

Hedging in George W. Bush 2003 Press Conferences as the Reflection of His Evasion on His Policy of Iraq War

(Pengelakan Secara Halus Pada Konferensi Pers George W. Bush Tahun 2003 Sebagai Cerminan Dari Pengelakan Terhadap Kebijakannya Pada Perang Iraq)

Vicky Margareta Purnamasari, Syamsul Anam, Agung Tri Wahyuningsih
English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University
Jln. Kalimantan 37, Jember 68121
E-mail: margaretavicky@gmail.com

Abstrak

Pengelakan secara halus dapat diartikan sebagai suatu perangkat yang digunakan untuk mengurangi dampak dari suatu ucapan. Hal ini merupakan jenis dari strategi retorik. Hyland (1996:15) menyebutkan bahwa perangkat pengelakan secara halus digunakan untuk menunjukkan kurangnya komitmen lengkap pada kebenaran proposisi dan keinginan untuk tidak mengungkapkan komitmen secara pasti. Penelitian ini merupakan analisis pragmatik. Seperti ditegaskan oleh Yule (1996:3) bahwa pragmatik adalah studi tentang makna kontekstual di mana studi tersebut mengharuskan adanya pertimbangan yang mengatur tentang apa yang ingin mereka katakan sesuai dengan siapa mereka berbicara, di mana dan dalam situasi apa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap bagaimana hedges (pengelakkan secara halus) dapat mencerminkan penghindaran dari beberapa pertanyaan para wartawan yang menantang terkait dengan kebijakan George W. Bush pada perang Iraq. Pertanyaan-pertanyaan tersebut ditujukan pada George W. Bush dan digambarkan oleh hedging (pengelakan secara halus) yang dominan. Penelitian ini menganalisa empat konferensi pers yang dipilih pada tahun 2003 yang terdiri dari: 6 Maret 2003, 30 Juli 2003, 28 Oktober 2003 dan 15 Desember 2003 melalui cooperative principle (prinsip kerjasama) oleh Grice (1975). Cooperative principle (prinsip kerjasama) dijelaskan sebagai berikut: buatlah kontribusi percakapan anda seperti yang dibutuhkan, pada tahap dimana itu terjadi, dengan tujuan yang diterima atau pertukaran arah pembicaraan dimana anda terlibat (Grice dikutip di Grundy, 2000:73). Berkenaan dengan teorinya, Grice (1975) mengusulkan empat maksim yang bisa dianggap sebagai dasar untuk prinsip kerjasama: maxim of quality (maksim kualitas), maxim of quantity (maksim kuantitas), maxim of relation (maksim relevansi) dan maxim of manner (maksim cara). Terkadang orang-orang melanggar maksim-maksim tersebut dan hal ini disebut flouting. Hedging (pengelakan secara halus) dapat diidentifikasi dari flouting maksim-maksim tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Pragmatik, Pengelakan secara halus, Prinsip kerjasama, Peningkaran maksim-maksim

Abstract

Hedging can be defined as a mitigating device that is used to lessen the impact of an utterance. It is kind of rhetorical strategy. Hyland (1996:15) mentions that hedging devices are used to indicate a lack of complete commitment to the truth of the proposition and a desire not to express the commitment categorically. This study is a pragmatics analysis. As asserted by Yule (1996:3) that pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning where it requires a consideration of how speakers organize what they want to say in accordance with who they are talking to, where, and under what circumstances. The study aims to uncover how hedges can reflect avoidance of some challenging questions from the reporters related to George W. Bush's policy of Iraq war. The questions are delivered to George W. Bush and depicted by dominant hedging. It analyzes four selected press conferences in 2003 comprising: March 6th 2003; July 30th 2003; October 28th 2003 and December 15th 2003 through cooperative principle by Grice. The cooperative principle is elucidated in the following way: make your conversational contribution such is as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged (Grice in Grundy, 2000:73). Concerning with his theory, Grice (1975) proposes four maxims that could be regarded as the basis for co-operative communication: maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relevance and maxim of manner. Sometimes people breaking those maxims and it is called flouting. Hedging can be identified from the flouting maxims.

Keywords: Pragmatics, hedging, cooperative principle, flouting maxims.

Introduction

Hedging is a mitigating device that is used to lessen the impact of an utterance. For certain people, the term "hedges" or "hedging" is strange. They hedge unconsciously in their daily conversation. The origin of the term hedging or hedges is introduced firstly by George Lakoff in 1970s. He associates hedging with unclarity or fuzziness. It deals with Hyland (1996: 15) that he mentions that "Hedging devices are used to indicate a lack of complete commitment to the truth of the proposition and a desire not to express the commitment categorically (Hyland, 1996: 15). According to Hyland (1995: 34-35) there are three main functions of hedging. First, hedging is used to express propositions with greater precision. It means that by hedging the writer can accurately state uncertain scientific claims with appropriate caution. Second, hedging concerns with the willingness of the writer to anticipate possible negative consequences of being wrong. The third function of hedging is to contribute to the development of the writer-reader relationship, addressing the need for deference and cooperation in gaining reader ratification of claims. In sum, hedging covers three main functions, namely: function toward the proposition, the writer and the reader.

It is interesting to analyze hedging concerning with the object of the study that is George W. Bush's press conference in 2003 related to the Iraq war because it is one of his controversial policy. Iraq war occurred on March 20th, 2003 until December 15th, 2011. The main reason of this war was he claimed Saddam Hussein had mass destructive weapons and Saddam Hussein planned to sell them to Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda who would smuggle them into the United States and killed many people. The study is concerned only with his press conference about Iraq war because it represents the avoidance of challenging questions posed him by reporters. The four selected presidential press conferences were chosen, comprising: March 6th, 2003; July 30th, 2003; October 28th, 2003; and December 15th 2003. The reason I choose those four press conferences above is that they happen before and after Iraq war in order to know George W. Bush reaction's before and after Iraq war in that year. The application of hedging is found in the four selected press conferences.

In order to analyze the four selected press conferences, there are four questions arises comprising:

1. what is the cooperative principle which is lead to find out the types of hedging?
2. what types of hedging which are found in the selected press conferences?
3. what dominant hedging that is frequently used by George W. Bush in the selected press conferences?
4. how the dominant hedging can reflect avoidance through selected press conferences?

In line with those problems, the study is designed to achieve some goals, namely:

1. to elucidate the utterances into cooperative principle which is lead to find out the types of hedging in the press conferences
2. to describe the types of hedging that are used by George W. Bush through the press conferences of Iraq war.

3. to reveal the dominant hedging of the press conferences which is identified as the reflection of avoidance of George W. Bush.
4. to prove whether George W. Bush really evades himself by using the statement through hedging in the text.

Research Methodology

The study apply qualitative method. It is used to analyze qualitative data that is press conferences which is taken from the website (<http://www.precidency.ucsb.edu/>) accessed on June 19th 2012. Moreover, documentary study is used in this study as the technique of data collection and descriptive methode is applied as the technique of data analysis. Briefly, this thesis investigate the use of hedging in 2003 Presidential press conference by George W Bush. There are four different selected texts of Presidential press conferences, comprising: March 6th, 2003; July 30th, 2003; October 28th, 2003; December 15th, 2003. There are remarks, questions and answers in the text which are contain different topics but topic of Iraq war is chosen as the sample. Thus, Gricean Maxims are used to reveal the kind of cooperative principle. Then, the utterances that flouts the maxim will be identified and classified in the types of hedging. Next, counting the percentage is used to reveal the dominant hedging. As a result, descriptive method is applied to relate the finding to the goal of the study.

Result

The result of the distribution of hedging used by George W. Bush indicates that hedging device "must" becomes the dominance among thirteen kinds of hedging devices with the percentage of 20,70 %. hedging device "I believe" is in the second place with 18,97 %. It is followed by hedging device "I think" with 17,24 %. In the fourth place, it comes from hedging device "you know" with 12,07 %. Next, hedging device "I'm confident" and "very" have the same percentage with 6,90 %. Then, hedging device "fully" in the seventh place with 5,17 %. In the eight place comes hedging device "I guess" with 3,45 %. Last, hedging device "clearly", "firmly", "in our judgement", "most" and "strongly" have percentage 1,72 % each.

Discussion

The analysis is supported by cooperative principle proposes by Grice (cited in Grundy, 200:74) which is state that there are four maxims in cooperative principle, comprising: "maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner". Successful conversation will emerge when the speaker's utterances obey those four maxims. however, if the speaker breaks one of those maxims, it is called flouting maxims. Flouting maxim is revealed in each maxim in the four selected press conferences. There are 10 flouting maxim of quantity , 1 flouting maxim of quality, 2 flouting maxim of relation and 3 flouting maxim of manner in the text. The analysis in detail can be seen in the following examples:

1. Maxim of Quantity

The reporter asked for a question about possibility to face the war and give Saddam Hussein final ultimatum. George W. Bush provides a fair explanation. However, he gave more explanation by adding some statements. Here, he flouts the maxim of quantity dealing with Grice statements that maxim of quantity contains two different things. The first one is “make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange) and the second one is “do not make your contribution more informative than is required” (cited in Grundy, 2000:74). Moreover, there are hidden meanings implied by hedging in these statements when he states:

“I’m spending a lot of time on the phone, talking to fellow leaders about the need for the United Nations Security Council to state the facts, which is Saddam Hussein hasn’t disarmed. Fourteen forty-one, the Security Council resolution passed unanimously last fall, said *clearly* that Saddam Hussein has one last chance to disarm. He hasn’t disarmed, and so we’re working with Security Council members to resolve this issue at the Security Council.”

It is implied that Bush wants to face force because Saddam Hussein has not disarmed. It is shown by hedging device “clearly” to strengthen the statement in which Saddam only has one last chance to disarm. According to Swan (1995:23) “clearly” is one of adverb of certainty. He states that “we use these adverbs to say how sure we are of something.” It means that Bush uses the hedging device “clearly” to state that he is very confident with the utterance and he is certainly sure with his statement. Furthermore, he adds in the following quotation:

“This is not only an important moment for the security of our Nation; *I believe* it’s important moment for the Security Council, itself.”

Here, he gives a strong statement which indicates by “I believe”. Hedging device “I believe” is a kind of epistemic modality because it is used to show the confidence of the speaker through the sentence. It is related to Simpson’s theory (1993:44) that “epistemic modality is concerned with the speaker’s confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of proposition expressed.” Bush uses hedging device “I believe” to persuade people agree about his own belief indirectly. In second question, he uses “I think” which indicates an opinion. It deals with Swan (1995:592) that he states “when *think* is used to talk about opinions, progressive forms are not normally used”. Moreover, Holmes (1993:93) mentions that “*I think* is (typically) in initial position and think gets level stress, both linguistic means of expressing emphasis and confidence”. Meanwhile, another hedging device is also found in the following quotation:

“We *must* work together to defeat terror”

Hedging device “must” is used to strengthen the meaning of the utterance. It means that they do not have another option

except against terror together. It is related to Swan (1995:342) that he mentions “in affirmative statements, we can use *must* to say what is necessary, and to give strong advice and orders to ourselves or other people.” In conclusion, there are four kinds of hedging devices in the text. They are hedging device “clearly”, “I believe”, “I think”, and “must”. Flouting maxim of quality is found in the following analysis:

2. Maxim of Quality

Flouting maxim of quality is found in the text because Bush tends to talk about evidence which is used to link Saddam and Al Qaida. According to Grice (cited in Grundy, 200:75) there are two components in maxim of quality, they are: “do not say what you believe to be false” and “do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence” (cited in Grundy, 2000:74). In this case, he flouts the second point of maxim of quality because he talks about evidence which is still dismantled as he states in the following utterance:

“but it’s going to take time for us to gather the evidence, the—analyze the mounds of evidence, literally, the miles of documents that we have uncovered”.

In addition, there is hedging device “you know” to express that he is certainly confident by his utterance that the addressee knows what he is talking about as in the following utterance:

“He’s going to testify in closed hearing tomorrow, which in Washington may not be so closed, as *you know*.”

It is supported by Holmes (1993: 89) that hedging device “*you know* expresses the speaker’s confidence that the addressee knows or understands, on the basis of shared experience or attitudes, the kind of thing referred to in the proposition”. He tries to share mutual knowledge with his addressee in order to saving Bush’s face to protect his reputation as the President. It is related to Holmes (1993:89) statement that he adds “their function seems to be to protect the speaker’s face: they express uncertainty and appeal to the addressee for reassurance.” Other hedging device “I’m confident” is found in the text. It means that he believes Saddam Hussein has weapons mass of destruction and will give it to Al Qaida. Hedging device “I’m confident” is used to express strong confidence of his opinion. The statement in the following quotation:

“*I’m confident* the truth will come out”

Even though the mounds of documents about weapon programs and the documentation of terrorist link are still uncovered. He really believes that Saddam is a dangerous man. He is the threat of the world especially of the United States security. Whereas, he does not have any adequate evidence yet to prove that Saddam is a threat but he dares to say such statement by give some strong opinions. His statement is used to form opinions society that Saddam is a threat who must be attacked in order to create peace. It is also used as justification for his policies concerning Iraq war. In conclusion, there are two hedging devices found in

the text. They are hedging device “you know” and “I’m confident”. Flouting maxim of Relation is found in the following analysis:

3. Maxim of Relation

The reporter delivered his questions about key of success of military operations which is seen by catching Saddam Hussein, dead or alive. However, he answers by state that Iraq’s regime will be change. This can be clearly seen that his answer is irrelevant with the question. So that, he flouts the maxim of relevance because he consciously makes his contribution irrelevant with the question which is asked by the reporter. In the form of maxim relation, Grice (cited in Grundy, 2000:74) states that the utterance must be relevant. Meanwhile, there is hedging device “fully” which is used to emphasize the sense of the utterance. Hedging device “fully” is used to emphasize the sense of the utterances. It is a kind of adverbs of certainty which deals with Swan’s statement (1995:23) that “we use these adverbs to say how sure we are of something”. It is shown in the following quotation:

“We *fully* intend to make sure that they’re—got ample food.”

In conclusion, there is hedging device “fully” found in the text. Flouting maxim of manner is found in the following analysis:

4. Maxim of Manner

The reporter asked about Bush’s opinion of the critics concerning with his action because Senator Kennedy says that Bush’s fixation with Saddam Hussein makes the world become a dangerous place. Flouting maxim of manner is clearly found in the text. According to Grice (cited in Grundy, 2000:75) “maxim of manner consists of four components, comprising: avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief and be orderly.” It means that the speaker’s utterances should be perspicuous. Bush explains that:

“My job is to protect America, and that’s exactly what I’m going to do. People can ascribe all kinds of intentions. I swore to protect and defend the Constitution. That’s what I swore to do. I put my hand on the Bible and took that oath, and that’s exactly what I am going to do.”

Here, Bush uses the word “protect” to justify his action. He assumes that there is only one way to protect his nation against terror by face the war. In short, those utterances flout the maxim of manner because it tends to obscure the participant and vague. In addition, he states:

“*I believe* Saddam Hussein is a threat to the American people. I believe he’s a threat to the neighborhood in which he lives, and I’ve got a good evidence to believe that.”

That utterance means that he has strong belief to assume Saddam is a threat of the world and it is supported by hedging device “I believe”. Hedging device “I believe” is a

kind of epistemic modality because it is used to show the confidence of the speaker through the sentence. It is related to Simpson (1993:44) that “epistemic modality is concerned with the speaker’s confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of proposition expressed.” In conclusion, there is hedging device “I believe” found in the text.

Besides the interpretation of the maxims, there is another interpretation that is needed in this journal. It is the context of situation. According to Halliday & Hasan (1985:6) context refers to the words and the sentences that go before and come after particular words and sentences that one is looking at. Thus, context refers to what has gone before and what is coming after the particular words and sentences. Moreover, context of situation is the situation which text is uttered (Halliday & Hasan, 1985:6). It means that the environment which the text is expressed.

Context of situation is found in the relationship between United States and Iraq. It is depicted that the history began with the Iranian revolution in 1979 which marked significant change in US policy toward that region. At that time, US became the country which support Iraq’s invasion to Iran. US transfer biological weapons to Iraq. After the eight-year long Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein is suspected make mass destructive weapons by George W. Bush. Bush argues that Saddam Hussein cooperate with Al-Qaeda to attack the world especially United States. Therefore, Bush asked the world to join attack Iraq in order to save the world peace. In relation to the finding of context of situation, there are types of hedging which are discovered in the study. Edmondson and House’s type is chosen to analyze hedging in George W. Bush 2003 press conferences because this type are fits with the hedging that is discussed. He mentions four different kinds of hedging that is called “grounders, sweeteners, disarmers and expanders”(cited in Caffi, 2007:52). The following utterances are the examples of expander in flouting maxim of quantity:

- a. “I’m spending a lot of time on the phone, talking to fellow leaders about the need for the United Nations Security Council to state the facts, which is Saddam Hussein hasn’t disarmed. Fourteen forty-one, the Security Council resolution passed unanimously last fall, said clearly that Saddam Hussein has one last chance to disarm. He hasn’t disarmed, and so we’re working with Security Council members to resolve this issue at the Security Council. This is not only an important moment for the security of our Nation; I believe it’s an important moment for the Security Council, itself. And the reason I say that is because this issue has been before the Security Council—the issue of disarmament of Iraq—for 12 long years.”(Press Conference, 6th March 2003).

The example is classified as expander because they contain of additional information which is gives by Bush. Furthermore, the following example is belong to sweetener.

- a. "This is not only an important moment for the security of our Nation; I believe it's an important moment for the Security Council, itself. And the reason I say that is because this issue has been before the Security Council—the issue of disarmament of Iraq—for 12 long years"(Press Conference, 6th March 2003).

The example above is classified as sweetener because it contains of softening imposition. In this case, Bush tends to use that utterance to avoid the possible objection of others concerning with his statement. Besides, there are some utterances belong to different types of hedging such as grounders:

- a. The need for the United Nations Security Council to state the facts, which is Saddam Hussein hasn't disarmed.

The utterance above is classified as grounders because they contain of the basic topic of the text that being discussed. Moreover, last type of hedging comes from disarmer which is found in the following quotations:

- a. "Fourteen forty-one, the Security Council resolution passed unanimously last fall, said clearly that Saddam Hussein has one last chance to disarm. He hasn't disarmed, and so we're working with Security Council members to resolve this issue at the Security Council"(Press Conference, 6th March 2003).

The utterances above are classified as disarmer because they contain of preventive removal of a potential offense which is used to make grounder's essence is not vanish or vague. Therefore, disarmer is the way how someone protect his reputation by use the utterances to avoid potential offense.

Conclusion and Suggestion

From the analysis, it can be concluded that: first, there are four maxims which are flout. They are maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner. Among those maxims, maxim of quantity becomes the most dominant maxim. Furthermore, concerning with second question which is related to the types of hedging proposes by Edmondson and House, there are four types of hedging namely: grounder, sweetener, disarmer and expander. However, the most frequently used in the text is expander. Meanwhile, sweetener also frequently used in the text as well. The third question deals with the dominant hedging in the text. From the result, it can be seen that hedging device "must" becomes the dominant hedging with 20,70 %. From the result of the analysis, we conclude that Bush often gives more information in the text by flouts the maxim of quantity. It is linked with the most frequently types of hedging that used is expander. Moreover, it is supported

by the dominant hedging "must" which is used to strengthen his utterances because he wants to requiring people to against terrorist. It deals with one of the three function proposed by Hyland (1995: 34-35) that hedging is used to avoid possible objection and to protect the reputation.

In relation to this, we would like to propose suggestions. First, we expect that the study gives contribution for a better concept and understanding about hedging. Second, this study can also be used as a reference for those who are interested in studying hedging because hedging is a kind of pragmatics study that learn about mitigating devices which used to lessen the impact of the utterance. It is very useful to help people gain effectively communication.

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