## A STUDY OF EPISTEMIC MODALITY IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW

PAPIYA CHAKRABARTY

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE.

#### FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS

UNIVERSITY MALAYA

2010

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank several people in helping me complete my studies.

First and foremost, Pn. Khatijah Shamsuddin, my supervisor at the Language and Linguistics Department, University Malaya who has been very helpful and whose constant guidance helped me complete my project.

I would also like to thank all the lecturers who have lectured and tutored me throughout the four years I met after work who helped me enjoy my study at the university immensely. It is with their kind understanding and tolerance that mature students like me can fulfill life-long dreams to become graduates.

Next is the Jabatan Pendidikan Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, on behalf of the Ministry of Education Malaysia who gave their support in allowing further education to working officers during working hours with special amendments and consideration regarding change of schedules to allow easy transition from work at school to study at University Malaya.

I would also like to thank my the administration and my colleagues at SMK Vivekananda Kuala Lumpur who arranged my time-tables for four years so that I could juggle work and study without much difficulty, maintaining my status as full time employee of the Education Sector while fulfilling my obligations as a student at the university.

I would also like to thank my brother Pradeep Kumar Chakrabarty.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband M. Selvaraju who has been very supportive of my studies. He tolerated my time being shared between work, study and my duties as a housewife.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
ABSTRAK	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	xii

CHAPTER ONE	INTRODUCTION	
1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	THE PROBLEM	3
1.3	OBJECTIVES	4
1.4	THE RESEARCH QUESTION	4
	1.4.1 How many epistemic modals are used in a text where several people hold the floor in a forum?	4
	1.4.2 What is the percentage difference between modalized statements of forum participants and unmodalized statements within the same interview?	4

	1.4.3 How many sentences in the interview reflect commitments of truth by the speakers?	4
1.5	THE AIMS AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY	4
1.6	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	5
1.7	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	6
1.8	SUMMARY	6
CHAPTER TWO	LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.0	INTRODUCTION	7
2.1	SIGN BASED THEORY	8
	2.1.1 Synergesis of language	10
	2.1.2 The Philosophy of Truth and Logic	13
	2.1.3 Truth Propositions	15
	2.1.4 Epistemic Modality	15
	2.1.5 Hedging, epistemic modals, root modals & the Law	16
2.2	FUNCTIONS OF AUXILIARY MODALS ACCORDING TO RESEARCHERS	18
	2.2.1 Taxonomies of modalities according to researchers	21
	2.2.2 Modality by Palmer	32
	SUMMARY	36
CHAPTER THREE	METHODOLOGY	37
3.0	INTRODUCTION	37
3.1	THE ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK	37
3.2	DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES 3.2.1THE FIVE SPEAKERS	37

#### 3.2.2 THE WORD COUNT

3.3	DATA PROCESSING CRITERION	40
	3.3.1 DEFINITIONS OFD EACH CRITERION	40
3.4	LANGUAGE SOFTWARE AND THE RECORDING METHOD	42
3.5	STAGES IN DATA ANALYSIS	44
3.6	SUMMARY	45
CHAPTER 4	DATA ANALYSIS	47
4.0	INTRODUCTION	47
4.1	AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SPEAKERS OF A TELEVISION INTERVIEW – WAR IN IRAQ	47
4.2	A GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SPEAKERS USING THE CATEGORIZATION MODEL	48
	4.2.1 Frequency count table of auxiliary modals and lexical predicates in text of speaker 1	49
	Interview Analysis Speaker 2	50
	Categorization Model for speaker Sen.Graham	
	4.2.2 Interview Analysis frequency count table Speaker 2 ,James Carville and frequency count table	57
	Categorization model for speaker James Carville	58
	4.2.3 Interview Analysis Speaker 3 Newt Gingrich and frequency count table	71
	Categorization model for speaker Newt Gingrich	72

	BIBLIOGRAPHY	112
5.5	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	111
5.4	CONCLUSION	109
	How many sentences in the interview reflect commitments of truth by the speakers?	
	Research Question 3	106
	What is the percentage difference between modalized statements of forum participants and unmodalized statements within the same interview?	
	Research Question 2	105
	5.3.1 Research Question 1 How many epistemic modals are used in a text where several people hold the floor in a forum?	105
	QUESTIONS	
5.3	ISSUES PERTAINING TO RESEARCH	104
5.1	REVIEW OF RESEARCH	100
5.0	INTRODUCTION	100
CHAPTER FIVE	CONCLUSIONS	100
4.3	SUMMARY	99
	Categorization model for speaker Mary Matalin	98
	4.2.5 Interview Analysis Speaker 5 and frequency count table	97
	Categorization model for speaker Patrick Buchanan	85
	4.2.4 Interview Analysis Speaker 4 and frequency count table	84

Appendix 1	120
Appendix 2	136
Appendix 3	163
Appendix 4	165
Appendix 5	167
Appendix 6	169
Appendix 7	171
Appendix 8	174
Appendix 9	177
Appendix 10	179

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	The Structural Paradigm of Language	12
Table 4.2.	Frequency count of auxiliary modals in Sen.Graham's transcript.	49
Table 4.3	Frequency count of lexical predicates in Sen.Graham's transcript.	49
Table 4.4	Frequency count of auxiliary modals in James Carville's transcripts	57
Table 4.5	Frequency count of lexical predicates in James Carville's transcripts	57
Table 4.6	Frequency count of auxiliary modals in Newt Gingrich's transcript	71
Table 4.7	Frequency count of lexical predicates in Newt Gingrich's transcript	71
Table 4.8.	Frequency count of auxiliary modals in Patrick Buchanan's transcript	84
Table 4.9	Frequency count of lexical predicates in Patrick   Buchanan's transcript	84
Table 4.10	Frequency count of auxiliary modals Mary Jo Matalin transcript	97

### LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Epistemic devices used by native	21
	speakers of English	
Table 2.2	The Dictum and the Modi	25
Table 2.3	Semantic Categories relevant to epistemic modality	29
Table 2.4	Five categories of epistemic commitment	31
Table 2.5	High factuality and low factuality linguistic signals	31
Table 3.1	Linguistic analysis of epistemic expressions	43
Table 3.2	Frequency output of auxiliary modals	44
Table 3.3	Frequency output of lexical predicates	44
Table 4.1	Analysis of modalized and unmodalized	47
Table 5.1	Frequency Count of modals found in interview excerpts	101
Table 5.2	Frequency count of lexical predicates found in interview excerpts	101

### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

G	1	Analysis	1	50
G	2	Analysis	2	50
G	3	Analysis	3	51
G	4	Analysis	4	51
G	5	Analysis	5	52
G	5	Analysis	6	52
G	6	Analysis	7	53
G	7	Analysis	8	53
G	8	Analysis	9	54
G	9	Analysis	10	54
G	10	Analysis	11	55
G	11	Analysis	12	55
G	12	Analysis	13	55
G	12	Analysis	14	56
G	13	Analysis	15	56
G	14	Analysis	16	56
С	1	Analysis	1	58
С	2	Analysis	2	58
С	3	Analysis	3	59
С	4	Analysis	4	60
С	5	Analysis	5	60
С	6	Analysis	6	61
С	7	Analysis	7	61
С	8	Analysis	8	62
С	9	Analysis	9	62

С	10	Analysis	10	63
С	11	Analysis	11	63
С	12	Analysis	12	64
С	13	Analysis	13	64
С	14	Analysis	14	65
С	15	Analysis	15	65
С	16	Analysis	16	66
С	17	Analysis	17	66
С	18	Analysis	18	67
С	19	Analysis	19	67
С	20	Analysis	20	68
С	21	Analysis	21	68
С	22	Analysis	22	69
С	23	Analysis	23	69
С	24	Analysis	24	70
Ν	1	Analysis	1	72
Ν	2	Analysis	2	72
Ν	3	Analysis	3	73
Ν	4	Analysis	4	73
Ν	5	Analysis	5	74
Ν	6	Analysis	6	74
Ν	7	Analysis	7	75
N	8	Analysis	8	75
N	9	Analysis	9	76
N	10	Analysis	10	76
Ν	11	Analysis	11	77

Ν	12	Analysis	12	77
Ν	13	Analysis	13	78
Ν	14	Analysis	14	78
Ν	15	Analysis	15	79
Ν	16	Analysis	16	79
Ν	17	Analysis	17	79
Ν	18	Analysis	18	80
Ν	19	Analysis	19	80
Ν	20	Analysis	20	81
Ν	21	Analysis	21	81
Ν	22	Analysis	22	82
Ν	23	Analysis	23	82
Ν	24	Analysis	24	83
N	25	Analysis	25	83
Р	1	Analysis	1	85
Р	2	Analysis	2	85
Р	3	Analysis	3	86
Р	4	Analysis	4	86
Р	5	Analysis	5	87
Р	6	Analysis	6	87
Р	7	Analysis	7	88
Р	8	Analysis	8	88
Р	9	Analysis	9	89
Р	10	Analysis	10	90
Р	11	Analysis	11	90
Р	12	Analysis	12	91
Р	13	Analysis	13	91
Р	14	Analysis	14	92

Р	15	Analysis	15	92
Р	16	Analysis	16	93
Р	17	Analysis	17	93
Р	18	Analysis	18	94
Р	19	Analysis	19	94
Р	20	Analysis	20	95
Р	21	Analysis	21	95
Р	22	Analysis	22	96
Р	23	Analysis	23	96
Μ	1	Analysis	1	97
Μ	2	Analysis	2	98
Μ	3	Analysis	3	98
Μ	4	Analysis	4	99