

## HEDGE *WELL* IN TELEVISION INTERVIEWS: GENDER ASPECT

*The article presents the study of main functions of hedge 'well' in interview discourse as well as gender aspect of use of the hedge in communicative strategies and tactics in television interviews.*

*Key words: interview, hedge 'well', gender.*

Gender studies play a crucial role in the development and functioning of modern world linguistics. The growth of research on gender and language over the past forty years is both massive and remarkable. The milestones in this sphere have been the significant works by R. Lakoff [11], J. Holmes [9; 10], D. Cameron [8], S. Romain [12], V. Bergvall [7]. In Ukraine such linguists as O. L. Bessonova [1], N. D. Borysenko [2], A. P. Martynyuk [3], A. V. Yarho [5] have made weighty contribution to the research field of gender. In linguistics gender is seen more as "a variable and contingent phenomenon, rather than a pre-defined set of traits and characteristics" [13, p. 460]. In other words, gender may be defined as the blending, mixture or cooperation of sex and social status of a personality.

Gender specification of discourse strategies and gender discourse markers have been the main topic of recent linguistic researches. Thus, the present article is devoted to the investigation of the discourse gender marker hedge *well* in discourse strategies of the interviewees in television programmes CNN Larry King Live. The *aim* of the article is to present the main functions of hedge *well* in television interview discourse; to analyse peculiarities of gender use of hedge *well* in discourse strategies represented by interviewees.

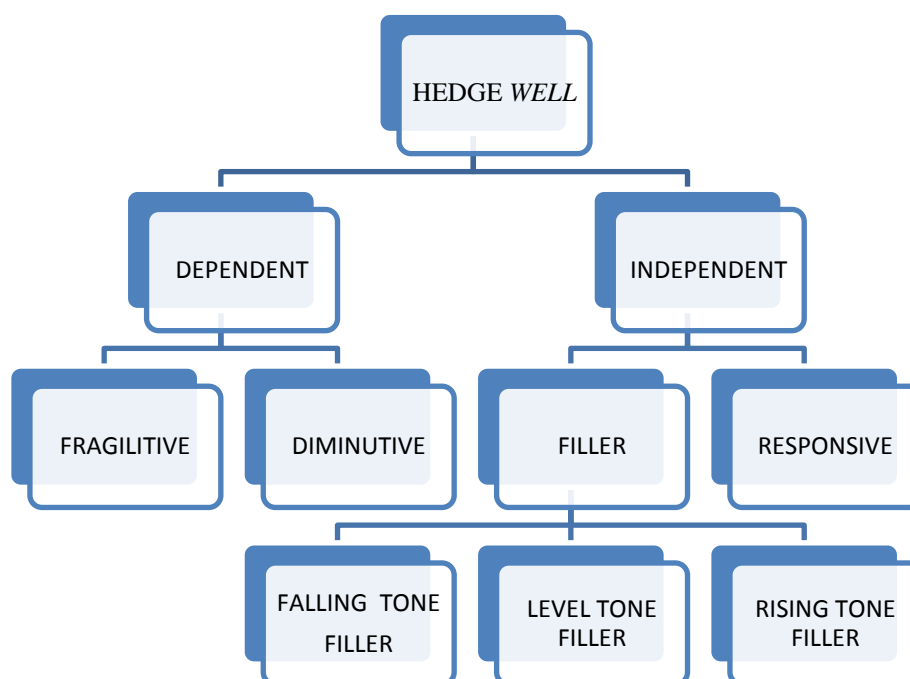
The *object* of the article is discourse strategies represented by interviewees in television interview discourse whereas the *subject* is gender functioning of the hedge *well* in the discourse strategies.

Television interviews are characterized by a wide range of factors. Television interviews are conducted with the particular purpose of obtaining information. There is an audience although not necessarily physically present at the programme but being determinant for the host in choosing possible guests for the programme as well as topics for discussion. A reasonable amount of preparation by the interviewer is required for a successful interview. This involves some research into the achievements and career of the guest, which enables the interviewer to choose particular topics and prepare her/his questions in advance taking into consideration the audience's expectations, predicting what exact issues might be of great interests to the audience. Participants' roles and actions are usually defined by the structure of television interview programme. Roles of participants — the interviewer and interviewee — impose some obligations that create an asymmetric interaction, a turn-taking system with clear obligations and restrictions. Thus, the interviewer has the power to commence and end the interview, to initiate and change topics and interviewees are to follow this procedure. Interviewers might sometimes criticize or

challenge their interviewee as a strategy to elicit a desired response. Both interviewers and interviewees are supposed to follow Grice's Maxims but interviewees sometimes might not answer questions touching upon private life, give as much information as they consider is appropriate under the circumstances, refuse to answer at all, and although for interviewees it is unusual to ask questions, they may violate the turn-taking system and initiate changing in the flow of the interview and even ask the interviewer questions. Television interview discourse mirrors gender peculiarities of strategic communicative behaviour of interviewees as well as gender discourse markers used by interviewees.

Hedges, linguistic devices such as *I think, you know, well* have been regarded as gender markers of 'women's style'[6]. Although all these hedges may have common functions in speech, they differ in meanings in each particular utterance. Situational context, intonation pattern and syntactic structure of the utterance must be taken into consideration while studying the functions of hedges in the women's/men's speech [4].

To analyze functions of hedge *well* in interview discourse the intonation patterns of utterances containing hedge *well* have been studied regarding whether the hedge forms an independent syntagma or it does not. The next step included interpreting of functions of the hedge. Now then the following scheme presents the functions of hedge *well*.



Thus, the hedge *well* is considered *independent* if it forms an independent syntagma, whereas it is regarded as *dependent* if it does not make an independent syntagma functioning as a pre-head of a certain intonation pattern. Dependent hedges function as *fragilitive* and *diminutive* whereas independent hedges may be *response* or *filler*. The last in its turn is subdivided into *falling tone filler*, *level tone filler* and *rising tone filler*.

The implication of dependent hedge as fragilitive is to demonstrate defencelessness, tenderness, vulnerability, weakness, on the one hand; and on the

other, fragilitive shows that the respondent seeks attention, comfort, consolation, support, which is exemplified in the following abstract:

*KING: How did Big Russ take all of this and how will he now take more fame?*

*RUSSET: You know when I wrote "Big Russ and Me" I sat down and inscribed it to him and it took a long time because I wanted to say just the right things and I FedExed it off to him. Day one I heard nothing, day two nothing, day three nothing.*

*I called him. I said, "Dad, did you get the book?" "Yes, yes." I said, "But, Dad, the book with your picture 'Big Russ and Me'"? "Yes, I got it." I said, "Well what do you think?" He said, "I'm reading a chapter a night. I'll let you know." (May 23, 2006).*

Using hedge *well* as diminutive the respondent sounds less peremptory, weakens categorical tones, avoids the status of expert. Such realization can be found in the given passage:

*KING: It's a great pleasure to welcome a return visit with Stedman Graham, educator, entrepreneur and best-selling author, chairman and CEO of the management and marketing consulting firm S. Graham and Associates.*

*His new book, there you see its cover, "Diversity, Leaders not Labels, A new plan for the 21st Century." And, he told me right before we started that it's the best and most important book he's ever written, why?*

*GRAHAM: Well it teaches you how to transcend race and to be able to rise above it and get rid of a race-based consciousness based on understanding who you are as a person and to be able to get along with people in the workforce based on building good relationships and that's an internal process. (September 22, 2006)*

Hedge *well* as filler gives the respondent some time to plan his/her utterance. Falling tone hedge *well* is to used to obtain small in amount time to form ideas, e.g.:

*SOMERS: My next book is all about men, men and their hormones. The sexier years? These are. These are because — because I — there's something I got back. Something that I lost, that I got back. And that's what most people feel as they are aging that once they lose it, they're never going to get it back again.*

*That's why I keep writing these books. And that's why I want doctors to catch up. You know, learn it. I think the pharmaceutical companies, I — you know, the pharmaceutical companies have a problem with me right now because when "The Sexy Years" came out the \$2 billion a year synthetic hormone business dropped by 72 percent. It's not my ego talking, it's just that in the complaint they filed against the Compounding Pharmacists of America, I was named in that complaint, as one of the key reasons for the decline.*

*So they're trying to get Compounding Pharmacists to not be allowed to make. So I thought, well, then why don't you, pharmaceutical companies make bio-identical hormones in individualize doses so women can get exactly what they want. Because the one pill ...(October 14, 2006)*

The respondent uses hedge *well* as rising tone filler when he or she intends to get more time to think over their ideas, e.g.:

*KING: Anything different from other Miss USAs?*

*SHUGART: Oh, no. I think — obviously — well, right now we moved to a bigger apartment and moved the title holders to a bigger apartment, and that was already in the works. So there is a staff member that is living there now. But I think I'm probably more in your life on a daily basis. But that's it (February 5, 2007).*

Hedge *well* as level tone filler enables the respondent to avoid the direct answer to the question.

*KING: But your own role...*

*PALIN: Every Republican governor has much to contribute.*

*KING: But your own role...*

*PALIN: Well, I'm one of them. I am one of them, desiring to reach out and assist the new administration that's recently been elected* (November 12, 2008).

Sarah Palin using hedge *well* as level tone filler avoids the direct answer to the question about her role after the elections underlining that everyone is supposed to perform their duties.

*KING: When Katrina hit, and you saw all you saw, and you'd just been there filming, right? What did you make of it?*

*PENN: Well, it was — you know, it was, oh, well, it's happened, because of course as everybody knows, this has been discussed — this was a daily discussion in New Orleans* (September 14, 2006).

The actor does not follow the topic suggested by the interviewer and using hedge *well* as level tone filler gets some time to form the answer and still not finding the right answer eludes from it.

Hedge *well* as responsive corresponds to *yes* or *maybe* and is often combined with them.

*KING: But it's very hard when you're in the stereotype. Blacks are lazy.*

*GRAHAM: Well, yes.* (September 22, 2006)

*KING: Are they hopeful? What do they tell you?*

*MCCLOY: Yes, yes. Well they can't just outright and tell you that everything is going to be perfect, you know, because you never know that so you just can't get your hopes up that it's going to all turn out right. But, yes, they think that he - he will recover but not — but maybe not 100 percent.* (January 6, 2006)

Hedge *well* is wildly presented in topic controlling strategy and mirrors gender variability of hedge use. The following table demonstrates gender distribution of hedge *well* in different functions in the tactics of topic extension:

male use	female use	male/female use		
<i>hedge well</i>				
e (69 %)	diminutiv (69 %)	fragilitive (78 %)	responsive	m (48 %) f (52 %)
	rising tone filler (68 %)	level tone filler	m (54 %) f (46 %)	f (46 %)
	falling tone filler	m (56 %) f (44 %)	f (44 %)	%0

Hedge *well* is used by respondents of both sex in different functions.

*KING: Did you know there were problems? I'm not going to dwell on it. I just...*

*PENN: Well, the problem was weight. He had — he had certainly been a fantastically self-abusing guy over periods of his life, but that wasn't the case in the end. I mean, it was a natural death, but a natural death that was brought on, you know, by some hard living but particularly weight.* (September 14, 2006)

The interviewer touches upon a very private topic dealing with the relationship of the actor and his brother and also asks about the possible cause of Sean Penn's brother's death. Such questions may imply that the actor was indifferent to his brother and his problems. Thus, the respondent explains that the death was natural because of health problems and unhealthy life style. The actor also underlines that they were rather close but he could not make his brother change his life style. The use of hedge *well* as fragilitive demonstrates that the respondent seeks for understanding appealing to the interviewer and the audience.

*KING: Good evening. Earlier today I talked with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. We had just learned that the United States hoped to have a deal on a U.N. resolution to end the Middle East violence and that that resolution could happen tomorrow. So, I began by asking if that was true.*

*RICE: Well, I wouldn't want to put tomorrow on the date but we're certainly getting close. We're working with the French very closely. We're working with others. We've wanted very much to see an end to this conflict.*

*We need to end the hostilities in a way, though, that points forward a direction for a sustainable peace. And we are working – we have worked with the parties when I was in the region to come up with those principles, with those elements. We're now working on a Security Council resolution and hopefully we can get that passed and I think it certainly will be within days, Larry.*

*KING: So imminent would be a good word?*

*RICE: Well, I would just say within days.*

*KING: All right, what do you make of this? Just in this morning, the Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrallah, vows to strike Tel Aviv in retaliation for Israel's bombardment of Lebanon's capital.*

*RICE: Well, Hezbollah is a very dangerous organization and they do have, thanks to Iranian supply and the Syrian land bridge, they do have some very significant long range weaponry but that's what we're trying to deal with (August 3, 2006).*

Condoleezza Rice following the topic suggested by the interviewer uses hedge *well* as a diminutive. it gives her possibility to avoid the role of expert and become closer to the audience, on the one hand, and on the other, as she is discussing urgent matters and use of hedge *well* in such function enables her to show that she is not the only person who makes decision on these matters.

*KING: All right. Let's move to another politician, Sarah Palin. What's your read on the governor?*

*BEHAR: Well, you know, they're talking about her as the new Republican Party. If that's what they want for their new Republican Party, that's fine – somebody who doesn't believe in a woman's choice, someone who doesn't believe in evolution, someone who is – you know, loves to hunt and kill animals or whatever. I don't know what her reasoning is (May 5, 2009)*

The TV host Joy Behar continues the topic suggested by Larry King. Combination of hedges *well* and *I think* makes possible to get some time and to soften her utterance.

*KING: We begin tonight with an old friend, Donald Trump. He's got another hit on his hands, as if he needed another hit, but this is going to be one. It's "Think Like a Champion," his terrific new book, written with his friend, Meredith McIver and*

*forward by Robert Kiyosaki, the author of "Rich Dad Poor Dad." Donald, I thank you for joining us. By the way, he comes to us from his office in midtown Manhattan. Why this book?*

*TRUMP: Well, I did, a long time ago, your show. And I had a certain book called "The Art of the Deal." And it became the number one business book of all time, in terms of sales. And since then, I've done a number of other books and they've all been great best-sellers.*

*And a lot of people wanted me to do a book right now about these troubled times that we're all in. And it's been sort of interesting. They're great times, as an entrepreneur. I don't think I've ever seen better times as an entrepreneur. But the world is a mess and the country is a mess. And they just wanted me to do a book, Larry, that really talked about the times that we're in, the trouble that we're in and how to make money and how to be happy, because I'm always happy when I'm making money.*

*KING: Why – why a good time for an entrepreneur and not necessarily for others?*

*TRUMP: Well, I don't think I've ever seen a time where there's been this kind of play, where you have assets that you can buy for dollars. I've never seen a time like it, Larry.*

*KING: So you – this is the time for smart people to make money, is what you're saying?*

*TRUMP: Well, this is a time for smart people. This is a time for entrepreneurial people. And this is a time for people like me. This is a great time for people like me – and maybe people like you, Larry, because I know you're a great investor (April 18, 2009).*

Donald Trump following the topic suggested by Larry King and using hedge *well* as diminutive lessens both categoricity of his utterances and his achievements in professional sphere.

While researching television interview discourse a lot of attention has been paid to taking into account the gender factor as a socio-linguistic factor influencing respondents' speech. Gender factor is especially revealed in interview discourse examination as interviewers always do their best to touch upon different sides of their interviewees in order to open up their personalities to the audience.

#### *LITERATURE*

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*У статті розглядаються основні функції хеджу well у дискурсі інтерв'ю, а також гендерний аспект реалізації хеджу респондентами у комунікативних стратегіях і тактиках на матеріалі англomовного телевізійного інтерв'ю.*

*Ключові слова: інтерв'ю, хедж well, гендер.*

*В статье рассматриваются основные функции хеджа well в дискурсе интервью, а также гендерный аспект реализации хеджа респондентами в коммуникативных стратегиях и тактиках на материале англоязычного телевизионного интервью.*

*Ключевые слова: интервью, хедж well, гендер.*