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Power, politics, and gender-related epistemic modality in interview discourse

A case study of TV/video interviews with Canadian politicians

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ABSTRACT

Department:	University of Gothenburg/Dept of Languages and Literatures/English
Course:	EN1C03, English: Advanced Undergraduate Level for General Purpose Course. Bachelor's Degree Essay Project (C-level linguistic essay)
Semester:	Spring 2014
Title:	Power, politics, and gender-related epistemic modality in interview discourse: A case study of TV/video interviews with Canadian politicians
Author:	Stephanie S. Roth
Supervisor:	Larisa O.-Gustafsson, PhD
Aims:	To examine usage, distribution and function of gender-related epistemic modality in the form of hedges and boosters in political interviews and compare the present findings with those of previous studies.
Methods:	A comparative, quantitative study of Canadian politicians' use of epistemic modality in TV/video interviews along with a qualitative analysis of reasons for choosing the respective hedging or boosting devices in the interview situation.
Material:	Transcripts of 6 TV/video interviews with Canadian politicians.
Main results:	Contrary to pioneering gender research observations and my hypotheses formulated accordingly for this study, the data analysis of the Canadian Political Interview Corpus (CaPIC) showed only marginal deviations in gender-specific use of hedges and boosters.
Keywords:	epistemic modality, hedging, boosting, political interviews, political discourse, political rhetoric, gender, gender-related differences in language use, language and politics, politics in language

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[1] http://snd.gu.se

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1. Introduction

Politics is a discipline that is related to sociolinguistics, the study of ways in which different groups of people use language. According to Spolsky (1998: 58), "language is regularly used in the exercise of political power". Political discourse – comprising, for instance, speeches, interviews, and panel discussions – contains a number of rhetorical features that are worth studying from the sociolinguistic point of view. Any such discourse subcategory within the realm of politics also deals with social interaction. Moreover, political discourse shows evidence of how language is used "to perform power-enforcing/imbuing practices" and demonstrates in what way it is "deployed for communicating decisions" (Okulska & Cap 2010: back cover). As Chilton (Okulska & Cap 2010: back cover) puts it, "[p]olitics in today's world consists of almost continuous interconnected talking and writing in a constantly expanding media universe".

In her 1990 publication *Talking Power: The Politics of Language in Our Lives*, Lakoff gives her view on how language, politics, and power interrelate and influence each other, but also on the role gender plays in this context. She states though that "[i]t is not yet clear whether, or to what degree, power alters women's interactive style in general. Differences between male and female style have been studied for less than twenty years; and in that time, almost all the focus has been on ordinary conversation" (Lakoff 1990: 209).

With the modern women's movement becoming a substantial force in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lakoff had started to look into the question whether the gender variable was manifest in specific linguistic choices such as syntactic decisions. Modality was one trait reportedly characterizing women's forms of speech with an excessive use of semantic modifiers or so-called 'approximators', i.e. hedges, conveying impreciseness, indicating uncertainty, or even need for approval (Lakoff 1990: 204).

This thesis applies an interdisciplinary angle to examine the power-political aspects and uses Lakoff's work as a starting point to investigate whether her cutting-edge, much discussed, criticised, and even rejected research claims hold true for today's media-centered political communication from a gender perspective. Does female politicians' language actually deny them the means of expressing themselves strongly, thus ultimately disallowing them access to a more powerful position in politics than that of their male counterparts? Or does power, on the contrary, lead to a change in the speech features that Lakoff and others (e.g.

Jespersen 1922) asserted to be typical of women's language, with politically powerful women espousing the male linguistic behaviour that is culturally accepted as 'right' or 'logical'?

Finally, the study will take into account that more often than not political speeches are the joint product of speechwriters and government officials actually delivering the speech. In order to be able to capture spontaneous utterances, which are likely to contain relatively pristine devices of epistemic modality[2], it seems that the genre of dyadic[3] political TV/video[4] interviews is the most suitable choice for my research study.

2. Aims and hypotheses

2.1 Aims of the present study

Lakoff's theories combined with relevant results from later research (cf. section 3, p. 3ff.) serve as the basis for defining the purpose of this sociolinguistic C-level project, which is to examine the usage of epistemic modality in the form of hedges and boosters in political interviews from a gender-specific perspective. The overall objective is to discover distribution patterns concerning relations and differences between gender-related uses, thereby considering politicians' educational and/or professional backgrounds, their role within the hierarchy of political power, party-political affiliation, and age variables.

Furthermore, the study's purpose is to unveil specific rhetorical and/or strategic functions that gender-related epistemic modality in political discourse fulfills. As far as female versus male usage of hedges, viz. expressions of doubt, is concerned, the issue of linguistic 'gender transformation' is an additional focus point. Another research question related to the complementary type of epistemic modality is whether there are any discernible trends suggesting that male politicians are more prone to incorporate boosters, viz. expressions of certainty, in their discourse.

The present linguistic essay aims to compare the findings from my analysis with those of previous studies and strives to find well-grounded answers to the problems and questions presented above.

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[2] See section 3 for more information on epistemic modality.
[3] The term 'dyadic' means dual in nature denoting a one-to-one conversational situation with one interviewer and one interviewee.
[4] The description 'TV/video interviews' refers to TV broadcasts which are even accessible in video format on the Internet.

2.2 Hypotheses

Based on the results of my literature review of relevant previous research (cf. section 3, p. 3ff.), the following hypotheses can be formulated regarding political interview situations set in a public broadcasting scenario:

- *H1 Female politicians use more hedges than their male counterparts.*
- *H2 Male politicians tend to use more boosters than their female counterparts.*
- *H3 Younger, aspiring male politicians use boosters most frequently.*
- *H4 There is an inverse relationship between the degree of political power and the frequency in the usage of hedging devices, though with a trend towards a generally more frequent use by female politicians.*
- *H5 A powerful position as a politician does not necessarily lead to an increase in the frequency of boosters occurring in his/her spoken political interview discourse.*

The present degree project in English linguistics intends to confirm or reject these hypotheses.

3. Previous research

The sections below summarize and highlight important definitions and classifications, methodological approaches, as well as results that have been produced in connection with previous linguistic research.

3.1 Epistemic modality in academic writing

Traditionally, the term *epistemic modality* is related to the use of modal verbs and modal auxiliaries, when a speaker expresses an opinion about a statement. More exactly, as the Greek word 'episteme' denotes 'knowledge', the term refers to "matters of knowledge, belief or opinion rather than fact" (Lyons 1977: 793, quoted in Rizomilioti 2006: 54). Coates (1995: 55) and others define epistemic modality in linguistics as indicator for a speaker's confidence or lack of confidence in her/his own claims.

Hyland's research on the use of epistemic modality in academic discourse follows Holmes's (1982, 1986, 1990) definition, so that his focus is on *hedging* and *boosting*, as well as on its impact on and importance for academic writing. His main objective for the 1998 paper (Hyland 1998b) was to extend on findings from previous and, not least, his own research

(Hyland 1998a) demonstrating the "pragmatic importance of hedging as a resource for expressing uncertainty, scepticism and deference in academic contexts" (Hyland 1998b: 349). Additionally, Hyland's intention was to examine the realizations and functions of hedging in particular academic disciplines as well as the "role of firm assertion, [i.e. a type of boosting representing] a potentially face-threatening[5] strategy [seemingly contradicting] the need to maintain a harmonious relationship with the reader" (Hyland 1998b: 349).

The methodology applied for the respective study (Hyland 1998b) was the combination of a quantitative and a qualitative approach. For the analysis, he compiled a text corpus consisting of 56 research articles from eight disciplines with 7 research papers each that were published in the seven top journals of the corresponding field. Thus, "a broad cross-section of academic activity" (Hyland 1998b: 354) was represented in the corpus. Furthermore, Hyland conducted interviews with researchers from the respective discourse communities. These oral accounts were used to "provide further evidence for the social nature of discourse and the relations that underlie the construction and interpretation of texts" (Hyland 1998b: 353). For the corpus analysis, a word list of 180 lexical items was created according to definitions given in previous studies, dictionaries, and grammars, completed by the most recurrent items used in the articles. The corpus was then searched for these devices of hedging and boost with the help of the Wordsmith Tools analysis software. Finally, two independent researchers verified the resulting hits.

The outcome showed on average 120 instances of epistemic modality per research paper, where hedging surpassed boosting with approximately 3 to 1. Hyland concluded that this was mirroring "the critical importance of both distinguishing fact from opinion in academic discourse and the need for claims to be presented provisionally rather than assertively" (1998b: 355).

Moreover, substantial disciplinary differences between the hard and the soft sciences could be detected. One exception was the biology domain, which took up some kind of middle ground as regards distribution patterns for use of epistemic hedging/boosting devices. The rate of boosters in science and engineering research articles was very low in comparison to social science and humanities papers (philosophy articles > ¼ of total of boosters, electrical engineering papers < 7 %). Similarly, there was a high instantiation of hedges in the social

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[5] The terms *face* and *threatening face* are even used by Partington (2003: 124-126) in relation to spoken political discourse. He introduces *face* as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Partington 2003: 124). The theory of *threatening face* maintains that "[a]ny act which could be construed as demonstrating a lack of care for the hearer's desires and goals is a potential threat to the latter's […] face, for example, criticism and disapproval […], or simply the failure to show […] agreement with their views" (Partington 2003: 125).

science and humanities articles (> 70 % of total of hedges, highest frequency rate in philoso-phy). Contrary to that, hedging was much less frequent in physics and engineering. Hyland found that *may*, *would*, and *possible* were mostly used as hedges, as opposed to *will*, *show* and *the fact that*, which were the most frequent boosters in his corpus. Furthermore, certain epis-temic verbs (*suggest*, *indicate*, *assume*, *seem*) often served to hedge statements.

Hyland attributed the differing outcomes in the use of hedges and boosters for the indi-vidual research domains to the fact that "research articles are manifestations of the different epistemological and social assumptions of disciplinary communities" (1998b: 359). All in all, hedges and boosters are consequently understood as "a response to the potential negatability of claims and an indication of the writer's acknowledgement of disciplinary norms of appro-priate argument" (1998b: 353).

Regarding the functions and intended purposes of epistemic modality usage in the pa-pers under examination, his interpretation also included the background of "knowledge con-texts and knowledge claims" (Hyland 1998b: 360), followed by "authorial involvement in knowledge construction" (Hyland 1998b: 363) raising the 4 issues "writer presence, […] sub-jectivity, […] interpersonal engagement, and […] writer commitment" (Hyland 1998b: 364).

Rizomilioti (2006) chose a methodological approach similar to Hyland's – described above – for his study of three tailor-made, small-scale corpuses in biology, literary criticism, and archaeology. His findings roughly tallied with the Hyland study (1998b) with some devia-tions owing to discipline-specific features. Furthermore, he could conclude that a generaliza-tion of the frequency distribution patterns is not always feasible, because "each discipline reflects different conventions serving different purposes and different ideologies" (Rizomilioti 2006: 66).

The above studies did not account for the fact that the rhetorical device of expressing doubt and certainty in English can also be influenced by sex differences and gender identity in language. This connection will be examined in the succeeding section.

3.2 Epistemic modality from a gender studies perspective

The interrelation of language and gender has been of significant interest to linguists over the past decades. In 1922, Jespersen published the earliest discussion of women's language. In this work, book III, chapter XIII, he devotes one chapter entitled "The Woman" to describing previous research observations on how men and women purportedly use different language in terms of pronunciation, voice pitch, syntax, and vocabulary. He portrays females as being deficient in power and intelligence. Jespersen presents a detailed description of how women

regularly invent words and paraphrases with an innocent and euphemistic denotation to eschew rude language, and contrasts this with male linguistic behaviour emphasizing their tendency to favour a rougher language among themselves (Jespersen 1922: 237ff.). The phenomenon referred to can very well be interpreted as a form of hedging on the female side versus a type of boosting on the male side, and thus falls into the linguistic category of epistemic modality.

The early pioneers of feminist linguistic gender research made the following assumptions: i. Women talk differently from men, ii. The existence and usage of a specific 'women's language' including the characteristics of gendered speech styles are a decisive drawback for females leading to communicative disadvantages for them (Lakoff 2004, 1990, 1975, 1973; Speer, 2005; Tannen 1990). According to the American linguist Robin T. Lakoff's (1990: 204) non-empirical, introspective observations, some of the features typical of women's speech are the following.

> Women use forms that convey impreciseness: *so*, *such*. […] Women use hedges of all kinds more than men. […] Women use intonation patterns that resemble questions, indicating uncertainty or need for approval.

Examples for hedging are given as instances of *well*, *y'know*, and *kinda* (Lakoff 2004, the original text [1975]: 79), i.e. "words that convey the sense that the speaker is uncertain about what he (or she) is saying, or cannot vouch for the accuracy of the statement" (Lakoff 2004, the original text [1975]: 79). These devices are described to be more frequently used in women's speech. Lakoff (2004, the original text [1975]: 79) states that even in cases when the female speaker is "perfectly certain of the truth of [an] assertion, and there's no danger of offense, […] the tag appears anyway as an apology for making an assertion at all". She interprets this linguistic behaviour as being grounded in female socialization that makes women "believe that asserting themselves strongly isn't nice or ladylike, or even feminine" (Lakoff 2004, the original text [1975]: 79). Further examples for typical and regular female use of epistemic verbs put forward by Lakoff are hedging on the speech act of saying, viz. *I guess*, *I think*, and asking, viz. *I wonder*. The consequence of excessive usage of these devices is that "the impression [is given] that the speaker lacks authority or doesn't know what he's talking about […] [arising] out of a fear of seeming too masculine by being assertive and saying things directly" (Lakoff 2004, the original text [1975]: 79). Similarly, Lakoff maintains that the amplifying adverb of degree *so* is prominent in women's language to a higher degree than in men's speech. Her argument regarding motivation and purpose to choose this epistemic hedging device is to weasel on the intensity of one's own strong feelings, so that this hedge is

used to avoid showing strong emotions or making strong assertions (Lakoff 2004, the original text [1975]: 79-80).

However, Murphy's findings from her sociolinguistic, age- and gender-related analysis of a corpus of casual Irish-English conversations with male and female speakers in their 20s, 40s, and 70s/80s comprising approximately 90,000 words with six 15,000-word sub-corpora for the different life-stages of the female and male speakers are opposed to Lakoff's observations. The results for vague category markers (VCMs) – a type of hedging device – provide "a good indication of the frequency of vague forms in male language" (Murphy 2010: 106). As an interpretation, Murphy suggests, that "the importance of relationship, shared knowledge and shared social space" (2010: 107) is more important than gender roles regarding the use of these devices of vagueness and "time-saving brevity" (2010: 106). Also, the examination showed that the socially closest female group in their 70s/80s uses VCMs most often, which corresponds to the male group in their 20s, who also share a high amount of closeness "hav[ing] known each other for more than 10 years" (Murphy 2010: 107). Their usage frequency of VCMs is second highest of all age- and gender-differentiated groups and highest among the 3 male age groups.

Janet Holmes is one of the corpus linguists whose research extends on Lakoff's work on hedging in women's language. Concerning the pragmatic particle *you know*, she has developed a comprehensive classification framework that makes it possible to examine the function of this lexical device in male and female speech (Holmes 1986, 1990). She proposes a main division between hedged *you know* and boosted *you know*. The first instance expresses addressee-oriented uncertainty concerning the addressee's attitudes or likely response in the interaction and message-oriented uncertainty regarding the linguistic encoding of the message (Holmes 1990). The latter, i.e. boosted *you know*, conveys the speaker's confidence or certainty concerning the addressee's relevant background knowledge and experience, attitudes and anticipated response or serves an emphatic function to reassure the addressee of the validity of the proposal, claim, or suggestion (Holmes 1990).

In her study of a corpus of spontaneous speech (Holmes 1986), she found no deviation in the total frequency of instantiations of *you know* between women's and men's usage in both formal and informal contexts. Moreover, an analysis of the functional aspects of the hedging device with *speaker certain* and *uncertain* pointed to the conclusion that for the *speaker uncertain appealing* type function with "instances of *you know* which convey the speaker's lack of confidence and need for reassurance in the social situation" (Holmes 1986: 13), there was no difference between male and female usage. Another important finding was

that men's use of *you know* increased for both functions of expressing certainty and uncertainty in relaxed same-sex conversation with other men.

All in all, the publication of Lakoff's groundbreaking and pioneering article (1973) and book (1975) *Language and Woman's Place* was the starting point for language and gender studies and feminist linguistic corpus research regarding the characteristics of women's language including epistemic modality. Unfortunately, this work is probably her "most sensationalized and misunderstood text" (M. Bucholtz in Lakoff 2004: 121), as, obviously, critics took for granted that the author's "ideas about women, language, and feminism stopped in 1975" (M. Bucholtz in Lakoff 2004: 121). Rather, Lakoff's incentive was to indicate "directions for further research in this area: in providing a basis for comparison, a taking-off point for further studies" (2004: 40). Under the influence of transformations, for instance in the structure and accepted behaviour rules of societies, gender interaction, or validity of conventions for the construction of gender identity, language evolves and is subject to constant change, a circumstance Lakoff was well aware of, which was commented on by Jespersen (1922: 134) as follows: "Lingering effects of this state of things are seen still, though great social changes are going on in our times which may eventually modify even the linguistic relations of the two sexes."

Yet, even if we have seen many modifications over the last decades, stereotyping and polarization patterns still apply with men's language being thought of as the "language of the powerful […] meant to be direct, clear, succinct, […] the language of people who are in charge of making observable changes in the real world" (Lakoff 1990: 205). This is to a certain extent even true for mediatized language. As an example, Lakoff points to the U.S. election campaign with the opponents Dukakis and George Bush, and remarks that "[m]ost extraordinary of all the Bush transformations was one of gender" (1990: 272). Owing to the fact that Bush was born into a social position of power and influence with no need to compete for it and having a "sufficiently uncombative personality" (Lakoff 1990: 273) – as per Lakoff's understanding – his speech style was that of a stereotypical woman with vague ellipsed ends of sentences and heavy use of speech act and lexical hedging. His campaign team and advisors worked hard to "make him into a man" (Lakoff 1990: 273), because, clearly, the U.S. electorate would not vote for a woman president. "By the election, all [the hedged feminine discourse features] had vanished. The new President may have opted for a kinder, gentler America, but a sharper, more confrontative George Bush." (Lakoff 1990: 273)

Although it can be said that the research tradition in the field of political rhetoric and discourse is an established one, rooted in the Ancient Greek system of political culture and oral tradition dating back to the 4th century BC and before, research on political communication including speeches "has become recognized as a distinct field of study only recently" (Stuckey 1996: vii). Given the "remarkable diversity of theories and approaches ranging from the purely quantitative to the strictly qualitative" (Stuckey 1996: vii) that is so characteristic for the "vast and heterogeneous territory of Political Linguistics" (Okulska & Cap 2010: back cover), it follows almost inherently that there is no considerable amount of research literature on epistemic modality in political speeches and interviews.

In his 2010 publication *Hedging in political discourse*, Bruce Fraser (2010: 201) states that although "there has been considerable research on vagueness, evasion, equivocation, and deception in the speech of politicians […], almost nothing [has been published] on hedging". The study uses a corpus of the 2007 Press Conferences comprising scripts of 30 press conferences held by G. W. Bush between Jan 1 and Dec 31, 2007. Fraser highlights the framework of the presidential press conferences as one vital aspect for the analysis. The setting is such that a relatively small number of journalists is usually allowed to ask one single question with no follow-up. On the one hand, this results in broad, open-ended questions that are mostly linked together. On the other hand, the President's response is likely to contain a greater number of hedging devices the more challenging, intrusive, intricate, and lengthy the reporters' questions are.

As regards categorization of the rhetorical strategy of hedging, Fraser gives an account of classifications from previous research, e.g. Salager-Meyer (1995), but emphasizes that in his view it is sufficient to distinguish between *content hedging*, where the speaker "signals a lack of […] full commitment […] to the full category membership of a term or expression in the utterance" (Fraser 2010: 201) and *force hedging*, denoting "the intended illocutionary force of the utterance" (Fraser 2010: 201), since there is "no basis for any finer distinction, either descriptive or theoretical" (Fraser 2010: 203). Furthermore, he argues that hedging in discourse can be reduced to two characteristic purposes. The first is to "to mitigate an undesirable effect on the hearer, thereby rendering the message (more) polite" (Fraser 2010: 206), the second, which was of main relevance for the corpus analysis, is to "avoid providing the information which is expected or required in the speaker's contribution, thereby creating vagueness and/or evasion" (Fraser 2010: 206).

In contradiction to the expected results of a high frequency in the use of hedging as a responsibility evading strategy, most importantly, it was found that a lot of hedge-type expressions were used in a non-hedging approach. Additionally, Fraser observed many hedging instantiations that had no effect on the discussion or were obviously lacking the President's intention to create vagueness or to avoid an outright answer to the question, termed *neutral hedging* in the article (2010: 207).

As far as hedging taxonomies and functions for the analysis of political discourse are concerned, it is important to mind Partington's suggestion that there are a number of other strategies used for evasion purposes besides what we might call 'traditional' hedging, among those "open refusal to answer […] with bald, on-record avoidance" (2003: 237), "claims of ignorance" (2003: 238), "referring the question" (2003: 240), "recurrent refusals to 'speculate'" (2003: 240), as well as claiming that a particular question has already been answered or that the answer is well-known (2003: 246). To prove his point, Partington gives a comprehensive, qualitative account including discourse examples from his 250,000-word corpus of 48 press briefings of the White House, mainly dating back to the period between 1996 and June 1999.

To conclude, another analysis of 4 political CNN and BBC interviews conducted by Jalilifar and Alavi (2011) with a methodological approach similar to that of Fraser's, given above, disclosed positive and negative politeness strategies realized through the use of hedges in the interviews. The main finding of the study was an inverse relationship between the frequency of hedging devices and the degree of political power of the interviewed politician.

4. Material and methods

The strategy for material collection and methodology design needed to be in line with the aims of the research study. Moreover, my objective was to lay a solid foundation for the quantitative and qualitative investigation of power- and gender-related epistemic modality usage patterns in political interview discourse.

4.1 Material

In order to avoid the common methodological pitfall to be confronted with too many and thus uncontrollable variables, the first choice to be made was that of excluding variation due to geographical factors. A number of publications has been written on modern political British and American English. However, my approach was to focus on Canada and its interesting and

vivid media and political scene for my data collection and corpus preparation. To maintain comparability of language features, another key filter condition for the selection of interviews was that only native Canadian speakers were approved[6]. An indispensible prerequisite for both the transcription process and the envisioned qualitative "function and form" analysis on top of a quantitative data analysis was to get acquainted with the Canadian parliamentarian system, the party-political spectrum on the provincial and federal levels, as well as topical political and social issues.

Altogether, six political interviews from televised broadcasts within a Canadian setting were chosen. Five of these were only available as video streams on the Internet, which made it necessary to produce transcripts of the interviews. One interview with Canada's current Prime Minister Stephen Harper conducted in London, UK, by CBC Chief Correspondent Peter Mansbridge was available on the cbc.ca website as a transcript. Due to the fact that this transcript held high quality and also proved to have reproduced the natural flow of speech in great detail replicating both repetitions and replannings in an appropriate way, I judged it to be sufficiently equivalent and comparable with my own transcripts. Occasionally, I corrected what seemed to be obvious typing errors or missing words and also added punctuation where applicable in the course of the dataset preparation process prior to the automated quantitative analysis. Furthermore, and most importantly, the interviewee was one of the high-rank politicians whose answers I wanted to be part of my corpus.

The selection of the dyadic conversations between Canadian journalists and politicians was made with great care in order to meet the essential criteria of gender, degree of power and topicality of issues discussed. The time frame was deliberately restricted to a relatively narrow period, i.e. between 5/2012 and 4/2014, viz. not too distant from the present time to be able to take into account current rhetorical and language usage trends of Canadian media-political English. 3 interviewees are female politicians, the remainder male.

As most of the hosts of Canadian political TV shows are male journalists, I had to abandon my original intention to even embrace an analytical, statistically representative focus on differences and similarities regarding the frequency of hedges and boosters in mixed-sex versus same-sex interview situations for an all-inclusive corpus analysis.

The choice of the specific type of political TV interviews guaranteed a greater level of impulsiveness, not least, because the interviewer's discursive moves like turn-taking or unexpected formulation of questions challenge the interviewed politician to respond in a more nat-

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[6] The only exception to this filter condition was one interview with the American-born politician Elizabeth May who became a Canadian citizen in 1978.

ural and intuitive way. Moreover, a possible "culture of disguise" might even be more diffi-cult to adhere to in a TV broadcast capturing facial expressions as well as body language in the minutest details.

Recapitulations and brief repetitions (e.g. "It's **it's** a self-fulfilling prophecy.", "than to say our **our** failure to comprehend") as well as replannings (e.g. "What is that, what should that tell us?", "It tends, it's a funny thing about politics […]."") were not omitted, so that the transcript would capture every aspect of tentativeness, instants of hesitation, moments of un-certainty, vagueness, equivocation, and ambiguity. Appendix one (p. 31) gives further particu-lars of the transcription conventions that were applied.

The corpus, henceforth called the Canadian Political Interview Corpus (CaPIC) com-prises a total length of 18,872 words including metadata on the interview setting, interviewer and interviewee, as well as footnotes with further clarifications of terminology and issues used or mentioned in the conversations.

In order to meet the requirements of the analytical process, the first phase of dataset preparation involved creating MS Word documents (cf. Appendix two, p. 35, for an example transcript). The second phase involved creating separate plain-text files for sets of interviewer questions and interviewee answers in preparation for the analysis with the AntConc linguistic analysis tool[7]. These files add up to a total of 12 with word counts as given in the below table.

Table 1: Word count statistics for each individual interlocutor

Interview count	Interlocutors (inter-viewee – interviewer)	Interviewee's total number of words	Interviewer's total number of words
1	Fast – Graham	949	526
2	Dunderdale – Cochrane	2178	1103
3	Trudeau – Fife	1057	508
4	Harper – Mansbridge	2356	681
5	Finley – Solomon	1437	1376
6	May – Mansbridge	3024	905

Finally, it needs to be emphasized that every transcription process is inevitably some sort of idealization of the spoken dialogue as long as no phonetic details are used. Creating a written representation of real spoken data also needs to tackle the issue of deciding how to

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[7] The AntConc linguistic analysis tool is a program for doing corpus linguistics and was created by Lawrence Anthony; see http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/antconc_index.html for more information.

accurately capture contextual data and metadata. In most cases, it is neither possible nor useful from the language researcher's point of view to include every aspect. Instead, a combination of common sense, time constraints, perceived value and practicality, feasibility of automated text processing, and not least readability for humans has to be considered.

4.2 Methods

The methodological approach for the current comparative, quantitative and qualitative study of Canadian politicians' use of epistemic modality in TV/video interviews takes into account the specifics of varying interview lengths and is based on the following statistical model adopted from Renner (Holmes 1986: 18). According to the Poisson[8] process in probability theory, the number of events occurring in a given time interval can be counted in a stochastic, continuous-time process. For the analysis of epistemic modality in male and female speech, this implies that a fixed number of words in each interview answer and question part respectively will, on average, provide n occurrences of the linguistic variables under study (i.e. lexical items, phrases or syntactic structures) that fall into the categories of either boosters or hedges. In other words, the probability of these items occurring can be computed in proportion to the interlocutors' total number of words (cf. Table 1). For this study, the below formula will be used to calculate the proportional frequency, i.e. incidence, of specific lexical items of type hedge/boost per 100 words for each interview question and answer section respectively:

$$\frac{number\ of\ lexical\ items\ of\ type\ hedge\ (boost)}{total\ number\ of\ words\ in\ interview} = \frac{proportional\ frequency\ freq_{p100}}{100\ words\ in\ interview}$$

Sample frequency 1 for interviewed male politician from interview 1 (computation for hedge marker *you know*):

$$freq1m_{p100} = \frac{3\ (hedges\ you\ know)\ *100}{949\ (answer\ text\ ED\ FAST)} = \frac{300}{949} \approx 0.32\ (of\ maximum\ value\ 100)$$

Sample frequency 2 for interviewed female politician from interview 2 (computation for hedge marker *you know*):

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[8] The process is named after the French mathematician Siméon Denis Poisson.

$$freq2f_{p100} = \frac{36\ (hedges\ you\ know)\ *100}{2178\ (answer\ text\ KATHY\ DUNDERDALE)} = \frac{3600}{2178}$$

$$\approx\ 1.65\ (of\ maximum\ value\ 100)$$

The formula ensures maximum comparability of the required statistical information for the linguistic variables and assures compliance with the unabridged interview texts. This is vital in view of the fact that any shortening of the original interviews would very likely result in a distortion of the proportional distribution of the instantiations of hedging and boosting devices. Furthermore, in order to successfully classify the lexical items under examination the complete set of context needs to be preserved to be able to distinguish the different functions of epistemic modality.

The comparatively small corpus size of the CaPIC under study facilitated using a computer-based methodology where especially the AntConc tool functionalities of assembling word-frequency lists and concordancing[9] were used as a means for carrying out a detailed, electronic quantitative analysis as well as a qualitative, context-based analysis of reasons for choosing the respective hedging or boosting devices in the interview situation. Finding and interpreting concordance lines with so-called 'word-based'[10] methods are useful for observing the *typical*[11] and the *central*[12] in the datasets, as well as for discovering e.g. distinctive meanings of near synonyms, but also for interpreting meaning through pattern and phraseology analysis. Hypotheses can be tested by first looking at a small selection of lines in the concordancer tool instead of having to investigate a large number of lines from the beginning. Thus, the linguistic analysis software provided for a partly automated, reliable classification of epistemic modality with its subclasses of hedges and boosters. However, to observe hidden, subtle or understated meaning and also to be able to determine the functions of uncertainty and certainty especially in the case of utterances where a specific phrase or lexical item can either be a neutral intercalation, a hedge, or a booster, a wider context needed to be searched and examined, stretching well beyond the items given in the concordance lines. This strategy was applied according to Rizomilioti's approach for exploring epistemic modality in academic discourse using corpora (2006: 57). Moreover, it was important to take into account that

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[9] Concordance lines can be generated either from a frequency list or by direct search input of words.

[10] If 'word-based' methods are used, words or lexical items – like e.g. the taxonomy terms listed in section 4.3 below – serve as input data for the concordancer tool.

[11] Observing the *typical* in the datasets means that the most frequent meanings of words and phrases are described.

[12] Observing the *central* in the datasets means that the description focuses on usage of categories of linguistic items (e.g. types of clauses, use of tenses, attributive vs. predicative use of adjectives) rather than the meaning of distinctive words.

concordance lines themselves only present information, the actual interpretation must be accomplished by the human observer with the help of intuition, common sense, and insight.

With regard to the analytical classification procedure, this research project uses a specific, genre-adjusted taxonomy framework developed considering the subsequent circumstances. Linguistic researchers have proposed varying, partly incongruous classifications of hedges and boosters including definitions of sub-categories of these devices expressing epistemic modality. Over time, different scholars have even used the same terminology but for distinctive clusters of hedging and boosting devices. This makes it difficult to follow a 'fixed' taxonomy, because there is no such single, clear-cut functional, grammatical and/or genre-specific[13] categorization framework unanimously applied within the field of linguistics including particular subdomains such as corpus linguistics, political linguistics and others.[14] Moreover, as an added strain, the same lexical item or combination of items might function, and thus be classified, either as a boost or a hedge within the scope of two different written or spoken discourse contexts.

Given the specifics of the corpus under study, a strategy similar to the procedure of methodology design applied for the analysis of hedging devices in political discourse by Fraser (2010: 201ff.) and Jalilifar and Alavi (2011: 49ff.) was adopted, used for the creation of a taxonomy of hedging devices, and was analogously extended for the development of a taxonomy of boosting devices. Besides, Murphy's methodology for the analysis of amplifiers and boosters (2010: 111ff., 135ff.) was examined and partly adopted as a role model.

This resulted finally in the following analytical procedure: a bottom-up pre-analysis of the CaPIC based on the classifications and taxonomies applied in previous research work, a frequency count analysis of lexical items including some rhetorical devices of 'political epistemic modality' with the potential to function as boosters or hedges in the given interview context using AntConc concordance lines, a frequency count of 'manually' verified genuine hedges and boosters in accordance with the taxonomy framework and types presented below (cf. section 4.3) using a context-related strategy, followed by a qualitative analysis with the help of independent variable values.

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[13] A genre-specific categorization framework differentiates between spoken versus written discourse as well as content type of discourse (e.g. academic, political, media-related).
[14] To find more detailed information cf. Clemen's account and discussion of hedge classification (1997: 235, 242) concerning this point.

As we have seen in previous sections, hedging is inherently about authors or speakers being cautious about their claims or even expressing a certain degree of doubt. In contrast to that, boosters emphasize a speaker's or author's confidence in the certainty of what is being expressed. For this study and for reasons given above (cf. section 4.2), I propose the following analysis framework for the present CaPIC.

My interpretation of hedge markers correlates with lexical items that can be described as downtoners, mitigating devices, attenuation, purposive expressions of vagueness, innuendos, expressions of positive and negative politeness, and rhetorical tactics of face-saving with the potential to contain specific *illocutionary*[15] and *perlocutionary*[16] patterns. The table in Appendix three (p. 43) lists the different types of hedges designed according to a pre-analysis of CaPIC, which I found to be suitable for carrying out the final corpus analysis. Word lists and examples from CaPIC were included where applicable.

It is, of course, possible to identify further, additional items that function as hedging devices in the corpus of political interviews. Some examples are: Neutral hedging, which has no effect on the subject matter being discussed (Fraser 2010: 207) and can be interpreted as empty rhetoric (CaPIC: Well, I think, it says a lot of things, Peter.). Detached *they* and expressions related to detached *they* (e.g. *them*, *[the] people*) can function as hedging devices in political discourse with the rhetorical purpose to express and apply evasion strategies (CaPIC: Our responsibility as a government is to provide effective, efficient programs and services for the people in the province.). Moreover, the analysis might also include use of agentless passive voice with "by + agent" left out (CaPIC: People have planned their retirement on promises that they were given.), which is a common rhetorical device in the political domain used for mitigation, vagueness and/or evasion discourse strategies. Conditional clauses and especially hypothetical *if*-statements are another characteristic hedging and "resort" device of political rhetoric (CaPIC: If that did occur, if our predictions weren't correct [...]). Finally, other markers of imprecision and approximators of degree, quantity, and/or frequency that function as hedges depending on the communicative context might be studied. Yet, given the time and scope limitations of this C-essay project, these types of hedges could not be included in the classification framework applied for the analysis.

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[15] The term *illocutionary* is related to the act of speaking or writing.
[16] The term *perlocutionary* is related to the non-verbal effect that an act of speaking or writing has on the discourse addressee.

As regards epistemic markers of boost, my interpretation correlates with rhetorical and lexical devices that can be described as indicators of certainty or more generally, as boosting exponents used to support a claim or to express a viewpoint more assertively and convincingly. Furthermore, utterances expressing directness, confident assertions, content-oriented boosters emphasizing the content, hearer-oriented boosters showing that the devices take into account their listeners, items strengthening the illocutionary and perlocutionary force, amplifiers, intensifiers, strengtheners, up-graders, and degree words were included for examination. The table in Appendix four (p. 45) lists the different types of boosters selected according to a pre-analysis of CaPIC, which I found to be suitable for carrying out the final corpus analysis. Word lists and example sentences from CaPIC were included where applicable.

There are a number of additional items functioning as boosting devices that could be worth analysing, like e.g. rhetorical questions, strong euphemisms, neutral boosters, modal expressions and tense-aspect, as well as specific context-related markers of precision, certainty, and conviction. However, within the limited scope and time frame of this C-essay project these cannot be taken into consideration.

5. Results and discussion

In this section, the results from the study will be presented and discussed based on the hypotheses and research questions from section 2, Aims and hypotheses. All relevant aspects from previous sections will be taken into account.

5.1 Hedging devices

5.1.1 Results of the quantitative analysis

The results of the analysis of the different hedging devices used by the interviewed politicians in their answers to the journalists' interview questions show that the hypothesis that female politicians use more hedges than their male counterparts (H1) could not be verified. The following graph illustrates the gender distribution for the different hedging categories according to the taxonomy described in section 4.3 above.
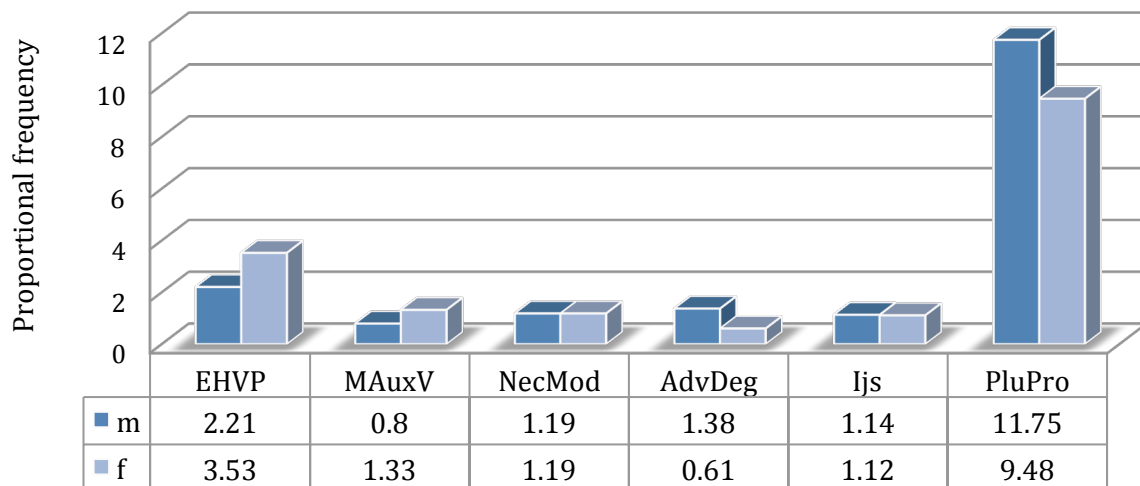
	EHVP	MAuxV	NecMod	AdvDeg	Ijs	PluPro
■ m	2.21	0.8	1.19	1.38	1.14	11.75
■ f	3.53	1.33	1.19	0.61	1.12	9.48

Figure 1: Occurrences of different hedging types in politicians' interview answer texts

Most strikingly, the PluPro category comprising plural pronouns including their posses-sive and reflexive forms strongly deviates. This is true both as regards the proportional fre-quency which is much higher than the frequency numbers of all the other hedging categories, as well as when looking at the fact that male usage is clearly ahead of female use. Even ad-verbs of degree with a downtoning effect are more frequent in the male politicians' answers. While hedging-type interjections and necessity modals are used roughly to the same extent by both sexes, gender distribution is inverse only for the 2 hedging types modal auxiliary verbs and epistemic, hedging verbs and phrases. The total frequency numbers illustrated in the be-low graph help to clarify the distribution patterns.
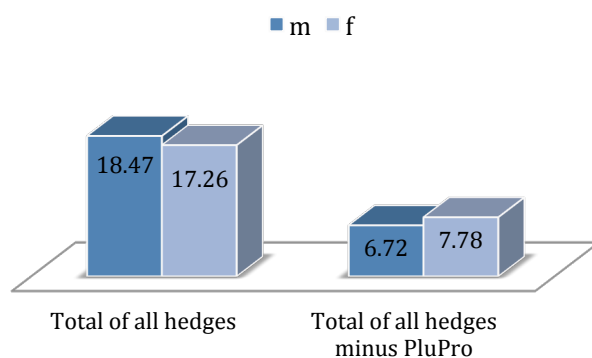

Figure 2: Proportional frequency of gender distribution for hedging in interview answers

All in all, the male politicians' usage of hedging is slightly higher in proportional fre-quency. However, if we ignore the breakout PluPro type, the female usage appears to be high-er with 1.06 frequency points. Figure 3 below illustrates the respective values as percentages.
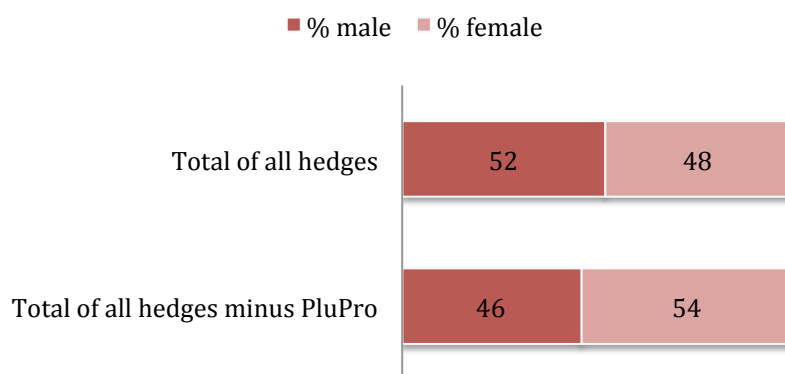
Total of all hedges	52 / 48
Total of all hedges minus PluPro	46 / 54

Figure 3: Gendered percentage distribution for hedges

For most hedging types under examination, the usage patterns did not differ significantly between the two sexes. Often, the analysis showed very low – or zero – usage frequency, especially of lexical items that we might call conventional hedging devices. The following table shows an example with individual word counts for items belonging to the EHVP hedge type. These counts needed to be collected with the AntConc software prior to calculating the proportional frequencies.

Table 2: Samples for individual word counts of lexical items from EHVP

	I believe	we believe	you know	think	I don't think
m: **Fast**	0	[3] 0	3	0	1
m: **Trudeau**	2	0	0	[4] 3	1
m: **Harper**	0	1	3	[21] *15* [17]	3
f: **Dunderdale**	0	2	*36* [18]	[2] 0	0
f: **Finley**	0	0	1	0	0
f: **May**	[3] 2 [19]	0	9	[14] *11* [20]	3

At the same time – and contrary to the above observation, a couple of hedging peaks (bold and italicized) are discernible for some lexical items used by certain individuals, where the female proportional frequency counts outweigh the male frequency counts.

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[17] Frequency count: 0.64
[18] Frequency count: 1.65. Often used in combination with backchannel *uh*, cf. Appendix two.
[19] [COUNT] denotes all instances including those that do not function as hedges but have the potential to function as hedges, i.e. are the total of concordance hits. The genuine number of hedges is given after the square brackets.
[20] Frequency count: 0.36

5.1.2 Results of the qualitative analysis

For the qualitative analysis, a number of extra-linguistic, independent variables related to the interviewed politicians need to be taken into account. These are presented in Appendix five (p. 47). If we correlate these variables to peaks (high vs. very low or zero) usage in hedging, the following conclusions can be drawn. There is some evidence in the frequency counts that an unsecure, weakened degree of political power results in a higher frequency in the usage of hedging devices, which partly confirms H4. The female politician K. Dunderdale's counts are highest among all interviewees for the EHVP (1.97) and MAuxV (0.96) categories and second highest for NecMod (0.69). At the time of the interview, she had been firmly criticised and heavily attacked for a number of political decisions and projects for some time. Furthermore, the interviewer Cochrane is already alluding to a possible resignation in the near future that became a fact shortly after the 2013 year-end interview in January 2014:

(1)   There is there's people though, ye you know, I talked to people in your party, as you know, and and there's a lot of people who support you. They still think <u>you're gonna go pretty soon</u>. That you'll either <u>announce your retirement</u>, <u>or announce your resignation</u>, maybe even before the budget, or <u>plans to to step down</u>?

The reverse situation for H4, i.e. that the lowest hedging usage would indicate a top power position, could not be verified from the CaPIC data. The lowest hedging numbers showed a relatively broad stratification between the different politicians. Prime Minister Fast, for example, only figured in the NecMod lowest peak (zero frequency), whereas Premier Dunderdale reached a lowest peak of 0.14 for the AdvDeg type. The remaining categories were divided up between Finley, Trudeau, and May. This may be an indication rather for personal linguistic choices and preferences in the use of different rhetorical hedging devices than a reliable explanation for the outright rejection of part 2 of H4. Instead, a larger data collection is called for in order to be able to reach clearer investigation results regarding this hypothesis.

5.1.3 Discussion

The quantitative finding that there is no clear-cut predominance of female hedging seems to indicate that the prevailing linguistic trends in the political discourse domain differ not only from other linguistic fields but also from Lakoff's non-empirical observations (1973, 1975). Evidence of a specific women's language that might be interpreted as being "illogical" (Lakoff 1990: 203) implying that female politicians "speak worse than men" (Lakoff 1990:

203) could not be found. The question of powerlessness purportedly triggered by characteristics of gender differences in language has in effect a much stronger relation to the party political situation and existing power status of the respective politician than to gender. Indicators of uncertainty or need for approval are most frequently found in the interview answers of both male and female politicians who are either heavily attacked or in substantial need to defend their current position, state of office, and/or present decision processes for policies and legislation. Examples for this are K. Dunderdale with highest frequency counts for the EHVP (1.97) and MAuxV (0.96) categories; S. Harper with highest frequency counts for the NecMod (0.81) and AdvDeg (0.59) types; and finally E. Fast with highest frequency count for the PluPro (6.74) type. In Appendix five, p. 47, further metadata details on the politicians are given.

The PluPro category for plural pronouns including possessive and reflexive forms is a hedging type that is used very frequently in the CaPIC. It is specific in that the obvious rhetorical purpose of using this device in political discourse is to evade personal responsibility, e.g. when making statements or announcing decisions and future programs. Instead, the interviewee transfers liability to an inclusive and/or exclusive, fairly 'fuzzy' *we*, which refers, for instance, to *the government*, *the political party/parties*, *the people of the province*, *Canadians*.

Apparently, idiosyncratic features can at times also be a reason for certain peaks in the usage of specific hedging categories, e.g. D. Finley with the highest frequency count for the Ijs (0.77) type. However, more data samples for the individual interlocutors would need to be collected and analysed for an appropriate and reliable verification.

Concerning the qualitative part, I would like to refer to what is discussed in the above section. In addition to that, I wish to emphasize that hedging patterns in political discourse heavily depend on *face* and *politeness* strategies (Partington 2003: 124ff.), and not least on the changing and fluid political dynamics that every politician is subject to. Finally, it is evident that possible reasons for choosing a certain hedging device are mainly rhetorical tactics of purposeful evasion or an effort to avoid having to give an outright answer to a question put forward by the interviewer.

5.2 Boosters

5.2.1 Results of the quantitative analysis

The results of the analysis of the different boosting devices used by the interviewed politicians in their answers to the journalists' interview questions show a somewhat stratified gender distribution for usage of the discrete boosting categories. The following graph illustrates

the gender distribution for the different categories of boost according to the taxonomy described in section 4.3 above.
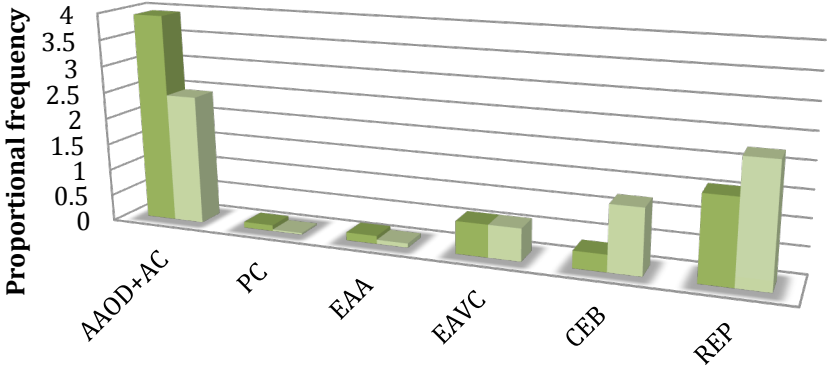
	AAOD+AC	PC	EAA	EAVC	CEB	REP
▪ m	3.94	0.11	0.15	0.61	0.32	1.57
▪ f	2.44	0.03	0.08	0.61	1.22	2.25

Figure 4: Occurrences of different boosting types in politicians' interview answer texts

As regards what we might call typical, conventional boosting, males lead in the categories AAOD+AC – viz. amplifying adverbs of degree and adverbial constructions – which is the one type that is used for boosted utterances most often, PC – i.e. prepositional constructions, and EAA – viz. epistemic, assertive adjectives. This is completely in line with the hypothesis that male politicians tend to use more boosters than their female counterparts (H2). The EAVC type for epistemic, assertive verbs and clauses shows an identical frequency count for both sexes. The CEB – i.e. context-related expressions of boost – and REP – viz. repetitions of utterings – types, however, show a significantly higher female usage. The total frequency numbers illustrated in the below graph help to clarify the distribution patterns.
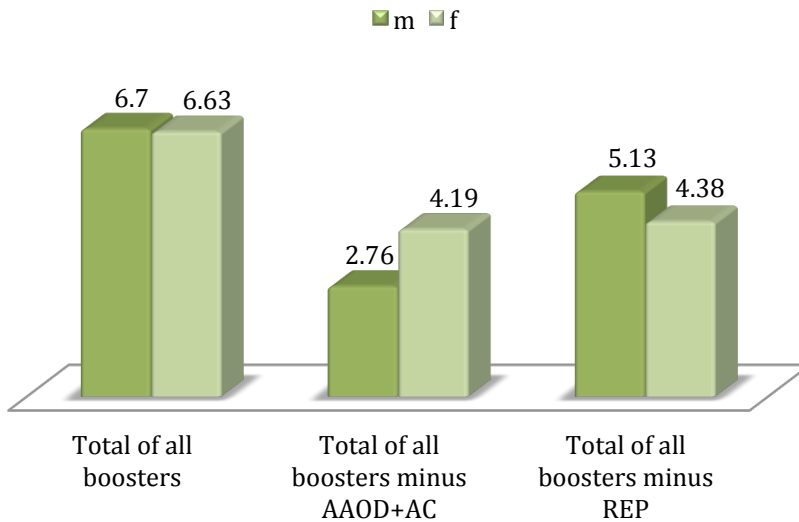
Figure 5: Proportional frequency of gender distribution for boosting in interview answers

All in all, the male politicians' usage of boosting is slightly higher in proportional frequency. This distribution pattern is even more obvious if we ignore the REP breakout type. However, if the breakout type AAOD+AC is disregarded, female usage appears to be higher with 1.43 frequency points. Figure 6 below illustrates the respective values as percentages. It is important to observe that the total of gendered distribution now appears to be equal due to the fact that male usage is only very marginally ahead of female use of boosters.

Figure 6: Gendered percentage distribution for boosters

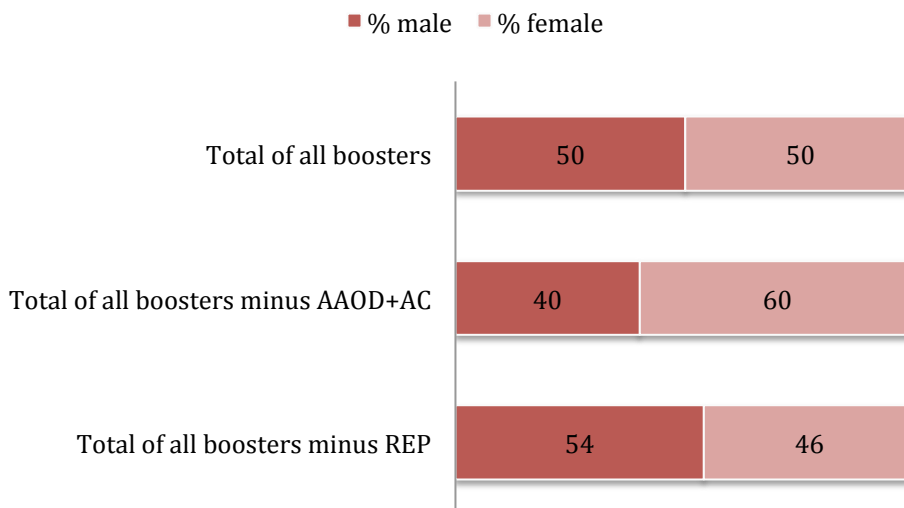What was found to be valid for most hedging types under examination, viz. that the usage patterns were often not strongly differing between the two sexes, at times showing very low – or zero – usage frequency, could also be noticed for the use of boosting devices.

5.2.2 Results of the qualitative analysis

As regards H3, the hypothesis assuming that younger, aspiring male politicians use boosters most frequently, we need to turn our attention to the youngest male politician in CaPIC, the Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau aged 42 who is challenging the sitting Prime Minister in the upcoming Canadian federal election in Oct 2015. Being the son of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau he is supposedly the most aspiring person of both the female and the male gender group. Yet, his use of the different boosting types mostly differs from the hypothesis. Only for the AAOD+AC type is his frequency count highest amongst both gender groups (1.61) and reflects his ambitious aims as well as how he is seeking solidarity with potential voters.

(2)   Uh, <u>obviously</u>, over over the coming year and a half, there will be a lot more discussions on on building the actual, uh, platform, but this weekend is about pulling together the team and building the plan, uh, to bring us towards, uh, twenty-fifteen, and I am <u>very, very</u> proud of how it's gone.

The fact that his use of backchannel *uh* is relatively frequent throughout his interview answers might on the other hand give some indication that a certain amount of anxiety is inherent in his answers, which somewhat levels down the effects of his boosting strategies. Yet, it is even possible to search for an explanation for Trudeau's lack of a high frequency in boosting in the fact that current polls indicate a lead for his federal Liberals meaning that they would be near a majority government if an election were held these days. In that case, the incentive to boost might be lower than the H3 hypothesis infers. Nonetheless, the wording of some of his boosted repetitions – with the second-lowest frequency count of 0.47 – clearly illustrates Trudeau's ambitions for a potential future top office position as, undoubtedly, he tries to deny the incumbent government's ability to live up to those responsibilities that modern Canada is in dire need of.

(3)   I think, what we've seen is this government <u>has done such a a terrible job</u> of living up to any sort of environmental responsibilities […] Right now, this government <u>has done such a poor job</u> on that, uh, that there is a low degree of faith.

To sum up, we find that the above analysis shows that the CaPIC data material could not verify the H3 hypothesis. Contrary to that, the last hypothesis, H5, which is indicating that a powerful position as a politician does not necessarily lead to an increase in the frequency of boosters occurring in his/her spoken political interview discourse, can actually be verified with the help of the sitting Prime Minister Harper's frequency counts. Of all the above boosting types, only the EAVC category has the leading frequency count of 0.42, but is still equal to Finley's count. It seems that this Conservative Party politician can be more relaxed in his utterances, and thus does not need to boost to the same degree as his ministers or rival candidates with different party-political affiliations.

Last but not least, one linguistically interesting aspect regarding this top-power status politician concerns some specifics in his use of boosting repetitions. Even if his frequency count of 0.47 for the REP type is second lowest and equal to that of Trudeau, the qualitative aspect of the kind of content enforcement he achieves is worth looking at in more detail. Most of his repetitions provide evidence for a rhetorical strategy of purposive evasion that evolves around the use of boosters. The latter actually become hedged statements in the wider context, like shown in the examples below.

(4)   And so, if the thing gets big enough, it <u>will affect everybody</u>, it's <u>going to affect everyone</u> potentially through the financial sector and, certainly, if the European recession gets deep enough, <u>it will affect everybody</u>.

(5)   […] it is important to point out that here and in many parts of Europe the economy <u>is actually in recession</u>. It's <u>in recession now</u>.

Then, obviously, Prime Minister Harper's choice of the stylistic device of repetition has the vital pragmatic function to help him use boosting devices for hedging purposes in his discourse with the objective to get less vulnerable to inappropriate, unpleasant, challenging, or awkward questions put forward to him by journalists.

5.2.3 Discussion

The quantitative finding that H2 – the hypothesis asserting that male politicians tend to use more boosters than their female counterparts – could be verified, yet with the exception that certain category usage distributions, viz. for the CEB and REP types, contradict the hypothesis might have possible reasons in the individual power-political situation with negative status values -2 and -1 (cf. Appendix five, p. 47) for the two female politicians. Their frequencies are highest for the respective boosting categories with K. Dunderdale leading the frequency

count (1.15) for CEB and E. May (1.16) for REP. My interpretation is that they are trying to strengthen their position in the interview context while applying this method of rhetoric of persuasion, thus boosting their statements to a higher extent than the other interviewed politicians. Of course, another and/or simultaneously valid explanation could be found in idiosyncrasy. Yet, the question whether K. Dunderdale's extremely frequent usage of boosted *you know* (frequency count: 25, cf. Appendix two, p. 35) and May's recurrent usage of repetitions (frequency count: 35) need to be correlated to this phenomenon or are rather the result of rhetorical training or education – with May's background being that of a lawyer's and Dunderdale's less academic background – would need more data collection, sampling and analysis for reliable confirmation. Concerning the qualitative part, I would like to refer to what is discussed in the above section 5.2.2.

6. Conclusions and outlook

The aim of this study has been to investigate gender-related features of epistemic modality in power-related political discourse. Hopefully, I have managed to show that in the case of the corpus that was analysed, the classifications and distributions of hedges and boosters originating from different, previously researched discourse fields are often incongruent. Obviously, the choice of hedging and boosting devices is triggered to a very high extent by the topic discussed, but even more so by the political status, the party-political situation, and the degree of power of the interviewed politician. The influence of gender, gender roles, and gendered language features, on the other hand, appears to be ancillary to a significant degree. Moreover, it is vital to keep in mind that the characteristics of today's political discourse – which, I would like to argue, is moving towards a gender-neutralized language – are also defined and created by PR campaign teams, image consultants, and rhetoric trainers that are part of the political body surrounding top politicians.

Understandably, the present analysis is in many aspects limited and incomplete, however it might serve as an incentive and a good starting point for further linguistic and/or interdisciplinary research endeavours in diverse but interrelated fields such as Political Linguistics, Analysis of Political Discourse, Discursive Psychology, Psycholinguistics, and Conversation Analysis. Most importantly, the paper argues for a methodology that enables the researcher to see and approach research questions and hypotheses related to the usage of epistemic modality from different angles, thereby taking into account genre-related features, underlying psychological and rhetorical-tactical discourse layers, as well as the semantic domain and the

syntactic structures of the data samples. Also, as the existing research studies on the use of epistemic modality in political discourse and even more so political interviews, are tremendously few, further linguistic research is needed to fill this obvious gap. Not least, the design of specific, genre-adapted classification frameworks and taxonomies for the analysis of epistemic modality in discourse might be another, fruitful future source of investigation.

Finally, I would like to conclude with several thoughts on the potential payback of the envisioned future linguistic research options presented above that could widen the dimensions of my discussion in the current degree project. A look at recent legal changes in Russia banning the use of expletives in the media, in print, on stage, and in films starting July 1, 2014, on the one hand, and on the other hand recalling Lakoff's statement from the late 1980s is likely to give some clues: "Language is politics, politics assigns power, power governs how people talk and how they are understood. The analysis of language from this point of view is more than an academic exercise: today, more than ever, it is a survival skill" (Lakoff 1990: 7).

The benefit of possible future research not only into epistemic modality but also other linguistic features of political discourse is thus not an end in itself, which would be of interest merely to linguists, or spin doctors and politicians willing to improve their rhetorical skills. Rather, in its practical application, this kind of research both contributes an added value to the linguistic domain, and more than that, it can help further, support, and protect crucial democratic processes by educating political journalists and analysts as well as by raising the electorate's awareness and interest, thus making people feel engaged in the political process.

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Appendixes

Appendix one: Transcription conventions

The transcription conventions used for this study were developed according to the specific needs of the transcription procedure based on conventions presented and applied by J. A. Dixon and D. H. Foster (1997: 104), B. Murphy (2010: 225-227), and S. A. Speer (2005: 199).

The aim was to develop conventions that could both help support machine-readability but also facilitate manual analysis of the transcripts, especially for the qualitative analytical process. The below table lists features, symbols, comments, and examples that explain and illustrate which conventions where used for the transcription.

Table 3: Transcription conventions used for this research study

Feature	*Symbol and/or comment*	*Example(s)*
Speaker	[$S1: Name1], [$S2: Name2]	[$S1: Cochrane] Not at all?
Speaker name plus extra information	[$S1: Name1 | (additional info)]	[$S1: Cochrane \| (introductory part)] Welcome to the show everyone. I am David Cochrane. … [$S1: Cochrane | (interrupts)] It was three times as long as was expected.
Interrupted utterances	The symbol [+] is used to mark the end of the interrupted utterance and also to mark the beginning of a resumed utterance. Resumed utterances begin with [+] followed by lowercase letters, except if the previous interrupted utterance was clearly marked with a sentence closure intonation. Not all interrupted sentences are resumed. In these cases, [+] is not used in the next turn of the interrupted speaker.	[$S2: May] I don't think he believes the climate crisis is a serious threat. You [+] [$S1: Mansbridge | (interrupts)] Do you think he's a denier? [$S2: May] And we have meetings that of the record [+] [$S1: Mansbridge | (interrupts)] What happens in them? [$S2: May] [+] We bring scientists in to talk to people.
Parallel speech due to interrupts	A typical feature of political interviews is that the flow of speech gets interrupted in a way so that interviewer and interviewee are speaking "in parallel". These overlaps due to simultaneous utterances are marked as extra information following the speaker name or are enclosed in […] within the scope of the interlocutor's utterance.	[$S2: May \| (interrupts, speaking into Mansbridge's sentence)] I don't label people. Yeah. I don't like calling people a denier or not a denier. [$S2: Finley] … It's like any other insurance [start of Solomon interrupt] program [+] [$S1: Solomon | (interrupts, simultaneous utterance)] But how many people don't qualify that are unem-

Feature	Symbol and/or comment	Example(s)
		ployed in Canada? *We* [start of Finley interrupt] we get like 70 percent [+] [$S2: Finley | (interrupts, simultaneous utterance)] *Out of* out of the people *that* that have paid into it … actually, it is 3 percent of them.
Slips of the tongue, misspeaks, brief repetitions, recapitulations	These kinds of utterances are marked with *italics*.	… than to say *our* our failure to comprehend the scale of this threat … But, you know, that responsible group of parliamentarians, *if* if we wanna call them responsible … … the federal *gov*, you know, the federal government is not bulking 5 billion dollars …
Replannings	All replannings are transcribed.	And it's not also, it's just, it's not also *a* an issue that, only for youth 'cause it's their future. It tends, it's a funny thing about politics …
Incomplete Words	Incomplete words (iw) are italicized and marked with an equals symbol ('iw[=…]'), where the intended complete word can be guessed. The assumed complete word is given without space after the equals sign.	… oh, *we[=well]* aside from that … … you know, you *s[=said]* as you just said, you know, you respect these people …
Uncertain or unintelligible utterances	The symbol [$G?] is used for unintelligible utterances where the number of syllables cannot be guessed. [$G1], [$G2], … [$G5], [$G5+] are used where the number of unintelligible syllables can be guessed up to a maximum of five after which the symbol [$G5+] will suffice.	… the ones who show up for your talk show are the ones who are [$G3], but I also speak to classrooms where it's essentially captive audiences.
Guessed utterances	Guessed utterances are enclosed in [$H]...[/$H].	[$S2: May \| (interrupts)] [$G?] [$H]Yeah, indeed,[/$H] I love them, I love everyone I work with. And it makes it a lot easier.
Standard contractions	To preserve the colloquial tone used in the interviews, the standard spelling for contractions in informal writing is used (it's = it is, they're = they are, we've = we have, etc.).	… you've got to deal with the economy … To my knowledge, he's never had a scientific briefing on the climate crisis.
Punctuation	Punctuation ('.', '?', '!', ',' etc.)	

Feature	Symbol and/or comment	Example(s)
	tries to follow the general rules of grammar for written English as much as possible while taking into account the different nature of spoken discourse that may incorporate 'stream of consciousness', 'mind-stream', or 'mental stream' features. Intonation units ending with the rising pitch contour that signals queries are marked as questions with the symbol '?'. Intonation units ending with the falling pitch contour that signals sentence closure are marked as statements with the symbol '.'. Commas are used according to punctuation rules where possible and/or applicable but also to denote pauses and breathing spaces.	
Capitalization	Capitalization is applied according to the general rules of grammar for written English.	
Quoted or direct speech	Utterances that report speech or thought in its original form are transcribed as quoted speech and enclosed in quotation marks.	[$S2: May] … so too are people in my generation who are looking at this and thinking, "I can't imagine that I'm gonna condemn my kids to an unlivable world, because I didn't have time right now to take this on, to demand at my government to do better." [$S2: May] I don't mean that they're sitting behind closed doors, … and saying, "Okay, what issues are top of mind?", but …
Fillers, backchannels, hesitation, approval	For the voiced hesitation features – or backchannels – [ə], [əm], [ɜ:], etc. that might be inscribed as e.g. uh, um, er, uhhhh, ummm, errr in written English (with 'u' pronounced as in 'cut') only the spelling *uh* is used in the transcripts for ease of consistency.	yeah, okay, right, oh, ah, ummmhm (= yes, I see/I understand; yes, that is right/correct; yes, I agree), uh (= voiced hesitation)
Emphasis	Words with strong emphasis are underlined.	We have to move on those.
Pauses	Shorter and longer clearly discernible speech pauses are indicated with [(type of pause)].	[short pause], [pause]

Feature	Symbol and/or comment	Example(s)
Laughter	[laughs] indicates laughter at the beginning, in the middle, in parallel to, or at the end of a turn.	[$S1: Mansbridge] [laughs]
Non-verbal actions or gestures	Non-verbal actions or gestures are indicated by [$NV: *action*] within the scope of the speaker's utterance or following the speaker's name.	[$S2: May] [$NV: nods her head]
Footnotes	Further clarifications of terminology such as personal names, titles, place names, names of buildings or organizations, etc. are provided in the footnotes where needed.	

Date: 28th Dec, 2013
Interviewee: Kathleen Dunderdale, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada
Interviewer: David Cochrane, CBC Television/CBC Radio (hosts the political television pro-
gram "On Point with David Cochrane" as well as "On Point Radio")
URL: http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/on-point-kathy-dunderdale-
discusses-her-toughest-year-yet-1.2478313
Type of interview: television broadcast, On Point with David Cochrane
Description: In this week's episode of On Point, host David Cochrane reviews a year of polit-
ical highs and lows with Premier Kathy Dunderdale.

Sample marking of interviewee's use of epistemic modality

Hedge: '`you know`' [pragmatic particle expressing addressee-oriented uncertainty concerning
the addressee's attitudes or likely response in the interaction and message-oriented uncertain-
ty regarding the linguistic encoding of the message (categorization according to Holmes 1986,
1990)]
Booster: '`you know`' [pragmatic particle expressing the speaker's confidence or certainty con-
cerning the addressee's relevant background knowledge and experience, attitudes and antici-
pated response or else serving an emphatic function to reassure the addressee of the validity
of the proposition (categorization according to Holmes 1986, 1990)]
Backchannel: '`uh`' followed by hedge '`you know`'.
Backchannel: '`uh`' followed by booster '`you know`'.

Booster: '`certainly`' [Epistemic adverb used to indicate certainty or to boost an utterance.]

[$S1: Cochrane | (introductory part)] Welcome to the show everyone. I am David
Cochrane. It's been over <u>two years</u> since Kathy Dunderdale won a majority government of
her own, now just passed the halfway point of her mandate, the Premier has largely finalized
her signature project in Muskrat Falls[21], but she also faces new political challenges in a resur-
gent liberal party. To discuss that and more, I am joined now by Premier Kathy Dunderdale.

[$S1: Cochrane] Premier, welcome back to On Point.

[$S2: Dunderdale] Thank you, happy to be here.

[$S1: Cochrane] It's been an eventful year - for your government. *You you* you've finalized
Muskrat Falls. You had a very tough budget. We saw things like a by-election loss in Car-
bonear-Harbour Grace[22]. Is 2013 your toughest year [pause] as a politician?

[$S2: Dunderdale] Uh[23], no question. It `certainly` has been challenging. `Uh`, `you know`, we
started the budgetary process, uh, last year, I mean, we knew we had a significant deficit to
wrestle down. *And* and that's <u>important</u>. `You know`, a lot of people say to me, `you know`, most

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[21] http://muskratfalls.nalcorenergy.com/
[22] Carbonear-Harbour Grace is a provincial electoral district for the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and
Labrador, Canada.
[23] Uh, um, er ... Uhhhh, ummm, errr ... 'u' pronounced as in 'cut'. This type of back channelling is always spelled
"uh" in the transcript for ease of consistency.

people don't care about debt. Uh, they certainly care about debt when you have to take hundreds of millions of dollars out of your operating revenue to service that debt.

[$S1: Cochrane] And a thousand jobs.

[$S2: Dunderdale] Uh, no question. *And* and, you know, *there were* there were two things happening, we had the debts that we had to deal with. We were also, you know, deeply into program review *and* and having a look at how we provided service to the people at the province. And those two things together resulted in significant layoffs that didn't go over well [pause] in the province. And, you know, I now understand that completely, but our responsibility as a government is to provide effective, efficient programs and services for the people in the province. The fact that we provide employment is ancillary to that.

[$S1: Cochrane] As tough as that budget was, there is still a sizeable deficit we *saw* saw on the fall fiscal update. It's so close to half a billion dollars.

[$S2: Dunderdale] Yes.

[$S1: Cochrane] And that's despite 270 million dollars in spending being pushed off.

[$S2: Dunderdale] Yes.

[$S1: Cochrane] So, the job's only really half done in terms of getting back to balance. So, looking ahead to the 2014 budget, are we looking at another tough round of downsizing and cuts?

[$S2: Dunderdale] Uh, not to the same degree. Uh, you know, people have to appreciate, this, uh, the volatility that comes with having 30 percent of your revenue come from oil. Uh, you know, I haven't met anybody in my time in government that has been able to predict the price of oil, uh [pause] very well. You know, we consult experts from all over the world. There is certainly nobody in the House of Assembly [pause] that's been effective at doing so. So, you take the best number you can, and the best advice you get, but then we can get, uh, a circumstance like we had this year with one of the platforms going down unexpectedly. That's a ninety million [+]

[$S1: Cochrane | (interrupts)] It was three times as long as was expected.

[$S2: Dunderdale] [+] a ninety million dollar hit [pause] to the bottom line that nobody could forecast, nobody could prepare for.

[$S1: Cochrane] *But* but should we prepare for job losses in the next budget? I mean, what is your sense of echo, it is still over 400 million dollars [$G?] in the trough [+]

[$S2: Dunderdale | (interrupts)] Oh, we're at the front end of our budgetary process, but we've right-sized programs and services, we believe, for the people in the province. I certainly don't see any layoffs in our future.

[$S1: Cochrane] With Muskrat Falls, *the* the year ended just much like [pause] the previous year ended, with a big Muskrat Falls announcement, sanctioning a year ago, financing this year. Everything is more or less done on the project now. So, when you look at it, do you see

for yourself the only thing left to do is build it? Do you regret anything about how you handled Muskrat Falls?

[$S2: Dunderdale] No, not at all. I mean, it's a big [pause], complex [pause] piece of work. 7.7 billion dollar *pro[=project]* project and trying to make as much information as [pause] we could possibly put out there available to the people in the province, amidst the great deal of noise and the great deal of misinformation has been extremely challenging. Uh, you know, the complexity of it, for me, it's been, you know, the example I used, it's like trying to explain brain surgery in 30-second [pause] clips, uh, and so, you know, it certainly has had its challenges, but I am satisfied that we have made information, uh, available to the people at the province, that we've tested the methodology and the business case that we put forward by independent experts so that we could, uh, assure the people at the province, that they could have confidence in the work that Nalcor[24] was doing. You know, it's been validated by, uh, so many different, uh, agencies, you know, the Government of Nova Scotia[25], MHI[26], the federal *gov[=government]*, you know, the federal government is not bulking [pause] 5 billion dollars worth *the* the debt liability, you know, based *on a* on a business plan that's just thrown together.

[$S1: Cochrane] About a month before the Muskrat Falls financing announcement, just over a month, you were announcing a 400 million dollar fund [pause] that came out of, uh, the CETA[27] negotiations for fisheries transformation, 280 million from the feds, 120[28] million from the province. [pause] What is the fishery going to look like after that money is spent?

[$S2: Dunderdale] The end goal is to have vibrant, sustainable, uh, predictable - as much as one can have in commodities - uh, industry here in the province that, you know, we're building *a* a world-class organization [pause] and having access to, you know, to this wonderful lucrative fish market, you know, uh, anecdotally, we were told from the FFAW[29], from the producers, from our own Department of, uh, Fisheries and Aquaculture that *in* in the first year alone, that this is *of* of a value of about 25 million dollars, uh, to the fishery in growth. [+]

[$S1: Cochrane | (interrupts)] And it goes up from there…

[$S2: Dunderdale] [+] Uh, yeah. And *i[=it]* *it* it's amazing.

[$S1: Cochrane] But is it the fishery that's gonna be focused primarily on harvesting and exporting or processing still be a significant part of that? Because it seems [pause] market forces aren't just the way the world is going. The processing sector is in a natural decline.

[$S2: Dunderdale] Yes.

[$S1: Cochrane] So is this, 400 million dollars going to be used to help transition out of the process-heavy sector? Because [pause] in the back-and-forth between Minister Fast and Minister Hutchings, as they negotiated, uh, the CETA [pause]'s compromise, it was pretty clear

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[24] Nalcor Energy: http://nalcorenergy.com/
[25] Nova Scotia is one of Canada's three maritime provinces and constitutes one of the four Atlantic Canadian provinces.
[26] Manitoba Hydro International: http://www.mhi.ca/
[27] Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensive_Economic_and_Trade_Agreement
[28] pronounced: "a hundred and twenty"
[29] Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union: http://www.ffaw.nf.ca/

that this might be supposed to help people lose their jobs, or at least partly [pause] to help people lose their jobs.

[$S2: Dunderdale] Well, uh, we don't believe that there is gonna be *a a* a job loss associated with the, uh, exemption, uh, of MPRs[30] for the European Union. But, one of the things we wanted to make sure of was that if that <u>did</u> occur, if our predictions weren't correct, that we'd have the capacity to be able to deal with it within this fund. You know, uh, there's concurrence, which is *in* of itself unusual between the government, FFAW, and the processor sector, *won't be* won't be a negative impact, uh, on workers, here in the province. But, you know, the thing that we have to get used to is that, you know, we're never gonna get rich selling fish here in Newfoundland and Labrador. There's only a half million of us. So, we have to be aware of what [pause] the markets are. What is it that they are looking for? *An[=And]* And can we provide that? Do we get the maximum benefit from our resource by responding appropriately to the market? You know, what this money helps us do is to get that market information, uh, *to* to make sure that our industry is well-positioned to take advantage of it and that's the only way we're gonna hang on to this industry here in the province.

[$S1: Cochrane] Okay, we're gonna take a quick break, but when we return more of my conversation with Premier Kathy Dunderdale.

[advertising break]

[$S1: Cochrane] Welcome back to On Point everyone; my guest this week is Premier Kathy Dunderdale who has joined me for a feature interview. Premier, when I look ahead to 2014, the big issue for me seems to be [pause] public sector pension reform, uh, Finance Minister has ruled out [pause] dramatic changes from a defined benefits plan to a defined contribution plan, but there has been pushback from the unions in their public commentary on this. So, how far are you prepared to push to get this done over union objections if they continue?

[$S2: Dunderdale] It certainly won't happen in 2014. This is a <u>big</u>, complex issue that is gonna require cooperation from the unions as well as *from the g[=government]* from the government. Uh, you know, there, uh, we want it to be *a[=an]* an inclusive process, one where we all come to the table, you know, one of the things, the very first thing we did was to provide some relief to people who are already retired.

[$S1: Cochrane] Ummmh.[31]

[$S2: Dunderdale] You know, people have planned their retirement on promises that they were given. Uh, many of them don't have an opportunity to come back, because there've been *changy*, you know, there might be changes, and do something different. And so, uh, you know, we just don't want people under that kind of pressure. So, whatever happens is not gonna affect the people who are already retired.

[$S1: Cochrane] Are you looking at a two-tier system, one where new employees would have a different, uh, pension plan? Or is it something that would affect people who are maybe mid-career?

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[30] minimum processing requirements
[31] Meaning "I see" in this context.

[$S2: Dunderdale] Uh, we haven't even gotten that far. Uh, *what* what we're doing at this point in time *is* is giving comfort to people who are already retired. Uh, saying to the people who are already in the system: whatever changes come about, you'll be given a long lead time so you can make decisions about your career and your future before changes are implemented. What we have now is not sustainable. We've put over 4 billion dollars into the public service, uh, pension plans since we've come to government. Uh, most of that has been eroded due to American conditions. Uh, the people of the province many of whom don't have a pension themselves are not going to be prepared to continue to do that, uh, *e[=every]* every four or five, uh, years. So, we have to find a solution. We can't let the plans collapse.

[$S1: Cochrane] Right, so on that point, given the stakes that are there 'cause this year is the *ss* the biggest portion *of* of the provincial debt line.

[$S2: Dunderdale] It is.

[$S1: Cochrane] Do you say you want this to be an inclusive process? But, you know, *ev[=eventually]*, the public commentary around from a lot of union members has been while the government spent the money on roads or schools back in the eighties [+]

[$S2: Dunderdale | (interrupts)] No.

[$S1: Cochrane] [+] *and* and *what* whatever the myth or history that exists around this, the present-day reality is that it's an enormous financial liability. So, if you can't get the cooperation, you are prepared as a government to act unilaterally if you have to?

[$S2: Dunderdale] Well, *well*, no we have to get cooperation. <mark>You know</mark>, *you* you have a vested interest in ensuring that your pension plan is sustainable. Uh, there is no question that governments, uh, help themselves to pension funds, uh, when they ought not to have done that. <mark>You know</mark>, the thing that we did as a government was to go back, do an audit, uh, *o[=of]* of all of that, uh, projector head *if* if the money had been left what would it have earned and so on. We've replaced every cent of it. Every cent of it. So, <mark>you know</mark>, the pension plan is looking like it would have looked like if governments hadn't taken a penny from it. So, I mean, and that was the right thing to do.

[$S1: Cochrane] So, you have made them haul for what passed governments did, 'cause you have never taken from the pension funds.

[$S2: Dunderdale] No.

[$S1: Cochrane] That was in 2003.

[$S2: Dunderdale] But we made haul what other governments did. <mark>You know</mark>, yes, they did take the money and spent it on roads and bridges and hospitals, but they ought not to have done that. So, we've gone back, we've taken the amounts, and then we did net present value and projected it forward so what if that money had never been touched what would the pension plan look like today?

[$S1: Cochrane] And that's where we are.

[$S2: Dunderdale] And that's where we are.

[$S1: Cochrane] That's gonna be Tom Marshall's top focus as Minister of Finance. What's gonna be your main focus for the year ahead? What will be the big issue that you [pause] try to push as Premier?

[$S2: Dunderdale] Uh, you know, we have significant *developent* developments happening in terms of mining. We have significant, uh, changes coming about in the way we do our land tenure, uh, in the off-shore and huge opportunity, uh, *a[=available]* available to us, particularly in the Labrador, uh, Basins, which we haven't seen up to this point.

[$S1: Cochrane] Mmmh.

[$S2: Dunderdale] Uh, you know, Muskrat Falls, to see that their project, uh, goes forward in a very balanced way. And how do we maximize benefit from that development, uh, for the people of the province? So, you know, and there are other issues. Uh, you know, we need to, uh, continue our poverty reduction strategy. Uh, you know, in education, we've got challenges, in health care, we certainly have significant challenges with an aging, uh, population, like how do we manage all of that? So, significant challenges. You know, having Muskrat Falls, having built Nalcor *and* and quickly coming to a point where we're going to see *a* a return of all of those investments into the Treasury. Uh, you know, that helps in the planning. We still have the keeper-about type for this year *and* and next, then we should come back out and be in surplus again, and we've got to maximize all of these resources that we have to, uh, you know, by the time that we get to 2018[32], 2019 that the time of deficit is behind us.

[$S1: Cochrane] Look ahead at 2018, 2019, do you expect you'll still be in politics then? Do you expect you'll still be in politics this time next year? Because, I wonder, when does a politician start to take stock of the political future? Because you've been there ten and a half years as either a senior minister, a deputy premier, or a premier. It's a grind. Polls are changing, not in a way you're happy with, as we've discussed. When do you start thinking about [pause] your next step?

[$S2: Dunderdale] Well, you think about it all the time. Uh, you know, this is not a business that you, uh, certainly not one that I went into, uh, that *wh[=where]*, you know, where I was gonna have a twenty- or thirty-year career. Uh, you know, I know, *a[=and]* and knew from the beginning that I wouldn't stay in politics for longer *than* than sixteen years. And, you know, certainly, my intention to run in 2015 [+]

[$S1: Cochrane | (interrupts)] *There is* there's people though, *ye* you know, I talked to people in your party, as you know, *and* and there's a lot of people who support you. They still think you're gonna go pretty soon. That you'll either announce your retirement, or announce your resignation, maybe even before the budget, or plans *to* to step down?

[$S2: Dunderdale] No, that won't happen.

[$S1: Cochrane] Not at all?

[$S2: Dunderdale] No.

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[32] pronounced: "twenty eighteen"

[$S1: Cochrane] You can't really give an honest answer on this, can you? About if you were thinking about what you're going to do, a leader can't really show any kind of doubt about [+]

[$S2: Dunderdale | (interrupts)] *You* you can't …

[$S1: Cochrane] [+] their political career in public because you're done.

[$S2: Dunderdale] Yeah, and that's why I am always surprised when I get *as[=asked]* asked these questions. And it is ==certainly== not my intention. ==You know==, my intention is, in January to take my grandchildren to Disney, and, uh, when I come back, ==you know==, it's a holiday I've been putting off for a long time, I am really looking forward to it, and, ==you know==, we're gonna be well advanced, uh, in our budget preparations, ==you know==, I am looking forward to the next year. I am so delighted to have this big trench of Muskrat behind us.

[$S1: Cochrane] Mmmh.

[$S2: Dunderdale] And now it is the challenge of managing the project properly. [+]

[$S1: Cochrane | (interrupts)] *When* when you look [pause] - Go on!

[$S2: Dunderdale] [+] But there are exciting things that, ==you know==, uh, that *are* are before me now, uh, that *I* I am looking forward to focusing on. And, uh, *ye[=you]* ==you know==, it's great to be able to give your full attention to it.

[$S1: Cochrane] There's the policy and the government's element to what you do, but there is also the political dynamic. Right? And there is this changing and fluid political dynamic and the problems with the Liberals have come back from the grave[33]. When you look at it, what if you come to the conclusion that you are not the person to lead the PCs[34] back? I mean, *how* how is your loyalty to the party factoring in any of these decisions that you have to make over the next little while?

[$S2: Dunderdale] Uh, but it's a comprehensive piece. It's about, ==you know==, for me it's always *be*, it will always be very important to be master of my own destiny. ==You know==, *I I am* I am very much a person who wants to be in charge of my own life. Uh, and so there's <u>that piece</u>. ==You know==, *i[=it]* it's your, ==you know==, you don't ever get to a place like this by yourself. There are all kinds of people who, uh, mentor you, who *sus* support you, who sustain you, who partner with you, who bear this responsibility with you, ==you know==, *the[=they]* they ==certainly== have to be factored into all of this. And then you always have a look around the landscape and see where successors might be, and so on. I mean for me, ==uh==, ==you know==, whenever it comes, it won't be a difficult decision. ==Uh==, ==you know==, I had a life before politics, I'll have a life after politics, uh, I see this very much about the people at the province. ==You know==, I had a vision *a[=about]* about things, how things <u>ought</u> to be and the stars aligned, uh, for me in that in a very particular way back in 2002 and 2003, uh, *ye*, I want to do the best that I can do. You have to be passionate [pause] *a[=about]* about this work, otherwise you couldn't do this, it's <u>too difficult</u>. ==Uh==, ==you know==, you have to put too much on the table. You have to *a[=ask]* ask, it's not so much about what you put on the table, it's what you ask the people who love you to put on the table.

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[33] That means "facing the liberal surge". (subtitle in video)
[34] Progressive Conservative Party

[$S1: Cochrane] Mmmh.

[$S2: Dunderdale] And sometimes the price can be very high. So, you always take all of that into consideration. Uh, but, you know, when I think my job is done, that I've done the best that I can do, and it's time for me to move on, uh, you know, I won't need a lot of encouragement to do that.

[$S1: Cochrane] Uh, Premier, thanks so much for joining me.

[$S2: Dunderdale] You're very welcome.

[$S1: Cochrane | (closing comments)] And that is it for our show tonight. I'll be back in 7 days with a new episode of On Point. I am David Cochrane, hope you had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Table 4: Taxonomy of epistemic modality hedging devices used in this research study

Type	Abbrev.	Word list and example sentences
Epistemic, hedging verbs and phrases conveying vagueness, innuendos, and fuzziness	**EHVP**	assume, believe, expect, feel, guess, identify, know, as you know, you know, to my/our knowledge, I don't know, look, mean, seem, I am not sure, think, I don't think, try, it is my/our view that, my/our view is *I think, what we've seen is this government has done such a terrible job of living up to any sort of environmental responsibilities that it has an impact on our trading partners.* *Peter, I think, it is important to point out that here and in many parts of Europe the economy is actually in recession.* *I don't think it'll surprise you that I disagree with the primacy of your question.*
Modal auxiliary verbs	**MAuxV**	can, could, may, might, would *You know, there might be changes.*
Necessity modals	**NecMod**	have to, must, need, ought to, should *There is no question that governments, uh, help themselves to pension funds, when they ought not to have done that.*
Adverbs of degree with a downtoning effect	**AdvDeg**	just, kinda, kind of, maybe, perhaps, possibly, pretty, quite, rather, relatively, somewhat, sort of *Canada has done relatively well.* *I don't want to sound too alarmist, but we are kind of running out of runway here.* *I am just pleased that we can, uh, yeah, draw on some of the expertise from people around the world.*
Interjections	**Ijs**	well, why

Type	Abbrev.	Word list and example sentences
		Why, I think you'll have to ask Mr. Harper about that.
Plural pronouns[35] including possessive and reflexive forms	**PluPro**	we, us, our, ourselves *We continue to lead the G7 in many of the key areas.*

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[35] Avoidance of individual responsibility through usage of e.g. inclusive or exclusive 'we'.

Table 5: Taxonomy of epistemic modality boosting devices used in this research study

Type	Abbrev.	Word list and example sentences
Amplifying adverbs of degree + Adverbial constructions	**AAOD+AC**	absolutely, actually, apparently, certainly, clearly, completely, extremely, highly, indeed, inevitably, obviously, really, so[36], surely, unquestionably, vastly, very, well[37] *Certainly, if the European recession gets deep enough, it will affect everybody.* *I am so delighted to have this big trench of Muskrat behind us.[38]*
Prepositional constructions	**PC**	for sure, of course, without doubt *... and we announced of course, that we're moving forward ...*
Epistemic, assertive adjectives	**EAA**	certain, definite, doubtless, enormous, evident, huge, obvious, sure, true
Epistemic, assertive verbs and clauses	**EAVC**	demonstrate, point out, show, will, it is clear that, I/we know, the fact that (… shows/speaks/is)
Context-related expressions of boost[39] that are mostly associated with hedge classification in previous linguistic research	**CEB**	I/we believe, you know *And we believe our economy is well-positioned to take advantage of the recovery.* *You know, we're building a world-class organization ...* *And, you know, certainly, my intention to run in 2015 ...*
Repetitions including repeti-	**REP**	*[$S2: Dunderdale] We've replaced every cent*

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[36] Mind the different use of conjunction 'so'.
[37] Mind the different use of interjection 'well'.
[38] female speaker
[39] Utterances, clauses, or pragmatic particles expressing the speaker's confidence or certainty concerning the addressee's relevant background knowledge and experience, attitudes and anticipated response or else serving an emphatic function to reassure the addressee of the validity of the proposition (categorization according to Holmes 1986, 1990).

Type	Abbrev.	Word list and example sentences
tions with adjusted reformulation(s) of interlocutor's and/or speaker's wording		*of it. Every cent of it.* *[$S1: Cochrane] So, you have made them haul for what passed governments did …* *[$S2: Dunderdale] But we made haul what other governments did.* *[$S1: Cochrane] And that's where we are.* *[$S2: Dunderdale] And that's where we are.*

Definitions of abbreviations and additional facts:

Names of politicians and title of office at time of interview (present office status)

EF – Edward Fast, Minister of International Trade (incumbent)

KD – Kathy Dunderdale, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador (resigned as of Jan 2014)

JT – Justin Trudeau, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada and Member of Parliament (incumbent, running for Prime Minister in coming 42nd Canadian federal election in Oct 2015)

SH – Stephen Harper, 22nd Prime Minister of Canada (incumbent)

DF – Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development (Minister of Public Works and Government Services)

EM – Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada and Member of Parliament (incumbent)

Description of variable names

g – gender (m = male, f = female)

a – age (at time of interview)

epb – educational and/or professional background

pa – party affiliation

fpm – federal (fed) vs. provincial (prov) mission

ps – political status / degree of political power / role within the hierarchy of political power

ti – topic(s) of the interview

ps categories taking into account the political situation at time of the interview

-2 under attack, highly criticized

-1 not very influential, regularly criticized

0 neutral

1 influential

2 very influential

3 highly influential

Table 6: Independent variable values related to the interviewed politicians

	g	a	epb	pa	fpm	ps	ti
EF	m	58	Graduation from law school at the University of British Columbia, lawyer	Conservative Party	fed	1	te
KD	f	61	thirty-three credits towards a degree in social work at Memorial University of Newfoundland, dropped out of university to get married, stay-at-home mom, volunteer roles, social worker	Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador	prov	-2	yr
JT	m	42	Bachelor of Arts degree in literature, McGill University; Bachelor of Education degree, University of British Columbia; social studies and French teacher	Liberal Party	fed	1	ec, te
SH	m	53	Master's degree in economics, University of Calgary	Conservative Party	fed	3	cq, te
DF	f	54	Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master's degree in Business Administration, University of Western Ontario; businesswoman, executive, management consultant, school administrator	Conservative Party	fed	2	ei

	g	a	epb	pa	fpm	ps	ti
EM	f	59	Environmentalist, writer, activist, lawyer (LLB, Dalhousie Law School)	Green Party	fed	-1	cc

Table 7: Overview of topics discussed in the interviews

Abbreviation	Description of topic
te	Trade and economics.
yr	Year-end review of a year of political highs and lows including the signature project in Muskrat Falls and new political challenges in a resurgent Liberal Party.
ec	Election campaign activities. Preparations to challenge sitting Prime Minister Harper, Conservative Party of Canada. How to bring the Liberal Party back into a top position.
cq	Celebration of the Queen's sixty years on the throne, impact of European economic issues on Canada's economy.
ei	EI (employment insurance) changes and reform plans in Canada to be financed with $21 million over 2 yrs in the budget.
cc	The politics of climate change in Canada.