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HEDGING IN DISAGREEMENTS IN US FILM DIALOGUES: A SIGN OF (SELF-)POLITENESS, POLITIC BEHAVIOUR AND AN IDENTITY MARKER[1]

Abstract
The paper deals with the concept of hedging in disagreements in selected US film dialogues, from pragmatic and culture-specific points of view, through the prism of qualitative politeness research. Following the introductory remarks on the linguistic phenomena of hedging and disagreement, as well as a socio-culturally based description of the research corpus, the paper aims at providing representative examples of hedging viewedfrom a number of different, often conflicting, theoretical angles. These include the Cooperative Principle, modern approaches to politeness, self-politeness, identity-related aspects of rapport management, and a view of politeness as politic behaviour. The assumption is that the contradictory nature of hedging can best be accounted for by observing

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it as a manifestation of politic identity-preserving and identity-enhancing verbal behaviour.

Key words: hedge, hedging, film dialogue, disagreement, mitigating strategy, politeness, self-politeness, politic behaviour, identity, society

1. Hedges and hedging

This paper aims at observing the phenomenon of hedging in instances of oral disagreements in selected US films, within the theoretical frameworks of both earlier and more recent politeness research, as part of a wider socio-pragmatic pattern of verbal behaviour.

Hedges represent one of the linguistic concepts most difficult to define and an elusive category whose scope is exceptionally difficult to delimit. As stated by Apróné (2011), "throughout the past 40 years a number of different but related, and often partly overlapping categories and classification systems have been proposed [...] the concepts of hedge and hedging having evolved and widened" (2011: 3633). One of the earliest definitions that best illustrates the elusiveness of the concept is Lakoff's claim that hedging means "making things fuzzier or less fuzzy" (1972: 195). A more precise, but nevertheless general definition was later proposed by Yule (1996: 130), who sees hedges as "cautious notes expressed about how an utterance is to be taken, used when giving some information", employed to protect the speaker from a possible non-adherence to one of Grice's maxims within his Cooperative Principle. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1989) explanation is that a hedge is a linguistic device that enables the speaker to avoid commitment related to the illocutionary force of the utterance. Hedges are thus often observed as a conventionalized strategy reduced to fixed formulaic expressions, such as *All I'm saying is...* or *This may sound strange, but...*

Moving on to the studies of the topic in the 21st century, Kaltenböck, Mihatsch and Schneider (2010) provide one of the most comprehensive contributions to defining and describing the concepts of hedges and hedging, with the basic claim that today they are mainly used for approximating and attenuating expressions. In line with the approach that will be taken in this paper, the explanation that is closest to what the author sees as a satisfactory operational definition of hedging is that it is "a discourse strategy that reduces the force or truth of an utterance and thus reduces

the risk a speaker runs when uttering a strong or firm assertion or other speech act" (Kaltenböck, Mihatsch and Schneider 2010: 1).

A phenomenon closely linked to hedges are discourse markers or discourse particles, such as *well*, *oh*, *you know*, *I mean*, which are "… elements that signal relations between units of talk by virtue of their syntactic and semantic properties and by virtue of their sequential relations as initial or terminal brackets demarcating discourse units" (Schiffrin 1987: 40). Hedges and discourse markers are often discussed together, since, regardless of certain formal differences, there are numerous cases in which they perform the same function – that which is otherwise primarily ascribed to hedges. Namely, discourse markers, or as Brown (1977) calls them – discourse fillers, or, even more appropriately for this discussion, in Holmes's terms (1995) – pragmatic particles, have the selfsame pragmatic function of expressing caution and achieving a mitigating effect.[2] This explains why they are sometimes also termed 'hesitation markers'. Earlier views of the functional overlap between hedges and discourse markers were best exemplified, reaffirmed and complemented by Locher (2004: 115), with a relevant statement that "a discourse marker can be a hedge, but does not necessarily have to be one." This is in line with Lakoff's (1972) treatment of expressions such as *sort of*, *kind of*, *technically speaking*, *strictly speaking*, which have the capability to modify the category boundaries of a concept and will, thus, in this paper also be treated as instances of hedging.

The following section will look into disagreements in oral communication as a kind of speech act that will afterwards serve the purpose of exemplifying the use and role of hedging in verbally expressed politeness.

2. Disagreement with the interlocutor

In socio-pragmatic literature, disagreement is an umbrella term, a hyperonym, for various acts that represent the opposite of 'agreement', including 'dispute', 'conflict', 'argument', 'confrontation', etc. (Angouri 2012, Locher 2012). Two of the most concise definitions and, at the same

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[2] In this paper, hedges and hedging will primarily be viewed as pragmatic phenomena. Formal aspects, such as their syntactic realization or position within a sentence, are beyond the scope of this discussion.

time, ones that are broad enough to cover most of the cases analyzed in this paper, are offered by Kakavá (1993) and Sifianou (2012). According to these authors, disagreement is "an oppositional stance (verbal or non-verbal) to an antecedent verbal (or non-verbal) action" (Kakavá 1993: 326) or, alternatively, "the expression of a view that differs from that expressed by another speaker" (Sifianou 2012: 1554). In terms of the speech act theory, disagreements, as a rule, belong to the functional class of representatives. Without going into detail about the nature and various formal and semantic manifestations[3] of this phenomenon, it should be stressed that the degree of tolerance towards disagreeing with the interlocutor varies greatly depending on the situational, and, even more so, cultural context.

When it comes to the preference structure of the entire further talk exchange, i.e. the preference orientation of disagreements (as well as agreements), Pomerantz (1984) discusses preferred and dispreferred second turns as the two possible reactions of the hearer, agreements usually being perceived as preferred, as opposed to disagreements, typically seen as dispreferred responses. Notwithstanding the fact that disagreements, in Locher's terms, inherently include conflict and a clash of interests, and lead to the interactant's action-environment restriction (2004: 93), the question arises as to what, in fact, is to be understood as preferred or dispreferred if the speaker's own unexpressed opinion, different from that of the hearer, is constantly undermined and neglected by the speaker himself, just in order to avoid disagreeing with the other. From the point of view of self-politeness and individual identity largely based on one's sense of self-esteem, such verbal behaviour is equally damaging to the further development of interpersonal relations, and may thus be viewed as dispreferred. It should, however, be emphasized that not all instances of disagreement are dispreferred from the hearer's point of view and that there is a substantial, be it relatively smaller, number of cases where disagreement is seen as the preferred response.

This leads the discussion to the ultimate issue of the role of hedges in statements of disagreement, which will be exemplified by cases of expressing opposing opinions in five selected US films.

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[3] Disagreements cover an entire array of expressions ranging from direct and/or explicit, to mitigated and indirect and/or implicit ones. Content- and implication-wise, they include a varietyof verbal contributions, from arguments to fierce confrontations, leading to long-lasting damaging consequences for interpersonal relations.

3. Research corpus and methodology

Hedging in film scripts has already been the subject of analysis in several recent papers (El Farra 2011, Panić Kavgić 2010, 2013, 2014). The corpus for this research includes 53 examples of hedging in oral disagreements with the interlocutor – both dispreferred and preferred ones, found in dialogues extracted from the following five feature-length US motion pictures released in the past two decades:

> F1 – *Crash* (directed by Paul Haggis 2004)
>
> F2 – *Noel* (Chazz Palminteri 2004)
>
> F3 – *Thirteen Conversations about One Thing* (Jill Sprecher 2001)
>
> F4 – *Magnolia* (Paul Thomas Anderson 1999)
>
> F5 – *Playing by Heart* (Willard Carroll 1998).

As pointed out in Panić Kavgić (2013), the chosen works belong to the category of multi-protagonist (inter-action) films, whose characters appear in a series of seemingly unrelated episodes, amidst circumstances leading to certain critical moments in their lives. The films offer a vivid depiction of the present-day middle class in the two largest and most vibrant American cities – New York and Los Angeles. The plots each involve up to twenty characters whose intricate relationships and ambivalent feelings have one common denominator – they stem from similar cultural milieus and share a common core of expected patterns of social and linguistic behaviour. The protagonists, whose verbal contributions provide the linguistic data for this study, speak informal contemporary varieties of English. Therefore, the selected dialogues lend themselves well to the kind of analysis carried out in this paper.

In sociolinguistic and socio-cultural terms, US society, which is portrayed in the films, is predominantly seen as a volitional, low-context, guilt-driven[4] and highly individualistic culture. The stated labels would mean that, unlike, for instance, in the Japanese cultural model, the speakers' linguistic behaviour largely depends on their own free choice in a particular situation. In other words, it is the individual who is responsible for shaping and negotiating new and emergent social relations and roles, regardless of possible pre-existing matrices of social structure. When it comes to

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[4] The listed terms were introduced and discussed by Hill et al. 1986, Ide 1989 and Hall 1976, respectively.

verbal politeness, the fact that a society is mainly individualistic, unlike the predominantly integrative, Mediterranean, Central- and Eastern-European cultural frameworks, would mean that it is characterized by more indirect verbal behaviour whose aim is to respect and protect the personality and face wants of every individual. There is a greater need to please the interlocutor who would thus preserve his positive self-image, often at the cost of not revealing his true intentions, by hiding them or stating them in a highly indirect and disguised manner. In terms of politeness, such language behaviour is characterized by a high-considerateness conversational style marked by the frequent use of negative politeness strategies and indirect, highly conventionalized forms. Hedging is seen as one of the primary language tools to achieve the aforementioned interaction goals.

4. Hedging in speech acts of disagreement – different points of view

In this section hedging will be observed within the theoretical frameworks of Grice's Cooperative Principle, politeness and self-politeness research, identity-related rapport management issues, as well as a more recent view of politeness as a positively marked form of politic verbal behaviour.

4.1. The Cooperative Principle and hedging

Within the Gricean paradigm, hedging is seen as a protective language device that prevents the speaker from blatantly violating the Cooperative Principle.[5] In other words, the principle's underlying conversational maxims of quality, quantity, relation and manner are more often than not in danger of being disregarded, especially in dispreferred disagreements, and, as already mentioned in the introductory section, it is frequently by means of hedging that the speaker tries not to fully commit himself/herself to the truth value (example (1)), the quantity of information (2), the relevance (3) or the clarity (3) of their contribution to the current talk exchange.

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[5] "Make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." (Grice 1975: 45)

(1) F3 DORRIE: These rich people, they got it easy. They ain't gotta worry about nothing.

BEA: People with money worry about other things, *I suppose*.

(hedging used to avoid potential non-adherence to the maxim of *quality*)

(2) F1 FRED: Is there a problem, Cam?

CAMERON: No, we don't have a problem.

FRED: I mean, *'cause all I'm saying is*, it's not his character.

(hedging used to avoid potential non-adherence to the maxim of *quantity*)

(3) F1 CAMERON: That looked pretty terrific, man.

FRED: *This is gonna sound strange*, *but* is Jamal seeing a speech coach [...]?

(hedging used to avoid potential non-adherence to the maxim of *relation* and *manner*)

Approached from this angle, hedging may seem a purely self-protective device and, as such, from the viewpoint of verbally expressed politeness, would be closer to being considered a self-face saving strategy, within the framework of self-politeness, rather than an aid to the interlocutor and a negative politeness strategy towards the other, within the more traditional other-oriented framework. The two aspects of hedging from the perspective of politeness will be discussed in the following sections.

4.2. Politeness and hedging

The 1980s saw an increasing interest in the study of verbally expressed politeness, articulated in the so-called modern approaches to the phenomenon, two of which were especially influential: the conversational maxim view, with Leech as its most prominent representative, and Brown and Levinson's face-saving view, which would make a lasting impact on all subsequent research in the field. Leech's Politeness Principle was based on complementing Grice's Cooperative Principle founded on four conversational supra-maxims. Without going into detail about Leech's theoretical explanation of the need to upgrade Grice's principle, for the

purposes of the current discussion on hedging it will only be stated that Leech proposes six maxims – Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy Maxim – only two of which are directed at the *self* and not the *other* and have considerable significance for the topic of hedging. Namely, the Generosity Maxim says: *Minimize benefit to self / Maximize cost to self*, while the Modesty Maxim states: *Minimize praise of self / Maximize dispraise of self*.

Brown and Levinson's seminal work on politeness treats hedging as one of the exit strategies within the suprastrategy of committing a face-threatening act softened by negative politeness as a redressive action. As a reminder, the Brown-Levinsonian paradigm is known as the face-saving view of politeness, its central concept being that of showing face concerns. Goffman's (1967) previously defined notion of face as the public self-image of a person, or, more precisely, "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (1967: 5), provided the core for establishing the concepts of positive and negative face (reflected in one's need to be liked and accepted as a member of the group, as opposed to the co-existing need for independence and freedom of action), face-saving and face-threatening acts, and, consequently, introducing positive and negative politeness strategies as the means of softening the threat to the other person's face.

To put it simply, according to both Leech's and Brown and Levinson's approaches, politeness, in whatever verbal form it takes, is primarily employed tomake the other person feel better and save their face – an approach which is better applicable in cases of what is traditionally seen as preferred, rather than dispreferred disagreement, such as the examples of hedging in (4), where a doctor comforts his patient's daughter, (5), in which a young woman consoles her desperate friend, in (6), when a young man finds an older woman attractive, and in (7), when she advises a bride-to-be not to give up on her fiancé:

> (4) F2 ROSE: I just don- I- I don't know that she knows that I am here though, you know.
>
> DR BARON: She knows you're here though, Rose. *I know that's hard to see, but* she knows. Your mother's lost her memory and her ability to recognize people. But one thing she'll never lose is her emotion. […] *I know I'm telling you things you already know, but, you know*, sometimes you forget.

(5) F3   BEA: […] And then I realized… There is no reason.

DORRIE: *Well, I just think that, you know,* you never know what's gonna be around the corner.

(6) F2   ROSE: You know, I have to say that I – I'm… Well, I just don't feel like I'm really your type.

MARCO: *I think* you should let me decide that.

(7) F2   NINA: […] Besides, I know I'm just nauseous from all the stress of everything going on.

ROSE: Look, *all I know is that, um…* nobody's perfect, and if you find love, I mean real love, you just don't throw it away without a hell of a fight.

Among numerous subsequent objections to both Leech's and Brown and Levinson's views of politeness, one affects the treatment of hedging as a mitigating device – the negative self-oriented approach in Leech's maxims of Generosity and Modesty and in a similar vein, Brown and Levinson's insistence on 'threat to the other person's face'.

4.3. Self-politeness and hedging

Leech's and Brown and Levinson's concepts of politeness are almost exclusively based on showing respect and considerateness towards the other, while *self-politeness*, i.e. consideration towards the speaker's own face, has been largely neglected (Chen 2001). As the most prominent advocate of highlighting the importance of self-politeness, Chen (2001) accepts the face-saving paradigm, but suggests a set of exit strategies along the lines of those proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) which would be directed towards the speaker instead of the hearer. Chen rightly notes that "the speakers' need to save their own face also has a bearing on their linguistic behaviour" (2001: 87), but that it has been marginalized in all previous research studies of politeness. Following Brown and Levinson's model, Chen proposes four supra-strategies that would minimize or soften the force of a *self-face threatening act (SFTA)*, which are similar and could exist in parallel with the previously established other-oriented supra-strategies. They include the following:

1) bald on-record self-politeness

2) self-politeness with redress

3) off-record self-politeness

4) self-politeness by means of withholding the SFTA.

Chen (2001) lists the following, sometimes even contradictory, exit strategies of self-politeness with redress, which take on the form of metaphorically addressing oneself in the imperative mood: 1) Justify. 2) Contradict. 3) Hedge. 4) Impersonalize. 5) Use humour. 6) Be confident. 7) Be modest. 8) Hesitate. 9) Attach conditions. The first five strategies listed would belong to those employed to achieve positive politeness, the last two lead to negative politeness, while strategies 6) and 7) reflect certain socially desirable modes of behaviour that benefit the speaker. Needless to say, Chen's contribution also relativizes Pomerantz's traditional division into preferred and dispreferred disagreements, which primarily takes into account the hearer's viewpoint. Thus, although examples (8), (9) and (10) are traditionally seen as instances of mitigated dispreferred disagreements, from the perspective of self-politeness, they could be seen as preferred, as they save the speaker's own face, while, at the same time, the force of the disagreement is softenedby the employment of hedging:

(8) F2 DENNIS: What are you saying, Mikey? Tha-that guys… don't notice me? Is that what you're saying? Tha-that I walk down the street and… guys don't turn their head to take look at me?

MIKE: No, I'm not saying that at all. *I just think* the guy's interested in me and not you.

(9) F1 DIXON: That's not a good enough reason.

HANSEN: *Then I guess* I should think of a better one and get back to you.

(10) F4 FRANK: You see, I have more important things to put myself into.
GWENOVIER: Frank, *I think* this is something very important… you might need to think about putting yourself into.

When it comes to maxims, Chen explains that, for instance, the 'be modest' maxim is adhered to "when the speaker decides that, in the given situation, modesty is the best alternative to enhance their face" (Chen 2001: 100), and thus sees it as a self-face saving act, rather than an act that saves the face of the other, as is the case in example (11).

> (11) F5 VALERY: You seem to be so good at this.
>
>   HUGH: *Maybe* I'm just better at pretending I'm someone else.

As Panić Kavgić (2014) points out, Chen's crucial contribution is his conclusion that the relationship between politeness and self-politeness should be viewed as a continuum where one end is marked by the speaker's primary motivation to achieve self-politeness, while the opposite end represents politeness towards the other. The imaginary line between the two extreme points on the scale is marked by an array of cases characterized by varying degrees of influence and importance of these two types of motivation. When it comes to hedging in dispreferred disagreements, in the author's opinion, examples (8), (9) and (10) have shown that it can be at the same time both a politeness and a self-politeness marker – it may save the speaker's face, but also lessen the damage inflicted upon the hearer's face.

Finally, the difference between hedging employed as a politeness device towards the other and its use as a means of expressing self-politeness is perhaps best seen when hedges as mitigating devices are realized as question tags. As such, they belong to one of the four categories of question tags discussed by Holmes (1995: 80–82) – to facilitative or invitational tags, which represent a positive politeness strategy, since under the right circumstances, they act as hedges that may motivate the hearer to give a positive contribution to a friendly conversation, such as in example (12), even when the wider context is generally not one of agreement with the interlocutor:

> (12) F3 DORRIE: You have returned everything from the hospital?
>
>   BEA'S MOTHER: Just what was in her purse. Some of the clothes you worewere discarded. You're not missing anything, *are you?*

On the other hand, epistemic modal tags, which are more numerous in the selected dialogues, are neutral concerning the expression of politeness towards the interlocutor, but may represent a sign of self-politeness as

the speaker expresses his or her uncertainty in connection with their own knowledge or experience and thus checks with the interlocutor whether he or she is in possession of the right information, as is the case in examples (13) and (14):

> (13) F2 DR BARON: Everything okay?
>
> ROSE: I'm fine. Just maybe a few too many Christmas parties, but... You meant me, *didn't you?*

> (14) F5 MARK: He was just here a minute ago. *No?*
>
> MILDRED: No.
>
> MARK: It was... you who were here. [...] You are here, *aren't you?*

4.4. Identity and hedging

Hedging as a mitigating strategy can also be perceived from the point of view of managing interpersonal relations, which refers to the use of language with the aim of enhancing, maintaining or endangering harmonious social relationships. This is what Spencer-Oatey (2008) refers to as 'rapport management', which consists in regulating and coordinating three mutually complementary components: management of face, management of sociality rights and obligations and management of interactional goals (Spencer-Oatey 2008: 13). For the discussion in this paper, the most relevant aspect is the management of face, as it includes three identity-related aspects, depending on whether face is related to a person a) as an individual, considered separately from the rest of the group or society they live in, or b) as a member of a group, or c) in relation to others. Based on these premises, respectively, Spencer-Oatey (2008) establishes three types of identity: a) individual, b) group or collective identity and c) relational identity.

When it comes to hedging, based on examples (1) – (14), the author of this paper suggests that its function as a self-politeness strategy could be seen as fitting into the frame of preserving one's a) individual identity, while hedging as an other-oriented politeness strategy would serve the purpose of constructing one's b) relational identity, in concrete communication situations that are part of a larger socio-cultural context which, in turn, shapes one's c) group or collective identity.

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4.5. Politic behaviour and hedging

The previous discussion on politeness towards the other as opposed to self-politeness may rightfully raise the following questions: can the two modes of face-saving views of politeness always co-exist or are they, more often than not, mutually exclusive? What, in fact, is considered to be polite behaviour and where are its limits if one tries to save the face of the interlocutor, to the detriment of one's own self-image, and vice versa? Which of the mentioned identities prevails and is given primary status in the former, and which in the latter type of situation? Is dispreferred disagreement with the interlocutor automatically to be perceived as such if one takes into account self-politeness concerns? Consequently, what is the place and function of hedging if one applies it in a self-face saving situation? Some of the answers can perhaps be found in works belonging to the so-called postmodern approach in politeness studies.

In the 1990s a number of authors seriously questioned the then dominant Brown-Levinsonian paradigm, pinpointing a number of theoretical, practical and terminological flaws in the modern approach. One of the most important objections concerned the very concept and term of *politeness*. Rather than split the spectrum of human verbal behaviour into polite and impolite, Watts (2003, 2005a, 2005b) proposed a new division into *politic* and *non-politic* language, as manifestations of socially appropriate and inappropriate linguistic behaviour. Politeness would, in that case, only be seen as a positively marked form of politic behaviour, whereas impolite language (with rude being its extreme case), as well as over-polite, would be perceived as two manifestations of non-politic behaviour (Watts 2005: xliii).

In other words, politeness is seen as a marked version of socially acceptable behaviour and, as such, it represents a marked surplus which Watts sees as a consequence of the speaker's egocentric motivation and wish to be seen as better by others. This view is contested by Locher (2004), who otherwise agrees with Watts's novel approach and his politic vs. non/politic matrix of verbal behaviour, but believes that the communicator's motives may also be of an altruistic, rather than, allegedly, egocentric nature. Finally, both Watts and Locher emphasize the dynamic nature of human interaction and they see language, both politic and non-politic, as a means of negotiating and re-negotiating relationships through relational work.

Bearing in mind this new position of politeness in recent research, as well as the complex and somewhat contradictory and ambiguous nature of both politeness and hedging as they were discussed and exemplified in sections 4.2 and 4.3, it would seem more appropriate and less problematic, in future research on the topic, to view and analyze hedging as a dynamic phenomenon representing politic, socially acceptable, rather than conspicuously polite linguistic behaviour. Examples (15)–(18) illustrate the point that certain cases of hedging in their contexts are not clearly polite (or, for that matter, impolite) in the traditional sense, but may represent a kind of transitional or auxiliary device in negotiating and re-shaping the relationships between the interlocutors:

(15) F2 MARCO: You're not attracted to me?

ROSE: No, *um*... I'm attracted to you, But this, *you know*, it's going a little fast for me.

(16) F2 DENNIS: *Well*, at least we know who the nut is now, *right*?

MIKE: Naw, he's not nuts.

DENNIS: Yeah, all right. *Whatever*. Let's get out of here. I'll take you home.

(17) F3 GENE: Our payout on claims is very, very low… and they're all legitimate.

LEW: *Well,* they're not quite low enough.

(18) F5 MEREDITH: *I mean*, I know this must be *kind of* unusual.

TRENT: It's not unusual.

MEREDITH: *I mean*, I'm sure that most women don't turn you down.

Moreover, reverting to a number of examples of disagreement in this paper, especially those which relate to the speaker's uncertainty about the truth value of the utterance or about their own knowledge or experience, it again becomes evident that they are instances of neutral, politic, rather than of emphatically polite behaviour, regardless of whether the use of hedging, if viewed as a mitigating strategy, is directed at the hearer's or the speaker's own face. Therefore, reducing and delimiting the use, scope and effects of hedging to those of a traditionally established static politeness device would deprive the researcher of observing and realizing its broader

dynamic function and implications in various instances of politic (or non-politic) communication.

5. Concluding remarks

The most usual case of disagreement in the selected films, which is in line with the predominant conversational style and cultural pattern in US society, is mitigated dispreferred verbal disagreement, which can be defined as "a case of disagreement whose potential face-threatening force has been softened or, even, minimized by means of employing mitigating strategies for avoiding straightforward disagreement" (Panić Kavgić 2010: 431) and which was also labelled 'polite disagreement' (Holmes 1995). Several mitigating strategies for softening disagreements with the interlocutor and thus achieving a greater degree of indirectness have been detected in the selected film dialogues, based on the categorizations proposed by Panić Kavgić (2010, 2013, 2014) and Locher (2004), among which hedging was found to be the most frequent. However, it is of utmost importance to stress that not one of those mitigation strategies, hedging included, isin itself a sign or marker of politeness – it may only become one in a specific linguistic and extralinguistic (situational and cultural) context that has to be taken into consideration in the analysis of each and every example of human communication.

It proved relatively difficult for the researcher to estimate and determine the extent to which a particular conversational contribution seen as an oppositional stance and mitigated by hedging is regarded as polite or impolite in a particular situational or cultural context. It is more appropriate to perceive the phenomenon within Watts's framework of politic and non-politic, i.e. socially acceptable and unacceptable verbal behaviour typical of a particular cultural setting, in this case the US individualistic social matrix. Furthermore, as Watts and Locher (2005) point out, it is of utmost importance to analyze disagreement through the aforementioned relational view, i.e. to perceive it as a means of negotiating relationships through relational work, starting from a mutually shared and previously established common core that serves as a foundation for the further development of interpersonal relations in the course of a particular communication event. Bearing in mind this dynamic nature of human relationships, any contribution to a particular conversation, mitigated

disagreements included, may have a face-aggravating, face-maintaining or face-enhancing effect on the other. Once again reverting to Chen (2001), the three kinds of effect could also be applied to the speaker's own face.

Finally, from the point of view of identity, the selected examples testify to the assumption that the manner and situations in which hedging is used contribute to the construction of each character's identity – be it individual, in cases of hedges that mostly attempt to save the speaker's own face, in line with the American individualistic ethos; relational – by means of hedges that contribute to preserving and enhancing the speaker's relationship with the other, by saving the hearer's face, seemingly paradoxically in line with the same prevailing individualistic tendency; or group or collective identity – when it comes to hedging that fits into a more general cultural framework that favours mitigated and less direct communication, as is the case with contemporary US society as depicted in the selected films.

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ОГРАЂИВАЊЕ ПРИЛИКОМ НЕСЛАГАЊА СА САГОВОРНИКОМ
У АМЕРИЧКИМ ФИЛМСКИМ ДИЈАЛОЗИМА: ЗНАК (САМО-)УЧТИВОСТИ,
ДРУШТВЕНО ПРИХВАТЉИВОГ ПОНАШАЊА И МАРКЕР ИДЕНТИТЕТА

Сажетак

Рад се бави прагматичким и социо-културним аспектима употребе дискурсних ограда приликом неслагања са саговорником у америчким филмским дијалозима, из угла језички испољене учтивости. Уводни одељак посвећен је кратком прегледу најважнијих појмовних и терминолошких запажања о дискурсним оградама, што је праћено освртом на феномен говорног чина неслагања са саговорником, који је веома често ублажен управо применом стратегије ограђивања од изнетог, потенцијално конфронтирајућег, става говорника. У наставку рада описан је корпус квалитативног истраживања заснованог на одабиру и опису дијалога из пет новијих америчких филмских остварења чији ликови и радње носе типична обележја америчке индивидуалистичке културне матрице, која почива на слободној вољи појединца и индиректној комуникацији са саговорником. Централни део рада сагледава примерима поткрепљену употребу дискурсних ограда, и то из пет углова: Грајсовог принципа кооперативности и кршења конверзационих максима; такозваног модерног приступа језички испољеној учтивости, кроз одређења, с једне стране, Лича и, с друге, Браунове и Левинсона; из угла самоучтивости, односно, обзира говорника према сопственом лицу; из позиције разматрања говорниковог идентитета – индивидуалног, групног или колективног, као и идентитета у односу на друге, те, коначно, из угла новијег, такозваног постмодерног приступа, чији је зачетник Вотс, који учтивост види као позитивно обележен вид друштвено прихватљивог, тј. пожељног вербалног понашања. Смештањем употребе дискурсних ограда у наведене појмовно-терминолошке оквире, у завршном одељку изнете су закључне напомене о комплексности сагледавања анализираног феномена као стра-

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тегије за ублажавање неслагања са саговорником, те је истакнут ауторкин став да је, услед многих размотрених противречности, ограђивање сврсисходније посматрати као динамичан појавни облик друштвено прихватљивог вербалног понашања него као појаву омеђену оквирима старије и традиционалније дихотомије учтивост / не-учтивост или, пак, учтивост / самоучтивост.

Кључне речи: дискурсна ограда, ограђивање, филмски дијалог, неслагање са саговорником, стратегија за ублажавање неслагања, учтивост, самоучтивост, друштвено прихватљиво понашање, идентитет, друштво