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The Role of Hedges in Political Discourse in Connection with Lying, Deceiving and Bullshitting

DIPLOMA THESIS

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Prehlásenie

Týmto prehlasujem, že som diplomovú prácu na tému: „The Role of Hedges in Political Discourse in Connection with Lying, Deceiving and Bullshitting" vypracovala samostatne pod odborným dohľadom vedúceho diplomovej práce a uviedla som všetky použité podklady a literatúru.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

The following lines contain the abbreviations used throughout the thesis. The abbreviations mark specific speaker, whose utterance served as the source of examples, or the category of the expression found in the examined text.

- B.O.- Barack Obama
- D.T.- Donald Trump
- H.C.- Hilary Clinton
- M.T.- Mitt Romney

- B- Boosters
- H- Hedges

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INTRODUCTION

The first presidential debate broadcasted in the USA in 2016 set a new record in almost 60 years history of the presidential debates, with estimated 84 million people watching, not including the viewers who watched the show online (National Public Radio 2016). Undoubtedly, focusing on the undecided audience, presidential debates represent one of the most influential elements affecting the results of any presidential elections. The viewership record, however, is not the only reason why the presidential elections of 2016 are perceived as one of the milestones in the history.

The US presidential elections, together with Brexit, represented two main reasons why Oxford Dictionary team named "post-truth" the word of the year, in 2016. The oxford dictionary defines the expression "post-truth" as "an adjective, relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief" (Oxford 2018). False statements have always been an inseparable part of politics. But the fact that we are living in the "post-truth" age suggests, that the nature of lies has changed. It seems, that instead of the truth value, the speakers have started to care more about the final effect which their statements have on the audience. Thus, instead of lies, we witness rather bullshiting. In other words, it happens more and more often that politicians around the word say obvious lies creating a good impression, rather than the truth, which does not always sound that pleasant.

One of the politicians, who is often blamed for using this deceitful kind of rhetoric, is Donald Trump. In other words, he is often blamed for bullshitting. Bullshitting, which is sometimes perceived even as a vulgar expression, is, in fact, an academically defined term representing one of the many forms of misrepresentation and deception, appearing together with speaker's carelessness about the truth value of a statement. Carelessness is the most typical feature of bullshit, which at the same time represents the characteristic distinguishing bullshitting from lying (Frankfurt 2009).

The problem with bullshitting, however, is that it cannot be easily spotted in a speech and its presence cannot be easily proven. Since we cannot know what the speaker's intentions are and whether the speaker does or does not care about the truth value, another defining feature which would suggest the presence of bullshit is needed. This thesis therefore seeks to answer the question whether there is a possible connection between bullshitting and linguistic features of the speech or not.

One of the linguistic elements which might suggest such a connection are hedges. Hedges, inconspicuous expressions, not only represent an important part of human interaction as

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elements essential for successful communication (Fraser, 2010), but they can as well serve as modifiers of the truth value and evidential status of statements (Lakoff,1972, Brown and Levinson, 1987, Sweetser,1987). On the contrary, avoidance of hedges and the lack of these elements in a speech can signify the speaker's lack of interest in the truth value, or, in other words, speaker's lack of cooperation (Brown and Levinson, 1987). That is to say, these characteristics suggest carelessness on the side of the speaker, which is, at the same time, one of the main characteristics of a bullshitter.

For the reasons mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the thesis examines the presence of hedges modifying the truth value and evidentiality status of the statements in speeches of four speakers engaging in political debates broadcasted in 2012 and 2016, in the United States. For the speaker's lack of interest in the truth value, it is highly probable that bullshits often appear in the form of lies. Consequently, the analysis included in this thesis examines also possible correlation between the occurrence of hedges and occurrence of false statements in speeches of the speakers. If the analysis proves the connection between these two variables, it would suggest that the lack of hedges in a speech might be another characteristic feature of bullshitting.

The thesis is divided into two main parts: theoretical and practical part. The theoretical part describes the key semantic and pragmatic concepts including hedges and describes the link between these concepts, false statements and lying. The literature review explains Gricean maxims, politeness theory and approaches to the classification of hedges. This section also introduces the phenomenon of bullshitting and emphasizes the difference between bullshitting and lying. It describes the distinction between lies and non-lies in details and disproves the popular belief that every statement which is false is also a lie. (Sweetser 1987, Meibauer 2011).

The practical part includes quantitative and qualitative analysis. The first, quantitative part of the analysis examines the frequency of hedges employed by the speakers during the presidential debates in 2012 and 2016. The qualitative approach was used in the second part of the analysis. The subjects of the qualitative research were hedges, which occurred in the false statements uttered by the candidates. The analysis compares the speech of the particular speakers and examines whether the nature of the hedges and lies changed during the period between the elections or not.

THEORETICAL PART

HEDGES, LYING AND BULLSHITTING

This part provides more information about the main concepts and theories concerning hedges and lying and demonstrates the connections between them. The following section also explains what is bullshitting and describes its defining features. Furthermore, the chapter points out essential differences between lying and bullshitting.

1. HEDGES

The term hedges refers to a large group of expressions which can take the form of particles, syntactic constructions, or they can be realized by intonation. Hedges represent an important part of human interaction and they function as essential elements of successful communication. Even a grammatically perfect sentence can fail to achieve its aim if it lacks hedges. Usage of hedges can prevent misunderstanding of the speaker's intentions. Fraser (2010) uses the example of non-native speakers, to demonstrate the effect of missing hedges. Even if a sentence uttered by a non-native speaker is grammatically correct, the speaker can be perceived as rude, impolite or arrogant (16). Fraser uses the sentences included in (1)a) and (1)b to demonstrate the cases, when the hedges are used to convey a negative message.

1) *a) It might be a good idea if we could move on to the next speaker.*
    b) I must insist that you leave.

Hedges, however, are not an essential part of human interaction only in terms of politeness theory. They can function as modifiers of truth value and evidential status of statements (Lakoff,1972, Brown and Levinson, 1987, Sweetser,1987). Following paragraphs describe the role and importance of hedges from different perspectives and demonstrate the fact that hedging is not only semantic but also pragmatic phenomenon.

The first serious discussions and analyses of hedges which influenced contemporary theorists emerged during the 1970s with publication of Lakoff's papers. He focused on predicate adjectives or predicate nominals in declarative sentences and described hedges as predicates affecting membership of element in class, which can either attenuate or reinforce the class membership of the element. He based his theory on the claim that category membership of an expression is not a black and white matter but a matter of degree (1972, 460).

Hedges were described as elements which can serve to hierarchical ranking of category membership. To explain his theory of degree and membership, Lakoff used word *bird* as an example of a category, words *robin* and *sparrow* as examples of central members of the

category and words *chicken* and *duck* as peripheral members of the category. To demonstrate the hierarchy, he claimed that robin and sparrow are more typical of birds than chicken or duck, but chicken and duck are more typical of birds than for example penguins, despite the fact that to some extent, all of them are kind of birds (195).

According to Lakoff's theory, the same principle can be applied to the truth value of a statement. If penguins can be birds only to some degree, a sentence can be true only to some degree as well. If a sparrow is more typical of birds than a duck, then statement *A sparrow is a bird* is more of truth than the statement *A duck is a bird* or even the statement *A penguin is a bird*, which is furthest from the truth but still not a lie. Lakoff argued that hedges can be used to signal this "fuzziness" and even modify the truth value of a statement, as it is demonstrated in examples (2)a) and (2)b). The hedge *sort of* changes the statement which is only partially true to a true statement. In addition to this, hedges can be also employed to signal the opposite and they can demonstrate the highest degree of category membership (473). This case is demonstrated in example 2c. Thus, according to Lakoff's theory, while expressions in (2)a) and (2)b) can make the statements „fuzzier", the expression in 0c) makes the statement "less fuzzy".

(2)   a) A penguin is a bird.   (partially true)
        b) A penguin is <u>sort of</u> a bird.   (true)
        c) A robin is a bird <u>par excellence</u>.   (true)

Lakoff was the first who demonstrated the essential connection between hedges and the truth value of statements, but his theory became influential and the subject was later discussed by many other authors, from different perspectives. Sweetser (1987), for example, departs from Lakoff's theory and considers hedges an essential aspect of the definition of lying. She argues that listeners do not believe in the facts or speaker's knowledge of the facts which are true, but rather in the speaker's assumptions and beliefs in what the truth is. Unlike knowledge, beliefs and assumptions do not have to be logically proven only by evidence. They can be based on previous experience, deductions and observations of the correlations in the world (Sweetser, 1987, 47). If the listener believes that the statement is true, he assumes that the speaker tries to cooperate, his beliefs are justified, and that the speaker evaluated the available evidence correctly. On the other hand, if a speaker lacks evidence for his statements, hedges can be used to signal this fact. (Sweetser,1987, 46)

The fact that hedges can signal evidential status of statements causes that their relevance to the definition of lying is undeniable. If a speaker uses one of the hedges, part of the responsibility for evaluating the evidence is shifted to the listener. Consequently, it becomes difficult to blame the speaker of lying, carelessness or prevarication. (Sweetser, 56) On the other hand, hedges from the opposite end of the spectrum can serve to signal the commitment of the speaker to the high evidential status of the statement. Sweetser provides expressions as *best of my knowledge, so far as I know, as I understand etc.* as examples of hedges which are capable of shifting the responsibility for the truthfulness of the statement to the hearer. She uses expressions *speaking conservatively* and *all the evidence points to the conclusion that* as examples of the hedges which commit a speaker to the high evidentiality status of the statement (56).

The previous paragraph describes how some of the expressions can hedge an evidential status. Besides this function, Sweetser sees hedges also as pragmatic deference markers (57). She argues that every statement can push belief systems of listeners. The right to command people's belief systems differs according to the authority of the speakers. If an authority of a speaker is low, the right to push hearers' beliefs is low as well. A person with a lower social authority cannot push directly on beliefs of a person with a higher authority. Thus, hedges do not modify only the informational (evidential) authority as explained in the previous paragraph but also the social authority. To demonstrate this idea, she provides example of a student, using a hedge to express disagreement with a professor. Sweetser also points out that while hedges employed by the student express politeness, too many hedges on the side of the professor could create sarcasm.

Brown and Levinson also belong to those authors who discussed the connection between hedges and truthfulness. They explained their theory referring to Gricean maxims. As they argue, participants of a conversation tend to make strong background assumptions about cooperation, informativeness, truthfulness, relevance and clarity of a statement, which often need to be softened (Brown and Levinson 1987, 145).

H.P. Grice introduced the communicative maxims of quantity, quality, relevance and manner as a part of his theory describing cooperative principle in 1975. As he claims, a conversation can be effective only if participants of an interaction try to be cooperative. Grice states that in order to cooperate, the participants need to fulfill all of the maxims. The maxims can clash and they can be either fulfilled, violated, opted out or flouted. Brown and Levinson discuss only flouting the maxims, which means that participants of an interaction fail to fulfill

the maxim blatantly (Grice1975, 49). Brown and Levinson refer only to the maxim of quantity and the maxim of quality and they omit the relevance maxim and maxim of manner.

The maxim of quantity, says that speakers should make the contribution as informative as it is required (1975, 45). According to Brown and Levinson, if is the maxim of quantity floated, hedges can be employed to signal that not as much or not as precise information is provided as might be expected. They refer to this category of hedges as to *quantity hedges* and provide examples such as *approximately*, *all in all* or *basically*.

On the other hand, the maxim of quality requires the speaker to make the contribution one that is true. It suggests that a speaker should not say what he believes is false and, not to say the statement for which he lacks adequate evidence. If the speaker flouts the maxim intentionally and blatantly, hedges provide the option to demonstrate that he is not taking the responsibility for the truth of the statement (Brown and Levinson 1987, 164). They called this kind of hedges *quality hedges* and included examples as *think*, *believe*, or *assume*.

Thus, Brown and Levinson define hedges as prosodics, particles, parentheticals, adverbial clauses or other lexical items without any definable literal meaning, which allow participants of an interaction to evaluate the evidence for the statement. This means that a part of the speaker's responsibility for the evaluation of the evidence can be transferred to the hearer by using hedges (1987, 90-95). In addition to this, Brown and Levinson claim that quality hedges can also serve to emphasize the speaker's commitment to the truth of the utterance. They provide examples as *with complete honesty (I can say)* or *absolutely* (164-5).

Lakoff's papers were influential also for another reason. His theory involved the concept of "hedged performatives", which had been observed earlier by Robin Lakoff. He was the first who pointed out that hedges interacting with performatives can cancel implication of a statement and modify the force of a speech act (1972, 213). He based his arguments about hedged performatives on the speech act theory, first introduced by J.L Austin, which departs from the belief that conveying information or describing an item does not have to be the only purpose of a sentence. In other words, beyond conventional meaning of sentences, which in terms of speech act theory represents locutionary act, sentences include also speaker's intention (illocutionary act) and the final effect of a sentence on the hearer (perlocutionary act) (Austin 1962, 52). Performative words can serve as elements which indicate that an utterance is performing an action (1962, 6). The concept of hedged performatives was later developed by Fraser (1975) and Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987).

By drawing on the concept of speech acts, Fraser described the way in which modals can function as hedges, if they interact with performatives. His analysis included performative

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verbs as *apologize* or *promise*, which were preceded by modal verbs such as *must* or *should*. Fraser expressed the opinion that in this kind of combination, modals can soften the force expressed by performatives. For instance, verb *apologize* can cause that the whole sentence is an apology, which is at the same time the illocutionary force of the statement. If a performative verb occurs with a modal, such as in *must apologize* or *should apologize,* the illocutionary force of a statement remains the same, but softened (1975, 145-146):

2)   *a) I apologize for what I've done*
        b) I should apologize for what I've done

Brown and Levinson paid attention also to the role of hedges considering the speech acts theory, when they described hedges as essential part of the politeness strategies. They developed the Lakoff's theory and claimed that communicative intentions and forces encoded in the speech acts can be perceived as potential threats to cooperative interaction (1987, 145). They demonstrated possible ways in which can the forces cause damage to the hearer, or damage to the speaker. Brown and Levinson refer to this phenomenon as to the face threatening acts. The term "face" is in the politeness theory understood as a public self-image that every person tries to protect (1987, 13).

To protect hearer's and speaker's face, participants engaging in the conversation are required to follow the cooperative principle. Brown and Levinson defined two main types of politeness strategies which can serve to maintain cooperation between the participants: the *positive strategies* and the *negative strategies*. The positive strategies focus on addressee's positive face, provide a hearer with sense of closeness and belonging and they also serve to communicate speaker's wants with respect to desires of a hearer. The negative politeness serves to avoid limitations of addressee's actions and it is used to interact with a hearer in a non-imposing way (1987, 65).

Hedges tend to occur as a part of the negative politeness strategies, but some of the expressions, such as *kind of, sort of or in a way,* can function as a part of the positive strategies. This is true, for example, in case when is a speaker hedging his own opinion. Speakers have a tendency to hedge their own opinions in order to make them safely vague, in other words, to avoid direct disagreement with a hearer. Expressing opinions directly, without hedging, is considered a risky step which can lead to the face threatening acts (Brown and Levinson 1987, 116). Hedges function as a fundamental method of disarming these routine threats which can occur during an interaction (1987, 145).

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The negative politeness strategies include hedging of the illocutionary force of an expression and also felicity conditions of the speech act. Hedges interacting with the performative verbs represent the illocutionary force of a sentence and hedged performatives serve as the most important tool used to satisfy the speaker's wants. This is caused by the politeness theory principles which say that the speaker should not assume that the hearer is able or willing to do what the speaker wants (Brown and Levinson 1987, 164).

Use of hedges can influence the surrounding discourse in several ways. Fraser listed four main discourse effects which can occur in a text: v*agueness, evasion, politeness* and *equivocation,* although he claims that the last mentioned cannot be created by hedges. Equivocation is defined as a non-straightforward communication or an intentional misleading by using a word with more than one meaning, which cannot be created neither by propositional hedges, nor by speech act hedges. (Fraser 2010, 28) On the other hand, Fraser agrees with Brown and Levinson when he describes the great contribution of hedges to politeness, which was already described in the preceding paragraphs (2010, 29).

Another of the discourse effects, Vagueness, can be defined as a lack of precision which can appear in a discourse intentionally or unintentionally. Intentional vagueness is employed, for example, to avoid directness which can offend the addressee. It can also occur when a speaker does not know the details or when the details are not important. Hedges are employed to make a statement vaguer in order to make the situation more informal, to signal loss of memory or to signal uncomplete knowledge. While propositional hedges can create vagueness, it is not a characteristic of speech act hedges. It is essential to point out that not all of the hedges can cause vagueness and vagueness do not always come from hedging (2010, 26).

Hedges can also serve to evade. Evasion tend to appear in a discourse when information provided by a speaker do not meet addressee's expectations. Fraser argues that evasion is an illocutionary act since it is dependable on the hearer's interpretation. Evasion can arise from vagueness caused by propositional hedges. Contrary to vagueness, evasion can be reached also by speech act hedging. As in the previous case, not all hedges can be employed to evade and not all evasion is always caused by hedges (2010, 27).

Many of linguists have attempted to provide a clear classification of hedges. Some of the classifications even overlap or differ only minimally. Fraser (2010), for instance, distinguished hedges according to their function as well as according to their form. Firstly, he defined the *propositional hedges*, which mark the membership of expressions in a class. Propositional hedges are employed to demonstrate lack of commitment to the semantic membership (Fraser 2010, 22). Hedges of this kind are demonstrated in the examples (3)a and

(3)b Secondly, Fraser described *speech act hedges*, which serve to express commitment to the speech act conveyed by an expression. Examples of speech act hedges are included in (3)c) and (3)d). On the contrary, Fraser excluded reinforcement, which was previously considered a part of hedging, by authors as Brown and Levinson (1987). While Brown and Levinson consider the notion of reinforcement a part of hedging, Fraser believes that reinforcement should represent its own separated concept and he does not perceive hedging as a symmetrical notion. Therefore, in terms of Fraser's theory, examples in (3) e) and (3)f) cannot be considered hedges (2010, 22).

(3)   a) *He's a real geek.*   *b) He's kind of a geek*
               c) *Come over here, can you?*   *d) I guess I should leave now.*
               e) *I certainly do insist that you sit down.*   *f) He is extremely tall.*

Comparable to Fraser, also Prince *et al.* (1982) divided hedges into two groups. The first class of hedges which they call *approximators* corresponds with what Fraser called propositional hedges. Approximators are further divided into *adaptors* and *rounders*. Adaptors correspond with the definition of hedges provided by Lakoff, since they modify the class membership of a word (4)a). This class includes expressions such as *somewhat, sort of,* or *almost.* The second subclass, rounders, serve to define a range (4)b). Typical for this group are expressions as *about, approximately, something* or around (2010, 19).

(4)   a) *She noticed that he was a little bit blue.*
               b) *His weight was approximately 3.2 kilograms.*

The second main class defined by Prince *et al.*, *shields*, corresponds with Fraser's speech act hedges. Similarly to approximators, they also include two subcategories. First of them, *plausibility shields*, functions to signal doubt (5)a). Plausibility shields include expression as *I think, I believe,* or *probably*. The second subclass, *attribution shields*, serve to suggest that some person other than the speaker is responsible for the message contained in the statement (5)b). Expressions as *according to, presumably* or *at least to my knowledge* belong to this group of hedges. (2010, 20)

(5)   a) <u>*As far as I can tell,*</u> *you don't have anything to lose by taking that path.*
               b) *There was no reason to worry,* <u>*as far as*</u> *anyone knew.*

Hübler (1983) also provided division of hedges which consisted of two main groups. His division resembles to the one provided by Prince *et.al*, since the first group which he defines, *understatements,* agrees with the definition of approximators and the second group, which he calls *hedges*, corresponds with the shields. Caffi (1999, 2007), on the other hand, distinguished between *shields*, *hedges* and *bushes*, when she provided a classification of mitigating mechanisms. She defined bushes as expression reducing commitment to the propositional content, hedges as lexical expressions attenuating the force of an utterance by reducing the speaker's commitment and shields as elements which serve to shift responsibility for the message (Caffi, 1999,12).

1.1. CLASSIFICATION OF HEDGES

Although chapter 1.1. describes various approaches to hedges, boosters and their classification, there is not a general consensus and the classifications differ. In order to analyze the data, however, a consistent classification is needed. The following paragraphs therefore describe a classification based on the main approaches described in the literature review, which was used in the practical part.

Firstly, the examined hedges are classified with respect to the Gricean maxims. As explained in the section 1.1, hedges serve to signal whether the cooperative condition was met or not. This section, however, also demonstrates that out of the four Gricean maxims, only the maxim of quality and maxim of quantity are relevant to lying. Consequently, the hedges were divided into two main categories: *quantity hedges* and *quality hedges.*

Quantity hedges are understood as devices signaling that not as much or not as precise information is provided as might be expected or that the statement is only partially true (Brown and Levinson, 164). Quantity hedges tend to appear for instance in statements expressing frequency of events or number of elements and hey can also function as an element making the statement fuzzier. Thus, for the purposes of the analyses, were the hedges divided in another three categories: hedges *modifying quantity* (shown in the example (5)a)), *hedges referring to time or frequency* (6)b) and *hedges signaling class membership of the words* (6)c)

(6)   *a) It's been growing about 12 percent per year over a long period of time.*
        (M.R., October16, 2012)
        b) Those decisions generally, generally, are not poll-tested.
        (B.O., October 22, 2012)
        c) I think my husband did a pretty good job in the 1990s.
        (H.C., September 26, 2016)

The hedges modifying quantity signal the fact that the number of items included in a statement is not exact or does not have to be exact. The hedges referring to time or frequency demonstrate the fact that the activity included in a statement is common but it at the same time admits the possibility of exceptions. Finally, the hedges signaling the class membership of the words signal the fact that the activity, feature or object included in a statement is not a typical member of a category which we usually imagine under the term used in the statement.

Quality hedges, on the other hand, signal that the speaker is not taking full responsibility for the truth of the utterance or they can serve to disclaim the assumption that the aim of the speaker's assertion is to inform (Brown and Levinson, 165). As stated in the section 1.1., some expressions can even serve to transform the responsibility for evaluation of the evidence to the hearer. Sweetser (1987) calls these expressions evidentiality hedges. As already explained in the literature review, people tend to make assumptions about the truthfulness of the statement according to three main criteria: available evidence, reliability of the speaker and previous experiences. For this reason, were the quality hedges examined in the practical part further divided into *evidentiality hedges* (demonstrated in (7)a), *hedges expressing the speaker's belief or assumption* that the statement is truth 0b) and *hedges expressing probability* (7)c)

(7)   a) *We see in -- in Libya, an attack apparently by, <u>I think</u> we know now, by terrorists of some kind against our people there.*
(M.R., October 22, 2012)
b) *<u>I think</u> we've never had a situation so bad in this country*
(D.T., October 9, 2016)
c) *<u>Maybe</u> he didn't do a good job and I was unsatisfied with his work. (D.T.,   September 26, 2016)*

On the contrary, as mentioned in the section 1.1., Brown and Levinson claim that the quality hedges can also serve to emphasize the speaker's commitment to the truth of the utterance (164). They, however, do not consider the case, when elements reinforce the impression that the information is precise. In other words, unlike in the case of the quality hedges, they do not describe the opposite of the quantity hedges. For this reason, the last category examined in the practical part stems from the Lakoff's theory, as well. Lakoff claimed that certain elements can function to reinforce the class membership of an element and consequently, "make the things less fuzzy" (1975, 195). Sweetser (1987) also departs from the Lakoff's theory. She claims that uttered statements push on the belief system of the hearers and some of the hedges can commit speakers to the high evidential status of the statement (56). The last category, therefore includes also the words which suit these definitions. In the practical

part, I refer to these expressions as to *boosters*. The boosters analyzed in the practical part were divided into three main categories: *boosters expressing amount, frequency or absolute class membership* of a word in a category 0a), *boosters directly pushing on the hearer's belief system or expressing speaker's certainty about the truthfulness of the statement* (8)b) and *boosters signaling high evidentiality status* of the statement (8)c).

(8)   *a) And Donald <u>never</u> tells you what he would do. (H.C., September 26, 2016)*
        b) And <u>believe me</u>, she has tremendous hate in her heart. (D.T., October 9, 2016)
        c) This is <u>obviously</u> an area of great concern to the entire world, and to America in particular, which is to see a complete change in the structure. (M.R., October 22, 2012)

2. LYING

The previous chapter illustrates the connection between hedges and the truth value of utterances. The fact that they can modify the truth value and evidential status of a statement, makes them undeniably relevant to lying. Firstly, it is essential to define lying, which is not as simple as it might seem. In the field of linguistics can be found numerous definitions of lying. One of the first, traditional definitions refers to lying as to a process of "making a statement believed to be false, with the intention of getting another to accept it as true" (Primoratz 1984, 54). Coleman and Kay (1981, 29), on the other hand, list the main features of a lie as it follows: the speaker uttering the sentence needs to believe that the statemen is false; the speaker needs to intend to deceive the listener; and the statement must be false in fact. As they suggest, the statement fulfilling all of the listed conditions is a lie.

Coleman and Kay claim that a lie needs to be false in fact. This means that a speaker should be able to identify what is true and what is false every time when he is uttering a statement. That is, however, possible only under ideal circumstances, not in the real world. (Sweetser 1987, 50). To ensure that the statement is either false or true, a fact-checking would have to be done. In other words, the speaker's knowledge of the facts would have to be logically proven every time when he provides information. Doing fact-checking every time when a speaker utters a statement would be time consuming and in some cases even impossible to do in everyday life. Hence, to lie does not mean to provide an addressee with a false information but with the information which is believed to be false by a speaker. Thus, a speaker with intention to lie can be in fact providing a true information (1987, 51).

Coleman and Kay's definition is based on the premise, that the process of lying involves making a statement. They do not, however, take into account the non-verbal communication. Thus, person can be misled, for instance, by a person using sign language, Morse code, or body

language (Siegler 1966, 130). In addition to this, not only uttering a statement, but also not uttering a statement can be considered lying. If a person behaves in a way which provides the others with false in-formation, or which confines the true, in both cases, the person is lying. If a person utters a statement which is true, but acts in the opposite way, the person is also lying. Making misleading implicatures can be considered lying as well (Meibauer 2011, 285). Withholding information can function as lying, if it is done with the intention to mislead. (Smith 2004, 14).

There are, however, cases in which can a speaker provide wrong information with intention to deceive, and still not be lying. Judging a statement as a lie depends on context and purpose of the conversation. Meibauer, for instance, does not consider bold-face lies examples of lying, since it is understood by both participants of a conversation that the statement is not true. He argues that the speaker is still opting out from the Cooperative principle in case of bold-faced lies and at the same time carrying out an attack on the listener's face. Therefore, Meibauer refers to bald-face lies as to a special kind of insults rather than lies (2014, 147). Sweetser, for example, also argues that if the truth of the statement is irrelevant, the person is not lying. This applies to jokes or kidding, when the primary goal of the statement is humor, not providing information. Tall tales, fiction or fantasy cannot be perceived as lies as well, since they are intended to provide artistic entertainment. Sweetser also believes that lying involves wrong moral choice on the side of a speaker. Thus, honest mistakes, when the speaker tries his best to evaluate the evidence and fails, cannot be considered lies either. Exaggerations, simplifications or understatements can or cannot be perceived as lies. If the setting is not prototypically informational and the statements do not obstruct the informational goals, they are non-lies.

On the contrary, white lies and social lies are still perceived as lies. Even in the case when would telling the truth cause more harm than false statements, they represent deliberate misinformation in serious informational context (Sweetser, 53). Thus, white lies and social lies represent the case when politeness maxims suppress truthfulness. Even if they are generally perceived as justified, they can in some cases cause harm. Therefore, they cannot be called non-lies. Fibs are produced for selfish reasons and belong to lies as well. Nonetheless, Sweetser calls them inconsequential lies, since they do not harm (54)

3. BULSHITTING

As it was already mentioned, avoidance of hedges and lack of hedges in speech can mean the speaker's lack of interest in the truth value, or in other words, speaker's lack of cooperation. There are visible parallels between this assumption and the definition of bullshitting provided by Frankfurt. He was the first who defined bullshitting in his article (1986), and later also in his book, *On Bullshit* (2009). Frankfurt provided theoretical definition of a bullshiter, emphasizing the difference between bullshitting and lying.

According to Frankfurt, bullshitting represents one of the many forms of misrepresenting and deception. The most important defining feature of bullshit is carelessness on the side of the speaker uttering the statement. In other words, the speaker is not concerned with the fact that the statement is true or false. While bullshitting, a speaker does not even have to know what the truth is. The truth value of the statement is not in the interest of a speaker since the speaker does not even attempt to find out about the true state of the things (Frankfurt 1986, 89). Bullshit often occurs in the sphere of public relations, advertisement and politics. Despite the fact that a person uttering a bullshit is not concerned with the truth value of the statement, the information provided by the bullshiter does not have to be necessarily false (1986, 92). Pretentiousness may be one of the characteristics of bullshitting, but it is not always a condition for statement to be a bullshit (1986, 86). The following chapter demonstrates the reasons why cannot be bullshitting and lying considered the same thing, even if their definitions overlaps in some aspects.

3.1. BULLSHITTING VS. LYING

What bullshitting and lying have in common is that they both try to lead away the speaker from the correct understanding off reality. Both of them can be therefore perceived as a mode of deceiving (Frankfurt 1986, 93). Although lying and bullshitting share some of their characteristics, they cannot be considered the same thing.

The most significant aspect in which lying and bullshitting differ is their content. A liar is providing false information about the state of affairs or about what he believes is the state of affairs. He is concerned with the truth value and he attempts to mislead the hearer by making a statement opposite to it (1986, 93). On the contrary, a bullshiter is not concerned with the truth value or with the real state of affairs. Instead, he provides the hearer with his perception of reality, which serves to his purpose. Therefore, it can be assumed that unlike a liar, a bullshiter provides the wrong information or false impression about his intentions and goals (1986, 93). A liar attempts to mislead a hearer with what he believes is false information, whereas a

bullshiter tries to hide his carelessness about the truth value. In addition to this, Frankfurt claims that bullshitting, involves a sort of bluff, therefore, it is closer to bluffing than lying. A bullshiter shapes the beliefs and attitudes of his listeners in a certain way and modifies the facts and reality to serve his purpose, thus, it is fakery, not falsity what matters (1986, 94).

As Frankfurt claims, people generally find lying morally worse than bullshitting. Lying is more demanding than bullshitting. This is caused by the speaker's concern with the truth value. When lying, a speaker takes into consideration the truth, which serves as a ground for building a lie. Consequently, lying involves more plotting and planning on the side of the speaker, which can be the reason why people believe that lying is more immoral than bullshitting (1986, 93). In addition to this, majority of people believe in their own ability to recognize and avoid bullshitting more than in their ability to recognize a lie (Frankfurt, 81). Unlike a liar, a bullshiter is not restricted by the truth and fakes also context. Consequently, he has greater freedom while making the statement. Contrary to the general opinion, Frankfurt believes that Bullshitting is more dangerous to our society than lying. He argues that consequences of lying tend to be less serious than the consequences of bullshitting. This can be caused partly by the fact that there is a tendency in society to tolerate bullshitting, but not lying (1986, 96).

3.1.DONALD TRUMP AND BULLSHITTING

The current president of The United States, Donald Trump is often accused of bullshitting by media and also the public. Frankfurt, himself, suggested in his article (Time 2016) that Donald Trump is a genuine example of a bullshiter. Due to the fact that Trump's intentions cannot be proven and it cannot be certainly said if he believes or not in what he is saying, it is impossible to distinguish which of his statements are lies and which of them are examples of bullshitting. In some cases, however, it is highly probable that he is bullshitting.

Frankfurt argued that the reason for high number of false statements produced by Trump is not with much likelihood his intelligence or lack of relevant information, but rather his carelessness about the truth. With regards to the fact that he is the president of The United States, he is expected to possess both, intelligence and also relevant information about subjects of a conversation. Frankfurt mentioned several examples which are more likely to be bullshits than lies. He included, for example, his contradictory statements or the statements which can be proven to be false, but also his assertions which cannot be proven or disproven. As example of the last case, the article included the statement uttered by Donald Trump that he "has the best memory in the world". Despite the fact that this statement cannot be proven, it is evident that it

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is a lie. It is highly improbable that Trump possess better memory than any winner of world memory championship and any average listener is expected to assume this even without fact-checking. Donald Trump is believed to use bullshitting as this one to create certain impression in eyes of his listeners. Frankfurt also expressed the concern about the fact that society accepts the bullshitting and lying.

Frankfurt is not the only one who accused Donald Trump of bullshitting. Jeet Heer for instance, referred to Trump as to "a bullshitting campaigner who has become the bullshitting president" in his article *Worse Than a Liar* (New Republic, 2018). Heer based his belief on the Trump's conversation with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, when they discussed U.S.-Canada trade balance. Trump disagreed with Trudeau at one point and provided him with false information. As Trump later claimed, he "had no idea" if what he said was true and he "just said it". Heer's accusations seem to be justified, since Trump's obviously lacked any interest in the truth value, which is one of the essential characteristics of bullshitting. (Frankfurt 1986, 88)

Similarly to Heer, also Eldar Sarajlic called Trump a bullshiter in the article *Donald Trump's reign of bullsh*t: He's not lying to us, he's just completely full of it* (Salon, 2016). Sarajlic believes that Trump is not hiding the truth, since he is not aware of what the truth is. He used Trump's statement that thousands of Muslims were celebrating 9/11 as an example of his bullshitting. As it is suggested in the article, Trump's production of bullshits serves to attract the attention of media and voters.

In the same vein, Fareed Zakaria called Donald Trump a "bullshit artist" on CNN television program and later also in his article *The unbearable stench of Trump's B.S.* (The Washington Post, 2016), Zakaria did so after Trump's statement that he "was in Russia…in Moscow" where he „spoke, indirectly and directly, with President Putin, who could not have been nicer." The truth is, however, that Trump had not spoken with Putin at all. The "conversation" which Trump referred to, was aired on television and consisted of two separate prerecorded interviews which took place in Moscow and New York. Zakaria described Trump's behavior as a loss of connection with reality and he argued that Trump paid no attention to the truth.

Zakaria, Heer and Sarajlic referred in their articles to the previously mentioned Harry Frankfurt's articles. Not only articles, but also websites such as *www.donaldtrumpbullshit.com* suggest that Donald Trump is perceived by society as a bullshiter. Accusation of this kind can hardly be found in connection with Trump's political opponent Hillary Clinton, or any other American politician who ran for president in the past.

3. THE POST-TRUTH AGE OF FACT-CHECKING-THE AGE OF BULLSHIT

The beginning of the post-truth age can be tracked back to 2016, when oxford dictionary team announced that the word "post-truth" is the new word of the year. The connection between the terms bullshitting and post-truth is undeniable, since the oxford dictionary defines the expression "post-truth" as "an adjective relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief". In the both cases, the facts are ignored and left out (The Oxford Dictionary 2018).

Even though the expression itself has existed for at least a decade longer, the oxford dictionary team decided to emphasize the importance of post-truth in 2016 for several reasons. One of them was the fact that the frequency of the word increased in 2016 as never before. As the team claimed, this was caused mainly by Brexit and the presidential elections which took place in in the United States that year. The political events of 2016 demonstrated the extreme danger which can be generated by fake news, which seem to be an essential part of the post-truth age. Fake news can be understood as a misinformation, which is spread intentionally. They are perceived as alternative facts, which serve as a tool in informational war (Khaldarova and Pantti 2016). Even though they are more typical for alternative media, they seem to appear more and more often also in the mainstream media (Himma-Kadakas 2017).

Since 2016, there have been efforts of governments and also some private subjects, such as technological companies, to fight this dangerous phenomenon. Government of Czech Republic, for instance, decided to set up "anti-fake news" unit in 2016, which was supposed to minimalize the fake news regarding migrants, spreading especially by the websites supported by Russia. The unit is called Centre against Terrorism and Hybrid Threats. Czech government decided to take the action before at that time upcoming presidential election (Guardian 2016).

Czech Republic, however, is not the only country trying to eliminate fake news. German government, for example, demands social media, especially *facebook*, to provide tools which would help to remove hate speech or fake news from the social media. German government even passed the law which demands the social media to take steps against the fake news in 2017. Strong government action is one of the solutions proposed by some sociologists, professors or philosophers. For example, Nayef Al-Rodhan, a Saudi philosopher and writer, mentioned this option among several other options which could serve to fight fake news. He, on the other hand, emphasized the necessity to do so without infringing upon civil liberties. Al-Rodhan proposed two other steps essential in dealing with the phenomenon of post-truth. He continued with the necessity of greater public presence for scientists and dialogue with the

scientific community. The last but not least step proposed by Al-Rodhan is improvement of the technological tools used for fact-checking (Global Policy Journal 2017).

Fake news have been affecting politics to such an extent, especially since 2016, that fact-checking became an inseparable part of politics. It became such a common practice that politicians themselves often refer to it during the debates. Considering the debates included in this thesis, this is true especially for Hilary Clinton and Barack Obama:

(9)　　*a) At some point, we need to do some fact-checking here.*
(H.C., October 9, 2016)
b) That's a -- that's -- go to the -- please, fact checkers, get to work.
(H.C., September 26, 2016)
c) Well, I hope the fact-checkers are turning up the volume and really working hard.
(H.C., September 26, 2016)
d) Nothing Governor Romney just said is true, starting with this notion of me apologizing. This has been probably the biggest whopper that's been told during the course of this campaign. And every fact checker and every reporter who's looked at it, Governor, has said this is not true.
(B.O., October 22, 2012)

Several fact-checking websites had been operating also before 2016 but their number increased radically after this year. During the presidential debates in 2016, Hilary Clinton even provided live fact-checking of the debate on her own website. Many of the websites, such as *politifact.com* or *factcheck.org* were created only to verify the statements produced by politicians, but fact-checking is often provided also by media, whose primary goal is not fact-checking, such as The Washington post or The Guardian. In order to study the connection between false statements and hedges which appeared during the debates in the practical part, three fact-checking websites were used to decide, which of the statements are true and which are false. The first of them, *politifact.com* was created by the Tampa Bay Times, a Florida newspaper, in 2007. In 2018, was the website acquired by the Poynter Institute, a nonprofit school for journalists. The second, *factcheck.org* mentioned site is a non-profit website supported by foundations and public individuals. To guarantee independence and objectivity, the website discloses the identity of any individual donor giving $1,000 or more. Fact checking does not belong to the primary activities of The Washington Post, but it is related to the topics which often appear on this website, since it focuses mostly on national politics and the federal government (thewashingtonpost.com).

Each of the fact-checking websites provides different classification of the false statements, but their approach and purpose remain the same. Some of the websites provide only

a basic distinction between true and false statements, other offer more detailed classification. This is true also for tree main sources used in the practical part of the thesis: *factcheck.org*, *politifact.com* and *washingtonpost.com.* While *factcheck* distinguishes only between *accurate* and i*naccurate* statements (the later one is in some cases marked as "false" or "not true"), *politifact* classifies the statements into several categories: *true, mostly true, half true, mostly false and pants on fire*. The statements which belong to the last category are defined as a "ridiculous claim" and thus, is the closest one to bullshitting. The *Washington post, on the contrary,* used no fixed ranking and the expressions vary, but the statements are usually mark *true, false* or *misleading*. Unlike false statements, misleading represents the case, when a speaker is not giving false information directly but he is rather provided with a wrong idea or impression that leads the hearer to the false information (Oxford Dictionaries 2018).

Despite the obvious differences in classification, the websites agree in their principles and methodology. All of the sites provide fact-checking of every statement uttered by the politicians during the debates, regardless the topic discussed. Each of the websites also provides rating of the statements based on the information known at the time when it was produced, not the information which appeared later. The sites provide explanation and primary sources for each of the statements, whether they are rated as accurate or inaccurate. The sites look at the statements from various points of view. Firstly, they try to decide whether the statement is literature true or not. Secondly, they consider all possible interpretations of the statements. The process continues with verifying of the evidence provided by the speakers or other available evidence. Since it is not always possible to prove or disprove the statement, context and probability must be taken into consideration as well (Politifact 2018, Factcheck 2018, The Washington Post 2018).

As it was explained in the previous chapters, the speakers are responsible for uttering the statements and the listeners, on the other hand, for their verifying. since we are living in the "post-truth age", the responsibility on the side on the listener has never been so necessary. Consequently, the sites as those mentioned in the previous paragraphs can represent an invaluable source of information.

4. PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES IN THE USA

The tradition of presidential debates in the United states started already in 1960. It was John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon who met for the first time to discuss the controversial issues of that time in front of the cameras. Even though the style and also the rules of the debates have changed since that time, the debate broadcasted in 1960 still remains one of the most watched

programs in the history of the USA, taking into consideration the percentage of U.S. homes equipped with TVs (CNN Money 2016).

The very first debate was watched by approximately 66 million viewers out of a population of 179 million. The first presidential debate of 2016 set a new record in almost 60 years history of the presidential debates with estimated 84 million people watching. The debate broke the record held by Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, whose only debate was watched by 80.6 million, back in 1980 (National Public Radio 2016). The most watched presidential debate of 2012 was the first one, with 67.2 million people watching (Ad week 2016).

The presidential debates in the USA usually take place in September and October, prior the election day, which is in November. Traditionally, the candidates represent one of two major parties. Since the debates have indisputable power to influence the results of the elections and they are targeted on the undecided audience and the people who do not incline to any of the main political parties, the rules have been set to maintain their objectivity. For instance, each of the candidates can answer the questions asked by the audience or by the moderators in two minutes and the opponent has another minute to react to the answer of the first candidate. The debates usually include the closing speech and rarely also the opening speech. Conventionally, during the first two debates the candidates answer questions asked by the moderator and the third debate includes the discussion with the audience.

The topics of the discussions are usually selected and announced beforehand by a moderator or agreed by both candidates. In 2012, for example, was the agreed topic of the first debate domestic policy and the foreign policy was discussed during the last of the debates. Unlike in 2012, the topics varied during each of the debates in 2016. Despite the fact that the topics discussed during the elections change after time, foreign and domestic policy represent the most common topics of the discussions.

Since false statements and politics have always gone together, a lot of false information, and even more accusations of lying appear also during the debates. Taking into consideration the viewership of the debates and the power of rhetoric skills of the speakers, political debates can represent one of the most influential and at the same time one of the most dangerous aspects of any elections.

HYPOTHESES

As discussed in the literature review, hedges can serve to shift a part of the responsibility for the truthfulness of the statement from a speaker to a hearer (Brown and Levinson, 1987, Sweetser 1987). This means that the speaker cares about the truth value of the statement and he tries to be cooperative. Thanks to the hedges, a hearer receives the signal that the evidence might have been unintentionally evaluated incorrectly and takes this fact into consideration. On the other hand, absence of hedges in speech can signal speaker's carelessness about the truth value of the statement. In other words, the speaker is not being cooperative.

Frankfurt (1986) defines a bullshiter as a careless speaker, not interested in the truth value of the statement. Consequently, a connection might exist between the frequency of hedges in the speech and the frequency of bullshitting. As it was explained in the chapter two, Donald Trump has been accused of bullshitting several times. There are not, however, any accusations of this kind concerning his opponent Hilary Clinton, or his predecessors Barack Obama or Mitt Romney. Consequently, a question which arises is, whether the frequency of hedges in Donald Trump's speech is the same, or similar, as the frequency of hedges in the speech of the other candidates. For these reasons, the first hypothesis and null hypothesis were formed as it follows:

H_1: The frequency of hedges in Donald Trump's speech is lower than the frequency of hedges in the speech of Hilary Clinton.
H_0: The frequency of hedges in Donald Trump's speech is the same, or almost the same, as the frequency of hedges in the speech Hilary Clinton.

Frankfurt believes, that there is no way how presence of bullshit can be proven or disproven. proving H_1, however, would suggest that absence of hedges might be one of the defining features of bullshitting. Frankfurt in his article (1986) and also in his book (2009) claims, that the phenomenon of bullshitting is increasing, and it occurs more and more often. Frankfurt based his belief on two main premises. Firstly, a person tends to bullshit if his obligations and opportunities excess the speaker's knowledge about the topic of the conversation or if is the person required to speak about a topic which is out of his interest. According to Frankfurt, there is a general opinion nowadays that a citizen of a democratic country should be able to express his attitude to "everything", especially to the country's affairs, which provides the space for more bullshitting (1986, 96). Secondly, Frankfurt believes that there is growing skepticism and belief that the available sources of information do not provide information necessary to decide what is the true state of affairs and what is false (1986, 96).

Consequently, instead of looking for the relevant information, an individual tends to modify the fact in the way they suit his beliefs.

Based on the Frankfurt's theory and the claim that we are living in the "post-truth age", the analysis seeks to answer the question whether the candidates running for the president in 2012 used during the presidential debates more hedges than the candidates running for the president in 2016. The hypothesis 2 as therefore formulated as it follows:

H2: The frequency of hedges in the speech of the candidates running for the president in 2012 was during the debates higher than the frequency of the hedges in the speech of the candidates running for president in 2016.
H0: The frequency of hedges in the speech of the candidates running for the president in 2012 was during the debates same, or similar, as the frequency of hedges in the speech of the candidates running for the president in 2016.

Proving H_2 would support Frankfurt's belief that bullshitting occurs in political discourse more often than in the past. The last hypothesis stems from the fact that despite the differences between lying and bullshitting, they share some of the properties. Since a bullshiter does not even try to provide true information, it is probable that the person who produces more bullshit, produces also more false statements. Therefore, the analysis provides also information, whether there is a connection between the frequency of hedges and frequency of lying. The speakers producing more lies are expected to use less hedges. Low number of hedges, together with higher number of lies in in the speech of the same candidate may suggest that the person is bullshitting. With respect to these assumptions, the last hypothesis was formed as it follows:

H3: The frequency of the false statements occurring in the speech of the candidates correlates with the frequency of the hedges.
H0: The frequency of the false statements in the speech of the candidates and the frequency of the hedges do not correlate.

Results of the analysis, which would prove the hypothesis would mean the connection between hedges and lying and they would also imply that the lack of hedges in a speech might be one of the characteristics which would suggest carelessness of the speaker about the truth value. Consequently, lack of hedges could be one of the features helping to distinguish bullshitting from lying.

PRACTICAL PART

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides information about the design of the research, describes the methods used to carry out the study and it also explains their relevance to this thesis. The following paragraphs provide more details about the sources of the data which were analyzed, the principles according to which were the data processed, as well as the techniques which were used to process the data. In addition to this, they explain the reasons why the results of the research can prove or disprove the hypothesis formed prior the research.

Processing the data involved both, quantitative and qualitative methods. The analyzed data included transcriptions of six political presidential debates. The text subjected to the analysis was produced by four speakers: Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. The political debates served as an ideal subject of the study, since the conditions under which they were produced were the same. Each of the speakers was allowed to speak approximately the same time and the speakers were required to answer questions relating to the same subject. Table1 summarizes the place and time of the debates, as well as the speakers involved in the debates. It also provides numbers of tokens produced during the debates.

PLACE	TIME	PARTICIPANTS	TOKENS
University of Denver	October 3, 2012	Obama, Romney	16309
Hofstra University	October 16, 2012	Obama, Romney	17943
Lynn University	October 22, 2012	Obama, Romney	16694
Hofstra University	September 26, 2016	Clinton, Trump	16621
Washington University	October 9, 2016	Clinton, Trump	15324
University of Nevada	October 19, 2016	Clinton, Trump	15993

Table1) Presidential debates

Firstly, hedges and boosters employed by the speakers during the debates were counted. In order to provide an objective examination of the data, a list of expressions was formed prior examining the samples. The list was created with respect to the literature included in the theoretical part, namely, Lakoff (1972), Fraser (1975), Brown and Levinson (1982) and Sweetser (1987). Secondly, the expressions were divided into several categories, according to their function. Section 1.1 contains a detailed description of the categories and the criteria used to classify the expressions. The list includes all forms of the words, such as third person or past tense of the words.

In order to avoid any inaccurate results, the expressions from the list which occurred in the text, had to be processed manually. Since the words from the list do not have to necessarily function as hedges or boosters, a manual processing was the only possible option. If a word

functioned as a hedge in the text, it was classified according to the definitions which are provided in the theoretical part. The following examples demonstrate, how can the same word appear in the text as a hedge or as a non-hedge. The examples (10)a) and (10)c) include the expressions which serve as a hedge or a booster, while the examples (10)b) and (10)d) demonstrate the cases in which were the expressions omitted, as they do not belong to any of these categories. They do not modify neither the truth value, nor evidential status of the statement.

(10)   *a) I personally believe that the steps that President Obama took saved the economy. (HC., October 19, 2016)*

b) I believe in self-reliance and individual initiative and risk takers being rewarded. (B.O., October 16, 2012)

c) They'll have at least two plans. (M.R., October 3, 2012)

d) Well, at least I have a plan to fight ISIS. (H.C., October 19, 2016)

The utterances were rated as false consistently with the fact-checking provided by following websites: *www.politifact.com, www.factcheck.org* and *thewashingtonpost.com.* The statements marked as lies consisted of the false statements, misleading utterances or the speakers' attempts to strain the facts. The statements which were marked by the websites as "not the whole truth" or "half-truth" were omitted.

The websites did not judge only the statement itself, but also the effect which the statement had on the listeners and context. For example, some of the statements which would be without any further context considered only partially false or true, were judged as false, as they were only continuation of the speaker's previous statement on the topic, which said the opposite. The statement included in example (11)a refers to the case, when Trump made a statement contradictory to his previous statements. The background of this statement is explained in more details in chapter 9. Example (11)b, on the other hand, represents the case when was the hedge *about* used to soften the statement and thus, make the statement fuzzier. The hedge, however, did not affect the truth value to such an extent, that the statement would be considered true, and it was counted as a lie. Due to the significance of the difference between the numbers, the statement remains false even if its softened by the quantitative hedge *about.* Again, the final effect on the audience was taken into consideration.

(11)   *a) I don't know Putin   b) That creates about 4 million jobs.*

In the end, the numbers of hedges and boosters which appeared during the debates were compared with the numbers of lies, to find out, whether there is a correlation between these two variables. Since the false statements represent only a small part of the text, the number of the examined expression within them is minimal. For this reason, the last section of the practical part contains a qualitative, instead of quantitative analysis.

ANALYSIS

This chapter includes a presentation and discussion of the available data. The results are divided into sections in accordance with the classification provided in the theoretical part. The graphs and the tables in this section provide detailed information about the type and frequency of the hedges used by the speakers during the debates. The chapter includes commentary on the results of the analysis, anomalies found within them and it also describes the differences between expected and obtained results.

5. QUANTITY HEDGES

The following paragraphs describe the expressions which were classified in section 1.1. as the quantity hedges. That is to say, expressions used during the debates to signal that not as much or not as precise information is provided as might be expected by the hearer, or the hedges which were used to signal that the statement is only partially true. While the table2 lists all the hedges modifying quantity and hedges referring to time or frequency, the hedges signaling class membership of the expressions are illustrated in table3.

HEDGE	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
about	5	3	8	11
almost	16	1	0	5
approximately	2	0	0	0
around	1	0	0	1
at least	0	1	0	2
bunch	0	0	0	0
couple	0	0	0	0
few	0	0	0	0
frequently	0	0	0	0
generally	1	0	4	0
most	2	2	0	0
mostly	0	1	0	0
occasionally	0	0	1	0
often	0	2	3	0
partially	0	0	0	0
rarely	0	0	0	0
rarely	0	0	0	0
roughly	0	0	0	0
seldom	0	0	0	0
several	0	2	1	2
so far	0	0	0	0
some of	10	11	13	5
sometimes	1	4	0	2
tend	1	0	0	1
usually	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	**39**	**27**	**30**	**29**

Table2) Hedges referring to quantity, time or frequency

Table 2 shows only moderate differences between the results. The speakers used the most often hedges *some of* and *about.* Sentences in Example (12) illustrate the ability of these words to influence the truth value of the statement. Example (12) a) demonstrates how Clinton used the expression *some of* to signal that not 100% of the threat comes from the countries mentioned and avoids providing false information. Example (12)c) illustrates how Romney softened the statement that half of the companies left business. This would mean that exactly 50% of the companies did so. In both cases would be the statement either false without a hedge softening them, or the speakers do not know the exact number or amount and they signal this fact. In other words, the speakers used the hedges to make the statements fuzzier and to indicate that the information provided is not as precise or as true as might be expected by the audience:

(12)   a) *Some of that threat emanates from over in Syria and Iraq, and we've got*
        to keep fighting… (H.C., October 19, 2016)   (*True*)
        b) *That threat emanates from over in Syria and Iraq, and we've got to keep fighting…*
                                                                        (*False*)
        c) *And these businesses, many of them have gone out of business, I think about half of*
        them (Romney, October 3, 2012)   (*True*)
        d) *And these businesses, many of them have gone out of business, half of them.*
                                                                        (*False*)

It can be also noted that Donald Trump used the hedge *almost* more often than the other speakers. This, however, can be caused by his tendency to repeat the same hedge, while other speakers tend to alternate the hedges. During the debates, he used the hedge *almost* 16 times, 9 of them during the first debate. Examples in 13 represent the case when he repeated the hedge three times during one turn, separated only by few words:

(13)   a) *"Look, I've been under audit <u>almost</u> for 15 years. I know a lot of wealthy people that*
        have never been audited. I said, do you get audited? I get audited <u>almost</u> every year.
        And in a way, I should be complaining. I'm not even complaining. I don't mind it. It's
        <u>almost</u> become a way of life."
        (D.T., September 26, 2016)

        b) *"<u>Almost</u> every police group, very — I mean, a large percentage of them in the United*
        States…In a place like Chicago, where thousands of people have been killed, thousands
        over the last number of years, in fact, <u>almost</u> 4,000 have been killed since Barack
        Obama became president, over — <u>almost</u> 4,000 people in Chicago have been killed."
        (D.T., September 26, 2016)

HEDGE	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
a bit	0	1	1	0
basically	3	5	3	0
fairly	0	0	0	0
kind of	0	6	1	2
largely	3	1	0	1
mainly	0	0	0	0
more or less	0	0	0	0
necessarily	0	0	1	0
overall	0	0	0	0
practically	1	0	0	0
pretty	3	4	2	4
quite	2	3	1	3
rather	0	0	0	0
somehow	0	0	2	0
somewhat	1	1	1	0
sort of	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	13	22	12	10

Table3) Hedges signaling class membership of the expressions in the category

Table3 shows only slight differences between the results as well. Example (14) illustrates, how the hedges can modify the degree of class membership. The sentence in (14a) includes the hedge *pretty,* which was used by Obama to indicate that the behavior of the companies is not one that would be typically called clever, thought it, in some sense, is. Similarly, Trump used expression basically, to hedge the verb fallen, as the action about which he is speaking would not be in most cases considered falling:

(14)   a) *But there's still a problem, because what happens is, those insurance*
          companies are <u>*pretty*</u> *clever at figuring out who are the younger and healthier seniors.*
          (B.O., October 3, 2012)
          b) *It* <u>*basically*</u> *has fallen.*
          (D.T., October 10, 2016)

6. QUALITY HEDGES

The following paragraphs provide an analysis of the quality hedges which were employed by the speakers during the debates in order to avoid the responsibility for their statements. The chapter contains an analysis of 30 quality hedges. The chapter was divided into three main parts, in accordance with the classification described in the section 1.1. Table 4 lists the quantity hedges expressing opinion or belief of the speaker, table5 includes the hedges evaluating available evidence and table 6 summarizes the hedges which were used to express probability.

HEDGE	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
actually	17	17	23	17
assumption	2	2	0	1
believe	9	12	16	19
consider	3	0	0	0
doubt	0	0	0	1
estimate	0	1	5	0
find	0	5	0	2
guess	1	2	0	0
in my mind	0	0	0	1
in my opinion	4	0	0	2
in my view	0	0	0	5
indicate	2	0	0	0
my impression	0	0	0	0
my thinking is	0	0	0	0
possibility	0	0	0	0
presume	1	0	0	0
suppose	0	0	0	0
sure	0	0	0	1
think	72	98	38	40
understand	0	1	2	2
TOTAL	111	138	84	91

Table4) Quality hedges expressing opinion or belief of the speaker

From the table above can be assumed that words expressing opinion or belief of the speakers belong to the most frequently used hedges. The speakers preferred mostly hedges *(I) think*, *actually* and *(I) believe*. Examples included in 15) represent some of the cases when were the hedges used to signal that the speaker could evaluate the available evidence incorrectly, and, consequently, they shift the responsibility for evaluating the evidence to the audience.

(15)   *a) And I think that's a mistake. (B.O., October 3, 2012)*
b) They're actually quite great. (D.T., October 9, 2016)
c) But they really want the carried interest provision, which, I believe, Hillary's leaving. (D.T., October 9, 2016)

HEDGE	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
maybe	13	10	6	2
perhaps	8	1	0	2
probably	2	2	6	4
TOTAL	23	13	12	8

Table 5) Quality hedges expressing probability

As can be noted from table 5, the hedge *maybe* was used by the speakers the most often. The sentences used in example (16) demonstrate how was the responsibility for the statement avoided, since the employed hedges signal that the statements are probably true, but they do not have to be. Thus, the responsibility to evaluate the evidence is left to the audience.

(16)   *a) First, <u>maybe</u> he's not as rich as he says he is. (H.C., September 26, 2016)*
         c)Because NAFTA, signed by her husband, is <u>perhaps</u> the greatest disaster trade deal
         in the history of the world. (D.T., October 9, 2016)
         d) This has been <u>probably</u> the biggest whopper that's been told during the course
         of this campaign. (B.O., October 22, 2012)

HEDGE	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
apparently	0	1	0	2
appear	0	0	1	0
looks like	1	0	0	0
seem	0	2	2	4
suggest	0	0	0	1
virtually	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	2	3	3	8

Table 6) Quality hedges evaluating the available evidence

As shown in table 6, the quality hedges evaluating evidence did not occur during the debates as often as the hedges from the previously mentioned categories. Nevertheless, the sentences included in example (17) demonstrate their importance in the speech, as they soften the statements and consequently, serve the speakers to avoid full responsibility for the truth value. Examples (17) a) and (17)c) represent the cases in which the speakers cannot be accused of lying if the statements are not true, since the hedges refer to the evidence which does not have to be sufficient. The hedges thus signal the fact that the speakers tried their best to evaluate the evidence correctly. On the contrary, if the hedges are absent, as in (17)b) and (17)d), the hearers can assume that the evidence is sufficient and the speakers are certain about the truthfulness of the statements. In the latter case can be the speakers accused of lying, in case that the statements are false.

(17)   *a) Whether it's 6 or 5, but it <u>looks like</u> it's 6, $6 trillion in the Middle East,*
         we could have rebuilt our country twice. (D.T., September 26, 2016)
         b) Whether it's 6 or 5, but it's 6, $6 trillion in the Middle East,
         we could have rebuilt our country twice.
         c) This <u>seems to</u> be a trend. (B.O., October 3, 2012)
         d) This is a trend

SPEAKER	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
HEDGES	188	203	141	146

Table 7) Numbers of all hedges used during the debates by each of the speakers

From the tables contained in this chapter can be assumed that the numbers of hedges used by the speakers in 2016 are slightly higher than the numbers of hedges used in 2012. Despite the fact that the difference is not conclusive, it can be assumed that the results are contrary to the expectations and the hypotheses 3. As it can be noted, the highest number of quality hedges was employed by Clinton, who used them 203 times. The results achieved by Clinton differ the most from Obama, who used the quality hedges only 141 times.

7. BOOSTERS

Although boosters do not represent the primary interest of this thesis, they are capable of modifying the evidentiality status of statements, therefore, the practical part provides also an analysis of these expressions. The following paragraphs describe the analysis of 320 boosters which are divided into three main groups. Table 8 includes the boosters directly pushing on the hearer's belief system or expressing speaker's certainty about the truthfulness of the statement. Number of the boosters expressing amount, frequency or absolute class membership of a word is demonstrated in table 9, and the boosters signaling high evidentiality status of the statement are listed in table 10.

BOOSTER	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
believe me	9	1	0	0
certainly	6	4	3	4
definitely	1	0	1	0
indeed	0	5	0	0
(I) know	6	10	4	19
(in) fact (that)	14	17	21	17
no doubt	3	3	3	0
sure	4	0	0	3
trust me	0	0	0	0
truth(is)	9	4	12	3
TOTAL	52	44	44	46

Table 8) boosters directly pushing on the hearer's belief system or expressing speaker's certainty

As can be seen in table 8, the speakers tended to use the boosters which refer directly to the facts or the expressions directly stating that the statement is true. Boosters in (18)a) and (18)b) represent the examples of cases, when the audience received a signal that the speakers

evaluated the evidence and found it sufficient to make an assumption that the provided information is correct.

(18)   a) And, _in fact_, violent crime is one-half of what it was in 1991.
        (H.C. September 26, 2016)
        b) _The truth, though, is_ that Al Qaeda is much weaker than it was when I came into office.
        (B.O. October 22, 2012)

The boosters included in examples (19)a) and (19)b) do not refer to the facts and evidence, such as the examples in the previous paragraph, but they push on the belief system directly. By using them, speakers require the hearers to believe that they are trustworthy and capable of evaluating the evidence.

(19)   a) We have a divided nation, because people like her — and _believe me_, she has tremendous hate in her heart. (D.T., October 9, 2016)
        b) And _I know_ Donald's trying very hard to plant doubts about it, but I hope the people out there understand (H.C., September 26, 2016)

BOOSTER	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
absolute(ly)	1	6	7	7
always	4	3	6	3
never	26	15	5	10
really	31	30	3	3
total(ly)	9	0	0	2
TOTAL	71	54	21	25

Table 9) Boosters expressing certainty of the speakers

The expressions displayed in table 8) represent the only group of hedges in which the numbers differed. From the table above can be assumed that the 2016 speakers used considerably higher number of hedges which refer to frequency or which modify class membership of the expression, than the 2012 speakers. The difference is caused by higher frequency of the word _never,_ especially in Trump's case, and word _really_. Examples (20)a) and (20)b) represent the situations in which the word _really_ reinforces the class membership.

(20)   a) He worked _really_ hard. (H.C., September 26, 2016)
        b) And it's _really_ a shame. (D.T., October 9, 2016)

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BOOSTER	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
clearly	0	4	0	0
conceivably	0	0	0	0
evidently	0	0	0	0
indisputably	0	0	0	0
obviously	1	4	1	4
unarguably	0	0	0	0
unquestionably	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	1	8	1	4

table 10) Boosters signaling high evidentiality status of the statements

The boosters illustrated in (21)a) and (21)b), can be perceived as kind of opposites to the hedges included in chapter 7, table 6, since they reinforce the evidential status of the statements. They serve to signal the fact that the evidence evaluated by the speakers was more than sufficient. They demonstrate that the speakers are certain about the truthfulness of the statements and also about the fact that the evidence was evaluated correctly. The expressions contained in table 10 embody the least frequently used class of boosters. The sentences included in example 21 demonstrate some of the cases when they appeared in the debates.

(21) *a) But you are <u>very clearly</u> quoting from WikiLeaks. (D.T., October 9, 2016)*
b) And -- and that upset them, but <u>obviously</u>, there was a great deal of anger even before that. (M.R., October 22, 2012)

SPEAKER	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
BOOSTERS	124	106	66	75

Table 11) Overall results- Boosters

The figure above illustrates the number of the boosters used by the speakers. It can be noted that speakers used more boosters during the debates in 2016 than the speakers in 2012. From the table can be also assumed that Donald Trump used the highest number boosters. While the difference between Trump and Clinton is minimal, the difference between Trump and thw 2012 speakers, especially Obama, is considerable. As the numbers show, Trump used almost once as much quality boosters as Obama, who employed them only 66 times.

9. HEDGES AND BOOSTERS IN THE FALSE STATEMENTS

Unlike the previous parts of the analysis, this chapter examines only those hedges and boosters uttered by the candidates, which modified the false statements. Contrary to the previous chapters, this section includes also those expressions which did not appear on the lists formed prior the analysis. The tables contained in this chapter summarize the statements which were

marked by the websites *politifact.com, factcheck.org* and *thewashingtonpost.com* as false. Tables 11 and 12 comprise the statements which were rated as either *inaccurate*, *incorrect, false* or *not true* by *factcheck.org* and *thewashingtonpost.com* or those rated as *false*, *mostly false* or *pants on fire* by *politifact.com*. The categories of the false statements which are included in this section are explained in more details in the theoretical part, chapter 4.

Since the length of the sentences does not always correspond with the length of the false statements, the false statements are marked with bold letters. The rest of the sentence is not omitted in order to provide further context in which they were uttered. Some of the sentences include a hedge(H) or a booster(B), which is, however, not always a part of the inaccurate statement, as showed in example (22). The example includes the hedge *I think,* which is used in the sentence to soften the claim that Clinton should apologize, not the statement that she acid washed 33000 e-mails, which was rated as false. In the cases similar to this one, hedges and boosters were not counted.

(22)   *"...I think the one that you should really be apologizing for and the thing that you should be apologizing for are the 33,000 e-mails that you deleted, and that you acid washed"* (D.T., October 9,2016)

Table 12 comprises the false statements uttered by Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump during the presidential debates in 2016. The debates were held in New York, Missouri and Nevada. The candidates disagreed mainly about the immigration policy, abortions, gun policy or situation in Iraq and both of the speakers made also several unsupported accusations. Trump, for example, accused Clinton of losing 6$ billion. On the other hand, Clinton also made several wrong accusations during the debates, for instance, she accused Trump of deporting foreign workers working on the Trump Tower, without any evidence.

The speakers also had to defend themselves when they were confronted with the accusations made by media or public. While Clinton had to explain the situation with the deleted e-mails, Trump had a hard time explaining the accusations of sexual assault. The table below sums up all the false statements which occurred during the debates in 2016.

SPEAKER	FALSE STATEMENT	H	B
2016 Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York September 26			
D.T.	"…**because they're (China) using our country as a piggy bank** to rebuild China, and many other countries are doing the same thing"	X	X
D.T.	"…**my father gave me a <u>very</u> small loan in 1975**, and I built it into a company that's worth many, many billions of dollars…"	X	✓
D.T.	**"I did not. I did not. I do not say that."** ... **"I do not say that."** (that climate change is a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese)	X	X
D.T.	**"But you will learn more about Donald Trump by going down to the federal elections, where I filed a 104-page essentially financial statement of sorts, the forms that they have."**	X	X
H.C.	**"…he's paid nothing in federal taxes,** because the only years that anybody's ever seen were a couple of years when he had to turn them over to state authorities when he was trying to get a casino license, and **they showed he didn't pay any federal income tax."**	X	X
D.T.	**"They were pressing it** (birther movement stories) **<u>very hard</u>. She failed to get the birth certificate."**	X	✓
H.C.	"I was so shocked **when Donald publicly invited Putin to hack into Americans.** That is just unacceptable."	X	X
D.T.	"But I said they have to focus on terror, also. And they're going to do that. **And that was, <u>believe me,</u>** I'm sure I'm not going to get credit for it -- **but that was <u>largely</u> because of what I was saying and my criticism of NATO.**	✓	✓
D.T.	**"I did not support the war in Iraq"**	X	X
D.T.	"We defend Japan, we defend Germany, we defend South Korea, we defend Saudi Arabia, we defend countries**. They do not pay us."**	X	X
D.T.	**"China is totally powerful as it relates to North Korea."**	X	X
D.T.	(the Obama administration's payment to Iran) **"was one of the great giveaways of all time, including $400 million in cash. Nobody's ever seen that before. That turned out to be wrong.**	X	X
Washington University in St. Louis St. Louis, Missouri October 9, 2016			
H.C.	**"you know, we are now for the first time ever energy-independent. We are not dependent upon the Middle East. But the Middle East still controls a lot of the prices."**	X	X
D.T.	**"No, there wasn't check out a sex tape. It was just take a look at the person that she built up to be this wonderful Girl Scout who was no Girl Scout."**	X	X
D.T.	"But I will tell you what isn't fictionalized are her **e-mails, where she destroyed 33,000 e-mails criminally, criminally, after getting a subpoena from the United States Congress."**	X	X
D.T.	"…I think the one that you should really be apologizing for and the thing that you should be apologizing for are the **33,000 e-mails that you deleted, and that you acid washed**"	X	X
D.T.	"Her client she represented got him off, and **she's seen laughing on two separate occasions, laughing at the girl who was raped."**	X	X
D.T.	"But **she is raising everybody's taxes massively.**"	X	X
H.C.	**"And, <u>indeed</u>, the way that he talks about his tax cuts would end up raising taxes on middle-class families, millions of middle-class families."**	X	✓
H.C.	**"No, I wasn't** (in the office when there was a red line against Syria). **I was gone."**	X	X
D.T.	"…it's the Iran deal that you're so in love with, where **we gave them $150 billion back…it's the Iran deal…** it's a one-sided transaction where **we're giving back $150 billion to a terrorist state, <u>really,</u> the number one terror state, we've made them a strong country from <u>really</u> a <u>very</u> weak country** just three years ago	X	✓
D.T.	**"No, there wasn't check out a sex tape. It was just take a look at the person that she built up to be this wonderful Girl Scout who was no Girl Scout."**	X	X
D.T.	**"Also, the Second Amendment, which is totally under siege by people like Hillary Clinton."**	X	X
University of Nevada, Las Vegas Paradise, Nevada, October 19, 2016			
D.T.	"…but the Second Amendment, which is under absolute siege. **I believe if my opponent should win this race**, which I truly don't think will happen, **we will have a Second Amendment which will be a <u>very, very</u> small replica of what it is right now**."	✓	✓
D.T.	**"Hillary wants to give amnesty. She wants to have open borders."**	X	X
D.T.	**"I don't know Putin"**	X	X
D.T.	**"Her plan is going to raise taxes and even double your taxes."**	X	X
H.C.	"He used undocumented labor to build the Trump Tower. **He underpaid undocumented workers, and when they complained, he <u>basically</u> said what a lot of employers do: "You complain, I'll get you deported.""**	✓	X

H.C.	"I disagreed with the way the court applied the Second Amendment in that case, **because what the District of Columbia was trying to do was to protect toddlers from guns** and so they wanted people with guns to safely store them."	X	X
D.T.	"Just like **when you ran the State Department, $6 billion was missing. …**You ran the State Department, **$6 billion was either stolen.** They don't know**. It's gone, $6 billion.**"	X	X
D.T.	"**She gave us ISIS, because her and Obama created this huge vacuum, and a small group came out of that huge vacuum** because when -- we should never have been in Iraq, but once we were there, we should have never got out the way they wanted to get out. **She gave us ISIS** <u>as sure as you are sitting there.</u>"	X	✓
D.T.	"Well, first of all**, those stories have been largely debunked**"	X	✓
D.T.	**"Wrong"** (denying the statement that he mocked and mimicked the disabled reporter on national television)	X	X
D.T.	**"Buffett took hundreds of millions of dollars, Soros, George Soros, took hundreds of millions of dollars...Most of her donors have done the same thing as I do."**	X	X
D.T.	**"This is coming from Pew report and other places -- millions of people that are registered to vote that shouldn't be registered to vote."**	X	X
D.T.	**"Wrong."**	X	X
D.T.	**"We gave them $150 billion back."**	X	X
D.T.	**"We take care of illegal immigrants, people that come into the country illegally, better than we take care of our vets."**	X	X

Table 12) false statement uttered by the 2016 speakers

What can be clearly seen in table 12 is that when lying, boosters were favored by the speakers more than hedges. While boosters appeared in the speech twelve times, hedges were used by the speakers only four times. The table also demonstrates that the number of hedges in the false statements did not differ significantly. On the contrary, the number of boosters uttered by Trump is considerably higher than the number of boosters used by Clinton.

Clinton used a booster only once while lying, namely, when she was talking about Trump's tax plan. In this case, the booster *indeed* served to strengthen the claim that taxes of millions of middle-class families will rise. The booster emphasized the impression that the speaker is certain about the truthfulness of the statement. On the other hand, Clinton employed the hedge *basically* to soften her wrong accusation of Trump, when she claimed that he deported the workers who complained about the working conditions. The expression was used to hedge the accuracy of the claim but the hedge itself did not change the truth value of the statement to such an extent that the statement would change from false to true.

Clinton's opponent Trump did not use many of the hedges in his false statements either. The qualitative hedge *I believe* appeared when Trump misrepresented Clinton's intentions with gun policy. The second, quantitative hedge, *largely* was used by Trump to soften the claim that NATO started to fight terrorism only because it was suggested by him. The false statements uttered and hedged by Trump, however, differ from the Clinton's in an interesting way. Each of the two hedged statements was at the same time strengthened by a booster, as demonstrated in examples (23)a) and (23)b).

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(23)   *a) I said they have to focus on terror, also. And they're going to do that. And that was,* <u>*believe me*</u>*, I'm sure I'm not going to get credit for it -- but that was* <u>*largely*</u> *because of what I was saying and my criticism of NATO.*

b) "...but the Second Amendment, which is under <u>*absolute*</u> *siege.* <u>*I believe*</u> *if my opponent should win this race, which I* <u>*truly*</u> *don't* <u>*think*</u> *will happen, we will have a Second Amendment which will be a* <u>*very, very*</u> *small replica of what it is right now."*

From the results can be also observed that a single word can function as both, a hedge and a booster, if used in a different context and co-text. Examples (24)a) and (24)c) represent the case when the words *believe* and *largely* function as hedges, while examples (24)b) and 24)d) contain the statements where the same words serve as boosters :

(24)   *a) I said they have to focus on terror, also. And they're going to do that. And that was,* <u>*believe me*</u>*, I'm sure I'm not going to get credit for it -- but that was largely because of what I was saying and my criticism of NATO.*

b) "...but the Second Amendment, which is under absolute siege. <u>*I believe*</u> *if my opponent should win this race, which I truly don't think will happen, we will have a Second Amendment which will be a very, very small replica of what it is right now."*

c)Well, first of all, those stories have been <u>*largely*</u> *debunked"*

d)I'm not going to get credit for it -- but that was <u>*largely*</u> *because of what I was saying and my criticism of NATO.*

Probably the strongest booster pushing directly on the listener's belief system which can be found not only in in the Trump's speech but in in the analyzed speeches in general, is the expression *as sure as you are sitting here,* which appeared when he falsely accused Clinton of starting the war in Iraq and giving the USA to ISIS. In addition to these expressions, the false statements uttered by trump contained mostly boosters expressing amount, frequency or class membership of the word, such as *very* or *really*, which appeared in the false statements eight times. Trump favored especially the booster *very,* which was included in the statements five times.

Table 13 provides a summary of the false statements uttered by the 2012 speakers and highlights the hedges and boosters which were part of them. The debates took place in New York, St. Louis and Nevada. As in 2016, the presidential debates which were held in 2012 offered plenty of space for a disagreement between the speakers. One of the discussed topics was adequacy of the government's intervention in creating jobs. Other topics discussed during the debates included for example foreign policy, Obamacare or gun control. The candidates were in very different positions during the debates. While Obama had to defend the actions

taken during the years that he spent in the office, Romney had to persuade the audience about his competences for the position. Obama was blamed mostly for the economic decline in the past years, Romney, on the other hand, was accused of flip-flopping on foreign policy and important international issues. The table below summarizes all the false statements which were uttered by the 2012 speakers during the presidential debates.

SPEAKER	FALSE STATEMENTS	H	B
University of Denver, Denver, Colorado October 3, 2012			
B.O.	"Look, Governor Romney's called for $5 trillion of tax cuts that he says he's going to pay for by closing deductions."	X	X
M.R.	"My number-one principal is, there will be no tax cut that adds to the deficit. I want to underline that: no tax cut that adds to the deficit."	X	✓
M.R.	"There are six other studies that looked at the study you describe and say it's completely wrong. I saw a study that came out today that said you're going to raise taxes by $3,000 to $4,000 on middle-income families."	X	✓
B.O.	"And over the last two years, health care premiums have gone up -- it's true -- but they've gone up slower than any time in the last 50 years."	X	X
M.R.	"Number three, it puts in place an unelected board that's going to tell people ultimately what kind of treatments they can have."	X	X
B.O.	"Over the last 30 months, we've seen 5 million jobs in the private sector created."	X	X
M.R.	"The president said he'd cut the deficit in half. Unfortunately, he doubled it. Trillion-dollar deficits for the last four years. The president's put it in place as much public debt -- almost as much debt held by the public as al prior presidents combined."	✓	X
B.O.	"But I have said that for incomes over $250,000 a year, that we should go back to the rates that we had when Bill Clinton was president, when we created 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to surplus, and created a whole lot of millionaires to boot."	X	X
M.R.	"Under the president's policies, middle-income Americans have been buried. They're just being crushed. Middle-income Americans have seen their income come down by $4,300. This is a -- this is a tax in and of itself. I'll call it the economy tax. It's been crushing."	X	✓
B.O.	"…I've put forward a specific $4 trillion deficit reduction plan. It's on a website.	X	X
M.R.	"Right now, the CBO says up to 20 million people will lose their insurance as Obamacare goes into effect next year."	X	X
M.R.	"And it's not working. And the proof of that is 23 million people out of work."	X	✓
M.R.	"The proof of that is that 50 percent of college graduates this year can't find work."	X	✓
M.R.	"If the president were to be reelected you're going to see a $716 billion cut to Medicare. You'll have 4 million people who will lose Medicare Advantage… I'll restore that $716 billion to Medicare."	X	X
Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York, October 16, 2012			
B.O.	"Governor Romney says he wasn't referring to Arizona as a model for the nation. His top adviser on immigration is the guy who designed the Arizona law, the entirety of it…"	X	X
B.O.	"So, for example, on wind energy, when Governor Romney says these are imaginary jobs, when you've got thousands of people right now in Iowa, right now in Colorado, who are working, creating wind power …"	X	X
M.R.	"I am not going to have people at the high end pay less than they're paying now."	X	X
M.R.	"A recent study has shown the people in the middle-class will see $4,000.00 per year in higher taxes as a result of the spending and borrowing of this administration."	X	X
M.R.	"in the last years, women have lost 580,000 jobs. That's the net of what's happened in the last four years. We're still down 580,000 jobs."	X	X
M.R.	"But I have said that for incomes over $250,000 a year, that we should go back to the rates that we had when Bill Clinton was president, when we created 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to surplus, and created a whole lot of millionaires to boot."	X	X
M.R.	"I want to make sure we keep our Pell grant program growing."	X	X

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M.R.	"…incomes go down $4,300 a family, even as **gasoline prices have gone up $2,000.**"	**X**	**X**
M.R.	"…he would cut the deficit in half. **Instead, he's doubled it.**"	**X**	**X**
M.R.	"How in the world **the president said no to that pipeline?**"	**X**	**X**
M.R.	"He hasn't done that either. **In fact,** he doubled it. He said that by now middle-income families would have a reduction in their health insurance premiums by $2,500 a year. **It's gone up by $2,500 a year. And if Obamacare is passed or implemented -- it's already been passed -- if it's implemented fully, it'll be another $2,500 on top.**"	**X**	✓
M.R.	"**He said that by now we'd have unemployment at 5.4 percent.**"	**X**	**X**
Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida, October 22, 2012			
B.O.	"**And you said we should ask Pakistan for permission.**"	**X**	**X**
B.O.	"**That's not true.** … **[W]hat I would not have done is left 10,000 troops in Iraq that would tie us down.**"	**X**	**X**
M.R.	"Our Navy is old, excuse me, **our Navy is smaller now than at any time since 1917.**"	**X**	**X**
B.O.	"**Governor Romney, that's not what you said. … Governor Romney, you did not... You did not say that you would provide government help. Let's check the record… Governor, the people in Detroit don't forget… The fact of the matter is.. No, I am not wrong. I am not wrong.**"	**X**	✓
M.R.	"**The president's policies throughout the Middle East began with an apology tour** and -- and -- and pursue a strategy of leading from behind, and this strategy is unraveling before our very eyes."	**X**	**X**
M.R.	"**While I was governor, I was proud that our fourth graders came out number one of all 50 states in English, and then also in math. And our eighth graders number one in English and also in math. First time one state had been number one in all four measures.**"	**X**	**X**
B.O.	"**Governor Romney, I'm glad that you recognize that al Qaeda's a threat because a few months ago when you were asked, what's the biggest geopolitical threat facing America, you said Russia — not al Qaeda, you said Russia.**"	**X**	**X**
M.R.	"**They look at the fact that we owe 'em a trillion dollars and owe other people $16 trillion in total, including that.**"	**X**	✓
M.R.	"**In the 2000 debates, there was no mention of terrorism, for instance. And a year later, 9/11 happened.**"	**X**	**X**

Table 13) summary of the statements uttered by the 2012 speakers.

From table 13 can be assumed that as in the previous part of the analysis, the number of hedges used in the false statements is considerably lower than the number of boosters. The only hedge which appeared in the false statements was the qualitative hedge *almost,* uttered by Romney, when he used it to soften the claim about the debt created by Obama. None of the hedges appeared in the false statements uttered by Obama.

On the contrary, the analysis of the boosters showed the difference between the speakers. While Obama used only one booster when lying (*the fact of the matter is*), the false statements of his opponent included eight expressions which belong to the boosters. Despite the different number of the boosters, the speakers used the expressions which belong to the same category. They favored the expressions containing the words like *fact* or *proof*, which belong to the boosters increasing the evidential status of the statements. The statements included only one booster pushing directly on the hearer's belief system and only two of the expressions modified the membership of the word in the category.

The lack of hedges may, as in the case of the 2016 speakers, suggest the effort to avoid fuzziness while lying. The claim can be supported also by the fact that a large part of the statements consisted of simple and clear denials. Especially when denying accusations, the

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speakers tended to avoid the contracted forms and tried to make the statements less fuzzy. The statements included in example (25) represent some of these cases.

> (25)   *a) "I <u>did not</u>. I <u>did not</u>. I <u>do not</u> say that." ... "I <u>do not</u> say that." (that climate change is a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese)*
> *(D.T. September 26. 2016)*
> *"I <u>did not</u> support the war in Iraq"*
> *(D.T. September 26, 2016)*
> *b) "That's <u>not</u> true. ... [W]hat I <u>would not</u> have done is left 10,000 troops in Iraq that would tie us down."*
> *(B.O. October 22, 2012)*
> *c)Governor Romney, that's <u>not</u> what you said. ... Governor Romney, you <u>did not</u>... You <u>did not</u> say that you would provide government help. Let's check the record... Governor, the people in Detroit don't forget... The fact of the matter is... No, I <u>am not</u> wrong. I <u>am not</u> wrong."*
> *(B.O. October 22, 2012)*

Looking at the false statements and their rating provided by the websites, one more difference can be spotted between the speakers, especially between Trump and the other candidates. Some of the false statements which appeared in Trump's speech could be called obvious lies. In other words, his speech included several statements, which could be considered false without any further fact-checking. Website *politifact.com* even rated some of these statements as "pants on fire". Trump was the only one of the speakers whose statements were labeled like this. The statements, for example, included his lie about the Trump's well-known tweet, which included the sentence "check out the sex tape". During the second presidential debate, Trump claimed that "there wasn't check out a sex tape. It was just take a look at the person that she built up to be this wonderful Girl Scout who was no Girl Scout."

Politifact.com rated another two statements uttered by Trump which appeared during the first presidential debate as "pants on fire". It was when he claimed that his opponent Clinton lost 6$ billion and the claim that millions of registered voters in the USA are not supposed to vote. In addition to this, the last presidential debate included Trump's claim, that he does not know Putin. This statement was rated by the website as "full flop", since Trump, himself, claimed in the past that they "do have a relationship" (2013), that they "spoke, indirectly and directly, with President Putin" (2014) and that he "got to know him very well" (2015). Considering these statements, it can be assumed that Donald Trump is careless about the truth value and the fact that the statements can be easily detected as false. Consequently, what Trump was doing can be perceived as bullshitting, since carelessness represents the most important

characteristic of bullshitting. As the summary of the false statements shows, no statements similar to those of Trump's can be spotted in the speech of the other candidates.

In conclusion, no considerable difference can be spotted between the frequency of hedges and boosters in the false statements of the 2012 speakers and in the false statements of the 2016 speakers, but there is a visible change considering the category of the boosters. While the 2016 statements included mostly the expressions which belong to the category of boosters pushing directly on the belief system of the audience and quantity hedges modifying the membership of the expression, the 2012 statements included more boosters modifying the evidentiality status of the statements. The 2016 statements included no booster which would belong to this category. The change in the category of hedges may imply the change in the nature of the lies.

7. RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS

Both, the quantitative and qualitative analysis showed unexpected results. The first part of this chapter interprets the results of the quantitative analysis and offers an interpretation of the results with regards to the hypotheses. The later part of this chapter discusses the results of the qualitative analysis and sums up the findings of the practical part of the thesis. Table 14 comprises the overall results of the quantitative analysis.

SPEAKER	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
HEDGES	188	203	141	146
BOOSTERS	124	106	66	75
F. STATEMENTS	31	7	11	24

Table 14) Overall results of the analysis

As the table shows, the results support H^1, which expected a higher number of hedges in Clinton's speech than in Trump's speech. The difference between the results, however, is not significant enough to claim that the hypothesis was definitely proven. On the other hand, the differences between the numbers can unquestionably disprove the second hypothesis, which expected the 2012 speakers to use a higher number of hedges than the 2016 speakers. As it is visible in the table, the analysis brought the opposite findings. The third hypotheses which presumed correlation between the occurrence of hedges and occurrence of false statements also has not been proven. The hypotheses presumed that the speaker with the lowest number of lies employs the highest number of hedges. As the table shows, this is true for Clinton, but since Trump, whose number of lies was the highest of all candidates did not use the lowest number of hedges, the results do not support the hypothesis.

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Despite the fact that the qualitative analysis showed opposite numbers than expected and H[1], H[2], and H[3] have not been proven, it brought valuable results in the field which was not the primary target of the analysis. As the table shows, the number of boosters was higher in the cases of the speakers who lied the most. It can be also noticed, that the 2016 speakers employed boosters more often than the 2012 speakers. As it can be observed, this is true especially for Trump, whose number of the boosters, as well as the number of false statements, are considerably higher than the numbers of false statements and boosters in the speech of the other speakers. Thus, from the table can be concluded that instead of hedges, there might be a possible correlation between boosters and bullshitting. This claim can be supported also by the qualitative analysis. Since the false statements included only minimal numbers of hedges, as demonstrated in table 15, the only significant conclusion which can be made by examining this class of expressions is, that the speakers tried to avoid fuzziness and, consequently, also hedges when lying.

SPEAKER	FALSE STATEMENTS	HEDGES IN F.S.	BOOSTERS IN F.S.
TRUMP	31	2	11
CLINTON	7	1	1
OBAMA	11	0	1
ROMNEY	24	1	7

Table 15) Hedges and boosters in the false statements

The qualitative analyses of boosters, however, suggest that the nature of the lies which appeared in the speech of the candidates during the debates in 2012 and 2016 differs. The analysis of the boosters showed that the 2012 speakers used the boosters from other category than the 2016 speakers. While the 2012 preferred the boosters pushing directly on the belief system of the audience, the 2016 speakers tended to use the boosters reinforcing the evidentiality status of the statements.

These results might suggest the interest of the 2016 speakers in the final effect of the statement on the hearer, while the choice of the boosters used by the 2012 may signify their interest in the truth value. To conclude, the qualitative analysis suggests that the nature of lies has changed and that the final effect on the audience became more desirable than truthfulness of the statements. The fact that the winner of the 2012 elections was the candidate who lied less, and the 2016 elections were dominated by the candidate who lied the most also works in favor of this claim. That is to say, the qualitative analysis supports the belief that bullshitting and post-truth appears in the political discourse more often than before 2016.

DISCUSSION

As it was already explained in the first, theoretical part of the thesis, the thesis was primary focused on the prevalence of hedges in the political discourse**.** The results of the analysis and the fact that none of the hypotheses was definitely proven showed, that boosters represent the category which would deserve more attention in the field of pragmatics. As it could be noticed in the literature review, the attention was paid mostly to the hedges and they were discussed in relation to the cooperative principle, the truth value or evidentiality status. The authors discussed the role of hedges and their final effect on the listener, but the effect of the boosters was mentioned only marginally.

The theoretical part, which comprises the most influential works in this field, also does not include any detailed classification of boosters, such as in the case of hedges. The results of the analysis showed that boosters may deserve more attention in the field of pragmatics, as they can have the same, if not a greater effect on the speaker and the speaker's belief system. There is a reason to believe that the concept of hedged performatives proposed by Fraser (1975) would also deserve greater attention. The following figure demonstrates the number of modals which appeared in the speech of the speakers during the debates.

MODAL	TRUMP	CLINTON	OBAMA	ROMNEY
can	53	70	71	71
could	29	15	14	27
may	2	5	6	4
might	5	6	6	5
should	58	31	32	26
would	44	73	55	53
total	**191**	**200**	**184**	**186**

Table 16) Modal verbs

As explained in the theoretical part, under certain circumstances, even modals can function as hedges. Since any detailed description or classification of hedged performatives is missing, this thesis does not include any analysis of these hedges. Without any fixed rules, it cannot be objectively decided in which cases the modals serve as hedges and in which they do not. A manual processing of the data, which would be the only possible option, would become highly subjective and, consequently, their analysis would not bring any valuable results. While analyzing the modal verbs occurring in the speech of the candidates, the ability of the expressions to modify not only the force, but also the evidentiality status of the expressions would have to be judged. This part of the analysis would be very subjective as well, as the meaning and function of the expressions can be fuzzy.

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The analysis included in the practical part showed several surprising and unexpected results. The differences between the numbers, however, were not significant enough to prove the hypothesis. One of the reasons is, that the analysis focused on a relatively short time period. Firstly, the hypotheses were based on the premise that the year 2016 was the turning point, when the "truth" changed to the "post-truth". For more detailed study of the development of lies and bullshitting, a larger amount of data would be needed. The data necessary for the further study could be provided by the 2020 elections.

Secondly, the research could not go further into the past and study the presidential debates from the elections prior 2012, as the fact-checking in the form as it appears nowadays, was not available at that time. None of the sites used for the analysis provides fact-checking of the debates older than 2012. Thus, an objective analysis of the data would not be possible. The analysis, however, still suggest ongoing change in connection with lying and political discourse, despite the short time period which was examined.

The results of the analysis create the space for the further research, which could develop in several possible ways. Not only the categories and functions of boosters could be examined in more details, but also modal verbs functioning as hedges. A syntactic analysis of the false statements and also presidential debates in general could bring interesting results as well, maybe even the results which would help to define and distinguish bullshitting, which represents one of the most dangerous phenomenon of these days.

CONCLUSION

The first, theoretical part of the thesis provided an overview of the literature focusing on the cooperative principle, lying, deceiving and bullshiting, as well as the literature describing functions and importance of hedges and boosters. The theoretical part also explained the connections between these terms. The later chapters of the theoretical part portrayed the connection between hedges, bullshitting and "post-truth age". This part emphasized the danger which can both, bullshitting and fake news represent and describes possible solutions and steps which could be implemented to fight these phenomena.

The literature included in the theoretical part served as a base for the classification of the examined expressions, which was used in the quantitative and qualitative analysis. The aim of the practical part of the thesis was to examine a possible existence of a connection and correlation between the lack of hedges in a speech and bullshitting. Although none of the hypothesis was definitely proven by quantitative or qualitative analysis, and the lack of hedges cannot be considered one of the defining features of bullshitting, the study has brought unexpected, but valuable results. As the analyses demonstrated, boosters, which seem to be often overlooked in the field of pragmatics, can play more important role in defining bullshit than their opposites, hedges.

Firstly, the analysis supports the claim that there might be a connection between the occurrence of boosters and the occurrence of lies which appear in the political discourse, since their number correlates with the number of lies. Secondly, the prevalence of hedges in the speech of Donald Trump and the nature of boosters used during the debates in 2016 also suggest a possible connection between boosters and bullshitting. The changing nature of boosters and lies shows increasing importance of the effect which the statements have on hearers and their belief systems, as well as decreasing importance of the truth value of the statements.

A further study of boosters, which would require a larger amount of data and, consequently, a longer time period to examine, could answer the question, whether boosters can serve as one of the defining characteristics of bullshitting or not. Even if the results of the analysis included in this thesis support this belief, the differences between the numbers gained during the research are not significant enough to scientifically prove this claim.

The results of the thesis support the belief that we are living in the age of post-truth, that is to say, in the age where bullshitting and fake news represent one of the most dangerous elements influencing the decision making in the society. The power of political debates, which are regularly viewed by audience consisting of millions of people, is unquestionable. A detailed definition of bullshitting, which would help to distinguish between this phenomenon and lies,

could, together with fact-checking of the debates, serve as one of the tools in the fight that many countries are leading against fake news and post-truth.

RESUMÉ

Prvá, teoretická časť tejto práce, poskytla súhrn literatúry, ktorá sa zaoberá kooperačným princípom, klamstvom či bullshittingom a taktiež súhrn teórií, ktoré opisujú nátúru a funkcie hedžov. Teoretická časť tiež vysvetľuje spojitosť medzi spomínanými javmi. V druhej polovici pojednáva teoretická časť o spojitosti medzi hedžmi, bullshittingom a takzvanou post-truth dobou. Táto časť kladie dôraz aj na nebezpečenstvo, ktoré so sebou prinášajú bullshiting a fake news a vysvetľuje možné riešenia, ktoré by sa dali implementovať a ktoré by mohli byť nápomocné v boji proti týmto javom.

Literatúra použitá v teoretickej časti poslúžila ako základ pre klasifikáciu hedžov a boostrov, na ktorej bola založená kvantitatívna, ako aj kvalitatívna analýza. Praktická časť mala za úlohu zistiť, či je možné, že medzi nedostatkom hedžov v reči a bullshitingom existuje spojitosť alebo korelácia.

Aj napriek tomu, že sa nepodarilo definitívne potvrdiť ani jednu zo sformovaných hypotéz a nedostatok hedžov v reči nemôže byť vnímaný ako jedna z typických vlastností bullshittingu, analýza priniesla síce prekvapivé, ale určite zaujímavé a cenné výsledky. Z analýzy vyplýva, že boosters, ktorým sa v literatúre často nepripisuje až taká dôležitosť v oblasti pragmatiky v spojitosti s kooperačným princípom a klamstvom, môžu zohrávať dôležitejšiu rolu v spojitosti s bullshitingom než ich náprotivky, hedže.

Analýza podporuje tvrdenie, že by mohla existovať spojitosť medzi výskytom boosterov a výskytom lží v politickom prejave. Zvýšený výskyt boosterov v prejave Donalda Trumpa počas prezidentských debát v roku 2016 taktiež naznačuje možnú spojitosť medzi týmito výrazmi a bullshititingom. Meniaci sa charakter boosterov naznačuje, že konečný efekt, ktorý majú nepravdivé výroky na poslucháča, sa stáva pre kandidátov dôležitejší ako skutočná pravda a fakty.

Detailnejší výskum boostrov, ktorý by ale vyžadoval, aby bolo skúmané dlhšie časové obdobie, by mohol zodpovedať otázku, či by mohol byť práve zvýšený výskyt boostrov v reči jednou z typických vlastností bullshitingu.. Výsledky analýzy, ktorá bola súčasťou praktickej časti síce potvrdzujú túto hypotézu, no na to, aby mohla byť definitívne potvrdená, by bolo potrebné väčšie množstvo dát.

Výsledky analýzy sú v súlade s teóriu, že žijeme v post-truth dobe. Inými slovami, v dobe, v ktorej bullshiting a fake news patria medzi najnebezpečnejšie aspekty, ktoré ovplyvňujú rozhodovanie spoločnosti. Moc, ktorú reprezentujú prezidentské debaty s pravidelnou sledovanosťou miliónmi divákov, je nepopierateľná. Podrobnejšia definícia,

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ktorá by pomohla rozlíšiť bullshitting od klamstva by mohla spoločne s fact-checkingom slúžiť ako prostriedok v boji proti fake news, ktorý vedú mnohé krajiny po celom svete.

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Cieľom tejto práce bolo poskytnúť súhrn literatúry, ktorá sa zaoberá kooperačným princípom, klamstvom či bullshittingom a taktiež súhrn teórií, ktoré opisujú nátu a funkcie „hedžov". Prvá, teoretická časť, tiež vysvetľuje spojitosť medzi spomínanými javmi. Praktická časť práce, ktorá je založená na klasifikácii „hedžov" vypracovanej v súlade s literatúrou použitou v teoretickej časti, obsahuje kvantitatívnu, ako aj kvalitatívnu analýzu „hedžov" a „boostrov" v politickom diskurze. Kvantitatívna ako aj kvalitatívna analýza skúma výskyt spomínaných výrazov v prezidentských debatách so zameraním na nepravdivé výroky. Práca skúma nielen výskyt a typológiu „hedžov" a „boostrov", ale aj charakter nepravdivých výrokov a ich zmenu z diachronického hľadiska. Práca sa snaží zodpovedať otázku, či existuje spojitosť medzi „hedžmi" a bullshittingom a či ich nedostatok v reči môže predznamenávať snahu o bullshitting zo strany rečníka. Práca tiež vysvetľuje, prečo je bullshiting považovaný za fenomén takzvanej „post-truth doby", v ktorej sa podľa mnohých žijeme od roku 2016 .

Kľúčové slová:

kooperačný princíp, klamstvo, lož, nepravdivý výrok, bullshitting, „hedž", „booster", „post-truth"

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The aim of this thesis is to provide an overview of the literature concerning cooperative principle, lying, deceiving and bullshiting, as well as the literature describing functions and importance of hedges and boosters. The theoretical part also explains the connections between these terms. The practical part includes a qualitative and quantitative analysis, based on the classification of the examined expressions, which was made in accordance with the literature used in the theoretical part. The thesis seeks to answer the question, whether can be hedges, especially their lack and avoidance, one of the defining features of bullshiting. The thesis demonstrates why is bullshiting believed to be part of the "post-truth age", which supposedly started in 2016.

LIST OF TABLES

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APENDIX

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