

## An Adaptation-based Approach to Hedges in the Courtroom Cross-Examination: A Case Study of the Jodi Arias Trial

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### Abstract

Hedges as a considerable fascinated language phenomena and pragmatic strategy, objectively and widely existed in every aspect of human life. Most researches on hedges focus on their communicative function in daily conversation and ESP discourse, but few of them pay attention to the study of hedges used in institutionalized settings. Therefore, this paper aims to study hedges in courtroom discourse in the light of Verschueren's theory of adaptation, exploring how the different kinds of hedges adapts to the specified linguistic contexts. The analysis shows that the use of hedges in courtroom discourse adapt the physical world, the social world and the mental world by conveying uncertain and objective information, which can effectively create beneficial evidence for the defendant and at the same time deny the damaging accusation of the prosecutor. This paper not only enriches the research results of hedges from the perspective of adaptation theory but also proves again that adaptation theory applies to the study of the use of hedges.

**Key words:** Hedges; Adaptation; Physical world; Social world; Mental world

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

As a hot topic in the field of linguistics, hedges have attracted the attention of many scholars in recent years.

After L. A. Zadeh put forward the theory of fuzzy sets in 1965, more and more scholars began to study it, and many related disciplines came into being, such as fuzzy mathematics, fuzzy linguistics and fuzzy logic. It can be said that vague language is closely related to our life. As the most common kind of fuzzy language, hedges have gradually attracted the research interest of scholars. Words in any context have specific meanings. In different contexts and for different communicative purposes, utterances have specific meanings. Verschueren pointed out that once the communicative behavior occurs, the communicator must make a choice. So the choice of fuzzy words in the use of language is unavoidable. The proper use of hedges can make the language more accurate and the tone more euphemistic. According to Verschueren's adaptation theory, the use of vague language in the legal setting is the result of the utterer's linguistic choices and linguistic adaptation. The hedges are tactfully used to obscure the known information and undermine the credibility of the testimony in the courtroom. However, the importance of hedges lacks enough attention from scholars. Since Verschueren's adaptation theory brings a completely new perspective to language production and interpretation and sheds light on the dynamic process of language use, this thesis attempts to analyze how the language choices of hedges realize the linguistic adaptation.

As a very important field of fuzzy language, hedges play an important role in our daily life. Appropriate use of hedges is also crucial to the realization of communicative purposes. Therefore, the study of hedges in court trials has both theoretical and practical significance.

Theoretically, in recent years, the research on hedges from the perspective of pragmatics has been very fruitful, but it focuses on the study of non-legal texts, while the research on hedges in legal texts is relatively rare. This paper takes Jodi Arias Trial's cross-examination as the corpus to study the use of hedges in court trials, which can

supplement the research on hedges. Secondly, scholars from all over the world mainly focus on the theoretical framework of the Cooperative Principle, the Politeness Principle and the Face Theory, but rarely set foot in Verschueren's adaptation theory. Therefore, this paper not only enriches the research results of hedges from the perspective of adaptation theory but also proves again that adaptation theory is applicable to the study of the use of hedges.

In reality, this paper can help people to better understand the characteristics of hedges, and the study of hedges in the trial also helps people to deepen the understanding of trial and law, enhance people's legal awareness and master communication skills.

Based on the adaptation theory, this paper takes the Jodi Arias case as the research object and adopts qualitative and quantitative research methods to analyze the use of hedges in court hearings from the perspective of adaptation theory. Firstly, this paper makes a statistical analysis of the hedges used by the defendant in the trial. Then, starting with the classification of hedges, it explores how hedges conform to the linguistic context from three aspects: physical world, social world and mental world. And this thesis tries to answer the following question:

What's the function of the different types of hedges in the legal settings?

How the language choices of hedges realize the adaptation of the physical world, social world and mental world?

This thesis consists of six sections. The first section gives a general introduction. The second section is a brief review of the previous studies. The third section introduces the theoretical framework of hedges and adaptation theory. The fourth section describes the method used in the thesis. The fifth section is the analysis of the hedges in courtroom discourse within the adaptation theory. And the last section draws a conclusion.

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## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

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A hedge is a word or a phrase whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy. We can identify in a discourse between 150 and 450 hedges per hour, or more than one every fifteen seconds. It plays a pivotal role in various discourses. Previous researches investigate the use of hedges in different kinds of discourse including academic writing (Varttala, 1999), conversation (Jucker et al., 2003) we demonstrate instead that vague expressions may be more effective than precise ones in conveying the intended meaning of an utterance. That is, they may carry more relevant contextual implications than would a precise expression. In introducing entities into a conversation, we found that vague referring expressions often served as a focusing device, helping the addressee determine how much processing effort should be devoted to a given referent. In characterising events and experiences,

they may indicate a closer or looser assignment of a characteristic to a conceptual category. For expressing quantities, they may convey the speaker's attitude about the quantity itself, and they may convey assumptions about the speaker's and/or the hearer's beliefs. They may be used to directly express the degree of commitment a speaker makes to a proposition, or they may convey other propositional attitudes such as newsworthiness and personal evaluation more indirectly. Finally, they may serve social functions such as engendering camaraderie and softening implicit criticisms. They may thus be seen as managing conversational implicature. Our analysis is based on a corpus of semi-controlled spoken interactions between California students, who were asked to converse on specific topics, such as movies, sports or opera. Following the categories proposed by Channell (Channell, Joanna. 1994. *Vague Language*. Oxford University Press, Oxford and so on.

However, few research probes into the reason for people's frequently choosing hedges. Certain fuzziness is a way to promote communication, which is beneficial to individuals, society and even a country to be better understood. Certain theories should be introduced to investigate the inner communication mechanism. Adaptation theory presents its vigor in seeking the communication mechanism, the role of society and certain cultural background to reveal various phenomena appearing in the human language. Previous studies in different kinds of discourse such as English teaching (Duan & Ren, 2013), news reports (Lian, 2018) and English learning (Toby, 2016) have introduced this theory. Adaptation theory can also be used to probe into the linguistic concepts such as discourse marks (Han, 2011), presupposition (Liu, 2009) and hedges (Gong, 2008). Adaptation theory offers a methodological basis to analyze the hedges. Past study has found that the adaptation of mental world, physical world and social world by using hedges can help implement the pragmatic function in news reports.

The adaptation theory presents more strong explanatory power for hedges in interactive communication. The study on the overinformative response (Xu & Li, 2006) is a prime example. On the basis of sorting out the types of response to information overload, Verschueren's adaptation theory was applied to explore the specific process of court respondents' choosing to use this strategy, and it was pointed out that the mutual adaptation of the mental world, social world and physical world of language users was the internal cause of producing response to overinformation response.

However, research on the hedges based on the adaptation theory in interactive communication still lacks. This study contributes to the understanding of the characteristics of hedges in courtroom discourse through an exploration of how the language choices of hedges realize linguistic adaptation.

To bridge the research gap mentioned above, the present study adopts quantitative and qualitative research methods. In order to solve the problem of the distribution and frequency of hedges in Prince's hedges classification, the author adopts a quantitative research method to the corpus text in the trial. The interpretation of the pragmatic functions of hedges from the perspective of adaptation theory adopts a qualitative research method.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 The Adaptation Theory

##### 3.1.1 Key Notions: Variability, Negotiability and Adaptability

Three related key notions are quite essential in understanding the process of making choices as the baseline description of language use. They are variability, negotiability and adaptability.

“Variability is the property of language which defines the range of possibilities from which choices can be made” (Verschueren, 1999, p.59). This concept may evoke what is traditionally called varieties of language, whether defined geographically, socially or functionally. But from the pragmatic perspective on language use or verbal action, it is meant to cover the entire range of variable options that must be assumed to be accessible to language users for them to be able to make choices.

“Negotiability is the property of language responsible for the fact that choices are not made mechanically or according to strict rules or fixed form-function relationships, but rather on the basis of highly flexible principles and strategies” (Verschueren, 1999, p.59). The choices are made according to our communicative purpose, not to some fixed rules.

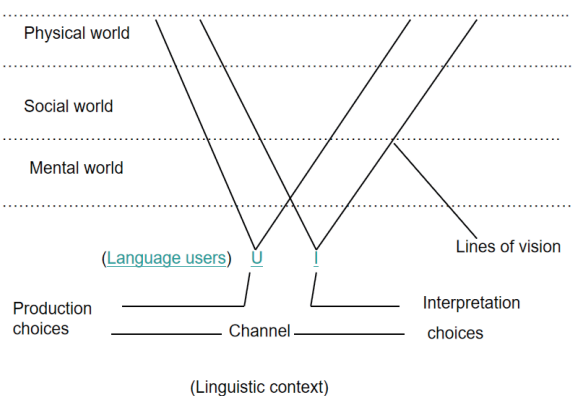
“Adaptability is the property of language which enable human being to make negotiable linguistic choices from a variable range of possibilities in such a way to approach points of satisfaction for communicative needs” (Verschueren, 1999, p.61). The term itself may be conducive to a simplified vision of language choices being made in accordance with the communicative context. And the contexts also get changed by the linguistic choices that are made. That means linguistic choice-making and context are interadaptable.

In a word, the three properties are closely related to each other. Variability and negotiability can provide possibilities and means in linguistic choice. Adaptability makes the appropriate choice to satisfy the communicative needs, which guarantee smooth communication.

##### 3.1.2 Four Angles of Investigation

There are four aspects of language study from the adaptation theory. They are contextual correlates of adaptability, structural objects of adaptability, dynamics of adaptability and salience of the adaptation process.

Firstly, the contextual correlates of adaptability “potentially include all the ingredients of the communicative context with which linguistic choices have to be inter-adaptable” (Verschueren, 1999, p. 66). It includes the utterer, interpreter, physical world, social world and mental world. “The physical world consists of both temporal reference and spatial reference. The social world involves relationships of dependence and authority not only between utterer and interpreter and any third party which withers figures in the topic of the discourse or is otherwise involved. The mental world involves communicators’ mental propensity such as personalities, emotions, beliefs, desires or wishes, motivations or intentions” (Verschueren, 1999, p. 30). The contextual correlates of adaptability could be stretched as follows:



**Figure 1**  
Contextual correlates of adaptability

Secondly, structural objects of adaptability involve any layer or level of structure and principles of “structuring”. Since the making of communicative choices takes place at all possible levels of linguistic structure that involve variability of any kind, pragmatic phenomena can be related to any layer or level of structure, from sound feature and phenomena to discourse and beyond, or to any type of interlevel relationship.

Thirdly, the dynamics of adaptability are the fundamental part of the adaptation theory, because linguistic choices are made dynamically which concerns not only the contextual but also the structural aspects of dynamics.

Lastly, the salience of the adaptation process is that some of the language choices are not made consciously but unconscious and automatic, which greatly depends on the language users.

These four angles are essential elements of an adequate pragmatic perspective on any given linguistic phenomena. They relate to each other and function differently. According to Verschueren, “the general concern for the study of linguistic pragmatics is to understand the meaningful functioning of language as a dynamic process operating on context-structure relationships at various levels salience” (Verschueren, 1999, p. 69).

### 3.2 Hedges

A hedge is a word or a phrase whose job it is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy. There are two types of hedges. One introduces, or is responsible for, fuzziness within the propositional content proper; the other correlates with fuzziness in the relationship between the propositional content and the speaker, i.e. the speaker's attitude towards the truth condition of the proposition conveyed. Sort of and the like are approximators, which belong to truth-conditional semantics; while I think and others (such as I guess, according to somebody's opinion, etc.) are shields, belonging to non-truth-conditional pragmatics. The approximators show the difference or degrees of the (prototypical) proposition; it affects the truth condition of the proposition. Approximators themselves are of two types: adaptors and rounders. The shield does not affect the truth conditions of the proposition; the only effect is the speaker's own belief or opinion. Again, shields may be plausible, as well as attributing.

## 4. METHOD

This paper studies the use of hedges in court trials from the perspective of adaptation theory. Based on the research questions, this paper mainly adopts quantitative and qualitative research methods. The interpretation of the pragmatic functions of hedges from the perspective of adaptation theory adopts a qualitative research method. To achieve reliability, in the present study, an adaptive approach to the collected data was applied in order to enable issues to be examined from several perspectives.

To address the research questions, the author decided to set two aims for this study. The first aim is to probe into the usage of the different types of hedges in the legal settings. According to Prince's classification of hedges, hedges are divided into approximators and shields. Approximators include adaptor and rounder and shields include plausible shields and attributing shields. The author tends to see how the different types of hedges are used by different roles in the courtroom. For this, the author makes a statistical analysis of the distribution and frequency of hedges in Prince's hedges classification. By

adopting a quantitative research method to the corpus text in the trial, the author finally finds the characteristics of these four kinds of hedges. The second aim is to probe into the function of the different types of hedges in legal settings. For this, the author tends to elaborate on the function of hedges from the perspective of adaptation theory. To be specific, it is to see how the language choices of hedges realize the adaptation of the physical world, social world and mental world in legal settings.

The corpus of this paper is selected from the Jodi Arias case in the cross-examination stage of the case. The cross-examination stage of the Jodi Arias case presents more interactivity, which is suitable for this research. Since the complete transcriptions are not retrieved on the Internet, all the relevant texts in this paper come from the author's processing and revision of YouTube transcriptions. Due to the low voice and the rapid speech, the transcription is not as precise as the original one. But the hedges selected from the corpus present much precision after ten times' revision. The statistical result of the frequency of hedges is also from the author. The classification of the types of hedges is based on a thorough reading of *Pragmatics*, so my manual labeling is authoritative.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 The Frequency of the Hedges

To explore the realization of the adaptation of the physical world, social world and mental world by hedges, this study firstly needs to see how different kinds of hedges are used in an institutionalized discourse. So a statistical analysis is conducted to see if there are any differences between different kinds of hedges. To investigate the function of the different types of hedges in legal settings, this thesis extends this pragmatic concept to an adaptive perspective. Based on the adaptation theory, this study investigates how different kinds of hedges adapt the physical world, social world and mental world.

In the whole cross-examination, 21 hedges are found. In order to explain the use of hedges in corpus more clearly and accurately, the author made statistics on all hedges in the used corpus, as shown in the table below.

Types	Sub-type	Number	Percentage	Adaptation of social world	Adaptation of physical world	Adaptation of mental world
Approximators	Adaptor	12	57.2%	√		√
	Rounder	3	14.2%		√	
	Plausible shields	5	23.8%			√
Shields	Attributing shields	1	4.8%			√

According to the statistics in the above table, it can be concluded that there are 21 hedges in this corpus, among which the adaptor with the highest frequency is 12. Plausible shields rank the second with the number 5. Then follows the rounders and attributing shields. Through the above analysis, we find that the adaptor and plausible

shields are the two types of hedges most commonly used by defendants in court trials. From this chart, we can see that all four kinds of hedges are used but in different frequencies. The approximators are more frequently used than the shields, And this difference may arise from the different functions of hedges. The Adaptor can achieve the

purpose of emphasizing the content of the conversation, and the use of plausible shields can help the defendant to explain his point of view. Arguing about the facts plays a significant role in the defense of the defendant's interests.

These statistical results are used for further exploration of how different type of hedges adapts the communicative contexts. Different types of hedges have various functions in institutional settings. From this chart, we can see that approximators can realize the adaptation of the physical world, social world and mental world, while the shields can only be used to realize the mental world. Specifically, an adaptor is used most frequently to adapt to the social world and the mental world. Rounders are mainly used to adapt to the physical world. Plausible shields and attributing shields are very effective in the adaptation of the mental world. The choices of different hedges realize different adaptation, whose ultimate objective is to adapt the courtroom context.

## 5.2 Analysis

This chapter analyzes the hedges used by the defendant in the cross-examination of the Jodi Arias trial from the perspective of adaptation theory. All data is from Jodi Arias trial transcript on, a cross-examination of Arias by plaintiff's attorney Martinez. On Feb. 21, 2013, accused murderer was challenged by phone records, text message records, and her diary entries that appeared to contradict her previous testimony. The prosecutor Juan Martinez has been aggressive in questioning witnesses throughout the trial.

During the court hearing, the defendant is weak in speech, and often states the gist of the question in a roundabout way, avoids answering the question directly, and use the strategy of fuzzy speech to create an obscure discourse structure. From the perspective of cognitive psycholinguistics, it is to increase the difficulty of decoding, so that the recipient cannot correctly understand the intended meaning of the defendant's vague discourse, and the lawyer and the judge cannot obtain all the information they expect, thus changing the unfavorable situation. The defendant adopts the strategy of vague speech, which seems to be related to the case but is vague and does not provide any effective information. Uncertain language and the use of hedges reduce the credibility of the information. Cognitive psychology believes that the use of fuzzy words can increase the difficulty of understanding the meaning of the speaker's words, but it can also deepen the questioning of the defendant's testimony. The defendant's vague speech strategy is to avoid legal responsibility for himself.

The physical world is that Jodi Arias is being cross-examined by the prosecutor in the courtroom. Jodi must answer his question in no time in the courtroom interaction. Though the communicative time is quite short, Jodi did not choose simple "Yes" or "No" answers to give confirmation or negative response throughout the whole

cross-examination, but a series of hedges in an attempt to provide less evidential information. The social world is that Jodi Arias is in an imbalanced position in facing the institutional powers. In the cross-examination she must be cooperative, answering all the questions of the adversarial counsel. The language choices of hedges are realized by the process of adaptation to the relationship between the defendant and the prosecutor. The mental world lies in the motivations and intentions of the defendant. In this trial, Jodi Arias made up a series of lies to get away with her guilt. Apparently, in the cross-examination she intentionally chose a variety of hedges in order to prove innocent. The following is a detailed analysis of how the language choices of the hedges adapt the linguistic contexts.

As a liar, Jodi uses the hedging strategy tactfully, attempting to gain innocence.

### 5.2.1 The adaptation of the physical world

The adaptation of the physical world can be divided into the adaptation of time and the adaptation of space.

#### 5.2.1.1 The Adaptation of Time

The following example presents how hedges adapt to time.

Example 1

**Martinez:** And this was taken sometime in May of 2008, correct?

**Jodi:** This exhibit?

**Martinez:** No, number 452.

**Jodi:** I only remember it was the spring, I think.

The timeline is quite important for the prosecutor. In this example, Jodi uses rounder to adapt to the physical world by providing timely information. At the same time, the "spring" means at least a time length of three months. However, the accuracy of the information is needed in the trial. A period of time is obviously bad information here.

#### 5.2.1.2 The Adaptation of Space

The following example presents how hedges adapt to space.

Example 2

**Martinez:** Well, you live within ten miles, weren't you?

**Jodi:** I was living by Greenfield and Broadway. I don't know the length.

**Martinez:** Oh how long would it take you to drive?

**Jodi:** It's about 15 minutes depending on traffic.

In this example, Jodi uses rounder to adapt to the physical world for providing distance information. The prosecutor asked the defendant whether she lived close to his boyfriend's house. Jodi directly gave an unknown answer, which urged the prosecutor to transform his question in another way. And Jodi then adopted another hedge "about" to make an unclear statement. In addition, she added "depending on traffic" to enlarge the scope of the driving time, making the distance unknown. This evidence is clearly null and void.

The use of hedges not only realizes the adaptation of the physical world, but also the creation of useless evidence.

### 5.2.2 The Adaptation of the Social World

The adaptation of the social world mainly refers to the adaptation to the imbalanced power in the institutional settings.

#### 5.2.2.1 The Adaptation of the Imbalance of Power

The following example presents how hedges adapt to the imbalance of power.

##### Example 3

**Martinez:** So you did lie to him Mr. Alexander, right?

**Jodi:** yes and no.

**Martinez:** So you think that sending him that text message and telling him this is the second part of the text message that that's not a lie even though you fabricated it.

**Jodi:** That part was a lie.

Still, Martinez pressed forward with pushing Arias to admit that she lie to Mr. Alexander. Under the increasingly-loud questioning by Martinez, Jodi finally admitted that the second part of the text message is fabricated. The institutional power forces the defendant to make an adaptation. Meanwhile, by the use of an adaptor Jodi indicates that she is not always lying, thus creating a favorable situation for herself.

##### Example 4

**Martinez:** I thought you said before that you didn't discuss these issues involving you and Mr. Alexander.

**Jodi:** Not typically.

**Martinez:** Not typically. You said you didn't yesterday and all the days before. Remember telling us that?

**Jodi:** The violence, yes.

In this example, the use of "not typically" undermines the authenticity of the previous testimony. Under repeated questioning, Jodi finally admitted that she has not spoken with her family about her ex-boyfriend's abuse and violence after the prosecutor presented the previous evidence. This is also a prime example of the adaptation of the imbalanced institutional power. "Not typically", as an adaptor, helps to make the evidence less credible.

The use of hedges not only realizes the adaptation of the social world but also creates a favorable situation.

### 5.2.3 The Adaptation of the Mental World

The adaptation of the mental world shows how the use of hedges create beneficial evidence and avoid unfavorable information for the defendant.

#### 5.2.3.1 To Create Beneficial Evidence

The following examples demonstrate how hedges help to create beneficial evidence.

##### Example 5

**Martinez:** Did you or did you not indicate that you loved your mother. I'm not asking you if you love your mother. I'm asking if you indicated it.

**Jodi:** I don't remember.

**Martinez:** Do you have problems with your memory, ma'am?

**Jodi:** Sometimes.

##### Example 6

**Martinez:** Do you again, do you have a problem with memory.

**J o d i : O c c a s i o n a l l y .**

**Martinez:** And so some of the things that you've told us for example then about other things in the past you may have also had problems with your memory there, right?

**Jodi:** Yes.

A woman charged in the stabbing and shooting death of her Arizona lover traded barbs with a prosecutor under a withering cross-examination as she struggled to explain why she can recall precise details of her life from years earlier, yet can't remember crucial aspects of the murder case against her. The prosecutor keeps hammering her with questions about her apparent selective memory. Arias also attempted to explain away her repeated lies. She first told authorities she knew nothing about Alexander's death, then later blamed it on masked intruders before eventually settling on self-defense.

These two examples demonstrate that Jodi Arias has a spotty memory of the events. Arias choose the adaptor to confront the prosecutor. This is inconsistent with the later diagnose of Jodi's mental illness. Here she intends to create a mentally-ill image, thus getting away with the guilt. The memory problem by her claim is a longstanding one depending on the circumstances. The realization of the mental world is through the adaptor "sometimes" and "occasionally", which greatly enhances the truthfulness of Jodi's argument. Though the notion of the memory issue is so non-plausible, all these tactics help create beneficial evidence.

##### Example 7

**Martinez:** And you broke up with him on June 29 2007, right?

**Jodi:** Yes.

**Martinez:** But you felt that it was okay for you to go over to his house in August of 2007, didn't you?

**Jodi:** After he told me, yeah.

**Martinez:** Yes or no? Did you feel it was okay to go over to his house.

**Jodi:** I said yes.

Attributing shield is seen as rare in the selected examples. The linguistic function of the attributing shields is to avoid responsibility to be taken by quoting others' opinions. And accordingly, the purpose of using attributing shields by the defendant in the courtroom is to pass the buck. The use of hedge here attributes the responsibility to her ex-boyfriend. The language choices of hedge successfully realize the adaptation of the mental world. By such testimony, Jodi Arias can naturally implement the avoidance of responsibility.

### 5.2.3.2 To Deny Harmful Evidence

The following example demonstrates how hedges help to deny harmful evidence.

#### Example 8

**Martinez:** I thought you said the relationship with Mr. Alexander was very stressful.

**Jodi:** Some of the sex wasn't.

**Martinez:** Pardon?

**Jodi:** Some of the sex wasn't.

**Martinez:** So you did enjoy the sex then. Is that what you're telling me?

**Jodi:** At times I did.

In this example, Jodi denied the prosecutor's assertion about her sexual life with her ex-boyfriend. The adaptor "some" indicates that some of their sex life is harmonious but at the same time entails a presupposition that most of them are unpleasant and stressful, which is consistent with the description of Travis --a "sexual deviant". The negation of the stressful relationship between Jodi and Travis indicates that there seems to be no motive for the murder. This tactful use of hedge accomplishes the adaptation of the mental world by turning the tables.

#### Example 9

**Martinez:** Did you know he was dead when you were Mr. burns and he were kissing.

**Jodi:** um yeah, I think I did.

**Martinez:** You think you did, but you're not sure with that.

**Jodi:** I don't wasn't really in my own mind. I was out of my mind sort of.

After she stabbed and shot Travis, she went to visit a man in Utah and slept in his bed, kissing and cuddling. Martinez then hammers Arias on her claimed monogamous relationship. And when he asked whether Jodi knew that Travis had been dead when she turned to another man's arm. Martinez demands a confession, however, the answer "out of my mind sort of" makes a shift from the murder to her memory lapse. She said she didn't know Alexander was dead when she left his home, noting her memory from that day has "huge gaps." By deliberately denying the sureness mentioned by the prosecutor, the adaptor helps to realize the adaptation of the mental world.

#### Example 10

**Martinez:** And he was there with the female, but you were able to see her face, right?

**Jodi:** Yes, sort of.

**Martinez:** Well, yes, it sort of means two different things yes or no? Were you able to see her face or not?

**Jodi:** Part of it was shadowed from the TV behind her. So I saw part of it.

In this example, Jodi Arias denies the prosecutor's presumption that she could see the face of Travis' new girlfriend. By the use of the adaptor, Jodi not only realizes the adaptation of the imbalanced institutional power, but

also the adaptation of the mental world. The use of "Sort of" and "part of" renders the evidence unconvincing. Therefore, this evidence cannot be used to prove the presupposition that Jodi killed her ex-boyfriend out of jealousy. The denial of the unfavourable evidence weakens the motivation of the defendant, making it even closer to her exemption.

#### Example 11

**Martinez:** Ma'am, you told us you were monogamous. And that's what monogamous means sexually, doesn't it?

**Jodi:** I think it means more than that sometimes.

Martinez questioned her contention that she was monogamous throughout her relationship with the victim while referring to Arias' previous testimony that the day she killed him, she went to visit a man in Utah and slept in his bed, kissing and cuddling. Here the answer "sometimes" indicates that monogamous is not restricted in the sexual aspect. By saying that, Jodi Arias is in an attempt to distract the prosecutor's attention from her sexual concept. This choice of adaptor "sometimes" negates the prosecutor's assertion in an indirect way, distracting all the attention from the moral charges against Jodi Arias.

The use of hedges is really helpful in the adaptation of the mental world. At the same time, the damaging information is cleared while more favorable evidence is created.

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## CONCLUSION

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Through the analysis of the hedges used by the defendant in the cross-examination of Jodi Arias trial based on the adaptation theory, an overall conclusion can be made that the hedges realize the adaptation of the physical world, social world and mental world by conveying ambiguous meanings, therefore putting the defendant in a favorable position.

Firstly, different types of hedges have various functions in institutional settings. The adaptor is used most frequently to adapt to the social world and the mental world. It can add uncertainty to the defendant's speech, thus making the evidence not available anymore. Rounders are mainly used to adapt to the physical world. It gives an indefinite range of time or space, confusing the timeline of the whole trial. Plausible shields and attributing shields are very effective in the adaptation of the mental world. Plausible shields mitigated the tone, rendering the prosecutor see things from the defendant's angle. The moderation of the evidence makes the conviction even more difficult. Attributing shields transfer the responsibility to someone else by citing the other's opinion.

Secondly, the language choices are to realize an adaptation to the current linguistic contexts. Accordingly, all the language choices of hedges in the courtroom

context have one objective of creating favorable evidence.

Last but not least, we can see how the defendant exerts a series of hedges to realize the adaptation of the physical world, social world and mental world. The use of rounders adapts to the physical world by giving an indefinite range of time or space, which directly affects the control over the time and space factors of the prosecutor. The use of adaptor adapts to the social world by stating uncertain issues under the imbalanced institutional power. Adaptor, plausible shields and attributing shields combined realize the adaptation of the mental world, in the way of adding uncertainty, untruthfulness and irresponsibility of the defendant's reporting. These factors can effectively create beneficial evidence for the defendant and at the same time deny the damaging accusation of the prosecutor.

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