THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICAL CONFRONTATION: INTERTEXTUAL AND DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES OF THE TRUMP-CLINTON 2016 SECOND PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE - A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This research paper examines the discursive strategies employed by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump during the second 2016 U.S. presidential debate, focusing on nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and mitigation/intensification. Through a detailed analysis of their debate performances, the study reveals how both candidates strategically framed their messages to appeal to voters and undermine their opponent's credibility. Nomination was used to highlight specific individuals, groups, and policies, leveraging intertextuality to evoke pre-existing public knowledge. Predication allowed both candidates to construct positive self-images and negative portrayals of their opponents, aligning with broader societal values and concerns. Argumentation was grounded in practical policy solutions, historical examples, and intertextual references to reinforce credibility and address voter anxieties. Perspectivization enabled the candidates to present their visions for America, emphasizing unity, strength, and restoration of national greatness. Finally, mitigation and intensification were employed to soften criticisms, amplify key messages, and manage public perceptions. The findings underscore the centrality of discursive strategies and intertextuality in political communication, offering insights into how candidates navigate complex debates to influence voter attitudes and electoral outcomes. This study contributes to the broader understanding of political discourse and its role in shaping democratic processes.

1.1 Introduction

The discourse of American politics underwent a change during the presidential election of 2016 when Donald Trump contested against Hillary Clinton (Jamieson & Taussig, 2017). The second presidential debate was a unique turning point in the campaign that was marked by first time ever seen rhetorical and verbal fights unlike any other candidate debates (Lee & Xu, 2018). We analyze the language of this debate from the perspective of critical discourse analysis, particularly in regard to the strategies and intertextuality used by both candidates.

Debates on political matters are an example of the performance of political power relations and of power, identity and ideology itself (van Dijk, 2015). They are full of 'performative' acts because each candidate systematically presents his or her policies along with convincing his or her political competitors, demonstrating credibility to win in politics (Benoit & Airne, 2005). The Trump and Clinton debate on October 9, 2016, offers rich data as it was held during a highly politically charged period of the campaign (Ott, 2017), featuring candidates with polarized attitudes and differing styles of communication (Wells et al., 2016).

In the scope of this research, we attempt to understand the discourse strategies used by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the course of the debate. It also deals with the scope and nature of intertextuality, that is, how the candidates referred, reacted, and transformed prior texts, events, and discourses as plots of rhetoric (Fairclough, 2003). With these features of language and discourse, the study seeks to explain phenomena relating to the use of language in political situations, especially how specific language strategies are employed during presidential debates (Chilton, 2004).

This paper systematically critiques the discourse, offering an analysis of how the choices made related to language evidence and construct political realities, identities, and power

structures (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). The results add explanations not only regarding the specific communicative environment of the 2016 election, but also regarding the political discourse, characterized by partisan divides and fragmentation of media outlets (Boydstun et al, 2014; Lakoff, 2015).

1.3 Research Objectives

• To identify the predominant discursive strategies employed in the 2016 2nd presidential debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

• To explore the nature of intertextuality employed by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in their 2016 2nd presidential debate.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although political debate and rhetoric have been extensively studied, very little scholarship exists surrounding the explicit discursive strategies implemented during the unprecedented 2016 presidential campaign (Kreis, 2017). The second debate between Trump and Clinton is one of the most confrontational exchanges in presidential debate history, and as such offers rich rhetorical opportunities for analysis considering the unique strategies employed by each candidate (Savoy, 2018). To this date, there is a lack of literature capturing the combinatory intertextual dynamics of presidential debates; instead, scholars focus on singulars such as emotion (Koschut, 2018) or fact-checking (Jamieson, 2016). This research examines this gap by analyzing how Trump and Clinton linguistically negotiated policy, political identity, competitive oppositions, and controversies (Lauerbach & Fetzer, 2007). Additionally, this study aims to describe the degree to which intertextuality with its self-contained textual referencing and contextualization served strategically for both candidates to construct dominant political positions while disparaging their opponent (Hodges, 2015). This research faces a dual challenge: firstly, to pinpoint the dominant discursive practices that influenced the high-stakes exchange; and secondly, to examine how intertextual allusions were used, altered, and contested within the debate's warring context. By applying critical discourse analysis, this study seeks to deepen our comprehension of the language of politics within intense electoral settings and also engage more broadly with the literature on language, power, and political legitimation in modern democratic contexts (van Dijk, 2013; Wodak, 2015).
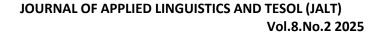
LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of politics and linguistics focusing on presidential campaigns, debates, and rhetoric has earned attention from linguists, communication scholars, and political analysts alike. The more theatrical Trump and Clinton debates in 2016 added fuel to the discussions around modern rhetoric and debate style, capturing the attention of scholars analyzing American rhetoric. This review is focused on the debates of 2016 and their intertextual and discourse analysis strategies in the context of political discourse analysis, specifically studying debates and the Trump and Clinton discourse.

Theory of Challenges in Political Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) appears to be the most prevalent approach when dealing with the analysis of political discourse. Van Dijk (2013) for example created CDA when considering how social power, domination and inequality is performed and implemented through text and talk. Fairclough (2010) built upon that work in its three-dimensional approach to CDA by seeing discourse as a text, discursive practice, and social practice with heavy intertextual emphasis in political discourse.

Wodak and Meyer (2015) developed the discourse-historical approach that integrates socio-historical dimensions, placing discourses in wider social and historical frameworks. It has

been especially useful for examining political debates because candidates routinely invoke history and prior political discourses in their arguments.

Presidential debates represent a unique genre of political discourse with distinctive features and conventions. One of the first attempts to analyze presidential debates in detail was launched by Jamieson and (Bush et al., 1990) who described them as a hybrid narrative capturing features of political speech, interviews, and confrontational dialogue. They pinpointed some of the most important aspects of successful performances in debates that included managing messages, setting the agenda, and refuting opponents' claims.

With the assistance of Benoit et al. (2002), The functional theory of political campaign discourse was created in which debate discourse is classified by three main functions: acclaims (self-praising statements), attacks (opponent-focused criticism), and defenses (justifications of previous remarks termed as 'attacks'). Their studies identified the presence of these functions in debates over time, demonstrating their longitudinal studies of presidential debates from 1960-2000 realized differently across contexts and formats.

Schroeder (2016) explored the history of presidential debates as media spectacles, how changes in format, the role of the moderator, and media attention over time has impacted debating strategies. His assessment of the Obama-Romney debates put into context the far more aggressive approach taken during the 2016 debates.

Intertextuality in Political Discourse

Meaning of intertextuality, which is the relationship between a text and other texts as well as the meaning created in interaction with these other texts, has drawn interest in relation to political discourse. Kristeva (1986), who introduced the concept, pointed out that no text exists separately but always in relation to another text.

In political discourse, Lemke (2004) showed how politicians use intertextuality purposely to position themselves in discursively favorable spaces while distancing themselves from unpopular ones. In the same manner, Hodges (2015) studied the role of intertextuality in the political identities of presidential candidates and how these candidates used national narratives and collective memory to delegitimize their opponents.

Dunmire (2012) has focused on the role of intertextuality in campaign discourse, analyzing how candidates reinterpret their opponents' statements in a way that is likely to be damaging. Strategic reinterpretation of context was particularly noticeable in the 2016 debates when both Trump and Clinton repeatedly quoted each other.

Literature focusing on the 2016 presidential debates points out some distinguishing features of the confrontational style of dominating debate featured in the Trump-Clinton show. Ahmadian et al. (2017) studied Trump's rhetorical approach to the debates, describing it as casual, unsophisticated yet pompous, laden with personal insults, and highly emotional.

Savoy (2018) performed a lexical analysis of the three 2016 presidential debates, noting that Trump used a simple vocabulary and pronouns while employing emotionally-charged language, whereas Clinton utilized sophisticated vocabulary and polysyllabic words specific to her policies.

Darweesh and Abdullah (2016) applied Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to the ideological analysis of the debates and how both candidates fought for supremacy using language to construct their opponent's image. They recognized the self-positive and other-negative representations that each aligned with the narratives of the respective campaigns.

Kayam (2018) looked at the second presidential debate and focused on who's interrupting whom, reporting that Trump interrupted Clinton much more than she did him. He researched the gendered power dynamics in these interruptions as well.

To conclude, Gill et al. (2025) performed a corpus-based multidimensional analysis that defined the Trump and Biden inaugural speeches on a language and rhetoric level. The results

show differences in rhetorical strategies as Trump attempts to give information and Trump in-voke, while Biden calls for emotional empathy and attempts to articulate unifying phrases.

Raza et al. (2024) explores the discourse of inauguration speeches provided by Joe Biden and Donald Trump based with Van Dijk's (2005) model of discourse analysis. The study shows the level of both leaders use rhetorical strategies like lexicalization, victimization, populism, metaphor, and modality to manipulate the narratives. The speech given by Trump centers on attaining unity and claiming dominion in contradistinction to his predecessors whom he considers failures. Biden, on the other hand, seeks to emphasize deeply-ingrained democratic principles like healing the national psyche and a shared sense of nationhood. Both leaders strategically formulate their statements to portray themselves in a favorable light and attack the opposing principles, thus strengthening their credibility as leaders and proponents of certain policies.

Raza et al. (2024b) examine Trump's inaugural speech, focusing on strategies of self-presentation and portrayal of opponents. Trump was found in this study to adopt strategies of division, nationalist appeal, and strategic vocabulary shift as he presented evidence and made authoritative claims to reinstate his populist narrative.

Imran et al. (2024) examine Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Biden's inaugural address detailing topicalization, polarization along with self-presentation strategies of lexicalization, metaphor usage, and the "Number Game." The study claims that Biden casts himself as a unifying leader placing emphasis on democracy, resilience, and subtly undermining past administrations. His speech offers a constructive vision of America's progress, drawing on historical and contemporary challenges to bolster arguments for the need- ought leadership and national unity.

Raza et al. (2025c) apply Hyland's (2005) meta-discourse model to study the use of hedges and boosters in Trump's (2017) and Biden's (2021) inaugural speeches. Trump's speech is nearly devoid of hedging, reinforcing a confident and authoritative demeanor, while Biden uses a variety of hedges "could" and "may" to mitigate statements and facilitate his inclusiveness. Contrastingly, Trump frequently employs boosters "will" and "never" to assert boldness and urgency, while Biden employs them less, thus assuming a more neutral demeanor. This study showcases the divergent rhetorical approaches - Trump's assertiveness and nationalistic rhetoric and Biden's cautious and unifying discourse. All these studies together advance the Critical Discourse Analysis of political discourse within the American context.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes a qualitative methodology in conjunction with Critical Discourse Analysis to explore intertextuality and discourse in the second presidential debate between Republican candidate Donald Trump and Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton in 2016. As the main data for analysis, the debate transcript was obtained from renowned sites such as the CPD and various news archives. Furthermore, the study implements Wodak's (2011) Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to examine pertinent strategies of discourse and intertextuality. This approach analyzes techniques of persuasion, logical reasoning, lexical choice, appeals, and self- and other-representation. The intertextual perspective concentrates on how candidates reference political events, policy debates, and historical narratives at the level of prior discourse. Given that the data is in the public domain, the research poses no ethical issues. A detailed methodological framework guarantees neutrality while revealing the depth of how both candidates employed discourse analytically and rhetorically for construction manipulation of public opinion.

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Chapter IV
Analysis and Discussion

4.5 Analysis of the Second 2016 US Presidential Debate

The second U.S. presidential debates of 2016 was conducted on October 9 at the Washington University in St. Louis. This debate included voting that was characteristically a town hall where undecided voters could ask questions alongside the moderators Anderson Cooper and Martha Raddatz. The debate was centered on the conduct and policies of both candidates that were head and shoulders above the personal behavior and policies of the candidates, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. After the leak of the controversial 2005 tape of trump having inappropriate conversations about women, the debate highlight character and suitability for office. The comments after the tape from Trump's response dominated the discourse and the policy discussions on health care, economy, taxes, and national security further delineated their stark differences. The dominant hostility on the confrontational mood marked heightened division among the population which was important for the last weeks of the campaign.

4.5.1 Hilary Clinton

4.5.1.1 Nomination

Extract 1: He never apologized to Mr. and Mrs. Khan, the Gold Star family whose son, Captain Khan, died in the line of duty in Iraq. And Donald insulted and attacked them for weeks over their religion. He never apologized to the distinguished federal judge who was born in Indiana, but Donald said he couldn't be trusted to be a judge because his parents were, quote, "Mexican." He never apologized to the reporter that he mimicked and mocked on national television and our children were watching. And he never apologized for the racist lie that President Obama was not born in the United States of America. He owes the president an apology, he owes our country an apology, and he needs to take responsibility for his actions and his words.
Extract 2: The Affordable Care Act was meant to try to fill the gap between people who were too poor and couldn't put together any resources to afford health care, namely people on Medicaid. Obviously, Medicare, which is a single-payer system, which takes care of our elderly and does a great job doing it, by the way, and then all of the people who were employed, but people who were working but didn't have the money to afford insurance and didn't have anybody, an employer or anybody else, to help them. That was the slot that the Obamacare approach was to take. And like I say, 20 million people now have health insurance. So if we just rip it up and throw it away, what Donald's not telling you is we just turn it back to the insurance companies the way it used to be, and that means the insurance companies get to do pretty much whatever they want, including saying, look, I'm sorry, you've got diabetes, you had cancer, your child has asthma. You may not be able to have insurance because you can't afford it.
Extract 3: Well, thank you for asking your question. And I've heard this question from a lot of Muslim-Americans across our country, because, unfortunately, there's been a lot of very divisive, dark things said about Muslims. And even someone like Captain Khan, the young man who sacrificed himself defending our country in the United States Army, has been subject to attack by Donald. I want to say just a couple of things. First, we've had Muslims in America since George Washington. And we've had many successful Muslims. We just lost a particular well-known one with Muhammad Ali.

Table 1: Use of Nomination by Hillary Clinton; 2nd Debate

During the second debate with Donald Trump, Clinton cleverly incorporated "nomination" as discursive strategy to convey her message, while her arguments were intertextually framed. In the first extract, we hear Clinton nominate numerous individuals and groups who, in Trump's America, are said to be beaten down, including "Mr. and Mrs. Khan," "the distinguished federal judge," "the reporter," and "President Obama." By enumerating these particulars, she depicts Trump as one who behaves in bigoted and abusive ways, morally bankrupt as he may be. These intertextual pointers to the events more recently and widely reported and documented use the audience's prior knowledge for which media and public discourse has created Trump as a controversial and inappropriate figure, hence reinforcing her critique. In the second extract, Clinton nominates "people on Medicaid," "our elderly" on Medicare, and "people who were working but didn't have the money to afford insurance" as the targets of her criticism of Trump's purported action on healthcare signifying the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In so doing, she effectively nominates these groups to show who will suffer if the ACA is taken away.

The socio-political concerns regarding the uninsured population in America and the function of insurance companies evokes the intertextual relations of the extract. Ultimately, Clinton, in the third extract, nominates "Captain Khan," "Muhammad Ali", and "Muslim Americans" in recognition of the Muslims' contributions as well as sacrifices in America. In doing so, she seeks to undermine the opposing Trump's rhetoric while nominating Muslim-Americans as indispensable citizens of the United States. By mentioning the intertextual allusions to the historical presence of Muslims in America "since George Washington" and the emblematic figure of Muhammad Ali, she seeks to the incorporate argument within a wider scope of history and culture, particularly American history and the legacy of inclusivism as well as Muslims' contributions to the society. It can be concluded that the way Hillary Clinton nominated various groups during the second debate with Donald Trump demonstrates the employment of rhetorical strategy of ascription which aims at depicting her as a reconciliatory candidate while opposing her as an atypical Republican, drawing attention to the unconventional moves of the President, defending the microsystem, and appreciating the citizens of America who are Muslims.

By incorporating historical, cultural, and media references, she is able to intertextually argue in conjunction with prominent accepted discourses. This makes it easier to express her argument and appeal to a larger audience who is accustomed to these narratives.
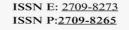
4.5.1.2 Predication

Predication as defined by Ruth Wodak (2011a) in Hillary Clinton's responses during the second presidential debate:

Extract 1: "Obviously, I'm hoping to earn your vote, I'm hoping to be elected in November, and I can promise you, I will work with every American. I want to be the president for all Americans, regardless of your political beliefs, where you come from, what you look like, your religion. I want us to heal our country and bring it together because that's, I think, the best way for us to get the future that our children and our grandchildren deserve."
Extract 2: "When I hear something like that, I am reminded of what my friend, Michelle Obama, advised us all: When they go low, you go high."
Extract 3: "But everybody else, the 170 million of us who get health insurance through our employees got big benefits. Number one, insurance companies can't deny you coverage because of a pre-existing condition. Number two, no lifetime limits, which is a big deal if you have serious health problems."
Extract 4: "It's also important I intend to defeat ISIS, to do so in a coalition with majority Muslim nations. Right now, a lot of those nations are hearing what Donald says and wondering, why should we cooperate with the Americans? And this is a gift to ISIS and the

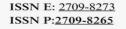| |
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| terrorists, violent jihadist terrorists." |
| Extract 5: "I take classified materials very seriously and always have. When I was on the Senate Armed Services Committee, I was privy to a lot of classified material. Obviously, as secretary of state, I had some of the most important secrets that we possess, such as going after bin Laden." |
| Extract 6: "My vision of America is an America where everyone has a place, if you're willing to work hard, you do your part, you contribute to the community. That's what America is. That's what we want America to be for our children and our grandchildren." |
| Extract 7: "I want to be the best president I can be for every American." |
| Extract 8: "Eight million kids every year have health insurance, because when I was first lady I worked with Democrats and Republicans to create the Children's Health Insurance Program. Hundreds of thousands of kids now have a chance to be adopted because I worked to change our adoption and foster care system. After 9/11, I went to work with Republican mayor, governor and president to rebuild New York and to get health care for our first responders who were suffering because they had run toward danger and gotten sickened by it." |
| Extract 9: "The price of coal is down worldwide. So we have to look at this comprehensively." |
| Extract 10: "We are not dependent upon the Middle East. But the Middle East still controls a lot of the prices. So the price of oil has been way down. And that has had a damaging effect on a lot of the oil companies, right? We are, however, producing a lot of natural gas, which serves as a bridge to more renewable fuels. And I think that's an important transition." |

Table 2: Use of Prediction by Hillary Clinton; 2nd Debate

Throughout the second debate with Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton used predication as a rhetorical technique where she portrayed herself and America in a positive light. She first describes herself as a 'unite' in Extract 1 when she promises to 'work with every American' which means healing the country and showing willingness to accept people from all walks of life politically, socially, or even religiously. Extract 2 introduces moral high ground as a predicative attribute when she uses Michelle Obama's advice, 'When they go low, you go high' to show how her campaign strives to be ethical. In Extract 3, Clinton shows the benefits of her policies where she covers pre-existing conditions and does not set lifetime limits, thus portraying her healthcare policies as favorable. In Extract 4, she shows how international cooperation is important by telling how Trump's speeches are damaging and how she has to lead the charge in defeating ISIS in a nurturing way. Post 5, she shows how she is responsible and dependable by discussing her experience with classified documents and how she is capable of such sensitive information. Lastly, in Extract 6, she describes her America as one that is inclusive and open, using hard work and community service as the measuring sticks.

Extract 7 emphasizes that Clinton is prepared to equally serve all Americans, further deepening her resolve to offer the best presidential leadership. In Extract 8, she attributes some of her bipartisan successes including the Children's Health Insurance Program and post 9/11 recovery to herself, depicting her as a cooperative legislator. Extract 9, predicates her approaches to energy issues as multi-faceted, indicating a willingness to take a measured approach to addressing problems. Lastly, in Extract 10, Clinton asserts that the shift in energy use must happen, paying attention to natural gas as a transition fuel to renewables, thus depicting her policies as progressive and environmentally friendly.

By applying intertextuality to most of her achievements, like referring to Clinton's Health Insurance Program and post 9/11 recovery efforts, she goes back into history and demonstrates knowledge and skill to create bipartisan agreements. Clinton's intertextual

references not only support her claims but build her image as a caring and uniting leader who seeks to and can improve the nation.

4.5.1.3 Argumentation

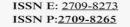| |
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| Extract 1: These are very important values to me, because this is the America that I know and love. And I can pledge to you tonight that this is the America that I will serve if I'm so fortunate enough to become your president. |
| Extract 2: Well, first, let me start by saying that so much of what he's just said is not right, but he gets to run his campaign any way he chooses. He gets to decide what he wants to talk about. Instead of answering people's questions, talking about our agenda, laying out the plans that we have that we think can make a better life and a better country, that's his choice. |
| Extract 3: When I hear something like that, I am reminded of what my friend, Michelle Obama, advised us all: When they go low, you go high. |
| Extract 4: Well, Martha, first, let me say — and I've said before, but I'll repeat it, because I want everyone to hear it — that was a mistake, and I take responsibility for using a personal e-mail account. Obviously, if I were to do it over again, I would not. I'm not making any excuses. It was a mistake. And I am very sorry about that. |
| Extract 5: So I want very much to save what works and is good about the Affordable Care Act. But we've got to get costs down. We've got to provide additional help to small businesses so that they can afford to provide health insurance. But if we repeal it, as Donald has proposed, and start over again, all of those benefits I just mentioned are lost to everybody, not just people who get their health insurance on the exchange. And then we would have to start all over again. |
| Extract 6: I want to be the best president I can be for every American. |
| Extract 7: Because we talked about what we wanted to do. We might have had some differences, and we had a lot of debates... |
| Extract 8: Well, it's not only my opinion. It's the opinion of many others, national security experts, Republicans, former Republican members of Congress. But it's in part because those of us who have had the great privilege of seeing this job up close and know how difficult it is, and it's not just because I watched my husband take a $300 billion deficit and turn it into a $200 billion surplus, and 23 million new jobs were created, and incomes went up for everybody. Everybody. African-American incomes went up 33 percent. |

Table 3: Use Argumentation by Hillary Clinton; 2nd Debate

In her second debate with Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton presented her case with intertextuality as a discursive strategy and argumentation as the focus of her message. The first extract features Clinton asserting her argument from deeply rooted ethos, stating that the values she campaigns for are part of her America. In this case, her promise reinforces her vision, boosting trust that she intends to deliver on her obligations if elected, hence, appeals to patriotism. This taps into a shared identity and nostalgia, which tend to invoke perceptions for American ideals. In the second extract, Clinton compares herself with Trump and states that she concentrates on having a detailed set of plans and policies while he does not. This strategic shift is used to advance her image as the more serious candidate, civic minded, policy driven, and focused on campaigns. In the third extract, Clinton uses instructions from Michelle Obama so as not to shift the blame on her and frame the speech as cleansing his conscience. This is designed to strengthen her position towards the voters as one of integrity and decency in order to elicit support and creates an intertextual link with the former First Lady who has an appealing reputation. In the fourth extract, Clinton attempts the email scandal directly by admitting it was a blunder and accepting the blame.

This approach focuses on responsibility and the honesty which quiets the impact of the scandal at hand. Her acknowledgment makes reference to a political scandal that is well

known, using it to showcase her confronting and dealing with her blunders openly. In extract 5, we hear Clinton argue for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to be preserved and improved instead of repealed. She argues specifically the benefits of the ACA and why it should not be repealed, framing the loss of these benefits as a great risk, which aids in her counter argument to Trump's repeal. This confronts the larger public discourse around the debate on healthcare and also mentioned other widely known benefits and the ongoing political discussion. In extract 6, Clinton's direct statement captures the essence of her argument towards inclusion and service to all Americans. The bluntness of this statement would resonate with logic of voters and citizens who wish to see a president who is for the people, connecting with the notion of democracy that a president needs to serve all citizens. In extract 7, we notice Clinton distinguishing between her campaign's substantive policies and the Trump campaign's focus, highlighting meaningful debate over personal attacks. This further reinforces that her campaign is focused toward substantive discourse such as issue driven debates. As her campaign has been expected, unlike other political campaigns that tend to focus on surrogates as a face for discussing meaningful issues.

Lastly, as seen in extract 8, Clinton uses expert opinions and provides historical references to support her claim on her ability and effectiveness of her policies. She cites statistical evidence from his presidency as a means to proffer her value in achieving similar outcomes. This creates an intertextual association to authoritative sources and past successful administrations, which enhances her credibility.

During her second debate with Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton incorporated intertextuality to persuade her audience and strengthen her rhetoric. The slogan of her campaign "Stronger Together" recalled historic instances of unity focused on coming together. Clinton's reference to the email controversy demonstrated political accountability and transparency which, of themselves, are quite controversial. The intertextuality showcased in her performance is the reference to widely known debates that cut across culture, politics, and history. Broadly speaking, Clinton's use of perspectivization and intertextuality during the second presidential debate effectively constructs her persona as an informed leader that is ethical and devoted to upholding American values while emphasizes practical actions in solving the nation's ailment.

4.5.1.4 Perspectivisation

Extract 1:"I want to be the president for all Americans, regardless of your political beliefs, where you come from, what you look like, your religion. I want us to heal our country and bring it together because that's, I think, the best way for us to get the future that our children and our grandchildren deserve."
Extract 2:"These are very important values to me, because this is the America that I know and love. And I can pledge to you tonight that this is the America that I will serve if I'm so fortunate enough to become your president."
Extract 3:"But here's what I don't want people to forget when we're talking about reining in the costs, which has to be the highest priority of the next president, when the Affordable Care Act passed, it wasn't just that 20 million got insurance who didn't have it before. But that in and of itself was a good thing. I meet these people all the time, and they tell me what a difference having that insurance meant to them and their families."
Extract 4:"Eight million kids every year have health insurance, because when I was first lady I worked with Democrats and Republicans to create the Children's Health Insurance Program. Hundreds of thousands of kids now have a chance to be adopted because I worked to change our adoption and foster care system. After 9/11, I went to work with Republican mayor, governor and president to rebuild New York and to get health care for our first responders who were suffering because they had run toward danger and gotten sickened by

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This approach focuses on responsibility and the honesty which quiets the impact of the scandal at hand. Her acknowledgment makes reference to a political scandal that is well known, using it to showcase her confronting and dealing with her blunders openly. In extract 5, we hear Clinton argue for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to be preserved and improved instead of repealed. She argues specifically the benefits of the ACA and why it should not be repealed, framing the loss of these benefits as a great risk, which aids in her counter argument to Trump's repeal. This confronts the larger public discourse around the debate on healthcare and also mentioned other widely known benefits and the ongoing political discussion. In extract 6, Clinton's direct statement captures the essence of her argument towards inclusion and service to all Americans. The bluntness of this statement would resonate with logic of voters and citizens who wish to see a president who is for the people, connecting with the notion of democracy that a president needs to serve all citizens. In extract 7, we notice Clinton distinguishing between her campaign's substantive policies and the Trump campaign's focus, highlighting meaningful debate over personal attacks. This further reinforces that her campaign is focused toward substantive discourse such as issue driven debates. As her campaign has been expected, unlike other political campaigns that tend to focus on surrogates as a face for discussing meaningful issues.

Lastly, as seen in extract 8, Clinton uses expert opinions and provides historical references to support her claim on her ability and effectiveness of her policies. She cites statistical evidence from his presidency as a means to proffer her value in achieving similar outcomes. This creates an intertextual association to authoritative sources and past successful administrations, which enhances her credibility.

During her second debate with Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton incorporated intertextuality to persuade her audience and strengthen her rhetoric. The slogan of her campaign "Stronger Together" recalled historic instances of unity focused on coming together. Clinton's reference to the email controversy demonstrated political accountability and transparency which, of themselves, are quite controversial. The intertextuality showcased in her performance is the reference to widely known debates that cut across culture, politics, and history. Broadly speaking, Clinton's use of perspectivization and intertextuality during the second presidential debate effectively constructs her persona as an informed leader that is ethical and devoted to upholding American values while emphasizes practical actions in solving the nation's ailment.

4.4.1.5. Mitigation and Intensification

Hillary Clinton's responses during the second presidential debate, which illustrate "Mitigation and Intensification" as discursive strategies, as discussed by Ruth Wodak (2011a):

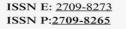| |
|---|
| Extract 1 "Well, first, let me start by saying that so much of what he's just said is not right, but he gets to run his campaign any way he chooses." |
| Extract 2 "When I hear something like that, I am reminded of what my friend, Michelle Obama, advised us all: When they go low, you go high." |
| Extract 3:"Well, Martha, first, let me say — and I've said before, but I'll repeat it, because I want everyone to hear it — that was a mistake, and I take responsibility for using a personal e-mail account. Obviously, if I were to do it over again, I would not. I'm not making any excuses. It was a mistake. And I am very sorry about that." |
| Extract 4:"But I think it's also important to point out where there are some misleading accusations from critics and others. After a year-long investigation, there is no evidence that anyone hacked the server I was using and there is no evidence that anyone can point to at all — anyone who says otherwise has no basis — that any classified material ended up in the wrong hands." |
| Extract 5 "Look, it's just not true. And so please, go to..." |
| Extract 6:"I want to be the president for all Americans, regardless of your political beliefs, where you come from, what you look like, your religion. I want us to heal our country and bring it together because that's, I think, the best way for us to get the future that our children and our grandchildren deserve." |

Table 5: Use of Mitigation and Intensification by Hillary Clinton; 2nd Debate

In the second presidential debate with Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton employed both mitigation and intensification as discourse strategies to convey her message. As noted in Extract 1, Clinton mitigates her disagreement with Trump by critiquing his campaign but does so within the limits of his freedom to run his campaign. "Well, first, let me start by saying that so much of what he's just said is not right, but he gets to run his campaign any way he chooses," she narrates. This softening remark acknowledges Trump's autonomy and creates a less confrontational atmosphere, portraying her criticism in a more conciliatory fashion. Extract 2 illustrates Clinton's appeal to emotion and moral appeal as an example of intensification. She cites a phrase by Michelle Obama, "When I hear something like that, I am reminded of what my friend, Michelle Obama, advised us all: When they go low, you go high." By quoting her, she strengthens her argument by asserting moral credibility while bringing an emotional dimension to the speech, showing her determination to uphold grace. In Extract 3, Clinton mitigates the damage from the email scandal by accepting full blame for her actions and admitting that she made a mistake.

In her attempts to regain trust, she accepts accountability by saying phrases like "I take responsibility" and "I am very sorry," which look like she trying to mitigate the critique placed towards her. Extract 4 demonstrates Clinton intensifying her defense to justify her accusations on her email use. Clinton extracts, "there is no evidence" and "anyone who says otherwise has no basis," which reinforces the validity and credibly of Clinton's claim. In Extract 5 Clinton starts with what is known as mitigation and therefore makes her rebuttal weaker. This technique makes her sentence less direct and aggressive by resorting the audience to check the factual materials instead of basing trust on her claim with no proof. In the final example presented, Extract 6, Clinton is seen using the technique of intensification with emotionally loaded phrases like "heal our country" and "the future that our children and our grandchildren deserve," portraying his message to resonate powerfully with the audience for a prosperous united America while emphasizing the vision he wants for the future. All in all, through the use of intertextuality, Clinton has managed to address sensitive issues while

remaining impartial and within the limits found in discourse analysis that focus on audience engagement.

4.5.2 Donald Trump
4.5.2.1 Nomination

Extract 1:"We're going the make great deals. We're going to have a strong border. We're going to bring back law and order. Just today, policemen was shot, two killed. And this is happening on a weekly basis. We have to bring back respect to law enforcement."
Extract 2:"But I want to do things that haven't been done, including fixing and making our inner cities better for the African-American citizens that are so great, and for the Latinos, Hispanics, and I look forward to doing it. It's called make America great again."
Extract 3: "You know, when we have a world where you have ISIS chopping off heads, where you have — and, frankly, drowning people in steel cages, where you have wars and horrible, horrible sights all over, where you have so many bad things happening, this is like medieval times. We haven't seen anything like this, the carnage all over the world."
Extract 4: "I will knock the hell out of ISIS. We're going to defeat ISIS. ISIS happened a number of years ago in a vacuum that was left because of bad judgment. And I will tell you, I will take care of ISIS."
Extract 5: "We're going to make America safe again. We're going to make America great again, but we're going to make America safe again. And we're going to make America wealthy again, because if you don't do that, it just — it sounds harsh to say, but we have to build up the wealth of our nation."
Extract 6: "I'm going to help the African-Americans. I'm going to help the Latinos, Hispanics. I am going to help the inner cities."
Extract 7: "But that was something that happened. If you look at Bill Clinton, far worse. Mine are words, and his was action. His was what he's done to women. There's never been anybody in the history politics in this nation that's been so abusive to women. So you can say any way you want to say it, but Bill Clinton was abusive to women. Hillary Clinton attacked those same women and attacked them viciously. Four of them here tonight. One of the women, who is a wonderful woman, at 12 years old, was raped at 12."
Extract 8: "The Muslim ban is something that in some form has morphed into an extreme vetting from certain areas of the world. Hillary Clinton wants to allow hundreds of thousands — excuse me. Excuse me."

Table 6: Use of Nomination by Donald Trump; 2nd Debate

During the second presidential debate, Trump made specific tactical choices, including cross-referencing as a form of nomination strategy and intertextuality to call Trump's base that goes beyond the customary turn addressing framework of America and naming it as his base. In particular, he purposefully chose expressions vivid materialism to market himself for public adoration while his opponents and certain policies were placed in the opposite frame. In the first extract, Trump uses nomination by quoting "great deals"," a "strong border," and "law and order." Collectively, they describe the marked achievement in economics, national security and the resulting social order. He adds, "There are policemen who are being shot. They are so badly treated." These policemen and others who go through such violence deserve full restoration of respect backbone of decent society. Intertextuality works here: we have widely circulated discourses revolving around political debates regarding crime and law enforcement, as well as memories of brutal criminality with civil disorder and previous political snap elections targeting such problems. The second extract has Trump using nomination with "African-American citizens," "Latinos," and "Hispanics" and further depicting them as active participants of social phenomena which need his assistance. This outright recognition of these consternated communities demonstrates even stronger resolve
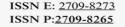
and obligation towards the subjects. Trump repeats his campaign phrase "make America great again," thus emphasizing selling his primary slogan. the integrational dimension relates to the historic and contemporary addresses focused on marginalized groups and urban policies across the politics of America.

In the third extract, Trump vividly recounts the outrageous violence perpetrated by ISIS, such as "chopping off heads" and "drowning people in steel cages." He refers to these actions as reminiscent of medieval times, further emphasizing their extremity. The intertextuality in this extract builds on the collective narrative of terrorism and violence, tapping into a shared comprehension of violence and amplifying the threat of ISIS. The fourth extract illustrates Trump's repeated nomination of ISIS as the enemy, emphasizing the need to focus all efforts on defeating this group. He blames their emergence on "bad judgment," placing his approach as needing to neutralize decisively. This extract relies on existing counterterrorism discourse in combination with other policy decisions, positioning Trump in the established discourse of a strong liberal leader fighting terrorism. In the seventh extract, Trump repeatedly nominates America as the subject to prime it to be "safe again", "great again", and "wealthy again." The repeating strengthens the promises he made during his campaign and set his objectives for the country. The intertextuality connects to the discussion of broader security issues, prosperity and national pride and links the narrative back to historical economic slogans and promises from other politics on renewal.

The fifth extract has Trump nominating "African-Americans," "Latinos," "Hispanics," and 'inner cities' as groups to be helped. This shows a deep concern with directly addressing their needs. The elements of intertextuality pertain to ongoing social and political discourses concerning support for minorities and urban areas funding which positions his message to address systemic inequalities and urban conditions. In the sixth extract, Trump uses nomination to describe "Bill Clinton" as "far worse" and "abusive to women," highlighting the hypocrisy of his words relative to his actions, claiming that he also nominates "Hillary Clinton" as being equally guilty of perpetuating violence against these women. He frames both Clintons in a pejorative light. The intertextuality here relies on pre-existing scandals and accusations against the Clintons, deepening their adverse perceptions while also utilizing a broader political discourse of scandal and misconduct. Finally, in the seventh extract, Trump uses nomination by categorizing the policies as "the Muslim ban" and "extreme vetting," which he contends to be essential for upholding national security. He states that "Hillary Clinton" is claiming to be opposed to those measures as she would let multitudes from "certain areas of the world" into the country.

The intertextuality of this extract evokes post-9/11 security narratives and discussions of immigration and national security, suggesting his position is informed by broader nation-protection concerns regarding external threats.

In the 2nd presidential debate, Donald Trump adeptly utilized intertextuality to resonate with his audience by drawing on widely recognized political, social, and cultural narratives. By referring to the United States as a "great country" and invoking themes of American exceptionalism, he connected his campaign to a longstanding tradition of patriotic rhetoric. His criticism of "Iran deal" tapped into existing public debates and anxieties, amplifying their perceived failures. References to "law and order" and the plight of "policemen" evoked historical political discourses on crime and security, while his focus on helping "African-American citizens," "Latinos," and "Hispanics" aligned with ongoing conversations about minority support and social justice. The vivid descriptions of ISIS's brutality drew on global narratives of terrorism, leveraging shared fears and the horror of violence. By criticizing "Bill Clinton" and framing "Hillary Clinton" negatively, he tapped into well-known scandals and public sentiments about political misconduct. Finally, his discussion of the "Muslim ban" and

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"extreme vetting" resonated with post-9/11 security concerns, positioning himself as a protector against external threats. Through these intertextual references, Trump effectively connected his rhetoric to broader societal issues and historical contexts, enhancing the impact of his message. Donald Trump's use of nomination as a discursive strategy and his employment of intertextuality are evident. By strategically naming and framing issues, policies, and individuals, Trump effectively communicated his message, resonating with his audience and reinforcing his campaign themes

4.5.2.2 Predication

Extract 1: "When I look at all of the things that I see and all of the potential that our country has, we have such tremendous potential, whether it's in business and trade, where we're doing so badly. Last year, we had almost $800 billion trade deficit. In other words, trading with other countries. We had an $800 billion deficit. It's hard to believe. Inconceivable."
Extract 2: "We're going to make America safe again. We're going to make America great again, but we're going to make America safe again. And we're going to make America wealthy again, because if you don't do that, it just — it sounds harsh to say, but we have to build up the wealth of our nation."
Extract 3 : "It's just words, folks. It's just words. Those words, I've been hearing them for many years. I heard them when they were running for the Senate in New York, where Hillary was going to bring back jobs to upstate New York and she failed."
Extract 4: "I'm going to help the African-Americans. I'm going to help the Latinos, Hispanics. I am going to help the inner cities. She's done a terrible job for the African-Americans."
Extract 5: "I have great respect for women. Nobody has more respect for women than I do."
Extract 6: "I hate it. But it's locker room talk, and it's one of those things. I will knock the hell out of ISIS. We're going to defeat ISIS."
Extract 7: "She's got tremendous — she's got tremendous hatred. And this country cannot take another four years of Barack Obama, and that's what you're getting with her."
Extract 8: "Obamacare is a disaster. You know it. We all know it. It's going up at numbers that nobody's ever seen worldwide. Nobody's ever seen numbers like this for health care. It's only getting worse."

Table 7: Use of Predication by Donald Trump; 2nd Debate

During the second Presidential debate, Trump made great use of narrative predication strategy to convey his message and used intertextuality to connect with the audience's prior worries and stories. In Extract 1, he recalls Trump's contrast between the "tremendous potential" of the country and its dismal performance in "business and trade," emphasizing the enormous trade deficit that he considers "inconceivable." This kind of predication paints a picture of squandered potential because of mismanagement. The intertextual reference to economic data, as well as, national discourse about trade policies connects Trump's critique to more pressing economic issues. In Extract 2, promises to "make America safe again," "make America great again," and "make America wealthy again," are promises bound to positive results. This kind of predication casts his intended actions as central improvements. His campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again" also gets repeated, cementing the slogan as the underlying theme of the campaign. Extract 3 leads with Trump calling Hillary Clinton "failed" in delivering certain political promises pertaining to job creation. This predication draws off a developed picture of political accountability and public skepticism towards career politicians. The reference to Clinton's past promises draws on existing criticisms and skepticism of her effectiveness.

In Extract 4, Trump sets the context of his remarks concerning minorities as inner cities as positive by promising them "help" while describing Hilary's actions as a "terrible job." This

contraste makes use of already existing issues of concern concerning minorites, which cast Trump in a more positive light. There is intertextuality here regarding racial and urban policy and social stories. Extract 5 presents Trump declaring that he has, "great respect" for women, which is a positive remark adjacent to a negative perception. This addresses ongoing critiques of Trump's actions towards women by attempting to portray him differently under the prevailing societal standards on respect and equality. In Extract 6, Trump downplays the impact of what he calls "his locker room talk," while strongly professing his intent to "defeat" ISIS under decisive actions against them. This justification sidesteps controversial conduct in the past and takes a more powerful position on national security. The term "locker room banter" evokes his past comments which was public while the assumed aggression towards ISIS speaks to interests relating to national security. Extract 7 describes Hillary Clinton as possessing "tremendous hatred" and in saying this associates her presidency to the perpetuation of Obama's term. This reasoning stems from the storylines of discontent during Obama's presidency, casting Hillary as a continuation of the alleged harmful policies. The intertextuality here builds on criticisms of the Obama's presidency and its feared continuation. For instance, in Extract 8, Trump depicts Obamacare in highly unfavorable terms, labeling it a "disaster" while pointing out skyrocketing costs. This reinforces negative stereotypes associated with Obamacare, linking them to the prevailing public and political discourse regarding its viability and overall value.

In the second presidential debate, Donald Trump's strategic use of intertextuality enhanced the impact of his arguments by linking them to public concerns and narratives that predate the debate. For example, Trump's discussion of economic data and the large trade deficit resonates with national discussions on trade policies, thus situating his critique within the context of wider economic concerns. The slogan "make America great again" captures the essence of the repetition of his campaign slogan that served many functions beyond a mere slogan. "Locker room talk" references about his past comments while his reiterated bold decision not to back down from ISIS assert his authority on national security issues. As a result of using such intertextual references, Trump grounded his arguments in wider society — political issues prudently and therefore made his arguments more powerful and relatable to citizens. Drawing oppositional predication from the quote for these examples allows attributing negative characteristics to opponents' policies whilst ascribing positive attributes to his own plans/carbon his plans. The intertextuality employed here falls into the category of using preexisting narratives and concerns, using information available in the public domain to construct an argument so that it strongly resonates with one shared knowledge and sentiments.

4.5.2.3 Argumentation

"Argumentation" discursive strategies employed in Donald Trump's 2nd presidential debate:

Extract 1: And they look and they see. Can you imagine the people that are, frankly, doing so well against us with ISIS? And they look at our country and they see what's going on. Yes, I'm very embarrassed by it. I hate it. But it's locker room talk, and it's one of those things. I will knock the hell out of ISIS. We're going to defeat ISIS. ISIS happened a number of years ago in a vacuum that was left because of bad judgment. And I will tell you, I will take care of ISIS.
Extract 2: I have great respect for women. Nobody has more respect for women than I do. And women have respect for me. And I will tell you: No, I have not. And I will tell you that I'm going to make our country safe. We're going to have borders in our country, which we don't have now. People are pouring into our country, and they're coming in from the Middle East and other places. We're going to make America safe again. We're going to make America great again, but we're going to make America safe again. And we're going to make

America wealthy again, because if you don't do that, it just — it sounds harsh to say, but we have to build up the wealth of our nation.
Extract 3: It's just words, folks. It's just words. Those words, I've been hearing them for many years. I heard them when they were running for the Senate in New York, where Hillary was going to bring back jobs to upstate New York and she failed. I've heard them where Hillary is constantly talking about the inner cities of our country, which are a disaster education-wise, jobwise, safety-wise, in every way possible. I'm going to help the AfricanAmericans. I'm going to help the Latinos, Hispanics. I am going to help the inner cities. She's done a terrible job for the African-Americans. She wants their vote, and she does nothing, and then she comes back four years later. We saw that firsthand when she was United States senator.
Extract 4: If you look at Bill Clinton, far worse. Mine are words, and his was action. His was what he's done to women. There's never been anybody in the history politics in this nation that's been so abusive to women. So you can say any way you want to say it, but Bill Clinton was abusive to women. Hillary Clinton attacked those same women and attacked them viciously. Four of them here tonight. One of the women, who is a wonderful woman, at 12 years old, was raped at 12. Her client she represented got him off, and she's seen laughing on two separate occasions, laughing at the girl who was raped. Kathy Shelton, that young woman is here with us tonight. So don't tell me about words. I am absolutely — I apologize for those words. But it is things that people say. But what President Clinton did, he was impeached, he lost his license to practice law. He had to pay an $850,000 fine to one of the women. Paula Jones, who's also here tonight.
Extract 5: When I speak, I go out and speak, the people of this country are furious. In my opinion, the people that have been long-term workers at the FBI are furious. There has never been anything like this, where e-mails — and you get a subpoena, you get a subpoena, and after getting the subpoena, you delete 33,000 e-mails, and then you acid wash them or bleach them, as you would say, very expensive process. So we're going to get a special prosecutor, and we're going to look into it, because you know what? People have been — their lives have been destroyed for doing one-fifth of what you've done. And it's a disgrace. And honestly, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.
Extract 6: We are killing — absolutely killing our energy business in this country. Now, I'm all for alternative forms of energy, including wind, including solar, et cetera. But we need much more than wind and solar. And you look at our miners. Hillary Clinton wants to put all the miners out of business. There is a thing called clean coal. Coal will last for 1,000 years in this country. Now we have natural gas and so many other things because of technology. We have unbelievable — we have found over the last seven years; we have found tremendous wealth right under our feet. So good. Especially when you have $20 trillion in debt. I will bring our energy companies back

Table 8: Use of Argumentative by Donald Trump; 2nd Debate

During the second presidential debate, Donald Trump argued his case using a plethora of argumentative strategies. Extract 1 shows how Trump attempts to deal with ISIS by blaming past mistakes on leaders who neglected to destroy it, framing himself as a bold leader who will take intense action. He justifies his promises within the scope of a broader critique of previous administrations, using common myths about the origins of ISIS to support his argument. In Extract 2 Trump defends accusations against him by changing the subject to his respect for women and diverting towards national security where he stresses border control and the economy. He combines intertextuality and campaign slogans like "Make America Safe Again," crafting to his message. Extract 3 covers Trump launching attacks against Hillary Clinton regarding her supposed commitments to Africans and African Americans and

people living in the inner cities of the United States, her words claiming action where there was none. He uses specific evidence to support his critique of Clinton's past promises and present outcomes, intertextuality to lend credibility to his argument. Finally, in Extract 4, Trump attempts to defend criticism on his language by juxtaposing his words with those of Bill Clinton, whom he deems far more reprehensible. Trump's argument boils down to portraying his wife's opponent in a terrible light, and many would consider these remarks utterly scurrilous – underscoring Bill Clinton's notorious scandals by drawing on his legal consequences stemming from unrestrained historical intertextuality.

In extract 5, identify features in which Trump has criticized Clinton's policies on emails, proposed legal consequences, and hired a special prosecutor. He makes use of existing controversies and public disenchantment regarding the email scandal and employs legal language and detailed procedures to strengthen his argument, thus utilizing intertextuality. Lastly, in extract 6, Trump promotes "clean coal" and other energy sources argues that policies aimed at restricting the use of coal as an energy source economically recover. He taps into persistent disputes surrounding environmental policy and economic development and undermines them using strategic intertextuality. It can be concluded that throughout the debates, Trump employs intertextuality to build context for his arguments, reinforcing overarching themes while drawing parallels with his audience's sentiments, which enhances his persuasiveness.

4.5.2.4 Perspectivisation

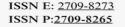| |
|---|
| Extract 1: "And my whole concept was to make America great again... We have such tremendous potential, whether it's in business and trade..." |
| Extract 2: "Just today, policemen was shot, two killed... We have to bring back respect to law enforcement." |
| Extract 3: "You know, when we have a world where you have ISIS chopping off heads... This is like medieval times. We haven't seen anything like this, the carnage all over the world." |

Table 9: Use of Perspectivisation by Donald Trump; 2nd Debate

During the second presidential debate with Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump demonstrated "perspectivisation" as a discursive strategy throughout his messaging. In Extract 1, the focus is on what he perceives as the unexploited potential of America that is already there. He states that the current policies and leadership setbacks for America are not being optimally utilized, and that this situation can fundamentally improve under his rule. This perspectivisation fits with his campaign tagline, "Make America Great Again," which suggests the country has lost its former glory and can be made great again in the future. The intertextual quality of this utterance taps into the robust narrative of American greatness, especially in business and trade, which are fundamental to the American identity and aspirations. In Extract 2, Trump takes some examples of violence directed at police officers and uses them to argue towards the need for more law enforcement. He perspectives focuses heavily on law and order with the assumption that there is very little respect towards the police and law enforcement, and that something must be done to change this societal norm. This creates a sense of urgency and justifies his stance on law enforcement policies. In terms of intertextuality, there is reference to several social problems and issues of violence against the police, especially those reported in the media and public discourse, thus broadening his message towards social anxieties regarding violence and respect for authority.

At long last, in Extract 3, Trump analyzes global terrorism in order to accentuate threats and rationalize his militaristic approach to national security. His remarks about ISIS's savagery being akin to "medieval times" furthers the characterization of these acts in order to argue for his violence-laden solutions. The intertextuality in this extract includes all acts of terrorism that ISIS committed and have been reported ad museum, as they are ubiquitous in global

media. Trump makes vivid historical comparisons to depict ISIS that compel and exploit fears about global terrorism which his opponents have framed in the discourse around the need for fierce counteraction. Trump uses perspective in such a way to view himself as a viable candidate because he attempts to fathom the scope of the multitude of national crises facing the public. His criticism of current situations tends to accompany pessimistic assessments, while optimism regarding the situation after his deduction emerges in the form of a narrative focused on transformation.

4.5.2.5 Mitigation and Intensification

Extract 1: "We're going to make America safe again. We're going to make America wealthy again, because if you don't do that, it just — it sounds harsh to say, but we have to build up the wealth of our nation."
Extract 2: "I apologize to my family. I apologize to the American people. Certainly I'm not proud of it. But this is locker room talk."
Extract 3: "We're going to make great deals. We're going to have a strong border. We're going to bring back law and order."
Extract 4: "I will knock the hell out of ISIS. We're going to defeat ISIS."
Extract 5: "Well, I actually agree with that. I agree with everything she said."
Extract 6: "I have great respect for women. Nobody has more respect for women than I do."
Extract 7: "I will tell you: No, I have not."
Extract 8: "It's hard to believe. Inconceivable."

Table 10: Use of Mitigation and Intensification by Donald Trump; 2nd Debate

During the second debate with Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump demonstrated a highly effective use of mitigation and intensification strategies. For example, in extract 1, mitigation is, "It sounds harsh to say, but…" and this impacts how Trump remarks on the need to construct wealth on a national level. This strategy helps the audience brace themselves for a truth that is controversial but critical. In extract 2, Trump apologizes and refers to his prior comments as "locker room talk." This is also an example of mitigation where he seeks to mitigate the severity of the remark. Trump argues that by saying those things, he meant they were informal and should not affect his reputation gravely. Upon extract 3, Trump's phrases "We're going to" and "great deals," "strong border," "bring back law and order" indicate a shift in the speaker's attitude as they begin to gain strength, and support toward the audience who prefer obstinate leaders. Another extract that illustrates reign of intensification is extract 3, where Trump states, "knock the hell out of" ISIS and promises to defeat the organization, portraying him as a decisive leader ready to tackle threats.

As noted in segment seven, Trump mitigates potential conflict with the strategy of mitigation, "'Well, I actually agree with that. I agree with everything she said.'" By agreeing with the previous remark, he eliminates the possibility of disagreement, demonstrating that he is able to identify a compromise and that he is indeed very flexible, which is attractive to moderate voters. In extract 4, Trump employs intensification. Both, "great respect" and "nobody has more respect" are absolute terms which amplify his claim, demonstrating that he respects women contrary to the negative perceptions about him. Trump's assertiveness is intensified in extract 5, "I will tell you: No, I have not." The expression "I will tell you" serves to stress the certainty and conviction contained in his denial, and, therefore, that no one will be in any doubt regarding the veracity of his statement. Finally, extract 8, "It's hard to believe. Inconceivable," Trump's strongest expression of disbelief concerning trade deficits is with strong adjectives "hard to believe" and "inconceivable." This language is designed to evoke the same incredulity and concern in the audiences.

In general, Trump's use of intertextuality integrates his arguments into known conversations and frameworks which increases their appeal and effectiveness. In the debate, Trump also deployed both mitigation and intensification as discourse strategies to structure his answers and highlight his arguments.

Discussion

Analyzing the second 2016 U.S. presidential debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump shows the distinct use of discursive strategies such as nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and mitigation/intensification. Each candidate crafted his or her argument and utilized these strategies to appeal to the voters, cast doubt about their opponent, and defend their credibility. The incorporation of intertextuality that draws upon and weaves in historical, cultural, and political stories also enhances their arguments as they situate them within broader societal narratives. This discussion integrates the findings and considers them alongside existing literature on political discourse and debates.

The approach that Clinton used of nomination was quite powerful in portraying Trump as someone who lacked the moral virtue to assume office. Through the intertextuality of media and the public's existing knowledge about Trump, Clinton was able to mention specific people who he had wronged such as the Khan family, a federal judge, and even Obama. This is in conjunction with other studies which assert claim that in political discourse, intertextuality is essential for sustaining political arguments (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 2011). Clinton's nomination of beneficiaries of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) also drew on broader debate on healthcare policy which strategically appealed to voters' perception of the policy's appeal. This is in fact documented in literature that claims that practitioners of politics rely on nomination to portray policy issues in a bipartisan way in order to connect with voters on a deeper level (Chilton, 2004).

Through predication, Clinton self-presented as a unifying and an ethical leader. For instance, her use of 'When they go low, we go high' serves as a moral high ground for her campaign, a reference to the ethical standards set by the Obama administration. This is in line with the literature which indicates that politicians more often than not utilize predication as a tool for crafting a favorable self-portrait and an unfavorable portrait of others (Van Dijk, 2006). Clinton's America, "everyone has a place," and her emphasis on inclusivity also supported her narrative as a unifying leader for the country, which evidence suggests are the type of voters who feel the need for a stable and cohesive environment (Cap, 2013).

This rhetoric stems from practical policy methods and historical reasoning. For example, her defense of the ACA, along with her mentions of bipartisan accomplishments like the Children's Health Insurance Program, drew from successful past policies. This confirms that politicians frequently resort to use 'historical/policy' based arguments in attempts to establish credibility and competence (Reisigl & Wodak, 2005). Additionally, her approach about the email controversy acknowledges it, while seeking to downplay its significance, which displayed accountability. This particular mitigation has shown to benefit political figures in recovering from scandal (Benoit, 1997).

As a result, Clinton comes off as a responsible and experienced leader due to her implementation of perspective and mitigation/intensification. For example, emphasizing her commitment to American values and her outlook spoke to the need for unifying change. Exerting mitigation by admitting to the email mistake softens the argument, but adds potential criticisms. On the other hand, the too much reinforcing of Trump's statements portrayed him in a much worse light than intended, which served as his critique. All of these actions align with the accusation of politicians using mitigation and bolstering as inverses of voters' value, to extend to their hopes and aspirations (Chilton, 2004).

The way he made nominations was strategic to how he campaigned for Trump and argued how he was restoring America's greatness. He framed himself as able to make America great again and a patriotic champion by acknowledging the issues of ISIS, law enforcement, African-Americans, Latinos, and inner-city dwellers. The narrative he made considering this was mindful of the intertextual deep-rooted narratives of American exceptionalism and drew on "Make America Great Again" which is well-known and well-received for aiding claims about America's past elegance. The way he framed ISIS as a threat also at the same time became medieval heightened urgency for vicious responses and the overreliance on frightening threats politically aligns with other research (Altheide, 2018).

Through the use of predication, Trump framed himself as a particularly strong and decisive leader while persuading the public that Clinton was incompetent and untrustworthy. His portrayal of Obamacare as a 'disaster', and Clinton's policies as 'terrible' for the African American community opportunistically appealed to existing public grievances. This is consistent with the findings of many scholars who contend that political predication is primarily used to foster negativity about political competitors while generating self-praise (Van Dijk, 2006). Even his claim that he has "great respect for women" illustrates his negative attention predication, which has been known to enhance managed public image (Benoit, 1997).
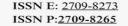
Trump's argumentation often made use of intertextual allusion to well-known political topics and historical references. His critique of the Iranian deal, as well as his focus on law and order, underscored pre-existing public discussions and concern. This is consistent with scholarly research claiming that politicians employ intertextuality to contextualize their political debates into wider societal issues (Fairclough, 1992). Trump's arguments about his controversies alongside Bill Clinton's was also based on the historical scandals, which have been proven effective as a strategy for deflecting blame by shifting attention to discourse about the opponent's past (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015).

As stated earlier, or ultimately, the framing employed by Trump on his policies around national security and economic growth within the persuasive policies of mitigation and intensification were posited as essential for stimulating national security and economic recovery. Trump's promises to "knock the hell out of ISIS" and his vivid description of ISIS's brutality fuel his perceived threat which requires extreme action and urgent solutions. This aligns with previous research on the use of fear appeals in political discourse (Altheide, 2018). Also, Trump's mitigation of his comments to "locker room talk" illustrates a use of discourse strategies to downplay negative perceptions that has been proven effective in public image management (Benoit, 1997).

Both candidates apply different framing techniques to appeal to voter, but Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Trump employ discursive strategies differently. Policy inclusivity and expertise, along with moral integrity is what describes Clinton's discourse. On the other hand, Trump emphasized decisiveness and strength in his discourse for a return to perceived past greatness. These differences mark deeper ideological and rhetorical divides in the American political landscape, as studied previously (Lakoff, 2002; Van Dijk, 2006).

The use of intertextuality was a consistent theme across both candidates' strategies as it helped popularize their arguments in connection to greater public narratives and existing societal concerns. This corresponds to intertextuality research in political discourse which posits that intertextuality is widely employed by politicians as a framing device in order to make their messages more relevant and increase their impact (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 2011).

The analysis of the second 2016 US presidential debate uncovered the applicability of discursive strategies and intertextuality as crafted policy by Hillary Clinton and Donald

Trump. Trump relied on characteristically masculine traits such as strength, decisiveness, and restoring national greatness, while Clinton concentrated on moral integrity, inclusivity, and mastery in policy-making. The aforementioned approaches illustrate increasingly fundamental ideological and rhetorical divides in the American political sphere and demonstrate the efficacy of discursive strategies for altering public opinion and voter behavior. Perhaps further studies could analyze the longitudinal impact of these strategies as more elections occur in an attempt to understand the shift in voter perception and behavior patterns.

Conclusions

The debates between Trump and Clinton are crucial like the second one from 2016 where both candidates gave speeches. With Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), I was able to examine the discourses and actions that each candidate had and compare the strategies they utilized to appeal to voters. Both candidates utilized positions, nominations, and arguments in order to spin their narratives as well as do the same for their opponents. Trump's campaigns focused heavily on policy issues, opposition towards immigration, and military expansion while Clinton focused on American as a whole and making America great again. The approaches both these candidates took highlight the differences which are far deeper in American politics. From analyzing the debates, I grasped a strong underlying idea which is the references chosen for and between the campaigns was critically important. These quotes could range from events that were popular or notable to many people to public disputes making most clichés rhetorically effective. Arguments with these kind of intricate histories aided Clinton forming claims alongside obtaining the presidency. Trump managed to persuade people by his arguments targeting them and casting them together with the historical narratives that he and his opponents displayed. On the other hand, the tapping into voters' desire for change, restoration, and the "Make America Great Again" slogan was largely a product of America's economic anxieties and national security threats during Trump's presidency. Furthermore, the analysis emphasizes the effectiveness of strategic management of public image controversies. For instance, Clinton's admission of the email indiscretion and her focusing on responsibility illustrated how she was able to respond to criticism honestly. In contrast, how Trump referred to his controversial comments as "locker room talk" was an attempt to soften their impact. Strategies such as these are consistent with prior studies on crisis communications and image management, showing how politicians attempt to navigate scandals while preserving their credibility and reputation. This research provides a comprehensive examination of the 2016 presidential debates—which represents a critical moment in American political history—and thus adds to the existing literature of political discourse. It highlights the importance of strategic discourse in campaign politics and demonstrates how candidates articulate their identities, policies, and aspirations for the nation's future through language. This analysis opens avenues for exploring how these strategies shift over time in relation to other elections, voter perception, and political polarization. Examining the influence of language in political communication reveals deeper understanding in the dynamics of electoral campaigns and the multi-faceted motives impacting voters' decisions.

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