Trabajo de Fin de Grado

The 2016 U.S. Presidential Debates: A Discourse Analysis Approach

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ABSTRACT

Presidential debates constitute an essential part in the political campaign to gain the vote of citizens for the elections. In fact, political actors employ their own techniques to persuade the audience through spoken language which allow citizens to know the true personality of the candidates. The purpose of this project is to analyse the political discourse through the examination of seven representative linguistic features employed by the two candidates, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in the 2016 United States presidential debates.

Key words: critical discourse analysis (CDA), political discourse, presidential debates, spoken language, linguistic features, Trump, Clinton.

RESUMEN

Los debates presidenciales constituyen una parte esencial en las campañas políticas para ganar el voto de los ciudadanos en las elecciones. De hecho, los políticos emplean sus propias técnicas para persuadir a la audiencia a través del lenguaje hablado lo que permite a los ciudadanos conocer la verdadera personalidad de los candidatos. El objetivo de este trabajo académico es analizar el discurso político a través del estudio de siete rasgos lingüísticos más representativos usados por los dos candidatos políticos, Donald Trump y Hillary Clinton en los debates presidenciales de Estados Unidos en 2016.

Palabras claves: análisis crítico del discurso (ACD), discurso político, debates presidenciales, lenguaje oral, rasgos lingüísticos, Trump, Clinton.

1. INTRODUCTION

News media has changed the campaign of political parties over time becoming presidential debates a decisive means of communication to gain the vote of undecided citizens. Presidential debates provide an opportunity not only for candidates to display their best public image, but also for the audience to examine them closely to decide who fits better with the demands of the time.

But, why are the three presidential debates of the 2016 elections in the United States positioned within the seven most watched debates in America history? (The Statistics Portal, 2016) This is due to the fact that the world was immersed in a huge economic crisis since the 2008s and the decisions taken by the American government not only affect this country, but also many countries around the world because the United States is the first world power. Therefore, the election of an appropriate politician was essential for the citizens of the whole world.

The presidential debates in the United States are organized by the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD). This is an organization that coordinates the vice-presidential and presidential debates since 1987. They decide which political parties can participate in the debates which are generally the major political parties of the elections. Thus, the last presidential debates in the United States were formed by the candidates of the Republican and Democratic political parties, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton respectively.

The hypothesis of this study lies in the belief that each candidate employs a different way of talking because each one projects a different personality to persuade the audience in the presidential debates. Therefore, our aim is to analyse the style adopted by the two candidates through the examination of seven particular features used in the context of a formal political interview: personal pronouns, three-part list, contrastive pairs, conceptual metaphors, fillers, equivocations and interruptions.

In order to verify the hypothesis, a mixed approach has been applied to identify the linguistic features in each presidential debate to quantify them later and provide an objective explanation. Moreover, a deductive method has been carried out because the seven linguistic features have been analysed in a specific corpus.

This project has been structured in two sections clearly distinguished: a theoretical framework and a practical analysis. The theoretical background contains an overview of the most relevant concepts in the study of political discourse. After that, the selected linguistic features have been explained claiming the importance of analysing these ones in presidential debates. Before the practical analysis, the contextualization of the corpus of this paper has been fundamental to understand completely the practical section. The practical framework is divided into two sections. On the one hand, the most representative examples of the use of these linguistic features of each candidate have been explained in order to make the reader of this paper reach a general perception about the way both candidates employ the linguistic features to persuade the audience in each presidential debate. On the other hand, taking into consideration the quantification of the linguistic features, the styles of both candidates have been compared objectively. Finally, some remarks have been included at the end of this project.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
2.1. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis (CDA)[1] emerged from critical linguistics at the University of East Anglia in the 1970s, but it was not widely developed until the 1990s with linguists such as Teun Van Dijk, Ruth Wodak or Normal Fairclough. It is a multi-disciplinary perspective because it relates discourse with other disciplines like sociology or psychology.

Van Dijk proposes a sociocognitive approach to CDA combining three dimensions: *discourse*, *cognition* and *society*[2]. Some people have the power to control others because of

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[1] Henceforth CDA.

[2] Van Dijk (2008) included history and culture within the society dimension.

their social position. In fact, power is needed to control society. However, those people take advantage of their social position to dominate the citizens through language. Therefore, Van Dijk (1995, p.18) claims that the aim of CDA is the following:

> The attempt to uncover, reveal or disclose what is implicit, hidden or not immediately obvious in relations of discursively enacted dominance or their underlying ideologies. That is, CDA specifically focuses on the strategies of manipulation, legitimation, the manufacture of consent and other discourse ways to influence the minds of people in the interest of the powerful.

Similarly, Fairclough (2001) suggests a three-dimensional model taking into consideration the following dimensions: *text*, *interaction* and *context.* In fact, Fairclough (2001, p. 21) distinguishes three stages of CDA which involve the previous concepts:

- Description of the formal properties of the text.
- Interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction - seeing the text as the product of a process of production and as a resource in the process of interpretation.
- Explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context – with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects.

The first stage is different from the other two because the analysis is grounded on identifying the formal features of a text in terms of a descriptive framework. However, the stages of interpretation and explanation are not based on applying a procedure to a text; while interpretation deals with the cognitive process of participants, explanation involves the relationship between interactions and social structures.

On the other hand, Wodak (2001, p. 65) proposes a discourse-historical approach to CDA examining "the ways in which particular genres of discourse are subject to diachronic change". In other words, she explores how particular discourse events are embedded within past and current historical and political backgrounds.

To sum up, CDA has not a specific theoretical framework or methodology. Indeed, CDA is a perspective which involves different approaches to analyse general discourse from a critical point of view.

2.2. POLITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Political discourse is a discourse uttered by professional politicians (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 12). However, they are not the only ones who take part in politics. In fact, the audience is also involved in the domain of politics from an interactional point of view. Furthermore, context is decisive to classify a discourse as political or not (Van Dijk, 1997, p.14). Thus, he states different properties which are included in the context of political domain.[3]

Specifically, political discourse analysis (PDA)[4] is "a perspective which focuses on the reproduction and contestation of political power through political discourse" (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 17). That is, political discourse occupies the way ruling classes control and dominate through language the dominated classes. Indeed, discourse structures are employed not only because of an official criterion of decorum, but also because it helps politicians to manipulate official opinion, garner support or emphasize or de-emphasize political attitudes and opinions (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 25). For instance, the use of repetition structures helps to reinforce an idea or use of passive or active sentences to emphasize specific words.

On the other hand, Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) focus on the argumentation employed by politicians to analyse political discourse. In other words, they study the premises and conclusions used by politicians in rational persuasion to persuade and manipulate the audience. In fact, they argue that "an argument can be rationally persuasive without being sound and premises can be rationally acceptable without being true" (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 52).

To sum up, as Van Dijk (2008) states in his book *Language and Power*, PDA is studied in two levels which are constructed as a whole in everyday interaction: micro and macro level. He explains this binary distinction taking into consideration a racist speech uttered in a parliamentarian debate, where a politician expresses his or her personal political beliefs employing certain strategies of talk (micro level), but at the same time this person talks as a member of a group expressing the ideologies of a certain political party (macro level).

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[3] See more on Van Dijk (1997).

[4] Henceforth PDA.

2.3. PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Presidential debate is a sub-genre of political discourse because of its contextual features. As Chilton (2004, pp. 72-73) claims, presidential debates incorporate political contextual references and past political history references which are identified by the audience.

Presidential debates are carried out for a particular purpose which is principally to show the citizens of a country the goals and opinions of the candidates. Debates also have a particular setting and rules which must be obeyed by the participants. These rules affect the way in which political actors speak as they have to adjust to a limited amount of time to express their concerns.

Undoubtedly, one of the most interesting features of presidential debates is the face-to-face interaction that takes place between interviewers and interviewees. The interviewer asks controversial questions to the interviewees to inform the audience and stay tuned to them. Besides, the interviewees are the candidates who want to be elected the president of the elections, so they are required to answer the questions in some minutes. Related to this fact, according to Levinson (1983, p. 304), a question-answer is one type of adjacency pair which is considered to be a fundamental unit of conversational organization formed by two different speakers who utter two different utterances in a particular context. In debates, the interviewer poses a question (first pair part) which is answered by the interviewee (second pair part). In fact, the interviewer creates an expectation that must be fulfilled by the interviewee in his or her statement.

However, presidential debates do not simply have a definitive question-answer format; there is also an open debate and discussion between candidates where the opponents attack each other verbally. As Van Dijk (1997, p.25) suggests:

> Campaigning politicians speak about themselves as candidates, about the elections, about voting for them, and the policies they promise to support when elected. They speak about opponents and political enemies and about the bad politics and policies of previous presidents, governments or parliaments.

These verbal attacks are interrelated with Goffman's sociological theory (1959) which deals with the way people behave in society. Indeed, human behaviour depends on personal scenarios and relationship with others so political actors in presidential debates project the best image of themselves to be acclaimed by the audience. Related to this fact, it is also important the contribution of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). They based their theory on Goffman's sociological theory (1959) to state that face is considered a public image which every person wishes to claim. It can be positive or negative. Whereas positive face deals with the desire to be approved and accepted by others, negative face concerns with the freedom of action and not to be imposed by others. Keeping a positive face is one of the main goals in political interaction. Therefore, face-to-face interaction in political debates is based on the highlight and protection of the positive face and the threat of the others positive face through a clever use of language.

2.4. LINGUISTIC FEATURES

In order to study the way politicians employ language, this section provides an explanation of the following relevant linguistic features: personal pronouns, three-part lists, contrastive pairs, conceptual metaphors, fillers, equivocations and interruptions.

2.4.1. PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Personal pronouns constitute a "small and closed set of lexical items with the principal function of distinguishing among individuals in terms of the deictic category of person but often also expressing certain additional distinctions of number, sex or anymacy" (Trask, 1992, p. 206). There are two kinds of personal pronouns in English,[5] subject personal pronouns (*I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *we* and *they*) and object personal pronouns (*me*, *you*, *him*, *her*, *it, us* and *them*). Subject personal pronouns refer to the subject of a clause and object personal pronouns refer to direct or indirect object of a verb, or an object of a preposition.

Personal pronouns play an important role in political speech because they allow political

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[5] As Trask (1992, p.206) claims, personal pronouns vary from one language to another. Some languages have only first person and second person personal pronouns and demonstratives are used for third-person reference. Also, in some language in the Southeast Asia the function of personal pronouns is performed by lexical nouns or noun phrases. For instance, in Malay language, proper names and nouns as *tuan* 'sir', *guru* 'teacher', *amah* 'nurse' or *mak* 'grandmother' are more frequent than personal pronouns.

actors to construct a positive representation of *them* and a negative representation of the *other*. In fact, traditionally, political discourse analysts have centred on the binary distinction between *us* and *them* (Van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2009) which is related to the subject personal pronouns *we* and *they*[6] and the effects they have on the audience. Specifically, critics have widely studied the function of *we* in political speeches because this pronoun involves the speaker who utters the statement within a group. Fairclough (2001, p. 106) distinguishes between inclusive and exclusive *we*. Whereas inclusive *we* involves not only to the politician but also the audience, exclusive *we* includes the politician but not the audience. Nevertheless, Beard (2000, p. 45) provides a more exhaustive division which is summarised in the following diagram:

- Inclusive *we.*
    - Politician plus the whole country.
    - Politician plus the rest of humanity.
- Exclusive *we.*
    - Politician plus one other.
    - Politician plus a group.

Therefore, politicians employ inclusive and exclusive *we* in order to get closer to the audience and share responsibility with another group, especially when the decisions are tricky or the news is uncertain (Beard, 2000, p. 45).

Politicians also employs pronoun *I* to present themselves as individuals and talk from their subjective point of view. As Beard (2000, p. 45) states, first person singular "shows a clear sense of personal involvement on the part of the speaker, which is especially useful when good news is delivered". However, personal pronoun *you* is used to directly attack the adversary or address the audience with a straightforward style. In fact, it is a generic pronoun which involves anyone who feels alluded.

Apart from this, personal pronouns *he* and *she* are essential in political debates because they are mostly employed by politicians with the aim to provide a statement which attack verbally the adversary. Proper names are also used in the debates to attack the opponent more directly and to sound more convincing to the audience by giving the real name of the

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[6] In this paper we analyse subject personal pronouns.

opponent[7].

These pronouns cannot be fully understood without textual or additional contextual information to assign the reference to the pronouns and contribute to the cohesion and coherence of the speech. Thus, there are two types of references: endophoric and exhoporic. Endophoric reference is the co-reference of an expression with another expression before it or after it in the discourse (Glossary of linguistic terms, 2003). Likewise, there are two kinds of endophoric reference: anaphora and cataphora. Anaphora is the relation between an expression and its antecedent. For instance, "*Mary* was watching TV when *she* started to feel headache" where the subject of the subordinate clause, *she*, is related to the subject of the principal clause. Cataphora is the relation between an expression and another expression which follows it. For example, "Before *she* felt worse, *the girl* went to the hospital". On the other hand, exophoric reference[8] is the co-reference of an expression to an extra-linguistic referent (Glossary of linguistic terms, 2003). Therefore, the context is essential to assign the reference of pronouns. For example, imagine the situation where a mother is talking with her two children and one of them asks to her the following question "Mum, can *I* go to the cinema with my friends?". The personal pronoun *I* refers to the child who poses the question to her mother so contextual information is needed in order to assign reference to the pronoun.

2.4.2. THREE-PART LISTS

Three-part lists consist on the repetition of an item three times in order to give "an air of unity and completeness" (Atkinson, 1984, p. 57) to the discourse. Indeed, it allows politicians to strengthen, highlight or amplify an opinion or idea. According to Jones and Peccei (1999, p.39), "repeating certain phrases contributes towards making the ideas contained in them seem *common sense*". Besides, as Jones and Peccei states (1999, p. 51) this structural device is used by politicians when they only have statement to claim, but they want to reinforce it by repeating it. For instance, at the 1996 Labour Party conference, while Tony Blair claimed that the three commitments of the Labour Party were "education, education, education".

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[7] Therefore, proper names are also analysed in the practical part of this paper in conjunction with the other personal pronouns.

[8] This term is also known as deixis.

The repetition of an item into three is the best way to organize political interventions in presidential debates. As Charteris-Black (2005, p.6) claims, the first item of a three-part list initiates an argument, the second one responds to the first and the third one does not convey more information, but reinforces the first two and indicates completion of the argument in order to suggest that it is appropriate to applaud. On the contrary, the repetition of an item into four or two is not appropriate for political debates because the repetition of an item twice could "become inadequate or incomplete to the audience" (Atkinson, 1984, p. 57) and the repetition of four times risks the politician to be interrupted by his or her opponent.

Three-part list can take three different structures in political discourses:[9]

- Repetition of a single word at the beginning of a clause or a sentence three times. For instance consider the following statement uttered by Winston Churchill praying the efforts of the Battle of Britain fighter pilots in 1940: "Never in the field of human conflict has *so* much been owed *so* many to *so* few".

- Repetition of a single word at the end of a clause or sentence three times. For instance consider the following example said by Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address of 1863: "Government of the *people*, by the *people*, for the *people*".

- Repetition of different words with similar general meaning three times. For example see the following statement expressed by Nelson Mandela's first speech on his release from prison in 1990: "*Friends, comrades* and *fellow South Africans*. I greet you all in the name of *peace*, *democracy* and *freedom* for all".

The three-part list is associated with tricolon which is a rhetorical device consisting on the repetition of three parallel clauses, phrases or words to convey an idea. However, it is not necessary that the words of the tricolon have the same length. In fact, Forsyth states that if the third word of a tricolon is longer than the preceding two, it sounds greater (2013, pp. 74-76). For instance, in the following example, "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" uttered in The Declaration of Independence in 1776, there is a repetition of three different words with similar meaning as all of them contains the three fundamental pillars of human beings, but the use of a longer word in the third position helps to increase the importance of the clause.

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[9] Examples are taken from Beard (2000).

Furthermore, paralinguistic devices and body language are really important in three-part list to communicate to the audience whether they are proposing to carry on or come to a close in order to invite them to applaud (Atkinson, 1984; Bull, 2003). As Atkinson (1984, p. 63) states, it is even possible to anticipate when the audience will applaud even when the politician is talking in an un-known language.

2.4.3. CONTRASTIVE PAIRS

Along with three-part list, contrastive pairs are one of the most appropriate devices for obtaining applause from the audience. In fact, applause is a form of showing the audience's approval to what the politician has previously said.

Contrastive pairs consist on the opposition between two different words, phrases or ideas. For instance, consider the following example which was uttered by Martin Luther King in his speech "I Have a Dream":

> I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will be not judged *by the colour of their skin* but *for the content of their character*. I have a dream today!

This example contains a contrast of ideas between two clauses which have the same structure (preposition + article + noun + preposition + article + noun), but the nouns have opposite meanings. Whereas "colour of the skin" makes reference to the physical appearance of people, "content of the character" alludes to their personality.

The opposition between two ideas is widely used by politicians in political interviews to show different ideologies. As Van Dijk (1997, p. 31) suggests, specific groups tend to be describe themselves in more positive terms than the other groups in order to give the audience a good impression. Van Dijk (2008) and Wodak (2009) proposed the terms *Positive Self-presentation* and *Negative Other-presentation* to refer to this binary opposition.

2.4.4. CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS

Metaphors are used in daily discourse, but they are so frequent that people do not realise

that they are metaphors. As Beards (2000, p. 21) claims, "metaphors are deeply embedded in the way we construct the world around us and the way that world is constructed for us by others". For instance, consider the metaphorical idea that a lesson is a journey and we take with a difficult topic so "We have to confront it *step by step*" or we cannot conclude an idea so "We *go round in circles*".

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest a cognitive view of metaphors which highlights the importance of mental procedure in language. This is due to the fact that "our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 4). Actually, they propose the conceptual metaphor theory considering that one concept can be understood in terms of another.

In order to provide an exhaustive analysis of their study, three kinds of conceptual metaphors are distinguished by Lakoff and Johnson in their book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980):

- Structural conceptual metaphors. One concept is realized with the help of another. For example, TIME IS MONEY.

- Orientational conceptual metaphors. A whole system of concepts is organized with respect to one another. They are not arbitrary; they are based on physical and cultural experiences. For instance, HAPPY IS UP, SAD IS DOWN.

- Ontological conceptual metaphors[10]. Concepts that are created as entities and substances. They are grounded in terms of people's experience. For example, THE INFLATION IS THE ENTITY.

Actually, metaphors involve two different conceptual domains. Simpson (2004, p. 41) discerns between the *target domain* and the *source domain*. The *target domain* is considered to be the concept that the speaker wants to describe and *source domain* makes reference to the concept that is associated. For instance, considering the conceptual metaphor "LOVE IS A JOURNEY", the *target domain* is the concept of "love" and the *source domain* is the concept that the speaker expresses of love in terms of a journey.

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[10] Personifications are included in this type of conceptual metaphor. As Jones and Peccei (1999, p. 46) claim, personification is a special type of metaphor.

To sum up, conceptual metaphors play an important role in social and political reality (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 159) because they allow politicians not only to simplify an abstract or complicated argument or concept, but also to hide or distort reality to the audience to persuade them.

2.4.5. FILLERS

Fillers are "sounds or phrases that could appear anywhere in the sentence and that could be deleted from the sentence without a change in content" (Baalen, 2001). There are two types of fillers: silent or filled pauses (e.g. /əm/ or /əːm/) and verbal fillers[11] (*well*, *I mean*, *you know*) (Strenström, 1994, p. 1). They are frequent in spoken language because these words fill the gaps of the discourse. However, the analysis of verbal fillers in debates becomes interesting in presidential debates in order to study the way political actors interact with the participants.

Stenström (1994) divides verbal fillers into two categories according to their properties: interactional signals and discourse markers. Interactional signals contribute to the smooth of the interplay between speaker and listener by appealing (e.g. *right*) and giving a feedback (*I see*), responding (*Yes, that's right*) and involving the listener in the conversation (*You know*) (Stenström, 1994, p. 61). On the other hand, discourse markers give coordination to speech by helping to begin a conversation, introducing and marking the end of a topic, introducing a digression and resumption of an old topic and indicating the end of a conversation (Strensröm, 1994, p. 63).

Fillers do not have propositional meaning or grammatical function (Brinton, 1996, p. 6). Instead, they perform various functions depending on the situation. For instance, *right* can function as an interactional signal functioning as confirmation, emphasizer, appellation or acceptance, but it can also function as a discourse marker by framing or starting the intervention (Strenström, 1994, pp. 62-63).

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[11] In this paper we analyse verbal fillers because of their high frequency.

2.4.6. EQUIVOCATIONS

Politicians employ equivocal or ambiguous language to mislead or hedge messages in political speeches. This fact becomes more evident in presidential debates where political actors do not know the questions that the interviewer is going to ask to them.

According to Bavelas, Black, Bryson and Mullet (1988, p. 144), "equivocal communication is not desirable, but from the point of view of politician-interviewer interaction, it is at present inevitable". In addition, politicians equivocate because they are involved in an *avoidance-avoidance conflict* when all possible direct messages have bad consequences (Bavelas et al., 1988, p. 138). In fact, political actors avoid direct replies supporting or criticizing certain position because it could offend an important number of voters. Also, they have to adjust their answers to a limited period which is often insufficient to provide a complete reply. What is more, politicians may even lack the knowledge to answer properly questions about complicated issues.

Bull (2003) proposed an exhaustive typology of equivocation based on political interviews between Margaret Thatcher and Neil Kinnock in 1987 and seven interviews with John Mayor between 1990 and 1991. Bull differenced twelve types of equivocations which can be grouped into three main types: *replies*, *intermediate replies* and *non-replies*.[12] Replies are considered an appropriate answer because the politician provides the information requested. Non-replies are the opposite as the politician does not provide the information requested by the interviewer. Also, intermediate replies are in-between replies and non replies because "the politician cannot be said to have given a full reply to the question, but nor can he or she be said not to have given a full reply at all" (Bull, 2003, p. 110).

It is also important to remark that equivocations are not considered lies. Whereas equivocation presents the information indirectly, lies misrepresent it (Bavelas, 2009, p. 537). For instance, imagine a friend asks you about his or her new hairstyle and you think that it looks horrible. You could say "It looks not too bad" or "It's much better than any other hairstyle". These utterances are not considered lies because although you do not express a sincere opinion, they do not misrepresent reality. Therefore, equivocation is related to indirect

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[12] See more on Bull (2003).

speech such as polite requests. For instance, "Do you have a watch?" to mean "Tell me the time" (Bavelas, 2009, p.238).

2.4.7. INTERRUPTIONS[13]

Conversations are characterised by turn-taking: one participant, A, talks, stops; another, B, starts, talks, stops; obtaining an A-B-A-B-A-B distribution of talk between two different participants (Levinson, 1983, p. 296). Indeed, this change of role is repeated until the conversation is finished. However, there are situations where while one participant is talking, the other participant overlaps him or her.

A number of studies have demonstrated that turn-taking and interruptions are affected by social and personality variables (Bettie, 1982, p. 95). Bull (2003, p. 81) mentions an experiment where participants were grouped according to a high or low on dominance. The investigation revealed that members with a higher dominance tended to interrupt more as the conversation progressed. What's more, according to Robinson and Reis (1989), interruptions are related to negative personality. Indeed, interrupters are seen as less sociable and more assertive than people who do not interrupt. Therefore, the analysis of interruptions becomes important in political debates because it allows the audience to glimpse the politician's personality.

Besides, interruptions are related to gender. In fact, Zimmerman and West (1975) carried out an analysis to conclude that interruptions in conversations between members of the same sex are proportionately distributed, but interruptions in conversations between members of different sex are mostly performed by men. However, this finding is not conclusive as Murray and Covelli (1988) managed a similar analysis to Zimmerman and West (1975) to state that women interrupt more than men.

Apart from this, interviewees are not the only ones who interrupt in political interviews, interviewers also do with a different purpose. In fact, interviewers must control and redirect the interview to cover all the controversial issues of the time to keep the audience tuned. That is why interviewers must inform about the concerns of citizens to organise the discourse.

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[13] Although interruptions are not a proper linguistic device, they have been included in this section as one of the main distinctive features because of their high frequency in political interviews.

3. THE UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES OF 2016

The corpus of this paper consists of the presidential debates of the United States presidential election of 2016 represented by the candidates of the two major political parties, Donald Trump the Republican and Hillary Clinton the Democratic. The presidential debates spread along three different meetings with around ten days between each one before the elections on 8th November 2016.

Although the polls suggested that Clinton would be the winner of the elections, Trump finally won the presidency. The results astonished the whole country because he became the first person ever elected in the U.S. presidency without any previous government or military experience.

The aim of this section is to introduce the distinctive and particular personal background of both candidates for a better understanding of the practical analysis of this project. Also, the three presidential debates will be contextualized because they are lightly different in content and form.

3.1. THE CANDIDATES
3.1.1. DONALD TRUMP

Donald Trump is the 45th and current President of the United States of America. He was born in Queens in New York in 1971. He was an energetic and assertive child so his parents sent him to the New York Military Academy at the age of 13 hoping the discipline of the school would change his energy in a positive manner. He became a star athlete and a student leader by the time he graduated in 1964. Then, he studied economics in the Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania.

After college, Trump started his business career in his father's company where he became the president of the firm in 1974. He owned the Grand Hyatt New York Hotel and a luxury high-rise called Trump Tower in New York, casinos in New Jersey and a private club in Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. Furthermore, he wrote the best seller *The Art of the Deal* in 1987 where he wrote an autobiography. As a consequence of an economic downturn, he was deeply in debt in 1990 and he lost a lot of money, but he continued to acquire and develop

real estate properties.

In 1997, Trump married Czech model Ivana Zelnickova and they had three children, Donald Jr., Ivanka and Eric. However, they divorced in 1992 and Trump married again one year later with the actress Marla Maples with whom he had one daughter, Tiffany. He divorced again in 1992 and remarried his current wife Melania Knauss in 2005.

Trump started to be known in politics in 2011 when he began to attend TV interviews and help him to gain popularity. His presidential candidacy was announced in a speech at Trump Tower in June 2015 for the presidential election of 2016. (Donald Trump Biography, 2016).

3.1.2. HILLARY CLINTON

Hillary Clinton was born on October, 26, 1947 in Chicago, Illinois. She lived in a middle-class life and attended to public school. After graduating high school, Hillary began to get involved in social justice activism. By the time she graduated, she became a prominent student leader. After that, Hillary enrolled in Yale Law School where she met his current husband, Bill Clinton.

Instead of starting to work in law, she worked for the Children's Defense Fund going door-to-door gathering stories about the lack of schooling for children with disabilities. In fact, Clinton has stayed throughout her life with the commitment to public service and fighting for others. After that, she served as a lawyer for the congressional committee investigating President Nixon and she moved to Arkansas where co-founded Arkansas Advocated for Children and Families, one of the state's first child advocacy groups.

Bill Clinton was elected president in 1992 and re-elected in 1996. Therefore, Clinton as first lady fought to reform the health care system so that all families would have access to the care they needed at affordable prices. In 2008, she run for the presidency, but Obama won the U.S. presidential election. However, Obama proposed her to be the secretary of state and Hillary Clinton became the 67th U.S. secretary of state during Obama presidency. In 2016, she run for president again and she won. In fact, she became the first woman to be nominated for president by a major U.S. political party. (Hillary Clinton Biography, 2016).

3.2. THE DEBATES

3.2.1. THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

It took place on September, 26th, 2016 at New York's Hofstra. The interviewer was Lester Halt of National Broadcasting Company (NBC). The debate lasted 95 minutes of which Trump spoke for 45 minutes and 3 seconds and Clinton spoke for 41 minutes and 50 seconds (Hellman, 2016). Trump and Clinton were positioned in front of the interviewer with a podium in front of them.

The candidates talked about the most controversial issues which concerned American citizens: improvement of economy, race, cyber-attacks, nuclear weapons and politicians' opinion about the possible outcome of the elections. The questions were asked by the interviewer and were not shared with the commission or the campaigns. Also, the audience was not allowed to applaud or talk.

3.2.2. THE SECOND PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

It was celebrated on October, 9th, 2016 at Washington University in St. Louis. The interviewers were Anderson Copper of Cable News Network (CNN) and Martha Raddatz of American Broadcasting Company (ABC). The debate extended for 90 minutes of which Trump spoke for 40 minutes and 10 seconds and Clinton spoke 39 minutes and 5 seconds (Hellman, 2016).

In contrast to the other two debates, the questions were not only asked by interviewers but also by members of the audience and people through social networks. Thus, Trump and Clinton discussed about many different topics which concerned a majority of the population: islamophobia, refugees, economy, war in Syria, mistakes committed by Trump and Clinton in the past and the reason why he or she was the appropriate person to hold the presidency and not his or her opponent. Besides, candidates were positioned in front of the interviewer, but they had a chair and a table next to them so they had the possibility to move around the stage.

3.2.3. THE THIRD PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

It was held on October, 19th, 2016 at University of Nevada, in Las Vegas. The interviewer

was Chris Wallace of Fox News Channel (FNC). The debate was prolonged for around 93 minutes of which Trump spoke for 35 minutes and 41 seconds and Clinton spoke for 41 minutes and 46 seconds (Hellman, 2016).

The topics discussed by Trump and Clinton were the followings: abortion, immigration, economy, cyber-attack, war in Syria and the reason to be elected president in the elections and not his or her opponent. Moreover, similarly to the first debate, the questions were asked by the moderator and they had not been shared by the commission or the campaigns, Trump and Clinton positioned in front of the interviewer and the audience was requested to remain in silence with the aim of focusing on the candidates' interventions.

4. LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

This section analyses the use that Trump and Clinton make of the seven linguistic aspects. The extension of this paper do not allow us to provide an explanation of all the examples in each presidential debate so we have selected the most representative and interesting statements in order to examine the style of both candidates. After that, a quantitative analysis has been carried out to make an objective comparison between the particular ways of speaking of Trump and Clinton.

The percentages of appearance of the different linguistic features were calculated in two different ways. On the one hand, personal pronouns and proper names,[14] three-part lists, contrastive pairs, conceptual metaphors and fillers were computed taking into consideration the number of words uttered by Trump and Clinton. In fact, they do not speak the same number of words so it was necessary to compute the normed rates of occurrence applying Biber and Conrad's normalization formula.[15] We have normalized to 100 the fixed amount of text in order to know the extent to which each linguistic feature is employed by both candidates. However, it is important to remark that before applying this formula, the

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[14] AntConc has been used to count the personal pronouns and proper names. It is a computer software program developed by Laurence Anthony which calculates the frequency of a specific word in a big corpus. This program also provides the context in which the word appears.

[15] Biber and Conrad (2009, p. 61) propose the following formula: Normed rate = (raw count/ total word count) * the fixed amount of text.

transcripts of the three presidential debates were cleansed. This way, contractions were considered as two distinct words and the names of the speaker who makes the intervention were removed.

On the other hand, equivocations and interruptions were calculated slightly different because they do not depend on the number of words uttered by a speaker, but on the number of interventions that the speaker does in a specific context. This way, according to Biber and Conrad's normalization formula, the occurrences of both linguistic features were divided by the number of interventions and not by the number of words. Apart from this, the identification of equivocations and interruptions were determined by two different ways; while interruptions were identified taking into consideration all the interventions of Trump and Clinton, equivocations were calculated taking into account the replies of the questions which directly demand a response from him or her.

4.1. DONALD TRUMP
4.1.1. THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

The first controversial issue discussed in the first presidential debate was about economy and Trump expresses a general viewpoint about how he considers economy in the United States as it can be observed in the following intervention:

> 1)   Thank you, Lester. *Our jobs are fleeing the country. They're going to Mexico. They're going to many other countries.* (…) When you look at what's happening in Mexico (…) They're building *some* of the biggest plants anywhere in the world, *some* of the most sophisticated, *some* of the best plants. (…) Thousands of jobs are *leaving* Michigan, *leaving* Ohio. They're all *leaving*. And *we* can't allow it to happen anymore. I think *Hillary* and *I* agree on that. *We* probably disagree a little bit as to *numbers* and *amounts* and *what we're going to do*, but perhaps *we*'ll be taking about that later. (…) Under my plan, *I*'ll be reducing taxes tremendously, from 35 to 15 percent for companies, *small* and *big* companies.

Trump begins talking about the downturn economic situation in America by considering the structural conceptual metaphor ECONOMY IS MOTION. This is emphasized with a contrast

between the growing economy in Mexico ("They're building *some* of the biggest plants anywhere in the world, *some* of the most sophisticated, *some* of the best plants") and the recession in America ("Thousands of jobs are *leaving* Michigan, *leaving* Ohio. They're all *leaving*") which ideas are repeated three times to give more emphasis.

These first words are reinforced with this following statement "And *we* can't allow it to happen anymore" which includes an exclusive *we* involving the government and himself. Trump also employs four more exclusive *we* with an anaphoric reference involving himself and Clinton who had been mentioned before. After that, he prefers to use a more subjective viewpoint to introduce his goal by using the pronoun *I*. Besides, he employs a contrastive pair "small and big companies" to involve all companies in America and a number game ("from *35* to *15* percent for companies") to display objectivity and credibility to the audience (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 738).

Equivocations are also commonly used by Trump in the first presidential debate as it can be observed in the following excerpt where the interviewer asks about a mistake that Trump committed in the past and Trump is evasive in his response:

2) HOLT: Mr. Trump, for five years, you perpetuated a false claim that the nation's first black president was not a natural-born citizen. You questioned his legitimacy. In the last couple of weeks, you acknowledged what most Americans have accepted for years: The president was born in the United States. (…) The birth certificate was produced in 2011. You've continued to tell the story and question the president's legitimacy in 2012, "13, "14, "15 (…) as recently as January. So the question is, what changed your mind?

TRUMP: *Well*, nobody was pressing it, nobody was caring much about it. I figured you'd ask the question tonight, of course. But nobody was caring much about it. But I was the one that got him to produce the birth certificate. *And I think I did a good job. Secretary Clinton also fought it*. *I mean*, *you know* -- now, everybody in mainstream is going to say, oh, that's not true. Look, it's true. Sidney Blumenthal sent a reporter -- you just have to take a look at CNN, the last week, the interview with your former campaign manager. And she was involved. But just like she can't bring back jobs, she can't produce.

Indeed, he just gives his own view about the efforts he made without explicitly replying the question posed by the interviewer. Furthermore, Trump arises proud of the efforts carried out by Hillary and himself so he employs the structural conceptual metaphor POLITICIANS ARE SOLDIERS by relating the effort of political actors in government with people who fight in a battle. It is interesting that Trump alludes to his opponent as *Secretary Clinton* in order to show the audience that Clinton had a political position in the prior government of the United States.

The spontaneity of the debates becomes evident with the use of fillers. Trump begins his intervention with the words *well* which functions as a discourse marker and interactional signal. In fact, *well* helps Trump to introduce his digression about the topic, but also shows that Trump has not fully prepared the previous question so he needs to put his thoughts into words and utter a convincing reply. Similarly, *I mean* functions as a discourse marker and interactional signal. However, *you know* performs only as an interactional signal involving the audience in the conversation in order to show closeness to them.

To sum up, Trump in the first presidential debate is aware that he can persuade people giving his viewpoint about the economic situation in America because he has worked throughout his life in business. Indeed, the economy is a fundamental pillar in a country because it covers the basic needs of the population. However, Trump does not regret for the failures of the past in order to avoid damage the presentation of the self.

4.1.2. THE SECOND PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Donald Trump's motto "Make America Great Again" is uttered throughout the three presidential debates in order to persuade the audience. Therefore, it seems important to have a look at it in the second presidential debate where Trump uses it to reply a question of a person from the audience asking about his opinion of the image he is projecting to the younger generation of the country through the campaign:

3) (…) And my whole concept was to *make America great again*. (…) *We're going to* make great deals. *We're going to* have a strong border. *We're going to* bring back law and order.

Trump describes the greatness of a country in positive terms employing the orientational conceptual metaphor GREAT IS GOOD in his slogan. Also, a three-part list is included in this excerpt by repeating the exclusive *we* and *be going to* three times in order to emphasize the power of Trump to make America great.

Moreover, Trump praises his position by criticizing Clinton's failures in the past as a senator. Indeed, she was the favourite candidate to win the elections so Trump interrupts Clinton in order to criticise her lack of action and portray a negative representation of her as it can be observed in the following excerpt:

4) CLINTON: *I will be the president and we will get it done*. That's exactly right.
   TRUMP: You could have done it, if you were an effective – if you were an
   effective senator, you could have done it. If you were an *effective senator*, you
   could have done it. But you were not an *effective senator*.
   COOPER: Please allow her to respond. She didn't interrupt you.

The interaction between both politicians contains a contrastive pair. Clinton makes a promise for the future, but Trump retorts her to show disagreement and attack Clinton's past political career. Therefore, there is a contrast between past and future actions.

Trump's contribution is emphasised by the use of the personal pronoun *you* to get closer to his opponent and make her more responsible of her actions. Besides, he uses a three-part list by the repetition of the same words ("*effective senator*") at the end of three consecutive clauses. In fact, a parallelism is included in the two first clauses to express an unreal past condition ("if you were an *effective senator*, you could have done it. If you were an *effective senator*, you could have done it.") which is highlighted in the third part of the repetition with a conclusive statement ("But you were not an *effective senator*.")

In conclusion, the fact that the second debate shows physical closeness between the candidates and the audience also influence on the way of talking of the candidates. Indeed, Trump takes advantage of the intimacy the audience to make them believe that the country must keep the position it deserves because it is a great country. Also, the proximity between the candidates helps Trump to accuse Clinton more directly and to sound more convincing to the audience.

4.1.3. THE THIRD PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

The growth of economy is also discussed in the third presidential debate where Trump emphasizes that it is not only necessary his role in the presidency to reform the economy, but also the citizens' help as it can be observed in the following excerpt:

5) (…) *we* will *create an economic machine* the likes of which *we* haven't seen in many decades. (…) And *we*'ll have companies that will *grow* and *expand* and *start* from new.

Trump employs the personal pronoun *we* with inclusive value to give his plans to improve the economy. Besides, he makes use of a structural conceptual metaphor NATION IS A MACHINE by expressing the target domain *nation* in terms of the source domain of *machine*. Finally, the intervention is concluded with a three-part list which contains three different verbs (*grow*, *expand* and *start*) which complement each other giving a sense of unity to Trump's intervention (Beard, 2000, p. 39).

The opinion of candidates about the outcome of the elections is really interested for the audience. As it can be observed in the following excerpt, Trump shows that he would not accept being the loser in the elections:

6) WALLACE: (…) Do you make the same commitment that you will absolutely – sir, that you will absolutely accept the result of this election?
TRUMP: *I will look at it at that time. I'm not looking at anything now. I'll look at it at the time.*
(….)
WALLACE: (…) Are you saying you're not prepared now to commit to that principle?
TRUMP: What I'm saying is that I will tell you at the time. I'll keep you in suspense.

It is considered an equivocation because Trump does not reply the question posed by Wallace. Indeed, he does not want to reply the question before the elections. Furthermore, the first

intervention contains a three-part list because he repeats the same words and structure three times ("*I will look at it at that time. I'm not looking at anything now. I'll look at it at the time.*") which contributes to the strength of the equivocation.

To conclude, Trump in the last debate tries to show once again closeness to the audience because actually they are the population that Trump is going to support if he wins the elections. However, his superior personality is glimpsed when he is forced to answer for the possible failure in elections.

4.2. HILLARY CLINTON
4.2.1. THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Hillary Clinton begins replying the first question of the first presidential debate posed by the interviewer about economy in the following way:

7) *Well*, thank you, Lester, and thanks to Hofstra for hosting us. The central question in this election is really *what kind of country we want to be* and *what kind of future we'll build together.* (…) First, *we* have to *build an economy* that works *for everyone*, not just *those at the top*. That means we need *new jobs, good jobs*, *with rising incomes.* (…) Finally, *we* tonight are on the stage together, *Donald Trump* and *I*. (…) *We*'re going to have a debate where *we* are talking about the important issues facing our country. *You* have to judge us, who can shoulder the immense, awesome responsibilities of the presidency, who can put into action the plans that will make your life better. *I* hope that *I* will be able to earn *your* vote on November 8th.

The first word functions as a discourse marker because it helps Clinton to begin talking in the debate. Moreover, she begins her intervention with two conceptual metaphors in order to capture the attention of the audience from his first intervention: COUNTRY IS A PERSON and FUTURE IS A BUILDING. The first one is an ontological conceptual metaphor because Clinton personifies the country and the second one is a structural conceptual metaphor because the concept *future* is related to the concept of *building*. It is also used the first person plural pronoun *we* with an inclusive function because it involves Hillary Clinton and the whole country. Actually, the verb *build* means to construct something with effort. Therefore,

from the beginning of the presidential debates, Clinton emphasizes the active role of the citizens to raise the country.

After that, she employs a structural conceptual metaphor: ECONOMY IS A BUILDING. Indeed, the management of the economic resources of a community is related to the concept of construction to connote the harsh assembly of different issues. Therefore, a contrastive pair is found "works for *everyone*, not just *at the top*" which points out Clinton's belief to provide the under-privileged social classes an opportunity in America. Also, the sense of unity is achieved with the three-part list: *new jobs, good jobs*, *with rising incomes*.

At the end of this intervention, Clinton remarks the importance of the presidential debates for the audience by involving herself and Trump in the same place ("*we* tonight are on the stage together"). She refers to Trump with his full name (*Donald Trump*) in order to adopt later the exclusive *we* with an anaphoric reference involving herself and his opponent. She also uses the second person pronoun *you* to highlight the citizens' active role in the elections as they are who have to vote one of them.

In contrast to Tump's opinion about the outcome of the elections, Clinton accepts to be the loser of the elections as it can be observed in the following example:

8) I support our democracy. *Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose*. But I
   certainly will support the outcome of his election. (…)

She considers that POLITICS IS A BATTLE so she uses a structural conceptual metaphor. In fact, she explains the concept of *politics* in terms of the concept of *battle* which has the connotation of heavy and devastating struggle. She also reinforces the idea of the acceptance of election's results by employing a contrastive pair with the verbs *win* and *lose*. In fact, this contrastive pair is a tautology because there is always a winner and a loser in a battle.

In short, Clinton in the first presidential debate is more realistic by analysing the situation and giving the citizens a more active position.

4.2.2. THE SECOND PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

In contrast to Trump's reply about the image they are projecting to the younger generation of the United States through the political campaign, Clinton expresses her personal viewpoint by employing the personal pronoun *I* and appeals to all kinds of people:

9) (…) I want to be the president of all Americans, *regardless of your political beliefs, where you come from or what you look like.* 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 *grandchildren* deserve.

Besides, a three-part list is found as three subordinate clauses are used in order to involve the diversity of American's citizens: beliefs, origin and appearance. This position is reinforced with the contrastive pair *children* and *grandchildren* to include two different generations. In fact, politicians do not know exactly which audience is listening to them, so they involve as many people as possible to achieve their vote. This example also contains two metaphors; the ontological conceptual metaphors of COUNTRY IS A PERSON and the structural conceptual metaphor of FUTURE IS MOTION. In other words, the country adopts the human quality of being recovered after a situation of illness and in movement with a positive destination.

As Trump does with Clinton, Clinton also attacks Trump taking into account his bad behaviour towards a small group of population, women, as it can be observed in the following excerpt:

10) (…) Donald talking about *women*, what *he* thinks about *women*, what *he* does to *women*. And *he* has said that *the video doesn't represent who he is*. *But* I think it's clear to anyone who heard it that it represents exactly who he is. (…)

In order to emphasize the same idea, Clinton repeats the word *women* at the end of three consecutive clauses. She also repeats three times the anaphoric pronoun *he* which makes reference to Trump who has been mentioned before.

In conclusion, the intimacy position between the candidates and the audience helps

Clinton to strengthen her beliefs. Indeed, Clinton does not only support the privileged social classes in America, but also the under-privileged social classes who are attending the debate for asking questions or just listening to them. Besides, Clinton selects a small part of population who had been dominated by males in history in order to reflect the kind of male is next to her.

4.2.3. THE THIRD PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Similarly as Trump, Clinton attacks Trump's failures in the past working in business. In fact, she considers Trump a disloyal businessman as it can be observed in the following example:

11) (…) one of the biggest problems we have with China is the illegal dumping of steel and aluminium into our markets. (…) Donald has bought Chinese steel and aluminium. In fact, the Trump Hotel right here in Las Vegas was made with Chinese steel. (…) but he has given jobs to *Chinese steelworkers*, not *American steelworkers*.

Clinton considers the economy an issue of all Americans citizens. Therefore, the pronoun *we* has an inclusive function involving not only the government but also the whole country. Also, the pronoun *he* has an anaphoric reference involving to the proper name of Trump. Finally, she ends her intervention opposing the workers from two different nationalities ("*Chinese steelworkers,* not *American steelworkers*") in order to emphasize that Trump is not supporting the United States because people from another country is working on his constructions.

Apart from this, Clinton highlights her humanitarian personality when she is asked about the reason why she must be elected the president in the following elections. In fact, she worked for helping the under-privileged social levels people before being nominated for president so she uses a real case to persuade the audience:

12) I was thinking about a young girl I met here in Las Vegas, Carla, who is very worried that her parents might be deported, because she was born in this country but they were not. *They* work hard, *they* do everything *they* can give her a good life.

Clinton finishes her intervention with a three-part list by repeating the same structure in the last three clauses which helps her to support immigrants which have worked hard in America and will be forced to leave the country if Trump holds the presidency in the elections.

To sum up, Clinton in the final presidential debates employs real facts to attack her opponent and defend her position which is the aim of the debates. Indeed, Clinton worked for the middle-class so her arguments are mostly based on facts which involve under-privileged social classes.

4.3. A COMPARISON BETWEEN TRUMP AND CLINTON'S STYLES

This section compares the way of talking of both candidates in the three presidential debates through the quantification of the linguistic devices. The three presidential debates have been considered as a whole, spread along three different moments where the politicians have the opportunity gain the vote of the citizens.

The following table unifies all the selected linguistic features to reflect objectively the percentage of use by each candidate[16]. The frequency of each linguistic aspect was obtained as it was explained at the beginning of this section:

		DONALD TRUMP	HILLARY CLINTON
PERSONAL PRONOUNS & PROPER NAMES	I	3,15 %	2,90 %
	You	1,79 %	0,95 %
	He	0,22 %	1,24 %
	She	1,16 %	0,04 %
	We	1,99 %	2,12 %
	They	1,32 %	0,48 %
	Trump	0,01 %	0,09 %
	Clinton	0,17 %	0 %

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[16] While Trump utters 23406 words, Clinton speaks 19854 words. Moreover, Trump does 347 contributions and Clinton does 239 interventions. Taking into consideration the replies of questions posed by the interviewers which demand a response from a particular politician, while Trump contributes 47 occasions, Clinton does 37 times.

THREE-PART LISTS	0,40 %	0,32 %
CONTRASTIVE PAIRS	0,46 %	0,38 %
CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS	0,43 %	0,45 %
FILLERS	1,89 %	1,92 %
INTERRUPTIONS	35,45 %	9,62 %
EQUIVOCATIONS	7,49 %	6,28 %

The use of personal pronouns is the most common linguistic feature used by Trump and Clinton to persuade the audience in the three presidential debates because this kind of words allows them to create different portrayals about the issues questioned in the debates. Proper names are also employed by both candidates with the aim of attacking his or her opponent in a more direct way so we have analysed them in conjunction with personal pronouns.

The first person singular pronoun *I* is the most employed by both politicians with the aim of defending their own position, but Trump is the candidate who uses it with the highest percentage (3,15%). The first person plural *we* is also used by both politicians when they want to give their opinion involving more referents. Clinton is the candidate who employs this pronoun with the highest percentage (2,12%) in order to share responsibility with another group and avoid taking the entire responsibility (Beard, 2000, p. 45).

On the other hand, both politicians portray a negative representation of the other by using the pronouns *you*, *they*, *he* and *she*, and the proper names of the politicians onstage Trump and Clinton. Trump employs a greater percentage of the second person singular pronoun *you* (1,79%) and third person plural pronoun *they* (1,32%) to attack Clinton. Moreover, although both candidates criticise the opponent by using the pronouns *he* and *she*, the names of the politicians onstage are also employed to sound more convincing to the audience. Specifically, Clinton alludes to Trump with his full name *Donald Trump*. On the contrary, Trump names Clinton as *Secretary Clinton* or *Hillary Clinton* employing *Secretary Clinton* with a greater percentage. This is due to the fact that Americans needed a change so Trump alludes to Clinton's political position in the prior government of Barack Obama to show the audience that Clinton as president would not change the country because she would apply the same policy actions as the prior government.

Three-part list is used by both candidates because it is a recursive linguistic device which strengthens an item and provides coherence to their speeches. Furthermore, the

repetition into three creates a rhythm which allows political actors to be remembered by the audience so the use of this linguistic feature has a mnemonic purpose.

This linguistic feature is more frequent in Trump (0,40%) than Clinton (0,38%). This could be due to the fact that Trump is not a well-skilled giving strong argument to persuade the audience. Thus, the repetition of an idea helps him to give more effect to his speech and as a consequence, to sound convincing in front of the audience.

Past highly separates Trump and Clinton. Indeed, most of the contrastive pairs in the three presidential debates are related to the personal background of both candidates. In fact, Clinton blames Trump for his misconduct and exploitation of people in his business companies and Trump criticises Clinton for the wrong decisions made during her political career.

Trump (0,46%) employs more contrastive pairs than Clinton (0,38%). This is related to the fact that Hillary Clinton's husband, Bill Clinton, was president of the United States from 1993 to 2013 and Clinton had a political position in the democratic prior government. Therefore, Trump employs contrastive pairs to state real facts about the wrong decisions made by the democratic political party in order to show to the audience that the republican political party is an alternative to raise the country.

Political interviews are available for anyone in the country so it is important for the political actors to simplify reality in order to persuade the greatest part of population. That is why conceptual metaphors are used by Trump (0,43%) and Clinton (0,45%) with almost the same frequency.

The most common metaphors are related to time periods because elections mark a transition between a past and a new era. Indeed, the most common metaphor is FUTURE IS GOOD and PAST IS BAD. Moreover, the government is not considered to be a unified institution where cooperation between politicians leads to the welfare of a country. Therefore, Trump and Clinton consider the administration of government to be a military fight, arguing that POLITICS IS A BATTLE. This struggle begins in the political campaign where the two candidates fight to hold the presidency of the United States. Indeed, Trump feels attacked by Clinton in the first presidential debate arguing the following statement: "Hillary is hitting me with tremendous commercials". Likewise, Hillary regards Trump as the leader of a cavalry: "I

know you're into big diversion tonight, anything to avoid talking about your campaign and the way its exploding and the way Republicans are leaving you."

Fillers are the most common linguistic aspect used by both politicians in the debates. In fact, conversations are characterised by the high frequency of this words which are inevitable in political debates because they occur to hold the control of the turn while the politician is thinking what to say next. Clinton (1,92%) and Trump (1,89%) employs almost the same percentage of fillers. This is due to the fact that although Clinton and Trump had some planned remarks before the presidential debates, they did not know the question that the interviewer would pose to them. Therefore, they employ these words to organise and carry on their interventions to make them cohesive.

Politicians in presidential debates have a limited time to talk about complicated issues and to persuade the audience so they frequently employ equivocal language to avoid answering the question posed by the interviewer.

Trump (7,49%) is generally more evasive than Clinton (6,28%). This could be due to the fact that Trump does not have a deep knowledge in politics. In fact, he was one of the richest businessmen in the United States when he was nominated by the Republican political party. On the contrary, Clinton began to approach to politics when her husband, Bill Clinton, became the 42nd president of the United States so she has experience in politics.

Finally, interruptions are an essential feature in political debates because they show a sign of dominance and power between politicians. Indeed, the speaker who interrupts wants to gain the floor and redirect the conversation to express his or her point of view about an issue. Traditionally, it has been claimed that men interrupt more than men as Zimmerman and West's analysis (1975) and this study supports this approach. In fact, Trump is the candidate who interrupts with the highest percentage (35,45%) to Clinton to avoid that she damages his image when she utters false claims about him.

5. CONCLUSION

The hypothesis investigated in this paper has been confirmed after the analysis of the selected linguistic aspects in the three presidential debates. Indeed, Trump and Clinton talk and behave differently because although they both have a common purpose, which is to persuade the majority of American citizens to gain their vote and win the elections, their ideologies lie in different principles.

We have found that two of the seven linguistic features, conceptual metaphors and fillers, are used by Trump and Clinton with almost the same frequency in political exchanges. This is due to the fact that these linguistic aspects are embedded in daily discourse so they are employed unconsciously by political actors in order to make the interventions cohesive and understandable to the majority of population. Regardless of this, the rest of linguistic features are employed distinctively by the two candidates.

On the one hand, Trump employs more personal pronouns with the aim of directly attacking his rival and promoting his position. He also uses a greater amount of three-part list, contrastive pairs, interruptions and equivocations in the three presidential debates. This direct and confrontational style projects an authoritarian and cynical personality to the American audience who are attending the debates.

On the other hand, Clinton prefers using personal pronouns in order to defend her viewpoint by avoid taking the whole responsibility or sharing it with a group such as the government or the citizens. Besides, she almost does not interrupt to Trump or the interviewer and provide more complete replies to the audience. Therefore, Clinton shows a more polite style and stresses the importance of improving the life of American citizens which reflect to the audience that she is a refined and empathetic person.

Taking into consideration the way of talking of both candidates, it was popularly believed that Clinton would win the presidency of the United States according to her interventions and way to face questions. However, the results of the elections proclaimed Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States.

When it comes to the possibilities of future research, it would be interesting to analyse the role of non-verbal communication in the three presidential debates because paralinguistic features and body language have also an important effect on communication. This future research would allow us to get in deep the reason why a person without political training persuaded the majority of the population of the United States.

To conclude, persuasion in politics is unattainable without language. Indeed, language allows political parties to manipulate the citizens because they employ professional speechwriters who write premeditated speeches which are just read by politicians in a meeting. On the contrary, political actors in interactive debates do not act as rhetoricians of pre-planned speeches. In fact, although politicians are influenced by the linguistic features

of premeditated speeches uttered throughout the political campaign, they employ their particular way of talking to convince the audience by projecting a particular image of themselves and their opponents.

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7. APPENDIX

7.1. CORPUS

Due to the extension of the transcript of the three presidential debates, three files have been included in the DVD which contains this project. Each file includes the transcript of each debate and the video of the debate.