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### Investigating the Discursive Strategies in the Language of the US Presidential Debates

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#### Abstract

The U.S. presidential debates are rich in revealing national/international policies of the politicians. More specifically, the 2012 U.S. presidential debates between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney are unique in balancing and predicting the election outcome through the candidates' discourses. A Political Discourse Analysis is integrated to Ruth Wadak's (2011) Discourse-Historical Approach to investigate how the candidates employ the discursive strategies in order to gain the public support. The present study adopts a qualitative design of analyzing the candidates' speeches. The materials are particular extracts selected from the transcripts of one presidential debate. The purpose of the study is to uncover the discursive strategies in the candidates' speeches when they debate the most important issues of USA. The findings indicate that Obama's continuous use of the referential strategy indicates that there is a heavy emphasis on positive self-representation, defending the previous policy of Obama's government and presenting the record of achievement to gain the voters' support. On the other hand, Romney uses the argumentation strategy to attack Obama's previous policy and trigger the topos of threat that the same faults will take place if Obama is reelected. That is, Romney diminishes the public support surrounding Obama.

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## التحقيق في الاستراتيجيات الخطابية في لغة المناقشات الرئاسية الأمريكية

م.د. نورجان حسين جمال

كلية الآداب - قسم الترجمة - جمعة تكريت

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| <p><b>الخلاصة:</b> المناقشات الرئاسية الأمريكية غنية في الكشف عن السياسات الوطنية / الدولية للسياسيين. وبشكل أكثر تحديداً ، تعتبر المناظرات الرئاسية الأمريكية لعام ٢٠١٢ بين باراك أوباما وميت رومني فريدة من نوعها في موازنة نتائج الانتخابات والتنبؤ بها من خلال خطابات المرشحين. تم دمج تحليل الخطاب السياسي في منهج روث ودك (٢٠١١) الخطاب التاريخي للتحقيق في كيفية استخدام المرشحين للاستراتيجيات الخطابية من أجل الحصول على دعم الجمهور. تعتمد الدراسة الحالية على تصميم نوعي لتحليل خطابات المرشحين. تتضمن الدراسة مقتطفات معينة مختارة من نصوص مناظرة رئاسية واحدة. الغرض من الدراسة هو الكشف عن الاستراتيجيات الخطابية في خطابات المرشحين عندما يناقشون أهم القضايا في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. وتشير النتائج إلى أن استخدام أوباما المستمر للاستراتيجية المرجعية يشير إلى وجود تركيز كبير على التمثيل الذاتي الإيجابي والدفاع عن السياسة السابقة لحكومة أوباما وتقديم سجل من الإنجازات لكسب تأييد الناخبين. من ناحية أخرى، يستخدم رومني استراتيجية الجدل لمهاجمة سياسة أوباما السابقة وإطلاق العنان للتهديد بأن نفس العيوب ستحدث إذا أعيد انتخاب أوباما. أي أن رومني يقلل من التأييد الشعبي المحيط بأوباما.</p> | <p><b>الكلمات الدالة:-</b></p> <p>- الاستراتيجيات الخطابية</p> <p>- النقاشات الرئاسية</p> <p>- تحليل الخطاب السياسي</p> <p><b>معلومات البحث</b></p> <p><b>تاريخ البحث:</b></p> <p>الاستلام: ٢٥-٩-٢٠٢١</p> <p>القبول: ٩-١٠-٢٠٢١</p> <p>التوفر على النت</p> <p>23-1-2022</p> |
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### 1. Background of the study

American presidential debates are most followed, viewed, controlled and most well-known televised action that has come to accompany each presidential election. They are often considered crucial in determining the outcome of the election. Presidential debates are also a very important message in modern campaigns because they allow voters to compare and assess the leading candidates and their issues and positions simultaneously as they appear side by side. Furthermore, debates allow for an extended opportunity to learn about the candidate. There are critical criteria that should be found in the candidates to win the public support. First, candidates should be highly educated and well-prepared. They can answer direct questions during the debates whether these questions are directed by the moderator or by the people. Furthermore, they should be

conformable, since they face each other, i.e. the candidate should be competitive and persuasive to win the public support. Second, in each election campaign, the candidates are nominated by their political parties. There are two parties in the United States of America: Democrats and Republicans. Both of the nominated candidates should be of matched characteristics in order to face each other in the direct and live debates. Third, the candidates prepare their political program before the debates, in addition to solutions to the most critical issues in the country. For example, finding solutions to the issue of the huge percentage of the unemployment. This also helps both candidates present their future policy clearly. Fourth, debates are held to gain the decision of the audience: in this case the candidate should be convincing in order to win the people's support, since the audience cast their votes for the most convincing nominee. The voters should be aware of how beneficial these debates are to decide who the candidate they elect (Gee, 2011, p. 131).

The U.S. presidential debates of 2012 enable the candidates to express their policies directly to the people. Millions of people watch the debate. Thus, a candidate must have a special strategy in order to convince people to vote for him/her. Topics of the debate are scheduled according to specific time segments (90 minutes) to allow each candidate to answer the questions directed to him/her either by the moderator or by the audience. On the other hand, candidates in the debates may encounter an unexpected question or attack from an opponent (Benoit and Klyukovski, 2006, p. 210). Candidates have to carefully choose what to say in debates because whatever they say, it will grasp the attention of the American public. They aim to express their policies in the best way possible and as such, to satisfy the voters' needs. This is because the debates may change the elections outcomes and may even change the candidates' constituency. Accordingly, debates are a competition and how a candidate would win public support. Jim Lehrer (2011), the moderator of the first presidential debate of 2012, which was held on the 3rd of October in Denver, compares the presidential debates to the "Ultimate Rashomon", i.e. the Japanese combat (p. 16). Thus, the candidate presents his/her agenda to the public. In addition to the public knowledge about the candidate and his/her agenda, the context of the debate carries clear information about the candidate's priorities by observing which aspects the candidate discusses most often, which frames are used to present each field, and what strategies s/he will follow to present his/her policies. In 2012, Obama (the Democratic nominee) and Romney (the Republican nominee) discussed the most important issues of the American society in three debates. In 90 minutes, they debated the most important domestic and foreign issues. The candidates' goal is to win the public consensus by persuading and impressing them. Each debate includes discursive strategies which are used by the candidates in order to reveal specific agenda or to present themselves positively in front of the public. Such strategies are very important in the presidential debates because they help the candidate in determining the course s/he follows in the campaign by persuading the voters to think in a different way about important topics. This will lead the candidates to change their relative evaluation and give this persuasion more concern. As a result, the candidates manipulate the public, spread the ideological orientation of the candidates and their organizations, and gain support of the public.

In addition to debating the US domestic policy, presidential debates present the American foreign policy which is given more attention by the whole world because decision-making and future policies will affect most of the countries in the world, especially the Arab countries. Language of the presidential debates is also used to influence the voters' way of thinking and shape their minds. Therefore, candidates can

transmit their messages through the use of specific discourses in order to materialize the polarized account of self and other, persuade and manipulate the electorates to vote for them. Moreover, candidates' speech carries in its content various concepts that enhance, mitigate, and avoid issues underline the ideological manipulations of the presidential debates discourses. Among these concepts are discursive strategies which are important to be traced in the presidential debates.

The current study is a political discourse analysis of the language of the one US presidential debate of 2012. Focusing on some discursive strategies, the general aim of this study traces on how the two candidates use language to reveal power manipulation and ideology in order to win the polls. Specifically, the study aims at investigating the discursive strategies utilized by the two candidates in the selected debate and to illustrate how do these strategies of the two candidates contrast with each other.

## **2. Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited to the political discourse analysis of the presidential debate between Obama and Romney in the 2012 US election campaign.

## **3. Methodology**

This study is a qualitative analysis based on Ruth Wodak's (2011) Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). This approach is designed to integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text. DHA is used to trace the impact of particular discursive strategies that serve to introduce arguments of an individual or a group either positively or negatively (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2009, p. 279). According to Wodak (2011), DHA also provides a method of analysis to show the latent power dynamics and the range of potentials in agents. That is, it enables the analysis of implicit, coded prejudiced utterances, as well as identifying and exposing the allusions contained in prejudiced discourse (pp. 43-4). The material of this study is the U.S presidential debate of 2012 between Obama and Romney. In this study, the analysis is based on investigating the candidates' use of the discursive strategies according to DHA.

The discursive strategies are executive tools in the construction of identities, of in- and out-groups, and the use of strategies of positive self-presentation and the negative presentation of others. In Wodak's DHA (2011), there are five interesting types of discursive strategies, all involve positive self- and negative other-presentation. These strategies underpin the justification/legitimization of inclusion/exclusion and the construction of social/political identities. First, the referential/nomination strategy constructs and represents the social actors (e.g. through the creation of in-groups and out-groups). This can be done through the use of metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches. Second, the predicational strategy characterizes the social actors like individuals, group members or groups as a whole. This can be realized through the evaluative attributions of negative and positive traits in the linguistic form of implicit or explicit predicates. Third, the argumentation strategy concentrates on the topoi manifested, where positive and negative attributions are justified. Fourth, the perspectivization strategy focuses on the speakers' involvement in discourse and positions their point of view in the reporting, description, narration or quotation of relevant events or utterances. Fifth, the intensification/mitigation strategy can be an important aspect of the presentation in as much as the strategy operates the presentation by either sharpening it or toning it down (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2009, pp. 278-281 and Wodak, 2011, pp. 38-45).

#### 4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

##### Analyzing Discursive Strategies

The section is organized in different steps. First, pinpointing the most sonorous extracts of the two candidates that include discursive strategies from each topic of the debate. Second, at the end, there is a brief discussion of the extracts in order to detect why these strategies are employed by the candidates. Third, there are tables that illustrate more specifically how these discursive strategies are discerned by the two candidates. The tables identify where discursive strategies occur as well as the purpose of their usage. The debate deals with the most critical domestic issues of the American Society. The debate format is designated by the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD). The debate is divided into segments in which the candidates debate the issues whether they are domestic or foreign and attempt to gain the public support. It is important to mention that the arrangement of the topics and the turn-taking of the candidates in the analysis are dictated by their appearance in the debate. The debate was held at Magness Arena, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado in October 3, 2012 between President Barack Obama and Former Gov. Mitt Romney. The moderator was Jim Lehrer. The main concern of the debate is the most critical domestic issues. The candidates debate the economy and its different sub-topics. The analysis will be based on only five topics: jobs, tax code and federal deficit and federal debt from the first segment (economy), Social Security from the second segment, and the role of government, the third segment.

##### Topic 1. Jobs

Millions of Americans lost their jobs or houses in the crisis of 2008. In 2011 there were roughly thirteen million people out of work. There was an economy growth but the global financial crisis still casted a long shadow on the American economy (Sides and Vavrek, 2013, p. 4). Both candidates want to create jobs, but each one of them may follow a different policy in terms of job increasing (Benoit, 2014, p. 11).

##### Obama

Different discursive strategies appear in Obama's speech about jobs which serve as a defensive approach of his previous policy, building a close relation with the Americans or positive self-representation (Wagner and Wodak, 2006, p. 386). Synecdoche like *we* and *us* are used in the referential strategy that endorses Obama's view of unifying the American people as in: *We've begun to fight our way back...we've still got a lot of work to do.... in order for us to do it, we do have to close our deficit.*

The use of synecdoche enables Obama to categorize the American citizens as the leaders who represent the government, and they side by side make the decisions with the president. Metaphor in the referential strategy as in: *The auto industry has come roaring back*, delivers a positive message that Obama's policy is creating jobs although it is slow. The argumentation strategy appears in Obama's speech in order to attribute the process of developing the American economy to his achievements. The topos of definition is highlighted (Wodak, 2011) because Obama attributes many achievements to his government. In addition, he reveals himself positively as a devoting and consistent president. By saying, *we've made enormous progress drawing on ideas both from Democrats and Republicans...*

The argumentation strategy highlights the topos of authority because Obama legitimizes and materializes the ideas into a real process that serves the American society. Obama also uses the mitigation strategy to narrow the gaps between himself and Romney,

*Governor Romney and I both agree... Governor Romney and I, we both agree.*

### **Romney**

The argumentation strategy triggers the topos of threat when Romney says, *I'm concerned that the path we're going on has just been unsuccessful*. Moreover, Obama is presented negatively because path means the way he is leading America, which is unsuccessful. The perspectivation strategy is also used to play on the issue of unemployment. Romney assumes that developing an independent energy in North America will create four million jobs, *One, get us energy independent... That creates 4 million jobs*. This implicitly means that Obama's policy does not create jobs, because Obama has no independent strategy to develop energy for America.

### **Topic 2. Tax Code**

Tax code in USA is complex because it is based on different social strata. Individuals and businesses must substantially pay their tax liabilities regularly (Laffer, Winegarden and Childs, 2011). What ultimately matters for people is that their tax paying must not be raised because it burdens them. The candidates' role is to present a reasonable and balanced policy which reduces taxes and increases jobs (Benoit, 1999, Blackledge, 2005, and Balz, 2013).

### **Romney**

Romney uses various discursive strategies to present Obama negatively because he regards that Obama failed in steering the country to the right path. In the referential strategy, a metaphor appears in *"buried and crushed"* to refer to the burden on the middle-class during Obama's period. In addition, the intensification strategy is also employed to emphasize the attack strategy which Romney follows in presenting Obama negatively as Romney says, *the people who are having the hard time right now are middle-income Americans*.

The argumentation strategy also highlights the topos of reality and negative other-representation when Romney says that Obama's administration has cut the number of permits and licenses of increasing oil and energy in half, *your administration has cut the number of permits and licenses in half*. Therefore, Romney employs the predicational strategy to present himself positively, attribute the successful economic plan to himself and allude to the solution that he has which reduces the "burden being paid by middle-income Americans". This means that Romney will reduce the taxes on the middle class people if he is elected as the president of the U.S.

### **Obama**

Concerning the discursive strategies, the argumentation strategy is utilized to criticize Romney's economic plan and trigger the topoi of threat and burdening on the middle class as Obama says, *how we pay for that, reduce the deficit, and make*

*investments that we need to make, without dumping those costs onto middle-class Americans.* The argumentation strategy is also employed to emphasize the topos of authority and represent Obama positively who says *my tax plan has already lowered taxes for 98 percent of families, I also lowered taxes for small businesses 18 times. And what want to do is continue the tax rate.* Obama implicitly declares that the families have not been crushed and buried as Romney claims. Therefore, Obama justifies his previous tax policy and asserts that he will continue with this plan because it is suitable.

### **Topic 3. Federal Deficit and Federal Debt**

Federal deficit is a critical issue which concerns the American people. A decade of foreign wars and the 2008 financial crisis have burdened the US budget which led to a high debt and deficit (Yochum, 2012). Candidates concentrate on how to tackle this critical issue and reduce the deficit, which means to achieve the ultimate goal and win election by presenting the proper way of manipulating the federal deficit and debt (Benoit, 2014).

#### **Romney**

Romney presents his ideas and plans in numbers and he numerates each idea. The topos of numbers in the argumentation strategy serves to represent Romney positively as the organized businessman who always depends on his epistemic background, *\$4 million in cuts...your plan will kill 700.000 jobs.* The intensification strategy serves to represent Obama negatively as the weak president who cannot cut the deficit and manipulates the federal debt. Romney intensifies this viewpoint and calls it an immoral process, *it's not just an economic issue, I think it's a moral issue...And the amount of debt we're adding, at a trillion a year, is simply not moral.* Romney presents Obama negatively as the president who does not care for the federal debt. In addition, the use of intensification strategy here reveals the attack policy which Romney follows against Obama.

#### **Obama**

Concerning Federal Deficit and Federal Debt, Obama uses the *argumentation* strategy to trigger the topos of threat when he mentions that he does not want America to slip into another "Great Depression". The *referential* strategy is also used to implicitly attribute the failure of the American economy to Bush's previous policies. He labels bush negatively because he thinks that he caused the federal deficit. This means that Obama does not criticize Bush only, but he also criticizes the whole Republican Party including Romney. By saying *we went after medical fraud in Medicare and Medicaid very aggressively,* Obama intensifies the topos of urgency in the *argumentation* strategy because this is attributed to the previous policy and need to be manipulated and changed into a better process. The result is saving *tens of billions of dollars...taken out of the system.* The use of the *referential* strategy enables Obama to allude to the corruption of Bush's government which means that Romney is not different from Bush since both are Republicans.

### **Topic 4. Social Security**

What the elders in America want from the new president is to protect and save the social security because it provides them housing, Medicare and Medicaid (Benoit, et al, 2003 and Johnson, 2011).

### **Obama**

The synecdoches we/us are used in the referential strategy to assert the close relationship between Obama and the seniors, especially when he represents his grandmother as a symbol of the strong senior, *folks like my grandmother at the mercy of the private insurance system*. The predicational strategy also appears to establish positive self-representation by pointing that "when Obamacare is fully implemented, we're going to be in a position to show that costs are going down". That is, Obama seeks to mobilize the public support towards himself. Therefore, he uses the perspectivation strategy to trigger the public's fear that the costs of Medicare will increase and label Romney negatively, "if you repeal Obamacare...what happens is those seniors right away are going to pay \$600 more in prescription care".

### **Romney**

Romney uses the argumentation strategy to represent Obama negatively. He asserts the topos of threat when he says, *for current retirees, he's cutting \$716 billion from the program*. The perspectivation strategy is also used to represent Romney as a man of epistemic background when he offers a flexible Medicare program which lets the people choose either the current Medicare program or the new one he proposes, *what I do to make sure that we can keep Medicare in place for them is to allow them either to choose the current Medicare program or a private plan, their choice*. Romney also uses the metaphoric expression *the biggest kiss* to attribute the harmful bankruptcy of some banks in Wall Street to Obama. Accordingly the referential strategy is used to label Obama negatively.

## **Topic 5. The Role of Government**

### **Obama**

The argumentation strategy is conveyed to emphasize the topos of authority. He says, *the first role of the federal government is to keep the American people safe*. He represents himself positively by saying, *And as a commander-in-chief, that is something that I've worked on and thought about every single day that I've been in the Oval Office*.

The argumentation strategy is also used to highlight the topos of reality when Obama represents Romney negatively, as Romney wants to cut taxes and only the high income people and businessmen will benefit from this tax cut, *when Governor Romney indicates that he wants to cut taxes and potentially benefits folks like me and him*. Obama believes that the best investment is in developing education. Thus, by saying, *let's hire another 100,000 math and science*, he uses the predicational strategy to gain the teachers' support and labels himself positively.

### **Romney**

In discussing this topic of the role of government, Romney mentions some negative points about poverty and unemployment because of the previous government. By using a metaphoric expression, the referential strategy is used to represent Obama negatively



as he says, *all these desired things are out of the American heart*. The topos of numbers is also used in the argumentation strategy to trigger the topos of threat that the percentage of poverty and unemployment may increase if Obama is reelected, *the proof of that is 23 million people out of work. The proof of that is 1 of 6 people in poverty*.

From this analysis, it appears that Obama utilizes the referential strategy as defensive devices for his previous policies and presenting himself positively in order to gain the public support to vote for him once more. On the other hand, Romney employs the argumentation strategy to attack Obama's policies, diminish the public support surrounding Obama and justify Romney's argument towards the public issues. This is done in order to have more support from the middle-class people, small business owners and the job seeker. Table 1 gives a brief overview of the candidates' use of the discursive strategies in the selected presidential debate.

**Table 1: The Discursive Strategies Used By the Candidates in the Debate**

| Topics   | Candidate | Speeches   | The Discursive Strategy | Device/ Topoi                     | Presentation                |
|----------|-----------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Jobs     | Obama     | <i>We/us</i>   | Referential             | Synecdoches                       | Positive self-presentation  |
|          |           | <i>The auto industry has come roaring back</i>                                       | Referential             | Metaphor                          | Positive self-presentation  |
|          |           | <i>we've made enormous progress</i>  | Argumentation           | Topoi of authority and definition | Positive self-presentation  |
|          | Romney    | <i>I'm concerned that the path we're going on has just been unsuccessful</i>         | Argumentation           | Topos of threat                   | Negative other-presentation |
|          |           | <i>get us energy independent...That creates 4 million jobs</i>                       | Perspectivation         | Assumption                        | Positive self-presentation  |
| Tax Code | Romney    | <i>Buried...crushed</i>  | Referential             | Metaphor                          | Negative other-presentation |
|          |           | <i>The people who are having the hard time right now are middle-income Americans</i> | Intensification         | Attack                            | Negative other-presentation |
|          |           | <i>your administration has cut the number of permits and licenses in half</i>        | Argumentation           | Topos of reality                  | Negative other-presentation |
|          |           | <i>I'll reduce the burden being paid by middle-income Americans</i>                  | Predicational           | Attribution                       | Positive self-presentation  |
|          | Obama     | <i>How we pay for that... without dumping those</i>                                  | Argumentation           | Topos of threat                   | Negative other-presentation |

|   |               |  |                 |                    |                             |
|---|---------------|--|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
|   |               | <i>costs onto middle class Americans</i>   |                 |                    |                             |
|   |               | <i>my tax plan has already lowered taxes for 98 percent of families</i>  | Argumentation   | Topos of authority | Positive self-presentation  |
| <b>Federal Deficit and Federal Debt</b> | <b>Romney</b> | <i>"\$4 million in cuts...your plan will kill 700.000 jobs</i>   | Argumentation   | Topos of numbers   | Negative other-presentation |
|   |               | <i>the amount of debt we're adding, at a trillion a year, is simply not moral</i>  | Intensification | Attack             | Negative other-presentation |
|   | <b>Obama</b>  | <i>Great Depression</i>  | Argumentation   | Topos of threat    | Negative other-presentation |
|   |               | <i>we went after medical fraud in Medicare and Medicaid very aggressively</i>  | Referential     | Synecdoches        | Positive self-presentation  |
|   |               |  | Argumentation   | Topos of urgency   | Negative other-Presentation |
|   |               | <i>tens of billions of dollars...taken out of the system</i>   | Referential     | attribution        | Negative other-presentation |
| <b>Social Security</b>                  | <b>Obama</b>  | <i>We/us</i>   | Referential     | Synecdoches        | Positive self-presentation  |
|   |               | <i>When Obamacare is fully implemented, we're going to be in a position to show that costs are going down</i>              | Predicational   | Attribution        | Positive self-presentation  |
|   |               | <i>if you repeal Obamacare...what happens is those seniors right away are going to pay \$600 more in prescription care</i> | Perspectivation | Presupposition     | Negative other-presentation |
|   | <b>Romney</b> | <i>for current retirees, he's (Obama) cutting \$716 billion from the program</i>   | Argumentation   | Topos of threat    | Negative other-presentation |
|   |               | <i>what I do to make sure that we can keep Medicare in place...</i>  | Perspectivation | Presupposition     | Positive self-presentation  |
|   |               | <i>the biggest kiss</i>  | Referential     | Metaphor           | Negative other-presentation |

|                               |               |   |               |                         |                             |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>The Role of Government</b> | <b>Obama</b>  | <i>The first role of the federal government is to keep the American people safe</i>                             | Argumentation | Topos of authority      | Positive self-presentation  |
|                               |               | <i>when Governor Romney indicates that he wants to cut taxes and potentially benefits folks like me and him</i> | Argumentation | Topos of reality        | Negative other-presentation |
|                               |               | <i>let's hire another 100,000 math and science</i>  | Predicational | Attribution             | Positive self-presentation  |
|                               | <b>Romney</b> | <i>all these desired things are out of the American heart</i>   | Referential   | Metaphor                | Negative other-presentation |
|                               |               | <i>the proof of that is 23 million people out of work. The proof of that is 1 of 6 people in poverty</i>        | Argumentation | Topoi of number, threat | Negative other-presentation |

## Conclusion

The analysis showed that the debate harbor a variety of discourses which uncover elements of power struggle and ideological orientation through the use discursive strategies. The candidates have employed various DHA tools to persuade and manipulate the public opinion through the use different discursive strategies to achieve several aims. The discursive strategies are utilized in disseminating the hegemonic ideologies. For example, the continual use of synecdoches and metaphor reveals the candidates' desire of domination. More specifically, the referential strategy is employed by Obama to help in the positive self-presentation through the frequent mentioning of his record of achievements. Such achievements may frame Obama in the light of successful president who is able to lead the country at the time of crises. On the other hand, Romney utilizes the argumentation strategy for a number of reasons. Romney tries to justify his argument against Obama. As a businessman, he has to be able to present exact numbers and statistics of the unemployed people in America, the federal deficit and federal debt. Romney also employs the argumentation strategy to present himself positively and present his opponent in a negative light through repeatedly triggering the topos of threat. Furthermore, the argumentation strategy helps Romney in activating the attack method of debating against his rival. The discursive strategies are also crucial tools in clarifying the candidates' viewpoints concerning the foreign policy. Thus, Obama utilized various strategies as the argumentation and intensification. Obama wants to justify his precious policy and present himself to the public as the president who has good experience in leading the country. Moreover, the intensification strategy is employed in the foreign policy discourse of Obama to frame Romney negatively as the candidate who does not have experience in directing the American foreign policy. This means that Romney is not able to lead the United States of America since is following reckless strategy. On the other hand, Romney utilizes the referential strategy to present Obama in the negative light. Romney believes that Obama's policies have made America weak and it is time to choose a stronger president for USA. Other discursive strategies like predicational and perspectivation appear but

in a wide range. They function as a positive self-presentation and negative other presentation.

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