

**Persuasive Strategies in the Second Presidential
Debate between Clinton and Trump: A
pragmatic Study**

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Abstract

This research paper aims at investigating the key persuasive strategies used by Clinton and Trump in the second presidential debate that takes place between them before American voters so as to obtain the greatest number of votes that enable the winner to take office. The study at hand, which is pragmatically conducted, emphasizes three persuasive strategies alongside their accompanying mechanisms that the rivals usually employ in the presidential race to carry out their aims and satisfy the audience (Au henceforth) with their theses, views and opinions. These strategies are acclaiming, attacking and defence, which represent the key pillars upon which the candidates in question depend to persuade the voters of their theses concerning the controversial issues.

Key Words : debate, persuasive strategy, attack, acclaiming, defence, Trump, Clinton, pragmatic analysis.

الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث للتقصي عن استراتيجيات الاقناع التي استخدمها ترامب وكلنتون في المناظرة الرئاسية الثانية التي حدثت بينهما امام الناخبين الامريكان لغرض جمع اكبر عدد من الاصوات التي توهم الفائز لتولي الرئاسة . وقد ركزت هذه الدراسة التبادلية على ثلاث استراتيجيات اقناعية مع اليات تلك الاستراتيجيات التي عادة ما يستعملها الخصماء في السباق الرئاسي للوصول الى اهدافهم واقناع المتلقي باطروحاتهم وارائهم وافكارهم وهذه الاستراتيجيات هي الادعاء(مدح النفس) والهجوم والدفاع وهي الركائز الثلاث الذي اعتمدها المرشحان المذكوران لمحاولة اقناع الناخبين بالقضايا الجدلية.

The Notion of Debate

Viewed as a controversy over a given topic or a certain issue, debate may be defined as an extensive discussion holding between two or more parties the point of which is to persuade the public of the debater's arguments(Al Matrafi, 2006: 97). Reinforced by Hornby (1974: 224), debate is "a formal discussion" taking place in a public meeting where two clashing ideas are posed on a particular issue raised in the debate to be ultimately evaluated by the voters. A word of caution should be voiced here that a debate is not a chaotic action, but a disciplined event happening commonly between single participants at particular time. Following Greene (2016: 13), debates have much in common; all of them have opening and closing remarks, two-minute period of

time for each candidate, admittance of rebuttal and a clear-cut topic to discuss. Since it is a form of persuasion, debates rely on three appeals: ethos, pathos and logos. The first appeal is concerned with the truthfulness and credibility of the message producer, the second one pertains to the audience's emotions that the speaker takes over, and the third draws upon the tangible evidences, the statistical data and documentary proofs raised in such an event (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2004: 145–232).

Looked at from another angle,, a debate is made up of clashing arguments where the debaters are to introduce their ideas and propositions according to certain conventions the most significant of which are those pinpointed by Benoit et al. (1998:3–5).

- a.– A presidential debate regards voting as a comparative event.
- b. Candidates are bound to differentiate themselves from their rivals via the debate.
- c. Candidates are to score preferability via attacking, acclaiming and defending, and
- d. Campaign discourse has to do with two main aspects: policy and character.

It is worth mentioning that persuasion in debates is pragmatically analysed as a directive speech act (SA)

since the speaker gets the addressee do something usually in the interest of the former (Lakoff, 1987 cited in Simpson, 2004). Accordingly, candidates try to get the audience vote in favour of them when the former produce a persuasive talk on a certain issue.

Contextual Factors

According to Yule (2010: 55), context contributes substantially to understanding of utterances produced because it eliminates the other accompanying interpretations that arise, fostering and inculcating the most candidate one. Identifying three types of context, namely linguistic, physical and social, Simpson (2004) accentuates the importance of social environment as a decisive factor in interpretation of any text. As such, this work briefly discusses the social context where the second debate happens to get access to understanding the textual structure of this debate.

Politically speaking, there is a tough competition between Clinton, a veteran politician, and Trump, a well-known businessman. Running for presidency, the two candidates have different views on how to manage all aspects of life in America and overcome the challenging issues that this country would encounter. After conducting the first debate between them with a noticeable advance in favour of the democratic

candidate, as observers indicate, Trump saves no effort to persuade the audience of his qualifications and ability to “make America great again”. Simultaneously, he tries to underrate his rival’s potentials of leading this most powerful country. Clinton, who spends too much time as an active politician occupying so many political positions the most notable of which is Secretary of state, attempts to satisfy the American voter with her ability to manage the country successfully by virtue of her long-term experience, an allegation Trumps harbours his doubt about, reminding the voters in question that her many years’ experience has gone fruitless because no tangible achievements have been made yet. Accordingly, each candidate is entitled to address the audience indirectly by attacking his rival, defending himself against the accusations directed to him or using acclaiming to inform the voter of his glorious history concerning his past actions and/ or his charming character (Benoit et al, 1998). Of help for both the candidate and voter, debate is privileged over other forms of campaign such as advertisements due to the fact that it offers the opportunity for the voter to be in face-to- face communication with the candidate and get acquainted with him/her. Moreover, such an event is of wider coverage; that is to say the number of the

people that listen to the candidates is greater than those who can be covered by some other activities (*ibid*).

Because of the thorny problems Americans have been suffering from in Obama's era such as heavy taxes, unemployment, migration of foreigners, deteriorated economy, racial discrimination, health expenses and the like that American people look for a president that undertakes to address. As such, persuasive arguments are what the two candidates after and their talk is replete with attacking each other, defending against the charges mentioned, and praising themselves that they have made marvelous accomplishments for the sake of the people and the country (*ibid*).

Idealized Cognitive Model of Persuasion

According to Lakoff (1987, cited in Simpson, 2004: 87), the illocutionary force of any SA, including persuasion, is negotiated by means of the Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM), a conceptual representation of the world stored in our long-term memory. The ICM of a speech act(SA) is constructed on the basis of some pragmatic dimensions such as cost-benefit, optionality, power, etc. that identify its distinguished character. Persuasion is, thus, regarded as a speech act on the basis of such features. In fact persuasion in debates is an act that takes place in the future by the addressee while the

debater is delivering his speech in the present. In addition to the time of persuasive events in debates, the most important contextual factors that constitute the illocutionary force of persuasion can be indicated as follows.

Cost –Benefit variable

Leech (1983:108) accentuates the cost–benefit essence of any expression, arguing that this factor is peculiar to directives and commissives . He (ibid) affirms that cost–benefit variable is construed in terms of (*un*) *favourableness* for the addressee as far as the politeness is concerned. In other words, to secure advantage to the addressee is to show politeness for that person and the converse holds true. Since persuasion is evaluated as cost avoidance on the part of the addressee, it is regarded as a polite SA.

Optionality

According to Games (1983:129), a polite speech act implies that the speaker should give options to the person he is addressing. As far as persuasion is concerned, the addressee is left with freedom as to accept or reject the debater’s arguments, ideas, analyses and proposals. Put differently, the addressee’s optionality of a persuasive act is high (Hernandez,2001: 181).

Social Distance

In presidential debates, the candidates are, of course, superior to the audience. That is to say, there is a great social distance between the two parties involved. In persuasive arguments, the speaker has the knowledge authority demonstrated in his/ her experience (Leech, 1983). Nonetheless, politicians usually exhibit remarks of powerlessness to the audience, an evidence that power is not always attributable to social status. Stated otherwise, the less powerful individuals may become more powerful and vice versa in certain circumstance. Candidates in debates are stemming their strength from the audience while elsewhere they have nothing to do with the voters they address (ibid.). In debates, candidates show a kind of intimacy with the voter; they make jokes, laugh, kiss him/her and shake hands with him/her.

Mitigation

According to Mey (2009:647), mitigation is modification of the illocutionary force of utterances. Such modification calls into play an intensity of desired expressions which can be thought of as scalar concept. Persuasion, unlike other harsh acts such as threats and orders, is free of imposition and, hence, has a considerable degree of mitigation. Looked at from

another angle, mitigation, in fact, makes the addressee believe that performing the proposed action is not inevitable (Hernandez, 2001: 189). Candidates do their best to minimize the cost of the persuasive acts attracting their attention to what can be beneficial for the audience to be adopted and what is detrimental to be avoidable.

Speaker's and Address's Wills

In debates, the speaker's will is likely to be so high since the interest to be attained is in favour of him/her. On the contrary, the addressee's will is neutral but it can be then biased for this or that debater in accordance with the force of persuasive arguments he is going to receive the candidates (ibid:190). Pragmatically speaking, the audience serves as the real agent upon which the speaker depends because the addressee, once satisfied, is making a decisive vote for the interest of the addressee.

Analytical Model

Following Benoit et al (1998: xii), three key persuasive strategies are predominantly employed in presidential debates, namely acclaiming, attacking and defence. Of these three strategies, attacking is the most effective one, acclaiming comes in the second place and defence is the less effective one. Consequently, candidates tend

to exploit these strategies for making the Au persuaded. These strategies, along with their persuasive mechanisms will be briefly discussed.

Acclaiming (Acc.)

Alternatively termed as self-praise, claiming involves a statement embodying a candidate's merits and benefits that enhance the speaker's reputation and attitudes . Demonstrating in boasting, this strategy implies three main elemental components, viz. fact, value and policy. The factual part aims at captivating the audience's interest in what the speaker claims about his/her deeds, activities and traits. The value part is constructed to satisfy the Au that the debate's arguments are desirable, advantageous and fruitful. The third portion of acclaiming, the policy, is to nail in the audience integration between fact, value and character. (Benoit and Wells, et al.,).

Acclaiming Structure

Demonstrating the outcome of reasoning or evidence, acclaiming should be deemed as a persuasive argument and, hence, it can be pragmatically analysed. Toulmin (2003, cited in Altimimi, 2011) proposed a comprehensive pragmatic model concerning the content and structure of acclaiming. He (ibid.) sustains that this model is pragmatically considered because the

argumentative propositions rely on one another to come up with the speaker's intention. In addition, the structure of an argument is not fixed but is determined by the context where the proposition and contextual variables are negotiating to trigger the debater's intended message. What is more, the structure of an argument can be a one-part statement with single preposition that will then integrate with the missing propositions which can only implicitly arrived at by virtue of the non- linguistic factors. According to Fairclough (2003:81), three basic elements are inserted in all argumentative strategies, including acclaiming, viz. datum, warrant and claim. He (ibid) assigns the following suitable definitions to these elements:

Datum. It is a truth employed to support an argument. It is the base upon which the next argumentative component stands. As a case in point, Trump's comment on Obamacare once undertaking to abolish it can be analysed as follows:

, so that unless you get hit by a truck, you're never going to be able to use it

Datum: " Obamacare is a total disaster." Trump said

Warrant. It is an inference linking datum to the claim. Recognized either explicitly or implicitly, warrants are triggered by the receiver to respond to the conclusion.

Acting as the bridge between datum and claim, it serves as an answers the question “Why should we believe or react to the claim?”(Altimimi, 2011:45–46).

Warrant: Not only are your rates going up by numbers that nobody’s ever believed, but your deductibles are going up.

Claim. Coming up with a conclusion by the addressee(s), claim is a thesis the debater postulates and wants the addressee to take it for granted and respond to it.

Claim: We have to repeal Obamacare.

The following diagram is an illustration of Toulmin’s (2003) model of arguments:

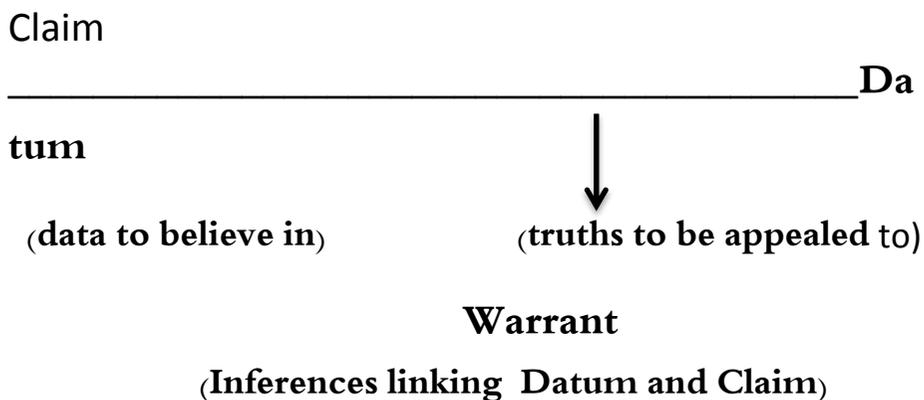


Figure (1) Propositions of the Pragmatic Structure of the Claiming Argument (Following Altimimi, 2011)

As asserted by Toulmin, the three- part acclaiming structure is not always straightforward; there are acclaiming arguments that explicitly lack warrant part,

inviting the addressee to covertly detect. In contrast, the claims are always recognized because it contains the greatest portion of the communicative intention of an argument.

Attacking (Atk.)

Attack may be defined as a statement exhibiting the rival's negative characteristics, undesired policy or misconduct. Pragmatically considered, a persuasive attack falls into two substrategies: a negatively perceived action (NPA) and attribution of responsibility for to the agent (ARA) (Pomerantz, 1989:12 cited in Benoit and Wells, 1996). NPA may concern what the doer ascribes to perform. ART refers to the accused who shoulders the responsibility for something wrong. The person under attack may have done the offence or may suggest or provoke, or let it be done (Benoit and Wells, 1996:29–30). In order to launch a persuasive attack, politician often do their best to create an offensive picture of their opponents by persuading the Au of their rival's undesired actions to rule out those rival from the Au's attentions and decision when they come to electoral process (ibid.). NPA can be performed by one of the following mechanisms.

Extent of the Damage (Extent)

Concerning the amount of harm, this mechanism has a great impact in creating a negative of the rival to underrate his/ her personality and qualification required for leadership. Accordingly, the more offense the accused had committed, the more hateful the action is recognized by the audience (Benoit and Wells, 1996:30-1).

Persistence of Negative Outcomes (Persist)

It has been pointed out that long-term harms are more effective than short-term ones. Describing their rivals as having determination to commit further offences, candidates utilize this tendency to wage attack against their opponents to undermine the rivals' opportunity of winning the voter's decision (ibid).

Recency of Harms (Rece)

The more recent an event is, the more effective burden it produces in the audience's satisfaction in negative evaluation of the rival's intentions and conducts. By contrast, the activities that have taken place in a distant time have less burden on the audience since the consequences created by these misdeeds can be avoided with the passage of time (Ibid).

Innocence of Victims (Innoce)

This mechanism recommends that the helplessness of the victim depicts and broadens devastation to the image of the person under attack. (Benoit et al ,1998:13–14)

Inconsistency (Inconsist)

Inconsistency constitutes an important mechanism of attack because it sparks intensification of the offense that an accused is said to make . Candidates resort to this mechanism to talk about of the opponent’s unstable policy, highlighting contrast between what their rivals have already done and what they are supposed to do (Benoit and Wells, 1996:33).

Effects on the Audience (Effect)

Persuasive attacks can be accentuated by associating the undesired results directly with the audience (ibid).

Attribution of Responsibility to the Target (ART)

The other kind of the attack that a politician can lunch against his opponent concerns the responsibility that their rivals should shoulder. This is conducted via the following mechanism (ibid: 34).

Intent to Achieve the Outcome (Int)

Benoit, et al. (1998: 33-4) hold the view that the misdeeds performed by accident can be justified by the Au and, therefore, the agents are and not blamed for them. By contrast, the agents whose actions are intentionally done are out of favour and the agents are seen as dishonest.

Knowledge of the Act's Consequences (Knowledge)

This mechanism holds that unpredictability justifies the accused's responsibility and gets it excusable. This stands in stark contrast to the case where officials are aware of the effects of their deeds (ibid:35).

Prior Commission of the Offensive Act (Prior)

Repeated commission of an offense will not pardon the agent from this responsibility, considering him an offender. On the contrary, the single offence will not hold the target accountable for this misdeed (ibid.).

Benefit from the Offense (Benefit)

This mechanism implies that offences can be of use for the officials. As such, those officials don't condemn such wrongdoings because they make use of them (Benoit and Wells, 1996: 36-7).

Defence (Def)

According to (Benoit, 2007:21), Defence can be defined as the verbal expression that reacts to an attack to abandoning further devastation or to restore the accused's preferability.

Denial (Den)

Denial is a mechanism which publicly rejects a statement or allegation as untrue. This substrategy holds that when one is presented with something difficult to accept, one challenges it openly. An individual adopting such a mechanism is referred to as a denier or true believer. A distinction needs to be made between two groups of denial: simple denial vs. shifting blame (ibid.)

Simple denial (S den.)

According to Benoit et al. (1998: 39), the politician under attack may respond by denying the offence. Alternatively, the candidate who is accused may tell the public that the offensive action (s) he is accused of committing do not take (s) place at all. A third possibility in this paradigm is that the accused can evaluate the offences involved as of little, if any, detrimental consequences (ibid).

Shifting Blame (ShBlame)

regarded as a more common defensive mechanism, shifting blame falls within the scope of denial. This mechanism of denial is to unload the accused's claimed responsibility and shift some blame on another individual or institution (Benoit et al., 1998: 40).

Evasion of Responsibility (EVR)

Obscuring responsibility is a form of image repair and has four forms . This strategy is commonly appealed to by politicians to whom accusations are directed so as to convince the Au that their actions and deeds are proper and appropriate (ibid). This evasion is performed by one of the following mechanisms.

Provocation (Prov)

Schonbach (1980) and Semine and Manstend (1983 cited in Benoit and Wells, 1996:43) hold the opinion that the accused can proclaim that his offences served as a response to another misdeed , arguing for the truthfulness and appropriateness of their reactions.

Defeasibility (Defeas)

Representing a defensive form of refraining from responsibility, defeasibility recommends that the accused suffer from a lack of information on important elements of the undesired action or the deteriorated situations he is blaming for. The candidate under attack

may allege a shortage of control over the principal contents of the situation or action at issue (Benoit and Wells, 1996: 43).

Accident (Accident)

The target may tell the public that the offence has occurred by accident excluding his deliberate intention in this respect. Seen as mitigation, the accused's defence may be, to an extent, justified, reducing the devastation that does inflict his/ her image (Benoit, et al.1998:40).

Good Intention (GInt)

It is generally accepted that misdeed committed with good will are likely to be forgiven while those made with ill-willed intentions are not excused at all. As a result, well-intentioned agents of misdeeds are not deemed as accountable as their bad-intentioned counterparts (ibid:41).

Reducing the Act's Offensiveness (Red.A.Off)

Concerning minimization of the offences committed, there exist six mechanisms that have to do with decreasing of accusations directed to the accused (ibid: 41-2). They are to be briefly discussed as follows.

Bolstering (Bolst)

Ware and Linkuge 1 (1973, cited in Benoit et al., 1998) postulate that the accused prolongs describing his/her positive actions that he has accomplished in the past in

an effort to eliminate his/her negative image created in the audience's mind . However, the negative consequence arising from the accusation does not considerably change, but these growing positive feelings help to better the target's reputation that is deteriorated.

Minimization (Mini)

Conducted via minimizing the unpleasant feelings associated with the wrongdoings, minimization, which acknowledges the fact but pays no attention to its risky consequences, minimization is regarded as a bridge between denial and rationalization. When the audience realizes that the offence is less effective now than it once was, the detrimental outcome pertaining to the accused's fame will be to reduced (Benoit and Wells, 1996:44).

Differentiation (Differen)

A third option of offensiveness pertaining to reducing the target's policy and character is differentiation in which he/ she compares between the allegedly offensive act that he has committed and similar ones made by others (ibid.).

Transcendence (Trans)

An alternative defensive form of smoothing the tension generated by the rival's attack is transcendence

in which the audience is convinced to evaluate the action as less offensive. Not attributing the responsibility to himself/ herself, the accused usually transfer the burden of responsibility of the action to some other official or one of his aides (ibid:45) .

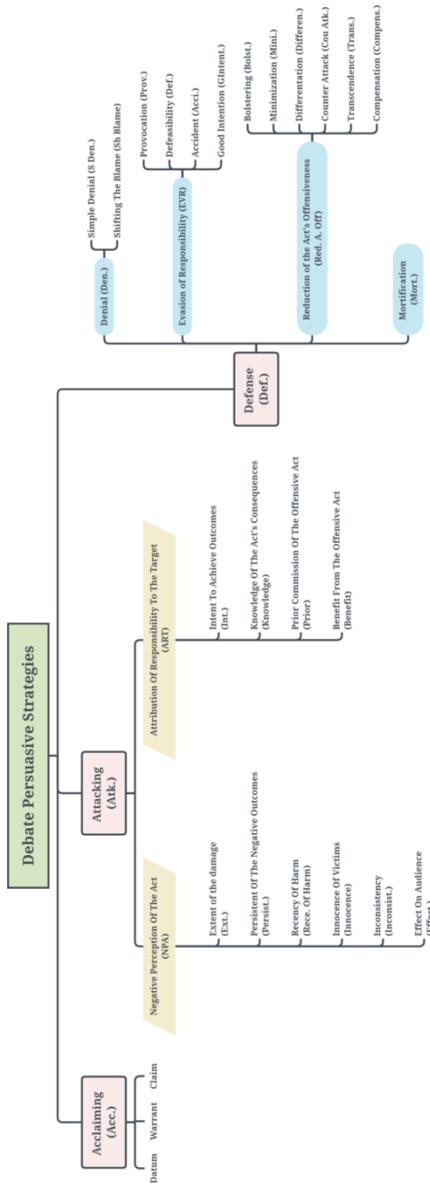
Counter Attack (Cou Atk.)

Following Semin and Manstead (1983, cited in Benoit et al, 1989 : 35), the reduction of the force of an offensive act can be conducted via counter attack. Also known as attacking accusers, this mechanism of defence implies that the target's potential to distort the trustworthiness of the source of accusations will bring about limitation of devastation to that target's face.

Compensation (Compen)

Schonbach (cited in Benoit et al.,1998) argues that the last mechanism of reducing an offence resides in substitution where the candidate under attack tries his best to offer compensation for the victim by paying for his/her loss in an attempt to soften the negative emotions that arise from the misdeed.

All in all, the analytic model of persuasive strategies employed in presidential debates, which is adopted from Benoit et al (1998), can be diagrammed as follows.



Textual Analysis and Results

In order to carry out the aims of this study, the model in question (viz. Benoit et al (1998)'s model) is utilized to account for the persuasive strategies employed in the second presidential debate between the republic candidate, Trump, and democratic candidate, Clinton. For brevity, two texts from the debate in question, one for each candidate, are selected for analysis. This two-text situation, which is about presidency, acts as a representative speech where the two candidates are enthusiastically interact to persuade the public and gain more votes (ibid).

Text (1)

Serving as a response to a question regarding tax system and its violations, this text is adopted from the second debate where there is hotly controversial arguments between the two candidates over the validity of this system and the accusations each candidate directs at the other (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/10/us/politics/transcript-second-debate.html>).

CLINTON: Well, everything you've heard just now from Donald is not true. I'm sorry I have to keep saying this, but he lives in an alternative reality (Atk/AR:Prior). And it is sort of amusing to hear somebody who hasn't

paid federal income taxes in maybe 20 years talking about what he's going to do (Atk/ART:Benefit). But I'll tell you what he's going to do. His plan will give the wealthy and corporations the biggest tax cuts they've ever had, more than the Bush tax cuts by at least a factor of two (Atk/ART:Benefit). Donald always takes care of Donald and people like Donald, and this would be a massive gift. And, indeed, the way that he talks about his tax cuts would end up raising taxes on middle-class families, millions of middle-class families ((Def/Cou Atk)) . Now, here's what I want to do. I have said nobody who makes less than \$250,000 a year — and that's the vast majority of Americans as you know — will have their taxes raised, because I think we've got to go where the money is. And the money is with people who have taken advantage of every single break in the tax code. And, yes, when I was a senator, I did vote to close corporate loopholes (Def/ Trans). I voted to close, I think, one of the loopholes he took advantage of when he claimed a billion-dollar loss that enabled him to avoid paying taxes (Def/ Cou Atk). I want to have a tax on people who are making a million dollars. It's called the Buffett rule (Acc). Yes, Warren Buffett is the one who's gone out and said somebody like him should not be paying a lower tax rate than his secretary . I want to

have a surcharge on incomes above \$5 million. We have to make up for lost times, because I want to invest in you (Def/ Compen). I want to invest in hard-working families(Acc). And I think it's been unfortunate, but it's happened, that since the Great Recession, the gains have all gone to the top(Def/ Defeas). (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/10/us/politics/transcript-second-debate.html>)(my italics).

Clinton's Persuasive Contribution

Frustrated by her rival's decorated comments on tax system, Clinton inaugurates her speech with an attack against Trump accusing him of lying, an accusation that underestimates his personality and cause the audience persuaded with her performance (Leech, 1983: 114). Reinforced by another attack, which implies ironical statement as to her opponent's previous non-commitment of paying his taxes for 20 years, Clinton asserts that Trump has made use of not paying taxes. Put differently, she utilizes Benefit mechanism of attack strategy to lash out at her rival, persuading the Au of his dishonesty (Benoit et al, 1998). Using the same mechanism of Benefit, she proceeds to attack him with the charge that his yet-to come tax system will be

serviceable to rich people only, leaving the poor suffer and unable to live decently.

Shifting to a series of defensive forms, which are the weakest strategy of persuasion debaters might resort to, Clinton employs counter attack mechanism of defence in response to her rival's comment that she has no experience in taxes, a practice that is not in her interest as far as persuasion is concerned (ibid.). This defensive argument is followed by another by means of mechanism where she transfers the responsibility of not getting the tax system comprehensive to the officials concerned though she votes for getting rid of some inadequacies found in the said system (Benoit and Wells, 1996). By the same token, she again appeals to Cou Atk in reference to defects in the tax law utilized by Trump when he is businessman. Realizing that her persuasive argument is getting weaker and weaker as she keeps on using defensive strategy, she does use an acclaiming strategy in which she undertakes to raise the tax on people with high income. Such an acclaiming statement that reads "I want to have a tax on people who are making a million dollars" can be broken down as follows:

Datum: There are some Americans who are making a million dollars.

Warrant: The poor can make use of taxes taken from the rich.

Claim: Once being a president, Clinton takes a tax from rich people.

The warrant statement is not overtly stated, but it can be reached at in terms of the context in which it is produced (ibid.).

Unfortunately, she comes back to defence strategy when talking about her reformatory plans pertaining to tax system, arguing that she is going to double the taxes on wealthy people and institution, an acknowledgment that she fails to make any amendments when she was part of Obama's administration. Her use of Comp mechanism does not not contribute substantially to eradication of the negative image created in the Au's mind about her, but it (Comp mechanism) can, to an extent, lessen this effect. In so doing, she gets her arguments feeble and undesired (Benoit et al, 1998). Too much defences make her use another acclaiming strategy to gain more persuasion. In this vain, the claiming statement that says " I want to invest in hard-working families" can be analysed as follows.

Datum: Some families are working hard.

Warrant: Taxes should be invested in hard working families.

Claim: Clinton undertakes to invest in hard working families (Altimimi, 2011).

Terminating this extract with a defensive strategy by means of Defeas mechanism in which she complains about lack of control with regard to the economic crises that wealthy people make use of, Clinton proclaims that her determination of helping the poor through taxes has forcefully been hampered, an attempt to persuade the public of this feeble argument.

Text (2)

TRUMP: Of course I do. Of course I do. And so do all of her donors, or most of her donors(Atk/Prior). I know many of her donors . Her donors took massive tax write-offs (Atk/Benefit). A lot of my — excuse me, Anderson — a lot of my write- off was depreciation and other things that Hillary as a senator allowed (Atk/Benefit). And she'll always allow it, because the people that give her all this money, they want it (Atk/Knowledge). See, I understand the tax code better than anybody that's ever run for president(Acc) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/10/us/politics/transcript-second-debate.html>). Hillary Clinton — and it's extremely complex — Hillary Clinton has friends that want all of these provisions, including they want the carried interest provision, which is very important to

Wall Street people(Atk/Benefit).. But they really want the carried interest provision, which I believe Hillary's leaving. Very interesting why she's leaving carried interest(Atk/Benefit). But I will tell you that, number one, I pay tremendous numbers of taxes(Acc). And so did Warren Buffett and so did George Soros and so did many of the other people that Hillary is getting money from. Now, I won't mention their names, because they're rich, but they're not famous. So we won't make them famous(Atk/Benefit). No, but I pay tax, and I pay federal tax, too. But I have a write-off, a lot of it's depreciation, which is a wonderful charge. I love depreciation. You know, she's given it to us (Def/ShBlame).

Hey, if she had a problem — for 30 years she's been doing this. Anderson. I say it all the time. She talks about health care. Why didn't she do something about it? (Atk/ Int). She talks about taxes. Why didn't she do something about it? She doesn't do anything about anything other than talk (Atk/Int) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/10/us/politics/transcript-second-debate.html>)(my italics).

Trump's Persuasive Contribution

Unlike Clinton's response to the question as to the tax system, Trump's contribution in this regard is

replete with attacking strategies, an indication that shows his ability to get access to the voter's interests and concerns on the topic under discussion. Inaugurating his speech with an attack at his rival's bias towards the people whom she makes use of by means of Prior mechanism that implies Clinton's dishonest act of getting the people in question released from tax payment, Trump tries to pin a negative image of his rival in the Au's evaluation, achieving a great deal of persuasion in his favour (Benoit et al, 1998). Accentuating Benefit mechanism in igniting a second attack concerning freeing Clinton's friends and acquaintances, including Trump, from taxes, Trump develops his criticism for her biased policy which is achieved at the expense of the public in an attempt to blackmail her fame and highlight this action as amounting to treason, a conduct that brings about a good deal of satisfaction for himself and minimizes his counterpart's opportunities for gaining some votes (ibid.). Proceeding to tilt the Au's mentality towards bad evaluation of his rival's policy and character, the republic candidate, relying again on Benefit mechanism of attack, accuses his opponent of providing extra tax facilities that he depicts do harm for the public, an act that persuades the voter and inculcates in his/ her head

his alleged bright image with the aid of the addressee's recognition that such a pattern of Clinton's behaviour should be condemned (ibid.). Here, the Au's satisfaction of Trump's is accomplished in virtue of the social and cognitive context that is paired with the most satisfying strategy, i.e. attacking (Simpson, 2004). Later on, Trump adopts an acclaiming strategy in which he is proud that he is more competent in tax code than any other American president by saying "I understand the tax code better than anybody that's ever run for president" which can be broken down into:(Altimimi, 2011).

Datum: Tax system is highly skilled activity and one of the new

president's responsibilities and concerns.

Warrant: Tax system is badly needed in America.

Claim: Trump is proficient in dealing with taxes.

Persisting in turning the Au's attention to disadvantages created by Clinton, Trump adopts Benefit mechanism of attack and lashes out at her by saying that she is adopting unfair tax policy; she facilitates her colleague's businesses with regard to taxes, but she is so strict with other people, an accusation of corruption directed to her with the aim of undermining her qualifications as the next US

president. Subsequently, Trump finds it necessary to support his persuasive attack by some of bright, historic achievements that he had made in this respect when he claimed that he had inscribed to all instructions and conventions regarding tax system and he, said Trump, had already paid “tremendous number of his taxes”. This argument is not as convincing as the previous one because the expression “tremendous number” does not imply “all” his taxes (Levinson, 1983). The acclaiming clause “I pay tremendous numbers of taxes” can be decomposed as follows:

Datum: Some people do not pay taxes, some do pay.

Warrant: Paying taxes is a must.

Claim: Trump paid his taxes (Altimimi, 2011).

To consolidate his persuasive arguments of this acclaiming strategy,

Trump again launches a fierce attack against Clinton accusing her of subsidizing her colleagues by turning a blind eye to the taxes that they should pay because they awarded her financially in a tit-for tat practice. His attacking mechanism of Benefit becomes more convincing when he discloses Clinton’s friend’s names, a testimony that she is not doing well in this paradigm. Ultimately, he can create a negative image in the Au’s

mind about the democratic candidate in question (Benoit et al, 1998).

A radical change in persuasive strategies that Trump uses is only once realized when he adopts a defensive strategy by claiming that he does not pay the taxes due to the “depreciation” that Clinton, when in office, confers to all businessmen, including Trump (ibid). This defensive strategy consists in shifting of blame mechanism through which Trump does not consider himself responsible for such an offence, making fun of Clinton’s illogical measures she adopts with regard to tax system. Irony, which is one of persuasive devices as Leech (1983:110) asserts, is here demonstrated by Trump’s comment on depreciations as if he wanted to say this measure is silly because this procedure, believes Trump, is vacuous and nonsensical. Feeling that defence is not in his interest, the republic candidate decided to launch two successive attacks on her counterpart’s misdeeds; the first pertains to her inaction concerning the health care because her long-term political dominance, Trump alleges, has not enabled her to make some reforms in the health sector (Benoit and Wells, 1996). If so, how can she, Trump wonders, make radical changes in this sector when she is elected? The second offence is related to tax system by which Trump

can undermine his rival's character once he comments mockingly at Clinton's thirty year experience saying that Clinton is nothing but a talking shop. These attacks are constructed by Int mechanism since Clinton, Trump repeated says, insists on committing these offences though she lives up to the fact that absence of necessary reforms in health sector and taxes regulations and precepts will trigger dire consequences on American (ibid).

For further illustration, table (1) and Figure (2) display the persuasive strategies adopted by the two candidates in this two-text situation, where Trump remarkably surpasses his rival in using more attacks (81.81) vs. attacks employed by Clinton(33.33).Here, Trump's strategies are juxtaposed with Clinton's which assign priority to defence (55.55) at the cost of attacking strategies (33.33) and acclaiming (11.11), an indication of her weakened ability to fulfill her aim of getting the Aus convinced in contrast to her rival who proficiently can.

Candidates	Persuasive Strategies			Total Number	
	Acclaiming	Attacking	Defence		

	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Clinton	1	11.11	3	33.33	5	55.55	9	100
Trump	1	9.09	9	81.81	1	9.09	11	100

Table(1) Clinton’s and Trump’s Persuasive Strategies in a Selective Situation from the Second Debate.

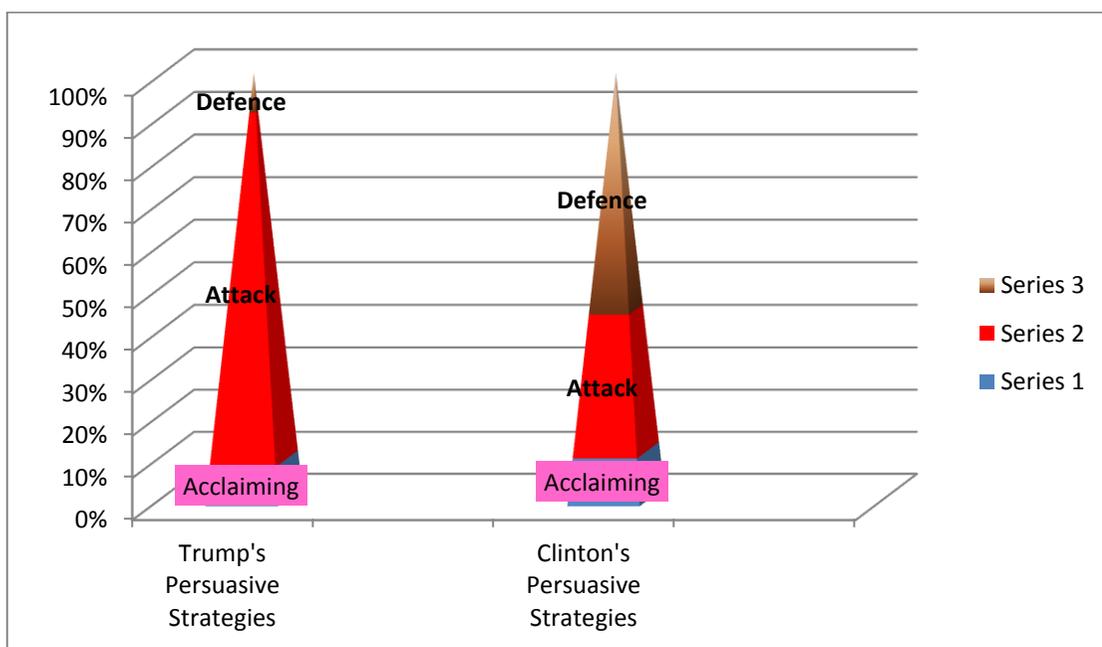


Figure (3) Clinton’s and Trump’s Persuasive Strategies in Situation 2,D2.

Concluding Remarks

This study arrives at the following conclusions:

1. Trump is more convincing than his rival Clinton in most arguments between the two candidate.

2. Clinton commonly appeals to defence strategies in her communication, while Trump seldom adopts this strategy.
3. Trump enthusiastically wages attacks in his interactive contribution, whereas Clinton's contribution is almost free of attacking strategy.
4. Both candidates incorporate a number of acclaiming strategies in their contributions when engaged in debating.
5. Trump prioritizes the benefit from the offence and intent on performing the offence mechanisms in his attacks in preference to the rest of attacking mechanisms.
6. Clinton is in favour of transference of responsibility and counter attack mechanisms at the expense of the remaining defensive mechanisms.
7. Due to his consistent attacking, Trump can gain more votes when he can get the Au persuaded of his arguments, achieving a sweeping success.
8. Trump depends on logos appeal to persuade the Au of his theses, while Clinton resorts to pathos in this concern.

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