

## Hillary Clinton's Debate Speech as an Example of American Political Discourse

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**Abstract.** This paper, being a part of a bigger project<sup>1</sup>, aims at identifying linguistic features of American political discourse on the basis of Hillary Clinton's first debate speech from the 2016 presidential campaign in the United States<sup>2</sup>. It begins by explaining the notion of discourse and depicting its relation to power. Then, the applied methodology is presented. It is made up of three components, namely a pragmatic analysis on the basis of deixis and presupposition, Critical Discourse Analysis according to the framework elaborated by Norman Fairclough, as well as quantitative research that aims at examining top phrases with the highest frequency. The paper finishes by presenting the results of the analysis and indicating possibilities for further research.

**Keywords:** discourse studies, American political discourse, pragmatics, Critical Discourse Analysis

### 1. Introduction

It is common knowledge that language plays a vital role in the process of exercising power. As can be imagined, such a powerful tool in the hands of politicians often becomes an efficacious means of persuasion. With the growing access to mass information, language itself appears to have an increasing impact on people's political decisions. That is why I chose the transcript of an official presidential debate – one of the events that constitute an inherent part of the US elections – as the research material for this analysis. It attempts to identify linguistic features of American political discourse on the basis of Hillary Clinton's statements. Although there already exists a small group of studies on Clinton's discourse (see e.g. Abdel-Moety, 2015; Halle, 2017; Qi, 2017), the three-dimensional method applied in this research allows me to provide new insights into the nature of American political discourse.

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<sup>1</sup> On the basis on M.A. thesis by Mateusz Pietrus, entitled "An Analysis of American Political Discourse. On the Basis of Hillary Clinton's Speech from the 2016 Presidential Campaign," written at the University of Wrocław under the supervision of Prof. Piotr P. Chruszczewski.

<sup>2</sup> The transcript was retrieved March 25, 2018, from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/09/26/the-first-trump-clinton-presidential-debate-transcript-annotated/?utm\\_term=.5fccbc68d57f#annotations:10505517](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/09/26/the-first-trump-clinton-presidential-debate-transcript-annotated/?utm_term=.5fccbc68d57f#annotations:10505517).

## 2. Discourse and its Relation to Power

Discourse has recently become an increasingly popular term. As noticed by Jerzy Szacki (1981/2002, p. 905), the word itself has made a noticeable career – it is used as a scientific expression for any longer text or statement. Although it is commonly viewed as a certain form of language use (van Dijk, 1997/2001, p. 2), such explanation is general and requires further clarification. Émile Benveniste (1966/1971, pp. 208–209), a French linguist, argues that “[d]iscourse must be understood in its widest sense: every utterance assuming a speaker and a hearer, and in the speaker, the intention of influencing the other in some way.” He therefore views it as a broad concept that deals with merely every attempt of an individual to communicate. David Crystal (1992, p. 25) defines discourse more precisely, describing it as “a continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than the sentence, often constituting a coherent unit, such as a sermon, argument, joke or narrative.” A considerable number of different definitions make it possible to notice that the principal problem associated with the notion of discourse is its polysemy (Jabłońska, 2006, p. 55). In this study, I agree with Piotr P. Chruszczewski (2009, p. 1) who defines discourse as “a textual phenomenon of a socio-cultural nature” and contrasts it with text, which is described as “a singular realization of a particular discourse.”

Having analyzed selected definitions of discourse, let us now look at its relation to power. As the subject is relatively broad, in this section I focus solely on the works of two scholars – Pierre Bourdieu and Teun van Dijk. The first researcher – Pierre Bourdieu – acknowledges the importance of the symbolic, social, and cultural capital in the process of exercising power (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/1990 in Jabłońska, 2006, p. 60). He also claims that people possessing certain capital rule in a sensible way those who lack such capital – they can use accessible instruments to affect people’s perception (Bourdieu, 1981). Thus, the effective and modern authority is exercised by the means of symbolic elements. This shows that the scholar postulates that dominance can be in fact achieved through communication acts.

The Bourdieu’s way of thinking seems to be continued by Teun A. van Dijk. He notices that apart from privileged access to such resources as wealth and knowledge, social power is also based on communication, as well as different genres, forms, and contexts of discourse (van Dijk, 1993, p. 254). The idea of power itself is explained as the control of one group over other groups. It may take two forms: action – an ability to limit somebody’s freedom of acting, and cognition – a possibility of influencing people’s minds (van Dijk, 1993, p. 254). Van Dijk (1993, p. 254) claims that modern and effective authority is usually cognitive, and uses such means as persuasion, dissimulation, and manipulation to achieve its goals. What is interesting, such mind management does not have to be manipulative – it may likewise take the form of routine forms of text and talk that seem to be natural and acceptable. In order to differentiate between the legitimate power and different forms of its abuse, the researcher introduces the idea of dominance (van Dijk, 1993, p. 255). Its stronger form – hegemony – occurs when somebody dominated not only can be influenced to such a degree that they accept dominance, but

also acts freely in the interest of those in power. According to Van Dijk (1993, p. 255), social dominance is not enacted individually – the most important role in this process is played by social elites. Although the scholar does not exclude other means by which power is exercised, he – similarly to Bourdieu – considers discourse to be effective and progressive.

### 3. Selected Areas of Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the use of language as determined by social conditions (Mey, 1993/2001). George Yule (1996, p. 3) adds that pragmatic is predominantly concerned with meaning. He notices that people's utterances normally communicate much more than the words or phrases in those utterances mean by themselves. Thus, this area of linguistics goes far beyond the literal meaning of language communicates, trying also to reveal implicated but unsaid messages. It encompasses such terms as speech acts, implicatures, politeness, and others. My aim in this section is to describe two pragmatic concepts – deixis and presupposition – which are later used as a component of the methodology applied to analyze Hillary Clinton's debate speech.

#### 3.1. Deixis

The first term – deixis – refers to the words or expressions that can be understood only in a particular context. By the way of illustration, let us consider the following two utterances: a) "Tom Smith is a doctor." and b) "He is a doctor." The sentence "a)" presents a pure fact, whereas the sentence "b)" cannot be fully comprehended without knowing the person that the pronoun "he" refers to. Thus, "he" can be considered a typical example of a deictic word. Steven C. Levinson (1983, p. 54) underlines the key role of deixis in linguistics. He defines deictic expressions as words and phrases whose understanding requires contextual information (Levinson, 1983, p. 54). Andreea Stapleton (2017, p. 2) adds that this information contains the knowledge of both the speaker and the addressee, as well as the time and the place to which a particular utterance refers.

Many different classifications of deixis can be found in literature (see *e.g.* Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996; Lyons, 1977). George Yule (1996) distinguishes three main types of deictic expressions: person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis. Stephen C. Levinson (1983) renames temporal deixis time deixis and spatial deixis place deixis, as well as adds two new categories: discourse deixis and social deixis. A short description of all five types of deictic expressions can be found below.

- A. person deixis – in order to explain person deixis, Yule (1996, p. 10) proposes a three-part division: speaker (*e.g.* "I"), addressee (*e.g.* "you"), and the others (*e.g.* "he" or "she"). He also underlines that each participant of a conversation constantly moves between being "I" and "you." In many languages person deixis reveals certain social differences. This can be noticed, for instance, in various

forms of “you” (such as *tu* and *vous* in French or *tu*, *ocê* and *o senhor/a senhora* in Portuguese);

- B. spatial deixis – it is predominantly used to describe the relative location of people and objects (Yule, 1996, p. 12). This can be achieved by using certain adverbs (such as “here” and “there”) or some verbs (such as “come” and “go”, e.g. “Go to bed!”). It is also crucial to differentiate between two types of locations that the speaker can refer to, namely mental locations and physical locations (e.g. an American tourist temporarily residing in Spain is likely to use “here” while talking about the USA);
- C. temporal deixis – it refers to time expressions used in an utterance. Their understanding, however, can be dependent on the hearer’s interpretation – the word “now” can apply both to the time when the speaker communicates something, as well as to the moment in which his or her message is being heard (Yule, 1996, p. 14). The same happens in case of the word “then” as it can be used both in past and future sentences (e.g. “I was at home then” and “I will do it then”). One of the most visible indicators of alluding to far events is the proper usage of tenses (Yule, 1996, p. 14). It is possible to observe (Yule, 1996, p. 15) that temporal deixis, similarly to special deixis, may sometimes refer to mental rather than physical distances (e.g. “If I was very rich, I would buy a huge villa”);
- D. discourse deixis – it can be understood as using certain expressions in order to point to a prior or succeeding portion of discourse (Levinson, 1983, p. 85). Otherwise speaking, it can be defined as referring to other parts of discourse by the speaker. According to Levinson (1983, p. 85), this can be achieved by using, among others, time-deictic words (such as “last”, e.g. “in the last paragraph”) or place-deictic terms (especially “this” and “that”);
- E. social deixis – this term can be defined as a reference to social relationships in utterances (Levinson, 1983, pp. 89–94). Charles J. Fillmore (1975, p. 76) understands it as “that aspect of sentences which reflect or establish or are determined by certain realities of the social situation in which the speech act occurs.” One of the most frequently encountered examples of social deixis are titles of address (Levinson, 1983, p. 89).

### 3.2. Presupposition

Having understood the notion of deixis, let us now focus on the concept of presupposition. According to Yan Huang (2007, p. 65), it can be defined as “an inference or proposition whose truth is taken for granted in the utterance of a sentence.” This explanation considers presupposition to be a kind of precondition for the proper use of sentences. Notwithstanding, Yule (1985/2006, p. 248) describes presupposition as an assumption made by the speaker or writer about the knowledge that is already possessed by the listener or reader. An interesting point is made by Levinson (1983, pp. 178–180). He proposes to conduct a test for identifying presuppositions by negating sentences – the information that is shared by both the positive and the negative statement can be referred

to as presupposition. By the way of illustration, let us consider the sentence “My employees work hard.” The conclusion that can be drawn from both the original sentence and its negation is the fact that I am an employer. The concept of presupposition appears therefore to play a significant role in the process of understanding utterances.

In order to fully comprehend the notion of presupposition, it is vital to enumerate presupposition triggers – the words or constructions creating the presupposition. Levinson (1983, pp. 181–184) divides them into thirteen subgroups:

- A. definite descriptions (*e.g.* “Ann noticed/did not notice my neighbor’s new car.” – presupposition: my neighbor has a new car);
- B. factive verbs (*e.g.* “John was/was not aware that Sam was in Greece.” – presupposition: Sam was in Greece);
- C. implicative verbs (*e.g.* “She managed/did not manage to solve the exercise.” – presupposition: she tried to solve the exercise);
- D. change of state verbs (*e.g.* “Ann began/did not begin to drink water every day.” – presupposition: Ann had not been drinking water every day);
- E. iteratives (*e.g.* “I do not work in the UK anymore.” – presupposition: I used to work in the UK);
- F. verbs of judging (*e.g.* “John criticized/did not criticize Sam for being egoistic.” – presupposition: John considers egoism to be a bad feature);
- G. temporal clauses (*e.g.* “Since he came to London, he has been attending English classes.” – presupposition: he came to London);
- H. cleft sentences (*e.g.* “It was/was not Ann that brought a bottle of wine.” – presupposition: somebody brought a bottle of wine);
- I. implicit clefts with stressed constituents (*e.g.* “The light bulb was/was not invented by EDISON.” – presupposition: someone invented the light bulb);
- J. comparisons and contrasts (*e.g.* “John is/is not as optimistic as Ann.” – presupposition: Ann is optimistic);
- K. non-restrictive relative clauses (*e.g.* “The Aztecs, who created a complex society, were conquered by the Spanish.” – presupposition: the Aztecs created a complex society);
- L. counterfactual conditionals (*e.g.* “If John had only met many Americans, he would/would not speak English today.” – presupposition: John did not meet many Americans);
- M. questions (*e.g.* “Who is the recruiter in this company?” – presupposition: this company has a recruiter).

#### 4. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis is one of the most popular contemporary approaches used to examine texts. It is possible to find a number of different CDA models in literature (see *e.g.* Fairclough, 1992 or van Dijk, 1993). In this section, I focus solely on

the approach proposed by Norman Fairclough – the inventor of the term. For him, this method makes it possible to examine relations between discourse and various social elements, *e.g.* ideologies and social identities (Fairclough, 2012, p. 9). He considers CDA to be normative and explanatory. The first feature means that its aim is not simply to describe the reality but also to evaluate it, whereas the second one implies that such an analysis should have an explanatory character (Fairclough, 2012, p. 9). According to the scholar, CDA often requires a multidisciplinary approach.

Fairclough (1992) proposes a three-dimensional framework for analyzing discourse. It consists of three levels: text, discursive practice, and social practice. This model can be represented diagrammatically in the following way:

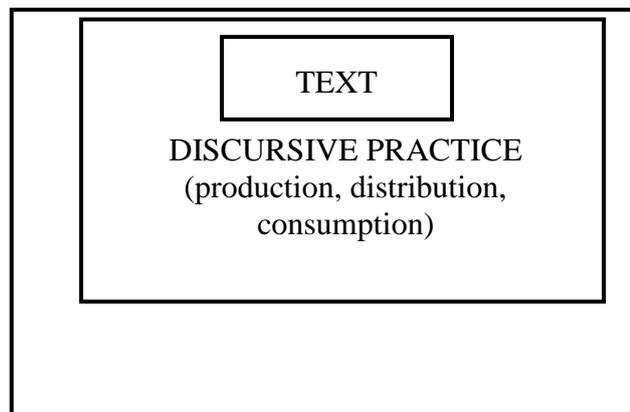


Figure 1. The relationship between text, discursive practice and social practice (adapted from Fairclough, 1992, p. 73)

Fairclough (1989, p. 26) distinguishes three stages of Critical Discourse Analysis that correspond to each of the dimensions presented above. These are:

- A. description – it deals with the formal properties of a given text;
- B. interpretation – it focuses on the relationship that exists between text and interaction;
- C. explanation – it examines the relation between interaction and the social context.

Such an approach makes it possible to connect three distinct analytical traditions (Fairclough, 1992, p. 72), what consequently enables us to look at a given text from three different dimensions.

## 5. Method Description

The method used to analyze Hillary Clinton's speech from the 2016 presidential campaign is composed of three elements, namely chosen pragmatic concepts, one approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, as well as a statistical computation of the most

frequently used words or phrases. The research is to be conducted in the following steps:

- a. Pragmatic analysis – this stage aims at analyzing the text by applying the concept of deixis and the notion of presupposition;
- b. Critical Discourse Analysis – the goal of this step is to conduct a three-level analysis of the text according to the model elaborated by Norman Fairclough;
- c. Quantitative analysis – this stage aims at revealing the most commonly used words and phrases in the text under consideration. They are to be examined so as to disclose the message they transmit.

After completing all the steps described above, three distinct views on the same text are going to be obtained. The ultimate stage is to compare them with each other so as to draw final conclusions. In my opinion, this method has a number of advantages. First of all, it is multidisciplinary – it does not limit its scope to one field of linguistics only. What is more, the combination of three different perspectives provides an opportunity to expose the real intentions of the speaker. Finally, it sheds some light on American political discourse as a whole and enables to identify its unique features.

## 6. The Analysis of Hillary Clinton’s Debate Speech<sup>3</sup>

The following section presents the results of my analysis concerning Hillary Clinton’s first debate speech. These research findings are divided into three main parts: pragmatic analysis, CDA analysis, and quantitative analysis.

### 6.1. Pragmatic analysis

The first part of the pragmatic analysis aims at identifying, categorizing, and commenting on the deictic expressions occurring in the text. Such an approach makes it possible to identify both the type and quantity of expressions whose interpretation is dependent on the surrounding context. Let us begin by looking at the phrases belonging to the category of person deixis (Table 1).

<b>PERSON DEIXIS</b>			
	<b>deictic expression</b>	<b>quantity</b>	<b>example</b>
<b>FIRST PERSON DEIXIS</b>	I	135	“Well, <i>I</i> support our democracy”
	my	11	“ <i>My</i> father was a small-businessman”

<sup>3</sup> All quotations in this section come from the debate transcript retrieved March 25, 2018, from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/09/26/the-first-trump-clinton-presidential-debate-transcript-annotated/?utm\\_term=.5fccbc68d57f#annotations:10505517](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/09/26/the-first-trump-clinton-presidential-debate-transcript-annotated/?utm_term=.5fccbc68d57f#annotations:10505517).

	me	5	“Now, let <i>me</i> say this”
	mine	1	“concluded that <i>mine</i> would create 10 million jobs”
	myself	1	“But I want to – on behalf of <i>myself</i> , and I think on behalf of a majority of the American people, say that, you know, our word is good”
	we	167	“That means <i>we</i> need new jobs, good jobs, with rising incomes”
	our	43	“I intend to be a leader of <i>our</i> country”
	us	17	“I want <i>us</i> to do more to support people who are struggling to balance family and work”
<b>SECOND PERSON DEIXIS</b>	you	87	“This election's really up to <i>you</i> ”
	your	23	“That is <i>your</i> opinion”
	yours	1	“and <i>yours</i> would lose us 3.5 million jobs”
	yourself	2	“So you've got to ask <i>yourself</i> , why won't he release his tax returns?”
	he	65	“ <i>he</i> knew <i>he</i> was going to stand on this debate stage”
	his	18	“we don't know all of <i>his</i> business dealings”
	him	7	“And they brought <i>him</i> down”
	a man	2	“But this is <i>a man</i> who has called women pigs”
	the man	1	“And you wouldn't pay what <i>the man</i> needed to be paid”
	she	1	“And <i>she</i> has become a U.S. citizen”
	this woman	1	“And he called this woman ‘Miss Piggy’”
	her	3	“Then he called <i>her</i> ‘Miss Housekeeping,’ because she

<b>THIRD PERSON DEIXIS</b>			was Latina”
	they	34	“that <i>they</i> 're well prepared to use force only when necessary”
	their	18	“I think building the middle class, investing in the middle class, making college debt-free so more young people can get <i>their</i> education”
	them	10	“They had stocked <i>them</i> with centrifuges that were whirling away”

Table 1. Person deixis in Hillary Clinton’s debate speech

As evident from the above, Hillary Clinton’s debate speech comprises twenty-three different person deixis expressions. The Democratic Party candidate most often uses words belonging to the first person deixis, and least those from the second person deixis. The deictic expression that appears the biggest number of times is the pronoun “we,” which refers to Hillary Clinton and all the American citizens. Let us now look at the analysis of spatial deictic (Table 2).

<b>SPATIAL DEIXIS</b>		
<b>deictic expression</b>	<b>quantity</b>	<b>example</b>
this country	3	“the top percent of the people in <i>this country</i> than we've ever had”
here	2	“both <i>here</i> at home and around the world”
there	1	“I hope the people out <i>there</i> understand: This election's really up to you”

Table 2. Spatial deixis in Hillary Clinton’s debate speech

The above table shows that the text under consideration includes solely three spatial deictic expressions. The most frequently used one is the phrase “this country,” and the least frequently used one is the adverb “there.” The subsequent table presents the results of my analysis devoted to temporal deixis (Table 3).

TEMPORAL DEIXIS		
deictic expression	quantity	example
now	8	“we're <i>now</i> on the precipice of having a potentially much better economy”
then	8	“ <i>then</i> he should tell us what his alternative would be”
today	2	“ <i>Today</i> is my granddaughter's second birthday”
recently	1	“And we <i>recently</i> have learned that, you know, that this is one of their preferred methods of trying to wreak havoc and collect information”
eight years ago	1	“let's stop for a second and remember where we were <i>eight years ago</i> ”
a few weeks ago	1	“I've met with a group of very distinguished, experienced police chiefs <i>a few weeks ago</i> ”
tomorrow	1	“You can pick it up <i>tomorrow</i> at a bookstore”
over the last eight years	1	“the progress we've made <i>over the last eight years</i> ”
for 40 years	1	“ <i>For 40 years</i> , everyone running for president has released their tax returns”

Table 3. Temporal deixis in Hillary Clinton's debate speech

The above table reveals that Hillary Clinton uses nine different temporal deixis expressions in her speech. Two of them – “now” and “then” – appear eight times each. It is possible to notice, however, that the majority of deictics in this category are used only once. Let us look now at the expressions belonging to the category of discourse deixis (Table 4).

DISCOURSE DEIXIS		
deictic expression	quantity	example
that	49	" <i>That</i> means we need new jobs, good jobs, with rising incomes"
this	21	"I have thought about <i>this</i> quite a bit"

Table 4. Discourse deixis in Hillary Clinton's debate speech

It follows from the above that the text under consideration comprises solely two discourse deixis expressions. The most frequently used one is the word "that." The diagram presented below (Figure 2) depicts the frequency distribution of all of the five types of deixis in Hillary Clinton's debate speech.

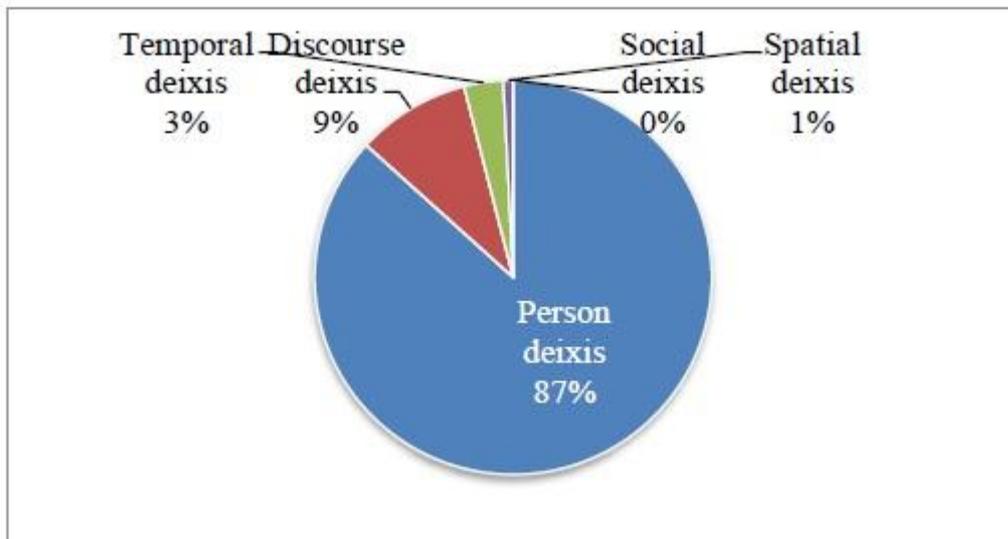


Figure 2. Frequency of five types of deixis in Hillary Clinton's debate speech

The foregoing chart shows that the vast majority of all deictic expressions used in the campaign speech belong to the category of person deixis. It should be also noticed that the research did not identify any social deixis expressions in the text.

The second part of the pragmatic analysis aims at identifying the thirteen

presupposition triggers in the text and, afterwards, counting their frequency. This is supposed to reveal phrases that convey a broader message than their literal meaning. The results of my analysis are presented below (Table 5). Apart from the frequency, each trigger is illustrated with an example that shows both the lexical item or construction carrying presupposition, as well as the content it presupposes.

<b>PRESUPPOSITION TRIGGER</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>
<b>Definite descriptions</b>	130	“the Iraqi government would not give that” >> There is a government in Iraq.
<b>Factive verbs</b>	8	“I know you live in your own reality” >> You live in your own reality.
<b>Implicative verbs</b>	1	“tax policies that slashed taxes on the wealthy, failed to invest in the middle class” >> They were supposed to invest in the middle class.
<b>Change of state verbs</b>	9	“Donald started his career back in 1973 being sued by the Justice Department for racial discrimination” >> He hadn’t had any career before.
<b>Iteratives</b>	9	“We have to restore trust” >> There had been trust before.
<b>Verbs of judging</b>	3	“I think Donald just criticized me for preparing for this debate.” >> According to Donald, the speaker is not properly prepared for the debate.
<b>Temporal clauses</b>	10	“When I was in the Senate, I had a number of trade deals that came before me” >> I was in the Senate.
<b>Cleft sentences</b>	4	“What I have proposed would cut regulations and streamline them for small businesses.” >> Something would cut regulations and streamline them for small businesses.
<b>Implicit clefts with stressed constituents</b>	0	–
<b>Comparisons and contrasts</b>	3	“he's not as rich as he says he is” >> He says he is rich.
<b>Non-restrictive relative clauses</b>	3	“if his tax plan, which would blow up the debt by over \$5 trillion and would in some instances disadvantage middle-

		class families compared to the wealthy, were to go into effect, we would lose 3.5 million jobs and maybe have another recession” >> His tax plan would blow up the debt by over \$5 trillion and would in some instances disadvantage middle-class families compared to the wealthy.
<b>Counterfactual conditionals</b>	2	“And if I had to do it over again, I would, obviously, do it differently.” >> I don’t have to do it over again.
<b>Questions</b>	22	“Who does he owe money to?” >> He has some money.

Table 5. Presupposition triggers in Hillary Clinton’s debate speech

The above analysis reveals that Hillary Clinton uses eleven types of presupposition triggers in her speech. The ones used most frequently are definite descriptions (130 times) and questions (22 times). The frequent appearance of definite descriptions shows that the Democratic Party candidate very often refers to some unique issues, individuals, or objects. By using questions, she makes her speech much more open. My research did not reveal any examples of implicit clefts with stressed constituents in Hillary Clinton’s address. The presupposition triggers used in the speech play a vital function in communicating the overall message to the target audience. They are supposed to shape the Americans’ views on, among others, their own country as well as Hillary Clinton’s political opponent.

## 6.2. Critical Discourse Analysis

The aim of this part is to perform a Critical Discourse Analysis of Hillary Clinton’s debate speech according to the principles elaborated by Norman Fairclough. It is to be partially based on Fairclough’s list of questions (see Fairclough, 1989, pp. 110–112). Since the scholar considers it to be only a list of possible directions that can be investigated and does not require discourse analysts to use all of them, my research focuses only on those which might provide significant insights from the point of view of the entire analysis.

The textual analysis of Hillary Clinton’s address reveals that the politician speaks clearly and avoids ambiguity. The vast majority of sentences are expressed in simple present tense. The speech comprises many modal verbs (*e.g.* “can” used 29 times and “should” used 15 times). In most sentences, the agency is clear (*e.g.* “I prepared to be president”). The agents are mostly animate (*e.g.* “Donald”), but it is possible to encounter several inanimate ones as well (*e.g.* “race” or “mental health”). Hillary Clinton uses

predominantly the active voice. The overwhelming majority of sentences are declarative. Although a few imperative phrases can be encountered (*e.g.* “please go and have a look”), the speaker seems to avoid them, trying to encourage the audience to engage in a particular activity in a more indirect way (*e.g.* “If you help create the profits, you should be able to share in them”). One can observe that the speech comprises both accurate figures (*e.g.* “40 percent of the world’s population,” “3.5 million jobs” or “\$13 trillion in family wealth”), as well as imprecise data (*e.g.* “a lot of great business people” or “many families”). The Democratic Party candidate evokes important events from the US history (*e.g.* the Great Recession). Her address comprises several examples of the word game (*e.g.* “trumped-up trickle down”). Finally, it is worth noticing that Hillary Clinton uses intertextuality – she refers, among others, to the address given by Michelle Obama at the Democratic National Convention.

Following Fairclough’s framework (1989), let us now focus on the second stage of the analysis – interpretation. First of all, the results presented above enable us to identify the type of audience that the speaker wanted to target. Although the politician talks a lot about the middle-class in her speech, the simplicity of chosen structures suggests that the working class was also aimed at. Both the issues she discusses and the kind of grammar she uses enables me to conclude that the upper class of Americans was not very much targeted. Frequent references to historical events shows that the address is tailored to a very specific audience – it could not be given in a different country without a number of amendments. This may suggest that one of Hillary Clinton’s aims was to create a sense of community and unity. Recalling emotional happenings from the US history (*e.g.* the 11 September attack on the World Trade Centre) was most likely used to make the Americans aware that although they cannot change the past, they can truly impact the future of their country by voting for one of the two candidates.

Let us begin the last part of the analysis – explanation – by identifying the ideology that Hillary Clinton wanted to transmit in her address. It is not surprising that most of her postulates coincide with the program of the Democratic Party (*e.g.* helping the poor or fighting with social injustice). One can observe, however, that she also underlines the importance of some issues in an indirect way. These are, among others, the importance of family life (*e.g.* “today is my granddaughter’s second birthday”) or women’s rights (“this is a man who has called women pigs”). Although the politician proposes a number of changes, at the end of her talk she expresses her respect for the American democracy. We can notice that the presidential debate is a moment in which Hillary Clinton exercises power by the very fact of giving her speech. A rich political experience makes her a person whose words have a huge impact on the decisions of others. In spite of the fact that her performance is full of ideological slogans, it is worth underlining that it has only one goal – winning the election.

### 6.3. Quantitative analysis

The last stage of my analysis focuses on identifying top phrases containing eight, six, four, and two words. This is supposed to reveal the most important messages that the Democratic Party candidate wanted to communicate in her address. The frequent appearance of certain expressions suggests their significance, especially with reference to those used only once. This type of analysis is therefore a valuable component of my overall research – it exposes a number of essential issues from the speech expressed through repetition.

The results of the study are presented below. They begin with the presentation of top phrases containing eight words (Table 6).

Top phrases containing 8 words	Occurrences
“we've got to do everything we can to”	2

Table 6. Top phrases containing 8 words in Hillary Clinton’s debate speech

As evident from the above, Hillary Clintons openly identifies herself with the American citizens. Instead of creating a division into “I” and “you,” she prefers to use the pronoun “we.” The Democratic Party candidate wants to engage her compatriots so as to introduce all the changes together. The phrase quoted higher up on the one hand implies that their collective work will require a lot of effort, but on the other seems to be a motivating slogan. Let us now focus on the analysis of top phrases containing six words (Table 7).

Top phrases containing 6 words	Occurrences
“I want us to invest in”	2
“would add \$5 trillion to the”	2
“when I was in the Senate”	2
“we've got to do everything we”	2
“add \$5 trillion to the debt”	2
“guns out of the hands of”	2
“to do everything we can to”	2
“when I was Secretary of State”	2
“got to do everything we can”	2

Table 7. Top phrases containing 6 words in Hillary Clinton’s debate speech

The table presents nine different phrases that appeared twice in Hillary Clinton’s address. They include her visions of the future (*e.g.* investments and changes of gun laws), references to the past (especially Clinton’s experience as the Secretary of State), as well as motivational statements. The Democratic Party candidate seems to underline her

previous work, depicting it as a valuable asset that her opponent lacks. Similarly to the first part of the analysis, it is possible to observe the frequent appearance of the pronoun “we.” This proves that one of Hillary Clinton’s main aims is to engage her electorate in implementing the political plan. Let us now look at top phrases containing four words (Table 8).

<b>Top phrases containing 4 words</b>	<b>Occurrences</b>
“we need to do”	5
“we also have to”	4
“I want us to”	4

Table 8. Top phrases containing 4 words in Hillary Clinton’s debate speech

As visible from the above, Hillary Clinton willingly uses the first person plural. This may suggest that she wants to create an intimate bond with the people and, as a result, persuade them to identify themselves with her political proposals. The subsequent table presents top phrases containing two words (Table 9).

<b>Top phrases containing 2 words</b>	<b>Occurrences</b>
“I think”	37
“and I”	27
“to be”	26
“we have”	26
“of the”	24
“in the”	22
“going to”	21
“to do”	21
“have to”	21

Table 9. Top phrases containing 2 words in Hillary Clinton’s debate speech

It follows from the above that Hillary Clinton very often declares her opinion – the phrase “I think” is used thirty-seven times throughout the speech. The Democratic Party candidate’s address appears to be strongly future-oriented. This can be seen in such expressions as “going to” or “have to” (both appear twenty-one times).

## 7. Conclusions

The analysis of Hillary Clinton's debate speech provides us with a number of valuable observations concerning, among others, the attitude of the speaker towards the audience, strategies implied in the process of text creation, as well as the ideology that the address was supposed to transmit. First of all, it is possible to notice that the Democratic Party candidate is well aware of the pragmatic aspects of language use. The frequent usage of the personal deictic expression "we" shows that the politician wants to identify herself with the audience. Most of the presupposition triggers identified in the text are supposed to improve the image of Hillary Clinton in the eyes of the Americans, as well as shape their views on certain political issues. The Critical Discourse Analysis reveals that the speech was targeted towards the middle and lower classes of the American society. Because of numerous references to the US history, the address was tailored to be given in this country only. The ideology transmitted in the speech reflects the program of the Democrats (*e.g.* helping the poor or fighting with social injustice), as well as some issues particularly important for the speaker (*e.g.* respecting women's rights). Because of Hillary Clinton's social position, her possibility of exercising power is very strong. The quantitative analysis of the text showed that the majority of phrases used more than once are supposed to connect the speaker with the audience, and then encourage its members to take an active role in changing their country for the better.

The study of Hillary Clinton's address enables us also to identify a number of features of American political discourse. First of all, it has an ideological character. Secondly, it implies the manipulative use of language. Thirdly, it aims at creating a strong bond between the speaker and the audience. Apart from such general characteristics, one can also notice that the message is more important than the structure – the level of grammar and vocabulary is adjusted to the expected audience. Besides, the speech is intertextual and has numerous references to the history of the United States. These and other characteristics make American political discourse unique. In my opinion, the results of this study open up many possibilities for further research. It could be extended, for example, by an analysis of the debate speech given by Donald Trump. This would show the differences in strategies and performance of the two candidates, and consequently, reveal new insights on the nature of American political discourse.

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