The 2012 U.S. Presidential Debates: A Discourse Analysis

Tereza Nožičková

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně

Fakulta humanitních studií

Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky

akademický rok: 2012/2013

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE
(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení:	**Tereza NOŽIČKOVÁ**
Osobní číslo:	**H10451**
Studijní program:	**B7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor:	**Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**
Forma studia:	**prezenční**
Téma práce:	**Americké prezidentské debaty 2012: diskurzní analýza**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Teoretická část:
Prezidentské debaty a prezidentské volby v USA
Diskurz a diskurzní analýza
Charakteristika politického diskurzu
Lingvistické prostředky typické pro jazyk politické sféry
Praktická část:
Vytvoření korpusu tří politických debat v rámci prezidentských voleb v USA v roce 2012
Diskurzní analýza jednotlivých debat
Srovnání debat z obsahového a lingvistického hlediska
Shrnutí poznatků, vyvození závěrů

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Beard, Adrian. 2000. The language of politics. London: Routledge.
Brown, Gillian, and George Yule. 1983. Discourse analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press.
Charteris Black, Jonathan. 2005. Politicians and rhetoric: The persuasive power of
metaphor. New York: Palgrave Macmillian.
Chilton, Paul. 2004. Analyzing political discourse: Theory and practice. London:
Routledge.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Lenka Drábková, Ph.D.**
                                   Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky
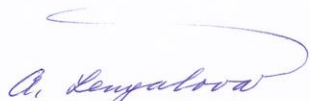
Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **30. listopadu 2012**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **3. května 2013**

Ve Zlíně dne 30. ledna 2013

doc. Ing. Anežka Lengálová, Ph.D.   L.S.   PhDr. Katarína Nemčoková, Ph.D.
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá třemi prezidentskými debatami, které se konaly v rámci volby prezidenta USA v roce 2012.. Cílem této bakalářské práce je analyzovat jazyk použitý během těchto debat.

Teoretická část popisuje vznik amerických politických stran a obecně charakterizuje prezidentské debaty a prezidentské volby v USA, dále se zabývá obecným představením diskurzu a jeho analýzy, na kterou navazuje charakteristika politického diskurzu. Teoretická část je zakončena popisem lingvistických prostředků typických pro politickou sféru.

Cílem praktické části je analýza debat z lingvistického hlediska a lingvistické srovnání jednotlivých debat mezi sebou. Na závěr praktické části jsou shrnuty všechny dosažené poznatky a vyvozen závěr.

Klíčová slova: prezidentská debata, diskurz, analýza diskurzu, politický diskurz, lingvistické prostředky, Obama, Romney

ABSTRACT

The bachelor thesis deals with three presidential political debates which were held in order to elect the President in the USA in 2012. Its aim is to analyze the language used in presidential debates.

The theoretical part describes the establishment of American political parties and generally characterizes presidential debates and presidential election in the USA. It also deals with the general introduction to discourse and its analysis, followed by the characterization of political discourse. The theoretical part ends with a description of linguistic devices typical for a political sphere.

The practical part aims at the analysis and the comparison of debates from the linguistic point of view. The practical part is ended by the conclusion.

Keywords: Presidential debate, discourse, discourse analysis, political discourse, linguistic features, Obama, Romney

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The presidential election in the United States is a highly followed event. The whole world is watching with excitement who becomes the new president of the superpower that America undoubtedly is. The most influential tool of this event is language. Via language presidential candidates communicate with their future voters. Via language they express their ideologies, their opinions. Via language they get closer to the audience. Their ability to express themselves is widely exercised in presidential debates. Therefore, this bachelor thesis is going to focus on political discourse used in presidential debates.

The theoretical part will be devoted to the characterization of the presidential election together with the brief introduction to the establishment of political parties in the USA. Then discourse and a discourse analysis is going to be described. Furthermore, at the end of the theoretical part the linguistic features typical for political discourse will be introduced together with rhetoric and politeness.

Regarding the practical part, the corpus is going to be established. It will consist of three transcripts of presidential debates. Then language of these debates is going to be analyzed. The main aim of the analysis is to prove whether linguistic features characterized in the theoretical part are applied in language used in debates- Furthermore, the aims is to find out which of candidates used linguistic features and rhetoric more successfully, with a better impact upon the audience. The assumption is that linguistic features mentioned in the theoretical part are used in political debates and that presidential candidates differ in the usage of these features.

I.   THEORY

1 THE PARTY SYSTEM OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Hershey generally characterizes the political party as "a group organized to nominate candidates, to try to win political power through elections and to promote ideas about public policies" (Hershey 2009, 6). However, the American political party is different from political parties in other democratic countries. The difference is in closeness of the political representatives to voters. This closeness can be symbolized by the choice of the presidential candidate in the primary election. This choice is made by voters in the USA. However, in other nations, this decision is made by politicians. Schlager and Weisblatt (Schlager and Weisblatt 2006) see the role of the American political parties mainly in a selection of presidential candidates. Political parties do not have any official power regarding the state functioning.

1.1.1 Development of American Parties

As Hershey (Hershey 2009) claims, the first world´s political parties have their origins in the United States. The idea of the political party development is dated to the 18th century. It is caused by the disagreement in the power division among states and the government. Two different viewpoints emerged in that time. Alexander Hamilton, the treasury secretary, favoured the federal government. According to him, the taxation on imported goods and the manufacturing society were seen as the future of the America. On the other hand, Thomas Jefferson, the secretary of the state, supported the state government and he promoted a free trade and the agrarian society. These different stances led to the formation of first political parties.

The Federalist Party (1788-1816) formed by Alexander Hamilton which ended under the pressure and the dominance of the Democratic-Republicans (1800–1832) formed by Thomas Jefferson. In 1832 Andrew Jackson established the Democratic Party, which originated as a one wing of the Democratic-Republicans. The second wing that separated from the Democratic-Republicans during 1834 to 1856 was known as the Whig Party. The development of American political parties was completed by the establishment of the Republican Party in 1854 by anti-slaves activist.

Two-party system is applied in the United States. Hershey says that this two-party dominance is rooted in so called the Era of Good Feelings. This Era is dated to 1815-1825 when only the Democratic-Republicans ruled in the US. This period caused the splintering

of the Democratic-Republicans and ended by the establishment of two currently prevailing political parties in the US.

1.1.2 The Democratic Party

The official website of the Democrats (www.democrats.org) provides the core belief of this party: "we´re greater together than we are on our own." The presented belief reflects the party´s concentration on the social policy. According to svgop (www.svgop.com), the Democrats see themselves as the party that bears the responsibility for citizens. They prefer the strong and big government with the aim at ensuring fair conditions for socially disadvantaged people. It is the Democratic Party who knows what is best for their voters. Therefore, as for the economy, they advocate government´s interventions into business. Concerning national defense, the Democrats reduce funding military, since they rather prefer the negotiation. Their attitude towards the immigration is positive as they believe in open borders. According to Hershey (Hershey 2009), the Democrats do not intervene into personal beliefs of citizens; therefore, they can be seen as a liberal party. It is not difficult to conclude from this characterization that the main supporters of the party are middle class people, immigrants and citizens from the Northeast and the West coast.

On the official website of the Democratic Party the authorized platform is available. The main message of this platform concentrates on the hard working middle class which needs to be treated in an honest way. The Democrats introduce here their plan of fighting against crisis by the taxation of wealthy people. The main concern of the Democratic Party can be seen in offering more job opportunities to the middle class, an establishment of safer world by the world´s strongest military and applying foreign policy ensuring no wars. Healthcare reforms are introduced, in particular The Affordable Care Act or The Recovery Act, together with reforms of the financial sector which should prevent another economic crisis from reappearing. Main representatives of the Democratic Party are Andrew Jackson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and the current President Barack Obama.

1.1.3 The Republican Party

Hershey (2009) characterizes the Republicans as the individualistic and business oriented political party. The Republicans prefer the small government with limited number of government interventions, since the party believes that every person is responsible for himself. The Republicans are against the gay marriage as well as the abortion and support

the Death penalty. Therefore, this party is seen as a conservative one with puritan values. The Republicans´ agenda is comprised of the property rights, the strong military and tax cuts. It is assumed that supporters of this party are mainly businessmen and citizens living in the South. According to svgop (www.svgop.com), the Republicans support free market and strong military, which is generously financed by them. Immigration is seen as a contribution for the country, although, the violence committed by foreigners should be reduced.

The platform available on the official website of the Republicans (www.gop.com) deals with the restoration of the American dream by the economy reorganization connected to the tax code reformation. This reform should ensure business progress. The Republicans provide companies with the tax relief; hence they can invest and create more job opportunities for the middle class. The federal spending is reported to grow under the current President. Therefore, the Republican Party wants to introduce new policy in order to reduce the debt. The main representatives of the Republican Party are Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Harrison, Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush.

1.2   Electoral System of the USA

As illustrated in Coleman, Cantor and Neale, available on the official website of the Senate (www.senate.gov), the presidential election is comprised of the Primary election and/or the Caucus, the Nominating Convention and the Electoral College vote. The campaign can be also included in this process. As indicated on IIP Digital (iipdigital.usembassy.gov), two types of election are in the US, in particular the primary election and the general election. In the primary election candidates are chosen and nominated for the general election. During the general election the winner is chosen.

1.2.1   Primary Election and/or Caucus

Hershey (Hershey 2009) says that the essence of the primary election is in the reduction of the number of many candidates to only one candidate suitable for the nomination. The final choice is made by citizens of the state who choose delegates that are representatives of the particular candidate. The number of allocated delegates differs in each party. Coleman, Cantor and Neale available on (www.senate.gov), say that as for the Democrats, the number of delegates depends on the population of the state. Regarding the Republicans' delegates, each congressional district has three delegates and six delegates are

allotted to each state. The candidate is to be subsequently officially nominated in the Nominating Convention by delegates. Coleman, Cantor and Neale claim that the decision, whether the primary election, the caucus or the mix of both of them is to be held, depends on the particular state or the particular political party. The primary election is either open or closed. In the open primary election a voter can vote for any political party he chooses. As for participation in the closed primary election, a voter needs to be a party member. The caucus is a meeting where voters show the support for the candidate publicly. The Primary election and the Caucus start from January in Iowa and Alaska and continue until June.

1.2.2 Nominating Convention

According to Coleman, Cantor and Neal available on (www.senate.gov), the official appointment of each state candidate, for the President and the Vice-President, takes place in the Nominating Convention. However, candidates are already known due to a big media interest in results of the primary election. Hershey (Hershey 2009) claims that in the Nominating Convention the platform of each political party is introduced and approved. The platform includes aims of the party and helps the party to show voters its stances. As for the nomination of candidates, the rules of voting are approved and delegates officially cast their votes for the candidate chosen in each state. They also vote for the Vice-President candidate. Since the choice of delegates is already known from Primaries, the Nominating Convention is mainly a place for the beginning of the official campaign. Candidates are publicly introduced and they give their acceptance speeches. The Nominating Convention takes place usually in July or August.

1.2.3 Campaign

Coleman, Cantor and Neale available on (www.senate.gov), state that the traditional methods of the campaign in the 19th and 20th century were formed at the local levels by party leaders. The current form of campaigns became more popular thanks to Franklin D. Roosevelt who was the first presidential candidate travelling around the USA and visiting most of the states. Nowadays, the modern technologies, in particular the Internet and social networks such as Facebook or Twitter, influence campaigns a lot. Televised presidential nominee´s debates are considered to be very appealing and represent a chance to persuade undecided voters. The first public debate was held in 1948 in the radio broadcast. The first televised debate between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy was held on September 26, 1960.

1.2.4   Electoral College

As illustrated in Neale available on (fpc.state.gov), the Electoral College is the final process of the presidential election. The beginning of this process is rooted in not existing clear method of how the President should be elected. Two possible ways were suggested, namely that the President is to be elected by the Congress or the President is to be elected by citizens themselves. A compromise between these two suggestions gave the birth to the process of the Electoral College. Electors, mostly representatives of high state positions, chosen by the political party, are elected on the Election Day by citizens. The Election Day falls on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Electors go to Washington D.C. where they officially vote for the future President and the Vice-President. The number of electors for each state equals the number of state´s representatives in Senate and House of Representatives. The District of Columbia has three electors and together the Electoral College consists of 538 electors. This process was established to provide smaller states with power to have a chance to influence elections. Most Americans are not aware of the fact that they do not vote for the particular candidate, but for the particular number of Electors. Actually, in most states, electors´ names are not even mentioned on the ballot where only the candidate´s name appears. Electors are not under the obligation to vote for a candidate who won in the state they represent but they are assumed to do so.

1.3   General Characteristics of Presidential Political Debates

Presidential debates are seen as a common part of the Presidential election. Although, opinions that debates nowadays do not have such a convincing power as they had in the past exist. Debates constantly have a high viewership, as it is indicated on the official website of the Commission on Presidential Debates (www.debates.org). The first debate, held on October 3, 2012, drew 67.2 million viewers. Dailey, Hinck and Hinck (Dailey, Hinck and Hinck 2008) define a debate as "a side-by-side comparison" (2008, 12). Debates provide voters with the crucial and complex information about candidates, in particular their stance towards the most debated topics such as the economy, foreign policy or social problems etc. Debates also reveal candidates´ ability to communicate. Do they tend to manipulate with the opponent or act more passively? A candidate's final image depends on many aspects; the audience mostly focuses on the candidate's nonverbal communication, the argumentative language and the behaviour towards the opponent, if he is polite or rather offensive. The candidate's ability to defend his policy and stance while attacking the

opponent's policy is highly appreciated by the audience. All these features together create the bigger picture of each candidate and help him to get the audience on his side. The debate provides a place for all these elements, thereby it helps candidates to persuade undecided voters and it helps voters to make decision of choosing the appropriate candidate. It is the constantly mentioned difference between candidates that makes debates so popular. To sum it up, debates show the suitability of candidates for the office.

2   PRAGMATICS

This chapter is dedicated to a brief characteristics of pragmatics and its importance in a discourse analysis. Leech (Leech 1983) says that pragmatics can be defined as a study that deals with the use of language in a conversation. To understand language, pragmatics needs to be applied. In general, it focuses on the author's meaning, furthermore on the author´s intention, and speaker´s perception of a given discourse. Yule (Yule 1996) offers the explanation of pragmatics regarding linguistics saying that pragmatics deals with the connection between linguistic utterances and their users. The discourse, in terms of pragmatics, focuses on a function and form, in particular form of a request, promise, command etc.

These pragmatic definitions imply benefits to the political discourse analysis. Politicians do not often communicate with the direct and obvious purpose. Moreover, their intentions are often hidden; therefore, as Yule claims, pragmatics helps to reveal the real intention by the connection to the hearer's background knowledge and expectations. As illustrated in Mey (Mey 2009), the speaker´s willingness to communicate is an important feature in the communication. This willingness is ensured by the cooperative principle which explains that communication is natural for people.

3 DISCOURSE AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This thesis is going to analyze the discourse of presidential debates in the USA. Therefore, it is important to be familiar with terms such as discourse, discourse analysis, context, cohesion and coherence, which will be explained in the following chapter.

3.1 Discourse

Cook (Cook 1989) defines two different approaches towards the study of language. The first approach is connected to language teaching which is realized by a comprehension of applied rules. As for the second approach, the coherent communication is the main purpose of studying a language, furthermore this approach is characterized as "language in use"(1989, 6) and the term discourse is applied. Gee (Gee 2005) says that to analyse a discourse, not only grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary are studied but also non-language or prosodic features used in a certain situation need to be taken into account, in particular gestures, beliefs, emotions etc. To get more accurate picture of a discourse, Widdowson (Widdowson 2007) contrasts a text and a discourse. He defines a text as a piece of language which was created in order to communicate, however this language product does not need to be understandable, for example when a foreign language is used. When a meaning of a text is identified by a hearer, more precisely it is coherent to a hearer, the text becomes a discourse. A conversation, a speech, a public notice can be defined as the discourse.

3.2 Discourse Analysis

According to Cook (Cook 1989), discourse analysis deals with the process in which a piece of language becomes coherent. McCarthy (McCarthy 1991) claims that a discourse analysis deals with the connection between language and the particular context. Its scope consists of spoken interactions as well as written ones.

Fairclough (Fairclough 1989) states that there exist several approaches to the analysis and he dedicates to some of them in his work. Fairclough together with Wodak or Van Dijk represent the critical discourse analysis. According to critical discourse analysts, language is used to abuse power. Van Dijk (Van Dijk 1997) agrees with Fairclough and says that critical analysts see the discourse as a tool which is used to control and persuade the public. They are mainly interested in language concerning social changes.

The linguistic approach is represented by Cook, who defines discourse as language in use, as it is indicated above. Representatives of this approach focus on grammar, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics in connection to a discourse. This approach is widely accepted in the field of human studies.

Potter and Wetherell (Potter and Wetherell 1987), who represent social psychological approach, point out that the purpose of language is to create new social networks. This approach deals with daily used social texts. The language is seen as the essential tool for a creation of relationships and a personal cooperation.

3.2.1   Levels of Discourse Analysis

According to Crystal and Davy (Crystal and Davy 1969), a discourse analysis studies discourse in particular levels, namely phonetic, phonological, grammatical, lexical and semantic, which are demonstrated below. To get an accurate picture of studied discourse; all levels need to be analyzed.

1. Phonetic (Graphetic) Level

Phonetic level deals with a basic units of a language sound system, as Crystal and Davy say, this level studies "the characteristics and potential utility of human vocal noise" (1969, 16) and it is dedicated mainly to spoken language. If written language is to be analyzed, graphetics is applied. Graphetics provide analysts with the properties of written language, in particular a size and color of script which can help a reader to understand a text. The purpose of graphetics can be seen in attraction of a reader, this may be typical for a tabloid as a newspaper type. Another property of written language is spacing, unusual spacing is used in poems or strictly set rules of spacing are used in business letters. Written text can be divided into paragraphs, which make language more coherent. Reading and orientation in a text is easier for a reader.

2. Phonological (Graphological) Level

The scope of the phonological level lies in the analysis of phonetic and graphetic properties of particular language. Each language is unique therefore an occurrence of these properties will vary. Regarding phonology, the sound system of a certain language and its organization are studied, namely pronunciation, rhythm, intonation, word stress or

intonation. On the basis of these properties, different variations of language can be classified. Apparently, the phonological level is analyzed in spoken language. It is graphological level, which is analyzed in terms of written language. Graphology studies language regarding a written piece of text that is produced by a particular person.

3. Grammatical Level

As McCarthy (McCarthy 1991) states, grammatical level studies "grammatical connexions between individual clauses and utterances" (1991, 34). This level concentrates on syntactic and morphological properties of language, in particular the structure and function of parts of speech and basic language units. The author stresses that grammar is an essential part of a discourse analysis. Main aspects studied within this level are the length of sentences and their inner structure, theme and rheme, voice and aspect of English tenses, modality etc. This level is closely related to the stylistic analysis of a discourse.

4. Lexical Level

Crystal and Davy (Crystal and Davy 1969) claim that words, their choice and usage, are analyzed by lexical level without taking into account their grammatical forms and functions. The level is characterized as "the study of vocabulary" (1969, 19). The choice of vocabulary, the frequency of certain words, formality and informality of used words and differences between words in written and spoken language are studied within this level.

5. Semantic level

Semantic level studies the meaning and its distribution within a text or speech. This level deals with words and grammar and tries to clarify the conveyed information. The term meaning is not used here in a pragmatic connotation, but purely in a linguistic sense. Discourse analysts are not interested in a meaning of separate words, but in a meaning of bigger units – paragraphs, stories, speeches etc.

3.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

As illustrated in Blommaert and Bulcaen (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000), the roots of the critical approach to the discourse analysis are in late 1980s. This approach is mainly represented by Norman Fairclough, Michael Halliday, Teun van Dijk and Ruth Wodak.

Critical discourse analysts are mostly interested in social topics such as political discourse, racism, ideology, immigration, anti-Semitism, etc. Van Dijk (Van Dijk 2001) defines the critical discourse analysis as a form of discourse analysis concerned with social power abuse, dominance, and gender inequality represented in language that is used in the social and political context. Fairclough (Fairclough 1992) claims that critical analysts explore the language with connection to the changes in society and culture. The meaning is influenced by an ideology. Mey (Mey 2009) defines functions of the critical discourse analysis as *ideational* (2009, 166) which shows speaker´s attitude to the world.

3.3   Written and Spoken Discourse

This chapter is dedicated to different varieties of discourse, in particular spoken and written. The brief characteristics of these two varieties will be provided.

3.3.1   Spoken Discourse

Dontcheva–Navratilova (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2005) says that spoken discourse is created by a transmission of sounds and it is produced in a form of a spontaneous conversation. Therefore, a discourse is mostly unprepared and full of fillers and hesitation. Prosodic features appear in this type of discourse, in particular gestures, laughter, raised voice, facial expressions etc. The main function of spoken discourse is socialization and the exchange of information. Dontcheva-Navratilova provides some typical properties of spoken discourse, in particular simpler grammar structures resulted by the spontaneous form of spoken discourse. The speaker does not have a time to create more complex structures. Since spoken language is used mostly for communication, Dontcheva-Navratilova claims that this variety of language is inexplicit. Participants of the communication rely on background knowledge and on possibility to get a prompt feedback, if something is not clear. Other property of spoken discourse is vagueness expressed by the usage of unspecific words, in particular *thing, stuff, place* etc. The meaning of these words is not expressed directly. The repetitiveness occurs in a spoken variety of discourse due to a manner of transmission. Monitoring features are connected to the spoken variety, for example *so, well, I think* etc.

Halliday (Halliday 1989) states that main characteristics of spoken discourse are intonation and rhythm. Intonation affects the meaning of language utterances. As Dontcheva-Navratilova describes, a falling tone shows certainty and finality of the speaker´s statement while a rising tone stands for an uncertainty and is mostly used for yes/no questions.

Rhythm is the main aspect of the phonetic system and does not influence the meaning. An informality of the spoken discourse is the last feature Dontcheva-Navratilova mentions.

3.3.2   Written Discourse

According to Dontcheva-Navratilova (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2005), written discourse is permanent and provides readers with the time to get familiar with a message which is conveyed. However, a writer has not the possibility to see a reaction of a reader and on the contrary the reader does not get the prompt opportunity to check if he understands a message correctly. Written discourse differs in its function, since it serves mainly as a cultural record of literature, religion etc. or for administrative needs. Halliday (Halliday 1989) adds other functions, namely social contact mediated through letters or postcards, a conveyance of information by newspapers, books, magazines etc. and the last function mentioned, entertainment, is connected to fiction books, poetry, drama etc. Written discourse has its typical division into paragraphs or verses accompanied with punctuation which clearly finishes each segment. Typical features are grammatical, lexical density and nominalization. As Dontcheva-Navratilova claims, the written variation of discourse is more formal and explicit, due to the fact that the reader cannot rely on the context. Halliday illustrates some characteristics of the written discourse. Prosodic features, in particular intonation, rhythm, pausing, and paralinguistic features such as timbre, volume and body language are not used in written discourse.

3.4   Context

As Widdowson (Widdowson 2007) claims, language is very complex and needs to be used under certain conditions and circumstances to be understood correctly and to be accepted in the social sphere. These conditions and circumstances are seen as a context. People who communicate with each other need to share a specific background or a common knowledge to be able to decode the conveyed information. However, if, for some reason, the common knowledge is missing, it is on the author/speaker to introduce an important information which helps the reader/listener to comprehend the meaning Mey introduces terms the *common knowledge* communication and *common ground* (Mey 2009, 116). The common knowledge is used for a communication and cooperation and to facilitate a communication. The common ground shows how information is gradually added. People tend to extend the amount of information. If someone says that Peter is a doctor, the hearer automatically deduces that Peter probably studied medical school and

works in hospital. Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams 2011) define two types of context – linguistic and situational. The linguistic context uses discursive utterances that provide the meaning, while the situational context is connected to everything surrounding the speaker/writer.

Widdowson (Widdowson 2007, 13) further explores pragmatic meaning of the discourse, which is composed of three levels apart from the reference. The first level is called a *locution.* The locution level represents the exact meaning of used words. The second level called an *illocutionary act* represents the purpose of the speaker´s statement, for example a suggestion, promise or an intention which are conveyed by speaker´s statements. The final level, a *perlocutionary effect,* focuses on how speaker´s words influence a hearer´s behavior using phrases such as Don´t worry, Hurry up! etc.

3.5   Cohesion and Coherence

A text or discourse should be developed in the way that it is easily understandable for the reader or hearer. This is fulfilled by cohesion and coherence. Halliday and Hasan (Halliday and Hasan 1976) state that the term cohesion can be described as inner connections within a text that carry the meaning and which in fact create the text. It is further described that the main function of cohesion is the interpretation of some used unit. If this unit is difficult to recognize or understand, unless the referred word is connected to this unit, the cohesion is applied. Cohesion is arranged by cohesive devices, as Widdowson (Widdowson 2007) claims, the text can be cohesive thanks to these devices, but it does not mean that the text is coherent. Two cohesive devices are mentioned, in particular anaphora and cataphora. As for the anaphoric device, it deals with a preceding unit. (1).

(1)   Jane is responsible for this project. She needs to make serious decisions.

The pronoun *she* used in the second sentence refers to the person whose name is *Jane.* Therefore, a reader can make a clear comprehension of this text through the cohesive device. On the other hand, cataphoric device refers to the unit which follows the pronoun as it is indicated in the example (2).

(2)   After she finished her work, Jane went to bed.

In this case a reader is not sure who the pronoun *she* refers to. After reading the text further, the reader realizes that the previous pronoun *she* actually refers to *Jane*.

Widdowson (Widdowson 2007) compares coherence to external ties which make reference to external utterances. Östman, Verschueren and Zienkowski (Östman,

Verschueren and Zienkowski 2011) claim that a notion of coherence is not still appropriately covered unlike cohesion, which is thanks to Halliday and Hasan explained well. A text becomes coherent under condition of being set in the context. The coherence is defined as a "mental notion" (2011, 45) which is supported by Yule (Yule 1985) who stresses that people have the ability to make an utterance coherent taking into account their own experience. Yule (1985) provides the example of the text which is not tied by cohesive devices, but it is still coherent.

(3) Nancy: *That's the telephone*

Ron: *I'm in the bath*

Nancy: *O.K.*

4   POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Van Dijk characterizes political discourse as "a class of genres defined by a social domain" (Van Dijk 2002, 19). Fairclough and Fairclough (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012) defines political discourse as "primarily argumentative discourse" (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 17). This definition is based on the approach to politics which is established on a disagreement and feeling of uncertainty while making decisions. Van Dijk (Van Dijk 2002) states that political discourse is ideological since it is used to present personal beliefs and stances which are mostly influenced by ideology. The relationship between ideology and language is studied by critical analysts.

Chilton (Chilton 2004) claims that the function of political discourse is mainly dedicated to the persuasion and negotiation, therefore its analysis is mainly focusing on linguistic tools used to maintain these functions. Van Dijk (Van Dijk 2006) mentions manipulation and acceptance of speaker´s ideological views as the other function of political discourse. Due to the fact that political discourse effects people via "social interaction" (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2011, 66) various types of disciplines are involved in its analysis, namely linguistics, psychology and sociology. Fairclough and Fairclough (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012) claim that the analysis should study the way how arguments are presented and rhetorical tools that are used. However, political discourse has not been studied in a detail yet. Chilton and Schaffner (Chilton and Schaffner 2002) claim that analysts often face difficulty of studying transcripts of political discourses hence the outcome of the analysis highly relies on the source. Furthermore, prosodic and paralinguistic features, which can be seen contributive since they give us the whole picture of political discourse, are not often taken into account. Therefore such an analysis can be seen as invalid.

Chilton (Chilton 2004) describes this connection between man, politics and language using the Aristotelian proposition that the man is the political animal distinguished from other animals by the ability to produce a speech.

4.1   Ideology of Political Discourse

As was said before, political discourse is highly ideological. According to Van Dijk (Van Dijk 2006), this is caused by the fact that politics is based on ideological views and that politics is established mostly by discursive tools. Therefore, political discourse has to

be ideological. Van Dijk defines an ideology as "the fundamental beliefs of a group and its members" (Van Dijk 2002, 7).

Ideologies can be conveyed and expressed only by discourse. The connection between discourse and ideology is mostly studied with the focus on discourse structure. However, the context is essential to clarify reasons of such a usage. The term context is connected to the political function of its users, political knowledge or particular ideology. Nevertheless, an ideology does not influence everything connected to political discourse. As Van Dijk (Van Dijk 2006) claims, people with different ideologies do not use different grammar structures. Therefore, ideology influences utterances seen as variable ones, for example the usage of pronouns. There is a need to focus the attention on what is said than how it is said.

Since this thesis is devoted to the analysis of political discourse used in debates, the functional theory will not be used, because it is mostly connected to the campaign discourse. However, it can be seen as a

4.2 Rhetoric

Bearing in mind that one of the purposes of language used in the political sphere is to persuade, rhetoric should not be omitted in this thesis. Therefore, this chapter is dedicated to the brief characteristics of this art.

Cockcroft and Cockcroft define rhetoric as the "art of persuasive discourse" (Cockcroft and Cockcroft, 2005, 3) and provide a reader with the Aristotle's definition of rhetoric, who is said to be the founder of rhetoric, from his book called *Rhetoric*. Aristotle defines rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever" (2005, 4). Cockcroft and Cockcroft, in accordance with Aristotle´s ideas, define and further characterize three types of persuasive means, in particular ethos, pathos and logos.

4.2.1 Ethos

The term ethos reflects persuasion through a character. The efficiency of the persuasion depends on the personal involvement of the speaker. Two terms are distinguished, namely personality and stance.

Cockcroft and Cockcroft claim that persuasion through personality is based on the speaker´s individuality emphasizing the most suitable characteristics towards the audience and topic. It is the *public image* (2005, 30) that is essential. To sum it up, persuasion by personality basically means that the speaker has such a strong character and therefore a

great impact on the audience that he is seen as the trustworthy person. The reputation is essential for the speaker. The example of persuasion by personality may be supported by the reflection to the current cult of celebrities. As Cockcroft and Cockcroft claim, it is the distinctiveness which makes a person a celebrity. Therefore, the persuasion by personality is highly influential, because people tend to project themselves in other people.

Stance is seen as a persuader´s attitude or position towards a given topic. This position is evaluated by the audience with the result of their agreement or disagreement with the persuader's viewpoint. However, Cockcroft and Cockcroft state that it is not important in what the speaker believes, but how he believes. The speaker identifies the audience´s position and then adopts an appropriate stance.

4.2.2   Pathos

Cockcroft and Cockcroft claim that pathos reflects persuasion through emotions, since they influence a rational judgment. They state the thought of Antonio Damasio, professor at the University of Southern California, who claims that people are not able to think unless they apply emotions. Hence, emotions are seen as a base for successful persuasion. Emotions applied towards any topic are rooted in a particular culture. However, emotions need to deal with the prejudice which can easily influence the speaker´s image.

The speaker needs to identify emotions of the hearer towards the discussed topic by empathy. This recognition helps the speaker to use the right argument to support the position.

Tools how to appeal to audience´s emotions lie in the usage of abstract words with a positive or negative connotation, e.g. liberty, death, birth, love etc. The figurative language is very influential.

4.2.3   Logos

According to Cockcroft and Cockcroft, persuasion of the audience by a usage of persuasive arguments is called logos. The speaker´s personality, stance and applied emotions influence the choice of the argument. This rhetorical stage consists of *invention* and *judgement* (2005, 81). Invention is a process of argument´s creation while judgment can be seen as a process of the assessment of this argument. A persuasive argument needs to be based on reliable and available sources to every participant of a conversation; debate etc. Arguments have to be coherent and arranged in a logical order to be evaluated adequately.

Cockcroft and Cockcroft (Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005) say that these three parts of rhetoric should not to be dealt with separately, but rather simultaneously, since they influence each other. Rhetoric and linguistics work on the similar bases. Both see language in some context and both deal with the persuasive function of the language.

4.3 Linguistic Features Typical for Political Discourse

As was previously mentioned the purpose of the political discourse is to convey ideological information and to persuade a hearer. In order to maintain these purposes, different linguistic features are used. This chapter will deal with the most used features in political discourse, in particular figures of speech, such as metaphor and metonymy, pronoun reference, adjectives, their superlative forms and adverbials, and the rule of three.

4.3.1 Metaphor

Simpson (Simpson 2004) characterizes metaphor as a process of mapping between two different conceptual domains. These domains are distinguished as the target domain, which serves as the topic, and the source domain that was derived in order to create the form of metaphor. Beard (Beard 2000) claims that metaphor can be seen as a connection between contrasting word or phrase. Mio (Mio 1997) states that the function of metaphor used in political discourse lies in inducing hidden bents or symbolic representation, since politics is theoretical and not everybody can experience it. Therefore, the speaker inducts required emotions of the audience through metaphors. Furthermore, metaphors help the speaker to emphasize the topic and, on the other hand, to elude an issue he does not want to confront with. Beard says that metaphors used in political discourse are mostly connected to sport, a war; battles e.g. *hit the ground running* or boxing e.g. *the gloves are off.* The usage of metaphors differs in each country, for example metaphors used in the USA are more commonly connected to baseball e.g. *to be back at first* base, while metaphors used in the Great Britain are rather connected to cricket e.g. *batting on a sticky wicket* . Charteris-Black (Charteris-Black 2005) says that journey metaphors and personifications of good and evil are frequently used in political discourse. The explanation of the usage of journey metaphors lies in their structure. Journey is comprised of a starting point and end point which reflect situations in the political sphere.

4.3.2 Metonymy

Simpson (Simpson 2004) states that this figure of speech is formed by transfer within a single conceptual field. Metonymy can be distinguished as a part of the whole called *synecdoche* e.g. *the gray beard* used for an old man, or the location that stands for an organization e.g. *The Buckingham Palace*. As for Beard (Beard 2000), metonymy is rather applied if the statement is negative than in the situation when the conveyed statement is positive. The function of metonymy is to influence the audience´s perception to something. Beard gives an example (Beard 2000, 26): *The White House today threatened Saddam Hussein ...* The White House stands for the president and his team and Saddam Hussein stands for the country of Iraq. This example shows how the usage of metonymy helps the President not to be connected to this decision personally, because attack to a foreign country is not a positive message. The usage of Saddam Hussein provides the audience with the feeling that it will be only Hussein who will suffer from this attack; no innocent citizens will be involved.

4.3.3 Pronoun Reference

The pronoun reference, according to Beard, plays a significant role in political discourse, because each pronoun evokes different feelings of the audience. As Van Dijk (Van Dijk 2006) states, pronouns serve as a speaker´s tool to distinguish *us* from *them*.

The pronoun *you/your* signifies that the hearer is addressed directly. Another sense this pronoun evokes is the feeling that the speaker addresses to every citizen of a particular country. The usage of the pronoun *we* and its form *our* helps the speaker to persuade the hearer that he or she has already agreed with the speaker. Moreover, the pronoun evokes the sense of collectivity. As Beard says, the pronoun *we* gives an impression that we are in this together. Naturally, the pronoun *I* and its form *my* elicits the speaker´s responsibility for the statement he or she made. The analysis of pronouns provide readers or hearers with information of what the conveyed message is and how politicians want to be seen.

4.3.4 Degree

Beard (Beard 2000) claims that a term degree can be described as a comparison in adjectives and adverbials. Politicians tend to emphasize the importance of their stances. To achieve this emphasis, they often use a superlative form, e.g. *this election is the most important one in our history*. The usage of adverbials that are strong in their meaning is common, e.g. *so important, care passionately*.

4.3.5 Voice

Beard (Beard 2000) states that this linguistic feature is connected to the usage of active or passive voice. The active voice highlights the participant while the passive voice omits the participant, e.g. *the president declared the war; the war was declared by the president.* However, politicians should prefer active voice rather the passive one.

4.3.6 Rule of Three

The rule of three is widely used by speakers. It means that person involved into the debate tends to repeat a particular word three times. However, repeated words do not need to be the same. The function of such a usage lies in eliciting approval. Number three represents "a sense of unity" (Beard 2000, 38) such as for example in the speech of Abraham Lincoln from 1863 *Government of the people, by the people, for people.*

4.4 Politeness

Dailey, Hinck and Hinck (Dailey, Hinck and Hinck 2008) claim that politeness is an important phenomenon occurring in the presidential debates. Politeness shows ways how candidates cooperate and oppose to each other and how they impress the audience, since the audience take politeness into account while assessing candidates. Therefore, it is very important for participants in the debate to be rather polite than aggressive. Talking about politeness and the impression which this phenomenon provides, the main finding which presidential debates offer is *a political face* (2008, 6). The political face is positive or negative and represents the image of each candidate. It is obvious that candidates wish to be seen in the positive way; they want to have the positive face. When candidates verbally assault each other they actually assault the opponent's positive face and means how they do this are highly evaluated by hearers. Means of communication need to be in the level of courtesy and need to represent the respect for the opponent. Only polite and respecting but self-assertive candidate has a chance to become a new president. Although, the research done by Dailey, Hinck and Hinck (2008) showed that the challenger is usually more aggressive than the person who currently holds the office.

II.   ANALYSIS

5 STRUCTURE OF ANALYSIS

The practical part of this thesis is aimed at the identification and the frequency determination of linguistic features used by Barack Obama and Mitt Romney throughout three presidential debates held in the USA in 2012. Each debate is going to be analyzed and subsequently compared and contrasted with other debates. On the basis of results gained by the analysis of each debate, it will be proved that linguistic features, characterized in the theoretical part, are applicable to the practical usage and it will be evaluated who of the two participants in debates used linguistic features and rhetoric more successfully, with a better impact upon the audience.. I am going to suppose that debates were spontaneous.

I am going to analyze the frequency of metaphors and metonymies. Then I will focus on the pronoun reference, adjectives strong in the meaning, their superlative forms and adverbials. The active and passive voice will be studied within the analysis together with the rule of three. All three debates will be finally contrasted and compared and the conclusion will be drawn.

Analyzed transcripts are taken from the official website of the presidential election called 2012 Election Central (http://www.2012presidentialelectionnews.com/). They are recorded on the CD that is attached to this bachelor thesis.

5.1 The Corpus

The corpus consists of three transcripts of presidential debates held in the United States in October 2012. Participants in these debates were the current President Barack Obama, a representative of the Democratic Party, and Governor Mitt Romney, representing the Republican Party.

Transcripts of all three debates as well as videos are available on the official website of the election called 2012 Election Central (http://www.2012presidentialelectionnews.com/) currently renamed to 2016 Election Central.

The first debate was held on October 3, 2012 at the University of Denver in Denver, Colorado. Its official topic was the domestic policy and a host of this evening was Jim Lehrer, an American journalist. The debate contained six segments. Each segment, opened by moderator's question, was fifteen minutes long. Candidates were provided with two minutes to answer.

The second debate took place at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York on October 16, 2012. The format of the debate was a town meeting. It means that questions were asked by voters personally or via telephone. Topics dealt with in this debate were the foreign and the domestic policy. Candy Crowley, a news presenter in CNN, performed as a host.

The third and last debate was held at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida on October 22, 2012. The debate focused on foreign policy and its format was identical to the format of the first debate.

5.2 Linguistic Features

This chapter deals with the analysis of linguistic features typical for political discourse, in particular metaphor, metonymy, pronoun reference, degree, voice and rule of three.

5.2.1 Debate October 3, 2012

The first debate was held on October 3, 2012 at the University of Denver in Denver, Colorado. The discussed topic was domestic policy. The debate was divided into 15 minutes segments and each segment focused on a different topic connected to domestic policy. The debate was controlled by the host, who ensured fair conditions for both participants. The first segment dealt with the economy, in particular with the question how candidates would create new job opportunities. In the second segment candidates explained what they will do about the federal deficit and the third segment was aimed at presenting the differences between candidates on social security. The fourth segment focused on health care and both candidates were asked to express their different attitudes towards the topic. The fifth segment dealt with the role of the federal government and finally the sixth segment offered candidates´ plans concerning the paralysation of the legislative functions due to partisan gridlock. The debate was concluded by closing statements of both candidates.

Metaphors

- o   Obama*: create ladders of opportunity; move forward; hand over fist; burdening middle-class families; frozen up.*
- o   Romney: *different path; Education is key; get at the bottom line; create their own pathways; is the biggest kiss that's been given to banks.*

Metonymy

- o Obama: *Wall Street, Main Street, America*
- o Romney: *America, Wall Street*

Pronoun Reference

- o Obama: *I want to provide tax breaks; you will not end up picking up the tab; the way we already have during my administration; we can afford to do a little bit more; the big driver of our deficits right now*
- o Romney: *I'll restore the vitality; there are three ways that you can cut a deficit; My plan has five basic parts; We still have trillion-dollar deficits; there's nothing better for getting us to a balanced budget*

Degree

- o Obama: *critical, enormous, magnificent, wonderful, more aggressively, genuinely the luckiest, the worst, the best, the largest, the slowest*
- o Romney: *absolutely, extraordinary, massively, enormous, excellent the best, the biggest, the most effective*

Voice

- o Obama: *Millions of jobs were lost; Two wars that were paid for on a credit card; That's not how America was built; They are certainly in a better position*
- o Romney: *Middle-income Americans have been buried; we are endowed by our creator with our rights; he was going to lower tax rates.*

Rule of three

- o Obama: *I think math, common sense, and our history; their genius, their grit, their determination; everybody's getting a fair shot. And everybody's getting a fair share -- everybody's doing a fair share*
- o Romney: *spending more, taxing more, regulating more; more people working, earning more money, paying more taxes; the president to your own airplane and to your own house, but not to your own facts*

5.2.2 Conclusion

The figure of speech with the biggest frequency in this debate was a metaphor. Metaphors, used 85 times, together with metonymies, used 37 times, and adjectives, their superlative forms and adverbials, used 93 times, made language more emotional. Furthermore,

metaphors were used to emphasize some important facts and to help the audience to better understand what candidates said, for example the Obama´s statement *the financial system had frozen up*. This metaphor helped the hearer to better imagine and comprehend what happened with the financial system. The most used metaphor in Obama´s language was the metaphor of weight connected to the middle class, namely *burdening middle-class families; middle-class families are burdened further, the only way to pay for it without either burdening the middle class*. Obama also favoured metaphors of journey e.g. *we should move forward; a right strategy for us to move forward; we're putting it forward before Congress*. Romney also used metaphors of journey, however, he used the word path mainly, e.g. *It´s time for a new path; they can create their own pathways; I don't want to go down the path to Spain*. Applied adjectives can be seen as a tool that makes language to be more emotional. The audience feels the difference between *It's one of the reasons for the great financial calamity we had* and *It's one of the reasons for the financial calamity we had.* The adverbial *absolutely* appeared in the Romney´s language very often e.g. *I´d say absolutely not, you´re absolutely right, it´s absolutely extraordinary*. Obama preferred the adjective great e.g. *great example, great investment and great care*. However, Obama used 29 different adjectives and adverbials while Romney only 15. Regarding voice, since active voice is commonly used, the conclusion will focus on the usage of passive voice. As it is explained in the theoretical part, the passive structure is widely used in a political discourse. I found 38 passive structures in the first debate of which 17 were used by Romney and 21 by Obama. However, the speaker should prefer active voice considering the fact that the passive structure is mostly used to background or omit the speaker by not making the reference towards him. Passive voice is then used when some bad news need to be conveyed. On the other hand, active voice is preferred when the speaker wants to gain the recognition. As it is indicated in the Obama´s example sentences e.g. *Millions of jobs were lost. I've also said is let's hire another 100,000 math and science teachers* or in the Romney´s examples *Middle-income families are being crushed; I'm not going to reduce the share of taxes paid by high-income people.*

As for the rule of three, I found 6 cases in the debate and both candidates used 3 of them. This linguistic feature is used to elicit the approval. What was significant for the Obama´s language was the pronoun reference. The usage of pronouns *I* and *we* can be seen as the most striking difference between Obama and Romney. Obama used the pronoun *we* 168 times while the frequency of the pronoun *we* in the Romney´s language was 124. Romney

favoured the pronoun *I*. He used it 214 times and Obama used the pronoun *I* 112 times. As Beard (2000) says the pronoun *we* is used mainly in order not to bear responsibility for the statement and to induce a feeling of belonging. By using the pronoun *we*, Obama created the feeling of unity whereas, if the speaker uses the pronoun *I*, he can be very easily connected to the statement or action. Therefore, we can say that Obama tried to hide himself in order not to be directly associated with statements he made. In my opinion, another explanation can be added in connection to the frequency of pronouns *I* and *we*. Since Obama is the representative of the Democratic Party he may have used the pronoun *we* so frequently, because this party sees the citizens as a group of people. On the other hand, Romney, as the representative of the Republican Party, favoured the pronoun *I*, because this party sees a person as an individual creature.

5.2.3   Debate October 16, 2012

The second debate took place at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York on October 16, 2012. The format of the debate was a town meeting. It means that questions were asked by voters personally or via telephone. Topics were related to issues which were currently most pressing ones. These contained unemployment of graduated students and long term unemployment, tax reductions and deductions regarding the middle class or the inequalities in the workplace concerning females. Also topics concerning duties of the Energy Department and the issue of gas prices were discussed in the second presidential debate. The Governor Romney was asked to provide the audience with differences between him and the last Republican president George W. Bush. The President Barack Obama had to say how he would persuade still undecided voters to vote for him. Candidates talked about the important topic of the illegal immigration, the responsibility for the denial of the extra security for the American embassy in Libya and the problem of job outsourcing overseas. Voters were interested in the law enforcement connected to the prohibition of assault weapons. At the end of this debate, candidates had to evaluate the impression that they conveyed through the whole debate. Each candidate had two minutes for the answer. Candy Crowley, a news presenter in CNN, performed as a host.

Metaphors

- o Obama: *to get out of that mess; an oil man; save money in your pocketbook; pipeline to wrap around the entire earth once; she was smart as a whip*

- o Romney: *filling that bucket; get us on track; the buck does stop at his desk; to put daylight between us and Israel; binders full of women.*

Metonymy

- o Obama: *Wall Street, America, Washington, Detroit, don't take my word for it; 9/11*
- o Romney: *Washington, America, Detroit*

Pronoun reference

- o Obama: *So here's what I've done since I've been president; my philosophy on taxes has been simple; you should believe him because that's been his history; we want a strong middle class; the things that makes us grow*
- o Romney: *I wanted to take the auto industry bankrupt; what I said about my tax plan; you can go ahead, but you'll go bankrupt; we're going to bring that pipeline in from Canada; Those things will get us the energy we need*

Degree

- o Obama: *critical; extreme; absolutely; extraordinary; fundamentally the highest; the largest; the greatest; the wealthiest*
- o Romney: *too scarce; very robust; outrageous; wonderful; enormous the greatest; the largest; the most attractive; the highest*

Voice

- o Obama: *They have been hit hard over the last decade; everybody will be held accountable; He wanted to take them into bankruptcy*
- o Romney: *the president's policies have been exercised; taxpayers have been buried; We'll bring back manufacturing to America*

The Rule of three

- o Obama: *That's been his philosophy in the private sector, that's been his philosophy as governor, that's been his philosophy as a presidential candidate; Make it easier, simpler and cheaper for people*
- o Romney: *This has not been Mr. Oil, or Mr. Gas, or Mr. Coal; Have been out of work for a long, long, long time*

5.2.4 Conclusion

The most frequent linguistic feature of this debate was a metaphor, used 140 times, followed by adjectives, together with their superlative form and adverbials. They occurred 88 times. Romney used the metaphor referring to wealthy people as people *at the high end* 4 times in the second debate. The journey metaphor *get sb on the track* occurred in Romney´s discourse often as well as the game metaphor *play by the rules,* which was also used by Obama. One of the most discussed metaphors used in this debate was the Romney´s metaphor *binders full of women.* He used this metaphor in connection to female workforce and its extension. Unfortunately for Romney, this metaphor made a sense of women belittle. In this debate Obama referred to George W. Bush as *oil man* and to Romney as *big coal guy.* Obama tended to use very often metaphors connected to fighting, for example *we've got to fight for it; I'm fighting for as president* or *I want to fight for them*. Metonymies were used 45 times. Romney used frequently the metonymy *America* that stands for the United States of America followed by the metonymy *Detroit* which represents the auto industry. Obama´s metonymies consisted of *9/11* or *Wall Street* that can be seen as financial markets in the USA.

The analysis of the pronoun reference showed that Obama used the pronoun *we* 216 times in this debate while Romney only 125 times. The trend of Romney using more the pronoun *I* and Obama using more the pronoun *we* continues.

As for adjectives and their superlative forms, Obama tended to emphasize his statements using *great* very often, in particular *great pride, great question, the world´s greatest middle class* or *the greatest engine.* This was also quite typical for Romney as it is seen from following examples *the great financial calamity, great schools, great experience* or *great teachers*.

Passive voice was used more by Obama than Romney in this debate. I found 21 passive structures in his language. Together with the wide usage of the pronoun *we,* passive voice gives a strong impression of not being personally connected to statements.

5.2.5 Debate October 22, 2012

The third debate was held at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida on October 22, 2012. The debate focused on foreign policy and its format was identical to the format of the first debate. The host of this debate was Bob Schieffer of CBS News who also prepared questions for candidates. The debate was divided into two minutes segments. Questions

dealt with problems in the Middle East, problems in Syria, the role of the America in the world, a foundation of the military, problems of Israel, leaving of combat troops from Afghanistan, the future of the national security and finally each candidate gave his closing statement.

Metaphors

- o Obama: *They have a roof over their heads; the biggest whopper that's been told during the course of this campaign; it was worth moving heaven and earth to get him*

- o Romney: *I have clear eyes on this; I'm not going to wear rose-coloured glasses; I'll get us on track to a balanced budget.*

Metonymy

- o Obama: *9/11, Detroit, America*

- o Romney: *9/11, Washington, America*

Pronoun reference

- o Obama: *I will stand with Israel if they are attacked; I've made that clear throughout my presidency; you were still invested in a Chinese state oil company; the strength that we have shown in Iran; first trip I took was to visit our troops*

- o Romney: *I don't want to have our military involved in Syria; my relationship with the prime minister; You got that fact wrong; We have to get our economy going; we have to strengthen our economy here at home*

Degree

- o Obama: *serious, painstaking, murderous, the wealthiest, the strongest*

- o Romney: *wonderful, critical, pretty dramatic, robust, the greatest, the most powerful*

Voice

- o Obama: *I know Americans had seen jobs being shipped overseas; they went through bankruptcy*

- o Romney: *First of all, 30,000 people being killed by their government; they don't want war*

The Rule of three

- o Obama: *Developing <u>our own</u> economy, <u>our own</u> energy sectors, <u>our own</u> education system; <u>Whether it's</u> Afghanistan, <u>whether it's</u> Iraq, <u>whether it's</u> now Iran*
- o Romney: <u>*You can't have*</u> *23 million people struggling to get a job.* <u>*You can't have*</u> *an economy that over the last three years keeps slowing down its growth rate.* <u>*You can't have*</u> *kids coming out of college, half of them can't find a job today, or a job that's commensurate with their college degree.*

5.2.6 Conclusion

The most used figure of speech is a metaphor. Its frequency is 137. Obama used often the metaphor based on disability e.g. *it is crippling their economy; crippling sanctions*. He also referred to the America as to the home e.g. *nation building here at home; both at home and abroad, he has proposed.* This usage is the same for Romney, e.g. *we have to strengthen our economy here at home; to deal with our economic challenges at home*. Obama used 47 different metaphors while Romney used 68 different metaphors. According to theoretical part, such a wide usage of metaphors made his discourse more emotional and helped the audience to understand and to imagine the abstract thing he talked about as it is indicated in the following example *create daylight between ourselves and Israel.* This metaphor stands for demanding diplomatic negotiations and clearly foreshadows the desired result. Arm metaphors were widely used in connection to weapons, e.g. *they have the arms necessary to defend themselves; It's the route for them to arm Hezbollah in Lebanon.* This is the same type of metaphor that Obama used, e.g. *we're not putting arms in the hands of folks; We cannot afford to have a nuclear arms race.* Obama and Romney used identical metonymy through the whole debate, however, Romney used them 34 times while Obama only 19 times. Talking about the pronoun reference, the outcomes are still the same. At Obama's discourse there prevail the usage of the pronoun *we* while at Romney´s discourse the pronoun *I* is predominant. However, Romney used the pronoun *we* most frequently in this debate than in other two. This can be connected to the fact that the topic of this debate was foreign policy and both Romney and Obama used the pronoun *we* a lot together with the passive voice in order to not be directly associated with statements they made. The last linguistic feature analyzed within this debate was the rule of three which is used to elicit

the approval. Obama used this feature 3 times. As for Romney, I found only one example of this linguistic feature.

5.3   Rhetoric

It is very difficult to define rhetorical persuasive means, namely ethos, pathos and logos, since they cannot be treated separately but rather simultaneously. Rhetoric was more or less unchanged for both candidates during debates.

Obama´s ethos was based on his presidential post which should automatically provide the president with trustworthiness. This suspicion can be supported by the statement he made in the first debate: *I said that I'm not a perfect man and I wouldn't be a perfect president.* This shows that he admitted mistakes he would possibly make, because he is an ordinary man. His ethos is mainly represented in the following statement, reflecting Obama´s ideology: *And everybody's getting a fair shot. And everybody's getting a fair share -- everybody's doing a fair share, and everybody's playing by the same rules.* Pathos was mostly based on the emotional language, metaphors, personal stories, in particular story about his grandmother or the story about the teacher he personally spoke to etc., used to show that he dealt directly with citizens. Rhetorical questions also represent pathos, for example *Do we embrace a new economic patriotism that says America does best when the middle class does best?* I would say that pathos is Obama´s strength. In my opinion, he mostly appealed to the audience through pathos. Some more examples are provided in order to get the bigger picture of his pathos, in particular *who actually killed us on 9/11; we would go after those who killed Americans and we would bring them to justice. And that's exactly what we're going to do; and the world needs a strong America, and it is stronger now than when I came into office.* In the third debate he even made fun of Romney: *We have these ships that go underwater* (talking about submarines). This shows that he was aware of his strong position. An Obama´s logos in the first debate was a little bit weak due to the fact that Romney structured his arguments; therefore Obama´s discourse was not as coherent as Romney´s was. Obama supported his arguments by figures that helped to create more credible sense. The number of used figures throughout all three debates is 162. His arguments were logically structured, for example *making sure that we're bringing manufacturing back to our shores so that we're creating jobs here.*

Romney´s ethos was built on the vision of businessman who has required experience, as it can be seen in following utterances *I was someone who ran businesses for 25 years; I know what it takes to balance budgets. I've done it my entire life; I came through small business. I understand how hard it is to start a small business*. To be a trustworthy person, he presented his past achievements as Governor, in particular *when I was governor of Massachusetts ...; I ran the -- the state of Massachusetts as a governor* etc. Romney´s pathos is represented by personal stories; in particular about workers he spoke to or about places where he was e.g. Israel, and metaphors. Some examples of Romney's pathos are provided: *Our hearts and -- and minds go out to them* (speaking about victims of the Libya attack); *our purpose is to make sure the world is more -- is peaceful; We didn't ask for it. But it's an honor that we have it* (talking about the leading role of America*). I'm so proud of the state that I had the chance to be governor of*.

Logos can be seen as a Romney´s strength, although he used persuasive statements in pathos a lot. As was said before, he structured his arguments in order to make them more coherent. He supported them by figures, in the total number of 225, and his arguments had logical structure, for example *Because if there's a two parent family, the prospect of living in poverty goes down dramatically; Because if they put their currency down low, that means their prices on their goods are low* etc.

5.4 Politeness

As was said in the theoretical part, manners of politeness have also their place in political discourse used during presidential debates. Since these manners did not change through all three debates, they will be briefly characterized in this chapter.

Both Obama and Romney thanked at the beginning of each debate to host of the evening, also to the university and also to each other for participating. The aim they would like to gain was to show good manners, respect to an opponent and the audience and to maintain the positive face or so called the positive image.

Politeness was expressed, especially in the second debate, after each asked question mostly by Romney. Obama tended to express the enthusiasm resulting from the possibility to answer given questions.

And finally at the end of each debate, both candidates thanked again the opponent, the host and the university.

This politeness can be seen as not so important tool. However, it can have the devastating impact on the candidate to show the exaggerated aggression or contempt for the opponent.

5.5   Summary

As the analysis proved, linguistic features characterized in the theoretical part, namely metaphor and metonymy, the pronoun reference, degree, voice and the rule of three, were practically applied in presidential political debates. The most frequent linguistic feature was a metaphor that occurred 382 times through all three debates followed by adjectives, together with their superlative form and adverbials, which occurred 351 times. Metonymies were used 135 times in debates. Finally, the frequency of passive voice was 107 and the rule of three occurred least, in particular 31 times. Regarding the pronoun reference, the pronoun *we* occurred most in the third debate, exactly 491 while the pronoun *I* was used most in the second debate. The first debate was rich in adjectives strong in meaning which occurred 93 times followed by metaphors used 85 times. Speaking about the second debate, the most used linguistic features were metaphors with the frequency of 140 together with analysed adjectives, their superlative forms and adverbials, which occurred 88 times. Finally, the third debate was typical for the usage of adjectives, their superlative forms and adverbials, which were used 170 times. The second most used linguistic feature were metaphors, which occurred 157 times.

It is important to connect these findings to each candidate in order to find out which of them used linguistic features and rhetoric more successfully, with a better impact upon the audience. The following graphs indicate the frequency of linguistic features through all three debates. As we can see in the Table 1, the frequent Obama´s linguistic feature is a metaphor, which was present most often in the third debate. Second linguistic feature that occurred often were adjectives strong in meaning together with their superlative form and adverbials. As for Romney, findings of analyses are indicated in the Table 2. On the basis of this table we can say that Romney also used most metaphors followed by adjectives, their superlatives forms and adverbials. Based on these findings, we can draw the following conclusion. The frequency of linguistic features that were used in debates by Obama and by Romney is almost the same. Therefore, it cannot be said which of these candidates used them more effectively.
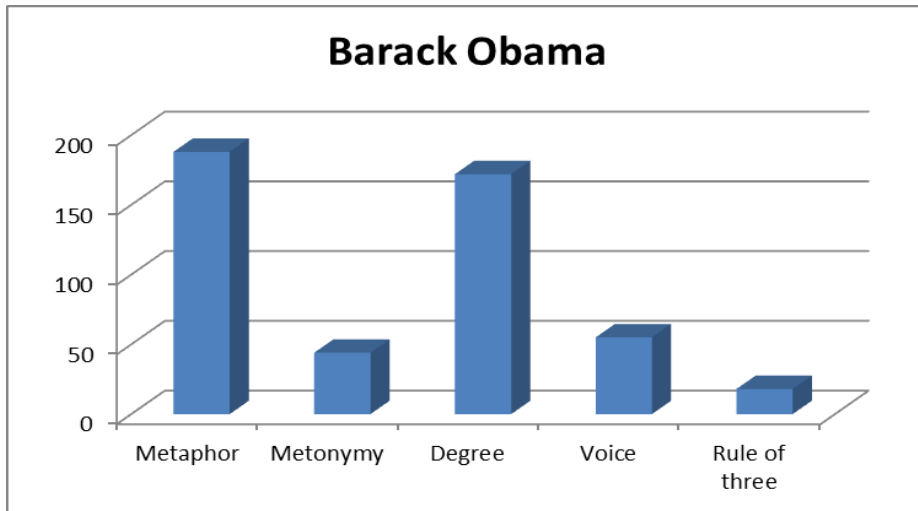
Graph 1: Total Frequency of Obama´s Linguistic Features
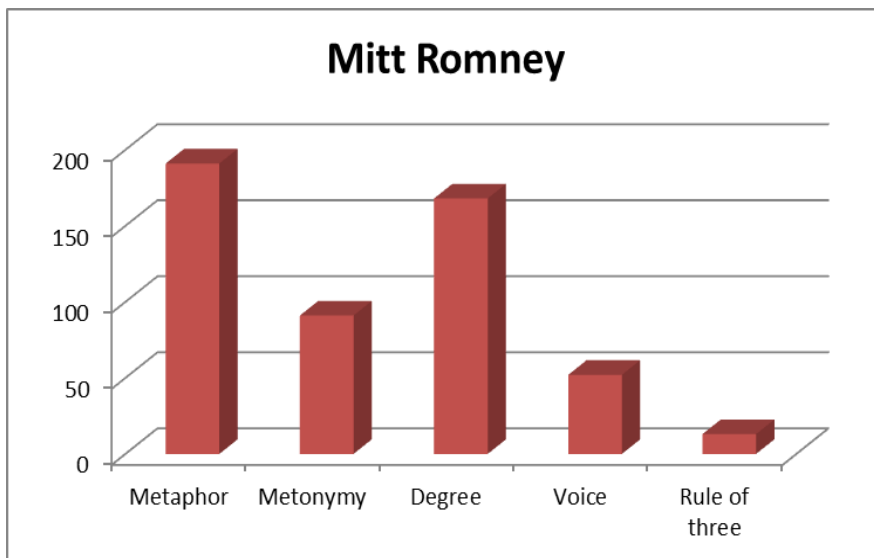
Graph 2: Total Frequency of Romney´s Linguistic Features

As for rhetoric, it is problematic to draw a clear and definite conclusion. Since to determine where the particular rhetoric device begins and ends is difficult. Bearing this fact in mind, I did not discover any tendencies which would lead me to the conclusion that the rhetoric of Obama and the rhetoric of Romney vary.

Regarding politeness manners, based on the analysis, we can say that these manners were observed by both candidates.

6 CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to analyze linguistic features typical for political discourse used in presidential debates held in October 2012 and to deduce which of presidential candidates used linguistic features and the art of rhetoric more successfully, with a better impact upon the audience.

The bachelor thesis was divided into the theoretical part and the practical part. Theoretical part was dedicated to the explanation of the process of the presidential election in the USA. It was followed by the characterization of pragmatics, discourse and discourse analysis. At the end of the theoretical part, linguistic features typical for political discourse and rhetoric were described.

The practical part was devoted to the analysis that was based on the corpus. This corpus consists of three transcripts of presidential debates. According to the analysis, all linguistic features typical for political discourse that were mentioned in the theoretical part were used in debates. The most used linguistic feature was a metaphor which widely occurred in all three debates. The second most used linguistic feature were adjectives strong in meaning, together with their superlative forms and adverbials. Metonymies, passive voice and the rule of three were used in lesser extent. Based on these findings, we can say that the language used in debates is quite emotional in order to appeal and to persuade the audience. The second part of the conclusion drawn on the basis of this analysis should clarify which of presidential candidates used the linguistic features frequently; therefore their language seemed to be more persuasive and appealing. The findings did not fulfil my expectation which were formed by the reading of transcripts. I assumed that it will be Obama who uses more linguistic devices and therefore his language is more emotional and appealing. However, the analysis proved that both candidates used linguistic features with almost the same frequency.

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Corpus of transcripts:

2012 Election Central. www.2012presidentialelectionnews.com

LIST OF CHARTS

APPENDICES

P I   Corpus of analysed transcripts (see the enclosed CD)