

UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID
FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA



TESIS DOCTORAL

Promesas, promesas: la expansión del compromiso en los debates de primarias presidenciales en EEUU

Promises, promises: The expression of commitment of US primaries and presidential debates

MEMORIA PARA OPTAR AL GRADO DE DOCTOR

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Resumen

“Promesas, Promesas: La Expresión del Compromiso en los Debates de Primarias y Presidenciales en EEUU” es una tesis doctoral que explora la expresión del compromiso en los debates de primarias y presidenciales en los Estados Unidos de América desde las elecciones presidenciales del 2000 hasta el momento presente desde un punto de vista discursivo y de posicionamiento. Este estudio aborda una de las principales actividades políticas de las campañas electorales presidenciales en EEUU, que normalmente atrae la atención de grandes audiencias, a saber, los debates electorales presidenciales. Esta actividad política dota a los políticos de una oportunidad única para explicar su visión de futuro, aportar detalles de sus programas políticos, responder a los ataques de sus rivales políticos, legitimar las políticas que desean implementar si son elegidos y movilizar a los votantes para que apoyen sus candidaturas (Chilton, 2004; Benoit, 2007). La presente tesis tiene como objetivo identificar las estrategias lingüísticas para expresar compromiso que los candidatos políticos utilizan habitualmente en sus discursos durante los debates electorales de primarias y presidenciales. Basado en el modelo de Langacker (2013) de “control cycle” (CC) y en su concepto de “target of force” así como en la distinción de Marín-Arrese (2011, 2021, 2013) entre efectividad y epistemicidad, esta investigación utiliza una taxonomía basada en el corpus de la expresión del compromiso con una doble distinción, a saber, el compromiso del hablante a llevar a cabo una acción futura (CI) y el compromiso a la obtención de un resultado futuro (CO). Para cada categoría, la taxonomía describe las categorías semánticas que han sido identificadas y anotadas en el corpus recogido para esta tesis. Uno de los objetivos principales de esta investigación es el de identificar cuál de los dos tipos de compromiso (CI versus CO) ocurre más frecuentemente en los debates de primarias y presidenciales en EEUU. Asimismo, este estudio trata de identificar las categorías semánticas que son más comunes en el corpus

para cada una de las macro-categorías. Por otro lado, esta tesis también tiene como objetivo identificar si existe alguna relación significativa entre la expresión del compromiso y el tipo de debate político en el que se expresa o la ideología de los candidatos, a saber, demócratas frente a republicanos. Además, explora las idiosincrasias y preferencias de cada candidato respecto a ciertas categorías semánticas que expresan compromiso. Los datos obtenidos en esta investigación revelan que los candidatos utilizan con mayor frecuencia las expresiones del compromiso a la obtención de un resultado futuro (CO), que enfatizan la necesidad o conveniencia de implementar las políticas y planes de acción de su candidatura y que animan a las audiencias a tomar acción, frente a las del compromiso a llevar a cabo una acción futura (CI), que implican por parte del hablante el seguir una línea de actuación determinada si es finalmente elegido como presidente. Igualmente, los resultados muestran que los candidatos usan en pocas ocasiones verbos performativos para expresar ambos tipos de compromiso. Más bien, prefieren hacer uso de las expresiones de compromiso convencionalizadas a través de los verbos modales de voluntad o intención para expresar el compromiso del hablante a llevar a cabo una acción futura (CI), por un lado, y expresiones deónticas para expresar el compromiso para la obtención de un resultado futuro (CO), por otro lado. Además, esta tesis también proporciona evidencia para creer que hay diferencias significativas respecto a las expresiones de CO en los debates de primarias frente a los debates presidenciales generales, y respecto a la ideología de los candidatos, demócratas frente a republicanos, en el caso de las expresiones de CI. Finalmente, los datos apuntan a que hay diferencias significativas entre los candidatos demócratas a nivel individual, por un lado, y los candidatos republicanos, por otro lado, en relación con la frecuencia del uso de las categorías semánticas que expresan ambos tipos de compromiso.

Palabras claves: compromiso, debates de primarias, debates presidenciales, ideología, candidatos demócratas, candidatos republicanos, taxonomía.

Abstract

“Promises, Promises: The Expression of Commitment in US Primary and Presidential Debates” is a thesis dissertation which explores the expression of commitment in US primaries and general presidential debates from 2000 up to nowadays from a stance and discourse perspective. It deals with one of the main political events taking place in US presidential electoral campaigns, which usually draws the attention of wide audiences. For this reason, primary and general presidential debates provide politicians with a unique opportunity to explain their vision of the future, give details on their political programmes, respond to their opponents’ attacks and policies, legitimise the policies they will implement if elected and mobilise voters to support their candidacy (Chilton, 2004; Benoit, 2007). The present thesis aims at identifying the linguistic strategies expressing commitment that candidates typically use in their speeches during primary and general presidential debates. Based on Langacker’s (2013) model of control cycle (CC) and his concept of “target of force” as well as on Marín-Arrese’s (2011, 2021, 2023) distinction between effective stance and epistemic stance, this research uses a corpus-based taxonomy of the expression of commitment with a two-fold distinction, namely, speaker’s commitment to a future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO). For each macro-category, the taxonomy describes the semantic categories which has been identified and annotated in the corpus compiled for this dissertation. One of the main objectives of this thesis is to identify which of these types of commitment (CI versus CO) occurs more frequently in US primary and general presidential debates. Likewise, it identifies the most common semantic categories occurring in the corpus under each macro-category. On the other hand, this thesis attempts to identify whether there is any relationship between the expression of commitment and the type of political debate in which they occur, that is, primary vs. general presidential

debates; and between the expression of commitment and the candidates' ideology, namely, Democratic vs. Republican candidates. Similarly, this study explores candidates' individual idiosyncrasies and preferences towards certain linguistic strategies or semantic categories when expressing both types of commitment. The data obtained from the research reveals that the candidates' preference for expressions of commitment to a future outcome (CO), which emphasises the necessity or convenience of implementing the candidate's plans of action and encourage audiences to act, over expressions of commitment to a future course of action (CI), which involve the speaker's commitment to follow a particular course of action if elected. The findings also show that candidates rarely use performative verbs to express these types of commitment. Rather, they prefer to use conventionalised expressions of commitment with modal verbs of volition or intention to express speaker's commitment to follow a future course of action (CI), on the one hand; and deontic expressions for the expression of commitment to a future outcome (CO), on the other. In addition, it provides evidence to believe that there will be significant differences regarding the expressions of CO in primary versus general presidential debates and in the expressions of CI between Democratic and Republican candidates. Finally, the data reveal that there will be also significant variations regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing both types of commitment among individual Democratic and Republican candidates.

Key words: commitment, primary debates, general presidential debates, ideology, Democratic candidates, Republican candidates, taxonomy.

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Abbreviations & Acronyms

BNC	British National Corpus
CC	control cycle
CI	commitment of speaker's future course of action
CO	commitment to a future outcome
DC	Direct Commissives
DD	Direct Directives
DEO	Deonticity
DGP	Democratic General Presidential Debates Corpus
DPM	Democratic Primary Debates Corpus
GOP	Grand Old Party
IH	Imperatives & Hortatives
INC	Inclination
INT	Intentionality
LL	Log-Likelihood
M	Model
N	Number
OF	Offers
PLA	Plans and Goals
PRO	Proposals
QUD	Question Under Discussion
R	Ratio
RGP	Democratic General Presidential Debates Corpus
RM	Reality Model
RPM	Republican Primary Debates Corpus
RQ	Research Question
SAT	Speech Acts Theory
SBCSAE	Corpus of Spoken American English
SG	Share Ground
TDL	To-Do-List
VOL	Volitionality

Symbols

H_o	null hypothesis
H_a	alternative hypothesis
%	Percentage
%DIFF	percentage of differentiation
R/‰	ratio per 10,000 words
χ^2	chia square
>	greater than
<	less than
p -value	Probability value

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. General Background and Rationale

Political discourse has been studied from different disciplines and paradigms in the last decades. Political scientists, sociologists and linguists have shown their interest in this field, which has been categorised as “institutional discourse” since it occurs in institutional settings under certain contextual constraints (Fetzer, 2013). It embodies a wide range of subfields related to the use of language in every type of political activity that takes place in any political system, from parliamentary speeches to press conferences and electoral debates in which politicians disseminate messages on a regular basis. Furthermore, the expansion of the media in the last decades and the consolidation of the internet as a common source of information has significantly influenced political discourse because of its contribution to provide most citizens with access to a wide range of political events such as parliamentary debates, press conferences or presidential debates in a rapid and inexpensive manner (Woods, 2006, p. 46).

However, one of the political activities which has been particularly controversial has to do with political campaigns. The rivalry between political actors, the controversial messages which are delivered with the intention of persuading and agitating audiences, along with impact of the electoral results in terms of power have gained the interest of researchers from different backgrounds (Dudek & Partacz, 2009). In particular, electoral debates have become one of the core elements in the design and organization of these political events since they provide politicians with a unique opportunity to explain their vision of the future, give details on their political programmes, respond to their opponents’ attacks and policies, and mobilise voters to support their candidacy. During this political activity, candidates not only attempt to represent themselves positively so

that their arguments gain credibility (Albalat-Mascarell & Carrió-Pastor, 2019), but also make promises, discuss and legitimise the policies they will seek to implement if elected. Therefore, promising, persuading and mobilising audiences are some of the main purposes of electoral debates.

Consequently, electoral debates have become an indispensable platform in the run for the presidency in United States to bring candidates to wide audiences who want to make informed choices. Although electoral campaigns have traditionally drawn the attention of different fields of knowledge such as Rhetoric, Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, Systematic-Functional Linguistics and Cognitive Linguistics, among others, it is still an appealing research area for various linguistic disciplines.

The unique features of presidential debates make them particularly appealing to be analysed from a stance and discourse perspective, which may contribute to shed light on the linguistic strategies used by politicians to positioning themselves regarding various issues in front of mass audiences who will determine whether they will eventually be elected as presidents.

Different subdisciplines from the field of Linguistics have recently addressed attention on the notion of “stance” due to its multifaceted nature. The present thesis dissertation draws on several studies on stance dealing on stance strategies in discourse (Chilton, 2004, Englebretson, 2007; Dubois, 2007) and the distinction between epistemic and effective stance (Langacker, 2010; Marín-Arrese, 2011) Langacker distinguishes between the epistemic level of control, which concerns the knowledge individuals have on events; and the effective level of control, which relates to the occurrence of events regardless how knowledgeable individuals are about those events. Therefore, Langacker (2013) conceives linguistic interaction as “a means of striving for control” which has a two-fold purpose, namely, constructing language user’s mental world and influencing

upon social reality (pp. 9-10). Similarly, Marín-Arrese (2023) makes a distinction between epistemic stance, which “involve speaker’s/writer’s control of conceptions of reality in the discourse, through the estimation of the veracity of the event designated and the likelihood of its realisation”; and effective stance, which involve the use of expressions through which speakers attempt to influence the future course of events (p. 31-32). It is under the domain of effectivity that this thesis will analyse the expression of commitment in US primary and general presidential debates by focusing on the candidates’ expression of intentions and promises, on the one hand; and on expressions which either urge audiences to carry out an action or emphasise the obligation, appropriateness or desirability of following a particular course of action (Marín-Arrese, 2023).

The expression of commitment becomes an important aspect in the rhetoric of the candidates who attempt to achieve the audience’s support for their candidacy in electoral debates, and whose protagonism is even more outstanding when they are running as prospective nominees for presidential elections. Benoit (2014) points out that “debates are another opportunity for presidential candidates to make policy commitments which allow voters to hold them accountable for their campaign promises” (pp. 7-8). Therefore, debates play a vital role for the electorate to know the candidates’ vision of the future and their intentions if elected and enable voters “to see, hear and judge them in a way never before possible” (Minow & LaMay, 2008, p. 1). Therefore, those utterances in which the speaker expresses certain degree of commitment to implement a plan of action will be referred to as expressions of commitment to the speaker’s future course of action (CI) in this thesis. Through these expressions of commitment, candidates make themselves accountable for their words as they express and explain their promises and intentions that will guide the political activity in the following years.

On the other hand, candidates addressing mass audiences in electoral debates have the opportunity of using a wide range of persuasive strategies, such as hegemony, marginalization, or legitimation, which may have a powerful impact on audiences and may involve in some cases distortion in knowledge to justify decisions that “sustain the comfort and welfare of those within the margins” according to critical theorists (Stoner & Perkins, 2005, p. 242). Chilton (2004) and Marín-Arrese (2011) identify legitimising strategies of political language which may influence audiences’ construction of reality and their ideological position regarding the realization and accomplishment of their goals and plans. Candidates usually devote time and effort to legitimise their choices and decisions by explaining why the policies they will implement are the most necessary, convenient, or appropriate ones to be carried out (Marín-Arrese, 2011; 2023). Moreover, besides legitimising candidates’ positioning on a wide range of political issues, candidates also attempt to mobilise audiences by urging their target audiences to act in a particular manner. As mentioned above, political discourse and, even more frequently, electoral campaign discourse have a persuasive function through which politicians attempt to achieve the intended goals, which usually involves gaining or keeping power. In this thesis, those utterances which try to legitimise candidates’ choices and mobilise audiences will be referred to as expressions of commitment to a future outcome (CO), which will be further developed in chapter 3.

Both types of expressions of commitment eventually involve some degree of responsibility to be taken by politicians, who are fully aware of the accountability they are holding by delivering those messages during the presidential debates. But, at the same time, those expressions will also contribute to the electorate’s perception of the candidate’s competence and credibility to be eligible as a prospective candidate or

president. For this reason, having the audience in mind during the process of crafting their messages is critical to successfully gain the electorate's support.

Although “politics involves reconciling differences through discussion and dialogue” (Hague et al., 1998, pp. 3-4), the heterogeneity of the electorate may make somehow challenging the process of drafting political messages and determining what promises they are willing to make as well as what arguments they will use to justify those decisions, particularly when dealing with controversial issues. Some politicians may argue that a clear consensus of the electorate is impossible and, consequently, language must be vague to address a wider range of interests. In fact, there are multiple examples in presidential debates in which candidates do not always communicate their intentions overtly and feel impelled to express their position regarding certain issues in an ambiguous or vague manner, even if, by doing so, they are likely to sacrifice certain degree of credibility.

On the other hand, candidates' accountability may also vary depending on the degree of personal responsibility they hold when expressing their commitments. The role and relevance of the notions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in communication have been extensively discussed in the last decades (Lyons, 1977, 1995; Langacker 1991, 2002; Traugott 2010, Traugott and Dasher, 2002; Nuyts, 2001, 2012; Marín-Arrese, 2009, 2015, 2023). Each candidate will determine whether they want to express their commitments taking individual or shared responsibility of their words either explicitly or implicitly. Marín-Arrese (2009) refers to the interaction of two parameters of subjectivity and intersubjectivity: “‘salience or overtness of the role of the conceptualizer’ and ‘personal vs. shared responsibility’ for the information” (p. 43).

The present thesis dissertation is corpus-based research which delves into the expression of commitment in primary and general presidential debates from a stance and

discourse approach. Although the term *commitment* has received attention from several areas of research in the field of Linguistics, such as formal models of dialogue and modality and evidentiality (De Brabanter & Dendale, 2008), this notion has been typically associated to commissive speech acts under speech act theory in the last decades. Some recent studies have drawn attention to the use of commissive speech acts, such as promising, pledging or threatening and their relationship with other speech acts (Hernández, 2001; Kissine, 2013). However, it seems that there is a need for a taxonomy which include a wide range of expressions of commitment playing a critical role in the identification of the speaker's intentions and preferences, covering not only acts of promising but also legitimation and mobilization strategies which reveal the speaker's commitment towards a particular outcome or policy realization that will guide the candidate's behaviour if elected. For this purpose, an extensive corpus collection is required to explore and collect the numerous linguistic strategies used by politicians to express commitment during electoral debates.

On the other hand, Benoit (2001) considers that there is a need for research on this type of political event, which have been underdiscussed in the literature Benoit, 2001, p. 1). More specifically, some authors have identified a need for further research on primary debates, which has been less extensively addressed by scholars than general presidential debates (McKinney & Carlin, 2004). This may sound paradoxical since some scholars point out that primary debates often have a greater impact on viewers rather than general presidential debates (McKenney & Carlin, 2004). For these reasons, the corpus collected for this thesis also includes speeches delivered in primary debates. The contrastive analysis of the performance of the candidates in primary debates as opposed to general presidential debates seems to be an opportunity to provide further insight on the

identification of similarities or differences of the language used by candidates during these distinct debates concerning the expression commitment.

Another reason why the collected corpus for this research includes speeches from primary and general presidential debates concerns their significant role in spreading political information and the far-reaching dissemination of the messages sent by the candidates since they have been chiefly broadcast nationwide. The expansion of mass media seems to have had a significant impact upon the spread of the content of presidential debates since highlights from those debates are also disseminated through social media networks, and the transcripts of the presidential debates are usually available on numerous websites.

Therefore, this thesis will focus on primary and general debates, which are watched by a high number of prospective voters who seek to get informed about the candidates' positioning on various issues and their intentions and promises regarding their own interests, to identify the expression of commitment of a selection of candidates running for the nomination of their corresponding parties and, later, for the US presidency. The main goals of this research will be further developed and expounded in the next section.

1.2. Aims and Research Questions

Voting responsibly requires from citizens to become knowledgeable on the candidates who are running for a nomination or for the presidency along with the policies they want to implement. Electoral campaigns are a helpful means of communication of political actors which have an educational function for the electorate. (Krukones, 1984). Furthermore, electoral messages delivered during presidential debates create expectations

on the electorate and provide relevant information for voters who use it “to form beliefs about the policies the candidate will choose if elected” (Aragónés et al., 2007, p. 847). Therefore, persuasive strategies to shape those beliefs and gain the electorate’s support are commonly used in different types of political activity and, even more frequently, in electoral debates.

The expression of commitment, which typically occurs in this political context, contributes to persuade and mobilise the electorate. Because of the importance of political debates in shaping the electorate’s opinion on the future candidates’ performance and the impact it may have on voters’ decisions, the primary objective of this thesis is to analyse the expression of commitment in US primary and general presidential debates by candidates running for the nomination of their own parties to subsequently join the presidential race.

The identification of the semantic categories used by the candidates to express commitment both in primary and general presidential debates will be carried out under two main macro-categories, namely commitment to the speaker’s future course of action (CI), expressions of commitment which involve semantic categories that candidates typically use to make promises or express intentions; and commitment to a future outcome (CO), semantic categories which are used to legitimise the candidates’ plans of action as well as to mobilise the electorate and encourage the audience to act. The analysis of these semantic categories, which will be further explained in the chapter devoted to the theoretical framework, may provide further understanding on the candidates’ preferences for certain semantic categories over others when expressing commitment during electoral debates. For this purpose, this thesis dissertation will identify and quantify the semantic categories occurring in a corpus which amounts up to 230,850 words. It consists of four sub-corpora which include speeches delivered primary debates from Democratic

candidates (DPM) and from Republican candidates (RPM), on the one hand; and speeches delivered during general presidential debates by Democratic candidates (DGP) and Republican candidates (RGP), on the other. The corpus will be annotated and analysed as explain in the Methodology chapter.

Nevertheless, this thesis will also accomplish some more specific objectives. The first specific objective that will be addressed relates to the most common type of commitment that candidates prefer to use during primary and presidential debates by identifying which macro-category, CI versus CO, occurs more frequently in the corpus. The analysis will focus on variables such as the type of debate in which those expressions occur, primary versus general presidential debates, and speaker's ideology, Democrats versus Republicans. Based on this objective, it is possible to formulate the first research question:

RQ1. Do candidates express more often commitment to the speaker's future course of action over commitment to a future outcome?

This seems to be a reasonable research question since politicians are fully aware of their need for delivering persuasive arguments during debates so that they can gain the voter's support and encourage them to act, it would be relevant to know whether they prefer to express more often their commitment to follow a particular course of action or to encourage the audience to act in order to achieve a particular outcome.

The second specific objective to be accomplished has to do with the identification of the candidates' preference for certain linguistic strategies when expressing their commitment. Because of politicians' overall lack of credibility and the importance that promises have to gain votes in the elections, candidates may be interested in expressing their commitment mainly through direct speech acts in order to make clear that they are

committed to the implementation of certain policies, on the one hand; and to persuasively encourage the audience to take action in order to achieve the intended outcome, on the other hand. To accomplish this objective, it is necessary to identify and classify the linguistic strategies used by the candidates to express commitment, both expressions of CI and CO, during primary and general presidential debates. For this reason, a corpus-based taxonomy with a wide range of semantic categories has been put forward in the present thesis. Therefore, the following two research questions will be addressed in the analysis:

RQ2. Do presidential candidates prefer to express CI by using performative verbs, which have been classified in the taxonomy as Direct Commissives, during primary and presidential debates?

RQ3. Do presidential candidates prefer to express CO using performative verbs, which have been classified in the taxonomy as Direct Directives, during primary and presidential debates?

A third objective concerns the differences which make primary and general presidential debates different. Although these types of debates have numerous features in common, there are important differences between them that may have an impact on the speaker's choices regarding the preferred semantic categories to express commitment. For instance, it is worth noticing that some candidates may not be popular and known by the electorate during the primary debates and, consequently, such situation offers them an opportunity to gain people's attention on their candidacy. However, by the time they have become presidential candidates, they are already known by the electorate.

One more feature which makes these types of debates different lies in the fact that there are multiple candidates in primary debates, which may prevent candidates from having enough time to inform the voters extensively about their policies and promises,

since the allotted amount of time is more restrictive than in general presidential debates. Moreover, the number of opponents each candidate needs to reply and confront with arguments is again larger than in general presidential debates. Thus, it may be assumed that candidates have the need to explain their policies and express commitment in a more direct manner because of the limited amount of time they have available.

On the other hand, since primary presidential elections tackle intraparty contents, “candidates often have virtually indistinguishable positions on issues” (Lanoue and Schrott, 1989; as cited in Kendal, 2000, p. 54). Consequently, it may be reasonable to expect that candidates make clear their stand on a wide range of policies by expressing their commitments more overtly to show their distinctiveness.

In addition, audiences in primary debates are not usually as broad as those in general presidential debates, where candidates compete against the opponent parties. Therefore, the degree of heterogeneity of the electorate is expected to be greater in general presidential debates. Since audiences usually have a direct impact on the messages crafted by the candidates and the word choice in which those messages are conveyed, candidates may use vaguer language and indirect expressions of commitment in presidential debates in order to meet the expectations of a more heterogeneous electorate, particularly when dealing with issues about which there may be polarized positions.

Therefore, the third objective of this thesis is to determine whether there are significant differences in the frequency of occurrence of certain semantic categories used by the selected candidates to express commitment both in primary and general presidential debates. For the purpose, the following research questions will be formulated as follows:

RQ4. Are there significant differences in the expression of the speaker's commitment to follow a particular future course of action (CI) between primary and general presidential debates?

RQ5. Are there significant differences in the expression of commitment to a future outcome (CO) between primary and general presidential debates?

The data collection for this research includes a balanced number of speeches delivered in each type of electoral debates to be able to find a reliable answer to RQ4 and RQ5.

Likewise, a fourth objective that is formulated in this thesis consists of determining whether there are differences in the cline of preference for certain categories to express commitment, both CI and CO, on the part of candidates from the Democratic Party versus Republican Party. For that reason, the data collected include virtually the same number of Democratic and Republican candidates in primary and general presidential debates. The resulting research questions, consequently, will be formulated as follows:

RQ6: Are there significant differences in the semantic categories used to express the speaker's commitment to a future course of action (CI) between Democratic and Republican candidates in primary and general presidential debates?

RQ7: Are there significant differences in the semantic categories used to express commitment to a future outcome (CO) between Democratic and Republican candidates in primary and general presidential debates?

Finally, a fifth objective will consist of providing an analysis of the preferred categories used by individual candidates to identify any possible idiosyncrasies in their speeches. Therefore, the eighth and ninth research questions to be addressed will be the following:

RQ8. Are there variations regarding the cline of preference of individual candidates regarding the semantic categories expressing the speaker's commitment to a future action (CI) occurring during primary and general presidential debates?

RQ9. Similarly, are there variations regarding the cline of preference of individual candidates regarding the semantic categories expressing commitment to a future outcome (CO) occurring during primary and general presidential debates?

This final objective will explore candidates' language idiosyncrasies in the expression of CI and CO. Since candidates tend to use creative language and attempt to outwit their rivals with persuasive speeches during presidential debates, they may use distinctive choices or patterns when expressing their commitment that may be unique when compared to other candidates.

To sum up, this thesis identifies the type of commitment and linguistic strategies which occur more often in primary and general presidential debates. Then it identifies prospective relations between the linguistic strategies used by candidates who are running for the nomination of their corresponding parties and, after the nomination, running for US presidency and (i) the type of context in which it occurs, primary vs. general presidential debates, and (ii) the political party to which the candidate belongs, Democratic vs. Republican Parties. For this purpose, it provides a corpus-based taxonomy of the expression of commitment in order to analyse a large collection of speeches from Democratic and Republican candidates which have been delivered in different presidential elections from 2000 up to nowadays. The following section provides an overview of the distribution of the contents of this thesis dissertation in each chapter.

1.3. Overview of the Thesis

This thesis contains seven chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the background and rationale that have motivated the present research on the expression of commitment in primary and general presidential debates. Moreover, it provides the formulation of general and specific objectives of this thesis, along with the corresponding research questions which have guided the plan, design and development of the present study.

Chapter 2 provides a political contextualization in order to understand presidential debates and the importance of these political events in US presidential elections. It provides some arguments that support the usefulness of presidential debates in the electoral system. It also explains the differences between these types of presidential debates, with a major focus on the distinct features of primary versus general presidential debates, which will be targeted in this thesis dissertation. This chapter attempts to contribute to a better understanding of the formulation of the hypotheses and the results obtained after the annotation and analysis of the corpus.

It is in chapter 3 that the theoretical framework of this thesis is provided in detail. It discusses the notion of *commitment* as addressed in the literature from different linguistic fields. It also tackles the contribution of speech act theory to the understanding of the expression of commitment and promises and it provides a stance-based approach to the study of the expression of commitment during presidential debates. This chapter also explains the way in which the various semantic categories expressing commitment contributes to persuade and encourage audiences to support the corresponding candidate in the presidential race.

On the other hand, chapter 4 provides the formulation of the hypotheses that will be tested in the present study. Those hypotheses align with the corresponding research

questions and general and specific objectives of this thesis, which provide a direction for this study and establishes the prospective relationships between variables.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the description of the research design and sample collection process of the corpus that has been compiled for this study. It also describes the corpus-based taxonomy used for testing the hypotheses that have been formulated in the previous chapter. Finally, it provides and justifies the methodology used to carry out the research.

Chapter 6 provides the results and discussion of the data resulting from this research. The results will allow us to determine whether the hypotheses formulated in this thesis fail to be proved or not.

Finally, chapter 7 summarises the conclusions drawn from the data analysis to answer the research questions that have been guiding the present study. It also discusses contributions and limitations of the research and points out areas for further research.

All in all, this thesis attempts to provide further insights on the influence that the type of debate and ideology may have on the candidate's lexical realization when expressing these types of commitment and on the possible idiosyncrasies the data may reveal on individual candidates.

2. POLITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

2.1. The USA Electoral System and Political Parties

The USA electoral system guarantees universal suffrage for male and female citizens who are over 21 in most of states to choose the members of the two Houses of Congress, that is, the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the presidential electors, which usually involve officials and state party leaders. Citizens' participation may occur in numerous ways, such as signing a petition, voting in a referendum or voting in local, state and national elections. However, one of the challenges voters frequently face consists of obtaining the necessary information on a large number of candidates who are eligible to become nominees in their corresponding parties during the primary elections and appointed nominees who are running the presidential race during general presidential elections in order to make an informed decision.

Traditionally, there have been two major parties in United States of America, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party (Gopnik et al, 2024). Nevertheless, other parties have gained some attention in some electoral elections, such as the Federalist Party, which became the first political party in United States; the Progressive Party, which was led by Theodore Roosevelt in 1912, or the Green Party, which gained almost 3% of the vote in 2000 presidential elections. Some of the difficulties that minor parties face in the USA electoral system relate to their ideological positioning in contrast with the two major parties and the “winner-take-all” system. Therefore, minor parties are challenged by the need of appealing to a wide diversity of voters and issues competing against the two major parties, which “have tended to adopt centrist political programs”, and by the difficulty of having “to win a plurality of the vote in individual districts” if they want to gain representation. (Gopnik et al, 2024).

The Democratic Party has undergone numerous changes during its history. It was in the 1930's that the party favoured greater intervention in the economy on the part of the government and "opposed government intervention in the private noneconomic affairs of citizens" (Gopnik et al, 2024). The main constituency of the Democratic Party involve the down-scale classes, and, therefore, favours progressive social policies even if it may entail an increase of inflation, as opposed to the Republican Party, which is concerned more heavily on inflation and foster "disinflationary policies" (Hibbs, 1986, p. 66). On the other hand, the Republican Party, also known as the "Grand Old Party" (GOP), have also experienced remarkable changes during its history. The party has stood during the last two centuries in favour of the "laissez-faire capitalism, low taxes, and conservative social policies" (Gopnik et al, 2024).

Although these major parties tend to favour centrist political programmes that allow them for covering a wide spectrum of interests, some scholars argue that they are "distinctive separate entities" (Crotty, 1983, pp. 205-206). Freeman (1986) claims that the main differences between both parties are not largely found in outcomes but "in the mode in which internal politics is conducted", which concerns the differences between Democratic caucuses and Republican receptions (pp. 327-332). Both types of events are places "for demonstrating the status of the groups and individuals within in" (Freeman, 1986, p. 332). With the celebration of new presidential elections, political parties appoint a nominee to represent the party in presidential election on a regular basis. After some abuses, the process of nominating candidates in political parties have become under the control of the government. Therefore, the functions of the conventions have been regulated and become more limited in favour of a primary election system which has been established in all the states.

In this thesis, speeches delivered in primary electoral debates have been compiled in the corpus collected to be analysed along with speeches from general presidential debates. For this reason, the following section will provide further details on the features and characteristics of these two political events.

2.2. Presidential Debates in Political Campaigns

Since the ancient Greece, there has been a close relationship between political activity and public speaking (Kendall, 2000). Political leaders seek for opportunities to reach citizens in order to disseminate their messages effectively and accomplish their political goals according to democratic rules (Ferrer-Navas, 2019). One of the political activities in which sending messages to influence public opinion is significantly relevant is electoral campaigns. This political event has become “simultaneously a means for those who seek elective office to connect with voters and a way for citizens to learn about the candidates who are seeking their votes” (Benoit, 2014, p. 1).

Candidates use a wide range of strategies to disseminate their messages in the most effective manner. Some of these strategies involves delivering speeches, distribute pamphlets, and attend some interviews in tv or radio shows (Benoit, 2001). However, the emergence of the radio, television and new media has largely influenced the way in which these campaigns have been approached by candidates throughout numerous elections. Jamieson (1992) identifies the changes that have taken place in the last decades regarding speeches in general election campaigns, which include less clear positioning with regards to controversial issues, the shortening of the length of the speech which has result in a decline of reasoned arguments, a lower level of specificity when addressing the questions, and the transformation of speeches as a result of candidate’s ability “to act, speak, and

think in television terms” (p. 204). Candidates have been continuously adapting themselves and their speeches to the changes taking place in the media in the last decades.

Speeches in electoral campaigns have drawn the attention of citizens and the media in numerous countries because of their relevance to know the candidate’s vision of the future and their intentions if they are eventually elected. The positions for which candidates have run their candidacy in United States vary from presidential elections to other non-presidential elections, such as governor, the Senate, or major (Benoit, 2014). However, debates have become one of the core elements in the design and organization of these political campaigns.

Debates hold certain features which make them unique as opposed to other political events in which politicians need to explain their position concerning a wide range of issues. Hart and Jarvis (1997) claim that debates “cut through some of the campaign baloney, ground political discourse a bit, sharpen points of difference, make the candidate at least faintly introspective, and restrain overstatements” (p. 1120).

Speeches generally allow candidates to express their opinions, beliefs, values, priorities and commitments on their own manner. However, while candidates usually have “complete control over the content of the speeches” (Kendall, 2000, p. 81), they have to response questions asked by the moderator, reporters or even citizens, defend themselves from the opponents’ attacks, and face unforeseen situations during the debates, whose reaction will provide valuable information to the audience about the candidate’s competence and intentions concerning relevant issues. Although debates usually include opening and closing statements in which candidates may draw the audience’s attention to those issues which could be beneficial for their candidacy, Benoit (2014) observes that “the fact that political debates are built around questions matters because those questions constrain the topics candidates can talk about” (p. 34). However,

candidates may have some freedom to start answering the question and then deftly switch to another issue they would be more interested in tackling (Benoit, 2014).

Some discussion has been generated in literature on whether the issues brought to the debate by the journalists and the candidates are the ones about which citizens are really concerned (Benoit, 2014); however, it is commonly accepted that this format “inject some spontaneity into the candidate discourse, as candidates are asked questions for which they may be required to expand or depart from the usual stump speeches” (Kenski & Jamieson, 2011, p. 308). On the other hand, the length of debates contributes to candidates’ possibility to develop their views and intentions to some extent. Nevertheless, some candidates struggle to develop their answers and future plans of action in depth depending on the complexity of the issue under discussion.

Likewise, this political event has been particularly appealing for viewers when compared to other political activities. Jamieson and Birdsell (1990) claim that “general election debates command large audiences including individuals who seek out little other political information during the campaign” (p. 120). They suggest that other type of political messages have not received such attention on the part of the electorate from a historical perspective, even though primary debates do not reach such number of viewers. Pfau (2003) argues that debates attract the attention of even those citizens who are not prone to pay attention to the political campaign of candidates, who are often described as “marginally attentive”.

There are different theories which have studied the televised electoral campaigns. McKenney and Carlin (2004) identify four main approaches to the analysis of televised campaign debates, namely the democratic theory, which focuses on the evaluation of the extent to which this event contributes to have informed voters; the agenda-setting theory, which attempts to explain to what extent the issues that are tackled in electoral debates

have an impact on the “viewers’ issue salience”; theories on uses and gratifications, which study the usefulness for citizens of debates and the way in which voters make use of them; and the argumentation and debate theory, which include approaches to argumentation in debates such as clashes, and candidates’ attacks and defences during this event (pp. 205-208).

Benoit (20007) identifies three main functions for the candidates’ utterances occurring in electoral debates. These functions consist of *acclaims*, which deal with those utterances which express the candidates’ strengths and intentions; *attacks*, those utterances which highlight the opponents’ shortcomings and controversial behaviours and beliefs; and *defences*, which focus on utterances which attempt to protect and dignify a particular candidate whose reputation may have been damaged because of their opponents’ attacks (Benoit, 2007). This functional theory predicts that candidates devote more time on discussing their policies than their own characters (Benoit, 2014).

However, the content of speeches will vary depending on the experience of candidate in positions of power and the type of debate in which the speech is delivered. For example, although acclaims are the most common function in these political events according to the Functional Theory, this is particularly the case when the speaker is an incumbent party candidate, who will try to outstand their positive accomplishments while they were in the office. Attacks, on the other hand, will gain a greater protagonism in speeches delivered by challengers, who usually focus more on the deficiency or broken promises of their opponents (Dudek & Partacz, 2009). It seems to be reasonable that attacks occur less frequently in speeches delivered by incumbent candidates, especially if challengers lack experience in political positions of power and authority. On the other hand, Benoit (2014) concludes that the frequency of occurrence of candidates’ attacks in

primaries is lower than in general presidential debates while acclaims occur more frequently in primary debates.

All in all, candidates are fully aware of the potential of presidential debates to disseminate their messages and the importance of those messages in political campaigns to gain media coverage and, above all, the support of the electorate. Therefore, after having discussed some aspects that make debates unique political events, the next section will tackle the relevance of those presidential debates for citizens, candidates, and democracies.

2.3. Importance of Presidential Debates

The role and importance of primary and general presidential debates during the electoral campaigns has been widely discussed in the literature (Schroender, 2016; Kendal, 2000; Jamieson & Birdsell, 1990). There is valuable information that is conveyed in presidential debates in a unique manner. Presidential debates become useful political events for citizens since they provide the opportunity to know the candidates' beliefs, attitudes, vision of the country, and future intentions if they eventually reach the public office, particularly in their opening and closing statements. This political event has become institutionalized to the extent that it would be a novelty that a candidate refuses to partake in a debate (Mckinney & Carlin, 2004, p. 203) An exception has recently occurred during the 2020 electoral campaign, when candidate Donald Trump tested positive for Coronavirus. The organizing committee of the presidential debates which was scheduled for October 15th suggested that the debate should take place remotely. However, after candidate Trump refused to partake in a virtual TV with the opponent candidate Joe Biden, the commission decided to cancel the debate. That was a controversial and unusual situation in presidential campaigns.

Benoit (2014) identifies some benefits of this political event with regards to citizens, candidates, and the democratic system. Regarding the advantages for citizens, he argues that debates provide an opportunity for voters to compare the candidates' positions on numerous issues. Unlike other political events and speeches, which are carefully crafted by candidates, debates may elicit occasions in which candidates may be asked unexpected questions, which may help the electorate to "obtain a more accurate view of the candidates" (Benoit, 2014, p. 3).

As for candidates themselves, debates become beneficial in that they receive attention in prime time in a free manner during the debates as well as in the news coverage or voters discussions on the candidates' performance and position on the different issues (Benoit, 2014). Likewise, candidates have an opportunity to deny false statements and accusations from their opponents immediately during debates (Benoit, 2014).

Regarding the benefits for democracies, finally, debates make use of a different "channel or medium" to inform voters in a unique manner, which is characterized by a "confrontational format" which lead to some dramatic moments during the debate that allow citizens compare candidates (Benoit, 2014, p. 4). Despite their confrontational aspect, presidential debates and, more generally, any type of political communication, play an important role as a form of civic action, which is an expectation in healthy democracies (Kendall-Taylor & Frantz, 2016).

On the other hand, Benoit (2014) discusses different means in which politicians can make their messages reach the audience since they are integrated in a "complex information environment of a modern political campaign" (Benoit, 2014, p. 1). The fact that presidential debates are televised allow the candidates to be viewed by wide audiences. Chaffee (1979) points out that "Of all the changes in political campaigning that television has brought, the face-to-face televised debate between candidates prove to

be the most significant” (p. 19). A part of the electorate follows the debate directly while broadcast and, in turn, they share that information with people in their environment through political discussions. Media coverage also plays an important role in disseminating the candidates’ messages via TV news, newspapers or social media.

When it comes to the expression of commitment and promises, presidential debates provide a unique opportunity for candidates to commit with the electorate to accomplish some goals and to implement certain policies while they are in office. According to Benoit (2013), “Research [...] shows that candidates discuss policy more than character in debates and they frequently use two forms of policy future plans (means) and general goals (ends) that lay out what they will do if elected” (p. 5). Furthermore, they provide politicians with a valuable opportunity to legitimize their policies and their plans of actions as well as mobilize mass audience to vote or persuade them to follow a certain course of action. However, there are some particularities between primary and general presidential debates that may influence upon the candidates’ approaches to disseminate their messages. Those differences and possible implications on the candidates’ communicative performance will be discussed in the following section.

2.4. Features of US Primary vs. General Presidential Debates

2.4.1. Types of Presidential Debates

There is a great variety of political events that take place on a regular basis because of the plethora of public offices available for which numerous candidates compete through some established election procedures. Concerning presidential elections, however, there are three main types of debates that have become institutionalized in

United States, namely primaries debates, general presidential debates, and vice-presidential debates.

2.4.1.1. Primary Debates

Although conventions, caucuses and primary elections have been important ways of promoting a more democratic process of nomination of the candidate in a party who will confront the opponent candidates for presidency (Thompson, 2010, p. 205), opening popular participation of the candidates who will represent the corresponding party was conceived in some more earlier stages as a threat to state and local party systems (Kendall, 2000). However, primary debates have eventually become an essential event in the selection of a party's nominee for the presidential election in United States even though the rules regulating primary debates have been continuously changing since the first debate which was held in 1912. Hellweg et al. (1992) consider that "primary election debates have become an increasingly prevalent feature of the presidential nomination process" (p. 67).

According to Thompson (2010), primaries should help citizens to identify and judge the character, or quality, of the candidates. Ranney (1977) provides a definition of the primary process as follows:

(1) the parties' nominees to public office are chosen directly by rank-by-file party members rather than indirectly by their representatives in caucuses and conventions; and (2) they are chosen by primary elections, that is, elections administered by public authorities (not party authorities) using virtually the same statutory rules (not party rules) for printing, distributing, casting, and accounting ballots that are in general elections. (p. 4)

There has been an increasing interest in primaries debates in the last decades. In fact, the number of debates has progressively increased throughout this period. During the primaries in 1992 presidential campaigns, there were 13 primary debates as opposed

to the 3 debates that typically are held for general presidential campaigns (Benoit, 2001). The number of primaries has considerably increased in the last decades. For instance, about 13 primary debates were celebrated only for the nomination of the Democratic candidate in the presidential elections of 2020. Such increase of primary debates may be explained by the relevant role they play in selecting the nominee who may eventually become the president of United States. Benoit (2001) argues that primaries have become an important political event since they determine the candidate who will run the presidential race as the party's nominee "with all the partisan support that position legitimizes" (p. 1). Similarly, this type of debates seems to have a greater influence on the audience with regards to voter preferences, particularly "the earlier primaries" (Beniger, 1976, p. 33).

However, there is a need for further research on this relevant political event campaign, which has been underdiscussed in the literature (Benoit, 2001, p. 1). McKinney and Carlin (2004) claim that "knowledge of general-election campaign communication is far more extensive than that of primary campaign messages" (p. 224). This gap becomes somehow surprising when the research already conducted on this type of debates reveal that they have a greater impact on viewers rather than the general presidential debates do (McKenney & Carlin, 2004, p. 224). The analysis of the performance of the candidates in primary debates as opposed of general presidential debates carried out in this thesis is an opportunity to provide further insight on the identification of similarities or differences of the language used by the candidates during these distinct debates when it comes to the expression of commitment.

2.4.1.2. General Presidential Debates

The first presidential campaign was held on 26th September 1960 between Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy in Chicago. Schroeder (2016) claims that “The meeting of John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon in a Chicago television studio in September 1960 began a campaign tradition that reconfigured the electoral landscape—not only in the United States but around the world” (p. 339). Today, general presidential debates seem to be one of the most common political debates which are followed by wide audiences every four years, both nationally and internationally.

The preparation of debaters nowadays differs largely to the pre-debate strategies used by the candidates then, such as informal drills of a set of questions in the case of J. F. Kennedy or Nixon’s refusal to rehearse the debate (Schroeder, 2016). In order to avoid surprises once the candidates are on stage, they devote time and effort to prepare these encounters in which they will be challenged by their opponents. These political events allow the corresponding nominee of each party represented in the debate to discuss their policies and future intentions for the next years and to persuade the audience to pursue a particular course of action and gain their electoral support to reach the office.

Through these face-to-face encounters, voters have the opportunity of getting to know and understand the candidates’ positions on a wide range of topics, their experience as administrators, and their education and competence to become president. Since these events are moderated by journalists who have a collection of questions to ask the candidate about, candidates have the chance to give a convincing answer to them and successfully sort out any obstacle they may encounter in terms of past decisions in a public office, knowledge on a particular issue or even opponent’s attacks, since a common strategy used by candidates is to destabilize their opponents (Benoit, 2014). Therefore, presidential debates are a unique opportunity for the electorate to be informed about the

candidates' characters, suitability and desirability of their plans of action and their future intentions.

2.4.1.3. Vice Presidential Debates

Joseph Lieberman explained in his campaign memoir the exhaustive preparation that a vice presidential debate involves when he claimed that “If it takes a village to raise a child, it apparently takes an army to prepare a vice presidential debates, or so I learned in 2000” (as cited in Schroeder, 2016, p. 92). Even though general presidential debates have been the focus of wide audiences, the responsibility of candidates for the vice presidency to confront each other with live audiences seem to be also overwhelming due to the size of viewers who follow these events, which may vary significantly from election to election. For example, the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) in 2008 pointed out that “unlike previous campaigns seasons, the size of the vice-presidential debate-viewing audiences in 2008 exceeded the sizes of the presidential debate-viewing audiences (Kenski & Jamieson, 2011, p. 308). About 70 million viewers watch the debate between the first female candidate for the vice presidency, Sarah Palin, and the Democrat candidate, Joe Biden. The case of Sarah Palin had only a precedent in the congresswoman Geraldine Ferrero, the first female candidate of one of the main parties who contributed to attention drawn to the vice-presidential debate in 1984. Trent (1990) suggested that “the spotlight on the debate had less to do with what they said and did than it had with the fact of their gender” (p. 121).

From the limited evidence of the research conducted on vice-presidential debates, which have received less attention than general presidential debates in literature, some scholars have concluded that they have limited impact of the campaign and voters' behaviour (Carlkin & Bicak, 1993, p. 191). On the other hand, it has been also pointed

out that these encounters “have unique rhetorical exigencies that demand different candidates’ messages strategies than those used in presidential debates” (Carlin & Bicak, 1993). However, vice-presidential debates will be beyond the scope of this thesis dissertation because one of its primary objectives is to compare the performance of the same candidates in different contexts, that is, primaries and general presidential debates. Therefore, including an analysis of the vice-presidential debates in those terms would not fit the overall research design of this thesis dissertation.

2.4.2. Similarities and Differences between Primaries and General Presidential Debates

There are significant differences between primary and general presidential debates since the context and circumstances in which they occur are somehow different. This section first focuses on some features that characterize the campaigns in which these distinct debates take place and then deals with some features which are more specific to those debates.

One relevant difference between primary and presidential campaigns concerns the length of the debates. While the latter one usually consists of a two-month period, primary campaigns may last about a year. Such difference has an impact on important factors of the campaign. Kendall (2000) explains that “candidates need to organize staffs, raise money, announce their candidates, conduct polls, take part in straw votes at party gathering, and try to attract media attention months and even years before the primaries (p. 7). All these factors may have an impact on the approaches the candidates may take during the debates to outstand and draw the media’s attention.

One more feature of primaries races has to do with “constant state of flux” of their candidates (Benoit, 2001, p. 3). Although it seems to be less common the case of candidates who may decide to support a different team at some point of the race, such situation may occasionally occur in primary elections. Benoit (2001) refers to the case of Buchanan, a Republican candidate, who decided to join the Reform Party during the 2000 presidential elections (p. 3). In the latter case, it is not the number of candidates that is modified, but the identity of the candidate, which may contribute to creating confusion among the electorate regarding the ideological positioning of the candidates who are campaigning for the nomination.

There are some specific differences regarding the debates themselves which are worth noticing when comparing these types of debates. A feature which is worth noticing regards the level of popularity of the candidates at the beginning of the race since challengers are commonly less known to the electorate in primary debates. Hellweg et al. (1992) claim that “Primary and caucus debates can have substantial influence on the acquisition and development of candidate precisely because they occur early in a political campaign” (p. 122). Therefore, these debates become particularly relevant for candidates to outstand and introduce themselves as suitable and feasible candidates for the presidential election.

One of the important differences between primaries and general presidential debates has to do with the ideology of the candidates which are contending on stage. Benoit (2001) explains the critical situation candidates face in primaries in the following terms:

The fact that contenders in the primaries belong to the same party also has implications for the target of attacks in primary races. Republicans battle Republicans, whereas Democrats fight Democrats. Candidates occasionally attack members of the opposing party (particularly front-runners or incumbents running

for re-election) in primaries, but their chief focus should be on their immediate opponents, who are their fellow party members. (p. 3)

Candidates need to outstand among other members of the same party, but they need to determine to what extent they can damage the image of a candidate that may eventually become the nominee, since the attacks addressed against such candidate can be later used by the opponent party and threaten the party unity. One example is found in the 2016 presidential campaign, in which Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump position themselves against Hillary Clinton, who was identified as an establishment politician responsible for some of the major problems of the American society (Kelley, 2016). Sander's attacks to Hillary had been present during his campaign to the point that Trump himself could say that by reading Sander's speeches he could "get some very good material" to attack Clinton (quoted in Kelley, 2016, p. 23). Therefore, because of the intraparty nature of this type of debates, Kendall (2000) points out that candidates usually emphasize their personal traits over their party positions. The ground for disagreement regarding different issues is narrower and "they stress their personal qualifications and ideas and attack their opponents on these grounds" (Kendall, 2000, p. 10).

The other side of the coin relates to the ideological identification of the audience to the candidates in presidential debates. In order to persuade the corresponding audiences, speakers will need to anticipate and construct the target audience as accurately as possible to avoid unsuccessful results or "opposition" when delivering their messages (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, pp. 19-20). Therefore, candidates usually craft their messages for members of their own party in the primary debates, as opposed to the general debates, in which they address a broader audience from an ideological perspective. When it comes to the issues candidates discuss, there is some evidence that "presidential candidates adapt their television spot messages for the target audience", which result in the Democratic candidates running to the left and Republican candidates to the right in

primary campaigns, “but to the centre of the political spectrum in general campaigns” (Benoit & Hansen, 2002, p. 138). The case of John McCain in the 2000 campaign seems to be one exception to this trend when he attempted to persuade independent voters to support his candidacy during the primaries (Benoit & Hansen, 2002). It is common that having elected the corresponding nominees for each party, candidates may put their emphasis on certain issues to gain the attention of undecided and non-partisan voters.

Another way in which candidates attempt to adapt their messages to a more heterogenous audience in general presidential debates is by using less precise language when expressing commitment or their preference for certain policies. In fact, one of the primary objectives of this thesis dissertation is to find out whether there is any similarities or differences in the way commitment to the speaker’s future course of action and commitment to a future outcome are expressed in both types of debates by candidates who stand in opposed positions in the ideological spectrum, that is, Democrats and Republicans.

On the other hand, the number of candidates partaking in the debates is another relevant feature that distinguishes both types of debates. A high number of candidates, typically six or more in primary debates, may prevent viewers to remember in detail the candidates’ positions on a variety of topics of each candidate, as opposed the limited number of candidates that typically partake in general presidential debates, two or three in some cases. Making comparisons between the candidates seem to be an easier task when the number of candidates is more limited (Benoit, 2001, p.3). The high number of candidates that typically characterizes primary debates, along with the lack of knowledge of voters on some of the candidates, make complex the process of informing the electorate about candidates’ intentions and policies (Kendall, 2000, p. 8), even though the number of candidates in primaries often vary on a regular basis because of candidates who decide

to drop out or join the race at some point during the primary campaign. Moreover, the fact that there are several primary campaigns occurring at the same time may be confusing for the electorate (Kendall, 2000, p. 8).

Another objective of this thesis dissertation is to determine whether these features that characterize each type of presidential debate may have an impact on the linguistic strategies used by the candidates when expressing both types of commitment above mentioned.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Language and Politics

Several fields of Linguistics have devoted themselves to studying the existing relationship between *language* and *power*, such as the politics of language, critical discourse analysis and the power to persuade (Partington & Taylor, 2018). Language lies at the interface of numerous political activities and events in which politicians are to engage on a regular basis. As noted by Chilton & Schäffner (2002), the various forms of political activity or participation would not be possible without the use of language. Political events require the use of language to expose, discuss, argue, agree or disagree and the like during the interactions having a political nature. In turn, human language has properties of “a system of symbolic communication” which allows its users to express their mental representations of the world and to compare with other individuals’ representations regarding present or future events. (Chilton, 2004, p.19).

Therefore, language is an important instrument for maintaining political systems since it can foster and build consensus among political representatives from different ideologies and, consequently, “stabilize and enable constitutional democracies” (Kelley, 2018). In fact, any type of political communication should be a form of civic action that contributes to the development and consolidation of healthy democracies (Kendall-Taylor & Frantz, 2016). Schäffner (1996) also highlights the importance of language in politics by pointing out that it is with language that political will be transformed into “social action” (p. 201).

There is a vast body of research which focuses on the use of language in politics since it locates at the intersection of numerous disciplines such as political science, social psychology, philosophy, sociology, rhetoric, media studies and pragmatics, among

others. However, it is particularly the field of pragmatics that has targeted political discourse as a primary object of analysis due its multi-layered nature (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). In fact, the field of pragmatics, which focuses on those processes which are involved in the construction of meaning during interactions, provides a suitable theoretical framework to explore the use of language in those contexts in which political discourse occurs.

Thomas (1995) defines *pragmatics* as “meaning in interaction” since the process of assigning meaning to an utterance is dynamic and involves the negotiation of meaning between the speaker and the addressee, the context of the utterance, and its potential meaning (p. 22). One of the aspects in which pragmatics is particularly helpful for political discourse analysis concerns the study of context-dependent meanings and the “audience’s calculations of the speaker’s communicative intentions” (Fetzer & Weizman, 2006, p. 144). Interpreting the speaker’s intentions is by no means an easy endeavour. In political discourse, this task seems to be even more complex since it mainly consists of monologic communication in which the audience are not often given the opportunity to respond to a particular political text and engage in the process of negotiation of meaning (Fetzer, 2013). Such peculiarity may result in a discrepancy between the speaker’s intention and the audience’s force attribution that could contribute to take a particular course of action. These constructions and calculation of the speaker’s intended meaning are particularly relevant in political discourse because some of its main functions involve informing, promising and encouraging the hearer to act often with the ultimate goal of persuading audiences to support their candidacy.

Likewise, it is generally accepted that language becomes an essential tool to interact in a wide range of political events with a view to persuading the addressee to make decisions or take political action (Rozina & Karapetjana, 2009, p. 113). As a matter

of fact, Partington & Taylor (2018) explain that “the principal use of language in politics is for persuasion in debate in both the political sphere, that is, among politicians, but also the public sphere, in the media, both mainstream and social media” in functional democracies” (p. xvi). To be persuasive, it is vital for politicians to use language skillfully. Politicians are not innocent when using language since they are aware of how powerful it is and, consequently, they will attempt to exploit the potential of language to achieve their political goals.

3.1.1. Defining Political Discourse

Before exploring the notion of commitment in presidential debates, it is necessary to define what political discourse is. The properties of political discourse have been widely discussed in the literature (Chilton, 1985; Wilson, 1990; Van Dijk, 1997b) from various methodological perspectives resulting from different sub-disciplines of Linguistics that relates to this form of discourse, such as Critical Discourse Analysis, cognitive pragmatics or socio-pragmatics, among others (Berrocal & Salamurović, 2019).

Political discourse typically refers to the oral and written texts related to political issues which are disseminated by individuals who have some degree of political power, such as state and local government leaders, members of the opposition party, activists of social organizations, or even citizens. Van Dijk (2003) identifies this genre as “the discourse of politicians”, which is restricted due to its institutional nature to those discourses in which politicians are speaking as such in institutional settings, which fall under this domain, excluding informal conversations of politicians with their friends on politics (p. 212). Moreover, Van Dijk (1997b) provides a definition of political discourse by focusing on the actors, the context of the political activity, and the notion of *politics*.

Concerning the actors of the political activity, he argues that most of the study of political discourse has focused mainly on the “talk and text” produced by professional politicians and by those pieces of text which have occurred in political institutions. However, he claims that politicians are not the only agents of political activities since politician usually interact with audiences which may involve citizens and voters, among other social groups (pp. 12-13). On the other hand, the context is also taken as a decisive element to identify political discourse. According to Van Dijk (1997b), “politicians talk politically also (or only) if they and their talk are contextualized in such communicative events” (p. 14). Therefore, any talk of politicians who are conversing privately, for example after the parliamentary session, is not considered as political discourse. Regarding the notion of *politics*, Van Dijk (1997b) selects some properties that characterise the political domain and, consequently, provides a criterion to distinguish political discourse from other forms of discourse and “a tentative positioning of political discourse among other properties of the political system and process” (p. 18). He lists the categories of societal domain or field, political systems, political values, political ideologies, political institutions, political organizations, political groups, political actors, political relations, political processes, political actions, political discourse and political cognition. He explains that discourse may be classified as political “when it has a direct functional role as a form of political action in the political process” (p. 23). Similarly, Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) also focus on political actors and the context to identify political discourse. They argue that the discourse of any ‘political actor’ should be considered as ‘political’ only in political contexts because they are institutional contexts “which make it possible for actors to exert their agency and empower them to act on the world in a way that has an impact on matters of common concern” (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p.18).

Some of the most common institutional settings in which political discourse occurs are parliamentary assemblies, political rallies and meetings during electoral campaigns or press conferences or newspaper editorials. The present thesis focuses on the use of language in speeches delivered during primary and general presidential debates which have been collected in a corpus for the analysis of the expression of commitment.

3.1.2. Commitment and Persuasion in Political Discourse

Apart from its informative role to maintain the proper level of information in a particular society, political discourse is also closely related to a persuasive language function due to the rhetorical and persuasive nature of political activities, about which audiences seem to be aware. Virtanen & Halmari (2005) understand that all use of language is to some extent persuasive since the linguistic choices that we make “aim at changing or affecting the behaviour of others or strengthening the existing beliefs and behaviours of those who already agree, the beliefs and behaviours of persuaders intended” (p. 5).

The notion of *persuasion* originated in the ancient Greece, where the first democracy was established. Under such democratic system, Greeks developed the traditional literary studies of Rhetoric, which basically concerned the art of political persuasion. The field of Rhetoric was closely associated with dialogue in ancient times. In fact, “It was through dialogue that rhetoricians such as Aristotle, Isocrates, and Cicero taught their students rhetorical skills”, and, in turn, it was through those arguments that they pursued to gain knowledge rather than “win out over the others” (Ferrer et al., 2018, p. 1). Therefore, the use of arguments served the purpose of finding a consensus and, consequently, avoiding conflicts.

Aristotle distinguished three main types of arguments in the field of Rhetoric, namely *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*. The appeal to *logos* refers to rational discourse or, in other words, makes use of arguments which are presented as logical to the audience. The appeal to *pathos*, on the other hand, consists of using emotions to adhere the audience's minds, which is typically achieved by constructing through discourse fears, desires or hopes that may impel the audience to act in the speaker's intended manner. And finally, the appeal to *ethos* refers to the credibility of the speaker, which is typically connected with the character of politicians, their honesty, competence virtue, goodwill and previous experience. This is one of the features which opponents will strive to attack by delegitimising the speaker, "questioning [their] character or discrediting [their] credentials to make certain claims or hold certain powers" (Partington & Taylor, 2018). However, the interaction of these three types of arguments can create powerful and persuasive messages that may encourage audiences to act.

Although the notion of rhetoric related to areas such as law and oratorical skills, Charteris-Black (2013) identified the word *political* as the most frequent one occurring with rhetoric in the British National Corpus. This association reveals the close relationship between the term *rhetoric* and the field of politics. This may have been one of the reasons why the term rhetoric has often related to the use of deceptive language. Toye (2013) points out that "we can still see the influence of Plato, who launched a powerful assault on rhetoric as the enemy of logical discourse" (p. 2). Although some regimes and politicians, however, have used rhetoric as a self-serving tool to divide and create conflicts, the use of language in "pluralistic democracies" should serve the goal of persuading others in debate (Partington & Taylor, 2018). Nowadays, politicians often take advantage of persuasive strategies to convince the audience about the legitimacy of a

given plan of action or the suitability of implementing certain policies that may contribute to the welfare of the community and to mobilise voters in electoral campaigns.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971) explain that persuasion involves the use of arguments to make the hearer behave in a certain manner. When it comes to political discourse, Wilson (1990) similarly suggests that “political language is designed to achieve specific political goals, to make people believe in certain things” (p. 19). Chilton (2004), on the other hand, describes political action as social action. By arguing in favour of certain beliefs, the speaker may feel prompted to act in a certain manner which may benefit the political actor involved in the interaction. In fact, politicians’ goals often involve eliciting a particular course of action on the part of the audience, which may include verbal and non-verbal responses. This means that certain aspects of the meaning of the message delivered may be motivated by the speaker’s objectives. Therefore, language plays an important role in politics when deliberating and debating on the policies politicians want to implement.

Fairclough & Fairclough (2012) identify the processes of deliberations and decision-making as central to the political activity. For this reason, political discourse may be conceived as mainly argumentative discourse. They argue that making decisions on what to do is an essential aspect of politics, and decisions will be reasonable as far as they draw on tested “reasons, claim and arguments for action” (p. 17). A persuasive use of language seems to be necessary to articulate, justify and implement certain policies. Therefore, political actors draw special attention to the way they use language when disseminating messages so that they communicate effectively, create consensus among citizens and achieve their political goals in compliance with the rules of democratic systems in a successful manner.

There are not always clear-cut boundaries between the use of legitimate persuasion in political discourse and communicative forms of manipulation. For Van Dijk (2006), communicative manipulation not only involves Grice's conversational maxims, but also involves exerting power to influence the addressee's knowledge, beliefs and actions against the best interest of audiences. Although persuasion and manipulation are forms of "discourse-based mental influence" and both involve influencing audience's beliefs and, consequently, the actions, Van Dijk (2006) defines *manipulation* as "illegitimate in a democratic society, because it (re)produces, or may reproduce, inequality, [which] is in the best interests of powerful groups and speakers and hurts the interests of less powerful groups" (p. 363). He uses the issue of immigration as an example to illustrate how manipulation may occur in political discourse. He explains that some politicians may argue that the problem of unemployment and other economic problems lie on the arrival of immigrants to their territory instead of blaming their own policies on that matter (Van Dijk, 1993; 2006). The speaker's intention may be to misinform the audience and influence their perception of immigrants to be used in the best interest of the speaker. However, it is based on the violation of the hearer's civil rights that manipulation is illegitimate rather than on the speaker's intentions, since politicians' intended goals are not always explicitly expressed and they often need to be contextually attributed by the hearer (Van Dijk, 2006).

Nevertheless, whether the candidates' expressions of commitment may be interpreted as persuasive or manipulative is beyond the scope of this research. This thesis does not focus on the veracity of the words uttered by the candidates' speeches or attempts to determine whether politicians' influence on the audience's beliefs is meant to be against the electorate interest, or whether politicians are reproducing social power in their political discourse. However, it is still relevant to pay attention to how the selection of

some semantic categories expressing commitment may contribute to persuade the audience to adhere to a particular belief or to act in a certain manner with the goal of gaining the electorate's support.

In fact, a common political activity which offers politicians the opportunity to persuade the audience to act concerns electoral campaigns and, more specifically, presidential debates. The latter ones are some of the most critical and complex political events due to the interest they raise among citizens and the wide media coverage they often receive. Consequently, politicians devote an important effort to designing, organising and preparing the performance of these campaigns since they may contribute to maintaining, gaining or losing power. It is particularly during electoral campaigns to run for office that “politicians attempt to gain citizens’ confidence and support to achieve their ultimate goal, namely, obtain their votes” in order to be in the presidential office (Ferrer-Navas, 2019).

Politicians make serious efforts to disseminate persuasive messages that contribute to project a positive self-image that help prospective voters perceive them as capable and committed candidates. They also attempt to make promises that reveal their willingness to address and resolve the main concerns of the electorate. Guerini & Castelfranchi (2006) identify a connection between persuasion and the type of commitment in which the speaker commits to follow certain course of action desired by the audience. They argue that some promises may be performed to persuade the electorate to give support to the speaker's candidacy. What is more, politicians find opportunities to persuade their audiences about the appropriateness or the need to follow a particular course of action or they even urge audiences more straightforwardly to act (Marín-Arrese, 2021; 2023).

This thesis dissertation aims at identifying and quantifying some of the linguistic strategies that politicians use to express commitment in primaries and presidential elections, particularly in televised presidential debates, in order to gain the necessary electorate's support to reach the office. It provides a stance approach to the expression of commitment and puts forward a taxonomy on the expression of commitment for the analysis of the corpus containing the contributions of a significant number of candidates partaking in the US presidential debates. Some of the lexical realizations of the expression of commitment are accomplished through performative verbs while others consist of lexico-grammatical elements which express a commitment by means of indirect speech acts. Therefore, this chapter attempts to provide the theoretical framework for the study of the expression of commitment and its convergence with speech act theory and the notion of *stance*.

3.2. The Expression of Commitment

Although expressions of commitment occur relatively often in daily interactions in both the private sphere, which involves interactions in personal and family relationships; and the public sphere, such as professional settings, transactions, the media, and political activities, some scholars from the fields of semantics and argumentation highlight the public character of this notion (Hamblin, 1970).

The term *commitment* has been traditionally associated with promises, which are a core element of this notion. In political discourse, promises play a vital role in the parliamentary activity and, even more, in electoral campaigns, in which presidential candidates require the support of the electorate to be in office and implement their plans of action. Because of their relevance in presidential campaigns and in presidential debates, an independent section is devoted to discussing the literature referring to this

language act and the principles and rules involved in the successful performance of promises. However, before delving into such discussion, it is necessary to define the notion of *commitment* by pointing out some widespread conceptions of the term in the literature.

3.2.1. The Notion of *Commitment*

The term *commitment* has been used in multiple contexts and numerous disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy or linguistics. Within each area of knowledge, different notions of the term have been employed depending on the theoretical framework under which it has been used. Generally speaking, the acts of commitment have a significant impact upon human behaviour and social relations. Their importance relies on the fact that these acts “make individuals’ behaviour predictable in the face of fluctuations in their desires and interest”, which allows for the planning and coordination of cooperative actions between those individuals, contributes to a feeling of reliance on each other and to the maintenance of important social institutions (Michael, 2022, p. 1).

In the field of linguistics, attention has been drawn upon this term from theoretical approaches concerning speech act theory, modality and evidentiality, and formal models of dialogue, which have been extensively discussed by Brabanter & Dendale (2008). Concerning speech act theory, which emerged under the field of pragmatics in the 1960’s, the way in which individuals use language has been profusely discussed, not only to exchange information during interactions, but also to perform certain actions, known as *speech acts*.

The notion of *commitment* has been commonly categorised in the speech act theory literature as commissive speech acts, typically performed through the speech act of promising, which have been widely accepted by other speech-act theorists (Searle, 1979; Bach and Harnish, 1979). Therefore, promises have been traditionally classified as commissive speech acts, in which other types of commitment have been also included. In his taxonomy of speech acts, J. L. Austin (1962) explains that “the whole point of a commissive is to commit the speaker to a certain course of action” (p. 157). Brabanter and Dendale (2008) claim that three reasons why the notion of *commitment* has been largely associated almost exclusively with commissive speech acts are that “(i) one of the core meanings of *commitment* is promise; (ii) promises are the core type of commissive speech acts, and (iii) earlier speech-act theorists tend to use the term in a non-technical sense” (p. 2).

The speech act theory literature has also tackled the notion of *commitment* in relation to assertive speech acts, in which the speaker’s assertion of a proposition involves committing oneself to the truth of such proposition (Searle, 1979; Alston, 2000; Williamson, 1996). Although Searle’s use of the word *commitment* was initially associated with commissive speech acts (Brabanter and Deldale, 2008), he later uses the term to describe the essential rule that governs speech acts by which “the maker of an assertion commits himself to the truth of the expressed proposition” (Searle, 1979, p. 62), and describes assertions as language acts in which the speaker takes responsibility for the truth of the proposition (Searle, 1999).

Assertions has been often connected to another type of commitment, that is, “the commitment to having justifications for the propositional content” (Kissine, 2008, p. 155), which may be illustrated with Williamson’s (1996) knowledge norm, by which one

must assert *p* only if one believes *p*. This type of commitment is understood “in terms of norms governing a social practice” (Shapiro, 2020, p. 73).

Nonetheless, Kissine (2008) points out that both the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the propositional content and the speaker’s commitment to having justifications for such proposition can be traced back to the concept of “assertoric sign” conceived by Frege (1892), who claimed that thoughts forming acts of judgment involve the acknowledgement of the truth of a thought.

The notion of *commitment* as conceived in the theoretical framework of speech act theory is similar to the use of the term in studies on modality and evidentiality. In fact, Lyons (1995) refers to the illocutionary commitment associated with the speech act of asserting as “epistemic”, even though both notions do “not overlap perfectly” (Brabanter and Dendale, 2008). There has been certain controversy on the boundaries between the notions of *epistemic modality* and *evidentiality*. Palmer (2001) understands that the difference between these categories is that “with epistemic modality speakers make judgments about the factual status of the proposition, whereas with evidential modality they indicate what is the evidence that they have for it” (Palmer, 2001, p. 24). Regarding epistemic modality and its scope, Carretero and Zamorano-Mansilla (2019) describe two main conceptions, that is, “the estimation of the chances for a proposition to be or become true” in a narrow sense and “the speaker/writer’s commitment to the reliability of the information” in a broader sense (p. 133-134).

On the other hand, Palmer (1990) acknowledges some degree of overlap between epistemic modality and evidentiality in that both systems allow speakers to express lack of confidence on the truth of the statement. Likewise, Chafe (1986) considers epistemic modals as markers of judgement on the degree of reliability of the information under the domain of evidentiality. However, other authors understand that there is no overlapping

between epistemic modality and evidentiality categories, since evidential markers are neutral regarding any epistemic conception (Aikhenvald, 2004, Cornille 2009). Boye (2012) considers epistemic modality and evidentiality as two distinct domains, and as subdomains of the conceptual domain of ‘epistemicity’.

While Palmer (2001) also uses the term *commitment* when he claims that the speaker’s degree of commitment may be increased or lessened by the addition of “harmonic combinations” or “hedges”, in Halliday’s (1970) terms (p. 35), Lyons (1977) makes a distinction between objective epistemic modality, the expression of possibilities or necessities as matters of fact; and subjective epistemic modality, which quantifies “the speaker’s commitment to the truth of her utterance” (De Brabanter and Dendale, 2008, p. 5).

The evidential system concerns the specification of the source of information and evidence available to the speaker/writer, which entitles them to make a claim (Anderson 1986). Willett (1988) distinguishes between direct evidence, having a sensory source; and indirect evidence, involving both reported and inferred information. De Haan’s (1999) adds the distinction between firsthand vs. secondhand information and argues that evidentiality basically involves the identification of the source and means by which information is available, but it does not involve any epistemic judgement by the speaker/writer. Regarding indirect inferential evidence, Marín-Arrese (2017) makes a further distinction between ‘perceptual-based’ inferences “based on external sensory evidence”, ‘conceptual-based’ inferences based “speaker’s logical reasoning” or “personal assumptions”, and ‘report-based’ inferences “based on documentary evidence, oral and written reports”. (p. 199). These various forms of evidentiality have different implications regarding degrees of commitment to the information proffered. Cornillie, Marín-Arrese & Wiemer (2015) argue that “it does not seem possible to do without

reliability in any kind of judgement (assertion)” (p. 9), whether we express an epistemic evaluation or an evidential assessment. In addition, “the question still remains, as Marín-Arrese (2015) points out, that speakers/writers may make conscious choices to either enhance or mitigate the force of their assertions or to specify or mystify the source and mode of access to the evidence in order to exercise epistemic control in discourse” (Cornillie, Marín-Arrese & Wiemer 2015, p. 9).

Finally, a third area of linguistics in which the term *commitment* has been extensively discussed is related to the formal models of dialogue. As opposed to its conception in speech act theory and modality, the notion is understood as a set of language acts which constrain conversational moves, which are referred to as “statement-stores” (Hamblin 1970, p. 257). In more general terms, some questions have been raised on whether speakers commit to what they say or to what they mean in a conception of *commitment* as “speaker’s endorsement or distance from what they communicate” (Bonalumi et al., 2020, p. 361). Some authors (Morency, Oswald, and De Saussure, 2008) claim that speaker’s degree of commitment is higher when the meaning is explicitly encoded in the proposition, whereas others (Bonalumi et al., 2020) argue that there are good reasons “to positively expect commitments to be tied to ‘what is meant’, and not ‘what is said’” due to contextual factors mutually known by the participants, according to the theoretical framework of the relevance theory, except for ritual acts associated to legal settings or marriage ceremonies in which individuals perform or exchange vows in a more ritualized manner (p. 363).

Literature regarding the model of dialogue has suggested an account of speech acts “in which commitment can bear on a variety of objects” (Brabanter and Dendale, 2008, p. 8). According to Brabanter and Dendale (2008), different speech acts commit the speaker to different aspects; for example, directive speech acts commit the speaker to

a particular ‘outcome’, questions commit speakers to a ‘propositional abstract’; and exclamations to a ‘fact’ (p.8). The notion of *commitment* and *commitment to an outcome* will be further developed in section 3.2.3.

3.2.2. The Contribution of SAT to the Understanding of the Expression of Commitment.

Speech act theory has developed under the paradigm of pragmatics, which is a subdiscipline of Linguistics largely devoted to understanding the context-dependent meanings of daily interactions. Interpreting the speaker’s intentions in those interactions is by no means an easy endeavour. This process may become even more complex in monologic communication in which the audience is not often given the opportunity to engage in the process of negotiation of meaning (Fetzer, 2013), which may result in a discrepancy between the speaker’s intention and the audience’s force attribution. In this context, speech act theory has become an influential theoretical framework to understand how meaning is negotiated in different communicative contexts. The hearer’s construction and calculation of the speaker’s intended meaning has been particularly relevant in political discourse and, therefore, may result also useful in the analysis of the expression of commitment in electoral debates.

3.2.2.1. An Introduction to Speech Act Theory

An interest in language functions led to a shift from a theoretical grammar paradigm to the language user paradigm during the second part of the 20th century. It is in this context that the theory of speech acts emerges under the field of pragmatics, which

focuses on the study of language in use, and draws attention to acts or actions that are accomplished in the process of speaking.

Although providing a definition of *Pragmatics* is a difficult task, the conceptions of some scholars of this paradigm may become helpful for such endeavour. Morris (1938) defines pragmatics as “the study of the relation of signs to interpreters” (p. 6). On the other hand, Mey (1993) claims that communication is determined by certain principles of society. Therefore, he defines pragmatics as “the study of the conditions of human language uses as these are determined by the context of society” (Mey, 1993, p. 42). More recently, Thomas (1995) defines pragmatics as “meaning in interaction” since the process of assigning meaning to an utterance is dynamic and involves the negotiation of meaning between the speaker and the hearer, the context of utterance, and its potential meaning (p. 22).

The emergence of pragmatics as a distinct discipline in the 1960’s was partly prompted by the study of some philosophers who noticed that a significant number of language problems remained unexplained under logic-like rules devised for explaining syntax or under truth-based formalisms. Some have referred to pragmatics as a “waste-basket” of linguistics, where linguists from areas such as syntax and semantics dropped unresolved problems of language which very often were considered to be unworthy of their attention (Mey 2001). From this perspective, a linguistic description was only valid if it was syntax oriented. Chomsky (1984) had described language as “a set of well-formed sentences”, which served as a criterion that should be the basis of the analysis of any type of linguistic production.

Pragmaticians revealed the importance of approaching linguistics with a focus on meaning in context rather than on abstract meaning when interpreting an utterance. In other words, the meaning of an utterance is largely determined to by the total human

context of use, or “by how it responds and how it is responded to, by its place in an interactional sequence” (Bilmes, 1986, p. 127). Lakoff (1971), for example, makes referenced to some “extralinguistic factors”, which should be also examined as part of the analysis of “well-formedness”. Moreover, other linguists turned to pragmatics when dealing with issues such as the way people understand each other or the role of meaning within a language system with interacting levels of structure, whose semantic theories became inadequate for these purposes.

J. L. Austin attempts to challenge the logical positivists by providing insight about what actually occurs in language with his work *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). He develops his speech act theory in which he explains that we do not merely make assertions when using language, but we also perform actions. He draws attention to the use of ordinary language, which had been considered as an illegitimate variant of the pure language of logic by some linguists and logicians whose conception of language was explained in terms of logic. Under his theory, the context of the utterance will take a relevant role in assigning its meaning. However, assigning contextual meaning may be a difficult task on some occasions and, consequently, the hearer needs to work out alternative interpretations. Austin (1962) introduces the concept of *force* to deal with this communicative difficulty, which will be further discussed below, and relates to the idea that we often say more than what our words actually say. Similarly, Thomas (1995) will use the term *force* to refer to the speaker’s communicative intention and distinguishes three different levels of meaning, namely, the abstract meaning, which applies to words, phrases and utterances; the context meaning, which concerns the process of assigning sense and reference to the words uttered by the speaker; and the force of an utterance. Which is the speaker’s communicative intention.

Under this pragmatic paradigm, speech act theory “revives the interest in aspects of language other than those belonging to formal domains and thus opens possibilities for a systematic study of language seen as action” (Ilić & Radulović, 2015, p.20). Even though some of the issues addressed by speech act theory had already discussed “or at least hinted” by Western philosophers and linguists (Verschueren & Östman, 2009, p.229), this theory puts the focus on the conception of utterances as actions.

3.2.2.2. J. L Austin’s Contribution to Speech Act Theory

The beginning of speech act theory as known today is based on the observations that J. L. Austin (1962) discussed in a series of lectures collected in his monograph *How to Do Thing with Words*. His theory has become an influential work for numerous approaches of linguistic analysis. Austin’s (1962) lectures challenge the research carried out by philosophers of language in the mid-twenty century who had focused on the ‘truth-functional’ definition of semantics in the Carnapian tradition when he argued that “it was for too long the assumptions of philosophers that the business of a ‘statement’ can only be to ‘describe’ some state of affairs, or to ‘state some fact’, which may be either truly or falsely” (p.1).

Having highlighted the impossibility of verifying the truth or falsity of certain utterances, Austin establishes a distinction between constative and performative utterances. His theory refers to those utterances which could be determined to be true or false as constatives, whereas utterances whose frame of reference was not the truth-conditionality, because the speaker was performing an action by uttering those words under specific circumstances, were classified as performatives. Austin (1962) provides some examples that illustrate the use of performative utterances in a variety of situations. He claims that by uttering the sentence “I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth”, the

speaker is not describing what he is doing at that moment, but performing the action described by the verb. According to Austin, it is this type of utterances that cannot be considered as a true or false statement, but as the performance of an actual action (pp. 5-6).

Austin proposed the performative formula to distinguish performatives from constatives, which consisted in using the personal pronoun “I” followed by the present simple form of the verb which expressed in an explicit manner the intended action performed, as illustrated in the example “I promise that I shall be there” (Austin, 1962, p. 69). He referred to this sort of utterances as explicit performatives. Austin encouraged the use of the adverb *hereby* to test the performativity of the verb. Accordingly, the performativity of the verb *promise* could be tested by uttering “I hereby promise that I shall be there”. However, Austin acknowledged that the performative formula does not guarantee the successful identification of performative sentences. In fact, some speech acts cannot be accomplished by using such performative formula.

On the other hand, Austin points out certain conditions that are to be fulfilled for a speech act to be valid or successful. While constative sentences could be classified according to their truth-validity. He proposes the terms “happy” and “unhappy”, or “felicitous” and “infelicitous”, to refer to the success or failure of the action that the speaker intends to perform by uttering certain words. Philosophers of language had devoted a great amount of their research on determining the truth-validity of constative sentences. However, one of the main contributions of Austin was to identify those necessary conditions under which performatives were successfully accomplished. Austin (1962) develops his doctrine of infelicities to explain the necessary circumstances under which an utterance can successfully perform an action as follows:

- (A. 1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,
- (A. 2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
- (B. 1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
- (B. 2) completely.
- (C. 1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, as further
- (C. 2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently. (pp. 14-15)

Austin identifies three different types of infelicities. The first category refers to violations of the conditions (A.1) and (A.2) as examples of “misinvocations”. That type of infelicity takes place when a particular speech act is invoked by a person who has not the authority to perform the intended speech act or the circumstances under which it has been invoked are not appropriate. For example, a wedding ceremony cannot be successfully performed unless the wedding officiant who utters the corresponding ceremony words is in a position of authority to perform such act. A second category involves acts violating conditions (B1) and (B2). This type of infelicity, “misexecutions”, takes place when the procedure cannot be applied “as purported” because of mistakes or omissions. Taking the previous example, if the person who are getting married fails to properly sign the legal documents, the act would have not been completed and successfully performed. A third category of infelicities, which is named by Austin as “abuses”, involves the conditions (Γ.1) and (Γ.2). In this case, the failure is the result of having performed the intended speech act without the thoughts, feelings or intentions that the participants involved in the process are expected to have. Unlike violations of the conditions (A.1) and (B.1), the speech act is performed. One of the examples Austin uses to illustrate this sort of infelicity is the case of promises. He argues that a person can utter the words “I promise” without having the intention of doing what has been promised. Mey (1993) provides an example related to the institution of marriage in the Roman

Catholic Church, in which having no intention of consummating the marriages “or even the withholding of one’s intention to get married [...] is sufficient to render the marriage null or void” (p. 114).

However, Austin realised that the felicity conditions of performatives could be also apply to constative sentences. He attempted to prove that the falsity of those utterances was “a feature of the unhappiness of performatives” (Mabaquiao, 2018, p. 7). He argues that both descriptive and effective aspects can be identified in these utterances and, therefore, constative sentences may also be unhappy. He illustrates this point with several sentences. The sentence “All John’s children are bald” presupposes that John has children. If that would not be the case, the sentence would be void in the same manner as performatives which are not uttered under the necessary circumstances are null. Likewise, the utterance “The cat is on the mat” would be abused, or insincere, if the speaker does not believe in what is being stated, which may resemble the case of promises made even when the speaker has not the intention of fulfilling them. Therefore, constatives could be false if what it has been asserted does not correspond with the state of affairs in the world that the speaker attempts to describe, but they could be also unhappy if the speaker does not believe in what is being said.

Austin eventually abandoned the initial distinction between constative and performative utterances to develop classification of the types of acts that speakers perform when using language through which utterances can be analysed as a three-dimensional speech act. He distinguished between the locutionary act, the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary act. The locutionary act refers to the action of producing an utterance according to the grammatical rules of a particular language, and it is related to the literal meaning of the words uttered by the speaker. The illocutionary act, on the other hand, refers to the performance of an utterance with an intention and has been discussed

extensively not without difficulty in the literature. The third category is the perlocutionary act, which consists of the effect of the utterance upon the hearer's feelings, thoughts, or actions. Those effects cannot be always predicted since they are dependent on various circumstances under which the utterance takes place. Austin (1962) exemplifies this distinction of the three acts with the utterance *shoot her*, and identifies the locutionary act, meaning by *shoot* the action of firing with a gun and by *her*; the illocutionary act, the speaker is giving advice or ordering; and the perlocutionary act, the hearer is persuaded to shoot her.

Likewise, Austin (1962) made a distinction between "explicit performatives", utterances in which the speaker's intention was explicitly stated, as in the sentence "I promise I'll be there"; and "primary utterances", in which the action performed is not clearly stated. Therefore, the sentence "I'll be there", an example of a primary utterance, may be interpreted as an intention, a promise, or a prediction depending on the circumstances under which those words are uttered. Levison (1983) provides a clear description of Austin's revaluation of his theory as follows:

Firstly, there is a shift from the view that performatives are a special class of sentences with peculiar syntactic and pragmatic properties, to the view that there is a general class of performative utterances that includes both **explicit performatives** (the old familiar class) and **implicit performatives**, the latter including lots of other kinds of utterances, if not all. Secondly, there is a shift from the dichotomy performative/constative to a general theory of **illocutionary acts** of which the various performatives and constatives are just special sub-cases. (p. 231)

Even though the theory of speech acts as proposed by Austin has originated some debate and discussion, there is no doubt of the relevance and influence of his work on the field of philosophy of language and linguistics the following decades until today. Other philosophers such as P. Grice and J. R. Searle would also make important contributions to provide further insight into speech act theory.

3.2.2.3. H. P. Grice: From What Is Said to What Is Meant

H. P. Grice was found among the philosophers of language who were concerned about the use of ordinary language. The theory of speech acts proposed by Austin and Searle, along with his Theory of Implicatures have contributed to the development of Pragmatics as an independent discipline. Although his research was not mainly concerned on the issues addressed by Austin, his earlier articles would influence some aspects of speech act theory.

One problematic area that Austin's speech act did not explain was the way in which hearers interpret what speakers mean from what they say. It is generally accepted that people say things with the intention of conveying information that goes above and beyond the literal meaning of their words. On certain occasions, the speaker may be able to perform several illocutionary acts through a locutionary act, using Austin's terminology. Grice's theory of implicature attempts to provide further understanding on how a hearer is able to identify the intended illocutionary force by focusing on the process through which implicatures arise and are understood. Even though there are still some problems of his theory that remain unexplained, the influence of the ideas proposed by Grice concerning conversation and implicatures have had a significant impact on numerous theories developed in the fields of philosophy and linguistic pragmatics.

Austin's distinction between locutionary acts, what the speaker says, and illocutionary acts, the speaker's intention in uttering those words, made evident that speakers usually mean something beyond the actual words they utter in a particular situation. Grice (1989) establishes a connection between meaning and intention when he claims that "A [agent] meant something by x [utterance]' is (roughly) equivalent to 'A intended the utterance of x to produce some effect in an audience by means of the

recognition of his intention” (p. 220). Therefore, speakers mean something by uttering certain if they utter utterance with the intention of inducing a perlocutionary effect by means of the recognition of this intention. As pointed out by Searle (2007), his originality lies in the self-referentiality of the intention, which “is not just to produce an effect, but to produce an effect by getting the hearer to recognize the intention to produce that very effect” (p. 11).

In his theory, Grice describes two types of implicatures that may arise in daily conversations, namely, *conventional implicatures* and *conversational implicatures*. The former ones are bound to the literal meaning of the utterance. Their implicated meaning occurs because of the conventional meaning of the words regardless of the context in which the utterance occurs. Grice (1975) illustrates this type of implicature with the utterance “He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave” (p.44). He explains that a hearer will understand that what is implicated from these words is that his being brave is the consequence of being an Englishman. The word “therefore” always carries such implication, no matter in which situation it occurs.

On the other hand, conversational implicatures seem to be more complex since they are dependent to the context in which they are uttered. Through this type of implicatures, the speaker conveys some content that is not explicitly expressed because it is not part of the literal meaning of the words that a particular speaker says. Some linguistic features of conversational implicatures are their cancellability and detachability, which are notions particularly interesting in the field of political discourse.

Grice attempts to explain how these implicatures are generated and interpreted by a hearer. In order to explain such a complex process, he develops The Cooperative Principle and four cooperative maxims that attempt to explain the regularities speakers observe in daily interactions (Thomas, 1995, p. 62). The Cooperative Principle, which is

based on those engaging in a conversation are rational agents, consists of making the speaker's contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged (Grice 1989, p. 26).

The Cooperative Principle will be fulfilled when a speaker observes nine maxims of cooperative behaviour that ensure that their communicative intention in uttering certain words is identified by the hearer. Grice classifies those maxims under four categories, namely, *Maxims of Quality*, *Maxims of Quantity*, *Maxim of Relation* and the *Maxim of Manner*. Under the category of Quantity, Grice (1989) includes two maxims:

1. Make your contribution as informative as required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required. (p.26)

The category of Quality concerns the supermaxim 'try to make your contribution one that is true'. Grice acknowledges that it may be argued that such category is disputable because the speaker who is providing unnecessary information is simply wasting time rather than transgressing the Cooperative Principle. However, he claims that being over-informative may confuse and mislead a hearer. This category is developed through two more specific maxims:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say for which you lack adequate evidence. (Grice, 1989, p. 27)

Regarding the category of Relation, there is only one maxim involved, namely, 'be relevant'. Finally, the category of Manner relates to the supermaxim 'be perspicuous', which is followed by four specific maxims:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
3. Be orderly. (Grice, 1989, p. 27)

Based on speaker's rationality, Grice (1989) argues that speakers will generally adhere to the Cooperative Principle and the maxims by making the statement below:

... anyone who cares about the goal that are central to conversation/communication (such as giving and receiving information, influencing and being influenced by others) must be expected to have an interest, given suitable circumstances, in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable only in the assumption that they are conducted in general accordance with the Cooperative Principle and the maxims. (p. 30)

Although he assumes that speaker tend to observe the Cooperative Principle and the maxims, he explains that a speaker may fail to observe them by violating a maxing, when speakers do not cooperate unostentatiously in an attempt to mislead the hearer; by opting out a maxim, when speakers indicate their unwillingness to cooperate according to those maxims and the CP, or by flouting a maxim, when the speaker do not observe a maxim deliberately to generate an implicature. Grice (1989) claims that when a speaker flouts a maxim, the hearer will assume that an appropriate meaning needs to be implicated from the utterance instead of reaching the conclusion that the utterance is nonsense (p. 26). Therefore, by flouting one of these maxims, a speaker deliberately generates an implicature. Through his theory, Grice establishes a clear distinction between what is said and what is implicated.

Therefore, Grice (1989) makes a distinction between three groups of conversational implicatures which are illustrated with several examples. The first group belong to those implicatures in which no maxims are thought to be violated by the speaker. He illustrates this group with the following example:

A: I am out of petrol.

B: There is a garage round the corner. (Grice, 1989, p.32)

In this example, there seems to be no reason to think that the *maxim of Relation* 'be relevant' has been infringed provided that the speaker believes that the garage is open and there is petrol available to sell. He exemplifies a second group of conversational

implicatures in which the speaker seems to violate a maxim because of a clash with another maxim:

A: Where does C live?

B: Somewhere in the South of France. (Grice 1989, p. 32)

The speaker does not observe the maxim “make your contribution as informative as is required”, under the *category of Quantity*, since providing further details would involve the infringement of the maxim “do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence”, which belongs to the category of Quality. (Grice 1989, p. 32)

The third group identified by Grice concerns those cases in which a maxim is exploited to generate the implicature. He exemplifies this group with the writing of a testimonial about a student who is applying for a philosophy job, whose letter reads as follows: “Dear Sir, Mr. X’s command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular.” (Grice 1989, p. 33). The reader may reach the conclusion that the writer, who is assumed to know well his pupils, is reluctant to cooperate since he is believed to be aware that further information is required in a hiring process. Therefore, by flouting the maxim of Quantity, the reader may conclude that the writer thinks the pupils is not good at philosophy.

These examples belong to the category described by Grice as *particularized conversational implicature*, which require some knowledge on the context to be inferred since they are computed through context-sensitive inferences. Had those utterances taken place in a different communicative context, the implicatures described may not have been inferred. As opposed to this type of conversational implicature, he also identifies generalized conversational implicatures, which are implicatures which are inferred by the reader effortlessly as if they were default inferences. Grice (1989) illustrates the latter one

with the utterance “X is meeting a woman this evening”, in which the speaker generally implicates that such is not X’s wife, relative or friend (p.37).

In his theory, Grice (1989) claims that there are certain common features that characterize conversational implicatures. A relevant feature that he explains is the cancelability of generalized conversational implicatures. He points out that speakers may cancel an implicature, even in an explicit manner, since they are able to opt out of the observation of the CP. He refers to a second aspect of implicatures, which is the feature of nondetachability. Since conversational implicatures are triggered by the semantic content of what has been said, along with the contextual and background information, not by the conventional meaning of the linguistic expression, rephrasing the utterance would not generally involve any change in the implicature that has been generated. Grice also explains that a conversational implicature is not part of the conventional meaning or force of the expressions used to generate such implicature. Likewise, the truthfulness of an implicature cannot be determined by the truth-validity of what has been said. A fifth feature relates to the indeterminacy of implicatures, which means that several interpretations may be given to the same utterance.

Although the description of these features is useful to identify conversational implicatures, Grice acknowledges that they are not sufficient to distinguish a conversational implicature from what was originally a conversational implicature that has become conventionalized. Moreover, Searle will argue that observing the Cooperative Principle is not sufficient to understand the process through which a hearer is able to identify an illocutionary force, as discussed in the following section.

On the other hand, Bach (1994) argues that Grice’s distinction between what is said and what is implicated is not complete since there is a need “to distinguish not only the implied from the explicit but also the implicit from the implied” (p. 124). Therefore,

he proposes the distinction between Grice's notion of *conversational implicature* to refer to those utterances in which the speaker says something and *implicature*, which refers to utterances in which the speaker says something and communicates something else "instead". Bach (1994) points out two processes through which speakers can mean something even if they do not make it completely explicit, namely the process of *completion* and the process of *expansion*. The former one consists of utterances in which a complete proposition is not expressed by virtue of the meaning of the words it contains and, therefore, it requires a process of *completion* to be understood. On the contrary, the process of *expansion* is related to utterances which do not express a complete proposition "but some other proposition [...] is being communicated by the speaker" (Bach, 1994, p. 122). He also argues that the process of *expansion* involves "lexical strengthening" since the what the speaker communicates could have been conveyed in an explicit manner by adding "lexical material". Both processes result in what Bach refers to as *conversational implicature*.

Therefore, Bach makes a three-fold distinction between what is said, implicature and implicature. As opposed to what has been communicated explicitly, both implicatures and implicatures are cancellable and vague; however, the way they go beyond the actual words uttered are different. In the case of implicatures, what is said and what is meant are propositions conceptually different. On the contrary, implicatures can be understood from the explicit meaning of the utterance if the necessary "lexical material" would have been added by the speaker. He provides an example on how both implicature and implicature may occur with the same sentence. Bach (1994) explains that from the sentence "Mary has a boyfriend" the implicature that Mary has only one friend could have been made from the actual words uttered while several implicatures, such as the idea that Mary is not a lesbian or Mary is getting divorce, could be made by the hearer depending on the context

in which those words were uttered (p. 138). Therefore, while implicatures are implied from what the speaker says in an utterance, implicatures involve implicit information in the words the speaker says.

All in all, despite of other linguistic phenomena which may have received less attention by linguists and philosophers of language, both Austin's and Grice's contributions have been critical to conclude that understanding utterances do not only consist of decoding the words uttered. Their works reveal several processes which are involved in understanding an utterance said by a speaker in a particular context.

3.2.2.4. J. R. Searle's Contribution to Speech Act Theory

J. R. Searle will accept some of the hypotheses postulated by J. L. Austin, and he will further develop his speech act theory. Some of his contributions are related to the distinction between the utterances and the propositional acts, the distinction he makes between the effects of illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts, and a consistent taxonomy of speech acts.

Although Searle had been influenced by Austin's lectures on speech acts, there are relevant innovations in his work on speech act theory. His research will focus mainly on what Austin called *illocutionary acts*, to which he will refer as *speech acts*, which are considered as the minimal units of linguistic communication. Searle (1969) identifies at least three acts that take place simultaneously when a speaker expresses an utterance. Drawing on Austin's distinction between locutions and illocutions, he distinguishes between the "utterance act", the production of a string of words; the "propositional content", the content of a sentence according to the meaning of a particular statement, that is, referring and predicating; and the "illocutionary force", the speaker's intention in

uttering certain words. Searle's (1969) innovation with regards to Austin's proposal consists of distinguishing the propositional content of an utterance from its illocutionary force or intention, as shown in the sentences below:

1. Sam smokes habitually.
2. Does Sam smoke habitually?
3. Sam, smoke habitually!
4. Would that Sam smoke habitually. (p. 22)

In these sentences, the speaker uses different utterance acts with the same propositional content or reference and predication, that is, "Sam" and "smokes habitually", to perform different speech acts, such as asserting, asking a question, or ordering. Although they are different acts, the propositional act cannot occur without the illocutionary act.

Similarly, he also discusses Austin's notion of "perlocutionary acts" to add a distinction between the effects of illocutionary acts and those of perlocutionary acts upon people's "actions, thoughts, or beliefs" (Searle, 1969, p. 25). According to Searle, speakers usually accomplish a particular illocutionary act with a given perlocutionary effect in mind. He claims that a speaker may persuade the hearer to do something (perlocutionary act) by performing the speech act of informing.

On the other hand, he proposes the "principle of expressibility" to claim that anything a speaker can say can be meant. He explains that such a principle does not mean that a speaker will be always able to find an expression to accomplish all the intended effects in the hearer since he distinguishes between what the speaker means and the intended effects that the speaker wants to produce in the hearer. Similarly, this principle will not imply that what is said will be always understood by the hearer.

By assuming this principle of expressibility and the hypothesis above-mentioned which claims that the speech act is the minimal unit of communication, Searle (1969) finds analytic connections between “the notion of speech acts, what the speaker means, what the sentence uttered means (or other linguistic element), what the speaker intends, what the hearer understands, and what the rules governing the linguistic elements are” (p. 21). Searle (1969) had accepted Austin’s hypothesis that language is governed by conventions when he hypothesises that “speaking a language is engaging in a rule-governed form of behaviour” (p. 16). Although he acknowledges the role played by Gricean intentions in communication, he claims that Grice and Strawson views fail to distinguish between acts performed successfully in virtue of getting the addressee to identify the speaker’s intention to achieve the intended effect and those acts for which such recognition is possible by means of hearer’s knowledge of certain rules governing the elements of the utterance. For Searle, therefore, convention plays again a critical role in the successful performance of speech acts, and he conceives rules as a conventional association between a particular act and its consequences. Searle (1969) revisited the Gricean analysis of meaning as follows:

1. Grice's original analysis

Speaker *S* means *mn* something by *X* =

(a) *S* intends (/i) the utterance *U* of *X* to produce a certain perlocutionary effect *PE* in hearer *H*.

(b) *S* intends *U* to produce *PE* by means of the recognition of /i. 2. Revised analysis

S utters sentence *T* and means it (i.e., means literally what he says) = *S* utters *T* and

(a) *S* intends (/i) the utterance *U* of *T* to produce in *H* the knowledge (recognition, awareness) that the states of affairs specified by (certain of) the rules of *T* obtain. (Call this effect the illocutionary effect, *IE*)

(b) *S* intends *U* to produce *IE* by means of the recognition of /i.

(c) *S* intends that */-1* will be recognized in virtue of (by means of) *H*'s knowledge of (certain of) the rules governing (the elements of) *T*. (pp. 49-50)

Searle distinguishes between two different types of rules, that is, “regulative rules”, which are logically independent from any existing form of behaviour; and “constitutive rules”, which constitute forms of behaviour whose existence is dependent on those rules. As a result, Searle (1969) claims that “speaking a language is performing acts according to rules”, and therefore, a language can be regarded as “a conventional realization of a series of sets of underlying constitutive rules”, and speech acts as acts which are carried out by means of utterances that harmonizes with those constitutive rules (pp. 36-37). According to his view, performing an illocutionary act involves the observation of some conventional rules that are constitutive of a particular act.

In an attempt to systemize and formalize Austin's theory, Searle (1969) identifies a set of conditions or rules that have to be met for a speech act to be felicitously (pp. 62-63). He calls his first rule the propositional content condition, under which the performance of a particular speech act requires an appropriate propositional content. The preparatory conditions have to do with real-world prerequisites to an illocutionary act, usually related to the social status of the interlocutors. The sincerity condition relates to the requisite beliefs, feelings and intentions of the speaker who performs the speech act. Finally, Searle identifies the essential condition, by which the speaker intends that an utterance be acted upon by the addressee. Although Searle (1969) affirms that those rules could be generally applied to the rest of speech acts, he focuses on the speech act of promises to identify a set of rules for “the use of illocutionary force indicating device” (p. 62). According to Searle, if the of these rules he listed is not observed, the speaker's intended speech act will be infelicitously performed.

Although Searle's classification of infelicities varies from the taxonomy proposed by Austin, there are some similarities regarding the violation of the *preparatory conditions*, which fits with Austin's *misinvocations*, and in the *sincerity condition*, which corresponds to what Austin called *abuses*. These conditions will be further discussed when dealing with the speech act of promising.

3.2.2.5. Different Approaches to Speech Act Theory

For J. L. Austin, social conventions play a key role in the performance of an illocutionary act since they need to observe "felicity conditions" to be successfully performed. However, some theorists claim that the speech acts he described in his theory are highly ritualized, as in the case of performing a marriage or christening a ship and, therefore, neglect speech acts that people performed on a daily basis that are not dependent on any set of institutions and conventions. (Harris et al., 2017, pp. 2-3). Bach and Harnish (1979) argue that it is appealing to distinguish conventional illocutionary acts from this type of communicative illocutionary acts. Harris et al. (2017) identify as one of the main issues that the conventionalist approach may have to solve is "to account for semantic indetermination" since a speech act is rarely determined by the linguistic meaning of the expressions that the speaker may have used to perform the act (p.44). A good example of this challenge is the indirect speech acts, which will be discussed below, and non-literal speech acts. Bach and Harnish (1979) also acknowledge these cases are particularly problematic for the conventionalist approach.

On the other hand, Grice's approach to speech act theory highlights the importance of the speaker's intention in performing certain illocutionary act. Harris et al. (2017) point out that such account allows for a three-fold distinction of the necessary conditions to perform a speech act successfully. They explain that performing an

illocutionary act successfully requires to produce the utterance with an intention, which the audience should recognize to identify the sort of response the hearer is expected to produce. Production of that response, in turn, involves a further sort of perlocutionary success. Strawson and Bach and Harnish will adapt Grice terminology to the speech act theory (Harris et al., 2017).

Unlike the Gricean's approach, authors such as Millikan will provide an alternative account in which the success of a speech act can lie at least on some occasions on their "proper function". For example, causing belief is the proper function of assertions such as a result of a natural selection, that is, past successes in achieving causing belief through assertions make this type of speech act to be reproduced. The author illustrates this process by claiming that "a proper imperative mood is to induce the action described, and a proper function of the indicative mood is to induce belief in the proposition expressed" (Millikan, 2005, p. 157).

Similar to the intentionalist perspective provided by Grice, some theories claim that performing a speech act consists of expressing the speaker's state of mind. Harris et al. (2018) point out that, "whereas intentionalists categorize speech acts in terms of psychological responses they are intended to *produce* in addressees, [...] expressionists categorize speech acts in terms of the different kinds of states in the speaker's mind that they express" (p. 10). However, authors such as Green (2007) claim that expressing mental states may not always involve presupposing intentional control. However, he claims that performing speech acts involve making the speaker's thought manifest in an intentional and overt manner. A challenge this approach needs to tackle, since it claims that assertions express beliefs, concerns the performance of other speech acts, which is addressed with Moore's paradox. Accordingly, the sentence "I have two hands, but I don't believe that I have two hands" is infelicitous, normatively defective, and somehow

irrational although the content of those propositions may not be contradictory or false. Condovavdi and Lauer (2012) identify another example which is Moore-paradoxical in the utterance “Take the train, but I don’t want you to take it” (Harris et al., 2018, p. 11). In this case, they argue that speech acts we canonically perform with imperative forms are expressions of “effective preference”, which will be further develop in the discussion of the expression of commitment from a stance approach.

Other theories point out that the act of asserting is normative. Williamson (2000) claims that assertions are ruled by a constitutive norm that he calls the “knowledge norm”. Accordingly, speakers must assert *p* only if they know that *p*. Therefore, a speaker is assumed to say what they belief and they have evidence that it is true, which related to Grice’s maxim of quality. Other normative accounts argue that “performing a speech act is, fundamentally, a matter of doing something that gives rise to certain rights (or entitlements) and obligation (or commitments)” (Harris et al., 2018, p. 15). Interestingly, MacFarlane (2011; 2014) understands that assertions should be understood as public commitment to the truth of their propositions in the context of assessment of each utterance.

The present landscape of speech act theory involves a wide range of influential approaches. In their analysis, Harris et al (2017) refer to the five different families above described as conventionalism, intentionalism, functionalism, expressionism and normativism. Nevertheless, it seems to be clear that the contributions of earlier theorists such as Austin, Grice and Searle have played a key role in understanding the way we perform linguistic acts in daily interactions. In the following section, we will focus the attention of the role of performative verbs in the performance of speech acts.

3.2.2.6. Performative Verbs

Austin (1962) originally used the term *performatives* to refer to utterances containing a special type of verb that, under appropriate circumstances and used performatively, performs an action, such as promising or ordering, as opposed to *constatives*, which were statements or descriptions whose truth-validity could be determined. In his account of explicit performatives, Austin (1962) explains that performative verbs usually take the “first person singular present indicative active” form, as illustrated in “I promise to do *X*” (p. 56). Similarly, Verschueren (1980) explains that this type of verbs satisfies two conditions which draw on Austin’s conception of performatives:

- (i) ‘I (hereby) V [simple pres., ind., act.] (...)’ is a grammatical sentence.
- (ii) Under normal circumstances, saying ‘I (hereby) V [simple pres., ind., act.] (...)’ is an act of V-ing {°}. (pp. 7-8).

However, Austin (1962) acknowledges that there were some exceptions in which some changes may be also accepted, such as the use of the first plural person, as in “We promise”; the second and third singular person and the passive voice, as exemplified in the utterances “you are hereby authorized to pay” and “passengers are warned to cross the track by the bridge only”; or even impersonal forms with the passive voice, as in the case of the sentence “Notice is hereby given that trespassers will be persecuted” (p. 57).

For Searle (1989), performatives are utterances containing an expression that name a particular speech act the speaker is performing (p. 86). He illustrates this notion with the example “I order you to leave the room”, in which the speaker expresses explicitly that he or she is making an order. He defines performative verbs as those verbs which occur as the main verb in a performative sentence, that is, “a sentence whose literal meaning in appropriate circumstances constitutes the performance of an illocutionary act

named by an expression in that very sentence in virtue of the occurrence of that expression” (Searle, 1989, p. 87). Searle (1989) also provides examples of various forms that performative verbs may take:

I am *asking* you to do this for me, Henry, I am *asking* you to do it for me and Cynthia and the children.
 Passengers are hereby *advised* that all flights to Phoenix have been cancelled.
 We *pledge* our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.
 I’ll come to see you next week, and that’s a *promise*. (p. 87-88)

According to Searle (1989), these examples show that performative utterances may occur in the present continuous form even though performative sentences typically take the so called “dramatic present”. Likewise, some performative sentences may be used in the passive voice some performative verbs may take the plural form. Regardless the possible forms that performative verbs may take in the accomplishment of a speech act, the occurrence of this type of verbs that describe the speech act, such as “promise”, “guarantee” or “pledge” in the case of commissives, contributes to make explicit the illocutionary act of the utterance. Therefore, if a speaker utters the sentence “I promise I shall be there”, the hearer will undoubtedly interpret that utterance as a promise.

However, the mere occurrence of a performative verb, such as *promise*, *pledge*, *commit* or *guarantee* does not involve the performance of a speech act. Austin acknowledged that his formula *I hereby promise* was not sufficient to identify performatives since sentences fitting that formula can be also descriptive under certain circumstances, as shown in the utterance ‘I protest again the verdict’. Similarly, Searle (1989) claims that “though every utterance is indeed a *performance*, only a very restrictive class are *performatives*” (p. 536). When he discusses various features that he considers to be desirable for explicit performatives, he points out that these verbs have also “non-performative literal occurrences” (p. 540). Searle points out that some prefixes, such as “I state”, “I order” or “I promise”, may be indicators of illocutionary force in

some utterances while they are part of the propositional in other cases. Therefore, these verbs also have a non-performative sense, as shown in the sentence “I promise too many things to too many people”. Philosophers such as Raz (1977) support this claim by arguing that using the verb *promise* does not necessarily mean that the speaker is performing the speech act of promising since it may be used as well to threaten the addressee, as illustrated in the utterance “I promise I’ll get you”, to make resolutions, as in the case of the utterance “I promised myself a holiday abroad this summer”; or to make emphatic statements, such as “I didn’t do it, I promise” (p. 211). These examples illustrate that, although the performative verb *promise* may help the hearer identify the intended speech act accomplished, such verb is not necessarily used with a performative sense in every utterance.

The role of performatives in accomplishing a particular speech act has been widely discussed in the literature of speech acts. The common claim that sentence structures that syntactically behaves like a declarative sentence, as in the case of “I promise you to be there at five”, spells out a performative prefix that is silent in other declaratives does not explain why “the first person and present tense are special, so that first-person present tense can spell out performative prefixes, while other cannot” (Condoravdi & Lauer, 2011, p. 1).

Some authors explain that utterances like “I promise you to be there at five” are assertions which self-guarantee their truth value (Austin, 1962; Lemmon, 1962; Hedenius, 1963; Ginet, 1979; Bierwisch, 1980, Leech, 1983). Bach and Harnish (1992) argue that “a performative sentence when used performatively is used literally, directly to make a statement and indirectly to perform the further speech act of the type (an order, say) named by the performative verb” (p. 98). They claim that a hearer is able to infer that a speaker intends to perform a particular speech act from this type of statement

through a Gricean implicature. Therefore, the hearer's interpretation of the utterance does not seem to be semantically encoded but pragmatically inferred.

Searle (1989) will argue against this claim because it fails to meet some of the "conditions of adequacy" that he develops in his account of explicit performatives:

- (1) Performative utterances are performances of the act named by the main verb (or other performative expression) in the sentence.
- (2) Performative utterances are self-guaranteeing in the sense that the speaker cannot be lying, insincere, or mistaken about the type of act being performed (even though he or she can be lying, insincere, or mistaken about the propositional content of the speech act and he or she can fail to perform the act if certain other conditions fail to obtain.
- (3) Performative utterances achieve features (1) and (2) in virtue of the literal meaning of the sentence uttered.
- (4) They characteristically take "hereby" as in "I hereby promise that I will come and see you."
- (5) The verbs in question are not ambiguous between a performative and a non-performative sense, even though the verbs have both performative and non-performative literal occurrences.
- (6) Performative utterances are not indirect speech acts, in the sense in which an utterance of "Can you pass the salt?" can be an indirect speech act of requesting the hearer to pass the salt.
- (7) Performative utterances in virtue of their literal meaning are statements with truth values.
- (8) Performative sentences typically use an unusual tense in English, the so called "dramatic present." (p. 90)

Features (1), (2) and (3) would not be compatible with an assertoric account. According to Searle (1989), making a statement commits the speaker to the truth of the propositional content, but it does not guarantee its truth value or the speaker's intention that the statement be true, since the speaker may lie or be mistaken. Searle (1989) claims that this type of accounts confuse "*being committed to having an intention with actually having the intention*" (p. 96). When it comes to promises, they simply say of themselves

that they are promises since they are self-referential, but there is no guarantee that speakers made those statements with the intention of promising. Therefore, he reasons that from the production of an utterance that states that the speaker promises cannot be derived that such utterance is an actual promise, failing to produce the self-guaranteeing feature that typically characterizes performatives.

Searle (1989) argues that performatives are declarations which create either a “linguistic entity”, such as promises, orders, and statements, or a “non-linguistic entity”, as in the case of war or marriages. He identifies the institutional nature of the latter group of declaratives which are valid as long as they are recognized as a result of an agreement between the members of a community (p. 99). He identifies three elements to explain how the literal meaning of a particular sentence can accommodate the performative and assertive meanings. He claims that the manifestation of the intention to perform an action is sufficient for its performance and performative verbs include the notion of intention in their meanings, as in the case of promises, and performative utterances are both self-referential and executive since they operate in themselves and encode the intention to perform such speech act. Therefore, the primary purpose of an utterance such as “I promise to come and see you” is not to make an assertion, but to make a promise and, therefore, Searle (1989) concludes that it is the statement that is derived from the declaration instead of the performative meaning from the assertion (p.107).

While Bach and Harnish (1992) agree with Searle that there is no ambiguity between the performative and non-performative senses of performative sentences and on the truth value of the literal meaning of performative utterances, they argue that Searle’s account does not provide sufficient evidence to unambiguously interpret whether a performative sentence is being used performatively or as a statement. Bach and Harnish

(1992) argue that performative sentences that are carried out performatively are being used “literally, directly to make a statement and indirectly to perform the further speech act of the type (an order, say) named by the performative verb” (p. 98). Like Searle, they claim that performatives have not any special semantic property. Consequently, the use of performative verbs to perform a speech act are one more linguistic strategy among the diverse forms that have been standardized for indirect uses. Although the use of standardized forms is not a requirement to perform a particular speech act, they will contribute to an easier identification of the speaker’s intention on the part of the hearer. Therefore, for Bach and Harnish (1992), performative sentences are indirect speech acts, as illustrated with the performative sentence “I order you to leave”, in which case, the hearer goes through an inferential process as follows:

- (1) He is saying "I order you to leave".
- (2) He is stating that he is ordering me to leave.
- (3) If his statement is true, then he must be ordering me to leave.
- (4) If he is ordering me to leave, it must be his utterance that constitutes the order (what else could it be?).
- (5) Presumably, he is speaking the truth.
- (6) Therefore, in stating (p. 99)

In the case of promises, Bach and Harnish explain that the phrase “I promise” is a statement which also counts as a promise, not through entailment between them or through the hearer’s inferential process. Rather, they claim that “the statement, by virtue of intentionally providing evidence for the speaker’s intention of making a promise, informs the hearer of the promise” (Bach and Harnish, 2002, p. 100). As opposed to Searle, the statement is not “constitutive” of a speech act but provides the necessary “rational basis” for the hearer to identify the speaker’s intended speech act.

Bach and Harnish (2002) also contend Searle’s description of performatives as self-guaranteeing by claiming that they do not guarantee the existence of an intention on

the part of the speaker. They argue that performatives are self-identifying because the direct statement explicitly clarifies which act is being performed but they are not more self-guaranteeing than speech acts which are not performatively accomplished (Bach and Harnish, 2002, p. 104). They have different views on what is involved in the successful performance of a speech act.

Searle's approach to performatives as declarations which produce changes in the world through "physical causation" is criticized by Bach and Harnish, who believe that they actually change the world by conventions. Moreover, they object to Searle that most of ordinary performatives are not declarations. They make a distinction between performatives which are bound to institutional contexts, such as marrying or adjourning a meeting, which are declarations, and performatives which do not involve institutional contexts to be successfully performed, as in the case of Searle's "linguistic declarations", such as promises or orders. For Bach and Harnish (2002), this group of performatives do not require any especial explanation since the mere intention of the communicative speech act "constitutes the act because the act is nothing else than verbally expressing an attitude" (p. 107), with or without of a performative verb.

In short, Bach and Harnish (2002) highlight that one of the main mistakes of Searle's account consists of conflating "performativity and communication success". Drawing on Grice's work, Bach and Harnish claim that a particular communicative act may succeed if the speaker's intention or "attitude" is recognized by the hearer, regardless of whether the hearer thinks the speaker actually has that attitude. In fact, such recognition of the speaker's communicative intention occurs even before the hearer determines whether the speaker is sincere. Bach and Harnish also disagree with Searle in that assertions are derived from the declaration. They conclude that the assertion is not derived

since it is a direct speech act. In their assertive account of performatives, this type of sentences is a direct statement that embeds prefixes, such as “I promise”, from which the performative force can be pragmatically inferred, and consequently they do not require any special explanation since they are one of the various standardized forms to perform an indirect speech act. Bach and Harnish argue that only those performatives which are bound to institutional contexts can be considered as declarations.

Recanati's (1987) provides an intermediate approach between the performative and assertive accounts above discussed. He claims that speakers perform two illocutionary acts when uttering explicit performatives, namely the declaration of the act which is being performed and the actual performance of the act. Recanati agrees with Searle in that explicit performatives are declarations. However, the declaration of the act is performed directly while the second act is performed indirectly. Unlike Bach and Harnish, Recanati (1987) considers that the declaration is “force-neutral”, and the second illocutionary force, or the indirect speech act, is ‘entailed’ by the direct act of self-referential declaration” (p. 175) in virtue of the literal meaning of the performative verb that helps the hearer to identify the speaker's intention rather than from Gricean inferential processes.

On the other hand, authors such as Green (2000, 2007) and Jary (2007) have developed an account on explicit performatives as acts of showing. Whereas Green (2000) describes a performative utterance as an assertion and an act of showing that occur simultaneously, in which the latter expresses commitment by the speaker before the hearer, Jary (2007) claims that those acts are not occurring simultaneously since speakers are showing the act that is being performed (p. 2). He supports a performative interpretation of this type of utterances drawing on Perry's (2001) reflexive-referential

account of indexicals such as “I”. Therefore, the association of the character of “I” and the nature of the act denoted will make the hypothesis that the speaker intends to perform that act highly accessible, so that strong contextual or linguistic clues will be needed to override this hypothesis. (Jary, 2007, p.225).

Corredor-Lanas (2009) argues that the “reflexive-performative” property of explicit performatives is a significant feature of this type of utterances (p.287). Similarly, Recanati (1987) argues that it requires a conventional, explicit performative formula with a conventional marker for the illocutionary force (p. 288), and a particular utterance can be classified as performative according to the utterance meaning rather than the change that has been brought about. Corredor-Lanas (2009) points out that Recanati is right when he claims that the force is not determined by the effect brought about. However, it is still unexplained the process through which uttering some words can be interpreted as performing an action. For Recanati (1987), the intention to produce a belief or an attitude by making the hearer recognize the speaker’s is not sufficient since its success must be due to the speech act itself.

3.2.2.7. Indirect Speech Acts

Language is a complex code through which its users exchange information. Messages can be conveyed in a straightforward and unambiguous manner by using direct speech acts in daily interactions. However, speakers often communicate by using indirect speech acts (ISAs), that is, utterances which do not mean what a speaker has literally said. This type of speech acts is pervasive in ordinary language.

Indirectness has been a concept extensively discussed in the speech acts theory literature. John Searle’s (1979) seminar paper “Indirect Speech Acts” analysed in detail

ISAs, which are defined as utterances “in which one speech act is performed indirectly by way of performing another” (p. 31). There may be numerous reasons why a speaker decides to convey a message in an indirect manner. Searle appeals to politeness considerations to explain why ISAs are commonly used in daily interactions. Although a theory of politeness may partially explain the use of indirectness, politeness does not seem to be the only motivation. Thomas (1995) discusses other aspects that also contribute to the use of ISAs, namely the speaker’s intention of increasing or deflecting interest in their language, improving the effectiveness of a particular message, or expressing competing goals (pp. 142-146).

Regardless of the reasons why a speaker decides to perform an ISA under certain circumstances, the most problematic aspect of this type of speech acts derives from the process through which speakers are able to implicate something else than what is explicitly expressed through the literal meaning of the words they utter. The development of the Cooperative Principle and the maxims along with the features of conversational implicatures identified by Grice provided an important insight on how the speaker is able to implicate what is meant from what is said. Such distinction will be in numerous contemporary pragmatic theories, which also acknowledge the Gricean conception of human communication as rational and based on communicative principles. However, Philosophers such as J. R. Searle believes that there are more aspects that interact in the process of identifying and understanding implicatures. He claims that interlocutors rely “on their mutual shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer” (Searle, 1979, pp. 46-47). To illustrate his point, he makes a reconstruction of the steps followed by a hearer to interpret an utterance like “Can you pass the salt?” as a request. Searle (1979) explains:

Step 1: Y has asked me a question as to whether I have the ability to pass the salt (fact about the conversation).

Step 2: I assume that he is cooperating in the conversation and that therefore his utterance has some aim or point (principles of conversational cooperation).

Step 3: The conversational setting is not such as to indicate a theoretical interest in my salt-passing ability (factual background information).

Step 4: Furthermore, he probably already knows that the answer to the question is yes (factual background information). (This step facilitates the move to step 5, but it is not essential).

Step 5: Therefore, his utterance is probably not just a question. It probably has some ulterior illocutionary point (inference from Steps 1, 2, 3 and 4). What can it be?

Step 6: A preparatory condition for any directive illocutionary act is the ability of H to perform the act predicated in the propositional content condition (theory of speech acts).

Step 7: Therefore, X has asked me a question the affirmative answer to which entail that the preparatory condition for requesting me to pass the salt is satisfied (inference from Steps 1 and 6).

Step 8: We are now at dinner and people normally use salt at dinner; they pass it back and forth, try to get others to pass it back and forth, etc. (background information).

Step 9: He has therefore alluded to the satisfaction of a preparatory condition for a request whose obedience conditions it is quite likely he wants me to bring about (inference from Steps 7 and 8).

Step 10: Therefore, in the absence of any other plausible illocutionary point, he is probably requesting me to pass him the salt. (pp. 46-47)

Although Searle's conception of speech acts relies to some extent on the literalist view, which claims that the force of a particular utterance is predictable on the basis of its morpho-syntactic structure, he includes some Gricean elements in the interpretation of ISAs. Bach and Harnish (1979) put forward an approach that is based on Searle's conception of speech acts; however, they include important innovations. One of their contributions to the theory relates to the way in which the hearer identifies the locutionary act of an utterance. They claim that such interpretation is not only the result of the conventional meaning of the words uttered, but also the outcome of an inferential process which relies on linguistic meaning and the contextual information regarding the speaker's

intention. For Bach and Harnish, “mutual contextual beliefs”, not only between a speaker and a hearer, but also among the members of a particular community, will be involved in the inferential processes occurring during the interaction. They develop three presumptions that are involved in this process, namely the presumption of literalness (PL), by which the hearer knows when the speaker is or is not beyond the bounds of literalness; the linguistic presumption (LP), the moral belief that members of a particular community share; and the communicative presumption (CP)

The various theories proposed on ISAs differ in the role assigned to the propositional content literally present in the utterance and its illocutionary force to interpret the ISA the speaker is performing. Ruytenbeek (2021) claims that literalism which characterize the classic speech act theory is not popular nowadays, even though he argues that, in an attempt to consider the intuitions on which the literalist perspective is based, “some contemporary authors propose that sentence-types should be defined with a reference to illocutionary forces [,which is] compatible with the more recent theoretical development on IASs” (pp. 26-27).

3.2.2.8. Taxonomies of Speech Acts

The literature on speech acts provides several classifications of illocutionary acts (Austin, 1962; Fraser, 1974; Searle, 1975; Bach & Harnish, 1979; Wierzbicka, 1987), which seems to be far from being an easy endeavour since there is no agreement on such taxonomy. In his lectures, Austin (1962) attempted to provide a preliminary classification of types of utterances based on their illocutionary force. He identifies five different types of speech acts, even though he acknowledges that they are not clear-cut categories. The first group of speech acts are named *verdictives*, which refer to those speech acts giving a verdict by a jury, arbitrator, or umpire based on some kind of evidence. He makes a

distinction between judicial acts, which are *verdictives*; and *legislative* and *executive* acts, which he considers to be *exercitives*. According to Austin (1962), this group are related to the concepts of “truth and falsity, soundness and unsoundness and fairness and unfairness” (p. 153). A second group of speech acts are called *exercitives*. Austin explains that this category relates to the exercise of “powers, rights or influence”. They involve the act of giving a decision that favours or opposes certain actions, such as appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, warning, and so on. The third group refers to commissive speech acts, in which speakers commit themselves to act in a particular manner. This category also includes declarations or announcement of intentions. Promises will be the one of the most representative speech acts belonging to this category. *Behabitives*, on the other hand, are concerned with expressions of attitudes and social conduct, as exemplified by illocutionary acts such as apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing, and challenging. They are particularly characterized by a special “scope for sincerity”, even though this group is subject to felicity conditions as in the case of any illocutionary act. Finally, Austin identifies a group of *expositive* speech acts that includes acts that “make plain how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation” (p. 152). This type of speech act is generally expository and includes those acts which expound ideas, clarify or conduct arguments. Along with the classification and description of each group, Austin provided a list of verbs which fall under the scope of each category. However, he acknowledged that those categories were not definite and admitted that they were not well-motivated and unambiguous.

There have been various attempts to improve Austin’s taxonomy of speech acts; however, one of the most relevant was accomplished by his student John Searle. In 1979, he publishes his work *Expression and Meaning*, in which he devotes a chapter on the taxonomy of speech acts where he explains the shortcomings of his predecessor’s

tentative taxonomy and provides some principles on which he builds a revised taxonomy of speech acts. One of the most relevant observations that Searle makes on Austin's classification has to do with the absence of principles or rules guiding the elaboration of such taxonomy. According to Searle, the lack of systematic principles, along with the use of the concepts "illocutionary acts" and "illocutionary verbs", result in the overlapping of some categories and a great diversity of meanings expressed under each of them. For example, he claims that verbs such as *dare*, *defy*, and *challenge*, which are concerned with the addressee's subsequent actions, are classified as *behabitives* alongside *apologize*, *deplore*, and *welcome*. He also argues that some verbs listed within each category do not satisfy the corresponding description provided for such groups, as illustrated by verbs such as *nominate*, *appoint* and *excommunicate*, which are not "giving of a decision in favour of or against a certain course of action" since they are performances of these actions rather than advocacies (Searle, 1989, p. 11).

After having examined the weakness of Austin's taxonomy, Searle proceeds to propose a systematic classification of speech acts based on what he calls "dimensions of variation" that determine the way in which illocutionary acts differ from each other. Although he provides twelve different dimensions, he points out that three of them play the most significant role in the development of his taxonomy, namely the illocutionary point, the purpose of the speech act; the direction of fit, whether the words uttered are intended to match the world or world is intended to match the words; and the sincerity condition, which relates to the speaker's psychological state or attitude to the propositional content of an utterance. (Searle, 1979, pp. 2-8).

Searle puts forward a taxonomy that distinguishes five different categories, which are defined based on these dimensions. He identifies a first group of speech acts called *assertives*, which commit the speaker to the truth of the propositional content, and whose

direction of fit is word-to-world. They express a belief. A second group, named *directives*, includes those speech acts whose purpose is to get the hearer to perform a particular action. Their direction of fit is world-to-word and the sincerity condition is wish or desire. He refers to a third group, which is called *commissives*, which commit the speaker to follow a specific course of future action, its direction of fit is world-to-word, and the speaker's psychological state expressed is intention. The fourth category refers to expressive speech acts. This group of illocutionary acts differs from the previous categories in that there is no direction of fit and their objective is to express the psychological state described in the sincerity condition. Moreover, the truthfulness of the proposition is presupposed. Finally, another category identified by Searle is called declarations. According to Seale, this group is characterized by the absence of direction of fit because its existence is presupposed. Finally, the fifth category to discuss is *declaratives*, which consists of performative utterances; therefore, by performing the speech act successfully, the propositional content becomes true. According to Searle, this feature distinguishes declarative speech acts from the rest of categories. Another peculiarity of this group has to do with an "extra-linguistic institution" that Seale explains as "a system of constitutive rules in addition to the constitutive rules of language" that need to be observed for the speech act to be felicitously performed. Therefore, the speaker must occupy the necessary position within the institution, in which the speech act occurs. Unlike Austin, who seemed to assume that this condition was necessary in all performatives, Searle suggest that this extra-linguistic institution is only required in certain types of speech acts.

There is no doubt about the usefulness of Austin's and Searles's contributions to understanding the communication process. In fact, it seems to be clear that speech act theory has provided a better understanding on what is taking place in the communication

process; however, it is more complex to identify the kind of actions speech acts do. Nowadays, the tentative taxonomy that was put forward by Austin, which is based on the “conventional characters of their [speech acts] effects”, is no longer influential on theorist (Kissine, 2013b). On the other hand, Strawson’s approach to speech acts claims that conventional speech acts are governed by “extra-linguistic conventions” which are required for the speech act to be successfully performed and require their satisfaction. In the case of promises, which is one of the main objects of this thesis, the success of this speech act involves keeping the promise. However, Kissine (2013b) argues that not all promises are kept. Furthermore, he claims that his distinction between conventional and non-conventional speech acts is confusing because all of them are conventional (Kissine, 2013b).

Although Searle’s attempts to provide an alternative classification to Austin’s taxonomy, his classification has been also criticised. Searle (1969) and one of his defenders, Alston (2000), claim that both the content and the illocutionary force of an utterance is determined by the linguistic meaning of such utterance. However, they have been criticised by scholars like Recanati and Kissine, the former of whom claims that his classifying principle of “direction of fit” is not completely satisfactory in some speech acts, particularly in the case of declaratives (Kissine, 2013b).

Bach and Harnish (1979), influenced by Grice’s intentionalist view, consider that utterances express successfully a mental state only if they are produced with that intention and the hearer interprets those utterances as such by the recognizing that the speaker uttered those words with that intention. This is one of the principles used by Bach and Harnish to develop their taxonomy of speech acts. Therefore, a promise can be interpreted as such if the speaker intends the hearer to believe that he has the intention of committing

himself to carry out the designated event and that the hearer believes so because he realizes that the speaker is taking the obligation of carrying out the action.

In their taxonomy, Bach and Harnish (1979) distinguish between communicative and conventional speech acts. Regarding the communicative speech acts, they distinguish between *constatives*, speaker's intention to make the hearer believe that a proposition is true; *directives*, the expression of the speaker's desires or intentions that the hearer carry out the designated action; *commissives*, speaker's expressions of their intentions to accomplish the designated action; and *acknowledgements*, the speaker's expression of feeling towards the hearer. On the other hand, conventional speech acts are classified into *effectives*, those speech acts that "effect changes in institutional states of affairs", such as a student who becomes graduated; and *verdictives*, consisting of "judgements that by convention have official, biding import in the context of the institution in which it occurs" (Bach & Harnish, 1979, pp. 110-111), both of which would correspond to Searle's *declaratives*.

It seems to be challenging to find a classification of speech acts which a give satisfactory reply to all the problems that scholars debate regarding speech act theory. However, it seems that it is widely accepted the categories of commissive and directive speech acts, which are the main object of study of the present thesis dissertation. In the following section, we will discuss in further detail commissive speech acts.

3.2.2.9. Commitment and the Speech Act of Promising

Philosophers and linguists have widely discussed whether the use of performative verbs is necessary to accomplish a particular illocutionary act (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Hacker & Raz 1977; Naverson 1967; Mey, 1993). Whereas the orthodox 'speech act

verbers' claim that a speech act counts as such only if there is a performative verb present, other authors claim that this is not the case. Austin (1962) made a distinction between *primary utterances*, those accomplished without the use of performative verbs, and *explicit performatives*, whose illocutionary acts are carried out with performative verbs that name the accomplished speech act (p. 69). He explains that the utterance "I shall be there" is an example of primary utterance, or "implicit performative", as opposed to the utterance "I promise that I shall be there", which is an example of a explicit performative, where the action that the speaker intends to accomplish in producing such utterance is explicitly expressed. For Searle (1989), only the first group are performatives since only utterances whose "illocutionary acts can be performed by uttering a sentence containing an expression that names the type of speech act" can be considered as performative (p.536). Therefore, in the sentences "I promise to come" and "I intend to come", explicit performative and implicit utterance respectively in Austin's terms, only the former one is an actual example of performative since the second example is merely making a statement about the speaker's intention, which could be interpreted as an indirect speech act of promising under certain circumstances according to Searle. Therefore, he considers that a promise, as in the case of any speech act, may be performed without using the performative verb. Similarly, Mey (1993) claims that "most binding promises are given without the verb to promise ever coming into play" (p. 116). This may be the reason why promises that are performed through an indirect speech are difficult to be distinguished from intentions.

In his theory of infelicities, Austin (1962) claims that performative utterances may go wrong if they do not take place under the appropriate conditions. This idea will be accepted by Searle (1969), who argues that a speech act can only be performed felicitously if certain conditions are fulfilled. In fact, he revises Grice's theory of

implicatures by claiming that the speaker intends his intention to be recognized by virtue of the hearer's knowledge of conventions. Searle (1969) focuses on the speech act of promising to provide a description of each condition or rules, as follows:

Rule 1. Pr is to be uttered only in the context of a sentence (or larger stretch of discourse) T, the utterance of which predicates some future act A of the speaker S. I call this the propositional content rule. It is derived from the propositional content conditions 2 and 3.

Rule 2. Pr is to be uttered only if the hearer H would prefer S's 9

doing A to his not doing A, and S believes H would prefer S's doing A to his not doing A.

Rule 3. Pr is to be uttered only if it is not obvious to both S and H that S will do A in the normal course of events. I call rules 2 and 3 preparatory rules, and they are derived from the preparatory conditions 4 and 5.

Rule 4. Pr is to be uttered only if S intends to do A. I call this the sincerity rule, and it is derived from the sincerity condition 6.

Rule 5. The utterance of Pr counts as the undertaking of an obligation to do A. I call this the essential rule. (p. 63)

Searle (1969) accepts Austin's idea that illocutionary acts can be tested by verifying whether they could have been performed using an explicit performative. Nevertheless, he argues that it is possible to perform more than a speech act in the utterance of a single, non-compound sentence. He exemplifies this assertion with the utterance 'It's really late', uttered by a wife in a party. According to Searle (1969), the speaker is simultaneously stating a fact and suggesting or requesting. He claims that there are no arguments from a syntactic perspective proving that *I* as deep structure subject is required in commissive speech acts, as in the utterance "I promise that Henry will be here next Wednesday". He refers to formal features of the utterance that determine the literal illocutionary act performed by the speaker as the "illocutionary force indicating device" (IFID). Consequently, it is not the performative verb *promise* that creates an obligation on the speaker but the required conditions for achieving that purpose since the speech act counts as a promise only if a specified set of rules are given. In his Theory of Speech

Acts, Searle (1969) lists nine necessary conditions to perform sincere and non-defective promises as follows:

1. Normal input and output conditions obtain.
2. S (speaker) expresses the proposition that p in the utterance of T (sentence).
3. In expressing that p, S predicates a future act A of S.
4. H (hearer) would prefer S's doing A to his not doing A, and S believes H would prefer his doing A to his not doing A.
5. It is not obvious to both S and H that S will do A in the normal course of event.
6. S intends to do A.
7. S intends that the utterance of T will place him under the obligation to do A.
8. S intends (i-I) to produce in H the knowledge (K) that the utterance of T is to count as placing S under an obligation to do A. Speaker intends to produce K by means of the recognition of i-I, and he intends i-I to be recognized in virtue of (by means of) H's knowledge of the meaning of T. (pp. 57-61)

In this account for the performance of promises, Searle (1969) points out certain conditions that need to be met by the speaking who is performing the speech act of promising. For Searle, the "input" and "output" conditions refer to both the speaker's and the hearer's ability to express themselves and understand the language as well as their awareness of what they are doing with the language when promising. Likewise, performing a promise requires propositional content conditions which states what is being promised to the addressee, which must be a future act. Therefore, utterances such as "I didn't do it, I promise" are not considered to be promises since they are referring to past events. Likewise, a promise would be defective if what is promised is not desired by the addressee. This feature allows interlocutors to distinguish a promise from a threat. Then Searles makes reference to the *sincerity condition*, by which the speaker is making a promise must have the intention of accomplishing the designated action. He makes a parallelism between act of promising without intending and the act of asserting without believing. The controversy of this condition has been widely discussed in the literature of speech acts. J. R. Searle claims that a speaker who makes insincere promises purports to have the intention to perform the corresponding actions which have been promised.

Therefore, he eventually Searle (1969) reformulates this condition and claims that “*S intends that the utterance of T will make him responsible for intending to do A*” (p. 62). Finally, Searle explains that the speaker gets the hearer to recognize his intention because it conventionally associated with the intended effect. Therefore, the circumstances in which a promise is uttered must be conventionally appropriate.

On the other hand, the question on whether a promise binds the speaker to perform the designated action have been a controversial issue widely discussed in the literature. Some authors argue that by performing the act of promising, speakers are undertaking an obligation (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). However, there are different views about the degree of commitment of a promise and the conditions that may justify a promiser not to keep his promise under certain circumstances. As also explained by normative approaches to speech act theory, a speaker is often assumed to say what they believe and they have evidence that it is true. Therefore, the performance of a speech act at least may give rise to certain rights and obligation. Normative views on speech act theory would claim that making a promise “would be a norm-enacting speech act” since they create a promissory obligation (Harris et al., 2017, p. 15).

Sperber and Wilson (1995) and Alston (2000) claim that the obligation concerns some extra-linguistic and group-specific conventions. However, Bach and Harnish (1979) argue that “to undertake an obligation is not automatically to create one, even if S [the speaker] uses a performative like ‘I promise’, [consequently] S’s utterance may express her belief that an obligation is thereby created, but that does not make her belief true even if A [the hearer] shares the belief and it is mutual (p.125). Furthermore, Harris et al. (2018) refer to the raise of such obligation from a different perspective as follows:

Likewise, an intentionalism, a functionalist, or an expressionist could hold that promissory obligation results from the expectation that tend to result from

successfully coordinating one's intentions with other, a view that can be made with a range of normative theories. (p. 16)

On the other hand, Condoravdi and Lauer (2011) claim that having the intention of accomplishing the designated event is not a requirement to perform a promise successfully (p.162). Regardless the approach we assume in the analysis of promises, what it seems to be clear is that the expression of commitment and promises raise expectations on the hearer in one way or another. In political discourse, candidates' expressions of commitment make the speaker's behaviour predictable and often raise expectations on the part of the electorate.

3.2.3. A Stance Approach to the Expression of Commitment

3.2.3.1. The Notion of *Stance*

Recent attention has been drawn to the concept of *stance* in the literature from various subdisciplines under the field of linguistics, such as corpus linguistics, discourse-functional linguistics, cognitive linguistics or sociocultural linguistics, as well as from other areas of knowledge such as anthropology, social psychology and sociology, particularly in the last two decades (Englebretson, 2007, p. 1). However, there seems to be no agreement on the definition of the phenomena due its multifaceted nature and complexity. The notion of *stance*, far from being a homogenous concept, is conceived and explained according to the particularities of the interest and background of the researcher, as shown by variety of terms used to refer to this concept. Among those terms, the literature discusses the notions of *affect* (Ochs 1989), *stance* (Biber and Finegan, 1989), *hedging* (Hyland, 1998), *appraisal* (Martin, 2000), *evaluation* (Hunston and Thompson, 2000), *modality and evidentiality* (Palmer, 2001; Marín-Arrese, 2009), *engagement* (Martin and White, 2005), *stancetaking* (Englebretson, 2007; DuBois, 2007),

or *epistemic and effective stance* (Marín-Arrese, 2011, 2023). It is such heterogeneity of the notion of *stance* that seems to be problematic to develop a unified theory of stance. For Englebretson (2007), the fact that each researcher ‘operationalizes’ this term with the corresponding conception and definition within their own discipline, along with the different terminology used to work on similar stance-related issues, may result in having certain difficulty to envisage whether these different approaches to stance may converge in one way or another. Englebretson (2007) suggests a possible reason of such terminological and conceptual complexity:

I would suggest that these conceptions of stance are based directly on the wide range of meanings and activities associated with this lexeme in everyday language use. In other words, there is a reflexive relationship between stance as a concept in language research, and stance as a word in English more generally; the everyday conceptions of stance serve as a window into how this term has been appropriated by linguistic, social, and interactional research. (p. 4)

Biber and Finegan (1989) refers to stance as “the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the propositional content of a message” (p. 92). They identify three domains under which stance may occur in interactions, namely the epistemic domain, the “speaker’s comments on the status of the information in a proposition”; the attitudinal domain, the expression of personal feelings or attitudes; and the style, which concerns the speaker’s comments on the information provided (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 972-975). Biber (1999) uses the term “grammatical stance device” to refer to those “indices” expressing overtly evaluation for some other proposition (p. 967).

On the other hand, Hyland (2005) conceives *stance* as “an attitudinal dimension” which involves the writer’s judgements, opinions and commitments and allow them “to stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement” (p. 176). Both instilling the speaker’s or writer’s message with their

personal authority and creating some distance the propositional content of an utterance are useful linguistic strategies in terms of accountability and detachment which often occur in political discourse.

A term that has been widely discussed in literature is *evaluation* (Conrad and Biber 2000; Hunston and Sinclair 2000; Hunston and Thompson 2000; Macken-Horarik and Martin 2003; Thompson and Hunston 2000). Hunston and Thompson (2000) proposes the use of this term to refer to the ‘expression of the speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about’ appealing to the flexibility of the term evaluation involves from a syntactic and morphological perspective (p.5).

As mentioned above, the notion of *stance* has been also discussed in literature from a dialogic perspective by authors who highlight the intersubjective nature of dialogue as social action. Martin and White (2005) claim that utterances are usually conceived as “attitudinal and stanced” in discourse studies (p. 92). According to these authors, it is through these linguistic devices that speakers are able to position themselves and “engage” with other voices with a different positioning during the interaction (Martin and White, 2005, p. 94). Similarly, Englebretson (2007) also provides a dialogic approach to *stance*. He prefers to use the term *stancetaking*, which “suggests that stances are something that people actively engage in” (p. 3). In his qualitative analysis of the occurrence of the term *stance*, within their corresponding interactional context, in the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (SBCSAE) and the British National Corpus (BNC), he identifies five conceptual principles of stance, namely the occurrence of stance at the levels of physical action, personal attitude/belief/evaluation and social morality, the availability of stance as a result of being public and perceivable, its interactional nature, its indexicality and the consequences derived for stancetakers

resulting from their positioning. Englebretson (2007) illustrates the three levels of analysis with the following examples:

- (1) But I like the Hane-Makikomi, when it's used on a player who's fighting you in that extreme defence stance.
- (2) They asked what my stance was on abortion.
- (3) But lately, the information they're sending out is community moral stance... (pp. 7-10).

Englebretson (2007) explains that the use of the word *stance* in example (1) refers to “a physical act”, whereas the term in examples (2) and (3) refers to beliefs, attitudes and evaluation. He claims that the difference between examples (2) and (3) lies mainly in the attribution of the subject of stance, either to a person in the former one or to an institution in the latter. Overall, the excerpts provided from the corpus by the author illustrate the principles of stance discussed above. Some of these features are also highlighted by DuBois (2007) when defining the concept of *stance*:

Stance is a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field. (p. 163)

Like Englebretson, DuBois (2007) understands *stance* as a linguistically articulated social action, which he connects to dialogicality, intersubjectivity and stancetaker's actions. He proposes a unified conceptual framework and model of stancetaking, known as *stance triangle*, in which speakers create intersubjectivity by providing an evaluation of a particular object and aligning with other subjects. DuBois (2007) tentatively defines alignment as “the act of calibrating the relationship between two stances, and by implication of two stancetakers”, whose most “transparent” lexical realization may be the verb *agree* (p. 144). He considers alignment as one of the three types of stance function along with evaluation and positioning, the latter of which

includes affective stance, that is, speakers' expressions which position themselves affectively; and epistemic stance, speaker's expressions in which they position themselves with a particular degree of knowledge.

However, the framework of this thesis draws mainly on Langacker's (2010) distinction between epistemic and effective levels (of control), and Marín-Arrese's (2011, 2021) macro categories of stance, namely *epistemic stance* and *effective stance*. Langacker (2013) conceives linguistic interaction as "a means of striving for control", which is described as an instrument with two well-differentiated purposes, that is, constructing language user's mental world and influencing upon social reality (pp. 9-10). This author refers to the duality represented by the verbs *think* and *do* to explain that each of them has numerous linguistic manifestations by means of lexical items belonging to each semantic category, which makes evident the differences between physical acts and mental acts (Langacker, 2010). He takes Sweetser's (1990) subtle distinction between causal and adversative conjunctions which are illustrated in the following examples:

- (4) The chair broke because it was poorly made.
- (5) The chair was poorly made, because it broke. (pp.165-166)

According to Langacker (2010), the chair is physically responsible for its breaking because of being poorly made in example (4) whereas the mental act by which the speaker questions the quality of the chair is the result of the chair's breaking in example (5)" (p. 166). He concludes that there is an effective relationship in the first example, as opposed to example (5), in which he identifies an epistemic relationship resulting from "a basic experiential correlation of physical activity with the causation of events" on the one hand, and "mental activity with knowledge of events", on the other.

Langacker describes a Reality Model (RM) which conceives reality the way it is no matter what an individual knows about it. In such RM, our world develops as certain

course of events take place through the present moment, known as Reality (R), among all the possibilities that have not occurred. What is still to be determined is future course of events, some of which will be more likely to happen than others. On the other hand, the author considers that individuals' knowledge of reality is limited and imperfect and, consequently, they may perceive reality in a different manner. For this reason, Langacker describes individuals as conceptualizers who are in a continuous process of engaging in building up a conception of reality (CR), which is the conceptualizer's own experience. In this RM, he distinguishes between the effective level, "the actual occurrence of events, which constitutes reality independently of whether we know about them"; and the epistemic level, which pertain to "our presumed knowledge of these events (p. 173).

Marín-Arrese (2011) draws on Langacker's distinction between these two levels to develop a framework with two macro-categories of stance, a notion that she defines as "the particular viewpoint or enunciational position of the speaker/writer or some other subject of conception, which reflects their attitudes, assessments and knowledge concerning the designated event and/or the communicated proposition" (p. 195). While the category of epistemic stance refers to the speaker's positioning concerning the realization of the designated event and "to the ways in which the speaker/writer carries out a stance act aimed at estimating the likelihood of an event and/or judging the validity of a proposition designating the event", effective stance encodes the speaker's/writer's attempt to influence reality through "stance acts" (Marín-Arrese, 2011, p. 195). For the realization of each macro-category, Marín-Arrese (2011, 2021, 2023) has identified and classified a wide range lexico-grammatical markers.

The motivation behind the selection of this theoretical model for stance lies in its alignment with the theoretical framework used for the analysis of the expression of commitment, which distinguishes between the expressions of commitment to a belief,

which corresponds to the expression of epistemic stance or epistemic modality; and the expressions of commitment to an intention and an outcome, which fall under the category of effective stance. Both macro-categories are interrelated since they “serve the joint strategic purposes of legitimation of knowledge and of actions plans of actions and goals (Marín-Arrese, 2023, p. 30). However, these macro-categories seem to provide a sufficiently clear-cut distinction between the above-mentioned types of commitment that contribute to the development of the subcategories proposed for this thesis, which are based on Marín-Arrese’s classification of the categories expressing effective stance. Since the present thesis focuses on the expression of commitment to the speaker’s future course of action and commitment to a future outcome in US presidential debates, the following section will discuss in detail the categories which are classified under the notion of *effectivity*.

3.2.3.2. Effectivity and Stance

Individuals can influence the future course of events around them through communication. Langacker (2013) describes linguistic interaction as a “means of striving for control”, in which the impact of a speaker’s utterance may vary from attracting or directing the addressee’s attention during the interaction to eliciting a linguistic or non-linguistic response on the part of the addressee (p.9). Therefore, language provide their users with a wide range of linguistic strategies to exert certain degree of persuasiveness on the addressee through lexical realizations which belong to the notion of *effectivity* or *epistemicity* (Marín-Arrese, 2013). Biber et al. (1999) claim that speakers have a wide range of the lexico-grammatical markers available to “express an evaluative frame for some other proposition” (p. 967). Among those, the present thesis will focus on lexico-grammatical markers expressing effective stance, that is, expressions through which

speakers attempt to influence the future course of events, which include “the obligation, desirability, normativity or requirement of carrying out those actions [and the] intention or commitment to the actions or events” designated by the speaker. (Marín-Arrese, 2023, p. 30).

Some possible lexical realizations of the representation of the conceptualizer’s experience at these levels concern modal verbs. In fact, modals are generally characterized in cognitive linguistics in terms of “force dynamics”, which is a semantic category that explains “how entities interact with respect to force”, including its exertion (Talmy, 1988, p. 49). In English, modality can express both epistemic or effective meanings, that is, what individuals accept as real and their attempts to influence on the course of events that take place at the level of reality respectively (Langacker, 2010). Langacker (2013) claims that, while their absence in a finite clause will indicate that the occurrence profiled is conceived as “real”, their presence denies such status. He identifies root modals as elements expressing effective control in that they describe some force towards the realization of a particular action. Drawing on Talmy’s conception of modality from the perspective of force, Sweetser (1990) proposes a tentative analysis of root verbs, which typically involve “force and obligation”, in terms of force-dynamic. Sweetser conceives modality as “basically referring to intentional, directed forces and barriers”. For Langacker (2010), in a similar way, root modality has the potential to change the course of reality, as illustrated in the utterance *You must apologize to her*, which expresses the speaker’s demand to the addressee (p. 175). In this case, the speaker’s effective stance, expressed through the deontic meaning of modal verb *must*, may result in the addressee’s apologizing. Langacker (2009) also deals with the concept of force-dynamic in his model of control cycle (CC), which is conceived as “a general cognitive model applicable to many aspects of human experience” (p. 130). They consist of four phases,

namely, the Baseline, Potential, Action and Result, in which elements such as an actor, an entity striving for control; the actor's dominion, the specific elements over which the control is exercised; the field, "the actor's present range of potential interaction", and a target come into the scene along those phases with a particular force-dynamic situation as described by Langacker (2013) as follows:

The initial, baseline phase is static: momentarily stable and devoid of forces (other than those involved in maintaining the dominion). When a target enters the field, it produces the potential phase, where the actor faces the prospect of dealing with it in some manner. It is thus a state of tension, a force-dynamic situation of opposing tendencies where neither has yet prevailed. One possible outcome is an action, in which the actor exerts force in order to capture the target and bring it under control. Alternatively, the actor can resolve the situation by avoidance, an action (or lack of it) that effectively removes it from the field. Either sort of action induces the result phase, which is once more static. Depending on the action, the dominion now incorporates the former target (as shown) or else excludes it. (pp. 4-5)

The CC contributes to the characterization of the categories expressing both epistemic and effective stance. Regarding effectivity, Langacker (2010) identifies seven phases of what he calls the "main sequence" for effective predicates: potential, inclination, decision, intention, preparation, execution and result, along which he provides a tentative list of predicates that usually take personal or sentient subjects:

- (a) Potential: know how, able, qualified, equipped
- (b) Inclination: want, hope, willing, inclined, eager, prefer, would like, afraid, hesitant
- (c) Decision: decide, opt, resolve
- (d) Intention: intend, expect, plan
- (e) Preparation: ready, set, prepared, primed
- (f) Execution: try, attempt, remember, forget, start, begin, continue, cease
- (g) Result: manage, able, fail (pp. 187-188)

On the other hand, effectivity can also be expressed with respect to the object (Langacker, 2010). He explains that it is through the process of persuasion that a person makes a decision and intends to follow the course of action intended by the

conceptualizer. Therefore, Langacker (2010) also includes in his model, as part of the “main sequence”, the phases of the “outcomes” of the profiled actions:

- (a) Potential: teach, enable, qualify, equip
- (b) Inclination: tell, order, beg, exhort, encourage
- (c) Decision/Intention: persuade, convince
- (d) Preparation: get . . . ready, prepare, prime
- (e) Execution/Result: cause, force, allow, permit, induce, get, help, remind, prompt (p. 188)

While Langacker (2009, 2010) provides the matrix predicates, modals and adverbs of the above-mentioned effective control phases, Marín-Arrese (2021) puts forward some categories expressing norms, obligation, inclination and commitment, namely Intentionality (INT), the speaker’s expression of intention, commitment and volition; Directivity (DIR), the speaker’s expression of the conventional illocutionary directive force by means of direct or indirect speech acts; Normativity (NRM), the speaker’s “claims to social desirability or requirement regarding events and situations”; Deonticity (DM), expressing the necessity or obligation of the realization of the designated event; and Potentiality (POT), expressing the ‘participant-external possibility’ for the realization of the designated event (pp-41-42). These categories for the expression of effective stance provided by Marín-Arrese (2011, 2021, 2023) will be the foundation for the taxonomy on the expression of commitment developed for the analysis of the corpus under study.

3.2.3.3. Effective Stance and Commitment

3.2.3.3.1. Types of Commitments under Effective Stance

As mentioned in the introduction, the term *commitment* has been used differently in the various subfields of linguistics. However, among the different uses of this notion found in the literature, three types of commitment are identified in relation to the Searle’s taxonomy of speech acts: commitment to a believe or proposition (*I claim*), the speaker

commits to the truthfulness of the expressed proposition; commitment to the speaker's future course of action (*I promise*), the speaker's commits to the realization of a future event; and commitment to a future outcome (*I order*), the speaker's commits to a particular outcome through utterances with directive force (Brabanter and Dendale, 2008).

The expression of commitment to a proposition is beyond the scope of the present thesis, even though exploring this type of commitment in political discourse would provide relevant insight on the way candidates in presidential debates attempt to raise expectations in the electorate by expressing their own beliefs and positioning themselves on certain matters (Bonilla, 2017). However, this thesis will focus on the expression of commitment to the speaker's future course of action and commitment to a future outcome, which are closely related to effective stance in that they involve an inclination and intention on the part of the speaker to influence or determine the future course of events. An integrated study of both types of commitments in presidential debates may shed light on the way politicians express their commitment to persuade and encourage the electorate to act or to legitimise their plans of actions with a view to achieving their ultimate goal, gaining the voter's support to reach the office.

Some similarities have been observed in the literature between utterances having commissive and directive illocutionary forces. In fact, some authors have pointed out to the hybrid nature of these categories (Bach and Harnish, 1979; Hancher, 1979; Pérez-Hernández, 2001). There are certain speech acts such as offering, inviting, bidding, volunteering or threatening, which seem to display features of commissive and directive categories. Since Searle's rigid categories are not able to accommodate this type of hybrid illocutionary acts, Bach and Harnish (1979) and Hancher (1979) propose a hybrid *directive-commissive* category to classify those speech acts that cannot clearly be

attributed to one of them because they share properties of both categories. According to Hancher (1979), the speech acts under this hybrid category “are equally commissive and directive; neither force dominates” (p. 6). However, Pérez-Hernández (2001) argues that these hybrid speech acts do not belong to a “homogenous group of illocutions which occupies an exact position between the two extremes of prototypical directives (e.g. orders, requests) and prototypically commissive (e.g. promises, guarantees) illocutions” (p. 78). She claims that there is a cognitive continuum between these two categories, along which certain speech acts may be closer to one of the two extremes, as in the case of threats, invitations and offers (Pérez-Hernández, 2001, p. 90), which the author analyses under nine variables: agent type, time of the action, degree of the speaker’s will, degree of the addressee’s will, degree of cost-benefit, degree of optionality, degree of mitigation, degree of power, and degree of social distance. This group of speech acts make evident the close connection existing between commissive and directive speech acts.

From the semantic and pragmatic perspectives, Portner (2004) has also identified some similarities between promissory and imperative sentences. He suggests that these types of propositions are functionally similar in that the former place “a requirement on the speaker”, whereas imperatives place “a requirement on the addressee” (p. 235). He refers to the concepts of Common Ground and To-Do-List to point out the differences between those propositions. According to Stalnaker (2002), the common ground of a conversation is just what is common belief among the participants in a conversation” (p. 706). In Portner’s (2004) words, each proposition is added to “the set of propositions mutually assumed by the participants in a conversation” (p.237). This concept is related to Hamblin’s (1970) conception of *commitment* as “a statement-token” that each participant stores throughout the conversation, all of which constrain the following conversational moves (Brabanter & Dendale, 2008, p. 7). Portner (2004) argues that each

participant in the interaction is assigned a To-Do-List, which rank the possible worlds compatible with the Common Ground (p. 241). The combination of these two processes results in a model “for the relationship between what people say and what they can be expected to do as rational agents” (Portner, 2004, p. 247). He concludes that similar features characterize promissives and imperatives since both involve the addition of properties to each participant’s To-Do-List and, therefore, the difference lies on the participants’ To-Do-list in which the properties are added, the speaker’s or the addressee’s (Portner, 2004).

Searle (1969) justifies his classification of commissives and directives as two distinct categories based on the idea that the purpose of the former group is to commit the speaker to carry out an action while the latter one attempts to get the hearer to do something. However, he acknowledges that both categories share certain features, such as the world-to-word direction of fit, for which he regrets not to be able to provide a more “elegant taxonomy” proving that both groups are members of the same category (Searle, 1969, p. 14). Even though the present thesis relies on Searle’s distinction between commissive and directive speech acts; by making a distinction between commitment to an intention and commitment to an outcome, it seems to be reasonable to analyse both types of commitment under the same thesis in order to have a wider vision on the way the expression of commitment operates in political discourse and how those expressions of commitment contribute to exert certain degree of persuasiveness on the electorate.

3.2.3.3.2. Commitment and the Target of Force (Langacker, 2013)

From a discourse and stance perspective, the commitment to the speaker’s future course of action (CI) and the commitment to a future outcome (CO), having a commissive and directive force respectively, seem to share as their ultimate goal to accomplish or

elicit certain changes in the future course of events. Using Langacker's terminology regarding his Reality Model (RM), the conceptualizer will attempt to influence the future course of events by accomplishing the action to which he has committed or by persuading the hearer to act in a certain manner in order to successfully achieve the intended outcome among all the possibilities that may occur and become part of Reality (R) in a continuous changing world.

In Langacker's model of CC, the target comes into scene whenever an element enters the field, which is defined as "the actor's present range of potential interaction" (p.4). In the case of effective stance, the target of force consists of the realization of the event profiled (Langacker, 2013, p. 24). He explains that such force is usually directed at an individual who becomes responsible for the realization of the designated event, as he illustrates in example (b), in which the target force is channelled through the hearer, who is coded as the clausal subject and is assigned the responsibility of the realization of the event. With certain lexical verbs, such as *force*, *compel* and *induce*, and for extension *order*, *ask*, *urge*, and similar verbs having a directive meaning, the target of force may be coded as clausal object, as he exemplifies in sentence (a), in which the conceptualizer and "source of the potency" is coded as subject of the matrix clause:

- a. He forced her to attend the wedding. [clausal object (lexical predicate)]
- b. You must attend the wedding. [hearer (as clausal subject)]
- c. She must attend the wedding. [specific individual (as clausal subject)]
- d. Beer must be served at the wedding. [diffuse] (p.24)

In sentence (c) the target of force is someone else rather than the addressee. Likewise, there may be cases in which such target of force cannot be clearly defined, in which case the subject cannot be considered responsible for the realization of the event, as Langacker illustrates in sentence (d). Langacker (2013) claims that "the source of the

potency” does not always correspond with the speaker in those cases in which they may be reporting someone else’s imposition or “social expectations” (p. 24).

Concerning the two macro categories that are object of study in the present thesis, commitment to speaker’s future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO), and in accordance with Portner’s observation on promissives and imperatives, one of the main differences between these types of commitment lies precisely on the target of force. Whereas the speaker is coded as the target of force in speech acts having a commissive force, the hearer becomes the target of force in directive acts. Some particularities regarding the second category in relation to the target of force will be discussed in the section of Results.

3.2.3.3.3. Expressing Commitment to the Speaker’s Future Course of Action

From the point of view of language as action, the expression of CI would fall under Searle’s (1969) category of commissive speech acts. Searle (1969) defines commissives as an illocutionary act that obliges the speaker carry out the designated event. Similarly, Bach and Harnish (1979) describe this category as “the speaker’s intention and belief that his utterance obligates him to do something” (p. 41). When speakers perform a commissive speech act, therefore, they commit themselves to carry out the corresponding designated event. From a discourse and stance perspective, the conceptualizer’s commitment towards the realization of a future event would be represented in Langacker’s (2013) model as the intention stage (Marín-Arrese, 2021, p. 177).

However, one of the most relevant linguistic acts expressing CI is the speech act of promising, which plays an important role in electoral campaigns, in general, and in

presidential debates, more specifically. They help the electorate to know the candidates' positions on a wide variety of matters and make their behaviour more predictable if they reach the office. The general interest in promises may have recently had an impact on their frequency of occurrence, which has increased in the last two decades (Hakansson and Naurin, 2014; Bonilla 2014).

While some authors provide a narrow definition of what a promise is, others conceive this notion in a broader sense. Royed (1996) defines the notion of *promise* as “a commitment to carry out some action or produce some outcome”. A broad definition of promising is also provided by Bonilla (2017), who conceives promises as a “form of position-taking” (p. 4). Bonilla (2017) argues that the strength of the commitment expressed by candidates varies according to the way they are encoded linguistically and enable voters to “change perceptions of how committed a candidate is to follow through on an issue position” (p. 2). She distinguishes between promises and non-promises position statements, both of which occur frequently in presidential debates. Promises are conceived as “a policy-statement that a candidate issues while also indicating they will act on that position in the future, distinct from other position-statements that candidates make without attaching plans for future action” (Bonilla, 2017, p. 4). Bonilla illustrates promises with examples such as “I promise that I will not increase taxes” or “When I am in the White House, I will not increase taxes”, in which the candidate makes a connection between a particular position-taking and a future course of action. On the other hand, an example of a non-promise position statement would be the utterance “I am in favour of providing affordable health care” (Bonilla, 2017, p. 4). While some scholars may agree that there are different levels of strength in the expression of CI, a more restrictive approach will be used for the analysis of this type of commitment. Since there are not semantic properties which make reference to the speaker's intention to act in line with the

position-statement designated in the utterance in the latter example, these examples would be considered to be an expression of a commitment to a belief, despite the numerous expectations they might raise and, consequently, this type of examples occurring in the corpus will be beyond the scope of this analysis.

The taxonomy provided for this research includes a variety of linguistic strategies to express CI, whose strength varies according to semantic category selected by the candidate. Bonilla (2017) points out the usefulness of the use of different expressions of this type of commitment since they may be strategically deployed by politicians (p. 2). She discusses the importance of such promises not only because of the interest they raise in the electorate as they become with the candidates' position on various issues, but also as an alternative to the use of past records to build voter's confidence and trust. Therefore, Bonilla (2017) claims that expressing promises "may be an alternative tool through which candidates may assure voters of their intents in office. (p. 6).

The performative verb through which this act of promising is typically accomplished in a direct manner is *promise*, even though there are other speech acts expressing a similar meaning, whose performative verbs are *guarantee*, *pledge* or *commit*. Nevertheless, there has widely discussed the functional heterogeneity of speech acts (Beyssade & Maradin, 2006a, 2006b; Condoracdi & Lauer, 2010). The Literal Force Hypothesis was put forward in an attempt to establish a direct relationship between clause types and illocutionary forces. However, it is precisely the LFH that has been pointed out as one of the limitations of the speech act theory (Gazdar, 1981; Beyssade & Maradin, 2006a). Garzar (1981) suggests that there is not a one-to-one relation between clause type and illocutionary force, as conceived by the LFH; rather, he claims that a clause type may be attributed several illocutionary forces and vice versa. In other words, an illocutionary force can be expressed through different sentence structures.

The first macro-category of the taxonomy of the expression of commitment proposed for this thesis, commitment to the speaker's future action (CI), refers to those utterances in which speakers commit themselves to follow a specific future course of action, typically represented by the acts of promising, pledging, guaranteeing or vowing. Searle (1969) points out that the speaker's psychological state expressed in this type of acts is intention. Under this macro-category, five categories have been identified, namely, Direct Commissives, Intentionality, Volitionality, Plans and Goals, and Offers, which will be define and further discussed in section 5.1.3.2.1. along with their corresponding lexical realizations.

3.2.3.3.4. Expressing commitment to a future outcome

From the viewpoint of language as action, a commitment to a future outcome (CO) would fall under Searle's (1969) category of directive speech acts. When speakers perform a directive speech act, they attempt that the addressee follows a particular future course of action. Nevertheless, some connections have been established between the use of imperatives and public commitments. Condoracdi & Lauer (2010a) discuss different views regarding the role of the utterance of imperatives, namely, the *man in the street* view, which "imposes a commitment on the address to bring about *p*" the propositional content; the *addressee-commitment only* view, which commits the addressee to act as though he preferred *p*"; the *speaker-commitment only* view, which "commits the speaker to act as though he preferred *p*"; the *underspecification* view, which "commits the agent to act as though he preferred *p*, where the agent is either the speaker or the hearer"; and the *the speaker's preference for a hearer-commitment* view, which "commits the speaker to act as though he had a preference for the hearer committing himself to act as if he preferred *p*" (pp. 2-4). Condoracdi & Lauer (2010a) seem to be reluctant to believe that

speakers, “as a matter of linguistic convention, are able to alter the commitments of other interlocutors or agents” (p. 4).

The functional heterogeneity of speech acts will be the point of departure for Beyssade and Maradin (2006a), who provides an (insightful) bidimensional analysis for illocutionary forces in complex speech acts focussing on two dimensions, namely the speaker’s commitment and the speaker’s call on the addressee. Under the study of formal models of dialogue and based on Hamblin’s (1970) notion of *commitment*, which is understood as a commitment-store which is updated during the interaction and constrains the following conversational moves, Beyssade and Maradin (2006a) argue that the speaker commits to the propositional content and, simultaneously, attempts to persuade the addressee “to change his own commitments” (p. 42). Therefore, two different updates occur during the interaction, the speaker’s and the addressee’s, which are not always necessarily the same.

Although Hamblin constrains this notion of *commitment* to propositions, Beyssade and Maradin (2006a) extends it to all speech acts, particularly assertions, questions and directives. They conceive speech acts as “moves in conversational games” that “lead from one set of shared commitments to another set of shared commitments”, in a process through which participants may add or remove such commitments (p. 47). They explain the process in the following terms (Beyssade & Maradin, 2006a):

...an assertion brings about the incrementation of SHARED GROUND, uttering a question the incrementation of QUD [Question Under Discussion] and, uttering a directive utterance the incrementation of TDL [To-Do-List] (Addressee). (p. 47)

In Beyssade and Maradin’s (2006a) conception of speaker’s commitment, uttering directives are understood as moves in the interaction by which speakers commit to outcomes, which are “states of affair in the future, the actualization of which more or less

direct depends on the addressee” (p.47). Although directives are often discussed in terms of the effect they have on the addressee, Beyssade and Maradin (2006a) claims that such directive utterance involves also a commitment on the part of the speaker, who “presents herself as positively orientated to the realization” of the designated event (p. 47). Similarly, Stefanowitsch (2003), explains that the speaker’s commitment consists of “the affirmative stance” towards the actualization of this potential (p. 4).

Beyssade and Maradin’s (2006b) discuss another dimension for the analysis of illocutionary forces in complex speech acts, namely the speaker’s call on the addressee which is conceived as a dialogue move. They claim that there are three types of calls on the addressee: assertions, questions and directives, and argue that such call on the addressee is registered in the speaker’s dialogue gameboard (DGB), which is updated “utterance by utterance” (Beyssade & Maradin, 2006b, p. 58). Therefore, by uttering “Marie has arrived, hasn’t she?”, the speaker’s call on the addressee specifically attempt to commit the addressee “to the issue whether Marie has arrived” (Beyssade & Maradin, 2006b, p. 56).

For Beyssade and Maradin (2006b), the call on the addressee is not determined by the clause type the speakers use in their utterances, as explained in the following terms:

Addressee. By default, Speaker’s call on Addressee is identical to Speaker’s commitment. But, each clause type is compatible with any of the two other types of call. For example, declarative utterances commit Speaker to their content and are compatible with three types of call on Addressee. When Speaker calls for Addressee to take her utterance as an assertion, Addressee is expected to add the propositional content to his own SG, which corresponds to felicitous statements. When she asks him to take her utterance as a question, Addressee is expected to add a Question to his own QUD, which corresponds to demands for confirmation. When she asks him to take her utterance as a directive, Addressee is expected to add an outcome to his own TDL. (p. 59)

Regardless the clause type used by the speaker, this dimension allows for the analysis of the aspects related to the addressee of an utterance with a particular

illocutionary force (Beyssade & Maradin, 2006b, p. 57). In the case of directive utterances, which express CO, speakers make evident their inclination for the realization of the event and, at the same time, make a call on the addressee to carry out a particular event, or to add a particular outcome to his own TDL (Beyssade & Maradin, 2006a, pp. 44-47).

There are several ways in which the speaker can express a commitment to a future outcome. Such commitment can be expressed using direct directives, that is, through the use of performative verbs such as *I order you to*, *I ask you to*, or *I urge you to*, among others, or through declarative utterances having different degree of directive force. Beyssade & Maradin (2006b) claim that directives expressed through interrogative clauses [...] do not have the same impact in context as directives conveyed by imperative clauses (p.61). They illustrate such difference with the examples *Can you close the door, please?* and *Close the door, please*. They believe that by uttering the first sentence, the speaker is committing to the issue whether the addressee can actually carry out the action of closing the door, whereas in the second example, the speaker commits to the outcome that the door should be closed. Even if politeness considerations are taken into account in the first example, they argue that the speaker is “less insistent” when choosing an interrogative clause to make the request.

Beyssade & Maradin, (2006b) also make a distinction between directives expressed via an imperative clause and a declarative clause, which is exemplified by the utterances *Come tomorrow, please* and *You will come tomorrow, please*. Beyssade & Maradin, (2006b) explain such difference in the following terms:

By using the imperative, Speaker only commits herself to judging positively the realization of a potential state of affairs, without committing herself to the probability of that realisation, whereas a declarative in the future commits Speaker to the future factuality of the state of affairs. (p. 61)

Therefore, the second macro-category will be the expression of commitment to a future outcome (CO), which refers to the speaker's performance of directive acts through which they commit themselves to outcomes, which are "states of affair in the future, [the] actualization of which more or less directly depends on Addressee" (Beyssade & Marandin, 2006a). Condoravdi & Lauer (2011) argues that a speaker commits to her preference for the realization of the designated event by giving an order or urging the addressee to follow a particular course of action. Under this macro-category, there are six semantic categories that have been identified in the corpus, namely Direct Directives, Imperatives and Hortatives, Inclination, Deonticity, Desirability and Proposals, which will be defined and illustrated in chapter 5.

3.3. The Interface of Commitment, Effectivity and Persuasion in Political Discourse

3.3.1. Persuasion in Electoral Campaigns

It is generally accepted that the role of language in maintaining political systems is essential since "it lies at the interface of a wide variety of tasks in which politician engage on a regular basis" (Ferrer-Navas, 2019, p. 61). Chilton and Snäffner (2002) have taken a text and talk approach to politics drawing on the premise that "political activity does not exist without the use of language" (p. 3). Chilton (2004) highlights the interaction of language as action and politics in the following terms:

Only in and through language can one issue commands and threats, ask questions, make offers and promises – provided one had convinced one's interlocutor that one has the resources to make the speech act credible. And only through language tied into social and political institutions can one declare a war, declare guilty or non-guilty, prorogue parliaments, or raise or lower taxes. (p. 30)

In some of these political activities, language has an informative role that is required for the proper functioning of the democratic systems. However, one of the most common uses of language in politics has to do with the notion of *persuasion*. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971) understand *persuasion* as a human skill through which somebody is able to make other people behave or act in a particular manner or cooperate with a variety of activities. More specifically, Perloff (1993) argues that persuasion induces a change in beliefs, attitudes, behaviour as well as acceptance and rejection (p. 13). Similarly, Marín-Arrese (2021) describes the notion of *persuasion* as follows:

Persuasion involves communicating the credibility and reliability of beliefs (Aristotle's *logos*) with the aim of influencing the readers, as well as convincing readers about the righteousness (Aristotle's *ethos*) of the goals of the persuader, thus inducing the reader to pursue those goals. (p. 136)

Making others believe and act in a particular manner which may serve the speaker's interests could be a way in which persuasion, or even manipulation, may occur in a given communicative situation (Marín-Arrese, 2021). Fairclough & Fairclough (2012) argue that "understanding the argumentative nature of political texts is therefore key to be able to evaluate the political strategies they are part of" (p. 18). They claim that activity types in politics are related to "fields of action" since they require practical argumentation. For them, politics is mainly orientated towards the decision-making process, which requires previous deliberation, to pursue the well-being of society. In such process, politicians provide citizens with arguments in favour or against pursuing a particular future course of action.

Some of the linguistics tools available to persuade or manipulate other have been the focus of attention of Critical Discourse Analysis. Chilton and Schäffner (1997) identifies some strategic functions for which language may be used, most of which are related to the persuasive role of language, that is, coercion, legitimization,

delegitimization and representations and misrepresentations (pp. 211-215). They describe several situations in which politicians may act coercively through the use of language, such as “setting agendas, selecting topics in conversation, positioning the self and others in specific relations, making assumptions about realities that the hearers are obliged to at least temporarily accept in order to process the text or talk” (Chilton, 2004, p. 45). The strategy of legitimization, on the other hand, attempts to persuade the hearer on someone’s right to command and be obeyed, which is explained or justified through linguistics means with a certain degree of directness, according to Chilton. Some of the typical arguments that he points out have to do with the desires or wants of the electorate, ideological principles, and positive representation of the politician’s character. Chilton (2004) describes two types of legitimizing functions, namely, the epistemic function, in which a speaker claims to be more knowledgeable and have better “recognition of the ‘real facts’”; and deontic function, in which the speaker claims to be right both from a cognitive and a moral perspective (p. 117). On the contrary, the use of language to make someone accountable for a particular outcome, or even exclude or attack the adversary, are examples of delegitimization, in which language is used to represent “the other” negatively (Chilton, 2004, pp. 46-47). On the other hand, the strategies of representation or misinterpretation are achieved through “the control of information” by omitting relevant information, evading giving explanations, denial actions or attitudes, or even lying explicitly or implying information to mislead the audience (Chilton, 2004). Chilton makes a connection between these strategic functions and some of Grice’s maxims and his Cooperative Principle and Habermas’s validity claims.

Electoral debates become an exceptional occasion for politicians, not only to inform about their vision of the world, but also to persuade audiences to gain their support during the electoral process. Being able to know the nature and characteristics of their

audiences is essential to successfully persuade the electorate about their suitability to occupy the public office. As discussed above, visualizing the target audience plays a critical role in the politicians' construction of arguments during their speeches (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971). As a matter of fact, during the previous stage of speech preparation, politicians carefully select the strongest arguments that may support their view and the suitable language features from a lexico-syntactical and rhetorical perspective according to the target audience in front of which the message will be delivered.

The knowledge the candidate may have on the target audiences may contribute to the candidate's selection of arguments for the electoral debates that, not only support their vision of the world, but also are adequate for the audience to which the words will be uttered. Such endeavour seems to be a complex one since "audiences are almost infinite in their variety", which results in numerous problems that the speakers need to overcome in order to adapt their speech to the particular individualities of their audiences (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, p. 26). Adapting messages on controversial issues to the corresponding audiences seems to be as necessary as challenging in political language.

Therefore, the language used by politicians is not innocent and it plays a critical role in attaining their political objectives. Language is a powerful tool for politicians to persuade citizens to agree with their policies and to attain their goals by choosing the most suitable linguistic or pragmatic resources for a particular communicative event. Particularly effective stance, the domain under which CI and CO are identified, seems to play a relevant role in the exertion of persuasion on the part of politicians. I will discuss how this is the case with regards to the expression of CI and CO in presidential debates.

3.3.2. The Expression of Commitment and Persuasion in Electoral Debates

An important part of candidates' messages sent during debates are devoted to make acclaims (Benoit et al. 2000), among which there are numerous references to the politicians' vision of the future of the corresponding country and their commitments to carry out a particular future action. Even though debates may have an informative function since it is commonly accepted that politicians inform about their own visions of the future of the country, politicians also make a persuasive use of language when explaining their policy positions to persuade the electorate to support their candidacy. Having a vague stance on certain matters may be a strategy of candidates or even an approach to their campaign, which may bring a wide range of consequences depending on the candidate's management of vague language, the context in which it occurs and the issue they are tackling at the moment. There may be different motivations to have a vague stance on a particular matter. Kendall (2000) claims that "Candidates often 'sit on their lead', speaking vaguely and trying not to offend anyone by taking clear stands" (p. 88). He provides some examples of candidates who decided to use vague language on different occasions. One of them is the case of Roosevelt, Howe and Farley, who were especially vague in their speeches they delivered by avoiding expressing clear stands on certain issues in order to "build a national coalition" which required to avoid focusing on differences among prospective supporters nationwide (Kendall, 2000, p. 59). A second example concerns Muskie, Democratic candidate, who decided to be vague about almost every topic, including the Vietnam war, in his interview on Meet the Press which was held on January 16, 1972, where he avoided giving specific and precise answers to the questions he was asked (Kendall, 2000, p. 70). Using vague language may a persuasive strategy for politicians to diver the electorate attention from some controversial issues.

However, providing less information than expected, according to Chilton, may collide with Grice's Maxim of quantity and Habermas' claim validities.

Another way of being persuasive in electoral debates may be closely related to the expression of CI. Gueniri and Castelfranchi (2006) understand that one of the distinctive features of promises, as opposed to other commissive acts such as threats, is that the candidate intends to persuade the addressee instead of dissuading the addressing from acting in a certain way. There are different communicative acts than can be used to persuade the addressee to carry a particular action. They make a connection between the persuasive function of political language and the expression of commitment to follow a future course of action by claiming that the performance of some promises may have a persuasive goal "as a result of the speaker's power over the listener's goals" (Ferrer-Navas, 2019, p. 65).

For instance, Wallace's campaign theme in the 1972 primaries was "Send them a message", which "allowing people to fill their own meaning for both "them" and the "message" (Kendall, 2000, p. 75). However, on other occasions he spoke confidently and energetically when expressing his commitments. Kendall (2000) explains that he was able to give the impression of firmness by using certain language choices which seemed to be direct and clear, as illustrated certain such as "I shall", or "No, we do not" (p. 75).

Politicians' persuasive intention may be made even more evident by explicitly uttering their linguistic goal they want to accomplish, either committing themselves to carry out certain actions or encouraging the audience to act in some way or another. Gueniri and Castelfranchi (2006) make a connection between persuasion and commitment by claiming that "an influencing promise is a sort of combination between two different (linguistic) acts", an *offer* and a *request* for *addressee* in which the offer is conditioned to the accomplishment of the request (p. 17). An example of this type of

promise is found in 2008 presidential debate that was held in Hofstra University, where the candidate Barack Obama made the following promise:

(5) I'm absolutely convinced we can do it. I would ask for your vote <request>, and I promise you <promise> that if you give me the extraordinary honor of serving as your president <request>, I will work every single day on your behalf and on the behalf of the future of our children <commitment>. (as cited in Ferrer-Navas, 2019, p. 65)

Gueniri and Castelfranchi (2006) refers to “commissive requests” as a speech act of requests which is conveyed by taking a commitment on the part of the speaker if the addressee does the requested action. For example, conditional promises may be an example of this type of commitments as illustrated above.

On the other hand, persuasion is also connected to the expression of commitment to a future outcome. Candidates often make utterances in which they encourage the addressee to act through effective stance lexical realisations. Roosevelt, who was considered a good orator, usually concluded his speeches with “with a slogan of a football field: ‘Don’t flinch, don’t foul, and hit the line hard’” (Kendall, 2000, p. 56). He clearly called on the addressee to take action in a direct manner through the use of imperative forms. However, there are some more indirect ways of inviting the addressee to take action. Marín-Arrese (2021) claims that a strategy of legitimization consists of “urging for action by claiming the necessity, normativity, desirability or righteousness of the proposed plans of actions” (p. 138). In some cases, such call on the addressee is made even if the addressee is not in the position of carrying out the designated action. For example, candidate Obama said in the presidential debate which was held on October 3rd, 2012 “Let’s hire another 100,000 math and science teachers”, which is a clear example of the use of hortative structures to persuade the addressee to act. In this example, none the addressee or the candidate are in apposition to carry out the action since the outcome

can only be achieved through cooperation. If the electorate support the candidate to the extent that such individual wins the election, then the elected candidate will be in a position to carry out the action at a moment when he or she would be committed to fulfil his word. This is a common strategy to persuade the voter through a reward.

However, it is worth noticing some politician may use other strategies to persuade their audiences. Politicians may adjust their positions on certain matters to more popular views even if they have a different vision on a particular matter or on the policies to which they commit may not be beneficial for the society as a whole in order to satisfy the desire of an important part of the electorate. Bonilla (2017) claims that, even though candidates who make promises may be considered more honest because of the higher degree of commitment derived from their words, “voters are notoriously sceptical of pandering” (p. 7). Politicians may also be tempted to provide a biased interpretation of an event. A clear example is provided by Boris Johnson, the leader of the Conservative Party in Great Britain at the time, and the Brexit when he made the following promise:

My pledge is to come out of the EU at Halloween on 31 October. And the way to get out our friends and partners to understand how serious we are is finally, I’m afraid, to abandon the defeatism and negativity that has enfolded us in a great cloud for long and to prepare confidently and seriously for WTO or no deal outcome. (as cited in Ferrer-Navas, 2019, p. 63)

By establishing a cause-effect relationship between the unsuccessful negotiations with the European Union and the negative frame of mind associated to such process of negotiation, Johnson may lead hearers to believe that by having developed a positive mindset, the results of the negotiations would have been different. No doubt, these strategies involve the use of persuasive language and, in some cases, the use of manipulative language since they distort the reality to a certain degree in order to gain the audience

adherence to achieve the politicians' political goals. The following section will focus on the expression of CI and CO as persuasive strategies in electoral debates.

3.3.3. Effective Stance and the Expression of CI and CO in Presidential Debates as Persuasive Strategies

Political discourse is often linked to the notion of persuasion in that it seeks to gain the necessary support of the congress, parliament, or electorate depending on the context in which it occurs. The political activity requires to propose laws and policies which need to have the necessary support to be enforced from the members of the parliament or congress. Moreover, those decisions need to be understood by citizens if politicians want to keep the favour of the electorate and have any possibility of keeping the power.

Moreover, politicians use a wide range of strategies to highlight differences between candidates and present themselves as the suitable candidates for the public position at stake. Kendall (2000) argues that they can defined themselves as a unique human being by means of their use of language:

An important way to define oneself as a unique human is through speech style, the choice of words to express ideas. Speech style is highly personal, affecting the speaker's efforts to persuade through the clarity, vividness, appropriateness, and accuracy of language" (p. 81)

Stance involves the speaker's "expression of beliefs, attitudes or emotions, and the way we align or disalign with particular positions or information advanced by others in social interaction" have been widely discussed in the literature" (Marín-Arrese, 2021, p.137). Politicians, on the other hand, make use of a wide range of strategies to explain their positioning regarding numerous issues and persuade the audience on the legitimacy

of their stance on those matters. More specifically, *effective stance* can be considered as “markers of legitimisation strategies in expressing the speaker’s/writer’s [...] claims to be morally right in the proposed realization of actions” (Marín-Arrese, 2021, p. 136).

When it comes to elections, the need for displaying persuasive strategies is even more critical since results of the elections will determine whether candidates will have the opportunity to accomplish their commitments and proposals. It is particularly in primary and presidential debates that they use a wide range of persuasive strategies to achieve their political goals. In this context, the use of expressions of CI and CO have the same ultimate goal, which is to gain the audience support and, consequently, become the elected president. Effective stance markers become particularly useful for politicians to persuade the electorate on the suitability of their candidacy to enforce certain plans of action in the best interest of citizens. Marín-Arrese (2021) describes the function of those effective stance markers as follows:

Effective stance strategies are meant to exert a direct persuasive force on hearers/readers’ acceptance of action plans and events, and of judgement regarding the occurrence of events, by expressing intention or determination to carry out those action plans, by arguing them towards the realization of the events, by expressing inclination towards the event, or by claiming the social desirability, advisability or requirement of a particular event or situation, by intending to subject the hearer/reader to social and psychological force or finally more indirectly by indicating their feasibility or enable circumstances.” (p.143).

This thesis aims at analysing the expression of commitment with effective stance strategies by making a distinction between commitment to the speaker’s future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO). The expressions of CI and CO act as two interacting persuasive forces intending to impel the electorate to take action, which ultimately consists of voting in favour of the corresponding candidate.

There are certain features that characterize each macro-category in terms of who is designated as the conceptualizer, and the degree of salience of the role of the speaker

and, consequently, the degree of responsibility and accountability taken by the speaker. On the one hand, the expression of CI is an effective persuasive strategy in which the speaker expresses certain degree of commitment to carry out the corresponding designated event in the proposition. The speaker offers himself to carry out a plan of action which is perceived as desirable for the audience. Therefore, the speaker is the conceptualizer of the designated event and will be held responsible for the accomplishment of the event by expressing the commitment using a first-person subject *I*. (See Traugott & Dasher, 2002, p. 11; Marín-Arrese, 2015). Although the expression of CI typically involves the explicit designation of the speaker as the conceptualizer and, therefore, the one taking accountability on the fulfillment of the event to which they have committed, in some cases, the CI can be expressed with the plural first-person subject *we*, which involves shared responsibility, but still it is clear that the speaker is considered responsible for fulfilling of the designated event. However, to identifying exactly with whom the candidate is sharing responsibility seems to be a more difficult task (Marín-Arrese, 2015). The plural first-person subject “we” can either refer to the executive team, to the whole party, or to every citizen.

On the other hand, the expression of CO acts also a persuasive force in that the designated event is presented as morally necessary, convenient, appropriate or desirable for the audience or the society as a whole. Therefore, the expression of CO functions as a legitimization strategy which attempts to persuade the audience so that voters perceive the candidates’ plans of action as legitimate because of their necessity, importance, advisability, convenience or desirability. In this case, the speaker is the conceptualizer, but the person who will perform the action remains undetermined, since the emphasis is put on the convenience of accomplishing certain outcome rather than on the speaker’s responsibility to perform the action. In other words, while the expression of CI puts the

emphasis on the speaker as the one committing to carry out the action, the expression of CO emphasizes the legitimization a particular outcome.

The role attribution of responsibility in the expression of CO is more complex than in the expression of CI. This type of commitment is characterized by evoking (i) the addressee's responsibility, as in the case of directives and imperative forms; (ii), shared responsibility with the hearer using the plural first-person subject *we*, as in the case of the use of deontic forms (*we must... we should...*); and (iii) impersonal expressions which, according to Langacker (2009), “de-focus the mental activity of any particular conceptualizer, and their personal responsibility” (p. 286), evoking “a virtual entity as conceptualizer” (Marín-Arrese, 2015, p. 8). The relation between the speaker and the addressee towards the accomplishment is the proposition is made more implicitly (Marín-Arrese, 2015) by using expressions such as *it is important*.

All in all, candidates are often interested in the pragmatics of political language because they usually use implications or secondary meanings in order to encourage specific interpretations. This often allows politicians to state the truth using words that the audience can interpret in more than one way. Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that their audience eventually interpret their utterances in the intended way since such interpretations are not categorical but probabilistic. What is more, listeners may locate the principles which are being manipulated and subvert them. The present paper will focus particularly on politicians' use of language when expressing CI and CO while they are engaged in political campaigns, particularly US primary and presidential debates. The following section will discuss the hypotheses that this thesis will test to understand in further detail how candidates express their commitment.

4. FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

4.1. Introduction

This section discusses the hypotheses of the thesis along with the corresponding research objectives regarding the expression of commitment in primary and in general presidential debates. The identification of the semantic categories used by the candidates under study to express commitment both in primary and general presidential debates will be carried out under two main macro-categories, that is, commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI), expressions of commitment which involve semantic categories that candidates typically use to make promises or express intentions; and commitment to a future outcome (CO), semantic categories which are used to legitimise the candidates' plans of action as well as to mobilise the electorate and encourage the audience to act. Some hypotheses will be formulated to determine whether there are relations between the linguistic strategies used by candidates and the type of context in which it occurs, primary vs. general presidential debates, and the political party to which the candidate belongs, Democratic vs. Republican Parties.

The acceptance or rebuttal of the hypotheses formulated below will contribute to the understanding of those linguistic choices and the candidates' preferences for certain semantic categories over others from the taxonomy of the expression of commitment proposed in this thesis.

4.2. Null Hypotheses and Research Objectives

Even though the extent to which electoral campaigns are influential on a candidate's success is somehow uncertain (Holbrook, 1994), every time elections for a

new president approach, candidates invest a significant amount of time and resources on reaching as many prospective voters as possible during their campaigns. The role of mass media in the last years seems to have been significant in order to reach a more extensive part of the electorate in an easier and quicker manner. The role of television, in particular, which has a “significant social influence”, has attracted the interest of politicians to make an effective use of its audiovisual features during their presidential campaigns (Ince & Koçak, 2018). Both mass media and, more recently, new media have contributed to the development of more complex processes of campaign design.

Candidates take advantage of any opportunity they have to promote trust and credibility in the electorate using a wide range of political and communicative strategies, among which the expression of commitment seems to play a relevant role by providing detailed accounts of their intentions and promises, on the one hand. In fact, recent research shows that the occurrence of promising has increased in the last years (Håkanson and Naurin, 2016; Bonilla, 2017). Furthermore, the act of promising usually occurs along with the legitimization strategies which explain or justify the candidates’ plans of action and mobilisation strategies that encourage the audience to act. Therefore, the use of language is not naïve, and politicians often make linguistic choices to express their commitments because of its relevance in terms of credibility and accountability.

The first hypothesis concerns the candidates’ preferences to express their commitment during electoral debates. More specifically, it attempts to prove whether there is a preference for any of the macro-categories of the taxonomy, namely the speaker’s commitment to a future course of action (CI) or commitment to an outcome (CO).

Presidential candidates are fully aware of the repercussion of their words during electoral campaigns, and primary debates and presidential debates become exceptional

opportunities to explain the candidates' intentions and to make promises that may be appealing to the electorate. However, they are conscious about the need of delivering persuasive arguments during debates so that they can gain the voter's support and encourage them to take action. For this reason, the first null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis will be formulated as follows:

H₀1: There is no significant difference between the use by candidates of expressions of commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) over expressions of commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and in general presidential debates.

If the null hypothesis is rejected, we can adopt the alternative hypothesis, which predicts a relationship between variables:

H_a1: There will be a significant difference between the use by candidates of expressions of commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) over expressions of commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and in general presidential debates.

Although "many studies indicate that candidates and parties keep more promises than they break" (Bonilla, 2017, p. 1), politicians face bad reputation regarding their trustworthy and credibility, in part, because of their use of language in political events. The ambiguity and vagueness of language may not allow the electorate to evaluate the candidates' statements and commitments as lies, but in many cases they feel that their deeds when they reach the office do not match the expectations which were raised during the campaign. Consequently, people often have no faith in their promises, or at least, they have doubts on whether their promises will be eventually fulfilled.

To face such lack of credibility, some politicians attempt to promote trust in the electorate by making promises overtly despite the accountability that they bring about

with them. On the contrary, the avoidance of expressing their intentions overtly may be useful strategically speaking since they can be cancelled with less difficulty than in the case of explicit promises. However, candidates need to be balanced in the use of ambiguous and vague expressions of commitment if they want to foster credibility in the electorate.

One of the research objectives of this thesis consists of determining whether candidates are willing to express their commitment without using performative verbs even if it may involve sacrificing their credibility. Therefore, I hypothesize the second and third null hypotheses (H_{o2} and H_{o3}) as follows:

H_{o2} : Overall, candidates do not favour the use of performative verbs when expressing commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) in primary and in general presidential debates.

H_{o3} : Overall, candidates do not favour the use of performative verbs when expressing commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and in general presidential debates.

If these null hypotheses are rejected, we can adopt the alternative hypotheses, which predict a relationship between variables:

H_{a2} : Overall, candidates will tend to use of performative verbs when expressing commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) in primary and in general presidential debates.

H_{a3} : Overall, candidates will tend to use performative verbs when expressing commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and general in presidential debates.

On the other hand, one of the main endeavours of this thesis is to determine whether there are significant differences in the way candidates' commitment is expressed in

primary vs. general presidential debates. As argued in preceding chapters, the characteristics of these types of debates are different at least in terms of the degree of heterogeneity of the audience, the turn-taking system and the amount of time allotted for each candidate. On the one hand, the audience to which presidential debates are targeted are usually more heterogeneous than in the case of primary debates. In order to be successful, candidates need to craft their messages having their audiences strategically in mind. Therefore, one way in which candidates may face the challenge to address a heterogeneous audience from an ideological perspective is by expressing their intentions less overtly and positioning themselves in more ambiguous manner regarding certain controversial issues, even though their credibility may be at stake by using a vaguer strategy. On the other hand, candidates have more amount of time to express their commitment in presidential debates since they are typically held with two candidates, the Democratic and the Republican nominees.

On the contrary, it is worth noticing that candidates are often unknown for the electorate during the primary debates and, consequently, those offer them an opportunity to gain people's attention on their candidacy. Furthermore, since primary presidential elections are intraparty contents, "candidates often have virtually indistinguishable positions on issues" (Lanoue and Schrott, 1989; as cited in Kendal, 2000, p. 54). Consequently, it may be reasonable to expect that candidates make clear their stand on a wide range of policies by directly expressing their commitment to show their distinctiveness.

Likewise, in primary debates the number of candidates is higher than in general presidential debates, even though it reduces as the campaign advances and some candidates drop from the run to presidency. As a result, the allotted time to explain their ideas is more limited, which may become an obstacle to inform the voters extensively

about their policies and promises. Thus, candidates may have the need to explain their policies and express their commitments in a more direct manner. In both contexts, politicians' lack of credibility and the importance of promises to gain votes in the election should be also calibrated when choosing a strategy. Therefore, these features may have an impact on the candidates' preferences for certain semantic categories when expressing CI and CO in each type of debate. Drawing on these distinct features between both types of debates, I hypothesize the fourth and fifth null hypotheses (H_{o4} and H_{o5}) in the following terms:

H_{o4} : There are no significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) in primary and in general presidential debates.

H_{o5} : There are no significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing commitment to a future outcome (CO) between primary and general presidential debates.

If these null hypotheses are rejected, we can adopt the alternative hypotheses, which predict a relationship between variables:

H_{a4} : There will be significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) in primary and in general presidential debates.

H_{a5} : There will be significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing commitment to a future outcome (CO) between primary and general presidential debates.

It is also object of study of this thesis to determine whether the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing commitment varies in relation to ideological position of the candidates represented in the corpus, namely the Democratic

and Republican parties. Audiences usually have a direct impact on the messages crafted by the candidates and the word choice in which those messages are conveyed. Candidates may use vaguer language or may use more indirect expressions of commitment in general presidential debates, particularly when dealing with certain issues about which there may be polarized positions, in order to meet the expectations of a more heterogeneous electorate. The data collected in the corpus include a balanced number of speeches delivered by Democratic and Republican candidates. In order to determine whether there are significant differences in the expression of commitment of candidates having different ideologies. Therefore, the sixth and seventh null (H_{o6} and H_{o7}) will be formulated as follows:

H_{o6} : There are no significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) in relation to the ideological position of the candidates' political parties, namely Democratic vs. Republican parties.

H_{o7} : There are no significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing commitment to future outcome (CO) in relation to the ideological position of the candidates' political parties, namely Democratic vs. Republican parties.

If these null hypotheses are rejected, we can adopt the alternative hypotheses, which predict a relationship between variables:

H_{a6} : There will be significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) in relation to the ideological position of the candidates' political parties, that is, Democratic vs. Republican parties.

H_a7: There will be significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing commitment to future outcome (CO) in relation to the ideological position of the candidates' political parties, namely Democratic vs. Republican parties.

Finally, this thesis aims at finding out whether there is any specific preference for certain semantic categories to express CI and CO on the part of the candidates as a result of their own rhetorical styles. Therefore, the eighth and ninth null hypotheses (H_o8 and H_o9) may be expressed in the following terms:

H_o8: There are no significant variations regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories among individual Democratic and Republican candidates when expressing commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) in primary and in general presidential debates.

H_o9: There are no significant variations regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories among individual Democratic and Republican candidates when expressing commitment to future outcome (CO) in primary and in general presidential debates.

If these null hypotheses are rejected, we can safely adopt the alternative hypotheses, which predict a relationship between variables:

H_a8: There will be significant variations regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories among individual Democratic and Republican candidates when expressing commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) in primary and in general presidential debates.

H_a9: There will be significant variations regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories among individual Democratic and Republican candidates

when expressing commitment to future outcome (CO) in primary and in general presidential debates.

In order to test the validity of these hypotheses, the following research objectives and procedures have been followed:

(a) The compilation of a corpus of speeches collected from primary and presidential debates between Democratic and Republican candidates running for presidency in elections taking place from 2000 to 2020.

(b) The development of a taxonomy of the various semantic categories identified in the expression of CI and CO, and the corresponding annotation scheme and tagset, in order to analyse the corpus and test the above-mentioned hypotheses.

(c) The analysis and annotation of the data obtained from a relevant number of speeches delivered by a relevant number of presidential candidates, according to the taxonomy developed.

(d) The quantitative analysis of the data, the statistical tests and the interpretation of the results, in order to validate the hypotheses.

The procedures will be more fully discussed in the Methodology section below.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. Research Design and Analysis

This thesis uses different research methods to throw light on its hypotheses and understand the analysis it pursues, namely the identification, classification, and quantification of a wide range of semantic categories expressing commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI), which typically involves promises, and the commitment to a future outcome (CO), through which candidates attempt to persuade audiences to take action. For this purpose, a corpus containing a large number of speeches from Democratic and Republican candidates delivered in primary and general presidential debates has been collected, annotated and analysed.

5.1.1. Corpus Description

The collection of a corpus allows for testing the hypotheses formulated in this thesis dissertation by identifying the frequency of occurrence of the various semantic categories under the two macro-categories, CI and CO, to find out any differences or similarities in the expression of commitment in primaries vs. general presidential debates across candidates' ideologies. In addition, the analysis of such corpus will enable the identification of evidence of unusual ways of expressing commitment as well as the most frequent linguistic strategies used for that purpose in this type of political activity.

In order to analyse the expression of commitment, therefore, a selection of speeches delivered in primary and general presidential debates during the electoral campaigns from 2000 to 2020 has been compiled. The corpora collected for this research

is made up of four sub-corpora of electoral debates, each of them containing between 55,000 and 60,000 words, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Sub-Corpora & Number of Words

Sub-corpora	N of words
Democratic Primary Debates (DPM-Corpus)	55,381
Republican Primary Debates (RPM-Corpus)	56,326
Democratic General Presidential Debates (DGP-Corpus)	59,251
Republican General Presidential Debates (RGP-Corpus)	59,892

This specialized corpus, which amounts up to 230,850 words, contains a set of restrictions on candidates and debates that can be part of the corpus, which will be further discussed in the following section.

5.1.2. Sample Collection: Primary and General Presidential Debates' Transcripts

Under this sample design, some restrictions have been observed in order to ensure a corpus which was balance and representative of the type of language which is being studied in the present thesis dissertation. Even though a ratio scale has been used to analyse the data, the sample has been meant to be balanced in the number of words collected for each candidate, party and type of debate so that the corpus is not skewed as a whole by some of the texts that have been collected.

Regarding the selection of the candidates which have been included in the corpus, it is worth noticing that only those who have run for presidency from 2000 to 2020 has been studied in this research. Since one of the primary objectives of this thesis is to identify similarities and differences in the expression of commitment both in primary and

general presidential debates, there is a need for analysing those candidates who had the opportunity of delivering their speeches as candidates in both contexts. Therefore, only candidates who were eventually became nominated in their corresponding parties during the primary elections have been included in the corpus.

On the other hand, some successful candidates have run for presidency after having been elected and, as a result, there were a greater number of speeches available for analysis. However, research on presidential debates show that the communicative strategies used by incumbent candidates vary from those used by challengers. Benoit & Airne (2005) note that incumbent presidential candidates usually acclaim and defend their positions more often and attack less than challengers. Similarly, Kendall (2000) claims that “incumbent presidents [...] have been able to use their power of position with great effectiveness through speeches in the primaries” (p.88). It seems to be reasonable that incumbent candidates express their commitment largely in terms of giving continuity to the policies implemented in the previous parliamentary term. In an attempt to analyse candidates who have a more similar power status, speeches delivered by candidates who opt for being re-elected as the president have not been included in this collection, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2

List of Selected Incumbent and Challenger Candidates for US Presidential Elections from 2000 to 2020

Year	Democrat Party	Challenger/ Incumbent	Republican Party	Challenger/ Incumbent
2020	Joe Biden	Challenger	Donald Trump	Incumbent
2016	Hillary Clinton	Challenger	Donald Trump	Challenger
2012	Barack Obama	Incumbent	Mitt Romney	Challenger
2008	Barack Obama	Challenger	John McCain	Challenger
2004	John Kerry	Challenger	George W. Bush	Incumbent
2000	-	-	George W. Bush	Challenger

Therefore, the collected data for this research consists of four collections of primary and general presidential debates held during the last two decades. In the case of the two collections of primary debates, they include the contributions of the candidates who eventually became nominees in their corresponding parties, namely Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and John F. Kerry from the Democratic Party; and Donald Trump, Mitt Romney, John McCain and George W. Bush from the Republican Party. Likewise, the two collections include the contributions of the above-mentioned candidates for the Democratic Party and Republican Party who partook in the general presidential debates. The corpora amount to a volume of 230,850 words and 49 debates, whose distribution in terms of candidates, type of debate, and ideology is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Number of Words and Debates in the Sub-Corpora Collected

Party	Candidates	Year	N of words in primary	N of words in general presidential	Total N of words	Total N of debates
Democrats	Joe Biden	2020	14,625	13,810	28,435	4
	Hillary Clinton	2016	14,518	13,228	27,746	4
	Barack Obama	2008	13,165	14,403	27,568	4
	John F. Kerry	2004	13,073	14,885	27,958	8
	Total Democrats		55,381	56,326	111,707	20
Republicans	Donald Trump	2016	15,350	15,165	30,515	6
	Mitt Romney	2012	15,431	16,325	31,756	7
	John McCain	2008	14,634	13,459	28,093	9
	George W. Bush	2000	13,836	14,943	28,779	7
	Total Republicans		59,251	59,892	119,143	29
Total Democrats & Republicans			114,632	116,218	230,850	49

Most of the transcripts included in the corpus have been collected from *The American Presidency Project*, a non-profit and non-partisan website hosted by the

University of California at Santa Barbara, which have become a leading online source of presidential documents. All presidential debates from which speeches were collected were found on the above-mentioned website. Others, however, have been manually transcribed from debates which had been recorded and made available to the public via internet. That was the case of some primary debates whose transcriptions were not available on the Internet since they have not received as much media coverage as in the case of presidential debates.

After having collected the corpus, a taxonomy of the expression of commitment has been put forward to identify and classify examples for each category. In the following section, those categories are defined and illustrated with examples from the corpus.

5.1.3. A Taxonomy on the Expression of Commitment

As explained in the theoretical framework, the usefulness of expressing commitment lies in the fact that individuals' behaviour can be predictable despite the possible changes that speakers may face in their desires or interests. This language function is singularly important in the case of candidates who are running for presidency since the electorate needs to know how they will behave or, in other words, what decisions they will make if they reach the office that may have an impact on the electorate and their environment before voting a particular candidate. A corpus-based taxonomy has been developed for this thesis dissertation to identify, annotate and analyse the expression of commitment in electoral debates. The following section provides a detailed account of the two macro-categories distinguished in the expression of commitment and their corresponding semantic categories.

5.1.3.1. Taxonomy's Theoretical Framework

The present taxonomy of the expression of commitment has been put forward in line with the classification developed by Marín-Arrese (2011, 2021, 2023), who draws on Langacker's (2013) conception of linguistic interaction as "a means of striving for control" and his distinction between epistemic and effective levels of control that allow users to construct their mental world, and more importantly for this research, influence on social reality (pp. 9-10). Marín-Arrese (2011, 2021, 2023) distinguishes between epistemic stance and effective stance, the former of which expresses the speaker's knowledge regarding the realization of an event whereas effective stance concerns the speaker's attempt to transform reality. This taxonomy will exclusively focus on the category of effective stance concerning the expression of commitment since one of the main objectives of presidential debates relates to the public expression of the policies they want to implement if elected and the major decisions they will make after gaining the electorate's support. Therefore, there is an inclination or intention on the part of presidential candidates to bring about changes and influence the future course of events. In fact, their main endeavour in presidential debates is to let the audience know in what ways reality will be transformed if elected. For this purpose, two macro-categories have been identified, namely commitment to the speaker's future action and commitment to a future outcome. Both macro-categories and their corresponding semantic categories will be defined below.

5.1.3.2. Annotation Scheme and Tagset for Annotation of the Expression of Commitment

This section provides an overview on the process of annotation that have been followed to identify and annotate the different categories found in the corpus. In

particular, it will explain the annotation scheme that has been used in such process, along with the tagset for the annotation of the expression of commitment in presidential debates.

5.1.3.2.1. Categories of Commitment to Speaker's Future Action (CI)

The first macro-category, commitment to the speaker's future action (CI), refers to those utterances in which speakers commit themselves to follow a specific future course of action, typically represented by the acts of promising, pledging, guaranteeing or vowing. According to Searle (1969), the speaker's psychological state expressed in this type of acts is intention. Under this macro-category, five categories have been identified, namely, Direct Commissives, Intentionality, Volitionality, Plans and Goals, and Offers. In Table 4, these five categories are presented along with the corresponding tagset and common lexical realizations.

Table 4

Categories, Tagset and Common Lexical Realizations for the Expression of CI

Categories & tagset	Lexical realizations
Direct Commissives (DC)	<i>I promise, pledge, guarantee, commit, that's going to be my pledge, I'm committed to...</i>
Intentionality (INT)	<i>I will, I shall and going to, would and lexical verbs in their present continuous form, and expressions such I'm committed to...</i>
Volitionality (VOL)	<i>I want to, I'd like to, I'd love to...</i>
Plans and Goals (PLA)	<i>I intend, I plan, my plan will, the plan I have is to, my vision is to, the objective I have is to, my strategy is to, our purpose is to, our mission is to, I have a plan for, I have a plan to, I have a plan that will, I have a comprehensive approach toward...</i>
Offers (OF)	<i>I offer, I'm offering...</i>

Direct Commissives (DC) are promises expressed with commissive performative verbs and performative expressions other than verbs. They are typically realized with the performative verbs *promise*, *pledge*, *guarantee*, *commit* or *vow*, as illustrated in examples (1-5).

(1) I would ask for your vote, and I **promise** <CI, DC> you that if you give me the extraordinary honor of serving as your president, I will work every single day, tirelessly, on your behalf and on the behalf of the future of our children. (Obama, DGP-Corpus)

(2) But I **pledge** <CI, DC> this to you, America: I will do it in the way that Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan and John Kennedy and others did, where we build the strongest alliances, where the world joins together, where we have the best intelligence, and where we are able, ultimately, to be more safe and secure. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

(3) I can do a better job of waging a smarter, more effective war on terror and **guarantee** <CI, DC> that we'll go after the terrorists. I will hunt them down, and we'll kill them. We'll capture them. We'll do what's ever necessary to be safe. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

(4) And I **commit** <CI, DC> that I will, in fact, appoint a -- I'll pick a woman to be vice president. (Biden, DPM-Corpus)

(5) And so the long-term trajectory is that we're going to have to get serious about increasing our fuel efficiency standards and investing in new technologies. That's something **I'm committed to** <CI, DC> doing. (Obama, DPM-Corpus)

Intentionality (INT) refers to the speaker's expressions of commitment which are conventionally accomplished through indirect speech acts which involve "modals of volition (*I/We will/'ll/won't*) with a commissive illocutionary force, and 'emerging' modals of intention (*I am going to*) (Marín-Arrese, 2021, p. 142; 2023), as shown in examples (6-9):

(6) I **will not** <CI, INT> raise taxes on anyone making \$250,000 or less. (Clinton, DGP-Corpus)

(7) We're **going to** <CI, INT> cut business taxes massively. (Trump, RGP-Corpus)

(8) As president of the United States, Alan, I **would** <CI, INT> order the secretary of the treasury to immediately buy up the bad home loan mortgages in America and renegotiate at the new value of those homes -- at the diminished value of those homes and let people be able to make those payments and stay in their homes. (McCain, RGP-Corpus)

(9) I'm **getting** <CI, INT> rid of the carried interest provision. And if you really look, it's not a tax, it's really not a great thing for the wealthy. It's a great thing for the middle class. It's a great thing for companies to expand. (Trump, RGP-Corpus)

The category of Volitionality includes those lexical realizations in which speakers express their willingness to accomplish the designated event using verbs of volition such as *want to* or *would like*. Unlike Huddleston and Pullum (2002) who conceive volition as "dynamic" modality since they argue that volition expresses the willingness of the subject rather than the speaker's attitude, this category will involve the above-mentioned verbs of volition that are preceded by a first-person subject, which seems to express the

speaker's attitude towards the designated event. This category is illustrated in example (10).

(10) I **want to** <CO, VOL> put 250 billion dollars additional, on top of what Congress has done. That gets us to a half a billion. I **want to** <CO, VOL> start a National Infrastructure Bank. I **want to** <CO, VOL> capitalize it with 25 billion that I believe will leverage 10 times that, that's another 250 billion. (Clinton, DPM-Corpus)

Under the category of Plans and Goals, expressions of intentions, plans, goals or purpose to perform a future course of action have been included. They are conveyed through the lexical realisations which usually include the words *plan*, *goal*, *intention*, *purpose*, *vision*, *mission*, and the like, as shown in examples (11-15):

(11) And one of the things that I **intend to** <CI, PLA> do as president is to restore America's standing in the world. We are less respected now than we were eight years ago or even four years ago. (Obama, DGP-Corpus)

(12) **My vision is to** <CI, PLA> empower Americans to be able to make decisions for themselves in their own lives. (Bush, RGP-Corpus)

(13) And so **my plan is to** <CI, PLA> take the middle class individuals and dramatically reduce their taxes by the following measure. And that is for middle income Americans, no tax on interest, dividends or capital gains. (Romney, RPM-Corpus)

(14) **I have a plan that** <CI, PLA> will provide health care to all Americans, that will lower the cost of health care for Americans, and I think that's a critical way

to Medicare and strengthen the entire health care system of our country. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

(15) And **it's my absolute intention to** <CI, PLA> leave Social Security the way it is. Not increase the age and to leave it as is. (Trump, RPM-Corpus)

Finally, Offers involves expressions in which the speaker proffers something to someone, as illustrated in example (16), often the addressee, who may freely accept or refuse it.

(16) That's why **I'm offering** <CI, OF> \$20 billion to states to change their¹⁸ state laws to eliminate minimum mandatories and set up drug courts. (Biden, DGP-Corpus)

These five sub-categories composed the first macro-category of the expression of commitment, namely, commitment to the speaker's future course of action. In the following section, a definition of the sub-categories identified in the expression of commitment to a future outcome will be provided along with the corresponding examples to illustrate them.

5.1.3.2.2. Categories of Commitment to a Future Outcome (CO)

The expression of commitment to a future outcome (CO) refers to the speaker's performance of directive acts through which they commit themselves to outcomes, which are "states of affair in the future, [the] actualization of which more or less directly depends on Addressee" (Beyssade & Marandin, 2006a). In other words, by giving an order or urging the addressee to follow a particular course of action, the speaker commits to her preference for the realization of the designated event (Condoravdi & Lauer, 2011). When

expressing CO, the agent who will accomplish a future outcome may not be easily determined, even though they are normally carried out by the addressee. However, in the case of presidential debates, the designated event uttered by a candidate may require to be in a specific position of power to be done, very often that of the President. However, the speaker is persuading the hearer to take action, which in an electoral context, it mainly consists of giving their support to a candidate by voting for their candidacy, which would allow for the accomplishment of a specific outcome. Under this macro-category, there are six semantic categories that have been identified in the corpus, namely Direct Directives, Imperatives and Hortatives, Inclination, Deonticity, Desirability and Proposals, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Categories, Tagset and Common Lexical Realizations for the Expression of CO

Categories & tagset	Lexical realizations
Direct Directives (DD)	<i>I/We order, urge, ask, ask for, plead, encourage...</i>
Imperatives & Hortatives (IH)	<i>lexical verbs in the imperative form, let us, let's...</i>
Inclination (INC)	<i>I want sb to, I would like sb to, I want sb vb-ing</i>
Deonticity (DEO)	<i>need to, need, a need to, have to, have got to, it's got to, must, should, ought to, it's necessary/mandatory to, can't, what's needed to..., it's required that..., the (second) thing we need is to, X is what we need, we'd better, we have no choice but to..., we owe (sth) to (sb), we have an obligation to...</i>
Desirability (DES)	<i>it's time to, it's time (for), it's right to, the right course for us is, it's our turn to..., it's wrong, it's important (for us) to, it's important that, it's essential (for X) to..., it's good that/to, X is/will be good, X is not a good deal, it's not moral, the best course for X is to..., the best way to do that is to..., X deserve(s) ..., the second most important thing is..., it's the (someone)'s job to</i>

Proposals (PRO)

what I am proposing is to, I propose, I am proposing, I have a major proposal to, I have a proposal for...

Direct Directives (DD) consist of expressions of the speaker's commitment to an outcome with performative verbs typically used to give orders or make requests, such *ask*, *order*, *urge* or the like:

(17) And I **ask** <CO, DD> you to embark on that journey with me. I **ask** <CO, DD> you for your trust. I **ask** <CO, DD> you for your help. (Kerry, RGP-Corpus)

Imperatives and Hortatives (IH) consists of expressions through which the speaker orders or gives an exhortation so that the addressee performs a particular action.

(18) You want to do that, do what I proposed over 30 years ago. Federally fund all elections, no private contributions in the election process. If you want to do that, **join** <CO, IH> me. **Join** <CO, IH> me and my constitutional amendment that I've been proposing. (Biden, DPM-Corpus)

(19) Number two, **let's** <CO, IH> help families right away by providing them a tax cut, a middle-class tax cut for people making less than \$200,000, and **let's** <CO, IH> allow them to access their IRA accounts without penalty if they're experiencing a crisis. (Obama, DGP-Corpus)

Inclination (INC), on the other hand, involves those expressions which convey the speaker's desire or willingness for the realization of a particular outcome. In this case, the force of "target of the intent is not the speaker/writer", but the addressee on numerous occasions. (Marín-Arrese, 2023, p. 42), as shown in example (20).

(20) **I want you to** <CO, VOL> do the latter, and here's why: The prescription drug companies have not been held accountable. And what they're doing is they're playing games with the patents. They'll take a little jar, they'll change the color, there will be the same thing in it, they extend the patent laws. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

The category of Deonticity (DEO) “includes expressions of deontic modality involving necessity, and also weak forms of deonticity, that of ‘advisability’ (*should, ought to*)” (Marín-Arrese 2011, 2021, 2023). Through these expressions the speaker suggests a course of action that will benefit the addressee (Traugott and Dasher, 2002).

(21) Look, we **must** <CO, DEO> improve education in this country. (McCain, RGP-Corpus)

(22) And we finally **need to** <CO, DEO> pass a prohibition on anyone who's on the terrorist watch list from being able to buy a gun in our country. (McCain, RGP-Corpus)

(23) That has this kind of special protection. We hear a lot from Senator Sanders about the greed and recklessness of Wall Street, and I agree. We've **got to** <CO, DEO> hold Wall Street accountable. (Clinton, DPM-Corpus)

(24) **The second thing we need is to** <CO, DEO> crack down on illegal hiring. It's against the law in the United States to hire people illegally, and we **ought to** <CO, DEO> be enforcing that law properly. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

(25) You can't -- you can't get something for nothing. And if we care about Social Security, which I do, and if we are firm in our commitment to make sure that it's going to be there for the next generation, and not just for our generation, then **we**

have an obligation to <DEO> figure out how to stabilize the system. (Obama, DPM-Corpus)

The category of Desirability (DES) involves expressions in which the speaker conveys the convenience and appropriateness of the even designated in the prepositional content based on moral grounds, the speaker's values or their subjective evaluation of the reality (see Marín-Arrese's Normativity, 2021, 2023). This category is characterized by an implicit source of force which "may be some generalized or virtual conceptualizer" which is interpreted by default as the speaker (Marín-Arrese, 2021, p. 142).

(26) **It's time to** <CO, DES> bring folks together to say that all seniors will get prescription drug coverage. (Bush, RGP-Corpus)

(27) But **the first and most important thing is to** <CO, DES> start creating jobs in America. The jobs the President is creating pay \$9,000 less than the jobs that we're losing. And this is the first President in 72 years to preside over an economy in America that has lost jobs—1.6 million jobs. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

(28) But **the key thing is to** <CO, DES> have somebody who knows how to lead, to bring people together to solve the Social Security system. (Bush, RPM-Corpus)

(29) But let me also say to you that **it's the president's job to** <CO, DES> make sure Congress doesn't have the money to spend in the first place. (Bush, RPM-Corpus)

(30) And that's why **it's so critical** <CO, DES> that we make America once again the most attractive place in the world to start businesses, to build jobs, to grow the economy. And that's not going to happen by just hiring teachers. (Romney, RGP-Corpus)

(31) My response is people **deserve** <CO, DES> to have affordable health care -
- period. Period, period, period. (Biden, DGP-Corpus)

(32) But I feel that at this point in our country's history, **it is important** <CO, DES> that we not reverse marriage equality, that we not reverse Roe v. Wade, that we stand up against Citizens United, we stand up for the rights of people in the workplace, that we stand up and basically say: The Supreme Court should <CO, DEO> represent all of us. (Clinton, DGP-Corpus)

(33) **It's required** <CO, DES> that they have representation now. (Biden, DPM-Corpus)

Finally, the category of proposals (PRO) refers to the speaker's suggestions to follow some course of action which will be eventually accepted or rejected by the addressee or audience, as illustrated in examples (34) and (35).

(34) So now we've dug ourselves out of it, we're standing, but we're not yet running. **So what I am proposing** <CO, PRO> is that we invest from the middle out and the ground up, not the top down. That is not going to work. (Clinton, RGP-Corpus)

(35) I am—I **have a proposal** <CO, PRO> for a tax cut for all people earning less than the \$200,000. The only people affected in my plan are the top income earners of America. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

As mentioned above, these are corpus-based categories of the expression of commitment. Therefore, there may be more sub-categories expressing commitment that did not occurred in corpus and their corresponding lexical realizations. However, it can be affirmed that the different subcategories identified seem to cover the expression of

commitment extensively because of the size of the corpus compiled for this thesis. In the following section, some methodological considerations and problematic areas regarding the classification of the different categories will be discussed.

5.1.3.3. Methodological Considerations in the Development of the Categories

There are some methodological considerations regarding the identification and development of the taxonomy which has been developed for the analysis of the corpus of this thesis. The categories of the present taxonomy have been classified from a semantic perspective. However, it is remarkable to point out that there are some difficulties that have been tackled during the process of categorization. One of the most relevant challenges concerns the difficulty in identifying clear-cut categories due to the overlapping of some of them.

Austin (1962) pointed out in his work that the categories of his taxonomy of speech acts were not clear-cut categories. In fact, some attention has been devoted in literature to the possible overlapping of some of the categories or sub-categories of the taxonomies that have been proposed under speech act theory, particularly when dealing with threats, invitations and offers (Bach and Harnish, 1979; Hancher, 1979). While authors such as Leech (1983) and Wierzbicka (1987) classify invitations and offers as commissive and directive speech acts respectively, Tsui (as cited in Pérez-Hernández, 2001) claims that both belong to the same category known as requests.

The hybrid nature of these speech acts is discussed by Bach and Harnish (1979) and Hancher (1979), who claim that certain subtypes of speech acts should be classified under a new category of commissive-directive speech acts since they equally share features of commissive and directives speech acts. While speakers performing these

speech acts attempt to encourage the hearer to follow certain future course of action, which is a feature typically identified in directive speech acts, they also potentially to accomplish a future action by their performance, as in the case of commissive speech acts.

However, Pérez-Hernández (2001), who analyses the speech acts of threats, invitations and offers from a cognitive perspective, claims that “prototypical directives and commissives fade into one another forming a continuum” (Pérez-Hernández, 2001, p. 78). She analyses these speech acts under nine variables, some of which have been widely discussed in literature (Austin, 1962; Searle 1979; Bach and Harnish, 1979, Leech, 1983; Verschueren, 1985), namely *agent type*, the person performing the action designated in the proposition; *time of action*, which can be performed in the past, present or future; *degree of speaker’s will*, the extent to which the designated event is desired by the speaker; *degree of addressee’s will*, the extent to which the designated action is desired by the hearer; *degree of cost-benefit*, whether the designated action will have a positive or negative impact on the participants involved in the communicative event; *degree of optionality*, the extent to which the potential agent is free to carry out the designated action or refuse it; *degree of mitigation*, the extent to which the speech act is softened by the speaker; *degree of power*, the power relation between participants; and *degree of social distance*, the participants’ relative position “in a continuum of intimacy” (Pérez-Hernández, 2001, p. 79). Although she applied these variables to the three speech acts above-mentioned, this section will focus on offers since such sub-category will be part of the taxonomy provided for the analysis of the expression of commitment of this thesis dissertation.

Pérez-Hernández (2001) discusses what she calls propositional idealized cognitive models of offers. Regarding the agent type, she points out that most offers

encode the speaker as the agent who will perform the designated action, as illustrated in the example “I’ll walk you back to your hotel, I offered” taken from the British National Corpus. However, there are some offers which invite the hearer to act, as in the utterance “Do try one!”. The author claims that the latter type of offers involves the “transfer of objects (e.g. *strawberry*) from the speaker to the addressee”, which requires the speaker to give something and the hearer to take something. However, despite requiring the hearer to perform an action, she argues that the hearer is also committing to carry out an action, a feature which is common to both types of offers. Pérez-Fernández (2001) claims that every offer requires the hearer to act since they are required to accept or reject the speaker’s offer, which is what “gives the act of offering its directive flavour” (p.87).

However, there is a substantial difference between the examples discussed above. While both utterances involve the linguistic act of accepting or declining the offer, only the second one involves the physical action of the hearer, which typically characterizes directive speech acts. Therefore, in the taxonomy proposed in this thesis, only offers of the first type, which represent the speaker as the agent who will perform the designated action, will be classified as such under the macro-category of commitment to the speaker’s future course of action. On the contrary, those expressions which are expressed with the imperative mood and, consequently, require the hearer to perform a future action will be classified as Imperatives and Hortatives under the macro-category of commitment to a future outcome, since the variable of agent type is the main criterion used to distinguish between both types of commitment.

The variable of *cost-benefit* seems to be difficult to be determined in political discourse. Although political candidates usually encourage audiences to perform certain action through persuasive arguments which highlight the appropriateness, desirability or necessity of performing the designated action, it is not always possible to determine to

what extent this is the case and whether following the course of action requested by the speaker will have a positive impact on the addressee.

Another controversial category is Proposals, which is typically associated to the suggestive sub-category under directive speech acts. As in the case of the category of Offers, Proposals belong to the so-called “adjacency pairs” since they required to be accepted or rejected by the addressee (Sacks & Schegloff, 1974). However, in this case, the potential agent of the designated action seems to be unspecified or indetermined. The speaker may be encouraging addressees to act on their own or to perform the action with the speaker (Chengcheng & Forteza-Fernández, 2020). In political discourse, the designated event may involve actions that the addressee is not in a position to accomplish, but whoever the agent may be (unspecified) it required the acceptance or support of the electorate. This type of speech acts usually contains the speaker’s will or desire for the designated action to be performed on the one hand, and the motivation of the addressee to complete the act by accepting. If we focus on the criteria to determine the macro-category under categories should be place, it seems clear that the target of force, in this case, is not necessarily on the speaker. This is the reason why they have been classified under the macro-category of commitment to a future outcome (CO).

There are more categories in the taxonomy proposed for this thesis that have required some effort to be distinguished. Under the macro-category of CI, the categories of Intentionality and Plans & Goals seem to overlap. However, making a distinction between these categories was considered relevant in order to distinguish those expressions of commitment in which the speaker uses conventionalised forms of making promises, such as the use of *I will* and *I’m going to* from those expressions in which candidates explained their plans and intentions with lexical realizations which usually involve the use of expressions such as *my plan is*, *my goal is*, *my intention is*, *my purpose*

is, and the like, as shown in examples (11-15). In fact, the degree of commitment of the first group seems to be stronger than in the latter one since their lexical realizations have become conventionalised forms of promising which have been generally accepted as such.

It is also remarkable the use of complex forms such *I'm going to have*, which occurs with certain frequency in the corpus. In this case, it was necessary to determine whether those examples were going to be classified as Intentionality, because of the use of the semi-modal *going to*, or as Deonticity, because of the use of the modal verb *have to* expressing obligation. The deontic meaning of those expression seems is explicitly expressed by the speaker. Even though the speaker may be expressing their determination to follow a particular course of action on some occasions, the potential agent is often difficult to be determined because of the use of the first-person plural pronoun “we”. Furthermore, the designated even seems to be explained as necessary and, therefore, the speaker seems to be forced to do it, regardless the resulting action may be beneficial for the addressee or not. It is for these reasons that those examples have been annotated under the category of Deonticity.

On the other hand, regarding the use of verbs of volition in the corpus, such as *want* or *would like*, there are two different categories under which those expressions have been classified. The sentence structure has determined whether they are classified under the macro-categories of CI or CO. Those verbs preceded by a first-person subject and followed by a *to*-infinitive clause typically expresses CI, as illustrated in example (10), while those verbs preceded again by a first-person subject and followed by an object and a *to*-infinitive clause or *that*-clause typically express CO, as shown in example (20).

There is a final remark to make on the development of the taxonomy presented below. Since this is a corpus-based taxonomy, it is reasonable to think that there may be

certain lexical realizations which have not occurred in the corpus and, therefore, the list of those may need to be completed with a more extensive corpus. However, when it comes to the various semantic categories to express CI or CO, it seems to be probable that all the semantic categories, or at least most of them, have been identified because of the size of the corpus. Undoubtedly, there is also room for further research to identify any other categories or lexical realizations by compiling a larger corpus.

5.1.3.4. Procedures

The data collected in the corpus have been manually annotated in *Microsoft Word* files according to the corresponding tagset and analysed under the categories identified in the proposed taxonomy, which include a wide range of semantic categories expressing CI and CO. After a first annotation, the whole corpus was revised in two more occasions to make sure that all tokens present in the corpus were identify and categorized. Throughout this process, ambiguous tokens were identified to be revised and categorize according to the definition of the categories. The context of those tokens was also analysed to determine the category to which they belonged. As the process of annotation was carried out, the lexical realizations of each token were added to the list of lexical realizations under the corresponding category in a *Word-Office* document.

Finally, in order to quantify the total number of occurrences of each category, the software *AntConc 4.1.4.*, a free textual analysis software developed by the Japanese scholar Laurance Anthony and commonly used in Corpus Linguistics, has been employed. The results have been compiled in tables that will be shown and discussed in the section of “Results and Discussion”. The statistical analysis which has been carried out with the data obtained from the quantitative analysis will be further explained in the section below.

5.2. Methods

Quantitative data have been increasingly handled in linguistic research in the last years in fields such as phonetics, sociolinguistics or computational linguistics, even though other subdisciplines are now using such data (Johnson, 2008). As opposed to qualitative methods, which attempt to provide an in-depth data on a matter, quantitative methods aim at “generalizing research finding” (Litosseliti, 2018, p.33). Aliaga and Gunderson (2002) explain the process of making quantitative research involves “explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods” (p. 14). Based on positivism, quantitative approaches and methods aim at measuring certain variables.

This thesis dissertation explores (i) which of these types of commitment, CI and CO, are predominant in presidential debates, along with the degree to which the categories described above of the expression of CI and CO may correlate with (ii) the political context where they occur, that is, primary vs. general presidential debates; (iii) the ideology of the candidates expressing those commitments, Democrats vs. Republicans; and (iiii) the individual rhetorical style of each candidate.

In the analysis of the data, a quantitative methodology has been used in order to identify similarities and differences in the frequency of occurrence of each category according to the type of electoral debate in which they occur, the candidates’ ideology and their individual rhetorical styles. The use of quantitative methods seems to be appropriate for this thesis dissertation in order to provide a macro-view of the expression of commitments in different political contexts, such as primary vs. general presidential debates and to make systematic and standardized comparisons between the different sub-corpora.

Several measures allow researchers to compare the number of occurrences of key words or expressions across corpora, such as the chi square test or the log-likelihood statistic (Rayson, 2008, p.529). Both are “null-hypotheses significance test statistics which have associated probability values (*p*-value) indicating the probability of observing the data under the null-hypothesis” (Pojanapunya & Watson Todd, 2018, p. 4). In this way, researchers may determine whether those occurrences are due to chance.

The present thesis uses inferential statistics to test the null hypotheses, which predict that there is no relationship between the dependent variables, the categories identified in the taxonomy, and independent variables, primary vs. presidential debates, the candidates’ ideology and their personal rhetorical styles. Such type of statistics is appropriate for this thesis since it will allow us to make predictions about the validity of the correlations above described. Likewise, inferential statistics has become a useful tool in this dissertation to determine whether the patterns identified in the data are statistically meaningful. In the field of humanities and social sciences, 5 % sure means that the null hypothesis is true ($p = 0.05$) (Levon, 2010). Therefore, the null hypotheses will be rejected if the percentage is less or equal to 5% sure, which means that we are in a position to claim that the statistical test is at least 95% sure that the null hypothesis is not true. The rejection of any of the null hypotheses of this dissertation will simultaneously imply the confirmation of the experimental hypothesis. On the contrary, the hypotheses will be valid if the percentage is greater than 5%.

Since we are dealing categorical dependent and independent variables which are categorical, that is, “those variables whose values can be easily separated into discrete categories” (Levon, 2010, p. 72), the statistical test selected is the chi square test, whose main goal is explained by Levon (2010) as follows:

The goal of the chi-squares is to determine whether the proportional distribution we observe in our sample population (e.g. X% of values in one category, Y% of values in another) is significantly different from the distribution we would expect to find in any population of the same size and shape. (p. 74)

Therefore, such mathematical calculations have been done with the raw numbers after having quantified the corresponding categories from the taxonomy in each corpus with the software *AntConc 4.1.4*. in order to identify any significant differences in the occurrence of those categories with regards to the various independent variables. However, some considerations regarding the chi square calculations have been taken into account in this process. Levon (2010) explains that “a good benchmark is at least 5 tokens per cell, or a total of five times the total number of cells (p. 78). In the process of determining whether there was any relation between the expression of CI and the type of electoral debate in which those tokens occur or the political ideology of the candidates (H_04 and H_06), the total of cells was 10, which multiplied by 5 equals 50. The number total of tokens was 1145, which means that this requirement has been widely met. In the case of the analysis of the possible correlation between the expression of CO and the type of electoral debate in which those tokens occur candidate’s ideology (H_05 and H_07), again this requirement is met since the total number of cells are 12, which multiplied by 5 equals 60, and the total number of tokens is 1383. Therefore, the total number of tokens in this research, 1145 and 1383 respectively which let us conclude that such requirement is met. In the case of the chi square test of independence for H_08 and H_09 , which claim that there are no significant variations regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories among individual Democratic and Republican candidates when expressing commitment to speaker’s future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and general presidential debates, the number of cell which have at less than 5 tokens is higher than a 20% because of the low frequency of occurrence of

some categories. For that reason, we have selected the three most common semantic categories for each macro-category, CI and CO, in order to avoid obtaining an invalid result. For chi square calculations, the following online calculator has been used:

<https://quantpsy.org/chisq/chisq.htm>

After determining the chi square of the data, the distribution of the *degrees of freedom* (*df*) and the *p*-value have been calculated. In the case of the data regarding the expression of commitment to the speaker's future course of an action (CI) in H₀4 and H₀6, the *p*-values have been determined with 4 *degrees of freedom* using a chi square significance chart, whereas the *p*-values in the case of the expression of commitment to a future outcome (CO) in H₀5, and H₀7 have been calculated with 5 *degrees of freedom*. On the other hand, the *p*-values of H₀8 and H₀9 have been determined with 14 *degrees of freedom* using a chi square significance chart.

As mentioned above, the chi square test may be unreliable when there are cells having less than 5 tokens in the contingency tables of the data. Therefore, the log-likelihood statistic, a significance test which has been also used in this thesis, could be considered a more reliable test in some cases (Dunning, 1993). The log-likelihood requires to collect the examples containing the key word or expressions targeted by the researcher in a corpus or several corpora. The calculation is carried out with the number of occurrences of each category, and its corresponding lexical realizations, in relation to the size of the corpora under study. The greater discrepancy in frequency across corpora is found the higher the log-likelihood will be, that is, "high LL [log-likelihood] value or keyness suggests that a word has a more significant relative frequency difference between the two corpora" (Pojanapunya & Watson Todd, 2018, p. 5). Therefore. Such test will determine which categories of the taxonomy of the expression of commitments observed in the data are overused or underused in each sub-corpora according to the observed

frequency observed in corpus 1 (O1) and the observed frequency of corpus (O2). A plus sign (+) will be used to indicate overuse of a particular category in O1 relative to O2 whereas a minus sign (-) will be used to indicate underuse of a certain category in O1 relative to O2 (Rayson, 2008). Additionally, the %DIFF has been also provided since it measures the size of the difference between normalised frequencies of a particular category in two corpora (Grabielatos & Marchi, 2011). The following calculator of the log-likelihood and percentage of differentiation has been used:

<https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>

Regarding the hypotheses that have been formulated for this thesis dissertation, different quantitative methods have been used to test them. For H₀1, H₀2, H₀3, the use of the ratio and the log-likelihood test will be required to know whether the data fails to support the null hypotheses or vice versa. However, for H₀4, H₀5, H₀6, H₀7, H₀8 and H₀9 the use of the chi square is necessary to determine whether there is a connection between the semantic categories used by presidential candidates to express commitment and (i) the type of debate in which they occur, primary vs. general presidential, (ii) the differences in ideology, Democrats vs. Republicans, and (iii) the individual Democratic and Republican candidates.

The use of quantitative methods has some advantages for the research and the researcher. They involve larger samples which are usually selected randomly, from which findings can likely be generalized to a whole population (Carr, 1994). In this case, having a large corpus with language that have naturally occurred to be analysed using statistical methods provides us with findings and conclusions that are more reliable. Levon (2010) also claims that “the strength of the corpus approach is in using fast and accurate techniques to identify patterns that human analysts would not notice” (p. 111). However, some limitations can also be pointed out regarding quantitative methods. For example, they

cannot give an account of how people interpret their use of language, the reasons why a particular pattern is more frequent than another or why a particular linguistic phenomenon has occurred in a particular manner.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results obtained from the analysis of the data related to the use of the categories of the of commitment to speaker's a future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and general presidential debates. In particular, it deals with the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories described in the taxonomy on the expression of commitment that has been put forward for this thesis. The corpus collected for the analysis includes primary debates in which eight different candidates attempted to become their corresponding party's nominee for president; and general presidential debates, in which nominees discuss a plethora of relevant topics for the electorate to win the US Presidency. The corpus is structured into four sub-corpora, namely Democratic Primary Debates (DPM-Corpus), Republican Primary Debates (RPD-Corpus), Democratic General Presidential Debates (DGP-Corpus), and Republican General Presidential Debates (RGP-Corpus), all of which amount to 230,850 words. Each sub-corpora deliberately contains a similar number of words, about 57,713 words on average, that belong to the speeches of each corresponding candidate.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics have been used to analyse the resulting data. The former has been necessary to calculate the number of tokens identified in the corpus for each semantic category of the taxonomy and the percentages of their occurrence in the corpus. On the other hand, inferential statistics have contributed to determine whether the patterns we have observed are statistically meaningful, and, consequently, confirm or refute the corresponding hypotheses. Therefore, results will show whether there is a relation between effective stance, or more specifically, the expression of commitment to a future action or commitment to a future outcome, and the

type of electoral debate in which those commitments occur, that is, primary vs. general presidential debates. Likewise, inferential statistics will also determine whether there is a significant correlation between the candidates' preference for certain categories to express their commitment and their ideological positioning, namely Democrats vs. Republicans. The most significant findings will be discussed throughout this chapter under different subsections that relate to each hypothesis that have been formulated in this thesis. The first section will focus on number of tokens expressing CI and CO to see the speaker's preferences regarding these two macro-categories. The second section will be devoted to identifying the percentage of performative verbs or expressions employed by the candidates when delivering their messages in primary and presidential debates. The following section will analyse similarities and differences in the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories in primary vs. general presidential debates. Similarly, the fourth section will deal with those similarities and differences regarding the candidates' preferences for certain categories in relation to the political party to which they belong. Finally, the last section will focus on individual idiosyncrasies and possible patterns of each candidate concerning the expression of their commitment during electoral debates. Some concluding remarks will also be provided at the end of this chapter.

6.1. The Expression of Commitment to Speaker's Course of Action vs. Commitment to a Future Outcome in Primary and Presidential Debates

The taxonomy designed for this thesis dissertation is structured around two main macro-categories: commitment to speaker's future course of action and commitment to a future outcome. As explained in the methodology chapter, the main difference between these macro-categories stems from the target of force. Such force is usually directed,

according to Langacker, at an individual who will be responsible for the realization of the event designated in the utterance. In the case of the expression of CI, the speaker is the conceptualizer of the action and the individual assigned to carry out the designated event, whereas in the expression of CO, the target of force is someone else than the speaker and conceptualizer (Langacker, 2013).

Based on the taxonomy proposed in this thesis dissertation, the expression of CI is typically expressed through the semantic categories of Direct Commissives, Intentionality, Volitionality, Plans and Goals and Offers, as illustrated in examples (1-5) respectively.

(1) I **promise** <CI, DC> you I will reach across the aisle. (McCain, RPM-Corpus)

(2) I **will** <CI, INT> impose some fiscal discipline. There is nothing that -- anything the Democrats have said except -- that I have seen except tax and tax, spend and spend, elect and elect. (McCain, RPM-Corpus)

(3) Now, I **want to** <CI, VOL> build the wall. (Trump, RGP-Corpus)

(4) **My plan** <CI, PLA> drops the rate from 15% to 10% and increases the child credit from \$500 to \$1,000 to make the code more fair for everybody, not just a few, not just a handful (Bush, RGP-Corpus)

(5) That's why I'm **offering** <CI, OF> \$20 billion to states to change their state laws to eliminate minimum mandatories and set up drug courts. (Biden, DGP-Corpus)

In all these examples of CI, the speaker is the conceptualizer of the commitment or promise, but also the individual who is committing to carry out the designated event. Therefore, the target of the force is on the speakers themselves.

On the other hand, the expression of CO will be conveyed by numerous lexical realizations falling under the semantic categories of Direct Directives, Imperatives and Hortatives, Inclination, Deonticity, Desirability and Proposals, as observed in examples (6-11).

(6) And I **ask** <CO, DD> you for the privilege of leading our Nation to be stronger at home and respected again in the world. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

(7) **Let's** <CO, IH> focus our attention on how to make legal immigration work and stop illegal immigration. (Romney, RPM-Corpus)

(8) And I **want us to** <CO, VOL> do more to support people who are struggling to balance family and work. (Clinton, DGP-Corpus)

(9) We **have to** <CO, DEO> fix our health care system, which is putting an enormous burden on families. (Obama, DGP-Corpus)

(10) I think **it's more important** <CO, DES> right now to pass the Employment non-discrimination Act, hate crimes legislation and begin to move us forward so we have on the books those laws that allow us to protect people. (Kerry, DPM-Corpus)

(11) So what I **am proposing** <CO, PRO> is that we invest from the middle out and the ground up, not the top down. (Clinton, DGP-Corpus)

In examples (6-11) the speaker is the conceptualizer, but the target of force is not the speaker, who attempts to persuade the hearer to act in order to achieve a particular goal or outcome. This target of force may be also self-directed when the speaker includes him/herself as part of the role of the target. Under this macro-category, the sub-categories of Direct Directives, Imperatives and Hortatives and Inclination are typically used by

candidates to mobilise the electorate to act in a particular manner. On the other hand, the sub-categories of Deonticity and Desirability are commonly used as legitimisation strategies to persuade the electorate on the necessity or convenience of achieving certain outcome.

This section aims to determine whether presidential candidates prefer expressing CI or CO during primary and presidential debates by observing their corresponding frequency of occurrence in their speeches. For this purpose, every example of these two macro-categories have been annotated in the corpus and quantified to be displayed and analysed in the tables below. Table 6 shows the number of tokens and ratio of both types of commitment in the four sub-corpora, along with the log likelihood test and the percentage of differentiation. In all cases, the number of tokens expressing CI is lower than those expressing CO. The most far-reaching differences in the log-likelihood test is found in the RGP-Corpus (LL = 16.54; %DIFF = -26.47), in which expressions of CI occur a quarter percent less frequently than those expressing CO. Such corpus is followed by the DGP-Corpus, whose percentage of differentiation is -17.58%.

Table 6
The Expression of CI vs. CO

Sub-Corpora	Words	CI		CO		CI vs. CO
		N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
DPM-Corpus	55,381	264	47.670	302	54.531	LL= 2.55 %DIFF = -12.58
RPM-Corpus	59,251	309	52.151	343	57.889	LL= 1.77 %DIFF = -9.91
DGP-Corpus	56,326	272	48.290	330	58.588	LL= 5.60 %DIFF = -17.58
RGP-Corpus	59,892	300	50.090	408	68.123	LL= 16.54 %DIFF = -26.47
Total	230,850	1145	49.599	1383	59.909	LL= 22.44 %DIFF = -17.21

The data displayed above shows that there is a larger difference in the frequency of occurrence between CI and CO in general presidential debates than in primary debates. Such difference is also shown in Table 7, in which the log-likelihood test and the percentages of differentiation are remarkably different (LL = 4.26; %DIFF = -11.16 and LL = 21.09; %DIFF = -22.49 respectively) and the latter one doubles in general presidential debates. More specifically, by analysing their corresponding ratios per ten thousand words, it is observed that the ratio of CI is virtually the same in primary and presidential debates (49.986‰ and 49.218‰ respectively) while in the case of CO there is a significant difference in the frequency of occurrence (56.267‰ and 63.501‰ respectively), which is also proved by the log-likelihood test displayed in the table below.

Table 7

The Expression of CI vs. CO in Relation to Types of Debate

Type of Debate	Words	CI		CO		CI vs. CO LL & %DIFF
		N	R/‰	N	R/‰	
Primary Debates	114,632	573	49.986	645	56.267	LL= 4.26 %DIFF = -11.16
Presidential debates	116,218	572	49.218	738	63.501	LL= 21.09 %DIFF = -22.49
Primary vs. Presidential LL & %DIFF		LL= 0.07 %DIFF = 1.56		LL= 5.05 %DIFF = 11.39		
Total	230,850	1145	49.599	1383	59.909	LL= 22.44 %DIFF = -17.21

The results can be also displayed according to the candidates' ideology, as shown in Table 8, which presents the data in terms of the candidates' corresponding political parties, either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. Unlike the dichotomy between primaries and presidential debates, the frequency of occurrence of the expression of CI varies significantly concerning the candidate's ideology. While the frequency of the

expression of CI remains steady in both types of debates, there is a remarkable difference between the frequency of occurrence of the expression of CI in speeches delivered by Democratic candidates, whose ratio is 47.983‰, and the Republican candidates, whose ratio rises to 51.115. Furthermore, the test of log-likelihood and the percentage of differentiation (LL = 1.14; %DIFF= -6.13) also confirm such difference. However, the difference in the expression of CO, which is also observed in their corresponding ratios, is even larger (56.577‰ and 63.033‰ respectively) than in the expression of CI. In fact, the test log-likelihood test and the percentage of differentiation make clear such difference in the frequency of occurrence of the expression of CO (LL = 4.02; %DIFF= -10.24).

Table 8

The Expression of CI vs. CO in Relation to Political Parties.

Political Party	Words	CI		CO		CI vs. CO LL & %DIFF
		N	R/‰	N	R/‰	
Democrats	111,707	536	47.983	632	56.577	LL= 7.90 %DIFF = -15.19
Republicans	119,143	609	51.115	751	63.033	LL= 14.85 %DIFF = -18.91
Primary vs. Presidential LL & %DIFF		LL= 1.14 %DIFF = -6.13		LL= 4.02 %DIFF = -10.24		
Total	230,850	1145	49.599	1383	59.909	LL= 22.44 %DIFF = -17.21

When the ratios of the expressions of CI and CO are compared in relation to the political parties to which the candidates belong, a noteworthy difference is found between both types of commitment. However, those differences are rather similar in Democratic and Republican candidates, as shown by the percentage of differentiation of both political parties, namely -15.19% for Democrats and -18.91 for Republican.

Therefore, the data shows that there are not remarkable differences in the frequency of occurrence of the expressions of both types of commitment when it comes to the candidates' ideology slant whereas there are more significant differences in the expression of CI and CO in relation to the type of debate where they occur, that is, primary vs. general presidential.

Nevertheless, the analysis of the total amount of expressions of CI and CO in the corpus and their corresponding ratios reveals that candidates, regardless their political ideology and the type of debate in which they were delivering their speeches, tend to express more frequently expressions of commitment to a future outcome (CO: 59.909‰) than commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI: 49.599‰). Likewise, this trend is also confirmed again by the log-likelihood test and the percentage of differentiation (LL = 22.44; %DIFF= -17.21) of the total amount of expressions of commitment compiled and annotated in the corpus.

As a result, the first null hypothesis (H_{01}), which claimed that there is no significant difference between the use by candidates of expressions of commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) over expressions of commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and in general presidential debates, has been rejected. The data proves that candidates, regardless the political party to which they belong, tend to use more expressions of commitment to a future outcome (CO) than commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) in order to persuade the audience to take action and gain their support by putting the emphasis on the need, obligation or convenience of the corresponding designated events, or by encouraging voters to act by using more straightforward linguistic strategies, such as Imperative and Hortative forms, Inclination and, less commonly, performative directive verbs. Expressions of CO, therefore, play a critical role in electoral debates to the extent that they occur more frequently than those

expressions in which candidates commit themselves to carry out a certain course of action if elected by voters. In section 6.5., this preference for the expression of CO will be further developed in a more extensive manner by focusing on the data obtained from each candidate.

6.2. Effective Stance and Performative Verbs Expressing Commitment

The need for credibility of the candidates who are running for president seems to be critical to gain the necessary support from the electorate during the electoral campaigns they thoroughly plan. Candidates attempt to reach as many prospective voters as possible and persuade them by using a wide range of credibility-boosting strategies when drafting and delivering their messages in public events, as it is the case of televised electoral debates. Effective stance, which “pertains to the positioning of the speaker/writer with respect to the realization of events [...] at determining or influencing the course of reality itself” (Marín-Arrese, 2011, p. 195), occurs in political discourse, particularly in electoral debates, on a regular basis since one of the main goals of the candidates running for a nomination in their own parties and later running for presidency is to persuade voters to support them by making promises or expressing certain degree of commitment to enforce laws or policies that they claim to be beneficial for the electorate. Therefore, language becomes one of the main tools that politicians use to be perceived as trustworthy and reliable candidates who will implement policies that would have a positive impact on the prospective voters and to persuade the electorate on the necessity, appropriateness or convenience of bringing about those changes.

Televised debates usually become a unique opportunity for the candidates to spread their messages and express their commitment in front of large audiences. As a matter of fact, research on political promises reveal that the occurrence of this speech act

has been increasing in the last years (Håkanson and Naurin, 2014; Bonilla, 2014). It may be expected that candidates use clear and direct language, as it is the case of performative verbs, to make explicit their commitment for the sake of such trust and credibility. If those expectations were validated in the data, the second null hypothesis (H₀2) formulated for this thesis, that candidates do not favour the use performative verbs when expressing commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) in primary and in general presidential debates, would not be rejected. This section discusses whether the data obtained from the corpus confirms or rejects this null hypothesis.

To start with, the expression of CI has a relatively significant presence in the corpus since it occurs 1145 times. Table 9 provides a summary of the total number of tokens expressing CI identified and annotated in the corpus, along with their correspondent ratios.

Table 9

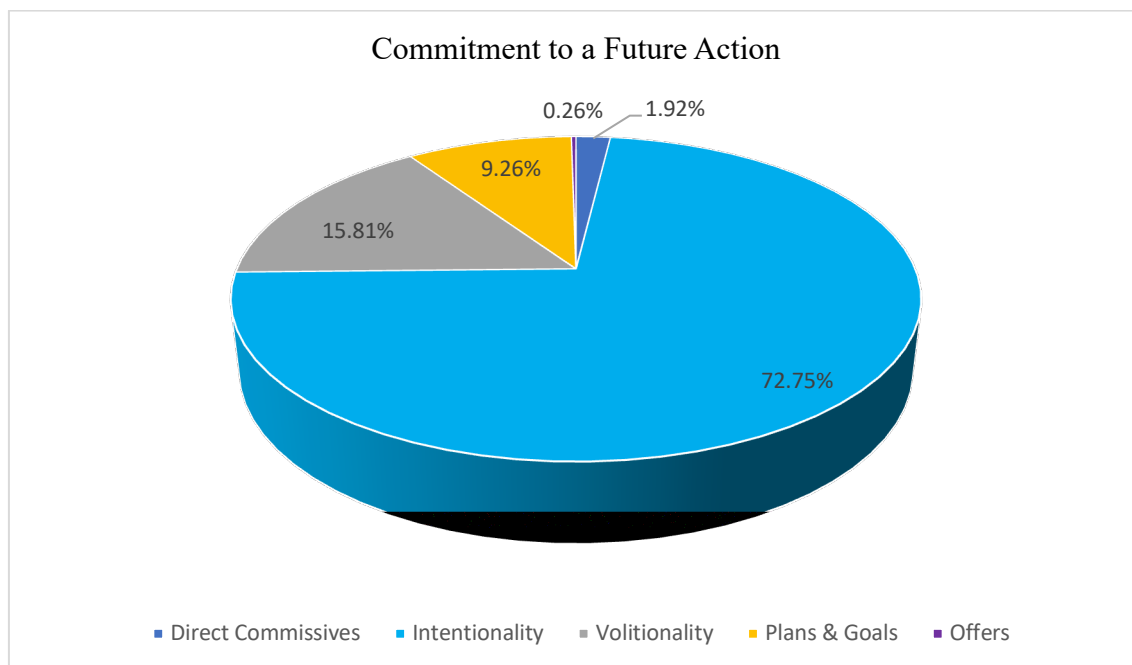
Raw Numbers & Ratio per 10,000 words of the Expression of CI

Semantic categories 230,850 words	N	R/‰
Direct Commissives (DC)	22	0.953
Intentionality (INT)	833	36.084
Volitionality (VOL)	181	7.841
Plan & Goals (PLA)	106	4.592
Offers (OF)	3	0.130
Total	1145	49.599

The data show that only 22 out of 1145 tokens are classified under the semantic category of Direct Commissives, which correspond to 1.92% of the sum of all the tokens expressing this type of commitment, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Percentages of the Semantic Categories of the Expression of Commitment to a Future Action



When compared to other semantic categories, the analysis of the corpus shows that frequency of occurrence of Direct Commissives by all the candidates under study is rather low. Therefore, performative verbs, such as *promise* or *pledge*, as illustrated in examples (1) and (12), are not commonly used by presidential candidates in the corpus.

(1) I **promise** <CI, DC> you I will reach across the aisle. (McCain, RPM-Corpus)

(12) I can **pledge** <CI, DC> this to the American people: I will never conduct a war or start a war because we want to. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

When talking about the Immigration Reform Republicans wanted to enforce, John McCain asked for cooperation from all parties to reach an agreement, and he made the promise expressed in example (1) using the prototypical performative verb for the category of Direct Commissives, namely, *promise*. Likewise, John F. Kerry chose to use

the performative verb *pledge* to make explicit his commitment of avoiding a new war while he was in the Office unless it was absolutely justified. However, this type of examples is rather rare in the corpus. The data clearly proves that candidates reduce the use of performative verbs or expressions to make public few of their promises, if any, even though that category *a priori* emphasizes their willingness to carry out the designated event and, as a result, they may contribute to the speaker's projection as reliable candidates for presidency in front of their audiences.

Concerning the expression of CO, the null hypothesis H₀₃ was stated in the following terms: Overall, candidates do not favour the use performative verbs when expressing commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and general presidential debates. This hypothesis is also not rejected. There are 1383 tokens which have been annotated under such macro-category. Table 10 shows the number of tokens identified in the corpus expressing this type of commitment. According to the data displayed, only 12 out of 1383 tokens correspond to the category of Direct Directives.

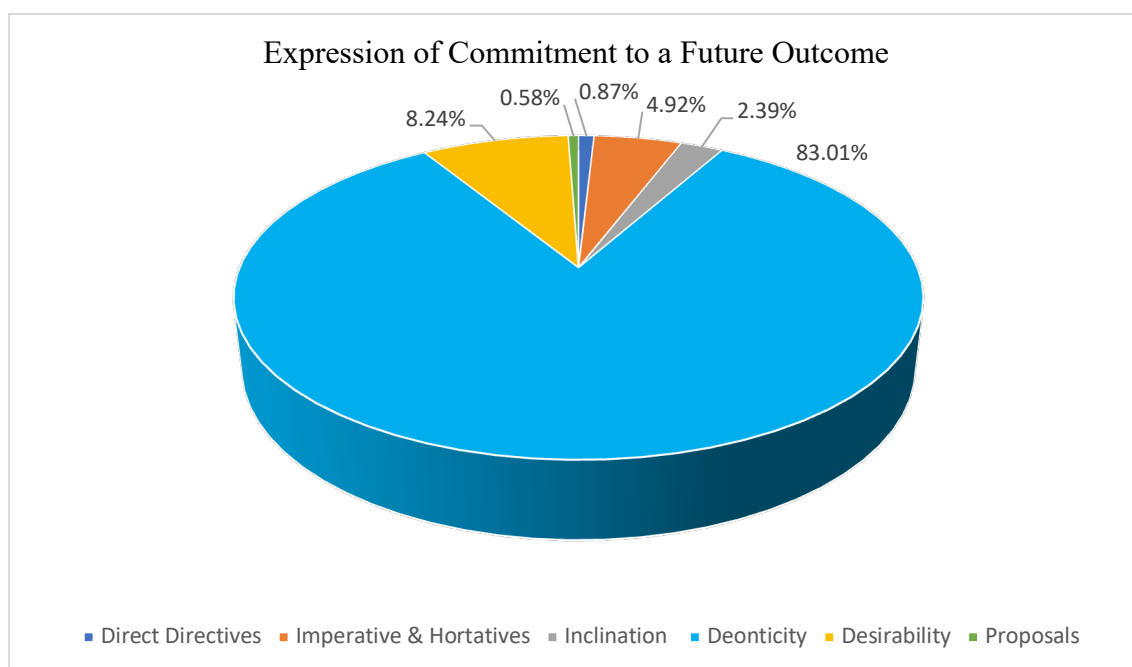
Table 10
Raw Numbers & Ratio per 10,000 words of the Expression of CO

Categories 230,850 words	N	R/‰
Direct Directives	12	0.520
Imperatives & Hortatives	68	2.946
Inclination	33	1.429
Deonticity	1,148	49.729
Desirability	114	4.938
Proposals	8	0.347
Total	1383	59.909

In this case, the ratio of Direct Directives in primary and presidential debates is 0.520‰, which is even lower than the ratio of Direct Commissives in the expression of CI, which increases to 0.953‰. There are a few examples of the use of performative verbs, such *ask* or *urge*, to encourage audiences to take action. This number of tokens expressing this semantic category represents 0.87% of this type of commitment, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Percentages of the Semantic Categories of the Expression of CO



Example (13) is one of the few examples found in the corpus in which a candidate, John F. Kerry from the Democratic Party, is asking voters their support in a general presidential debate to become the president of United States and, consequently, have the opportunity of making the country stronger and internationally respected.

(13) And I **ask** <CO, DD> you for the privilege of leading our Nation to be stronger at home and respected again in the world (Kerry, DGP-Copus).

In some cases, Direct Directives are used repetitively in the conclusion of some of the candidates. Examples (14) and (15) were uttered by the Republican candidate George W. Bush at the end of his final message in the primary debate held on January 15th, 2000.

(14) I'm **asking** <CO, DD> for your vote. (Bush, RPM-Corpus)

(15) And I **urge** <CO, DD> you to go to your caucuses a week from Monday night. (Bush, RPM-Corpus)

By using the performative verbs *ask* and *urge*, the candidate makes explicit the intention of his illocutionary act, and encourage audiences not to stay home, exercise their right to vote, and more specifically, vote for him. Even though this semantic category conveys the message in a clear and direct manner, candidates rarely make use of Direct Directives in the corpus. Rather, they prefer to use deontic expressions, which represent 83.01% of the expressions of CO, through which they explain the need for taking action in some way or another. For example, referring to the accountability that had to be demanded to schools in US, George W. Bush uttered the words in example (16), in which he uses the semantic category of Deonticity.

(16) We **must** <CO, DEO> ask school districts and states that accept federal money to develop on their own — not a federal test, but on their own — an accountability system. (Bush, RPM-Corpus)

In this example, the candidate attempts to persuade the audience on the need for schools to develop an accountability system using the modal verb *must*, which is a common lexical realization of this category. In this way, the audience may eventually support Bush's candidacy if they agree on many of the changes the candidate expressed as necessary to be carried out.

By analysing the ratio per 10,000 words included in tables 4 and 5, the cline of preferences for the categories of commitments in primary and general presidential debates can be determined. Under the macro-categories of CI, Intentionality (36.084‰) is the most frequently used sub-category, followed by Volitionality (7.841‰), Plans and Goals (4.592‰), Direct Commisives (0.953‰) and Offers (0.130‰), the latter of which has almost a residual occurrence in the corpus. In fact, only three cases of Offers are found, one of which is example (17), where John F. Kerry offers his candidacy as a means of bringing American people together.

(17) I mean, we're vying for the nomination that that's once we have a nominee this country will have an opportunity to hear a positive vision of how we can offer hope to Americans optimism about the possibilities of the future, not divide America but bring it together to find real solutions, and that's what I'm **offering** <CI, OF>. (Kerry, DPM-Corpus)

Interestingly, Offers are the least frequent category for the expression of CI in the corpus, despite providing a positively orientated meaning towards the policy or changes they want to bring about when they reach the presidency.

When it comes to the expression of CO, the cline of preference for the sub-categories listed above is headed by Deonticity (49.729‰), which outstands as the category that occurs more frequently among all the subcategories identified under both macro-categories in the taxonomy. Such sub-category is followed by Desirability (4.938‰), Imperatives and Hortatives (2.946‰), Inclination (1.429‰), Direct Directives (0.520‰) and Proposals (0.347‰).

Among these categories, Proposals are the least frequently used category in the corpus sin only 8 tokens are identified, as illustrated in example (18), in which candidate

Mitt Romney suggested grading schools to make parents' school selection easier according to those results in a presidential debate in 2012.

(18) I **propose** <CO, PRO> we grade our schools so parents know which schools are succeeding and failing, so they can take their child to a -- to a school that he's being more successful. (Romney, RGP-Corpus)

On the other hand, the sum of tokens from the subcategories of Direct Directives, Imperatives and Hortatives and Inclination amount up to 113, with a ratio of 4.895‰ in contrast with the sum of the categories of Deonticity and Desirability, which reaches 1,270 examples, with a ratio of 54.667‰. Therefore, there is a clear preference for persuasive strategies of legitimization of the candidates' policies as opposed to persuasive strategies of mobilisation of the electorate to act.

The data provided in this section clearly prove that politicians have some preference for the use of any of the lexical realizations under Intentionality when committing themselves to implement certain policies in electoral debates and for Deonticity when persuading the electorate to take action to achieve a particular outcome. These results align with similar recent research carried out in the field (Marín-Arrese, 2021; Ferrer-Navas & López-Mora, 2023). When it comes to Marín-Arrese's taxonomy of effective stance, which identifies the categories of Deonticity, Directivity, Intentionality, Normativity and Potentiality, the predominant category occurring in parliamentary discourse is Intentionality (62.159‰), closely followed by Deonticity (47.114‰). Although there are different categories in such study that are beyond the scope of this thesis, and there is not a one-to-one correspondence between all of them, as it is the case of Intentionality, there is a clear tendency in political discourse to use Intentionality to express commitment to the speaker's future course of action, as well as

Deonticity in order to persuade the audience about the convenience of enacting or enforcing certain laws or making some political decisions by expressing those in terms of necessity. What this thesis adds to those results is that the category of Direct Commissives is scarcely used when expressing commitments as opposed to the categories of Intentionality and, to a lesser extent, Volitionality and Plans & Goals.

By examining the results shown in tables 4 and 5 above, therefore, the second and third null hypotheses (H_{o2} and H_{o3}) cannot be rejected. This section, therefore, provides an answer to the second and third research questions on whether candidates prefer to use the semantic categories of Direct Commissives and Direct Directives to express commitment. The percentages and raw numbers displayed in tables 4 and 5 show that candidates running for nomination and later for presidency do not prefer to use performative to express CI or CO. On the contrary, they prefer to use other categories, as explained in the following sections, even if that they may not be as much effective as performatives in terms of clarity and directness.

6.3. The Expression of Commitment in Primary and General Presidential Debates

Primary and general presidential debates have some typical features which make them unique, such as the degree of popularity of the candidates, the ideological proximity between the candidates and the target voters, the number of candidates debating, the turn-taking system, and the allotted time for their contribution, among other factors. The position of the candidates regarding certain issues is almost identical in the case of primary debates in contrast with general presidential debates, in which candidates belonging to different political parties often differ from each other on the convenience of enacting or enforcing a particular law or policy. Consequently, the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used by those candidates may vary in these types of electoral debates.

For this reason, this thesis dissertation also aims to determine whether there are significant differences in the way candidates express their commitment in two distinct types of debates, that is, primary and general presidential debates.

In the fourth and fifth null hypotheses (H_{o4} and H_{o5}), therefore, it is assumed that there are no significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) or commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and general presidential debates despite the distinct features that characterize them. For this reason, a test of independence has been performed to assess the relationship between the macro-categories of CI and CO and the type of electoral debates where they occur.

6.3.1. The Expression of CI in Primary and General Presidential Debates

One of the main expectations of the audiences in electoral debates is to hear and understand the promises and intentions of the candidates running for a nomination or the presidency. In turn, politicians are fully aware of the importance of making clear their goals and intentions during these political events and the repercussion their words will have through the media. In this regard, expressing CI during electoral debates, which are often televised, becomes an expectation on the part of the electorate. Since primary and general presidential debates have some unique features, this section will examine whether there are any differences in the expression of CI in these types of political contexts. For this purpose, Table 11 shows a 5 x 2 contingency table which provides the observed totals for each category of CI, the log likelihood for each category, along with the percentage of the difference between each category in both types of debates.

Table 11

Raw Numbers, Ratio per 10,000 Words, Chi Square Test and Log-Likelihood Test for the Expression of CI in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates

Categories	Primaries 114,632 words		General 116,218 words		Total 230,850 words		Primaries vs. General	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	χ^2 & <i>p</i> -value	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	12	1.047	10	0.861	22	0.953		LL = +0.21 %DIFF = 21.66
Intentionality	422	36.813	411	35.365	833	36.084		LL = +0.34 %DIFF = 4.10
Volitionality	75	6.543	106	9.121	181	7.841		LL = -4.92 %DIFF = -28.27
Plans & Goals	62	5.409	44	3.786	106	4.592		LL = +3.32 %DIFF = 42.86
Offers	2	0.175	1	0.086	3	0.130		LL = +0.35 %DIFF = 102.77
Total CI	573	49.986	572	49.218	1145	49.600	$\chi^2 = 9.026$ <i>p</i> < 0.0604	LL = +0.07 %DIFF = 1.56

The data show that primary and general presidential debates do not necessarily have an impact on the candidates' preferences for certain categories over others to express CI. This explains that the same preferences for certain semantic categories expressing CI are identified both in primaries and general presidential debates. For instance, the ratios of Intentionality prove that it is the preferred semantic category to express CI through a wide range of lexical realizations both in primary (36.813‰) and presidential debates (35.365‰). Examples (19) and (20) illustrate the use of Intentionality in these two different political contexts.

(19) On government land, your administration has cut the number of permits and licenses in half. If I'm president, I'll <CI, INT> double them. (Romney, RGP-Corpus)

(20) In our commitment to get the lobbying and you know what I'm going to do is I'm going to <CI, INT> issue an executive order that prohibits anyone from going from lobbying, from government directly into lobbying for a period of five years and we're going to <CI, INT> make every meeting of a lobbyist and a public of

Dennis a matter of public record subject prescription for American people. (Kerry, DPM-Corpus)

The typical lexical realizations found in the corpus under the category of Intentionality are *will* and *going to*, illustrated in examples (19) and (20), but there are also examples of the use of verbs in their present continuous form to express their intention and of the conditional form *would*, as shown in examples (21) and (22).

(21) So I'm **trying** <CI, INT> to do this in a way that will gain support and be affordable but there's no doubt, we have to do more on our roads, our bridges, our tunnels, our ports, our airports. (Clinton, DPM-Corpus)

(22) I **would** <CI, INT> repeal and replace it. (Romney, RGP-Corpus)

After candidate Hillary Clinton expresses his commitment of creating a National Infrastructure Bank which would be capitalised with 25 billion dollars under her presidency, she expresses in example (21) her commitment of trying to accomplish this goal in an affordable manner using the present continuous form of the verb *try*. Similarly, arguing that the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, which intended to provide some standards and supervision to protects American consumers, investors and businessmen, was harmful for the economy of the country, Mitt Romney made clear in example (22) his intention to repeal it if he reached the office by using the conditional form *would*. All these examples of CI are expressed through the semantic category of Intentionality, which is the predominant one in both types of debates. In fact, the log-likelihood test and the percentage of differentiation reveals that there is virtually no difference between them (LL = 4.10; %DIFF= 0.34).

Even though there is a relevant preference for Intentionality in both types of debates, the ratios displayed in Table 11 reveal that the distribution of the different

categories expressing CI is slightly more diverse in quantity terms in primaries as opposed to their distribution in general presidential debates, which rely strongly on Intentionality (35.365‰), even though there are examples of every category in both types of debates. Although Intentionality is still the most frequently used in primary debates, the ratio slightly increases in other categories than Intentionality (36.813‰).

Concerning candidates' use of Direct Commissives to express CI, the log-likelihood test and the percentage of the difference (LL + 0.21, DIFF = 21.66) indicate that there is an overuse of such category in primary debates, as shown in Table 11. However, the greatest difference is found in the category of Plans & Goals, which is overused again in primary debates (LL + 3.32, DIFF = 42.86). Examples (23) and (24) illustrate this category.

(23) And so **my plan** <CI, PLA> is to take the middle class individuals and dramatically reduce their taxes by the following measure. (Romney, RPM-Corpus)

(24) **My goal** <PLA, ES>, should I become the president, is to keep the peace. I **intend to** <PLA, ES> to do so by promoting free trade which, in my judgment, promotes American values across the world. I **intend to** <PLA, ES> do so by strengthening alliances, which says America cannot go alone, we must be peacemakers not peacekeepers. And I **intend to** <PLA, ES> strengthen the military to make sure that the world is peaceful. (Bush, RPM-Corpus)

In example (23), Mitt Romney explains during one of the primary debates he attended his plan of reducing taxes to middle classes using the lexical realisation *my plan is to*, which is one of the most common in the category of Plans and Goals. On the other

hand, Candidate W. Bush expresses his intention to promote peace in terms of “goals” in example (24). He then expands the way he will be accomplishing such goal by stating again his intention of doing it with the verb *intend* followed by an event that will result in such accomplishment.

Despite the above-mentioned differences, the chi square test of independence X^2 (4, $N = 1,145$) = 9.026, $p = 0.0604$ fails to reject the fourth null hypothesis (H_04) since the result is not significant at $p > .05$. According to the data shown in Table 11, primary and general presidential debates do not necessarily have an impact on the candidates’ preferences for certain categories over others to express CI. However, it is noteworthy that the critical value of the X^2 is 9.026, which means that the p value obtained (0.0604) is close to the corresponding critical value. In fact, the results would be statistically significant at 0.10. However, since scientists use by convention the 5.0% value ($p > 0.05$) to determine if observed deviations are significant, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected according to such criterion.

6.3.2. The Expression of CO in Primary and General Presidential Debates

Concerning the expression of CO, some differences can also be observed regarding the frequency of occurrence of some of its semantic categories, such as Direct Directives, Desirability or Proposals. For example, Direct Directives occur more frequently in general presidential debates than in primary debates, as compared in Table 12.

Table 12

Raw Numbers, Ratio per 10,000 Words, Chi Square Test and Log-Likelihood Test for the Expression of CO in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates

Categories	Primaries 114,632 words		General 116,218 words		Total 230,850 words		Primaries vs. General	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	χ^2 & p-value	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	4	0.349	8	0.688	12	0.520		LL= -1.30 %DIFF = -49.31
Imperatives & Hortatives	37	3.228	31	2.667	68	2.946		LL= 0.62 %DIFF = +21.01
Inclination	16	1.396	17	1.463	33	1.429		LL= -0.02 %DIFF = -4.58
Deonticity	519	45.275	629	54.122	1148	49.729		LL= -9.10 %DIFF = -16.35
Desirability	68	5.932	46	3.958	114	4.938		LL= 4.58 %DIFF = +49.87
Proposals	1	0.087	7	0.602	8	0.347		LL= -4.98 %DIFF = -85.52
Total CO	645	56.267	738	63.501	1383	59.909	$\chi^2 = 14.993$ p < 0.0104	LL= -5.05 %DIFF = -11.39

The ratio shows that there is a significant lower frequency of occurrence in Direct Directives in primary debates (0.349‰) as opposed to the frequency of occurrence in general presidential debates (0.688‰). In fact, the log likelihood test and the percentage of the difference (LL = -1.30; %DIFF= -49.31) proves that there is a slight underuse of Direct Directives in primary debates as contrasted with general presidential debates. However, the greatest underuse occurs in the category of Proposals (LL = -4.98; %DIFF= -85.52), among which only one example is found in primary debates as opposed to general presidential debates, in which 7 examples are identified and annotated. In contrast, there is an overuse of the Category of Desirability, whose percentage of difference (LL = 4.58; %DIFF= 49.87) is similar to Direct Directives in primary debates. Therefore, expressions conveying the appropriateness of carrying out an action, as illustrated in examples (25) and (26), are more common in primary debates.

(25) **It's in our interests** <CO, DES> to have a hemisphere that is peaceful and open for trade. (Bush, RPM-Corpus)

(26) And **it's time** <CO, DES> that we provide more benefits for widows, divorcees, for caregivers, for women who deserve more from the Social Security.
(Clinton, DPM-Corpus)

Example (25) refers to any attempts to block the passage of goods through the Panama Canal. George W. Bush expresses the convenience of keeping the canal open for trade through the category of Desirability. Expressions such as *it's important*, *it's in our interests*, or *it's time*, which is used by Hillary Clinton in example (26) during a primary debate to express the convenience of widening the Social Security services for people who need further economic support, are typical lexical realizations of the semantic category of Desirability. On the contrary, an underuse of the category of Deonticity (LL = -9.10; %DIFF= -16.35) is identified in primary debates. In this case, the percentage of difference is a third lower than in the case of Direct Directives, but it seems to be still noteworthy.

Despite the above-described differences, the cline of preference for the subcategories of the expression of CO is the same both in primary and general presidential debates. The analysis of the ratio per 10,000 words reveals that the cline of preference is headed by the category of Deonticity (45.275‰ and 54.122‰ respectively), which outstands as the category that occurs more frequently among all the subcategories identified under the macro-category of commitment to a future outcome. Such subcategory is followed by Desirability, whose ratio is 5.932‰ in primary debates and 3.958‰ in general presidential debates, Imperatives and Hortatives (3.228‰ and 2.667‰ respectively), Inclination (1.396‰ and 1.463‰), Direct Directives (0.349‰ and 0.688‰) and, finally, Proposals, with a ratio of 0.087‰ in primary debates and 0.602‰ in general presidential debates. Again, legitimization persuasive strategies are preferred by candidates to mobilisation persuasive when expressing CO.

All in all, the fifth null hypothesis (H_{05}) assumes that there are no significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing CO in primary and general presidential debates despite of the features that characterize each of this type of debates. Table 12 shows the observed totals for each category falling under this domain, the log likelihood and the percentage of independence between each type of electoral debate. The chi square test of independence $X^2(5, N = 1,383) = 14.993$, $p = 0.0104$ rejects the null hypothesis since the result is significant at $p > .05$. Therefore, the data favours the alternative hypothesis (H_{a5}), which states that there are significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing CO in primary vs. general presidential debates. The use of these subcategories and their distribution in primary and presidential debates will be further discussed in the section 6.5., which is devoted to the analysis of the semantic categories used by each candidate in both political contexts.

6.4. The Expression of Commitment and the Ideological Positioning of Political Parties.

The ideological positioning of a particular politician in relation to their opponents, who attempt to reach the office, varies to some extent depending on whether candidates are running for the nomination within their own parties in primary debates, or running for presidency in general presidential debates. In the former ones, the position of the candidates in certain issues is almost identical in primary debates, whereas the candidates debating in general presidential debates usually have diverse positions on a wide range of issues as explained above. In this section, the analysis focuses on the preferred semantic categories of the candidates who have been analysed in this thesis according to their ideological slant to determine whether there is a relation between the categories used to

express their commitments and the political party to which they belong, that is, the Democratic Party vs. the Republican Party.

6.4.1. The Expression of CI and the Ideological Positioning of Political Parties.

As discussed in the introduction, one of the objectives of this thesis dissertation is to determine whether there is some relationship between the expression of commitment and the ideological positioning of the candidates representing their corresponding political parties. More specifically, the sixth null hypothesis (H_06) assumes that there are no significant differences regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing commitment CI in relation to ideological position of the candidates.

In order to test the above hypothesis, Table 13 displays the corresponding data concerning number of tokens and the observed totals for each category identified in the corpus, the log likelihood tests and the percentage of difference between speeches delivered by Democratic and Republican candidates respectively, along with the chi square test of independence for the macro-category of CI.

Table 13

Raw Numbers, Ratio per 10,000 Words, Chi Square Test and Log-Likelihood Test for the Expression of CI of Democratic vs. Republican Candidates

Categories	Democrats 111,707 words		Republicans 119,143 words		Total 230,850 words		Democrats vs. Republicans	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	χ^2 & p -value	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	17	1.522	5	0.420	22	0.953		LL= 7.71 %DIFF = +262.63
Intentionality	402	35.987	431	36.175	833	36.084		LL= -0.01 %DIFF = -0.52
Volitionality	57	5.103	124	10.408	181	7.841		LL= -21.27 %DIFF = -50.97
Plans & Goals	57	5.103	49	4.113	106	4.592		LL= 1.23 %DIFF = +24.07
Offers	3	0.269	0	0.000	3	0.130		LL= 4.36 %DIFF = +268559714772582 4.00
Total CI	536	47.983	609	51.115	1145	49.599	$\chi^2 = 31.434$ $p < 0.0000025$	LL= -1.14 %DIFF = -6.13

The cline of preference observed in the data is similar in the speeches delivered by the candidates from both political parties, even though some differences are identified in the number of totals of the semantic categories used to express CI. The preferred category for this macro-category is Intentionality, followed by Volitionality Plans and Goals, Direct Commissives and Offers, the latter of which does not occur in the RPM-Corpus and RGP-Corpus. Utterances like example (5) in section 5.1., therefore, are only used by democratic candidates.

Even though the average ratio of Democrats, on the one hand, and Republicans, on the other, have a similar cline of preference as mentioned above, some differences are observed in relation to the categories of Volitionality and Plans and Goals. Their ratios are the same in the speeches delivered by the Democrat candidates (5.103‰), whereas their ratios vary significantly in the case of Republican, namely 10.408‰ in Volitionality and 4.113‰ in Plans and Goals, the former of which doubles its frequency of occurrence. In addition, other differences are identified when analysing the log-likelihood test and the percentage of difference between both political parties. Despite having adopted the second null hypothesis ($H_0 2$) in section 5.2, according to which there is not a preference for the use of performative verbs expressing CI in primary and presidential debates and, consequently, having a low ratio of occurrence in the corpus, there is a clear overuse of Direct Commissives ($LL = 7.71$; $\%DIFF = 262.63$) in the case of Democratic candidates (1.522‰) as opposed to Republican candidates (0.420‰). To a lesser extent, there is also an overuse of Offers by Democratic candidates (0.269‰) in relation to its frequency of occurrence in the RPM-Corpus and RGP-Corpus, in which none examples of this category are found. However, Table 13 reveals a significant underuse of Volitionality in Democratic (5.103‰) as opposed to its frequency of occurrence in Republican speeches

(10.408‰), which is also supported by the loglikelihood test ($LL = -21.27$; %DIFF= -50.97).

Although the predominant use of Intentionality shows that both parties rely strongly on conventionalized expressions of commitment when making their electoral promises or commitments, the overuse of Volitionality identified in Republican speeches reveal a higher use of ‘affectivity processes’, using Locke and Downing’s (2002) terminology, when those candidates express CI. Overall, the chi square test of independence $X^2(4, N = 1,145) = 31.434, p = 0.0000025$ rejects the sixth null hypothesis (H_{o6}) since the result is significant at $p > .05$. Therefore, the data favours the corresponding alternative hypothesis (H_{a6}), which states that there is a significant variation in the expression of CI in relation to the ideological position of the candidates’ political parties, namely, Democrats vs. Republicans. It is remarkable that the critical value of the X^2 (31.334) is by far higher than the critical chi square value with 4 degrees of freedom at 0.05 (9.49) and the critical value of the chi square at 0.01 (13.28), which means that the X^2 value obtained (31.334) is also statistically significant at 0.01.

6.4.2. The Expression of CO and the Ideological Positioning of Political Parties.

As far as the expression of CO is concerned, the raw numbers and ratio per 10,000 words provided for this macro-category in Table 14 shows the same cline of preference for certain semantic categories in the speeches delivered by candidates from different political parties. The highest ratio belongs to the category of Deonticity, followed by Desirability, Imperatives and Hortatives, Inclination, Direct Directives and Proposals.

Table 14

Raw Numbers, Ratio per 10,000 Words, Chi Square Test and Log-Likelihood Test for the Expression of CO of Democratic vs. Republican Candidates

Categories	Democrats 111,707 words		Republicans 119,143 words		Total 230,850 words		Democrats vs. Republicans	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	χ^2 & p-value	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	9	0.806	3	0.252	12	0.520		LL= 3.54 %DIFF = +219.97
Imperatives & Hortatives	35	3.133	33	2.770	68	2.946		LL= 0.26 %DIFF = +13.12
Inclination	14	1.253	19	1.595	33	1.429		LL= -0.47 %DIFF = -21.41
Deonticity	520	46.550	628	52.710	1148	49.729		LL= -4.41 %DIFF = -11.69
Desirability	49	4.387	65	5.456	114	4.938		LL= -1.34 %DIFF = -19.60
Proposals	5	0.448	3	0.252	8	0.347		LL= +0.64 %DIFF = 77.76
Total CO	632	56.577	751	63.033	1383	59.909	$\chi^2 = 6.531$ p < 0.2579	LL= -4.02 %DIFF = -10.24

With regards to the number of tokens found in each sub-corpora, some variation is noticeable in certain categories, particularly in Direct Directives, Proposals, Desirability and Imperatives according to the log-likelihood test and the percentage of difference between both corpora. As in the case of the CI, again Democratic candidates use more often Direct Directives when expressing CO, which would be the corresponding Direct Commissives in CI, according to the log-likelihood test (LL = 3.54; %DIFF= 219.97). As shown in Table 14, there is an overuse of Direct Directives in the DPM-Corpus and DGP-Corpus (0.806‰) in contrast with the frequency of occurrence in the RPM-Corpus and RGP-Corpus (0.252‰), which does not even reach a half of the tokens of such category identified in Democratic speeches. Likewise, Democratic candidates use more frequently the category of Imperatives and Hortatives (3.133‰), illustrated in examples (17) and (18), when contrasted to the frequency of occurrence of this category in Republican speeches (2.770‰), as revealed by the log-likelihood test and percentage of difference (LL = 0.26; %DIFF= 13.12). Therefore, lexical realizations such *let us* as

well as second-person imperative forms, illustrated in examples (27) and (28) are more common among Democratic candidates.

(27) **Let's** <CO, IH> be sure we have affordable childcare and debt-free college.

(Clinton, DGP-Corpus)

(28) **Join** <CO, IH> me in rolling back the President's unaffordable tax cut for people earning more than \$200,000 a year. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

While the contrast is greater in the case of the Direct Directives, it is noteworthy to point out the overuse of Imperatives and Hortatives in the case of the Democratic Party, whose distribution between primary debates and general presidential debates is somehow similar. Likewise, there is relevant variation in the semantic category of Proposals (LL = 0.64; %DIFF= 77.76). Democrats (0.448‰) again show a more frequent use of this category, as opposed to Republican candidates (0.252‰), who use it only once in the corpus. Finally, an underuse of the category of Desirability (LL= -1.34; %DIFF= -19.60), illustrated in examples (25) and (26) from the previous section, is found in the DPM-Corpus and DGP-Corpus (4.387‰), when compared to the frequency of occurrence in the case of the RPM-Corpus and RGP-Corpus (5.456‰).

The above-mentioned variations in the use of the different categories seem to support the seventh null hypothesis stated for the expression of commitment to a future outcome (CO) in relation to the ideological slant. The chi square test of independence $X^2(5, N = 1,383) = 6.531, p = 0.2579$ performed for this analysis fails to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) since the result is not significant at $p > .05$. Consequently, it may be assumed that there are no significant variations in the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories identified for the expression of CO regarding the ideological position of the candidates' political parties, namely, Democrats vs. Republicans.

6.5. Individual Idiosyncrasies in the Expression of Commitments of the Candidates under Analysis

Candidates who partake in electoral debates usually craft the messages that they want to deliver in front of massive audiences carefully. They are fully aware that millions of spectators, who may eventually vote for one of them, are listening to their promises, intentions and arguments. This section aims at identifying the preferred semantic categories of the expression of commitment of individual candidates running for a party nomination or for president. Again, a focus will be put on whether there are significant variations in the way they express commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primaries and general presidential debates.

6.5.1. The expression of Commitment to a Future Course of Action (CI): Democratic vs. Republican Candidates

This section will analyse whether there are significant variations in the way each candidate expresses commitment to a future course of action (CI) in relation to other candidates from the same party, whose average serves as a control group for the discussion. Therefore, the idiosyncrasies of each Democratic candidate, on the one hand, and individual Republican candidates, on the other, who have been included in the corpus will be discussed below. Then some concluding remarks will be provided from the analysis of individual candidates' preferences to express CI in section 6.5.3.1.

6.5.1.1. Democratic Candidates: The Expression of Commitment to a Future Course of Action (CI)

This section will focus on the individual preferences for the expression of commitment of to a future course of action (CI) of the Democratic candidates in primary and in general presidential debates. The discussion of the results concerning the semantic categories used by each Democratic candidates will be analysed on their own and in relation to the rest of Democratic candidates under analysis in this thesis. Therefore, this section will discuss in detail the cases of candidates Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton, Barak Obama and John F. Kerry.

The predominant semantic category common to all Democratic candidates in both types of debates is Intentionality, which involves those speaker's expressions that are conventionally accomplished through "modal verbs of volition" with a commissive illocutionary force and modals of intention. Among all Democratic candidates, Hillary Clinton is the candidate who uses this category more frequently in messages delivered during primary debates (46.150‰), as shown in Table 15, while John F. Kerry is the candidate who uses Intentionality more frequently in general presidential debates (62.479‰), as displayed in Table 16. On the other hand, candidate Barak Obama has the lowest frequency of occurrence in this semantic category in primary debates, which decreases to 17.470‰.

Table 15
Democratic Candidates Expressions of CI in Primaries

Categories	Joe Biden 14,625 words		Hillary Clinton 14,518 words		Barak Obama 13,165 words		John F. Kerry 13,073 words		Total 55,381 words	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰
Direct Commissive	2	1.368	4	2.755	1	0.760	1	0.765	8	1.445
Intentionality	58	39.658	67	46.150	23	17.470	47	35.952	195	35.211
Volitionality	3	2.051	18	12.398	4	3.038	4	3.060	29	5.236

Plans & Goals	2	1.368	12	8.266	9	6.836	7	5.355	30	5.417
Offers	0	0.000	1	0.689	0	0.000	1	0.765	2	0.361
Total CI	65	44.444	102	70.258	37	28.105	60	45.896	264	47.670

The most common semantic categories after Intentionality in Democratic speeches are Plans and Goals and Volitionality, whose ratios in primary debates are virtually the same. There are no significant differences in the use of Plans and Goals by Democratic candidates in primary debates except for Joe Biden, who clearly disprefers this category as compared to the rest of Democratic candidates. Likewise, it is remarkable the overuse of Volitionality in Hilary Clinton speeches delivered in primary debates in contrast with the rest of Democratic candidates.

Table 16
Democratic Candidates Expressions of CI in General Presidential Debates

Categories	Joe Biden 13,810 words		Hillary Clinton 13,228 words		Barak Obama 14,403 words		John F. Kerry 14,885 words		Total 56,326 words	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰
Direct Commissives	0	0.000	0	0.000	2	1.389	7	4.703	9	1.598
Intentionality	55	39.826	40	30.239	19	13.192	93	62.479	207	36.750
Volitionality	0	0.000	14	10.584	9	6.249	5	3.359	28	4.971
Plans & Goals	0	0.000	8	6.048	3	2.083	16	14.749	27	4.794
Offers	1	0.724	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	1	0.178
Total CI	56	40.550	62	46.870	33	22.912	121	81.290	272	48.290

However, the data reveal some common aspects of the expression of commitment to a future course of action (CI) in primary debates, such as the residual use of the categories of Direct Commissives and Offers by all Democratic candidates. The ratios seem to be similar in general presidential debates regarding these two semantic categories, as shown in Table 15 and Table 16, except for John F. Kerry, who overuses the category of Direct Commissives in general presidential debates.

Figure 3
Percentages of Democratic Candidates Expression of CI

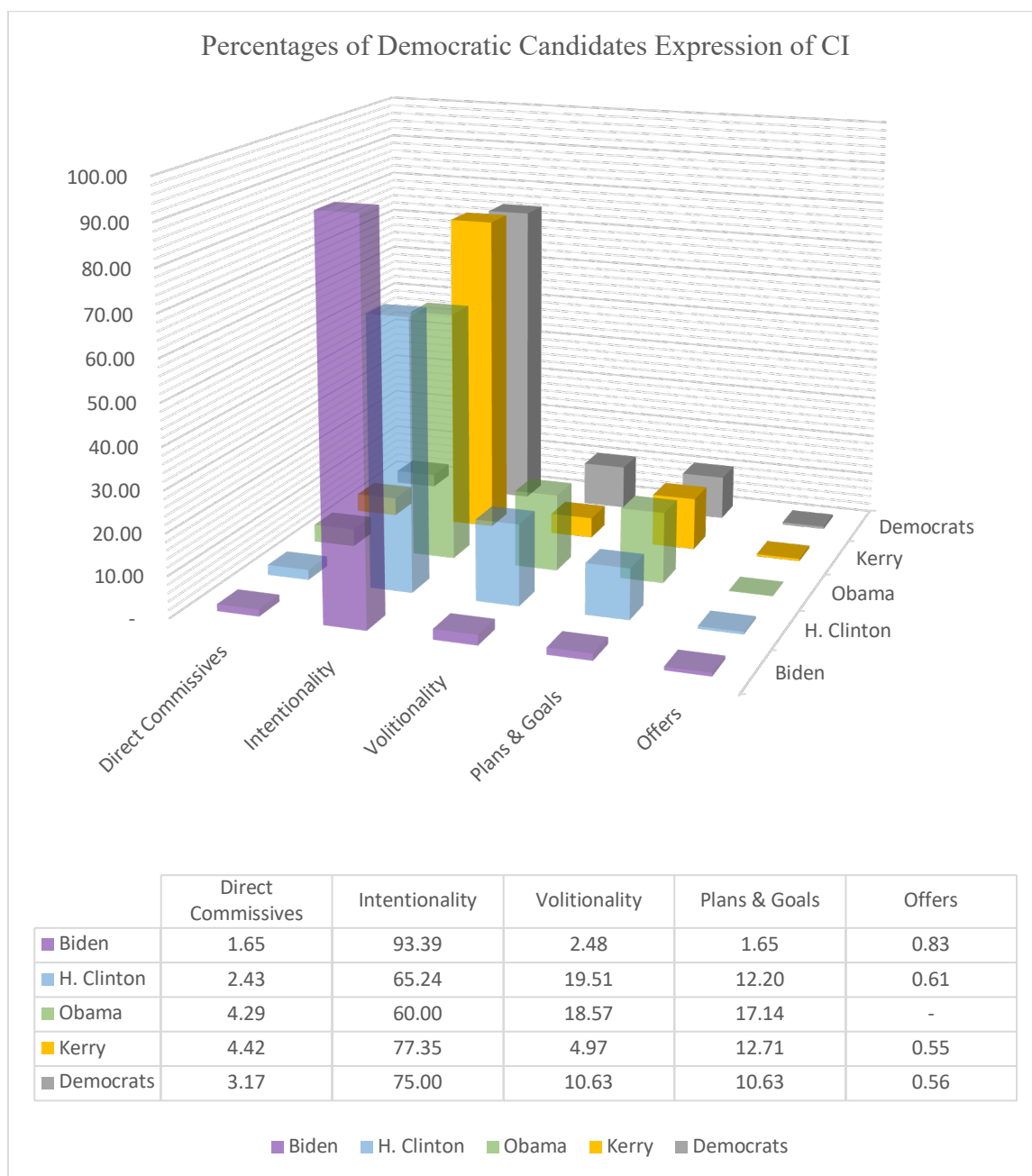


Figure 3 shows graphically the total percentages of the semantic categories used by each Democratic candidate in both debates. It reveals Joe Biden's strong reliance on Intentionality to express commitment to a future course action (CI). However, it also shows the higher frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories of Plans and Goals

and Volitionality in Hillary Clinton's and Barack Obama's speeches in contrast with Joe Biden's and John F. Kerry's. The data of Democratic candidates will be further analysed in the following section.

6.5.1.2. The Expression of Commitment to a Future Course of Action (CI) of Democratic Candidates

This section will discuss in further detail the individual preferences of Democratic candidates to express commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) in both types of debates.

6.5.1.2.1. Joe Biden

The messages analysed in this chapter which were delivered by Joe Biden belong to the primaries and general presidential debates for 2000 elections, in which he was a running candidate for presidency from the Democratic Party, together with the Republican candidate Donald Trump. The data observed in tables 15 and 16 include the number of tokens identified in the corpus in which Biden uses semantic categories for the macro-category of commitment to a future course of action (CI), as described in the taxonomy proposed in section 5.1.3. For this purpose, the analysis of Joe Biden's expression of CI will consider the ratio per 10,000 words and the log-likelihood test for each sub-category, which is displayed in detail in Appendix D.

Regarding the expression of commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI), Joe Biden uses all the semantic categories identified in the taxonomy. However, all of them except for Intentionality have an extremely low ratio concerning their frequency of occurrence. In fact, tables 15 and 16 show Biden's preference for Intentionality (39.740‰), which represents 93.39% of his expressions of CI.

Although the lexical realizations of Intentionality involves a wide range of expressions and verbs, such as the use of *will*, *going to*, *would* or the present continuous with future meaning, Biden shows a tendency to use the conditional *would* (42.24%), more commonly in primary debates, and the semi-modal verb *going to* (34.48%), whose frequency of occurrence is higher in general presidential debates, both of which are illustrated in examples (29) and (30). In example (29), Biden commits himself to have a woman in the position of the Vice Presidency by using the conditional form *would* whereas example (30) concerns Biden's commitment to eliminate Donald Trump's tax cuts, which is expressed with *going to*.

(29) I'll pick a woman to be vice president. There are a number of women who are qualified to be president tomorrow. I **would** <CI, INT> pick a woman to be my vice president. (Biden, DPM-Corpus)

(30) That's why I'm **going to** <CI, INT> eliminate the Trump tax cuts. And I'm **going to** <CI, INT> eliminate those tax cuts. (Biden, DGP-Corpus)

However, the use of *will*, which is the prototypical lexical realization for expressing Intentionality, is rather infrequent (11.21%) in Biden's messages.

As for the distribution of those tokens in primaries vs. presidential debates, there is a balanced number of examples using the typical lexical realizations of Intentionality. The category of Volitionality, Direct Commissives and Plans and Goals are only identified in primary debates, whose ratio of frequency is remarkably low, namely 2.051‰, 1.368‰ respectively. When contrasted with other Democratic candidates, Biden shows an overuse of the semantic category of Intentionality (LL = +0.85; %DIFF = 10.43).

In relation to performative expressions, the frequency of occurrence of Direct Commissives reveals Biden's underuse of such category with respect to other democratic candidates. In fact, the only lexical realization used by Biden is the verb *commit*, as illustrated in example (32).

(32) Secondly, if I'm elected president, my cabinet, my administration will look like the country. And I **commit** <CI, DC> that I will, in fact, appoint a, I'll pick a woman to be vice president. (Biden, DPM-Corpus)

Nevertheless, the most remarkable underuse is found in the category of Volitionality, whose percentage of occurrence in Joe Biden's speeches (2.48%) contrast with the average percentage of occurrence in speeches delivered by Republican candidates (15.81%) in both types of debates, as shown in Figure 3. On the other hand, there is an overuse in Joe Biden's expression of CI in the categories of Intentionality and Offers, the latter of which is exemplified in sentence (31).

(31) And one of the things we should be doing is there should be no, no minimum mandatories in the law. That's why I'm **offering** <CI, OF> \$20 billion to states to change their state laws to eliminate minimum mandatories and set up drug courts. (Biden, DGP-Corpus)

All in all, Biden's cline for preference consists of Intentionality (93.39%) is followed by Volitionality (2.48%), Direct Commissives and Plans and Goals, each of which represents 1.65% of the total number of tokens annotated which express CI, and finally Offers.

6.5.1.2.2. Hillary Clinton

Hillary Clinton became nominated as the Democratic candidate to run for the office and, therefore, as the main opponent of Donald Trump in the presidential election of 2016. In this section, her preferred semantic categories to express commitment to a future course of action (CI) during primary and general presidential debates will be presented. Then a contrastive analysis between Hillary Clinton's and other democratic candidates' preferences to express this type of commitments will be provided.

When analysing Hillary Clinton's linguistic strategies to express CI, it becomes evident the richness of her speech in terms of the variety of semantic categories occurring in her messages since they contain examples of each sub-category. It is also noteworthy to mention that the number of expressions of commitment conveyed during primaries and presidential debates is above average in contrast with other candidates. However, there is a clear tendency towards the use of Intentionality as the predominant category (38.564‰), as observed in tables 15 and 16. Interestingly, the number of tokens identified for this category is more than a third lower in general presidential debates (30.239‰) than in primary debates (46.150‰). Such overuse of Intentionality ($LL = +4.61$; $\%DIFF = 52.62$) in primary debates is also shown in the log-likelihood test.

As for the lexical realizations of Intentionality, Hillary uses a wide range of modal and semi-modal verbs, such as *will*, *going to*, *would* and verbs in the present continuous form. However, *will* is the preferred lexical realization occurring in her messages, which represent 39% of the tokens identify expressing Intentionality, followed by *going to*. On the other hand, the use of the conditional *would* and the present continuous are the least frequent lexical realizations, which represents 9,6% and 3,7% respectively.

Concerning the lexical realizations for expressing Volitionality, Hillary Clinton is the only candidate who uses *would rather*, as shown in example (39), in which she was addressing the Iran's nuclear programme.

(39) There's no doubt that we have other problems with Iran. But personally, **I'd rather** <CI, VOL> deal with the other problems having put that lid on their nuclear program than still to be facing that (Clinton, DGP-Corpus).

(40) I don't take a back seat to your legislation that you've introduced that you haven't been able to get passed. I **want to** <CI, VOL> do what we can do to actually make progress in dealing with the crisis. That's exactly what I have proposed. (Clinton, DPM-Corpus)

However, such category is mainly expressed with the lexical realization *want to*, which amounts up to 25%. The frequency of occurrence of *want to*, which is illustrated in example (40), is particularly high when compared to the frequency of occurrence in the rest of candidates' messages.

Figure 3 reveals Clinton's preference for Intentionality (65.24%), as opposed to the use of the categories of Direct Commissives and Offers, which rarely occur in her speeches. Despite her preference for Intentionality when expressing commitment to a future course of action (CI), however, the percentages of this category in relation to other candidates from her same political party is significantly lower. All in all, Clinton's cline of preference consists of Intentionality (38.564‰), Volitionality (11.533‰), Plans and Goals, (7.208‰) Direct Commissives (1.442‰) and Offers (0.360‰).

In terms of the diversity of the semantic categories used by the candidate, it is more limited in the case of presidential debates since no examples of Direct Commissives and Offers are found. In fact, example (30), in which Hillary Clinton refers to her

commitment to fight climate change through the expression *to be committed*, and example (31), where she expresses her commitment to promote unity among Americans and build on their common values through an offer, can only be found in primary debates.

(30) I worked with President Obama during the four years I was secretary of state to begin to put pressure on China and India and other countries to join with us to have a global agreement which we finally got in Paris. So I **am committed** <CI, DC> to and focused on how we make that transition. (Clinton, DPM-Corpus)

(31) That's what I'm **offering** <CI, OF> in this campaign: to build on the work, to build on the value that we share here in New York, to take those to Washington, and to knock down those barriers that in any way hold back not only individual Americans, but our country from reaching our full potential. That is what my campaign is about. (Clinton, DGP-Corpus)

Therefore, Hillary Clinton uses all categories in primary debates whereas she only uses some of them in general presidential debates. In the latter case, the frequency of occurrence of those categories is lower. However, she overuses the category of Offers, among which one of the three examples (0.130‰) found in the Democratic sub-corpora was uttered by the Democratic candidate (0.360‰). The ratio clearly shows how infrequent this category is in the four sub-corpora. Overall, she is one of the few candidates who uses every semantic category to express CI and with a higher frequency of occurrence in most cases. Moreover, there is a remarkable overuse of the category Volitionality in both types of debates in relation to other Democratic candidates.

The question that may arise from these results is whether the use of a wider range of semantic categories and a higher number of expressions of CI occurring during debates may have an impact on the results of the elections. While Clinton uses more semantic

categories to express her commitment to a future course of action with higher ratios in primary debates, which ended up winning the Democratic nomination, those figures in terms of quantity and diversity decreases in general presidential debates, in which her opponent won. However, this thesis focuses on the correlation between the expression of commitments and the type of electoral debate in which they occur and the candidates' ideological slant. Consequently, these findings cannot shed light on any possible correlation between the expression of commitment and the electoral results of the candidates.

6.5.1.2.3. Barak Obama

This section will analyse some of the primary and general presidential debates in which the Democratic candidate Barak Obama ran for the nomination in the Democratic Party and later for the presidency of United States against his Republican candidate John McCain in the presidential elections of 2008. Barak Obama's preferences to commitment to a future course of action (CI) in primary and presidential debates will be analysed and compared to other Democratic candidates' choices by computing the ratio per 10,000 words and the log-likelihood test for each sub-category identified in the taxonomy proposed in this thesis.

Despite Barak Obama's reputation of being an eloquent speaker, it is remarkable that the data provided in tables 15 and 16 reveal that he did not make use of all the semantic categories identified in this thesis to express CI, which contrast to the richness of linguistic strategies used by other presidential candidates to make and explain their electoral promises.

Obama barely expresses his promises using performative verbs, since there are only three examples of Direct Commissives (1.088‰) in his speeches. He uses the same lexical realization for this category, namely, *to be committed to*, as shown in example (47). In this example, Obama expresses his commitment to enforce a federal law that provided health access to US citizens by means of the category of Direct Commissives.

(47) We've got to have somebody who is fighting for patients and making sure that you get decent, affordable health care. And that's something that **I'm committed** <CI, DC> to doing as president. (Obama, DGP-Corpus)

As in the case of the rest of candidates, Obama's preferred semantic category to express CI is Intentionality, whose ratio is 15.235‰, followed by Volitionality (4.716‰), Plans and Goals (4.353‰), and Direct Commissives (1.088‰). However, examples of Offers have not been found in the corpus.

When comparing the expression of commitment in primary debates versus general presidential debates, the category of Intentionality outstands as the most frequent in the corpus in both types of debates. For this category, Obama uses a wide range of lexical realizations, which have a more balanced frequency of occurrence in general presidential debates, as opposed to primary debates, in which the lexical realizations expressing Intentionality are limited mainly to *will* and to *going to*, the former of which is the most frequent lexical realization in primary debates, as illustrated in examples (48).

(48) Well, our first step should be to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of the Iranians, and that has to be one of our top priorities. And I **will** <CI, INT> make it one of our top priorities when I'm president of the United States. (Obama, DPM-Corpus)

Moreover, the total of both primaries and general presidential debates together shows a remarkable reliance on the modal verb *will* (38.18%), which is followed in terms of frequency of occurrence by *going to* (21.82%), *would* (12.73%) and present continuous with a future meaning (3.64%). Similarly, there is a predominant use of the lexical realization *want to* when expressing Volitionality in presidential debates, even though similar lexical realizations have been also identified, such as *would like to*, to expresses the speaker's willingness to carry out the designated action, as shown in examples (49) and (50).

(49) For many of you, it is getting harder and harder to save, harder and harder to retire. And that's why, for example, on tax policy, what I **want to** <CI, VOL> do is provide a middle-class tax cut to 95 percent of working Americans, those who are working two jobs, people who are not spending enough time with their kids, because they are struggling to make ends meet. (Obama, DGP-Corpus)

(50) Well, Tom, we're going to have to take on entitlements and I think we've got to do it quickly. [...] I'd **like to** <CI, VOL> do it in my first term as president. (Obama, DGP-Corpus)

As for the frequency of occurrence of the remaining semantic categories expressing CI in primary and presidential debates, it is noteworthy that they vary in almost every category, except for Offers. Concerning Intentionality, the ratio is somehow higher in primary debates (17.470‰) versus presidential debates (13.192‰). However, the categories of Plans and Goals, Volitionality and Direct Commissives occur more frequently in presidential debates than in primary debates. In fact, the ratio of Volitionality and Direct Commissives doubles in presidential debates. In the case of Plans and Goals, the frequency of occurrence in primary debates (6.836‰) is three times the sum of number of tokens identified in presidential debates (2.083‰).

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the higher number of expressions of CI expressed in primary debates (28.105‰) as opposed to presidential debates (22.912‰) are mainly accomplished by a greater reliance on the category of Plans and Goals and Volitionality in primary debates, which may have allowed Barak Obama to discuss in detail the policies he was willing to implement if he eventually won the Democratic nomination and, subsequently, the presidential elections.

When compared with the rest of Democratic candidates, an underuse of each category is observed again in Obama's corpus. The likelihood test shows that the greatest differences are found in the categories of Offers and Intentionality (LL = -35.42; %DIFF = -57.67 and LL = -38.91; %DIFF = -57.78 respectively). Tables 15 and 16 provide the data concerning the ratio of the different categories in Barack Obama's messages in relation to other Democratic candidates. Although Intentionality is Obama's preferred category (15.235‰) to express CI, it is noticeable that the ratio of this category doubles in the case of the Democratic candidates (35.987‰). Interestingly, the only overuse of a category in Obama's messages is found in Direct Commissives in relation to the frequency of occurrence of this category in the whole corpus, which includes both Democratic and Republican candidates (see Appendix D).

On the other hand, the overall ratio of the frequency of occurrence of expressions of CI identified in Obama's messages (25.392‰), as opposed to those occurring in the Democratic sub-corpora (47.983‰) shows an underuse (LL = -29.47; %DIFF = -47.08) of this type of commitment in Obama's messages. All in all, Figure 3 reveals that Obama's cline of preference is similar to those of Democratic candidates, who rely strongly on the category of Intentionality and, to a lesser extent, on the categories of Volitionality and Plans and Goals.

6.5.1.2.4. John Forbes Kerry

John F. Kerry was nominated as the Democratic candidate to run for the presidency against the Republican candidate George W. Bush in the US presidential election of 2000. This section will analyse some of the primary and general presidential elections in which the candidate delivered his messages to identify his preferred semantic categories to express commitment to a future action (CI). Then a contrastive analysis between John F. Kerry's preferences to express both types of commitments in relation to other Democratic candidates as well as to all the candidates together, both Democrats and Republicans, will be provided by computing the ratio per 10,000 words and the log-likelihood test for each semantic sub-category.

When analysing John F. Kerry's messages, two aspects stand out in his expression of commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI). On the one hand, tables 15 and 16 show that he expresses a larger number of expressions of commitment in general debates than in primaries, which is the opposite trend that will be observed in Hillary Clinton's messages some years later. In fact, the number of tokens expressing this type of commitment identified in John F. Kerry's messages in general presidential elections doubles its number in primary debates. On the other hand, it is noteworthy to point out that the candidate has a clear preference for lexical realizations expressing Intentionality, as shown in tables 15 and 16. Interestingly, the frequency of occurrence of Intentionality and Plans and Goals almost doubles in presidential debates with respects to primary debates.

The least frequent category occurring in his speeches is Offers. There is only one example of this category, which candidate Kerry utters during primaries debates to

suggest that he would try to unite the country under agreed solutions to American's problems, as shown in example (53).

(53) I mean, we're vying for the nomination that that's once we have a nominee this country will have an opportunity to hear a positive vision of how we can offer hope to Americans optimism about the possibilities of the future, not divide America but bring it together to find real solutions, and that's what I'm **offering** <CI, OF>. (Kerry, PMD-Corpus)

However, one of the most outstanding features of Kerry's expression of CI is the high ratio of Direct Commissives in presidential debates (4.703‰), as opposed to primary debates (0.765‰), in which the ratio dramatically decreases. There is also a significant overuse of Direct Commissives when compared to the average ratio of the use of this category by other Democratic candidates. John F. Kerry uses a significant variety of lexical realizations under the category of Direct Commissives, such as the verbs *guarantee*, *pledge*, *promise*, and the expression *be committed*, as illustrated in examples (54-57), which lead audiences to interpret his words as undeniable expressions of commitment.

(54) So we can do a better job of homeland security. I can do a better job of waging a smarter, more effective war on terror and **guarantee** <CI, DC> that we'll go after the terrorists. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

(55) But I **pledge** <CI, DC> this to you, America: I will do it in the way that Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan and John Kennedy and others did, where we build the strongest alliances, where the world joins together, where we have the best intelligence, and where we are able, ultimately, to be more safe and secure. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

(56) What I can **promise** <CI, DC> you is that I will make the playing field as fair as possible, that I will, for instance, make certain that with respect to the tax system, that you as a worker in America are not subsidizing the loss of your job.
(Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

(57) I've never seen such ideological squabbles in the Congress of the United States. I've never seen members of a party locked out of meetings the way they're locked out today. We have to change that, and as President, I **am committed** <CI, DC> to changing that. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

John F. Kerry's preference for the semantic categories CI is the same as the cline of preference of Democratic candidates, namely Intentionality, Plans and Goals, Volitionality, Direct Commissives and Offers. However, it is relevant to point out that there is an overuse, not only in the above-mentioned category of Direct Commissives, but also in each semantic category except for Offers, which reveals the remarkable diversity of linguistic strategies used by candidate John F. Kerry to express this type of commitment, as well as their higher frequency of occurrence in the corpus. Such diversity may be in part supported by the larger number of expressions of commitment expressed by the candidate.

6.5.1.3. Republican Candidates: The expression of Commitment to a Future Course of Action (CI)

After having discussed the individual peculiarities in the expression of commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) of Democratic candidates during primary and presidential debates, the following section will focus on the individual preferences of Republican candidates concerning this type of commitment. The

discussion of the findings concerning the sematic categories used by each Republican candidates will be analysed on their own and in relation to the rest of Republican candidates under study. Therefore, this section will focus on the expressions of commitment to a future course of action (CI) of candidates Donald Trump, Mitt Romney, John McCain and George Walker Bush.

In general terms, the predominant semantic category common to every Republican candidate under study in both types of debates is again Intentionality. The four Republican candidates prefer to use expressions with modal verbs such as *will* or *going to*. Among all Republican candidates, Donald Trump is the candidate who uses Intentionality more frequently in his speeches, even though its frequency is even higher in primary debates, as shown in tables 17 and 18.

Table 17
Republican Candidates Expressions of CI in Primaries

Categories	Donald Trump 15,350 words		Mitt Romney 15,431 words		John McCain 14,634 words		George W. Bush 13,836 words		Total 59,251 words	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰
Direct Commissives	0	0.000	0	0.000	3	2.050	1	0.723	4	0.675
Intentionality	71	46.254	53	34.346	56	38.267	47	33.969	227	38.312
Volitionality	14	9.121	19	12.313	1	0.683	12	8.673	46	7.764
Plans & Goals	1	0.652	1	0.648	8	5.467	22	15.901	32	5.401
Offers	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000
Total CI	86	45.896	73	47.307	68	46.467	82	59.266	309	52.151

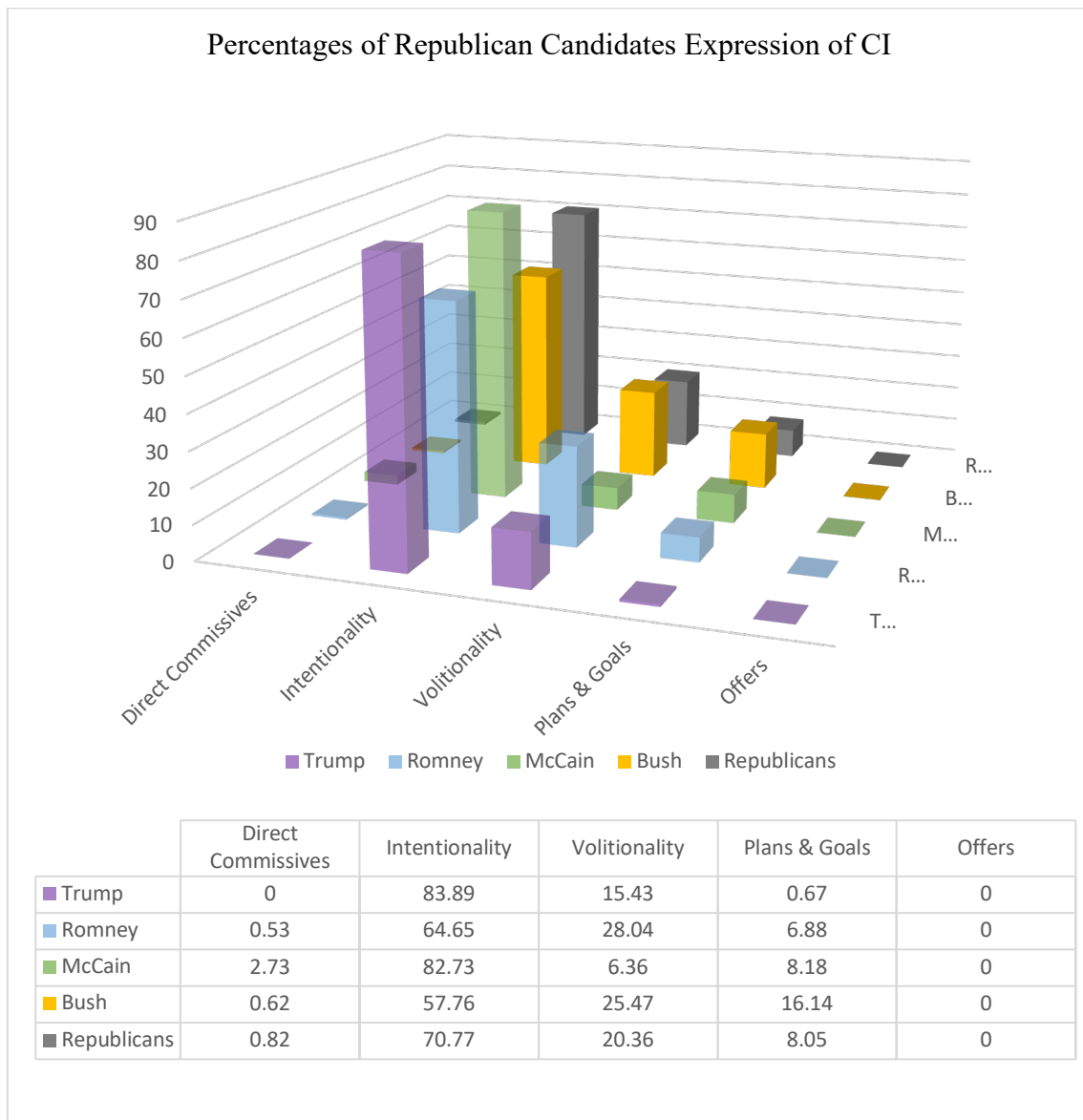
When contrasting the data from each type of electoral debate, it is evident that the frequency of occurrence of expressions of Intentionality is lower in presidential debates in favour of expressions of Volitionality (13.023‰), which almost doubles its ratio in

relation to primary debates (7.764‰). In addition, the category of Plans and Goals rarely occur in the corpus in the case of most Republican candidates, except for George W. Bush, who makes extensive use of this category in primary debates. Likewise, there no examples of Offers in the Republican sub-corpora; therefore, it is only Democratic candidates that use this semantic category.

Table 18*Republican Candidates Expressions of CI in General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Donald Trump 15,165 words		Mitt Romney 16,325 words		John McCain 13,459 words		George W. Bush 14,943 words		Total 59,892 words	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰
Direct Commissives	0	0.000	1	0.613	0	0.000	0	0.000	1	0.167
Intentionality	54	35.608	69	42.266	35	26.005	46	30.784	204	34.061
Volitionality	9	5.935	34	20.827	6	4.458	29	19.407	78	13.023
Plans & Goals	0	0.000	12	7.351	1	0.743	4	2.677	17	2.838
Offers	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000
Total CI	63	41.543	116	71.057	42	31.206	79	52.868	300	50.090

Figure 4, which shows the percentages of the total number of expressions of commitment to a future course of action (CI), reveals the preference of Republican candidates for the semantic category of Intentionality, followed by Volitionality. On the other hand, the data also show that Republican candidates barely express this type of commitment with performative verbs or with lexical realizations for the category of Offers.

Figure 4*Percentages of Republican Candidates Expression of CI*

In the following section, individual choices of Republican candidates will be discussed in further detail regarding the expression of commitment to a future course of action (CI) in primary and general presidential debates.

6.5.1.4. The Expression of Commitment to a Future Course of Action (CI) of Republican Candidates

This section aims at discussing the data of each individual candidate's expressions of the macro-category of commitment to a future course of action (CI). The discussion of the results concerning the semantic sub-categories used by each Republican candidates will be analysed on their own and in relation to the average frequency of occurrences of the semantic categories in the corpus in Republican speeches using the ratio per 10,000 words and the log-likelihood (See Appendix E for further details on the data collected from the RPM-Corpus and RGP-Corpus).

6.5.1.4.1. Donald Trump

Donald Trump was nominated as the Republican candidate for the first time to run for president against the Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton in the US presidential election of 2016. This section will focus on the candidate's preferences to express commitment to a future course of action (CI) during primary and presidential debates and will provide a contrastive analysis between Donald Trump's preferences to express this type of commitment and other Republican candidates. Such analysis will include the calculation of the ratio per 10,000 words and the log-likelihood test for each sub-category identified in the taxonomy that has been put forward for this thesis.

Donald Trump's expression of CI is characterised by the limited range of diversity of the semantic categories he uses during primary and presidential debates, in which he partook as the Republican candidate. The data show that he virtually uses two semantic categories, namely Intentionality and Volitionality. The ratio of those categories is significantly lower in presidential debates, 35.6087‰ and 5.935‰, than in primary debates 46.254‰ and 9.121‰ respectively, which results in an overuse of Intentionality

and Volitionality in primary debates. Concerning Plans and Goals, there is only one token occurring in primary debates, which is example (61), whereas no examples of the categories of Direct Commissives and Offers have been found in the corpus.

(61) And **it's my absolute intention** <CI, PLA> to leave Social Security the way it is. Not increase the age and to leave it as it is. (Trump, RPM-Corpus)

Under the semantic category of Intentionality, on the one hand, the most common lexical realisations used by Trump are *going to* (41.54%), followed by *will* (22.31%), the use of the present continuous with future meaning (14.62%), and in the case of Volitionality, *want to* is the most common lexical realization (14.62%), as illustrated in examples (62-65), some of which include the motto that characterized Trump's campaign, "Make America great again".

(62) I'm **going to** <CI, INT> cut regulations. I'm **going to** <CI, INT> cut taxes big league, and you're going to raise taxes big league, end of story. (Trump, RGP-Corpus)

(63) Under my plan, I'll <CI, INT> be reducing taxes tremendously, from 35 percent to 15 percent for companies, small and big businesses. (Trump, RGP-Corpus)

(64) And we're **bringing** <CI, INT> GDP from, really, 1 percent, which is what it is now, and if she got in, it will be less than zero. But we're **bringing** <CI, INT> it from 1 percent up to 4 percent. (Trump, RGP-Corpus)

(65) I **want to** <CI, VOL> make America great again and I **want to** <CI, VOL> leave Social Security as is. (Trump, RPM-Corpus)

Other lexical realizations occurring in his corpus less frequently are the conditional *would* and *would rather*. In some cases, Trump combines the conditional *would* with *want to*, as shown in example (66).

(66) I **would want to** <CI, VOL> make a strong, solid, good deal because right now, everything is in Cuba's favor. (Trump, RPM-Corpus)

When Trump's total number of tokens of Intentionality and its corresponding ratio (40.963‰) is contrasted with the rest of Republican candidates (36.175‰), there is still a slight overuse of this category in Donald Trump's speeches, as shown in tables 17 and 18. As for the rest of categories, the raw number of tokens and percentages illustrated in Figure 4 highlight the absence of diversity in the linguistic strategies used by the candidate to express CI, and reveals the use of conventionalised promises as virtually the only semantic category used by Donald Trump to express this type of commitment.

6.5.1.4.2. Mitt Romney

Mitt Romney was nominated as the Republican candidate to run for the presidential office against the Democratic candidate Barack Obama in the US presidential elections of 2012. This section will analyse some of the primary and general presidential elections in which the candidate delivered his messages to identify his preferred semantic categories to express both commitment to a future course (CI) in relation to other Republican candidates.

A large number of expressions of CI is identified in Mitt Romney's speeches (59.516‰), which exceeds the average of the rest of candidates (49.599‰) under study. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that the frequency of occurrence of almost every category decreases in primary debates (47.307‰) as compared to general presidential debates

(71.057‰), which results in an underuse of every category in in primary debates. Such underuse is particularly observed in the case of Plan and Goals, whose ratio is 0.648‰ in primary debates and 7.351‰ in presidential debates. On the other hand, the only example of category of Direct Commissives in his speeches is found in presidential debates to guarantee voters that industries in United States will be competitive.

Again, Intentionality is the most common semantic category in both types of debates, even though there is again a remarkable underuse of such category in primary debates. In terms of lexical realizations of Intentionality, Romney is one of the presidential candidates using a wider range of lexical realisations under this category, half of which are used rather often. The data shows Romney's preference for the modal verb *will* (39.43%). However, there are also examples of lexical realisations such as *going to* (14.86%), *would* (14.29%), and present continuous forms (1.14%).

Similarly, the frequency of occurrence of the lexical realisations for the category of Volitionality are particularly diverse. While the most common lexical realization is *want to* (25.71%), it is not the only one since the candidate includes sentences with *would like to* (2.86%), *would rather* (1.14%), and *would love to* (0.57%). The data reveal Romney's linguistic ability to express Volitionality in various ways, as illustrated in examples (69-72).

(69) ...I **would like** <CI, VOL> to take the Medicaid dollars that go to states and say to a state, you're going to get what you got last year, plus inflation, plus 1 percent, and then you're going to manage your care for your poor in the way you think best. (Romney, RGP-Corpus)

(70) But at the same time, we recognize that we need to have a Fed. Why -- why do I say that? Because if we don't have a Fed, who's going to run the currency?

Congress? I'm not in favor of that. I'd **rather** <CI, VOL> have an agency that is being overseen rather than have the United States Congress try and manage our currency. (Romney, RGP-Corpus)

(71) And finally, with regards to that tax cut, look, I'm **not looking** <CI, INT> to cut massive taxes and to reduce the revenues going to the government. (Romney, RGP-Corpus)

(72) And having spent 25 years in business, I know something about taking waste out of enterprises. I'd **love to** <CI, VOL> do that [balance the budget] to the federal government. (Romney, RPM-Corpus)

All in all, Romney's cline of reference to express CI is slightly different in primary and presidential debates. Whereas in the former ones, the predominant use of Intentionality is only followed by Volitionality and Plans and Goals, in presidential debates, the categories of Intentionality, Volitionality and Plans and Goals are followed by Direct Commissives. Such cline of preference is the same as other Republican candidates', in which none of them use the category of Offers to express this type of commitment.

The data displayed in Figure 4 show clearly the higher percentage of the use of Intentionality and Volitionality in Romney messages and the underuse of the rest of categories both with respect to other Republican candidates and the Democratic candidates included in the corpus compiled for this thesis (see Appendix E for further details).

6.5.1.4.3. John McCain

John McCain was nominated as the Republican candidate to run for the presidency against the Democratic candidate Barak Obama in the US presidential election of 2008. This section discusses the candidate's preferences to express commitment to a speaker's future action (CI) in primary and presidential debates. As in the previous sections, the analysis includes the calculation of the ratio per 10,000 words and the log-likelihood test for each sub-category identified in the taxonomy that has been provided for this thesis.

There are two main aspects to be highlighted on candidate John McCain from the data analysed of the corpus. First of all, the total amount of expressions of CI are by far fewer than the average number of tokens identified in the speeches from the rest of candidates, both Republicans and Democrats, which means that he spent less time on making promises in favour of other language functions, such as arguing or counterarguing. Secondly, the diversity of semantic categories used when expressing such commitment and their frequency of occurrence is more limited than the average of Republican candidates.

McCain's preferred semantic category to express CI is Intentionality, as in the case of the rest of candidates, since 82.73% of the tokens were conveyed with lexical realizations under this category. The frequency of occurrence of Intentionality in primary debates (38.267‰) is higher than in general presidential debates (26.005‰). Similarly, the categories of Direct Commissives and Plans and Goals occur more frequently in primary debates. Only Volitionality is the category which is more frequently used in presidential debates. Nevertheless, the frequency of occurrence of Intentionality overall in both types of debates (32.392‰) is slightly lower than its average frequency in

speeches delivered by Republicans (36.175‰), even though such difference is not particularly remarkable as revealed in tables 17 and 18.

It is more noteworthy, however, that every semantic category is underused by John McCain except for Direct Commissives. Three out of five examples of Direct Commissives used by Republicans were uttered by John McCain. The lexical realisations chosen by John McCain to express CI through the category of Direct Commissives is *be committed*, *guarantee* and *promise*, as shown in examples (76-78).

(76) **We are all committed to** <CI, DC> carrying out the mandate of the American people, which is a national security issue, which is securing the borders. (McCain, RPM-Corpus)

(77) And I'm proud to tell you, Chris, in 24 years as a member of Congress, I have never asked for nor received a single earmark or pork barrel project for my state and I **guarantee** <CI, DC> you I'll veto those bills. (McCain, RPM-Corpus)

(78) We need to act on issues that affect America that are in the nation's interests, that we should work together, as they used to in the past when I first came to Congress. I **promise** <CI, DC> you I will reach across the aisle. (McCain, RPM-Corpus)

In example (76), John McCain uses the pronoun “we” to refer to the agreement he understands that there is on the need of securing borders despite the “humanitarian situations” that were taking place in those borders. In this case, as in examples (77) and (78), he seems to be attempting to gain the trust from the audience by using Direct Commissives, which do not allow for ambiguity, and they are hardly cancellable.

Overall, candidate John McCain’s preferences are clearly represented in Figure 4, which shows his cline of preference, namely, Intentionality, Plans and Goals,

Volitionality, Direct Commissives and Offers, which is different from the tendency shown by Republicans since the frequency of occurrence of Volitionality is higher than Plans and Goals in those cases.

6.5.1.4.4. George Walker Bush

George Walker Bush became a presidential candidate for the first time in the 2000 US presidential elections after having been selected as the nominee by the Republican Party through a series of primaries and caucuses. He eventually became the 43rd President of United States. This section analyses a random selection of some of Bush's speeches during primary and general presidential elections in order to determine his preferable semantic categories when expressing commitment to a future action (CI).

Candidate Bush expresses this type of commitment 161 times in the corpus, which is a higher frequency of occurrence than average. Like in the case of the rest of candidates, Intentionality is the main category used for this purpose. However, he does not rely on this category as much as other Republicans in favour of categories such as Volitionality and Plans and Goals, which occur more frequently than average in the corpus. These two categories vary to a great extent from primary debates, in which Plans and Goals is the preferred category after Intentionality, to presidential debates, where the candidate uses the category of Volitionality as the second preferred option. As for Intentionality, this category remains constant in both types of debates. In addition, George W. Bush's speeches are virtually characterized by the absence of the category of Direct Commissives, except for one example, which occurs during the primary debates. Similarly, there are no examples of the category of Offers in his speeches.

When George W. Bush's expression of CI is compared to other Republican candidates, a remarkable overuse of Plans and Goals is observed. Therefore, the frequency of occurrence of this category doubles in the case of George W. Bush, which is also supported by the log-likelihood test ($LL = 9.53$; $\%DIFF = 119.67$). The most common lexical realization of this category in his speeches is *my plan* followed by a present simple verb form, as illustrated in the example (81), in which George W. Bush expresses his CI in terms of plans concerning Medicare for seniors when debating with candidate Gore.

(81) You've had your chance, Vice President, you've been there for eight years, and nothing has been done. My point is that **my plan** <CI, PLA> not only trusts seniors with options; **my plan** <CI, PLA> sets aside \$3.4 trillion for Medicare over the next ten years. (Bush, RGP-Corpus)

On the other hand, although Republican candidates make use of Volitionality more often than Democratic candidates, there is still a remarkable overuse of this category in candidate Bush's speeches, as revealed by the ratio, 14.246‰ and 10.408‰ respectively.

Therefore, George W. Bush's cline of preference is Intentionality, Volitionality, Plans and Goals and Direct Commissives. Although the candidate has the same cline of preference as the one resulting from the average percentage of the sum of his Republican colleagues' tokens, Figure 4 illustrates the decrease of the frequency of occurrence of Intentionality in the case of candidate Bush (57.76%) in favour of Volitionality (25.47%) and Plans and Goals (16.14%). Another remarkable feature of George W. Bush's speeches is the higher number of expressions of CI he uses as compared to the rest of Democratic candidates. In fact, the ratio of his expressions of CI is 55.944‰ whereas the ratio average of all candidates is 49.599‰ (see Appendix E).

6.5.2. The expression of Commitment to a Future Outcome (CO): Democratic vs. Republican Candidates

This section will also analyse the variations in the way each Republican candidate expresses commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and presidential debates with regards to other candidates from the same party, which serves as a control group for the discussion.

6.5.2.1. Democratic Candidates: The Expression of Commitment to a Future Outcome (CO)

The data displayed in this section focuses on individual Democratic candidates' expressions of commitment to an outcome (CO) both in primary and general presidential debates. In particular, it deals with the preferences for certain semantic categories expressing CO in speeches delivered by candidates Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton, Barak Obama and John F. Kerry.

Table 19

Democratic Candidates Expressions of CO in Primaries

Categories	Joe Biden 14,625 words		Hillary Clinton 14,518 words		Barak Obama 13,165 words		John F. Kerry 13,073 words		Total 55,381 words	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰
Direct Directives	0	0.000	2	1.378	0	0.000	0	0.000	2	0.361
Imperatives & Hortatives	12	8.205	8	5.510	0	0.000	1	0.077	21	3.792
Inclination	0	0.000	6	4.133	3	2.279	1	0.077	10	1.806
Deonticity	92	62.906	71	48.905	33	25.067	43	32.892	239	43.156
Desirability	5	3.419	4	2.755	7	5.317	13	9.944	29	5.236
Proposals	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	1	0.077	1	0.181
Total CO	109	74.530	91	62.681	43	32.662	59	45.131	302	54.531

The predominant semantic category that is common to Democratic candidates expressing CO is by far Deonticity, which represents 82.28% of the total number of expressions of CO. Although Barack Obama is the candidate who overuses this category, there are some differences in the frequency of occurrence of Deonticity between candidates in primary and general presidential debates, as shown in tables 19 and 20. For example, it is noteworthy that candidate Joe Biden doubles the number of tokens expressing Deonticity in primary debates. Similarly, Barack Obama relies strongly on the category of Deonticity to gain the audience support by putting the emphasis on what is needed to be done in general presidential debates. While Obama's ratio of Deonticity in primary debates is 25.067‰, it reaches up to 84.708‰ in general presidential debates.

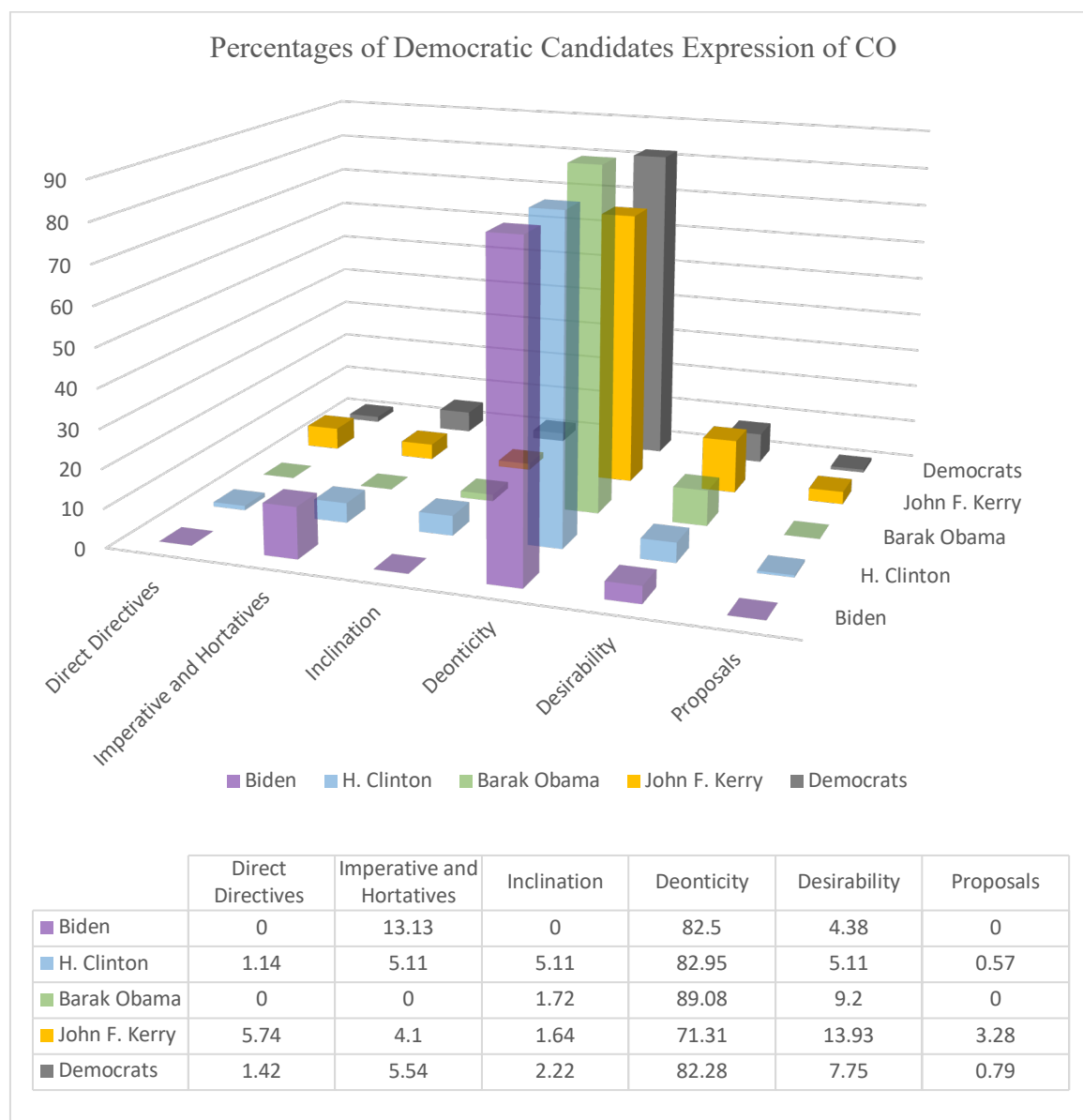
Table 20*Democratic Candidates Expressions of CO in General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Joe Biden 13,810 words		Hillary Clinton 13,228 words		Barak Obama 14,403 words		John F. Kerry 14,885 words		Total 56,326 words	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰
Direct Directives	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	7	4.702	7	1.243
Imperatives & Hortatives	9	6.517	1	0.756	0	0.000	4	0.269	14	2.486
Inclination	0	0.000	3	2.268	0	0.000	1	0.067	4	0.710
Deonticity	40	28.965	75	56.698	122	84.705	44	29.560	281	49.888
Desirability	2	1.448	5	3.780	9	6.249	4	2.687	20	3.551
Proposals	0	0.000	1	0.0756	0	0.000	3	2.016	4	0.710
Total CO	51	36.930	85	64.258	131	90.953	63	4.2325	330	58.588

On the other hand, Direct Directives rarely occur in the Democratic corpus. In fact, it is John F. Kerry the only candidate who uses them in general presidential debates and Hillary Clinton, to a lesser extent, in the case of primary debates. Similarly, Proposals is a category whose frequency of occurrence is rather low since it is only used by candidate Kerry on 4 occasions and Hillary Clinton on 2 occasions. Therefore, the most

common categories among Democratic candidates when expressing commitment to a future outcome (CO) are Deonticity, followed by Desirability and Imperatives and Hortatives, as illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5
Percentages of Democratic Candidates Expression of CO



The following section will provide further details in the use of this macro-category in Democratic speeches delivered during primary and presidential debates.

6.5.2.2. The Expression of Commitment to an Outcome (CO) of Democratic Candidates

This section is devoted to discussing in further detail the individual preferences of Democratic candidates to express commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and general presidential debates of debates based on the taxonomy developed for this macro-category. (See Appendix F for further details on the data collected from the DPM-Corpus and DGP-Corpus)

6.5.2.2.1. Joe Biden

When it comes to the expression of CO, there is a wide variety of semantic categories used by Democratic candidates, among which Deonticity is the predominant category. In the case of candidate Joe Biden, he strongly relies on this category to express commitment to a future outcome (CO) during electoral debates. In fact, one of his main persuasive strategies to gain the necessary support for his candidacy is to express the policies he is proposing in terms of necessity or obligation.

Deonticity is typically expressed by deontic modal verbs, such as *must*, *have to*, *need to*, *should*, *ought to* or *cannot*. In the case of Joe Biden, he prefers to use the modal verbs *have to* (39.49%) and *should* (31.84%) to express Deonticity, mainly in primary debates. These lexical realizations are illustrated in examples (33) and (34), in which Biden argues in favour of providing the require equipment to hospitals, in terms of necessity, so that they are able to face the pandemic, as well as offering elderly people the possibility of being tested on COVID-19.

(33) We provided these hospitals dealing with these great pandemics, and we were able to do it quickly. And people would have a place to go. But we also **have to**

<CO, DEO> provide the equipment to protect the first responders. And that's not being done, either. (Biden, DPM-Corpus)

(34) We **should** <CO, DEO> have every single person that's in a nursing home being able to be tested. (Biden, DPM-Corpus)

Biden's preference for Deonticity is followed by the semantic categories of Imperatives and Hortatives (7.385‰) and Desirability (2.462‰), the former of which has a low ratio both in primary and general presidential debates. However, there are no examples of the categories of Direct Directives, Inclination and Proposals. The range of semantic categories used by Biden to encourage the audience to take action is somehow limited. He avoids using performative verbs and uses only few examples of Imperatives and Hortatives forms.

Concerning the frequency of occurrence of the categories in primaries vs. presidential debates, there is a significant overuse of deontic expressions in primaries, whose number of tokens doubles, over presidential debates (LL= 18.18; %DIFF=117.18). On the contrary, the frequency of occurrence of Desirability is higher in presidential debates, as shown in tables 19 and 20. Based on the data, it could be inferred that Biden prefers to use frequently more direct persuasive strategies in primary debates, among which deontic expressions outstand; whereas the use of Deonticity significantly decreases in presidential ones in favour of a slight increase in the use of lexical realizations which emphasizes the convenience or desirability of acting in a particular manner.

When Joe Biden's expression of CO is contrasted with other Democratic candidates', a relevant difference is noticed in relation to the range of semantic categories identified in the corpus. The corresponding ratios show an underuse of the categories of

Direct Directives, Inclination, and Proposals since they do not occur in the messages sent by Biden during primaries and general presidential debates.

Although Joe Biden does not use Direct Directives in his messages, it is worth noticing that there is an overuse of Imperatives and Hortatives as compared to Democratic candidates ($LL = 8.77$; $\%DIFF = 135.71$). Through this category, Joe Biden encourages the electorate to act in a somehow direct manner, even if they are not as much straightforward as Direct Directives.

Examples (35) and (36) show the most common lexical realization of Imperatives and Hortatives used by Joe Biden is the use of the second-person imperative, which amounts up to 81% of the tokens annotated for this category, as opposed to hortative expressions, which represent 19% of the tokens.

(35) **Pass** <CO, IH> the Biden health care plan, which takes Obamacare, restores all the cuts made to it, subsidizes it further, provides for lower drug prices, makes sure that there's no hidden bills, makes sure that we invest -- what I want to invest, \$50 billion in dealing with underlying diseases that are of great consequence, diabetes, Alzheimer's and cancer. (Biden, DPM-Corpus)

(36) I'd take advantage of the test kits they [the World Health Organization] have available to us, even though the president says a million or more are coming. **Let's** <CO, IH> just get all the tests we can, done, as quickly as we can. (Biden, DPM-Corpus)

There is a clear preference for the use of the second-person imperative, which include verbs such as *vote*, *make sure*, *pass*, *join* or *give*. In this regard, one of the most frequently verbs taking this type of imperative is the verb *vote*, which occurs 8 times, that is, 47% of the second-person imperatives occurring in his messages. Interestingly, Biden

encourage the electorate to vote only in general presidential debates, and he usually combines that verb with another action which highlights the benefits and outcomes that can be accomplished by exercising the right to vote, as illustrated in examples (37) and (38).

(37) **Vote** <CO, IH> and **let** <CO, IH> your Senators know strongly how you feel.
(Biden, DGP-Corpus)

(38) **Show up** <CO, IH> and **vote** <CO, IH>. You will determine the outcome of this election. (Biden, DGP-Corpus)

The use of imperatives in general presidential debates are frequently focus on gaining the voter's support on specific policies. The overuse of Imperative and Hortatives with respect to all candidates is also reflected in its ratio in Biden's corpus (7.385‰) as compared to the four sub-corpora (2.946‰). However, it is noteworthy that the total amount of tokens expressing commitment to a future outcome (CO) is similar to the Democratic candidate's average.

All these similarities and differences are clearly observed in percentages in Figure 5, which represents the overuse of Imperatives and Hortatives and the underuse of categories of Direct Directives, Inclination and Proposals in Joe Biden's expression of commitment to an outcome (CO). The data makes clear the relevant differences between Biden and other democratic candidates in the expression of this type of commitment. His cline of preferences, therefore, is Deonticity, followed by Imperatives and Hortatives and Desirability. As discussed above, there are no examples of the categories of Direct Directives, Inclination, and Proposals.

6.5.2.2.2. Hillary Clinton

General speaking, the ratio per 10,000 words of the tokens annotated as expressions of commitment to a future action (CI: 59.108‰) is slightly lower than the number of expressions of commitment to an outcome (CO: 63.433‰) in Hillary Clinton's speeches. When it comes to the latter, there is again a predominant use of the category of Deonticity, whose ratio is 52.620‰.

Among the wide range of lexical realizations expressing deontic meaning, such *have to*, *must*, *need to*, *should*, *ought to* and *cannot*, candidate Clinton uses mainly *have to*, followed by *need to* (26.90%), or *need* (someone) *who*, as illustrated in example (41), and the modal verb *should*, which represents 15.86% of the total of tokens. On the contrary, examples of *cannot* (2.76%), or *can* combined with the adverb of frequency *never*, as shown in example (42), *must* (3.45%) and *ought to* (1.38%) rarely occur in her messages.

(41) We **need a president who** <CO, DEO> will fight for commonsense gun safety reforms. (Clinton, DPM-Corpus)

(42) We **can never** <CO, DEO> let Wall Street wreck Main Street again. (Clinton, DPM-Corpus)

When comparing primary and presidential debates, the log-likelihood test points out a relevant overuse of Imperative and Hortative expressions in primary debates (LL= 5.57; %DIFF= +628.92), in which 8 tokens are identified as, opposed to 1 token found in general presidential debates. Similarly, the ratio of Inclination almost doubles in primary debates (0.4133‰) with respect to presidential debates (2.268‰). In the case of performative verbs, there are only two examples of Direct Directives (1.378‰), which have been found in presidential debates. She is more direct and explicit in primaries, in

which there are examples of performative expressions and Imperatives and Hortatives to move the electorate to take action.

Regarding the diversity of semantic categories occurring in Clinton's messages, it is remarkable that she uses a wider range of those in primaries, among which Deontic expressions, which represented 78.02% of the total of expressions of commitment to a future outcome (CO), are predominant. On the contrary, Clinton used less categories to express this type of commitment in presidential debates than in primary debates.

All in all, Deonticity is followed by three categories having the same ratio, namely Imperatives and Hortatives, and Desirability (3.244‰). On the other hand, the least frequency of occurrence is observed in Direct Directives (0.721‰) and Proposals (0.360‰) with 2 and 1 tokens respectively.

Turning now to the contrastive analysis between Hillary Clinton and the rest of Democratic candidates, it is noteworthy that there is an overuse of all the categories expressing commitment to an outcome (CO). However, the corresponding ratios highlight some remarkable differences in the frequency of occurrence in the case of some semantic categories. It is particularly the category of Inclination that shows the greatest overuse in Clinton's messages regarding the expression of CO. These structures are typically realized with the verb *want* followed by an object and a *to*-infinitive clause, and they are similar to imperatives, as illustrated in example (43). However, the use of the pronoun *us* involves the speaker and, in some cases, the administration as well in the accomplishment of the outcome, which seem to hedge the statement, as shown in example (44).

- (43) I **want** <CO, INC> white people to recognize that there is systemic racism.
(Clinton, DPM-Corpus)

(44) I **want** <CO, INC> us to have an absolute commitment to getting rid of lead wherever it is because it's not only in water systems, it's also in soil, and it's in lead paint that is found mostly in older homes. (Clinton, DPM-Corpus)

The ratio of this type of expressions is significantly higher in messages delivered by Clinton (3.244‰) during primary and general presidential debates than in the rest of candidates' messages (1.429‰), but also the greatest overuse among all the categories expressing commitment to a future outcome (CO), which highlights Clinton's greater preference for this category as compared to other Democratic candidates. Among Hillary Clinton's lexical realizations used to express Desirability, the expressions *it's time* followed by a *that*-clause and *it's important* followed by *that*-clauses or *to*-infinitive clauses are the most common when the speaker wants to emphasise the convenience of implementing certain policies. Utterances (45) and (46) exemplify the use of such lexical realizations to make clear the appropriateness of raising taxes for wealthy people and asking for further financial cooperation to the countries which are part of NATO.

(45) And I think **it's time** <CO, DES> that the wealthy and corporations paid their fair share to support this country. (Clinton, DGP-Corpus)

(46) I support our continuing involvement in NATO. And **it is important** <CO, DES> to ask for our NATO allies to pay more of the cost. (Clinton, DPM-Corpus)

To conclude, both in the expressions of commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO), Clinton uses a low rate of performative verbs, which are only used in primary debates, when compared to the rest of Democratic candidates. Her persuasive strategies are more indirect in presidential debates, in which there is no presence of performative verbs and only one example of Imperative and Hortatives forms are found. The higher frequency of occurrence of Direct

Performatives, Imperatives and Hortatives and Inclination forms in primary debates seem to be replaced by deontic expressions, which are slightly higher in general presidential debates.

6.5.2.2.3. Barak Obama

The diversity of Barack Obama's range of semantic categories used to express CO is more limited than in the case of the previous type of commitment (CI). Among the six categories identified in the corresponding taxonomy, only three of them occur in his messages, namely Deonticity (56.225‰), Desirability (5.804‰) and Inclination (1.088‰). Therefore, there are no examples of Direct Directives and Imperatives and Hortatives to persuade the audience to follow a particular course of action in a more direct manner. Rather, Obama strongly relies on the category of Deonticity to gain the audience support by putting the emphasis on what is needed to be done, as illustrated in examples (51) and (52).

(51) We **have to** <CO, DEO> fix our health care system, which is putting an enormous burden on families. (Obama, DGP-Corpus)

(52) Well, our first step **should** <CO, DEO> be to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of the Iranians, and that has to be one of our top priorities. (Obama, DPM-Corpus)

When analysing the lexical realizations of Obama's expression of Deonticity, it is noteworthy to point out his preference for the modal verb *have to*, in any of its forms, which amounts up to 70.75% of the expressions of CO in the corpus, followed by *cannot* or *can't* (8.84%) and *should* (6.12%). The percentage of the category of Deonticity

slightly increases if we only focus on general presidential elections, in which 73.28% of tokens expressing Deonticity use *have to*.

Interestingly, the ratio of Deonticity in primary debates (25.067‰) triples the ratio in general presidential debates (84.705‰). This is in part due to the higher number of expressions of commitment uttered by Obama during primary debates. However, Table 47 (see Appendix F) still shows an underuse of this semantic category in primary debates (LL = -46.68; %DIFF = -70.41), which reveals the greater emphasis that Obama made on the need to act during general presidential elections.

Even though the number of expressions of CO is noticeably lower in primary debates, Obama's total number of tokens in both debates reaches a higher ratio of this type of commitment (63.117‰) than the ratio of other Democratic candidates (56.577‰). In terms of the cline of preference, the predominant semantic category in the case of Obama is Deonticity (89.08%) and Desirability (9.20%) and Inclination (1.72%), as shown in Figure 5. The absence of the categories of Direct Directives, Imperatives and Hortatives and Proposals in Obama's messages delivered during primaries and presidential debates are also represented in Figure 5 in contrast with their Democratic candidate's average. It seems that the limited range of semantic categories that Obama uses may have contributed to his stronger reliance on Deontic expressions.

6.5.2.2.4. John Forbes Kerry

Electoral promises are an essential aspect of primary and presidential debates which are usually combined with other persuasive strategies, such as the expression of CO, which allow the candidate to legitimise their policies and promise and encourage the electorate to act. To achieve these goals, candidate John F. Kerry's makes a significant

use of performative verbs in both types of commitment particularly during presidential debates, in which the ratio of expressions of CO is 4.702‰ and the ratio of CI is 4.703‰.

The only lexical realizations of Direct Directives used by the Democratic candidate is the verb *ask* followed mainly by the object pronoun and a *to*-infinitive clause, as shown in example (58).

(58) And I **ask** <CO, DD> you to embark on that journey with me. I ask you for your trust. I ask you for your help. I **ask** <CO, DD> you to allow me the privilege of leading this great Nation of ours, of helping us to be stronger here at home and to be respected again in the world and, most of all, to be safer forever. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

However, there are no examples of Direct Directives in primary debates and, therefore, there is an overuse of such category in general presidential debates, as shown in tables 19 and 20. Nevertheless, this category is not the preferred option for Kerry when expressing CO despite the high ratio and frequency of occurrence of Direct Directives. Rather, the data show that his cline of preference is Deonticity (31.118‰), followed by Desirability (6.081‰), Direct Directives (2.504‰), Imperative and Hortatives (1.788‰) and Proposals (1.431‰).

As opposed to other candidates, the number of expressions of commitment and its corresponding ratio in primary debates versus general presidential debates is very similar. However, whereas Direct Directives occur more frequently in presidential debates, there is an overuse of Desirability in primary debates, whose frequency of occurrence is almost quadrupled in primary debates. Nevertheless, one of the most noteworthy categories

concerns Kerry's use of Proposals, which amounts the highest number of tokens of such category in the corpus. In fact, 50% of the tokens identified in the whole corpus under this category are expressed by candidate Kerry. The main lexical realizations for Proposals involve the use of the expression *I have a (major) proposal*, as illustrated in examples (59) and (60).

(59) I want to put money in your pocket. I am—I **have a proposal** <CO, PRO> for a tax cut for all people earning less than the \$200,000. The only people affected in my plan are the top income earners of America. (Kerry, DGP-Corpus)

(60) Absolutely, positively. And I have not only voted for that in the past, but I **have a major proposal** <CO, PRO> to provide for school construction. (Kerry, DPM-Corpus)

On the other hand, it is the category of Deonticity that reveals the greatest underuse when compared to Democratic candidates. While it is still Kerry's preferred category to express CO, the ratio is by far below average, which may be in part explained by the lower frequency of occurrence of expressions of CO in his speeches. The distribution of the categories is represented in percentages in Figure 5, which shows candidate Kerry's lesser reliance on the category of Deonticity in favour of other categories such as Desirability or Direct Commissives when compared to other Democratic candidates' preferences. Therefore, the cline of preference of John F. Kerry is significantly different from the average of Democratic candidates. Whereas the average cline of preference is Deonticity, followed by Desirability, Imperative and Hortatives, Inclination, Direct Directives and Proposals, John F. Kerry's cline of preference is Deonticity followed by Desirability, Direct Directives, Imperative and Hortatives, Proposals and Inclination. This cline of preference highlights the greater importance that more direct linguistic strategies such as performative verbs and imperative forms may

have in Kerry's speeches, which are categories typically used to encourage the audience to act in a certain manner.

6.5.2.3. Republican Candidates: The Expression of Commitment to a Future Outcome (CO)

After having discussed the expression of commitment to a future outcome (CO) of Democratic candidates, this section will focus on how Republican candidates express this type of commitment in primary and general presidential debates. The data displayed below reveal the semantic categories preferred by individual Republican candidates for the expressions of CO, namely Donald Trump, Mitt Romney, John McCain and George W. Bush.

There are some differences in the frequent of occurrence of each category and their distribution between primary and general presidential debates in Republican candidates' speeches. However, as in the case of Democratic candidates, the common predominant category to express commitment to a future outcome (CO) is Deonticity. Most candidates have similar ratios regarding the frequency of occurrence of Deonticity in both types of debates. It is candidate Mitt Romney that shows a greater variation in the ratio of this category between primary debates (20.738‰) and general presidential debates (43.492‰), as displayed in tables 21 and 22.

Table 21
Republican Candidates Expressions of CO in Primaries

Categories	Donald Trump 15,350 words		Mitt Romney 15,431 words		John McCain 14,634 words		George W. Bush 13,836 words		Total 59,251 words	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰
Direct Directives	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	2	1.446	2	0.338
Imperatives & Hortatives	4	2.606	6	3.888	4	2.733	2	1.446	16	2.700

Inclination	2	1.303	3	1.944	0	0.000	1	0.723	6	1.013
Deonticity	64	41.693	32	20.738	83	56.717	101	72.998	280	47.257
Desirability	1	0.652	11	7.129	5	3.417	22	15.901	39	6.582
Proposals	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000
Total CO	71	46.254	52	81.006	92	62.867	128	92.512	343	57.889

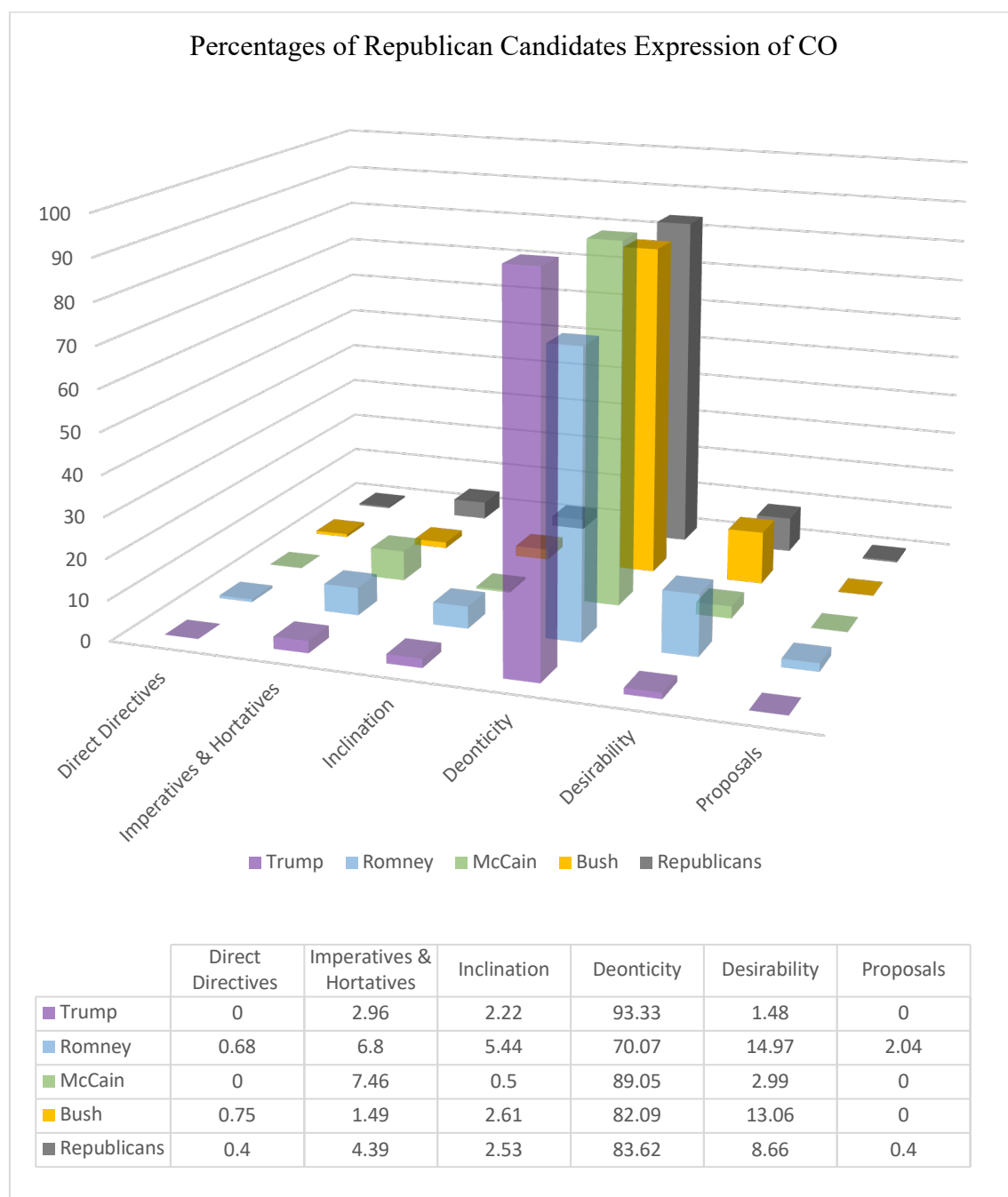
On the other hand, it is also noteworthy the variation in the frequency of occurrence of Deonticity among Republican candidates. The case of George W. Bush is the most remarkable since the ratio of Deonticity is 79.636‰ in general presidential debates, while the average ratio of Republican candidates is 58.105‰.

Table 22

Republican Candidates Expressions of CO in General Presidential Debates

Categories	Donald Trump 15,165 words		Mitt Romney 16,325 words		John McCain 13,459 words		George W. Bush 14,943 words		Total 59,892 words	
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰
Direct Directives	0	0.000	1	0.613	0	0.000	0	0.000	1	0.167
Imperatives & Hortatives	0	0.000	4	2.450	11	8.173	2	1.338	17	2.838
Inclination	1	0.659	5	3.063	1	0.743	6	4.015	13	2.171
Deonticity	62	40.884	71	43.492	96	71.328	119	79.636	348	58.105
Desirability	1	0.659	11	6.738	1	0.743	13	8.698	26	4.341
Proposals	0	0.000	3	1.838	0	0.000	0	0.000	3	0.501
Total CO	64	42.202	95	58.193	109	80.987	140	93.689	408	68.123

Figure 6 illustrates graphically the preferences of Republican candidates to express CO and the diversity of category used in their messages. It is noteworthy that the categories of Direct Directives and Proposals rarely occur in the corpus. Likewise, the use Imperative and Hortatives, Inclination and desirability varies significantly from candidate to candidate. While candidates Romney and Bush use more frequently the category of Desirability, other candidates such as McCain make use of imperative and hortative forms more frequently than his Republican colleagues.

Figure 6*Percentages of Republican Candidates Expression of CO*

In the following section, individual choices of Republican candidates will be discussed in detail regarding the expression of commitment to a future outcome (CO) both in primary and general presidential debates. Their individual preferences will be discussed in contrast with the rest of Republican candidates and the average ratio of each semantic category expressing CO.

6.5.2.4. The Expression of Commitment to a Future Outcome (CO) of Republican Candidates

This section aims at discussing in further detail the data of each individual candidate's expressions of the macro-category of commitment to a future outcome (CO). The discussion of the results concerning the semantic sub-categories used by each Republican candidates will be analysed on their own and in relation to the average frequency of occurrences of the semantic categories in Republican speeches using the ratio per 10,000 words and the log-likelihood (See Appendix G for further details on the data collected from the RPM-Corpus and RGP-Corpus).

6.5.2.4.1. Donald Trump

Generally speaking, the ratio of the expression of commitment to a future outcome (CO) is significantly lower in the case of Donald Trump (44.241‰) when compared to the average ratio of expressions of CO used by other Republican candidates (63.033‰). The data obtained from the corpus reveal Donald Trump's preference for the semantic category of Deonticity to express this type of commitment both in primaries (41.693‰) and general presidential debates (40.884‰). Although the diversity of Donald Trump's range of semantic categories used to express CO is not as limited as in the case of his expression of CI, the ratio is extremely low in the case of Imperatives and Hortatives (1.311‰), Inclination (0.983‰) and Desirability (0.655‰) when compared to the category of Deonticity. In fact, by focusing on the number of tokens, only 9 out of the 135 tokens expressing CO belong to other categories than Deonticity, as shown in tables 21 and 22. This contrast is even more substantial in general presidential debates since all expressions of commitment except for two of them belong to the semantic category of

Deonticity, which represents the 96.88% of the total amount of expressions of commitment.

Therefore, candidate Trump strongly relies on deontic expressions to persuade voters to support his candidacy. However, the diversity of lexical realizations expressing Deonticity is also more limited as compared to other candidates. The most common lexical realization of this category in Donald Trump's speeches during electoral debates is *have to* or *has to* (65.93%), as illustrated in examples (67) and (68), which were two frequent messages that the candidate conveyed to mass audiences during his campaign.

(67) And we **have to** <CO, DEO> stop the violence. We **have to** <CO, DEO> bring back law and order. (Trump, RGP-Corpus)

(68) And one thing we **have to** <CO, DEO> do: Repeal and replace the disaster known as Obamacare. It's destroying our country. It's destroying our businesses, our small business and our big businesses. We **have to** <CO, DEO> repeal and replace Obamacare. (Trump, RGP-Corpus)

Regarding other semantic categories, it is also relevant to point out Donald Trump's reluctance to use any performative verb both in the expression of CI and CO. There are no examples of Direct Directives and Proposals in Donald Trump's speeches delivered both in primary and general presidential debates.

Because of all the above-mentioned data, it is reasonable to conclude that Donald Trump linguistic strategies to express commitment to a future outcome (CO) make the candidate unique in his rhetorical style and in his linguistic choices regarding the variety of semantic categories used in both types of commitment.

6.5.2.4.2. Mitt Romney

There are some remarkable differences in the frequency of occurrence of each category in primary debates versus presidential debates. As shown in tables 21 and 22, there is a noteworthy overuse in the predominant category in primary debates, Deonticity, whose ratio is 20.738‰, as opposed to the ratio found in general presidential debates, 43.492‰, which virtually doubles the former one. Some other categories, such as Direct Directives and Proposals do not occur in primary debates, which results in a more limited variety of semantic categories occurring in this political context.

Figure 6 also reveals that the most common semantic category used by all candidates is Deonticity. Even though this is the case of Mitt Romney, the log-likelihood test clearly shows that there is an underuse of such category in comparison to other Democrat candidates (LL = -23.38; %DIFF = 38.47). According to the data compiled, candidate Mitt Romney underuses deontic expressions in favour of categories such as Inclination and Desirability, which emphasize the speaker's willingness to guide the audience's decisions and behaviour to achieve a particular outcome, or the convenience of following a specific course of action respectively, as illustrated in examples (73) and (74). In fact, the ratio of Desirability and Inclination in Mitt Romney's speech (6.928‰ and 2.519‰) is significantly higher than average (4.938‰ and 1.429‰).

(73) I am pro-immigrant. I **want people to** <CO, VOL> come to America with skill and vitality and vibrance. (Romney, RGP-Corpus)

(74) **The right course is to** <CO, DES> add ships to our Navy, to modernize and add aircraft to our Air Force, to add 100,000 troops to our active-duty personnel, and to strengthen America's military. (Romney, RGP-Corpus)

It is also remarkable that all examples of Proposals found in the Republican sub-corpora have been uttered by Mitt Romney. In example (75), Romney suggests that schools should be graded for the sake of transparency so that parents can make informed decisions on what schools are the most successful ones for their sons. For this purpose, the lexical realization chosen by Mitt Romney is the verb *propose* in its present simple form.

(75) I **propose** <CO, PRO> we grade our schools so parents know which schools are succeeding and failing, so they can take their child to a -- to a school that he's being more successful (Romney, RGP-Corpus).

On the other hand, the frequency of occurrence of Direct Directives (0.315‰) is slightly lower than average (0.520‰). It seems to be clear that this category is dispreferred by most candidates and, to a greater extent, by Republican candidates. In particular, candidate Romney prefers to use Imperatives and Hortatives when attempting to mobilise audiences in a more straightforward manner.

Figure 6 shows the percentages of the frequency of occurrence of each category in the case Mitt Romney, as compared to Republican candidates. It clearly reveals candidate Romney's underuse of deontic expressions, even though Deonticity is his preferred category, and his greater reliance on categories such as Desirability, Inclination, Imperatives and Hortatives and Proposals.

All in all, the cline of preference of Mitt Romney's expression of CO is Deonticity, Desirability, Imperatives and Hortatives, Inclination, Proposals and Direct Directives. Such cline of preference is similar to Republican and Democratic candidates except for the categories of Proposals and Direct Directives, since they are the least common in both political parties.

6.5.2.4.3. John McCain

The limited variety of categories used by John McCain to express commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) is similarly found concerning the expression of commitment to a future outcome (CO). Unlike the former type of commitment, however, McCain does not use performative verbs under the semantic category of Direct Directives, which shows his preference for performative verbs when making promises over performative verbs encouraging the electorate to act in a direct manner. Likewise, he neither uses the category of Proposals or Inclination, except for one occasion in general presidential debates, in which McCain expresses his inclination or willingness for families to be able to choose their health care, as shown in example (79).

(79) I **want you to** <CO, VOL> be able to choose the health care for you and your family. That's what I'm all about. And we've got too much government and too much spending and the government is -- the size of government has grown by 40 percent in the last eight years. (McCain, RGP-Corpus)

Regarding John McCain's preference for deontic expressions, a slight overuse is observed in primary debates as opposed to presidential debates, which is also observed in the category of Imperatives and Hortatives. There is a remarkable number of lexical realizations expressing the category of Imperatives and Hortatives in his speeches delivered during general presidential debates, particularly hortative forms, which are exemplified in the utterance below in which McCain argues against raising taxes.

(80) We have to keep Americans' taxes low. All Americans' taxes low. **Let's** <CO, IH> not raise taxes on anybody today. (McCain, RGP-Corpus)

Despite the limited range of semantic categories used by John McCain, the total number of tokens expressing CO is higher (71.548‰) than average when compared to

other Republican candidates (63.033‰). As a result of the high frequency of occurrence of tokens expressing CO and limited number of categories used, there is an overuse of Deonticity (63.717‰) with regards to the Republican average (52.710‰). On the contrary, the semantic categories of Direct Directives, Inclination, Desirability and Proposals are largely underused by candidate McCain.

Overall, John McCain's cline of preference is Deonticity, which embodies 89.05% of the tokens expressing CO, Imperative and Hortatives, Desirability and Inclination, as illustrated in figure 6. There are no examples of Direct Commissives and Proposals in candidate McCain's speeches collected in the corpus. In the light of the results obtained from the data, it seems to be clear that McCain prefers to persuade the audience to take action mainly by putting the focus on what is necessary to be done and disregards other common linguistic strategies to express commitment to a future outcome (CO).

6.5.2.4.4. George Walker Bush

One of the most remarkable features of George W. Bush's speeches is the higher number of expressions of commitment he uses as compared to the rest of candidates. However, the overuse is even greater in the case of his expressions of CO, in which its ratio stands out against the average ratio of the rest of candidates, which are 93.123‰ and 59.996‰ respectively (See Appendix G).

Concerning the expression of CO, Deonticity is again the predominant category, which is followed by Desirability. However, the variety of George W. Bush's range of semantic categories used to express CO is rather wide. Examples of every category have been identified in his messages, except for Proposals, even though there are some categories which barely occur in his speeches.

On the other hand, when it comes to the distribution of each category in primary and presidential debates, tables 20 and 21 show that the number of tokens and ratio are rather steady across the board, apart from Desirability, which is overused in primary debates with a ratio of 15.901‰ as opposed to its ratio in presidential debates, which decreases substantially (8.698‰).

Although George W. Bush uses Direct Directives on two occasions, he clearly avoids using straightforward semantic categories to express CO, such the use of Imperative and Hortative forms (1.390‰), whose frequency of occurrence is lower than in the case of Republican candidates (2.770‰). On the contrary, this candidate relies strongly on the categories of Deonticity and Desirability, which are overused in his speeches in relation to the average ratio of Republican candidates.

Regarding Deonticity, the most common the lexical realization used by George W. Bush is *need to*, as illustrated in example (82), which highlights the need for setting measurable standards in schools so that parents can make informed choices. The percentage of this lexical realization encompasses 33.64% of the deontic expressions occurring in his speeches.

(82) But I believe we owe it to our children to say to the state, you owe — You **need to** <CO, DEO, IC> set standards and you **need to** <CO, DEO> measure. And if the schools don't rise to the challenge, as opposed to allowing the status quo to reign, we **need to** <CO, DEO> free the children. We **need to** <CO, DEO> free the parents so they can make [...] so they can make a different choice. (Bush, RGP-Corpus)

This lexical realization is followed by *should* and *ought to*, which together become 40.45% of the verb forms expressing Deonticity. Then *have to* and *must* are used in

23.18% of the deontic expressions occurring in George W. Bush's speeches. Therefore, the candidate shows preference for the expression of CO in terms of necessity rather than obligation, which aligns with his avoidance of Direct Directives and Imperatives and Hortatives forms. Again, the frequency of occurrence of this category of lexical realizations remains steady in both primary and presidential debates.

As for Desirability, examples (83) and (84) illustrate two main lexical realizations used by the candidate, namely *It's important* and *It's time* followed by a *to*-infinitive clause, to express commitment to a future outcome (CO) in terms of the convenience of implementing tax cuts and senior Medicare choices.

(83) And that's why **it's important** <CO, DES> to cut taxes. **It's important** <CO, DES> to cut taxes to give — make sure the economy continues to grow. But John, **it's also important** <CO, DES> to cut taxes to make sure that the federal budgets don't become bloated and don't grow. (Bush, RPM-Corpus)

(84) They have a variety of choices to choose, so should seniors. And my point has been, as opposed to politicizing an issue like Medicare, in other words, holding it up hoping somebody bites it and try to clobber them over the head for political purposes. This year **it's time** <CO, DES> to get it done once and for all. (Bush, RGP-Corpus)

Besides the overuse of Deonticity and Desirability, Figure 6 shows the higher frequency of occurrence of the category of Inclination. Such overuse is beheld in a higher ratio 2.432‰ as opposed to the average ratio of the whole corpus, which is 1.429‰. All in all, George W. Bush's cline of preference is Deonticity, Desirability, Inclination, Imperatives and Hortatives and Direct Directives, which varies from the cline of preference of most candidates.

6.5.3. Concluding Remarks

The data discussed above allow for some conclusions regarding the individual preferences of candidates to express commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO) and highlight some similarities and differences between candidates in relation to the type of electoral debates in which they disseminate their messages and their ideology.

6.5.3.1. Concluding Remarks on the Expression of Commitment to a Future Course of Action (CI)

When it comes to the expression of CI, it is noteworthy that the preferred semantic category by all candidates, with no exceptions, is Intentionality, as compared in Table 23.

Table 23

Cline of preference of the Expression of CI

Candidates	Direct Commissives	Intentionality	Volitionality	Plans and Goals	Offers
Joe Biden	•••	•••••	••••	•••	•
Hillary Clinton	••	•••••	••••	•••	•
Barack Obama	••	•••••	••••	•••	∅
John F. Kerry	••	•••••	•••	••••	•
Democratic Average	••	•••••	••••	••••	•
Donald Trump	∅	•••••	••••	•••	∅
Mitt Romney	••	•••••	••••	•••	∅
John McCain	••	•••••	•••	••••	∅
George W. Bush	••	•••••	••••	•••	∅
Republican Average	••	•••••	••••	•••	∅
Total Average	••	•••••	••••	•••	•

Likewise, for most candidates, 6 out of 8, the second preferred category is Volitionality. It seems to be clear that most candidates prefer to express CI using lexical realizations which are classified under the category of Volitionality. It is only in the case of candidates John F. Kerry, from the Democratic Party, and John McCain, from the Republican Party, that the category of Plans & Goals is the second preferred option. For these two candidates, expressing CI in terms of thoroughly plans and intended goals was a preferable option to the use of verbs of volition. It is this feature that makes John F. Kerry's and John McCain's cline of preference different from most of the candidates in their expression of CI.

However, there are some differences between Democratic and Republican candidates in their cline of preference. The frequency of occurrence of Volitionality in Republican speeches is higher than the category of Plans and Goals. It seems that Republican candidates overall have a greater preference for expressing their commitment using utterances that include verbs of volition, such as *want* or *would like*, preceded by the first person subject, which may contribute to put the emphasis on the speakers' willingness and desire to act in a certain manner, show their personal involvement in the accomplishment of a particular policy and make public their intentions and promises in a more emotive manner. That is particularly the case of the Republican candidates Mitt Romney and George W. Bush, who have the highest ratio of Volitionality.

On the contrary, the least frequent category to express CI is Offers. Only 3 Democratic candidates, Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton and John Kerry, use this semantic category once in their speeches. Therefore, there are no examples of Offers in the Republican candidates' speeches.

Interestingly, Direct Commissives are also a rare category in terms of frequency of occurrence. However, they occur more frequently in speeches delivered by Democratic

candidates during presidential debates, as shown in Table 24. In fact, there are only 22 examples of Direct Commissives in the corpus, 17 of which occur in Democratic candidates' speeches. The data fail to reject the second null hypothesis and, therefore, it may be assumed that the credibility that may be gained by making a promise with a performative verb or, at least, the lack of ambiguity of this category, is not by far a preferred option. On the other hand, Direct Commissives become the third preferred option for candidate Kerry, who is one of the two candidates who use all the semantic categories of the taxonomy. In fact, John F. Kerry utters one third of the total number of Direct Commissives identified in the corpus, as shown in Table 24. It is one of the most relevant features of Kerry's expression of CI, besides the fact that he was also one the candidates who used more frequently Plans & Goals.

Table 24

Total of tokens of Individual Candidates Expressions of CI

Categories	Biden	Clinton	Obama	Kerry	Trump	Romney	McCain	Bush	Total
N of Words	28,435	27,746	27,568	27,958	30,515	31,756	28,093	28,779	230,850
Direct Commissives	2	4	3	8	0	1	3	1	22
Intentionality	113	107	42	140	125	122	91	93	833
Volitionality	3	32	13	9	23	53	7	41	181
Plans & Goals	2	20	12	23	1	13	9	26	106
Offers	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Total CI	121	164	70	181	149	189	110	161	1145
χ^2 & <i>p</i> -value	$\chi^2 = 120.575$ $p < 0$								

Besides candidate Kerry, it is also worth pointing out the case of Barak Obama. At first sight, the figures which are different from other candidates is the total amount of tokens expressing CI in the corpus. They amount up to almost the half of the average

number of tokens for each candidate. As explained in previous sections, the cline of preference is similar to most of the candidates, but he strongly relies on the category of Intentionality, even though the ratio of such category is a half of those of other candidates. It is noticeable that there is an underuse of all categories in Obama's messages except for the category of Direct Commissives, which is slightly higher.

Another candidate who behaves differently from other candidates linguistically speaking is Donald Trump. It is particularly remarkable that, despite the high number of tokens expressing CI, which is very close to the average of all candidates, he virtually uses only one semantic category from the taxonomy, that is, Intentionality, which contrast with the wide linguistic diversity of strategies used by candidates such Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton and John F. Kerry.

All in all, the data provided for this analysis in Table 24 reveals that there is enough evidence to reject the eighth hypothesis (H_{o8}), which claims that there are no significant differences in preferences of individual candidates regarding the expression of commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) in primary and general presidential debates. Based on the categories of Intentionality, Volitionality and Plans and Goals, which have the highest frequency of occurrence in the corpus, the chi square test of independence $\chi^2(14, N = 1,120) = 120.575, p = 0$ rejects the eighth null hypothesis (H_{o8}) since the result is significant at $p > .05$. Therefore, this test of independence approves the eighth alternative hypothesis (H_{a8}), which claims that there will be significant variations regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories among individual Democratic and Republican candidates when expressing commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) in primary and general presidential debates.

6.5.3.2. Conclusions on the Expression of Commitment to a Future Outcome (CO)

As for the expression of CO, some general conclusions can also be drawn from the data. There are more remarkable differences regarding the cline of preference of each candidate in the expression of CO than in CI. As mentioned above, there are only three candidates that use all the semantic categories in their speeches, namely Hillary Clinton and John F. Kerry, from the Democratic Party; and Mitt Romney, from the Republican Party, as shown in Table 25. However, the distribution of the number of tokens across those categories vary to a great extent from each other. In fact, their cline of preference regarding the CO is different in the three cases.

Table 25

Cline of preference of the Expression of CO

Candidates	&					
	Direct Directives	Imperatives Hortatives	Inclination	Deonticity	Desirability	Proposals
Joe Biden	∅	•••••	∅	••••••	••••	∅
Hillary Clinton	••	•••••	•••••	••••••	•••••	•
Barack Obama	∅	∅	••••	••••••	•••••	∅
John F. Kerry	••••	•••	•	••••••	•••••	••
Democratic Average	••	••••	•••	••••••	•••••	•
Donald Trump	∅	•••••	••••	••••••	•••	∅
Mitt Romney	•	••••	•••	••••••	•••••	••
John McCain	∅	•••••	•••	••••••	••••	∅
George W. Bush	••	•••	••••	••••••	•••••	∅
Republican Average	••	••••	•••	••••••	•••••	••
Total Average	••	••••	•••	••••••	•••••	•

On the other hand, candidates who use a limited number of semantic categories are Joe Biden and Barak Obama, from the Democratic Party. The figures show that Biden

and Obama mainly rely on Intentionality, and they only have a few examples of the categories of Desirability and Imperatives and Hortatives in the case of Biden and Desirability and Inclination in the case of Obama. They clearly trust in the conventionalized forms to make promises, which typically make use of modal and semi-modal verbs, such as *will*, *going to*, *would*, along with present continuous forms with a future meaning.

As in the case of CI, there is a preferred category for all the candidates that embody the corpus, namely Deonticity. It is possible to assume that most candidates prefer to express CO by means of deontic expressions, such as *we have to*, *we need to*, *we should*, *we ought to*, and the like. Explaining the actions to be taken in the future in terms of necessity or obligation seem to be an appealing persuasive category for presidential candidates when expressing CO. There is no consensus in the case of the second preferred category since 4 out of 8 candidates use Desirability as the second most frequent category, which is followed by the category of Deonticity, while candidates like Joe Biden, Donald Trump and John McCain prefer to use Imperatives and Hortatives as the second preferred category.

The use of Imperatives and Hortatives as one of the preferred options for some candidates is a remarkable aspect of the expression of CO since most of them clearly avoid expressing themselves extremely straightforward when encouraging the audience to take action. That may be also the reason why they disprefer the category of Direct Directives, whose frequency of occurrence is rather low except for John F. Kerry. For example, although candidate Biden do not use Direct Directives in his speeches, there is an overuse of the category of Imperatives and Hortatives in relation to the general average ratio. It is through this category that candidate Biden attempts to move audiences to take action to achieve a particular outcome, even though this linguistic strategy is almost as

much straightforward as Direct Directives. Similarly, Inclination is also a common strategy used to persuade audiences to act. As an average, it is the fourth most common strategy used in the corpus, although some candidates, like Hillary Clinton, Barak Obama, Donald Trump and John McCain use it as the third preferred option.

Finally, the least frequent category occurring in the corpus is Proposals. Only three candidates, Hillary Clinton, John F. Kerry and Mitt Romney use them in their speeches. In fact, the number of tokens of the category of Proposals which has been identified in the corpus is extremely low in comparison with the total number of tokens expressing CO, as shown in Table 26.

Table 26

Total of tokens of Individual Candidates Expressions of CO

Categories	Biden	Clinton	Obama	Kerry	Trump	Romney	McCain	Bush	Total Categories
N of Words	28,435	27,746	27,568	27,958	30,515	31,756	28,093	28,779	230,850
Direct Directives	0	2	0	7	0	1	0	2	12
Imperatives & Hortatives	21	9	0	5	4	10	15	4	68
Inclination	0	9	3	2	3	8	1	7	33
Deonticity	132	146	155	87	126	103	179	220	1148
Desirability	7	9	16	17	2	22	6	35	114
Proposals	0	1	0	4	0	3	0	0	8
Total CO	160	176	174	122	135	147	201	268	1383
χ^2 & p-value	$\chi^2 = 87.773$ p < 0								

To recap, the ninth null hypothesis (H₀9) claimed that there are no significant variations regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories among individual Democratic and Republican candidates when expressing commitment to future

outcome (CO) in primary and general presidential debates. Based on the categories of Imperatives and Hortatives, Deonticity and Desirability, which have the highest frequency of occurrence in the corpus, the chi square test of independence $X^2(14, N = 1,330) = 87.773$, $p = 0$ rejects the ninth null hypothesis (H_{09}) since the result is significant at $p > .05$. Consequently, this test of independence supports the ninth alternative hypothesis (H_{a9}), which claims that there will be significant variations regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories among individual Democratic and Republican candidates when expressing commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and general presidential debates.

Although Tables 25 and 26 show that there are differences in the candidates' preference for using some of the semantic categories under the expression of CO more frequently than others, there are also some similarities that have been also identified. For instance, Deonticity is the preferred option to express CO and Direct Directives and Proposals are characterised by an outstanding low frequency of occurrence since they are rarely used by few candidates. It can be inferred from the data that most candidates like to put the emphasis on the need or convenience of accomplishing the designated action when expressing CO and avoid the use more straightforward categories such as Direct Directives, Imperative and Hortative forms and Inclination to encourage the audience to take action. However, despite these general tendencies, there are some noteworthy differences on this matter. For example, candidate John F. Kerry makes a greater use of Direct Directives in his speeches to mobilise the audience to act in contrast with the rest of candidates. However, if we sum the number of tokens of the categories of Direct Directives, Imperatives and Hortatives and Inclination, John Biden and Hillary Clinton, both from the Democratic Party, are the candidates who encourage the audience more frequently to take action. On the contrary, candidates Barak Obama, from the Democratic

Party, and Donald Trump, from the Republican Party, are more reluctant to use mobilisation strategies through the above-mentioned categories. In the case of Barack Obama, there are only three examples of the category of Inclination and none of Direct Directives and Imperatives and Hortatives. However, he is one of the candidates who uses more frequently legitimisation strategies to argue on the necessity or obligations of taking action regarding certain issues in the speeches analysed. The only candidate who uses more frequently the category of Deonticity is George W. Bush. Nevertheless, if the figures displayed in Table 26 are analysed in terms of ideology, the ratio of the categories typically used to encourage the electorate to act is rather similar in the speeches delivered by candidates from the Democratic and Republican parties, even though it seems that it is the Democratic party that relies slightly more often on these categories. However, it is a constant tendency in the data obtained from the research that all candidates use more often the categories of Deonticity and Desirability over Direct Directives, Imperatives and Hortatives and Inclination.

7. CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the key findings and conclusions that have been drawn from the analysis of the data obtained regarding the expression of commitment in primary and general presidential debates in light of the research aims, and the research questions and hypotheses formulated in the thesis. Moreover, it discusses the main contributions of this dissertation, as well as the limitations of the study, along with the challenges that have been faced throughout the whole research process. Finally, it presents some recommendations for future research; it suggests some areas that may require further research to expand the findings of this research and to confirm some tentative conclusions drawn from this thesis dissertation.

7.1. Key Findings and Concluding Remarks

The present thesis has discussed the expression of commitment of political candidates from the Democratic and Republican parties in US primaries and presidential debates. Furthermore, it has also tackled the most common linguistic strategies that presidential candidates use to provide citizens with valuable information about the plans and intentions of the corresponding presidential candidates that will guide their future decisions if elected. Electoral debates are critical for candidates running for nomination or the presidential office since they have numerous opportunities to gain the support of the electorate by making promises and expressing their intentions. Moreover, candidates can also legitimise their positioning on a wide range of issues and policies they are willing to implement, some of which may result controversial because of the diversity of the exiting views on those matters or because of the polarisation of some part of the electorate. Likewise, debates are a unique opportunity for politicians to mobilise the

electorate and invite them to act. These messages disseminated during primary and presidential debates may be particularly useful for voters who are still undecided about the candidacy they will be supporting. In turn, candidates' expressions of commitment in front of mass audiences may contribute to make politicians accountable for their words if they are eventually elected.

The expression of commitment has been addressed from a two-fold distinction, namely the commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO), which have been discussed in detail throughout the chapter of results. The act of promising often occurs along with legitimization strategies which explain or justify the candidates' goals and mobilisation strategies that encourage the audience to take action.

The first hypothesis concerns the candidates' preferences to express their commitment during electoral debates, that is, the use of expressions of commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) or expressions of commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and in general presidential debates. The findings obtained from this research allow us to conclude whether candidates prefer to put the focus on letting audiences know to what plans of actions and goals they are committing or whether they prefer to refer to future outcomes by putting the emphasis on the need or convenience of carrying out a particular action to achieve certain outcome. This use of persuasion may impel audiences to support the candidacy of a given candidate.

The second and third hypotheses try to provide some solid conclusions regarding the use of performative verbs, such as *promise*, *pledge*, *guarantee* or *commit*, to express their promises in the case of the expression of CI, and the use of verbs such as *ask* or *urge* in the expression of CO. The data clearly prove that candidates reduce the use of performative verbs or expressions to express their CI, if any, even though that category *a*

priori explicitly emphasizes their willingness to carry out the designated event and, as a result, they may contribute to the speaker's projection as reliable candidates in front of their audiences. In fact, only 1.92% of the sum of all the tokens in the corpus express this type of commitment with performative verbs. Similarly, when it comes to the expression of CO, only 0.87% of those expressions is accomplished with a performative verb. Few examples of the use of performative verbs, such *ask* or *urge*, have been found in the corpus. There is a clear preference for conventionalised ways of promising and less direct strategies to explain candidates' plans of actions and goals. As a matter of fact, the data reveals that politicians have some preference for the use of any of the lexical realizations under Intentionality, when committing themselves to implement certain policies in electoral debates, and for Deonticity, when legitimising their plans of action or persuading the electorate to take action to achieve a particular outcome.

Overall, there are some differences in the frequency of occurrence of the expression of CI and CO in primary and presidential debates. By examining the ratio of occurrence, the log-likelihood test and percentage of differentiation, the results have revealed that the expression of CI is less frequent than the expression of CO in the corpus. However, it is noteworthy to point out that the frequency of occurrence of the expressions of CI is 25% less frequent than the expressions of CO in the Republican General Presidential Corpus (RGP-Corpus). Therefore, Republican candidates put a greater focus on the use of legitimisation and mobilisation strategies in general presidential debates than in primary debates. Likewise, their frequency of occurrence is higher in Republican candidates than in democratic candidates in both types of commitment.

Interestingly, the data show that there is a larger difference in the frequency of occurrence between CI and CO in general presidential debates than in primary debates. In fact, while the ratio of CI observed in primary and presidential debates is relatively the

same, the frequency of occurrence of the expression of CO between these two types of debates is more significant. In terms of ideological slant, on the other hand, there is a slightly difference between the frequency of occurrence of the expression of CI in speeches delivered by Democratic candidates and the Republican candidates, whose ratio is higher in the case of the Republican candidates. That difference between both parties is even larger when it comes to the expression of CO.

Even though there is an interaction between these two types of expressions of commitment in electoral debates, it can be concluded that presidential candidates express CO more often, regardless of their political ideology and the type of debate in which they are partaking, than CI in general terms. The data show that candidates devote a greater amount of time to justifying and legitimising their decisions and future course of action than to express their intentions, plans of actions and commitment. It would be interesting to make further research on the reason that may be found behind this wide-spread preference.

Since presidential candidates are also aware of the repercussion of the messages they deliver during electoral campaigns, primary debates and presidential debates are exceptional opportunities to reach the electorate and gain their support. In addition, politicians often face the danger of a bad reputation regarding their trustworthiness and credibility because of their use of language. These results prove the interest candidates have in making themselves understood and explain their ideological positioning and intended policies they want to implement to the electorate. Furthermore, the subcategories they use when expressing commitment may also contribute to promoting the credibility they need to gain from the electorate. As discussed in the hypotheses of this thesis, using the ambiguous and vague language may prevent voters from getting to know if candidates are committing themselves to follow a course of action or they are simply expressing their

intentions or preferences. For that reason, this thesis also aimed at determining how frequently candidates express their commitment overtly despite the accountability that it may bring about by using performative verbs. The second and third hypotheses try to provide some solid conclusions regarding the use of performative verbs, such as *promise*, *pledge*, *guarantee* or *commit*, to express their promises in the case of CI, and the use of verbs such as *ask* or *urge* in the expression of CO.

Likewise, it was a second objective of this thesis to find out whether there is any relationship between the expression of commitment and the type of debate in which those expressions occurred. Chapter 2 has provided some political contextualisation of this electoral debates along with some features that make primary and general presidential debates unique and different in terms of the number of candidates who were partaking in the debate, the extent to which they are known by the audience, the allotted time for their speeches and type of audiences who typically followed each type of debate. Candidates may feel impelled to use less direct strategies to express commitment when dealing with certain issues about which there may be polarized positions in general presidential debates, in which audiences are more heterogenous.

The fourth and fifth hypotheses focused on the preferred semantic categories to express commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) or commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and general presidential debates. The findings show that primary and general presidential debates do not necessarily have an impact on the candidates' preferences for certain semantic categories. In fact, Intentionality is by far the preferred semantic category used by the candidates both in primary and general presidential debates. However, while Intentionality is the most frequently category occurring in both types of debates, the ratios slightly increase in categories other than Intentionality in primary debates. That means that candidates use a wider range of

linguistic strategies to express CI in primaries debates. All in all, the chi square test of independence fails to reject the fourth null hypothesis and, consequently, it can be assumed that primary and general presidential debates do not necessarily have an impact on the candidates' preferences to express CI.

Concerning the expression of CO, some differences can also be observed regarding the frequency of occurrence of some of its semantic categories, such as Direct Directives, Desirability or Proposals. An example of those differences was clearly illustrated in the category of Direct Directives, which occur more frequently in general presidential debates than in primary debates. On the contrary, there is an underuse of the category of Deonticity in primary debates as opposed to general presidential debates. In general, however, candidates show certain preference for the use of strategies of Deonticity when expressing CO. The chi square test of independence disapproves the fifth null hypothesis, which assumes that there are no significant differences in the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing CO and the type of debates in which they occur. Interestingly, there are no significant differences in the case of the expression CI whereas there are statistically significant differences in the frequency of occurrence of the expression CO with respect to the type of debate where they occur. The factors explained above that make these two types of debates unique and diverse seem to have an impact on the expression of CO according to the data observed in this research. Nevertheless, these results show that there is a need for further research on this distinction with a larger corpus to confirm whether these tendencies are confirmed.

A similar process was carried out regarding the possible relationship between the expression of commitment and the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories expressing CI and CO in relation to ideological position of the candidates who belong to the Democratic Party versus the Republican Party, as posited in hypotheses six and seven.

The data obtained show that candidates from both parties prefer the category of Intentionality to express CI. However, there are some differences regarding the categories of Volitionality and Plans and Goals. Although the predominant use of Intentionality shows that both parties rely strongly on conventionalized expressions of commitment when making their electoral promises or commitments, the overuse of Volitionality identified in Republican speeches reveal a higher use of ‘affectivity processes’ when those candidates express CI. Nevertheless, the frequency of occurrence of Direct Commissives in speeches delivered by Democratic candidates is higher than in those delivered by Republican candidates, even if the use of this category is residual in both cases. On the whole, the chi square test of independence disproves the sixth null hypothesis and, consequently, it is assumed that there is a statistically significant relation between the expression of CI and the ideology of the candidates.

On the contrary, the seventh null hypothesis is supported by the data, that is, there is no evidence that there is a significant relation between the expression of CO and the candidate’s ideology. Again, although the preferred semantic category is Deonticity for both political parties, Democrats use more frequently the categories of Direct Directives, Imperatives and Hortatives and Proposals to express CO while Republicans use more frequently lexical realizations which belong to the category of Desirability. Therefore, Democrats encourage the audience to act more frequently than Republican candidates do, while the latter tend to legitimise their action plans by putting the focus on the convenience of accomplishing certain outcomes more often than Democratic candidates do.

Finally, some conclusions have been also drawn from this research regarding the individual preferences of each candidate under study to express commitment during primary and presidential debates. Candidates who partake in electoral debates usually

craft the messages they want to deliver very carefully since they are aware that those messages will reach mass audiences. Overall, there are only three candidates who use all the semantic categories identified in the taxonomy to express CI, namely Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton and John F. Kerry. On the contrary, Donald Trump is the candidate who uses a more restricted number of categories when expressing this type of commitment. Although all candidates prefer to use Intentionality to express CI during presidential debates, some differences are observed in the rest of semantic categories. While most candidates use Volitionality as the second semantic category more frequent in the corpus, which shows the speaker's willingness and desire to carry out the designated action, some of them prefer to express their commitment as a thoroughly planned or an intended goal. Consequently, there is evidence to claim that there are some differences in the cline of preference of individual candidates when expressing CI.

As for the expression of CO, there are only three candidates who use all the semantic categories listed in the taxonomy, that is, Hillary Clinton, John F. Kerry and Mitt Romney. On the other hand, the cases of Joe Biden and Barack Obama are remarkable because of the limited number of categories occurring in their speeches to express CO. Despite these differences, all the candidates predominantly use the same semantic category, namely, Deonticity. That preference reveals that a common strategy to persuade the audience to support their candidacy consists of pointing out the need for certain policies, changes and decisions. However, the cline of preference regarding the rest of categories varies from candidate to candidate. Half of the candidates use Desirability as the second most common semantic category while the other half prefer to use Imperatives and Hortatives to encourage the audience to act. Finally, there is another parallelism between the expression of CI and CO. While Offers is the least common category to express CI, the category of Proposals is the least frequent in the case of the

expression of CO. These categories are clearly dispreferred by all candidates when expressing their commitment.

Overall, the differences in the cline of preference of some candidates and the chi square test of independence reject the eighth and ninth null hypotheses. Therefore, the alternative hypotheses are adopted, that is to say, that there will be significant variations regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories among individual Democratic and Republican candidates when expressing commitment to the speaker's future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and general presidential debates.

To sum up, this thesis has shown that expressions of CI are less frequent than the occurrence of expressions of CO in the corpus compiled for this research. Although debates provide candidates with numerous opportunities to make “policy commitments” in front of mass audiences (Benoit, 2014), the data proves that the number of tokens which are typically associated with persuasive strategies of legitimization and mobilization are higher than those expressing the speaker's commitment to act in a certain manner both in primary and general presidential debates. The candidates that have been studied in this thesis often use legitimizing strategies which may contribute to voters' construction of reality and their ideological positioning (Chilton, 2004; Marín-Arrese, 2021) and avoid using strategies of mobilization, typically expressed by the categories of Direct Directives, Imperatives and Hortatives and Inclination, which occur more frequently than the categories expressing commitment to act in a particular manner if elected. However, it has also revealed some differences between the frequency of occurrence of the corresponding semantic sub-categories identified under the macro-categories of CO. As discussed in the previous section, candidate John F. Kerry makes a greater use of Direct Directives in his speeches to mobilise the audience to act in contrast with the rest of

candidates. Likewise, the sum of the number of tokens identified under the categories of Direct Directives, Imperatives and Hortatives and Inclination reveals that John Biden and Hillary Clinton, both from the Democratic Party, are the candidates who encourage the audience more frequently to act. These are individual tendencies which distance themselves from the main trends, which clearly avoid the use of Direct Directives, Hortatives and Imperatives and Inclination. Nevertheless, candidates Barak Obama and Donald Trump, who belong to different political parties, are more reluctant to use mobilisation strategies through the above-mentioned categories.

It seems to be a constant tendency across the different types of debates or ideologies that candidates pay great attention to expressing the convenience or necessity of implementing their policies. Although the data has shown that an important part of their speeches is devoted to explaining what they are willing to do if elected, it seems that primaries and general presidential debates are important occasions to justify candidates' choices in terms of policies and ideological positioning on different issues and they provide a suitable opportunity to legitimise their plans of actions. It can be inferred from the data that most candidates like to put the emphasis on the need or convenience of accomplishing the designated action when expressing CO and avoid the use of more straightforward categories such as Direct Directives, Imperative and Hortative forms and Inclination to encourage the audience to take action, with few exceptions which have been discussed above. Moreover, some individual tendencies towards the overuse and underuse of some categories expressing CI and CO have been also discussed in this section. It has been the intention of this thesis to shed some light on the way political candidates express their commitment in US primary and presidential debates by paying attention to their trends and preferences they have in relation to the use of certain semantic categories over others. Nevertheless, it may be assumed from these results that further

research on this area is required to consolidate the findings exposed in this thesis and expand the understanding of the linguistic strategies commonly used by political candidates to gain the electorate's support in relevant political events like the primary and presidential debates. The following section will discuss in further detail the contributions and limitations of this research.

7.2. Contributions and Limitations of the Research

This thesis has delved into the different linguistic strategies used by Democratic and Republican candidates to express commitment in primary and general presidential debates. It is a relatively large corpus containing speeches delivered during these types of presidential debates which has allowed us to identify the main semantic categories used by the candidates under study and the occurrence of frequency of each category. One of the contributions of this thesis consists of the development of a taxonomy on the expression of commitment with a two-fold distinction, that is, commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO). Furthermore, a wide number of sub-categories under the expressions of CI and CO has been provided, drawing on Marín-Arrese's (2011, 2021, 2023) categories for effective stance. This taxonomy attempts to be a contribution to further understanding the linguistic strategies that presidential candidates use during the speeches delivered in primary and presidential debates, and how frequently candidates commit themselves to implement certain policies or to act in a particular manner, on the one hand, and how often they use legitimisation and mobilising strategies in primary and presidential debates, on the other.

Relevant findings have been discussed in the chapter of Results of this thesis concerning the evidence provided by the data obtained from this research to determine whether there are significant variations in the expression of commitment in relation to the

type of debate in which candidates deliver their speeches, namely, primary versus presidential debates; and the ideological slant of speakers representing the Democratic or Republican parties. Moreover, this dissertation also provides an extensive discussion of individual features which make candidates unique in their rhetorical style when expressing commitment as well as those preferences which are common to the candidates under study. Moreover, this thesis also attempts to contribute to further understanding the persuasive linguistic strategies used by candidates running for the nomination of their corresponding parties in primary debates, which have not been as widely discussed as general presidential debates in the literature.

However, the present thesis dissertation has some limitations concerning the scope of the analysis and the size of the corpus compiled. The notion of *commitment* is a wide notion which may entail analyses from different perspectives. The aim of this thesis was to design a taxonomy for the expression of commitment using a corpus-based approach from a stance perspective. Although the corpus is large enough as to be used to draw trustworthy conclusions, there are some trends regarding the expression of commitment in electoral debates and some idiosyncrasy of the candidates under analysis that may require a wider number of speeches to confirm those trends in the expression of CI and CO. Moreover, including a higher number of candidates may be useful to check if the same results are obtained from the chi square test are obtained again for the null hypothesis 4-7 (H_{04} - H_{07}).

Regarding the eighth and ninth null hypotheses (H_{08} and H_{09}), which claim that there are no significant variations regarding the frequency of occurrence of the semantic categories among individual Democratic and Republican candidates when expressing commitment to speaker's future course of action (CI) and commitment to a future outcome (CO) in primary and general presidential debates, the chi square test of

independence has been calculated from the semantic categories of Intentionality, Volitionality and Plans and Goals for the expression of CI; and Imperatives and Hortatives, Deonticity and Desirability for the expression of CO, which have the highest frequency of occurrence in the corpus. In this case, it was not possible to include the categories of Direct Commissives and Offers in the expression of CI, on the one hand, and Direct Directives, Inclination and Proposals in the expression of CO, on the other, because the chi square test of independence requires that expected frequencies should be at least 5 for the majority 80% of the cells (see Appendix H). Although expected frequencies less than 5 are acceptable if Yates' correction is applied, such correction can only be done with 2x2 contingency tables, which is not the case of the contingency tables under discussion. Therefore, it is assumed that the chi square test with all categories may work if a larger corpus is used to avoid having expected frequencies lower than 5 for the majority 80%.

7.3. Plans for Future Research

The possibilities of further research in the expression of commitment in presidential debates are numerous. This thesis has focused on the candidate's preference for expressing CO over CI, and on the correlation between the expression of commitment and the type of electoral debate in which they occur and the candidates' ideology. However, one question that may arise from the results obtained in this thesis is whether the use of a wider range of semantic categories and a higher number of expressions of commitment conveyed during debates on the part of the candidates may have an impact on the results of the elections. For example, while Clinton uses more semantic categories to express her commitment to a future action and higher number of expressions of commitment in primary debates, which ended up winning the Democratic nomination,

those figures in terms of quantity and diversity decreases in general presidential debates. The findings of this thesis cannot shed light on any possible correlation between the expression of commitment and the electoral results of each candidate, which may deserve some attention.

On the other hand, politicians use numerous political and linguistic strategies to confront the generally perceived lack of credibility of politicians. Candidates may prefer to emphasize their role of conceptualizers when expressing their commitment to the speaker's future course of action. However, they may decide to share responsibility, in terms of (inter)subjectivity, when dealing with controversial issues or when they want to position themselves as part of an institution rather than individuals. Thus, this research may be completed with a study concerning the degree of salience and explicitness of the role of the speaker as the conceptualizer of the designated action, that is, to determine whether or not candidates prefer to represent themselves as the explicit or implicit source of conceptualization of the designated event (Marín-Arrese, 2011, 2021).

Regarding the corpus-based categories identified in the proposed taxonomy of the expression of commitment, it may be convenient to find out if those categories are also associated and interpreted as expressions of commitment by potential voters from different educational backgrounds. For this purpose, it may be useful to design and distribute a survey with examples of each semantic category to express commitment that has been found in the corpus. Several excerpts from the corpus could be selected with examples of each category that composes the taxonomy so that subjects could choose about three utterances that they typically perceived as expressions of commitment among the given excerpts. In this way, we could know which are the semantic categories which are more closely associated each type of commitment.

On the other hand, one more aspect which could be worth researching is related to the way politicians express their commitment when dealing with controversial issues, which may vary from primary to presidential debates. Policies that are not considered to be controversial in the primaries may be perceived as such in presidential elections since there is a tendency to move to the centre of the ideological spectrum in the latter ones. Politicians usually use polls to identify the main concerns of the electorate and to assess the extent to which they may support certain policies (Jacobs, Shapiro, 2005). The heterogeneity of voters in presidential campaigns may impel candidates to consider the expectations of most part of the electorate regarding certain policies and, as a result, prioritize certain semantic categories over others to express their commitment. Therefore, a selection of opinion polls regarding the issues and topics that the electorate considered to be important at the time of the electoral campaigns could be analysed to find out whether this parameter has an impact on the candidates' choice to express commitment during electoral debates.

Likewise, finding out whether there is a correlation between issues expressed through CI and CO could be interesting to understand the persuasive strategies used by politicians. The main purpose of this study would be to know if there are certain issues which are expressed by means of both macro-categories, CI and CO, and therefore determine to what extent both expressions of commitment interplay.

More specifically, another possible area of future research also concerns the issues tackled in presidential debates by presidential candidates. Scholars such as Jamieson (1992) have observed in the last decades some changes in the messages delivered in political campaigns, such as a less clear positioning with regards to controversial issues, the shortening of the length of the speech which has result in a decline of reasoned arguments, a lower level of specificity when addressing the questions, as well as the

transformation of speeches as a result of candidate's ability "to act, speak, and think in television terms" (p. 204). The present thesis has only analysed the speeches of individuals who have presented their candidacy for their nomination in primaries elections for their corresponding parties and for the US presidency in general presidential elections from 2000 up to nowadays. Addressing the various strategies to express commitment by presidential candidates and analyse their frequency of occurrence with regards some decades ago could provide a valuable picture on how the expression of commitment concerning controversial issues addressed in electoral debates have evolved up to nowadays. The present research may provide a starting point for a wider analysis of the expression of commitment from a diachronic perspective.

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APPENDIX A. Democratic Primary Debates Compiled in the Corpus

Electoral Elections	Candidates	Date
2020	Joe Biden	29 th September 2020
2020	Joe Biden	25 th February 2020
2020	Joe Biden	19 th February 2020
2016	Hillary Clinton	14 th April 2016
2016	Hillary Clinton	6 th March 2016
2008	Barack Obama	16 th April 2008
2008	Barack Obama	26 th February 2008
2004	John Kerry	29 th January 2004
2004	John Kerry	22 nd January 2004
2004	John Kerry	4 th January 2004
2004	John Kerry	9 th October 2003
2004	John Kerry	9 th September 2003
2004	John Kerry	26 th February 2003

APPENDIX B. Republican Primary Debates Compiled in the Corpus

Electoral elections	Candidates	Date
2016	Donald Trump	10 th March 2016
2016	Donald Trump	3 rd March 2016
2016	Donald Trump	10 th November 2015
2016	Donald Trump	28 th October 2015
2012	Mitt Romney	22 nd February 2012
2012	Mitt Romney	26 th January 2012
2012	Mitt Romney	10 th December 2011
2012	Mitt Romney	12 th September 2011
2008	John McCain	15 th May 2008
2008	John McCain	30 th January 2008
2008	John McCain	24 th January 2008
2008	John McCain	6 th January 2008
2008	John McCain	12 th December 2007
2008	John McCain	5 th September 2007
2008	John McCain	5 th August 2007
2000	George W. Bush	2 nd March 2000
2000	George W. Bush	15 th February 2000
2000	George W. Bush	26 th January 2000
2000	George W. Bush	15 th January 2000
2000	George W. Bush	2 nd December 1999

APPENDIX C. General Presidential Debates Compiled in the Corpus

Electoral	Candidates	Date
2020	Joe Biden	22 nd October 2020
2020	Joe Biden	29 th September 2020
2016	Hillary Clinton & Donald Trump	19 th October 2020
2016	Hillary Clinton & Donald Trump	26 th September 2016
2012	Mitt Romney	22 nd October 2012
2012	Mitt Romney	3 rd October 2012
2008	Barack Obama	26 th September 2008
2008	Barack Obama & John McCain	7 th October 2008
2008	John McCain	15 th October 2008
2004	John F. Kerry	8 th October 2004
2004	John F. Kerry	13 th October 2004
2000	George W. Bush	3 rd October 2000
2000	George W. Bush	11 th October 2000

**APPENDIX D. Tables on Democratic Candidates Expressions of Commitment to
Speaker's Future Course of Action (CI)**

(i) Joe Biden's Expression of CI

Table 27

Joe Biden's Expression of CI in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates ζ

Categories	Primaries 14,625 words		General 13,810 words		Total 28,435 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	2	1.368	0	0.000	2	0.703	LL= +2.66 -
Intentionality	58	39.658	55	39.826	113	39.740	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = -0.42
Volitionality	3	2.051	0	0.000	3	1.055	LL= +3.99 -
Plans & Goals	2	1.368	0	0.000	2	0.703	LL= +2.66 -
Offers	0	0.000	1	0.724	1	0.352	LL= -1.44 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CI	65	44.444	56	40.550	121	42.553	LL= +0.25 %DIFF = +9.60

Table 28

Joe Biden's Expression of CI vs. Other Candidates'

Categories	Joe Biden 28,435 words		Democrats 111,707 words		Biden vs. Democrats	All Candidates 230,850 words		Biden vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	2	0.703	17	1.522	LL= -1.30 %DIFF = -53.78	22	0.953	LL= -0.18 %DIFF = -26.20
Intentionality	113	39.740	402	35.987	LL= +0.85 %DIFF = +10.43	833	36.084	LL= +0.90 %DIFF = +10.13
Volitionality	3	1.055	57	5.103	LL= -11.60 %DIFF = -79.32	181	7.841	LL= -24.66 %DIFF = -86.54
Plans & Goals	2	0.703	57	5.103	LL= -14.76 %DIFF = -86.22	106	4.592	LL= -13.55 %DIFF = -84.68
Offers	1	0.352	3	0.269	LL= +0.05 %DIFF = +30.95	3	0.130	LL= +0.62 %DIFF = +170.62
Total CI	121	42.553	536	47.983	LL= -1.46 %DIFF = -11.32	1145	49.599	LL= -2.68 %DIFF = -14.21

(ii) Hillary Clinton's Expression of CI

Table 29*Hillary Clinton's Expression of CI in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 14,518 words		General 13,228 words		Total 27,746 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	4	2.755	0	0.000	4	1.442	LL= +5.18
Intentionality	67	46.150	40	30.239	107	38.564	LL= +4.61 %DIFF = +52.62
Volitionality	18	12.398	14	10.584	32	11.533	LL= +0.20 %DIFF = +17.15
Plans & Goals	12	8.266	8	6.048	20	7.208	LL= +0.48 %DIFF = +36.67
Offers	1	0.689	0	0.000	1	0.360	LL= +1.30
Total CI	102	70.258	62	46.870	164	59.108	LL= +6.49 %DIFF = +49.90

Table 30*Hillary Clinton's Expression of CI vs. Other Candidates'*

Categories	Hillary Clinton 27,746 words		Democrats 111,707 words		Clinton vs. Democrats	All Candidates 230,850 words		Clinton vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	4	1.442	17	1.522	LL= -0.01 %DIFF = -5.27	22	0.953	LL= +0.53 %DIFF = +51.27
Intentionality	107	38.564	402	35.987	LL= +0.40 %DIFF = -7.16	833	36.084	LL= +0.41 %DIFF = +6.87
Volitionality	32	11.533	57	5.103	LL= +12.37 %DIFF = +126.02	181	7.841	LL= +3.70 %DIFF = +47.10
Plans & Goals	20	7.208	57	5.103	LL= +1.67 %DIFF = +41.27	106	4.592	LL= +3.08 %DIFF = +56.98
Offers	1	0.360	3	0.269	LL= +0.06 %DIFF = +34.20	3	0.130	LL= +0.65 %DIFF = +177.34
Total CI	164	59.108	536	47.983	LL= +5.26 %DIFF = +23.19	1145	49.599	LL= +91.66 %DIFF = +154.57

(iii) Barak Obama's Expression of CI

Table 31*Barak Obama's Expression of CI in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 13,165 words		General 14,403 words		Total 27,568 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	1	0.760	2	1.389	3	1.088	LL= -0.26 %DIFF = -45.30
Intentionality	23	17.470	19	13.192	42	15.235	LL= +0.83 %DIFF = +32.44
Volitionality	4	3.038	9	6.249	13	4.716	LL= -1.55 %DIFF = -51.38
Plans & Goals	9	6.836	3	2.083	12	4.353	LL= +3.70 %DIFF = +228.21
Offers	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Total CI	37	28.105	33	22.912	70	25.392	LL= +0.73 %DIFF = +22.66

Table 32*Barak Obama's Expression of CI vs. Other Candidates'*

Categories	Barak Obama 27,568 words		Democrats 111,707 words		Obama vs. Democrats	All Candidates 230,850 words		Obama vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	3	1.088	17	1.522	LL= -0.31 %DIFF = -28.49	22	0.953	LL= +0.04 %DIFF = +14.19
Intentionality	42	15.235	402	35.987	LL= -35.42 %DIFF = -57.67	833	36.084	LL= -38.91 %DIFF = -57.78
Volitionality	13	4.716	57	5.103	LL= -0.07 %DIFF = -7.58	181	7.841	LL= -3.64 %DIFF = -39.86
Plans & Goals	12	4.353	57	5.103	LL= -0.26 %DIFF = -14.69	106	4.592	LL= -0.03 %DIFF = -5.20
Offers	0	0.000	3	0.269	LL= -1.32 %DIFF = -100.00	3	0.130	LL= -0.68 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CI	70	25.392	536	47.983	LL= -29.47 %DIFF = -47.08	1145	49.599	LL= -36.20 %DIFF = -48.81

(iv) John F. Kerry's Expression of CI

Table 33*John F. Kerry's Expression of CI in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 13,073 words		General 14,885 words		Total 27,958 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	1	0.765	7	4.703	8	2.861	LL= -4.32 %DIFF = -83.73
Intentionality	47	35.952	93	62.479	140	50.075	LL= -10.02 %DIFF = -42.46
Volitionality	4	3.060	5	3.359	9	3.219	LL= -0.02 %DIFF = -8.91
Plans & Goals	7	5.355	16	14.749	23	8.227	LL= -2.55 %DIFF = -50.19
Offers	1	0.765	0	0.000	1	0.358	LL= +1.52 -
Total CI	60	45.896	121	81.290	181	64.740	LL= -13.81 %DIFF = -43.54

Table 34*John F. Kerry's Expression of CI vs. Other Candidates'*

Categories	John F. Kerry 27,958 words		Democrats 111,707 words		Kerry vs. Democrats	All Candidates 230,850 words		Kerry vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	8	2.861	17	1.522	LL= +1.99 %DIFF = +88.02	22	0.953	LL= +5.84 %DIFF = +200.26
Intentionality	140	50.075	402	35.987	LL= +10.70 %DIFF = +39.15	833	36.084	LL= +11.90 %DIFF = +38.77
Volitionality	9	3.219	57	5.103	LL= -1.84 %DIFF = -36.91	181	7.841	LL= -8.98 %DIFF = -58.94
Plans & Goals	23	8.227	57	5.103	LL= +3.47 %DIFF = +61.22	106	4.592	LL= +5.65 %DIFF = +79.16
Offers	1	0.358	3	0.269	LL= +0.06 %DIFF = +33.18	3	0.130	LL= +0.64 %DIFF = +175.23
Total CI	181	64.740	536	47.983	LL= +11.53 %DIFF = +34.92	1145	49.599	LL= +10.40 %DIFF = +30.53

**APPENDIX E. Tables on Republican Candidates Expressions of Commitment to
Speaker's Future Course of Action (CI)**

(i) Donald Trump's Expression of CI

Table 35

Donald Trump's Expression of CI in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates

Categories	Primaries 15,350 words		General 15,165 words		Total 30,515 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Intentionality	71	46.254	54	35.608	125	40.963	LL= +2.12 %DIFF = +29.90
Volitionality	14	9.121	9	5.935	23	7.537	LL= +1.04 %DIFF = +53.68
Plans & Goals	1	0.652	0	0.000	1	0.328	LL= +1.37 -
Offers	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0'.00
Total CI	86	45.896	63	41.543	149	48.828	LL= +3.29 %DIFF = +34.86

Table 36

Donald Trump's Expression of CI vs. Other Candidates'

Categories	Donald Trump 30,515 words		Republicans 119,143 words		Trump vs. Republicans	All Candidates 230,850 words		Trump vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	0	0.000	5	0.420	LL= -2.28 %DIFF = -100.00	22	0.953	LL= -5.46 %DIFF = -100.00
Intentionality	125	40.963	431	36.175	LL= +1.46 %DIFF = +13.24	833	36.084	LL= +1.69 %DIFF = +13.52
Volitionality	23	7.537	124	10.408	LL= -2.17 %DIFF = -27.58	181	7.841	LL= +2.06 %DIFF = -40.32
Plans & Goals	1	0.328	49	4.113	LL= -15.72 %DIFF = -92.03	106	4.592	LL= -19.28 %DIFF = -92.86
Offers	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00	3	0.130	LL= -0.74 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CI	149	48.828	609	51.115	LL= -0.25 %DIFF = -4.47	1145	49.599	LL= -0.03 %DIFF = -1.55

(ii) Mitt Romney's Expression of CI

Table 37*Mitt Romney's Expression of CI in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 15,431 words		General 16,325 words		Total 31,756 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	0	0.000	1	0.613	1	0.315	LL= -1.33 %DIFF = -100.00
Intentionality	53	34.346	69	42.266	122	38.418	LL= -1.30 %DIFF = -18.74
Volitionality	19	12.313	34	20.827	53	16.689	LL= -3.50 %DIFF = -40.88
Plans & Goals	1	0.648	12	7.351	13	4.094	LL= -10.36 %DIFF = -91.18
Offers	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Total CI	73	47.307	116	71.057	189	59.516	LL= -7.60 %DIFF = -33.42

Table 38*Mitt Romney's Expression of CI vs. Other Candidates'*

Categories	Mitt Romney 31,756 words		Republicans 119,143 words		Romney vs. Republicans	All Candidates 230,850 words		Romney vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	1	0.315	5	0.420	LL= -0.07 %DIFF = -24.96	22	0.953	LL= -1.67 %DIFF = -66.96
Intentionality	122	38.418	431	36.175	LL= +0.34 %DIFF = +6.20	833	36.084	LL= +0.41 %DIFF = +6.47
Volitionality	53	16.689	124	10.408	LL= +7.73 %DIFF = +60.36	181	7.841	LL= +20.21 %DIFF = +112.86
Plans & Goals	13	4.094	49	4.113	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = -0.46	106	4.592	LL= -0.16 %DIFF = -10.85
Offers	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00	3	0.130	LL= -0.77 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CI	189	59.516	609	51.115	LL= +3.25 %DIFF = +16.44	1145	49.599	LL= +5.16 %DIFF = +19.99

(iii) John McCain's Expression of CI

Table 39*John McCain's Expression of CI in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 14,634 words		General 13,459 words		Total 28,093 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	3	2.050	0	0.000	3	1.068	LL= +3.91 -
Intentionality	56	38.267	35	26.005	91	32.392	LL= +3.29 %DIFF = +47.15
Volitionality	1	0.683	6	4.458	7	2.492	LL= -4.39 %DIFF = -84.67
Plans & Goals	8	5.467	1	0.743	9	3.204	LL= +5.63 %DIFF = +635.77
Offers	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Total CI	68	46.467	42	31.206	110	39.156	LL= +4.22 %DIFF = +48.91

Table 40*John McCain's Expression of CI vs. Other Candidates'*

Categories	John McCain 28,093 words		Republicans 119,143 words		McCain vs. Republicans	All Candidates 230,850 words		McCain vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	3	1.068	5	0.420	LL= +1.47 %DIFF = +154.46	22	0.953	LL= +0.03 %DIFF = +12.05
Intentionality	91	32.392	431	36.175	LL= -0.94 %DIFF = -10.96	833	36.084	LL= -0.98 %DIFF = -10.23
Volitionality	7	2.492	124	10.408	LL= -21.07 %DIFF = -76.06	181	7.841	LL= -4.95 %DIFF = -53.61
Plans & Goals	9	3.204	49	4.113	LL= -0.50 %DIFF = -22.10	106	4.592	LL= -1.19 %DIFF = -30.23
Offers	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00	3	0.130	LL= -0.69 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CI	110	39.156	609	51.115	LL= -7.03 %DIFF = -23.40	1145	49.599	LL= -5.99 %DIFF = -21.06

(iv) George W. Bush's Expression of CI

Table 41*George W. Bush's Expression of CI in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 13,836 words		General 14,943 words		Total 28,779 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	1	0.723	0	0.000	1	0.347	LL= +1.46 -
Intentionality	47	33.969	46	30.784	93	32.315	LL= +0.23 %DIFF = +10.35
Volitionality	12	8.673	29	19.407	41	14.246	LL= -6.02 %DIFF = -55.31
Plans & Goals	22	15.901	4	2.677	26	9.034	LL= +15.14 %DIFF = +494.00
Offers	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Total CI	82	59.266	79	52.868	161	55.944	LL= +0.53 %DIFF = +12.10

Table 42*George W. Bush's Expression of CI vs. Other Candidates'*

Categories	George W. Bush 28, 779 words		Republicans 119,143 words		Bush vs. Republicans	All Candidates 230,850 words		Bush vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Commissives	1	0.347	5	0.420	LL= -0.03 %DIFF = -17.20	22	0.953	LL= -1.34 %DIFF = -63.54
Intentionality	93	32.315	431	36.175	LL= -1.00 %DIFF = -10.67	833	36.084	LL= -1.05 %DIFF = -10.44
Volitionality	41	14.246	124	10.408	LL= +2.88 %DIFF = +36.88	181	7.841	LL= +24.48 %DIFF = +165.23
Plans & Goals	26	9.034	49	4.113	LL= 9.53 %DIFF = +119.67	106	4.592	LL= +8.30 %DIFF = +96.75
Offers	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00	3	0.130	LL= -0.70 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CI	161	55.944	609	51.115	LL= +1.02 %DIFF = +9.45	1145	49.599	LL= +1.98 %DIFF = +12.79

APPENDIX F. Tables on Democratic Candidates Expressions of Commitment to a Future Outcome (CO)

(i) Joe Biden's Expression of CO

Table 43

Joe Biden's Expression of CO in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates

Categories	Primaries 14,625 words		General 13,810 words		Total 28,435 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Imperatives & Hortatives	12	8.205	9	6.517	21	7.385	LL= +0.28 %DIFF = +25.90
Inclination	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Deonticity	92	62.906	40	28.965	132	46.422	LL= +18.18 %DIFF = +117.18
Desirability	5	3.419	2	1.448	7	2.462	LL= +1.16 %DIFF = +136.07
Proposals	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Total CO	109	74.530	51	36.930	160	56.269	LL= +18.32 %DIFF = +101.82

Table 44

Joe Biden's Expression of CO vs. Other Candidates'

Categories	Joe Biden 28,435 words		Democrats 111,707 words		Biden vs. Democrats	All Candidates 230,850 words		Biden vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	0	0.000	9	0.80	LL= -4.08 %DIFF = -100.00	12	0.520	LL= -2.09 %DIFF = -100.00
Imperatives & Hortatives	21	7.385	35	3.133	LL= +8.77 %DIFF = +135.71	68	2.946	LL= +11.38 %DIFF = +150.72
Inclination	0	0.000	14	1.253	LL= -6.35 %DIFF = -100.00	33	1.429	LL= -7.67 %DIFF = -100.00
Deonticity	132	46.422	520	46.550	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = -0.28	1148	49.729	LL= -0.57 %DIFF = -6.65
Desirability	7	2.462	49	4.387	LL= -2.36 %DIFF = -43.88	114	4.938	LL= -3.94 %DIFF = -50.15
Proposals	0	0.000	5	0.448	LL= -2.27 %DIFF = -100.00	8	0.347	LL= -1.16 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CO	160	56.269	632	56.577	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = -0.54	1383	59.909	LL= -0.57 %DIFF = -6.08

(ii) Hillary Clinton's Expression of CO

Table 45*Hillary Clinton's Expression of CO in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 14,518 words		General 13,228 words		Total 27,746 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	2	1.378	0	0.000	2	0.721	LL= +2.59 -
Imperatives & Hortatives	8	5.510	1	0.756	9	3.244	LL= +5.57 %DIFF = +628.92
Inclination	6	4.133	3	2.268	9	3.244	LL= +0.76 %DIFF = +82.23
Deonticity	71	48.905	75	56.698	146	52.620	LL= -0.80 %DIFF = -13.74
Desirability	4	2.755	5	3.780	9	3.244	LL= -0.22 %DIFF = -27.11
Proposals	0	0.000	1	0.0756	1	0.360	LL= -1.48 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CO	91	62.681	85	64.258	176	63.433	LL= +0.03 %DIFF = +2.45

Table 46*Hillary Clinton's Expression of CO vs. Other Candidates'*

Categories	Hillary Clinton 27,746 words		Democrats 111,707 words		Clinton vs. Democrats	All Candidates 230,850 words		Clinton vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	2	0.721	9	0.806	LL= -0.02 %DIFF = -10.53	12	0.520	LL= +0.17 %DIFF = +38.67
Imperatives & Hortatives	9	3.244	35	3.133	LL= +0.01 %DIFF = +3.53	68	2.946	LL= +0.07 %DIFF = +10.12
Inclination	9	3.244	14	1.253	LL= +4.49 %DIFF = +158.82	33	1.429	LL= +4.03 %DIFF = +126.91
Deonticity	146	52.620	520	46.550	LL= +1.67 %DIFF = +13.04	1148	49.729	LL= +0.41 %DIFF = +5.81
Desirability	9	3.244	49	4.387	LL= -0.74 %DIFF = -26.05	114	4.938	LL= -1.66 %DIFF = -34.31
Proposals	1	0.360	5	0.448	LL= -0.04 %DIFF = -19.48	8	0.347	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = +4.00
Total CO	176	63.433	632	56.577	LL= +0.57 %DIFF = +12.12	1383	59.909	LL= +0.50 %DIFF = +5.88

(iii) Barak Obama's Expression of CO

Table 47*Barak Obama's Expression of CO in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 13,165 words		General 14,403 words		Total 27,568 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Imperatives & Hortatives	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Inclination	3	2.279	0	0.000	3	1.088	LL= +4.43 -
Deonticity	33	25.067	122	84.705	155	56.225	LL= -46.68 %DIFF = -70.41
Desirability	7	5.317	9	6.249	16	5.804	LL= -0.10 %DIFF = -14.91
Proposals	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Total CO	43	32.662	131	90.953	174	63.117	LL= -39.07 %DIFF = -64.09

Table 48*Barack Obama's Expression of CO vs. Other Candidates'*

Categories	Barak Obama 27,568 words		Democrats 111,707 words		Obama vs. Democrats	All Candidates 230,850 words		Obama vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	0	0.000	9	0.806	LL= -3.97 %DIFF = -100.00	12	0.520	LL= -2.71 %DIFF = -100.00
Imperatives & Hortatives	0	0.000	35	3.133	LL= -15.44 %DIFF = -100.00	68	2.946	LL= -15.34 %DIFF = -100.00
Inclination	3	1.088	14	1.253	LL= -0.05 %DIFF = -13.17	33	1.429	LL= -0.22 %DIFF = -23.87
Deonticity	155	56.225	520	46.550	LL= +4.11 %DIFF = +20.78	1148	49.729	LL= +1.99 %DIFF = +13.06
Desirability	16	5.804	49	4.387	LL= +0.90 %DIFF = +32.31	114	4.938	LL= +0.35 %DIFF = +17.53
Proposals	0	0.000	5	0.448	LL= -2.21 %DIFF = -100.00	8	0.347	LL= -1.80 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CO	174	63.117	632	56.577	LL= +1.60 %DIFF = +11.56	1383	59.909	LL= +0.41 %DIFF = +5.35

(iv) John F. Kerry's Expression of CO

Table 49*John F. Kerry's Expression of CO in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 13,073 words		General 14,885 words		Total 27,958 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	0	0.000	7	4.702	7	2.504	LL= -8.82 %DIFF = -100.00
Imperatives & Hortatives	1	0.077	4	0.269	5	1.788	LL= -1.56 %DIFF = -71.53
Inclination	1	0.077	1	0.067	2	0.715	LL= +0.01 %DIFF = +13.86
Deonticity	43	32.892	44	29.560	87	31.118	LL= +0.25 %DIFF = +11.27
Desirability	13	9.944	4	2.687	17	6.081	LL= +6.26 %DIFF = +270.05
Proposals	1	0.077	3	2.016	4	1.431	LL= -0.80 %DIFF = -62.05
Total CO	59	45.131	63	4.2325	122	43.637	LL= +0.13 %DIFF = +6.63

Table 50*John F. Kerry's Expression of CO vs. Other Candidates'*

Categories	John F. Kerry 27,958 words		Democrats 111,707 words		Kerry vs. Democrats	All Candidates 230,850 words		Kerry vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	7	2.504	9	0.806	LL= +4.61 %DIFF = +210.76	12	0.520	LL= +8.89 %DIFF = +381.66
Imperatives & Hortatives	5	1.788	35	3.133	LL= -2.15 %DIFF = -47.43	68	2.946	LL= -1.58 %DIFF = -42.92
Inclination	2	0.715	14	1.253	LL= -0.63 %DIFF = -42.92	33	1.429	LL= -0.63 %DIFF = -42.92
Deonticity	87	31.118	520	46.550	LL= -13.28 %DIFF = -33.15	1148	49.729	LL= -20.36 %DIFF = -37.42
Desirability	17	6.081	49	4.387	LL= +1.27 %DIFF = 38.62	114	4.938	LL= +0.61 %DIFF = +23.13
Proposals	4	1.431	5	0.448	LL= +2.74 %DIFF = +219.64	8	0.347	LL= +4.36 %DIFF = +312.85
Total CO	122	43.636	632	56.577	LL= -7.31 %DIFF = -22.87	1383	59.909	LL= -12.31 %DIFF = -27.16

APPENDIX G. Tables on Republican Candidates Expressions of Commitment to a Future Outcome (CO)

(i) Donald Trump's Expression of CO

Table 51

Donald Trump's Expression of CO in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates

Categories	Primaries 15,350 words		General 15,165 words		Total 30,515 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Imperatives & Hortatives	4	2.606	0	0.000	4	1.311	LL= +5.50 -
Volitionality	2	1.303	1	0.659	3	0.983	LL= +0.33 %DIFF = +97.59
Deonticity	64	41.693	62	40.884	126	41.291	LL= +0.01 %DIFF = +1.98
Desirability	1	0.652	1	0.659	2	0.655	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = -1.21
Proposals	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Total CO	71	46.254	64	42.202	135	44.241	LL= +0.28 %DIFF = +9.60

Table 52

Donald Trump's Expression of CO vs. Other Candidates

Categories	Donald Trump 30,515 words		Republicans 119,143 words		Trump vs. Republicans	All Candidates 230,850 words		Trump vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	0	0.000	3	0.252	LL= -1.37 %DIFF = -100.00	12	0.520	LL= -2.98 %DIFF = -100.00
Imperatives & Hortatives	4	1.311	33	2.770	LL= -2.42 %DIFF = -52.67	68	2.946	LL= -3.17 %DIFF = -55.50
Inclination	3	0.983	19	1.595	LL= -0.68 %DIFF = -38.35	33	1.429	LL= -0.43 %DIFF = -31.23
Deonticity	126	41.291	628	52.710	LL= -6.60 %DIFF = -21.66	1148	49.729	LL= -4.13 %DIFF = -16.97
Desirability	2	0.655	65	5.456	LL= -18.02 %DIFF = -87.99	114	4.938	LL= -16.69 %DIFF = -86.73
Proposals	0	0.000	3	0.252	LL= -1.37 %DIFF = -100.00	8	0.347	LL= -1.99 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CO	135	44.241	751	63.033	LL= -15.55 %DIFF = -29.81	1383	59.909	LL= -12.29 %DIFF = -26.15

(ii) Mitt Romney's Expression of CO

Table 53*Mitt Romney's Expression of CO in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 15,431 words		General 16,325 words		Total 31,756 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	0	0.000	1	0.613	1	0.315	LL= -1.33 %DIFF = -100
Imperatives & Hortatives	6	3.888	4	2.450	10	3.149	LL= +0.52 %DIFF = +58.69
Inclination	3	1.944	5	3.063	8	2.519	LL= -0.40 %DIFF = -36.52
Deonticity	32	20.738	71	43.492	103	32.435	LL= -13.03 %DIFF = -52.32
Desirability	11	7.129	11	6.738	22	6.928	LL= +0.02 %DIFF = +5.79
Proposals	0	0.000	3	1.838	3	0.945	LL= -3.99 %DIFF = -100
Total CO	52	81.006	95	58.193	147	46.290	LL= -10.46 %DIFF = -42.89

Table 54*Mitt Romney's Expression of CO vs. Other Candidates*

Categories	Mitt Romney 31,756 words		Republicans 119,143 words		Romney vs. Republicans	All Candidates 230,850 words		Romney vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	1	0.315	3	0.252	LL= +0.04 %DIFF = +25.06	12	0.520	LL= -0.27 %DIFF = -39.42
Imperatives & Hortatives	10	3.149	33	2.770	LL= +0.12 %DIFF = +13.69	68	2.946	LL= +0.04 %DIFF = +6.90
Inclination	8	2.519	19	1.595	LL= +1.10 %DIFF = +57.97	33	1.429	LL= +1.84 %DIFF = +76.23
Deonticity	103	32.435	628	52.710	LL= -23.38 %DIFF = -38.47	1148	49.729	LL= -19.46 %DIFF = -34.78
Desirability	22	6.928	65	5.456	LL= +0.90 %DIFF = +26.98	114	4.938	LL= +1.96 %DIFF = +40.29
Proposals	3	0.945	3	0.252	LL= +2.45 %DIFF = +275.18	8	0.347	LL= +1.85 %DIFF = +172.61
Total CO	147	46.290	751	63.033	LL= -12.54 %DIFF = -26.56	1383	59.909	LL= -9.47 %DIFF = -22.73

(iii) John McCain's Expression of CO

Table 55*John McCain's Expression of CO in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 14,634 words		General 13,459 words		Total 28,093 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Imperatives & Hortatives	4	2.733	11	8.173	15	5.339	LL= -4.01 %DIFF = -66.56
Inclination	0	0.000	1	0.743	1	0.356	LL= -1.47 %DIFF = -100.00
Deonticity	83	56.717	96	71.328	179	63.717	LL= -2.35 %DIFF = -20.48
Desirability	5	3.417	1	0.743	6	21.358	LL= +2.59 %DIFF = +359.85
Proposals	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Total CO	92	62.867	109	80.987	201	71.548	LL= -3.21 %DIFF = -22.37

Table 56*John McCain's Expression of CO vs. Other Candidates'*

Categories	John McCain 28,093 words		Republicans 119,143 words		McCain vs. Republicans	All Candidates 230,850 words		McCain vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	0	0.000	3	0.252	LL= -1.27 %DIFF = -100.00	12	0.520	LL= -2.76 %DIFF = -100.00
Imperatives & Hortatives	15	5.339	33	2.770	LL= +4.04 %DIFF = +92.77	68	2.946	LL= +3.82 %DIFF = +81.27
Inclination	1	0.356	19	1.595	LL= -3.42 %DIFF = -77.68	33	1.429	LL= -3.00 %DIFF = -75.10
Deonticity	179	63.717	628	52.710	LL= +4.83 %DIFF = +20.88	1148	49.729	LL= +8.95 %DIFF = +28.13
Desirability	6	21.358	65	5.456	LL= -6.27 %DIFF = -60.85	114	4.938	LL= -6.27 %DIFF = -60.85
Proposals	0	0.000	3	0.252	LL= -1.27 %DIFF = -100.00	8	0.347	LL= -1.84 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CO	201	71.548	751	63.033	LL= +2.48 %DIFF = +13.51	1383	59.909	LL= +5.29 %DIFF = +19.43

(iv) George W. Bush's Expression of CO

Table 57*George W. Bush's Expression of CO in Primaries vs. General Presidential Debates*

Categories	Primaries 13,836 words		General 14,943 words		Total 28,779 words		Primaries vs. General
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	2	1.446	0	0.000	2	0.696	LL= +2.93 -
Imperatives & Hortatives	2	1.446	2	1.338	4	1.390	LL= +0.01 %DIFF = +8.00
Inclination	1	0.723	6	4.015	7	2.432	LL= 3.59 %DIFF = -82.00
Deonticity	101	72.998	119	79.636	220	76.445	LL= -0.41 %DIFF = -8.34
Desirability	22	15.901	13	8.698	35	12.162	LL= +3.09 %DIFF = +82.77
Proposals	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	LL= 0.00 %DIFF = 0.00
Total CI	128	92.512	140	93.689	268	93.123	LL= -0.01 %DIFF = -1.26

Table 58*George W. Bush's Expression of CO vs. Other Candidates'*

Categories	George W. Bush 28,779 words		Republicans 119,143 words		Bush vs. Republicans	All Candidates 230,850 words		Bush vs. All Candidates
	N	R/‰	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF	N	R/‰	LL & %DIFF
Direct Directives	2	0.696	3	0.252	LL= +1.12 %DIFF = +176.00	12	0.520	LL= +0.13 %DIFF = +33.69
Imperatives & Hortatives	4	1.390	33	2.770	LL= -2.03 %DIFF = -49.82	68	2.946	LL= -2.68 %DIFF = -52.81
Inclination	7	2.432	19	1.595	LL= +0.85 %DIFF = +52.52	33	1.429	LL= +1.45 %DIFF = +70.15
Deonticity	220	76.445	628	52.710	LL= +21.15 %DIFF = +45.03	1148	49.729	LL= +30.93 %DIFF = +53.72
Desirability	35	12.162	65	5.456	LL= +13.23 %DIFF = +122.92	114	4.938	LL= +18.31 %DIFF = +146.27
Proposals	0	0.000	3	0.252	LL= -1.30 %DIFF = -100.00	8	0.347	LL= 1.88 %DIFF = -100.00
Total CO	268	93.123	751	63.033	LL= 28.18 %DIFF = +47.74	1383	59.909	LL= +39.50 %DIFF = +55.44

APPENDIX H. Contingency Tables for the Expression of CI and CO of Individual Candidates

Table 59

Contingency Table for the expression of CI of each individual candidate

	Gp 1	Gp 2	Gp 3	Gp 4	Gp 5	Gp 6	Gp 7	Gp 8	Gp 9	Gp 10	
Cond. 1:	2	4	3	8	0	1	3	1			22
Cond. 2:	113	107	42	140	125	122	91	93			833
Cond. 3:	3	32	13	9	23	53	7	41			181
Cond. 4:	2	20	12	23	1	13	9	26			106
Cond. 5:	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0			3
Cond. 6:											0
Cond. 7:											0
Cond. 8:											0
Cond. 9:											0
Cond. 10:											0
	121	164	70	181	149	189	110	161	0	0	1145

Output:

Calculate

Reset all

Chi-square: 140.502

degrees of freedom: 28

p-value: 0

Yates' chi-square: 122.515

Yates' p-value: 0

Status: At least one expected frequency is less than 1 !!

Table 60

Contingency Table for the expression of CO of each individual candidate

	Gp 1	Gp 2	Gp 3	Gp 4	Gp 5	Gp 6	Gp 7	Gp 8	Gp 9	Gp 10	
Cond. 1:	0	2	0	7	0	1	0	2		12	
Cond. 2:	21	9	0	5	4	10	15	4		68	
Cond. 3:	0	9	3	2	3	8	1	7		33	
Cond. 4:	132	146	155	87	126	103	179	220		1148	
Cond. 5:	7	9	16	17	2	22	6	35		114	
Cond. 6:	0	1	0	4	0	3	0	0		8	
Cond. 7:										0	
Cond. 8:										0	
Cond. 9:										0	
Cond. 10:										0	
	160	176	174	122	135	147	201	268	0	0	1383

Output:

Calculate

Reset all

Chi-square:

174.417

degrees of freedom:

35

p-value:

0

Yates' chi-square:

141.423

Status:

At least one expected frequency is less than 1 !!

Yates' p-value:

0