

Abstract

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Politician's changing Identities in Late-Night Talk Shows

The recent appearances of politicians on broadcast late-night talk shows offer opportunities to consider how politicians use entertainment spaces to pursue political goals. Here, politicians have to negotiate between their political goal and the program's entertainment goal. We employ Membership Categorization Analysis to study the use of different types of categories and activities during Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton's appearances on late-night talk shows this last election campaign for the U.S. presidency. We argue that each of those categories and activities belong to either to the device of Politics (i.e. campaign, primaries, polls, debating) or to the device of Entertainment (i.e. returning guest, celebrity, playing games, making impressions). Namely, for each device, the participants create a coherent set of categories and activities, which cannot be seen as belonging to a single device. Thus, we argue that rather than creating a hybrid discourse which blends these devices, the participants produce two discourses and alternate between them. This suggests that politicians, instead of redefining the identity of a politician, attempt to show different identities of themselves. Thus, using this entertainment space for pursuing their political goal, politicians use multiple identities, not just political ones, to advance their campaign. Although we currently do not discuss hierarchical relationships between these two devices, we do show the candidate's

preference for a specific device at certain moments and how each device is constructed.