

DIALOGIC SPACE IN POLITICAL DEBATE DISCOURSE: A COMPARATIVE ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS OF DONALD TRUMP AND KAMALA HARRIS

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ABSTRACT: This study examines how dialogic space is constructed in the 2024 U.S. presidential debate between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris through the Engagement system of Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative and qualitative analysis of 1180 clauses, including 632 clauses from Trump and 548 from Harris. The findings show that both candidates rely heavily on monoglossic resources, indicating a strong tendency to present propositions as taken-for-granted facts. However, clear differences emerge in their use of heteroglossic resources. Trump employs more contractive resources, especially Pronounce, reflecting a more assertive and authoritative discourse style. Harris, by contrast, makes greater use of Deny as part of structured rebuttal and employs more Endorse, Entertain, and Acknowledge resources, suggesting a comparatively more open and institutionally grounded dialogic stance. These results demonstrate how Engagement resources shape stance, alignment, and persuasive strategies in political debate discourse.

KEY WORDS: Dialogic space; presidential debate; appraisal theory; engagement; monogloss; heterogloss.

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1. Introduction

Appraisal Theory, as developed by Martin and White (2005) within the framework of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1994), has been widely employed in discourse studies to investigate evaluative language across a range of discourse genres. Within this body of research, evaluative meaning has commonly been examined from three interrelated dimensions: Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement. These dimensions have been applied to diverse genres, including news discourse (Vo, 2011; Nguyen & Huynh, 2014; Jiang & Chen, 2017), academic discourse (Miller, Mitchell, & Pessoa, 2014; Yu, 2021; Fryer, 2013; Hyland, 2005), and political speeches (Wang, 2010; Zhang & Pei, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2025).

In these studies, it can be observed that studies on the Attitude system greatly outnumber those focusing on Engagement, although Engagement plays a crucial role in shaping the characteristics of dialogic space. According to Martin and White (2005), Engagement enables researchers to understand how writers and speakers project their presence in discourse, how they interact with readers or listeners, and how they guide or shape the audience's interpretation of meanings. In this sense, Engagement is central to the study of stance, alignment, and intersubjective positioning in discourse.

Debate discourse is a highly prominent genre in the political arena, where candidates use language to express their positions on public issues and to persuade audiences. In the course of interaction, speakers incorporate other voices into their discourse to varying degrees and by different means in order to enhance credibility, project objectivity, or strengthen the persuasiveness of their arguments.

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As noted above, a considerable number of studies have drawn on Appraisal Theory to explore evaluative language and political positioning. However, little attention has been paid to the dialogic properties of debate discourse through the lens of Engagement, particularly in terms of how political speakers construct and manage dialogic space. To the best of our knowledge, few previous studies have specifically examined the dialogic space of debate discourse by focusing on the Engagement system. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how the two U.S. presidential candidates, Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, construct dialogic space in their debate turns. In doing so, it is expected to contribute to the growing body of research on the application of Appraisal Theory and to deepen understanding of the linguistic features of Engagement in political debate discourse.

This study addresses the following research questions: 1/What Engagement resources are employed in the debate discourse of Trump and Harris?; 2/What similarities and differences can be identified in the ways Trump and Harris construct dialogic space through their use of Engagement resources?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Engagement in Appraisal Theory

Martin and White's Engagement system within Appraisal Theory explains how speakers and writers position their own voice in relation to other possible voices, viewpoints, and alternative positions in discourse. More specifically, it accounts for the ways in which dialogic space is either opened up or closed down through linguistic choices. In this sense, the Engagement system provides an important analytical framework for examining how discourse constructs alignment, negotiation, and interpersonal positioning.

The schematic representation of Martin and White's Engagement system is presented in Figure 1.

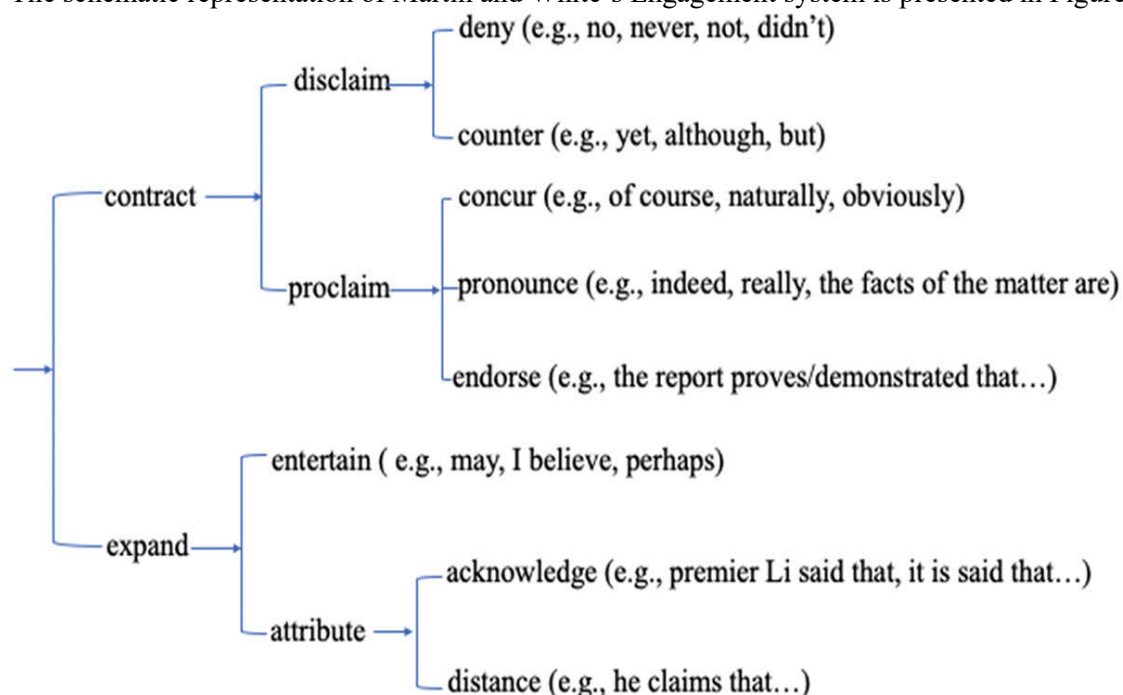


Figure 1. Engagement framework (Martin & White, 2005, p.134)

Within Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal framework, heterogloss is divided into two broad categories: dialogic contraction and dialogic expansion. Dialogic contraction refers to the narrowing of dialogic space by limiting alternative positions and viewpoints. This category is further divided into two subsystems: disclaim and proclaim. The disclaim subsystem is realized through rejection or

replacement of alternative meanings, while proclaim signals strong alignment with a proposition by construing it as credible, reasonable, or difficult to dispute, thereby excluding competing viewpoints.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the disclaim subsystem comprises the two subcategories deny and counter. Deny, also referred to as negation, functions to reject a prior or potential position once it has been invoked or made available in the discourse (Martin & White, 2005). It is typically realized through negative forms such as *no*, *not*, *never*, and *don't*. Counter, by contrast, introduces a meaning that runs against an expected assumption or prior line of reasoning. Resources such as *still*, *yet*, *instead*, *but*, *even*, and *only* signal a departure from what the reader or listener may anticipate, thereby positioning the writer or speaker as overturning an assumed viewpoint.

Within the proclaim subsystem, Martin and White (2005) identify three additional categories: concur, pronounce, and endorse. Concur refers to cases in which the writer or speaker explicitly aligns with the audience by construing a proposition as already shared or self-evident, often through expressions such as *obviously*, *certainly*, and *no doubt*. Pronounce involves overt authorial emphasis or intervention, realized through expressions such as *in fact* and *the fact of the matter is*, which strengthens the speaker's commitment to the proposition. Endorse, meanwhile, occurs when propositions are attributed to external sources that are represented as authoritative, valid, or indisputable, as in *the statistics demonstrate* or *the data have shown that*. Collectively, these five resources function to contract dialogic space, enabling the writer or speaker to align readers with a preferred position while maintaining the inherently dialogic character of discourse.

By contrast, dialogic expansion refers to the opening up of dialogic space by acknowledging the legitimacy of alternative views and voices to a significant extent (Martin & White, 2005). This category is also divided into two subsystems: Entertain and Attribute. Entertain is used to indicate that a proposition is only one possible interpretation among several alternatives. Attribute, by contrast, refers to the representation of external voices through direct or indirect citation, formulaic references, or other forms of attribution that bring these viewpoints into the dialogic space of the text.

As shown in Figure 1, Attribute, which includes acknowledge and distance, "represents the proposition as grounded in the subjectivity of an external voice" (Martin & White, 2005, p.98), thereby positioning the textual voice as only one among several possible voices. Acknowledge is realized through resources such as *reportedly*, *according to*, and *it is said that*, which attribute information to external sources without overt authorial judgment. Distance, however, differs from acknowledge in that the writer not only attributes information to an external source but also signals a degree of disalignment or skepticism toward that source. In this way, distance creates a wider dialogic space for alternative interpretations. The entertain category, meanwhile, is often realized through mental verbs such as *I think* and modal expressions such as *may*, which indicate that a proposition is only one possible position rather than an absolute truth.

2.2. Engagement and Dialogic Positioning

In terms of dialogic orientation, the Engagement system, through its two broad modes of monogloss and heterogloss, clearly reflects the extent to which speakers or writers allow alternative viewpoints to exist within their message. Monogloss represents direct assertions that presuppose the correctness and validity of a given proposition without requiring justification, verification, or dialogic engagement. In monoglossic formulations, the writer or speaker presents an idea as common sense, natural, or beyond dispute. As such, monogloss does not create dialogic space in the discourse, excludes interaction with readers, and does not rely on support from other voices or sources. It is therefore a mode of discourse in which propositions are presented as factual rather than evaluative.

By contrast, heterogloss acknowledges and accommodates the existence of multiple viewpoints by incorporating other voices into the discourse, often through citation, attribution, concession, or modalization (Martin & White, 2005). This inclusive stance allows discourse to achieve a degree of objectivity while also reducing the writer's personal responsibility for the proposition (White, 2003). The defining characteristic of heterogloss is thus its inherently dialogic nature. To fulfill this

interpersonal function, heterogloss draws on a wide range of modal and evaluative resources, ranging from assertion and certainty to prediction and doubt. These resources enable discourse producers not only to express evaluative meanings but also to negotiate interpersonal relations with readers or listeners. Through linguistic forms of recognition, concession, and invitation, writers and speakers position themselves in relation to competing viewpoints and ideological alternatives (White, 2003). From this perspective, once a writer acknowledges the existence of different possible views on a given issue, that writer simultaneously enters into a potential process of negotiation with readers who may share, resist, or modify those viewpoints.

Martin and White (2005) developed the Engagement system from Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. According to Bakhtin (1981), speakers draw on diverse linguistic resources to construct a communicative context through which viewpoints are conveyed and interaction with others is promoted. In this sense, Engagement concerns the ways linguistic resources position speakers and writers with respect to the evaluative stance being advanced, as well as with respect to potential responses to that stance (Martin & White, 2005). Put differently, discourse producers express their position toward the attitudinal value being conveyed and simultaneously attempt to guide audience response by either narrowing or broadening the range of possible reactions. In the process of communication, speakers introduce other voices into the text to varying degrees and by different means. Within Martin and White's framework, the concepts of monogloss and heterogloss are therefore central to investigating the origins of voices in discourse as well as the dialogic space those voices create.

As one of the three major systems of Appraisal Theory, Engagement focuses on the stance, source, and interpersonal positioning of information in a text, thereby illuminating the dialogic nature of discourse. According to Martin and White (2005), the purpose of Engagement is to enable discourse producers to communicate their values to readers and to establish a form of alignment with them. Such alignment does not necessarily mean complete agreement; rather, it may also involve tolerance, recognition, or strategic accommodation of divergent viewpoints.

2.3. Previous Studies

Because Engagement theory foregrounds the positioning of voices and viewpoints, it has proven to be highly useful in analyzing how discourses interact with readers and listeners. As a result, it has informed a wide range of studies, including research on journalistic discourse, genre analysis, political discourse, and academic discourse.

In the field of news discourse, Appraisal Theory has been shown to be a particularly effective linguistic framework. A number of studies have analyzed and identified salient features of Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation in news texts (e.g., Vo, 2011; Nguyen & Huynh, 2014; Jiang & Chen, 2017). These studies demonstrate the value of Appraisal Theory in uncovering evaluative patterns and interpersonal positioning in media discourse.

In academic discourse, the application of Appraisal Theory is extensive and covers all three subsystems - Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement. Research on Engagement, in particular, has been highly diverse, ranging from the analysis of stance and voice in student writing to the exploration of attribution, dialogic positioning, and intersubjective alignment in research discourse (e.g., Miller, Mitchell, & Pessoa, 2014; Yu, 2021; Fryer, 2013; Hyland, 2005; Loghmani, Ghonsooly, & Ghazanfari, 2020).

As for political speeches, a considerable number of studies have employed Appraisal Theory to examine the evaluative language used by political leaders in spoken discourse (e.g., Goudong & Afzaal, 2023; Wang, 2010; Zhang & Pei, 2018). These studies have primarily focused on the expression of attitude, persuasion, and ideological positioning in political language. However, despite the growing body of research on political discourse, it appears that very few studies have specifically examined the dialogic space constructed through Engagement resources in political debate discourse. In other words, while Appraisal Theory has been widely used to investigate political evaluation, the

ways in which political speakers open up or close down dialogic space through Engagement have not yet received sufficient scholarly attention.

For this reason, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining how Engagement resources are deployed in the debate discourse of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, with particular attention to the ways in which they construct, manage, and negotiate dialogic space.

3. Methodology

This study aims to identify the Engagement resources within Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal framework as employed in the 2024 U.S. presidential debate between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, and thereby to investigate how the two candidates construct dialogic space in their debate discourse. To achieve this aim, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The corpus consists of a total of 1180 clauses, including 632 clauses produced by Trump, coded from T1 to T632, and 548 clauses produced by Harris, coded from H1 to H548. The coding of Engagement resources was conducted manually based on Martin and White's (2005) classification framework. To ensure consistency, the dataset was repeatedly reviewed and cross-checked during the annotation process. The quantitative analysis was conducted to identify the frequency distribution of monoglossic and heteroglossic resources, as well as the specific Engagement categories through which the candidates either contract or expand dialogic space. The qualitative analysis, in turn, was used to interpret how these linguistic choices function discursively in shaping stance, alignment, and interpersonal positioning within political debate discourse. Due to the interpretive nature of appraisal analysis, formal inter-coder reliability measures were not employed in the present study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Overall Frequency of Engagement Types

Table 1 presents the overall frequency and percentage distribution of Engagement resources used by the two candidates.

Table 1. Distribution of Engagement resources in the Trump–Harris debate

Main system	Subsystem	Category	Trump (n = 632)	Harris (n = 548)
Monogloss	Contract	Monogloss	379 (59.97%)	318 (57.97%)
Heterogloss		Deny	94 (14.87%)	106 (19.34%)
		Counter	37 (5.85%)	24 (4.38%)
		Concur	8 (1.27%)	6 (1.09%)
		Pronounce	101 (16.01%)	57 (10.40%)
		Endorse	5 (0.79%)	11 (2.01%)
	Expand	Entertain	16 (2.53%)	32 (5.84%)
		Acknowledge	8 (1.27%)	14 (2.55%)
		Distance	0	0
			632 (100%)	548 (100%)

Table 1 shows that both Donald Trump and Kamala Harris rely heavily on monoglossic resources, with nearly identical proportions (Trump 59.97% vs. Harris 57.97%), indicating a strong tendency to present propositions as taken-for-granted facts rather than dialogically negotiable positions. However, differences become more apparent within the heteroglossic system, particularly across the two subsystems of Contract and Expand. In the Contract subsystem, both candidates employ strategies that close dialogic space, but with distinct preferences: Trump uses Pronounce most prominently (16.01%), signaling strong authorial assertion, whereas Harris relies more on Deny (19.34%), reflecting a more consistent strategy of direct rebuttal. Trump also shows slightly higher use of Counter and Concur, reinforcing his tendency to reframe and naturalize his claims, while Harris exceeds Trump in Endorse, indicating a greater reliance on external or institutional voices.

In contrast, the Expand subsystem reveals a clearer divergence: Harris consistently uses more Entertain, Acknowledge, and Distance resources than Trump, nearly doubling his use of dialogic expansion (e.g., Entertain: 5.84% vs. 2.53%). This suggests that, although both speakers operate within a predominantly contractive debate genre, Harris allows comparatively more room for alternative viewpoints and negotiated meaning, while Trump maintains a more dialogically closed and authoritative stance.

4.2. Monogloss: The authoritative presentation of voice

Monoglossic resources are the most prominent type in the discourse of both Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, accounting for nearly 60% of all coded instances. This dominance suggests that both candidates frequently present their claims as if they were self-evident, stable, and not open to negotiation. In other words, monogloss reduces the visibility of alternative voices and limits dialogic space by construing propositions as facts rather than as contestable interpretations. This is particularly characteristic of political debate, where speakers often seek to project confidence, control, and ideological certainty.

From an explanatory perspective, this dominance of monogloss reflects the communicative goals of debate discourse. As White (2003) argues, monoglossic formulations construct propositions as taken-for-granted knowledge, thereby reducing the need for justification and limiting the space for opposition. In highly adversarial contexts such as presidential debates, this strategy becomes particularly salient, as candidates aim to control the narrative, pre-empt counterarguments, and influence audience perception through confidence and rhetorical force.

For example,

T11: We have inflation like very few people have ever seen before

H37: Donald Trump hand-selected three members of the United States Supreme Court with the intention that they would undo the protections of Roe v. Wade.

In both cases, the propositions are delivered without overt acknowledgment of competing viewpoints. Neither speaker frames the statement as a personal opinion to be discussed; instead, each presents it as a reality that should be accepted by the audience.

However, despite this shared reliance on monogloss, the two candidates use it in different rhetorical ways. Trump's monogloss tends to take the form of emphatic and often hyperbolic assertion, which reinforces a forceful, populist speaking style grounded in certainty and urgency. His wording intensifies the sense of crisis and positions him as the one who can diagnose national decline with absolute clarity. Harris, by contrast, often realizes monogloss through collective epistemic expressions such as "*we know*," as in *H8* which do not foreground personal authority as strongly as Trump's discourse does, but instead construct a sense of shared social knowledge between speaker and audience.

H8: We know that we have a shortage of homes and housing...

This strategy invites listeners to align with her view not because she alone asserts it, but because it is framed as something already commonly recognized. Thus, while monogloss in both cases functions to suppress dialogic alternatives, Trump uses it mainly as certainty as persuasion, whereas Harris employs it more as shared reality as persuasion.

Contractive resources constitute a substantial proportion in both datasets with 38.79% made by Trump vs 37.22% by Harris. This confirms that political debate discourse is inherently argumentative and adversarial.

The finding is consistent with prior research on political speech, which characterizes it as inherently argumentative and dialogically competitive. Studies such as Wang (2010) and Zhang & Pei (2018) similarly report a high frequency of contractive resources in political discourse, where speakers strategically close down dialogic space to assert authority and challenge opposing viewpoints. In this respect, the present findings reinforce the view that contraction is a defining feature of persuasive political communication.

From a comparative perspective, the relatively similar proportions between Trump and Harris suggest that both candidates operate within the same genre constraints of debate discourse, where direct contestation and rebuttal are expected. This aligns with Hyland (2005), who argues that engagement strategies are shaped not only by individual style but also by interactional demands of the discourse community. In a debate setting, speakers must simultaneously defend their position and undermine their opponent, leading to a shared reliance on contractive mechanisms such as Deny, Counter, and Pronounce.

4.3. Deny: Direct rejection of alternative voices

The resource of Deny functions as a prototypical contractive strategy by explicitly rejecting competing viewpoints and thereby narrowing dialogic space. In the dataset, Harris employs Deny more frequently than Trump (19.34% vs 14.87%), suggesting a more systematic strategy of direct rebuttal. For instance,

H325: That's absolutely not true.

By this statement, Harris directly dismisses the opponent's claim and positions her stance as the only valid interpretation.

Similarly, in T53, Trump asserts, "*I have nothing to do with Project 2025*," using denial to reject an allegation directed at him and to reinforce his personal credibility.

While both speakers use Deny to invalidate opposing voices, their rhetorical orientations differ: Harris tends to use denial as part of a structured argumentative rebuttal, whereas Trump often uses it defensively to reinforce self-legitimacy. For example, Harris's denials, such as "*That's absolutely not true*" (H325), "*That is not happening*," (H57) and "*We're not taking anybody's guns away*," (H487) are typically embedded in a broader argumentative sequence in which rebuttal is followed by explanation or evidence. By contrast, Trump's denials, including "*I have nothing to do with Project 2025*" (T53), "*I haven't read it*" (T55), "*I'm not going to read it*" (T56) and "*I'm not signing a ban*" (T102) are more often defensive in orientation, functioning primarily to protect personal credibility and reinforce self-legitimacy rather than to develop a structured counter-argument.

4.4. Counter: Reframing expectations

Counter resources function to replace or overturn an expected or previously introduced viewpoint, thereby reorienting the direction of the discourse. Unlike denial, which simply rejects a proposition, countering resources introduce an alternative interpretive frame that redirects how the audience should understand the issue. For example, Trump's statement "*But it makes no difference*" (T61) shifts the focus from the content of the preceding claim to its perceived irrelevance, while Harris's "*But I'm going to tell you what you're going to hear tonight*" (H65) guides the audience toward a re-interpretation aligned with her evaluative stance. In this way, counter does not merely negate prior meaning but reconstructs the interpretive trajectory of the discourse.

4.4.1. Concur: Assumed Agreement

Concur is a contractive resource within the Engagement system that presents a proposition as if it were already shared, obvious, or indisputable. In the debate data, although it occurs at relatively low frequencies (Trump 1.27% and Harris 1.09%), it still plays a meaningful rhetorical role.

T62-63: Everybody knows I'm an open book; everybody knows what I'm going to do.

H36: Let's understand how we got here.

H113: Let's be clear that the Trump administration resulted in a trade deficit.

In both cases, the speakers do more than simply provide information; they position the audience as already aligned with their viewpoint, thereby reducing the space for alternative interpretations. However, their rhetorical orientations differ. Trump's use of Concur tends to be more assertive and prescriptive, invoking an assumed collective agreement to legitimize his personal stance. In contrast, Harris's use is more guiding and interpretive, aiming to frame the issue as logically evident rather than overtly imposed.

4.4.2. Pronounce: Strong authorial intervention

The Pronounce category represents a strong form of authorial intervention, where the speaker explicitly asserts a viewpoint with heightened certainty and emphasis, thereby suppressing dialogic alternatives. Trump's discourse shows a particularly high frequency of Pronounce, as illustrated by T274, which presents an evaluative claim as an unquestionable fact.

T274: *In fact, I got more votes than any president, sitting president in history by far.*

Harris also employs Pronounce, though less frequently and often in a more moderated form such as "really", as in H167-168.

H167- 168: *And I'm going to actually do something really unusual and I'm going to invite you to attend one of Donald Trump's rallies because it's a really interesting thing to watch*

While both examples signal speakers' commitment, Trump's usage tends to be more categorical and unqualified with more repetition of "In fact" and "the fact is", reflecting a high degree of authorial presence and minimal openness to alternative interpretations. In contrast, Harris's formulation retains a degree of interpersonal softening with more use of "actually" and "really", even within a contractive framework.

4.4.3. Endorse: External legitimation

Endorse involves invoking external voices or sources as authoritative support, thereby strengthening the speaker's position while simultaneously contracting dialogic space by presenting those voices as reliable and aligned. In this dataset, Harris uses Endorse more frequently than Trump, reflecting a greater reliance on institutional or expert validation. For example,

H254: *Sixteen Nobel laureates have described his plan as...*

In this statement, by attributing the proposition to a group of recognized experts, she implicitly validates the truth value of the claim, thereby contracting dialogic space.

Similarly, in T161: *The governor of Virginia said we put the baby aside*, Trump incorporates external voices to support his stated information.

However, different from Harris, Trump draws on a more diffuse and unspecified source of validation, relying on generalized public approval rather than institutional authority as in T84: "People give me credit...". This difference highlights two distinct modes of legitimation: Harris constructs credibility through technocratic and institutional alignment, whereas Trump appeals to popular or collective endorsement.

4.4. Heterogloss: Expansive resources

Expand resources in the debate are relatively limited but show a clear contrast between Trump with only 3.80% and Harris, 8.39%.

The relatively low proportion of expansive heteroglossic resources in both candidates' discourse confirms that the debate is largely characterized by a restricted dialogic space, where alternative viewpoints are minimally entertained. However, the noticeable difference between Trump (3.80%) and Harris (8.39%) reveals distinct communicative orientations. Trump's very limited use of Expand indicates a highly closed dialogic stance, in which meanings are presented as fixed and authoritative, leaving little room for negotiation or alternative perspectives. In contrast, although Harris also operates within a predominantly contractive framework, her higher use of expansive resources suggests a more open and flexible dialogic positioning, where other voices and possibilities are at least partially acknowledged. This difference implies that Harris is more inclined to manage and incorporate dialogic diversity, whereas Trump tends to suppress competing voices in favor of certainty and control, resulting in a more monologic and authoritative discourse style.

4.4.1. Entertain: Modalizing certainty

The Entertain resource functions to expand dialogic space by presenting propositions as one possible interpretation among others, typically through modal expressions that indicate probability, subjectivity, or inference. Both Trump and Harris employ Entertain, but with notable differences in tone and communicative effect. For example:

T74: *I think it's a lot higher...*

T584: *I think it's in the U.S. best interest to get this war finished and just get it done.*

Trump states, *"I think it's a lot higher..."*, which superficially signals tentativeness; however, in context, such expressions often function as pseudo-hedges, preceding strong assertions rather than genuinely inviting alternative viewpoints. In contrast, Harris uses forms such as *"believe"* as in H93: *"It leads one to believe..."*, which more explicitly frame the proposition as a reasoned inference rather than a fixed claim. This formulation creates a greater sense of analytical distance and acknowledges the potential for alternative interpretations. Thus, while both speakers use Entertain to introduce a degree of subjectivity and soften commitment, Harris's usage more effectively opens dialogic space, whereas Trump's tends to maintain underlying certainty despite surface modalization.

4.4.2. Acknowledge: Neutral attribution

The Acknowledge category expands dialogic space by attributing propositions to external sources without overt evaluation, thereby recognizing the existence of other voices in the discourse. Both candidates employ this resource but again differ in how they construct and position these external voices. Harris's example, *"Economists have said..."*, invokes a clearly identifiable and institutionally grounded source, which lends credibility while maintaining a relatively neutral stance toward the attributed claim.

Trump's repetition of *"They said..."* (in T278, T280, T301, T314, T521) by contrast, introduces a vague and unspecified source, which can function ambiguously - either as neutral attribution or as a subtle distancing strategy. While both forms technically acknowledge alternative voices, Harris's usage tends to legitimate and stabilize the attributed information, whereas Trump's often leaves the source indeterminate, potentially weakening its epistemic status.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that both Trump and Harris construct debate discourse through a predominantly contractive dialogic orientation, as reflected in their heavy reliance on monoglossic resources. Nevertheless, they differ significantly in how they manage heteroglossic space. Trump tends to favor strong authorial assertion and dialogic closure, particularly through Pronounce and defensive forms of Deny, which reinforce personal authority and self-legitimacy. Harris, in contrast, uses Deny more systematically as part of argumentative rebuttal and draws more frequently on Endorse and expansive resources such as Entertain and Acknowledge, allowing greater room for alternative viewpoints while still maintaining persuasive control. These differences suggest two distinct rhetorical styles: Trump's discourse is more monologic, forceful, and self-authorizing, whereas Harris's is more institutionally grounded and dialogically managed. Overall, the study confirms the value of Engagement analysis in revealing how political speakers position themselves, negotiate audience alignment, and construct persuasive meaning in debate discourse.

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**Không gian đối thoại trong diễn ngôn tranh luận chính trị:
phân tích so sánh nguồn tham thoại của Donald Trump và Kamala Harris**

Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này khảo sát cách thức Donald Trump và Kamala Harris lựa chọn không gian đối thoại trong cuộc tranh luận tổng thống Mỹ năm 2024 thông qua hệ thống Tham thoại trong Thuyết Đánh giá của Martin và White (2005). Nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp hỗn hợp, kết hợp phân tích định lượng và định tính trên 1.180 mệnh đề, bao gồm 632 mệnh đề của Trump và 548 mệnh đề của Harris. Kết quả cho thấy cả hai ứng viên đều sử dụng phổ biến các Đơn nguồn (monogloss), thể hiện xu hướng trình bày các phát biểu như những sự thật hiển nhiên, ít có tính thương lượng. Tuy nhiên, sự khác biệt rõ rệt xuất hiện trong việc sử dụng các Đa nguồn (heterogloss). Trump có xu hướng sử dụng nhiều nguồn hạn định (contract), đặc biệt là Pronounce, phản ánh phong cách diễn ngôn mang tính khẳng định mạnh và áp đặt. Ngược lại, Harris sử dụng Deny như một chiến lược phản biện có cấu trúc, đồng thời sử dụng nhiều hơn các nguồn Endorse, Entertain và Acknowledge, cho thấy cách tiếp cận mang tính mở hơn và dựa vào tính chính danh thể chế. Những kết quả này cho thấy vai trò của nguồn Tham thoại trong việc giúp người giao tiếp thể hiện lập trường, và định hình chiến lược thuyết phục trong diễn ngôn tranh luận chính trị.

Từ khóa: Không gian đối thoại; tranh luận tổng thống; Thuyết Đánh giá; Tham thoại; đơn nguồn; đa nguồn.