

### **3. Methodology**

This chapter explains how the data was collected and analyzed. It is divided into three subsections: 3.1 Context and Candidates, 3.2 Data Collection Procedures, and 3.3 Data Analysis.

#### ***3.1. Context and Candidates.***

For this study, the utterances of different US Republican party candidates were analyzed during three of the political debates for the United States' presidential election in 2016. There were a total of five Republican party debates aired in 2015. In these debates, the candidates share their political and economic plans if elected president. The objective of these debates is to introduce the candidates to the audience. Each debate follows the same setup: the candidates must answer the questions of the hosts. These questions come from the voters which submit them through Facebook and other social media. The candidates have one minute to answer what they are being asked and another 30 seconds for follow ups, which means the other candidates can answer back to their opponents. It is very important to highlight that, since this is a live event, the candidates do not know what they will be asked and their answers are therefore not scripted but spontaneous.

The candidates involved in the debates analyzed were Florida Senator Marco Rubio, Texas Senator Ted Cruz, former President George W. Bush's brother, Jeb Bush, former CEO and consultant Carly Fiorina, the only female candidate, Arkansas' Governor Mike Huckabee, New Jersey's Governor Chris Christie, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, former Senator Rick Santorum, Governor of Ohio John Kasich and businessman Donald Trump. Conducting the debates were Becky Quick and Carl Quintanilla and Washington Bureau

Chief, John Harwood Neil Cavuto, Maria Bartiromo, Gerard Baker, Megyn Kelly, Brett Baier and Chris Wallace.

### ***3.2. Data Collection.***

Out of the five debates, three were selected for data collection. These were chosen randomly. The analyzed debates were the first Republican presidential debate aired on August 6th, 2015; the third Republican presidential debate held on October 28th, 2015; and the fourth Republican presidential debate held on November 10th, 2015. Each of these debates lasted approximately 120 minutes. Short pieces of the three debates were extracted by watching each of the debates and simultaneously reading the scripts of the debates (available at the Washington Post web page). Whenever a candidate used humor, the utterance was extracted and noted down. These extractions were done using the author's own humor competence which, as discussed previously, requires linguistic and cultural competence which the author claims to possess. However, in some occasions, additional cultural information was obtained to correctly identify a humor act with specific cultural references. In order to corroborate whether the utterances were indeed humorous, they were then analyzed using the GTVH explained above.

### ***3.3. Data Analysis Procedures***

Once it was determined that the candidates were using humor, the utterances were organized in a table which showed the debate in which it was made, the producer of the utterance, the humor act itself, and the explanation of the scripts and their opposition, as shown in Table 1 below.

Date	Speaker	Utterance	Script opposition explanation
August 6 <sup>th</sup>	Carson	“If Hillary is the candidate, which I doubt, that would be a dream come true.”	Normal/Abnormal  A (qualified) opponent candidate is supposed to be feared, by stating that having Clinton as candidate would be a dream come true he is stating she is not a good candidate.

**Table 1.** Data analysis example

The table above shows an example of how the data was organized. First, the date on which the utterance was said, August 6<sup>th</sup>, is noted down followed by the speaker, Ben Carson, and the utterance he stated “If Hillary is the candidate, which I doubt, that would be a dream come true”. Finally, the type of script opposition and the two scripts are written down. In this case, Carson was alluding to him not being afraid of Hillary Clinton because she is not a suitable candidate. According to the GTVH, identifying to scripts that are (partially) opposed is the only necessary and therefore sufficient condition for linguistic humor take place. No other elements are therefore included in the table.

Once all of the humor acts were identified, they were further analyzed using the General Theory of Verbal Humor. Since humor has a target, although not a necessary condition for an utterance to be deemed humorous, this knowledge resource was used to determine whether the humor act contained an FTA or not. If the objective of the speaker’s utterance

was to put at risk, hurt, or threaten another candidate's face, then it was coded as a face threatening act.

Below is an example of how an utterance was analyzed using the GTVH:

- Script Opposition (SO): NORMAL/ABNORMAL. (qualified/unqualified)
- Logical Mechanism (LM): Juxtaposition
- Situation (SI): Carson was asked about how he would respond to Hillary Clinton's attack (Clinton is most likely to be one of the candidates of the Democratic party)
- Target (TA): Clinton (candidacy)
- Narrative Strategy (NS): Question-Answer
- Language (LA): N/A

The following chapter, Chapter 4, presents the results of the analysis of the selected Republican primary debates exemplifying the interplay of humor and FTAs in this specific context.