

## A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE DEBATES BETWEEN REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS OVER THE CONTINUATION OF WAR IN IRAQ

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### Abstract

This paper is intended to show how a single reality, that is the continuation of war in Iraq by the American troops, is presented and viewed by the two major American political parties' (Republican and Democratic) candidates of the US presidential primaries of 2008.

In this study, van Dijk's (2004) framework adopted from *Politics, ideology and discourse* is used to detect discursive structures within the transcripts of the candidates' speeches and discover the ideologies underlying them. The macro strategies of 'positive self-representation' and 'negative other-representation' (which are intimately tied up with 'Polarization' of in group vs. out group ideologies or US-THEM) plus the other 25 more subtle strategies have turned out to be very accurate criteria for the evaluation of attitudes, and opinions. The findings of this study can be conducive to expanding readers' critical thinking abilities in comprehension and production of language.

**Key words:** Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); Political discourse.

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