Construction and negotiation of voter-friendly identities in electoral debates

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Resumen. In this article we examine the identity construction of two politicians in the 2011 Spanish pre-electoral debate, following four of Bucholtz & Hall's (2005) linguistic means: evaluation, implicatures, interactional negotiation, and complementary identity relations. For the analysis, Martin & White's (2005) evaluation model and Corpus Linguistics are adopted. The Socialist candidate's positive identity positions him as a defendant of laymen's interests (i.e. Nurturant Parent identity), while he contributes to Rajoy's emergent identity as a dishonest politician. However, the Conservative politician plays down the other candidate's identity inferences, casts his identity as a Nurturant Parent to attract the audience's sympathy and embodies an identity of change. This positive identity contributed to his ethos in the debate and resulted in an overwhelming win.

Palabras clave: identity inferences; evaluation; emergent identity; appraisal

[es] Construcción y negociación de identidades favorables a los votantes en debates electorales

Resumen. En este artículo analizamos la construcción de la identidad de dos políticos en el debate preelectoral español de 2011 utilizando cuatro de las herramientas lingüísticas de Bucholtz y Hall (2005): evaluación, implicaturas, negociación interactiva y relaciones de identidad complementarias. Para el análisis adoptamos el modelo de evaluación de Martin y White (2005) y la Lingüística de Corpus. La identidad positiva del candidato socialista lo postula como defensor de la identidad de Padre Nutriente, al mismo tiempo que contribuye a crear una identidad emergente para Rajoy como político deshonesto. Sin embargo, el político conservador minimiza las inferencias de identidad del otro candidato, se presenta como Padre Nutriente y personifica la identidad del cambio. Esta identidad positiva contribuyó a la construcción de su ethos en el debate, lo que dio como resultado una victoria abrumadora.

Palabras clave: inferencias de identidad; evaluación; identidad emergente; appraisal

1. Introduction

Even though identity may be *a priori* conceived as a pre-existing mind state that is intrinsic to the individual and that is univocally reflected in discourse, it is, in fact, the product of discursive interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Ponton, 2010) and, thus, it may be constructed and negotiated in ongoing talk. For politicians, their public identities are also "an amalgam between [their] own personalities and what they believe will please the public taste" (Ponton, 2010, pp. 197); that is, they have a private true self and a public persona that may not coincide a hundred percent. In fact, it might be expected that the politicians' public persona will be built in accordance with what their communication advisors believe will favor a voter-friendly identity. Building such an identity to be performed on stage is paramount for pre-electoral debates, particularly when the image of presidential candidates is at stake. That was the situation previous to the 2011 Spanish General Elections, when the candidates of the two most representative parties, PSOE (in government at the time) and PP (main party in the opposition) held a debate that, as expected, played a fundamental role in the electorate

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turn-out. One might guess that, since persuasion in pre-election debates happens "through performance of self" (Lorenzo-Dus, 2011, pp. 89), politicians have no option but to show a positive self-image and to construct an identity that comes over well to electors, while at the same time they create a negative identity to their opponents that may alienate public sympathy. Four linguistic means to build a favorable persona for oneself and an unfavorable one for one's opponent in interaction are evaluation, implicatures, interactional negotiation and complementary identity relations (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Ponton, 2011). The aim is for politicians to "sell the 'right' image to audiences" (Lorenzo-Dus, 2011, pp. 89) and, thus, convince them – persuading them, rather than by coercion (Van Dijk, 2005) – to vote for them. This is unlikely to happen without expressing a certain stance and using implicatures (for a review of the wide range of terms to refer to the evaluative function of language, see Thompson & Hunston (2000/2003). All of them focus on the meaning of the assessment, the linguistic realizations of evaluation at all levels of language (see Thompson & Alba-Juez, 2014, pp.10-11) and the subsequent response of the hearer or (potential audience) (2014, pp. 13)).

The presentation of political self has been studied through the notions of commitment in a French electoral debate (Johansson, 2008); self-categorization in an interview with Margaret Thatcher (Ponton, 2010); and as the product of discursive interaction in the same interview with Thatcher (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Ponton, 2010). However, to our knowledge none has attempted to analyze the construction of political identity of the candidates to Prime Minister as a result of political interaction in pre-electoral debates in Spain. In previous research (Cabrejas-Peñuelas & Díez-Prados, 2014), we addressed the issue of evaluation, according to the Appraisal Model, in order to demonstrate how Conservative Rajoy and Socialist Rubalcaba employed evaluative devices for self-praise and other-deprecation in the 2011 debate. Now, we examine the same debate under a different light: how the two politicians construct and negotiate their discursive identities in the debate via the discursive strategies of evaluation, implicatures, interactional negotiation and complementary identity relations, as Bucholtz & Hall (2005) suggest. Hence, the research questions that guide our study are:

RQ1. Does the use of the most frequent evaluative devices depict a given political persona (i.e. Strict Father vs. Nurturant Parent morality) for Rajoy and Rubalcaba?

RQ2. What key political implicatures do the politicians generate for the audience?

RQ3. What identities do the political candidates construct in interaction?

For the analysis of evaluation, we adopt Martin & White's (2005) Appraisal Theory. This theory seems especially suitable when applied to a political debate, since it is concerned with the linguistic resources available to speakers to express their subjective positions (García Gómez, 2010; Partington & Taylor, 2018), which ultimately reflect their ideological stance. For implicature, we identify political implicatures that, when combined with evaluative language, perform identity work. For complementary identity relations, we distinguish the relations constructed by the two politicians in the debate. Finally, for interactional negotiation we adopt the view of identity as an emergent product in interactive discourse (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

The 2011 debate format, which favored monologic rather than dialogic interventions, proved successful for Rajoy's strategy for persuading the audience. Indeed, he had to show himself a presidentiable candidate and to thrill citizens with a future project (Carrera Boleas, 2012, pp. 129), for which he did not need to question his opponent, but instead adopted the strategy of "not get[ting] out of the script" [our translation] (2012, pp.128), which was a safer stance. In contrast, Rubalcaba, the Socialist candidate, adopted the role of inquirer in order to "corner" the Popular Party's candidate so that he unveiled his unpopular, hidden agenda. Hence, in the pre-electoral debate at hand, each debater constructed the discourse identity that they considered more likely to uphold their candidacy and defeat their opponent. And yet, the discursive construct that emerged from each candidate during the debate seemed to play a decisive role on who was to win the debate to the public eye.

In Section 2, we present an overview of the theoretical framework for the construction of identity in interaction. Section 3 introduces the methodology employed and presents the frameworks used to analyze evaluation, implicatures, complementary relations and identity work in interaction. Section 4 discusses the results from the analysis and Section 5 provides the conclusions to the present study.

2. Theoretical framework for the construction of identity in interaction

Within the modernist or liberal-humanist perspective, 'identity' is defined as "who a person is" (i.e. as an attribute of an individual), which contrasts with the poststructuralist perspective that indicates that "individuals are never outside cultural forces or discursive practices but always 'subject' to them" (Baxter, 2016, pp. 37). Thus, discourse has regulatory effects upon identity construction. For example, within the context of work, employees are subject to work discourse practices that offer information about socially 'approved ways' for speech, behavior and employer-employee relationships.

In the field of CDA, identity is viewed as "the emergent product, rather than the pre-existing source, of linguistic and other semiotic practices, and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, pp. 588). This suggests that, when analyzing the discursive construction of identity of a politician, his/her identity is considered as "a product which emerges, by degrees, during the discourse interaction, and can be modified at any stage of it. It therefore depends, crucially, on contributions of interlocutors to the discourse as it unfolds" (Ponton, 2010, pp. 196). This emergent identity is therefore a joint product that is dependent on both interlocutors in a discourse interaction; thus, exploring interactional work accomplished in a pre-electoral debate, where politicians address each other and negotiate dialectically, should allow us to observe how they position themselves subjectively and, intersubjectively, how they depict themselves versus the other (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, pp. 593).

Bucholtz & Hall (2005) propose a toolkit to probe how identity is constructed linguistically and through identity relations, which has been successfully applied by other researchers (e.g. Ponton, 2010; Stamou, 2018). Of the tools proposed, the current study has selected four: evaluation, implicatures, interactional negotiation and complementary identity relations. The first resource to construct identity is through evaluative language, since "speakers (…) position [themselves], and align [or disalign]" with one another (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, pp. 595), making positive evaluations of themselves and negative evaluations of the other(s). This is precisely the type of interaction held between contenders in a pre-electoral debate (Cabrejas-Peñuelas & Díez-Prados, 2014). Recent work on evaluation has shown that evaluative language is a resource that can be used for the construction of identity, as Ponton (2010, pp. 206-7) illustrates in examples (1) and (2), obtained from one of Thatcher's speeches:

(1) Perhaps it takes a <u>housewife</u> to see that Britain's national housekeeping is appalling. (Positive Judgement: Capacity)

(2) Every housewife knows that Harold Wilson was right that one's man wage increase was another man's price increase. (Positive Judgement: Capacity)

In these exchanges, Thatcher associates herself with positive qualities: women as good domestic managers and as effective managers of high inflation due to wage increases. Her positive evaluative language serves Thatcher to signal her approval of those positive qualities in women, of whom she is one. However, although identity may be discursively produced through evaluative language, it is often combined with other processes, such as implicatures and presuppositions (Bucholtz & Hall 2005, pp. 594). See another example taken from Ponton (2010, pp. 201), in which Thatcher was asked about her personal and political life when she became the first woman prime minister:

(3) Have you <u>been able to</u> combine your political life with looking after a family, running a home? (Positive Judgement: Capacity)

In (3), the journalist judges positively that a woman looks after a family and runs a home, since the presupposition that women should reconcile both roles is implied by the question. Likewise, the dichotomy established in the question and the implied impossibility of playing both roles simultaneously (and, thus, having the obligation to be a housewife) raises the implicature that 'it is unclear whether women are suitable candidates for occupying a political office'. Thatcher's response played with an image of a housewife politician, who did not let down either her domestic responsibilities or her political ones. Thus, she rejected being seen as a feminist or a purely traditional woman. For Ponton (2010, pp. 211), the journalist had a very active role in projecting a discursive frame in which Thatcher's gender identity was the focus of attention while, at the same time, gave her bipolar options that limited the identities that she could construct by framing her either as a housewife or as a politician.

Evaluation, an amply researched phenomenon (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Cabrejas-Peñuelas & Díez-Prados, 2014; Hunston & Thompson, 2000; Martin, 2000/2003; Martin & White, 2005; Ponton, 2010, 2011; Thompson & Alba-Juez, 2014), is a prevalent resource for persuasion in political discourse (Partington & Taylor, 2018). Indeed, through positive lexical markers politicians praise their attitude and their deeds (e.g. benefits obtained as a result of their policies) and highlight the negative policies and ideological traits of their opponents in an attempt to win votes to their side. The objective is "not so much to inform as to make people believe, and in the end to act upon their beliefs, he/she who sounds like one of us is the one we most easily trust" (Sornig, 1989, pp. 109). Also, by expressing positive evaluations about themselves and negative evaluations about the 'others', "the speakers are interacting [with the audience] to create a sort of community, on the basis of shared values" (Ponton, 2011, pp. 17) (e.g. the Conservative community *versus* the Socialist community in the 2011 General Elections). Through evaluation, "speakers position themselves and others as particular kinds of people" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, pp. 595) and, thus, its expression is productive for the study of identity construction.

Although Martin & White's (2005) Appraisal framework is widely known and extensively used, we include the evaluation categories below for ease of reference (see Figure 1):
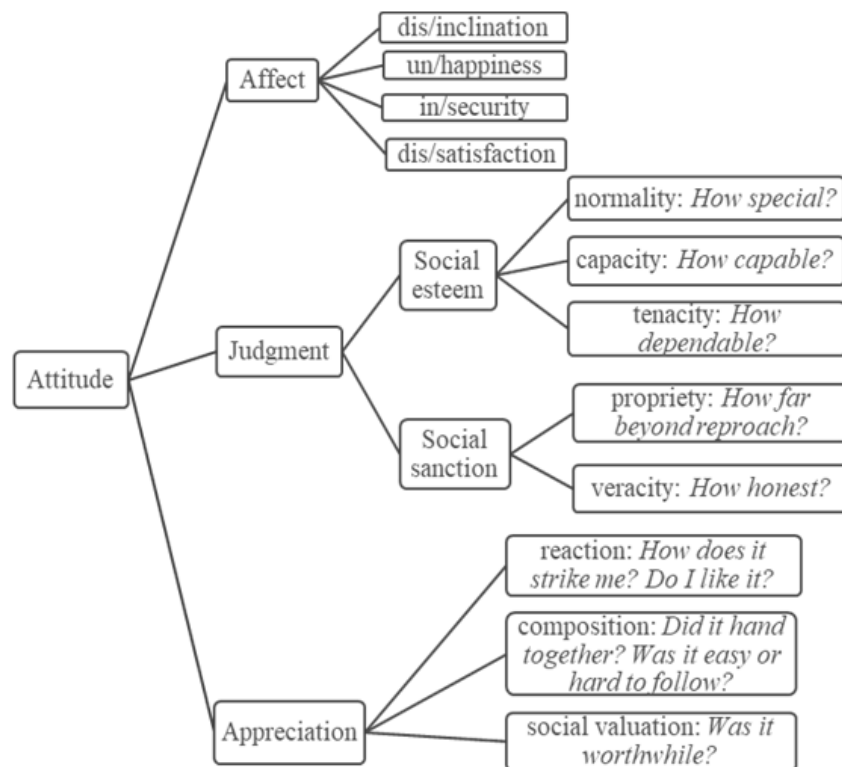
Figure 1. Martin & White's (2005) Appraisal categories.

The second linguistic resource for the construction of identity is implicature (Grice, 1975). This term is used to refer to what a speaker implies in a sentence. Implicatures are "weak semantic implications", whereas "political implicatures" are of a pragmatic rather than of a semantic nature and are "specifically based on the political context" (van Dijk, 2005, pp. 69). These are defined as what hearers are invited to infer from politicians' actual words taking into account "relevant political knowledge of the current political situation" (2005, pp. 70). The importance of political implicatures lies in the fact that:

> [l]ater commentary in the media on parliamentary debates often precisely focuses on these tacit political implicatures of such debates. Political implicatures *explain* that and why political participants say the things they do. They define the fundamental political *point* of parliamentary debates in the first place, such as 'doing' government and 'doing' opposition, and more generally the institutional and political power play enacted in parliaments (van Dijk, 2005, pp. 70; italics in original).

Van Dijk (2005, pp. 68) analyzes the political implicatures in a Spanish parliamentary debate and points to the unique properties of such debates as being contextual: who are speaking and listening, the kind of actions they engage in, their intentions, and so on. These also happen in pre-election debates, which are considered "a specific genre of political discourse" (2005, pp. 67), since in both, politicians engage in interactions, political actions and political goals. Politicians also use political implicatures to explain positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation, such as the 'Partido Popular is the (exclusive) locus of democracy in Spain' (Atkinson & Ramblado, 2018, pp. 6). This inexplicit political implicature is realized through the construction and representation of 'we' (the PP and other in-groups) as having democratic credentials and 'they' (the opposite parties and other out-groups) as being antithetical to the democratic tradition of Spain (2018, pp. 13-4). This suggests that politicians construct "political identities, roles, goals, actions and beliefs" (van Dijk, 2005, pp. 69) taking into account the properties of the social situation that are now relevant for them (2005, pp. 68).

The third parameter to be studied is that of interactional negotiation. In order to study this tool for the construction of identity, we examine the discursive characteristics of Spanish debates, since the construction of the politicians' identity is somewhat constrained by the interactional rules of this type of interaction. We also focus on the dialogical parts of the debate (question-answer turns), which are scarce but highly significant. These happen in the central parts of the debate and are mostly initiated by the Socialist candidate, whose political strategy was questioning his rival at the end of his interventions. However, the strategy did not work as expected, as "that model had not been agreed on with the popular candidate and Mariano Rajoy dismissed the 'proposal'. The popular candidate did not answer any of Rubalcaba's 10 questions] [our translation] (Carrera Boleas, 2013, pp. 322-3). Rajoy only asked rhetorical questions, because he preferred to appeal citizens with a reassuring discourse to build up their trust (2013, pp. 325). This kind of public identity

that he constructed about himself (the so-called *presentation of political self* (Johansson, 2008, pp. 399, emphasis in original)) was more successful before voters, which is why most probably he won the elections by gaining most swing voters to his side after his performance in the debate (in fact, his represented an unprecedented victory).

The fourth parameter for the study of identity is complementary identity relations – including adequation-distinction, authentication-denaturalization and authorization-illegitimization-, which serve speakers to project their identity or others' identity intersubjectively. The pair adequation-distinction refers to relations of similarity and difference, according to which individuals are positioned as similar or different. The pair authentication-denaturalization deals with relations of authenticity. Authentication refers to identities being authentic, such as an individual validating his/her identity or validating the identities constructed by the other; in contrast, denaturalization challenges the authenticity of an identity. Finally, the pair authorization-illegitimation refers to issues of legitimation or lack thereof. Authorization implies using the power, status or authority of a community or government to legitimize one's words, whereas illegitimation implies the opposite.

3. Political self-presentation

Numerous authors (Fetzer & Weizman, 2006; Johansson, 2008) agree on the fact that politics has undergone dramatic changes in the last two decades and has become a "media endeavor" (2006: 146). Indeed, monologs are no longer considered appropriate to inform the public in Western countries, but instead politicians need to use dialogs (Fetzer & Weizman, 2006, pp. 146). Also, there has been a shift towards the conversationalization of politics - "the modelling of public discourse upon the discursive practices of ordinary life, 'conversational' practices in a broad sense" (Fairclough, 1994/2003, pp. 253) – and an interest in the "private self" (Turner 2004, pp. 8) of politicians, which is the "privileged object of revelation" (2004, pp. 8). As Turner (2004, pp. 8) expressed it:

> We can map the precise moment a public figure becomes a celebrity. It occurs at the point at which media interests in their activities is transferred from reporting on their public role (such as their specific achievement in politics or sport) to investigating the details of their private lives.

Thus, "self-presentation is one of the principal means of current media representation" in the domain of politics (Johansson, 2008, pp. 398). In today's politics this can only happen through the media, as a great number of political events (i.e. interviews, pre-electoral debates) are media events. That is why today's politics are *mediated politics* (2008, pp. 398, emphasis in original). Alongside its mediated status, political discourse also has a public status (Fetzer & Weizman, 2006, pp. 145), since "political talk is 'on the record' and this has consequences on what can and cannot be said and for ways of saying and not saying" (Scannell, 1998, pp. 260). For example, while in everyday life showing feelings of irritation and anger does not usually have serious consequences, in a televised debate such feelings are amplified and contribute to painting a negative image of the politician.

It is precisely through self-presentation that politicians construct a public identity about themselves, which should have persuasive effects on the audience in order to gain votes to their side (see Duranti (2006) for the use of narratives on the part of politicians to present self and Johansson (2008) for the use of commitment in their discourse). And yet, the politicians' public identity in a televised pre-electoral debate is not simply determined by themselves, but instead it is a "joint product" (Ponton, 2010, pp. 197), involving the collaboration of both political candidates. At the same time, self-presentation in a pre-electoral debate happens within two frames of interaction (Fetzer, 2000): the first frame of interaction takes place between the political candidates and between the candidates and the moderator, who interpret the messages they give one another as if they were intended only for them. The second frame of interaction is "the media interaction between the participants and the audience" (Johansson, 2008, pp. 399), being the latter who ultimately interprets the media messages. It is precisely the interaction between the co-participants in the second frame of interaction that is of interest in this paper. Indeed, how politicians construct their self has ultimately consequences on whether or not they manage to persuade the electorate of their good qualities to be the future Prime Minister.

4. Methodology

As aforementioned, to analyze the politicians' construction of identity, we adopted Bucholtz & Hall's (2005, pp. 586) viewpoints on identity as "the social positioning of self and other" and as "a discursive construct that emerges in interaction" and, thus, identity is not individually produced, but an emergent phenomenon. Following Ponton's (2010) analysis, we used Bucholtz & Hall's (2005) framework to examine the Rajoy-

Rubalcaba pre-election debate in order to depict the identity each candidate built for himself and for the other candidate. In this study, we concentrate on four tools as described by Bucholtz & Hall (2005, pp. 585):

1. Evaluative orientations to ongoing talk.

2. Implicatures regarding each other's identity position.

3. Interactional negotiation and contestation regarding others' perceptions and representations.

4. Complementary identity relations through which speakers construct for themselves and others intersubjectively.

For the analysis of evaluation, we took into account of the results obtained for evaluation following Martin & White's (2005) methodological framework in Cabrejas-Peñuelas & Díez-Prados (2014). This framework was adopted since the objective then was to discover how the two politicians "map[ped] [their] feelings" (2005, pp. 42) in the debate; that is, whether they expressed emotions; condemned or praised, attacked or defended the opposing candidate and his policies; or they showed a positive or a negative attitude. This study focuses on the verbal content of the debates, transcribed as if they had been produced as written text; thus, although relevant for other types of analysis, no indication of oral linguistic features or other multimodal features are included, since what is at stake here is the propositional content of the message and not their actual performance.

To carry out the analysis, the Rajoy-Rubalcaba debate (19,849 words, including the moderator's interventions) was taken from the Spanish national radio and television broadcast (Radio y Televisión Española or RTVE) web page (the debate and the transcription can be consulted on the webpage of RTVE, 2011). The whole debate was uploaded in text format into a freeware program called UAM Corpus Tool, developed by Mick O'Donnell (the program can be downloaded from the UAM corpus tool webpage). Then, the content analysis was made using Martin & White's (2005) model by assigning labels corresponding to the appraisal schemes. We labelled individual words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) but, on occasions, the unit of analysis spanned over phrases or even clauses or sentences. Example 4 is a case in which a whole sentence is categorized as an invoked (i.e. implicit) positive judgement of the speaker's intentions:

(4) Yo voy a explicar lo que haría y cómo veo la situación [I'll explain what I'd do and how I see the situation] [Attitude: Judgement: Veracity: Invoked: Positive]

To ensure interrater reliability, one of the researchers analyzed the whole corpus, whereas the second one analyzed 30%. Both researchers reached a 95.68% agreement.

For the analysis of implicatures, the text was fragmented into monological and dialogical sections. The monological parts were analyzed in search of two inferences, taking into account the "relevant political knowledge of the current political situation" (van Dijk, 2005, pp.70) (i.e. the political situation in Spain before the 2011 debate):

1. Zapatero and the Socialist party are to blame of the economic crisis in Spain.

2. The Popular party has a hidden agenda that includes sweeping cuts.

Regarding the dialogical sections, the implicatures were derived from all 10 questions asked by the politicians at the end of their dialogical interventions. The implicatures in the monological parts were inferred by hearers from their knowledge of the political climate in Spain before the 2011 General Elections, while those in the questions were inferred from the questions themselves.

For the interactional construction of identity (re)negotiation, we examined the dialogical parts, derived from the questions posed by the political candidates. Rhetorical questions were excluded from the analysis. Examination of the questions (both direct and indirect) revealed that all of them belonged to the Socialist candidate, while the Conservative politician only asked two rhetorical questions.

For the analysis of the complementary identity relations, we examined what identities are constructed between the two politicians throughout the debate. Identity is thought of as a "relational phenomenon" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, pp. 598) and, thus, the identity construction of one political candidate in a pre-election debate only makes sense in relation to the other political candidate. In the following section the results obtained from these analyses are dealt with.

5. Results

This section deals with the results from the different analyses tackled and their contribution to the construction of identity.

5.1. Analysis of evaluation

In order to answer our first research question (i.e. Does the use of the most frequent evaluative devices depict a given political persona (i.e. Strict Father vs. Nurturant Parent morality) for Rajoy and Rubalcaba?), we analyse the evaluative stance of each candidate to construct his identity in the debate, which is linked to the "self-projection of themselves as a particular kind of person" (Ponton, 2010, pp. 198): as a Strict Father or a

Nurturant Parent. Conservative Rajoy and Socialist Rubalcaba have a different conceptualization of morality that is shown in their policies: Rajoy follows a Strict Father Morality and Rubalcaba, a Nurturant Parent Morality (Lakoff, 1996/2002) (see Díez-Prados (2016) for the analysis of both morality conceptualizations in the Rajoy-Rubalcaba debate).

In the 2011 debate, Rajoy uses more Affect and Judgement than Rubalcaba, who prefers Appreciation over the other evaluative types (see Figure 2 below). Regarding Judgement, Rajoy mainly judges the Capacity and Normality of the Appraised elements, whereas Rubalcaba judges their Propriety (see Figure 3). Indeed, the Conservative candidate judges the opposing government's incapacity to mend the current situation of Spain and the need for change. This way, he stresses the Socialist government's incompetence (i.e. Judgement: Capacity), while he represents the change Spain needs: "un cambio politico […] con ministros que sepan de lo que hablan, que se conozcan bien los temas, se los estudien" [a political change … with ministers that know what they are talking about, that know the topics well, that study them]. Also, he paints a picture of himself as a defender of Spanish hard-won social rights and negatively evaluates the impact of the policies of the opposing party (i.e. Appreciation: Reaction: Impact) on Spaniards (see Figure 4). Thus, he presents himself as caring for and protecting the people, which projects a Nurturant Parent identity, despite his presumed Strict Father Morality, typically associated to a conservative ideology (Lakoff, 1996/2002). Thus, he refuses to project a Strict Father identity before the electorate, avoiding to hold forth on his party's plans for belt-tightening, which might have inclined the electorate in favour of his opponent.

In contrast, Rubalcaba could not criticize his own party, since they were in power at the time; instead, he blamed the banks' indebtedness, lack of credit, unemployment and economic stagnation (i.e. Judgement: Propriety) for the economic crisis. Also, he attempted to convince the electorate by offering agreements with the rest of political parties; control of public expenses and a guarantee of basic social rights, including healthcare, education and pensions (i.e. Appreciation: Social Valuation), while he accused his opponent of elitist policies (i.e. Appreciation: Impact: Quality). It is precisely his interest in the citizens' social rights that helped to construct his identity as a Nurturant Parent (see (5)):

(5) Rubalcaba: Me quiero comprometer [Judgement: Veracity: Positive] ante ustedes a tres cosas: primero, buscar un acuerdo [Judgement: Propriety: Positive] para el empleo [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive], que es una gran causa [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive] nacional. Un acuerdo [Judgement: Propriety: Positive] con los partidos, los sindicatos y las fuerzas políticas y, por supuesto, con las instituciones. En segundo lugar, a reorientar [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive] nuestra economía, a buscar un equilibrio [Appreciation: Composition: Balance: Positive] entre el control del gasto público y los incentivos [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive] para crear empleo [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive]. Y, en tercer lugar, garantizar la seguridad [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive] de los españoles, las garantías básicas [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive] como la sanidad [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive], las pensiones [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive], la educación [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive] y la protección al desempleo [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive]. Estos son mis compromisos, acuerdos, protección social [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive] y crecimiento económico [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive] y creación de empleo [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive] [I would like to commit myself to three issues: first, to find an agreement for employment, which is a great national motive, an agreement with the parties, the unions and the political forces and, of course, with the institutions. Second, to redirect our economy, to find a balance between the monitoring of public expenses and incentives to create jobs. And third, to guarantee Spaniards' safety, basic guarantees such as healthcare, pensions, education and protection for unemployment. These are my commitments, agreements, social protection and economic growth and job creation] (Cabrejas-Peñuelas & Díez-Prados, 2014: 173-4).

In (5), Rubalcaba stresses ideas that are coherent with the Nurturant Parent model: the government's duty is to care and protect their people by offering them employment, safety and the rights to education, healthcare and pensions, which are considered assets in the Spanish society. This is the safest identity for a politician that occupied a major position – Interior Minister and Deputy Prime Minister - in a government that was blamed for the astronomical rates of unemployment and for mishandling the economic crisis. Nonetheless, Rubalcaba also defended Strict Father policies when he referred to "monitoring public expenses"; however, they went almost unnoticed, because he needed to present a voter-friendly identity before the audience.
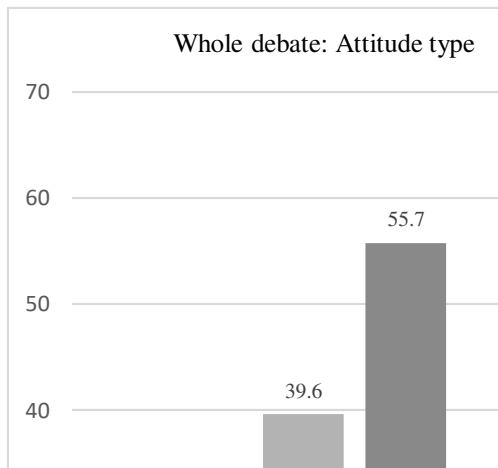
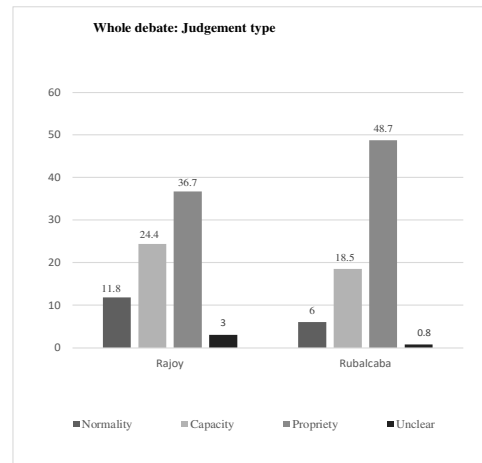Figure 2. Percentages of Attitude devices in the whole debate.

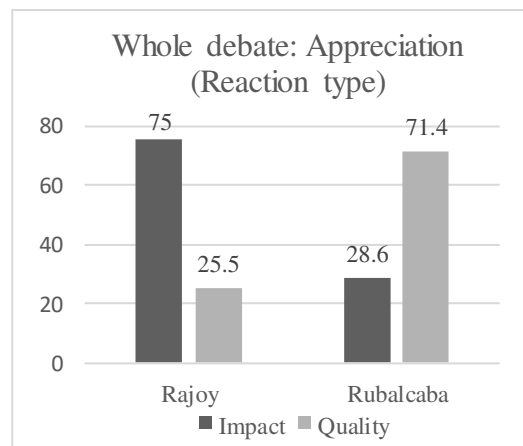Figure 3. Percentages of Judgement items in the whole debate.

Figure 4. Percentages of Appreciation devices (Reaction type) in the whole debate

5.2. Implicatures and the construction of the politicians' identity: demonization of the other versus a hidden agenda

This subsection attempts to give an answer to our second research question (i.e. *What key political implicatures do the politicians generate for the audience?*); for that purpose, we analyse two political implicatures (out of the thousands that could be inferred) derived from the political situation in Spain during the 2011 debate and find out how they contribute to the politicians' identity construction.

Positive self-evaluation and negative other-presentation are pervasive in pre-electoral debates (Cabrejas-Peñuelas & Díez-Prados, 2014) in an attempt to attract the votes of those dissatisfied with the opposing party. The 2011 debate is no exception and, thus, the candidates are each other's target of discursive excoriation (i.e. 'demonization of the other'), while they present themselves as the only "legitimate" defenders of Spaniards' interests. Specifically, Rajoy shows the former Prime Minister Zapatero (and the party he represents, in which Rubalcaba occupied a prominent position) as incapable, inactive and unable to adopt the right decisions and, in doing so, he invites the political implicature "Zapatero and the Socialist party are to blame of the current economic crisis" (see (6) below):

(6) Rajoy: El que gestiona mal la economía y el que no hace una política que crea empleo es el que pone en dificultades las políticas sociales e impide que puedan ser mejoradas. En estos años, en España más de 3 millones de personas perdieron su puesto de trabajo y eso fue lo que llevó a una reducción de ingresos del Estado. 'That who mishandles the economy and does not do politics that creates employment is the one who puts in danger social policies and deters them from being improved. In these years, in Spain over 3 million people lost their jobs and that led to a reduction of the State's income'.

In (6), although vague in their identity, "that who" is the Socialist party, who is held responsible for the ills of the crisis and jeopardize social policies, the pillars of the Spanish welfare state. The political context helps to generate the above implicature and 'the enemies' as the opposing party. However, Rajoy does not mention the property bubble fed for years by banks, property developers and home-buyers or Spanish workers' lack of competitiveness in the world as possible causes of the economic crisis striking Spain. This simplification with an aim to get votes is a clear case of manipulation. Likewise, Rajoy and his party did not make any suggestions to face the Spanish economic problems when in the opposition, nor did they support any of the Socialist reforms aiming at getting through the crisis. What is important here is that Rajoy does not mention the PP's inaction when measures against the crisis had to be taken. By only referring to the harmful effects of the crisis on Spaniards when the Socialist government was in power, their inaction goes unnoticed and the government takes the brunt of the blame of the economic crisis.

Likewise, Rubalcaba's discourse also presents the global strategy of negative other-presentation when referring to Rajoy by recalling the economic measures taken by PP that had had negative results for Spain, such as promoting the construction sector as the model of growth. Furthermore, he is at pains to show Rajoy's true agenda, which includes harsh budget cuts. This is not but an attempt to present Rajoy as hiding his true face, while at the same time to reconstruct his position as the "legitimate" protector of workers. For that purpose, Rubalcaba resorts to the implicature "The Popular party will make harsh budget cuts if they win", as in (7):

> (7) Rubalcaba: […] En tercer lugar, hay que proteger a los trabajadores y a los desempleados y creo que usted eso no lo va a hacer. Lo dejo en este debate porque habrá muchos debates y creo que usted no lo va a hacer; bajará el desempleo, estoy convencido; sacará a las pymes, estoy convencido. Y le voy a decir más: me gustaría saber qué va a a hacer con el IVA. […] 'Thirdly, workers and the unemployed should be protected and I believe you won't be doing that. I leave it in this debate because there will be many debates and I believe you won't be doing that; you'll reduce the unemployment subsidies, I'm convinced; you'll take out small and mid-sized companies, I'm convinced. And I'll tell you more: I'd like to know what you are going to do with VAT. […]'.

In (7), Rubalcaba tries to carve out for Rajoy an image of a dishonest politician because he plans harsh budget cutbacks once in power, without explicitly mentioning it. The audience would get to such image by resorting to the "relevant political knowledge of the current political situation" (van Dijk, 2005, pp. 70), specifically the fact that Spain was facing a grim outlook and that the Conservative party would favor capitalist interests rather than Spaniards' interests. For that purpose, he attempts to make his opponent be more specific about the PP's policies, asking him over his exact intentions regarding VAT (and other main parts of the Spanish welfare system in other parts of the debate). However, Rubalcaba's attempts are counterproductive, as Rajoy succeeds in sidestepping the questions (whether direct or indirect), while he gives the impression that he is taking for granted that Rajoy is going to win (political analysts (see Carrera Boleas, 2012, pp. 127) commented on Rubalcaba's strategy of questioning his opponent and concluded that it had a negative effect for his aspirations).

5.3. The candidates' construction of identity in interaction and their identity relations

In order to analyze our third research question (i.e. *What identities do the political candidates construct in interaction?*), we analyse the politicians' identity construction in the dialogical parts of the debate. This happens as a result of the discursive interaction between the participants, but it also depends on the interactional format of the debate (divided into sections and subsections, totaling 90 minutes) (see Table 1). It further depends on the conversational norms of the debate (i.e. formal forms of address ("señor/a")); use of name calling, such as indirect insults; the professional roles of the two politicians (i.e. political candidates to be a Prime Minister, as appointed by the Socialist and the Conservative parties); and their professional relation (i.e. leader of the opposing party and leader of the governing party).

Participants	Debate sections	Number of interventions	Timing
Moderator	Opening		
Politicians	Introduction	1	
	Economy and employment	5	40 min
	Social policy	4	30 min
	Foreign policy and other topics	3	20 min
	Conclusion	1	
Moderator	Closure		

Table 1. Debate sections

The interactional format of the debate indicates that the candidates have a given time for each section, which they can manage as desired and, thus, the different interventions in each section can have different lengths. The introduction and conclusion by each candidate are two-minute monological interventions, while the rest of the debate is a communicative interaction that is, however, not completely spontaneous. The monological, pre-assigned nature of turns allows communication advisers to prepare a script for interventions according to the image they want to portray for each of their candidates. This pre-conceived and rehearsed delivery favors the construction of a voter-friendly persona to be performed on the debate stage. However, this pre-fabricated identity is challenged at the dialogical parts, albeit at times unsuccessfully.

Examination of the dialogical sections reveals that Rubalcaba's and Rajoy's process of identity construction in the 2011 debate also relies on the interactional negotiation between the candidates. Analysis of the categories of identity used in the 2011 debate shows that both politicians used the ritualized form of address "señor" [Mr] when referring to each other, since the debate is a televised formal encounter and, thus, the politicians have mediated political identities. Also, Rajoy indirectly insults his opponent ("usted miente" [you're a liar]) and seems to confuse his opponent's name with that of Zapatero, which could be interpreted as a strategy of negative other-presentation of the Socialist candidate, and as an attempt on the part of Rajoy to construct a rival identity. At the same time, the professional identities of Rajoy and Rubalcaba as leaders of their parties and as political candidates are constructed in interaction (see (8)):

(8) Rubalcaba: He leído unas declaraciones suyas del diario La Nación de Argentina donde dice pura y sencillamente que va a revisar el seguro de desempleo. Me gustaría que me dijera si tiene eso en la cabeza o no lo va a revisar […] [I have read some of your statements in La Nación newspaper, where you simply say that you are going to revise the unemployment subsidies. I'd like you to tell me whether you have that in your head or you aren't going to revise it].

In (8), Rubalcaba projects himself as the leader of the opposing party, who questions the leader of the governing party about whether he is going to revise the unemployment subsidies, a task that only corresponds to the leader of the governing party. He therefore constructs a relation of adequation with Rajoy (identities of prime ministerial candidates) and a relation of distinction (professional identities of the leader of the opposing party and the leader of the governing party). At the same time, Rubalcaba "validates the identities constructed by the other [Rajoy], and thus, a relation of authentication is constructed between them" (Stamou, 2018, pp. 579). Indeed, Rubalcaba validates Rajoy as the governing prime ministerial candidate and, hence, he acknowledges an unequal relation of power with respect to the Conservative politician. However, and what is more important, Rubalcaba authenticates Rajoy as the future Prime Minister with his questions.

Rubalcaba further attempts to be seen as a presidentiable candidate, one who is the "legitimate" protector of citizens and who aims to uncover his opponent's toughest policy plans. At the same time, he "tries to write on stone the differences between him and the other candidate" [our translation] (Carrera Boleas, 2012, pp. 130). This way, Rubalcaba makes discursive use of his identity to project a Presidentiable image. See (9), in which the use of evaluative language, when combined with the implicature "Rajoy (and his party) will review the pension system every two years" performs identity work, as the speaker aligns himself with certain identities and disaligns with others (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, pp. 595):

(9) Rubalcaba: Lo que usted está diciendo aquí pura y sencillamente [Appreciation: Reaction: Negative] es que cada dos años el Congreso de los Diputados va a revisar cómo va el sistema de pensiones [Judgement: Propriety: Negative]. Y yo le digo que eso no debe ser así [Judgement: Propriety: Negative]. Yo le digo que nosotros aprobamos un sistema de pensiones en el año 85 [Judgement: Propriety: Positive], solitos, nosotros, sin su apoyo [Judgement: Propriety: Negative]. Y ha dado como resultado 25 años de tranquilidad para los pensionistas [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive]. 'What you are simply saying here is that every two years the House of Representatives is going to revise the pensions system. And I'm telling you it shouldn't be like that. I'm telling you that we passed a pensions system in 1985, alone, we did, without your help. And it has given as a result 25 years of tranquility for pensioners'.

In (9), Rubalcaba interprets PP's platform document as regards pensions, which he assesses negatively, and contrasts Rajoy's (and the Conservative party's) actions with his own and his party's actions with negative Judgement. A negative interpretation and assessment of Rajoy's acts helps Rubalcaba to make identity work: to the extent that his acts differ greatly from Rajoy's, he can cast himself as in possession of a positive identity. At the same time, by taking sides with laymen's interests, he flatters part of the electorate, namely, demotivated Socialists and undecided voters, who may now be more willing to vote for him.

Rubalcaba also tries to undermine Rajoy's credibility for his ambiguous platform document and the lack of clear policies emanating from it by resorting to dichotomous questions that ask the respondent to answer in a yes or no fashion. Questions serve Rubalcaba to "make identity inferences on the basis of pre-conceived narrative 'frames'" (Ponton, 2010, pp. 215), since they "ask what kind of [politician] the questioner [is] positioning" (2010, pp. 210) Rajoy as (see (10) below):

(10) Rubalcaba: Yo lo que le pido es que aclare aquí si va a sacar a las pymes o no de la negociación colectiva, [le pido] si esto que está usted escribiendo aquí, si esta ambigüedad del programa nos la querría aclarar. 'What I'm asking you is that you clarify whether or not you are going to take workers in small and midsized companies from the collective bargaining. I'm asking you if this that you are writing here, if you would be so kind as to clarify this ambiguity of your platform document'.

In (10), the identity inference of Rubalcaba's question is "Rajoy (and his party) will take workers in small and midsized companies out of collective bargaining", which projects a subordinate identity to capitalist interests for Rajoy and, thus, a non-presidentiable identity. However, Rubalcaba's role of inquirer does not give the expected results, as he "seemed like he was acting like a journalist before Mariano Rajoy or assumed his role as the opponent before the President of the Government 'in pectore'" [our translation] (Carrera Boleas, 2012, pp. 127). What is important is that, in an attempt to "corner" Rajoy, Rubalcaba gives him bipolar options "that tend to constrain the range of possible identities that [he] can construct" (Ponton, 2010, pp. 211): 'Rajoy is going to take workers out of collective bargaining' (and, thus, he follows capitalist interests) *versus* 'Rajoy is not going to take workers out of collective bargaining'. However, the Conservative politician dodges all issues and the Socialist "transmitted a certain inferiority feeling" [our translation] (Carrera Boleas, 2012, pp.127) before the new-Prime-Minister-to-be, Rajoy.

Rajoy's construction of identity relies on the use of evaluative devices but, unlike Rubalcaba, they are for the most part of the Affect and Judgement types so as to stress his rival's incapacity to mend the current economic crisis, while he also expresses emotions. Also, he invites identity implicatures that connect him with a necessary change for the country and the new Socialist candidate with Zapatero and his wrong political decisions, such as "Rubalcaba will make the same political decisions that led Spain to the economic crisis" and "Rajoy can bring about a change in Spain", as in (11):

(11) Rajoy: Me lo recuerda usted [a Zapatero] porque han hecho exactamente las mismas políticas a lo largo de todos los años [Judgement: Propriety: Negative], usted es corresponsable del señor Rodríguez Zapatero […] [Judgement: Propriety: Negative]. Por tanto, lo que hay que hacer en España es una política económica total y absolutamente diferente a la que ustedes han hecho y han planteado en estos años [Appreciation: Social Valuation: Positive]. 'You remind me of him [of Zapatero] because you have done exactly the same policies throughout these years; you are co-responsible with Rodriguez Zapatero […]. Therefore, what should be done in Spain is a totally and absolutely different economic policy than that you have implemented and proposed these years'.

Rajoy's identity construction in the 2011 debate also happens in his responses to Rubalcaba: He dodges all questions that were designed to force him into explaining his own (and his party's) plans for belt tightening if he becomes the new Prime Minister and, in doing so, he resorts to breaking the frame (Goffman, 1974) that the Socialist candidate had created (see (12) below):

(12) Rubalcaba: *¿Va usted a aplicar su programa? ¿Sí o no? Y segundo, ¿va usted a aplicar su programa en la reforma laboral? ¿Sí o no?* 'Are you going to follow your electoral program? Yes or no? And second, are you going to follow your program as regards the labour reform? Yes or no?'

Rajoy: *Se lo repito, espero que sea por última vez, que yo no haré lo que ustedes han hecho, que es reducir las prestaciones por desempleo.* 'I'll repeat it for you, I hope it's the last time, I won't do what you have done, which is reduce the unemployment subsidies'.

In (12), Rubalcaba mediates the identity of Rajoy before the audience and tries to have "an active role in creating [Rajoy's] identity, since [his] questions set the parameters within which the interviewee [Rajoy] can negotiate […] [his] emergent identity" (Ponton, 2010, pp. 199, emphasis in original). However, the Conservative politician avoids answering the leading questions and he does so by overtly criticizing his opponent and his party for lowering unemployment subsidies in the past, constructing a denaturalization relation in this way (i.e. he claims the incredibility of Rubalcaba's identity as a protector of citizens). His answer also casts his identity as an honest politician that is far from the Socialist party's identity as liars and dishonest. This is not but part of his strategy of not straying from the script (Carrera Boleas, 2012, pp. 128).

Asked about the problem regarding education in Madrid (where PP was governing locally at the time), Rajoy dodges the question again by playing down Rubalcaba's inference that the Conservative party favors private schools (although state-funded) to the detriment of the public education system, breaking his interlocutor's frame in this way (see (13)):

(13) Rubalcaba: […] señor Rajoy, si nos está pasando en educación [los estudiantes inmigrantes se están derivando de la enseñanza privada-concertada a la enseñanza pública] ¿Qué cree usted que está pasando en la educación madrileña? ¿Qué cree usted que está pasando? 'Mr. Rajoy, it's happening in education too [immigrant students are being derived from state-subsidized schools to state schools]. What do you think is happening to education in Madrid? What do you think is happening?'

Rajoy: Según el informe PISA, es de las mejores de España. 'According to the PISA report, it's one of the best in Spain.'

In (13), Rubalcaba had set up the opposition: state-subsidized schools *versus* state schools; however, Rajoy redirects the question "what is happening to education in Madrid?" and forces a different interpretation, avoiding to answer what Rubalcaba was truly asking by creating the opposition quality of education in Madrid *versus* quality of education in the rest of Communities in Spain.

Finally, Rubalcaba's direct accusations of creating uncertainties for Spaniards and his requests to make Rajoy explain his tough austerity plans if he governs were met with accusations of lying and spreading malicious acts on the Conservative politician's part. By breaking Rubalcaba's frame, Rajoy challenges the authenticity of Rubalcaba's identity and, thus, a relation of denaturalization is constructed between them. At the same time, he allows to emerge a negative identity for his opponent that is in stark contrast with his own positive identity, as in (14):

(14)   Rubalcaba: Usted viene aquí a sembrar una incertidumbre sobre los parados y su prestación por desempleo, incertidumbre sobre los convenios colectivos de las pymes, incertidumbre sobre las pensiones. Señor Rajoy, salga usted de su ambigüedad calculada y dígale a los españoles lo que quiere hacer si gobierna. 'You have come here to spread uncertainty about the unemployed and their unemployment subsidies, uncertainty about the collective bargaining of small and midsized companies, uncertainty about pensions. Mr. Rajoy, get out of that calculated ambiguity and tell Spaniards what you'd like to do if you govern.'

Rajoy: El señor Pérez Rubalcaba no entiende lo que yo le digo y me acusa de sembrar incertidumbres. Aquí el único que siembra algo es usted. Usted siembra insidias. Usted dice que no me preocupa la sanidad pública, que no me preocupa el sistema de pensiones, sólo le preocupa a usted. Eso sí, usted congela las pensiones […]. 'Mr. Pérez Rubalcaba doesn't understand what I'm telling him and he's accusing me of spreading uncertainties. You are here the only one that is spreading something. You're spreading malicious acts. You're saying that I'm not concerned with the public health system, I'm not concerned with pensions, that you are the only one concerned. And yet, you freeze pensions.'

All throughout the debate, both candidates insist on distinguishing themselves from each other, in an attempt to manifest that their own policies and ideological positions are better than those of their opponents', even in cases when they are defending the same or similar political measures. This open contraposition is a clear example of what Bucholtz & Hall (2005) denominate *distinction*, particularly when both debaters blame each other for having implemented the same inefficient policies in the past, such as cuts in social expending (see example 15) or when Rajoy explicitly highlights he is not the same as Rubalcaba:

(15)   Señor Pérez Rubalcaba, yo no soy como usted, no lo soy**.** Usted le bajó el sueldo a los funcionarios, el 5% y no lo llevaba en su programa (…) Yo no soy como usted, lo que no llevo en mi programa, no lo hago, por lo tanto, no me confunda. Le ruego que no me confunda. 'Mr. Pérez Rubalcaba, I am not like you, I am not. You [formal] decreased the civil servants' pension, a 5% and that was not in your program (…) I am not like you, I do not do what is not included in my manifesto, so do not get me wrong, I beg you not to get me wrong'.

6. Conclusions

The present study attempts to determine how Conservative Rajoy and Socialist Rubalcaba construct and negotiate their discursive identities in the 2011 pre-electoral debate by exploring four tools proposed by Bucholtz & Hall (2005): a) the expression of evaluation (in terms of Appraisal); b) the political implicatures raised by the candidates; c) the interactional dimension of their identity construction; and d) the complementary identity relations constructed between the candidates. How politicians construct their identity is a relevant question, since a voter-friendly identity adds to their ethos, which may well serve to persuade the audience to vote for them. It is therefore no wonder that they try to construct a positive identity that comes over well to electors, while at the same time they construct a negative identity for their opponents.

The politicians' identity construction in the Spanish 2011 debate is constrained by its discursive nature; its interactional format, which favors monologs rather than dialogs; the conversational norms of the debate; and the candidates' need to present a positive image before the audience and a negative one for their opponent. Indeed, part of the politicians' identity construction happens in the monological sections of the debate, where the candidates try to show a presidentiable identity in an attempt to win votes to their side. In the dialogical sections, Rubalcaba, in his role of inquirer, attempts to have an active role in constructing Rajoy's emergent identity when trying to position him according to the preconceived political frame that the Conservative politician is hiding his true face. However, Rajoy rejects the identity inferences projected by the questions outright. On the other hand, both politicians' construction of their identity happens on the basis

of similarity/distinction relations between the politicians and of authentication/denaturalization, although Rubalcaba goes further to authenticate Rajoy as future Prime Minister in an attempt to reveal his real self.

In more specific terms, Rubalcaba's general strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation serves him to position the Conservative candidate as disguising his plans, having capitalist interests and implementing Strict Father policies, which is why he adopts the role of inquirer. At the same time, he constructs a positive identity for himself by taking sides with laymen's interests through evaluative language (Nurturant Parent identity) (mainly of the Appreciation type, to emphasize the impact of the policies of the opposing party on Spaniards) combined with the implicature "The Popular party will make harsh budget cuts if they win". However, his attempts do not have the desired effects and are even counterproductive.

On his own part, Rajoy plays down the inferences of Rubalcaba's questions by tying his interlocutor to former Prime Minister Zapatero and his wrong political decisions and by breaking the frame that his opponent had created. Also, Rajoy invites the identity of change and embodies it in the debate, while he also refuses to cast his identity as a Strict Father not to scare voters away. Instead, he projects himself as a defender of Nurturant Parent policies. This also happens through evaluative language (mainly of the Judgement type to emphasize the Socialists' incapacity to mend the Spanish economy) and the implicature "Zapatero and the Socialist party are to blame of the current economic crisis". The identity of change resonates heavily with voters, who are eager for a change in an economy that showed disastrous data; however, the years to come have shown the emergence of an identity Rajoy had hidden for fear of alienating public sympathy.

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