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What is This?
Presidential candidates’ ethos of credibility: The case of the presidential pronoun I in the 2012 Hollande–Sarkozy debate

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Abstract
The traditional televised debate remains a decisive event in the French presidential elections. This study aims to examine the ways in which French presidential candidates in 2012 reinforce their credibility, their ethos. More specifically, I will study the use of the pronoun I as used in the debate by the candidates, a text element that refers to a physically present I behind the discourse. This pronoun is essential in the ‘self-presentation’ being developed by candidates in the debates. So, I try to categorize the different types of ‘I’ relating to the concepts of, for example, solidarity, commitment, authority, patriotism. Second, I will analyze the relationship between ethos and rhetorical use of the French sentential negation ne … pas, the most significant and frequently used counter-argumentative tool used in electoral debates. My studies have shown that counter-argumentation by negation is a relevant parameter for determining the type of text (polemic) and the genre (political debate). The study therefore aims to highlight the relationship between constructions of credibility as presented through the candidates’ use of I, on the one hand, and the refutation of one or the other candidate’s arguments, on the other. This study is based on an assumption of the theory of polyphony that the sentence negation stratifies the utterance into two points of view that are hierarchically organized and semantically opposed: one that refutes and the other being refuted. My assumption is that candidates build ethos by developing a counter-image of the other candidate. Using the negation then allows the candidates to refer to a negative image of their protagonists, while at the same time providing a positive image of themselves: ‘I would not call my Prime Minister a traitor’ (Holland, 2012). Sentence negation also seems to be used to save their own ethos, which is the case when candidate A refutes an argument (from candidate B) which discriminates the positive image of candidate A: ‘Of course I do not take all the credit, but I also do not take all the blame Mr Hollande’ (Sarkozy, 2012). These types of examples

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show that the form ‘I’ in relation to the function of negation is relevant to an examination of the ethos rhetoric of the candidates.

**Keywords**
Counter-argumentation, discourse analysis, ethos, linguistic polyphony, media, negation, personal pronouns, political debates, rhetoric

**Introduction**

**Aim and background of the study**

The traditional televised debate remains a decisive event in the French presidential elections. This study aims to examine the ways in which the 2012 French presidential candidates reinforce their credibility, their ethos, in interaction. More specifically, I study the use of the pronoun I as used in the debate by the candidates, an element that refers to a physically present I behind the discourse. Second, I analyze the relationship between ethos and rhetorical use of the sentential negation ne . . . pas, the most significant and frequently used counter-argumentative tool used in electoral debates (Roitman, 2013). My studies have shown that counter-argumentation by negation is a relevant parameter for determining the type of text (polemic) and the genre (political debate). The study therefore aims to highlight the relationship between constructions of credibility as presented through the candidates’ use of I, on the one hand, and the refutation of one or the other candidate’s arguments, on the other.

The questions I asked in order to formulate the aim of this study were as follows:

1. What forms are used to express ethos in the debate?
2. What importance does the genre ‘political debate’ have for the establishment of ethos?
3. What effect do pre-established representations of the candidates have on their ethos?
4. What relationship exists between negation and the ethos of the presidential candidates?

The main aim of the study is to expand knowledge and further understanding of the construction of ethos and counter-argumentation in French political discourse and to identify the linguistic and rhetorical mechanisms involved.

**Ethos and I in a political debate: To what end?**

A presidential candidate has to appear credible. To convince people that behind all the grand speeches there is a serious character and political agenda to be voted for, one must create a credible image for oneself in discourse. Constructing a rhetorical ethos of credibility, following Aristotelian principles, is about the values attached to personal and professional qualities such as candor, fairness, righteousness, good moral character, good
sense, modesty, responsibility, fortitude, etc. (Charaudeau and Maingueneau, 2002: 238; Maingueneau, 1999, 2002).

Very little research has been conducted on how the pronoun I can help us to identify the mechanisms behind presentation of self that are employed by presidential candidates. The presidential elections are inevitably about choosing a single candidate, and when reaching the second round it seems as though the media no longer focus on political parties but on the two remaining candidates; it is now a matter of electing the Head of State, the position carrying the most official power and the most prestige in the French Republic.

I believed it would be particularly interesting to continue along this path, having learnt that a study carried out by Véronis (2012) showed that Sarkozy’s use of I increased considerably during the three periods of his career when he was a candidate (firstly to lead L’Union pour un mouvement populaire (Union for a Popular Movement) in 2004 and then for presidency in 2007 and 2012). Véronis’ lexicometric study is based on 728 political speeches given by Sarkozy between 2004 and 2012 (and by Hollande from January to May 2012). His statistics show that the use of I will increase significantly until the evening of the second round of presidential elections, and then steadily decrease thereafter (Véronis, 2012). The number of Is used by Sarkozy at the end of the 2012 campaign matched the levels measured at the same period of the campaign in 2007.

It goes without saying that the personal pronoun I is one of the forms related to the construction of ethos during the presidential duel. The explicit Is of the discourse should introduce the image that the candidates wish to project of themselves. The use of I in presidential speeches has also been the topic of earlier studies in lexicometry and discourse analysis. Adam (1999: 101–126) studied ethos in speeches by Presidents de Gaulle, Giscard d’Estaing and Mitterrand based on a model that takes into account their use of argumentative connectors, performative speech acts and personal pronouns. Fiala and Leblanc (2004) and Leblanc and William (2005) carried out lexicometric studies on the verbs and adjectives accompanying the Is, we and yous used in presidential speeches. They found a certain pattern in the use of certain Is that were weaker in meaning: ‘what I would like’. Also taking a lexicometric approach, Marchand and Dupuy (2009, 2011, 2012) and Véronis (2007a, 2007b, 2012) studied the use of pronouns, among other linguistic units, in traditional presidential debates. However, to my knowledge, no extensive studies like this one have been carried out that investigate the function of pronouns as part of discourse analysis.

**Theoretical framework**

**Ethos: The possibilities and limitations of a concept**

The term ethos as used in discourse analysis refers to a qualitative concept used to describe all forms of explicit expression with which the speaker establishes the credibility of his/her message (Charaudeau and Maingueneau, 2002). In this study, the notion of ‘ethos’ will be limited to linguistic expressions seen in their generic context.

Aristotle (Kennedy, 1991) defines ethos as the elements that make it easier to trust a speaker, most notably: good sense, good moral, character and good will. As early as Aristotle, there was a divide between pre-discursive and discursive ethos. The former is
made up of collective images and ideas, platitudes and qualities associated with a specific position in society, but also with a person. The concept of pre-discursive ethos, which has been revised to fit discourse analysis, is thus fueled by more or less identifiable ‘knowledge’ that is common to a linguistic, social and cultural community (Amossy, 2010; Maingueneau, 2002: 238). Candidates’ credibility is thus based on pre-discursive ethos as well as on discursive ethos, that is, the effective representation of oneself among the audience, influenced by the generic and social contexts of the communicative event itself. This dimension of ethos thus emerges in the debate itself, as the result of using a discourse that either consolidates or rectifies pre-discursive ethos; in other words, it arises from linguistic materiality in the actual discourse. Even if ethos in a broad sense touches on issues of identity, it entails, within the framework of discourse analysis, studying ethos as it appears in discourse, that is, how the candidates present themselves and their qualities discursively – rather than analyzing the psychology and ethics of the real person behind the text. Here, we shall be concerned with analyzing the interaction between discursive ethos and pre-discursive ethos.

Amossy (2010: 42) states that ethos is ‘an integral dimension of discourse’ and that all speech acts constitute ‘presentation of self’. She also speaks about rhetorical (instrumental) ethos, in other words the efficiency of a discourse with a specific purpose: how what we say and how we say it is efficient with regards to purpose, in a discursive situation where we wish to convince people, such as in political speeches or advertising. Thus, the challenges of discursive ethos are as follows: discourse, in the sense of oral or written production, will always constitute an indirect and often unconscious presentation of the speaker’s identity. On the other hand, ethos can be intentional, that is to say the product of elaborative work on the locutor’s image to make the text convincing. Ethos thus represents an aspect of rhetorical style that the speaker must adopt in order to capture the attention and gain the confidence of the audience, and to appear credible and friendly. It appends to the audience’s imagination in order to appeal to its pathos (Amossy, 2000: 86, 2010: 72). Amossy (2010), like Maingueneau (1999, 2002), notes that ethos (pre-discursive and discursive) in discourse analysis concerns the discursive image transmitted of someone rather than the image of the real person.

Amossy (2010: 10) also insists that first-person discourses deserve investigation, given that they ‘allow us to see how identity constructs itself in verbal exchanges, how it [identity] is negotiated in relation to an interlocutor and to what extent it is linked to issues of discursive efficiency’.

**Rhetorical ethos and the genre ‘political debate’**

I support, as do Adam (1999), Charaudeau (2001) and Maingueneau (1999) among others, the importance of including the parameters of genre in any description of discursive phenomena, including ethos. Amossy (2010: 9) shares this opinion and writes that ‘presentation of self’ is ‘a discursive construction’: the locutor positions him/herself and constructs an identity in and with the discourse, also positioning him/herself within a social and generic space. I make the assumption that the presidential debate will be conditioned by certain discursive, cultural and institutional constraints of this particular genre (Charaudeau, 2001).
Maingueneau (2007: 60–64) developed a model that connects discursive phenomena such as ethos with the *enunciation scene* of a discourse. This involves (1) ‘the overall scene’, which represents the type of discourse in question, that is, its function – intention – conveyed by certain formal traits; the discourse may thus have narrative, educational, argumentative, etc. function; (2) ‘the generic scene’, which represents the social and cultural norms concerning the textual mode and the distribution of the set roles with which we label texts: novel, manual, essay, etc.; and finally (3), ‘scenography’, which represents the form in which messages are presented. Maingueneau suggests that the interpretation of ethos – and other rhetorical-discursive phenomena – should be analyzed in light of these three phenomena.13

When applying these concepts to our corpus, it is necessary to take into account that an argumentative text such as a political debate (the overall scene) aims to persuade, and that the *I*s, which refer to empirical subjects, are linked to the (ideological, argumentative) positioning of the discourse. One must also consider that the electoral debate is an interactive genre (generic scene) often involving formalized and/or ritualized turns of phrase. Finally, interaction can be staged in different ways (scenography) and interlocutors may take different roles according to the type of text: father–son, professor–student, informed–uninformed, etc. It is in the light of these three enunciation scenes that I will attempt to examine devices of rhetorical ethos of credibility in the candidates’ speech. Maingueneau (2007) also notes that one must view the two dimensions of ethos – discursive and pre-discursive – in light of the concept of genre.

*Ethos and elements of language*

Presentation of self can be achieved directly or indirectly. Benveniste (1966: 252) dealt with language from the speaker’s perspective; anchored in the communicative situation, the *locutor* (the speaking subject) leaves traces in his discourse, and it is by using certain linguistic units – deictic expressions in particular – that the subject emerges in the discourse; subjectivity par excellence is marked by the personal pronoun *I*. However, people are probably less likely to explicitly say ‘I am an honest person’ than to show their honesty via their arguments, one of voice, careful choice of words, etc. What has been extensively researched in the field of *enunciation theory* is the dual nature of the pronoun *I* (Barthes, 1970: 212; Ducrot, 1984: 199): on the one hand, the speaker is making him/herself the topic of his/her own discourse, meaning that the *I* is an entity in the discourse, namely that under discussion. On the other hand, speakers present themselves in everything they say, in their intonation, attitude, choice of words, that is, in every possible way that could refer to the empirical subject behind the discourse. Ducrot notes that expressions reflecting ethos (attitudes, value judgments, etc.) are attributed to the locutor, the one responsible for the utterance and the one who – explicitly or not – refers to the speaker, the empirical *I* behind the text. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1980: 32) is interested in ‘subjectivemes’, that is to say units of language which denote the speaker behind the discourse without them appearing explicitly: these are affective, axiological and evaluative words. Thus, it may be concluded that the locutor’s ethos is expressed even if there is no explicit *I*.

This division between the *speaker of the utterance* and the *represented ethos*, on the one hand, and the *speaker of the enunciation* and the *situated ethos*, on the other, has
been explored in some polyphonic models under different names (Charaudeau and Maingueneau, 2002; Ducrot, 1984: 201; Nølke et al., 2004). It therefore follows that a distinction can be made between what I will hereinafter refer to as represented Is and situated Is. The represented I refers to the speaking entities in the discourse – the protagonists of the interaction – and constitutes the persons presenting the topics of the communicative event. This I certainly refers to the speaker but not as speaker, rather as a subject of other (past, present or future) actions or properties – for example, as future president, rather than as speaker. The situated I refers, on the other hand, to the empirical subject and has a meta-linguistic or pragmatic function; it positions itself in the discourse in relation to the arguments presented and the progress of the interaction; it stages the utterances and imposes itself explicitly by commenting on its own discourse and arguments as well as those of the other. It plays quite an important role in debates, where candidates have to position themselves, be in control, and take and keep the floor. Here are three examples of these two types of I for illustrative purposes:

Hollande: I must say [situated I], this evening, what a president I will be [represented I] if the French people place their trust in me.

Hollande: After this digression, I now come [situated I] on to the right to vote. On the right to vote, it’s a position I have been defending [represented I] for years.

Sarkozy: I am not your pupil [represented I]. I will respond to that [situated I] once I have told you what I need to tell you [represented I].

In my analysis, I will investigate these types of explicit ‘I’ across the generic levels proposed by Maingueneau (2007).15

Hypotheses

My first general hypothesis is as follows: the more discrepancy between the pre-discursive and effective ethos, the more costly the presentation of self will be in discourse. The more the two ethè correspond with one another, the less costly the presentation of self will be. Sarkozy has a fairly loaded, negative pre-discursive ethos and Hollande, as a rookie in this race, has a much less important and less negative pre-discursive ethos. As a result, the latter has less to defend.

Given that the debate is an interactive and argumentative genre between two adversaries, it is fairly natural that the outgoing president will find himself in a defensive position. I therefore believe that the candidates’ ethos will not always be the rhetorical ethos desired, but one that results from a certain level of ‘self-defence’ in this confrontation. Negation thus seems to play an important role with regards to the candidates’ rhetorical ethos.

Analysis of the two faces of I and rhetorical ethos

With the aim of presenting oneself as a future president who will perform one’s duties – who will transform one’s promises into actions, listen and try to respond to the demands of the people and have the power to implement one’s projects – the strategies available to do
so are numerous. I have therefore chosen to analyze one aspect of language which is crucial to ethos, notably the first-person singular pronoun I. I work with the two forms of explicit I. The represented Is represent the two protagonists and provide, together with their verbs, the topics of the discourse. They can thus be contradicted, agreed with, etc. The situated Is emerge from the enunciation – in keeping with Ducrot – and present the actual speaker behind the discourse. These two types of I, which both reflect ethos, will be analyzed by taking their accompanying verbs into consideration. I have categorized and quantified the Is of the two candidates according to the semantics and argumentative value of their accompanying verbs. Table 1 shows this breakdown of I–ethè from the examined corpus.

In Table 1, I have categorized the various represented Is based on the predicates that qualify them and with which they express an ethos of credibility. Here are two examples of this categorization: the words ‘I prefer to stand by a position I have been defending for years’ (Hollande) express the ethos of sincerity and fidelity; the words ‘Yesterday I addressed all French people’ (Sarkozy) express the ethos of unity. The candidates present these Is, project a discursive image of their character, their opinions, their political projects and their ability to implement them. The situated Is, however, form a more functional category; they position the speaker within the communicative event: ‘I tell you one thing, Mr Hollande: I am proud…’ (Sarkozy), ‘Do I need to remind you that you’ve been in power for ten years?’ (Hollande).

Adopting Maingueneau’s model of the enunciation scene, I started from the hypothesis that discursive phenomena are conditioned by socio-cultural context, genre (the linguistic-discursive forms conventional to political debates) and chosen forms of presentation. For ethos analysis, I will also take into consideration the institutional framework of the role of president and of the elections (type of discourse – overall scene), topics addressed, vocabulary, enunciative processes (generic scene) and types of interaction (chosen scenarios).

Let us first analyze the breakdown. We can see that there are four dominating categories and other categories which are fairly small but do appear in the speech of the two candidates. It is clear that Hollande produces more Is than Sarkozy in the represented Is category. Hollande dominates or draws with Sarkozy in all areas except ‘ethos of authority’. In addition, he seems to need to present himself in front of the audience and he strives harder to deliver his political visions. It also appears logical that Sarkozy, the outgoing president, is often the one who presents himself as an authority. Although I did not quantify Is + negation separately, my comparisons show that it is Sarkozy in particular who uses this collocation, often to defend himself. Thus, based on preliminary findings, my first hypothesis can be accepted. In the situated Is category, we can see that the breakdown is almost equal, even if Sarkozy is the one using the most situated Is in terms of the positioning of power. His institutional role as President of the Fifth French Republic compels him to demonstrate his position and power to his people. It thus seems natural that Sarkozy presents an ethos of powerful leadership, having been president for five years.

**Represented Is**

Dominating categories of represented Is include action and fortitude Is (extracts 1–2), ideologue Is (3–4) and humble leader Is (5–6). The candidates’ rhetorical ethè thus
mainly relate to the image of being a man of action, having the power to implement envisaged projects, persisting in this position, having political visions for the future, yet still being of a humble nature, that is, being able to listen to and converse with one’s people and to respect them, but also able to admit to one’s own limitations when faced with serious problems:

(1) Hollande: I will implement a flat rate which will mean that consumers, up to a certain point, a certain volume of consumption, will pay the same tariff.

(2) Sarkozy: I’ve made a certain number of commitments, the number of public sector employees will be stabilized globally over the next five years and public spending will not increase by more than 1% per year.

(3) Hollande: I believe that 300 euros for a pair of minimum wage earners is unacceptable.

(4) Sarkozy: I don’t feel that we will reduce our spending, our deficit and our debt by sending debt to Europe as it will be secured by no one if not the two most powerful countries in Europe, Germany and France. It’s irresponsible.

(5) Hollande: I have great confidence in the nuclear industry but attention must be paid to the new generation of reactors.

(6) Sarkozy: I want to speak to them and say: you have expressed a choice, it isn’t one I share but I respect you and acknowledge you. I have heard your demands for the nation, the borders, and for authenticity, authority and firmness.

Table 1. Breakdown of rhetorical ethè of I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Represented I's</th>
<th>Hollande</th>
<th>Sarkozy</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of unity</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of being a respectful and humble leader</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of sincerity and faithfulness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of politeness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of authority</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of emotional commitment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of political will</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of ideologue</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of action and fortitude</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of responsibility</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of indignation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total represented I's</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situated I's</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of discourse mastery</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and the ethos of positioning of power</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total situated I's</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total represented I's and situated I's</td>
<td>487</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ethos most often expressed by the candidates is associated with action and fortitude (1–2). If we assume that the candidates are aware of the image they wish to portray during the debate, these qualities would naturally be those that give them the most credibility.

Second most frequent are ideologue Is; this ethos is often negotiated, in other words the fact of presenting oneself as having political visions is questioned by the other. The ethos of a humble I – when candidates present themselves as being close to the people and respectful, and will admit the difficulty involved in governing a country – is also often negotiated; Sarkozy and Hollande both want to claim this ethos, but each is also challenged by the other. The figures in Table 1 thus render discursive analysis problematic: the actual ethos will also depend greatly on the interactive devices used, not solely those of the isolated statement. Here (7) is an example of how this ethos is negotiated:

(7) Sarkozy: Finally, I think that this debate should be a moment of democracy where French people, when switching off their televisions, say: ‘We like one but we prefer the other, we might disagree with what they say but they have not lied to us, they have not bypassed anything, they have been true’. That’s our challenge Mr Hollande, to be true.
Hollande: Yes, everyone will have their truth and everyone will be genuine, I do not imagine that you are pretending here.

The less important categories are nonetheless still interesting, at least from a comparative point of view. Politics is nothing without the will of male and female politicians to change areas of society that are not running as well as others: the poor financial situation, injustices, inequalities, etc. In the debate, examples of willingness Is are fairly numerous, even if they are less important than the categories above:

(8) Hollande: I want to be a president who will recover production, employment, growth.

(9) Sarkozy: I want to mobilize public money, not for those who are already employed but for those who are looking for work.

(10) Hollande: I also want to be a rallying president [...] I want to reunite them because I believe we need all of France’s forces.

A topic that comes up and was a hot issue during the campaign is that of unity (of the people, the citizens, the French people), which resulted in the ethos of a unity I. Since Sarkozy came to power, he has been attributed a pre-discursive ethos of being the president who, on the contrary, has divided the French people. Hollande also plays on this ethos in his arguments: the ethos of unity is in effect the issue that was most negotiated during this debate. The following (11–12) are two excerpts from a longer sequence on this topic:

(11) Sarkozy: Just a word about unity. Unity, it’s a wonderful word, a wonderful idea, but it needs to be put in context. Unity is when you speak to the French people, all French people. I am not a one-party man, I do not speak to the Left. Yesterday I addressed all French people.
Hollande: (…) I would like to return to the issue of unity, because like you I believe that it’s an essential notion for our country. And if you think that for five years you have united all French people, you haven’t divided them, you haven’t resisted them, you haven’t pointed your finger at him, or her a bit further away, then I’d like to grant you qualified discharge. But I know that French people have felt as though they have always been subject to separation and segregation.

The fact that an interactive situation such as a debate is a communicative event where ethos is negotiated is very apparent here. Each speaker claims to have an ethos of unity, which in these elections appears to have a certain symbolic value, without doubt due to the heavy criticism Sarkozy attracted during his five-year term. A dominant component of Sarkozy’s pre-discursive ethos that quite rightly circulates in the media is his ‘divide and rule’ presidential style, something that has become a ‘discursive stigma’ which he wishes to shake off. With the example above, we are inevitably approaching the role of negation in the establishment of ethos. It justly plays the role of negotiator here; it is up to the spectators to judge who will unite the French people.

If we consider the overall scene here, we can see that the ethè of the represented Is fulfill the global purpose of the candidates’ interventions, notably to show the electorate that they have the will, the power and political ideas to change things. At a generic level, we can see that there is a certain ritualization in the way the same verbs appear, for example: ‘I will commit to’, ‘I will be a … president’, etc. With regards to scenography, there is a power struggle that resembles a to-ing and fro-ing between a false statement (13) – irony – and the authoritarian style of an omniscient and sarcastic leader (14):

(13) Hollande: So you’re very disgruntled with yourself. I had to be wrong, I had to make mistakes. I am trying to apologize, you are very disgruntled with yourself.

(14) Sarkozy: Mr Hollande, I know that you have a sense of humour but you, stand by your convictions, frankly, that’s just not your style.

Sarkozy dominates this struggle, but both candidates are sarcastic and ironic to a point.

**Situated Is and the art of governing one’s discourse**

The explicit Is of the situated ethos assist in the management of discursive activity and the positioning of the speaker; meta-discursive Is are those that comment on one’s own discourse as well as that of the protagonist. This is switching par excellence, which refers to the physical and mental presence of the speaker, I, as in: ‘I have to say this evening what type of president I will be’ (Hollande). In the debate, we come across formulas like ‘I have a question’, ‘Let me come on to your proposition’, ‘What I expect from the debate’, ‘Let me discuss my reasons’ (Sarkozy) and ‘I’m coming on to my propositions’, ‘Let me explain’, ‘Now I’m going to come on to the question’ (Hollande). These situated Is are typical for any public interaction that involves holding an explanatory and educational talk in front of an audience, a speech that runs the risk of being interrupted by one’s adversary. With these Is, the candidates are each in control of their own speech – they position themselves and take their place – by giving us information about their discursive activity.
The majority of situated *Is*, however, operate from a position that is more orientated towards argumentation. They function as *proof of authority behind the discourse* of the speaker who claims to be right. These *Is* reinforce the claims of authority that they introduce and function as factual verbs, underlying the ‘truth’ behind the arguments that follow:

(15) Hollande: May I remind people that under your leadership over these last 5 years, public spending has increased by 2%.

(16) Hollande: I would also like to point out to you that there are French people of Muslim faith nowadays.

(17) Sarkozy: Let me tell you why. I have explained it to you already.

(18) Hollande: I tell you, it is better to adopt an intelligent position than a dogmatic one.

(19) Sarkozy: I’ll give you three examples that show how the spirit of unity is the lifeblood of French society.

(20) Sarkozy: May I remind you that the Taliban decided that little girls would not go to school.

The situated *Is* of the debate (21–23) here expose a *metalinguistic discussion* concerning the allocation of speaking time, not without a certain level of irony; this is how one identifies a debate:

(21) Hollande: I’ll let you finish since you seem to want to continue. Go ahead.

(22) Hollande: Can I stop you there? Can I stop you there? This rule already exists for Community residents.

(23) Sarkozy: If I can just conclude my reasoning…
    Hollande: Answer my question.
    Sarkozy: Thank you. I’m going to conclude my reasoning.

The situated *I* is also a constituent part of the *demonstration of power* in debates. It is about trying to control the interaction and being the one dominating the discourse. These forms of ‘I’ transmit the ethos of a person who is in control of his speech, who positions himself and who, as a result, portrays the image that he is able to run his country. Sarkozy is often the one producing situated *Is*:

(24) Sarkozy: Mr Hollande, you have spoken, undoubtedly because you are unhappy with my position as a normal president. I tell you, the role of President of the French Republic is anything but a normal position.

(25) Sarkozy: I tell you one thing, Mr Hollande: it is a source of pride. There are those who speak of unity and there are those who have made it a reality.
We have seen that these Is operate on the level of the overall scene, which is linked to the function of the text – the persuasive purpose. It is also interesting to study them from the level of the textual genre, as stereotyped traits (of dominance, authority: *I tell you*) in debates between authorities in a political context. Let us now turn to how, as with the represented Is, the situated Is reveal an ambition to construct a relationship of power at the level of scenography. We will thus witness ironic and sarcastic attitudes as well as other domination strategies in the statements introduced by these Is. In (26), Hollande ironically stages a (false) statement:

(26) Hollande: So you’re very upset with yourself. I had to be wrong, I had to make mistakes. I am trying to apologize, you are very disgruntled with yourself.

**Rhetorical ethos negotiated by negation: ‘I am not like you, I do things differently’**

In Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2005: 94), we see that in an interactive situation such as that of a political debate, the construction of ethos, as it is envisaged by the audience, is to a certain extent a negotiation, in other words the protagonists fabricate an image of themselves, an image that always risks counter-attack. Amossy also adds that the protagonists themselves can ‘cast doubt on [the ethos of the other], correct it, reject it or even reflect a different, potentially unfavourable image’ (2010: 132). It is at this stage that negation becomes interesting in the candidates’ speech. We will see how the two-fold division of pre-discursive and discursive ethos will be of use in this part of the analysis.

Before explaining the relationship between ethos and negation, I shall first present the basic postulate of negation as something that functions polyphonically (Ducrot, 1984; Nølke et al., 2004). Sentential negation is one of the entities described in French enunciation theory (Anscombe and Ducrot, 1983) as polyphonic, that is, a unit which has an intrinsic argumentative value which causes a stratification of its utterance in two points of view. According to this model, negation thus stratifies an utterance in two superposed and hierarchically-organized points of view: the refuting (negating) and the refuted (underlying affirmative). The following (27) is an illustration of the *polyphony of negation*:

(27) Hollande: No. Did he belong to PPE or not? Answer my question. Sarkozy: I am not your pupil.

The stratification of the negated utterance is thus:

Point of view (pov) 1: ‘I am your pupil.’
Point of view (pov) 2: ‘I am not your pupil.’

Point of view 1, affirming that ‘I am your pupil’, underlies the negating point of view 2, ‘I am not your pupil’. This underlying pov 1, implicit in the negative statement, the refutation, can be associated with another protagonist than the one uttering the statement, in this case with Hollande. Ironically, Sarkozy, by referring to Hollande’s previous
question, attributes pov 1 to his adversary, a point of view that Sarkozy refutes. Thus, pov 2 (negative) is associated with Sarkozy and might be paraphrased in the following way: ‘you think that I am your pupil but I am not’. Proponents of the Scandinavian theory of polyphony (Nølke et al., 2004) also developed the notion of enunciative links, which is based on the idea of associating the povs of a text with different discursive entities, namely linguistic markers of people. In (27), pov 2 (negative) is, by default, associated with the locutor, Sarkozy, the one responsible for the enunciation, whereas the association of pov 1 is underdetermined in language but can be associated with the interlocutor (Hollande) or the collective voice in discourse.

If we return to our hypotheses, rhetorical ethos seems, at least in part, to be built on an unfavorable image which is created by negation of the opposite candidate. This image is often based on a pre-discursive ethos. The rhetorical function of negation, based on its status as a marker of linguistic polyphony, thus seems relevant in the examination of candidates’ ethè. We can see that examples where candidates refer to the other’s or their own pre-discursive ethos are often limited to the unity Is and the humble leader Is, but also affect other types of ethos in the debate.

Below, Hollande presents himself as an open, reconciling and cooperative president by indirectly classing Sarkozy as one who distinguishes between governing assemblies, different professional categories, employees, etc. In (28–29) he directly refers to certain events that have taken place. The pre-discursive ethos of a leader who breaks up his country is fueled by the media’s description of Sarkozy and his peremptory character, a recurring topic during the electoral campaign:

(28) Hollande: Me, I don’t distinguish between work that is ‘real’ and work that is not, between trade unionists that I like and those that I don’t, between employer organizations that I am in favour of and those I am not. No. I am neither against private nor public sector workers.

(29) Hollande: I, President of the Republic, will not deal with my Prime Minister as though he/she were a traitor.

These examples show that negation allows the user to play on the pre-discursive ethos of the other candidate. Thus, Hollande’s positive ethos is reinforced by the demeaning image of Sarkozy – underlying the denied statement – that Hollande puts across by using negation. It is the staging of this pre-discursive ethos, transmitted by the underlying point of view and the refuting thereof which lends power to these examples of rhetorical ethos. We can see that negation can be a very useful tool for the presentation of self, given that the candidate who makes use of it kills two birds with one stone: he improves his own image while demeaning that of the other. Thus, there will be a conflict between the image that Sarkozy paints of himself during the debate and that staged by Hollande. This negation strategy is even more effective in a debate where it is difficult for one’s adversary to contest what is being said in an indirect manner. Given that (28) is an indirect way of saying that Sarkozy separates work that is real from work that is not, it is not as easy to rectify as it would have been if the other had openly said that Sarkozy was wrong to separate work that is real from work that is not, etc. This is why I believe that negation negotiates ethos in the debate. Negation, essentially a polyphonic phenomenon, produces an
underlying statement, a pre-discursive ethos, which, at this stage, can be associated with a collective voice adhering to a certain image of Sarkozy. It is therefore not solely an idea invented by Hollande on the spur of the moment; he justly plays on these existing negative, pre-discursive ethos about Sarkozy by saying that he, Hollande, would do things differently.

The following (30–31) are two examples of the same type where Sarkozy presents himself as the candidate who understands and listens to the aspirations of the ‘people’, and who speaks to all French people without exception:

(30) Sarkozy: I am not a one-party man, I do not speak to the Left. Yesterday I addressed all French people, not just the trade unionists who have a perfect role to play, unity means speaking to everyone, including those who do not share your ideas.

(31) Sarkozy: I didn’t need a clothes peg to hold my nose, Mr Hollande. I haven’t taught people living in areas I don’t live, or who send their children to schools I don’t live near, moral lessons. For me, there are no secondary citizens.

In (30), Sarkozy plays on the pre-discursive ethos that ‘Hollande is a one-party man’, or that ‘Hollande only speaks to the Left’, unlike Sarkozy who has been president for a five-year term and already assumes, as Head of State, the role of someone who unites the people. Negation kills two birds with one stone: it transmits the message that Hollande remains a leader of the Left and that Sarkozy himself is the leader of all French people. By using negation, Sarkozy implies the belittling pre-discursive ethos that ‘Hollande is far removed (in every sense) from the people’, that ‘he is a snob and a moralist’ or even that ‘Hollande ignores the situations of the non-integrated’. Inherent in these two examples (31–32), there are two larger pre-discursive ethos – that ‘the Left is an exclusive party’ and that ‘Lefties are intellectual snobs who always think they are right’ – to which Sarkozy has referred at other points, above all in the debate in 2007 against Ségolène Royal.

‘I am not the person you claim I am’: Rhetorical ethos negotiated by negation

The other example of a link between polyphonic negation and rhetorical ethos is when the candidates wish to shake off a belittling pre-discursive ethos attributed to themselves. This may be a pre-discursive ethos in the sense of a collective image or even an ethos created during the debate. Negations also allow speakers to refute the belittling pre-discursive ethos attributed to them and even to correct – negotiate – this ethos:

(32) Hollande: You say to us: ‘I have implemented a certain number of difficult reforms’, but at what price for the French people? What price for the injustices that have been caused, the inequalities that have been made worse? […] if a five-year term comes to an end having been vetoed and there having been no violence, as you claim, I think the credit for this goes to the French people.

Sarkozy: Of course I do not take all the credit, but I also do not take all the blame, Mr Hollande.

The negation introducing Sarkozy’s statement constitutes an understatement ‘I do not take all the credit’: it is as though he were sweetening a pre-discursive ethos that “Sarkozy
takes all the credit’, thereby presenting himself as a ‘humble leader’ who does not personally take all the credit. In the negation that follows ‘I also do not …’, he attempts to refute the pre-discursive ethos attributed to him by Hollande and others that ‘he takes all the blame’. Sarkozy thus negotiates his ethos by playing on two superlatives, ‘all the credit’ and ‘all the blame’, which reinforces the effect of a certain disguised omnipotence, on the one hand, and the victimization that Sarkozy often makes use of, on the other.

The discussion on the need to unite a divided people ensues. The pre-discursive ethos attached to the outgoing president is that ‘Sarkozy is to blame for injustices and inequalities’; this is the image that Hollande evokes as a reply and that Sarkozy attempts to shake off by refuting it. Thus, belittling pre-discursive ethè are evoked here to harm an adversary and these ethè are then negotiated by Sarkozy with the use of negation:

(33) Sarkozy: I’d like to point out that the spirit of unity that has driven me for the past five years is that there has never been any violence throughout my five-year term; I have never been forced to withdraw an offensive document or a text that would have created a climate of civil war in our country.

Sarkozy later returns to the very same pre-discursive ethos attributed to him, one that he wants to make disappear at all costs, and he tries to do so by using negation:

(34) Sarkozy: There have been demonstrations, they have been peaceful, nobody has felt humiliated, there has been no division, no rioting, no violence.

Hollande does not have as loaded a pre-discursive ethos as Sarkozy, which presents anyone who wishes to attack his past with a difficult task. Nevertheless, Sarkozy tries to conjure up friendship links between Hollande and his predecessor for candidacy, Dominique Strauss Kahn (DSK) – defined by the New York scandal – in order to render him suspect 21:

(35) Hollande: I was not the one who elected Dominique Strauss Kahn Head of the IMF.
Sarkozy: I do not know him as well as you.
Hollande: But I also did not know him any more than you did […] Do you think you really know the private lives of your employees or your friends? I don’t. I don’t know them.

Even if one might think this is a low blow on Sarkozy’s part, insinuating that Hollande has something to do with DSK’s actions means that it is not without risk that Hollande has to defend himself against this ‘no smoke without fire’ idea evoked by Sarkozy, to contradict a fairly innocent pre-discursive ethos that ‘Hollande knows DSK’. Given all the connotations evoked by the former candidate and the extension of the word know, this (de)negation ‘I do not know him’ would be open to interpretations that could stretch fairly widely, of the type: ‘I am not perverted.’ The audience could ask why it is necessary to reveal such supposed links with DSK.

I have therefore avoided saying that these ethè are refuted by negations, as rhetorical ethos is ultimately a discursive phenomenon belonging to those that are listening to and judging the debate. Those debating may refuse, declare – in their ‘belief system’ – that what the other said is false, but in the eyes of the audience one must consider the negation of an ethos in the debate as a process that negotiates the rhetorical ethos of the two
candidates. We are faced with two candidates aspiring to be president, and the image that they portray to the audience is very important. The scene of the debate is that of a duel where replies constitute blows of a sword which reveal to the public the fighting style, strength, speed and tactics of the competitors, but where the final blow is dealt by the electorate.

Discussion and conclusion

Presentation of self, I ethos of credibility and power struggles

Ethos – presentation of self – is prevalent everywhere in speech; whenever speakers make statements, they are stating something about themselves. By examining ethos based on a specific form of language, as I did with I, I may possibly have had different answers if I had begun an analysis on another linguistic unit. However, my aim was to select an element which was closely linked to ethos in this type of discourse.

When breaking the discourse down by candidate, I found that Hollande was the candidate using I more often. This is perhaps only to be expected, given that he is the lesser known candidate; he needs to show that he has the ability to assume the role of president and that his message is credible. The represented Is dominating the discourse are the action and fortitude Is, the ideologue Is and the humble leader Is. Hollande clearly dominates in the unity Is category, while Sarkozy is the one presenting the most authority Is. Sarkozy is also the candidate who uses the most negation Is, even if the breakdown in this category is fairly even between the two; both are conscious of defending themselves against pre-discursive ethè that have been attributed to them, but above all they use negation Is to imply a pre-discursive ethos that is belittling to their adversary, while simultaneously presenting themselves as the opposite of this image. This is all done to protect their credibility. Sarkozy is also the candidate who uses the most situated Is that place him in a position of power, which seems fairly natural given his position as outgoing president whose credibility mainly rests on his role and achievements as Head of State.

I have analyzed how situated Is denote position in the discourse; these Is carry the status of metadiscursive units. They are formulas which express the act of maintaining the floor, interrupting the other, excusing oneself for interrupting the other, commenting on and reinforcing what one has said, as in ‘Let me finish’, ‘I’m going to answer you’, etc. These Is introduce language acts in the truest sense: what is ‘said’ is what is being ‘done’ here. Thus, candidates’ speeches are also power exercises: the interaction not only becomes a battleground of ideas, but also a demonstration of the strength and power of speech. These metadiscourses are very useful in demonstrating this power.

Is and negations modify, negotiate, sweeten

Besides the presentation of self, done by the candidates using I, there are also Is combined with negation. The Is of denied statements are presented indirectly by the candidates: by saying what I am not, the underlying statement is either (1) what the other thinks I am: this is a pre-discursive ethos that the candidate (‘I’) wishes to refute because he does not agree with this image; or (2) what I think (unlike myself) the other candidate
is like: this is a belittling pre-discursive ethos that one of the candidates attributes to the other from whom he (‘I’) distances himself. In other words, negation I$s allow the speaker to present himself as a credible person and to indirectly transmit a rather disparaging image of the other. Either the candidate responsible for refuting something rectifies the flawed image that the other has painted of him or the candidate presents himself – indirectly – and simultaneously distances himself from a negative image of the other. In both cases, the candidate is denying an underlying pre-discursive ethos (point of view 1). But given that these are ethè based on value judgments that depend on an audience and a context, and that this is a confrontation between two adversaries, negation negotiates – rather than refutes – this ethos.

**Ethos and the enunciation scene**

By taking different aspects of the enunciation scene of political debates into consideration, we can see that the ethè of a debate are not solely formed by conscious linguistic choices on the part of the candidates (and also fueled in part by the media), but are also the result of negotiation within the interactive discourse itself. Thus, represented I$s may be confirmed, parodied, cast in doubt, rectified; if one’s presentation of self is put into question, it can be newly reaffirmed. The overall scene of the debate is also assumed by negotiation. This is true given that, in order to present one’s positive side and persuade the audience of the validity of one’s political agenda, the verbal duel (in question) is the central element of all political debates which determines their textual function: this is a polemic and argumentative discourse.

This interaction–competition also explains, on the level of the generic scene, the frequency of the pronoun I in presidential debates compared to other forms of interaction (Fiala and Leblanc, 2004); the situated I$s are often ritualized forms which maintain the floor and organize the discourse: ‘I say’, ‘let me tell you’, ‘may I remind you’, ‘I’m going to come on to that’, ‘let me finish’, etc. The represented I$s, on the other hand, evoke presidential topics and commitments: ‘I want to close Fessenheim for two reasons’, ‘Me, I protect the children of the Republic’ (Hollande) and ‘I want to mobilize public money’, ‘I love France and would like to lead you in these difficult times’ (Sarkozy). These are stereotypical lines of political discourse. Returning to the overall scene and the persuasive purpose, the candidates cannot overlook any negative counter-images painted by the other candidate. They must try to refute them, which explains the central role of ‘I’ and negation in the genre debate.

To win the battle, each candidates tries, at the level of scenography, to distribute roles of the discourse corresponding to power relationships such as father–son, employer–employee, master–pupil, authority–uninformed by lending himself either a powerful and knowledgeable role or the role of the mistreated or insulted. Both of these roles can evoke an ethos of credibility.

**Final remarks**

In this study, I have categorized I ethè according to the verbs accompanying this first-person pronoun. We can see, however, that quantitative analysis has its limits when it
comes to rhetorical-discursive phenomena, as ethos is also subject to negotiation and interpretation. The rhetorical impact of presentation of self is envisaged by the audience listening and watching; one candidate’s negation of the other’s ethos becomes a negotiation of that ethos.

In previous studies on negation as an argumentative strategy (Roitman, 2013), I looked at how refuting others’ arguments reinforces the candidate’s own arguments in interaction. In both cases, I started out with the assumption that negation is a marker of polyphony which stratifies statements in two points of view, as well as the rhetorical-argumentative challenges exploited by this linguistic structure. The studies do overlap but take different perspectives, one wishing to describe refutation as a tool of argumentation between two candidates (2013) and the other (this study) wishing to describe the rhetorical impact of the use of negation in the presentation of the empirical \( I \).

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**Notes**

1. This study is based on an earlier project entitled ‘Cinq élections présidentielles en France (1974–2007): Les débats de l’entre-deux-tours à la télévision: l’argumentation et contre-argumentation’. The corpus for that study is made up of the previous six televised presidential debates that took place between 1974 and 2012: Giscard d’Estaing/Mitterrand (1974); Mitterrand/Giscard d’Estaing (1981); Mitterrand/Chirac (1988); Chirac/Jospin (1995); Sarkozy/Royal (2007); and Hollande/Sarkozy (2012) (Éditions Boucher; INA). I recorded the latest two debates ourselves. They were then transcribed by the newspapers *Libération* (2007) and *Le Monde* (2012) and published online. I reviewed and amended the transcriptions myself as certain elements, such as forms of address, discourse markers (e.g. confirmations, ‘okay’, ‘of course’, ‘yes’, ‘no’, etc.) and the replies of the two journalists, among other things, were often omitted.

2. A lot of research has been done within the linguistic-pragmatic domain on political debates from the Anglo-Saxon and French speaking world, including: Carter and Stamm (1994); Chanay et al. (2011); Constantin de Martel and Turbide (2005); Gordon and Miller (2004); Gorton and Diels (2011); Kerbrat-Orecchioni and Constantin de Chanay (2007); Lemert (1991); Mellman (1992); Munck (2004); Patterson et al. (1992); Sandré (2011); Sandré (2012); Vancil and Pendell (1984); Wicks (2007); Yawn et al. (1998); Zhu et al. (1994).

3. The credibility aspect – ethos – has been foreground in many studies on political discourse, including: Baumlin (1994); Baumlin and Baumlín (1994); Benoit and Benoit (2007); Chilton and Schäffner (2002); Fetzer (2002); Glynos (2003); Goffman (2005); Habermas (1987); Halloran (2007); Hinck (1993); Holly (1989); Hyde and Schrag (2004); Miller (1974); Wisse (1989).

4. There have been some advanced studies on the function of the use of personal pronouns (mostly on the pronoun *we*) in (political) discourse, including: Benveniste (1966); Bolivar (1999); Bramley (2001); Drew and Woton (1988); Fillmore (1971); Fløttum et al. (2007); Foucault (2002); Freundlieb (2004); Geoffroy (1985); Hubert and Labbé (1995); Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1980); Levinson (1988); Labbé (1990); Maitland and Wilson (1987); Maingueneau (1994); Mayaffré (2003); Perret (1994); Quême (2008); MOTS: *les langages du politique* (1985).

6. In a very broad sense, one could study ethos as a sociological phenomenon (Fusulier, 2011) or as ‘corporeal’ ethos (Fontanille, 2007a, 2007b). This understanding of ethos includes everything to do with the visual, the semiological and the corporeal, most notably bodily gestures and behavior. In Anglo-Saxon oriented pragmatics (Brown and Levinson, 1987), ethos refers to norms of interaction within a socio-cultural community: there will be a ‘Swedish ethos’, for example.

7. The notion of ‘ethos’ is primarily framed here as a rhetorical device of persuasion. Interesting studies on ethos in rhetoric and its expressions in language include: De Saussure (2006); Dorsey (2002); Foss (2009); Halmari and Virtanen (2005); Karlberg and Mral (1998); Kjeldsen (2008); Lim (2002).


9. For the same concept, Bourdieu (1991) prefers the term ‘prior ethos’ (ethos préalable) in his volume Ce que parler veut dire.

10. It is interesting to note the evolution in terminology in Amossy’s research (1999, 2000, 2010). In 1999 and 2000, she wrote about ‘ethos’ and ‘image of self’, while in 2011 she opted instead for the term ‘presentation of self’, inspired by Goffman (1973). Even if we are basically approaching the traditional idea, that is, the same concepts – good manners, social status – which lend someone credibility, this change in terminology reflects a socio-cultural evolution: society has become a stage where everyone can and does ‘present’ themselves. Awareness of the impact that one can achieve via media channels is so great that presentation of self has become an industry in itself. Communication advisors help politicians develop the character that they wish to present to the public.

11. Discourse analysis has become the main method for studying language in political events: Amossy (2012); Beard (2000); Chilton (2004); Chilton and Schäffner (2002); Fairclough (1995, 2003); Habermas (1984); Joseph (2006); Kress and Hodge (1993); Maingueneau (2007); Van Dijk (2008, 2009); Windt and Ingold (1987); Wodak (1989, 2011).

12. The notion of enunciation scene is borrowed from Maingueneau (2007) (scène énonciative) and refers here to the communicative situation (socio-cultural setting, genre, channel and social roles) that frames the different forms of discourse. Enunciation has thus a broader sense here than in this study in general. See also note 13.

13. These phenomena are broadly referred to in discourse analysis and pragmatics as contextual elements. Van Dijk (2009) carries out a thorough inventory of the concept of context and sets it in relation to the notion of mental models from cognitive psychology. A mental model is a subjective representation of an episode and can be distinguished from shared cultural knowledge. To understand context, we need, according to Van Dijk, to see the subjective way in which the participants of discourse view and represent the situation. On this view, a context ‘is what is defined to be relevant to the social situation by the participants themselves’ (2009: 5), implying that there is no direct link between social structures and discourse structures and that context must also be considered and analyzed as individual representations of an event. This means that ‘context’ is bi-directional and partly a construct; the analyst should not only seek out the objective situational influences on discourse, but also consider influences from the participants’ individual representations of the situation. This aspect is not fully taken into account by Maingueneau (2007) and could certainly enrich his model for text genres.

14. French discourse analysis (Benveniste, 1966; Culioli, 1990, 1999; Ducrot, 1980) utilizes the notions of énonciation and énoncé, which are here translated as ‘enunciation’ and ‘utterance’. Enunciation (énonciation) is, in this framework, not only referred to as the physical act of
speaking, but denotes the coming into being of one unique utterance (énoncé). The act of enunciation is seen as a historical moment where existence is given to something – an utterance – that didn’t exist before this moment nor will appear after. *Utterance* (énoncé) is thus the instant and concrete result of a unique enunciation. This methodology proposes to study the ‘traces’ of enunciation in utterances, that is, the speaker’s marks of modality, axiology and affectivity in discourse (Ducrot, 1980: 50–56). See Marnette (2005) for a thorough global review of *La linguistique de l’énonciation*, and Johansson and Suomela-Salmi (2011) for further explanation on the origins and use of the notion of énonciation in French discourse analysis.

15. One method of distinguishing a performative verb from a non-performative verb is to do the ‘hereby test’. We may then distinguish the *representational I* from the *situated I* by adding ‘hereby’ after the pronoun-subject; in the representational *I* you can’t add ‘hereby’ but in the situated *I* you can.

16. The categories presented in the text are abbreviated forms of those found in Table 1.

17. For a discussion on factual verbs, see for example Berrendonner (1981), Moeschler and Reboul (1994) and Stalnaker (1978/1999).

18. See note 14 earlier.

19. All these terms come from Nolke et al. (2004). The notion of enunciative links corresponds to *liens énonciatifs*; discursive entities corresponds to *êtres discursifs*; and interlocutor corresponds to *allocutaire*. The concept of discursive entity was introduced by Ducrot (1984) and subsequently revised by Nolke et al. (2004).

20. If an utterance containing a *represented I* is refuted, we would have either a *polemic negation* or a *descriptive negation* containing an underlying point of view (Ducrot, 1984). This is what Givón (1978: 80) calls a ‘pragmatic presupposition’. These negations, the ones refuting the *represented I*s, are of particular interest to us in our analysis of pre-discursive ethos. If an utterance containing a *situated I* is refuted, however, we have a *metalinguistic negation*, in keeping with Ducrot (1984) and Horn (1989), in other words a negation that focuses on the actual words of the speech rather than on any underlying argument. Metalinguistic negation rejects presuppositions and it does not follow the law of lowering; it also reverses the normal argumentative orientation of negation on a descending scale (Ducrot, 1980: 31–35, 1984: 217–218). See Ducrot (1984) and Horn (1989) for sequence tests and the different argumentative orientations of the different types of negation.

21. In 2012 DSK (Dominique Strauss-Kahn), French politician and former head of the International Monetary, was accused of sexually assaulting a chambermaid in New York. The charges against him were dropped later.

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