

Tradition and Innovation in Televised Election Debate

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Abstract

TV show election debate is a special, mixed type of discourse, having not only the features of the public political communication, but also the peculiarities of the talk show. Marked by conventionality and ritualization, TV show election debate emphasizes one's communicational skills and appeals to a range of strategies of contextual meaning construction. New communication stratagems are based on the classical rhetorical techniques, both having the same target: a better self-image than that of the competitor's. By this approach we intend to analyse, from the social-linguistic and pragmatic point of view, the messages of the candidates Traian Băsescu and Micea Geoană, in the second round of presidential elections in Romania,. In this respect, we use the last election debate, broadcasted in "You decide!" Robert Turcescu's show, on December 3rd, 2009, at TVR1 channel. We think that the communicational interactive projects of the two candidates respect both the specific rules of the election debate, marked by high lexical innovations and the rules of political speech focused on the practical aim.