

Dialectical Integration of Authenticity and Creative Identity in Analyzing Political Debates: A Pragma-Stylistic Study

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Abstract

This research investigates the dialectical interplay between Authenticity and creative identity in the rapidly shifting domain of human–AI interaction, focusing on the analysis of political debates. As AI becomes increasingly embedded in innovative practices, critical questions emerge about the preservation of human originality, which grounds creative expression. Adopting an analytic perspective, the study examines how Authenticity—traditionally regarded as a defining feature of human creativity—intersects with novel forms of identity co-constituted through collaboration with intelligent systems. The inquiry engages both stylistic and pragmatic dimensions, drawing on different types of figures of speech and on pragmatic concepts such as speech act theory, implicature, and contextual interpretation. It aims to develop a framework that focuses on the essence of human creativity, analyzing and presenting different views of the given data through the stylistic form of AI. It advances a model of co-creative synthesis that affirms human distinctiveness while simultaneously embracing the generative affordances of AI in analyzing texts, i.e., political debates. This convergence provokes ethical and cultural reflection, not in terms of replacement, but rather in the form of complementarity—where inspiration and acceleration are dynamically shared. However, the rise of AI foregrounds philosophical debates about the ontological status of its output—whether algorithmically generated products may legitimately be considered “art” or instances of “authentic creativity.” To address these issues, the research employs qualitative discourse analysis, tracing linguistic markers and stylistic strategies that are framed in creative discourse. The findings offer a refined account of identity formation by showing that human analysis is more innovative and deeper; on the other hand, AI uses statistical and probabilistic algorithms to reconstruct and draw on existing knowledge, but it does not “create” in the existential sense of the word. As a result, it excels in synthesis and imitation but struggles with creativity that deviates from norms without prior knowledge.

Keywords: Dialectical Integration, Authenticity, Stylistic dimensions, pragmatic dimensions, Implicature, Contextual interpretation, Authentic creativity

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الدمج الجدلّي للأصالة والهوية الإبداعية في تحليل المناظرات السياسية: دراسة تداولية-أسلوبية

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المُسْتَخْلَص

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدمج الجدلـي، الأصالة، الأبعاد الأسلوبـية، الأبعاد التداولـية، الاستـلزم، التأـويل السياـقي، الإـبداع الأصـيل

I. Introduction

Political debates refer to speech exchanges held by particular individuals in designated venues. Political debates are discussions about issues that affect a significant number of people. The nature of political arguments, together with the participants and their locations, significantly influences the outcomes. This concept is frequently used in presidential debates held during election seasons and broadcast on television. Alternatively, we may examine political debates that include civil society participants; in these cases, discussions can take place in diverse environments, such as private homes, public streets, bars, conference rooms, online platforms, social media, and others (Berganza, R., & Carratalá, A., 2016).

The intricate interactions among language, identity, and Authenticity have always been a central issue in the examination of political discourse. Political discussions represent a distinct discursive domain in which the contest for credibility, legitimacy, and public confidence is linguistically contested. In this setting, Authenticity and creative identity are crucial aspects of persuasive communication, illustrating the speaker's effort to align personal ethos with institutional tasks and ideological commitments (Fairclough, 2001; van Dijk, 2006). The concept of dialectical integration provides a valuable framework for analyzing the pragmatic and stylistic interaction of Authenticity and creative identity in political discourse. This integration influences the rhetorical formation of political identity and dictates the practical effectiveness of speech actions in debate contexts. By employing Linguistic Pragma-Stylistics, one examines every communication through a singular, cohesive perspective, providing a primary inquiry together with its subordinate questions: How does this text's particular linguistic structure function within its environment to accomplish a specific communication objective? (Levinson, 1983; Thomas, 1995).

Few studies examine how Authenticity and creativity interact dialectically to construct persuasive identity in political debates. So from this point, the present study tries to seek and answer the following questions:

1. How do Pragmatics function and dialectically integrate to shape Authenticity and creativity in Human-AI interaction in analyzing political debates?
2. How are Authenticity and creativity dialectically expressed in human-AI interactions to shape audience perception?

2. Aims of the Study

1. Explaining the functions of Pragma-Stylistics and integrating them dialectically on the chosen data.
2. Showing that Authenticity and creativity are dialectically expressed in human-AI interactions to shape audience perception.

3. Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to investigate the operation of Pragma-Stylistic functions within specific political discourse and to explore, through a dialectical framework, the collaborative construction of authenticity and creativity in human–AI analytical interactions, thereby influencing audience interpretation and perception.

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4. Significance of the Study

This study advances interdisciplinary comprehension of pragmatic and stylistic interactions within political discourse. It also contributes to Pragma-Stylistic theory by demonstrating how linguistic Authenticity and creativity are dialectically expressed in human-AI interactions to shape the audience's impression.

4. Limits of the Study

This study focuses on the analysis of political debates in the American electoral system, specifically the New York 2025 elections. This study analyses political discussions from a pragmatics-stylistic perspective to demonstrate the interplay between Authenticity and creativity in human-AI interaction. The analysis involves using the chosen data and leveraging AI technologies such as Chat GPT, Deep Seek, or Copilot, with the researcher's own evaluation.

II. Literature Review

1- Political Debates

Political discourse using the framework of pragmatics has emerged as a significant area of research, demonstrating a growing interdisciplinary interaction among linguistics, communication studies, and political science. Pragmatics, as expressed by Levinson (1983) and Thomas (1995), examines the construction of meaning within context through the interplay of linguistic forms, speaker intentions, and mutual assumptions. This technique reveals how political actors strategically utilize language to influence, convince, and legitimate beliefs within particular sociocultural and institutional contexts. Pragmatics in politics surpasses the structural analysis of language, engaging instead in performativity, persuasion, and ideological representation.

Recent scholarship highlights the performative aspects of political identity through practical implementation. Drawing on Goffman's (1959) concept of self-presentation and Butler's (1997) notion of performativity, scholars contend that politicians enact identities through linguistic and pragmatic choices that align with ideological narratives. Ilie (2006) observes that in parliamentary discourse, techniques such as Irony, hedging, and rhetorical questions are employed to navigate authority while maintaining Face. Fetzer and Bull (2012) illustrate that political debates encompass intricate dynamics of turn-taking, interruption, and repair that pragmatically shape Authenticity and control. The performative practices exhibit a dialogical nature, as suggested by Bakhtin (1981), highlighting a dynamic interaction between individual agency and the norms of institutional discourse. Pragmatic devices like modality, deixis, and evaluative speech acts enable politicians to convey sincerity, empathy, or determination—key components for maintaining credibility and aligning with their audience (Partington, 2017). Pragmatics provides a framework for analyzing how linguistic choices influence ideological positioning and identity formation in political communication.

The concept of Authenticity in political discourse has been extensively theorized as a socially constructed ethos, shaped by linguistic performance, audience interpretation, and contextual framing (Goffman, 1959; Butler, 1997). In the realm of human-AI-mediated politics, this ethos takes on a technological dimension: Authenticity is progressively evaluated through algorithmic filters, social media engagement metrics, and AI-generated portrayals of personality (Enli, 2015; Bucher, 2018).

2- Authenticity through the Lens of Creativity

Creative Authenticity, according to its definition, is a continuous process of learning to create through organically motivated, self-aware, and self-affirming behaviours and justifications. It is based on Constructivist learning theory (Chuang, 2021), Postmodernist perspectives on pluralism and cultural positioning (Davis, 2012), Anthony Giddens' theory of reflective identities (Bontempo e Silva & del Carmen Flores Macías, 2017), and research on intrinsic motivation in education. Utilising a definition of Authenticity that encompasses elements of what Newman & Smith (2016) categorise as 'value authenticity' and 'self authenticity,' we enable students to ascertain their own genuine creative identity through the processes of creation and reflection on their work. Their identity as 'creatives' is shaped by a critical examination of their outputs (execution/style), the methods of creation (both physical and cognitive processes), and the rationale behind their choices on both the content and approach of their creative pursuits. It is essential to recognise that this is a process, which, by its inherent nature, is not conclusive. Creative Authenticity is the continuous enhancement of one's identity rather than establishing a static persona, achieved through creation, reflection, and discourse—similar to Tracy and Tretheway's notion of the 'crystallised self' (2005, 186).

III. Methodology

1- Pragma-Stylistics

linguistic and stylistics research focused on the formal language aspects of literary texts, such as grammatical forms, phonological elements, and propositional meaning. That is why the analyst's work of finding stylistic impacts on many discourse levels is challenging because it requires separating the stylistic effects on each level. Furthermore, it is impractical to examine the entire text because it is typically longer. Thus, the early stylisticians' disregard of theatre is attributed to a lack of skills for dealing with such texts or analysing discursive interaction (Jeffries and McIntyre, 2010:100). So, until recently, stylistics was primarily concerned with formal linguistic qualities, that is, words on a page. Such an approach of study distinguishes stylistics as 'eyes-on-the-page' (Sell, 1993:136).

The analysis of a text through pragma-stylistics frequently results in the text acquiring "a special effect" and consequently "a special meaning," indicating that language transcends a mere neutral objective description of reality, instead elucidating "social situatedness" pertinent to the text (Fowler, 1986). He asserts that pragma-stylistic analysis, at the stylistic level, encompasses "all linguistic means of expressing subjectivity (phonetic, morphological, syntactic, lexical, and semantic means)," whereas at the pragmatic level, it emphasises the "speakers' language usage contingent upon their mood, time, and place of utterance." The connection between pragmatics and stylistics originates from the language of use. Stylistics analyses text through intrinsic language elements such as phonology, morphology, and semantics, whereas pragmatics interprets it using extrinsic linguistic resources.

3- Authenticity in creativity

Authenticity in creativity constitutes a continuous process of self-aware, organically motivated behaviour, whereas creativity can be classified by its processes, including divergent thinking (creating several ideas) and convergent thinking (identifying the optimal answer). Additional categories encompass lateral thinking (indirect problem-solving) and emotional creativity (leveraging emotions to enhance creative output) (Wooll: 2024).

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Kumar (2024) identifies three categories that encompass both Authenticity and creativity.

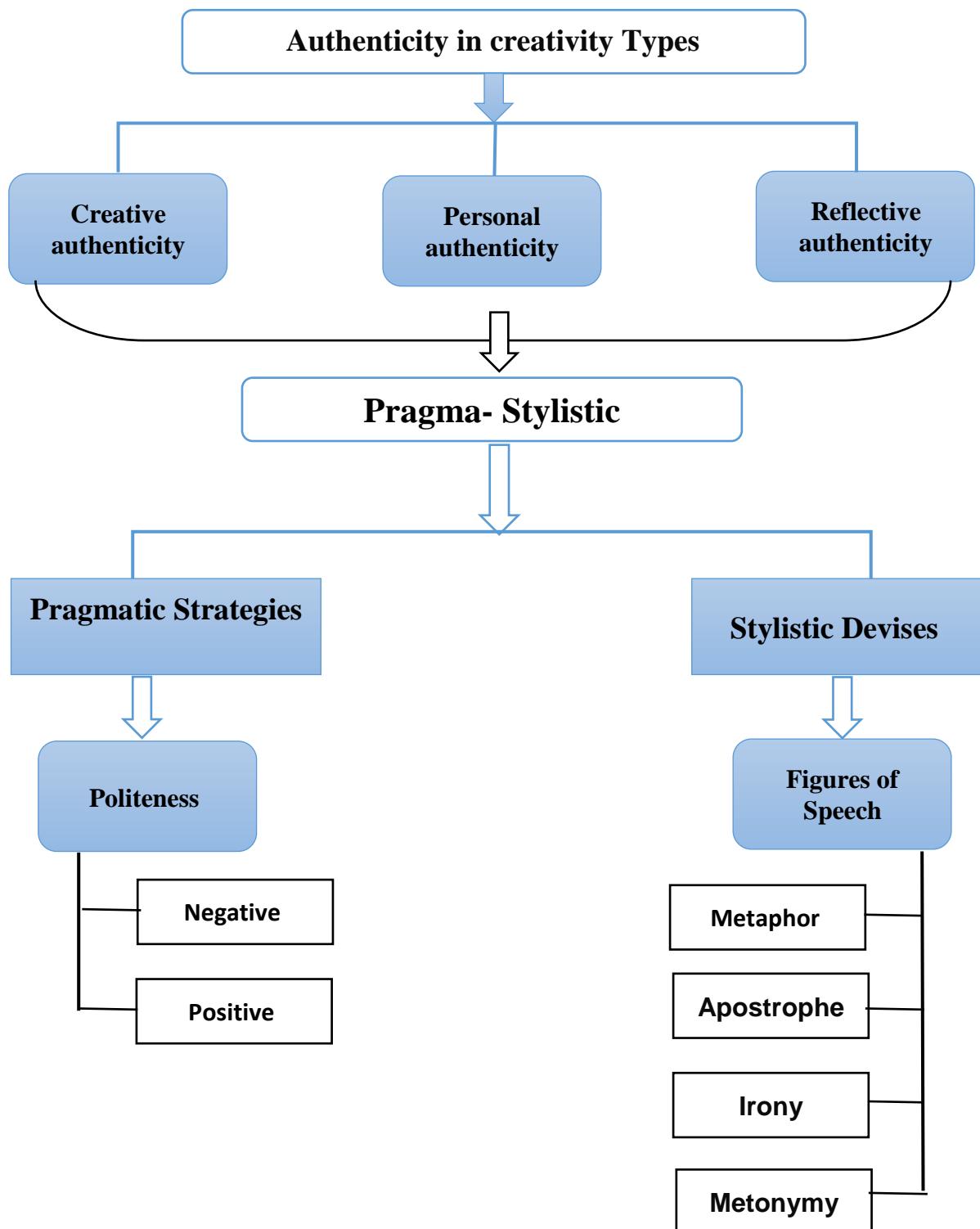
1- Creative Authenticity: is defined as the continuous process of creation driven by internal motivation, self-awareness, and self-affirmation.

2- Personal Authenticity: entails a relationship between a creator's inner self and their work, resulting in a distinctive and unique style.

3- Reflective Authenticity: is an ongoing process that is perpetually developed by the act of creation, subsequent reflection on that creation, and analysis of the rationale and methodology underlying the creative decisions.

4- Integrated Model of Authenticity and creative identity

Dialectical integration is the dynamic reconciliation of two seemingly opposing ideas through contact and change (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). A dialectical paradigm states that authenticity and creative identity are interrelated processes that impact each other in communicative and cultural contexts (Giddens, 1991; Taylor, 1991). Authenticity has always meant adhering to a "inner truth" of the self (Trilling, 1972; Ferrara, 1998). Creative identity is the ability to reinvent oneself through new manifestations, performances, and interpretations (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). These principles are dialectically negotiated between stability and innovation, where people or discursive agents maintain personal truth while creatively adapting to situational requirements and rising social expectations. Authenticity gives creative representations credibility in artistic, political, and organisational performance, while creativity keeps it dynamic and contextually relevant (Lindholm, 2008). This integration affirms that identity is a constant creative expression in response to dialogical encounters and sociocultural changes (Bakhtin, 1981). Political communication, artistic performance, and digital self-presentation integrate dialectically. Leaders often use creative rhetoric to blend personal authenticity with audience adaption in political speeches. Barack Obama's speech conveys personal authenticity through inventive narrative and linguistic originality, establishing credibility and engaging diverse audiences (Charland, 1987; Goffman, 1959).



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Fig. (1)An eclectic model of dialectical integration of Authenticity and creative identity in analyzing political debates: a pragma- stylistic study

IV. Data Analysis and Discussion

The selected political debate features Zohran Mamdani vs. Andrew Cuomo. The eclectic model will be examined to demonstrate Human-AI interaction and the degree of creative identity.

1- Human-AI (Deep Seek) Analysis

“... And I allocated more funding for housing than any governor in the history of the state of New York. You could turn on the TV any day of the week, and you will hear Donald Trump share that his pick for mayor is Andrew Cuomo. And he wants Andrew Cuomo to be the mayor, not because it will be good for New Yorkers, but because it will be good for him. Protest, demonstrate, You could turn on the TV any day of the week, and you will hear Donald Trump share that his pick for mayor is Andrew Cuomo. And he ran on lowering the cost of living. If he wants to talk to me about the third piece of that agenda, I will always be ready and willing. But if he wants to talk about how to pursue the first and second piece of that agenda at the expense of New Yorkers, President Trump has to respect you. He sent the National Guard into 20 cities. City, he didn't send it into? New York...”

1- Authenticity in creativity Types

The provided political debate shows a high-stakes, heated exchange that is a good place to look at how Authenticity works in public speaking. In this case, Authenticity means that people think a candidate's communication is real, honest, and true to who they are and what they believe. In the first place the researcher point of view is presented in the following analysis:

- Mamdani's Creativity Authenticity:

Mamdani tries to prove his Creative Authenticity by clearly saying that he is the "**only candidate running with a vision for the future of this city.**" He purposely ignores what his opponents say about the past, saying that they "**only talk about the past because that's all they know.**" This framing is meant to set him apart as the person who will bring about change in the political establishment. Reframing the Core Issue: He tries to shift the focus away from the attacks on his opponents (like Cuomo's legal and political history) and national politics (Trump) to the voters' immediate, relatable concerns: "**It's whether or not you can afford to live a safe and dignified life in this city.**" This is a critical effort to show that the policy is based on real events and is looking ahead.

- Cuomo's Counter-Framing:

Cuomo's plan is based on a story of his own experiences and successes, such as "**I gave more money to housing than any other governor in New York history**" and "**I've lived it and done it with President Trump.**" People talk about his Authenticity as being proven and transactional, which means they want to see expertise and past achievement instead of a radical new idea.

Personal Authenticity, on the other hand, is how a candidate shows who they are, what they stand for, and what their moral compass is. It is frequently substantiated by anecdotes, emotive pleas, and the justification of one's personal reputation or integrity.

-Cuomo's Attack on Mamdani's Realness:

Cuomo strongly criticises Mamdani's professional attitude and skills, directly questioning his worth: "*You have never had a job. You haven't done anything... You don't know how to run a government.*" Cuomo tries to show that Mamdani isn't a good public servant by challenging his CV, attendance record, and legislative background. The later, very charged attacks that link Mamdani to "*global jihad*" and anti-Semitism are a direct attempt to undermine his Personal Authenticity by painting him as an extremist and a "*arsonist who fanned the flames of anti-Semitism,*" making him untrustworthy to a key group of people.

-Mamdani's Defence of Personal Authenticity (Response):

Mamdani takes a defensive yet calm approach to reaffirm his Personal Authenticity. At first, he brushes off the attacks as coming from *a "desperate man, lashing out,"* which is a type of pre-emptive psychological framing. In response to the "*global jihad*" charge, he gives a firm, clear answer: "*I have never, not once, spoken in support of global jihad. I didn't say that...*" He immediately puts the attacks in context by saying that they are because he is *"the first Muslim candidate to be on the verge of winning this election."* This tactic changes the opponent's political criticism into a personal attack based on prejudice, trying to make his Personal Authenticity seem like a target of bigotry instead of a real threat. He then quickly goes back to his promise to keep all New Yorkers safe, even the offspring of his opponents, which shows that he has a broad, open-minded set of personal values.

In the same way, Reflective Authenticity looks at how consistent a candidate's words and actions are, including their historical record, and whether they are willing to admit or deal with any contradictions they see. It is the capacity to present a consistent political identity over time.

- Mamdani's Critique of Cuomo's Authenticity in Reflection:

Mamdani's most effective argument is a direct challenge to Cuomo's Reflective Authenticity, which focusses on his offended and humiliated behaviors with women: "*13 different women... incredibly accused you of sexual harassment. Since then, you have used more than \$20 million in government money to protect yourself...*" Cuomo's purported moral integrity and consistency are immediately challenged. People are starting to wonder if Cuomo is really fit to be governor because his prior behaviors and financial choices seem to be selfish and go against the public's trust.

-Cuomo's Defence of Reflective Authenticity (response):

Cuomo restores Reflective Authenticity with legal evidence "Cases dropped? True, you know". He called Mamdani's claim "misstatement." His steadiness and innocence are shown by dropped cases. Asserting the official record clears him legally. Mamdani's plan is intricate. His goal is to create a three-part authentic identity and discredit his opponents via Creative Authenticity. He highlights "future" and New Yorkers' cost of living/safety to make his policy look cutting-edge. Cuomo's strong, calculated attack on his embarrassing replies to woman claims harms his Personal and Reflective Authenticity. He appears selfish and immoral despite his repeated elections. He defends himself by maintaining his Personal Authenticity Under Conflict against aggressive, identity-based threats like "*global jihad*". He disputes the charge, calls it racism since he is Muslim, and then discusses safety. He uses accusations to show his convictions and fortitude. Language shows Mamdani's framing and counter-framing. He tries to move the subject from Cuomo's transactional history to Mamdani's revolutionary morality. His closing statements about protecting the opponent's children are an emotional plea to apply his

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Personal Authenticity to everyone, not just politicians. The Andrew Cuomo-opposition debate highlights how political communication balances sincerity and creativity. AI (Chat GPT) uses the tripartite paradigm of Authenticity to identify three interrelated political selfhood manifestations(Taylor, 1991; Ferrara, 1998; Lindholm, 2008):

1. Creative Authenticity: Innovation and Reframing of Identity

Creative Authenticity in this debate surfaces through **rhetorical invention** and **discursive reframing** — devices used to reconstitute the speaker's identity and narrative authority (Runco & Jaeger, 2012; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). For example:

“You could turn on TV any day of the week, and you will hear Donald Trump share that his pick for mayor is Andrew Cuomo... He wants Andrew Cuomo to be the mayor not because it will be good for New Yorkers, but because it will be good for him.”

Here, the speaker constructs **creative Authenticity** by *reframing Cuomo's identity* as a proxy of Trump — a narrative inversion that redefines the opponent's ethos while reinforcing the speaker's *authentic distinctiveness*. The creative re-contextualization of political alliances transforms a potential liability (association with Trump) into a symbolic contrast between *selfless leadership* and *self-serving Power*. Similarly, Cuomo's response demonstrates another facet of creative Authenticity:

“The governor doesn't build housing in New York City... The state allocates funding for localities. And I allocated more funding for housing than any governor in the history of the state of New York.”

AI Interpretation: Creative Authenticity in the debate operates dialectically: it fuses *rhetorical creativity* with *claims of factual truth*, allowing candidates to appear innovative yet credible. As Bakhtin (1981) would argue, this hetero-glossic interplay of voices (Trump, Cuomo, the city, the “people”) generates dialogic Authenticity — an identity constructed in creative negotiation with others' discourse.

2. Personal Authenticity: Emotional Sincerity and Ethical Integrity

Personal Authenticity concerns the candidate's *moral and affective credibility* — their ability to present the self as emotionally sincere, ethically coherent, and grounded in lived experience (Trilling, 1972; Lindholm, 2008).

Cuomo's emotionally charged defense illustrates this:

“Protest, demonstrate, disagree, God bless America, God bless New York City... there's two sides on what's going on and the passions are very high.”

This invocation of patriotic pluralism enacts *personal Authenticity* through emotional resonance and shared civic values. The repeated appeal to “**God bless**” and the acknowledgment of “two sides” convey empathy and moral tolerance, positioning Cuomo as a leader rooted in American democratic sentiment rather than partisanship. Conversely, his opponent's statement also appeals to personal Authenticity through moral indignation:

3. Reflective Authenticity: Reflexivity, Ethical Awareness, and Moral Reconciliation

Reflective Authenticity represents the *highest dialectical synthesis* between creative and personal Authenticity — it denotes a self-aware, ethically responsive, and reflexive stance toward one's discourse and identity (Ferrara, 1998; Giddens, 1991). This mode surfaces most clearly when the Muslim candidate responds to accusations of extremism:

"I have never, not once, spoken in support of global jihad... I think much of it has to do with the fact that I am the first Muslim candidate to be on the precipice of winning this election. I do still want to be the mayor that will keep your sons safe, that will keep every single New Yorker safe..."

Here, reflective Authenticity manifests through **ethical reflexivity** — the speaker directly confronts misrepresentation, reframing identity from a position of marginalized awareness. By acknowledging the prejudice embedded in the accusation (“because I am the first Muslim candidate”), he turns vulnerability into moral authority. The coupling of defensive clarification (“I have never...”) with inclusive aspiration (“keep every single New Yorker safe”) exemplifies the reflexive balancing of self-defense and communal empathy. Similarly, Cuomo’s self-referential defense against harassment allegations shows partial reflective Authenticity:

3. Dialectical Synthesis: Authenticity as a Dynamic Identity Performance

Authenticity and creative identity are integrated through conflict and reconciliation throughout the argument. Candidates balance performance and authenticity, inventiveness and conviction, self-defence and empathy. This dynamic interaction creates a creative, intimate, and reflective authenticity. Political communication retains rhetorical vigour and ethical resonance through integration (Charland, 1987; Fairclough, 1992). Thus, authenticity is a dialectical practice that balances creative self-stylization and moral self-coherence in public.

2- Politeness Strategies: A Pragmatic Analysis

Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model of politeness is based on Goffman’s (1959) concept of **Face** — the public self-image that individuals claim during social interaction, both candidates in this debate use mostly bald on-record (direct, undiluted speech) and highly face-threatening methods, putting rhetorical effect and public persuasion ahead of interpersonal peace on purpose.

1. Negative Face Strategies (Independence and Non-Interference):

Negative Face relates to the desire for freedom of action, territory, and non-imposition. Threatening a person's Negative Face means constraining their actions, making demands, or questioning their independence (Brown, & Levinson:1987).

The following Table (1) summaries the used negative face strategies in the chosen debate:

Speaker	Strategy	Examples of FTA (Threat to Opponent's Negative Face)
Cuomo	Maximum Threat / Zero Mitigation: Cuomo's strategy is to completely reject the opponent's right to participate autonomously in the political sphere. His philosophy is that Mamdani's <i>lack of competence</i> negates his right to non-imposition (Negative Face).	<i>"The governor doesn't build housing in New York City. Not if it's you. No, no, legally there are jurisdictions."</i> (An authoritative imposition of jurisdictional limits, implying Mamdani is ignorant and must be corrected.)

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		<p><i>"You don't know how to run a government. You don't know how to handle an emergency."</i> (A direct claim that Mamdani lacks the necessary autonomy and freedom of action, or ability to act, required for the job.)</p>
Mamdani	Strategic Imposition: Mamdani's use of Negative Face threat is primarily to <i>impose</i> a public burden of accountability on Cuomo, challenging his freedom from scrutiny regarding his past conduct. His opinion is that a politician's past actions forfeit their right to non-imposition (Negative Face).	<p><i>"Mr. Cuomo, in 2021, 13 different women... incredibly accused you of sexual harassment... What do you say to the 13 women that you sexually harassed?"</i> (This is a maximum FTA: a direct, unmitigated demand for a response, imposing a severe conversational burden and restricting Cuomo's freedom to change the topic or avoid accountability.)</p>
		<p><i>"Excuse me. Excuse me, Mr. Cuomo. It's my turn, all right?"</i> (A high-power, on-record imposition of a turn-taking rule, directly restricting Cuomo's freedom to speak and assert his turn.)</p>

2. Positive Face Strategies (Approval and Approval)

Positive Face relates to the desire to be liked, approved of, and have one's self-image validated. Threatening a person's Positive Face means showing disagreement, disapproval, or criticizing their character or views (Brown, & Levinson:1987).

The following Table(2) summaries the used Positive face strategies in the chosen debate:

Speaker	Strategy	Examples of FTA (Threat to Opponent's Positive Face)
Cuomo	Maximum Aggression / Character Assault: Cuomo's strategy is to launch a full-scale assault on Mamdani's Positive Face by attacking his professional and moral character, negating any desire for him to be approved of or admired. His philosophy is to <i>destroy</i> the opponent's public self-image.	<p><i>"You have never had a job. You've never accomplished anything. There's no reason to believe you have any merit or qualification..."</i> (Directly negates Mamdani's desire to be seen as competent, accomplished, or worthy of the electorate's approval.)</p> <p><i>"...They view you as the arsonist who fanned the flames of anti-Semitism."</i> (A severe, unmitigated accusation that completely negates Mamdani's desire to be seen as a moral, responsible, and non-hateful public figure—a total positive face destruction.)</p>

Mamdani	Deflection and Counter-Attack: Mamdani's initial Positive Face strategy is to re-claim solidarity with the audience while aggressively denigrating the opponent's character. His philosophy is to frame the opponent as <i>unworthy of approval</i> by exposing their perceived desperation and corruption.	<p><i>"Andrew Cuomo will spend much of tonight attacking me. He is a desperate man, lashing out because he knows that the one thing he's always cared about, Power, is now slipping away from him."</i> (A direct, on-record FTA that accuses Cuomo of desperation and selfishness, effectively negating Cuomo's desire to be seen as a powerful, rational leader.)</p> <p><i>"We first just heard from the Republican candidate for mayor, and then we heard from Donald Trump's puppet himself, Andrew Cuomo."</i> (A highly aggressive insult that challenges Cuomo's political independence and self-determination, directly rejecting his political self-image and desire for approval as a serious candidate.)</p>
	Mamdani's Politeness as Redress: Following the most severe attacks (e.g., "global jihad"), Mamdani shifts to a Positive Politeness Redress aimed at the audience and the opponent's family, seeking to reassert his own Positive Face by showing concern for the opponent's constituents: <i>"...I do still want to be the mayor that will keep your sons safe, that will keep every single New Yorker safe..."</i> (This is a final, strategic appeal to the audience's want for a safe city, attempting to reclaim his image as a caring public servant.)	

Mamdani prefers strategic impoliteness and face-work to politeness. His civility plan focusses dismantling the opponent's institutional facade to gain popular sympathy and anti-establishment position. His rudeness revealed him. Mamdani promptly addresses sexual harassment charges (*"I, however, can speak"*) in a high-risk, brazen on-record style. Courtesy becomes boldness and integrity—revealing the political establishment's (Cuomo's Negative Face) secrets. He can sacrifice civility for morals, demonstrating his hyper-positive public image. After personal attacks, he replied, *"...frankly, I believe much of it relates to my status as the inaugural Muslim candidate on the verge of winning this election"*—a good move.

It portrays the FTA (the "global jihad" allegation) as a personal attack on his unchangeable identity rather than a political critique. Mamdani turns an opponent's actions into a Face Threatening Act (FTA) against a group, giving the opponent civility. He uses Positive Politeness to elicit empathy and inclusivity from his followers and fair voters. This study reveals that the discourse highlights impoliteness as a political instrument to commit the biggest Face-Threatening Act against the opponent's public image and legitimacy to govern.

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In political discourse, *face* functions on two levels in the following analysis according to AI (Deep seek):

- **Positive Face** – the politician's need to be liked, respected, and socially approved.
- **Negative Face** – the politician's need to appear independent, authoritative, and uncoerced.

Politeness strategies mitigate **face-threatening acts (FTAs)** such as accusation, contradiction, criticism, and self-defense, which are central to debates (Thomas, 1995; Holmes, 2013). The present analysis identifies how **positive politeness** (solidarity-oriented) and **negative politeness** (autonomy-oriented) are deployed in the discourse to balance aggression with civility and to shape interpersonal power relations.

1. Positive Politeness Strategies: Constructing Solidarity and Affiliation

Positive politeness strategies are used to *reduce social distance* and emphasize common ground, approval, or shared values (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Despite the competitive atmosphere of the debate, several expressions of positive politeness are embedded in appeals to unity, empathy, and collective identity.

a. Invoking Shared Values and Group Identity

“Protest, demonstrate, disagree, God bless America, God bless New York City.”

Here, Cuomo momentarily suspends adversarial tone to appeal to *shared civic and patriotic values*. By invoking collective symbols (America, New York City), he establishes solidarity with the audience. This functions as a **positive politeness strategy** that reaffirms mutual belonging despite ideological conflict. **Pragmatic Function:** Reinforces shared moral identity → mitigates prior attacks → restores communal rapport.

b. Expressions of Empathy and Concern

“My sons are afraid. Their family, their friends, many in the Jewish community are concerned if you become mayor.”

Although accusatory on the surface, this utterance embeds **positive politeness** through empathetic framing — the speaker connects his critique to the collective fear of a specific group. It personalizes concern and signals identification with community emotions rather than abstract judgment. **Pragmatic Function:** Humanizes the attack, softens the FTA, and appeals to common affective ground.

2. Negative Politeness Strategies: Preserving Autonomy and Authority

Negative politeness strategies protect the speaker's or the hearer's *freedom of action* and *territoriality* (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In political debates, these strategies assert independence, justify authority, or soften impositions while maintaining dominance.

a. Deflection through Institutional or Legal Explanation

“The governor doesn’t build housing in New York City... The state allocates funding for localities.”

Cuomo uses **negative politeness** by appealing to bureaucratic and legal constraints — distancing personal responsibility and invoking impersonal authority. By referencing *jurisdictions* and *legal roles*, he protects his own negative Face (freedom from blame) while respecting institutional boundaries. **Pragmatic Function:** Deflects accusation via appeal to rules; frames inaction as legitimate non-involvement.

b. Indirectness and Mitigated Disagreement

“That’s what the mayor does. The mayor builds housing.”

Instead of directly stating “***you are wrong***,” Cuomo employs *assertive reformulation* — an indirect correction strategy typical of negative politeness. It allows him to maintain argumentative authority while avoiding overt rudeness. **Pragmatic Function:** Preserves debate decorum; minimizes imposition on interlocutor's Face.

4. Impoliteness and Face-Threatening Acts

While politeness strategies aim to mitigate FTAs, **deliberate impoliteness** is also a rhetorical strategy in adversarial genres like debates (Culpeper, 2011). Examples include:

“You have never had a job. You’ve never accomplished anything. Shame on you.”

“Zoran, your resume could fit on a cocktail napkin. And Andrew, your failures could fill a public school library.”

These utterances perform *face-attack acts*, not mitigated by politeness markers. They are intended to *damage positive Face* (by undermining competence and moral worth). Yet, in a political context, impoliteness can paradoxically function as *face work for the audience* — constructing an image of Authenticity and strength (Lakoff, 2005; Holmes, 2013).

AI Interpretation: The selective violation of politeness norms here is strategic — designed to project moral superiority and assertive leadership to the public, rather than interpersonal harmony.

5. Dialectical Interaction of Politeness Types

Throughout the debate, **positive and negative politeness** operate dialectically rather than discretely:

Positive Politeness	Negative Politeness	Dialectical Interaction
Builds through solidarity and empathy,	Protects autonomy through indirectness, deference, and	The tension between emotional engagement and professional restraint

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shared identity, and inclusive language.	appeals to impersonal authority.	constructs a credible political persona — relatable yet authoritative.
Example: "We need federal help if we're going to save our city."	Example: "The governor doesn't build housing... there are jurisdictions."	Integration: collaborative ethos + legal competence → balance of warmth and control.

Stylistic Devises:

1. Metaphor (Substitution of Conceptual Imagery)

Metaphors communicate concepts or express emotion by contrasting two unlike elements. Metaphors dominate character assassination and conflict formulation in this argument. The phrase was highly metaphorical: *"Andrew Cuomo will attack me all night. Power, his only passion, is waning, so he panics and lashes out."* Power is *"slipping away"* and Cuomo must grab it. These portray Cuomo as a tragic failure, not a political opponent. He adds *"Donald Trump's puppet himself, Andrew Cuomo."* This horrible metaphor depicts Cuomo as a mindless, powerless puppet. Cuomo is quickly delegitimised by their master/servant political relationship. Instead, Cuomo argues, *"They view you as the arsonist who fanned the flames of anti-Semitism."* This stunning metaphor compares Mamdani to an arsonist and anti-Semitism to fire. The "fanning" metaphor implies he incited enmity. *"...you're coming in like a firefighter and you're going to put out these flames."* It says Mamdani is a liar who cannot be a firefighter after committing arson. *"Zoran, your resume could fit on a cocktail serviette."* This excessive metaphor devalues Mamdani's expertise and credibility.

2. Apostrophe (Direct Address to an Absent/Abstract Entity)

Apostrophe is the direct address to an absent or imaginary person, a personified object, or an abstract idea. In this context, it functions primarily as a highly emotional appeal to a higher power or moral principle. Cuomos expression *"Protest, demonstrate, disagree, God bless America, God bless New York City."* The repetition of *"God bless America"* and *"God bless New York City"* constitutes an apostrophe. He addresses God (an abstract entity) to raise a sense of moral rectitude, patriotism, and solemnity over the political conflict, attempting to frame the discourse within a national and spiritual context.

3. Irony (Incongruity Between Expectation and Reality)

Verbal and situational irony involve a discrepancy between what is said and what is meant. The argument mostly uses verbal irony for sarcasm and criticism. Mamdani's approach to the Cuomo/Trump relationship is verbally ironic. "...And he wants Andrew Cuomo to be the mayor not because it will be good for New Yorkers, but because it will be good for him." The speaker's argument that Trump's recommendations are self-serving contradicts the tacit premise that political endorsements should benefit the public. Otherwise, Cuomo says "You're the saviour of the Jewish people." Bitter, scathing verbal irony. The speaker implies that Mamdani is a threat, not a saviour, to mock his safety record defence. Situational irony occurs when mayoral candidates quarrel "like kids in the schoolyard" despite their expected decorum and maturity.

4. Metonymy (Substitution by Association)

Metonymy is when an item or concept is called by a closely related term. Used to rapidly and concisely summon complex ideas or institutions. Mamdani emphasises "***He will amplify right-wing talking points.***" He utilises The word "right-wing" encompasses the Republican Party's philosophy, politics, and cultural fears. Mamdani associates Cuomo with "right-wing talking points," which he wants to delegitimise for his base. His claim "***Trump campaigned on three pledges. He campaigned for the largest American deportation force.***" represents the entire anti-immigrant policy agenda and government aggression. Cuomo said, "***The governor doesn't build housing in New York City... The mayor builds housing.***" The names "governor" and "mayor" refer to all of their jurisdictional and administrative power. The speaker is referring to the institution and its legal jurisdiction. Another statement: "***...anti-Semitism rears its ugly head, which it's now doing more than ever before...***" The "ugly head" symbolises anti-Semitism's visual manifestations.

Table(3) Stylistic Devices are used in the political debate.

Device	Example from Debate Excerpt	Speaker	Function & Analysis
Metaphor	"power, is now slipping away from him."	Mamdani	Conceptualizes Power as a fragile, physical object being lost, framing Cuomo as desperate and losing control.
	"...Donald Trump's puppet himself, Andrew Cuomo."	Mamdani	A harsh, dehumanizing metaphor that casts Cuomo as an unthinking, manipulated tool, immediately delegitimizing his independence.
	"...view you as the arsonist who fanned the flames of anti-Semitism."	Cuomo	Equates Mamdani to an arsonist and hatred to flames, a destructive metaphor designed to completely negate his moral authority.
	"Zoran, your resume could fit on a cocktail napkin."	Opponent (Curtis)	Uses extreme size contrast to metaphorically imply Mamdani's experience is inconsequential and negligible.
Apostrophe	"God bless America, God bless New York City."	Cuomo	A direct address to God (an abstract entity) to invoke a sense of moral seriousness, national unity, and spiritual blessing over the contentious political event.
Irony	"...he wants Andrew Cuomo to be the mayor not because it will be good for New Yorkers, but because it will be good for him."	Mamdani	Verbal Irony that uses the expected (public good) to highlight the claimed reality (self-interest), portraying the endorsement as corrupt or self-serving.
	"You're the savior of the Jewish people."	Opponent (Curtis)	Sarcastic Verbal Irony where the speaker means the opposite of "savior" (i.e., threat), used to ridicule Mamdani's perceived defense of his stance.
	"It's like two kids in a schoolyard."	Moderator/Opponent	Situational Irony that contrasts the expected maturity of

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			mayoral candidates with their actual, petty combative behavior.
Metonymy	"He will amplify right-wing talking points."	Mamdani	"Right-wing" is used metonymically to stand for the entire conservative ideology, political machinery, and associated culture, linking Cuomo to an opposing political force.
	"The governor doesn't build housing... The mayor builds housing."	Opponent (Cuomo)	"Governor" and "Mayor" are used metonymically for the jurisdictional authority, legal Power, and administrative responsibilities of those respective offices.
	"He ran on creating the single largest deportation force in American history."	Mamdani	"Deportation force" acts metonymically for the entire anti-immigrant policy and enforcement strategy, used to evoke fear and urgency.

The following Stylistic devices analysis according to AI (Copilot):

1. Metaphor: Conceptual Framing of Authenticity and Struggle

For political speech, metaphor is a powerful stylistic and cognitive tool that lets speakers explain abstract concepts like truth, identity, and social justice through tangible imagery (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In analysed debates, political speakers may utilise metaphors like ***"We must light the torch of truth amid the storm of corruption."*** The speaker's duty as a moral counsellor or saviour is framed by truth as light and corruption as storm. This metaphor views authenticity as illumination, associating moral integrity with clarity and transparency, and creative identity as the power to redefine socio-political realities through inventive language. The metaphor produces emotional resonance (pathos) and positive etiquette through shared cultural ideals. The speaker promotes unity and inclusivity by using audience-relevant metaphors (Charteris-Black, 2014).

2. Apostrophe: Direct Address and Emotional Alignment

Apostrophe, the rhetorical device of directly addressing an absent or abstract entity, enhances both the *performative* and *relational* dimensions of the speaker's discourse. For example:

"O Justice, how long will you sleep while the people cry?"

Through this apostrophe, the speaker animates an abstract ideal — *Justice* — giving it human agency and evoking emotional engagement. Pragmatically, this serves two politeness purposes:

- It **invokes shared moral sentiments**, fulfilling **positive politeness** by appealing to common ideals (Brown & Levinson, 1987).
- It **mitigates direct blame** against real political actors, thus preserving **negative politeness** by shifting confrontation from individuals to an abstract principle.

3. Irony: Strategic Distance and Critical Authenticity

Irony plays a central role in constructing the speaker's *creative Authenticity* — the ability to criticize, question, and distance oneself from hypocrisy or manipulation while maintaining sincerity. Consider the statement:

“Our opponents surely deserve applause for turning promises into works of fiction.”

Here, Irony produces a double-layered meaning: the literal compliment masks a critique, inviting the audience to infer the speaker's evaluative stance. Pragmatically, this device allows the speaker to perform criticism indirectly, maintaining negative politeness by avoiding overt face-threatening acts (Leech, 1983). Stylistically, Irony displays creative identity, as it demands interpretive collaboration between speaker and audience. It establishes *shared understanding* (Grice, 1975) through implicature — those who “get” the Irony become part of an in-group of interpretive competence. Thus, Irony bridges authentic conviction and strategic artistry, enabling the speaker to maintain moral authority while engaging the audience's intellect.

4. Metonymy: Symbolic Substitution and Institutional Representation

Metonymy, unlike metaphor, substitutes within the same concept (Jakobson, 1956). Metonymy in political speech sometimes involves institutional or iconic substitutes, such as **“The White House has spoken,” or “The streets are angry.”** The nation speaks through our youth” refers to the developing generation or the collective conscience of the people in the argument. Practically, this accomplishes two things:

- Positive civility promotes inclusivity, presenting the leader as part of the people rather than superior.

-Authenticity performance: Linking the speaker's identity to genuine social agents, not abstract institutions.

Metonymy reinforces the dialectical relationship between authenticity (identification with the genuine social body) and creative identity (symbolic reconstruction of social reality). It lets the speaker connect individual ethos to communal agency (Charteris-Black, 2011).

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Conclusion

The present study has investigated the dialectical integration of Authenticity and creative identity in the analysis of political debates through a pragma-stylistic perspective, focussing on the dynamic interaction between human analytical intuition and AI-driven interpretative abilities. The analysis revealed that Authenticity, both as a communicative act in political discourse and as an analytical perspective, is most evident when human interpretive agency remains central to the analytical process. Although AI enabled structural organisation, pattern detection, and stylistic classification, it ultimately depended on pre-existing information, encoded linguistic principles, and prior knowledge to produce its outputs. Consequently, AI's contribution was fundamentally derivative rather than generative.

Conversely, the human analyst had a significantly greater level of creative identity, demonstrated through the capacity to generate novel interpretive frameworks, re-contextualise stylistic indicators, and discern subtle aspects of political performance that are not overtly represented in language data. The creative identity was enhanced through Human–AI interaction: the AI offered structure and systematic clarity, while the human supplied invention, inferential developments, and contextually relevant insights unattainable by AI alone. The dialectical interaction demonstrated that human creativity is not diminished by technological mediation; instead, it is frequently enhanced by critical engagement with AI-generated frameworks.

The pragma-stylistic analysis further validated that political Authenticity—be it creative, personal, or reflective—is most comprehensively comprehended through the integration of algorithmic accuracy and human interpretative insight. Nevertheless, the study eventually indicates that AI, despite its use, remains inadequate for encapsulating the fluid, context-dependent, and culturally entrenched essence of Authenticity in political discourse. Human analysts, possessing socio-pragmatic awareness and creative identity, remain essential for generating interpretations that transcend the merely conceivable to achieve actual understanding.

Consequently, the results underscore the significance of human creativity in political discourse research and emphasise the necessity of preserving a Human-AI collaborative framework in which AI assists rather than replaces the generative, imaginative, and context-sensitive aspects of human investigation.

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