

# Attitude - Case Study

## Barack Obama vs. Mitt Romney - Presidential Debates 2012

The purpose of this case study is to offer insights into how the choices of words used can be an important factor in determining the way we are perceived by others, even when not taking into consideration the visual aspects of our communication.

By using our technology to analyze the transcripts of the three presidential debates that took place in 2012, we can reveal information that was being communicated unconsciously by each of the candidates to the people who were viewing the events.

### Public opinion about the winners of each debate & IntenCheck text analysis results.

In order to show how advanced language analysis can give insights into the perceived performance of the presidential candidates, we will present the public opinion regarding the winners of each debate while also highlighting the results of our text analysis.

#### First Presidential Debate – Polls: Who had done better?

Poll	Obama	Romney	Tied/No Opinion
CBS	22%	46%	32%
CNN	25%	67%	8%
Gallup	20%	72%	8%

The primary critiques of Obama's performance were that he looked detached, seldom addressed his opponent directly, and was often looking down while Romney was speaking.

#### First Presidential Debate – IntenCheck Text Analysis Results for 'Attitude' Category:

Candidate	Positive	Negative	Active	Passive	Strong	Weak
Obama	3.5	2.3	0.1	-1.4	-0.3	1
Romney	-0.9	5.8	1	-0.1	0.7	1.8

It's clear from the results that Mitt Romney, during the first debate, was using words which reflected that he was more aggressive overall, attacking Obama and pointing out the negatives (5.8) as his main

strategy. His words also reflected a more animated and engaged attitude than his opponent, while also using slightly more words that showed a strong position. He also used more words to paint a picture of weakness when referring to his opponent.

On the other hand, Barack Obama, used a lot more positive words while talking, attacking his opponent much less and perhaps appearing to the general public not to compete as much.

### Second Presidential Debate – Polls: Who had done better?

Poll	Obama	Romney	Tied/No Opinion
CNN	46%	39%	11%
CBS	37%	30%	33%

Polls conducted by CBS, CNN, and Reuters showed that Obama had done better than Romney, and a slight majority felt the same in a Gallup poll.

55% of the voters CBS polled also said that Obama gave more direct answers.

The consensus among liberals as well as some conservatives was that Obama's showing in the second debate was considerably stronger in comparison with his performance in the first debate. Analysts characterized him as more assertive and "tough" in the second debate. Romney was perceived to have not done as well as his previous performance, missing several opportunities to rebut Obama.

### Second Presidential Debate – IntenCheck Text Analysis Results for 'Attitude' Category:

Candidate	Positive	Negative	Active	Passive	Strong	Weak
Obama	-1.1	0.2	2.6	-1.9	0.8	-3.4
Romney	-4	-2.1	-1	0.3	-1.5	0.1

The results of our analysis of the second presidential debate clearly prove the fact that Obama was much more active, and this was reflected through his words (a value of 2.6 compared to 0.1 in the first debate), especially when compared to his opponent (value of 1 in the first debate, dropped to -1 in the second).

Obama also used slightly less words that are perceived as passive (-1.9 compared to -1.4 in the first debate) while his opponent did the opposite (0.3 value in the second debate going up from -0.1 in the first).

During the second debate, the public also could see their president appearing much stronger and more assertive, both when compared to Mitt Romney, and when compared to his performance from the first debate: 0.8 strong, going up from -0.3, while the number of words that communicate weakness went down dramatically from +1 to -3.4

Meanwhile, his opponent seemed less tough, his words reflecting a shift in the 'strong' category going from 0.7 in the first debate to -1.5 in the second.

**Third Presidential Debate – Polls: Who had done better?**

<b>Poll</b>	<b>Obama</b>	<b>Romney</b>	<b>Tied/No Opinion</b>
CNN	46%	39%	24%
CBS	48%	40%	12%

The third presidential debate, the decisive one, showed that Obama was more in control and had a better overall performance to convince the public.

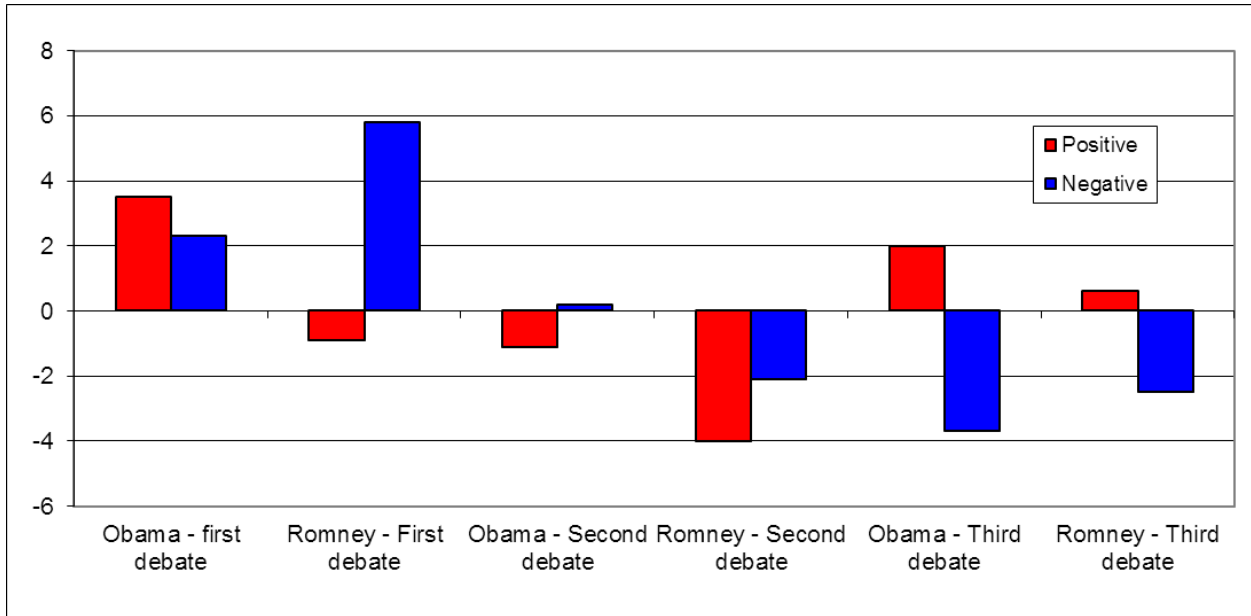
**Third Presidential Debate – IntenCheck Text Analysis Results for ‘Attitude’ Category:**

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Weak</b>
Obama	2	-3.7	0.4	1.2	0.6	0.3
Romney	0.6	-2.5	-2.8	1.9	-0.2	0.3

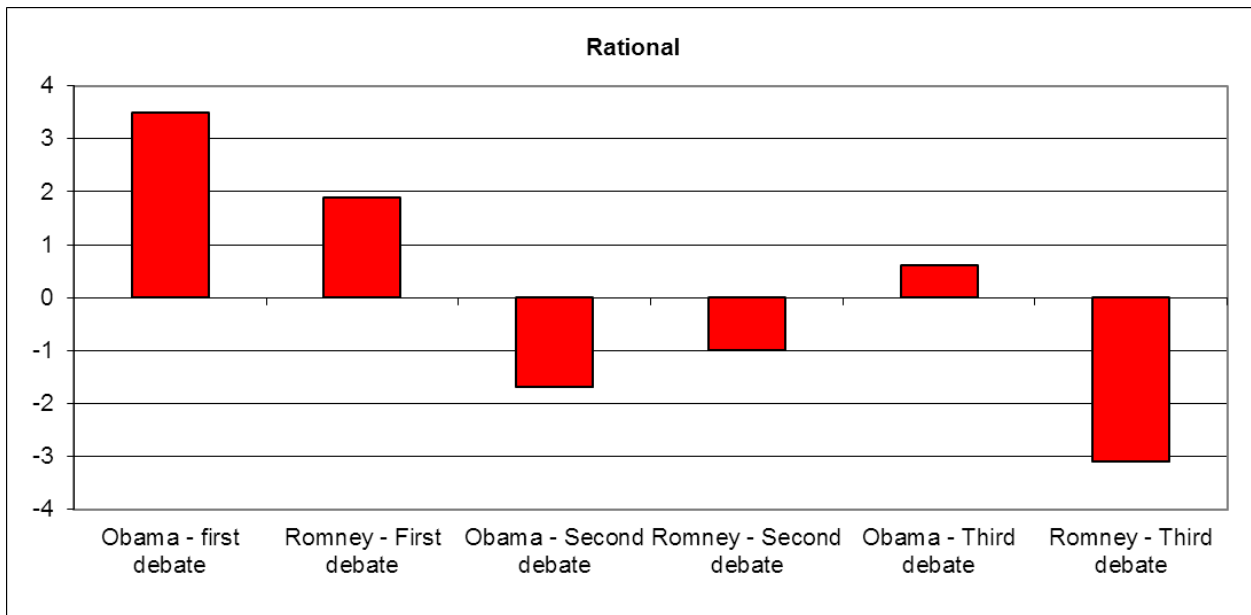
The results of our analysis of the third debate also prove that Mitt Romney was inferior to Obama in all categories when it comes to attitude. He used words which contributed to the general perception by the public of being less active, more passive, and less strong than his opponent, while also failing to attack Obama as much and failing to impact the viewers in a positive way, to show the positive aspects of him being elected as president.

**Other results & statistics worth considering.**

**1. Positive & Negative – Comparison of the candidates’ attitude as reflected by their language during the three debates.**



**2. Rational – A comparison of the candidates use of rational words as reflected by their language during the three debates.**



### 3. Differences in emotional state – Anger & Fear.

Candidate	Anger	Fear
Obama – first debate	-3.6	-1.9
Romney – first debate	-2.2	-2.5
Obama – second debate	0.7	-1.4
Romney – second debate	0.3	-0.8
Obama – third debate	0	4.3
Romney – third debate	4.5	2.3

While analyzing the texts from the presidential campaigns, we came across another interesting set of results: in the levels of anger and fear expressed through words.

On the first debate president Barack Obama seemed to appear unbothered by his opponent's attacks and focused instead on the positive perspective of his potential future presidency. This could have contributed as well to him being perceived as more passive and less competitive throughout that debate.

The major difference and a possible key factor can be noticed in the third debate. It is clear that Obama made a very good use of words which induced fear, contrasting them with a possible presidency of Mitt Romney. This could have caused his opponent to display a lot of anger throughout his verbal communication, reaching a very high value of 4.5 for this emotion, which is in sharp contrast with Barack Obama's composure reflected by a value of 0.

### Information about the text analysis values presented in this case study.

For this case study we have analyzed 6 different texts, three for Barack Obama and three for Mitt Romney. Each text contains all the answers given by the candidate during the course of one presidential debate.

The numbers displayed in the tables have statistical value, and show how the language used by the candidates compares to what is considered within the standard (statistical) norms of the American population.

A category showing values lower than **-1.8** reflects a tendency or intention to avoid words of that particular type. For example Romney's **-4** result in **Positive** category during the second debate means that his language had a much lower average of positive words than what you would normally use every day.

The opposite is also true, and a category showing values higher than **1.8** reflects a tendency or intention to use more words of that particular type than you normally would.

A category with values between **-1.8** and **1.8** means that the analyzed text contains a number of words (of that particular category) which is considered within the standard norms of the American population. In this case, the context has to be well considered before reading more into the values, and additional information could prove very useful – such as contrasting the analysis results with those obtained in a similar or the same context.

**References:**

1. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_presidential\\_election\\_debates,\\_2012](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election_debates,_2012)
2. <http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=october-3-2012-debate-transcript>
3. <http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=october-1-2012-the-second-obama-romney-presidential-debate>
4. <http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=october-22-2012-the-third-obama-romney-presidential-debate>