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**КОМПОЗИЦИОННО-СОДЕРЖАТЕЛЬНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ МЕДИАТЕКСТОВ
 (НА ПРИМЕРЕ ТЕКСТОВ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ ВИДЕОКЛИПОВ КАНДИДАТОВ НА ПОСТ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА
 В 2017 Г. ВО ФРАНЦИИ)**

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются тексты политических рекламных видеоклипов кандидатов на президентский пост во Франции в ходе кампании перед первым туром выборов в 2017 г. Указанные примеры медиатекстов анализируются с точки зрения их композиционного строения и тех особенностей содержания, которые непосредственно связаны со структурой текстов. В целом, большинство исследованных роликов имеют сходное строение и состоят из трех частей: вступления, основной части и заключения. Однако в результате исследования был выявлен ряд преимуществ, отличающих удачные по структуре клипы. К таковым относятся: наличие обращения к избирателям и четкая формулировка темы дискурса во вступительной части клипа, наличие яркой и уместной вступительной фразы, логичность и четкость изложения информации, уместное включение дополнительных видеосюжетов, наличие в тексте заключения.

Ключевые слова: политический видеоклип, политическая реклама, композиционное строение, содержание.

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**COMPOSITIONAL AND CONTENT-RELATED PARTICULARITIES OF POLITICAL MEDIA TEXTS
 (THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF THE TEXTS OF POLITICAL VIDEO CLIPS ISSUED BY THE CANDIDATES
 FOR PRESIDENCY IN FRANCE IN 2017)**

Abstract

The article examines the texts of political advertising video clips issued by the candidates for presidency in France during the campaign before the first round of elections in 2017. The mentioned examples of media texts are analysed from the compositional point of view as well as from that of the content particularities which are directly connected to the text structure. In general, the majority of the studied clips have a similar structure and consist of three parts: introduction, main part and conclusion. However, as a result of the research, a range of advantages marking well-structured videos was revealed. These include: addressing the voters and stating the speech topic clearly at the beginning of the clip, a relevant attention-grabbing opening phrase, consistency and clarity of the information presentation, appropriate use of additional video plots, conclusion at the end of the clip.

Keywords: political video clip, political advertisement, compositional structure, content.

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Introduction

Political video clips as a genre of political advertisement evoke considerable research interest. Being an example of audiovisual advertising [11, P. 140] as well as a type of media text [3, P. 40], a political clip encompasses both verbal and non-verbal components, as well as includes certain emotional tonality. Besides, the clip conveys all the necessary information about a particular candidate. All the above mentioned makes the advertising videos quite comprehensible and easy to understand. D.V. Olshansky notes that 'these days, the main requirements towards the political advertising are brevity, diversity and emotional intensity' [11, P. 234]. This explains why political clips are so popular among voters. In modern France, the situation is even more peculiar due to the official ban on any visual types of political advertisement (leaflets, brochures, billboards, newspapers etc.). In these conditions, political video clips (together with the television debates) play a pivotal role in political advertising campaigns.

According to S.F. Lisovsky's definition, a political clip is 'a video which is longer than a political spot and contains more edited fragments' [5, P. 100]. Here, in turn, it is important to clarify that the length of a political spot, according to E.P. Murashova, varies from 15 seconds to 5 minutes [9, P. 147]. Hence, a political clip usually lasts longer than a minute. Also, S.F. Lisovsky states that 'a politician or an advertising organization representatives should be present' [5, P. 100] in their political clip. The

researcher also adds that 'political clips use the synthesis of a real image and a modeled one' [Ibidem].

So far, political video clips as a genre of political advertisement have not been studied thoroughly enough. The majority of articles and monographs deal with various aspects of political advertising as a whole [1], [2], [5], [11], [13], [15], [18]. We cannot but mention the articles written by E.P. Murashova [6], [7], [8], [9], [10] who analyses political spots in English from different points of view. However, despite certain similarities between this advertising genre and the political clip, there are still some differences mentioned previously. Another researcher, Y.K. Kryuchkina, carries out a comparative analysis of political advertising texts in France and Russia but pays more attention to the visual types of advertisement rather than to the audiovisual ones. Besides, the material studied by Y.K. Kryuchkina [4] refers to an earlier period of time than the political clips considered in the present article. Therefore, the fractional study of the topic under investigation and the recency of the material precondition the timeliness of the present research.

Method

The article examines the compositional structure of video clips as one aspect of a deeper linguistic analysis of this political advertisement genre. Also, the clips are regarded from the point of view of some content particularities which are directly related to the text structure.

The studied material is regarded in compliance with the discursive approach as well as with the use of structural and rhetorical analysis methods. The discursive approach is

totally reasonable when studying political advertisement texts. Indeed, it is necessary to consider the linguistic material 'in the context of the political situation in which it was created, in correlation with other texts <...>, in accordance with the author's political views and personal qualities as well as the specificity of its perception by different people' [14, P. 9]. This comprehensive approach allows a deeper vision of different linguistic details and a better understanding of the situation as a whole.

The methods of structural and rhetorical analysis are basically used to deal with creolized texts representing an ensemble of linguistic and iconic [12, P. 175], verbal and non-verbal components, which is the case of political video clips.

Discussion

Altogether, 28 video clips (from the first round of elections) with the total length of approximately 35 minutes have been analysed in the course of the present research. Each of the 11 candidates for presidency in France (Marine Le Pen, Emmanuel Macron, François Fillon, Benoît Hamon, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, Nathalie Arthaud, François Asselineau, Jean Lassalle, Jacques Cheminade and Philippe Poutou) has presented at least two clips, each lasted from 1.5 to 4 minutes. The majority of the candidates released two or three clips, except for Philippe Poutou who came up with at least ten. However, it seems that quantity in this case is not transformed into quality as P. Poutou's videos completely differ in style from those of the other contenders and look more like soap opera series. Of all Poutou's clips, only one has a similar format to the videos of the other candidates and only this one, in our view, is suitable for analysis.

During the first round of the presidential campaign 2017, most clips were broadcasted on the television in groups of 10 with a common lead-in. Thus, each release contained a varied set of videos from different candidates. Moreover, each clip is available on Youtube up to now. Some candidates, e.g. Jean-Luc Mélenchon, issued non-official videos, apart from the official ones.

In terms of composition, the texts in most of the clips are similar or, more precisely, look like candidates' monologues aiming at persuading the electorate to vote for a particular contender. The structure of these texts is quite simple: we can distinguish the introduction, the main part and the conclusion. In some cases a slogan and/or contact information are also present at the end of the clip.

Concerning the introduction, several tendencies can be noticed. First of all, in this part of the clip, candidates usually (though not always) address the voters. Some politicians use the introduction to state their aims and/or the problem they are going to discuss in the main part. For example, Emmanuel Macron always clearly sets the topic of speech: *Chers compatriotes, je veux vous parler de notre jeunesse... – Dear compatriots, I want to talk to you about our youth...; Chers compatriotes, je veux vous parler de l'égalité... – Dear compatriots, I want to talk to you about the equality...* Another candidate, Benoît Hamon, uses the same strategy in some of his clips: *Je veux vous parler de travail, d'emploi et de pouvoir d'achat. – I want to talk to you about work, employment and purchasing power.* The theme of the following speech is also stated in the introduction of some clips of Marine Le Pen (*Mes chers compatriotes de métropole et d'outre-mer, sans une éducation et une formation solides, l'avenir, de nos jeunes est compromis. – My dear compatriots from France and from the overseas departments, without proper education and instruction, our children's future is*

threatened), Jean Lassalle (*Le temps est venu de nous délivrer des chaînes de l'oppression financière. – It is time to get free from the chains of financial oppression*) and Nathalie Arthaud (*Le chômage est le fléau qui pèse sur toute la société. – The unemployment is the burden that puts pressure on the whole society*). Other candidates' clips lack a clear statement of the speech topic, which does not contribute well to the perception of information. Moreover, in some of the studied clips, the appeal to the audience is totally absent, for instance, in all the videos issued by Jacques Cheminade, Philippe Poutou, Jean-Luc Mélenchon as well as in the majority of Nathalie Arthaud's clips and in some by François Fillon. As a result, there is an impression that these politicians either continue an interrupted speech or just demonstrate disrespect to the voters.

Sometimes, on the contrary, the speaker is very attentive to the audience and emphasizes (in the introduction) that his/her goals and interests are the same as those of the voters. In this way, the candidate wants to show that he/she is one of them. This is particularly characteristic of Benoît Hamon's (*Mes chers compatriotes, comme beaucoup d'entre vous, je suis farouchement européen – Dear compatriots, like many of you, I am a fervent European*) and Nicolas Dupont-Aignan's clips (*Comme vous, je suis bercé depuis l'enfance par ses paysages, son histoire, ses valeurs. – Just like you, I have been cradled since by childhood by its [French] landscapes, its history, its values*). This technique aims at holding the audience's attention and provoking people's sympathy towards the candidate.

One more technique that some participants of the presidential campaign used at the beginning of their clips is an attention-grabbing phrase appealing to the voters' emotions in the first place and thereby inciting the audience to continue watching the clip. Interestingly, Marine Le Pen and Nicolas Dupont-Aignan used absolutely identical attention-grabbing phrases at the beginning of some clips: *J'aime la France – I love France*. A similar technique can be observed in videos released by François Asselineau (*Le vrai sujet de l'élection présidentielle est l'indépendance de la France. – The real subject of the presidential elections is the independence of France*), Benoît Hamon (*La France est aujourd'hui saisie par le doute. – France is assailed by doubts today*), François Fillon (*La France ne peut plus subir sans réagir. – France cannot suffer without action any more*) and some other candidates. The use of an attention-grabbing phrase at the beginning of a clip is quite effective, especially if this sentence reflects the topic of the following discourse at the same time. No doubt that many candidates resorted to this technique.

In the introductions of several video clips, the politicians oppose themselves to their rivals accentuating the advantages and strengths of their own programme or tactics. This is particularly noticeable in clips of Jacques Cheminade (*Je pourrais faire comme les autres candidats et aligner des mesures pour soulager les urgences... – I could do like the other candidates and list the measures to ease the urgent issues...») and Nathalie Arthaud (*La plupart des candidats expliquent que les entreprises ne peuvent pas augmenter le SMIC. – The majority of the candidates explain why they cannot raise the SMIC [the guaranteed minimum wage]*). In this case we can observe examples of the so called subvertisement: the politicians tend to show their best advantages as opposed to the other candidates whose drawbacks they outline. However, using such phrases at the very beginning of the speech is not quite appropriate, in our opinion, especially since the clips of the above mentioned*

candidates completely lack the address to the voters. Concerning J. Cheminade and N. Arthaud's videos, there are also non-verbal factors that play a negative role in their perception (the so called 'speaking head' on a unicoloured background as well as the fast speech tempo). Nevertheless, judging only by the clip introduction, one could get quite an unpleasant impression of these videos.

In some of the studied clips, the beginning differs considerably from the following parts of the text, having the form of a separate video fragment directly connected to the candidate's political programme. For instance, in the opening part of one of Marine Le Pen's clips, the narrator's role is given to one of her prospective voters – a student worried about the employment difficulties she might encounter after her graduation. This is the way the clip creators state the topic of the main part in the introduction. In the described example, it is the education and employment problem which Marine Le Pen promises to solve as soon as possible.

Finally, we cannot but mention the introduction to Philippe Poutou's clip (the only one studied) as it stands in stark contrast to the other candidates' videos. Instead of addressing the voters, this contender for the presidency names himself and formulates the aim of his clip in a rather laconic and rude way: *Je m'appelle Philippe Poutou, ouvrier anticapitaliste. Il faut qu'on parle. – My name is Philippe Poutou, a worker-anticapitalist. It is necessary to talk.* Earlier, it was mentioned that most of P. Poutou's clips do not accord with the political clip format due to their style and discourse particularities. The clip quoted above is relatively close in terms of format to the other candidates' videos. However, even judging by the opening phrases, it is obvious that P. Poutou tends to use the informal style in his speech, which is not characteristic of the other contenders for the presidency.

In the main part of the video clips, candidates briefly present their programmes (the most topical and important aspects for voters) and/or their views on a particular issue or situation in the society. From the compositional point of view, the main parts of the studied clips do not have significant particularities.

The closing part (conclusion) of the videos in question is mainly represented by one or two sentences. This can be explained by special features of the video clip genre, especially by its short duration. Nevertheless, we can outline several variations of the closing part in the studied videos:

1. The candidate summarizes the speech and draws conclusions (M. Le Pen, N. Dupont-Aignan, N. Arthaud, B. Hamon, F. Asselineau, J.-L. Mélenchon (in some of his clips)).

2. The candidate appeals to the electorate to vote for him, to make their choice and/or to act together with this politician (E. Macron, N. Dupont-Aignan, J. Cheminade, B. Hamon, N. Arthaud, F. Fillon, J.-L. Mélenchon, P. Poutou)

3. The closing phrase or the text on the screen represents the candidate's slogan (M. Le Pen, N. Arthaud, B. Hamon, J.-L. Mélenchon, F. Fillon, P. Poutou)

4. The clip finishes by the phrase: *Vive la République et vive la France ! – Long live the Republic and long live France !* (J. Lassalle, F. Fillon)

Special focus should be placed on the composition of some clips by Jean-Luc Mélenchon as it differs considerably

from that of the other candidates' videos (except for P. Poutou's clips the special features of which were mentioned earlier). Each of J.-L. Mélenchon's clips under consideration consists of two parts (the first is much longer than the second). In the first part, the audience is shown a hypothetical situation in the life of common people one year after J.-L. Mélenchon having won the elections. The offscreen voice comments on the changes and improvements that have taken place so far. In the second part of the clip, J.-L. Mélenchon explains briefly the essence of his programme. The content of the second part is the same for all the videos of this kind. Actually, it plays the role of a conclusion, though quite a long one. In the very end, the audience can see the candidate's slogan as well as his contact information on the screen. This specific clip structure has substantial advantages because it helps to switch the viewers' attention and, thus, stir up their interest.

Meanwhile, the other clips of J.-L. Mélenchon (both official and non-official) are less structured and actually represent a mere stream of words addressed to the voters. Besides, this train of thoughts lacks any introduction or logical conclusion. Finally, such clips often start with a shredded sentence, which complicates the perception of information even more.

Results

Concerning the compositional structure of the studied video clips, we can list several advantages that distinguish the well-structured ones:

- addressing the voters at the beginning of the clip;
- clear statement of the speech topic;
- a relevant attention-grabbing opening phrase;
- consistency and clarity of the information presentation;
- appropriate and balanced use of additional video plots;
- conclusion at the end of the clip (at least in the form of an appeal to the voters).

Taking into consideration the above mentioned criteria, the most structurally effective, in our point of view, are the clips released by E. Macron, F. Asselineau, M. Le Pen (some videos), J.-L. Mélenchon (the clips representing the view from the future) and B. Hamon.

Conclusion

In general, the compositional structure of any text, regardless of its genre, influences its perception by the target audience. As for the political advertisement, its text structure is particularly important. The impact of a media text on the voters and, hence, on their commitment to the corresponding candidate hugely depends on how logically, clearly and skillfully the text is built. Certainly, the electorate's attitude towards this or that candidate is influenced by a great number of factors but the composition of political advertising texts is not the least one in terms of importance.

In the perspective, we are going to continue the comprehensive analysis of modern political video texts in France and study other aspects such as the use of expressive means, verbalization of the 'addresser-addressee' relations, the text tonality, correlation of verbal and non-verbal components.

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