

## Electoral television advertising and persuasion in Puebla 2010. An approach from Critical Discourse Analysis<sup>1</sup>

*Publicidad electoral televisiva y  
persuasión en Puebla 2010.*

*Una aproximación desde el  
Análisis Crítico del Discurso*

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This paper proposes the analysis of discursive genres in political communication, with emphasis on electoral spots. The corpus considered the spots of the election for governor of the state of Puebla, Mexico, in 2010. The findings reveal the discursive, standardized configuration of the spots under the principles of credibility and political legitimacy of representative democracy.

**KEYWORDS:** Discursive genres, spots, elections, style and democracy.

*El trabajo propone el análisis de los géneros discursivos en la comunicación política, con énfasis en los spots electorales. El corpus consideró los spots de la elección para gobernador del estado de Puebla, México, en 2010. Los hallazgos revelan la configuración discursiva estandarizada de los spots, bajo los principios de verosimilitud y legitimación política de la democracia representativa.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Géneros discursivos, spots, elecciones, estilo y democracia.

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE APPROACH: DISCURSIVE GENRES AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Political communication (PC) in contemporary States with democratic characteristics has incorporated to its processes of construction and messages diffusion a wide diversity of discursive genres: television spots, podcasts, posters, billboards, online interviews, virtual networks, informative notes, infomercials, among other expressions of the political activity in the information society (Dader, 1999; García Beaudoux, D'Adamo & Slavinsky, 2005; Klinger & Svensson, 2015; Lits, 2003; Mancini & Swanson, 1996). Nevertheless, this communicative heterogeneity has discursive constants that suggest certain forms of stylistic configuration, for the ideological contents diffusion.

Given the variety of discourses that feed PC strategies (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012), the concept of *discursive genres* (Bajtin, 1997/1979; Beacco, 2004; Brand, 2012; Bubnova, 1984; Todorov, 1996/1978) is considered as a way of identifying and classifying the forms taken by discourse in the political action's development. This approach deepens on the prevailing style on rhetorical strategies (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2006/1989; Taguieff, 1990) that serve as vehicle for political messages, in the media persuasion universe (Klinger & Svensson, 2015). Thus, the adopted perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Chilton & Schäffner, 2000/1997; Leeuwen, 2007; Soage, 2006; Wodak & Meyer, 2009) is the one which conceives the "discursive genre" as "a form that structures social communication, constituent of places, whose configuration reveals the socio-historical conjunction, in which the discursive formations are anchored and the societal significance is learned" (Beacco, 2004, p. 109). This approach unlocks a possibility of understanding about political processes, from the role of language within the discourses configuration (Gutiérrez Vidrio, 2000) of the actors associated with the exercise of power and its relationship with democracy.

## THE DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

As an interpretative discipline, the CDA establishes the understanding conditions of the language phenomena in the social context (Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2003; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013; Leeuwen, 2009), recognizing the communicative roles of interlocutors, signification spaces, the non-limited situation and the generic resources of discourse (Pérez Daniel, 2008). With this approach, the election for governor in Puebla, Mexico, in 2010, is analyzed through the electoral campaign spots, in accordance with the media profiles of the candidates. From the CDA, the rhetorical configuration of electoral spots is analyzed, considering “discursive standardization” as a precondition for the attributes formulation of political actors (Gutiérrez Vidrio, 2015). Furthermore, the following research questions were formulated: As a discursive genre, how did political discourse in the spots was shaped to reinforce the candidates profile and legitimacy? as advertising isotopies, which were the discursive axes that articulated the electoral campaigns spots? and how did the standardization of media rhetoric was implemented in the electoral campaign?

## THEORETICAL APPROACH

### *Discursive genres as communicative conditions*

The research considered revisiting Bajtín’s proposal (1997/1979) on the recognition of discursive genres and their implicit heterogeneity. His contribution to discourse studies has allowed investigating social and political action discursive manifestations. Analyzing the “types of discourses” over social life, according to Bajtín (1997/1979, p. 248), required to think about the forms in which sentences can be constructed, as major universes of communication, with specific spheres depending on their sociocultural function.

Bajtín (1997/1979) argued that the “thematic content, style and composition” constitute the three moments of discourse’s manifestation within the statement’s *totality*, according to a certain sphere of communication. Indeed, “each separate statement is, in fact, individual, but each sphere of the language’s exercise elaborates its

own relatively stable types of statements, which we shall call *discursive genres*<sup>3</sup> (Bajtín, 1997/1979, p. 248). Based on these notions, *political communication*, as a *subsystem of communication in culture*, constitutes a communicative sphere that generates its own statements regarding certain particular and steady features, in other words, its *discursive genres*. The thesis is the following: *The communicative possibilities derived from political action would be predefined by the set of available discursive genres to actors and/or interlocutors of political life.*

Assuming that “the concept of *discursive genre*, by implying a variety of social roles that the discourse’s subject can adopt, appears to be the most suitable instrument for the analysis of every kind of discourse” (Bubnova, 1984, p. 39). From this perspective, the electoral spot, as discursive genre, reaches its social dimension, by considering the actors as interlocutors inserted in a communicative flow, where language (Halliday, 2001/1978), depending on the intentionality of issuers and receivers, adequate to the communicative situation (Maingueneau, 2005, 2012).

In media contexts, the generation, transformation and combination of discourses (Charland, 2003) represent a challenge for the CDA and the PC. “Generic certainties”, the idea of “pure” discourses, have been left behind. Upon the transformations of language as social and political action, Todorov’s judgment (1996/1978, p. 49) must be considered: “Genres have not disappeared, only the genres of the past; and is not that they have disappeared but have been replaced by others”. Discursive genres are mechanisms of the language that provide a channel for reality representation’s schemes.

#### REGARDING THE STANDARDIZATION OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

The notions of “discourse” and “discursive genres” in the study of PC allow the conception of the electoral campaign as a “unity of meaning”, as a set of statements articulated among them. For this reason, the discourse is conceived as a “persuasive construction that allows to communicate ideas

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<sup>3</sup> Italics on the original document.

and proposals, concerning public and/or political objects, either through words as well as through images, by what is explicitly said and also by what is suggested” (Garcia Beaudoux, D’Adamo & Slavinsky, 2005, p. 32). The challenge for political discourse’s analysis in the media PC, from the perspective of discursive genres (Brand, 2012) lies on the fact that, identifying it with the *persuasive function* –rhetoric of advertising (Adam & Bonhomme, 1997)– steps away from the “deliberative function” that, traditionally characterizes the debate of public affairs.

Political life and institutions in media democratic societies require a communication system that encourages a symbolic values exchange, which legitimizes the actions of political agents and citizens (Leeuwen, 2007; Mackay, 2015; Nilsson & Carlsson, 2014), with regard to the exercise and seek of power. This dynamic nurtures itself from the values, history and social and political practices. Thus, “symbolically, campaigns legitimize democratic governments and political leaders, linking voters and candidates in a game of civic mercy and national renewal rituals” (Mancini & Swanson, 1996, p. 1).

In these processes, political agents play a “pragmatic” role, concerning to political actions and social practices in electoral processes, and on a “symbolic level”, associated with production, emission and reception of discourses, customized through the games of language. The articulation of said two levels involves certain forms of PC in the exchange of messages between politicians, media and citizens. Here, the tendency announced by Mancini and Swanson (1996) and Dader (1999) is followed, they saw in media rhetoric this set of PC behavior variables: personalization of politics, scientific approach of politics, detachment between parties and citizens, communication structures autonomy, and the transformation of citizens into spectators.

## PREVIOUS STUDIES ON ELECTORAL SPOTS AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN MEXICO

### *Quantitative studies*

The study of television advertising in political campaigns in Mexico with a quantitative approach has enabled looking into the relations between partisan strategies and citizen preferences. In electoral

processes, “through television advertising ... candidates and campaign designers build a narrative that reflects the central elements on which each candidacy seeks to place” (Freidenberg & González Tule, 2009, p. 270). In the case of the 2006 election, the television advertisements of the three dominant parties –Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) y Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD)– reported the used strategies to influence public opinion: propagandistic surveys, negative advertisements and lack of dialogue. The use of such strategies restricted the democratization of the political system (Freidenberg & González Tule, 2009).

On the other hand, Maldonado Maldonado, Muñiz Muriel and Segoviano Hernández (2013) refer that “the political spot is perhaps one of the propaganda tools mostly used by parties and politicians to convey their proposals” (p. 124). It consists in a work based on the framing approach and content analysis. The analysis unit of their studio considers 22 television spots, and the publicity of Nuevo León’s local elections in 2009 is documented. The results show that there was not a notable difference between the strategic and the thematic framings.

Lugo Rodríguez (2011), with a comparative quantitative approach, delves into the attack messages of two elections: 2003 and 2009. The content analysis shows the changes all over the “partisan’s political communication practices”. The difference was affected by the 2007 electoral reform: direct attack messages decreased but indirect attack messages increased.

The study of attack messages in electoral processes has been an object of analysis for PC in Mexico. In the federal election of 2015, for example, distinguishes the strategic use of negative messages (Díaz Jiménez & Alva Rivera, 2016), of spots with frames to develop schemes of antagonist television advertising, such as occurred with the main parties: PRI, PAN and PRD. This tendency represents one of the modalities of the media game in electoral campaigns.

### *Qualitative and mixed studies*

Chihu Amparán (2010) explores the framing theory and deepens into the communication frames of electoral spots in Mexico 2006. He values the image’s qualitative dimension, the cultural and emotional factors

that compound political propaganda. He classifies the *frames* according to the roles of “protagonist” and “antagonist”. In his analysis, proposes three dimensions of framing: verbal, visual and aural. He points out that the predominance of antagonist’s framing in electoral propaganda is related to the weakening of civic culture.

The qualitative approach represents a form of analysis that has allowed exploring other PC dimensions, as it happens in the relation between the audiovisual advertisements of campaign and the emotions transmitted to the citizenship. With regard to the federal election in Mexico 2012, based on the theory of affective intelligence and the context of political competitiveness, it has been documented: the use of positive emotions as a permanent strategy in the PRI-Partido Verde Ecologista de México (PVEM) , and the game with negative emotions as a resource used by the PAN and the PRD, whose candidates had lower electoral competitiveness indexes (Aguilar, 2013).

The research recognizes the importance of quantitative methods and the relevance of qualitative methods to delve the ways in which audiovisual messages are constructed in electoral campaigns. It also considers the preponderance of the political propaganda model focused on the spots (Meyer Rodríguez, Cortés Moreno, Ahuactzin Martínez & Ríos Calleja, 2014).

With a qualitative approach, this study intends to explain and understand, with empirical evidence, how discourse is articulated in the spots of the local electoral campaigns in Puebla 2010, generating a proposal of analysis based on the CDA.

## THE ELECTORAL CONTEXT

The Puebla’s electoral process in 2010, within the national arena, meant the confirmation of a tendency that has been arising along the last elections in Mexico: the incremental polarization of political forces, despite partisan diversity. Cause of the formation of pre-electoral coalitions, even in ideologically incompatible situations. It must be considered, therefore, the PAN alliances in 2010 as a strategy of political repositioning in governor elections: Oaxaca, Puebla, Sinaloa, Durango, Hidalgo, Veracruz and Tlaxcala (Reveles Vázquez, 2011).

In fact, election, as a process of political positioning, had constituted itself as a mechanism for the re-articulation of political forces under the scheme of a latent two-party system. For Valdiviezo (2012), “the election of Puebla 2010 was an election of all positions. Governor, representatives on the two principles (26 of relative majority and 15 of proportional representation) and 217 municipalities were elected” (p. 257). The renewal of authorities in the three government levels implied an electoral strategy to focus on the governor election upon the citizens. In such way, the alignment of the political forces is presented (see Table 1):

TABLE 1  
COALITIONS AND POLITICAL ACTORS

Coalition	Coalición Compromiso por Puebla (CCP)	Alianza Puebla Avanza
Political actors	PAN <sup>a</sup> , PRD <sup>b</sup> , PCD <sup>c</sup> , PANAL <sup>d</sup>	PRI <sup>e</sup> , PVEM <sup>f</sup>
Parties	Rafael Moreno Valle (RMV)	Javier López Zavala (JLZ)
Governor candidates		

a. Partido Acción Nacional, b. Partido de la Revolución Democrática, c. Partido Convergencia Democrática, d. Partido Nueva Alianza, e. Partido Revolucionario Institucional, f. Partido Verde Ecologista de México.

Source: Own elaboration based on Valdiviezo (2012).

Valdiviezo (2012) emphasizes two background aspects of the electoral results of 2010 and the defeat of the coalition Alianza Puebla Avanza: 1) the 2006 election, “where the PRI lost 12 of the 16 districts of the entity”, and 2) the de-legitimation of the governor Mario Marín, who incurred in the “violation of Lydia Cacho’s journalist rights”. Both events, served as determinants of the 2010 election: low electoral preference and a reduced political legitimacy.

On the other hand, Reynoso (2011) finds in the alliance Coalición Compromiso por Puebla (PAN, PRD, PCD and PANAL) an argument to understand the first defeat of the PRI in Puebla. He also points out that Javier López Zavala did not have the highest probability of winning,

despite his strategic position as Secretary of Government and later on as Secretary of Social Development. The filiation of Javier López Zavala with the governor in office, Mario Marín, was paradoxical: institutional support vs. political de-legitimation (Reynoso, 2011). These elements, from the media rhetoric's perspective, led to a symbolic confrontation that was manifested in the narrative of political spots during the campaign period. Otherwise, in the case of the alliance *Coalición Compromiso por Puebla*, "a dynamic and well-designed campaign" is recognized (Reynoso, 2011, p. 29), although the electoral results of 2006 (Valdiviezo, 2012) had already marked a political reorganization precedent.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Selection of the case*

The election for governor in Puebla 2010 is relevant in the context of the electoral processes in Mexico, because is one of the three cases in which the PAN-PRD coalition defeated the PRI. The other states in which this alliance was victorious are Oaxaca and Sinaloa (Romero, 2012). In addition, the election of Puebla fulfills three key aspects for PC: 1) an electoral discourse of opposition to the PRI was constructed; 2) television advertisements were used in order to build the symbolic-political values of the pre-electoral coalition; and 3) was part of the polling enterprises game (Romero, 2012).

### *The research corpus*

The spots collecting and treating technique follows the CDA's methodology, which establishes the integration of a discourses corpus that document one or several communicative situations (Bateman, 2014; Bolivar, 2013; Shiro, 2012; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This work was carried out in the Political Communication's Laboratory of the Instituto de Ciencias de Gobierno y Desarrollo Estratégico of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla.

The sample of television electoral advertising was compounded with all the spots registered at the Federal Electoral Institute: 17 audiovisual pieces. 13 spots correspond to the PRI and its coalition *Alianza Puebla*

Avanza, and 4 spots to the PAN and its alliance Coalición Compromiso por Puebla (Comunicación política y ciudadanía, 2016). This is the universe of spots officially disclosed to the electorate during the governor election of Puebla, Mexico, in 2010.

#### *CDA's method and technique*

As a method and technique, the CDA proposes from Fairclough's approach (1996/1989) the recognition of three dimensions or states:

1. The *description* is the state that refers to the formal properties of the text.
2. The *interpretation* is conceived as the relation between the text and the interaction - being the text conceived as the product of a production process ...
3. The *explanation* is shaped by the relation between interaction and the social context ... (p.26)

Based on these dimensions, the relations between semiotic systems and social structures analysis was carried out, considering the *generic features of communication systems* in the configuration of electoral spots. The CDA approach, by considering discourse's centrality in the construction of the spots, allowed to pose the following secondary questions, complementary to those raised in the delimitation of the study: what were the aspects of audiovisual cohesion of the spots that determined the rhetorical strategies?, how was the structure and significant coherence of the spots established in terms of symbolic values?, and how was the candidates' message configured in the process of articulating multimodal isotopies? To follow up these questions, a multimodal and rhetorical analysis was determined to be carried out.

#### *The level of multimodal and rhetorical analysis*

At the level of multimodal cohesion, Leeuwen (2005) considers four central aspects: 1) *rhythm*, which considers coherence and significant structure on the order of time; 2) *composition*, which provides coherence and meaningful structure on the basis of spatial organization; 3) *linked information*, which takes into account the relationship of

information axes between words and images, considering the spatial and temporal levels, respectively; and 4) *dialogue*, which beholds dialogical exchanges structures and musical interaction forms, which helps to understand the relation of semiotic modes in multimodal texts.

Therefore, two instruments were constructed, one for the *composition of symbolic values of the candidates* and another for the audiovisual *messages isotopy*. As a semantic phenomenon associated with the audiovisual discourse's meaning construction, the notion of "isotopy" in the analysis of electoral television advertising allowed to identify the frequency of semantic units that make possible the syntagmatic construction of the discourse's meaning/s, under Rastier's perspective (2005/1996) of the term. In political spots, isotopy can be revealed through the use of phrases, such as the slogan, that allow the symbolic and thematic identity of electoral advertising. In the construction of the term, the path that has taken since its incorporation by Greimas (1971/1966) and its contributions to the analysis of verbal discourse (Beristáin, 2003/1985) and audiovisual discourse are recognized. Likewise, the presence of the "verbal anaphoric resource" is conceived as "the intermittent *repetition* of an idea, either with the same or other words"<sup>4</sup> (Beristáin, 2003/1985, p. 40), therefore, "anaphorization" as a semantic phenomenon, as a procedure, "allows to minimize *redundancy* and maintain the discursive *isotopy*, that is, to develop the line of meaning as an inter-sentence relation ..." (Beristáin, 2003/1985, p. 40-41). In this sense, the instrument of analysis considers the "line of meaning" that is configured in the spots development, due to the effect of semantic redundancy, from three fields: verbal anaphoric resource, visual composition and symbolic value associated to each isotopy path.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Spots and discursive and rhetoric strategies*

As effects of meaning, discursive multimodality (Constantin de Chanay & Turbide, 2011) allows the use of political image (Lebel, 2003) as a powerful rhetorical resource in terms of meaning. The analysis of

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<sup>4</sup> Italics on the original document.

multimodal discourse (Leeuwen, 2005), as the study of the different semiotic modes composition, allows to establish the levels of meaning articulated in the significance unit of the electoral spot. In the 2010 electoral process, the coalition *Compromiso por Puebla* had a small number of spots, nevertheless, the campaign reflected constancy about the issues and the ways in which the candidate was presented. With regard to the profile's composition of the candidate Rafael Moreno Valle (RMV) (see Table 2).

The construction of Rafael Moreno Valle's image, candidate of the coalition *Compromiso por Puebla*, at the level of multimodal discourses, considered the presentation of a thematic-argumentative axis, an isotopy, synthesized in the notion of "commitment". For this, as an illustrative strategy, "witnesses" were used, and whose testimonies endorse the candidate's attributes. The tendency towards the personalization of politics is evident (Mancini & Swanson, 1996). The candidate's figure considered a codification of values in opposition to other political-electoral proposals.

Two antecedents are recovered in the spot: the actions as senator for Puebla and the separation of the hegemonic party in the state, the PRI. It is a matter of two intertextual, media, processes that allow to show positive evidence about his profile: is considered that his work as a senator was acceptable in the argumentative logic of the spot, and the favorable nature of his separation from the party involved in the media scandal of the journalist Lydia Cacho during the period of Mario Marín (Valdiviezo, 2012). As a result of the demarcation regarding the PRI, the "compromiso" is established as a key value. Therefore, it is necessary to show the discursive strategies that allowed the construction of the isotopy, according to the multimodal rhetoric that had the testimonies as axis. For the construction of the argumentative-persuasive line of the coalition *Compromiso por Puebla* (see Table 3).

A predominant feature in the mediatisation of political profiles is the creation of narratives that allow citizens to identify the values and actions associated to political personalities, especially in electoral processes, whose axiological confrontations are waged on the candidate's antagonist relations ground. For said reason, the symbolic values promoted by the coalition *Compromiso por Puebla* reinforced

TABLE 2  
RMV COMPOSITION OF SYMBOLIC VALUES

Multimodal discourse	Rhythm	Composition ( <i>layout</i> )	Linked information	Dialogue	Mayor isotopy
I'm with Rafa	30 seconds. Testimony sequence: office worker, hair stylist, housewife mother of family, student, elderly.	 Switching images of the actors that testify. RMV closes. Mainframe image.	Media Intertextuality  Reference on congress achievements, disengagement with the PRI.	Composition levels are related based on the candidate's attributes.	"My commitment is with Puebla"

Source: Own elaboration based on the multimodal categories of Van Leeuwen (2005).

TABLE 3  
ISOTOPY “COMMITMENT”

Verbal anaphoric resource	Visual composition	Symbolic value
“Because he didn’t raise taxes”		Administrative responsibility
“Because he’s well-prepared and has different proposals”		Education and initiative

Source: Own elaboration based on the multimodal categories of Van Leeuwen (2005).

aspects related to an integral profile of RMV. The verbal anaphoric resources are a sample of these dynamics, for example: “He didn’t raise taxes”, “He lowered the legislators salaries”, “He is from Puebla”, “He is well-prepared”, among others. These attributes work because of the opposition of his contender: Javier López Zavala.

On the other hand, the Puebla Avanza Alliance, PRI-PVEM, maintained a more traditional rhetorical strategy, based on the candidate’s political values and using an electoral narrative based on the vulnerable majority’s identity, relating argumentative and rhetorical resources with the notion of a “rural and indigenous” society. Actually, the figure of the candidate, in the spots, reveals with a “populist” character, in the connotation of electoral corporatism that has distinguished the PRI throughout its history within the Mexican political system. About the composition of the coalition Alianza Puebla Avanza candidate’s profile see Table 4.

Contrary to the construction of an electoral strategy that seeks to position a candidate, the spot “El orgullo de Puebla” does not present

TABLE 4  
JLZ COMPOSITION OF SYMBOLIC VALUES

Multimodal discourse	Rhythm	Composition (layout)	Linked information	Dialogue	Mayor isotopy
Puebla's pride	30 seconds.  Testimony sequences: grown up woman, indigenous woman, young indigenous woman, grown up man. Profile: poverty.		Media intertextuality Intertextualities happen on the axiological level: the political values of the candidate are presented.	Composition levels are related based on the candidate's attributes.	"Puebla wins"

Source: Own elaboration.

the visual image of JLZ. His absence limits, in persuasive terms, the association between the political proposal and the candidate. Likewise, a political narrative based on testimonies is used to remark the candidate's attributes. This is a frequent rhetorical strategy in presentation spots, because on the basis of testimony, the legitimacy of the political actor is intended to be founded. This strategy reveals as a discursive condition in the multimodal semiotic composition, which grant political parties to build a narrative around the candidate, based on the principle of plausibility that articulates every narrative.

The particular characteristic of the spot lies on building an axiological legitimacy, for example: "He's just like us", "he's a reliable man". In JLZ composition of the symbolic values, the isotopy "Puebla wins" constitutes the closing premise of the argumentative cycle that began with the testimonies. As long as the candidate's image does not appear, there is no illustrative voice that connects with him, in other words, the absence is not only visual but also with regard to an agent of discourse. "Puebla wins" as an expression, politically and electorally is an impersonal formula. Therefore, the possibilities of the candidate's positioning, at the discourse level, are limited. About the construction of the argumentative-persuasive line of the coalition Alianza Puebla Avanza see Table 5.

The dynamic configuration of political discourse requires emphasizing the political actors attributes, especially in audiovisual media, since the logic of semiotic articulation of the spots also implies image's rhetoric. Thus, the presentation spots consider anaphoric resources, at the different levels of multimodality. In the spot "Puebla wins", the copulative verb "is" serves as basis for the attributes description: "just like us", "reliable", "humble", "serious and committed". The symbolic values, therefore, are the result of the rhetorical strategy: "identity", "civic confidence", "humble background" and "commitment". Another anaphoric resource is the systematic presence of women, whose multiplicity roles values reinforce the plausibility of discourse. The media rhetoric, as seen in the spots of *Compromiso por Puebla* and *Alianza Puebla Avanza*, present the modality described by Lebel (2003) as "image control", understood as the political actors' image configuration, from a given discursive intentionality, through the use of media techniques.

TABLE 5  
ISOTOPIA "PUEBLA WINS"

Verbal anaphoric resource	Visual composition	Symbolic value
"Because he's just like us"		Identification with vulnerable people
"He's a man of his word"		Political comply

Source: Own elaboration.

Based on the configuration of the candidate's political profile, the axiological and symbolic features were identified in the discursive universe: 4 spots of the alliance Compromiso por Puebla and 13 spots of the coalition Alianza Puebla Avanza (see Table 6).

TABLE 6  
RMV CANDIDATE PROFILE'S ISOTOPY

	
"The Puebla that looks forward"	"Puebla, open your eyes"

Source: Own elaboration.

The personalization of politics, as a communicative strategy, is presented as a generic condition. The spots of the coalition *Compromiso por Puebla* present RMV as a committed politician. Visually, the candidate is shown in the foreground, either at the beginning or at the end of the audiovisual sequence: in the spot “I’m with Rafa” the political-electoral proposal is reinforced by the intervention of the candidate; in the spot “The Puebla that looks forward”, a recognition of the strengths of the state is made; in the spot “Puebla deserves to be better”, the citizen needs are identified and intended to attend; finally, in the spot “Puebla, open your eyes” the candidate calls out to join his political project. As a discursive configuration, the spots reveal argumentative unity, by constructing the candidate profile’s isotopy.

In the case of the coalition *Alianza Puebla Avanza*, the argumentative and persuasive resources are more heterogeneous. The spots do not always reinforce the candidate’s visual image: 9 out of 13 spots promote his figure. The spots “Puebla, winning state”, “In Puebla you breathe a great future”, “The pride of Puebla” and “The pride of Puebla (2)”, visually only reinforce the image of the party, even though in its verbal-hearing level they refer to the candidate. The use of the testimonial strategy is frequent in these spots, however, there is an evident absence of the visual reinforcement of the candidate. As multimodal compositions, the 9 spots that do promote the visual JLZ’s figure show a candidate seeking for legitimacy (see Table 7).

TABLE 7  
JLZ CANDIDATE PROFILE’S ISOTOPY



“Puebla wins with Javier López Zavala”



“What would Puebla be without our youth?”

Source: Own elaboration.

In his spots, JLZ is always accompanied, therefore in media rhetoric terms is difficult to establish the iconic “centrality” of the candidate. In the spot “Puebla wins with Javier López Zavala”, the political actor emerges from the community and by means of a first shot announces his political proposal. This way of showing himself is replicated in other spots, although in each one intends to serve a sector of the citizenship: young people, peasants, women. The argumentative-persuasive strategy lies on the “people’s” appreciation.

Even so, the discursive configuration is restricted in terms of an isotopic construction of the candidate’s profile, given the heterogeneity of visual resources. Even in the spots “I win with Javier López Zavala” and “I win with Javier López Zavala, women”, the presence of other social actors does not represent an audiovisual strategy that strengthens the image of the candidate. Something similar happens with the spots “An invitation to vote” and “Zavala”, in which the visual games of the shots, because of their heterogeneity, difficult the construction of a political-electoral narrative centered on the candidate’s profile.

At the rhetorical level, the game of argumentation in both, RMV and JLZ spots, follows a persuasive logic: the most sensitive problems of the citizenship are identified and the political project is proposed to solve them. However, it should be noted that the contextualization of the electoral discourse is the most obvious difference, since in the spots of the coalition *Compromiso por Puebla*, the topic focuses on the transformation of society, while in the *Alianza Puebla Avanza*’s spots seek the appreciation of the vulnerable sectors of the population and a welfare policy is proposed.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study of television electoral advertising has focused on the role played by the spots in positioning parties and candidates among the citizens. According to the previous literature (Freidenberg & González Tule, 2009), the configuration of the spots seeks to highlight the positive aspects of the candidates and minimize their negative aspects. As a discursive strategy, strengthening the positive image of political actors allows to place the spot in a range of larger acceptance by the electorate.

Although the quantitative studies have a more functional character in contexts of political competitiveness, their contribution to comprehend the communicative dynamics has generated a space of investigation on the discursive and rhetorical strategies that has been addressed from the Critical Discourse Analysis.

In concern to the quantitative studies associated to content analysis (Lugo Rodríguez, 2011; Maldonado Maldonado, Muñiz Muriel & Segoviano Hernández, 2013) and in light of the qualitative studies related to the framing theory (Chihu Amparán, 2010), the research revealed that the approach to the study of television electoral advertising from the Critical Discourse Analysis allows to delve into the ways in which the message is configured as a multimodal unit.

In the construction of the political image, the spots of the Puebla 2010 election confirm the personalization of politics hypothesis of Mancini and Swanson (1996) and Dader (1999). The analysis of the spots showed in the context of electoral competitiveness in Puebla, that even though the candidates had represented a political alliance, it was necessary to implement discursive strategies to position them as suitable profiles for the governorship: Rafael Moreno Valle supported by the symbolic value of “commitment” and Javier López Zavala promoted by the ambiguous expression “Puebla wins” These discursive axes, as advertising isotopies, articulated the spots of the campaigns.

As media discourses, television electoral advertising responds to the assumption of standardized public discourses, in accordance to the logic of discursive genres configuration (Bajtín, 1997/1979; Beacco, 2004; Brand, 2012; Bubnova, 1984; Todorov, 1996/1978). Electoral spots, as a discursive genre, also constitute a communicative condition for parties and candidates, imitating standardized processes of the messages construction. This aspect is visible through the application of the CDA, in its descriptive, interpretive and explanatory dimensions.

The results of the analysis also revealed the relationship between the communicative interaction promoted by the electoral spot and the social and political context in which it is enrolled (Fairclough, 1996/1989). Likewise, the multimodality inherent to the electoral spot, in terms of rhythm, composition, linked information and dialogue (Leeuwen, 2005), through the analysis of the semiotic modes allowed

to establish the relations between strategies of political legitimation and the candidate's attribute. At this level, the opposition of the symbolic values of Rafael Moreno Valle and Javier López Zavala is understood: their symbolic identities correspond to the specificities of the electoral competition and the coalition's positioning within the political context of Puebla in 2010. The findings of this research present empirical evidence on the isotopies that established spots symbolic flows: the coalition Compromiso por Puebla managed to generate a more articulated meaning space in the spots sequences, while the Alianza Puebla Avanza presented a limited level of multimodal configuration in favor of the candidate.

The study enables to consider that an articulated isotopic construction, centered on the candidate's image, through political commitment, generates a more persuasive discursive strategy than an isotopy based on the "recognition of the vulnerable classes", associated with electoral corporatism. The importance of the relation between discourse and political narrative is emphasized. Finally, to deepen the dynamics of political and electoral discourses construction, an interdisciplinary view that considers the Critical Discourse Analysis is proposed, for a better understanding and interpretation of political phenomena in democratic societies.

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APPENDIX

INSTRUMENT 1 COMPOSITION OF SYMBOLIC VALUES					
Multimodal discourse	Rhythm	Composition ( <i>layout</i> )	Linked information	Dialogue	Mayor isotopy
Spot's title.	Consistency and significant structure on the order of time.  The relation between rhythm and meaning is sought in each of the sequences or frames of the communicative act.	Consistency and significant structure on the basis of spatial organization. The "visual narrative" is considered as an articulating element of the meaning in the spot.	Media intertextuality It considers the relation of the information axes between words and images, considering the spatial and temporal levels. In this respect, the relation between text and context is established as a signification process.	Shows the structures of dialogical exchanges and the forms of musical interaction that allow us to understand the relation of semiotic modes in multimodal texts.	Frequency of semantic units. Isotopy operates at a deep level of content structures.

INSTRUMENT 2  
ISOTOPIES

Verbal anaphoric resource	Visual composition	Symbolic value
<p>Phraseological units: substantive, adjective or adverbial locutions that frequently generate ambits of signification. The frequency of the phrases “with similar features” articulates the discursive line of the spot.</p>	<p>Frame in which the visual sequence synthesizes the coherence of the meanings in the spatial and temporal order. The composition allows the integration of semiotic modes associated with symbolic values, as an articulating mechanism of meaning.</p>	<p>Semantic load generated by the verbal anaphoric resource and visual composition, with sociocultural character. The symbolic value represents the basis of the interpretations in the communicative interaction.</p>