

INTERPRETATION OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE BY AMERICAN MEDIA DURING THE INTERNATIONAL INFORMATIONAL OPPOSITION

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Abstract. This article considers the features of the media interpretation of political discourse by analyzing CNN video reports related to the Ukrainian political crisis (November 2013 - April 2014). The analysis of format media message is conducted as a main component of event-interpretation and formation of public opinion processes in the context of informational opposition between the USA – Russian Federation. Special attention is paid to review of interpretative methods of the news agency and discourse as a special form of construction of social reality for the recipients of media reports.

Keywords: discourse, information confrontation, political communication, media manipulation, Ukrainian crisis, interpretation, mass consciousness.

1. Introduction

Opportunities given by modern technologies for presenting news content, have a very broad scope and are displayed in the fact that sometimes one and the same information can be presented in different ways. Interpreting of information and appropriate presenting of this information depends on the editorial policy of the news agency, political engagement, relationships with government and others. Technology of media for interpreting the information and for broadcasting it to the audience is sufficiently developed in order to create a specific social reality and thus to influence the public opinion by spreading information about it.

Media is becoming an even more influential tool to affect political processes in the world: it "interferes" the formation of foreign and domestic policy, forms the worldview of recipients of news, creates the political image of the person and the image of the country. It is easy to verify that the influence of the media, either in the scale of separate state or the whole world, arises from the fact that it is the only source of information from other parts of the world. In addition, the media is one of the most important tools of information opposition and warfare.

The presentation and interpretation of political discourse of media is different for different countries even in times of peace and coexistence and is becoming much deeper at the time of the informational confrontation. In such case the features of political discourse of media can be demonstrated by examining of realities of the political crisis in Ukraine 2013-2014 presented by the CNN TV channel.

2. Materials and Methods

Considering the scale of the political crisis, that happened in 2013 – 2014 and included such actors as Ukraine, the USA, the EU and Russia, political discourse formed by American media has an undisputed influence on the formation and direction of international public opinion. This is possible within the frames of information opposition between Russia and the USA due to the special status of

English language and the role of the USA in international relations and significant size of English-speaking segment of the world to which the information is addressed. This phenomenon is fairly complex by its nature and includes many elements that together give the following result. The problem is multidimensional and includes the following elements: correlation between discourse / political discourse and social reality; features of an information opposition and the relationship between discourse and manipulation of mass consciousness; American political discourse in the context of informational confrontation.

During the study the following methods were used:

- The theoretical analysis of the literature
- Analysis and synthesis of media materials
- Generalization of details of analysis into a single concept
- Comparison of media informational messages to each other
- Extrapolation the results of the analysis of media materials on general model of political discourse of the American media

Media is a priori a third party of virtually every conflict, since the political, ideological views of society are formed due to political telecommunications, agents of which are war correspondents and media for which they work. Very often on the preparatory phase of information war the media use methods of discrediting of the enemy, with the aim to direct public opinion against one of the parties. Winning the informational war will not provide complete military success but will have a serious impact on the environment in the future. Thus, we see that the struggle on the information field is no less important than on the real "battlefield" [2].

November 2013 - April 2014 – period of political crisis in Ukraine and a surge of revolutionary attitudes across the country. At this time it is impossible not to note the importance of media influence on the mood of the population and public consciousness in Ukraine and the world.

The term "information opposition" was chosen in relation to the position (editorial policy) of the media and their interaction, which is part of a complex political opposition in the format the USA (Ukraine) - Russia, because the media in each country create its own version of reality in the form of political discourse.

In this context, information opposition (confrontation) should be understood as a form of fight between sides, that uses special (political, economic, diplomatic, military) methods, ways and means to influence the informational environment of their opponents and the protection of own informational environment in order to achieve their own goals [3, p.175].

Regardless of objectivity or subjectivity of presenting information, media form a kind of social reality. At this point it is a certain kind of discourse when an available view entails deploying of special position, which is a basis for various sources of information in the representation of events.

Any discourse must convince the recipient in a presented (given) idea (thesis), as it brings new knowledge (new information or different assessment of information already known to the recipient) in already existing system of evaluation and values and changes it from the inside in accordance with the given aim. The same is true for political discourse. Thus the social significance of political discourse is to convince the recipients of the need for politically correct "actions or assessments. In other words, political discourse does not seek to describe (doesn't sum up) but convinces, preparing the ground for the push to certain actions. So this is what characterizes the effectiveness of political discourse.

"It can be argued that the discourse of media, namely, political – is something like McDonald's diner: such a discourse should easily be digested and quickly cause effect (being digested as any fast-food product), allowing if possible to quietly manipulate consciousness of the audience. The view on building of a discourse with the eyes of "consumer" - interpreter - can be called "the interpretive approach" [1].

Political discourse interprets reality and thus somehow manipulates the audiences' perception of political events, causing some intentions and guidelines for recipients and shaping public opinion. The art of manipulation depends on the ability to "touch the right string at the right time" and on how politician understood the symbols that are important for its real audience [4, p.108].

If we consider the process of formation of public opinion, it can be represented as follows. When an event/phenomenon occurs somewhere, the individual/social group can express its attitude toward it only after receiving the informational notification (IN). The comment, given for this notification is of special significance. For example, the radio (or television) announcer may, after the text message give pieces of his personal assessments. Comments in relation to (IN) are: K1 - very positive, K2 - positive K3 - neutral K4 - negative K5 - very negative. On the basis of obtained information a person or social group expresses a certain relation to a phenomenon. It can also be various: C1 - very positive, C2 - positive, C3 - neutral C4 - negative C5 - very negative. In practice, the comment is manipulation, which

includes special actions on formation of stereotypes and creation of certain impression or relation to certain facts and phenomena [3, p.247].

Methods of manipulating of public opinion are based primarily on media that allow to correct, regulate and to "design" mass consciousness and psyche of people. The emphasis is on the use of the laws of psychology, uncritical acceptance and political inexperience of audience [3, p. 249].

Four periods that demonstrate the greatest degree of intensity and thoroughness and most detailed media coverage were selected during the study of the abovementioned chronological interval. In terms of informational discourse of the American media these periods can be distinguished as follows:

- November 25 – December 2 [6, 8, 13, 16, 20].
- January 16 – 23 [7, 17, 19, 21, 26].
- February 18 – 22 [5, 10, 12, 14, 23, 24, 25, 28].
- March 16 – 18 [9, 11, 15, 18, 27].

3. Results

Video materials of the first analyzed period are characterized by frequency of recruitments of experts and use of expert evaluation from the scene to create reliable image of presented "reality". That is the first stage of forming of images of countries and individuals that will develop in the future. Viewers are presented with thrilling moments and basic information about Ukraine and it's problems.

This is the initial stage of elaboration of opposition of media and contrast of civilization models in the format "progressive democratic West" - "corrupted backward Russia", it also firstly refers the idea of similarity of this situation to the Cold War times. The activity of politicians from the West and the USA in Ukraine is estimated as the necessity and friendly help with advice without pressure; Russia's actions - as unjustified desire to intervene in the internal affairs of Ukraine through economic pressure. It's also constructed a dichotomy: peaceful protesters - aggressive power. The main image - violence ("blood of students") and fear of President Yanukovich in face of Russia (his "dependence" on V. Putin). The opposition movement and protesters are considered as unity in the struggle for democracy with their associated motive of returning of the Orange Revolution. In the context of political opponents of V. Yanukovich leading role is given to U. Tymoshenko, who is positioned as a "victim of selective justice." Conventionally, this period, in accordance with the media discourse created by CNN TV channel, can be described as "Ukraine - taken away from a desire to join the EU."

Negative connotations in relation to the President of Ukraine and police units are deepened and intensified during the second period by presenting dramatic video materials containing bloody scenes, suffering, efforts of opposition movement; all this is confirmed by appropriate background music to enhance the psychological effect and rendering of acquired impressions in memory. The figure of the president is not controversial yet, but definitely negative, it is not affected by Moscow, which fades into the background. The images of "unarmed and peaceful protesters", who are heroic

and courageous in the fight against "militant and aggressive well-equipped police units", that defends "unlawful laws" on "restriction of the right to protest". Conventionally, this period, interpreted by the CNN TV channel, can be described as: "The suppression of the will of peoples".

During the third analyzed period a large role is given to the video images and figurativeness. Materials are presented mostly in the form of comments, the attention is focused on thoughts and TV presenters and experts. Infotainment techniques are also used to enhance the experience. The main reasons/theses are: the escalation of violence, sniper fire, "massacres", enormous destructions and suffering of people, the unity of peoples and their dissatisfaction with "soft" actions of opposition movement against the government, understanding of state power as a "criminal regime" and the actions of President "as the sale of state interests to Moscow", "Moscow is a sponsor and guard of Viktor Yanukovich, "Tymoshenko -" symbol of the protest movement, people successful in combatting the state power. Much attention is paid to the idea of confrontation between Russia and the USA, but supplemented by the format of enmity between Putin and Obama not only in Ukraine but also in Syria. US actions in Syria are seen as progressive and peaceful, and Russia's - as selfish, caused by self-interest, and militaristic. The involvement of Russia is put forward considering the political crisis in Ukraine and specific role of this state is distinguished in its desire to return the influence of the former Soviet Union, at a time when the US "wants Ukrainians to decide for themselves." In light of the political scandal with V. Nuland, the very indecision of Europeans is condemned, but not the untypical behavior of the politician; "secret actions of Moscow on intervention in the internal affairs of Ukraine" are also condemned. Conventionally, this period, in the informational messages of CNN TV channel can be described as: "The escalation of violence and the suffering of the Ukrainian people - the involvement of Moscow."

The fourth step is characterized by an intensifying growth of the discourse. Here appears the idea of "Great hostile strategies of Putin" and strengthening of the image of Cold War confrontation. This is the period of constructing the image of the "grand strategy of Putin and Russia" for the return of the former territories of the USSR and former influence. There is also a cultivation of the image of hopelessness of the situation for Ukrainian citizens, established due to the aggressive actions of Russia. The discourse also uses historical associations to draw a parallel between the annexation of the Sudeten by Germany with the actions of Russia in the Crimea. The involvement of experts and special guests for highly authoritative comments containing indications of danger and approval of the unity of the Western community towards protecting the values of democracy, freedom, rights, territorial sovereignty and integrity. The emphasis is on the unity of the international community against isolated Russia, which acts politically unadvisedly and already suffering from sanctions. Conventionally, this period, in the media discourse constructed by CNN TV channel, can be described as "Grand strategy of Moscow".

4. Conclusions

1. Discourse is a specific point of view, formed by the media, regarding the examined issue and sequence of events. This concept exists in parallel with the category of social reality, because the media discourse is a product of processing by media companies, passing on the way of its inception several stages of interpretation, and cannot be objective, and social reality is a concept that exists objectively without the intervention of external influences. The main purpose of the discourse is convincing, which is the main task of media companies with their unlimited opportunities of forming a "picture of reality."

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of CNN news discourse, presented in English, to influence a mass audience, because English is the leading language of international relations, taking into account the factor that for about 400 million people it is native and a few hundred million more people use it as a second language. Therefore, the segment of the world, on which extends the influence and presence of English-speaking channels broadcasting is very broad and significant in forming and shaping the views of the international community on the events in the world.

2. With opening the features of the information opposition, it can be concluded that the political crisis of 2013 - 2014 in Ukraine has developed an information model of confrontation in the form of semantic war between political discourses of media of the USA and Russia. Manipulating of public opinion happens due to format of the political discourse of the media, which such includes items as: specifically designed comments, interpretation of political events, figurativeness, focus on political ignorance of audience in the worldview, formed through the video materials produced by media.

3. The general American discourse can be represented as follows:

Ukrainians want to enter Europe, but they are put under pressure by state power, which is put under pressure by the political establishment of Russia due to economic sanctions:

- Americans sympathize with the Ukrainian people.
- In Ukraine there is a bad situation with the economy.
- Ukraine is important for the US and the EU, but also important for Russia, which wants to renew themselves within the borders of the former Soviet Union and again become one of the leading countries in the world.
- During the bloody political opposition the Ukrainian people achieved (struggled) the displacement of the state power regime and took its stand on the path of democratization and progressive changes in the direction to the EU and the US, but now it is the threat of invasion from Russia and suffers from the annexation of the Crimea by Russia.

The model of political confrontation with Russia is viewed through the whole discourse to a greater or lesser extent. But at the last analyzed stage, we can notice the transformation of the discourse toward open criticism of Russia's actions in the international arena. Thus it is built the model of confrontation with Russia, which is isolated, in the

following format: The international community, including the US, EU (+ Ukraine) – against Russia.

Media discourse is dynamic: during 5 months here happens the development of initial images and connotations change from "dissatisfied unarmed people of Ukraine" to "perturbed and desperate people"; police from the "strict guardians of law and order" to the "bloody impersonators of political retribution"; from "ill-conceived and politically improvident government in Ukraine" to "cruel and criminal regime"; Russia, which "doesn't want to see Ukraine in the EU" to "country-aggressor, which is dangerous for the world and claims to expand the zone of influence by the return of the territories of the former USSR"; from Putin, who "puts pressure on Ukraine and Viktor Yanukovich by sanctions" to "the person who wants to restore the old Russian empire and Obama's chief enemy and a threat to the whole world" and from Tymoshenko as a "victim of selective justice" to "main symbol of struggle against the regime."

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