

Polemics in French politicians' blogs

Lotta Lehti (University of Turku)

Politician's blog is a genre in which traditional political persuasion meets a new medium. As Lehti (2011) shows, politicians recur to different strategies and ways of writing in their blogs. One of the different blog types is characterised by an element of strong opposition; Lehti (2011) labels this sub-genre as polemic.

The features traditionally attached to polemic writing are confrontation, verbal violence and pseudo-argumentation (Amossy 2008, Plantin 2003, Gelas 1980). However, Amossy & Burger (2011) claim that the nature of polemic writing, and especially its dimension of verbal aggression, is determined by the status of the participants, the communicative frames and the politeness norms of the given community or genre. Further, Amossy & Burger (*ibid.*) point out that the emergence of new communication media provided by the internet has transformed the conditions of polemic writing.

The objective of this paper is to examine polemic writing in French politicians' blogs. Based on a corpus of the posts written in 80 blogs during the month of September 2007, altogether 874 posts, the paper will answer the following questions: 1) What forms polemic writing takes in this genre? 2) Are these forms compatible with the traditional conception of the polemic as verbal violence or are they more implicit? 3) What are the purposes of polemic writing in politicians' blogs; do they serve political ends or do they pertain to what Wodak (2009) calls the entertaining side of politics? The preliminary results indicate that the tacit conventions of the genre allow harsh verbal violence but that also more implicit confrontations are found. The entertaining function of polemics can be detected especially in the titles of some posts.

References

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