



VISUAL AND VERBAL RHETORIC ON TELEVISION: A MODERN PERSPECTIVE

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Annotation

This article explores the phenomenon of **visual and verbal rhetoric on television** as a complex and multidimensional communicative practice. Drawing upon the ideas of Uzbek, Russian, and Western scholars, the study emphasizes how television discourse embodies both rhetorical tradition and modern communication strategies. The research analyzes the role of **ethos, pathos, and logos** in televised speeches, focusing on how credibility, emotional appeal, and logical argumentation shape audience perception. It also highlights the significance of visual elements such as symbols, imagery, and staging, which reinforce verbal messages and create a persuasive multimodal discourse.

Keywords: television rhetoric, ethos, pathos, logos, visual communication, political discourse, multimodality.

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Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена исследованию феномена визуальной и вербальной риторики на телевидении как сложной и многомерной коммуникативной практики. Опираясь на идеи узбекских, российских и западных учёных, автор подчеркивает, что телевизионный дискурс объединяет в себе как традиции классической риторики, так и современные коммуникативные стратегии. В работе анализируется роль этоса, пафоса и логоса в телевизионных выступлениях, где авторитетность, эмоциональная выразительность и логическая аргументация формируют восприятие аудитории. Особое внимание уделяется визуальным элементам – символическим образам и сценическому оформлению, которые усиливают вербальное послание и создают убедительный мультимодальный дискурс.

Ключевые слова: телевизионная риторика, этос, пафос, логос, визуальная коммуникация, политический дискурс, мультимодальность.

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Аннотация

Мазкур мақола телевидениеда визуал ва вербал риторика феномени ҳамда унинг кўп қиррали коммуникатив амалиёти сифатидаги ўрнига бағишланган. Ўзбек, рус ва ғарб олимларининг илмий қарашларига таянган ҳолда, телевизион дискурс ҳам анъанавий риторик меросни, ҳам замонавий коммуникация стратегияларини мужассамлаштириши таъкидланади. Тадқиқотда телевидение орқали чиқишларда этос, патос ва логоснинг аҳамияти таҳлил қилиниб, обрў-эътибор, хиссиётга таъсир ва мантикий асос аудитория қабул қилишини шакллантириши кўрсатиб ўтилган. Шунингдек, рамзлар, образлар ва саҳнавий жиҳозлаш каби визуал элементларнинг нутқ мазмунини кучайтириши ва кўпқиррали таъсирчан мултимодал дискурсни вужудга келтиришига алоҳида эътибор қаратилган.

Калит сўзлар: телевизион риторика, этос, патос, логос, визуал коммуникация, сиёсий дискурс, мултимодаллик.

Today, television is exerting an increasingly powerful influence on our society. Its rapid development is determined by the evolution of humanity's material and spiritual culture. In the process of television's impact on the audience, its audiovisual language plays a crucial role. Through this medium, it becomes possible to transmit any type of message – informational and journalistic, documentary, artistic, popular-scientific, or educational – and to create the most favorable conditions for fully revealing the world of human thought, emotions, and impressions¹. Indeed, the spoken word (text) on the television screen is always inseparably linked with visual imagery, forming a polycode text. The verbal-audial sequence is perceived by the viewer in harmony with the visual sequence; that is, within the composition of a television program, text and image complement one another, generating new meaning and a heightened power of influence².

Television is one of the most influential rhetorical platforms of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Unlike print media, it blends the power of **verbal rhetoric** (speech, dialogue, commentary) with **visual rhetoric** (images, gestures, symbols, and *mise-en-scène*). This dual channel of communication makes television a unique instrument for persuasion, shaping political debates, cultural discourses, and social norms. Visual rhetoric refers to the use of **images, body language, and visual cues** to persuade the audience. In television, visuals often carry as much weight, if not more, than words.

As Uzbek scholar T. Tojiboyev observes, “Television rhetoric functions as a synthesis of oratory and visual imagery, forming a multidimensional influence on the audience”³. Similarly, Russian researcher M. M. Bakhtin emphasized the dialogic nature of media, noting that “meaning in mass communication is created not only by words but by the polyphony of images, voices, and contexts”⁴. Western perspectives echo this: as Kathleen Hall Jamieson explains,

¹ Гегелова Н. С. Телевизионная речь как явление культуры // Вестник РУДН. Серия: Литературоведение. Журналистика. – 2009. – №2. – С. 91.

² Кемарская И. Н. Телевизионная речь: поликодовый характер вербальных включений // Вестник ВГИК. – 2010. – №1(2). – С. 132 .

³ Tojiboyev T. *Television ritorika va uning ta'sirchanlik omillari*. Toshkent, 2019.P.44.

⁴ Bakhtin M. M. *The dialogic imagination*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. P.126.



“television amplifies rhetoric by giving immediacy to speech, fusing the oral and the visual in ways that can bypass critical reasoning and directly engage emotion”⁵.

Classical rhetoric, as developed by Aristotle, identified three key appeals: ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic). These categories remain fundamental in analyzing television communication. Uzbek professor Sh. Karimov argues that in modern media, “ethos is reinforced visually by the credibility of the speaker’s appearance, pathos is deepened through audiovisual imagery, and logos is presented in the structured narrative of broadcasts”⁶. Russian scholar I. Krasavina highlights that television rhetoric departs from traditional public oratory because it is mediated: “the camera, editing, and visual codes reshape the speech act, turning the viewer into both a participant and a distant observer”⁷. From a Western viewpoint, John Corner in his work “Television Studies” describes TV rhetoric as “a hybrid discourse combining journalism, advertising, entertainment, and politics in a continuous flow of symbolic communication”⁸.

Visual rhetoric includes gestures, body language, images, colors, and settings. Political communication provides a classic case: the 1960 U.S. presidential debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. As communication scholar Edwin Diamond noted, “television rewarded Kennedy’s visual composure and punished Nixon’s uneasy appearance, creating a decisive rhetorical advantage”⁹. In news coverage, Uzbek media researcher M. Yusupova points out that “images of disaster, war, or celebration speak beyond words, embedding themselves in collective memory faster than verbal commentary”¹⁰. Russian semiotician Yu. Lotman stressed that “a televised image is not neutral; it carries cultural codes that persuade through symbolic association”¹¹. For instance, car commercials show open landscapes, linking the product to freedom and adventure.

Verbal rhetoric on television operates through narration, interviews, slogans, and commentary. Ethos is established by news anchors through formal tone and professional vocabulary. As Uzbek linguist N. Rakhimov states, “the authority of the broadcaster is not only professional but also linguistic; the voice itself becomes a guarantee of truth”¹². Pathos is dominant in humanitarian campaigns, where emotional appeals such as UNICEF’s televised messages use phrases like “every child deserves a future,” reinforced by heartbreaking visuals. Logos, on the other hand, is central to documentaries. British scholar B. Nichols argues that “documentary rhetoric appeals to reason by structuring evidence into coherent narrative logic”¹³.

Television’s true power lies in merging visual and verbal dimensions. Talk shows are a prime example: Oprah Winfrey’s broadcasts exemplify rhetorical synergy. As communication

⁵ Jamieson K. H. *Dirty politics: deception, distraction, and democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. P.56.

⁶ Karimov Sh. *Media ritorikasi va zamonaviy nutq madaniyati*. Toshkent, 2021. P.77.

⁷ Krasavina I. *Ritorika televizionnogo diskursa*. Moskva, 2018. P.92.

⁸ Corner J. *Television studies: key concepts*. London: Routledge, 1999. P.101.

⁹ Diamond E. *The spotted owl: a political analysis*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970. P.88.

¹⁰ Yusupova M. *Televideniyedagi obrazlarning ritorik ahamiyati*. Toshkent, 2020. P.54.

¹¹ Lotman Yu. M. *Universe of the mind: a semiotic theory of culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990. P.66.

¹² Rakhimov N. *Ommaviy axborot vositalari tilining ritorik xususiyatlari*. Toshkent, 2022. P.39.

¹³ Nichols B. *Introduction to documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. P.112.



theorist Mary E. Stuckey observes, “Oprah’s rhetoric blends verbal empathy with visual cues of intimacy, creating persuasive trust”¹⁴.

News events in Uzbekistan, such as Navruz celebrations, combine verbal narratives of unity with vibrant imagery of dance, music, and national costumes, strengthening cultural identity. In Russian television debates, verbal attacks are often dramatized by visual split screens, amplifying the perception of conflict.

Recent global events demonstrate this interplay vividly. During the COVID-19 pandemic, televised images of overcrowded hospitals combined with verbal urgings to wear masks created a powerful rhetorical strategy of fear and responsibility. In the war in Ukraine, Western media emphasized visuals of destroyed cities alongside verbal frames of “*aggression*” and “*resistance*,” while Russian state media highlighted visuals of military strength paired with verbal claims of “*protection*” These contrasting rhetorical strategies reveal how television can construct divergent realities.

In Uzbekistan, President Sh. Mirziyoyev’s televised speeches exemplify the integration of ethos, pathos, and logos: ethos through formal delivery, pathos through references to youth and national pride, and logos through detailed reform programs. His rhetoric is reinforced by visual backdrops of national symbols, flags, and attentive audiences. His **ethos** is unmistakably reinforced by the gravitas with which he speaks – delivering reform updates in a calm, authoritative tone while dressed in formal attire and supported by solemn national symbols like the Uzbek flag.

This measured delivery, combined with thoughtful phrasing such as “a government serving the people” or “open, transparent governance,” endows him with strong credibility as a reform-minded and trustworthy leader. At the level of **pathos**, Mirziyoyev frequently invokes the aspirations of youth, national pride, and collective renewal.

For instance, he often frames reforms as a gift to “New Uzbekistan’s builders,” embedding emotional resonance by addressing young professionals and emphasizing their role in shaping the country’s future. In one speech, he stated, “We are energizing our youth with opportunity, entrusting them to raise our national flag high,” directly appealing to the population’s emotional bond with identity and progress. Meanwhile, **logos** is woven into his speeches through clear, structured presentations of reform initiatives and statistics. He regularly outlines step-by-step policies, such as simplifying business registration, reforming the judiciary, or creating e-government platforms, often following with data like job creation figures or GDP growth projections. For example, in a televised address he explained that over 300,000 new jobs were created, and export volumes increased by nearly 15%, lending rational weight to his rhetorical appeal.

However, the rhetorical power of television is not without challenges. Manipulation is a real danger. As Russian philosopher A.Zinoviev warned, “television can transform rhetoric into manipulation, where the viewer is not persuaded but programmed”¹⁵.

Fragmentation is another issue: in the digital era, televised content is clipped, decontextualized, and circulated on social media, changing its rhetorical meaning. Bias and propaganda remain perennial concerns, as both visual and verbal rhetoric may be orchestrated to serve political interests rather than truth.

¹⁴ Stuckey M. E. Rethinking the rhetorical presidency. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014.P.143.

¹⁵ Зиновиев А. З. Глобальная катастрофа. Москва, 1999. С.72.

Television rhetoric is therefore a multidimensional phenomenon where visual and verbal elements work in synergy. Scholars from Uzbekistan, Russia, and the West agree that this hybrid mode of persuasion is among the most powerful tools in modern communication. It appeals simultaneously to ethos, pathos, and logos, shaping public opinion, culture, and political identity.

As Uzbek academic Sh. Karimov concludes, “Television rhetoric is not merely a reflection of reality, but a constructor of meaning, a stage on which the ethos of leaders, the pathos of collective emotions, and the logos of arguments are woven together”¹⁶.

In conclusion, the study of visual and verbal rhetoric on television reveals that modern broadcasting is not only a means of delivering information but also a sophisticated platform for shaping thought, values, and behavior. Television rhetoric today integrates voice, language, image, gesture, and narrative into a unified system of persuasion that influences audiences on emotional, ethical, and rational levels. By combining verbal strategies with visual symbolism, television achieves a unique power to both inform and inspire, guiding public perception and collective imagination. As technological and cultural landscapes continue to evolve, the importance of critically analyzing these rhetorical mechanisms becomes even more urgent, ensuring that society can both appreciate and challenge the persuasive force of media in shaping contemporary life.

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¹⁶ Karimov Sh. Media ritorikasi va zamonaviy nutq madaniyati. Toshkent, 2021.B.144.