

Characteristics of the images of Chinese politicians in the national media

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Abstract

This study is devoted to the definition of media images specifics for national politicians from the Republic of China's people in Chinese mass media via system analysis, content analysis, and comparative analysis methods. As a result, the central figures are governors and other regional officials, party leaders, what justifies the status of provincial publications and confirms their dependence on the authorities. As conclusion, the images of Chinese politicians as the fathers of the nation are ideological in nature; they are intended to unite the nation in front of world threats and challenges.

Keywords: journalism, media image, Chinese mass media.

Características de las imágenes de los políticos chinos en los medios de comunicación nacionales

Resumen

Este estudio está dedicado a la definición de imágenes de medios específicas para políticos nacionales de la gente de la República de China en los medios de comunicación chinos a través del análisis de sistemas, análisis de contenido y métodos de análisis comparativos. Como resultado, las figuras centrales son gobernadores y otros funcionarios regionales, líderes de partidos, lo que justifica el estado de las publicaciones provinciales y confirma su dependencia de las autoridades. Como conclusión, las imágenes de los políticos chinos como los padres de la nación son de naturaleza ideológica; Su objetivo es unir a la nación frente a las amenazas y desafíos mundiales.

Palabras clave: periodismo, imagen mediática, medios de comunicación chinos.

1. Introduction

Defining the concept of a media image, one should point to its insufficient development in the scientific literature. Modern scholars define it as one of the forms of public consciousness functioning in the media space as a kind of synthesis of ideas that are formed in the audience as a result of acquaintance with mass information. In modern studies, this term is most often used in the context of promotion and positioning issues, which allows influencing the change in the attitude of mass audience to the promoted object in the future. The methodological basis for the study of images in the mass media is poorly developed and is still in its infancy. In our work, we adhere to the approach in which the designing of media images is carried out through journalistic texts, and we are talking about information prepared by professional journalists and not experts, because there are significant differences in the approaches to the object and the means used to influence public consciousness. Noting the degree of elaboration of the topic, it should be emphasized that scientists are actively developing language aspects. In addition to the images of politicians, the media images of countries, as well as social, cultural, and other contexts are explored (Anholt, 2005).

2. Methodology

The methods used consisting of system analysis, content analysis, and comparative analysis made it possible to identify the essential features in the development of the studied publications. The specificity of media images is considered by the example of the following publications: Nanfan Zhibao (Southern Provincial Newspaper), Jilin Daily, Nanfang Daily Newspaper, and Hebei Zhibao. The territorial framework of the study covers the following provinces of the Republic of China's people: Guangdong, Jilin, Hebei. The chronological framework covers the period since August to December, 2017. They allowed the specificity of the images of political figures of the Republic and its provinces through the channels of the media to trace and to identify. The investigated publications have the following characteristics. The newspaper Nanfan Zhibao (Southern Provincial Newspaper) is a party publication of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. It has a rich history and traditions which originate from 1949, i.e. the moment the mass media was founded in Guangzhou. It must be said that the newspaper plays a leading role in the media system of the province of Guangdong, being an authoritative source of information on political and economic topics for a wide circle of readers. Structure of the periodical: 1) News, 2) Economy, 3) Culture and Sport, 4) Analytics, 5) Weekly section, 6) Local news. The Jilin Daily newspaper was founded in 1945 and became one of the first newspapers in Jilin Province. The Hebei Zhibao newspaper published since 1949 is the official organ of the Hebei Province government. This is the largest daily newspaper in the region (Chakvetadze et al., 2016).

3. Results

Let us consider the specifics of the images of Chinese politicians. The newspaper Nanfan zhibao is the first edition, which was analyzed by the authors. First of all, it is interesting in that the style of narration in it is more free and open than, for example, in the national newspaper Renmin Jibao. But still, the Nanfan Zhibao edition functions under the control of the Republican Communist Party, and therefore the coverage of a China's political image must be immaculate. The front page

of the publication is mainly devoted to key national affairs relating to the activities of the party (mainly in terms of economic policy), and the achievements of national leaders in the international diplomatic activity; it must also promote basic socialist values. The study of the media image nature of Chinese politicians was carried out within the framework of various areas: foreign policy and domestic policy, economic and financial indicators, level of industrial development, and military potential (Pan, 2003).

Describing the uniqueness of the political component, we note that the periodical broadly covers official visits, working meetings and joint events in the context of Russian-Chinese bilateral cooperation: Chairman of the PRC Xi Jinping and President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, Premier of the State Council of the PRC Li Keqiang and Prime Minister the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev, ministers of Foreign Affairs - Van I and Sergey Lavrov. However, for obvious reasons, national political figures of the country occupy a central place. The characters in newspaper texts are shown as serious, responsible, self-confident people. For example, Xi Jinping shows a tough attitude in the fight against corruption. The authors of texts widely use various language methods: proverbs (clever hands make light work, and a master must have excellent skills), comparisons (Xi Jinping compared officials with the craftsmen and demanded strict control of the party). Analysis shows that the periodical prefers to use various figurative means. For example, the title of the material on the meeting of Xi Jinping and Donald Trump was: The Pacific Ocean is so big that it can accommodate China and the United States (Greenberg, 2008).

The periodical mainly demonstrates the positive dynamics of the achievements of China in the economic sphere. At the level of heading complexes, numbers and exclamations are actively used: \$ 253.5 billion! Chinese and the US companies sign a big order. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang called, Roll up your sleeves and get rich! He and other Chinese leaders are showing a very hardworking and pragmatic image to the Chinese readership. China's economy is shown as a promising, dynamic area requiring attention. In the context of the cultural component, the role of the head of government is presented as an example of sincere service to the people. As the analysis of texts shows, the image of the government is effective and practical (for example, Always serve the people) (Ermolenko, 2013).

The Jilin Daily newspaper has a deeper regional character. The Political Issues in Jilin section cover the main events and activities in this area. The main actors here are regional politics. The analyzed materials show that the activities of the deputy secretary of the Jilin Regional Party Committee, the Governor, a member of the Central Commission for the Comprehensive Management of Social Security, a member of the leading group on poverty alleviation and the development of the State Council Liu Guojong; the current secretary of the Central Committee of the Jilin Party, a permanent member of the People's Congress, Pein Lulan, and other politicians are quite actively covered. The specificity of the media image presentation of a politician mainly consists of the events in which the local leaders participated and in which speeches were made. The news specific was the following: efficiency, availability of general pictures on events on a chronological basis (time, place, speech content). There were not enough of interesting and vivid details (Zhou, 2009). The Hebei Daily is known as No. 1 newspaper in Hebei Province. The party and the government organized the periodical giving particular importance to the political sphere. All its reports reflect the will and positions of the Communist party and protect its authority. The central figures are the secretary of the provincial party committee, Wang Dongfeng, the deputy secretary of the provincial party committee, Xu Qin. The publication reports the news in a factual style, most often without any comments or emotions (Lee, 2018). Actual topics are the following:

improvement of living standards, and improving the environment. In the periodical Daily newspaper Nanfang, national leaders are at the top: PRC Chairman Xi Jinping, PRC State Council Premier Li Keqiang. The following are mentioned less often: the governor of the province Ma Singui, the secretary of the regional committee of the party Wang Yang. It must be said that due to their political weight and authority, the overall image of the province in the information space has increased. The main genre of the periodical under study is reports. Officials of the region are paying particular attention to the use of mass media to address issues of the work of state bodies; the main method of working with the press and the public is press conferences. Most political images in the newspaper of Guangdong province are accompanied by national political theories and slogans, which, however, do not give readers a sense of reality and are definitely far from them (Dautova, 2016).

Describing the media in general, it should be noted their mainly informational nature. The intense journalistic rhythm and the desire to show the course of events in dynamics compel authors and editors to omit interesting details and summarize the picture of an event. Most of the materials are ideological in their nature, what is explained by their party affiliation and the influence of their founder and authorities on the implementation of the information policy. At the same time, Chinese mass media are characterized by restraints, caution, and conservatism, what is explained by the peculiarities of the national culture. Therefore, excluding the ideological, politicized component of media activity, it should be emphasized that there are definitely positive features in the media practice there: the desire for balance and objectivity in the presentation of material, attraction not only Chinese, but also Russian, as well as foreign experts); lack of evaluation and bias in the story (Galinskaya, 2013).

4. Discussion

The characters of newspaper texts are shown as serious, responsible, and self-confident people. The central figures are governors and other regional officials, party leaders, what justifies the status of provincial publications and confirms their dependence on the authorities. Due to the political weight and authority of these people, the overall image of the province in the media space is enhanced. Regional officials pay special attention to the use of mass media to resolve issues of the work of state bodies. The main method of working with the press and the public is public events: press conferences and briefings. It is recommended that regional authorities establish an advisory agency for image formation, management and control over information flows (Jeffery and Albert, 1996).

5. Summary

The specificity of a media image of a politician mainly consists in the events in which the local leaders participated and in which they spoke. The specifics of the news are their promptness: they give a general picture of events on a chronological basis (time, place, are speech content). However, there are not enough interesting and vivid details in them.

6. Conclusions

The images of Chinese politicians as the fathers of the nation are ideological in nature; they are intended to unite the nation in front of world threats and challenges. China is developing at an amazing pace, outpacing other countries and gaining more and more influence in the world, and therefore the study of media images of its leaders is a significant and promising direction of modern media research. They can occur in a number of areas: the media image of an individual political figure on a national scale; comparative analysis of influential politicians from China, Russia and other countries; consideration of the image of politics in the context of actual problems and thematic areas: not only politics and economics, but also culture, education, military cooperation. Other vectors of national media information are also relevant and interesting for analysis.

7. Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that the presented data do not contain a conflict of interest.

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