



Persuasion in the Audiovisual Content of Pedro Sánchez on Instagram

Persuasión en el contenido audiovisual de Pedro Sánchez en Instagram

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KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

Due to its multidimensional nature, Instagram has become an ideal platform for political marketing, as it enables the publication of audiovisual content accompanied by verbal and symbolic messages aimed at generating user reactions and interactions. This study proposes an analysis of the rhetorical persuasion techniques and political promotion strategies present in the audiovisual content of Pedro Sánchez's official Instagram account during his first term in office. The following specific objectives were established: to identify the aforementioned techniques, to recognize predominant communicative patterns and dynamics, to analyze the emotional and textual responses generated among followers, to assess the effectiveness of the strategies employed, and to propose guidelines for the design of more effective persuasive content. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative analysis of the posts with quantitative analysis of follower engagement. The results show that Sánchez used Instagram in a conventional manner, focusing the staging on his professional environment, with high-key artificial lighting, cheerful harmonic background music, a fixed camera, and a predominance of medium shots. However, this approach did not generate high levels of engagement or significant emotional responses. In conclusion, despite the construction of credibility associated with his professionalism, his followers demonstrated clear preferences for less formal and more humanized content.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Retórica
Técnicas de
persuasión
Instagram
Pedro Sánchez
Contenido
audiovisual

RESUMEN

Debido a su carácter multidimensional, Instagram se consolida como una plataforma ideal para el marketing político, ya que permite la publicación de contenidos audiovisuales acompañados de mensajes verbales y simbólicos destinados a generar reacciones e interacciones entre los usuarios. Este estudio propone analizar las técnicas de persuasión retórica y de promoción política presentes en el contenido audiovisual de la cuenta oficial de Pedro Sánchez durante su primera legislatura en Instagram. Se plantearon los siguientes objetivos específicos: identificar las técnicas mencionadas, reconocer los patrones y dinámicas comunicativas predominantes, analizar las reacciones emocionales y textuales generadas entre los seguidores, evaluar la eficacia de las estrategias aplicadas; y proponer orientaciones para el diseño de contenidos persuasivos más eficaces. La investigación utilizó una metodología mixta, basada en el análisis cualitativo de las publicaciones y el análisis cuantitativo de la participación de los seguidores. Los resultados evidenciaron que Sánchez utilizó Instagram de manera convencional, centrando la puesta en escena en su entorno laboral, con iluminación artificial de clave alta, fondo musical de armonías alegres, cámara fija y predominio de planos medios, lo que, sin embargo, no generó alta participación ni respuesta emocional significativa. En conclusión, a pesar de la construcción de credibilidad asociada a su profesionalidad, sus seguidores mostraron claras preferencias por un contenido menos formal y más humanizado.

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1. Introduction

The present study emerges from the need to apply the theoretical foundations of audiovisual rhetoric, particularly in relation to political communication, to a concrete empirical case. Its general objective is to identify and demonstrate the persuasive elements integrated in political audiovisual content within a digital environment shaped by the dynamics of contemporary modernity and the increasing influence of social media, specifically Instagram, and to evaluate the effectiveness of such elements through patterns of follower engagement. More precisely, this research seeks to examine how Spanish politicians employ rhetorical persuasion techniques in audiovisual content on Instagram to reach sympathizers, followers, and potential voters, as well as to determine the factors that may generate higher levels of interactivity.

Pedro Sánchez has been selected as the primary subject of analysis given his prominent presence on the platform (until April 2026 second only to Santiago Abascal) and his role as President of the Government of Spain and Secretary-General of the PSOE. Accordingly, this study undertakes a detailed analysis of the rhetorical strategies present in the audiovisual content published on Sánchez's official Instagram account.

The study is grounded in the hypothesis that, as a politician with a left-wing ideological orientation, Sánchez more frequently employs rational and logical persuasive techniques, characterized by structured and coherent argumentation.

The methodological design is structured at two complementary levels. First, a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques, is employed, based on the analysis and interpretation of statistical data (Gutiérrez & Delgado, 1997; Medina et al., 2020). Second, a descriptive-interpretative methodology grounded in narrative and audiovisual language is applied to the analysis of the audiovisual content generating the highest levels of interaction (Fernández Díaz & Martínez Abadía, 1999; Fernández Holgado et al., 2022).

The temporal scope of the analysis includes a full legislative term, extending from 7 January 2020, corresponding to the beginning of Sánchez's mandate, to 23 July 2023, the date of the early general election. This delimited timeframe provides a robust basis for comparative analysis in future research focusing on other legislative periods or political actors.

Previous research on the effectiveness of political messaging on social media has tended to focus on a limited range of platforms, primarily Facebook and Twitter, and has predominantly examined textual and visual content (Peng, 2020). With 37% of U.S. adults reporting use of the platform, Instagram has become the third most widely used social network in the United States, following YouTube and Facebook (Peng, 2020). Nevertheless, despite the recognized importance of visual and audiovisual communication in politics, studies examining political actors' use of Instagram remain relatively scarce (Ekman & Widholm, 2017; Filimonov et al., 2016; Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019; Larsson, 2017, 2019; Muñoz & Towner, 2017; Russmann et al., 2019). This limitation likewise extends to research focusing on the narrative and audiovisual language of content disseminated on social media, particularly Instagram.

The present analysis is based on a range of scholarship concerned with political discourse rhetoric, visual communication in social media, and audiovisual narrative. Within the field of political rhetoric, previous studies have examined the persuasive structures of political communication and discourse strategies (Charadeaux, 2009; Van Dijk & Mendizábal, 1999; López et al., 2021). Complementing this perspective, research on digital visual communication has explored how political actors construct meaning and engage audiences on social media platforms (Klinger & Svensson, 2014; Larsson, 2015; Ekman & Widholm, 2017; Medina et al., 2020; Djordjevic, 2025). Furthermore, theoretical approaches to audiovisual narrative and propaganda provide a framework for understanding the construction of persuasive audiovisual content in political contexts (Fernández Díaz & Martínez Abadía, 1999; Gutiérrez Rubí, 2008; García Hipola, 2017; Fernández-Holgado et al., 2022).

The study is organized into five sections. First, the introduction and theoretical framework are presented, addressing the defining characteristics of political communication on Instagram and its transformation within the context of an increasingly active social media audience, alongside the principles of audiovisual rhetoric in the political domain. This is followed by a detailed account of the methodology, the presentation and analysis of the results, and, finally, the discussion, conclusions, and references.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Persuasion on Instagram

Political actors seek to establish political authority through the construction of credibility (*ethos*) and to persuade audiences by appealing to common values and emotions (*pathos*) (Charaudeau, 2009). In this regard, political discourse functions as a strategic instrument through which actors shape public opinion in relation to elites, negotiate alliances across parties and sectors in order to maintain cohesion around a common project, and appeal to mass audiences with the aim of achieving legitimised dominance through persuasive communication capable of generating collective enthusiasm. Political discourse is closely aligned with processes of social change, adapts to contemporary forms of modernity, and increasingly extends its modalities into the digital sphere, where it seeks to exploit the affordances of the Internet, including accessibility, mass reach, the reconfiguration of traditional hierarchies such as authority and authorship, and enhanced interactivity (Loewe, 2007).

Within this context, social media platforms play a central role in contemporary political communication, both for political parties and individual actors (Klinger & Svensson, 2014; Larsson, 2015; Ekman & Widholm, 2017). These platforms are particularly attractive to politicians due to their capacity to foster more personalised relationships with voters and to enable greater control over the construction and management of public image (Balmas et al., 2014; Filimonov et al., 2016; Grusell & Nord, 2020). In turn, such dynamics contribute to the strengthening of trust, authority, and perceived legitimacy (Strachan & Kendall, 2004). The increasing presence of political actors on social media requires new forms and strategies of self-presentation (Muñoz & Towner, 2017), facilitating the management of online communication according to personal stylistic choices and the expectations of followers and voters (Casero-Ripollés, 2015; Azmi, Sylvia & Mardhiah, 2018). Consequently, connectivity and audience participation, particularly through the interpretation of ideas, emotions, and information, become fundamental components of digital political discourse.

Instagram, in particular, constitutes a digital environment characterised by the production and circulation of visual self-representations, notably selfies, which are closely associated with immediacy, mobility, and intimacy (Ekman & Widholm, 2017). The platform's visual dimension is closely linked to the broader process of political personalisation (Steffan & Venema, 2019; Poulakidakos & Giannouli, 2019; Adam & Maier, 2010), which is reflected in the frequent dissemination of visual and audiovisual content marked by individualised self-presentation (Balmas & Sheaffer, 2015; Stanyer, 2013). In this sense, it functions as an effective space for the construction and promotion of personal branding, enabling the integration of private and professional identities within a single communicative framework (Ekman & Widholm, 2017), as well as the dissemination of content that is not necessarily formal or strictly political in nature (Azmi, Sylvia & Mardhiah, 2018). The coexistence of professional representations, such as speeches, debates, institutional meetings, party events, media appearances, and public demonstrations, and private representations, such as family interactions and everyday routines, constitutes a defining feature of political actors' profiles. This hybridisation contributes to the characterisation of the platform as an "ideal political marketing platform" (Muñoz & Towner, 2017: 291).

Instagram enables users to publish visual and audiovisual content accompanied by textual or symbolic messages, which may be engaged with through user-generated responses. The platform offers four principal formats: photographs, videos, albums, and IGTV (Instagram Television) (Larsson, 2021). In addition, the "Stories" function, introduced in 2016, allows for ephemeral

content sharing. While photographic posting has been available since the platform's inception, video sharing was introduced in 2013 (Larsson, 2021). Since 2017, users have been able to publish albums containing up to ten images or videos, presented as navigable collections of content (Larsson, 2021). Furthermore, although video duration was initially restricted to between 15 and 60 seconds, the introduction of IGTV in 2018 expanded this capacity to videos of up to 60 minutes, both as a standalone application and as an integrated platform feature (Larsson, 2021).

User engagement with published content is often measured through affective indicators such as “likes”. Although comments may explicitly express identifiable sentiments, the meaning of a “like” is inherently ambiguous, as it may reflect a range of interpretations, including both support and criticism (Larsson, 2021; Driscoll & Walker, 2014; Gorrell & Bontcheva, 2015; Lomborg & Bechmann, 2014). Despite this interpretative ambiguity, high levels of engagement, measured through likes and comments, are likely to influence platform algorithms, which in turn shape content visibility and public attention dynamics (Kreiss & McGregor, 2017).

2.2. Persuasion in Audiovisual Narrative

The wide range of audiovisual productions encompasses diverse artistic, aesthetic, and intellectual forms of expression, including phenomena such as film, television, propaganda, and comics, which are typically analysed according to their literary and communicative dimensions (Pulido Tirado, 1998).

The audiovisual format constitutes a particularly effective medium for the transmission and dissemination of advertising messages, as it integrates linguistic, visual, and audiovisual elements. This mode of communication is characterised by a specific and highly complex syntax, particularly in relation to processes of encoding and decoding (Fernández Díaz & Martínez Abadía, 1999). Its effective production therefore requires specialised competences that ensure communicative efficiency and impact (Fernández Díaz & Martínez Abadía, 1999).

Advertising discourse is produced and interpreted within a specific socio-cultural context and functions as a point of convergence between the advertised product or brand and the dominant cultural values of the society in which it circulates. This contextual dimension is essential, as the effectiveness of advertising depends on its capacity to adapt to the cultural and social expectations of its target audience. While advertising frequently constructs its discourse through the representation of everyday situations and explicit content, its most effective forms rely on sophisticated rhetorical strategies designed to reinforce meaning and maximise persuasive impact.

A comprehensive analysis of advertising messages reveals a carefully structured narrative and discursive organisation grounded in rhetorical devices oriented towards specific communicative objectives. Within this framework, both the narrated content (story) and its mode of articulation (the arrangement of elements used to construct meaning) exhibit a high degree of formal precision.

The communicative effectiveness of the visual component is achieved through the use of cinematic resources such as shots, takes, scenes, sequences, editing, and *mise-en-scène*. Similarly, verbal and narrative construction requires a coherent narrative framework capable of organising these elements, enriched by expressive resources drawn from visual, iconic, symbolic, gestural, and verbal modes of communication (Fernández Fernández et al., 2012).

2.3. Spot

The effectiveness of a communicative message depends largely on the sender's capacity to demonstrate rhetorical competence and to adapt the content to the needs, interests, and expectations of the receiver. In this sense, persuasive communication depends on the audience's identification with the perceived message. Given that the fundamental objective of advertising is to associate a brand with specific values and a particular lifestyle, its purpose is not only to persuade consumers to accept a product or idea, but also to encourage identification with it. This process seeks to position the product as a medium of communication and self-expression, thereby

extending its meaning beyond mere consumption. To achieve the intended effect, advertising discourse must, in addition to constructing a coherent narrative structure, be situated within an everyday context and establish an emotional connection with the audience.

In order to consolidate their objectives and maximise effectiveness, advertising practitioners have progressively incorporated a range of innovative techniques, among which storytelling, the art of narrative construction, has become particularly prominent. Advertising spots have emerged as an especially suitable medium for the application of storytelling, which is widely regarded as one of the most effective strategies for engaging audiences, fostering interaction, and establishing emotional bonds through narrative structures. Storytelling represents a contemporary communicative approach that reconfigures traditional persuasive strategies and further develops propagandistic techniques by employing narrative resources to generate emotional resonances conducive to the communicator's objectives (Gutiérrez Rubí, 2008). Within this framework, persuasion shifts away from a predominantly logical process based on rational argumentation towards an emotional dimension grounded in shared and universal values.

The use of storytelling in advertising is based on the construction of narratives designed to engage and emotionally involve the audience, with the ultimate aim of persuading and, in many cases, encouraging consumption. In this context, the intended message, whether a product, an idea, or even a political entity, is not presented in an explicit or direct manner, but rather emerges indirectly through inference, analogous to the moral structure of a story. Consequently, advertisers tend to favour narrative formats resembling short stories, short films, or performative sequences capable of capturing attention and sustaining audience engagement. In this sense, storytelling constitutes a persuasive strategy grounded in narrative techniques that evoke emotion and entertainment, ultimately appealing to affective memory and emotional experience.

Over time, and due to its strong persuasive capacity, storytelling has become an established communicative technique not only within advertising, but also in institutional communication, journalism, and political discourse.

2.3.1. Campaign Spot

In order to construct a coherent public image, communicate the outcomes of their activities, and disseminate ideological positions, political actors require both familiarity with contemporary communication platforms and the capacity to use them effectively (Fernández Holgado et al., 2022). In this regard, the success or failure of a political career is closely linked to the degree and quality of media presence.

Political advertising spots are characterised as communicative productions designed to capture public attention and, ultimately, to secure electoral support (García Hipola, 2017; Fernández-Holgado et al., 2022). The defining features of the political spot include its explicit intentionality, its persuasive orientation, the institutional nature of the sender (candidate, officeholder, or political party), and its historically televisual format (García Beaudoux & D'Adamo, 2012; García Beaudoux, 2016). These spots are generally classified as positive advertisements considering that they emphasise the attributes of the candidate and present the party's position on selected issues (García Beaudoux & D'Adamo, 2006; Peña & García, 2010). Their positive nature lies in their self-referential character, as they predominantly construct and reinforce a favourable image of the political actor, while explicit references to opponents are relatively infrequent (García Beaudoux & D'Adamo, 2006; Fernández Holgado et al., 2022).

Political parties thus employ campaign videos as a central audiovisual instrument for disseminating ideological positions, communicating policy proposals, and introducing candidates to the electorate. Within this context, storytelling has proven to be a particularly effective strategy in political communication, especially within electoral advertising.

Given that contemporary political culture has increasingly shifted from argumentative rationality towards emotionally oriented forms of persuasion, electoral videos produced by major political

parties, often with substantial budgets and developed by specialised professionals, frequently incorporate narrative structures in the form of “mini-stories,” “mini-films,” or short cinematic sequences. These formats tend to appeal less to rational argumentation and more to emotions, sensations, imaginaries, and affective forms of persuasion. This is achieved through the strategic deployment of rhetorical and pragmatic devices designed to influence audience perception and encourage behavioural or attitudinal responses.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

For the purposes of this study, all videos published on the official Instagram profile of Pedro Sánchez were systematically collected for the period spanning 7 January 2020 to 23 July 2023, corresponding to his first term as President of the Government of Spain. From this dataset, a corpus was constructed including a total of 626 videos distributed across 618 posts.

To measure impressions (i.e., views), a subcorpus of 605 individual videos was established (see Table 1), given that this metric cannot be disaggregated for videos integrated within carousel posts. Only permanent video content was included, while Stories were excluded due to their ephemeral nature. Data were obtained using the Insget application. The corpus was extracted on a single date to minimize potential fluctuations in interaction metrics over time.

The coding procedure was conducted twice by the same researcher. Intra-rater reliability for quantitative variables was evaluated using the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC), indicating a high degree of consistency between both coding iterations.

Prior to analysis, a database was manually compiled through the methodical recording of metadata in a spreadsheet. These metadata included the date of publication, thematic category of each post, number of “likes,” number of comments, number of views, video duration (in seconds), and post type (individual video or carousel).

3.2. Method

The present study was structured across several methodological levels.

First, a mixed-methods approach which combines quantitative and qualitative techniques was employed to conduct a general analysis of the metadata associated with the audiovisual content. Within the quantitative framework, the principal variables of the dataset were described, including the number of audiovisual posts, the total number of videos, the average level of user engagement (likes, comments, and views), and the number of followers recorded in July 2023 (Djordjevic, 2025) and updated as of March 2026 (see Table 1) (Medina et al., 2020). Metrics such as saved content or collections, which enable users to store posts and organize them into personalized categories (Ogunsola & Fisher, 2025), were excluded, as were shared posts, due to their limited availability or relevance during the period under analysis. Reposts were likewise omitted, given that this functionality was introduced at a later stage.

Second, a rhetorical analysis was conducted based on the identification of elements of logos, ethos, and pathos as manifested in and adapted to the audiovisual content (Djordjevic, 2025). A coding protocol was developed, incorporating precise operational definitions for each variable under examination (audiovisual genre and rhetorical appeals), in order to ensure consistency in classification and to enhance the replicability of the study.

Under the concept of *logos*, the genre of audiovisual posts was analyzed. A qualitative examination of the content was conducted with the aim of assessing the nature of political discourse and the audiovisual genres employed. To this end, all videos in the corpus were viewed, and each post was analyzed individually. Drawing on the typology of discursive genres (Bakhtin, 1986) and studies on audiovisual narrative (Scolari & Fraticelli, 2017), a tailored classification was developed

to suit the context of Instagram. Through an exploratory classification process, five principal genres were identified: institutional interventions (depicting active participation in parliamentary debates, legislative sessions, public hearings, etc.); political speeches (recording organized participation in institutional, national, or international events, forums, summits, etc.); reports (elaborate audiovisual productions documenting and informing about political activities and actions); interviews (participation in traditional media); and promotional spots (Fernández Holgado, 2022).

With regard to *ethos*, the analysis considered the presence of the president in the videos, the existence of selfie-style videos, and shared authorship of the content (López et al., 2021; Djordjevic, 2025). The analysis of *pathos*, in turn, included mise-en-scène (location, lighting, setting), sequencing (background music, use of voice), framing (camera movement) (Rodríguez Serrano et al., 2019), and shot type (Fernández Díaz & Martínez Abadía, 1999). Although shot typology could be classified under *logos* due to its logical and linear planning, in this study only the typology of the initial shot of each video was considered, given its significant impact on viewers (Xu et al., 2022; Shafiq et al., 2014).

Table 1.
Rhetorical elements in the narratological analysis of audiovisual content.

Rhetorical techniques of persuasion	
	Narratological elements analyzed
Logos	1. Video genre (Djordjevic, 2025; Scolari & Fraticelli, 2017; Bakhtin, 1986)
Ethos	1. Enunciative trace and presence of the politician in the video (López et al., 2021; Djordjevic, 2025) 2. Shared authorship
Pathos	1. Use of the politician's own voice or the presence of one or more narrators (Rodríguez Serrano et al., 2019) 2. Mise-en-scène (location, setting, lighting) (Rodríguez Serrano et al., 2019) 3. Use of background music (Rodríguez Serrano et al., 2019) 4. Shot typology (Rodríguez Serrano et al., 2019; Fernández Díaz & Martínez Abadía, 1999)

Source: Author's own elaboration.

The level of interaction, measured through views, likes, and comments, served as an indicator of the degree of persuasion achieved among followers (Medina et al., 2020). Interaction levels were analyzed in relation to the number of followers recorded in July 2023 and March 2026¹ (see footnote 1).

To examine the relationship between follower interactivity and to determine the existence of a positive correlation between the number of views and the number of likes and comments, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (*r*) was calculated using the software JASP 0.19.3.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Considering the number of audiovisual posts and the total number of videos (see Table 2), the results indicate that Pedro Sánchez showed a clear preference for the use of individual videos

¹ The number of followers used in the analysis corresponds to the figure recorded after the early elections of July 2023. In order to estimate the persuasive impact of older posts, the current number of followers was also used as an approximate measure of the account's potential reach, allowing the observed levels of interaction to be contextualised. Although these values do not accurately reflect the number of followers at the time each piece of content was published, it is assumed that their use does not invalidate comparisons between posts nor the general trends identified in the analysis.

(98.4%). Only 0.5% corresponded to video carousels, while 1.1% consisted of mixed carousels combining photographs and videos.

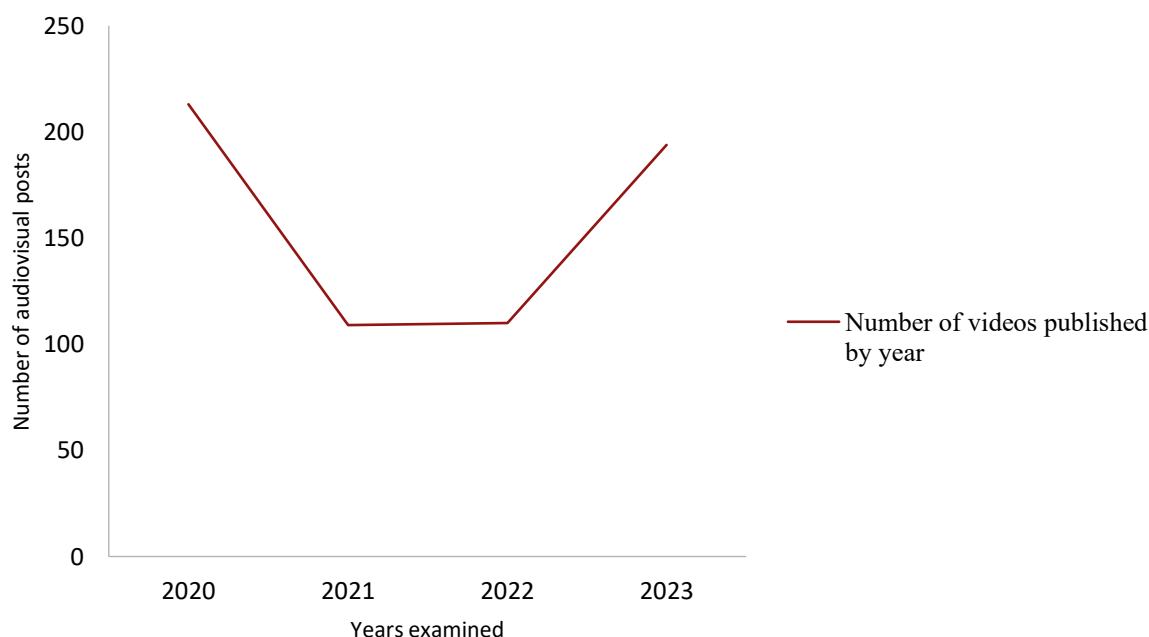
Table 2.
Number of videos created by Pedro Sánchez on Instagram and user engagement.

PEDRO SÁNCHEZ	Number of audiovisual posts	Total number of videos	Average "likes"	Average comments	Average reproductions	Number of followers July 2023	Number of followers April 2023
Numerical values	618	626	4633,15	533,57	51592,37	380mil	870 mil

Source: Author's own elaboration.

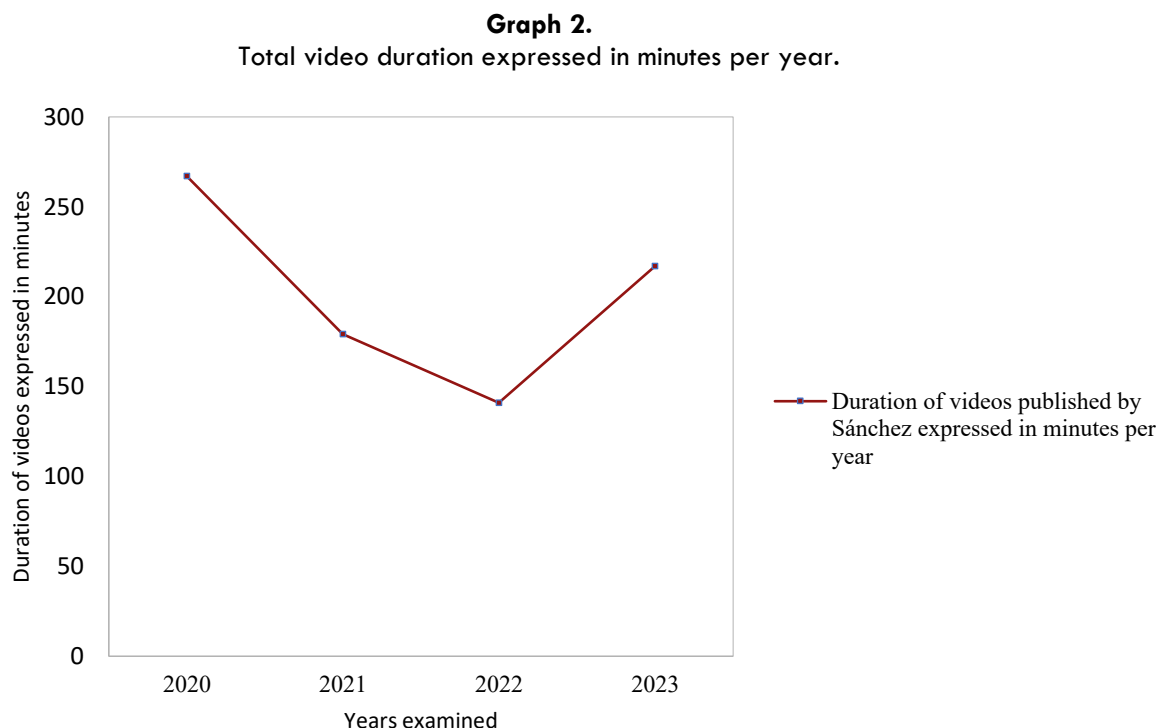
The results also revealed a notable preference for video usage during the pandemic period; however, this tendency declined in subsequent years until the election year, when the dynamics of audiovisual content publication slightly increased (see Graph 1). The reliability coefficient obtained was high ($R \approx 0.97$), indicating a strong level of intra-observer consistency in the measurements performed.

Graph 1.
Number of videos published per year.



Source: Author's own elaboration.

The results show that video duration follows a similar pattern to publication frequency. Accordingly, the longest videos were published during the first year of his term in office. Video length decreased over the subsequent two years, reaching its lowest point before increasing again in the election year, when a rise in total minutes of published content was observed (see Graph 2). In 2.1% of the posts, video duration was not considered, as these were part of either photo-and-video carousels or video-only carousels in which it was not possible to obtain duration data or measure the number of views. Although video duration was originally measured in seconds, for reasons of data economy and clarity, the results are presented graphically in minutes.



Source: Author's own elaboration.

4.2. Rhetorical Analysis

4.2.1. Logos

The results showed that Pedro Sánchez's audiovisual content encompassed a wide range of genres used to communicate his message in diverse and engaging ways, with the purpose of mobilizing, informing, inspiring, or generating trust.

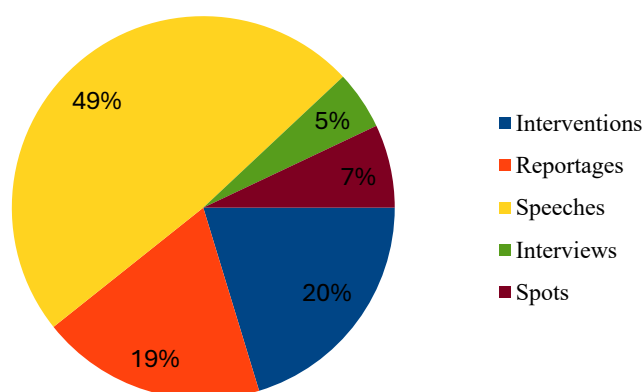
The most frequently used audiovisual format consisted of recordings of his speeches (see Graph 3), delivered on different occasions and for various purposes. Through these, he presented official statements on matters of major national importance, reported on government decisions and activities related to his participation in official events, forums, and summits, and delivered political speeches during electoral campaigns and party congresses.

Short report-style videos were also used, providing information on meetings, official visits, receptions, and formal ceremonies, both at national and international level, as well as recordings of his interventions in Parliament.

On occasion, fragments of his interviews on television or radio programs were published along with various types of spots, including electoral, commemorative, informational, and promotional propaganda content.

No selfie videos or humorous content were identified.

Graph 3.
Types of audiovisual content genres published by Pedro Sánchez.



Source: Author's own elaboration.

4.2.2. Ethos

Regarding the origin of the publications, which determines ethos (Warnick, 2007) and the credibility of political actors, the results indicate that Sánchez, to varying degrees, relied on institutional support in the creation, selection, and dissemination of audiovisual content.

He opted for a conventional communication strategy, avoiding the use of selfie-style videos and relying on a large number of communication professionals (Djordjevic, 2025). Although, unlike traditional media, Instagram enables the personal and active construction of one's public image (Poulakidakos & Giannouli, 2019), the analysis of factors such as publication regularity, professional production, and institutional language suggests that Sánchez did not directly participate in the selection of his content, instead delegating these decisions to his communication team.

In the absence of selfie videos and the predominance of professional themes (Ekman & Widholm, 2017), such as official statements, participation in national and international events, and parliamentary interventions, the findings suggest that the audiovisual content was predominantly produced (73.94%) by the Government of Spain. However, semi-professional content (Ekman & Widholm, 2017) accounted for 23.13% of the posts, indicating co-authorship with his political party, while the remaining 2.93% consisted of content shared with other politicians or repurposed from external media sources.

The politician appeared in 92.17% of the videos, of which in 76.36% he was identified as an active protagonist, as he used his own voice. In only 2.24% of the publications was the voice of other narrators employed, who were in most cases either professionals or party colleagues.

No videos featuring political opponents were identified.

4.2.3. Pathos

Regarding the location of the videos, 79.07% of the published content was recorded indoors (parliament, press conference rooms, his office, meeting rooms, conference halls and official events, television programs, etc.), while 12.46% of the videos were filmed in outdoor settings. Outdoor recordings included inauguration and reception spaces such as public areas, train stations, airports, courtyards, or the entrance to the Moncloa Palace, which accounted for 74.36% of the externally filmed publications, whereas the remaining 25.65% were recorded in natural environments such as parks and the Moncloa gardens. This selection portrays Sánchez as consistent with his institutional

role and lacking informal representation (Selva Ruiz & Caro Castaño, 2017; Pineda et al., 2020; Gil Torres et al., 2021).

Due to the predominance of indoor recordings, artificial lighting was used in 79.55% of the videos, while natural light was identified in 12.78% of the cases. Although the presence of cold light was detected in 44.41% of the videos and warm light in 41.12%, high-key lighting was generally prioritized, characterized by minimal or soft shadows achieved through the use of diffusers and multiple light sources. A total of 12.62% of the videos were recorded in daytime environments with soft lighting in 8.3% of cases, while hard lighting was identified in only 1.44% of the videos. Videos recorded at sunset were statistically negligible. This analysis reveals a deliberate and controlled use of visual resources aimed at creating an atmosphere that maximizes the persuasive impact of the message.

A total of 10.7% of the videos, including political propaganda spots, tributes, or promotional announcements, featured background music consisting of light melodies designed to evoke feelings of well-being, joy, and calm. In most of these cases, the president was not present on screen. As part of the electoral campaign, during the months preceding the 2023 elections, 1.44% of videos featuring Sánchez incorporated pop, electronic, or classical music soundtracks, which conferred a positive, dynamic, and modern tone, consequently generating a stronger emotional response among followers.

The results indicate that in 43.93% of the videos, the politician maintained a natural, clear, and well-modulated tone of voice, with emphasis on key terms in his discourse and variations in rhythm depending on the importance of the topic. Through this strategy, Sánchez sought to present himself as a competent, reliable, self-confident, and transparent leader. By contrast, in 30.67% of the audiovisual content, largely corresponding to parliamentary interventions, direct confrontations with political opponents, or party speeches, he adopted a more passionate tone. In 3.19% of the videos, exclusively related to party content and the 2023 electoral campaign, he displayed an excited and euphoric tone of voice in order to stimulate action and social mobilization. This proved effective, as these publications generated higher levels of engagement among followers on the platform (Djordjevic, 2025).

A preference for conventional techniques was identified, reflected in the use of a static camera in 72.84% of the publications. The use of tracking shots (travelling), a technique involving forward or backward camera movement along a linear axis (Fernández Díaz & Martínez Abadía, 1999), was identified in 15.64% of the posts, while panning shots, defined as horizontal camera movement from a fixed point (Fernández Díaz & Martínez Abadía, 1999), were minimal.

Regarding shot composition, the medium shot predominated in 40.42% of the publications, followed by the medium-long shot (American shot) in 23.32% and the long shot in 19.97%. The videos did not generate a strong sense of dynamism, as 65.18% of the publications consisted of speeches. However, posts in which the prime minister appeared in motion, representing 19.97% of the total, demonstrated greater persuasive impact in terms of visual engagement.

4.3. Interaction Structure

With reference to the number of followers recorded in July 2023, a low level of interactivity was identified in terms of likes and comments generated. More than half of the posts (54.05%) recorded fewer than 1% likes relative to the total number of followers, while 45.79% remained below 10%. Regarding comments, interaction levels were even lower. Although no posts recorded extremely low interaction levels (below 0.01%), 59.87% of publications fell below 1% comments, while 40.13% were below 0.1%. Views, by contrast, showed greater dispersion compared to likes and comments; however, the overall trend remained similar, characterised by predominantly low interaction levels and a limited presence of high-reach content (19.18%).

In relation to the number of followers recorded in March 2026, this tendency became more pronounced. A total of 91.9% of posts were concentrated at very low levels of interaction in terms

of likes (below 1%), indicating an even stronger concentration in the lowest ranges. A similar pattern was observed for comments, although more accentuated: the majority of posts (86.1%) fell below 0.1%, with no instances of extremely low values (below 0.01%), while 13.9% remained below 1% interaction. Finally, regarding views, 86.7% of videos were concentrated below 10% relative to the total number of followers, indicating limited reach. Only 2.1% of audiovisual posts exceeded 20% of views, confirming the scarce presence of highly disseminated content.

A significant shift in the distribution of interactions between 2023 and 2026 was observed. In the case of likes, the proportion of posts with less than 1% interaction increased markedly, rising from 54.05% to 91.9%, while high levels of interaction virtually disappeared. This pattern was similarly reflected in comments and views, indicating a clear concentration of values in the lowest ranges. Overall, the results demonstrate a general decline in engagement and content reach (see Table 3).

Table 3.
Follower engagement.

INTERACTIONS	LEVEL OF INTERACTIONS	Number of posts (percentage) 2023	Number of posts (percentage) 2026
Likes	>20%	0.16%	0,0%
	<10%	45.79%	8,1%
	<1%	54.05	91.9%
Comments	<1%	59,87%	13,9%
	<0.1%	40,13%	86,1%
	<0.01	0,00%	0,0%
Reproductions	>300%	0,17%	0.00%
	>130%	0,00%	0.02%
	> 80%	0,17%	0,0%
	>70%	0,33%	0,0%
	>60%	0,49 %	0,0%
	>50%	0,83%	0,0%
	> 40%	1,16%	0,0%
	>30%	5,95%	0,5%
	>20%	10,08%	1,5%
	>10%	30,41%	11,1%
	<10%	50,41%	86,7%

Source: Author's own elaboration.

A very strong and statistically significant positive correlation was observed between views and “likes” on the posts ($r = 0.871$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.851, 0.889], Fisher's $z = 1.338$), indicating that posts with a higher number of views tend to receive a greater number of “likes.” A moderate and statistically significant positive correlation was also found between views and followers' comments ($r = 0.635$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.585, 0.680], Fisher's $z = 0.749$), suggesting that more highly viewed posts also tend to generate a higher number of comments.

5. Discussion

Following the analysis of the rhetorical elements present in the audiovisual content published on Pedro Sánchez's official Instagram account, it was observed that all three persuasive strategies, logos, ethos, and pathos, were employed. The findings indicate a predominance of logos and organisational ethos, both institutional and partisan (Djordjevic, 2025b), oriented towards the transmission of informational messages and the construction of a formal leadership image. In contrast, pathos was articulated through carefully selected visual and auditory resources aimed at generating a positive emotional impact, while maintaining a serious and institutional tone. This combination of professional production, controlled staging, and limited spontaneity reflects a highly planned form of political communication designed to enhance persuasive effectiveness and reinforce the credibility of the political leader.

The results show that, despite a high number of followers, most posts did not generate a high level of engagement or significant emotional or textual interaction. Nevertheless, posts incorporating personal elements or those that humanised the political figure achieved higher levels of participation. In addition, content related to the 2023 electoral campaign, ideological positioning, and criticism of the opposition elicited greater interest, indicating a preference among the audience for more dynamic, partisan, and emotionally charged messages. The followers' response reveals potential weaknesses in account management during the period under study and suggests that future publications could enhance persuasive capacity by increasing emotional and textual engagement.

It is also notable that a significant increase in the number of followers was recorded, particularly in the final month of the period analysed, suggesting possible variations in communication strategies that future research could examine in greater depth.

This study presents several important limitations:

1. It focuses on the political communication of a single account on one specific social network, which limits the generalisability of the findings to other political figures or digital contexts.
2. The interpretation of rhetorical and audiovisual elements may involve a degree of subjectivity, as the analysis was conducted by a single evaluator, despite achieving high reliability levels.
3. Engagement indicators (likes, comments, and views) do not fully capture the real impact of the content on audiences.
4. The assessment of persuasive impact is approximate, as the current number of followers was used to analyse a previous time period.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, Pedro Sánchez's communication strategy on Instagram during his first legislative term is characterised by a predominant use of professional audiovisual content, with a clear preference for individual videos focused on speeches and official events. This pattern remained consistent throughout the term, with variations in publication frequency and duration associated with specific political contexts, such as the pandemic or the electoral period.

Furthermore, although all three rhetorical strategies of persuasion were present, most publications did not elicit a significant response from followers. However, the inclusion of personal elements and campaign-related content increased engagement, highlighting the importance of making content more accessible and relatable in order to optimise persuasive effectiveness.

This study is particularly relevant to the analysis of audiovisual techniques within digital environments, as it provides empirical evidence derived from the practical application of theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, by examining audiovisual persuasion strategies on Instagram from a rhetorical perspective, it contributes to the advancement of scholarship in the field of political communication.

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