

Abstract

This master thesis deals with the pre-election TV debates before the second round of the presidential elections in 2023 in the Czech Republic, when Petr Pavel and Andrej Babiš stood against each other. The thesis draws on political communication theory, normative media theory, agenda-setting theory and previous analyses of the TV debates. Using quantitative content analysis, the three selected pre-election duels are examined in terms of the moderator's agenda setting, the types of moderator's questions and speeches, the candidates' agenda setting, the candidates' running away from the topic, and the type and tonality of the candidates' messages. The results of the analysis show that each moderator gave different importance to each topic. However, the moderators most frequently focused on the presidency itself, the conduct of the election, the communist past of both candidates, security issues, and the current government. In most cases, their speeches were neutral and did not take the form of a question. The debate on Czech Television, moderated by Martin Řezníček, had the most even distribution of replicas on each topic. Nova and Prima TV had a less even distribution of topics, and two topics dominated both of them. On both Nova and Prima, the most frequently communicated instructions were those related to the debate itself. Rey Koranteng and Terezie Tománková did not usually repeat a question twice and only invited the candidates to answer by saying their name - e.g. "Mr Pavel, please." The candidates respected the topics raised by the moderators to a greater or lesser extent. Petr Pavel was more disciplined than Andrej Babiš in all the debates. He less often ran away from the topic and his speeches were much less offensive. Andrej Babiš, on the other hand, ran away from the topic much more often, attacked more, criticised the current government for its actions and deliberately linked Petr Pavel to the war.