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The spatial-temporal fragmentation of live television video clips: analysis of the television production of the Eurovision Song Contest

Abstract

Multicamera television production's similarity to the video clip has become evident in the production of the EBU's Eurovision Song Contest, where various musical numbers representing public television stations from the organizing countries compete against each other in terms of spectacularity and originality. The main objective of this research is to analyze several acts to identify such appropriation. We will apply a textual analysis to the audiovisual discourse of a sample chosen through subjective sampling. We divide our analysis into four sections: preliminary phase, formal audiovisual analysis, staging and performance. The investigation leads to the conclusion that the characteristic fragmentation of space and time of video clips can also be identified in live music videos. This fragmentation is seen in the break in spatial continuity, resulting from recreating sets on stage and the abstraction of the stage thanks to screens and an avant-garde composition shot. We also consider that the production imitates the time fragmentation and fast shot speed of the video clip.

Keywords

Music video, television production, audiovisual production, textual analysis of audiovisual discourse, Eurovision Song Contest.

1. Introduction

Videoclips are a promotional audiovisual format that the record industry uses to foster/encourage music consumption, which often displays avant-garde and formal experimental aspects. However, they are subject to stringent market criteria that define the formal finish of the product. Even if the definition of music videos is increasingly complex, one characteristic remains unchanged: it is an audiovisual format that has been edited and stored on a type of medium (celluloid, magnetic or digital), as an item recorded and edited before distribution.

The evolution of both the video clip and live multi-camera television production has led to a confluence of formats in which the television production of live musical numbers adopts the language and fragmentation techniques of the video clip as its defining features.

This research takes the television production of some musical numbers from the Eurovision Song Contests held between 2015 and 2018 as the object of study. Our hypothesis

supposes that the Eurovision Song Contest's multicamera television production adopts techniques that are typical of video clips, in the sense that there is a similar fragmentation of film space and time. In this way, the language of live television production is hybridized with the language of a video clip. As a result, live television takes on the avant-garde and seductive discourse of videoclips.

The main objective of this article is to analyze the selected audiovisual items from the Festival to examine the appropriation mentioned above of the techniques that characterize the edited and stored video clip. To achieve this objective, we will carry out a textual analysis of the audiovisual discourse of four musical performances from the Festival broadcast live on television.

Hybridizing languages is difficult as live television production had until now been characterized by the continuity of space and time and the centrality of the stage as the main focal point for the shots, as well as by the fact that it did not introduce pre-recorded parts, as opposed to the fragmentation and lack of continuity in videoclips. Therefore, the context of live music audiovisual content, which has become known as a live music video, has more and more in common with the video clip. The performance Videoclip (Sedeño, 2007) has been directly inspired by musical performances for television, so much so that on many occasions, these multicamera recordings have made up the music video itself. It is innovative when television production imitates the language and techniques of the music video.

These production techniques have become visible in the production of the European Broadcasting Union's (EBU) Eurovision Song Contest, where various musical numbers representing the organizing countries' public television stations compete against each other in terms of spectacularity and originality.

Other television music shows (Grammy, Brit Awards, MTV Music Video Awards, or even some moments of televised film award ceremonies or events such as the opening galas of significant sporting events) have also demonstrated similar techniques that would merit a contrasting case study. However, the need to limit the object of study of this work and not broaden it to all live television production has meant that we have focused this research on a single show, Eurovision.

Previous studies on the Eurovision Song Contest have centered on a social-political analysis and the festival's role in creating national identities in Europe (Ginsburgh & Noury, 2007; Raykoff & Deam, 2007; Baker, 2008; Jordan, 2011, 2014; Fricker & Gluhovic, 2013; Akin, 2013; Tragaki, 2013), in other cases, authors have approached the voting from a mathematical or statistical point of view to identify relations between country blocks (Yair, 1995; Gluhovic & Noury, 2008; Gatherer, 2006) or authors have focused on the perspectives of gender and queer studies (Lemish, 2004; Singleton, Fricker & Moreo, 2007; Gluhovic, 2013; Aston, 2013).

Ortiz notes (2017, p. 146) that the academic literature in Spanish on the Festival is practically non-existent. This can also be extended to research from approaches related to Audiovisual Communication, whether it be a discursive, narrative or technological analysis.

Similarly, previous work on television production has dealt with a multitude of facets and formats (Barroso, 1996; Millerson, 1991) or has focused on television sports broadcasting (Marín Montín, 2005; Roger Mozó, 2015), but has disregarded musical show production. The lack of previous research about our object of study, especially from the methodological perspective that we propose, justifies the need for this work.

The research on videoclips is parallel and diverse to the evolution of the format itself. After achieving a period of communicative centrality, the video clip went through, "a creative and mercantile crisis as a result of the crisis in the record industry and the cultural industries in general, together with a redefinition of the production and distribution conditions," according to Jódar-Marín (2017, p. 120). In this context, the format has resurfaced thanks to the Internet and online video platforms such as YouTube or Vevo; as a result, video clips studies are once again enjoying some visibility.

Regarding research on music videos, Sedeño *et al.* (2017, p. 83) state that even though there are more articles on them, “it is one of the most unknown formats and is hardly ever addressed from an audiovisual theory and analytical point of view,” it also has a variety of possibilities as a format that “prevents the establishment of a single analysis methodology and epistemological frame.”

2. Fragmentation in the music video: towards new television formats

Videoclips being defined as a discourse on fragmentation is commonplace, “it is still light and ultimately suggests absolutely nothing,” Roncallo and Uribe-Jongbloed (2017, p. 88) state, although they recognize the difficulty in categorizing an experimental format that makes it difficult to classify. The idea of fragmentation goes hand in hand with discontinuity and continuity, as well as speed.

Viduarre (2004, p. 39) affirms that in recent years, “narrative fragmentation has once again become the focus of the most interesting operations in audiovisual discourse.” In this sense, Gordillo (2006, p. 3) highlights that fragmentation constitutes one of the most evident and demonstrable features of television discourse, as it has a series of characteristics that are different from other audiovisual discourses.

Let’s add that if television is already identified by an update of a characteristically fragmented discourse, videoclips and live musical performance shows that have several cameras (any effects generators, graphics, VFX or live post-production) micro-fragment the discourse even more. The many primary segments of analysis such as the shot (in terms of framing and duration) are fragmented, as well as resources that extend the formal discourse profoundly since the complex succession of shots is combined with superimposed layers of images, audiovisual sequences or graphic resources. The extravagant nature of contemporary television arises from the extreme fragmentation of the discourse and the sum of fragments.

Time and space fragmentation is an identifying characteristic of music videos (Pérez-Rufí & Rodríguez-López, 2017, p. 50). Rodríguez-López (2016, p. 22) defines the video clip as a postmodern format since fragmentation is one of the characteristics of post-modernity, which results from combining repetition and speed in music videos. This fragmentation translates into “the deconstruction of the classic temporal structure in the form of flashback, flashforward, mixing formats, actions represented simultaneously and any effect that contributes to breaking linear time.”

Spatial fragmentation is implied in every frame since space has to be fractured when selecting a part of what is to be shown. This occurs in videoclips where this spatial fragmentation is extreme, to the extent that it acts as a Mosaic that recomposes spaces from close frames and shots conditioned by their brief duration so that temporal fragmentation eventually fosters spatial fragmentation.

As a discourse of fragmentation, music videos became a representative product of contemporary television production, regardless of their distribution means. The question is, can live television production of musical performances appropriate spatial and temporal fragmentation as characterizing features of the video clip? Would the proximity/similarity of languages and techniques allow us to speak about live video clips?

Regarding television broadcasting, Barroso (1996, p. 535) does not define live broadcasting as a genre, but as a means of providing genres or content. Barroso argues that the production forces the event to be fragmented, “first to attend to the different focuses of attention: the leading actors in the event, the atmosphere that surrounds and recreates it and the live audience,” at the same time, each point of interest will be fragmented, and broken down into shots and frames, “that allow it to be contemplated from the amplitude of a long shot, necessary to allow the dynamic of the interrelationship between the protagonists and the scene where it takes place to highlight the foreground” in addition to those background

images, “which will allow the broadcast to be experienced and felt like an act of participation” (Barroso, 2008, p. 515).

The musical event broadcast live on television will be the focus of our analysis: The Eurovision Song Contest is a show created specifically to be broadcast on television, even though it is a mass event that takes place in front of a live audience. The EBU has organized the Eurovision Song Contest since 1956 as a way of increasing its services and exchanging content. In this case, a musical competition was created as the focal point of the format. Ortiz Montero (2017, p. 161) defines the show as an annual media event that integrates “the European cultural heritage in which the participating countries show their own identity thus guaranteeing cultural diversity, promoting the integration of all individuals, groups and communities” so that it fulfils the EBU’s objectives. Ortiz (2017, p. 146) goes further and defines it as “a social, political, cultural, economic, technological program that impacts on Europe and beyond.” With over 63 editions held by 2018, the festival has become a show that focuses on not only the value of the songs and the performers, but also the production and staging. Its television production is precise and exact; it is even produced using a specialized live multi-camera production software called CuePilot, which is similar to digital video postproduction software.

The rules of the competition updated for the 2018 edition in Lisbon are: each country represented (through public television) could propose a song of a maximum length of 3 minutes, there could be up to six people participating in the performance (over 16 years of age), animals are not permitted on stage, countries are free to choose the language and the selection process of the song and performer, and must not convey any political message or gesture. The rules also state that the pre-recorded music cannot include any vocal component and that the on-stage performance is identical in both the second dress rehearsal and the final (EBU, 2018c).

The relationship between the live music broadcast and the video clip has led to the definition of the so-called live music video. Although it has been highlighted on some media that Gwen Stefani was the first to perform a live video clip in only one shot at the Grammy Awards Ceremony in February 2016 (for the song *Make me like you*), however, it is more of a lip-dub, that is, a mixed format understood as “a new form of audiovisual expression based on videoclips and popular playback” where different modes of filmed performances converge (Subires, 2012, p. 1611). Based on this argument, live music videos are a variation of lipdub in which multicamera production allows for successive live shots that are broadcast at the same time on any digital distribution channel of the signal.

3. Methodology

Live music video broadcasts on TV music programs appear in several productions. We have restricted our focus to the Eurovision Song Contest because of the need to reduce the sample. The show imposes some aesthetic and formal conditions that may imply some uniformity in the numbers produced, however extending the analysis to other shows would multiply the possible production models and make it difficult to contrast the results and draw conclusions. Thus, we propose broadening the sample and the object of study for further work.

Frith (2002, p. 280) refers to Eurovision as one of the musical “moments” we remember from music on television, even if music is omnipresent on TV for two reasons: it disrupts the flow of television and it becomes news. We thus highlight the show’s relevance and possible disruptive nature to justify choosing it as an object of study.

We have limited our sample to four musical performances. We start from subjective sampling based on educated decisions, in which the sample units “are not chosen based on stylistic procedures but depending on some of their characteristics” (Corbetta, 2007, p. 288-289).

From the abundant musical numbers produced throughout the Festival's history, four recent items have been selected for analysis to have a sample that is as current as it is representative. Since our objective is to identify the production techniques of music videos on live television, we have selected four items which are formally similar to the aesthetics of videoclips. These four musical performances, available through the official Eurovision Song Contest channel on YouTube are "Måns Zelmerlöw - *Heroes*" (EBU, 2015), "Iveta Mukuchyan - *LoveWave*" (EBU, 2016), "Mikolas Josef - *Lie To Me*" (EBU, 2018a) and "Benjamin Ingrosso - *Dance You Off*" (EBU, 2018c).

We will carry out a textual analysis of these four television musical performances: the items will be broken down and later recomposed to identify their principles of construction and workings (Casetti & Di Chio, 1991). We will also carry out a content analysis within the textual analysis of the audiovisual discourse. We consider that the selected television items can be analyzed based on parameters similar to music videos.

We divide our analysis into four sections: 1) Preliminary phase, where we will take note of the performer, title and the year of production of the television performance, its length, its musical genre, authorship of the song and a very brief description of the content; 2) Formal audiovisual analysis, in which we will identify the most evident aspects relating to the formal articulation of the item through the segmentation in each of the shots, addressing the following formal elements: preference for types of shots, according to the European scale of framing (Big Long Shot; Long Shot; Full Shot; American Shot; Medium Long Shot; Medium Shot; Medium Close Up; Big Close Up) (based on Millerson 1991, p. 114-117); number of shots and ASL (Average Shot Length), that is, the result of dividing the length of the parts in seconds by number of shots (Salt, 2006, p. 389), a value which will serve as a reference for interpreting the rhythm in each change of shot, average duration of the shot (expressed in seconds and frames: s:f); subjective perception of rhythm; camera movements (travelling, zoom, digital travelling), where frame changes will be noted in order to interpret their possible function in the discourse and their stylistic consequences; editing effects and "post production" elements programmed but applied live (texts and graphics or diegetic or extradiegetic audiovisual content, VFX, etc.); we will conclude with an assessment of the production in general regarding the continuity, or spatial and temporal break; 3) Staging, according to the traditional division of set design analysis, the composition of the shot or frame, the lighting, characterization and performance; 4) Performance, based on the data previously gathered, we will draw conclusions about the formal configuration of live television production in order to relate it the language of the music video.

4. Analysis

The following table shows the application of the analysis methodology for the selected sample, briefly pointing out some characteristics and conclusions that we will comment on in the next section.

Table 1: Summary of the textual analysis of the audiovisual discourse of four live television performances (Eurovision Song Contest, EBU, 2015-2018).

Textual analysis of the audiovisual discourse of Eurovision musical numbers (2015-2018)					
1. Preliminary stage	Performer	Måns Zelmerlöw	Iveta Mukuchyan	Mikolas Josef	Benjamin Ingrosso
	Title	<i>Heroes</i>	<i>LoveWave</i>	<i>Lie To Me</i>	<i>Dance You Off</i>
	Year	2015	2016	2018	2018
	Country	Sweden	Armenia	Czech Republic	Sweden
	Duration	03:17:00	03:04:18	03:06:06	03:17:13
	Genre	Dance-Pop	Electronic Ballad	Pop, Hip Hop	Ballad, Eurodance
	Author(s)	A. M. Hård af Segerstad, J. Deb, L. Deb	I. Mukuchyan, S. Crutchfield, L.&L. Navasardyan	M. Josef	MAG, L. Schoorl, K Nita, B. Ingrosso
Content	Zelmerlöw sings solo in front of a screen and interacts with projected animation. In the chorus, he approaches the audience.	Mukuchyan sings solo and moves little; she is initially hidden by smoke; the choreography is contained and sophisticated.	Josef sings together with two dancers, on different sets in front of neutral background color. Afterward, they perform a choreography together.	Ingrosso sings and dances solo in a structure with animated tubular lighting coordinated with his choreography.	
2. Formal analysis	Types of shots	Mainly FS, also MLS, MS, LS, BLS, and a few CU	LS, CU, MS, BCU. The contrast in every shot change	FS, MLS, MS. A few CU. Functional frames.	FS, MS, MLS. Scarce expressive CU.
	No. Shots	35	125	104	91
	ASL	5.62	1.47	1.78	2.16
	Average duration/shot/	05:15 (140 frames)	01:12 (37 frames)	01:19 (44 frames)	02:04 (54 frames)
	Subjective perception of rhythm	Slow, in line with the start of the ballad. Gets into rhythm with the travelings in the chorus.	Very fast, (with sequences of 6-7 shot frames) frames are contrasted.	Agile, the rhythm of shot changes consistent with the song.	Slow start, in tempo with the song. After that, there is more rhythm. Longer moving shots.
	Camera movements	Spectacular travelings, with significant frame changes in a few seconds, where the performer is the focus. Some zooms.	Many high-speed travelings, with the performer as the focus.	Ample travelings, several zooms, a vertical panorama. Functional, at the service of the choreography.	Only seven traveling shots. Framing moves internally by linear LEDs. Very static.
	Editing, postprod., effects, and VFX	Projection of character animation together with precise interaction and choreography.	Several out of focus shots. Screen hologram projection.	Dancers' sets in square format and white lateral sidebands. Both sets appear in split screens – quick edit.	Editing measured according to the vocal part. Two out of focus shots and one with an out of focus transition.
Production: spatial and temporal continuity	Functional production at the service of the projection narrative and performance. Search for continuity between shots, classic grammar, except for the chorus, where effects are imposed.	Constant spatial break, no continuity, broken up by the contrast of frames, lighting, perspectives, etc., although her action is the permanent focal point. The speed of shot change fragments the discourse.	Josef's performance switches from FS to MS with the same continuity and camera shot. Breaking spatial continuity for the two sets for the dancers, which is created with screens.	Constant play with recreating new spaces by using light. Very dynamic production.	

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3. Staging	Scenography	Abstract and neutral, based on the black screen where white characters are projected, events allude to the lettering and lighting in the first chorus, which is white, then red. The chorus shows the rest of the stage and the audience.	LED screens in the background with abstract blue or black sequences, not prominent. No props or other elements. Initially, she is hidden in fog, dark tenebrist background. The stage is not taken into account to give importance to the performer.	There seem to be at least three sets: the central one, where Josef performs the song, and two voice overs for each dancer set against neutral backgrounds. Then in LS, the relationship between spaces is discovered. Saturated and cheerful tones. The last part is on the catwalk, with a smoke effect.	Abstract, created with a horizontally lined structure of a screen of LED lights: it gives the impression of a futuristic tubular lit stage. It imitates a videoclip scenography, showing hip hop and RnB scenarios from the late 90s.
	Framing (composition)	Conventional, quite symmetrical, and functional. The performer moves to strong points when another element of the animation intervenes on the side.	Unconventional, it creates tension, displaced to the margins, no continuity, crossing the action line and seeking the impact of change. Symmetrical in the chorus and instrumental solo.	Most symmetrical, except when there are similar frames in succession, where they shift to one side. Repetitive except for the last minute.	Frames in strong points that create tension. Changes in perspective to the service of the lighting choreography.
	Lighting	Tenebrist, black and white. Functional. After that, the screen turns red (alluding to blood, the heart and passion), except for the performer.	Effective, it evolves from backlighting and initial tenebrism to it turning red because of lights and white lighting during choruses.	Backlighting in sets with screens. Josef seen in neutral lighting. Basic, saturated background colors.	Lighting play of the tubular stage change of red and blue lighting and some tenebrism, and dark backgrounds. His face is partially lit.
	Characterization	Casual. Long-sleeved top suitable for projection, black pants. Not prominent nor any wardrobe changes.	Semitransparent dark-colored leotard with a cape, hair out, heavily made up. Darkness is consistent with the tenebrist concept.	Dandy look, glasses, smart and formal look accompanied by casual accessories. The backpack is childlike.	Casual, informal, dark colors aimed at contributing to the stage tenebrism and the lighting play.
	Interpretation (direction, performance)	At the service of the lyrics, smiling, relaxed, open communication, and interaction with the animation or the audience.	Performs the diva-clip confidently, somewhat sensual – Choreography based on hand movements and body postures, little movement.	Fun, cheerful, contained choreography, rap movements and gestures. Fashion poses.	Against the tenebrism of the space, smiling and seductive performance. Precise choreography, with hardly any interaction with the audience.

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<p style="text-align: center;">4. Performance. Relationship to the formal discourse of the video clip</p>	<p>Effective discourse from the multimedia projection, functionality of the production to the service of the narration, and communication of the story. Relationship with the video clip not so much from the temporal fragmentation as from the recreation of new spaces with the projection, as well as from the narrative.</p>	<p>The impression of a video clip created by the lack of permanent spatial and temporal continuity, given the extreme speed of the shot and frame changes, which are not very common. Break in continuity even in lighting between shots. Selective use of blurring. Spectacular and effective fragmentation, which makes it similar to a video clip.</p>	<p>The originality comes from the neutral sets created with screens, which multiply spaces. This fragments the space. The rest is conventional — references from hip hop clips from the late 80s-early 90s and the song’s video clip.</p>	<p>The relationship to the clip comes from the changing spatial articulation of the abstract stage that is created with lighting. It is the lack of spatial continuity, the rhythm in the shot changes and the effectiveness of the performance that makes it similar to performative studio video clips.</p>
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Source: Own elaboration.

5. Results and discussion

First, we will comment on the content, we identified a similar structure in the four performances analyzed, which we did not recognize a priori: the start of the song (up to 3 minutes, as aforementioned), the interpretation, the use of audiovisual resources and the performance, in general, is coherent and even repetitive in the first two minutes and changes are later introduced at the last minute. The chorus is usually repeated a second time, followed by the bridge or an instrumental solo to then return to the third repetition of the chorus when the tone or vocal variations are changed. Changes are also introduced visually in the last part of the song; there is a precise choreography coordinated with the projections on screens during the first two minutes, in the final minute a connection to the audience is sought (previously absent), approaching them, interacting or seeking a response from them. This relationship is visually evident through spectacular camera movements (traveling) whose object of focus is the performer when they interact with the audience.

The length of the items is determined by the length of the songs (3 minutes), although the live broadcast on YouTube exceeds this by a few seconds by including a couple of introductory context shots and several seconds of epilogue in which the performer usually addresses the audience in the venue. This is why the length of the pieces analyzed ranges from 03:17:00 (minutes: seconds: frames) to 03:04:18.

The number of shots for each performance is 35 (*Heroes*), 125 (*LoveWave*), 104 (*Lie To Me*), and 91 (*Dance You Off*). Except for the first one, which has a lower number, the rest have several shots and, consequently, a rate of shot change and an average length of shot, consistent with the averages of videoclips. According to Pérez-Rufí and Rodríguez-López (2017), the most frequent number of shots in a current music video is around 120. Therefore, each shot has an average length of fewer than 2 seconds, specifically 01:18 (seconds: frames). These values are maintained in *LoveWave*, *Lie To Me* and *Dance You Off*, with average lengths per shot of 01:12, 01:19 and 02:04. The two musical numbers analyzed from 2018 vary just a few frames from these averages.

To conclude, it is speculative to declare that videoclips have a grammar, as the study of the average lengths of the shots can lead to considerable inaccuracies. We can identify a common element in the production of the musical numbers analyzed in the Eurovision Song Contest and the video clip: the speed of the shot change, which has a notable rhythm that is possibly faster than the rhythm of other television formats –however, this would need to be contrasted.

The relationship between total length and the average number of shots, i.e., the ASL, reaffirms this question, as the data does not allow for relevant conclusions. The subjective perception of rhythm is conditioned by the average lengths and the rhythm of the shot changes. However, it is more dynamic due to shots that are generally longer such as camera movements on agile devices which provide different frames at astounding speeds. Thus, performances like *Heroes*, with only 35 shots, do not convey a sense of calm that such a small number of shots would create because of the traveling movements. The last part of the performance is filmed with spectacular camera movements, increasing the impression of acceleration and perception of rhythm that does not correspond to the value from the ASL.

By observing the most frequent types of shots, we cannot obtain results that highlight trends since the items selected for analysis are very different from each other. We must point out, in any case, that the choice of the type of shot is functional even if the television musical number does not have to fulfil a narrative nor be functional, as the video clip. Each frame has its logic in the entire production and therefore its function.

In any case, there are many full shots, which perhaps remind us better than any other type of frame that we are witnessing a live performance taking place on a stage. The Close Ups and Medium Shots, which are more frequent in videoclips, are not so evident in the analyzed items as we may initially think, as opposed to the most common practices in the video clip. The reason behind this is that the musical number is usually choreographed, or there is an interaction with the background projections that would lose effect or go unnoticed in shorter shots. Performances like Iveta Mukunchyan's which does not have a tremendous scenographic display and whose performance is centered on the interpretation of a "diva clip," use close-ups more. On the other hand, the other performances have hardly any close-ups, either because the scenographic environment is essential as well as the interaction with the screens, or because of the need to focus on choreography.

There are usually traveling camera movements that allow for frame changes that range from Close-Ups to Long Shots (*Heroes*, *LoveWave*) in a matter of seconds, giving the shot a great deal of spectacularity. In any case, the focus and axis of circular travelings is always the performer; the movement is made with an aesthetic, spectacular objective; to seduce the television audience. However, it is also functional as it adds emphasis to the performance by highlighting the action. The camera movements add dynamism to the discourse, usually during the song's chorus and especially in the third part of the song, as we have previously mentioned.

Benjamin Ingrosso's performance is an exception as it only has seven traveling movements, partly to keep the frames within the set created with the LED screen structure, where he performs the song. However, this lack of dynamism in the shots is made up for by the constant change in the LED lighting on the tubular stage, which gives the discourse a continuous internal movement within the frame.

Analyzing the production and the continuity of space and time invite us to interpret the results provided. Again, we cannot find common trends that link the conclusions, but we have identified aspects of interest. In the case of *Heroes*, we identified a rather classic and functional production, which serves to convey the story of Zelmerlöv's interaction with the projected animation, which is interrupted by the visual dynamism of the choruses. This creates a spatial and temporal continuity that does not create tension and allows for relaxed viewing.

The production of *LoveWave* is avant-garde, unconventional and risky, as a result of the contrast between shots and by breaking any continuity, introducing changes in the lighting between consecutive shots, jumping the action line, jumps of very different frames, unfocused shots and frames that create tension by moving away from classic audiovisual grammar. The constant focus on the performer is, therefore, the only element capable of providing a minimal unity to the discourse.

Lie To Me breaks the spatial continuity by inserting shots of the sets created with screens for the dancers, which imitates video clips filmed in studios. In the shots of the performer, the frequent change from Full Shots to Medium Shots (Long or Close-Ups) from cameras with the same perspective creates rhythm and manages to maintain continuity, since the difference in framing is enough for it to avoid creating a jump-cut effect. The shot change is in time with the song, although it avoids an evident cut-to-the-beat shot.

Finally, in *Dance You Off* the lack of spatial continuity between shots comes from the constant change in the spatial references due to the fluctuating lighting of the structure that serves as a scenographic space, together with the continuous variations in frames, perspectives and lighting between shots. The result is a very dynamic production that also imitates a video clip filmed in a studio.

We have adapted the classic components of film analysis of the staging (set design, composition, lighting, characterization, and direction) to television production, starting once again from the premise that the video clip staging could have some defining features that arise from the repetition in multiple discourses. First of all, we highlight the set design which has received particular attention in the musical numbers analyzed. This would not be the case with all the performances broadcast at Eurovision, as an analysis of the staging of the Spanish delegation's musical numbers in the Festival's recent editions show.

In the two items analyzed from the Swedish representatives (Zelmerlöv and Ingrosso), the scenography is based on the use of the screens that allow for the musical numbers to be replayed, as was done in the performances for the Swedish public television (SVT) in the national selection television programs (Melodifestivalen from 2015 and 2018). The staging was not prominent, as was the case in the Eurovision festival performances in Vienna (2015) and Lisbon (2018). In both cases, the dark almost tenebrist backgrounds allowed for an impression of depth and three-dimensionality, either through animated projections (*Heroes*) or lighting the stage structure in moving horizontal lines (*Dance You Off*). The screens thus turn the stage into an abstract or neutral space that imitates a studio rather than trying to recreate a natural space.

In the case of *Heroes*, traveling and the stage lighting in the form of concentric waves (first white, then red) end up contextualizing the screen space within the whole stage, including the audience. This only occurs in a couple of shots in Ingrosso's performance but enables an abstract and futuristic space to be coherent.

The staging is barely noticeable in Mukunchyan's performance, beyond the initial tenebrism created by the smoke and backlighting or the unfocused shots that envelop the performer in an aura of mystery. The LED screens in the background have abstract motifs in cold tones or black and do not add much to the discourse, beyond the gloomy atmosphere of the first third of the song. The chorus reveals the performer and further highlights her centrality, despite on stage smoke columns alternating with pyrotechnic effects.

Finally, Josef's performance, as aforementioned, bases its scenography around the space arranged for the performer by the Festival - there are no spatial elements or anything remarkable beyond the saturated colors and neutral lighting together with the screens that create neutral colored background sets for the dancers, lit against backlighting.

After analyzing the scenography, we can conclude that each of the participating delegations has provided its concept of the representation of the space, recreating itself totally through screens or settings based on the available means offered by the Festival. Unlike the Festival's previous editions, where the stage had a strong identity in all of the musical numbers, in recent years, each national delegation has created its scenographic concept, breaking away from the unity that a typical stage could provide. The screens and the changes in lighting allow for scenographic variety and contribute to breaking spatial continuity, referring to the spatial fragmentation that is typical of a video clip.

By focusing on the frames, we obtain results consistent with the previously made comments. In *Heroes* and *Lie To Me*, there are several symmetrical and functional compositions to represent the action. In *Heroes*, the performer moves toward one of the strong points in the frame (following the principles of classical composition) when the “empty” side of the shot is taken up by the projection. In *Lie To Me* the symmetry is broken when two very similar sized shots and the camera position follow each other, thus avoiding a jump in the editing and maintaining the spatial continuity.

The frames in *LoveWave* and *Dance You Off* are rarely symmetrical (except in the choruses in *LoveWave*) instead, the performers appear in one of the strong points or in precarious positions, which are away from the central axis or strong points. This creates enormous tension in the shot and steers away from the classic principles of composition. Even if avant-garde audiovisual languages have a vast tradition in the history of cinema, the break away from framing conventions continues to create tension and impact on an audience used to classic or normative production.

Lighting plays a central role in the staging of the numbers analyzed. *Heroes*, *LoveWave*, and *Dance You Off* are set in dark scenes, where the illumination provides enormous dramatic tension by defining forms and playing with the performers’ concealment through backlighting (in the cases of Mukunchyan and Ingrosso), or by coloring them red. *Heroes* is articulated as a monochrome discourse in the first part (practically in black and white), creating tension and dynamism by introducing red light projected from the performer’s chest, lighting up the whole stage. The red lighting and the subsequent white light break the continuity between shots in the case of *LoveWave*. Ingrosso’s profile is lit up by blue and red lighting In *Dance You Off*, creating a contrast and a duo color effect that is trendy in today’s photography and graphic design. The backlighting of the screens for the *Lie To Me* dancers hides their identities and makes it possible to focus on Josef. We can, therefore, conclude that the lighting is not dramatic but narrative.

Swedish performers are usually characterized (Zelmerlöw e Ingrosso) in dark casual apparel so as not to stand out and to integrate into the spatial darkness recreated by the screens. In Zelmerlöw’s case, his white upper garment takes on the effect of a screen on which motifs are projected. Mukunchyan’s characterization presents her performance as a “diva-clip,” as she is wearing a semi-transparent leotard and a cape, while Josef is represented as a current dandy, wearing trendy suspenders, a bowtie or glasses, which create an image of sophistication. We have noted that these performances break away from one of the Festival’s clichés (Panea, 2017, p. 92): there is no wardrobe change or play on surprise in this sense, as it is not necessary when other elements are used.

In all the cases, the singers perform precisely, and every detail is choreographed, as seen when comparing the performances in the semi-final and final shows. In the cases analyzed, the performers transmit confidence and friendliness by permanently smiling, while in some cases, they look at the cameras seductively and sensually (Mukunchyan or Ingrosso) and in others, they seek out the audience’s involvement (Zelmerlöw or Josef). The performers depend on the audience’s TV vote. Therefore, they attempt to gain the audience’s empathy, usually by transmitting a positive and cheerful non-verbal message.

From an interpretative perspective, we can generally conclude that the relationship with the video clip comes mainly from spatial fragmentation, as was to be expected, as well as from the lack of continuity between shots broadcasted consecutively. The use of screens that seem to recreate virtual scenes or studios or the immediate setting change through lighting and other stage resources (such as pyrotechnics or ambient smoke) thus allow for an instantaneous change in the environment and a consequent break in spatial continuity similar to an edited and stored video item and uncharacteristic of the production of a live television event. This impression of fragmentation is in time from the moment in which the quick shot change ensures concise length shots, around an average of 2 seconds, similar to a video clip.

Finally, it should be noted that the approach of Zelmerlöv's performance is more conventional since, unlike the other numbers analyzed, the choice of audiovisual resources is more functional when it comes to telling a story. In any case, this story could be similar to videoclips which are often narrative.

6. Conclusions

Transferring a textual analysis methodology of the audiovisual discourse (appropriate to the study of a video clip) to television production creates a methodological paradox: the results once again question the reference with which we intend to generate language analogies, technique and audiovisual resources, that is, the video clip itself, not the object of precise analysis that we have taken which is the Eurovision show productions. We have highlighted the difficulty in defining a music video and its elusive categorization, since it is a format that is permanently undergoing reformulation and experimentation, therefore avoiding normalization and any audiovisual grammar.

Thus, we have considered that if video clips were to have a characteristic feature, it would be both space and time fragmentation and that this feature could be extended to other types of audiovisual formats making it therefore comparable. After the analysis, we had to be cautious when concluding, since the lack of an Institutional Representation Model (IRM) (Burch, 2006) in music videos means we should not be categorical, leaving the door open to future research.

We cannot try to define a new type of audiovisual format for television (live music videos) since the theoretical basis of the reference, the video clip, is not solid but we can at least demonstrate that various common practices do bring live television production closer to the ambiguous field of the video clip, as we can see in the four musical numbers analyzed from various Eurovision Song Contests.

The analysis of the selected items shows that a break in spatial continuity is produced by recreating different sets on the stage (Mikolas Josef - *Lie To Me*), as well as through the abstraction of the scene thanks to the use of screens and lighting devices like LEDs, and an avant-garde composition of the shot (Benjamin Ingrosso - *Dance You Off*). Likewise, we consider that the production also appropriates the fragmentation of time and a faster shot change than the video clips, as well as a break in continuity between shots (Iveta Mukuchyan - *LoveWave*). Finally, introducing a narrative forms part of the influence of videoclips (Måns Zelmerlöv - *Heroes*) even though a narrative is not the main priority.

We conclude that ultimately live television's approach to the language of the video clip comes from being innovative and creating a spectacle. The video clip thus becomes a model of an avant-garde audiovisual format characterized by applying techniques that aim to seduce and fascinate the viewer. Eurovision has so far been a field of formal experimentation in television, using not only the latest technological innovations for television but also a postmodern audiovisual language. Thus, despite its longevity and tradition, we assert that the value of the Eurovision Festival lies in its avant-garde and experimental format.

Levine (2008, p. 405) affirms that live television increases the prestige and the perceived value of projects. The sophistication of the staging and meticulous and choreographed planning of the musical numbers analyzed contrasts with the supposedly more improvised and spontaneous - but also valuable- nature of live television. However, we believe that the Eurovision Song Contest is capable of adding the values of live TV to those of programmed production. In this sense, Ytreberg (2006) points out that live television is "premeditated" and "scripted," although taking other formats as references would be relevant to the case at hand. Without going any further, Bourdon (2006, p. 535) characterizes live television by both its "truths" and "lies." In confluence with what is live and what is planned and the language of an audiovisual format such as the video clip, television broadcast of musical numbers has a way of producing and formal experimentation that other types of television formats cannot

possibly afford. That is why we consider that the broadcasting of live musical numbers can enjoy the freedom and formal creativity of an experimental and disruptive format such as music video.

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