

Political communication on *TikTok*: from the feminisation of discourse to incivility expressed in emoji form. An analysis of the Spanish political platform *Sumar* and reactions to its strategy

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Abstract

In a context of permanent electoral campaign, an increasing number of political communication specialists are trying to unravel the resources with which government officials and their parties seek to influence *TikTok* users. From a broad perspective, the theme is more current than novel, however, in the specific case of this research, an academic void is identified by combining the identification of idiosyncratic traits of the feminization of political discourse in *TikTok* with the study of reactions (text and emojis) that audiovisual content imbued with this trend provokes in users. The intention is to find out whether the inclusive tone of the feminized rhetorical style can be extrapolated to the Chinese-origin social network and, if so, whether its particular characteristics mitigate forms of incivility. To carry out the checks, the first seven months of activity on *TikTok* by the political platform *Sumar* with its leader, Yolanda Díaz, as the protagonist of most of the videos, are selected. The mixed methodology of analysis on audiovisual content and comments allows to verify that, although the new Spanish party does not apply a strategy perfectly adapted to the social network under study, the anti-polarization rhetoric and the storytelling techniques manage to neutralize extreme forms of flaming.

Keywords

TikTok; Social media; Political communication; Political feminization; Incivility; Flaming; Yolanda Díaz; *Sumar*; Political parties; Politicians; Anti-polarization rhetoric; Storytelling; Emojis; Sentiment analysis.

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1. Introduction

In the third decade of the 21st century, the use of social media has become an essential part of the way that people aged 18 to 26 interact and communicate. This leads to the need to reflect on a distinctive feature of an entire lifestyle. ‘Centennials’ (or members of the so-called ‘generation Z’) are digital natives who have aroused growing interest among communication and marketing specialists (Cerezo, 2016; Madrigal-Moreno; Madrigal-Moreno; Béjar-Tinoco, 2021; Gotor-Cuairán; Martín; Sacristán-Navarro, 2022). As a result, there has been increasing research in recent years aimed at deciphering the stimuli that influence the behaviour of young *TikTok* users as consumers of all types of information and brands, including political ones. Some experts, including Muñoz (2012), López-Fernández (2022), Morejón-Llamas (2023), Gamir-Ríos and Sánchez-Castillo (2022), Vijay and Gekker (2021), Zurovac (2022), Cervi, Tejedor and Marín-Lladó (2021), and Figuereo-Benítez, De-Oliveira and Mancinas-Chávez (2022), among others, have attempted to address the resources employed by government officials and their political parties to sway *TikTok* users, either in the context of a constant state of political campaigning or when facing specific electoral challenges. In view of the proliferation of works on this field worldwide, it goes without saying that the subject matter is not new but it is topical; however, this research clearly goes one step further. Specifically, the aim is to combine the identification of idiosyncratic features of pop politics and the feminisation of political discourse in *TikTok* with the study of the negative reactions that this kind of audiovisual content elicits in some users who are recipients of messages/videos; especially through the universal language of emojis or pictographic words that complement written text, often giving it new meaning (Moschini, 2016; Sampietro, 2019; Pavalanathan; Eisenstein, 2016; Prada *et al.*, 2018). According to Cervi and Marín-Lladó (2022), emojis are not only useful as representations of emotions, but also create alignment between people and structure exchanges of information built on somewhat ubiquitous language capable of crossing linguistic barriers (Cervi; Marín-Lladó, 2022; Alshenqeeti, 2016; Gibson; Huang; Yu, 2018). It is clear that both *TikTok* and pictograms are used by users to reject some posts in a polarised climate fuelled by incivility (Bormann; Ziegele, 2023; Balocco, 2016; Rosenberg, 2018; Cuevas-Calderón; Yalán-Dongo; Kanashiro, 2022; Robles *et al.*, 2022); therefore an additional point of interest involves exploring how audiovisual contents intended to be pleasant and inclusive can be modified to the effect of changing the connotations of graphic emoticons, turning their originally childish/friendly implications into openly hostile, ridiculing or sarcastic overtones in the responses provided (depending on the context in which they appear). In other words, in line with the assertion by Martin *et al.* (2023) in one of their studies on Twitter interactions, it is our contention that the complex meanings of the responses need to be unravelled.

In a governmental scenario marked by the breakdown of the two-party system and the emergence of new parties in Spain (*Podemos* and *Ciudadanos* in 2015, *Vox* in 2019), the above considerations are of particular importance due to the diversified forms of discourtesy employed by haters and users who are critical of more than one political party. *Sumar* is a Spanish party on the left of the political spectrum, whose leader is the current second Vice-president of the Government in Spain, Yolanda Díaz. It is the most recently founded left-wing party in Spain, but also one of the first to epitomise the feminisation of discourse (Quevedo-Redondo, 2022). Assuming the hypothesis that feminised discourse can be extrapolated to *TikTok*, in order to confirm this and to see whether Díaz’s inclusive tone mitigated extreme expressions of incivility (flaming), the two main research questions were:

RQ1. Only a few months before the Spanish general election, what was *Sumar*’s strategy on *TikTok*? Is it possible to identify a common pattern in the posts to see whether the party had a strategy specifically adapted to this social media platform, beyond the extrapolation of the feminine rhetorical style hypothetically used by *Sumar*’s leader?

RQ2: How does support or criticism manifest itself in *TikTok* users’ comments on videos posted from the @sumar_official account?

The interest in answering this second question lies not only in looking at the content of the comments, but also in analysing the tone and the presence of incivility in them in order to decipher the use of emojis and assess whether (or not) flaming was targeted at Díaz and her discourse on *TikTok*.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Feminisation of political discourse on *TikTok*

The feminisation of political discourse is a phenomenon that can now be detected in a growing number of spaces and/or platforms (including social media), thanks to its use in the public arena by both men and women. While its emergence is not solely based on the increasing number of women pursuing government careers, the type of rhetoric that is the focus here is one of its outcomes. This rhetoric is infused with values traditionally associated with women and often surpasses the conventional methods of conducting and communicating in politics (Quevedo-Redondo, 2021).

In the academic domain where the concept of the ‘feminine style’ is examined from a rhetorical perspective, several scholars have argued that male and female leaders often exhibit different communication patterns (Down; Tonn, 1993; Blankenship; Robson, 1995; Amaireh, 2022). This notion has been supported by multiple researchers, including McConnell-Ginet (1988) and Azher, Riaz and Ikram (2022). However, this generalisation must be qualified so as not to disregard all those female leaders who use discourses where masculine strategies (formal evidence, deductive structure and linear modes of reasoning) and feminine strategies (inductive structure, use of an approachable tone, narration of anecdotes or personal stories and stimulation of audience participation to generate empathy) (Jones, 2016) converge. ‘In other

words, to speak of a female rhetorical style does not mean that all women use it, nor that men avoid using it' (Quevedo-Redondo, 2021, p. 276), although Hargrave and Blumenau (2022) have argued that female presidents, ministers, deputies and mayors tend to use more words with emotional connotations and more personal pronouns than their male counterparts.

“ The growing phenomenon of the feminization of political discourse is evident in various spaces, including social media, thanks to its adoption by men and women active in the public sphere ”

In line with the identification of styles outlined above, Bligh *et al.* (2010) consider that feminising forms of communication involves addressing human interest issues, including referring to private life experiences and narrating events in the first person. In addition to the second observation, reflections such as that by James W. Pennebaker (Pennebaker, 2011), who as an expert in the psychology of language, not only second the previous contributions, but also highlight why the use of nouns evocative of the family and the home (partner, children, hobbies, daily routines and family and work balance, among other items on a long list of themes) contribute to reinforcing the home/State metaphor and to humanising those in power with techniques typical of political personalisation (Balmas; Sheaffer, 2013).

Candidates for office who employ one or more of the above tactics are accustomed to presenting themselves to potential voters as ordinary citizens, and this sometimes enables them to be perceived by the public as someone who could be part of their circle. Theoretically, this is a *modus operandi* aimed at increasing charisma (Bligh *et al.*, 2010), but in the case of women candidates, it also fosters the 'gender affinity effect' to reinforce a gender-based connection (Dolan, 2008, Becerra-Chávez; Navia, 2022). The set of strategies described in this part of the introductory framework can be complemented by a significant element that involves empowering the recipients of the discourse through inclusive language. The term 'empowerment' is understood here as the outcome of persuading citizens that they have the ability to effect significant changes, particularly within the political domain (Campbell, 1989, p. 13).

The use of a communicative style informed by empathic pragmatism, as defined by Bonnafous in 2003, encapsulates the core elements of the discourse to be unravelled. This style can be recognised in four features identified on *TikTok*, which ultimately could potentially signify a feminisation of the political message within it:

- Discourse is humanised by resorting to stories or descriptions of small anecdotes based on everyday life (day-to-day routines; the real and ordinary; what is on the street and what concerns the social class that aspires to become emerging media). *Storytelling* is making its way as a strategy, either through narratives about oneself or about others.
- Irony and verbal attacks on detractors, opponents and/or political rivals are strictly restricted or even completely omitted, as part of a tendency towards non-polarised discourse.
- Benevolence and solidarity are often expressed, enhanced by a vocabulary of love, affection and compassion (Bonnafous, 2013, p. 137). Due to its inclusive nature, this encompasses everything from the use of colloquial expressions to the diminutives and intentionally positive body language, especially using a social smile.
- Messages of closeness and unity are delivered, in most cases intended to empower recipients by replacing 'you' with 'we' and 'together'.

These four features shape the model of expression employed by the representatives of the new politics try to capture the attention (and sympathy) of *TikTok* users, avoiding the raucous style that for decades has prevailed in the world's parliaments.

2.2. Incivility as expressed in emoji form in political messages on *TikTok*

Spanish political parties have not had a strong presence on *TikTok*, perhaps because of 'the high personal exposure that the platform requires to be successful' (Morejón-Llamas, 2023, p. 241) and the need to create their own exclusive content, more or less specifically adapted to *TikTok* (Sánchez-Castillo, 2021; López-Fernández, 2022). Recent research has shown that the most recently formed political parties (such as *Podemos* in Spain), have effectively utilised the space available on social media (Cervi; Marín-Lladó, 2021; Gamir-Ríos; Sánchez-Castillo, 2022; Castro-Martínez; Díaz-Morilla, 2021). However, they have remained partly committed to older strategies, which sometimes suggests a lack of interest in what they may perceive as a mere contemporary façade for unilaterally promoting their agenda and discourse (Cervi; Tejedor; García-Blesa, 2023). This is the case similarly with *Spotify*, where the novelty of its use by political representatives often leads to a lack of sound judgement when creating playlists (Quevedo-Redondo; Rebollo; Navarro-Sierra, 2023). Since *Spotify* does not lend itself to the examination of discourse feminisation and its associated responses as *TikTok* does, it can be argued that *TikTok* provides an ideal environment for discerning whether political posts primarily targeting *centennials* (the most active users of the platform) adhere to new codes of communication; and for seeking insights into the reactions expressed through the pictographic language used by consumers of video content. It is also important to pay attention to the incivility displayed by Internet users and, in particular, to the presence of flaming in the form of emojis which increase the levels of polarisation. These demand no more effort for users than choosing one or more emoticons, including those that suggest anger, frustration, rage or disgust (😡, 😠, 😡, 😡, 😡); those that denote mockery, contempt or weariness/disbelief depending on the context (😏, 🙄, 🙄, 🙄); and those that imply danger and/or intimidation (👊, 🤬), among other possibilities that, without having an exact meaning in themselves, acquire significance from the situation surrounding the message and the sympathy awakened by the subject who inspired their use.

Where there is a scenario of persistent or long-term polarisation (Garimella; Weber, 2017), incivility is understood as the absence of consideration or courtesy towards others in interpersonal communication and in the exchange of views on political developments, where it becomes more negatively loaded through *flaming*, *flame trolling* or the use of *flame bait* (Lingam; Aripin, 2017; Jane, 2015; O'Sullivan; Flanagan, 2003). Thus, this phenomenon evolves in the social media ecosystem and takes on a more aggressive nature as users seek to offend, humiliate or explicitly provoke specific people (in this case, politicians). They may do so whether through the direct use of disrespectful language, the use of insults in sarcastic comments, or the use of pictograms with openly hostile (even threatening) connotations to cause discomfort or conflict. It is the latter trend that is the focus of the second part of this research, as its existence clashes with the spirit of feminised political discourse and with that of *TikTok* itself (as it is linked to entertainment in an inclusive and diverse way).

3. Material and methods

A dual methodology was used to address the two core areas of this research, namely, messages and reception. On the one hand, a template based on the classic methodology of content analysis from a mixed approach or quantitative-qualitative perspective was used to analyse the discourse of the videos posted by *Sumar* on *TikTok* (Krippendorff, 2004). The purpose was to identify how the feminised political discourse that Yolanda Díaz used in the traditional media was mirrored on this particular social media platform (Quevedo-Redondo, 2022) and to find out if there were characteristics shared by different posts which showed that there was a strategy that had been truly adapted to the platform. On the other hand, reception was tackled through the thematic analysis of the comments that *TikTok* users made about @sumar_oficial posts in order to identify any patterns and trends in their reactions, paying special attention to the meaning and use of emoticons that fostered incivility. The combination of methods was not only proposed to investigate the communicative strategy employed by Díaz, but also to discover whether an eminently inclusive message (that of the leader herself and her project) was ineffective in avoiding precisely the opposite: the generation of a scenario where polarisation was even shown in the pictographic language of emojis.

The corpus was designed to contain the posts extracted from the profile chosen in the first period when it was used on *TikTok*, prior to the confirmation of Yolanda Díaz as a candidate for the general election in Spain in 2023. Specifically, 50 videos uploaded to *TikTok* between 1 July 2022 (first publication) and 9 February 2023 were analysed. The sample was thus limited to seven months from the opening of the account, on the understanding that, while one six-month period was enough to check the initial publication strategy, one more month of study or observation would serve to confirm the trend.

The first phase of the fieldwork was based on an analysis sheet divided into three main blocks, which are explained later. In addition, all the comments received by *Sumar* videos on *TikTok* were extracted for the same period of time delimited for the content analysis. This procedure was carried out using the premium version of *ExportComments.com*. This tool captured all reactions to the posts on the political account until 9 February 2023: a total of 4,061 comments for 50 videos, including nested comments, which can be freely consulted in the dataset of the sample uploaded to *Figshare*:

<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.24599562.v1>

3.1. Analysis of the message

The analysis of the videos published by @sumar_oficial was based on a template created specifically for this research. The starting point was a preliminary set of variables that were derived from the study's objectives and the insights obtained from the literature review. The second stage involved establishing a system of *a posteriori* categories, which resulted from the classification of 20.4% of the videos by analogy. The specification of the variables resulted in three major analytical blocks. The first one involved a denotative analysis of the video (Table 1). This contained some categorising variables, including length; language; originality (whether it was

Table 1. Denotative analysis template

Code: Date of post: DENOTATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE VIDEO 1. Length of the video: 1. More than 90 seconds 2. Between 60 and 90 seconds 3. Between 30 and 60 seconds 4. Less than 30 seconds 2. Original video created for <i>TikTok</i> : 1. Yes 2. No (cut from another video) 3. Reproductions: 0. Up to 500 1. From 501 to 2,000 2. From 2,001 to 5,000 3. From 5,001 to 10,000 4. From 10,001 to 20,000 5. Over 20,000 4. Number of likes 0. Up to 500 1. From 501 to 1,000 2. From 1,001 to 2,000 3. More than 2,000 5. Number of comments 0. Up to 50 1. From 51 to 100 2. From 101 to 200 3. From 201 to 500 4. From 501 to 1,000 5. More than 1,000 6. Díaz's presence in the video: 0. Yolanda Díaz was not present 1. Yolanda Díaz was featured on her own 2. Yolanda Díaz was featured with other people	7. Main people featured in the video: 1. Yolanda Díaz (Y.D.) 2. Celebrity or comedian 3. Members of the public 4. Members of the public with Y.D. 5. Young people 6. Young people with Y.D. 6. Groups with demands 7. Yolanda Díaz and journalists 8. Others 8. Setting 0. Not defined 1. Public space 2. Political space 3. Media space 9. Clothing (Y.D.) 0. Does not apply 1. Formal 2. Informal 10. Language used in the video 0. No language 1. Spanish 2. Catalan 3. Basque 4. Galician 5. Others 11. Use of a social smile (Y.D.) 0. Does not apply 1. Yes 2. No 12. Applause featured in the video 1. Yes 2. No
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created exclusively for *TikTok* or edited from previous content); the number of likes and comments; the presence or absence of Yolanda Díaz; the individual(s) delivering the video-recorded message; the location where it was recorded; the leader's attire, if she appeared on screen (formal or informal clothing); her use of a social smile as a facial expression conveying friendliness, acceptance and pleasantness; and whether the video featured applause, as this helps to create a sense of enthusiastic support for a person or message and to generate a greater impression of popularity.

The second level of analysis was connotative (Table 2), and aimed to examine the underlying meaning of the posts. This aspect complemented the more explicit or direct meanings investigated in the first section of the template and emphasised the prevailing subject matter and purpose. The objective was to establish a taxonomy for categorising videos, distinguishing between audiovisual content that included electoral announcements or pledges ('video pledge') and content that promoted celebrity politics through the involvement of public figures who were unrelated to governmental activities ('video endorsement'). Videos that were merely informative or explanatory were differentiated from those that served to publicise the leader's agenda and those that offered an audiovisual summary of the events she was involved in, generally in massively-attended gatherings with other politicians and/or members of the public. The latter is related to one of the functions to which researchers paid attention in the 'Symbolic Role' variable (specifically, under the category 'leader of the masses'), separating this role from that of 'great communicator' (Yolanda Díaz featured alongside journalists), 'protector', 'first female administrator' (video of Díaz undertaking management tasks) and 'ordinary citizen' (which, according to **Goodnow** (2013), refers to politicians being portrayed in everyday situations where they are close to the common or the ordinary). Finally, once the type of role that Díaz took in each post had been decoded, the tone of her discourse (positive or negative) was studied, as well as the video music backgrounds that induced diverging sensations depending on the rhythm and intensity of the melody (**Koelsch**, 2005).

The last section of the template contains discourse analysis variables focused on investigating the idiosyncratic features of the feminised rhetorical style, which were also unravelled in a specific section for qualitative observations. This block not only compiled the most significant words that the *TikTok* user heard in the videos (nouns and adjectives that were relevant due to the number of times they are repeated or for their selected use), but also coded the material according to the discursive structure, the kind of tone and the predominant political theme, the allusions to the audience, the application (or not) of lexical splitting, and even the references to other parties that were not always directly mentioned. The aim was to create a solid methodological basis, the consistency of which was ultimately corroborated inter-rater analysis carried out by the authors of the research.

3.2. Analysis of comments and reactions

The comments received by the videos on the *Sumar* political platform were analysed from a twofold perspective. On the one hand, a quantitative thematic analysis was conducted of the 4,061 comments that made up the sample. To achieve this goal, a sentiment analysis of user-generated text was conducted through the implementation of machine learning techniques, utilising *R*, a programming environment and language which adopts a statistical analysis approach. This approach has been successfully applied to research in political communication, as demonstrated in studies by **Chenou** and **Restrepo** (2023) and **Estrada-Rodríguez** and **Martínez-De-la-Rosa** (2023). In particular, the *Tidyverse* and *Tidytext* packages were used for text tokenisation and *Affine Lexicon* to identify positive and negative terms. Each word was given a value of between -4 and +4 depending on intensity and valence (positive or negative), on the understanding that the graphs of the most negative terms excluded the term 'no' because it is a very common word and distorts the information. The average (mean and standard deviation) per comment and video was also compared along with the evolution of the sentiments present during the period analysed, ultimately obtaining the most repeated or common positive and negative words.

Table 2. Connotative analysis template

<p>Code: Date of post:</p> <p>CONNOTATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE VIDEO</p> <p>13. Predominant theme/purpose: 1. Video-promise 2. Video-support (celebritization) 3. Informative video (explanatory) 4. Video-chronicle (summary) 5. Video agenda 6. Others</p> <p>14. Y.D. symbolic role 1. Non-applicable category 2. The great communicator 3. The heroine / Protector 4. Leader of the masses 5. The first female administrator 6. Citizen (ordinariness)</p> <p>15. Predominant tone: 0. Does not apply 1. Positive (joy, hope, humour...) 2. Negative (anger, apathy, rage) 3. Neutral</p> <p>16. Emotion-inducing music: 0. Does not apply 1. Rhythmic / Entertaining 2. Stimulating / Inspiring 3. Emotive / Deep and thoughtful 4. Loud / Aggressive / Cathartic 5. Other</p>	<p>DISCOURSE ANALYSIS / APPLICATION OF YD's FEMININE RHETORICAL STYLE</p> <p>17. Significant nouns (quoted several times or highlighted in various ways): Word Cloud</p> <p>18. Discursive structure: 0. Does not apply 1. Inductive / Storytelling 2. Deductive</p> <p>19. Tone / Arguments and language: 0. Does not apply 1. Personal tone / Ethics of care 2. T. Impersonal / Ethics of justice</p> <p>20. Appeals to the audience: 0. Does not apply 1. Inclusive language 2. Exclusive language</p> <p>21. Lexical splitting: 0. Does not apply 1. Yes 2. No</p> <p>22. Categorisation of political issues: 0. Does not apply 1. Hard politics 2. Soft politics</p> <p>23. Allusions to the opposition: 1. Yes 2. No</p> <p>OTHER INFORMATION/Remarks</p>
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On the other hand, a linguistic analysis was carried out using the *Atlas.ti* qualitative analysis software to narrow the focus and carry out a process of coding, categorisation and conceptual levelling of the comments present in the *Sumar* videos. This part of the fieldwork was both inductive and deductive, as the categories linking to politicians' names were expanded through pseudonyms that appeared frequently during coding (for example, the code used for 'Yolanda Díaz' recognised terms such as 'Yolanda', 'Yolanda Díaz', 'Yoli', 'Yoly' or 'Piquiños'). The process was also reviewed and refined using the features in *Atlas.ti* version 23.1.0 powered by models from *Open AI* (Lopezosa; Codina; Boté-Vericad, 2023).

“TikTok serves as a key platform to assess whether political posts aimed at the centennial generation align with their codes, and to analyze reactions expressed through pictorial language by video consumers”

It should be noted that the researchers carried out a manual check of 5% of downloaded comments to ensure both the integrity of the sample with respect to the original source and a review of the coding process. No significant variations were identified. At the end of the process, a total of 120 different codes had been recorded which were grouped into 6 major clusters (political, groups, ideology, assessments, emojis and problems) in order to analyse co-occurrences through a thematic analysis. In this way, for example, it was possible to detect whether certain codes (support or adhesion, mere rejection, incivility or flaming) were recurrent in relation to other variables. Taking the research questions as a reference, the systematic exploration of the trends and their intersections showed that there were visible features of political polarisation in the corpus.

4. Results

The content analysis confirmed that, as predicted at the beginning of the research, Yolanda Díaz exploited the idiosyncratic features of the feminisation of political discourse on *TikTok*, even without having a perfectly defined strategy for this social platform. Under the brand name 'Sumar', the leader was prominently featured in a large part of the content posted in the profile under study, and received comments and responses that ranged from praise (enhanced by the use of friendly emoticons) to reactions that were totally the opposite (flaming). The first results sub-section deals with the interpretation of the first part of the results, whereas the existence of incivility in the reactions is addressed in the second sub-section.

4.1. Content analysis: *Sumar's* strategy on *TikTok*

One of the distinctive characteristics of the content created for *TikTok* is its brevity, as the videos posted on this social network are usually between 15 and 60 seconds long. This characteristic was only partly found in posts from *Sumar's* account, as 56% of its audiovisual content lasted more than 60 seconds. It is worth noting, however, that three of the four longest videos in the sample (at around two minutes in length) accumulated more than 20,000 views each, even though they had a relatively low number of likes (one of the longest and most played content did not reach 50 likes at the end of its first week of posting). Similarly, despite the significance of originality as one of the distinguishing characteristics of creations that are most likely to be successful, it was astonishing to observe that only 44% of the corpus met this criterion. The majority of the content posted consisted of no more than fragments extracted from initial recordings of speeches or interventions created for other media, with minimal editing, often resulting in an abrupt ending that adversely affected the quality of the message.

Although the number of comments significantly increased as soon as Yolanda Díaz announced her intention to become a presidential candidate, over the first few days when the videos were available to users, they did not usually exceed 100 comments per video (52% of the sample analysed did not even generate more than 50 comments over the first two weeks after they were produced). The contents that received the most comments coincided with points in time when

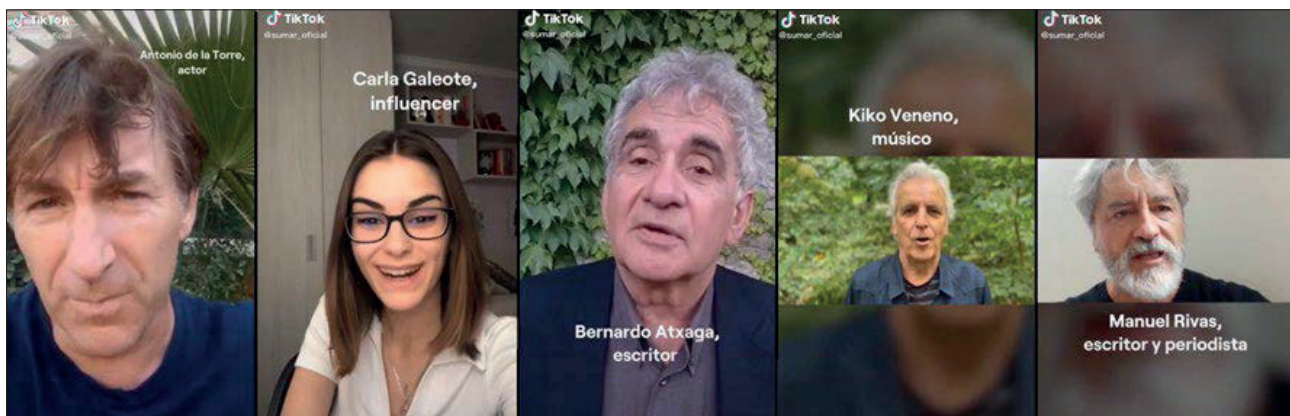


Figure 1. Celebrities who recorded videos for *Sumar*.
Source: https://www.tiktok.com/@sumar_oficial

Díaz had a strong individual media presence, more than with specific themes. This was the case of the announcement that she made on 8 July 2022, when ‘the *Sumar* process takes off’ (more than 1,000 users reacted verbally to the content within the first few hours).

In terms of the presence of individuals in the audiovisual corpus, the party leader appeared in 28% of the contents, while in 44% of them she was featured with other political actors or with members of the public. The remaining 28% consisted of publications where the candidate was not featured. This included instances such as the initial video from @sumar_oficial, which was a basic combination of text and music. Another example was a video featuring Spanish actor Antonio de la Torre on 22 August 2022, focused on expressing support for the project without the presence of any element or subject that could diminish its impact. In other words, the visibility and influence of well-known people in Spanish society and of people who were authorities in a given field was used to back Díaz’s political project, with support similar to that provided by *ad verecundiam* arguments (arguments from authority).



Figure 2. Most commonly used terms (in Spanish) in the videos posted

Alongside celebrities and comedians who, like Nerea Pérez on 16 August 2022, brought a ‘pop’ perspective to the political message (Mazzoleni; Sfardini, 2009), 20% of the sample consisted of videos of images of Yolanda Díaz with citizens of all ages, while 8% was made up specifically of young people or social groups with demands familiar to centennials such as *Glovo* and *Just Eat* delivery riders (10%). This proves that, although *TikTok* is one of the platforms preferred by the under 26s, *Sumar* did not apply micro-segmentation-based strategies to leverage its advantages. There was an interest in videos being recorded not only in political or media spaces/settings (48% of the sample), as 44% was in public locations such as streets, parks or squares in order to convey a sense of proximity to the recipient. The same applied to clothing, as Díaz usually appeared on camera in casual attire (42% of the cases) to reinforce the connection with her potential electorate by projecting a natural image of closeness to people, which was often accompanied by a social smile (52%) greeted with applause (30%). In this way, the friendly facial gesture that has become the hallmark of feminised political discourse was only avoided in situations that required great seriousness, or when Díaz made pleas in defence of workers’ rights (as in the case of the video of 27 September 2022) using strong words such as ‘politicking’, ‘respect’ (referring to the unemployed) and ‘rectification’.

Most of the content was published in Spanish, whereas a minority were in Catalan (8%), Basque (4%) or Galician (8%). This greater inclination towards the Spanish language was shown by the use of the terms highlighted or most repeated in the verbalised messages. The word cloud depicted in Figure 2 confirms the extrapolation of the following feminisation features of the rhetorical style to the discourse in *TikTok*: manifestation of empathy and ‘solidarity’ enhanced by a lexicon of affection with diminutives such as *biquiño* (‘little kiss’ in Galician, as Díaz comes from this Spanish region); frequent calls for the ethics of ‘caring’ and ‘care’; limited use of verbal attacks, and the creation of messages of closeness and unity in order to *sumar* (meaning ‘add’, ‘add up’ or ‘unite’ in Spanish), which was the most repeated term. The aim was to empower *TikTok* users by replacing *vosotros/as* (informal ‘you’ form in Spanish, both for masculine and feminine) with *nosotros/as* (‘us’, both for masculine and feminine) and *juntos/as* (‘together’ (both for masculine and feminine)), as well as appealing to the group of ‘people’ or ‘citizens’ as a ‘country’ in a positive way and from the ‘social’ component of a petition made individually by ‘Yolanda’: *sumemos* (let’s unite). Moreover, this inclusive strategy puts ‘people’ and their ‘rights’ at the centre, without neglecting the ‘feminist’ and ‘environmentalist’ approach in order to build a ‘future’ in ‘democracy’ and never lose ‘hope’.

Díaz played a symbolic role of heroine or protector in 12% of the messages, and of leader of the masses in 20% of them, with a strong personalisation and inclusive component. Regarding the subject matter or the purpose of the posts, there was a particular preference for videos categorised as ‘video chronicles’ or ‘video diaries’, in which the presidential candidate demonstrated how successful her gathering with the residents of a specific municipality had been or made announcements about her upcoming engagements (54% of the videos). Less common were ‘pledge videos’ (14%) and informative messages containing details about, and ways to become involved with, her political party, among other less creative options (10%).

Finally, it is worth noting that the feminine rhetorical style, which was a guiding thread in the first part of this research, was once again evident in the predominant tone of Díaz’s speeches and interactions (positive in 74% of the videos), as well as in the prevailing discursive structure (inductive in 60% of the videos). This style also extended to the arguments linked to the ethics of care (66%), the recurrent presence of inclusive language (76%), lexical splitting (applied in 54% of instances), a focus on soft politics over politics associated with classic ministerial competences (58%), and the limited presence of (typically indirect) allusions to opposition politicians and parties (only occurring in 20% of cases). The main music category (stimulating/inspiring in 50% of cases) was characterised by a fast and energetic beat, with a positive melody to motivate and instil a sense of action in listeners.

In summary, while *Sumar's* strategy was not ideally suited for *TikTok* due to the absence of basic elements such as the controlled use of irony or humour (which is also an idiosyncratic feature of pop politics), upon review, it revealed the use of the female rhetorical style in the content posted on *TikTok*. However, her unity-seeking style did not avoid polarisation or displays of incivility, as will be shown below.

4.2. Love, criticism and incivility. Reactions to *Sumar's* discourse on *TikTok*

The analysis of user reactions to the videos posted by *Sumar* on *TikTok* used a dual approach: a quantitative methodology was used to identify parameters in the comments of *TikTok* users, while a qualitative approach was employed to assess the tone used and to identify connections between the different elements of the leader's discourse.

4.2.1. Descriptive analysis of the comments to the videos on the *Sumar* platform

An analysis of the comments collected during the first phase of the fieldwork was carried out (using *R*) with a view to making an initial assessment of the tone of the 4,061 comments in the sample (Table 3).

The graphical representation of the data shows the low variation of most of the words used, which were located between -1 (median, midpoint) and a value close to 2 (Figure 3a). That is, over the total number of words in the comments, there was no tendency towards a particular tone or sentiment.

Table 3. Frequency of occurrence of negative and positive terms

Frequency type	Frequency	% of total
Negative	1,326	53.9%
Positive	1,133	46.1%

Figure 3b shows the linear regression (prediction of likes according to the intensity of sentiment detected by the *R* packages) on the total number of messages (n=4,061). This graph does not show systematically higher degrees of engagement (positive or negative) of *TikTok* comments and the number of likes received. Thus, statistically, there were no truly significant relationships between the positivity or negativity score and the number of likes received on the total sample. Be that as it may, and aside from the illustrative nature of the image, this method of analysis gives a relatively superficial and non-significant view of the vectors of positivity or negativity generated by the videos published by *Sumar* on the *TikTok* platform. Thus, a qualitative analysis is needed to address the limitations and answer the second research question.

4.2.2. Thematic analysis of the comments on the videos posted by the *Sumar* platform

The nested comments on the videos posted on *TikTok's* @sumar_oficial account centred around two types of discourse in relation to the content of the video: a reaction to the content of the audiovisual message (either as support or criticism) and a parallel discourse (unrelated to the video) that was part of the imaginary constructed on the basis of the context of the political project. Both types of reactions were included as a form of adhesion or support, civilised criticism (disagreement expressed without resorting to ridicule, threats or insults) or, on the contrary, flaming targeted at the person and/or the discourse of Yolanda Díaz and the overall national political sphere.

The discourse that focused on Díaz as a political figure was the most recurrent, and was among the subjects that aroused the greatest number of reactions (with 327 direct mentions). The politician with the second highest number of mentions (but much fewer) was Isabel Díaz Ayuso (44 direct mentions) and, the third political figure mentioned, current Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez) only had 12 direct mentions.

Popularity did not seem to influence the tone and gradation of the comments that advocated an unwavering support for or criticism of the different figures in the governmental scene and the *Sumar* platform. Despite a slight predominance of negative comments, the most striking aspect of this negativity was its greater heterogeneity (or creativity in form) than that which was found in the positive comments, which were more similar to each other. For example, *TikTok* users highlighted Yolanda Díaz's ability to 'solve all problems' or being the only 'different' politician. The critical comments,

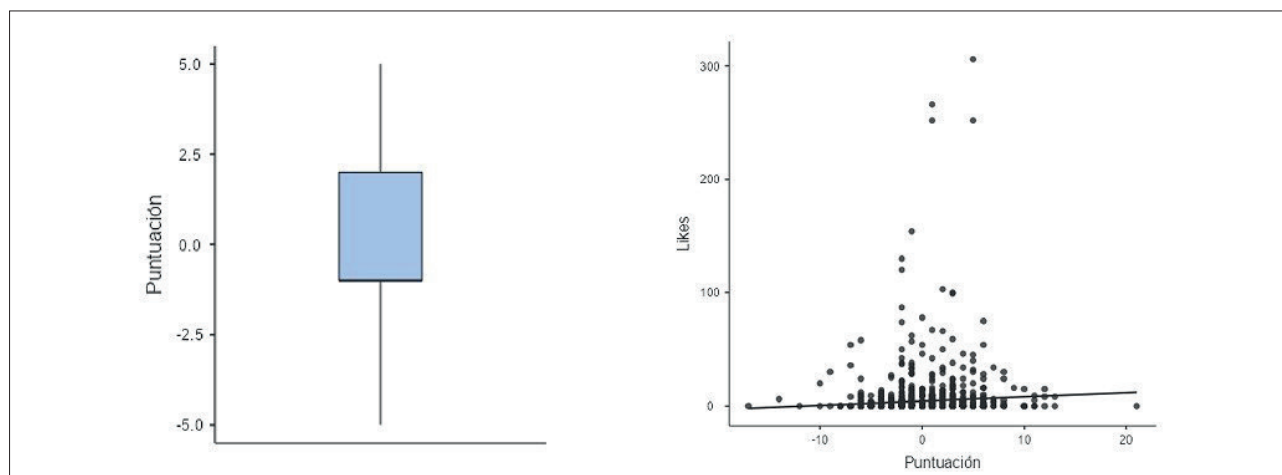


Figure 3a. Box plot of the median frequency of sentiment.

Figure 3b. Linear regression of the frequency of negativity and positivity in relation to likes.

however, could be classified between those that ridiculed her image or her political style; those that denigrated her work as Minister of Labour and Social Economy, such as ‘*Yoli esconde a los parados reales, qué chuli*’ (Yoli hides the real [figures of] unemployed people, how cool is that!); (those that raised the topic of cases of corruption in that had involved politicians from other left-wing parties (such as Mónica Oltra); and others that accused Díaz of being a traitor because of her disagreements with *Podemos* and that made allusions to ‘*restar*’ (subtract) and ‘*dividir*’, (divide), in a clear play on words aimed at the name of the platform ‘*sumar*’ (add up). These latter reactions also tended to link a jaded view of politics to comments suggesting that the vice-president ‘*suma*’ (adds up) in order to line her own pockets.

4.2.3. Polimojis: political criticism through emojis

A total of 1,339 emojis of 50 different types were found in the corpus, made up of 4,061 comments. While other emoji classifications have previously been made (such as the one proposed by Cervi, Tejedor and Marín Lladó in 2021), the study that gave rise to this paper went further into identifying how *TikTok* users resorted to these pictograms to express themselves, communicate and express their support for or rejection of an idea or political figure.

After analysing the use of emoji codes and the types of comments made, some categories were proposed which are shown in Table 2. This taxonomy takes into account both emojis (defined as codes) and the rest of the elements contained in each of the reactions to the videos posted on *TikTok*.

Table 4. Proposed taxonomy of emojis found in *TikTok* comments

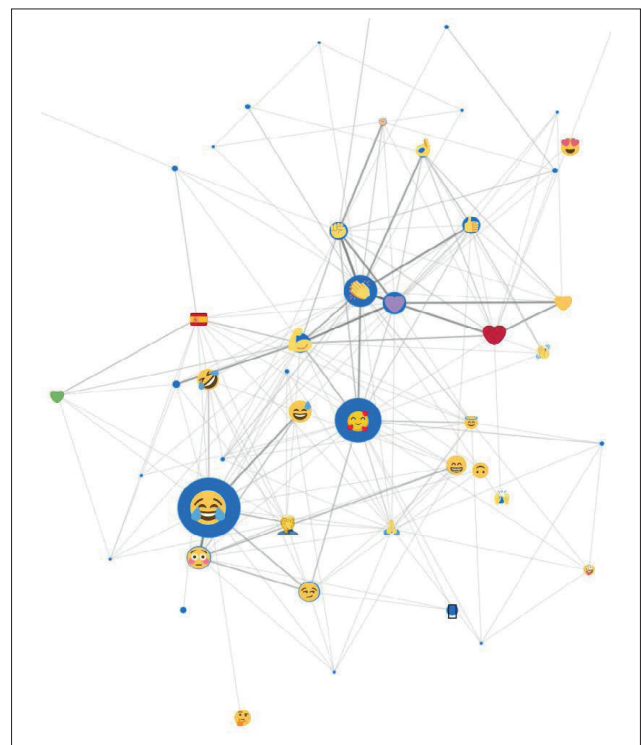
Emoji category	Definition	Emojis (and frequency)	Examples	Examples (English translation)	Frequent co-occurring codes
Adherence to the political project	Pictograms that appeared in messages expressing support for a political project or its members.	👍36 🙌33 👉6 🙏6 👊4 🇺🇳3 🌱2 🔥2	“Ganas de un proyectazo como este y volver a encontrar una izquierda que me represente” 👉👉👉👉👉👉	Looking forward to a super project like this and to finding again a left [-wing party] that represents me 👉👉👉👉👉👉	<i>Sumar</i> (Add up) <i>Proyecto</i> (Project) <i>Izquierda</i> (Left)
Personalistic adherence	Pictograms used to show support for or loyalty to a particular political figure, without making a specific or clear reference to the political project.	👍225 👉116 💖57 🙌43 👊34 🙏 👉12 🙏10 👉9 🙏8 🙏5 💖👍2 🙏3	“Eres la persona que necesita este país, mi voto y el de mi familia lo tienes” 👉👉👉 “adelante Yolanda” “Esta es la única política que de verdad defiende al pueblo español, Yolanda presidenta” “opino que ya era hora, y que sería una presidenta excepcional” “nuestra presidenta”	You are the person this country needs, you have my vote and my family’s keep going Yolanda This is the only politician that truly defends the Spanish people, Yolanda for president I think it’s about time, and that she would be an exceptional president our president	‘Yolanda Díaz’ ‘Ministra’ (Minister) ‘Vicepresidenta’ (Vice-President)
Non-targeted	Ambiguous pictograms used to respond positively or negatively to other comments, depending on the context.	🇪🇸9 🙌6 👉8 🙏4	“viva España viva vox” “si Ayuso cerrando hospitales y residencial y alludando a los ricos y Apoyando políticos corruptos y sigimos” “En Valladolid? Ahí no se te suma nadie!! sigue soñando, que es bonito” “Mucho mejor con V?”	Long live Spain, Long live Vox Yes, Ayuso closing hospitals and residential homes and helping the rich and supporting corrupt politicians and it goes on “In Valladolid? Nobody will join you there!! keep dreaming, it’s beautiful” Much better with V?	N/A
Criticism	Pictograms used to express criticism of or irony towards the political project or political figures depicted in the video	👍410 👉61 🙌48 👊38 🙏37 👉31 👉🙏68 👉9 🙏5 👉4 🙏3	“La YOLI vive en los mundos de Yupi” “Yoly, no me esperes con migo restaras” “te ha faltado hija TEDES” “No puedo con ella” “Te definimos a ti? ya te hemos estudiado” “¿DE QUÉ PAÍS ES ESTA?...” “y la gente se lo cree” “Yoli nos esconde a los parados reales, que chuli”	YOLI [informal name, short for Yolanda] lives in cloud cuckoo land. Yoly, don’t expect me, with me you’ll subtract you only missed ‘TEDES’ (this is a made-up, gender-neutral form of todos y todas; it is another example of sarcastic mockery of Spanish gender-inclusive language forms used by Yolanda Díaz to mean ‘all’) I can’t stand her We define you? we have already studied you WHAT COUNTRY IS SHE FROM? and people believe it Yoli hides the real [figures of] unemployed people from us, how cool is that!	‘Yoli’ ‘Yolandiña’ (Little Yolanda) ‘Todes’ (Made-up ironic form of Spanish gender inclusive forms, meaning ‘all’) ‘Chulisísima’ (a code that encompasses irony to criticise her use of language, such as words meaning ‘cool’, including ‘chuli, guay, etc.’) ‘Expresión irónica’ (Ironic expression such as ‘haha’)

Emoji category	Definition	Emojis (and frequency)	Examples	Examples (English translation)	Frequent co-occurring codes
Critical disagreement	These critical emojis were mainly used in response to other comments to discuss their content. They mainly sought to express disagreement or dissatisfaction with the comment to which they responded	🙄14	"ayuso.dejo morir en residencias,miles de mayores..si esa es la mejor 🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄" "tu más que sumar, restas 🙄"	ayuso.let thousands of old people die in old people's homes..if she's the best 🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄 you subtract rather than add 🙄	
Linked to another political project	Pictograms that acquired their own meaning in order to support a different project, politician or party, for which they served as a reference	❤️7 (Vox) 💜57	"Muy bien. Pues ya sabes, vota a VOX ❤️❤️❤️" "Te queremos presidenta 💜💜"	Very good. So you know, vote for VOX ❤️❤️❤️ We want you as president 💜💜💜💜	Vox Rights
Apathetic	No clear political position, but rather political apathy.	🙄3 🙄2 🙄1	"Más partidos, más división 🙄"	More parties, more division 🙄	

Explicative note: Vox (used in original posts above as 'vox' and V 🇪🇽): Spanish far-right political party. Ayuso: referred to Isabel Díaz Ayuso, President of the Madrid Region, Spain, a leader of the Spanish conservative *People's Party (PP)*.

The proposed category table was collated on the basis of the frequencies of appearance of emojis and the analysis of concurrence, which identified the main matches between emoticons and codes associated with the discourse of each of the comments on *TikTok*. It can be observed that the political discourses of support and rejection had their own pictographic languages to express specific positions in relation to the content posted by *Sumar*.

The frequencies of emojis used in the comments led to a clear categorisation of the most recurrent ones, such as 🙄, 😂, 🙌 and 🤔, while the less frequent ones, or those derived from the context, will require further research in the future. It should be noted that there were no clear signs of flaming, although there were glimpses of incivility as a form of inappropriate behaviour that included rude phrases, offences or disrespect with a view to ridiculing/infantilising the figure of Yolanda Díaz and implying that her project does not deserve to be taken seriously (the emoticons linked to laughter were frequently found here). In addition, different nuances were detected in some emoticons that took on a whole distinct meaning depending on the context in which they were used. For example, the 🙌 pictogram appeared to show support for Isabel Díaz Ayuso, Yolanda Díaz or *Vox*, but also to convey adherence to *Sumar's* project (🙌).



Graph 4. Emoji co-occurrence force-directed graph

Emoticon frequency and co-occurrence (Graph 4) reflected the groupings that were established between emojis and supports the proposal outlined in Table 4. This approach provides a visual representation of the relationship between emojis, but further captures the intensity with which they appeared in the comments. The upper part of the graph shows the most strongly linked codes pointing to adherence, both in the cases of adherence 🙌🙌🙌🙌🙌🙌 and of rejection 🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄.

4.2.4. Acrimony, incivility and glimpses of flaming on *TikTok*

The 4,052 comments in the corpus received more than 10,014 likes in total. Of these, 194 accumulated at least a dozen likes, resulting in a total of 6,486 likes (64.75% of the total). The quantitative analysis of the comments that were most endorsed by other users makes it possible to determine the dominant tone of these comments.

Table 5. Frequency of occurrence of negative and positive terms

Tone of comments	Comments		Likes	
	n	%	n	%
Negative	114	58.76	4,454	68.67
Positive	76	39.10	1,835	28.20
Neutral / Apathetic	4	2.06	197	3.03
Total	194	100	6,486	100

Table 5 reflects the tone as a whole (and not word by word, as the *R* correlation analysis did in an earlier section). This analysis showed that the most common comments were negative (58.76%), despite the friendly spirit of most of the videos that elicited them. Furthermore, these relatively unfriendly reactions from *TikTok* users garnered significant support in the form of likes (68.76%). As a result, polarisation increased instead of diminishing. It is important to note that rejection was expressed by users from both left-wing positions (who perceived the platform as a betrayal or a threat to other left-wing parties) and from right-wing positions (some of which were apathetic towards politics or critical of Díaz's rhetorical style, occasionally mocking it).

The expression of the harshest, most humorous or most critical reactions gave rise to uncivil behaviour on *TikTok*. Consequently, it was decided that it would be interesting to analyse a sample of the 39 comments that received the most likes within the corpus (Table 6). Of these, most had the negative tone described above.

Table 6. Ranking of comments to the videos according to the number of likes (>40)

Video title (Spanish)	Video title (English translation)	Likes	Original comment (Spanish)	Comment (English translation)
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	283	y los todes pueden ir?	and can 'todes' (all) come? (This is a made-up, gender-neutral form of todos y todas'; it is another example of sarcastic mockery of Spanish gender-inclusive language forms used by Yolanda Díaz to mean 'all')
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	266	qué guay y haremos cosas chulísimas y comeremos tarta de cumpleaños, chachi	Awesome! And we'll do really cool stuff and eat birthday cake, wicked!
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	181	Voy corriendo en Falcón. 🤪	I'm going there by Falcon (name of the Spanish President's official plane). 🤪
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	154	Los hombres no estamos invitados??	Us men are not invited??
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	141	ni de coña	no bloody way
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	130	Uf!! Que pereza de políticos... para cuando el recorte del 50%??	Ugh! Can't believe these politicians... when will the 50% cut be made? (referred to the proposal to reduce the funding given to political parties by 50%)
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	126	Huy yo no puedo tengo que trabajar con mi camión 15 horas como todos los sábados, hay cuanto lo siento, pasarlo bien, dejate ago pagado	Oh well, I can't make it! I have to work, driving my truck for 15 hours like I do every Saturday. I'm so sorry. Have fun, treat us to something, will you?
Sumar en Valladolid	Sumar in Valladolid	117	Barrio Sésamo	Sesame Street
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	105	🤪🤪🤪🤪En un matadero 🤪🤪🤪🤪	🤪🤪🤪🤪In a slaughterhouse 🤪🤪🤪🤪
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	104	Espérame sentada .	I wouldn't hold my breath if I were you.
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	103	El sitio ya dice donde acabará este "proyecto". COMUNISMO O LIBERTAD.	The site already says where this 'project' will end. EITHER COMMUNISM OR FREEDOM.
Y tú qué opinas	And what do you think?	102	Nunca, hubo una ministra...ni ministro, de trabajo, tan competente y comprometido con su cargo. Gracias, Sra. Ministra! 🤪🤪	Never before has there been a minister... or minister of labour, so competent and committed to her work in office. Thank you, Madam Minister! 🤪🤪

Video title (Spanish)	Video title (English translation)	Likes	Original comment (Spanish)	Comment (English translation)
La madre que te...	What the...	102	Presidenta	President
Sumar en Valladolid	Sumar in Valladolid	91	Hola soy Epi!!!!	Hi, this is Ernie!!!! ('Epi' is the Spanish name of Ernie, the Muppet character who appeared on the children's television show, Sesame Street, together with Bert)
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	87	Y me sale esto a mi en para ti.. hasta el tiktok tienen infectado	So I get this in my 'for you' section... even tiktok is infected.
Yolanda y Ada Colau	Yolanda and Ada Colau	84	viva Ayuso!! es la mejor..viva Madrid!!!!	Long live Ayuso!! she's the best...Long live Madrid!!!!
Sumar en Valladolid	Sumar in Valladolid	81	pensaba que iba a decir que a esa hora iba a dimitir el gobierno en bloque.	I thought she was going to say that at that time the government was going to resign en bloc.
La madre que te...	What the...?	78	Para un político que nos escucha, tenemos que cuidarla!	We only have one politician who listens to us, so we have to treat her well!
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	76	paso totalmente de restar y de su jefa	I totally pass on 'subtract' and on your boss.
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	71	🤔Nos van a enseñar a sumar?? 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔	🤔Are they going to teach us how to add up? 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔
No todos los políticos son iguales	Not all politicians are the same	69	el nivel de ésta mujer es extraordinario	this woman's standard is extraordinary
Mucha gente se queda fuera...	Many people had to stay outside...	67	Claro , si haces un acto en un cuarto de baño normal q haya gente fuera .	Of course, if you hold an event in a [venue the size of a] bathroom, obviously people will have to stay outside.
Sumar en Valladolid	Sumar in Valladolid	66	elecciones ya por favor	[Let's have] an election now, please
Sumar en Valladolid	Sumar in Valladolid	65	no dudes que no voy 😂😂	don't have any doubts... I am definitely not going 😂😂
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	62	pero colegai,....¿lo de sumar no será muy complicado? ¿podemos sólo colorear los primeros meses?	but mate,.... don't you think adding up will be too complicated? can we just colour some pictures in the first few months?
Y tú qué opinas	And what do you think?	61	👉 futura presidenta 👉	👉 future president 👉
Sumar en Valladolid	Sumar in Valladolid	61	por mi resta	As far as I'm concerned, subtracting
En Sumar cabe todo el mundo	There is room for everyone in <i>Sumar</i>	59	por supuesto tenemos una la mejor de todas Ayuso	of course, we have the best of them all, Ayuso
Mucha gente se queda fuera...	Many people had to stay outside...	58	Tendrás los mismos votos que en Galicia...	You will get the same votes as in Galicia...
Sumar en Valladolid	Sumar in Valladolid	57	voy si presentas tu renuncia, pues sería la única manera de animarme a participar	I'll be there if you resign, as it would be the only way to encourage me to participate
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	55	todas todos todes 😂😂😂😂	All 😂😂😂😂 (As explained above)
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	52	QUE CHULI!!!!	SOOO COOL!!!!
No todos los políticos son iguales	Not all politicians are the same	50	Tiene un manejo de los datos y una preparación increíble	She is incredibly well prepared and has a great ability to manage data
Mucha gente se queda fuera...	Many people had to stay outside...	46	se han quedado fuera tres 😂😂😂	Three [people] were left outside 😂😂😂
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	43	vas en Falcón? primero pasaremos por New York?	Are you're going in the President's official plane? first stopping in New York?
Yolanda Díaz te invita (Valencia)	Yolanda Díaz has invited you (Valencia)	43	sumar, restar, multiplicar y sobre todo dividir....te voy a explicar el fijo discontinuo en mi empresa 😂😂😂	adding, subtracting, multiplying and, above all, dividing.... I will now explain the fixed-term contract in my company to you. 😂😂😂
Qué es Sumar	What is <i>Sumar</i>	41	Mi voto lo tiene	She has my vote
Sumar en Valladolid	Sumar in Valladolid	41	Hay que chuliii	It's sooooo cool!
Yolanda Díaz tiene un mensaje para ti	Yolanda Díaz has a message for you	40	que cosas más chulísimas. muy bien lo de sumar, ya llegarán las restas	all these things are sooo cool. It's all very well, this adding-up business... subtracting will come later

The results of the study show that the most popular comments were those that encouraged incivility, as they went beyond mere disagreement with issues tangential to *Sumar's* political proposals, focusing on Yolanda Díaz's discursive style (including her use of gender-inclusive language) or targeting the political class in general. A common factor among them was the intention to ridicule both the political project and its most visible figure through scathing remarks, sarcastic expressions and irony.

Two observations stood out from the criticisms focused on Díaz's communicative style. Firstly, the use of lexical splitting was attacked with comments that accumulated a high number of likes, such as: 'y los todes pueden ir' [and can we everyone (gender-neutral form) come] 'los hombres no estamos invitados??' (us men not invited?) and 'o todas todos todes' (everyone, all (fem.) everyone, all (masc.) everyone, all). Secondly, users questioned the infantilisation of discourse employed by Díaz, replicating this supposed style in a mocking tone: 'qué guay; haremos cosas chulísimas y comeremos tarta de cumpleaños, chachi' (Awesome! And we'll do really cool stuff and eat birthday cake, wicked!); 'Hola soy Epi!!!!' (Hi I'm Ernie!!!); and 'QUE CHULI!!!!' (SOO COOL).

In contexts of prolonged polarization, the lack of courtesy in political communication, known as incivility, intensifies with practices like 'flaming', 'flame trolling', or 'flame bait', escalating its negative impact.

In terms of discourtesy, there were also comments that attacked what was perceived to be representative of *Sumar* without reaching the degree of a threat or serious insult (flaming). In this case, the critical comment illustrated a concern about the atomisation of left-wing parties in Spain ('paso totalmente de restar y de su jefa', that is, 'I totally pass on 'subtract' and on your boss'). There were also allusions to other women politicians who are her rivals, such as Isabel Díaz Ayuso, of the conservative party *PP* and president of the Madrid region (Long live Ayuso!!!! she is the best... Long live Madrid!!!!). Finally, the viability of *Sumar*'s political project was discussed through ironic comments such as 'Nos van a enseñar a sumar??' (Are they going to teach us how to add up?) or 'pero colegai,....¿lo de sumar no será muy complicado? ¿podemos sólo colorear los primeros meses?' (But mate, don't you think adding up will be too complicated? can we just colour some pictures in the first few months?) Comments reflecting general dissatisfaction with the political class (against politicians) also received significant support, despite the comments made in the previous paragraph.

In short, the data showed belligerent activity in reaction to *Sumar*'s videos, not only in terms of *TikTok* users' participation as authors of critical responses to the party, but also in terms of support for comments that fed that perception. The expressions of support for Díaz that used emoticons to graphically reinforce the subjective assessment of her ability and commitment (showing support for *Sumar*'s political project) were insufficient to overcome the effects of polarisation or neutralise the signs of incivility that point to signs of a still incipient case of flaming.

5. Conclusions

The completion of the fieldwork with the subsequent interpretation of results answered the research questions posed at the start of the study. On the one hand, as noted when analysing the type of publications made by *Sumar* on *TikTok*, it was clear that its political project did not have a communications plan that was specifically adapted to this particular app, although it did exemplify the extrapolation of the feminine rhetorical style that Yolanda Díaz used, with techniques such as the omission of direct attacks on the adversary, the use of inclusive language and appeals to the ethic of care. The party's presence on *TikTok* occupied a relatively new space, rather than making strategic use of it; this would have required a more professional use of video editing tools and a greater commitment to originality in the creation of content that incorporated music and humour to appeal to centennials.

The second part of the study found that the tendency to feminise the message was not only ineffective in neutralising polarisation, but often created the perfect breeding ground for malicious comments that ridiculed Díaz's discursive style, equating her inclusive tone to that of a naïve child. Incivility was thus at the forefront of the reactions generated by *Sumar*, but rudeness and mocking language, accompanied by graphic emoticons, did not reach the level of seriousness that could be categorised as flaming and that was observed in other cases (Paz; Mayagoitia-Soria; González-Aguilar, 2021). While the absence of the use of flaming which has been more frequent in the messages from other political formations may be related to the recent creation of @sumar_oficial, it may be the case that the profile and rhetorical style of its candidate generated less hostility than traditional speeches and strategies. This hypothesis, be that as it may, will have to be tested in research that is closer to the 2023 general election (held in July of this year), which may have a more heightened climate of polarisation and a political project extended over a longer period of time. This research would also make it possible to include the analyses undertaken in the ideas being finalised here, once their effectiveness has been separately verified.

6. References

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