



Content analysis of political advertisements in local newspapers

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Abstract

In democratic politics, political advertising plays an essential role as a form of political communication. This paper focuses on the form and content of political advertising messages appearing in major Telugu leading newspapers. The researcher wants to do in this study is that how a specific sort of text, the political advertisements paid for by the parties themselves and published in dailies, fills in as a pointer of how the political discourse has changed within the state. The populace of this examine turned into described as all political advertisements at the state level seeming in leading daily newspapers from January – June 2018. The period of six months end up being enough to envelop the appearance of most ads all through the period. Findings from the content analysis point out that political advertising messages communicated via way of means of the political parties had been particularly reflective of their directions.

Keywords: Political advertising, newspapers, political parties, content analysis.

Introduction

Advertising is consistently present, however people may not know about it. In present world, advertising and marketing makes use of each and every viable media to get its message through. It does this by means of TV, newspapers, magazines, radio, internet, mailers, direct selling, posters, hoardings, sponsorships, posters, visuals, events, and even people. Now, advertising is a basic aspect of our social, political and financial framework. Consistently, we are presented to so much advertising. Just as Blake Clark¹ said, “the average man lives with the advertising man’s work more hours a day than with his family, and is certainly more familiar with advertising slogans than with the proverbs in his bible”. We are so vigorously and ceaselessly bombarded by advertising in modern life.

“Political communication research typically acknowledges the importance of both paid and free media as primary information sources for voters”². However, generally little consideration has been given to the extra impact advertising may have because of the news media. That is an oversight on the grounds that without a comprehension of how regularly and under what conditions advertising seems in news coverage, research of advertising hazard underestimating citizen publicity to paid media. “Of all business activities, probably none is better known, more widely discussed, or more highly criticized by the public than advertising. One reason for this is that advertising has become the spokesman for business and even politics”³. “As a form of mass communication closely linked with the world of politics, commerce and marketing, an advertisement is a powerful tool for the flow of information from the seller to the buyer”³. It now no longer best affects any human society however additionally displays positive factors of that society’s values and structure.

Ademilokun & Taiwo⁴ said, central to the idea of politics are such issues as power, legitimization, persuasion, struggles for dominance, and coercion. In the different kinds of discourse that one can think of as political, such as speeches, parliamentary debates, broadcast interviews, campaign speeches, advertisements, manifestos, and so forth, some of these issues manifest. Since the study of discourse started shifting grounds from conversational analysis to the analysis of other forms of discourse, political discourse has become a major focus in the new cross-discipline of discourse studies. Scholars in critical discourse studies blending linguistic and social theories have argued that discourse is part of the social processes and practices⁵.

Wright⁶ defines advertising as “a powerful communication force and a vital marketing tool helping to sell goods and services, image and idea”. Similarly, Roderick⁷ defines advertising as “a message specified by its originator, carried by a communication system and intended to influence and/or inform an unknown audience”. “Advertising may also be seen as a group of activities aiming at and including dissemination of information in any paid product or service to compel action by the intent of an identifiable sponsor”⁸.

“A successful advertisement is expected to accomplish five functions namely, attracting attention, commanding interest, creating desire, inspiring conviction and provoking action”⁹. “In achieving these functions in the production of an advertising copy, and effective use of language becomes all the more important”⁹. Remarking on the outrageous consideration that one should take about the utilization of language in advertisements. Ranade¹⁰ states “Incredible, the amount of damage one may cause with a slight play on words here and there or a twist in the title, or even by the willful omission of a

single comma". According to Harrop¹¹, "covers the whole area of party positioning in the electoral market. Political advertising, on the other hand, refers to the method or process by which any entity promotes its image or services intending to attract further interest from people". It is intriguing to take note of that despite the fact that advertising and marketing were initially connected with the business or corporate enterprises, they presently have pertinence in practically all circles of human life. In the political territory, advertising is extraordinarily conveyed since a definitive target of events concerned in politics is to prevail upon the general population to their side.

Political Advertisements: Indian papers regularly carry advertisements by governments, ministries and public organizations. This is aggrandizement that blurs the difference among public service messaging and political advertising. Not at all like simply political advertising where a party and its patrons pay for advertisements, government publicizing utilizes public funds to laud the excellencies of people with great influence. This has a slippery political goal. Unadulterated public enthusiasm informing doesn't have to include impressive media campaigns with mug shots of political pioneers. Indeed, even state governments book center spreads in dailies, bringing up issues over who their intended interest group is. "Political advertising remains a dominant area of interest in political communication. Of the various ways to transmit messages through mass media, political advertising thus comprises the only communicative means under the direct and complete control of the candidates. In retrospect, most researchers agree that this news type of message conveyance exerts the most powerful effect on election campaigns"^{12,13}.

"Early research highlighted the traditional argument that political advertising contains issue and image. That is, issue advertisements are composed of statements that suggest some future policy action and image advertisements suggest either general personal characteristics or constructions unrelated to policy. The concern about the content of political advertising, issue and image have its roots in the classic democratic voting theory assumptions that votes should be rational and based on issue"^{14,12}. Latimer¹⁵ "examined newspaper ads from Alabama from 1982", while Latimer¹⁶ analysed "newspaper advertisements from 1986 in seven state campaigns. Both found image was more common than policy". Several studies describe political newspaper advertising¹⁷⁻²⁰. Bowers' "analysis of 1970 ads found that issues accounted for 46% of the assertions and candidate characteristics accounted for 37% of the statements in these ads"²¹. Humke, Schmitt, and Grupp²² studied "ads from 1932 to 1960. The central theme was the candidate or party in 62% of the ads and issue in 38% of the advertisements".

"Voters' beliefs and attitudes about political advertising are commonly ascribed to diverse voter perceptions"²³. "Political advertisements effective appears to associate with knowledge of voters' prior attitudes and beliefs"²⁴. "Many antecedents to the understanding of the attitudes and beliefs of voters can be

found; these include integrity of the source of advertising"²⁵, "media choice (Stroud 2008) and the strength of voters established primary belief about political figures and parties"²⁶. "Political advertising, for example, has undergone an examination from the choice of candidate standpoint"²⁷. "Relatively few studies have examined the type of soft propaganda that is harder to detect and is the hallmark of political native advertising. To our knowledge, there has been only one systematic study of political native advertising, which finds that clearly labelled hypothetical political native advertisements by political parties in Norway reduce citizen trust in political news in general"²⁸. "Political native advertising, in which political actors buy space on independent media sites to publish political advertisements that mimic the standard editorial content found on the hosting media site"²⁹.

Methodology

The purpose of the present study is to ascertain the differential political advertisements in the newspapers at the state level by the political parties. Three Telugu newspapers were selected for this purpose. Content analysis was used to compare the political advertisement content of the sample newspapers and draw inferences about the coverage given to the phenomenon under the study in the sample newspapers.

Research Objectives: i. To understand political advertisements and the consequences of political ads. ii. To find out and make a comparative analysis in terms of frequency and space of the differences in the coverage of various unit analysis in the specific Telugu newspapers. iii. To study the differences in frequency and space devoted to the political ads given location and geographical coverage.

Selection of Newspapers: A purposive sample comprising of three leading daily newspapers were taken. The news dailies were *Eenadu*, *Andhra Jyothi*, and *Sakshi*. The prime thought in the determination of these papers was prominence as reflected their circulation and their regional representation.

Sampling: What the researcher desires to do in this study is show how a specific sort of text, the political advertisements paid for by the parties themselves and published in newspapers, fills in as a marker of how political discourse has changed within the state. The universe in this study comprises all the editions of the three selected dailies published from January 2018 to June 2018. This study was based on the complete census during six months' time span. All political advertisements were analysed in terms of the geographical region of Guntur district.

Unit of analysis: The unit of analysis for this study consisted of political parties' advertisements of the three selected dailies.

Subject categories: i. Appointments ii. Anniversaries iii. Festivals iv. Birth & Deaths v. Welcome, vi. Visits vii. Awards.

Procedures of measurement: The coding unit used in this research was the subject category. Each category (advertisement) was coded according to its function. The unit of analysis, coded into subject categories were measured both in terms of their frequencies and space. All kinds of events measured by political parties.

Results and discussion

The present study analyses a total of 267 frequencies of advertisements and 11029 column cms space published in the selected three dailies i.e., *Eenadu*, *Andhra Jyothi*, and *Sakshi*.

This above table explains the details of the newspaper wise political advertisements during the study period. *Andhra Jyothi* is on the top position by getting 112 political advertisements with 5100 column cms space, the *Eenadu* is in the second position by publishing 92 political advertisements with 4229 column cms space, lastly *Sakshi* published 63 political advertisements with 1700 column cms space. It clearly shows that *Sakshi* newspaper got very less and almost half of political advertisements in compare with *Andhra Jyothi*.

The above table shows the detailed frequency and space of political advertisements published by party-wise in selected papers. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) gave 195 political advertisements in the selected news papers with the space of

9251 ccm. This is the party gave more advertisement in the selected period. This party had given preference to *Andhra Jyothi* newspaper with 98 political advertisements and with 4621 column cms, and to *Eenadu* newspaper 83 political advertisements with the space of 3965 column cms, but, interestingly, the party gave only 16 political ads with 665 column cms to *Sakshi* newspaper.

The Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) gave a total of 36 political advertisements with 919 column cms space during the study period. YSRCP gave more advertisements to *Sakshi* newspapers with 33 frequencies and 845 column cms space and the same party gave very less number of advertisements to *Eenadu* and *Andhra Jyothi*, 1 and 2 ads with space of 62 column cms space respectively. The interesting finding is that the *Sakshi* newspaper belongs to YSRCP, so it gave more ads to this newspaper.

Surprisingly, other parties like Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) gave 34 political advertisements with the space of 859 column cms. These parties gave more advertisements to *Sakshi* newspaper. A total of 14 ads with 178 column cms space. Interestingly, the remaining two newspapers *Eenadu* and *Andhra Jyothi* got less frequency of ads 8 and 14, but they received large space ads with 243 and 438 column cms space respectively.

Table-1: Distribution frequency and space paper wise in selected dailies.

Name of the Newspaper	Frequency	Space
<i>Eenadu</i>	92	4229
<i>Andhra Jyothi</i>	112	5100
<i>Sakshi</i>	63	1700
Total	267	11029

Table-2: Distribution of frequency and space in selected dailies as political party wise.

Name of the Newspaper	Name of the Political Party						Total	
	TDP		YSRCP		Others			
	fr	sp	fr	sp	fr	sp	fr	sp
<i>Eenadu</i>	83	3965	1	21	8	243	92	4229
<i>Andhra Jyothi</i>	98	4621	2	41	12	438	112	5100
<i>Sakshi</i>	16	665	33	857	14	178	63	1700
Total	195	9251	36	919	34	859	267	11029

Table-3 analyses of various subject categories of political advertisements by frequency and space. Birth & Death category got the highest frequency of ads with 101 and 4373 column cms space, secondly, Welcome category advertisements got published with 79 frequency and 2886 column cms space in all selected dailies. The third position occupied by Anniversary ads in the newspapers with 38 frequency, 1381 column cms space. Least advertisements received on Visits and Awards with 2 and 5 frequency, 148 and 121 column cms space. The Table-4 explains about political advertisements by subject category wise in the selected newspapers. *Eenadu* got 41 ads on Birth & Death events with 1832 column cms space, 21 welcome advertisements with 1216 column cms space and Visits got low space only 148 column cms with 2 advertisements. *Andhra Jyothi* published 52 Birth & Death advertisements with the space of 2231 column cms and 29 Anniversary ads with 983 column cms and Appointments ads with a frequency of 12 (584

column cms space). Interestingly, *Sakshi* got more advertisements on the Welcome category with 40 frequency, 1078 column cms space, secondly on Festivals 13 ads with 282 column cms space.

Table-5 discuss the details of the advertisements and distribution of percentage space of with rank order in selected dailies. *Eenadu* got 41 advertisements on the event of Birth and Death with 44.6% and received first rank, 21 (22.8%) advertisements on Welcome, 15 (16.3%) ads on Appointments. *Andhra Jyothi* also got more advertisements on Birth and Death category with 52 (46.4%) ads are the highest when comparing with all the newspapers, second on Anniversary events with 29 ads got the second rank. *Sakshi* newspaper received Welcome event ads and got the first rank with 40 (63.5%) and 13 Festival ads with 20.7% got the second rank.

Table-3: Distribution of frequency and space by subject category-wise.

Subject Category	fr	%	sp	%
Appointments	28	10.5	1128	10.2
Anniversary	38	14.02	1381	12.5
Festival	14	5.2	992	8.9
Birth & Death	101	37.8	4373	39.7
Welcome	79	29.6	2886	26.2
Visits	2	0.75	148	1.3
Awards	5	1.9	121	0.11
Total	267	100	11029	100

Table-4: Distribution of frequencies and space of subject categories by selected dailies.

Subject Category	Name of The Newspaper						Total	
	Eenadu		Andhra Jyothi		Sakshi			
	fr	sp	fr	sp	fr	sp	fr	sp
Appointments	15	532	12	584	1	12	28	1128
Anniversaries	9	398	29	983	-	-	38	1381
Festivals	-	-	1	710	13	282	14	992
Birth & Deaths	41	1832	52	2231	8	310	10	4373
Welcome	21	1216	18	592	40	1078	79	2886
Visits	2	148	-	-	-	-	2	148
Awards	4	103	-	-	1	18	5	121
Total	92	4229	112	5100	63	5100	267	11029

The sixth table shows the space occupied for publishing a political advertisement in the selected newspaper. *Andhra Jyothigot* 2231 column cms space ads on Birth & Death events and received the first rank. *Eenadu* got the first rank on the same event with 1832 column cms space, Welcome category got

second, Appointments got third. *Sakshi* newspaper received more ads on the event of Welcome got the first rank with 1078 column cms space, the second rank occupied with Birth & Death category 310 column cms space.

Table-5: Percentage distribution of space with rank order in selected dailies.

Subject Category	Name of the Newspaper								
	<i>Eenadu</i>			<i>Andhra Jyothi</i>			<i>Sakshi</i>		
	fr	%	Rank	fr	%	Rank	fr	%	Rank
Appointments	15	16.3	3	12	10.7	4	1	1.6	4
Anniversary	9	9.7	4	29	25.9	2	-	-	-
Festival	-	-	-	1	0.89	5	13	20.7	2
Birth & Death	41	44.6	1	52	46.4	1	8	12.7	3
Welcome	21	22.8	2	18	16.1	3	40	63.5	1
Visits	2	2.17	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Awards	4	4.3	5	-	-	-	1	1.6	4
Total	92	100		112	100		63	100	

Table-6: Distribution of percentage of space with rank order in selected dailies.

Subject Category	Name of the Newspaper								
	<i>Eenadu</i>			<i>Andhra Jyothi</i>			<i>Sakshi</i>		
	space	%	Rank	space	%	Rank	space	%	Rank
Appointments	532	12.6	3	584	11.5	5	12	0.70	5
Anniversary	398	9.4	4	983	23.2	2	-	-	-
Festival	-	-	-	710	13.9	3	282	16.5	3
Birth & Death	1832	43.3	1	2231	43.7	1	310	18.3	2
Welcome	1216	28.7	2	592	11.6	4	1078	63.4	1
Visits	148	3.5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Awards	103	2.4	6	-	-	-	18	1.05	4
Total	4229	100		5100	100		1700	100	

Table-7: Distribution of frequency of subject categories in the selected dailies by party-wise.

Subject Category	Name of the Newspaper									Total
	Eenadu			Andhra Jyothi			Sakshi			
	TDP	YSRCP	Others	TDP	YSRCP	Others	TDP	YSRCP	Others	
	fr	fr	fr	fr	fr	fr	fr	fr	fr	
Appointments	13	-	2	8	-	4	-	-	1	28
Anniversaries	7	1	1	20	1	8	-	-	-	38
Festivals	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	8	3	14
Birth & Deaths	36	-	5	51	1	-	7	1	-	101
Welcome	21	-	-	18	-	-	6	24	10	79
Visits	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Awards	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5
Total	83	1	8	98	2	12	16	33	14	267

Table-8: Distribution of Space of subject categories in the selected dailies by party-wise.

Subject Category	Name of the Newspaper									Total
	Eenadu			Andhra Jyothi			Sakshi			
	TDP	YSRCP	Others	TDP	YSRCP	Others	TDP	YSRCP	Others	
	sp	sp	sp	sp	sp	sp	sp	sp	sp	
Appointments	488	-	44	331	-	253	-	-	12	1128
Anniversaries	262	21	115	778	20	185	-	-	-	1381
Festivals	-	-	-	710	-	-	34	202	46	992
Birth & Deaths	1748	-	84	2210	21	-	280	30	-	4373
Welcome	1216	-	-	592	-	-	333	625	120	2886
Visits	148	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	148
Awards	103	-	-	-	-	-	18	-	-	121
Total	3965	21	243	4621	41	438	665	857	178	11029

The above grand tables clearly explain frequencies and space of the political advertisements by subject category in the selected dailies by party-wise.

Conclusion

In this research, all political advertisements placed in Telugu leading newspapers during January – June 2018 were analyzed. There were a total of 267 different ads found in the three selected newspapers: *Eenadu*, *Andhra Jyothi* and *Sakshi*. The total frequency of the different commercials in the three newspapers amounted to 267, some 34.5 per cent appeared in the *Eenadu*, 41.9 per cent in *Andhra Jyothi* and 23.6 per cent in

Sakshi newspaper. In the latter, advertisements were sponsored exclusively by either the alliance or its supporting organizations. The YSRCP refrained from placing ads in *Andhra Jyothi* and *Eenadu* because it boycotted these papers, which is viewed as the mouthpiece of the alliance of TDP. The present study has found that the political party and ruling party TDP has given preference in advertisements to *Andhra Jyothi* and *Eenadu*. In *Sakshi*, ads sponsored by the YSRCP because it is their paper. Other parties placed half of all their ads in the *Sakshi* daily.

In the advance of modern technology and new media, advertisements are coming in great flow. Political parties also must know the people are not ignored. They are watching

everything around the society and all parties' agendas and newspapers hidden agenda also. Newspapers must not give preference to the ruling party and the parties also not to feed some papers only. This is so poisonous situation in media. So the equality must show on all newspapers by all political parties in the state.

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