Representation of Legislative Member Candidates of Partai Demokrat on Their Outdoor Political Advertising

Tri Sulityaningtyas, Dadang Suganda, Cece Sobarna & Wahya

E-mail: trining_ism@yahoo.co.id

Received: November 27, 2013   Accepted: February 18, 2014   Published: April 29, 2014
doi:10.5296/ijl.v6i2.5553   URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v6i2.5553

Abstract

Political advertising is political marketing that serves to gain voters’ support. Political leaders use advertising as a means of creating their self-images that depict they are ideal figures to lead the nation, thus deserving of being elected in the election. In political advertising, language becomes a powerful medium to instill ideology as well as to obtain and maintain power. Various linguistic devices are used to gain sympathy; attracting one’s attention; creating perceptions concerning existing problems; and controlling the mind, behavior, and values of the public. This article aims to (1) examine how candidates and parties represent themselves in the language of political advertising in the Indonesian elections, (2) examine the pattern of relationship between the candidates and the public that was formed in the language of political advertising in Indonesian elections, and (3) examine the language manipulation that is used for political purposes in the election advertising in Indonesia. In the analysis, the representations of legislative candidates of Partai Demokrat (Democrat Party in Indonesia) were studied. Based on the analysis, the candidates of Partai Demokrat, who will fight for the region, city, or regency—where they will represent their constituencies—focus on unemployment issues and are mostly popular figures. Overall, in their political advertising, the public is always represented as the one that will be fought for, defended, and fostered. Also, the public is always represented as the underdog, subordinate, or marginal entity. On the other hand, the political parties and candidates are always represented as a strong, dominant and advantageous entity.

Keywords: Representation, Relation, Manipulation
1. Introduction

Language has a very important role in the world of politics. Language has become a powerful medium to instill ideology, gain power, and maintain power. Various linguistic devices are used to gain sympathy, such as by attracting one’s attention, creating perceptions on existing problems, and controlling the mind, behavior, and values of the public.

Since the reform era, Indonesia has had two elections: in 2004 and 2009. The two elections were conducted under the new electoral system in which the candidates are directly chosen by the voters, and the winning candidates are the ones with the most votes. Consequently, each political party has always tried to find the most effective ways to get as many votes as possible for its candidates in every election. One way to gain the most votes is through the party’s candidates’ political messages or political advertising on which the party can rely to win the hearts and sympathy of the voters. Through political advertising, politicians compete to display their positive self-images. Thus, now political advertising serves as a self-imaging creating arena where the political leaders portray themselves as the ideal figures to lead the nation, and thus they are worthy of being elected in a general election. Political advertising helps the political figures in such a way that they are worthy to lead the nation.

Through political advertising, parties, legislative member candidates, presidential candidates, or candidates for regional leaders want to be quickly known by the voters. They believe that the continuous political advertisements will have a magical power to introduce themselves and persuade voters in an instant. According Jazeri (2009) “Tak kenal maka tak sayang”--the English equivalent for this Indonesian proverb as “Unknown, unloved”-- seems to be the basis of thinking adopted by both the parties and candidates of political leaders to their political advertising in the mass media in order to be quickly known by the public. They apply various ways to introduce themselves, such as using advertisements on television, newspapers, radio, or even putting up billboards, posters, or banners. Through these political advertisements, they spread the visual and verbal promises implying that they can resolve the nation's big problems quickly if they are elected.

Political advertising is one of political marketing tools that the candidates of political leaders use to gain voters’ support. As a political marketing tool, political advertising follows the logic of the theory of public communications called AIDDA, an abbreviation for attention, interest, desire, decision, and action. Not surprisingly, then come the political advertisements that sell only sensation by highlighting their academic degrees and narcissism (Jazeri, 2009). According to Tinarbuko, the candidates of political leaders who conduct political advertising in Indonesia prefer “idology” than ideology (2009:31). Why is that so? The reason is that the advertisements are able to show their large font sized election registered numbers, large font sized political promises, and large sized pictures. They position themselves as a trade product. By visualizing their muslim cap, scarf, academic degrees, and socio-religious activities, they believe these enable to create self-images that they are the figures who are religious, intellectual, and pro-people. Through language, candidates, presidential candidates, and political parties throw discourses glorifying them and often attacking their political opponents. In other words, the message still revolves around the product, not the idea. Thus, most of the
political advertisements just introduce their election registered numbers, party logos, or popular figures.

In essence, the mass media is a communication medium that aims to convey information. In practice, the mass media, as Sobur says (2006:30), also becomes an arena for competing ideologies. One segment that is selected in the mass media by the ruler or the budding rulers is an advertising segment. This segment can be used to disseminate their political advertising either through print or electronic media. As far as the outdoor political advertising media, the commonly used ones are billboards, leaflets, banners, and posters. Each of them has its own functions and segments.

In Indonesia, political advertising is a relatively new thing. It first appeared in Indonesia approaching the 1999 election, when Indonesia readopted a multiparty system. The changes in the electoral system, which was established by the decision of the Constitutional Court, based on a direct election system and the number of votes gained, have led to the intense competition not only between one party with its opposing parties but also among members of the same party. Thus, the competitive advantages of a figure has, as a candidate of political leader, have become very important. One way to introduce a figure is through a variety of attributes that are considered to be the symbolic representation of the figure him/herself as a candidate.

As the time of an election is approaching, the content of political advertising is getting more varied. It may relate to the candidates who position themselves as the oppositions, exhibit their successes during their official terms, explain their vision and missions, raise slogans, expose their acronym names, attack their political rivals. And it is definitely the language that is used as a tool to perform these various purposes. In some political advertising, the language used may not so clearly addressed to which public’s social class it is intended. The advertising tend to be occupied with "flowery" words, which may not be understood by a particular group of people.

In many outdoor political advertising medias, the candidates (addressors) utilize rhetorical styles by choosing the forms of statements (speech acts) that have power to affect the addresses (Leech , 1983). The words used is a form of command or solicitation, characterized by the choice of words, such as pilih (vote), antarkan (take to), mohon (please), dan pastikan (make sure).

Based on the aforementioned background, the following research problems can be formulated: (1) How do the campaign election language of the parliament member candidates and parties in Indonesia, which is used in the political advertising, represent them? (2) How is the relationship between the parliament member candidates and the public shaped by the campaign election language which is used in the political advertising in Indonesia? (3) How is the language used for the sake of politics manipulated in the political advertising in Indonesia?

2. Theoretical Framework

In this research, the representation theory proposed by Leeuwen (2008 ) was used to analyze
how political advertising in Indonesian elections represent legislative member candidates and parties. The analysis will be focused on how the candidates and parties present themselves through the language they use in the campaign media. What presupposition underlies the language in outdoor political advertising will also be discussed. Finally, theory of relation proposed by Fairclough (1995; 2003) will also be used to analyze the relation that is built between the candidates and the audience based on the campaign language used in the political advertising in Indonesian elections. The language manipulation used by the candidates and political parties will be identified as a result of both these representations and relation analyses.

The term representation refers to how a person, a group of people, an idea, or an opinion is presented in a text (Eriyanto, 2003: 113). The essential thing to understand a representation depends on whether a person, a group of persons, or an idea that is presented in a text is supported by relevant facts or not. An event or a person may be presented in various linguistic constructions that will convey various meanings in the minds of the readers. In other words, through words, sentences, and accentuations—with the help of photographs—a person, a group of persons, or an idea may possibly be featured in the text to the public.

Sociolinguistic studies conducted by Brown and Gilman (1960) and Fairclough (2003:76) state that social relations are divided into two dimensions, namely "power"(strength) and "solidarity" (social hierarchy and social distance). Relation relates to how the participants interact and how they are displayed in a text. A text can be viewed as a social arena in which all groups, classes, and individuals that exist in a society are interconnected and convey their own opinions and ideas (Eriyanto , 2003: 300). A study on the relation of the language of political advertising may be focused on how the advertisers or politicians create the patterns of relations with the voting public. The relation patterns that the politicians create with the voting public can be in the form of a near or distant relation, a high-low or an equivalent relation, a strong–weak or an equal relation, a shared culture or not relation, a shared ideology or not relation, and so on.

The data used in this study is the textual data in the form of speech acts presented in political advertising. The data is expressed in the billboards, banners, leaflets, flyers, business cards, and advertisements in either newspapers or magazines. The media above are considered suitable as a medium of politics because it is the easiest means to promote oneself, a political party, a vision - mission to the public. These campaign media can be found in the neighborhoods, on the streets, in the public centers, along the roadsides, the terminals, or campaign grounds during the campaign period or even before the campaign begins. The data used are the campaign advertisements of candidates for House Representative members of the Republic of Indonesia and for Regional legislative members. In addition, there data that come from the campaign advertisements of Partai Demokrat (Democratic party in Indonesia) from 2008 to 2009.

3. Representation of Legislative Member Candidates of Partai Demokrat (Indonesian Democratic Party) in the 2009 election

Language in the political context can be either a power tool or symbolic power. Symbolic
power is an invisible force - and is distortive - but its legitimacy is recognized. A language is considered legitimate or illegitimate depends on who says it (Piliang, 2005: 203). Language can be used as a tool for manipulating image. It also has the power to build up the image of a politician or political party. Piliang says that freely manipulating signs and images has occurred (2005). Freely manipulating signs and images without relating oneself to any metaphysical aspect seems to be the reflection of today's political world. Political signs and images are no longer discussed on the bases of truth and trust as they should do. They are regarded purely as games that are played purely to gain a power. Therefore, power is no longer regarded as something that carries out social responsibility (Piliang, 2005: 16).

Political language is very closely related to efforts to win public sympathy. Political language is needed to cultivate a certain image, make propagandas, and create political icons, all of which are used to influence people. Based on these facts, the general election raises many linguistic phenomena in society that deserves to be studied.

In general, the above data represent candidates who are ready to fight for the region, city, regency which they run for office. The data of PD 1 and PD 11 explicitly represent candidates who will fight for the little people in the region. The data of PD 2, PD 3, and PD 5 do not explicitly represent for whom the relevant candidates will fight in the region.

The data of PD 1 shows the readiness of the candidate to fully devote to and struggle for the public and Natuna region. This is indicated by the phrase "Ready to Serve and Fight for Communities and Region for the Progress of Natuna Ahead". In addition, the candidate represents himself that he loves Natuna as he shows the photo of Natuna Island as the background for his campaign media. Natuna is an island with the sea area located on the border between Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. With this background, he wants to convince the voters that he understands both the conditions of the local people and the geographical characteristics and potentials of Natuna region, a coastal region, which will be fought for when he was elected as a legislative member. In addition, the media also displays the figure of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY). It can be seen that it is as an attempt to do the framing that he and SBY have things in common, or at least he wants to show that he is a cadre of Democrats who admire SBY, the chairman of Indonesian Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat).

The data of PD 2 represents a female candidate who will fight for the interests of the constituency of North Sulawesi 1, which is Hj. SURIYANI IMRAN, S.E. She is a candidate of Southeast Sulawesi Province of 2009-2014 period. She has the slogan "Forward Together Towards a Democratic and Prosperous Justice". The data of PD3 represents a candidate who will fight for the interests of the electoral district of Riau Province. The candidate’s label is abbreviated AS for his name APRI Sujadi, S.Sos. He is the election contestant with number 7 representing Indonesian DEMOCRAT PARTY (Partai Demokrat). He is running for the candidate of Riau provincial legislative member. His political advertising says "Please Pray for Restu as the parliament member candidate for Riau Islands province". The advertising contains the slogan "For a More Prosperous Life". This slogan is intended for the people of Riau Islands.
Data of PD 5 is also the data that represents a candidate who will fight for the interests of the constituency in city of Kendari. This political advertising presents the candidate of legislative member for Kendari City Muhammad Amin (Boby Razak) with SBY as the background. Like the candidate in the data of PD 1, his political advertising says "STRIVE FOR PARTAI DEMOKRAT (The Indonesian Democratic Party) 31, MUHAMMAD AMIN (Boby Razak) Rank 1 legislative member candidate for KENDARI CITY".

There are various issues raised by the Democratic candidates in their political advertising. One of the interesting issues raised in their political advertising is unemployment. The data of PD 6 presents the unemployment issue. Visually, this political advertising uses a blue, white, black background. The addressor in this advertising is Angelina Sondakh. She is one of the candidates for House of Representative member from Partai Demokrat (Indonesian Democratic Party). she is a Democratic Party cadre, who is also a celebrity. Meanwhile, the addressees in the political advertising are Indonesian society in general. This political advertising was produced with the aim of reaching the Indonesian people with various backgrounds. Since Angelina Sondakh happens to be a celebrity, this advertising is expected to attract the attention of the public so that it can raise the popularity of Partai Demokrat.

The context of this narrative is the 2009 legislative elections. This advertising appeared as a form of campaign to socialize both Partai Demokrat and the candidates from Partai Demokrat. The Party was the ruling party in the period 2004-2009, and SBY was the incumbent president then. This advertising was created with the aims of not only promoting Angelina Sondakh, SE but also socializing Partai Demokrat. The slogan used in this advertising says "Unemployment and poverty decline". The message that this advertising tries to convey is that if Angelina Sondakh is elected to be a member of the House of Representatives, unemployment and poverty will be decreased. The same thing will happen if Parati Demokrat win the general election.

The political advertising that highlights one’s pesona is shown in the data of PD 11. This political advertising is about parliament candidate from the Democratic Party named Anas Urbaningrum. In this advertising, Anas Urbaningrum is the candidate who runs for the House of Representative member for the electoral district East Java VI, which includes Blitar Regency, Blitar Municipality, Kediri Regency, Kediri Municipality, Tulungagung Regency. The background in the billboard is blue color which matches the color of the greatness of the Democrat Party. Anas Urbaningrum also wears blue colored Democratic Party uniform.

Meanwhile, in the billboard, Anas Urbaningrum represents himself to "Move Forward with the People". This slogan indicates that Anas promises something to the public although it is not stated explicitly stated by specific words that express the promise. However, pragmatically "Forward with the People" should be seen under the context in which he is running for the House of Representatives. And his body gestures indicate as if he is greeting the people. This means means he promises to move forward with people. Presuppositions contained in the proposition "Forward with the People" means "Previous members of the House of Representatives do not go forward with the people". Therefore, he promises to "Move Forward with the People" if he is elected as a member of the House of
Visually, Anas represents himself as a candidate who addresses the people. It can be seen from his bodily gestures and the placement of text "Forward with the People" in the upper right hand and over his head. Meanwhile, the information about the symbol of Partai Demokrat and the name Anas Urbaningrum are placed above the electoral districts. This composition represents the interests of the people is above the party and the candidate himself. This composition distributes two different interests in a hierarchical relationship: the people in the top position and the parties and candidates in the bottom position. The text placement becomes very important because Anas only uses a very simple design. However, this simple design properly represents the candidate and the party in such a way that it attracts the public’s attention. Anas represents the interest of the people is above the interest of himself and his party.

The data show social relations among the actors involved or engaged in the discourse. In the poster, we can see the relations between candidates themselves, parties, and people. This poster displays a three-party relationship is hierarchical. First, the people is in the top position. It can be seen from the placement of "Forward with the People", which is placed in the top. Second, the Party is in second position or in the middle. It can be seen from the placement of the symbol of Partai Demokrat, which is placed between the statement "People's Forward Together" and the name Anas Urbaningrum. Third, at the very bottom is the name Anas Urbaningrum with information of electoral districts. The establishment of such relations is calculated by the addressor (Anas Urbaningrum) because he puts himself under the two main interests: the people, at the very top, and the party, in the second place. Thus, the ability of the candidate to show such relations will benefit the candidate because he is able to relate the two other interests above his own self-interest. This will change the perspective of the addressees who felt they are the ones that benefit in the composition presented in the poster. Anas could benefit greatly from the representations and relations presented in the poster.

To boost a candidate’s popularity, political advertising uses popular figures. The data of PD 7 represents the candidate who identifies himself as the U.S. President, Barack Obama. The representation presented in the advertising is aimed to show the public that the candidate is able to be as popular and successful as Barack Obama. The advertising says: “Is 31 Partai Demokrat?” “YES! These two sentences are direct speech. They are followed by another sentence that says: “In America Democrat supported BARACK OBAMA and he won the election spectacularly”; “In Situbondo, Partai Demokrat also support GATOT ADI WIBOWO, Sos (aka Bambang)”; and sentence, “May he also win the election spectacularly”. The advertising is concluded with the phrase PARTAI DEMOKRAT written in capital letters.

The statement “PARTAI DEMOKRAT supports the cadre of Partai Demokrat BARACK OBAMA to become the President of the United States CHANGE” and combined with SBY icon, as the leader of Partai Demokrat in Indonesia, are intentionally displayed to give an impression to the public that SBY is supporting Barack Obama to be the President of the United States. Obama is displayed in this campaign billboard with the intention to show the
public that Obama is a cadre of Partai Demokrat in Indonesia. This intention can be seen from the word “mendukung (support)” which is used in the statement “PARTAI DEMOKRAT supports the cadre of Partai Demokrat BARACK OBAMA to become the President of the United States CHANGE”. Definitely, this is a lie because Barack Obama is a member of the Democratic Party in the United States, not the Democratic Party in Indonesia. However, with this strategy, Partai Demokrat wants to show the public that Barack Obama is a cadre of Partai Demokrat in Indonesia. This outdoor political advertising seems to be intentionally made for the Indonesian community members who have limited knowledge and information about Barack Obama. It is made with the hope that people who do not know him will assume that Barack Obama is a member or cadre of the Democratic Party in Indonesia. This analysis is supported by placing both the photo of Obama and the legislative candidate parallely. People who have a lack of information and knowledge about Barack Obama may believe this lie.

The data of PD 8 were made by a legislative member candidate who represents himself as a celebrity Bondan Prakoso and represents himself as the candidate who will fight for the interests of the constituency of Malang City. He was running for the legislative member of Malang City. His name Dadik wahyu, S.H. His election registered number is 8. In the political campaign advertising, he adopts the slogan "Dreams and reality are parallel" The addressee in this political advertising is called Dadik Wahyu, SH and the targeted addressees in this political advertising are young age people. The addressor is trying to familiarize himself with these targeted voters. It can be seen from the way the addressor dresses. He is wearing a black T-shirt because the celebrity Bondan Prakoso quite often wears T-shirt.

The data of PD 9 represents a candidate who will fight for the interests of the electorate district of Tulungagung city. His utterance says, "I beg Your Blessing & Support. Vote for the candidate with No. 31 PARTAI DEMOKRAT. New Generation ... The New spirit... New Hope ... 2 SOFYAN HERYANTO, SE. (HERI) YOUNG, CLEAN, RELIABLE, the candidate with the rank 1 nomination for the electorate district and with election registered number no 2 TULUNGAGUNG YOUNG, RELIABLE, CLEAN". This advertising represents a candidate who claims himself as a young man who will fight for the people of Tulungagung. In addition, he is a young man who has a spirit and a hope. He represents himself as a young leader who is clean (not corrupted) and can be trusted to fight for the people.

The data of PD 10 is political advertising of one of the candidates for a member of the House of Representative of the Republic of Indonesia with the electoral district of Central Java IV covering Karanganyar, Sragen, Wonogiri. The candidate's name is Adriana Venny Aryani. She is a Doctoral Candidate of Philosophy of University of Indonesia and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Institute for Women's Participation in Jakarta. She is a candidate from Partai Demokrat. The addressor in this political advertising is Adriana Venny Aryani, while the addressees of this political advertising are the people in the fourth electoral districts of Central Java: Karanganyar, Sragen, and Wonogiri. With the speech that says she acts as the head of an organization that fosters women, she represents herself as a person who cares about women. Adriana also mentions that she is a doctoral candidate. With this speech, she
represents herself as an educated candidate.

The data of PD 11 represents a candidate for the House of representative of the Republic of Indonesia who will struggle to advance the areas where she is running for the election with the people of the areas. His electorate district is East Java of region VI, which includes Blitar Regency, Blitar Municipality, Kediri Regency, Kediri Municipality, Tulungagung Regency. The candidate’s name is Anas Urbaningrum. The media of his political advertising has the blue background color, which represents the color of the Partai Demokrat. In this media, Anas Urbaningrum is also wearing blue colored clothes which share the same color with the uniform of Democratic Party’s cadre.

The data of PD 12 is the political advertising that represents the candidate for legislative member of Natuna region, who will fight for the people of his constituency and advance the region together with the people of his electorate district, which is Natuna region. In the advertising, the candidate, called IMALKO ISMAIL, S. Sos., is from Partai Demokrat. His advertising uses the slogan "TOGETHER WE BUILD THE COUNTRY". The advertising also uses photos, name of the Partai Demokrat and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Partai Demokrat. Like the data PD 1 and PD 5, the addressee also uses a map of Indonesia as his political advertising background. The map represents that when SBY is reelected as the president of Indonesia, SBY is able to unite "embrace" all elements that belong to Indonesian archipelago.

4. Conclusion

Political advertising is one of political marketing to gain voters’ support. It is not surprising that political advertising is occupied with sensation only, the highlight of the addressors’ academic degrees, and narcissistic addressors. The political advertisers (addressors) in Indonesia emphasizes large font-sized numbers, very large pictures of faces, and large font-sized political commitments. They position themselves as a trade product. By visualizing the muslim cap, muslim scarf, academic degrees, and their socio-religious activities, they believe they can create the image that they are the legislative, presidential, regional head candidates who are religious, intellectual, and protective of their people. Through language, the advertisers (addressors) throw discourse glorifying themselves and not infrequently attacking their political opponents. Furthermore, the messages in the political advertising revolve around the product, not the idea.

In this study, the data represent the candidates who will fight for the region, municipality, or regency, where they run for office or as their electoral districts, consist of data of PD 1, PD 2, PD 3, PD 4, PD 5, PD 7, PD 8, PD 9, PD10, PD 11, and PD 12. As for the data representing the unemployment issue are the data of PD 6. The data representing popular figures are the data of PD 7 and PD 10.

The relation between political language and an attempt to win sympathy of the people is closely related. Political language arises because there are the needs to cultivate a certain image (propaganda) so that people can be affected and influenced by such image (propaganda) and political icons they the political addressors (icons) present. The relationship between the
legislative member candidates and the people can be seen in aforementioned representation. In general, in the representation of Partai Demokrat’s political advertising, people are always related with ideas such as they will be fought, defended and sophisticated. The people in these political advertising are always positioned as the subordinate, marginal, and weak. As for the political parties, presidential candidates, and legislative member candidates are always positioned as the dominant, powerful, and advantageous individuals. In such a relation, the political language is closely related with the efforts to win public sympathy.

Language is manipulated for the political purposes in the election of political advertising in Indonesia. Language is used as a tool to develop the masking or image manipulation. Language has the power to build up the image of a politician or political party. Linguistically, most political advertising of Partai Demokrat is featuring visionary things, promises, achievements that will be made and that had been made by the party or individual members of the party. These are shown to make people believe that both the party and the party cadres are the best and deserve to be elected.

However, it is inversely proportional to what happens in reality. The party suffered from so many cases, ranging from the corruption cases to the chaos occurring in the internal party both in the headquarters and the branches. Through the mechanism of positive language, visionary, glorifying promise, showing the achievements that have been made, the political advertising of Partai Demokrat can make people pick this party win in the 2009 elections. In other words, this party has managed to manipulate the language to win the 2009 election by ignoring the impacts to the society of the language manipulation the party has made. Thus, the party is neglecting one of its responsibilities a party should keep: social responsibility. Moreover, the political advertising of Partai Demokrat has also launched a hegemony campaign in which this party, as the incumbent one, has access to the dissemination of its campaign messages to most Indonesian people. With the power that the incumbent still held, the party managed to spread the campaign messages Indonesian people and plant them to the public. Through this party’s political advertising, the achievements of the incumbent in the 2004-2009 ruling period were displayed. In short, when this party was in power, its political advertising managed to embed hegemony campaign into its political maneuvers. The political advertising became the dominant message that led people to elect this party again in the 2009 election.

References


Appendix

Data PD 1 (2) Data PD 2 (8) Data PD 3 (11)

Data PD 4 (12) Data PD 5 (15) Data PD 6 (16)

Data PD 7 (20) Data PD 8 (21) Data PD 9 (23)