

## Educational Language in Political Advertising: An Assessment on the Campaigns of Mustafa Akıncı and Ersin Tatar in the TRNC 2020 Presidential Elections

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### Abstract

In this study, since no candidate received more than fifty percent of the votes in the TRNC Presidential election held on October 11, 2020, the election campaign visions of the candidates who made it to the second round and their latest commercials were analyzed using discourse analysis.

For this purpose, the political advertising campaign contents of Mustafa Akıncı and Ersin Tatar, who made it to the second round of the Presidential election, were examined under the four headings of language clarity and understandability, transmission of political messages, informative content, political ethics and impartiality, which are four items within the scope of educational language in political advertising, and their contribution to the election result was evaluated.

**Key words:** TRNC, Presidential Elections, Education, Educational Language.

### Introduction

Political advertising refers to all advertising activities carried out with the aim of influencing voters to vote and support a particular party or politician. It is important to provide educational information on some issues in order to persuade voters and direct them to vote through political campaign communication, which is communication activities that are concentrated especially during election periods and aim to influence large masses.

The Presidential election in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, planned for 26 April 2020, was postponed due to the pandemic and took place on 11 October 2020. 11 candidates, 7 of whom were independent, competed in the election. These candidates are: then-president Mustafa Akıncı (independent), then-prime minister Ersin Tatar (National Unity Party-UBP), Erhan Arıklı (Rebirth Party-YDP), Tufan Erhürman (Republican Turkish Party-CTP), Kudret Özersay (independent), Serdar Denktaş (independent), Fuat Türköz Çiner (Nationalist Democracy Party- MDP), Ahmet Boran (independent), Alpan Uz (independent), Arif Salih Kırdag (independent), Mustafa Ulaş (independent). The elections were held in two rounds after no candidate exceeded the 50% threshold in the first round (TRNC Supreme Election Board, 2020).

This election went down in history as the presidential election in which the most candidates competed in the TRNC. 54.72% of the voters participated in the election, where there were 198 thousand 867 registered voters. Among the candidates, then-National Unity Party (UBP) Chairman and Prime Minister Ersin Tatar had 32.35%, then-President and independent candidate Mustafa Akıncı had 29.84%, Republican Turkish Party (CTP) Chairman Tufan Erhürman had 21.68%, then-Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister had 32.35%. Minister and independent candidate Kudret Özersay received 5.74% of the votes and Rebirth Party (YDP) Chairman Erhan Arıklı received 5.36% of the votes. Since no candidate received more than 50% of the votes in the first round, the election went to the second round (AA, 2020). Thus, in the second round elections held on October 18, 2020, Ersin Tatar, who advocated the establishment of a two-state structure based on sovereign equality, and Mustafa Akıncı, who supported a federation-oriented integration with the Greek side, competed (SETA, 2020).

While the participation rate in the second round of the TRNC Presidential elections was 67.29%, the winner was Ersin Tatar with 51.69% (New Order, 2020). Thus, Ersin Tatar became the fifth President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

### Method

In this study, the content analysis method was used and the effect of educational language in political advertising on election results was evaluated. In the political advertising communication of Ersin Tatar and Mustafa Akıncı, who made it to the second round among the 11 candidates competing in the presidential elections held in 2020, their latest advertisements published on Youtube within the framework of their election campaigns were examined, with their clear vision at the beginning of the election campaigns.

### Political Communication

The history of political communication has existed together with the deep-rooted history of humanity and dates back to the Ancient Greek period (Çakmak, 2019: 70). It is stated that the first significant steps in this field were taken in the early classical works of thinkers such as Aristotle and Plato (Aziz, 2014). These thinkers' works can be considered political communication activities (Bekiroğlu and Bal, 2014). However, the concept of political communication in the modern sense dates back to the 20th century. It developed in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century. It came to the fore using tools such as advertising techniques, opinion polls, television and posters in election campaigns (Topuz, 1991).

In addition to elements such as the mass media of the period, factors such as economic, social and cultural capital can also play a role in the practical emergence of politics (Topbaş-Babacan, 2013).

Aysel Aziz (2017) stated that the concept of political communication is difficult to summarize with a single definition and defined political communication as "various communication types and techniques are used by political actors in order to impose certain ideological goals on certain groups, masses, countries or blocks within the society and to turn them into action when necessary." It is defined as "communication used". According to Aziz, political communication includes all kinds of communication-related to politics. In addition, political communication, as its name suggests, has a close relationship with communication science. In addition, it intersects with many fields, such as sociology, social psychology, history, public relations, and propaganda (Can, 2012).

*Political communication* is a comprehensive discipline that starts before the election, continues during the campaign process, and is also necessary in non-election times. However, today, despite its broad content, political communication has often been tried to be reduced to election-oriented activities. It is seen as an activity used only to persuade voters and create consent during campaign processes (Çakmak Kılıçaslan, 2013).

*Political communication* is a process in which political actors, institutions, leaders or organizations consistently use various mass media to influence, inform or gain the support of target audiences. Therefore, election campaigns are seen as a part and an element of political communication (Doğan, 2017).

Advert Advertising is "drawing attention to something or informing someone about something" (Dyer, 2010). The term advertising originates from Latin and derives from the verb 'clemere', which means to call (Ekinci and Şahim, 2013).

Advertising is introducing people, institutions, products and services to the public and making them adopt them. In marketing, advertising presents ideas, institutions, products and services to the target audience through non-personal methods for a specific fee (Okay, 2009). According to the American Marketing Association, the definition of advertising is; "Advertising is for the purpose of informing or persuading individuals or viewers who constitute a specific target market about products, services, organizations or ideas; It is the placement of persuasive messages and announcements of companies, non-profit organizations, public institutions and individuals in mass media by purchasing space and time." (Elden, 2009: 136).

The main goal of advertisements is to create changes in the knowledge level and attitudes of the target audience (Elden and Yeygel, 2006: 13). For this reason, today, advertisements do not only provide information about products; People also obtain information about various ideas, products, services or institutions through advertisements (Elden, 2013: 136). The primary purpose of advertising is to create desires that did not exist before and to arouse desires in people. The advertiser's role is to persuade people rather than provide information (Dyer, 2010: 7). Therefore, advertisements promote products, provide information and shape attitudes and behaviours depending on the purpose and content of use.

### Political Advertising and Educational Language in Election Campaigns

Political advertising is the preparation of impressive messages for the media by professional advertisers in visual, audio and written formats, aiming to increase the vote rates of parties during election periods (Aziz, 2003).

*Political advertising* is defined as a political communication activity related to preparing and publishing messages aimed at positively influencing voters' attitudes about the candidate or party by purchasing space and time from the media for candidates or parties (Kaid, 1981). In other words, political advertising refers to all advertising efforts to direct voters to vote and support a party or politician. Communication activities that intensify during election periods and aim to persuade large audiences are called political campaign communications. Political advertisements are essential to political campaign communication and have been used for propaganda since World War II. (Uztuğ, 2003).

The key features of modern political advertising are (a) control of the message and (b) paid use of mass media channels. The most crucial advantage of political advertising is that the message is entirely controllable within a political campaign, and the targeted audience can be reached directly through mass media. (Kaid, 1999).

Political advertising refers to all advertising efforts to direct voters to vote and support a party or politician. Communication activities that intensify during election periods and aim to persuade large audiences are called political campaign communications. Although political advertisements, an essential part of political campaign communication, are generally considered commercials broadcast on television, they can also appear in brochures,

newspaper ads, posters, leaflets or rallies (Uztuğ, 2003). Especially with the development and spread of the internet, digital channels and social networks are used intensively.

Political advertising aims to promote and adopt political products, organizations, leaders or ideologies (Karaçor and Gözümlü, 2012). From a broad perspective, political advertising is the set of techniques and methods used to introduce the political product package (elements such as party, party leader, candidate) to the electorate, to make them accept it by making it different from rival political parties, and to win the election (Bongrand, 1992).

### **Discourse and Language Unity**

Discourse is a meta-action and is the process of language practices turning into action by interacting with elements such as ideology, knowledge, communication, style of expression, discussion, interaction, power and balance of power. Discourse is related to all areas of social life, such as social, political, cultural and economic (Sözen, 1999). In this sense, discourse is not limited to language alone but also includes social relations, power dynamics and forms of communication.

As Sözen (1999) states, discourse can only be associated with language and occurs through the use of language. From this perspective, discourse is a phenomenon shaped by the use of language and directly related to the unique structure of the language.

### **Discourse analysis**

Discourse analysis is a critical tool in the study of language and communication. This analysis method is used to understand language use, social structures, power relations and cultural factors. Discourse analysis goes beyond language and focuses on analyzing the power relations and social structures underlying texts, conversations and forms of communication.

*Discourse analysis* was defined by Fairclough (1989) as a methodology developed to understand how language functions and how it is shaped in a social context. According to Fairclough, discourse analysis is essential for understanding social structures, power relations, and language use.

This analysis method generally examines the social, political and cultural contexts of texts and forms of communication. Van Dijk (1998) states, "Discourse analysis is used to understand the social and political effects of language and examines how discourse is shaped on issues such as power relations, identity formation and discrimination."

Discourse analysis also reveals power dynamics in communication beyond language. This analysis methodology is essential for understanding power relations, identity formation, and how ideologies are transmitted. Jäger (2001) states, "Discourse analysis is indispensable for understanding the social, cultural and political structures of texts and forms of communication as well as language." Therefore, discourse analysis allows the examination of communication beyond language. This methodology helps us understand how language works but also helps us analyze the social structures and power dynamics underlying texts, conversations, and forms of communication.

### **Educational Language in Political Advertising**

Using educational language in political ads helps voters better understand political processes. Smith and Johnson (2010) show that the use of educational language in political advertisements makes it easier for voters to understand better and evaluate politicians' promises, policy proposals, and election platforms. In this way, voters can make more informed choices.

Political advertisements are essential to influencing voters and conveying politicians' messages. According to Smith and Johnson (2010), the analysis of educational language in these advertisements can be carried out under various headings.

**Clarity of Language and Understandability:** The effectiveness of political advertisements is closely related to the clarity and understandability of the language. In this context, word choice, sentence structures and general clarity of language in advertising texts are examined. Avoiding complex terms and creating the language to appeal to a broad audience is essential.

**Transfer of Political Messages:** Educational language aims to express political messages clearly. In the analysis, the content and messages of the advertisements are examined in detail. Are the candidates' policy proposals, promises and political platforms presented in an educational language?

**Informative Content:** The content of the advertisements is examined, whether they are educational and informative or just emotional on topics such as political processes, candidates' backgrounds, and party ideology. The content presented to voters through educational language helps them make more informed decisions.

**Political Ethics and Impartiality:** Educational language and political advertisements are analyzed regarding impartiality and ethical standards. Whether the advertisements present accurate and balanced information and contain views or prejudices specific to the political side is observed.

Analyses carried out under these headings are essential to understand the impact of political advertisements on voters and how they shape political participation.

The data on which this study is based are the YouTube commercials of Mustafa Akıncı and Ersin Tatar, who made it to the second round of the Presidential elections on October 11, 2020, published on October 10, 2020, during their election campaigns. Discourse analysis of educational language in political advertising was used as a method. The language used in advertising videos was examined regarding clarity and understandability, transfer of political messages, informative content, political ethics and impartiality.

### Conclusions And Recommendations

The TRNC used the slogan "We are marching to a new future" in Ersin Tatar's political advertising campaign in the 2020 Presidential elections. Besides, "It's time to stand up and walk to a brand new future. New alternatives will come to the table on the Cyprus issue now, a new opening will come that brings the closed Maraş to humanity, Wealth will come to our country with the Blue Homeland, a new era will come when our relations with Turkey will become stronger, and a presidency will come that is intertwined with the Turkish Cypriot people and open to the public." He expressed his vision as. (AA, 2020).

On the other hand, the President of the period, Mustafa Akıncı, officially announced his candidacy at the "Confidence and Determination Night" held in Nicosia on February 5, 2020. He set his vision for the second term under the "Trust and Determination Document". Emphasizing that a federal model is the only reasonable and possible solution, he said, "We do not want to be either a minority of Southern Cyprus or a subordinate administration dependent on Turkey." said. Akıncı's election campaign was shaped around the slogan "Answer Akıncı" and focused on concepts such as "trust", "determination", "sincerity", and "responsibility" (Wikipedia, 2023).

Ersin Tatar's latest ad, published on YouTube as part of the election campaign, begins with a scene in which young people start the day smiling. The music of the commercial film is the song "Let This Be the End" by Cem Karaca. In this advertisement, children, teenagers and the elderly are shown waking up in sunny weather. While the smiles of people from different age groups are emphasized, people operating in various business sectors are also depicted. Various segments, such as students, employees and pensioners, are represented. In one part of the commercial, young people dance in different places and perform the song (a person who cried when he was born, let this be the end, this is the end). Then, the young people walk through different streets and move towards the headquarters of the National Unity Party, and Ersin Tatar greets them on the balcony of the party headquarters. Then Tatar joined the young people and started walking with them happily. At the end of the commercial, he said, "Good days don't come to you, you will walk to them. As the Turkish Cypriot People, we must stand up and walk to a new future" ends with the sentence, while the camera angle focuses on the Closed-off Maraş region (YouTube, 2020).

On the other hand, Mustafa AKINCI's latest advertisement, published on his YouTube channel as part of the election campaign, begins with the appearance of the Mustafa Akıncı logo, where young people are together. Dec. It is noteworthy that there are masks on the people who come together here because it is immediately after the pandemic. Dec. Young and older adults wave flags in front of Mustafa Akıncı's election office and have cards with election slogans in their hands. These cards have slogans such as 'answer will' and 'answer Akıncı'. At this time, Mustafa Akıncı's voice is heard in the background, and he says: 'We will give our answer against all interventions, all pressures at the ballot box. As he says this, an enthusiastic sound of applause is heard from the crowd, and Mustafa Akıncı and his wife appear on the screen, walking with the crowd. Flags and slogans are seen in the crowd marching behind Mustafa Akıncı. In addition, some young people have crowns made of olive leaves on their heads, representing peace. Ads reading 'Answer Trust, Answer Determination' are seen on billboards that the crowded group passes in front of. After that, the banner held by the young people says 'Answer Akıncı'. The crowd is seen to be enthusiastic and faithful. After that, young people look at the 'Answer Trust' advertisement. Moreover, at the end of the advertisement, the slogan 'Answer Akıncı' appears on the screen again. (Youtube, 2020)

The vision and the latest published advertisements of the candidates who reached the second round in the TRNC 2020 Presidential elections were evaluated on four items under the heading of educational language in political advertising. In this context, it has been seen that Ersin Tatar's vision and advertisement are explained with a more precise and more explicit language in the context of clarity and intelligibility of the language, which is the first item. The opening of the closed Maraş was used both in the election vision and in the last advertisement published and expressed in a clear framework. On the other hand, Mustafa Akıncı's election vision and the last published advertisement contain more complex discourses and slogans. We cannot talk about slogans used more than once, intangible promises and discourses. It can be evaluated more emotionally in this context.

On the other hand, when ads are evaluated as the transmission of political messages, which is the second item, political promises are seen in Ersin Tatar's vision. It is seen that political messages have been successfully conveyed in the promises of the Wealth that Blue Homeland will bring and the opening of the Closed Maraş. On

the other hand, in Mustafa Akinci's vision, "We do not want to be either a minority of Southern Cyprus or a subordinate administration dependent on Turkey." Emphasis is placed on their political stance in his discourse. In the advertisement, a stance is taken against Turkey's government's interference in the elections.

When Vision and Advertisements are evaluated as informative content, it is seen that there are informative and guiding contents in Ersin Tatar's vision and advertisement. On the other hand, more emotional content is seen in Mustafa Akinci.

When the vision and advertisements are evaluated in terms of political ethics and impartiality, the fourth article of the educational language in political advertising, it is seen that Mustafa Akinci is a party against the Turkish intervention. On the other hand, Ersin Tatar, with his Blue Homeland emphasis, has drawn an image that he is pro-Turkey.

As a result, when viewed within the scope of educational language in political advertising, the language used in the Ersin Tatar advertising campaign is much more transparent, understandable, informative, and concrete. On the other hand, more than one concept was used in the campaign of Mustafa Akinci, who participated in the presidential election. However, explicit and explanatory content was not included. Considering the election result and that the election winner was Ersin Tatar, it can be concluded that using educational language in political advertising is essential and convinces the voters.

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