

## CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE ‘FAKE NEWS’: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE MAJOR NEWSPAPERS IN SOUTH KOREA

Mahnwoo KWON

School of Digital Media, Kyungsoong University, South Korea  
mahnoo@ks.ac.kr

Yongwoo Jun  
miraeec@naver.com

Hajin Im  
ahengk2@naver.com

**Abstract:** This paper is a report on the findings of a study conducted on a graduate level virtual conference summer school course. Discourse analysis formatted classes.

### INTRODUCTION

Journalists have been distinguished between news and advertising content physically and psychologically. Advertising had same value to news content until 1970's and was recognized different category. Traditional journalism text also regards editorial department deal news content and advertising department handle commercial messages. This separatism was mainly caused by production goal of traditional news. News exists for satisfaction of readers and advertising stands for advertiser's benefit. Thus, advertising has been regarded necessary evil for news media. This viewpoint is also reflected in audiences. Even media recipients clearly divide news and advertising.

But challenges for this assumption are increasing. According to recent survey about media recognition, audiences of American media has tendency of giving similar importance to advertising as news source. This report said that media users do not separate advertising content and non-advertising content. In contrast to perception of journalist, readers' perception toward advertizing is changing. They started to think that advertising is also a kind of important news information.

Major newspapers in South Korea issue special section pages every week and these pages consist of fake news or paid news. Advertorials normally attach distinctive mark at head part of each section. But these fake news use camouflage to pretend to be real news. The section pages also use fixing arrangement of advertising. This kind of fake news section leads to audience confusing. Sponsored news can cause serious problem of ethical, legal, and journalistic issues. Past researches about advertorials also give warning to this problem.

### THE STUDY AND METHOD

Advertising looks like news, paid news, and news format advertising are new trends of advertising method in Korea. There are many similar concept of conveying commercial messages through print media. Typical examples are advertorial and infomercial. Advertorial is complex world using advertising and editorial. It is a sort of advertising but looks like editorial of newspaper or magazine. Infomercial is mixed word using information and commercial. Infomercial refer to broadcasting context as to advertorial refer to newspaper. Both advertorial and infomercial come on the scene together with new communication technologies in media industry. Digital media like internet and mobile phone require hyper-linking function to news content to advertising, and consequently division between news and advertising meaningless.

In addition, there are more similar concepts; Paid news, Monetize content, Stealth advertising, Fake news, Sponsorship-linked news, and Event-related News. Paid news or monetize content is defined as dealing news of advertiser in the pages concerned. Journalists and scholars express worry because paid news is easy to be swayed by the capital power. Still paid news is hot issues in American journalism environment. Stealth advertising is portrayed as situation of hidden advertising like stealth airplane, not caught on radar. Fake news means advertising that copying format of TV news. Sponsorship-linked news has low relevance than paid news to advertisers but indirectly promote their sponsors through news coverage. And event-related news means indirect promotion of advertisers regard special events like sports or exhibitions. We will use terminology ‘fake news’ in this paper for describe upper concepts.

Main issues regarding fake news can be categorized into two. One is deceitfulness and the other is political expression. First the biggest problem of fake news is deceiving readers. Recent legal case in Korea reported that media have to pay for compensation if the media publish fake news without giving proper notice in the pages. The court also judged that media must clearly specify that the content is advertising. And the media has to print corrected article in same weight if the audience experience damage caused by the fake news. In consideration of this trend, fake news related disputes or controversies are expected to increase in the future. So this paper analyzed Korean fake news cases and suggested guide lines of publish fake news.

We analyzed 3 major Korean newspapers, Chosun, Donga, and Joongang, from July to September, 2014. Section pages containing fake news were selected for content analysis. We coded the numbers of fake news, day of the week, the rate of sponsored news, average fake news publication number per pages, the conformity between news and advertising, and the type of fake news. And the unit of analysis is article base.

## **FINDINGS**

“C\_\_\_ [male], I hope I’m doing this right. I thought your observations were right on target. I subbed for high school and jr. high classes. High school was the best. I definitely felt the kids were on my level. They either took repsonibility (sic) or they didn’t. How neat to have such a small class, but more importantly to know the

seminar to use an emoticon which has been sex class linked to females. It is highly likely that her gender, her ethnicity and her lack of experience as a teacher all were communicated through her text based communication and conspired against her. Ds was not seen as a competent participant in the discussions. Ds did not participate actively in the on-line seminar. The lack of response was surely discouraging.

**Table 1:** Sponsor-related news

			Sponsor-related news		Total
			Yes	No	
Newspaper	Chosun	Frequency	77	192	269
		%	7.7%	19.1%	26.8%
	Joongang	Frequency	76	272	348
		%	7.6%	27.1%	34.7%
	Donga	Frequency	96	291	387
		%	9.6%	29.0%	38.5%
Total		Frequency	249	755	1004
		%	24.8%	75.2%	100.0%

K was an experienced participant in on-line discussion groups. She was a member of a state-wide program funded with an NSF grant that maintained a discussion forum with teachers across the state. She is the participant that sent out 36 directed responses and only received 12 directed back at her in return. If linguistic/technological competence is not the issue here, what were the dynamics that determined if a participant was read and responded to?

Further examination of D’s speech act communications reveal a style of Absolute. D always made statements in a tone of challenge.

Example “...Yet the public continues to believe that it is the students, teachers, and school who are failing. Once again, I will return to the idea of Obsolete. We are not failing, the system is obsolete!!!”

On the first couple of passes through the data I had missed the significance of the style. D was not only holding court and lecturing throughout the whole seminar, he was also inviting participation and response from others by being a provocateur with his strong, emphatic stances. The female participants explicitly asked for responses with direct questions while this male individual invited response with challenges.

**CONCLUSIONS**

D’s linguistic strategies were the most successful in this seminar. This is not the equal, level playing field that some champions of the technology have promised. The discursive style which incorporated stances of the provocateur marginalized Ds’s contributions. Ds did not have a repertoire of strategies to discourse successfully with D.

course will have a requirement that every participant in a discussion group must respond to all members of that same group within a two week time period. After careful analysis of the transcripts from this virtual conference seminar, it is apparent that equal participation on-line requires careful support and planning with some rules concerning attending and responding to other participants.

**REFERENCES**

- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cazden, C. (1986). Classroom discourse. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp.432-463). NY:MacMillan.
- Davis, B.H & Brewer, J.P. (1997). *Electronic discourse: Linguistic individuals in virtual space*. NY: SUNY.
- Gumperz, J. (1982). *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University
- Herring, S. (1996). Posting in a different voice. In C. Ess (Ed.), *Philosophical perspectives on computer-mediated communication* (pp. 115-145). NY:SUNY.
- Herring, S., Johnson, D., & DiBenedetto, T. (1992). Participation in electronic discourse in a “feminist” field. In M. Bucholtz, K. Hall, & B. Moonwomon (Eds.), *Locating power: Proceedings of the second Berkeley women and language conference* (pp.250-62). Berkeley,CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group.
- Schiffrin, D. (1995). *Approaches to discourse*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Tannen, D. (1994). *Talking from 9 to 5*. NY: Avon Books
- Wertsch, J. (1990). The voice of rationality in a sociocultural approach to mind. In L.C. Moll (Ed.), *Vygotsky and education: Instructional implications and applications of sociohistorical psychology* (pp.111-126). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University.