

in both offline and online settings ensures deeper comprehension, improved retention, and the formation of independent, critical readers.

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LANGUAGE-BASED MANIPULATION STRATEGIES IN MEDIA

COMMUNICATION

In today's highly globalized environment, media and political discourse function not only as instruments for information dissemination but also as influential mechanisms shaping public consciousness and social perception. The investigation of linguistic mechanisms operating within media and political contexts has become an essential component of information security and strategic communication at the state level. Prominent global news outlets such as CNN, The Washington Post, The New York Times, among others, actively employ diverse linguistic techniques within media and

political communication. In such an informational space, it is crucial to educate audiences in the critical analysis of both linguistic and visual strategies used for manipulative purposes. As Aleksic A. emphasizes, the examination of linguistic strategies of manipulation in media and political discourse is particularly significant for understanding the processes underlying the formation of public opinion (Aleksic, A. 2025).

The theoretical framework of this research is grounded in the scholarly contributions of international researchers, including G. Schiller, R. Goodin, T. van Dijk, J. Searle, P. Danler, D. L. Lillian, as well as Ukrainian scholars such as I. Rudyk, I. Shkitska, M. Zaitseva, L. Ilnytska, and others. Their studies consistently view language as an instrument of power implementation, ideological construction, and the formation of social reality (Hlazkova I., Khalabuzar, O., 2026).

The aim of the study is to examine contemporary strategies of manipulative influence in modern English-language media and political discourse. According to T. van Dijk, linguistic manipulation is defined as an interactive practice in which the manipulator gains control over social actors, often against their will or interests. In this regard, manipulation is characterized by the presence of negative intent on the part of the communicator, as well as by the modification of speech structures that obscures the boundary between factual information and persuasive content (Hlazkova, Khalabuzar, 2026). On this basis, several types of linguistic manipulation can be identified:

Choice manipulation – alteration of available options in the environment through their expansion or restriction;

Information manipulation – distortion or reframing of perception without direct persuasion in order to influence understanding of a situation;

Psychological manipulation – influencing an individual by altering cognitive processes, excluding those directly responsible for comprehension.

Depending on the nature of interaction between communicative participants, linguistic manipulation may be classified as direct or indirect.

Direct manipulation occurs when the speaker explicitly formulates demands or intentions, expecting a specific reaction from the recipient. This form is commonly expressed through directive speech acts such as commands, instructions, or appeals.

BBC News: "We must act now to stop this threat before it's too late."

Explanation: directive construction with modal verb *must*, creating urgency and pressure.

CNN: "This policy will destroy jobs and harm American families."

Explanation: categorical forecast of negative consequences without alternative interpretations.

The Guardian: "The government's decision is reckless and morally indefensible."

Explanation: explicit evaluative lexicon with strong negative connotation typical of opinion-based discourse.

The New York Times: "There is no excuse for inaction."

Explanation: moral imperative excluding alternative viewpoints.

Reuters: "Voters should reject this proposal outright."

Explanation: direct call to action presented in an analytical format.

Indirect manipulation, in contrast, involves influencing behavior in a covert manner, for instance through modification of the informational, social, or contextual environment. This type is particularly prevalent in advertising and mass communication, where influence is exerted through secondary symbolic structures rather than explicit directives.

BBC News: "Mistakes were made during the operation."

Explanation: passive construction obscures the agent and reduces accountability.

The Guardian: "Critics say the reform may have unintended consequences."

Explanation: vague subject and modal expression create perceived neutrality.

The New York Times: “The move comes amid growing concerns about national security.”

Explanation: framing through an alarmist context without identifying sources.

CNN: “Some experts believe the situation could escalate.”

Explanation: indefinite reference group reduces responsibility for claims.

Financial Times: “Adjustments are expected as the policy evolves.”

Explanation: euphemistic formulation conceals potentially negative outcomes.

The process of linguistic manipulation is complex and multi-layered, which enables systematic analysis of communicative influence mechanisms.

Message perception by the recipient represents the initial level of manipulative effectiveness, determined by whether information is perceived as credible, or whether it provokes doubt or resistance. Perlocutionary effect refers to the actual transformation of the recipient's cognitive or behavioral state in accordance with the manipulator's intended goals. Based on the analysis of print media, several highly effective strategies have been identified:

- 1) Legitimization of one's position – aimed at constructing belief in the correctness or moral superiority of the speaker's standpoint through references to norms, values, and “obvious” facts.
- 2) Delegitimization of the opponent – aimed at undermining trust in alternative perspectives via negatively charged language, stereotyping, sarcasm, or attribution of harmful intent.
- 3) Concealment of intention – involves masking communicative goals through euphemisms, passive constructions, and abstract vocabulary.
- 4) Cognitive simplification – reduces complexity by presenting information through emotionally charged binary oppositions.
- 5) Collective identification – establishes a sense of unity between communicator and audience through shared values and pronouns.

6) Emotional resonance – activates emotional responses such as fear, pride, or anxiety through expressive vocabulary and rhetorical devices.

7) Authoritative reinforcement – strengthens credibility through references to experts, institutions, statistics, and authoritative sources. These strategies integrate discursive-pragmatic and cognitive-semiotic mechanisms of manipulation, reflecting a multi-level model of influence ranging from identification and solidarity to covert pressure through simplification and delegitimization. The interaction of verbal and non-verbal components is also a significant factor in shaping persuasive impact.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that contemporary English-language media and political discourse combines informational and manipulative functions, which makes it a dual-purpose and highly relevant object of linguistic research. Future studies may focus on cross-cultural variations in manipulative strategies, their manifestation in digital environments such as social networks and video platforms, and the influence of digital technologies on the evolution of manipulative communication patterns.. Promising directions for future research involve examining cross-cultural variations in the application of manipulative techniques, investigating manifestations of manipulation within media and political environments such as social networks, blogs, and video-sharing platforms, as well as exploring the influence of digital technologies on the evolving dynamics involved in the development of manipulative strategies.

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