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**Master's Thesis**

**MANIPULATION IN MODERN MASS MEDIA (BASED ON ENGLISH)**

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## АНОТАЦІЯ

Ця магістерська робота є дослідженням явища маніпуляції в сучасних засобах масової інформації. Актуальність теми зумовлена посиленням занепокоєння суспільства щодо доброчесності сучасних засобів масової інформації, а відтак – необхідністю ретельного дослідження тактик маніпуляції, до яких вдаються у медіаіндустрії.

Об'єктом дослідження є маніпуляції в сучасних британських засобах масової інформації, а предметом дослідження – типи і прийоми маніпуляцій, що використовуються в медіа.

Цілями цього дослідження є класифікація та структурування типів і методів маніпуляцій, що використовуються в сучасних британських ЗМІ, а також визначення найпоширеніших її прийомів. Досягнення цих цілей поєднується з основними завданнями визначення маніпуляцій у ЗМІ: класифікувати поширені типи маніпуляцій, а також дослідити контекстуальні та соціально-психологічні механізми, що лежать в їх основі.

Структура роботи складається зі вступу, трьох розділів з підрозділами, висновків та списку використаних джерел. Завдяки аналізу лексичних і граматичних методів маніпуляції, дослідження розкрило складні механізми, що діють у медіа-дискурсі. Було виявлено 25 різних стратегій, які використовують ЗМІ для формування наративів і впливу на громадську думку, починаючи від вибіркового подання фактичних даних і закінчуючи сприянням ідеологічній поляризації.

Результати цього дослідження підкреслюють необхідність критичного аналізу медіа-контенту для виявлення прихованих мотивів і розуміння складнощів сучасного поширення інформації. Випадкова вибірка забезпечила репрезентативну серію статей, що підвищить рівень узагальнення отриманих результатів. Зрештою, розуміння маніпулятивних комунікативних стратегій

дасть змогу людям більш розбірливо сприймати інформацію, сприяючи формуванню поінформованішого та пильнішого суспільства.

*Ключові слова:* маніпуляція, дискурс ЗМІ, масова комунікація, інтернет-ЗМІ, комунікативна стратегія, маніпулятивний прийом.

## **ABSTRACT**

The Master's thesis is devoted to the study of manipulation in modern mass media. The relevance of this research is predetermined by the increasing concerns regarding the integrity of modern mass media, which requires a thorough study of the manipulation tactics used in the industry. With a focus on manipulation in the modern British mass media, this study offers new insights into the strategies used to shape public opinion and influence reader perceptions.

The object of this research is the manipulation in the modern British mass media outlets, whereas the subject of the research is the manipulation types and techniques used in the media.

The aim of this study is twofold: to classify and structure manipulation types and methods used in modern British mass media, and to identify its most commonly employed techniques. Achieving these aims aligns with the overarching objectives of defining media manipulation: classification of the prevalent manipulation types, and investigation of the underlying contextual and social-psychological mechanisms.

The paper's structure encompasses an introduction, three chapters with subchapters, conclusions, and references. Through a comprehensive analysis of lexical and grammatical manipulation techniques, the research has uncovered complex mechanisms in media discourse. It identified 25 distinct strategies used by media outlets to shape narratives and sway public opinion, ranging from selective presentation of factual data to promotion of ideological polarisation.

The findings of this research underscore the necessity for critical analysis of media content to discern hidden motives and understand the complexities of modern information dissemination. Random sampling ensured a representative selection of articles, enhancing the generalizability of the findings. Ultimately, understanding manipulative communication strategies empowers individuals to engage with information more discerningly, fostering a more informed and vigilant society.

*Keywords:* manipulation, mass media discourse, mass communication, Internet mass media, communicative strategy, manipulation technique.

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## INTRODUCTION

Within the field of communication studies, manipulation emerges as a multidimensional and sophisticated phenomenon, crucially significant in the landscape of the 21st century. In the modern digital age, characterised by information overload and ubiquitous media saturation, manipulation techniques have progressively expanded their reach. Thus, understanding the concept of manipulation is imperative for communication researchers due to its pervasive presence across various forms of media and its profound impact on society.

With diverse definitions attributing manipulation to different facets of social power abuse, cognitive manipulation, and pragmatic deception, defining the concept becomes a critical preliminary step in any study [43]. As mechanisms compel listeners to perceive messages uncritically, create illusions, and manipulate emotions, the need for clarity in defining and understanding manipulation becomes paramount for various researchers working in this complex terrain.

Media discourse covers the interactions occurring through broadcast platforms, either written or spoken, directed towards non-present readers, viewers or listeners [39]. While traditional limitations may have hindered immediate responses from discourse recipients, ongoing technological advancements are reshaping this landscape. Within modern society, the influence of mass media discourse is profound, serving as a pivotal force in moulding public awareness and shaping attitudes towards various events. Recognised as a cornerstone of the social system, mass media actively contribute to its construction and evolution, underscoring their significance in societal development.

This profound influence has garnered the attention of scholars from various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and linguistics [26]. Notable figures such as T. van Dijk and H. Davis delved into the analysis of mass media discourse, recognising its significant role in global communication across diverse fields such as science, politics, as well as culture.

In contemporary society, mass media heavily influences and controls people's minds. This happens because of the fact that it reaches a lot of people and thus affects public opinion. It is also a major source of information and entertainment for most people. Additionally, media outlets compete with each other to get the attention of the audience, which leads them to use manipulative tactics to do so. The need to make money often gets in the way of honest reporting. As manipulation techniques become more advanced, journalists must follow ethical guidelines and aim for fair and accurate reporting [45].

British online newspapers, along with other mass media outlets, apply a diverse range of strategies in order to captivate their audience and mould their perspectives. These tactics encompass everything from provocative headlines to captivating narratives, all thoughtfully designed with the aim of evoking specific reactions from readers. Moreover, the interactive nature of digital news platforms enables constant refinement of these tactics based on audience feedback and engagement metrics. As such, researchers must delve into the complexities of manipulation within this context to gain a deeper understanding of its implications on societal attitudes and behaviours.

**The relevance** of the research lies in the growing concerns over the integrity and credibility of modern mass media, necessitating a thorough examination of manipulation tactics employed within the industry.

**The novelty** of the research stems from its comprehensive investigation into manipulation techniques within the modern British mass media landscape, offering fresh insights into the evolving strategies used to shape public opinion and influence reader perceptions.

**The object** of the research is the manipulation in the modern British mass media. **The subject** of the research is the manipulation types and techniques used in the media.

**The aim** of this study is to classify and structure the types and methods of manipulation utilised in the modern British mass media. Furthermore, it seeks to

identify the most commonly employed techniques, with the aim of devising effective strategies to counteract them.

The purpose of the research constitutes the accomplishment of the following **objectives**: to define the concept of media manipulation, to identify and classify the various types and techniques of manipulation prevalent in contemporary British mass media, to describe the phenomenon of clickbait headlines and sensationalist content in online news media, to investigate the contextual factors and social-psychological mechanisms underlying media manipulation.

**The theoretical meaning** of this research lies in its contribution to the understanding of media manipulation within the theoretical frameworks of communication studies.

**The practical meaning** of this research lies in its potential to provide valuable insights and methodologies for further research in communication studies, particularly in understanding and addressing the challenges posed by media manipulation in contemporary media environments.

**Language data** used in this paper include 30 article samples from popular British online newspapers (*The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*) with a total word count approximate to 30 thousand words. These articles were chosen through a random sampling method, ensuring a representative assortment across various publications and topics. Random sampling proves advantageous in this research endeavour by offering a comprehensive snapshot of manipulative strategies deployed by media outlets, thus minimising potential bias and bolstering the generalizability of our findings. The selection of the newspapers *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* aligns with a deliberate choice to focus on the UK's "quality newsbrands," including their digital editions [66]. These outlets represent a significant presence in the UK media landscape, commanding credibility and influence.

**Research methods** used for the implementation of the tasks set out for this research paper include a combination of qualitative content analysis and contextual

analysis of newspaper articles sourced from reputable British media outlets, as well as a random sampling method, all complemented by theoretical frameworks from communication studies literature to analyse manipulation techniques and their impact.

**Structure:** the paper consists of an introduction, and three chapters, each of which consists of several subchapters, also conclusions and references.

# **1. THE CONCEPT OF MANIPULATION IN MODERN MASS MEDIA WITHIN MODERN COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

## **1.1. The Concept of Mass Media Discourse in Contemporary Research**

With the rise of global informatization, information has become a central tool for exercising power and governing societies. Contemporary communication theory integrates insights from various disciplines such as sociology of mass communications and media psychology, supporting a generative approach that is gaining prominence. A lot of famous scholars like J. Baudrillard, P. Winterhoff-Spurk, as well as N. Kostenko contributed to this approach, emphasising the importance of accumulating functionality and situationality in understanding information dissemination. This perspective is increasingly valued for its ability to address the diverse nature of information needs, a realm traditionally explored within anthropocentric and socio-cultural frameworks. As information continues to shape societal dynamics and influence decision-making processes, grasping its functionality and contextual significance becomes most important for navigating the complex terrain of modern governance and communication networks. Understanding these intricacies is essential for the effective management of the complexities inherent in the information-driven societies of today [36].

Mass media holds considerable power as a tool for spreading information and shaping public perception. Through mass media discourse, individuals acquire knowledge about different global events, significant cultural developments, and the broader social community to which they belong. This covers various media formats, including news outlets, educational programs, and informational resources, all of which contribute to the multifaceted landscape of modern media.

Bach [3] argues that the relationship between intention and expressive modality shapes the function of the discourse, emphasising the role of language in reinforcing power dynamics and ideologies.

In contemporary research, the concept of mass media discourse holds significant relevance as scholars delve into the complex dynamics of communication within social contexts. It offers a lens through which scholars analyse the contact between language, communication, and societal dynamics. Through the analysis of discourse in mass media, researchers seek to uncover the underlying mechanisms behind the production and dissemination of information, exploring how linguistic elements interact with broader socio-cultural contexts to shape public discourse. By understanding the complexities of mass media discourse, researchers gain insights into the power dynamics at play within society, informing discussions on issues ranging from media representation to social change.

The term “discourse” covers language use within social contexts, focusing on the interplay between language, society, and communication modes such as written and spoken language, as discussed by Fairclough and Wodak [16] and Van Dijk [61], with the latter distinguishing between “text” and “talk,” respectively.

Discourse, fundamentally, covers the organisation and construction of linguistic components that transcend the boundaries of individual sentences, helping the articulation of complex ideas, perspectives, and narratives, shaping collective understandings and interpretations. The term “discourse” finds its roots in the Latin word “discursus,” which denotes both written and spoken communication or debate. This conceptualization emphasises the relations between language and social context, wherein discourse serves as a vehicle for communication and interaction within society [34].

The nature of discourse can be perceived as a dynamic, unfolding in a gradual way over time, with its thematic content revolving around a central reference concept [82]. The theme of discourse often delves into various aspects of the social world, the speaker’s emotions, inner thoughts, and prevailing issues. Discourse analysis endeavours to uncover the individuals or entities controlling these themes and their evolution, including semantic macrostructures and stylistic elements.

Discourse serves as a means for reproducing systemic power dynamics, knowledge frameworks, and hegemonic structures [63]. However, it also serves as a platform for resistance and critique against dominant power structures, aiming to transform societal constructions of reality and promote social empowerment and change [71].

Fairclough and Wodak underscore the pivotal role of discourse in shaping power dynamics within society. According to their insights, power relations are not merely inherent but are actively performed and constructed through discourse, serving as a lens through which society and culture are constituted in a dialectical relationship. It becomes evident that discourse carries inherent ideological biases and is far from being neutral, functioning as a medium through which historical contexts are intertwined with contemporary narratives. Understanding the link between text and society necessitates an appreciation of discourse's historical dimensions, highlighting its role as a mediator between the two realms. Moreover, discourse analysis emerges as an interpretative and explanatory process, shedding light on the complex mechanisms through which discourse influences social action and shapes collective perceptions [16].

While discourse encompasses various non-linguistic semiotic modalities, such as multimedia texts and online discursive practices, language remains paramount in the process of meaning-making within social contexts, as highlighted by scholars like Kress and van Leeuwen [28] and Halliday and Matthiessen [19].

Mass media, according to McQuail's definition, encompasses not only the production and dissemination of messages but also their selection, transmission, reception, and response, underscoring its extensive reach and impact within modern society [35]. This comprehensive understanding of mass media includes a wide variety of communication channels, ranging from traditional mediums such as television, radio, books, magazines, newspapers, films, recordings, and billboards to the more contemporary platform of the Internet. With the advent of the so-called smart mass media, characterised by devices like smartphones, smart TVs, and tablets,

the scope of mass media has expanded even further, reflecting the evolving landscape of communication technologies [70;23].

J. Baudrillard delves into the interplay of rational and postmodern perspectives regarding the simulated nature of mass communication, and further suggests the concept of “mass cultural mystification.” In this construct, the mass itself eliminates the traditional notion of mass culture. Controlled socialisation intricately blends conflicting aspects of individual existence into the framework of societal simulation, blurring the boundary between reality and representation. Within this framework, individuals are compelled to assume the roles of both consumers and producers in what Baudrillard terms the “hypermarket of culture.” Baudrillard’s analysis sheds light on the complexities inherent in mass communication, calling attention to the challenges that individuals come across in reconciling their identities and ambitions within an environment dominated by simulated cultural paradigms [6].

In our contemporary society, mass media fulfil various functions, including providing information, analysis, entertainment, and advertising, influencing the daily lives of individuals as well as contributing to societal dynamics [1;22;31;50].

Yemelyanova and Shulik mention several key functions of mass media in their study. Firstly, it serves an informative role by reporting current events, facts, and situations. Secondly, it assumes an evaluative function, offering commentary, analysis, and opinions on various topics, thereby shaping public understanding. Thirdly, mass media serves educational purposes, providing access to a wide range of educational materials, including books, historical accounts, geographical information, and other resources across print, television, and online platforms [72].

Sociologist John Thompson of Cambridge University identifies five key characteristics of mass communication. Firstly, mass communication covers both technical and institutional methods of production and distribution, which are evident across various media platforms fulfilling commercial objectives. Secondly, it involves the commodification of symbolic forms, where materials are mass-produced and marketed, analogous to selling advertising space in newspapers or airtime on radio

stations. Thirdly, a clear distinction exists between the production and reception of information within mass communication contexts. Fourthly, it oversteps geographical and temporal boundaries, giving producers an opportunity to connect with audiences regardless of their location or the timing of dissemination. Finally, mass communication operates on a “one-to-many” model, introducing information broadly to large audiences simultaneously, rather than through personalised interactions [57].

Media discourse, whether articulated orally or inscribed in written form, assumes a paramount position in moulding collective perceptions and engagements within society. Despite the frequent absence of instantaneous feedback from audiences for some forms of mass media, the discourse remains directed towards the readership or viewership, embodying a deliberate and documented mode of interaction [39]. Linguistic inquiry into media discourse frequently delves into the intricacies of language manipulation, with scholarly attention focused on discerning subtle linguistic manoeuvres aimed at distorting reality. Scholars such as White underscore the strategic deployment of language to project an illusion of impartiality, as evidenced by the meticulous selection of linguistic registers to convey purported neutrality [68;30].

The term “mass” often evokes the image of a passive and undifferentiated audience, reflecting earlier critiques of mass culture and society. However, interactive digital media have challenged this perception, allowing for more engaged forms of communication [57]. Understanding mass media is most important for analysing and gaining deeper insights into population and culture, as it offers valuable clues into societal trends and thought processes [53].

The emergence of the Internet, propelled by advancements in information and telecommunication technologies, has revolutionised mass media and communication dynamics [14]. As print media faced challenges due to economic constraints, the Internet emerged as a dynamic alternative, offering a diverse array of functions and content formats.

Internet mass media, also known as web-based mass information sources or online mass media, encompasses various online platforms that serve as sources of mass communication in contemporary society [11;23]. Social media platforms such as YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, various blogs, alongside traditional media outlets like magazines, newspapers, television and radio broadcasting, produce information with regularity, reflecting societal life and events.

The functions of Internet media mirror those of traditional mass media but are tailored to leverage the technical capabilities of the Internet [14]. These functions include preserving all media content and creating a specific, conditioned environment for information consumption.

The scholar Hausenblas underscores the communicative aspect of text, placing an emphasis on its orientation towards the reader. Every text inherently conveys information to an audience through different channels, such as print media and the Internet, with the aim of evoking a response or perception from the recipient. The process of information perception establishes a personal connection between the reader and the text itself, in such a way forming pragmatic relations that influence interpretation [76].

In a similar way, one distinguishing feature of Internet media mentioned in a recent study by Duishonbaeva et al. is its communicative function, characterised by a two-way model of communication that encourages active reader participation [14]. Unlike traditional media, where readers passively consume information, Internet users actively engage in information exchange, contributing to discussions and public discourse.

The audience's pragmatic attitude toward a text is influenced not only by its inherent pragmatics but also by the characteristics of the audience themselves [93]. Factors such as personality, background knowledge, previous experiences, and mental state all play a role in shaping the audience's interpretation of the text. Analysing the pragmatics of a text enables the prediction of its potential communicative effects on a typical audience member in a plausible manner.

There are statements that mass media play a pivotal role in shaping our culture by filtering and emphasising select elements from the vast spectrum of cultural phenomena. They elevate certain ideas while marginalising others, leading to polarisation within the cultural sphere. In our modern world, content that doesn't make it into mass media channels has limited, minimal impact on societal progress [65]. This viewpoint highlights the substantial influence of mass media on public discourse, societal norms, and values. Through controlling information dissemination and shaping public perception, mass media wield significant power in determining which cultural narratives gain prominence and which remain obscure. Therefore, gaining insight into the operational mechanisms of mass media is essential for understanding the complexities of cultural evolution and societal transformations.

Orkhovska sums up the most notable aspects of media influence by giving two theses. Firstly, mass media significantly contribute to the dissemination of various social norms among individuals of different age groups and the shaping of their value systems in areas such as politics, economics, health, and law. Secondly, mass media serve as an informal platform for educating and enlightening diverse segments of the population. However, users often encounter a plethora of diverse, sometimes contradictory, and unorganised information on social and political issues [84].

Speaking of the contact with the audience, it is crucial to mention the stages of communication between the mass media and the public. We turn again to Orkhovska's study to outline the phases of knowledge transmission on the part of mass media [84]:

- Contact phase: This initial phase involves encountering the basic facts generated through human activity, marking the initiation of information communication.
- Encoding phase: Here, the channel delivering the information adds symbolic forms to the received data, shaping it into a coherent message. This stage covers all activities that are related to organising information and preparing it for further dissemination.

- Transmission phase: In this stage, both the transmitting and receiving channels are activated, using appropriate technical means to convey information.
- Reception phase: This complex phase involves the active engagement of psychological mechanisms. Changes in attitudes and value orientations typically begin during this phase.
- Post-phase: The use of information by individuals and groups may not always occur in an overt manner. The impact of information on the psyche can persist over time, influencing consciousness continuously, regardless of whether individuals are consciously aware of it or not.

Nowadays Internet media platforms play a pivotal role in regulating values beyond their conventional functions of disseminating information and entertainment. These platforms serve as dynamic spaces that aid multifaceted discussions and foster social participation among users. Providing opportunities for individuals to engage in dialogue and exchange diverse viewpoints, Internet media platforms contribute to the formation of public discourse and the negotiation of societal norms and values [14]. Through interactive features such as comment sections, forums, and social media channels, Internet media platforms promote inclusivity and democratic engagement by amplifying the voices of diverse communities. Moreover, they offer spaces for constructive debate, collaborative problem-solving, and collective action, thereby shaping public opinion and influencing social change. As such, Internet media platforms serve as essential vehicles for value regulation in the digital age, facilitating the exchange of ideas and the construction of shared meanings within modern society.

According to Habermas, digital platforms provide a worldwide, economically practical, and rapid method of communication that allows for bidirectional exchanges among a large number of users [18]. This communicative framework holds promise for democracy by amplifying citizen participation within the public sphere, where the formation of public opinion occurs. The emergence of online publications has been accompanied by heightened interactivity, a feature that has garnered significant attention among readers, as highlighted by Chung [12]. This shift towards

interactivity challenges the traditional paradigm of media communication, which is defined by the unilateral broadcast of material from elite producers to passive viewers.

Traditionally, media communication relied on a linear and unidirectional flow of information, controlled by elite groups, with limited opportunities for audience feedback or participation. However, with the advent of digital platforms and social media, the landscape of media communication has undergone significant changes. Digital platforms promote interactive communication, blurring the lines between official and unofficial texts and empowering individuals to participate in the production and dissemination of content.

El Alaoui underscores the progression of reader interaction within online newspapers, where individuals now encounter diverse interactive functionalities to directly engage with news content [15]. The inclusion of reader comments sections reflects the modern version of traditional letters to the editor, providing a platform for public voice and participatory journalism. Despite this transition towards heightened interactivity, scholarly investigations indicate that the roles of journalists and audience members maintain a clear demarcation, with readers predominantly assuming the role of active recipients rather than news contributors [27].

In order to comprehend the shift of mass audiences towards “interpretive communities” and the transformation of the average media consumer into a personalised entity within the media-communicative realm, it is crucial to incorporate the scientific principles of persuasive communication theory. This integration forms the contemporary scientific foundation for examining sociocultural phenomena, particularly the metadiscourse of media, despite attempts to politicise it, as well as other media-generated creations, such as artistic expressions. Embracing the ideas of persuasive communication theory leads to a more thorough knowledge of how viewers engage with media information, altering their perceptions and identities within a larger sociocultural framework. This interdisciplinary approach not only clarifies the dynamics of media consumption but also emphasises the importance of

acknowledging the diverse impacts exerted by media on individuals and society as a whole. Thus, through the adoption of this interdisciplinary framework, scholars can better unravel the intricate interplay between media, culture, and communication processes in contemporary society [36].

In conclusion, the exploration of mass media discourse within contemporary research underscores its pivotal role in shaping public perception and understanding. Through various media formats, including news outlets, educational programs, and online resources, mass media discourse serves as a potent tool for disseminating information and fostering societal engagement. By understanding the complexities of mass media discourse, researchers gain valuable insights into power dynamics, media representation, and societal change, informing critical discussions on contemporary issues. As mass media continues to evolve with technological advancements, further research into discourse dynamics will be crucial for navigating the complexities of the modern media landscape and its broader implications for society.

## **1.2. Theoretical Approaches to Understanding Manipulation in Mass Media**

Individuals in modern culture are expected to be able to critically analyse the information they encounter. Nevertheless, there is a growing trend within mass media to obscure information through various linguistic deviations from established norms. Decrypting such encrypted material requires significant time and cognitive effort on the part of the reader, increasing their exposure to its influence. Consequently, an unresolved aspect of the broader issue pertains to the identification of indicators and mechanisms employed in the manipulation of human consciousness.

Manipulation is a central focus across diverse academic disciplines, including psychology, political science, and social communication theory. In psychology, scholars such as Z. Freud, and C.G. Jung have investigated the effect of manipulation

on individual consciousness and subconscious behaviour. The concept of manipulation as a scientific category emerged during the 1940s and 1950s, largely through the contributions of Western political philosophers. Contemporary scholars like H. Pocheptsova continue to delve into its psychological dimensions. Concurrently, researchers such as J. Wilson, J. McCoy, O. Yevlanova and others explore manipulation's political ramifications in society. Their collective endeavours enhance our understanding of manipulation's complex nature and its significant impact on both individuals and societal dynamics. Through interdisciplinary collaboration, these scholars contribute valuable insights into the pervasive influence of manipulation across various spheres of human existence.

Yevlanova, Shyroka and Hrebin emphasise the multidimensional nature of manipulation, noting various distinguishing features identified by academics in the field. Central to these characteristics is the widespread use of psychological influence, which serves as the foundation for manipulative methods. Moreover, manipulators adopt an instrumental stance towards the recipient, viewing them merely as a means to their own ends, thus embodying a self-serving agenda. This instrumental attitude underscores the manipulator's pursuit of a one-sided advantage, prioritising their own interests over those of the recipient [78;51].

Kosovet's definition of manipulation encapsulates it as a deliberate speech behavior strategically employed during communication to prompt an interlocutor into undertaking an action that ultimately proves disadvantageous to them but advantageous to the manipulator. Central to this definition is the clandestine nature of manipulation, wherein both the intent and the means of persuasion are intentionally concealed from the recipient. This covert approach distinguishes manipulation from other forms of influence, as the manipulator operates with a veiled agenda, often exploiting the unsuspecting target's vulnerabilities or lack of awareness [80].

Importantly, manipulation often operates covertly, veiling both its existence and direction from the recipient's awareness. This clandestine nature is further compounded by the manipulator's skillful use of psychological power, often

exploiting the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of the recipient in order to achieve their objectives. Through inducement and motivational induction, manipulators subtly steer the recipient towards the actions that are desirable for the former, all while demonstrating finesse and adroitness in executing manipulative manoeuvres.

Another interpretation of manipulation emphasises its role as a form of psychological infiltration, aiming to insidiously implant goals, desires, intentions, or attitudes within the recipient's psyche that diverge from their current disposition. By covertly shaping the recipient's perceptions and motivations, manipulators seek to exert a subtle yet potent influence over their behaviour and decision-making processes [90].

Language manipulation aims to implant goals, attitudes, and intentions that diverge from an individual's existing beliefs and attitudes, which they cannot independently form. This process induces a specific emotional state or prompts particular actions in the target of the manipulation. Manipulators attempt to alter the recipient's perceptions and actions in order to achieve their own goals by adding inconsistent elements into their cognitive framework. This manipulation operates by subtly infiltrating the recipient's psyche and reshaping their cognitive landscape, ultimately steering them towards outcomes predetermined by the manipulator [41].

In essence, manipulation operates through implicit persuasion rather than overt coercion, employing subtle and strategic means to achieve its desired outcomes. Through these nuanced tactics, manipulators adeptly navigate the psychological landscape of their targets, leveraging their insights and skills to manipulate with precision and efficacy [78;51].

A fundamental aspect of comprehending manipulation lies in distinguishing between legitimate persuasion and manipulation, as underscored by O'Keefe [40]. At the same time, according to Sorlin [54], manipulation and persuasion represent distinct approaches: persuasion involves transparent argumentation, while manipulation selectively emphasises certain elements while concealing others to control interpretation. Legitimate persuasion affords individuals the autonomy to

critically evaluate arguments and make informed decisions, whereas manipulation tends to render recipients passive, positioning them as unwitting victims of the manipulator's agenda. This passive response commonly arises when recipients are unable to discern the true motives behind the manipulation, particularly when they lack the requisite knowledge or awareness to resist it effectively. Consequently, manipulation within mass media operates insidiously, exploiting vulnerabilities and exerting influence in ways that may elude immediate detection by the audience, underscoring the intricacies inherent in its execution.

Van Dijk links manipulation with unequal power dynamics, particularly when wielded by speakers in dominant positions [59]. Scholars like Radu conceptually connect manipulation and influence, as seen in instances where “influence” replaces “manipulation” [47]. Manipulation targets various human needs and motivations, often exploiting fear as a potent emotional tool. It involves exerting control, dominance, and distorting facts to elicit consent that may not have been freely given [9], often achieved by exaggerating situations and unjustifiably validating irrational arguments.

Effective manipulation often works best when it operates discreetly, flying under the radar to prevent individuals from recognizing its influence. However, media platforms frequently resort to employing direct manipulation techniques, notably through the strategic use of headlines and accompanying them with photographic imagery [45].

Headlines, in particular, serve as the critical entry point for readers, acting as the first impression and determining whether individuals engage further with the content. As such, they undergo scrupulous crafting in order to seize attention and provoke curiosity. This process often involves the use of wordplay tactics, which may occasionally veer away from ethical journalistic standards in pursuit of maximising impact. The primary goal of a headline is not merely to convey information but to entice readers into delving deeper into the article, prompting them to explore the story

in its entirety. Therefore, headlines must possess a compelling and expressive quality to captivate audiences and encourage continued engagement with the content.

Manipulation in headlines can be classified into verbal and non-verbal methods. Verbal techniques encompass morphological, syntactic, lexical, and stylistic elements. Non-verbal strategies involve graphic features like size, colour, font variations, and highlighting, along with semantic approaches.

Peter Robert Rupert White explores the commonly held belief that mass media news reporting should maintain objectivity, free from the influence of the author's or the media organisation's opinions and points of view. White identifies two main categories of evaluative language that challenge notions of journalistic neutrality. The first category involves explicit and direct assessments presented by the journalistic author, such as positive or negative evaluations of events or speeches. The second category covers attitudinal assessments that are more subtle and indirect, operating through association, metaphor, implication, or inference, making them analytically challenging to address [68].

To delve into the evaluative functionality of language, White proposes an analytical framework that distinguishes between different types of attitudinal assessments and considers the means by which these assessments are activated in the text. He categorises positive and negative assessments into opinions and emotions, further subdividing opinions into assessments of human behaviour, texts and artefacts, and naturally occurring objects and states of affairs. Moreover, White emphasises the importance of discerning between attitudinal assessments for which the author takes direct responsibility and those attributed to external sources.

In various scholarly works, manipulation is analysed across different domains. Informational manipulation, for instance, extends its influence throughout mass communication channels, allowing unchecked control over the dissemination of information. Simultaneously, governmental figures at the highest echelons utilise manipulative tactics as crucial components of political strategy and administration. Media owners shape narratives across newspapers, television channels, and internet

platforms to manipulate public perception, emphasising the significance of upholding journalistic integrity for accurate information dissemination. Additionally, manipulative strategies are frequently employed during electoral cycles, while linguistic manipulation functions as a subtle tool within the broader spectrum of informational manipulation, shaping public interpretation and reactions to events. This classification highlights the diverse manifestations of manipulation across economic, political, media, and linguistic spheres, each exerting distinct yet interconnected influences on societal dynamics [88].

Manipulation within the realm of mass media is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that transcends mere exercises of power. It entails the deliberate exploitation of power dynamics with the aim of establishing dominance and control [59]. This form of manipulation predominantly operates through discourse, where individuals are subtly coerced into adopting beliefs or behaviours that align with the manipulator's agenda, often to the detriment of their own genuine interests [33]. Furthermore, manipulation extends beyond verbal discourse to cover a diverse array of visual mediums, such as images, photographs, films, etc. within a semiotic framework. This reflects the nuanced and multimodal nature of contemporary communication strategies deployed by mass media entities, highlighting their adeptness at using different channels in order to influence and shape public perceptions [13].

Manipulation involves the strategic imposition of spiritual influence on individuals to direct their actions. This influence acts profoundly within individuals' psychological frames, discreetly aiming to transform their views, desires, and goals to fit with the manipulator's desired consequences [90]. This manipulation allows for the execution of extraordinary influence by influencing the target's will, emotions, and sentiments. It maintains their passive condition by masterfully influencing their ideas, wants, expressions, and behaviour. Whether through providing authentic information, altering behaviour through deception, or exploiting vulnerabilities, manipulation encompasses complex psychological mechanisms aimed at subtly moulding and

managing the behaviours and perceptions of others to serve the manipulator's interests [88].

As outlined by Cabrejas-Peñuelas, manipulation is characterised by an unauthorised control exerted by manipulators, deceiving others into believing that implemented policies serve their best interests, when in actuality, they predominantly benefit the manipulators themselves [10]. This process manifests in both interpersonal and societal contexts. Interpersonal manipulation takes place between individuals, while societal manipulation is orchestrated by institutions or organisations with the aim to influence broader groups like readers, voters, audiences, and public opinion [60].

Both forms are troubling because manipulated individuals often overlook the adverse implications of their situation [69], potentially perpetuating inequality by favouring the interests of powerful groups and speakers over those less influential [63].

Social-political manipulation, closely linked to power misuse, is inherently ideological, encompassing ideologies, ideological attitudes, and the structural discourse of ideological discourse utilised in manipulative tactics [59]. This ideological aspect underscores how manipulators utilise belief systems and narrative frameworks to sway perceptions and maintain control over societal narratives, further entrenching their dominance.

Manipulation operates covertly, leveraging psychological rather than physical means to influence its targets. It requires adeptness and knowledge, aiming for desired outcomes with minimal effort. Research into manipulative strategies employs various terms like “method,” “reception,” “technique,” and “technology,” yet definitive criteria for their differentiation remain elusive. Their application depends on the breadth and universality of the approach. For instance, a blend of techniques might be classified as a method or technique, while in other cases, it could be labelled as a technology. The boundaries between these terms are fluid, depending on the exact context and extent of the manipulation being examined. This interdisciplinary

exploration of manipulative tactics unveils the complex mechanisms driving human behaviour and persuasion, offering insights into how individuals and groups wield influence over one another [36]. Through such investigations, a deeper understanding of manipulation's nuances emerges, enabling more effective strategies for mitigating its negative impacts and promoting ethical communication practices.

Bartoszek's characterization of manipulation as "spiritual suppression" suggests that it operates not only on a superficial level but also penetrates the individual's innermost thoughts and beliefs, stifling their ability to form independent judgments [5]. Other scientists amplify this perspective by asserting that manipulation of consciousness represents a grave moral transgression [90]. By subverting an individual's cognitive autonomy, manipulators exert control over their desires and decisions, effectively relegating them to mere instruments of external influence. This erosion of personal agency not only compromises the individual's ability to make rational choices but also infringes upon their inherent civil liberties, depriving them of the freedom to determine their own course of action.

However, scholars hold divergent views on this matter. Yevlanova argues that covert control, when used for benevolent purposes, is justifiable. She suggests that manipulation serves as a fundamental mechanism for society's self-preservation. According to her perspective, manipulation helps maintain social order and stability by guiding individuals towards behaviours that benefit the collective. Yevlanova contends that in certain situations, such as crises or emergencies, manipulation can be necessary to prevent disorder and ensure the well-being of society as a whole [78]. By subtly influencing people's perceptions and actions, manipulation can steer society towards outcomes that serve its long-term interests, even if it means temporarily compromising individual autonomy.

In conclusion, the theoretical framework for understanding mass media manipulation encompasses diverse perspectives from psychology, political science, and social communication theory. Manipulation, as defined by various scholars,

involves the strategic imposition of influence to control individuals' thoughts, emotions, and behaviours covertly. It operates through linguistic and visual mediums, exploiting power dynamics and vulnerabilities to serve the manipulator's agenda. Distinguishing manipulation from legitimate persuasion is crucial, as the former renders recipients passive and undermines their autonomy. Despite differing views on its morality, manipulation remains pervasive in mass media, shaping public perception and societal narratives. Scholars emphasise the need for ethical communication practices to mitigate its negative impacts and promote informed decision-making.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the exploration of theoretical frameworks surrounding manipulation in modern mass media is essential for comprehending the multifaceted dynamics of communication in our contemporary society. The exploration of mass media discourse within modern research highlights its prominent role in shaping public perception and understanding. In various media formats, including news, educational programmes and online resources, online media discourse serves as a major tool for communicating information and contributing to civic engagement. Understanding the intricacies of mass media discourse, the researchers acquire valuable knowledge about the dynamics of power, media representation and social change, which in turn contributes to critical discussion of current issues.

According to researchers, the concept of manipulation involves the strategic imposition of influence with the aim of covertly controlling people's thoughts, emotions and behaviour. Manipulation is carried out through language and visual means, using the power and vulnerability dynamics to achieve the objectives of the manipulator. While there are different views on its morality, manipulation remains a significant phenomenon in the mass media, shaping public opinion and social narratives.

## **2. MANIPULATIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN BRITISH MODERN MASS MEDIA**

### **2.1. Manipulation Techniques in Communication Studies**

This section delves into the taxonomy of manipulation strategies in communication studies, drawing on multidisciplinary views to highlight the diverse character of manipulative tactics. Manipulation techniques cover a wide range of methods, including verbal and nonverbal communication, psychological manipulation, and strategic information transmission.

Manipulators employ a plethora of strategies to perpetuate their dominance, often at the expense of those they manipulate [25].

Covert manipulation tactics are increasingly common in media communication. Among the variety of strategies that are employed, one notable method revolves around the structural composition of textual content.

Media articles are written to prioritise clarity and simplicity, often involving straightforward sentences and concise vocabulary in order to facilitate easy comprehension. Importantly, significant information is strategically positioned at the outset of the article or even within the headline itself. This deliberate arrangement serves the purpose of immediately capturing the attention of readers, particularly those who are merely scanning through headlines. Ensuring that the most important details are prominently featured, media outlets can effectively draw in their audience and deliver the core message swiftly and efficiently. This approach not only maximises audience engagement but also enables media organisations to convey their intended narrative with the greatest possible impact, shaping public perceptions and influencing opinions in the process [45].

Language manipulation can be delineated through several approaches, with each shedding light on different facets of this complex phenomenon [74]:

- Covert influence: This perspective underscores the hidden or implicit influence exerted by language on the recipient's opinions or behaviour. Here, language serves as a tool for persuading individuals to adopt the manipulator's viewpoint while masking the true intentions behind the communication. By operating subtly, manipulators seek to sway others without arousing suspicion regarding their underlying motives.
- Specific linguistic behaviour: Another lens through which language manipulation is understood focuses on the deliberate use of particular linguistic behaviours during communication. This approach emphasises the manipulator's strategic deployment of language resources to induce the interlocutor into actions that may not be in their best interest but serve the manipulator's agenda.
- Skilful use of language resources: Language manipulation also manifests as a sophisticated form of manipulative influence achieved through adept exploitation of linguistic tools. Here, the manipulator uses verbal resources to subtly impact the cognitive and behavioural reactions of the recipient. By strategically selecting words, phrases, and communication strategies, manipulators seek to subtly shape the perceptions and actions of others in alignment with their own objectives.

The categorization of manipulative techniques cannot be universally standardised because each communication context demands a tailored approach based on its unique dynamics.

The scientists Susska, Chernii, and Sukharevska [36] compiled the list of prevalent manipulative methods commonly employed by the media and television to sway public opinion: serving as the intermediary between information and society, the media possesses the authority to mould news delivery to its advantage; consequently, information may be manipulated to align with the agenda of the “customer” through various means:

- Distortion via one-sided presentation;

- Fabrication, disseminating fictional narratives instead of factual accounts;
- Editing involving the insertion of personal opinions and conjecture;
- Interpretation favouring the manipulator's perspective;
- Complete concealment from the audience.

To achieve their objectives, manipulators employ various strategies to transform information effectively, as outlined by Yevlanova [78]. The strategies, mentioned by the scholar, include:

- Distortion: This ranges from outright falsehoods to subtle shifts in the semantic context, altering the perception of facts.
- Concealment: Manipulators may choose to remain silent on certain details or selectively present information to shape a particular narrative.
- Presentation manipulation: The manner in which information is presented can be manipulated to influence interpretation and understanding.
- Timing manipulation: The timing of information delivery, including the order and timing of discussion, can significantly impact how it is perceived and absorbed by the recipient.
- Information overload: Manipulators may inundate the recipient with an overwhelming amount of information selected based on specific criteria, making it challenging to discern key details amidst the deluge.

The media often presents information incompletely or selectively due to their subjective stance. This can involve pairing material with inappropriate headlines, publishing truthful information when its relevance has diminished, or including inaccurate quotes out of context, thereby distorting the intended meaning of the information [36].

While Harriet B. Braiker's study primarily focuses on psychology, its insights are valuable when examining mass media discourse. We find the following methods from Braiker's list relevant for our study:

- Positive reinforcement: Mass media outlets may use positive reinforcement by offering praise or public recognition to individuals or groups that align with

their agenda. They may also provide attention or grants to those who support their viewpoints.

- Negative reinforcement: Media manipulation can involve negative reinforcement by removing coverage or attention from individuals or organisations that oppose their narrative, effectively rewarding compliance.
- Gaslighting: Manipulative media tactics may include gaslighting techniques to distort public perception of certain events or issues, causing doubt or confusion among the audience regarding the accuracy of their own beliefs or experiences.
- Intermittent or partial reinforcement: Mass media manipulation may employ intermittent or partial reinforcement strategies to control public behaviour or opinion. By alternating between rewards (such as favourable coverage) and punishments (such as negative portrayal), media outlets can influence audience reactions and compliance.
- Punishment: Media manipulation may involve punishing dissenting voices or viewpoints through tactics like public ridicule, character assassination, or exclusion from media platforms. This can discourage opposition and maintain control over the narrative.
- Traumatic one-trial learning: In extreme cases, manipulative media practices may involve traumatic one-trial learning, where a single instance of intimidation, harassment, or defamation establishes dominance and discourages dissent among individuals or groups who fear similar treatment in the future [8].

In Bezugla's analysis [75], television emerges as the predominant tool for manipulation in contemporary society, with various tactics frequently used by the media. One such strategy is emotional resonance, which seeks to influence the overall mood of a wide audience through the dissemination of propaganda. By evoking emotional reactions, manipulators can circumvent individuals' conscious defences against brainwashing.

Fabricating facts is another common method, often accomplished through the gradual accumulation of minor distortions rather than outright falsehoods.

Reference to authority is employed to cultivate trust among viewers, relying on the credibility, popularity, and societal status of influential figures.

Sensationalism also plays a significant role, as information is presented in a fragmented manner to obscure its coherence and highlight pseudo-sensational stories, diverting attention from genuinely important news. Additionally, media manipulators frequently alter the meanings of words and concepts, modifying contexts to convey messages contrary to their original intent or distorted. These manipulation strategies collectively contribute to the perpetuation of societal anxiety and the reinforcement of desired narratives within the mass media landscape [75]

Saiko's research explores how newspapers intentionally focus on negative news to capture their audience's attention. This approach is driven by the understanding that negative stories tend to attract more readers and boost newspaper sales compared to positive ones. As a result, newspapers prioritise negative news to maintain or increase their readership. Saiko investigates various fields like psychology, economics, and political communications to understand why negativity is favoured. Drawing from evolutionary-biological analysis, she suggests that humans may have a natural inclination to pay more attention to negative information due to its perceived evolutionary benefits. This perspective implies that the potential risks associated with negative news outweigh the potential benefits of positive news, leading people to prefer negative stories [49].

Manipulative techniques encompass various forms, shaping not only individual perceptions but also societal narratives [88]. These techniques include:

- Shaping informational waves: Manipulators craft information to influence public opinion and shape narratives.
- Establishing societal agendas: Manipulators set agendas to control discussions and steer collective focus towards specific topics or issues.

- Anonymous authorship: By concealing the identity of authors, manipulators influence readers' perceptions without accountability.
- Contrasting principles: Manipulators juxtapose conflicting principles to evoke emotional responses and sway opinions.
- Strategic commentary placement: Commentary is strategically positioned to reinforce desired narratives and discredit opposing viewpoints.
- Selective presentation of factual data: Manipulators present facts selectively to support their agenda while omitting contradictory information.
- Categorization of facts: Facts are categorised to frame narratives in a favourable light, shaping public opinion.

Anonymous authorship is particularly noteworthy, aiming to steer readers towards specific viewpoints without disclosing the author's identity, subtly moulding their perceptions of the presented information. Regular exposure to such methods assists individuals in adjusting to negative information by distorting its content, appealing primarily to emotions rather than rationality, and targeting human senses.

While radio and television predominantly influence emotions through visual and auditory means, newspapers often utilise techniques like "eyewitness accounts" and "expert comments." These emotionally charged accounts or responses, although not directly involved in the events, serve to validate the publication's narrative and counter opposing viewpoints. Furthermore, the method of fact confirmation bolsters credibility by prioritising factual accuracy, positioning the publication as a trustworthy source of information. This underscores the significance of promptly disseminating information to a wide audience to ensure its acceptance and influence [88].

In the context of discourse analysis related to mass media manipulation, Rorty's observation that influencing emotions, or what he terms "manipulation," can be effective is relevant. Drawing upon examples like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, he illustrates how sentimental narratives can evoke sympathy for those experiencing rights violations, fostering a sense of unity and solidarity among audiences [48]. This

notion of “sentimental education” encourages empathy toward oppressed individuals, promoting the recognition of their shared humanity and dignity [73]. Rorty’s suggestion to broaden our moral identity to include diverse experiences of suffering may have implications for understanding mass media manipulation, particularly in leveraging emotional appeals to shape perceptions and attitudes [4]. Thus, employing strategies of sympathy and solidarity can be potent tools in the context of mass media manipulation, as they appeal to people’s emotions and foster a sense of unity and empathy.

Another important theory distinguishes four types of communicative persuasion tactics. The first category, presentation, includes techniques like making promises, providing examples, and eliciting favourable feelings in the audience. The second type is appeals, which include strategies such as references, hints, and shows of sincerity used to persuade opinion. Self-presentation, named third, focuses on expressing oneself authentically and freely, using parallelisms and framing tactics to increase credibility. The fourth type comprises discrediting opponents by logical arguments, selective information presentation, and unfavourable image representation, which is frequently accompanied by hostile criticism [91].

The research of the concept of conflict discourse, in our opinion, can be applied to our exploration of mass media manipulation. In media manipulation, conflict often arises from clashes between different narratives, beliefs, or interests in the media. Strategies like the “Degradation Game” can worsen conflicts by depicting opposing views or people negatively, leading to division and polarisation among audiences. On the other hand, the “Increase Game” aims to reduce conflicts by boosting the authority or credibility of specific media sources, positioning them as trusted voices in contentious topics. Similarly, the “Theatre Strategy” may exploit or incite conflicts to grab audience attention or promote certain agendas, highlighting how media manipulation interacts with conflict dynamics [83; 85].

Various strategies outlined by George K. Simon in psychology literature could be pertinent to examining mass media manipulation. These include:

- Lying by commission and lying by omission: Media manipulators might use these methods to distort information or withhold critical details, shaping public perception.
- Denial and rationalisation: Those manipulating media content may refuse to admit fault or justify inappropriate actions through rationalisation.
- Selective inattention or selective attention: Media manipulators may focus on specific topics or narratives while disregarding others, influencing audience viewpoints.
- Diversion and evasion: Manipulators in the media may redirect discussions away from sensitive issues or provide vague responses to avoid scrutiny.
- Covert intimidation and guilt trip: Media manipulators might subtly intimidate or induce guilt to control audience reactions and behaviour.
- Shaming and vilifying the victim: Those manipulating media content may use sarcasm, insults, or false accusations to discredit opponents or dissenting voices.
- Feigning innocence and confusion: Media manipulators may pretend ignorance or confusion to deflect criticism or evade accountability.
- Brandishing anger: Manipulators in the media may display controlled anger or emotional intensity to intimidate or coerce audiences [52].

When exploring mass media manipulation, it's important to consider various methods mentioned by Yevlanova that could be applicable [78].

- Universal statements: Manipulators often employ statements that cannot be verified, thus evading scrutiny. For instance, a news report claiming “everyone agrees” without providing concrete evidence.
- Appeal to the “generally accepted norm”: Media outlets might use societal norms to bolster their arguments. For instance, framing a controversial opinion as aligned with commonly held beliefs.

- Implicit assumptions: Manipulators may subtly imply superiority or dismissiveness towards their audience. An example could be a news anchor's tone conveying scepticism towards opposing viewpoints.
- Indefinite reference index: Phrases like "everyone thinks so" can create an illusion of consensus, influencing audience perceptions. This tactic might be seen in political speeches or opinion pieces.
- Multiplication of actions: Negative pluralization can amplify perceptions of negativity. For example, a news segment highlighting multiple instances of crime in a particular neighbourhood.
- Communicative sabotage: Deliberate disruption of logical communication, such as deflecting questions or ignoring counterarguments. A politician's evasive responses during a debate could serve as an illustration.
- Criterion blur: Manipulators may blur criteria for judgement to create confusion. For instance, framing a complex issue in overly simplistic terms to sway public opinion.
- Substitution of the subject of action: Personal comparisons may be used to assert dominance or undermine opponents. A commentator comparing their own accomplishments to those of their critics exemplifies this strategy.
- Emotional-evaluative language: Substituting neutral concepts with emotionally charged terms to sway opinions. For example, describing a policy as "heartless" rather than objectively discussing its implications.
- False analogy: Drawing misleading comparisons to manipulate audience perceptions. A news article likening a political figure to a historical tyrant could illustrate this tactic.
- Modal operators: Words like "must" or "possibility" may be used to impose beliefs or limit alternative perspectives. A headline asserting "There's no other option" is an example.

- Delivering conflicting messages: Manipulators may convey contradictory information to confuse or mislead their audience. A media outlet endorsing conflicting narratives on the same issue demonstrates this tactic.
- Creation of information uncertainty: Introducing ambiguity or doubt to manipulate audience interpretations. For instance, selectively omitting key details in a news report to shape the narrative.

Proficiency in manipulation techniques is crucial for achieving success in various fields. Various methods exist for influencing individuals, as detailed by the scholar Rizun [86]:

- The “labelling” method involves assigning certain traits or characteristics to individuals without providing further justification.
- The “casual story” method gradually desensitises individuals to negative messages by incorporating them into everyday narratives. For instance, continuously reporting on serious crimes with a composed demeanour on television can lead to habituation and reduced societal response over time.
- “Starving” applies psychological pressure on authorities, often resulting in significant media attention and accusations of inhumane governance, prompting governmental response.
- The “brainwashing” method, prevalent in mass communication, aims to persuade and instil new ideas by altering individuals’ ideological frameworks, thereby reshaping their beliefs and perceptions.
- The boomerang effect, commonly observed in election campaigns, involves overwhelming opponents with criticism to elicit sympathy from the general audience, though it often proves counterproductive.
- The “preoccupation” method reduces the relevance of certain topics or triggers negative reactions to them, occasionally creating information overload to obscure crucial issues.

- Persuasion is fundamental in influencing audiences by promoting specific values, norms, and behaviours through persuasive propaganda techniques, often utilising convincing rhetoric and general phrases.
- The effect of presence involves simulating reality through various elements to create a compelling illusion.

Next, ideological polarisation is a prevalent tactic observable in the *Us/Them* dichotomy [87; 46], where manipulators divide people into an ingroup (*Us*) representing allies and an outgroup (*Them*) representing adversaries [59]. This polarisation frequently involves discrediting dissenters by accentuating differences between *Us* and *Them*, portraying the outgroup negatively while portraying the ingroup positively. Furthermore, discrediting others may encompass avoiding denial, accusing misconduct, and shifting blame [20].

Van Dijk's analysis sheds further light on manipulation strategies, offering insight into how language is used to shape perceptions and influence behaviour. According to Van Dijk, the discourse manipulation strategies can be categorised into various levels, each contributing to the overall bias in favour of the speaker's or writer's own interests while disparaging opponents or others. These strategies include:

- Overall interaction strategies:
  - Positive presentation of oneself: Highlighting positive attributes, achievements, or actions attributed to oneself.
  - Negative presentation of others: Depicting opponents or others in a negative light, often blaming them for adverse situations or events.
- Macro Speech Acts: Employing speech acts like accusation or defence to frame actions as favourable or unfavourable, insinuating *Our* 'good' deeds and *Their* 'bad' deeds.
- Semantic Macrostructures:
  - Topic selection: Selecting topics that either emphasise or de-emphasize negative or positive aspects related to *Us* or *Them*.

- Local Speech Acts: Making statements or arguments at the local level that support the overarching positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation.
- Local Meanings:
  - Describing *Our/Their* positive/negative actions: Providing varying levels of detail, specificity, and clarity to shape perceptions of actions attributed to *Us* or *Them*.
- Lexicon: Using language that carries favourable or unfavourable connotations depending on the subject, favouring positive words for *Us* and negative words for *Them*.
- Local Syntax:
  - Active vs. passive sentences: Choosing sentence structures that either highlight or diminish the agency or responsibility of *Us* or *Them*.
  - Nominalisations: Using nominalized forms to either emphasise or de-emphasize the positive or negative aspects of actions.
- Rhetorical Figures:
  - Hyperboles vs. euphemisms: Employing rhetorical devices such as exaggeration or understatement to manipulate perceptions of positivity or negativity.
  - Metonymies and metaphors: Using figurative language to highlight or downplay positive or negative attributes associated with *Us* or *Them*.
- Expressions:
  - Sounds and visuals: Using auditory or visual elements to reinforce positive or negative meanings, such as volume, size, or emphasis.
  - Order: Arranging elements in order to prioritise positive or negative meanings, such as placing favourable attributes first or negative attributes last [62].

Further on, Van Dijk suggests that manipulators strategically mask their personal agendas by emphasising collective terms such as “nation” and inclusive

expressions like “all of us.” Moreover, they may initiate conversations about assumed shared interests with their counterparts to foster a sense of trust and unity among the audience. Through these linguistic tactics, manipulators aim to camouflage their hidden motives and present themselves as aligned with the larger community, thus bolstering their persuasive power [59].

Hancock have identified linguistic behaviours frequently employed by manipulators, such as:

- Verbosity,
- Excessive use of third-person pronouns,
- An emphasis on sensory-related terms [42].

Expanding on this, Van Dijk sheds light on additional manipulation tactics, including:

- Lexical derogation,
- Selective accusations,
- Presuppositions,
- Disclaimers,
- Positive self-presentation,
- Presenting suspicions as facts,
- Generalisations,
- Number manipulation,
- Delegitimizing or legitimising accusations [60].

The exploration of Van Dijk’s framework of discursive manipulation strategies uncovers techniques including highlighting the speaker’s power, moral superiority, and credibility; promoting polarising ideologies; discrediting opponents; emotionalizing arguments; and presenting seemingly irrefutable evidence for the speaker’s beliefs and motives. The assertion of power, moral superiority, and credibility is often achieved through specific speech acts, metaphors, rhetorical devices, formal language, intonation, volume, speed, tone, and lexical choices [59].

Manipulators employ metaphors to enrich the persuasiveness and lucidity of their message. Rather than being evaluated based on the accuracy of their assertions, they are judged by the efficacy of their arguments in swaying opinions and shaping perceptions of social reality [64]. The goal is to persuade individuals to adopt a specific representation or interpretation of the world, thereby aligning their beliefs with the manipulator's agenda. Metaphors serve as potent instruments in moulding public opinion and influencing behaviour, as they possess the ability to evoke powerful emotional reactions and resonate profoundly with individuals' experiences and preconceptions. Through strategic use of metaphorical language, manipulators can manipulate perceptions and guide individuals towards their desired conclusions, ultimately advancing their own interests.

Emotional appeals serve as potent tools in discourse, fostering a sense of empathy and connection between the speaker and the audience. Manipulators exploit this susceptibility to convince recipients that they understand, share, and empathise with their emotions, thereby influencing their beliefs and actions without critical scrutiny [7]. To evoke emotional responses, speakers employ rhetoric, explicit and implicit information, figures, and images [21]. Photographic imagery plays a significant role in direct manipulation. Images are carefully selected and positioned to complement the textual narrative, evoking specific emotions or associations that further reinforce the intended message [45].

Presenting seemingly irrefutable evidence bolsters the speaker's arguments, making it challenging for recipients to refute the information provided. This tactic relies on the presentation of compelling information that appears undeniable, thereby reinforcing the speaker's beliefs and motives.

Central to political manipulation is the utilisation of doublespeak, as elucidated by Lutz [32]. Doublespeak capitalises on incongruity, creating a stark disconnect between spoken or unspoken words and the underlying reality. Its primary function is to mislead, distort, deceive, inflate, circumvent, and obfuscate information, purposefully obscuring the truth and distorting facts. This can encompass a range of

tactics, including the use of euphemisms to soften harsh truths, deliberate linguistic ambiguity, or the reversal of meanings.

Another frequently observed technique used for manipulation is the utilisation of dysphemisms and pejoratives. Dysphemisms serve as opposites to euphemisms, aiming to coarsen the language by replacing neutral terms with those carrying negative connotations. This deliberate choice of language aims to evoke specific emotional responses in the audience, steering them towards a particular interpretation or reaction. By employing dysphemisms and pejoratives, manipulators seek to shape perceptions and attitudes, often by instilling fear, disgust, or disdain towards certain ideas, individuals, or groups [45].

In the realm of political propaganda, downplaying involves tactics such as omission, diversion, and confusion, while intensifying relies on repetition and association to manipulate perception. Through these strategies, manipulators effectively manipulate language to create a facade of credibility and authority while simultaneously misleading and influencing their audience [44].

Saiko examines the lexical means of manipulation, particularly focusing on inherent-evaluative and adherent evaluative neologisms. These neologisms, when used within a specific context, acquire a negative connotation, serving as tools for language aggression [49].

Imperative verbs function as tools to assert authority and minimise debate, leaving little room for dissent. Qualifying adjectives are strategically employed to evoke specific emotional responses, highlight particular aspects, and shape information in alignment with the manipulator's objectives [58].

Personal pronouns are wielded as instruments of manipulation to either foster inclusion or exclusion, establish or dissolve identification, and elicit desired emotional reactions from the audience [58].

Modality, which encompasses expressions of possibility, probability, necessity, or obligation, reflects the speaker's attitude and level of certainty. Epistemic modality involves the speaker's assessment of truth or likelihood, as evidenced in phrases like

“to be under the impression” or “may not understand.” Deontic modality pertains to obligations, permissions, or prohibitions, such as “to be prohibited” or “to be punishable.” Dynamic modality expresses capability or willingness, as demonstrated by phrases like “I’ll take care” or “We will make sure.” These manipulative uses of modality aim to influence the character's actions and reactions [44]. Moreover, evaluative modality is employed to offer positive assessments or promises of assistance, as illustrated by modulating items such as “will,” which convey a strong prediction of future events, eliminating any doubt [58].

Jaworski and Coupland investigate grammatical manipulation techniques including nominalisation, passivisation, and sequencing, which serve as linguistic and textual tools for ideological impact. These approaches, known as “masking devices,” disguise the identities of individuals as well as the causal linkages between events. Nominalisation, as demonstrated by sentences such as “Failure to display this notice will result in prosecution,” separates agents from acts, rendering them abstract. Passivisation, as shown in sentences like “John was murdered,” removes agency and, as a result, culpability. In contrast, sequencing influences the perceived significance of activities, as demonstrated by different phrases such as “Employers always quarrel with unions” and “Unions always quarrel with employers” [24].

Kosovet’s idea of conditional sentences being used as a means of manipulation represents a manipulative tactic aimed at provoking a specific response from the interlocutor. For instance, consider the construction: “If you are innocent, you have nothing to fear.” [80] Here, the use of the conditional construction introduces a conditional clause that hinges on the assumption of innocence. By juxtaposing the adjective “innocent” in the first part of the sentence with the phrase “nothing to fear” in the second part, a subtle implication is made: if one is truly innocent, there should be no reason for fear or apprehension. Beneath the veneer of sincerity lies a manipulative ploy, as the conditional sentence subtly coerces compliance or confession by exploiting the psychological desire to avoid consequences and maintain innocence.

Repetition stands as a prominent tool in the arsenal of manipulators, serving to reinforce their message and bolster their credibility through continuous reiteration of specific phrases, words, or arguments. By perpetually echoing these elements, manipulators aim to wear down resistance over time, making the manipulated individual increasingly susceptible to their influence and more inclined to relinquish their initial objections. Furthermore, generalisation emerges as another prevalent tactic in manipulation. This strategy involves oversimplifying complex issues, disregarding nuances, and drawing distorted conclusions to elicit emotional responses [44]. Through both repetition and generalisation, manipulators exploit psychological vulnerabilities, gradually eroding resistance and steering individuals toward compliance with their agenda.

Each method aims to direct public perception or sentiment in a predetermined direction. However, the effectiveness and prevalence of these tactics vary based on factors such as audience receptiveness, media platform, and overarching motives. Understanding these manipulative strategies empowers individuals to critically assess media content and navigate the intricacies of modern media influence. Individuals should scrutinise information, distinguishing between factual reporting and biased narratives, thus enhancing their ability to engage with the media responsibly [36].

To sum up, the classification of manipulation techniques in communication studies encompasses a wide array of strategies employed by manipulators to exert control and influence over individuals and societal narratives. These techniques span various dimensions of communication, including language manipulation, information distortion, emotional appeals, and strategic dissemination of information. The classification provides insight into the multifaceted nature of manipulation tactics, shedding light on the nuanced ways in which manipulators operate within different communication contexts. By understanding these manipulation techniques, individuals can develop critical thinking skills to discern biased narratives and navigate media environments responsibly. Ultimately, the conceptualization of

manipulation techniques in communication studies provides a foundation for examining the intricate dynamics of persuasion, power, and influence in contemporary society.

Classifying manipulation techniques in communication studies incorporates a wide range of strategies used by those who manipulate to control and influence individuals and social narratives. These techniques cover various dimensions of communication, such as language manipulation, information distortion, emotional appeals, and strategic information dissemination. The taxonomy provides insight into the many-sided nature of manipulation tactics, highlighting the nuances of how manipulators operate in different communication contexts. Awareness of these manipulative techniques can help people develop critical thinking skills so that they can recognise biased narratives and navigate the media environment responsibly. Eventually, the conceptualisation of manipulation techniques in communication studies provides a framework for studying the complicated dynamics of persuasion, power and influence in modern society and in the modern British mass media outlets in particular.

## **2.2. Overview of the Modern British Mass Media Websites**

Based on the findings from the theoretical chapters, our investigation focuses on exploring how influence is strategically imposed in the modern UK mass media landscape. Manipulation, as defined by various scholars, involves covert control over people's thoughts, emotions and behaviour through strategic means. Despite the ethical problems associated with manipulation, its prevalence in the media remains undeniable, as it shapes public perception and social narratives.

This study aims to scrutinise the methods and strategies used on modern media platforms, emphasising the need for ethical communication practices to counteract the negative effects of manipulation and promote informed decision-making.

In this case study, a systematic approach to sampling was used to ensure the statistical reliability of the study. A random sampling method was used to select articles from three well-known British online newspapers: *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. Each newspaper provided a diverse set of articles from different sections, among others, including politics, money, television, health, royalty, travel, business, environment, technology, books, football, music, social media and family. This diverse selection ensures a comprehensive study of manipulation methods in various subject areas, enriching the depth and breadth of our research.

The classification of manipulation techniques in communication studies covers a wide range, including a variety of strategies used by manipulators to exert control over individuals and social narratives. These methods cut across different dimensions of communication, including, among others, language manipulation, information distortion, emotional appeals, and strategic information dissemination. In light of the dynamic evolution of the media driven by technological advances, delving into the dynamics of discourse is paramount to understanding the complexities of the contemporary media landscape and its broader implications for society.

In order to begin our analysis, it is necessary to offer some preliminary observations on the newspapers themselves.

*The Telegraph*, a renowned British conservative newspaper, presents its online version, [Telegraph.co.uk](https://www.telegraph.co.uk), with a layout reminiscent of traditional broadsheet newspapers. The banner of the newspaper's website prominently displays the name *The Telegraph* in its distinctive font, accompanied by the accolade *UK NEWS WEBSITE OF THE YEAR*, indicating its recognition at the 2023 Press Awards [56]. Below these banners, the website's sections are neatly organised in a horizontal line, facilitating easy navigation.

If we examine the newspaper's main page layout through the lens of our research topic, it becomes apparent that the placement and presentation of articles

employ manipulation tactics to influence readers' perceptions of importance. Headlines and descriptions vary in size and are accompanied by images, guiding readers to perceive certain articles as more significant than others. For instance, the first article on the March 24 issue, under the section "Royal Family," features a bold red section title, a headline highlighting Princess of Wales' plight against trolls ("Princess of Wales 'revictimised' by trolls over cancer disclosure"), and an accompanying image. All these elements are signalling the importance of the article and topic to the readers (*Picture 1*).

ROYAL FAMILY

## Princess of Wales 'revictimised' by trolls over cancer disclosure

Social media conspiracy theorists are doubling down by saying diagnosis should have been revealed earlier



*Picture 1. The main page of The Telegraph, March 24, 2024 issue*

In contrast, another article, "How Macron and Scholz broke the Franco-German alliance crucial to Ukraine," despite containing critical information about European politics, is presented with a headline only, lacking visual prominence. However, if we click on the heading, we come to a conclusion that a deeper look at the article would, actually, touch on an important aspect of European relations and the geopolitical landscape. The breakdown of the Franco-German alliance, as the title states, has significant implications for European unity and stability. The article analyses the rift between French President Macron and German Chancellor Scholz, illustrating the potential consequences for the cohesion of the European Union and its ability to address pressing challenges, including the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Moscow concert hall accused of locking emergency exits before terror attack that killed 137	'Kill them and have no mercy', say Moscow gunmen in concert massacre video	Ukraine 'hits two Russian warships in the Black Sea'	How Macron and Scholz broke the Franco-German alliance crucial to Kyiv
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Picture 2. The main page of *The Telegraph*, March 24, 2024 issue

This deliberate arrangement subtly manipulates readers of the online outlet into prioritising certain topics over other issues, in such a way shaping their understanding of the ongoing events and issues. By emphasising certain articles through visual cues and positioning, *The Telegraph* influences the perceptions of the readers and directs their attention to specific narratives, potentially shaping public discourse.

Furthermore, upon entering specific sections of *The Telegraph* online newspaper, for instance, “Ukraine,” the selection of articles may appear rather peculiar, as it reflects one more strategy of manipulation in modern British mass media. Despite the people suffering and humanitarian crises, the section may feature articles on seemingly unrelated topics.

Russia-Ukraine war

**EU puts brakes on Ukrainian honey imports to appease farmers**  
Limits agreed for more foodstuffs as producers complain duty-free imports are flooding their markets

**Ukrainian drones attack key Russian bomber airbase**

**The rogue soldiers detonating Putin's claim to have the loyalty of Russians**  
Maverick groups of defecting soldiers dedicated to liberating Ukraine claim they are undermining the Russian military operation

**Putin plans 450-mile railway to Crimea**

**Russia evacuates children from border after 'invasion' by rogue troops**

**Germany buys long-range US missiles amid Russia threat**

**Macron backs restrictions on £1bn Ukrainian imports to EU**

Picture 3. The section “Ukraine” in the issue of *The Telegraph*, March 21, 2024

For instance, as of 21 March, the “Ukraine” section covered a variety of different topics, including honey imports from Ukraine, Russian volunteers, and commentary on Ukraine’s attack on a key Russian bomber base. At the same time,

there was not a single report on the horrific destruction of Ukrainian cities by Russian troops (*Picture 3*).

This omission strategically manipulates the narrative, diverting attention from the horrific realities of the war, potentially shaping readers' perceptions and downplaying the seriousness of the situation. In such a way, by means of selective focus on seemingly less influential topics in the "Ukraine" section, *The Telegraph* online media outlet subtly diverts readers' attention from the most pressing issues, thus illustrating the complex ways in which the modern British online media space is manipulated.

Next, *The Guardian*, a British daily newspaper known for its centre-left stance, presents its online version with a layout similar to traditional broadsheet newspapers, resembling that of our previous online mass media newspaper, *The Telegraph*. Both British outlets have a similar organisational, with sections placed on the front page above and various articles presented in a strategic sequence. This strategic presentation is consistent with the manipulative tactic of selective presentation of factual data, where facts are reported selectively with the objective of supporting a particular agenda.

One notable feature shared between *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* is the emphasis on information trustworthiness. Journalists at both online outlets frequently hyperlink to trusted sources such as governmental and scientific websites, thus enhancing the credibility of their articles. Additionally, hyperlinks to previous articles of the online newspaper itself contribute to the narrative's longevity and coherence, as a result bolstering the trust of the readers. However, the reliance on guest columnists and reader comments raises concerns about the reliability of alternative sources, particularly given the potential for censorship by moderators who can ban posts, according to the newspaper's policy.

Another feature of *The Guardian*'s website is the marking of older articles with a banner stating "This article is more than 1 month old" etc., as seen in the article "Volodymyr Zelenskiy pleads for more arms as frontline Ukrainian city falls" dated

February 17 (*Picture 4*). While this approach informs readers of the article's age, it may also serve as a form of manipulation. By disclaiming responsibility for outdated information, the website and the journalists subtly shift accountability onto their readers. This tactic can be interpreted as an example of gaslighting, a manipulation strategy that undermines the reader's perception of reality and accountability.

🕒 This article is more than **1 month old**

## Volodymyr Zelenskiy pleads for more arms as frontline Ukrainian city falls

**Retreat from Avdiivka deals military blow and hands initiative to Putin as war's second anniversary looms**

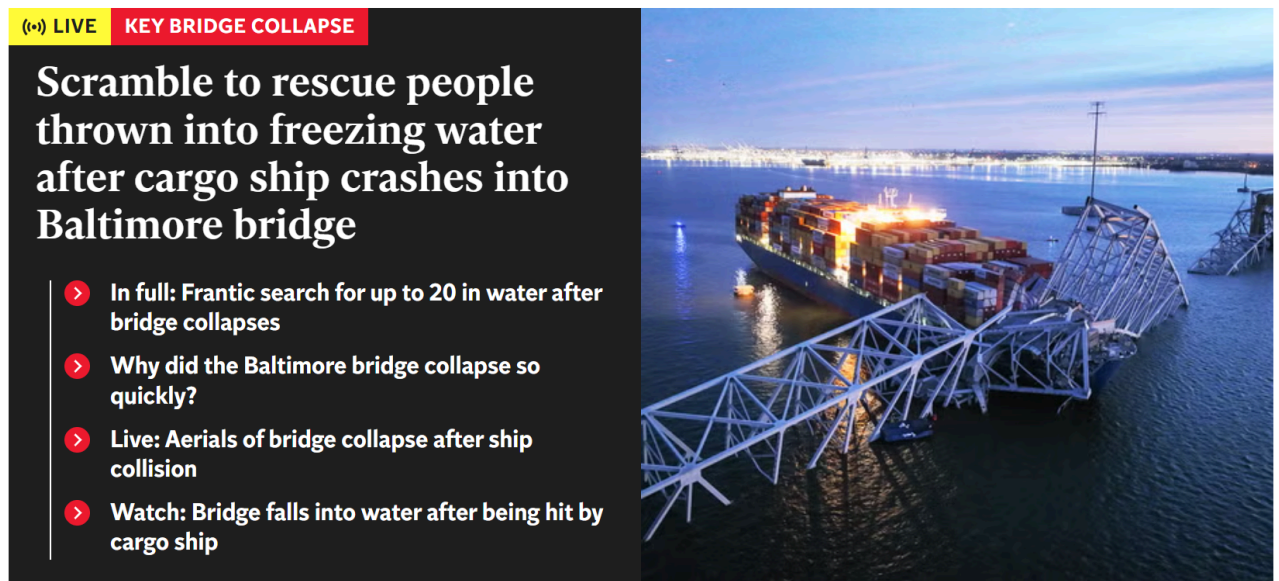
*Picture 4. The older articles at The Guardian are marked with a corresponding banner - The Guardian issue of February 17, 2024*

*The Independent* presents a website layout that bears similarities to its counterparts, although with some differences. Although the homepage organisation is similar to previous newspapers, the layout of the articles differs from the traditional broadsheet format. Instead, there is a noticeable emphasis on media content, as evidenced by the frequent inclusion of video content alongside more traditional articles.

Like its counterparts, the website strategically highlights certain articles with images and descriptions in an attempt to manipulate readers into perceiving them as more important. Articles that are accompanied by visuals and detailed descriptions are positioned to attract more attention, using a manipulation strategy that consists of selective presentation of factual data.

In addition, the inclusion of video content labelled as “Live” with banners and a “Play” symbol creates a sense of immediacy, suggesting to readers that these reports are extremely important and should be consumed first (*Picture 5*). This tactic exploits

the effect of presence, using the perceived urgency of live broadcasts to influence reader priorities.



Picture 5. *The Independent* issue of March 26, 2024 uses video content and corresponding banners

Based on the study of manipulation strategies used by leading British online newspapers, further analysis of headline structure provides insight into how the modern British mass media shape the perceptions of their readers and influence discourse.

The headlines in *The Telegraph* exhibit a blend of sensationalism, speculation, and selective presentation of factual data to captivate readers and promote particular narratives.

The use of colloquial language and hyperbole, as seen in “The latest Princess of Wales conspiracy theory shows just how bonkers Britain has become” [10m], aims to intrigue readers while framing the narrative to discredit opposing viewpoints.

Similarly, headlines such as “Half of Sunak’s Cabinet are lining up to replace him, says Starmer” [14m] employ speculation to generate interest and potentially influence reader perceptions, suggesting political instability within the government. By attributing the statement to Starmer, a prominent political figure, the headline

lends credibility to the claim and may sway reader opinions regarding the state of the government.

Additionally, the headline “Why Apple is throwing millions at Meryl Streep and Nicole Kidman to make TV nobody watches” uses not only celebrity appeal but also rhetorical questioning and paradox to engage readers and convey a critique of corporate decision-making [1m].

Headlines from *The Guardian* exhibit a diverse range of strategies aimed at engaging readers and shaping their perceptions. For example, “Cameron: ‘Giving Ukraine weapons will help bring peace, not escalate war’” [5m] employs appeal to authority by attributing the statement to a well-known political figure.

In contrast, “Want to get rich quick? Business influencers have some new advice – and it’s terrible” [20m] uses a strategy of negative reinforcement. The rhetorical question prompts readers to consider the validity of the advice offered by business influencers.

The headline “Volodymyr Zelenskiy pleads for more arms as frontline Ukrainian city falls” [29m] uses emotional resonance to draw attention to the ongoing war.

Headlines in *The Independent* employ a variety of manipulation strategies to shape perceptions as well. For example, “Father arrested for calling police more than a dozen times over son’s homework” [7m] employs sensationalism and number manipulation to intrigue readers, prompting curiosity about the circumstances.

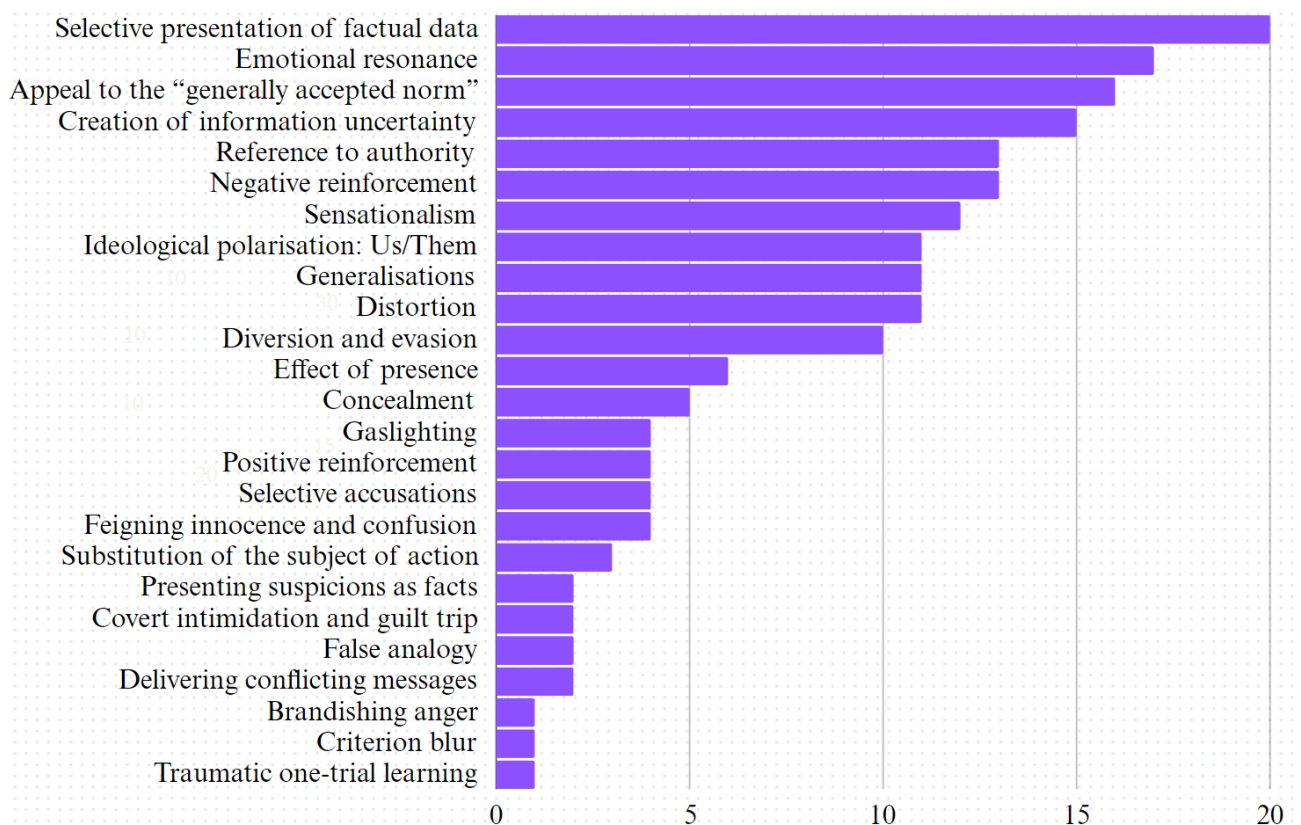
Similarly, “Kate’s apology over THAT photo has only made things worse” [22m] uses intrigue and speculation through capitalization and an informal tone, drawing attention to the topic that is being discussed.

Meanwhile, “Discovering who Taylor Swift is secretly related to blew my mind” [8m] applies sensationalism and hyperbole to attract readers by generating interest in the story through the involvement of celebrities.

Thus, our analysis of the leading UK online newspapers reveals a range of manipulation strategies that are intersected with the presentation and organisation of content. Regardless of the outlet, tactics such as strategic placement of articles and selective coverage subtly manage reader perceptions. A variety of tactics are used to engage the audience and direct the discourse, from appealing to authority to exploiting emotional resonance. These findings underscore the need for critical analysis of media content in order to identify hidden motives and understand the complexities of modern information dissemination.

### 2.3. Manipulative Communication Strategies in Modern British Mass Media

Based on the investigation undertaken in the theoretical section of this research work, we discovered a number of communicative strategies for manipulation that are common in modern British mass media articles. Among the publications examined, we discovered evidence of 25 different techniques being used (*Chart 1*).



*Chart 1. The results of the correlation of manipulative communication strategies in the studied articles*

These strategies, ordered from most to least used, give insight on the various techniques used by media outlets to construct narratives and influence public opinion.

To offer a more thorough analysis of manipulation, categorizing the techniques from British modern mass media according to Aristotle's rhetorical appeals — ethos, pathos, and logos — would furnish a comprehensive framework for understanding how these techniques function and their efficacy [2]. This categorization acknowledges the varied strategies media outlets use to influence their audience effectively.

Firstly, let's delve into appeals to logos, or logic. This grouping covers techniques that aim to sway the audience through reasoned arguments and factual presentation. Selective presentation of factual data and referencing authoritative sources appeal to the logical faculties of the readers by means of providing evidence-based information. At the same time, techniques like distortion and false analogy exploit logical reasoning by misleadingly framing narratives. Generalizations, while simplifying complex issues, may oversimplify and distort the truth. These techniques manipulate perceptions of truth and reliability, crucial aspects of logical persuasion.

Let's review the examples more closely:

1. *Selective presentation of factual data* (20 times) - This strategy involves picking facts to support a particular narrative while ignoring contradictory evidence. It is likely prevalent because it allows journalists to shape the story to fit their desired narrative or agenda.

In *The Telegraph's* article titled "How your dog is making you less stressed, slimmer and more creative" [27m], the author selectively presents information that supports the positive effects of owning a dog. The article highlights research indicating positive associations between contact with dogs and lessening human suffering, including pain, depression, and loneliness. However, it downplays or omits

potential counterarguments or conflicting evidence that might suggest owning a dog has negative effects or is not universally beneficial.

A review by *The Independent* titled “Damsel review: Why is Millie Bobby Brown wasting her time on this blunt-force empowerment dreck?” [17m] exemplifies selective presentation of factual data by focusing solely on negative criticisms, shaping a narrative that the film offers no value. By ignoring any potential merits or entertainment the audience might derive, the review creates a biased perspective. Even the title of the review employs selective presentation to capture attention by provoking shock or disapproval.

In another article by *The Independent* titled “The King needs the people at least as much as they need him” [11m], the author emphasises the positive reception of King Charles by the public. The article selectively highlights moments of unity and support, portraying a positive image of the monarch. However, it fails to address any criticisms or controversies surrounding King Charles, thus shaping a narrative that aligns with a favourable view of the monarchy.

2. *Creation of information uncertainty* (15 times) - Introducing doubt or uncertainty can make readers more receptive to alternative explanations or viewpoints presented in the article. It can also create a sense of intrigue or mystery, keeping readers engaged.

In *The Independent*'s article titled “Now Boris tries to sabotage his own bungled Brexit deal with new attack on Sunak” [13m], Downing Street's statement regarding changes to the Brexit deal contains vague language. They stated that the deal contains “significant” changes to the Windsor deal's “operation” but is not about altering the “fundamentals” of the framework. This ambiguous wording introduces uncertainty about the specifics and implications of the deal's changes, leaving room for interpretation and debate.

*The Telegraph*'s article titled “Picture agencies, paparazzi and the Palace: The battle to control the truth” [28m] discusses the amateur editing of photographs by royals and its implications for media accountability. By casting doubt on the

authenticity of images and questioning the trustworthiness of both amateur and professional photography, the article contributes to an atmosphere of uncertainty regarding the truthfulness of media representations. For instance, the article quotes an expert stating, “no single image can be trusted” - this uncertainty surrounding the authenticity of images prompts the readers to consider alternative interpretations of media content.

3. *Reference to authority* (13 times) - Citing authoritative sources or experts can lend credibility to the arguments presented in the article, making readers more likely to trust the information being conveyed.

In *The Guardian*'s article “Lost in music: why piano competitions must address the gender gap” [26m], the text references data and research to support the argument for addressing the gender gap in piano competitions. By citing statistics and expert opinions, such as those gathered by Vick Bain in “Counting the Music Industry: The Gender Gap,” the article appeals to authoritative sources to validate its claims about structural barriers and biases faced by female pianists.

*The Telegraph*'s article “The eurozone is about to go bust” [19m] refers to authoritative figures such as Jacques Delors, the former president of the European Commission, and statements made by the presidents of central banks like Dr. Joachim Nagel of the Bundesbank and François Villeroy de Galhau of the Banque de France. These references to authority lend credibility to the arguments presented in the article regarding the financial challenges faced by central banks in the eurozone.

4. *Generalisations* (11 times) - Making broad, sweeping statements without sufficient evidence or nuance can simplify complex issues and make them more understandable for readers.

In *The Independent*'s article “From Mark Wright in Snowdonia to Anton and Gio in Spain – haven't we suffered enough from male celeb travel shows?” [30m] generalisations are made about the genre of male celebrity travel shows. The article suggests that all male celebrity travel shows are devoid of wit, curiosity, and genuine enthusiasm for different cultures.

In *The Guardian*'s article "First it was Facebook, then Twitter. Is Reddit about to become rubbish too?" the statement "The internet used to be full of special-interest forums... but most have either shut down or are rarely used" [16m] serves as a generalisation about the decline of special-interest forums online. This broad statement creates a nostalgic backdrop, suggesting a loss of digital community spaces due to the rise of commercial social media platforms.

5. *Distortion* (11 times) - Distorting facts or language allows journalists to manipulate the narrative to fit their agenda while maintaining a semblance of truth.

The article in *The Telegraph*, entitled "The American revolt against green energy has begun" [4m], uses the term "climate alarmist" to distort the perspective of those who favour renewable energy. In referring to green energy advocates as "climate alarmists", the author portrays their fears as exaggerated or unfounded, thereby distorting the public's perception of their point of view. This distortion undermines the credibility of those who advocate for renewable energy and reinforces the author's own position against green energy projects.

In *The Guardian*'s article titled "Chelsea owners warned by fans of slide towards 'irreversible toxicity'," the statement "The current mood amongst supporters is critically low and cannot be ignored" [6m] might involve distortion of the overall sentiment. This distortion of fan sentiment can highlight the urgency of addressing fan concerns and force club owners to take action that is in line with the agenda of a fan trust group advocating for change at the club.

6. *Diversion and evasion* (10 times) - This strategy involves redirecting attention away from certain topics or issues, often used to avoid addressing inconvenient truths or criticisms.

In *The Guardian*'s article titled "Volodymyr Zelenskiy pleads for more arms as frontline Ukrainian city falls" [29m], there is a transition from Zelenskiy's plea for more arms and the military situation to Navalny's death and the response to it. This strategy diverts attention from one subject to another so as not to dwell on the

complexities or unresolved aspects of the first topic. Shifting the focus to Navalny's death and the reaction to it, the article can avoid delivering too much insight into the implications of Volodymyr Zelenskiy's request for more weapons or the challenges Ukraine faces with the Russian aggression.

In *The Telegraph's* article titled "The American revolt against green energy has begun" [4m], the author diverts attention from the core issue of renewable energy by discussing environmental protections. The statement "But US society has seen fit over the decades to extend similar protections to animals, plants, the water, and the air as well" [4m] shifts the focus away from the arguments against renewable energy and instead discusses broader environmental concerns. This diversionary tactic deflects criticism of the arguments against renewable energy by emphasising the importance of protecting the environment in general. While expanding the scope of the debate, the article may evade specific criticism or inconvenient truths about opposition to green energy initiatives.

7. *Concealment* (5 times) - Withholding information or obscuring certain details can shape the narrative in a way that serves the journalist's agenda or biases.

*The Telegraph* article titled "Rents rise at fastest pace on record as Gove's crackdown on landlords backfires" [25m] lacks discussion of other factors contributing to the rent increase, which may hide additional reasons for the phenomenon. It focuses solely on Michael Gove's policies as the cause of the rent increase, while omitting other potential factors such as changes in demand, economic conditions or housing supply. Limiting the focus to Gove's policies may obscure the complexity of the issue and promote a particular point of view that fits the agenda or bias of the journalist.

An article in *The Independent* headlined "From Mark Wright in Snowdonia to Anton and Gio in Spain – haven't we suffered enough from male celeb travel shows?" [30m] focuses exclusively on the perceived negatives of male celebrity travel shows, selectively presenting information to support its critical position. The

positive aspects or appeal of these shows to certain demographic groups are omitted, thus creating a narrative of their general undesirability and lack of value.

8. *Substitution of the subject of action* (3 times) - This strategy involves making comparisons to assert dominance or undermine opponents.

In *The Independent's* article "Damsel review: Why is Millie Bobby Brown wasting her time on this blunt-force empowerment dreck?" [17m] the author uses this strategy by comparing the film negatively to other works such as "Enola Holmes" or "Stranger Things." By juxtaposing "Damsel" with Brown's other, presumably more successful projects, the review indirectly undermines the film's value. This comparison serves to diminish the perceived worth of "Damsel" by highlighting the perceived superiority of Brown's other works, thereby implying that her involvement in the film is a waste of her talents.

9. *False analogy* (2 times) - Drawing comparisons between unrelated or dissimilar situations may strongly influence readers' perceptions or emotions.

In the article "Picture agencies, paparazzi and the Palace: The battle to control the truth" [28m], the comparison between the actions of picture agencies and those of North Korea or Iranian news agencies constitutes a false analogy. The statement "...it is normally photographs from the North Korea news agency or the Iranian news agency that are 'killed' for reasons of manipulation" [28m] draws a comparison between the withdrawal of a royal image due to manipulation and the practices of the totalitarian regime. However, this comparison is flawed as it equates the withdrawal of an image due to amateur editing with the intentional manipulation of news and images by authoritarian governments, in such a way creating an inaccurate and misleading analogy.

10. *Delivering conflicting messages* (2 times) - Introducing contradictory information or arguments within the same narrative can confuse readers and undermine their ability to critically evaluate the content.

In the article "Want to get rich quick? Business influencers have some new advice – and it's terrible" [20m] by *The Guardian*, delivering conflicting messages is

evident in the mention of Yim as possibly starting as a joke but then pointing out that many influencers are seriously promoting it. This introduces a conflict between the potentially satirical origin of Yim and its real-world application, confusing the reader about the intent behind the method and whether it should be taken seriously or as a critique of exploitative practices. This contradictory information undermines the reader's ability to critically evaluate the content and understand the true nature of Yim.

11. *Criterion blur* (1 time) - Blurring the criteria used to evaluate certain issues or events can manipulate readers' perceptions and distort their understanding of the situation.

In the article "Emma Stone's Best Actress Oscar win over Lily Gladstone doesn't feel right – and Stone herself seems to know it" [18m], criterion blur is evident in the evaluation of the Best Actress race at the Oscars. The author discusses the performances of Emma Stone and Lily Gladstone, highlighting the merits of both. While praising Stone's performance as "truly joyous" and acknowledging her talent, the author also emphasises the unique and revelatory nature of Gladstone's portrayal. However, the article blurs the criteria used to evaluate these performances by introducing conflicting messages about what kind of art should be celebrated. On one hand, Stone's win is portrayed as commendable, with the author acknowledging her talent and the strength of her performance. On the other hand, there is a sense of unease about the Hollywood industry's choices, especially when considering Gladstone's "striking" and "singular" portrayal in "Killers of the Flower Moon." The author suggests that Stone's win might not align with the true value of art in a fractured world, hinting at a discrepancy between the criteria for celebrating performances and the industry's choices. This criterion blur manipulates readers' perceptions by presenting conflicting viewpoints on the significance of the Best Actress award, ultimately distorting their understanding of the situation and the underlying values guiding the recognition of talent in the film industry.

Appeals to pathos, or emotion, are employed to evoke strong emotional responses from the audience. Emotional resonance and sensationalism are powerful tools for capturing attention and eliciting empathy or outrage. Techniques like negative reinforcement and covert intimidation can exploit readers' emotions to manipulate their beliefs or behaviours. Gaslighting and feigning innocence further manipulate emotions by sowing doubt and confusion.

1. *Emotional resonance* (17 times) - Appeals to emotions are effective in capturing readers' attention and garnering support for a particular viewpoint. Emotions such as fear, anger, or empathy can be powerful motivators for readers.

In *The Independent's* article titled "Now Boris tries to sabotage his own bungled Brexit deal with a new attack on Sunak" [13m], the author employs charged language to evoke strong emotional responses from the audience. Phrases like "pineless, weak-kneed, Brexit-betraying government" are designed to tap into feelings of national sovereignty, betrayal, and resistance against perceived external control.

Another instance of emotional resonance is found in *The Telegraph's* article titled "The latest Princess of Wales conspiracy theory shows just how bonkers Britain has become" – the author appeals to emotions by expressing concern for the Princess's health, stating, "All I can say is: let's hope the Princess completes her recovery soon. Not just for the sake of her health – but for the sake of our country's sanity" [10m]. This statement links the Princess's recovery to the country's sanity, framing belief in the conspiracy theory as detrimental to the nation's well-being.

2. *Negative reinforcement* (13 times) - Highlighting negative consequences or outcomes can be a persuasive technique to dissuade readers from certain actions or viewpoints.

In *The Telegraph's* "The American revolt against green energy has begun" [4m], the author emphasises negative aspects of wind and solar energy projects, such as noise, bird deaths, and visual impact. By using phrases like "we

simply must stop using the friendly-sounding term ‘farms’ to describe them” [4m], the author reinforces a negative perception of renewable energy initiatives.

*The Independent*’s article “Emma Stone’s Best Actress Oscar win over Lily Gladstone doesn’t feel right – and Stone herself seems to know it” [18m] criticises the lack of recognition for “Killers of the Flower Moon” at the Oscars. The article highlights the film’s significant cinematic achievements and criticises the inappropriate humour used at its expense during the awards ceremony: “Scorsese’s masterful work was barely mentioned beyond Kimmel’s tasteless joke...” [18m].

3. *Sensationalism* (12 times) - Sensationalising certain aspects of a story can attract attention and increase readership. It may involve exaggerating or dramatising events to make them seem more exciting or impactful.

*The Guardian*’s article titled “Want to get rich quick? Business influencers have some new advice – and it’s terrible” [20m] uses sensationalism in its headline to immediately grab attention with the promise of controversial content. By suggesting that the article contains new and potentially harmful financial advice from influential figures, the headline sets the stage for a critical examination of morally dubious practices.

In *The Telegraph*’s article “The eurozone is about to go bust” [19m], sensationalism is employed in the headline to create a sense of urgency and alarm. By suggesting that the eurozone is on the brink of a catastrophic collapse, the headline grabs readers’ attention and encourages them to read further.

4. *Effect of presence* (6 times) - Creating an illusion of reality can influence readers’ perceptions and reactions.

In *The Guardian*’s article titled “‘We are all mixed’: Henry Louis Gates Jr on race, being arrested and working towards America’s redemption,” the author uses the phrase “Imagine my surprise when I received my first DNA results, and I’m 49% white!” [15m]. This phrase invites readers to mentally visualise the scenario described by Henry Louis Gates Jr., creating an illusion of reality.

In *The Independent*'s article titled "The King needs the people at least as much as they need him," the author employs the phrase "Just imagine how much trouble not just Charles, but the institution of the monarchy, would be in..." [11m]. This phrase encourages readers to envision the potential consequences described in the article, such as the monarchy facing trouble in case certain scenarios were to occur.

In *The Telegraph*'s article titled "How your dog is making you less stressed, slimmer and more creative," the statement "Dogs are very conscious of human mood, and will comfort you if you're upset" [27m] uses the pronoun "you" to directly involve the reader in the scenario described. The fact that the article addresses the reader personally creates a sense of presence, making the information more relatable and relevant to the reader's own experience. This presence effect can increase the impact of the article and increase readers' interest in the topic.

5. *Positive reinforcement* (4 times) - Highlighting positive outcomes or benefits can encourage readers to adopt certain behaviours or viewpoints, reinforcing the desired narrative.

In *The Telegraph*'s article titled "How a land of melancholic people created the world's happiest country" [21m], the text reinforces positive associations with Finnish culture by describing nostalgic childhood memories. The line, "Fondly recalling a childhood memory, tour guide Tuula Kleiman describes the good old days when people would paint the soles of their feet with tar" [21m], creates a favourable impression of Finland and its people. Highlighting the nostalgic and charming aspects of Finnish culture, the article encourages readers to view Finland as a place with particularly positive qualities, reinforcing the narrative of Finland as the world's happiest country.

In *The Independent*'s article "The King needs the people at least as much as they need him" [11m], the passage reinforces the idea that the monarchy has adapted and improved in its relationship with the public. The line, "It is probably fair to say, too, that the bigger and more active role for the public – the people – over the days of

national mourning for the Queen reflects lessons learned by the palace and the authorities generally from the mistakes made in handling the death of Diana” [11m], suggests that the monarchy has responded to past criticisms and evolved to better engage with the public. This positive reinforcement frames the monarchy as a responsive and evolving institution, encouraging readers to view it in a more favourable light.

6. *Gaslighting* (4 times) - Gaslighting involves manipulating someone into questioning their own perceptions or sanity. In journalism, this might involve distorting facts or denying the validity of certain viewpoints to undermine opposing perspectives.

In *The Telegraph*'s article “Kyiv blitzed by Russian missiles as revenge for raids” [2m], the text frames the missile barrage as “revenge” for alleged cross-border attacks by Ukraine on Russian border regions. This framing manipulates the reader's perception by suggesting that Russia's military actions are a response to provocation, rather than an aggressive act of warfare.

In another article by *The Telegraph* titled “Picture agencies, paparazzi and the Palace: The battle to control the truth” [28m], the quote from Eric Baradat, a photo director at Agence France-Presse (AFP), describing the editing efforts of the Princess of Wales as “really amateur,” suggests incompetence on the part of the royals in managing their public image. This portrayal manipulates the reader's perception by casting doubt on the competence and integrity of the royals' media management, causing readers to question the credibility of the actions and intentions of the Royal Family.

7. *Feigning innocence and confusion* (4 times) - Pretending not to understand or claiming innocence can deflect criticism or scrutiny, allowing journalists to evade accountability for their actions or biases.

In *The Independent*'s article “Emma Stone's Best Actress Oscar win over Lily Gladstone doesn't feel right – and Stone herself seems to know it”, the author employs a tactic of feigning innocence and confusion by suggesting, “Perhaps, even,

she wasn't quite sure she was meant to win" [18m]. By attributing uncertainty to Emma Stone regarding her Oscar win, the author attempts to shift the narrative away from their own criticism and onto the supposed doubts of the award recipient. This tactic deflects potential scrutiny of the author's opinion by insinuating that even Stone herself may have questioned the legitimacy of her win, thereby evading direct accountability for the critical stance taken in the article.

In the article "Kate's apology over THAT photo has only made things worse," the author uses feigned innocence and confusion by stating, "I have to say, when I first clapped eyes on the image – taken by the Prince of Wales, last week in Windsor – it seemed to me there was something about Kate's head that looked like it had been plonked onto a big patch of black where her torso should be, but I'm no expert" [22m]. By expressing uncertainty about the authenticity or quality of the photograph, the author attempts to deflect potential criticism or scrutiny regarding their interpretation of the image. This feigned innocence suggests that the author is merely an impartial observer offering their subjective opinion, rather than actively contributing to the controversy surrounding the photograph.

8. *Covert intimidation and guilt trip* (2 times) - Subtly inducing guilt can pressure readers into adopting a certain viewpoint or behaviour.

In "The latest Princess of Wales conspiracy theory shows just how bonkers Britain has become" [10m] from *The Telegraph*, the author uses covert intimidation and a guilt trip to dismiss conspiracy theories about the replacement of the Princess of Wales in the photos. By sarcastically addressing the conspiracy theorists as "poor dingbats" and presenting absurd scenarios to debunk their claims, the author implies that believing in such theories is nonsensical and foolish. This subtly intimidates readers into feeling foolish if they entertain similar thoughts, coercing them to align with the author's viewpoint.

9. *Brandishing anger* (1 time) - Using displays of anger to assert dominance or authority and discourage dissent or opposition.

In “The eurozone is about to go bust” [19m] by *The Telegraph*, brandishing anger is evident when the author highlights broken promises and the potential betrayal of trust regarding the eurozone. By emphasising these points, the author aims to invoke anger and resentment among readers towards the eurozone authorities, potentially inciting negative sentiments and asserting dominance or authority over the narrative.

Appeals to ethos, or morality and character, play a significant role in media manipulation. Techniques such as appealing to the “generally accepted norm” and ideological polarization reinforce existing beliefs and social norms, appealing to the audience’s sense of morality and identity. Selective accusations and presenting suspicions as facts manipulate perceptions of justice and ethicality, framing certain individuals or groups as morally culpable or virtuous. While these tactics can bolster the perceived integrity of journalists, they also run the risk of promoting bias and reinforcing divisive narratives.

1. *Appeal to the “generally accepted norm”* (16 times) - By appealing to what is commonly accepted or expected, journalists can reinforce certain beliefs or attitudes within their audience, making their arguments seem more credible or valid.

In *The Guardian*’s article titled “First it was Facebook, then Twitter. Is Reddit about to become rubbish too?” [16m] the author highlights the unique, human-driven communities on Reddit, such as r/bookbinding, that offer free knowledge and support. By contrasting this with the commercialised nature of other social media platforms, the article appeals to a normative belief in the intrinsic value of community and knowledge sharing over profit.

In the article from *The Independent* titled “Father arrested for calling police more than a dozen times over son’s homework,” a detective is quoted saying, “This is a K-5 school so there is not an abnormal amount of homework” [7m]. By stating that the amount of homework assigned by the school is within normal expectations, the detective appeals to societal norms regarding educational practices. This statement

suggests that the complaints from the father were unwarranted and overblown, as they deviated from what is considered standard or acceptable in terms of homework assignments for elementary school students.

2. *Ideological polarisation: Us/Them* (11 times) - Framing issues as “US vs THEM” can appeal to readers’ innate inclinations for group identity and reinforce existing beliefs or biases.

In *The Telegraph*’s article titled “The American revolt against green energy has begun” [4m], a division is created between proponents of green energy projects (referred to as “climate alarmists” and “globalist elites”) and their opponents. The text frames the issue as a struggle between those who advocate for renewable energy and those who prioritise protecting stakeholder rights. By portraying green energy initiatives as forced, heavily subsidised, and authoritarian, the article accentuates differences between the two groups and suggests that supporting green energy entails sacrificing individual rights. This ideological division pits “us” against “them,” creating a narrative of conflict and opposition.

In *The Guardian*’s article titled “Why those profiting from childcare in England need to be kept in check” [9m], a division is presented between profit-hungry private equity investors and stressed parents or guardians of young children. The text portrays private equity investors as prioritising profit over the well-being of families, contrasting them with parents facing the challenges of childcare. This ideological division accentuates the differences between the two groups, framing private equity investors as the “other” whose interests conflict with those of families.

3. *Selective accusations* (4 times) - Choosing to focus on certain individuals or groups while ignoring others can create a skewed perception of blame or responsibility within the narrative.

In *The Guardian*’s article titled “Cameron: ‘Giving Ukraine weapons will help bring peace, not escalate war,’” Cameron subtly shifts the focus onto European partners by stating, “However, he said the onus was on European partners to

concentrate their minds on forging a close and consolidated alliance on major issues before the next US president took office” [5m]. This selective accusation implies that European partners need to prioritise alliance consolidation, potentially deflecting attention from any shortcomings on the UK’s part in addressing the Russian aggression.

In *The Telegraph*’s article titled “Rents rise at fastest pace on record as Gove’s crackdown on landlords backfires” [25m], the article selectively blames Michael Gove’s policies for negative outcomes in the rental market without considering potential benefits or addressing broader housing issues. The statement, “Michael Gove’s crackdown on landlords backfired on the market” [25m], creates a skewed perception of responsibility within the narrative, portraying Gove as the sole cause of the problem while ignoring other relevant factors.

4. *Presenting suspicions as facts* (2 times) - Presenting speculative or unsubstantiated claims as if they were verified facts can mislead readers and shape their perceptions of certain individuals or events.

In *The Independent*’s “Emma Stone’s Best Actress Oscar win over Lily Gladstone doesn’t feel right – and Stone herself seems to know it,” the author presents suspicions as facts by stating, “And it seemed as if Stone might be inclined to agree” [18m]. This statement suggests that Emma Stone’s behaviour or feelings are evident and align with the author’s speculation. By phrasing it this way, the author presents their interpretation of her behaviour as a factual representation of her sentiments, without concrete evidence to support this claim. This presentation blurs the line between speculation and fact, potentially misleading readers into accepting the author’s subjective interpretation as objective truth.

5. *Traumatic one-trial learning* (1 time) - Intimidating or defaming individuals or groups can establish dominance and discourage dissent or opposition.

The excerpt from *The Guardian*’s article “Cameron: ‘Giving Ukraine weapons will help bring peace, not escalate war’” [5m] illustrates the concept of traumatic one-trial learning through the mention of the intercepted call between senior German

military officials about Ukraine. The article states, “The meeting came at a delicate time for Berlin, not long after Kremlin-controlled media in Russia published an intercepted call between senior German military officials about Ukraine” [5m]. The excerpt highlights a breach of security and confidentiality, indicating potential negligence or oversight in protecting sensitive information. This portrayal may instil a sense of unease or concern among readers about the competence and reliability of the authorities tasked with safeguarding national interests. As a result, readers may feel a heightened sense of vulnerability and insecurity regarding geopolitical tensions and the potential ramifications of intelligence breaches. This example illustrates how traumatic one-trial learning can establish dominance by undermining trust in institutions.

Categorizing manipulation techniques from British modern mass media according to Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos offers an understanding of how these techniques operate and their levels of effectiveness. The appeals to logos, rooted in logic, highlight techniques that rely on reasoned arguments and factual presentation to sway opinion. Appeals to pathos, centred on emotion, aim to evoke strong emotional responses from the audience. Appeals to ethos, concerning morality and character, focus on establishing credibility and trustworthiness.

It is important to note that variance in the frequency of the manipulation strategies may be influenced by the genre of the articles. For instance, opinion pieces or columns might employ more emotional resonance and ideological polarisation, while news reports might focus more on selective presentation of factual data and reference to authority.

For more detailed study, we present an example of an analysis performed. The article “Lost in music: why piano competitions must address the gender gap” [26m] from *The Guardian*’s March 20, 2024 issue delves into the pervasive issue of gender inequality within the realm of classical music, specifically focusing on piano competitions. Through the lens of the CEO of the Leeds piano competition, the article

highlights the entrenched biases and structural barriers that hinder the progression of female musicians in these competitions.

One prominent strategy used throughout the article is the appeal to authority. By referencing the UK parliamentary women and equalities committee and Vick Bain's work on the gender gap in the music industry, the article strengthens its argument by aligning itself with reputable sources. For instance, when discussing the prevalence of misogyny and sexual abuse in classical music, the author cites the parliamentary report, stating, "The report contained personal accounts... that inequality is still pervasive..." [26m]. This reference bolsters the credibility of the article's claims, compelling readers to take the issue more seriously.

Another manipulation strategy employed is the creation of information uncertainty through passive constructions. The article mentions that extensive data was gathered but not published by musicians due to fear of career consequences ("We were given access to extensive data, collated by musicians who had chosen not publish it themselves for fear of the consequences...") [26m]. By highlighting the existence of undisclosed data, the article suggests that there is more to the issue than meets the eye, fostering a sense of intrigue and prompting readers to question the full extent of gender disparity in classical music.

The article also uses the strategy of ideological polarisation through the contrast of "concert violinist" and "concert pianist" to illustrate gender biases in the music industry. By pointing out the association of gender with specific instruments, the article underscores societal norms and challenges readers to reconsider their preconceived notions. This is evident when the author states, "Many AI imaging apps have now learned that a 'concert violinist' is female, and a 'concert pianist' male" [26m]. This contrast serves to highlight the underlying biases that contribute to the gender gap in classical music.

The author employs ideological polarisation to critique the explanations offered for the gender gap in piano competitions. By highlighting the various conjectures, such as differences in resilience, societal expectations, and even the

desire to have a family, the author exposes the flawed reasoning used to justify the underrepresentation of women in classical music. This framing positions those who advocate for structural change (the “Us”) against those who offer inadequate explanations or excuses for gender disparities (the “Them”).

Additionally, the article uses the effect of presence to emphasise the significance of the gender gap issue. By recounting personal experiences and anecdotes, such as the CEO’s reflections on the male-dominated Leeds piano competition, the article brings the issue to the forefront of readers’ minds, evoking emotional responses and fostering empathy for those affected by gender inequality in classical music.

Last but not least, the article employs the strategy of opposition to the generally accepted norm by challenging the prevailing belief that the odds are inherently stacked against female pianists in classical music. By stating, “Our purpose is to try to show female pianists that the odds are not necessarily stacked against them” [26m], the article directly challenges the assumption that gender disparities are insurmountable or inevitable.

While employing manipulation strategies, the article does so with the benevolent purpose of advocating for gender equity and encouraging positive change in the music industry [78m].

From the findings of our research, it is evident that media outlets employ a diverse range of manipulative communication strategies to shape narratives and influence public opinion. Through our analysis, we have identified a total of 25 distinct strategies, each with its own unique role in moulding audience perceptions. The samples show a clear prevalence of selective presentation of factual data, emotional resonance, appeal to the “generally accepted norm,” and creation of information uncertainty among others. Each strategy serves to shape narratives, influence perceptions, and sway public opinion. The frequency analysis of

manipulation techniques in British modern mass media reveals a notable predominance of appeals to logos, followed by pathos and ethos, respectively.

The prevalence of these strategies can be attributed to several factors. Media outlets often use strategies that have been proven effective in capturing and maintaining audience attention in a competitive environment. Strategies such as emotional appeal and sensationalism leverage human cognitive biases and emotional responses, thereby enhancing engagement with content. Additionally, selective presentation of factual data and appeals to authority reinforce existing beliefs or ideologies among targeted audiences, fostering loyalty to specific media sources.

Furthermore, the observed ratio of manipulation strategies reflects the complex interplay between media agendas, audience preferences, and societal contexts.

In light of these findings, it is clear that manipulation strategies within media outlets are pervasive and nuanced, highlighting the dynamic interaction between media producers and consumers. Further research is needed to explore the ethical implications of these strategies and to develop approaches for promoting media transparency and accountability. By enhancing our understanding of manipulation in media, we can empower audiences to critically evaluate information and engage with media content in a more discerning manner.

### 3. LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL MEANS OF MANIPULATION IN BRITISH MODERN MASS MEDIA

#### 3.1. Lexical Means of Manipulation in Modern British Mass Media

In this subsection, we will delve deeper into the study of lexical manipulation in the contemporary British mass media, based on a preliminary analysis of 30 articles from three prominent online newspapers: *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. Our research aimed to identify and classify the main techniques used by authors to influence the audience's perception. Following, among others, the research of such scholars as Saiko, Vâlcea, and Susska et al., we developed a classification structure that became the basis for our analysis.

During our research, we studied each article thoroughly, paying particular attention to the language used and its potential impact on reader interpretation. Our goal was to identify recurring patterns and strategies used by the authors to shape narratives and influence the audience's opinion. Applying a systematic approach to the analysis, we tried to identify the most common lexical manipulation tools present in the articles.

Upon completion of our analysis, several key techniques were identified that are particularly evident in the selected articles. These include labelling, euphemisms, dysphemisms, neologisms, strategic use of personal pronouns and emphasis on sensory-related terms. These techniques, which are often used imperceptibly in the text, play a key role in shaping the discourse and directing the reader's interpretation.

In the course of our analysis, we will examine each of these techniques in more detail, thus shedding light on their use and significance in the context of contemporary British media, using examples from our selected articles.

For our analysis of lexical manipulation techniques, we begin with *labelling*, a method involving the assignment of traits or characteristics to individuals without further justification [86]. This technique aims to evoke a specific emotional response

or shape perceptions by associating undesirable traits or characteristics with the labelled entity. By employing labels that carry implicit negative connotations, manipulators seek to influence how the audience perceives the subject, steering them towards predetermined attitudes or opinions. Moreover, labelling can trigger cognitive biases and emotional responses, leading individuals to form negative associations and prejudices without critically assessing the underlying information. Consequently, this manipulation tactic can contribute to the reinforcement of stereotypes, polarisation of opinions, and erosion of trust in the targeted subject or group. Thus, the method in question becomes a frequent tool in applying such previously reviewed strategies of manipulation as *positive/negative reinforcement*.

Now, let's have a look at the examples from the selected articles. In *The Telegraph* piece "The latest Princess of Wales conspiracy theory shows just how bonkers Britain has become" [10m], the term "dingbats" is used to describe adherents of the conspiracy theory. This label dismisses their credibility without directly engaging with their arguments, portraying them as irrational or silly.

Similarly, *The Telegraph's* article titled "Why Apple is throwing millions at Meryl Streep and Nicole Kidman to make TV nobody watches" [1m] employs labelling in its headline. By referring to the content created for Apple TV+ as "TV nobody watches," the article presents the offerings of the service in a negative light from the outset, which could potentially affect readers' perception of its quality and popularity.

In *The Guardian's* article "The left is smeared as the angry mob again and again. In reality, it is the target of political violence" [3m] an example of labelling appears already in the title. The word "mob" carries a negative connotation, often implying a group of unruly or violent individuals acting with hostility. Calling the leftists an "angry mob" categorises these people in a specific way, depicting them as aggressive or destructive.

In modern mass media, *euphemisms* serve as a subtle means of manipulation, often employed to soften harsh truths, introduce deliberate linguistic ambiguity, or

reverse meanings [32m]. Euphemisms involve the substitution of mild or indirect expressions for potentially unpleasant or offensive ones, thereby concealing or sugar-coating the reality of a situation. By employing euphemisms, media outlets can influence audience perceptions and manipulate interpretations of events or issues. This manipulation tactic aims to shape the audience's emotional response and predispose them towards a particular viewpoint by framing the information in a more palatable or less alarming manner. Furthermore, euphemisms can serve to downplay or minimise the seriousness of certain actions or events, thereby influencing public opinion and steering discourse in a desired direction. Consequently, euphemistic language in mass media contributes to the construction of narratives that may diverge from objective reality, shaping audience attitudes and beliefs in accordance with the media's agenda. Looking back to our previously discussed topic of strategies of manipulation and their review, we may conclude here that the manipulation techniques that may be applied in the use of euphemisms in modern mass media include *concealment*, *distortion*, and *positive reinforcement*.

In *The Telegraph's* article "Picture agencies, paparazzi and the Palace: The battle to control the truth" [28m], the portrayal of digital image manipulation is carefully constructed, with the practice referred to as "minor adjustments." This euphemism, which is commonly used in professional circles, serves to downplay the potentially deceptive nature of image alteration, thus mitigating any negative connotations associated with the practice.

Likewise, in another article from *The Telegraph* titled "The eurozone is about to go bust" [19m], the phrase "annual distributable profit of zero" is used as a euphemism for financial losses. Replacement of the grim reality of financial instability with more neutral or euphemistic language, such as "zero profit", can mitigate the immediate impact of the situation and possibly reduce readers' anxiety.

Furthermore, in *The Guardian's* coverage of Volodymyr Zelenskiy's asking for more arms in the article "Volodymyr Zelenskiy pleads for more arms as frontline Ukrainian city falls" [29m], Putin's comments on the capture of Avdiivka are

characterised as “an important victory.” The article uses euphemistic language to downplay the seriousness of Russia’s military actions by presenting them in a less negative manner. The article subtly manipulates reader perceptions, potentially minimising the seriousness of Russia’s aggressive actions in the conflict.

*Dysphemisms*, as a means of manipulation in modern mass media, serve as opposites to euphemisms, aiming to coarsen language by replacing neutral terms with those carrying negative connotations. This deliberate choice of language seeks to evoke specific emotional responses in the audience, steering them towards a particular interpretation or reaction. Through the use of dysphemisms and pejorative words, manipulators shape perceptions and attitudes, often instilling fear, disgust or contempt for certain ideas, individuals or groups [45]. By definition, the corresponding manipulation strategies applied in the reviewed samples are *sensationalism*, *emotional resonance* and *negative reinforcement*.

In the article from *The Guardian* “The left is smeared as the angry mob again and again. In reality, it is the target of political violence” [3m], the term “mob” can be seen as an example of dysphemism. It is used to portray the left in a negative light, evoking associations with unruly behaviour and violence. A neutral counterpart to “mob” in this context could be “group” or “community,” which do not carry the same negative connotations.

In “Damsel review: Why is Millie Bobby Brown wasting her time on this blunt-force empowerment dreck?” [17m] from *The Independent* online newspaper, the phrase “BBQed by dragon’s breath” serves as a dysphemism for being burned. The dysphemism downplays the seriousness of the character’s suffering. As a result, readers may perceive the film as less emotionally impactful or intense than it actually is, affecting their overall interpretation and assessment of its quality.

*Neologisms*, a prominent means of lexical manipulation, involve the creation of new words or phrases in order to convey specific meanings or concepts within a given context. Such new linguistic constructs can be created by various methods, such as blending existing words, borrowing from other languages, or adapting terms

for specific purposes. Neologisms can take different forms, including portmanteaus, abbreviations or semantic shifts, depending on the desired effect and audience perception. The media strategically use neologisms to shape discourse, introduce new concepts or trigger specific associations in the audience. By means of introducing new vocabulary, media organisations can influence perceptions, shape debates and promote a particular agenda, thereby controlling the narrative and moulding public opinion. This means of lexical manipulation was not widely observed in given articles, with only three evident instances present.

One example of neologism usage can be observed in *The Telegraph* article titled “How your dog is making you less stressed, slimmer and more creative” [27m], where the term “vitamin DOG” is introduced. This neologism playfully suggests that interacting with dogs is as essential to health as consuming vitamins. Equating the benefits of dog ownership with essential nutrients, the phrase “vitamin DOG” evades medical terminology and engages readers with a more relatable and appealing concept.

Similarly, in another article from *The Telegraph*, titled “Why Apple is throwing millions at Meryl Streep and Nicole Kidman to make TV nobody watches” [1m], the term “Prestige Dad TV” is coined by GQ to categorise Apple TV+’s content. This neologism highlights the quality and niche appeal of the programming while also subtly implying a limitation in its audience reach. Through portraying the material as prestigious yet suited to a certain demographic, “Prestige Dad TV” shapes readers’ perceptions of Apple TV+ as a platform offering high-quality but potentially niche entertainment.

*The Independent* article “The Conservatives are heading for a long spell in the wilderness” [24m] introduces the term “Truss interregnum” to describe Liz Truss’s brief tenure as prime minister. This neologism alludes to a chaotic and unstable time of leadership within the Conservative Party, and promotes the narrative of internal turmoil and chaos.

The use of *personal pronouns* in modern mass media serves as a potent tool for manipulation, aiming to foster specific emotional responses and establish connections with the audience [58m]. Selectively using the pronouns “we”, “you”, “they” etc., the news media can create a sense of inclusiveness or exclusivity, thus promoting an imagined unity or division among the audience. This manipulative tactic aims to generate a sense of belonging or identification with the message that is being conveyed, thereby increasing audience engagement and receptivity to the media’s agenda. Besides, the choice of personal pronouns can influence the perception of the relationship between the source and the audience, positioning the media as a reliable ally or an authoritative voice of reason. Various manipulation techniques may apply to the use of personal pronouns in media, including *emotional resonance*, *effect of presence* and *ideological polarisation*.

In *The Telegraph*’s article “How your dog is making you less stressed, slimmer and more creative” [27m], the consistent use of first-person singular pronouns such as “I” and “my” creates a personal connection with the reader, grounding scientific findings in relatable, trustworthy personal experiences. Through sharing tales and thoughts using personal pronouns, the piece builds a sense of camaraderie and understanding, increasing the persuasiveness of the message.

Similarly, in *The Telegraph*’s coverage of the Russian invasion of Ukraine titled “Kyiv blitzed by Russian missiles as revenge for raids” [2m], Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s use of personal pronouns like “you” and “we” in his statements directly appeals to the audience, creating a sense of urgency and collective responsibility.

In *The Guardian*’s article “Why those profiting from childcare in England need to be kept in check” [9m], the deliberate use of personal pronouns such as “they” for investors and “our” for parents and guardians creates a clear distinction between different groups. This ideological polarisation builds a sense of community among readers who identify with the latter group, positioning them against profit-oriented

investors and reinforcing the message of the article concerning the importance of regulating childcare services.

In the same way, *The Guardian*'s piece on Reddit titled "First it was Facebook, then Twitter. Is Reddit about to become rubbish too?" [16m] employs the use of inclusive pronouns like "we" and "our" in order to make readers empathise with the author's concerns about the future of the platform.

*Sensory-related terms* serve as powerful tools of manipulation in journalism due to their ability to evoke vivid imagery and emotional responses from readers. By appealing to the senses, journalists can immerse the audience in the narrative, making it more engaging and memorable. Through appealing to the senses of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell, journalists can create engaging narratives that immerse readers in a story, increasing their emotional involvement and empathy. This manipulative tactic aims to establish a deeper connection between the audience and the narrative, increasing its impact and resonance. In addition, the smart use of sensory terms allows journalists to present a piece of news in a specific light, stressing certain points or interpretations and downplaying others. Manipulation techniques like *emotional resonance* and *effect of presence* may apply to the use of sensory-related terms in media.

In the article "How a land of melancholic people created the world's happiest country" [21m] from *The Telegraph*, sensory descriptions of Finnish landscapes, like "the rush of an owl's wingbeat" or "rustle of autumn leaves," transport readers to the Finnish environment, allowing them to experience the setting firsthand. This immersion helps convey the unique Finnish perspective on happiness, making the concept more tangible and relatable to the audience.

In *The Guardian*'s coverage of a criminal case titled "Ex-takeaway worker guilty of money laundering in £2bn bitcoin operation" [12m], sensory-rich descriptions of luxurious properties and extravagant possessions, such as "six-bedroom house in north London" and "jewellery worth tens of thousands of pounds," create a vivid picture of opulence and excess. These sensory details

emphasise the allure of wealth and the thrill of indulgence associated with the criminal activities, effectively capturing the attention of the newspaper readers and highlighting the contrast between the former life of the person and their newfound wealth.

Moreover, in *The Guardian's* article addressing gender inequality in piano competitions titled “Lost in music: why piano competitions must address the gender gap” [26m], the use of sensory-related terms like “discordant note” in “gender inequality strikes a particularly discordant note” appeals to the auditory senses of the audience, thus evoking a sense of disharmony and discomfort. This metaphor not only emphasises the seriousness of the gender gap issue but also adds depth and richness to the narrative, engaging readers on both intellectual and emotional levels.

In modern British mass media, *evaluative adjectives* serve as effective tools for manipulation, shaping reader perceptions of key figures, events, and cultural products. Through carefully chosen descriptors, media outlets imbue their narratives with subjective judgments and emotional connotations, influencing audience interpretations. Such adjectives typically carry implicit biases or judgements, presenting a narrative in a preferred light and prompting readers to draw predetermined conclusions. Moreover, evaluative adjectives can evoke an emotional reaction by appealing to readers’ prior beliefs or prejudices in order to reinforce an ideological position or political agenda. In addition, the use of evaluative adjectives allows media professionals to claim authority and influence over public discourse by positioning themselves as arbiters of truth and gatekeepers of public opinion. Through the use of these lexical tools several strategies of manipulation may be applied, most notably, *emotional resonance*, *sensationalism* and *positive/negative reinforcement*.

For instance, in an article from *The Independent* titled “Now Boris tries to sabotage his own bungled Brexit deal with new attack on Sunak” [13m], evaluative adjectives such as “astonishing” and “unresolved” are strategically deployed to characterise the actions of political figures. The adjective “astonishing” in the phrase

“Former PM launches astonishing intervention” conveys a sense of surprise and incredulity, framing Johnson’s actions as unexpected and disruptive. Similarly, the term “unresolved” in “the unresolved mess left by Mr Johnson’s Brexit deal” suggests chaos and incompetence, colouring the reader’s perception of the situation and implicating Johnson in the perceived disorder.

Likewise, in a review of the film “Damsel” titled “Why is Millie Bobby Brown wasting her time on this blunt-force empowerment dreck?” [17m] negative evaluative adjectives like “blunt-force,” “wasting,” “joyless,” and “odd” are employed to express the author’s disdain for the film’s quality and thematic approach. These adjectives evoke a sense of disappointment, boredom, and peculiarity, effectively conveying the critical stance of the author and discouraging readers from viewing the film favourably.

While lexicon plays a crucial role in shaping language and perception, rhetorical devices and metaphors offer an additional layer of persuasion and vividness to journalistic discourse. Metaphors, in particular, enrich the efficacy of arguments by evoking vivid imagery and *emotional resonance*, rather than relying solely on factual accuracy [64].

For instance, in *The Telegraph*’s “Rents rise at fastest pace on record as Gove’s crackdown on landlords backfires” [25m], the metaphor of the policy “backfiring” conveys a sense of failure and unintended consequences, amplifying the perceived negativity of the outcome.

In a similar way, in the article “Half of Sunak’s Cabinet are lining up to replace him, says Starmer” [14m], the metaphor of “holding the sword of Damocles above his head” dramatises the precariousness of Sunak’s position as Prime Minister.

Furthermore, in “Picture agencies, paparazzi and the Palace: The battle to control the truth” [28m], metaphors like “eroding trust” and “killing off the paparazzi” intensify the perceived impact of image manipulation on public perception and media integrity.

In The Guardian's "Lost in music: why piano competitions must address the gender gap" [26m], metaphors such as "the pipeline breaks" and "the window to launch a career is short" vividly illustrate the barriers faced by female pianists, emphasising their struggles through powerful imagery.

Thus, while lexical manipulation sets the stage, metaphors add depth and persuasion to journalistic discourse, ultimately shaping the way audiences interpret and respond to media narratives.

In order to present the dynamics of the use of lexical means of manipulation in modern British online newspaper articles, we present the analysis of one of *The Independent's* articles below.

The "Damsel Review" [17m], included in the newspaper's International Women's Day 2024 issue, employs several linguistic means of manipulating the reader to shape their perception of the movie "Damsel" and its lead actress, Millie Bobby Brown. One notable strategy is the use of dysphemisms to diminish the value of the film. Phrases such as "blunt-force empowerment dreck," and "mean-mugging to camera" are employed to convey a negative impression of the movie, painting it as lacking in substance or quality. Additionally, the author applies lexical derogation by employing terms like "micro-industry" to diminish the significance of Millie Bobby Brown's involvement in the film.

The author employs labelling when describing the film as "blunt-force teen girl empowerment dreck" [17m]. This label not only conveys a negative impression of the film's content but also diminishes its value by categorising it as shallow and lacking substance.

Moreover, the article employs the use of personal pronouns "we" and "you" to engage the reader and foster a sense of shared perspective. By including the reader in statements such as "But we're more than two decades into a post-Shrek world" and "It's not really something you have to announce ahead of time" [17m], the author creates a sense of camaraderie and solidarity, subtly persuading the reader to align with their viewpoint.

This style of manipulation, especially on a day meant to celebrate women's achievements and empowerment, is particularly egregious and detracts from the broader discourse surrounding gender equality and representation in media.

In conclusion, our analysis of lexical manipulation in modern British mass media reveals a multitude of techniques employed to influence audience perception. Through techniques involving the use of such lexical means as labelling, euphemisms, dysphemisms, neologisms, strategic use of personal pronouns, evaluative adjectives, and other means of manipulation, authors shape narratives and sway reader interpretation. These subtle linguistic strategies, often imperceptible to the casual observer, play a pivotal role in directing discourse and moulding public opinion.

By shedding light on these techniques and their significance, our analysis underscores the intricate relationship between language and persuasion in contemporary media, highlighting the importance of critical literacy in navigating today's information landscape.

### **3.2. Grammatical Means of Manipulation in Modern British Mass Media**

In this subsection, we will delve into the subtle aspects of grammatical manipulation used by media outlets such as *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. Our research aims to reveal how specific grammatical devices are strategically used to influence reader perceptions and promote certain goals.

Grammar plays a crucial role in shaping how readers interpret information presented in media discourse. Through various manipulative techniques, such as passive constructions, use of direct speech, and the use of modal verbs, media outlets influence reader perceptions. Our analysis of modern British mass media has revealed significant trends in grammatical manipulation, which we will explore further in the subsequent analysis.

Passive constructions are a prevalent grammatical tool used in modern British mass media to shift focus away from the subject performing the action, thereby downplaying their agency or responsibility. This linguistic technique is often employed to obscure accountability or deflect attention from specific individuals or entities involved in a particular event or situation, thus forcing *the creation of information uncertainty, selective presentation of factual data, concealment* as well as *diversion and evasion*.

In our analysis of 30 articles from the main British online media outlets, we observed frequent use of passive constructions used by journalists with an aim to manipulate reader perceptions.

For instance, in an article from *The Telegraph* titled “Picture agencies, paparazzi and the Palace: The battle to control the truth” [28m], passive voice is employed to diminish agency and obscure responsibility. An example of this is seen in the phrase, “it is normally photographs from the North Korea news agency or the Iranian news agency that are ‘killed’ for reasons of manipulation.” Here, the passive voice obscures the actor responsible for killing the photographs, contributing to a sense of irony regarding the action. Instead of creating ambiguity, this usage highlights the lack of transparency or accountability within authoritarian regimes like North Korea and Iran.

Similarly, in an article from *The Independent* titled “The Conservatives are heading for a long spell in the wilderness” [24m], passive constructions are used to downplay agency and focus attention on broader phenomena. For instance, phrases like “the debate about the Rwanda bill had been hijacked” employ the passive voice to deflect attention from specific actors involved. This technique effectively emphasises the situation or action itself rather than the individuals responsible, shaping reader perceptions of the events described.

Another significant grammatical manipulation observed in modern British mass media is the use of nominalisation, wherein verbs or adjectives are turned into nouns to emphasise certain points and add weight to the argument. Through the

transformation of verbs or adjectives into static nouns, the media can highlight the importance of certain concepts or ideas in a particular narrative, shaping the perception of the reader and accentuating certain themes or issues (*selective presentation of factual data*). Moreover, nominalisation allows media professionals to condense complex concepts or multifaceted phenomena into a short time frame, making them easier to understand and strengthening the coherence of the narrative. Also, by using nominalisation, the news media can mask the subjectivity of some statements or claims while *generalizing* and presenting them as objective facts or indisputable truths.

In an article from *The Telegraph* titled “The latest Princess of Wales conspiracy theory shows just how bonkers Britain has become” [10m], nominalisation is used in order to underscore the author’s critical stance. Phrases like “the bewildering spread of the latest unhinged conspiracy theory” and “the plan’s next screamingly obvious pitfall” [10m] turn actions into static entities, amplifying the impact of the argument and emphasising the perceived absurdity of the situation.

In another article from *The Telegraph* titled “Half of Sunak’s Cabinet are lining up to replace him, says Starmer” [14m], nominalisation is employed to lend authority and credibility to the information presented. Phrases like “the speculation about a plot to oust the Prime Minister” [14m] present the actions as established facts rather than ongoing processes or discussions.

Furthermore, in an article from *The Guardian* “First it was Facebook, then Twitter. Is Reddit about to become rubbish too?” [16m] instances of nominalisation, such as “the impending initial public offering” and “dominance of advertiser-focused algorithmic feeds,” abstract the actions and events described, contributing to a formal tone and lending a sense of authority to the discourse.

Active voice is another grammatical tool frequently employed in modern British mass media to shape reader perception and, on the contrary to passive constructions, to emphasise agency, *authority* or responsibility. This grammatical choice adds a degree of immediacy and clarity to narratives, which makes the

information more compelling and interesting to readers. Furthermore, the active voice can have a subtle effect on the interpretation of the audience by focusing attention on certain actors or objects, thereby directing attention to the desired focal points in the narrative.

In an article from *The Guardian* titled “Cameron: ‘Giving Ukraine weapons will help bring peace, not escalate war’” [5m], active voice is employed to underscore the role of countries like Britain in supporting Ukraine. For instance, Cameron states, “I know that what we have given to the Ukrainians has helped them to resist this appalling invasion...” [5m]. Here, the active voice emphasises the direct action taken by Britain in providing support to Ukraine, highlighting its proactive stance in the support of Ukraine.

In an article from *The Telegraph* titled “The eurozone is about to go bust” [19m], active voice is employed to convey urgency. For example, phrases like “The Bundesbank last week announced an annual distributable profit of zero,” and “The ECB has printed far more money than the Federal Reserve” directly attribute actions to specific entities, presenting a clear narrative about the financial state of the eurozone [19m]. This active construction engages readers by providing concrete information and attributing responsibility, thus influencing their perception of the economic situation.

Another prevalent grammatical manipulation observed in modern British mass media is the use of direct speech, which serves to convey authenticity, credibility, and authority to the discourse. By using quotes, the mass media gives the impression of first-hand testimony or eyewitness accounts (*effect of presence*), which increases the perceived credibility of the information being reported. Such grammatical choices also contribute to a sense of urgency and intimacy, as readers feel directly involved in the voices of the people who participate in the narrative. Furthermore, direct speech allows media professionals to link statements or opinions to specific *authority*, in a way that shapes the discourse to suit their editorial views or agenda. Also, by using direct speech, media outlets can manipulate readers’ perceptions by selectively

quoting individuals or omitting context to support certain narratives or viewpoints (*selective presentation of factual data*). Finally, the use of direct language lends a sense of authority and credibility to the discourse, positioning the media as a reliable interpreter and mediator of public discourse.

In an article from *The Guardian* titled “Lost in music: why piano competitions must address the gender gap” [26m], direct speech is employed to present the perspectives of individuals directly affected by the issue at hand. For instance, a direct quotation states, “It clearly is sexism – how can you call it anything else?” [26m]. By incorporating direct quotations, the article provides firsthand accounts and opinions, enhancing the credibility of the argument and creating a sense of connection with readers.

At the same time, in an article from *The Independent* titled “Now Boris tries to sabotage his own bungled Brexit deal with new attack on Sunak” [13m], direct speech is applied through quotative frames attributing statements to specific individuals like “said Mr Johnson” and “the trouble-making Tory peer warned.” These direct quotations amplify the voices of prominent figures within the political discourse, framing their remarks as authoritative and influential. By directly quoting Johnson and other key figures, the article bolsters the credibility of their statements and positions in the ongoing debate over Brexit and UK-EU relations.

Furthermore, in another article from *The Independent* titled “Damsel review: Why is Millie Bobby Brown wasting her time on this blunt-force empowerment dreck?” [17m], direct speech and quotations are employed to critique the film’s dialogue and thematic elements. For instance, phrases like “we are the granddaughters of the princesses you couldn’t burn” and “there is a special place in hell for girl dragons who don’t help other women” [17m] are used to mock or parody the film’s content. By incorporating direct speech, the article highlights the perceived flaws in the film’s writing, strengthening the author’s critique and engaging readers through vivid language.

In articles from *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *The Telegraph*, modal verbs are frequently employed in order to influence the reader's perception of the presented information. Modal verbs convey expressions of possibility, necessity, or obligation, enabling the media to report on events, views, or predictions in accordance with an editorial preference. Modal verbs allow for the expression of assumptions, doubts or ambiguity, encouraging readers to question what is being said or consider alternative points of view. In addition, the use of modal verbs allows media outlets to hedge their claims by presenting them as possibilities rather than definitive statements, mitigating potential criticism or backlash. The use of modal verbs tends to be a frequent occurrence in such manipulation strategies as *emotional resonance*, *creation of information uncertainty* as well as *presenting suspicions as facts*.

For instance, in an article titled "Lost in music: why piano competitions must address the gender gap" [26m] from *The Guardian*, modal verbs such as "must," "can," and "may," along with evidential adverbs like "clearly" and epistemic adverbial expressions such as "no doubt," are used to underscore the urgency of addressing gender disparity in piano competitions [37]. For instance, the author asserts, "We can take heart from the world of conducting (...) So we must do the same, or we will continue to lose original and unique voices..." [26m].

In an analysis of Emma Stone's Best Actress Oscar win over Lily Gladstone from *The Independent*, common verbs expressing modal meaning like "didn't feel" and "seems" are employed to express uncertainty and speculation. The phrase "And, yet, for many, the win didn't quite feel right" [18m] implies a sense of ambiguity surrounding Stone's victory, prompting readers to question its legitimacy and suggesting that even Stone herself may have doubts.

In another example from *The Telegraph*, in an article titled "How a land of melancholic people created the world's happiest country," phrases such as "must be onto something" convey a degree of uncertainty and speculation regarding Finland's happiness [21m]. This linguistic choice piques the reader's curiosity and encourages

further exploration of the topic, shaping their perception of Finland's status as the world's happiest country.

Conditional sentences are another powerful tool used by modern mass media to manipulate readers' perceptions and prompt them to consider hypothetical scenarios and their potential outcomes [80]. With conditional sentences, the media can present narratives in a highly speculative way, prompting readers to imagine alternative realities or potential outcomes (*effect of presence*, oftentimes combined in pair with *emotional resonance*). This technique encourages audience engagement and critical thinking by presenting hypothetical situations that may resonate with readers' experiences or concerns.

In an article from *The Independent* titled "The King needs the people at least as much as they need him" [11m], conditional sentences are employed to invite readers to contemplate the significance of public support for the monarchy. For instance, the author presents a hypothetical situation, stating, "Imagine how much trouble the institution of the monarchy would be in if no one had flocked to the gates of Balmoral or Buckingham Palace after the Queen died (...)" [11m]. This conditional construction encourages readers to envision the consequences of a lack of public support for the monarchy, highlighting its dependence on the people.

In a similar way, in articles from *The Guardian*, conditional sentences are used to convey warnings and predictions about potential future scenarios. For example, in a post "Chelsea owners warned by fans of slide towards 'irreversible toxicity'," the use of conditional language, such as "Unless the situation improves, this seems likely to manifest itself in more targeted chanting (...)" [6m], suggests the possibility of negative outcomes if the case does not improve. This framing prompts readers to consider the consequences of the club's actions and the potential impact on fan sentiment and behaviour.

Additionally, in an article featuring Henry Louis Gates Jr. discussing race and America's redemption, *The Guardian* employs conditional sentences to convey Gates' perspective on the country's challenges and potential for change. For instance,

the article states, “Yet if underneath it lies a pessimism – that racism makes western nations unliveable – it is not one that Gates shares” [15m]. This conditional construction allows Gates’ viewpoint to be presented in contrast to a hypothetical scenario, inviting readers to consider alternative perspectives on the issue of racism and the prospects for redemption and progress in America.

Comparative structures serve as a potent means of manipulating readers’ perceptions by drawing comparisons between different entities, situations, or possibilities. The use of comparative language allows the media to construct *ideological polarisation*, emphasise differences, similarities, advantages or disadvantages (either applying the *emotional resonance* strategy or not), and often even make *false analogies* in the text, thus shaping reader perceptions and affecting attitudes towards certain topics or issues. This grammatical technique allows media outlets to structure stories in a way that emphasises certain aspects while downplaying others, guiding readers’ interpretation to the desired conclusions.

In an article from *The Independent* titled “Damsel review: Why is Millie Bobby Brown wasting her time on this blunt-force empowerment dreck?” [17m] comparative structures are employed to juxtapose the film in question with other works, emphasising its perceived lack of originality or uniqueness. For instance, phrases like “about as fresh as a Batman film where we see how his parents die” and “every generation deserves their own version of 2007’s Stardust” highlight comparisons to well-known films, suggesting that “Damsel” fails to offer a fresh or compelling narrative [17m].

Then, in “The King needs the people at least as much as they need him” [11m], an article discussing the relationship between the monarchy and the people, also from *The Independent*, comparative constructions are applied in order to highlight the reciprocal nature of this relationship. Phrases such as “the people need the monarch as much as the monarch needs them” [11m] draw parallels between the needs and dependencies of both parties, putting an emphasis on the interconnectedness of their roles and responsibilities.

In another article titled “Discovering who Taylor Swift is secretly related to blew my mind” [8m], also from *The Independent*, comparative constructions are used to draw comparisons between Taylor Swift and Emily Dickinson. By stating that “The crucial thing is that both women speak to the heart of the human experience” [8m], the author highlights perceived similarities and common themes in their work, positioning Taylor Swift’s significance alongside that of a renowned literary figure.

Furthermore, in an article from *The Guardian* discussing Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s plea for more arms in Ukraine, comparative constructions are applied to compare different defensive positions. Phrases like “move to defence from more favourable lines” [29m] suggest a comparison between defensive positions, framing the decision as a strategic move to maintain a more advantageous position. This comparative framing influences the reader’s perception of the tactical decisions made by Ukrainian forces, presenting the defensive manoeuvre in a more positive light.

Interrogative sentences wield significant influence in shaping readers’ perceptions by engaging them in critical reflection and prompting consideration of broader implications. Such sentences are frequently used as a rhetorical device to frame issues or events in a thought-provoking way, directing the attention of the reader to certain aspects or perspectives. This type of sentences is a frequent means within such strategies as *emotional resonance* and *sensationalism*.

In an article from *The Independent* titled “Kate’s apology over THAT photo has only made things worse,” the author employs a rhetorical question at the outset: “How was it that the joyous Mother’s Day picture of the Princess of Wales with her three children has turned into the mother of all Photoshop fiascos?” [22m]. This question captivates the reader’s attention and accentuates the unexpected nature of the situation that is described, compelling them to contemplate the circumstances surrounding the controversy and preparing them for forthcoming revelations.

Then, in an article pondering the future of Rishi Sunak, also from *The Independent*, interrogative sentences are used strategically as well. Questions such as

“If the end is nigh for Rishi Sunak, should we worry that he will try too hard to leave a legacy?” and “What will he be remembered for?” [14m] prompt readers to consider hypothetical scenarios and uncertainties regarding Sunak’s future actions and legacy. By engaging readers in this manner, the author encourages them to reflect on potential outcomes and implications, setting the stage for the discussion to follow while subtly guiding their thought process.

Furthermore, in a review of the film “Damsel” from *The Independent*, the title itself poses a rhetorical question: “Why is Millie Bobby Brown wasting her time on this blunt-force empowerment dreck?” [17m]. This interrogative title immediately establishes a critical tone, inviting readers to question the value of the film and Brown’s involvement in it. By framing the review as a question, the author primes readers to approach the analysis with a sceptical mindset, thereby influencing their perception of the film even before delving into the review itself.

In order to show the dynamics of the use of grammatical means of manipulation within one particular article, we present the analysis of one of *The Telegraph*’s pieces. The article from *The Telegraph*’s March 21, 2024 issue discusses the aftermath of a Russian missile barrage on the capital city of Ukraine, Kyiv, employing various grammatical means of manipulation commonly observed in modern mass media [2m].

One prominent strategy evident throughout the article is the use of reported speech to appeal to authority while avoiding direct responsibility. For instance, when Ukraine’s air force is cited as saying, “it had shot down all 31 hypersonic, ballistic and cruise missiles” [2m], the article indirectly attributes the information to a reputable source, deflecting responsibility from the author. By using this strategy, the author manipulates by lessening the credibility, and in the long-term effect this can lead to dramatic consequences.

Another manipulation strategy employed is the use of passive constructions to emphasise actions rather than agents and thus avoid attributing blame. For example, when describing the damage caused by the missile strikes, the article states,

“Residential buildings, medical facilities, and businesses were damaged” [2m], without specifying who caused the damage. By omitting the agent responsible for the destruction, in this case, the Russians, the article shifts focus away from assigning accountability and instead emphasises the impact of the events.

Additionally, the article employs the sequence of events seen in the use of the past perfect tense combined with the euphemism “revenge” in order to gaslight those who support Ukrainians. By stating that “Moscow had vowed revenge” for cross-border attacks, the article implies a causal link between past events and the subsequent missile barrage, framing Russia’s actions as retaliatory rather than aggressive. Such a manipulation strategy distorts the narrative surrounding the Russian aggression.

Furthermore, the article uses the grammatical means to impose the simultaneousness of actions to divert attention from the main topic onto seemingly equally important matters. For instance, while discussing the missile strikes in Kyiv, the article abruptly shifts focus to EU leaders (“Meanwhile, in Brussels, EU leaders...”) [2m]. The latter topic may well seem more casual to the British reader and will not gather as much support and attention as the sympathy to the Ukrainian people would. By presenting these topics in such a way, the article distracts readers from the immediate consequences of the missile attacks and instead directs attention towards potential future actions, thereby downplaying the severity of the situation in Kyiv.

The article employs various grammatical means of manipulation in modern mass media to shape the narrative surrounding the missile barrage on Kyiv. Through strategies such as reported speech, passive constructions, and other, the article subtly influences public perception of the war.

Our analysis of modern British mass media reveals pervasive grammatical manipulation tactics. Passive constructions diminish accountability, while active voice emphasises agency. Direct speech lends credibility, while nominalisation adds

weight to arguments. Modal verbs convey certainty or doubt, and conditional sentences prompt contemplation of hypotheticals. Comparative structures juxtapose entities, shaping understanding. Interrogative sentences engage critical reflection. This study illuminates the intricate role of grammar in media influence, vital for communication studies and public discourse. Understanding these linguistic tools empowers readers to discern underlying agendas and evaluate media narratives critically.

Random sampling is particularly advantageous for this research as it ensures a representative selection of articles across different publications and genres. This approach helps to capture a comprehensive snapshot of manipulative strategies employed by media outlets, minimising bias and enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

From the gathered information, we can grasp the pervasive nature of manipulative communication strategies in media discourse. These tactics are used to construct narratives, reinforce ideologies, and influence audience attitudes and behaviours. By means of understanding the prevalence and mechanisms of these strategies, researchers can gain insights into the dynamics of media manipulation and its implications for public discourse and decision-making.

In further studies on the topic, researchers can delve deeper into the effectiveness of different manipulative strategies across various contexts and audience demographics. They can also explore the ethical implications of media manipulation and investigate potential interventions to mitigate its negative effects. Additionally, longitudinal studies can track changes in manipulative tactics over time, providing valuable insights into evolving media landscapes and communication strategies.

## CONCLUSIONS

The initial stimulus for the study of manipulation in modern media was driven by growing concerns about the integrity and credibility of media sources in our contemporary society. With the proliferation of digital platforms and the rapid dissemination of information, there is an increasing need to examine the strategies that are used by the mass media outlets in the UK in order to shape public opinion and influence reader perceptions.

This study aimed to shed light on the changing landscape of manipulation in the contemporary British media, offering a fresh perspective on the strategies employed by media professionals.

The study of manipulation in modern mass media demonstrates a multi-layered array of tactics used to shape narratives, influence perceptions, and sway public opinion. Our analysis, which covers manipulative communication strategies as well lexical and grammatical manipulation has provided useful insights into the complex mechanisms at work in media discourse.

The analysis of manipulative communication strategies has uncovered a diverse array of tactics employed by the British media outlets aiming to shape narratives and sway public opinion. Across the spectrum, we have identified a total of twenty five distinct strategies, each serving a unique purpose in influencing audience perceptions. These include a wide range of techniques, including selective presentation of factual data, use of emotional resonance, creation of information uncertainty, appeal to authority, use of negative reinforcement, sensationalisation of content and promotion of ideological polarisation through the *Us/Them* dichotomy. These tactics are strategically used in order to shape the audience's perception and promote a certain narrative in the media discourse.

Further, our study has categorized the manipulation techniques into Aristotle's appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos.

Appeals to logos (logic), among other techniques, include the selective presentation of factual data, reference to authority, generalizations, distortion, false analogy, delivering conflicting messages, criterion blur, creation of information uncertainty, diversion and evasion, concealment, and substitution of the subject of action.

Pathos (emotion) is targeted through the use of techniques that evoke strong emotional responses, such as emotional resonance, negative/positive reinforcement, sensationalism, brandishing anger, gaslighting, feigning innocence and confusion, covert intimidation and guilt trip and effect of presence.

Finally, ethos (credibility) is manipulated through strategies that play on morality and character, such as appeal to the “generally accepted norm,” ideological polarization, selective accusations, presenting suspicions as facts and traumatic one-trial learning.

By delivering a comprehensive analysis of lexical and grammatical manipulation techniques, this research has revealed the complex mechanisms at work in media discourse. The study of lexical manipulation has shown a variety of tactics, from subtle labelling and euphemisms to the strategic use of personal pronouns and evaluative adjectives.

In a similar manner, the study of grammatical means of manipulation has highlighted the importance of syntax and structure in shaping audience understanding and perception.

The findings of this research underscore the need for critical analysis of media content to discern hidden motives and understand the complexities of modern information dissemination. By illuminating the prevalence and mechanisms of manipulation in media discourse, researchers gain insights into its implications for public discourse and decision-making. Random sampling ensures a representative selection of articles, enhancing the generalizability of our findings across different publications and genres.

Ultimately, understanding the pervasive nature of manipulative communication strategies empowers individuals to navigate media content critically and engage with information more discerningly. By cultivating critical literacy, audiences can mitigate the influence of manipulation in media discourse, fostering a more informed and vigilant society.

The results of this research can be used in further studies of issues of manipulation in modern mass media, including more detailed analysis of the suggested strategies and methods for reducing the negative influence of mass media manipulation on modern society.

## SUMMARY

Ця магістерська робота присвячена вивченню питання маніпуляцій у сучасних британських засобах масової інформації. У дослідженні піддаються критичному аналізу різні стратегії маніпуляції, що використовуються для формування громадської думки та впливу на читацьке сприйняття, а також підкреслюється необхідність глибшого розуміння цих тактик у зв'язку зі зростаючим занепокоєнням з приводу доброчесності засобів масової інформації.

Маніпуляція полягає у стратегічному нав'язуванні стороннього впливу з метою прихованого контролю над думками, емоціями та поведінкою індивідів. Вона здійснюється за допомогою вербальних та невербальних прийомів, а також використовує динаміку влади та вразливі сторони аудиторії задля досягнення цілей маніпулятора. Важливо відрізнити маніпуляцію від звичайного переконання, оскільки вона ставить реципієнтів у пасивний стан і обмежує автономію їхніх рішень.

Незважаючи на існування різних поглядів на питання моральності застосування маніпуляцій, вони залишаються поширеним явищем у засобах масової інформації, а також формують суспільне сприйняття та наративи. Сучасні науковці наголошують на необхідності застосування етичних комунікативних практик з метою пом'якшення негативних наслідків маніпуляцій у мас-медійному дискурсі та сприяння усвідомленому ухваленню рішень.

Ця магістерська робота складається зі вступу, трьох розділів з окремими підрозділами, а також висновків та списку використаних джерел. Така структура уможливорює методичне дослідження стратегій маніпуляції, яке доповнюється ретельним вивченням лінгвістичних даних.

Об'єктом цього дослідження є маніпуляції, що застосовуються в сучасних британських засобах масової інформації, а предметом – типи та методи маніпуляцій, що застосовуються у них.

Актуальність цього дослідження обумовлена гострою потребою у вивченні та розумінні впливу засобів масової інформації на формування суспільних поглядів та думок.

Новизна роботи полягає в детальній класифікації та аналізі різноманітних технік маніпуляції в конкретних культурних та медійних контекстах, що дозволяє по-новому поглянути на діючі механізми маніпулювання медіадискурсом.

Основною метою цього дослідження стала класифікація та структурування типів і методів маніпуляції в сучасних британських засобах масової інформації. Завдання магістерської роботи полягали у визначенні найбільш поширених методів маніпуляції в сучасному британському мас-медійному дискурсі, а також аналіз контекстуальних і соціально-психологічних механізмів, що лежать в основі цих методів. Досягнення цих цілей робить значний внесок у ширше наукове розуміння маніпуляцій у засобах масової інформації.

Емпіричні дані для цього дослідження були отримані зі статей, які були відібрані методом випадкової вибірки з трьох відомих британських онлайн-видань: *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian* та *The Independent*. Метод випадкової вибірки забезпечив статистичну достовірність результатів дослідження, оскільки тексти були обрані з різних розділів перелічених інтернет-видань, таких як політика, охорона здоров'я, технології та інші. Ця методологія дозволила провести комплексний аналіз прийомів маніпуляцій у різних медіаконтекстах.

Видання, які ми досліджували – *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian* та *The Independent* – є зразками сучасних популярних британських засобів масової

інформації, кожне з яких має свій особливий нарративний стиль, але які при цьому мають певні спільні маніпулятивні підтексти.

Наш аналіз показує, що ці видання використовують широкий спектр маніпулятивних прийомів (а саме 25 прийомів), спрямованих на формування читацького сприйняття. Серед них виділяються емоційний резонанс і сенсаційність, особливо в заголовках, де використовують різні риторичні прийоми для того, щоб привернути увагу читачів і вплинути на їхнє сприйняття та подальшу оцінку описаного явища, особистостей чи події. Такі прийоми, як вибіркоче представлення фактичних даних, посилення на авторитети та використання риторичних запитань, стратегічно застосовуються для посилення певних точок зору.

Також у дослідженні маніпулятивні технології було класифіковано за класичними прийомами давньогрецького філософа і логіка Арістотеля: етос, пафос та логос.

Апеляція до логосу (логіки), серед інших маніпулятивних прийомів, включає вибіркоче подання фактичних даних, посилення на авторитети, узагальнення, викривлення, хибну аналогію, донесення суперечливих повідомлень, розмивання критеріїв, створення інформаційної невизначеності, відвертання уваги та ухилення від відповіді, приховування та підміну суб'єкта дії.

Пафос (емоції) досягається за допомогою маніпулятивних прийомів, що викликають потужні емоційні реакції читачів, таких як емоційний резонанс, негативне/позитивне підкріплення, сенсаційність, розпалювання гніву, газлайтинг, симуляція невинності та розгубленості, приховане залякування та навіювання почуття провини та ефект присутності.

Етосом (авторитетом) маніпулюють за допомогою стратегій, що спираються на поняття моралі та характеру, зокрема апеляції до “загальноприйнятої норми”, ідеологічної поляризації, вибіркових звинувачень, представлення підозр як фактів та травмуючого одноразового досвіду.

Лексичні маніпуляції у сучасних британських засобах масової інформації проявляються у таких прийомах як використання лейблів, евфемізмів, дисфемізмів, неологізмів, а також у стратегічному використанні особових займенників та прикметників з оцінним значенням. Ці техніки тонко формують наратив і впливають на читацьку інтерпретацію та оцінку, часто залишаючись непомітними.

Грамматичні прийоми також використовуються для маніпулювання сприйняттям читача. Пасивні конструкції застосовуються з метою зниження ступеня відповідальності, у той час як активний стан підкреслює ініціативу та авторитет. Пряма мова надає повідомленню достовірності, номіналізація додає ваги поданим аргументам, модальні дієслова передають почуття впевненості або сумнівів, а умовні речення представляють гіпотетичні припущення з метою зацікавлення читачів. Порівняльні конструкції та питальні речення ще більше підсилюють дію на формування громадської думки, зіставляючи різні особистості, поняття чи явища, або спонукаючи читача до критичного осмислення.

Дослідження показало, що частота та застосування різних стратегій маніпуляції суттєво відрізняються в різних типах статей. Зокрема, в авторських статтях значно частіше використовують емоційний резонанс та прийом ідеологічної поляризації, для того щоб вплинути на ставлення читачів до описаного, тоді як у публікаціях новин більше уваги приділяють вибірково поданню фактичних даних і посиланню на авторитети з метою формування довірчих відносин з читацькою аудиторією.

Результати цього дослідження підкреслюють необхідність формування критичної медіа грамотності громадськості з метою кращого розпізнавання та розуміння глибинних мотивів у медіаконтенті. Детальний розгляд прийомів маніпуляції за допомогою лексичного та граматичного аналізу підкреслює складність сучасних медіа-стратегій у впливі на публічний дискурс. Заохочуючи читачів до критичної взаємодії з медіа, дослідження сприяє формуванню більш

поінформованого та пильного суспільства, здатного розпізнавати приховані маніпуляції та сприяти здоровому суспільному діалогу про доброчесність і прозорість засобів масової інформації.

Результати цієї магістерської роботи можуть бути використані в подальших дослідженнях проблематики маніпуляцій у сучасних засобах масової інформації, зокрема в британських онлайн-виданнях. Також отримані у результаті цього дослідження напрацювання стануть корисними для проведення більш детального розгляду пропонованих прийомів маніпуляції, а також у розробці подальших методів зменшення негативного впливу маніпуляцій у засобах масової інформації на сучасне суспільство.

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