

**LINGUOPRAGMATIC FEATURES OF FAKE NEWS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK
ONLINE MEDIA**

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Annotation: Fake news as an emerging trend of online communication persists to change the dynamics of sociopolitical discourse and public opinion. This article explores the linguopragmatic features of fake news in English and Uzbek language online media, highlighting how language is employed strategically with a view to influence perceptions. Drawing on the tools of critical discourse analysis and speech act theory, the research points out certain linguistic markers-sensationalist headlines, emotive appeals, vague sourcing, and analyzes how they are deployed to persuade or deceive. Through a comparison of data from English and Uzbek contexts, the discussion reveals global trends along with culturally rooted nuances, such as the invocation of national heroes or code-switching for added credibility. Utilizing qualitative and quantitative methods, discourse analysis, content analysis, and online news users' survey-the paper gives an account of how the fabric of fake news is made, disseminated, and received. Lastly, the results call for increased media literacy, sound fact-checking protocols, and vigilant regulatory schemes tuned to linguistic and cultural specificities. The recommended proposals aim at fostering a knowledgeable public and protecting the integrity of virtual information spaces.

Keywords: fake news, linguopragmatics, critical discourse analysis, speech act theory, media literacy, disinformation, cultural specificity, Uzbek and English online media

**INGLIZ VA O'ZBEK OMMAVIY AXBOROT VOSITALARIDA SOXTA
YANGILIKLARNING LINGUOPRAGMATIK XUSUSIYATLARI**

Annotatsiya. Soxta yangiliklar onlayn muloqotning rivojlanayotgan tendensiyasi sifatida ijtimoiy-siyosiy nutq va jamoatchilik fikrining dinamikasini o'zgartirishda davom etmoqda. Ushbu maqola ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi onlayn ommaviy axborot vositalaridagi soxta yangiliklarning lingvopragmatik xususiyatlarini o'rganib, insonlarning idroklariga ta'sir qilish maqsadida tilning strategik jihatdan qanday qo'llanilishini ta'kidlaydi. Tanqidiy nutq tahlili va nutq akti nazariyasi vositalariga tayangan holda, tadqiqot muayyan lingvistik belgilar - sensatsion sarlavhalar, emotsional murojaatlar, noaniq manbalarni ko'rsatadi va ishontirish yoki aldash uchun qanday qo'llanilishini tahlil qiladi. Ingliz va o'zbek matnlaridan olingan ma'lumotlarni solishtirish orqali munozarada milliy qahramonlarni chaqirish yoki ishonchlikni oshirish uchun kodni o'zgartirish kabi madaniy jihatdan ildiz otgan kichik farqli, deyarli sezilmas jihatlar bilan bir qatorda global o'zgarishlarlar ochib beriladi. Sifatli va miqdoriy usullardan, nutq tahlili, kontent tahlili va onlayn yangiliklar foydalanuvchilari so'rovidan foydalangan holda - maqolada soxta yangiliklar qanday yaratilgani, tarqatilishi va qabul qilinishi haqida ma'lumot berilgan. Nihoyat, natijalar media savodxonligini oshirishni, ishonchli faktlarni tekshirish protokollarini va lingvistik va madaniy o'ziga xosliklarga moslashtirilgan hushyor tartibga solish sxemalarini talab qiladi. Tavsiya etilgan takliflar bilimdon jamoatchilikni rivojlantirish va virtual axborot makonlarining yaxlitligini himoya qilishga qaratilgan.

Kalit soʻzlar: soxta yangiliklar, lingvopragmatika, tanqidiy nutq tahlili, nutq akti nazariyasi, media savodxonligi, dezinformatsiya, madaniy oʻziga xoslik, oʻzbek va ingliz onlayn media

ЛИНГВОПРАГМАТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ФЕЙКОВЫХ НОВОСТЕЙ В АНГЛО- И УЗБЕКСКИХ ОНЛАЙН-СМИ

Аннотация. Поддельные новости как новая тенденция онлайн-коммуникации продолжают изменять динамику социально-политического дискурса и общественного мнения. В этой статье исследуются лингвопрагматические особенности фейковых новостей в англоязычных и узбекскоязычных онлайн-СМИ, подчеркивая, как язык используется стратегически с целью влияния на восприятие. Опираясь на инструменты критического анализа дискурса и теории речевых актов, исследование выделяет определенные лингвистические маркеры— сенсационные заголовки, эмоциональные призывы, неопределенные источники— и анализирует, как они используются для убеждения или обмана. С помощью сравнения данных из английского и узбекского контекстов обсуждение выявляет глобальные тенденции наряду с культурно обусловленными нюансами, такими как призывание национальных героев или переключение кода для дополнительной достоверности. Используя качественные и количественные методы, анализ дискурса, контент-анализ и опрос пользователей онлайн-новостей, в статье дается отчет о том, как создается, распространяется и принимается ткань фейковых новостей. Наконец, результаты призывают к повышению медиаграмотности, надежным протоколам проверки фактов и бдительным схемам регулирования, настроенным на лингвистические и культурные особенности. Рекомендованные предложения направлены на формирование осведомленной общественности и защиту целостности виртуальных информационных пространств.

Ключевые слова: фейковые новости, лингвопрагматика, критический анализ дискурса, теория речевых актов, медиаграмотность, дезинформация, культурная идентичность, узбекские и английские онлайн-СМИ.

INTRODUCTION

Disinformation or news reports recognized as deliberately false and misleading—is an omnipresent presence on international digital media. Its viral transmission is fueled by the attention economy: online platforms amplify emotively engaging stories to broader audiences, independent of factual validity. Theorists have contended that discourse not only reflects social structures but is also a means of building and solidifying power relations (Teun A. Van Dijk, 2000). In the context of media production, it is of specific interest to examine how linguistic strategies are utilized to elicit immediate and direct emotional reactions, subsequently shaping belief and behavior.

While English language fake news has had more than enough coverage in Western contexts, comparatively fewer works have looked at non-Western media environments. Uzbekistan, for instance, is a useful case study of how a rapidly evolving digital environment interfaces with historical, cultural, and political particularities to shape the production and dissemination of dubious information. News reporting is conditioned by regulatory regimes and official media frameworks, but informal or semi-official platforms—particularly Telegram channels enable quick rumor dissemination (Bekhzod Abdullaev, 2020). This article deals with linguopragmatic

aspects of fake news, i.e, both linguistic structure (lexicon, syntax, rhetorical devices) and pragmatic effect (speech acts, implicated meaning, perlocutionary forces).

Speech act theorists once observed that language "does" rather than "says" things; certain utterances can amount to warnings, commands, or invitations and thereby build social reality. J. L. Austin (1962) and John R.Searle (1969) explored why fake news producers make disinformation, in employing sensationalized headlines, emotive content, and speculative reporting, engage in acts of persuasion with the intention of inducing emotional responses or ideological alignments. The current research is comparative, examining a corpus of English and Uzbek online news articles labeled for potential false information. More specifically, it attempts to uncover linguistic cues present in both languages while also unveiling cultural or contextual differences specific to Uzbekistan. Using a mixed-methods design, the study combines discourse analysis, content analysis, and reader surveys.

The findings shed light on how fake news manipulates pragmatic function and linguistic form to attract attention and influence attitudes across English speaking or Uzbek speaking societies. In the process, this article adds to the general discussion of how to better detect, counter, and stem the flow of fabricated news in complicated media environments.

Methodology

Research Design

A mixed-methods design provided access to both the breadth and depth of English and Uzbek online fake news phenomena. Qualitative methodologies, including critical discourse analysis, reveal insidious manipulations of language and cultural references, while quantitative methodologies track the incidence of certain linguistic features and test audience attitudes (John W.Creswell, 2018). By integrating both methodologies, the research provides a multi-layered picture of how fake news operates.

Data Collection

A corpus of 200 articles, 100 each in English and Uzbek, was compiled from online content that had been noted by fact checkers or scholarly analysis as spreading questionable or untrue information. English samples were taken from large sites and Facebook pages well-known for sensationalist or conspiracy-type coverage, and Uzbek samples were taken from domestic portals and mass-subscribed Telegram channels. The Uzbek sample contained a few channels known to mix proven news with rumor, indicative of a changing digital landscape.

In addition, to assess the readers' feelings and responses to possibly misleading headlines, a survey was conducted involving 300 participants, consisting of 150 who primarily read news in English and 150 who primarily read news in Uzbek. The survey included inquiries about demographics, daily news consumption practices, emotional responses to sensational or shocking headlines, and whether they typically verify information before sharing it.

Analytical Framework

Using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach enables researchers to examine how language use relates to wider social processes (Norman Fairclough, 1995). Headlines, ledes (the lead or introductory section of an article), and body texts were examined for common themes like emotive language, sensationalism, and unwarranted attributions ("experts say," "sources report").

The study also looked at how fake news producers can invoke ideological considerations or cultural references in order to influence readers.

Speech Act and Pragmatics

Grounded in Austin's performative utterance theory and Searle's speech act taxonomy, the study examined the deceptive claims' illocutionary force. Headlines that insist, for instance, "You must see this!" are a directive act, commanding readers to look at the content. Articles making unsubstantiated accusations are assertive acts, trying to shape readers' beliefs about a person or event.

Content Analysis

Employing a frequency-based methodology, the research inventoried salient linguistic and structural characteristics in the gathered articles-e.g, superlatives ("incredible," "astonishing"), rhetorical questions, affective adjectives, quotations from anonymous "insiders." This systematic coding allows for quantification of patterns within and across English and Uzbek articles and hence empirical validation of qualitative conclusions.

Challenges in cross-cultural analysis

Conducting comparative linguopragmatic analysis across English and Uzbek media spaces was not without difficulty. First, there is the disparity in the amount and availability of fact-checked content between the two languages. Whereas fact-checking efforts in English are widespread and generously funded, Uzbek verification work is at its inception, limiting access to verified corpora. Second, cultural translation outside of word meaning was a significant challenge. Pragmatic impacts are usually encapsulated in culture-specific idioms, rhetorical devices, or cues. A speech act that would be considered persuasive in Anglo-American cultures could be perceived as too blunt or unseemly in Uzbek speech. In order to deal with such issues, the research employed native speakers to translate data and triangulated qualitative data against survey findings in order to create linguistic and cultural validity in comparative claims.

Results

Quantitative Results

The content analysis found that English stories used the terms "shocking," "exposed," "secret," and "disaster" frequently, and Uzbek stories used "hayratlanarli" ("astonishing"), "sirli" ("secret"), and "fosh bo'ldi" ("has been exposed") with equal frequency. These terms were used mostly in headlines, framing the content in sensational, urgent, or expose language. Some 70% of the English stories and 65% of the Uzbek stories used such affective leads in the headline or lead paragraph. Survey Highlights

Consistent with the survey, 65% of English-dominant readers and 58% of Uzbek-dominant readers reported being "highly emotional" upon reading sensational headlines. Furthermore, more than half of them conceded that they did not always fact-check stories before sharing them on social media. This illustrates how powerful emotionally charged language can be in triggering quick, reflective reactions.

Structural Similarities

Both Uzbek and English samples made ample use of rhetorical questions in headlines, superlatives in descriptions, and reader-directives ("Look at this!" / "Buni ko'ring!"). While the

actual lexical items differed by language, these devices throughout the corpus transcend cultural boundaries, illustrating how certain formulaic patterns transcend cultures.

Qualitative Observations

One other striking feature was the frequent resort to unnamed "experts," "researchers," or "insiders." English translations referred to something along the lines of "insiders close to the administration," whereas Uzbek ones cited "mahalliy mutaxassislar" ("local experts") or "sirli manbalar" ("confidential sources"). This attribution renders the information authoritative yet unchecked.

Cultural Resonances

Cultural references were a main locus of variation. English-language articles quoted Western celebrities or political leaders to make a point, whereas Uzbek-language articles utilized local heroes, national figures, or religious appeal. Evoking shared identity or historical pride, the Uzbek material strengthened communal bonds, thus making the text more persuasive.

Code-Switching and Hybrid Identity

Code-switching into Russian was observed in some Uzbek sources, mirroring the bilingual environment in which many Uzbek speakers work. The strategic invocation of Russian words can create an impression of greater authenticity or situate the text in a regional (as opposed to narrowly national) sphere. This type of development was widely observed in Telegram channels writing for readers from several post-Soviet countries.

Reader psychology and reception patterns

The readers' survey reflects not just a lack of fact-checking but also underlying psychological biases on which disinformation capitalizes. The principles of cognitive psychology like confirmation bias, availability heuristic, and emotional contagion provide insight into why readers accept and share false news. Readers are more likely to accept a headline when it is consistent with current beliefs. Emotional contagion explains how sensational language can cause emotional states to propagate across social networks, evoking reactive sharing. Such psychological mechanisms are independent of language and functioned similarly across both English- and Uzbek-speaking groups, highlighting the reality that the power of fake news as a persuasive tactic is cognitively-emotionally embedded in deep-seated human processes, regardless of linguistic heritage.

Discussion

Universal Strategies of Linguistic Manipulation

The research verifies that some of those methods—clickbait titles, emotional keywords, unattributed sources—are more or less ubiquitous in the stories of fake news. Relying on emotional signals, like fear or outrage, these pieces of writing take advantage of cognitive biases and heuristics. It gets individuals to engage with the material (click, share, comment) instead of stopping to fact-check it.

Recurrent patterns of sensationalist language, according to discourse analysts, mirror underlying social practices whereby media producers are maximizing audience share at the cost of checked truth (Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan, 2017).

Other than lexical choice, the imperative and assertive speech acts that are present in the majority of headlines are indicative of the performative function of fake news. Drawing on Austin's theory, language in these instances does not only describe reality but actually reshapes it by prompting readers to do or believe something (J.L.Austin, 1962). For instance, "You won't believe this scandalous secret!" is not simply descriptive; it calls for an emotional reaction of disbelief or alarm.

Cultural Nuances in Uzbek

Though universal strategies dominate, the expression of these strategies is strongly mediated by local cultural references. Uzbek texts frequently call upon national heroes, religious figures, or historical events in an effort to engage with collective identity and social memory. This can work to enhance the effect of the text, as it engages more deeply with audiences that read the content through a local sensibility. The trend is also extended to code-switching, which, if used judiciously, can contribute to the perceived legitimacy of a story, particularly in a multilingual society dominated by Uzbek, Russian, and other local languages (Bekhzod Abdullaev, 2020).

This sort of cultural immersion shows how misinformation exploits shared experience, underpinning "us vs. them" framing and encouraging group solidarity around a particular perspective. The affective appeal of these sorts of stories can be particularly powerful within close communities, enhancing viral transmission through social networks.

Emotional Appeals and Reader Response

Survey participants disclose that both English-dominant and Uzbek-dominant participants report increased emotions—anger, shock, fear—when they read sensationalized headlines. Arousal is most directly linked to a decrease in fact-checking motivation. The outcome is a feedback cycle: sensationalized headlines trigger emotional reactions, which prompt sharing, which in turn facilitates the dissemination of the story to more viewers. After an article receives notice, its visibility on social media frequently expands, and even more readers are exposed to misinformation.

This cycle underscores the need to address not only the production of fake news but also the consumption patterns that sustain it. Critical reading training—learning to spot vague attributions, checking fact-checking sites, evaluating the credibility of sources—might empower readers to deactivate the manipulative language that saturates the web. Implications for Detection and Countermeasures One of the practical uses of this study is the possibility of developing semi-automatic or automatic systems prioritizing general linguistic markers of disinformation. Terms such as "secret," "shocking," or "exposed," when paired with abundant usage of exclamation marks or rhetorical questions, can become warning signals for initial content filtering. These signals would, nevertheless, have to be adjusted to local linguistic particularities, i.e; Uzbek counterparts or code-switching patterns. Media literacy initiatives are also important. That such a large proportion of readers in the survey admits to having shared unconfirmed news is a reminder that campaigns targeting secondary schools, universities, and workplaces can emphasize the value of assessing source credibility and developing simple fact-checking reflexes. Regulatory actions—such as mandates for transparency in revealing sources—could help curb the spread of misinformation, yet any regulations must consider the implications for freedom of expression. Finally, it's essential to coordinate efforts among technology companies, policymakers, educators, and fact-checking organizations. As those who spread misinformation refine their techniques, continuous research is essential to track new linguistic strategies and develop fresh counteractions.

Limitations and Future Research

The focus on textual content and the data-set size of 200 articles limited the scope of this study. Future studies could be expanded to multimedia formats—videos, audio files, memes—and analyze how linguistic manipulation is combined with visual or auditory signals. Longitudinal studies could also investigate if fake news tactics evolve as a reaction to public awareness campaigns or new regulations. From an ethnographic perspective, it would be intriguing to analyze how various social groups interpret and negotiate potentially made-up news in their everyday interaction. Such qualitative data would provide a fuller sense of the "life cycle" of disinformation, from producer intent to final audience effect.

Multimodal dimensions of Fake News

Although this study is committed to text analysis, one cannot ignore the expanding role of visual-linguistic hybrids such as memes, info graphics, and subtitles for videos to the spread of misinformation. These formats of presentation have the tendency to condense complex messages into effectively loaded and shareable bites. Both in English and in Uzbek contexts, memes are used to ridicule public figures, endorse conspiracy theories, or appeal to nationalist sentiments. Textual captions with doctored images form powerful speech acts—particularly expressive and assertive ones—likely to bypass rational scrutiny because they are humorous or emotionally relevant. Spreadability of such content also further amplifies false news by spreading it in informal, peer-to-peer channels that blur the distinction between entertainment and information. Subsequent research needs to incorporate such multimodal artifacts in order to best represent the linguopragmatic range of fake news.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of the linguopragmatic features of fake news in English and Uzbek online media, this study uncovers both the universal and culturally specific ploys of deceiving audiences. Universal ploys—sensational headlines, emotive language, unspecified sourcing—transcend linguistic boundaries, preying on psychological stimuli for immediate sharing. Locally grounded features, such as national symbols and code-switching, adapt disinformation to more deeply resonate with specific cultural groups. Implications of this comparative methodology render clear the importance of not only examining the surface structures of language (words, syntax) but also the pragmatic work done by such discourse. That is, these articles don't simply disseminate falsehoods; they provoke affective reactions, set up ideological parameters, and shape behaviors. The detection and prevention implications lean towards multi-pronged measures: technological means that mark off suspicious content, media literacy interventions that encourage critical reading, and regulatory mechanisms intended to enhance transparency. As online spaces ever more comprise the public discourse of the globe, understanding the linguistic and pragmatic mechanisms of disinformation is crucial to protecting the information environment. This article emphasizes that meaningful action must involve not just a consideration of global patterns of disinformation but also consideration of local cultural, linguistic, and regulatory environment peculiarities. Only through long-term cross-disciplinary collaboration can societies hope to mitigate the harms of manufactured narratives, to foster a more informed and resilient public.

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