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Manipulations in Contemporary German Press

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Abstract

On the basis of the previously developed theoretical model of media educational activity, which contributes to the development of media competence of the audience in the process of analyzing the reliability of media texts, the authors of the article suggest the following technology of countering media manipulations and false information, based on tasks related to answering the following challenging questions: What is the source of information? Can you verify the source? What is the main message? What facts are presented to support the main idea? Is there any information missing? What is the purpose of transmitting this message? Who will benefit if people accept this message as true? Who will lose? From whose point of view is the message presented? Does the message refer to logic or emotion? What effect is it aimed at? Does this media text allow you to share different points of view? What values and priorities are transmitted as a result? Based on this model and problematic issues, the authors analyzed 337 articles in German newspapers during the period 2020-2021. Meanwhile, it was found that 98.2 % of the texts (331 out of 337 articles) expressed negative opinions about Russia, about its politics and economy.

Keywords: media competence, students, teachers, media and information literacy, media education, media manipulations, models.

1. Introduction

The problem of media manipulations, in particular, in the press, is far from new, but in recent decades it has become significantly relevant due to the fact that the press of the 21st century is not only paper media, familiar in previous century, but also news Internet sites easily accessible to millions of readers. Thus, with the help of the Internet, the texts of modern newspapers attract the attention of readers who are not in the habit of buying press, subscribing to it and going to the reading rooms of libraries. And, consequently, the manipulative influence of the press reaches a new, previously inaccessible audience. This means that the analysis of media manipulations in the press remains essential, especially for the youth audience.

2. Materials and methods

Materials of this research are articles in German press. Methodology is based on theoretical framework on the relationship, interdependence and integrity of the phenomena of reality, the unity of the historical and the logical in cognition, the theory of the dialogue of cultures. The following methods are used: data collection, analysis, generalization and classification.

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3. Discussion

As maintained by numerous researchers (Albright, 2017; Aldwairi, Alwahedi, 2018; Baake et al., 1999; Berghel, 2017; Bertin et al., 2018; Bharali, Goswami, 2018; Blumeke, 2000; Bowker, 1991; Bradshaw, Howard, 2018; Buckingham, 2003; 2015; Conroy et al., 2015; De Abreu, 2019; Dentith, 2017; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2021; Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2021; Fletcher, 2018; Flintham et al., 2018; Gahirwal et al., 2018; Goering, Thomas, 2018; Hobbs, 2010; 2017; Jolls, Wilson, 2014; Martens et al., 2018; Marwick, Lewis, 2017; McDougall et al., 2018; Nielsen, Graves, 2017; Pérez Tornero et al., 2018; Potter, 2019; Potter, McDougall, 2017; Ruchansky et al., 2017; Rushkoff, 1994; Sadiku et al., 2018; Salma, 2019; Silverblatt, 2001; Tambini, 2017; Usov, 1989; Vargo, 2018; Waldrop, 2017; Wilson, 2019; Wilson, 2019; Zhou et al., 2019), the view that “we need to forever banish the association of the word “truth” with “politics” – these two terms just don’t play well with each other” (Berghel, 2017: 80) can be supported.

Yet, it should not be forgotten that “fact-checking is predicated on the assumption that people will change their mind when confronted with correct information, which implies a very passive model of the audience: If an audience member reads a fake news story, she believes it; if she is presented with contradictory facts, she will change her mind. Her own agency and predispositions are entirely absent. ... [but] this ignores a wide variety of social and cultural factors, and is not supported by empirical evidence. In fact, fact-checking may have the opposite effect of making stories “more sticky.” ... the more people see fake news headlines, the more likely they are to think they are accurate” (Marwick, 2018: 508).

In 2018, a team of British scientists conducted an experiment in which the audience was asked to read an article containing fake information. The findings revealed that “of those who did read the article either in full or in part, only 55 % believed that the headline accurately matched the content. ... 37 % of respondents had *come across a news story, believed it to be true, then later realized that it was either exaggerated, inaccurate or blatantly false*. Common examples were celebrity news, American news, and again issues related to Brexit and Donald Trump. Here respondents stated that they identified the piece of news in question as fake predominantly by fact-checking against other sources, or using their own reasoning that something either could not be true or seemed implausible. Conversely, 46 % had *come across a news item they immediately identified as fake*, principally based on knowledge of the source..., or being known to exaggerate – ‘because it was the *Daily Mail*’, or again through their own reasoning and judgements of plausibility. Our survey results suggest that social media users are not only incidentally consuming news via sites such as *Facebook*, but they are aware of – and encountering – fake news, some of which is taken at face value. Respondents appear to draw on a number of different strategies in reasoning about the validity of news, including prior assumptions about source reputation, determinations of plausibility, headlines and sometimes the full text” (Flintham et al., 2018).

Russian scientists came to similar conclusions: “it has been experimentally proven that a large percentage of people who read news, read only headlines and thus judge the current picture of the world by the totality of information conveyed by headlines” (Pogorelova, 2018).

Unfortunately, we have to admit: “a significant, and not the worst one, part of our society, under the influence of mass culture and the flow of low-standard, and, often, extremely harmful to the human mind, information pouring on it from the pages of newspapers, from TV screens and from the radio, in a progressive mode loses the ability to complex logical thinking and critical, or “perspective”, analysis of information. And this is also one of the manifestations of the manipulation of consciousness” (Kara-Murza, Smirnov, 2009). As it has been proposed by Kara-Murza, “manipulators are trying to turn us into *consumers of ideas*, into an attentive ear and an iris dilated. ... a manipulator, interrupting the dialogue, presents a solution that is beneficial to him as having no alternative – otherwise, thoughts and reasoning begin. ... One has only to allow oneself to think of different solutions in mind, and the whole structure of manipulation collapses – and selfish intentions immediately become visible” (Kara-Murza, 2002).

4. Results

Based on previous research (Albright, 2017; Aldwairi, Alwahedi, 2018; Bertin et al., 2018; Bharali, Goswami, 2018; Bradshaw, Howard, 2018; Conroy et al., 2015; Dentith, 2017; Fletcher et al., 2018; Gahirwal et al., 2018; Goering, Thomas, 2018; Martens et al., 2018; McDougall et al., 2018; Marwick, 2018; Marwick, Lewis, 2017; Nielsen, Graves, 2017; Ruchansky et al., 2017; Sadiku et al., 2018; Salma, 2019; Tambini, 2017; Vargo, 2018; Waldrop, 2017; Wilson, 2019).

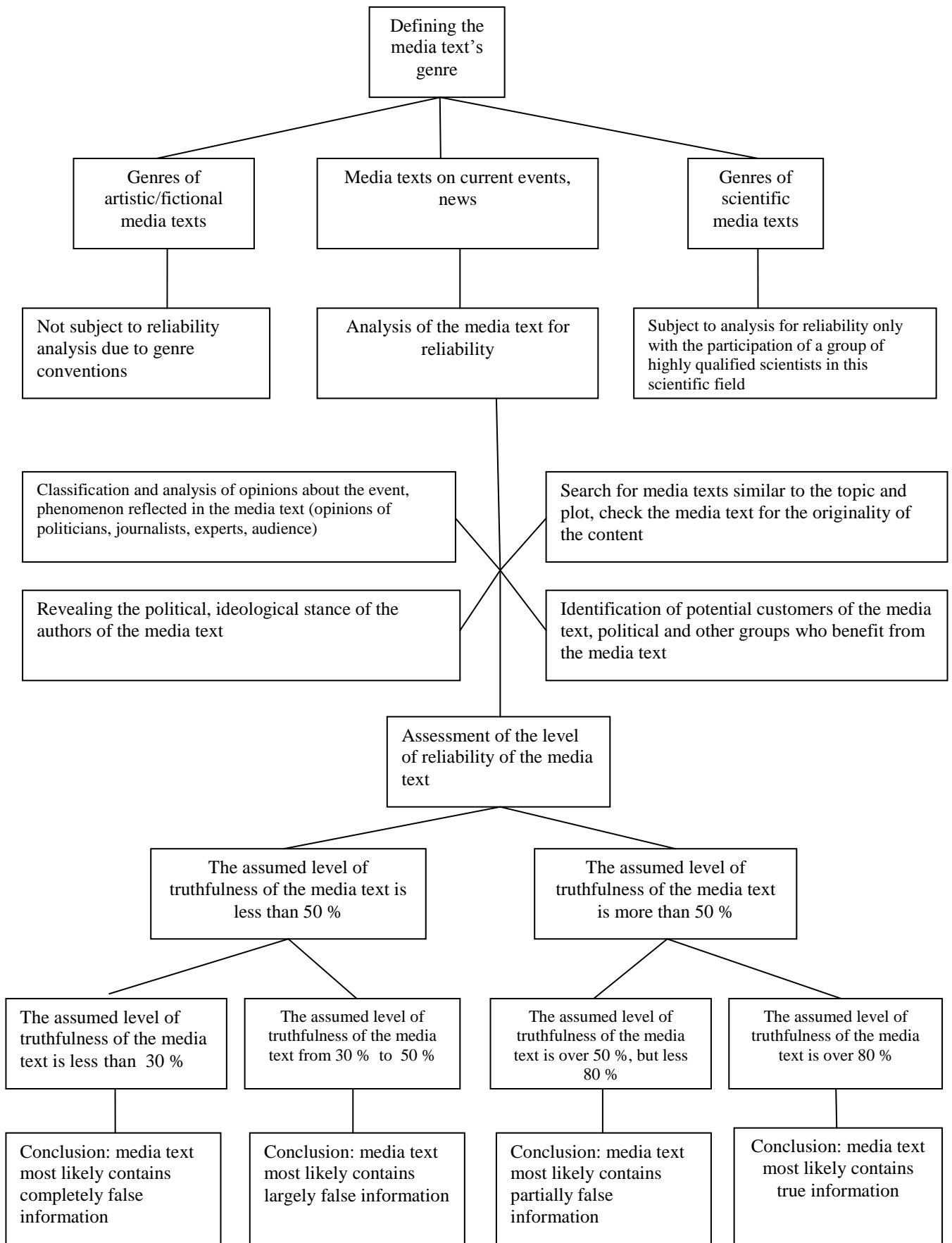


Fig. 1. Model of media education activity, fostering the audience's media competence in the process of analysis of media texts' credibility

we have developed the structural model of media education activity, fostering the audience's media competence in the process of analysis of media texts' credibility (Figure 1).

Further, based on the structural model developed by us (Figure 1) of media educational activity, contributing to the development of media competence of the audience in the process of analyzing the reliability of media and key questions (What is the source of information? Can you verify the source? What is the main message? What facts are presented to support the main idea? Is there any information missing? What is the purpose of transmitting this message? Who will benefit if people accept this message? Who will lose? From whose point of view is the message presented? Does the message refer to logic or emotion? What effect? What values and priorities are reinforced as a result? (Wilson, 2019), we have analyzed 337 articles in German newspapers over the period 2020-2021. Meanwhile, it was observed that 98.2 % of the texts (331 out of 337 articles) expressed negative opinions about Russia, about its politics and economy. Positive opinions of German journalists were expressed only if the article was devoted to the activities of the Russian opposition.

For example, in December 2020, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* newspaper published an article entitled (German) "Russland: Wie viel Autorität genießt Wladimir Putin noch?"/(Eng.) "Russia: how much authority does Vladimir Putin still enjoy?" (Scholl, 2020), dedicated to the state of health of Russian President V. Putin.

Media text genre: article on current events in the world, news text.

Analysis of the media text for reliability (identifying the political, ideological position of the authors of the media text, identifying possible receivers of the media text, political and other groups who benefit from the media text):

What is the source of the information? What facts are presented in support of it?

The source of information in this article is rumors about V. Putin's poor health, received by a German journalist from several unverified sources: "This year, sports fan Vladimir Putin has never taken part in a hockey match. This has fueled rumors that have been circulating in Moscow for several weeks: the 68-year-old president is allegedly seriously ill, so he will announce his resignation in January. ... The liberal television channel Dozhd drew attention to a coughing fit when Putin cleared his throat several times during one of the videoconferences. And one Moscow masseuse, who regularly kneads the parliamentarians, tells her clients that the State Duma is expecting "huge changes". The main source of the rumor is historian Valery Solovey, who boasts of his close ties to the Kremlin. In May, he announced that Putin would have to resign because he was allegedly taking medication with severe side effects" (Scholl, 2020),

Can you verify the source?

Throughout 2020 V. Putin was actively engaged in his professional activities and did not miss any scheduled meetings or events. None of the rumors cited by Scholl have been confirmed.

Does the message refer to logic or emotion?

This article primarily addresses human emotions, simple emotional reactions in response to a "sensational" message invented by unverified sources.

What is the main purpose of a media text?

The main goal of the publication (Scholl, 2020) is to convince German-speaking readers that the Russian president is seriously ill and is about to step down.

Is there any information missing?

The article does not provide any alternative information to the false rumors.

Whose point of view does the message present?

This article is presented from the point of view of V. Putin's opponents.

Who will benefit if people accept this message? Who will lose?

If the information presented in the article is accepted as true, the political opponents of V. Putin, of whom there are many in modern Germany, will win, and the mass audience incapable of critical analysis of the media text will lose.

Assessment of the level of truthfulness of the media text: the estimated level of truthfulness of the media text is close to zero.

Conclusion: the media text most likely contains utterly false information.

In February 2021, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper published an article entitled (German) "Neun Worte über Nord Stream 2"/(Eng.) "Nine words about North Stream 2" (Schuller, 2021), related to the political situation around the 95 % completed gas pipeline running along the bottom of the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany.

Media text genre: an article about current events in the world.

Analysis of the media text for reliability (identifying the political, ideological position of the authors of the media text, identifying possible receivers of the media text, political and other groups who benefit from the media text):

What is the source of the information? What facts are presented in support of it? Can you verify the source?

The article is centered around the personal opinions and recommendations of journalist K. Schuller (Schuller, 2021), not supported by links to any authoritative sources.

Does the message refer to logic or emotion?

This article addresses human emotions and follows the logic of a harsh anti-Russian policy: “The goal of Putin's gas pipeline is to bypass Ukraine as a transit country for gas. When the pipeline is ready, the president will be able to reignite the frozen war against that country without fear of hindering exports to the West. For the eastern NATO countries, the Russian threat would take on a new dimension. ... Germany, being the EU's gravity center, threatens to lose its binding power” (Schuller, 2021).

What is the main purpose of a media text?

The main objective of the article “Nine words about North Stream 2” (Schuller, 2021) is to convince German-speaking readers that the construction of the pipeline should be urgently stopped in order to thereby put pressure on Russia and support the Russian opposition: “After the verdict handed down to Navalny in Russia, the chancellor needs to say only one single proposal. So she could set boundaries for Putin, win Biden to herself and unite Europe. ... These words could sound like this: “I cannot support the Nord Stream gas pipeline-2”. ... Thus, having said such a proposal, Merkel would not have had to admit a mistake. Nevertheless, its effect would be enormous. ... At the same time, it would be possible to talk with Putin in plain text. If his Baltic project were threatened, even the Russian president could understand that he cannot show aggression against Ukraine for free, carry out a covert military intervention in Libya, and now persecute Navalny, violating international law. Then Putin would have a reason to seek a compromise. For example, he might wonder if the time has come to actually withdraw his irregulars from eastern Ukraine” (Schuller, 2021).

Is there any information missing? The article does not explicitly refer to alternative points of view, although it does mention that German Chancellor A. Merkel considers the Nord Stream 2 project to be purely economic (Schuller, 2021).

Whose point of view does the message present?

This article presents the point of view of opponents of Russian politics.

Who will benefit if people accept this message? Who will lose?

If the proposals presented in the article are accepted, Russia's political opponents will win, and a mass audience incapable of critical analysis of the media text and comparison of different points of view will lose.

Assessment of the level of truthfulness of the media text: the estimated level of truthfulness of the media text is less than 30 % (truthful information here includes the fact that Nord Stream 2 is really being built, that political disputes around it do not subside; the rest of the information is presented by the journalist in an extremely biased manner, usually without any or alternative points of view).

Conclusion: the media text most likely contains the highly ideologized point of view and recommendations of journalist K. Schuller, reflecting the views of Russia's political opponents.

In June 2021, *Die Welt* published an article entitled (German) “Ökonom sieht Russland hinter Amerikas historischem Steuer-Leak”/(Eng.) “The Economist Sees Russia Behind America's Historical Tax Leak” (Beutelsbacher, 2021), dedicated to the tax scandal of American billionaires.

Media text genre: an article about current events in the world.

Analysis of the media text for reliability (identifying the political, ideological position of the authors of the media text, identifying possible receivers of the media text, political and other groups who benefit from the media text):

What is the source of the information? What facts are presented in support of it?

The main source of this article is ProPublica, a nonprofit organization based in New York, whose purpose is investigative journalism. S. Beutelsbacher writes: “There was a sensation in the USA. The published figures — if true — are discouraging: Between 2014 and 2018, the richest 25 Americans paid only 3.4 % federal tax, far below the taxes that ordinary workers in the US have to pay to the government” (Beutelsbacher, 2021).

Can you verify the source?

Without access to the tax base and investigation materials, it is not possible to check this information for compliance with reality.

Does the message refer to logic or emotion?

This article primarily addresses human emotions of outrage, simple emotional reactions in response to a sensational message.

What is the main purpose of a media text?

The main objective of this article (Beutelsbacher, 2021) is to convince German-speaking readers that American billionaires are evading taxes, and “in March 2020, attackers — possibly with the support of the Russian government — also gained access to IRS data. Then the investigators said that there were no signs that confidential data had been stolen. Now, following the ProPublica revelations, the US Treasury wants to launch a new investigation” (Beutelsbacher, 2021).

Is there any information missing? The article does not provide any alternative information regarding the above assumptions.

From whose point of view is the message presented?

This article is partially presented from the point of view of opponents of Russian politics.

Who will benefit if people accept this message? Who will lose?

If the information presented in this article (Beutelsbacher, 2021) is accepted as true, the political opponents of Russia will win, and the mass audience incapable of critical analysis of the media text will lose.

Assessment of the level of truthfulness of the media text: the estimated level of truthfulness of the media text is less than 50 % (the author is verbally making some reservations: “if they (figures) are true”, “perhaps”).

Conclusion: the media text most likely contains largely false information.

In June 2021, the Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper published an article entitled (German) “Wir werden mit dieser EM wahrscheinlich völlig ersticken”/ (Eng.) “We will probably completely suffocate with this EM” (Schmidt, 2021), dedicated to the European Football Championship, several games being held in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Media text genre: an article about current international events.

Analysis of the media text for reliability (identifying the political, ideological position of the authors of the media text, identifying possible receivers of the media text, political and other groups who benefit from the media text):

What is the source of the information? What facts are presented to support it?

The main source of this article is the published statistical data on the spread of coronavirus in Russia, the opinions of the German journalist F. Schmidt and an anonymous nurse from St. Petersburg (Schmidt, 2021).

Can you verify the source?

Statistics on the spread of coronavirus in Russia are available, they are updated daily on the official Russian portals.

Does the message refer to logic or emotion?

This article primarily addresses human emotions regarding fear of the Covid-19 pandemic, simple emotional reactions.

What is the main purpose of a media text?

The main objective of this article is to convince German-speaking readers that “a year after the end of the strict restrictions, anti-coronavirus measures are being tightened again in Moscow. The number of new infections is on the rise, the lack of confidence in vaccinations is high, and the European Championship could further exacerbate the situation” (Schmidt, 2021).

Is there any information missing?

The article does not provide any alternative information regarding the above assumption that the holding of the European Football Championship will dramatically worsen the epidemiological situation in St. Petersburg and in Russia.

Whose point of view does the message present?

This article is presented partially from the point of view of critics of Russian policy in the field of combating Covid-19.

Who will benefit if people accept this message? Who will lose?

If the information presented in this article (Schmidt, 2021) is accepted as true, the critics of Russian policy in the fight against Covid-19 will win, and the mass audience incapable of critical

analysis of the media text will be affected, though not taking into account the fact that the European Championship was carried out in different countries of the continent, and, of course, there was also a danger of the virus spread.

Assessment of the level of truthfulness of the media text: the estimated level of truthfulness of the media text is not more than 50 % (the straight part of the information is that in the summer of 2021, the epidemiological situation in Russia in fact worsened, and in June 2021 in St. Petersburg some championship matches were held during European Football Championship).

Conclusion: the media text most likely contains partially false information (regarding the fact that the holding of the European Football Championship in St. Petersburg will dramatically increase the rate of Covid-19, which, in fact, did not happen).

In June 2021, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* published an article titled (German) “Joe Bidens heilige Verpflichtung”/(Eng.) “Joe Biden's Sacred Duty” (Gutschker, 2021) on American policy towards Russia.

Media text genre: an article about current international events.

Analysis of the media text for reliability (identifying the political, ideological position of the authors of the media text, identifying possible receivers of the media text, political and other groups who benefit from the media text):

What is the source of the information? What facts are presented in support of it?

Statements by US President J. Biden and the NATO leadership.

Can you verify the source?

The statements mentioned above were widely broadcast by various media, it is not difficult to get acquainted with them (in the press, on Internet platforms).

Does the message appeal to logic or emotion?

This article primarily addresses human emotions, simple emotional reactions. The main message of the article – the military “threat to Euro-Atlantic security” from Russia and Russia's refusal to engage in dialogue with NATO – is presented absolutely unsubstantiated.

What is the main purpose of a media text?

The main purpose of this article is to convince German-speaking readers that “three years after Donald Trump's outburst of rage, his successor dispelled all doubts in Brussels: America is supporting its NATO partners. They are closing ranks - against Russia, but also in the face of China. ... In recent years, this process has only accelerated, as Moscow rejected proposals from the West - including proposals from the alliance - for dialogue and instead intensified its confrontation. This brought the allies together” (Gutschker, 2021).

Is there any information missing? The article does not provide any alternative point of view regarding the political positions of J. Biden and NATO.

Whose point of view does the message present?

This article presents the viewpoint of critics of Russian politics: Russia's “aggressive actions” are classified as a “threat to Euro-Atlantic security”. Thus, “Russia poses the greatest threat to the alliance, along with terrorism in all its forms”. Why this is so is outlined in more detailed paragraphs than three years ago, covering everything NATO is concerned about – from disinformation campaigns to new short and medium-range missiles and recent troop deployments near Ukraine's borders. While the proposal for a dialogue with Moscow remains in effect, the communique unequivocally states: “Until Russia demonstrates compliance with international law and its international obligations and responsibilities, there can be no return to business as usual” (Gutschker, 2021).

Who will benefit if people accept this message? Who will lose?

If the information presented in this article (Gutschker, 2021) is accepted as true, opponents of Russian politics will win, and a mass audience incapable of critical analysis of the media text will lose, which does not take into account alternative points of view.

Assessment of the level of truthfulness of the media text: the estimated level of truthfulness of the media text is less than 50 % (the information correctly reflects the political views of President J. Biden and NATO, but completely unsubstantiated draws a conclusion about Russia threatening Euro-Atlantic security).

Conclusion: the media text most likely contains partially false information.

In June 2021, the *Bild* newspaper published an article entitled (German) “Corona macht Putin noch gefährlicher”/(Eng.) “The Coronavirus Makes Putin Even More Dangerous” (Harbusch et al., 2021) on the policy of Russian-German relations.

Media text genre: an article about current events in the world.

Analysis of the media text for reliability (identifying the political, ideological position of the authors of the media text, identifying possible receivers of the media text, political and other groups who benefit from the media text):

What is the source of the information? What facts are presented in support of it?

Report of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, report of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution of the German Internal Intelligence Service and the point of view of three German journalists.

Can you verify the source?

Ordinary German-speaking readers are unlikely to have access to the full text of this report, much less to the mechanisms for checking the information presented in the report.

Does the message appeal to logic or emotion?

This article, primarily appeals to human emotions: "Putin's special services and propaganda media are keeping Germany at gunpoint. In an annual report from the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Germany's internal intelligence service warns that the Putin regime is using the coronavirus crisis to spread misinformation and undermine the credibility of the German government" (Harbusch et al., 2021).

What is the main purpose of a media text?

The main message of the article is to convince the audience that "in addition to espionage activities, Russia continues to seek to channel political and public opinion in Germany in its favor through the dissemination of propaganda, disinformation, and other attempts to influence" (Harbusch et al., 2021).

Is there any information missing? The article does not provide any alternative point of view.

From whose point of view is the message presented?

This article is presented from the point of view of critics of Russian politics: "In recent weeks, there has been an increase in attacks from a Russian cyber entity on political bodies in Germany. The attacks are aimed, in particular, at the e-mail boxes of political parties and political foundations and are aimed at obtaining data to authorize users and thus gain access to confidential information. ... The goals of all Russian efforts are to discredit the German government, polarize political discourse and undermine trust in government agencies. ... In 2021, Germany is likely to become the center of Russian espionage and influence with the Bundestag elections scheduled for September 26, 2021, elections to the Landtag and city parliaments in six federal lands and municipal elections. ... At the same time, the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic may further persuade the Kremlin to engage in dangerous attacks. The significant political and economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic for Russia itself could further intensify Russian espionage activities, especially with the aim of diverting attention from its own problems in the economy and science" (Harbusch et al., 2021).

Who will benefit if people accept this message? Who will lose?

If the information presented in this article (Harbusch et al., 2021) is accepted as accurate, opponents of Russian politics will win, and a mass audience incapable of critical analysis of the media text, which does not take into account alternative points of view, will lose.

Assessment of the level of truthfulness of the media text: the estimated level of truthfulness of the media text is very low, since it does not contain any evidence of Russia's interference in the political life of Germany (through cyber attacks, etc.).

Conclusion: the media text most likely contains largely false information.

In June 2021, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper published an article entitled (German) "Putins Rendezvous mit dem Lieblingsfeind" / (Eng.) "Putin's rendezvous with the favourite enemy" (Bigalke, 2021), dedicated to the talks between US President J. Biden and Russian President V. Putin in Geneva.

Media text genre: an article about current events in the world.

Analysis of the media text for reliability (identifying the political, ideological position of the authors of the media text, identifying possible receivers of the media text, political and other groups who benefit from the media text):

What is the source of the information? What facts are presented in support of it?

The real fact presented in this article is the meeting and negotiations between US President J. Biden and Russian President V. Putin in Geneva, the rest is the personal opinion of the journalist.

Can you verify the source?

The very fact of the meeting and negotiations between US President J. Biden and Russian President V. Putin in Geneva (summer 2021) is easily verified, the rest of the information presented in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* article is the subjective opinion of the journalist.

Does the message appeal to logic or emotion?

This article, first of all, refers to human emotions, simple emotional reactions: “The world, as the Kremlin presents it to the Russians, is as bipolar as Putin wants it to be. There is Russia and the United States, and all the rest revolve around these poles” (Bigalke, 2021).

What is the main purpose of a media text?

The main message of the article is to convince the audience that “the Kremlin is inciting hostility towards the United States – and is using it to fight critics in its own country” (Bigalke, 2021).

Is there any information missing?

The article does not provide any alternative point of view.

From whose point of view is the message presented?

This article is presented from the point of view of opponents of Russian politics: “The United States has long been Russia's favorite enemy, relations with Washington are the pivot around which Putin's foreign policy revolves – and, more and more often, his domestic policy as well. After all, the image of the enemy that the Kremlin cultivates not only motivates a sufficient number of Russians to rally behind their president. It also serves an explanation for all kinds of complaints in the country. Critics and Russian opposition are controlled by foreign forces, i.e. the United States – that is the message of its propaganda” (Bigalke, 2021).

Who will benefit if people accept this message? Who will lose?

If the information presented in this article (Bigalke, 2021) is accepted, opponents of Russian politics will win, and a mass audience incapable of critical analysis of the media text will lose, which does not take into account alternative points of view.

Assessment of the level of truthfulness of the media text: the estimated level of truthfulness of the media text is less than 50 %.

Conclusion: the media text most likely contains partially false information.

5. Conclusion

Thus, relying on the developed media educational activity that contributes to the development of media competence of the audience in the process of analyzing the reliability of media texts (Figure 1) and a series of analytical questions encouraging the identification of media manipulations, we have analyzed a number of articles in the German press devoted to Russian foreign and domestic policy. In total, we analyzed 337 articles in German newspapers for the period 2020-2021. Herewith, it was found that 98.2 % of the texts (331 out of 337 articles) expressed negative opinions about Russia, about its politics and economy, which, certainly, does not contribute to the development of mutual understanding and dialogue between Germany and Russia.

Meanwhile, in many cases, the German press uses the following typical manipulative persuasive techniques: *selection*: selection of certain tendencies (in this case, only negative ones), distortion of these tendencies; *labeling* (accusatory, offensive, etc.); *appeal to authority*: a reference (often incorrect) to authorities in order to justify a particular statement; *false accusations*; *framing*; *loaded language*; *name-calling*, etc.

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