RESEARCH OF THE FORMATION OF FAKE INFORMATION AND THE MAIN TYPES OF RHETORICAL PRACTICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

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Abstract

At present, we are forced to encounter many uncertainties and challenges which we did not have in the past. In this context, special attention is paid to fake information. The latter, combined with the relevant rhetoric practices becomes a serious tool in terms of influencing the public consciousness. Furthermore, the flow of information that we receive needs to be recycled and harnessed competently. Taking into consideration the fact that nowadays we have too much manipulative information in social media and network, we need to be more attentive and careful. The theme of coronavirus is exponential. In the current article, the manipulative informational process around coronavirus is discussed. The article also touches upon the issue of its possible impact on human and public consciousness and the kind of behavioural reactions it may raise in connection with this influence.

Keywords and phrases:

Covid-19, manipulative process, fake, information, rhetorical idioms.

«ՖԵՅՔ»-ԱՅԻՆ ՏԵՂԵԿԱՏՎՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԵՎ ՀԻՄՆԱԿԱՆ ՀՌԵՏՈՐԱԲԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ COVID-19 ՀԱՄԱՎԱՐԱԿԻ ՊԱՅՄԱՆՆԵՐՈՒՄ

ԲԵՆԻԿ ՅԵՐԻԲԵԿՅԱՆ

Խ. Աբովյանի անվան հայկական պետական մանկավարժական համալսարան

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Համառոտագիր

Ներկա ժամանակահատվածը ստիպում է մեզ բախվել բազմաթիվ անորոշությունների և մարտահրավերների, որոնք նախկինում մենք չենք ունեցել: Տեղեկատվական հոսքը, որը մենք ստանում ենք, անհրաժեշտություն ունի վերամշակման և գրագետ օգտագործման: Հաշվի առնելով, որ սոցիալական ցանցերում և կայքերում մեր օրերում չափազանց շատ են մանիպուլյատիվ տեղեկությունները՝ անհրաժեշտ է լինել զգույշ և ուշադիր: Այս համատեքստում առանձնահատուկ ուշադրության է արժանանում «ֆեյք»-ային տեղեկատվու-թյունը: Վերջինս, համակցվելով համապատասխան հռետորաբանության հետ, լուրջ միջոց է դառնում հանրային գիտակցության վրա ներազդելու տեսանկյունից: Կորոնավարակի թեման սրա վառ ապացույցն է: Հոդվածում դիտարկվում է կորոնավարակի վերաբերյալ մանիպուլյատիվ տեղեկատվական գործընթացը: Ներկայացվում է նաև մարդկային և հասարակական գիտակցության վրա ազդեցության գործընթացը, ինչպես նաև այն, թե վարքային ինչ ռեակցիաներ կարող են առաջանալ այդ ազդեցությամբ:

Բանալի բառեր և բառակապակցություններ

Տեղեկատվական հոսք, սոցիալական ցանցեր, կորոնավարակ, մանիպուլյատիվ տեղեկատվություն, հասարակական գիտակցություն, վարքային ռեակցիաներ:

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ФЕЙКОВОЙ ИНФОРМАЦИИ И ОСНОВНЫХ ТИПОВ РИТОРИЧЕСКИХ ПРАКТИК В ПЕРИОД ПАНДЕМИИ COVID-19

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Аннотация

Современная жизнь и реальность сталкивает нас со многими вызовами и неопределённостью, которых мы до этого не встречали. Информационный поток, который мы получаем, нуждается в грамотной переработке и использовании. В этом контексте отдельное место занимает фейковая информация. В сочетании с отдельными риторическими практиками последняя преобразовывается и становится отдельным средством воздействия на общественное сознание. Тема коронавируса является показательным примером. В статье рассматривается манипулятивный информационный процесс в связи с темой коронавируса, основное влияние, которое оказывается на индивидуальное и общественное сознание. Рассматриваются поведенческие реакции, которые возникают в ответ на данное влияние.

Ключевые слова и фразы

Covid-19, манипулятивный процесс, фейк, информация, риторические идиомы.

Introduction

Modern life is impossible to predict or define. Uncertainty has filled almost all areas of human life. In this uncertainty, it is difficult for a person to find correct and proven answers to his questions. And the solutions which are found, in its turn, are not accurate and plausible. This kind of information may generate anxieties and panic.

Especially, modern TV and media programs widely and very commonly use some tactics when they start to refer to the unidentified and unknown speakers and people. The audience in this case, is mainly manipulated by the visual modality, and the conversation it is fulfilled with is very enjoyable and consequential. Various archival videos are often used in such programs. The summary of all these videos is essential for defining the phenomenon called "fake journalism"[1](8).

In general, "fake" information is essentially similar to real and credible information. Components of similarity include, for example, sensational title, the main part, the conclusion. However, in the case of fake information, some discursive reconstructions are carried out by individual newspapers and websites. It is obvious that every news item is based on certain specific facts, but very often, the relevant role and significance are played by voluntary comments with the appropriate direction. The above mentioned comments are often constructed with the help of certain tricks and means, which are based on manipulative techniques[2] (9). Having this in mind, it should be mentioned that in modern reality, without any doubt, it is difficult to underestimate life speed in general. As for the face of that speed and haste, particularly when the flow of information is increasing, it becomes necessary for the media to coordinate quickly and provide ready-made information to the public as a final result.

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[1] **Ильченко С., Пучков Д.,** Как нас обманывают СМИ. «Манипуляция информацией»: ООО Издательство «Питер»; Санкт-Петербург; 2018, стр. 66.

[2] **Ключникова Кристина Александровна**, (Пермский государственный национальный университет), Век информации (сетевое издание, Феномен fake news в современных СМИ США/Fake news phenomenon in modern USA media, from ttps://age-info.com/

At this stage, we face a significant point. Understandably, any individual journalist or news channel (or publishing house) is not able to actually "endure" and "bare" the speed and frequency of current life and to analyze and select the relevant credible and real material or information.

As a result, we have an obvious fact that in many situations, there is a wide range of informational sources which are used for manipulative purposes. The trouble with pandemics is a typical example of using various types of fake news and information.

The following article discusses the process of creating fake information on an example of virus COVID-19.

The aim is to show the peculiarities and mechanisms of fake information formation based on the analysis of various informational sources.

The objects of the current research are the features of a manipulative process on the example of fake information.

The subject of the paper is to explore the basic mechanisms of creating fake information on the example of virus COVID-19.

As for the methodology used for implementing detailed research, it is mainly based on Ibarra and Kitsuse's ideas. According to the authors, the concept of rhetorical idiom should be highlighted and analyzed. There are five main idioms-the rhetoric of loss, the rhetoric of empowerment, the rhetoric of danger, the rhetoric of unreason, and the rhetoric of disaster. The authors also highlight certain words that are used in accordance with certain rhetoric[3] (Ibarra P., Kitsuse J. 2007).

The primary mechanism of formation and distribution of fake information

In general, there are certain motivations for the creation or emergence of any fake information or news. The main types of motives are either political or financial. Very often, fake news in politics is created to develop a certain attitude or position towards a particular political side (whether it is positive or negative). Moreover, social websites are more often used for this purpose, rather than the media. (Fake news, как создаются фейковые новости и можно ли их распознать, https//habr.com/).

As a financial incentive to create fake news, we should present the following example. With the help of various fakes, a group of relevant visitors can be involved. For example. "Only three constellation signs will prevail in 2020". It is obvious that such a manipulative trick will easily and quickly secure a large number of visitors. It should be added that competition is one of the motivations for creating fake information and news. The latter is mainly used to devalue or discredit the competitor[4] (2).

Summarizing the ideas mentioned above, we may conclude that these three presented motivations provide a relatively straightforward explanation of the primary purpose of the fake information creation and mission in general. But one thing is exact: if we are going to understand the real peculiarities of such information, it is

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[3] **Ibarra P., Kitsuse J**. 2007, **Ясавеев И**., Риторика контролируемого бедствия: специфика конструирования ФСКН проблемы потребления наркотиков, https://cyberleninka.ru/

[4] Fake news, Как создаются фейковые новости и можно ли их распознать, https//habr.com

necessary to discover and to study the deeper structural basis of fake news and information.

We consider it essential and useful to present the process of creating and structuring fake information in general. As for its main stages, we believe that the analysis of this topic will allow us to develop a more objective and thoughtful attitude and behavioral response. It will help us to avoid or at least to minimize the manipulative process and keep us away from being involved in some tricks.

Let's see the main stages in the creation and construction of fake information.

In the initial stage, we talk about target group exploration. In this context, the manipulator must mainly answer three questions: who should be cheated on, what is the purpose of cheating and what should be cheated. Here the worldview and positions of the above-mentioned target groups are analyzed in detail. In the second stage, we talk about the elaboration and creation of fake information. By the way, it is said that the specific event here is fake and such components as the number of participants, time and place are real. It may be that we are talking about some fake news where, for example, one fake information enlarges and expands the main topic of the second one. It should be mentioned that in the second stage talks about the selection of the agents of disseminating fake information or the corresponding channels. In the modern world, this "function" can be performed by certain popular social networks and channels (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)[5] (2).

The process of spreading fake information or news needs some special attention. Usually, some fake information appears in the domain of a similar fake platform, which is not generally controlled. Then any authoritative blogger appears who installs and after spreads the news. Next, the "shift" of distribution is taken by real users or so-called "robots" who, in addition to distributing the material, perform one of the most important functions: they neutralize the critics who in turn remain in a passive position because there is no serious resistance which can be shown by those fakes. At the next stage, users start using and sharing the news. There is unique information which, in turn, already catches the attention of a large audience. And we are talking about professional journalists and, in general, about wide media network[6].(2).

Let's bring an example of such fake news. On the 65th birthday of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, Russian television was reporting that a burger with five cutlets was being served in one of the New York restaurants in honour of the President. Reference was made to the video of "Rutley" agency. In particular, the employee of the restaurant said that the weight of the burger was 1952 grams which corresponded to Putin's birth year. This original information was refuted later. One of the employees of the restaurant confirmed that it was her initiative for which she was fired[7] (13).

The following procedure distinguishes the fifth stage. Here long-term goals are generally pursued: there is a need to bring about rather profound changes in the

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[5] Fake news, Как создаются фейковые новости и можно ли их распознать, https//habr.com

[6] Там же.

[7] Самые популярные "фейковые новости" в российских медиа в 2017-м, https://rus.azattyq.org/

attitudes of the audience. For this purpose, several fake news items are launched at once, which aim to present a specific targeted event from different angles. In many cases, new "heroes" are also involved. It is necessary to mention one important feature. The fact is that in many cases, when it comes to the particular devaluation of an organization or company in the discrediting message often adds certain positive characteristics. It is done for one main purpose-not to allow the audience to guess about the manipulation process. The final action of this whole process is that immediately after the previously presented fake news the next one is covered or posted the first one which mainly aims to divert the audience's attention excluding the occurrence of any critical analysis. One important feature-the new created fake news must be completely different from the previous one[8]. (13).

Fake news in connection with the origin of coronavirus COVID-19

Of course, in recent times, it has been difficult to underestimate the crucial role of fake news in creating different moods in public and society in general. In particular, various posts on COVID-19 and fake manipulative information have become relevant and familiar at this stage.

We have just talked about the basic principles and features of fake news creation and construction. Now, we would like to present some fake information and facts around COVID-19 and introduce some specific examples.

One of the most popular theories is that Americans have invented COVID-19. It was mentioned to have been created by a secret extra-governmental group whose primary mission was the current US authorities. The dissemination and distribution of this information were facilitated by US President Donald Trump's Twitter post. In particular, on February 26 Donald Trump announced that COVID-19 was deliberately created as a political struggle and fight against him[9] (14),[10] (1).

Here we can see an attempt of using certain manipulative information which tries to form and create some position and attitude and gives the corresponding counterattack.

The second fake information about COVID-19 is that it is the invention of Chinese scientists. It should be noted that this theory has been prevalent in the media for a long time, but the interpretations of motives were different. According to the opinion, as mentioned earlier, the distribution and spread of COVID-19 were necessary to the Chinese government to rectify their demographic problems. As an argument for this theory, it was mentioned that there were some facts about artificial cloning of a child registered in China which was considered as a danger of fast population growth[11] (14).

There is another point of vision that has become widespread, particularly on British social networks. The main idea was that 5G Internet affects the immune

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[8] Там же.

[9] Топ-5 фейков о коронавирисе, https://www.interfax.ru/, 07.04.2020р

[10] Facts or fake news: Revealing   patterns in the COVID-19 tweets of Trudeau and Trump, https://theconversation.com/

[11] Топ-5 фейков о коронавирисе, https://www.interfax.ru/, 07.04.2020

system of the human body, which increases the risk of COVID-19. It was also mentioned that the infection was distributed by the opponents of the English "Liverpool" football club, as "Liverpool" had most excellent chances of winning the championship during the season[12] (14).

The next popular fake news about COVID-19 was that it has a cosmic origin. This one, however, did not get enough popularity. Another popular viewpoint related to the creation of the infection was connected with the name of Bill Gates (founder of Microsoft). According to the rumours, it was he who created this disease intending to control the whole planet[13] (14).

It should be noted here that in addition to the "known" theories of COVID-19's origin and spread, there are still many others which have not been presented in this paper. One of those theories is that coronavirus has spread through "ibuprofen" or African bananas. Another one is that the virus has been distributed by the feminist movement to deprive men of the opportunity to go to their active recreation areas[14] (14).

Apparently, in modern reality, new "fuel" is ready for the preparation of fake information which is actively used for the dissemination of manipulative information. Here we need to talk not so much about changing attitudes or views but more about increasing the mark and level of anxiety in society or humanity.

Although, as we have seen the current situation is "skillfully" used to obtain certain political dividends and advantages (particularly in the example of Donald Trump).

Analysis of the use of rhetorical idioms on the example of official statements of the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson

In General, almost every manipulative process is composed and built up using certain phrases and language techniques (for example, NLP programming). And in combination with the impact on the process of human perception, these speech-language manipulative techniques and tools become a serious "weapon" for specific manipulators.

In General, there are several similar tricks.

For example, the use of any information or message that causes horror or fear. In general, information constructed in this way is highly productive and effective, since fear mainly helps to unite a particular group of people or society (for example, against an external enemy)[15] (7).

In this context (the situation in the modern world is connected with COVID-19)the external enemy looks like this infection. Such rhetoric can be seen in the words of the heads of many countries. And here they often do not avoid using manipulative tricks.

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[12] Там же.
[13] Там же.
[14] Топ-5 фейков о коронавирисе, https://www.interfax.ru/, 07.04.2020
[15] **Дзялошинский И. М.,** Манипулятивные технологии в масс-медиа, https://cyberleninka.ru/

In previous parts, we talked about the primary mechanisms for constructing, creating and distributing fake information, as well as about the main fake news that was an actual part of the topic COVID-19. Now we would like to show and analyze the basic principles and sequence of constructing fake information as well as show the mechanisms for announcing such news.

The methodology of this paper is based on ideas proposed by Ibarra and Kitsuse, which highlighted and mentioned the concept of the rhetorical idiom. There are five main idioms-the rhetoric of loss, the rhetoric of empowerment, the rhetoric of danger, the rhetoric of unreason, and the rhetoric of disaster. The authors also highlight specific words that are used in accordance with certain rhetoric[16] (3),[17] (11).

Now let's try to show the use of specific rhetorical idioms used in certain examples, analyze the consequences which affect social behaviour and the result of using these idioms. In parallel, we will also try to show the words and expressions used in these idioms.

In our research, we will touch upon the statements of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, related to COVID-19.

We will start with the statement that the Prime Minister of Great Britain made on March 12, 2020. "*Many families will lose their loved ones before the epidemic ends,*"[18](4), [19](6).

Here we can talk about using two rhetorical practices: first-the rhetoric of danger and the rhetoric of disaster. In particular, in speech practices of hazard rhetoric, expressions such as *disease, pathology, preferences, risk, infection, health threat,* and *prevention* are often used. The rhetoric of disaster is mostly about individual causal relationships that action can lead to[20] (3), [21](11).

In this expression, the speech practice of hazard rhetoric is the expression epidemic. And the rhetoric of disaster is presented here in the construction "*Many families will lose their loved ones…*".

In this regard, we would like to say that, in general, these rhetorical practices can be used very often and skillfully and are used for manipulative purposes. We are talking about manipulation in a negative sense.

But also we would like to show what impact such speech practices can have on social consciousness.

In this context, we consider it necessary to note that in the modern world, the Covid-19 controller is the embodiment of such an external "enemy". As an example, we would like to mention, in particular, the statement of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson addressed to his nation. In this statement, he describes the current situation

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[16] **Ibarra P., Kitsuse J.**, Claims-Making Discourse and Vernacular Resources, (2007)

[17] **Ясавеев И.,** Риторика контролируемого бедствия: специфика конструирования ФСКН проблемы потребления наркотиков, https://cyberleninka.ru/

[18] In Britain, announced new measures to combat coronavirus, https://www.corona24.news/

[19] В Британии объявлены новые меры борьбы с коронавирусом, https://www.bbc.com/

[20] **Ibarra P., Kitsuse J.**, Claims-Making Discourse and Vernacular Resources, (2007)

[21] **Ясавеев И.,** Риторика контролируемого бедствия: специфика конструирования ФСКН проблемы потребления наркотиков, https://cyberleninka.ru/

as the greatest challenge since the war. He also notes that the risks of infection are very high[22] (12).

In continuation of this topic, we would like to show and analyze another statement by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson:

"*Yes this enemy can be deadly, but it is also beatable-and we know how to beat it, and we know that if as a country we follow the scientific advice that is now being given we know that we will beat it*"[23] (5).

Here we can also observe the use of two rhetorical idioms-the rhetoric of danger and the rhetoric of disaster[24] (3),[25] (11).

The rhetoric of danger here is observed in the phrase "*Yes, this enemy can be deadly…".* Using these two words-the enemy and the deadly, British Prime Minister is trying to marshal and focus the attention of the British society.

The rhetoric of disaster is presented here in the phrase "…*if as a country we follow the scientific advice that is now being given we know that we will beat it*". Here, the British Prime Minister indirectly hints what will happen if you do not follow scientific research and advice.

Far from wishing to delve into the moral and humanistic concepts and criteria of this manipulative trick, we will only note the following.

The above-mentioned announcement was made in April 2020. According to some sources in the UK, in May 2020, there was a decrease in the total number of deaths due to the epidemic.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to mention that the modern world, with its rapid and up to date information flow is becoming a problem for preserving and maintaining social stability. It seemed that numerous information sources would enrich public life. Whereas, we got almost the opposite effect.

In the modern world, various types of information manipulation are beginning to play an increasing role. It is especially true for creating fake information and news. In this article, we attempted to present and analyze the features of the construction and further distribution of the marked fake news.

Recently, pandemic COVID-19 has become the primary source and reason for the creation and dissemination of various kinds of fake information and news. First of all, this concerned the question of the causes of this pandemic COVID-19. We saw and demonstrated different versions of this topic.

We were able to see that in the process of creating fake information, various manipulative speech constructions and phrases are often used. These speech constructions and phrases are different depending on the specific goal.

In the practical part, we have shown and analyzed the use of certain manipulative technologies, as well as the use of specific rhetorical idioms for this purpose. We also demonstrated the impact of these practices on the transformation of public attitudes.

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[22] Премьер Британии после Covid-19 обратился к нации https://korrespondent.net/, 27.04.2020

[23] This enemy can be deadly': Boris Johnson invokes wartime language, https://www.theguardian.com/

[24] **Ibarra P., Kitsuse J.,** Claims-Making Discourse and Vernacular Resources, (2007)

[25] **Ясавеев И.,** Риторика контролируемого бедствия: специфика конструирования ФСКН проблемы потребления наркотиков, https://cyberleninka.ru/

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THE ISSUE OF OVERCOMING ECONOMIC CRISIS CAUSED BY CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IN ARMENIA

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Abstract

The economic crisis caused by the coronavirus epidemic is unique since its consequences are difficult to predict. Governments in almost every country in the world have tried, and are still trying to find the right balance between saving lives and saving national economies.