

# ԶԱՆԳՎԱԾԱՅԻՆ ԼՐԱՏՎՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԻՋՈՑՆԵՐԻ ՏԵՍՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ MEDIA THEORY

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SEDA GASPARYAN\*

*Doctor of Sciences (Philology), Professor*

*Yerevan State University,*

*Corresponding Member of NAS RA*

*sedagasparyan@ysu.am*

ZARA HAYRAPETYAN

*PHD student of English Philology Department*

*Yerevan State University,*

*zara.hayrapetyan@ysumail.am*

## THE RECENT WAR AGAINST KARABAKH: A CLASH OF INTERESTS

*Key words:* media discourse, Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, the Karabakh (Artsakh) issue, strategy of manipulation, manipulative tactics, influence on the audience, distortion of facts.

### *Introduction*

The desire to impose a certain view of a problem on the audience is observed today in almost all spheres of communication, including the media. The accumulation of new investigative data in recent years has allowed the realization to be made that media is a specific channel of information which not only sends

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out to its audience messages about significant events in the world, but also distorts the perception of what happened, as well as controls public opinion, using various techniques of manipulation. The present article is meant to unveil the untrue nature of the Azerbaijani considerations and comments on the Karabakh conflict and the war of 2020. The object of study in this research is, mildly speaking, the inaccuracy and fallacy of the Azerbaijani mass media article based on the **journalistic “highlights” of the recent war unleashed against Nagorno-Karabakh** and its Armenian population. In the centre of our investigative interest lies the question of manipulation and the variety of manipulative tactics employed in the discourse of the politically oriented field of mass-media.

It is already an established fact that language is a code, which can be shared, allowing people to communicate with one another, explain their ideas and speak out their opinions. When used in communication, it is usually meant to satisfy this or that purpose the communicators have in mind. It is beyond doubt that in the sending out of information, one can do it either directly and explicitly or indirectly, i.e. implicitly, through adding hidden meanings to the actual spoken message. This latter manner of speaking is intensively exercised particularly in the field of politics with the aim of influencing the perception of the audience and, as a rule, misleading them. This is identified as manipulation: a linguistic or behavioral trick in which the speaker uses language in such a way as to abuse people through a rearrangement of facts. This is achieved by employing certain manipulative tactics and techniques, which make the speech more persuasive and convincing. However, this does not mean to say that manipulative strategies and tactics are implemented in speech through the application of specific linguistic units, but rather due to their relationship to the manipulator's aims and motives. The use of seemingly rational means for making the impression of being objective and reasonable helps the manipulator conceal certain points of view and keep them away from fair hearing.

Our investigation regards the manipulation of facts, when the latter as well as the history as a whole originate **from the speaker's own subjective standpoint** and desires to delude readers. Our observations show that the author of the presented facts and ideas tries to achieve his goals by eliminating large portions of information and short-changing the entirety of the story through the employment of such manipulative techniques as blaming the opponent; distorting reality and the truth; restructuring the information to their own good even if it is a lie.

Especially in politics, reality swirls around a vortex of manipulation, which political circles apply rather beneficially and cunningly, thus managing to draw a larger audience to their side.

*Purpose of the Study, Methodology and Material*

This paper goes along the lines of a larger research project which was started back in 2015 and was aimed at studying anti-Armenian propaganda discourse in English. Proceeding from our observations and conclusions achieved in our prior research, we focus in the present paper on the study of **the media article “Report on Threats and Pressure on Journalists Covering the Armenian Azerbaijani Conflict Presented”**<sup>1</sup> which presents the official standpoint of the government of Azerbaijan, written by its mouthpiece, the head of Azerbaijan Journalists' Network Public Union Ayaz Mirzayev. The target of the research is the verbal and non-verbal expression of the atrocious disposition and behaviour of the writer who, following the line of the policy of the Azerbaijani government, strives to create an extremely negative and unacceptable image of Armenia as a terrorist state in the eyes of the international community. The overall analysis of the Mirzayev article requires the employment of different linguistic and non-linguistic methods (description, argumentation, linguostylistic analysis and discourse observations) to bring out the manipulation of the story and the facts distorted by the Azerbaijani side.

*The Historical Background of the Conflict*

True is the statement that the past is a vital resource. We believe it is first and foremost a resource of facts about reality which however can be and unfortunately are manipulated to support the political ends of the manipulators. Thus, it is not difficult at all to identify all the claims announced by Azerbaijan as nothing but untrue, distorted and preposterous statements. The historical fact, regarding the fabrication of Azerbaijan as a State for political reasons in 1918 is obvious and cannot be disputed. Azerbaijan became a state on May 28, 1918, though Baku remained in the hands of a communist government, assisted by local Armenian militaries, who had put down a Muslim revolt in March. Being unable to go against Armenians alone, the Azerbaijanis allied with the advancing Turkish army and in September 1918 took their capital, Baku, by massacring the

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<sup>1</sup> St'u <https://en.azvision.az/news/134983/news.html>

Armenians<sup>2</sup>. The Azerbaijani journalist neglects the recorded fact that they are a mixed race from different ethnic groups<sup>3</sup> who did not have a native country as they were nomadic tribes converted by the conquering races. Lastly and most importantly, history is the purest proof to whom those territories belonged. This is testified to by Pavel P. Shafirov, a distinguished Russian diplomat, who back in 1733 defined the region: "...Armenia Minor which is now called Armenian Seghnakhs; all those lands are populated by brave Armenian Christians, who have defended themselves with their own forces against both the Turks and the Persians for [the last] several years"<sup>4</sup>. There is also Jonas Hanway's testimony which refers to those autonomous areas of Karabakh and Kapan as "a kind of republic", thus adding to the de facto recognition of those territories as independent<sup>5</sup>. Strabo in his "Geography" mentions Armenians and their territories more than once. According to him, Armenia neighbored Albania and Iberia. When we look at the map, we can see how large the territory of Armenia had been while the present Azerbaijani territory belonged to the Albanians<sup>6</sup>.



Robert H. Hewsen "Armenia: A Historical Atlas".  
The University of Chicago Press,  
2001, p. 34.

Karabakh (Artsakh) has existed since the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, when local dynastic princes, known as nakharars formed the hierarchy, asserted power and gave

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<sup>2</sup> St'u Independent Azerbaijan. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Azerbaijan/Russian-suzerainty>

<sup>3</sup> St'u Azerbaijani people. Retrieved 27.05.2021 from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Azerbaijani-people>

<sup>4</sup> Aivazyan 1997, 18–19. Retrieved from [http://hayq.org/upload/files/Armenian\\_Rebellion\\_ENG.pdf](http://hayq.org/upload/files/Armenian_Rebellion_ENG.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Hanway 1754, 252. Retrieved from <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.334330.66631619&view=1up&seq=274>

<sup>6</sup> Jones (ed.) 1924. Retrieved from <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Aabo.tlg.0099.001.11#note42>; Harutyunyan 2016, 13–35. Retrieved from [http://publishing.ysu.am/files/Babken\\_Harutyunyan\\_2016.pdf](http://publishing.ysu.am/files/Babken_Harutyunyan_2016.pdf)

strength to the Armenian society. Due to the location of Karabakh (Artsakh) in the Kingdom, the province maintained a strong identity and presence throughout the region. From this period until the 1760s, it remained the base and foundation of Christianity and Armenia<sup>7</sup>.

This brief review of the history of Artsakh is intended to remind the readers of the deep roots of Karabakh-Armenians in that location from the early ages.

*The Claims of the Azerbaijani Journalist*

In the aforementioned article the author manipulates with the story, history and reality, **concerning the issue of Karabakh overall and the recent conflict's context. According to the author's claims which in fact reflect the disposition of the Azerbaijani government, the Armenian lobby has threatened the international media, supposedly exposing an Armenia's policy of aggression directed towards those who do not meet its interests. But has the author ever discerned the question what the Armenian interests are?**<sup>8</sup> Has he taken the trouble of acquainting himself with what has long been documented by Strabo, Hübschmann and others<sup>9</sup> who expand at authoritative length on the geographical and historical background of Karabakh as part of Armenia? The author of the article seems to be unaware of the fact that the conflict of Karabakh has never been a conflict of territory. One wonders if it is genetically impossible for a race of nomadic origin to understand what Motherland is – a land that birthed your ancestors, a land that retains your culture and cultural traditions.

Even a cursory reading of the text of the article reveals that the author obviously oversteps the boundaries of morality, calling the Armenians aggressors and the State of Armenia itself, a terrorist, with no hesitation in presenting the aggressive attacks of Azerbaijan against Armenia as *just* and justifiable.

The claim of targeting and threatening public activists, politicians and the media is utterly baseless with no validity behind what the author writes. He must

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<sup>7</sup> Տե՛ս Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh): Historical and Geographical Perspective. Retrieved from <http://www.nkrusa.org/countryprofile/history.shtml?fbclid=IwAR1DsQ-CoWwfolI6L5wtNuK0tra-XSsLX1xtgQF021cDP93rotnyWG7MLk>

<sup>8</sup> Տե՛ս Republic of Artsakh: the history and the present. Retrieved 18.05.2021 from <https://www.president.am/ru/Artsakh-nkr/>

<sup>9</sup> Nahapetyan 2018, pp. 85-114; Hübschmann 1904. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111641393>; տե՛ս Նսսս History of the East. The East in the Middle Ages, 2002. Retrieved 13.04.2021 from <https://book.ivran.ru/f/istoriya-vostoka-tom-2-vostok-v-srednie-veka-2002.pdf>

have conveniently dismissed the numerous Azerbaijani cases of oppressive actions taken against representatives of independent media long before and during the war. We know from different sources that the authoritarian rulers of Azerbaijan previously and currently continue to employ all kinds of threats and violence towards independent media, both national and international. As an example we could refer the author to the reports of the foundation Justice for Journalists<sup>10</sup> which call attention to the variety of attacks against media in Azerbaijan. Among 1,464 cases of attacks including physical violence in Central Asia and Azerbaijan against professional journalists, bloggers and other media, Azerbaijan takes a leading place with its 26 incidents in the course of one year (2019). The report of the foundation unveils and analyses those cases, classifying them into three basic categories: attacks that endanger life, health and liberty, i.e. physical, non-physical and/or cyber-attacks and threats and attacks via judicial or economic means. Azerbaijan can take pride in practising all three categories. According to the report, in the period from 2017 to 2019, there have also been brutal beatings of journalists held in custody, kidnappings and deportations to their home country.

In 2016, Freedom House<sup>11</sup> issued a statement, concerning threats from the Azerbaijani government towards Sevinc Osmanqizi, who lives in the US. As cpj.org states<sup>12</sup>, Sevinc Osmanqizi was reported to be engaged in some kind of activities against Azerbaijan, which led the Azerbaijani government to threaten her and her family. CPJ also states that Azerbaijan harassed the journalist and even threatened to reveal intimate pictures of her to the public if she did not stop her TV show and apologize.

**Azerbaijan's deteriorating media and the abuse of freedom of speech** has also been referred to in an article by Freedom House, where **Elmar Huseynov's** death is mentioned as an example of impunity for violence in Azerbaijan. This article not only gives the name of Elmar Huseynov as a victim of the Azerbaijani

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<sup>10</sup> St'u A report: attacks on journalists, bloggers and media workers in central Asia and Azerbaijan/Justice for journalists, 14..04.2020. Retrieved 10.04.2021 from <https://jfj.fund/central-asia-azerbaijan-report-eng>

<sup>11</sup> Azerbaijan: Death Threats to Journalists / Freedom House, October 4, 2016. Retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/article/azerbaijan-death-threats-journalists>

<sup>12</sup>Azerbaijani Journalist Sevinc Osmanqizi Faces Harassment, Threats to Leak Intimate Photos / CPJ, Committee to Protect Journalists (2019). Retrieved 03.12.2020 from <https://cpj.org/2019/05/azerbaijani-journalist-sevinc-osmanqizi-faces-hara/>

ruling circles, but also publicizes a whole list of names of the journalists harassed and abused by the Azerbaijani government<sup>13</sup>.

Another media reporter, Latif Mammadov, provided a testimony to the OC media<sup>14</sup> about the threat and physical abuse he received from the Azerbaijani Security Service officers as he was an anti-war activist. He received threats from Azerbaijani officers who claimed they would kill him together with his family if he did not stop his online activity against the government.

These reports from the Azerbaijani independent media are evidence of the violence, aggressive and brutal nature of the government policy against freedom of speech, probably borrowed from Turkey (see the infamous Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code<sup>15</sup>). The Azerbaijani authorities do not tolerate any opinion, idea or judgment, which goes against their government, thus affirming the totalitarian aspect and approach of the officials. They threaten, abuse, punish and execute every individual who gives voice to the unfair, unjust and dictatorial nature of the Government, as proven in the aforementioned articles and reports. Thus, the use of the word-combination *Azerbaijan's just position* in the discourse is an obviously deliberate introduction of a "logical fallacy"<sup>16</sup>, which violates the logic of the argument. It is in fact, an assertion of a lie presented by the manipulation of the lexical-semantic unit *just* aimed to trick people into reading and interpreting the discourse in favour of the ideas pushed forward by the author<sup>17</sup>.

The misleading Azerbaijani assertion of Armenia being the aggressor in the war does not allow us to overlook the obvious fact of February 19, 2004, long before the recent war, when the Armenian 26-year-old Guren Margaryan, who

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<sup>13</sup> **Sb'u** Journalists Killed in 2005 - Motive Confirmed: Elmar Huseynov, January 2006, where the story of the thoroughly pre-planned death of an independent journalist in Azerbaijan is presented // Refworld, Committee to Protect Journalists (January 2006). Retrieved 03.12.2020 from <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4e6495d730.html>

<sup>14</sup> Azerbaijani Security Services 'threatened to kill' activist and family // OC Media, November 16, 2020. Retrieved 04.12.2020 from <https://oc-media.org/azerbaijani-security-services-threatened-to-kill-activist-and-family>

<sup>15</sup> Gasparyan et al 2019, pp. 54-89.

<sup>16</sup> Business Communication for Success // Saylor Foundation (2019). Retrieved from <https://resources.saylor.org/wwwresources/archived/site/textbooks/Business%20Communication%20for%20Success.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Khudhair 2013, pp. 1-14.

was participating in the NATO-sponsored programme “Partnership for Peace” in Budapest, was hacked to death while asleep by the Azerbaijani Army Lieutenant Ramil Safarov. The latter was not only released after his transfer from Hungary to Azerbaijan but also glorified and promoted as a National Hero of Azerbaijan<sup>18</sup>. Can this ever be justified? Does this not contradict the logical reasoning of facts with the sole aim of supporting the violence and aggression fostered by the state policy of Azerbaijan?

The article continues with another statement turned upside down by the journalist who states that it was the Armenian armed forces who breached the ceasefire on September 27, 2020 using heavy artillery, thus committing a military provocation.

This statement is obviously nothing but a simple manipulation of facts and reality. However hard he may try to employ his manipulative tactics of reversing the facts<sup>19</sup> and blaming the opponent<sup>20</sup> through casting discredit on the Armenian side, he cannot succeed in turning reality upside down. Albeit he tends to rely on the “communicative blindness” of his audience<sup>21</sup>, he cannot achieve his goal, for there are hundreds of tools to check the truthfulness of his unfounded announcements meant to manipulate and mislead the perception of the international community and provoke anti-Armenian hysteria in the world. It is not only immoral but also politically superfluous to issue such statements when everybody is well aware of the true nature of events, particularly as this statement cannot stand up to the requirements of elementary logical reasoning. The Armenian side could not have provoked this war; the people of Karabakh had already won some of their native lands back in 1994 and were happily engaged in exercising democracy and freedom in their country. So, they could not have been interested in a new war. It might have been honest for the head of Azerbaijan Journalists’ Network Public Union to confess that it was the turmoil of Neo-Ottomanism – which never leaves Erdogan and now Aliev too, alone – that provoked this war by Aliev and Erdogan in tandem, in order to come as close as

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<sup>18</sup> Azeri killer Ramil Safarov: Concern over Armenian anger. // BBC, 3 September 2012. Retrieved 12.04.2021 from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19463968>

<sup>19</sup> Unkelbach 2007, 219–230. doi.org/10.1037/0278-7393.33.1.219

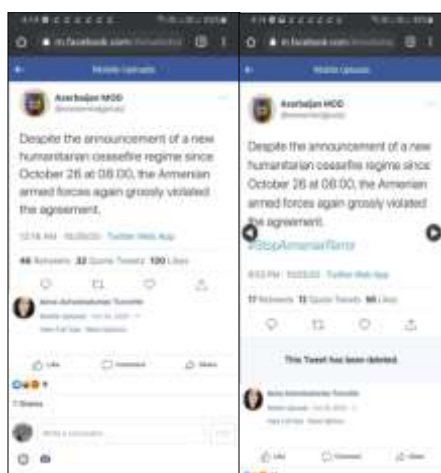
<sup>20</sup> D’Errico & Poggi 2012, 460–476. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12559-012-9175-y>

<sup>21</sup> Bityanova 2001.



possible to the accomplishment of their geopolitical revisionism<sup>22</sup> under the pretext of establishing stability in the region. The claim regarding the Azerbaijani provocation of the war, officially uttered by the French President Emmanuel Macron in a news conference during his visit to Latvia<sup>23</sup> was not accidental.

As Reuters reports, in Ilham Aliyev's words, the latter was not even planning to put an end to his military actions before Armenian forces were withdrawn from the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh<sup>24</sup>. Besides, the ceasefire agreed to in the United States on October 26 was also breached by Azerbaijan. However the announcement made by Azerbaijan MOD on twitter claimed: *"Despite the announcement of a new humanitarian ceasefire regime since October 26 at 08:00, the Armenian armed forces again grossly violated the agreement."* Strangely enough, the information about the ceasefire agreed to on October 26 was posted on October 25 at 9:02 PM by Azerbaijan MOD and shortly afterwards, the tweet was removed and re-posted on October 26 at 12:18 AM (see the screens below)<sup>25</sup>.



The screens are retrieved from a Facebook page.

<sup>22</sup> Azadian January 7, 2021. Retrieved 24.05.2021 from <https://mirrorspectator.com/2021/01/07/challenges-for-armenias-survival-in-a-new-geostrategic-configuration/>

<sup>23</sup> French President Emmanuel Macron blames Azerbaijan for starting conflict with Armenia. // Anadolu Ajansi, September 30, 2020. Retrieved 20.05.2021 from <https://eurasianimes.com/french-president-emmanuel-macron-blames-azerbaijan-for-starting-conflict-with-armenia/>

<sup>24</sup> Bagirova, Hovhannisyan October 4, 2020. Retrieved 24.05.2021 from <https://www.reuters.com/article/armenia-azerbaijan-idUSKBN26P098>

<sup>25</sup> Retrieved 20.04.2021 from <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=3280401265342656&set=pcb.3280401342009315>

This is a proof that the information about the ceasefire is just a fragment of the Azerbaijani manipulative strategy of putting the blame on others and victimizing themselves intentionally. Moreover, when the author announced that the Armenian armed forces launched an attack on residential settlements in Gyanja, he deliberately left out an important portion of factual information that had preceded the undesirable event, which was the warning of the President of Karabakh who called on the people of Azerbaijan to leave Gyanja and the **surrounding towns as soon as possible, because he couldn't stand aside and watch** his native land leveled to the ground<sup>26</sup>. Thus the responsibility for the situation lay on the military-political authorities of Azerbaijan.

Human Rights Columbia<sup>27</sup> published an article about the large-scale war against Karabakh unleashed by Azerbaijan, supported by Turkey, Syrian jihadists<sup>28</sup>, and heavy artillery and missiles from Israel<sup>29</sup>. The participation of Syrian jihadists in the war was also testified to by the Arab news which reported **the French President's strong denouncement of the provocative statements from** Turkey<sup>30</sup> which was doing everything in its power to prolong the war and satisfy its insatiable thirst for Armenian blood.

Thus, it can be assumed that the Azerbaijani trait of shrugging the responsibility from its shoulders, shared with their Turkish brothers is quite well known to the international community. **Ayaz Mirzayev's** false statement about the violation of the ceasefire by the Armenian side, in fact, attempts to vilify the Armenians and create a negative image of Armenia. Through intentional falsification of real facts and implementation of the manipulative technique of

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<sup>26</sup> Retrieved 04.10.2020 from <https://www.facebook.com/ArayikHarutyunian/posts/616555875708456>

<sup>27</sup> Gulesserian & Phillips 2020. Retrieved 20.05.2021 from <https://www.humanrightscolumbia.org/news/media-war-azerbaijan-and-turkey-against-armenia-and-nagorno-karabakh>

<sup>28</sup> Khadder, Tuysuz & Lister 2020. Retrieved 22.05.2021 from <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/01/iddleeast/azerbaijan-armenia-syrian-rebels-intl/index.html>

<sup>29</sup> Reports indicated Azerbaijan used the LORA missile, which was invented in Israel. Cf. Frantzman 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.jpost.com/international/missile-war-of-the-cities-in-armenia-and-azerbaijan-escalates-analysis-644526>

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Armenia-Azerbaijan clashes rage as **Macron denounces 'jihadist' deployment**. June 08, 2021. Retrieved 03.02.2021 from <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1743121/world>; Cf. also Armenia-Azerbaijan fighting rages as Macron says Turkey crossed 'red line'. Retrieved 03.02.2021 from <https://www.france24.com/en/20201002-armenia-azerbaijan-fighting-rages-as-macron-says-turkey-crossed-red-line>

blaming the opponent<sup>31</sup>, the author tries to mask the aggressive intents of Azerbaijani state policy and achieve the realization of his persuasive strategies.

The reporter intentionally leaves out the fact that the Azerbaijani side bombed a maternity hospital in Stepanakert, rather far from the conflict zone and the military bases, though according to the Geneva Convention (Article 19, p. 176)<sup>32</sup>, it is considered a war crime if any of the sides shells a hospital without warning unless expecting threatening acts from the hospital. Even if there were wounded soldiers in the hospital, it does not give the enemy the privilege of targeting it, as mentioned in the Convention. These inhumane behaviors and acts **are proof of Azerbaijan's hatred towards the Armenian nation and its religion**. This is further evidence of their brutal, cruel, vicious and atrocious nature. They stop at nothing and nobody; they bomb and shell anything without thought.

Another unpardonable act, targeting religion, culture and humanity at large is the shelling of the Ghazanchetsots Cathedral in Shushi, which has long been an indispensable spiritual and cultural component of the Christian traditions of the Armenians in Karabakh and the Armenians in general. And of no less import is the Azerbaijani political scientist Saadat Kadyrova's justification of this horrendous case, in her impudent attempt to compare the Christian Cathedral to a toilet, particularly against the background of her vain and contradictory announcement **that Shushi is a "holy land for Azerbaijan"**<sup>33</sup>. Folk wisdom is indeed very powerful **when it says: "Actions speak louder than words"**.

Hence, one can conclude that spreading reversed information is body and soul to Azerbaijani state policy. Even the facts of having attacked Nagorno-Karabakh with white phosphorus munitions, setting the Karabakh forests on fire and intentionally damaging both Armenian soldiers and civilians did not hold the Azerbaijani journalist back from reversing reality and turning the facts upside down. This seems outside logic and morality and confirms that in modern days

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<sup>31</sup> Simon 1996.

<sup>32</sup> The Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva, pp.153-221. Retrieved from [https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.33\\_GC-IV-EN.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Political scientist Saadat Kadyrova justified the shelling of the Shushi Cathedral where Russian journalists were wounded October 9, 2020. Retrieved 16.10.2020 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xox3PTSROEs>

political interests and moral positions are concepts from two opposite poles, for cynical political considerations have utterly no relation with morality<sup>34</sup>.

*The Realization of Manipulative Tactics through Linguistic Elements*

It has long been established that an attitude towards a represented object of discussion is accomplished through the choice and arrangement of linguistic elements at large, first and foremost the lexical ones. The study of the article in question reveals the use of a diversity of words and word-combinations based on the negative value and aimed at demonizing the Armenians and Armenia, albeit **the “truthfulness” conveyed through those elements is far from being true.** Obviously, the abundant use of elements like *policy of aggression, provocations of the terrorist state, threats and pressure of Armenia, stifle freedom of speech, military provocation against Azerbaijan, policy of illegal resettlement, destructive actions of the Armenian government, launch a missile attack, banned weapons, war crimes, etc.* is quite openly and directly meant to persuade the international community that **Armenia’s behavior is completely unacceptable and can never be pardoned.** The author believes that denigrating Armenians and creating the image of an Armenian in the most negative light will help him indirectly delineate the portrait of a peaceful and civilized Azerbaijan and the patriotic but unjustly victimized Azerbaijanis.

A close look into both the denotative and connotative meanings in the semantic structure of the words included in the word-combinations mentioned above helps to reveal connotations of disapproval, contempt, reproach, disparagement, blame<sup>35</sup> which create an obviously negative environment in the discourse, expressing negative emotions and hostile attitudes. The derogatory value of these linguistic units is meant to make a manipulative influence on the perception of the reader and to present the image of Armenia in densely negative colours.

Thus, all these combinations of words loaded with negative expressive-emotional-evaluative overtones and based on the underlying concept of aggression which the author seeks to impose on the Armenian side are particularly intensified not only in the co-text of the given piece of condemning speech but also the

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Auron 2003; Gasparyan 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Kozhina et al. 2008.

context of the war at large. It can be assumed that this aggression verbally expressed in the speech of the Azerbaijani journalist is in fact “the mirrored image” of his country’s blatant acts of physical aggression against Karabakh and Armenia.

The arsenal of the author’s manipulative tactics is rich, and he doesn’t even take the trouble to conceal it. He is rather direct and explicit in reversing the facts, the situations, the behaviors, etc. However, one wonders if his attempt to implement his manipulative strategy in the discourse can be considered successful. Both his logical and ethical appeals fail, and it is doubtful that his fabricated story can arouse the anticipated reactions and emotions in his readers. **The author’s strategy** of persuasion and the intended manipulative effect is not achieved because the content he proposes is deliberately and insensitively falsified.

#### *Conclusion*

It is beyond doubt that the role of media is paramount in engaging audiences and enhancing communication internationally. The creation of the objective picture of reality is achieved through logical reasoning, though when the **speaker’s intention is to misrepresent reality to gain advantage in dishonest political goals** he may be carried away by his lies and turn everything upside down, falsify facts and situations so obviously that the results attained will **contradict the established principle of covertly manipulating the reader’s ability of logical reasoning**, for as we know, effective manipulation becomes available when the reader/hearer does not recognize the intentions of the speaker to influence him.

This case-study, representing the Azerbaijani Journalists’ Network Public Union head Ayaz Mirzayev’s interpretation of the recent war between Azerbaijan and Karabakh, reveals the variety of manipulative tactics and techniques (reversion of reality, lying by omission of important facts, self-victimization, blaming the opponent) implemented in his speech to support Azerbaijan’s desire to realize their historically unsatisfied dream, instigated by Turkey, which tends to gain the role of a great player in the geopolitical transformation of Transcaucasia.

The research shows that whatever intentional fabrications and reversions may occur, particularly when they are not skillfully hidden, the expected effect will not be successfully achieved.

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## ՎԵՐՋԻՆ ՂԱՐԱԲԱՂՅԱՆ ՊԱՏԵՐԱԶՄԸ. ՇԱՀԵՐԻ ԲԱԽՈՒՄ

ԳԱՍՊԱՐՅԱՆ Ս., ՀԱՅՐԱՊԵՏՅԱՆ Զ.

### Ամփոփում

**Քանալի բառեր**՝ մեդիադիսկուրս, հայ-ադրբեջանական հակամարտություն, Ղարաբաղի (Արցախի) հարցը, մտաշահարկման ռազմավարություն, մտաշահարկային մարտավարություն, ազդեցություն լսարանի վրա, փաստերի աղավաղում:



Այս կամ այն տեսակետը հասցեատիրոջը պարտադրելու մեծ տարածում ունեցող միտումը այսօր արդեն նկատելի է հաղորդակցության գրեթե բոլոր ոլորտներում, այդ թվում՝ լրատվամիջոցներում, և վերջին տարիներին իրականացված քննական ուսումնասիրությունների արդյունքները թույլ են տալիս ենթադրել, որ լրատվամիջոցները տեղեկատվության յուրօրինակ խողովակ են: Դրանք աշխարհում տեղի ունեցող նշանակալի իրադարձությունների մասին տեղեկատվություն հաղորդելով հանդերձ՝ մտաշահարկման (*manipulation*) տարբեր մեթոդների կիրառմամբ հաճախ խեղաթյուրում են փոխանցվող տեղեկատվության ընկալումը, նպատակադրվելով վերահսկել հասարակական կարծիքը:

Սույն հոդվածը կոչված է բացահայտելու ղարաբաղյան հակամարտության և 2020 թ. Լեռնային Ղարաբաղի ու նրա հայ բնակչության դեմ սանձազերծված ագրեսիայի վերաբերյալ ադրբեջանական լրագրողական մեկնաբանությունների անիրական ու հորինովի բնույթը: Մտաշահարկման և տարաբնույթ մտաշահարկային մարտավարությունների կիրառմամբ, ապարդյուն ջանքեր են գործադրվում Հայաստանի և հայ ժողովրդի իբր, ագրեսիվության գաղափարը քարոզելու և թուրք-ադրբեջանական իրական նկրտումները քողարկելու համար:

## ПОСЛЕДНЯЯ АРЦАХСКАЯ ВОЙНА: СТОЛКНОВЕНИЕ ИНТЕРЕСОВ

ГАСПАРЯН С., АЙРАПЕТЯН З.

### Резюме

**Ключевые слова:** медиадискурс, армяно-азербайджанский конфликт, вопрос Арцаха, стратегия манипуляции, манипулятивные тактики, влияние на аудиторию, искажение фактов.

Навязывание определенного взгляда на ту или иную проблему сегодня наблюдается практически во всех сферах коммуникации, в том числе и в СМИ. Данные проведенных за последние годы исследований позволяют предположить, что СМИ – это особый канал информации, который может не только информировать общественность о значимых событиях в мире,

но и, искажая толкование этих событий, контролировать общественное мнение посредством различных манипулятивных приемов.

Настоящая статья преследует цель представить ложные измышления и комментарии по карабахскому конфликту и войне 2020 года, нашедшие место в азербайджанских СМИ. Объектом исследования являются неточность и ошибочность фактов, основанных на журналистской интерпретации агрессивной войны, недавно развязанной против Нагорного Карабаха и его армянского населения. Используя различные манипулятивные тактики, азербайджанские массмедиа тщетно пытаются пропагандировать идею агрессии Армении и армянского народа, скрывая истинные турецко-азербайджанские устремления.