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PRISTRASNOST MODERNIH MEDIJA: SFL PRISTUP

MASTER RAD

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MODERN MEDIA BIAS: AN SFL APPROACH
MASTER THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This master's thesis uses a combined approach of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine media bias in modern news reports, with a special focus on Western media, especially American sources. Investigating the linguistic means by which bias is achieved, the study categorizes the analyzed examples by types of bias, and by their ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. The examples that define the theoretical framework of the paper are taken from reports on various developments in the sphere of contemporary politics. For a comprehensive analysis as part of the conducted research on the presence of bias, 30 articles were selected on a unique topic: the withdrawal of US military forces from Afghanistan.

Key words: modern media bias, systemic functional linguistics (SFL), critical discourse analysis (CDA), linguistic strategies, political discourse

SAŽETAK

Ovaj magistarski rad koristi kombinovani pristup sistemske funkcionalne lingvistike (SFL) i kritičke analize diskursa (CDA) kako bi ispitaio pristrasnost medija u modernim novinskim izvještajima, s posebnim fokusom na zapadne medije, posebno američke izvore. Istražujući lingvistička sredstva kojima se postiže pristrasnost, ovaj rad nastoji da kategoriše analizirane primjere po vrstama pristrasnosti, te po tri tipa metafunkcija (*ideational*, *interpersonal*, *textual*). Primjeri koji definišu teorijski okvir rada preuzeti su iz izvještaja o različitim dešavanjima u sferi savremene politike. Za sveobuhvatnu analizu u sklopu sprovedenog istraživanja o prisutnosti pristrasnosti, odabrano je 30 članaka o jedinstvenoj temi: povlačenje američkih vojnih snaga iz Avganistana.

Ključne riječi: moderna medijska pristrasnost, sistemska funkcionalna lingvistika (SFL), kritička analiza diskursa (CDA), lingvističke strategije, politički diskurs

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1. INTRODUCTION

Media bias is a crucial topic of today's society because of how significantly it can affect an individual's view of the world as well as move the masses. Biased media portray information in an untruthful or misleading manner, which may cause people to form false beliefs about important problems, resulting in a variety of detrimental effects.

Among these effects is the loss of trust, as people will be less likely to trust the information provided if they believe the sources are biased. The heavy propagation of misinformation makes it challenging to distinguish between truth and opinion, leading people to believe falsehoods, and more or less directly causing a polarization of public opinion. Even in the most evolved era of humanity, the media participates in the phenomenon of yet again dividing human society, usually according to liberal or conservative standpoints and the adherence to a specific political party or other segregated groups.

There are different ways to identify the presence of bias in the media that we consume. Among some are the consideration of sources and the presence or lack of evidence given. Most people do, however, carry their own biases. Media-consuming adults likely have already formed opinions and morals they stand by, which poses no problem so long as they are aware of them and avoid being heavily influenced by them.

Linguistic analysis is an objective approach to this modern-day problem, as will be exemplified through the use of SFL¹ and CDA² in this paper. The strongest clue towards the bias of an author or publication is the language they use in their stories. A few notable examples of this that are fairly common and easy to spot are the use of overly positive or negative adjectives when trying to present something in a different light, and the avoidance of direct pronouns in an attempt to mask someone's agency in an event.

By becoming more aware of media bias and the different ways it can be identified, consumers can become more critical of the information that they digest daily and this enables them to then make better-informed decisions in the actions they take. Changing the world very nearly cannot be an individual effort, and yet the manipulation of a large number of people can easily be produced

¹ Systemic Functional Linguistics; will be used interchangeably with the abbreviation throughout the text.

² Critical Discourse Analysis; will be used interchangeably with the abbreviation throughout the document.

through a singular news outlet. In staying up to date with current events and changes that are happening all around us, people could benefit more by further evolving critical thought and one of the ways this can be achieved is through valuing language through which everything is communicated. Words are not only the media's tool to work around the people they sell to, they can also be the consumers' tool and a way of understanding what the presented material truly is.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The research questions and objectives that will be addressed in this paper are related to how media bias is achieved in contemporary newspapers and media outlets using various linguistic devices. The findings and hypotheses will be explained and exemplified throughout the paper and the main process of analysis will move through SFL and CDA as complementary means of analysis with topics of this nature. This phenomenon will be researched through sources originally published in English.

➤ Assessing Media Bias in Modern Newspapers and Media Outlets

Objective: To investigate how media bias manifests itself in contemporary newspapers and media outlets.

In the rapidly evolving landscape of media, it is essential to comprehend the mechanisms behind media bias and how it influences public discourse. This research aims to explore the various linguistic devices used to create media bias in contemporary media sources published in English.

➤ Identifying Linguistic Devices for Achieving Media Bias

Objective: To analyze and show examples of linguistic devices employed in creating media bias.

This study will delve into the linguistic aspects of media bias, providing examples to illustrate how language is used to sway public opinion. By identifying and showcasing these devices, the research seeks to provide a tangible understanding of their impact on media content.

➤ Examining the Presence of Media Bias in Western Media

Objective: To determine the prevalence of different types of media bias and the linguistic devices employed in Western media.

The Western media landscape, particularly American media sources, offers a rich environment for studying media bias due to its significant political polarization. A special emphasis will be placed on the inclusion of examples from the entire spectrum of political

perspectives present in the US, from the radical right and the radical left towards the more lenient inclinations and the supposed neutral center as defined in most part by AllSides³, in consultation with other reputable bias markers.

³ AllSides™ is a media technology and solutions company that strengthens our democratic society with balanced news, media bias ratings, diverse perspectives, and real conversation. (AllSides, n.d.)

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Understanding Media Bias

In today's society, the omnipresence of news has become an integral part of our daily lives. From the moment we wake up in the morning, throughout our workday, and until we go to sleep at night, we find ourselves enveloped by a constant flow of information. However, it is important to note that this stream of news, although it is supposed to be focused on reporting facts, often takes on different forms when spread through various news outlets. Discrepancies appear in wording and are discernible from the way the information is selected and presented. Beyond simply conveying facts, news often comes with opinions, beliefs, and ideologies attached.

When news coverage exhibits a discernible slant, departing from a strictly factual and impartial reporting style, it is likely to be biased. It is important to underscore that media bias can take many forms. Sometimes it presents itself overtly, with two distinct and opposing perspectives on a given story. At other times, however, the bias operates in a more subtle manner, shaping the narrative without directly expressing a partisan stance.

It is paramount to distinguish between media bias and the deliberate spreading of false or harmful information.

Journalists, nevertheless, often feel compelled to try to prove that they are “unbiased.”

(Dean, 2023)

Journalists and readers alike are prone to unintentionally spread wrong information or fake news, and there are examples of media bias that is passed on actively but is not motivated by malicious intent. Similarly, the act of spreading inaccurate information does not necessarily entail a bias. For these reasons in particular, the ability to discern and recognize media bias is of great importance, as it directly influences one's perception of the topics discussed.

In this context, cultivating a critical approach to news consumption becomes imperative. It reminds people to scrutinize news sources and content, as well as acknowledge that media bias, whether overt or subtle, can significantly shape one's understanding of the world. Therefore, the imperative to engage with news in a discerning and analytical manner remains central in our information-rich age.

3.2. Types of Media Bias

Listed below is the set that is estimated to be the most suitable for consideration as part of the critical discourse analysis intended for this paper. Furthermore, this list is fully compatible with the scope of the research topic, for which political discourse was chosen, or more specifically discourses of war. (Machin & Leeuwen, 2007)

In their paper documenting media bias, Raymond and Taylor (2020) note that media bias is researched and measured mainly in comparison. For instance, the liberal slant of The New York Times is significantly easier to ascertain when in relation to the general tone and inclinations of Fox News, since both newspaper companies are on opposing sides of the spectrum between the liberal and radical political spheres. It is significantly more difficult to track and evaluate levels of bias about the actual truth, and even to track stories down to the original sources and publications due to how filtered the news media scene is. That being noted, the systemic research in the sixth chapter⁴ of this paper is concerned with the way in which the coverage of the event and its aftermath were presented in different newspapers in relation to one another, not their reality. The following list is adapted for the purposes of this paper⁵ and will be referenced in the research conducted on the reporting of America's longest war to date⁶.

3.2. (a) Spin and slant: Framing a story in a way that emphasizes certain facts or viewpoints while downplaying others. This can be done with selective sourcing, selective framing, and the use of loaded language. This type of media bias in politics dates back to the time when Theodore Roosevelt was the president of the USA, as he was one of the first American presidents who practiced an active media discourse between the head of the state and the wider public. (Miller Center) He upgraded the White House press house and held informal conferences, toured the country to promote new legislations, monitored photographers at events to get the best front pages, and even staged publicity stunts. Owing to his success came the age where presidents would follow this trend, engaging in opinion management and publicity work, known otherwise as spinning favorites.

⁴ The title of the section is "Withdrawal of U.S. Troops From Afghanistan: Deep Dive" and it starts on page 28.

⁵ Originally compiled at allsides.com, titled *How to Spot 16 Types of Media Bias*.

⁶ Currently, the armed conflict between organized U.S. military forces and organized forces of belligerents that has the longest duration is the War in Afghanistan, which ended in 2021, having been active for 19 years and 10 months, and surpassing the previous record duration of 19 years and 5 five months amassed during the Vietnam War.

Presenting information in a way that favors one perspective or ideology is often done subtly or through framing choices. While covering political campaigns, news outlets have to make many choices, to frame events in a particular way, to highlight one thing and push another out of the limelight, as well as to portray candidates in different ways. All of these choices affect the voters' behaviour directly and can completely change the way people think, depending on how much credibility the sources are entitled to. (Druckman & Parkin, 2005)

While researching examples in modern news media, one will very quickly find that the concepts of spin and slant are very interwoven with one another. It is not uncommon that only one or the other is listed in overviews of bias subtypes, considering the similarities and definitions of the two across diverse approaches, as discussed by various authors who have dealt with the prospect of media bias and/or the linguistic devices behind it. For instance, spinning a story involves deriving something new and preferable for the author's needs from the knowledge obtained, and slanting the story would also mean it is made to lean more one way, which the author is inclined towards. In light of these shared characteristics, this research paper opts to categorize them together as a unified subcategory of media bias. Although it is to be noted that the original listing that sparked the idea for this very exploration is longer, and gives each a separate feature and description.

If a distinction was really to be made, the research conducted for the purposes of this paper would point to the following: the bias in news reports actually comes from the authors themselves, spin is the linguistic craftsmanship behind it all and slant is the overarching notion. Spin is borne through the composition of a text and what is written in itself, while the notion of slant determines an article's overall meaning and tone. Therefore, slant is not unlike the original division of left-leaning and right-leaning characterizations of modern American media, except for the fact that it is applicable outside this particular framework as an indicator of whether the presentation is impartial or exhibits directional bias.

The analysis of the examples below further divulges the strategy behind this modern media scheme:

Beyond helping small businesses stay afloat, the Biden economic agenda has also helped drive an unprecedented surge in entrepreneurship. Just this week, new data show that over the last two years, Americans have applied to start 10.5 million new businesses, the strongest two years on record. (WH Briefing Room, 2023)

In this excerpt, the positive language (i.e. “unprecedented surge”) is a form of spin that presents the information in a way that favors the perspective of the current president, suggesting that the economic policies of the acting government are solely responsible for the positive outcome, although it could have been a culmination of years’ worth of combined efforts.

The language used is declarative, factual, and sequential in presenting information, and at the same time loaded with innuendos. Looking at it through the lens of a systemic analysis can offer helpful insight into why this is so and exactly why every single word is a choice. The prepositional phrase and its verbal group complementation “beyond helping small business stay afloat” are made thematic to place focus on the achievements the economic agenda has already realized. All of the premodifiers in keyword noun groups are of a positive tone and what people are looking forward to seeing in a text like this: *small businesses > unprecedented surge, new data > strongest years on record*. The definite and recent time frame and numbers mentioned are meant to prove claims and add to the credibility (just this week, last two years, 10.5 million new businesses).



Figure 1: from *Environmental Entrepreneurs*

Biden SOTU Marks “Game-Changing” Moment For Clean Energy Policies As Focus Shifts To Implementation (E2, 2023)

In the headline above the loaded premodifier “game-changing” comes as the first device to achieve a positive spin on the decisions and actions the current government is making. It is the lead-in to a post that makes it seem as if everything before the State of the Union address in question were empty words and promises, and that this is the first time that any attempts at implementation are being made. The moment is so “game-changing” because the focus has *finally* shifted to putting these policies into practice.

Singh '24: Nikki Haley's attempt to transcend race is a major setback for Indian Americans in politics

“Haley has spent years distancing herself from her Indian background in order to fit in with her conservative allies who — let's face it — couldn't care less about her ethnicity or experiences as a person of color.”

Figure 2: from The Brown Daily Herald

This thinly veiled attempt to appeal to the racist undertones of today's Republican Party is part of Haley's effort to fit in with a political base that struggles to engage with nuance on issues of identity. (Singh, 2023)

The phrase functioning as the Theme here is heavy with modifiers that suggest that the action is insincere or deceitful (thinly veiled, racist). Referring to the “racist undertones” of the Republican Party assumes a negative characteristic about the party as a whole, potentially oversimplifying a complex political climate. The verbal groups mainly feature material and relational processes, that leave a sense of something unfinished/incomplete, because they have been grouped around strong NP heads that carry these attributes as well: *attempt to appeal, is part of, effort to fit in, issues of identity*. Overall, these lines encourage assuming an unfavorable perspective on Nikki Haley's actions, slanting the image of the events so that she is presented as someone who is striving for things that are far beyond her.

Capitol Police Officer Dies From Injuries in Pro-Trump Rampage

The death of the officer, Brian D. Sicknick, appeared likely to lead to calls for profound changes to the Capitol Police, a centuries-old force.



Share full article



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Figure 3: from *The New York Times*

Capitol Police Officer Dies From Injuries in Pro-Trump Rampage

(Santora, Specia, & Baker, 2021)

The modifier “Pro-Trump” introduces a potential bias by associating the rampage with a political affiliation. It may imply that the actions were driven by a particular political ideology, and the use of the term “rampage” suggests a violent attack. The choice of words is deliberate and meant to influence readers’ perceptions of the incident. This can be categorized as heavy slant due to its connection of the event to a specific political group, even going so far as to create a false belief that someone was the victim of an attack and possibly killed when, according to the official statement of the United States Capitol Police (USCP), the person died of natural causes. This example illustrates how quickly simple bias and an attempt to malign the Republican Party turned into misinforming the wider public.

3.2. (b) Unsubstantiated Claims: Spreading statements or allegations without providing credible evidence to support them. (ACAP, 2022) Claims of ‘serious voter fraud’ in the 2016 U.S. election are an example of the creation of this type of bias in the media.



Figure 4: from Twitter

In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally. (Trump, Twitter, 2016)

Despite having won the election, the then-president of the United States, Donald Trump, insisted that he would have won the popularity vote as well had there not been serious voting fraud at work. There were no sources cited for these claims, nor were statistics and evidence presented. Trump went on to single out certain states as the catchment areas for the problematic votes:



Figure 5: from Twitter

Serious voter fraud in Virginia, New Hampshire and California - so why isn't the media reporting on this? Serious bias - big problem! (Trump, Twitter, 2016)

Although the ex-president was likely presented certain data by a team of analysts, none of it

was shared with the public, thus making his claims unsubstantiated and seemingly indignant. The medium through which Donald Trump expressed his dissatisfaction is a social media platform that enables its users freedom of speech, and everything written by its users and published on Twitter, Inc. (now succeeded by X Corp.) is attributed exclusively to the user as personal opinion. So all of the claims featured in these posts become significantly more problematic when they are reported in the news as the actual state of electoral proceedings.

It is not unusual for opposing parties to call each other out for fraudulent votes during elections, so this trend continued four years later in a similar fashion to no one's surprise. During the 2020 presidential election in the United States, Donald Trump was insistent on claiming fake votes were being accumulated through mail-in ballots, and he named different places as the hot spots of such actions without actual evidence backing the claims.



Figure 6: from Twitter



Figure 7: from Twitter

Corresponding news reports filled with similar statements are to be treated entirely different, however. Personal bias is specific to exactly one person, but corporate media bias is not exclusive; on the contrary, it aims to include as many people as possible in its following, to impress them, to convince them, and ultimately use them, which is why passive reading is dangerous. Cited below are examples of how unsubstantiated claims on this same topic have been presented in the news:



Figure 8: from New York Post

Fox News host Tucker Carlson on Wednesday identified dozens of dead people who cast ballots in this year's presidential election, pointing to a push in some states to mass-mail ballots to all registered voters automatically.

Slamming the media for failing to report on such voting irregularities, calling it a “media blackout,” Carlson listed more than 25 people who voted from beyond the grave just in states where President Trump is currently challenging the vote count. (Bowden, 2020)

Despite the reports coming in with corroborating verb phrases (i.e. “*identified dozens*”, “*listed more than 25 people*”, “*called on a media black out*”), it was later found that the numbers cited were not accurate and that the actually questionable votes were unrelated to the people mentioned in the above listings. Fox News was even faced with defamation lawsuits⁷ for these and similar reports, and their hosts have been documented giving per contra accounts of the stories about election fraud they had reported in 2020.

⁷ Dominion Voting Systems v. Fox News Network (colloq. Dominion v. Fox) defamation lawsuit from March 2021 on the account of libel, defamation and intentional malice; ended in 2023 via settlement in the amount of \$787.5 million. (Wikipedia, 2023)

The reports in question did, however, serve their purpose at the time of posting. They were intended to find sympathy with the readers in those moments when everything was still very fresh, and it could have been spoken about in the present tense. The circumstantial adjuncts are almost entirely related to the present tense in 90% of news articles that reported the investigation of fake votes. The reports that followed up were mainly dispelling these claims with facts and tangible evidence, and had in doing so no need to focus on how current the challenging of a vote count was or on the outcome of the election itself.

Mail-In Ballots Are a Recipe for Confusion, Coercion, and Fraud



Figure 9: from National Review

So, naturally, Democrats are pushing to have them sent to every voter — or ‘voter.’

...

liberals see a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to sweep away the current system. (Fund, 2020)

In this article from National Review an unsubstantiated claim is made in the very title of the article, which is given in the present tense as a fact. From the first lines of the article a negative view of Democrats and liberals is implied; the noun *voter* is repeated under quotation marks suggesting skepticism towards the legitimacy and sincerity of those receiving voting slips. The use of the term “naturally” introduces a subjective perspective, meaning that the author of the article expects or assumes these actions are to follow. This type of subjectivity is standard for private or

personal posts on social media, as seen in the examples of Donald Trump’s posts⁸ earlier in this section. It is not, however, the standard for official reports on current events, and does not adhere to the neutrality that is desirable in newspaper accounts. Following this, the tone of the article does not change, and remains loaded with subjective evaluations of liberals’ intentions, e.g. “liberals see a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity”.



'Twitter Files' Show Platform Helped Biden Win in 2020; GOP Vows to Investigate, Trump Calls for a Re-Do

Figure 10: from CBN News

The so-called “Twitter Files” released by new CEO Elon Musk show that just days before the 2020 presidential election, the Biden campaign demanded that Twitter scrub information critical of Joe Biden and his son Hunter from the site, and it did. (Hurd, 2022)

In this example, it is shown again, how credibility can be challenged by the use of quotation marks with supposedly suspicious items, and even by means of using *so-called* as a premodification for the files in question, despite of how heavy it is with innuendos of the their false accuracy. The article provides a follow up to these subjective remarks, through the verb group “demanded that Twitter scrub...from the site” suggesting a strong one-sided action by the Biden campaign, and potentially framing them in a negative light. The conclusive statement “and it did” simplifies what is essentially a complex situation, oversimplifying the actions taken by Twitter as a company and implying their compliance in covering up information.

⁸ Refer to figures 4, 5, 6 and 7, pages 12-14.

3.2. (c) Opinion Statements Presented as Facts: Presenting subjective opinions as if they were objective facts, blurring the line between reporting and commentary.

Pew Research Center conducted a study in 2018 to see how well Americans could distinguish facts and opinion statements. Only 26% out of 5,000 participants properly identified all five factual statements and only 35% of adults correctly identified all five opinion statements. The research also showed that both the Republicans and Democrats were more likely to believe opinion-heavy reports when they supported their viewpoint. (Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel, & Sumida, 2018)



Follow the science on the Trump tax cuts: Steve Moore

Economic experts Art Laffer and Steve Moore weigh in on extending the Trump tax cuts on 'Kudlow.'

If Congress does absolutely nothing – which is what Congress is best at doing – then pretty much every American is going to be paying higher taxes. Rich or poor, your tax bill is going up – and economic growth will decrease – when the non-permanent provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 expire at the end of 2025.

Figure 11: from Fox Business

The sunset of the Trump tax cuts will cast darkness on the economy
(Gonzales, 2023)

There is nothing factual about the metaphorical expression likening tax cuts to an eclipse: it is just colorful language being used to attract attention to what is essential only an opinion on a matter. The commentary segments featured in this example, (“If Congress does absolutely nothing - which is what Congress is best at doing...”) directly translate as opinion presenting itself as fact.

There is a certainty in the tone, it is said in the present tense, as if truly factual, and yet it is as much as the next words from the imagination and convictions of the author.

Are Covid Vaccines Riskier Than Advertised?

There are concerning trends on blood clots and low platelets, not that the authorities will tell you.

By Joseph A. Ladapo and Harvey A. Risch

June 22, 2021 1:09 pm ET

Figure 12: From The Wall Street Journal

Some scientists have raised concerns that the safety risks of Covid-19 vaccines have been underestimated. But the politics of vaccination has relegated their concerns to the outskirts of scientific thinking—for now.

... Nonetheless, the large clustering of certain adverse events immediately after vaccination is concerning, and the silence around these potential signals of harm reflects the politics surrounding Covid-19 vaccines.

...

And while you would never know it from listening to public-health officials, not a single published study has demonstrated that patients with a prior infection benefit from Covid-19 vaccination. (Ladapo & Risch, 2021)

If there is a comment in the subhead (e.g. “*not that the authorities will tell you*”), or opening lines to articles of this nature in general, it is most likely a sign of opinionated storytelling that follows. Direct sourcing of information is avoided, as it becomes clear throughout the read that the author reaches for determiners that specify no exact quantities and that they also rarely name the informants. Among the final lines of the article quoted above, the author chooses to zero in on the number of published studies on the vaccines’ potential side effects, claiming that there

are *none*. In over two years that passed between the start of the pandemic and the publishing of this article many questions were raised on the safety of the measures people were to undertake in combating the virus, so writing that *not a single* study was published, shows a lack of acknowledgment on the author's part. The author makes specific choices that introduce a narrative of struggling for scientific honesty and imply a lack of transparency, suggesting a flaw in the approach to information distribution.

3.2. (d) Sensationalism/Emotionalism: Prioritizing dramatic or emotional aspects of a story to capture attention, potentially at the expense of accuracy or objectivity. Media reports that exhibit this type of bias often give readers a false sense that a huge story has reached its climax, most commonly due to the shock value of the article headlines. Sensationalist bias frequently uses dramatic but vague language, hyperbolizes events and situations, and decontextualizes entire sentences in order to provoke the readers. Not uncommonly, emotionally loaded sensationalist titles can be found in headlines that are marked as “breaking” or “breaking news”, in view of the fact that this is no longer reserved for actually important and largely impactful reports and has instead become a tool to draw attention strategically. (Anti-Defamation League, 2022)



Figure 13: from the Intelligencer

This Time, the Craziest Election Doesn't Have Trump (Debenedetti, 2021)



North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un (L) guiding Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu (R) to the banquet hall (Image: KCNA VIA KNS/AFP via Getty Image)

NEWS POLITICS FOOTBALL CELEBS TV CHOICE ROYALS

Kim Jong-un's HUGE portraits of Vladimir Putin revealed in bizarre tour

Photos released by state media showed North Korean leader Kim Jong-un giving a Russian minister a tour of a plush official building with walls plastered with portraits of warmonger Vladimir Putin

Figure 14: from The Mirror

Kim Jong-un's HUGE portraits of Vladimir Putin revealed in bizarre tour (Hagan, 2023)

“The craziest election”, “a circus”, “huge portraits of Putin”, “Kim Jong-un’s bizarre tour”, are all overdramatized retellings of events that serve as examples of sensationalism. Attention is drawn to the names of famous world leaders and the peculiar adjective phrases used in the premodifications in the headlines. Even though this paper advocates neutrality in reporting, and this research is meant to examine the amount of bias that is present in the modern media, it is also worth noting that biased titles often sell well because people are interested in all things scandalous and unexpected. Many people will be drawn more towards some alarmist headline than a boring but factual one.

3.2. (e) Mudslinging/Ad Hominem: Attacking a person's character or reputation rather than addressing the substance of their arguments or claims. These tactics can be used overtly or as a way to subtly discredit someone, without engaging in their argument. (Mastrine, 2022)

Mudslinging is known as the strategy behind name-calling in politics and the other name for it, *ad hominem*, comes from the Latin expression, *argumentum ad hominem*, which can refer in itself to several types of arguments, most of which are fallacious, however.

Betrayal: The Final Act of the Trump Show by Jonathan Karl review – a tyrant's last stand



📷 Donald Trump: 'An existential fraud who admits his unease by referring to himself in the third person.' Photograph: Stephen Zenner/AFP/Getty

The ABC News correspondent offers a sobering glimpse of a man unfit to govern and the chaos wreaked by an ego unable to grasp its own ineptitude

Most viewed

Figure 15: from *The Guardian*

Betrayal: The Final Act of the Trump Show by Jonathan Karl review – a tyrant's last stand
(Conrad, 2021)

The headline announces a betrayal and talks of an ex-president's actions as if real life were a mere theater play and he was assigned the role of a tyrant ruler. Very strong negative noun heads draw attention to the person that is being scrutinized, and the consequences of their negative personal characteristics, such as the supposed *chaos* that has been created by an *inept ego* of a *man unfit to rule*.

How do Trump's extraordinary betrayals stand up against history? He could be the worst.

Putting Trump in context is the best way to highlight and understand his betrayals. History is the highest court, and its verdict can't be appealed.

Figure 16: from USA Today

How do Trump's extraordinary betrayals stand up against history? He could be the worst.

(Rothkopf, 2020)

Another example of a report written by means of similar tactics is featured above. Hyperbolising premodifiers (e.g. *extraordinary betrayals*, *great betrayer*) are used to draw attention to personal characteristics, and in this very case the superlative that has been used to mark Trump's person puts him at the very top of the scale according to how bad he was for America's history.

3.2. (f) Mind Reading: Imputing motives or intentions to individuals or groups without concrete evidence. This type of media bias occurs in journalism when a journalist presumes that they know what another person thinks, feels, or intends, without ever receiving any information directly from the source. The coverage of political stories is riddled with this bias variety, due to how often the writers make assumptions about the motives and intentions of politicians. This, however, can result in misinformation and falsehoods being reported very easily, given that many news sources relay stories from others. (Rodrigo-Ginés, Carrillo-de-Albornoz, & Plaza, 2023)



Tucker Carlson: Democrats are running on denial

Figure 17: from Fox News

There may be people out there who feel sorry for Joe Biden, but there's absolutely nobody who thinks or can argue with a straight face that he's doing a good job because he's not.

(Carlson, 2022)

The clause “there’s absolutely nobody who thinks or can argue...” is a gross generalization on the reporter’s part, making it an opinion presented as a fact. The following statements about President Biden not doing a good job in his duties are framed as absolute facts about his performance as well, without any specific criteria or evaluations that would grant them viability.

Netanyahu and Trump: two desperate men exploiting power to save themselves

Israeli PM growing increasingly Trumplike in willingness to turn a personal crisis into a national one to stay in power and out of jail



📷 Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu shaking hands in Jerusalem in 2017. Photograph: Ronen Zvulun/Reuters

Figure 18: from The Guardian

Netanyahu and Trump: two desperate men exploiting power to save themselves

... But as much as many Israelis liked Trump, few foresaw the extent to which their own prime minister would prove as willing to turn a personal crisis into a national one in order to save his own skin. (McGreal, 2023)

The characterization of Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump through the noun phrase “two desperate men exploiting power” is another example of an evaluative statement which conveys a subjective opinion rather than objective fact. Furthermore, in the following sentence Netanyahu's actions are portrayed as self-serving without providing evidence; notably expressed in the noun phrase headed by “the extent”: *the extent to which their own prime minister would prove as willing to turn a personal crisis into a national one in order to save his own skin.*

3.3. Linguistic Strategies for Achieving Media Bias

3.3. (a) Use of adjectives: Using certain adjectives can create a positive or negative impression of a person or entity. Words like “amazing”, “wonderful” or “brilliant” are associated with positive impressions, while words like “awful”, “horrid” or “terrible” are associated with negativity. Similarly, words like “shocking”, “controversial”, or “problematic” can be used to create a negative impression.

Several examples of negative adjectives commonly used in newspaper articles to create bias are:

➤ **Describing a political candidate or party**

*America even at her lowest point can always count on **Crooked** Hillary Clinton to provide some unintentional hilarity.* (Linebarger, 2023)

In the example above, it is fairly obvious that the author of the article not only comments on a politician’s actions with bias, they also mock their person by creating puns with the name Hillary and the noun hilarity.

*Chronic ills—a **corrupt** political class, a sclerotic bureaucracy, a heartless economy, a divided and distracted public—had gone untreated for years.* (Munday, 2020)

In the second example, the usual way of referring to the ruling political class as corrupt is strengthened with the appearance of more adjectives that help portray it as crippled and incapable.

Disgraceful: Kamala Harris’ Attack Against Florida’s Slavery Curriculum is Brazenly Dishonest (Benson, 2023)

➤ **Describing a policy decision or action**

*How the Tories broke Britain with their **reckless** Brexit gamble* (Burnside, 2023)

*Mexico’s **Misguided** Lawsuit against American Gun Companies* (Keane, 2021)

Shock value titles don’t always go hand in hand with quality retellings of events; moreover, the use of adjectives such as the ones exemplified often signals that the rest of the report will be of the same subjective tone.

*Poor management practices and **inexperienced** leaders led to FTX’s implosion* (Lang, 2022)

This is yet another example of playing into an interesting eye-catching title, where the author is citing somebody else's words; but instead of choosing to point out that this is a direct quote, they made it a matter-of-fact article title.

➤ **Describing a political figure or decision maker**

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy — ringmaster of the GOP's impeachment circus?

*Even with subsequent qualifications, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's floating of the idea of an inquiry into impeaching President Biden is **irresponsible** and another example of McCarthy giving aid and comfort to the crazy caucus of the Republican Party. (Times Editorial Board, 2023)*

According to the Times, McCarthy is a “ringmaster” orchestrating chaos and frivolities; straight from the beginning a lack of seriousness and purpose is implied in this example of negative bias, and this is then further strengthened with negatively tinged adjectives: irresponsible and crazy.

Biden's deficits threaten economic doom

*Only **dreadful** and **foolhardy** policies create rapidly growing deficits in times of low unemployment. (Washington Examiner Editorial, 2023)*

“Dreadful” and “foolhardy” set a negative tone, suggesting that President Biden's policies are not only bad, but also reckless and unwise.

*Two **erratic** presidential candidates put Colombia at risk*

In a run-off in June voters will choose between an ex-guerrilla or a TikTok populist. (The Economist Editorial, 2022)

Describing presidential candidates as “erratic” implies instability and unpredictability, which serves to cast doubt on their abilities to fulfill presidential duties.

➤ **Describing political agendas and ideologies**

*It's the Republicans, not the Democrats, who are **radical** on Israel. (Tharoor, 2023)*

“Radical” as a term in this example suggests that the Republican stance on Israel is excessively and unreasonably different from the norm.

*Moms for Liberty **Extremist Group** Defends Hitler Quote in Newsletter Before Removing It*
Moms for Liberty, a far-right organization that claims to advocate for parental rights in education and was recently labeled a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, which monitors extremism, has apologized for prominently using an Adolf Hitler quote in an Indiana chapter's inaugural newsletter. (Wiggins, 2023)

“Far-right” and “extremist” portray Moms for Liberty as being on the far end of the conservative spectrum, insinuating that their views are dangerous.

***Unhinged activists** warn Florida ‘may not be safe’ for LGBT people (Polumbo, 2023)*

Describing activists as “unhinged” implies a lack of mental stability, potentially making the readers doubt the rationale of their warnings about safety for LGBT people in Florida.

3.3. (b) Avoiding the use of direct pronouns and using third-person pronouns. By avoiding the use of direct pronouns, the media can create a sense of mystery or anonymity, which can lead to speculation or misinterpretation, and ultimately bias.

In the examples below, the parts with heavy impersonalization are found in bold:

*The Chinese spy balloon that transited the US earlier this year was able to capture imagery and collect some signals intelligence from US military sites, **a source familiar with the matter** tells CNN. (Bertrand, 2023)*

*Cocaine found in the White House was in a different location than previously reported, **sources say. The sources maintain** that the area is highly trafficked, in keeping with the White House press secretary's characterization Wednesday. Investigators expect to be done with the investigation by Monday, **said two sources familiar with the investigation.** (O'Donnell & Lebowitz, 2023)*

*Production of Apple Inc's (AAPL.O) iPhones could slump by as much as 30% at one of the world's biggest factories next month due to tightening COVID-19 curbs in China, **a person with direct knowledge of the matter said** on Monday.... **A second person familiar with the situation said** many workers remained at the Zhengzhou plant and that production was continuing. (Lee, 2022)*

3.3. (c) Transitivity: In biased reports, the use of a specific type of transitivity is more prevalent than others. Intransitive structures are typically more common in biased reports, as they help divert the attention away from the doers and obscure responsibility.

*Dozens of Palestinians **have died** in protests as the U.S. prepares to open its Jerusalem Embassy* (Halfbinger, Kershner, & Walsh, 2018)

vs.

*55 Palestinian Protesters **Killed**, Gaza Officials Say, As U.S. Opens Jerusalem Embassy*

*Tens of thousands of Palestinians are protesting the opening of the new U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, and Israeli army forces **have killed 55 protesters**, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.* (Chappell, 2018)

The comparison between these reports of the same event provides a straightforward example of an intransitive structure being used strategically to mask responsibility or agency.

In the first headline, the verb group “have died” is intransitive, and it does not specify who or what caused the deaths of the Palestinians. The sentence focuses on the outcome (the deaths) but fails to provide any cause or assign any responsibility since the opening of the U.S. Jerusalem Embassy is given as a contextual event and not directly linked to them.

The protesters certainly did not simply die, and a report of the same event from a different news agency (here an article from the National Public Radio website is cited) gives more insight into the agency behind these deaths/killings. It is attributed to the Israeli army forces and furthermore linked to the opening of the Embassy in question. In contrast, the transitive structure used in the second report highlights agency and responsibility.

3.3. (d) Modality: When it comes to modality, biased media reports use both weak and strong modalities, also known as *hedging* and *boosting* to sway the flow of public opinion to their preferred side or interpretations. With strong modality, a biased news report will use words or phrases to imply that certain facts or events are absolutely true or that a certain opinion is widely accepted, even if it is not the case. Weak modality will in turn lead to speculation and is often nothing more than a tool to hide a lack of evidence on part of the reporters and publishers.

Hedging and boosting are primarily realised through the use of simple tense forms and modal expressions (Ronald Carter, 2006); however, as seen in the examples below, adverbs and other expressions used for asserting and dissuading can be taken into consideration as well.

Some political analysts suggest that Poland's politicians may be exaggerating the threats from Wagner and Belarus because they are facing elections shortly, and want to show that they are tough on security issues.

(BBC News, 2023)

vs.

Political analysts insist that Poland's politicians are undeniably exaggerating the threats from Wagner and Belarus as a strategic move in light of the upcoming elections.

In this version, phrases like “insist”, the present simple form replacing the modal, and “undeniably exaggerating” convey a higher level of certainty and confidence in the analysts’ viewpoint, emphasizing that this perspective is presented as a strong assertion rather than a mere suggestion.

Numerous experts assert that different narratives of the past should be openly discussed to pinpoint elements that negatively contribute to contemporary conflict.

(Reynolds, 2020)

vs.

Numerous experts imply that different narratives of the past could be openly discussed to potentially pinpoint elements that might negatively contribute to contemporary conflict.

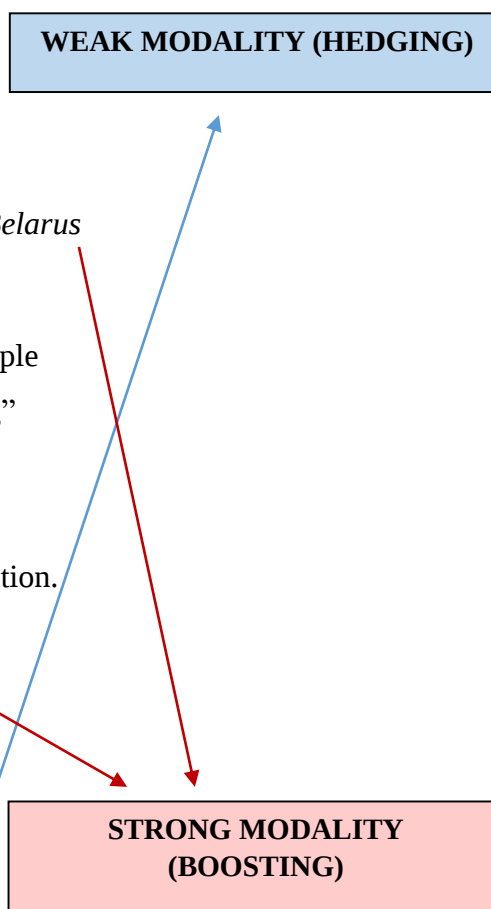


Figure 19: Strong vs. Weak Modality

In the rewritten sentence⁹, phrases like “imply”, “could be openly discussed”, and “might negatively contribute” introduce an element of uncertainty and hedging, presenting the idea as a suggestion rather than the firm assertion it was originally.

In the pursuit of comprehending and dissecting, the many layers of media bias within contemporary news output, it is important to recognize the role of linguistic modality as a key analytical tool. When further explored, this linguistic concept reveals in great detail how language expresses attitudes, judgments, degrees of certainty, and the subjective perspectives of speakers and writers, and yet the typological studies on it remain relatively rare and, as Suhadi (2011) notes, there is a lack of consensus on terminology and classification.

Within the realm of modality, two primary subtypes are discernable, as discussed by Halliday (1994) and Eggins (2004): modalization and modulation, and those are central to the analysis showcased in this paper as well.

Modalization is the dimension of modality that involves expressing degrees of certainty, possibility, probability, and necessity. It enables us to gauge how likely or certain the information presented in media texts is perceived to be. Modalization operates within a spectrum, ranging from statements of absolute certainty to some more tentative expressions of possibility.

- Certainty: the highest degree of modalization, representing conviction and confidence in a statement,
e.g. The President asserted that Sri Lanka will win the economic war, similar to the successful fight against terrorism, adding that measures would be taken to establish economic independence in the country. (PMD, 2023)
- Probability: signifies the likelihood or plausibility of an event or proposition,
e.g. Some analysts speculate that a takeover is likely to ease investor concerns. (AP, 2023)
- Possibility: acknowledges the potential existence or occurrence of something without naming it a definite fact,
e.g. There is a chance that the proposed tax rate increase could be eliminated in the final version, Vice Mayor James Parent said. (Smith, 2021)
- Necessity: indicates the need or requirement of an action or event,

⁹ The original sentences used in this example are followed by the source reference in brackets. Their counterparts were rewritten by the author for the purposes of showcasing the differences of the two modalities on the same samples of text.

e.g. In the more immediate term, however, the government must allocate enough funding to continue vital programmes such as discharge to assess. (NHS Confederation, 2021)

Modulation is the other major subtype of modality, concerned with prescribing actions, emphasizing degrees of obligation or inclination. It encompasses linguistic resources used to influence readers' perceptions of the desirability or necessity of particular actions or behaviors.

- Obligation: reflects the level of necessity or duty associated with carrying out a particular action,
e.g. Richest oil states should pay climate tax, says Gordon Brown. (Geiger, 2023)
- Inclination: expresses the speaker's degree of willingness or desire to engage in a particular action or proposal,
e.g. The voters won't pay ideology; they will pay results. (The Australian, 2023)

3.3. (e) Verb processes: In biased media, certain verb processes are more common than others. One type of process that is frequently used in biased media is the verbal type, which entails the following participants: Sayer, Quoted/Reported, Verbiage, Target, Receiver. (Thomas Bloor, 2004). By often using verbal processes to retell or repeat information in others' words, the authors of news articles form an extra barrier of protection between themselves and the content they write; originality gives way to distance.

"Ukraine holds its lines and will never surrender," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky declared during his address to the two chambers of the United States (US) Congress on Wednesday. (Statecraft staff, 2022)

- **Analysis of participants:**

Sayer: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky

Verbal process: declared

Quoted: "Ukraine holds its lines and will never surrender"

Receiver: the two chambers of the United States (US) Congress

We Must Prioritize Response to COVID-19, Reaffirm Focus on Sustainable Development, Deputy Secretary-General Tells Security Council

(United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 2021)

➤ **Analysis of participants:**

Sayer: Deputy Secretary-General

Verbal process: Tells

Quoted: “We Must Prioritize Response to COVID-19, Reaffirm Focus on Sustainable Development”

Receiver: Security Council

As is showcased in these examples, when employed effectively, verbal processes can contribute to distancing oneself from potential bias and impersonalizing the reporting. This linguistic choice helps create a sense of objectivity by minimizing personal involvement, and reducing the potential influence of the author’s bias in the reported content.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Complementary Theories

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are two interconnected theories that provide valuable perspectives on language and discourse. While they are not always employed together, their synergy is particularly evident in Australian research, where both approaches are frequently integrated. (Ross, 2020) In contrast, European scholars often pursue CDA without an in-depth linguistic analysis. This compatibility between SFL and CDA can be attributed to their concurrent development, beginning in the late 1960s and extending into the 1970s and 1980s, ultimately evolving in parallel.

The simultaneous engagement of both is particularly advantageous when analyzing text, whether it involves deciphering the effectiveness of advertising or addressing sensitive topics like racism or sexism within discourse. The inclusion of SFL provides specific tools and insights to not only identify linguistic features but also offer comprehensive explanations for their impact on discourse.

In essence, the combination of SFL and CDA enhances the depth of analysis by offering a structured framework for understanding how language operates and why it does so in particular ways. This interdisciplinary approach proves invaluable when grappling with the multifaceted complexities of contemporary communication.

4.2. Distinguishing SFL and CDA

SFL, or Systemic Functional Linguistics, primarily offers a lens through which to examine the formal structures of language, encompassing elements such as grammar, style, and punctuation. It delves into how language functions in different types of discourse. Importantly, SFL also extends beyond conventional linguistic analysis and is even applicable to visual elements and music.

On the other hand, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) places emphasis on the broader context and implications of language and discourse, seeking to clarify the underlying reasons for linguistic choices and their effects. Essentially, SFL investigates what language is and what it does, while CDA delves into the motivations behind these linguistic actions. In practice, researchers often use

SFL as a toolkit to conduct CDA, employing detailed linguistic analysis to uncover larger discourse practices.

4.3. Methodology

The corpus for this study is comprised of thirty (30) editorials in over ten American newspapers, namely: The Atlantic, Jacobin, The Nation, Slate, Vox, CNN, The Guardian, The New York Times, NPR, USA TODAY, and BBC News. The newspapers were purposely selected on the basis of readership and representation across the political spectrum. The period of study is between 2021 and 2023. The papers and their respective bias ratings were regarded as presented in the table below:

LEFT	LEANS LEFT	CENTER	LEANS RIGHT	RIGHT
The Atlantic	CNN	BBC News	Fox Business	Daily Mail
Jacobin	The Guardian	The Christian	New York Post	The Daily Wire
The Nation	The New York	Science Monitor	Washington	FOX News
Slate	Times	Forbes	Examiner	National Review
Vox	NPR	Newsweek		
	USA TODAY	REUTERS		

Table 1: Bias chart

The sentence samples taken for analysis are mainly a combination of the headline and opening segments to an article (up to four or five of the initial lines depending on the content's relevance to the research method).

5. WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM AFGHANISTAN: DEEP DIVE

This chapter features the capital systemic functional linguistic analysis of examples gathered from various news media sources on the topic of the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. This event has been pivotal in the western media’s political discourse in the 21st century, aligning closely with the paper’s analytical focus. The deliberate choice of this singular topic of analysis was made for the purposes of more accurate comparisons of how different media entities retell the same event. The findings of this “deep dive” are presented through a tabular analysis, encompassing all three metafunctions of the media texts as defined in SFL¹⁰ and incorporating components of critical discourse analysis to help contextualize the types of media bias in the articles within the scope of research.

5.1. THE LEFT: examples from “liberal” news sources

1) A cost-free exit from Afghanistan // may have never been // possible. The war itself // had been // a debacle // for two decades //, and // the US // had very much failed.

Days after Afghanistan’s fall to the Taliban in August 2021 //, a senior Biden administration official // told // me // that the entire administration had let the president down. // President Joe Biden had made a politically brave decision // , the official // said, // but // the policy plans // were not // there // to back it up.// (Guyer, 2022)

Table 2: from Vox

Clause	A cost-free exit from Afghanistan	may have never been	possible
Ideational metafunction	Carrier	Process: relational(being)	Attribute
	Subject	Finite+Aux1+Adjunct ^{cir} +Predicator	C ^{int}

¹⁰ SFL recognizes the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions as operating simultaneously and harmoniously.

Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + Modalization: possibility	Attitude: neutral Bias type: opinion statements presented as facts
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 3: from Vox

Clause elements	The war itself	had been	a debacle	for two decades	and	the US	had very much failed
Ideational metafunction	Identified	Process: relational (being)	Identifier	Circumstance: time		Actor	Process: material + Circumstance : degree
	Subject	Finite+ Predicator	C ^{int}	A ^{cir}	Conj.	Subject	Finite +Adjunct ^{cir} + Predicator
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active			Attitude: neutrally written (negative in opinion on US presence in AFG) Bias type: opinion statements presented as facts	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme					

Table 4: from Vox

Clause elements	Days after... in August 2021	a senior Biden administration official	told	me	that the entire... president down
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Ideational metafunction	Circumstance: time	Sayer	Process: verbal	Receiver	Reported
	A ^{cir}	Subject	F/P	C ^{io}	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active		Attitude: neutrally written (slightly positive towards government actions in the choice of report) Bias type: opinion statements presented as facts	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme			

Table 5: from Vox

Clause elements	President ... brave decision	the officials	said	but	the policy plans	were not	there	to back it up
Ideational metafunction	Reported	Sayer	Process: verbal		Existent	Process: existential	Circ: place	Circ: purpose
	C ^{do}	Subject	F/P	Conj.	Subject	Finite	A ^{cir}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)			Voice: active			Attitude: neutrally written (slightly positive towards government actions in the choice of report) Bias type: opinion statements presented as facts	

Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme
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2) Afghanistan veterans more likely than average voter to support Afghanistan withdrawal, // poll // finds

With President Biden's much-criticized Afghanistan withdrawal largely in the rearview, // a new poll from Morning Consult // found // that veterans of America's longest war were more likely than the average voter to say they were in support of Biden's departure decision. // (Kennedy, 2021)

Table 6: from *The Week*

Clause elements	Afghanistan veterans more likely than average voter to support Afghanistan withdrawal	poll	finds
Ideational metafunction	Goal	Actor	Process: material
	C ^{do}	Subject	F/P
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral (positive about the decision to withdraw based on the topic choice and report presentation Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 7: from *The Week*

Clause elements	With President Biden's ... largely in the rearview	a new poll from Morning Consult	found	that veterans ... in support of Biden's departure decision.
Ideational metafunction	Circumstance: location	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	A ^{cir}	Subject	F/P	C ^{od}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active		Attitude: neutral (positive about the decision to

			withdraw based on the topic choice and report presentation Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

3) Afghan withdrawal // leaves // allies // to face harsh reality of US's departure from world stage//

On Tuesday, // Biden's fellow G7 leaders, led by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, // pressed // the US President // to extend that deadline // in order to get foreign citizens, Afghan people who have aided allied troops and other vulnerable groups out of the country, // but // Biden // stood // firm. // (McGee, 2021)

Table 8: from CNN

Clause elements	Afghan withdrawal	leaves	allies	to face harsh... world stage
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: purpose
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral to negative (emphasis on the predicament the allies found themselves in) Bias type: spin	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

Table 9: from CNN

Clause elements	On Tuesday	Biden's	pressed	the US Pres.	to... deadline	in order to get... country	but
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		fellow... Johnson					
Ideational metafunction	Circ: time	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circ: purpose	Circ: cause	
	A ^{cir}	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}	A ^{cir}	Conj.
Clause elements	Biden	stood			firm		
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material			Circumstance: manner		
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active			Attitude: neutral Bias type: spin		
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme					

4) After 20 years, // Biden's Afghanistan withdrawal // has finally ended // the 9/11 era //

Foreign policy, // for better or worse, // is // always // an extension of a nation's domestic politics.
 // The arc of America's war in Afghanistan // is // a testament to this reality – the story of a
 superpower that overreached, slowly came to terms with the limits of its capacity to shape events
 abroad, and withdrew in the wake of raging dysfunction at home. // Viewed through this prism,
 // President Joe Biden's decisive yet chaotic withdrawal // comes // into focus. (Rhodes, 2021)

Table 10: from *The Guardian*

Clause elements	After 20 years	Biden's Afghanistan withdrawal/	has finally ended	the 9/11 era
Ideational metafunction	Circumstance: time	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	A ^{cir}	Subject	Finite+A ^{mod} +Predicator	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral to positive (towards the actions of the current government)	

			Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 11: from *The Guardian*

Clause elements	Foreign policy	for better or worse	is	always	an extension...domestic politics
Ideational metafunction	Carrier		Process: relational	Circumstance: time	Attribute
	Subject	A ^{mod}	F	A ^{cir}	C ^{int}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active		Attitude: neutral to slightly inclined to the left (due to the modal adjunct which expresses the author's judgement) Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme			

Table 12: from *The Guardian*

Clause elements	The arc of America's war in Afghanistan		is	a testament to this reality ...	
Ideational metafunction	Carrier		Process: relational		Attribute
	Subject		F		C ^{int}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active		Attitude: neutral Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme		Rheme		

Table 13: from *The Guardian*

Clause elements	Viewed through this prism	President Joe Biden’s decisive yet chaotic withdrawal	comes	into focus
Ideational metafunction	Circumstance: manner (means)	Actor	Process: material	Goal/Circumstances: result
	A ^{cir}	Subject	F/P	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: left-leaning (the given lets the reader know that a certain perspective is assumed) Bias type: spin	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

5) Biden, Setting Afghanistan Withdrawal, // Says // 'It Is Time to End the Forever War'

The president // said // the main objective of ensuring that Afghanistan would not be a launching pad for terrorism had been achieved and that it was time for American troops to come home. (Sanger & Shear, 2021)

Table 14: from *The New York Times*

Clause elements	Biden, Setting Afghanistan Withdrawal	says	'It is time to end The Forever War'
Ideational metafunction	Sayer	Process: verbal	Quoted
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: left-leaning Bias type: none
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 15: from *The New York Times*

Clause elements	The president	said	the main objective of ensuring...to come home.
Ideational metafunction	Sayer	Process: verbal	Reported
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: left-leaning Bias type: none
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

6) Afghanistan// Did Not Have to Turn Out // This Way

If we are to sustain our position as the leader of the Western world, // we // must understand // why one of our signature campaigns resulted in such frustration. (Petraeus, 2022)

Table 16: from *The Atlantic*

Clause elements	Afghanistan	Did Not Have to Turn Out	This Way
Ideational metafunction	Carrier	Process: relational	Attribute
	Subject	Finite+Not+Aux+Predicator	C ^{int}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + Modalization: necessity	Attitude: borderline negative Bias type: opinion statements presented as facts, emotionalism
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 17: from *The Atlantic*

Clause elements	If we are to sustain our position as the leader of the Western world,	we	must understand	why one of our...frustration
	Circumstance: condition	Actor	Process: material	Goal

Ideational metafunction	A ^{cir}	Subject	Finite+Predicator	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + Modalization: necessity		Attitude: right-leaning Bias type: opinion statements presented as facts, emotionalism
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

7) State Department’s Afghanistan withdrawal report//shows// there wasn’t a plan for “worst-case scenarios”

The Biden and Trump administrations // did not sufficiently plan // for “worst-case scenarios”// ahead of the U.S. withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in summer 2021, // according to a State Department review released Friday. (Herszenhorn, 2023)

Table 18: from USA Today

Clause elements	State Department’s Afghanistan withdrawal report	shows	there wasn’t a plan for “worst-case scenarios”
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: slightly negative Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 19: from USA Today

Clause elements	The Biden and Trump administr.	did not sufficiently plan	for “worst-case scenarios”	ahead of the U.S. withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in summer 2021	according to a State Department review released Friday.
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: purpose	Circumstance: time	Circumstance: angle
	Subject	Finite+not+ Adj ^{cir} + Predicator	A ^{cir}	A ^{cir}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: right-leaning Bias type: spin		
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme			

8) The Taliban // Is Celebrating // Its Takeover // Now That The U.S. Withdrawal Is Complete//

Many Afghans // are // anxious about the Taliban rule // and // are figuring out // ways to get out of Afghanistan. // (The Associated Press, 2021)

Table 20: from NPR

Clause elements	The Taliban	is celebrating	its takeover	now that... is complete
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: time
	Subject	Finite+Predicator	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral Bias type: sensationalism/emotionalism	

Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme
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Table 21: from NPR

Table 21.7 from R. R. R.

Clause elements	Many Afghans	are	anxious about the Taliban rule	and	are figuring out	ways to get out of Afghanistan
Ideational metafunction	Clause1: Carrier Clause2: Actor	Process: relational	Attribute		Process: material	Goal
	Subject	F	C ^{int}	Conj.	Finite+Predicator	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active		Attitude: neutral Bias type: sensationalism/emotionalism	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme				

9) The US's Failure in Afghanistan // Shows // the Hubris of American Empire

Joe Biden's withdrawal from Afghanistan // signals // the US has lost the longest war in its history.
 // And even if the warmongers don't want to admit it, // that failure // shows // the US can't just
 bend the world to its will. // (McCoy, 2021)

Table 22: from the Jacobin

Clause elements	The US's failure in Afghanistan	shows	the Hubris of American Empire
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + Modalization: possibility	Attitude: neutral to negative (towards the political tendencies of the U.S. overall)

			Bias type: opinion statements presented as facts, spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 23: from the Jacobin

Clause elements	Joe Biden's withdrawal from Afghanistan	signals	the US has lost the longest war in its history.
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral to negative (towards the political tendencies of the U.S. overall) Bias type: opinion statements presented as facts, spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 24: from the Jacobin

Clause elements	And	even if the warmongers don't want to admit it	that failure	shows	the US can't just bend the world to its will.
Ideational metafunction		Circumstance: concession	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Conj.	A ^{cir}	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active	Attitude: neutral to negative (towards the political tendencies of the U.S. overall) Bias type: opinion statements presented as facts, spin	
Textual metafunction	Textual Theme	Topical Theme	Rheme		

10) We // Now // Know // Why Biden Was in a Hurry to Exit Afghanistan

He // made // several missteps, // but // on the big picture, // he // was // right.

The Doha agreement, which President Donald Trump had signed with the Taliban in early 2020 (with no participation by the Afghan government), // required // a total withdrawal of foreign forces. // If U.S. troops had stayed beyond August, // Milley // said, // the Taliban would have resumed the fighting, // and, // in order to stave off the attacks, // “we // would have needed // 30,000 troops” // and // would have suffered // “many casualties.” // (Kaplan, 2021)

Table 25: from the Slate

Clause elements	We	now	know	why Biden was in a hurry to exit Afghanistan
Ideational metafunction	Senser	Circumstance: time	Process: mental	Phenomenon
	Subject	A ^{cir}	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active	Attitude: heavily leftist (they justify the actions of the acting president, and the government responsible for the AFG withdrawal) Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

Table 26: from the Slate

Clause elements	He	made	several missteps	but	on the big picture	he	was	right
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal		Circ: manner (perspective/degree)	Carrier	Process: relational	Attribute
	S	F/P	C ^{do}	Coord. Conj.	A ^{cir}	Subject	F	C ^{int}

Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: heavily leftist (they justify the actions of the acting president, and the government responsible for the AFG withdrawal) Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 27: from the Slate

Clause elements	The Doha agreement, ... (with no participation by the Afghan government)	required	a total withdrawal of foreign forces.
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + Modalization: necessity	Attitude: heavily leftist (they justify the actions of the acting president, and the government responsible for the AFG withdrawal) Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 28: from the Slate

Clause elements	If U.S. troops had stayed beyond August,	Milley	said	the Taliban would have resumed the fighting	and	in order to stave off the attacks,
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Ideational metafunction	Circumstance: condition	Sayer	Process: verbal	Reported		Circumstance: purpose
	A ^{cir}	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	Coord. Conj.	A ^{cir}
Clause elements	we	would have needed	30,000 troops	and	would have suffered	many casualties
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal		Process: material	Goal
Clause elements	Subject	Finite+Aux +Predicator	C ^{do}	Coord. Conj.	Finite+Aux +Predicator	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction Textual metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active + Modalization: necessity and probability + Modulation: inclination		Attitude: heavily leftist (they justify the actions of the acting president, and the government responsible for the AFG withdrawal) Bias type: spin	
	Theme	Rheme				

5.2. THE CENTER: examples from “neutral” news sources

1) Afghanistan: Biden was advised to keep 2,500 troops, // say // generals //

Two top US generals // have said // they recommended keeping a force of 2,500 troops in Afghanistan, // ahead of the full US withdrawal in August. // Testimony by Gen Mark Milley and Gen Frank McKenzie to Congress // seemed to contradict // President Joe Biden, who said he did not recall any such advice. // (Zurcher, 2021)

Table 29: from BBC News

Clause elements	Biden was advised to keep 2500 troops	say	generals
	Reported	Process: verbal	Sayer

Ideational metafunction	C ^{do}	F/P	Subject
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active (passivization in the β clause)	Attitude: neutrally written (slightly negative towards government actions in the choice of report)
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 30: from BBC News

Clause elements	Two top US generals	have said	they recommended... in Afghanistan	ahead of the ... in August
Ideational metafunction	Sayer	Process: verbal	Reported	Circumstance: time
	Subject	Finite+predicator	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutrally written (slightly negative towards government actions in the choice of report) Bias type: none	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

Table 31: from BBC News

Clause elements	Testimony by Gen Mark Milley...to Congress	seemed to contradict	President Joe Biden, who said he did not recall any such advice
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Subject	Finiter+Predicator	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + potential modalization of possibility, due to a lack of certainty in the report	Attitude: neutrally written (but slightly ironic tone) Bias type: none

Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme
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2) Biden: Collapse of Afghanistan’s government// shows // U.S. withdrawal ‘was the right decision’

President Joe Biden // on Monday // defended // his decision to pull American troops out of Afghanistan, // as he drew flak for the fall of the Central Asian country’s government. // (Reklaitis, 2021)

Table 32: from WSJ

Clause elements	Collapse of Afghanistan’s government	shows	U.S. withdrawal ‘was the right decision’
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutrally written (positive regarding the withdrawal, considering the perspective presented and the choice to directly quote the president) Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 33: from WSJ

Clause elements	President Joe Biden	on Monday	defended	his decision to pull American troops out of Afghanistan	as he drew flak for the fall of the Central Asian country’s government
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Circumstance: time	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: reason
	Subject	A ^{cir}	F/P	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}

Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active	Attitude: neutral Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

3) Biden // ‘Makes // No Apologies’ // for Afghanistan Withdrawal, // Regrets // Taliban Rule, ISIS-K Attack //

President Joe Biden // said // he makes “no apologies” for his August 2021 withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. // However, // he // did express // regret for changes that have happened in the country under the Taliban’s rule, as well as an ISIS-K terrorist attack that killed U.S. troops during the withdrawal. // (Villarreal, 2022)

Table 34: from *Newsweek*

Clause elements	Biden	makes	no apologies	for Afghanistan Withdrawal	, ¹¹	regrets	Taliban rule, ISIS-K Attack
Ideational metafunction	Actor/Senser	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: purpose		Process: mental	Phenomenon
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}	conj.	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active		Attitude: mainly neutral, signaling, however, a certain nonchalance in the acting president's manner of handling a difficult situation Bias type: none		
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme					

¹¹ Punctuation signs with the same semantic functions as the subcategory of coordinating conjunctions (additive, adversative, consequential etc.) will be noted but not analysed in further detail, as they have no specific role in the SFPCA structure of the clause as an exchange. (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p. 175)

Clause elements	President Joe Biden	said	he makes “no apologies” for his ... from Afghanistan.
Ideational metafunction	Sayer	Process: verbal	Reported
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral Bias type: none
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 35: from Newsweek

Clause elements	However,	he	did express	regret for changes... during the withdrawal.
Ideational metafunction		Actor	Process: material	Scope
	Conj.	Subject	Finite+Predicator	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral Bias type: none	
Textual metafunction	Textual Theme	Theme	Rheme	

4) Biden review of chaotic Afghan withdrawal // blames // Trump

President Joe Biden’s administration // on Thursday // laid // the blame // on his predecessor, President Donald Trump, // for the deadly and chaotic 2021 withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan that brought about some of the darkest moments of Biden’s presidency.// (Miller & Merchant, 2023)

Table 36: from the Associated Press

Clause elements	Biden review of chaotic Afghan withdrawal	blames	Trump
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal

	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral Bias type: potentially ad hominem and spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 37: from the Associated Press

Clause elements	President Joe Biden's administration	on Thursday	laid	the blame	on his predecessor, President Donald Trump	for the deadly and... Biden's presidency
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Circumstance: time	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: location	Circumstance: reason
	Subject	Adj ^{cir}	F/P	C ^{do}	Adj ^{cir}	Adj ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active		Attitude: neutral Bias type: potentially ad hominem and spin	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme				

5) End of the 'forever war': Last U.S. troops exit Afghanistan

The last U.S. military planes // departed // one minute before midnight in Kabul on Aug. 30. //Some American citizens // remain // in Afghanistan // but // should be able to depart. The State Department // has left // open // the possibility of resuming conditional diplomacy with the Taliban. // (Burns & Baldor, 2021)

Table 38: from The Christian Science Monitor

Clause elements	End of the 'forever war'	Last U.S. troops	exit	Afghanistan
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Ideational metafunction	Circumstance: time	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: place
	A ^{cir}	Subject	F/P	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active		Attitude: neutral to positive Bias type: none
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

Table 39: from *The Christian Science Monitor*

Clause elements	The last U.S. military planes	departed	one minute before midnight in Kabul on Aug. 30.
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: time + circ: place
	Subject	F/P	A ^{cir} +A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 40: from *The Christian Science Monitor*

Clause elements	Some American citizens	remain	in Afghanistan	but	should be able to depart
Ideational metafunction	Existent, Carrier	Process: existential	Circumstance: place		Process: relational, Participant: Attribute
	Subject	F/P	A ^{cir}	Conj.	Finite+Aux+C ^{int} +Predicator
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active	Attitude: neutral to positive Bias type: none	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme			

Table 41: from *The Christian Science Monitor*

Clause elements	The State Department	has left	open	the possibility of resuming ... with the Taliban
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Beneficiary
	Subject	Finite+Predicator	C ^{int}	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active	Attitude: neutral to positive Bias type: none
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

6) Most Americans // Now // Think // U.S. Should've Kept Some Troops In Afghanistan — Despite Previously Backing War's End //

One month after the U.S. military wrapped up its frantic departure from Afghanistan amid a Taliban takeover, // most Americans do not think withdrawing all forces was the right course of action //, Quinnipiac // revealed // in a Wednesday poll //— even though // the majority of U.S. adults // supported // winding down the two-decade-long war in Afghanistan last month. // (Walsh, 2021)

Table 42: from *Forbes*

Clause elements	Most Americans	now	think	U.S. should've kept some troops ... war's end
Ideational metafunction	Senser	Circumstance: time	Process: mental	Phenomenon
	Subject	A ^{cir}	F/P	
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + Modulation: obligation		Attitude: neutral Bias type: none
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

Table 43: from *Forbes*

Clause elements	One month after the U.S. military wrapped up ... amid a Taliban takeover	most Americans do not think ... course of action	Quinnipiac	revealed	in a Wednesday poll
Ideational metafunction	Circumstance: time	Goal	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: place
	A ^{cir}	C ^{do}	Subject	F/P	A ^{cir}
Clause elements	even though	the majority of U.S. adults	supported	winding down the two-decade-long war in Afghanistan	last month
Ideational metafunction		Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: time
	Conj.	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active		Attitude: neutral Bias type: none
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme			

7) Review // Finds // Biden And Trump Failed To Consider Impact Of Afghanistan Withdrawal //—More A Year After Taliban Takeover//

Sections of a State Department review published Friday // fault // the administrations of President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump // for not adequately preparing for consequences of withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan—which drew ire from many over its botched execution.// (Pequeño IV, 2023)

Table 44: from Forbes

Clause elements	Review	finds	Biden And Trump Failed To Consider Impact Of Afghanistan Withdrawal	More A Year After Taliban Takeover
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: time
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active		Attitude: neutral Bias type: none
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

Table 45: from Forbes

Clause elements	Sections of a State Department review published Friday	fault	the administrations of President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump	for not adequately preparing ... over its botched execution
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: reason
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active		Attitude: neutral Bias type: none
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

8) US and Nato // start // to formally withdraw troops // from Afghanistan

The US // has started // formally withdrawing troops // from Afghanistan//, // beginning // the end of what President Joe Biden called “the forever war”// The US and Nato // have had // a presence // in Afghanistan // for almost 20 years.// (BBC News, 2021)

Table 46: from BBC

Clause elements	US and Nato	start	to formally withdraw troops	from Afghanistan
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: place
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral Bias type: none	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

Table 47: from BBC

Clause elements	The US	has started	formally withdrawing troops	from Afghanistan	beginning the end of what ... “the forever war”
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance : place	Circumstance: manner (means)
	Subject	Finite+Predicator	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active		Attitude: neutral Bias type: none
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme			

Table 48: from BBC

Clause elements	The US and Nato	have had	a presence	in Afghanistan	for almost 20 years
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Ideational metafunction	Carrier: possessor	Process: relational (possessive)	Attribute: possessed	Circumstance: place	Circumstance: duration
	Subject	Finite+Predicator	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active	Attitude: neutral Bias type: none	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme			

9) Voters Largely Support Afghanistan Withdrawal Even If It Means Al-Qaeda Resurgence//, Poll // Finds //

Americans in large part want U.S. troops out of Afghanistan even if it means terrorist groups like al-Qaeda might reestablish operations under Taliban rule//, a Morning Consult Politico poll // found //, as // support for the U.S. withdrawal // remains // widely popular among the American public despite concerns that it's been handled poorly. (Reimann, 2021)

Table 49: from Forbes

Clause elements	Voters Largely Support Afghanistan Withdrawal Even If It Means Al- Qaeda Resurgence	Poll	Finds
Ideational metafunction	Goal	Actor	Process: material
	C ^{do}	Subject	F/P
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral Bias type: none
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 50: from Forbes

Clause elements	Americans in large part... under Taliban rule	a Morning Consult Politico poll	found	as
	Goal	Actor	Process: material	

Ideational metafunction	C ^{do}	Subject	F/P	Conj.
Clause elements	support for the U.S. withdrawal	remains	widely popular among the American public despite concerns that it’s been handled poorly.	
Ideational metafunction	Carrier	Process: relational	Attribute	
	Subject	F/P	C ^{int}	
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + Modalization: possibility	Attitude: neutral Bias type: none	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

10) U.S. // completes // withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan// after 20-year war//

The United States // completed // the withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan // on Monday //, ending 20 years of war that culminated in the militant Taliban's return to power. (Reuters staff, 2021)

Table 51: from Reuters

Clause elements	U.S.	completes	withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan	after 20-year war
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: time
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral Bias type: none	

Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme
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Table 52: from Reuters

Clause elements	The United States	completed	the withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan	on Monday	ending 20 years of ... Taliban's return to power.
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: time	Circumstance: manner
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active	Attitude: neutral Bias type: none	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme			

5.3. THE RIGHT: examples from “neutral” news sources

1) Trump // Calls // Withdrawal from Afghanistan // ‘Greatest Embarrassment in the History of Our Country’//

Former president Donald Trump // labeled // the Biden administration’s handling of the American withdrawal from Afghanistan // the “greatest embarrassment in the history of our country,”// in an interview with Fox News host Sean Hannity // on Tuesday.// (Evans, 2021)

Table 53: from the National Review

Clause elements	Trump	Calls	Withdrawal from Afghanistan	Greatest... of our country
Ideational metafunction	Sayer	Process: verbal	Target	Verbiage
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	C ^{int}

Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: declarative	Voice: active	Attitude: neutrally written (heavily against government actions in the choice of report) Bias type: sensationalism/emotionalism	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

Table 54: from the National Review

Table 34: from the National Review

Clause elements	Former president Donald Trump	labeled	the Biden administration's... ... of our country	in an interview with... Sean Hannity	on Tuesday
Ideational metafunction	Participant 1: actor	Process: material	Participant 2: Goal (the Biden administration's ... Afghanistan) + Circumstance: manner (degree)(the greatest...our country)	Circumstance: manner (means)	Circumstance: time
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do} + C ^{int}	A ^{cir}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: declarative	Voice: active		Attitude: neutrally written (heavily against government actions in the choice of report) Bias type: sensationalism/emotionalism	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme			

2) Afghanistan Withdrawal: // A political turning point for way public felt about Biden

State Department // won't say // how many Americans still stranded in Afghanistan.// The Biden administration's series of missteps during the chaotic Afghanistan withdrawal one year ago, which led to the death of 13 U.S. service members,// marked // a political turning point for the public's perception of President Biden's competency and ability to lead. // (Chasmar, 2022)

Table 55: from Fox News

Clause elements	Afghanistan Withdrawal	is	a political turning point for way...Biden
Ideational metafunction	Carrier	Process: relational	Attribute
	Subject	Finite	Complement ^{int}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + Potential modalization of possibility due to words being dropped from headline	Attitude: speculative Bias type: mudslinging, spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 56: from Fox News

Clause elements	State Department	won't say	how many Americans (are) still stranded in Afghanistan
Ideational metafunction	Sayer	Process: verbal	Verbiage
	Subject	Finite+Predicator	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + Modulation: inclination	Attitude: negative (towards informants/ source) Bias type: mudslinging, spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 57: from Fox News

Clause elements	The Biden administration's series of missteps...death of 13 U.S. service members	marked	a turning point for ... ability to lead
Ideational metafunction	Identifier	Process: relational	Identified
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: negative (towards the current government's actions) Bias type: mudslinging, spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

3) McConnell // Blasts // Biden Plan to Pull Remaining U.S. Troops from Afghanistan//

Senior administration official // says // the withdrawal from Afghanistan by Sept. 11 is NOT conditions based.// Biden // has judged // that “a conditions based approach, which has been the approach of the past two decades, is a recipe for staying in Afghanistan forever.”// (McCormack, 2021)

Table 58: from the National Review

Clause elements	McConnell	blasts	Biden Plan to Pull Remaining U.S. Troops from Afghanistan
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: negative (towards the issue at hand, due to word and source choices) Bias type: sensationalism, spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 59: from the National Review

Clause elements	Senior administration official	says	the withdrawal... is not conditions based
Ideational metafunction	Sayer	Process: verbal	Verbiage
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: negative (due to source choices and punctuation) Bias type: sensationalism, spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 60: from the National Review

Clause elements	Biden	has judged	that “a conditions based approach...recipe for staying in Afghanistan forever”
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Subject	Finiter+Predicator	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutral (potentially contemptuous) Bias type: sensationalism, spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

4) Biden: // I Would Have Withdrawn The Troops From Afghanistan Regardless Of Trump’s Deal //

As The Daily Wire reported Wednesday, // Biden // denied // any failures in the Afghan withdrawal // and // refused // to acknowledge horrifying images coming from Kabul of Afghans and Americans desperate to flee a dissolving country. // (Zanotti, 2021)

Table 61: from the Daily Wire

Clause elements	Biden	:	I Would Have Withdrawn The Troops From Afghanistan Regardless Of Trump's Deal
Ideational metafunction	Sayer	implied verbal process	Quoted
	Subject	implied predicator	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + Modulation: inclination	Attitude: neutral (deliberate choice of quoted elements) Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 62: from the Daily Wire

Clause elements	As The Daily Wire reported Wednesday,	Biden	denied	any failures in the Afghan withdrawal
Ideational metafunction	Circumstance: comparison	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	A ^{cir}	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Clause elements	and	refused	to acknowledge horrifying images ... desperate to flee a dissolving country.	
Ideational metafunction		Process: material	Goal	
	Conj.	F/P	C ^{do}	
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: negative (the report is criticising the active president's actions)	

			Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

5) Biden's Afghanistan withdrawal // remains // catastrophe of American weakness // a year later

Biden administration // ripped up // Trump team's conditions-based withdrawal, // trusting the Taliban. (Pompeo, 2022)

Table 63: from Fox News

Clause elements	Biden's Afghanistan withdrawal	remains	catastrophe of American weakness	a year later
Ideational metafunction	Carrier	Process: relational	Attribute	Circumstance: time
	Subject	F/P	C ^{int}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: negative (hyperbolising the problem and acting government's actions)	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

Table 64: from Fox News

Clause elements	Biden administration	ripped up	Trump team's conditions-based withdrawal	trusting the Taliban
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: manner
	Subject	S/F	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: negative (hyperbolising the problem and acting government's actions)	

			Bias type: sensationalism, spin, opinion statements presented as facts
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

6) GOP lawmakers // rip // Biden's 'reckless withdrawal' from Afghanistan //

Top Republicans in the House // are demanding // answers // from President Biden // on the missteps that led to the Taliban's rapid takeover of Afghanistan following the botched withdrawal of U.S. forces // and // would like // to know how the administration plans to address the ongoing crisis.// (Brufke, 2021)

Table 65: from the New York Post

Clause elements	GOP lawmakers	rip	Biden's 'reckless withdrawal' from Afghanistan
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutralised by heavy depersonalisation, yet still noticeably negative Bias type: sensationalism, mudslinging, spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 66: from the New York Post

Clause elements	Top Republicans in the House	are demanding	answers	from President Biden
Ideational metafunction	Actor, Sensor	Process: material	Goal	Source
	Subject	Finite+Predicator	C ^{do} (discontinued)	C ^{int}

Clause elements	on the missteps ... following the botched withdrawal of U.S. forces	and	would like	to know how the administration plans to address the ongoing crisis.
Ideational metafunction	Goal		Process: mental	Phenomenon
	C ^{do} (discontinued)	Conj.	Finite+Predicator	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: neutralized by heavy depersonalization, yet still noticeably negative Bias type: sensationalism, mudslinging, spin	
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

7) In Hasty Withdrawal, // U.S. // Left Behind // \$7B Of Military Gear, Including 78 Aircraft And 12,000 Humvees, // In Afghanistan

“In all, about \$7 billion worth of hardware remained in the country after the Taliban seized control, according to the report prepared for Congress which was obtained by CNN,”// the Daily Mail // reported. (Curl, 2022)

Table 67: from the Daily Wire

Clause elements	In hasty withdrawal	U.S.	left behind	\$7B of military gear, ... and 12,000 humvees	in Afghanistan
Ideational metafunction	Circumstance: manner (means)	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance: place
	A ^{cir}	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}	A ^{cir}

Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: rightist (validated through factual info, numbers etc.) Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 68: from the Daily Wire

Clause elements	“In all, about \$7 billion worth of hardware ... which was obtained by CNN”	the Daily Mail	reported
Ideational metafunction	Quoted	Sayer	Process: verbal
	C ^{do}	Subject	F/P
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: rightist (validated through factual info, numbers etc.) Bias type: spin
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

8) Report: // Biden’s Afghanistan Withdrawal Could Leave Americans Vulnerable To Terrorist Attack In ‘Next 12 To 18 Months’//

A new report from the U.S. Department of Defense // acknowledges // that President Biden’s disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan could possibly endanger Americans at home in the United States. // (Berrien, 2022)

Table 69: from the Daily Wire

Clause elements	Report	:	Biden’s Afghanistan Withdrawal Could Leave Americans Vulnerable To Terrorist Attack In ‘Next 12 To 18 Months’
	Sayer	implied	Reported

Ideational metafunction		verbal process	
	Subject	implied predicator	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active + Modalization: possibility	Attitude: rightist (inciting approach) Bias type: spin, ad hominem
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 70: from the Daily Wire

Clause elements	A new report... Department of Defense	acknowledges	that President Biden's disastrous withdrawal ... at home in the United States.
Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: rightist (inciting approach) Bias type: spin, ad hominem
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

9) Senate Report // Reveals // Biden Failures That Led To 'Botched' Afghanistan Withdrawal//

The Biden administration's withdrawal from Afghanistan // was defined // by inept planning and poor decision making, causing significant and numerous failures throughout the process, // according to a Senate report released Thursday. // (Pearce, 2022)

Table 71: from the Daily Wire

Clause elements	Senate Report	reveals	Biden Failures That Led To 'Botched' Afghanistan Withdrawal
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Ideational metafunction	Actor	Process: material	Goal
	Subject	F/P	C ^{do}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: active	Attitude: rightist (accusatory towards the acting government and the president) Bias type: spin, mudslinging
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme	

Table 72: from the Daily Wire

Clause elements	The Biden administration's withdrawal from Afghanistan	was defined	by inept planning and poor decision making, causing significant and numerous failures throughout the process	according to a Senate report released Thursday.
Ideational metafunction	Carrier	Process: relational	Attribute	Circumstance: angle
	C ^{do}	Finite+Predicator	Subject	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: passive	Attitude: rightist (accusatory towards the acting government and the president) Bias type: spin, mudslinging
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

10) Timeline of terror:// How Biden's Afghanistan withdrawal disaster // unfolded

One year after the U.S. military withdrew its troops from Afghanistan and the Taliban regained control of the country, // top lawmakers and White House officials // are still clashing // over who, or what, is to blame for the collapse of the Afghan government. // (Cami Mondeaux, 2022)

Table 73: from the Washington Examiner

Clause elements	How Biden's Afghanistan withdrawal disaster	unfolded	
Ideational metafunction	Circumstance: manner (means)	Process: material	
	A ^{cir}	F/P	
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)	Voice: /	Attitude: neutral to right-leaning Bias type: sensationalism/ ad hominem
Textual metafunction	Rheme		

Table 74: from the Washington Examiner

Clause elements	One year after ... control of the country	top lawmakers and White House officials	are still clashing	over who, or what, is to blame ... Afghan government.
Ideational metafunction	Circumstance: time	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance: matter
	A ^{cir}	Subject	Finite+Adj ^{cir} +Predicator	A ^{cir}
Interpersonal metafunction	Mood: indicative (declarative)		Voice: active	Attitude: neutral to right-leaning Bias type: sensationalism/ ad hominem
Textual metafunction	Theme	Rheme		

6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

In this systemic analysis of newspaper reports, an attempt was made to delve deeper into the linguistic features that underlie the discourse of modern media outlets, and shed light on the ways in which language is employed to shape the narratives presented to the public. Through an analysis of 30 article samples of the same topic/event, certain patterns and tendencies that offer valuable insights into the mechanisms of news reporting were found, particularly in the context of war discourse:

6.1. Processes and Their Significance

Table 75: Percentage distribution of different process types

PROCESS TYPE	PERCENTAGE
Material	59.6
Verbal	18.0
Relational	14.6
Mental	5.6
Existential	2.2

This research revealed that material processes dominated the corpus, constituting a substantial 59.6% of the analyzed examples. This prevalence underscores the inherent need for action and events in news reports. In the domain of journalism, stories are not merely there to pass on information but are also a form of entertainment, demanding the presence of dynamic events to engage the readers. Verbal processes were the second most frequent type at 18%, aligning with our earlier proposition that authors often utilize hedging strategies through reporting verbs and direct quotations. These verbal processes often serve as tools for distancing the authors from the news content, allowing them to present information without explicit endorsement or judgment.

Relational processes, at 14.6%, followed suit, reflecting the frequent comparisons between the previous Trump administration and the current Biden government. These comparisons form a significant aspect of news discourse, influencing the readers' perceptions of leadership transitions. Mental and existential processes, at 5.6% and 2.2%, respectively, took up the lowest percentages.

These processes, while important in other contexts, are not very applicable in the creation of engaging narratives of news reports within war discourse.

6.2. Participants in the Spotlight

When considering the participants within the sentences analyzed, the Actor subject stood out as the most prevalent, accounting for 30.1% of all participants. Goals, often serving as direct objects, followed closely at 27.7%. This distribution reflects the focus on actions and their agents in news reports. The Sayer participant, at 8.4%, demonstrated a higher presence, correlating with the increased use of verbal processes, where authors often incorporate direct quotations. Quoted and reported elements and the Carrier and Attribute participants both garnered 6.6% and 7.2%, respectively, illustrating their significance in conveying information and attributing statements.

6.3. Modality in News Discourse

Table 76: Outline of the distribution of modality types and the ratio between modulation types

MODALITY TYPE	PERCENTAGE
Possibility	54.5
Necessity	36.4
Probability	9.1
MODULATION TYPE	RATIO
Inclination	3
Obligation	2

In the realm of modality, our analysis identified three distinct modalizations: possibility, necessity, and probability. Notably, the modalization of possibility dominated at 54.5%, reflecting the constant sense of potential scenarios within news reporting. Necessity closely followed at 36.4%, aligning with the urgency often associated with news outlets. Probability, at 9.1%, occupied a smaller share, indicating that news discourse tends to lean towards presenting events as either possible or necessary rather than merely probable. That being noted, there were no modalizations of certainty, which goes to show that the authors also avoid making claims that are too

straightforward or abrupt, most likely because they are afraid of receiving heavy backlash, or suffering the contemporary trend of “cancel culture”¹².

Interestingly, when considering modulation, a notable pattern emerged with inclination and obligation appearing in a ratio of 3:2. This finding suggests a delicate balance between the willingness of authors to present information persuasively and their perceived obligation to report objectively. The interplay between these modalities serves as a testament to the complexity of news discourse and the strategic choices made by authors to engage their audience while maintaining a degree of journalistic integrity.

6.4. Attitude and Voice

The examination of the attitude portrayed in the sampled newspaper reports revealed that a critical stance is commonly assumed. Concerning the withdrawal from Afghanistan in particular, surprisingly some newspapers deviated from the viewpoints they were expected to have based on their unofficial ideological affiliations,. Left-leaning and center publications exhibited unexpected levels of criticism, challenging preconceived notions. From this it can be concluded that the criticism towards government decisions is a prevalent and persistent trend. The differences in the paper’s initial hypothesis and the results of the research add a layer of complexity to the notion of modern media bias, for it proves itself to be a territory full of gray areas.

In terms of voice, the overwhelming majority of sentences employed the active voice (almost 99%). While some minor passivization was observed deeper in the texts, it was minimal in the headlines and opening segments. The indicative (declarative) mood was predominant, with other mood types rarely appearing. A kind of reliance on the active voice was to be expected, considering the fact that material and verbal processes took up over 60% of all active verbs in the texts. This is due to the need for dynamic storytelling; news writers know very well how to attract the readers’ attention and keep them vigilant.

6.5. Bias Types

¹² The practice or tendency of engaging in mass canceling, especially on social media, as a way of expressing disapproval and exerting social pressure. (Merriam Webster, n.d.) Cancel culture is a phrase contemporary to the late 2010s and early 2020s.

The analysis of bias typology in the selected corpus stands to prove the earlier visual representation (on page 32.) of the distribution of media bias among major news outlets in the United States. The samples taken from mainly pro-right-wing newspapers are over 95% biased, containing at least a moderate amount of slant. The left-wing sources showed to be only slightly less biased, but the presence of slanted reporting in them still reaches up to 90%. The news sources marked as mainly center, were indeed very neutral in reporting, reaching only up to 20% of any kind of biased nuance.

Spin was the most present form of bias in the coverage of the story about the withdrawing of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, affirming itself as the most present overall. It is omnipresent with any news agency that is politically inclined toward one party or another. Once sources become slanted, their news cannot be reported in neutral ways since their purpose is not to achieve neutrality in information distribution but to distribute the information in a manner most beneficial to the people and groups they are backing. The leftist media showed itself keen on selling opinion-based stories as factual reporting, and the right-wing news were heavily inclined to call out the opposition, in doing so reaching for the type of biased reporting that borders on attacking other people's integrity, the so-called mudslinging. Sensationalist headlines were also significantly more prevalent with the news reports coming from the right side of the American political spectrum, meaning the Republican-friendly reporters like to draw attention to their articles first, and in doing so they oftentimes attract a larger readership outside of the forecasted figures/following.

6.6. Thematic Structure and Attention-Grabbing Techniques

Thematic structure played a pivotal role in news reports, with most sentences adhering to the standard SVO structure, where the subject typically opened the sentence. Exceptions were observed when more marked thematic elements, such as adjuncts providing background or quoted elements from prominent figures like President Joe Biden, were strategically placed to attract attention. Notably, many news articles aimed to present the names of influential figures as given information (the Theme), often reserving the consequences or details for later in the sentence.

6.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, our analysis of newspaper reports within the context of war discourse has unraveled the intricate tapestry of linguistic choices made by authors and editors to engage, inform, and shape public opinion. Through the lens of processes, participants, modality, attitude, voice, thematic structure, and attention-grabbing techniques, we have gained valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of news reporting. This research underscores the importance of understanding the linguistic underpinnings of media discourse. Linguistic strategies play a pivotal role in shaping the narratives that influence our understanding of the world. As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of media, the systemic functional analysis and the critical analysis of discourse will continue to serve linguists as critical tools for discerning the subtle nuances that govern the language of news.

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BIOGRAFIJA

Elena Španović je rođena 30.12.1998. godine u Banjoj Luci, Republika Srpska, Bosna i Hercegovina.

Osnovnu i srednju školu završila je u Banjoj Luci sa odličnim uspjehom. Nakon završene srednje škole (Gimnazija Banja Luka, društveno-jezički smjer), 2017. godine, upisala je akademske studije na Filološkom Fakultetu Univerziteta u Banjoj Luci, usmjerivši se na engleski jezik i književnost. Tokom cijelog trajanja prvog ciklusa studija, studentica je bila stipendista Vlade Republike Srpske. 2021. godine diplomirala je u roku s najboljom prosječnom ocjenom na svom odsjeku, 9.75/10, te je za to nagrađena priznanjem od strane fakulteta.

Elena Španović je predani lingvista i pedagog, te je trenutno student master studija engleskog jezika na Univerzitetu u Banjoj Luci. U drugom ciklusu svoje akademske formacije, Elena bira da se posveti u potpunosti naučnoj studiji jezika, odnosno analizi jezičke forme i značenja u kontekstu. Shodno tome, master rad i istraživanje bazira na polju primjenjene sistemske funkcionalne lingvistike u engleskom jeziku.

Pedagoško iskustvo Elena je stekla prilikom učešća u programu kurseva jezika pod organizacijom Filološkog Fakulteta UNIBL-a u periodu od 2021. do 2022. godine, te stažiranjem i aktivnim radom u privatnim školama jezika, kojim se bavi od 2020. godine.

Praktično iskustvo u području prevodilačkog rada stekla je kroz program prakse za studente Filološkog fakulteta, kroz koji je kao učesnik imala ulogu prevodioca u Inspektoratu Republike Srpske, u Odjeljenju za planiranje, izvještavanje i institucionalnu saradnju u periodu od marta do juna 2021. godine. Ovo prevodilačko iskustvo u Republičkoj upravi za inspekcijske poslove joj je omogućilo da se bavi pitanjima međunarodne saradnje i evropskih integracija, prevodeći suštinska dokumenta i vijesti, te je imalo uticaja na formiranje teme njenog istraživačkog rada na master studijima.

Elenino znanje stranih jezika proteže se u aktivnoj upotrebi na engleski, njemački i francuski jezik. Učenje stranih jezika je jedno od njenih najvećih strasti, naročito holistički pristup istom u sklopu kojeg se pažnja posvećuje i informisanju o tradiciji, kulturi uopšte ali i posebno pop kulturi svakog jezika. Njena ostala interesovanja van akademskog i profesionalnog života uključuju putovanja i grafički dizajn, te volontiranje u pomaganju životinjama lualicama.

Филолошки факултет
ПРИМЉЕНО: 6.2.2024.
09/3.2216-9/23
24

НАУЧНО-НАСТАВНОМ ВИЈЕЋУ ФИЛОЛОШКОГ ФАКУЛТЕТА УНИВЕРЗИТЕТА У БАЊОЈ ЛУЦИ

На 175. сједници Научно-наставног вијећа Филолошког факултета Универзитета у Бањој Луци, одржаној 11.12.2023. године, Одлуком бр. 09/3.2216-9/23, именована је Комисија за оцјену мастер рада *Modern Media Bias: An SFL Approach* кандидаткиње Елене Шпановић. Комисија је радила у саставу:

1. Др Татјана Марјановић, редовни професор за ужу научну област Специфични језици – енглески језик на Филолошком факултету Универзитета у Бањој Луци, предсједник (ментор),
2. Др Далибор Кесић, редовни професор за ужу научну област Специфични језици – енглески језик на Филолошком факултету Универзитета у Бањој Луци, члан,
3. Др Емир Мухић, ванредни професор за ужу научну област Специфични језици – енглески језик на Филолошком факултету Универзитета у Бањој Луци, члан.

Захваљујући на повјерењу Научно-наставном вијећу Филолошког факултета, Комисија подноси следећи

ИЗВЈЕШТАЈ

Мастер рад *Modern Media Bias: An SFL Approach* кандидаткиње Елене Шпановић написан је на енглеском језику и износи укупно 88 страница, од којих 78 заузимају текст и анализа корпуса, а у остатку се налазе библиографски подаци, који броје 18 јединица, и корпусни извори, којих је 80. На крају рукописа уприличена је пратећа биографија кандидаткиње, те примјерци изјаве о ауторству, изјаве којом се овлашћује Филолошки факултет Универзитета у Бањој Луци да мастер рад учини јавно доступним, и изјаве о идентичности штампане и електронске верзије мастер рада. У почетном дијелу рада који није означен пагинацијом налази се апстракт са кључним ријечима на енглеском и српском језику. Рад је организован у шест засебних цјелина, од увода, преко циљева истраживања, прегледа литературе, теоријског утемељења истраживања, корпусне анализе, до закључка. Битан дио рада представља 76 табела, од којих двије садрже квантитативне податке, док највећи дио њих отпада на детаљне анализе изабраних наслова или уводних реченица медијског корпуса на којем је проведено истраживање. Поред табеларних

приказа, у раду се налази и 19 слика које прате изабрану корпусну грађу, као и један графички приказ који илуструје однос слабе и јаке модалности у тексту.

Кандидаткиња Елена Шпановић провела је емпиријско истраживање засновано на двије комплементарне теорије: окосницу језичке анализе представља системска функционална лингвистика, коју допуњава и у медијски контекст јавног простора ставља критичка анализа дискурса. Системска функционална анализа имала је задатак да истражи језичке карактеристике које обликују савремени медијски дискурс, посебно у контексту сфере политике модерног доба, те извјештавања о ратним дешавањима. Фокус је био на разумијевању начина на који се језик користи за конструисање наратива у медијским извјештајима, а анализом су обухваћене категорије попут клаузалних процеса и учесника, тематске структуре, модалности, глаголског стања, и сл.

Корпус, прикупљен електронским путем, сачињавају и новинске и телевизијске вијести, као и садржаји објављени на друштвеним мрежама у америчком медијском простору. Повезницу међу њима представља јединствен избор теме, а то је рат у Авганистану и повлачење америчких трупа са тог подручја. Медијски извјештаји који су били предмет анализе овог мастер рада покривају цијелу лепезу политичких опција, од либералних до радикалних, од заговорника политичког центра до оних лијевог и десног опредјељења.

Анализом је показано да десничарски извори предњаче у домену изражавања пристрасности, првенствено у оном што се у анализи медијских текстова назива *slant*, искривљено становиште, или извјештавање које погодује одређеним политичким субјектима. Иако су извори лијеве оријентације исказивали пристрасност у мањем обиму, и ту је, као најдоминантнији експонент медијског наратива, забиљежен *spin*, овдје употребиљен као технички термин за изокретање чињеница. Анализом су обухваћене и друге, у медијском дискурсу релевантне, категорије попут непоткријењене тврдње, представљања личног мишљења као чињенице, сензационализма, блаћења, и сл.

Закључак и приједлог

Истраживање које је кандидаткиња Елена Шпановић провела у мастер раду назива *Modern Media Bias: An SFL Approach* показало је њену способност да проучи комплексне и слојевите лингвистичке концепте попут клаузалних процеса и учесника, тематске структуре, модалности, те да их конкретно примијени у самој корпусној анализи. Основни закључак њеног истраживања

јесте и потврда почетне хипотезе, а то је да је пристрасност у медијском извјештавању свеprisутна, иако се, у зависности од политичке опције којој се тежи, може разликовати у обиму и начину изражавања. Управо овај посљедњи налаз позива на нарочит опрез у приступу савременим медијским садржајима, које могу да одликују суптилне методе фаворизовања или убјеђивања, некада и тешко препознатљиве за недовољно медијски образованог читаоца. Дobar одабир референци, разумијевање кориштених теорија и вишеслојна анализа корпуса потврда су њеног зрелог приступа у изради овог мастер рада, који отвара бројна теоријска и емпиријска питања и позива на нова истраживања ових и њима сродних лингвистичких и дискурзивних категорија.

Комисија са задовољством констатује да је у изради мастер рада *Modern Media Bias: An SFL Approach* кандидаткиња Елена Шпановић у потпуности испоштовала формалне и суштинске захтјеве који прате ову врсту радњи, те показала да може успјешно да се носи са теоријским и практичним изазовима истраживачког рада. Сходно томе, Комисија предлаже Научно-наставном вијећу да усвоји овај извјештај, а кандидаткињи омогући усмену одбрану рада пред комисијом у истом саставу.

У Бањој Луци, 2.2.2024. године

Комисија:

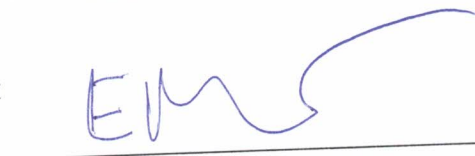
1. Проф. др Татјана Марјановић, предсједник (ментор)



2. Проф. др Далибор Кесић, члан



3. Проф. др Емир Мухић, члан



ИЗЈАВА О АУТОРСТВУ

Изјављујем да је
мастер/магистарски рад

Наслов рада *Приситрасност модерних медија: сара Трисидеја*

Наслов рада на енглеском језику *Modern Media Bias: An SFL Approach*

- ☐ резултат сопственог истраживачког рада,
- ☐ да мастер/магистарски рад, у цјелини или у дијеловима, није био предложен за добијање било које дипломе према студијским програмима других високошколских установа,
- ☐ да су резултати коректно наведени и
- ☐ да нисам кршио/ла ауторска права и користио интелектуалну својину других лица.

У Бањој Луци, *дана 6. 3. 2024. године*

Потпис кандидата

Елена Митановић

Изјава 2

Изјава којом се овлашћује Филозофски факултет/ Академија умјетности
Универзитета у Бањој Луци да мастер/магистарски рад учини јавно доступним

Овлашћујем Филозофски факултет/ Академију умјетности Универзитета у Бањој
Луци да мој мастер/магистарски рад, под насловом

Modern Media Bias: An SFL Approach

који је моје ауторско дјело, учини јавно доступним.

Мастер/магистарски рад са свим прилозима предао/ла сам у електронском формату,
погодном за трајно архивирање.

Мој мастер/магистарски рад, похрањен у дигитални репозиторијум Универзитета
у Бањој Луци, могу да користе сви који поштују одредбе садржане у одабраном типу лиценце
Креативне заједнице (*Creative Commons*), за коју сам се одлучио/ла.

1. Ауторство
2. Ауторство - некомерцијално
- ☒ 3. Ауторство - некомерцијално - без прераде
4. Ауторство - некомерцијално - дијелити под истим условима
5. Ауторство - без прераде
6. Ауторство - дијелити под истим условима

(Молимо да заокружите само једну од шест понуђених лиценци, кратак опис лиценци дат је
на полеђини листа).

У Бањој Луци дана 6. 3. 2024. год.

Потпис кандидата

Елена Милачић

Изјава 3

Изјава о идентичности штампане и електронске верзије
мастер/магистарског рада

Име и презиме аутора Елена Милићковић
Наслов рада Modern Media Bias: An SFL Approach
Ментор Проф. др Милутина Марјановић

Изјављујем да је штампана верзија мог мастер/магистарског рада идентична електронској верзији коју сам предао/ла за дигитални репозиторијум Универзитета у Бањој Луци.

У Бањој Луци, дана 6.3. 2024. год.

Потпис кандидата

Елена Милићковић