

MEDIA MANIPULATION AS A TOOL OF INFORMATION WARFARE: TYPOLOGY SIGNS, LANGUAGE MARKERS, FACT CHECKING METHODS

^aIRYNA KONSTANKEVYCH, ^bNATALIIA KOSTUSIAK,
^cNATALIIA SHULSKA, ^dOLGA STANISLAV, ^eTETIANA
YELOVA, ^fIRYNA KAUKA

^{a-f}Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, 13, Voli Ave.,
43025, Lutsk, Ukraine,
email: ^afilol9944@gmail.com, ^bkostusyak.nataliia@vnu.edu.ua,
^cchulska.natalia@vnu.edu.ua, ^dstanislav@vnu.edu.ua,
^eyelova.tetiana@vnu.edu.ua, ^fkauka.iryana@vnu.edu.ua

Abstract: The article analyzes the manipulations that exist in the Ukrainian media space due to Russian propaganda in the conditions of the information war. Harmful information material was collected through a comprehensive survey of social networks. Its dissemination aims to create panic among the Ukrainian population, discrediting the authorities, the military, and the army, threatening the loss of the country's independence and democracy, etc. Based on the study of manipulative communication technologies used by the Russian mass media in wartime, it was revealed that effective methods are the use of mediators, information blockade, rewriting of history, the technique of shifting accents, sensationalism, and psychological shock. A common method of manipulation in the Russian Federation is the creation of virtual reality through myths and the construction of various images, stamps, and simulacra. Typical signs of hostile media manipulations are singled out: appeal to emotions; questionable sources of origin of the information or their absence; misrepresentation of facts; expressive hyperbolization or surrealism, and others. Evidence of manipulative news is the low language culture of this kind of message: the absence of elementary spelling rules, violations of linguistic and stylistic norms, the use of Russianisms or other lexical inaccuracies, and factual and logical errors. Effective fact-checking methods are proposed for detecting and refuting various types of disinformation.

Keywords: Fact-checking, Fake, Information war, Linguistic communicative markers, Media manipulation, Russian propaganda.

1 Introduction

The 21st century is the era of innovative technologies, scientific progress of society and, of course, it represents the driving force behind the development of information communication between people. We live in the era of "instant messaging", when the exchange of any data between communicators takes only a few seconds. Such changes have significantly affected the field of mass media, because now news is produced and distributed at a tremendous speed. This enables media workers to quickly create and distribute information, providing relevant news to a specific group of people or the population of the entire country. The mega-fast pace of dissemination of various messages has led to the fact that it is not always possible to quickly reveal their reliability and accuracy, since it is extremely difficult to control this process. Humanity began to use such advantages of technological progress for a negative purpose – waging an information war. The mass media began to actively use this term since 1991, connecting it with the operation "Desert Storm" (a military operation led by the United States against Iraq in connection with its occupation of the neighboring state of Kuwait). According to the scientist and information policy expert H. Pocheptsov, despite the fact that information does not shoot or explode, it cannot be safe, because in the virtual space, information weapons bring destruction and irreparable consequences [15].

In general, information warfare is the presentation of information to the public with the aim of further forming in it the necessary thoughts, attitudes, and a comprehensive system of views regarding certain issues, events, or people for the benefit of the organizer of a specific information or propaganda campaign. The main goal of conducting an information war is to manipulate the masses, that is, to introduce by the enemy into the consciousness of the victim country the necessary ideas and views, to disorient and misinform the mass audience, on the one hand, to intimidate one's own people with the image of the enemy, on the other hand, to create fear and insecurity in the opponent due to own power. It is clear that when the enemy does not succeed in doing what he wants, then he starts "fighting" on the information front with false "throwbacks" – all kinds of manipulative messages and fakes.

Today, in the conditions of a full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, all the goals of the aggressor are aimed not only at causing real losses to the adversary on the battlefield, but also at disrupting the exchange of reliable information and influencing the state mechanisms for making important decisions. The main goal of Russian propaganda is to put Ukrainians in a state of panic, to make the population of the country scared and disoriented, to think about fleeing or surrendering, to spend time on sending fake messages instead of real help to the army and country. In the conditions of martial law, it is important to be able to detect and refute media manipulations, to look for typical linguistic and expressive markers of fake news, as well as to know the basics of fact-checking, because to be armed on the information front is to see fake news "in the face", to be able to identify their typological signs, to know the main anti-disinformation rules. We see the relevance of our research in this. The importance of scientific search is also confirmed by the fact that, in connection with current events, there is an urgent need to analyze the Ukrainian information space for the presence of manipulations and false news produced by the Russian mass media.

2 Materials and Methods

Various manipulations in mass media, as an effective tool of information warfare, sporadically became the object of analysis by media experts, scientists, and practicing journalists. H. Pocheptsov [15], N. Horban [5], I. Kulyas [8] write about the peculiarities of conducting modern information wars, as well as compliance with professional standards, calling Russia's war with Ukraine until 2022 "hybrid" or "undeclared". Since 2014, O. Goyman [4], N. Nikolayenko, Yu. Vasylevich, O. Komarchuk [12]; S. Parkhomenko [13] have been studying the specifics of mass consciousness manipulation through the Russian mass media in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war; A fake as a method of manipulation in mass media, its varieties and features of detection and refutation are considered in scientific investigations by S. Zozulya [19], M. Kits [7], I. Mudra [11], M. Prokopenko [16], I. Puciat [17], O. Saprykin [18]. R. Gerasimenko [3], V. Eismunt [1], and O. Minchenko [9] note the ability to distinguish lies from the truth in the information space and the importance of knowledge of the basics of fact-checking. V. Portnikov defines mass media as another type of Armed Forces [14].

Following the full-scale invasion of Russia on February 24, 2022, advice from the Ministry of Digital Transformation and from the State Emergency Service on how to combat Russian manipulative propaganda on the Internet, as well as 10 tips on how not to fall victim to disinformation in wartime appeared. The Center for Combating Disinformation at the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine constantly gives sound advice on how to detect false information and not spread it. During the wartime in Ukraine, negative manipulative content, which the Russian side throws into the Ukrainian space, are detected and refuted by such media sites and anti-fake projects as "StopFake", "Brehunetz" ("Liar"), "NotaYenota", "Media Detector" and "Institute of Mass Information". With the beginning of the war, a podcast with the specific name "Russian fake, go to..." was launched on the "Detector Media" website. The creators of this information resource not only prepare selections of ready-made refutations of fakes, but also talk about how to independently learn to distinguish between manipulation, fraud, and disinformation. However, until now, there are no separate scientific studies that would consider in detail media manipulation as a tool of enemy propaganda, which appeared in the information space with the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war on February 24, 2022.

The purpose and task of the research is to analyze manipulations in the Ukrainian media space as a tool of information warfare and the result of Russian propaganda; indicate the typical signs of fake news of the aggressor country, to investigate linguistic

and communicative markers of false enemy messages, and to offer the most effective fact-checking methods in the fight against disinformation.

3 Results and Discussion

Today, social networks, as well as so-called garbage sites, which spread false content supported by fake photos, "testimonies" of pseudo-eyewitnesses, and falsified videos, have become the main platform for conducting an information war. The extraordinary popularity of social networks has made it possible not only to spread disinformation instantly, but also to have direct access to the accounts of the political and military leadership of the enemy country. Some of the modern wars started with information wars. For example, the reason for the bombing of Baghdad by the United States of America was the information spread by the world media that the regime of Saddam Hussein (representative of the Iraqi leadership, dictator and president of Iraq from 1979 to 2003) allegedly has weapons of mass destruction. As a result of the spread of such misinformation, the war in Iraq began, during which the weapon that scared all of humanity was never found.

The main types of information warfare usually include the following: collection and processing of strategic information, dissemination of propaganda or fakes for the purpose of demoralizing the population of the country or the military, undermining the quality of information resources of the enemy, and preventing the possibility of the enemy collecting and processing information. In modern conditions, mass media can serve, on the one hand, as a tool of information warfare, on the other hand, as a non-governmental organization for the protection of the information space. In the first case, the media implement the goals of state information security through anti-propaganda and educational activities. The experience of Ukraine, which is under military information pressure from an external aggressor, is an example of the use of mass media as a kind of "information shield".

Otherwise, the mass media implement a strategy of aggressive propaganda to achieve the political goals of the government. As V. Khristenko points out, "propaganda differs from ordinary information primarily in that it contains means and mechanisms for manipulating the consciousness of a person or a group of people, and the manipulation, in turn, is carried out hidden from the consciousness of a person, which greatly complicates the critical evaluation of information" [6, p. 165]. It is known that media manipulation is one of the types of psychological influence, which was previously carried out mainly through the press (books, magazines, newspapers) and radio or cinema; today, television, the Internet (primarily social networks, chats, communities, groups) and billboards are the actual field of dissemination of manipulative messages. The purpose of spreading manipulations is to awaken intentions in the object of influence that radically change his mood, desires, behavior, and views.

Information security and Russian propaganda researcher Ben Nimo singled out four main components of disinformation: denial of truth and facts; distortion and twisting of facts; distraction and blame; intimidation, causing panic and anxiety. It is precisely according to this model that the information dumps and manipulative statements of the Russian Federation work. Since the annexation of Crimea and the occupation of eastern Ukraine in 2014, the Russian side has been actively using information weapons involving manipulative hybrid technologies, as well as techniques of media aggression against Ukraine. The mass media, as the second Armed Forces, systematically serve to carry out informational attacks on the domestic media space. The aggressor state uses the means of communication to undermine the vital interests of the Ukrainian state and the social and psychological stability of Ukrainian society. Based on the analysis of manipulative communication technologies used by the Russian mass media in wartime conditions, it was established that effective methods are the use of mediators (real or pseudo-authorities of informal leaders, politicians, representatives of science and culture, etc.);

information blockade (the information space of the Russian Federation is constantly in an artificial vacuum); the method of rewriting history (part of the Ukrainian territory is still considered its 'own' after the collapse of the USSR); receiving feedback (various theatrical productions with the aim of creating an appropriate reaction from consumers of information, such as frequent spectacle communications with V. Putin online); the technique of shifting accents (inventing problems and giving them great significance, creating a possible threat); the method of sensationalism and psychological shock (such messages usually contain inflaming the situation, undermining the psychological protection of citizens, which causes an increase in the level of nervousness). A common method of manipulation in the Russian Federation is the creation of virtual reality through myths, the construction of various images and stereotypes.

Among the toolkit of manipulative communication technologies, the Russian mass media also single out the technology of contextual blocking, expressed in part by verbal markers. Let us recall, for example, the use of the phrase "return of Crimea" by Russian media instead of "accession" or "annexation". In the modern context, we observe something similar: Russian narratives use only the terms "liberation from imaginary Nazis" or "special operation", avoiding the correct concepts of "war" and "full-scale invasion".

Today, the Russian Federation powerfully uses the meanings of Soviet propaganda, and in the future constructs myths surrounding the Second World War not only in the Ukrainian information space, but also in the world. This is due to the fact that the aggressor country relies on social stereotypes that were formed by the totalitarian regime for many years in a row. The technology of anonymous citation is also repeatedly used, which involves citing anonymous expert assessments, documents, witnesses without indicating the source of the message, and this, in turn, contradicts the professional standards of journalism. No less widespread in Russian propaganda are the methods of pseudo-surveys and ratings, the purpose of which is the formation of relevant public opinion through the distortion of reality.

In the Ukrainian media space, there is a large amount of not just Russian propaganda, but the so-called "war of meanings" for the retransmission of which the communication technologies described above are used. Simulacra - images of things that do not exist in real time - have become the main structural element in the information struggle today. Examples of such simulacra are "Nazis in Ukraine", "fascists in Kyiv", "atrocities of punitive battalions", "crucified children", "use of prohibited weapons by Ukraine", etc. As the researchers note, "the strategic goal of exploiting these simulacra is to replace the objective perceptions of the target groups about the nature of the conflict with those "informational phantoms" that the aggressor needs" [19].

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the Russian Federation has actively promoted narratives of hate towards the Ukrainian people among its citizens, including that Ukraine is a breeding ground for Nazism, as well as it is a close relationship with the United States. For example - the news of the Russian mass media "RBK", in which they claim that Ukraine steals gas from the Russian "Gazprom" and does not pay a penny for it. Another well-established example of such an information campaign was a fake article by one of the Russian media about a boy allegedly crucified by military officers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Such simulacrum narratives have been spread by the Russian mass media for many years so that the population of the Russian Federation begins to hate the Ukrainian people. With the help of fake news, the Kremlin's propaganda justifies and covers up the crimes committed by the Russian military on the territory of Ukraine. Russian propaganda is trying to create a false impression of the course of the war among its citizens and portray Ukrainians in a negative light. For this, in their manipulative materials, they use oral and written false messages and staged video sequences. The Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, Sergei Shoigu, himself admitted that fake

news and mass media are another type of the Russian Armed Forces.

A proven and effective technology for manipulating public opinion in wartime is the distribution of fakes, that is, specially created messages that contain false or distorted information. The main purpose of spreading hostile fake news is to misinform the audience through invented facts, to promote an opinion or position necessary for the aggressor, to sow panic and create a psychological shock, to change the fixed opinion of the recipients, to activate attention to what is necessary, to induce a certain action, to shake the position of the individual, to make him doubt or get scared. On the one hand, a fake can be untrue in its pure form, but presented and formed in such a way that it is difficult to notice; on the other – it can combine truth and lies in the ratio required by the manipulator.

Among the so-called Russian information “dumps”, we distinguish mass media fakes created by special enemy mass media and spread by them, as well as “network rumors”, that is, the spread of someone else's fiction through social networks, Viber groups, messengers, Telegram channels, chats, etc. Communicative markers of manipulative messages are usually characterized with excessive emotionality, repetition after a certain period of time (as with the fake about the lack of blood, which was distributed in the same wording for a long time); extraction of a certain context, fragmentation of the whole picture of information. In such messages, the lexemes “urgent”, “sensational”, “reliable source”, etc. are usually used as verbal signs. There is the so-called “totalitarianism” of the source of the message with an absolute lack of credibility. There are also mixing of information and misinformation, activation of stereotypical ideas, cover-up by unknown authorities, etc.

Among the most common fake messages, we point to such as posts on Facebook and Telegram channels, materials in the format of YouTube and Instagram, since audiovisual information is the easiest and most attractive to a huge audience of users. Given the large amount of time spent on the Internet, the uncontrolled flow of information in it, as well as the lack of censorship and opinion leadership, precisely social networks, unfortunately, contribute to the spread of manipulative content as opposed to traditional media. Since most of people perceive messengers as personal communication platforms, personal space, viral messages in Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram communities often become one of the most effective ways to spread panic, incitement and intimidation. Fake sms messages have also become a popular tool for spreading lies; they are designed mainly for older people who rarely use Internet communication tools.

Often, fakes are spread not only in social networks, but also in traditional mass media. Russian propaganda tools are very active in spreading manipulative news on various topics, but mostly they concern the Ukrainian military and immigrants from the territories where active hostilities are taking place. In their texts, the Kremlin mass media try to portray the Armed Forces of Ukraine in a negative light and discredit them in the eyes of the public. As typical formal signs of enemy fakes, we note first of all the use of manipulative phrases such as “reliable information”, “the military told me”, “you know me, I will not lie” and the like. The source of such information is the so-called “exclusive from friends, relatives in the prosecutor's office, the police, the Military Commissariat, “a source in higher circles”, etc. Sometimes, there is absolutely no information on the sources of their appearance. If a dash is placed in the title and the mass media is generally indicated as the source, then such information should definitely cause doubt.

For example, in the construction: “In Ukraine, the departure of men from the cities can be restricted, – mass media”. The primary source of this news is UNIAN, which published an article with the screaming headline “Not a step without the Military Commissariat”. The author of the publication is a lawyer who writes that there are allegedly various provisions in Ukrainian legislation, according to which men under martial law can move outside their place of residence only with the

permission of the head of the Military Committee, but there is no indication of a specific provision that regulates this, i.e., information presented too generalized, which is evidenced by the violation of the reliability standard already in the indicated reference to the source “*according to some information*”.

Media manipulation is often created on the basis of already available information, but it is presented from manipulators' own point of view, as needed by the hostile media. For example, the Russian media spread reports that Great Britain and Turkey plan to buy up all Ukrainian grain and doom Ukraine to famine, referring to the statement of Foreign Affairs Minister Liz Truss. Although the statement is actually about the cooperation between Britain and Turkey regarding the export of grain from Ukraine, the news contains Russian propaganda built on the comments of users of social networks, who incompetently act as experts and draw a conclusion about the alleged future famine in Ukraine due to the negative actions of the two countries. In a similar way, the manipulation of the HGU-56/P ABH helmet, which was found at the crash site of the Ukrainian helicopter, is presented. Such helmets are used by pilots of NATO member countries, as well as in the US Army. Ukrainian soldiers do not wear such a headdress. Russian propagandists began to mass-distribute photos of the helmet and accuse current and former NATO servicemen of allegedly participating in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Fact-checkers from Mythdetector found out that the information is not true, as the helmet manufacturer Gentex Corporation first published these photos, and the photo was sent to the Air Force of Ukraine as a gratitude for the fact that the helmet saved their lives.

Using the facts that are already in the information space, the occupiers often distort them, creating their own “scary fictions”. In particular, by presenting in a different way the statement of the chief state sanitary doctor of Ukraine regarding the possible threat of a cholera outbreak in Mariupol, Russian propagandists created a fake that the chief doctor was allegedly gathering his subordinates in one of the hospitals of Mariupol regarding the outbreak of the disease. As it is known, not a single case of cholera has been recorded in Ukraine, it is clear that these are again fake “throw-ins” by the Russians.

Partly manipulative information has a pronounced pro-Russian character, aimed at discrediting the Ukrainian authorities, the military, the army, the loss of the country's independence and democracy, etc. An example is the fake that the residents of Nova Kakhovka have not received salaries and pensions for two months, and Kyiv has disconnected mobile communications and blocked the bank accounts of residents of the occupied South, although in reality mobile communications and the Internet were turned off in Kherson Oblast by the Russian military. False narratives about the retreat of Ukrainian troops and their significant losses are repeatedly spread in the temporarily occupied territories, which are in an information vacuum. Manipulative one is also the information about the alleged desire of captured Ukrainian servicemen to obtain Russian citizenship. A photo of a fake document about the shooting of a soldier by the Ukrainian military, who did not follow his order, was also circulated on social networks. It is not a new fake that by order of the leadership of the National Guard “they will shoot Ukrainian soldiers who surrender”.

Expressive hyperbolization serves as a demonstrative linguistic and expressive means of Russian propaganda, such as in the fake news that there is a great excitement in the Kherson region about the fact that residents of Ukraine are en masse in queues to submit documents for acquiring Russian citizenship. Additional markers of manipulation here are the lexemes “great excitement” (strengthening the context provides a non-normative pleonasm), “very”, “massively”. After taking control of Mariupol, the Russian authorities began to spread false information that Ukraine supposedly “does not exist” and that the Russian army is advancing. The Russian media spread false “spoilers” that lists of volunteers are being formed in Zaporizhzhia, who seek to defend the city from Ukrainian soldiers. It is clear that this kind of information seems completely absurd.

The main message of manipulative messages is incitement to panic, and the news is based on opinions and evaluative judgments without real facts. It is usually written in an emotional and hysterical tone. For example, there was false information that the Armed Forces of Ukraine allegedly throw untrained soldiers into battle. At the beginning of the war, a fake about the surrender of Volodymyr Zelenskyi and his escape was widely spread. Another one of such "news" was a report about a cruise missile that seems to be flying in the direction of the Volyn region. This message spread in various Telegram channels, which publish unverified and unconfirmed data in official sources, in this way they adhere to the principle of expediency in journalistic texts, but forget about the standard of reliability. The information appeared during the air alert, however, when it ended, this message was deleted, but it managed to fulfill its "mission": to attract the attention of readers to the Telegram channel, to create activity in it, but worst of all, to spread panic among the residents of Volyn. Exacerbating the military situation on the Ukrainian-Belarusian border, users of the communities of the Volyn region sometimes publish manipulative messages "Volyn, hold on!" or "Volyn, we are with you!", playing along with the enemy in this way.

In the first weeks of the war, Viber groups, chats, and telegram channels began to receive messages from various sources about alleged planes with "Russian landing forces", "DRG", weapons in religious buildings. As it turned out later, this information was not confirmed, but nevertheless it managed to spread among the population of Volyn, and even put some into a state of panic. The well-known fake about the blood, that allegedly injured boys from Kyiv were brought to the military hospital in Lutsk, also became popular. The fake message urged that "a lot of blood is needed, especially type IV Rh (-)". Later, the press service of the Volyn police denied this information, as did the blood transfusion station, where concerned Luhansk residents called to help. Applying aspects of critical thinking, we point out clear signs of fakeness in a popular message that was spread with great activity. First, it is an appeal to emotions through the markers "attention", "this is important", "a lot of blood is needed". The appeal for news of this type is already known: "throw it to everyone, to all possible groups". This fake about blood became almost the most popular, because it was spread every time in a new way, not only in Volyn, but also in other regions of Ukraine at other times. The purpose of such hostile propaganda is clear: not only to sow panic that there are many wounded on the Ukrainian side, but also to disorient the work of the relevant services. In this regard, the explanation of experts is useful, because turning to experts should be one of the priority tasks when checking such information: "There is never an urgent and acute need for blood due to a lack of a certain group and rhesus".

In the first days of the full-scale invasion, a hoax was spread about alleged "volunteer drones" over the Volyn region, although the police claimed that all private aircraft were prohibited in Volyn in wartime conditions. An example of false information was also the reports about the so-called training sirens, although this information was quickly refuted. Users of social networks spread fake news about the immediate dismantling of all satellite antennas installed on the roofs of houses, because allegedly through them the Russian invaders get information illegally, and news spread in Kyiv that such antennas served as target indicators for planes. Salt, or rather its shortage, became a hot topic for Ukrainians at the end of May - beginning of June. Social networks actively spread false information that the spice would completely disappear from store shelves or would be very expensive. The company "Artemsil" did cease to operate, but large stores still had stocks (thousands of tons) of this spice, and small stores, due to the news and the artificially created hype that arose around the product, began to raise prices. Also, a fake was spread in social networks that vinegar is disappearing from sales counters. In fact, this message is a manipulation, as a result of which an artificial shortage of the product can really arise and, accordingly, an increase in prices.

A separate category of Russian propaganda is fakes related to the publication of supposedly "secret" documents of the Ukrainian government, which contain a variety of narratives in favor of the enemy: "support for Russia among the local population", "Ukrainians in the encircled territories were always waiting for the Russians", etc. Sometimes opinions can be completely opposite – about subversive activities against the Russian Federation, allegedly planned attacks from Mariupol, Melitopol and other nearby territories, the seizure of Crimea, preparation of biological weapons, laboratories, etc. For example, one such "secret" document, as if belonging to the "Azov" regiment, allegedly was found by the Russians at the "Azovstal" plant. It allegedly indicated that 70 % of the population of Mariupol supported Russia, although in fact this fake was soon refuted.

Evidence of manipulation is the low language culture of this kind of messages: lack of elementary rules of spelling, violation of linguistic stylistic norms, use of Russianisms or other lexical inaccuracies, etc. For example, in the forged documents of the state bodies of Ukraine, which were allegedly found by the Russian military, the requisites indicate the non-normative for Ukrainian usage of the lexeme "секретно" ("secretly") instead of the correct "таємно". It is not difficult to guess that the tracing from the language of the aggressor indicates the implausibility of such documents. A similar example is with a fabricated report allegedly about a Ukrainian soldier who was shot for disobeying the order of the leadership. Spelling and lexical errors were found in it: the "молодий" (junior) lieutenant in the document was identified by the token "млаодий", and the last name "Kutsyn" was translated as "Kutsin". Russianism is also used in writing the date: "04.06.22 з." (06.04.22" (the letter at the end means "год" (year), while it should be: р. (r.) – "рік"). In such messages, we often record lexical inaccuracies: "scatter information in groups" (correctly – "distribute in groups"), "massive missile attacks" (properly – "mass"), "we do not disclose address" (normatively – "addresses"), "leaving to the shelter" (correctly – "go to the shelter"), "жд станції" (railway stations) (normatively – "залізничні станції"); grammatical errors: "давайте не підводити наші ЗСУ" (let's not let our armed forces down) (correctly – "не підводьмо наші ЗСУ"), "не говорити номери" (don't say numbers) (normatively – "номери") and the like.

Factual inaccuracies are not unique in fake materials. In the already mentioned falsified document, the report is written in the name of the former commander of the separate mechanized brigade "Kholodny Yar", who performed his duties until January 2022, and since then - the commander of the brigade is different. The fake about the alleged appearance of cholera in Mariupol contains inaccurate information that the disease is caused by a bacillus, while in fact the disease is caused by the cholera vibrio. Logical errors are also one of the signs of manipulation. For example, in the false reports of the Kremlin mass media, it is noted that servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are allegedly involved as volunteers in experiments with biological weapons. The Russians claim that the captured Ukrainians are suffering from hepatitis and West Nile fever. Such reports indicate a logical inaccuracy, i.e., the emergence of a contradiction, because, according to the testimony of the aggressor country, it tests every Ukrainian prisoner of war for dozens of diseases, that is, conducts detailed analyses, while from Ukrainian side it is known that military personnel who were captured by Russia do not receive the necessary medical care.

The specificity of enemy fakes, as already noted above, is pseudo-specificity and an atypical form of presentation of the textual component. In particular, in fake news, there are often heterogeneous fonts, accumulation of exclamation marks or question marks, their incorrect use, such as in another Russian manipulation: "Доброго вечора, шановні!!!! Хочу повідомити. Увага!!! Інформація достовірна!!!!!" ("Good evening, dear ones!!!! I want to inform. WARNING!!!! The information is reliable!!!!!!"), "!!! ТЕРМІНОВО! Розповсюджуйте по групах, лише достовірних!!!!!"

("!!! URGENTLY! Distribute in groups, only reliable ones!!!" and the like).

Russian propaganda through mass media also discredits the activities of the leadership of other countries or international organizations. In this context, it is worth mentioning the fake story about the Red Cross, in the branch of which in Mariupol, lists of healthy children were allegedly found who were undergoing examinations in order to transport their organs to European countries. We see that the information not only immediately seems unreal, that is, it raises doubts, but also indicates a violation of cause-and-effect relationships. Many fakes and manipulations are related to Poland, which most actively helps Ukrainian refugees abroad. It is not the first time that Russian propaganda spreads false information that a neighboring country threatens the subjectivity of Ukraine, discrediting the Polish people in the eyes of Ukrainians. In the Kremlin's propaganda media, there was news that Poland intends to introduce its troops into part of the territory of Ukraine (Volyn and Lviv regions) and take it under its control. Such messages are spread by the Russian side with the aim of worsening relations between Ukraine and Poland, which is currently one of the key partners and sends military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Recently, false information has been spread about the fact that Poland allegedly received the right to issue passports to citizens of Ukraine. This statement contradicts the norms of current Ukrainian legislation and immediately makes it clear that this is another pro-Russian manipulation. In fact, a pilot project has been launched, according to which foreign offices of the State Migration Service of Ukraine can issue documents to Ukrainians outside the country, and the first such office has started operations in Warsaw.

A message with the title "In Germany, refugees from Ukraine mowed down a swastika on a field" was circulated on social networks. There are even references to the testimony of the German journalist Julian Ripke and the Bild newspaper. But in fact, it is a fake, since the German law enforcement officers do not have any information about the involvement of Ukrainians in this. Recently, the Russian media spread the lie that alleged refugees from Ukraine almost caused a fire in the house of a German family by burning the Russian flag. A message sent to the e-mails of Transcarpathian newsrooms purportedly from the Society of Hungarian Culture of Transcarpathia about the provision of material assistance to Transcarpathian Hungarians forcibly mobilized into the Ukrainian army, as well as their families, was a fake aimed at worsening relations between Ukraine and Hungary. It is clear that the key elements of this provocative fake were the national component and the emphasis on forced mobilization.

Manipulation repeatedly appears as a method of justifying Russia's own crimes. Moscow, through information channels, every time motivates the shelling of Ukrainian civilians with false reports that it is doing it because Ukrainian soldiers are allegedly there, and residents are used only as "human shields". In this way, for example, the Kremlin media justify the crime of the Russian occupiers, which they committed on the evening of July 9, 2022, by shelling a residential building in the city of Chasiv Yar, Donetsk region. A similar informational "throw" was used to blame one's own crime on the opponent. Russian mass media spread a fake that Ukrainians set fire to wheat fields in the Kherson region themselves, as if from a helicopter. This fake message is part of the message that Ukraine is provoking the food crisis and hunger in the world. In fact, it is clear that namely the Russian military is shelling the fields with grain incendiary shells. Let us remind that the destruction of bread is considered one of the most serious crimes in wartime. Regarding the shelling of Vinnytsia, propagandists also invented excuses to hide a clear terrorist act: Russian Telegram channels spread fake information that missiles allegedly hit a military infrastructure object in the town of Haysyn, Vinnytsia region, although in reality the Russians hit residential quarters in the very center of Vinnytsia.

Another type of manipulation, which is becoming especially relevant today, given the state of war and not always logic use in decision-making, is the so-called phishing, that is, data theft. The purpose of such messages is obvious - to mislead a person, to force him to quickly, without even thinking, go to a specific link and enter his payment card data (user name, number, expiration date, CVV code). The sites to which they are asked to go via links are similar to the official resources of the Cabinet of Ministers, Ukrainian ministries, banking institutions, the UN, UNICEF, the EU and others. Phishing can be recognized by the following signs: an invented legend about alleged financial assistance to Ukrainians who suffered from the war; a link to the site where one needs to go and enter his data; comments of bots under the post that the payment is real and someone has already received 20–30–40 thousand hryvnias; time limit: the appeal "have time to fill in 30 minutes" (of course, not to give the person time to think). Unfortunately, more than 5,000 Ukrainians fell for fraudulent schemes, and criminals cheated people out of more than 100 million hryvnias under the guise of social benefits.

As a negative phenomenon, manipulation is, unfortunately, also present in the Ukrainian domestic media space. This is usually a far-fetched hyperbole in the titles of materials related to the war, or a mismatch of the title with the text of the news. This is the so-called technique of clickbait, which is used specifically so that more people read the news, and, accordingly, to increase media traffic. For example, the online publication "Volyn24" very often "speculates" on manipulative headlines, such as: "They fired at the regional center", "At night, air defenses shot down two cruise missiles that were supposed to attack the region", "23 missile strikes were carried out by the Russians on the city in a day", "A soldier shot a dog at a gas station in the middle of the day", "Five communities of the region are designated as territories where hostilities are taking place". It is clear that these headlines do not correspond to the information presented in the news texts. Such techniques in journalism are not ethical and violate professional standards.

Often, manipulative or fake news serves as a means of PR and advertising for those who want to promote their media. Unfortunately, even the Ukrainian mass media do this, despite the war in their country. For example, on the social network Facebook, they launched an advertisement with disinformation content: on a bright red background, which immediately attracts the attention of users, there was the inscription "Volyn region under threat of rocket attacks", and above it was depicted a yellow triangle with an exclamation mark. The audience that saw this advertising campaign was very indignant and wrote negative comments under the photo.

One of the Telegram channels, which was linked in the advertisement, decided to promote in this way, because people had to go to the address and subscribe to find out detailed information. Fake information was spread on Facebook that Poland pays Ukrainians large sums that depend on the month of a person's birth. Those born in September as if receive the most - 9,600 zlotys, and those born in March receive the least (6,800 zlotys). The post is on the fake Facebook page of the President of Poland (this is indicated by the misspelled name and the low activity of the account: only two posts and two thousand likes), and it is spread in various groups by ordinary readers who were led by false information. In addition, the field of activity "Real estate agent" was indicated on the fake page, so it can be assumed that in this way the real author of the page was "winding up" clients and assets.

So that manipulative news and fake messages do not completely flood the modern media space, everyone should know the basics of fact-checking, be able to recognize misinformation, refute it and not spread it further. In the conditions of war, when people are especially vulnerable, false messages are spread by the enemy at maximum speed. The only condition for resisting this is the formation of the foundations of critical thinking and teaching media literacy. If people receive news in Viber chat or Telegram channel from acquaintances, they should not panic and

spread it. First, one needs to check whether there is similar information on the pages of official sources: the Office of the President, the Ministry of Defense, the military administration, etc. If this information is not there, then the message is a manipulation, a fake or another pro-Russian gossip, so it is not worth your trust. False manipulative “throw-ins” are a powerful tool of hostile propaganda, so people should not give them a chance to “live” in the information space. The channel of distribution of manipulations is mostly also unknown, it is usually “word of mouth”. Before posting any information on social networks or forwarding it in private messages, it is worth trying to understand what result we will achieve by doing so. One should always be wary of messages containing appeals: “don't tell anyone”, “we have been betrayed”, and the like.

Russian propaganda is easily distinguished by the fact that it is extremely primitive, with the same set of metanarratives, presented one-sidedly, with a violation of cause-and-effect relationships. First of all, practicing journalists are advised not to spread anything that does not have reliable sources; do not resend those messages in which there is even a moment's doubt. One should also not believe the news in various online communities, chats that contain token tokens such as “betrayal”, “trouble”, “important information”, “we are not told about it”, etc. It is important to remember that all reports must first be checked in official sources regarding their truth or fakeness. It is necessary to always maintain self-control and not become a carrier of unverified information with overly emotional lexemes containing a distinct connotative context, especially from social networks and dubious channels.

The news should be of a neutral character, because if the author placed the “necessary” accents in the text, using various epithets with a negative evaluation (“junta”, “cotton workers”, “Banderivites”, “terrorists”, “fascists”), it is worth thinking about its veracity. The presence of evaluative judgments is a distinct sign of propaganda. If there are no references to verified and official sources of information in the text, or there are generalized sources, for example, “media reports”, etc. When refuting a fake, in no case should one spread it, it is better to block the post and explain that it is a false message. Media expert A. Romaniuk advises to act as follows: “The main thing is not to interact with fake news, because every comment will add an audience to this news. If one of your acquaintances has behaved and is accidentally spreading a fake, write to the person in private messages, explain that this is false information, and ask them to remove it” (cited by [3]).

The Center for Combating Disinformation under the National Security and Defense Council recommended a special fact-checking bot in Telegram called “*ВЕРИФІКАЦІЯ*” (VERIFYING) to Ukrainians. It will help to verify the truth of any information from social networks and electronic resources (especially news ones, because even journalists sometimes make mistakes). The chatbot works very simply: it is enough to send a link to a news story or, for example, a post on a social network, and a team of specialists will immediately check the authenticity of the facts presented in the text. The answer will come within a few minutes, and one will find out whether the information is true or fake. The main thing is to wait for the result and only then share information. During the war, this advice should not be neglected, because the enemy is watching for every mistake on the information front. The most important thing when observing information hygiene is to turn on the basics of logic and turn off emotions.

4 Conclusion

Therefore, the mission of every Ukrainian on the information front is more important today than ever. After all, in the conditions of war, it is necessary to be media literate, think critically, resist the spread of fake news, refute enemy manipulations and actively fight against them. It is important to maintain self-control, to help fight the enemy with information by all means.

Prospective in this direction may be studios that expand research on media manipulation, its varieties, impact on recipients, etc. Research related to media literacy and teaching critical thinking in the conditions of war in Ukraine is important.

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