

DAAD Project:
Hochschuldialog mit den Ländern des westlichen Balkans
Nis Workshop
May 2017



„Digesting Crises in Europe (DICE): Deconstructing and Constructing Media **Texts in Dialogue**“

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Theoretical Implications

Definition of **construe** verb from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

construe *verb*

BrE /kən'struː/ ; NAmE /kən'struː/  <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Construals> (10/05/17)
[usually passive] (*formal*)

+ Verb Forms

★ Add to my wordlist

to understand the meaning of a word, a sentence or an action in a particular way

→ SYNONYM INTERPRET

- **construe something** *He considered how the remark was to be construed.*
- **construe something as something** *Her words could hardly be construed as an apology.*

In [social psychology](#), **construals** are how individuals perceive, comprehend, and interpret the world around them, particularly the behavior or action of others towards themselves.

Halliday M.A.K., Matthiessen C.M.I.M. (2000). *Construing Experience Through Meaning: A Language-Based Approach to Cognition*. Continuum.

Definition of **deconstruct** verb from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

deconstruct *verb*

BrE /,diːkən'strʌkt/ ; NAmE /,diːkən'strʌkt/ 

+ Verb Forms

★ Add to my wordlist

- 1 **deconstruct something** (*specialist*) (in literature and philosophy) to analyse a text in order to show that there is no fixed meaning within the text but that the meaning is created each time in the act of reading
- 2 **deconstruct something (into something)** to separate something into the parts from which it is made up and put them together again in a different way
 - *Picasso deconstructed his subjects into cubes and colours.*
 - *deconstructed lasagne*

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deconstruction> (10/05/17)

Derrida's original use of the word "deconstruction" was a translation of *Destruktion*, a concept from the work of [Martin Heidegger](#) that Derrida sought to apply to textual reading. Heidegger's term referred to a process of exploring the categories and concepts that tradition has imposed on a word, and the history behind them. ^[22]

Political Implications

official criteria:

- continuation
- civil societies
- democratic development
- ethnic conflict

- sustainable
- young researchers
- cross-national coop

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Hochschuldialog mit den Ländern des westlichen Balkans



Das Programm „Hochschuldialog mit den Ländern des westlichen Balkans“, das aus Mitteln des *Auswärtigen Amtes* (AA) gefördert wird, knüpft an das 2016 beendete Programm „Akademischer Wiederaufbau Südosteuropa“ an. Durch dieses neue Förderprogramm soll ein Beitrag zur Stärkung der Zivilgesellschaften, zur Demokratieentwicklung und zum Abbau ethnischer Konflikte in der Zielregion geleistet werden. Dadurch trägt das Programm auch zur nachhaltigen Entwicklung der akademischen Lehre und Forschung, zur Nachwuchsförderung sowie zur grenzüberschreitenden fachlichen Zusammenarbeit in der Region bei.

1. Introduction

1.1. Combining critical thinking and writing

Many modern philological syllabi include

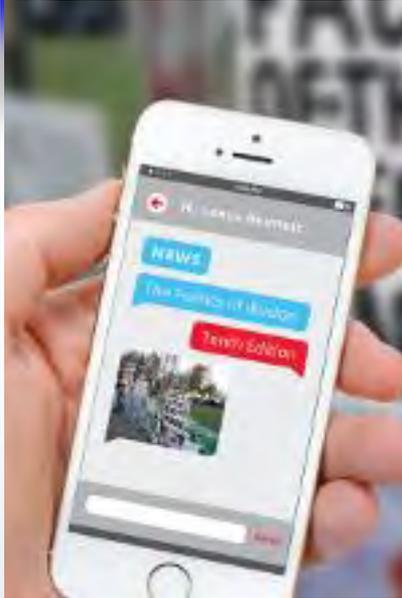
- modern digital literacy skills:
 - IT skills
 - text/source evaluation skills
 - writing skills

- evaluating research sources in Research Colloquia:
 - authority
 - accuracy
 - objectivity
 - currency
 - coverage

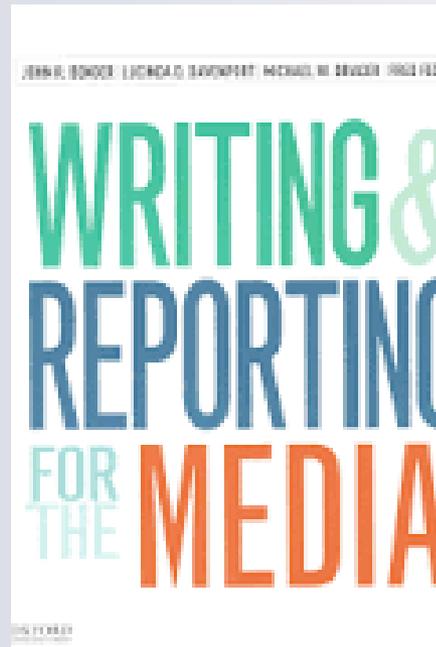
e.g.

<http://www.umuc.edu/current-students/learning-resources/writing-center/online-guide-to-writing/tutorial/chapter4/ch4-05.html>

1.2. Sources: from Journalism to applied linguistics



Bennett, Lance (2016). *The Politics of Illusion*.
Chicago: Chicago U.P.
includes modern media, like twitter, etc.



Bender, John et al. (2016). *Writing and Reporting for the Media*. 11th edition.
New York: Oxford U.P.
includes blogging and digital media

2. Concepts

2.1. Journalistic concepts

2.1.1. Crisis of the news?

The struggles of the legacy press system may not worry most people because there appear to be so many outlets for information that it is hard to keep up with them. One only need enter a topic in a search engine to find hundreds or thousands of sites with information about it. Yet many of the blogs, webzines, and online news organizations are **merely recycling the shrinking journalism content produced by increasingly threatened news organizations**. Consider a revealing study of one news microcosm: the “news ecosystem” of the city of Baltimore. The Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism conducted a study of where information about politics, government, and public life came from in that city.¹⁵ The study looked at various media, from newspaper, radio, and television to blogs and other online sites. Although this information system seemed rich and diverse, with some 53 different outlets for news, tracking the origins of actual news items showed that 95 percent of the stories containing original information “came from traditional media—most of them from the newspaper.” Even more distressing was a look back in time showing that the sole surviving paper, the *Baltimore Sun*, reported 32 percent fewer stories between 1999 and 2009, and 73 percent fewer than in 1991.

In his sweeping look at the creation (and demise) of the modern media, Paul Starr argued that if these trends continue, **the growing ignorance of the citizenry and the diminished public accountability of officials will surely be accompanied by a great wave of public corruption.** ^{fn} Indeed, many citizens already see corruption in government as a major problem. For example, a 2008 poll on the roots of the financial crisis showed that 62 percent strongly agreed with the statement that political corruption played a major role in the crisis, and another 19 percent agreed “somewhat” with that statement. ^{fn} By 2013, 76 percent of Americans felt that the political parties were the most corrupt institutions and that the problem was growing worse. ^{fn} (Bennett 2016: 4f)

2.1.2. Definitions of News

How do the changing interactions among political actors, publics, and the press affect the way we define the news? As a starting point, it makes sense to adopt a simple definition that expands political news beyond just what news organizations produce:

news consists of

(a) the reporting of actions and events

(b) over a growing variety of publicly accessible media

(c) by journalism organizations and an expanding spectrum of other content producers, including ordinary citizens.

As the news process expands beyond the legacy media, standards for selecting, formatting, sourcing, and documenting reports become less shared and more open to challenges about accuracy and relevance. Yet as some properties of news change, others remain the same. Doris Graber suggested that news is not just any information, or even the most important information, about the world; rather, the news tends to contain information that is *timely*, often *sensational* (scandals, violence, and human drama frequently dominate the news), and *familiar* (stories often draw on familiar people or life experiences that give even distant events a close-to-home feeling).⁸⁴ In this view, the news is constructed through the constantly changing interactions of journalists, politicians, and citizens often seeking different ends. (Bennett 2016: 24f)

2.1.3. From Gatekeepers and Spin to direct communication (P2P)

At the height of the mass media era, journalists were often regarded as “gatekeepers” who screened information (ideally according to its truth and importance. More recently, as the news habits change and the capacity for **direct news production and distribution by citizens grows**, gatekeeping by the legacy press is less effective and, in the view of some observers, less important.⁸⁵

Despite all the changes outlined above, the legacy news reported by journalists remains important in the governing process, even as it may undermine the legitimacy of that same process for many citizens who consume it. The core question explored in this book is, *How well does the news, as the core of the national political information system, serve the needs of democracy?* (Bennett 2016: 25)

In public relations and politics, spin is a form of propaganda, achieved through providing a biased interpretation of an event or campaigning to persuade public opinion in favor or against some organization or public figure. While traditional public relations and advertising may also rely on altering the presentation of the facts, "spin" often implies the use of disingenuous, deceptive, and highly manipulative tactics...

As such, a standard tactic used in "spinning" is to **reframe, reposition, or otherwise modify the perception of an issue or event, to reduce any negative impact it might have on public opinion.** For example, a company whose top-selling product is found to have a significant safety problem may "reframe" the issue by criticizing the safety of its main competitor's products or indeed by highlighting the risk associated with the entire product category. This might be done using a "catchy" slogan or sound bite that can help to persuade the public of the company's biased point of view. This tactic could enable the company to defocus the public's attention on the negative aspects of its product.

... theory suggests, **the omnipresence of the Internet in some societies will inevitably lead to a reduction in the effectiveness of spin.** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spin_\(propaganda\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spin_(propaganda)) (13/05/17)

Spin (propaganda)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"Spin doctor" redirects here. For the rock band, see [Spin Doctors](#).

In [public relations](#) and [politics](#), **spin** is a form of [propaganda](#), achieved through providing a biased interpretation of an event or campaigning to persuade [public opinion](#) in favor or against some organization or public figure. While traditional public relations and [advertising](#) may also rely on altering the presentation of the facts, "spin" often implies the use of [disingenuous](#), [deceptive](#), and highly [manipulative](#) tactics.^[1] Spin is typically applied to events or situations which are deemed to be unfavourable or potentially harmful to the popularity of a person, [brand](#) or product.

As such, a standard tactic used in "spinning" is to reframe, reposition, or otherwise modify the perception of an issue or event, to reduce any negative impact it might have on public opinion. For example, a company whose top-selling product is found to have a significant safety problem may "reframe" the issue by criticizing the safety of its main competitor's products or indeed by highlighting the risk associated with the entire product category. This might be done using a "catchy" [slogan](#) or [sound bite](#) that can help to persuade the public of the company's biased [point of view](#). This tactic could enable the company to defocus the public's attention on the negative aspects of its product.

As it takes experience and training to "spin" an issue, spinning is typically a service provided by paid media advisors and media [consultants](#). The largest and most powerful companies may have in-house employees and sophisticated units with expertise in spinning issues. While spin is often considered to be a private sector tactic, in the 1990s and 2000s, some politicians and political staff have been accused by their opponents of using deceptive "spin" tactics to manipulate public opinion or deceive the public. Spin approaches used by some political teams include "burying" potentially negative new information by releasing it at the end of the workday on the last day before a long weekend; selectively [cherry-picking](#) quotes from previous speeches made by their employer or an opposing politician to give the impression that she or he advocates a certain position; and purposely [leaking misinformation](#) about an opposing politician or candidate that casts her or him in a negative light.

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- [Techniques](#)
- [Fictional individuals](#)

This article is part of a series on

Misinformation and disinformation



List [hide]

Types

[Alternative facts](#) · [Big lie](#) · [Circular sourcing](#) · [Deception](#) · [Doublespeak](#) · [Echo chamber](#) · [Euphemistic misspeaking](#) · [Euromyth](#) · [False flag](#) · [Factoid](#) · [Fallacy](#) · [Fake news](#) (by country · online) · [Filter bubble](#) · [Gaslighting](#) · [Half-truth](#) · [Hoax](#) · [Ideological framing](#) · [Internet manipulation](#) · [Media manipulation](#) · [Post-truth](#) · [Propaganda](#) · [Quote mining](#) · [Scientific fabrication](#) · [Social bot](#) · **[Spin](#)** · [Yellow journalism](#)

Related article series [hide]

[Fraud](#) · [Media manipulation](#) · [Propaganda](#)

2.1.4. Post-truth politics (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-truth_politics; 13/05/17)

Post-truth politics (also called **post-factual politics**) is a **political culture** in which debate is framed largely by **appeals to emotion** disconnected from the details of **policy**, and by the repeated assertion of **talking points** to which factual rebuttals are ignored. **Post-truth** differs from traditional contesting and falsifying of **truth** by rendering it of "secondary" importance. ...

Michael Deacon, **parliamentary sketchwriter** for *The Daily Telegraph*, summarised the core message of post-truth politics as "Facts are negative. Facts are pessimistic. Facts are unpatriotic." He added that post-truth politics can also include a claimed rejection of **partisanship** and **negative campaigning**.^[24] ...

Social media adds an additional dimension, as the networks that users create can become **echo chambers** (possibly emphasised by the **filter bubble**) where one political viewpoint dominates and scrutiny of claims fails,^{[4][6][33]} allowing a parallel **media ecosystem** of websites, publishers and news channels to develop which can repeat post-truth claims without rebuttal.^[34] In this environment, post-truth campaigns can ignore **fact checks** or dismiss them as being motivated by bias....

Data is becoming increasingly accessible as new technologies are introduced to the everyday lives of citizens. An obsession for data and statistics also filters into the political scene, and political debates and speeches become filled with snippets of information that may be misconstrued, false, or not contain the whole picture. Sensationalized television news emphasizes grand statements and further publicizes politicians.

2.1.5. Fake news (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fake_news; 12/05/17)

Fake news is a new term, ^{[[citation needed](#)]} or [neologism](#), used to refer to fabricated news. Fake news originated in traditional news media but has now spread to online media. This type of news found in traditional news, [social media](#) or [fake news websites](#) have no basis in fact, but are presented as being factually accurate. ^[6]

...

Beginning in the 2017 school year, children in Taiwan study a new curriculum designed to teach critical reading of propaganda and the evaluation of sources. Called "media literacy," the course provides training in journalism in the new information society. ^[19]

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:
How_to_Spot_Fake_News.pdf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:How_to_Spot_Fake_News.pdf)

HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

2.1.6. Fake news website

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fake_news_website created 16/11/16!!; 13/05/17)

Fake news websites (also referred to as **hoax news websites**)^{[1][2]} are **Internet websites** that deliberately publish **fake news**—**hoaxes**, **propaganda**, and **disinformation** purporting to be **real news**—often using **social media** to drive **web traffic** and amplify their effect.^{[3][4][5]} Unlike **news satire**, fake news websites seek to mislead rather than entertain readers, often for financial or political gain.^{[6][4]} Such sites have promoted political falsehoods in Germany,^{[7][8]} Indonesia and the Philippines,^[9] Sweden,^{[10][11]} Myanmar,^[12] and the United States.^{[13][14][15]} Many sites originate, or are promoted, from Russia,^{[3][13][16]} Macedonia,^{[17][18]} Romania,^[19] and the United States.^{[20][21]} ...

Fact-checking websites **FactCheck.org**, **PolitiFact.com**, and **Snopes.com**, authored guides on how to respond to fraudulent news.^{[4][133][134]} FactCheck.org advised readers to check the source, author, date, and headline of publications.^[133] They recommended their colleagues Snopes.com, *The Washington Post* Fact Checker,^[c] and PolitiFact.com.^[133] FactCheck.org admonished consumers to be wary of **confirmation bias**.^[133] PolitiFact.com used a "Fake news" tag so readers could view all stories Polifact had debunked.^[134] Snopes.com warned readers social media was used as a harmful tool by fraudsters.^[4] *The Washington Post's* "The Fact Checker" manager **Glenn Kessler** wrote all fact-checking sites saw increased visitors during the 2016 election cycle.^[136] Unique visitors to The Fact Checker increased five-fold from the 2012 election.^[136] ... Full Fact worked with Google to help automate fact-checking.^[137]

FactCheck.org former director Brooks Jackson said media companies devoted increased focus to the importance of debunking fraud during the 2016 election.^[135] FactCheck.org partnered with CNN's **Jake Tapper** in 2016 to examine the veracity candidate statements.^[135] Angie Drobnic Holan, editor of **PolitiFact.com**, cautioned media companies chiefs must be supportive of debunking, as it often provokes **hate mail** and extreme responses from zealots.^[135] In December 2016, PolitiFact announced fake news was its selection for "Lie of the Year".^{[138][32]}

2.1.6. Fake news website

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fake_news_website_created_16/11/16!!; 13/05/17)

Macedonia [\[edit\]](#)

Much of the fake news during the [2016 U.S. presidential election season](#) was traced to adolescents in Macedonia,^{[17][37]} specifically [Veles](#). It is a town of 50,000 in the middle of the country, with high unemployment, where the average wage is \$4,800.^[38] The income from fake news was characterized by *NBC News* as a [gold rush](#).^[38] Adults supported this income, saying they were happy the youths were working.^[39] The mayor of Veles, Slavcho Chadiev, said he was not bothered by their actions, as they were not against Macedonian law and their finances were taxable.^[38] Chadiev said he was happy if fraud from Veles influenced the results of the 2016 U.S. election in favor of Trump.^[38]

BuzzFeed News and *The Guardian* separately investigated and found teenagers in Veles created over 100 sites spreading fake news stories supportive of [Donald Trump](#).^{[17][40][41]} The teenagers experimented with [left slanted](#) fake stories about [Bernie Sanders](#), but found that pro-Trump fictions were more popular.^[40] Prior to the 2016 election the teenagers gained revenues from fake [medical advice](#) sites.^[42] One youth named Alex stated, in an August 2016 interview with *The Guardian*, that this fraud would remain profitable regardless of who won the election.^[17] Alex explained he wrote articles by plagiarism, [copy and pasting](#) from other websites.^[17] This could net them thousands of dollars daily, but they averaged only a few thousand per month.^[42]

The [Associated Press](#) (AP) interviewed an 18-year-old in Veles about his tactics.^[39] A [Google Analytics](#) analysis of his traffic showed more than 650,000 views in one week.^[39] He plagiarized pro-Trump stories from a [right-wing](#) site called *The Political Insider*.^[39] He said he did not care about politics, and published fake news to gain money and experience.^[39] The AP used [DomainTools](#) to confirm the teenager was behind fake sites, and determined there were about 200 websites tracked to Veles focused on U.S. news, many of which mostly contained plagiarized legitimate news to create an appearance of credibility.^[39]

NBC News also interviewed an 18-year-old there.^[38] Dmitri (a pseudonym) was one of the most profitable fake news operators in town, and said about 300 people in Veles wrote for fake sites.^[38] Dmitri said he gained over \$60,000 during the six months prior through doing this, more than both his parents' earnings.^[38] Dmitri said his main dupes were supporters of Trump.^[38] He said after the 2016 U.S. election he continued to earn significant amounts.^[38]



Fraudulent news stories during the 2016 U.S. election were traced to teenagers in [Veles, Macedonia](#). [\[17\]](#)

2.1.7. Clickbait

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clickbait>; 13/05/17)

Clickbait is a pejorative term for web content that is aimed at generating online advertising revenue, especially at the expense of quality or accuracy, relying on sensationalist headlines or eye-catching thumbnail pictures to attract click-throughs and to encourage forwarding of the material over online social networks.^[citation needed] Clickbait headlines typically aim to exploit the "curiosity gap", providing just enough information to make readers curious, but not enough to satisfy their curiosity without clicking through to the linked content.^{[1][2][3]}

From a historical perspective, the techniques employed by clickbait authors can be considered derivative of yellow journalism, which presents little or no legitimate well-researched news and instead uses eye-catching headlines that include exaggerations of news events, scandal-mongering, or sensationalism.^{[4][5]}

Clickbait has also been used to political ends, and in this respect has been blamed for the rise of post-truth politics. Katherine Viner, editor-in-chief at the The Guardian has said that "chasing down cheap clicks at the expense of accuracy and veracity" undermines the value of journalism and truth.^[13] Emotional subjects with stark headlines are widely shared and clicked, which resulted in what Slate described as an "aggregation of outrage" and a proliferation of websites across the political spectrum – including Breitbart News, Huffington Post, Salon, Townhall and the Gawker Media blogs – which profited by producing shareable short-form pieces offering simple moral judgements on political and cultural issues.^[12]

Cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viral_marketing (13/05/17)

2.3. Investigative journalism



Houstan, Brant et al. (2008). *Investigative Reporter's Handbook: A Guide to Documents, Databases, and Techniques*. 5th Edition

Investigative journalism is a form of [journalism](#) in which reporters deeply investigate a single topic of interest, such as serious crimes, [political corruption](#), or corporate wrongdoing. An investigative reporter may make use of one or more of these tools, among others, on a single story:

- Analysis of documents, such as [lawsuits](#) and other [legal documents](#), tax records, government reports, regulatory reports, and corporate financial filings
- Databases of public records
- Investigation of technical issues, including scrutiny of government and business practices and their effects
- Research into social and legal issues
- Subscription research sources such as [LexisNexis](#)
- Numerous interviews with on-the-record sources as well as, in some instances, interviews with [anonymous sources](#) (for example [whistleblowers](#))
- Federal or state [Freedom of Information Acts](#) to obtain documents and data from government agencies

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Investigative_journalism (12/05/17)

2.2. Applied linguistic concepts

2.2.1. Detecting news bias – fake news

Linguistic/Grammatical/POS approaches:

- more proper nouns (focused on celebrities)
- more adjectives and adverbs (indicative of sentiment)
- more comparatives and superlatives (*better, biggest, worst*)
- more question words (*where, how, why*)

Functional Linguistic approaches:

- personalisation: pronouns (*we*)
- stance: more boosters (*must, clearly*) than hedges (*may, possibly*)
- affect words, esp. negative (+anger)
- little metadiscourse (+conjuncts)

Artificial Intelligence approaches:

- more exclamation marks
- less sentence complexity: semicolons, quotes, articles, apostrophes, commas
- stance: headline-supporting and -conflicting evidence

2.2.2. Excursus: facts & truths

What are facts – alternative facts?

5 types of truth? <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth> (05/05/17)

- correspondence theory: states that the truth or falsity of a statement is determined only by how it relates to the world and whether it accurately describes (i.e., corresponds with) that world.
- coherence theory: regards truth as coherence within some specified set of sentences, propositions or **beliefs** ...
- discourse theory: holds that truth is whatever is agreed upon, or in some versions, might come to be agreed upon, by some specified group. Such a group might include all human beings, or a subset thereof consisting of more than one person.
- constructivist theory: truth is constructed by social processes, is historically and culturally specific, and that it is in part shaped through the power struggles within a community.
- pragmatic theory: truth is verified and confirmed by the results of putting one's concepts into practice (Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey)

2.2.3. Objectivity (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journalistic_objectivity; 12/05/17)

Journalistic objectivity requires that a journalist not be on either side of an argument. The journalist must **report only the facts and not a personal attitude** toward the facts. [5] While objectivity is a complex and dynamic notion that may refer to a multitude of techniques and practices, it generally refers to the idea of "three distinct, yet interrelated, concepts": **truthfulness**, **neutrality**, and **detachment**. [6]

Truthfulness is a commitment to reporting only accurate and truthful information, without skewing any facts or details to improve the story or better align an issue with any certain agenda. [6]

Neutrality suggests that stories be reported in an unbiased, even-handed, and impartial manner. Under this notion, journalists are to side with none of the parties involved, and simply provide the relevant facts and information of all. [6]

The third idea, detachment, refers to the emotional approach of the journalist. Essentially, reporters should not only approach issues in an unbiased manner, but also with a dispassionate and emotionless attitude. Through this strategy, stories can be presented in a rational and calm manner, letting the audience make up their minds without any influences from the media. [6]

2.2.4. Academic credibility according to sources

Concept sources (definitions):

Learners' Dictionary?

+ limited vocabulary

Wikipedia

+ anybody - concensus

Encyclopaedia

+ expert?

Textbook

+ introductory

Handbook

+ expert

Research article

+ current

Types of evidence:

- sources (quotations)
- examples
- statistics (+significance)

2.2.5. Media bias through language

Media bias is the bias or perceived bias of journalists and news producers within the mass media in the selection of events and stories that are reported and how they are covered. The term "media bias" implies a pervasive or widespread bias contravening the standards of journalism, rather than the perspective of an individual journalist or article. The direction and degree of media bias in various countries is widely disputed.

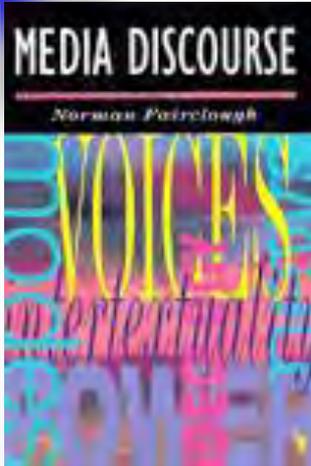
Role of language

Language may also introduce a more subtle form of bias. The selection of metaphors and analogies, or the inclusion of personal information in one situation but not another can introduce bias, such as a gender bias.[62] Use of a word with positive or negative connotations rather than a more neutral synonym can form a biased picture in the audience's mind. For example, it makes a difference whether the media calls a group "terrorists" or "freedom fighters" or "insurgents". A 2005 memo to the staff of the CBC states:

Rather than calling assailants "terrorists," we can refer to them as bombers, hijackers, gunmen (if we're sure no women were in the group), militants, extremists, attackers or some other appropriate noun.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_bias (12/05/17)

3. Deconstructing: **Critical Discourse Analysis**



Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice.

Scholars working in the tradition of CDA generally argue that (non-linguistic) social practice and linguistic practice constitute one another and focus on investigating how societal power relations are established and reinforced through language use.^[1]

Critical discourse analysis emerged from 'critical linguistics' developed at the University of East Anglia in the 1970s, and the terms are now often interchangeable.^{[2][3]} Sociolinguistics was paying little attention to social

hierarchy and power.^[4] CDA was first developed by the Lancaster school of linguists of which Norman Fairclough was the most prominent figure.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_discourse_analysis (12/05/17)

Case Study (Dana)

3. Deconstructing: Framing

In the social sciences, **framing** comprises a set of concepts and theoretical perspectives on how individuals, groups, and societies, organize, perceive, and communicate about reality.

Framing involves social construction of a social phenomenon – by mass media sources, political or social movements, political leaders, or other actors and organizations. Participation in a language community necessarily influences an individual's perception of the meanings attributed to words or phrases. Politically, the language communities of advertising, religion, and mass media are highly contested, whereas framing in less-sharply defended language communities might evolve imperceptibly and organically over cultural time frames, with fewer overt modes of disputation.

Framing itself can be framed in one of two ways, depending on whether one chooses to emphasise processes of thought or processes of interpersonal communication.

Frames in thought consist of the mental representations, interpretations, and simplifications of reality.

Frames in communication consist of the communication of frames between different actors.^[1]

One can view framing in communication as positive or negative – depending on the audience and what kind of information is being presented.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Framing_\(social_sciences\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Framing_(social_sciences)) (12/05/17)

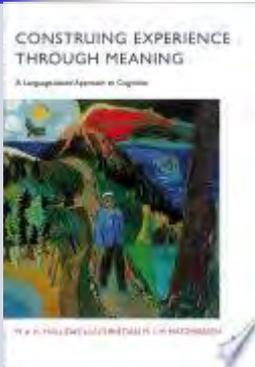
4. Constructing: Construing in SFG

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Systemic_functional_linguistics (10/05/17)

For Halliday, all languages involve three generalised functions, or **metafunctions**: one construes experience (meanings about the outer and inner worlds); one enacts social relations (meanings concerned with interpersonal relations), and one weaves together these two functions to create text (the wording). Because these functions are considered to come into being simultaneously—viz., one cannot mean about the world without having either a real or virtual audience—language must also be able to bring these meanings together: this is the role of structural organisation, be that grammatical, semantic or contextual. These three generalised functions are termed "metafunctions".^[2]

In adopting a system perspective on language, systemic functional linguistics have been part of a more general 20th- and 21st-century reaction against atomistic approaches to science, in which an essence is sought within smaller and smaller components of the phenomenon under study. In systems thinking, any delineated object of study is defined by its relations to other units postulated by the theory. In systemic functional linguistics, this has been described as the trinocular perspective. Thus a descriptive category must be defended from three perspectives: from above ("what does it construe?" "what effect does it have in a context of use?"), below ("how is this function realised?") and round about ("what else is in the neighbourhood?" "what other things does this thing have to interact with?"). This gives systemic functional linguistics an affinity with studies of **complex systems**.

4. Constructing: Construing in SFG



Halliday/Matthiessen (2000, 2006).

Construing Experience Through Meaning: A Language-Based Approach to Cognition. Continuum.

Systemic functional grammar (SFG) is a form of grammatical description originated by [Michael Halliday](#).^[1] It is part of a social **semiotic** approach to language called ***systemic functional linguistics***. In these two terms, *systemic* refers to the view of language as "a network of systems, or interrelated sets of options for making meaning";^[2] *functional* refers to Halliday's view that language is as it is because of what it has evolved to do (see [Metafunction](#)).

These grammatical systems play a role in the construal of meanings of different kinds. This is the basis of Halliday's claim that language is *metafunctionally* organised. He argues that the *raison d'être* of language is meaning in social life, and for this reason all languages have three kinds of semantic components. All languages have resources for construing experience (the *ideational* component), resources for enacting humans' diverse and complex social relations (the *interpersonal* component), and resources for enabling these two kinds of meanings to come together in coherent text (the *textual* function).^{[9][10]} Each of the grammatical systems proposed by Halliday are related to these metafunctions.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Systemic_functional_grammar (12/05/17)

4. Constructing: Construing Hedging/Boosting



stance: boosting – hedging

In pragmatics (a sub-field of linguistics), a **hedge** is a mitigating word, sound or construction used to lessen the impact of an utterance due to constraints on the interaction between the speaker and addressee, such as politeness, softening the blow, avoiding the appearance of bragging and others. Typically, they are adjectives or adverbs, but can also consist of clauses such as one use of tag questions. It could be regarded as a form of euphemism.

Examples:

*There might just be a few **insignificant** problems we need to address.* (adjective)

*The party was **somewhat** spoiled by the return of the parents.* (adverb)

*I'm **not an expert** but you might want to try restarting your computer.* (clause)

*That's false, **isn't it**.* (tag question clause)

Case Study (Vincenzo)

5. Conclusion

Philology & Journalism: same basic issues
in Academic and News Writing:

credibility of texts,

- of sources,
- of statistics,
- etc.

=increasing demands in modern digital literacy

Contribution to personal & national development

References

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Project website

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