A Pragmatic Study of Misrepresentation in British and American News Reports

Ebtehal Salih Hamza   **Asst. Prof. Nesaem Mehdi Al-Aadili**
ebtihal.jasim@student.uobabylon.edu.iq   nasaem_rose_i@yahoo.com

University of Babylon/ College of Education for Human Sciences/ Department of English

Abstract

   This study is concerned with investigating misrepresentation in British and American news reports from a pragmatic perspective. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this topic has not been given sufficient investigation, particularly pragmatically. As such, this study attempts to fill in this gap in this arena, particularly in the genre of news reports. Hence, the study aims to achieve the following: finding out the types of misrepresentation that are used by British and American news reporters, revealing which pragmatic strategies are employed by British and American news reporters in their attempt to misrepresent facts and events in news reports, determining what is the difference, if there is any, between British and American news reports as far as the exploitation of the pragmatic strategies of misrepresentation is concerned, pinpointing which pragmatic strategy has prevalence over other strategies in British and American news reports , and showing if there are any differences between British and American news reports as far as the stages those reports consist of.

   The study hypothesizes that: British and American news reporters use fraudulent misrepresentation in an attempt to misrepresent news reports,   British and American news reporters make use of speech acts and fallacies as pragmatic strategies in their attempt to misrepresent facts and events, there is no difference between British and American news reports as far as the exploitation of the pragmatic strategies of misrepresentation is concerned, speech act strategy has prevalence over other strategies in British and American news reports, and there is no difference between British and American news reports as far as the stages those reports consist of.

   The study adopts the following producers in order to fulfill its aims and test the validity of its hypotheses: providing a literature review about misrepresentation from a pragmatic perspective, collecting a sample of news reports from different British and American news sites and newspapers to be the data of the study, using the adopted model to pragmatically analyze the data under scrutiny and a suitable statistical mean to analyze the data quantitatively, and discussing the results of the analysis to come up with certain conclusions.

Key words: misrepresentation; news reports, speech acts; maxims; fallacies, persuasive strategies

1. The Concept of Misrepresentation

   According to Mallor et al. (2001:1), misrepresentation is defined as an assertion which is not in accord with the truth. It can also be defined as a false declaration which impacts the decision of the others. In law, misrepresentation is known as a false statement that is made by haggling between two sides (ibid.). Misrepresentation, generally, can be featured as fraudulent or innocent.

   Galasiniski (2000: 36) argues that the notion of misrepresentation is used to "encompass the gamut of deceptive uses-from straightforward lies/ falsification, through half-truths, to deceptive implications". In such a way, the notion of misrepresentation includes all those cases in which the utterance deviates from what the speaker believes to be a true account of the extralinguistic state of affairs. For Danler (2005: 46), misrepresentation can be pointed to as insincerity or falsity. Insincerity is a sort of disinformation in which the speaker seeks to twist the world view in the mind of the target so that he is not able to have a healthy attitude to make a decision (Rigotti, 2005: 70- 71).

A Pragmatic Study of Misrepresentation in British and American News Reports

Ebtehal Salih Hamza   **Asst. Prof. Nesaem Mehdi Al-Aadili**

1.2 Types of Misrepresentation

It is important to explain that there is a need to recognize among kinds of misrepresentation in order to determine the obtainable remedies. These types include:

1.   Fraudulent misrepresentation which can be defined as a false declaration which is made knowingly and without credence. This type of misrepresentation is also called dishonest misrepresentation since it is an argument that the defendant made it clear to be false (Web Source 1).

2.   Innocent misrepresentation is the type of misrepresentation which the person makes ignorantly. It is a false assertion of material reality by the defendant, who was unaware that the assertion was misleading (ibid.).

1.3 Misrepresentation and Related Terms

1 Distortion: it is shown to consist of categories such as exaggeration, minimization, and equivocation (Metts, 1989: 169). A distorted utterance, as such, is an utterance in which deceivers do not lie so much; instead, they exaggerate, diminish, or mislead (ibid.). In this regard, exaggerations are the actions of excessive representation by providing more information than is required, whereas minimizations are half-truths where deceivers give less information than is required. As far as equivocation is concerned, it is semantically defined as a vague or unclear post and conversationally as an indirect one (ibid.).

2 Falsification: it is also called false attribution; it consists of falsely attributing a specific statement to another to persuade the audience that the speaker is simply making a justified interpretation of what was originally said. Falsifications, in other words, are devious claims in which deceivers impute words to other parties that are in line with what the deceivers themselves believe (Galasinski , 2000 : 39).

3 Disinformation: For Wardle (2017:1), disinformation refers to the intentional production and dissemination of information that is perceived to be inaccurate. It also refers to the inadvertent sharing of false information. According to Wardle (2017:1), disinformation is a deliberate creation and sharing of information known to be false.

4 Misinformation and Mal-information: Misinformation, on the one hand, is characterized by many scholarly papers as an error, honest mistake and inaccurate information. It is not meant to mislead, but it is deceptive (Fallis, 2015 : 401-26). Mal-information, on the other hand, is described as "reality-based information used to damage an individual, organization or nation" (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2018: 21).

1.4 Related Pragmatic Issues

The concept of pragmatics has been expanding; this area of understanding has been studied with particular attention by many linguists. For instance, Finch (1998: 231) sums up its definition as "the analysis of the situational and interpersonal factors that influence the definition of the utterances". Crystal (1985:243) believes that pragmatics studies the variables that control someone's language choice. As Mey (2001: 787) says, the task of pragmatics is to explain what it means to "see and not to see" an object that uses the "same words," but is interpreted in different, sometimes profoundly divergent ways.

As for misrepresentation, it attempts to accomplish specific ends. It can therefore be specified in relation to certain concepts which have their own pragmatic roots, such as goals and intentions. This indicates that it is necessary to pragmatically analyze misrepresentation. In order to illustrate the pragmatic essence of misrepresentation in British and American news reports, essential pragmatic topics are dealt with below:

1.4.1 Misrepresentation in Relation to Speech Act Theory

According to Cutting (2002: 16) and Archer et al. (2012: 35), one of the cornerstones of pragmatics is speech act theory; the interest in which can be traced back to the principle that

people use language, whether verbally or in writing, whether honestly or dishonestly, to do things.

Crystal (2003:427) notes that from the work of the philosopher J.L. Austin, the word speech act is derived and is now commonly used in linguistics to refer to a theory that analyzes the role of utterances in interpersonal communication in relation to the actions of speakers and hearers. Thus, Austin (1960) was the first scholar to propose the concept of speech act to explain the functions of interpersonal communication through utterances. He was also the first linguist insisting that speech activities are not simply data vehicles, but rather actions (ibid.).

Austin (1962: 24) isolates three fundamental senses in which one does something by saying something, hence three kinds of actions are performed simultaneously; these are: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary actions. Searle, on his part, proposed a number of dimensions to classify speech acts into five categories based on the fit between words and world, psychological state of the speaker/ writer, and the purpose of the illocution (Archer et al., 2012: 39). These five categories, as presented by Searle (1969: 65), are the following:

a. Representatives: These are demonstrated by actions reflecting the conviction of the speaker/ writer that something is real. Examples are: say, imply, assert, infer, insist, define, hypothesize, forecast, announce, attribute, confirm, classify, refute, reveal, contest.

b. Commissives: Speakers/ writers commit themselves to performing any future act that demonstrates world-to-word fit by using a commissive, as the speakers/ writers undertake to make the world fit the terms. Promising, pledging, threatening, denying, volunteering and vowing are examples of such acts.

c. Directives : They are speech acts in which the words are aimed at getting something done by the listeners/ readers. Examples include requesting, recommending, authorizing, forbidding, excusing, instructing, encouraging, warning, needing, and inviting.

d. Expressives: These are actions that state what speakers / writers feel in the words. The illocutionary point of these actions is therefore to express their actors' attitudes towards certain facts and events. Deploring, embracing, praising, regretting, apologizing, and thanking are examples of such actions.

e. Declarations: By their very utterance, these speech acts such as acquitting, disqualifying, declaring, and the like, change the world. Therefore, their illocutionary purpose is to generate facts and events.

1.4.2 Misrepresentation in Relation to Conversational Maxims

Misrepresentation can be examined in relation to conversational maxims non-observance since it is commonly seen as a violation of one or more of these maxims. According to Grice (1975: 45), the cooperative principle of communication reads as "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged". This principle is supported by the following maxims:

a. **The Maxim of Quantity,** "Be informative", with its two sub-maxims:
   - "Make your contribution as informative as is required."
   - "Don't make your contribution more informative than is required ."

b. **The Maxim of Quality**, "Try to make your contribution one that is true", with the following sub-maxims:
   - "-Don't say what you believe to be false."
   - "Don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence."

c. **The Maxim of Relation**: "Be relevant"

d. **The Maxim of Manner**, "Be perspicuous", which includes the following four sub-maxims:
   - "Avoid obscurity of expression".

A Pragmatic Study of Misrepresentation in British and American News Reports

Ebtehal Salih Hamza   Asst. Prof. Nesaem Mehdi Al-Aadili

- "Avoid ambiguity".
- "Be brief" (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
- "Be orderly".

1.4.3 Misrepresentation in Relation to Fallacious Arguments

Fallacious arguments can be considered as strategies of misrepresentation therefore it seems appropriate to include some information about them. According to Ward and Fearnside (2005: 11), fallacies are brilliant tricks for getting people accept all sorts of false premises as true. Walton (1995: 1) describes fallacy as a purposely constructed manipulation technique designed to manipulate and convince the viewer in order to get the best out of them. Walton (2007: 21) argues that fallacies are logically incorrect claims, but seem to be right because they look reasonable and rationally convincing.

For Damer (2009:30) fallacious arguments are breaches of the requirements of successful arguments. For him, successful arguments should meet the following five conditions; otherwise, they become fallacious arguments (or faulty arguments):
1- A well-formed structure.
2- Premises that are relevant to the truth of the conclusion   .

3- Premises that are acceptable to a reasonable person.
4- Premises that together constitute sufficient grounds for the truth of the conclusion.
5- Premises that provide an effective rebuttal to all anticipated criticisms of the argument.

Damer (ibid.) mentions that there are four kinds of fallacious arguments: fallacious structural argument, fallacious valid arguments, fallacious appropriate argument and fallacious sufficient arguments. These types are discussed below:
1. Fallacious Structural Arguments
2. Fallacious Relevant Arguments
3. Fallacious Acceptable Arguments
4. Fallacious Sufficient Arguments

1.4.4 Aristotle's Modes of Persuasion

Perloff (2010: 8-9) emphasizes that the modes of persuasion form the central foundation of rhetorical argumentation (of which news reports are a type) wherein the arguer can attempt to convince an audience by relying more strongly on one of the points of the triangle represented by the arguer himself, the audience, or the argument. Therefore, three types of argumentative tools are available. The first type depends on the personal character of the speakers/ writers; the second type depends on placing the listener in a certain frame of mind; the third depends on the evidence presented by the words of the speech itself (Richardson, 2007: 151). For Richardson (ibid.181), these argumentative tools are called Aristotle's appeals which are presented as follows:
1.Ethos: the essence of the claim or the manner in which people are more likely to believe in those who believe that they are trustworthy or informed about the matter under debate,
2.Pathos: the use of emotional themes or emotional language to make the audience more sensitive to the assumptions of the arguer, and
3.Logos: the way a good argument draws upon reasoning in order to support a conclusion.

2. The Concept of News
News is one of the most important fields of research. From various perspectives, there are several ways to define news. MacKane (2006:1) refers to the concept of news saying "news is anything which interests a large part of the community and which has never been brought to their attention". This definition therefore emphasizes the argument that news must attract the

attention of people. For Burns (2004: 49), news gives information for people to act their opinions about the events of the world that happen around them.

Fowler (1991: 13) claims that news "is not only what happens, but what can be seen and viewed as newsworthy", where "newsworthy" means that it is attractive or sufficiently significant to be reported as news. Bell (1991: 191) states that much of the news published by news reporters is generated by an authoritative source, in other words, an 'accessed voice,' such as a member of the government. Beard (2000: 18) stresses that in news reports, language is not free of values; rather it is a means of expressing and forming a set of beliefs. It is not anything different from the ideas it includes, but it tells a lot about how the ideas were influenced by the way language is used.

2.1 The Language of News

Generally speaking, without adapting the meaning of subjectivity, the language of news should be objective and impartial. Consequently, the vocabulary of the news is essential to understanding the linguistic aspects of language for journalists and media workers. The way language is used dictates how viewers will be influenced by the news. McKane (2006:105 -8) discusses in numerous ways the language of news. One of these approaches is that the language structure must be brief and simple. Therefore, the strong sentences are those that do not make the reader read the news story more than one time to know what the news is about. In addition to this , using short forms of the verbs is preferable like, for example, instead of saying "Tom has promised", it is preferable to say "Tom promised" .

2.3 The Structure of the News Report

In particular, news has components that shape the structure of telling any event. It is necessary to have a defined formula in which the data is well structured for the readers. The key elements of news stories are described by Rich(2006:37) as follows :

1. Headlines

Headlines are one part of a news story. To draw a reader's attention, it is placed at the top of the news. Pajunen (2008:8) describes the key feature of the news as a headline. This is used to get the readers to read the news story. At the same time, its position plays an important role in establishing the reach of the news that directly directs readers. Reah (1998: 13) mentions that the headline conveys a variety of tasks that govern its type, content and structure in particular. It also thoroughly demonstrates the news story with a limited number of terms that make the reader excited to learn the news more profoundly .

2. Leads

The second component of the framework of the news is called lead. Its location is after the news headline. Leads should be short and straight to the point at the moment (Silcock et al, 2014: 122). Brown and Yule (1983:125) assert that the position of the leads provide a significant introduction to the reader giving them clues on what the next one will be. Bell (1991:183) adds more about leads' function: "it must begin to tell the story as well as summarizing it. It must provide a springboard for telling the whole story , not just a summary" .

3. Body /lead development

Bednarek and Caple (2012: 97) state that the development of the body/lead represents the paragraph that follow the lead paragraph, adding to the report various kinds of detail. In other words, by incorporating information attribution features, including direct quotes (ibid.).

2.4 The Meaning of Fake News

According to Allcott and Gentzkow (2017 : 213), fake news is produced and disseminated for various ideological, monetary and propaganda purposes. In relation to its use by some politicians, Marsden (2017 : 29-31) has a different view of fake news. For him, fake news is "the heartfelt cry of politicians who feel misled by the online media".   According to Allcott and

Ebtehal Salih Hamza   **Asst. Prof. Nesaem Mehdi Al-Aadili**

Gentzkow (ibid.), the term fake news can be defined as news articles which are knowingly and verifiably inaccurate and which may deceive readers.

Fake news may also be seen as a particular type of misrepresentation (Fallis, 2015: 401-26). There is a lack of honesty in fake news stories; however, they do not have to be actually false-they may only be dishonest in stating something that is basically true, but that conveys anything false. A lack of truthfulness is what turns false or deceptive claims into fake news. In other words, fake news goes along with the intention to deceive or deny the truth, in which case they fall into the category of bullshit.

For Lazar et al. (2018: 1094-6), fake news is described as disinformation that has conventional news media trappings with suspected related editorial processes. Mustafariaj and Metaxas (2017: 235-39) state that fake news refers to "lies interpreted as news, i.e. online falsehoods formatted and distributed in such a way that they could be mistaken by a reader for real newspapers".

2.5 Criteria for Fake News Recognition

Fake news, portrayed as factually true, is intended to confuse or cause confusion or dissatisfaction in order to achieve political benefits, often with exaggerated or clearly false headlines that attract publicity (Web source 1).

According to the Collins English Dictionary (Web source 3), fake news is inaccurate, frequently sensational information disseminated under the cover of authentic news to manipulate the views of readers/listeners. Most reporters believe that (1) death, war, and suffering hoaxes, and (2) social identity hoaxes are the most important forms of fake news (ibid.).

Several signs are said to describe fake news. These can be summarized as follows: (1) fake news is slanted and biased; imprecise and sloppy; (2) fake news violates the principle of sufficiency in that its premises do not offer adequate support or proof to prove an argument, but it seems fair because reporters use reason that sounds plausible but is actually fake to support the point of view in question (ibid.).

Ryerson University 2017 (Web source 1) conducts research on the most pointed characteristics of fake news, particularly political and war news, which distinguish it from other forms of intentional misinformation. The results of the study show that the following characteristics can classify fake news: (1) playing on emotions (gratifying emotions), (2) taking a stance on a highly controversial issues, (3) is linked to a political issue, (4) is sensational, topical, vilifying, and irresistible, and (5) is breaking news and click bait (ibid.).

Fake news can be characterized linguistically by the following signs whose perusal is pragmatically critical in intensifying the purpose of the reporters. According to Burgoon et al. (1996: 726), the use of pronouns (avoiding pronouns of the first person and preferring other pronouns) and words related to feelings and senses (inclination to the use of more expressive words and sense verbs). Dilmon (2009: 1152-1161) lists other criteria: (1) excess in the use of words with a negative semantic load, (2) repetition of such false claims, (3) ambiguous expressions, as well as hints and symbols.
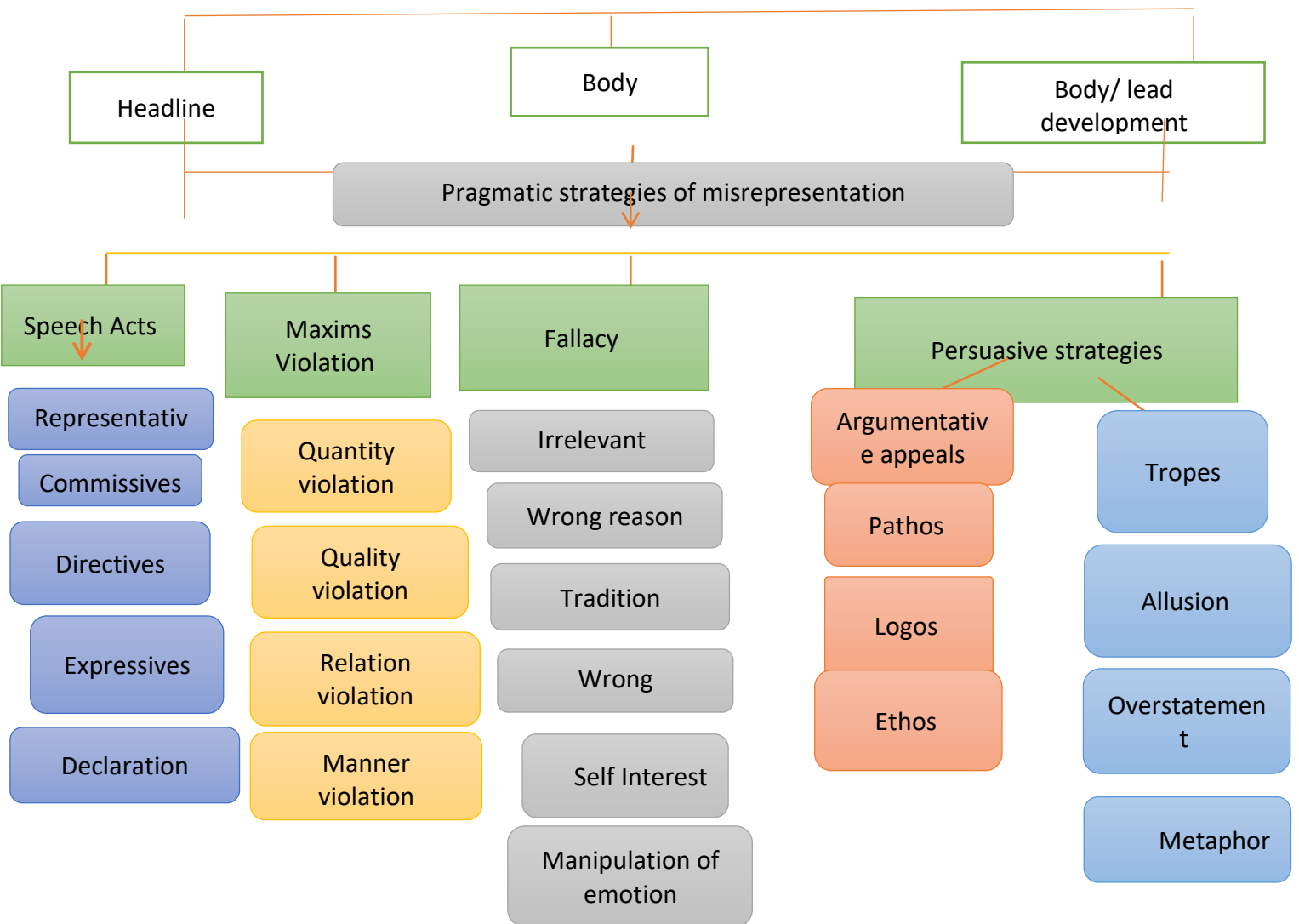
3.The Model of Analysis

Structure of news report

Figure (1) : The Eclectic Model of Analysis

3.1 Illustratively Analyzed Examples
3.1.1 British News Reports
(T1)
Cargo ships may contain Iraqi weapons

US and British intelligenSce are tracking three cargo ships suspected of carrying Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, it was reported today .

The vessels are alleged to have been chartered through an Egyptian shipping firm and collected loads smuggled through either Syria or Jordan to avoid Western naval patrols off the Iraqi coast. Leaving port in late November - a few days after UN weapons inspectors went back into Iraq - the ships have maintained radio silence, refused to disclose their cargo or destination and are thought to have spent much of their time in the Indian ocean, the Independent reported. But according to the newspaper, the British and US navies were reluctant to board the vessels in case their captains scuttled the ships, causing catastrophic environmental damage. John Eldridge, editor of Jane's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defence, said Saddam Hussein would have been "extremely sensible" to hide weapons at sea. "If there were biological or chemical

A Pragmatic Study of Misrepresentation in British and American News Reports

Ebtehal Salih Hamza   **Asst. Prof. Nesaem Mehdi Al-Aadili**

munitions they would be pretty difficult to detect because they would be in sealed containers with a low risk of damage or emissions," he said. "There's no way you could detect what they were without boarding the ship."Western intelligence agencies are already believed to monitoring al-Qaida-linked ships suspected of gun running arms and explosives. Whitehall sources suggested the reports of Iraqi weapons on cargo ships were unfounded. A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence said it did not discuss intelligence matters.The International Maritime Organisation told Reuters it was "common practice" for ships to withhold information about the content of a cargo, its destination or to maintain radio silence. "A declaration [of cargo] is only required when a port or destination is known - oil companies, for example, do this kind of thing all the time," a spokesman said.The US secretary of state, Colin Powell, today restated that Washington did not believe weapons inspections could continue "indefinitely" and criticised France for suggesting the inspection regime could be strengthened. "It is not a satisfactory solution to continue inspections indefinitely because certain countries are afraid of upholding their responsibility to impose the will of the international community," he said. Now is the time to support a free press and truth-seeking journalism. With no shareholders or billionaire owner, we are free from political or commercial influence. We can investigate, challenge and expose those in power, and report without fear or favour. And because we believe everyone deserves access to trustworthy, fact-led news and analysis, we keep Guardian reporting open for all readers, regardless of where they live or what they can afford to pay (web source 2)

The above report is considered to be fake because it includes the following cues which are characteristics of fake news: (1) violating the sufficiency principle in that its premises lack sufficient justification or proof to prove the arguments made in it, (2) preferring meaning-related terms such as sense verbs (said and reported), and (3) repeating false statements such as "Iraq is hiding its weapons of mass destruction in the sea using cargo ships ."

The structure of the analyzed news report consists of three stages: the initiating stage (headline), the constructing stage (lead), the maximizing stage (body/ lead development(

The initiating stage is realized by means of certain pragmatic strategies which are as follows: the representative speech act of stating in which the reporter states that cargo ships may contain Iraqi weapons. The second strategy is the irrelevant appeal to tradition which is part of the strategy of fallacious relevant arguments in which the reporter attempts to convince others by saying that Iraqi weapons may be on cargo ships . Another pragmatic strategy is that of violating quality maxim wherein the reporter presents untrue information (here he was spreading false information about cargo ships). All these strategies are patent in "Cargo ships may contain Iraqi weapons."

As for the constructing stage, it is achieved by means of the following pragmatic strategies: the representative speech act of stating in which the reporter confirms that three cargo ships suspected of carrying Iraqi weapons of mass destruction are being followed by US and British intelligence. The second strategy is that of quality violation since the reporter is presenting information for which he lacks adequate evidence. Another strategy is that of self _Interest (which is type of fallacious relevant argument) in which the reporter lacks relevant facts to his arguments. The two strategies are evident in "U.S and British intelligence are tracking three cargo ships suspected of carrying Iraqi weapons of mass destruction."

The maximizing stage is realized by means of the following pragmatic strategies: the first strategy is the violation of quality maxim (spreading unconfirmed information) and the second is the speech act of claiming in order to construct the events in the news report. This can be seen in "The vessels are alleged to have been chartered through an Egyptian shipping firm and collected loads smuggled through either Syria or Jordan to avoid Western naval patrols off the Iraqi coast".

(T2)
 "WMD just a convenient excuse for war", admits Wolfowitz

The Bush administration focused on alleged weapons of mass destruction as the primary justification for toppling Saddam Hussein by force because it was politically convenient, a top-level official at the Pentagon has acknowledged.

The extraordinary admission comes in an interview with Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Defence Secretary, in the July issue of the magazine Vanity Fair.Mr Wolfowitz also discloses that there was one justification that was "almost unnoticed but huge". That was the prospect of the United States being able to withdraw all of its forces from Saudi Arabia once the threat of Saddam had been removed. Since the taking of Baghdad, Washington has said that it is taking its troops out of the kingdom. "Just lifting that burden from the Saudis is itself going to the door" towards making progress elsewhere in achieving Middle East peace, Mr Wolfowitz said. The presence of the US military in Saudi Arabia has been one of the main grievances of al-Qa'ida and other terrorist groups. For bureaucratic reasons we settled on one issue, weapons of mass destruction, because it was the one reason everyone could agree on," Mr Wolfowitz tells the magazine.The comments suggest that, even for the US administration, the logic that was presented for going to war may have been an empty shell. They come to light, moreover, just two days after Mr Wolfowitz's immediate boss, Donald Rumsfeld, the Defence Secretary, conceded for the first time that the arms might never be found.The failure to find a single example of the weapons that London and Washington said were inside Iraq only makes the embarrassment more acute. Voices are increasingly being raised in the US and Britain demanding an explanation for why nothing has been found. Most striking is the fact that these latest remarks come from Mr Wolfowitz, recognised widely as the leader of the hawks' camp in Washington most responsible for urging President George Bush to use military might in Iraq. The magazine article reveals that Mr Wolfowitz was even pushing Mr Bush to attack Iraq immediately after the 11 September attacks in the US, instead of invading Afghanistan (Web source3)

The above report is considered to be fake because of the existence of the following cues which are typically characteristics of fake news. First, it is slanted, biased, imprecise and sloppy. It violates the principle of sufficiency in that its premises do not offer adequate support or proof to prove the raised claims. The accusations raised in it concerns the alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction by Iraq what gives a justification for the war on Iraq. Secondly, it is linked to political issues (i.e., the issue of weapons of mass destruction which the American government considers an appropriate excuse for attacking Iraq). Finally, untrue or false statements are made use of and are repeated for the sake of emphasis; these statement focus on the ideas that Iraq is concealing banned weapons and Saddam is developing it.

The mentioned report consists of three stages which include : headline (the initiating stage), body (the constructing stage) and lead (the maximizing stage.

The initiating stage is realized by means of certain pragmatic strategies which are as follows: the representative speech act of stating in which the reporter states that WMD is just an appropriate excuse for war and this is clear in "WMD just a convenient excuse for war". The second pragmatic strategy is irrelevant appeals to authority which is a kind of fallacious relevant arguments. Here the reporter   David Usborne wrongly believes that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and that the war against Iraq was justified.

As for the constructing stage, it is achieved by means of the following pragmatic strategies: appeals to tradition and irrelevant appeals to authority which are both kinds of fallacious relevant arguments in which the reporter attempts to convince others of his argument. This this patent in "The Bush administration focused on weapons of mass destruction as the primary justification for toppling Saddam Hussein by force because it was politically convenient, a top-level official at the Pentagon has acknowledged." In the same stage , the silence technique is activated by the maxims of quantity (saying less than is needed) which is utilized by the reporter for the sake of keeping the top level official's identity secret. Moreover, the speech act of

A Pragmatic Study of Misrepresentation in British and American News Reports

Ebtehal Salih Hamza   **Asst. Prof. Nesaem Mehdi Al-Aadili**

informing is made use of in the previous extract wherein the reporter informs the public about the reason behind war on Iraq.

The maximizing stage, which is the last stage in the news report, is also pragmatically realized by means of the representative speech act of asserting which is evident in "For bureaucratic reasons we settled on one issue, weapons of mass destruction, because it was the one reason everyone could agree on" and "The trucks were fitted with hi-tech laboratory equipment and the report said the discovery represented the strongest evidence to date that Iraq was hiding a bio warfare programme". The reporter tries to misrepresent facts falsely asserting that WMD is the one reason that everyone could agree on as far as the matter is related to the war on Iraq. Another speech act used for the sake of distorting facts and events and to give a justification for the war on Iraq is the representative speech act of claiming which is clear in "A joint CIA and Defence Intelligence Agency report released this week claimed that two trucks found in northern Iraq last month were mobile labs used to develop biological weapons". Another pragmatic strategy is that of violating quality wherein the reporter presents information for which he lacks adequate evidence concerning accusing Iraq of hiding a biowarfare programme. Moreover, the maxim of quantity is violated because there is no sufficient amount of information about trucks which are fitted with hi-tech laboratory equipment and about Iraq hiding a biowarfare programme.

3.1.2 American News Reports

(T3)

 White House Lists Iraq Steps to Build Banned Weapons

Seeking to buttress the case for military action against Iraq, the Bush administration published a brief paper yesterday outlining what it says are efforts by Saddam Hussein to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons .

The administration insists that despite Iraq's efforts to hide its activities to develop or acquire nonconventional weapons, Baghdad has shown a clear pattern of violating its commitments in all areas....George J. Tenet, the director of central intelligence, has been adamant that tubes recently intercepted en route to Iraq were intended for use in a nuclear program, officials said. They also said it was the intelligence agencies' unanimous view that the type of tubes that Iraq has been seeking are used to make such centrifuges.. Mr. Hussein's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction is the centerpiece of the argument for planning a military campaign to topple him.... . There are tubes and then there are tubes.. The best technical experts and nuclear scientists at laboratories like Oak Ridge supported the C.I.A. assessment (Web source 4).

The report above can be considered fake because it meets the following criteria of fake news. Firstly , it is slanted and biased; imprecise and sloppy. Secondly, it violates the sufficiency principle in which it does not provide enough evidence to support the claims it arouses. Thirdly, it takes a stance on a highly controversial issue. Finally, it is linked to a political issue.

As for the structure the news report, it consists of four stages: the initiating stage (the headline), the constructing stage (the lead), and the maximizing stage (body/ lead development) .

 The initiating stage is realized by means of certain pragmatic strategies which are represented by the representative speech act of stating wherein the reporter states that Iraq had weapons and White House enumerates Iraq steps in order to build banned weapons; irrelevant appeals to authority and tradition in which the reporter attempts to convince others that Iraq had weapons . The two strategies are evident in "White House Lists Iraq Steps To Build Banned Weapons."

The constructing stage is achieved by means of the following strategies: first, the representative speech acts of asserting and insisting wherein the reporter asserts and insists that Iraq possesses banned weapons; second, irrelevant appeals to authority which is type of fallacious relevant arguments is also made use of; third, irrelevant appeals to tradition in which the reporter attempts to convince others that Iraq has banned weapons when the reporter refers to "Bush administration" in his report. All the strategies are patent in "the Bush administration published a brief paper yesterday outlining what it says are efforts by Saddam Hussein to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons ."

As for the maximizing stage, it is realized by means of the speech act of stating in which the reporter states that George Tenet has stated unequivocally in which the tubes detected en route to Iraq were designed for use in a nuclear program; the insincere speech act of confirming which is intended by the reporter to confirm Iraq's possession of WMDs. The two strategies are evident in "George J. Tenet, the director of central intelligence, has been adamant that tubes recently intercepted en route to Iraq were intended for use in a nuclear program, officials said".

(T4)

Prohibited Weapons; Illicit Arms Kept Till Eve of War, An Iraqi Scientist Is Said to Assert

A scientist who claims to have worked in Iraq's chemical weapons program for more than a decade has told an American military team that Iraq destroyed chemical and biological warfare equipment only days before the war began, members of the team said. They said the scientist led Americans to a supply of material that proved to be the building blocks of illegal weapons, which he claimed to have buried as evidence of Iraq's illicit weapons programs.

The scientist told American weapons experts that Iraq had secretly sent unconventional weapons and technology to Syria, starting in the mid-1990, and that more recently Iraq was cooperating with Al-Qaeda, the military officials said. The American said the scientist told them that president Saddam Hussein's government ..had recently focused its efforts instead on research and development projects that are virtually impervious to detection by international inspectors, and even American forces on the ground combing through Iraq's giant weapons plants.. The officials' account of the scientist's assertion and the discovery of the buried material supports the Bush administration's charges that Iraq continued to develop those weapons and lied to the United Nations about it. Finding and destroying illegal weapons was a major justification for the war.. Military officials said the scientist told them that four days before president Bush gave Mr. Hussein 48 hours to leave Iraq or face war, Iraqi officials set fire to a warehouse where biological weapons research and development was conducted. The officials quoted him as saying he had watched several months before the outbreak of the war as Iraqis buried chemical precursors and other sensitive material to conceal and preserve them for future use. The officials said the scientist showed them documents, samples, and other evidence of the program that he claimed to have stolen to prove that the program existed.. The scientist has told MET Alpha members that because Iraq's unconventional weapons programs were highly compartmented, he only had firsthand information about the chemical weapons sector in which he worked, team members said. But he has given the Americans information about other unconventional weapons activities, they said, as well as information about Iraqi weapons cooperation with Syria, and with terrorist groups, including Al-Qaeda. It was not clear how the scientist knew of such a connection (Web source 4).

The above report is considered to be fake because of the existence of the following cues which are typically characteristics of fake news. First, it is slanted, biased, imprecise and sloppy. Second, it violates the principle of sufficiency in that its premises do not offer adequate support or proof to prove the raised claims. Third, it takes a stance on a highly controversial issue. Finally, it includes repetition of the false declaration that Iraq does possess illegal weapons.

The mentioned report consists of three stages which include : headline (the initiating stage), body (the constructing stage) and lead (the maximizing stage).

The initiating stage is realized by means of the following strategies: the violation of quality maxim (issuing information which is not adequate) and quantity maxim (saying less than is required to keep the scientist's identity hidden for the sake of misrepresentation); the speech act of informing wherein the reporter tries to inform the readers of what the Iraq scientist has asserted. The above strategies are patent in "An Iraqi Scientist Is Said to Assert."

As for constructing stage, it is advanced by using the following strategies: firstly, violations of both quality and quantity (represented by partial omission to hide the identity of the Iraqi scientist); secondly, representative speech acts of stating and claiming. These strategies are

A Pragmatic Study of Misrepresentation in British and American News Reports

Ebtehal Salih Hamza   **Asst. Prof. Nesaem Mehdi Al-Aadili**

evident in "A scientist who claims to have worked in Iraq's chemical weapons program for more than a decade has told an American military team that."..

As for the maximizing stage, it is advanced through using the representative speech act of stating in which the reporter states that Iraq managed to build those weapons while lying on the United Nations and the violation of quality maxim (don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence) . These are apparent in "Iraq continued to develop those weapons and lied to the United Nations about it".

3.2 Statistical Analysis

To support the pragmatic analysis, a statistical analysis is conducted as follows:

3.2.1 British Misrepresented News Reports

Table (1): The Frequencies and Percentages of the Pragmatic Strategies of Misrepresentation in British News Reports

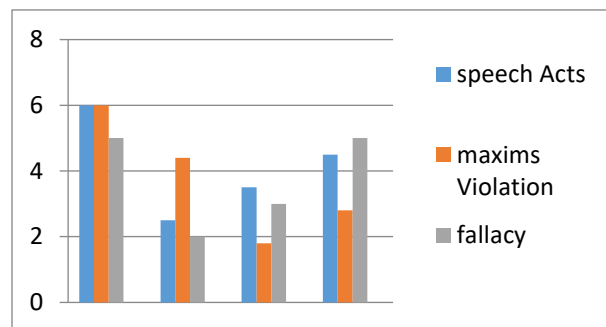| Pragmatic strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Speech Act	6	35.2
Maxim Violation	6	35.2
Fallacy	5	29.5
Persuasive Strategies	0	0
Total	17	99.9

Figure (2): Rates of the Pragmatics strategies of Misrepresentation in British new reports

Table (1) and Figure (2) above summarize the pragmatic strategies resorted to by British news reporters to misrepresent facts and events in their news reports. The table and the figure show that the strategies of speech acts and maxims violation score the same percentage, that is (35.2%) because the reporters resort to them to represent their opinions and present their news without an adequate evidence.

3.3.2 American Misrepresented News Reports

Table (2) : The Frequencies and Percentages of the Pragmatic Strategies of Misrepresentation in American News Reports

Pragmatic strategy	Frequency	Percentages
Speech Act	9	47.4
Maxim Violation	5	26.3
Fallacy	5	26.3

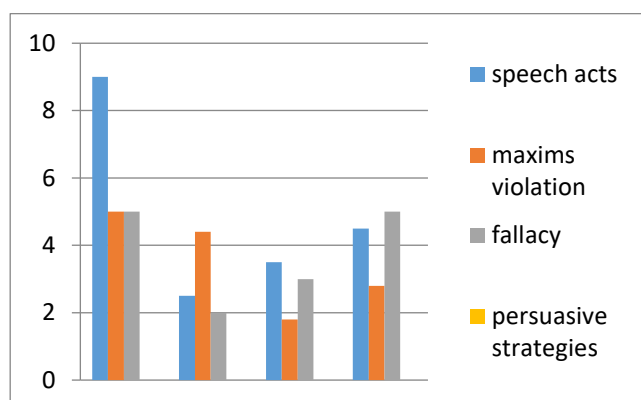| Persuasive Strategies	0	0
Total	19	100

Figure (3) :Rates of the Pragmatic strategies of Fabrication in   American Misrepresented News Reports

Table (2) and Figure (3) clarify that among the pragmatic strategies used in the process of misrepresenting news reports, the percentage of the strategy of speech acts surpasses. This does not mean that the other strategies are not employed. On the contrary, they are exploited but with a less percentage.

4. Conclusions

Depending on the results of the pragmatic and statistical analyses, the following conclusions are arrived at**:**

1. Although there are two types of misrepresentation: fraudulent and innocent, both British and American news reporters make use only of the fraudulent type of misrepresentation because they try to deceive the public by their fake news and accordingly change their beliefs.

2. British and American news reporters exploit various pragmatic strategies in their attempt to misrepresent facts and events in news reports. These strategies include speech acts, maxims violation, fallacies, and persuasive strategies.

3. There are no differences between British and American news reports as far as the exploitation of the pragmatic strategies of misrepresentation is concerned. British and American news reporters make use of the same pragmatic strategies for the sake of misrepresentation; they resort to speech acts, fallacies, maxims violation, and persuasive strategies.

4. The pragmatic strategy of speech acts has prevalence over the other pragmatic strategies, namely maxims violation, fallacies, and persuasive strategies. British and American news reporters highly exploit speech acts in the process of misrepresenting news, particularly the category of assertives represented by (stating, asserting, and confirming) because they state their beliefs and opinions through the use of these sub-acts.

5. British and American news reports consist of the same stages in their organization, namely the initiating stage (represented by the headline), the constructing stage (i.e., the lead), and the maximizing stage (body/lead development).

References

Allcott, H. and Gentzkow, M. (2017). "Social media and fake news in   the 2016 election". Journal of Economic Perspectives,   31(2), pp.211-36.

Archer, D., Aijmer, K., and Wichmann, A. (2012). *Pragmatics: An*

   Advanced Resource Book for Students. London: Routledge, Taylor and

   Francis Group.

A Pragmatic Study of Misrepresentation in British and American News Reports

Ebtehal Salih Hamza   **Asst. Prof. Nesaem Mehdi Al-Aadili**

Austin, J. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Cambridge: Harvard

Bell, Allan .(1991). The Language of News Media . Oxford: Blackwell .   University Press.

Burgoon, J. K., Buller, D. B., Floyd, K., and Grander, J. (1996). "Deceptive Realities: Sender, Receiver, and Observer Perspectives in Deceptive Conversations". *Communication Research*, 23, 724-748.

Crystal, D. (2003). A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics (5th ed.). London: Blackwell Press.

Damer, T. E. (2009). Attacking Faulty Reasoning: A Practical Guide to Fallacy-Free Arguments. Oxford: Wordsworth.

Danler, P. (2005). Morpho-syntactic and textual realizations as deliberate pragmatic argumentative linguistic tools?. In Louise de Saussure and Peter Schulz (eds.), Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co., pp:45 - 60.

Fallis, D., 2015. "What is disinformation"?. Library Trends, 63(3), pp.401-426.

Galasinski, D. (2000). *The Language of Deception*: A Discourse Analytical Study. London: Sage.

Lazer, D.M., Baum, M.A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A.J., Greenhill, K.M., Menczer, F., Metzger, M.J., Nyhan, B., Pennycook, G., Rothschild, D. and Schudson, M., 2018. "The science of fake news". *Science*, 359(6380), pp.1094-1096.

MaKcan , Anna. (2006) . "News Writing" . London : Sage.

Mustafaraj, E. and Metaxas, P.T., 2017, June. "The fake news spreading plague": was it preventable?. In Proceedings of the 2017 ACM on Web Science Conference (pp. 235-239). ACM.

Metts, S. (1989). "An Exploratory Investigation of Deception in Close Relationships". Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 6, 159-179.

Mey, J. L. (2001). Pragmatics: An introduction. (2nd ed.). USA : Blackwell Publishing.

Pajunen , Juhani : *Linguistic Analysis of Newspaper Discourse in Theory and Practice* . MA thesis. U of Tampere , 2008. Print.

Perloff, R. M. (2010). The Dynamics of Persuasion. New York: Routledge.

Reah, D. (1998). The Language of Newspapers. London: TJ International   Ltd.

Richardson, J. E. (2007). Analysing Newspapers. An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rigotti, E. (2005). "Towards a typology of manipulative processes". In D, Saussure and P, Schulz. (eds), *Manipulation and and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp: 61-84.

Searle, J. R. (1979). Expression and Meaning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Silcock , William B Haider , Don, and Rogus, Mary T. (2014). Managing News: A Handbook for Ethical and Effective Producing . New Jersey : Rutledge.

Walton, D. (1995). *A Pragmatic Theory of Fallacy: Studies and Rhetoric and Communication*. London: University of Alabama Press.

Walton, D. (2007). *Media Argumentation: Dialectics, Persuasion, and Rhetoric.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ward, W. and Fearnside, W. B. H. (2005). *Fallacy; the Counterfeit of*

Argument. Canada: Canada University Press. Retrieved at:
   m.bookfi.net/book/1211526.
Wardle, C. (2017). *Fake news. It's complicated*. First Draft News.

Web Sources
1. **http://learn.library.ryerson.ca/fakenews/identify**
2. **https://www.theguardian.com/**
3. **https://www.independent.co.uk/**
4. **https://www.nytimes.com/**