

## Persuasive Techniques in Selected Newspaper Headlines: A Critical Stylistic Study

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اساليب الاقناع المستخدمة لمختارات من العناوين الصحفية : دراسة نقدية اسلوبية

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### Abstract:

The current study examines the persuasive techniques used in selected newspaper headlines on the COVID-19 vaccine using a critical stylistic approach. Headlines have a significant effect in molding public views by employing certain linguistic structures and stylistic choices that correspond to ideological, political, or cultural goals. Using Jeffries' (2010) concept of critical stylistics, the current study evaluates ten headlines from prominent international newspapers. To identify the underlying ideological and persuasive techniques, the analysis utilizes tools such as naming and describing, implying and assuming, prioritizing, and presenting actions/events. The findings show headlines using charged emotional lexis, strong modality, and selective agency to project importance, attribute blame, and elicit emotional reaction such as fear, hope, or solidarity. For example, assertions like "vaccine hesitancy undercuts progress" frame hesitation as the main hurdle, whereas others such as "India reaches record vaccination levels" highlight national success to instill trust. The study also cites the use of inclusion and exclusion devices to highlight or hide specific actors and opinions in a bid to change public perceptions regarding vaccinations and their impact. Through an examination of such linguistic elements, this study unpacks the ways in which headings are used as informative tools and powerful instruments of persuasion. Consequently, this study contributes to the newly emerging discipline of critical stylistics through its elucidation of the way that the media discourse influences attitudes and actions in times of public health crises.

### المستخلص:

تبحث هذه الدراسة في الأساليب الإقناعية المستخدمة في عناوين الصحف المختارة حول لقاح COVID-19 باستخدام نهج الأسلوبية النقدية. تلعب العناوين دوراً مهماً في تشكيل وجهات نظر الجمهور من خلال توظيف تراكيب لغوية وخيارات أسلوبية تتماشى مع الأهداف الأيديولوجية أو السياسية أو الثقافية. بالاعتماد على مفهوم الأسلوبية النقدية لجيفريز (٢٠١٠)، تقوم الدراسة بتحليل عشرة عناوين من صحف دولية بارزة. وللكشف عن التقنيات الأيديولوجية والإقناعية الكامنة، يستخدم التحليل أدوات مثل التسمية والوصف، والتضمين والافتراض، وإعطاء الأولوية، وعرض الأفعال/الأحداث. تُظهر النتائج أن العناوين تستخدم لغة مشحونة عاطفياً، وصيغاً دلالية قوية، وانتقائية في تحديد الفاعلين للتعبير عن الشعور بالإلحاح، وإلقاء اللوم، وإثارة ردود فعل عاطفية مثل الخوف أو التفاؤل أو الوحدة. فعلى سبيل المثال، تعكس عبارات مثل "التردد في أخذ اللقاح يهدد التقدم" التردد باعتباره عقبة خطيرة، في حين أن عبارات أخرى مثل "الهند تحقق أرقاماً قياسية في التطعيم" تركز على النجاح الوطني لتعزيز الثقة. كما تكشف الدراسة عن استخدام أدوات الإدماج والاستبعاد لتسليط الضوء على جهات فاعلة معينة أو التعتيم عليها، مما يؤدي إلى تغيير التصورات العامة حول اللقاحات وتأثيرها. ومن خلال تحليل هذه الاختيارات اللغوية، تكشف الدراسة كيف يمكن استخدام العناوين كأدوات إعلامية فعالة وتقنيات إقناعية مؤثرة. وتساهم الدراسة في مجال الأسلوبية النقدية الناشئ من خلال تسليط الضوء على كيفية تأثير الخطاب الإعلامي على المواقف والسلوكيات خلال الأزمات الصحية العامة.

Keywords: critical stylistics, persuasive techniques, newspaper headlines, COVID-19 vaccine, media discourse.

1. :Introduction

Headlines of newspapers are expertly crafted texts that seek to catch the eye of readers, set the tone, and influence audience perception. They are more than merely summaries of news pieces. Headlines are among the most noticeable and influential components of media discourse, and they have a significant influence on how news is viewed and consumed. Their ability to convey complex ideas in a few words is made possible by their language brevity and stylistic clarity, which can have a significant impact on readers' comprehension of events and concerns (Bell, 1991). The two main functions of headlines are "to inform" as well as "to persuade". They might draw attention to some sides of a tale while downplaying others by spotlighting particular parts of it. Such selective framing can be justified by the publication's or readers' ideological position. For example, no form of media language is ever objective, writes Fowler (1991); rather, it reflects and reproduces society's views. The selection of words, grammar, and syntax is significant especially in the headlines because they embody implicit assumptions and explicit meanings. The rhetorical power of headlines is especially important during moments of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. During the entire duration of this, vaccine-related headlines have served as information, assurance, and occasionally controversy. They have been used in a bid to drive public health initiatives, address vaccine hesitancy, and combat misinformation. According to research, emotive language, stylistic and rhetorical devices, and emotive words in headlines have a significant effect on readers' attitudes towards health behavior (Peters et al. 2014). Reading headlines with a critical stylistic glance reveals how the words are utilized to create specific realities, emphasize specific narratives, and promote ideological positions. This is especially crucial when examining how the media constructs people's minds concerning COVID-19 vaccines and their consumption.

### ١,٢ The Significance of Exploring the Persuasive Techniques in Headlines

The analysis of persuasive devices in headlines is crucial in addressing the ways in which the media influences public opinion and behavior. Headlines are one of the most important aspects of news reporting as they affect how readers approach the content and whether they will read it or not. According to Bell (1991), headlines are intended to summarize complex stories in few but forceful words, and for this reason, they are always persuasive. This persuasiveness is not coincidental but a calculated linguistic and stylistic choice on the part of the media to garner attention and align with their ideological purposes. In a time of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, public health headlines, especially those concerning vaccines, have significantly impacted cultural attitudes. Persuasive devices used in headlines, such as the use of emotive language, selective framing, and foregrounding of particular narratives, can either increase public trust in vaccines or boost skepticism. Media language, particularly headlines, is a tangible ideological instrument that fixes perceptions and entrenches dominant narratives (Jeffries, 2010). The risks are especially grave in times of health crises, since compliance by people with norms is often a function of trustworthy communication. Moreover, an understanding of the persuasive devices in headlines promotes critical media literacy because it makes the readers recognize and examine how the choice of words may influence opinions. Dor (2003) concluded that headlines are "relevance optimizers" that guide readers towards particular meanings and disallow other perspectives. Understanding such techniques enables audiences to critically assess information given in headlines, thereby making more informed and independent decisions.

### :Objectives of the Study ١,٣

1. Understanding Linguistic Persuasion in Media
2. Analyzing Ideological Constructs in Newspaper Headlines
3. Evaluating Media's Role in Public Health Communication
4. Enhancing Critical Awareness

### :Literature Review ١,٤

Newspapers have also traditionally been seen as strong instruments for influencing the public's perception since they can frame the news in a way that influences what is known. Newspaper articles and headlines act as agents of persuasion, shaping the reader's perceptions on immediate concerns and general social ideologies (van Dijk, 1988). In his "The language of news media" (1991), Bell says that the headlines of newspapers not only make up a gist of news content, but they are actually meant to attract the attention of the readers and guide interpretation. Headlines employ a variety of linguistic techniques like word choice, modality, and framing in order to elicit emotional reactions and get the reader to take on a certain attitude.

Moreover, Richardson's book "Analyzing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis" (2007) is interested in the way that headlines utilize the choice to foreground some opinions or characters but not others. This is axiomatic in research which looks at discourse about politics, where headings frequently voice some particular framing of events by foregrounding some opinions but not others. Framing effect, or the effect of the

way a story is put across to decide its interpretation, is an important form of persuasion used in news reporting. A headline calling a political figure "championing" a new initiative makes a positive evaluation, but one that calls the same figure "pushing through" the bill implies coercion or conflict. Peters et al. (2014) offer a discourse on health issues that has investigated how newspapers utilize persuasion to shape behaviors concerning health. health news stories, particularly vaccination news stories, use headline strategies that instill feelings of insecurity and urgency in the attempt to shape the decisions of the public. Such discourse, using certain rhetorical devices, shapes public perception and action and hence influences the general reaction to public health concerns. As Caple and Bednarek (2016) note, headlines tend to use sensationalized vocabulary or sympathetic prompts to provide a sense of priority or salience, which impacts readers' responses to content as published. To this extent, headlines are forceful ideological instruments that direct readers' perceptions of events, participants, and issues. For example, when addressing matters of equality or those of politics, headlines tend to apply precise verbs and adjectives to create a positive or negative perception with regard to individuals or organizations. The words applied in these headlines are intended not just to clarify, but also to encourage readers to take a specific stance on the issues being introduced. As explained by Wahl-Jorgensen (2020), emotionally charged headings—whether they evoke fear, happiness, anger, or sympathy—are more attention-grabbing and have the potential to gently influence readers' opinions about the subject under discussion. This is particularly noticed during life-threatening diseases, when the urgency and societal interest of the matter require using emotional appeals.

## 2. Critical Stylistics as a Theoretical Framework

Lesley Jeffries (2010) ventured the Critical Stylistics, which is a methodical theory of the analysis of the ways texts, particularly media discourse, utilize language techniques to convey information and agenda. This paradigm synthesizes stylistics' rigorous textual analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis's more general sociopolitical concerns, and provides means of finding implicit conceptual signals within language. In contrast to conventional stylistics, which constantly concentrates on literary texts, Critical Stylistics examines non-literary materials such as political monologues, advertisements, and political monologues. Jeffries believes that language is not neutral, but rather an active constructor of social reality. This supports Fowler's (1991) finding that media language reflects and promotes ideological beliefs. Critical Stylistics allows academics to carefully analyze how language choices impact readers' perceptions and sentiments. Jeffries (2010) proposes a range of textual and abstract tools that serve as the foundation for Critical Stylistics. These tools show the ideological foundations of texts:

### 1. Naming and describing

It is an effective linguistic strategy that examines how items, events, and individuals are named and stated in texts. This tool demonstrates how name assemblies may deliberately transmit ideologies, beliefs, and opinions. The use of nouns and modifiers formulates distinct descriptions of entities or occurrences.

### 2. Representing Actions/Events/States

Grammar-based patterns, notably the usage of active vs passive voice, influence how agency and responsibility are expressed.

### 3. Equating and contrasting

This tool develops associations of "similarity or difference", frequently resulting in asymmetry.

### 4. Prioritizing.

The sequence of details in a text influences whether it is "foregrounded or backgrounded"

### 5. Implying and Assuming

Many writings use "implicit meanings or presuppositions" to deliver their subject matter.

### 6. Negating

Negation involves highlighting or dismissing specific notions.

### 7. Exemplifying

The strategic application of lists or examples highlights certain facets of a topic.

and Enumerating

## 3. Data Collections:

The current study examines ten English-language newspaper headlines on the COVID-19 vaccine, taken from well-known English-language newspapers including "The New York Times, The Guardian, BBC News, The Washington Post, and The Times of India". The choice concentrates on how critical stylistic tools which , employed as persuasive techniques are used to affect the public's view towards the issue of vaccination. Headlines were picked as the main source of data because they capture significant ideologies in a brief and convincing form, presenting them perfectly for a critical stylistic evaluation. The headlines were published from 2020 to 2022, a time highlighted by massive international attention on COVID-19 vaccine.

### 3. The Used Approach:

To examine the selected newspaper headlines, the current study uses an approach based on mixed methods that combines "quantitative and qualitative" methodologies. The combination of "quantitative and qualitative" methodologies enables a thorough investigation of persuasive strategies, handling both observable patterns and broader context-dependent implications.

### 4. :Data Analysis

#### 4.1. "COVID-19: Thousands of people in UK vaccinated as rollout begins" (BBC News, 2020).

The headline names "COVID-19" as the main topic, placing the content within the context of the global pandemic. The phrase "thousands of people" is ambiguous but strategically chosen to imply considerable and powerful behavior. This "unspecified quantifier" prevents the specificity and can indicate common development or achievement. In this respect, the naming tool is employed in this headline.

Concerning the implication tool, Using the phrase "people in the UK" emphasizes a national viewpoint, instilling a sense of local pride or duty. The term "vaccinated" is neutral yet action-oriented, stressing beneficial medical intervention. The phrase "rollout" refers to the coordinated, large-scale dissemination of vaccinations, whereas "begins" conveys a feeling of urgency and progression. The headline highlights the encouraging news of vaccination efforts, with "thousands of people in the UK vaccinated." This framework emphasizes accomplishment and achievement, aiming to increase public faith in the vaccine. It ignores logistical obstacles, vaccination reluctance, and other negative factors, presenting a positive narrative. The headline implies that the vaccine deployment is an important and noteworthy event. The term "thousands" indicates widespread engagement, although the actual quantity is not mentioned. The underlying assumption is that the rollout is well-organized and effective, as demonstrated by the phrase "rollout begins," which implies that the process is proceeding smoothly.

The action "vaccinated" is highlighted in the title, implying that it has been done and is still in progress. However, the agency (that is vaccinating) is not mentioned, instead focussing on the beneficiaries ("thousands of people in the UK"). The lack of a specific actor (e.g., healthcare experts or the government) draws emphasis on the accomplishment rather than the individuals responsible. There is an implicit difference between the pre-rollout phase (implied to be passive) and the present phase ("rollout begins"), indicating a movement toward activity and progress. The title connects "thousands" with success, implying that the figure is significant and indicative of efficient vaccination administration. The vaccine's reach is demonstrated with the quantifier "thousands." Despite being ambiguous, it serves as an example of advancement, enabling readers to deduce the scope of the campaign without supplying precise information. Nothing is specifically negate in the title, but the lack of details about difficulties (such as logistical problems or vaccination reluctance) subtly downplays or dismisses these worries in favor of an upbeat story. The headline highlights the advancements made in UK vaccination campaigns in an optimistic and upbeat manner. By emphasizing the number of participants ("thousands") and the rollout's beginning, it quietly fosters trust in the immunization program. A one-sided, success-oriented viewpoint is reinforced when obstacles or restrictions are left out. By emphasizing the beneficiaries of the immunization and leaving out the agents (healthcare professionals or authorities), the focus is shifted from the method to the result. The analysis here demonstrates how the headline, through its linguistic choices, generates a narrative of progress and success that is consistent with ideological aims of increasing public belief in immunization programs.

#### 4.2 "Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccine faces scrutiny over side effects" (BBC News, 2021).

By examining this headline using Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistics model, we may identify persuasive techniques inherent in the language, such as naming, describing, implying, and prioritizing. This analysis will demonstrate how these stylistic decisions help to construct a certain narrative and underlying ideology.

The title opens by naming "Johnson & Johnson," a well-known pharmaceutical business. The use of a well-known brand lends authority and weight to the remark, portraying the problem as a major public concern owing to the company's reputation. This option positions the vaccination in a specific business and global context, emphasizing the company's responsibilities. The word "COVID vaccine" is especially important since it quickly connects the issue to the current epidemic and the worldwide immunization effort. The title, "COVID vaccine," resonates with an issue that is extremely topical, emotionally charged, and significant to a large audience. The inclusion of the virus's name links the vaccine directly to the epidemic, highlighting the greater public health context in which it is being scrutinized. The word "faces scrutiny" implies active, continuing inspection or criticism. "Scrutiny" is employed negatively, as if the vaccination is being probed critically or inquired into, particularly safety and efficacy. This statement introduces an evaluative component, implying that the vaccination

is subject to government or public scrutiny. The addition of "overside effects" identifies the reason why the inspection is taking place. By emphasizing "side effects," the title signifies the vaccine's possible danger or risk. The employment of the term "side effects" implies that the vaccination has negative outcomes, which leads readers to think about probable disadvantages. This alternative contextualizes the story on the vaccine's possible dangers and not its advantages, which can lead to fear or doubt among audiences. The title places greater emphasis on "scrutiny over side effects" than on benefits or the efficacy of the vaccine. The headline format suggests that the main concern at hand is possible harms and safety issues, diverting public attention from the greater purpose of fighting COVID-19 through vaccination. This ordering shows a critical eye, with possible danger being prioritized above the lifesaving or protective value of the vaccine. Furthermore, by putting "scrutiny" in the middle of the headline, the process of critical review is relegated to the background, and the possible negative review remains the primary focus of the target audience. The use of "over side effects" as explanation comes across as emphasizing safety issues regarding the vaccine. The headline assumes that the reader is already aware of the general importance of the COVID-19 vaccine, which is why it does not need to explain the vaccine's purpose or significance. It also assumes a shared understanding that side effects are a source of concern and warrant attention. These assumptions guide the reader to view the scrutiny as legitimate and relevant. The phrase "faces scrutiny" means that the vaccination is now under major public or scientific study. The use of the word "scrutiny" implies that there is something incorrect or suspicious about the vaccination. It suggests that the inspection is not a casual observation, but rather a thorough study, potentially conducted by regulatory officials or the media. This implies danger or dispute. Besides, the title implies that the reader will instantly associate the vaccination with its possible hazards, framing the debate around damage rather than benefit. This assumption shades the immunization in a bad light, and hence it seems to be controversial or in jeopardy. The title characterizes the setting of investigation as a process that the vaccine is undergoing in the present. The phrase "faces scrutiny" makes the event continuous or impending, and it characterizes the vaccination as being under current scrutiny or questioning. This active action inspires urgency in the heading, making readers question whether the vaccine is safe and whether there is any danger. The application of the phrase "over side effects" raises the issue into a primarily negative concern over the adverse consequences of the vaccination. This framing pinpoints the disadvantages of the vaccine by focusing on the negative effects, a presentation that may make the reader more doubtful about the safety of the vaccine. The headline implies a contradiction between the vaccine's intended public health advantages and the alleged negative consequences revealed by the inquiry. By emphasizing "side effects," the headline contrasts the vaccine's intended preventive function with the potential hazards connected with its usage. The contrast between the vaccine's desirable purpose (combating COVID-19) and its bad characteristics (side effects and scrutiny) produces stress which may lead readers to be more cautious or dubious. Furthermore, the usage of "Johnson & Johnson" rather than just "the vaccine" distinguishes this specific vaccine from others in the global immunization campaign. The headline implies that, while other vaccinations may not be subject to such scrutiny, this one is, and so the reader is urged to consider this specific vaccine with greater mistrust.

The headline prevents any discussion of the vaccine's success or usefulness in combating COVID-19. Focusing simply on the scrutiny and potential adverse effects ignores the vaccine's larger advantages or positive consequences in the battle against the epidemic. This selective framing gives way to a narrative of potential damage and suspicion, creating the perception in the audience that the vaccination is more of a hindrance than a benefit. The decision to highlight "side effects" ignores other potential beneficial narratives regarding the vaccine, such as its effective administration or lives vaccinated.

Using Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistic paradigm, the title "Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccine under scrutiny for side effects" demonstrates the language selection using persuasive tactics. The title guides the narrative by emphasizing the possible danger of the vaccine and the scrutiny that it has faced. By specifically pointing out "side effects" and "scrutiny," the title automatically describes the vaccination as being problematic and evokes safety concerns. This research reveals how stylistic devices in headings guide and shape popular ideas and assumptions, presenting the vaccination as an answer to health and an argument.

#### 4.3. "COVID-19 vaccine: What you need to know about the new mandates" (New York Times, 2021).

The headline opens with the clear mention of "COVID-19 vaccine," identifying the article's key subject. This approach establishes the vaccination as a relevant and timely issue, quickly drawing the reader's attention. The phrase has a neutral to positive meaning, emphasizing the vaccine's usefulness in combating the epidemic. The term "new mandates" provides a level of clarity by noting recent regulatory or policy changes. The term "mandates" connotes power and duty, implying government-enforced immunization laws. While the descriptor

"new" highlights the regulations' timeliness and relevance, it also indicates possible debate or change, which piques people's interest. The phrase "What you need to know" in the headline emphasizes the presentation of critical information to the reader. This statement conveys utility and relevance, implying that the article includes vital information for understanding the ramifications of the new regulations. By emphasizing the reader's informational demands, the headline portrays itself as a useful and authoritative source. The emphasis on "new mandates" elevates legislative developments above other parts of the vaccination debate, such as scientific advances, public attitude, or vaccine accessibility. This emphasis indicates an effort to educate readers about government activities and their possible consequences. The headline includes many assumptions:

1. Mandates are essential. By stressing "new mandates," the title implies that these rules are significant and need attention from the public.

2. Readers require knowledge: The phrase "What you need to know" implies that readers are either uneducated or underinformed about these mandates. This generates a sense of urgency, which encourages readers to connect with the material.

3. Mandates pertain to COVID-19 vaccines: The headline presupposes a direct and exclusive relationship between the requirements and the vaccine campaign, leaving out broader public health policy or other pandemic-related actions.

The "new mandates" are the focal point of the headline, with the COVID-19 vaccination serving as the backdrop or trigger. The phrase "What you need to know" implies that the directives are active and important, necessitating the reader's comprehension and possible compliance. However, the headline does not explain the nature of these obligations (for example, who they impact or what they demand), generating ambiguity and drawing readers into the story for clarity. While the headline may not openly utilize contrasting language, it does establish an implied distinction between the educated and the uninformed. By providing information on "what you need to know," the piece serves as a link between the two groups, appealing to readers' need for awareness and control in the face of shifting demands. The emphasis on "new mandates" also distinguishes the current situation from earlier policies or norms, implying a shift or evolution in the COVID-19 reaction. This difference gently emphasizes the pandemic's changing nature and attendant concerns. The headline negates other frames of the vaccine story, such as the scientific or human aspects of immunization. It focuses on the administrative and regulatory components of the COVID-19 vaccination rather than its effectiveness, safety, or public image. This limited emphasis simplifies the larger vaccination discourse by diverting attention away from potentially controversial issues concerning vaccine reluctance, access, or ethical concerns. Using Jeffries' (2010) paradigm of critical stylistics, the headline "COVID-19 vaccine: What you need to know about the new mandates" demonstrates how language and stylistic choices contribute to a convincing narrative. By naming and defining the COVID-19 vaccine and new rules, stressing public awareness, and indicating the relevance of the demands, the headline molds readers' opinions and accords with an ideology that values compliance and institutional authority. This research highlights the ability of headlines to shape public conversation by framing facts in ways that support various agendas and views.

#### 4.4 "U.S. vaccine mandates: A step forward in the fight against COVID-19" (Reuters, 2021).

The title "U.S. Vaccine Mandates" addresses the main topic. This phrase applies only to governmental mandates for COVID-19 vaccination. The words "mandates" are factual but commanding, emphasizing policy implementation. Although the word does not imply overt judgment, it does create a formal tone that signifies institutional power. The word "a step forward" positions the mandates in a positive light, suggesting improvement and progress. This rhetorical phrase indicates a thoughtful ideological position, presenting the regulations as both necessary and desirable. Being "in the fight against COVID-19" places the regulations within an overarching saga of world health, presenting them as the continued reaction to the epidemic. The title emphasizes the progressive element of vaccination requirements through the use of the words "a step forward." The words are positioned in the middle of the title, which emphasizes accomplishment and development and presents the rules as good social development. Any opposing viewpoints, such as personal freedom issues, vaccine resistance, or enforcement issues, are eliminated. This targeted highlighting puts emphasis on presumed benefits of the regulations and omits possible issues, influencing the reader's understanding of the topic. The title argues that vaccine mandates are required and effective steps in the fight against COVID-19. By framing the mandates as "a step forward," it argues that they are the rational and productive step forward in the war against the epidemic. Also, the title suggests that everyone agrees on the significance of this "fight," presenting COVID-19 as a shared adversary that justifies such actions. It implicitly presents the US government as proactive and accountable. The headline links vaccination

requirements with progress, referring to them as "a step forward." This creates a stark contrast between the present and the past, implying that the lack of requirements was a less successful or stagnant era in combating the epidemic. The implied contrast portrays the mandates as a watershed moment, emphasizing their significance and urgency. Although the headline does not provide specific details or statistics, the phrase "a step forward" exemplifies progress and improvement in combating COVID-19. The lack of numerical data or specifics allows the headline to generalize its message, appealing to a broader audience and focusing on the overall narrative rather than measurable outcomes. While the headline does not expressly negate any assertions, it does imply rule out any counterarguments or disputes regarding vaccination requirements. Individual rights, opposition to mandates, and practical obstacles are pushed to the background, resulting in a one-sided narrative that associates mandates with development and public health. By excluding such views, the title negates their relevance or significance here. Using Jeffries' (2010) model of critical stylistics, the title "U.S Vaccine Mandates: A Step Forward in the Fight Against COVID-19" displays an effective narrative of forward progress, group effort, and duty. The headline makes vaccination mandates necessary steps in the battle against the virus by referring to and delineating them, arranging and suggesting. The heading promotes public health efforts and encourages trust in government action by underlining positive features and keeping potential disputes in the background. This study emphasizes the importance of word selection in framing public discourse and propagating ideological agendas.

#### 4.5. "Vaccine hesitancy is a global issue: How countries are combating misinformation" (Reuters, 2021).

The title begins with "Vaccine hesitancy," which refers to a given phenomenon indicating reluctance or refusal to be vaccinated in the face of existing vaccines. Reluctance is framed negatively as something that is a problem to be solved. Referring to it as a "global issue" emphasizes its significance, implying widespread and pressing concern. This categorization internationalizes the problem, generating a sense of common responsibility and implicitly overlooking unique circumstances or variations of vaccine hesitancy.

The second half of the headline, "How Countries Are Fighting Misinformation," is action-oriented. The employment of the word "fighting" provides a war-like image, placing efforts to counter disinformation on par with a battle. This backdrop presents a sense of necessity and resolve, with nations as participants willing to do something about the problem. The identification of "misinformation" as a special attention point underscores the role of misleading or false information in extending vaccination hesitancy, shining the spotlight on external forces and not system-based or social internal issues. The headline places the emphasis on the fact that vaccination hesitancy is a global issue and not a personal or provincial reality. In noting that governments are "facing down misinformation," it shows positive actions to counter the situation. This phrasing positions the problem as something that can be solved through action, one which can bring focus to solutions rather than the reasons underlying vaccination refusal, such as government distrust or healthcare systems' past injustices. The headline structure also, implicitly, positions vaccination reluctance as the major problem and misinformation as the secondary problem. But it implies causation, suggesting misinformation is a main cause of vaccination reluctance. The title makes a few assumptions:

1. Hesitancy towards the vaccine is a problem to concern about: By classifying it as a "global problem," the title gives the impression that vaccine hesitancy is commonly an issue to be solved promptly.
2. misinformation is the cause: The use of "fighting misinformation" makes it seem like misinformation is the primary reason for vaccination hesitancy, overshadowing other possible factors such as institutional issues or actual medical concerns.
3. Countries are actively working on the problem: Present continuous tense in "are combating" reflects that countries are actively working on alleviating the problem. The title situates vaccination reluctance and disinformation as interpenetrating phenomena where nations actively intervene. "Combating" implies a sustained, forceful action, which fits with the seriousness and urgency implied in the description "global issue." The framing of nations as agents suggests a measure of state responsibility and agency, emphasizing institutional action above individual or community-level action.

The title spans vaccine hesitancy to an international crisis by referring to it as a "global issue." This general sense of reference is as opposed to localized or individual cases of hesitation, implying that the issue crosses geographical and cultural boundaries. Furthermore, it compares governments' activities (combating disinformation) with the problem itself, resulting in a contradiction between those actively addressing the issue and the misinformation seen to be the major cause. While the headline highlights misinformation as the primary barrier to vaccination uptake, it indirectly ignores other variables that contribute to vaccine reluctance. Historical distrust of healthcare institutions, religious or cultural views, and socioeconomic impediments are not present. By

eliminating these causes, the headline simplifies the story, emphasizing misinformation as the primary reason and promoting the belief that resolving it is sufficient to overcome reluctance. Using Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistics approach, the headline "Vaccine hesitancy is a global issue: How countries are combating misinformation" displays a well-crafted narrative that emphasizes urgency, action, and institutional authority. The title depicts vaccination hesitancy as a worldwide problem caused by misinformation, positioning countries as active players in fixing it. By emphasizing certain parts of the issue while ignoring others, the headline simplifies a complicated situation, directing public conversation in a way that matches with institutional ideology and supports belief in global health policies.

#### 4.6. "Europe's vaccine rollout: Why some countries are struggling to vaccinate" (Reuters, 2021).

The headline begins with "Europe's vaccine rollout," stating the main issue and placing the conversation regionally and culturally. The term "rollout" is systematic, large-scale application with the connotation of a certain order and building. But it also carries with it the implication of a logistical procedure that can encounter difficulties, setting the scene for the condemnatory tone taken in the second half of the title. The phrasing of the words "some countries" offers information without specificity, refusing to nominate individual states. This option permits the headline to summarize the issue without alienating individual readers. The use of "struggling" is particularly noteworthy because it characterizes the immunization process in some nations as flawed or ineffective. This negative assessment leads the reader to consider the action in these nations to be the wrong type of activity relative to an unstated norm of success. The structure of the headline prioritizes the problem at the expense of progress.

Whereas "Europe's vaccine rollout" provides a snapshot, the lower-priority clause "Why some countries are struggling to vaccinate" is focused on vulnerabilities and difficulties. The focus on adversity shifts reportage from celebrating to criticizing, emphasizing difficulties over accomplishments. The headline places a high value on "why" as the most significant factor, evoking the significance of such difficulties, provoking the reader to investigate causation and consequence. This emphasis promotes problem-solving discourse, wherein vaccine problems are portrayed as problems requiring to be investigated and resolved. The headline includes some presumptions that guide the reader's interpretation:

1. Europe's vaccine rollout is struggling: Employing "struggling" is a presumption that there are certain countries with really bad issues, framing the rollout as problematic and patchy.
2. Vaccination is a major goal: The invocation of "struggling to vaccinate" in the title assumes that mass vaccination is a concerning and desirable goal.
3. Justifications are necessary: Placing "why" in the title suggests that the difficulties are unexpected or require justification, and hence some underlying criticism of the preparedness or policy of these countries.

Placing the word "are struggling to vaccinate" in the title suggests that the act of vaccination is a continuous, active process. The present continuous tense in this application is designed to indicate immediacy and motion, an understanding that these issues have not been fixed but are current in real time. The absence of named actors (i.e., governments or institutions) fosters a passive construction, putting emphasis on the issues themselves instead of those tasked with fixing them. Moreover, the phrase "vaccine rollout" portrays vaccination as a careful process, but when used in conjunction with "struggling to vaccinate," it creates a disconnect between intent and outcome. It subtly degrades the efficacy or ability of the existing systems. The title indirectly discriminates between "non-struggling" and "struggling" European nations. In comparing the latter, it situates them as exceptions or outliers, highlighting their perceived failings in comparison to an unstated level of success. Through its failure to name particular countries, the title generalizes the challenges, enabling readers to view them as symptoms of systemic failures rather than individual instances. The heading downplays any mention of achievement or uniformity in the vaccination deployment across Europe. It distracts from satisfactory achievements, such as elevated immunization levels in certain nations, and accentuates disparity and setbacks instead. This absence forms a selective narrative that emphasizes criticism over jubilation, portraying Europe's immunization campaign as dispersed and weak. Using Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistics, the title "Europe's vaccine rollout: Why some countries are struggling to vaccinate" shows how language and stylistic devices construct a critical discourse. The title represents the campaign of vaccinations in Europe as uneven and problematic by reporting and developing issues, highlighting challenges, and indicating the requirement for clarification. By portraying events as ongoing and comparing successful and unsuccessful nations, it highlights inequities and issues, shaping popular discourse on duty and advancement. Through this, it demonstrates headlines as key to shaping perception and advancing certain ideological stances.

**4.7. "The COVID-19 vaccine: Public health measures and the role of the pharmaceutical industry"** (Reuters, 2021).

The headline opens with "The COVID-19 vaccine," a clear allusion to the subject of the story. The usage of "The" here serves as a definite article, indicating that the headline is referring to a specific and well-known vaccine: the one created to prevent the COVID-19 epidemic. This framing assumes that the audience is already familiar with the vaccination, presenting it as a well accepted public health instrument. The word "COVID-19 vaccine" is an objective description, but it also conveys a feeling of urgency and importance given the pandemic's worldwide scope. The second part of the headline contains two components: "public health measures" and "the role of the pharmaceutical industry." These terms offer additional context and information concerning the broader impact of the vaccine. "Public health measures" imply coordinated and systematic pandemic management. The word "measures" implies that efforts are deliberate to restrict the impact of the virus, which usually include public vaccination campaigns, social distancing, and wearing face masks. It classifies the vaccination within an overarching public health strategy. The second aspect, "the role of the pharmaceutical industry," offers a new angle by focusing on private sector activity in vaccine production, distribution, and promotion. The use of the term "role" puts the pharmaceutical business at the forefront in the context of managing the pandemic, with an agreement that it has a role to play in presenting solutions. However, the term might carry an underlying connotation of control and influence, implying that the pharma industry effectively sets the public health scenario. The format of the headline highlights "The COVID-19 vaccine," which indicates its pivotal importance in the conversation. By putting the vaccination first, the headline announces it as the main point, and the other two items ("public health measures" and "the role of the pharmaceutical industry") explain its background and implications. The order "public health measures" before "the role of the pharmaceutical industry" reflects a conceptual bias. Public health initiatives are presented as part of a broader, more cooperative strategy, the pharmaceutical industry being an ancillary component. This sequence may be reflective of the fact that the manufacture and distribution of the vaccine are being viewed as largely an integrated part of global health program, with the private sector playing an ancillary role. The fact that the elements are placed in an order serves to instill the perception that the vaccine is effectively a public health measure and that the pharmaceutical company is simply playing a secondary but important role. The title affirms that "public health measures" and "the role of the pharmaceutical industry" are both crucial components of the success of the vaccine. It implies that the vaccine cannot be viewed individually, but as part of a broader strategy to meet the epidemic.

This recommendation invites the reader to consider the relationship between public health efforts by the government and the role of pharmaceutical companies' support. Furthermore, the expression "the role of the pharmaceutical industry" invites the reader to have faith in the fact that pharmaceutical companies have a significant role to play in public health. Although stated in a neutral way, the use of "role" invites the reader to have some faith in the behavior of the pharmaceutical industry. It does not challenge the influence role of these firms but instead presents them as responsible players in the pandemic response. The title mentions the vaccine both as a "public health measure" and one which has been influenced by the "role of the pharmaceutical industry." The use of the phrase "public health measures" situates the vaccine within a broader response, highlighting the community and society dimensions to the vaccine distribution. It emphasizes the urgency of public health officials to have vaccines accessible and administered to people in time and in an effective manner. Alternatively, "the role of the pharmaceutical industry" emphasizes the company as a key player in the success of the vaccine. This statement suggests that the pharmaceutical companies are not only unbiased actors, but important determiners for the solution. The use of the word "role" emphasizes the pharmaceutical companies' participation in the procedure, altering the opinion of the reader towards the vaccine as the product of both public health efforts and private enterprise imagination. A critical stylistic analysis of the title "The COVID-19 vaccine: Public health measures and the role of the pharmaceutical industry" illustrates how words influence beliefs and shape knowledge. With the examination of the linguistic choices, naming, prioritizing, hinting, and naming action/event, the title situates the vaccination as a key tool in the global battle against COVID-19, where pharmaceutical business engagement and public health intervention join forces. This frame centers on the government and corporate initiative reliance, providing the perception that the vaccination is both a question of public health imperative and the result of private sector cooperation. The ideological significance of this presentation emphasizes the importance of both government and private sector involvement in addressing global health issues.

**4.8. "The global vaccination race: Who's winning the battle against COVID-19?"** (The Guardian, 2021).

The title uses the term "The global vaccination race" as the theme, referring to the multinational campaign to distribute and deliver vaccines as a "race." Invoking the term "race" creates the idea of competition and speed and presents vaccine delivery as a race among nations in which they compete to win. This linguistic use creates an impression of competition and advancement, implying that the vaccine's success or failure is measurable and significant. The language "the war against COVID-19" metaphorically puts the pandemic in a position of a foe that must be fought. This war-like language employs war-like imagery, portraying the campaign of vaccination as a fight for life and death. The use of emotionally charged terms like "race" and "battle" sets a story of high stakes, emphasizing the gravity of the problem and its necessity for a public response. The title emphasizes the competitive form that global immunization efforts have taken by asking "Who's Winning?" This is a rhetorical question implying the success of vaccines is quantifiable and that there are outright winners and losers. The title overlooks other facets of vaccination distribution, such as equality, ethics, and public health results, for the sake of competitiveness. The title aligns with an ideology that places vaccination as a test of national or institutional superiority through the lens of "winners" and "losers." The heading indicates that vaccination efforts can be tracked and contrasted cross-nationally, painting the picture of some countries succeeding while others fail. The phrase "winning the battle" assumes that vaccine success is the key metric of success in COVID-19 elimination. It also implies that international efforts to vaccinate are inherently competitive, rather than cooperative, and thus any understanding of global cooperation against the epidemic is ruled out.

The use of the term "race" in the title refers to immunization campaigns as a continuous, dynamic process. This framing situates countries as active actors in a continuous process of urgency and progress. The term "battle" symbolizes the pandemic as a lethal enemy, emphasizing that vaccination is the most urgent action against it. These images tell a story of global progress, struggle, and resolve, introducing heroic and inspirational tones into the vaccine campaign. The headline consciously distinguishes between "winning" and non-"winning" countries. With an analogy of competition, it contrasts success with vaccination with success in winning a war or race, promoting an either-or understanding of winning and losing. The analogy simplifies a complicated international health issue by highlighting numeric measures (e.g., number of doses administered, population reached) and ignoring qualitative factors such as vaccination hesitation, infrastructural constraints, and variability of access. The title indirectly counters arguments questioning the competitive nature of immunization efforts. For example, it disregards cooperative initiatives like COVAX, whose objective is to promote equitable vaccination rollouts across nations. By emphasizing "winning," the title dismisses global immunization's ethical and practical concerns like shortages of materials or vaccine nationalism.

Using the paradigm of critical stylistics by Jeffries (2010), "The global vaccination race: Who's winning the battle against COVID-19?" is a good illustration of how linguistic choices shape beliefs and build public discourse. The headline creates a competitive narrative by identifying, ranking, and insinuating, while also highlighting collaborative efforts and ethical issues. This investigation emphasizes the importance of headlines in molding public opinions, demonstrating how language can be used to persuade and perpetuate ideologies.

**4.9. "Biden's vaccine push: Federal mandates and the challenge of convincing Americans"** (The Guardian, 2021). The first aspect of the headline, "Biden's vaccine push," quickly identifies the topic as President Joe Biden's endeavor. The possessive word "Biden's" personalizes the strategy, making it appear that the immunization push is inextricably linked to his leadership. This selection places the onus on Biden, presenting him as the driving force of this public health initiative. The adverb "push" implies a sense of active effort and determination, perhaps an implication of force or intensity in his approach. By invoking the word "push," the title implies the campaign is an active drive, perhaps with an implication of urgency or forceful persuasion. The "federal mandates" term describes the government's actions as commanding and coercive. "Federal" is employed to identify the national government sphere, suggesting that the mandates originate from the nation's highest authority. The term represents the issue as a policy concern, drawing attention to the state's role in the vaccine environment. Even the term "mandates" carries a powerful connotation of obligation and statutory requirement, reinforcing the non-negotiability of the directives, which is sure to evoke feelings ranging from approval to rejection, depending on the reading public's attitude towards government intrusion. The second half of the headline, "the challenge of convincing Americans," adds a new level of challenge and conflict. The use of the term "challenge" gives the impression that there are significant barriers to be overcome in persuading the American public to get vaccinated. That uses the sense that Biden's job is not easy or straightforward, and it may set the issue in the context of broader society rather than one of simple policy adoption. The phrase "convincing Americans" directs attention to the people of the United States as the target of persuasion. This places the focus on the relationship between the

government and the public, specifically on the challenge of altering people's beliefs or behaviors regarding vaccination. The headline's structure puts "Biden's vaccine push" and "Federal mandates" ahead of the "challenge of convincing Americans." The early emphasis on Biden's active leadership and the government's legal power elevates the vaccination rollout's political and authoritative components. The issue of persuasion is portrayed secondary, indicating that, while influencing the public is important, the major focus is on the political and institutional factors at work. This priority makes Biden's vaccination push the key issue, linking the story with political power and government involvement. The headline, which leads with "Biden's vaccine push" and "Federal mandates," implies that the emphasis is on top-down action and policymaking. Only after outlining the government's part does the headline shift to the public's reaction, framing the task of persuasion as a secondary but nonetheless significant aspect. The headline suggests that "convincing Americans" is a difficult undertaking, implying considerable skepticism or opposition to the vaccination. The word "challenge" emphasizes that the process of persuading the public is not simple, and its placement at the end of the headline shows that the problem is mostly about overcoming resistance or opposition. Likewise, the headline implies that anyone who reads knows the importance of "federal mandates" in the context of the epidemic. This assumption mirrors the larger context of the COVID-19 epidemic, in which government intervention in the form of mandates, laws, and recommendations has become an important part of public debate. The term "convincing Americans" indicates that readers are aware that vaccination hesitation or opposition is a well-known and contested subject in the United States, implying an assumption about public attitude.

The headline declares that the process of "convincing" is a difficulty or challenge, using the noun "challenge" to make it seem like something that is work to overcome. This is one means of framing the act of persuasion as one that is difficult, and this implies that a strong majority of Americans is not receptive to the idea of getting the vaccine. The label "Biden's vaccine push" invokes the action as an active effort being made by the president, depicting a forceful attempt on his part to impose vaccination efforts despite challenges. "Federal mandates" is the label used for government enforcement as a significant aspect of the immunization campaign. It points to the government's power to enforce legislation, exhibiting an authoritative way of combating vaccination resistance. This terminology also emphasizes the conflict between public health policy and personal liberty, in government control vs human liberty terms. The title quasi-compares "Biden's vaccine push" with public opposition, implying a potential conflict between governmental power and personal choice.

The use of the term "challenge" suggests that the fight is as much one of rolling out the vaccine as it is one of overcoming resistance from individuals who may oppose the mandate or the vaccine in itself. Contrast between top-down government initiative and bottom-up popular resistance is a tension that gives the headline an implicit ideological message. Contrast between "federal mandates" and "persuading Americans" is equally significant. Federal directives are official top-down decisions imposed from a place of power, and "persuading Americans" is a personalized, grassroots campaign of persuasion. The headline contrasts political might with the work of persuasion, changing hearts and minds, and emphasizes the intricacy of the issue. Using Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistics methodology, examination of the headline "Biden's vaccine push: Federal mandates and the challenge of convincing Americans" uncovers numerous important persuasive strategies, including naming, describing, suggesting, and ranking. Through linguistic choices like "push," "federal mandates," and "the challenge of convincing Americans," the title embodies the vaccine campaign as both authoritative, top-down action and challenge to persuade a recalcitrant constituency.

These stylistic choices construct the narrative by projecting the government as the principal agent of action at the same time that it spotlights the predicament of how to outwit popular skepticism. This research demonstrates how the media, through its use of language, shapes public attitudes toward governmental action and social issues at a time of national health crisis.

#### **4.10. "How vaccine inequality is delaying the end of the COVID-19 pandemic" (The Guardian, 2021).**

The title starts off with the words "vaccine inequality" and they are weighty and emotive. The term "inequality" is important since it has a strong negative connotation and implies unequal access to resources. The use of this phrasing introduces concepts of inequality and injustice, influencing the reader's perception. The term "inequality" also at once suggests a social and moral problem, implying that the present distribution of vaccines is morally incorrect and should be changed. Then, the phrase "delaying the end of the COVID-19 pandemic" reinforces the effect of vaccination inequalities. The use of the term "delaying" is important because it conveys the feeling that the epidemic has some conclusion within its grasp, but the conclusion is being delayed due to vaccine disparity. "Delaying" connotes a stumbling block or an impediment, and by that, it signifies vaccination disparity impedes

further advancement and crisis alleviation. It also brings to the fore the urgency and need for addressing this issue in an effort to bring an end to the epidemic. By employing the phrase "delaying," the headline portrays vaccination inequity as a major contributor to the pandemic's continuing existence. The headline's structure prioritizes "vaccine inequality" before "delaying the end of the COVID-19 pandemic." This ranking is essential because it identifies vaccination inequity as the most pressing problem that must be addressed in order to stop the epidemic. By focusing on inequality, the headline draws attention to a single cause—rather than the epidemic or other contributing factors—that is preventing the situation from being resolved. More importantly, the word "how" at the start of the headline suggests an investigation or explanation of this cause. The platform posits that the reader will be given the insight of why vaccination disparity is directly influencing the chronic nature of the epidemic, and how it can be potentially solved quicker if tackled. This prioritization also highlights the necessity of solving inequality in an attempt to tackle the larger global issue.

The headline, "How vaccine inequality is delaying the end of the COVID-19 pandemic" implies that the reader is aware of vaccination inequality and its implications. The phrase "vaccine inequality" presupposes that everyone understands what it means: uneven access to immunizations depending on location, money, and social position. This assumption is based on the reader's knowledge of the problems of vaccine distribution worldwide, and it does not state inequality explicitly but rather is based on the reader's awareness of the problem.

Secondly, the title declares that inequity in vaccination is central and a major factor in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It implies that the pandemic can't be controlled on schedule unless this inequity is addressed. The title assumes causality between vaccine distribution justice and the ultimate conclusion of the epidemic, offering inequalities in vaccine distribution as a serious obstacle to the recovery of global health. The title depicts vaccination inequalities as causally "delaying" the conclusion of the pandemic.

Using the word "delaying," the title describes imbalance in immunization as a dynamic force that is impeding the international effort to contain the pandemic. The word "delaying" attributes fault to the systemic problem in hampering vaccine distribution, which is emphasized as the true obstacle to the desired objective.

The phrase "the end of the COVID-19 pandemic" defines a goal or occurrence that is attainable but obstructed by unequal vaccination deployment. This framework describes the end of the epidemic as an identifiable, concrete event that is presently in view, but only so long as vaccination inequalities are removed. The vision of the closing of the pandemic as being something to be postponed rather than endlessly prolonged gives a built-in hope, and urgency, in the termination of the condition. The title, "How vaccine inequality is delaying the end of the COVID-19 pandemic" employs a number of key stylistic features to position vaccination inequality not just as an acute global health issue but as one of ethics. The title highlights the need for fair distribution of vaccines through words like "inequality" and "delaying," presenting this as the prime hindrance to stopping the epidemic.

The title also reflects a direct relation between vaccine equality and the decline of the epidemic, which again merits that equal access to vaccines is a paramount requirement for world health well-being.

### Conclusion:

This study analyzed persuasive strategies in selected media headlines on the COVID-19 vaccine using Jeffries' (2010) paradigm of critical stylistics. Results show how linguistic and stylistic structures influence public beliefs, actions, and perceptions during a health pandemic. Newspaper headlines, as influential media, are strategically designed to persuade readers by building situations, assigning blame, evoking emotions, and framing ideological positions.

The current study finds that each one of the following critical stylistic tools has a particular function as shown below:

1. "Naming and Describing: Headlines use emotive words like "hesitancy," "inequality," and "scrutiny" to describe the vaccine debate. These are designed to elicit moral reactions and instill urgency for issues related to vaccines
2. „Representing Action: Headlines tend to place in the limelight particular parties, i.e., governments drug companies, or the public, to place blame or praise achievements. For example, phrases such as rollout starts" or "mandates launched" highlight effort and responsibility, which influences" impressions of action and leadership
3. Prioritizing and Foregrounding: Some elements in the vaccination story are highlighted by the headlines, such as problems, achievements, or disparities, while downplaying others. Problems such as reluctance to vaccinate and unequal distribution are consistently raised, keeping public attention focused on the big issues

4. Implicating and Assuming: Headlines contain unspoken ideological assumptions that frame vaccinations as a "battle," "race," or "solution." These metaphors and assumptions tie readers to .specific worldviews, evoking urgency, solidarity, and trust in immunization action

Finally, the study points out newspaper headlines as a vital instrument for shaping public opinion and behavior during crises. Headlines use methods like identification, description, ordering, and emotional framing to build narratives that direct public opinion, are in sync with ideological agendas, and evoke certain responses. This study emphasizes the necessity of critically reading media discourse and the possibility of critical stylistics as a method .for unveiling the ideological and persuasive aspects of media language

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