

## LANGUAGE MANIPULATION IN MEDIA AND THE WAYS TO CORRECTLY RESIST THEM BY USING CRITICAL THINKING

**Seitkenov Kamal**

Student, Toraighyrov University, Kazakhstan, Pavlodar

**Khudiyeva Sevdal**

научный руководитель, PhD, associate Professor, Toraighyrov University, Kazakhstan, Pavlodar

**Abstract.** This research article is devoted to the analysis of language manipulations used in media world, including social media, and critical thinking by which it is possible to formulate relevant and efficient algorithm or order of acts, which will assist people to resist various types of manipulation in current media space. The issue related to the importance of critical thinking is also raised in the article. Several examples from social media were presented and analyzed to identify how the language manipulation works. These examples were of various types and provided us with a large amount of good and necessary information to get ourselves protected from manipulative steps of other people. Besides the special test in google (По запросу Роскомнадзора сообщаем, что иностранное лицо, владеющее информационными ресурсами Google, является нарушителем законодательства Российской Федерации — прим. ред.) form for identification how different people are able to find the language manipulation among given texts was involved in our research work.

**Keywords:** Language manipulation; media; mass media; the concept of manipulation; critical thinking; critical thinking skills; critical thinker; efficient algorithm; information.

Nowadays it is no secret that in media, especially in social media most of bloggers and marketers use a lot of manipulation in their texts given under the posts. Sure, it may be accepted as the marketing and commercial techniques, which are quite normal in the era of business. However, it is only one side of the coin, another is that ordinary people got mentally captured will probably spend their money on things that were actually not necessary to them. The only way for consumers to identify deceptions or tricks of product manufacturers is to get critical thinking skills. When a person is capable to think and analyze critically, he becomes a very difficult subject to manipulate. In other words, the person with strong critical thinking can effectively resist language manipulation. So, this research paper is devoted to the analysis of language manipulations used in media and critical thinking by which it is possible to formulate correct and efficient algorithm or order of acts, which will assist a person to resist manipulations in media space.

Let us start with **the language manipulation**, which is the conscious change of the language by certain interest groups or individuals who force their ways of thinking or ideology. The language manipulation takes place through the use of emotional, judgmental or interpretive language components and is considered to be both “manipulation of the language and manipulation through the language”. The language manipulation is consciously carried out by multipliers such as parties, politicians, journalists, interest groups and advertisers, who can be defined as the groups that have a privileged position in terms of their language distribution. For example, a certain party or interest group changes the language by striving for a political language regulation that fully serves their interests. It can also be advertisers or entrepreneurs who seek ways of promoting their commercial

product [1].

In relation to a person, manipulation is a type of speech influence that forces an individual to act in accordance with the interests of the manipulator. Since a person, unlike an object, has a mindset that allows him to pursue his own interests, the manipulator is forced to exploit such aspects of human thinking as drawing conclusions and checking information for validity, as well as emotions [2, p. 117]

The study of manipulation is conducted within the framework of various disciplines and scientific directions. In psychology, manipulation is considered primarily as a psychological type of influence that can be resisted by having an understanding of manipulative influence technologies and possessing ways to protect against them. Psychologists emphasize various aspects of manipulation: a form of spiritual influence (hidden domination), carried out by force, this aspect was carefully studied by B.N. Bessonov; the hidden use of power (force) contrary to the alleged will of another, which was studied by Robert Goodin; inducement of behavior through deception or playing on the alleged weaknesses of another, in the study of which the scientist J. Rudinow was highly noted; and the last aspect is hidden coercion, programming of thoughts, intentions, feelings, attitudes, attitudes, behavior, in the study of which the scientist G. Schiller made a great scientific contribution.

The analysis of various definitions of the concept of manipulation, conducted by E.L. Dotsenko, allowed us to identify seven groups of signs of the phenomenon under study: 1) generic feature — psychological impact; 2) the attitude of the manipulator to another as a means of achieving one's own goals; 3) the desire to get a one-sided gain; 4) the hidden nature of the impact (both the fact of the impact and its orientation); 5) the use of (psychological) force, "playing on weaknesses"; 6) motivation, motivational introduction; 7) skill and dexterity in carrying out manipulative actions.

On the basis of these signs, a formulation of the concept of manipulation was proposed as a type of psychological influence, the skillful execution of which leads to the latent arousal of intentions in another person that do not coincide with his actual desires [3, p. 59]

So, the language manipulation is the act of the conscious language change with correlations with psychology by certain groups or individuals for their own interests and purposes. These manipulations are mostly carried out by parties, politicians, journalists, interest groups, businessmen and advertisers.

Let us now deal with another phenomenon of our research which is critical thinking. **Critical thinking** is the thorough and precise analysis of available facts, evidence, observations, and arguments in order to form a correct judgement by the application of rational, skeptical, and unbiased analyses and evaluation. The application of critical thinking includes self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective habits of the mind, thus we may say that a **critical thinker** is a person who practices the skills of critical thinking or has been trained and educated in its disciplines [4, p. 86-93].

So, critical thinking is the act of complete and exact analysis of available facts, evidence, observations, and arguments in order to form an accurate judgement or conclusion about some certain theme by the application of rational, skeptical, and unbiased analyses and evaluation.

Regarding the media, it encompasses a range of communication channels utilized to reach a broad audience. This includes newspapers, television, radio, and the internet. The media significantly influences public opinion and shapes people's thoughts and behaviors.

The term "media" denotes diverse communication forms employed to distribute information widely. This encompasses traditional media like newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and film, as well as contemporary forms such as social media, blogs, podcasts, and streaming services. The media's purpose is to inform, entertain, and educate the public, playing a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing cultural norms.

The media exerts a profound influence on society, molding people's opinions, beliefs, and values. It

can impact society in multiple ways:

- **Shaping public opinion:** By presenting information in specific ways, the media has the power to influence public opinion on various matters. News outlets may choose to cover stories that align with their political or social agendas, thereby shaping how people perceive specific issues.
- **Setting the agenda:** The media plays a role in setting the agenda for public discourse by emphasizing specific topics while neglecting others. This can shape what people discuss and which issues they deem significant.
- **Creating stereotypes:** Through its portrayals, the media has the ability to establish and perpetuate stereotypes, depicting certain groups of people in particular ways. This can contribute to the development of prejudice and discrimination against these groups.
- **Affecting behavior:** The media has the power to influence people's behavior by endorsing specific products or lifestyles. Advertisements, for instance, can instill a desire for material possessions or a particular way of life.
- **Providing information:** The media serves as a source of information on crucial issues, contributing to the education and awareness of the public. This dissemination of information can lead to positive societal changes.

In general, the media wields significant influence over society. It can mold public opinion, dictate the agenda for public discourse, perpetuate stereotypes, impact behavior, and serve as a vital source of information. It is crucial to recognize and critically assess this influence, urging individuals to scrutinize the information presented by the media [5].

The relevance of the study is determined by the study of the mechanisms of manipulative influence, as well as the need to identify the manipulative potential of modern Kazakh mass media. The creation of an information system or an algorithm for automatic text processing will make it possible to identify manipulative materials that are information weapons, and to a certain extent prevent intentional distortion of the worldview of the mass reader or information on certain products. Besides, in the current time we can come across with texts which have both grammatical and spelling errors in social medias, but mostly the authors of such texts are quite popular bloggers. This can also be the proof of our insufficient knowledge in critical thinking.

Here it should be mentioned that nowadays there are widely accepted digital and media literacy competencies. To be more precise, we have five of them, these are:

- Make informed choices and access information by finding and sharing materials, comprehending information and ideas;
- Evaluate messages presented in various forms by discerning the author's identity, purpose, and point of view, and assessing the quality and credibility of the content;
- Generate content in diverse forms, utilizing language, images, sound, and emerging digital tools and technologies;
- Engage in self-reflection regarding one's conduct and communication behavior, applying principles of social responsibility and ethics;
- Participate in social action both individually and collaboratively, contributing knowledge and addressing challenges within the family, workplace, and community, and actively participating as a community member [6, p. 7-8]

And now we should reveal the second point wider and clearer because exactly out of this one we form the algorithm or system of resistance against language manipulation in any type of media by using critical thinking. This second competency can be subdivided into eleven steps of actions which can be called as the algorithm of correct resistance against invalid information in media, these are:

1. Develop Media Literacy:

- Educate yourself on media literacy to understand how information is created, disseminated, and consumed.
- Learn to identify different forms of media manipulation, such as misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda.

## 2. Diversify Your News Sources:

- Consume news from a variety of sources to get a more comprehensive understanding of events.
- Avoid relying solely on one news outlet to minimize the risk of bias.

## 3. Verify Information:

- Fact-check information before sharing it. Use reputable fact-checking websites to confirm the accuracy of news stories.
- Be cautious about sharing unverified information, especially on social media.

## 4. Question Headlines and Content:

- Analyze headlines critically and be aware of sensationalism.
- Read beyond the headlines to ensure that the content accurately reflects the context of the story.

## 5. Understand Biases:

- Be aware of potential biases in media outlets and consider how their perspectives might influence the presentation of information.
- Consciously seek out diverse perspectives to counteract bias.

## 6. Promote Media Literacy in Your Community:

- Share knowledge about media literacy with friends, family, and community members.
- Encourage open discussions about media and its impact on public perception.

## 7. Support Quality Journalism:

- Subscribe to reputable news outlets that adhere to journalistic standards.
- Financially support independent journalism that prioritizes accuracy and objectivity.

## 8. Be Mindful of Emotional Manipulation:

- Recognize when language is used to evoke strong emotions. Take a step back and assess the information objectively.
- Be wary of content designed to provoke fear, anger, or other strong emotional responses.

## 9. Engage in Constructive Conversations:

- Foster open and constructive dialogues with others who may have different perspectives.
- Avoid inflammatory language and seek common ground for understanding.

## 10. Report Misinformation:

- Report instances of misinformation or manipulation to the relevant platforms or authorities.
- Encourage social media platforms to take action against the spread of false information.

## 11. Stay Informed About Media Trends:

- Stay informed about emerging trends in media manipulation to adapt and refine your resistance strategies.

By following these steps, individuals can become more resilient against language manipulation in mass media and contribute to a more informed and critical society.

Let us give some examples from social media with correct, efficient and manipulative texts. To be more precise, from Instagram

(a social network banned on the territory of the Russian Federation, as a product of the Meta organization, recognized as extremist - ed.), **we have several interesting texts which were added under the posts. The first one is an advertisement of the new Netflix film's Premiere Date. So such is the text:**

"#TheArchies Premiere Date is Finally Here! (some emojis)

After years of anticipation, we're thrilled to share that "The Archies" - a spectacular international rom-com and feature film adaptation of the beloved comics - will premiere December 7 on #Netflix (some emojis).

Featuring the exceptionally talented #NYFAAlums Khushi Kapoor • @khushi05k & @Suhanakhan2, get ready to witness their magic on the screen! (the emoji of the shining star) Guided by the visionary direction of Zoya Akhtar, this live-action musical is set in the enchanting backdrop of 1960s India, bringing a whole new twist to the iconic story.

(the emoji of the calendar and popcorn) Mark your calendars and join us for a journey down memory lane with @TheArchiesOnNetflix! (the emoji of the direction pointer) Watch the latest trailer at the link in bio, and stay tuned for more updates and behind-the-scenes exclusives!"

By this example we may see emotional enhancements of contemporary type, the hashtags, the links to the personal accounts of some world famous actors and some certain emojis before and after the sentences. The language of the advertisement is also quite exciting and playful, altogether both the social medium functions for emotional enhancing such as hastags, links and emojis, and the unusual style of the language make the advertisement pretty attractive for viewers. Besides, the most likely that it can mentally and emotionally force people to watch this new movie.

Another example is related to the advertising educational services for school graduates. Actually it consists of two different posts which have interconnected texts. Let us look at the text of the first one:

"Hey Hey Hey Algorithm, do your thing and show this post to the following:

- Storytellers
- Creators
- Actors
- Filmmakers
- Producers

Writers

- Cinematographers
- Performers
- Photographers

- Game Designers
- Film Editors
- VFX Artists
- Show runners
- Casting Directors
- Production Assistants
- Indie Film Investors

If any of these resonate with you, leave a comment so we can connect! (some emojis)”

And text for the second one is as following:

“”The 12- Week Evening Filmmaking Workshop is exactly as advertised, a super intensive, hands-on program geared toward teaching you everything you need to get started on your short and feature film projects by putting the camera in your hands within the first week. Not only have I learned the basics of lighting, everything about the SONY FS5 camera, screenplay theory, and camera technique, but I met some of the coolest people alive.” - Laura B.

Our 12-week Evening Workshops are part-time programs typically held during the week at our New York, Los Angeles & Miami Campuses. In addition to Filmmaking, we also offer evening programs in Acting For Film, Photography, Producing, Screenwriting, Comic Book Writing, TV Writing, 3D Animation & VFX, and so much more! (some emojis)”

Click the link & in our bio to explore our programs and find the perfect fit for you!

So, as we can see here, the text of the first post is quite ordinary, and not so much enriched with emotional enhancement, but it has a very good photo where there is also one little text which is as such “Dear storytellers! There are 53 days left in the year. GO CRAZY. Finish what you started.” It is quite short message, but it is pretty motivational one and the most intriguing piece of it was specially colored with capitalization of each letter. And all these things together make correlation with the text of the second post. In the text of the second post we can see already more emotional and fascinating sentences which make school graduates excited and eager for entering this university on one of the specialties in the list. In addition, the first paragraph of the whole text, which is personal life and emotional experience of one student, makes fascinating and bright colorful image of the learning process with professional equipment in this university. These two interconnected texts of two posts provide a very effective promotion and advertisement of the university.

And the last example will be quite different from the previous two ones. This one is a lot shorter, but it does not mean that it should be evaluated as inefficient one, because it is strongly emphasized and enhanced by the video of the post where one of the most famous Hollywood actors shows his own tries and experiences during playing the game called “What’s in the box”. The actor filmed and posted this video because thus he got money from advertising this game and the company that created it. He had done it in a very effective and affectionate way using all his acting skills and talents. So the video starts with the statement: “What’s in the box?!” And then the actor begins his speech in this way:

“I’ve been around a few end of day scenarios, but it’s been a minute. Before I dive back in with my new game Undawn, I want a refresher course. And we’re gonna start by identifying some end of the world items, based on feeling alone. Welcome to “What’s in the box?” Alright. Oh, a butter knife. (incorrect) It feels like a knife used to defend yourself against the Undawn. A machete. There we go. (correct)”.

So we already understand that this is the game where a person needs to guess the name of the

object he is touching with his hands without having an opportunity to see this object because it is hidden in the wooden box. At the beginning he incorrectly guessed first object, but then he correctly guessed the second one. Now let us have a look at the end of the video:

“What the? That feels like a handle. Oh, that’s an eye piece. Oh, crossbow (correct). Okay, you almost got me. You almost embarrassed me in front of people. Come on, man. This is I don’t even like that. I didn’t like that. Ohhh! Ah ha ha ha! That was pretty scary. It moved. Whatever it is, it moved. So now this has become a spiritual practice because I am terrified. Oh! Ha, ha. Alright, I can’t. I have no idea (failure). Oh you got me! You got me. That’s horrific (the last object inside of the box was rodent and the actor was the person who feared of them very much).”

This time we also see his emotional and comic expressions and feelings. We can even see him smiling. In the end it was much more affectionate because he felt that the last object was the one that really scares him and he gave up on it. After this, seeing that it was even the thing of which he was afraid the most he again shows his emotional state, state of being simultaneously shocked and joyful. All these scenes make the watcher try this game and the most likely that the watcher will really try it without even paying attention to the price. So, it is also like some kind of media manipulation.

All above mentioned texts were from the video itself. However there is also short text about which we have mentioned at the beginning. So we should have a look at this text as well and it is as such:

“Hahaha they shoulda known better than to try 'n play me like this! Here's a peek into our world of @undawngame and the tools critical for survival. Shout out to my partners at LightSpeed Studios and Level Infinite for building an amazing game! Go preregister y'all, it's free to play! Link in bio #Undawn #UndawnGame”

The language of text is some kind of everyday conversational one and it is not enhanced by emojis. But it goes pretty well with the text in the video, so this is a good one, as it makes an effective combination with the video.

About all the texts described and analyzed in the article we should say that no matter how the text is enriched and enhanced with affectionate and exciting elements it should be checked critically anyway. We can use our formulated algorithm to this text as well. Especially we should use third, fourth, fifth and eighth steps to check the reliability of these texts. In short we must verify the information, question and analyze both headlines and the whole content, understand biases of the information and be mindful about emotional manipulation.

In this article there was also special test in google (At the request of Roskomnadzor, we inform you that a foreign person who owns Google information resources is a violator of the legislation of the Russian Federation - ed. note)

form to identify what language manipulations are the easiest for people to identify, and what are the most difficult ones to find out. 20 people anonymously participated in the test. Here are the ones which were the easiest for our participants:

Find the text where the language manipulation is used:

Копировать

Верных ответов: 17 из 20



Figure 1. For the first text among the easiest texts with language manipulation

(2 smileys) Dhwani Shah, our Screenwriting dynamo from Mumbai, India, dubs the @NewYorkFilmAcademy the ultimate hub of creativity and collaboration. She attests that NYFA's mixers are golden opportunities to forge connections with peers and industry pros alike! Interested in meeting the @NYFANewYork cast & mingle with other NYFA peers at 'The College Tour' Watch Party next week? - Students, alumni, faculty & staff !! Don't miss out on the action next Wednesday, 09.20.2023. Get ready for a thrilling on-campus screening and networking extravaganza! (smiley) Be the first to catch NYFA's episode on @TheCollegeTourTV, premiering on Apple TV and Amazon Prime in October 2023! (smiley) Keep an eye on the school inbox for your invite and be sure to RSVP and secure your spot! (smiley) Don't let this blockbuster event slip through your fingers! (smiley)

Find the text where the language manipulation is used:

Копировать

Верных ответов: 17 из 20

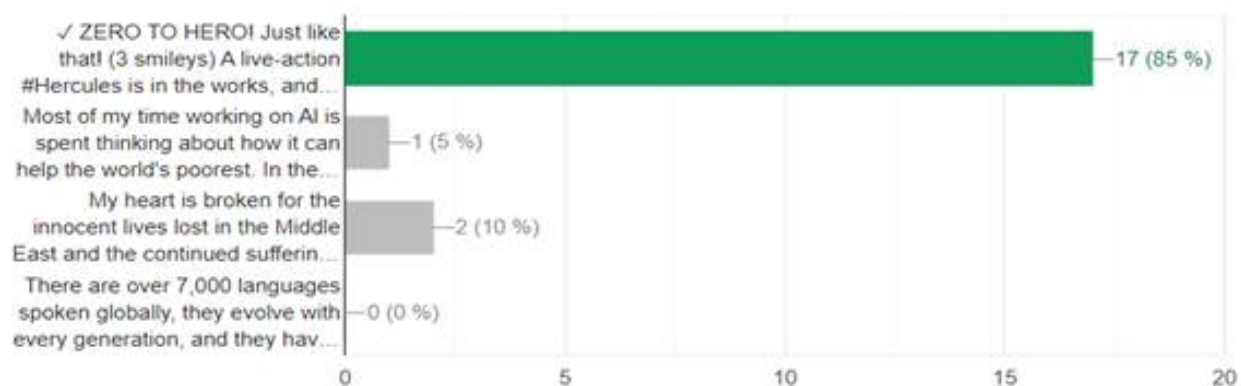


Figure 2. For the second text among the easiest texts with language manipulation

ZERO TO HERO! Just like that! (3 smileys) A live-action #Hercules is in the works, and we might have the PERFECT #NYFAalum-filled cast! (1 smiley) Our beloved CHORD OVERSTREET as HERCULES. (1 smiley) The beautiful ILDA MASON as MEGARA. (1 smiley) The only choice for HADES has to be BILL HADER. (1 smiley) As our favorite dynamic duo PAIN & PANIC - ISSA RAE & AUBREY PLAZA. (1 smiley) And MICHEL CURIEL is the perfect candidate for the role of ZEUS. Now, Hercules can't go the distance without PHIL!? Who would you cast as everyone's favorite



grumpy trainer of heroes???

As we can see both texts are quite huge and full smileys and emotional reinforcements. It hints us the idea that people have already started to be more careful with emotional reinforcements and improvements in sentences as they were caught in manipulation before because of them.

And now let us look at the ones which were the hardest ones for our participants to identify as the texts with language manipulation:

Find the text where the language manipulation is used:

Копировать

Верных ответов: 10 из 20



Figure 3. For the first text among the hardest texts with language manipulation

The Straw Hats set out to help Luffy achieve his dream and enters a new chapter! Get ready for Egghead! A new episode of #ONEPIECE (ep. 1089) begins tonight on simulcast after the original Japanese broadcast! Look out. (3 smileys)

Find the text where the language manipulation is used:

Верных ответов: 10 из 20

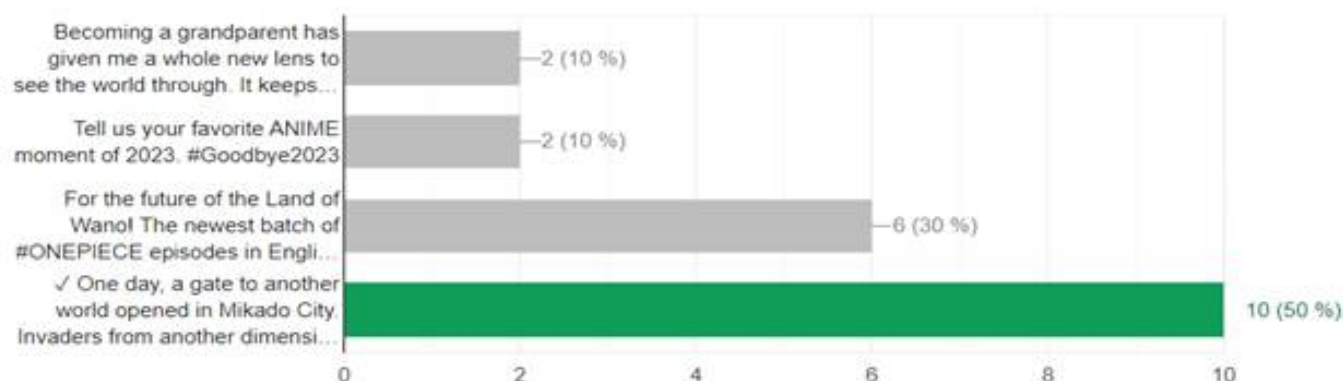


Figure 4. For the second text among the hardest texts with language manipulation

One day, a gate to another world opened in Mikado City. Invaders from another dimension, referred to thereafter as Neighbors, overran the area around the gate, leaving the city gripped by fear.

However, a mysterious group suddenly appeared and repelled the Neighbors. This Border Defense Agency independently researches Neighbor technology and fights to protect this world. In a short time, they managed to build an enormous base and prepare a defensive system against the Neighbors. It's been four years since then. Watch all three seasons of #WORLDTRIGGER now on Crunchyroll!

Here we can see that the manipulation is made by adding the fresh storyline of an artistic animation products. People, who do not watch such things can leave such texts without any special attention, but those ones who are totally into such animation series will definitely get caught by such manipulation. As the test is passed anonymously we can assume that the people who made mistakes in these questions are either not fans of such things or they are still unaware of such language manipulations.

In conclusion, we should say that in contemporary times, it is widely acknowledged that within the media landscape, particularly in social media, a significant number of bloggers and marketers employ various manipulative tactics in the textual content accompanying their posts. While these strategies may be viewed as standard marketing and commercial techniques prevalent in the business era, there is also a flip side. The unintended consequence is that unsuspecting individuals, who got mentally captured by these tactics, might find themselves expending resources on items that are, in reality, unnecessary for them. The only reliable way for people to identify deceptions or tricks of product manufacturers is to cultivate critical thinking skills. In test we are able to see the lack of critical thinking mind and the knowledge for sorting out the information in mass media. We also examined and revealed both concept of language manipulation used in media and the concept of critical thinking. We have managed to formulate our own algorithm for protection from language manipulation in media, which consists of eleven steps and it can help us not only to defend ourselves from any kind of language manipulation but it may also give us a lot of opportunities to write our own texts in media world much better. Several examples from social media

Instagram (социальная сеть, запрещенная на территории РФ, как порождение организации «Мета», признана экстремистской — ред.) have been thoroughly observed and analyzed.

## References:

1

URL:<https://de.zxc.wiki/wiki/Sprachmanipulation#:~:text=Language%20manipulation%20is%20the%20conscious,language%20and%20manipulation%20through%20language.%22>

2 de Saussure, L. Manipulation and Cognitive Pragmatics: Preliminary Hypotheses. / Louis de Saussure // Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century: Discourse, Language, Mind / L. de Saussure, P. Schulz. - Amsterdam - Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2005.

3 Доценко, Е. JT. Психология манипуляции: феномены, механизмы и защита / Е. JT. Доценко. — М.: ЧеРо, 1997. — 344 с.

4 Piergiovanni, P. R., Creating a Critical Thinker, College Teaching, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July-September 2014), pp. 86-93, accessed 26 January 2023

5 URL:<https://whatmean.site/what-does-the-media-mean/#:~:text=The%20media%20is%20a%20term,way%20people%20think%20and%20behave>

6 Hobbs, R. (2010). Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action. A White Paper on the Digital and Media Literacy Recommendations of the Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy. Aspen Institute.

