



Original article

A Pragmatic Analysis of Persuasive Strategies in Fake News in Facebook and X platforms

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how online platforms such as Facebook and X contribute to the spread of fake news as a persuasive communicative practice influencing opinions, attitudes, and decision-making. It searches to fill the gap of the cognitive frames underlying fake news and analyze pragmatically how these frames function to achieve persuasion. The research adopts a descriptive design based on content analysis of sixty highly engaged fake reports by adopting cognitive blend theory, evenly selected from both platforms. Findings show that fake news frequently relies on fear, victimhood, moral polarization, and conspiracy frames, expressed through emotionally charged and strategic language. Persuasive techniques include hyperbole, implicatures, presuppositions, and indirectness to shape audience interpretation and response. These linguistic and cognitive strategies intensify message impact and credibility. The study concludes that understanding pragmatic cognitive framing is crucial for designing effective media-literacy interventions and strengthening public resistance to misinformation in digital communication environments.

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Keywords fake news, cognitive frames, pragmatic analysis, persuasive strategies, social media

تحليل تداولي للاستراتيجيات الإقناعية المستخدمة في الأخبار الزائفة على منصتي فيسبوك وإكس

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المستخلص

أدى ظهور المنصات الإلكترونية مثل Facebook و X إلى تفشي الأخبار الزائفة، التي غدت ممارسة تواصلية شائعة تؤثر في تكوين الرأي والاتجاهات وفي اتخاذ القرارات المبنية على المعرفة. وعليه، تقترح هذه الدراسة تحديد الأطر المعرفية المستخدمة في ممارسات الأخبار الزائفة، من خلال تحليل تداولي يبين الكيفية التي تُوظف بها هذه الأطر المعرفية لتحقيق الإقناع. يعتمد تصميم البحث المنهج الوصفي، ويتضمن تحليل محتوى لستين تقريراً زائفاً من الأخبار المزيفة، بواقع ثلاثين تقريراً من فيسبوك وثلاثين تقريراً من منصة إكس، جرى تحديدها محلياً على هذه المنصات نظراً لارتفاع مستويات التفاعل مع محتواها الزائف. وتُظهر النتائج أنّ ممارسات الأخبار الزائفة تركز بصورة شائعة على أطر الخوف، والضحية، والاستقطاب الأخلاقي، ونظريات المؤامرة، حيث تُفعل تداولياً عبر لغة الخوف والضحية والأخلاق والمؤامرة على التوالي، وتُستعمل لنقل رسائل تتسم بالمبالغة في العرض، من خلال الرسائل التضخيمية، والاستلزمات التخاطبية، والافتراضات المسبقة، والتوظيف الاستراتيجي للأسلوب غير المباشر في الممارسة اللغوية. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أنّ اعتماد مقاربة تداولية في تحليل ممارسات التأطير المعرفي يُعدّ أمراً جوهرياً في تطوير تدخلات فاعلة في مجال التربية الإعلامية لمواجهة الأخبار الزائفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأخبار الزائفة، الأطر المعرفية، التحليل التداولي، الاستراتيجيات الإقناعية، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

1. Introduction

The exponential growth of websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and X has therefore significantly impacted the way in which messages are produced, circulated, and consumed, resulting in the creation of entirely new communicative spaces, where messages are no longer filtered by professional journalists but, in a way, originate from people themselves, who are enabled by such websites to actively participate in, contribute to, and disseminate messages with an unprecedented speed and reach. Although research on fake news has been approached from a cognitive, pragmatic, and media perspective respectively, there has been a lack of research that has holistically approached cognitive framing theory, pragmatic theory, and fake news simultaneously. Additionally, there has been a lack of development in cross-platform comparison, specifically within qualitative discourse research. It is, therefore, with this background that the research introduced here proposes an analytical tool that attempts to holistically assess the pragmatic construction of cognitive frames in fake news on Facebook and X.

The significant rise of fake messages has become a significant preoccupation with respect to the contemporary era of digital message communications, owing to the potentiality of such messages with respect to propagating belief, manipulation, influencing, and effecting collective behavior with serious societal implications (Entman, 1993; van Dijk, 2018). It has been argued that such fake messages are no longer dependent on falsities with respect to the factual components but are dependent on highly sophisticated discursive, cognitive devices that make such messages highly credible, memorable, and persuasive.

Among the most significant notions that shed light on how fake news works is that of framing. Framing is a phenomenon that consists of communicators emphasizing some aspects of a reality that are more significant in a message, which leads to evaluations, interpretation, and responses (Entman, 1993). Specifically, with regard to fake news, cognitive frames are described as models of thought that make the receiving of a message easier in regard to event perceptions, assignment of blame, and assessments of sincerity (Recuero Ronda, 2018). They commonly make use of cultural knowledge, feelings, and ideologies that make fake news messages attractive to a particular group, even when it is lacking in honest facts. The effectiveness of fake news, though, cannot simply be explained by the use of framing power. The effectiveness that is generated from the said effects of framing, specifically with regard to fake news, is commonly attributed to pragmatic approaches that are used when implications, presuppositions, and implicit messages are communicated (van Dijk, 2018). Pragmatics, as a discipline that investigates how meaning is conveyed within a certain message, provides significant insights on how fake news uses implicit messages, speech acts, and contextual perspectives that lack the necessary critical consideration (van Dijk, 2018).

Despite the explosion of research on the topic of misinformation and fake news, the literature has been largely divided into content analysis, algorithmic solutions, or audience susceptibility. Little scholarly work has been dedicated to exploring the relationship between cognitive framing and pragmatic meaning-making in online interactions, which is a problem, given that fake news persuasion is necessarily implicit rather than explicit, relying on presuppositions, affect, and strategic ambiguity rather than on argumentative reasoning. In addition, comparatively-based research is similarly underdeveloped, although platforms such as Facebook and X, being different, can have varying affordances, audience anticipation, and communicative conventions, which are factors that may similarly contribute to the framing and pragmatic realization of fake news on different platforms. In short, as suggested by Wardle & Derakhshan (2017), research on fake news needs to go past the specific definition of fake news to examine how, exactly, fake news is framed, enacted, and communicated within a particular communicative environment.

In an attempt to address this research gap, this research has the following objectives:

1. The major aim of this research is to analyze cognitive frames used in fake news on Facebook and X, with a pragmatic perspective on how the persuasive strategy is used to communicate fake news on these platforms.
2. The research specifically aims to analyze how fake news uses speech acts, implicatures, presuppositions, evaluative language, and appeals on these platforms to communicate fake news.
3. Additionally, one of the objectives of the research is to compare the use of cognitive frames on these two platforms with the aim of identifying whether there are factors that specifically affect the two platforms, making the fake news messages on the two platforms distinct.

On the basis of these goals, the research questions this study tries to address are: What are the types of cognitive frames that are most commonly used in fake posts on Facebook as well as X? In what way are these cognitive frames pragmatically realized on the basis of linguistic and discourse-level pragmatic strategies of persuasion? In what way are there similarities and differences between Facebook and X with respect to the framing practices, as well as the pragmatic realization of these practices? The significance of this research is that it attempts to go beyond fake news as a matter of false information.

The relevance of this research is that it is interdisciplinary, combining the theory of cognitive framing with a pragmatic analysis to reach a deeper interpretation concerning the mechanisms that make fake news persuasive. From a theoretical perspective, the research is a contribution to research on discourse, media, and their relationship, because it shows, by means of a theoretical interpretation, how the cognitive aspects of pragmatic analyses are interrelated with fake news, which appears on the internet. From a pragmatic perspective, the significance of the research is that it provides a tool that can be used for different purposes concerning the interpretation of online discourses, such as political discourses. From a societal perspective, as trust concerning information is becoming more vulnerable, this research provides a vital service aimed at developing a critical relation with online media. The analyses of pragmatics and semantics show that presuppositions serve as strong instruments of persuasion by constructing debated meanings as assumed truths, which hinders audience members' ability to critically engage with them (Jassim, 2024).

The scope of the research is limited to the pragmatic qualitative analysis of sixty fake news posts, divided into thirty from Facebook and thirty from X. The choice of the posts is grounded on relevance to themes as well as engagement, with the emphasis on socio-political posts, which are most relevant to the topic of framing in fake news. The analysis is limited to the non-visual aspects of the posts, without consideration for algorithmic effects, although the discussion focuses on the text-level effects, which are the most significant ones. Although the results are not meant to be generalized, they are significant from a theoretical perspective, as they provide a solid foundation for future research that could, for instance, consider a larger number of posts.

2. Literature Review

1. Fake News and Social Media Discourse

The phenomenon of fake news has garnered significant academic interest, especially with regard to its quick spread on various social media platforms. The definition of fake news is essentially the use of intentionally false or inaccurate information framed in the style of a news article, with the aim of deceiving people (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). The environment that prevails on social media sites enhances the spread of fake news, owing to programming, user interactions, as well as user practices on the sites. It has been demonstrated that false information has been spreading faster than accurate information on social media platforms, mainly because fake news is designed in a manner that induces reactions such as fear, anger, and moral outrage (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018). The results aptly indicate that fake news is not a matter of inaccurate information anymore but a communicative approach that has a profound logic grounded in the environment that is inclusive of social media sites.

2. Cognitive Framing Theory

The Cognitive Framing Theory is one of the most vital theoretical components that describe how fake news impacts the perceptions of audiences. It is known that a frame is a mental model with the ability to accomplish experiences by focusing on certain aspects of reality but overlooking other facts (Goffman, 1974). Frames within a message on media are seen to impact the development of issues, responsibility, and moral judgments. It has been noticed that the impact of a frame is highly significant when handling political communications, within which a mental schema is used to process messages quickly (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Regarding fake news, the impact of frames is observed to leverage shared beliefs within a particular cultural and pragmatic context, rendering messages that are non-fact-based sound reasonable.

3. Pragmatics and Persuasion in Digital Communication

Pragmatics is a type of analysis that is predominantly concerned with the construction of meaning from pragmatic mechanisms such as presupposition, implicature, deixis, and speech acts (Yule, 1996). Studies have shown that language is not merely an information delivery system; it functions as a cognitive tool that provides and shapes the interpretation/meaning of the discourse (Saadoun & Al-Dalfi, 2022). In the pragmatic realm of persuasive rhetoric, such pragmatic mechanisms are highly relevant with regard to the construction of meaning (Yule, 1996). The presence of the internet has encouraged a pragmatic message component, which is further encouraged by a lack of message length, a lack of formality, and a degree of message ambiguity that is highly encouraging of implicit messages (Dyner, 2020). It has been suggested that a pragmatic message construction is common to misinformation messages, which are typically communicated in a style that is highly encouraging of implicit message construction, such that it is less readily verifiable (Dyner, 2020).

4. Persuasive Strategies in Fake News

There are a number of research pieces that have managed to identify a list of common persuasive devices used in fake news articles, such as moral polarization, in-group vs. out-group identity, or even emotionalization (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). In this regard, fake news relies on a set of devices used in language that might include evaluative statements, rhetorical questions, hyperbole, or even absolute statements (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). In support of this, it has been shown that individuals who use emotionalization in articles are more likely to engage with fake news articles, even when they are known to be fake (Pennycook & Rand, 2019).

5. Platform-Specific Framing Practices

In more recent literature, it is argued that the affordances available on different platforms affect the framing of fake news, with different platforms being used in different ways to communicate fake news. For instance, the use of longer posts on Facebook promotes narrative framing, which is supported by emotionally rich messages, while X's limited characters support assertive messages that are similar to a slogan (KhosraviNik, 2017). Research studies focused on discourse reveal a high level of influence that an invented or made up story (unrealistic) has by using language techniques that influence perception and feelings (interpretation) rather than how accurate something is (factual reasoning) in order to change the way something is viewed (Al Mansoori, 2025). Furthermore, most comparative analyses reject the idea that fake news on different platforms should be generalized because of similarities in the structure of social media discourse.

3. Methodology

In this research, a qualitative, discourse-focused research design involving pragmatic analysis is used to explore the construction and use of cognitive frames as a means of persuasion in fake news on social media. The choice of a qualitative research design is apt in this research because, unlike quantitative research, the qualitative research design is capable of exploring meaning-making practices, tacit assumptions, and contextual indications that cannot be investigated in a quantitative research design. This research is framed by an interpretive paradigm, which conceives language as a practice existing within a social context, with meaning being context-dependent, negotiated, and produced in a particular environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The dataset comprises a total of sixty fake postings on two prominent social media platforms, namely Facebook and X. The thirty postings on each of the two platforms were carefully considered

to ensure that they are balanced and amenable to comparison. The posts cover the same topics and are posted around the same time. The postings identified as fake news were cross-checked with credible fact-checking websites and prominent verification sites, which were used as a reference to classify the postings as such. The choice to conduct this research on postings that touch on socio-political related to social accidents and political issues within the Iraqi society is supported because past research has established that postings on such themes are highly susceptible to manipulative framing practices, which use misleading messages (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). The postings retained for consideration are devoid of identifying attributes that, with research ethics, should remain private.

The theoretical framework used in this research is a blend of Cognitive Framing Theory with pragmatics in discourse research. Cognitive framing theory is used to identify and classify the predominant frames used in fake news headlines, such as fear, moral polarization, victimization, and conspiracy frames. Cognitive frames are considered mental representations that organize interpretation by prioritizing particular aspects of knowledge in a particular way by marginalizing others (Entman, 1993). Then, pragmatic analysis is done to analyze the way in which frames are encoded in language with a purpose of persuasion. This is done by relying on the most essential pragmatic notions, such as theory of speech acts, presupposition, implicatures, deixis, and evaluative language, which are described in essential pragmatic literature (Yule, 1996; Dynel, 2020).

The process of analysis involved a number of systematically devised stages. The first entailed a recursive reading of all posts with a view to becoming familiar with the data. The second involved the use of initial coding, which entailed the development of instances regarding the use of cognitive frameworks on the basis of interpretive orientation. This is based on theory-driven categories that are established from literature on frameworks, alongside the use of data-driven insights that may originate from the texts. Third, a pragmatic analysis of all posts entailed a particular attention to the use of linguistic devices aimed at the activation of identified frameworks. This involved a consideration of implicit meaning, such as taken-for-granted assumptions, which are presupposed, alongside implicatures that amount to accusations that remain implicit.

In order to increase the validity and trustworthiness of the findings, some methods of ensuring the rigor of the qualitative research were adopted. The transparency of the analysis was acquired on purpose, noting and theorizing on the coded interpretation. Reflexivity has been adopted throughout the research process, especially when interpreting certain messages that are sensitive from a political/ideological perspective. The consistent interpretation of representative messages from the transcripts that aim to identify the frames has been adopted, which corresponds with the norms of qualitative discourse analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Although the study delivers a rich set of insights on the framings of fake news, some drawbacks need to be recognized. The limited size of the dataset is a constraint on the applicability of the research findings, as the research focuses only on the textual framing component, omitting potential framings from other components, such as image and video, which might significantly add to the framings. Additionally, the research is not aimed at studying the actual readers' perceptions and effects on cognitive aspects but is limited to the production-oriented framings of fake news on social media platforms. The research methodology, although less fitting on grounds of applicability, is apt for conducting research on the pragmatics of cognitive framings within fake news on social media platforms, providing a robust foundation for potential research with different perspectives, such as mixed research or audience-focused research.

4. Data Analysis

This section draws on a qualitative analysis of cognitive framing in fake news posts on Facebook and X. The analysis is grounded on sixty posts, thirty from each site, with a view to exploring the dominant cognitive frames, the pragmatic means used to realize these frames, and how these are different on the two platforms. In order to facilitate easy comprehension, the results are segmented across themes, with the support of analytical tables. This section clearly is not interested in statistical representation but intends to develop a deeper, discursive comprehension of fake news' pragmatic success in a social environment such as Facebook/X.

Text: «*إيران فقط قصفت قواعد أمريكية في العراق والغرب يعيش عذاب اليوم! شاهد الفيديو الحقيقي*» (Facebook, Arab News. (2021, May 29))

Translation: «*IRAN just bombed American bases in Iraq and the West is suffering today! Watch the real video!*»

Text: “*IRAN just BOMBED US military bases in Iraq. The Western warmongers are getting a taste of their own medicine!*” — by an X user identified as @JacksonHinkle on January 15, 2024.

Translation: «*إيران فقط قصفت القواعد العسكرية الأمريكية في العراق. الغربيون متعودون على الحرب والآن تذوقوا نفس الدواء!*»

Table 1. Dominant Cognitive Frames in Facebook and X Fake News Posts

<i>Cognitive Frame</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Facebook</i> (<i>n=30</i>)	<i>X</i> (<i>n=30</i>)
<i>Fear/Threat Frame</i>	Portrays events as imminent dangers or existential threats	9	8
<i>Moral Polarization</i>	Constructs a binary opposition between good and evil actors	7	9
<i>Victimization Frame</i>	Represents a group as oppressed, silenced, or unjustly treated	6	5
<i>Conspiracy Frame</i>	Attributes events to hidden plots or secret powerful actors	5	6
<i>Authority/Credibility</i>	Invokes experts, institutions, or alleged evidence to legitimize claims	3	2

As illustrated in Table 1, fear/threat, moral polarization, and moralization frames are most prominent in the dataset on both platforms. Frames operate cognitively by enabling users to break down complicated socio-political truths into compelling stories that command an instant response. The use of fear, victimization, moral polarization, moralization, and conspiracy frames is slightly more common on Facebook, with X more commonly posting on moral polarization, moralization, and conspiracy frames.

The second level of analysis investigated how these cognitive frames are pragmatically realized on the basis of particular strategies of persuasion. The pragmatic level of analysis has revealed that the fake news message seldom uses explicit misrepresentation; moreover, it uses implicit mechanisms of meaning construction, namely, presupposition, implicatures, and indirect speech acts. The most common pragmatic mechanisms are listed in Table 2.

Text:

كالعادة، الحقيقة تُخفى عن الشعب العراقي.
إلى متى يبقى الفاسدون يسرقون خيرات البلد بينما المواطن صامت؟
شارك المنشور ليعرف الجميع ما لا يريدون لك أن تعرفه. (Kal- 'ādah, al-ḥaqīqa tukhfā 'an al-sha 'b al- 'Irāqī) (2023)

Translation:

As usual, the truth is being hidden from the Iraqi people.
How long will the corrupt keep stealing the country's wealth while citizens remain silent?
Share this post so everyone knows what they don't want you to know.

Table 2. Pragmatic Strategies and Their Persuasive Functions

<i>Pragmatic Strategy</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Persuasive Function</i>
<i>Presupposition</i>	Assumes contested information as already accepted	Normalizes false claims
<i>Implicature</i>	Suggests meanings indirectly without explicit assertion	Avoids accountability
<i>Emotive Lexicalization</i>	Uses emotionally loaded vocabulary	Triggers affective responses
<i>Rhetorical Questions</i>	Poses questions that imply a single preferred interpretation	Guides audience inference
<i>Directive Speech Acts</i>	Encourages sharing, outrage, or alignment	Promotes engagement and circulation

Presupposition appeared to be one of the strongest pragmatic resources in the messages. Most messages presuppose the presence of corruption, threat, or injustice without necessarily providing evidence that can be verified, thus presenting such beliefs as shared knowledge. For instance, claims that "the truth is being hidden" presuppose that the government is deceiving people, invoking the conspiracy frames with less emphasis on evidence.

Implicature is also a significant element, especially in X posts, which are so brief that implicitness is encouraged. The use of vague statements, ellipses, and suggestive hashtags is meant to leave the conclusion to the readers themselves, which is very effective in terms of convincing people as it gives a sense of personalized reasoning. This is very similar to fear polarization frames.

Representative analysis of fear frames shows the use of lexicalization linked to emotion, in particular, the use of expressive speech acts. Key lexical terms that convey the notions of danger, urgency, and loss, such as "collapse," "invasion," and "destruction," are used extensively. Table 3 shows the pragmatic expression of the fear frame.

Table 3. Pragmatic Realization of the Fear Frame

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Facebook Usage</i>	<i>X Usage</i>
<i>Lexical Choices</i>	Extended emotional narratives	Condensed alarmist terms
<i>Speech Acts</i>	Expressives and warnings	Assertives and predictions

<i>Presuppositions</i>	Ongoing danger is unquestionable	Threat is obvious and immediate
<i>Audience Positioning</i>	Reader as potential victim	Reader as urgent witness

The use of Facebook posts embeds fear frames in a narrative structure that builds an emotionally charged effect. X posts, on the other hand, make use of a direct assertive style that states threats in a matter-of-fact way. In regard to style, both platforms are still positioning the audience as vulnerable.

Moral polarization frames are highly dependent on evaluative language use, which marks actors as righteous or inherently bad with little possibility of ambiguity. In practice, the moral polarization frame is enacted by assertive language use, with a high degree of other-presentation that is negative. Key attributes of moral polarization frames are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Pragmatic Features of Moral Polarization Frames

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Observed Pattern</i>
<i>Evaluative Language</i>	Frequent use of absolutes (e.g., always, never)
<i>Pronoun Usage</i>	Strong in-group vs. out-group distinction
<i>Speech Acts</i>	Accusations, condemnations
<i>Implicit Assumptions</i>	Moral superiority of the in-group

This is a strategy that improves persuasion on the grounds that it relies on shared values and identifications. It is a pragmatic way of building moral certitude that prevents people from becoming skeptical.

Victimization frames, although less common, are essential in authorizing the feeling of reaction and the call to take action. The pragmatic construction of the frames occurs via expressive speech acts, metaphors of suffering, and presuppositions of injustice. The salient features are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Victimization Frame and Pragmatic Strategies

<i>Pragmatic Element</i>	<i>Function</i>
<i>Metaphors of Harm</i>	Intensify perceived injustice
<i>Presupposed Oppression</i>	Frames inequality as undeniable
<i>Emotional Appeals</i>	Elicit sympathy and moral outrage
<i>Indirect Directives</i>	Encourage sharing as moral duty

Lastly, the conspiracy frames were revealed to employ a combination of pragmatic approaches, which makes them even more convincing. The posts, for instance, make use of vague statements, unanswered questions, and insider knowledge that identifies the reader with a chosen elite. This framing technique is geared at encouraging engagement by instilling a sense of curiosity and disbelief in the official narrative.

In sum, this analysis shows that the cognitive frames used in fake news are more than a set of themes, but are actively produced and reinforced by means of strategic pragmatics. The relationship between frames and pragmatics provides a mechanism that makes fake news a highly effective form of persuasive discourse, optimized for the particular affordances of a given social media platform. This comprehensive analysis supports the argument that the analysis of fake news, in order to be complete, is dependent on the interrelationship that exists between what is said, as well as what is pragmatically implied.

5. Findings and Discussion

This section connects the qualitative identified findings with a critical discussion of these implications. Instead of designing a findings section that is followed by a discussion section, this section takes on an interpretive stance, in which findings are continually linked to existing literature with regard to cognitive framing, pragmatics, and the discourse of fake news. It shows that the phenomenon of fake news on Facebook and X is produced following a limited set of dominant cognitive frames that are pragmatically articulated to reach maximum persuasive effect with a minimum requirement on falsifiability.

Among the most evident findings that arise from this research is the prevalence of fear and moral polarization frames on both platforms. The fear frame is a way of framing messages that transmits political events as threats that need instant responses. The applicability of the fear framing is supported by presuppositions that embed danger as a phenomenon that cannot be questioned, alongside lexicalization that increases fear. This confirms previous observations that emotionally charged messages, most specifically messages with fear-provoking narratives, are shared faster and are judged to be more credible on the internet (Vosoughi et al., 2018). On a cognitive level, the increased receptibility to manipulation resulting from fear-oriented frames is brought about by lowered critical thinking because of increased affective, as opposed to cognitive, processing.

Moral polarization appears as a closely related but still different framing practice. In fake news postings, moral polarization is used to set up a moral dichotomy between righteous in-groups and sinful, malicious, or corrupted out-groups. Results indicate that moral polarization is pragmatically expressed by means of assertive, evaluative, and categorical statements that preclude alternative interpretations. This is consistent with Entman's (1993) assertion that frames define problems, but also moralize them by assigning blame. Moral polarization in fake news postings increases the persuasiveness of the message by connecting it with pre-existing moral ideologies, in which believing a message translates into a moral validation rather than a matter of fact.

Another important result has to do with the use of presupposition and implicature as pragmatic devices in fake news messages. The results show that a considerable number of messages presuppose false claims, embedding them in a background setting as presupposed, as opposed to front-grounding them. The application of presupposition in fake news messages undermines the need for evidence, presuming false claims to be common knowledge. This is further supported by implicature, which facilitates the interactants in conveying extreme messages indirectly, hence avoiding accountability. This particular result is supported by pragmatic research, which states that implicit messages are particularly useful in manipulative messages because they are less prone to being consciously processed by the recipient (Dyner, 2020).

Differences in platform-specific factors are revealed as an important result. Although the cognitive frames used by Facebook and X are similar, the pragmatic implementation of them differs in line with the affordances of the platforms. This is because Facebook posts use longer narrative formats, storytelling, expressive language, and discursive speech acts that cumulatively encode fear/victimhood, while X posts use short narrative formats, assertive language, and condensed evaluative statements, which are sometimes upheld with the help of hashtags or intertextual cues. Such differences indicate that producers of fake news are optimizing framing practices on platforms for greater reach potential. This is in line with Khosravi Nik's argument that social media discourse cannot be studied from a meta-discursive perspective that considers it a single genre with uniform properties, but within the media technological environment that supports it (2017).

Frames of victimization and conspiracy, although less common than fear manipulation and moral polarization, are an essential complementary part of a set of frames that support a persuasive message. Frames of victimization bestow legitimacy on the use of affectively charged messages such as anger and resentment, discovering presumed injustice and oppression, while conspiracy messages instill a sense of distrust with respect to official messages, making viewers feel that they belong to a privileged in-group with esoteric knowledge. In practice, the design of the conspiracy message relies heavily on hush-hush talk, with vague allusions, questions, and links to esoteric knowledge. The results confirm that these types of messages are most effective with regard to long-term engagement, because they invite the ongoing interpretation of events with a mindset of suspicion.

Theoretically, the results of this research are useful in the development of framing theory because this research has been able to show that frames used in fake news are not merely themes but are dynamic in that they are arrived at through linguistic means that take into consideration the context of the message. The intersection of cognitive framing theory and pragmatic theory is thus useful because it is capable of identifying how messages are coded at two different levels, one that is cognitive, meaning how the message is processed in the mind, and the other that is interactive, which pertains to how messages are conveyed.

On the application side, the implications of the research are highly significant, especially within the context of media literacy learning, and especially with regard to resistance strategies against fake news. The identification of fake news is not a simple process of detecting the most evident statements that are not true; on the contrary, it is a process that also involves the detection of implicit messages, affective, and framing elements. This research, therefore, by making the pragmatic work of the cognitive frames evident, provides a set of instruments that can be used with a view to supporting a subtle resistance against manipulative messages on the web. In this respect, this research confirms that a substantive definition of fake news is still necessary.

6. Conclusion

This research has been conducted to examine the way in which cognitive frames are articulated, pragmatically realized, and used as a strategic tool of fake news communicated on a social media platform, specifically on Facebook and X. In this research, an interdisciplinary approach has been adopted to analyze these issues. In other words, it has been shown that fake news is a strategic form of discourse, far from being merely a vehicle that transmits incorrect information, but relies on subtle mechanisms of meaning construction.

The results indicate that a small number of dominant cognitive frames, most specifically fear, moral polarisation, victimisation, and conspiracy, are shared on both platforms, which indicates that producers of fake news make use of common cognitive resources to add persuasive power to fake news. The frames serve the purpose of simplifying a particular socio-political reality as well as giving priority to certain beliefs, sidestepping alternative perspectives on the issue. Most importantly, what the research has made evident is that with the use of pragmatic devices such as presupposition, implicature, evaluative language, and speech act, the strategic potential of these frames is realised.

The comparative analysis, therefore, not only points towards the fact that even though a similar framing structure is used on the platforms of Facebook and X, a different pragmatic application of that structure is being practiced on the two platforms, based on the affordance of the two platforms.

The posts on Facebook are narrative in nature, while the posts on X are assertive, short, and condensed in terms of evaluation. This is significant in the context of fake news analysis, which should not restrict itself to a uniform concept of social media discourses.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the literature on fake news, discourse, and online communication, in that it sheds light on the importance of a cognitive-pragmatic approach. It advances the literature on framing theory, in that it shows how frames are dynamically enacted on a linguistic level, which, in turn, advances pragmatic scholarship, because it investigates the importance of the mechanism of implicit meaning in fake news. This research offers a qualitative research design that has the potential for replication in relation to other online communicative messages.

In relation to implications, the study vigorously claims that a remedial approach to fake news research must cover fact-checking with a critical perspective on framing and pragmatic manipulation. The discussion on media literacy is encouraged to empower viewers with the ability to decode the use of affective triggers, implicit assumptions, and polarized frameworks that make up interpretive practice. Despite the fact that the research is limited by a small corpus of texts, this research provides a solid foundation for a more expansive research study on a different scope, such as multiple platforms, a larger corpus, or a multi-method approach. In conclusion, the research substantiates that a fake news comprehension, as a phenomenon, depends on the precise consideration of the cognitive pragmatic practices of persuasion on which platforms are built.

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