

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the general description of the paper. It contains research backgrounds, statement of the problems, research objectives, research significances, conceptual frameworks, definition of key terms, and previous studies.

#### 1.1 Research Background

Headline news serves as the gateway to public discourse, often shaping the first impression readers have of a particular event or issue. Stroud, a noted scholar in communication studies, has extensively explored the concept of media bias and its implications for audience engagement and public opinion. Her work underscores how biases in headline news contribute to selective exposure, Confirmation **bias**, and the reinforcement of ideological divisions within society.

In the modern digital age, where information is abundant and easily accessible, the ability to critically engage with media content has become more crucial than ever. The act of reading something from the media requires a thorough and analytical approach, far beyond mere surface-level comprehension. The reasons why contemporary media as Stroud mentioned (Johnson 2012). First and foremost, media content often contains multiple layers of meaning that extend beyond the literal text. As linguist Leech pointed out in his work on semantics, words and phrases carry connotative meanings – associations and implications that may not be immediately apparent (Leech 1974). Moreover, Stroud Wrote that “media pieces frequently contain subtext, cultural references, and specific framing techniques that shape the overall message”(Stroud, Muddiman, and Lee 2014) . A thorough reading allows consumers to unpack these layers, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the content.

The recognition of bias and perspective is equally crucial in the analysis of linguistic content. No piece of writing is entirely neutral; every text, whether it be

an academic article, a literary work, or an opinion piece, is shaped by the author's particular viewpoint and intentions. This bias can be evident in various aspects,



such as the selection of themes, the choice of words, and the framing of narratives. It can also manifest in using certain literary devices or emphasizing specific aspects of a story or argument (Stroud 2014). Careful and thorough analysis is necessary to identify these biases and consider alternative interpretations, thereby achieving a more comprehensive understanding of the text. Context and background knowledge are vital for fully grasping the subtleties of linguistic content. Texts often assume a certain level of familiarity with cultural, historical, or social contexts. A thorough analysis involves going beyond the surface of the text – exploring unfamiliar concepts, understanding the broader context in which the text was produced, and considering how the piece fits into wider literary or cultural traditions. This deeper engagement allows for a more nuanced appreciation of the work and helps to connect it with other related issues or themes.

Recognizing bias and perspective in linguistic content is crucial because every piece of writing carries an author's unique viewpoint. This perspective influences not only the explicit content but also the connotative meanings embedded within the text. Connotative meaning refers to the emotions, associations, and additional implications that words or phrases carry beyond their literal definitions. These nuanced meanings are crucial for a deeper understanding of any text, as they often reveal underlying biases, cultural contexts, and the author's intentions.

Connotative meaning is important because it adds layers of interpretation beyond the surface level, according to Leech (Yunira et al. 2020). For instance, the choice of words in a text can evoke specific emotional responses or imply judgments. A word like "aggressive" might denote a straightforward action but connotes negative qualities such as hostility or belligerence. This choice of language can subtly influence the reader's perception of a character, event, or argument, highlighting the importance of critical reading and awareness of connotations. The recognition of connotative meaning is particularly important in identifying biases and perspectives. Authors may use specific connotations to align the reader with certain viewpoints or to subtly suggest a particular interpretation. For example, describing a protest as a "riot" rather than a "demonstration" carries connotations of chaos and

illegality, which can bias the reader's understanding of the event. Such connotative choices can be deliberate, aiming to frame a narrative in a certain light.

In the broader context of analyzing linguistic content, understanding connotative meaning helps in appreciating the cultural, historical, and social contexts of a text. Words and phrases can carry different connotations based on the cultural and historical background of both the author and the audience. A thorough analysis that considers these aspects can uncover deeper meanings and connections that might otherwise be overlooked. This is why background knowledge and context are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of linguistic content. Moreover, the evaluation of connotative meaning ties into the critical evaluation of interpretations. Different critical schools and theoretical perspectives can highlight various connotations and their implications, offering diverse interpretations of the same text. For example, a feminist reading might focus on the connotations of language that reinforce gender stereotypes, while a Marxist analysis might highlight economic or class-based connotations. Recognizing these differing interpretations helps distinguish between well-substantiated analyses and those that may be speculative or biased. In conclusion, connotative meaning plays a pivotal role in the analysis of linguistic content. It enriches the text with emotional and associative layers, reveals the author's biases and perspectives, and provides a deeper understanding of the cultural and historical context. Engaging with these nuanced meanings through critical analysis fosters a more comprehensive and informed interpretation of texts, essential in navigating the complexities of literary and linguistic studies. As we encounter diverse linguistic content, being attuned to connotative meanings becomes indispensable for critical literacy.

Connotative meaning is a way of referring to the extra meanings that words carry beyond their dictionary definitions. These meanings encompass the implied, suggested, or associated meanings, feelings, and connotations that words have, going beyond their literal definitions. Looking at The New York Times headlines about Gaza through Leech's types of meaning. It may expose any hidden biases and framing techniques used by the newspaper, which can aid in understanding how

language influences our perception of the conflict. By analyzing the emotional and social connotations of the headlines, we can see how the language used reflects the power structures and ideologies involved, indicating whether the newspaper is reinforcing or challenging existing structures (Leech 1981). In addition, it can learn a lot about the paper's associations and disassociations with different groups and ideologies concerning the conflict. Ultimately, Leech's framework can give a comprehensive understanding of how language choices shape media discourse surrounding the conflict, revealing the newspaper's role in shaping public discourse and influencing socio-cultural and political narrative (Stroud 2014). Overall, using Leech's approach can provide valuable insights into the meanings conveyed through NYT's language choices in their Gaza coverage.

Understanding connotative meaning is important in shaping attitudes, perceptions, and interpretations. It refers to the meanings, feelings, and associations that a word or expression suggests beyond its literal definition. These meanings are often rooted in personal, cultural, or emotional associations. Connotative meanings are used in figurative language, such as metaphors and idioms, to create vivid imagery and convey deeper symbolic meanings. Writers, poets, and speakers use connotative meanings to achieve particular effects in their works. Carefully picking words with certain connotations can greatly impact the tone, mood, and overall impact of a piece of writing or persuasive argument. Advertisers also use connotative meanings to influence consumer perceptions and preferences. Leech's emphasis on connotative meaning highlights the importance of understanding the implicit, associative, and emotional dimensions of language beyond its surface-level definitions. This type of meaning plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes, perceptions, and interpretations and is an essential aspect of linguistic analysis, literary criticism, effective communication, and persuasive messaging (Leech 1981).

The writer has discovered several studies that could assist in uncovering the connotative meaning behind New York Times headline news. After evaluating

several studies, the writer has identified three studies that would enhance the success of this research. The three relevant studies are listed below.

One of the studies that would be useful for this research is *Lexical Ambiguity in BBC News Online Headlines with the Assistance of WordNet* (2023), Refa Triana. In this study, he explores the ambiguity of headlines on BBC News and how they can be interpreted differently based on their semiotic and lexical context. The study focuses on enhancing the writer's understanding of media by utilizing semiotics, a diverse field that complements the writer's path. Therefore, the writer believes this study would improve their understanding of how media functions in the digital era, using BBC Headline News as the object of analysis. This study applies Van Dijk's theory to analyze news headlines in summarizing articles. This text provides guidelines for analyzing news headlines with intellectual understanding. reintroduced

Another study that could be useful for this research is *Geoffrey Leech's Seven Types Of Meaning* (2023), authored by Prasannata Ramtirthe and Milind Ovhal. In this study, they have reintroduced Leech's theory in a more modern format and listed some examples that are easier for people to understand using simpler words. This would help the writer better understand the theory that will be used in the research. Additionally, the modern examples provided in the study would make it easy to comprehend, like riding a bicycle down a hill.

Last but not least, there is an article titled *Fighting Wars, Killing People: New Media And Awareness Of Gaza-Israeli 2023 War* (2024) written by Ifeanyi Martins. The article discusses how new media has given a voice to the Palestinian people in Gaza, which traditional media had not previously done. Through new media platforms, they were able to share their experiences with the world and gain support from people all over the world. The article explores how traditional media often had a biased view of the conflict, while new media provided a clearer picture. It describes how social media platforms were used to share images and accounts from Gaza, which helped shape public opinion and encouraged people worldwide to speak up. The article also suggests that this could potentially impact diplomatic

efforts to resolve the conflict. By using independent news outlets, this article presents an unbiased view of what is happening in Gaza, as opposed to the biased views of larger news outlets. This will enable writers to differentiate between biased and unbiased headlines.

The writer thinks that the prior studies could be a big help in this research. This study hopes to be one of the first among many to look at whether the headline news of the New York Times about the conflict inside the Gaza Strip is biased or unbiased.

### **1.2 Statements of Problem**

In this research, the writer has to find the connotative meaning behind the headline news, identify the types of biases within it, and understand the context to prevent misinformation. Therefore, there are two problem formulations that are being studied in this paper. They are:

1. How are the connotative meanings in The New York Times's Headline news?
2. What types of biases are present in The New York Times' headline news?

### **1.3 Research Purposes**

According to the formulation of the problem, there are two objectives to be achieved in this study. They are:

1. To find out the connotative meanings in The New York Times's headline news
2. To find out the types of biases presented in The New York Times' headline news

### **1.4 Research Significances**

The significance of this research lies in its application of Geoffrey Leech's and Natalie Jomini Stroud's theories to analyze The New York Times's headline news. Geoffrey Leech's work on semantics, particularly his exploration of connotative meanings, provides a framework for understanding the subtle implications and emotional associations embedded in language. This research seeks to uncover these connotations in headlines, offering insights into how language can shape readers' perceptions and influence their interpretations of news events.

Stroud's research on media bias and selective exposure emphasizes the impact of biased reporting on audience attitudes and public discourse. By identifying the types of biases present in headlines, the research aims to highlight how news outlets may frame events in ways that align with specific ideological perspectives, potentially reinforcing existing beliefs and contributing to societal polarization.

Together, these theoretical perspectives underscore the importance of critically analyzing media content. The research is significant in its effort to illuminate the ways in which language and bias in headlines can affect public understanding and prevent misinformation. By providing a nuanced analysis of connotative meanings and biases, this study contributes to the broader field of media literacy, helping readers become more discerning consumers of news and fostering a more informed public. This research is essential in an era where the rapid spread of information—and misinformation—can have profound implications for society.

### **1.5 Definition of Key Terms**

These definitions of key terms are made in the intention to avoid any misunderstanding from the terms used in this research.

**Headline News:** "Headline news" refers to the most important or prominent news stories that are featured at the top of news broadcasts or publications. These stories are typically selected for their significant impact, relevance, or urgency and are designed to capture the audience's attention. Headline news often includes breaking news, major events, or critical updates that are of widespread interest or concern.

**Media:** Various channels and platforms are used for communication and the dissemination of information. These include traditional forms such as newspapers, radio, and television, as well as digital forms such as websites, social media, and streaming services. The media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, providing news, entertainment, and education, and facilitating communication across different sectors of society. It serves as a conduit for information exchange between individuals, organizations, and institutions.



**Bias:** Bias refers to a tendency or inclination that affects one's judgment or perspective in a way that is unfair or partial. It involves a lack of neutrality, where personal opinions, preferences, or prejudices influence the interpretation or presentation of information. Bias can manifest in various forms, including cognitive bias (such as **Confirmation bias**, where one favors information that confirms pre-existing beliefs), media bias (where news coverage may favor one side of an issue over another), and personal bias (where individual experiences or beliefs shape one's viewpoint). Recognizing and addressing bias is essential for achieving objective and balanced understanding.

