

## Perception Management of Newspapers: Evaluation of the Relationship Between Digital Media and Education

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### Abstract

Media literacy is an essential area of discussion with its digital competencies and skills, the online opportunities it provides, and the risks it carries. The mobilization of today's media tools, the ability to connect to the network through smartphones regardless of time and place, and easy accessibility have brought new media tools to the centre of our lives. The speed and change in new communication technologies present new opportunities and risks, especially for children and young people. Today, the new media environment and tools have a social role in determining, transforming, shaping and giving new forms to social relations. Communication relationships, online behaviours and attitudes realized by technology are the subjects of many studies. Being constantly networked or connected is essential in young people's social identity construction and carries many risks. The individual who needs to be media literate in the face of traditional media has to be much more conscious and educated in the face of multi-media channels and productions that are renewed and changed with today's digital developments. In this context, structural changes and transformations in information and communication technologies have made it necessary to discuss new media literacy and new literacy skills, online opportunities and risks. As a result of the conceptual discussion, it has been revealed that individuals who have the digital competencies and skills of the 21st century, who can use online opportunities at the maximum level, who are aware of online risks and can minimize them, should be trained with new media literacy education.

**Keywords:** Communication, media, local media, media literacy.

### Introduction

In 1878, the modern history of Cyprus began with the lease of the island of Cyprus by the Ottoman Empire to the British Empire and the de facto annexation of the island of Cyprus by Britain at the end of World War I. As a result of the 1959 London and 1960 Zurich Agreements, the Republic of Cyprus was established on the island of Cyprus in partnership with Greek and Turkish Cypriots under the legal guarantor of Britain, Turkey and Greece. With the beginning of the intercommunal conflicts in 1963, the two communities, which were forced to live in separate regions, with the support of Greek and Greek fanatical nationalists, overthrew the elected President of the Republic of Cyprus, Makarios, in 1974, as a result of the events that developed, Turkey landed troops on the island based on the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee and took approximately 40% of the island under its control. Shortly after the landing of the Turkish troops on the island, the Turkish Cypriots began to govern themselves by establishing the Autonomous Turkish Cypriot Administration on October 1 1974, the Turkish Cypriot Federated State on February 13, 1975, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on November 15 1983, exercising their right to self-determination.

Article 99 of the 1985 TRNC Constitution stipulates that presidential elections must be held every five years (TRNC Constitution, 2009). In the first elections held on November 15, 1983, Rauf R. Denktaş was elected as the first President of the TRNC. Rauf Denktaş, who did not trust the federal solution based on the partnership between the Greeks and the Turks and believed in the independence and sovereignty of the TRNC, won the re-elections in 1990, 1995 and 2000 and served as the President for three terms.

The recognition of the President of the TRNC as the representative of the Turkish Cypriot community in the international community and the fact that he is the only accepted representative of the Turkish Cypriot community in the Cyprus settlement negotiations, reveals the importance of the Presidency, especially in international relations. "Another factor that ensures that the President is in a strong position is that the President has the title of leader of the Turkish Cypriots, and this title is often confirmed by the decisions taken by the Assembly of the Republic (Bozkurt, 2014)." Although there is no direct duty given to the President in the Constitution within the scope of the Cyprus peace negotiations, there is an established tradition that the President of the Republic conducts

the negotiations as the "leader of the Turkish Cypriots". Therefore, it can be concluded that the President has undertaken an essential task in the context of the Cyprus issue (Ustabulut, 2020)."

Since 1964, the Republic of Cyprus, represented by the Greek Cypriots, has made Exclusive Economic Zone agreements with other countries in the Eastern Mediterranean and started natural gas exploration studies, which changed the policies followed in the region. In this severe crisis, in which regional powers and especially international powers such as the United States, Russia, France and Italy, which have essential interests in the region, are involved, the only internationally accepted factor that strengthens Turkey's hand other than the length of the coast is its rights in the context of the guarantor of the Republic of Cyprus, arising from the 1959 Zurich and 1960 London Agreements. Therefore, dominating the island of Cyprus has been important for Turkey's Eastern Mediterranean policy. When we consider that dominating the island of Cyprus requires having a say over the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the importance of the last TRNC Presidential elections emerges.

### **The Language of Headlines and Education**

Language is a structure that matured in the periods before the formation of writing, equipped with all kinds of bodily and environmental movements, includes silent and verbal communication forms, and means much more than writing (Çelik, 2018). Language, the most critical communication tool of human beings, is one of the most essential elements that provide social development and regulate human relations. According to Muharrem Ergin (1980), language is "a natural tool that enables agreement between people, a living entity that has its laws and develops only within the framework of these laws, a system of secret agreements whose foundations were laid in unknown times, a social institution woven from sounds." Language is the most effective means of communication for people living in groups. Without language, it is very primitive for people to communicate. With this primitive communication, society cannot develop and grow. Language serves many purposes, enabling the individual to express his thoughts, convey information, share, understand, evaluate and clarify events. Language, which can determine what is thought and seen, plays a vital role in transferring the civilization and culture created by man to new generations. "The other important function of language is to hold the nation and society together. Language emerges as a tool that enables the transition of the culture that shapes the nation and gives it personality from historical times to today and today to tomorrow (İpek, 2015)."

Language, one of the most influential forces used by politicians to influence, manipulate and direct target audiences, is conveyed to society in a political language that serves the purpose of politicians. "Politicians, whose aim is to influence the target audiences, often resort to rhetorical expressions. Aristotle defines rhetoric as follows: It is the ability to use the means of persuasion that are available in a given situation. Political rhetoric: Politically motivated speeches made by politicians (Aristotle, 1995; Aziz, 2019). Politicians aim to change or direct the target audience's behaviour through rhetorical statements. Instead of detailed, precise statements, politicians interpret the events known to the masses so that they understand and give them the messages they want without tiring the audience. The language used by politicians must be persuasive, carefully selected and simple for the issues that the public can understand, that the public is aware of and that it creates a change in attitude and behaviour in the target audience.

The basis of the Turkish Cypriot Press in the TRNC is the print media (Kalkan, Şafaklı and Günalp, 2015). The indicators used in newspaper news and the signifier-signified relations that make up these indicators will be determined, and the codings used in their arrangement will be examined. Semiotic analysis deals with the meaning contained within texts; in other words, 'meaning consists of signs' and intersemiotic relations (Seyide and Parsa, 2004). By analyzing the headlines and subheadline news of Cyprus, the largest left-wing party, the Republican Turkish Party's publication, Yenidüzen, the publication organ of the ruling conservative right-wing party, the National Unity Party, the influential ideological newspapers, the nationalist and conservative Volkan, and the European newspapers representing radical leftist views, the political messages that the presidential candidates Ersin Tatar and Mustafa Akıncı aim to convey to the voters in the local press are determined, The language and codes used in these messages will be analyzed, and the effect of print media on voters will be investigated. Yenidüzen newspaper is a party publication directly linked to the CTP. Güneş newspaper is the official organ of the ruling UBP. Newspapers not affiliated with political parties clearly show their ideology compared to others: Africa, Volcano ... (Kalkan, Şafaklı and Günalp, 2015).

### **Political Communication and Digital Learning Environments**

Political communication has many definitions because it covers all economic, cultural, social and economic issues with a broad and complex concept. Despite all this complexity and difficulty, "political communication" is simplified. It can be defined as "the use of various types and techniques of communication by political actors to impose certain ideological tools and policies on certain groups, masses, countries or blocs, and to transform them into action and put them into practice when necessary" (Aziz, 2019). Although political communication is

multifaceted, it is generally perceived as electoral communication. Political communication covers not only the election period but also the period outside the election. It is necessary to consider the dimensions of political communication as a political campaign, election period and non-election time (Öztuğ, 2004).

Language is the most critical element that establishes people's connection with society and enables them to communicate within society. Language is the most essential tool used when the messages from politicians to the public are built on building thought (Durgun and Yaman, 2017). Without language, life is straightforward and primitive. French philosopher Roland Barthes' definition of ideology as how the ruling class shaped social reality in the 1960s and questioning media discourses put a different view in the study of texts. The role of mass media in the realization of political communication is vital. Politicians give ideological direction to society by using language and realizing political communication through mass media. Politicians or political campaign consultants dictate the language used to manipulate, change, or manipulate society. Once the ideological language jargon is determined, it is sent to the target audience through various forms of communication (Kılıçaslan, 2008). Political language, which creates a link between the rulers and the society, uses the characteristics of language to influence, direct, manipulate and educate the target audience and society. The individual's words, facial expressions, tone of voice, statements, jokes, gestures, clothing and clothing strengthen the political language.

When the linguistic features used in political communication are examined, it is seen that personal pronouns are frequently used. They address the masses in a language that the public can understand, using folk idioms and proverbs. Using personal pronouns such as I, we, he, them, supporters and opponents are distinguished. Using the rhymes, redifs and assonance of the language ensures that the discourses sound more effective and pleasing. It is frequently used in political language, forcing the target audience to think. Abbreviations, figurative and ambiguous sentences, nicknames and similes are the most used features of political language. Neuman defines this concept as an interpretation in which someone appears to be saying something new but speaks in circles and makes circular reasoning by making a true statement (Durgun and Yaman, 2017).

### **The Importance of Social Education in Political Communication**

Education is an essential element of the development of a society. Societies need education to develop, modernize and progress. Education educates the individual and enables him to take his role in society. Thanks to education, the political awareness of society is formed, and it significantly contributes to the formation of political preferences. As the education level of the individual increases, his political preferences also diversify. In modern societies, many reasons, such as the high level of education, the fact that individuals have a greater awareness of social responsibility, the absence of obstacles to participation, etc., increase the intensity of participation in politics (Altan, 2011). Education, which has a vital role in the continuation of political culture, contributes to forming their political preferences by informing individuals about the political system. Mass media, one of the most critical political communication tools, changes the existing culture using political language and ensures the formation of a new dominant political culture.

### **Method**

The most commonly used method in analyzing news is the discourse analysis method. Studies on news texts, on the other hand, are generally carried out by analyzing and revealing objective, unbiased and unbalanced texts with various analyses (Şeker, 2009). Critical discourse analysis systematically explores explicit or implicit causality. It determines relationships between discursive practices, events, and texts as broader social and cultural structures, relations, and processes (Bostancı, 2016). It is possible to present Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis model in the following table (Özer, 2011).

The study, the front page headlines and subheadlines of 5 newspapers were examined based on VanDijk's Critical Discourse Analysis. Qualitative research methods will be used to decipher disinformation in the 2020 TRNC Presidential elections. Qualitative research is conducted without using any hypotheses and statistical tests to study a topic or problem (Hoephel, 1997). In qualitative research, statistical data are not needed to confirm the results. Data sources include people and articles, official records, letters, newspaper articles, diaries, reports, printed articles on the relevant subject and video recordings (Erdoğan, 2012).

Analysis of the Discourses of Political Leaders in the TRNC and the Languages They Use in Terms of Education  
In the study, the Presidential Election is limited to the headline and subheadline news of the newspapers Cyprus, Yenidüzen, Güneş, Avrupa and Volkan published on 19, September 26, 3, 10 October before the first round and 14, 15, 16 and 17 October before the second round, including the discourses of the Presidential candidates Ersin Tatar and Mustafa Akıncı on the selected days. The fact that the Presidential Election coincided with the period of intense COVID-19 pandemic measures, the fact that the election took place under extraordinary conditions, the printed newspapers could not healthily continue their publications due to intense health measures and economic

problems, causing them to print on certain days of the week. In some of the periods determined in our study, some selected dates were different since there was no pressure from the Volkan newspaper. The dates of 18, September 24, 2, 9 October and 13-16 October, which are closest to the generally determined dates, were chosen. In the period covered by the study, two headlines and three headlines were published in the Cyprus newspaper, one headline in the Yenidüzen newspaper, five headlines and one headline in the Güneş newspaper, and two headlines in the Avrupa newspaper about the Presidential elections, while Volkan, a nationalist and conservative opinion newspaper, used headlines and headlines containing the ideology of the newspaper instead of the candidates' discourses.

A total of 14 headlines and subheadlines were generally supported by photographs to increase the credibility of the discourse. The language used in the headlines and subheadlines, the size of the letters, whether they are positive or negative, whether they are direct or indirect, naming, allusions, predicate-valuing ascriptions, whether the parties subject to the news are included, whether the language used about the parties is impartial or not were determined and examined.

## Result

The 2020 TRNC Presidential Elections, which took place under extraordinary COVID-19 pandemic conditions, took place in a fierce competition environment between Prime Minister Ersin Tatar and President Mustafa Akıncı, despite being multi-candidate. While the candidates used the print media intensively, they conveyed their ideologies and political views to the voters through the political language and discourses they used. "Linguistic messages are also an essential tool of politics. The essence of political discourse lies in examining, defining, and limiting various aspects of social institutions and evaluating concepts such as authority, competence, science, family, structure, and gender-related to that institution. From this point of view, political discourse is not neutral regarding language but is shaped by syntactic forms.

In the 2020 Presidential Election, relations with Turkey, the independence and sovereignty of the TRNC constituted the main agenda of the election, while the Cyprus issue and economic problems remained in the background. Nationalist and conservative candidate Ersin Tatar, while completely opposing the federation thesis, argued that the sovereign equality of the TRNC is the primary condition for the solution of the Cyprus issue. Mustafa Akıncı, whom liberal and left-wing voters supported, argued that the Turkish Cypriot people should be independent and have their own will and that the Cyprus issue should be resolved in the light of the UN parameters. Since 2017, Akıncı has experienced tensions with the Turkish government. Both candidates demanded support from society by promising better economic conditions and a safer future in a way that voters wanted to hear about the current positive or negative developments with the political language they used. The five newspapers selected in our study follow an editorial policy based on ideological and economic grounds.

Yenidüzen and Güneş newspapers published in line with the ideologies and views of the political parties they represented. Yenidüzen newspaper did not reflect Akıncı's rhetoric in its headlines and subheadlines and followed a direct anti-Turkey editorial policy. Güneş newspaper frequently included the discourses of Ersin Tatar, the head of the party it is affiliated with, in its headlines and subheadlines. It reflected Tatar's messages to the voters as positive and anti-Akıncı by using effective political language. Avrupa and Volkan newspapers are newspapers of opinion and have uncompromisingly reflected the ideologies they represent in their publications. Both newspapers reached the target audiences with headlines and headlines representing their ideologies instead of the candidates' rhetoric.

As always, the Cyprus newspaper has followed a publication policy in line with the economic interests of its owners. While the 2003 Annan Plan supported the CTP candidate in the referendum process and the 2004 Presidential Elections, it supported the UBP candidate, who adopted utterly opposite views, in the 2020 elections. The sale of the Cyprus newspaper in December 2022 to a large capital group, including Turkey's largest publicly traded electricity producer, AKSA, was not a positive development for the media sector. AKSA's sale of electricity to the TRNC, its participation in public tenders and the fact that its primary purpose is profit cast a shadow on the impartiality of the media. After the Cyprus newspaper changed hands, it continued its publications by assuming the identity of the party newspaper of the UBP, like the Güneş newspaper. The newspaper, which has gained a new shareholder structure without connection with the Turkish Cypriot people, has limited opportunities to offer to the community.

In the 2020 TRNC Presidential elections, the media followed broadcasting policies in line with the ideologies, ideas or interests they represented instead of objective journalism, where the media was divided. In other words, there is the domination of minds through the media (Aşkın, 2016). The fact that the facts are hidden, obstructed and manipulated by the perception of the masses harms the concept of democracy and freedom. While the political language used can benefit society, it can also be to the detriment of society and mislead the masses. Therefore,

freedom and democracy should be guaranteed by solving the media's disinformation, coding and manipulation techniques and conveying accurate and impartial news to the target audiences. In democracies, accurate and healthy information is needed to control the governments. The disinformation applied by the media prevents public institutions and especially the government from fulfilling their duties, harms democracies, and paves the way for the protection of the interests of a powerful minority. Independent and unrestricted media is essential to democratic, open societies (Bostancı, 2016).

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