

CHAPTER 12. INFORMATION SECURITY IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT: LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES AND THE ROLE OF ENGLISH

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Abstract. This article addresses the multifaceted relationship between information security, the English language, and the educational sphere in modern Ukraine. The ongoing Russian war of aggression has significantly heightened the destructive impact of disinformation targeting both global and domestic audiences. The primary research problem centres on the growing vulnerability of citizens – especially language learners – to manipulative narratives and misinformation campaigns disseminated in English. Our study investigates the pedagogical methods that integrate critical thinking and authentic English-language materials to shield learners from such threats. The theoretical framework draws on sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and best practices in foreign language teaching, reflecting the urgency of media literacy in conflict settings. Crucially, we highlight the pivotal role English teachers play in equipping students with evaluative and analytical tools for detecting bias and inaccuracies in real-world content. Concrete effectiveness of these methods is illustrated through case studies involving mainstream news outlets, social media feeds, and targeted fact-checking exercises. Results indicate a marked improvement in students' language proficiency, critical awareness, and capacity to critically assess narratives related to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. By cultivating both advanced linguistic competence and informed digital literacy, this educational process empowers learners to become active participants in Ukraine's global discourse. Overall, the findings underscore the need for continued research and curricular innovation, asserting that robust information security education significantly enhances Ukraine's resilience on the world stage.

Key words: intercultural communication, disinformation, English language curricula, cultural awareness, resilience.

Information security, in its broadest sense, transcends the mere deployment of firewalls, encryption algorithms, and cybersecurity protocols. It is an intricate tapestry woven from a confluence of technical expertise, policy considerations, sociocultural norms, and, crucially, linguistic variables. While technology often finds itself at the forefront of

discussions about preventing data breaches and safeguarding intellectual property, it is language – how it is used, understood, and translated – that underpins the success or failure of communication in global information security networks. In a world that is increasingly interconnected through digital platforms, the capacity to facilitate clear, nuanced, and context-appropriate exchanges is central to securing data. Indeed, complexities in linguistic usage can undermine otherwise robust security frameworks, as errors or ambiguities in translation can open the door to misinterpretations, vulnerabilities, and even deliberate manipulations. Understanding how languages function within various cultures and how English, as a global lingua franca, shapes professional and casual communication, is thus essential for crafting effective information security strategies.

The linguistic dimension of information security becomes abundantly evident when examining how cybersecurity policies are drafted and shared (*Baltuttis et al., 2024*) across diverse linguistic communities. Although English is predominantly the de facto language in many international technology and security collaborations, the localized interpretations and implementations of such policies are no less crucial than the original directives. Every language possesses its own unique linguistic structures – syntax, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistic norms – that colour how individuals understand and respond to information security measures. Consequently, when developers, network administrators, and policymakers communicate in English, but come from distinct cultural-linguistic backgrounds, certain concepts may be conveyed inaccurately, or security protocols may not be consistently enforced. This phenomenon can arise not only from translation difficulties, but also from deeper cultural assumptions embedded in language that produce divergences in risk perceptions and trust boundaries.

These divergent perceptions have material consequences. Consider the ways in which terms such as “privacy,” “data protection,” and “authorized access” may carry subtly different connotations and historical contexts from one language community to another. While English often serves as a neutral or universal vehicle in global business and diplomacy, not every stakeholder possesses equal fluency in it, nor do they approach security discourse in the same manner. Mismatched expectations, arising from limited linguistic proficiency or from culturally rooted styles of communication, can hinder the timely and precise execution of security protocols. Moreover, technical jargon itself – concepts like “encryption key management,” “multifactor authentication,” or “zero-day vulnerabilities” – is often anchored in English. Where direct translations do exist, they sometimes lack the precise nuance that the English term carries, or they rely on borrowed English words that non-native speakers may not fully grasp.

From a policy standpoint, this raises an intriguing set of questions: How should guidelines for secure data handling be adapted to multiple languages without sacrificing clarity? What is the responsibility of global organizations, such as multinational corporations or intergovernmental agencies, to ensure the accuracy of translations and the cultural appropriateness of security instructions? How do local norms and linguistic practices shape employees’ willingness to report potential threats, abide by strict password regulations, or adhere to guidelines for remote work security? These are not purely linguistic or sociocultural curiosities; they lie at the heart of the effective or ineffective functioning of worldwide information security systems.

At the same time, the ascendancy of English as a global lingua franca in technology and cybersecurity is not merely incidental. A major driver behind this dominance is the historical development of internet-based communication, initially pioneered by English-speaking institutions and companies in North America and Western Europe. Over time, English solidified its status as the language of programming, tech entrepreneurship, and international research collaboration. Yet, this centrality of English also codifies power relationships. It can inadvertently marginalize non-English-speaking communities, limiting their direct involvement in vital decision-making processes and in real-time threat sharing. Overcoming or mitigating these disparities requires a more nuanced approach – one that acknowledges the role of English while simultaneously respecting and incorporating the linguistic diversity of the international security landscape.

In the broader global context, cyber-threat actors do not restrict themselves to an Anglophone universe. Malicious entities frequently exploit linguistic gaps and variations in phishing emails, social engineering attacks, or well-targeted phone scams. Furthermore, international cybercriminals may take advantage of the fragmented nature of security communication. If official advisories are issued solely in English, certain populations are left relatively uninformed and thus more vulnerable. Indeed, entire networks, industries, or countries might become “soft targets” if security protocols are misunderstood or incorrectly translated. This phenomenon underscores the practical and urgent imperative to address language as a significant factor in global information security.

Equally critical is the recognition that linguistics is more than just translation. We are dealing with pragmatics, which concerns how language is used in context. For example, the norms of politeness and directness in certain cultures can lead individuals to hesitate before flagging suspicious online behaviour if they fear it might cause interpersonal conflict. Similarly, some cultures may value hierarchical communication patterns, where subordinates do not question superiors, even if they notice a potential security weakness. Such sociolinguistic patterns can create blind spots or communication bottlenecks in an organization’s security apparatus. Even the creation of user interfaces for security systems involves carefully chosen wording to ensure that instructions are correctly understood and that the user’s cultural-linguistic expectations are met. Ignoring these intricacies can compromise the universal adoption of best practices in information security. Consequently, ensuring multilingual accessibility in cybersecurity advisories and training materials is crucial for comprehensive global protection. Such vulnerabilities highlight the necessity for cross-cultural collaboration and specialized translation expertise in every stage of cybersecurity planning.

1. Specificity of information threats in international communication in the world

This article’s purpose is to explore these multifaceted issues by examining both the linguistic and cultural dimensions of information security, while simultaneously highlighting the central, and sometimes problematic, role of English. In doing so, our goal is to advance the conversation beyond purely technological or purely policy-oriented frameworks. While hardware and software solutions are, of course, indispensable to modern cybersecurity, they operate within a matrix of human interactions that are continuously shaped by language. A policy drafted in English but improperly localized could hinder, rather than help, an organization’s security posture. By the same token, a well-translated but

culturally misaligned guideline could still fail to elicit the intended behavioural response, thereby leaving vulnerabilities in place.

In the pages that follow, we will explore how linguistic research methods, including discourse analysis and pragmatics, can help uncover hidden assumptions in cybersecurity literature and policy documents. We will likewise investigate how cultural-linguistic norms in different societies impact the efficacy of security awareness training. Special attention will be given to real-world case studies that illustrate the direct effects of linguistic misunderstanding on organizational vulnerabilities. These may include instances of phishing emails exploiting certain culturally specific tropes or formal registers, as well as cases where a lack of clear linguistic guidance has led to catastrophic lapses in data protection. We will then turn our attention to the future, offering recommendations that draw on linguistic scholarship to propose more robust and culturally sensitive approaches to information security.

In highlighting the critical role of English, we do not seek to diminish its undeniable utility as a global medium. Rather, we aim to shed light on the ways in which its global dominance can be both an asset and a constraint. English connects multinational teams, but it may also inadvertently exclude or misinform those who have varying levels of English proficiency. We therefore assert that addressing global information security necessitates the integration of linguistic expertise at all levels: from the drafting of security protocols to the training of users in culturally diverse workplaces. Effective cybersecurity strategies depend not only on the adoption of cutting-edge encryption standards or the most advanced intrusion detection systems, but also on accurate, context-sensitive communication that resonates with diverse linguistic audiences around the world.

Recent scholarly discourse underscores the urgent need to equip language learners with critical thinking skills and robust information literacy, particularly in contexts of conflict and heightened propaganda. An influential milestone in understanding the structural features of disinformation is Wardle and Derakhshan's seminal report, *Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policymaking* (Council of Europe, 2017), which details the typologies of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation. Their taxonomy forms the basis for numerous subsequent studies, including Hobbs's (Hobbs, 2023) exploration in her book of "*Media Literacy and Media Education Research Methods*", which focuses on language-based strategies to identify and mitigate deception within online discourse communities. Li (Li, 2016), writing in *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, provides empirical data on how classroom interventions can bolster critical reading among learners grappling with multilingual media environments – a point of particular relevance to Ukraine, where both local-language and foreign-language propaganda intersect. Meanwhile, Cristiano et.al. (Cristiano et. al., 2023), in *Journal of Cyber Policy*, foregrounds how digital literacy initiatives can help reduce vulnerability to manipulative narratives in conflict zones.

Although these works illuminate critical areas – such as building resilience against disinformation and fostering higher-order thinking in foreign language classes – they often do not address in enough depth the unique sociolinguistic realities confronted by teachers and students in active conflict regions. This is particularly true for Ukraine, where learners regularly engage with English-language media both for academic and practical survival-oriented purposes. Existing analyses have identified the pedagogical potential of authentic

materials (*Chinn, 2020*) and the importance of fact-checking tools (*UNESCO, 2022*) Global Media and Information Literacy framework. However, few empirical studies detail how these recommendations are implemented amid wartime upheavals, infrastructural disruptions, and continuous psychological stressors.

To bridge these gaps, the present study leverages both the foundational theoretical insights from Wardle and Derakhshan and Hobbs and the applied frameworks proposed by Cristiano. Specifically, it expands on how Ukrainian educators – operating in an environment saturated with Russian propaganda – can contextualize critical language instruction to facilitate effective detection of manipulative messages. By integrating micro-level classroom strategies (debates, case studies, and targeted source analysis) with macro-level considerations (institutional support, access to reliable digital resources), the article examines the feasibility and efficacy of existing methods. Thus, while prior scholarship lays the groundwork for teaching critical thinking alongside language skills, this study addresses previously unsolved parts of the general problem: the design, implementation, and systematic evaluation of structured classroom interventions in a high-stakes conflict environment. The goal is to offer evidence-based practices that are both culturally sensitive and adaptable, contributing to the broader conversation on how foreign language pedagogy can serve as a frontline defence against pervasive disinformation.

In essence, information security cannot be divorced (*Brown, 2022*) from language. Every alert, every security policy update, every incident report, and every piece of user education must be conveyed in a language and style that is comprehensible, relevant, and actionable. Otherwise, the best technological safeguards can be unwittingly compromised by human error, cultural misunderstandings, or linguistic oversights. By integrating linguistics into our approach to cybersecurity, we can construct a more inclusive, secure, and resilient global digital environment, better equipped to handle the sophisticated and evolving threats of the modern era. Our mission, therefore, is to reveal how a deeper engagement with linguistic perspectives – including a critical view of English's centrality – can strengthen the international community's collective capacity for information security.

In the contemporary digital era, the concept of 'information threat' has emerged as a critical focal point for researchers, policymakers, and the general public. While technological progress has afforded unprecedented opportunities for global outreach and knowledge exchange, it has also birthed sophisticated methods of manipulating and distorting information. Information threats, at their core, involve the deliberate dissemination of misleading or harmful data – ranging from orchestrated disinformation campaigns to well-planned cyberattacks aimed at stealing sensitive material or shaping public perception. These threats operate across borders, languages, and sociocultural contexts, highlighting the urgent need for a multidimensional approach that addresses not only technical vulnerabilities but also linguistic and cultural nuances.

Against this backdrop, English frequently occupies centre stage due to its position as a global lingua franca. Whether it is in the realm of social media, international diplomacy, global commerce, or higher education, English has become the language through which key policies are debated, commercial deals are struck, and public opinions are often moulded. This widespread adoption arises partly from historical factors, notably colonial expansion and the influence of English-speaking nations in technological innovation and media. More recently, the internet's early development in predominantly English-speaking environments

contributed further to the language's proliferation online. Consequently, English is not only a vehicle for exchanging information but also a powerful medium through which nefarious actors can deploy strategic misinformation, launch cyberattacks, and conduct subtle manipulation aimed at reshaping public discourse or sowing social discord.

In essence, understanding information threats in the world demands a grasp of how language functions within those threats. Because English has been woven so tightly into global communication channels, vulnerabilities that arise in English-speaking contexts often reverberate worldwide. Furthermore, knowledge of English is not uniform – even in regions where English is widely understood, varying levels of fluency can open the door to different forms of exploitation. This reality underscores the need for critical language awareness and robust strategies that account for linguistic diversity, as well as for the continuously evolving nature of malicious information tactics.

Disinformation. Definition and difference from propaganda

Disinformation, by its most accepted definition, is false or misleading information that is deliberately created and spread with the intention of causing harm or influencing public opinion. Although sometimes confused with propaganda – a broader term describing information (often biased) used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or viewpoint – disinformation is characterized by its intentional deceit and subversive goals. Propaganda, in contrast, can at times involve selective truth-telling or exaggeration rather than outright fabrication. The key element (*Jowett, 2015*) differentiating disinformation from other forms of communicative persuasion is the deliberate distortion of facts, whether subtle or blatant, to manipulate the perceptions, decisions, or behaviours of a target audience.

Examples of large-scale disinformation campaigns in the world

High-profile instances of disinformation have garnered significant attention and remain a prime concern for governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and citizens alike. In Ukraine and the United States, disinformation campaigns surrounding political elections have illustrated how strategic falsehoods and manipulated narratives can swing public sentiment. Social media platforms, such as *Facebook* and *X(Twitter)*, have been used to distribute misleading stories or sensational claims to both English-speaking domestic audiences and foreign constituencies, exacerbating political polarization and undermining trust in democratic institutions.

In the United Kingdom, the Brexit referendum served as another prominent stage for disinformation. Campaigns on both sides leveraged emotionally charged messages – some verifiably inaccurate – to sway voters uncertain about the economic and social implications of remaining in or leaving the European Union. These examples underscore the potent role that English, used in mainstream media and social platforms, plays in amplifying disinformation across national and international boundaries.

False claims concerning economic benefits and migration policies circulated widely, muddling the facts for many citizens. Social media channels, in particular, became fertile ground for quick, unchecked dissemination of rumours. As a result, the referendum period witnessed heightened polarisation and a surge in anti-expert sentiment. Political figures and campaign strategists harnessed these tactics, capitalising on the emotional resonance of simplistic slogans rather than fostering nuanced debate. In retrospect, the Brexit experience underscores the urgency of developing critical thinking and robust information evaluation

skills among English language users worldwide. Crucially, it also brings into relief the need for heightened oversight and collaboration among digital platforms, governments, and civil society to mitigate the destructive impact of disinformation tactics. Strengthening educational interventions to teach critical evaluation of media content can help guard against similar challenges in other democratic processes worldwide.

Below are three commonly observed manipulation techniques in English-language media and on social media platforms, along with illustrative examples for each. These techniques are by no means exclusive to English-speaking contexts, but given the language’s global reach, they can gain significant traction in shaping public opinion.

Table 1.

Manipulation techniques in media

		Description	How it appears	Example
1.	Bandwagon effect	The bandwagon effect exploits our innate desire to fit in with the majority or be on the “winning side.” Content employing this strategy implies that a particular viewpoint, product, or political stance is universally accepted or overwhelmingly popular.	Headlines or social media posts that claim “ <i>everyone is talking about X</i> ” or “ <i>millions are switching to Y</i> ” can pressure individuals to conform, even when the actual number of people involved is relatively small. By repeatedly insisting that “everyone else” supports a certain viewpoint, the message can nudge fence-sitters into adopting that same stance out of fear of being left out.	A series of social media posts announcing that “ <i>9 out of 10 Americans are outraged by the new policy</i> ” may create the impression of overwhelming consensus. In reality, if the cited statistic is unverified or fabricated, it can still trigger a bandwagon effect, causing readers to assume that a majority shares this sentiment – even when the real figures are unknown or markedly lower.
2.	Appeal to authority	This technique relies on endorsements or citations from high-profile individuals, institutions, or so-called “experts” to legitimize a claim. Rather than focusing on the evidence itself, the audience is encouraged to trust a statement because of who allegedly said it.	By citing “expert opinions,” “top scientists,” or “government insiders,” media outlets or social media personalities can dissuade critical questioning. The mere invocation of authority can quash deeper inquiry, especially when sources are vaguely referenced, unnamed, or only tangentially qualified.	A news segment might declare, “Leading economists warn of impending market collapse,” without specifying which economists, their credentials, or the data supporting their viewpoint. Audiences might accept the statement without further analysis, simply because the term “leading economists” implies a level of authority and expertise.
3.	Sensational or polarizing headlines	Eye-catching headlines that invoke fear, shock, or anger are frequently used to lure readers into clicking on a link or	Phrases like “ <i>You won’t believe what happened next!</i> ” or “ <i>Shocking development reveals massive cover-up!</i> ” are typical of this approach.	An article titled “ <i>Massive scandal rocks parliament-democracy in crisis!</i> ” might turn out to discuss a relatively minor procedural controversy. However, the

		sharing a post. Known as <i>clickbait</i> in online contexts, these headlines often oversimplify complex issues into exaggerated, emotionally charged statements.	While the body of the article might present more nuanced information, the sensationalized title sets a tone that can colour how readers interpret the content.	exaggerated framing fosters outrage or alarm before readers even delve into the details, shaping their subsequent reactions and undermining balanced analysis.
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Source: Created by authors.

Tools and platforms most often used to spread fakes

The digital revolution has democratized information dissemination, making it easier for anyone to publish, share, and circulate content on a global scale. Social networks such as *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *TikTok* serve as swift conduits for viral content, including fabricated news stories and manipulated audiovisual material. Moreover, messaging apps like *WhatsApp* and *Telegram* enable disinformation to spread in closed or semi-private circles, which can be particularly difficult for fact-checkers or regulators to monitor. Online forums and video-sharing platforms (e.g., *YouTube*, *Rumble*) also play a role in disseminating conspiratorial content, often in English, as creators aim to reach the largest possible global audience.

Even traditional media outlets can become unwitting participants in the spread of disinformation when they fail to rigorously verify sources or rely on sensational headlines to drive viewer engagement. Consequently, while there has been an upsurge of fact-checking services, the sheer volume of content and the speed at which it circulates can overwhelm efforts to systematically identify and correct falsehoods. In the English-speaking world, where media outlets often command international followings, disinformation can proliferate rapidly and influence audiences far beyond geographic borders.

Cyberattacks. Overview of the main types of cyberattacks

Cyberattacks aim to disrupt, damage, or gain unauthorized access to computer systems, networks, and databases. Several core tactics are particularly prevalent.

Table 2.

Main types of cyberattacks

	Type	Description
1.	Phishing	Attackers pose as trusted entities in emails, text messages, or websites, tricking recipients into revealing sensitive personal or financial information.
2.	Email hacking	Unauthorized access to email accounts allows attackers to steal data, monitor communication, or launch secondary attacks on the user's contacts.
3.	DDoS (distributed denial of service) attacks	Overwhelming a targeted website or network with massive, coordinated traffic spikes, effectively paralyzing its ability to function.
4.	Ransomware	Malicious software that encrypts a victim's data, offering decryption keys only if a ransom is paid.
5.	Malware and spyware	Software designed to infiltrate computer systems, either to disrupt normal operations or covertly gather sensitive information.

Source: Created by authors.

These cyberattacks exploit both technical vulnerabilities (unpatched software, weak passwords) and human vulnerabilities (lack of awareness, poor security habits). As with disinformation, they can be carried out at scale, often transcending national boundaries thanks to the decentralized nature of the internet.

English-speaking countries are frequently prime targets for cyberattacks for several interrelated reasons. Firstly, the global reach and economic influence of markets like the United States and the United Kingdom make them lucrative targets for financially motivated cybercriminals. Secondly, major international companies and technology hubs (e.g., Silicon Valley) are concentrated in English-speaking regions, offering attackers access to valuable intellectual property and significant data repositories. Thirdly, the dominance of English in online communication and business transactions expands the attack surface: malicious actors can execute phishing campaigns, fake websites, and hacking attempts that affect a global user base, regardless of their native language, simply by leveraging English as a universal touchpoint.

Interconnection of cyberattacks and information manipulation

Cyberattacks increasingly dovetail with broader disinformation efforts, producing a multifaceted threat environment. Breached systems can yield sensitive personal or organizational data, which can then be selectively leaked or weaponized in disinformation campaigns. Phishing emails can be tailored to reflect hot-button social or political issues, thus intensifying their persuasive impact. Such synergy between technical breaches and manipulative messaging exemplifies how information threats extend beyond merely stealing data: they can be engineered to reshape public opinion, destabilize markets, or erode trust in institutional frameworks.

Manipulation through information channels

Manipulation within the media space takes on varied forms, each leveraging distinct strategies. While some manipulative tactics rely on emotional triggers, others exploit logical fallacies or psychological pressure. This diversity not only complicates the detection of manipulative messages but also underscores the importance of multi-pronged defence strategies, including critical thinking education and fact-checking tools. Ultimately, a comprehensive approach that addresses emotional, logical, and psychological manipulation is essential for a robust information ecosystem.

Table 3

Forms of media manipulation

	Form	Description	Outcomes
1.	Emotional manipulation	Content crafted to trigger fear, anger, or empathy, prompting impulsive reactions rather than calm deliberation. Headlines that stoke outrage or highlight dramatic personal stories often fall into this category.	1. Impaired reasoning. Strong emotions like anger or fear can lead individuals to make hasty decisions without examining facts in depth. 2. Polarization. People may split into opposing groups, each fuelled by emotional rhetoric that vilifies the “other side,” thereby reducing opportunities for constructive dialogue. 3. Viral spread of content. Emotionally charged posts, headlines, or videos tend to get shared rapidly, amplifying reach and potential misinformation.

2.	Logical (pseudo-logical) manipulation	Presenting incomplete or distorted data in a manner that appears analytical or evidence-based. While the arguments seem logical at a superficial level, deeper scrutiny reveals manipulations of context, correlation-causation fallacies, or cherry-picked statistics.	1. Misled public perceptions. Audiences accept skewed arguments as valid, believing they have engaged with “data-driven” proof. 2. Reinforcement of biases. Faulty logic can confirm pre-existing beliefs, making readers even more resistant to conflicting evidence. 3. Policy or behaviour changes based on false premises. Decisions – whether individual or collective – are made under the illusion of rational support, potentially leading to harmful societal outcomes.
3.	Psychological manipulation	Techniques aimed at exploiting cognitive biases, social identities, or peer pressure. These often draw on authoritative or celebrity endorsements and can influence groupthink dynamics in online communities.	1. Erosion of individual autonomy. People may feel pressured to conform to a group or an authoritative figure, relinquishing personal judgment. 2. Groupthink and echo chambers. Communities can become insular, recycling and strengthening manipulative narratives without outside scrutiny. 3. Manipulated loyalty and identity. By framing issues as central to a person’s sense of belonging, manipulators can secure unwavering loyalty to a cause, reducing the likelihood of questioning or debate.

Source: Created by authors.

Common tactics encountered in English-language news outlets, talk shows, and online platforms include the ‘bandwagon effect’ – implying that a view is ubiquitous so audiences feel compelled to conform – and the ‘appeal to authority,’ where a statement is taken at face value merely because an influential figure or institution endorses it. Moreover, sensational or polarized framing (e.g., “all-or-nothing” narratives) is frequently employed to reduce complex issues into simplistic dichotomies. These methods can be particularly potent in emotionally charged or fast-moving news cycles, where individuals have little time to verify facts or counterarguments.

On social media, memes and short-form videos represent a powerful vector for manipulation. They can distil complicated ideas into digestible visuals, sometimes evoking a sense of humour or shared identity. Because these formats are easy to produce and share, they can quickly gain traction among diverse English-speaking audiences, spreading even further if they tap into existing cultural or political divides.

The influence of language (vocabulary, style) on audience perception and response

Language choice is instrumental in shaping how information is processed. Different vocabulary sets can evoke varied emotional responses, while style (formal vs. informal, academic vs. conversational) can either engender (*Betancourt, 2024*) trust or scepticism. In the English-speaking world, where large populations use English as a second language, connotations of words and idioms may be misconstrued. Malicious entities can exploit these linguistic ambiguities, crafting messages that either appear benign to casual readers or exploit emotional triggers for those deeply embedded in a specific cultural-linguistic context.

For instance, labelling a policy as “revolutionary” might appeal to audiences seeking radical change, while more neutral language like “innovative” might resonate with moderate segments. Similarly, employing inflammatory phrases in headlines can whip up public emotion, driving clicks or shares that boost a piece of content’s reach. In each case, the linguistic register and tone act as catalysts, guiding how audiences interpret and respond to the presented information.

Throughout this exploration of information threats in the English-speaking world, we have seen how disinformation, cyberattacks, and manipulative tactics intersect to create a complex environment that transcends national boundaries. English’s global prominence amplifies these threats by furnishing malicious actors with a linguistically unified platform that can reach vast and diverse audiences. The very qualities that make English essential for international communication and collaboration – ease of transmission, widespread use, and a relatively standardized form – also position it as a potent channel for disinformation and cyber exploitation.

Key to mitigating these hazards is the cultivation of critical thinking skills and heightened language proficiency among users and policymakers. Mastery of English not only facilitates the detection of manipulative linguistic cues but also enables the careful parsing of complex or emotionally charged messages. Coupled with a robust comprehension of digital security fundamentals, such linguistic awareness can act as the foundation for more resilient information ecosystems.

As we move forward, it is vital for scholars, security experts, and citizens to remain vigilant. By fostering critical analysis skills and staying informed about emerging threats – both technical and communicative – individuals can better recognize and counter the array of challenges that exploit vulnerabilities in language, technology, and cognition. Ultimately, understanding the specificity of these threats within the English-speaking sphere is a crucial step toward building a more secure and transparent global information landscape.

2. The role of the English teacher in developing students’ critical thinking and information evaluation skills

Over the past few decades, the field of foreign language teaching has undergone a radical transformation. Traditional methods primarily emphasized memorizing grammatical structures and vocabulary lists, often relegating students to a passive role in the classroom. Rote learning, while useful to a certain extent for building basic linguistic competence, does not necessarily foster the ability to navigate and evaluate complex ideas – a critical need in today’s rapidly changing information landscape.

More recent approaches have shifted from these passive techniques towards a student-centred paradigm, wherein the development of communicative competence intersects with higher-order thinking skills. Instead of treating language learning as an isolated set of structures to be internalized, modern curricula encourage learners to use language as a vehicle for analysis, debate, and self-expression. Within this context, critical thinking emerges as a cornerstone of classroom practice. Students are prompted not only to understand the language but also to engage with the underlying meanings, cultural nuances, and broader contexts in which the language is embedded.

Recent literature demonstrates a growing consensus regarding the pivotal role of English teachers in nurturing learners’ critical thinking and information evaluation abilities. One foundational strand of research appears in Hobbs’s work in the *Journal of Media*

Literacy Education, where she underscores how language instructors can guide students to decode, interpret, and critique multimedia content. Similarly, Kot's et al. (Kot, 2024) meta-analysis in *Science and Education in the Third Millennium* systematically reviews classroom interventions that enhance English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' capacity for analytical reading and writing, highlighting strategies such as debates, source evaluation, and problem-based projects. Complementing these studies, Cummins (Cummins, 2020) in the *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* explores how teachers can foster "language transfer" in multilingual settings, thereby encouraging deeper engagement with texts and sharper awareness of bias across linguistic boundaries.

Despite these significant contributions, gaps remain regarding how precisely to implement critical thinking and information evaluation training in high-stakes contexts – particularly relevant to Ukrainian educators grappling with the effects of the current war. Although Hobbs and Kot detail classroom frameworks applicable to diverse cultural settings, they tend not to address the profound psychological and logistical disruptions encountered in conflict zones. Additionally, UNESCO provides universal guidelines (UNESCO, 2022) but does not specifically cater to the difficulties of teaching critical thinking when fundamental safety and resources are often in question.

Hence, the present study builds upon these scholarly foundations by concentrating on the urgent realities of modern Ukraine. While acknowledging the accomplishments of prior research in clarifying the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy, this article focuses on tailoring and testing practical activities – e.g., analysis of real-time newscasts, cross-checking war-related social media posts – that directly respond to the heightened disinformation threats facing Ukrainian students today. This approach aims to address the previously unsolved parts of the problem, namely how to design, adapt, and evaluate critical thinking pedagogies under conditions of persistent conflict and pervasive media manipulation. Ultimately, the intention is to contribute empirical insights and adaptable strategies that reinforce both linguistic competence and a fortified skill set for independent, critical inquiry.

English language curricula in many educational systems now explicitly incorporate objectives that go beyond basic communication skills. Teachers are expected to design activities that challenge learners to reflect, question, and synthesize information. For instance, learners might read news articles, evaluate the credibility of online sources, or compare differing opinions within a text. By weaving these tasks into lesson plans, educators empower students to develop a more nuanced understanding of the language. This dual focus – on communicative ability and on higher-order thinking – recognizes that language proficiency is not merely an end in itself but rather a tool for critical engagement with the wider world.

Critical thinking: concepts and methods of development

Critical thinking can be defined as the active, disciplined process of conceptualizing, analysing, synthesizing, and evaluating information in order to form a judgement. It involves several interrelated cognitive skills:

- a) analysis – breaking down complex ideas into smaller, more manageable components.
- b) synthesis – combining disparate pieces of information to form new insights or perspectives.

- c) evaluation – assessing the credibility, relevance, and logic of information or arguments.
- d) interpretation – understanding the nuanced meaning of data, texts, or other forms of information.

Critical thinking is widely viewed as a foundational cognitive skill that underpins effective problem solving, decision making, and intellectual inquiry across multiple domains. While it is often described in various ways, most definitions emphasize the capacity to reason objectively and reflectively, systematically examine assumptions, and weigh evidence from multiple perspectives before drawing conclusions. According to leading scholars (*Facione, 2011*), (*Halpern, 2013*), critical thinking comprises core skills such as interpretation, analysis, inference, self-regulation, and evaluation. These skills work together to help individuals identify potential biases – both external and internal – recognize logical fallacies, and question the validity of information sources.

In practical terms, cultivating critical thinking goes beyond mere memorization or passive intake of content. Rather, it involves active engagement with ideas and data: one must challenge initial perceptions, and remain open to alternative viewpoints or hypotheses. This process is iterative and dynamic, requiring an ongoing commitment to intellectual humility and rigorous standards of proof. In modern contexts shaped by rapid technological change and an overabundance of information, critical thinking has become (*Nykyporets, 2024*) an indispensable tool for navigating misinformation and conflicting narratives. As students encounter increasingly complex social, political, and economic challenges, the ability to parse data critically and arrive at well-grounded conclusions empowers them to make informed choices that resonate with ethical and evidence-based principles.

In the context of language learning, these components become especially meaningful. Students often encounter (*Nykyporets, 2023*) texts and dialogues that present differing opinions or require interpretation beyond face-value comprehension. By honing critical thinking abilities, learners become more adept at spotting subtleties in tone, identifying potential bias, or discerning cultural underpinnings in English-language materials.

Methods and techniques for developing critical thinking in language learning

A variety of pedagogical strategies can be integrated into the English language classroom to cultivate critical thinking.

a) Socratic questioning

Instructors prompt students with carefully structured questions that elicit deeper thought. Instead of merely asking, “What does this word mean?” a Socratic question might be, “Why do you think the author chose this particular term to describe the event?” Such questions encourage learners to consider the connotations, context, and implications of language choices, thus moving beyond surface-level understanding.

b) debates

Classroom debates in English offer an excellent way to practice not only speaking and listening skills but also analytical thinking. Students must gather evidence, construct coherent arguments, and critically evaluate opposing viewpoints. In the process, they gain confidence in articulating their thoughts while being exposed to diverse perspectives.

c) case studies

Case studies drawn from real-life scenarios or historical events encourage learners to analyse situations in-depth. Students read and discuss authentic materials, form hypotheses,

and propose potential solutions, all in English. This method brings together textual analysis, critical reflection, and problem-solving, allowing students to see language use in meaningful, context-rich environments.

By incorporating these techniques systematically, teachers can create an interactive classroom atmosphere where students learn to question assumptions, draw reasoned conclusions, and express their viewpoints with clarity and nuance.

The importance of information evaluation skills in the context of information noise and disinformation

In an age characterized by rapid digital communication, students face a barrage of information, some of which may be misleading, biased, or outright false. This information noise becomes more complicated when navigating English-language media and social platforms, where the global audience and diverse sources multiply the volume of content. As a result, learners who consume or produce content in English must develop the capacity to discern reliable evidence from mere speculation and to recognize factual reporting as opposed to manipulative messaging.

Information evaluation, therefore, emerges as a key competence. It requires the ability to cross-check data, understand context, and weigh the credibility of various sources. English teachers, tasked with guiding students in reading and interpreting authentic texts, are uniquely positioned to instil a habit of critical examination. By introducing students to different forms of media – ranging from reputable news outlets to user-generated content on social media platforms – teachers can highlight how to question authenticity, look for corroboration, and identify indicators of potential bias.

Such an approach fosters digital literacy by encouraging learners to engage actively with online content rather than passively consuming headlines or social media posts. It also promotes a questioning mindset, prompting students to compare varied perspectives before arriving at conclusions about events or issues. In regions affected by conflict, such as modern Ukraine, the ability to sift through potentially manipulated or misleading narratives gains particular urgency. By practising information evaluation in the classroom, students can develop resilience against propaganda and develop a stronger sense of personal responsibility for what they share online. Teachers can design group tasks where learners collaborate to verify news stories, researching original sources or consulting fact-checking platforms. Over time, this collective exercise trains them to apply similar scrutiny in their personal use of digital media, helping prevent the rapid spread of unverified claims. Analysing rhetorical devices and persuasive language can further empower students to spot manipulative tactics, whether in political statements, advertisements, or sensational headlines. Teachers might also encourage learners to reflect on their emotional reactions, distinguishing between reasoned judgement and impulsive, fear-based responses. Such self-awareness reinforces the habit of stepping back and evaluating the motives behind every message. Ultimately, strengthening information evaluation skills is a cornerstone of developing responsible, globally minded citizens who can navigate today's challenging information landscape with discernment and integrity.

The expanded involvement of technology in everyday life has made verifying the origin of online materials both more necessary and more complex. Students who engage actively in fact-checking, paraphrasing, and contextualising sources sharpen not only their English language abilities but also their critical faculties. By learning to recognise loaded

language and oversimplifications, they can better judge the reliability and intent of messages circulating in social media ecosystems. In the case of Ukraine, where narratives around the ongoing conflict can be distorted or misrepresented, the cultivation of these skills has far-reaching implications for civic engagement and national security. Educational institutions, therefore, bear a profound responsibility to foster an academic environment that champions evidence-based analysis and open-minded dialogue. Incorporating interactive digital tools – such as online research databases, collaborative annotation software, and multimedia platforms – can amplify students’ capacity to discern credible information. Teachers may also collaborate with librarians or media experts, inviting them to run workshops that simulate real-world challenges in evaluating conflicting data streams. These initiatives help students appreciate the complexity of global events, reinforcing the importance of thorough investigation over superficial judgment. Building these competences early prepares learners for participation in an increasingly interconnected society, where the line between truth and misinformation can often seem blurred. Underpinning these efforts must be a collective commitment to academic integrity, empathy, and a shared pursuit of genuine understanding, values that become indispensable in times of crisis.

Methods and tools for checking sources and using authoritative resources

1. Source triangulation

One of the most effective strategies for confirming the credibility of information is to cross-reference multiple sources. An English lesson might involve students reading a news article from a major international publication, then comparing it with reports from local outlets or specialized research organizations to see if the facts align or if differing perspectives emerge.

2. Fact-checking websites

Encouraging students to use established fact-checking platforms, such as *PolitiFact* or *Snopes*, builds awareness of how to verify or debunk circulating claims. These platforms often illustrate step-by-step how their teams arrive at their verdicts, providing insights into the standards of evidence-based verification.

3. Digital literacy tools

Browser extensions and online tools (e.g., reverse image search) allow students to investigate the origin of images or identify manipulated visuals. Incorporating such tools in classroom activities helps students become more independent in their pursuit of reliable knowledge, while simultaneously enhancing their English vocabulary related to technology and media literacy.

By learning these skills, students develop a systematic approach to navigating the information-rich environment – skill set that not only boosts their English proficiency but also prepares them to be thoughtful, informed global citizens. Through regular practice with authentic materials and fact-checking exercises, they become increasingly adept at discerning credible sources from manipulative propaganda.

Pedagogical techniques for English language teachers. Integration of case studies from English-language sources

A powerful way to fuse language instruction with critical thinking and information evaluation is through the use of authentic case studies. For example, a teacher might select a recent event reported in English-language newspapers, compile several articles offering different viewpoints, and then guide students through a structured analysis. Students could

evaluate the credibility of each source, identify the journalists' or authors' potential biases, and practice synthesizing information into a coherent summary or opinion piece. This method simulates real-world information processing, showing learners how language proficiency and critical analysis intertwine.

The role of project tasks for research and analysis

Extended projects can (Nykyforets, 2023) further enhance students' engagement and skill development. In such assignments, learners may be tasked with researching a particular topic – such as environmental policy, cultural practices, or technological innovations – in English-language articles, journals, and websites. Over the course of several weeks, students compile data, keep track of how they assessed the reliability of each source, and ultimately present their findings in oral or written form. The process requires them to practice (Nykyforets, 2021) note-taking, source evaluation, and argumentation in English, thereby reinforcing both linguistic competence and analytical rigor.

The use of role-play to practice critical information analysis

Role-play activities offer students a safe yet dynamic setting to exercise creative thinking and language production. A teacher might devise a scenario where disinformation circulates in a fictional community, and learners take on roles such as concerned citizens, journalists, or fact-checkers. Each group is tasked with either spreading or debunking misinformation, compelling students to adapt their use of English in real-time while applying the critical thinking and evaluation techniques learned in class. In this context, language teaching transcends the pages of a textbook: students build practical understanding of how English is used in discourse around truth, accuracy, and manipulation.

In all, the role of the English teacher extends far beyond imparting linguistic knowledge. By deliberately incorporating critical thinking and information evaluation into language instruction, teachers serve as architects of a “protective filter” for their students. This filter equips learners with the capacity to question and verify information, assess diverse viewpoints, and communicate their own perspectives with clarity and discernment – all essential skills in the modern world.

Through the use of targeted pedagogical techniques – Socratic questioning, debates, case studies, and role-plays – educators can foster an environment that challenges students to refine both their English proficiency and their cognitive agility. These efforts contribute (Nykyforets, 2023) to shaping informed, proactive individuals capable of identifying manipulation and fake news in the vast English-language information sphere.

This underscores a seamless connection with the next section of our discourse, which will delve deeper into the practice of using authentic materials. By linking theory with real-world applications, we reinforce the premise that English language teaching is not solely about grammar or vocabulary; it is an active, multifaceted process that prepares learners to navigate the complex, often cluttered, global media landscape.

3. Using authentic English-language materials to develop information literacy.

Authentic materials: definition and advantages

The concept of “authentic materials” in foreign language teaching has expanded significantly in recent years, particularly with the advent of digital media. These materials are defined as texts, audio recordings, videos, or any other forms of language content created by and for native speakers, without the primary intention of language learning. They include – but are not limited to – news articles, blogs, speeches, podcasts, vlogs and social media

posts. Their central characteristic is that they reflect genuine usage of the language in real-world contexts, thereby introducing learners to natural discourse patterns, cultural nuances, and contemporary issues.

From the vantage point of a Ukrainian linguist, especially amid the ongoing Russian aggression in Ukraine, harnessing authentic English-language materials acquires greater importance. Access to reliable information sources has never been more critical, as disinformation campaigns – many of which spill over into the English-speaking global media – significantly impact public perception of the conflict. Integrating authentic materials into the curriculum empowers students to become active information consumers, simultaneously advancing their language skills and their resilience against manipulation. Additionally, exposing learners to primary sources from international news outlets fosters a more direct understanding of how global opinion and policy can shape local realities. This heightened language proficiency, combined with enhanced critical awareness, also enables students to more effectively communicate Ukraine's perspective to an international audience. In a broader sense, these educational practices contribute to reinforcing national resilience and promoting a more balanced global discourse about ongoing events.

Advantages of using authentic materials to develop language competence

1. Rich vocabulary. Authentic materials introduce learners to topical, domain-specific vocabulary that textbooks may not yet include, ranging from political discourse to technology jargon. In the context of modern Ukraine, for instance, reports on the war often contain specialized terminology, including terms pertaining to military strategy, diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and sanctions.
2. Cultural context and realism. Textbooks frequently sanitize or oversimplify language to fit a pre-structured syllabus. Authentic resources, on the other hand, showcase regional dialects, cultural references, and even slang – essential elements for understanding the real, living language.
3. Relevance and engagement. When learning materials connect directly to current global or local events, student motivation tends to increase. Learners see the practical applications of improving their English proficiency, such as reading international news, engaging in global discussions on social media, or communicating with volunteers.
4. Analytical and critical skills. The authenticity of the sources compels students to adapt to varied writing styles, viewpoints, and tones. By navigating these complexities in real time, they cultivate advanced reading comprehension and critical thinking capacities, indispensable for parsing propaganda and manipulative discourse.

Types of English-language sources and their thematic specificity

Authentic materials span a wide range of themes and genres. They can include everything from newspaper articles, radio broadcasts, and video interviews to social media posts and user-generated content, providing learners with exposure to real-world language use and contextualized cultural references. Learners can explore mainstream international news outlets, specialized investigative reports, niche blogs focusing on cultural or scientific topics, and even official statements from foreign governments of different countries. When confronting the realities of the Russian-Ukrainian war, for instance, reading reports from think tanks or official statements made by international organizations can provide deeper

insight into how global media interprets the conflict. Each source category offers unique language features – formal, conversational, or even anecdotal – thus preparing students for the variety of registers they might encounter in real life every day.

Mass media, social media, and analytical resources: forms and methods of working with authentic materials

Reputable international news platforms such as *BBC*, *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The New York Times* often have broad coverage of global events, including Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. Additionally, numerous specialized outlets focus on military analysis, political commentary, or economic research. When selecting articles or videos for classroom activities, teachers can compare how these different sources present the same event, prompting students to analyse not just the language itself but also potential biases and framing tactics. In contrast, local and regional publications may provide unique perspectives, yet may also reflect specific cultural or political leanings. By cross-checking narratives from both global and niche media outlets, students gain a more comprehensive understanding of how events are reported and contextualized.

Social media usage has skyrocketed in Ukraine in recent years, serving both as a platform for civic engagement and an arena for disinformation campaigns. *X(Twitter)*’s character limit encourages succinct, sometimes emotionally charged statements, while *Facebook* groups or *Telegram* channels can foster closer-knit communities around specific topics – be they humanitarian aid updates or pro-Ukrainian activist groups. Meanwhile, *LinkedIn* offers a more professional, formal register. Each platform carries its unique “content features and risks”.

Table 4.

Key content features of social media and their potential risks

	Content feature	Description	Risk
1.	Virality	False information can spread quickly	Rapid circulation of misleading content can reach large audiences before it can be fact-checked or corrected.
2.	Echo chambers	Users might only see content that aligns with their existing viewpoints	Reinforcement of existing biases, leading to polarization and reduced exposure to diverse perspectives.
3.	Linguistic variation	Posts can be highly informal or riddled with abbreviations, hashtags, and emoticons	Risk of misinterpretation or ambiguity, making it harder to assess credibility and detect manipulative messaging.

Source: created by authors.

Analytical resources: think tanks, official government reports, and scientific journals

English-language think tanks, such as *Chatham House* or the *RAND Corporation*, often release detailed reports on military conflicts, international relations, or global security trends. Government websites issue official statements and documents, providing language learners with insight into formal diplomatic and legal discourse. Scientific journals, albeit more specialized, can be relevant for advanced students or those interested in the technical underpinnings of modern warfare (e.g., cybersecurity, drone technology). By engaging with these materials, students practice discerning objective data-driven language from opinion or speculation. Moreover, analysing these sources can deepen learners’ understanding of the

institutional frameworks and rhetorical strategies used to present sensitive information. This expanded skill set enhances their readiness for professional and academic pursuits where data interpretation and evidence-based arguments are crucial.

Forms and methods of working with authentic materials

1. Comparative reading. Students read multiple articles on the same event to recognize differences in style, word choice, and framing.
2. Listening comprehension. Short news broadcasts or podcasts help train students to identify speakers’ intonation and detect manipulative rhetoric.
3. Task-based projects. Learners may create a mini research report or presentation after consulting various authentic English-language sources, reflecting on their methods for verifying credibility.

Developing the ability to recognize unreliable sources and enhance language skills

Table 5.

Pedagogical strategies for enhancing students’ critical thinking and information evaluation skills

		Objective	Process	Outcome
1	Reading and analysing articles or social media posts	Strengthen students’ ability to identify potential red flags (e.g., lack of credible references, exaggerated or emotionally charged language, inconsistent data)	Encourage learners to ask who the author is, what their background might be, and whether other reputable outlets corroborate the story.	Enhanced reading comprehension and critical literacy, both crucial for navigating disinformation prevalent in war contexts.
2	Listening to and watching podcasts/videos	Develop “sensitivity” to intonation shifts that might reveal sarcasm, fearmongering, or subtle manipulative accents.	Students watch or listen to a short podcast on current events in Ukraine, pausing to discuss tone, body language (in video), and argumentation techniques.	Improved listening skills and heightened awareness of rhetorical devices and emotional cues.
3	Writing (reflection, review, critical analysis)	Hone the ability to articulate reasoned arguments, indicate agreement or disagreement, and present counter-evidence.	Assign reflective essays or responses to English-language articles. Students must cite sources, state arguments, and propose solutions or counterarguments.	Reinforced writing fluency alongside logical structuring of viewpoints, mirroring the demands of university-level course-work or international communication.
4	Developing information literacy: technologies and tools	Familiarize students with practical methodologies for cross-checking facts and authenticating images or data.	Demonstrate reverse image search (e.g., Google Images, TinEye), official press releases, or publicly available data repositories.	Cultivation of digitally-savvy learners who can confidently filter truths from falsehoods – a particularly urgent skill given the war-related propaganda in multiple languages.

Source: created by authors

Interactive platforms and practical cases for classroom and self-study

Websites like *FactCheck.org*, *PolitiFact*, and *Snopes* provide invaluable lesson content. Teachers can assign tasks in which students research a claim about the war in Ukraine (e.g., a viral video allegedly showing events on the frontline), compare it to verified sources, and present their findings. This repetitive process of “analyse, compare, conclude” builds methodological rigor into the learning experience. Furthermore, these assignments encourage students to adopt a proactive stance in verifying information, reinforcing their capacity to act responsibly and conscientiously in digital spaces.

Social media analysis tools

Platforms such as *CrowdTangle* or *TweetDeck* help track hashtags, influencer accounts, and content circulation patterns. Students can analyse how certain narratives gain traction, noting rhetorical patterns or bots amplifying disinformation. This not only strengthens language comprehension but also expands their digital literacy. In turn, they gain critical insights into the mechanics behind modern information ecosystems.

Online courses and thematic WebQuest tasks

Coursera/edX. Free or low-cost courses on subjects such as media literacy, global politics, or journalism ethics, often conducted in English. Students can practice specialized vocabulary and broaden their worldview.

Thematic WebQuest. Learners follow a structured online inquiry that culminates in a project or presentation. For instance, a *WebQuest* on “Reliable reporting on the Donbas situation” guides students through official statements, NGO sites, and news outlets, prompting them to form evidence-based conclusions.

Practical cases

Case 1. Comparing news outlets on civilian evacuations

Students examine *BBC* and *CNN* reports on the urgent evacuation of civilians in a specific Ukrainian town, carefully cross-referencing relevant facts with a credible local Ukrainian news platform. They meticulously document significant discrepancies or omissions and openly discuss possible underlying reasons (e.g., editorial focus, deadlines, biases, political pressures).

Case 2. Social media misinformation via *Telegram*

The teacher selects a viral *Telegram* post claiming an “urgent military update.” Students use verification steps: checking official government *Telegram* channels, verifying images via reverse search, and reviewing reputable Western sources. The exercise highlights potential manipulative language and the importance of cross-referencing.

Analysing examples of disinformation and manipulative materials in the English-language environment

Given the Russian-Ukrainian war, instances of outright fabrications and subtle manipulations abound in the international media landscape. Below are three illustrative examples that can be examined collectively.

Following the analysis, students prepare mini-presentations or mini-research projects on fact-checking methodologies. Presentations might include their step-by-step approach, discoveries, and final assessments of the claims’ veracity. By sharing their findings with peers, learners also refine public speaking skills and reinforce collaborative learning dynamics.

Table 6.

Examples of fabrications and manipulations

		Type	Real issue	Activity
1.	Fake military videos	Clips allegedly showing Ukrainian forces in conflict situations.	Footage from a completely different region or even a different year, mislabelled to skew public perception.	Students check the video's metadata, compare timestamps, or use specialized fact-checking communities (e.g., Bellingcat)
2.	Biased "expert" commentary	An individual touted as a military or geopolitical expert writing op-eds in English-language newspapers	The "expert" may lack credible credentials or may have ties to lobbying groups	Class discussion on evaluating an author's background, cross-referencing professional affiliations or publications
3.	Sensational headlines in clickbait websites	Overly dramatic headlines that claim immediate catastrophes or breakthroughs	Exaggeration or manipulation to capture more clicks, often referencing the war out of context	Students analyse the textual structure, rhetorical style, and credibility signals (or lack thereof), leading to a mini-research project on truthfulness versus sensationalism

Source: created by authors

This collaborative environment fosters reflection on personal strategies for media consumption. Students become more confident in identifying manipulative materials and distinguishing legitimate journalism from propaganda. Feedback sessions can highlight best practices – such as verifying multiple sources, paying close attention to editorial disclaimers, and maintaining a cautious attitude towards sensational or “too good to be true” narratives.

In sum, employing authentic English-language materials in a linguistically oriented curriculum is more than just a strategy for vocabulary expansion or fluency improvement – it is a foundational approach that shapes information literacy. Learners not only become adept at handling the complexities of real-world English but also gain vital skills for identifying and mitigating the impact of disinformation, which is particularly consequential in the Ukrainian context beset by hybrid warfare and propaganda.

Further prospects: integrating these approaches into technical university curricula.

First, interdisciplinary collaboration is crucial: by coordinating with IT departments, educators can enhance students' cyber literacy and fact-checking proficiency. Next, sustained relevance can be achieved (*Nykyporets, 2024*) by developing semester-long projects in which students track the evolution of a major event related to the war, fostering ongoing analytical engagement. Finally, international collaboration is essential: by partnering with educators abroad, instructors can compare classroom experiences and share best practices for integrating authentic materials and disinformation analysis into the curriculum.

By embedding these techniques into language programs across secondary and higher education, we prepare Ukrainian students not only to function effectively in an English-speaking environment but also to serve as informed, critical-minded participants in shaping the future – both for Ukraine and the broader international community.

Summary. In this chapter, we explored how information security in the English-speaking context intertwines with the realities of modern Ukraine, particularly against the backdrop of the Russian-Ukrainian war of aggression. The chapter's structure unfolds in three key segments, each shedding light on theoretical concerns and practical classroom applications.

In the first part, we addressed the main types of contemporary information threats and explained why the English-speaking sphere plays such an influential role. We observed that English has become a global tool not only for legitimate communication but also for the dissemination of disinformation. This context resonates with Ukraine's current struggles, where numerous manipulative narratives – often crafted in or translated into English – aim to shape international perceptions of the conflict.

Building on these insights, the second part turned to the pedagogical dimension. Here, we focused on how English teachers can equip students with critical thinking skills vital for recognizing misinformation. By integrating analytical exercises, debates, and open dialogues into language lessons, educators foster a learning environment in which students practice (Stepanova, 2024) evaluating sources and questioning biased content. This emphasis on critical scrutiny directly addresses (Medvedieva, 2023) the urgent need for Ukrainians, especially the younger generation, to protect themselves from propaganda and manipulative messaging tied to the ongoing war.

Finally, the third part offered concrete methods and authentic resources for strengthening information literacy in parallel with language proficiency. We examined (Ibrahimova, 2024) real-world materials – news articles, podcasts, social media posts – as vehicles for cultivating both linguistic aptitude and evaluative judgment. Interactive tools such as fact-checking websites and social media analysis platforms were showcased to illustrate how learners can verify content before accepting or sharing it. By intertwining theoretical approaches to information security with pragmatic classroom strategies, the chapter highlights an actionable path forward: students empowered to engage critically with English-language content, and thereby contribute to Ukraine's broader resistance against disinformation. At the same time, these strategies can be expanded beyond the classroom, helping to cultivate a society-wide culture of media literacy and civic engagement.

By promoting cross-cultural dialogues and demonstrating the effectiveness of fact-checking tools, educators and learners together become catalysts for more ethical and transparent communication across diverse digital platforms. In doing so, they contribute to a globally networked defence against manipulative narratives that thrive on public ignorance or misunderstanding. As language learners attain a solid grasp of media literacy, they become empowered to engage in complex international discourses with greater confidence and discernment. Ultimately, the synergy between advanced language competence and heightened critical awareness stands as a vital pillar of Ukraine's ongoing resilience, reinforcing both national sovereignty and the democratic values that underpin it. This synergy is especially salient in an era of swiftly evolving media landscapes, where misinformation can spread faster than traditional fact-checking processes. By incorporating real-life case studies, educators show students how fabricated narratives erode social cohesion and trust in public institutions. Over time, such classroom approaches help normalize scepticism and thorough verification, turning critical analysis into a habitual practice rather than an isolated exercise.

Furthermore, students acquire the ability to identify the structural elements of deceptive materials, from sensational headlines to misleading statistical presentations. These skills not only benefit them academically but also inform their civic engagement and responsible behaviour online. The next step is expanding these efforts through professional development programs that give teachers the confidence and tools to seamlessly incorporate authentic materials and media literacy into their lessons. When teachers have robust institutional support, they can adapt methods to a range of language abilities and age groups, ensuring more inclusive access to these crucial skills. Beyond formal education, well-designed community workshops and public awareness campaigns can amplify the impact of media literacy initiatives. Such collective strategies bring Ukraine ever closer to achieving “information autonomy,” wherein citizens can independently discern the truth and remain vigilant against external manipulation.

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