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ONLINE BULLYING DISCOURSE IN NEWS MEDIA

Identifying a frame used in newspaper articles covering online bullying in the United Kingdom

Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences
Bachelor's Thesis
April 2021

ABSTRAKTI

Leila Munne: ONLINE BULLYING DISCOURSE IN NEWS MEDIA: Identifying a frame used in newspaper articles covering online bullying in the United Kingdom
Kandidaatintutkielma
Tampereen yliopisto
Englannin kielen opintosuunta
Huhtikuu 2021

Sosiaalisen median käytön kasvun myötä verkkokiusaamista käsitellään mediassa yhä enemmän. Vaikka useimmille verkkokiusaaminen on tuttu käsite oman tai läheisten kokemusten kautta, media on kuitenkin monelle suurin tiedonlähde verkkokiusaamisen vaaroista ja haitoista. Tämä tutkimus käsittelee verkkokiusaamisesta uutisoivan mediadiskurssin tyypillisiä piirteitä Ison-Britannian verkkolehtien artikkeleissa. Tutkimus pyrkii vastaamaan kysymyksiin siitä, millaisia tunteisiin vaikuttavia sanoja sekä muita vaikuttamisen keinoja artikkeleissa käytetään. Sekä millaisella kiellellä verkkokiusaamista tyypillisesti kehystetään ja minkälaisia vaikuttamisen keinoja lukija voi olettaa olevan läsnä artikkeleissa, jotka käsittelevät verkkokiusaamista.

Tutkimuksen päämenetelmä on diskurssianalyysi, jonka tukena käytetään Robert Entmanin (1993) Framing -teoriaa (kehystysteoria). Aineistona tutkimuksessa käytetään neljää artikkelia Iso-Britannialaisista verkkolehdistä: *The Guardian, The Telegraph*, *The Independent* ja *Mirror.* Artikkelit, joita tarkastellaan, ovat vuosilta 2017–2020. Tutkimuksen lähtökohtana on näkemys siitä, että verkkokiusaamisesta uutisointi ei koskaan voi olla täysin neutraalia, sekä se, että artikkelien sisällöllä yritetään vaikuttaa ihmisten tunteisiin ja asenteisiin. Tutkimuksessa yhdistellään sekä laadullisia että määrällisiä menetelmiä, jotta materiaaleista löytyviä piirteitä voidaan tutkia niiden yleisyyden ja tarkoituksen kautta.

Tutkimus osoittaa millaisilla keinoilla lukijaan vaikutetaan ja millaisia vaikuttamisen keinoja voimme lukijana olettaa verkkolehtien artikkeleissa käytettävän, kun uutisoidaan verkkokiusaamisesta. Tutkimuksessa löydettiin kolme eri kategoriaa, joilla kirjoittaja vaikuttaa lukijaan: lukijan tunteisiin vetoavien sanojen, tilastojen, sekä ulkoisten lähteiden lausuntojen käyttö. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että näillä vaikuttamisen keinoilla yritetään vedota lukijan tunteisiin sekä järjellisyyteen.

Verkkolehtien artikkelit jakoivat paljon piirteitä kaikista kategorioista, mutta artikkelien välillä oli painotuseroja esimerkiksi siinä, kuinka paljon tilastoja tai tunteisiin vetoavia sanoja käytettiin. Tutkimuksen tuloksien pohjalta vaikuttaa siltä, että painotuserot voivat johtua lehden käyttämästä journalistiikan tyylistä, sekä lehden kannattamasta poliittisesta suuntauksesta.

Avainsanat: diskurssianalyysi, kehystysteoria, verkkokiusaaminen, media, uutiset

Tämän tutkielman alkuperäisyys on tarkistettu Turnitin OriginalityCheck -palvelussa.

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1. Introduction

Online bullying is a growing problem around the world. With the growth of social media and communication technology, the internet enables another big platform for bullying (Juvonen & Gross, 2008, 497). News media has covered this issue frequently and the amplitude of the problem is emphasized with word choices and statistical evidence.

News media aims to cover events in a neutral way, but through repeated similar framing readers' emotions and rationality are affected by the topic. Furthermore, online bullying raises emotions in readers as a topic because bullying is something that almost everyone has either experienced themselves or they know someone that has.

Online bullying and more "traditional" bullying happening in, for example, schools, workplaces, or extracurricular activities, share similar characteristics and they often coexist. Online bullying is just a new and different platform that enables people who bully to be anonymous and still have a large audience.

The purpose of this study is to examine the different ways in which language is used to affect people's emotions and rationality in newspaper articles covering online bullying in the United Kingdom. The aim is to identify what kind of words are used to affect people's emotions, how bullying and the people being bullied are characterized and what ways of using language is applied to strengthen the message. Furthermore, this study attempts to answer the question of how bullying is framed and what type of ways of using language we can expect to find in these types of articles with the help Robert Entman's *Framing Theory* (1993). Also, the hypothesis was drawn that the articles about online bullying are designed to appeal to reader's emotions and rationality.

The research questions for this study are:

1. What kind of words are used to affect people's emotions in online newspaper articles covering online bullying?
2. What other ways of affecting people's emotions or attitudes can be found in the articles?
3. How is the problem that is online bullying framed in the articles?
4. What kind of ways of using language to affect people can we expect from online newspaper articles covering online bullying?

This study is restricted to the characteristics found in four online newspapers: *Mirror*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Telegraph*. The articles examined are "Young victims seeking help over online bullying doubles in five years" (Evans, A. 2017) from *Mirror*, "How to deal with cyberbullying" (Waugh, 2019) from *The Telegraph*, "Quarter of Children experienced Cyberbullying in past year, study finds" (Barr, 2019) from *The Independent*, and "One in five children in England and Wales experienced online bullying in 2019" (Quinn, 2020) from *The Guardian*.

The thesis consists of six sections. First, in section 2, key themes such as Discourse analysis, Discourse analysis and the Media, Framing Theory and Online bullying, and previous studies are introduced more closely. Then method and materials of this study are introduced in section 3. After introducing the research process and materials, the items found from the materials are further analysed in section 4. In section 5, the results from the analysis are discussed in more detail and in the last section, conclusions from the findings are drawn and future research ideas discussed.

2. Literature review

This section introduces the key concepts and theories that are relevant to examining the language used in online newspaper articles covering online bullying. Moreover, in this theoretical background

the concepts of Discourse analysis, framing theory, media and online bullying will be further explained.

2.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse can be identified as a combination of language use in the sentence level and the meaning that is established through the way the language is used. Discourse can be both vocal and written. As observed by Waring (2017, 8), "Discourse refers to the actual use of language along with other multimodal resources to accomplish actions, negotiate identities, and construct ideologies".

Discourse analysis is a way of examining discourse as a multidimensional concept of actual use of language together with other multimodal resources. In other words, Discourse analysis is a way of understanding language use in the real world (Waring, 2017, 6). Furthermore, the purpose is to dissect the structure of the language that is used and to devise the intended meaning of the discourse (Waring, 2017, 9). The language and the semantic meaning are stretched beyond the word sentence level. Tannen et al. (2015, 298) defines discourse analysis as follows:

> The "discourse analytic" paradigm addresses discourse-level matters related to larger stretches of talk and text beyond the word or sentence level, including questions of participant, topic, function, and discourse structure, as well as a range of genre- or speech-event-specific discourse phenomena that includes interviews, quotation and reported speech, register issues, politeness, positioning and framing, stance, graphic display, visual communication, and so forth.

2.2 Discourse analysis and the Media

According to Tannen et al. (2015, 798), we should consider three categories when studying media discourse: (1) discourse analytic, (2) sociolinguistic, and (3) "non-linguistic". Usually when media discourse is studied, researchers use all three approaches in their study, to cover more dimensions during the research. Tannen et al. (2015, 797) consider, that finding how media covers power relations in a society or finding the presence of ideologies or bias, in language, is a primary focus.

An important aspect of mass media is the variety of audiences reached from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Mass media should target an image as an objective reporter of events to the public, but this rarely happens. This suggest that writers make either conscious or unconscious choices to promote some ideologies over others.

Furthermore, journalists in mass media focus on projecting ideas in a certain way. Journalists have the authority to choose the type of reporting they do and what is newsworthy (Bednarek & Caple, 2014). Writers make these choices both consciously and unconsciously. Writers give events and topics newsworthiness in the way they construct the article, by highlighting certain aspects or news values or backgrounding other (ibid., 2014).

2.3 Framing theory

In this thesis the theoretical background is centred on *Framing theory* by Robert Entman (1993). Frames are used to create a typical way a specific topic is presented. Some aspects of the reality of the topic are selected to make them more central and noteworthy compared to other aspects that are left absent by the writer (Entman, 1993). Through frames some aspects and features of the topic are highlighted, for example its consequences or implications to give emphasis to the highlighted topic (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Frames guide the reader to understand a discussed topic in a particular way. The selection of aspects about the topic shows how the writer wants to present the topic. A topic usually raises the reader's own attitudes about it, but frames are used to reorient the reader's thinking or to emphasize the attitude that was there in the beginning (Chong & Druckman, 2007). According to Entman (1993), framing is a way to affect the way an issue is portrayed and appeal to the reader in a specific way. The writer can shape the issue by defining what it is, what caused it, and what can be done about it in the future.

Frames can be used to define issues itself, diagnose what caused it, make moral judgements, and offer ways to prevent or help the issue. Defining the issue helps us to determine what are the costs and benefits of the issue. Diagnosing the causes helps us to identify the forces that created the issue. Making moral judgements can help us to evaluate the causal agents and their effects on other people. More importantly, the frames can be used to suggest remedies to the issue concerned (Entman, 1993, 52-53). These characteristics of frames can help us to identify what aspects of language used are used as a part of a frame.

2.4 Online bullying

Online bullying has been a growing problem around the world for many years and through the growth of the use of social media the problem keeps growing. It is a frequently discussed topic overall, including online articles, due to cases of, for example, suicide that was attributed to online bullying. It is commonly referred to as online bullying or sometimes cyberbullying in online newspaper articles. Online bullying can manifest itself in many different forms.

As regards the core idea of bullying itself and what it essentially is, there appear to be three main characteristics of bullying as an activity: intentionality, power imbalance and repetition. From the point of view of online bullying, some of these features are harder to perceive. There are many different forms of negative acts that happen on the internet, but although they have the intention to harm someone, we cannot know whether there is power imbalance present or whether the act has been repetitive (Smith & Steffgen, 2013, 24). Furthermore, the traditional idea of bullying has been taken further when defining bullying that happens online.

According to Smith and Steffgen (2013, 24) the criteria for online bullying are:

> Anonymity, that occurs when the victim does not know the identity of the bully, and publicity (as opposed to private exchanges between two parties) that characterizes the acts where a large audience is involved (i.e. emails, SMSs, MMSs sent to a large audience, or offences occurring in a public forum, or videos and pictures distributed via social

networking).

Online bullying and "traditional" school bullying often co-occur. Because bullying happening in schools and in online have similar characteristics, they often overlap. Online bullying is just a different platform that people who bully can use and be anonymous if they want to.

In conclusion, we can define online bullying as a combination of the three more traditional criteria of bullying: the intentionality of the act, the repetitive occurrences and the power imbalance with the people involved, with the two more specific criteria for online bullying: anonymity and publicity.

2.5 Previous studies

Even though online bullying has been a growing issue, there have been surprisingly few studies about the language used in newspaper articles covering online bullying. Considering the paucity of these type of studies there are only two worth mentioning concerning this study. One of the studies focused on American newspaper coverages about online bullying and the second study focused on articles found in *The Star* that is an English-language daily newspaper with the largest circulation in Malaysia.

The first study examined was: "Applying Natural Language Processing to Evaluate News Media Coverage of Bullying and Cyberbullying" by Moreno, Gower, Brittain et al. (2019). In this study they analysed articles from regional and national US newspapers from the year 2013 to 2018. The second study was "Media reporting of cyberbullying: A framing analysis of the Star" by Lai Fong Yang (2020). This study was carried out with articles found in one Malaysian online newspaper, *The Star*.

According to Moreno, Gover, Brittain et al. (2019), the articles examined all showed similar characteristics. The characteristics found supported their hypotheses that in articles about cyberbullying the writers preferred to use language that emphasized the use of words around harm.

Furthermore, the writers preferred to use fear-based style of reporting cases of cyberbullying. The results from the study suggested that articles about cyberbullying shared their own unique frame.

In the study by Moreno, Gover, Brittain et al. (2019), articles about cyberbullying were also compared with articles about bullying in general. They found shared characteristics between the two types of bullying. For example, the use of language with both positive and negative connotations was similar, and that it could be considered as an emotive way of using language. Also, it was typical that bullying was portrayed in family and peer settings. Lastly, in the study, they found similar frequency with the use of terms related to power and reward. There were also differences between articles about cyberbullying and bullying. In articles about cyberbullying, language about death was used more frequently. Also, language related to anger or anxiety was more common in articles about cyberbullying. According to Moreno, Gover, Brittain et al. (2019), we can expect that the writer covering cyberbullying uses both fear-based framing and tips for prevention when discussing the issue.

Yang (2020) also looked into the references to external sources in articles in *The Star* on cyberbullying. In his study, it was clear that the most frequent citations used came from, for example, government agencies or ministries. This is a way of emphasizing the message and giving articles more strength with the use of authority. This part reflects the many ways in which news media influences the audience in many ways to determine importance of causes and solutions to social problems (ibid., 2020).

3. Method and materials

3.1 Method

In this section, the process of analysis and the methods used will be described. The analysis is linked to the theoretical background introduced in section 2. In this study, the reporting style of articles covering online bullying was investigated from the year 2017 to 2020. The articles were selected to represent different types of online newspapers to identify if there are similarities between them. The articles were handpicked based on the content and the time of publication.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied in this study. The quantitative analysis was used to identify the frequency of characteristics found in the selected articles. After analysing the frequency of the characteristics, the most frequently attested characteristics and the reason behind the choices were examined qualitatively.

In this study the articles are examined using the idea of framing. Entman's *Framing Theory* focuses on finding the reasons why writers carefully select items of reality in the text that makes them noticeable and appealing to the reader, while excluding some items. The selection in question is used to promote a specific frame of one issue. The aim of the selection of items is to lead the reader to a particular interpretation of the text (Entman, 1993).

Three relevant categories for this study were identified in the articles. The hypothesis was drawn that the articles about online bullying are designed to appeal to both emotion and the rationality of the reader. The emotion created with word choices is strengthened with facts and statistics. The first category concerns the use of words that create an emotional response in the reader. The second and third categories appeal to the rationality of the reader. These categories are 2. the use of statistics and 3. the use of statements made by external sources.

Words with characteristics that could appeal to the emotions of the reader, for example words with negative and positive connotations, were identified from the articles and the frequency of those words was calculated manually from each article.

The ways of using language that appeal to the rationality of the reader were also identified and calculated manually from the articles. The number of paragraphs that included statistics found in the text were compared to the number of paragraphs in the whole article. Lastly, in the second category that appealed to the readers rationality, statements made by external sources, the statements were calculated manually from the text.

3.2 Materials

The materials for this analysis were selected samples of online newspaper articles covering online bullying from the year 2017 to 2020. The articles selected for this study were published in four different online newspapers: *The Guardian*, *Mirror*, *The Telegraph* and *The Independent*. The goal of the selection of articles was to include different types of online newspapers in the UK to see if similar characteristics could be identified.

The online newspapers were chosen to represent online publications with different styles and journalistic profiles. *Mirro*r is an online newspaper that focuses on tabloid-style journalism, which in style is usually more dramatized. Part of tabloid journalism is sensationalism, which can be seen to appeal to the reader in a way that provokes sensory and emotional reactions, in an unexpected or dramatic way that raises the reader's curiosity (Skovsgaard, 2014).

The Guardian, *The Telegraph* and *The Independent* were chosen to represent more of quality style newspapers or broadsheet newspapers. Quality press focuses more on presenting important news or political events with not as much added flare.

Furthermore, newspapers in the UK usually have a political stance and most support either the Conservative Party (right) or Labour (left). According to Matthew Smith's article (2017), we can see that *The Guardian* and *Mirror* represent most left-wing newspapers. *The Independent* is placed broadly in the centre of left and right and *The Telegraph* leans more to the right.

The points of interest examined in the articles are divided in to three categories.

1. The use of words to target emotions.
2. The use of statistics
3. The use of statements made by external sources

The materials were then further analysed keeping in mind Entman's (1993, 53) categories in which frames are used to define issues itself, diagnose what caused it, make moral judgements, and offer ways to prevent or help the issue.

4. Analysis

In this section, items and examples from the articles are further analysed. The materials are analysed according to the three different categories: the use of words that create emotional response in the reader, the use of statistics and the use of statements made by external sources.

The analysis is also divided in to three sections that cover categories presented in the materials. In these three sections examples from the articles are provided that feature the ways of appealing to the reader and framing of the subject that strengthen the topic.

4.1 The use of words to target emotions

The articles examined showed similarities with word choices. But different newspapers with different types of journalism, targeted the reader's emotions with either more or less emphasis on added drama with the word choices.

We can see from the charts provided in Appendix A, that the more tabloid-style newspaper *Mirror* used more words with negative connotations to add drama and appeal to the emotions of the reader. In comparison, these type of word choices were used less with quality style newspapers *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. Furthermore, in articles from *The Independent* and *The Telegraph* more words with positive connotations were present in the article.

When analysing the word choices more closely, according to Entman's (1993) *Framing theory*, the words that were chosen can be used to:

1. Define problems
2. Diagnose causes
3. Make moral judgements
4. Suggest remedies

The word choices in all articles were mostly made to create a frame for the idea of something to be feared and something we need to prevent in the future. The issue is presented in a way that raises people's interest and emotion, especially fear when defining the issue, as seen in example (1):

> (1) Cyberbullying is a very real problem, with thousands of British children suffering at the hands of online bullies every year. (Waugh, 2019)

Many of the word choices in the articles were emotionally based. The words chosen had mostly negative connotations except when an idea of a way of preventing or helping the issue was talked

about. The writers build up the emotive side by using words such as *harmful*, *abuse*, *suffering* and *traumatic*.

After the writers defined the issue and the magnitude of it, they move to characterizing the people who are bullied and people who bully. The people that experienced the bullying were characterized as *victims*, *vulnerable*, *suicidal* and *targets*. Examples (2) and (3) show how both tabloid-style and quality style papers characterize the people who were bullied:

(2) Young victims seeking help over online bullying doubles in five years. (Evans, 2017)
(3) These unusual circumstances means that some kids may be venting their frustration online – and their classmates become the targets. (Quinn, 2020)

The people who bully are characterized as being relentless in their pursuit of bullying, and social media gives a platform that makes bullying even easier. In examples (4) and (5), we can see the way the actions of the people who bully are characterized in both tabloid-style and quality style newspapers:

(4) Young people these days rely upon their mobile phones and social media to keep in touch with their friends, but inevitably that makes it easier for bullies to pursue their victims relentlessly. (Evans, 2017)
(5) Around one in four children have experienced a form of online abuse in the past 12 months, new research has revealed. (Barr, 2019)

The way of characterizing the actions of people who bully is important to the framing of the topic. It builds on the idea of fear and gives a certain impression of the person who bullies as someone to be feared. Furthermore, the writer leads the reader to make moral judgements about the bullies and the effects they make on the people they bully. That is why the description of the people who bully and the people who experience the bullying is important to the framing of the topic.

Drama is added with word choices. Especially in tabloid-style newspapers the impact bullying can have on a person is emphasized with word choices. Example (6) shows this type of added drama:

(6) Whether bullying occurs online or in person it can have a devastating impact on a young person, destroying their confidence and leaving them isolated and vulnerable. (Evans, 2017)

Words with more positive or neutral connotations were typically only used when suggested remedies, and ways of prevention were discussed. Words like this were for example *safe* and *responsibility.* From all articles, Rob Waugh's article in *The Telegraph* had most suggested remedies and words with positive connotations. Examples (7) and (8) show how the article introduced remedies that should be and are already in motion:

(7) Snapchat partners with the UK Safer Internet Centre to deal with bullying. (Waugh, 2019)

(8) Dr Nassem says that parents also need to take an active role. "Friends and parents need to take some responsibility. Parents should set a good example. It is especially important for parents to speak to their children and find out how they are communicating online and which social media platforms they are using." (Waugh, 2019)

4.2 The use of statistics

Statistics are used to appeal to the readers' sense of rationality. The statistics were used to strengthen the idea that online bullying is a serious and growing issue that affects many people. When the magnitude of the issue is presented as something to be considered seriously with statistical facts, the rationality of the reader is paralleled to the readers' raised emotions.

In addition, statistics are used to define the problem. They show the how many people the problem affects. The quantity of people that online bullying affects was used as an opening in all the articles.

As seen in example (9), Sabrina Barr (2019) used statistics to show how big a percentage of children are affected by online bullying in her article in *The Independent*:

(9) Their findings, which were published in Ofcom's first annual Online Nation report, showed that 23 per cent of children have been cyberbullied in the last year, while 39 per cent have been subjected to offensive language online.

Also, statistics are used to show how the issue has grown over time. Example (10) shows how statistics are used emphasize the growth with factual evidence:

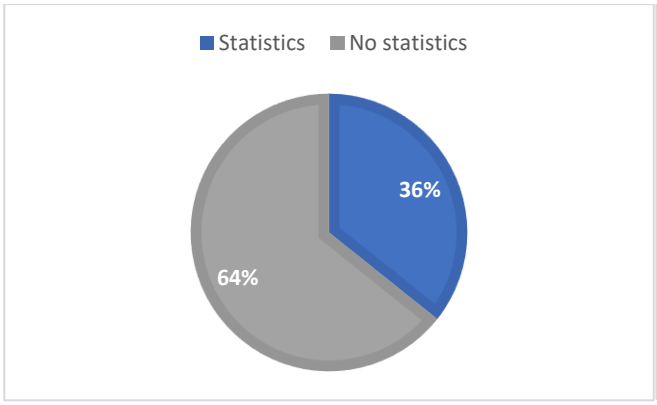
(10) Nearly one in five children experienced some form of online bullying last year, figures show, amid warnings that the problem has worsened during lockdown. (Quinn, 2020)

Furthermore, the statistics can be used to introduce remedies to the issue. The use of statistics shows the amplitude of the problem but also how prevention methods already in motion are working. Example (11) shows an example how these remedies were introduced:

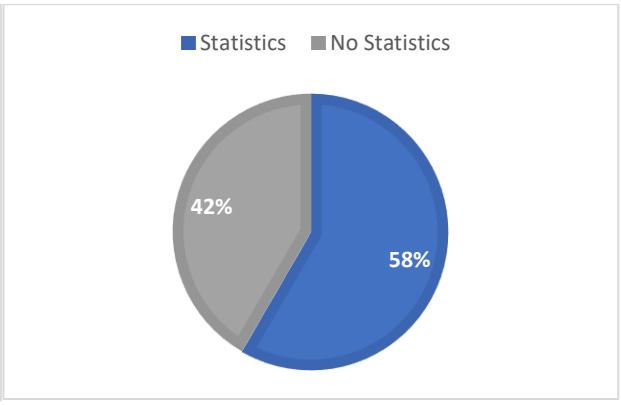
(11) The statistics, released at the start of Anti-Bullying Week , revealed the hotline had helped 5,103 youngsters in the past year alone - 12% up on the previous year and double that of 2012. (Evans, 2017)

All ways described of using statistics were present in all the articles. Some articles put more emphasis on using statistics than others, but all still shared similar characteristics.

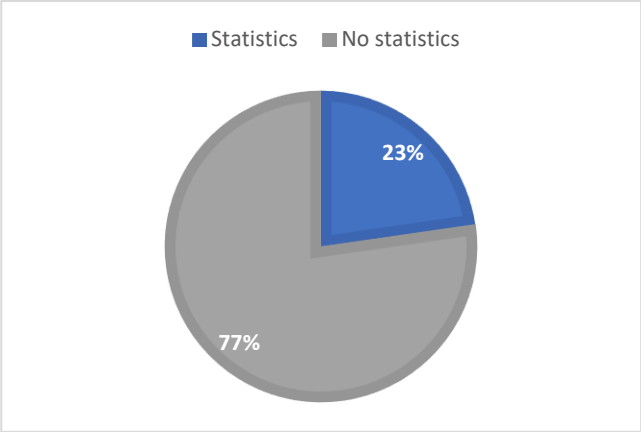
In the following figures, the number of paragraphs that include statistics is paralleled to the number of paragraphs without statistics. In the figures the paragraphs with and without statistics are represented with a percentage of all the paragraphs.



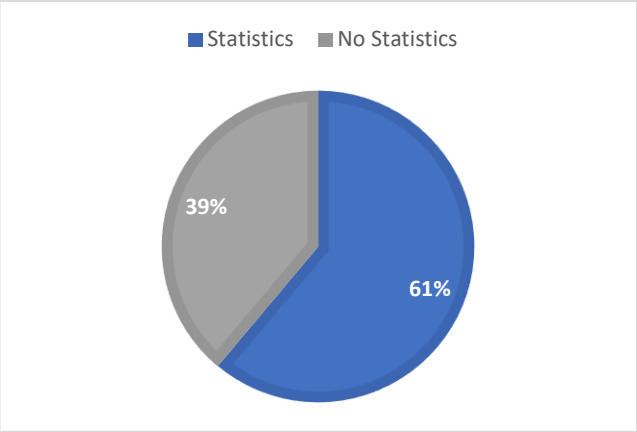
Article 1. Mirror



Article 2. The Guardian



Article 3. The Telegraph



Article 4. The Independent

From the figures we can see that statistics were used in more than 20% of all the paragraphs, in all the articles. *The Independent* and *The Guardian* are more focused on quality style reporting which can be a reason for the emphasis on the use of statistics. In comparison, *Mirror* uses more tabloid-style journalism which gives more emphasis to the word choices rather than statistical evidence.

Furthermore, *The Telegraph* is characterized as a quality style newspaper but compared to the other articles we can see it sharing similar emphasis with the tabloid-style newspaper *Mirror.* The emphasis in the article is with the word choices rather that statistics. The difference in emphasis with the other quality style newspapers could derive from the differences in political stance but examining the political differences would require more materials.

4.3 Statements made by external sources

The statistics found in the articles were paralleled with expert statements from, for example, doctors or heads of associations to strengthen the message and appeal to the rationality of the reader. Charts in Appendix B show the name of the professionals, famous people, and/or corporations/associations, and how frequently they are mentioned or quoted directly or indirectly in the articles. In example (12), Barr shows a way of using statement from a professional from a large corporation to strengthen the message:

(12) Tony Stower, head of child safety online at the NSPCC, said that it's "vital" for young Internet users to "reap the benefits of going online without being exposed to unacceptable harm." (Barr, 2019)

Statements can also be used to define the problem. The quotes and paraphrased statements from professionals, such as doctors, help with strengthening the facts of the problem. Example (13) is from Ben Quinn (2020) who used several paraphrased statements from a doctor and from a professional in his article:

(13) Dr Peter Macaulay, a lecturer at Staffordshire University who has researched cyberbullying and online safety issues relating to young people and children, said that cyberbullying had been on the rise before lockdown but some reports now suggested that just 20% of bullying took place at school now.

Furthermore, influential people are used to strengthen the message. For example, Prince William and his Royal Foundation's taskforce are mentioned to give greater emphasis to the issue in example (14), from *Mirror*:

(14) It comes as Prince William has also been working tech giants for the past 18 months with his Royal Foundation's taskforce on cyberbullying". (Evans, 2017)

The use of quotes from influential people can also be seen as a way to also appeal to the emotive side of the reader. For example, Prince William and the Royal Family can raise emotions in some of the readers of the article.

Another way of using statements was to introduce remedies to the issue. The importance of the suggested remedy was usually strengthened with statistics from associations or the title or occupation of the speaker. In example (15), Rob Waugh (2019), for example, used a doctor to strengthen the veracity of the suggested remedy:

(15) Dr Nassem says that parents also need to take an active role. "Friends and parents need to take some responsibility. Parents should set a good example. It is especially important for parents to speak to their children and find out how they are communicating online and which social media platforms they are using. "

The frequency in which the articles used these statements made by external sources was very similar in quantity. The differences between tabloid-style and quality style newspapers were that a tabloid-style newspaper *Mirror* seemed to prefer the use of mentioning famous and influential people. Furthermore, quality style newspapers, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, preferred to use statements from doctors or executives in nationally wide corporations, such as The Office for National Statistics (ONS) and The National Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

5. Discussion

The first two research question overlapped with the third research question. The first research question was formed to identify specifically the kind of words that are used to affect people's emotions in online newspaper articles covering online bullying. And the second research question focused on finding other ways of affection the reader's attitude that could be found in these articles.

The answer to the third research question was a combination of the first two research questions. The third research question was: "How is the problem that is online bullying framed in the articles?" The result was drawn that in the articles writers focused mainly to a fear-based framing of the issue. The issue was defined with the use of words that had mostly negative connotations. Online bullying was characterized as something to be feared and something that is a growing issue. Words like *traumatic*, *devastating, destroying*, and *abusive* showed how the definition of the topic of online bullying is framed as something to fear and something to be prevented in the future.

The fear-based framing continued with making moral judgements of the people who bully. The people who were bullied were characterized as *targets* of *relentless* and *abusive* behaviour from the people who bully.

Some words with positive connotations were used when suggesting remedies to online bullying. They were characterized for example, as making a *safer* environment in social media.

The emotive use of words was followed targeting the rationality of the reader. Statistics were used to emphasize the magnitude of the growing issue that is online bullying and to show how many people are affected by it.

The use of statistics supports the idea that articles about online bullying focus on fear-based framing. Even though specific numbers appeal to the rationality of the reader, they also appeal to the emotions of the reader. Especially they appeal to fear of the growing issue and how bullying can affect people. Furthermore, statistics also suggested remedies. They were used to show how much the remedies that are already in motion have done to help the people who are bullied online.

Lastly, writers used statements made by external sources. They were used to define the issue, strengthen the message with expert statements and to suggest remedies. The statements could be looked at as appealing to the emotive side and the rationality of the reader depending on their personal ideas about, for example, influential people from the Royal Family.

The last research question was: "What kind of ways of using language to affect people can be expected from online newspaper articles covering online bullying?" According to the characteristics identified in this study, we can expect to find language that is formulated to appeal to the emotions (especially fear) and the rationality of the reader.

The examined articles shared similar features with the use of words, statistics, and quotations. The differences between the articles could be found from the emphasis they gave to either the word choices with negative connotations or statistics. We can see from the analysis that from tabloid-style newspapers we can expect more emphasis on word choices that are made to target the reader's emotions. *The Guardian* and *The Independent* seem to favour more neutral language compared to a tabloid-style newspaper like *Mirror*. The focus was mainly on providing factual evidence with statistics without over-dramatizing through word choices.

Furthermore, even though the use of statements was similar in quantity, the choices of whose statements were used showed that quality style newspapers focused more on using statements from,

for example, doctors or executives from nationwide corporations. A tabloid-style newspaper *Mirror* used famous or influential people from the Royal Family and its taskforce.

This study showed that from tabloid-style newspapers like *Mirror*, we can expect more dramatized use of words, less statistics and more statements from influential people and corporations. From quality style newspapers we can expect more statistical evidence used with more neutral language and statements from experts and big nationwide corporations.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to discover the different ways of using language that are used to target people's emotions and rationality in online newspaper articles covering online bullying in the United Kingdom. The aim was to find out what type of characteristics can be expected to find in articles covering online bullying. Furthermore, the purpose was to answer what kind of words are used to affect people's emotions, how bullying and the people being bullied are characterized and what ways of using language is applied to strengthen the message.

This study showed how different online newspapers share similar characteristics when covering online bullying. The frame identified in this study shows the kind of characteristics the reader can expect to find in these articles. Furthermore, the ways of affecting the reader and appealing to their emotions and rationality were identified.

These findings show that there was a frame that the writer applied in the article. The issue of online bullying was addressed as something to be feared and something that is growing and needs to be prevented. These articles showed that describing something as feared as suicide and self-harm as a result of bullying, paralleled to ways of helping the issue, targeted the emotional as well as the rational side of the reader. In this way the writer can promote the issue at hand more strongly.

In this study four research questions were drawn. The questions complemented each other, and the answers overlapped. Three relevant categories, when examining the articles, were identified: 1. The use of words to target emotions, 2. The use of statistics and 3. The use of statements made by external sources. The items found in the articles were divided into these categories and then further analysed.

These categories helped to answer the question of how online bullying is framed in online articles. In this study a result was drawn that articles about online bullying use fear-based framing. The magnitude of the issue is emphasized with words of negative connotation, statistics, and strengthened with statements from external sources. The significance of the problem was paralleled with ways of prevention, both future and ones that are already in motion. The importance of prevention is amplified with the way online bullying is portrayed as a growing issue that affects a large number of people.

The emphasis was different between the two styles of newspapers that were used in this study. The tabloid-style newspaper*, Mirror,* gave emphasis to more dramatized use of words and less to the statistical evidence. It also favoured more references to popular culture with mention of influential people.

Quality style publications, *The Guardian* and *The Independent***,** gave more emphasis to the statistics and they used more references to big nation-wide corporations. Also, the word choices made in articles from these publications had fewer negative connotations, and more neutral language.

The Telegraph, which is characterized as a quality style newspaper, shared more similar emphasis, with word choices rather that statistics, with *Mirror*. The reason for these differences in emphasis could derive from the different political stance between the quality style newspapers.

However, the differences between political stances would acquire further research and more overall materials.

In this study a suggested applied frame for newspaper articles covering online bullying was discovered. The fact that this data was collected from the year 2017 to 2020 suggests that further analysis to the subject should be considered. The limitation of this study was the amount of data collected. The versatility of the articles was increased with the choices of different online newspapers, but more articles from a larger timeframe should be examined. During the examined time frame the use of social media has increased rapidly, and along with that online bullying. In the future, more articles should be focused on from different periods of time.

In further research, the effect of time and the development on social media should be researched, from the beginning of the 21st century to the current day. The change in the framing of articles about online bullying, found in online newspapers, could show how the increased use of social media has affected the frame. With more research, we could examine the issue of online bullying via the changes that have happened in the world.

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Appendix A

The use of words to target emotions

In the following charts the words found from the articles that target readers' emotions are arranged according to how frequently they were used in the articles. The charts show the name and how many times they are used or quoted in the articles.

Article 1. Mirror

Bully, bullies, bullied, bullying, cyberbullying (14 times)
Victims (3)
Self-harming or harm (2)
Death threats or threats (2)
Blackmailed
Suicidal
Relentlessly
Inevitably
Destroying
Vulnerable
Isolated
Devastating
Ugly
Fat

Article 2. The Guardian

Bullying, online/cyberbullying 13

Vulnerable
Targets
Traumatic
Impossible

Article 3. The Telegraph

bullied, bullying bullies, online bullies (15)
cyberbullying (5)
safety, safety ambassadors, safety center (5)
abusive, abuse (4)
problem (2)
responsibility (2)
suffering
offenders
anti-bullying
devastating
harmful

Article 4. The Independent

Cyberbullying, Cyberbullied (3)
Harmful (3)
Vital (2)
Unacceptable harm (2)

Online abuse
concerns
trolling
unwelcome
worried
protect
tough sanctions
fail
safe
risks
benefits
great strengths

Appendix B

The use of statements made by external sources.

In these charts the quotes and mentions of professionals, famous people, and/or corporations/associations are shown. The charts show the name and how many times they are used or quoted in the articles.

Article 1. Mirror

Childline (5)
NSPCC (2)
Prince William and Royal Foundation's taskforce of cyberbullying

Article 2. The Guardian

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) (3)
Dr Peter Macaulay (3)
The National Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) (2)

Article 3. The Telegraph

Will Gardner CEO of anti-bullying charity Childnet (7)
Dr Elizabeth Nassem of Birmingham City University (2)
Parent's portal, Safety center, Bullying Prevention Hub-Facebook (3)
Safety Center - Snapchat
Help Center - Twitter
experts at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University

Youtube spokesman
Help Center - Instagram
the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

Article 4. The Independent

Ofcom - The UK's communications regulator (5)
Yih-Choung Teh, group director of strategy and research at Ofcom (3)
Tony Stower, head of child safety online at the NSPCC (2)
Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) (2)
the NSPCC - The National Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children