

Manipulation in news reporting. A case-study of a Romanian sketch by I.L. Caragiale

Abstract:

The aim of the current paper is to analyse the discourse strategies used by various newspapers in rendering the same piece of news, which appeared at the beginning of the 20th century Romania, and recorded by I.L. Caragiale in one of his sketches. The analysis reveals that after more than a century, media manipulation is created through the same discourse strategies, creating biases according to the various political orientations of the newspapers that present a certain piece of news. The author borrows the technique of theme and variations from music and applied it to the literary construction of his sketch, creating four variations on the theme of a fire which was put out by dutiful and country-loving fire-fighters: Variation 1 – The fire is the result of inefficient current government ruling; Variation 2 – The fire is an awake call for educating the citizens to be fire-fighters; Variation 3 – The fire is an occasion for socialising and Variation 4 – The fire did not exist at all.

The modernity and timelessness of I.L. Caragiale is also considered in the context of his fine and sharp dissection of the Romanian society of that time, apparently so much in fashion and immortal nowadays.

Keywords: *Media manipulation; Discourse strategies; Sensation news; I.L. Caragiale.*