

# The Impact of Linguistic Misinformation on Shaping Saudi Awareness: An Empirical Study of Saudi Perception of Social Media News

Ayman Khafaga<sup>1&2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Suez Canal University, Egypt

[a.khafaga@psau.edu.sa](mailto:a.khafaga@psau.edu.sa)

## Summary

The main objective of this paper is to probe the extent to which misinformation propagated through the different social media platforms contribute effectively in the process of directing, shaping and reshaping societal awareness of Saudis. In so doing, this paper attempts to delve into the relationship between linguistic misinformation and societal awareness, by exploring the perception of Saudis towards social media news, particularly misinformation and the extent to which this misinformation influences the social attitudes of Saudis in terms of various societal issues. Two main research questions are addressed in this study. First, to what extent does social media misinformation affect Saudis' awareness? Second, what are the linguistic manifestations of misinformation presented in the different social platforms? Two main findings have been recorded in this study: first, misinformation significantly contributes to the societal awareness of Saudis; and, second, however misinformation is linguistically manifested at the different levels of linguistic analysis, it is highly representative at the lexicalization level of language use.

## Keywords:

*ICT, social media, linguistic misinformation, Saudi awareness, fake news*

## 1. Introduction

With the massive advancement of Information Communication Technologies (ICT), social media platforms occupy a great part of our everyday lives and activities. Social media, such Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, etc. contribute significantly in shaping and reshaping the societal awareness of individuals and societies. Such an influential role played by social platforms manifests itself in different levels including the linguistic level. The daily lives of Saudis in general and the social community in particular have been impacted by social media and information technology. Due to its various formats, social media platforms enable people to communicate and interact in a variety of ways, such as blogs (Facebook), microblogs (Twitter), wikis (Wikipedia), video podcasts, and photo sharing (Instagram and Snapchat) [1]. Applications like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and

WhatsApp have significantly increased social engagement and information sharing in communities of different genders, different levels of education, different ages, and different careers in the Saudi context [2].

The human desire for exploration, limitless connection, and the free exchange of ideas and opinions with other users who share similar interests may be the driving force behind this expansion. Social media platforms, therefore, enable users to create and share content with other people all over the world. Users of social media platforms can communicate, express themselves, and transcend national boundaries via these platforms in different linguistic and paralinguistic ways of communication [3]. Social media's accessibility and immediacy have greatly aided in the production and spread of false information like rumors, spam, and fake news. How to spot disinformation in social media has emerged as a significant issue, as seen by recent instances of misinformation [4].

Social media platforms are becoming important platforms for the dissemination of news and information, but they are also becoming more appealing targets for abuse and manipulation. Social media users do not always choose the sources of the items they see on these platforms, which makes them different from conventional news-gathering media (such as TV news, news websites, and mobile phone news applications). Instead, targeted information with little transparency is provided by proprietary algorithms. In other news medium, users choose the source first and do so knowing what kind of source it is [5]. With social media platforms like Facebook, consumers' newsfeeds are filled with articles from a wide range of sources. Sponsored articles, or paid adverts, and posts from family and friends are incorporated into news pieces. All of them could be accurate or untrue, either on purpose or accidentally, but some are specifically meant to influence [6]. Based on the assumption that social media platforms dominate the life of people and affect their

personalities as well as attitudinal behavior, and due to the rise in social media usage and the opportunities it has created, this paper attempts to explore the extent to which misinformation propagated through the different social media platforms contribute effectively in the process of directing, shaping and reshaping societal awareness of Saudis.

### 1.1. Research Questions

The paper tries to answer the following questions:

- RQ1. To what extent is Saudi awareness affected by the misinformation propagated on social networks?
- RQ2. To what extent do social networks contribute to the formation of Saudi awareness?
- RQ3. What are the linguistic manifestations of misinformation used on social networking platforms?
- RQ4. To what extent are social media platforms considered manipulation and/or persuasive sources of news?

### 1.2. Research Objectives

This study attempts to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To explore the extent to which Saudis' awareness is influenced by the misinformation propagated on the various social media platforms.
2. To show the extent to which social networks contribute to the formation of awareness and behaviors pertaining to Saudis.
3. To decode the various linguistic manifestations of misinformation used on social networking platforms.
4. To demonstrate the extent to which social networking platforms are considered manipulation and/or persuasive sources of news.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the literature review, wherein previous and related literature is offered. Section 3 provides the methodology adopted in the current study, wherein the data collection procedures, the instruments, the participants, and the analytical procedures are offered. In Section 4, the paper displays the results of the study. Section 5 discusses the results by comparing and contrasting the current study results to those approached in previous studies. Section 6 is the conclusion, which also offers some recommendations for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

News has never been completely trustworthy [7]. Certain newspapers were infamous for their biases and potentially corrupted news even before the arrival of the Internet. Instead than being restricted to traditional sources, the Internet allows users to access dozens of diverse news sources, increasing their exposure to skewed and misrepresented news. There was a ton of news around the 2016 US presidential election, both factual and misleading [8]. Users of social media also had to deal with the deliberate creation and dissemination of fake news, whether it was done so to sway elections or earn money from advertisements [9]. Social media platforms have come under fire for not doing enough to stop the spread of false information [10].

It has become much easier for those who spread disinformation to locate fertile ground where they can spread lies and rumors since social media has grown to be accessible to everyone anywhere in the world [11–12]. The availability of information via social media makes accessing it an easy task that can be targeted at any time, which in turn makes it possible for any user to share, report, or propagate any piece of information [13]. Social media also makes it simple to create strong communicative connectivity among people around the world. There is growing worry over the veracity and reliability of the material found on these social networks. Facts as well as rumors and false information are spread through social media. No matter their religious affiliations or political views, these rumors easily spread among society's members, occupying mental space and even changing their cognitive attitudes (i.e., schemata) toward the topics covered on these sites, which frequently deal with contentious issues that dominate public opinion both locally and globally [14].

Misinformation in social networks, which is the dissemination of false information through different social media platforms, is crucial in forming and reshaping views [15]. One type of fake news is misinformation, which influences changes in attitudes as well as the development of new ideas [16]. It is obvious that such a process of misinformation is spread through the use of language, a means of communication that individuals use to express their attitudes and views as well as to maintain interpersonal connections and achieve certain goals. The use of language to further ideological goals is one of the language's many uses [17]. These ideologies occasionally try to enlighten the populace, and occasionally they want to manipulate people [18]. Thus, language is used for ideological reasons.

The dissemination of false information through numerous social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter,

YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc., is one way language is used to attack ideological functions [19]. Obviously, language-verbal or nonverbal-is the foundation of all communication through the various social networking platforms [20]. The lexical level, the semantic level, the grammatical level, the pragmatic level, and other linguistic levels of analysis are just a few examples of how this communication process appears in language. These many linguistic levels are used in social networks to accomplish specific objectives relevant to language users' ideological backgrounds [21]. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to examine the extent to which Saudis' social, political, and religious perspectives are impacted by linguistic misinformation disseminated through various social media platforms. In order to target a change in Saudis' social, political, and religious attitudes, the research examines the linguistic tactics used to sway their cognitive paradigms and ideological convictions.

According to many studies, such as Dwoskin and Shaban [22], Dwoskin and Timberg [23], and Roberts [24], the way people consume news on social media differs from how people consume it elsewhere on the Internet. For instance, certain product reviews are well recognized to be false. Users don't read product evaluations for pleasure; rather, they read reviews for information to help them decide, understanding that there is a financial incentive to choose the best, most educated course of action. This is a crucial distinction between fake reviews and fake news. Because of this, individuals who read phony reviews do so with a utilitarian perspective; they want to comprehend the meaning of the information in the review and determine which reviews should be taken into account when making a choice. In a decision-making environment, Minas et al. [25] looked at a utilitarian perspective in virtual team interactions. The study discovered confirmation bias existed while people evaluated data in a decision-making team-based discussion. In contrast, the hedonistic mindset when reading social media news indicates the user's purpose is satisfaction and pleasure rather than figuring out what is true and what is phony. The user will steer clear of demanding tasks that feel like work, such as carefully analyzing information, and tasks that are not enjoyable (e.g., reading stories that your favorite sports team lost). Users are more likely to interact with content that affirms their opinions and makes them feel good.

Numerous researches have looked at how social media affects how people view and react to important issues [26], [27], [28], [29], among others. All of these research looked into how rumors spread via social media affected people's attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs in addition to other areas of their lives. These consequences span a variety of domains, such as social, economic, cultural, political, and other areas. The current study reveals how linguistic disinformation

spread through social media platforms affects how Saudis perceive the world. In a related study titled *Measuring Impact of Rumors Messages in Social Media*, Koidl and Matthews [30] looked at how social networks, which are places where people share ideas and views, affect how people behave in emergency situations. This study made it clear that spreading false information during a crisis might make people afraid and put their lives in danger. As a result, the study brought attention to the harmful effect rumors play, especially in emergency situations. This is due to the study's finding that rumors spread swiftly through social networks during times of crisis; they first emerge for a brief period of time before being received, propagated, and, in many cases, internalized by large numbers of people.

Furthermore, the significance of social media platforms in politics and social movements has been highlighted by Lee in a subsequent study [31]. This study showed that social media technologies have already sparked important social and political revolutions. These technologies have also greatly expanded the ability of common people to challenge and change social power systems through platforms that can mobilize and influence people. The study highlighted the growing number of online groups that provide alternative ideas and opinions without depending on traditional media. Both Lopes [32] and Lee and Xenos [33] utilized the same viewpoint in order to demonstrate how social networks contribute significantly to social and political movements as well as in the formation of political and social attitudes. Additionally, Rogers and Niederer [34] emphasized the supposition that since the middle of the nineteenth century, misinformation has frequently been used politically as a jab against the free press when inconvenient truths are published in a way that targets particular political purposes that are, in most cases, manipulative. Repoll [35] asserts that social media can play a useful function in reducing stigma and fear as well as a similar, but riskier, role in raising fear and anxiety about the coronavirus. Repoll goes on to say that social media reformulates people's attitudes and answers to pressing situations by pressuring the entire society to accept a specific viewpoint that could be at odds with reality. As a result, Repoll also suggests that social networks are a place where the public's opinion and attitudes are shaped. This naturally fits with the thesis that this study is trying to support.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Data: Collection, Description and Instruments

In this study, a questionnaire and an interview were used as the two instruments to gather information and provide results. The interview involved just 11 participants, 7 of whom were men and 4 of whom were women. The

questionnaire was created electronically and distributed to participants. As a result, it can be argued that both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used in the work. The interview and the questionnaire were both created and distributed electronically to participants. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms and sent to participants via participant emails and WhatsApp groups. The questionnaire's statements centered on three key dimensions: Saudis' perceptions of disinformation in social networks; the impact of various misinformation methods on Saudis' awareness of society, politics, and religion; and the best linguistic techniques for swaying participants' attitudes and opinions. Two subject-matter experts validated and examined the questionnaire to ensure its validity and reliability. The interview, on the other hand, is made up of six open-ended questions and is also intended to assess Saudi citizens' attitudes of the influence of linguistic misinformation on social networks and how this misinformation affects their awareness of social, political, and religious issues. Importantly, such a quantitative-qualitative methodological integration aids in producing results that are reliable and verifiable as well as a thorough comprehension of how Saudis view linguistic misinformation spread through various social networks

### 3.2. Research Design

This study used a survey research design and the descriptive quantitative method to characterize the attitudes, views, behaviors, or characteristics of the population by administering a survey or questionnaire to a sample of the population or to the full population. According to [36], descriptive research entails gathering data to describe current conditions. This design offers quantitative information for the analysis and interpretation of the findings. To gather the data, a sample of 130 Saudis constituting different ages, different genders, different educational levels, as well as different careers. Twenty statements on a five-point Likert scale were included in the questionnaire. By delivering the questionnaire to the chosen participants, data were gathered. The participants were asked to sign a written consent form outlining the study's goals and their rights.

### 3.2. Participants

130 Saudi respondents who agreed to participate in the questionnaire and interview for the study's analysis of how the Saudis interpret linguistic misinformation spread through social media make up its participants. 95 males and 35 females, ranging in age from 18 to 45, are participants. Participants were chosen at random, and they had various professional and educational backgrounds.

### 3.3. Procedures

The four phases of the procedure used in this study are as follows: (i) the preparation of instrumental methods, (ii) the distribution of questionnaires and the conduct of interviews, (iii) the extraction of results from the collected data, and (iv) the discussion of the results and the provision of pedagogical implications. An electronic questionnaire with 15 items was created during the planning phase, and a six-question interview was also listed for participants to complete in order to get their perspectives on the subject at hand. The second procedural stage begins with delivering the link to the electronic questionnaire to the chosen participants via emails and WhatsApp groups after drafting the questionnaire and interview questions. Additionally, at the time in which interviews with participants began, with male participants receiving in-person interviews while female participants received phone interviews. Results were collected in the third phase so they could be available for discussion, which made up the fourth procedural stage in this study. Following the four steps outlined above, some specific themes related to how Saudis perceive linguistic misinformation being spread on various social networks were highlighted. These themes were then discussed to get specific linguistic indications and to offer pedagogical implications related to the study's main goal.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Participants' Demographic Data

The following two tables display the demographic data pertaining to the respondent participants, which include the variables of gender, age, nationality, educational level, and employment.

Table 1. Respondents' demographic data in terms of gender, age, and nationality

Number	Gender	Nationality	Age	
			Count	Range
95	male	Saudi	32	from 18 to 25
			44	from 25-35
			19	from 35-45
35	female	Saudi	13	from 18 to 25
			16	from 25-35
			6	from 35-45
Total: 130 participants				

Table 2. Respondents' demographic data in terms of education and employment

Number of respondents	Education	Employment	
17	PhD, MA holders	university staff	
28	university graduates	6	Doctors
		13	Teachers
		7	administrative work in different governmental and/or private sectors
		2	unemployed
53	university students	not working	
17	high school	12	private business
		5	not working
15	till grade 9	private business	
Total: 130 participants			

The demographic information of the respondent participants, as shown in Tables 1 and 2, reveals that all participants are Saudi and range in age from 18 to 45. Additionally, the response participants hold a variety of employment, some of which are unemployed. Additionally, they show various degrees of education, ranging from PhD holders to people who merely have high school diplomas, as well as people who did not get any kind of education or who dropped out of school before they reached the high school level. This suggests that the current study comprises the most common age groups for social media platform use and that it focuses on varied Saudi populations with a range of educational backgrounds and employment opportunities.

Table 4. Results of the Questionnaire

No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	Total agreement %
		Scales %						
1	Social networking is one of my go-to information sources.	4.11	6.85	2.74	71.23	15.07	2.14	42.8%
2	Social media platforms are usually ideology carriers.	9.59	65.75	17.81	4.11	2.74	3.75	75%
3	The information shared on numerous social media platforms is not something I trust.	4.11	72.6	10.96	8.22	4.11	3.64	72.8%
4	My social attitudes are influenced by social media misinformation.	15.07	67.12	9.59	5.48	2.74	3.86	77.2%
5	My social decision-making process is influenced by Social media misinformation.	4.11	50.68	2.74	24.66	17.81	2.99	59.8%
6	My political attitude is	2.74	9.59	47.95	26.03	13.7	2.62	52.4%

#### 4.2. Social Media Platforms as Sources of Information

Results for the various social media platforms utilized by respondents are provided in this section, along with information on how often each participant uses each platform.

Table 3. Using social media platforms as news sources

	Social platforms	Usage percentage among participants
1	FACEBOOK	87%
2	TWITTER	84%
3	YOUTUBE	75%
4	WHATSAPP	89%
5	SNAPCHAT	65%
6	TIKTOK	53%
7	INSTAGRAM	39%
8	MESSENGER	13%
9	TELEGRAM	8%

Table 3 highlights the diversity in how people use the various social media. As shown in the table, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and TikTok are the most popular social networks utilized as news sources among the responder participants in this survey, with percentages of 87%, 84%, 75%, 89%, 65%, and 53%, respectively. ,

#### 4.3. Respondents' Questionnaire

	influenced by social media misinformation.							
7	Social media misinformation affects my religious attitudes.	0	0	4.11	72.6	23.29	1.81	36.2%
8	I only use social media for amusement.	20.55	73.97	0	4.11	1.37	4.08	81.65%
9	Social media occupies much of my time.	12.33	36.99	19.18	17.81	13.7	3.16	63.2%
10	Social media misinformation takes many forms.	4.11	58.9	0	28.77	8.22	3.22	64.4%
11	There are many linguistic representations for misinformation on social media manifestations.	4.11	61.64	0	34.25	0	3.36	67.2%
12	The choice of particular vocabulary contributes effectively in conveying misinformation on social media.	2.74	69.86	0	23.29	4.11	3.44	68.8%
13	Misinformation propagated on social media adopts verbal and non-verbal ways of communication.	17.81	78.08	0	4.11	0	4.1	82%
14	My beliefs, values and attitudes are affected social media misinformation.	0	4.11	5.48	84.93	5.48	2.08	41.6%
15	My social activities are influenced by social media misinformation.	1.37	75.34	0	13.7	9.59	3.45	69%

NOTE: SA (STRONGLY AGREE)- A (AGREE)- N (NEUTRAL)- D (DISAGREE)- SD (STRONGLY DISAGREE)- M (MEAN)

Table 4 explains the favorable and negative attitudes toward using social media as a news source as well as the degree to which these networks have an impact on changes in Saudis' opinions toward social, political, and religious issues. Numerous analytical observations are made as a result of the questionnaire. First, although expressing a low level of agreement (42.8%) with the statement that they do not rely on the various social platforms as a source of news, the respondents express a total agreement of 69% (M=3.45) that social media disinformation influences their daily activities. The high level of agreement in statement No. 4—that people use the various social platforms mainly for entertainment—81.65% (M=4.8)—adds extra emphasis to this finding. Second, even though 75% (M=3.75) of participants emphasize that social platforms frequently promote particular beliefs that benefit their users, 72.8% (M=3.64) of them emphasize that they do not trust the news spread through social networks. Third, the results of the questionnaire show that the majority of respondents 77.2% (M=3.86) agree that social networks have an impact on forming their social attitudes. This is in relation to the effect of social media disinformation on attitudinal shift. However, 52.4% (M=2.62) of the participants concur that

the false information on social media has little impact on their political opinions. Fourth, statements No. 7 and 14 have the lowest percentages of agreement among the questionnaire's statements, with participants agreeing that social media misinformation did not change or have an impact on their religious attitudes and ideological beliefs with 36.2% (M=1.81) and 41.6% (M=2.08), respectively. Fifth, 82% (M=4.1) of respondents concur that spreading false information on social media platforms qualifies as both verbal and nonverbal message delivery. Sixth, 67.2% (M=3.36) of the participants concur that there are numerous linguistic expressions of disinformation in social media, and 68.8% (M=3.44) of them add that lexicalization is the most prevalent method of misinformation dissemination in social networks.

#### 4.5. Respondents' Interview

Table 5. Results of the Interview

	Interview question	Positive attitude	%	Cannot decided	%	Negative attitude	%	Total
1	What impression do you have of the misinformation shared on the various social networks?	4	36.36	0	0	7	63.64	11
2	How much do you believe in the information shared on social media platforms?	2	18.18	1	9.10	8	72.72	11

3	Do you believe that false information spread on social media affects your social behavior?	8	72.72	2	18.18	1	9.10	11
4	Do you believe that false information spread on social media affects your religious beliefs?	0	0.0	0	0.0	11	100.00	11
5	Do you think that false information spread on social media affects your political beliefs?	1	9.10	3	27.26	7	63.64	11
6	Do you think that social media platforms propagate ideologies?	8	72.72	2	18.18	1	9.10	11

Table 5 displays a range of attitudes in relation to how the various social media platforms affected the participants' social, political, and religious attitudes. Eight (72.72%) of the 11 participants communicate a negative attitude about how much they trust the information posted on various social networks, and seven (63.64%) of the participants express a negative attitude about how much they perceive the information posted on various social networks. All participants (100%) underline that their religious attitudes and beliefs are unaffected by the false information spread through social media platforms when asked whether or not their political, social, and religious attitudes are influenced by it. Additionally, 7 (63.64%) participants emphasize that they are not influenced by the various forms of false information spread on social media. However, 8 (72.72%) of the participants express positive attitudes toward interview questions No. 3 and 6, emphasizing the influence of social media misinformation on the formation and modification of their social attitudes as well as their agreement with the notion that social media platforms serve as ideological channels for the dissemination of various ideological meanings.

## 6. Discussion

This study demonstrated that although the dissemination of false information has extensively been researched in different disciplines, the openness of social networking platforms and the ability for automation make it possible for false information to spread quickly to a broad population, creating previously unimaginable issues. The current paper has shown that there has been a lot of discussion regarding disinformation and fake news because some false information is deliberately shared to trick its audience. Behind the popularity, there are frequently authors and organized teams of disseminators with a specific agenda and goal to gather and spread the inaccurate information.

According to the aforementioned findings, social media sites are a significant source of false information and fake news. Such a technique of spreading false information aims to influence receivers' and users' perspectives in a variety of ways, including social, political, religious, and other contexts. People can come together around similar interests, worldviews, and tales as a result of the quantity of user-generated content in online social media. This study

highlights how the World Wide Web ecosystem fosters the widespread dissemination of unverified rumors. Social media platforms significantly occupy a large portion of Saudis' everyday activities and time, and Saudi society is no different. The analysis supports Jones' [37] findings by showing how the dialectics of interests shift in tandem with shifting viewpoints and unprompted agreement in news discourse.

The findings showed that spreading false information has always taken place on social networks. This is because information and communication technology have greatly advanced and are widely available. The current study emphasizes the presumption that social media are used as ideology conduits to spread ideas, whether they are real or fake news, that are always intended to promote a certain group, institution, or person [38]. Misinformation spread through the various social platforms tackles a range of subjects, including social, political, and religious issues, and it targets individuals of all ages and demographics. Such an ideological process of deceit also aims to change attitudes, which emphasizes that mind control and manipulation are best communicated through linguistic devices as opposed to any physical means and further emphasizes the significance of the rhetorical dimension of power in conveying specific ideological meanings [39].

It is obvious that people of all ages and educational backgrounds search for the most recent information on social networks, which are a vital source of information. On social media platforms, however, information can be spread and disseminated in ways that are false, manipulative, and misleading. According to [40], one type of false information is misinformation, which is when particular discursive techniques are used to influence how others see various elements of life, such as politics, society, and religion. This is covered in the section below. Misinformation exhibits the rhetorical aspect of power, as the analysis in this article has demonstrated. Power in this context refers to verbal force. The investigation showed that, in comparison to other forms of power used in social media discourse, the power of the word is more indicative of the production of persuasion and manipulation [41].

Different perspectives on the influence of false information on social media on Saudis' sentiments were evident in the survey results. Analytical research has shown that Saudis utilize social media frequently, but they mostly do it for enjoyment. The responding participants express

their agreement that only their social and societal attitudes can be influenced by the false information spread through these social media channels, even though they acknowledge that social networks are ideology carriers. Most participants concur that there would be very little of an impact on religious and political attitudes. The implication that Saudis are typically swayed by false material that deals with social and societal issues rather than those dealing with political and/or religious issues.

The analysis also revealed that the majority of respondents concur with the hypothesis that false information on social media is spread through verbal and nonverbal cues, which constitute both the lexical and pragmatic levels of analysis [42]. Therefore, they concur that false information is spread both at the word level (lexicalization) and the level of the utterance (pragmatics). However, they stress that the most prevalent level through which false information is spread on social media platforms is the lexical level. This in turn highlights the role of lexis in changing perspectives and attitudes as well as the ideological preference of words over other linguistic devices in the spread of false information on social media. This is consistent with a number of earlier researches, including those by [43-46] who highlight the potency of language as an ideology-carrier, particularly when used as a tool for social media manipulation and persuasion.

The results of the interview revealed that the findings from the questionnaire and the participants' negative attitude toward how much of the information posted on various social networks they perceive are true. The respondents express their agreement that they don't trust the information shared on social media sites in both situations. This negative attitude perception reveals a divergent perspective on the use of social media. That is, in light of this study and within the Saudi context, responding participants underline that these social networks only have an impact on their social attitudes, despite the fact that they frequently utilize social media platforms. A positive attitude that social media platforms are ideology carriers that target particular aims and always work to the benefit of people who spread false information is one of the interview's other findings that correlates with the questionnaire's results. Additionally, the findings of the questionnaire and the interview are complementary in that there is broad agreement that false information spread via social media can alter social attitudes but not the recipients' political and religious ones.

## 7. Conclusions

This empirical study is anticipated to contribute effectively to the field of sociolinguistic research, as it offers a sociolinguistic analysis that attempts to approach

the perception of the linguistic misinformation in social networks by Saudi people; and the extent to which this linguistic misinformation influences the social, political and religious awareness of Saudis. The paper draws on critical discourse analysis, which in turn shows how this linguistic model of analysis is incorporated with sociolinguistics to elaborate a sociolinguistic phenomenon in society. The main findings of the current study, therefore, can be listed in the following points: first, language, with all its levels of analysis, is employed to shape and or reshape the public's social, political and religious awareness. Second, social networks represent a conduit for linguistic manipulation and mind control in the present era. Third, the qualitative and quantitative results reported in this study indicate that lexicalization contributes to shaping and/or reshaping the Saudi social, political and religious awareness. Fourth, the findings of the study demonstrated that lexical choice is the most representative linguistic strategy used to communicate misinformation in social network. Fifth, the findings of the current study also clarified that mind control and manipulation can be best conveyed via linguistic tools rather than by any physical ways. This in turn highlights the power of the word as well as sheds light on the importance of the rhetorical dimension of power in communicating particular meanings.

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**Ayman Khafaga** is an associate professor of linguistics at the department of English, College of Science & Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. He is also an associate professor of linguistics, Faculty of Arts & Humanities, Suez Canal University, Egypt. His research interests include computational linguistics, e-learning, discourse studies, semantics, pragmatics, and stylistics.