UNDERSTATEMENT AND OVERSTATEMENT IN MEDIA COVERAGE OF CORONAVIRUS COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Prof. Qasim Obayes Al-Azzawi, PhD
University of Babylon, College of Education for Human Sciences, Department of English.

Assist. Lecturer Kadhim Ketab Rhaif, MA
Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Education in Babylon Governorate.
kadhim.ketab2@gmail.com

Abstract
People's knowledge and beliefs about the world are shaped by what they see and read in the media. However, reporters may change the facts to support a certain point of view or to make a story more interesting, which can lead to biassed or even false reports. This study aims at investigating the way that news agencies and writers maximize and minimize the danger of Coronavirus COVID 19 through two linguistic strategies: overstatement and understatement. The main concern of this study is to tackle the role of overstatement and understatement in ten news articles about Coronavirus COVID 19 pandemic taken from CNN news agency and Fox news agency, five from each. Accordingly, this study concerns itself to answer following question: (1) Which of these two linguistic strategies the news articles about Coronavirus COVID 19 pandemic exploit more ? (2) Which linguistic and rhetorical devices news agencies and writers employ more in implementing each of these two strategies? To answer the aforementioned question, the following procedures are followed: (1) surveying the relevant literature on overstatement and understatement and their linguistic and rhetorical devices. (2) analyzing the use overstatement and understatement in the selected news articles according to a model developed by this study. The results show that all reporters of the selected data of the two news agencies employ devices of both understatement and overstatement to report the related news.

Keywords: understatement, overstatement, media, CNN news, Fox news, and COVID 19 Pandemic.

Introduction
News media has a tremendous power in shaping people's beliefs and opinions. The media has a great power to influence people's knowledge and beliefs about the world. There is always a possibility to exploit media manipulate news frames, set agendas, and propagate ideas. News agencies employ linguistic and rhetorical devices as a vital tool to implement their agendas. Of these device, understatement and overstatement play a major role in structuring the viewpoint of the writer or the agency.
Understatement and overstatement have a significant and universal role in language use as they mark the nature of different nations around the world. However, most studies in this area concentrated on describing their role beyond these limits. Because they can be interpreted in a variety of ways, they cannot be treated as literal expressions of the words they represent.

What we mean when we say "overstatement" is an exaggeration for the sake of effect or emphasis, which means that the truth is magnified and up scaled. Conversely, an idea is intentionally made to appear less important than it truly is by using understatement. Such techniques are exploited by news agencies and reporters to maximize and minimize the scope of public and political issues in accordance with their agendas.

Literature Review
Statement: The Norm

The proper start for a research on "understatement" and "overstatement" is considering the structure both these terms are derived from. A close look at both words leads to the presupposition that the stem to both of them is *statement* to which the prefixes "under" and "over-" are attached. Thus, *statement* refers to a norm, which satisfies the basic requirement of any ideational or emotional self-expression, and what falls short of this objective is *understatement*, and what goes beyond this objective or exceeds the requirement is *overstatement*. Thus, they are ways of making a statement.

Aristotle (1991) considered *statement* as an essential part in speech. He believed that a speech has two parts: statement and proof. If one states a case one must prove it. Thus as *Aristotle* phrased it:

"A speech has two parts. You must state your case, and you must prove it. You cannot either state your case and omit to prove it, or prove it without having first stated it; since any proof must be a proof of something, and the only use of a preliminary statement is the proof that follows it. Of these two parts the first part is called the Statement of the case, the second part the Argument, just as we distinguish between Enunciation and Demonstration".

Undoubtedly, asynchronous mutual relationships between language and the world are to be observed., i.e., language can be seen in correspondence with the world "It's snowing in the mountains", and on the other hand the world is seen in correspondence with language "Open the window". But it should be stated that not all of the utterances in language are statements and this is what most of the linguists realized. For instance, Lyons (1977:725) states that "statements are a subclass of utterances and that they may be regarded either as acts or signals". Similarly, Richards, Platt and Platt (1985:351) defined statement as:

"An utterance which describes a state of affairs, action, feeling or belief.... a statement occurs in the form of a declarative sentence but not all declarative sentences makes statements".

Determining how things actually are and how they ought to be are the two basic moods in which language (expressed by sentences) and the world are related to one another. This can be viewed in terms of two types of sentences: "assertorical sentences" which makes a statement about the actual state of affairs; and "practical sentences" which make a statement about the desirable state of affairs.

It is obvious that on uttering a sentence, a speaker always takes an unequivocal standpoint on the *content* outlined in his *proposition*. Thus, in the case of assertorical sentence this standpoint is always positive, whereas in a practical sentence the speaker does not view the propositional content as actually given and hence it has a negative standpoint. On the other hand, the standpoint of the hearer is not predetermined by the sentence and it is essential that his attitude to the propositional content is not

predetermined. This is true because if there is a predetermined consensus on the propositional content between speaker and hearer, or if there is absolutely no consensus, then the content already has some interpersonal commitment whether it is negative or positive. Thus any sentence along these lines becomes superfluous. In this way it is realized that an assertorical sentence is true when its propositional content is found to be in correspondence with the world. In the same way, a practical sentence is fulfilled when its propositional content is not already extent in the world, but still has to be realized (Stalnaker, 1978: 278-289).

In making a statement, certain tropes are used, notably *understatement* and *overstatement* which form the subject of this paper. These devices the speaker with a specific framework for structuring discourse offering the opportunity to amplify and diminish in two closely related senses. Both amplification and diminution can be used to develop an argument about controversial news, or briefly, that is to enhance the importance of the subject, or to denigrate it. Understatement and overstatement can equally apply to single words, or   whole discourses according to need.

Understatement

The term understatement ', comes in contrast with the general term overstatement. The principal idea of understatement is saying less and meaning more. It is recognized as a figure of speech in which the speaker minimizes the amount of his / her speech and present the fact as less significant than it is. It is defined as a common figure of speech where the literal meaning of what is said falls detectably short or under the magnitude of what is being talked about such as saying, pretty fair', meaning , splendid. (Harmon 2003: 522).

 Israel (2004: 1) defines understatement as " The intentional use of a weak proposition to communicate a related, stronger proposition". In this definition, Israel reveals his attitude that an understatement is a statement which, somehow, because it is conspicuously less informative than some other statement, can be used to express the meaning of the more informative statement.

In his book English Social Difference, Pear (1955:93) agreed with Breitenstein and emphasized the ambiguity aspect of understatements:

"An Englishman who employs gentle irony of understatement, when speaking to a foreigner who thinks he understands English, runs the risk of being taken seriously".

Regarding the social effects, Brogan (1943) believes that understatement is an irritating mannerism and a real cause of misunderstanding :

"The English habit of understatement, of allusion of apparent moderation in statement combined with inflexible maintenance of the original point of view, is not only an irritating mannerism, but a real cause of misunderstanding".   (Ball 1970: 201-3)

For Fowler (1926) the case is a little bit more moderate than that of Brogan. Fowler believes that the main purpose of understatement is "not to deceive, but to enhance the impression on the hearer", i.e., "to impress by moderation". The idea of *understatement* is further elaborated by Sperber and Wilson (1992:53-76) and Harris (2002:5-6). They agree upon the fact that understatement deliberately expresses an idea less important than it actually is.

Bergen et.al's(1993)and Vander Wouden (1995) in Harris (2002:6-7) believe that "Litotes" is sometimes reserved for a particular kind of *understatement*, i.e., the speaker uses a negative expression where a positive one would have been more forceful direct. For instance, saying "It is not hot" or "She's not exactly happy", indicate that they are not so much untrue as non-committal. In other words, statements can be evaluated in terms of a scale conveying how much they ascribe to somebody or something in a particular position on that scale. Moreover, by depending on the tone and context of the usage, litotes either retains the effect of understatement or becomes an intensifying expression. However, occasionally a litotes construction conveys an ironic sentiment by its understatements

Owing to the difference in attitude towards *understatement*, it can be classified into two types: restrictive understatement and emphatic understatement. Restrictive understatement is based on the national characteristic of the English, such as modesty or unwillingness to express emotion; for example, slightly cold or mildly hot (Spitzbardt 1963: 28-282).

Emphatic understatement, on the other hand, looks equal to restrictive understatement in form but it is emphatic in nature. It is clearly seen in classical rhetoric as the rhetorical figure litotes is linked with understatement. Thus, an understatement suggests more than it says .As a result of the ambiguity of the English understatement, which in some cases may be emphatic and in others restrictive, it can be manifested hardly better than with the well-known idiom "not half bad

 (ibid: 281).

Devices of Understatement

Understatement is a superordinate phenomenon, which exploits the stylistic means of rhetoric especially of meiosis, litotes and euphemism – but does not conflate with any of these notions. Israel (2006: 143)

)Harris (2018) states that the word "meiosis" originated from the Greek word meioo, which means "to diminish," or "to make smaller." Meiosis can be defined as a witty understatement that belittles or dismisses something or somebody; particularly by making use of terms that give an impression that something is less important than it is or it should be. It is typically characterised by a semantic diminution or an indetermination of a concept obtained through "detensifiers" or "hedges".

 In example (1) the writer minimizes the effect of virus COVID 19 by likening it to flu.

(1) "The death rate is actually 0.1 percent – similar to the flu".

 (Berenson ,2020)

Litotes is a form of understatement, created by denying the opposite of the idea in mind. Depending on the context and the subject matter, litotes either retains the effect of understatement or intensifies the expression. Those who examine themselves will not remain ignorant of their failings. (Harris, 2018:30).

 In example (2), here the write tries to understate the risk of virus COVID 19 by saying that it is not mutating though it is dangerous.

(2) "The virus is not mutating, but it's still dangerous". (Karimi, 2020)

Traditionally, euphemisms were intended to save embarrassment, prevent offense, or avoid hurt feelings. Nowadays, Euphemisms can be useful tools when the intent is to avoid an offense that bluntness might provoke. Euphemisms can also serve well to help people reconceptualize something. The substitution of customer service representative in place of help desk or technical support can produce a more positive attitude on the part of the customer. One problem is that after a while, the euphemism loses its softer impact and a new euphemism must be invented. For example, the rather blunt term crippled was dropped in favor of disabled , which at some point sounded too negative and was dropped in favor of handicapped , which in some arenas is giving way to physically challenged , which is itself in the process of being dropped in favor of differently abled. Far more serious than the need to invent new euphemisms, however, is the use of euphemisms to make something bad or immoral sound reasonable, acceptable, or at least less unpleasant. (Harris, 2018).

In example (3), the writer uses the word "the vulnerable" to refer to the old people who are the most likely to be infected with the virus.

(3) "that additional supplement might be good for the vulnerable in society". (Reynolds, Erdman and Picheta, 2020)

Overstatement

There is a belief that English people are less likely to overstate. This is explained by Ball (1970:204):

"We are not, let us face it, a gesticulatory people. We are less likely to wear our hearts on our sleeves" than many other people, and perhaps for this reason have acquired the reputation of being reserved, aloof, passionless, and undemonstrative".

Rhetoric practice has traditionally been associated with the production of persuasive speech, and later with aesthetics and literature; however, only relatively recently has the study of figurative language been switched into domain of banal, everyday language. Thus, few studies have been addressed to "overstatement" whether in the domain of linguistics, psychology, philosophy or literary criticism.

Spitzbardt (1963) views the divergence of style with words and expressions of overstatement from a socio-psycholinguistic perspective. They believe that one may easily surmise that the admiration of the big word spread from the seacoast to the frontier, where new coinages now became a sport of the unlettered, fitting in neatly with other hyperbolical characteristics of tall-talk. Such kinds of "tall-talk", "high-sounding mouth filling words" are described by Spitzbardt (ibid: 280) in the following way:

   … "a form of utterance ranging in composition from striking concoctions of ingeniously contrived epithets expressing disparagement or encomium, to wild hyperbole, fantastic simile and metaphor, and a highly bombastic display of oratory, employed to impress the listener with the physical prowess or general superiority of the speaker".

Most studies accompany with overstatement the terms "hyperbole" and "exaggeration". Hence there is a must to identify the kind of relation between these three terms and figure whether there is a demarcation line between them or not. In order to comprehend the meaning of *overstatement*, definitions to the accompanying terms must be given first. The ancient Greek students of rhetoric have

given the name hyperbole (hy-PER-bol- lee) from "hyperballein", i.e, to exceed, hit beyond the mark, from "hyper" overt "ballein" to *throw, cast*. The word "hyperbole " in English is identified as "Extravagant exaggeration by which something is represented as much greater or less, better or worse, or as involving a greater, intensity than in reality, or beyond possibility; a statement exaggerated fancifully through excitement, or for effect". (2OED,s.v. *hyperbole*)

Hyperbole is a reflection of a deliberate exaggeration to heighten an effect a long with metaphor and simile. It is a figure of speech in which emphasis is achieved by deliberate exaggeration and not intended to be taken literally; for example *Hurry we are hours late* (Brooks and Warren 1970: 484-85). On the other hand, overstatement is defined in (2OED, s.v. *overstate*): The action or act of overstating, a statement which exceeds the limits of facts; exaggeration.

Overstatement, actually, is an exaggeration for the sake of effect or   emphasis, i.e., it magnifies and up scales reality, and, naturally up scaling produces, a difference with reality. The frequency of overstatement in everyday conversation has its testimony in many idiomatic expressions, since English people are more accustomed to speak in figures. In fact their instantaneously transpose expressions such as "million" into "many" and "hours" into "very.

However, hyperbolic intention not only affects the audience, but the user too and it is not designed to embellish meaning but to constitute. Therefore, overstatement and hyperbole depend on a kind of joint pretence in which speakers and addressees create activity, (Fogelin 1998)

Hence, in either case it is exaggeration in a rhetorical figure, thus the minifying and magnifying are viewed as literal facts but make an effective illustration of truth (Leech 1983:). Depending on the stated facts, overstatement can be considered the life feature and the umbrella term of both hyperbole and exaggeration.

Devices of Overstatement

Al- Tufaili and Al- Jobori (2016:49) refer to certain devices of exaggeration are more often appealed to by exaggerators in order to be effective in conveying what they intend to achieve: hyperbole, irony, Simile, metaphor, and rhetorical questions. These devices are explained below:

Fussell and Krueuz (1998:94) define hyperbole as a figure of speech of bold exaggeration. It is used by speakers to make their feelings or states of mind as clear as possible. Thus, hyperbole can provide insight into why a particular statement has been said. Spitzbardt (1963:278-280) sets various forms through which hyperbole is realized as numerical hyperboles, adjectives, verbs, nouns, adverbs, and many others. For example, the writer in (4) uses the phrase "doubling every week" to maximizing the risk of the virus. Example (5), on the other hand, exposes how the words "boon" and "vindication" are used to overstate the effects of the recent results.

(4) "In Brazil, India, Chile, Colombia and South Africa, cases are doubling every two weeks". (Reynolds and Petterson, 2020)

(5) "The latest U.S. job numbers, revealed Friday, are a "boon" for President Trump and represent "vindication" for those who opposed coronavirus lockdowns". (MacCallum, 2020)

Fussell and Kruez (1998:91) state that people may exaggerate in describing the aspects of the situations that they want to refer to. In many cases, peoples' exaggeration is frequently embodied in saying the opposite of what they mean (irony). Fussell and Kruez (ibid.:91) also assert that the use of exaggeration is a reliable cue for determining ironic intent.

In example (6), the writer uses the word "overwhelming" twice to describe to the quality of emails he receives to blame him for his opinions concerning Coronavirus COVID 19 as an exaggeration how such emails are annoyed.

(6) "And the email I get – which is overwhelming, and overwhelmingly in favor of this effort – suggests many, many people – some fancy". (Berenson, 2020).

Another device of exaggeration is simile which is defined by Cruse (2006:165) as an explicit comparison between different things that have one similar characteristic. In simile, the word "as" or "like" is used to create a comparison in mind .In example (7), the writer uses simile as a tool to exaggerate his concerns by referring to his colleagues' as a whole unit.

(7) "I get very concerned, as my colleagues do" (Fauci, 2020 Metaphor is one of the devices of exaggeration is through which an implicit comparison is conducted by exaggerators to convey their opinions, evaluations, and attitudes toward things (Fussell and Kreuz,ibid.:194). Accordingly, Moon (1998:194) assures that exaggeration is an important feature of metaphorical expressions. In metaphor, "concepts, notions, models, pictures from one domain, the source domain, are borrowed for the description of things in another domain, the target domain. Example (8) shows how metaphor "rocketship" is cited by the wrtirer as used by Trump to exaggerate his promise to reform the fallen economy of America.

(8) "Trump on Friday promised a "rocketship" rebound from the coronavirus pandemic, suggesting 2021 could be one of the "best years" for the U.S. economy after the better-than-expected May jobs report". (MacCallum, 2020)

A rhetorical question is an effective device of exaggeration that might be used by exaggerators to persuade others of their ideas and beliefs. It is as a question which does not look for an answer rather, it involves an assertion. Pragmatically speaking, a positive rhetorical yes-no question has the illocutionary force of a strong negative assertion, while a negative question has the illocutionary force of a strong positive assertion (Black, 2006:26).

In example (9), the writer uses the rhetorical question as a way to exaggerate the risk of Coronavirus COVID 19 pandemic to the public especially for those who are still not fully aware of the real risk.

(9) "How lethal the virus is?" (Berenson, 2020).

Methodology

To achieve the aims of this study, the following procedures are followed: (1) surveying the relevant literature on overstatement and understatement and their linguistic and rhetorical devices. (2) analyzing the use overstatement and understatement in the selected news articles according to an eclectic model developed by this study. The model consists of two main concepts, namely overstatement and understatement. The former is realized by the following devices: hyperbole, irony, simile,

metaphor, and rhetorical questions. The latter is realized by the following devices: meiosis, litotes, and euphemism.

Data Analysis

Understatement is investigated through its devices in accordance with Israel (2006):

a- Meiosis is found in the following:

1- "They may become lax in the measures needed to control the spread of the virus". (Karimi, 2020)

2- ..."the death rate is actually 0.1 percent – similar to the flu". (Berenson, 2020)

3- "The coronavirus appears far less dangerous than the Spanish flu". (ibid)

b- Litotes is found in the following:

1- "There have only been less than 100,000 on five days". (Reynolds and Pettersson)

2- "But there's still not enough testing to capture an accurate picture". (ibid)

3- "The virus is not mutating, but it's still dangerous". (ibid)

4- "That it's not definitive and should not be characterized as such". (Miles, 2020)

5- "I'm nobody". (Berenson, 2020)

6- "I don't have a prime time news show or a syndicated column; I have all of 103,000 followers on Twitter". (ibid)

7- ..."but financially this has been nothing but a distraction". (ibid)

8- "However, there is no evidence that this is the case". (Reynolds, Erdman and Picheta, 2020)

9- ..."and there is no known benefit at this time to taking higher than recommended doses". (ibid)

10- "Löfven rejected the "narrative" that "Sweden is doing so totally different than other countries," saying "that's not the case."

11- "Highly lethal pandemic outbreak was actually nothing more than the result of the wrong genes". (Sepkowitz, 2020)

c- Euphemism is found in the following:

1- ..."suggesting that additional supplement might be good for the vulnerable in society". (Reynolds, Erdman and Picheta, 2020)

2- "Just like several other countries we did not manage to protect the most vulnerable people". (Dean and Nyberg, 2020)

Overstatement, on the other hand is investigated through its devices in accordance with Al- Tufaili and Al- Jobori (2016):

a-Hyperbole is found in the following:

1-   "The latest U.S. job numbers, revealed Friday, are a "boon" for President Trump and represent "vindication" for those who opposed coronavirus lockdowns". (MacCallum, 2020).

2-   ..."seems to be in a much better mood than he was earlier this week, which was a very tough week for him". (ibid)

3- "There's going to be some jobs that don't ever come back". (ibid)

4- "This is obviously really good news, very surprising news today". (ibid)

5- "Estimates for the lethality of the coronavirus have varied widely". (ibid)

6- ..."making it very, very dangerous". (ibid)

7- "So the hidden part of the iceberg is huge". (ibid)

8- "Recent protests across the U.S. over the death of George Floyd could lead to new surges in coronavirus cases". (Fauci, 2020)

9- "I became very concerned that we might see a resurgence". (ibid)

10- "He believes the COVID-19 outbreak was engineered in a lab and spread through coincidence".

11- "Let's suggest that the Chinese maybe have too much say in their journals". (Miles, 2020)

12- "The Chinese understand us extremely well". (ibid)

13- "We understand the Chinese very poorly". (ibid)

14- "Media ignoring that thousands of coronavirus victims died in nursing homes". (Berenson, 2020)

15- "This is why these people hated my book, "Tell Your Children," so much". (ibid)

16- ...."had been telling each other the same nonsense for so long". (ibid)

17- "The lockdowns appear more insane". (ibid)

18- "We should all be THRILLED about this fact, but too many of us aren't". (ibid, 2020)

19- "that seriously ill Covid-19 patients who were treated with hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine were more likely to die". (Reynolds, Erdman and Picheta, 2020)

20- "And taking too much vitamin D can lead to a toxic buildup of calcium in your blood". (ibid)

21- "Yet recent Google searches find people asking about the intake of much higher levels, even up to 60,000 IU per week".(ibid)

22- "But vitamin D does much more than protect bone and muscle development".(ibid)

23- "There are many crackpot claims about miracle cures".(ibid)

24- "There is a certain amount of correlation, but huge uncertainty about causation".(ibid)

25- "Much of the criticism around Sweden's response has focused on the high death rates in care homes". (Dean and Nyberg, 2020)

26- "The disease to spread in elderly care homes, with so many deaths".(ibid)

27- "The disease would enter so easily and for the spread to be so big".(ibid)

28- "We have too many older people who have died".(ibid)

29- "New cases of the novel coronavirus are rising faster than ever worldwide". (Reynolds and Pettersson, 2020)

30- "In Brazil, India, Chile, Colombia and South Africa, cases are doubling every two weeks". (ibid)

31- "There is every reason to expect that we will see new clusters and potentially new outbreaks moving forward".(ibid).

b- Irony is found in the following:

(1) "And the email I get – which is overwhelming, and overwhelmingly in favor of this effort – suggests many, many people – some fancy". (Berenson, 2020).

c- Simile is found in the following:

1- "I get very concerned, as my colleagues do"… (Fauci, 2020)

2- "has been a useful foil for them in this as they have been for him". (Berenson, 2020).

d- Metaphor is found in the following:

1- "The participants then return home and create a "perfect recipe" for a resurgence of the virus". (Fauci, 2020)

2- "the spread of the virus in the sense of creating some blips which might turn into some surges". (ibid, 2020)

3- "I've thought a bit about why the media blue-checks hate me so". (Berenson, 2020)

4- "But I am a particular burr for three reasons". (ibid, 2020)

5- "The media/academic left tries to cudgel its opponents with an attitude of mocking scorn and intellectual superiority". (ibid, 2020)

6- "The president has been a useful foil for them". (ibid, 2020)

7- "As for those folks calling me a grifter?" (ibid, 2020)

8- "We should all be THRILLED about this fact, but too many of us aren't". (ibid, 2020)

9- "There are many crackpot claims about miracle cures floating around". (Reynolds, Erdman and Picheta, 2020)

10- "As the coronavirus pandemic swept across the world and governments"….(Dean and Nyberg, 2020)

11- "A Swedish care home without ever seeing a doctor after falling ill with Covid-19. "It's haunting me". (ibid, 2020)

12- "What is needed to create "herd immunity" in a population". (ibid, 2020)

13- "Attempting to create herd immunity had low support". (ibid, 2020)

14- "Herd immunity is reached when the majority of a given population -- 70 to 90% -- becomes immune". (ibid, 2020)

15- "To help keep the economy afloat, all US states have reopened"… (Karimi, 2020)

16- "Trump on Friday promised a "rocketship" rebound from the coronavirus pandemic, suggesting 2021 could be one of the "best years"". (MacCallum, 2020)

e- Rhetorical questions is found in the following:

1- "As for those folks calling me a grifter?" (Berenson, 2020)

2- "How lethal the virus is?" (ibid).

3- "Media ignoring that thousands of coronavirus victims died in nursing homes?" (ibid).

4- "Is your inbox all a flutter over the latest Covid-19 miracle cure -- vitamin D?"
(Reynolds, Erdman and Picheta, 2020)

Statistical Analysis

Firstly, the date in table (1) shows that both Fox news reporters and CNN reporters use overstatement and understatement while covering the news of CORONAVIRUS COVID 19 pandemic. The total number of overstatements is (55) with a rate of 77.5% and that of understatements is (16) with a rate

of 22.5%. CNN news reporters use (25)overstatements with a rate of 83.3% comparing to the number of understatements which (5) with a rate of 16.7%. Fox reporters, on the other hand, use (30)overstatements with a rate of 73.2% comparing to the number of understatements which (11) with a rate of 26.8%.

Table (1) The total distribution of overstatement and understatement

No.	Name of news agency	Overstatement	Percentage	Understatement	Percentage
1	CNN news	25	83.3%	5	16.7%
2	Fox news	30	73.2%	11	26.8%
Total		55	77.5%	16	22.5%

Secondly, the data in table (2) shows that total distribution of overstatement devices in the selected data is as follows: hyperbole (31), irony (1), simile (2), metaphor (16), and rhetorical questions (5) with a rate of 56%, 1.8%, 3.6%, 29%, and 9.3%, respectively. CNN news data contains (16) hyperbole, (0) irony, simile (1), metaphors (6), and (2) rhetorical questions, with a rate of 64%, 0%, 4%, 24%, and 8%, respectively. Whereas Fox news data, on the other hand, includes (15) hyperbole, (1) irony, simile(1), metaphors (10), and (3) rhetorical questions, with a rate of 50%, 3.3%, 3.3%, 33.4%, and 10%, respectively.

Table (2) The total distribution of overstatement

No.	Name of news agency	Overstatement									
		hyperbole	Percentage	irony	Percentage	simile	Percentage	metaphor	Percentage	Rhetorical questions	Percentage
1	CNN news	16	64%	0	0%	1		6		2	
2	Fox news	15	0%	1		1				3	
Total		31	6%	1	%	2		16		5	

Thirdly, the data in table (3) shows that total distribution of overstatement devices in the selected data is as follows: meiosis (3), litotes (11), and euphemism (2) with a rate of 18.75%, 63.75% and 12.5%, respectively. CNN data contains (1) meiosis, (4) litotes, and euphemism (0), with a rate of 20%, 89%, and 0%, 24%, respectively. Whereas Fox news data, on the other hand, includes (2) meiosis, (7) litotes, and euphemism (2),, with a rate of 18.2%, 63.6%, 18.2%, respectively.

Table (3) The total distribution of understatement

No.	Name of news agency	Understatement					
		Meiosis	Percentage	litotes	Percentage	Euphemism	Percentage
1	CNN news	1	20%	4	89%	0	0%
2	Fox news	2	18.2%	7	63.6%	2	18.2%
Total		3	18.75%	11	63.75%	2	12.5%

Conclusions

The analysis of the selected data shows that both of CNN and Fox news employ overstatement and understatement to report the facts, opinions, problems, solution and / or treatment of Coronavirus COVID 19 pandemic which is found at the very end of 2019 in China and then spread quickly to almost over the whole world. The analysis also shows that the news reporters rely heavily on overstatement when covering news related to the above mentioned pandemic where its frequency of occurrence percentage is 77.5 % comparing with that of understatement which records 22.5%. This may due to the fact that a great number of people do not take the healthy instructions in concerns to avoid the inflection of the new virus. Furthermore, the news writes may resort to such linguistic strategy because of the continuous daily increase in the number of inflected people with this virus. Moreover, it is found that the news reporters in the selected data make their exaggeration, regarding Coronavirus COVID 19 pandemic news, mainly through the use of hyperbole and metaphor. This may due the simplicity and popularity of these two devices among American people. On the other side, litotes is used more than the other devices of understatement. This may back to its force in negating the false assumption or opinions related to the subject of writing.

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