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A Linguistic Analysis of Errors in News Agencies and Websites of Iran

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Abstract—In this research, we analyzed the common errors of three highly visited news websites of Iran within three syntactic, morphological and typographic-orthographic level to scrutinize the pitfalls of news websites. The data was gathered from three news websites of ALEF, ASRE-IRAN AND TABNAK which are listed among the most visited news websites in Iran based on Alexa ranking site. The findings showed that in studying the syntactic level of the materials on the news sites, one can face with a breach in the unmarked constituent order of Persian language and asymmetrical verbs deletion. Furthermore, the writing errors in the news are more of the typographical errors, and lack of using punctuations in the news and the commonest linguistic errors in morphological level in news sites are lexical redundancy

Index Terms—errors, discourse, linguistic analysis, linguistic analysis of errors, news

I. INTRODUCTION

In new theories, “discourse” is a social and communicative act. In fact, discourse analysis is the analysis of the text in context. Text can be used in a broad sense by discourse analysis. Sometimes text can be news, a radio program, a page of the newspaper, a TV series, or a TV program, a simple talk, a social interaction and so on. All kinds of are text can be analyzed. Text analysis can be done at different levels. Since news sites and agencies have a lot of addresses all around the country and became use people receive the news and the events of politics, society, sports, etc from them, the appearance of errors like incorrect spelling of words, using uncommon structures, and inappropriate words in some journalistic texts show that some of Persian writing and grammatical points in these mass media require more attention and since in Iran the research has not been done much on the analysis of such news errors in the news sites and agencies and through considering the thing that linguistic errors analysis in mass media like news sites and agencies can uncover their drawbacks, this study investigates the linguistic features of the news from the perspective of the common linguistic errors at different levels of the sentence so that it helps the authorities identify and strengthen the weaknesses and it can increase the quality of public news transmission by revealing the flaws in such sources. The purpose of this study is to find out the most common linguistic errors in morphological, syntactic, and writing levels in the Iranian information centers and news agencies as the most modern and developing source of information gathering for Iranian citizens. This study offers suggestions to the news writers and correspondents for using better ways in writing Persian language and linguistic principles to reduce the linguistic errors in supplying the news. It also provides a technique to resolve the morphological, syntactic, and writing linguistic errors. This study seeks to answer the following questions:

Q1. What kinds of linguistic errors are seen more in considering the syntactic level of the news on news sites and agencies,?

Q2. What are the linguistic errors at the morphological level of the news on the news sites?

Q3. What are the commonest linguistic errors in writing and editing level of the broadcasted news on the news sites?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Discourse Analysis of Media and News Texts

Harrison's (2000), in his study about supplying TV news. Analyzed TV news of 4 channels (ITV, BBC2, BBC, and Channel 4) gave interesting educational explanations about content analysis in a series of the students' textbooks. Fowler (1991) is of the forerunner linguists in critical discourse analysis whose views have been changed a lot, primarily from 1970s to 1990s. However, his propounded known book entitled as "Language in the News", "Discourse and Ideology in the Press" and also " the Language of the News " are his recent and influential works has a peculiar place in the studies of critical discourse analysis especially linguistics. In addition, the book " language and control" (1997) published by Fowler, Haj, and Trew can be counted as one of the progressive works in critical linguistics and explanation of the role of language in social control that became a progressive and productive work.

Kheir Abadi (1390), in his doctoral thesis entitled as" the Linguistic Model of Supplying and Processing the News: Critical Discourse Analysis Approach", has studied the supplying of the news and its related processes. Supplying of

the news, as a worthy phenomenon in the world of information gathering and the main offered product in the news media, has been noticed by the researchers in different fields particularly linguists and also the researchers in media and news agencies.

Agha Golzadeh and Kheir Abadi (2014), in their study entitled as "comparative study of the way of representation of Iranian and European activists in Iran nuclear records in international media", stated that one of the objectives of the critical discourse analysis is to study the unequal and hegemonic relations over media and to create the critical awareness and insight in media addresses. In the current research, 50 news and papers for two last months of 2010 on Islamic Republic of Iran atomic records published within valid international media were studied within the framework of the said model and the ways of representation by the social activists on both sides of dispute (Iran and Europe) were analyzed.

B. Analysis of the Linguistic Errors in the News Media and Texts

Agha Golzadeh and Kheir Abadi (2014), in their article entitled as "The absence of verb in the news headlines of Farsi speaking newspapers from the aspect of critical discourse analysis", argued that the news text of the newspapers are mostly narrative and in a few sentences or paragraphs describe an event cohesively. Headlines do not usually follow sentence pattern, and they have no cohesion. It seems that verb absence in headlines is more salient than its presence.

Hasani (2004) studied the types of linguistic mistakes in Seda-o- Sima (name of Iran Radio and Television Organization), and he investigated the mistakes that have come into the Persian language. He found out that the mistakes can be primarily classified into three categories. The first category includes semantic, content, and grammatical errors. The second category involves the pronunciation errors like the pronunciation of Persian and Arabic words, signs and phrases whether verses, hadiths and proverbs. The third category includes prosodic errors in reciting the poem. He later has mentioned some examples for each part of these mistakes.

In a news report, the text from which the news has been reported (secondary discourse) and the report itself (primary discourse) must be differentiated from each other. The way of representing the secondary discourse by primary discourse has two main types: direct and indirect quotations. Each of these has its analysis. For example, the following reasons may play role in using direct quotation:

- The importance and pre-eminence of secondary discourse
- The dominance of the source of secondary discourse
- The liking of news report setters to get away from or close to secondary discourse

III. METHOD

A. Research Data

The sample was selected from some of the country's present news sites and agencies. In this study, one news agency and three news sites were selected. For this research, two first news pages in these selected sites and agencies were observed within two weeks to achieve the samples needed to be studied.

B. Data Collection

The data were collected in a library form using the archive of the news sites and agencies. The researcher, randomly but systematically, selects the concerned news agencies from the available agencies in Iran, then by going to the concerned news sites and agencies archive for two weeks, she studied and observed one special news agency in the selected sources and used them as research sample.

Ranking of the selected news agencies according to ALEXA.com Ranking was as follows:

- Fars news agency: 9
- Tabnak news agency: 12
- Alef news agency: 68
- Asr-e- Iran news agency: 23

In this study, 2074 sentences from three news sites and one news agency were studied for two weeks from 1393/05/15 to 1393/05/30. These sentences were selected from the news of the first page of the concerned sites. From each of these sites 25 news pages were extracted so that altogether 100 pages were attained from four concerned sources. 709 sentences from Alef news agency, 426 sentences from Tabnak news agency, 468 sentences from Asr-e- Iran news agency, and 471 sentences from Fars news agency were assessed that constitute the data of the present research.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A. Studying Syntactic Level of Sentence

Constituent order of the sentence in the news headlines (sentence word order):

This method is also called "word order." However, a better term for it is "constituent order" which refers to the order of the constituents placement in the sentence that shows how the constituents are related to each other. Within the fluent Persian, it is the tradition to put each of the constituent words of the sentences in its distinct place, but in the past it has been noted less. As it was mentioned before, the constituent order of the sentence in verb clause sentences is as follows:

1. Subject 2. Direct object 3. Indirect object (verb complement) 4- verb and in predicative sentences, the word order is like the following: 1. Subject 2- Predicate 3- Copula verb (Ghandi, 2002, p. 106-109). In the current Farsi, a verb is usually moved to the end of the sentence but this rule is not observed in all cases.

B. Deletion of Verb in the News Headlines

Some verbs are omitted to beautify the phrase or shorten the speech. However, the verb is deleted by literal ellipsis and ellipsis. Therefore, we must know that in sentences with the deletion of the verb by literal ellipsis, the stated verb must be the same with deleted verb in every respect. In Persian, the verb is very important. Verb frequency is one of the principles of writing which structurally makes an utterance more animate if it is used appropriately. Selecting an appropriate verb has been known as an important issue for succeeding in composing the news headlines (Gandhi, 2003, p. 109-110).

The absence of verb in the news headlines is very common and it should not be just perceived as the shorter way to express a news event; rather we can enumerate other objectives for it; for example, employing this language tool makes it possible for writer to say the events indirectly and by this create ambiguity in his words (ibid).

C. Study of Morphological Level of Sentence

1. Lexical Cohesion

Transitional words and phrases, point of view, repetition of basic words and concepts, and general patterns (whether grammatical, lexical or conjunctive) make discourse cohesive. Textual cohesion shows how a writer has consecutively brought together the things he has mentioned in some sentences as allegory, description, and argument. Supporting sentences are arranged in a good paragraph in such a way that create a logical order in reader's mind. To write a cohesive text, one can use the following ways: transitional words and phrases, point of view, and the repetition of basic words and concepts. In other words, to produce a cohesive and meaningful text, facial cohesion factors, that is, lexical, grammatical, and conjunctive elements and non-facial factors including elements of dominant discourse, semantic cohesion and cultural models and also pragmatics factors should be considered.

2. Lexical Redundancy

One of the other inaccuracies which have come into Persian is using words redundantly. In the literary sense, redundancy is putting two synonymous words next to each other attributively or other than that. These two terms are often from one language (Sa'adat, 2005, p.455). Linguistically, redundancy refers to a thing that becomes possible to be predicted or deleted. This concept has been applied in various fields of language study like phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

D. Studying Writing Level of Sentences

The script refers to the written aspect of language and follows a set of rules and principles called "language grammar." The script has to stick to set of standards that we called "script grammar." According to the 15th rule of Iran constitution, a Persian script is the official script of our country. All formal documents, correspondence, and textbooks must be written in this script. Therefore, such script must naturally have known and standardized rules and principles so that everybody establishes and keeps script identity by following those principles (Academy of Persian Language and Literature, 2005). General rules of Persian academic language include the following: Keeping the face of Persian script, Keeping independence of script, Conformity of written to pronounced, Rule comprehensiveness, Ease of writing and reading, Simplicity of teaching rules, Spacing and delimitation of the word for keeping word independence and reading accuracy (ibid).

In studying the constituent order of the sentences in broadcasted news of the news sites in research given the period, 2074 sentences were investigated from which 98 sentences have breached unmarked order of sentence constituents. For instance, five of these sentences were selected from the concerned sites that were as follows:

Such matter has no reason but wrong and often inappropriate interference of human in nature (Alef news site, news code 238390, 1393/05/18)

Unmarked sentence: Such matter except for wrong and often inappropriate interferences of human in nature has no reason.

Make all power of this poor but honest nation consolidated and centralized to get the result (Asr-e- Iran news site, news code 350892, 1393/05/29)

Unmarked sentence: To get the result, consolidate and centralize all power of this poor but honest nation.

On the basis of findings, it became clear that in most cases breach of the constituent order of sentences occur because of disregarding the placement of verb and subject in sentence and displacement of adjectives and/or adverbs in which the constituents order of the sentence is not observed. This is against the syntactic principles of Persian grammar. However, media owners use special techniques to get the addressees attention more. One of these techniques is to make news headlines salient and show their importance. Therefore, through displacing some constituents of the sentence, news writer tries to make his intended important event more significant in addressees' view. For this, he utilizes news saliency technique that causes that some used sentences in the news do not follow the principles of the constituent order of a sentence in Persian so the sentence will be syntactically wrong.

Ninety-eight sentences among the total number of 2074 sentences studied in the research were found as we were considering the constituent order of the sentences in these news sites. In these 98 sentences, the order of sentences constituents was disregarded. This constitutes 4.72% of all studied sentences in this study that are illustrated in the following diagram.

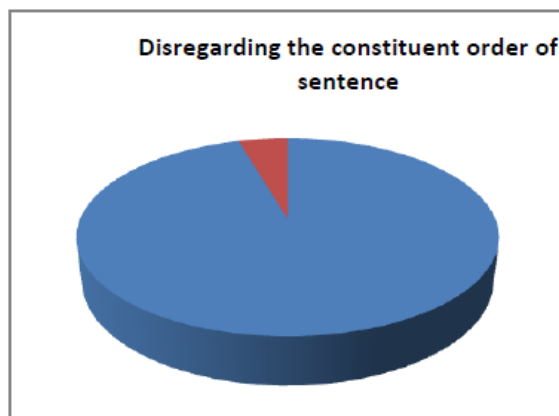


Figure1. Disregarding the constituent order of sentence Total number of sentences Order breach

In a news headline, sentence will not get out of ambiguity until a verb is not added to it, and since primary headline must always make complete sense independently and directly, the verb must be used in it.

While studying asymmetrical verb deletion in the news headlines in the studied news sites, 117 headlines were found in which 45 cases had a deleted verb in their sentences. Five of these sentences, as an example, were selected from the concerned news sites:

Yemenis still looking for achieving Islamic awareness requests

Unmarked sentence: Yemenis still seek to achieve Islamic knowledge requests.

3.2 billion rial raise in research budgets of Gonbad Kavos Azad University

Unmarked sentence: The research budgets of Gonbad Kavos Azad University raised to 3.2 billion rials.

One of the news correspondents' technique for making the news salient is to delete the verb in news headline so that it creates a kind of ambiguity in headline and it motivates addressee to read the rest of news and ne aware of theme of the news. So, this technique is prevalent on the news sites and the main purpose to shorten the sentence and delete verb is making a headline more interesting in addressee's mind.

Regarding asymmetrical verb deletion, 117 news headlines were studied in data among which 45 cases of headlines had a deleted verb. This number comprises 38.46% of all headlines under study in this research that are shown in this figure:

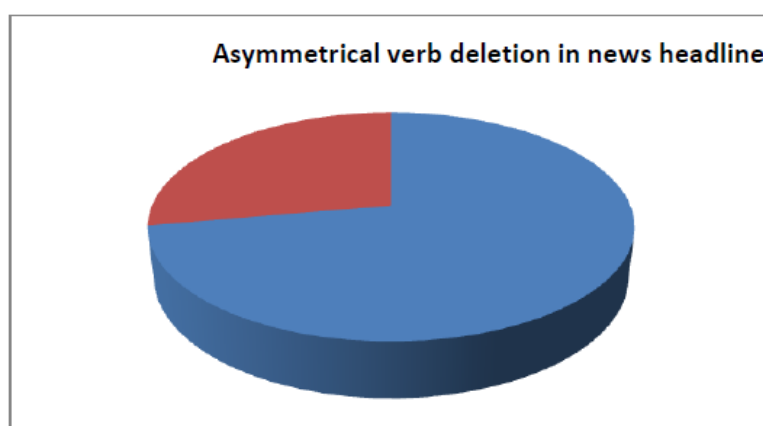


Figure4.2 Asymmetrical verb deletion in news headlines Total number of news headlines Analysis of morphological level of sentence

Lexical cohesion and redundancy were studied in morphological level of the sentences in the news sites and agencies:

1. Lexical cohesion

In forming the text, besides structural relations between the inner parts of the sentence and clause, a number of meta sentence semantic relations is also intelligible that are facially represented by cohesion factors such as reference, substitution, and lexical ellipsis.

We also dealt with studying the repetition process of words in news headlines as we studied the lexical cohesion in the news sites and agencies. On account of this, 117 news headlines were selected from the relevant news sites. The frequency of 10 highly repetitive words of them is as follows:

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
امريكا America	رئيس جمهور president	سوريه Syria	ايران Iran	داعش Daish	سياست politics	مردم people	اقتصاد economy	دولت government	يارانه subsidy	واژه word
6	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	13	15	بسامد تکرار Frequency of repetition

According to research data, it is evident that the most frequent words in the news headlines include the words that are more about people's daily events and economies such as subsidy, government, economy, and people. Following these, attention to political affairs is a top priority. It consists of words like the president, Daesh, America, politics, and Syria. In this range, word "subsidy" has the highest and word "America" the lowest frequency of repetition. This showed the lexical cohesion of the news headlines in the public's favorite areas.

2. Lexical Redundancy

Lexical redundancy is a linguistic error that occurs unconsciously by the news writer as he writes the news text. The news correspondent adds additional explanations to it to make the central theme of the news ambiguous and distract the addressee's mind from the main point. The application of this feature in the news texts is due to the correspondent's lack of mastery in the art of writing the news. The news correspondent's carelessness to clarify of the news text in transferring the message is due to the ambiguousness of the text. The more ambiguity the news text is, the more problem the addressee has in understanding the news. As a result, redundancy in news correspondence should be avoided so that the central theme of the news should be offered clearly to the addressee with brief and striking words in order to be easily perceived by the recipient.

Five sentences of these were selected from the relevant news sites. The sentences in which lexical redundancy was used are the following:

Different Yemeni tribes became united with each other against central government (Alef news site, news code 238395, 26/05/1393)

Lexical redundancy: became united with each other

Referring to this principle is to repeat the last years repetitious things

(Fars news agency, news code 13930529001681, 1393/05/29)

Lexical redundancy: repeating the repetitious things

While studying the lexical redundancy in the news sites sentences, 42 sentences were found from 2074 constituent sentences of the research in which the lexical redundancy was used. This makes up 2.02% of all studied sentences in the study that were shown in the following figure.

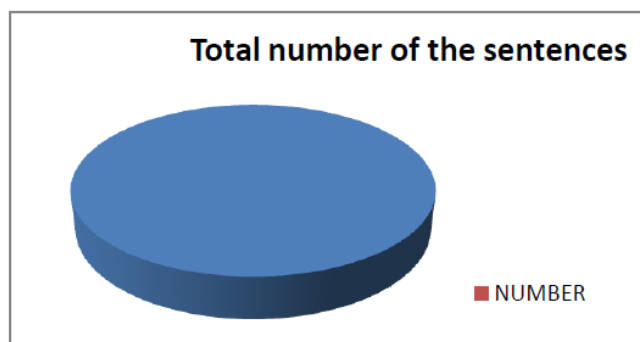


Figure4.3. Use of lexical redundancy in sentences Total number of sentences Using redundancy

In writing level, we studied typographical errors and writing mistakes in broadcasted news on the news sites. These errors are as follows:

Analysis of writing the level of the sentence. When we were studying typographical errors in the news sites sentences, 195 sentences were found from 2074 sentences. They were wrong in following the principles of typing and spelling. As an example, five sentences have been selected from the concerned news sites that are as follows:

Dowlat dar sharayet zamame umur ra be dast gereft ke sakhtarin vazeyate eghtesadi keshvar teye salhaye ba'ad va ghabl az enghelab re dashtim(Alef news site, news code 238418, 1393/05/24).

Correct sentence: Dowlat dar sharayeti zaamame umur ra be dast gereft ke sakhtarin vazeyate eghtesadi keshvar teye salhaye ba'ad va ghabl az enghelab ra dashtim.

Emrooz baraye eghtesad ma az janebe barkhi pinshahad mishavad (Fars news agency, news code 13930529000245, 1393/05/29).

Correct sentence: Emrooz baraye eghtesad ma az janebe barkhi pishnahad mishavad.

Studying typographical errors in the sentences of the news sites, from among 2074 studied sentences, 195 sentences were found in which the sentence was wrong in observing the spelling and typographical principles. This constitutes 9.40% of total studied sentences that are shown in the following diagram:

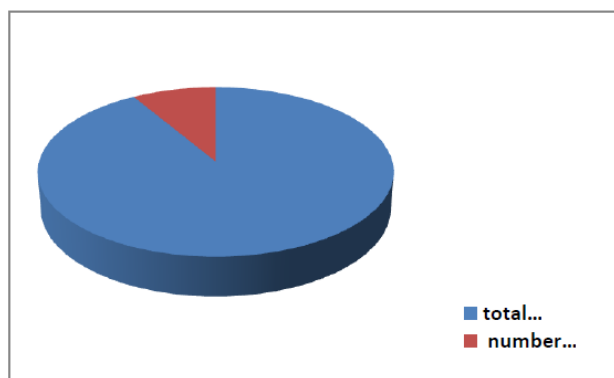


Figure4-4: Typographical errors in the news sites sentences Total number of sentences number of errors

Most of spelling and typographical errors are one or two letters displacement with each other, deletion of one or two letters in a word, wrong typing of one same letter and often repetition of a whole word. The appearance of typographical errors in the news text of the news sites is probably because of high speed in supplying the news and because these bulletins are online and have no time limit for producing news to publish them in special hours. Spelling and typographical errors are completely removed by a little more attention to typing the materials and reviewing and rereading the same materials by another person.

In studying writing mistakes in 2074 sentences in the studied news sites, 385 sentences were found having mistakes in not following the writing principles. Disregarding these principles makes the sentence ambiguous to understand and causes that text reader does not comprehend the writer's intention correctly. Five sentences of these are selected from the relevant sites that will be said in the following:

1- و یاد در صنایع نیروگاهی برای ایجاد هر شغل باید ۹۴۰ میلیون تومان هزینه کرد. (سایت الف، کد خبر 238488، 1393/05/28)

جمله بی نشان: ... و یاد در صنایع نیروگاهی برای ایجاد هر شغل باید ۹۴۰ میلیون تومان هزینه کرد.

2- چراکه کسانی که در این وضعیت بد اقتصادی با به کار انداختن خط تولید برای چند نفر شغل ایجاد می کنند لایق و شایسته احترام هستند. (خبرگزاری فارس، کد خبر 13930529000245، 1393/05/29)

جمله بی نشان: چراکه کسانی که در این وضعیت بد اقتصادی با به کار انداختن خط تولید برای چند نفر شغل ایجاد می کنند لایق و شایسته احترام هستند

385 sentences were found while we were studying writing mistakes in 2074 sentences in the studied news sites. According to the writing principles of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature, these sentences were not true. This consists 18.56% of the studied sentences that were illustrated in the following diagram.



Figure 4.5. Writing mistakes in the news sites sentences Total number of sentences Number of mistakes

Most of the writing mistakes are the following:

1. Disregarding space and semi-space between letters and words
2. Joint writing of words that have two separate parts and they must be written separately.
3. Lack of observing punctuations such as comma, colon, period, and quotation.

A variety of reasons causes that writing principles will not be found in the news of the news sites. These reasons include the following:

1. Observing the writing and editing principles in Iran are related to taste in a way that most media and news agencies owners follow their own special institute's writing principles for composing the news. These principles may not be equal to the enacted writing principles of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature.

2. Some news correspondents are not familiar enough with the news writing and editing principles, and they have empirically learned the arts of writing the news, so this causes the mistakes like these.

3. Many of news correspondents do not have university education related to the field of news correspondence.

4. We do not have complete and comprehensive teaching courses of professional news correspondence in our country, and most correspondents are taught either in university or welcome this profession through the news related institutions. Because there is an abundance of these centers in country and since their offered teachings are not consolidated, we see the appearance of writing, editing, and other linguistic errors in broadcasted news in the country's news sites and agencies.

As we were studying the writing errors in 2074 sentences of the studied news sites, 385 sentences were found which were wrong, according to the observance of the writing principles of Persian language and literature academy. This constitutes 18.56% of the studied sentences. Of these, 205 cases were related to lack of observing comma inappropriate setting of sentence, 185 cases pertained to lack of using correct spacing between letters, 127 cases were relative to incorrect joint writing of words, and 65 cases were joined with lack of following declarative colon in its suitable place. All of these are specified in the following figure.

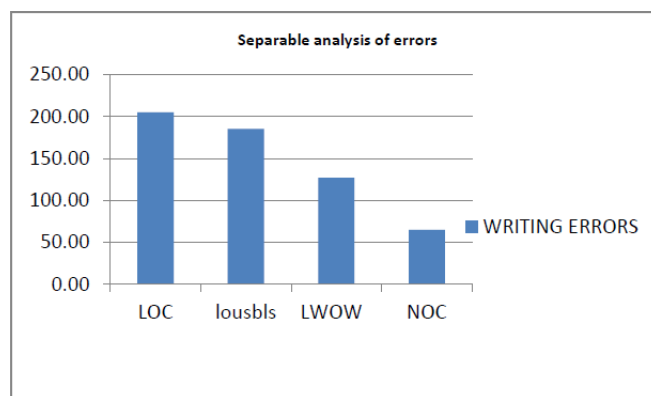


Figure 4.6. Separable analysis of writing errors Writing errors Lack of observing comma Joint writing of words Lack of using space between letters Not using comma

V. CONCLUSION

Since some news of oral speech turns exactly into writing, we also noticed some linguistic errors when the message is transferred from speech into writing. Moreover, one of the saliency techniques of the news by the news correspondents is deleting the verb in the headline. Verb deletion in news headline causes some ambiguity and duality in a headline, and this makes addressee eager to read the rest of the news and get to know the theme of the news. So, this technique is common in the news sites. Typographical errors and lack of using punctuation are the most common writing errors in the news of the news sites and agencies. The findings showed that most of the orthographical and typographical errors include the displacement of one or two letters with each other, deleting one or two letters in a word, wrong typing of one similar letter, and often repeating one whole word. The high-frequency of typological errors in the news texts of the news sites may be due to the high speed in supplying the news of these sites.

Since these bulletins are online and have no time limitation for supplying the news to publish them on certain hours, they try to make their site the first site which makes an event communicated. On account of this, in time of supplying and composing the news, orthographical / spelling writing of the words and their accurate writing may be overlooked so cause errors like these. The spelling and typographical errors will be removed completely with a bit more attention to typing the materials and reviewing and rereading them by another person. In studying lexical cohesion in the news sites and agencies, we looked into the process of lexical repetition in the news headlines. On this basis, 117 headlines were selected from the relevant news sites for which the frequency of 10 highly repetitive words of them is as follows:

Based on the research data, the most frequent words in the news headlines are found to be the words that are more on the daily events of people and their economy such as subsidy, government, economy, and people. After that, political affairs are in the top priority to be minded which includes words like the President, Daesh, America, politics, and Syria. In this range, the word "subsidy" has the highest and "America" the lowest frequency of repetition. It denotes the lexical cohesion of the news headlines in areas that are favored by the general public.

The commonest linguistic error in the sentences used in the news sites and agencies is using lexical redundancy. Lexical redundancy is one of the linguistic errors that unconsciously happen by the news writer as he is corresponding the news text. The correspondent makes the main theme of the news ambiguous by adding additional explanations to it so the addressee's mind will be distracted. The use of this feature in the news texts is due to the news correspondent's

lack of mastery in the arts of news correspondence and his inattention to the candor and clarity of the news text in transferring the message because the more ambiguous the news text is, the more the addressee will be in difficulty to understand the news. Consequently, using redundancy in the news correspondence should be avoided for the news main theme to be communicated to the addressee clearly and explicitly with succinct and interesting words to be understood easily by the addressee.

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