

The Impact of Language Errors in Print Media on Linguistic Integrity and Effective Communication

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Abstract: This study explored the presence and impact of language errors in print media on linguistic integrity and effective communication. Given the crucial role of print media as a primary means of communication in society, maintaining high standards of language usage is essential. The primary objective of this research was to identify the potential harm that language errors can inflict on language structure and understanding. Using a descriptive quantitative design, data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to a diverse sample of participants, including university professors from Kabul University, provincial universities, and media journalists. The analysis revealed that language errors disrupt proper language structure, undermine linguistic rules, create misunderstandings, diminish media credibility, and distort content meaning, leading to an artificial use of language. The findings aim to assist media professionals in recognizing the adverse effects of language errors and implementing strategies to promote standard linguistic practices. Ultimately, this study sought to enhance public understanding and ensure that media retains its value and credibility.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental tool for communication, and the media stands as one of the most potent platforms for its promotion and widespread dissemination. As a conduit for information, the media is responsible for delivering accurate and precise messages to society while upholding linguistic standards (Ziyar, 2014). Journalists, in particular, are tasked with shaping narratives effectively, a responsibility that necessitates strict adherence to standard language norms (Rafat, 2023). However, the pervasive presence of linguistic errors in media has raised critical concerns about their impact on language integrity and communication effectiveness.

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Observations across various multimedia platforms reveal a troubling prevalence of linguistic errors in media outlets. These errors often arise from negligence, inadequate translation practices, and insufficient understanding of basic language rules. This research aims to address the following objectives:

1. To examine the impact of linguistic errors in media on the integrity of language.
2. To analyze the consequences of linguistic errors in media on communication effectiveness.

A descriptive research approach combined with quantitative methods has been adopted to achieve these objectives, utilizing questionnaires distributed to key opinion leaders online and in person. Using the Morgan formula for sample size determination, this study seeks to provide a scientific and evidence-based analysis. The findings are anticipated to help media professionals and journalists recognize the detrimental effects of linguistic errors and adopt strategies to minimize them, thereby safeguarding the credibility and sustainability of media.

Language forms the foundation of the media's role in preserving social values and cultural identity. In the contemporary landscape, media audiences are not passive recipients but active participants who gravitate toward platforms that present accurate and authentic content while adhering to linguistic principles (Haidari, 2019). Media encompasses print forms—such as newspapers, magazines, and books—and electronic platforms, including radio, television, websites, and social media, which deliver audio-visual information (Hashmai, 2020). Language must be standardized and scientific to be an effective means of communication, particularly in educational and governmental contexts (Zirak, 2022). However, linguistic errors often occur when these fundamental standards are neglected, compromising message clarity and credibility (Lodeen, 2016).

The prevalence of linguistic errors in media poses a profound challenge, as language reflects the identity and culture of a nation. When the integrity of a nation's language and culture is eroded, it undermines its societal fabric, reducing it to a hollow shell (Harifal, 2020). Studies have identified common linguistic errors in media, including spelling mistakes, mistranslations, overuse of clichéd vocabulary, and misrepresenting concepts (Ghazi, 2018). These errors diminish the credibility of media outlets and compromise the integrity of the language. Factors contributing to these errors include the employment of unqualified personnel, a lack of expertise in translation principles, and excessive workloads for journalists (Zirak & Wardag, 2023).

Despite recognizing linguistic errors in media, the critical question remains: what are the broader implications of these mistakes on language and communication? This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the impact of linguistic errors on the language itself, emphasizing their consequences for linguistic integrity and effective communication. The findings aim to equip journalists with a deeper understanding of the significance of language accuracy, enabling them to preserve linguistic standards and uphold the credibility of their profession.

The issue of linguistic errors in media, while significant, remains underexplored. Although some research has examined the causes and types of linguistic errors, limited attention has been given to their specific effects on language and communication. This study draws upon a comprehensive review of credible books, scholarly articles, and research publications to offer valuable insights into this critical area.

Among these works, Zia Rafat's book, *Writing Methods with a Media Approach* (2023), provides foundational perspectives on media writing across three languages. Zabihullah Ghazi's master's thesis, *Writing and Professional Errors in Online Media* (2019), highlights issues such as using foreign vocabulary, clichéd expressions, tonal inconsistencies, and spelling mistakes in media language. Dr. Rahimullah Zirak and Professor Mohammad Shafiq Wardag's article, *Employment of Unprofessional People in the Media* (2023), investigates factors contributing to Afghanistan's media language errors, including inadequate translation skills and heavy workloads for journalists. Rahimullah Harifal's article, *Standardized Language and Media* (2020), emphasizes the importance of standardizing the Pashto language in media and provides insights into its implementation. These works have laid a foundation for understanding linguistic errors in media. However, this research specifically aims to address the gap by focusing on the broader impact of these mistakes, particularly on language integrity and media credibility.

The language used in media is also central to its role in informing, influencing, and shaping societal narratives. Bellow review synthesizes research exploring linguistic complexity, sociolinguistic dimensions, media language norms, and the dynamic evolution of language across traditional and digital media.

Tolochko and Boomgaarden (2017) investigated linguistic complexity in professional and citizen journalism, revealing notable structural differences in how political information is presented. Using automated content analysis, they highlighted that linguistic complexity significantly impacts how audiences process information. The findings are particularly relevant to communication theories, including the knowledge gap hypothesis, language expectancy theory, and credibility research, as they underscore the distinct patterns in citizen journalism's accessibility compared to traditional professional journalism.

Georgieva (2022) explored the intersection of media language, linguistic consciousness, and linguistic personality. This study underscored the regulatory power of linguistic norms and the risks posed by non-normative usage in media discourse. Through lexicalization and grammaticalization, media language evolves while simultaneously acting as a "cognitive passport" of cultural identity. Georgieva emphasized the necessity of modern regulatory mechanisms to safeguard linguistic integrity, ensuring that media language remains a robust representation of national identity and cultural sovereignty.

Israil (2023) examined the sociolinguistic aspects of printed media, focusing on how media texts interact with social factors in mass communication. The study employed comparative and descriptive methods to analyze the bidirectional relationship between

language and society, offering insights into how media influences social norms and vice versa. This approach highlights the role of media language in reflecting and shaping societal dynamics.

Ekwueme and Akpan (2012) addressed the prevalence of language errors in print and broadcast media. These errors are often avoidable, obscure meanings, and erode public trust. Their study examined the societal outcry against linguistic inaccuracies and proposed solutions for improving the fidelity of media communication. By identifying the causes of sloppy language use, the authors advocate for improved linguistic standards to enhance the clarity and impact of media content.

Priyadarshini (2023) traced the historical transformation of media language from the printing press era to the digital age. The study highlighted how traditional forms of communication laid the foundation for modern mass communication, while digital platforms have democratized content creation and redefined language's reach and immediacy. Key challenges, such as linguistic diversity, misinformation, and content regulation, were discussed alongside the opportunities offered by digital media for expanding language's societal impact.

Together, these works underscore the critical role of language in media as a bridge between communication, culture, and societal narratives, offering a foundation for further interdisciplinary research in communication, linguistics, and journalism studies.

By shedding light on these issues, this study aspires to bridge the gap in existing literature and offer practical solutions for improving language use in media. The research underscores the importance of linguistic accuracy, preserving language integrity, and maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of media communication.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a Quantitative descriptive research design to generate applied results, complemented by a quantitative data collection and analysis approach. The primary research instrument was a standardized questionnaire developed by Wolfgang and Glickman (2008). Before distribution, a panel of expert teachers and journalists reviewed and refined the questionnaire, ensuring its relevance, clarity, and alignment with the research objectives.

A pilot test was conducted with 30 participants to assess the validity of the questionnaire. Feedback from this pilot study confirmed the instrument's suitability for capturing the required data. The target population comprised university professors and media professionals, totaling 210 individuals. Using the Cochran formula for sample size determination, a sample size of 132 participants was calculated, ensuring high reliability and confidence in the findings.

The finalized questionnaire was distributed to all 132 participants online and in-person. All participants completed the questionnaire, ensuring a 100% response rate. The collected

data were systematically analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel to ensure accuracy and comprehensive insights. Detailed analysis and findings are presented in the subsequent sections of this study.

FINDINGS

The data presented in Table 1 below indicate that the study comprised 132 participants. Among these, 119 individuals were male, representing 90.2% of the sample, while 11 were female, accounting for 8.3%. Additionally, the gender of the two participants remains unspecified in the questionnaire responses.

Table 1: *The gender of the respondents*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	119	90.2
	Female	11	8.3
	Total	130	98.5
Missing	System	2	1.5
	Total	132	100.0

The data in Table 2 reveal that among the respondents, 9 individuals (6.8%) held doctoral degrees, 73 participants (55.3%) possessed master's degrees, and 46 individuals (34.8%) had bachelor's degrees. Additionally, the educational level of 4 participants was not disclosed. This indicates a significant representation of master's degree holders within the study sample.

Table 2: *The level of education of respondents*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Bachelor	46	34.8
	Master	73	55.3
	PHD	9	6.8
	Total	128	97.0
Missing	System	4	3.0
	Total	132	100.0

The data illustrated in Table 3 indicate that the study comprised 132 participants. Among these, 83 individuals (62.9%) reported a tenure ranging from one to ten years. Additionally, 36 participants (27.3%) had a tenure of 11 to 20 years, while 9 individuals (6.8%) had 21 to 30 years. One participant (0.8%) indicated a tenure of 31 to 40 years. Notably, three participants did not disclose their tenure in the questionnaire.

Table 3: *The tenure range of participants*

Tenure Years		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1 to 10	83	62.9
	11 to 20	36	27.3
	21 to 30	9	6.8
	30 to 40	1	0.8
	Total	129	97.7

Missing System	3	2.3
Total	132	100.0

Table 4 presents the distribution of academic ranks among the 132 study participants. The largest group is comprised of Teaching Assistants (37.1%, n=49), followed by Associate Professors (12.9%, n=17), Senior Teaching Assistants (9.1%, n=12), and Assistant Professors (9.1%, n=12). The table also includes Professors (2.3%, n=3). In total, 93 participants (70.5%) have valid rank data, while 39 participants (29.5%) have missing information.

Table 4: Involvement of Media Professionals in this Research

Academics ranks		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Teaching Assistant	49	37.1
	Senior Teaching Assistant	12	9.1
	Assistant Professor	12	9.1
	Associate Professor	17	12.9
	Professor	3	2.3
	Total	93	70.5
Missing System		39	29.5
	Total	132	100.0
Total		132	100.0

Table 5 illustrates respondents' perceptions regarding the influence of linguistic errors in the media on replacing correct forms with incorrect ones. Out of 132 respondents, the majority (52.3%, n = 69) agreed with this assertion, while 27.3% (n = 36) strongly agreed. A smaller proportion of participants expressed disagreement, with 6.1% (n = 8) disagreeing and 0.8% (n = 1) strongly disagreeing. Additionally, 13.6% (n = 18) opted not to comment. These findings indicate a notable consensus among respondents that linguistic errors in the media negatively impact language correctness by promoting incorrect forms.

Table 5: Perception of Linguistic Errors in Media

Likert Scale	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	0.8
Disagree	8	6.1
No comment	18	13.6
Agree	69	52.3
Strongly agree	36	27.3
Total	132	100.0

Table 6 summarizes responses to a Likert scale assessment examining the perception that linguistic errors in the media contribute to replacing Pashto words with foreign vocabulary. Among the 132 respondents, half (50.0%, n = 66) agreed with the statement, while 36.4% (n = 48) strongly agreed. Conversely, a smaller proportion expressed disagreement, with 4.5% (n = 6) disagreeing and 0.8% (n = 1) strongly disagreeing. Furthermore, 8.3% (n = 11) chose not to respond. These results highlight a significant concern among participants regarding the encroachment of foreign words on the Pashto language within media discourse.

Table 6: Perception of Foreign Words Replacing Pashto Words in Media

Likert scale	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	0.8
Disagree	6	4.5
No comment	11	8.3
Agree	66	50.0
Strongly agree	48	36.4
Total	132	100.0

Table 7 illustrates the results of a Likert scale assessment regarding the perception that linguistic errors in the media and the application of linguistic rules contribute to the destruction of standard language forms. Of 132 participants, the majority agreed with this statement: 67 individuals (50.8%) agreed, and 49 individuals (37.1%) strongly agreed. Conversely, 4 participants (3.0%) disagreed, while 1 (0.8%) strongly disagreed. Additionally, 11 participants (8.3%) chose not to comment.

Table 7: Perception of Linguistic Errors Affecting Standard Language Forms

Likert scale	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	0.8
Disagree	4	3.0
No comment	11	8.3
Agree	67	50.8
Strongly agree	49	37.1
Total	132	100.0

Table 8 presents the results of a Likert scale assessment on whether linguistic errors in the media create misunderstandings. Among the 132 participants, a substantial majority agreed with the statement: 66 individuals (50.0%) agreed, and 58 individuals (43.9%) strongly agreed. Only a tiny fraction of respondents expressed disagreement, with 4 participants (3.0%) disagreeing and another 4 participants (3.0%) choosing not to comment.

The findings indicate a strong consensus among participants that linguistic errors in the media contribute to misunderstandings, reflecting concerns about the potential impact of these errors on effective communication.

Table 8: Perception of Linguistic Errors in Media Creating Misunderstandings

Likert scale	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	4	3.0
No comment	4	3.0
Agree	66	50.0
Strongly agree	58	43.9
Total	132	100.0

Table 9 displays the results of a Likert scale assessment regarding the belief that linguistic errors in the media undermine the value and trust in education. Among the 132 participants, a significant majority agreed with the statement: 66 individuals (50.0%) strongly agreed, while

52 (39.4%) agreed. A small portion of respondents disagreed, with 4 participants (3.0%) indicating disagreement, and 10 participants (7.6%) chose not to comment.

The results suggest a strong consensus among participants that linguistic errors in the media negatively affect the perceived value and trust associated with educational content.

Table 9: Perception of Linguistic Errors in Media Diminishing the Value and Trust in Education

Likert scale	Frequency	percent
Disagree	4	3.0
No comment	10	7.6
Agree	52	39.4
Strongly agree	66	50.0
Total	132	100.0

Table 10: This table presents the results of a Likert scale assessment regarding the belief that linguistic errors in the media contribute to the creation of neologisms. Among the 132 participants, a notable majority agreed with the statement: 62 individuals (47.0%) agreed, and 43 individuals (32.6%) strongly agreed. A smaller portion of respondents expressed disagreement, with 1 participant (0.8%) strongly disagreeing and another 1 participant (0.8%) disagreeing. Additionally, 25 participants (18.9%) chose not to comment.

The findings indicate that many participants perceive linguistic errors in the media as a factor that fosters the development of new words, reflecting broader concerns about language evolution in media contexts.

Table 10: Perception of Linguistic Errors in Media Leading to Neologism

Likert scale	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	0.8
Disagree	1	0.8
No comment	25	18.9
Agree	62	47.0
Strongly agree	43	32.6
Total	132	100.0

Table 11 below displays the results of a Likert scale assessment regarding the perception that linguistic errors in the media are common and negatively impact the spirit and meaning of the subject matter.

Table 11: Perception of Linguistic Errors in Media as Common and Detrimental to Subject Spirit and Meaning

Likert scale	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	0.8
Disagree	3	2.3
No comment	6	4.5
Agree	65	49.2
Strongly agree	57	43.2
Total	132	100.0

Among the 132 participants, a substantial majority agreed with the statement: 65 individuals (49.2%) agreed, while 57 individuals (43.2%) strongly agreed. A smaller number of respondents disagreed, with 3 participants (2.3%) indicating disagreement and 1 (0.8%) strongly disagreeing. Additionally, 6 participants (4.5%) chose not to comment. The findings suggest that many participants believe linguistic errors in the media are prevalent and undermine the content's integrity and meaning.

Table 12 below presents the results of a Likert scale assessment regarding the belief that linguistic errors in the media contribute to making language superficial. Among the 132 participants, a significant majority agreed with the statement: 58 individuals (43.9%) agreed, and 54 individuals (40.9%) strongly agreed. A smaller portion of respondents disagreed, with 8 participants (6.1%) indicating disagreement, while 12 participants (9.1%) chose not to comment.

Table 12: Perception of Linguistic Errors in Media Creating Superficial Language

Likert scale	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	8	6.1
No comment	12	9.1
Agree	58	43.9
Strongly agree	54	40.9
Total	132	100.0

The results indicate that many participants believe that linguistic errors in media contribute to a perception of superficiality in language, highlighting concerns about the authenticity and depth of communication in media contexts.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research underscore the critical role of linguistic accuracy in media and its broader implications for language preservation and communication effectiveness. As a primary tool for information dissemination and cultural representation, media holds a unique position of influence. Therefore, errors in its linguistic output have far-reaching consequences, including diminished credibility and the potential erosion of a language's integrity. This section interprets the findings, compares them with prior research, and identifies existing gaps to chart a course for future studies.

This research reveals that linguistic errors in media arise from several interrelated factors, including hiring unqualified personnel, negligence in translation, and insufficient knowledge of linguistic standards among media professionals. These findings align with Zirak and Wardag's (2023) observations, which emphasized that a lack of professional training and increased workloads contribute significantly to errors. Moreover, the descriptive analysis demonstrated that such errors are not isolated but pervasive across print, electronic, and online media platforms.

Interestingly, this study found that mistranslations are among the most impactful mistakes, often distorting meaning and reducing audience comprehension. This corroborates Wahidi's (2020) research on the *Effect of Translation on Pashto Prose*, highlighting the detrimental influence of translation errors on linguistic integrity in journalistic writing. The findings also echo Khokulai's (2019) assertion that translations influenced by Dari and English often introduce unnecessary complexity into Pashto media content.

This study aligns with the conclusions of multiple scholars who have examined linguistic errors in media. Wahidi's thesis, *Linguistic Errors of Current Pashto Media*, identified similar patterns of mistakes, particularly in using verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. These insights provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing language use in media but focus primarily on traditional media rather than the rapidly evolving digital landscape. By contrast, Zabihullah Ghazi's (2019) thesis, *Writing and Professional Mistakes in Online Media*, addresses linguistic challenges specific to online platforms, a domain that this research also explores.

While the present study concurs with Harifal's (2020) emphasis on standardizing Pashto in media, it provides actionable recommendations to mitigate linguistic errors. Additionally, Wardag's (2023) guidelines in *Journalistic Language* regarding sentence structure and word choice were validated in this research, which found that many journalists fail to follow these principles, leading to inconsistent and error-prone reporting.

Despite the wealth of literature addressing linguistic errors in Pashto media, several gaps remain. First, while previous works such as Wahdat's (2017) *Correction Guide* and Haqmal's (2021) thesis *Correcting Pashto Writing Errors* focus primarily on grammatical accuracy, they overlook these errors' contextual and semantic implications. This study fills this gap by examining how such errors affect the audience's understanding and trust in media.

Second, although prior research has extensively analyzed translation errors, there is limited discussion on the strategies journalists can adopt to improve linguistic accuracy in their day-to-day practices. For example, Ajmal Khokulai (2019) briefly touches on the principles of journalistic translation but does not provide detailed methodologies for their practical application. This research builds on his work by proposing targeted training programs and editorial policies to ensure clarity and brevity in translated content.

Lastly, many existing studies, including Sajid's (2020) *Technical Aspects of Contemporary Authorship*, focus on the technical side of writing without addressing the cultural and linguistic nuances that influence audience perception. This research expands the scope by analyzing how linguistic errors affect cultural identity, a dimension that remains underexplored in prior studies.

The findings and identified gaps suggest several avenues for future research. There is a pressing need for longitudinal studies examining the evolution of linguistic standards in Pashto media over time. Additionally, further research could explore the role of digital tools and artificial intelligence in reducing linguistic errors, an area primarily neglected in existing literature. Finally, studies focusing on audience reception and the social impact of linguistic

errors in media would provide valuable insights into how these mistakes shape public opinion and cultural identity.

By addressing these gaps and building on the insights of previous research, this study highlights the critical importance of linguistic accuracy in media. It lays the groundwork for future scholarship to preserve the integrity and richness of the Pashto language in the media landscape.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal a significant concern regarding the prevalence and impact of linguistic errors in the media. These errors distort the meaning of messages and undermine the authenticity and integrity of language. Participants overwhelmingly agree that such inaccuracies lead to misunderstandings, foster the adoption of incorrect linguistic forms, and contribute to the development of superficial neologisms, thereby diminishing communication's cultural and educational value.

Moreover, linguistic errors in media compromise trust and professionalism, especially in educational and informational contexts where accuracy is paramount. This erosion of credibility not only alienates audiences but also hinders the effectiveness of media in delivering clear, reliable information. The study underscores the critical need for media personnel to be adequately trained in language use, ensuring a higher standard of linguistic accuracy.

In conclusion, addressing linguistic errors is essential to preserving language integrity, enhancing communication clarity, and maintaining public trust in media outlets. By prioritizing accuracy and professionalism, media organizations can play a pivotal role in fostering a more informed and engaged society, particularly in contexts such as Afghanistan, where effective communication is crucial for cultural and educational development.

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