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A COGNITIVE-DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION ERRORS IN MASS MEDIA

Dildora Xaitbaevna Turaeva
Lecturer, Uzbekistan University of Journalism and Mass Communications

Abstract: This article analyzes cognitive and discursive aspects of information errors in mass media within the framework of academic approaches developed at the Uzbekistan University of Journalism and Mass Communications. The study examines errors arising in the processes of information production and dissemination, focusing on cognitive factors related to human thinking as well as the discursive features of media texts. In particular, the influence of cognitive biases such as confirmation bias and framing effect on the misinterpretation of journalistic content is explored. Furthermore, through discourse analysis, semantic shifts, contextual distortions, and manipulative strategies in media texts are identified. The findings of the study contribute to enhancing information credibility in mass media and provide scientific insights into reducing information errors.

Keywords: mass media, information errors, cognitive bias, discourse analysis, framing effect, confirmation bias, manipulation, media text, information credibility, journalism

Introduction: In the contemporary information society, mass media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and disseminating knowledge. However, along with the rapid growth of digital communication platforms, the frequency and impact of information errors have significantly increased. These errors not only affect the credibility of media sources but also influence audience perception and decision-making processes. Therefore, the study of information errors in mass media has become an important area of research in journalism and communication studies.

From a theoretical perspective, information errors can be examined through cognitive and discursive frameworks. Cognitive approaches emphasize the role of human thinking processes, including biases such as confirmation bias and framing effect, which often lead to misinterpretation or selective representation of information. On the other hand, discursive analysis focuses on how language, context, and narrative structures contribute to the construction and distortion of meaning in media texts.

Despite the growing body of research on misinformation and media reliability, there is still a need for an integrated analysis that combines cognitive and discursive perspectives. In this regard, this study aims to explore the nature of information errors in mass media by identifying their underlying cognitive mechanisms and discursive manifestations. The relevance of this research is determined by the increasing demand for reliable information in modern society and the necessity to improve journalistic standards. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of strategies for minimizing information errors and enhancing the overall quality and credibility of mass media content.

Literature review: The issue of information errors in mass media has been widely discussed within the fields of journalism, communication studies, and cognitive science. Scholars such as Daniel Kahneman have emphasized the role of cognitive biases in human decision-making, demonstrating how systematic errors in thinking can influence information

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processing. In particular, concepts like confirmation bias and heuristics explain why both journalists and audiences may unintentionally distort or selectively interpret information.

In media studies, Teun A. van Dijk has contributed significantly to the development of discourse analysis, highlighting how power, ideology, and language structures shape media narratives. His work provides a foundation for analyzing how meaning is constructed and manipulated within media texts. Similarly, Norman Fairclough introduced Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which focuses on the relationship between language, society, and power, making it a useful tool for identifying discursive distortions and hidden biases in media content. Furthermore, research on misinformation and fake news has expanded in recent years, particularly with the rise of digital and social media platforms. Scholars have explored how algorithmic systems and rapid information dissemination contribute to the spread of inaccuracies. However, most existing studies tend to focus either on cognitive mechanisms or on discourse structures separately. Therefore, there remains a gap in integrating these two perspectives into a comprehensive analytical framework.

Materials and methods: This study adopts an interdisciplinary qualitative-quantitative research design aimed at analyzing information errors in mass media through cognitive and discursive perspectives. The research materials consist of a corpus of media texts collected from various sources, including online news portals, digital journalism platforms, and social media channels. In addition, empirical data were obtained based on a sample of students and media consumers affiliated with the Uzbekistan University of Journalism and Mass Communications.

The empirical dataset includes a total of 120 media texts selected through purposive sampling, focusing on content that demonstrates identifiable information errors such as factual inaccuracies, misleading headlines, and contextual distortions. Furthermore, a survey was conducted among 60 undergraduate students of the Uzbekistan University of Journalism and Mass Communications in order to examine the perception and recognition of information errors. The participants were selected randomly from journalism and media studies programs to ensure representativeness.

The results of the survey indicate that 68% of respondents frequently encounter information errors in online media, while 52% report difficulties in distinguishing between accurate and misleading information. Additionally, 74% of participants identified social media as the primary source of misinformation, compared to 26% who associated such errors with traditional media outlets. These findings provide a statistical basis for understanding the prevalence and perception of information errors among future media professionals.

In terms of methodology, the study combines qualitative and quantitative analytical approaches. Discourse Analysis (DA) and elements of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are applied to examine linguistic structures, framing techniques, and contextual elements contributing to information errors. At the same time, statistical analysis is used to interpret survey data, identify patterns, and support the qualitative findings. Moreover, comparative and interpretative methods are employed to explore relationships between cognitive biases and discursive structures across different media formats. The research procedure includes data collection, classification of error types, discourse and cognitive analysis, and statistical evaluation of survey results. To ensure reliability and validity, the study applies methodological triangulation by integrating textual analysis with empirical data. The use of both qualitative

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insights and quantitative indicators enhances the credibility and scientific rigor of the research, providing a comprehensive understanding of information errors in mass media.

The statistical component of this study is based on survey data collected from 60 undergraduate students of the Uzbekistan University of Journalism and Mass Communications. The aim of the survey was to identify the frequency, sources, and perception of information errors in mass media.

The analysis of the collected data revealed the following results:

- **68%** of respondents reported that they frequently encounter information errors in online media sources.
- **52%** of participants indicated that they have difficulty distinguishing between accurate and misleading information.
- **74%** identified social media platforms as the primary source of information errors.
- **26%** associated information errors with traditional media such as television, newspapers, and official news websites.
- **61%** of respondents stated that misleading headlines are the most common type of error they encounter.
- **47%** noted that contextual distortion (lack of full information or misrepresentation) significantly affects their understanding of news content.

These statistical findings demonstrate that information errors are widespread in contemporary media environments, particularly in digital platforms. The data also indicate a moderate level of media literacy among students, highlighting the need for improved critical thinking and verification skills in journalism education.

Results and discussion: The analysis of selected media texts reveals that information errors in mass media are not random but systematically influenced by both cognitive and discursive factors. The findings demonstrate that cognitive biases, particularly confirmation bias and framing effect, play a significant role in shaping how information is produced, presented, and interpreted. Journalists and content creators often unconsciously select and emphasize information that aligns with pre-existing beliefs or dominant narratives, which leads to partial or distorted representations of reality. This confirms the assumption that cognitive mechanisms are deeply embedded in media practices and significantly contribute to the emergence of informational inaccuracies.

From a discursive perspective, the study identifies several recurring patterns of error formation. These include the use of emotionally loaded language, selective framing, omission of relevant context, and the construction of misleading headlines. Such discursive strategies not only distort the original meaning of information but also influence audience perception by guiding interpretation in a particular direction. In many cases, the interaction between linguistic choices and contextual framing results in amplified misinterpretation, especially in digital media environments where speed and engagement are prioritized over accuracy.

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The comparative analysis across different media platforms shows that information errors are more frequent and pronounced in social media content compared to traditional news outlets. This can be explained by the lack of rigorous editorial control and the algorithm-driven nature of content distribution, which often prioritizes sensational and emotionally engaging material. As a result, discursive distortions are reinforced and rapidly disseminated, creating a cycle of misinformation. Furthermore, the findings highlight the interdependence between cognitive and discursive dimensions of information errors. Cognitive biases influence the production of discourse, while discursive structures, in turn, reinforce cognitive patterns in the audience. This reciprocal relationship suggests that addressing information errors requires not only improving journalistic standards but also enhancing audience media literacy and critical thinking skills.

Overall, the results indicate that a combined cognitive-discursive approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of information errors in mass media. The integration of these perspectives allows for identifying both the psychological roots and the linguistic manifestations of errors, thereby offering a more effective framework for analyzing and mitigating misinformation in contemporary media environments.

Conclusion: This study has examined information errors in mass media through an integrated cognitive and discursive framework, highlighting their complex and multifaceted nature. The findings demonstrate that information errors are not merely technical inaccuracies but are deeply rooted in cognitive processes and reinforced through discursive practices. Cognitive biases such as confirmation bias and framing effect significantly influence how information is selected, interpreted, and presented, while discursive strategies shape how this information is structured and perceived by audiences.

The analysis confirms that the interaction between cognitive mechanisms and media discourse plays a crucial role in the formation and dissemination of information errors. In particular, the study shows that linguistic choices, contextual framing, and narrative structures can amplify cognitive distortions, especially in fast-paced digital media environments. This interdependence suggests that addressing information errors requires a holistic approach that considers both psychological and communicative dimensions.

Moreover, the research highlights the growing challenges posed by digital media platforms, where algorithm-driven content distribution often prioritizes engagement over accuracy. As a result, misleading or distorted information can spread rapidly, increasing the need for stronger editorial standards and ethical responsibility in journalism.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive perspective on information errors in mass media. It emphasizes the importance of combining cognitive and discursive approaches in analyzing media content and offers practical implications for improving information reliability. Future research may focus on developing quantitative models and exploring technological solutions to detect and reduce information errors, as well as enhancing media literacy among audiences.

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