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Lexical Cohesion Analysis on Articles of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict in Arabic and English Online Newspapers

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Abstract

Discourse studies on the Russia-Ukraine conflict have been conducted in the past few years, especially in newspapers. Comparative studies on the media in several countries have been widely carried out; however, none so far focused on comparing Arabic and English newspapers. Thus, this article aimed to examine the lexical cohesion of Arabic and English newspapers to identify each newspaper's tendency to represent the conflict. Aljazeera and The Guardian newspaper were designated as subjects of the study, in which five opinions published in March 2022 by each newspaper were purposively selected as data sources. Data was collected through internet archival documentation techniques and analysed by referring to the lexical cohesion theory framework proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013). The results showed that repetition was the dominant cohesive device used in Aljazeera, whereas repetition and collocation were the most used lexical cohesion devices in The Guardian. The use of these lexical cohesion devices showed that Aljazeera took a neutral position in representing conflicts and actors. On the other hand, The Guardian tended to side with Ukraine while framing Russia and Putin negatively. Differences in these tendencies were due to the differences in interests. Aljazeera could stay impartial because Qatar had no political interests in the conflict. By contrast, The Guardian was

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positioning itself against Russia and Putin because Britain had economic and geopolitical interests in the conflict.

Keywords: Arabic, English, lexical cohesion, online newspapers, Russia-Ukraine conflict.

1. INTRODUCTION

The escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in early 2022 prompted many journalists, academicians, and observers to share their opinions in various newspapers. Based on diverse perspectives and goals, these widely accessible opinions contain tendencies and partialities that are used as tools by certain parties to shape public perceptions (Awad AlAfnan, 2019). On the one hand, some opinions focus on neutrally describing the conflict, identifying the parties involved, and mapping the impacts of conflict on various sectors of human life (‘Alim, 2022; Aqtay, 2022; Salih, 2022). On the other hand, some opinions aggressively propagate the anti-war movement, demonization of actors, and countries’ reactions to refugees (de Gruyter, 2022; Jones, 2022a, 2022b). This narrative pattern is not much different from the strategic narrative circulated during the previous Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2014 (Roman et al., 2017; Szostek, 2018a).

As revealed in several previous studies, the intensity of mass media involvement in the Russia-Ukraine conflict reflects the reality of the conflict as hybrid warfare (Pasitselska, 2017; Stănescu, 2022; Veljovski et al., 2017). As digital instruments, online newspapers are no longer positioned as information distributors, but more than that, they have become the main component of a proxy war that has a significant impact on a conflict (Pasitselska, 2017; Veljovski et al., 2017). A study by Ojala and Pantti (2017), Roman et al. (2017), and Fengler et al. (2020) showed that there are differences in the narratives of conflict in newspapers in various countries: Russia, Ukraine, Sweden, Poland, English, United States of America, Albania, Czech Republic, Germany, Latvia, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Switzerland. These studies concluded that the newspapers provide narrative tendencies through the lexical choices used to represent conflicts and actors. Critically, narrative tendencies are determined by the interests of power in each country (Fengler et al., 2020).

With lexical selection as a stage of discourse production in newspapers, the researchers then directed discursive analysis at the lexical level. Lexical cohesion as a feature of analysis functions to uncover various hidden interests behind a discourse (Nijat, 2022; Robert, 2019; Shahnaz & Imtiaz, 2014). Several studies revealed the importance of lexical cohesion in writing opinions in newspapers. Cohesive devices organize texts, build internal meanings, and connect texts with writers, readers, contexts, and culture (Ayyash, 2016; Huneety et al., 2019). In newspapers, the most widely used lexical cohesion devices are repetition and collocation (Dontcheva-Navrátilová et al., 2018; Huneety et al., 2019; Malah et al., 2016; Rostami & Gholami, 2016). These two devices are considered the most effective in creating textual continuity (Huneety et al., 2019). In connection with these facts, an analysis of lexical cohesion on the narratives of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in newspapers in various countries is interesting to conduct.

The constellation earlier discussed creates a gap because no study has compared Arabic and English news. The narratives in Arabic newspapers are quite crucial and significant because they play an important role in the global geopolitical dynamics; hence, the Russia-Ukraine conflict's narratives in Arabic newspapers need to be investigated. For example, the opinions of [Al-Rasyid \(2022\)](#) and [Ja'far \(2022\)](#) published in Aljazeera explained the conflict comprehensively and multi-perspectival. This description differs from The Guardian's narrative, which tends to favour one country ([Jones, 2022a, 2022b; Menon, 2022](#)). As initial data, this phenomenon would be interesting to explore because both newspapers can be used as a representation of Arabic and English mass media. Based on the arguments in the previous studies, a discourse analysis of the two newspapers will be able to reveal their tendencies in describing the conflict. Thus, the results of the study can be the basis for mapping the alignment of newspaper owners in the conflict. In line with that, this article would like to answer two main questions:

1. What are the types of lexical cohesion in the Russia-Ukraine conflict articles in Aljazeera and The Guardian newspapers, and what is the frequency of use of each type?
2. How do Aljazeera and The Guardian tend to represent the Russia-Ukraine conflict through the use of lexical cohesion?

The study was conducted by referring to the theoretical framework of lexical cohesion proposed by [Halliday and Matthiessen \(2013\)](#). Based on [Halliday and Matthiessen's \(2013\)](#) theory, the types of lexical cohesion consist of repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, co-hyponymy, meronymy, co-meronymy, and collocation. Referring to the arguments of [Shahnaz and Imtiaz \(2014\)](#), [Robert \(2019\)](#), and [Nijat \(2022\)](#), these cohesive devices were used to present ideas about the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Aljazeera and The Guardian newspapers. Along with that, an analysis of lexical cohesion can be used as a basis for mapping the discourse tendencies of the two newspapers in describing the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Lexical Cohesion in Arabic and English

In Arabic, cohesion and coherence are two things that have received the attention of many researchers in recent years ([Al-Hindawi & Abu-Krooz, 2017](#)). Al-Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims is one of the objects that is widely discussed. The studies of [Ilyas \(2014\)](#) and [Abbas \(2020\)](#) showed that there is cohesiveness in the narration in a series of verses in the Qur'an. In the study of [Abbas \(2020\)](#), lexical cohesion appears mostly in narrative verses, while grammatical cohesion is dominant in conversational verses. This study reinforced the findings of [Ilyas \(2014\)](#) in short letters which emphasized that cohesive devices in the form of repetition and synonymy are dominant. In a more practical context, [Tabrizi and Mahmud \(2013\)](#) conducted a contrastive study between the Qur'an and its translation in English. Analysing five translated works, [Tabrizi and Mahmud \(2013\)](#) identified differences in translating synonymy. They concluded that common and cultural issues pose challenges in adapting lexical cohesion from the Qur'an into English.

In more detailed studies, the differences in lexical cohesion in Arabic and English can be elaborated in a more detailed manner. Several recent studies concluded that Arabic is more dominant in lexical cohesion, whereas English is more dominant in grammatical cohesion (Al-Hindawi & Abu-Krooz, 2017; Huneety et al., 2019). This conclusion is rather strong because it is based on the data collected from various academic written texts, news articles, religion, and literature. In more profound elaboration Hashemi Aghdam and Hadidi (2015) and Igaab and Abdulhasan (2018) found that repetition, synonymy, and collocation are the most numerous cohesive Arabic devices in a variety of texts. The differences in the types of cohesion found in the two languages are due to differences in the elaboration of indexical devices in building cohesive relationships (Dontcheva-Navrátilová et al., 2018). Meanwhile, different findings were presented in the study of Farghal (2017). Farghal (2017) confirmed his finding that lexical cohesion has the same amount in Arabic and English.

2.2 Lexical Cohesion in Newspapers Discourse

Lexical cohesion is an important dimension in the technique of newspaper writing. In sentence and paragraph connectivity, lexical cohesion plays a role in creating semantic links that can coordinate ideas completely and effectively (Huneety et al., 2019). In his study, Ayyash (2016) identified the significant role of lexical cohesion. The cohesive devices play a role not only at the textual level, but also in organizing the text, constructing internal meaning, and connecting the text with authors, readers, contexts, and cultures (Ayyash, 2016). In a variety of newspaper articles, the researchers exploited lexical cohesion to highlight the connectivity and regularity of the text, clarify the meanings of the text through more organized ties, and emphasize important ideas (Nijat, 2022; Robert, 2019; Shahnaz & Imtiaz, 2014). With this complex role, the existence of lexical cohesion can help analysts to map discourse tendencies and assess the partiality of information contained by writers in newspapers (Hassoon, 2014; Shahnaz & Imtiaz, 2014).

Recent studies reveal newspapers commonly use similar lexical cohesion types, with repetition and collocation being the most prevalent (Dontcheva-Navrátilová et al., 2018; Huneety et al., 2019; Malah et al., 2016; Rostami & Gholami, 2016). This finding is resulted from studies in various countries and various types of writing (articles, opinions, news, and editorials). Many writers choose repetition to connect and organize their texts because they are thought to create textual continuity effectively (Huneety et al., 2019). Dontcheva-Navrátilová et al. (2018) and Afzaal et al. (2019) reported that lexis has more semantic linkages and can form better semantic associations than grammar. This context makes lexical cohesion generally more widely used in newspapers than grammatical cohesion (Afzaal et al., 2019; Farnia & Kabiri, 2020; Michael et al., 2013; Rostami & Gholami, 2016).

Concerning critical discourse analysis, the use of lexical cohesion in various writings in newspapers represents the power and ideology of the discourse producers. A contrastive study of media conducted by Hashemi Aghdam and Hadidi (2015) revealed that lexical cohesion is one of the key elements representing the efforts of discourse producers to limit readers' interpretation of an event. Hashemi Aghdam and Hadidi (2015) associated these interpretations with certain ideologies and political tendencies adopted by discourse producers. This finding was also reinforced by Awad AlAfnan (2019). The researchers deliberately chose different lexis and showed them

repeatedly throughout the article. The contrastive study concluded that the selection of lexis and their affirmation through repetition and collocation was due to a particular ideological and power background owned by the newspaper and realized by the authors. Hence, critical discourse analysis has proven that texture and connectivity can be exploited to infiltrate the tendencies wanted by newspapers (Awad AlAfnan, 2019).

2.3 Discourse of Russia-Ukraine Conflict in Newspapers

Since the last escalation in 2014, the Russia-Ukraine conflict has become one of the most discussed topics in international newspapers. Due to the complexity of the conflict which involves many parties and various media instruments, some researchers called the conflict 'hybrid warfare' (Pasitselska, 2017; Stănescu, 2022; Veljovski et al., 2017). Within this frame, the conflict is no longer seen as a mere confrontation of weapons on the battlefield but also as narrative clashes on various internet media platforms to sway opinions and gain public sympathy (Roman et al., 2017; Szostek, 2018b). As one of the media instruments, the newspaper plays a strategic role as an information component that functions to shape the representation of the parties involved in the conflict and the community's interpretation of the conflict. Russia, Ukraine, and the countries that supported them spread issues in newspapers that made a positive impression of themselves and negative impressions of their opposition. It is in this context that the national media plays an important role in shaping and directing a conflict (Makhortykh & Bastian, 2022; Szostek, 2018a; Zeitzoff, 2017).

Some researchers carried out a contrastive analysis of the representations of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in newspapers and media of various countries (Fengler et al., 2020; Ojala & Pantti, 2017; Roman et al., 2017). It was found that each country represented the conflict differently due to differences in geographic and cultural proximity, domestication, economic exchange, and editorial resources (Fengler et al., 2020). Russia tended to represent the conflict with lexical choices and punitive operating phrases and defined the conflict as a Western threat to the Russian world. Meanwhile, Ukraine and its supporting countries tended to refer to the conflict as a crisis, conflict, war, or anti-terror operation and defined the conflict as a form of Ukrainian activism and patriotism (Roman et al., 2017). In general, the media in both countries used the strategy to portray the enemy negatively to discourage international action in support of their adversary. Fisher (2020) called this narrative pattern a special propaganda that could influence individual judgments about the conflict.

Newspapers exhibit a distinct pattern in depicting conflict actors, with Vladimir Putin, as Russia's leader, being the most frequently mentioned. He was portrayed as the instigator and aggressor in the conflict (Fengler et al., 2020). In various Western media, Putin was depicted as an antagonist responsible for the conflict (Ojala & Pantti, 2017). Meanwhile, the representation of actors on the Ukrainian side was dominated by non-elite parties, such as citizens, political leaders, demonstrators, police, militia, volunteers, and military soldiers (Fengler et al., 2020; Ojala & Pantti, 2017; Roman et al., 2017). Russia constructed a historical narrative by calling Ukraine a fascist and extremist, while Ukraine portrayed Russia as a terrorist, gunman, and enemy (Roman et al., 2017). This strategic communication pattern was deliberately conditioned to obtain international support. The memory of ancestors played an important role in determining people's alignment in the conflict. For this reason, Russia amplified the historical narrative of World War II to its advantage (Szostek, 2018a).

3. METHODS

The research design was critically qualitative, as proposed by Ziskin (2019). The entire research series was carried out in a natural and objective setting without any researchers' intervention. Data investigation was oriented toward disclosing aspects of power and ideology hidden behind the news narratives of data sources. The research data was taken from two popular online newspapers in Arabic and English, namely Aljazeera (aljazeera.net) and The Guardian (theguardian.com), respectively. Using purposive sampling, five articles on the Russia-Ukraine conflict in each newspaper published in March 2022 were selected as the research data. Five articles from Aljazeera were coded as A1-A5, whereas five articles from The Guardian were coded as G1-G5. The period of publication during the early days of conflict escalation was chosen to see how each newspaper led readers' opinions and perspectives on conflict.

Research data was collected using internet archival documentation techniques through several stages: reading and observing, sorting, storage and printing, re-reading, and determination of research subjects. At the reading and observation stage, a large amount of data in the form of articles related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict was read and observed. At the sorting stage, the researchers only took articles focusing on the current conflict and eliminated articles discussing other perspectives. The sorted data was then stored and printed to facilitate the re-reading process. The researchers then chose ten articles as the research subjects based on the focus of the discussion in the article. In the data collection stage, the listening technique without engaging in conversation was used to read the data carefully and repeatedly. Reflective notes were made throughout the data collection process to make an inventory of things relevant to answering the research questions (Lune & Berg, 2017).

The analysis began by classifying and quantifying the data according to the types of lexical cohesion proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013). The data was then described by referring to the qualitative analysis stages proposed by Lune and Berg (2017), involving data reduction, data display, conclusion, and verification. At the data reduction stage, the researchers selected some representative data to be displayed in the analysis section. At the data display stage, the researchers displayed data considered the most relevant and representative for analysis representing all data that had been classified. The selected data was then described and concluded according to the research question. At the verification stage, the researchers re-checked the relevance of the analysis to the research questions to ensure that the research questions had been answered. Meanwhile, the transliteration of Arabic data into Latin script was carried out by referring to the ALA-LC Romanization transliteration model.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Types and Frequency of Lexical Cohesion in Aljazeera and The Guardian

The analysis results of the two newspapers showed that the most dominant types of lexical cohesion were repetition (733) and collocation (263). Apart from these types, synonymy (94) and hyponymy (75) were also found in significant numbers. Antonymy (40), meronymy (29), co-hyponymy (18), and co-meronymy (10) were also discovered

yet in very small numbers. Thoroughly, the types and frequencies of lexical cohesion are shown in the following table.

Table 1. Types and frequency of lexical cohesion in Aljazeera and The Guardians.

Lexical Cohesion	Aljazeera		The Guardian		Total	Percentage
	N	%	N	%		
Repetition	561	61.6	172	48.9	733	58.1
Synonymy	83	9.2	11	3.2	94	7.5
Antonymy	26	2.9	14	3.9	40	3.2
Hyponymy	33	3.7	42	11.9	75	5.9
Co-hyponymy	16	1.7	2	0.6	18	1.4
Meronymy	22	2.3	7	1.9	29	2.3
Co-meronymy	7	0.8	3	0.9	10	0.8
Collocation	162	17.8	101	28.7	263	20.8
Total	910	100	352	100	1.262	100

4.1.1 Aljazeera

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that repetition (61.6%), collocation (17.8%), and synonymy (9.2%) were the cohesive devices that frequently appeared in Aljazeera. For example, the A1 portrays the reality of the Russian state as ‘very bad’, which often threatens the peace of other countries. In this data, the lexical item روسيا (*Rusia*) ‘Russia’ which is the axis of the narrative was repeated in many sentences. The basic form of the lexis was repeated nine times, while the inflectional form الروسية (*Al-Rusiyah*) ‘Russia’ was repeated twice. In this data, the researchers consistently revealed the reality of Russia’s foreign policy which tended to be expansive and interferes in the affairs of other countries. Through this repetition, the researchers organized the ideas and topics of the writing from beginning to end, so that the conclusion obtained by the readers would be the image of Russia as an aggressor country and destroyer of world peace.

[A2] (1) كشفت ردود الفعل حرب روسيا... (2) وليس هناك قناع وجه روسيا... (4) إن روسيا هي آلة حرب... (6) روسيا... ليس مجرد... (7) أن تفسر عدوان روسيا؟ (8) هذه العملية تعبر عن حقيقة روسيا... المتحدة ونبوءاتها وسياساتها ضد روسيا... (11) إن المواقف الوحشية وغير الإنسانية لروسيا... رؤية مدى الفظائع الروسية من خلال أحداث... (12) من الهجمات الروسية ربما تكون مثالا... (14) أن روسيا لفتت الانتباه...

(1) *Kashafat rudūd al-fi'l ḥarba Rūsīā...* (2) *Wa laysa hunāka qinā' wajhi Rūsīā...* (4) *Inna Rūsīā hiya ālat al-ḥarb...* (6) *...Rūsīā laysa mujarrad...* (7) *...An tufassira 'adwān Rūsīā?* (8) *Hādhihi al-'amaliyah tu'abbira 'an haqīqati Rūsīā... Al-muttaḥidah wa nubū'ātuhā wa siyāsātuhā diddu Rūsīā...* (11) *Inna al-mawāqif al-waḥshiyah ḡayra al-insāniyah li Rūsīā... ru'yah madā al-fazāi' Al-Rūsīāh min ḥilāl aḥdāth...* (12) *...min al-ḥajamāt Al-Rūsīāh rubbama takūnu mithālan...* (14) *Anna Rūsīā lafatat al-intibāh...*

(1) The reactions revealed Russia's war... (2) There is no mask for Russia's face... (4) Russia is a war machine... (6) ...Russia not just... (7) ...to explain Russia's aggression? (8) This process expresses the reality of united Russia... and its prophecies and policies against Russia... (11) Russia's brutal and inhuman stances... seeing the extent of Russian atrocities through events... (12) ...of the Russian attacks may be an example... (14) that Russia drew attention...

On the other hand, A2 demonstrates collocation in describing the Ukrainian crisis, using historical and diachronic data on global dynamics, internal and external

factors in Ukraine, with eight connected lexical items in nine sentences. The lexical أزمة (*uzmah*) ‘crisis’ as a core was described as Ukraine’s failure to define هوية وطنية جامعة. (*hawiyah wataniyah jāmi’ah*) ‘comprehensive national identity’. This fundamental problem then led to الإنقسام والتجزّي (*al-inqisām wa al-tajzī*) ‘split and fragmentation’, making it easier for other countries to carry out التدخل الخارجي (*al-tadakhul al-khārijī*) ‘external intervention’. Meanwhile, from the external aspect, the crisis was caused by انضمام (*inḍimām*) ‘annexation’ by Russia and ملاعبة البلدان (*mulā’abah al-buldān*) ‘manipulation of countries’ against the principles of the international order. For this reason, Russia carried out القضاء على استقلال (*al-qadā’ al-istiqlāl*) ‘annihilation of independence’ of Ukraine and declared that Ukraine ليست دولة حقيقية (*laysat dawlah haqīqiyah*) was ‘not a real country’.

[A5] (9) ... وأوكرانيا التي تجسد أزمة الدولة القومية... (5) فأوكرانيا... عجز كيائها... أن يعبر عن هوية وطنية جامعة...
تزيد الإنقسام والتجزّي و تخلق قابليات للتدخل الخارجي... (6)...تتخذ مسألة انضمام أوكرانيا... (10) ...سؤال
الهوية الوطنية... (11) على حساب بناء الهوية الوطنية الجامعة. (12) ...وفي أوكرانيا، انقسام حول التحاق
بالغرب... (19) ...كيف تتلاعب البلدان بالمبدأ الأساسي للنظام الدولي... (22) ...وجرى القضاء على استقلال
جارتها... (26) ...بالقول
أن أوكرانيا ليست دولة حقيقية...

(2) ...wa Ukrāniā allatī tajsadu uzmah al-dawlah al-qawmiyah... (5) fa Ukrāniā... ‘ajz kiyānihā... an yu’abbira ‘an hawīyyah waṭaniyah jāmi’ah... tazīdu al-inqisām wa al-tajzī wa takhluqu qābiliyyāt li al-tadakhul al-khārijī... (6) ...tattakhidhu mas’alah inḍimām Ukrāniā... (10) ...suāl al-hawiyah al-waṭaniyah... (11) ‘alā ḥisāb binā’ al-hawiyah al-waṭaniyah al-jāmi’ah. (12) ...wa fī Ukrāniā, inqisām ḥawl iltihāq bi al-gharb... (19) ...kayfa tatalā’ abu al-buldān bi al-mabda’ al-asāsī li al-nizām al-dawli... (22) ...wa jarā al-qadā’ ‘alā istiqlāl jāratiḥā... (26) ...bi al-qawl anna Ukrāniā laysat dawlah haqīqiyah...

(2) ...and Ukraine, which embodies the crisis of the nation-state... (5) Ukraine ... the inability of its entity ... to express a comprehensive national identity...increases disintegration and fragmentation and creates capabilities for external intervention... (6) ...takes the issue of Ukraine’s accession... (10) ...the question of national identity... (11) at the expense of building a comprehensive national identity. (12) ...In Ukraine, there is a disintegration over joining the West... (19) ...how countries manipulate the basic principle of the international system... (22) ...the independence of its neighbour has been destroyed... (26) ...by saying that Ukraine is not a real country...

4.1.2 The Guardian

In The Guardian, the dominant types of lexical cohesion were repetition (48.9%), collocation (28.7%), and hyponymy (11.9%). An example of repetition can be seen in G3 which discusses the urgency of the anti-war movement to suppress the various aggressions launched by Putin on Ukraine. In this data, the lexical item ‘anti-war’ is the core of the discussion which was mentioned six times across the text. The six lexical repetitions established connectivity to support the main ideas delivered. The authors first described the situation that led to the need for the initiation of an anti-war movement by European countries. The anti-war movement would meet pros and cons among activists and protestors. Notwithstanding, the movement, advocating for peace, posed no obstacle. The authors concluded that a well-executed anti-war movement could halt Putin’s aggression in Ukraine.

[G1] ...a need for an anti-war movement that unapologetically fights... (17) It is true that anti-war protesters... (18) Anti-war activists should not obfuscate... (22) ... the role of an anti-war movement is to emphasise alternatives... (26) The anti-war movement fights for a heart in a heartless world. (30) ...the need for an anti-war movement that is as consistent...

As another form of lexical cohesion, G4 below shows the use of hyponymy to connect lexical items in the narrative about weapon supply to Ukraine. The lexical item 'weapons' were the most frequently used, while in the following sentences, more specific types of weapons were mentioned: 'anti-tank', 'anti-aircraft missiles', 'armor', 'aircraft', 'Javelines', 'tanks', 'Stinger anti-aircraft missiles', 'warplanes', 'counter-battery radars', 'artillery', and 'cruise missiles'. With the existence of a general-specific relation explaining the types, the researchers strung the cohesiveness of his ideas. The ideas about the types of weapons used in the aggression in Ukraine were integrated through the hyponymy lexical cohesion device.

[G5] ...receive the weapons it needs to fight Russian aggression. (4) It sent Ukraine 1,000 anti-tank and 500 anti-aircraft missiles... (13) ... the US had arranged for 17,000 anti-tank missiles... (15) ...helped Ukraine destroy a lot of Russian armor and aircraft. (16) ...that more Javelins will improve...to destroy Russia's tanks...additional Stinger anti-aircraft missiles will cause... Russian warplanes to fall from the skies... that counter-battery radars will locate... deadly Russian artillery. (25) ...Russian aircraft aimed military airfields... (28) ...a barrage of Russian cruise missiles hit the Yavoriv military base...

An example of collocation use can be found in G5 discussing the impacts of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on European countries, such as targeting the core of the European people's lives. The lexical unit 'core' was the core idea developed in G5 which was interconnected with other lexical items in the following sentences, explaining that it would affect many aspects of life, such as the economic, political, social, security, food, democracy, and national integration aspects.

[G2] ...how Vladimir Putin's brutal war on Ukraine is shaking Europeans to the core. (5) ...that Ukrainians...must also defend democracy, freedom, and the right of sovereign states... (6) ...the very raison d'être of the EU peace project. (7) ...to help the younger generation...relate to European integration. (12) ...the need for a strong territorial defence... (19) ...have discussed extra supplies of wheat, food, and fertiliser... (20) Even eurozone monetary policies will change. (23) ...have suddenly opened border... (26) led to political turmoil across Europe. (28) ...prize for services to European integration... (30) ...Europe's ultimate guarantor of peace. (33) ...divisions between EU member states will reappear soon.

4.2 Discourse Tendencies of Aljazeera and The Guardian through the Use of Lexical Cohesion

4.2.1 Conflict representation

Each newspaper's approach to depicting the Russia-Ukraine conflict is evident in lexical item selection and article repetitions, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Lexical selection and repetitions in Aljazeera and The Guardians.

Lexical Choice in Arabic / English	Aljazeera		The Guardian		Total	Percentage
	N	%	N	%		
حرب (<i>harb</i>)/war	101	62.3%	40	67.8%	141	63.8
أزمة (<i>uzmah</i>)/crisis	16	9.9%	0	0.0%	16	7.2

Table 2 continued...

صراع (<i>ṣirā'</i>)/conflict	15	9.3%	0	0.0%	15	6.8
عدوان (<i>'adwān</i>)/aggression	13	8.0%	7	11.9%	20	9.0
غزو (<i>ghazw</i>)/invasion	10	6.2%	11	18.6%	21	9.6
معركة (<i>ma'arakah</i>)/fight	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	0.4
مواجهة (<i>muwājahah</i>)/confrontation	6	3.7%	1	1.7%	7	3.2
Total	162	100%	59	100%	221	100%

Based on Table 2, there were differences in the number of lexical choices in each newspaper. Aljazeera had seven lexical choices to represent the conflict while The Guardian selected only four lexical units. In Aljazeera, حرب (*ḥarb*) 'war' was the most dominant lexical item used (62.3%). In addition, there were أزمة (*uzmah*) 'crisis', صراع (*ṣirā'*) 'conflict', عدوان (*'adwān*) 'aggression', and غزو (*ghazw*) 'invasion' whose repetition frequency was between 6% -10%. The other two lexical items were معركة (*ma'arakah*) 'fight' and مواجهة (*muwājahah*) 'confrontation' whose repetition frequency was below 4%. Like Aljazeera, The Guardian also dominantly chose 'war' (67.8%) to represent the conflict. Apart from these, there were also 'invasions' (18.6%), 'aggression' (11.9%), and 'confrontation' (1.7%). The dominant lexical similarity showed that the two newspapers were inclined to represent conflicts as wars using weapons, where both countries played an active role in attacking and attempting to defeat each other.

In addition to these dominant lexicons, it is interesting to observe other lexical choices in the two newspapers. Both used 'aggression' and 'invasion', where the repetition frequency in Aljazeera was 8.0% and 6.2%, while The Guardian was 11.9% and 18.6%, respectively. The lexical choices 'aggression' and 'invasion' have different meanings from 'war'. The two implied that one of the countries was the initiator of the conflict while the other was the victim. In aggression and invasion, the two countries did not play a balanced role in attacking. Meanwhile, the lexical choices 'crisis' (9.9%) and 'conflict' (9.3%) were only found in Aljazeera, implying that Aljazeera represented the conflict as a relatively neutral phenomenon that did not involve armed contacts. These two lexical units have a lower content of meaning in the context of representing assault and physical violence.

Apart from that, discourse tendencies were observable in the distribution of lexical adjectives to represent the conflict situations in the two newspapers. The distribution is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of lexical adjectives in Aljazeera and The Guardians.

Lexical Choice in Arabic/English	Aljazeera		The Guardian	
	Adj.	Freq.	Adj.	Freq.
حرب (<i>ḥarb</i>)/war	-	-	brutal horrendous criminal	3 1 1
أزمة (<i>uzmah</i>)/crisis	-	-	-	-
صراع (<i>ṣirā'</i>)/conflict	-	-	-	-
عدوان (<i>'adwān</i>)/aggression	-	-	-	-
غزو (<i>ghazw</i>)/invasion	-	-	criminal	1
معركة (<i>ma'arakah</i>)/fight	-	-	-	-
مواجهة (<i>muwājahah</i>)/confrontation	-	-	-	-

The data in Table 3 shows that The Guardian had a clear position in representing the Russia-Ukraine conflict as an armed contact that actively involved both countries. To reinforce this position, The Guardian added lexical adjectives to construct the conflict situation. Among the adjectives used were ‘brutal’, ‘horrendous’, and ‘criminal’. The spread of these adjectives was found in the phrases ‘brutal war’ (3 occurrences), ‘horrendous war’ (1 occurrence), ‘criminal war’ (1 occurrence), and ‘criminal invasion’ (1 occurrence). The addition of these lexical adjectives was not found in Aljazeera. The absence of conflict description emphasized that Aljazeera took a neutral position in its representation.

4.2.2 Actor representation

The differences in conflict representations were closely related to the representation of actors in the two newspapers. The actors represented by Aljazeera and The Guardian can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Actor representation in Aljazeera and The Guardians.

Lexical Choice in Arabic/English	Aljazeera		The Guardian	
	Actor	Freq.	Actor	Freq.
حرب (<i>harb</i>)/war	Russia	16	Putin	8
أزمة (<i>uzmah</i>)/crisis	Ukraine	4	-	-
صراع (<i>sira</i>)/conflict	-	-	-	-
عدوان (<i>adwan</i>)/aggression	Russia	6	Russia Putin	2 1
غزو (<i>gazw</i>)/invasion	Ukraine Russia	2 1	Putin Russia Soviet	3 1 1
معركة (<i>ma'rakah</i>)/fight	-	-	-	-
مواجهة (<i>muwajahah</i>)/confrontation	-	-	-	-

There were only two actors represented in the narrative of the Aljazeera article: ‘Russia’ and ‘Ukraine’. The existence of Russia and Ukraine as actors showed that the focus of Aljazeera’s narrative did not arise from the conflict involving the two nations. Based on the distribution pattern in Table 4 above, Russia became a “doer” in the lexical items حرب (*harb*) ‘war’, عدوان (*adwān*) ‘aggression’, and غزو (*ghazw*) ‘invasion’. The position as an actor in the three lexical choices was distributed over 23 sentences (79.3%) which explicitly narrated Russia as the perpetrator of war, aggression, and invasion of Ukraine. Accordingly, Russia as an actor was represented negatively as a war criminal and a disturbance to world peace. Meanwhile, Ukraine was a “patient” in the lexical أزمة (*uzmah*) ‘crisis’ (13.8%) and “doer” in the lexical غزو (*ghazw*) ‘invasion’ (6.9%). This finding can be found in A2 and A5. As an actor experiencing a crisis, Ukraine had become a victim of Russian war crimes, whereas the invasion of Ukraine was described as a response to the aggression initiated by Russia. In line with this plot, Ukraine as an actor was represented positively as a victim of Russian war crimes.

Unlike Aljazeera, The Guardian represented three actors: ‘Putin’, ‘Russia’, and ‘the Soviets’. Putin became a “doer” in the lexemes ‘war’, ‘aggression’, and ‘invasion’. The position as an actor in these three sentences was distributed over twelve sentences (75%) which explicitly narrated Putin as the perpetrator of war, aggression, and invasion of Ukraine. In line with that, Putin as the supreme leader of Russia was

represented negatively as the precursor and initiator of the aggression that led to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. This was apparent from the inherent negative adjectives and lexical items, such as ‘Putin’s brutal war’, ‘Putin’s war’, ‘Putin’s hitlist’, ‘Putin’s invasion’, and ‘Putin’s criminal invasion’. Meanwhile, Russia and the Soviets were also represented as “doers”. ‘Russia’ was found in the lexical ‘aggression’ and ‘invasion’ in three sentences (18.7%), while Soviet in the lexical invasion was found in one sentence (6.3%). Unlike ‘Putin’, ‘Russia’, and ‘the Soviets’ were also portrayed as entities destroying the harmonization of the Ukrainian nation-state. ‘Putin’ was considered the only actor responsible for all the damages that occurred in Ukraine.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings showed that repetition and collocation were the most dominant lexical cohesive devices found in both data sources. In Aljazeera, the repetition frequency was quite high compared to collocation (61.6%-17.8%). It was different from The Guardian where the frequency of repetition and collocation was almost the same (48.9%-28.7%). This gap proved that there were differences in language characteristics between Aljazeera and The Guardian. Arabic which is known for its non-concatenative morphological form, produces more repetition frequencies than the other types of lexical cohesion (Schwaiger, 2018). It is different from English which does not have many inflectional and derivational patterns; hence, the frequency between repetition and collocation is relatively balanced. In addition to repetition and collocation, Aljazeera appeared to frequently use synonymy, whereas The Guardian used a lot of hyponymies. It was also influenced by the typology of the Arabic language which has lexical richness so that it can express a meaning with different lexical items.

This finding strengthens the results of Malah et al. (2016), Dontcheva-Navrátilová et al. (2018), and Huneety et al. (2019). In various languages, newspaper writing uses more repetition and collocation. The language characteristics of newspapers are oriented as instruments to influence readers’ minds so that they agree with the ideas being raised. In other words, repetition and collocation can serve as tools to achieve the goal. According to the findings of Dontcheva-Navrátilová et al. (2018), Afzaal et al. (2019), and Huneety et al. (2019), repetition is chosen to connect and organize text because it is considered to be able to create textual continuity effectively. Meanwhile, collocation is used because it can connect lexical meanings more subtly, where each lexical collaborates in strengthening ideas. It is in line with the results of Ayyash (2016) in which one of the important roles of lexical cohesion is to build an internal meaning at the level of detail and the entire text.

In addition to strengthening the results of the studies above, the research findings also refute the conclusions of Farghal (2017). Differences in language typology, narrative styles, and discourse tendencies will produce different types and lexical cohesion frequencies. Articles that use Arabic and English can potentially use the same types of cohesion devices, but they tend to be difficult at the same frequency. This argument is in line with the findings of Ahmad (2017) that several English lexical cohesions turn into repetition when translated into Arabic. This confirms that repetition is a characteristic of Arabic lexical cohesion and is always found more in Arabic than

in English. In line with that, the dominance of repetition, collocation, and synonymy in Aljazeera agrees with the research findings of Hashemi Aghdam and Hadidi (2015) and Igaab and Abdulhasan (2018).

From the aspect of conflict representation, Aljazeera tended to take a neutral perspective by prioritizing humanitarian issues and world peace. This neutrality can be seen from the ideas that described the situation on both sides involved in the conflict. At one point, Aljazeera condemned Russia for its aggression. Meanwhile, at another moment, Aljazeera also criticized Ukraine for various policies that ultimately escalated the conflict. Commitment to world peace was reflected in Aljazeera's focus on mapping the impacts and what can be done to end the conflict. In a different way, The Guardian tended to create a negative image of Vladimir Putin and Russia. This tendency was manifested consistently from the editorial headlines to the developed narratives. Putin, with all his policies of aggression against Ukraine, was a real war criminal. However, even though it was full of negative narratives, The Guardian did not necessarily defend Ukraine. They promoted the European Union which was expected to counter Putin and Russia.

In line with the results of Ojala and Pantti (2017), Roman et al. (2017), and Fengler et al. (2020), the differences in representation between Aljazeera and The Guardian were due to the differences in geographic and cultural proximity, domestication, and economic exchanges. As one of the media in the Middle East, Aljazeera had no interest in being heavily involved because the conflict did not have a direct impact on their geography, culture, economy, and domestic situation. Unlike The Guardian, one of the media in Europe, the conflict was a threat to the existence of many countries on the continent. It was not surprising, then, that their tendencies and involvement were visible in the narratives they created. Given this narrative pattern, the findings corroborate the study results of Pasitselska (2017), Veljovski et al. (2017), and Stănescu (2022) who called the Russian-Ukrainian conflict 'a hybrid warfare'. As information components, Aljazeera and The Guardian became battlefields of propaganda and opinion gathering to win public sympathy (Roman et al., 2017; Szostek, 2018a, 2018b).

The representation of actors in The Guardian can be categorized as special propaganda as stated by Fisher (2020). The Guardian degraded Putin as an anti-peace figure and a real war criminal. This representational pattern strengthened the study results of Ojala and Pantti (2017) and Fengler et al. (2020). The Guardian reduced Russia's existence by emphasizing Putin's role as a supreme leader. This strategy indirectly created an interpretation that the conflict was essentially Putin's ambition, not Russia as a country. Meanwhile, the findings on Aljazeera showed a distinction from various previous relevant studies. Aljazeera represented Russia and Ukraine as conflict actors equally. Aljazeera never mentioned Putin (Russia's president) or Zelensky (Ukraine's president) as the conflict actor or the main aggressor. Putin and Zelensky were represented proportionally according to their status as supreme leaders.

The finding of different tendencies behind the use of lexical cohesion also reinforces the proposition of Hassoon (2014), Shahnaz and Imtiaz (2014), and Hashemi Aghdam and Hadidi (2015). The type and frequency of repetition and collocation were important indicators of Aljazeera's neutrality toward Russia and Ukraine and The Guardian's partiality to Ukraine. Strengthened by the arguments of Fengler et al. (2020), the current research results predict that the tendency of newspapers toward certain political entities will always occur in all newspapers,

countries, and events. In the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, countries with no direct interest will always remain neutral. It is reflected by the government of Qatar which is the owner of Aljazeera. In the opposite position, interested countries will always tend to one party only, as reflected by The Guardian, which dominantly supports British foreign policy interests. This research has implications for the dynamics of discourse on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in various mass media. With the tendency of conflicting discourses, as represented by Aljazeera and The Guardian, the contestation of narratives in the media will continue to flow during the conflict.

6. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that Arabic and English newspapers employed lexical cohesion to produce cohesion in the articles. The different types and frequencies of lexical cohesion in the two newspapers were caused by the differences in language typology, where Arabic as a non-concatenative morphological form produced more repetitions than other types of lexical cohesion. This is different from English which does not have many inflectional and derivational patterns, so the dominant lexical cohesion frequencies found were relatively balanced. Meanwhile, the tendency of each newspaper to represent the Russia-Ukraine conflict was reflected in the lexical and collocation choices created in the articles. Aljazeera represented the conflict in a balanced way, where Russia and Ukraine played the same role in the conflict. On the other hand, Russia as the initiator of the conflict was positioned as the guilty party. Meanwhile, The Guardian focused the narrative on war and brutal aggression, in which Putin was the most responsible main actor. Overall, the research findings proved that lexical cohesion devices can be one of the important features for mapping discourse tendencies as a basis for identifying the hidden power and ideology behind the discourse.

However, it is important to note that the limited data in this study resulted from the specific focus on conflict escalation within the research context. Despite this constraint, it presents a good avenue for future researchers to expand their investigations and gather a more extensive dataset.

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