Discursive strategies for managing coronavirus fake news (rumors) by analyzing some pages in Telegram

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1. Introduction

During the last months, side by side of COVID-19, fake news has been spread along with the outbreak of the virus, depending on its importance and fear and its effects on various fields.

Rumors or fake news are social phenomena and are often condemned, especially by those who fall victim to it. All human beings are often, each in a way, sometimes not obvious, at home, at work, while sitting in a public vehicle, in times of economic and social crisis, etc., exposed to fake news, hearing rumors, gossips, and so on. The initial perception of the word is that a piece of "news" whose validity and accuracy cannot be easily verified is published and is often associated with irresponsibility and immorality. What has created the context for the globalization of production and the spread of rumors is media technology and cyberspace.

Rumors, like fraud and forgery, manipulate the system of fact-finding and cause the material content of truth to be replaced by the material of false content in the semantic process. The main function of the rumor in this text is to discredit and disregard the truth (replacing a lie with a valid word).

Rumors and false news are phenomena that have always been produced in societies, but these phenomena are more pronounced at times when horrific events occur. With the occurrence of COVID-19 in the world since late 2019, rumors have also intensified. Some people consider the destructive effect of rumors on the escalation of the crisis to be even more important and effective than the Corona. Countries like China immediately devised a planning system to manage the news of the corona, thus limiting the spread of conflicting news and scattered statistics, yet some other countries not only did not seem to take measures to address the information crisis, their own institutions have become a source of fake news and rumors.

Rumors can be studied from different perspectives, but in this research, rumors and false news are related to Corona in terms of their linguistic nature and are observed in the context of discursive systems.

2. Materials and method

Using the approach of semiotic discourse analysis and Landowski's theory of Discourse Systems (Landowski, 2005), the present study examined the discourse nature of Corona rumors from this perspective, choosing the rumors reflected in some pages of the Telegram.

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3. Results and discussion

The findings of this research show that the more credible news sources lose their credibility, the greater amounts of fake news and rumors have been expressed. The prevalence of fake news is related to death and, in proportion to its greater prevalence, intensifies the formation of danger and risk. Managing crisis needs to implement a program-oriented discourse system to gradually move a potentially dangerous space away from danger to a safe place. The culmination of a discourse crisis occurs where credibility sources produce conflicting news and neutralize each other. This is where the epistemological inversion takes place, and what was known as the source of credibility becomes the source of the rumor.

Due to the outbreak of Corona virus in the world in early February 2016 and in Iran in late February, along with this huge and pervasive global crisis, the rumors and fake news have been expressed in proportion to the importance and dimensions of the subject which the rumor is related. The present study tries to examine the discursive nature of fake news based on the theory of Discourse Systems by Eric Landowski (2005), selecting some examples called "corona rumors" in some Telegram pages. The results of the research show that the more credible news sources lose their credibility, the more rumors being expressed. The prevalence of the rumor and fake news is related to death and, in proportion to its greater prevalence, intensifies the proportion of risk in the semi-sphere of the discursive system. Managing this crisis, needs to implement a program-oriented discourse system to gradually move a potentially dangerous space away from danger to a safe place. The culmination of a discursive crisis occurs where credibility sources produce conflicting news and neutralize each other. This is where the epistemological inversion takes place, and the source of credibility becomes itself the main source of producing rumor and fake news. The culmination of a discourse crisis occurs where credibility sources produce conflicting news and neutralize each other. Therefore, according to the research results, contrary to the common perception that describes accident discursive system better than programmatic discursive system compared to ethics ("to The Other"), in an epidemic situation where the principle of human survival is endangered, the programmatic discursive system is more appropriate.

4. Conclusion

According to the research results, rumor is a semantic deficiency that occurs in the context of an accident discursive system and targets the sources of truth and authority more than anything else. In the Corona era, which provides a platform for the production of rumors, cyberspace also acts as a tool to speed up its spread. In a state of profound confrontation, the rumor is on the verge of death, which has endangered human life. Therefore, no matter how much information is sent and received through limited, official, and referent sources, it will be more possible to exercise control over the risky situation in which the rumor is produced and grown. The first effect of rumor is that it replaces the system of truth with the system of doubt.

To manage the interactive aspects in the corona better, formal institutions must limit and manage the means of dissemination. In normal discourse conditions, this method can contradict the principle of "otherness" and be considered as the basis of a totalitarian discursive system, but in situations where public life is endangered, this control is justified to preserve the survival of The Other

Keywords: Control; Corona virus; Danger; Discursive system; Ethics; Rumor; The other