



Ministry of Higher Education  
and Scientific Research  
University of Diyala  
College of Education for Humanities  
Department of English



# **A Study of Null-Constituents in Journalistic English**

*A Thesis*

*Submitted to the Council of the College of Education for Humanities  
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the Degree of Master of Arts in English Language and Linguistics*

**By**

**Hiba Ahmed Eidan**

**Supervised By**

**Prof. Ayad Hameed Mahmood ( Ph.D.)**

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 The Problem

Journalistic texts constitute a vital part of our daily use of language. Almost no day passes without one's reading a newspaper or at least viewing media text on TV channels.

Like other registers, English journalistic texts, including newspapers, are characterized by certain textual and stylistic features. They often have their own organization, wording, choice of vocabulary, syntactic structures, etc.

News writers usually tend to manipulate language to achieve their own goals. They often use special expressions to shape or frame readers' emotions and ideologies into certain direction to achieve certain effects that can help to change their attitude. To achieve their aims, news writers may use various devices. They may even deviate from language norms to attract reader's attention.

Among the textual syntactic devices used in newspaper are null constituents. The problem is that there is a sort of ambiguity over the use of null constituents in journalistic English and how the readers get the sentential meaning from the surface structure that contain the deleted constituents. In spite of the wide use of journalistic texts in our daily life, and in spite of the increasing studies that deal with this type of texts, there is a rarity of studies dealing with some syntactic aspects of newspaper including null constituents with which this study is concerned. This rarity of such a sort of studies may give rise to a number of potential urgent questions that exist over the use of null constituents in the text under study. These questions are stated in the section below.

### 1.2 The Research Questions

The study is an attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1- To what extent are null constituents frequently used in English journalistic articles ?

- 2- What is the most frequent null constituent in English journalistic articles ?
- 3- What is the least frequent null constituent in English journalistic articles ?
- 4- To what extent does the content or type of the article determine the frequency of null constituents ?
- 5- What are the probable factors behind the high or low frequency of null constituents in journalistic articles ?

### **1.3 The Aims**

The study aims at finding out :

- 1- The extent of using null constituents in English journalistic texts.
- 2- The most and least frequent null constituents in English journalistic texts.
- 3- The influence of the article type on the frequency of null constituents.
- 4- The type of article which manifests the most frequent use of null constituents.
- 5- The reasons behind the high or low frequency of null constituents in the texts unclear study.

### **1.4 The Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized that :

- 1-Null constituents are frequently used in English journalistic texts .
- 2-Null subject constituent is the most frequent one in English journalistic texts .
- 3- Null complement is the least frequent constituents in the texts under study.
- 4- The content or type of the article decides to a large extent the frequency of null constituents in the texts under study.
- 5-The high or low frequency of null constituents employed in journalistic texts can be due to the textual and stylistic features of the articles as well as the writers' attempt to influence their reader .

## **1.5 The Procedures**

To achieve the aims of the study and verify its hypotheses, the following procedures will be followed :

- 1-Presenting a theoretical framework of null constituents including their definitions, patterns, classifications , etc.
- 2- Presenting a theoretical framework of English journalistic texts including their linguistic, stylistic and textual features, as well as the main types of English news articles.
- 3-Selecting a sample of English news articles( American newspaper because the style of these newspapers tend to be more abbreviated).
- 4-Analysing the selected texts according to a model adopted in the light of theoretical frameworks presented in the study.
- 5- Drawing conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

The investigation of this study is limited to the analysis of null constituents in five types of newspapers articles: political, opinion, columnial, news and report articles quoted from five American newspapers: The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The USA Today, and The Houston Chronicle.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study are hoped to be useful for scholars and researchers interested in the statistical information of journalistic texts . The findings can also be useful for those interested in the stylistic studies of journalistic texts. Finally, writers of discourse analysis and communicative grammar texts books can also make use of the study findings.