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MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS

UKRAINAS KRĪZES ATTĒLOJUMS
PLAŠSAZIŅAS LĪDZEKĻOS

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ANOTĀCIJA

Plašsaziņas līdzekļi ir spēcīgs instruments valdošās sabiedrības daļas rokās, lai izplatītu ideoloģijai atbilstošas idejas. Šo darbu paveic attiecīgi izvēlēti valodas līdzekļi, kas ļauj uzsvērt vai, tieši otrādi, apslēpt dažādus uzskatus.

Darba mērķis bija izpētīt, kā Ukrainas krīze tiek atspoguļota medijos no Krievijas, Ukrainas un Rietumu perspektīvas. Iegūtie dati, kurus veidoja 45 ziņu reportāžas, tika analizēti, izmantojot kritisko diskursa analīzi, un tika izvērtēta leksika, mākslinieciskie izteiksmes līdzekļi, modalitāte un transitivity.

Tika secināts, ka mediji notikumus interpretē ļoti dažādi, atbalstīdami vadošos viedokļus sabiedrībā. Lietotā valoda un teikumu uzbūve veido ziņu auditorijas pasaules uztveri un izpratni par sabiedrības procesiem.

Atslēgvārdi: kritiskā diskursa analīze, ideoloģija, leksika, modalitāte, transitivity, krīze Ukrainā, mediji

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the mass media are the main tools in the hands of the powerful elite to force the ideological agenda onto society, and it is done through a particular selection and combination of linguistic means to emphasize or hide particular points of view.

The goal of the study was to examine how the crisis in Ukraine is portrayed by the mass media from the Russian, Ukrainian and Western perspective. The data that consisted of 45 news reports was analyzed from the perspective of critical discourse analysis, evaluating the lexis, stylistic devices, modality and transitivity.

It was concluded that the media view the events very differently, mirroring the views of the ruling elite. The language and sentence constructions used in the reports contribute to shaping the general perception of how the world works and interpretation of societal processes.

Key words: critical discourse analysis, ideology, lexis, modality, transitivity, Ukrainian crisis, media

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INTRODUCTION

They say objectivity is non-existent. There are too many variables to take into account to arrive at the absolute truth, the interpretation of which can differ from individual to individual. However, as people are social animals, they tend to conform to the truths endorsed by those individuals holding power over them, for some reason. As a result, the truth becomes a value shared by groups of people, to whom the particular interpretation seems to reflect the objective reality. This information is most easily disseminated via the medium of language that allows its users to mix and match the available means to arrive at completely different views of the world that may be called ideologies.

For the last year and a half the world has been following events in Ukraine, which has experienced turmoil and bloodshed, lost a part of its territory and is in danger of losing even more. Nevertheless, opinions of the Western and the Eastern worlds differ drastically as to what is going on in the country, who the aggressor is and who the victim is, and what the resolution should be. Given the fact that most people do not have first-hand experience, the mass media are of help, as they keep the population informed. Still, it also means that they have the ability to influence which events are reflected and how they are reflected, essentially constructing a particular reality, imposing their interpretation on the consumers. Because the topic of the situation in Ukraine is so relevant at the moment, it has been chosen as the basis for this study to investigate how the mass media portray it, which in turn contributes to the construction of the prevailing ideology. As the occasion is said to involve three parties – Ukraine, Russia and the West – examining the respective interpretations to note any tendencies is a marvellous way to show the power of language. Thus, the **goal** of the research is to analyze the linguistic means in the news reports by Western, Ukrainian and Russian digital media on the topic of Ukraine.

In order to achieve the goal, the below **research questions** to be answered have been proposed.

- 1) What are the main characteristics that mark the way each source portrays the events in Ukraine?
- 2) How does the choice of the linguistic means work to create a specific version of the situation in Ukraine?
- 3) Are there any major similarities or differences in lexis or sentence structures between the sources?

The **enabling objectives** are as follows:

- 1) to study relevant literature on the relationship between language and perception;
- 2) to understand how ideology is endorsed through the media;
- 3) to identify the levels of analysis of Critical discourse analysis and select the relevant criteria;
- 4) to select the sources and collect the data for analysis;
- 5) to analyze the data, interpret the findings and draw conclusions.

The empirical research is conducted using the data provided by three digital media outlets that produce content in English: **BBC News** (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news>), **Kyiv Post** (<http://www.kyivpost.com>) and **Pravda.ru** (<http://www.english.pravda.ru>), each representing a different viewpoint: Western, Ukrainian and Russian. The date range of the news reports is between January and March 2015, thus the research can be viewed as **synchronic**. The data for the study was collected randomly, using several keywords to filter the relevant content on the respective websites.

The **theoretical framework** used to carry out the practical analysis is **Critical Discourse Analysis** by T. van Dijk, N. Fairclough and J.E. Richardson that examines the linguistic particularities of discourse to reveal how power is enacted via language.

Chapter I discusses the relationship between language and world-view, touching on the arbitrariness of language as a precondition for linguistic reality that argues that language influences the way people see the world.

Chapter II combines the concepts of ideology, media and language, showing that mass media enforces the ideological viewpoints on its consumers via particular choices of linguistic means.

Chapter III comprises a description of Critical Discourse Analysis, its roots and developments, as well as the analytical tools employed by this research method/discipline.

Chapter IV reflects the empirical part of the research, which includes the analysis of the news reports and summarizes the findings.

1. LANGUAGE AND WORLD VIEW

1.1. Arbitrariness of language

The origin of language, despite countless theories and hypothesis, is still a mystery to the modern man, and will most likely remain so until time-travel becomes reality, which will allow us to pinpoint the moment language appeared and observe empirically what led to its emergence.

It is clear that language was not born in an instant, even though the Old Testament notes that God was able to speak from the very beginning, and Adam was born already possessing the gift of language (Janson, 2002:1). Language also did not appear for the sake of it, but came along as an instrument to aid hominins in understanding one another, or, as Knight puts it, ‘it evolved in the context of uniquely human strategies of social cooperation’ (Knight, 2004:19). Most people, when asked what the main purpose of language is, would say that it is communication, i.e., transfer of information from one participant to another.

That said, it is vital to stress that language is not something natural to the human body, such as breathing, but a system developed by the society. While the ability of developing speech, thanks to the evolutionary changes of the human skull and jaw, is now an innate property, no human being is capable of learning a language in isolation, which points to its social nature. Language is also a tool that allows us to categorize our experience of the world and make sense of it. According to Berger,

language provides me with a ready-made possibility for the ongoing objectification of my unfolding experience. Put differently, language is pliantly expansive so as to allow me to objectify a great variety of experiences coming my way in the course of my life (Berger, 1991:53).

Moreover, the experience itself and its manifestation in language bear no connection in most cases. Ferdinand de Saussure, the father of linguistics, developed his theory of the arbitrariness of language, laid out in his seminal work *Course in General Linguistics*, published post-mortem by his students. Saussure saw language as a system of signs, where a *sign* is composed of a *signifier* (sound-image) and a *signified* (concept) (Saussure, 1969:67). The most important idea here is that the relationship between the signifier and the signified (that is, between the sequence of sounds in the word *bird* and the physical object, i.e., a bird) is absolutely unmotivated (with some exceptions, for example, onomatopoeia). As Saussure puts it, ‘the idea of "sister" is not linked by any inner relationship to the succession of sounds *s-o-r* which serves as its signifier in French (ibid.:67)’. The arbitrariness of the sign, Saussure asserts, is also a bullet-proof argument for language being a social construct, as ‘the

community is necessary if values that owe their existence solely to usage and general acceptance are to be set up; by himself the individual is incapable of fixing a single value' (ibid.:113).

It must be noted, however, that the association between the signifier and the signified may be different for each individual, and this idea is relevant for the purposes of this paper. For example, when the word *bird* is spoken, each individual may picture a different bird, as this concept is general enough to allow room for interpretation, but, at the same time, since the value of the sign is not as fixed, it may be manipulated with. Therefore, it may be used in ideological conditioning by the media – by associating a signifier with a very specific signified, it may be pressed deeply into the consciousness of the society, and it would imagine exactly this concept upon hearing the sequence of sounds.

1.2. Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Language nowadays is no longer considered a phenomenon unique to humans, as modern definitions are loose enough to accommodate non-human languages, for it is considered that any exchange of information between living beings can be called 'language', thanks to modern technology that 'makes use of sensitive monitoring equipment in order to register the hitherto unperceived communications of the natural world' (Fischer, 1997:8). Thus language is recognized as a universal faculty (Fischer, 1999:7-8).

Human language, however, is infinitely different from the way animals communicate, in its complexity, variability and adaptability (Janson, 2002:6). The fundamental properties of human language are called the design features of language (Trask, 1999:1), and they point to the major characteristics exclusive to human communication, such as language being an open-ended system, capable of development, that allows people to convey information about something that is not within their field of vision without any stimulus to provoke the speech act.

Thus language, being universal to all of us and, at the same time, very personal to each individual, is tightly bound with our identity, and is part and parcel of our social self. It is via language that our thoughts and opinions are revealed, and it reflects the way we see the world via our individual lens. Therefore, the question of whether language bears a certain impact on the way people perceive the world has been on the agenda ever since the dawn of philosophy. As Gumperz and Levinson explain, "in a number of arenas, theological, philosophical, legal, and colonial, there have been for centuries well rehearsed debates about the mutual

dependence or independence of language and thought, and about the relation between social systems and that interdependence (Gumperz, Levinson, 1996:3-4).”

The influential German philosopher Wilhelm van Humboldt (1767-1835) formulated his world-view theory that led Western thought (especially in America) up to the middle of the 20th century. He wrote that

[...] there resides in every language a characteristic *world-view*. As the individual sound stands between man and the object, so the entire language steps in between him and the nature that operates, both inwardly and outwardly, upon him. He surrounds himself with a world of sounds so as to assimilate and process within himself the world of objects. These expressions in no way outstrip the measure of the simple truth. Man lives primarily with objects, indeed, since feeling and acting in him depend on his presentations, he actually does so exclusively, as language presents them to him (Humboldt, 1999 [1836]:60).

Humboldt believed that language is the lens via which people see the world, and learning a foreign language allows the individual to acquire a new stand-point, albeit only partially, for the original world-view is carried over, as it is so ingrained in us, thus rendering the experience incomplete.

This idea of language *having a say* in how we see the world resonated with the American linguist Franz Boas, which he transferred to his most gifted student Edward Sapir who, in turn, left an impact on his student Benjamin Lee Whorf. According to Robins,

Sapir [...] ranged widely through and around his subject, exploring its relations with literature, music, anthropology, and psychology, and expressing views on language, like those of Boas, that were reminiscent of Humboldt and were later developed by Whorf, both of whom insisted on the pervasive influence of language on every department of human life (Robins, 1976:208).

Sapir completed his doctoral thesis on the Takelma and Chasta Costa languages under the guidance of Boas, which sparked the idea of the relationship between language and world view (Koerner, 2002:50). He proposed human beings are ‘at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society’ (Sapir, 1929:209), and that the basis of the ‘real world’ is actually the language habits of the group, as language is the means of reflection of that world.

Sapir’s student Benjamin Lee Whorf, who was a chemical engineer and fire-insurance investigator by profession and took up linguistics as a hobby, studied the language of the Hopi Indians, residing in Arizona, which led him to certain conclusions. He asserted that the grammar of each language is ‘the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual’s mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade’ (Whorf, 1956 [1940]: 212). It followed from it that language users do not formulate ideas independently, but on the basis of grammar of a particular language, and, since grammars of

different languages may vary to great extremes, the ideas formulated by speakers of such languages are also entirely different (ibid.:212).

These assumptions formed the basis of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, are also known as linguistic determinism. The theory was largely discredited in the second half of the twentieth century, for it went against such phenomena as translatability of concepts, introduction of new ideas and the very emergence of language itself (since the theory holds that there is no thought without language). Nowadays, however, a weak form of Whorfianism has been finding support among scholars, largely due to research on meaning, which shows that meaning is not found in grammar and lexicon only, but they 'provide only schematic constraints on what the speaker will be taken to have meant in a particular utterance' (Gumperz, 1996:8). In short, meaning is very much dependent on the context, which is 'deeply embedded in practices of speaking, the local conduct of social life, and the social distribution of shared understandings' (Gumperz, 1996:8).

Chandler (1994) distinguishes four main aspects of moderate Whorfianism: firstly, the theory reasons that thinking may be influenced by language, not absolutely determined; secondly, the process is reciprocal, namely, thought impacts language as well; thirdly, the influence is ascribed to language within a language (i.e., a sociolect), and lastly, the social context of language is brought to the front. Thus Chandler argues that it is not some inherent property in language that makes us perceive the world in one way or another, but rather the use of the available means in particular contexts that are capable of adjusting our world-view. Thus, the discussion of Whorfianism, initially applied to language as a system, can be transferred to the discussion of Whorfianism in context-bound stretches of language, that is, texts, and these ideas are especially relevant in critical discourse analysis, which is going to serve as the methodological background for the empirical part of the paper.

In his book *The Act of Writing* (1995), Chandler applies moderate Whorfianism to the media theory, where language itself is a medium (one of the media), as it mediates our experience of reality. He argues that language is a selective medium that is capable of creating a certain resonance, and notes that 'any medium facilitates, emphasizes, intensifies, amplifies, enhances or extends certain kinds of use or experience whilst inhibiting, restricting or reducing other kinds' (Chandler, 1995:8). It is important to note that *selectivity* in the construction of meaning not only includes the words used, but those that are left out as well (either consciously or unconsciously), thus the whole paradigm is actually of importance, which allows us to infer the intent of the author by reading between the lines (Chandler, 1995:9). This also extends to the use of media as such, not just words, for instance, adding a photograph to a news report or not.

Another important term in the media theory is *resonance*, which refers to

any kind of significance which may be attached to the use of one medium rather than another, for example, to the use of: one word or phrase rather than another; writing rather than speech; an essay rather than a research report; or a word processor rather than a pen (Chandler, 1995:12).

Thus, by making certain lexical adjustments to a particular text (a synonym, or a paraphrase) might change the meaning, making the text lose a particular quality, and the resonance could be lost on an individual level, group level or even the level of a whole sub-culture or culture (ibid.:12). Chandler quotes the philosopher Michael Polanyi who says that ‘different vocabularies for the interpretation of things divide men into groups which cannot understand each other’s way of seeing things and of acting upon them. For different idioms determine different patterns of possible emotions and actions’ (Polanyi, 2005:188). Chandler also argues that the genre of the text matters here, as readers are much more aware of particular word choices in poetry, rather than in academic papers. It could then be said that the lack of creativity in a written text numbs the reader, making them less critical of what is being said and in what way.

As already mentioned before, Chandler supports moderate Whorfianism in that the influence of language on thinking refers to language within a language, rather than language as such:

In every subculture, the dominant conventions regarding appropriate usage tend to exert a conservative influence on the framing of phenomena. **From the media theory perspective, the *sociolects* of sub-cultures and the *idiolects* of individuals represent a subtly selective view of the world: tending to *support* certain kinds of observations and interpretations and to *restrict* others.** And this transformative power goes largely unnoticed, retreating to transparency (Chandler, 1995:18-19).

The statement may also be applied to larger groups and involve the dominant ideologies that attempt to enforce certain selective views of the world via the selective medium of language. This is also supported by Postman who points out that ‘embedded in every tool is an ideological bias, a predisposition to construct the world as one thing rather than another, to value one thing over another, to amplify one sense or skill or attitude more loudly than another’ (Postman, 1993:13, as quoted in Chandler, 1995:8). In the next chapter, the relationship between language and ideology, and the role of mass media in disseminating these views will be examined, as it is pertinent for the practical part of the research that will deal with the portrayal of the crisis in Ukraine by the mass media supporting different ideologies.

2. IDEOLOGY, MEDIA AND LANGUAGE

2.1. Ideology

The linguistic sign *ideology* is very often automatically associated with the writings of Karl Marx, to whom the phrase *false consciousness* is attributed, despite him never having actually used it. However, in the Marxist sense, ideology is part of the theory of social class, meaning ‘belief systems that help justify the actions of those in power by distorting and misrepresenting reality’ (Croteau, 2002:159). Thus, for Marxists, ideology was a tool for the dominant social groups to control those members of the society with no access to power, by imposing their worldviews and ideas on the *weaker* part of the society and by making them believe in ideas that, in fact, do not bring any benefit to them, but are only relevant to the ruling group (ibid.: 164).

Just like language, ideology is a social phenomenon, for it is associated with the beliefs of a particular group. Teun van Dijk points out that ‘as systems of ideas of social groups and movements ideologies not only make sense in order to understand the world (from the point of view of the group), but also as a basis for the social practices of group members’ (Van Dijk, 2000:8). This is also supported by Croteau who insists that it is important to recognize that ideology is not just about politics, but ‘has a broader and more fundamental connotation’ (Croteau, 2002:160), for it is a prism through which the world is defined.

Ideology is, of course, closely linked with power:

Indeed, ideologies were traditionally often defined in terms of the legitimization of dominance, namely by the ruling class, or by various elite groups or organizations. Thus, if power is defined here in terms of the control one group has over (the actions of the members of) another group, ideologies function as the mental dimension of this form of control. That is, ideologies are the basis of dominant group members' practices (say of discrimination). They provide the principles by which these forms of power abuse may be justified, legitimized, condoned or accepted (van Dijk, 2000:35).

The goal of ideology is to embed these principles so deeply in the minds of the members of society that the ideas of the dominant group become synonymous with common sense, which happens ‘as soon as groups and their members accept a dominant ideology as a reflection of their own goals, desires or interests, or as a representation of a natural or otherwise legitimate social order’ (van Dijk, 1998:102). However, in order to achieve such hegemony, consent must be obtained first, and the two notions are closely linked. In order to legitimize the worldviews and social practices of the dominant group and hide the fact that they are actually imposed onto the society, thus making them seem natural and commonsensical, institutions that produce and distribute knowledge are vital tools, and they include the mass media. It is also essential to note that the distribution of ideological

knowledge must be continuous, for failing to upkeep the ideological standpoint with regular enforcement may lead to the society beginning to question and doubt these assumptions (Croteau, 2002:167).

2.2. Ideology and the media

Lately, the institution that has been overtaking the role of ideological education is the mass media, surpassing the family, the Church and the school, according to van Dijk (van Dijk, 2002:187). Because media content is so easily accessible nowadays that it is impossible to avoid it, it is an incredibly potent mechanism to use in reproducing ideologies. There are scholars, like Stuart Hall, who argue that to a large extent the media impose certain ideological assumptions on its consumers unknowingly and unconsciously, for these ideas have attained the status of common sense, and compares this situation to native speakers who are able to speak grammatically correct language without always being able to explain the rules governing the underlying structure (Hall, 1983:72). Others, such as David Miller, challenge this view, saying that ‘it strains credulity to suggest that left journalists would not and do not notice their contributions to dominant ideologies’ (Miller, 2002:249).

Norman Fairclough in his work *Language and Power* (1996) singles out the mass media as it is separated in place and time from its consumers, and as it exercises hidden power over the consumers: ‘Mass-media discourse is interesting because the nature of the power relations enacted in it is often not clear, and there are reasons for seeing it as involving ideological relations of power (Fairclough, 1996:49).’ He also stresses the one-sidedness of (written) media discourse, for there is a lack of reciprocity and feedback, meaning that the producer has exclusive power over the consumer, ‘and can therefore determine what is included and excluded, how events are represented, and (as we have seen) even the subject positions of their audiences’ (ibid.: 50). However, it remains to be answered who the real producers of the discourse are and whose position is being endorsed – whether it is the journalist’s, the editor’s or someone else’s? Van Dijk claims that it is the question of access – since elite persons, organizations and states have better access to the media (the president of a company is more likely to be interviewed than a janitor of the same enterprise), their views and opinions will dominate the media (van Dijk, 2002:188). It is, however, just half the battle, for there is the question of *perspective* as well, and this is where the dominant ideology usually plays the first violin.

Still, the power of media lies in the abundance of information that it throws at its consumers,

working through the repetition of particular ways of handling causality and agency, particular ways of positioning the reader, and so forth. Thus through the way it positions readers, for instance, media: discourse is able to exercise a pervasive and powerful influence in social reproduction because of the very scale of the modern mass media and the extremely high level of exposure of whole populations to a relatively homogeneous output (Fairclough, 1996:54).

It must be stressed that the output is largely homogeneous and does not offer a vast array of perspectives but rather focuses on ‘remarkably narrow range of behaviours and lifestyles’ (Croteau, 2002:163), thus stressing what is considered to be normal and what is considered to be deviant (and that way perpetuating these *norms*), even though members of the media industry would argue that they only represent the general opinion of the public.

2.3. Ideology, language and meaning

Language and ideology are two social phenomena that are, in fact, closely intertwined, as it is exactly through this medium that ideologies are conceptualized and imposed on the public, and it is extremely important to realize that language is an omnipotent tool in the hands of power-holders that allows their domination (Fairclough, 1996:1). Ideological manipulation with the help of language is exercised on several levels, starting with the word (the sign) and extending to discourse.

To begin with the first level, one must look to the word and its meaning. Hall (1983) observes that the creation of meaning is a social practice, just as suggested by Ferdinand de Saussure. When ideology is considered alongside the production of meaning, the ideological context becomes essential, for, according to Hall, ‘different kinds of meaning could be ascribed to the same events’ (Hall, 1983:67). Fixing a certain meaning comes at the expense of de-legitimizing alternative constructions which become unthinkable and unsayable in a certain context. Fairclough takes a similar stand and points to the different interpretations of the word *ideology* in various ideologies (Fairclough, 1996:93). Thus we must reckon with the fact that certain meanings are injected into words by the ideologies that use and appropriate them.

It is also a question of the choice of particular wording to reflect a certain event, which Fairclough calls constraining consent and deems it a form of hidden power, as the wording actually belongs to the powerholders of the society, while it is disguised as the opinion of the media that spreads it (ibid.: 52). George Orwell in his essay *Politics and the English Language* showed how the use of particular linguistic elements over others (euphemisms, in this case) contributed to creating a specific picture in the minds of the readers, thus shifting perspectives:

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of the political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called *pacification*. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called *transfer of population* or *rectification of frontiers*. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called *elimination of unreliable elements*. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them (Orwell, 1946).

Since ideology aims to legitimize and justify the concepts that underlie it, language is the most widely available tool of manipulation that allows the dominant group to show the events in the society in a particular light via choosing one signifier over another. The two main mechanisms that generate meaning are selection and combination (Hall, 1983:68), which work together to produce content. While the production of content is in the hands of the media that claims to be impartial and independent, it is clear that it could not operate outside the framework of the consensus, which in turn means that it contributes to the dissemination of the ideas upheld by the dominant groups of the society (ibid.: 87).

These questions are of great interest to critical discourse analysis, a discipline that investigates language in context from the point of view of how dominant ideologies are enforced via language use, and this branch of linguistics will be examined in the next chapter in order to provide a methodological framework for the analysis of news articles.

3. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

3.1. What is discourse

Discourse has been a buzzword for several decades, ever since linguistics shifted its focus from analysis of language on the sentence level to that of beyond sentence, and the term *discourse* has been subject to interpretation by many scholars, stretching or, on the contrary, shrinking the meaning of the word and what it is supposedly inclusive of.

It has been noted that, in general, definitions and the consequential interpretations of discourse fall in three broad categories: 1) anything beyond the sentence, 2) language in use, 3) a broader range of social practice that includes non-linguistic and nonspecific (that is, if discourse is treated as an abstract value system that does not surface directly as a text (Jaworski, Coupland, 2006:6)) instances of language (Schiffrin, Tannen, Hamilton, 2001:1). The first definition is said to be favoured by linguists, as it is the most general one (ibid.:1). Supporters of the second approach to discourse are, for instance, Brown and Yule who write that

the analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restriction to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs. While some linguists may concentrate on determining the formal properties of a language, the discourse analyst is committed to an investigation of what that language is used for (Brown, Yule, 1983:1).

It is, however, the third category that is of the greatest interest with regards to the topic of this paper, as it views discourse as an integrated concept that cannot be separated from societal processes. Paul James Gee in his work *Social Linguistics and Literacies: ideology in discourses* (2008) claims the following:

Discourses are ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities (or “types of people”) by specific groups, whether families of a certain sort, lawyers of a certain sort, bikers of a certain sort, business people of a certain sort, church members of a certain sort, African-Americans of a certain sort, women or men of a certain sort, and so on and so forth through a very long list. Discourses are ways of being “people like us.” They are “ways of being in the world”; they are “forms of life”; they are socially situated identities. They are, thus, always and everywhere social and products of social histories (Gee, 2008:3).

He also asserts his conviction that language and ideology are bound with each other, therefore language cannot be analyzed without taking into account the ideological assumptions it carries with it (ibid.:4).

It is vital to note that discourse is not limited to a certain mode of production, and can be both spoken and written, thus there are many approaches to analyzing it, and each is supported and endorsed by a number of scholars.

3.2. Evolution of (critical) discourse analysis

While the term as we know it – discourse analysis – came into general use only in the mid-20th century, the underlying concept can actually be traced back to Aristotle and his contemporaries, and the discipline called *rhetoric*, or the art of good speaking. These scholars looked at structures of speeches and how effective they were at contributing to the goal of the speech, i.e., persuading the public (van Dijk, 1988:18). Although rhetoric as a discipline lost its importance over time, and was no longer the dominant discipline of the humanities by the beginning of the 20th century, other branches of humanities developed and, consequently, new disciplines appeared that led to the emergence of discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1985:1).

In the first half of the 20th century, scholars attempted to disconnect language from the real world and study it *by itself*, which led to developments in phonology, morphology and syntax that studied parts of language separately. If research in phonology and morphology was quite successful, absolute and complete truth could not be found concerning syntax because, as Beaugrande puts it ‘the arrangement of words in phrases and sentences is decided only partly by syntax, and partly by speakers’ knowledge of the world and of their society’ (Beaugrande, 1996). Therefore, linguists came to realize that in order to make assumptions about language it has to be put in a certain context. Thus modern discourse analysis was built, and this domain has seen a lot of development over the last few decades, and is now a fully fledged research method with many sub-branches stemming from it.

One of the disciplines that is rooted in discourse analysis and has developed additional features is Critical Discourse Analysis – an approach of discourse analysis available for use to uncover the specifics of language use in particular contexts. Wodak and Weiss explain that ‘the roots of CDA lie in classical Rhetoric, Textlinguistics and Sociolinguistics, as well as in Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics. The notions of ideology, power, hierarchy, gender and sociological variables were all seen as relevant for an interpretation or explanation of text’ (Weiss, Wodak, 2003:12). It is also said that the origins of CDA can be traced back to the 1970s, when Critical Linguistics was popular (Wodak, Chilton, 2005:xi). It is vital to remember that the word *critical* does not mean *negative* in this context, but analytical, as the discipline aims to uncover and explain the particulars of language use.

The term itself is attributed to Norman Fairclough, one of the *fathers* of CDA, who summarized ‘critical approaches’ to discourse analysis without using the actual term in his work *Discourse and Social Change*, published in 1992. In the same year, he published another book where the term that is widely used today – Critical Discourse Analysis –

appeared for the first time, and, finally, in 1995, a book that bore the same title was published (Weiss, Wodak, 2003:35). Other prominent pioneers in the field include Teun van Dijk and Ruth Wodak who make up the core of the network of scholars involved in this discipline.

Notably, scholars make it a point to mention that Critical Discourse Analysis is not a single theory, and neither does it support a single methodology, thus it should be referred to as a school or a programme, in order to correctly reflect what CDA is (Wodak, Meyer, 2009:5):

The methodologies differ greatly in all these studies on account of the aims of the research and also the methodologies applied: small qualitative case studies can be found as well as large data corpora, drawn from fieldwork and ethnographic research (Weiss, Wodak, 2003:12).

While it might seem that the multitude of theories and methodologies supported by CDA is a factor that hinders the development of the discipline, for it lacks a truly unified front, Weiss and Wodak stress that it is just the other way around, and this plurality is, in fact, one of the greatest strengths of CDA, for it allows it to be dynamic (ibid.:6).

To add to the varied nature of CDA, it must be remarked that it may include more than verbal language:

Critical discourse analysis has also moved beyond language, taking on board that discourses are often multimodally realized, not only through text and talk, but also through other modes of communication such as images ... Overall, then, critical discourse analysis has moved towards more explicit dialogue between social theory and practice, richer contextualization, greater interdisciplinarity and greater attention to the multimodality of discourse (van Leuween, 2006:292, as cited in Wodak, Meyer, 2009:16).

3.4. Main aspects of (Critical) Discourse Analysis

Despite its varied nature, Wodak and Meyer have singled out seven dimensions that are pertinent when discourse analysis is considered:

- an interest in the properties of '*naturally occurring*' language use by real language users (instead of a study of abstract language systems and invented examples)
- a focus on *larger units than isolated words and sentences* and, hence, new basic units of analysis: texts, discourses, conversations, speech acts, or communicative events
- the extension of linguistics *beyond sentence grammar* towards a study of action and interaction
- the extension to *non-verbal (semiotic, multimodal, visual) aspects* of interaction and communication: gestures, images, film, the internet, and multimedia
- a focus on dynamic (socio)-cognitive or interactional moves and strategies
- the study of the functions of (social, cultural, situative and cognitive) *contexts of language use*
- an analysis of a vast number of *phenomena of text grammar and language use*: coherence, anaphora, topics, macrostructures, speech acts, interactions, turn-taking, signs, politeness, argumentation, rhetoric, mental models, and many other aspects of text and discourse (Wodak, Meyer, 2009:2).

Thus, it is clear that discourse analysis is a multidisciplinary field that draws from other domains of research in order to create an integrated method of analyzing language. Gee asserts that an ideal discourse analysis 'involves asking questions about how language, at a

given time and place, is used to construe the aspects of the situation network as realized at that time and place and how the aspects of the situation network give meaning to that language' (Gee, 2005:110).

The previous chapters of the paper have touched upon on the influential power of language to manipulate with our thinking, and the correlation between language and power can be said to be one of the keystones of Critical Discourse Analysis. Van Dijk comments that 'one of the crucial tasks of CDA is to account for the relationships between discourse and social power. More specifically, such an analysis should describe and explain how power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimised by the text and talk of dominant groups or institutions' (Van Dijk, 2003:84). Thus, Critical Discourse Analysis combines three aspects of the social world to draw relevant conclusions: dominant groups, power and language.

Supporters of the CDA School do not see language as possessing any power *per se*, as they believe that it becomes a powerful instrument only when it is used by the *right* people, so language is entwined in social power, as it 'indexes and expresses power, and is involved where there is contention over and a challenge to power' (Wodak, Meyer, 2009:10). Because of this, CDA often looks at language from the point of view of those who suffer because of it, as it brings out the linguistic means employed by those responsible for the inequalities (Weiss, Wodak, 2003:14).

The reciprocal nature of discourse practices and societal processes must also be stressed:

As critical discourse analysts we assume a dialectical relationship between particular discursive practices and the specific fields of action (including situations, institutional frames and social structures) in which they are embedded. On the one hand, the situational, institutional and social settings shape and affect discourses, and, on the other, discourses influence discursive as well as non-discursive social and political processes and actions. In other words, discourses as linguistic social practices can be seen both as constituting non-discursive and discursive social practices and, at the same time, as being constituted by them (Wodak, Weiss, 2003:22).

A crucial notion in CDA is that of *opacity*, for power over the submissive groups of society is not always exercised in a way that clearly demonstrates inequality. On the contrary, language is often used in a way that conceals the true goals of the dominant groups, and it is the aim of CDA to uncover and analyze both transparent and opaque structural relationships between power and discrimination that are maintained with the help of language (ibid.:15).

In a process called *naturalization*, ideologies and ideological practices 'become dissociated to a greater or lesser extent from the particular social base, and the particular interests, which generated them' (Fairclough, 1995:35), so they appear to be commonsensical and *natural*, rather than supporting the interests of particular groups. In the end, they become part of the 'knowledge base', and, due to this false sense of embedment, 'micro' actions, that

is, local verbal interactions, start contributing to the reproduction of ‘macro’ structures, i.e., these ideologies and ideological practices (ibid.:35). Thus it is a process that creates opacity, meaning that the ideological practices are no longer seen as such, but as commonsensical (ibid.:42), and, as a result, members of society are falsely committed to these dimensions, for they are not aware that the information provided to them is ideologically biased. Therein lies the importance of Critical Discourse Analysis, for

CDA is good at showing how particular language users establish exclusionary attitudes and maybe practices by recurrently and selectively asserting certain attributes of social and ethnic groups. In other words, CDA draws attention to the existence of stereotyped categorisations in daily talk, elite talk and texts (Wodak, Chilton, 2005:24).

An essential point that must not be forgotten, however, is the fact that critical discourse analysts are also part of the same system, the societal hierarchy of social power and status, and researchers often occupy superior positions in the society, therefore, their work may not be as transparent as it may seem (Wodak, Meyer, 2009:7).

The scope of material that may be subjected to critical discourse analysis is virtually limitless. Weiss and Wodak observe that ‘gender issues, issues of racism, media discourses, political discourses, organizational discourses or dimensions of identity research have become very prominent’ (Weiss, Wodak, 2003:12). Still, it does mean that only such social and political experiences and events that are considered extremely serious or negative can undergo critical discourse analysis, for that is not the case, as it can analyze practically any text on any topic, from war to the latest fashion (Wodak, Meyer, 2009:2).

Since mass media are the most influential information channel nowadays, it is of particular interest to critical discourse analysts:

Particularly the language of the mass media is scrutinized as a site of power, of struggle and also as a site where language is often apparently transparent. Media institutions often purport to be neutral, in that they provide space for public discourse, reflect states of affairs disinterestedly, and give the perceptions and arguments of the newsmakers (Wodak, Meyer, 2009:12).

As this paper is going to focus on the representation of the Ukrainian crisis in mass media, it should provide proof for the ideological nature of the media, as suggested by CDA scholars.

To conclude, Fairclough and Wodak have summarized the main tenets of CDA:

1. CDA addresses social problems;
2. power relations are discursive;
3. discourse constitutes society and culture;
4. discourse does ideological work;
5. discourse is historical;
6. the link between text and society is mediated;

7. discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory;
8. discourse is a form of social action (Fairclough and Wodak, as cited in van Dijk, 2001:353).

3.5. Levels of analysis in CDA

Once the goals of CDA have been established, it is time to consider the means via which the aims are achieved, i.e., the categories at which critical discourse analysts look to draw conclusions about the correlation between language use and power. It is going to help with building the framework of analysis for the empirical part of this paper, therefore, only some aspects will be considered, those relevant for the impending research. Moreover, only those aspects that van Dijk (2001:357) calls ‘local details of *meaning, form and style*’ will be used later on.

First of all, it must be noted that in order to perform critical discourse analysis, one does not necessarily need to include an abundance of parameters:

A further characteristic of CDA is that most researchers integrate linguistic categories into its analyses – but to a different extent and with a different focus and intensity. CDA does not necessarily include a broad range of linguistic categories in each single analysis; one might get the impression that only a very few linguistic devices are central to CDA studies. (Wodak, Meyer, 2009:21)

Therefore, while these linguistic categories are available to be selected to form the set of variables for a specific analysis, there is no need to go into extremes and consider all of them in a single research.

On the level of microstructures (as opposed to macrostructures that look at the global meanings or topics), textual analysis may be carried out on the lexical level and the syntactic level, both of which are pertinent in this context, hence attention will be given to both.

3.5.1. Lexis

As the *word*, in a general sense, is the smallest language unit capable of standing in isolation and retaining meaning that can be communicated (while, of course, in linguistics it would be further separated into morphemes), perhaps, the most important category that is considered in Critical Discourse Analysis is, as referred to by van Dijk, *lexicalization*.

As the paper is concerned with the analysis of news, it does not hurt reminding how influential the mass media are:

The mass media provide the means of access to much information and represent a potentially powerful force in our society. They can select what is news, who gets into the papers and onto

television and radio and, most importantly for linguists, the way that those stories get told, and the frameworks in which people get to appear and talk (Thomas, Wareing, 2005:44).

Therefore, those in power of producing and disseminating news reports hold the reins of the information carriage and may make us perceive certain events in a certain light by choosing particular lexical items from the array available to them.

While people are used to thinking about words in terms of what they signify, it must be remembered that ‘all types of words, but particularly nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs carry connotated in addition to denotated meanings’ (Richardson, 2007:47). That is, words often lack neutrality, as they are emotionally charged either positively or negatively; thus, they carry attitudes with them along with their factual meanings.

One of the ways to create a certain perspective via particular word choices is **naming and reference**:

We all simultaneously possess a range of identities, roles and characteristics that could be used to describe us equally accurately but not with the same meaning [...] Journalists have to provide names for the people in the events they report and this naming always involves choice. And logically, by choosing one social category over another, they include them within a category and exclude them from other different categories – or, perhaps, choose to foreground one social category over other equally accurate alternatives (Richardson, 2007:49).

Consequently, a man may be referred to as a *father of three children* or as a *cage fight enthusiast*, depending on the goal of the report. Closely bound with this is the concept of **predication**, that is ‘the choice of words used to represent more directly the values and characteristics of social actors’ (ibid.:50), and can be expressed via attributes, predicates and predicative clauses, collocations and rhetorical figures.

Quite a lot of research has been done on the surface structures observable in the news, which has revealed biased language use to report current events. One of the pioneers of such explorations was the series *Bad News*, produced by the Glasgow Media Group in the 1970s, which analyzed TV reports on various issues (such as industrial disputes (strikes), the Falklands (Malvinas) war, the media coverage of AIDS) (van Dijk, 2001:359). It was common to assume that TV coverage offers a neutral stance, and they challenged this assumption by claiming that ‘news was simply an artifice which systematically articulated a particular viewpoint reflecting the special status and credibility afforded to certain sectional interests’ (Franklin et al., 2005:21). During the analysis they discovered that

in the coverage of industrial affairs, the press will typically choose lexical items to denote workers and their actions ("strike," "disruptive actions," etc.) that are more negative than the items chosen to denote the actions of the employers. Also, the workers are typically described as "demanding" and the employers as "offering," and not the converse. Thus, even at this restricted level of stylistic variation in lexicalization, basic opinions and ideologies about social participants and social actions can be expressed (van Dijk, 1983:30).

Van Dijk himself also performed similar research in Amsterdam on the local and national news coverage on riots that ensued once the police decided to take action against squatters, and he found that there were

systematic differences between the lexical description of the demonstrators by the national press agency and by the popular (conservative) newspapers, using the Dutch equivalents of "hooligans," "rioters," "rowdies," and "thugs." Also, the lexical items used to describe the police and their actions, although they were also violent, were usually more neutral (ibid.:30).

Van Dijk also suggests that, although lexical variation is typically treated as a phenomenon on the level of sentence, it is actually relevant for the whole discourse, since stylistic coherence is usually maintained through the text, and that even neutral words may achieve negative connotations in particular contexts (ibid.:31).

Norman Fairclough presents an interesting point of view, which might be relevant to this research, since it will look at the productions of several news agencies and their interpretations of the events in the Ukraine. He refers to an article which uses words and phrases, like *incorrigible*, *defiance*, *lack of responsibility*, *delinquency* to talk about youngsters. He states that this is only one of the codes that may be used to describe these individuals, as there is an indefinite amount of possible lexicalizations, and an 'anti-language' may be created just as easily, substituting these words for *irrepressible*, *debunking*, *refusal to be sucked in by society* and *spirit*, thus showing the stance of a divergent ideological position (Fairclough, 1995:34). Such oppositions are one of the expected outcomes of this research, which is going to try to uncover the opposing ideological positions supported by the news agencies.

It must be remembered that lexicalization must not always include extremely different positioning, i.e., the choice between a *terrorist* or a *freedom fighter*, as it can also work on the level of marked and unmarked forms, that is, choosing a particular item from a list of synonymic string (such as a *child*, *offspring*, *kid*, *brat*) can have a considerable effect on the *colouring* of the story, thus pushing the agenda in a more covert way. Lexicalization also includes the use of various metaphors, hyperboles, cases of metonymy and other rhetorical tropes to describe the respective situation. Richardson (2007:65) points out that, for instance, hyperbole is a very menacing tool when it comes to news reports, for it may be used to attempt to *blow a story out of proportion* and show one part of the involved as especially wicked.

Lastly, Linda Thomas provides an astute observation of the lexicalization of a certain event:

Consider the expression 'Christopher Columbus discovered America', which has been a common way to describe the voyage of 1492. This represents the event from the perspective of the colonial powers of Europe. To the indigenous people of America, the arrival of Christopher

Columbus was not the ‘discovery’ of their country but the beginning of a long-lasting, far-reaching process of loss of independence. However, until recently, only the version of events which presented the perspective of the more powerful group was to be found in history books. Thus language reflected the ‘truth’ of the more dominant group, and largely hid the ‘truth’ of the less dominant group. The use of the word discovered in this context might seem ‘natural’ to you, until you consider its implications and the power dynamics at work (Thomas, 2005:11).

3.5.2. Sentence structure

Another significant point to evaluate under critical discourse analysis is the grammatical structure of the sentence (and the whole text), based on the framework of Halliday’s functional-systemic grammar: ‘The point of such research is that events and actions may be described with syntactic variations that are a function of the underlying involvement of actors (e.g. their agency, responsibility, and perspective) (van Dijk, 2001:357).’

Transitivity describes the relationships between participants and the roles they play in the processes described in the reporting. [...] As such, transitivity forms the very heart of representation, describing the relationships between the participants and the roles they play in the processes described in reporting. [...] That is, choices in the way to represent an event’s participants and choices in the way that the event itself is represented, as reflected in the principal verb of the clause (Richardson, 2007:54).

One of the scholars who used this approach to the analysis of the media was Roger Fowler (also in the 1970s), and he found that in the descriptions of *riots* at a minority festival, responsibility of the authorities (who possibly initiated the violence) was removed by the use of passive constructions and nominalization, thus making agency implicit, rather than explicit (Van Dijk, 2001:357). Conclusions have been made in successive studies that these choices are not at all arbitrary, for they carry ideological meanings, as the transformation of a clause from active into passive may remove political implications (Richardson, 2007:56).

Fairclough calls this property **transitivity**, and he distinguishes four types of process:

- 1) relational – the verb marking the relationship between the participants;
- 2) action – an agent acting upon a goal (i.e., the agent as the subject of the sentence, at the end or missing at all);
- 3) event – event and a goal, usually expressed in intransitive S-V clauses;
- 4) mental – verbs of knowing, feeling and perceiving, usually expressed in transitive clauses.

Nominalization is also included in this analytical category, as it allows the omission of both the agent and the goal (e.g., a woman was raped vs. a rape occurred) (Locke, 2004:49-50). In an article about verbs being used as nouns, Henry Hitchings noted the following:

Nominalizations give priority to actions rather than to the people responsible for them. Sometimes this is apt, perhaps because we don’t know who is responsible or because responsibility isn’t relevant. But often they conceal power relationships and reduce our sense of

what's truly involved in a transaction. As such, they are an instrument of manipulation, in politics and in business. They emphasize products and results, rather than the processes by which products and results are achieved (Hitchings, 2003).

One more notion of importance is that of **modality**, which Richardson (2007) calls the counter-part of transitivity. Modality refers to 'to judgments, comment and attitude in text and talk, and specifically the degree to which the speaker or writer is committed to the claim she or he is making' (Richardson, 2007:59), that is, how much the writer believes in the content they are producing (or wants the readership to believe in it).

Contrary to popular belief, modality can be expressed not only with the help of modal verbs. The below list is by no means comprehensive, but provides an insight into the various ways of showing possibility and certainty in a sentence:

- 1) modal auxiliaries (You must/should/can/may/might talk to the professor.);
- 2) semimodal verbs (You ought to/have to/need to talk to the professor.);
- 3) adverbs (It is certainly overdone.);
- 4) nouns (There is a possibility that it is raining);
- 5) adjectives (It is necessary that you keep the receipt);
- 6) conditionals (If the sky is blue, it is not raining.) (Von Fintel, 2006:1).

Richardson points out that there are two principal forms in which modality can be expressed, these being *truth modality* and *obligation modality*.

Truth modality varies along the scale of options from the absolutely categorical through to varying degrees of hedging and reduced certainty. Obligation modality refers to future events and, specifically, the degree to which the speaker/writer believes that a certain course of action or certain decisions should or ought to be taken (Richardson, 2007:60).

The same distinction is described using the terms **epistemic** and **deontic** modality. Epistemic modality is related to an individual's knowledge base (or lack thereof), due to which inferences are made as to the probability of a situation or an event, and it comprises the notions of 'necessity' and 'probability'. Deontic modality, on the other hand, expresses a speaker's directive attitude towards a given action, thus it is said to be similar to directive speech acts, comprising the notions of 'obligation' and 'permission' (Radden, Dirven, 2007:234-236).

3.6. News as discourse

Before proceeding to the practical analysis of the paper, a brief summary of news as discourse is in order since the raw data of the analysis is going to consist of online news reports.

In different social contexts, people behave, interact and speak differently, especially in stereotypical situations in which one is expected to act in a certain way and use certain phrases. News discourse is no exception, and it is also subjected to certain formulae, such as style constraints, thus it must be treated accordingly. However, it is not as regulated as, for example legal discourse, and allows certain textual freedom.

News discourse is meant to be consumed by readers, but, interestingly, they are not present there as communicative partners, as they are not addressed directly in this communicative act. However, there is an ideal reader in mind for which agencies are catering, thus it is a reciprocal process – news is shaped by its readership, and news also shapes its readership.

Richardson argues that the language of news is of great importance due to its omnipresence in the social reality:

Journalism has social effects: through its power to shape issue agendas and public discourse, it can reinforce beliefs; it can shape people's opinions not only of the world but also of their place and role in the world; or, if not shape your opinions on a particular matter, it can at least influence what you have opinions on; in sum, it can help shape social reality by shaping our views on social reality. For these reasons, and many more, the language of the news media needs to be taken very seriously (Richardson, 2007:13).

To analyze news discourse 'the theoretical instruments must be borrowed from other disciplines. A full account of news discourse, then, requires both a description of textual structures of news and a description of the production and reception processes of news discourse in communicative situations and sociocultural contexts (van Dijk, 1988:30)'.

One of the pioneers of analyzing news as discourse and applying a specific framework to this analysis was Teun van Dijk, who was concerned with this discipline already in the 1980s. He developed the theory of microstructures and macrostructures of newspaper articles, and came up with the news schemata, that is, the formal layout of newspaper reports according to which most articles are organized. However, since this paper is going to deal with microstructures only, van Dijk's framework will not be reflected here, although, undeniably, if the scope of the research were to be extended, including such analysis would be of great value.

Moreover, with the advent of the Internet newspapers are being pushed into the background more and more every day, so news agencies are bound to reckon with the mogul that the World Wide Web is, and provide news to people in an electronic format.

Although there are differences between newspaper reports and online news reports, they share the communicative goals and have many similarities. While the application of van Dijk's news schemata might not fit online reports perfectly, since the goal of the research is to look at lexis and syntactic structures of news reports, some overlapping elements may be

borrowed from his theories. Of interest for this paper are headlines, one of the macrostructures of newspaper articles, which accompany both printed articles as online ones, hence they can be discussed here.

Headlines are the first important feature of newspaper discourse (van Dijk, 1988:36). Van Dijk (1991:50) asserts that they have both textual and cognitive functions. First of all, they provide a summary of the events mentioned in the report, as people tend to glance at the headlines to know the current events, without going into particulars and reading an extensive analysis. In the English language, headlines have developed their own particular grammatical features, which may sometimes be used for a specific purpose:

Grammatically, headlines are often incomplete sentences: articles or auxiliary verbs may be deleted. This may sometimes lead to vagueness or ambiguity, which may also have a special ideological function, for instance when the responsibility for an action must be concealed (van Dijk, 1991:50).

Cognitively, headlines, because they are read first, are used by readers to construct the overall meaning of the whole text before it has been read; moreover, 'headline information is also used to activate the relevant knowledge in memory the reader needs to understand the news report. Thus, as soon as the word riot is used in the headline, the reader will activate relevant general knowledge about riots, that is, a so-called 'riot script'. This script monitors the interpretation of the details of the rest of the text' (van Dijk, 1991:50). Therefore, headlines are of vital importance as they provide clues to the reader as to how the event should be defined and interpreted (van Dijk, 1998:40).

It is essential to note that headlines have ideological implications, and, since they are read first (and best recalled), they basically determine the interpretation that the reader will have of the article, and deriving an alternative interpretation would require an extra effort on the reader's part (van Dijk, 1991:51).

Thus, it is evident that news reports are especially convenient sources for applying critical discourse analysis to, as they are real communicative events that can reveal how language works to influence perceptions of those to whom it is addressed. Moreover, there are many levels of analysis, which can be selected and combined according to the aims of the linguist based on the focus on the research. The next chapter of the paper will present the analysis of news reports about the events in Ukraine, as portrayed by three different news outlets, each representing a different ideological mindset, with the aim of investigating the similarities and differences (if any) in the way their audience is conditioned to perceive these events. The focus areas will include the lexical means, sentence structures in terms of transitivity, as well as modality.

4. MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF UKRAINIAN CRISIS

4.1. Context of situation

There is always a military conflict unfolding somewhere in the world at any given time, but it is clear that the farther the combat zone lies from an individual, the less interest one takes in it. Over the past one and a half years, Europeans have been following the events in Ukraine because of the country's proximity to the European states, and the danger of the expansion of the conflict that could lead to other countries being affected by it as well, especially the Baltics. The initial cause for unrest was Viktor Yanukovich's, who was the president of Ukraine at the time, abandonment of a trade agreement proposed by the EU that would strengthen Ukraine's ties with Europe and bring it closer to the West, in late November 2013. The president's wish to seek closer cooperation with Russia angered a great number of Ukrainians who voiced their opinion in continuous demonstrations and protests throughout November and December. In January 2014, the demonstrations and clashes with the police began turning bloody and deadly, both sides suffering losses as a result of the armed clashes. The following month, president Yanukovich was ousted by the parliament and was forced to flee the country, while a couple of days later armed men walked into Crimea and seized control of the key buildings, and the local government expressed a wish for the peninsula to be joined to the Russian Federation. A referendum was organized in a matter of days, and on March 18 Crimea was officially absorbed by Russia – the Western world doubted the legitimacy of the referendum and began imposing sanctions on the Eastern superpower. At the same time, protests in the Eastern provinces of Ukraine began, calling for a greater autonomy in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions that eventually became self-proclaimed republics. These events were followed by more sanctions from the European Union and the United States, as well as more and more casualties due to the continued attacks, finally resulting in shaky truce deals and peace talks, even though the conflict has not been resolved, and fighting in Ukraine continues (Online 1; Hoodbhoy, 2014).

The opinions on the situation in Ukraine differ greatly: to some Russia is abusing its power and attempting to steal something that is not theirs, while some believe that Ukraine is holding on to something that is not theirs, playing with innocent people's lives. The attitudes differ due to the political affiliation of the individual: those expressing pro-Western views side with Ukraine, while those agreeing with Russia's politics see no fault with its conduct regarding Ukraine. Views are greatly influenced by how the mass media interpret the events, since they are the windows through which consumers see the world, as the theoretical

background suggests. Since the conflict in Ukraine, it could be said, involves three parties – Ukraine, Russia and the West – the research focuses on three different news outlets and looks at the linguistic means used to convey information to their audiences, to see how language use shapes up a certain interpretation leading to changes in perception.

4.2. Sources

In order to provide a comprehensive comparison that might show actual differences in the interpretation of the events unfolding in Ukraine, three sources, each representing a party to the conflict, have been selected for analysis: **BBC**, **Kyiv Post** and **Pravda.ru**.

The **BBC** in this research represents the Western view on the war in Ukraine. As the world's oldest national broadcasting organization, founded in 1922, it has gained fame as one of the most trusted news outlets in the Western world. The Western media are said to be trying to maintain a neutral stance in this situation, abstaining from recognizing Russia as a party to the military conflict in Ukraine.

Kyiv Post is Ukraine's leading English-language newspaper that publishes most of its content online, although the Kyiv Post is also published in paper format. The paper was founded in 1995 and is known for holding Western views and supporting democracy and freedom in Ukraine, and calls itself an independent media outlet (Online 2). This source has been chosen to see how Ukraine itself sees the situation, as if from within, but it must be remarked that the source is openly anti-Russian.

Pravda.ru is a representative of the Russian media that produces content in English, but, admittedly, some of the articles are not original productions, but translations of the Russian versions provided by an agency. This news outlet that began operating in 1999 only produces its content online, and is said to be a pro-Kremlin establishment, thus its portrayal of the events is expected to favour the pro-Russian view.

4.3. Methodology and criteria

In order to gain understanding of how language works and what goals it achieves in any of the three sources selected for the purposes of this paper, Critical Discourse Analysis was selected as a research method, the principles of which have been laid out in the previous chapters.

The main fields of interest are as follow: lexis, sentence structures (active and passive constructions) and modality. Lexical items are of primary interest in this paper; hence the

biggest portion of the analysis is devoted to the use of specific words that bring out the ideological differences.

The categories for analysis were not pre-selected, but drawn up during the initial reading process. This was done in order for the analysis to reflect the phenomena that are actually found in the articles, rather than look for features that might not be present in the sources.

Consequently, the following categories were formed, according to which the texts are to be analyzed:

- lexis, separated into the following topics:
 - events in Ukraine;
 - Ukraine and its territories;
 - Russian and Ukrainian military;
 - weapons and military terminology;
 - killings and deaths.
- stylistic devices;
- modality;
- transitivity.

Even though unrest in Ukraine began in November 2013, and a serious conflict soon ensued that has been continuing ever since, it was decided to focus on more recent publications, rather than analyze the initial reports. The logic behind this step is simple and based on practical assumptions: as the in-built search filters of the websites are not advanced enough to offer greatly customized search results, the effort to retrieve articles that date back to early 2014 would have been unnecessarily big in relation to the added value it might give to the paper. Moreover, the goal of the study was not to trace the development of events' interpretation in time, but focus on more recent data.

Therefore, the selection procedure went as follows: in the search box of each website, a keyword (Ukraine/Crimea) was entered, and fifteen articles selected from the results. Given the length of the articles, such a number was judged sufficient to provide enough material for the analysis. Preference was given to those published more recently (March 2015), going back to February and January until the quota was filled. The articles were then opened to see whether they were actual reports, instead of interviews or videos, or linked content, and those not fit for the analysis replaced by new reports. After the completion of the initial reading, done with the purpose of developing the categories for analysis, each article was carefully perused, and the relevant material highlighted and added to the particular category. The

retrieved data was then summarized and described separately, and this analysis comprises the next subchapters of the paper, followed by a comparative summary of all three sources.

4.4. BBC

As explained previously, BBC News has been chosen as a representative of the Western media that supposedly holds a neutral position as to Russia's involvement in the events taking place in Ukraine and Crimea and does not throw direct accusations at one party or another.

Headlines in the articles by the BBC are relatively short, and they reflect the argument proposed by van Dijk that a specific style has been developed for headlines in the English language, that is, omitting articles and tense forms, which do not allow the reader to understand the issue at hand by a single glance. There are a couple of headlines that do not stick to this style, and it may be related to the content of the piece – whether it is a descriptive article or a standard news report. The information is conveyed in a concise way, and in more than a half of the headlines there is a repetitive pattern, announcing the topic of the report (e.g., Ukraine crisis/Ukraine conflict) and following with the focus. The location (Ukraine/Crimea) and the situation (crisis/conflict/annexation) are constantly repeated, alerting the readers and creating a certain sense of anxiety. However, lexis that would sound attitudinal is largely avoided.

4.4.1. Events in Ukraine

In the articles published by the BBC, the situation in Ukraine is referred to as a *conflict* or a *crisis* (*Mr Nemtsov was killed days before a march he had been organising against the conflict in Ukraine* (BBC News, 14 Mar 2015). *The crisis in Ukraine has already claimed more than 5,300 lives [...]* (BBC News, 9 Feb 2015)). The use of the word *conflict* is more frequent in the articles themselves, while *crisis* adorns the headlines more often; the introductory phrase *Ukraine crisis* or *Ukraine conflict* is a prominent feature of the headlines, with nine out of fifteen articles beginning with either one of them (*Ukraine crisis: US sanctions target Russia ideologue* (BBC News, 11 Mar 2015), *Ukraine conflict: US 'may supply arms to Ukraine'* (BBC News, 9 Feb 2015)).

The choice of the denomination is also worthy of mention, since the words *crisis* and *conflict* are not absolutely interchangeable, they do not express one and the same thing, and they do not appear on the list of synonyms on the *Oxford Dictionaries* website when one or the other word is entered in the search box. *Cambridge Dictionary* defines *conflict* as 'an

active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles’ or ‘fighting between two or more groups of people or countries’ (Online 3), thus it already includes the notion of active clashes, possible fighting etc., while *crisis* is a more abstract concept, defined as ‘a time of great disagreement, confusion, or suffering’ or an ‘extremely difficult or dangerous point in a situation’ (Online 4) but it does not necessarily entail an opposition of forces, thus it is a *safer* choice to avoid any accusations of siding with anyone; moreover, *crisis* seems to suggest problems within a certain region, while conflict rather signals the involvement of some outside forces as well.

To maintain their political correctness, the use of the world *war* is largely avoided, but it still manages to find a place in the articles. One of the few cautionary instances relate to a quote by Angela Merkel, but there are no quotation marks to insist that the opinion is hers only (*Russia will face fresh sanctions from the EU if a deal to end the Ukraine war is not fully implemented, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has warned* (BBC News, 12 Feb 2015)) In another article, the word *war* is mentioned twice: once as part of a conversation (‘*Are you scared of dying in the war?*’ (BBC News, 9 Mar 2015)), and the second time as part of the article itself (*But attitudes have been hardened by months of conflict, and few believe the war is over* (ibid.)). Albeit very few, these explicit references lead us to believe that the West agrees to the opinion that a war is being waged in Ukraine, instead of just a crisis or a conflict, which are considerably *weaker* words.

4.4.2. Ukraine and its territories

The general consensus of what happened to Crimea is that it was annexed by Russia. Annexation is ‘a formal act whereby a state proclaims its sovereignty over territory hitherto outside its domain’ (Online 5) and it does not necessarily mean that it is preceded by violence.

The word annexation is repeated time and time again in the articles (*President Putin admitted to planning the annexation of Crimea from the start [...]* (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015). *He also said Russians in Crimea were in danger before Russia annexed it.* (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015)), constantly reminding the readers of the events in Crimea that took place just over a year ago.

The legitimacy of this annexation is not questioned by the BBC, except for a single mention, quoting Philip Hammond, UK Foreign Secretary: ‘By illegally annexing Crimea and now using Russian troops to destabilise eastern Ukraine [...]’ (BBC News, 10 Mar 2015). Unlike the quote by Angela Merkel, this is put in quotation marks thus strictly signifying the

author of the opinion; in that way, the media agency distances itself from what has been said by Mr. Hammond.

The process of annexing Crimea is described using various phrasal verbs, such as to seize control (*[...] a year ago Russia had also denied using its armed forces to seize control of Crimea* (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015)). *But one year after Russian soldiers furtively moved into Crimea and seized control [...]* (Galpin, 2015)), take control (*[...] well before Russian and local paramilitary forces took control* (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015)), take over (*Crimea was taken over shortly after months of protests had led to the downfall of Ukraine's President Viktor Yanukovich* (BBC News, 18 Mar 2015)), and the verb to absorb (*Crimea was formally absorbed into Russia on March 18 [...]* (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015)). With the exception of the verb *seize* that implies force and suddenness, the rest are rather neutral words, therefore the articles largely provide statements of facts without any value judgements.

Although the article in question is one of the *fiercest* of the selection, reference to another *takeover* is neutral as well, and securing a town is portrayed as a simple transaction of taking something without any negative implications (*This was the consensus at the late morning market in Debaltseve, a town which pro-Russian forces took from the Ukrainian army [...]* (BBC News, 9 Mar 2015)).

There are territories now in Ukraine that are being controlled by the so-called pro-Russian rebels, and they are most often referred to as rebel-held areas in the articles (*Ukraine's MPs have approved changes to the 'special status' law for parts of rebel-held areas in eastern Ukraine* (BBC News, 18 Mar 2015). *Self-government for the Pro-Russian rebel areas is a key part of the Minsk deal [...]* (ibid.). *Tonight, the centre of this rebel heartland is quieter than before.* (BBC News, 12 Feb 2015)), and that does not point any fingers towards anyone, as the specifying phrase pro-Russian is often omitted, which generalizes the situation. The BBC also abstains from pointing towards direct Russian military presence in these areas.

Still, the word *occupation* also makes an appearance, once as a quotation from a resolution (*Separately, Ukrainian MP's adopted a resolution describing as 'temporarily occupied territories' parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.* (BBC News, 18 Mar 2015)), but also as part of the report itself (*Thursday's move is designed to force Russia to put pressure on the heavily armed pro-Russian rebels occupying parts of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions* (BBC News, 20 Mar 2015)), and *occupation* most definitely has a stronger connotative meaning than a *rebel-held* area. Evidently, more expressive lexis is mostly kept to direct quotes, which is a way for the source to indirectly side with an opinion without taking on any direct responsibility.

4.4.3. Russian and Ukrainian military

There are two sides directly involved in the Ukraine conflict, but they do not have equal exposure; in the selection of articles collected for the purpose of this analysis, Ukraine's military forces are mentioned at least three times more rarely, thus leading to the perception that there are not any armed soldiers on their side. When they do get mentioned, the choice of expressions is relatively neutral, such as *Ukrainian forces* (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015), *Ukrainian servicemen* (BBC News, 10 Mar 2015) or *Ukrainian troops* (BBC News, 9 Feb 2015). Only once does the army get called a bad name, but it is just to show the controversial opinion of pro-Russian inhabitants (Galina Ivanovna describes the Ukrainian army as 'fascists' and 'occupiers' (BBC News, 9 Mar 2015)), and it works to show the absurdity of the statement.

When both forces are mentioned side by side, an interesting contrast emerges: (*Ukraine's military has been battling pro-Russian separatist rebels in the country's east* (BBC News, 14 Mar 2015)). President Poroshenko talks about 'his government forces' and pro-Russian rebels' (BBC News, 10 Mar 2015), and there is also 'renewed fighting between the pro-Russia rebels and Ukrainian government troops' (BBC News, 9 Feb 2015), which aim to legitimize their military (because it is a governmental entity) and oppose it to pro-Russian forces, which are referred to as *rebels*.

Rebel is perhaps the most popular choice of words to use to refer to the forces fighting the Ukrainian military, but there is a very wide array of various references throughout the articles: *Russian separatist rebels*, *Pro-Russian rebel forces*, *Pro-Russian rebels*, *Pro-Russian separatists*, *The Russian-backed fighters*, *Pro-Russian fighters*, *Russian troops*, *Russian-backed rebels*, *Pro-Russian forces*, *Rebel forces*, *Separatists*, *Crimea insurgents* and more. More often than not, instead of just using the word *rebels* or *separatists*, or *fighters*, the label *pro-Russian* is appended to it to clearly mark their affiliation which obtains a certain negative connotation; there are no pro-Western or pro-European appendices to the Ukrainian military, since it is the norm to be pro-West, an unmarked form, so to say. Thus, even if the BBC do not openly claim that they believe Russians, sent there by the government, to be involved in the conflict, the constant repetition of this attribute might lead the readers to assume that the Russian army is fighting in the regions.

Since the government of Russia has denied that Russia is backing the rebels, BBC uses the word *volunteers* at times to refer to them, but the word is always put in quotation marks, thus as if mocking the notion (*Moscow denies it, insisting that any Russians serving with the rebels are "volunteers"* (BBC News, 14 Mar 2015). *The DPR says Dmitry's special forces*

unit of Russian 'volunteers' fought on the frontline in the battle for Debaltseve (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015)). Such ironic structure proves how a neutral word may obtain a negative connotation in a particular context.

In terms of referencing specific people, BBC cautiously assigns qualities to them in order to maintain neutrality, mostly sticking to their political affiliation, as *the murdered Russian opposition politician* (1), *Alexander Dugin is an extreme Russian nationalist* (7/8), *Mr Dugin, a prominent Russian ultra-nationalist philosopher* (9), or *Pro-Moscow president Viktor Yanukovich* (14). There aren't any personal qualities attached to these personalities that would imply the journalists' attitudes towards them, thus the professional distance is retained.

4.4.4. Weapons and military terminology

Although, as previously noted, the situation in Ukraine is rarely called war, there are continuous armed conflicts, thus military terminology is frequently employed. It raises the level of seriousness of the situation, and at the same time instils insecurity and fear in the readers, simultaneously increasing anger at the rebels.

Military ranks, such as *officers, generals and commanders*, and *special forces soldiers* (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015) who draw up *plans* and give *orders* are mentioned in relation to Russia's activities in Ukraine, and they are referred to as *operations, offensives* and *attacks*, clearly pointing to the war-like activities taking place in the conflict zone. There is the mention of weapons (*[...] there is clear evidence that Russia is helping the rebels with heavy weapons and soldiers* (ibid.). *President Vladimir Putin has said he was ready to put Russia's nuclear weapons on standby [...]* (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015)), and the physical environment is also described as a war zone (*The sound of artillery fire in the distance has become more sporadic but it has not entirely ended* (BBC News, 12 Feb 2015). *There are trenches where pro-Russian fighters have been dug-in for four months* (BBC News, 9 Mar 2015). *Despite sporadic gunfire, the birds are singing on the frontline in eastern Ukraine* (ibid.)). Even in an article about a group of people whose job is to post comments criticising Ukraine and the West, war is involved (*Some Russian experts are not convinced there is much point in the Kremlin having an online army* (BBC News, 19 Mar 2015)). It is essential to note that such terms are used in the context of pro-Russian rebel activities, rather than the conduct of the Ukrainians.

It is clear that not only the rebels are armed, but weapons are also used by the Ukrainians. The journalists make sure that the Ukraine military do not become associated

with aggression and maintain their position as the victims of the conflict. To do so, some peculiar strategies are used by the BBC. First of all, instead of explicitly referring to weapons as weapons, more abstract terms may be used, such as *equipment* (*the UK is providing some non-lethal equipment and the training focuses on medical aid and defensive tactics.* (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015)) or *aid* (*In a separate development, the US is preparing to send more non-lethal aid to Ukraine, including unarmed drones.* (BBC News, 11 Mar 2015)) thus removing the negative connotation associated with weaponry, and, in the case of *aid*, even inspiring more sympathy towards Ukrainians. In both cases, these nouns are preceded by the attribute *non-lethal*, which again stresses the benevolent and peace-seeking nature of Ukraine and the West.

Once the discussion moves to the involvement of lethal weapons (and once they are actually referred to what they are), it is always noted that they would be used for defensive purposes (*President Obama said the option of lethal defensive weapons for the Ukrainian government remained on the table* (BBC News, 9 Feb 2015). *President Barack Obama says the US is studying the option of supplying lethal defensive arms to Ukraine [...]* (ibid.)), therefore the unsaid member of the paradigm – *attack* – comes to mind, pointing to the existence of an aggressor. Still, BBC also calls these lethal weapons *aid*, in an attempt not to create any negative associations concerning Ukraine and the West (*US President Barack Obama agreed last month not to send lethal defensive aid to Ukraine [...]* (BBC News, 10 Mar 2015)).

Interestingly enough, a contrast between Ukraine and pro-Russian rebels is created within a single paragraph: ‘Mr. Poroshenko said his government forces had also pulled back ‘the lion’s share’ of their rocket and heavy artillery systems (BBC News, 10 Mar 2015)’, while ‘Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko says pro-Russian rebels in the east have withdrawn a ‘significant’ amount of heavy weapons’ (ibid.). Even though preceded by *rocket* and *heavy artillery*, these arms are called *systems*, not weapons, raising associations with technology and mechanisms, rather than the battlefield.

Consequently, a lot of references to fighting are made that also support the idea of violence. Fighting taking place in Ukraine is *heavy*, *fierce* and *bitter*, *renewed* and *continued*, and it *rages* and *intensifies* suggesting its prolonged and intense nature. The three words that are used to refer to action are *fight*, *battle* and *clash* in various forms (*[...] but the military says the battle is ongoing* (BBC News (a), 9 Feb 2015). *In mid-January, parliament passes restrictive anti-protest laws as clashes turn deadly* (BBC News (b), 9 Feb 2015). *[...] who described the key role played by Russian troops in recent fighting* (BBC News, Mar 31 2015)), and, even more, as bloodshed (*On February 20, bloodshed reaches its worst since the*

start of the crisis. (BBC News (b), 9 Feb 2015)). The articles are peppered with this information through and through. Even though there are talks of ceasefire and it has been signed, it is called *shaky* and *fragile* that points to the lack of stability of the situation.

4.4.5. Killings and deaths

Several articles contain the same paragraph, which has been barely modified, and it serves as a great example of how casualties in a conflict can be referred to and the differences in perception such tiny tweaks can create. The options are as follows:

1. More than 6000 people have died since fighting erupted in Ukraine last April (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015).
2. More than 6000 people have been killed in clashes since the rebels seized large parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions (BBC News, 18 Mar 2015).
3. At least 6000 people are believed to have been killed and more than one million have fled homes [...] (BBC News, 10 Mar 2015).
4. The region became engulfed in a conflict which has cost at least 6000 lives, according to the UN (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015).
5. The crisis in Ukraine has already claimed more than 5300 lives (BBC News, 9 Feb 2015).

Where the killings are mentioned, mostly passive voice is used and no agents are ever remarked, which could be seen as one of the ways the BBC attempts to keep their distance, that is, without putting blame on anyone, for it must be reckoned with that the defensive aid would be put to use as well, therefore both sides would suffer losses.

Senator John McCain is quoted saying that ‘*Ukrainians are being slaughtered and we’re sending them blankets and meals* (BBC News (a), 9 Feb 2015)’, which demonstrates the position taken by the US, but such a marked choice is never used in the reports as such, for it would clearly show whose side the broadcasting company is on; moreover, the quote shows that Ukrainians are the ones being killed, not just any people or any lives being lost. However, the lexis in the quote suggests brutal killings, and at the same time implies the helplessness of the Ukrainians.

4.4.6. Stylistic devices

The use of stylistic devices can also be observed in the articles, with the inclusion of understatements, euphemisms, metaphors and instances of metonymy. It could be said that the use of several particular words or expressions downplays the seriousness of the situation in

Ukraine, for example ‘*According to US Lt Gen Ben Hodges, a senior commander in Europe, nearly 12 000 Russian troops are operating inside Ukraine (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015)*’; in light of the events that have taken place in the country, *operating* seems a very neutral word to use. Similarly, the most critical moments have been referred as *tensions* ‘*President Vladimir Putin has said he was ready to put Russia's nuclear weapons on standby during tensions over the crisis in Ukraine and Crimea (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015)*’, although it could mean diplomatic tensions as well. Referring to a Russian nationalist, the BBC has said that ‘*Mr Dugin has called on President Putin to intervene militarily in eastern Ukraine (BBC News, 11 Mar 2015)*’. When Mr Putin is quoted, he is reported to have said that ‘*there were plans for his [President Yanukovych’s] physical elimination (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015)*’, and these cases of euphemisms show Ukraine in a more favourable light, since the use of such words as *murder* or *killing* is avoided.

Traditionally, metonymy is frequently employed to avoid pointing fingers at certain authoritative figures, instead opting to use the name of the country, city or the institution (*Pro-Russian rebels and Moscow accuse Ukraine of introducing new terms that threaten last month’s ceasefire deal (BBC News, 18 Mar 2015). There are fears that the Kremlin is stepping up propaganda to influence opinion in former communist bloc countries (BBC News, 20 Mar 2015). Russia said it found the new wave of sanctions “difficult to understand” (BBC News, 11 Mar 2015)*).

Metaphoric or idiomatic language is not a frequent phenomenon in the reports, contrary to expectations, but it could be related to the fact that the topic is so serious that such figures of speech do not seem appropriate and it is factual reporting; however, some instances have been noted down, such as ‘*The West turns a blind eye to Russian involvement (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015)*’. *But this is not the only post-Crimea headache for the Kremlin (Galpin, 2015). [...] Galina Ivanovna, who survived the lottery of war (BBC News, 9 Mar 2015). A deal that further cements Russian control over the breakaway Georgian region of South Ossetia (BBC News, 18 Mar 2015). He was ready to put Russia’s nuclear weapons on standby during tensions over the crisis in Ukraine and Crimea (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015)*’.

4.4.7. Transitivity

Since the BBC is a pro-Western news agency, it is important to show the active Western participation in helping deal with the crisis in Ukraine, achieved through such active constructions as ‘*The EU and US condemn the annexation of Crimea (BBC News, 9 Feb 2015), The United States has imposed sanctions on 14 Ukrainian separatists and Russians*

(BBC News, 11 Mar 2015)', thus, the readers are made to feel that the West is offering a helping hand and is sympathetic towards Ukraine, even if, in reality, their actual contributions may not have been of much help.

The articles by the BBC include a mix of active and passive constructions, but it must be admitted that hiding of the agents does not prevail, and journalists use active constructions even where the use of intransitive verbs would render the facts more neutral than they might actually be.

Where Russia's involvement in Crimea is discussed, the country is recognized as the one who took over the peninsula (*A month after Russia annexed Ukraine's southern Crimea peninsula [...]* (BBC News, 20 Mar 2015), *One year after Russian soldiers furtively moved into Crimea and seized control* (Galpin, 2015)). However, given that a year has passed since the annexation and Russia is not denying the fact, passive constructions would not do much here to influence the opinion of the readers. Emphasis is also laid on President Putin himself, who *ordered the annexation* (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015) and *ordered work on 'returning Crimea' to begin...* (BBC News, 10 Mar 2015), therefore, he is recognized as the causal element of the annexation.

Still, in some cases Russia's agency (*Unidentified gunmen had taken over the peninsula* (BBC News, 16 Mar 2015). *Within weeks, pro-Russian rebels had taken over cities in eastern Ukraine sparking a conflict* (BBC News, 18 Mar 2015)) plays to its disadvantage, although responsibility is pinned onto certain individuals (gunmen or rebels, in these instances), instead of the country as such (and those giving out orders). At the same time, occasionally passive constructions are used (*Crimea was formally absorbed into Russia on March 18* (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015). *The plan to annex Ukraine's Crimea region last March was ordered weeks before the referendum* (BBC News, 10 Mar 2015)), removing the agent from the stage.

Once military action and deaths are mentioned, passive constructions are largely used, which helps the readers to keep their distance from the violence and make connections with the actual process, which becomes abstract and fuzzy (*Mr Nemtsov was shot dead on 27 February* (BBC News, 14 Mar 2015). *A military helicopter is shot down over eastern Ukraine* (BBC News, 9 Feb 2015)). However, given the BBC's goal of preserving neutrality and not throwing accusations, it is an understandable choice to say that *more than 6,000 people have been killed in clashes [...]* (BBC News, 18 Mar 2015), or *Exactly how many people were killed in the fighting in and around Debaltseve is unclear* (BBC News, 9 Mar 2015), especially since it must be reckoned with that both sides have suffered losses.

Interestingly, there are active constructions with inanimate objects as subjects in the sentence, and that creates an effect of almost voluntary actions (*The strategic town of Debaltseve fell to the rebels* (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015), *Crimea's prime minister has told the BBC the peninsula has returned to its historical Russian homeland* (BBC News, 16 Mar 2015)). In the first instance, although it is clear that the town was conquered as a result of a rebel attack, putting it in the active position draws away the attention from the actions performed by the rebels, and focuses just on the fact. In the second sentence, the result is emphasized, making it seem as if the return never caused any issues to anyone.

Instances of nominalization can be spotted throughout the articles as well. Nominalization does not automatically mean that the truth is being hidden, for the agents may simply be unknown (*One recent technical task [...] was devoted to the murder of prominent Kremlin critic Boris Nemtsov*. (BBC News, 19 Mar 2015)) or they may have lost their relevance, as it has become common knowledge (*The formal annexation of Crimea sparked unrest* (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015)). Similarly, it can also be used to avoid shifting responsibility onto one party or another (*[...] sparking a conflict with Ukrainian armed forces that has led to more than 6,000 deaths and the displacement of some 1.1 million people [...]*. (BBC News, 18 Mar 2015)).

However, some cases prove dubious, as it looks that the agency is hidden on purpose (*The amendments also envisage the pullout of "all illegal armed groups" from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions* (BBC News, 18 Mar 2015). *Preparations to extract Mr Yanukovich were made by land, sea and air* (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015)).

On the other hand, in certain instances the agency still gets mentioned despite the nominal construction (*[...] say there is clear evidence of Russian military involvement in the fighting*. (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015). *The annexation of the peninsula by Russia one year ago had been a 'democratic act'* (BBC News, 16 Mar 2015). *Western anger at Moscow's decision to send troops into the Ukrainian territory* (Galpin, 2015).).

4.4.8. Modality

It is safe to say that modality is an efficient marker to use in order to avoid making categorical statements that could later be re-examined, and cause uncomfortable situations. They can certainly be used for the opposite purpose as well, to leave no room for stepping away from the claim. In BBC's case, modality markers are employed rather frequently, which helps the news outlet preserve caution when it comes to making predictions and accusations, as instances of low modality overwhelmingly prevail over those of high modality.

Avoiding direct accusations in the articles is done with the help of the adverb *allegedly* or the adjective *alleged* (*The sanctions, imposed because of Russia's alleged military intervention in Ukraine [...] (BBC News, 20 Mar 2015). Bloggers allegedly paid by the state to criticise Ukraine and the West [...] (Bugorkova, 2015)*) that removes the responsibility from the reporter should the claims turn out not to be true, since the statements are not factual as of yet. It is especially important in the first example, as the BBC has not confirmed their belief in Russia's involvement in the military conflict in Ukraine.

Cases of epistemic modality, vis-à-vis speculations about further actions are present in all articles to some extent. To lower the modality of the statements, verbs such as *to seem* (*Mr Poroshenko seems to want to send a strong signal that his government is getting serious about pursuing reform and battling corruption. (BBC News, 20 Mar 2015)*), *to believe* (*Blame a Russian-supplied missile, believed to have been fired by rebels (BBC News, 9 Feb 2015)*), *to think* (*The plan is thought to include a demilitarised zone (ibid.)*), *to appear* (*Recent media reports appear to have revealed some details (Bugorkova, 2015)*), *to say* (*Mr Nemtsov's computer and documents are said to have been seized by the authorities (BBC News, 14 Mar 2015)*) and others are squeezed in, instead of single verbs, the use of which would show the truth value of these *facts*.

If one reads a single article, these instances might not jump to the eye, but, once they are put together in a collection, it shows an amazing picture of how cautious the reporting is – the journalists are not taking a stand against anything, as if afraid to have a real opinion. It also leads to a suspicion that no facts are being reported, just speculations and suggestions.

The probability of a certain course of action is shown through *likely/unlikely* (*Vladimir, like virtually everyone you meet in this region, believes the fragile ceasefire agreed last month in Minsk is unlikely to hold. (BBC News, 9 Mar 2015)*), and certainty (or lack thereof) is expressed via modals, mostly *could* and *may/might* (*There are fears its capture could help the rebels to resupply [...] (BBC News, 9 Feb 2015). The Kremlin has denied rumours that the president might be sick or even dead [...] (BBC News, 15 Mar 2015). He still has access to tremendous wealth and resources, and may at some point push back harder [...] (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015)*). Conditionals are also placed there to signal the likelihood of an event, but the reader is left to judge how likely the condition itself is (*Russia will face fresh sanctions from the EU if a deal to end the Ukraine war is not fully implemented [...] (BBC News, 12 Feb 2015)*).

There are some rare exceptions to the low modality streak, and obligation is stressed by using the modal verb *must*, albeit used in just two articles, the modal appearing in quotes only in one of them (*The leaders stressed that confidentiality must still be respected for*

commercial contracts. (BBC News, 20 Mar 2015)). Another instance of high modality is shows an individual's belief in his statement: "*He is still sure he did the right thing, defending the interests of the Russian-speaking population and Russians in Donbas* (BBC News, 31 Mar 2015)." In this case the conviction may work against the speaker or in his favour, depending on the reader, but, as most readers of the BBC are expected to be Western-oriented, they would most likely condemn such bravado.

4.5. Kyiv Post

The Kyiv Post, being Ukraine's leading English-language newspaper that supposedly reflects independent opinions, not influenced by any ideological mechanisms (although the Western ideology is still an ideology). The content is produced by Ukrainian and Western journalists, and in this research the Kyiv Post news outlet represents Ukraine's viewpoint on the situation in the country.

Headlines of the Kyiv Post's articles differ from those by the BBC, firstly in the syntactic structure, as full sentences are mostly used, and, secondly, more attitude is involved. Some headlines are more abstract (*Giving Peace Another Chance, Murder Near Kremlin Wounds Ukrainians*) and do not reveal the content of the article, while others send a clear message. The vocabulary used in headlines here is more expressive, with connotative meanings, and neutrality is not preserved. War (even specifying who is fighting whom) is mentioned several times, and other war terminology appears, as well as strong lexis, such as *crime, animosities* and *occupation*. Therefore, the headlines already signal the position of the newspaper, openly expressing their hatred towards Russia and its conduct.

4.5.1. Events in Ukraine

If the reporters at the BBC try to maintain neutrality and refer to the situation in Ukraine as a *conflict* or a *crisis*, journalists writing for the Kyiv Post are very clear in their stance that a war is being waged by Russia against Ukraine. The word *crisis* is not used even once (as established previously, the term is relatively abstract and does not necessarily imply clashes between armed forces), and the situation is referred to as a *conflict* in a handful of cases (*Even though there are no official numbers of Russian soldiers involved in Ukraine's conflict, Ukraine estimates [...]* (Zhuk, 15 Mar 2015)).

The word *war* is used on its own several times without any specifying information (*For a country in a de facto state of war [...]* (Verstyuk, 11 Mar 2015). *And some*

commentators have even interpreted Nemtsov's murder as a spillover from the war in Donbas [...] (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015)), but, given the fact that these statements are put in certain contexts, the implications are clear.

However, in the majority of cases, it is exactly *Russia's war against Ukraine*, which gives a straightforward reference to who the aggressor is and who the victim is (*This will be Merkel's first visit to Moscow since Russia's war against Ukraine started with the invasion and annexation of Crimea* (Grytsenko, 5 Feb 2015). [...] *killing one officer, Serhiy Kokurin, who became the first victim of Russia's war against Ukraine*. (Goncharova, 5 Mar 2015). *The U.S. also imposed further sanctions on people blamed for fomenting Russia's war against Ukraine [...] (Verstyuk, 11 Mar 2015)), as well as simply *Russia's war* (*Nearly a year after the start of Russia's war [...] (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015))*). It also points to the fact that, according to the Kyiv Post, Russia began the war.*

Only one instance shows reversed roles, that is, Ukraine taking the active position (*But Ukraine's politicians and military experts say U.S. and other military assistance will be crucial for the country in its war against Russia*. (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015)).

4.5.2. Ukraine and its territories

The opinion of the journalists of the Kyiv Post is that Crimea was annexed by Russia, as supported by the choice of words in the articles (*As Russia prepares to celebrate the anniversary of the Crimean annexation [...] (Goncharova, 14 Mar 2015). He is proud of personally planning and overseeing the annexation of Ukraine's peninsula a year ago (Goncharova, 16 Mar 2015)), however, it seems that they only recognize the formal term of the process, but strongly condemn the events leading up to it, i.e., *Crimea held an illegal secessionist referendum overseen by gunmen. After the jubilation that followed, Russian President Vladimir Putin formally annexed the territory [...] (Goncharova, 5 Mar 2015)*.*

The term that is repeated several times in the articles is *invasion*, when the issue of Crimea is discussed, which is 'an occasion when an army or country uses force to enter and take control of another country' (Online 3) clearly pointing to the forceful nature of the whole process (*Nearly a year after the start of Russia's war, beginning with the invasion of Crimea in February and moving to the eastern Donbas in April [...] (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015))*. *Ironically, the killing coincided with the newly-established Day of Special Operations, which effectively marks a year after Russian special forces invaded Crimea [...] (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015))*. This territory is also referred to as having been occupied (*[...] she realized she had to leave the occupied territory (Goncharova, 5 Mar 2015))*. *For their part, residents of the*

occupied territories will have to transfer taxes and utility payments to Ukraine (Grytsenko, 12 Feb 2015)), which means being taken over against someone's will. The relatively neutral takeover (*Once again, Putin confirmed the country's soldiers involved in the takeover of Crimea.* (Goncharova, 16 Mar 2015)) appears in the reports as well, albeit sporadically, as does the more expressive *Crimean land grab* (Goncharova, 11 Mar 2015). These items of vocabulary are explicit signals that what is being done to Ukraine is a forceful act, taking place during the time of war.

The territories that are being controlled by the separatists are not often referenced, but they are largely called *separatist-held areas* (Grytsenko, 12 Feb 2015), *insurgent-controlled areas*. (ibid.), or *territories controlled by separatists* (Grytsenko, 5 Feb 2015).

Interestingly, unlike the BBC, writers for the Kyiv Post do not tend to use phrasal verbs to describe the takeover, but, when speaking about taking control over territories or buildings, the verb *to seize* is a popular choice (*He is certain the separatists won't stop in Debaltseve in their attempts to seize more ground* (Goncharova, 4 Mar 2015). *Russian soldiers helped the local self-defense units to seize the government buildings* (Goncharova, 16 Mar 2015)), as well as its synonym *to snatch up* (*The threat to the region comes not only from the east, where Russian forces and their allies are eager to snatch up more territory, but [...]* (Quinn 27 Mar 2015)), both verbs implying something quick and eager, even filled with malice.

4.5.3. Russian and Ukrainian military

In terms of sheer quantity of how often one party of the conflict or the other is mentioned in the articles from the Kyiv Post selected for analysis, the Ukrainian army, just like in the reports by the BBC, is present less prominently than the Russian forces.

Ukrainian forces are largely referred to as the *Ukrainian army* ([...] *that the Ukrainian army has been fiercely trying to hold* (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015). *Isa died when he was helping the Ukrainian army to avoid being surrounded in Debaltseve* (Sukhov, 27 Mar 2015)), or *Ukrainian military* (*The Administration of the U.S. President Barack Obama stated March 11 that it will provide \$75 million in non-lethal aid to Ukraine's military [...]* (Verstyuk, 11 Mar 2015). *Poroshenko talked about Ukrainian military successes on Feb. 10.* (Kyiv Post, 11 Feb 2015)). Sporadically, such names as *Ukrainian soldiers* or *Ukrainian servicemen* appear, but, on the whole, Ukraine's military is not a popular keyword in the reports, therefore, their participation in the conflict is not conspicuous, thus it does not plant any ideas in the readers' heads about associating Ukraine with aggression. On the other hand, however, frequent references to Ukraine's military forces in a newspaper that is essentially pro-Ukrainian could

help in strengthening belief in Ukraine's power, but it seems that the position of the victim is more effective in this case.

Russian forces are called out on a more frequent basis, and various word choices can be observed in the articles. Interestingly, there are no mentions of *volunteers*, which is what the BBC used to call those fighting in the Donetsk and Donbas regions due to Russia's denial in taking part in the conflict, and the writers of the Kyiv Post also avoid the word *rebels*, which was another popular choice in the reports by the BBC. These forces are usually called *insurgents* (noting that in this case Russian insurgents would be able to use the Dnipro as a defensive front line (Zhuk, 15 Mar 2015). Granting amnesty to Kremlin-backed insurgents and mercenaries [...]. (Grytsenko, 12 Feb 2015)) and *separatists* (*He is certain the separatists won't stop in Debaltseve in their attempts to seize more ground* (Goncharova, 4 Mar 2015). [...] *with many of his soldiers fighting for Kremlin-backed separatists*. (Sukhov, 27 Mar 2015)), as well as *forces* and *troops*, but they are never referred to as the Russian army.

Interestingly enough, the phrase *Russian forces and their proxies* makes an appearance on several occasions (*The land-bridge scenario [...] implies that Russian forces and their proxies will make a push along Ukraine's southeastern coast [...]* (Zhuk, 15 Mar 2015)), which seems to be a word used instead of *volunteers*, as favoured by the BBC.

Lastly, Russian forces are referred to as *enemies* (*Although Kostyantyn Zubov was not in Debaltseve when his fellow servicemen were leaving the town under enemy fire* (Goncharova, 4 Mar 2015)), leaving no doubt as to whose side the journalists are on.

When it comes to pointing out certain individuals, writers at Kyiv Post have a little more bite than those at the BBC. While Boris Nemtsov is dubbed *the opposition leader* and a *important opposition figure* (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015) without being glorified, Pavel Felgenhauer, who speaks in Ukraine's favour, gets called *an independent Russian military analyst* (Zhuk, 15 Mar 2015), and such an attribute automatically lends more weight to his argument.

Journalists are also more specific when it comes to the political affiliation of individuals, for they are not only pro-Russian (*or Russian-backed insurgent leaders* (Verstyuk, 11 Mar 2015)), but they are pro or anti-Kremlin (*Previous watersheds were crossed when anti-Kremlin tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky [...]* (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015). [...] *by pro-Kremlin Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov [...]* (Sukhov, 27 Mar 2015). *Denis Pushilin, another Kremlin-backed separatist lead [...]* (Quinn, 27 Mar 2015)), therefore, the targets become more concrete. Since President Putin is the leader of the Kremlin, it might be speculated that the writers actually mean Mr. Putin personally.

4.5.4. Weapons and military terminology

Given the fact that the reports consider the situation in the Ukraine war, consequently, the articles by the Kyiv Post are filled with military terminology that aggravates the situation and instils more fear and awe in the readers.

To support the *war* theme, various compounds with *war* are used in the reports (*Poroshenko said he had just returned from the war zone [...] (Kyiv Post, 11 Feb 2015). [...] Poroshenko said that Ukraine has to prepare for both options: peace and continued warfare.* (ibid.)). There is also the mention of the front lines (*He popped over just before his train back to the front lines in the east.* (Goncharova, 4 Mar 2015)) that suggests a real military conflict, and attacks and offensives are reported (*The other aim of the counter-offensive by Ukraine's military was to make it "impossible to hit the residential areas in Mariupol with Grads," he said* (Kyiv Post, 11 Feb 2015). *Badrak said the U.S. and Europe have to be more decisive on Ukraine to deter more Russian attacks.* (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015)), as well as military operations ([...] *adding that poor planning of the operation resulted in loss of many human lives of his comrades* (Goncharova, 4 Mar 2015)) and combat-readiness (*some 28 military units were positioned on the Ukrainian border and within Crimea to generate approximately 90,000 troops available for combat* (Zhuk, 15 Mar 2015)), so it can serve as an explanation why the word *crisis* is never used, for it would not convey such information. Such references create the impression that the whole country is a war zone where it is not safe to walk down the street, which does not seem to be the absolute truth.

Heavy weaponry is often mentioned ([...] *a lack of reliable mechanisms to guarantee the cease-fire and especially to pull back heavy weapons* (Grytsenko, 12 Feb 2015)), and *artillery* is also one of the words of choice when it comes to describing the arms (*He said Ukrainian artillery gave them very little support, the flanks were not covered.* (Goncharova, 4 Mar 2015)), and more detailed descriptions provided, such as *surveillance drones, counter-mortar radar systems, military ambulances, 30 armoured Humvees and 300 unarmoured ones* (Verstyuk, 11 Mar 2015), *with ditches, vehicle-barrier trenches and high-tech surveillance towers to detect troop and vehicle movement from the Russian side* (Goncharova, 21 Feb 2015), *longer-range Smerch missiles* (Kyiv Post, 11 Feb 2015) and others. As a result, Ukraine is portrayed as a land devastated by warfare, and the effect is rather frightening. To add weight to the argument, U.S. state secretary John Kerry is quoted, saying that '*Russia needs to demonstrate its commitment to end bloodshed*' (Grytsenko, 5 Feb 2015)'.

What concerns the descriptions of the action on the front lines, *battle* is a rarely used word (*at the exhibition of Russian weapons captured from separatist and Russian forces*

during battles in the east of Ukraine. (Goncharova, 21 Feb 2015)), and *clash* is not used at all. Overall, the reporters either speak about fighting (*Another group, part of the Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion, is fighting for Ukraine* (Sukhov, 27 Mar 2015)) or specifically single out the particular operation (*President Petro Poroshenko accused Russia-backed separatists of unleashing a brutal offensive that killed civilians in Ukrainian-controlled areas of Donetsk Oblast* (Kyiv Post, 11 Feb 2015). *And now it appears that Russia is poised to launch a full-scale attack on Debaltseve* (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015)), but the reporters also strive to present the Ukrainian military as capable of fighting back (*several successful operations (around Debaltseve), and planned a successful counter-offensive with the Azov Battalions* (Kyiv Post, 11 Feb 2015)), but it is important to note that they attack in response to having been attacked themselves. Still, they are subject to heavy shelling by the separatists and artillery fire (Zhuk, 15 Mar 2015), thus, again, the relationship between the aggressor and the victim is clear.

Ukrainian arms are largely mentioned in context with the aid promised to the country by the United States for defense purposes. As with the BBC, in certain cases euphemistic means are used to avoid calling a spade a spade: (*the U.S. deciding to send military equipment to help the nation fight Russian troops* (Verstyuk, 11 Mar 2015). [...] *it will provide \$75 million in non-lethal aid to Ukraine's military* (ibid.). *Ukraine needs to start negotiations with its Western partners to obtain lethal assistance* [...] (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015)). However, there are also direct references made (*Serhiy Taruta said modern and high-precision weapons supplied by the U.S. would help to save many lives* [...] (ibid.)) (saving many lives can be considered an euphemism for killing Russian soldiers, but also as a justification for the need of the weapons). *The high-precision arms would be efficient against tanks, Grads, Uragans (multiple-rocket launchers) which are now used against not only soldiers but also the civilians in the east.* (ibid.)). There is not much dwelling on non-lethal weapons, but lethal weapons appear several times (*supplying lethal weapons to Ukraine* (Verstyuk, 11 Mar 2015)), and it could be interpreted as an indicator of the serious state of the situation, since Ukraine is portrayed as needing external help to defend itself.

4.5.5. Killings and deaths

Articles on Kyiv Post's website largely avoid commenting on the number of casualties as a result of the war, noting the total estimate only once (*Nearly a year after the start of Russia's war [...] more than 5,000 people have been killed and more than 12,000 wounded, according to United Nations estimates* (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015)). It is clear that both sides are suffering losses, thus, perhaps, the issue is not on the agenda not to draw too much attention to the

number of people perished at the hands of Ukrainian soldiers. There are sporadic episodes mentioning deaths, for example, *When a group of gunmen attacked a Ukrainian army base in Simferopol, killing one officer, Serhiy Kokurin, who became the first victim of Russia's war against Ukraine* (Goncharova, 5 Mar 2015), with a sharp contrast between an anonymous group of people and a single individual, making the death feel more personal and more *offensive*, so to say.

Some collective deaths are also noted in the articles, such as a brutal offensive by Russia-backed separatists *'that killed civilians in Ukrainian-controlled areas of Donetsk Oblast* (Kyiv Post, 11 Feb 2015)' or information that *'at least 179 Ukrainian soldiers were killed in Debaltseve during the last month* (Goncharova, 4 Mar 2015)'. Ukrainians are shown as being attacked by the separatists, but their counterstrikes are left unspoken about, and it seems to be a deliberate choice.

4.5.6. Stylistic devices

The use of lexical stylistic devices or idioms is not a widespread approach in Kyiv Post's news reports, although some more expressions find their place among the weaponry and fighting. For instance, *the U.S. government has so far dragged its feet* (Verstyuk, 11 Mar 2015) with regards to sending lethal aid to Ukraine, and it is speculated that the assassination of Boris Nemtsov *just a stone's throw away from Red Square* (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015) could not have happened *without the Kremlin's blessing* (ibid.). The annexation of Crimea is referred to as *the Crimean land grab* (Goncharova, 11 Mar 2015), and there is talk of *the Russian propaganda machine* (Goncharova, 16 Mar 2015), but these are very episodic instances. However, given the fact that the staff at Kyiv Post includes both Ukrainian and Western journalists, it could be put down, at least to an extent, to the individual style of the writer who may or may not be familiar with the English language so well.

It is interesting that there is at least one case of euphemistic use, which is perhaps unexpected: 'For example, Russia could consider taking only the southern half of eastern Ukraine (Zhuk, 15 Mar 2015).' It is clear that *taking* here does not imply a simple, innocent transaction, but would involve aggression and violence, therefore the choice to play it down seems inexplicable.

Lastly, it is curious to note that when it comes to direct quotes, *Russia prevails* ("I think Russia will rather start a full-scale campaign if we stay weak, if we won't be resisting, if we keep defending and refusing from any attacks," he said. (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015)), while the content created by the journalists is much more likely to use the word *Kremlin* (However,

the Kremlin does have a lot to gain from Nemtsov's murder, Kremlin critics pointed out (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015)).

4.5.7. Transitivity

The news reports by the Kyiv Post are marked by the fact that active constructions prevail, and agents are clearly emphasized. Even where the passive voice is used, the agency is mostly appended to the clause so as not to go unnoticed.

The US and EU perform as agents, where applicable, stressing their importance and expecting help and assistance from them, but also reproaching the West for not taking big enough steps to protect Ukraine (*However, the U.S. government has so far dragged its feet on supplying lethal weapons to Ukraine despite repeated calls by both Republican and Democrat lawmakers (Verstyk, 11 Mar 2015). Badrak said the U.S. and Europe have to be more decisive on Ukraine to deter more Russian attacks (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015)).*

Wherever President Putin is mentioned, he is made sure to appear as the only decision-maker (*Russian President Vladimir Putin formally annexed the territory [...] (Goncharova, 5 Mar 2015). Putin said that he decided to take over the peninsula after Yanukovich left the country (Goncharova, 11 Mar 2015)). Although he is the head of the state, these can be interpreted as very specific and personal attacks, as if the whole war is one person's fault. Still, there are also references to the Russian military (*which effectively marks a year after Russian special forces invaded Crimea [...] (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015). Meanwhile, Russian soldiers helped the local self-defense units to seize the government buildings [...] (Goncharova, 16 Mar 2015)).**

It must be noted that Ukraine is also shown as taking the active role, which could be an attempt to portray the country as a similar force, and inspire Ukrainian readership to believe that Ukraine can come out victorious (*[...] that the Ukrainian government will regain control over this occupied territory (Goncharova, 5 Mar 2015). On Feb. 20, Ukraine's government issued a decree ordering the closure of border crossing points (Goncharova, 21 Feb 2015)).*

Nevertheless, intransitive constructions are made use of as well. In some cases, because the agent is not of great importance (*[...] more than 300 cases of alleged human rights violations were recorded in Crimea [...] (Goncharova, 5 Mar 2015)), or in order to avoid having to admit any military operations conducted by the Ukrainian army (*the Feb. 12 Minsk II peace agreement might repeat the fate of the September Minsk I deal, which was routinely violated.* (Grytsenko, 12 Feb 2015)). Just like the BBC, deaths are usually reported*

in the passive voice (*more than 5,000 people have been killed and more than 12,000 wounded, according to United Nations estimates* (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015). *The assassination took place ahead of Nemtsov's planned report [...]* (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015)), and that, in turn, shifts the focus onto the large number of killings in general.

Although nominalization is supposed to help turn a text more *abstract*, avoiding the mention of agents and focusing on results, looking at the articles by Kyiv Post suggests that it is not necessarily the case. While the journalists use this technique quite actively, they manage to include the agents as well (*[...]think tanks are coming up with their own research on Russian involvement in Crimea* (Goncharova, 11 Mar 2015). *The takeover by Russian troops without insignia last spring was nearly bloodless* (Goncharova, 5 Mar 2015)). In some cases, where it is important to stress the changes that could take place, nominalization is conveniently used (*[...] may herald an intensification of the Kremlin's war against Ukraine.* (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015). *Several reports released by Western organizations predicted a further escalation of the conflict [...]* (Zhuk, 15 Mar 2015)).

4.5.8. Modality

Modality in the articles by the Kyiv Post is a more frequent apparition than in those by the BBC; however, it is largely due to the more extensive use of modal verbs.

In addition to suggesting the possibility of a certain course of action via the modals *may/might* (with *may*, the stronger of the pair, being prevalent) and *could* (*The new reality also could lead to further isolation from the West and may herald an intensification of the Kremlin's war against Ukraine* (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015). *[...] the Feb. 12 Minsk II peace agreement might repeat the fate of the September Minsk I deal [...]* (Grytsenko, 12 Feb 2015)), there is also obligation expressed with the help of *should* and *must* (*These are people who say the Kremlin is behaving indecisively in Ukraine and should be more aggressive in its policy, he added* (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015). *Such elections must be monitored by the OSCE* (Grytsenko, 12 Feb 2015)), incredulity (*[...] the assassination of such an important opposition figure [...] could not have been carried out without the Kremlin's blessing.* (Sukhov, 5 Mar 2015)), and with *to have to* (*Badrak said the U.S. and Europe have to be more decisive on [...]* (Grytsenko, 3 Feb 2015)), which, although not a modal verb, is also part of the deontic modality markers.

Similarly, instances of *alleged* phenomena appear, albeit there are only three such cases (whereas there are six in the BBC) (*Recently the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe monitoring mission reported that more than 300 cases of alleged*

human rights violations were recorded in Crimea during the year of occupation (Goncharova, 5 Mar 2015)), and future events are examined in terms of their probability (*They are likely to consist of current insurgents and mercenaries fighting against Ukrainian troops.* (Grytsenko, 12 Feb 2015)). There are also very few conditionals (*If the peace talks fail to reach an immediate cease-fire, Poroshenko said that the "fighting spirit" of the military is high* (Kyiv Post, 11 Feb 2015)), and just a handful of speculative verbs (*[...]Kyiv seems to be growing even closer to the West, leaving Russia without a subservient buffer in the region* (Zhuk, 15 Mar 2015)). *She also suspects that a crackdown on Internet activists and bloggers is coming.* (Goncharova, 5 Mar 2015)), therefore, the overall modality of the articles is rather high and categorical.

On the other hand, certainty is expressed much more often (*He is certain the separatists won't stop in Debaltseve in their attempts to seize more ground* (Goncharova, 4 Mar 2015)). *I'm sure separatists will not comply with this agreement just like in September.* (Grytsenko, 12 Feb 2015)), especially in the context of speculations about Russia's further plans regarding Ukraine, therefore, these *strong* statements serve as calls to action to the readers to reflect on the matter seriously. Interestingly, in places where one might expect modality to be lower (especially after reading the reports by the BBC), Kyiv Post leaves no wiggle room for itself and presents information as hard facts, e.g., 'at least 28 military units were required to generate the approximately 90,000 troops stationed on the Ukrainian-Russia border and within Crimea in spring 2014, the report says' (Goncharova, 11 Mar 2015), instead of *were allegedly* required or the likes.

4.6. Pravda.ru

This news outlet reports the events as seen through the eyes of Russians; consequently, the interpretation of events differs significantly from that presented by the BBC or the Kyiv Post.

The headlines of the articles by Pravda.ru mostly do not follow the *headline syntax*, meaning that full sentences are used, from which the content of the article may be understood rather easily. Interesting appendices to two articles – *expert* and *political analyst* – automatically lend more credence and weight to the statement expressed in the headline. In the same way, authors of the statements are featured (Putin, Robert Parry, OSCE, Ukrainian MP).

Rather strong language appears in the headlines – *exterminate, poison pill, bad dream, bloodshed* – as well as war terminology – *offensive, defeat, war, weapons* – thus the headlines are provocative, and already demonstrate the attitude. It is easily understood which side the

newspaper supports, as the headlines clearly paint Russia in a positive light, while putting down Ukraine and the West.

4.6.1. Events in Ukraine

The main referent in the articles when it comes to giving a name to the situation in Ukraine is *war*, either without any modifiers (*For them, it is important to undermine Russia's forces through this war* (Pravda.ru, 12 Feb 2015). *This relationship indicates Washington's interest in continuing the war in the east of Ukraine.* (Pravda.ru, 2 Feb 2015)) or with modifiers (*Ukrainian military men have no desire to participate in the fratricidal war [...]* (Pravda.ru, 18 Feb 2015). *Ukraine may thus expand the geography of the civil war in the Donbass [...]* (Mikhailov, 16 Mar 2015). *One will have to answer for that, and those behind this terrible war know it* (Skotobogatov, 27 Jan 2015)). In most cases the journalists make it a point to include the location of the military conflict (*Those who control the war in Ukraine are associated with financial flows from the West and diplomatic support of the "free world."* (Lulko, 24 Mar 2015)), and the proximity of these two lexical items slowly turns this place into a hub of evil.

As established previously, war is also the word of choice for the journalists at the Kyiv Post, but, while to them Ukraine is a victim of this military conflict, and the fact that Russia is waging a war against Ukraine is constantly stressed, according to Pravda.ru, Ukraine is the initiator and the perpetrator of the war (*It was the only decision that could save the Crimea and its people from the chaos and war that the new Kiev government brought* (Mikhailov, 16 Mar 2015). *Maidan is the root cause of the war against the Donbass* (Skotobogatov, 27 Jan 2015)).

There is no mention of *crisis*, possibly due to vague and politically correct nature of the word (it could be said that the use is euphemistic in the reports by the BBC), and the word *conflict* appears from time to time as a substitute for war (*There is another round of the bloody conflict in store for the Donbass* (Pravda.ru, 20 Mar 2015). *Kiev is ready to expand these powers further, only if the military conflict in the region ends [...]* (Pravda.ru, 13 Jan 2015)), but, given the context on the sentence level, in most cases there is a certain tint of violence to it.

4.6.2. Ukraine and its territories

Just a little over a year after the annexation of Crimea, this historical event is barely even mentioned (unlike in the Western media and Ukrainian press who still keep returning to this issue), which leads to the conclusion that this news outlet considers Crimea to be an integral part of Russia that does not need special attention anymore.

Even more, reporters at Pravda.ru view what happened to Crimea in March 2014 in an absolutely different light than that reflected by the BBC and the Kyiv Post. According to this source, the word *annexation* cannot be applied to Crimea; the word itself only appears in the articles twice (both times in a single report) – once in context with the historical annexation of Crimea by Russia at the end of the 18th century (Syuh-jeun, 19 Mar 2015), and the second time referring to the concept mockingly in quotation marks (*Until the February, 2014 coup d'etat in Kiev, there was no opportunity, and there was no motive for "annexing" Crimea and Sevastopol* (ibid.)).

Instead of annexation, what happened between Crimea and Russia was an act of *reunification* (*A year has passed since the reunification of the Crimea and Sevastopol with the Russian Federation* (Mikhailov, 16 Mar 2015). *Decision of the residents of the Crimea to reunite with Russia was the only correct decision to make in that situation* (ibid.)). The use of such a term clearly points to perceptual differences, and aims to portray the separation of Crimea and Ukraine as an act of a long-lost brother who finally returned to his family rather than one country taking control over something that is not truly theirs. It is also hinted that Ukraine had taken Crimea away from Russia against its will (*What if Russia had not acted decisively to recover Crimea and Sevastopol [...]* (Syuh-jeun, 19 Mar 2015).

Speaking about the Donbass and Donetsk regions, whenever they are mentioned, they are referred to as the breakaway regions (*He also noted that the two breakaway people's republics have materialized as entities of Ukraine* (Lulko, 24 Mar 2015).) or breakaway republics (*The civil war was expected to finally end, if Kiev agreed to grant a special status to the two breakaway regions of Ukraine* (Pravda.ru, 20 Mar 2015).). Thus these regions where active military operations are still executed are seemingly trying to get away from Ukraine's bounds, instead of being controlled by separatists and rebels, as is the view of the other news sources.

4.6.3. Russian and Ukrainian military

In a very interesting turn of events, unlike in the articles by the BBC or the Kyiv Post, Russian military is a concept that is almost absent in the news reports, although it is expected, since Russia denies its presence in the regions affected by the conflict. On several occasions, however, to show that there are people standing against the Ukrainian government forces, the word *militia* is used (*During the recent weeks, Ukrainian security forces had to retreat under the offensive from the militia* (Pravda.ru, 2 Feb 2015). *It is not clear, whom Mr. Poroshenko was negotiating with in Minsk, if he refuses to recognize Donbas militia power representatives, Pravda.Ru reports* (Pravda.ru, 20 Mar 2015)), not to be found in the other two sources. It is a military force composed of non-professionals, rather than trained soldiers (Online 7), so the word essentially reveals that Russia as a state power is not involved in the armed clashes, likening their involvement to ‘volunteering’, as it has been designated by the BBC. In a single case, the side wanting to join Russia is called *army* (*As a result of a counterattack, DPR's army has occupied the new terminal rather easily and with minimum casualties, and placed the airport under control.* (Lulko, 23 Jan 2015)), but with a clear indication that it has been formed of the DPR’s people, not Russians.

The Ukrainian armed forces are mentioned much more often, in comparison with their rivals, and the typical designations, such as *troops* (*The Ukrainian troops shelled the city and suburbs at least 25 times in 24 hours [...]* (Pravda.ru, 4 Feb 2015)), *forces* (*During the recent weeks, Ukrainian security forces had to retreat under the offensive from the militia.* (Pravda.ru, 2 Feb 2015). *For Ukraine and its armed forces [...]* (Pravda.ru, 22 Jan 2015)) and *army* (*The expert noted that Kiev often creates the appearance of victories of the Ukrainian army.* (Pravda.ru, 12 Feb 2015)) can be observed. It must be admitted that their presence in numbers is not greatly overwhelming in the articles, but the clauses in which these designations appear tend to provoke a sentiment that Ukraine has begun a military offensive, and is the aggressor of the conflict.

As the theory suggests, reference can make or break a man, and writers at Pravda.ru are not afraid of stepping away from indicating just the political affiliation of a person, but also provide their own value judgements about them. Firstly, the label ‘pro-American’ appears (*The war between two pro-American oligarchs will continue* (Lulko, 24 Mar 2015). *Pro-American Kiev has launched an offensive in the east of the country with a provocation in Donetsk airport* (Lulko, 23 Jan 2015)), not only in reference to a particular person, but also Kiev (so, in fact, to Ukraine as a state). This attribute, in fact, demonstrates that the conflict in

Ukraine is a conflict between Russia and the West, not just Russia and Ukraine. Since Kiev is *the enemy*, America becomes the enemy as well.

In other cases, the references are even more attitudinal (*Indeed, Yanukovych was much closer to the region than the white teethed supporter of the Church of Scientology Mr. Yatsenyuk, and much closer than the ever gloomy Baptist Turchynov* (Skotobogatov, 27 Jan 2015). *It just so happens that it is impossible to negotiate with puppets of the Ukrainian side* (Pravda.ru, 13 Jan 2015). *Even such Russophobic organization as Human Rights Watch can no longer hide the fact that Ukrainian security forces throw unaimed fire on peaceful cities of Donbass* (Lulko, 23 Jan 2015)).

There is another technique used by the writers at Pravda.ru to lend credibility to their arguments, and that is calling everyone who supports their opinion an *expert*, a word that is scattered throughout the reports. For instance, chief editor of Historian Magazine (*According to the expert, the Crimea, being a part of the Ukrainian territory for more than two decades, had not seen any support from the Ukrainian authorities* (Mikhailov, 16 Mar 2015)), journalist, political scientist Julius Fedorov (*"Humanitarian convoys do not fall down from heaven - all costs money that comes from the state treasury," the expert told Pravda.Ru.* (Pravda.ru, 12 Feb 2015)), or political analyst, co-chairman of the National Strategy Council, Iosiph Diskin (*The expert is sure that Ukraine will not be accepted to NATO under any circumstances anyway.* (Pravda.ru, 3 Feb 2015)) and others. While, of course, there is nothing inherently wrong about being called an expert, especially if the person has in-depth knowledge of the respective domain, such a trend raises the suspicion that the use of the word is intentional, and its goal is to bring conviction to the readers and assure them of the website's correct portrayal of events.

One of the most emotionally charged words used to refer to Ukrainians involved in the war is *Nazis* (*The root cause of the war was the Maidan: a few bastards, thousands of nationalists and Nazis, whom they nurtured, and millions of naive fooled people rocked the previously beautiful country altogether. [...] All the people want is to separate from Nazi savages, who called themselves the new masters of Ukraine* (Skotobogatov, 27 Jan 2015)). Given the fact that Nazis are known to have committed the worst mass crimes known to humankind, using this referent shows a very hateful attitude towards Ukrainians and almost paints them as the destructors of the human kind.

4.6.4. Weapons and military terminology

Unsurprisingly, military terminology does not escape the reports by Pravda.ru. Even if the topic does not directly relate to physical battles, these buzzwords are thrown in to create a general feeling of unrest (*Kolomoisky goes on the offensive before the election in the United States* (Lulko, 24 Mar 2015). *The war between two pro-American oligarchs will continue* (ibid.)). Although the use of military metaphors in non-military contexts is a widespread tactic in reporting, in such cases it creates additional (unnecessary) vibes of aggression.

An impression of disarray is achieved through the mentions of fragments of missiles, shrapnel elements of cluster munitions, combat zone (Pravda.ru, 4 Feb 2015), nuclear war, and battalions.

What creates an especially prominent feeling of Ukraine being a combat zone is the mention of military tactics or operations (*Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that the Ukrainian security forces were going to conduct another military operation in eastern Ukraine to solve the crisis militarily* (Pravda.ru, 13 Jan 2015)). There is talk of attacks and retreats (*Ukrainian forces attempted to assault the old terminal occupied by militia, but they were defeated and retreated suffering great losses. As a result of a counterattack, DPR's army has occupied the new terminal rather easily and with minimum casualties, and placed the airport under control* (Pravda.ru, 23 Jan 2015)). To make the counterattack a lot less damaging, it is noted that there were minimum casualties, while the Ukrainian army suffered great losses. Offensive is another buzzword used in the articles (*During the recent weeks, Ukrainian security forces had to retreat under the offensive from the militia.* (Pravda.ru, 2 Feb 2015)), and orders are being given out (*Oligarch Igor Kolomoisky, ordered his battalion Dnepr-1 to take the building of Ukrainian oil company Ukrnafta* (Lulko, 24 Mar 2015)).

The question of Ukrainian weapons is also touched upon by the reporters at Pravda.ru. Only once does the text involve a euphemistic referent (*Indeed, the American media is promoting to extend military assistance to Ukraine in every possible way [...]* (Lulko, 23 Jan 2015)), however, in this case *military assistance* involves not only weapons, but other aid as well, therefore it is unlikely that the purpose of the expression is to retain neutrality. Moreover, the source seems to mock the Western choice of expressions (*Noteworthy, White House officials and American journalists call it "supplies of defensive weapons to Ukraine."* (Pravda.ru, 2 Feb 2015)), which is the only place the word *defensive* is mentioned in relation to Ukrainian weapons. It is expected, of course, since Ukrainians are those doing the attacking, according to Pravda.ru.

The readers are conditioned to form a negative opinion about the West, since the fact that the weapons would be coming from the West or America is repeated (*[...] the Russian president responded to a reporter's question about the supplies of Western weapons to Ukraine [...] (Pravda.ru, 18 Feb 2015). There are American weapons in the Donbas and in Ukraine," (ibid.). Vladimir Putin said that he was aware of the fact that the West already supplies lethal weapons to Ukraine [...] (ibid.)). Consequently, the readership of the website may begin fostering hate against the Western world, who is a contributor to the military conflict in Ukraine. Moreover, to achieve an even more frightening effect, the writers make it a point to explicitly mention the types of weaponry available (or soon to be available) to Ukrainians (*Western arms, such as machine guns, sniper rifles and many other types of small arms are found in Ukraine frequently* (ibid.). *Washington delivered heavy combat weapons to the Ukrainian army from the very beginning of the conflict or even before the war started* (ibid.). *Eight former high-ranking US officials call on the US to supply weapons to Kiev worth \$3 billion - anti-tank missiles, drones, armored personnel carriers and radars* (Pravda.ru, 2 Feb 2015)).*

Pravda.ru is apparently trying to create an impression that there is only one party fighting the war, as the absence of such terms as *fights, clashes* or *battles* is remarkable, since that would imply reciprocal action. There are, however, references to one-sided military operations, and writers at Pravda.ru are fond of the word *to shell* (*The Ukrainian troops shelled the city and suburbs at least 25 times in 24 hours, the Rossiiskaya Gazeta reports* (Pravda.ru, 4 Feb 2015). *Ukrainian troops systematically shell Donetsk and surrounding villages* (Pravda.ru, 13 Jan 2015). *The head of the special observer mission of the OSCE in Ukraine, Ertugrul Apakan, condemned the shelling of residential areas of Donetsk by Ukrainian security forces and urged all sides to take efforts to cease the destruction of the city.* (Pravda.ru, 1 Feb 2015)). The use of attributes is also a valid choice to introduce greater contrasts (*Ukrainian security forces throw unaimed fire on peaceful cities of Donbass.* (Lulko, 23 Jan 2015)). Finally, the mention of blood (*[...] the Ukrainian parliament have ruined the peace initiatives of several European politicians who had tried to stop the bloodshed in eastern Ukraine* (Pravda.ru, 20 Mar 2015). *Now these nonhumans have flooded the whole country with blood* (Skotobogatov, 27 Jan 2015)) works to raise the level of danger that Ukraine's inhabitants are in.

A trait that appears in the reports that emphasizes the idea of war going on in Ukraine is the use of such words as *win/lose/victory/defeat*, creating the sensation that Ukraine is the root of all evil, and wants to prolong the suffering of its residents (*One should achieve unconditional military and political victory to be able to conduct peaceful talks with Ukraine*

(Pravda.ru, 13 Jan 2015). *I think that sooner or later, everyone - from administration to social categories of the population - will have to agree that it is time to go to a victorious end to this conflict* (ibid.). *Ukraine has to be defeated to be able to start negotiations with people's republics* (ibid.). *If Washington is led to believe that "all is lost" and Russia is winning, only then they will probably pass from words to deeds.* (Lulko, 23 Jan 2015)). On the other hand, it is clear that someone has to stop the aggressor (Ukraine); however, the writers at Pravda.ru avoid naming the agent of the action, opting for passive constructions or the pronoun 'one', instead. That way, no associations with violence are formed directly.

4.6.5. Killings and deaths

Unlike the reports by the BBC that constantly stress the number of lives lost as a result of the war in Ukraine, articles published by Pravda.ru largely avoid speaking in numbers and talking about the death of civilians or military personnel in general. Unexpectedly, accusations of the Ukrainian army taking the lives of their *enemies* are not observed, but, on the other hand, admitting the existence of Russian casualties would also mean admitting Russia's involvement in the conflict. There is a general ballpark number provided just once (*The conflict in the Donbass has led to the destruction of 50,000 residents, German special services said, Pravda.Ru reports.* (Pravda.ru, 18 Feb 2015)) that differs considerably from that appearing in the BBC reports, and a single mention of concrete deaths (*Two people were killed in Luhansk on January 27 as a result of an artillery attack.* (Pravda.ru, 4 Feb 2015)), but the sentence construction permits omitting the agent of the action. Using erratic references however, (*They do not forgive the killings of young soldiers; they do not forgive the killings of Berkut fighters, who were brutally killed with chains, knives, fire and bullets* (Skotobogatov, 27 Jan 2015). *Therefore, they hate, humiliate and kill.* (ibid.)), even without any factual evidence, contributes to strengthening the image of the evil Ukrainians.

4.6.6. Stylistic devices

Stylistic devices bring colour and nuances to a text, and the language in articles by Pravda.ru strays away from a strictly formal tone, as various provocative expressions are peppered through them.

Euphemisms are not something that the writers are fond of, albeit in one of the articles the Ukrainians are said to want to 'solve the crisis militarily (Pravda.ru, 13 Jan 2015)'.

Likewise, it is said that *peace will not come to Donbass until we [Russians] tip the balance in our favor* (ibid.), which looks like a euphemism for a military victory.

Instances of metaphoric language are more frequent than those appearing on the BBC or Kyiv Post. In this case, it looks like the writers are trying to strike a more personal and familiar tone with the readers, gaining their trust and appealing to emotions, rather than spouting factual evidence, for instance, Donbas is called ‘a cry of despair (Skotobogatov, 27 Jan 2015)’.

Metaphoric and idiomatic expressions are mostly used to refer to Ukraine and its actions, rather than Russia (*Alas, Ukraine is drunk now, and the moment of sobering is not anywhere near* (Mikhailov, 16 Mar 2015). [...] *this may become a cold shower to Ukraine to shake the country and the people up.*” (ibid.)). Such expressive means may indeed make the articles appear as if they are stories told to the reader by a friend, but, on the other hand, Ukraine begins to look like it is not a serious player, but something that can be almost joked about. More poignant cases can also be observed in the articles, e.g., *The directors of this hellish spectacle knew that.* (Skotobogatov, 27 Jan 2015). *Yatsenyuk and Turchynov, who started brewing the bloody mess in the country, are not Ukraine* (ibid.).

The language in general shows more uses of epithets (*In 2013, when most of Ukraine was hysterical on Maidan* (ibid.). [...] *Kiev were enticed aggressively with promises of guided democracy and bountiful EU largesse* (Syuh-jeun, 19 Mar 2015)), which help blow things out of proportion and create more noise than there actually is.

Another remarkable feature of the reports by Pravda.ru is the pervasive presence of Kiev and President Poroshenko, and the absence of Moscow, Kremlin and President Putin. If the reports by the BBC give the impression that Russia is a party to the conflict, since their refutations of accusations and replies are constantly mentioned, the articles at Pravda.ru do not mention Kremlin or Moscow even once, but Kiev, which stands for the ruling elite, is omnipresent (*For the world community it becomes clearer that Kiev does not take any measures to settle the conflict* (Lulko, 23 Jan 2015). *Kiev should first acknowledge the subjectivity of Donetsk and Luhansk and* (Pravda.ru, 13 Jan 2015)).

4.6.7. Transitivity

If the reports by Kyiv Post use the active voice to speak about Russia’s (mis)treatment of Ukraine, journalists at Pravda.ru return the favour and emphasize the Ukrainian army and their (wrong) doings by noting that *Ukrainian security forces opened fire from various types of arms [...]* (Pravda.ru, 4 Feb 2015). [...] *two armored columns attacked the army of the DPR*

and tried to break through the encirclement [...] (Pravda.ru, 12 Feb 2015). *Ukrainian troops systematically shell Donetsk and surrounding villages* (Pravda.ru, 13 Jan 2015), pin the orders down to the president of Ukraine (*Then Poroshenko ordered to open a heavy artillery fire on Donetsk* (Lulko, 23 Jan 2015)) or take a hit at the media (*In Russia, it is difficult to imagine how massively the Ukrainian media misinform people* (Pravda.ru, 12 Feb 2015)).

Just like the BBC, an article by Pravda.ru personalizes the peninsula, by calling it the agent: ‘During this year, the Crimea has returned to Russia and started living a full-fledged life (Mikhailov, 16 Mar 2015),’ that masks the actual process.

Yet again, where it is clear that both sides have played a part, passive constructions with omitted agents can be observed: (*The civil war was expected to finally end [...]* (Pravda.ru, 20 Mar 2015). *Blood is being shed in the Donbass [...]* (Pravda.ru, 16 Mar 2015). *[...] innocent civilians have been impacted by the crisis [...]* (Pravda.ru, 1 Feb 2015)), while, in some cases, added for emphasis (*Substantiated evidence is now emerging that this coup d'etat was fostered by the NATO-EU Axis in its broader plan of military encirclement of Russia* (Syuh-jeun, 19 Mar 2015)). Where victims are concerned, nominalization proves useful: ‘The conflict in the Donbass has led to the destruction of 50,000 residents [...]

(Pravda.ru, 18 Feb 2015a).’

Given the fact that the online newspaper is essentially anti-Western, it is not surprising that the US and the West would take active roles (*The West supplies weapons to Ukraine*, (Pravda.ru, 18 Feb 2015b). *This time, even the US has not vetoed the resolution* (ibid.). *The US is not interested in a peaceful resolution of the conflict* (Pravda.ru, 12 Feb 2015)).

Nominalization has also been detected in the reports by Pravda.ru. In some instances, the use of the noun instead of a verbal form makes the fact sound general, less specific and context-bound (*[...] there was significant growing sentiment in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (within the new Ukraine) for separation to form a new independent polity [...]* (Syuh-jeun, 19 Mar 2015). *A year has passed since the reunification of the Crimea and Sevastopol with the Russian Federation.* (Mikhailov, 16 Mar 2015)), but, of course, there is also deliberate use of nominalisation to hide the agent and make the fact more abstract (*A year ago, the threat of a military conflict was strong [...]* (ibid.)). *The region would have swallowed it again to live its everyday life, if it was not for nationalism and killings.* (Skotobogatov, 27 Jan 2015)). Even if the agent is given, such as ‘Ukrainian security forces had to retreat under the offensive from the militia. (Pravda.ru, 2 Feb 2015)’, the focus is on Ukraine, not the militia.

4.6.8. Modality

The overall modality of the articles is relatively high, if compared with the reports by the BBC, but it is certainly lower than that of Kyiv Post, for lack of conviction can be observed more often.

Interestingly, where modal verbs are concerned, a frequent choice is the modal verbs *should*, which, although sounds more like a recommendation, actually could be treated as an obligation in many cases, so it is a kind of a passive-aggressive choice (*One should achieve unconditional military and political victory to be able to conduct peaceful talks with Ukraine*. (Pravda.ru, 13 Jan 2015). *Those who trumpet about their ethnic Ukrainian origin should try to find out who their great-grandmothers were sleeping with* (Skotobogatov, 27 Jan 2015)). Deontic modality is also expressed via *must* (*Vladivostok, but if the U.S. insists that their technical, technological and biological standards must be adopted in this zone then Russia will never do that*. (Pravda.ru, 3 Feb 2015)), and about half of the instances featuring modal verbs contain either *could* or *may*, therefore, writers at Pravda.ru also tend to express their attitude towards what could be expected to happen in the future (*Ukraine may thus expand the geography of the civil war in the Donbass,[...]* (Pravda.ru, 20 Mar 2015). *This long-term lease could be annulled unilaterally and abruptly by a new anti-Russian ruling regime in Kiev [...]* (Syuh-jeun, 19 Mar 2015)).

Probability is conveyed more frequently than certainty that appears rarely (*The expert is sure that Ukraine will not be accepted to NATO under any circumstances anyway*. (Pravda.ru, 3 Feb 2015)) or categorical impossibility (*However, at the current level of communications and internet it is impossible to hide true intentions of the "West-Kiev" coalition*. (Lulko, 23 Jan 2015)). Speculation is expressed in the following ways: *In the near future, possibly, Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada will pass the law to nationalize Privatbank* (Lulko, 24 Mar 2015). *According to the officer, other pro-Ukrainian countries are likely to be involved in the process to supply weapons to Ukraine* (Pravda.ru, 18 Feb 2015). *It is assumed that the shelling was conducted from the north-northwest*. (Pravda.ru, 4 Feb 2015)), but the arguing is mostly for something taking place than against it.

On the other hand, however, there are very many instances where a source is mentioned, followed by a statement (that portrays Ukraine in a negative light) in the simple present tense and the indicative mood (e.g., *According to the report of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, there are problems with the delivery of humanitarian assistance to residents of the breakaway regions in the combat zone in the east of Ukraine* (ibid.)). Such a practice allows the news outlet to provide categorical statements to its readers, but peg the

information onto someone else; that way readers are conditioned to take the facts at face value, while any responsibility about the truth factor is taken away from Pravda.ru.

4.7. Summary of findings

The articles by the BBC, Kyiv Post and Pravda.ru reveal clear differences in how events are interpreted through various ideological perspectives, and that in turn supports the idea that the way we see the world is largely determined by the language that is used around us.

It can be argued that the reports, especially those by the Kyiv Post and Pravda.ru, show how *naturalization* works, as the reports are so convincing that the reader might not even question the truth value of the statements, but blindly agree to what is being told to them.

It is evident that all aspects of lexical and syntactic manipulation are at work in the construction of news reports, and it is not surprising that readers tend to accept the ideologies endorsed by the papers, since they are constantly bombarded with certain perspectives in all possible ways.

Out of the three sources examined, BBC, naturally, preserves the most neutral stance, which is understandable, since the West is not directly involved in the conflict; moreover, as a reputable company, they do not want to openly side with anyone to avoid criticism that could be aimed at it by those not supporting the views expressed in their reports. They achieve relative neutrality by making assumptions, rather than presenting hard facts with the help of lowered modality and avoiding vocabulary that would involve personal attitude and opinion (expressive lexis is mostly kept to direct quotes). However, certain sympathies towards Ukraine are implied, e.g., laying an emphasis on the rebel forces or referring to the weapons about to be sent to Ukraine as defensive aid.

Accordingly, reports by the Kyiv Post show a different picture and are much more aggressive in their expression, for they make sure to note that Ukraine is in the position of the victim in this situation, by emphasizing the Russian involvement and downplaying their own conduct most of the time. The situation is aggravated by the use of the term *war*, specifying the agent (Russia) and the object (Ukraine), lexis that is more expressive and attitudinal, as well as higher modality.

Vis-à-vis the articles by journalists at Pravda.ru, their support of the Kremlin is clearly marked, and Ukraine is portrayed as the main culprit, along with the Western world. The articles involve more value judgements, stylistic devices are found more often, and omission of agents is employed where it is convenient.

What happened to Crimea is a different story, according to each source – it was annexation, occupation or reunification, depending on the interpretation of the media, which in turn forms the opinions of those reading the sources.

There are also some similarities in all three sources, for instance, agency is avoided when it comes to victims of the war, since it is not possible to claim that only one side has lost lives. Similarly, speculation with the help of changes in modality can be observed rather frequently.

As a concluding remark, such side-by-side evaluation of texts produced by different media is an excellent way to see how big a role language plays when it comes to our understanding of the world. Most consumers of the information provided by the media are not directly involved in the events that wind up in the news, so they are, in a way, enslaved to the interpretations offered to them. The consequences are not just local, for they lead to generalizations (e.g., the use of the word *occupation* in reference to Crimea contributes to promoting a certain image of Russia and Russians as such), and they form the basis of the ideological mechanisms that people begin to take as granted and mistakenly see as their own.

CONCLUSIONS

Language is a social phenomenon that developed as an instrument to improve interaction between humans, but it is not rooted in nature, for the relationship between the name (*signifier*) and the thing it names (*signified*) is arbitrary. Because the value of the sign is not fixed, it can be manipulated with.

Language is the main mechanism that allows people to make sense of the world and reveal their thoughts and opinions; therefore, the language we speak indicates how we see the world, an idea encapsulated in linguistic relativity.

Even though the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has been largely refuted, it has found new a new life, for moderate Whorfianism is supported nowadays, i.e., that *language* (and language within a language) has an impact on our thoughts, but the process is reciprocal. Language being a selective medium is able to emphasize certain kinds of experience while diminishing others.

Language is closely related to power, and power is a precondition for creating ideologies that become widely accepted by particular groups of people. The distribution of knowledge supporting a particular ideological framework is achieved by the media due to its omnipresence. Consequently, the media greatly influences our perception of the world by a simple selection of linguistics means.

The consequences of the relationship between language and power are of great importance in critical discourse analysis that examines how the dominant groups exert power over others via text and talk, legitimizing and naturalizing ideological practices.

Critical discourse analysis subjects discourse to investigation on many levels, starting from the lexical and the syntactic level, up to macrostructures that look at the global meanings. Such categories as reference, connotations, stylistic devices, modality and transitivity are of interest here.

Media portrayal of the events in Ukraine is rather controversial, as the situation is viewed differently by the Western, Ukrainian and Russian media.

The BBC attempts to avoid formally siding with one or the other party of the conflict, displaying neutrality and abstaining from any direct accusations. The term *war* is avoided, Crimea's separation from Ukraine is referred to as *annexation*, without any value judgments about the process. The modality of statements is often rather low, so the articles look like speculations, rather than factual reporting, but it helps with keeping the distance.

However, certain sympathies towards Ukraine are implied. They are manifested through the emphasis on the rebel-backed army, disguise of weapons possessed by Ukrainians, as well as the use of nominalization to divert attention from the agent of a particular action.

Journalists at Kyiv Post show Ukraine as the victim of acts of aggression by Russia, overtly claiming that Russia is waging a war against them and occupying their territories. Similarly, Ukraine's conduct is left out of focus so as not to create any associations with aggression. Personal attacks are included in the articles, as well as criticism of the lack of help the country is receiving from other states. Modality of the sentences is rather high, and the lexical choices are quite expressive.

When it comes to the perspective of Russia, articles of Pravda.ru are categorical that Ukraine is to blame for the war that going on in the country, and that it is purposefully attacking those who wish to separate from Ukraine. An emphasis is laid on the Ukrainian military forces, which contributes to the country's image as an aggressor, events in Crimea and Donbas are not referred to using the standard terminology (annexation, separatist-held territories), and expert opinions are stressed in cases where they support Russia.

Avoiding agency vis-à-vis mass killings and deaths is characteristic of all sources, and so are changes in modality. Similarly, war terminology is scattered throughout all reports that creates a general sensation of unease and alarms the reader.

Interestingly, the less *neutral* the source is, the more stylistic marking appears, which can be regarded as an attempt to gain the trust of the reader, pretending to have a personal connection with them.

A conclusion can be drawn that the mass media choose particular perspectives and show the events from those points of view convenient to them that are often one-sided and distorted to fit an ideological framework. As a result, interpretations differ significantly, and the readers are conditioned to accept the opinion of the media as the truth. It, in turn, goes to show the immeasurable power of language to shape one's world-view, as can easily be found in the reports by the digital media analyzed in the paper.

The limitations of the research include the amount of data, which should be expanded significantly in order to be able to generalize the conclusions. Moreover, as critical discourse analysts are aware, the scholars themselves take up certain positions in the society and are not left out of the prevalent ideologies, hence a research bias may exist due to which certain findings are emphasized or, on the contrary, downplayed, not giving a completely accurate picture. Thus, the research could be continued by introducing additional sources or enlarging the corpus of texts, as well as adding more parameters to be analyzed.

THESES

1. The arbitrariness of language and the variable value of the sign are pre-conditions for linguistic relativity.
2. A moderate version of Whorfianism is gaining acceptance nowadays, arguing that language bears a certain influence on thought and vice versa.
3. Language is the most effective non-violent tool for ideological manipulation.
4. The media play a major role in disseminating views that are supported by the dominant groups of the society.
5. Critical discourse analysis examines the ways language is used to exercise and abuse power.
6. Reports by the BBC attempt to retain a safe distance from both parties involved in the conflict and avoid pinning responsibility on anyone via moderate modality and neutral lexis.
7. Journalists at the Kyiv Post accuse Russia of waging a war against Ukraine and occupying its territories using active constructions and direct language.
8. Articles on Pravda.ru present expert opinions and show open support for Russia's conduct, manifested through value judgments and a prevalence of transitive verbs.
9. Terminology in terms of what is happening in Ukraine differs from source to source that contributes to absolutely different interpretations of the events.
10. Nominalization and the use of passive voice are used by all three media outlets to hide agency where its mention is not convenient.
11. The choice of lexical means makes a heavy impact on how the conduct of each country is viewed, which leads to changes in the overall perception of the order in the world.

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DOKUMENTĀRĀ LAPA

Maģistra darbs “Media Portrayal of the Ukrainian Crisis” (Ukrainas krīzes attēlojums plašsaziņas līdzekļos) izstrādāts LU Humanitāro zinātņu fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

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Rekomendēju darbu aizstāvēšanai

Vadītāja: asoc. prof. Jeļena Dorošenko

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