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Critical Discourse Analysis of Newspaper Articles Declaring the Outbreak of War in Ukraine: The Washington Post vs. The Moscow Times

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Abstract

This study provides a critical discourse analysis (CDA) account of two online newspaper articles published on February 24, 2022, by The Moscow Times and The Washington Post. Specifically, attitude analysis was used to compare and contrast the two newspaper articles to highlight that both exploited all elements of the attitude subsystems to influence the opinions and attitudes of their respective readerships, albeit with opposing agendas. The results suggest that both online news articles expressed both positive and negative attitudes to the invasion of Ukraine, albeit in different ways. The Washington Post mainly focused on the negative aspects of the invasion and reported positively on the United States' response to the Russian assault. In contrast, The Moscow Times reported on positive actions performed by both sides. Lastly, the study found that each online newspaper's use of language to persuade its readers to accept its narrative of the events in Ukraine is significant in shaping the ideological perspectives of its readership.

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1. Introduction

Research on political discourse first requires the term *politics* to be clarified. According to Chilton (2004), there are two broad branches of political research (if one considers the implicit and explicit concepts found in both the conventional study of politics and political discourse studies) that are in direct opposition to one another: one conceptualizes politics as a conflict between those with power and authority and those who seek to take it away (the micro level); the other views politics as an effort by various sectors of society and the state to strike an equitable balance between aspects such as wealth, power, and individual freedom (the macro level). While both conceptions of politics are valid, they approach politics from very different angles. As Chilton (2004) pointed out, political action is impossible without language. Notably, Al Saud (2006) indicated that it is vital to examine how the media employs language and the function it performs in communicating ideas and beliefs (Aljanadbah & Alramamneh, 2022). Thus, journalists seek to employ lexical and syntactic elements to shape the responses of their readership toward particular value-laden narratives. These lexical and syntactic characteristics are the focal point of systemic functional linguistics (SFL), which places the analytical focus on language use; therefore, SFL is a valuable tool to support CDA in analyzing texts and discourses (Zhu & Wang, 2020). In the same vein, as news is a discourse, the communication context in which news is produced and how journalists seek to justify and support specific narratives that are aligned with political objectives are all worthy of study (Bednarek & Caple, 2012).

According to Li and Zhu (2020), one of the most challenging components of evaluating political discourse is identifying evaluation approaches that can shed light on the underlying ideology. Consequently, they suggested that appraisal theory provides the most systematic, accurate, and exhaustive framework of discourse values for explaining how language is employed for appraisal, negotiating social encounters, adopting social stances, and disclosing its underlying ideology (Thompson & Hunston, 2006, as cited in Li & Zhu 2020). Martin and White (2005) derived appraisal theory from Halliday's interpersonal

metafunction (which asserts that language is used to communicate information in particular ways). They employed it to develop their own SFL-based theory for analyzing how interpersonal meanings are communicated in discourse settings. Appraisal theory examines how speakers establish identities and present themselves to their intended audience. Examining the characteristics of a particular piece of discourse allows researchers to infer the nature of the beliefs, goals, and relationships that the producer of the discourse has with others (Haristyanti, 2015). The evaluative language employed by the producer of a piece of discourse serves to establish their ideological position and attitude towards the subject of the discourse, which can be expressed either directly or indirectly; therefore, this evaluative language is the primary focus of appraisal theory (Puspita & Pranoto, 2021).

The importance of CDA lies in revealing the more subtle meanings contained within the discourse and assessing the ideological and power relationships with which it is aligned. Because people rarely reflect on how news affects their attitudes towards specific issues, it has become necessary to draw attention to how, via the use of particular linguistic devices, news conveys meanings that serve certain (self-interested) political and ideological positions to enlist the support of the readership and strengthen their particular position. To fill this gap, this study provides a politically framed case study analysis of news coverage of this conflict in Ukraine by examining two articles from the opposing sides of the international debate: the US and Russia. In particular, it is interested in examining the ways that these two media articles in the public sphere are likely to have influenced public opinion on both sides and how the content of each is unlikely to be given credibility by its ideological counterpart. To achieve this, it employed Martin and White's (2005) *attitude theory* to analyze the linguistic devices used by the respective writers of each of the two articles and reveal the underlying respective ideological positions of each. The research project aimed to answer the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1. What are attitude subsystems featured in the two articles by The Washington Post and The Moscow Times about the outbreak of war in Ukraine?

RQ2. Are there any similarities and differences between the use of the respective attitude subsystems used by The Washington Post and The Moscow Times in their respective articles?

2. Theoretical Framework

This research was primarily driven by two disciplines: CDA and SFL. This section will examine the core theoretical assumptions of these two frameworks before providing a summary of previous studies on the role of political ideology in newspaper reporting.

2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA considers discourse — the use of language in speech and writing — as a social practice (Wodak, 2014) that involves a dialectical relationship between a particular ideological perspective and the context, organization, and social system it frames: The media representation of a particular real-world event is formed by these elements, but these elements also have a role in forming the event itself. Therefore, CDA extends beyond simply recognizing language items and seeks to examine the ideological and political forces that shape particular strains of discourse.

By using CDS to analyze the media's use of language, it is possible to recognize the elements of power, control, authority, and subtly conveyed ideologies that exist within it. These quietly presented ideologies are communicated through media discourse via the use of so-called commonsense ideas that may go unnoticed by the general public; examining ideologies by using CDA helps to raise awareness of how language can affect our conscience (Wodak & Meyer, 2009) and therefore shape wider public opinion and value judgments about the ethics of particular events such as wars and conflicts.

Ideologies and the ability to account for and explain larger social phenomena are revealed through the methodical analysis of semiotic data, whether written, spoken, or visual (Wodak & Meyer, 2009); this goal links to the aims of the present study: To examine how these two media articles produced by journalists on opposing sides of the conflict have likely influenced public opinion.

2.2. Systemic Functional Linguistics

Both CDA and SFL seek to investigate the connections between language and society (Le & Wang, 2009). Although the use of CDA is of benefit to investigating a range of linguistic paradigms, texts, and discourses, SFL's emphasis on the communicative and social characteristics of discourse makes it a particularly suitable methodological choice in the present study.

SFL provides a functional-semantic study of language that is interested in how language is used in different settings and how it is constructed as a semiotic system (Eggins, 2004). As Liu (2017) put it, SFL theory characterizes language as a social semiotic or meaning-creating resource, with meaning resting in the connections between alternatives in meaning systems. SFL does not examine the cognitive processes or representations of language in the brain but seeks to understand the nature of written or oral discourses and their likely effects on the attitudes and opinions of the readership.

In SFL, metafunctional meanings are realized as a nexus of ideational, interpersonal, and textual aspects that are linked with one another to allow for the achievement of all three social functions at once (Martin & Rose, 2003). According to SFL, the three primary uses of language are a) ideational, in which language facilitates the construction of particular kinds of experience such as the formation of attitudes towards a particular event; b) interpersonal, in which language facilitates the enactment of roles and the sharing of values in the negotiation of social relations; and c) textual, in which language facilitates the composition of information flows into meaningful messages according to their interactions and contexts. The use of Martin and White's (2005) SFL-based appraisal theory as a model for the linguistic evaluation of media discourse firmly situates the present study within the sphere of interpersonal communication (Halliday, 1985, 1994; as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Martin, 1992; Thompson et al., 2019). Appraisal theory is a framework for examining the evaluative language featured in discourse. Martin and Rose (2003) proposed appraisal theory as a solution to investigating semantic discourse systems via assessing particular elements of discourse: the types of attitudes

negotiated in a text, the intensity of the feelings involved, how values are derived, and how readers align with these values. Furthermore, the interpersonal aspects of appraisal theory provide us with an understanding of the

meanings that reflect differences in the tone of particular social interactions enacted in a given discourse or text. Figure 1 outlines these three appraisal systems.

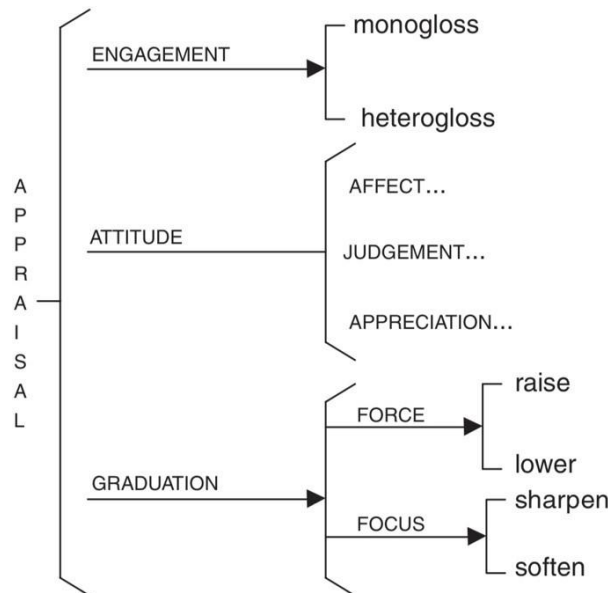


Figure 1

An Overview of the Different Aspects of Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005, p. 38)

During such interpersonal communication, analysis of the linguistic choices of the author can identify their ideological perspective, tone, and nature of their focus on the elements of the event or social interaction in terms of *engagement* (the extent to which the discourse is balanced or not towards the particular sides of the issue), *attitude* (what emotional responses and value judgments it seeks to elicit towards the issue, such as support or derision), and *graduation* (the extent to which it sharpens or softens the focus on particular elements of the event in question, for example, is the focus on collateral damage or freeing the oppressed?) (Martin & Rose, 2003).

Precisely, the *attitude* element of appraisal theory consists of three parts, the first of which we are most concerned with in the present study, namely, *category*, which comprises *affect*, *judgment*, and *appreciation*. These elements relate to the emotional response(s) elicited in the audience of the discourse; affect: what value judgments are made, and fostering

a sense of acknowledgment of the event, respectively, polarity: the extent to which a positive or negative gloss is attached to the discourse, and realization: the extent to which the discourse upholds certain values or seeks to a particular encourage action or opinion in support of the discourse's aims.

Affect is concerned with the intended emotional responses evoked in the receivers of a particular discourse. Affect-based elements are manifested in several lexicogrammatical structures, namely, *participant descriptions* and *characteristics*, *processes*, and *modal adjuncts* (Hart, 2014). According to Hart, the affect element has three distinct categories:

- Happiness (defined by emotions of joy or sadness)
- Security (defined by feelings of peace and fear)
- Satisfaction (characterized by feelings of achievement)

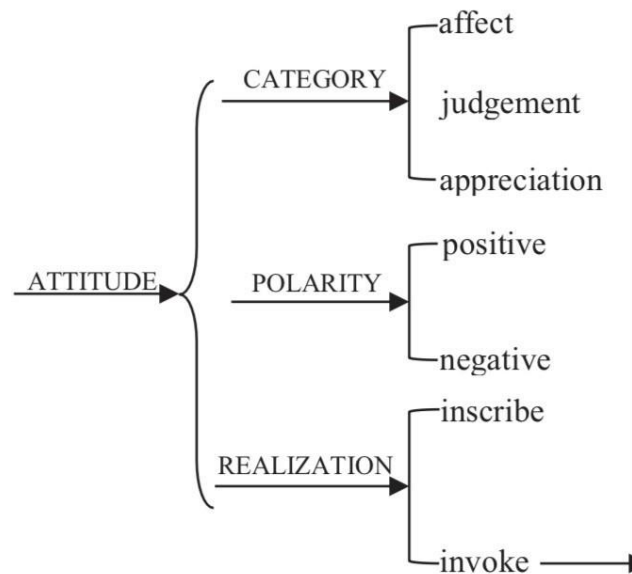


Figure 2
Attitude system (Liu, 2017, p. 73)

Judgment refers to having the ability to judge the morality and actions of others based on social esteem and social sanction, both of which can be further broken down into positive and negative subclasses (Hart, 2014). Subcategories of self-esteem include:

- Normality: concern about 'someone's uniqueness.
- Capacity: concern about 'someone's ability.
- Tenacity: concern about 'someone's dependability.

Accordingly, appreciation and criticism are associated with positive and negative aspects of social esteem. Subcategories of social sanction include:

- Veracity: concern about 'someone's honesty.
- Propriety: concern about a 'person's ability to be above reproach.

Accordingly, acts of approval and condemnation are associated with the positive and negative aspects of social sanction.

Appreciation is concerned with enabling audiences to evaluate discourse elements, semiotic objects, and processes aesthetically. *Reaction*, *valuation*, and *composition* are the three fundamental components of appreciation (Hart, 2014), as outlined below:

- Reactions are statements concerning quality or influence. In corporate social reporting, favorable responses to products and behaviors are most prevalent.
- Valuation entails expressions of value or uniqueness. This strategy is always applied positively to emphasize the positive aspects of a particular event.
- Composition involves the statement of balance, complexity, and functionality. In a more positive context, this strategy is sometimes used to highlight extraordinary characteristics (e.g., curvaceous, willowy, ornate, extravagant, etc.).

Affect resources are indisputably at the core of these regions since it is the defining resource, we are born with and biologically incorporate into every aspect of our daily lives (Martin & White, 2005; Painter, 2003). Feelings can be expressed or influenced both positively and negatively. Next, *judgment resources* can be defined as our positive attitudes toward behaviors we admire and praise or our negative emotions toward those we criticize or condemn. Finally, *appreciation resources* consist of evaluating semiotics and natural phenomena based on their value in a particular field (Martin & White, 2005). Wodak (2011) stated that all forms of attitude divide feelings into two categories: positive (liked) and negative (unliked).

2.3. Previous Studies

Hai and Nguyen (2019) used appraisal theory to conduct a case study on articles published in two online newspapers, namely the New York Times and Tuoi Tre (Vietnam), to demonstrate the subjectivity of their respective political remarks. The researchers identified the *attitude* and *engagement* elements of the chosen texts. The findings showed that although there were some minor differences in the frequency of use of these elements and that each had its own particular grammatical characteristics, both articles shared various similarities in their political commentaries. For example, both the English and Vietnamese articles exhibited genre-typical characteristics, including revealing author subjectivity, reader-writer intersubjectivity, and objectively representing a third-party perspective.

Chalimah et al. (2018) asserted that religious prejudice had become a global concern that must be addressed linguistically, especially regarding the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine in Gaza. Their study contributed to CDA by providing qualitative interpretations of media discourse to understand both sides' conflicting ideologies linguistically. It analyzed a CNN news article from April 2018 about the religious conflict between Israel and Palestine in Gaza from a linguistic perspective. The study focused on Martin and White's (2005) *attitude* and *affect* to determine how the text classified feelings towards the conflict by interpreting the use of cultural elements. The validity of the results was supported by *expert validity* and *source validity*, whereby each was used to cross-reference the validity of the other. Overall, the text expresses negative feelings about the conflict: Israel's antipathy towards Palestinians and their security issues and their confidence that each other's actions had peaceful aims.

Puspita and Pranoto (2021) examined the disaster reporting of 100 articles from three Japanese newspapers published between 2019 to early 2020 using Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory to assess the attitude elements of the coverage using a descriptive qualitative approach. The results showed that the most common element present in the three articles was judgment, followed by appreciation and affection. These results indicate the tendency of Japanese newspapers to express evaluations of

disasters rather than conveying the sentiments or emotions of the survivors.

Klimava (2016) used CDA to investigate how language was used to establish particular ideological viewpoints in the international press coverage of the war in Ukraine before the start of the 2022 conflict. He selected a total of 12 articles that corresponded to three significant crisis events (annexation, a plane crash, and the imposition of sanctions). He identified and discussed how the discursive strategies and linguistic devices used by the creators of these media discourses presented the same events, albeit from ideologically divergent perspectives. Their results highlight that those who wield political and economic power over the press influence national political decisions and economics, as well as justify such political decisions and acts via media content. Finally, the authors asserted that language is critical in forming ideological perspectives on events.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research aimed to provide a CDA-based analysis of the appraisal theory's *attitude resources* featured in two online newspaper reports by the WP and the RT about the outbreak of the 2022 war in Ukraine to assess how the two conflicting media discourses on the war have been portrayed by each and their likely effects on public opinion, both domestic and international. The analysis method used a qualitative explanation of the attitude resources featured in the two articles to reveal the nature of the underlying ideologies that influence the attitudes and opinions of each publication's readership, respectively, rather than a quantitative analysis approach. This method was chosen as in CDA; quantitative analysis is useless if used with limited data; therefore, the researcher opted for a qualitative approach to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the results and enable an interpretation of the views of the writers of the articles and the researcher's own views to be considered.

3.1. Materials

The data were gathered from the two selected articles published by the W. P. reported by Raghavan et al. (2022) and M.T. reported by Cichowlas and Clark (2022) on February 24,

2022. This date is considered to represent the declaration of war by Russia on Ukraine. These two newspaper websites were selected to present instances of opposing ideological viewpoints on the war in Ukraine.

3.2. Procedure

The appraisal theory originated from the interpersonal function of SFL was used for the analysis. Specifically, the analysis employed the attitude sub-types: affect, judgment, and appreciation, to compare and contrast the two newspaper articles and to find out how the elements of the attitude subsystems were used to influence the opinions and attitudes of each online newspaper's respective readerships which therefore reveal newspapers' ideologies.

The data analysis involved seven main steps. First, the researcher determined which online news articles published on the websites of the WP and MT on February 24, 2022, were related to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Second, each of the two articles was read in-depth and separately to gain an overall understanding of the content. Third, the researcher underlined words and phrases that conveyed any meanings related to the attitude resources of appraisal theory. Fourth, all highlighted terms were tabulated along with their respective subcategories. Fifth, the categories and subcategories were analyzed using descriptive data (frequency and percentage) of instances of each to provide a comprehensive summary of each newspaper's ideological stance towards the conflict. Due to the small sample size, no statistical analysis was conducted. In addition, qualitative descriptions were created of all instances of the attitude resources that exemplified the common patterns in each article, respectively.

4. Results

This section provides the results of the above data analysis. Specifically, it reports the qualitative characteristics of the attitude-related elements observed in the dataset. The results below respond to the following RQs.

RQ1. What are attitude subsystems featured in the political remarks on the Ukraine issue made by The Washington Post and The Moscow Times?

RQ2. Are there any similarities and differences between the use of the respective attitude subsystems used by The Washington Post and The Moscow Times in their respective articles?

4.1. Attitude Analysis

As previously mentioned, the *attitude resources* of appraisal theory consist of *affect* (emotional responses, social judgments, and aesthetic evaluations), which concentrate on the evaluator of the discourse in question with whom the receiver may or may not identify and may or may not be directed. Next, *judgment resources* are concerned with those with whom the evaluator shares common social understandings and values. Finally, *appreciation resources* focus on the contextual elements of discourse with which the appraiser interacts (Hart, 2014).

Martin and White (2005) asserted that when evaluating the creator of a particular discourse in terms of judging or appreciating it, it is essential to consider the *source* of the attitudes expressed in the discourse (typically, speakers and writers are considered to be the source of evaluations, unless attitudes are expressed as speech or thought by an additional appraiser), as well as *what* is being evaluated (who is being judged and what is being appreciated). Consequently, the evaluation also considers the 'appraiser' and the 'evaluated.' The researcher carefully read the content of the two articles to identify incidences of the use of different attitudinal resources (affect, judgment, and appreciation) in the coverage of the WP and the MT in respect of the outbreak of war in Ukraine. The following subsections will present the findings of the first and second research questions.

4.1.1. Affect Category

Affect resources encompasses numerous varieties of emotion, modes of cognition, individuals who feel emotions, and the objects or individuals that generate those emotions. According to Martin and White (2005), the "emoter" is the self-aware person feeling the emotion, and the "trigger" is whatever causes the emotion in the first place. The present study followed the approach taken by Martin and White (2005) and considered the person experiencing the emotion as the appraiser and the cause of the emotion as the appraised. A total of six types of affect resources were

featured in the two articles, one positive and five negatives (WP: two negatives, MT: three negatives, one positive). The following examples are from the reports of the two newspapers.

1. **Extract:** Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a military operation in Ukraine on Thursday, with explosions heard soon after in the capital and other parts of the country, prompting outrage from Joe Biden, who warned of a “catastrophic loss of life”. (MT)
Analysis: The phrase “prompting outrage” shows the appraiser’s emotion (anger) due to the Russian activities in Ukraine.
2. **Extract:** Joe Biden warned of a “catastrophic loss of life.” (WP)
Analysis: The word “catastrophic” expresses the US president’s feelings of public insecurity and disquiet in response to the Russian aggression. This instance of negative affect emphasizes the US president’s highly concerned attitude toward the situation.
3. **Extract:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky says “enemy sabotage groups” have entered Kyiv, the capital, as Russian forces close in. (WP)
Analysis: The phrase “enemy sabotage groups” shows a similar implicit effect of unhappiness/anger because it shows the Ukrainian President’s concerned emotions toward the surprise attack from Russia.
4. **Extract:** He also said the country has been left to fight alone by NATO despite appeals for help from the alliance. (WP)
Analysis: The word “alone” indirectly expresses the Ukrainian President’s unhappiness and disappointment with how NATO has reneged on its promise by not fulfilling its commitments to his country.

4.1.2. Judgment Category

Judgment resources entail interpreting our/others’ views of others and their behavior and commenting on their moral character. The news coverage of crises always includes victims, rescuers, government officials, and so on. Therefore, the reporters/presidents of concerned countries cannot avoid making direct or indirect judgments on those engaged in crises. A total of 25 judgment resources were featured in both articles: two positive

judgments and four negative judgments (WP: nine negatives, four positives, MT: nine negatives, three positives). The following examples were chosen from the reports of the two newspapers.

5. **Extract:** “Weeks of intense diplomacy and the imposition of Western sanctions failed to deter Putin.” (WP)
Analysis: The word “failed” shows a negative judgment of the imposed sanctions by criticizing the agency and effectiveness of those who imposed the sanctions.
6. **Extract:** “... claiming he (Vladimir Putin) wanted a “demilitarisation” of the former Soviet state but not its occupation.” (MT)
Analysis: The word “claiming” shows the reporter’s negative judgment of the veracity of Vladimir Putin in the sense that the Russian President appears to be seeking the demilitarization of Ukraine, not conflict/occupation.
7. **Extract:** He (Volodymyr Zelensky) also said the country has been left to fight alone by NATO despite appeals for help from the alliance. (WP)
Analysis: The statement that “the country has been left to fight alone by NATO” indicates a negative judgment of veracity by the appraiser (Volodymyr Zelensky) that the appraised (NATO) lacked credibility due to their lack of support to defend Ukraine.
8. **Extract:** Russia is unlikely to have achieved its planned military objectives for the first day of its invasion of Ukraine, the British Ministry of Defense said in a statement Thursday, citing the “fierce resistance” put up by Ukrainian forces. (WP)
Analysis: The reference to the failure of the Russian military objectives due to the “fierce resistance” put up by Ukrainian forces shows a positive judgment of the Ukrainian force’s capabilities.

4.1.3. Appreciation Category

Appreciation resources evaluate the semiotic and empirical phenomena related to how things are valued or not in a particular field. A total of 12 incidences of appreciation resources were featured in both news articles: five positive appreciations and seven negative appreciations (WP: five negatives, one positive, MT: two

negatives, four positives). The following provide examples of these.

4. **Extract:** He also called on Ukrainian soldiers to lay down their arms... (MT)
Analysis: The reporter's use of the phrase "lay down arms" indicates Russian President Vladimir Putin's positive intentions for Ukrainian soldiers to surrender to maintain peace by refraining from using force against Russian troops.
5. **Extract:** Their [the separatist leaders of Donetsk and Lugansk] appeals came after Putin recognized their independence and signed friendship treaties with them that include defense deals. (MT)
Analysis: The reporter's statement of "signed friendship treaties" shows a positive appreciation stating that the government and the other leaders have a similar responsibility for friendship and peace. Thus, it shows positive balance composition, showing that both sides can cooperate peacefully.
6. **Extract:** A residential building in Kyiv caught fire, sparked by what appeared to be rocket debris. (WP)
Analysis: The negative connotations of the phrase "caught fire" highlight the need for a response to the Russian aggression by the world community in response to this unanticipated crisis. The reporter's use of the phrase "what appeared to be rocket debris" provides implicit confirmation that Russia had commenced hostilities in Ukraine for anyone who may suspect otherwise.
7. **Extract:** US slaps sanctions on Russian banks, country's elites after military assault on Ukraine. (WP)
Analysis: The use of the term "slaps sanctions" suggests that the sanctions were imposed on Russia quickly rather than after a period of debate; the journalist appears to support this rapid action by the US to support Ukraine.

The results show that the distribution of positive and negative attitudinal resources towards the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine varied significantly between the two news reports. This distribution represents the difference in the position of the two newspapers in their coverage of the outbreak of

the Ukraine war. The very concept of war discourse highlights the possibility for negative characteristics to arise in the way the media describes the event. Nevertheless, the present results demonstrate that the outbreak of the war was portrayed only slightly more negatively in the MT than in the WP. This is somewhat surprising as one would have perhaps expected the MT to be significantly more positive and less negative in their coverage of the outbreak of the conflict compared to the WP, who we would have perhaps expected to be more negative and less positive about this same event. However, due to the MT's dedication to neutrality, the results show that its coverage was not significantly different from that of the WP in terms of the positive and negative attitudes it expressed toward the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine.

The following section discusses the uses of the affect, judgment, and appreciation resources in the two articles. It provides an analysis of their respective ideological meanings as well as the positive and negative attitudinal features.

5. Discussion

The outbreak of war in Ukraine on February 24, 2022 due to Russian military action was analyzed via performing CDA on two online newspaper articles by the WP and the MT published on the same day that covered the event. Attitude analysis was used to compare and contrast the attitudinal resources (affect, judgment, appreciation) that featured in the two newspaper articles and were likely to influence the political opinions and attitudes of their respective readerships toward this event. The 'writer's opinions on the event (and, by extension, the 'newspaper's opinion) were portrayed through the selective presentation of facts and careful choice of lexical items to frame the event. Opinions vary on whether the readership is aware of the occurrence of such lexical devices.

As representatives of Russian and American mass media, the researcher compared two online newspaper articles covering the outbreak of war in Ukraine, namely, the MT and WP, to determine how they depicted the same event. The opening sentences of such news articles provide an ideal locus for news organizations to demonstrate their overall opinion of a particular event convincingly,

even if these points of view are disagreeable with some readers. Further, it can be noticed in each article's beginnings that words are used to form 'people's identities, which can vary according to context; while doing so, they create personas to represent others, which they employ to further their own identity (Allami & Barzegar, 2020). The MT article begins as follows: "Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a military operation in Ukraine on Thursday with explosions heard soon after in the capital and other parts of the country, prompting outrage from Joe Biden, who warned of a "catastrophic loss of life" (Cichowlas & Clark, 2022).

Here, the reader can infer that by initiating this military campaign against Ukraine, Russia thereby implicates itself in conflict with the United States. The United States is therefore considered allied with most of the world's countries. As a result, most of the world states will likely side with the US and blame Russia for the conflict. Noteworthy, the above excerpt can be interpreted within the context of Sadirova et al.'s (2022) findings that the word choices underlying the concepts of 'power' and 'politics' play a significant role in a 'person's linguistic awareness, as these concepts are reflected not only in political or ideological relations but also in interpersonal relationships. Meanwhile, the WP article begins with the following: "Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky says "enemy sabotage groups" have entered Kyiv, the capital, as Russian forces close in (Raghavan et al., 2022).

The above extract foreshadows the tone of the article by expressing the President's anger via its use of the terms "enemy" and "sabotage," which suggests that the remainder of the article will condemn Russia. Based on a CDA of these two news reports, it was found that the MT article featured three instances of negative affect and one instance of positive affect. Meanwhile, the WP article featured two instances of negative affect and no instances of positive affect. This is in accordance with Chalimah et al. (2018), in which the text expresses negative feelings about the other party's actions. In the MT, the reporter conveyed messages of concern about the conflict between the US and the Ukrainian Presidents. Most of the instances of negative affect were related to political insecurity and

social disquiet. In the MT article, the reporter appeared to be committed to objectivity since they avoided expressing personal value judgments about the event; instead, they conveyed only the words of the US and the Ukrainian Presidents without interpretation. In contrast, in the WP article, the reporter mainly conveyed the negative affect of the Ukraine President towards the conflict: dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Here, the reporter interpreted the Ukraine President's statement in a possible way to discern the author's ideology from his/her words choices; for example, in "the country has been left to fight alone by NATO," the words in the phrase "left to fight alone" express how the reporter is attempting to convey the Ukrainian people's perception of the situation, as well appeal to the likely perceptions of its readership among allied countries such as European states and Americans, who may expect their leaders to oppose Russia.

In summation, regarding the first research question, the comparison of the two selected articles suggested that the two news organizations employed all aspects of the attitude as resources to influence their readership's opinions about the event, albeit in different ways, with the judgment resources' superiority in both articles. This is consistent with Puspita and Pranoto (2021), in which the most common element presented was judgment, followed by appreciation and affection. The articles of WP and MT differed in their inclusion of positive and negative attitude resources: WP focused on providing primarily negative attitude resources to frame the event. However, it featured positive attitude resources when detailing how the US responded to the Russian attack on Ukraine. In contrast, the article by MT attempted to maintain objectivity in its coverage of the crisis by featuring several positive attitude resources related to the US and Russia. This makes it somewhat uncertain if readers of MT could conclude which side the newspaper supports unless they carefully analyze the ideology proposed by certain words and sentences.

Referring to the second question, it can be concluded that most judgment resources in both reports were negative condemnations of the Russian hostility. The writer of the MT article attempted to maintain neutrality by

conveying negative judgments of both the Russian and Ukrainian parties. In contrast, the writer of the WP article chose to emphasize negative judgments about Russian action. Very little positive judgment of the Russian action featured in the MT article; this shows that the writer attempted to maintain objectivity by referring to the capabilities of both Joe Biden and Volodymyr Zelensky and undermining the veracity of Vladimir Putin's claim only to be concerned with demilitarizing the region. Although the reporter attempted to maintain a sense of neutrality, some of their word choices convey particular ideological meanings; for example, reporting that the Ukraine President "made an emotional late-night appeal" may indicate that the writer is perhaps mocking the Ukrainian President by using the word "emotional" to portray his behavior in such serious crisis. The WP article, however, ostensibly fails to maintain an objective view of the event; rather, it provides a somewhat subjective view by expressing a value judgment by heaping admiration on the American, British, and Ukrainian leaders in the face of the Russian aggression and condemning the Russian President.

Four instances of positive appreciation of the event featured in the MT article; these provide a positive gloss to the outbreak of war and attempt to evaluate the phenomena positively by focusing on elements that provide a glimmer of hope; for example, "signed friendship treaties." In contrast, the WP article only expresses one positive reaction towards the event in terms of describing how the US had "slap[ed] sanctions" on Russia in a step that was presumably designed to save lives by bringing the conflict to a quick ending, indicating that the reporter views this as a significant gleam of hope to end the war. Overall, the MT news reporter appears to be reticent to either support or condemn the Russian government's aggression against Ukraine. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the results suggest that WP is more aligned with the US government's stance on the war in Ukraine, while MT, although reluctant to praise the military action of its government, is also hesitant to condemn it.

The study's findings indicate that political dominance groupings are likely to have an impact on public opinion toward the political

ideologies on both sides of the conflict. The result is in accordance with Klimava (2016) that public opinion is likely to be influenced by political superiority groups. Finally, as language is a crucial element in the formation of ideological perspectives on events, some of which may become accepted as the official versions of particular real-world events. The finding aligns with Atai and Mozaheb (2013) that the choice of words in news stories is a strategic tool for shaping the audience's mental image, which enables the writer to manipulate the reader's reaction to the content of the news and make him or her to either accept or reject. Therefore, it is crucial to continually assess the veracity of the suggested realities that the media provides us with.

This study contributes significantly to the literature on corpus-based discourse analysis, especially as it relates to the analysis of political discourse in online news. Despite its merits, the present study was subject to two main limitations. First, the validity of the results was not supported by cross-referencing *expert validity* and *source validity* as in Chalimah et al.'s (2018) work. Adopting this approach may have improved the validity of the results. Second, this study was limited by time constraints, which limited the amount of content analyzed and prevented the inclusion of relevant articles from other newspapers. For future research, the researcher suggests focusing on the war in Ukraine and including several international newspapers, such as European newspapers and Arabic newspapers, in addition to Russian and American newspapers, to provide a wider research sample. Future studies could focus on using CDA and Martin and White's (2005) *appraisal theory* to analyze the attitudinal resources of a larger sample of news articles on this issue or other pertinent issues of importance.

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