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DIVERGENT VIEWS: UNPACKING THE REPRESENTATION OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR IN US NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS

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Abstract

Newspapers are considered one of the reliable sources for disseminating information worldwide. Therefore, people tend to believe that every national and international event is depicted from an unbiased and neutral stance. However, on careful observation, one can understand that this belief is no longer true. Various political interests shape reality while writing down the news. Based on the idea that newspapers recreate reality according to their ideologies, the present study analyzes two US newspapers, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post, to understand how the identities of Russia and Ukraine are constructed in the event of the Russia-Ukraine war in the news editorials. The selection of editorials was based on purposive sampling, and those editorials were selected that discussed the events of the Russia-Ukraine war. Ten news editorials from WP and ten news editorials from WSJ were selected. A mixed-method analysis was employed to achieve the desired objectives of this research. The 3-D Model of Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough (1995) was used as a theoretical framework. Corpus analysis and

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CDA of editorials show that Russia is assigned a negative image in war and is depicted as a brutal country that has destroyed various places in Ukraine and has indiscriminately killed people. On the other hand, Ukraine is presented as a naïve, victimized, and war-ridden country, and its soldiers are shown as brave and persistent in their resolutions who have forced Russian forces to move back into the war, hence presenting a positive image of Ukraine in the war. The implication of this study suggests that the perception of objectivity and neutrality traditionally associated with newspapers might be challenged. Despite being widely considered reliable sources of information, newspapers may not always present events from an unbiased standpoint.

Keywords: News Editorials, Corpus Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, Russia- Ukraine war, Identity Construction

1. Introduction

Media is considered a reliable and authentic source of information in the world today. Therefore, people tend to believe that every national and international event is depicted from an unbiased and neutral stance. However, on careful observation, one can understand that this belief is no longer true and that various political interests shape reality while writing down the news. By uniquely using language, news editors persuade the readers and create a specific identity of others in the minds of readers. Therefore, a thorough analysis of newspapers will help to understand how language is used in a particular way to construct identities.

Language is not only a medium of communication but also a powerful weapon in the coverage of war-related media (Ghods & Mirhosseini, 2016). The language of war-related news is designed in such a manner that it can shape public opinions, manipulate the emotions of readers and can also propagate the political interests of the news agency. By analyzing the choice of words, rhetoric devices and sentence structures, one can identify the

biases, manipulations and hidden agendas that are used to shape public opinions and change narratives subtly. The fundamental need for analyzing news has been attributed to the area of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which has created a milestone in analyzing the news. One of the main concerns of CDA is the analysis of news discourse, through which readers can grasp the real situations described in the news with the help of contextual awareness as well as linguistic structures. Along with CDA, corpus-based data also aids in elaborated observations of linguistics and contextual factors that may be hidden in spontaneous or qualitative evaluations.

Based on the above discussion, the present study analyzes the representation of the Russia-Ukraine War in the newspapers. Since this war has surpassed the borders of Russia and Ukraine and has spread to other nations across Europe, it has become a central topic for the entire world due to the ideological and economic role of Europe. To establish a ground for the study, two newspapers of the US, i.e., The Wall Street Journal (henceforth, WSJ) and The Washington Post (henceforth, WP) are selected to understand how the identities of Russia and Ukraine are constructed at the international level in the editorials. Thus, the present study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. *How do the linguistic choices in the selected editorials represent the Russia-Ukraine war?*
2. *How is identity constructed by The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war?*

2. Literature Review

In analyzing news editorials, the notions of discourse and critical discourse analysis are important to understand. The word discourse means larger units of language used in the natural environment. It can simply be understood as “text and talk” (van Dijk, 1997, p. 3). Critical Discourse

Analysis considers discourse as a social activity and analyzes various aspects of discourse to understand the underlying ideology behind a particular discourse. Fairclough has distinguished CDA from discourse analysis by stating that "Critical is used in the sense of aiming to show connections that may be hidden from people, such as language, power, and ideology" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 4)

There is a huge corpus in the previous studies that deals with this notion about the discourse of media and also relates it to the news. Li (2009) conducted a study in which the construction of national identities was examined in the selected newspapers. The study used Fairclough's (1995) model of CDA and intertextuality to analyze The New York Times and China Daily news reports for their coverage of conflicts between China and the US by examining the Chinese embassy bombing by NATO in 1999. This study concluded that each newspaper tried to depict a positive and justified version of "us" while condemning the actions of "others".

Another study was conducted by Nguyen (2012), in which the researcher used CDA to analyze the process of identity construction by using language in a certain manner. The study was based on the analysis of lexical choices used by The New York Times in its coverage of massive strikes in South Korea. Through the use of CDA, the researcher concluded that The New York Times favored the interests of capitalists instead of the rights of workers, thus constructing a biased ideology about the conflict.

Studying conflict as a socio-political phenomenon is among the research trends that attracted researchers' interest in examining social reality as constructed in the language of the news media. Analysts applied different analytical frameworks to investigate how war is reported in the media. The CDA approach is widely used in studies that investigate the influence of news outlets' political orientation on their representation of the two sides of the war. For instance, Amer (2016) conducted a study on the Gaza war in which the news coverage of four Western newspapers was investigated to

understand how Israeli forces and Hamas fronts are presented in news reports. Similarly, Osisanwo (2016) researched the depiction of Boko Haram in Nigerian newspapers. This study revealed that the discourse on Boko Haram is characterized by condemnation and distancing of the government from others.

Corpus linguistics provides a useful way of analyzing larger texts or speeches by using computer software programs. In the modern era, the use of corpus linguistics with other critical linguistics approaches like CDA has become very popular. A workable synergy can be created between corpus linguistics and CDA approaches (Baker et al., 2008). Various studies have been conducted in which CDA is applied to the corpora of various texts. A dialectical-relational approach was used by Liu (2018) to conduct the CDA of a corpus built upon the smog reports in Chinese and US newspapers at four levels, i.e., word frequency, concordance, collocation, and clusters. By conducting a comparative analysis, he concluded that US news focused on depicting a negative image of China, while China tried to construct a responsible government. Another study conducted by Kandil (2019) is a corpus-based study for investigating the discursive representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the newspapers of America, Britain, and the Arab world, i.e., Al-Jazeera, BBC, and CNN, respectively. From the three corpora, the researcher found that the same communicative event can be represented differently by using certain word choices in the newspapers. Kitishat et al. (2020) conducted a study in which they merged the methods of Corpus Linguistics and CDA to analyze the attitudes of Jordanian people towards Syrian refugees. Concordance analysis of the corpus showed that the newspapers exaggerated the harmful impacts that might arise in the economy and other sectors of Jordan due to Syrian migrants.

The above-mentioned studies prove that by incorporating Corpus Linguistics as a tool in CDA studies, a large amount of data can be analyzed quickly. The present research also uses the AntConc software for examining

the built corpora and performs word list analysis and concordance analysis to explore the representation of war participants in a better way.

3. Research Methodology

The present study is based on a mixed-method approach. Textual analysis with the help of corpus tools is done using quantitative analysis, while the text of editorials is analyzed, interpreted, and explained qualitatively. The data is taken from the official websites of two US newspapers. The first is The Wall Street Journal (WSJ), which is conservative in its stance, while the second is The Washington Post (WP), which is liberal in its stance. Ten news editorials from WP and ten news editorials from WSJ were collected. The selection of editorials is based on purposive sampling because those editorials were selected because they discuss the events of the Russia-Ukraine war. The Russian-Ukraine war started on February 24, 2022; therefore, the time frame selected for the collection of news editorials for the present study is from February 24 to December 31, 2022, to get a comprehensive view of how US newspapers create certain ideologies and perceptions of the war participants in the minds of readers. We developed two corpora, i.e.,. WSJ Editorials Corpus, consisting of editorials from WSJ, and WP Editorials Corpus, consisting of editorials from WP. In these corpora, the images and other illustrations are excluded, and only text is included. The AntConc tool is used for the analysis of these corpora.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

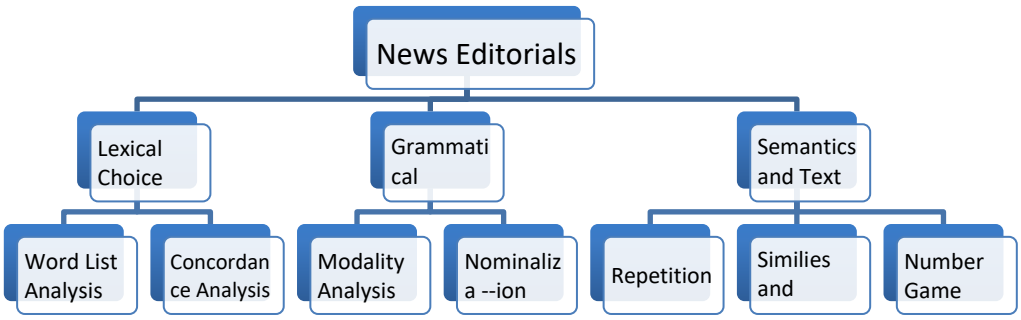
The present research draws upon the Three-Dimensional Approach of CDA by Fairclough (1995), who proposes a stepwise procedure in which description is the first stage, followed by interpretation and explanation. In the present study, all three stages of the Fairclough model (1995) are used for conducting a comprehensive CDA of news editorials.

(i) Textual Analysis

Fairclough (1995) has designed various elements of analysis at the textual level. The following Figure 1 presents the textual level analysis used in the present research.

Figure 1

Textual Analysis Model adopted from Fairclough 3-D Model (1995)



(ii) Discursive Analysis

This stage sheds light on the discursive features that are involved in shaping the processes of text production. The analysis of intertextuality is carried out at this stage.

(iii) Social Analysis

This stage of analysis looks at the power relationships prevailing in society and how these power relations shape the social relations of various entities (Fairclough, 1995b).

4. Analysis and Discussion

The corpus-based critical discourse analysis of news editorials is divided into the following three sections:

Textual Analysis / Description of News Editorials
Discursive Analysis
Social Analysis

4.1. Textual Analysis / Description of News Editorials

This is the first stage of the Fairclough Model (1995). This level is divided into three parts, i.e., lexical choices, grammatical features and semantics, and text structure.

4.1.1. Lexical Choices

Lexical choice describes an editor's decision to utilize a certain set of words as opposed to another set of terms. This section analyzes the words used to represent Russia and Ukraine in the war. It comprises word list analysis and concordance analysis of the WSJ and WP corpus.

(i) Words List Analysis

As a first step, the words of both corpora were arranged according to their frequency of occurrence. The corpora were first loaded into the AntConc, and then the word lists were generated. A list consisting of 3284 words for the WSJ corpus and 2685 words for the WP corpus was generated separately. By removing the functional words and tenses-related words, the top 120 words were extracted from each list, as shown in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

Table 1

Word List of WSJ Corpus

Categories	**Words List**	**%**
War Events /	War, Military, Forces, Nuclear, Invasion, Weapons,	32.74

Commodities	Defense, Troops, Missiles, Offensive, Strikes, Infrastructure, Mobilization, Strike, Battle, Drones, Operations, Tanks, Wars, Drone, Battalion, Armed, Aggressor, Aggression, Howitzers, Destruction, Self-Defense, Death, Shelling, Target, Dead	
People / Identity	Russian, Putin, President, U.S., Pope, Putin's, NATO, Minister, Vladimir, Zelensky, Gorbachev, Francis, Kremlin, Civilians, Army, Soldiers, Allies, Khrushchev, European, Biden, Volodymyr, Prisoners, Volunteers	25.66
Places	Ukraine, Russia, Russia's, Ukraine's, Moscow, Kyiv, Western, Donbas, East, Lviv, Europe, Ukrainians, Russians, Kharkiv, Soviet, Border, Donetsk, Mariupol, Kherson, Crimea, Moscow's, Battlefield, Kyiv's, Zaporizhzhia	24.77
Actions	Attack, Threat, Damage, Occupied, Hit, Destroyed, Aimed, Killing, Fighting, Seized, Shot, Killed, Damaged, Forcibly, Died, Fight, Force, Deter, Forcing	16.83

Table 2

Word List of WP Corpus

Categories	**Words List**	**%**
War Events / Commodities	War, Military, Forces, Nuclear, Troops, Crimes, Weapons, Defense, Battle, Force, Conflict, Invasion, Artillery, Armed, Aggression, Operations, Tanks, Himars, Offensive, Wars, Propaganda, Missiles, Rocket, Ammunition, Atrocities, Law, Jurisdiction,	41.19

	Shells, Infrastructure, Precision-Guided, Bomb, Warfare, Battlefield, Brutal, Violence, Arms, Warship, Militaries, Weapon, Airland, Prewar, Drones	
People / Identity	Russian, Putin, Ukrainian, Putin's, Ukrainians, Russians, Zelensky, Western, Kyiv, Civilians, Soldiers, NATO, Vladimir, Kremlin, Volodymyr, Khrushcheva, Gerasimov, Khrushcheva's, Enemy, Trump, Americans, American, Kofman, Superpower, Victims, Invaders, Biden, Criminal	28.57
Places	Ukraine, Russia, Russia's, U.S., Country, West, Kherson, Europe, East, West, Moscow, Soviet, Iran, Chechnya, Finland, Ukraine's, Sweden, Britain, Donbas	15.12
Actions	Use, Fighting, Fight, Killed, Combat, Strikes, Defeat, Torture, Strike, Prosecuted, Losing, Rape, Attacks, Murder, Killing, Attack, Fear, Fired	15.12

From the above word lists, it is clear that the most common words found in both corpora are related to the category of war and its various commodities. These war-related words show different aspects of war. Words like **"missiles**, **howitzers**, **drones**, **shelling"** in WSJ and **"missiles**, **ammunition**, **artillery**, **HIMARS**, **aircraft**, **tanks"** in WP depict the accessories of war. Moreover, words like **"destruction**, **infrastructure damage**, **dead"** in the WSJ corpus and **"propaganda**, **brutal**, **violence**, **aggression"** in the WP corpus refer to the outcome of the war.

The second category shows those identities that are part of the conflict. It includes people belonging to Russia like **"Russian**, **Vladimir**, **Gorbachev**, **Kremlin"** in WSJ corpus and **"Russian**, **Putin**, **Vladimir**, **invaders**, **Gerasimov**, **criminals"** in WP corpus, and people belonging to

Ukraine like **"Zelensky**, **Volodymyr**, **volunteers"** in WSJ corpus and **"Ukrainians**, **Zelensky**, **Kyiv**, **civilians**, **victims"** in WP corpus. The words **"Biden**, **US**, **NATO**, **Pope**, **allies**, **European"** in the WSJ corpus and **"Western**, **NATO**, **Americans, Biden"** in the WP corpus refer to those people or organizations that are indirectly a part of this war.

The third category shows various places. The words **"Ukraine**, **Kherson, Kyiv**, **Donbas"** are used to represent the Ukrainian places, while the words **"Russia**, **Soviet**, **Moscow"** are used to represent the Russian places. The places in Ukraine are discussed with more frequency as compared to Russia because the worst conditions in Ukrainian cities are discussed in great detail. Moreover, other places are also mentioned that are indirectly part of the war, like **"Europe, Mariupol, Crimea, US**, **Britain**, **West**, **Iran**, **Sweden"** are mentioned repeatedly.

The last category involves various actions performed in the war. Interestingly, all the words associated with war actions have negative connotations, like **"attack**, **destroyed**, **killed**, **seized**, **fight"** in the WSJ corpus and **"rape**, **torture**, **murder**, **fear"** in the WP corpus. These words create a violent image of the war and are mostly used to describe the actions of Russian soldiers.

The above discussion indicates that the words used to represent Russia have negative connotations and depict the brutality of Russian forces, thereby creating a negative image of Russia. On the other hand, these categories present Ukrainians as sufferers who are facing aggressive forces, thus depicting Ukrainians as victims of the war.

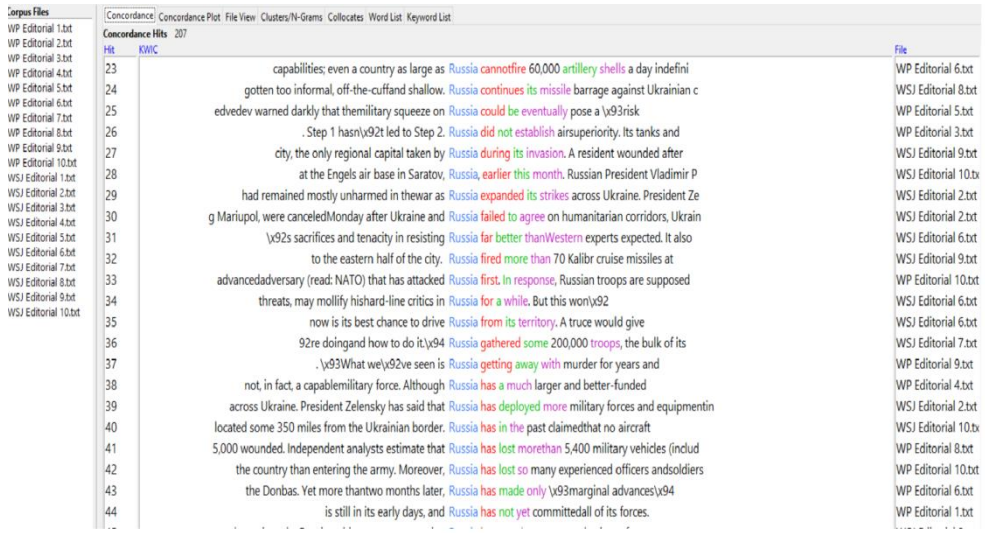
(ii) Concordance Analysis

Concordance analysis was done to get an in-depth explanation of the wordlist. Since the main focus of the present study is to analyze the representation of war participants, only the representation of Russia and

Ukraine in editorials is further analyzed. Figures 2 and 3 show the results of the concordance analysis of Russia and Ukraine.

Figure 2

Concordance Lines of "Russia"



Corpus Files

WP Editorial 1.txt
WP Editorial 2.txt
WP Editorial 3.txt
WP Editorial 4.txt
WP Editorial 5.txt
WP Editorial 6.txt
WP Editorial 7.txt
WP Editorial 8.txt
WP Editorial 9.txt
WP Editorial 10.txt
WSJ Editorial 1.txt
WSJ Editorial 2.txt
WSJ Editorial 3.txt
WSJ Editorial 4.txt
WSJ Editorial 5.txt
WSJ Editorial 6.txt
WSJ Editorial 7.txt
WSJ Editorial 8.txt
WSJ Editorial 9.txt
WSJ Editorial 10.txt

Concordance | Concordance Plot | File View | Clusters/N-Grams | Collocates | Word List | Keyword List

Concordance Hits 207

Hit	KWIC	File
23	capabilities; even a country as large as Russia cannotfire 60,000 artillery shells a day indefini	WP Editorial 6.txt
24	gotten too informal, off-the-cuffand shallow. Russia continues its missile barrage against Ukrainian c	WSJ Editorial 8.txt
25	edvedev warned darkly that themilitary squeeze on Russia could be eventually pose a \x93risk	WP Editorial 5.txt
26	. Step 1 hasn\x92t led to Step 2. Russia did not establish airsuperiority. Its tanks and	WP Editorial 3.txt
27	city, the only regional capital taken by Russia during its invasion. A resident wounded after	WSJ Editorial 9.txt
28	at the Engels air base in Saratov, Russia, earlier this month. Russian President Vladimir P	WSJ Editorial 10.tx
29	had remained mostly unharmed in thewar as Russia expanded its strikes across Ukraine. President Ze	WSJ Editorial 2.txt
30	g Mariupol, were canceledMonday after Ukraine and Russia failed to agree on humanitarian corridors, Ukrain	WSJ Editorial 2.txt
31	\x92s sacrifices and tenacity in resisting Russia far better thanWestern experts expected. It also	WSJ Editorial 6.txt
32	to the eastern half of the city. Russia fired more than 70 Kalibr cruise missiles at	WSJ Editorial 9.txt
33	advancedadversary (read: NATO) that has attacked Russia first. In response, Russian troops are supposed	WP Editorial 10.txt
34	threats, may mollify hishard-line critics in Russia for a while. But this won\x92	WSJ Editorial 6.txt
35	now is its best chance to drive Russia from its territory. A truce would give	WSJ Editorial 6.txt
36	92re doingand how to do it.\x94 Russia gathered some 200,000 troops, the bulk of its	WSJ Editorial 7.txt
37	. \x93What we\x92ve seen is Russia getting away with murder for years and	WP Editorial 9.txt
38	not, in fact, a capablemilitary force. Although Russia has a much larger and better-funded	WP Editorial 4.txt
39	across Ukraine. President Zelensky has said that Russia has deployed more military forces and equipmentin	WSJ Editorial 2.txt
40	located some 350 miles from the Ukrainian border. Russia has in the past claimedthat no aircraft	WSJ Editorial 10.tx
41	5,000 wounded. Independent analysts estimate that Russia has lost morethan 5,400 military vehicles (includ	WP Editorial 8.txt
42	the country than entering the army. Moreover, Russia has lost so many experienced officers andsoldiers	WP Editorial 10.txt
43	the Donbas. Yet more thantwo months later, Russia has made only \x93marginal advances\x94	WP Editorial 6.txt
44	is still in its early days, and Russia has not yet committedall of its forces.	WP Editorial 1.txt

Figure 3

Concordance Lines of "Ukraine"



Corpus Files

WP Editorial 1.txt
WP Editorial 2.txt
WP Editorial 3.txt
WP Editorial 4.txt
WP Editorial 5.txt
WP Editorial 6.txt
WP Editorial 7.txt
WP Editorial 8.txt
WP Editorial 9.txt
WP Editorial 10.txt
WSJ Editorial 1.txt
WSJ Editorial 2.txt
WSJ Editorial 3.txt
WSJ Editorial 4.txt
WSJ Editorial 5.txt
WSJ Editorial 6.txt
WSJ Editorial 7.txt
WSJ Editorial 8.txt
WSJ Editorial 9.txt
WSJ Editorial 10.txt

Concordance | Concordance Plot | File View | Clusters/N-Grams | Collocates | Word List | Keyword List

Concordance Hits 231

Hit	KWIC	File
29	iswhat military success requires. The Russians in Ukraine are learning what the Soviets learned in	WP Editorial 4.txt
30	Russia Redeploys Troops in Ukraine as Focus ofConflict Turns South Moscow is	WSJ Editorial 5.txt
31	month, Mr. Putin said that he views Ukraine as just the first step, with manyother	WSJ Editorial 4.txt
32	on the battlefield, is targeting civilians across Ukraine as temperatures plunge KYIV, Ukraine\x97Ukrainia	WSJ Editorial 9.txt
33	his\x91war of choice\x92 in Ukraine At the end of August, Ukrainian forces	WP Editorial 8.txt
34	Seven meeting and the NATO summit,with Ukraine at the top of the agenda. The	WP Editorial 6.txt
35	ssessments duringSenate testimony on Tuesday. The Ukraine battle \x93is developing into a war	WP Editorial 5.txt
36	that he doesn\x92t succeed in Ukraine, because otherwise his appetite willonly grow,\x9	WSJ Editorial 4.txt
37	forced to use cellphones to communicate until Ukraine blocked the +7 country codefor Russia and eventua	WSJ Editorial 1.txt
38	92t soon recover from Putin\x92s Ukraine blunder \x93I can\x92t stand	WP Editorial 2.txt
39	another $550 million in U.S. military aidfor Ukraine, bringing Washington\x92s security assistance for	WSJ Editorial 5.txt
40	be to seek a negotiated settlement with Ukraine, but Kyiv understands that now is its	WSJ Editorial 6.txt
41	dimension, wherehe is at war not with Ukraine but with the entire world. Therefore, there	WSJ Editorial 4.txt
42	.\x94 There is no room for complacency. Ukraine can prevail only if it continues to	WP Editorial 8.txt
43	\x92s implicit threat is that, if Ukraine continues to reclaim these territories, he willbe	WSJ Editorial 6.txt
44	also carries risks for Mr. Putin if Ukraine continues to take back territory.He will	WSJ Editorial 6.txt
45	groundattacks near Izyum, a city in eastern Ukraine, could be setting the stage for a	WSJ Editorial 5.txt
46	93I kept arguing that [the invasion of Ukraine] couldn\x92t happen because if you	WP Editorial 2.txt
47	shutdowns of all three nuclear-power plants Ukraine currently controls. Ukraine\x92s Ministry of	WSJ Editorial 9.txt
48	may meet the same fateas Ukraine. In Ukraine, despite Moscow\x92s military problems, the	WSJ Editorial 4.txt
49	have been under attack for months. Meanwhile, Ukraine dispatched its first grain shipment since the	WSJ Editorial 5.txt
50	faring as Russia\x92s war on Ukraine escalates and civilian death tolls rise. A	WP Editorial 2.txt
51	Putin\x92s Desperate Ukraine Escalation His new mobilization is an admission	WSJ Editorial 6.txt
52	say no. Reconstruction should begin now in Ukraine, even as the war continues. President Volodymyr	WP Editorial 5.txt

a) Lexical Representation of Russia

Data shows that both newspapers have used different terms to depict the negative role of Russia in the conflict. The editorials have used various lexical items to show the weaker position of Russia in the conflict, like **"failed attempts, difficulties encountered by Russia's military, retreat, losing the lands, Russian predicament" (WP Editorials).** These lexical choices indicate that Russia is represented as a weaker state in terms of its military capabilities. The editorials have also shown a negative image of Russian forces by mentioning the cases of brutality and aggressive attacks of Russia on Ukrainian cities, like the **"military offensive in Ukraine's east" (WSJ Ed-02),** unleashing **"the most brutal barrages of the war" (WSJ Ed-05),** and **"unlawful confinement, torture, ill-treatment, rape, and other sexual violence" (WP Ed-09).** Russians are also depicted as **"deliberately targeting civilians with artillery, air, and missile strikes" (WP Ed-04)**. This shows the below-the-belt and despicable strategies of Russian forces that they use whenever they are unable to win the war on the battlefield. Russian President Vladimir Putin is also presented in a negative

sense. The lexical choices for Mr Putin include **"Putin the Monster, "who tried to but failed", "Putin's actions out of character", "shaken Putin,** and **"a war criminal" (WP Editorials).** These choices show that the Russian president is a negative person who is carrying out various war crimes and has been trying to do various operations but always fails to execute those operations properly.

b) Lexical Representation of Ukraine

In the editorials, Ukraine is mostly represented as a victim of the Russian invasion, but it has still managed to fight the Russian forces with bravery. According to the WSJ, **"Moscow has more firepower, but Kyiv is using digital technology better" (WSJ Ed-01).** The editorials have used positive words to highlight the glorification of Ukraine, for instance, **"inspired combat performance" (WP Ed-09), "newly emboldened" (WP Ed-07), "Strategic patience" (WP Ed-05),** and **"better-than-expected job of resisting Russia" (WP Ed-01).** Moreover, Ukraine is also showing humanitarian behavior despite the brutality of Russians, and instead of torturing the captured and killed Russian soldiers, Ukrainian digital experts have **"begun using facial recognition to identify killed and captured Russian soldiers" (WSJ Ed-01).** This shows that Ukraine is different from Russia in terms of treating war soldiers. Furthermore, editorials have represented Ukraine as a victim of the aggression of Russian forces, not only on the battlefield but also in public places. On the battlefield, Ukrainian soldiers are tolerating **"some of the most brutal barrages of the war" (WSJ Ed-05).** In public places, Russian missile attacks have **"killed more than 50 people at a train station" (WSJ Ed-02)** and **"shelled a trauma center" (WSJ Ed-05).** Moreover, WSJ has repeatedly mentioned the role of Russian missiles in **"damaging the energy grids and degrading Ukraine's infrastructure" (WSJ Ed-10).** The Ukrainian president is also presented as **"an international idol" (WP Ed-01)** and Ukraine is **"benefiting from his strong, unifying leadership" (WP Ed-07)**.

The above discussion on the lexical representation of Russia and Ukraine shows that Russia is presented as an aggressive state that is willing to win this war at any cost, even by torturing and killing civilians. On the other hand, Ukraine is presented as a victim state that is facing the brutal attacks of Russians, but still, they are putting up a great fight. An important point to note here is that both newspapers have only shown Ukrainians as victims, and there is no mention of Russian civilians who are also adversely affected by this war. In other words, both newspapers are describing the impacts of war according to their political agendas.

4.1.2 Grammatical Features

The grammatical features also give a detailed understanding of the nature of the text, which includes modality analysis and nominalization.

(i) Modality Analysis

Modality refers to the grammatical expressions that show the affinity of the speaker with the statement, including probability, desire, possibility, obligation, or likelihood, etc. (Jorgensen et al. 2009). The following Table 3 shows the modal verbs that are found in the editorials.

Table 3

Modal Verbs in WSJ and WP Selected Editorials

Modal verbs	Frequency in WSJ	% in WSJ	Frequency in WP	% in WP
Will	29	21.6%	40	26.7%
Would	42	31.3%	15	10%
Can	21	15.7%	30	20%
Could	13	9.7%	26	17.3%
Should	9	6.7%	10	6.7%
May	9	6.7%	7	4.7%
Might	7	5.2%	16	10.6%

Must	4	3.1%	6	4%
Total	134		150	

Can and **could** are used to show the ability to do something and the possibility of an event. In WSJ editorials, the modal verb **can** is used to show the ability of Ukrainian soldiers to attack the military sites inside Russia and warn that **"even forces deep inside its territory can be hit" (WSJ Ed-10). Could** is used to show the possibility of nuclear attacks by Russia as a military squeeze on Russia **"could eventually pose a risk of turning into a nuclear war" (WP Ed-05)**. Overall, the use of these modal verbs presents Russia as an aggressive state while depicting Ukrainians as brave people.

May and **might** are used to depict the possibility of an event. While discussing the gaps between perceptions and the real capabilities of Russian forces, the editorials claim that **"Russian leadership may be hesitant to commit to large-scale combat operations" (WP Ed-03)**, implying that Russia knows its weaknesses; therefore, it is not indulging in a full-fledged war. **Might** is used to show the possibility of prolonging the conflict with other countries, as **"embarrassing setbacks in Ukraine... may push Mr Putin to expand the conflict" (WSJ Ed-04).** The use of these verbs refers to the weaknesses in the Russian army.

Should and **must** show expectation and obligation. While discussing the Russian army, the editorial states that **"Russia should have the world's greatest army" (WP Ed-04)**, implying that Russia should have the greatest army, but the war has exposed its weaknesses. **Must** is used as an indication of obligation on the part of Russia. When Ukrainian drones attacked the military centers inside Russia, the editorials advised Russia that it **"must devote resources to protecting its home" (WSJ Ed-10).** These modal verbs have shown the weaknesses of the Russian army.

Will is used to express beliefs about the future. While discussing the deployment of more forces by Russia, the editorial states that Russia believes that it **"will be justified in using a tactical nuke" (WSJ Ed-06)** if anyone interferes in this war. This shows the possibility of a nuclear war on the Russian side. While discussing the efforts of Ukraine, the editorials quoted the Ukrainian president, who, while discussing the Russian attack on the trauma center, said, **"We will rebuild!" (WSJ Ed-05)**. This shows the resolution and high morale of Ukrainians.

Would is used to refer to an imagined thing. WSJ quoted the remarks of Philip Lawler, who claimed that if there is no concept of just war, then a state **"would have no moral choice but to surrender to any aggressor" (WSJ Ed-03)**, implying that Ukraine should act offensively against Russia. While discussing the military strength of Russia, the editorials mentioned that Russia **"would be able to take over Estonia's capital, Tallinn" (WSJ Ed-04)** within one day, claiming that if Russia succeeds in this war, then it will also try to invade other states.

The modality analysis reveals that Russia is represented as a dangerous country that can destroy not only Ukraine but also its neighboring states. Therefore, the world should stand against this invasion. On the other hand, modality analysis highlights Ukrainians as brave people who are capable of destroying structures inside Russia. Overall, a positive image of Ukraine and a negative image of Russia are revealed by modality analysis.

(ii) Nominalization

Nominalization, also termed nouning, is a process of word formation in which any part of speech, especially a verb or an adjective, is transformed into a noun (Leech, 2006) to remove attention from the context. It is used extensively in the editorials of the WSJ and WP.

Following are a few examples from the data:

"Ukrainian President said that Russian forces have begun a fresh

offensive in eastern Ukraine, signaling the latest phase of an invasion." (WSJ Ed-02)

In the above example, the editorial has used the nominalization **"invasion"** to put more focus on the process of invading Ukrainian territory by the Russian forces. Moreover, the use of the term **"confrontation"** instead of simply saying that 'Russia confronts the West' also emphasizes the process of the emergence of a clash between the Russians and the West due to the ongoing invasion of Russian forces on a NATO member.

"Russian cruise missiles killed seven and injured 11 people in Lviv, including the child of a family that had fled to the safety of western Ukraine from Kharkiv." (WSJ Ed-02)

In the above example, the use of the term **"under Russian assault"** creates the impression that Russia has been continuously attacking Kharkiv. Instead of simply putting a verb, this nominalization enhances the negativity of the actions. If a simple verb were used here, then the writer was also supposed to give the reason behind this assault, which would eventually lead to the expansion of NATO, as the main reason. However, by using this nominalized form, the writer has emphasized more the negative impacts of invasion than the reason behind it.

With their artillery and air power, the Russians could rain destruction down on Kyiv and Kharkiv. (WP Ed-01)

The nominalization **"destruction in Kyiv and Kharkiv"** is employed in the editorials. This word has highlighted the process of destroying the capital of Ukraine with Russian missiles. It draws attention to the fact that destruction is caused by war. Moreover, to make the point clear that although Russia is facing problems, it is still a large state with enormous resources as

compared to Ukraine, the editorial has used nominalization 'destruction' instead of 'destruct' to show the process of how Russian missiles can lead to destruction in Ukraine.

The editorials also use different nominalizations for discussing the bravery of Ukrainian soldiers in the war, like **"displaying impressive resilience" (WP Ed-08), "Ukraine's fierce defiance and their inspired combat performance" (WP Ed-05),** and **"exceeded all expectations" (WSJ Ed-10)**. These phrases suggest that Ukrainians have displayed greater valor and bravery on the battlefield. The nominalizations **"resilience"** and **"defiance"** shed light on how Ukrainians have resisted the attacks of Russians through their resilient planning. Moreover, the nominalization **"performance"** and **"expectations"** show that the world was expecting submission from the Ukrainian soldiers, but they have performed so well on the battlefield that they have surpassed the expectations of the world.

Billig (2008) argues that nominalizations have ideological functions like deleting agency and reifying and repositioning the reified ideas as agents. The newspapers have highlighted the Russian atrocities by using the nominalizations **"destruction, offensive, confrontation** and **aggression"** so that more focus is put on the negative 'actions' rather than the 'agents of actions'. On the other hand, a positive image of Ukraine is created by focusing on the processes of **"defiance, combat performances** and **resilience**" of Ukrainian soldiers. These nominalized forms highlight the bravery of Ukrainian soldiers in contrast to the projected Russian barbarism.

4.1.3. Semantics and Text Structure

In this section, various aspects of textual features are analyzed, like number games, similes, metaphors, repetition, and presuppositions.

(i) Number Game

This strategy is used to express objectivity and to add credibility to what has been argued (Van Dijk, 2006). It is used to show the Russian atrocities in war; for instance, Russia **"killed seven and injured 11 people in**

Lviv" (WSJ Ed-02), the shelling by Russia **"killed two civilians" (WSJ Ed-02)** and the use of cluster munitions by the Russian army **"kill[ed] nine people at a busy bus stop" (WSJ Ed-05)**. Moreover, the shelling of several cruise missiles resulted in the **"temporary shutdowns of all three nuclear power plants" (WP Ed-09)** in Ukraine. Moreover, there is also a mention of the attack by Russia on the energy sector of Ukraine, as almost **"70% of the Ukrainian capital was experiencing power outages" (WSJ Ed-09)**.

(ii) Repetition

Repetition results in an emphasis on the events that should capture the reader's attention (Manjavidze, 2013). Table 4 shows the most repeated words in the corpus of news editorials.

Table 4

Frequency of Repetition in the Selected News Editorials

Repeated Words	Frequency	Repeated Words	Frequency
Nuclear	47	Killing	7
Invasion	34	Infrastructure	11
Killed	15	Destroyed	7

The term **"nuclear"** is used 26 times in the WSJ corpus and 21 times in the WP corpus. The use of nuclear forces by Russia is a continuous threat that is expressed by many Russian ministers when they are not in a good position in the war. This word is used for Ukraine only when there is a discussion of attacks on the nuclear plants of Ukraine. The word **"invasion"** is used 23 times in the WSJ corpus and 11 times in the WP corpus. This word is used only for Russia to emphasize the idea that Russia has invaded the territory of Ukraine, and it is not a simple fight in which one participant will win and then leave the land; rather, Russia wants to annex the lands of Ukraine. The words **"killed"** and **"killing"** are used 9 times and 5 times in the WSJ corpus, while they are used 6 times and 2 times in the WP corpus,

respectively. These words show that the war has resulted in massive killings on the Ukrainian side due to Russian missiles in public places. The word "**killed"** is used more frequently for Ukraine to show the deaths of civilians, while this word is used less frequently for Russia, suggesting one or two Russian deaths. The word **"infrastructure"** is used 8 times in WSJ and 3 times in WP, while **"destroyed"** is used 5 times in WSJ and 2 times in WP. The word infrastructure is used for Ukraine, while the term destroyed is mostly used for Russia to highlight the destruction of Ukrainian infrastructure by Russia.

(iii) Similes and Metaphors

This rhetorical device is used in the editorials to make comparisons between two different entities. The Russian president, Mr Putin, is compared with a hooligan by using the simile **"like a hooligan" (WSJ Ed-04)**. A hooligan refers to a young person who is involved in violent conflicts along with his gang members. This comparison between Mr Putin and a hooligan is made to show the violent acts of Russian ministers in Ukraine. The metaphor **"Zelensky is no Ashraf Ghani" (WP Ed-01)** is used in the editorial. This comparison shows that unlike Ashraf Ghani, who left Afghanistan when the enemies attacked his state, Mr Zekensky is a determined person who stands with his people even during the Russian invasion. Moreover, the similes are also used to compare Ukrainians with Afghans, claiming **"nor are the Ukrainians collapsing as the Afghan forces did." (WP Ed-01)** This comparison is used to show the determination of the Ukrainian forces, just like their leader, Zelensky.

The above discussion on semantics and text structure has made it clear that both newspapers have tried to develop an aggressive and negative identity of Russia by showing the Russian acts of killing, whereas they have tried to create a positive image of Ukraine in the war by discussing the bravery of Ukrainians.

4.2. Discursive Analysis

It is the second stage of the Fairclough Model (1995) and looks at the analysis of intertextuality to understand the interaction of news editorials with prior texts and speeches. There are various examples of intertextuality in the editorials. Some of the examples are references to past incidents of war, while others refer to quotes from historical figures.

This section discusses some of the intertextuality examples from the editorials of WSJ and WP.

"President Biden has taken to publicly comparing the current moment to the Cuban Missile Crisis." (WSJ Ed-08)

This excerpt includes text from a historical event in 1962 in which the US and USSR were on the brink of nuclear war. By comparing the ongoing Russian-Ukraine conflict with the Cuban missile crisis, President Biden has made it clear that if Russia continues to attack the Ukrainian cities, it will surely meet a swift response from the US. This intertextuality shows that there are very high chances that this conflict can turn into a new cold war in which the US and Russia can again confront one another.

"One of Russia's most famous paintings, by Vasily Vereshchagin, depicts a mountain of sun-bleached skulls and is dedicated "to all the great conquerors—past, present and future." (WSJ Ed-04)

This extract talks about the Apotheosis of War, a famous painting by Russian painter Vasily Vereshchagin in 1871. This painting shows a mountain of human skulls, and birds are sitting near that mountain. The most despicable aspect of that painting is that it is dedicated **"to all the great conquerors—past, present and future"**, implying that the great conquerors of Russia turned to the indiscriminate killing of innocent people in war. The purpose behind this intertextuality is clear, i.e., Russia will again show such acts of brutality as depicted by its past conquerors if it succeeds in annexing the lands of Ukraine.

"According to the CNA, the current Russian doctrine dates to the twilight years of the Cold War, when the Mikhail Gorbachev-era Soviet Union gave up any ambitions of territorial conquest and decided to focus on defensive operations." (WP Ed-10)

This excerpt contains a reference to the period of the Cold War in which Russian military doctrine was designed for performing defensive operations in Russia, and the Russian minister completely quit the idea of territorial conquests. By giving reference to these events that led to the creation of Russian doctrine, the newspapers have explained the follies of Russian forces in the present war. The Russian doctrine emphasizes the defensive aspects of the military while in Ukraine; the Russian forces are involved in attacking Ukraine offensively. This mismatch between the teachings of Russian doctrine and the current practices of Russia has led to the failure of Russian forces in Ukraine.

Montgomery et al. (2011) state that in implicit intertextuality, "the original wording is sometimes changed to suit the context" (p. 156). The above discussion shows that implicit intertextuality is used mostly in editorials. Past wars, terrorist attacks, and the history of Russian Military Doctrine are the themes of intertextual reference that highlight the weaknesses and barbarism of Russia. This shows that the newspapers have framed the intertextual references to fit into their ideological contexts, in which the Russians are depicted in a negative sense.

4.3. Social Analysis

The socio-cultural analysis incorporates the analysis of the social and historical context (Fairclough, 1992). Since US newspapers were selected for this study, the sociopolitical and historical relations between the US and Russia and between the US and Ukraine are analyzed.

If we look at the historical context, Russia and the US were involved in a long series of conflicts, starting with World War II and the Cold War. The formation of the USSR by Russia and NATO by the US formed the basis

of the Cold War. This cold war continued until 1991 when the USSR disintegrated and many smaller states emerged as independent countries. Now Russia is again trying to be a superpower by gaining military strength. The expansion of NATO with the addition of Ukraine posed a threat to Russia, and therefore it waged the war. Since the US is a crucial part of NATO, it will use every possible way to blame Russia for the war. The selected editorials have quoted different influential figures that support Ukraine and blame Russia for this war, like the Ukrainian President, the American President, political leaders of Ukraine, the UK, Finland, and religious scholars. Only those quotes of Russian leaders are cited that highlight the negative aspects of Russia, like **"expansionist"** leaders and **"revanchist"** nation.

On ideologies and cultural stances, both the US and Russia have different orientations. The US is a staunch supporter of democracy, while Russia believes in communism. When Russia was expanding during the Cold War, the US and its allies were supporting the idea of capitalism and portrayed the expansion of Russia as a danger to the world. Now that NATO is expanding in Asia, it is seen as a danger by Russia. Therefore, Russia decided to invade Ukraine. However, in US news editorials, the attack by Russia on Ukraine is not depicted as an ideological conflict. Instead, Russia is shown as a country that takes pleasure in harming other states.

The news editorials have discussed various events of the war to construct a certain identity for Russia and Ukraine in the war. A negative identity of Russia is created by the use of war-related negative words like **"attack, occupied, destroyed, killed, damaged, torture, rape, murder"** etc. as evident in Words List Analysis, by assigning an active role to Russia in destroying Ukraine, like **"shattered calm of Ukraine", "barbarically attacking Ukrainian cities from the air", "strikes against civilian infrastructure"** etc. and by highlighting the weaknesses of Russia in war, like **"lacking precision-guided munitions", "deficit of military power",**

"illiberal and incapable military force" etc. Contrary to this, the positive identity of Ukraine is being portrayed by depicting Ukrainians as victims of **"summary executions, unlawful confinement, torture, ill-treatment, and other sexual violence"** and by depicting the Russian attacks on the land of Ukraine as **"damaging half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure", "killed more than 50 people at a train station", "hit residential buildings"** etc.

5. Findings and Discussion

By applying Fairclough's (1995) CDA Model, a detailed analysis of editorials was carried out which helped in answering the research questions. As far as linguistic choices are concerned, such lexicons are used that represent Russia as a brutal and aggressive state, while Ukraine is represented as a victimized and war-ridden state. While describing the role of Russia in the war, the editorials claim that Russia is the one who started this war by invading Ukraine. The Russian forces were also involved in unethical acts like looting people, raping women, and torturing civilians in Ukraine. Furthermore, Russian ministers, particularly Russian President Mr. Putin, are also represented as insane people who are repeatedly using nuclear threats to create a sense of fear in the entire world. On the other hand, while describing Ukraine, the lexical choices made by editorials show Ukraine as a weak and innocent state thatt has played no active role in the war. Ukraine is represented as a victim of Russian aggression. In the news editorials, such lexicons are used that represent Ukrainians as a hardworking community that is making homemade war weapons to fight against Russian forces. Moreover, a lot of the Ukrainian population has become victims of Russian atrocities like rape, torture, burning of corpses, and other sexual violence. This shows the bad conditions in which Ukrainian people are living, where a continuous fear of Russian attacks and torture is swirling over their heads.

The analysis of grammatical features also presents a positive identity for Ukraine and a negative identity for Russia. Modal verbs are mainly used

to present Ukraine as a victim country and have shown a possibility of Ukrainian victory in the war whereas these verbs present a negative image of Russia by claiming that Russia, despite being a superpower, is facing severe setbacks from Ukrainian forces and is unable to take over Ukraine till now. Moreover, nominalizations are used to convey an idea that carries a negative image of Russia in those matters where Ukrainian forces are also doing the same acts as Russia but due to the incorporation of nominalizations, the entire blame is placed on Russian forces and the Ukrainians forces are not highlighted of doing any wrong act. The nominalizations that are used to refer to Russian actions in war include confrontation, invasion, deployment, annexation, destruction, mobilization, desertion, etc. These negative nominalizations portray Russia as a bad and aggressive country. Contrary to this, the nominalizations used for Ukraine include negotiations, evacuations, resistance, negotiated settlements, assistance, etc. to highlight the image of a strong Ukraine that is defending itself against Russian aggression and Ukrainians are, at the same time, victims of Russian attacks and are forced to evacuate their homes.

The use of rhetorical devices in editorials does not construct the identity of a person or event by themselves; rather, they are used in a specific pattern in a sentence to highlight the negative image of Russia while depicting an innocent image of Ukraine in the war. The number game strategy is used to highlight the damages caused by Russian attacks as well as to emphasize the number of Russian atrocities and killings in the region of Ukraine. Repetition is used in the editorials to show the attacks and killings by Russian forces, while this device is also used to show the damages and destruction in Ukraine caused by Russian missiles. Similes are also used to compare Russia with hooligans and to forecast the fall of Russian ministers, indicating a negative and weak position of Russia in war. Moreover, metaphor is used to show the strong will of Ukrainian soldiers as well as

Ukrainian ministers in effectively handling the Russian invasion, thus presenting a positive image of Ukraine in war.

The presence of intertextuality also creates the identities of war participants by creating multiple layers of meaning in news editorials. The editorials in selected US newspapers have created a negative image of Russians by relating them to past events that carry negative connotations. This war between Russia and Ukraine is related to the previous wars in the history of humans that created havoc all around the world, implying that Russia is again involved in destroying the peace of the world by illegally attacking the territory of Ukraine. Both of the selected newspapers have tried to create a similarity between the present conflict and the previous deadly conflicts in human history to show the readers that Russia is on the wrong side of war and that the disturbance in Ukraine and the entire world is only due to the Russian attack on Ukraine.

6. Conclusion

News editors construct certain identities of people or events by using certain lexical items over others and by presenting the events in a certain pattern. The present study has used corpus tools to analyze the news editorials of two US newspapers, WSJ and WP, in great detail by using Fairclough's (1995) 3-D Model of CDA. A detailed textual, discursive, and social analysis of editorials has shown that the US newspapers are following in the footsteps of American Foreign Policy, and therefore the editorials are supporting Ukraine and condemning Russia in the war. The use of modal verbs, nominalizations, intertextuality, and other rhetorical devices appears as a part of regular media discourse, but from in-depth analysis, it is clear that these tactics are used in the editorials to imprint a negative image of Russians and a positive image of Ukrainians in the minds of the readers. The strikes by Ukraine on Russia are celebrated in the editorials, while the Russian strikes on Ukraine are presented as horrific attacks. Similarly, the miseries of

Ukrainian civilians are discussed in detail, while there is no mention of miseries in the lives of Russian civilians. By doing so, a certain belief about the war is imposed in the mind of a layperson, and he/she is forced to see Russia as a weak state that is still a threat to the entire world and to consider Ukraine as a brave state that has put Russia in hot water in this war. In this way, the CDA of editorials has shown that news discourse can be effectively used to create certain identities of war participants according to their own beliefs and agendas.

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Appendix A

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