



Media Representation of the Russia-Ukraine War: A Comparative Discourse Analysis of Reuters and TASS

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ABSTRACT

This study has examined the linguistic differences in news reports published by Reuters and TASS on four distinct incidents during the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war. Employing discourse analysis as the methodological approach and discourse theory as the theoretical framework, the study has revealed significant linguistic and rhetorical disparities between the two media outlets, highlighting divergent ideological stances and power dynamics. The study has found that Reuters and TASS have employed distinct linguistic strategies that shape public ideologies and perceptions. TASS has portrayed the war from a Russian perspective, referring to it as a "special military operation" while excluding Ukrainian viewpoints. In contrast, Reuters has depicted the war as a full-scale invasion and emphasized allegations of war crimes while also excluding Russian viewpoints. Discrepancies have also emerged in reporting casualties and territorial control, with TASS and Reuters presenting conflicting figures and narratives. Neither outlet has cross-checked information, undermining their objectivity and contributing to biased reporting. The study underscores how the language used by TASS and Reuters serves to legitimize their respective positions and influence public perception, reflecting broader geopolitical power dynamics. Both media agencies have produced misleading narratives by relying solely on official statements from both nations without independent verification.

Keywords: Russia-Ukraine war, Reuters, TASS, discourse analysis, special military operation, invasion

INTRODUCTION

On February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a military operation in Ukraine. He described the operation as a 'special military operation' (Jazeera, 2022). Putin claimed Russia's survival was in danger due to Ukraine's decision to join NATO in 2008 and this choice had to be made by Russia (S. NYE, JR., 2022). There were 15 republics in the Soviet Union, including Russia and Ukraine (Jajanidge, 2020). Ukraine was regarded as the Soviet Union's most developed region. In terms of technology, nuclear power, industry, and agriculture, they were the most advanced. Ukraine was one of the 15 nations to gain independence following the fall of the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union disintegrated, Russia and the Western nations signed a contract in Minsk, Belarus, one of which stipulated that NATO would never include the countries that had done so. Nevertheless, NATO violated the agreement and progressively absorbed more former Soviet governments into their alliance. Finally, when Ukraine eventually joined NATO, Russia opposed it. Ukraine is Russia's closest neighbour. According to researchers, Ukraine's membership in NATO is one of the primary causes of the Russian-Ukrainian war (Masters, 2023).

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine began in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea, which had previously been part of Ukraine (Ray, 2023). Moscow legally seized the peninsula as Crimeans cast their ballots to join the Russian Federation in a contentious local referendum. Pro-Russian separatists in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk held their independence referendums two months after the crisis widened ethnic divisions (Ukraine war, 2023). France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine made an effort to start talks to stop the violence through the Minsk Accords in February 2015 (Allan, 2020). The basis of the deal contained clauses calling for a halt to hostilities, the removal of heavy weapons, and complete Ukrainian government control over the whole war area. To thwart any potential Russian assault elsewhere on the continent, particularly in the Baltic States, NATO announced in April 2016 the deployment of four battalions to Eastern Europe, with troops rotating through Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. To strengthen NATO's presence in the area, the US also sent two US Army tank brigades to Poland in September 2017 (Center for Prevention Action, 2023).

A series of powerful air drills were conducted in western Ukraine in October 2018 with participation from Ukraine, the US, and seven other NATO nations. The exercises followed Russia's yearly military drills in September 2018, which were the biggest since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Center for Prevention Action, 2023). Afterwards, there was an uptick in

animosity between the two nations. Russia conducted several military drills and started amassing soldiers around the Ukrainian border in late 2021. Then, on February 24, 2022, when Russian President Vladimir Putin approved a 'special military operation' against Ukraine, Russian forces attacked a completely unprepared Ukraine. Putin asserted that the operation's purpose was to demilitarize, de-nazify, and the alleged genocide of Russians in Ukrainian territory (Osborn & Nikolskaya, 2022). Since then, the war has escalated. The war has resulted in thousands of deaths, displacement, and economic devastation in both countries. More than 8.8 million Ukrainians have been displaced since the beginning of the war, and millions more have been internally displaced (UNHCR, 2023). As of March 2023, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) confirmed nearly 8,200 civilian deaths in Ukraine during the war. More than a year has passed since the fighting started. It is still going on now that the fight started in February 2022 (Russia-Ukraine War 2022-2023 - Statistics & Facts, 2023).

The Russia - Ukraine war is the most discussed incident of the present time. TASS and Reuters both cover the war between Russia and Ukraine. Whereas TASS is a Russian state-owned news organization based in Moscow, Reuters is a global news organization headquartered in London. This study has examined how Reuters and TASS portray the Russia-Ukraine war, which started in 2022 and the linguistic differences in news reporting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The media coverage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict has been a subject of intense scholarly interest, with numerous studies examining how different outlets present and shape public perceptions of the conflict. Anastasia and A (2017) examined how the media has covered the political situation in Ukraine by analyzing Western and Russian articles from such sources as The Russia Today, The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Daily Mail, etc. The study revealed western media, represented by sources such as The Washington Post and The New York Times, utilized military terminology to negatively depict Russia, framing it as an aggressor in the conflict. Krasnodemska (2017) supported these findings, noting that Western mass media consistently portrayed Russia as the direct initiator and participant in the crisis, especially during events like the annexation of Crimea and the Revolution of Dignity. This portrayal was compounded by criticisms of the United States and NATO for their perceived lack of military support to Ukraine. Boyd-Barrett (2015) examined the failures of mainstream media in exercising caution in the face of their government's propaganda during the Ukraine

crisis. The study identified ten critical narratives contributing to information conflict between nuclear powers, including the United States, the European Union, and Russia.

On the other hand, Russian media's framing of the Russia-Ukraine conflict has been starkly different. Anastasia and A (2017) revealed that Russian media outlets like The Russia Today used terms such as 'violent extremist organizations' or 'fascists' to describe the Ukrainian army. This negative portrayal was part of a broader strategy to delegitimize the Ukrainian government and its actions. Pasitselska (2017) revealed how Russian media framed the Maidan demonstrations as a carnival, using mockery and humor to undermine their seriousness and social significance. The study characterized the Ukrainian-Russian conflict of 2013-2017 as hybrid conflict, with a crucial role of informational component, and used ideological discourse analytic tools. Watanabe (2017) redefined news bias and used a new method to analyze ITAR-TASS' coverage of the Ukraine crisis, showing alignment with Russian government interests. The study found that ITAR-TASS' framing of Ukraine aligned with the desirability of events for the Russian government. The findings suggest that Russia strategically used ITAR-TASS for international propaganda during the Ukraine crisis.

These studies primarily focus on the 2014 conflict, which although significant, but differs in nature and scale from the full-scale war that erupted between Russia and Ukraine in 2022. The 2014 conflict was characterized by a complex interplay of political, military, and social factors, often described as hybrid warfare, involving a mix of traditional military engagements and significant informational warfare. In contrast, the 2022 conflict has escalated into an extensive, full-scale war, involving direct and sustained military confrontations, significant civilian impact, and broader geopolitical implications. This shift from a conflict to a full-scale war introduces new dimensions to the media portrayal that have not been adequately addressed in existing literature. The linguistic and narrative strategies employed by media outlets like Reuters and TASS in a full-scale war could differ significantly from those used during the 2014 conflict. Therefore, there is a need to examine how these media outlets adapt their discourse to the evolving nature of the conflict, considering the heightened stakes and intensified international attention. This study has addressed this contextual gap by focusing on the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war. It has investigated the linguistic differences in news reports published by Reuters and TASS on four separate incidents during this full-scale war.

Research Questions

The study has been done considering the following questions.

- How did Reuters and TASS portray the Russia-Ukraine war?
- What are the linguistic differences in news stories?

Theoretical Framework

The study has been conducted following the discourse theory. It provides a framework for analyzing how language is utilized to create and maintain social structures and power relations. Discourse theory asserts, at its centre, that language is not neutral but rather a potent instrument for shaping social and political realities (Foucault & Sheridan, 1972). In this study, discourse theory has been employed to analyze how Reuters and TASS present the Russia-Ukraine war, focusing on the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used by each news agency. The analysis has been grounded in the understanding that language is a powerful tool for shaping social and political realities. By examining the language used in the reporting of four specific incidents in the Russia-Ukraine war, this study has aimed to uncover the different ways in which these events have been presented and the ideological implications of these presentations.

Another essential concept in discourse theory is power knowledge, which refers to the notion that knowledge is not objective but is shaped by power relations in society (Foucault & Sheridan, 1972). By analyzing the language used by Reuters and TASS, this study has sought to uncover the power relations that underpinning their reporting. Discourse theorists contend that language is used to construct and sustain power relations within society and that those who control language substantially impact social norms and cultural values. Through the lens of discourse theory, this study has enabled a nuanced understanding of how media representations have been constructed and how they have influenced public perception of the Russia-Ukraine war.

METHODOLOGY

The study has been conducted using the method of discourse analysis by Smith and Bell.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis investigates language and communication and how language is used to establish or maintain social structures, power relations, and cultural hegemony. Discourse analysis methods determine how crises and wars are communicated in the media and what their language signifies. Through discourse analysis, it is determined how the media influences public opinion through language use and how it conveys various messages in social and political contexts. Van Dijk's media discourse framework (1985, 1987, 1988, 1991) combines

production, interpretation, and textual analysis. It emphasizes thematic analysis, focusing on narrative patterns and non-chronological event descriptions based on news value. Van Dijk compares this broad semantic structure to a syntactic structure called 'schemata,' which includes categories like headlines, lead paragraphs, previous events, background, and the main event, allowing for their analysis and interrelationships. Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis framework involves three dimensions: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. Each dimension can be analyzed separately, but their interrelationship is vital. Text analysis includes structure and representation, while discourse practice covers text production and consumption, including journalistic routines and transformations.

This study has conducted a discourse analysis of the news published by Reuters and TASS on the Russia-Ukraine war according to Smith and Bell's method. Smith and Bell (2007) provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing news stories. They mention four critical areas for discourse analysis of a news story. These areas are the story's structure and coherence, intertextuality, the nature of the story's sources, and labelling (self-labelling, description by others and media descriptors). Each area focuses on different aspects of the narrative and linguistic elements used in news reporting, offering a multifaceted approach to understanding how stories are constructed and conveyed. Structure and coherence examine how a news story is organized and how different parts of the story connect to form a coherent whole. Intertextuality helps to understand how a story positions itself within a broader discourse and how it relates to other texts and contexts. The nature of the story's sources looks at how sources are used to support the narrative and the influence they have on the story's interpretation. Labelling analyzes the labels used in the story, including self-labelling (how subjects describe themselves), descriptions by others (how subjects are described by external voices), and media descriptors (how the media itself labels subjects and events). Smith and Bell's method is specifically designed for analyzing media discourse, making it highly relevant to a study focused on news reporting. It provides tools to dissect how media organizations construct their stories, which is central to understanding the differences in portrayals by Reuters and TASS. This method also emphasizes the linguistic and narrative elements of news stories. This focus aligns with the study's goal of examining the linguistic differences in news reporting on the Russia-Ukraine war.

Sampling

This study has utilized critical case purposive sampling to select news reports from Reuters and TASS for analysis. This type of purposive sampling involves selecting cases that are crucial to understanding the research question. Four distinct incidents in the Russia-Ukraine war of 2022 have been selected as the sample of the study: the initiation of the war, war casualties, the capture of Artyomovsk (Bakhmut), and the taking control of Yagodnoye. These events have been selected based on their significance in shaping public opinion and their importance in the broader narrative of the war. They represent crucial turning points in the war, and their analysis is expected to yield valuable insights into how the media have portrayed the war.

The selected news reports for these incidents are as follows:

- For the initiation of the war: "Putin declares beginning of military operation in Ukraine" (TASS) and "Russia has launched full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Kyiv says" (Reuters).
- For war casualties: "At least 50,000 Ukrainian troops killed since the start of special operation — DPR official" (TASS) and "Ukraine has lost between 10,000 and 13,000 soldiers in war - official" (Reuters).
- For the capture of Artyomovsk: "Russia's flag hoisted over Artyomovsk, city technically captured — Wagner PMC founder" (TASS) and "Ukraine says Russia 'very far' from seizing Bakhmut, denies Prigozhin claims" (Reuters).
- For the control of Yagodnoye: "Russian forces take control of Yagodnoye settlement north of Artyomovsk — Wagner PMC" (TASS) and "Ukraine military says Russian offensive near Yahidne unsuccessful" (Reuters).

These reports have been selected to explore the linguistic and discursive strategies employed by both news agencies in covering these critical events.

Analysis and Findings

Event: Initiation of the war

Putin declares beginning of military operation in Ukraine

MOSCOW, February 24, 2022. TASS

The title "Putin Announces Start of a Military Operation in Ukraine" gives crucial details on a crucial event. Putin's activities are concisely and summarized in the title. Putin is shown as being the main player and acting forcefully in the circumstance. The word "declarers" implies that Putin is announcing his choice formally and with confidence. The phrase "the beginning of a military operation" implies that this is just the start of a bigger military operation and that

there may be more carnage to come. The mention of Ukraine implies that there is a war there that is still going on and that Ukraine is the object of military activities. It demonstrates the imbalance of power between Russia and Ukraine and Russia's attempt to establish its hegemony. The headline stresses that the issue is quickly getting worse and exudes urgency and seriousness. It also draws attention to Putin's part in the situation and raises the possibility that he is willing to go to extreme lengths to achieve his goals.

The word "seek" indicates that Russia is seeking a particular aim or goal at Standfirst. The phrase "Demilitarization and Denazification" suggests that Russia wants to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and Russia believes that Ukraine is militarized and supports far-right groups. The initial paragraph of the news story states that Russia began a military operation in Ukraine in response to a request for assistance from the administrations of Donetsk and Luhansk to fend off Kyiv's military action. This shows that Russia is engaging in defensive behaviour in response to a lawful authority's request for assistance. "Repelling Kyiv's military aggression" implies that Russia is defending itself while Ukraine is portrayed as the aggressor. Explosions were reported in numerous Ukrainian cities, including Kyiv and Kharkiv, towards the start of the third part. It's evident that there is already a military outcry, and things will quickly grow worse. The text uses several rhetorical devices to establish the legitimacy and justification of military activities in paragraphs 4-6. For instance, Putin justified the operation by referencing the message from the Republic of Donbas and claimed it was in reaction to the hardship and oppression experienced by those who lived there. He also used the need to safeguard Russian nationals and prevent the development of nuclear weapons as motives for the operation. The operation's stated goal is to defend individuals who have endured eight years of exploitation and atrocities at the hands of the Kiev. Phrases like "humiliation and genocide" and "numerous bloody crimes" portrayed Russia as the defender while portraying Ukraine and NATO as the aggressors. Also brought to account for are those who have committed horrible crimes against law-abiding persons, including Russians. This demonstrates that Russia is defending its nationals and seeking retribution for crimes committed against them. The text also makes it clear that Moscow has no plans to occupy Ukraine and that the right of the Ukrainian people to self-determination would be protected. This demonstrates that Russia is attempting to position itself as a responsible actor and that its actions are motivated by a desire to safeguard its population and uphold regional stability.

Putin urged the Ukrainian government in paragraph 10 to collaborate to end the current war. This indicates that Russia and Ukraine will work together to resolve the current war peacefully.

In paragraphs 11 through 13, President Vladimir Putin warned the rest of the globe. He declared that Russia would take action against those who attempt to intervene in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. Putin's statement portrayed Russia as an independent and sovereign nation, indicating that Russia would not tolerate interference from the outside. 14 to 16 outline the responses of the West to Russia's military operations in Ukraine. Where the speeches of President of the United States Joseph Biden and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg are given. Biden described the war as a "premeditated war," identifying Russia as the aggressor and expressing concern for the loss and suffering of numerous civilians. He said the United States and its allies will respond to Russia's actions. The message from President Biden emphasizes the gravity of the situation and suggests that the United States is prepared to act against Russia. The United States presents itself as the decision-maker and responsible party via this message. By Article 16 of the NATO Treaty, the NATO member states will examine the implications of Russia's military operations in Ukraine, according to Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. NATO appears to be essential in the circumstance that arises as a result of this proclamation. It also suggests that NATO thoughtfully debating how to react to Russia's military operation in Ukraine.

Russia has launched full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Kyiv says

KYIV, Feb 24, 2022. Reuters

The severity and urgency of the situation are conveyed by the headline, "According to Kyiv, Russia has begun a full-scale invasion of Ukraine." Additionally, it depicts Ukraine as the victim and Russia as the aggressor. The phrase "full-scale invasion" alludes to the circumstance's gravity and significant military action. The term "invasion" suggests Russia violently encroaching upon and attacking Ukrainian land. Additionally, it implies that Russia's operation is an impermissible and unlawful action. The phrase "full scale" implies that the Russian assault is a significant and sizeable military effort rather than a small military activity. Such language in the headline conveys importance and unease to the reader, who may feel anxiety and anger. The phrase "Kyiv says" conveys to the reader that Kyiv has confirmed the information and that the Ukrainian government is the information's source, giving the subject matter greater credibility.

In the report's opening paragraph, Dmytro Kuleba, Ukraine's minister of foreign affairs, provides an overview of the country's present status. In the paragraph, the phrases "full-scale invasion" and "weapon strikes" draw attention to how serious the situation is. This

indicates that Russia has attacked Ukraine and is conducting weapons attacks against several cities. It emphasizes the predicament in Ukraine and the threat Russia presents to the security of Ukrainian citizens. This message was posted on Twitter. This demonstrates that Ukraine has immediately informed the globe about its current situation and the Russian invasion via communication. Furthermore, the remark has credibility because the Ukrainian Foreign Minister made it.

According to the second article's citation of Interfax Ukraine, Russian troops were stationed in the southern port cities of Odesa and Mariupol, which said that Russia had launched rockets against numerous military locations around Ukraine. Additionally, the Kyiv Boryspil Airport is being evacuated of both staff and passengers. The word "reported" denotes that the information is sourced from a secondary source and has not yet been validated or verified. The phrase "rocket attacks on military facilities throughout Ukraine" means that Russia is assaulting different military facilities in Ukraine but that they are deploying cutting-edge weapons in these operations, suggesting the intensity of the fight. The phrase "Staff and passengers evacuating Kyiv's Boryspil airport" implies that a state of emergency has been declared in Ukraine and that people are fleeing the nation in terror and for safety. The magnitude and seriousness of the situation are made clear by this statement. This portrayal gives the reader the impression that Russia has invaded Ukraine violently and without regard for humanitarian principles. Moreover, in this case, Ukraine is portrayed as the victim of Russian aggression.

The declaration made by Dmytro Kuleba, the foreign minister, is found in the report's final two sentences. He briefed everyone on the state of affairs in Ukraine and accused President Vladimir Putin of ordering Russia to invade Ukraine. The phrase "just" in the sentence relates to Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine. Kuleba implied in his address that Russia was attacking civilians and Ukrainian military sites and forces when he remarked, "Peaceful Ukrainian cities are under strikes." By portraying Russia as an aggressor and anti-humanity, Ukraine attempted to win support from other nations. Instead of the Russian military and administration, Putin was referred to as the aggressor in the speech. By this, it may be inferred that Putin is a significant figure in the abovementioned situation and that the war on Ukraine was carried out in his direction. The reader is given the impression that Putin is a hostile individual.

In his closing statement, Foreign Minister Kuleba addressed Russia's assault on Ukraine. The Russian assault on Ukraine is called a "war of aggression." The address emphasized Ukraine's

resolve to fight back and prevail. The phrase "defend itself" suggests that Ukraine will fend off and defend itself from the Russian onslaught. This demonstrates that Ukraine displays its strength and commitment to upholding its sovereignty. The phrase "will win" conveys Ukraine's will to defeat this Russian attack. By making this declaration, they are telling Russia that Ukraine will fight and triumph against its aggression to defend its sovereignty. Kuleba urged the world community to end Putin's hostility in the speech's concluding section. The implication of the phrase "the world can and must stop Putin" is that to avert further hostilities, the international community must stop Putin. In other words, Putin is portrayed in this context as a threat to not only Ukraine but the entire world. Additionally, it conveys the notion that the international community must intervene to deter Putin from starting new wars. The phrase "The time to act is now" urges swift action. This suggests that waiting to take action can have more severe repercussions. Kuleba effectively called on the world to act quickly to stop Putin and Russia's aggressiveness with this statement.

Table 1: *Linguistic Differences Between The Two News Reports*

	TASS	Reuters
Title of news	Putin declares beginning of military operation in Ukraine	Russia has launched full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Kyiv says
Source of Information	Russian President Vladimir Putin's urgent address	Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba's tweet
Description of Russian Operation	Russia has begun a military operation in Ukraine following a request from Donetsk and Lugansk republics for assistance in repelling Kyiv's military aggression	Russia has launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine
Goals of the Operation	"Demilitarization and denazification" of Ukraine, seeking justice for crimes against civilians, self-determination for the Ukrainian people	Not Mentioned
Address to Ukrainian Military	Putin urges the Ukrainian military to lay down arms and leave for home, with responsibility for bloodshed resting upon Ukraine's ruling regime	Not Mentioned
Warning Against Foreign Intervention	Putin warns against attempts at foreign intervention and threatens	Not Mentioned

	potential consequences for the attacker	
Western Reaction	US President Joseph Biden's statement blaming Russia and announcing further measures against Russia, as well as NATO's consideration of Russia's actions	Not Mentioned
Reports of Attacks	Reports of sounds of explosions in Ukrainian cities, including Kiev and Kharkov	Reports of weapons strikes targeting cities, rocket attacks on military facilities, and Russian troops landing in Odesa and Mariupol

Event: War casualties

*At least 50,000 Ukrainian troops killed since the start of special operation — DPR official
MOSCOW, June 27, 2022. TASS*

The report's headline contains an assertion attributed to a DPR representative. At least 50,000 Ukrainian soldiers are said to have died at the hands of Russia since the Special Military Operation began. The source is acknowledged in the headline, which is written in an instructive style. The title elicit an emotional response from readers due to the many fallen troops listed in the title. This information can seem biased and like propaganda to people who disagree with DPR's assertions in the headline.

The opening sentence of the report quotes the Donetsk People's Republic's (DPR) opening Deputy Information Minister. He said that during Russian special military operations, at least 50,000 Ukrainian soldiers perished. The use of the word "at least" implies that there may be more fatalities. Daniil Bezsonov adds in the second paragraph of the report that Ukraine has suffered significant losses as a result of Russia's special military activities. By "suffering huge losses," it meant that Ukraine suffered a great deal and the consequences. It is clear from the term "combat-ready and experienced troops have either been killed or captured" that the war has dramatically weakened Ukraine by the loss of experienced and competent soldiers or their captivity. Bezsonov notes there are around 100,000 or maybe more than 150,000 wounded soldiers, three to four times as many as fatalities. The phrases "exceeding roughly" and "even" indicate that the estimated fatalities may be higher than the actual figure. The article emphasises the gravity of the situation while also describing the extent of the war's devastation to Ukraine. In this case, Ukraine is shown as having lost its might and becoming helpless.

The DPR official is quoted in the report's final sentence. He said that Ukraine had lost skilled warriors and had suffered greatly in this fight. This assertion demonstrates how frail the Ukrainian army has grown. In addition, he noted that the recruits chosen in place of these veterans have less combat experience. He asserted that the recruits were part of the regional defense unit and had low morale. The Ukrainian military is denigrated in this speech. These forces are less effective than the earlier soldiers and must be wholly trained for battle, underscoring Ukraine's vulnerability. Bezsonov referred to Ukraine's repositioning troops on the Donbas border with Belarus as a PR gimmick after the paragraph, casting doubt on the military's efficacy. An attempt called a "PR stunt" implies it is merely being exploited as a publicity stunt for the show. The episode highlights the military's shortcomings in Ukraine and the demoralized replacement troops.

Ukraine has lost between 10,000 and 13,000 soldiers in war - official

Dec 01, 2022. Reuters

Information on Ukrainian soldiers who have died in the ongoing war in Ukraine is included in the report's title. A trustworthy source of information is suggested by the word "official" in the title. According to estimates, between 10,000 and 13,000 Ukrainian soldiers have died in the current combat, as stated in the title. The title has straightforward wording. The language employed here is not passionate or sensational. It enhances the accuracy of the information in the title.

The report's opening sentence cited a statement made by Mykhailo Podolyak, the adviser of Ukraine's president, on the Ukrainian Television channel 24 station. He stated that Ukraine had lost between 10,000 and 13,000 soldiers in the continuing fight. The second paragraph substantiates this claim by using the army chief's August casualty data. It claims that there had been roughly 9000 army fatalities by the end of August. The presidential adviser then gives the source for the number of soldiers killed. The data provided by the appropriate authorities are referred to as "official figures" in this context. It raises the reliability of the data. The statement "we are open in talking about the number of dead" denotes that Ukraine is not concealing the number of soldiers killed in the war and is making this figure public so everyone can discuss it. Additionally mentioned in this passage is that more troops are wounded than killed. The speech of the top general of America is mentioned in the final sentence. In the ongoing confrontation between Russia and Ukraine, he claimed that more than 100,000 Russian soldiers had died or been injured. Additionally, he indicated that Ukraine's military might have

sustained similar losses. In this context, "probably" denotes supposition, meaning the knowledge is not entirely specific. According to a statement from America's top general, both sides have sustained heavy losses. Later in the article, Oleksiy Arestovych, a presidential adviser to Ukraine, makes a remark that offers a different account of the number of fatalities. No statistics or specific source of this information was offered in the statement, which lessens the trustworthiness of the data. He thinks the number of Russian soldiers killed in the ongoing combat is approximately seven times larger than in Ukraine. Furthermore, Arestovych's remarks significantly alter the number of casualties. According to statements from different officials quoted in the article, there are discrepancies and differing estimations among authorities and officials regarding the precise number of victims in the Russia-Ukraine war. The statistics stated in the report are not identified and verified as belonging to any government, organizational, or human rights organizations. Only a few responsible officials provide figures for combat casualties, and even in their remarks, variations and disagreements can be seen.

Table 2: *Linguistic Differences Between The Two News Reports*

	TASS	Reuters
Title of News	At least 50,000 Ukrainian troops killed since the start of the special operation	Ukraine has lost between 10,000 and 13,000 soldiers in war - official
Source of Information	First Deputy Information Minister of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) Daniil Bezsonov	Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak
Number of Ukrainian Troops Killed	At least 50,000 Ukrainian troops have been killed since the start of Russia's special operation	Between 10,000 and 13,000 soldiers so far in the war against Russia
Number of Wounded Troops	Their number is three to four times higher, exceeding roughly 100,000 or even 150,000	More soldiers had been wounded than had died
Russian Military Casualties	Not Mentioned	America's top general estimated that Russia's military had seen more than 100,000 of its soldiers killed and wounded in Ukraine
Comparison of Casualties	Not Mentioned	Ukrainian advisor stated that the Russian death toll was around seven times that of Ukraine's
Timing of Estimates	The news is from June 27, 2022	The news is from December 1, 2022

Event: Capture of Artyomovsk (known as Bakhmut in Ukraine) by Russia

Russia's flag hoisted over Artyomovsk, city technically captured — Wagner PMC founder

03 April 2023. TASS.

The founder of Wagner's private military firm was quoted in the report's heading cited the phrase "Russia's flag hoisted over Artyomovsk, city technically captured." The phrase "technically captured" in the title alludes to a point of contention or uncertainty regarding the extent of the city's control. "Hoisted" implies a feeling of triumph or victory. The words "flag" and "hoisted" have a patriotic or nationalistic connotation. Moreover, he hoisted the flag, indicating that Russia had taken control of that region. The material has more authority because the title cites the "Wagner PMC founder" as a source. Additionally, it suggests that the "Wagner PMC" organization played a crucial role in the Russia-Ukraine war and was responsible for the city's takeover.

The report's opening paragraph contains a quote from Prigozhin. He said Artyomovsk, also known as Bakhmut in Ukraine, had raised the Russian flag. It indicates that Russia has seized the city and is now in charge. The second sentence explicitly addresses Prigozhin's argument, where he notices the Russian flags rising at the Artyomovsk city hall and increasing the information's trustworthiness. The flag is raised in remembrance of Vladlen Tatarsky, a Russian military correspondent killed in a gunfight in St. Petersburg. The wording "In grateful memory is written on this flag" denotes that this Russian flag will bear a memorial to the murdered journalist Vladlen Tatarsky. In other words, they dedicated Russia's win to the memory of the murdered reporter. The phrase "Technically, we have captured Bakhmut" implies that Russia has not yet fully taken control of Bakhmut. The narrative it conveys regarding the Russian occupation of Bakhmut is hazy and unclear. To send this message, he used his press service's Telegram channel. This is regarded as an accurate information source. However, the statement of the opposing side, any responsible person, or organization from Ukraine or the Bakhmut region, was not presented in the occurrence indicated in the report. As a result, data are presented in a biased manner. Which makes the incident and the information mentioned less credible. The Ukrainian army is called "the adversary" in the paragraph's conclusion. Additionally, "Western blocs" refers to regions under Ukrainian sovereignty. Without additional context or analysis, this paragraph's statement portrays Prigozhin's claim as reality.

Ukraine says Russia 'very far' from seizing Bakhmut, denies Prigozhin claims

03 April, 2023. Reuters

The report's headline alludes to the dispute between Ukraine and Russia over the city of Bakhmut. The term "seizing" refers to Russian military forces attempting to seize possession of the city. The phrase "very far" implies that Ukraine does not perceive the threat as imminent. Ukraine denies in the title the claim of Yevgeny Prigozhin, proprietor of the private military company Wagner that the Russian flag was flown over Bakhmut's city hall. The title focuses primarily on the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia, the struggle for territorial control, and various perspectives.

The report's first paragraph details the ongoing war in Bakhmut between Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine clarified its stance on Bakhmut in the opening paragraph. The word "very far" implies that Ukrainian forces are confident that they have the situation under control and that it is doubtful that Russian forces will capture Bakhmut. The phrase "it was unclear where Russian forces had raised their flag" expresses a certain degree of uncertainty. In doing so, Ukraine disputes Russia's declaration. This implies that Russia has yet to assume authority in the region. The Russian claim was debunked by the Ukrainian spokesperson, who stated, "They falsely claimed to have captured the city." This implies that Russia has not yet captured Bakhmut and that Russia's claims to have done so are fraudulent. The phrase "They raised the flag over some kind of toilet" is an attempt to refute the assertion made by Wagner's forces. Russia is underrepresented, however. Using "rag" to characterise the flag demonstrates disdain for the Russian forces. As "let them think they've taken it" implies, Ukrainian officials reject Russian claims that they have captured Bakhmut and are not overly concerned by these assertions. The fourth paragraph of the report provides additional context for the war by highlighting the location of the city of Bakhmut. The phrase "bloodiest battles" refers to the violent wars at this location. Both parties sustained heavy casualties. The phrase "much of the eastern city was destroyed by bombardments" emphasises the devastation and destruction of the war. It indicates the gravity of the situation. The commander of the Wagner mercenary group, Yevgeny Prigozhin, is quoted in the fifth paragraph. He asserted that his troops raised the Russian flag above the administration building. The term "his forces" implies that Prigozhin is accountable for the actions of the Wagner group. The term "mercenary" implies an absence of legitimacy and allegiance to Russian forces. Prigozhin argues in the sixth paragraph that Russia occupied Bakhmut from a "legal" standpoint. The term "legal" suggests that Prigozhin attempted to establish the city's capture as a valid claim. The phrase "an idea vehemently denied

by Cherevatyi" conveys the Ukrainian official's disagreement with Prigozhin's statement. Cherevatyi's rejoinder to Prigozhin's claims is discussed in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report. The term "battles" refers to the city's continuous war. "Haven't captured anything in a legal sense" indicates that Ukraine did not support Russia's claim to have captured the city of Bakhmut. The phrase "very far from doing that, to put it mildly", implies that Russia is extremely unlikely to capture Bakhmut and that the Ukrainian military is confident in its ability to repel Russian forces.

Table 3: *Linguistic Differences Between The Two News Reports*

	TASS	Reuters
Title of News	Russia's flag hoisted over Artyomovsk, city technically captured — Wagner PMC founder	Ukraine says Russia 'very far' from seizing Bakhmut, denies Prigozhin claims
Source of Information	Yevgeny Prigozhin, founder of the Wagner private military company	A spokesperson for Ukraine's eastern military command
Statement about Capturing Bakhmut	Technically we have captured Bakhmut	Russian forces were "very far" from capturing the eastern town of Bakhmut
Flag Hoisting	Russian flag hoisted over Artyomovsk city hall	Russian forces claimed to have raised the Russian flag at the administration building
Disputed Claims	Prigozhin stated the city had been captured "technically"	Ukrainian spokesperson denied Russian forces had captured anything in a legal sense
Damage and Casualties	Not mentioned	Bakhmut has been the scene of one of the bloodiest battles, with huge casualties on both sides and significant destruction
Denial of Capture	Not mentioned	Cherevatyi denied that anything had been captured and stated that Russia was very far from doing so

Event: Taking control of Yagodnoye

Russian forces take control of Yagodnoye settlement north of Artyomovsk — Wagner PMC

MOSCOW, February 25, 2023, TASS

The report's heading begins with the phrase "Russian forces take control." This indicates that the Russian military has seized control of Yagodnoye, a Ukrainian settlement north of

Artyomovsk. It is a victory, suggesting that Russia has effectively captured it. The statement in the title signifying the representation of "Wagner PMC" is provided by Wagner Private Military Company. And it indicates that Wagner Private Military Company conducts this operation and is responsible for this action.

According to the report's first paragraph, the Russian military has seized complete control of the Yagodnoye region. The phrase "completely taken over by Russian forces" suggests that Russian troops have assumed complete control of the Yagodnoye region. "Called Bakhmut in Ukraine" refers to variations in Artyomovsk's regional identity. In Ukraine, the region is known as Bakhmut, whereas in Russia, it is known as Artyomovsk. The second and third paragraphs provide additional information about the Russian military's occupation of Yagodnoye. The phrase "completely captured" suggests that the Russian army has seized complete control of Yagodnoye. The originator of the PMC, Prigozhin, made this statement. The article states that Prigozhin made this statement through his press service's Telegram channel.

The final paragraph provides additional evidence to bolster and strengthen Prigozhin's argument. Along with Prigozhin's statement, the press released a photograph of Wagner combatants standing at the entrance sign of the town of Yagodnoye. It supports and strengthens Prigozhin's claim. And this information renders the Russian military's capture of Yagodnoye more credible. Although the report contains the statement of a Russian official, neither the message nor the response of Ukraine to the incident is mentioned, which indicates prejudice in data presentation.

Ukraine military says Russian offensive near Yahidne unsuccessful

February 26, 2023, Reuters

The Ukrainian military described the Russian offensive on Yahidne as a failure in the news. The word "unsuccessful" in the title suggests Russia's attack on Yahidne did not accomplish its goals and objectives. And their assault failed to produce the desired results. Ultimately, the title provides a concise summary of the situation described. Despite this, the Ukrainian military deemed the Russian offensive on Yahidne unsuccessful.

According to the report's first paragraph, Wagner Group asserts that Yahidne has been apprehended. The Ukrainian military, however, denied their claim. This passage engenders uncertainty and raises competing narratives regarding military operations. The second paragraph includes a quotation from the Ukrainian Armed Forces General Staff. He stated that

Russia continues to fight in the areas surrounding Yahidne's frontline in the Bakhmut region. This assertion suggests that Russia is actively vying for control of the region. The terms "offensive" and "concentrating offensive efforts" illustrate military activity's aggressive posture and effort. This passage emphasizes Bakhmut's role in the ongoing war. There is mention of intense combat occurring in Bakhmut. The phrase "the bloodiest attritional fighting of Russia's one-year invasion" implies that the bloodiest fighting occurred in Bakhmut. In addition, the intensity of this war was quite intense. Bakhmut is said to have been the site of the bloodiest combat during the nearly year-long battle. It's Clearly illustrating the intensity and duration of the war in the region.

The third paragraph contains contradictory allegations concerning the occupation of the Donetsk and Barkhivka regions. Yevgeny Prigozhin, the leader of the Russian Wagner mercenary group, asserts that his forces have taken possession of Yahidne and the Berkhivka region. According to Prigozhin, Russian troops have successfully advanced into this region of Ukraine. In the fourth paragraph, the Ukrainian Bulletin refutes Prigozhin's claim. It is noted that Russia's invasion of the region was unsuccessful, and that war continues to rage. In addition, the article states that Russian military offensives in six other areas of the Donetsk Region, including Yahidne and Berkhivka, were unsuccessful. By "unsuccessful offensives," it is indicated that the Russian offensive was unsuccessful.

On the other hand, Moscow claims to have seized possession of these territories. It presents an alternative narrative that emphasizes the ongoing war in the region and contests Russia's claims. Later, it was determined that neither side's battlefield messages could be verified by Reuters, which created doubt regarding the integrity of the information. The difficulty of obtaining accurate information in a war zone is also highlighted. And stresses the importance of verifying contradictory claims. The Ukrainian Bulletin reports in the following paragraph that the Russian military has bombarded 22 Ukrainian locations, demonstrating the severity of the war in the region. Later, it was stated that Ukraine is resisting Russian aggression in several areas, which exemplifies Ukraine's resistance to Russian aggression.

Table 4: *Linguistic Differences Between The Two News Reports*

	TASS	Reuters
Title of News	Russian forces take control of the Yagodnoye settlement north of Artyomovsk — Wagner PMC	Ukraine military says Russian offensive near Yahidne unsuccessful

Source of Information	Yevgeny Prigozhin, founder of the Wagner private military company	Ukraine's military
Claimed Capture of Settlement	Yagodnoye community to the north of Artyomovsk (Bakhmut) completely taken over by Russian forces	Russian mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin claimed his forces captured Yahidne
Evidence of Capture	The press service published a photo of Wagner fighters in front of the settlement's entry sign	Not mentioned
Ukrainian Perspective	Not mentioned	Ukraine's military said Russian offensives near Yahidne were unsuccessful
Offensive Efforts	Russia concentrated offensive efforts along the entire Bakhmut front line, where Yahidne is located	Russia conducted unsuccessful offensives near Yahidne
Continuation of Attacks	Not mentioned	Ukrainian bulletin said attacks were continuing, with "unsuccessful offensives" near several settlements
Verification of Reports	Not mentioned	Reuters couldn't verify the battlefield reports of either side
Shelling and Repelling Attacks	Not mentioned	Russian forces shelled 22 settlements, while Ukraine repelled 71 attacks
Battles and Progress	Fierce battles along the front lines, with crawling attempts by each side to move the line, sometimes a few meters at a time	Russia has made progress towards encircling Bakhmut but failed to capture it

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study analyzes eight news articles published by Reuters and TASS regarding four significant events in the Russia-Ukraine war. The analysis examines whether there are linguistic differences in the news presentation of the same event by the two media outlets. The comparative discourse analysis of Reuters and TASS news reports on the Russia-Ukraine war has revealed significant linguistic and rhetorical differences in how the events are presented, reflecting divergent ideological stances and underlying power dynamics. According to discourse theory, language is not passive but actively shapes the social power structure. This study illustrates that both media outlets presented the same issue in divergent ways, strategically using different linguistic approaches to influence public ideologies and thought

processes. The linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed by TASS and Reuters are not neutral but are shaped by their respective ideological commitments and the broader geopolitical context in which they operate.

The study reveals that TASS exclusively presented information from the Russian perspective, relying solely on statements from Russian officials and omitting any mention of Ukraine. In contrast, Reuters provided information from the Ukrainian viewpoint, drawing on statements from multiple Ukrainian officials while disregarding any statements from Russian sources. Neither agency cross-checked or verified the information received from their respective sides. This lack of independent confirmation undermines the objectivity of both news outlets. Moreover, there were linguistic disparities in their presentations. According to TASS, Russia views the war as a "special military operation" aimed at the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine. On the other hand, Reuters views this war as an invasion of Ukraine. According to Reuters, Ukraine considers Russia's actions war crimes and genocide.

The two news agencies also differ markedly in their reporting of casualties and territorial control. TASS reports that Ukraine has lost at least 50,000 personnel, while Reuters estimates the loss at 10,000 to 15,000. Reuters further claims that approximately 100,000 Russian soldiers have been killed in Ukraine, but TASS does not provide any figures for Russian casualties. According to Reuters, Russian casualties are reported to be six to seven times higher than those of Ukraine. TASS reports that Russia has occupied and taken control of the Bakhmut region. Conversely, Reuters states that Russia is far from achieving control over Bakhmut, noting that combat between the two parties continues in the area. Both media outlets present divergent accounts of the same incident. Each agency relied solely on official statements from their respective nations and did not independently verify the details. As a result, both TASS and Reuters disseminate information that reflects their own ideological biases without cross-checking, thereby attempting to shape public perception through potentially misleading narratives.

Through the lens of discourse theory, this study highlights the power-knowledge dynamics at play in the media representation of the Russia-Ukraine war. The language used by each news agency reflects the underlying power structures and political affiliations that influence their reporting. As a state-controlled news agency, TASS operates within a framework that supports and legitimizes the Russian government's actions. The choice of language, therefore, serves to maintain the existing power relations, presenting Russia as a sovereign actor defending its

interests and those of its allies. This aligns with discourse theory, which posits that language is a powerful tool for constructing and maintaining power relations. By controlling the narrative, TASS seeks to legitimize Russian actions and diminish the visibility of Ukrainian resistance, effectively shaping the public's perception of the war. On the other hand, Reuters operates within a Western media framework that is critical of Russia's actions and supportive of Ukraine. By emphasizing the term "invasion" and depicting Russia as an aggressor, Reuters aligns with the broader Western narrative that characterizes Russia's actions as a breach of international law and a threat to global stability. This framing reinforces the power dynamics between the West and Russia, portraying the West as the defender of international norms and Russia as the transgressor.

TASS and Reuters' linguistic and rhetorical choices have significant implications for public perception. The most concerning issue is that Reuters and TASS are major news agencies with substantial global influence. Reuters has over 1 billion readers and viewers worldwide, along with more than 1,000 publishing clients globally. Among the top 10 newspapers worldwide, eight rely on Reuters for news. This extensive reach indicates that Reuters has a large, regular audience and that many leading newspapers worldwide source their news from Reuters. Consequently, Reuters' portrayal of the Russia-Ukraine war will likely have a significant impact on public opinion. Reuters has been found to present biased and misleading information about the Russia-Ukraine war without cross-checking or verifying the facts. This means that this biased reporting is influencing a large segment of its audience. Similarly, TASS, which operates in 54 countries and has over 147 million users globally, has disseminated biased and misleading information about the war. This suggests that TASS's vast audience is likewise affected by this partial and deceptive reporting.

Given that Reuters has an even larger readership than TASS, the influence of Reuters' coverage on public opinion regarding the Russia-Ukraine war is likely to be substantial. The differing portrayals of the same events by these two agencies will lead to varied public reactions and biased perceptions worldwide. This divergence poses a significant threat to the essential journalistic principle of objectivity and highlights the substantial influence of major news agencies on public opinion.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the power of language in media reporting and the importance of critically engaging with news narratives. It underscores the need for media consumers to be aware of the ideological underpinnings that may influence the

representation of international events and to approach media reports critically. As conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine war continue to unfold, the role of media in shaping public perception remains a crucial area for ongoing research and analysis. This awareness and vigilance are essential for media consumers to navigate the complex landscape of news reporting.

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