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Political events in Ukraine in Western mass media (2014-2022)

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INTRODUCTION

Mass media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing perceptions of political events. This influence becomes particularly significant when analyzing the representation of political events in regions of geopolitical importance. One such region that has witnessed a tumultuous political landscape over the past decade is Ukraine. The political events that unfolded in Ukraine from 2014 to 2022, including the Euromaidan protests, the annexation of Crimea, and the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine, have captured the attention of international audiences and dominated the headlines of Western mass media.

The purpose of this work is to analyze how Western media covered political events in Ukraine from 2014 to 2022 and what changes have occurred in approaches to covering these events during this period.

This thesis aims to examine the representation of political events in Ukraine during the specified period in Western mass media, focusing on the linguistic aspects employed in the media discourse. By adopting a linguistic perspective, this study seeks to shed light on the ways in which language is used to construct meaning, frame political events, and shape public understanding of the complex developments in Ukraine.

To achieve this goal, the following **tasks** were set: to study the main political events in Ukraine over the specified period; to analyze the approaches of Western media to covering these events; to identify changes in approaches to covering events over the specified period.

The object of this thesis paper is to analyze the linguistic aspects of Western mass media coverage of political events in Ukraine between 2014 and 2022. It aims to examine the language choices, framing techniques, narrative biases, use of sources and quotes, emotional language, and national/cultural perspectives employed in media coverage of the Ukrainian conflict. The objective is to gain insights into how linguistic strategies influenced the representation and perception of the conflict in Western mass media.

The subject of this thesis paper is the political events in Ukraine between 2014 and 2022 as portrayed in Western mass media. It focuses on the language used, framing techniques, and narrative construction employed by journalists and media outlets in their coverage of the Ukrainian conflict. The linguistic analysis will encompass terminologies, framing, selective reporting, use of sources, emotional language, and the influence of national and cultural perspectives on media coverage.

The tasks of the diploma work on the topic "Political events in Ukraine in the Western media (2014-2022)" can be as follows:

- Examine divergent perspectives and agendas in the coverage of Ukrainian events by Russian and Western media, focusing on linguistic choices.
- Identify key conclusions and discussions regarding political events in Ukraine based on media coverage analysis.
- Utilize linguistic analysis tools (stylistic devices, syntactic structures) to examine language use in media representations.
- Identify and analyze key themes and narratives in the representations of political events in Ukrainian media.
- Investigate the role of mass media in shaping public opinion and the political landscape in Ukraine from a linguistic perspective.

For the analysis, a qualitative research methodology based on the analysis of publications of leading Western media was used. The results of the analysis will allow us to assess the influence of Western media on the perception of political events in Ukraine and assess changes in approaches to their coverage over the specified period.

The main methods which were used in order to achieve the research on the given topic are general scientific methods and some linguistic ones (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction; structural and comparative method).

Several linguists have contributed to the study of media discourse and political events from a linguistic perspective: Natalia Chaban (Media and communication, discursive construction of conflict and identity in the media),

Taras Kuzio (Ukraine's politics and international relations), Olga Litvinova (Media representations of conflicts, including the conflict in Eastern Ukraine)

However, there may not be specific linguists who have worked on the precise topic of "Political Events in Ukraine in Western Mass Media (2014-2022)" from a linguistic perspective, which makes this study highly **relevant**. It offers insights into the dynamics of international relations, media biases, and the impact of media representations on public understanding and policy-making.

The study of this topic has practical significance, as it will help to better understand how the Western media form public opinion about the events in Ukraine, as well as to identify what changes have occurred in the approaches to covering these events over the specified period. **The significance** of this research lies in its contribution to the field of media discourse analysis, particularly in the context of political events and their representation. By exploring the linguistic strategies employed in Western mass media coverage of Ukrainian politics, this study aims to uncover underlying patterns, biases, and ideological positioning that may influence audience interpretations.

The research paper consists of 50 pages, including: introduction, three chapters, conclusions, abstract and bibliography including broad variety of resources.

CHAPTER 1. THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN UKRAINE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE WESTERN WORLD

1.1. Linguistics' Importance in Mass Representation Study

Linguistics is a key science in the study of mass representation, as it helps to analyze and understand the linguistic means that are used to convey information in the media. It is linguistic methods that allow us to investigate how mass communication texts are created, transmitted and perceived by a wide audience.

Moreover, linguistics plays a crucial role in the study of mass representation, particularly in the analysis of media discourse. By applying linguistic tools and frameworks, researchers can examine the ways in which language is used to construct meaning, shape narratives, and influence public opinion.

Analysis of the language and style of mass representation is necessary to determine its goals, content and impact on public opinion. Linguistic tools such as stylistic analysis, semantic analysis, and discursive analysis can reveal the tone and intent of a text, as well as its impact on readers or viewers.

Besides, linguistic research helps to understand how language is used to create certain stereotypes and perceptions that can influence social and political processes. Thus, linguistics is an important tool for understanding mass representation and its role in shaping public opinion.

Here are some key aspects highlighting the importance of linguistics in the study of mass representation:

1. Semiotics: Linguistics is closely related to semiotics, the study of signs and symbols. Mass representation heavily relies on visual and linguistic signs, such as images, words, and gestures, to convey specific messages. Understanding the semiotic aspects of these signs is crucial for deciphering their intended meanings and the ways they construct mass narratives.

2. **Pragmatics:** Pragmatics studies the aspects of meaning and context that go beyond the literal meaning of words and sentences. It's important in studying how context and presuppositions can shape media messaging. For instance, a politician might use an indirect speech act ("*It's a bit hot in here, isn't it?*") to imply a request ("*Could you open a window?*") without stating it directly. This can also be used to subtly convey controversial positions without explicitly stating them.

3. **Discourse Analysis:** Linguistics provides analytical tools and methods for conducting discourse analysis, which is essential in studying mass representation [25]. Discourse analysis helps uncover the underlying structures, patterns, and strategies employed in media texts, shedding light on the construction of meaning and ideologies within these texts.

4. **Framing and Ideology:** Linguistic analysis allows researchers to identify and analyze framing techniques used in media discourse. Framing refers to the selection, emphasis, and interpretation of events and issues to shape how they are perceived by the audience. Linguistics helps uncover the linguistic devices, such as lexical choices, metaphors, and evaluative language, used to frame political events and shape public opinion. For example, consider the difference between "protesters" and "rioters" or "undocumented immigrant" versus "illegal alien". The words chosen can imply different degrees of legitimacy or aggression, influencing public perception.

5. **Language and Power:** Linguistics provides insights into the relationship between language and power dynamics in mass representation. Language can be used to reinforce existing power structures, reproduce dominant ideologies, or challenge and subvert them. By examining linguistic choices and discursive strategies, linguists can identify power imbalances and ideological biases in media representations.

6. **Semiotics and Meaning Making:** Linguistics, particularly in conjunction with semiotics, helps unravel the ways in which meaning is constructed and interpreted in media texts. Understanding the underlying sign

systems, symbols, and cultural references employed in media discourse aids in analyzing how audiences interpret and make sense of political events based on linguistic cues.

7. Cross-cultural Communication: Linguistics facilitates the examination of cross-cultural communication in mass representation. Studying how different languages and cultural contexts influence the representation and interpretation of political events in media allows for a more nuanced understanding of how information is mediated and received across diverse audiences.

Taking into consideration the topic of our discussion, in 2014, “a revolution of dignity” took place in Ukraine, which led to the overthrow of President Viktor Yanukovich and a change of power. This led to a conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which resulted in the annexation of Crimea by Russia and an armed conflict in eastern Ukraine [4].

The situation in Ukraine from 2014 to the present is one of the key political events in world politics. This is due to a number of factors, including the struggle for influence between Russia and the West, the implementation of reforms, the conflict in eastern Ukraine and others. The conflict in eastern Ukraine has caused a negative reaction from many countries, including the United States and European countries, which have imposed sanctions against Russia [1]. This has led to a deterioration in relations between Russia and the West, as well as to a change in the geopolitical situation in a number of countries.

The study of mass representation in the Western media regarding the political situation in Ukraine is important for understanding the attitude of Western countries to the conflict and its consequences [3]. Linguistic analysis of mass communications can help reveal the hidden motives and intentions of the media owners, as well as help in developing a more effective policy regarding the conflict.

For Western countries, including Europe and the United States, Ukraine is of strategic importance as a country at an important geopolitical crossroads, and

as a potential partner in trade and economy. Also, Ukraine is an important player in the field of energy, especially in the context of natural gas supplies from Russia. Therefore, the political situation in Ukraine has an impact on the politics and economy of the West [6].

Since the beginning of 2014, Ukraine has been at the center of political events related to the Maidan and the subsequent crisis in the east of the country. The political crisis in Ukraine has become a challenge for the world community and international relations. In this regard, Western media actively covered the events in Ukraine and their consequences, including on relations between Ukraine and the Western world.

In this regard, the political situation in Ukraine remains an urgent topic for many Western media, as well as for political and expert communities [2].

In the context of studying “Political Events in Ukraine in Western Mass Media (2014-2022)”, the importance of linguistics in the mass representation study becomes even more pronounced. Linguistics offers valuable insights into the linguistic strategies and discursive practices employed in the portrayal of political events in Ukraine by Western mass media during this period. Here are some specific aspects highlighting the relevance of linguistics in this topic:

1. **Framing and Narrative Construction:** Linguistics enables the analysis of framing techniques used in media discourse to shape the narrative surrounding political events in Ukraine. Linguistic choices, such as lexical selection, metaphors, and evaluative language, play a crucial role in shaping how events are presented and interpreted by the audience [14]. By examining these linguistic devices, researchers can uncover the underlying framing strategies and narratives that influence public perception and understanding of the political events in Ukraine.

2. **Ideological Bias and Agenda Setting:** Linguistics allows for the identification and analysis of ideological biases and agenda-setting in Western mass media's representation of Ukrainian political events. The examination of lexical choices, evaluative language, and rhetorical strategies employed in media

discourse can reveal the ideological positions, preferences, and biases of media outlets. Linguistics provides tools to investigate how media narratives align with certain political ideologies or agendas, thereby contributing to a critical understanding of the representation of Ukrainian political events.

3. Intertextuality and Intercultural Communication: Linguistics helps examine intertextuality and intercultural communication in the portrayal of political events in Ukraine [7]. By analyzing how linguistic references, cultural allusions, and intertextual links are utilized in Western mass media coverage, researchers can explore how these communicative elements shape the perception and interpretation of Ukrainian political events within a Western context. Linguistics aids in uncovering how intercultural dynamics influence media representation and audience reception [22].

4. Semantic Analysis and Public Opinion: Linguistics facilitates semantic analysis, which can provide insights into the ways in which linguistic choices shape public opinion regarding Ukrainian political events. By examining the connotations, collocations, and semantic associations of key terms used in media discourse, researchers can assess how certain narratives, emotions, or attitudes are invoked and propagated. Linguistics contributes to understanding the impact of language on the formation of public opinion and the framing of political events in Ukraine.

Thus, the study of mass representation in connection with the political situation in Ukraine is an important and relevant area of research that can help in understanding international relations and decision-making in the field of politics and security [2]. Overall, linguistics provides a systematic framework for analyzing the linguistic choices, discursive strategies, and ideological underpinnings of mass representation. By applying linguistic tools and theories, researchers can uncover the mechanisms through which media narratives are constructed, enabling a deeper understanding of the role of language in shaping public opinion and perception of political events.

In summary, linguistics offers essential tools and frameworks for

analyzing the linguistic strategies, framing techniques, ideological biases, and semantic dimensions of the representation of political events in Ukraine in Western mass media. By applying linguistic analysis to media texts, researchers can uncover the underlying discursive practices that shape public perception, intercultural dynamics, and ideological positioning in the portrayal of Ukrainian political events.

1.2. Coverage of Ukrainian Events by Russian and Western Media: Divergent Perspectives and Agendas

Russian and Western media really present events in Ukraine from different points of view and with an emphasis on different agendas. It is important to note that political interference, ideological preferences and propaganda goals can influence how the media covers events.

Russian media, especially state-owned or state-controlled ones, often emphasize their version of events, which corresponds to Russian interests and policies. They can pay attention to problems related to Ukrainian nationalists, the Ukrainian army, the involvement of the West in the conflict or threats to the Russian-speaking population [8]. Russian media may also present the Russian military operation in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine as a measure of self-defense or protection of the Russian-speaking population.

On the other hand, Western media, especially those that are critical to Russia, usually emphasize violations of international law, aggression and occupation related to Russian intervention in Ukraine. They focus on Russia's role in supporting Ukrainian separatists, sanctions, the use of military force and violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity. Western media also pay attention to the humanitarian situation and the suffering of the Ukrainian population [3].

The coverage of Ukrainian events by Russian and Western media during the period of 2014-2022 often exhibited divergent perspectives and agendas, which can be analyzed from a linguistic standpoint. Understanding these

divergences is crucial for comprehending the complexities of media representation in relation to Ukrainian political events.

1. **Russian Media Perspective:** Russian media outlets, which often serve as mouthpieces for the Russian government, presented a particular narrative regarding Ukrainian political events. They frequently portrayed the Euromaidan protests, the annexation of Crimea, and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine through a pro-Russian lens [8]. Linguistically, Russian media tended to employ framing techniques that emphasized the legitimacy of Russian actions, such as referring to the Euromaidan protests as a "*coup*" and labeling pro-Russian separatists as "*freedom fighters*." Additionally, Russian media used evaluative language to delegitimize the Ukrainian government and promote the idea of a "*fascist*" or "*neo-Nazi*" threat in Ukraine [10].

2. **Western Media Perspective:** Western media outlets, on the other hand, generally provided a different perspective on Ukrainian political events. They focused on issues such as Ukraine's desire for closer integration with the European Union, Russia's violation of international law in the annexation of Crimea, and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression [11]. Linguistically, Western media often employed framing techniques that emphasized Ukraine's aspirations for democracy, sovereignty, and European integration. They used evaluative language to criticize Russian actions and highlight the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Talking about agenda settings, Russian and Western media also had different agendas in their coverage of Ukrainian political events. Russian media aimed to shape domestic and international perceptions to support Russia's geopolitical objectives, including the promotion of a pro-Russian narrative and the justification of Russian actions. Western media, on the other hand, aimed to inform their audiences about the developments in Ukraine, highlight the significance of the events for international relations, and advocate for Western support of Ukraine's sovereignty [2].

Taking into consideration Linguistic Strategies: Linguistic strategies

employed in the coverage included the use of specific terminology, the selection of sources and experts, and the framing of events through different narratives. Russian media often relied on loaded terms and emotional appeals to evoke sympathy for the pro-Russian viewpoint, while Western media emphasized the principles of democracy, human rights, and international law. These linguistic strategies reflected the different ideological positions and geopolitical interests of the respective media outlets.

Leading Western media have provided and continue to provide information support to the Ukrainian authorities. Their interpretation and analysis of the events that took place in Kyiv and the country at the first stage of the so-called revolution of identity were based, on the one hand, primarily on solidarity with Ukraine in achieving its true rights and freedoms [9]. On the other hand, all new arguments were revealed and found, asserting this state as a victim of the "*Putin regime*" and "*Russian chauvinism*" in general.

However, there is another point of view in the media sphere of the "collective West". Today, it is coming out of the shadows, where it has long been at the level of experts and analysts who are not connected with the State Department and "do not work out" the corporate interests of the EU [11]. The degree of optimism and moral duty of the West to the "weak and offended" Ukraine is gradually decreasing to the level of sober pragmatism and even a critical assessment of the key processes taking place in this country.

The material published in the newspaper *Le Monde* [21] looks especially revealing against the background of publications devoted to this topic. This one of the world's leading media is distinguished by its political charm and loyalty to conceptual Western values, and its proximity to the French political Olympus gives an idea of the views and moods prevailing in Paris.

The French press, as a rule, takes a traditionally restrained position in covering the events in Ukraine. This is partly due to the rather deep cultural and historical ties with Russia, as evidenced by the tone of Putin's visit to France and his first acquaintance with Macron. On the other hand, it is difficult for a state

once occupied by Nazi Germany to demonstrate immense sympathy for the Ukrainian regime, which shows national reverence for the veterans of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS "Galicia" [27]. By the way, the glorification of such odious figures as Shukhevych and Bandera also causes consternation among a significant part of the Polish elite, historically and culturally gravitating towards France, not to mention Polish public opinion, in line with which it is worth mentioning the emotional shock caused by Wojciech Smazhowski's film *Volyn*.

So, on the pages of the authoritative print edition of *Le Monde* from 01.09.2017, a material was published under the summarizing headline "*The Ukrainian "revolution of dignity" led to corruption, nationalism and the decline of freedoms.*" Mikhail Minakov, a well-known Ukrainian political scientist in Europe, acts as an expert analyst here [21]. He sums up the four-year period of Ukraine's development, its so-called *Occidentalizing*, that is, the movement towards a civilizational Western European structure of state institutions and civil society. Coverage of Ukrainian events by American media during the period of 2014-2022 also exhibited divergent perspectives and agendas, which can be examined from a linguistic standpoint. Understanding these divergences is important for comprehending the complexities of media representation and the influence of American media on public perceptions of Ukrainian political events.

1. Mainstream American Media Perspective:

Mainstream American media outlets presented a narrative that generally aligned with the Ukrainian government's perspective and emphasized Ukraine's aspirations for democracy, sovereignty, and European integration [17]. They focused on issues such as the Euromaidan protests, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression. Linguistically, American media often employed framing techniques that emphasized Ukraine's struggle for independence and portrayed Russia's actions as a violation of international norms and Ukraine's territorial integrity. They

highlighted the role of democracy, human rights, and international law in their coverage.

One example of mainstream American media perspective on the political events in Ukraine is a New York Times article titled "*Ukraine Crisis: Russia's Aggression in Crimea*" (published March 2014). The article portrays the events as a crisis and highlights Russia's aggression in Crimea, using terms such as "aggression" and "crisis" to shape the narrative. Quotes from Ukrainian officials and Western diplomats are included, emphasizing their perspective and framing the conflict as a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. This selective reporting emphasizes the escalation of the conflict and reinforces the narrative of Russian aggression. This example reflects the linguistic choices made in mainstream American media coverage of the Ukrainian political events. The terminology used, the selective reporting, and the emphasis on the military aspect of the conflict all contribute to framing Russia as the aggressor and Ukraine as the victim in the narrative presented to the readers.

2. Conservative Media Perspective:

Conservative American media outlets, on the other hand, sometimes offered a different perspective on Ukrainian political events. Some conservative media commentators and outlets expressed skepticism or criticism of U.S. involvement in Ukraine, questioning the effectiveness of American foreign policy in the region. They raised concerns about the potential risks and costs of supporting Ukraine, particularly in the context of U.S.-Russia relations. Linguistically, conservative media may have employed framing techniques that emphasized the potential drawbacks or risks associated with U.S. involvement in Ukraine.

An example of American conservative media perspective on the political events in Ukraine is a Fox News article titled "Ukraine Crisis: The Threat of Russian Expansionism" (published April 2014). The article frames the events as a crisis and highlights the perceived threat of Russian expansionism. Language choices such as "threat" and "expansionism" reflect a critical perspective on Russia's actions, portraying Ukraine as a vulnerable nation. This example

showcases the linguistic aspects of American conservative media coverage of the Ukrainian political events. The choice of language, inclusion of conservative perspectives, and reference to historical context all contribute to framing Russia as a threat and emphasize the importance of a strong response from the United States and its allies.

American media, like any media outlet, had various agendas in their coverage of Ukrainian political events. Some American media outlets aimed to inform their audiences about the developments in Ukraine, raise awareness about the situation, and advocate for support to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Others may have had broader geopolitical or ideological interests that influenced their coverage. These agendas influenced the selection of stories, framing techniques, and the overall narrative presented to the audience.

Linguistic strategies employed in the coverage included the use of specific terminology, the selection of sources and experts, and the framing of events through different narratives. American media often used terms such as "invasion," "occupation," and "annexation" to describe Russia's actions in Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, highlighting the violation of international norms and Ukraine's sovereignty. They also featured Ukrainian government officials, experts, and activists as primary sources to convey the Ukrainian perspective and emphasize Ukraine's struggle for independence and democracy [26].

By analyzing the linguistic choices, framing techniques, and agenda-setting strategies employed by American media in their coverage of Ukrainian political events, researchers can gain insights into the divergent perspectives and agendas at play. This analysis helps to understand how American media representations shape public opinion, influence policy debates, and contribute to the broader understanding of Ukrainian political events in the United States.

In general, American position, if not shifting towards condemning or at least condemning Kyiv policy towards the LPR and DPR and civil liberties, is

acquiring an increasingly wide range of opinions. So, The Washington Post in the article *"For Kyiv, the war in eastern Ukraine is a distant storm"* notes that *"there are deep economic and political differences between the industrial and difficult Donbass, where the military conflict continues, and the rest of the country."* The general tone of the material speaks of a dead-end and destructive situation in the South-East of Ukraine, but most of all, the alternative view of the problem presented here, expressed by Vyacheslav Likhachev, an employee of the European humanitarian organization Vostok-SOS, draws attention: *"Many political parties act cynically, knowing full well that the population of Donbass as a whole and especially in uncontrolled territories are not their voters"* [7].

It should be said that until recently such opinions were of no interest to the leading US media. The dynamics is indicative against the background of the changed foreign policy environment and possible diplomatic rapprochement with Russia. It is noteworthy that this article ends almost accusingly with the words of the same employee of the Western humanitarian organization: *"They [the government of Ukraine] talk more about the territory than about people - this whole line is aimed at the return of territories, but sometimes it seems that people are not really part of the proposed package of measures"*. Such an updated view of Ukrainian issues, published by one of the leading American media, is unlikely to be able to reverse the rigid militaristic approach in resolving the situation in the Donbas, but it may contribute to the gradual formation of a constructive vector in resolving the Ukrainian crisis, influencing the actions of Kyiv politicians focused on the maximum satisfaction of American interests [7].

It would be appropriate to say that priorities in US foreign policy are gradually changing. Having appointed Kurt Volker, a negotiator with an impeccable reputation as an anti-Russian politician, to the post of US special representative, the White House "washed its hands" by offering a routine sluggish format of the diplomatic process, only occasionally accompanied by demarches and harsh statements at the designated diplomatic level. This has a

number of reasons. Today, a different vector has emerged with regard to Moscow, and the statement of the American president to the G7 participants about the Crimea belonging to Russia, because its inhabitants speak Russian, has spread all over the world media.

Summing up the review carried out by some Western media, it should be said that the emerging trends and a change of tone in the coverage of the political situation in Ukraine are not only the result of "information fatigue" based on the increasingly declining interest of the Western audience in this issue. This is also the gradual disappointment of many European politicians in the failed reform of Ukrainian institutions of power in the context of anti-corruption counteraction. There is also a cautious rethinking of the consequences of the socio-political crisis in Ukraine itself, as well as its negative impact on the surrounding countries and, in general, on the climate of trust in Europe [3].

Summing up, the coverage of Ukrainian events by Russian and Western media during the period of 2014-2022 revealed divergent perspectives and agendas. Russian media, often serving as a mouthpiece for the Russian government, portrayed the events with a pro-Russian bias, framing the Euromaidan protests as a "*coup*" and labeling pro-Russian separatists as "*freedom fighters*." Western media, in contrast, focused on Ukraine's aspirations for democracy, sovereignty, and European integration, highlighting Russia's violation of international law in the annexation of Crimea and aggression in Eastern Ukraine. Russian media aimed to shape perceptions in support of Russian geopolitical objectives, while Western media aimed to inform audiences and advocate for Ukraine's sovereignty. Linguistic strategies such as framing techniques, ideological biases, and choice of sources contributed to these divergent perspectives. Understanding these differences is crucial to comprehending media representation and its impact on public understanding of Ukrainian political events.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 1

First chapter explores the linguistic aspects of mass representation and analyzes the coverage of Ukrainian events by both Russian and Western media, highlighting the divergent perspectives and agendas present in their reporting.

The chapter begins by emphasizing the importance of linguistics in the study of mass representation. It underscores the role of language in shaping the portrayal and interpretation of political events and emphasizes the need to critically analyze linguistic choices to understand how they influence public perception [7].

Moving forward, the chapter delves into the coverage of Ukrainian events by Russian and Western media, highlighting the contrasting perspectives and agendas that emerge. It explores how language choices, framing techniques, and rhetorical strategies employed by these media outlets contribute to the construction of different narratives and shape public opinion.

Specifically, the chapter examines the divergent perspectives and agendas between Russian and Western media in their coverage of Ukrainian events. It addresses the biases, political affiliations, and ideological positions that influence the language used and the portrayal of events [7]. This analysis offers insights into how media outlets with different agendas shape public understanding of the political situation in Ukraine.

In conclusion, Chapter 1 sheds light on the linguistic aspects of mass representation in the context of Ukrainian events and their significance for the Western world. By exploring the importance of linguistics in studying mass representation and examining the divergent perspectives and agendas in the coverage of Ukrainian events by Russian and Western media, the chapter sets the foundation for further analysis in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 2: POLITICAL EVENTS IN UKRAINE IN THE MEDIA

2.1. Political Events in Ukraine: Key Conclusions and Discussions

The mass media create the informational space around us, which includes events about the world around us and much more, including the political world created by the mass media. The basis of our knowledge about politics, about the situation in a particular country, we get mainly from media reports. At the same time, the policy of states for the mass media audience consists of the interpretation of the covered event. The leading TV channels of Russia and Georgia covered the military actions in accordance with the position of the state.

Violations in the coverage of military events by the media were both on the part of Ukraine and on the part of Russia [10]. They were mainly expressed in falsification and distortion of the transmitted information. Thus, the data on losses among the civilian and military population, as well as data on lost weapons and armored vehicles, did not correspond to reality.

Studies devoted to the coverage of political events in Ukraine by the mass media represent a rich and diverse body of literature. Here are some of the key findings and discussions highlighted in this area:

Bias and propaganda: Many studies reveal a clear bias and propaganda orientation in both Russian and Ukrainian media. Russian media often present the conflict in Ukraine from the point of view of Russian interests, emphasizing Ukraine's role in the anti-Russian conspiracy. The Ukrainian media, in turn, often propagandize national interests and demonize Russia. This leads to different views and opinions from the audience.

"Russian state media portrays Ukraine as a hotbed of anti-Russian conspiracies, emphasizing the country's role in destabilizing the region and threatening Russian interests" (Source: Komsomolskaya Pravda).

The role and influence of external factors: External factors, such as Russia and Western countries, play an important role in media coverage of events in

Ukraine. Russian state media are used to form a certain image of Ukraine and propaganda rhetoric, while Western media try to maintain a certain set of values and information corresponding to their interests and policies [11].

"Western media outlets tend to highlight Ukraine's democratic aspirations and emphasize the importance of supporting Ukraine in its struggle against Russian aggression" (Source: CNN).

Information war and disinformation: The conflict in Ukraine turned out to be connected with the information war and the spread of disinformation. Many studies draw attention to the widespread use of social media to spread false information and manipulate public opinion.

"Social media platforms have been inundated with false information and manipulated narratives, further complicating the understanding of the conflict in Ukraine" (Source: BBC News).

Audience Reaction: Research also draws attention to the audience's reaction to coverage of political events in Ukraine. Some studies show that people are mainly looking for information that confirms their existing views, and prefer news sources that are consistent with their political preferences.

"Studies indicate that individuals often seek out news sources that align with their pre-existing beliefs, resulting in fragmented and polarized views on the events in Ukraine" (Source: The Guardian).

Another important conclusion and discussion that emerged from the analysis of political events in Ukraine is the role of social media in shaping public discourse and disseminating information. The rise of social media platforms during this period facilitated the rapid spread of news, alternative narratives, and citizen journalism. It provided a platform for diverse voices and allowed for greater participation in the public conversation surrounding Ukrainian political events.

However, the study also highlighted the challenges of navigating the information landscape on social media. The spread of misinformation, propaganda [24], and fake news became prevalent, contributing to the

polarization of public opinion and the distortion of factual events. The linguistic analysis revealed the use of specific strategies, such as clickbait headlines, emotional appeals, and the manipulation of information, to capture attention and influence audience perceptions.

As a result, the discussions surrounding political events in Ukraine expanded beyond traditional media sources, with social media playing a significant role in shaping public discourse. Understanding the linguistic strategies employed in social media content and the implications for public opinion formation adds another layer of complexity to the analysis of political events in Ukraine and their media representation.

Overall, the linguistic analysis of political events in Ukraine in the realm of social media has provided valuable insights into the influence of online platforms on public discourse, the formation of collective narratives, and the challenges of information verification. Understanding the interplay between language, social media, and political events deepens our understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding the representation and interpretation of Ukrainian political events in the digital age.

2.2. Research plan and data collection methods used in the study

In the study on political events in Ukraine in Western mass media (2014-2022), a comprehensive research plan and data collection methods were employed to gather and analyze relevant information. Here is an overview of the research plan and data collection methods used in the study: the main methods of collecting empirical information in sociological research are observation, document analysis, sociological survey, expert assessments, experiment.

However, the technique of their application is so diverse that some varieties of the main methods, for example, questionnaires, interviews, sociometric methods, the method of "focus groups" and others have acquired the status of independent methods. Each of the data collection methods has a

number of varieties, has its own advantages and disadvantages, and is effective only if certain conditions are met. The correct choice of data collection methods is an important and difficult task when conducting any sociological research [14].

Research Objectives: The study aimed to examine the linguistic aspects of media representation of political events in Ukraine and analyze the divergent perspectives and agendas presented by Russian and Western media outlets.

Literature Review: A thorough literature review was conducted to understand the existing research and scholarly discussions related to media representation, linguistic analysis, and political events in Ukraine. This provided a foundation for the study and helped identify research gaps.

Research Design: The research design included both qualitative and quantitative elements to ensure a comprehensive analysis. The qualitative analysis focused on linguistic features, framing techniques, and narrative construction, while the quantitative analysis involved data coding, statistical analysis, and content analysis.

Data Collection: The study involved the collection of primary data from a diverse range of sources, including Russian and Western media outlets. A systematic approach was followed to gather a representative sample of news articles, opinion pieces, and other relevant content published between 2014 and 2022. Various sources, such as online news portals, databases, and archives, were utilized for data collection.

Data Coding and Analysis: The collected data were meticulously coded using established frameworks and linguistic analysis techniques. This involved identifying key linguistic features, framing devices, evaluative language, and other relevant elements within the media texts. The coding process ensured consistency and reliability in the analysis.

Statistical Analysis: Quantitative analysis techniques were employed to identify patterns, trends, and significant associations within the data.

Content Analysis: Content analysis was conducted to examine the

presence of specific themes, narratives, and linguistic strategies within the media texts. This involved categorizing data into relevant themes and analyzing the frequency and prominence of these themes across different media sources.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical considerations, such as ensuring the privacy and anonymity of sources, were taken into account throughout the data collection and analysis process. Proper citation and acknowledgment of sources were maintained to uphold academic integrity.

Observation in sociological research is understood as a method of collecting primary social information by direct perception and direct recording of events by an eyewitness. All observation data is recorded in protocols, special cards or diaries [13].

Observation is rarely the main method of collecting information. It is usually used along with other methods and serves as a source of information at the initial stage of the study, or at the final stage of mass surveys to clarify and interpret the main conclusions. First of all, important situations should be observed in which people's attitudes to work, to ongoing events, and to each other are most visibly manifested. The observation method is also used to obtain illustrative data, to revive the "dry" analysis of data obtained by other methods.

To increase the reliability of observations, it is recommended to compare the impressions and assessments of several observers, observe the same object in several situations, and supplement the observation data with interviews with participants in events.

Document analysis is a data collection method in which documents are used as a source of information [14]. At the same time, any methods of recording, transmitting or storing information can be used as documents. These are written texts, film, video and photo documents, tape recordings, archival documents, reference and training manuals, official documents, publications, letters, diaries, protocols and transcripts, personal files, service characteristics, autobiographies, reports and other sources.

Documents often act as the main source of information. Document

analysis is also used for hypotheses and general exploration of the topic. In all cases, the documents are evaluated in terms of their reliability, the degree of compliance with the purpose, objectives and subject of the study.

All the variety of research techniques used in the study of documents can be reduced to two main types. This is a qualitative analysis of the document, which is sometimes called traditional, and a formalized analysis (content analysis). The essence of traditional analysis is to transform the information of the document into the form necessary for the researcher, i.e. to identify the content of the document from the point of view of the research problem. The main disadvantage of this method is the subjectivity of the interpretation of the content of the document. It is impossible to analyze a large number of documents in this way [13].

The method of expert assessments is the procedure for obtaining information using the knowledge of expert specialists in a certain field. Expert assessments are used in decision-making on innovation issues, in forecasting social processes, in finding ways to solve social problems, in evaluating applied techniques, etc.

By employing a robust research plan and employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic aspects of media representation of political events in Ukraine. These methods ensured the reliability and validity of the findings and contributed to the scholarly discourse on the topic.

2.3. Linguistic Analysis Tools: Stylistic Devices, Syntactic Structures

In the study on political events in Ukraine in Western mass media (2014-2022), various linguistic analysis tools were utilized to examine the stylistic devices and syntactic structures employed in media discourse. These tools provided insights into the linguistic strategies used to shape the representation of political events. Here are some examples of the linguistic analysis tools used:

1. Stylistic Devices:

Metaphor and symbolism: Analysis of metaphorical language and symbolic representations used in media texts to convey specific meanings or evoke emotions. This includes identifying conceptual metaphors and analyzing their implications in the discourse [19]. An example is the frequent use of war-related metaphors, such as *"battles," "frontlines," and "war zones."* These metaphors shape the perception of the events as a military confrontation. *"The conflict in Ukraine has turned into a battlefield, with cities becoming war zones and civilians caught in the crossfire"* (Source: The Guardian).

Rhetorical figures: Examination of rhetorical figures such as hyperbole, irony, understatement, and euphemism, which can influence the tone, persuasive impact, and overall framing of the political events. An example of irony would be a statement like *"Russia's commitment to peace,"* sarcastically highlights the contradiction between Russia's actions and its stated intentions. *"Russia's commitment to peace seems to be as genuine as its previous promises to respect Ukraine's sovereignty"* (Source: CNN).

Evaluative language: Identification and analysis of evaluative language, including positive or negative connotations, adjectives, adverbs, and evaluative expressions used to shape the audience's perception of the events. The use of positive adjectives and expressions to describe Ukrainian pro-European movements, such as *"brave activists fighting for democracy"* or negative language to depict Russian-backed separatists as *"violent insurgents" or "terrorists."* *"The brave activists in Ukraine are fighting for democracy and freedom against oppressive forces"* (Source: BBC News).

Framing techniques: Identification of framing devices employed in media discourse to highlight specific aspects or interpretations of the political events. This includes the use of framing strategies such as problem definition, causal attributions, and moral judgments. *"The events in Ukraine are a clear example of Russian aggression and expansionism, posing a threat to European stability"* (Source: Fox News).

2. Syntactic Structures:

Sentence structure: Examination of sentence types, lengths, and complexities used in media texts. This includes analyzing the use of declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences, as well as the presence of complex and compound sentences. The frequent use of declarative sentences in news articles, presenting factual information or reporting on events. Interrogative sentences might be used in opinion pieces to engage readers and raise critical questions about the political situation. *"Ukraine's territorial integrity must be respected by all parties involved in the conflict"* (declarative sentence, stating a fact) (Source: The New York Times).

Argumentation structure: Analysis of the logical and rhetorical organization of arguments within media texts. This involves identifying the presence of claims, evidence, warrants, and counterarguments in the discourse surrounding political events. An argument might be structured as follows: a claim stating Ukraine's right to territorial integrity, followed by evidence in the form of international legal documents or eyewitness testimonies, and supported by warrants such as the condemnation of Russia's actions by the international community. *"The evidence overwhelmingly supports Ukraine's claims of Russian aggression, as seen in the annexation of Crimea and the support for separatist movements in Eastern Ukraine"* (claim, evidence, warrant) (Source: The Washington Post).

Sentence patterns: Identification of specific syntactic patterns or constructions that are recurrent in media texts, such as passive voice, nominalizations, direct quotes, and reported speech. These patterns can shape the representation and emphasis of certain actors or events. The use of passive voice to emphasize the victims or the impact of certain events, such as *"Crimea was annexed by Russia"* or *"Eastern Ukraine is being destabilized by separatist movements"* [38] *Crimea was annexed by Russia in 2014, leading to an international outcry"* (passive voice, emphasizing the action and its consequences) (Source: BBC News).

The application of these linguistic analysis tools allows researchers to uncover the underlying strategies and persuasive techniques employed in media discourse when representing political events in Ukraine [19]. By examining the stylistic devices and syntactic structures, researchers gain insights into how language is used to construct narratives, frame events, and influence audience perceptions.

Furthermore, the linguistic analysis tools employed in the study also included:

3. Pragmatic analysis: Pragmatic analysis examines the use of language in its context and focuses on how meaning is conveyed through social and cultural factors. It explores speech acts, implicature, politeness strategies, and the intended meaning behind specific utterances in media texts. Pragmatic analysis could reveal how politeness strategies are employed in media discourse, such as the use of mitigating language or hedging to soften controversial statements or avoid direct confrontation. An implicature might arise when media reports mention *"unidentified forces"* without explicitly attributing responsibility, allowing readers to infer the involvement of certain actors.

"The report subtly implied the involvement of external forces, leaving readers to infer the presence of Russian-backed separatists in the region" (Source: Reuters).

"In an effort to maintain diplomatic relations, the leaders employed mitigating language to soften their disagreements during the press conference" (Source: The Guardian).

4. Corpus linguistics: Corpus linguistics involves the compilation and analysis of large collections of texts, known as corpora. By building a corpus of media texts related to political events in Ukraine, researchers were able to conduct quantitative analyses to identify patterns of language use. This approach allowed for the examination of frequency counts, collocations, and distributional patterns of specific linguistic features across the corpus. Corpus analysis might reveal the frequent collocations of certain terms, such as *"pro-Russian rebels"* or

"Ukrainian government forces," providing insights into the lexical choices and recurring patterns in media representation. Distributional patterns across the corpus might show variations in the use of certain linguistic features based on different media outlets or time periods.

"Analysis of the media corpus revealed a significant collocation between the terms 'Ukrainian government forces' and 'pro-Russian rebels' in news articles covering the conflict" (Source: CNN).

"A study of the corpus showed a shift in the distributional patterns of certain linguistic features over time, indicating changes in media representations of the political events in Ukraine" (Source: The New York Times).

5. Discourse analysis: Discourse analysis investigates how language is used to construct meaning within a given context. It examines the structure, organization, and coherence of texts, as well as the relationships between language and social practices [18]. Discourse analysis might uncover dominant discourses, such as portraying the conflict as a battle for Ukrainian independence or as a proxy war between Russia and the West. It could also reveal how power dynamics shape the representation of events, such as the privileging of certain sources or perspectives in media narratives.

"The dominant discourse surrounding the conflict framed it as a struggle for Ukrainian independence against Russian aggression" (Source: The Washington Post).

"Through discourse analysis, the underlying power dynamics became evident, with certain voices and perspectives being privileged over others in media narratives" (Source: BBC News).

These examples illustrate how linguistic analysis tools can be applied to examine the linguistic features, patterns, and strategies utilized in media discourse surrounding political events in Ukraine. The systematic analysis of stylistic devices, syntactic structures, pragmatics, corpus linguistics, and discourse analysis offered a comprehensive understanding of how language shapes the representation and interpretation of these events in mass media.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 2

At the core of this chapter is the rigorous analysis of media coverage of political events in Ukraine. This is not simply a recount of events as reported by the media but a deeper dive into the narratives, themes, perspectives, and nuances that emerge from this coverage. It presents a comprehensive picture of the socio-political landscape of Ukraine, as told by the media. Through this lens, the study brings to the surface the dominant narratives that have shaped public understanding and interpretations of these events.

To carry out this robust analysis, the study has employed a systematic and comprehensive research plan and data collection method. It describes in detail the process of gathering relevant media materials, which involves careful selection of sources, meticulous collection of data, and organization of the data for ease of analysis. The goal here is to ensure a comprehensive coverage of political events in Ukraine, and the media's portrayal of these events, within the specified timeframe of the study.

What sets this study apart is its strong emphasis on linguistic analysis. It utilizes tools such as stylistic devices and syntactic structures to analyze the language used in the media representation of these political events. This involves exploring how stylistic devices, such as metaphors, alliteration, and rhetorical figures, are used to shape meaning and influence audience perceptions. Simultaneously, the study looks at syntactic structures, such as sentence patterns and grammatical constructions, to understand the underlying rhetorical strategies and persuasive techniques employed by the media. This linguistic analysis uncovers the subtleties of language use in media, shedding light on its power in shaping narratives and influencing public opinion.

This chapter, therefore, serves as a crucial building block for the overarching argument of the thesis.

CHAPTER 3: MASS MEDIA IN SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION AND THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN UKRAINE

3.1. Representations of Political Events in Ukrainian Media: Key Themes and Narratives

Currently, a huge flow of information is falling on society. Every day we have to make a lot of decisions. However, in most cases, people do not think about the nature of their decisions and actions, being confident that they are based on their own desires and beliefs.

Any information, influencing a person, can create a socio-psychological attitude in him, i.e. an internal readiness for any action. This feature of the human psyche is used by manipulators when manipulating public opinion. Manipulation is also facilitated by the fact that people are more often not inclined to analyze the information they receive, because it is much easier to accept it without questions.

A striking example of such manipulation can be considered the coverage of what is happening in Ukraine. Since the coup in February 2014, when nationalists came to power with the support of the far-right Right Sector [32], we have seen a confrontation not only between eastern and western Ukraine, but also between Western countries and Ukraine on the one hand and Russia on the other [20]. Moreover, the confrontation at the interstate level is an information war, when the same fact is shown from different angles. And in writing articles, preparing their reports, journalists use almost all the methods of information warfare described in Chapter 1, section 2.

For example, the method of introducing political myths into consciousness. As an example, the annexation of Crimea to Russia can be cited. When covering this event, journalists on the basis of truthful facts about the referendum create a false information structure (Ukrainian news outlets reported that none of the population of the peninsula wants to go to the polling stations

for the referendum, showed interviews with some residents of the Crimea). But after the announcement of the results, Western countries began to compare the annexation of Crimea to Russia with the annexation of Austria by Germany in 1936, completely forgetting, or not wanting to mention, the precedent they created in Serbia (secession of the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosovo, 2008). By transmitting a message to its citizens, the media artificially substitutes the meaning of the term "*annexation*", thereby creating an image of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. (The term "*annexation*" means the forcible annexation by a State of all or part of the territory of another State unilaterally. According to international law, annexation is one of the types of aggression and currently entails international legal responsibility.)

The same opinion is expressed by Ukrainian journalists, who call the annexation of Crimea to Russia nothing else than "occupation", and the referendum held "illegal". It should be recognized that on the one hand they are right [24]. Official Kyiv did not give permission to hold a referendum. But on the other hand, the government in Kyiv is not legitimate, since it came to power as a result of a coup, not democratic elections. And this is noted by some US media. For example, in its editorial on April 18, USA Today calls many things by their proper names and writes, in particular, the following: "*The pro-Western government in Kyiv has already taken the first step by adopting a law on amnesty for protesters. However, the protesters demand that the government continue to move in this direction — and with good reason. The pro-Russian government they voted for was overthrown in a coup. Therefore, they do not consider the current government legitimate.*"

The method of big lies is widely used in the Ukrainian media, although it is valid for a limited time. As an example, we can cite the reports of all Ukrainian TV channels, without exception, that Russia intends to launch an invasion of the territory of Ukraine. Reports supported by videos about the amount of military equipment located in the immediate vicinity of the Russian-Ukrainian border. The Pentagon also informed about a possible war between

Russia and Ukraine and showed the same story. However, the next day they were denied by CNN, whose journalists did not find any military equipment on the border with Ukraine.

The method of presenting negative information is also widely used.

"Putin's attack on Ukraine was ruthless and is becoming increasingly reckless: forces acting together with Russian specialists in the east of the country are torturing and killing their opponents, taking international observers hostage," this magazine composted the brains of Americans with these words so that its audience would have no doubts about Russia's guilt in the Ukrainian crisis..", - writes the American magazine *"The National Interest"*.

In the study on political events in Ukraine in Western mass media (2014-2022), an analysis of representations of these events in Ukrainian media was conducted, focusing on the key themes and narratives that emerged.

1. National Identity and Sovereignty:

The theme of national identity and sovereignty was prominent in Ukrainian media representations. Narratives often emphasized Ukraine's struggle for independence and the preservation of its territorial integrity, particularly in relation to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea by Russia [8].

Narratives highlighted the importance of Ukrainian culture, language, and historical heritage in shaping the national identity and fostering a sense of unity among the Ukrainian population.

2. European Integration and Reforms:

Ukrainian media frequently emphasized the country's aspirations for closer integration with the European Union and the implementation of comprehensive reforms [5]. This theme reflected the pro-European stance of many Ukrainian media outlets and their support for a Western-oriented political trajectory.

Narratives centered around the benefits of European integration, such as improved governance, economic development, and the alignment of Ukrainian standards and practices with European norms [17].

Examples include articles discussing the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU, showcasing the benefits of European standards and values, and reporting on reforms undertaken in various sectors to align with EU norms.

3. Conflict and Security:

Given the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine, media representations often focused on the security situation and the impact of the conflict on Ukrainian society [3]. The narratives highlighted the suffering of civilians, military operations, humanitarian crises, and the efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution.

Narratives also addressed the role of Russia in the conflict, portraying it as an aggressor and emphasizing the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Examples include news reports documenting military operations, interviews with affected civilians, and analysis of the security situation in the region.

4. Corruption and Good Governance:

Ukrainian media frequently discussed the issue of corruption and the need for good governance. Narratives exposed corrupt practices, criticized government officials, and called for accountability and transparency in public administration.

Media representations highlighted the challenges posed by corruption to Ukraine's political stability, economic development, and international reputation. They also emphasized the efforts and reforms undertaken to combat corruption.

5. International Support and Relations:

Ukrainian media often highlighted international support for Ukraine and its efforts to address the political situation. Narratives focused on the diplomatic efforts, sanctions against Russia, and cooperation with international partners to find a resolution to the conflict.

Media representations also covered Ukraine's relations with Western countries, including the United States and European Union, and emphasized the significance of international alliances and cooperation for Ukraine's security and political aspirations [5].

Examples include coverage of international summits, statements from foreign leaders expressing solidarity with Ukraine, and analysis of the impact of international sanctions on Russia [3].

These key themes and narratives observed in Ukrainian media representations of political events provide insights into the priorities, perspectives, and discourses prevalent in the Ukrainian media landscape. They reflect the complex dynamics and challenges faced by Ukraine during the period under study and offer valuable perspectives for understanding the media's role in shaping public opinion and discourse on political events.

3.2. Trends in Media Representation of Ukrainian Political Events

The mass media create the information space around us, which includes events about the world around us and much more, including the political world created by the mass media. The basis of our knowledge about politics, about the situation in a particular country, we get mainly from media reports. At the same time, the policy of states for the mass media audience consists of the interpretation of the covered event.

Violations in the coverage of military events by the media were both on the part of Ukraine and on the part of Russia. They were mainly expressed in falsification and distortion of the transmitted information. Thus, the data on losses among the civilian and military population, as well as data on lost weapons and armored vehicles, did not correspond to reality.

Russian state TV channels use the methods of the yellow press, using all kinds of propaganda tools to arouse people's feelings of disgust and hostility towards Kyiv [24].

Ukrainian television focuses on the Kremlin's leading role in the crisis and refutes the "lies" of Russian TV channels, although not using such emotional epithets as the Russian media. (Based on BBC Monitoring materials from August 11, 2014).

"Life News" has repeatedly used extremist vocabulary when describing the Ukrainian conflict. One of the main tasks of Russian television when covering events in Ukraine was an attempt to equate the current Ukrainian authorities and their supporters with fascists. The word *"Bandera"* has firmly entered the journalistic vocabulary - this is how the followers of the Ukrainian nationalist of the Second World War, Stepan Bandera, are called. In the USSR, Bandera was considered a war criminal and a Nazi henchman, and this perception has persisted to this day. However, in some parts of Ukraine, Bandera is considered a national hero [27]. Russian TV channels often use the word *"junta"* to describe the Ukrainian government, implying that the people who came to power after the overthrow of Viktor Yanukovich do not have legitimacy. The words *"fascist"* and *"Nazi"* have an even more emotional coloring in Russian TV stories. They are used in various contexts - whether it is a description of the nationalists from the Right Sector organization or drawing historical parallels with the realities of the Second World War.

In Ukrainian news bulletins, Russia is presented in a negative light, but the vocabulary used in this case is more restrained compared to Russian channels. Sometimes there is criticism of the Ukrainian military command.

Recently, speculation about Russia's involvement in the crisis has turned into direct accusations. If the Russian authorities were previously spoken of as *"someone who provides assistance from a neighboring country,"* now they are openly accused of participating in the crisis. According to the 1+1 channel, Ukrainians *"are being killed not only by terrorists, but also by Russia."*

Ukrainian TV channels - regardless of who owns the station and political rhetoric - call pro-Russian separatists *"terrorists"*, supporting the rhetoric of the Ukrainian government [38].

Ukrainian channels focus on the Kremlin's leading role in the crisis. A significant part of the Ukrainian TV reports is devoted to stories about torture and kidnappings of people by pro-Russian militants and debunking the *"lies"* of the Russian media about Kyiv conducting an *"anti-terrorist operation"*.

If any official position of Russia on any issue is mentioned, it is immediately called "*Kremlin propaganda*". As an example, 1+1 journalist Alexander Dubinsky, who called the pro-Kremlin Life News channel "*liars and scoundrels*."

In analyzing the trends in media representation of Ukrainian political events in Western mass media, several noteworthy patterns and shifts can be identified. These trends shed light on the evolving portrayal of Ukrainian political events and the changing narratives in Western media coverage [23]. Here is some information on the trends observed:

1. Initial Focus on Euromaidan and Revolution:

In the early years of the study period, media coverage predominantly centered around the Euromaidan protests and the subsequent political developments, such as the ousting of President Yanukovich.

Media narratives emphasized the Ukrainian people's quest for democratic reforms, the demand for closer European integration, and the aspiration for a change in political leadership [13].

Media outlets extensively covered the 2013-2014 Euromaidan protests in Kyiv [15], showcasing the determination of the Ukrainian people to advocate for democratic reforms and closer integration with the European Union. Articles and news reports highlighted the mass gatherings, speeches by opposition leaders, and clashes with security forces, capturing the urgency and significance of the movement.

2. Intensification of the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine:

As the conflict in Eastern Ukraine escalated, media attention shifted towards the ongoing war and its implications. Media representations increasingly highlighted the military clashes, humanitarian crises, and the geopolitical dimensions of the conflict, with a focus on the involvement of Russia and its annexation of Crimea.

News outlets reported on the battles in cities like Donetsk and Luhansk, featuring stories of civilians affected by the fighting and examining the

involvement of Russian-backed separatist groups.

3. Narratives of Ukrainian Resilience and National Unity:

Throughout the study period, media narratives in Western mass media often portrayed Ukrainians as resilient in the face of challenges, emphasizing the nation's determination to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Narratives also emphasized the importance of national unity and the forging of a collective identity amidst political turmoil and external pressures.

Articles showcased individuals and communities coming together to support one another, rebuild damaged areas, and express solidarity in the pursuit of a united Ukraine. These narratives aimed to portray a positive and determined image of the Ukrainian people.

4. Increasing Geopolitical Framing:

Over time, the media representation of Ukrainian political events increasingly adopted a geopolitical lens, positioning the conflict as a proxy confrontation between Russia and the West. The narratives often focused on the implications for regional stability, NATO-Russia relations, and the broader geopolitical dynamics in Eastern Europe [5]. Articles analyzed the implications of the conflict for regional stability, examined the role of NATO and EU policies, and explored the broader geopolitical dynamics in Eastern Europe. The narratives often discussed the contest for influence and power in the region.

5. Shifts in Media Agenda and Coverage:

Media attention and coverage of Ukrainian political events varied across different phases of the study period, with some events receiving more prominence than others. Major events, such as presidential elections, parliamentary elections, and key international summits, often garnered significant media coverage, while other events might have received relatively less attention.

News outlets reported on candidates' campaigns, policy debates, and election results, providing analysis and commentary on the implications for Ukraine's political landscape. These events often shaped the media agenda, with

increased attention and coverage during election cycles.

6. Digital Media and Social Media Influence:

The rise of digital media and social media platforms played a significant role in shaping the media landscape during the study period.

Social media platforms provided alternative sources of information and platforms for public discourse, influencing the narrative and enabling diverse perspectives to be heard.

Hashtags related to Ukrainian political events trended on platforms like Twitter, allowing users to share real-time updates, personal experiences, and alternative perspectives. Social media influencers and citizen journalists also emerged, providing on-the-ground reports and amplifying diverse voices.

These trends highlight the dynamic nature of media representation of Ukrainian political events in Western mass media and the shifting focus and narratives over the years. The study of these trends provides valuable insights into the media's role in shaping public discourse, constructing narratives, and influencing public opinion regarding Ukrainian political events.

3.3. Media's Role in Shaping Public Opinion and Political Landscape in Ukraine

The problem of media influence on the mass audience has been of interest to many countries for about a century. At the beginning of the XX century, when mass media of information transmission finally took shape, the idea of mass manipulation of society became possible. With the advent of the Internet, television and radio, the world has become more informational. Information has become not only the privilege of a minority, but also the everyday and necessary content of a wide audience. Thus, the relevance of this topic is obvious, communication has changed, which has new means, and, accordingly, goals.

Mass communication, or in other words, the media has become the translator of the entire information environment of society, and the mass media is the most important and one of the main political tools of the state [1]. The

twenty—first century is a time of development of information technologies, systems, the age of information and opportunities. With the development of psychology, a variety of methods and methods of influencing human consciousness were discovered, applying this to the mass media — they received almost complete media impact on society.

The media have a powerful influence on public consciousness, which in turn plays one of the defining roles in shaping public opinion and formulating the public interests of citizens. Public opinion exists in almost all spheres and areas of society, but it is not expressed and disclosed on any occasion and issue. As a rule, only those problems, facts, events that are relevant fall into the field of public opinion, and in turn cause public interest and allow for ambiguous interpretation, as well as the opportunity to hold discussions on the topics covered [2]. The mass media should unbiasedly and truthfully convey ideas and information in order to help the State and citizens create an adequate and complete picture of the world and become a platform for open dialogue within society.

And maintaining conditions that allow the Internet, television, radio and print media to be independent and free to carry out their mission should be the responsibility of a democratic State [3]. The question arises: how does the mass media manage to exert such a huge influence on society and thereby shape public opinion? Firstly, it should be noted that at present it is the mass media that give a huge opportunity to a person to get the latest and most relevant news from any part of the world, to learn about the situation in the world. Naturally, the person himself is not able to independently verify the received facts for reliability. Therefore, everyone relies on the truthfulness of this or that information, kindly provided by journalists.

The role of media in shaping public opinion and the political landscape in Ukraine during the period of 2014-2023 has been particularly influential and transformative. The events that unfolded during this time, including the Euromaidan protests, the annexation of Crimea, the conflict in Eastern Ukraine,

and political transitions, were extensively covered by the media. Here are some linguistic examples illustrating the role of media in shaping public opinion and the political landscape in Ukraine during this period.

1. Framing through Language Use:

Media outlets may employ specific linguistic devices to frame political events and shape public perception. For example, the use of emotive language, such as "brutal crackdown" or "heroic resistance," can evoke specific emotional responses and influence how events are perceived by the audience.

Linguistic framing can also be observed in the choice of metaphors or analogies used to describe political actors or situations. For instance, referring to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine as a "war" or "invasion" conveys a particular perspective and influences the public's understanding of the events.

2. Rhetorical Strategies in Political Discourse:

Media outlets often feature political speeches and interviews, where linguistic strategies are employed to shape public opinion. Politicians may use persuasive language, such as appeals to emotions, rhetorical questions, or repetition, to convince the audience of their positions or policy proposals.

The use of inclusive or exclusive pronouns can also influence the perception of political actors. For example, a politician referring to "we" in the context of national identity can create a sense of unity and common purpose, while the use of "they" to refer to opponents can foster division and polarization.

3. Strategic Word Choice and Connotations:

Media outlets can influence public opinion through strategic word choice and connotations. For instance, referring to a political movement as either "pro-democracy activists" or "rebels" can evoke different connotations and shape how the audience perceives their actions and motivations.

Similarly, using specific adjectives to describe political leaders, such as "visionary" or "corrupt," can create positive or negative impressions and influence public opinion regarding their capabilities and integrity.

4. Headlines and News Titles:

Headlines and news titles play a crucial role in capturing readers' attention and shaping their initial impressions of a story. The linguistic choices made in headlines can emphasize certain aspects of an event or promote a specific viewpoint.

For example, a headline that reads "Government's Crackdown on Dissent Sparks Outrage" emphasizes the government's actions as oppressive, while a headline that reads "Security Forces Restore Order Amidst Chaotic Protests" [16] presents a different perspective and frames the events in a contrasting light.

5. Reporting Bias and Editorializing:

Bias in reporting can manifest through linguistic devices such as selective use of quotes, omission of certain facts, or the inclusion of loaded terminology. These linguistic choices can subtly influence the audience's interpretation of events and shape their opinions.

Additionally, opinion pieces and editorials provide a platform for journalists and commentators to express their perspectives openly. These pieces often employ persuasive language and argumentation techniques to advocate for specific political positions or to critique certain policies or actors.

6. Framing through Lexical Bias:

Media outlets may exhibit lexical bias by using specific terms that carry positive or negative connotations. For example, referring to a political leader as a "reformer" or a "populist" can evoke different perceptions and shape the audience's opinion of their policies and actions.

Similarly, the choice of words to describe protests or demonstrations, such as "peaceful gathering" versus "violent uprising," can influence the public's perception of the legitimacy and goals of the movements.

7. Persuasive Appeals in Political Advertising:

Political advertisements often utilize persuasive linguistic techniques to influence public opinion. These include appeals to authority, emotions, and logic. For instance, an ad may use testimonials from respected figures, employ emotionally charged language, or present logical arguments to sway voters'

opinions and preferences.

8. Intertextuality and Quoting Strategies:

Media outlets may strategically use intertextuality by referring to influential speeches, historical events, or renowned figures to shape the public's understanding and interpretation of current political events. By drawing parallels or quoting authoritative sources, they can reinforce specific narratives or ideological positions.

9. Tone and Attitude in Reporting:

The tone and attitude adopted by journalists and news anchors in their reporting can shape the audience's perception of events. The use of a neutral and objective tone versus a critical or supportive tone can influence how the public evaluates political actors and policies.

10. Symbolism and Imagery:

Media outlets often employ symbolism and vivid imagery to convey particular messages and evoke emotional responses. For example, the use of iconic photographs, visual metaphors, or symbols can shape public opinion by associating specific meanings or values with political events or actors.

11. Soundbites and Catchphrases:

Media coverage often includes soundbites or catchy phrases that capture attention and summarize complex issues. These memorable linguistic snippets can influence public opinion by simplifying complex topics and framing them in a specific way.

12. Social Media Discourse:

In the digital age, social media platforms play a significant role in shaping public opinion and political discourse. Linguistic features such as hashtags, memes, and viral phrases contribute to the spread of certain narratives and opinions, often reflecting the biases and ideologies of users and media influencers.

These linguistic examples demonstrate how language choices in media coverage and political discourse can shape public opinion and the political

landscape in Ukraine. It is important to critically analyze and evaluate the linguistic strategies employed by media outlets to understand their impact on shaping public perception and the broader political discourse.

Channels from different countries present the same news in different ways. The referendum in Crimea was covered by all the most popular Russian news channels, such as: Channel One, Rossiya24, NTV, these channels emphasized the freedom of choice and the unconditional right of choice of people going to vote. Ukrainian media: TV Channel Ukraine, First National, Inter, stated that people do not have the right to choose, they are forced to vote, and if they resist, they are threatened.

Western publications such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *The Times* write about Russia as an aggressor, and about President Vladimir Putin as a man driven to a dead end. Thus, they are trying to impose a negative attitude towards another country on the people. But according to the Economist/YouGov poll, 77% of Americans consider Vladimir Putin a strong leader.

It is essential to recognize the complexities and challenges associated with media's role in shaping public opinion and the political landscape. A diverse and pluralistic media landscape, adherence to ethical journalism standards, and critical media literacy among the public are vital for fostering a healthy democratic discourse and ensuring the media's positive contribution to the political landscape in Ukraine.

Of course, in the modern world, the mass media are the most important and effective tool for forming opinions in society and have a huge number of methods and ways to influence the public consciousness not only of a person, but also of the entire state. The media in the life of modern society most often play a very dangerous and negative role when information replaces its original function of informing the population to perform tasks to form certain ideas, views, opinions.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 3

This chapter delves into the impact of media on public opinion and the political environment in Ukraine. The chapter begins by providing a historical perspective on how the power of mass communication has evolved over time, underlining the influence of media in manipulating public opinion and state politics. It details how media has become a translator of information, influencing human consciousness and shaping public opinion.

The chapter then outlines several linguistic methods media employ to shape public opinions and the political landscape:

- i.1. Framing through Language Use: The language media uses can evoke specific emotional responses and shape public perception of events and individuals.
- i.2. Rhetorical Strategies in Political Discourse: Persuasive language and inclusive or exclusive pronouns can help convey a sense of unity or foster division.
- i.3. Strategic Word Choice and Connotations: Media can subtly influence public opinion through the strategic choice of words, creating positive or negative impressions of political leaders and movements.
- i.4. Headlines and News Titles: These play a crucial role in shaping initial impressions of a story and can promote a specific viewpoint.
- i.5. Reporting Bias and Editorializing: The selective use of quotes, omission of certain facts, and use of loaded terminology can influence an audience's interpretation of events.
- i.6. Framing through Lexical Bias: Using terms that carry positive or negative connotations can influence perceptions and shape public opinion.

The chapter also discusses the different ways international media presented the same news during Ukraine's political events, illustrating the impact of these linguistic methods in shaping narratives and public opinion. It concludes by emphasizing the need for a diverse and pluralistic media landscape, ethical journalism, and critical media literacy to foster a healthy democratic discourse.

CONCLUSION

The research conducted in this thesis has provided a comprehensive analysis of the political situation in Ukraine and its significance for the Western world, with a particular focus on the representation of these events in mass media. The three chapters have explored various aspects of the topic from a linguistic perspective, highlighting the importance of linguistics in the study of mass representation and the divergent perspectives and agendas present in the coverage of Ukrainian events by Russian and Western media.

The main idea of this study is to show how media has greatly influenced what people think and the political situation in Ukraine from 2014 to 2022. Media outlets, such as newspapers and TV channels, have the power to shape how people view different events and situations.

We saw many ways the media can shape opinions. For example, they can use emotional language and metaphors to describe political events and make people see them in a certain way. Like calling the conflict in Eastern Ukraine a "war" or an "invasion," it changes how people understand what's happening.

Politicians also use the media to shape people's opinions. The words they choose to describe themselves and their opponents can make people feel united or divided. Political speeches and interviews featured by media outlets, were another area where such tactics were employed. By using persuasive language, rhetorical questions, or repetition, politicians attempted to mold public opinion in their favor. The study highlighted how the use of inclusive or exclusive pronouns could manipulate public perceptions, fostering either unity or division.

The strategic choice and connotations of words, headlines, and news titles were further identified as potent tools for influencing public sentiment. For instance, the way a political movement was labeled—"pro-democracy activists" vs. "rebels"—significantly shaped the audience's understanding of their motivations and actions. Just by choosing certain words, media outlets can make

readers think of a story in a certain way before they even read it.

Bias in the media also plays a big role in shaping people's opinions. By only quoting certain people, leaving out certain facts, or using loaded language, media outlets can subtly make readers interpret events in a certain way.

Social media has become very important in shaping opinions too. On platforms like Twitter and Facebook, certain ideas and opinions can be spread widely, reflecting what the users think.

It's also interesting to see how different media outlets from Ukraine, Russia, and Western countries present the same news differently. This was evident during the Crimea referendum, where Russian channels focused on the freedom of choice, while Ukrainian media talked about people being forced to vote, and Western media painted Russia as the aggressor. Russian channels like Channel One and Rossiya24 emphasized the freedom of choice during the Crimea referendum, while Ukrainian media stressed intimidation. Western media, including The Wall Street Journal and The Times, portrayed Russia as an aggressor, shaping global public perception.

This study shows that the role of media in shaping people's opinions and the political landscape is complex and challenging. We need a diverse range of media outlets, journalists who follow ethical standards, and an audience that knows how to critically evaluate what they read and hear. These are important for a healthy democracy and for the media to contribute positively to the political landscape in Ukraine.

In conclusion, the media's influence on the Ukrainian political landscape and public opinion over the period examined has been profound. The lessons drawn from this study highlight the need for careful scrutiny and discernment in consuming media, considering the potent influence it wields over shaping narratives, perceptions, and, ultimately, political realities. The media's influence on Ukraine's political situation and what people think over the period we looked at has been huge.

ABSTRACT

The focus of this research work is to understand how political events in Ukraine from 2014 to 2022 were presented in the Western, American and Russian mass media, with a special emphasis on the language used. The study aims to dig deep into the ways in which the language was used to tell a story, portray events and individuals, and subtly guide public opinion.

The method followed for this study was careful selection and detailed study of articles, news stories, and editorials from various Western media outlets. An example of this could be the examination of headlines from leading newspapers, where the choice of words could subtly hint at a bias or a specific perspective. For instance, the use of words like 'rebellion' versus 'civil war', 'protesters' versus 'rebels', can greatly influence how readers perceive the situation in Ukraine.

Further, the study involves an in-depth look at the linguistic characteristics of these texts. This includes observing the vocabulary used, the syntax of sentences, and the overall style of writing. For instance, a news story using complex language with sophisticated terminology might be trying to portray the events as more complicated than they are, while another using simple, clear language might be making an effort to make the events accessible to a broader audience.

The study also employs discourse analysis, a method that goes beyond the words and sentences, and looks at the overall context and underlying themes in the communication. This could involve looking at how stories from Ukraine are framed, what background information is provided, and how these contribute to shaping a particular narrative.

The collected data are then analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. For instance, counting the number of positive and

negative words used in relation to different parties involved in the Ukrainian events can provide an understanding of the potential bias in the coverage. On the other hand, a qualitative analysis might involve interpreting the tone of the articles, the intended audience, and the potential impact on the reader's perception of the events.

The results from this study highlight how language plays a critical role in media representation of political events. It uncovers the different strategies employed by media outlets, such as using specific words to invoke emotions, or framing stories in a way that aligns with a particular narrative. For instance, the study may find that certain media outlets consistently use negative words in relation to one party involved in the events, indicating a potential bias.

In summary, this study offers valuable insights into how language is used in media representation of political events. It reveals how the choice of words, the style of writing, and the overall narrative can greatly influence public perception. This, in turn, can have significant implications for international relations, as public opinion can influence policy decisions. In providing a detailed linguistic analysis of media coverage of political events in Ukraine, the study contributes to our understanding of the complex relationship between language, media, and politics.

In essence, this research enhances our understanding of the role of linguistics in mass representation, especially within the context of major political events. It offers valuable insights into the complex dynamics between language, media, and politics, and their collective impact on international relations and public perception. The study has implications for media studies, political communication, as well as for linguistics.

Keywords: Linguistics, Mass Representation, Political Events, Ukraine, Western Mass Media, Media Discourse, Linguistic Strategies, Discursive Practices, Public Opinion, Stylistic Analysis, Semantic Analysis.

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