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A REVIEW OF THE TURKISH JOURNAL'S TAKE ON THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR

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ABSTRACT

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in Europe has caught the attention of nations worldwide. Türkiye's proximity to these countries and long-existing political relations have caused the conflict to become an essential part of the main agenda in the Turkish press. The Black Sea– a vital logistic artery for the transportation of both energy sources and agricultural products to the rest of the world– is a commonplace of convergence for all three of these countries, and the affairs between them, already considered important with regards to international relations, soared into an even higher point of interest in the media following the war. The warring parties have been vigilant on the matter of the Turkish Straits, on the subject of Türkiye having the power to regulate all waterway activities, which led to officials from both Russia and Ukraine releasing statements on the matter in the initial days of the conflict, to put media's power of creating a solid international public opinion to use. The Turkish press reacted promptly, sharing the news with Turkish readers after developments in February 2022. Thus, this paper reviews Turkish government officials' statements on the ongoing war and their narration, considering the miscellaneous reports in 4 Turkish newspapers. In this respect, the newspapers Yeni Şafak and Habertürk represent the right wing. In contrast, Aydınlık and Cumhuriyet represent the left wing to deepen further the understanding of how these newspapers acquired the necessary information and narrated the story in their reports. The paper, to assess the initial reaction to the war, strictly focuses on the news reported between the start of the war on February 28th and March 02nd, 2023, with the description of events, the parties of the war, international reactions to the conflict, and the war's impact on economy constituting the main headings under which the study showcases a thorough analysis of words that fall under the above-given headings, their frequency, why and how the newspaper had used them.

Keywords: Russo-Ukrainian war, international relations, the Turkish press, content analysis

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ GAZETELERİN RUSYA-UKRAYNA SAVAŞINA YAKLAŞIMI ÜZERİNE BİR DEĞERLENDİRME

ÖZ

Rusya-Ukrayna Savaşı'nın Avrupa'da meydana gelmesi, dünya kamuoyunun ilgisinin buraya yönelmesine sebep olmuştur. Türkiye'nin her iki ülkeyle gerek coğrafi gerekse siyasi ilişkileri Türk basının da konuyu ana gündeme taşımasında etkili olmuştur. Adı geçen her üç ülke de Karadeniz'i aktif olarak kullanmaktadır. Karadeniz hem enerji nakil hatlarının konumu hem de tarımsal ürünlerin dünya pazarına yayılması için önemli bir ortak alan özelliği taşımaktadır. Uluslararası ilişkiler noktasından önemli olan bu ülkelerin ilişkileri, savaş gibi medyanın ilgisini çeken bir noktaya taşınmıştır. Türkiye'nin boğazlar üzerindeki hakkı savaşan her iki ülkenin de önem verdiği bir durum olmuştur. Gerek Rus gerekse Ukraynalı yetkililer savaşın ilk günlerinde bu konuda açıklamalarda bulunmuştur. Medyanın kamuoyu oluşturmadaki gücünü savaşan taraflar kullanmak istemiştir. Türk basını, olayın meydana gelmesinin hemen sonrasında reaksiyon alarak, gelişmeleri okuyucularıyla paylaşmıştır. Buradan hareketle, yetkililerin açıklamaları ve

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bunların gazetelerde ne surette ele alındığı tarafımızdan incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. İlaveten savaş hakkında gazetelerin kendi bünyesinde ürettikleri haberler hariç diğer haberler de değerlendirmeye tabi tutulmuştur. Elde edilen bilgilerin hangi görüş tarafından ne surette ele alındığı bu araştırmanın ana konusunu oluşturmaktadır. Bu meyanda sol ve sağ görüşler temelinde dört gazete seçilmiştir. Skalanın sağ tarafında Yeni Şafak ve Habertürk, sol tarafında ise Aydınlık ve Cumhuriyet gazeteleri seçilmiştir. Zaman aralığı olarak ise savaşın başladığı 28 Şubat 2022 ile 2 Mart 2022 tarihleri arasını kapsayan, ilk izlenimleri ölçümlemek amacıyla bir haftalık süre baz alınmıştır. Olayın tanımlanması, olayın tarafları, uluslararası tepkiler ve ekonomik etkiler temaları belirlenmiştir. Bu başlıklar altında, seçilen kelimelerin tekrarlanma sıklığı, neden kullanıldığı ve nasıl tanımlandığı derinlemesine analiz edilmiştir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Rusya-Ukrayna Savaşı, uluslararası ilişkiler, Türk basını, içerik çözümleme

Introduction

One can, arguably, divide the relations between Russia and Ukraine into different periods based on the term of each president who has served in office since 2014 (Денис, 2017, p. 66). During Leonid Kuchma's time in office, there were talks about reunifying Ukraine with Russia. However, the ruling party in Ukraine– by using the British Commonwealth examples as a means to an end– somehow opposed this idea of reunification, which the 1991 agreement of the Commonwealth of Independent States (Hüseynov, 2003, p. 389) between Russia, Belarus and Ukraine worked towards to realise. Quoting Седякин, Баца (2017, p. 67) claims that Yushchenko aimed to set Ukraine apart from other post-Soviet states. The transfer of Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR and the dispute of dominion over Sevastopol, going as far back as the USSR era, have been the main points of long-lived controversial debates (Денис, 2017, p. 67). Another aspect of the geographical issues mentioned so far is the matter of energy transport lines. The USSR planned the construction of its energy pipelines around the then-existing Ukrainian SSR, which then had become problematic due to the climbing tension between Russia and Ukraine. Following the new agreements, Ukraine settled its gas debts with Russia by sending a sizeable amount of weaponry that it had inherited previously after the collapse of the USSR (Лапкин, 2013, p. 138). Despite that, Ukraine's approach to the matter remains unchanged, resulting in an ever-persisting dispute on energy transport lines between the two countries.

The 2004 elections in Ukraine saw the pro-West leader Yushchenko go against the pro-Russian ex-president Yanukovych. Although Yushchenko emerged as the official victor of the election, many knew there were conflicts of authority within the constituents of the ruling 'Our Ukraine Bloc' (Tüysüzoğlu, 2014, p. 27-28). Indeed, President Leonid Kuchma ordered Tymoshenko to be dismissed, with Yushchenko replacing her as the prime minister, resulting in a political feud between the two leaders (Bingöl, 2014, p. 19). With Western powers avoiding a conflict with Russia and his failure to establish economic stability, the persisting energy disputes with Russia caused Yushchenko to lose the majority popular support (Samedov, 2022, p. 66-68). In addition, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agreed to Ukraine's aspirations for NATO membership during the 2008 Bucharest Summit, which further strained the relations between Ukraine and Russia (Ünalmış & Oğuz, 2019, p. 2). Following a period of political instability, all three of the leaders mentioned above announced their candidacy for presidency with the elections seeing Yanukovych as the new president.

Yanukovych's ascension to the office came with some vital changes in Ukraine's foreign policy. Although he had the support of Western powers against his fiercest opponent, Tymoshenko, in the elections, the new president soon started implementing pro-Russian policies. The signing of the Kharkiv Pact in the first quarter of 2010 extended Russia's lease of a naval base in Sevastopol to 2042 with an option for a further 5-year renewal to 2047, while Yanukovych adopted policies that abandoned Ukraine's NATO membership ambitions in June of the

same year (Kuzio, 2012, p. 404-405). The diminishing support of Western states, economic underperformance and Tymoshenko's arrest caused concerns among Ukrainians, which then turned into protests with Yanukovych suspending the talks on EU membership in the latter half of 2013 (Diyarbakırlıoğlu, 2020, p. 212). Yanukovych had to flee the country following violent protests that took Ukraine by storm and saw dozens of protestors killed. After removing Yanukovych, the Ukrainian parliament installed an interim government, hoping to end the political turmoil interrupted by Russia's annexation of Crimea (Derman & Ongarava, 2014, p. 12). The consequent Crimean status referendum conducted in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea under Russian provision resulted in the majority of people voting for the integration of the region into Russia (Konak, 2019, p. 85). Russia's recognition of Crimea as a sovereign state during political turmoil in Ukraine raised global concerns. Worries over Donetsk meeting possibly the same end became the last straw between Russia and the Western powers leading the West to impose sanctions on Russia to prevent further invasion attempts (Ercan, 2015, p. 97). The downing of the Malaysia Airlines plane on July 17th increased the severity of these sanctions (Uyanıker, 2018, p. 145). Further political unrest in Donetsk and Luhansk regions ensued, with the Ukrainian government spending almost eight years between 2014-2022, struggling against separatists supported by Russia with the developments mentioned above boiling down to an all-out war on February 24th, 2022 (Dönmez, 2023, p. 135).

Gathering information and intelligence assumes an even greater importance during times of war. This fact is especially true today as international relations are more closely intertwined than ever, and the result of rising tension between two countries is not strictly limited to their immediate surroundings. Thus, newspapers and journalists are indispensable during wars or similar events. Because most people still turn to them for news, newspapers' way of framing, presenting and conveying any given message to their target audience is of paramount significance. Çaplı (2016) highlights that ethical limitations, one of many responsibilities of the media, are not limited to solely the accuracy, reality and objectivity of the news. However, the context of news must also be reported in full with undisputed facts. In this regard, one can assert that the way of framing certain news is a fundamental element of objectivity, especially on the part of lamestream news, since news is a visual and audial medium imposed on the people through public happenings and events by those that have or would like to have hegemony over others (İnceoğlu ve Çoban, 2016, p. 24). However, whether the framing establishes this principal requirement of objectivity remains disputed, as it features some aspects of events while obscuring, destroying or misconstruing others. Frames pick out certain pieces of information to enhance their effect, making a given event meaningful and unforgettable for the target audience (Fiske& Taylor cited by Entman, 1993, p. 53).

This paper aims to show how newspapers on the opposite poles of the political spectrum, leftist Aydınlık and Cumhuriyet and rightist Habertürk and Yeni Şafak, displayed significant similarities or differences in their information acquisition and perspectives by content analysing 1131 news reports. News reports included in the study consist of reports on the official websites of the newspapers and news acquired through their affiliated agencies. The paper includes the breakdown of news reports based on their dates and categories, using keywords under the following categories for themes: description of events, the parties of the war, international reactions to the conflict, and the war's impact on the economy. The content analysis results have shown that among newspapers ordered based on their ideologies, rightists Habertürk and Yeni Şafak were anti-Russian. On the other hand, Cumhuriyet displayed a more neutral

stance when compared to the first two newspapers, with every date taken into account under the above-given headings. At the same time, results on Aydınlık's part showed that the newspaper displayed a more pro-Russian behaviour.

Method and Limitation

The subject matter of this paper is the content analysis of online news reports on the Russo-Ukrainian war published by four different newspapers– all of them having a varying degree of rightist or leftist views– in Turkey. Content analysis is an objective and qualitative-quantitative research method that leaves no place for subjective interpretation, making the results applicable to all situations (Fiske, 1995). It ensures objectivity by enabling pre-determined analysis procedures to be applied impartially and consistently and ensuring that other researchers would achieve the same results when applying the same conditions. Researchers can also use this method to make descriptions and deductions (Smith, 2000, p. 314). Robert Philip Weber describes content analysis as following specific procedures to make valid deductions. These deductions are related to the sender and receiver of the message and the message itself (Weber, 1990, p. 9). Fiske states that the frequency of used words provides information about the message's quality. In this context, content analysis results allow cumulative evaluations and deductions. Thus, the findings in this paper have revealed each newspaper's approach to the Russo-Ukrainian war during the first days of the conflict. The fundamental limitation regarding the selection of the newspapers is that the newspapers represent different ideologies. At the same time, only those with open archive/source access are suitable for this paper. Under these limitations, the newspapers in this paper are the leftist Aydınlık and Cumhuriyet and rightist Habertürk and Yeni Şafak.

The news that this paper analysed is routine news that was acquired through agencies. At short notice, these institutions can obtain news through their means, fulfilling their role in finding, creating, and conveying reports (Girgin, 2002, p. 110). In contrast, any information acquired through agencies is subjected to reductions (Tokgöz, 1972, p. 147). 'Rarely do newspapers and televisions use the news bulletins they release directly. Agencies change these bulletins by redacting, sometimes removing or adding content, making them conform to their editorial policies with photos, additional footage (Şahin, 2013, p. 207). In this regard, one can claim that because news bulletins that agencies receive go under an editorial filter, conscious decisions are made to decide how a bulletin is reported. Furthermore, it is worth noting that this paper does not take into account the news written by individual reporters, columns, any personal remarks or interviews, with the main reason being the aim to exclude any private interpretations or column pieces due to their inherently subjective nature as this paper's primary purpose is to determine how news on the Russo-Ukrainian war was reported and framed within the first seven days of the conflict in the most objective manner.

As of the date of this paper, most countries regard the event as a full-out war. Furthermore, during the first few days of the conflict, there needed to be more definite information to define it as what we refer to it as today. The reason behind the limitation of time in this study, February 24th – March 02nd, 2022, aims to gauge the initial reactions to the conflict in the first seven days to evaluate what manner of words the newspapers used to describe the event, what they associated the even with, and to see whether the additional information in the following days caused a change in the use of words on the newspapers' side. The nature of the internet

brings with it the speedy and the consequent high number of reports on any given topic, especially in times of war, crisis, disaster and terror. Within only one week, and the boundaries of the above-given limitations, the total amount of news reported was 1131. Thus, it was necessary to set a time limit to prevent an excessive amount of news that this paper could review to evaluate how the newspapers reported the events in the wake of the newly risen conflict.

The paper also introduced additional limitations for determining the keywords, including those exclusively mentioned in the related news, excluding secondary headlines, links, and hashtags. Therefore, these limitations ensured that the study analyses only keywords directly related to the news. These keywords were then categorised according to their number and the days that they were published. Both researchers in the study code-named these words, first manually due to certain limitations, to assure the accuracy of the content analysis results. The keyword 'invasion', for example, went under manual scanning in the initial phase of the study, as the paper aimed to find the use of this word only in the context of the war, and this manual scanning, conducted at different times, achieved a 90% consistency. Finally, the paper used Maxqda to test the acquired data. However, because applications such as this one include every keyword as per the scan instruction, i.e., including words regardless of their context, Maxqda was used solely to confirm the results of the manual scanning. The main predicate of the study is the results of manual scanning done by two writers of the paper.

Findings

1. Number and Category of News

This chapter includes the total amount of news and their categories found in Aydınlık, Cumhuriyet, Habertürk and Yeni Şafak. The table shows Aydınlık, Cumhuriyet, Habertürk and Yeni Şafak, with the first two, of leftist ideology, have a significantly lower amount of news as opposed to right-wing Habertürk's and Yeni Şafak's over 800 news on the conflict. Russia, without a doubt, is considered the aggravator of the conflict. Thus, Aydınlık's tendency to include only a limited amount of news on the war suggests a partial stance, while the anti-Russian narrative on Yeni Şafak and Habertürk suggests that these newspapers tried to both portray and highlight Ukraine as the victim.

Categories	Aydınlık	Cumhuriyet	Habertürk	Yeni Şafak
Science and Technology	-	2	5	-
World	23	98	309	320
Economy	-	-	60	35
Headlines	73	-	17	45
Sports	1	6	43	28
Other	-	5	3	58
TOTAL (Percentage)	97 (8,58%)	111 (9,81%)	437 (38,64%)	486 (42,97%)

Table 1 Amount of news and news categories on each newspaper[1]

2. Description of the Event

[1] In alphabetical order

This chapter introduces the frequency of words and how these words varied daily in reports in Aydınlık, Cumhuriyet, Habertürk, and Yeni Şafak that described the event, i.e., the war under three categories.

Newspaper	Crisis	Ukrainian Crisis -Russia-Ukraine Crisis	Tension	Conflict	War[2]
Aydınlık	11	12	2	13	12
Cumhuriyet	5	7	4	47	19
Habertürk	44	29	46	172	74
Yeni Şafak	56	27	15	39	154

Table 2 Words that Described the Event Reciprocally

In the first couple of days of the conflict, during which the gravity of the events was not completely understood, the newspapers used words or phrases such as "crisis", "Ukrainian Crisis", or "Russian-Ukrainian Crisis" to describe the events, with Habertürk leading the others in the amount of news. News on the conflict in Aydınlık and Cumhuriyet, however, was sparse. Although the use of words, as mentioned earlier, decreased in the consequent days, they are still good indicators of how an act of war or an invasion causes fundamental changes in a country nationally while becoming a crisis that the rest of the world has to face. In this regard, it is possible that these newspapers used the word "crisis" not to underpoise what was happening but as a substitute for the word "war".

"There is no invasion of Russian forces in Ukraine as reported by some foreign media," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement on the Ukraine crisis" (Aydınlık, 2022a).

"The crisis between Ukraine and Russia, which has been going on for days, turned into a hot conflict today at 06.00 am Turkish time" (Cumhuriyet, 2022a).

"Fed Chairman Jerome Powell said a March rate hike is appropriate, but the Ukraine-Russia crisis creates uncertainty for the economic Outlook" (Habertürk, 2022a).

"The Russia-Ukraine crisis, which has been escalating rapidly for days, has become feared" (Yeni Şafak, 2022a).

This table shows that until the end of the week, the newspapers in the study tried to normalise the event by using words such as "negotiations, ceasefire" in the first seven days of the war.

Reporters used the word "conflict" to refer to the fact that Ukraine had been struggling against Russia from day one, with the right-wing Habertürk leading with the most news. Conservative Yeni Şafak and Aydınlık are relatively close to each other in their use of the word

[2] If one uses the word "war" itself as a search parameter, one would get results about every other war in the history of the world, on top of unrelated words such as war/warrior, effecting the accuracy of the scanning. Thus, the paper used following tags find the word war, directly used to characterize the event between Russia and Ukraine: War in Ukraine, Ukrainian War, Russia's War, Russian War, Ukraine's War, Ukraine's War with Russian, Russia's War with Ukraine, Ukrainian-Russian War, Russia-Ukraine War, Ukraine-Russia War, Russia and Ukraine War.

"conflict". Furthermore, Aydınlık's reports revealed that the newspaper hesitated to paint Russia negatively in its news. However, Yeni Şafak's tendency to repeat the same word with less frequency, as opposed to Aydınlık, shows that Yeni Şafak considered it inadequate to explain what was happening to Ukraine.

As of the date of this paper, the events unfolding between Ukraine and Russia have been unequivocally defined as a war. However, the use of this word varies in each newspaper in the first week. Aydınlık was the newspaper that used the word "war" the least, aiming not to portray Russia negatively by using such a strong word.

"In the war between Russia and Ukraine, President Zelensky calls heads of state to ask for support" (Aydınlık, 2022b).

"The 'Russia-Ukraine' war, which started with Russia's military action in the first hours of Thursday, February 24, is on the agenda of the whole World" (Cumhuriyet, 2022b).

"Zelensky gave a joint interview to Reuters and CNN, commenting on the Russia-Ukraine war" (Habertürk, 2022b).

"Odessa'nın nerede olduğu ile ilgili araştırmalar hız kazandı. Günlerdir yakından takip edilen Rusya Ukrayna savaşında kritik ilerleyiş sürüyor" (Yeni Şafak, 2022b).

Newspaper	Offensive	Military Strike	Invasion	Resistance
Aydınlık	30	2	7	6
Cumhuriyet	182	4	57	11
Habertürk	477	14	220	20
Yeni Şafak	269	11	254	44

Table 3 Words that Portrayed Russia as the Perpetrator and Ukraine as the Victim

Habertürk was the newspaper that used one other word to describe the event; "offensive". Aydınlık, again, as was the case with the afore-mentioned word, was the newspaper with the least number of reports that regarded Russian aggression as an "offensive".

"In a video message to the public, Zelensky claimed that Russian forces did not discriminate between civilian or military targets in their attacks" (Aydınlık, 2022c).

"Balance sheet of Russian attack revealed" (Cumhuriyet, 2022c).

"Rusya'nın saldırısı Polonya'da panik yarattı" (Habertürk, 2022c).

"Russia and Ukraine agree to negotiations as Russian aggression against Ukraine enters its fourth day" (Yeni Şafak, 2022c).

Aydınlık and Cumhuriyet appear to have exercised more caution than others in describing the incident as a "military strike". On the other hand, Habertürk and Yeni Şafak used this word to emphasise that Russia launched an attack on Ukraine with its army.

All newspapers reported China's statements that Russia's intervention in Ukraine was not an invasion, as they obtained the news from agencies. In contrast to Aydınlık, other newspapers frequently reiterate that the situation constitutes an "invasion" or "invasion attempt/plan."

"There is no invasion of Russian forces in Ukraine as reported by some foreign media," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement on the Ukraine crisis." (Aydınlık, 2022d).

"European countries mobilized after Russia invaded Ukraine" (Cumhuriyet, 2022d).

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine last week and its nuclear threat earlier this week changed the whole balance" (Habertürk, 2022d).

"Diplomacy accelerated in Ankara after Russia invades Ukraine" (Yeni Şafak, 2022d).

The word "resistance" signifies Ukraine's stance on the war. Related news reports present a narrative in which Ukraine is depicted as the victim and Ukrainians as defenders of their country. The study also considered the phrase "Zelensky's call for resistance" while scanning this word. Thus, newspapers portray Zelensky as a leader who endeavours to save his country from the hands of the "evil doers".

"Russian Defense Ministry announced: No resistance to Russian troops on the Ukrainian border" (Aydınlık, 2022e).

"Russian forces, which advanced in a minimal area on the first day of the war and faced stiff resistance, started the day with raids after receiving reinforcements" (Cumhuriyet, 2022e).

"Belarus has been one of the biggest supporters of Russian leader Putin, who faced unexpected resistance both in Ukraine and the international community." (Habertürk, 2022e).

"Ukrainian government recruits 18-60 year olds for resistance" (Yeni Şafak, 2022e).

Expressions used directly or in quotation marks or words quoted indirectly from a source indicate that the newspaper positions the news according to its perspective. In this respect, words also constitute the frames of the news. The fact that Aydınlık newspaper emphasized that "there was no resistance to the Russian troops" indicates that it framed the news from a pro-Russian point of view. On the other hand, other newspapers stated that there was resistance. The information on the resistance from the Ukrainian side reveals Ukraine's victimization against Russia. In this respect, it can be said that the newspapers resorted to pro-Ukrainian news framing.

Newspaper	Operation	Military Operation	Military Campaign	Military Intervation
Aydınlık	15	11	11	4
Cumhuriyet	16	26	21	8
Habertürk	35	59	40	54
Yeni Şafak	38	40	58	83

Table 4. Words that Focus on Russia's Action

The newspapers in the study use the words or phrases mentioned above most frequently to describe Russia's actions against Ukraine. Any number of reports about a military operation may carry connotations that could potentially lead to the glorification of Russia. Indeed, when examined within the context, news articles' true meaning and intent become clear. However, the repeated use of the exact words might create associations that might attract sympathy from the target audience towards this expression that opposes "the enemy, the perpetrator, the other."

"Russian defense officials noted that Russian soldiers were killed and wounded during the operation in Ukraine. Russian officials added that the other side captured Russian soldiers" (Aydınlık, 2022f).

"Russia's operation in Ukraine has begun" (Cumhuriyet, 2022f).

"U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Linda Thomas Greenfield says she will present a draft resolution to the UN Security Council on Russia's military operation in Ukraine" (Habertürk, 2022f).

"Day 6 of Russia's occupation operation against Ukraine" (Yeni şafak, 2022f).

3. Parties to the Event

Newspaper	Putin	Zelenski-Zelenskiy	Russians/ Russian People	Ukranians /Ukrainian People	Civil Population/ Population/ Citizens	Refugee/ Asylum seeker
Aydınlık	28	43	7/1	8/22	64	2/2
Cumhuriyet	113	193	15/7	24/21	58	4/1
Habertürk	510	282	78/30	99/86	104	32/4
Yeni Şafak	422	351	62/9	94/64	151	68/6

Table 5 Words that Focus on Civil

On the first day, newspapers Habertürk and Yeni Şafak mentioned Putin's name more frequently than Zelensky's, suggesting that both newspapers lean towards defining Russia, and consequently Putin, as the instigator of the war from the outset. The frequency of mentioning both leaders in news articles varies in the following days. This variance is influenced by factors such as the news content, statements from other countries' leaders, individuals, or institutions regarding the parties to the war, and whether the words of Putin or Zelensky are included. The scanning revealed that this variation is observed in all newspapers.

"Russian President Vladimir Putin has declared the goal of the military operation against Ukraine to be "cleansing it of militarism and Nazism," which pose a threat to the Donbass region and Russia" (Aydınlık, 2022g).

"This is how Putin pointed to Zelensky: Drug addict" (Aydınlık, 2022h).

"A Ukrainian boy addressed Russian President Vladimir Putin and asked him to withdraw his army" (Cumhuriyet, 2022g).

"As Russia's occupation of Ukrainian territory continues on its third day, President Vladimir Zelensky has issued a new statement" (Cumhuriyet, 2022h).

"Chanting slogans in support of Ukraine, the demonstrators carried Ukrainian flags as well as banners and placards reading "Say no to Putin", "Stop Russia's occupation", "Ukraine will resist", "Crimea belongs to Ukraine" and "Stop the war, protect Europe"" (Habertürk, 2022g).

"Zelensky said goodbye to the EU: This may be the last time you see me as head of state" (Hbaertürk, 2022h).

"Following Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to invade Ukraine, the Russian army attacked several cities, especially Kiev" (Yeni Şafak, 2022g).

"Ukrainian President Zelenskiy made a statement after the meeting. Zelenskiy said, "The Ukrainian people will never forget the support given and thanked Erdoğan" (Habertürk, 2022h).

Habertürk reported Zelensky's words directly. Cumhurşyet, on the other hand, quoted a child's plea to Putin. It is clear that these words contain dramatization and were deliberately moved to the headline. In this respect, the frame these newspapers use has a pro-Ukrainian subtext. Aydınlık newspaper carried Putin's claim about Zelensky in its headline. This choice alone seems to be a conscious pro-Russian choice.

Since the war occurred in Ukrainian territory, the newspapers primarily used the term "Ukrainian people". In this context, it is evident that all newspapers, regardless of their ideologies, positioned the Ukrainian people as the ones impacted by the war, as they frequently reiterated the expression "Ukrainian people".

The word "Ukrainians" can be essentially characterised as a discriminatory term that the newspapers used to refer to the victims of the war. At the same time, "Russians" is employed to describe the perpetrators. The frequent portrayal of Ukrainians as victims in Habertürk and Yeni Şafak suggests that they adopted a pro-Ukrainian stance in the war.

In specific news articles, Aydınlık claimed that the Ukrainian army was using civilians as shields, suggesting that Ukraine was not the victim of the ongoing war. In contrast, the other three newspapers concentrated on the impact of the war on civilians.

"DHC: Ukrainian army starts attacking civilians" (Aydınlık, 2022i).

"Russia's attacks on Ukraine continue. Ukrainian civilians stood in front of Russian tanks and tried to block their advance" (Cumhuriyet, 2022i).

"After the civilian population resisted the Russians with Molotov cocktails, the owner of a brewery in the city of Lviv switched its production from beer to Molotov cocktails" (Habertürk, 2022i).

"Civilians in Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, which is under fierce attacks by the Russian army, have taken up arms and decided to resist a possible Russian invasion" (Yeni Şafak, 2022i).

Aydınlık carried the news about the Ukrainian army attacking civilians on its headline. Thus, it was seen that it used a news frame that revealed its biased perspective on the issue. Other newspapers, on the other hand, chose news frames that emphasized Ukrainian civilians. This is evident from the words used.

The newspapers used terms such as refugees, asylum seekers or immigrants to describe Ukrainians fleeing their country because of the war. The paper should note that both the newspapers employ the terms 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee' to characterise the war's victims. However, they also use these phrases or words in a negative context that criticises Russia and stigmatises Ukrainians as individuals who fled their country due to the war.

Newspaper	Russian Soldier	Ukrainian Soldier	Army (Russian)	Army (Ukrainian)	Military Forces (Russian)	Military Forces (Ukrainian)
Aydınlık	8	12	9	37	1	-

Cumhuri-yet	50	15	32	31	4	-
Habertürk	91	26	46	68	7	2
Yeni Şafak	122	21	128	79	10	2

Table 6 Words that Focus on Military

In the related news reports to the given words or phrases, the newspapers used sentences such as "Russian troops entered Ukrainian territory… The operation started… Russian soldiers were killed… Ukrainian soldiers were killed…". However, the more frequent repetition of the phrase "Russian soldiers" compared to "Ukrainian soldiers" in newspapers other than Aydınlık shows how they emphasised Russia as the instigator of the war. Aydınlık has taken a different approach, where it emphasised that Russia attempted to invade Ukraine with organised military units. Words related to this are used less frequently in this newspaper. Another noticeable difference between Habertürk and Yeni Şafak is the positive connotations that went together with the term "Ukrainian army" in reports related to the war.

"Big lie from the BBC! It showed the house hit by Ukraine as the place where the Russian army struck" (Aydınlık, 2022j).

"Attacks on Ukraine by the Russian military continue" (Cumhuriyet, 2022j).

"09.50: The Russian military says it has disabled Ukraine's air defense space and the country's air bases" (Habertürk, 2022j).

"In addition to the reactions from NATO, the G7 countries also reacted to Russia's determined continuation of its invasion of Ukraine" (Yeni Şafak, 2022j).

Yeni Şafak, Habertürk, and Cumhuriyet emphasized that Russia was responsible for the war and Ukraine was the victim. The statement in the headline of Aydınlık newspaper is quite striking. It can be said that Aydınlık tried to emphasize the affirmation of Russia while reporting news that it claimed to be disinformation, and in this sense, it fulfilled the function mentioned in the framing theory. Even if Aydınlık quoted from another source, it seems to have framed a pro-Russian news story due to its chosen words.

4. International Reactions

The Russian-Ukrainian crisis met a variety of international reactions and threats of sanctions, which fall under NATO, United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), and Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). Thus, words that describe the international reaction to the war, e.g., reaction, protests, condemnation, support, and others such as negotiations and ceasefire, are coded and analysed under this theme.

Newspaper	NATO	UN – United Nations	EU – European Union	UEFA
Aydınlık	44	16	28	-
Cumhuriyet	52	38	52	5
Habertürk	323	258	329	29
Yeni Şafak	302	158	226	9

Table 7 Foundation

Although UEFA is a body that primarily deals with sports, all newspapers, excluding Aydınlık, used it to interpret reactions against Russia, i.e., Russia's removal from the cups. News on UEFA in the newspapers further suggests that reactions to Russia's invasion are not strictly limited to politics, as such a manner of reporting by including this phrase on something that concerns the rest of the world might gain the attention of readers that only focus on news, not political institutions.

Newspaper	Reaction	Protests	Condemnation	Sanctions	Supports (for Ukrainian)	Reaction	Protests
Aydınlık	-	-	2	25	7/2	51	7
Cumhuriyet	15	25	15	87	13/-	79	15
Habertürk	21	24	47	439	45/-	173	38
Yeni Şafak	36	15	43	319	16/11	196	42

Table 8 Approaches

The word "reaction", within the context of the paper's analysis, stands for international reactions to Russia's behaviour. whereas the other newspapers included it in their reports almost daily, depicting Russia consistently negatively. Similarly, all newspapers, except for Aydınlık, included reports on anti-war protests almost daily. Based on the fact that Cumhuriyet used the word 'protest' frequently on the first day of the war, one can claim that the newspaper positioned itself against Russia from the get-go. Yeni Şafak used the word "condemnation", which many international political actors, institutions and organisations have reiterated consistently since the beginning of the war. Meanwhile, it is possible to say that Aydınlık framed news in a manner to overlook reactions to Russia. Habertürk is the newspaper that utilised the word "sanction" the most among all newspapers as the most fervent reaction to stop Russia in its tracks, which makes it possible to state that the newspaper did not support Ukraine's unjustified invasion by Russia.

"Zelenskiy expressed gratitude for the West's sectoral sanctions against Russia, but claimed that Russian tanks were still firing on residential areas and armored vehicles continued to attack, including civilians" (Aydınlık, 2022k).

"The list of sanctions to be imposed on Russia by Western countries following Russia's military action in Ukraine continues to grow" (Cumhuriyet, 2022k).

"UKRAINE IS GRATEFUL TO THOSE WHO IMPOSED SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA" (Habertürk, 2022k).

"As Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues on its 3rd day, the White House released a statement on the diplomacy between Russia and the US and the US decision on sanctions against Russia" (Yeni Şafak, 2022k).

The newspapers used the word 'support', including reports that mentioned Zelensky's call for support, to emphasise Ukraine's inculpability and vulnerability. Some expressions still supported the Russian invasion; leftist Cumhuriyet and Aydınlık reported the news to this

extent three times, while Habertürk did nothing of the kind. Yeni Şafak, on the other hand, drew attention to the fact that Assad, Grup Yorum, China and Belarus were pro-Russian in its news reports on February 25th and 28th. The fact that Habertürk never employed this word, not even for referencing, is the most striking proof that it aligned itself with Ukraine, portraying the military attack negatively.

Based on the news content, it is apparent that the discourse of international actors influenced expressions about a possible ceasefire.

5. War's Impact on the Economy

Newspaper	Oil	Natural Gas	SWIFT
Aydınlık	8	2	3
Cumhuriyet	10	1	8
Habertürk	163	77	108
Yeni Şafak	83	61	18

Table 9 Terms of Economy

The paper categorises news on oil under three categories. Reports mentioned that Brent oil prices were rising while touching on the problems of importing oil from the Russian crisis to meet the rising demand. The second category deals with the then-current state of Russian oil companies and their losses in the stock market. Finally, the last category comments on oil fields, albeit they appear less frequently in the newspapers.

"EU countries currently procure 40 percent of their natural gas and about 1 in 4 of their oil from Russia" (Aydınlık, 2022l).

"04.39: In Russia's attacks on Ukraine, an oil tank farm in a region close to the capital Kyiv was reportedly hit" (Cumhuriyet, 2022l).

"Oil prices have risen 17 percent since Russia's invasion attempt began" (Habertürk, 2022l).

"The fact that Russian oil has almost become an unwanted product in international trade leads to an increase in oil prices" (Yeni Şafak, 2022l).

The paper categorised news about natural gas into two main topics—the first concerns price increases in natural gas, similar to those in oil. The second focuses on whether the stance adopted against Russia, Europe's largest natural gas supplier, will lead to a crisis in natural gas supply.

Habertürk leads the other newspapers regarding the amount of news on the war's impact on the economy, including news oriented towards Swift.

Discussion and Conclusion

Habertürk and Yeni Şafak published a more significant amount of news articles when compared to Aydınlık and Cumhuriyet. This pattern persisted in the categorisation and word coding involving various themes. However, word frequencies are not solely related to the presence or absence of news articles. There are instances where Cumhuriyet and Aydınlık exhibited equal or even higher word repetitions despite having fewer news articles on specific topics. Therefore, in this study, which focuses on analysing the differences and similarities in the

newspapers' attitudes, the quantity of news articles did influence the word repetition frequency. However, it was also not the sole determining factor. Cumhuriyet, Yeni Şafak, and Habertürk primarily shared news articles from the 'world' category, while Aydınlık predominantly featured news from the "headlines". In contrast to other newspapers, news in Aydınlık from the World category ranks second, which indicates the newspaper's perspective on the war. The World and Headlines categories encompass developments directly linked to the tension between Russia and Ukraine and the statements of political figures from various countries expressing their views on the war. Additionally, news articles categorised under 'Economy' address the economic repercussions of the war. However, there are also news pieces from categories such as Sports, Celebrity News, Arts and Culture, and Technology. A typical reader would never anticipate articles under these categories to depict scenes of war, chaos, or drama. Despite their usual content, news within these categories contains substantial subject matter related to international reactions against Russia. Especially the rightist Yeni Şafak and Habertürk shared numerous news items that conveyed an anti-Russian sentiment, endeavouring to engage their readers across various domains in their approach to the ongoing conflict.

It is possible to put the keywords that describe what has been unfolding between Russia and Ukraine into three groups. The first group includes words such as 'crisis, Ukrainian crisis / Russian-Ukraine Crisis, tension, conflict, and war', which the newspapers frequently used in the first two days of the war, implying that both countries were liable.

The second one contains words that victimise Ukraine, e.g., 'attack, military attack, invasion, resistance, genocide'. Finally, when etymologically examined, the last group reveals words that some newspapers used to justify or normalise Russia's actions, such as 'operation, military operation, military intervention'. The newspapers in the study mainly used the words that fall under the first category in the initial news reports during which the events were still unfolding. Similarly, the word tension was also frequently used. Cumhuriyet, the complete opposite of Aydınlık, leads the other newspapers in the amount of news that used the word tension, frequented by right-wing newspapers, to explain the reciprocal struggle. The rightist Yeni Şafak is the newspaper that employed the word war most frequently on the first day of the war, with other newspapers following in its steps from February 28th and onwards as the reality set in. Based on the statements so far, it is clear that newspapers reported the war as an issue that both sides were equally liable for. The words crisis and tension left their place to war following the 28th.

All newspapers used 'attack' at least once daily in the second group of words. Habertürk and Yeni Şafak repeated the word 'occupation' most frequently, while Cumhuriyet, following suit, used this word at least once every day. In contrast, Aydınlık virtually avoided using 'occupation', with a news item on the first day stating, 'This is not an occupation'. All newspapers show similar figures for the word 'resistance'. Habertürk and Yeni Şafak constantly used the words 'operation, military operation, military intervention, military operation', which indicate that Russia's action is systematic, carried out by the military, and has a warlike aspect. As for the word 'operation', in terms of its origin, which is the intervention to suppress the actions of a criminal group, it is possible to say that it legitimises Russia's action, with Aydınlık including it the most in news, further strengthening the word's connotative meaning. However, Habertürk, Yeni Şafak, and Cumhuriyet newspapers, with their news reports and other elements, downright use frames that justify Russia's action.

The inclusion of this word aims to apprehend how often the newspapers mentioned the parties involved in the event. In this context, the paper also analysed the news mentioning the leaders of warring countries, with Putin mentioned more often than his Ukrainian counterpart. Nonetheless, all newspapers mentioned both leaders frequently in their reports. In general, the phrase 'Ukrainian people' was used more regularly than 'Russian people', while the ethnic descriptions 'Russians' and 'Ukrainians' were used almost in equal numbers. The frequent use of both words refers to Ukraine's victimisation. In the case of the words 'soldier' and 'military forces', Russia was mainly mentioned in newspapers other than Aydınlık, which, concerning Ukraine, primarily used the word 'army'. 'Refugee' and 'asylum seeker' describe the victimisation of Ukraine as one of the parties. Aydınlık used these two words the least and also mentioned "Russian refugees" in its article dated February 27th.

Under the international reactions category, the paper analysed the keywords "reaction, protest, condemnation, sanction, support, ceasefire and negotiations" to see the amount of repetition of international organisations that reacted, namely, NATO, UN, EU and UEFA, on a global scale. The difference in the frequency of repetition of these words, with fewer mentions in Aydınlık and more in other newspapers, is related to the amount of news items. Nevertheless, all newspapers included these expressions. 'UEFA', on the other hand, appears in the content showing reactions against Russia in newspapers except for Aydınlık. In their news articles, Cumhuriyet, Yeni Şafak, and Habertürk repeatedly mentioned UEFA's condemnation of Russia and its sanctions. Aydınlık, on the other hand, only mentioned UEFA's emergency meeting held due to the war and did not cover UEFA's reaction, again indicating that the newspaper avoided news targeting Russia. The words 'reaction' and 'protest', which refer to international responses, were mentioned once in Aydınlık, while they appeared almost every day in other newspapers. Aydınlık also mentioned the word 'condemnation' only two times. However, the word 'sanction' was repeated many times in all newspapers, indicating comprehensive international coverage of the event with no significant differences. Almost all newspapers used the word 'ceasefire', referring to the steps taken to end the tension between Russia and Ukraine, from the second day onward in news articles that included calls for a cessation of hostilities. 'Negotiation', which appeared more frequently in all newspapers, was the subject of news reports that had reactions from international leaders and organisations, including Zelensky's calls for help. However, Aydınlık provided limited coverage for the same word. The word 'support' was used for both Russia and Ukraine. Generally, news items containing this word were neutral or against Russia. However, Aydınlık, Cumhuriyet, and Yeni Şafak also included news articles stating that some support Russia. News items supporting Russia included statements of support from the heads of states of Venezuela, China, Kyrgyzstan, Syria, and Myanmar.

The potential impact of Russia's war, one of the world's leading energy countries, could directly affect natural gas and oil prices, which has been a significant concern for Turkey and Europe. Aydınlık and Cumhuriyet, left-wing newspapers, covered this essential commodity much less than the right-wing newspapers Habertürk and Yeni Şafak. Habertürk and Yeni Şafak hold Russia responsible for the negative economic consequences of the war. Habertürk, publishing the most economy-related news, frequently used the "swift" in the context of sanctions against Russia. Although used less often in Yeni Şafak, both newspapers exhibit a hostile stance toward Russia on energy matters.

Every newspaper in the study, with the exclusion of Aydınlık, has displayed a pro-Russian manner since the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian War, selected news items that took an

anti-Russia stance and used numerous words to strengthen their disposition further. Certain words' use or lack thereof serves as a meaningful reference point for drawing conclusions. In this context, Aydınlık generally had the lowest frequency of word repetition. Nonetheless, it is essential to underline that this newspaper, known for its pro-Russian stance, refrained from using language that directly points to Russia as the cause of the war. Habertürk and Yeni Şafak, positioned in the centre-right and right-conservative spectrum, adopted an anti-Russia stance. Both in terms of the frequency of repeated words and the categories of news items, these newspapers predominantly portrayed Russia in a negative light, focusing on Ukraine's victimisation. Cumhuriyet, representing the centre-left, stood out with fewer news items. However, unlike Aydınlık, Cumhuriyet is not pro-Russian. It mainly featured news that did not support Russia's intervention in Ukraine.

The expressions used by the newspapers and the frequency of repetition of these expressions give us an idea about their approach to the event. But simultaneously, the words chosen especially reveal how the news is framed. In this study, it was observed that Aydınlık newspaper used pro-Russian frames. Although Yeni Şafak and Habertürk newspapers varied in categories and number of news items, they predominantly covered the event within a frame that positions Ukraine as the victim of the war. Cumhuriyet newspaper also seems to have a frame that sees Ukraine as a victim.

These findings are based on an analysis that relies on data from the first week of the war. Hence, it is difficult to predict whether the newspapers will uphold their current attitude until the war ends. However, this potential shift could be uncovered through future analyses.

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