

**A Comparative Genre Analysis of English News Reports  
about the Russian- Ukrainian Crisis.**

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**Abstract**

Genre is a sociolinguistic approach that is used for some particular communicative purpose. It tends to be related more with the organisation of culture and social aims around language (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990). Genre is also tied more firmly to concern of ideology and power. The current study links these two approaches in the analysis of the articles. The texts of newspapers work to build and shape the ideology of people. This study aims to analyse the structures of moves organisation of some selected articles written about the Russian- Ukrainian Crisis based on Bhatia (1993) model. The researcher chooses the Moscow Times from Russia and the Kyiv Post from Ukraine since these selected newspapers are written in English. All the articles were written before the official declaration of war to show how the language of newspapers manipulates messages to deceive the public. The findings showed that all the articles follow Bhatia's model using the four moves during writing and giving more emphases to the headlines.

**Keywords:** genre, sociolinguistics, ideology, power, the Russia-Ukrainian crisis.

## الخلاصة

### تحليل النوع المقارن لتقارير الاخبار حول الازمة الروسية – الاوكرانية

النوع هو نهج اجتماعي لغوي يستخدم لبعض الأغراض التواصلية الخاصة. يميل هذا النوع من النهج إلى ان يكون أكثر ارتباطاً بتنظيم الثقافة والأهداف الاجتماعية حول اللغة. يرتبط النوع أيضاً بشكل أكثر صرامة بمخاوف الأيديولوجيا والسلطة. تربط الدراسة الحالية بين هذين النهجين في تحليل المقالات. تعلق نصوص هف على بناء وصياغة أيديولوجية الشعب. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل هياكل تنظيم النصوص لبعض المقالات المختارة المكتوبة حول الأزمة الأوكرانية- الروسية بناء على نموذج باتيا (١٩٩٣). يختار الباحث صحيفة موسكو تايمز من روسيا وصحيفة كييف بوست من أوكرانيا لأن هذه لصحف المختارة مكتوبة باللغة الإنجليزية. كتبت جميع المقالات قبل إعلان الحرب رسمياً لإظهار هف تتلاعب الصحف باللغة لخداع القارئ. تظهر النتائج أن جميع المقالات تتبع نفس النموذج أثناء كتابة المقالات وإعطاء المزيد من التركيز على العناوين الرئيسية مما ساعد على بلورة اتجاه الشعبين حول الحرب القائمة.

الكلمات الافتتاحية النوع، اللغويات الاجتماعية، أيديولوجية، السلطة، الازمة الروسية – الاوكرانية

### ١-Introduction

Hodges (٢٠١٣) wrote in his book (Discourses of War and Peace) that people never go to war without discourse acting as a mediating influence. From the rhetorical sabre rattling that precedes fight to the diplomatic efforts that sue for peace, discourse plays a crucial part in the beginning, conduct, and argumentation of armed political conflict. This includes everything from the rattling of sabres that precedes combat to the efforts that sue for peace.

This succinct yet profound quotation emphasises the significance of words in social interactions and the fact that war is an express conflict between at least two nations that compete for certain resources and power. Although Hodges concentrated on armed conflicts, his argument illustrated the

importance of discourse before any armed conflict or the military violence and demonstrated how each conflict is sustained and shaped by distinct discursive processes. As a result, the contending nations and other parties included in the war participate in the development and negotiation of meanings surrounding the act of contending.

Linguists are consistently interested in the language of the news (mainly applied and sociolinguists). The practical justifications for this interest consider of “the accessibility of language data from the media, the significance of the media as language producing institutions, linguistic interest in the ways media use language, and the importance of media institutions and their discourses in shaping culture, politics and social life” (Bell, ٢٠٠٨, p. ٦١٥).

When utilized purposefully and intentionally, language is a powerful tool. It can be applied in a variety of ways to enhance and manipulate a message. The printed media is a linguistic medium, making it one of the most significant channels for the spreading of ideas.

### **٢-Literature Review**

#### **٢.١-The Politics and Power of Genre**

“Language is power, and the power of language is the ‘power of genre’. Power of genre is not only to construct, use, interpret and exploit genres, but also to innovate novel generic forms” (Bhatia, ١٩٩٧, p. ٣٦٢). Political speech's main goal is not just to inform; it also aims to achieve objectives, change attitudes, sustain ideologies, establish identities, and other things. A political speech “creates community in all its complexity, of discourse that creates identity, and of discourse that creates shared definitions of reality” (Brummett, ٢٠٠٤, as cited in Dedaić ٢٠٠٦, p. ٧٠١). Political speeches are undoubtedly exceptional examples of political intervention through language use because the speaker wants to be perceived as the voice of a specific group and to portray his individual message as his group message. This is mainly clear in what Graham et al. (٢٠٠٤) identified as one (sub-genre) of political speeches. On the other hand Królikowska stated that “Political genres are the means of managing communicative activity ... providing the speakers with some structures into which they can organize

content and thus pursue their goals by means of language” (Królikowska 2010, p. 73).

Politicians constantly search for new, clever, and, most importantly, more efficient ways to acquire and retain power. The method used to analyse political genre involves a broad understanding of political communication, which is taken to cover all forms of communication where various social groups pursue their goals, needs, and values (Fairclough 2006; Okulska & Cap 2010; Cap 2013). In order to maintain or challenge the current power difference, pursuing political goals permanently necessitates individuals or even organizations to adopt both cooperative and confrontational attitudes in social interaction.

Van Dijk (1998b) regarded political discourse as sub-genre (a class of genre) which demarcated by a social domain, specifically that of politics. Likewise, legal discourse scientific discourse, and educational discourse characterise the classes of discourse genres of the fields of law, science and education, separately. Therefore, government negotiations, parliamentary debates, and speeches by politicians are amongst the many genres that have its place in the domain of politics.

Such impolite behavior cannot be tolerated by a democratic administration. It never chooses direct control or summarily repression; it negates bad news instead of concealing it; it controls emphasis instead of facts; it balances bad news with good news; and it only purposefully lies when it is obvious that the deception won't be uncovered throughout the course of the war (Knightly, 2000 as cited in Richardson, 2007, p. 181).

### 2.2. War Rhetoric

The First World War required greater public support and sacrifice than any other conflict due to its massive conscript armies and horrific carnage. As a result, the importance of war propaganda increased, and the press—at the time a relatively new medium—played a crucial part in influencing public opinion in favor of the war. Following that, the study of war rhetoric and, more specifically, public opinion, emerges as a new discipline in American political science. For example, Harold Lasswell's *Propaganda methods in the World War* (1927) are still a model in the field. In his book, Lasswell recognised key propaganda tactics, such as the “demonization of the enemy leader, he need to couch war propaganda in terms of defense, the

## **A Comparative Genre Analysis of English News Reports ..... ( ๐ )**

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exaggeration of atrocities, and the need to devise different justifications for different groups in the population on the basis of their different interests” (Lasswell as cited in Leeuwen, ๒๐๐๖, p. ๑๑๖).

News has a crucial role in daily life, and newspapers are where most people first learn about political crises around the world. Nonetheless, it's possible that the field most frequently charged with language manipulation is journalism. One strategy for presenting incorrect information, altering the truth, or not telling the complete story is to disguise the facts using language or stylistic devices. Articles in newspapers could rewrite in diverse ways: “They can be summed up, simplified, polarised, intensified and personified. A transformation of the original account of the event in question is presented to the reader in such a way that it may affect his/her view of the world” (Nordlund, ๒๐๐๓, p.๘).

An article in a newspaper is based on the importance of the event, and as a result, the hierarchy of importance is reproduced in the article's structure. A reader can quickly scan the headlines to get an overview of the day's news and a sense of its relative relevance and influence (Reah, ๑๙๙๘, p.๑๕). Newspapers have a significant part in shaping public opinion. Newspapers specifically attempt to interpret news pieces while subtly presenting reality from a particular point of view for readers (Jaworski & Galasinski, ๒๐๐๒). Also, they “perhaps more than any other type of writing, reflect national styles regarding modes of styles” (Connor, ๑๙๙๖, p. ๑๕๓).

Together, newspaper’s publication is reflected to be an “industry and a business like any other business that should be profitable” (Fowler, ๑๙๙๑, p. ๒๐). Therefore it is noteworthy to the production of the newspapers is related “to the need to make a profit; to have external relations with other industries, with financial institutions and with official agencies” (Fowler, ๑๙๙๑, p. ๒๐). All these issues will have an influence on the news printed. Most of the newspapers are held by people or establishments which are commercial enterprises (Fowler, ๑๙๙๑, p.๑๒๑). This means that printed media can be biased by the owner or by the advocates in its illustration of events, consequently possibly conceding its freedom of expression.

However, from a comparative genre analytic standpoint, newspapers are a neglected genre. It offers the public attitude and plays a conclusive role in the formation and shifting public opinion (Van Dijk, ๑๙๙๑). Its job is to

comment on a current event and get the reader's agreement through a sequence of textual strategies (Alsono, ٢٠٠٨).

A genre is an increasingly common pattern of language usage and interaction that is identified by a certain linguistic form or structure, particular communicative goals, and distinctive or institutional settings (Fairclough, ٢٠٠٦, pp. ٣٢). For instance, news reports in newspapers typically include a headline, a main paragraph that summarizes the story, and a variable number of "satellite" paragraphs that fill in details. This general organizational structure distinguishes one genre from another and depends on specific elements occurring in a specific order. In this fashion, Bell and van Leeuwen (١٩٩٤, p. ١٢٤-١٢٧) examined "adversarial political interviews. A newspaper typically delivers a good level of language use that is acceptable everywhere but still maintains a local flavor. Newspapers also advise using new, intriguing, and contemporary terminology. The wide range of genres in daily newspapers appeals a lot of researchers to study them. Bhatia (١٩٩٣) noted that in newspaper, writers choose words to create encouraging or negative bias in their point of view to get the effect they need.

### **٢.٣. Genre Analysis**

Genre analysis can be regarded as a discourse analysis type that concentrates on dissimilar text types or genres (Dudley-Evans & St. John ١٩٩٨), as cited in Pruettipongsit, ٢٠٠٦). The genre as a type of written discourse with standards related to communicative events and purposes, limitations on form and content, and a related discourse community (Swales, ١٩٩٠). Cook (١٩٨٩, p. ٩٥) believed that genre is "something we all use every day in order to orient ourselves towards the communication in which we are involved". According to Coe (٢٠٠٢), New Rhetoric studies of genre are centered on ethnographic analysis to conclude the inspired, functional relationship between text type and rhetorical situation. The genre analysts shift their focus away from physical language characteristics and toward how a text reveals reality that is accustomed by external concerns (Paltridge, ١٩٩٤).

In his Systemic Functional Linguistics approach, Halliday (١٩٩٤) studied genre, emphasising social purposes of genre and describing the rhetorical

structures established to serve these purposes. Hyland (୧୦୦୧) investigated these attitudes by attempting to include schematic structures and additional rhetorical types in genre studies. Along with all of these studies, genre is the text's function and purpose. As a result, the examination of text genre must also focus on the sociopolitical contexts in which the text is formed and received.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to repeatedly assume that, for instance, the genre of all newspapers will be the same, or even that the genre of this newspaper is distinctive whatsoever the topic to which they belong to (Tirkkonen-Condit, ୧୯୯୧ as cited in Le, ୧୦୦୯, p. ୧୦୯). Research on genre seeks to understand how writers achieve their communication goals by utilizing diverse structural forms, developing varied focuses, and controlling subjects and readers through various linguistic methods.

### **୧. Methodology**

This work is a qualitative of texts in newspapers with descriptive and interpretive analysis. Reports will be collected to analyse their move structures in addition to exhibit the communicating intention in writing the reports. Four articles, two from Kyiv post newspaper and two from Moscow Times, were gathered to be analysed. The reasons behind choosing these two opposed newspapers were because that both were written in English language. Besides, each newspaper presents the opinion of its country and that helps to demonstrate how these two newspapers have an influence upon their readers. In addition, these two newspapers are selected by reason of their sizeable audiences. On the other hand, the four articles were not selected randomly. Instead, all the articles were written at the same time before the official declaration of the Russian war. The goal is to realize move structures of written articles in various newspapers. Furthermore, the study attempted to identify the similarities and differences between those move structures.

The data was analysed in two stages. The first was identifying rhetorical moves in order to expose genre structural organization. The second phase involved comparing the move structures of those articles. To compare the move structures of the newspapers, both similarities and differences were

## A Comparative Genre Analysis of English News Reports ..... ( ^ )

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summarized in this phase. The goal is to realise common move structures of articles written in various newspapers.

The analysis of moves is an vital part of the analysis. Move is a semantic component related to the writer's goals (McKinlay, 1984). It is move in terms of the function it performs in relation to the overall article goal (Swales, 1990). Bhatia model (1993) that was used in this study is as follows:

<b>Presenting the case</b>	"which concerns definite events, that is, what is or what was in the world of everyday actions. It may be seen as framing topics, expounding choices or describing areas of concern"
<b>Offering the argument</b>	"Where the writer argues for the possible different worlds, i.e., what was not or what might have been and can be seen in terms of Kinneavy's (1971) confutation and confirmation"
<b>Reaching the verdict</b>	"which concerns the world of chosen events, that is., what should be or what should have been and is usually seen as the writer's conclusion"
<b>Recommending action</b>	"where the journalist is seen as signifying how the desired world of events can be realized"

(Bhatia, 1993, p. 293)

Application of the model described above revealed that some recognised elements appeared frequently in the texts.

### 4-Data Analysis

#### 1-Presenting the case

*"Russian President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that military exercises and other moves by the West and Ukraine threaten Russia's security, warning against crossing the Kremlin's redlines"*

(Moscow Times, Nov.30, 2021)



*“Russian President Vladimir Putin, speaking publicly for the first time since his high-profile talks with U.S. leader Joe Biden, said Wednesday that Moscow reserves the right to “defend its security”*

*(Moscow Times, Des. 8, 2021)*

*“Russian military movements close to Ukraine’s border spotted recently in media are unlikely to be preparations for an imminent large-scale invasion, a U.S.-based think tank reported on Nov. 2”*

*(Kyiv post, Nov. 2, 2021)*

These passages served as rhetorical devices that provided readers with some prior knowledge about the text's main topic. It was essentially a description meant to set up further discussion on the topic. Occasionally, specific places, things, and situations were brought up and addressed.

The aforementioned cases in both newspapers were biased, limiting the opposing side's perspective and escalating the issue into a serious crisis. Furthermore, the storylines or frames of the news are critical in shaping the public's perception of events as crises and their analysis, such as the start of a new "Cold War" between Russia and Ukraine. By discussing the causes and potential consequences of crises, the two newspapers simultaneously raise the possibility of genuine political action.

#### ¶ Offering the argument

*“It is not about intervening or not intervening, fighting or not fighting. It's about mending ties, Putin said, adding that it was important to take into account the security interests of all parties. If we sincerely strive to achieve this then no one will feel threatened”*

*(Moscow Times, Nov. 2, 2021)*

*“According to the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense... a nearly 90,000-strong group of troops (forces) has been amassed near the Ukrainian border and in the territories temporarily occupied by Russia. In addition, separate units of the 4th and 7th armies of Russia’s air force and air defense force are based close to the Ukrainian border. Two army corps of the Russian occupation troops have been deployed and now operate in the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions”*

**(Kyiv Post, Nov. 3, 2021)**

Offering the argument functioned as a motivation for the newspaper. That is, it specified that there were existed an problem that must be discussed. The issue was frequently a vital recent sociopolitical issue that must be inevitably addressed and set on in one way or another.

This move stated both the manner of argumentation and the arguments formed in that procedure. The argumentation uses language to explain or disprove an opinion, for the purpose of getting agreement in views. Specially, propositions are presented as claims, while other propositions are given as justification or contradiction of those claims.

As a result, the news not only reports on crises, but also has the most engaged constitutive and performative involvement. They included crises from the viewpoint that society's media-adjusted citizens are aware of their value as a source of information and their presumed impact on public opinion. After a frame has permeated media discourse, politicians may utilize it to stimulate crisis management in politics and motivate them to employ problem-solving strategies or other aggressive techniques.

### **3-Reaching the verdict**

*“The Ministry of Defense notes that Russia periodically resorts to practices of moving and amassing forces in order to maintain tension in the region and political pressure on neighboring states. Earlier, several sources, including The Washington Post, wrote that in recent weeks, Russia had resumed the movement of hardware and forces to the border with Ukraine. Citing unnamed sources from among U.S. and European officials, the newspaper claimed the effort was launched after the Kremlin completed a large-scale joint military exercise with Belarus, Zapad 2021, more than a month ago”*

**(Kyiv Post, Nov. 3, 2021)**

*“It said that the so-called Quint of the five Western allies had in their talks expressed their determination that the sovereignty of Ukraine be respected. The same day, Russia said sent planes to intercept and "escort" three French military planes flying near its borders in the Black Sea, in a rise of tensions. Moscow's defense ministry said its pilots escorted French Mirage-2000 and Rafale planes after stopping them from violating the Russian border. It is the latest sign of tensions in the*

*Black Sea, a sensitive region for Russia which controls the Crimea peninsula after annexing it from Ukraine in ۲۰۱۴”*

(Mosow Times, Dec. ۸, ۲۰۲۱)

*“Putin said Moscow was concerned by Western moves to conduct large-scale previously unannounced military drills near Russia's borders, singling out U.S.-led exercises in the Black Sea. Separately, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov lobbed a series of new accusations against Kiev and said Russia reserved the right to respond if its security was threatened”. “We simply don't have the right to exclude that the Kiev regime may embark on a military adventure. This all creates a direct threat to Russia's security, Lavrov told reporters, speaking alongside his Brazilian counterpart Carlos Franca”*

(Moscow Times, Nov. ۳۰, ۲۰۲۱)

This move identified the writer's point with respect to the topic discussed. It defined the point of view from which the reporter looked at the subject and brought about a certain public opinion. Bringing to close the report, it frequently presenting a perspective from which the problem was viewed. Although the government of Russia remains to deny its envelopment in the war, Russian press have efficiently been on a war foothold since ۲۰۱۴. Subsequently it has seen a surprising spread of soldiers.

Language is widely used as a tool for expressing power, ideology, creating discrimination and building disparity. Indeed, language can be regarded a secret weapon, for the secreted meanings and suggestions that might be deliberately embedded into texts and not always obvious to the public (Fairclough, ۱۹۹۶, p. ۵۵). Tools of mind control and influence applied over discourse add to the reproduction and underpinning of power and control. Consequently, the role of language in these texts should not be undervalued.

#### **۴-Recommend Action**

*“For instance, the group confirmed that Russia's ۱<sup>st</sup> Army units are getting redeployed to Yelnya, which hosts the ۵<sup>th</sup> Tank Regiment that “should operate capabilities to maintain and repair military hardware.” Such a deployment would make sense if the Russian command wants to keep the ۴<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Army units combat-ready for the duration of the upcoming*

winter, CIT said” . *“Unlike this spring, when we saw a massive, focused movement of troops and personnel towards the border, this time we observe a notably lower level of activity, which could be at least partially explained with planned vehicle movements and/or reinforcement of existing units,” CIT said.*

(Kyiv Post, Nov 3, 2021)

*According to Ukraine’s military intelligence, as of November 1, no additional movement has been recorded of Russian units, weapons, and military hardware to the state border with Ukraine. In a comment to Radio Svoboda, Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council Oleksiy Danilov denied U.S. media reports about the possible amassing of Russian troops on the border with Ukraine, branding reports "deliberate misinformation”.*

(Kyiv Post, Nov. 3, 2021)

*“If the West is unable to contain Ukraine, but, on the contrary, will incite it, then of course, we will take all the necessary steps to ensure our reliable security.” Last week Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said that Russia was sending "very dangerous" signals with troop movements on the border, warning that his military was ready to push back any offensive. Moscow, which seized Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and backs separatists fighting Kiev, has strongly denied it is plotting an attack and blames NATO for fueling tensions. The conflict in the east has claimed more than 13,000 lives since 2014”.*

(Moscow Times, Nov.30, 2021)

The way writers shift in stressed form in "reaching the verdict" and "recommending the action" has been used as a signal to refer to the world of desirable events in this move. All of this signing is directly related to the genre's communicative goal, which these specific texts exemplify. Given the editors' strong opposition to the action, it is fascinating to observe how the journalist selects linguistic resources to identify favorable or disapproving bias.

The activities of Russia are defined as rapid, erratic and very determined, the actions of Russia may denote threat and danger. The article written by the Ukrainian produces this feeling by indicating that the speed of spreading the soldiers was surprising consequently so far seemingly

unstoppable. Similarly, Russia is ready to carry on with its threat even if it indicates more danger for its economy and more international isolation from other countries.

Opinion has been stated in no undefined terms in the headline .

**"Russia's larger invasion into Ukraine not imminent, experts say"**

( Illia Ponomarenko . Published Nov. 3, 2021)

**"UkrInform: Kyiv confirms almost 40,000 Russian forces stationed near border"**

(UkrInform. Published Nov. 3, 2021).

**"Putin Says Russia Has 'Right to Defend its Security' Amid NATO Tensions"**

( [AFP](#) Updated: Dec. 8, 2021)

**"Moscow Says West, Ukraine Threaten Russia Security"**

([AFP](#) Nov. 30, 2021)

The first step in any text analysis is almost always the analysis of specific words used in a newspaper script. Words express the imprint of the public and, more specifically, value judgments. An examination of the words in the headlines is a useful first step in analysing the newspaper content. Headlines are a “part of news rhetoric whose function it is to attract the reader” (Bell 1991, p 189). “More precisely, headlines achieve a double function a semantic function, regarding the referential text, and a pragmatic function regarding the reader the receiver to whom the text is addressed” (Rhardson, 2007, p. 1970).

The writer's goal in the first excerpt of each article is to convey the news to readers as accurately and objectively as possible. Newspaper news is typically brief and to-the-point. They have something specific and accurate to say. The journalist usually takes the reader directly to the heart of the events, and the linguistic resources serve that purpose.

The headlines highlight the events connected with the crisis between Russia and Ukraine. These headlines from both sides cover political opinions and the stance of dissimilar political groups on the crisis. They also create complexity and vitality by writing about political affairs that happen at a given time. Accordingly, equal power, significance and speed of action-taking is given to both countries that symbolize two different world outlooks and sets of values.

In all these articles, there is a news article on the problem of the Russian threatening against Ukraine. The occurrence of what Kinneavy (١٩٧١) referred to as the 'surprise value' is one of the factors that makes these headlines appropriate for a newspaper. This influences the distinctive discourse organization of these news reports to a large extent. The headline, also known as the 'lead' in the newspaper world, has been chosen to convey the highest level of surprise. This organization standard gives news stories the structure of a reversed pyramid, with the most important points of the news given first, and the rest of the story offering items in decreasing order of position and increasing direction of finer detail. The lexico-grammatical structure employs distinct lexis, which is closely related to newspaper language. This is done to more support the elements of surprise value. In the same way, the use of quotations from known sources is not only to present confirmation for what the journalist is claiming but also for objectivity, and to indicate the journalist's withdrawal.

### **٥-Conclusion**

The findings revealed that language in newspapers is an influential genre of communication which, by using argumentation- mainly rhetorical moves positioned in the normative basis of objective writing- can help shape people's appreciative of the world. Powerful institution that wants to use newspapers to uphold their form of the war to the world and therefore form the behaviour of the public in their side. The image of the war presented in the articles was the good guy and the bad guy. Russia described her 'good' movements toward Ukraine as peaceful and beneficial and are estimated positively, while other controversial movement "gathering ..... soldiers near the border with Ukraine are either ignored, defined with euphemistic. All of this is explained to show that Russia is not innocent of the accusations. Such denial of the issue is made manipulative at additional levels of analysis, for example, by lexical, discourse order emphasis, hiding responsibility, and thematically and linguistically boosting favorable or negative assessments. Nonetheless, the Russian President goes out of his way to present the public with an overall terrible impression of Ukraine while simultaneously attempting to explain the negative claim of that country, which is based on a generally unfavorable scenario. Ukraine is

signified as breaking the law and a divergent. Russia symbolizes itself as democrats who respect the law, follow the ideologies of democracy, worry about her stability. Both articles use strategies to boost the public's feeling that what they saying is true. The analysis showed that both newspapers used the four moves of Bhatia's model. However, the differences are in the way the moves presented. For instance Move "presenting the case" is presented in more details in the Ukrainian newspapers. This shows that the Ukrainian side tried to give their issue more space to be presented. On the other hand, the two Russian articles gave more detailed to Move "reaching the verdict".

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