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## SOCIOLINGUISTIC PECULIARITIES OF FRAMES OF RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR OF 2022

*The current war, unleashed by Russia against Ukraine, that actually began in 2014, has been constantly producing more and more linguistic units subordinated to certain frames. The aim of this research is to identify new frames that have appeared in the coverage of the war events since February 24, 2022; to analyze the reasons that caused those morphemes/ words/phrases to become sociolinguistic frames, to describe their linguistic features that contribute to growth of their manipulative potential and impact on the audience.*

*The ideas of Gregory Bateson, V. von Humboldt, J. Green, D. Hymes, M. Saville-Troike, Entman, A. Wierzbicka, S. Russell, O. Rohach served the ground for the research. Methods of observation, comparative analysis, synthesis have been employed. The choice of new frames in the language of war was made considering popular ways for framing news stories that were outlined by R. M. Entman (Entman, 1991) and criteria for choosing the key words worked out by A. Wierzbicka (Wierzbicka, 1997).*

*It was found out that the identified frames of war reflect human interest or consequences, are based on emotions, and bear morale. Language of war frames depends on the level of culture in society. From the lexical point of view these frames depict a close link between society and a language's lexicon and can be borrowed from foreign languages. The scale of the military conflict defines the semantic variety and degree of tension of metaphors. From the structural point of view frames are shortenings of various types, affixation, abbreviations and blending. Breaking orthography rules contributes to emotional coloring of the language of war.*

*The spelling of the English word “ruscism” was justified, clarifying its semantic difference from the words “russism” and “racism”.*

*Analyzing the popular frames from the sociolinguistic angle would help find out the mechanisms of their emergence and help foreign media understand their meaning correctly. Consequently, it might provide the true coverage of the events in Ukraine. by foreign media.*

**Key words:** language of war, language frame, framing theory, media, media coverage, sociolinguistic, semantic.

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## СОЦІОЛІНГВІСТИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ФРЕЙМІВ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ 2022 РОКУ

*Нинішня війна, розв'язана Росією проти України, яка фактично розпочалася у 2014 році, постійно продукує все більше мовних одиниць, підпорядкованих певним фреймам. Метою дослідження є виявлення нових фреймів, які з'явилися у висвітленні подій війни з 24 лютого 2022 року; проаналізувати причини, через які ці морфемі/слова/фрази стали соціолінгвістичними фреймами, описати їх лінгвістичні особливості, які сприяють зростанню їхнього маніпулятивного потенціалу та впливу на аудиторію.*

Підґрунтям дослідження є ідеї Грегорі Бейтсона, В. Фон Гумбольдта, Дж. Гріна, Д. Хаймса, М. Савілла-Тройка, Ентмана Р., А. Вежбіцької, С. Рассел, О. Рохач. Застосовані методи спостереження, порівняльного аналізу, синтезу. Вибір нових фреймів у мові війни здійснювався з урахуванням популярних засобів фреймування новин, які окреслив Ентман (Entman, 1991), та критеріїв вибору ключових слів, розроблених Анною Вержбіцькою (Wierzbicka, 1997).

З'ясовано, що визначені мовні фрейми війни відображають людський інтерес чи наслідки, ґрунтуються на емоціях та несуть моральне навантаження. Мова військових фреймів залежить від рівня культури суспільства. З лексичної точки зору ці фрейми зображують тісний зв'язок суспільства з лексикою мови і можуть бути запозичені з іноземних мов. Масштаб воєнного конфлікту визначає різноманітність семантики та ступінь напруженості метафор.

Зі структурної точки зору фрейми – це різного роду скорочення, афіксація, скорочення та змішування. Порушення правил орфографії сприяє емоційному забарвленню мови війни.

Обґрунтовано написання англійського слова “ruscism”, з'ясувавши його семантичну відмінність від слів “russism” і “rasism”.

Аналіз популярних фреймів під соціолінгвістичним кутом дає можливість іноземним ЗМІ з'ясувати механізми їх появи та правильно зрозуміти їх значення. Таким чином, це сприятиме правдивому висвітленню подій в Україні зарубіжними ЗМІ.

**Ключові слова:** мова війни, мовний фрейм, теорія фреймів, медіа ресурси, висвітлення в ЗМІ, соціолінгвістичний, семантичний.

**Significance of the problem.** Language reflects all aspects of our life. Language of war reflects political fight that takes place both locally and globally. According to Sara Russel, “language is extremely powerful; it shapes, and can be used to manipulate our perceptions and understanding of an event” (Russel, 2008, p. 1). The current war, unleashed by Russia against Ukraine, that actually began in 2014 with occupation of the Crimea and creation of illegal formations of “DNR” and “LNR”, has been constantly producing more and more linguistic units subordinated to certain frames.

Due to the massive information pressure of the Russian media with its more and more intense language of war, 82 % of Russian population appreciated the aggression of Putin’s regime in 2014, according to David Satter, Special to CNN (Satter, 2014).

At the same time, long-term debates about the status of Russian language in Ukraine have been fueling the ideas of one nation (one culture), preparing Ukrainians to giving up the thought of building independent state and recognizing a superior role of Russian Federation. The efficient spread of existing myth about “Russian brothers” by pro-Russian propagandists both in Russia and in Ukraine did not allow many Ukrainians to accept the obvious signs of the threat of the inevitable invasion.

Analyzing the global influence of Russian culture, its collaboration with western countries in all spheres, and in literature in particular, O. Zabuzhko mentions the long-term erosion of the limits of what is considered acceptable in

the western culture, and points at “the gradual transition from European rationalization to Russian normalization of evil (Zabuzhko, 2022)”.

All mentioned above raise new issues and cause the necessity of further research in this area. Analyzing the popular frames from the sociolinguistic angle would help find out the mechanisms of their emergence and help foreign media understand their meaning correctly. Consequently, it might provide the true coverage of the events in Ukraine by foreign media. As, according to Mass Communication Theory, the basis of framing theory lies in the fact that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning (Mass Communication Theory (Online), 2017), it is reasonable to apply the framing theory to find out new senses in the language of war.

#### **Analysis of the research into this problem.**

Review of the works in the field of framing and linguistics allowed to outline some scholars who contributed to the subject under consideration. The concept of framing was first suggested by Gregory Bateson in 1972 (Bateson, 1972). Later it was developed in the works of Goffman (1974) who noticed that there are two distinctions within primary frameworks: natural and social. V. von Humboldt, J. Green, D. Hymes, M. Saville-Troike, Y. Zatsny and others have done studies of “culturally marked vocabulary” (Rohach, 2015). They viewed a language as a reflection of a national culture. Entman identified five popular ways for framing news stories (Entman, 1991). Hallahan stated that framing operates as a form of metacommunication (Hallahan, 2008). Specific words serving as tools

of interconnection between language and patterns of thought were investigated in the research of Anna Wierzbicka (Wierzbicka, 1997, p. 5). Sara Russell studied anthropological and linguistical thinking concerning September 11 events and the subsequent wars of the USA (Russel, 2008). Oksana Rohach made the semantic, structural and etymological analysis of the language of war (Rohach, 2015).

#### **The goal and the specific tasks of the article.**

The aim of this research is to identify new frames that have appeared in the coverage of the war events since February 24, 2022; to analyze the reasons that caused those morphemes/words/phrases to become frames, to describe their linguistic features that contribute to growth of their manipulative potential and impact on the audience.

**Methodology.** Methods of observation, comparative analysis, synthesis have been employed. The choice of new frames in the language of war was made considering popular ways for framing news stories that were outlined by Entman (Entman, 1991) and criteria for choosing the key words worked out by Anna Wierzbicka (Wierzbicka, 1997).

#### **Presentation of the main material of the study.**

Sara Russell suggests, that “to understand how people used language, one must understand their framing (Russel, *ibid.*)” According to framing theory, frame is the way of presenting something to the audience, and these presentations influence the way people process that information and make decisions on it. Frames are abstractions that work to organize or structure message meaning.

Gregory Bateson defined psychological frames as a “spatial and temporary bounding of set of interactive messages” (Bateson, 1972, p. 197). Framing is related to the agenda-setting tradition but expands the research by focusing on the essence of the issues at hand rather than on a particular topic. The basis of framing theory is that the “media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning” (Mass Communication Theory (Online), 2017).

R. Entman claims that there are five popular ways for framing news stories:

– Conflict – conflict between parties can be prioritised, as opposed to the actual decision made.

– Human Interest/Personalisation – presenting a story with human face, personality is promoted over more important aspects.

– Consequence – consequences can be wide ranging.

– Morality – media coverage can often moralise, sometimes due to the indiscretions of political actors; or alternative, policies can be seen as morally questionable.

– Responsibility – attributing responsibility, either for a cause or a solution” (Entman, *ibid.*).

Anna Wierzbicka identifies four criteria for key words. 1) The word must be established as a common word. 2) It should be frequently used in a semantic domain, that is the domain of emotion, the domain of moral judgment, for example. As Frank Luntz stated, “understanding the importance of emotions, some linguistic strategists, claim that “twenty percent of life is decided by intellect and the remaining eighty percent based on emotion” (Luntz, 2005).

3) It must be the center of a phraseological cluster. 4) For a word to be a key word one can also look for its frequent appearance in proverbs, saying, popular songs, and book titles among other things” (Wierzbicka, 1997, pp. 15–16). In the language of war, linguistic units reflect the negative relationships between the participants of different military conflicts. They are coined at different times, but in most cases they are stylistically marked.

Analyzing the semantic, structural and etymological peculiarities of the language of war, Oksana Rohach concluded, that this kind of language “reflects the relationship between the participants of various military conflicts with consideration of the extra linguistic factors that caused its appearance and usage” (Rohach, 2015). She explained the linguistic aspects of many frames that emerged with the first phase of Russian-Ukrainian war that started in 2014.

One of the examples of such a word that corresponds to all four criteria and thus, serves as a frame, is *nazis / fascists*. According to O. Rohach, “due to the fact that the ideology and propaganda in the USSR were very effective and there are still many people who are under their influence, the restoration of the derogatory terms that were used to name the *nazis, fascists* and the Ukrainian Riot Army soldiers worked as a trigger. Now they are widely used by the Russian mass media, but in a new context. For example, the revolutionary events on the Maidan in Kyiv (2013–2014) were translated as anti-government riots, the change of power – фашистська узурпація влади (fashystska uzurpatsia vlady) “a fascist usurpation

of power”, переворот (perevorot) “upheaval”, Ukrainian soldiers – каратели (karateli) “punishers, chastisers”, бандеровці (banderovtsy) “members of the Ukrainian Nationalists Organization started by Stepan Bandera”, нацисти (natsisty) “nazis”, фашисти (fashisty) “fascists” (Rohach, *ibid*).

Since the events of the war that started in February, 2022, the frame *nazis/fascists* has been applied to both sides of the military conflict, and is internationally used to label Russian occupants, who became ingloriously famous for their genocide acts towards Ukrainian civilians on the occupied territories.

It should be noted, that the frame *fascists* has even been submitted by *ruscists*. “Ruscists” derived from “ruscism” – the term, that had been already viewed by some researchers As long time ago as in 2015, “*ruscism*” was defined by Oleh Hryniv as a kind of totalitarian, fascist ideology, a combination of the basic principles of fascism and Stalinism. “It is the basis of Russia’s barbaric geopolitics aimed at the occupation and annexation of other states, often under the frame “gathering Russian lands” (Hryniv, 2014).

However, in our opinion, the word *ruscism* received a strong emotional coloring and the status of frame only with the recent events. In particular, on April 3, 2022, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky stated that “what Russia is doing is Nazism. The way they killed, tortured, what they did to young children, rape, everything that happened – this is, not even a manifestation, this is Nazism. Historically, the state will have a word in history that no one has invented, but everyone is repeating “ruscism” in Ukraine and in Europe. It’s not just that everyone says it’s “ruscism”. Because for all these 80 years, if you analyze, there haven’t been such barbarism on our continent. Therefore, ruscism is a concept that will be in history books, in conditional wikipedias, will remain in the classroom. And, little children around the world will stand up at the desks and tell when ruscism began, on what land and who won the fight for freedom against this terrible concept” (Kizilov, 2022).

To justify the spelling of the word *рашизм* in English (for the moment of working at the article there haven’t been any variants of the frame found in any foreign media coverage of the events under discussion, Google Translate gave “russism” Wikipedia suggested “racism”, which both seem to

be lost in translation) we might consider that from the linguistic point of view, the frame “ruscism” is artificially formed by combining the English word Russia (the name of the country Russia, pronounced: [rʌʃə]) with the international word “fascism”. Thus, as a result of blending of the two words, in our opinion, in the English language it should have the spelling *ruscism*. In order not to confuse the word with *racism* or *russism*, the clarification is needed.

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, *racism* has got the following meanings:

1. “A belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race;

2. The systemic oppression of a racial group to the social, economic, and political advantage of another...”

While “*russism* [rəˈsɪzəm] means a word, expression, or language characteristic or distinctive of Russian” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Another frame that has a strong emotional impact and has been used by Russian propaganda in coverage of the events of the current Russian-Ukrainian war is abbreviation Z. The Latin letter Z was used by the Russian occupiers in the full-scale attack on Ukraine in February 2022. In the first days of Russia’s military intervention in Ukraine, photos and videos of Russian military equipment marked with white Latin letters Z and V appeared on social media. For the Russian population the letter Z is a sign of Russian support for the war against Ukraine. Like Hitler’s occupation of Poland in 1939, Russian political leadership and propaganda call it a “special operation.” (*ukrain.com.*, March 21, 2022). They put this symbol on T-shirts, cars, etc., thus turning it into the brand. On March 29, 2022, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba called on the whole world to criminalize the public use of the symbol of the Russian occupiers “Z” (UNN, 2022). To resist the emergence of new symbols of the renewed fascist ideology called “ruscism”, a number of countries and brands are banning the use of the letter Z in their branding. Thus, in Latvia, the tallest houses, called Z-Towers, changed their name to Zunda.

The language of war of the latest period of Ukrainian history in Ukrainian media coverage has been enriched by the frame *orcs* (укр. *орку*).

Being colloquial, it has been used in all levels of media coverage, including governmental. The word has got one of the strongest emotional power, demonstrating the most derogatory attitude towards Russian soldiers, meaning that even animals cannot be compared with their cruelty, low cultural, emotional, mental, educational levels.

Online Etymology Dictionary claims that the etymology of the word goes back to “ogre, devouring monster” of 1590s, being, perhaps a reborrowing of the same word that became Old English *orcþyrs*, *orcneas* (plural), which might originate from a Romanic source akin to *ogre*, “man-eating giant of fairy tales and popular legends” of 1713, *hogre* (in a translation of a French version of the Arabian Nights), from French *ogre*, was first used in Perrault’s “Contes,” 1697, and perhaps was formed by him from a dialectal variant of Italian *orco* “demon, monster,” from Latin *Orcus* “Hades,” which is of unknown origin. In English, the word is more literary than colloquial. The conjecture that it is from Byzantine *Ogur* “Hungarian” or some other version of that people’s name (perhaps via confusion with the bloodthirsty Huns), lacks historical evidence. It is related to *Ogrish*; *ogreish*; *ogrishness*; *ogreishness* and ultimately comes from Latin *Orcus* “Hell,” that is of unknown origin (etymonline).

Another possible origin is the word *Orca* which means “killer whale,” introduced as a generic term for the species by 1841, from earlier use in scientific names, from Latin *orca* “cetacean, a kind of whale.” Earlier in English, *orc*, *ork* “large marine mammal, deadly sea-creature” (by mid-17c.), from French *orque*, had been used vaguely of sea monsters (see *orc*). Strong, ferocious, and predatory, they are the only cetaceans which habitually prey upon warm-blooded animals. The term was later revived by J. R. R. Tolkien (1892–1973), who might have got it from Beowulf, as the name of a brutal race in Middle Earth. “But Orcs and Trolls spoke as they would, without love of words or things; and their language was actually more degraded and filthy than I have shown it.” [“Return of the King,” 1955] (etymonline). We may suggest that this very meaning is considered to be the base for the creation of the current frame *orcs* in Ukrainian media which serves the example of linguistic borrowing.

According to Edward Sapir’s, “language [is] a symbolic guide to culture” (Sapir, 1949, p. 62)

and “vocabulary is a very sensitive index of the culture of people” (ibid., p. 27). Anna Wierzbicka developed further Sapir’s ideas, finding a close link between society and a language’s lexicon, the actual naming of visible and tangible things. For example language specific names for kinds of things shows their importance in a language (Wierzbicka, 1997, pp. 1–2). Besides, specific words can be used as tools to understand a culture’s past experiences as Wierzbicka suggests, “language and patterns of thought are interlinked” (ibid., p. 5). The brightest example of this is a famous frame “Russkiy korabl’, idi n\*\*\*\*!” (English: Russian warship, go f\*\*\* yourself). 13 border guards found themselves being attacked by a Russian frigate standing just offshore. They were told to lay down their weapons and surrender, but they refused.

This event received an extremely wide coverage in international media. As it was stated in *Navy Times*, “The Ukrainian border guards’ final communication before the attack of Zmiinyi Island, (English: Snake Island) went viral and became a “rallying cry” for Ukrainians and their supporters around the world (*Navy Times*, February 25, 2022) *The Week* compared the phrase to “Remember the Alamo” (*The Week*, February 25, 2022). “Remember the Alamo” is a famous battle cry in the Texans’ struggle for independence from Mexico, later used by Americans in the Mexican War. It recalled the desperate fight of the Texan defenders in the Alamo, a besieged fort, where they died to the last man” (Dictionary.com),

In our opinion, the use of expressive phraseology here is of multitask character. Firstly, it is aimed at derogating the enemy. Secondly, it intends to make the message completely clear, as it is delivered in the most comprehensible for Russian people way – in obscene lexics. The fact that A. Plutser-Sarno, a Russian contemporary artist, journalist, lexicographer, one of the ideologists and artistic directors of the War art group, is the author of the “Big Dictionary of Foul Words” which comprises no less than 12 volumes, might explain the reason of overwhelming number of phraseology units of obscene character in the life of Russian people. One can not deny the spread of such language in Ukraine as well due to a long history of expansion of Russian culture on Ukraine.

A combination of an expressive phraseology unit with obvious personalisation (Russian warship

implies here the country-aggressor) created that bomb-shell effect and have been cited by all strata of people around the world, including prominent politicians, musicians, bloggers, etc. A Parliament Member from Poland Yvona Arent used the phrase in her speech at the session of Council of Europe in March, 2022. Lithuania also legalized to use the phrase in media. These examples can be easily found on YouTube. Moreover, In March 2022, the Ukrainian government announced that a postage stamp honoring the soldiers on Snake Island would be released. "In a public vote, Ukrainian artist Boris Groh's design of a Ukrainian soldier standing on a beach and giving the finger to a passing Russian warship received the most votes and was selected" (USA Today, April 2, 2022). A month later it was sold out within a couple of days. From May 1, 2022 Ukrposhta launches T-shirts, sweat shorts, magnets and other merchandise items for distribution (maximum.fm). As we see, such media frames are able to create a brand out of the conflict.

The language phenomena that reflect real military conflicts normally depends on the intensity of the conflict. The more deadly consequences the war events have, the stronger metaphors are produced. During the annexation of Crimea (spring, 2014) there appeared the frames *зелені чоловічки* (zeleni cholovichky "little green people"), *ввічливі люди* (vvichlyvi liudy "polite people"), metaphors that were used to name the Russian soldiers who wore the green uniform but had no chevrons. "They controlled the situation in Crimea during the illegal referendum and its annexation to Russia, but due to the fact that there were no shootings they were called "polite" (Rohach, 2015). After the full offensive of Russian troops in February, 2022, much stronger metaphors *орки* (orcs), *рашисти* (ruscists) appeared for nomination of the enemy. Metaphors *Bucha* and *Mariupil* originated from geographical names and represent horrible genocide of civilians in Ukrainian cities of Bucha and Mariupil.

The last, but not the least phenomenon of the latest developments of the language of war is ignoring the rules of orthography. The examples are: *putin*, *moscow*, *russia*, *russian federation*. In the current news coverage by Ukrainian media this

way of writing the proper names is prevailing. In our opinion, language is ultimately not just a means for communication, but is also a system of social signs indicating belonging to groups, attitudes to others, attitudes to self and attitudes to the world. Attitudes are marked by the emotions. The emotions of hate, disrespect make these frames quite noticeable in our media surface and formulate certain social thinking of the mentioned above objects.

**Scientific novelty** of the work lies in identifying the new frames within the language of war, explaining the etymology of these frames and attempts to analyze their meanings and structure.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** To sum up, the identified frames of war that appeared in the result of the current military conflict, reflect human interest or consequences, are based on emotions, and bear morale. Framing is socially determined, can occur in communication, can be positive or negative, taken from different sources of information and personalities. Framing also can occur on the level of thought and consist of mental representation, simplification, manipulation of reality. Language of war frames depends on the level of culture in society.

From the lexical point of view these frames depict a close link between society and a language's lexicon and can be borrowed from foreign languages. The scale of the military conflict defines the semantic variety and degree of tension of metaphors. From the structural point of view frames are mainly shortenings of various types, affixation, abbreviations and blending. Breaking orthography rules contributes to emotional coloring of the language of war.

The importance of such studies are caused by the fact that they deal with the language phenomena that reflect real military conflicts and their participants. This helps the researches to decode the history of such terms and define their pragmatic and manipulative power. However, there is a need for more research to explore deeper into semantic, morphological, semiotic, metalinguistic nature of framing. This research would provide insights into the characteristics of war frames, that ultimately would help their better understanding.

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