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CONFLICT, CONFRONTATION, AND WAR REFLECTED IN MASS MEDIA: SEMANTIC WARS, THEIR VICTORS AND VICTIMS

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Abstract: War presented in mass media as a piece of hard news has three spaces: military, economic, and informational. From a linguistic point of view, conflict has two constituents: CONFLICT-STATE and CONFLICT-ACTION. The variety of conflict is confrontation, which includes physical collision, armed opposition, verbal collision, collision of outlooks and interests. Each conflict or confrontation has a cognitive script, on which confrontational substrategies are being built.

Key words: conflict, confrontation, war, cognitive script, semantic wars, text categories.

1. Introduction

Each event, which takes place in the world, is sooner or later reflected in mass media. If we open a newspaper or its website on the Internet, we will see that the best informational places are given to pieces of hard news. Titles describing war conflicts

are large in size and contain numerous stylistic means used for the purpose of catching the reader's attention.

There are some specific techniques, which help make the text more informative and attractive for the audience. The authors of the text or speechwriters successfully use a set of words forming a lexico-semantic group (Lančarič 2016), employ different stylistic devices, add a large amount of emotively charged words or make a specific text composition.

We have chosen the two cases connected with our research topic – the Iraq war and the Skripal poisoning and with the help of numerous examples show how different confrontation strategies are used by the authors of the text, how some text categories are reflected in the text (mainly modality, emotivity, and evaluation), how the role of this or that text category changes over the course of time. That is why all the examples from the articles are accompanied not only by their source but also by the date of their publication.

Our language material comprises 25 articles on the Iraq war and 29 articles on the Skripal case, which we have chosen from American and British newspapers or journals (on-line versions).

2. Conflict, confrontation, war, and violence: Definition and differences

These things are very interrelated. We present different points of view on these four items taking into account linguistic aspects, i.e. the means of their verbalization. We present them as a chain of events: conflict arouses confrontation; confrontation may lead to war accompanied by violence.

2.1 Different aspects of conflict

Conflict has several definitions (Wright 1965). Some authors claim that it is "the sharpest way of the solution of the significant contradictions arising in the course of

interaction, consisting in counteraction of subjects of the conflict, usually against the background of negative emotions" (Анцупов & Баклановский 2005: 8); some treat it as the collision of opposite directed purposes, interests, positions, opinions of subjects of interaction; this is the contradiction arising between people in connection with the solution of these or those questions of social and private life" (Бандурка & Друзь 1997: 20). Conflict interaction is characterized by a low extent of orientation to the interests of other party, a high extent of orientation to personal interests, and a negative assessment of the value of interpersonal relations (Емельянов 2003: 95).

The most considerable research belongs to Rummel (1975-1981) who presented the results of his investigation of conflict and war. In five volumes of his research, Rummel asks the questions about the reasons of war and why international violence leading to international conflict appears. He writes that the answers are specific and explains that International Conflict Behaviour is caused by: opposing interests and capabilities (specific sociocultural differences and similarities between the parties); contact and salience (awareness); significant change in the balance of powers; individual perceptions and expectations; a disrupted structure of expectations; a will-to-conflict (Rummel 1979). These postulates are important for our research and we present them in the following way (see Fig. 1).
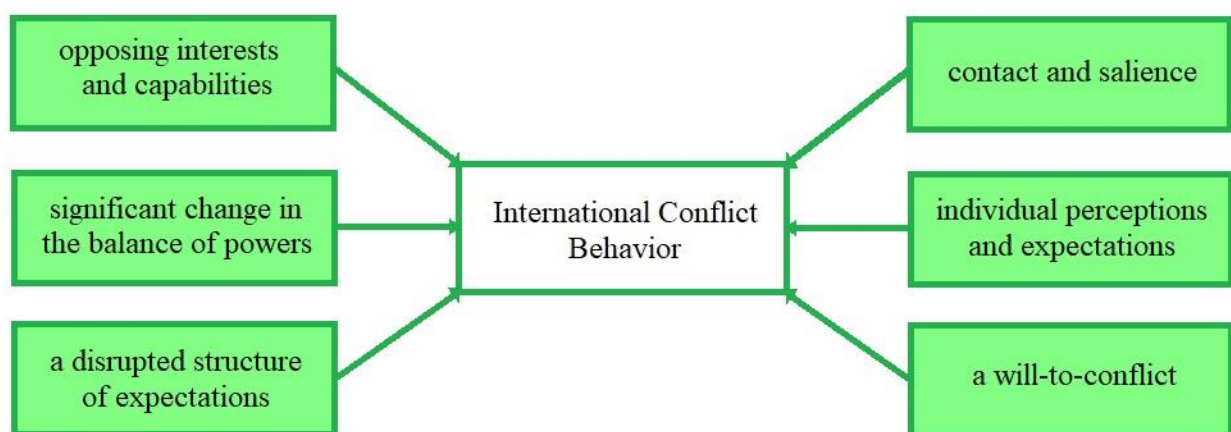

Figure 1. Reasons of International Conflict Behavior (after Rummel 1979)

International Conflict Behaviour is aggravated by sociocultural dissimilarity, cognitive imbalance, status difference, coercive state power; is inhibited by sociocultural similarity, decentralized or weak, coercive state power and is triggered by perception of opportunity, threat or injustice, surprise (Rummel 1979).

Judging from the information presented above there may be social, economic, psychological, political, and other approaches to conflict study. Our aim is to investigate how conflict may be considered from a linguistic point of view and how it is presented in the media. The lexical unit *conflict* in English has two constituents: CONFLICT-STATE and CONFLICT-ACTION, with its further subdivision into CONFLICT [HUMAN ACTIVITY EVENT] – [NON-MILITARY] – [VERBAL] (Жарковская 2007).

The study conducted by Venediktova shows that conflict belongs to the WAR concept and has specific associations in linguistic images of the world, like opposition, collision, armed struggle as a way of various disputes solution, and disagreements at the impossibility of eliminating contradictions by peaceful means. These associations are presented by the following lexical units: *war; warfare; clash; confrontation; combat; hostilities; collision; discord; fight; battle* (Венедиктова 2004: 10).

Moreover, scholars have found out conflict-triggering comments and have classified them as primary (explicit), which include the word *confrontation* or lexically connected with it semantic units or secondary (implicit) markers, which represent verbal means, (objectivizing the negative emotional psychological state of the speaker, one's intentions and evaluations (Фролова 2017: 186).

As far as the topic 'conflict' is kept under constant review by scholars, there appeared the new cross-disciplinary branch of humanitarian knowledge – conflictology – which integrates and develops scientific judgement accumulated through many centuries experience of conflict (Фролова 2017: 172).

2.2 Confrontation: Its types and substrategies

In dictionaries, confrontation is usually explained as a fight or argument; as a situation, in which people or groups with opposing ideas or opinions disagree angrily. Confrontation may appear between two people and there may be confrontation with somebody.

Frolova (Фролова 2017: 177) understands confrontation in the following way: as physical collision, armed opposition, verbal collision, collision of outlooks and interests. She revealed linguo-cognitive schemes of the strategy of confrontation realization in Anglophone discourse. In her paper, the scholar presents different cognitive strategies of confrontation based on two mental models: I AM SUPERIOR – YOU ARE INFERIOR, I AM GOOD – YOU ARE BAD. Substrategies of confrontation are based on the following cognitive scripts:

➢ DEMONSTRATE YOUR AUTHORITY AND POWER (accentuate your highest position and the low position of the other) – the substrategy of the demonstration of power;

➢ FIGHT FOR POWER (try to increase your own position and decrease your opponent's position);

➢ FORCE (compel, coerce, do not give any choice to somebody else);

➢ CAPTURE SPACE (enlarge your own space borders – excessively move away; interfere with the personal space of the other – excessively come nearer) – the substrategy of space capture;

➢ DESPISE (accentuate your own positive assessment and negative assessment of the other) – substrategy of disapproval;

➢ DEMONSTRATE DISRESPECT (accentuate your own needs, wishes, interests / ignore needs, wishes, and interests of somebody else) (Фролова 2017: 193).

These mental models and substrategies of confrontation ideally match our language material and form the theoretical background to our research. To illustrate them we have chosen George Bush's speech on Iraq given by him in Cincinnati on October, 7

in 2002 (published by *US news*), the analysis of which is presented below and some media texts on the Iraq war and the Skripal case.

Earlier (see Panasenko et al. 2017) we analyzed the ᴡᴀʀ concept and connected its constituents with Fillmore's semantic roles. According to Frolova (Фролова 2017: 195) mental representation of the situation of confrontation has obligatory constituents; some of them can also be considered as semantic roles (reason, purpose, object, instrument, maleficiant):

▪   communicative and positional roles of the speaker and the addressee, whose exchange happens between subjects;

▪   psychological role AGGRESSOR, peculiar to the speaker;

▪   the reason – existence of an intrapersonal or interpersonal contradiction (I AM AGAINST MYSELF, I AM AGAINST SOMEBODY ELSE);

▪   the motive – harm to somebody else;

▪   the purpose – disharmonization of interpersonal relations;

▪   the object – material, spiritual, imperious resource, the possession of which the subject seeks;

▪   the maleficiant – the communicant, at whom action of the AGGRESSOR is directed;

▪   the instrument of influence – verbal means – carriers of confrontational meanings.

We will illustrate below how constituents of these mental models of confrontation are presented in media texts.

2.3 War and violence. Causes, models, and types of war

Studying the war phenomenon has a centuries-old tradition. Any large war in the history of mankind didn't go unnoticed: collisions, disputes, and fights were carefully described and analysed by philosophers of different times (Ухова 2006: 166). As

Erofeeva claims (Ерофеева 2015: 73), modern market media gravitate towards the bright and intensive embodiment of the theory of "black mirrors". Negative and denial as opposed to positive and creative, death as a life antonym, darkness and evil against the sun, light and good are the main hooks of the media's so called "black square", which allows them to attract and keep the attention of the audience. Thus, war, violence, and death are in demand and, alas, are favourite topics of mass media.

First of all, let us clarify the meanings of the word "war". It has direct and figurative meanings. In its primary meaning, war is an organized armed struggle between states or classes. Figuratively war is a condition of hostility between people or groups of people, like war between mafia clans or war of opinions (Ухова 2006: 167). We may also consider "war" as a concept with different aspects. Ukhova (Ухова 2006: 167) names its following aspects: 1) social (antagonistic form of social relationship of people) and socio-political aspects (war as armed conflict); 2) physical aspect (physical collision of objects); 3) social and economic aspects (war as competition); 4) linguistic aspect (quarrel, dispute); 5) psychological aspect (intrapersonal fight, ideological fight). Venediktova (Венедиктова 2004: 9) considers the WAR concept as a frame with a complex multi-layered structure. This structure is presented by notions directly associated with war: conflict, fight, opposition; military operations; war and its types; military equipment and arms; participants of war; interpersonal relations of the people who are involved in war; result of war and its consequence.

When the question arises about the reasons for war, many sources cite the words of Wright who answered that question like this. War arises because of the changing relations of numerous variables – technological, psychic, social, and intellectual. There is no single cause of war. Peace is an equilibrium among many forces. Change in any particular force, trend, movement, or policy may at one time make for war, but under other conditions, a similar change may make for peace. A state may at one time promote peace by armament, at another time by disarmament, at one time by insistence on its rights, at another time by a spirit of conciliation. To estimate the probability of

war at any time involves, therefore, an appraisal of the effect of current changes upon the complex of intergroup relationships throughout the world (Wright 1965).

Describing the general causes of International Conflict Behaviour, Rummel (1979) speaks about the reasons for violence (including war), which is caused by: at least one party having an authoritarian or totalitarian regime, status quo disruption, confidence in success. It is aggravated by system polarity (centralization of coercive power), Big Power intervention, weakness of the status quo Power, credibility at stake, and honour at stake. It is inhibited by: cross-pressures, internal freedom, strength of the status quo Power, and world opinion. War is a particular type of intense violence and generally causes, aggravates, and inhibits violence. War is uniquely aggravated by power parity, class conflict and is inhibited by power disparity. This description vividly shows how closely war and violence are related. Very often, they may have the same roots of origin.

War has three spaces: military, economic, and informational. Of course, our research interest lies in the informational space. We will pay attention to the mental models dominating in modern media discourse, which definitely reflect some of the mentioned above spaces. Venediktova (Венедиктова: 2004: 14-18) speaks about several metaphoric models in the newspaper articles reflecting the Iraq war. The domineering one is "war is an economic operation". The second frequent model in the American and British press was "war is a punishment for crime". The author explains it by the fact that some countries initiated the war in Iraq and thus it was necessary to convince the world community of the correctness of their actions. In Russian articles, this model occurred less often. The next models are "war is destruction" and "the end of war is a construction and repair".

Types of war are marked with the help of numerous adjectives, which form specific classes: a) characterizing the war itself either positively (*sacred, liberation war, just…*) or negatively (*unjust, senseless, predatory, dirty, colonial…*); b) characterizing the

duration and level of war (*fruitless, global, long-lasting, local, overnight war, lost, protracted war…*), c) burden of war, its character and consequences (*cruel, brutal, savage, terrible, dreadful, fierce, severe, grim, rigorous, violent…*); d) logical (scientific) definitions of war (*nuclear, imperial, bacteriological, sea, partisan…*) (Panasenko et al. 2017: 91). Venediktova (Венедиктова 2004: 10) mentions the following types of war: ideological war, civil war, world war, cold war, colonial war, chemical war, aerial war, just war, war of liberation, and nuclear war. We see that this classification is based on different principles: instruments and weapons used in war, its assessment, location, and some others.

Summing up the causes of war as well as its types and violence, which inevitably accompany war, we would like to cite a fragment from the research by Erofeeva:

"Blossoming of spiritual development and material well-being is possible in peace time. War creates a stress situation, closes the harmonious movement of the subject, this phenomenon is asymmetric; it pushes together one's expectations and harsh reality into the atmosphere of suffering. Therefore war and peace are a starting point of contention or association of the people and the countries and also of sincere chaos and spiritual harmony" (Ерофеева 2015: 75).

3. How conflict, confrontation, and war are reflected in media

Modern media discourse has many a time become the object of linguistic research (Ерофеева & Ushnikova 2017; Alexiyevets 2017; Pravdová 2017; Zheltukhina 2016a). Much attention has been paid to the transformation of messages (Fedoriv 2016), manipulative discourse (Gnezdilova 2017), pragmatics and emotivity of discourse (Pinich 2017) as well to the role of journalism in digital media (Višňovský et al. 2015).

Journalists use different methods in presenting hard news (Panasenko et al. 2017) and tools on the impact on consciousness of people used in media texts about war strikes with variety and integrity (Ерофеева 2015: 74).

There are different types of information presentation in mass media: **media reflection,**

media transformation, and **media myth** (Доброниченко 2014: 16-17). Journalists who objectively highlight war conflicts sometimes are in real danger and some of them have been killed. Here we come across a very interesting phenomenon: when news appears, people take it as media reflection; when time passes, people incline to the opinion that this event was presented as media transformation. Over the course of time, it becomes obvious that it was a trick, a media myth presented like a real fact (Panasenko et al. 2017: 96). The best example of it is the 2003 invasion of Iraq (March 20, 2003 – May 1, 2003) where we can state that its description in the mass media was a myth. The case with Skrupal's poisoning also promises to be interesting. We present the results of these two cases analysis in detail below.

There are other definite tools of human consciousness manipulation, which we highlight in our practical part. Here we would like to mention fear activation as an effective means of capturing the audience (Ерофеева 2015: 80; Желтухина 2016b).

4. Case study

4.1 Case 1. The Iraq war. Semantic wars and a real war.

We have chosen articles, which were written before the invasion and which justify the war conflict because of Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction and we analysed media texts written some time ago after the USA invasion. We have 25 articles of analytical character and one oratory – Bush's speech.

4.1.2 Cognitive strategies of confrontation preceding Iraq war

All the articles under analysis belong to on-line media. The exception is an oratory, the transcript of George Bush's speech on Iraq given by him in Cincinnati on October 7, 2002 and first published by *US news* on the same day (Transcript: George Bush's speech on Iraq 2002). We find it an excellent way to demonstrate how different techniques are used by speechwriters who have a definite purpose and how these speeches can be analysed lexically, stylistically, or cognitively.

As we have already stated above, one of most popular techniques is fear activation. When the reader is frightened, he/she will take anything for granted. The speaker may use words with negative connotation. Such stylistic means, as hyperbole (exaggeration to such an extent that the saying becomes absurd) and various types of repetition (parallel constructions, epiphora, anaphora, framing, etc.) are widely used in hard news.

From Bush's speech, we have chosen all the emotively charged words with negative meanings and grouped them in the following way:

▪ **Group 1. Iraq is a threat (17 examples)** (*a grave threat, threat/threats, every threat, offensive threats*, etc.).

▪ **Group 2. Iraq brings terror and helps terrorists (35 examples)** (*an arsenal of terror, terror, terrorism, terrorist(s), sudden terror, terrorist groups, terrorist attacks, terrorist network*, etc.).

▪ **Group 3. Saddam Hussein is a tyrant (2 examples)** (*a murderous tyrant, tyrant*).

▪ **Group 4. Iraq possesses lethal weapons (41 examples)** (*chemical and biological weapons, atomic weapons, weapon of mass destruction, biological weapons, nuclear weapons, weapons of terror, dangerous weapons, new weapons*, etc.).

▪ **Group 5. Other words with negative connotation (128 examples)** (*to violate, suffering, horrible poisons, diseases, danger(s), to kill, invade, brutally, dictator, grows worse, chemical attacks, to injure, to die, attacks, violation, bomb-making, deadly gases, evil*, etc.).

We have calculated the number of usage of these words in the text. In the first group (**Iraq is a threat)**, the most frequently used word is *threat/threats* (11 examples) accompanied by different negative adjectives. In the second group (**Iraq brings terror and helps terrorists**), we refer to the most frequently used words *terrorist(s)* (11 examples), *terror* (7 examples), and *terrorism* (3 examples). The third group includes only two expressions, which are given above. The most frequently words and word

combinations in group 4 (**Iraq possesses lethal weapons**) are: *nuclear weapons* (11), *weapons of mass destruction* (7), *weapons* (6), *chemical and biological weapons* (6). Vocabulary in group 5 (**other words with negative connotation (128 examples**) is presented by different parts of speech; the most frequent are: *danger/s* (7), *to destroy* (5), *confronting* (4), *dictator* (3), *to kill* (3), *sanctions* (3), *blackmail* (3), *murder* (3). Figure 2 shows how examples are distributed among the negative emotive words.
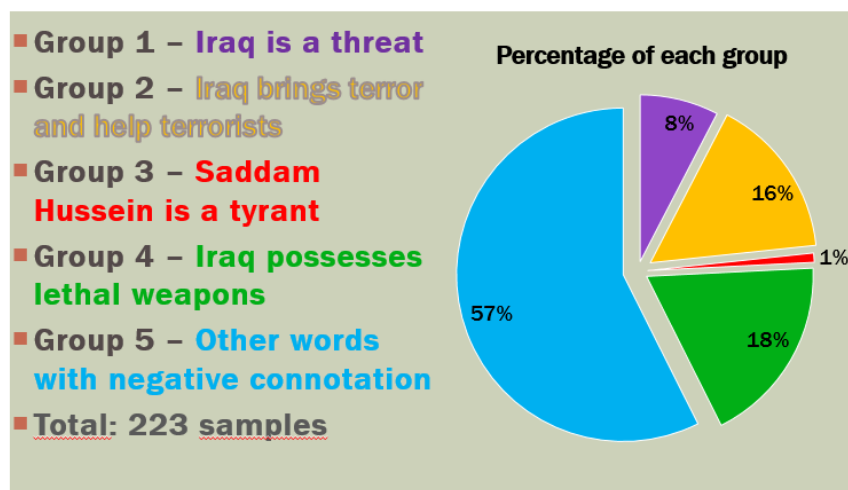

Figure 2. The frequency of words with the negative meaning in George Bush's speech on Iraq
Source: Our own research

These examples vividly show how CONFLICT-STATE is gradually transforming into CONFLICT-ACTION (Жарковская 2007). To prepare the world for CONFLICT [HUMAN ACTIVITY EVENT] and make it [MILITARY] others, more complicated techniques are used by the speaker and the country he represents. Now let us discuss cognitive strategies of confrontation (after Фролова 2017).

Mental model I AM SUPERIOIR – YOU ARE INFERIOR,
I AM GOOD – YOU ARE BAD

*We resolved then, and **we** are **resolved** today, **to confront every threat from any source** that could bring sudden terror and suffering to America.*

*The Iraqi regime **has violated all of those obligations**. **It possesses and produces chemical and biological weapons. It is seeking nuclear weapons. It has given shelter***

and support to terrorism and practices terror against its own people. The entire world has witnessed **Iraq's 11-year history of defiance, deception and bad faith.**

We agree that the Iraqi dictator must not be permitted to threaten America and the world with horrible poisons and diseases and gases and atomic weapons.

And ***that's why America is challenging all nations*** to take the resolutions of the UN Security Council seriously. ***These resolutions are very clear.*** In addition to declaring and destroying all of its weapons of mass destruction, ***Iraq must end its support for terrorism***. ***It must cease*** the persecution of its civilian population. ***It must stop*** all illicit trade outside the oil-for-food program. ***It must release*** or account for all Gulf War personnel, including an American pilot whose fate is still unknown.

In this speech, we can also identify some **confrontation substrategies** (after Фролова 2017).

Confrontation substrategies

Demonstrate your authority and power

*Saddam Hussein **must disarm himself**, or, for the sake of peace, **we will lead a coalition to disarm him.***

The United Nations would betray *the purpose of its founding and prove irrelevant to the problems of our time. And through its inaction, **the United States would resign itself** to a future of fear.*

Fight for power (try to increase your own position and to decrease your opponent position)

*And that's why **two administrations** – mine and President Clinton's – **have stated that regime change in Iraq is the only certain means of removing a great danger to our nation.***

Force (compel, do not give any choice to somebody else)

By taking these steps and by only taking these steps, the Iraqi regime has an opportunity to avoid conflict.

Capture space (enlarge your own space borders)

*Now, as before, **we will secure our nation**, protect our freedom and **help others** to find freedom of their own.*

*The resolution will tell **the United Nations, and all nations**, that America speaks with one voice and it is determined to make **the demands of the civilized world** mean something.*

Despise (accentuate) your own needs, wishes, interests / ignore needs, wishes, interests of somebody else

*As Americans, **we want peace**. **We work and sacrifice for peace**. But there can be no peace if our security depends on the will and whims of a ruthless and aggressive dictator. **I'm not willing to stake one American life on trusting Saddam Hussein.***

By our resolve, we will give strength to others. By our courage, we will give hope to others. And by our actions, we will secure the peace and lead the world to a better day.

Demonstrate disrespect / accentuate your own needs, wishes, interests / ignore needs, wishes, interests of smb. else

*On Saddam Hussein's orders, **opponents had been decapitated**, wives and mothers of political opponents had been systematically raped as a method of intimidation, and political prisoners had been forced to watch their own children being tortured.*
***America believes that all people are entitled to hope and human rights,** to the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. People everywhere prefer freedom to slavery, prosperity to squalor, self-government to the rule of terror and torture.*

4.1.3 Analysis of some basic text categories (emotivity, modality, and evaluation) displayed in media texts (diachronic approach)

Information in media is presented in various types of journalistic messages (Panasenko 2016), i.e. in texts, which have a specific volume, structure, and content. As any text, journalistic messages contain categories, like coherence, cohesion, information value, anthropocentricity, modality, emotivity, and some others. We have chosen three of them: *emotivity, modality, and evaluation,* because they are most vividly represented in the journalism of emotional type and in our texts under consideration. **Literary time** and **space** are also important in hard news. We accentuate the role of the category of **time** mentioning the date issue of each piece of news. **Place** in this case is mainly associated with the USA and Iraq. In the examples below, we use colours corresponding to the text categories in question. Marked in colour words can be treated as the signals of addressee orientation.

Let us compare how these three categories are presented in the media during the period 26.09.2002 – 13.11.2014. We have picked out the key words from the article and present them as a chain.

1. 26.09.2002: …*The comments by Condoleezza Rice were the strongest – White House's accusations – The accusations followed those made by President Bush – the U.S. government clearly knows – Iraq provided some training to al Qaeda in chemical weapons development – We know that Saddam Hussein has a long history with terrorism in general – There clearly are contacts between al Qaeda and Iraq – the picture is clear – a clear understanding of the threats that are posed – protecting the American people from future attacks*. Source:

http://edition.cnn.com/2002/US/09/25/us.iraq.alqaeda/

2. 28.09.2002: ...*to defend our national security interests against the threat posed by Saddam Hussein – the Iraqi dictator must be disarmed – Bush has accused Iraq – a promise to destroy all its weapons of mass destruction -- biological, chemical or nuclear. Iraq has repeatedly denied possessing any such weapons – the danger posed*

to the United States by Iraq *is grave and growing* – *This regime is seeking **a nuclear bomb*** – U.S. authorities *cannot afford to wait long*. Source: http://edition.cnn.com/2002/US/09/28/us.iraq/index.html

3. 02.03.2004: *...there were **no weapons of mass destruction*** *of any significance in Iraq after 1994* – ***Iraq had no banned weapons*** *before last year's U.S-led invasion* – ***no weapons had been found** – **he found no actual WMDs*** – U.S. teams' *inability to find any weapons – No evidence was found* to suggest Iraq possessed chemical or biological weapons. Source: http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2004-03-02-un-wmd_x.htm

4. 01.04.2005: *...said **the United States still knows "disturbingly little"*** *about the weapons programs – the intelligence community was **"dead wrong"** in its assessments of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capabilities – a major **intelligence failure** – America's **intelligence community needs fundamental change** – After **the intelligence failures in Iraq** – **no weapons*** or no evidence – ***changes at the FBI*** – We must learn from our *past errors*. Source:

http://edition.cnn.com/2005/POLITICS/03/31/intel.report/index.html

5. 10.12.2008: *...**False premise for going to war** – the president and his administration **used** these **two fears – unconventional weapons and terrorism – to win public approval** for going to war in Iraq – These conclusions came **too late** – On March 20, 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom began in **an attempt to kill the Iraqi president and overthrow his regime** – **Bush and seven members of his administration made 935 demonstrably false statements** in the lead-up to the war – **The failure of the commander in chief** and his administration to gather solid intelligence before sending U.S. troops to war **has cost thousands of American and Iraqi lives, billions of tax dollars** – President Bush said that he came to office "unprepared for war" and that his "biggest regret" was the U.S. intelligence failure on Iraq.* Source:

https://www.publicintegrity.org/2008/12/10/6277/false-premise-going-war

6. 27.02.2009: *…**we are leaving Iraq to its people** and we have begun **the work of ending this war** – the war had held some **harsh lessons for the country – America must go to war with clearly defined goals – America can no longer afford to see Iraq***

in isolation from other priorities: we face the challenge of **refocusing on Afghanistan and Pakistan** – **the war that has damaged America's international standing.** Source: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/barackobama/4864280/Barack-Obama-to-end-US-combat-operations-in-Iraq-by-2010.html

7. 18.12.2011: …*Nearly 4,500 US soldiers and tens of thousands of Iraqis* **have died** *since the US-led campaign began in 2003 – The operation* **has cost** *Washington nearly* **$1 trillion** – **still stubbornly jammed** *at* **a level of violence which kills on average around 350 people every month** – *most Iraqis believe it was* **high time for the Americans to go**. Source:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/nationalsecurity/last-us-troops-cross-iraqi-border-into-kuwait/2011/12/17/gIQArEyX1O_story.html?utm_term=.74adbccfe1fd

8. 13.11.2014: …*The Fact Checker* **was puzzled by Bush's reference to finding** **a dirty bomb in Iraq** – **in an offhand manner**, *was giving that as an example of* **something that was not found after the United States invaded Iraq** – *At the time of the March 2003 invasion, administration officials asserted that 44 nations were part of the coalition – The military force was almost entirely a U.S.-British campaign, with some assistance from Australia and Poland – Before the invasion, Bush was much more definitive – But* **none of that turned out to be correct**. *Even Bush's revised claim of "capacity" is* **a stretch** – *Hussein may not have given up his dream of one day again having weapons of mass destruction – but* **he did not have such weapons** – *There was* **no highly enriched uranium, no plutonium,** *no remaining capacity to produce either of those things.* Source:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2014/11/13/george-w-bushs-claims-on-weapons-found-and-not-found-in-iraq/?utm_term=.25e88c4cfea4

We see how from text 1 until text 8 emotivity, modality, and evaluation are gradually changing: in the first texts, there are many emotively charged words with negative connotations (*accusations, chemical weapons development, terrorism, threat danger, a nuclear bomb, weapons of mass destruction*, etc.*).* The tone of the texts is very categorical and leaves no place for sentiments (*the U.S. government clearly knows, the*

picture is clear, a clear understanding). Later the general line of the narrative still has negative elements but they are used against the USA (*no weapons had been found, he found no actual WMDs, U.S. teams' inability to find any weapons, no evidence was found… ...False premise for going to war, none of that turned out to be correct*). Text 7 reflects the economic aspect of war. The last texts show disillusionment in the US politics, regret that so many people have been killed, so much money wasted out. Are there victors in this war? In any case, there are more victims in it.

4.2. Case 2. Skripal versus 'novichok'

In the previous section, we showed ways and methods of presenting hard news in the mass media, namely the Iraq war. Now it is clear that it was a mistake to start that war conflict and many people perished either on fronts or at home because "*American intelligence had made a serious mistake.*" The second case is a fresh one and it is focused on the current diplomatic tension between Great Britain, the USA, the European Union as a whole (mainly 20 states of it), and Russia. It began with the poisoning of Skripal, continued with the process of the British investigation and accusation of Moscow that it was guilty, diplomatic steps and the expulsion of 23 Russian diplomats from the United Kingdom and 23 British diplomats from the Russian federation. It ended with accusations towards the Central European states (Czech Republic, Slovakia, etc.) of creating the agent 'novichok' and we see that this case is not yet finished.

4.2.1 UK – Russia confrontation: Mental models and cognitive scripts

If everything is quite clear with the first case, here some time must pass to find out the truth. We have analyzed in detail Case 1, now we will make a short analysis of the pieces of information found on the Internet connected with Case 2.

4.2.2 Some of basic text categories (emotivity, modality, and evaluation) displayed in media texts (diachronic approach)

We have chosen the most important words in each article, which we will take as linguistic signals of addressee orientation and follow them diachronically. Many of them are connected with the text categories under analysis.

1. 06.03.2018: *are critically ill in hospital* – *what "unknown substance" harmed the pair* – *Russia insists it has "no information"* – *Moscow was prepared to help with the investigation.* Source: http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43297638

2. 08.03.2018: *attempted murder* – *scientists had identified the substance used* – *the suspicion in Downing Street will be that the Kremlin has attempted another brazen assassination operation on British soil* – *Moscow will furiously deny involvement.*
Source: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/07/russian-spy-police-appeal-for-witnesses-as-cobra-meeting-takes-place

3. 13.03.2018: *As the PM says it is "highly likely" Russia was behind the Salisbury poisonings, Moscow calls her words a "provocation"* – *Alexander Nekrasoff said it was "possessed by about 16 countries in their laboratories"* – *the Porton Down military research facility near Salisbury possessed novichok.* Source:
https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/13/world/europe/uk-russia-spy-poisoning.html

4. 15.03.2018: *The White House says it "stands in solidarity" with "its closest ally" the UK* – *this kind of abhorrent attack does not happen again.* Source:
http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43411332

5. 17.03.2018: *none of the 23 British diplomats being expelled have been involved in the attempted murder of people in Russia.* Source:
http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43440992

6. 19.03.2018: *...speaking after winning a fourth term as leader, President Putin insisted Russia had destroyed all of its chemical weapons, adding it was "nonsense" to implicate his government in the attack to independently verify the nerve agent used. It will take at least two weeks to produce results.* Source:
https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43453833

7. 03.04.2018: *Experts unable to identify source of nerve agent but UK says it's Russia* (title) – *Putin said there were 20 countries that could manufacture the nerve agent, adding he was "surprised at the speed with which the anti-Russian campaign was promoted and accelerated." – Russia has repeatedly denied involvement in the poisoning.* Source: https://edition.cnn.com/2018/04/03/europe/skripal-poisoning-uk-nerve-agent-intl/index.html

8. 04.04.2018: Britain's Boris Johnson accused of misleading public over Skripal poisoning evidence – *Dozens of countries have sided with Britain against Russia after Moscow was accused of using a military-grade nerve agent to poison former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in England last month. Boris Johnson, Britain's foreign secretary, now stands accused of publicly misrepresenting the evidence in the case – "Serial liar Boris Johnson caught lying again?" Kevin Maguire, an editor at the left-wing Daily Mirror, wrote on Twitter – British journalists also noticed Wednesday the Foreign Office had deleted a March 22 tweet that said Porton Down had concluded the nerve agent used in the attack was "produced in Russia."* Source:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/.../britains-boris-johnson-accused-of-misleading-public...

9. 05.04.2018: *Vassily Nebenzia asserted that "with a high degree of probability", the intelligence services of other countries are behind the March 4 poisoning of the former Russian double agent, Sergei Skripal, and his daughter in the English country town of Salisbury – "This is a coordinated, very well-planned campaign" aiming to undermine Russia's role "not only in finding a solution in Syria, but anywhere else," Nebenzia said – "Novichok is not copyrighted by Russia in spite of the obviously Russian name," said Nebenzia, adding that the United States and Britain also had developed the nerve agent – it was an attempt to distract from Brexit, Britain's departure from the European Union – Lavrov said the refusal to allow Russia to join the investigation was a "mockery of international law, diplomatic etiquette and elementary decency." He said Skripal's poisoning was "staged to justify the expulsion of so many diplomats."* Source:

10. 15.04.2018: Independent Swiss Lab Says 'BZ Toxin' Used In Skripal Poisoning; US/UK-Produced, Not Russian – *according to the independent Swiss state Spiez lab, the substance used on Sergei Skripal was an agent called BZ, which was never produced in Russia, but was in service in the US, UK, and other NATO states – Sergei Skripal, a former Russian double agent, and his daughter Yulia were poisoned with an incapacitating toxin known as 3-Quinuclidinyl benzilate or BZ – The Russian foreign minister said that London refused to answer dozens of "very specific" questions asked by Moscow about the Salisbury case, as well as to provide any substantial evidence that could shed light on the incident. Instead, the UK accused Russia of failing to answer its own questions, he said, adding that, in fact, London did not ask any questions but wanted Moscow to admit that it was responsible for the delivery of the chemical agent to the UK. But hey, who cares about any of that? Diplomats have been sent home, Putin has been anointed Hitler, and besides, what about those missiles in Syria?* Source: https://southfront.org/independent-swiss-lab-says-bz-toxin-used-in-skripal-poisoning-us-uk-produced-not-russian/

Now let us select the most important linguistic signals of addressee orientation from the extracts presented above. The first five articles (8 – 17 March) have several emotive words (*critically ill in hospital, attempted murder, brazen assassination operation, furiously deny, abhorrent attack*). In the following texts a very wise approach is used – *Audiatur et altera pars* (May the other side also be heard). The journalists give the word to Putin, Lavrov, and Nebendzia who express their own understanding of the event, which is contradictory to the version sounded by Teresa May. On April 4, Boris Johnson is called a liar ("*Serial liar Boris Johnson caught lying again?*"). The latest article, which we have under analysis in our list (15.04.2018) says "*the substance used on Sergei Skripal was an agent called BZ, which was never produced in Russia, but was in service in the US, UK, and other NATO states*". Every day something new appears connected with the Skripal case but we have to stop adding new pieces of

information because it looks like an endless list. Now let us discuss how cognitive strategies of confrontation are presented in the media.

4.2.3 Cognitive strategies of confrontation

In 29 articles connected with the Skripal case, we have identified cognitive strategies of confrontation (after Фролова 2017).

Mental model I AM SUPERIOIR – YOU ARE INFERIOR,
I AM GOOD – YOU ARE BAD
Confrontation substrategies
Demonstrate your authority and power

1. 15.03.2018: *PM Theresa May said the diplomats would be expelled after Moscow refused to explain how a Russian-made nerve agent was used on a former spy in the UK*. Source: http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43411332

2. 16.03.2018: *Boris Johnson today said it was "overwhelmingly likely" that Vladimir Putin ordered the Salisbury attack.* Source: https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/boris-vladimir-putin-ordered-salisbury-nerve-agent-attack-a3791951.html

Fight for power (try to increase your own position and to decrease
your opponent position)

1. 07.03.2018: *The cabinet's most pressing problem is how to formulate a political response if the trail – once again – leads back to Moscow. But it is now unlikely that any operation to murder a defector could originate in Russia without a degree of official permission.* Source:
https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/07/russian-spy-police-appeal-for-witnesses-as-cobra-meeting-takes-place

2. 17.03.2018: *So this is really absolutely symbolic and typical of a Russian Federation that has used lying and propaganda as a means of warfare and is now*

repeating its style. Source: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/17/sergei-skripal-russia-expels-23-british-diplomats

3. 19.03.2018: *Speaking on the BBC's Andrew Marr Show, Boris Johnson said: "We actually have evidence within the last 10 years that Russia has not only been investigating the delivery of nerve agents for the purposes of assassination, but has also been creating and stockpiling Novichok."* Source:

https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43453833

Force (compel, do not give any choice to somebody else)

1. 13.03.2018: *The poison used to target former spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia was from the **Russian-made nerve agent group novichok**, Mrs May said… Russia disregards the international rules-based order, undermines the sovereignty and security of countries worldwide, and attempts to subvert and discredit Western democratic institutions and processes.* Source:

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/13/world/europe/uk-russia-spy-poisoning.html

2. 17.03.2018: *She said the UK would "never tolerate a threat to the life of British citizens and others on British soil from the Russian government".* Source:
http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43440992

**Demonstrate disrespect (accentuate your own needs, wishes,
interests / ignore needs, wishes, interests of somebody else)**

12.03.2018:*… the Kremlin was taking advantage of the UK's lack of allies in the US and EU.* Source: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/07/russian-spy-police-appeal-for-witnesses-as-cobra-meeting-takes-place

If we compare these texts to those connected with the Iraq war, we will see that Case 1 presents confrontation, which has led to CONFLICT-ACTION. Case 2 is in the CONFLICT-STATE and we hope that it will be frozen in the future and will not lead to CONFLICT-ACTION.

5. Conclusion. Victors (if any) and victims

Conflict, war, and confrontation presented in the media belong to hard news. We highlighted not only the reasons for the appearance of these phenomena but also treat them from the linguistic point of view. It gave us the opportunity to find in these journalistic messages some text categories (time and place, of course, can be found in any text but this time we neglect them) like emotiveness, modality, and evaluation and claim that that they are of paramount importance in hard news. **Emotivity** is important, because emotively charged words – namely with negative connotations – form the vocabulary of the texts under consideration and above we have given many examples proving this fact. **Modality** (in our case subjective modality) shows the attitude of the author of the text to the events described. It is done with the help of modal verbs, parenthetic words and sentences. **Evaluation** is connected with the moral estimation of conflict and confrontation; if we speak about war, it is reflected in such adjectives, as *sacred, liberation, just <u>war</u>*; *unjust, senseless, predatory, dirty, colonial <u>war</u>*; *fruitless, lost, cruel, brutal, savage, terrible, dreadful, fierce,* <u>war</u>, etc.

If we come back to Fig. 1 and have a look at the reasons for International Conflict Behavior, we will see that in the first case, the Iraq war, the reason of its starting was "opposing interests and capabilities", whereas in the Skripal case it is "a will-to-conflict" (after Rummel 1979).

We present different cognitive strategies of confrontation and types of speech behaviour. Having analyzed more than 50 texts according to the principles of the diachronic approach, we show that the roles of text categories as well as mental models of confrontation are gradually changing over the course of time.

As we have already mentioned, according to Dobronichenko, there are three types of media narrative: media reflection, media transformation, and media myth (Доброниченко 2014). Our research is based on the analysis of two cases: the Iraq war and the Skripal poisoning reflected in the mass media. Now we may state that the Iraq

war described by the media when it was in full swing and before it started was a myth, a media bubble. It's a pity that it has become clear only in recent years. There are so many victims in this war. Very often, the war ends with one's victory. The Iraq war has no victors. The second case under consideration, the Skripal poisoning, reflected in the media today looks like a media transformation. At first, Russia was accused by the United Kingdom, then in two weeks a Swiss laboratory stated that they could not identify the origin of the nerve agent (see the CNN article under the title "Experts unable to identify source of nerve agent but UK says it's Russia" by Kara Fox and Katie Polglase, April 3, 2018). Approximately one month after the poisoning, Boris Johnson (who was Britain's foreign secretary when those events took place and who resigned in summer 2018) was called "a serial liar" by Adam Taylor ("The Washington Post", April 4 2018). We will come to know for sure (if we will) the truth about this case only in the future. We obviously have two victims – Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia. Is Russia the victim? Are the hundreds of diplomats who had to leave the place of their work victims? Who is the winner in this case? We will be able see it over the course of time.

Notes

The Skrypal case is said to be connected with the nerve agent 'novichok'. This word comes from Russian 'новичок' and means 'a newcomer', 'a novice', or 'a beginner'. It may be considered as an unassimilated borrowing, thus we may write it in italics or with apostrophes. In the examples, which we borrowed from different Internet sources, we come across different variants of its spelling, which we preserve.

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Résumé

Conflicts, war, invasion, fight, explosion, kidnapping, etc. very often constitute the main hard news in mass media. We may specify three spaces of war: military, economic, and informational. In our research, we focus our attention on the informational space of war and military conflicts and show what techniques are used by journalists to attract the reader's attention. From the linguistic point of view, conflict has two constituents: CONFLICT-STATE and CONFLICT-ACTION. Further subdivision includes HUMAN ACTIVITY event and NON-MILITARY [VERBAL] EVENT. The variety of conflict is confrontation, which includes physical collision, armed opposition, verbal collision, collision of outlooks and interests. Either conflict or confrontation has primary (explicit) and secondary (implicit) markers. Each conflict or confrontation has a cognitive script, on which confrontational substrategies are built.

We analyse the two cases (the Iraq war and the Skripal poisoning) presented in media texts, analyse what confrontation strategies are used in them, and how some text categories are used as manipulation tools. Of all the well-known text categories, we have chosen modality, emotivity, and evaluation and using a diachronical approach we highlight how they are reflected in media texts. The analysis of articles in two case studies shows that when something happens and this hard news is on air, the texts abound in emotively charged words, mainly with negative connotations (category of emotivity prevails). Later politicians, authorities, and journalists express their attitude to this event, either positively or negatively (category of modality prevails). When some time passes, there appear publications, which belong to analytical journalism (category of evaluation prevails).

Key words: conflict, confrontation, war, cognitive script, semantic wars, text categories.