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METAPHOR OF WAR IN AMERICAN AND RUSSIAN MEDIA DISCOURSE: A CASE STUDY OF THE 2022 RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to analyse the use of war metaphors in the articles published on February 24, 2022, by the "New York Times" and the "Moscow Times" thematising Russian aggression against Ukraine. Building on Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphor, we observe how war and its various aspects are conceptualised metaphorically in the media discourse. The analysis confirms opposing ideological viewpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian war presented in the two online newspapers that shape public opinion and influence global narratives.

Key words: discourse linguistics, cognitive linguistics, metaphor, war, outbreak of war, Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

1. Introduction

The systematic examination of semiotic data, including written, spoken, or visual forms, unveils ideologies and their capacity to comprehend and elucidate broader social phenomena (Wodak & Meyer 2009). Conceptual metaphors play an important role in the realm of cognitive linguistics as they aim to facilitate comprehension of individuals' perceptions and address significant issues. Given that, every discourse is distinguished not only by its specific terminology but also by the discourse-specific metaphors it contains (Panasenko et al. 2018; 2020). This goal is linked to the aims of the present study: as today's world's focus is centred on the Russian-Ukrainian war, it is important to investigate how this conflict portrayed by journalists on opposing sides has likely influenced public opinion. To accomplish this, we analysed articles published on February 24, 2022, sourced from online newspaper reports such as the "New York Times" and the "Moscow Times". Both magazines contribute to shaping public discourse and are vital sources of information for readers seeking diverse perspectives on international events and Russian affairs.



Through the analysis of 24 articles sourced from the "Moscow Times" and 60 publications from the "New York Times", the research aims to determine how the Russian-Ukrainian war is conceptualized in the media discourse through various conceptual metaphors and answer the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1. What are the conceptual metaphors in the "New York Times" and the "Moscow Times" about the war in Ukraine?

RQ2. Are there any similarities and differences between the conceptual metaphors used by the "New York Times" and the "Moscow Times" in their respective articles?

2. Theoretical framework

The article systematically synthesizes the theoretical foundation of conceptual metaphor research by referencing prominent scholars (e.g., Evans 2013; Kövecses 2010; 2018; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; 1999; Lakoff & Turner 1989; Langacker 2004; Vorobyova 2017; Zhabotynska 2013) while putting the main emphasis on the exposure of significant universal trends in the construction of cognitive metaphors used to write about war. Additionally, the paper makes practical use of diverse methods of metaphor (cf. Klein 2002; Liebert 2003; Liedtke 2002; Musolff 1996; 2005) and discourse (cf. Bilut-Homplewicz 2011; Czachur 2011; Dąbrowska-Burkhardt 2013; Dąbrowska-Burkhardt & Hanus 2022; Hanus 2018; 2020; 2021; Pawliszko 2019; 2021) analysis.

For many years the study of metaphor focused solely on its stylistic function. However, in cognitive linguistics, it has assumed a new role as a cognitive tool. The conceptual metaphor theory, as articulated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 112), advances the proposition that our comprehension of abstract or less familiar concepts, denoted as the target domain, frequently relies on the process of associating them with more tangible or commonly understood concepts, referred to as the source domain. This cognitive mapping facilitates both the elucidation and effective communication of the target domain. The source domain encompasses a collection of literal attributes (the characteristics or properties associated with a source domain when it is used metaphorically to understand or describe a target domain), relationships, and processes that are semantically linked and stored in the mind while the target domain tends to be abstract and its structure is created based on the connection to the source domain (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 74-80).

Conceptual metaphors establish correlations not only between individual concepts but also between broader meaningful spheres that encompass various related notions (Zhabotynska 2013: 48). Cognitive linguistics highlights the connection between metaphors, thinking and conceptual system

of a person (Vorobyova 2017: 93). Thus, discourse analysis considers metaphors as a tool of politics and power. Rhetoric underlines their role in communicative influence.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 4) distinguish between structural, orientational, and ontological types of conceptual metaphors. An example often used to illustrate structural conceptual metaphor is ARGUMENT IS WAR articulated in expressions such as *He attacked every weak point in my argument* or *He shot down all of my arguments*. Here the abstract conceptual domain *debate* is understood through the specific conceptual domain of *war*. In the orientational conceptual metaphor, a system of ideas is organized in the relation and interaction in space like up-down, inside-out, front-behind, shallow-deep, etc. An example often cited to illustrate the orientational conceptual metaphor group is HAPPY IS UP, SAD IS DOWN illustrated in these examples: *I'm feeling down/up*, *You are in high spirits*, *He's really low these days* (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 5). The last type of conceptual metaphors, the ontological metaphor, serves as cognitive mechanisms that facilitate the comprehension of intricate or abstract notions by contextualizing them within the framework of more palpable, tangible, and commonplace experiences. The ontological metaphor often involves framing a complex concept as if it had a specific existence, location, or properties. For example, the ontological metaphor MIND IS A MACHINE can be shown by the following examples: *I'm little rusty today* or *My mind just isn't operating today* (Nguyen 2015: 69).

Another typology of conceptual metaphors is presented by Fabiszak (2007), who divides conceptual metaphors based on their structures, classifying them as paragraph-structuring metaphors and isolated metaphors. The first is the lexical realisation of a single conceptual metaphor underlying larger portions of text, such as a paragraph or an entire article that play an important discourse-structuring function. Fabiszak (2007: 113) illustrates paragraph-structuring metaphor exploiting the conceptual metaphor WAR IS A THEATRE by providing the following example: *This is how one of the acts of this play ends. We don't know yet if this play will turn out to be a grotesque show or a bloody drama of an as yet unknown title*. Isolated metaphors are also linguistic expressions motivated by conceptual metaphors, but their impact on discourse is limited to one sentence or sentence fragment only. The isolated metaphors for WAR IS A THEATRE conceptual metaphor are, for example, *the last but one act of war*, *a new act of aggression*, *to play a role*, *efforts behind the scenes* (Fabiszak 2007: 114). Both classifications are used in studying the conceptual metaphors of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Paragraph-structuring metaphor is extracted from the text based on the criterion of extended and complex comparison, contextualisation within a larger narrative or text, and the ability to emphasize and develop a theme whereas isolated metaphor is brief, self-contained, and impactful comparisons that can stand alone within a text.

Undoubtedly, media discourse serves as a valuable source for investigating conceptual metaphors. As emphasized by Chilton (2004), language is an indispensable component of political action and media discourse. Aljanadbah and Alramamneh (2022) emphasize the significance of examining how the media utilizes language and the role it plays in communicating ideas and beliefs. As the authors point out, journalists aim to utilize lexical and syntactic elements to shape the responses of their readership toward specific narratives laden with values. In the same vein, Kövecses (2018: 130) asserts that conceptual metaphors can structure media discourse both intertextually and intratextually, encompassing various forms of media language such as journalists' discourse, advertisements, headlines, and pictures. Hart (2017: 25) emphasizes how prior texts, linguistic or visual, are appropriated or alluded to establish a frame for understanding the current text. The author notes that intertextuality becomes particularly significant when the described texts belong to different frames than the target situation, offering a rich source for metaphorical interpretation.

Velykoroda and Moroz (2021: 78) provided evidence that media discourse fosters the generation of intertextual metaphors by examining the phenomenon of intertextuality from the recipient's perspective. During our analysis of conceptual metaphors of war, instances of intertextuality were also observed. For instance, some commentators from the "New York Times" draw on intertextuality through the use of historical references to World War II to provide the historical context, draw parallels, or highlight the significance of the conflict. This intertextual reference helps readers shape their understanding of the current conflict by associating it with a well-known and significant historical event, thereby highlighting the gravity and implications of the ongoing war.

3. Database and methodology

3.1 The research design

This research provides an analysis of conceptual metaphors featured in 84 online newspaper reports, 60 by the "New York Times" and 24 by the "Moscow Times", thematising the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The study aims to assess how the media discourse on the war has been portrayed by each and their likely effects on public opinion, both domestic and international. The research method relied upon a qualitative analysis of the conceptual metaphors to reveal the nature of the underlying concepts that influence the attitudes and opinions of each publication's readership, respectively. This method enables a more comprehensive interpretation of the outcomes and allows for an interpretation of both the views of the writers of the articles and the researchers' views to be considered.

3.2 Materials

The data were gathered from all the articles thematising Russian aggression against Ukraine, that is 24 articles from the "Moscow Times" and 60 articles from the "New York Times" published on February 24, 2022. This date is considered to represent the declaration of war by Russia on Ukraine. These two newspaper websites were selected to present instances of opposing ideological viewpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian war.

3.3 The "Moscow Times" vs. the "New York Times"

The "Moscow Times" and the "New York Times" are esteemed magazines that hold significant influence in the realm of journalism, yet they differ in aspects such as their geographical focus, language usage, content, readership, and perspectives. The "Moscow Times" primarily concentrates on events and developments within Russia, offering in-depth insights into Russian politics, business, culture, and society. Its coverage is characterized by its understanding of the local context and the Russian perspective. The publication is predominantly in English, targeting an international audience interested in gaining nuanced perceptions of Russian affairs. In contrast, the "New York Times" maintains a broader international focus by incorporating a blend of international and American viewpoints. With its emphasis on objective reporting and diverse voices, the "New York Times" plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and influencing global narratives. This newspaper is characterized not only by its comprehensive reporting and investigative journalism but also in-depth coverage appealing to a broad audience both within and beyond the United States.

3.4 Procedure

The selection of the material involved five main steps: (1) the researcher determined which online news articles published on the websites of the "Moscow Times" and the "New York Times" on February 24, 2022, were related to the Russian aggression against Ukraine; (2) the general theme of each text and (3) words/phrases that conveyed any meanings related to the conceptual metaphors were underlined; (4) all the highlighted terms were tabulated along with their respective subcategories; (5) subcategories were analysed using statistical data (frequency and percentage) of instances of each to provide a comprehensive summary of each newspaper's ideological stance towards the conflict. The researcher conducted qualitative analysis of all instances of the conceptual metaphors that exemplified the common patterns in each article, respectively.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 The "Moscow Times"

The conceptual metaphors prevalent in numerous abstracts analysed within The "Moscow Times" pertain to the idea that WAR IS ECONOMY. These metaphors are applied to understand and illustrate different aspects of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, particularly in terms of the economic strategies, the resource control, and the use of economic measures as tools of warfare:

(1a) *Scholz warned Tuesday that Russia could face further sanctions in response to its actions in Ukraine.* (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/scholz-says-germany-suspending-nord-stream-2-a76515>)

(1b) *Scholz says Germany suspending Nord Stream 2.* (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/scholz-says-germany-suspending-nord-stream-2-a76515>)

Extract 1a suggests that by the imposition of economic sanctions on Russia by various countries and international organizations and using economic measures such as trade restrictions and financial penalties, nations seek to exert pressure on Russia, highlighting the idea that economic tools are employed as a form of warfare. The struggle for control over strategic gas pipelines in the region in 1b reflects the metaphor WAR IS ECONOMY as both sides recognize the economic significance of these resources.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine can also be illustrated by the conceptual metaphor WAR IS A CRIME through the portrayal of military assaults as criminal acts, accusations of violating international law and breaching commitments, and the characterization of actions as brazen violations of the international order. These structural metaphors help convey the perception that certain actions in the context of war are considered morally and legally unacceptable, aligning them with the concept of crimes:

(2a) *Zelenskiy also told reporters that the Kremlin was paving the way for a major military assault on Ukraine.* (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/ukraine-says-will-consider-cutting-ties-with-russia-a76516>)

(2b) *He [French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian] accused Russia of violating international law and breaching its commitments.* (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/macron-demands-targeted-sanctions-on-moscow-a76503>)

(2c) *Russia has brazenly violated the international order.* (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/kremlin-categorically-denies-ukraine-war-crimes-claim-in-intl-court-a76684>)

In extract 2a the metaphor suggests that the anticipated military assault by the Kremlin on Ukraine is perceived as a criminal act. In quote 2b, the conceptual metaphor WAR IS A CRIME is reflected in the accusation of Russia violating international law and breaching its own commitments. By framing these actions as violations, it implies that Russia's conduct in the war is considered unlawful, akin to criminal behaviour. In the last extract (2c), the journalist reinforces the metaphor WAR IS A CRIME by asserting that Russia's actions have openly disregarded or violated the international order. The use of the term *brazenly* suggests audacity or boldness in violating the established norms and rules that govern international relations. By characterizing Russia's actions as a violation of the international order, the metaphor frames these actions as a transgression, emphasizing their illegitimate nature.

War is always associated with blood, brutality, and pain. The analysed articles contain the conceptual metaphor WAR IS BRUTALITY emphasizing the extreme violence and inhumanity associated with warfare. The journalists depict it in the following extracts:

(3a) *And the Ecumenical Patriarchate is the only Orthodox Church outside Ukraine to decry Russia's unprovoked actions as a violation of human rights and brutal violence against human beings.* (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/an-orthodox-christian-standing-with-ukraine-a76685>)

(3b) *We're still open to a diplomatic solution but we not longer (sic!) intend to allow a new bloodbath in the [eastern Ukraine territories known as] Donbas.* (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/were-all-just-spectators-russia-ukraine-border-residents-await-putins-next-move-a76521>)

In example 3a, the phrase *a violation of human rights and brutal violence against human beings* suggests that the actions carried out by Russia in the context of war are perceived as brutally violent and inhumane, showing disregard for individuals' rights and dignity. Extract 3b also aligns with the metaphor WAR IS BRUTALITY through the use of the term *bloodbath*. The metaphor implies that the situation in the Donbas region is characterized by extreme violence and a high potential for significant loss of life. The term *bloodbath* evokes an image of brutality and carnage, emphasizing the severity and inhumanity of the potential consequences of the continued conflict.

The conceptual metaphor WAR IS DIVISION used by the "Moscow Times" journalists also helps convey the idea that war inherently leads to division, whether it is in terms of conflicting ideologies, internal conflicts, or the response and actions of societies:

(4a) *The same ideological clash of worldviews is reflected in our own domestic context, where basic norms are likewise under threat.* (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/an-orthodox-christian-standing-with-ukraine-a76685>)

(4b) (...) *the decision to recognize the Donbas led to what he termed cognitive dissonance*. (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/were-all-just-spectators-russia-ukraine-border-residents-await-putins-next-move-a76521>)

In extract 4a, the metaphor WAR IS DIVISION is evident in the mention of an ideological clash of worldviews. It suggests that the confrontation leads to a sense of conflict and division, where basic norms and values are at risk. Although the author of extract 4b does not explicitly use the term *division*, it indirectly relates to the metaphor WAR IS DIVISION through the mention of *cognitive dissonance* – a psychological state of inconsistency or conflict between thoughts, beliefs, or values. In the context of war, the metaphor suggests that the decision to recognize the Donbas as an independent entity created a sense of division or internal conflict within individuals who were faced with conflicting beliefs or perceptions.

One of the most interesting conceptual metaphors found in the "Moscow Times" is WAR IS DEFENSE used in President Putin's emotional and angry speech in the wake of February 24:

(5a) *President Vladimir Putin pitched Moscow as a defender of its historical motherland on a crusade to protect Russians and Russian speakers from genocide as he justified the dramatic decision to recognize the independence of pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine late on Monday*. (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/rewriting-history-putin-pitches-russia-as-defender-of-an-expanding-motherland-a76518>)

(5b) *President Vladimir Putin on Monday ordered Russia's military to act as peacekeepers in two breakaway regions of Ukraine, just hours after he recognized them as independent*. (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/putin-orders-russian-military-to-act-as-peacekeepers-in-ukraine-regions-a76504>)

In paragraph-structuring metaphor 5a, Putin presents Russia as a defender of its historical homeland, framing its actions as a response to a perceived threat or attack. This aligns with the metaphor's idea that military actions are defensive in nature. The use of the term *protect* highlights the Russian intervention as a means of safeguarding the lives and well-being of Russians and Russian speakers, framing it as a defensive act against potential harm. Russia's actions are framed as a righteous cause also in an isolated metaphor presented in extract 5b which portrays Russia as a defender, with the concept of *motherland* being mapped onto a physical entity that needs protection. By using the term *peacekeepers*, it presents Russia's military actions as a means to restore stability and protect the people in these regions.

There are also examples of less productive conceptual metaphors like WAR IS A SPECTACLE (6a), WAR IS SPORT (6b), and WAR IS A RELATIONSHIP (6c):

(6a) *At the end of the day, we're all just spectators, staring with open mouths at what's happening.* (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/were-all-just-spectators-russia-ukraine-border-residents-await-putins-next-move-a76521>)

(6b) *In the end, for Putin, the church is merely instrumental, just another arrow in his quiver to reconstitute the Soviet Union, an atheist state.* (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/an-orthodox-christian-standing-with-ukraine-a76685>)

(6c) *Ukraine says will consider cutting ties with Russia.* (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/02/24/ukraine-says-will-consider-cutting-ties-with-russia-a76516>)

The underlined words in the given examples represent source domains SPECTACLE (spectators, staring with open mouths), SPORT (arrow, quiver), and RELATIONSHIP (ties) and map their qualities and characteristics on the target domain WAR.

As the analysis of the conceptual metaphors found in the "Moscow Times" shows, there are several prominent metaphors that convey various aspects of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict. The prevalent metaphor is WAR IS ECONOMY, emphasizing the use of the economic strategies, the resource control, and economic measures as tools of warfare. Another notable metaphor, WAR IS A CRIME, characterizes Russia's military actions as violations of international law. WAR IS BRUTALITY highlights the extreme violence and inhumanity associated with warfare, depicted through descriptions of brutal violence against human beings and the potential for a bloodbath. The metaphor WAR IS DIVISION reflects the idea that war inherently leads to division, whether in terms of conflicting ideologies or internal conflicts. Lastly, WAR IS DEFENSE is employed in President Putin's speech, presenting Russia as a defender of its historical homeland and framing its actions as defensive responses. Less frequently, there are also references to WAR IS A SPECTACLE, WAR IS SPORT, and WAR IS A RELATIONSHIP, which depict war as an event to be observed, a competitive endeavour, or a relationship between nations. These metaphors collectively shape the discourse surrounding the conflict, conveying complex aspects of the situation through metaphorical language.

4.2 The "New York Times"

The journalists at the "New York Times" appear to give significant attention to the connection between warfare and the economy. This is evident in the numerous articles analysed within the

newspaper, where the content of the articles often revolves around the conceptual metaphor WAR IS ECONOMY:

(7a) *The Russia-Ukraine crisis could slow global economic growth sufficiently to cause a recession, creating a dilemma for central banks.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/business/economy/stock-market-today.html>)

(7b) *The Russian invasion of Ukraine poses a risk to economic growth but will likely exacerbate inflation.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/business/economy/interest-rates-russia-ukraine.html>)

(7c) *[President Biden] agreed to move forward on devastating packages of sanctions and other economic measures to hold Russia to account.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/world/europe/why-russia-attacked-ukraine.html>)

(7d) *Europe faces a new refugee crisis, and harsh economic penalties to punish Russia are expected to reverberate worldwide.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/us/politics/ukraine-russia-whats-next.html>)

(7e) *On Wednesday, he [Tucker Carlson] labelled Ukraine a pure client state of the United States State Department.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/business/fox-news-russia-ukraine.html>)

(7f) *"If Putin does not pay a devastating price for this transgression, then our own security will soon be at risk" Senator Chris Murphy, a Connecticut Democrat, said.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/02/24/world/russia-ukraine-putin>)

Structural metaphors 7a-7f represent the conceptual metaphor WAR IS ECONOMY to frame the Ukraine-Russia war in terms of power dynamics, dependence, and the exchange of costs and benefits. The phrase *slow global economic growth* and the mention of a *dilemma for central banks* in 7a highlight the economic consequences of the crisis, akin to how businesses analyse and respond to potential disruptions that could lead to recessions. In extract 7b, the WAR IS ECONOMY metaphor is used to frame the Russian invasion as a risk to economic growth and a potential cause of inflation, highlighting its potential to disrupt economic stability. *Devastating packages of sanctions* and *economic measures* are depicted in 7c as strategic tools employed by governments to hold Russia accountable, akin to businesses' strategic decision-making in addressing challenges while 7d links the WAR IS ECONOMY metaphor to economic penalties, portraying them as punitive measures similar to financial penalties in business and highlighting their global economic repercussions. By describing Ukraine *a client state of the United States State Department* extract 7e suggests that Ukraine is dependent on and compliant to the interests and control of the United States. The expression used in 7f (*paying a price*) implies that Russia, personified by Putin, must face severe consequences or penalties for its actions.

Russian-Ukrainian war is also illustrated by the journalists as WAR IS A CRIME conceptual metaphor, where RUSSIA IS A CRIMINAL:

(8a) *It was not enough in the end to deter Russia from carrying out the broad assault that got underway early on Thursday.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/world/europe/intelligence-putin-biden-ukraine-leverage.html>)

(8b) *Those concerns, analysts say, are likely to shape how far the United States is willing to go to punish Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/business/biden-sanctions-russia-ukraine.html>)

(8c) *There is no purgatory for war criminals, they go straight to hell.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/02/24/briefing/news-quiz-russia-ukraine-war.html>)

Page does not exist anymore.

(8d) *Russia is the aggressor. Russia chose this war.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/us/politics/biden-putin-sanctions-ukraine.html>)

The use of the phrase *broad assault* (8a) suggests that Russia is portrayed as a criminal engaging in aggressive actions while the term *punish* (8b) reflects the notion of holding a criminal accountable for their actions. By characterizing Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a criminal act, the metaphor implies that there should be consequences imposed on Russia akin to those imposed on a criminal. In the next statements (8c and 8d), the metaphor is explicitly expressed through the comparison of war criminals to individuals who deserve punishment. By stating that war criminals *go straight to hell*, the metaphor portrays Russia's actions as morally reprehensible and deserving of severe condemnation. Russia framed as the *aggressor* in extract 8d suggests that it is responsible for initiating the war, likening the actions to those of a criminal who instigates harmful acts.

The conceptual metaphor WAR IS A SURPRISE is also used frequently by the "New York Times" to convey the unexpected, disorienting, and disruptive nature of war. This metaphor highlights the element of surprise, abruptness, and the profound impact that war may have on individuals, organisations, and societies at large:

(9a) *His [President Putin's] announcement came as the United Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting, stunning ambassadors who had to deliver impromptu reactions to the rapidly changing events.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/world/europe/why-russia-attacked-ukraine.html>)

(9b) *The shock of war adds to the enormous challenges facing central banks worldwide.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/business/economy/interest-rates-russia-ukraine.html>)

(9c) *The swiftness of Russia's multipronged assault sent shudders through international boardrooms and raised questions for businesses about how to confront the rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/business/multinationals-halt-operations-in-ukraine-and-move-employees-to-safety.html>)

(9d) *Russians awoke in shock as they learned that he had ordered a full-scale assault, our Moscow bureau chief writes.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/world/europe/putin-russia-ukraine.html>)

The source domain SURPRISE is expressed by the adjective *stunning*, nouns *shock*, *swiftness* and phrase *awoke in shock*. Also, the expressions *rapidly changing events*, *rapidly shifting*, and *swiftness* align with the metaphor WAR IS A SURPRISE as they imply that unfolding events associated with the war took the individuals and organizations by surprise, catching them off guard and requiring them to respond quickly and adapt to the unexpected developments. The phrase *awoke in shock* in 9d signifies the element of surprise experienced by the Russians upon discovering the order for a full-scale assault. It suggests that the news of the war came as an unexpected and shocking revelation, eliciting a profound emotional response. In stark contrast to the above is an extract from yet another article where the conceptual metaphor WAR IS A PREMEDITATED ACT is used:

(10) *Mr. Biden vowed to punish Moscow for a premeditated war that will bring a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/world/europe/biden-russia-ukraine-sanctions.html>)

Considering this example, we identify another conceptual metaphor – WAR IS SUFFERING which points out that war is not only characterized by physical destruction but also by the immense emotional, psychological, and social suffering endured by those affected.

In each of the following extracts, war is metaphorically conceptualized by the journalists as a path, course, or trajectory that has various implications and consequences. This metaphorical mapping suggests that WAR IS A JOURNEY with its own set of challenges, directions, and potential outcomes:

(11a) *Diplomacy is in turmoil with Russia's path of aggression.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/us/politics/ukraine-russia-whats-next.html>)

(11b) *On Wednesday night, even as he predicted that an assault was imminent, Mr. Blinken issued an 11th-hour appeal for Mr. Putin to take a diplomatic path from conflict.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/us/politics/ukraine-russia-whats-next.html>)

(11c) *And if neither international cooperation nor military aid is enough to get Putin to reverse course?* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/opinion/ukraine-russia-putin-war.html>)

(11d) *Even if it is not enough to shake the Fed from its course, some analysts are warning that the fallout of the conflict could be meaningful.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/business/economy/interest-rates-russia-ukraine.html>)

(11e) *In Parsi's view, the path to Putin's flagrant violation of Ukraine's sovereignty was paved in part by similar transgressions on the part of the United States.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/opinion/ukraine-russia-putin-war.html>)

The underlined words in the given examples represent the source domain JOURNEY (*reverse course, shake from its course, path of aggression, diplomatic path, path was paved*) and map their qualities and characteristics on the target domain WAR, allowing for a conceptual understanding of war that incorporates elements such as trajectories, paths, courses, alterations, and consequences.

One more conceptual metaphor which may be frequently identified in the "New York Times" is WAR IS FUEL as in the following examples:

(12a) *It couldn't happen at a worse time as it is pouring fuel over an already kindled fire of inflation.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/business/economy/interest-rates-russia-ukraine.html>)

(12b) *Russia and Ukraine together supply more than a quarter of the world's wheat, and coming disruptions could fuel higher food prices and social unrest.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/business/ukraine-russia-wheat-prices.html>)

In extract 12a, this conceptual metaphor suggests that war acts as a source of fuel that intensifies or exacerbates a pre-existing situation, in this case, inflation. Likewise, in 12b the disruptions caused by the war act as fuel, which could lead to higher food prices and social unrest. The conflict in the region is seen as a factor that amplifies the already existing conditions, resulting in potentially negative consequences. By employing these metaphors, the extracts provide a vivid and evocative way to conceptualize the impact of war on inflation, food prices, and social stability.

There is also an example of conceptual metaphor such as WAR IS A CONTAINER:

(13) *Early this morning in Ukraine, Russian troops poured over the border, and Russian planes and missile launchers attacked Ukrainian cities and airports.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/briefing/ukraine-russia-invasion-putin.html>)

The underlined expression illustrates the source domain CONTAINER (*poured over*). Here, the borders of Ukraine act as a container that separates conflicting forces, and the pouring of Russian troops into Ukraine can be seen as the filling of that container.

There were also some examples of orientational metaphor found in the "New York Times", which explain the concept of war through its SHALLOW-DEEP (14a) and IN-OUT (14b) spatial orientation:

(14a) *The conflict has deepened divisions between the two nations.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/news-event/ukraine-russia>)

(14b) *Russia's invasion crossed the border of Ukrainian territory.* (<https://www.nytimes.com/news-event/ukraine-russia>)

In extract 14a, the orientational metaphor SHALLOW-DEEP is used to describe the impact of the conflict on the relationship between the two nations. *Deepened divisions* suggests that the conflict has intensified or exacerbated the existing differences and hostilities between Ukraine and Russia. The metaphor implies that these divisions have become more profound and significant due to the conflict, emphasizing the depth of the rift between the nations. 14b employs the orientational metaphor IN-OUT to describe the movement of Russian forces into Ukrainian territory. The phrase *crossed the border* conveys the idea of moving from one spatial region (outside, in this case, Russia) into another (inside, Ukrainian territory). It highlights the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by emphasizing the invasion as a breach of borders.

As it is evident from the analysis presented above, the "New York Times" employs several conceptual metaphors to analyze the Ukraine-Russia conflict from which the most prominent is WAR IS BUSINESS, framing the conflict in terms of economic consequences, strategic decisions, and costs and benefits. Economic repercussions are extensively discussed, portraying the conflict as a potential disruptor of global economic stability. The metaphor not only links to punitive economic measures against Russia, but also characterizes Ukraine's relationship with the United States as dependent, akin to a client-state dynamic and, at the same time, points to the high-stakes nature of the conflict. The newspaper also frequently uses WAR IS A CRIME, depicting Russia's actions as criminal. The conceptual metaphor WAR IS SUFFERING highlights emotional and psychological anguish while WAR IS A SURPRISE underscores the unexpected and disruptive nature of war. WAR IS A JOURNEY portrays the conflict as a trajectory with implications. Additionally, the metaphor WAR IS FUEL suggests the conflict intensifies existing conditions. Orientational metaphors SHALLOW-DEEP and IN-OUT provide spatial orientations to describe deepened divisions and territorial violations. These metaphors collectively provide readers with rich perspectives on the multifaceted nature of the conflict.

5. Conclusions

After analysing 84 articles, 24 from the "Moscow Times" and 60 from the "New York Times", it is evident that while both newspapers use conceptual metaphors WAR IS ECONOMY and WAR IS A CRIME to portray Russia as a criminal engaging in aggressive actions, highlighting the notion of accountability and the need for consequences, they provide various lenses through which the conflict can be understood, highlighting different dimensions and implications.

Russian media discourse described war through such structural metaphors as WAR IS BRUTALITY, WAR IS DIVISION, WAR IS DEFENSE, WAR IS A SPECTACLE, WAR IS SPORT, WAR IS A RELATIONSHIP, capturing its brutality, divisive nature, manipulative aspects, spectacle-like quality, and competitive dynamics. American media frame the Ukrainian-Russian war mostly in terms of power dynamics, dependence, and the exchange of costs and benefits. The metaphors used in the "New York Times" such as WAR IS A SURPRISE, WAR IS A PREMEDITATED ACT, WAR IS SUFFERING, WAR IS A JOURNEY, WAR IS FUEL collectively depict the Russian-Ukrainian war as an event surprising in its onset and/or planned in its execution, transformative in its consequences, deliberate in its trajectory, fuelled by various factors, and characterized by performative elements.

Symptomatic for the analysed discourse is also the difference in the understanding of the notion of the aggressor in the conflict. The "New York Times" emphasises that the Russian nation is responsible for the aggression acts through negative evaluations of Russians (RUSSIA IS A CRIMINAL) which evoke images of extreme negativity, immorality, and danger. The "Moscow Times" journalists use *Putin* while writing about the aggressive military intervention by Russia.

The ontological metaphor WAR IS A CONTAINER used in the "New York Times" indicates the limitations of war and the orientation metaphors SHALLOW-DEEP and IN-OUT draw upon physical experiences and spatial reasoning to make these concepts more accessible and relatable, allowing readers to grasp the magnitude and impact of the conflict.


Our research encompassed an analysis of the two aforementioned media discourse sources as the foundation. Subsequent studies may explore additional print or digital media outlets to investigate potential variations in content and identify further metaphorical expressions.

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