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News reporting of public speeches in English on-line media: a constructional perspective

Viešųjų kalbų konstravimas angliškoje internetinėje žiniasklaidoje

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Abstract

The paper argues that news texts split into stories dwelling on events and reports with their organization influenced by the content of documents or public speeches they render. The two levels of arranging news reports – compositional and semantic – are revealed by the comparison of the BBC's and CBC's reports on Ukrainian President Zelensky's address to the American Congress of 22 December 2022. The composition of news reports is three-layered: universal, typical of all news texts with the headline, the lead, the post-lead paragraph and the text body; implicit, with the conventional layout accompanied by descriptive, argumentative and background sections; explicit, with additional headings emphasizing the editorial view of the speaker's ideas. Semantically, news reports are best structured in terms of morphosyntactic constructions, i.e., prefabricated pairings of form and meaning, which relate the content of news reports to the rendered address. It is found that with respect to the proximity to the original speech the constructions used in the news reports form five basic types: identical, equivalent with those in the speech to underscore the affinity of the speaker's and readers' worldviews; synonymous, reflecting the original content through meanings close to the new target audience's worldview; modifying, changing the dependent elements of the author's original constructions to adjust their meaning to the target audience's views; generalizing, fitting the speech content into the public worldview; specifying, clarifying the concepts absent from the readers' worldview.

KEYWORDS: construction, news text, news story, news report, public speech, composition, semantics.

Introduction

News discourse involves numerous social practices concerning politics, science, medicine, education, business (Claridge, 2010, p. 588) represented as reportages and discussions of states and events of “reasonable novelty” (Facchinetti et al., 2015, p. 2). News texts of different subgenres fall into two main categories: stories as structured narratives encompassing one or more events (Thornborrow & Fitzgerald, 2004, p. 345) and news reports, which as analysis suggests render the content of official documents, proclamations or public speeches.

The organization of news reports is studied from two main perspectives: recontextualization and intertextualization. According to the recontextualization approach, a source text is transformed for a new target audience (Schäffner & Bassnett, 2010, pp. 2–3), with the content adjusted to the appropriate conditions of specific situations and their constraints (Gottschling & Kramer, 2021). Consequently, the resulting news report extracts some parts of the source discourse from one communicative context and incorporates into another (Bondi et al., 2016, p. 2), resorting to three types of meaning modification: simplification, expansion, and rearrangement. Simplification is considered to involve meaning condensation or refocusing (Bondi et al., 2016, p. 2) through selection and omission, substitution of one fact for another (Schäffner & Bassnett, 2010, p. 6). The expansion of meaning is linked to elaboration or addition of new elements to the original text (Bondi et al., 2016). The rearrangement of content presupposes a layout of the material that is best suited for the new context foregrounding particularly relevant elements (Pérez-Llantada & Luzón, 2023). Recontextualization has been studied drawing on the transformation of news reports from scientific texts (Gottschling & Kramer, 2021), multimodal texts in the digital environment (Fryer, 2016) and in translation of political texts (Schäffner & Bassnett, 2010; Pan & Huang, 2021), to name a few. In its turn, intertextuality, perceiving “all texts as inextricably conditioned – in both their production and their reception – by other texts” (Baron, 2020, p. 2) deals with the fundamental interrelatedness and boundless connectivity. It focuses on imitative and adaptive processes concerning the composition of narratives (Mason, 2019; Fernandez-Vara, 2016), on the one hand, and linguistic phenomena such as references and quotes (Trillini, 2018), tropes and allusions (Carter, 2021), on the other.

However, the studies discussed above overlook the transformation of public speeches into news reports though addresses as a separate phenomenon have been investigated by a number of researchers. They analyze inaugural addresses of American presidents (Widiatmoko, 2017) and British Prime Ministers (Buczowski & Strukowska, 2022), or congressional speeches (Lenard, 2023). Ukrainian linguists investigate discursive strategies of various politicians (Slavova, 2020), symbols in Ukrainian presidential speeches (Kryvenko, 2021), pragma-communicative peculiarities of President Zelenskyy’s addresses (Humeniuk, 2023), his values and intents (Liubchenko et al., 2021). Therefore, the research problem this paper addresses is to study the transformation of the content of Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s addresses into news reports. The aim of the contribution is to determine the modifications the structure and semantics of a public speech undergoes in on-line news reports. Its novelty consists in applying the constructional approach which presupposes the comparison of reference texts of addresses with the uptaking texts of news reports drawing on the morphosyntactic constructions treated as conventionalized pairings of form and meaning (Goldberg, 2006, p. 5; Croft, 2022, p. 5, 15).

Theoretical Background

The use of news reports to disseminate the content of public figures’ speeches to the media audience involves structural and semantic transformation of reference texts.

Structurally, news reports partly derive from the now classical organization of news stories suggested by Teun van Dijk (1985) which is still used in a number of publications (see: Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 2004; Dunsmore, 2019; Yarlott et al., 2018). They distinguish the following categories of a news story: headline, expressing the most important topic of a news item; lead, extending the headline; main event, dominating the description of happenings; previous events, reminding readers of what occurred before; background, providing general, political, historical or social context of these events; consequences, organizing occurrences as being caused by the main event; verbal reactions, or quotations (Dijk, 1985, pp. 86–88).

In their turn, news reports have two obligatory components of news text composition: the headline and the lead. However, text bodies turn out to be organized differently under the influence of two factors: news values, or newsworthiness, employed to a larger extent than in news stories, and argumentation, borrowed from public speeches. News values as a set of selection criteria (Firmstone, 2023, p. 67) encompass ‘proximity’ (nearness to the addressee), ‘negativity’, ‘superlativeness’ (large scale / scope), ‘timelessness’ (e.g., recency), ‘unexpectedness’, etc. (Harcup, 2020, p. 3). Accordingly, news reports rearrange the speech content with respect to its proximity to the target audience. Argumentation as “the use of arguments to convince others by means of a reasonable discussion of the acceptability of the standpoint at issue in a difference” (Van Eemeren & Van Haften, 2023, pp. 342–343) creeps into reports under the influence of speeches. As a result, besides the headline and the lead, news reports comprise the following sections: post-lead, i.e., the first paragraph of the text body, elucidating the information of the headline and the lead; descriptive, representing the address’s content details; argumentative, consisting of the thesis offered by the journalists and the arguments borrowed from the speech; background, dwelling on the accompanying events. The explicit variants of the news report composition structure the implicit layout imposing the journalist’s subjective view on the speech: the text body is additionally divided by internal headings indicating descriptive and argumentative sections.

Semantically, news reports render speech content, which is best captured by morphosyntactic constructions, i.e., “conventional combinations of form and function that emerge from the dynamic clustering of witnessed exemplars in memory” (Goldberg & Herbst, 2021, pp. 285–286). Constructions vary in terms of the degree of their complexity and schematicity: constructional meanings are frequently non-compositional and their “forms are not predictable from general rules” (Hilpert, 2021, p. 7). With respect to their stability, morphosyntactic constructions are classified in two ways: linguistic and cognitive. According to the former, grounded in language levels, constructions are divided into three subtypes (Tomasello, 2000, p. 62): item-based, keeping their fixed form in all the contexts, e.g., *no-fly zone*, *ladies and gentlemen*; lexicalized with “relatively stable frames of reference”, termed as islands of reliability, e.g. *I X-ed it*; grammaticalized, highly abstract entities that rest on commonalities in the structure and function of a whole set of different specific expressions, e.g., *object transfer constructions*. The cognitive classification takes into account the interaction between two elements of the constructions: substantive, having a fixed phonological form, and schematic that can be filled in with various components creating opposing constructions (Hoffmann, 2022, pp. 2–7), e.g., *unfair*, *unbelievable*. In the cited *un-*constructions, the prefix *un-* is treated as a substantive element since it is fixed for all situations while *fair* and *believable* are regarded as schematic elements filling in the empty slots in different contexts. The cognitive structuring of constructions results into their two other variants: partly substantive / schematic and completely schematic. The partly substantive construction is exemplified by the unit *take something for granted* where the substantive element *for granted* has a fixed structure, while the partly substantive verbal slot is filled in with the verb *take* which changes the phonological realization following the rules of subject-verb agreement. The completely schematic templates have slots which can all be filled in with various lexemes, e.g., *firefighters cut the man free*. This resultative construction is considered to consist of slots for the subject, verb, object and result with the meaning of the construction “including parts that are not associated with any elements on the formal level” (Hoffmann, 2022, p. 7). It is obvious that the cognitive view is more generalized since it draws on slots and relates three types of linguistically defined constructions to the interaction of schematic and substantive elements though both classifications rest on the stability of constructions.

Methods and Material

This study presupposes three stages of analyzing the transformation of speeches into news reports: taxonomic, interpretational, and textual.

The first – taxonomic – stage aims at distinguishing five types of morphosyntactic constructions with respect to their relation to the content of public addresses: identical, synonymous, modifying, generalizing and specifying. *Identical* pairings are singled out due to their fixed structure and meaning in the reference and uptaking texts, e.g., *against all odds* (BBC, 2022). *Synonymous* constructions are differentiated on account of their similar meaning in the speech and in the news report. For instance,

the construction *the House and Senate lawmakers* (CBC, 2022) from a media text is related to the original pairing *ladies and gentlemen* (Zelenskyy, 2022). *Modifying* constructions are set apart on the basis of a change in their structure in news reports: the units of this kind keep one original element while others are replaced by a new component identified with respect to three levels of categorization: basic, superordinate, and subordinate (Rosch, 2009, p. 45). At the basic level of categorization objects share similarities with attributes typical of most members of a class; superordinate categories represent entities in a generalized or abstract way with their members sharing only a few attributes among each other; and subordinate categories are characterized by common attributes inherent for other categories (Rosch, 2009, p. 45–46). As a result, modifying constructions with generic meaning denote more abstract concepts in comparison with those used in the speech. It is the case with the construction *Ukraine stands* (CBC, 2022) referring to the country in the news report instead of the unit *Bakhmut stands* (Zelenskyy, 2022) which designates a town in the speech. Meanwhile, modifying pairings with concrete semantics indicate more particular objects in a news report due to a component particularizing the meaning of the original element, e.g., the construction *the Revolutionary War Battle of Saratoga* in the news text (CBC, 2022) correlates with the pairing *the Revolutionary War* from the speech (Zelenskyy, 2022). In news reports, *generalizing* and *specifying* constructions have all the components replaced in contrast to the original constructions. Generalizing constructions in uptaking texts replace basic-level pairings which have a more particular meaning in the address, cf. *US military aid* (BBC, 2022) and *financial assistance* (Zelenskyy, 2022) respectively. Conversely, in news reports, specifying constructions may replace more abstract units from the address, cf. *tens of billions of dollars* (CBC, 2022) and *financial packages* (Zelenskyy, 2022).

The purpose of the second – interpretational – stage is to clarify journalists' preferences in the choice of particular constructions to appeal to the target audience's worldview, which provides for the cognitive orientation of an individual or a community (Głaz, 2022, pp. 3–4). The selected type of construction indicates the proximity between the worldview fragments of the speakers and their audiences. For instance, the affinity between fragments of Zelenskyy's and readers' outlooks is indicated by the identical construction *will never surrender* in the lead of a news report: *Ukrainian leader [...] vows country will never surrender* (CBC, 2022). The cited construction is borrowed from President's speech without any transformation: *Ukraine holds its lines and will never surrender* (Zelenskyy, 2022).

The third – textual – stage of analysis presupposes the study of the ways constructions are incorporated into the structure of a news report: implicit, with no internal headings, or explicit, divided by a journalist. The textual analysis comprises two stages: compositional and constructional. The former consists in distinguishing report sections with respect to their newsworthiness, i.e., headline, lead, post-lead paragraph, descriptive and argumentative sections etc. The constructional stage is aimed at analyzing the types of units employed in particular sections of a news report. For instance, the specifying construction *on the eve of his Washington trip* from the descriptive section of the BBC's report replaces adverb *yesterday* from the address highlighting different temporal perspectives of the President's visit to the frontline, cf. *he visited on the eve of his Washington trip* (BBC, 2022) and *yesterday before coming here to Washington, D.C., I was at the front line in our Bakhmut*. (Zelenskyy, 2022)

Drawing on the suggested methodology, the paper studies how two news reports – BBC's (BBC, 2022) and CBC's (CBC News Network, owned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC, 2022)) – cover Ukrainian President's 2022 December speech to the American Congress (Zelenskyy, 2022). The BBC's news report is meant for the global audience which is suggested by the attribute *world* in the name of the news outlet, while the CBC tends to reflect Canadians' perspectives (CBC News, 2023). Being located in Great Britain and Canada, the news outlets show how the address is perceived by the journalists representing readers in different parts of the globe with varying worldviews. The difference in the location and purpose of the two media outlets seems to result in the number of words in the news reports: the 1470 words of the CBC's news text give a more detailed rendering of the 1931-word-speech while the BBC's 718 words offer a sketchy outline of the address. The choice of only two news reports is explained by a case study format of the paper and a necessity to set up a procedure of analysis which can further be extrapolated on the analysis of the formation of other news reports rendering public speeches.

Results

The BBC's and CBC's news reports render two segments of Zelenskyy's speech, namely, Ukrainians' ongoing resistance and American assistance to Ukraine, due to their newsworthiness for the English-speaking audience. Meanwhile the other two speech segments on mental and overall victories are left out of both news reports since their news value is questionable for the journalists representing the target public.

The Implicit Structure of Text Body: The BBC's News Report

The headline of the BBC's news report fronts the constructions *help it* and *defeat Russia* (Ex 1) to refer to the Ukrainians' ongoing resistance and American assistance to the country:

Ex 1 *Ukraine War: Zelensky urges US to help it defeat Russia.* (BBC, 2022)

The generalizing construction *help it* in the headline (1) generically represents the meanings of a number of substantive-schematic units from the speech segment about the ongoing resistance. Their substantive elements adjust the speech content to the readers' worldview: *more cannons and shells* (Ex 2); *American tanks and planes* (Ex 3); *financial assistance* (Ex 4); *assist in the implementation* [of our peace initiative] (Ex 5); *strengthen sanctions* (Ex 6). Meanwhile the modifying construction *defeat Russia* (Ex 1) with a generic meaning goes back to the unit *to defeat the Kremlin* in the speech segment about the ongoing resistance (Ex 7):

Ex 2 *To ensure Bakhmut is not just a stronghold that holds back the Russian Army, but for the Russian Army to completely pull out, more cannons and shells are needed.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

Ex 3 *I assure you that Ukrainian soldiers can perfectly operate American tanks and planes themselves.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

Ex 4 *Financial assistance is also critically important [...].* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

Ex 5 *Each of you, ladies and gentlemen, can assist in the implementation to ensure that America's leadership remains solid, bicameral and bipartisan.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

Ex 6 *You can strengthen sanctions to make Russia feel how ruinous its aggression truly is.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

Ex 7 *Yet, the battle continues, and we have to defeat the Kremlin on the battlefield [...].* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

The structure of the lead (Ex 8) rests on two identical constructions borrowed from the speech: *alive and kicking* (Ex 9) as well as *will never surrender* (Ex 10). They match the fragments of the Ukrainian and global audience's worldviews:

Ex 8 *Ukraine is "alive and kicking" and will never surrender, President Volodymyr Zelensky has said, in a defiant address to US lawmakers on his first foreign trip since Russia's invasion.* (BBC, 2022)

Ex 9 *Ukraine is alive and kicking.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

Ex 10 *Ukraine holds its lines and will never surrender.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

The specifying role of the post-lead paragraph (Ex 11) is implemented by the identical construction *was not a charity* which combines with two journalist's generalizing units *US military aid to Ukraine* (Ex 11) and *an investment in security* (Ex 11):

Ex 11 *US military aid to Ukraine was not charity, but an investment in security for the future.* (BBC, 2022)

- Ex 12 *Financial assistance* is also critically important [...] *Your money is not charity. It's an investment in the global security and democracy.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

In the cited post-lead paragraph (Ex 11), the generalizing construction *US military aid* underscores the role of weapons instead of the fiscal matters denoted by the pairings *financial assistance* and *your money* in the speech (Ex 12). Besides, the modifying pairing *an investment in security* (Ex 11) generalizes on the content of the speech segment about American support to Ukraine leaving the adjective *global* and the noun *democracy* from the original construction *an investment in the global security and democracy* (Ex 12) to adjust the transformed unit to the readers' worldview.

The descriptive section of the news report delving into the details of the Ukrainians' resistance rests on the journalist's generalizing construction *his country was still standing* combined with two identical units *against all odds* (Ex 14) and *a turning point* (Ex 15) borrowed from the speech:

- Ex 13 *Speaking in English, he told them his country was still standing "against all odds" and predicted "a turning point" in the conflict next year.* (BBC, 2022)
- Ex 14 *Against all odds and doom-and-gloom scenarios, Ukraine didn't fall. [...] They have been attacking it day and night, but Bakhmut stands. [...] But the Ukrainian Donbas stands. [...] our defense forces stand. [...] We stand [...].* (Zelenskyy, 2022)
- Ex 15 *And next year will be a turning point, I know it [...].* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

In the descriptive section (Ex 13) the generalizing pairing *his country was still standing* renders the meaning of the units referring in the speech to different places in Ukraine hardly known to the English-speaking audience since they are distant from their worldview: *Bakhmut stands, the Ukrainian Donbas stands, our defense forces stand* (Ex 14). The identical constructions *against all odds* and *a turning point* are meant to underscore the speaker's idea about the importance of the events of the current and coming years. The differences between news report and the address consist in the modality of introducing the idea expressed by the construction *a turning point*: the verb *predict* in the news report (Ex 13) casts more doubt on the positive outcome than the proposition *I know it* (Ex 15) in the speech.

The argumentative section of the news report comprises the journalist's thesis (Ex 16) and arguments expressed by the quotations from the speech (Ex 17). They are regarded as identical constructions since they are borrowed unchanged from the address. Consequently, we cite only the uptaking text in (Ex 17):

- Ex 16 *To illustrate the brutality of the war, Mr Zelensky evoked US troops fighting the Nazis during World War Two.* (BBC, 2022)
- Ex 17 *The Russians' tactic is primitive. They burn down and destroy everything they see. [...] They threw everything against us [...]. Threw everything it had against the free world, just like the brave American soldiers who held their lines and fought back Hitler's forces during the Christmas of 1944.* (BBC, 2022)

The thesis (Ex 16) rests on the journalist's four generalizing constructions adjusting fragments of the speaker's and the readers' worldviews: *the brutality of the war; fighting the Nazis; during World War Two; US troops*. The construction *the brutality of the war* (Ex 16) in the news text generalizes the meanings of the units *they burn down, destroy everything, threw everything against us* used in the speech (Ex 17). The journalist's construction *US troops* (Ex 16) replaces the pairing *the brave American soldiers* from the address (Ex 17) removing the evaluative adjective *brave* and using the superordinate noun *troops* referring to any type of armed forces. The unit *during World War Two* (Ex 16) in the BBC's text employs the well-established name of the war instead of the pairing *during the Christmas of 1944* (Ex 17). The generalizing pairing *the Nazis* (Ex 16) designating members of Hitler's party displaces the original unit *Hitler's forces* which tends to refer to soldiers.

The second descriptive section of the news report (Ex 18) resorts to five constructions rendering the content of the address: one modifying with a concrete meaning; two synonymous; one specifying and one identical depicting the procedure of Zelenskyy's presenting the Congress with a Ukrainian flag during a live address.

- Ex 18 *Concluding his speech, Mr Zelensky presented Congress with a battle flag signed by the defenders of Bakhmut, a frontline city in the east of Ukraine that he visited on the eve of his Washington trip.* (BBC, 2022)
- Ex 19 *[...] yesterday before coming here to Washington, D.C., I was at the front line in our Bakhmut. In our stronghold in the east of Ukraine, in the Donbas. [...].* (Zelenskyy, 2022)
- Ex 20 *When I was in Bakhmut yesterday, our heroes gave me the flag, the battle flag, the flag of those who defend Ukraine, Europe and the world at the cost of their lives.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)
- Ex 21 *Let this flag stay with you, ladies and gentlemen.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

In the descriptive section of the news report (Ex 18), the first modifying construction *presented Congress with a battle flag* (Ex 18) is related to the pairing *Let this flag stay with you* from the speech (Ex 21). The synonymous unit *the defenders of Bakhmut* (18) reflects proximity of worldviews of the readers and the speaker who used the following units in the address: *our heroes; those who defend Ukraine, Europe and the world; at the cost of their lives* (Ex 20). Moreover, in the news report the place name *Bakhmut* in the construction *the defenders of Bakhmut* (Ex 18) limits the hostilities to one city unlike the pairing *Ukraine, Europe and the world* in the speech (Ex 20) highlighting the global impact of the war. In addition, a number of the journalist's constructions in the cited passage from the report (Ex 18) locate various entities in time and space. The synonymous unit *a frontline city* (Ex 18) removes the evaluative shade from the construction *our stronghold* used in the speech (Ex 19), while the indefinite article diminishes the importance of the denoted place due to its distance from the English-speaking audience. The unit *in the east of Ukraine* occurs both in the news report (Ex 18) and in the address (Ex 19) being a substantive, i.e., fixed, element of a pairing.

To sum up, the BBC's news report is characterized by the domination of generalizing and identical constructions. Nine generalizing units are distributed between the headline, the post-lead paragraph, two descriptive sections and the thesis of the argumentative section. Six identical pairings appear in the lead, the descriptive sections and in the arguments substantiating the thesis.

The Explicit Structure of Text Body: The CBC News Report

Similarly to the BBC's text, the CBC's news report covers the content of two segments from Zelenskyy's speech: the ongoing resistance and American assistance to Ukraine (CBC, 2022). The composition of the uptaking text comprises the headline, lead, post-lead and three supersections: the first one dwells on the American support to Ukraine; the second – *Turning point* – encompasses references to the historical events, a lasting Ukrainian battle, presenting Congressmen with a flag; the third – *Political divisions don't go unnoticed* – focuses on the context of the visit.

The headline (Ex 22) employs two generalizing constructions – *stakes of war* and *beyond Ukraine's borders* – adjusting the content of the whole speech to the English-speaking readers' worldview:

- Ex 22 *In historic speech to U.S. congress, Zelenskyy warns stakes of war go beyond Ukraine's borders.* (CBC, 2022)
- Ex 23 *This battle is not only for the territory, for this or another part of Europe. The battle is not only for life, freedom and security of Ukrainians [...]. This struggle will define in what world our children and grandchildren will live, and then their children and grandchildren.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

Ex 24 *It will define whether it will be a democracy of Ukrainians and for Americans – for all. [...] It cannot be ignored, hoping that the ocean or something else will provide a protection. From the United States to China, from Europe to Latin America, and from Africa to Australia, the world is too interconnected and interdependent to allow someone to stay aside [...]. (Zelenskyy, 2022)*

In the headline (Ex 22), the construction *stakes of war* renders the meaning of a number of units from the speech segment about the Ukrainians' ongoing resistance: *the territory; life, freedom and security of Ukrainians or any other nation* (Ex 23); *a democracy of Ukrainians and for Americans – for all* (Ex 24). Meanwhile, the pairing *beyond Ukraine's borders* (Ex 22) generalizes the orientational meaning of the units naming in the address (Ex 24) the war's physical boundary (*the ocean*), a possible war extent (*from the United States to China, from Europe to Latin America, and from Africa to Australia*) and the world itself.

In the lead (Ex 25), the identical construction *will never surrender* borrowed from the speech brings forth the President's point of view cited in (Ex 10):

Ex 25 *Ukrainian leader receives several ovations as he vows country will never surrender. (CBC, 2022)*

The post-lead paragraph (Ex 26) of the news report opens up and closes with a number of identical constructions indicating the proximity of the President's and the readers' outlooks. They are *against all odds* (26) and *money that is "not charity," but an "investment" in global security and democracy* (Ex 26):

Ex 26 *Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy told cheering U.S. legislators that "against all odds" Ukraine still stands, thanking Americans for helping to fund the war effort with money that is "not charity," but an "investment" in global security and democracy. (CBC, 2022)*

Ex 27 *Against all odds and doom-and-gloom scenarios, Ukraine didn't fall. [...] They have been attacking it day and night, but Bakhmut stands. [...] But the Ukrainian Donbas stands. [...] our defense forces stand. [...] We stand [...]. (Zelenskyy, 2022)*

Ex 28 *Financial assistance is also critically important, and I would like to thank you, thank you very much, thank you for both financial packages you have already provided us with and the ones you may be willing to decide on. Your money is not charity. It's an investment in the global security and democracy. (Zelenskyy, 2022)*

In the post-lead paragraph (Ex 26), the journalist's modifying construction *Ukraine still stands* with a generic element *Ukraine* generalizes the meaning of the units referring in the address to different places in Ukraine and its troops: *Bakhmut stands, the Ukrainian Donbas stands, our defense forces stand* (Ex 27). The modifying pairing *thanking Americans* (Ex 26) with the concrete element *Americans* refers to the audience with the noun replacing the pronoun *you* in the construction *thank you* from the speech (Ex 28). Finally, the journalist's generalizing pairing *fund the war effort with money* (26) renders the meaning of the original constructions referring to the bulk of the American help: *financial assistance* (Ex 28) and *financial packages you have already provided* (Ex 28).

The argumentative section comprises the thesis (Ex 29) and arguments quoting the President's speech (Ex 30, Ex 31) to substantiate the journalist's point of view:

Ex 29 *[...] Zelenskyy called the tens of billions of dollars in U.S. military and economic assistance over the past year vital to Ukraine's efforts to beat back Russia, and he appealed for even more in the future. (CBC, 2022)*

- Ex 30 “Your money is not charity,” he sought to reassure both those in the room and those watching at home. “It’s an investment in the global security and democracy that we handled in the most responsible way.” (CBC, 2022)
- Ex 31 Yet, the battle continues, and we have to defeat the Kremlin on the battlefield [...]. (CBC, 2022)

The journalist’s thesis (Ex 29) uses a number of constructions. First, the specifying units *tens of billions of dollars* (Ex 29) and *U.S. military and economic assistance* (Ex 29) particularize the essence of the American aid. Both units correlate with the President’s more general constructions *financial assistance* (Ex 28) and *financial packages you have already provided* (Ex 28). Second, the journalist’s synonymous construction *called vital* (Ex 29), rendering the original *critically important* unit (Ex 28), indicates closeness of worldviews of the speaker and the target audience. Third, three generalizing constructions accommodate Zelenskyy’s ideas to the readers’ worldview. The pairing *beat back Russia* (Ex 29) referring to a whole state goes back to the structure *defeat the Kremlin* (Ex 31) in the address, and the units *he appealed* and *even more in the future* in the news report (Ex 29) replace a more precise original construction consisting of the basic units *the ones, you may be willing to decide on* (28). The explicit – *Turning point* – supersection introduced by a heading includes two descriptive and one argumentative sections. The pairing *turning point* occurs three times in (Ex 32): in the heading (Ex 32) and twice in the first descriptive section comparing the Battle of the Bulge with the Ukrainian war:

- Ex 32 *Turning point*
In his remarks to lawmakers, Zelenskyy harkened back to U.S. victories in the Battle of the Bulge, a turning point against Nazi Germany in the Second World War, and the Revolutionary War Battle of Saratoga, an American victory that helped draw France’s aid for U.S. independence. The Ukrainian leader predicted that next year would be a “turning point” in the conflict [...]. (CBC, 2022)

The *Turning point* section from the news report (Ex 32) is related to three paragraphs of the resistance segment of the President’s address (Ex 33–35):

- Ex 33 *And next year will be a turning point, I know it, the point when Ukrainian courage and American resolve must guarantee the future of our common freedom, the freedom of people who stand for their values.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)
- Ex 34 *They threw everything against us, similar to the other tyranny, which is in the Battle of the Bulge. Threw everything it had against the free world, just like the brave American soldiers which held their lines and fought back Hitler’s forces during the Christmas of 1944.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)
- Ex 35 *If so, just like the Battle of Saratoga, the fight for Bakhmut will change the trajectory of our war for independence and for freedom.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

The fronting of the construction *turning point* to the internal heading of the news report draws parallels between the major wars of the past and present emphasizing the significance of the historic events represented by the generalizing unit *U.S. victories* (Ex 32). It introduces two most outstanding events of the American history characterized by the pairings *held their lines* and *fought back* in the address (Ex 34). The first event is named in (Ex 32) by the identical construction *the Battle of the Bulge* combined with the generalizing unit *Nazi Germany* referring to the whole country. It is metonymically related to the *Hitler’s forces* original construction, while the unit *the Second World War* replaces the structure *during the Christmas of 1944* in (Ex 34) covering in the speech a shorter period. The co-occurrence of the identical and generalizing units in (Ex 32) combines the President’s and the journalist’s view on the historic battles adapting the content of the address to the corresponding fragments of the readers’ worldview.

The news report names the second *turning event* by the modifying construction *the Revolutionary War Battle of Saratoga* (Ex 32) with the concrete element reminding the readers of an 18th-century military conflict. The third use of the *turning point* construction attracts the addressee's attention to Ukraine's long-anticipated victory denoted by the identical temporal structure *next year* (cf. Ex 32 and Ex 33). Using the predicate *predicted*, the uptaking text casts doubt on the prospects of a win while the original unit *I know* (Ex 33) underlines the speaker's confidence of the outcome.

The second descriptive section dwelling on the presentation of a Ukrainian flag to Congress in the *Turning point* supersection employs two journalist's modifying pairings with concrete elements and one synonymous construction (Ex 36) bringing closer the worldviews of the speaker and the readers:

Ex 36 *Zelenskyy [...] presented lawmakers with a Ukrainian flag autographed by front-line troops in Bakhmut, in Ukraine's contested Donetsk province.* (CBC, 2022)

Ex 37 *When I was in Bakhmut yesterday, our heroes gave me the flag, the battle flag, the flag of those who defend Ukraine, Europe and the world at the cost of their lives.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

Ex 38 *Let this flag stay with you, ladies and gentlemen.* (Zelenskyy, 2022)

The modifying pairing *presented lawmakers with a Ukrainian flag* in the cited example (Ex 36) relates to *Let this flag stay with you* (Ex 38), designating an act of Zelenskyy presenting a flag brought from Bakhmut to the Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The noun *lawmakers* (Ex 36) in the journalist's modifying unit *presented lawmakers with a Ukrainian flag* specifies the pronoun *you* from the address while the origin of the flag is indicated by the adjective *Ukrainian*. Additionally, the modifying construction *in Ukraine's contested Donetsk province* in the news report (Ex 36) clarifies the location of the town of Bakhmut by the official name of the region, though the President refers to the territory by a more colloquial label *Donbas* (Ex 14, Ex 27). A more neutral synonym *front-line troops* in the news report (Ex 36) replaces the evaluative units from the address: *our heroes* (Ex 37), *defend Ukraine, Europe and the world* (Ex 37), and *the cost of their lives* (Ex 37).

The argumentative section covering the final two paragraphs of the report's *Turning point* supersection consists of the thesis (Ex 39) and the arguments expressed by a quotation borrowed from the address (Ex 40):

Ex 39 *Declaring that Ukraine "will never surrender," Zelenskyy warned that the stakes of the conflict were greater than just the fate of his nation – that democracy worldwide is being tested.* (CBC, 2022)

Ex 40 *"This battle cannot be ignored, hoping that the ocean or something else will provide protection."* (CBC, 2022)

The thesis in the news report (Ex 39) involves four constructions outlining in a reverse order the ideas ushered in in the headline and the lead to underscore the most important arguments from the speech. The first – identical – unit *will never surrender* borrowed from the address (Ex 10) highlights the affinity of the President's and readers' worldviews. The other three – two generalizing and one modifying – pairings in (Ex 39) represent in a general way the significance of the war in Ukraine adjusting the speaker's view on it to the English-speaking worldview. Consequently, the second – generalizing – unit *the stakes of the conflict* in the thesis of the news report (Ex 39) resonates with the construction *stakes of war* from its headline to underscore the importance of Ukraine's war outcome for other countries (Ex 22). The third construction *greater than just the fate of his nation* from the thesis (Ex 39) generalizes the meaning of two structures from the speech: the negative unit *not only* in the extended pairings *not only for the territory, not only for life, freedom and security of Ukrainians* (Ex 23) and the structure *in what world our children and grandchildren will live, and then their children and grandchildren* (Ex 23). The fourth modifying pairing from the thesis – *democracy worldwide* (Ex 39) – with its generic element *worldwide* underscoring the global scale of democracy relates to several units naming in the speech the nations in favor of the democratic form of government: *a democracy of Ukrainians and for Americans – for all* (Ex 24).

The *Political divisions don't go unnoticed* supersection of the report mainly covers the context of the President's visit to Washington. However, at the beginning of the supersection the descriptive section comprising two paragraphs focuses on the American support by synonymous and identical constructions reflecting a match between the Ukrainian and the English-speaking worldviews (Ex 41, Ex 42):

Ex 41 [...] he called on the House and Senate lawmakers to ensure American leadership remains "bicameral and bipartisan." (CBC, 2022)

Ex 42 Each of you, ladies and gentlemen, can assist in the implementation to ensure that America's leadership remains solid, bicameral and bipartisan. (Zelenskyy, 2022)

The agents of 'political divisions' implied in the subheading of the supersection are denoted by the construction *the House and Senate lawmakers* (Ex 41), synonymous to the original pairing *ladies and gentlemen* (Ex 42). Besides, Congressmen are characterized by the identical structures *ensure American leadership* (Ex 41) and *remain bicameral and bipartisan* (Ex 41), borrowed from the address (Ex 42), since they are meant to reflect the proximity of the worldviews of the Ukrainian President and the readers.

To sum up, the prevailing types of journalist's constructions in the CBC's news report are identical, generalizing and modifying. Identical units occur in all the sections of the uptaking text, except the headline. Generalizing pairings are distributed throughout all the sections of the news report, while modifying structures are mainly concentrated in the post-lead paragraph, the thesis and descriptive sections. Domination of the three groups of constructions is aimed at creating a balance between the original text and the news report via the sequence of identical and generalizing units or through the combination of the original and changed elements within modifying pairings.

Discussion

The analysis of the BBC's and CBC's news reports reveals their focus on two topics of Ukrainian President Zelenskyy's address to the American Congress of 22 December 2022 important for the target audience. The choice of the topics – the ongoing resistance and American assistance to Ukraine – is explained by their proximity to the English-speaking audiences' worldview. In addition to the regular components of headline, lead and post-lead paragraph, the composition of news reports encompasses descriptive, argumentative and background sections. The difference between the two news reports lies in the organization of their bodies: the BBC's implicit structure has all the sections typical of a news report, while the CBC's explicit text body is additionally split by internal headings which introduce several descriptive and argumentative sections combined into supersections.

Semantically, the transformation of the President's speech into a news report is implemented by morphosyntactic constructions of five types: identical, synonymous, modifying, generalizing and specifying. Their quantitative distribution among the sections of the news reports is given in Table 1.

Table 1 Distributions of constructions within the sections of news reports

Construction type	Headline	Lead	Post-lead paragraph	Descriptive section	Argumentative section	
					Thesis	Arguments
Identical	-	3	3	9	1	3
Generalizing	3	-	3	4	10	-
Synonymous	-	-	-	4	-	-
Modifying with concrete meaning	-	-	1	4	-	-
Modifying with generic meaning	1	-	1	-	1	-
Specifying	-	-	-	1	2	-

As Table 1 suggests, the headlines in both reports mainly resort to generalizing pairings adjusting the speech content to the English-speaking readers' worldview. The leads of both texts evoke identical pairings representing similarities of the President's and audience's worldviews. Being an element of text bodies in the news reports, the post-lead paragraph offers details of the main ideas of the address by pairings of various types in both texts: three identical units rendering major aspects of the speech; three generalizing constructions and two modifying units outlining minor points of the speech for the readers. However, the post-lead paragraphs of the news reports differ in the topics discussed: the BBC's text focuses only on American support, while the CBC's report covers both Ukrainian resistance to the enemy and the allies' support which can be put down to meeting the news values of an influential Ukrainian diaspora group in Canada. The bodies of both news reports contain five descriptive sections with dominating identical pairings. They highlight the address's key ideas about the ongoing resistance indicating a coincidence of the standpoints of Zelenskyy and the readers, though one pairing out of ten designates Congressional bicameralism. Argumentative sections – one in the BBC's text and two in the CBC's report – combine the thesis based on the generalizing constructions rendering an editorial view of the President's ideas with the arguments expressed by quotes from the speech which are treated as identical constructions meant to give a more precise view of the President's address. In the BBC's news report the arguments portray the ongoing resistance, while in the CBC's text they cover both the ongoing battle and the necessity for further American assistance. The argumentative section of the BBC's news report and the CBC's *Turning point* section refer to the American events of World War Two and the act of presenting the Ukrainian flag to the House Speaker.

Unlike the BBC's news report, the CBC's text renders the President's address to the American Congress in more detail due to Canada's geographical proximity to the USA and an influential Ukrainian diaspora in the country. It results into the affinity of the worldviews of the population of the neighboring countries, while the BBC's more compressed news text can be put down to the outlet's radio and TV reporting style.

Conclusions

The organization of news reports outlining the content of a speech encompasses two levels: compositional, i.e., fitting the content of a public address into the structure of a news text; and semantic, rendering the content of a reference text with the help of morphosyntactic constructions.

Compositionally, the structure of news reports turns out to consist of three levels: universal, characteristic of all news texts comprising the headline, lead, post-lead paragraph and text body; implicit, pertinent to the bodies of news reports with descriptive, argumentative, and background sections; explicit, structured by internal headings which introduce descriptive and/or argumentative sections combined into supersections.

The investigation proves the applicability of morphosyntactic constructions to rendering the content of a speech in on-line media. It is found that journalists make use of the following types of constructions revealing the ways of transforming a speech into a news report: identical; synonymous; modifying with generic or concrete meaning; generalizing or specifying. The prevailing types of constructions in news reports are identical and generalizing. The former indicate proximity of the President's and the readers' worldviews via the journalist's standpoint. The generalizing pairings are meant to fit the speaker's ideas to the readers' worldview because of some of their fragments being remote from one another. The modifying pairings keep one element from the original construction with the other component/s replaced to adjust the speaker's mindset to the audience of the media outlets. The synonymous constructions imply close worldviews of the speaker and media addressees. The least numerous – specifying – pairings represent the speaker's ideas distant from the audience of news reports. Further research foresees the application of the constructional approach to investigating other presidents' speeches and their news coverage.

Note

The paper uses two variants of the family name of the Ukrainian President following the styles of particular media outlets. The form *Zelenskyy* is employed by the authors of this paper, in extracts from the President's address published on his site and in the CBC's quotations while the form *Zelensky* is kept in the excerpts from the BBC's text.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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Santrauka

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