

“dying children, mothers in despair” – a computer-mediated discourse analysis of the portrayal of Ukrainian civilians and nation on the basis of Internet fora in Polish

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The current proposal will focus on the linguistic construction of the civilian, which emerges from the discussions on Polish online forums and the consequences of particular linguistic choices in mediating this war experience. This seems of primary importance in the light of the social linguistic approach (Phillips and Hardy 2002) to communication where discourse both shapes and is shaped by social reality.

The aim of the poster is to examine the discursive portrayal of civilians affected during the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, based on entries from Internet forums in Polish. The methodology adopted follows the principles of qualitative discourse analysis, with insights obtained from the quantitative exploration of the texts with the help of SketchEngine®. As the results of the study demonstrate, from the micro-perspective, the Ukrainian civilians tend to be portrayed in a passive manner, i.e., as grounds in the presentation of military activities, which can be seen at the level of sentential salience as well as in metaphorical expressions. From the macro-perspective, the discourses of the divided nation (Zhurzhenko 2014: 249) as well as narratives centring upon the criticism levelled at the West, of Russian building of the nationhood or of the fight against fascism were identified (Hutchings and Szostek 2015: 184-191).

It is hoped that such a study will provide new knowledge about how those who are affected most acutely, are communicated about by their fellow neighbours, which can be seen as a particular social behaviour in these unprecedented times of crisis. In this light, the social role of such media as shaping particular views and attitudes cannot be disregarded (Romaniuk 2016: 13).

References:

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