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PERSPECTIVES OF THE NARRATION CONCERNING THE WAR IN UKRAINE IN POLISH PRESS AND RADIO REPORTS (2022–2024)

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Abstract

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which began in 24 February 2022, is widely covered in the Polish media. One of the forms of journalistic communication is reportage – a factual genre allowing for a multi-aspect presentation of events. The aim of this article is to present the specifics of the war in Ukraine narrative in Polish reportage. The media materials come from the years 2022–2024. The press texts were selected through a search of opinion weeklies “Polityka” and „Newsweek”, while audio reports come from the collection of the Polish Radio Reportage and Documentary Studio and Radio 357. Following the content analysis, four narrative perspectives were identified: everyday life in wartime, military, refugee and solidarity. The analysis of the lexical components shows that the war in Ukraine narrative in Polish press and radio reportage is in-depth, exposing the individual’s personal experience and emotionally engaging. It constitutes a segment of qualitative coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the Polish media.

Keywords

radio reportage, press reportage, war, Ukraine, media narrative

Introduction

The full-scale war in Ukraine that has been ongoing since February 24, 2022 is arousing the interest of both journalists and media recipients. This trend particularly concerns Poland as a frontline state and strongly involved in helping Ukraine (Kasińska-Metryka, Pałka-Suchojad 2023). The media provide daily information about the course of the war (Leśniczak 2023, Skucha 2023) and opinion-forming content (Demel 2022; Przybysz-Stawska 2022).

The topic of this article is Polish press and radio reports dealing with the topic of war from February 24, 2022 to February 24, 2024. A published journalist report is considered to be a genre extremely useful in creating reports „of real events that were additionally enriched with a precise description of the environment, characteristics of the figure and finally the reporter’s impressions” (Nowakowska 2013, 112) by both theorists on media studies and practitioners, meaning journalists-publicists. According to Melchior Wańkowicz, the name of the genre „comes from the Latin word *reporto*, meaning ‘I relate’ or ‘I report’ on a given event to the consciousness of people who did not see it” (Wańkowicz 1972, 22). Therefore, the distinguishing feature of the reportage genre is to present facts using narrative techniques.

Media narrative in the context of the topic of war can be considered as political communication carried out through the media shaping public opinion (Shanahan, McBeth 2011) and political transportation – the construction of mental models that represent a political world (McLaughlin, Velez 2019). From a media studies perspective focused on the construction of the content of an individual publication, narrative can be defined as „a set of elements of journalistic and non-journalistic statements” (Bednarek 2017, 28), which builds an image of the reported events, giving them the structure of media stories engaging recipients (Płaneta 2023). The media studies approach to narrative understood in this way was taken into account in the presented research.

The press and radio reports analysed based on the needs of this article are materials that, though they belong to different types of media, have as their main construction material use the spoken word. In the case of the press report, this means written language (as text), in the case of radio report, is spoken language (audio text). For this reason, television and multimedia reportages were not included in the current research as they use different content construction techniques specific to visual narrative. The press and radio reports selected for the purposes of this article are consistent with this style of Polish war journalism (Kaliszewski 2017; Bednarek 2020) and the tradition of the Polish school of reportage (Greenberg 2012; Wiktorowska 2018; Białek 2018).

Research Methodology

The aim of the article is to characterise the dominant narrative perspectives in Polish press and radio reports on the war in Ukraine. The research corpus consists of 234 journal publications representing the reportage genre: 80 press reports and 154 radio reports. The materials qualified for analysis were created during the two years of the war in Ukraine, from 24 February, 2022 to 24 February, 2024.

The main determinants of the selection of research material were the correlated criteria of genre and thematic representativeness. The specificity of the Polish media is the

presence of press reportage in opinion weeklies (Mielczarek 2018, 36), radio reportage in public radio stations (Białek 2021, 80) and online information and social radio stations created by professional journalists as an alternative on the audio media market in Poland (Doliwa 2022).

When further selecting the corpus of media materials for analysis, a two-stage selection process was followed:

- Stage I: selection of the most popular nationwide media in the group of opinion weeklies and radio stations based on audience preference research (Polskie Badania Czytelnictwa 2023, 2024; Krajowy Instytut Mediów 2023, 2024);
- Stage II: selection of press and radio reports according to the criterion of periodicity of publications: reportage as a genre is a permanent element of the issue number (press) and the program schedule (radio).

For the next stage of the research, reports from two nationwide opinion weeklies (magazines) and two radio stations were selected. In the case of magazines, “Polityka” and “Newsweek” were selected, where reportage as a genre is a permanent element of each issue and the topic of Russia’s policy towards Ukraine has been widely presented there for a decade (Borowik 2022). All printed issues of weekly magazines from the period February 24, 2022 to February 24, 2024 were subjected to a detailed query. The texts were qualified based on the thematic criteria and genre determinants of reportage, as defined by media researchers: authenticity, credibility and clarity (Wolny-Zmorzyński 2022; Wojtak 2010). In the analysed period, a total of 80 reports devoted to the war in Ukraine were published in both weeklies, including 59 in the weekly “Polityka” (33 in 2022; 21 in 2023; 5 in 2024) and 21 in the weekly “Newsweek” (8 in 2022; 10 in 2023; 3 in 2024).

In the case of radio stations, materials from the Polish Radio Reportage and Documentary Studio (Studio Reportażu i Dokumentu Polskiego Radia) were qualified. These are produced and broadcasted in weekly cycles of several Polish Radio channels: Program I, II, III, and Polskie Radio 24. The reports are available as audio files on the studio’s website. Productions about the war in Ukraine have been collected in the “Russian aggression against Ukraine” section, arranged in chronological order, and the audio files are accompanied by short text information about the content. Online access to all recordings is free. The second station is Radio 357, where an audio report is scheduled every week at a fixed time. Files with reports are posted after broadcast on the radio’s website in the “Reportage” tab, according to publication dates and with a short description of the content. Some of the programs are available free of charge; the remaining recordings are available to patrons who finance the station through crowdfunding. This research used the full collection of recordings, including paid and free. During the period being reviewed, both stations broadcasted a total of 154 audio reports about the war in Ukraine, 13 of which were produced by Radio 357 (9 in 2022; 4 in 2023; 0 in 2024), while 141 are stored at the Polish Radio Reportage and Documentary Studio (100 from 2022; 36 from 2023; 5 from 2024).

In order to determine the specificity of the reporter’s narrative about the war in Ukraine, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the dominant narrative perspectives?
2. What elements of the message construct the individual narrative perspectives?

Full texts of press reports (80) were read, and full recordings of radio reports (47 hours 52 minutes 49 seconds) were listened to, and the most common thematic categories were defined. These categories were used to build the central themes of the narrative. Then,

based on this initial reading of the texts and hearings of the recordings, an analytical grid was developed containing detailed topics signalling the existence of specific narratives and their conceptualisations. Detailed themes became categories representing the main narrative perspectives. Important topics that appeared incidentally were not qualified for the next stage of the research, meaning the reluctance of Poles towards Ukrainian refugees or the story of a Russian opposition artist living in Poland. It would be worthwhile to make marginalised narrative perspectives the subject of separate analyses.

Dominant narrative perspectives were defined as:

1. The narrative of daily life during wartime,
2. The military narrative,
3. The refugee narrative,
4. The solidarity narrative.

Each narrative perspective was analysed according to the author's interpretation scheme containing three elements:

- Central theme;
- Detailed topics (developed on the basis of labelling fragments of texts and audio fragments);
- Used verbal elements and journalistic workshop solutions characteristic of a specific narrative perspective.

The next stage of the research consisted in identifying detailed elements of the message of each narrative perspective. Next, conclusions were formulated and directions for further research were indicated.

Polish war reportage in journalistic pragmatics

War reportage should be treated as a sub-genre of reportage whose „action is clearly related to armed conflicts. Unlike event-based, it focuses on individuals, describing their real behaviour in a social or psychological context” (Morawiecki 2024, 316). According to one of the first Polish war reporters, Melchior Wańkowicz (2019, 19), the task of a journalist performing that function is to „quickly reach sources, secure documents, describe them, talk to people, keep photographic and video documentation and ensure reliable correction of the collected statements of event participants”. In the case of radio reportage derived from written reportage (Pleszkun-Olejniczakowa 2005, 10–11), thanks to the technical possibility of sound recording, the author uses authentic statements of the participants in the events, acoustic sounds or musical elements, in accordance with the narrative structure of that form of communication (Wójciszyn-Wasil 2018).

The modern history of Polish war reportage dates back to the year 1914 (Kaliszewski 2019). The subject of media studies in the genealogical, historical or biographical aspects of war reportage has most often been the achievement of such masters of the genre as Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, Melchior Wańkowicz, Ksawery Pruszyński, Arkady Fiedler and Ryszard Kapuściński. Researchers have also distinguished a segment of women's wartime journalism (Kicińska 2018; Kaliszewski, Żyrek-Horodyska 2019). The works on Polish wartime reportage lack a study of its radio variant, with selected aspects mentioned only incidentally (Bednarek 2020, 21–22; Morawiecki 2024, 316). Presently, the persons associated with the art of Polish wartime reportage are Maria Wiernikowska, Miłada Jędry-

sik, Wojciech Jagielski, Piotr Andrusieczko, Bianka Zalewska, Waldemar Milewicz (d. in 2004) and Wiktor Bater (d. in 2020).

The outbreak of war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022 led to journalists specialising in the broad subject of Central and Eastern Europe becoming war reporters. In the case of the press, those were Paweł Reszka, Ziemowit Szczerek and Marcin Kołodziejczyk from „Polityka” and Jacek Pawlicki from “Newsweek”. Considering the radio, it was Maciej Jastrzębski, a long-time Polish Radio correspondent in Moscow, who was forced to leave Russia at the beginning of March 2022 (Korycka 2022). Additionally, in „Newsweek Polska”, war issues are taken up from time to time by Maciej Zaremba-Bielawski, Dorota Romanowska, Jacek Pawlicki and Mateusz Lachowski. In terms of audio reportage, various aspects of the conflict in Ukraine are documented primarily by reporters associated with the Polish Radio’s Reportage and Documentary Studio, e.g., Adam Bogoryja-Zakrzewski, Joanna Bogusławska, Magda Skawińska, journalists from Polish Radio’s regional radio stations and Internet radio stations with reportage departments. As regards the Internet-based Radio 357, included in this study, those are Anna Dudzińska, Agnieszka Szwa-jgier and Piotr Kaszuwara.

Reports describing the Russian-Ukrainian conflict cover current topics from the point of view of political, social, military, moral and even cultural events, such as concerts taking place in shelters. There are noticeable references to the reporters’ documentation, the authors pointing to specific places where the material is collected, witnesses or participants in wartime events. In this way, the model of a reporter’s work formulated in the Polish context by Wańkowicz is followed, according to which facts are the most important element of reportage and the journalist is required to take particular care while collecting information, selecting it, combining it and deciding on its importance. Knowledge is essential in the journalistic process of preparing the material; the reporter „must know the historical, economic, political, sociological and technical background of the war” (Wańkowicz 1972, 125). Ryszard Kapuściński (2013, 61) admits: „My writing is preceded by an extensive study. I read a lot as I consider it essential to know as comprehensively as possible the subject I am working on”. Krzysztof Miller (2010, 346) lists additional workshop elements: perseverance, adaptability and even physical fitness, „since getting to the subject matter – to people or places [...] – is sometimes a great challenge for the body”. The journalist mentions the need to overcome fear when reporting on events in a life-threatening situation. Honorata Zapaśnik (2019, 10) emphasises the importance of the journalistic mission in the work of a war reporter, the concept somewhat forgotten in the age of commercialised media. The mission, according to Zapaśnik, is supported by the non-mercantile approach of media people: „Some reporters get the material on their own, using their savings. Many times, they never recover their travel expenses after publication. Nevertheless, they feel that their work is meaningful and someone has to do it” (Zapaśnik 2019, 10). However, not all reporters treat their profession in such an idealistic way, considering it as „a task to be done in an exemplary manner, to the best of the ability, i.e., with one’s own eyes, up close, at arm’s length, otherwise it is not worth doing it at all” (Jagielski 2023, 1091). The price for that profession is often depression, post-traumatic stress, family problems or even loss of life.

According to the international organisation Reporters Without Borders (RSF), during the two years of war in Ukraine, more than 100 journalists became its victims: they were injured, detained, missing and 11 died (Reporters Without Borders 2024). „There

is neither respect for our work nor protection. “Press” signs do not help”, said Elisabetta Pique, who covered the war in Ukraine for the Argentine newspaper „La Nación” (Boczek 2022, 42). Giovanni Porzio, an Italian reporter, commented: „On the front line, the work was hard. Bombs were falling in the area, close by, about a kilometre or two away from us, every day” (Boczek 2022, 43). Reporters, as eyewitnesses of the wartime events, but also attentive listeners to the accounts of victims of Russian aggression, refugees, soldiers and their families, documented the course of the conflict and revealed the war crimes to the international community, including the events in Bucha and Irpin.

Polish journalism related to the war in Ukraine, apart from the typical reporter’s description of the events and the involved characters, includes commentary and explanatory reflections, bringing the Polish audience closer to the complex nuances of the historical and political situation in the part of Europe. The authors adopt the point of view of the victims, clearly indicating who the aggressor and culprit are (Głąb 2023, 17). They refer to the figure of a woman-mother and move the viewer with polyphonic descriptions of migrant communities (Czarnek-Wnuk, Sygizman 2022). Some publications, as Igor Borkowski notes, are distinguished by „the presentation of human dilemmas in the face of war disasters captured by reporters” (Borkowski 2023, 10).

Everyday life in wartime narrative

Presenting everyday life in Ukraine during Russia’s aggression, the authors of the press reports draw attention to the facts, received documents, historical, political and social conditions of the conflict as well as the personal experiences of the residents of the attacked country. They also describe the atmosphere of the places they visit, attempting to capture and convey the elusive, oneiric atmosphere of the events and depicted characters. That reporter’s technique is in accordance with the genological diagnosis of Paulina Kicińska, who emphasises that „war reportages refer directly to a specific space. The author stays in a given place and then describes the observed and experienced events (Kicińska 2018, 190).

One of the most moving examples of the everyday life in wartime narrative is the publication *Śmierć i Margarita* [Death and Margarita] by Paweł Reszka, in which the reporter described the story of a Ukrainian family from Bucha. A married couple with two sons aged 4 and 9 were shot in their car while trying to get out of the town in the first days of the Russian occupation. Only the father survived, seriously injured and taken to hospital (Reszka 2022d). Other examples of the narrative describing dramatic everyday war events are the materials *Okupowani* [Occupied] (Reszka 2022c) and *Ludzie w kotle* [People in the cauldron] (Reszka 2022f). The article *Jaki alarm?* [What alarm?] presents the life under Russian occupation in Kharkiv. Its characters describe how they manage to go on despite bomb alerts or when a loved one is injured or dies (Reszka 2024). The everyday life in wartime narrative is also a description of social problems in Ukraine, including demographic ones, affected by the war activities, emigration of young women or the fear of family enlargement for those remaining in the country (Lichnerowicz 2023).

The narrative is conveyed through the statements of individual characters; the reporters maintain the authenticity of their manner of speaking: there are linguistic errors, colloquialisms and vulgarisms. The journalists use „colourful”, direct language of high literary value. The materials contain digressions and flashbacks enabling comparisons of life before the war with the current situation, there are also fragments referring to past

periods, i.e. before the annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the war in Donbas in 2014. Paweł Reszka, in his articles published in the „Polityka” weekly, proves his good knowledge of the specifics of the local situation and excels in that way of presentation of the material from Ukraine. In a reportage entitled *Ciężki oddech brata* [Brother’s heavy breathing] published in January 2022, he created a poignant picture of waiting for a catastrophe to happen, a specific *fin de siècle* in Sumy, which, like all major agglomerations in eastern Ukraine, was brutally attacked by Russian troops (Reszka 2022a). A similar approach is used in an article by Ziemowit Szczerek entitled „Odessa czeka na wojnę” [Odessa waiting for war] (Szczerek 2022b) – in the text, there is also the anticipation of what is about to happen. Describing the everyday life of the inhabitants of that seaside resort, Szczerek constructs a parallel between the present and the days before 24 February 2022.

The comparison of places before and after the Russian invasion is also used by radio reporters, implementing solutions appropriate for audio media. Thanks to the intensification of acoustic stimuli, audio reportage engages the viewer’s perception, creating the impression of simultaneity and co-participation. Thanks to that mechanism, in the *Przewodnik* [Guide] reportage, the listener becomes a mental co-participant in the journalist’s expedition to Irpin and Bucha just after the liberation of those places from Russian occupation (Korbas 2022). Sound images of destroyed houses, a bridge and an overturned car serving as a barricade contrast with the memories of the Ukrainian guide – recorded by the reporter – about his former job, friends and happy family. The authors of the *30 lat życia w pięciu plecakach* [30 years of life in five backpacks] reportage introduce an even more advanced narrative solution (Dedo, Kasperczyk 2022), describing the drama of the war from the perspective of the everyday life of civilians. They begin their broadcast with the story of a family from a small Ukrainian village located near the border with Belarus: „We were working, building a house, ready for life” and the background for their words is a serene melody that creates a calm, almost fairytale-like atmosphere in the recording. The generation of such associations is deliberate, as it proves to be an unusual prelude to the actual narrative of the ongoing war. After a short sequence about life before the war, the sound of an air raid alarm begins to dominate the gentle melody, followed by the characters’ account: „from the floor of our house, we could see military facilities burning in Lutsk”. The effect of mixing peaceful music with the alarm signal becomes an acoustic metaphor expressing the loss of stability and future prospects.

The broadcasts document the numerous difficulties related to providing basic needs: food and drinking water (Jastrzębski 2023b, Jastrzębski 2023d), contact with relatives (Bogoryja-Zakrzewski 2023b; Jastrzębski 2023a), medical care (Jastrzębski 2024). The war experience of the characters in the recordings is rocket attacks, bombing, anti-aircraft alarms (Bogoryja-Zakrzewski 2022a; Bogoryja-Zakrzewski 2022b, Skawińska 2024; Michalak, Czyżewska-Jacquemet, Najda 2022; Sz wajgier, Dudzińska 2022), hiding in basements (Kaszuwara 2022; Dedo, Kasperczyk 2022) or images of destruction and death: „I saw imitations of graves next to garages and railway tracks, bulldozers digging holes for mass burials of civilians” (Jastrzębski 2024). The audio reportages also include a record of emotions conveyed in verbalised form and through strongly expressive paralinguistic means: sighing, crying, hesitation, lowering the voice and pausing.

Military narrative

The military narrative in press reports (Reszka 2022e, 2022g, 2023; Pawlicki 2022a, 2022b; Lachowski 2023; Morozova 2023) tries to recreate the drama of the events, the brutality, cruelty and wickedness of the invaders (Łukasiewicz 2023) and includes popular comparisons of Russian soldiers to orcs or Huns.¹ From the reportages written by Polish authors, the reader learns about problems with military equipment, the idleness of Ukrainian soldiers, their fatigue and homesickness and sometimes anger at fellow citizens who, after initially being active in reporting to the military conscription centres, are currently not rushing to the front. The publicists, describing the situation in the Donbas near Avdiivka or the beginning of the war in Mariupol, express admiration for the heroes and pay tribute to them (Reszka 2022b; Reszka 2022h), not only to those who have already fallen. They draw attention to the inconveniences, both physical and mental, of Ukraine's defenders. Thus, the articles feature images of mud, snow, rain, cold, heat, insects, dirt, noise, fatigue and grief but also of joy, friendship, brotherhood-in-arms, sacrifice and even love.

The military narrative in press journalism presents not only the servicemen and volunteers from the Ukrainian territorial defence forces but also the heroic attitude of the local government representatives. The article entitled *Czas atamanów* [The time of Atamans] by Ziemowit Szczerek contains a catalogue of charismatic and steadfast civilian defenders of their cities – the mayors of Kyiv, Melitopol and Kharkiv and the governor of the Mykolaiv Oblast (Szczerek 2022a).

In radio reportage, the military narrative is most often mediated: wives talk about their husbands fighting at the front (Jastrzębski 2023d, Czyżewska-Jacquemet 2022; Rozbiecka 2022), mothers mention their sons and daughters – soldiers and paramedics (Bogoryja-Zakrzewski 2023b). They know about their fate from rare phone calls or social media. Despite fear for their lives, they understand and accept their motivation to participate in the fighting. In the broadcasts selected taking the military narrative into account, the report *Strażnik fortecy* [The guardian of the fortress] by Maciej Jastrzębski stands out, the character of which is a territorial defence soldier from Mariupol. The event participant describes the situation in the attacked city chronologically and with military details: „Planes were constantly flying over us and dropping bombs, artillery was firing shells and rockets at us, ships were approaching the shore and shooting at us” (Jastrzębski 2023a). The broadcast presents his wartime journey: the dramatic defence of the Azovstal plant, the moment of surrender of the troops, the stay in a penal colony and detention centre and regaining freedom in a prisoner-of-war exchange. The recorded account is a testimony to Russian crimes and violation of human rights: in Mariupol, where the Russian army bombed the drama theatre while women and children were hiding there, and in the prisoner-of-war camps, where detained soldiers were beaten, tortured and persuaded to betray their homeland. The protagonist briefly sums up his 165-day captivity as „hell”. The narrative is of a personalised and retrospective nature and includes a public appeal for the release of the Ukrainian prisoners, some of whom are civilians.

1 The word “ork” [orc] is a frequent synonym for Russian occupying forces in Ukraine and has a pejorative meaning. Orcs are human-like creatures, villains of J. R. R. Tolkien's work. In Tolkien's novel, orcs are a symbol of cruel and thoughtless invaders, automatic executors of all orders from commanders. In Ukraine, this term was first used to refer to Russian soldiers in 2014, when they occupied Donbas (cf. Shaparenko 2022, 211; Yekelchuk 2022, 237).

It is worth noting that the specificity of the military narrative in the media is also related to the limitations resulting from information security (Burmahin 2023, 57; Seklecka, Węglińska, Razumenko 2023, 108–110).

Refugee narrative

The refugee narrative in Polish weekly opinion magazines (Kołodziejczyk 2022a, 2022b; Romanowska 2022) can be considered as women's war reportage of an autobiographical nature. Publications describing escape marked by fear for the fate of loved ones, uncertainty and lack of perspectives best present a woman's point of view, fitting into the trend of the so-called herstory. In their stories, the female protagonists report on their „new everyday life” in isolation from the previously safe place of residence, from the loved ones who stayed in Ukraine and from household appliances that are now considered artefacts of a happy life. The accounts of refugee women of the smells, colours and sounds of their hometown are symbolic, especially if the Polish reader knows that the particular city no longer exists (Reszka 2022i). An important element of the refugee narrative is not the need for combat equipment, as is the case with the military narrative, but accommodation, medicines for sick children or infirm parents and a warm meal or milk for the baby. In the women's narrative, the theme of daily existence and responsibility for the weaker members of the family – what can be described as „everyday heroism” – is apparent.

In the radio reportage, the refugee narrative is created during the meetings with those who are already in Poland but reconstruction of the earlier stages of their escape from their country can also be found: the decision to leave home, reaching the border, and waiting in the line at the border crossing. Based on numerous conversations recorded at railway stations, reception points and aid centres (Michalak, Czyżewska-Jacquemet, Najda 2022; Szkurlat, Łoś 2022; Szwajgier, Dudzińska 2022; Bogoryja-Zakrzewski 2022a), a polyphonic image of Ukrainian refugees was created, through the reporter's „poetics of the short moment of being close” (Czarnek-Wnuk, Sygizman 2022, 51). Another solution is in-depth reporter portraits, based on the intimate story of a single person or family, which makes it possible to explore the most personal experiences (Dudzińska 2022). Reporters re-visit some of the characters a year or two after the outbreak of the war to see how they managed to adapt to their new life in Poland and get to know their current opinion on the war (Jastrzębski 2023d; Skawińska 2024).

The refugee narrative shapes the reporter's story of fear and loss: „There is nothing there. No houses, no streets, no school, no nursery schools. There is nothing there” (Bogoryja-Zakrzewski 2022a) and of longing for the home, friends and workplaces the people were forced to leave behind. It is also the moment when they start life anew. In Anna Dudzińska's reportage, a song sung by a 14-year-old girl who escaped from Lviv before the war containing the words „Hello, welcome home” becomes a metaphor for a new life in Poland (Dudzińska 2022).

Solidarity narrative

The solidarity narrative can be seen as the reverse of the refugee narrative, as it manifests itself in reporting various aspects of helping refugees and their families (Sowa 2022, Zarembo-Bielawski 2022). The reader receives descriptions of help organised on a mass scale,

in large charity centres, e.g. at border crossings, bus and railway stations, as well as in private homes. The stories presented by the publicists expose both the „bright” and „dark” sides of the co-existence of strangers. The reader learns how places to stay are prepared, where the finances come from and what problems those who provide support to refugees struggle with, e.g. the consequence of post-traumatic stress disorder in Ukrainians, illnesses, separation, different lifestyle, value system, ways of raising children or even diet.

The solidarity narrative is a mosaic collection of micro-scenes depicting specific forms of support: free transport and meals (Michalak, Czyżewska-Jacquemet, Najda 2022; Bogoryja-Zakrzewski 2022a; Sz wajgier, Dudzińska 2022), activities for children (Rozbiecka 2022), medical assistance (Szkurłat, Łoś 2022) and donation collections (Chrobak 2022). It is not only an account of the types of aid but also of its scale: widespread involvement of city residents and large social groups. Both the press and radio reportage give particular attention to towns in eastern Poland: Rzeszów (Wilczak 2023), Chełm (Dedo, Kasperczak 2023), including the border towns of Dołhobyczów, Zosin, Horodło and Hrubieszów (Michalak, Czyżewska-Jacquemet, Najda 2022). Broadcasts show that missing products for civilians and the army are delivered directly to Ukraine (Bogoryja-Zakrzewski 2023a, Bogoryja-Zakrzewski 2023b) and Polish paramedics and doctors travel to offer medical assistance there (Jastrzębski 2023e).

Self-narrative about volunteers’ motivation is an important element of the solidarity narrative. The characters talk about their obvious compassion and sensitivity to other people’s harm but they also admit to a sense of injustice and discomfort: „I live here while people living there have nothing” (Rozbiecka 2022). They recognise the similarity between the fate of refugees and their own experience: „I, as a mother, cannot imagine it”, „I also have such grandchildren, at the same age” (Michalak, Czyżewska-Jacquemet, Najda 2022), they admire the determination of women and the honour of those fighting for the freedom of their homeland. They appreciate the positive experience of the community the aid providers and the beneficiaries.

Occasionally, reporters bring up controversial topics in their interviews with Poles and Ukrainians, the main one being the Volhynian massacre. The journalists test whether, in the new circumstances, these unsettled issues have an impact on relations between the two nations. The war victims admit: „I couldn’t believe the way the Poles supported us, I couldn’t believe. I didn’t realise that it would happen. There are reasons for that” (Michalak, Czyżewska-Jacquemet, Najda 2022). They compare the painful history of the two countries to heavy stones and argue that the focus should be on building a common future: „Stones must not be carried and people must live, because we are neighbours” (Bogoryja-Zakrzewski 2022a).

Conclusions

Newspaper and radio reports addressing the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the years 2022–2024 represent four dominant narrative perspectives: everyday life in wartime, military, refugee and solidarity. They form a system of opposites based on the participants of that socio-political situation: civilians—servicemen, people fleeing the war, or persons providing shelter. From the perspective of journalistic pragmatics, they become the characters in journalistic texts and recordings, narrators and witnesses authenticating the reported events. The separation and mixing of those different perspectives enable the

construction of a multidimensional and coherent image of the ongoing war in the publications of that period.

The everyday life in wartime narrative consists of distinct components: air raid alarms, rocket fire, destruction, staying in basements and shelter, lack of access to water, food or contact with relatives. The military perspective recreates the cruelty of the invaders, documents the crimes committed against civilians and prisoners of war and emphasises the heroism of the defenders. The refugee narrative is mainly maintained in the herstory form and presents the fate of war refugees from the decision to leave home to their attempts to adapt to life in a new country. The solidarity narrative is a mosaic record of the social movement to help Ukrainian refugees in Poland. In both press and radio reportage, meaningful parallels are created between life before and after the Russian invasion. The focus on the stories of individual characters, typical of that genre, gives factual accounts a personalised and emotionally engaging dimension. Conducted in this way, the narrative enables those looking for qualitative media content to understand the current contexts of the war in Ukraine.

The conducted analysis opens up further directions of research. First of all, it is worth expanding the analysed material to include other reportage media varieties. Including television reportage would allow for the visual narrative to be highlighted, while an analysis of online reportage would show hybrid solutions for the construction of journal texts based on interactivity. This would make it possible to build a catalogue of contemporary narrative techniques specific to this genre. In the area of thematic analyses, it is worth focusing, as previously indicated, on marginalised narratives in order to explain their social, political and media context. Further multi-aspect studies of media war narratives can be used to recognise the mechanisms of emotionalisation and storytelling when modelling factual media messages.

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