THE CONCEPT OF WAR IN POETIC WORKS: CRITERIA AND SPECIFICITIES OF STYLISTIC AND SEMANTIC-LEXICAL ANALYSIS


Pojęcie wojny w utworach poetyckich: kryteria i specyfika analizy stylistycznej i semantyczno-leksykalnej

Abstract

This scientific article focuses on the lack of research on the lexical-and-stylistic analysis of war-themed poems written by non-professional authors. Defining methodological founda-
tions and specific criteria, and analyzing war-concept poetry are its two major tasks. It introduces a specific analytical approach tailored to the examination of poetic works created by amateur authors who are ordinary residents from regions of Ukraine subjected to bombings during the initial stages of the war. The article seeks to shed light on the unique perspectives of non-professional authors expressing their encounters with war through poetry, which contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of war concept poetry, which tends to assume a documentary-like character.

**Keywords:** war concept poetry, lexical-stylistic analysis, criterion, paradigm, amateur poets, Russo-Ukrainian war.

1. Introduction

Recently poetry is an increasingly important area in applied linguistics. There have been many attempts to approach poetry based on linguistically oriented studies. Over the second half of the past century, there was an essential increase of developments (Yadugiri, 1992; Sharma, 1988) in poetry analysis that were the need for complex approaches for conveying meanings and exact interpretation of poetic texts. In terms of analyzing poetry from a linguistic perspective, it is important to mention Halliday’s approach (Halliday, 1964), effectively demonstrating the language system through paradigmatic relationships among semantic, syntactic, and phonological categories, Corpus Linguistics (Biber, 1988), Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992), Functional analysis (Stepanchenko, 1991) and many others.

It is a widely known fact that during periods of profound sorrow experienced by individuals or societies, art frequently flourishes and becomes a source of inspiration in the face of adversity. Numerous literary works owe their existence to their authors’ life tragedies. War concept poetry serves as a powerful means of expression, allowing poets to convey the complexities and emotional depths of human experiences within the context of armed conflicts. The unique combination of lexical choices and stylistic devices employed in such poetry offers a rich tapestry of meanings and images that demands careful, specific analysis.

Since it is the language that reflects the world as a comprehensive whole, the literary process of the war years is the most complex linguistic phenomenon that reflects real events, assessments and moods, giving rise to the aesthetically and linguistically newly formed people’s speech of the war era. In such difficult periods of the country’s history, it is the image of the Motherland that receives a new understanding and evaluation in poetic texts, as it is closely connected with personal and collective psychology, the socio-economic situation, the socio-political struggle and the culture of society. In 1933, Z. Folejewski (Folejewski, 1933) pointed to two currents of Polish literature when war forced a great number of Poles to live in exile. The scholar wrote that “writers in exile created inspired and profound works, especially
in poetry. Works written by those who stayed at home were, in general, of less artistic value and more realistic: they were pictures of hard and bitter life”.

War is an extreme manifestation of political confrontation, which, according to C. Schmitt (Schmitt, 2007), begins with the opposition of “Native-Alien”, and “Friend-Enemy”, essentially two antonymous concepts. But such an opposition does not take place in the Russo-Ukrainian war of the XXIst century as it was in the wars of the past centuries, where the opponents spoke different languages or were representatives of different cultures and religions, and were constantly in a physical confrontation.

The Special Military Operation announced in a special TV broadcasting speech (“On conducting a special military operation”, in Russian “О проведении специальной военной операции”) by Russian President V. Putin on 24 February 2022, immediately preceding the Russian invasion of Ukraine, became a full-scale “undeclared war” of Russia against Ukraine in the Eastern European region, and it constitutes a real threat to the existing international law and order in Europe. The resistance of the Ukrainian people has become one of the most important topics of the world mass media, which forms new military rhetoric due to the gradual adaptation of all the Ukrainian people to the cruel conditions of wartime, and to the changes in value orientations of people around the world, and in the European countries, in particular.

The poetic texts from the poetic collection “Slovyanin”, which have become the object of lexical-and-stylistic analysis, are of particular interest, since, as its head editor Leonid Machulin (Machulin 2022) appoints, all the verses were written by non-professional poets, specifically ordinary Ukrainian individuals who have personally experienced the tragedy of war. This is of considerable interest for the analysis of the entire spectrum of lexical-and-stylistic features of the authors’ idiostyles when creating the same artistic image of the war and the reactions of the individual to its realities. Furthermore, there is a limited focus on the specific criteria that can be employed in the analysis of war-themed poems.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is the lexical and stylistic analysis of the poems representing the concept of war and describing and identification of its specific criteria. The novelty of the work lies in the proposed subject, research material and specifically worked-out criteria for poetic works devoted to a war theme. To achieve the defined objectives, the study will pursue the following tasks: 1) to identify the methodological basis of the study and define the specific criteria for lexical-and-stylistic analysis of the war-themed poems; 2) based on the comprehensive lexical and stylistic analysis of the war-concept poetry to gain a deeper appreciation for how war-concept poetry captures the multifaceted aspects of armed conflicts and people’s reactions to it. By meeting these challenges, this article intends to contribute to the understanding of war concept poetry.
2. Methodological basis of the study and its criteria

Exploring the use of literary language across diverse mediums such as prose, newspapers, film, verse, and drama offers a distinctive perspective on how linguistic features are perceived and utilized. The analysis highlights the intricate choices of stylistic devices and styles to convey a concept in different contexts (Evans, 2018; Reichelt & Durham, 2017). A considerable amount of literature has been published on the various approaches to analyzing poetic texts and interpreting them from different perspectives. However, in recent years, there has been a shift in the focus of contemporary linguistic analysis of poetic texts, particularly those related to war themes, from a system-and-structural approach to an anthropological one. This approach emphasizes the meaningfulness and significance of the subject by exploring the dual mechanisms of production, perception, and interpretation of poetic messages. A useful tool for this is the analysis of the lexical and stylistic characteristics of the texts. In the last few decades, there have been significant advances in the field of cognitive linguistics, which explore how humans use a language and how our brains process and comprehend it. As P. Stockwell notes that words (and semantics) cannot be reduced to logical or decontextualised or asocial or non-cognitive denotations, and the meanings of concepts do not lie wholly in the words that are used to express those concepts, but in cognitive models which are cued up by words and which add rich and complex understanding in a communicative situation (Stockwell 2005). Cognitive poetics makes clear reconnections back to much older forms of analysis, such as classical rhetoric.

While it is a relatively new method in war poetry studies, cognitive poetics principles have been applied to the study of poetry in various ways. Many scientific works are based on cognitive linguistic principles and their application to the study of poetry. E. Semino, in her major study, “Cognitive Poetics and War Poetry: A Corpus-Based Approach”, noted that “cognitive poetics offers a valuable framework for the analysis of war poetry, enabling us to explore the complex interplay between language, emotion, and cognition in the representation of war and conflict” (Semino, 2010). The researcher believes that the process of interpreting poetry is a complex and dynamic one involving not only the analysis of individual words and phrases but also their contextual perception, as well as the construction of mental images and the activation of emotional responses (Semino, 2010). There is a large volume of published studies describing the role of metaphor. In her book “War, Language and Metaphors” L. Progovac specifies the role of metaphor in war language, drawing on insights from cognitive linguistics, psychology, and philosophy (Progovac, 2014).
In the last thirty years, discourse analysis has been increasingly used to analyze various types of discourse, including war, gender, national, and political discourse (McClintock, 1995). The concept of “war” can be analyzed through various forms of discourse, including traditional and modern forms. Civil discourse, such as memories, comments, and narratives; military discourse, such as the genre of “report”; politicians’ discourse, such as “interviews”; and media discourse on the course of the war are all part of the war discourse. Additionally, gender discourse plays an important role in how war is conceptualized and discussed. All of these discourses are interconnected and influence each other. In this study, the focus is on the Russo-Ukrainian War of 2022. According to T. van Dijk, discourse is a vital aspect of sociocultural interaction that is characterized by interests, goals, and styles. By analyzing numerous forms of discourse related to war, we can gain a deeper understanding of how war is perceived, experienced, and discussed (van Dijk, 1999).

In his model of analysis of political discourse, Polish scholar P. Cap (2013) when analyzing the conceptual organization of the discourse space, P. Cap concludes that it is represented in three dimensions: spatial, temporal and axiological proximization. The latter represents gathering ideological clash between the ‘home values’ and the alien and antagonistic values. All social practices have a cognitive dimension that includes knowledge, opinions, beliefs, norms, values, convictions, and stereotypes. Stereotypes are often used to explain the causes and peculiarities of conflicts and can become entrenched in various forms of publications. The use of stereotypes in discourse was first noted by the American psychologist F. Bartlett in his book “Remembering” in 1932 (Bartlett, 1932). He found that people often use stereotypical representations of reality when verbalizing past experiences. These stereotypical representations are called background knowledge schemas. They are also known as “frames” by M. Minsky, “scripts” by R. Schank and R. Abelson, and “scenarios” by A. Sanford and S. Garrod. These schemas provide contextual expectations, enable the prediction of upcoming events based on previous encounters, and contribute to the coherence of the text. However, the problem of understanding arises due to discrepancy between the background knowledge, semantic, and cultural context of the author’s frame and that of the reader. To overcome this, it is essential to take into account the cultural context and historical background of the author’s work to achieve an accurate understanding of the author’s perspective.

The study of language and its relation to the “human factor” is a well-established principle in linguistic research. Many scholars (Jacobs, 2015; Langacker, 2006; Wierzbicka, 1997, etc.) have emphasized the importance of the individual’s perspective in the interpretation and use of language. This is particularly relevant in the analysis of war-themed poems written by non-
professional poets in Ukraine. Their experiences and perspectives are uniquely expressed through language, and it is important to understand how they conceptualize and express their experiences through stylistic devices (antonyms, synonyms, epithets, stereotypes, and axiological predicates). These evaluative characteristics are evident at various levels of language, including lexical-and-stylistic and syntactic levels. By exploring them, we can gain a deeper understanding of the poet’s evaluation and perception of war. It is worth noting that these linguistic features are not isolated from the poet’s individual and cultural background, and they are influenced by their personal experiences, values, and beliefs. Therefore, by analyzing the linguistic and cultural factors involved, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of war-themed poems and their authors. The investigation of war poetry is often intertwined with the study of the psychological characteristics of people experiencing war or its devastating consequences. War discourse often focuses on issues of personality manifestations, which are considered from the point of view of the dynamic relationships of psychological antinomial reactions.

In 1991, the Ukrainian scientist I. Stepanchenko published a paper in which he described a certain model of the text within which the mechanism of its perception is considered a process of connecting linguistic units and mental units in the mind of the recipient. The methodological basis of his research has become the philosophical position about the inseparable link of language, thought and action, the position of philological hermeneutics (Humboldt, 1988; Husserl, 2000; Ricoeur, 1974, etc.) and the anthropocentric approach that presupposes that the categories of the addressee (a writer) and addressee (a reader) become of paramount significance. In his major study the researcher identified the main principles of the functional approach and offered a new category of “text depth” as a basic criterion for poetic texts investigations (Stepanchenko, 1991). According to this approach, the content of the text is a process of thinking of the transition from verbal images (the image of the material form of the word, the sequence of letters or sounds) to other verbal and non-verbal (“subject”) images, phenomena and situations of non-textual reality. Under the types of images, there are two levels of the content structure of the text, such as the linguistic (the level of operation of verbal images) and the mental or figurative-conceptual level of operation of “substantive” images and concepts. In the recipient’s mind, there is a formation of ties between the text and reality, which can be established both at the level of the image (a specific level) and at the level of connections between the images, the concept (abstract level). In this case, there are two different (distinct) but, simultaneously, closely interrelated principles of reflection of reality in the text. The proportion of the specific weight of projective (images) and conceptual elements in poetic texts.
varying, determines the specificity of functioning and its affiliation to one or another type of text: mainly projective or mainly conceptual.

This approach is supported by O. Gonchar (Stepanchenko, Gonchar et al., 2016) who proposed an inter-individual-style typology of poetic texts based on the ratio of projective and conceptual principles of the reflection of reality in a poetic text and the degree of explicitness of the evaluative paradigm. In her comprehensive investigation, O. Gonchar (Gonchar, 2017) concluded that a poetic text structural organization involves combining text units into paradigms and the main emphasis is put on the presence or absence of an explicit assessment as a kind of step-by-step procedure used for defining the perception process. Such understanding, implemented in the study as the “antithesis” criterion, allows us to consider the vocabulary of the poet’s individual style as a system of series (paradigms) that reinforces one or another side of the fundamental contradiction of the poetic work. The category of antithesis is a modification of the literary category of collision that is a dialectical contradiction lying in any work plot development, i.e. contradiction, the conflict between characters and moments, other actions in the works and forces, and is not so much the basis of action as the “movement of experiences”.

Poetic works of a mainly conceptual nature involve the realization of two types of antitheses: ANTITHESIS – CONFLICT and ANTITHESIS – ANTINOMY. This is where the role of the evaluation paradigm is important. Thus, in poems based on ANTITHESIS–CONFLICT, as a rule, there are explicitly placed evaluative accents, which discover the author’s position while the antithesis may remain unresolved. The second type of antithesis is ANTITHESIS–ANTINOMY. Opposite interrelated principles that make up the skeleton of poems of this type do not find their solution. The lack of unambiguous evaluation characteristics of one of the two sides of the antithesis indicates an uncertain author’s position. A characteristic feature of ANTITHESIS–SITUATION is the possibility of its implementation in verbal texts of a predominantly projective nature. In such poetic works, the connection of reality with the text in the recipient’s mind is carried out at the figurative level; the content at the conceptual level is a variable formation. Opposite interrelated principles can appear in various modifications, namely: statics – dynamics, colour contrasts (black – white – coloured), etc. Hegel defines such a “situation” as a description of a certain state that “has no further consequences”, where conceptuality recedes into the background, as less significant, secondary or obvious (Shynkaruk, 2010).

Though the generalizability of much-published research on this issue is problematic, and in addition, the approaches are not mutually exclusive, and scholars often use multiple approaches to gain a more detailed understanding of the poem, in the context of our research the described approach has many attractive features and can be adopted as a basic one.
However, to gain a comprehensive understanding of war poetry as a historical source, it is crucial to balance both historical and linguistic analysis. It is necessary to take into consideration the artistic features and specificities of a poetic text, while also considering the historical context in which it was written. The linguistic personality of the poet plays a key role in this process, as their speech-intellectual activity reacts to ongoing changes and fixes the verbally productive characteristics of the word that are relevant for an adequate designation of the speaker’s intention.

For instance, the use of leading antitheses and semantic symbols can reveal the author’s and the LYRICAL CHARACTER’s attitudes and emotions towards war. Meanwhile, the choice of vocabulary and stylistic devices can provide insights into the level of documentary nature and the degree of personalization of the poem. By adopting a balanced approach to the analysis of war poetry, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of how these poems reflect the experiences and perspectives of the poets who wrote them during the time of war. It is essential to note that the specific criteria for analyzing the war-themed poetry of amateur poets need to take into consideration the unique context of their experiences. As the poems were written under the influence of ongoing armed conflict, the language and stylistic choices made by the authors will likely reflect their immediate emotional and psychological reactions to the war. Therefore, it is necessary to establish additional criteria that reflect the psychological impact of the war on the poets, in addition to historical and linguistic factors.

It is the language that reflects the objective reality, and it is the objects, their properties, and the actions of a person with his thoughts, feelings, actions, etc. Thus, the language, performing a descriptive function, reflects the interaction of the surrounding world and a person through the prism of the evaluative and value division of “Good-Evil”, and “Good-Bad”. The key role is played by the form of expression in the poetic text of a linguistic personality who is considered “a manifold, multi-component, structurally organized set of linguistic competencies, a certain linguistic correlate of the spiritual world of a personality in the integrity of his social, ethnic, psychological aesthetic characteristics” (Normudova, 2018: 30).

The language used by amateur poets in their works about war reflects their linguistic personality, which is shaped by various social and political factors, as well as emotional background (fear, stress, compassion, grief, sorrow, suffering, distress, intense hatred, anguish, and shock). It results in a secondary articulation, which is unique and specific to the context of war.

Thus, the main criteria for the analysis of the poems in this work are composition, functions, means of crossing paradigms, the degree of explicitness of evaluative characteristics, as well as the type of antitheses (ANTITHESIS – CONFLICT, ANTITHESIS – ANTINOMY, and ANTITHESIS – SITUATION).
The factors mentioned above have resulted in the development of specific research criteria that are proposed in this study. The first criterion is “the author and the LYRICAL CHARACTER identification degree”. It aims to establish the extent to which the LYRICAL CHARACTER in the war-themed poems is identified with the author or with an imagined character. In other words, the more closely the LYRICAL CHARACTER is identified with the author’s image, the less generalizable the poem may be, and the more personal characteristics of the author's personality with a high level of subjective perception features may be reflected in the poem. Conversely, the less closely the LYRICAL CHARACTER is identified with the character’s image, the more generalizable the poem may be, and the more objective personal characteristics of the Character may be reflected in the poem. The degree of identification of the author and the LYRICAL CHARACTER allows the percept of the author of the poetic text as a spokesman for the public. Such a criterion can serve as a measure of the degree of documentary-like nature of the poem and the generalization of information, as well as the individual characteristics of the personality of the LYRICAL CHARACTER.

Moreover, the criterion of the degree of identification of the author and the LYRICAL CHARACTER enables us to perceive the author of a poetic text in three different ways. The criterion of “degree of the author and the LYRICAL CHARACTER identification” enables us to perceive the author of a poetic text in three different ways. The first is as a subject of activity, participating in the thick of events and knowing and critically analyzing from their own experience the realities of war. The second one is as a spokesman for public opinion, arguing through detailed war scenes, cases, and reality. And, the third is as a spectator of the war theatre who can only emotionally describe it but with a high portion of affectedness and histrionics. Thus, by examining the degree of identification of the author and the LYRICAL CHARACTER, we can gain insight into the author’s intentions and the message they are trying to convey through the poem.

Thus, by examining the degree of identification of the author and the lyrical character, we can gain insight into the author's intentions and the message they are trying to convey through the poem. Such a classification is closely connected with the Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), with accordance to which linguistic markers signal social distance or closeness between the poet and the events/people involved in the war. This could include pronouns (e.g., first-person “I” vs. third-person “they”), modality (indicating certainty or doubt), and evaluative language (positive or negative). According to Hart (Hart, 2014), pronouns in the poem are used significantly to increase or otherwise decrease the conceptual distance between the reader and the characters in the poem, in addition to revealing the view point of its author.

One more criterion is based on the understanding that the concept of “war” is closely connected with a wide spectrum of emotions that it can
evoke, and be associated with. In the context of linguistic analysis of war-themed poetry, the criterion that characterizes the degree of a person’s adaptation to the hardships and horrors of war can be examined through linguistic markers and textual representations. First, linguistic analysis allows us to explore how individuals adapt their language use to convey their experiences, emotions, and perspectives related to war. One aspect of linguistic adaptation in war-themed poetry is the use of specialized vocabulary and terminology specific to military processes, warfare, and the experiences of soldiers. This adaptation reflects the linguistic reflection of a native speaker deeply immersed in the context of war. Neologisms, occasionalisms, and terminological units emerge as linguistic innovations that capture the nuances and complexities of the war experience. The presence of such specialized vocabulary indicates the poet’s adaptation to the unique linguistic demands of expressing war-related themes. Additionally, the degree of adaptation can be assessed through the linguistic devices employed to convey the mental and physical pain associated with war. Anaphora, repetition, gradation, and oxymoron are linguistic techniques that intensify the portrayal of suffering, allowing readers to grasp the depth of emotional and physical anguish experienced by individuals in war-torn settings. These linguistic markers serve as indicators of how the poet adapts their language to communicate effectively the hardships and horrors of war. However, it is important to note that adaptation to the hardships and horrors of war is a complex and context-specific process, influenced by a multitude of individual, social, and environmental factors. Scientific research in this area aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the various dimensions of adaptation and inform interventions and support systems to enhance individuals’ well-being and resilience in war-affected contexts.

From the point of view of affect and emotional proximization, certain emotions can create empathy of high level and closeness, while others may lead to distancing, disassociation or indifference. So this criterion is closely related to another one, which characterizes “the degree of a person’s adaptation to the hardships and horrors of war”.

Thus, placing the specific criteria at the forefront of our analysis allows us to provide insights into the emotional portrayal of war experiences and unique characteristics that make war concept poetry a distinct one within the larger realm of poetic expression.

On the other hand, according to Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), identification of positioning of actors (lyrical character/authors) help us to analyze how the poets position themselves and others within the discourse of the war; if they present themselves as victims, witnesses, or activists, as well as how the adversaries are depicted, and what emotions are evoked to them.

Furthermore, the idea of analysis of the poems written by Ukrainian amateur poets during the Russo-Ukrainian War of 2022 to gain a deeper under-
standing of the Ukrainian experience during this challenging time could also offer insights and new perspectives on the cultural and historical ties between the European Union countries and Ukraine, and provide a basis for mutual understanding and cooperation in the future.

3. Lexical-and-stylistic analysis of the poems

A literary work, particularly a poetic one, often serves as a valuable historical source. However, it cannot be fully understood without considering its artistic features and the specificities of a poetic text. It is crucial to strike a balance between historical and linguistic analysis. Language serves as a reflection of objective reality, encompassing objects, their attributes, and human actions, thoughts, and emotions. Through language, the descriptive function portrays the interaction between the world and individuals, employing evaluative and value-based differentiations such as “good-evil” and “good-bad”. In the analyzed poems, the antithesis of OWN – ALIEN is a prominent and recurring element. This antithesis takes on three different plot modifications, highlighting the contrasting elements of familiarity and foreignness, known and unknown, and the transformation of the ordinary into something extraordinary. Understanding and examining these plot modifications provides valuable insights into the themes and narratives conveyed in the poems.

Tab. 1
The hyper-antithesis OWN – ALIEN modifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modification of the antithesis OWN – ALIEN is presented as</th>
<th>The number of analyzed poems / %</th>
<th>contradiction BEFORE – AFTER</th>
<th>contradiction MIND – HEART</th>
<th>contradiction REPRESENTATION – REALITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tab. 1</td>
<td>79 poems / 100%</td>
<td>49 / 62,0%</td>
<td>8 / 10,1%</td>
<td>22 / 27,9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1. Modification of the hyper-antithesis OWN – ALIEN revealed through a BEFORE –AFTER contradiction

Modification of the hyper-antithesis OWN – ALIEN is disclosed in the form of a BEFORE –AFTER contradiction. In the LYRICAL CHARACTER’s soul, as well as in the hearts of the people, native nature, and city landscapes, there exists a beloved way of life represented by the party OWN\ BEFORE. However, ALIEN /AFTER shows the significant changes occurring in the country due to the military actions of the aggressor nation.

To describe the process of the LYRICAL CHARACTER’s understanding of his position and current life circumstances, the authors employ various po-
etic language techniques. The poems rely on the juxtaposition of words with contrasting associative structures. For instance, the use of projective images such as “black house, black, blackened, white snow cooled” (“Snow during the war” by Vasyl Vorgul), and “scary place of homeless and abandoned dolls” and “burnt apartment” (“Mariupol” by Maksym Korovychenko) provide an explicit evaluation of the horrors of war at the conceptual level. The authors conveyed such negative emotional evaluations through additional colour schemes, often utilizing non-metaphorical epithets. The past world (OWN – BEFORE), represented by epithets like “Богатый, успешный, весёлый, родной, Свободный, бесстрашный, всегда молодой / rich, successful, cheerful, dear, free, fearless, always young” (“Kharkiv” by Oleg Peregon), stands in opposition to (ALIEN – AFTER) the real world with clearly defined negative evaluations like “сгоревший, черный, бездомный, брошенный, невинный, восьмой круг ада” / burn, black, homeless, abandoned, innocent, the eighth circle of hell” (“Mariupol” by Maxym Korovychenko). The associations with fear and emotional shock from the changed reality are created through wordplay, paraphrases, polysemy, and homophones. For instance, the phrase “осадки из ракет и бомб”, “в обед ожидается град” / “precipitation from rockets and bombs”, “hail is expected in the afternoon” plays on the homophones “град [grad]/hail” as small pellets of ice falling from cumulonimbus clouds when there are very strong rising air currents and “ГРАД/GRAD” as a self-propelled multiple rocket launcher system.

One more notable stylistic device used is personification, where Ukrainian cities and other things are described with using human characteristics. This technique, as shown in the poem “Я – Охтирка” / “I am Okhtyrka” by Nastka Fedchenko (“Я – Харків. // Уже не пам’ятьо, як спати в ліжку.../I am Kharkiv. // I don’t remember anymore, like sleeping in bed...”), allows a reader to directly relate to the generalized image on the objective/visual level. Personification enhances the emotional connection to a concept by activating social and empathetic processes, making the image at the conceptual level more detailed and documentary-like.

Simultaneously, the LYRICAL CHARACTER acts as a mirror, capturing the events occurring. A series of projective images using lexemes associated with evaluation (“черная, черно, почернели, страшное место, пепелища, розтріляній рашистом”/ “black, black, turned black, a terrible place, site of the fire, shot by a rushist”) at the conceptual level expresses the author’s position. The prevalence of projectivity indicates that the author’s conceptual thinking and artistic intention are in the stage of “inner speech” or internal monologue, which has not been completely transferred to the LYRICAL CHARACTER yet but remains as the author’s reflection.

The poem becomes an objectification of feelings and thoughts, verbalizing projective images where each described object carries an unambiguous
assessment at the conceptual level. The thoughts are in the process of formulation, with the author attempting to sort out his feelings and thoughts, to perceive, and accept the surrounding events. The author does not aim to align the seen and felt with the norms of artistic speech but remains at a level of spectacular and sensual communication.

Psychologist L. Vygotsky referred to this purely internal, invisible process as a diffusely indivisible stage of thinking. Everything depicted rushes by and constantly changes in the author’s mind. The described images remain at the projective level and are verbalized through semantically coloured vocabulary. Thus, the connection between reality and the text in the recipient’s mind occurs at the projective level, representing an objective imitation of reality, while its meaning appears in an explicit formation at the conceptual level.

3.2. Modification of the OWN – ALIEN antithesis revealed through a HEART – MIND contradiction

In the second plot modification, OWN is the Homeland (‘home’, ‘native walls’), and THE ALIEN is abroad. The LYRICAL CHARACTER is forced to leave the native places as a result of the war (and, accordingly, the sides of the MIND – HEART contradictions). In the poem “I have nowhere to run...” by Dmytro Usenko, the motif of rejection by the LYRICAL CHARACTER of the opportunity to leave Ukraine, his small and large Homeland is reflected utilizing rhetorical questions in the structure of the poem, realizing the circular composition: “Куда бежать? Мне некуда бежать! ... – Куда бежать? Мне некуда бежать!... Мне некуда бежать! Я остаюсь!” – “Where to run? I have nowhere to run! ... – Where to run? I have nowhere to run!... I have nowhere to run! I’m staying!”. Such a structure of the poem emphasizes the definiteness of the answer to the question that is completely identified with an Author’s opinion.

The similar unambiguity of assessments in some poems is explained through the exclamation: (“I have nowhere to run...” by Dmitry Usenko), “I’m staying at home!” (by Valerii Serov), “I will stay here...” (“I stay!” by Bohdana Tomenchuk), Don’t call me abroad...” (by Serhii Shelkovy), as well as epithets expressed by some textual antonyms that permeate the entire work: OWN/HEART – “здесь, старая черешня, пранный дух”/”here, old cherry, spicy spirit” (“Езжай в Европу или Палестину...”/ “Go to Europe or Palestine...” by Tatiana Okusheva): “Я тут умру и лягу в эту землю, и с ней сольюсь. Надолго. Навсегда” / “I will die here and lie down in this Earth and merge with it.// For a long time. Forever; and THE STRANGE/MIND („там, новый дом, за кордон, Польша, Чехия, Дания, Европа”/”there, a new home, abroad, Poland, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Europe”).
3.3. Modification of the antithesis OWN – ALIEN revealed by a contradiction VIEW – REALITY

The third and most prominent modification delves into the theme of surprise and pain caused by the war between the Slavic “brotherly” peoples. This theme is expressed through the antithesis of “OWN – ALIEN,” representing the contrasting sides of the VIEW – REALITY contradictions. It shows the immense mental strain and the unexpected betrayal of a “former brother,” leading to heartbreak. Poems such as “Листівка з Києва” (“Card from Kyiv”) and “Маску зірвала Москва” (“Moscow ripped off the mask”) by Aleksandr Irvanets capture this sentiment.

In this context, OWN represents false notions about the Russian people. The war in Ukraine has a uniquely complex character. Both sides speak the same language, which is the native language of many Ukrainian people. The invaders were brought up on the same stories, literature, films, and heroes as the Ukrainians. It makes the situation even exceptionally difficult and tragic. The Ukrainian civilians are killed by rockets launched from neighbouring Russian territories, where their relatives live. What was once brotherhood and friendship has unexpectedly turned into heartlessness and aggression, when some of yesterday’s Russian friends are now watching with satisfaction on TV as Ukrainian women, children, and the elderly are suffering.

The poem “Гостомель – Київ” by Andrey Gryazov emphasizes this by portraying the destructive consequences of war and the resilience of Gostomel in saving Kyiv. “Градов ревущий смертельный каскад, // Словно эхом советским... // Здесь, где цветущий Бучанский сад // Кладбищем стал вселенским. // Но судно вражье село на мель, // Ад не бывает раем. // Мир спасает сейчас Гостомель. Гостомель Киев спасает”/ „Roaring deadly cascade of Grads, // Like an echo Soviet... // Here, where the blooming Buchansky garden has become a universal cemetery. // But the enemy’s ship has run aground, / Hell cannot be a paradise. // The world is saving Gostomel now. Gostomel will save Kiev” (“Gostomel – Kyiv” by Andrey Gryazov).

On the other hand, ALIEN/REALITY embodies the true essence of the Russian people and the country itself, as depicted in Tatyana Voltskaya’s poem “Фашисты стреляют по Харькову” (“The fascists are shooting at Kharkiv”). The use of the term “fascists” associated with violence, the horrors of war, and a cruel enemy reinforces this opposition. The evaluative characteristics assigned to each paradigm further enhance the contrast, as the “fascists” speak the “native language”, intensifying the emotional turmoil: “Фашисты стреляют по Харькову, ... Но слово летит над выстрелами \| Родное – сума схожу я?” // “Fascists are shooting at Kharkiv,\| Native – am I going crazy?”.

The notably frequent use of allusions and antonomasia in the poems indicates the shared Soviet past of the two peoples, which contributes to the
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tragedy of emotional experiences. For instance, Lyudmila Nekrasovskaya’s poem “Профессор Преображенский” (“Professor Preobrazhensky”) makes a brief reference to Mikhail Bulgakov’s well-known novella “Heart of a Dog”. This allusion serves as an allegory of the Communist revolution and exposes the inconsistencies of the Soviet system. The rhetorical question posed by the LYRICAL CHARACTER/author, “How can a dog become a man?” accompanied by associations of a “wild beast” and a “dog” about modern Russia, conveys a strongly negative assessment. The poem concludes with the antithesis: “Нельзя никогда приводить в свой дом // И нужно всегда на цепи водить” // “You must never bring it to your house // And you must always lead it on a chain”), further emphasizing the rejection.

Similarly, Mykhailo Letskin in his poem “У військовій однострій вдяглася Україна” (“Ukraine got dressed just in the military”) draws attention to the shared history and traditions of both Ukrainian and Russian peoples. The oxymoron “вечно живые” (“alive forever”) highlights the collective memory of the fallen heroes in the Second World War. However, when intersecting with the evaluative paradigm expressed by the hidden comparison (“В бліндажі , в мавзолеї / In the dugout, in the mausoleum”), it acquires a negative associative-evaluative characteristic. This is achieved through paronymic attraction, where the contextual meaning is revealed by relating “KREMlin” to “CREMatorium”. The repetition of the word “way” further emphasizes this contrast.

The poem by Anna Koteneva, “Do Russians want wars?” makes use of background knowledge to perceive its allusive nature. The poem references the famous 1961 work by Russian (then Soviet) poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, which became the text for the legendary song performed by Mark Bernes, proclaiming the USSR as an advocate for peace. However, the meaning of the catchphrase-rhetorical question has transformed, depicting the Russian soldier as a cruel aggressor rather than a noble liberator. This shift in meaning reflects the ongoing war in Ukraine and the condemnation of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s actions.

The quantitative indicator of the poems written in the Ukrainian and Russian languages, along with macaronic verses, serves as a significant measure. The substantial number of macaronic verses underscores the tragic impact of the unexpected Russian aggression and disillusionment, evoking a profound sense of shock due to the betrayal of a country where many Ukrainians have relatives and share a common history, culture, education,
and values. On the one hand, these factors effectively demonstrate the bilingualism of the authors and readership. On the other hand, the use of the Ukrainian language as the opposition to Russian reflects the inclination of Ukraine’s Russian-speaking population towards national self-identification. The use of Ukrainian words in the poems written mainly in Russian signifies their desire to refuse to employ the Russian language that is now associated with the enemy and violent aggressors.

Tab. 2
The quantitative measure of the language used in the poems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of the analyzed poems</th>
<th>The poems in Ukrainian</th>
<th>The Poems in Russian</th>
<th>Macarone verses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>79 poems / 100%</td>
<td>39 / 50%</td>
<td>36 / 45%</td>
<td>4 / 5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4. Analysis of the composition of lexical paradigms

As the analysis showed, the composition of lexical paradigms that form the hyper antithesis OWN – ALIEN turns out to be largely stable. For example, at the conceptual level, the paradigm NATURE connected with the MOTHERLAND paradigm explicates an unequivocal positive assessment, selfless love for the native land and people.

Though the majority of the poems are characterized by the high level of identification of the LYRICAL CHARACTER with an Author, we can find poems where the theme of love for the Motherland, and the theme of war are revealed through stories “about others”, an appeal to them. It turns out something similar to the frames of a short documentary film, recorded through a poetic text (RAIKA). Indicative in this sense is the poem by Semyon Gubnitsky “Possible! Possible!”. It is indicative that the associative circle of lexemes that are part of the lexical paradigms ENEMY/THEY in the overwhelming majority of poems (53 poems) explicate a negative associative-evaluative characteristic. Thus, the lexical paradigm of the ENEMY is represented by a wide range of expressive-emotional vocabulary (“подлый москвин, сусід-людоїд, змій, супостат, Чудо-Юдо беззаконне, Лихо, посланники ада и зла...” / “mean Muscovite, neighbour-cannibal, snake, adversary, Miracle of Yudo lawless, the evil, messengers of hell and evil, etc.”), swear words (“уроды, подонки, сво-лочи”/“freaks, scums, bastards”), epithets (“подлый мир”, вражье судно, черный тиран, хищный карлик, народ без совести и чести”/“vile world”, enemy ship, black tyrant, predatory dwarf, people without conscience and honour”), as well as neologisms (“орки, рашисты, путлер”/“orcs, russists, putler”). Among the neologisms, it is significant to single out the portmanteau words, which are coined by blending two other words into a new one, for instance, “рашисты” (the “rushists/russists”) as a blend of “Russians” and
Having appeared because of the mixing of two surnames “Putin” and “Hitler”, the word “putler” is based on metaphorical antonomasia. The use of lowercase lettering to represent a proper name emphasizes the generalization of fascist, hateful or cruel behaviour. The lexical unit “putler” emphasizes emotionally coloured negative characteristics demonstrating a capacious description of a morally and intellectually flawed non-human.

The use of the Latin script letter Z as one of the main symbols painted on all the Russian military vehicles has become a sign of support for the invasion and is closely associated with “swastika” – Z-wastika. Russian film critic A. Dolin, whose door was marked with the symbol, compared the ‘Z’ to the zombie action-horror film World War Z (2013) and described the Russian army and pro-war activists as “zombified” (Gershkovich 2022). Thus, the use of cacography, such an intentional violation of the graphical shape of words (e.g.: “раzzия”, “руzzкий”, “рашизм” and “голодат”, “дьявольский Зnak”) intensifies the emotionally coloured meaning of the Russian enemy. The next nickname with an explicit evaluation for ‘руzzких’ comes from the word ‘орки’ going back to the English lexeme ‘orcs’ which means a fictional humanoid monster like a goblin that was brought into modern usage by the fantasy writings of J. R. R. Tolkien.

It seems indicative of the lexical and stylistic analysis of the use of the lexeme “brother”, which occurs 16 times in 9 poems. It is noteworthy that the word “brother” in Explanatory Dictionary of Russian by S. Ozhegov (Ozhegov 2014: 63) is interpreted as „the son of the same parents or one of them concerning their other children” and carries a positive associative-emotional assessment. At the same time, in the analyzed cycle of poems, this lexeme, in combination with the evaluative paradigm, reveals a sharply negative assessment of the LYRICAL CHARACTER, thereby representing the ENEMY paradigm. So, the poem by Natalia Neverova “Well, my “Russian brother?””, realizing the ANTITHESIS-CONFLICT, in which the motive of anguish and pain from the unexpected aggression of the Slavic “fraternal” people prevails, is revealing. Thus, the “Russian brother” kills his Ukrainian brother, who is represented in the poem by paraphrasing “native blood”. The tragedy of the situation is enhanced by rhetorical questions and exclamatory constructions.

«Ну что, мой «русский брат»!
Пришёл меня убить?
Убить родную кровь
Всего лишь по приказу.
Как будешь с этим жить?»...
«Видьрайте свои очи!!!!!»

“Well, my “Russian brother”!
Came to kill me?
Kill native blood
Just by order.
How are you going to live with it?”
“Open your eyes!!!!”

As well as the use of macaronic verses in which the Russian and Ukrainian languages deliberately intermingle to strengthen the opposition of the
former VIEW about the “fraternal people” and the cruel and disappointing REALITY. Thus, the ENEMY paradigm consists of Russian-language vocabulary that describes the former REPRESENTATIONS of the Lyrical Character (“Вы террористы, брат, Убийцы! Палачи! Бомбят рашисты все...” /“You are terrorists, brother, Killers! Executioners! Russists are all bombing ...”). At the same time, the Ukrainian-language component of the ENEMY paradigm (“путлер, рашисти, стара нацистка, орки-фашисти, груз-200” /“putler, russists, old Nazi, orc-fascists, cargo-200”), intersecting with the EVALUATION paradigm, through metaphors and explicitly coloured vocabulary with the ENEMY paradigm, explicates a sharply negative assessment and emphasizes the unambiguity of the situation in the eyes of a LYRICAL CHARACTER (e.g.: “Я проклинаю шкуру российского нациста, который приезжает в Украину убивать!” / “I curse the skin of a Russian Nazi who comes to Ukraine to kill!”).

Paradigm RELIGION mainly appears as a prayer for help (“Prayer to the higher powers” by Glib Sitko, e.g.: Miracle-Juda Lawless, it is for God in them, So neither is he afraid of Hell, nor human judgment?), faith in justice (“Forgive me” by Bohdan Tomenchuk, e.g.: “Forgive me, innocent victims // And forgive me, my God, - I pray... // For all human beings and Your Son”), for help from heavenly Powers (“We were waiting for spring...” by Andriy Pidgorny, e.g.: “Get up, people, for the holy struggle, // And may God help us. // When we are all brave and friendly, no enemy will defeat us!”). War makes everyone feel their mortality (“life is like a lottery ticket”), nothingness in outer space. Awareness of the brevity of life and mortality makes one appreciate every second of life, and the desire to live it with dignity, according to God. The analysis of biblicisms (“Помилуй их и мя, Господь, всесильный...” /“Have mercy on them and me, Lord, almighty ...”) serves as semantic conductors between the text and the history of the life of an earthly person ... (“Speech of a lawyer before Putin’s execution” / «Выступление адвоката перед казнью путина» by Александра Приймака: “Золотое правило: «Не делай другому того, Что ты не хотел, чтобы сделали с тобой” /“The golden rule: “Do not do to another what you did not want to be done to you”).

The specific use of pronouns in the poems brings the closeness between the author and the lyrical character. The opposition between the pronouns ‘you/yours/they/their’ (Russian) and ‘I/me/my’ (native) reveals the definite point of view declared by the author/Lyrical Character.

The paradigm of TEMPORARY LOCATORS plays a significant role, which, on the one hand, shows the turbulence of the ongoing hostilities and changes (“кожен день мотує вибухами”// “в країні щодня смерть”/“skin day is shaking with vibes” // “there is death every day in the country”), on the other hand, underline the confidence of the evaluations (“long ago”/“давно”) It is the LOCATION Paradigms (names of cities, streets, districts) in combination
with the ASSESSMENT paradigm and the TIME LOCALIZERS paradigm that enhance the degree of documentary-like reliability of the events described.

Explicitness and unambiguity of assessments define the frequency variation of repetitions in various forms: polysyndeton, epiphora, anaphora and gradation (e.g.: “I have terrible nightmares” by Oleksiy Tul’pa / Олексій Тюльпа Мне снятся жуткие кошмары), “Мне снятся «смерчи», «искандеры» И «грады», «грады», «грады», «грады»; Мне сняться мой горящий город, / Мне снятся мёртвые солдаты, Мне снятся ужасы террора, Мне снятся брошенные хаты” // „I dream of “tornadoes”, “Iskanders”/ And “/hail/grads”, “hail/grads”, “hail/grads”, “hail/grads”; / I dream of my burning city, / I dream of dead soldiers, I dream of the horrors of terror, / I dream of abandoned huts”.

In the context of a narrative full of dramatic scenes that portray the tragic destinies of the Ukrainian residents during the initial weeks of the war, the utilization of exclamatory constructions takes on a heightened expressiveness of the LYRICAL CHARACTER completely identified with the author, e.g.: “For a predatory dwarf” / „За хищного карлика” by Oleksiy Tul’pa (“Захищеного карлика мерзкую плешь, // За первый их шаг, преступивший рубеж – // Зарежь!!!”// “For a predatory dwarf, // I hate baldness, // For their first step, crossing the border – // Kill!!!”); “For Ukraine, I’ll raise the last!” / “Задвину останній за Україну!” by Anton Derbilov (“За донец, дружину // За мамку, за сваху // За Харків любімий // За Волноваху // За дітчик під завалами // За вой сирен над підвалами // За Київ і Мелітополь // За Марік та кожен тополь // За кожну людину // За кожну дитину // За дівчину Україну!!! [in Ukrainian] / “For my daughter, my wife // For my mother, for my matchmaker // For my beloved Kharkiv // For Volnovakha // For the children under the rubble // For the wail of sirens above the basements // For Kyiv and Melitopol // For Marik and every poplar // For every person // For every child // For wonderful Ukraine!!!”). Thus, these poems possess an inherent characteristic of emotionally-coloured constructions, manifested through the use of exclamatory constructions and imperative mood forms, often combined with prepositional for-phrases with expressing favour or support. Such linguistic devices effectively depict the subjective attitude of the author towards the subject of discourse within the poetic text, reflecting the author’s position and evaluation of the subject matter.

4. Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates the predominant autobiographical nature of poetic works, substantiated by the proximity between the author and the LYRICAL CHARACTER within the composition. This literary technique im-
parts the poem with qualities akin to a diary or memoir, thereby establishing a compelling sense of authenticity. The depth of mental and physical pain is effectively conveyed through the deliberate use of anaphora, repetition, gradation, and oxymoron.

Furthermore, the presence of military processes within society enhances the linguistic reflection of native speakers, leading to the emergence of linguistic innovations such as neologisms, occasionalisms, erratives, terminological units, and other stylistically coloured vocabularies. These linguistic features not only serve as linguistic reflections but also include evaluative commentaries on the chosen words or expressions, contributing to the nuanced and expressive language usage.

Moreover, the infrequency of implicit assessments indicates a lack of detailed discussion regarding the raised issues and limited uncertainty in the evaluations. Additionally, the inclusion of distinctive text messages in the form of rhetorical questions, appeals, exclamations, and reasoning, often directed towards the mother or friends, introduces the reader to the non-social aspects of the LYRICAL CHARACTER’s personality. This facet delves into the individual’s inherent sinfulness, fears, and experiences as a mortal being, providing a profound understanding of human nature.

The analyzed poems, written by amateur authors experiencing all the horrors of the war, demonstrate the emergence and legitimization of a completely opposite negative perception towards Russia, characterized by the loss of former illusions and stereotypes about the “fraternal” nation. Simultaneously, a stable stereotype is being formed, within which Russia is positioned as an aggressor country, carrying elements of fascism, and posing a real threat to the values of freedom and democracy in European countries.

**Primary sources**


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