

**REGISTER IN UKRAINIAN NEWS ANCHOR PUBLISHED BY TIMES RADIO:
IMPACT ON AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING**

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini meneliti dampak register yang digunakan oleh pembawa berita Ukraina dalam siaran Times Radio terhadap keterlibatan dan pemahaman audiens. Register merujuk pada variasi penggunaan bahasa yang dibentuk oleh konteks sosial, mencakup nada, gaya, dan pilihan leksikal. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Register (1988) dari Biber sebagai kerangka teoretis untuk mengidentifikasi fitur linguistik dan dimensi stilistik yang membedakan penyampaian berita formal, teknis, kolokial, dan percakapan. Dengan metode kualitatif dan teknik dokumentasi, penelitian ini menganalisis korpus siaran berita Ukraina untuk mengkaji bagaimana berbagai register memengaruhi persepsi dan pemahaman audiens. Analisis difokuskan pada bagaimana pilihan linguistik—seperti kepadatan informasi, keterlibatan naratif, dan spesifisitas referensial—mempengaruhi keterlibatan audiens. Selain itu, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi apakah register tertentu lebih efektif dalam meningkatkan pemahaman serta apakah pilihan register bervariasi pada topik atau pembawa berita tertentu. Dengan menerapkan pendekatan Biber, penelitian ini bertujuan menjelaskan bagaimana register berfungsi dalam media berita Ukraina dan bagaimana register membentuk penerimaan kognitif dan emosional audiens. Temuan penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang bagaimana register linguistik memengaruhi konsumsi berita serta memberikan wawasan berharga bagi organisasi media untuk mengoptimalkan strategi komunikasi dan meningkatkan keterlibatan audiens dalam lingkungan media yang multibahasa dan dinamis.

Kata Kunci: Register, Analisis Multi-Dimensi, Berita Ukraina, Times Radio, Keterlibatan Audiens

Abstract

This research investigates the impact of register, as utilized by Ukrainian news anchors in broadcasts presented by Times Radio, on audience engagement and comprehension. Register refers to the variation of language use shaped by social context, encompassing tone, style, and lexical choices. The study applies Biber's Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Register (1988) as the theoretical framework to identify linguistic features and stylistic dimensions that distinguish formal, technical, colloquial, and conversational news delivery. Using qualitative methods and documentation techniques, this research analyzes a corpus of Ukrainian news broadcasts to examine how different registers influence audience perception and understanding. The analysis focuses on how linguistic choices—such as informational density, narrative involvement, and referential specificity—affect audience engagement. Furthermore, it explores whether specific registers are more effective for enhancing comprehension and whether register choices vary across topics or individual anchors. By applying Biber's approach, the study seeks to clarify how registers function in Ukrainian news media and how they shape the audience's cognitive and emotional reception. The findings are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of how linguistic registers influence news consumption, providing valuable insights for media organizations seeking to optimize communication strategies and improve audience engagement in a multilingual and dynamic media environment.

Keywords: Register, Multi-Dimensional Analysis, Ukrainian News, Times Radio, Audience Engagement

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era characterized by a rapidly evolving media landscape, news consumption has undergone a profound transformation, largely driven by technological advancements and the growing dominance of digital platforms. Today, audiences no longer rely solely on traditional television broadcasts; instead, they engage with news interactively, consuming it across social media, online streaming, and on-demand platforms. This shift underscores the pivotal role played by language in shaping how news is framed, understood, and remembered. As Fairclough (1989) emphasizes, language functions as a form of social practice—reflecting and reproducing power relations while shaping the ideologies that inform everyday social life. In this context, news anchors emerge as powerful mediators between events and the public, using carefully chosen linguistic strategies to inform, persuade, and foster emotional alignment with their viewers.

Ukraine's media landscape provides a particularly compelling site for examining these dynamics. In recent years, the country's news environment has been shaped by the dual pressures of wartime reporting and digital transformation, with outlets like Times Radio—one of Ukraine's leading news platforms—playing a crucial role in delivering timely, authoritative, and widely accessible content. In such high-stakes reporting, the language used by news anchors becomes more than just a stylistic choice; it carries significant implications for audience comprehension, trust, and engagement. Anchors must navigate a delicate balance between formality and relatability, neutrality and empathy, expertise and accessibility—often within the same broadcast.

This balance is best understood through the concept of register. As Biber (1988) defines it, register refers to systematic variation in language use determined by specific situational contexts and communicative purposes. It encompasses vocabulary, syntax, tone, and discourse organization. Biber's Multi-Dimensional Analysis (MDA) reveals how clusters of linguistic features correspond to underlying communicative functions, such as the contrast between highly informational, technical language and more involved, interpersonal discourse. For instance, academic prose often includes dense nominalizations like "the implementation of the policy" and passive constructions such as "it is suggested that..." to emphasize objectivity and precision, while conversation tends to feature personal pronouns (I, we, you), contractions (it's, don't), and discourse markers like "you know" or "I mean" to maintain interactional involvement. Broadcast news

anchors similarly navigate between formal reporting marked by complex noun phrases and explicit reference to institutional sources, and conversational strategies that introduce hedging, rhetorical questions, or simplified syntax to increase accessibility and engagement.

As Van Dijk (1998) notes, media discourse plays a central role in shaping public understanding, reproducing dominant narratives, and legitimizing certain ideological positions. When Ukrainian news anchors employ formal registers, they project authority and institutional credibility; when they switch to colloquial or conversational tones, they foster intimacy and relatability, aligning emotionally with their audience. Technical registers, while signaling expertise, risk alienating non-specialist viewers unless balanced with clear, accessible explanations. These linguistic strategies thus operate at the intersection of power, ideology, and audience engagement, shaping not only what information is conveyed but also how it is received and interpreted.

Despite extensive research on register variation in academic and institutional contexts (Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2004) and on the ideological dimensions of media discourse (Fairclough, 1995), little attention has been devoted to Ukrainian news anchors in the digital sphere. This gap is significant because the communicative demands of wartime reporting differ sharply from those of routine journalism. In crisis contexts, anchors must simultaneously provide factual clarity, uphold credibility, and evoke empathy—all while addressing diverse audiences who may include both local and international viewers. Times Radio's YouTube broadcasts exemplify this complexity: videos such as "Ukraine Hits Russian 'Supply Chains' in Preparation for a Long Fight" require anchors to explain military developments in precise terms while maintaining a tone that reassures, informs, and emotionally engages audiences who may feel directly or indirectly affected by the conflict.

More recent studies have reinforced the impact of language style on audience engagement and ideological framing. Berger, Moe, and Schweidel (2023), for example, analyzed over 600,000 digital reading sessions and found that language with lower cognitive load and emotionally resonant wording—such as hope or mild anxiety—significantly increases audience attention span, whereas overly complex or neutral language risks disengagement. Ding, Horning, and Rho (2023) examined broadcast transcripts from CNN and Fox News between 2010 and 2020, showing that divergent register choices in news coverage forecast broader ideological polarization in social media discourse. These findings emphasize that register is not just a stylistic choice; it actively shapes how

audiences align ideologically and remain engaged with media content.

However, despite these contributions, there remains a significant gap in research focusing on how news anchors manage this register variation in high-stakes or crisis contexts. Most studies on broadcast news language have examined either scripted reporting or relatively stable news environments, without considering how anchors must rapidly shift between informational precision and empathetic engagement during unfolding events. Furthermore, while Biber's multi-dimensional framework has been applied to academic, conversational, and some journalistic contexts, its potential to map the fluidity of live news discourse—where technical jargon, institutional language, and conversational fillers coexist—remains underexplored.

This research therefore seeks to fill that gap by analyzing how news anchors employ different registers in broadcast journalism, identifying the linguistic patterns, contextual factors, and audience effects associated with these choices. By applying Biber's Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Register (1988) alongside Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, the study investigates not only what types of registers are used, but also why they are selected in specific contexts and how they shape audience comprehension and trust.

The objectives of this study are: (1) to identify the types of registers used by Ukrainian news anchors in delivering news, (2) to examine the cultural, social, and contextual factors that influence these register choices, and (3) to analyze how register variation affects audience perception—whether they see the anchor as authoritative, credible, approachable, or empathetic. By addressing these questions, the research contributes theoretically by extending register analysis into the field of wartime digital journalism, and practically by offering insights for news organizations on how to refine language strategies to engage, inform, and sustain trust among their audiences.

Ultimately, language in Ukrainian broadcast news is not simply a vehicle for reporting facts; it is a mechanism for framing national narratives, fostering resilience, and negotiating public understanding during moments of social and political upheaval. By investigating how registers function within this context, this study highlights the subtle but powerful ways in which news anchors mediate between complex events and the audiences who must make sense of them.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative descriptive research design aimed at exploring how linguistic register influences audience engagement and comprehension in

Ukrainian news broadcasts. Rooted in naturalistic inquiry and interpretive analysis, the study examined the language style choices of Ukrainian news anchors within their sociocultural and communicative context. Specifically, the research focused on register variation as theorized by Biber's Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Register (1988), which categorizes linguistic features based on their functional distribution across spoken and written modes.

The data source of this research was a YouTube news broadcast published by Times Radio entitled "Ukraine Hits Russian 'Supply Chains' in Preparation for a 'Long Fight' | Kateryna Malofieieva" (June 15, 2023). The broadcast was selected purposively because it represented authentic wartime news discourse, used English as the medium of reporting, and contained register features relevant to the digital journalism context.

The data consisted of transcribed utterances from the chosen news broadcast that contained notable register features such as formal, technical, colloquial, and specialist language. To complement the analysis, publicly available audience responses in the video's comment section were observed to identify general patterns of engagement and comprehension, without directly interacting with commenters.

Data were collected through documentation techniques, which included systematically observing, transcribing, and categorizing the linguistic features of the broadcast. The researcher served as the primary research instrument, selecting data based on criteria such as the presence of domain-specific vocabulary, shifts in formality, and interactional features (e.g., greetings, transitions). Supporting resources, including previous studies and guidelines on broadcast language, were consulted to strengthen the analytical framework.

The data analysis followed an interpretive process guided by Biber's Multi-Dimensional framework. Linguistic features were coded according to their register dimensions (e.g., informational vs. involved production, narrative vs. non-narrative discourse, explicit vs. situation-dependent reference). These features were then mapped onto matrices to trace how different register dimensions co-occurred in the news broadcast. Audience comments were contextually interpreted to understand how register features might relate to engagement and comprehension.

This approach directly addresses the research gap highlighted in the introduction, where previous studies have overlooked how anchors manage rapid shifts between technical precision and empathetic engagement in high-stakes wartime reporting. By applying Biber's Multi-Dimensional Analysis to a digital broadcast context, the study moves beyond scripted or routine journalism and demonstrates how linguistic strategies operate in real time to balance authority, clarity, and emotional resonance.

This alignment with Fairclough's (1989) notion of language as social practice allows the study to reveal not only what registers are used, but why they emerge in specific moments of crisis communication and how they subtly shape audience trust, comprehension, and ideological alignment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research reveals that register variation in the Ukrainian news anchor's discourse reflects both institutional constraints of news broadcasting and audience-oriented strategies to enhance accessibility. Drawing on Biber's (1988) Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Register, the news script shifts along dimensions of involved versus informational production, shared versus specialized knowledge, and highly planned versus spontaneous speech. While the anchor maintains the expected neutrality of institutional news delivery, moments of conversational and informal style soften the authoritative tone, strategically balancing credibility with engagement. The following illustrates how different registers emerge in the anchor's delivery.

a. Formal Register

- (1) *"...so Ukraine is now advancing and taking small parts of the territory over there... we still cannot consider this as a massive counter-offensive... the defense minister has said that extremely fierce battles are raging in parts of Ukraine..."*

As illustrated in example (1), the anchor adopts a formal register, evident in phrases such as "massive counter-offensive," "advancing," and "extremely fierce battles." According to Biber (1988), formal informational discourse relies heavily on abstract nominalizations "counter-offensive", institutionally sourced verbs of reporting "has said", and low use of personal pronouns. The syntax is declarative and compact, avoiding interactive markers or emotional evaluation. Lexically, terms like "fierce battles" and "territory" belong to a political-military semantic field, reinforcing a tone of seriousness.

This formal structure aligns with Biber's informational production dimension, where the anchor acts as a neutral transmitter of facts. For the audience, such formality enhances credibility and neutrality, presenting the anchor as a professional intermediary between officials and viewers. However, as Biber notes, this also increases social distance, making the delivery authoritative but less personally engaging.

b. Technical Register

- (2) *"...we still cannot consider this as a massive counter-offensive, it's a reconnaissance by the military, reconnaissance by action, what we see now on almost all the parts of the front line... officials of Melitopol said that part of the railway, which was very crucial for the Russian supply, was damaged..."*

In example (2), this excerpt demonstrates a technical register, with domain-specific military terminology: "reconnaissance by action," "front line," "railway crucial for supply." Biber (1988) identifies such topic-restricted lexicon as typical of registers that prioritize precision over interpersonal accessibility. Structurally, the sentence is dense with nouns "counter-offensive," "reconnaissance," "front line", reducing conversational flow in favor of informational efficiency.

By mentioning Melitopol without further explanation, the anchor presupposes audience familiarity with the conflict zone, signaling what Biber calls restricted audience targeting. For informed viewers, these terms enhance trust in the anchor's expertise, but for casual audiences they raise the cognitive load, potentially reducing comprehension. Thus, the technical register serves an institutional purpose of accuracy and authority, but risks alienating lay viewers.

c. Colloquial Register

- (3) *"Good morning to you... good morning... what is the situation there at the moment... yeah, there were explosions... at the moment it's not clear about casualties or damages in Kiev as well... but so far I hope that nothing serious happened overnight..."*

From example (3), the anchor shifts to a colloquial register, marked by the friendly greeting "Good morning to you" and the affective reassurance "I hope that nothing serious happened overnight." According to Biber (1988), such interactive features belong to the involved production dimension, which reduces social distance and builds audience rapport.

Lexically, phrases like "nothing serious happened" function as downtoning strategies, softening the severity of the conflict for viewers. The hedge "not clear about casualties" introduces epistemic uncertainty, making the delivery feel more conversational and less rigidly scripted.

This aligns with what Biber calls conversationalization in media discourse, a deliberate strategy to humanize formal reporting.

For the audience, this register provides emotional accessibility. It helps balance the impersonal nature of hard news with a moment of interpersonal connection, enhancing engagement without undermining professionalism.

d. Informal Register

- (4) *"...for Ukraine it's very important to have advanced, to advance basically on the previous direction because in this way uh Ukrainian forces can cut the supply of their um ammunition for Russian forces and there was some explosions uh yesterday um so so some, so some officials of the basically official Ukraine and officials of Melitopol..."*

Based on example (4), this line clearly exhibits an informal register, dominated by speech fillers "uh," "um," "so so", repetitions, and false starts "so so some, so some officials...". Biber (1988) associates such features with spontaneous, unplanned speech, which is highly involved but low in structural planning. Unlike the polished formal lines, this hesitating delivery reveals the anchor's real-time cognitive processing while summarizing complex updates.

Grammatically, the structure is fragmented, lacking the compact declarative form typical of formal reporting. While such informality could undermine perceptions of authority if overused, in this case it humanizes the anchor, signaling authenticity and immediacy. It demonstrates the blended mode of live reporting, where even professional anchors must occasionally improvise beyond the script.

e. Specialist Register

- (5) *"...now the defense minister said that Ukrainian forces managed to advance near Bakmoot in the East and Zapparisha in South... what regards Krugery which the night before was attacked by missile... they participated in Hearthstone Liberation so they prove themselves..."*

According to example (5), this excerpt illustrates a specialist register, where the anchor references proper nouns—Bakmoot (Bakhmut), Krugery (Kryvyi Rih), Zapparisha (Zaporizhzhia), Hearthstone Liberation—without elaborating their significance. Biber (1988) explains that specialist registers presume shared knowledge with a specific audience segment. These place names and operation titles act as indexical markers,

situating the report within a very localized geopolitical context.

For informed viewers who follow the war closely, such references provide precision and validation of expertise. For casual viewers, however, the lack of context may reduce comprehension, creating an information gap. This aligns with Biber's finding that specialized lexis simultaneously strengthens solidarity with niche audiences while excluding broader ones.

The anchor's shifting register is shaped by several situational factors. Institutional expectations of neutrality and professionalism drive the use of formal and technical registers. Topic specificity, especially in military reporting, requires specialized terminology like "reconnaissance by action" or "front line." Audience engagement prompts occasional colloquial greetings and hedging, softening the otherwise rigid tone. Live broadcast spontaneity accounts for fillers and repetitions "um... so so...", reflecting moments of unscripted speech.

Biber's theory supports this dynamic view of register: rather than being fixed categories, they are fluid adaptations to mode, topic, participant relations, and communicative purpose. In live news, the anchor must simultaneously fulfill informational accuracy and interpersonal connection, producing a hybrid style that moves along multiple dimensions.

The varied registers directly shape how audiences perceive both the anchor and the news content. The formal register enhances credibility and institutional authority but feels detached. The technical register signals expertise, building trust among informed viewers but raising a barrier for lay audiences. The colloquial register fosters rapport and reassurance, while the informal register adds a layer of authenticity and immediacy. The specialist registers build solidarity with niche audiences but risks excluding those unfamiliar with geopolitical details.

Together, these shifts confirm Biber's multidimensional view of register as a situated social practice—the anchor adapts language to balance factual reporting with audience accessibility. The result is a complex, layered communication strategy that maintains both authority and relatability in a live, high-stakes news context.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the variation of registers used by Ukrainian news anchors in Times Radio broadcasts functions as a strategic linguistic tool to balance authority, clarity, and audience engagement in wartime reporting. Five types of registers—formal, technical, colloquial, informal, and specialist—were identified, each serving distinct communicative purposes shaped by institutional expectations, topic specificity, live

broadcast spontaneity, and the need to sustain viewer trust. The formal and technical registers enhanced credibility and precision through neutral tone and domain-specific terminology, while the colloquial and informal registers reduced social distance, fostering relatability and emotional connection. Specialist registers addressed informed audiences but risked limiting accessibility for broader viewers. These findings align with Biber's (1988) Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Register, demonstrating that register is a fluid adaptation shaped by communicative goals, participant relations, and situational context. Ultimately, the study reveals that language in Ukrainian broadcast journalism operates not only as a medium for reporting facts but also as a powerful means of framing narratives, shaping public understanding, and sustaining trust during crisis communication, reinforcing Fairclough's notion of language as social practice while extending Biber's framework into digital, high-stakes news environments.

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of this research, future studies are encouraged to further explore register variation in wartime digital journalism by incorporating multimodal elements such as gesture, intonation, and visual framing to better understand how these features reinforce or soften the communicative impact of linguistic choices. Comparative cross-cultural analyses could also reveal whether similar register strategies are employed by news anchors in different geopolitical contexts or whether they are highly context-dependent. Expanding the application of Biber's Multi-Dimensional Analysis (1988) to a larger corpus of live broadcasts would provide a more comprehensive mapping of register fluidity across various topics, while integrating Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis would uncover the power relations and ideological implications embedded in register choices. Practically, news organizations could use these insights to develop training programs that help anchors balance technical accuracy with audience accessibility, fostering both trust and emotional engagement.

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