

VALENTIN VASILE¹

WAR CORRESPONDENTS REPORTING DURING THE ROMANIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (1877-1878): BETWEEN NEUTRALITY AND ENGAGEMENT

Abstract. The Romanian War of Independence, part of the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), occurred during journalism professionalization and the rise of war correspondents, establishing their professional status. This study examines how neutrality and engagement are balanced in war correspondents' reports on the Battle of Grivitsa, a critical stage of the Third Battle of Plevna (August 30/September 11, 1877). Employing a pragma-enunciative analysis, I examined the discursive mechanisms enabling war correspondents to uphold factual accuracy while integrating subjective interpretation to varying degrees. Based on a corpus of war correspondences published between August 20 and October 3, 1877, in European newspapers – *Le Temps*, *L'Indépendance Belge*, *Românul*, *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, *Pester Lloyd*, *The Daily News*, and *The Daily Telegraph* – this study analyses seven reports from correspondents stationed at Plevna, who provided firsthand accounts of the fighting as eyewitnesses. The findings reveal an ongoing oscillation between professional standards and personal perceptions, as correspondents bear the responsibility of accurately documenting the dehumanizing realities of war. This research contributes to understanding how war reporting – whether neutral or engaged – shapes public perceptions of conflict, while also providing insights into the development of professional practices in journalism and the ethical dilemmas journalists face in high-risk environments.

Keywords: war reporting, enunciative practices, pragma-enunciative analysis, subjectivity

¹ <http://orcid.org/0009-0000-5856-8350>, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies, valentin.vasile@unibuc.ro

1. Introduction

The Romanian War of Independence, an integral part of the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), unfolded at the height of the “golden age” of war correspondents, when around 125 journalists, painters, and photographers from various countries reported from the battlefields with notable freedom and prestige. The estimated figure of approximately 125 accredited war correspondents is drawn primarily from contemporary sources. One of the most important is the *Journal of Combat Actions of the Russian Army on the Balkan Front*, which, on June 22, 1877, records a total of 64 correspondents accredited to the General Headquarters of the Russian Army of Operations in the Balkans. These included Russians, Britons, Americans, French, Belgians, Germans, Austrians, Italians, one Spaniard, and one Swede, as well as two Romanians – the photographers Carol Popp de Szathmáry and Franz Duschek (Collection, 1898, pp. 172-174). It should be noted that this source provides no details about Russian or foreign correspondents reporting from the Caucasian front.

Added to this number are the correspondents accredited by the Romanian armed forces, who crossed the Danube in August 1877 to take part in the combat operations to capture Plevna at the request of the Russian side. Among them were Romanian correspondents, such as journalists Alexandru Ciurcu and Ion C. Fundescu, as well as photographers, graphic artists, and painters – including Nicolae Grigorescu and Sava Henția – alongside foreign correspondents like Friedrich Lachmann and Émile Galli, amounting to approximately 16 additional correspondents, without counting those already included under Russian accreditation (Vitcu, 1988; Ștefan, 1989; Ionescu, 2002; Petrescu, 2021; Szabo, 2023). The total number of correspondents accredited by the Russo-Romanian side thus amounts to approximately 80 journalists, photographers, graphic artists, and painters. This figure is confirmed by the American military attaché Francis Vinton Greene, who accompanied the Russian troops throughout the war. Greene acknowledges the estimated number of correspondents derived from Russian sources in his memoirs. In his book *The Russian Army and Its Campaigns in Turkey in 1877-1878*, published shortly after the war in 1879, Greene notes that on the Russian side, “about seventy-five correspondents began the campaign” (Greene, 1879, p. x). In his subsequent work, *Sketches of Army Life in Russia*, published in 1880, Greene further details the activity of the war

correspondents accredited by the Tsarist General Headquarters, indicating that “something over eighty correspondents joined the army..., about one-third of whom were Russians” (Greene, 1880, p. 164).

The number of correspondents accredited by the Ottoman side is likewise estimated based on primary sources, which allows us to approximate the presence of about 30 foreign war correspondents on the Balkan and Caucasian fronts and representatives from the main twelve Ottoman newspapers. Among the key primary sources are the *Telegram Collection: Russian Atrocities in Asia and Europe During June, July, and August 1877*, edited in 1877 by A.H. Boyajian, and official reports and correspondence signed by foreign correspondents. Essential reference works on the functioning of the Ottoman press during the war of 1877-1878, such as Yalman’s *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by Its Press* (1914), also provide important insights.

By accompanying the troops during military operations and acting as eyewitnesses on the battlefield, the war correspondents strengthened the credibility of their reports and earned personal notoriety among readers (Palmer, 2005, pp. 36-43). Their dispatches on the military operations in the Balkans circulated widely, reaching an international readership through numerous newspapers and illustrated periodicals. Among these, prominent publications from Austria-Hungary, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States dedicated significant space to covering the developments of the war. While some outlets had correspondents accredited to the Russian, Romanian, and Ottoman military headquarters, others published war reports reproduced from foreign newspapers or drew on information provided by press agencies.

This war continues to provide valuable insights into the evolution of journalistic practices and ethics, particularly regarding the balance between neutrality and engagement in reports from war correspondents. When analysing the press coverage of this war, this balance helps trace the roots of enduring trends in modern journalism, including the practices of responsible engagement, consciously adopted by war correspondents when confronted with death and devastation on the battlefields (Kellner, 2008; Tumber, 2013).

Building on McLaughlin’s (2016, p. 66) observation of “the development of a new style of journalism” in the late 19th century, marked by an emphasis

on accuracy and credibility, this research examines how war correspondents accredited to opposing sides navigated the interplay between neutrality and engagement during the Battle of Grivitsa, a key moment of the Third Battle of Plevna (August 30/September 11, 1877).

This major battle came after two successive Russian defeats against the well-fortified Ottoman defensive lines at Plevna. This prompted the Russian imperial authorities to request Romanian military involvement south of the Danube, beginning on August 20 / September 1, 1877. As a result, a Romanian contingent of 40,000 troops was integrated into the Western Army, made up of both Russian and Romanian forces, and placed under the effective command of Prince Carol of Romania, with Russian General Pavel Dmitrievich Zotov serving as chief of staff (Hitchins, 2023, pp. 58-60).

As a large-scale confrontation decisive for the outcome of the war, the Battle of Plevna – including the battle for the capture of the Grivitsa redoubts, which demanded a heavy blood sacrifice from Romanian troops – drew intense public attention and was extensively covered by war correspondents accredited to the belligerent sides. This phase of the war attracted one of the largest concentrations of war correspondents present on the front lines, some of whom were wounded or even killed in action. Referring to those accredited by the Russo-Romanian side, F.V. Greene (1880, pp. 166-167) observed: “Of these eighty correspondents, about half were at the front throughout the summer, and the greater part of them exposed themselves with the utmost fearlessness in battle and endured the greatest hardships without flinching. [...] For the other half, the comforts of Bucharest possessed the greater attraction. They visited the army occasionally, visited the camps and hospitals, studied the Russian character, and returned to Bucharest to digest their studies. But when the winter came on, the ardor of nearly all was benumbed, and their interest began to flag.”

By applying the pragma-enunciative analytical framework articulated by Johannes Angermüller and Alain Rabatel, the study aims to identify the enunciative, linguistic, and discursive indicators of neutrality and engagement in frontline reports, examining how correspondents manage the balance between these two approaches in their coverage of the Battle of Grivitsa. For this purpose, the article focuses on wartime dispatches

reporting on this battle, produced by British correspondents for leading British newspapers – *The Daily News* and *The Daily Telegraph* – as well as by correspondents from major continental European publications, such as the French newspapers *Le Temps*, the Belgian newspaper *L'Indépendance Belge*, the German-language *Pester Lloyd*, and the Romanian newspapers *Românul* and *Gazeta Transilvaniei*.

To this end, the research addresses the following questions:

RQ1: What markers of neutrality and engagement can be identified in frontline reports on this battle?

RQ2: How do the differences or similarities in approaches to neutrality or engagement in war correspondence reflect the reporting styles specific to Anglo-Saxon, continental European, and Romanian publications?

The structure of the study reflects the research approach: it begins with a literature review on neutrality and engagement in press reporting, followed by the theoretical and methodological frameworks of pragma-enunciative analysis, and concludes with a practical application of its analytical tools to examine selected war correspondences.

The findings are interpreted to highlight the differences observed in war reporting across the analysed newspapers and their theoretical and practical implications.

2. Literature review on neutrality in war reporting

In the second half of the 19th century, various approaches to journalistic neutrality emerged, notably in the United States, setting a trend that would later influence the European press. This period marked a significant turning point in journalism, as both editorial offices and individual journalists became increasingly committed to neutral reporting and the objective news presentation.

McLaughlin (2016) highlights early attempts to balance neutrality and engagement in war reporting, tracing them back to press coverage of events during the Canadian Rebellion (1837-1838). This effort is attributed to J.G. Bennett, the publisher of the *New York Herald*, “who emphasized

coverage on reporting and gathering facts and information rather than sensationalism and propaganda” (McLaughlin, 2016, p. 36).

These early developments laid the groundwork for ongoing debates on neutrality and engagement in journalism. As the field evolved, the emphasis increasingly shifted toward accurately delivering factual information, free from bias or promoting particular viewpoints or agendas. As a result, distinct professional practices emerged and matured, including systematic topic research, rigorous source selection and verification, and the balanced presentation of multiple, often conflicting perspectives on reported events. Gradually, neutrality became recognized as both a best practice and a professional standard for journalists, serving as a guiding principle and an aspirational ideal. Though difficult, if not impossible, to fully attain, it played a key role in shaping journalistic ethics rooted in transparency and accountability.

Scholars like Tuchman (1972), Gauthier (1991), Chalaby (1998), Schudson (2001), Ferenczi (2003), and Parent (2021) view neutrality in journalism as a key aspiration, integral to journalistic objectivity or synonymous with it (Gauthier, 1991, p. 109; Parent, 2021, pp. 60, 68-77). The enunciative strategies of neutrality, which are central to this concept, include respect for facts, impartiality, honesty, balance, accuracy, truthfulness, completeness, consistency, fairness, emotional detachment, and responsibility, all aimed at separating reported reality from the reporter’s subjective views, which may reflect a degree of engagement (Tuchman, 1972, pp. 662-678; Ferenczi, 2003, pp. 197-198). These norms have, in turn, significantly influenced press discourse, shaping editorial styles in news journalism, striving to provide the public with “an impersonal and distant account of reality” (Chalaby, 1998, pp. 128-133). Journalists aim “to separate facts from values and to report only the facts” (Schudson, 2001, p. 150), avoiding personal opinions and biases. This includes fairly representing all sides, presenting news without commentary or manipulation, and maintaining a neutral, unemotional tone. Parent (2021) examines different approaches to journalistic neutrality, contrasting the Anglo-Saxon model with European perspectives, mainly French and German. He highlights the challenges neutrality faces in journalists’ activities and the differences in expected practices such as impartiality, neutrality, and integrity across various professional codes of ethics. Parent (2021, pp. 21-47)

notes that while the Anglo-Saxon approach emphasizes neutrality and factual reporting, European models often prioritize the pursuit of truth.

Neutrality in journalism is demonstrated by adherence to professional ethical norms that guide occupational routines, even amid criticism or pressure (Tuchman, 1972, pp. 664-678; Tumber & Prentoulis, 2003, pp. 215-216, 221-221). Tumber (2020, p. 381) noted that “the academic debate has centred on the position that some journalists, in covering the dramatic effects of war actions, have adopted a critical position of denunciation of the witnessed events”. At the same time, he mentions that “whereas neutrality was sometimes perceived as unbearable or even undesired, taking a moral position during war times was usually counterbalanced by a professional requirement (and normative view) of keeping objectivity in the coverage of news.”

As firsthand witnesses to battlefield atrocities, war correspondents face the temptation to adopt a moral stance, engaging in what is known as “journalism of attachment” (Bell, 1998; Tumber, 2011, 2013; McLaughlin, 2016). Additionally, journalism of attachment has been criticized for potentially leading to inaccuracies and for being perceived as “self-righteous” and “moralizing” (McLaughlin, 2016, pp. 40-55).

The opposition between neutrality and engagement suggests that neutrality relates to universally valid ideas, while engagement reflects individual perceptions. This dynamic reveals a temptation in journalistic practice towards subjectivity – blending facts and opinions – and engaged reporting, often viewed as a patriotic act. Additionally, it includes evolving forms of journalism of attachment, driven by the war correspondent’s experience “as a witness to atrocities and injustices” (Tumber, 2020, p. 380).

These perspectives highlight how ideals of journalistic neutrality are often challenged in times of war. As Kellner (2008, p. 298) points out, “there are always complex relations between journalism and patriotism in which «objectivity» and conventional journalist standards are often strained to serve partisan ends”. In this context, Ward (2008, p. 142) argued that “the traditional emphasis on reporting skills and fact gathering” alone is insufficient for objective journalism serving the public. He suggested that “the imperative to «seek truth and report» – a major principle of journalism codes of ethics – is thereby transformed,” so that reporting is no longer seen “as «stenography of fact» but rather as an

informed interpretation of events in a larger cultural context.” Ward (2008, p. 145) further observes that, in wartime, certain news organizations may abandon their commitment to impartiality, favouring patriotic narratives. However, he suggests that responsible global journalism should reject these tendencies and provide independent, balanced reporting.

Analysing the evolution of ethical concerns of journalism from the early 19th century to the present, Ward (2020, p. 311) concludes that “professionalism and objectivity were meant to assure a skeptical public that journalists would use their power to publish responsibly and to ward off government regulation”. Ward (2020, p. 316) shares Tumber’s (2013) view that the professional standard for contemporary war reporters has shifted from neutral objectivity to a form of “responsible engagement” with events and issues. This aligns with Mercier’s argument (2019, p. 4) that “strict neutrality is an unattainable human ideal”, and that journalistic integrity relies on practices such as source verification, citation, presenting diverse perspectives, and minimizing subjective interpretations.

As journalists are increasingly regarded as active interpreters rather than mere observers (Berkowitz, 2020, p. 176; Baden, 2020, pp. 231-232), debates on journalistic norms have evolved, reconfiguring the traditional emphasis on neutrality, foregrounding engagement while redefining the balance between factual verification and interpretative assertion. Neutrality in war reporting results from maintaining an unbiased stance, unaffected by personal feelings or opinions, and refraining from favouring any side of the story. To achieve this, war correspondents strive to be impartial, precise, and accurate, presenting facts objectively without personal bias (Ward, 2020, pp. 308-318).

Based on the theoretical benchmarks outlined above, the following tables provide a synthesized overview of the main traits identified in the literature as either defining (see *Table 1*) or supporting and associated with journalistic neutrality (see *Table 2*).

While some traits are consistently recognized as core indicators of journalistic neutrality (e.g., factuality, impartiality, balance, fairness, non-engagement, emotional detachment), others are more context-dependent and may only indirectly reinforce neutrality (e.g., clarity, completeness, consistency, use of quotations, independence), or be simply associated with it (e.g., honesty, responsibility).

The selection reflects a variety of theoretical perspectives, disciplinary traditions, journalistic and sociological approaches, and the historical contexts in which different scholars have conceptualized neutrality in journalism.

Table 1

Defining Traits of Journalistic Neutrality: Synthesized Perspectives

TRAIT	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR(S)
Factuality / Respect for Facts	Considered a fundamental professional value in journalism, factuality is maintained by adhering strictly to verified facts and avoiding the presentation of unverified information, speculation or distortion as truth, ensuring the reliability of frontline correspondences.	Tuchman, 1972; Bell, 1998; Schudson, 2001; Ferenczi, 2003;
Impartiality	Balanced perspectives reveal impartiality, the absence of biased language, favouritism toward any side, and equal representation of conflicting views. By reporting without taking sides and ensuring equal representation of all viewpoints, war correspondents avoid allowing personal opinions to influence their reports. It is viewed as a conceptual synonym for neutrality.	Gauthier, 1991; Bell, 1998; Schudson, 2001; Tumber, 2020; Parent, 2021;
Balance	Balance of information in war reporting is achieved by ensuring that all sides of a story are fairly represented, preventing bias, and providing a comprehensive view of the issue. To this end, war correspondents give each side an equal opportunity to present their case, providing each viewpoint with appropriate coverage. Balance as a concept significantly overlaps with Presentation of Conflicting Possibilities.	Tuchman, 1972; Gauthier, 1991; Parent, 2021;
Fairness	War correspondents strive to be fair in their reporting. By treating all subjects of the story justly and giving them an opportunity to respond to allegations or statements made about them, they help achieve balanced reporting. Fairness is inherently connected to both impartiality and balance.	Bell, 1998; Schudson, 2001; Ward, 2008; Parent, 2021;

Accuracy	Accuracy is denoted using verifiable facts, clear sources, and precise data in analyzed war correspondences. To ensure all information reported is correct and precise, without exaggeration or omission, war correspondents double-check their facts and sources to avoid errors, which helps maintain the credibility of the frontline correspondences. Accuracy is connected to factuality, focusing on precise and correct details.	Gauthier, 1991; Schudson, 2001; Ward, 2008; 2020;
Supporting Evidence / Corroborations	Including commonly accepted facts to support assertions enhances the credibility of the report. War correspondents use documented sources to provide reliable evidence that supports key statements and validates claims, thereby ensuring the accuracy of reported facts. This concept is also directly tied to factuality.	Tuchman, 1972; Parent, 2021;
Presentation of Conflicting Possibilities	Ensuring the presentation of multiple viewpoints is crucial to avoid bias and maintain balance. War correspondents aim to present opposing sides of an issue and conflicting perspectives or hypotheses, even when they cannot immediately verify every assertion without endorsing any particular viewpoint. This concept is a concrete application of balance.	Tuchman, 1972; Parent, 2021;
Emotional Detachment	Maintaining an emotionally neutral tone and not letting personal feelings influence the report, war correspondents present an unbiased and objective account of the story to the readers. It can be viewed as an indication of non-engagement.	Tumber & Prentoulis, 2003; Ferenczi, 2003; Parent, 2021;
Non-Engagement / Retraintism	Avoiding conflicts of interest and social or political engagements that could compromise journalistic neutrality, credibility, and reputation, war correspondents maintain a professional distance from the subjects they report on. This distance should be distinguished from emotional detachment, as it is more rooted in professional ethos.	Chalaby, 1998; Parent, 2021;

Verification / Fact-checking	Verification is carried out by cross-checking facts and sources to confirm the reliability of information. This is especially crucial in war reporting to avoid the pitfalls of political and military propaganda by the parties involved in the conflict. It is a fundamental procedure for ensuring factual neutrality.	McLaughlin, 2016; Tumber, 2020; Ward, 2020.
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The defining traits identified in *Table 1* – such as factuality, impartiality, balance, fairness, non-engagement, and emotional detachment – are widely recognized across scholarly traditions as essential elements of journalistic neutrality. These traits reflect how correspondents position themselves in relation to the events they report, avoiding personal or ideological involvement. Authors like Gauthier (1991), Bell (1998), Schudson (2001), and Ward (2020) have emphasized these dimensions as core components of neutral reporting. Equally important are accuracy, verification, supporting evidence-corroborations, and the presentation of conflicting possibilities, emphasized by Tuchman (1972), Gauthier (1991), Chalaby (1998), Ward (2008), McLaughlin (2016), and Tumber (2020), to sustain an evidence-based approach in war reporting.

In contrast, *Table 2* includes traits that, while not defining neutrality per se, support or reinforce it in specific contexts. These include clarity, completeness, consistency, structured information sequence, use of quotations, transparency, independence, honesty and responsibility. These traits contribute to the coherence, credibility, and professional ethics of reporting, indirectly sustaining neutrality. They reflect diverse perspectives, from the sociological analyses of Tuchman (1972) and Schudson (2001) to the journalistic and ethical approaches advanced by Tumber (2011, 2013, 2020) and Ward (2008, 2020), highlighting that neutrality is not merely a fixed professional standard but also a dynamic, context-dependent ideal (Mercier, 2019).

While these supportive and associated traits are not constitutive of journalistic neutrality, they help uphold the standards and expectations of neutral reporting in practice, thereby contributing to its practical application and public credibility.

Table 2

Supportive and Associated Traits of Journalistic Neutrality: Synthesized Perspectives

TRAIT	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR(S)
Clarity	Clarity is achieved by communicating information in a clear, straightforward manner that is easily understood by the audience to avoid misinterpretation. By reducing ambiguity, clarity supports journalistic neutrality, as it minimizes the risk of biased or unintended readings that could distort the intended message.	Fowler-Watt & Allan, 2013; Parent, 2021;
Completeness	Completeness results from thorough topic coverage, including all relevant information and addressing various aspects of an issue. War correspondents strive to provide a full account of the story without omitting significant details in their reports, ensuring the public gets a complete understanding of the issue. This comprehensive approach reinforces journalistic neutrality by avoiding selective reporting and presenting a balanced view of events.	Mercier, 2019; Parent, 2021;
Consistency	Consistency is achieved by applying the same standards and rigor to all stories, regardless of subject matter. This maintains logical coherence and narrative integrity across reporting and helps uphold journalistic neutrality by avoiding double standards.	Fowler-Watt & Allan, 2013; Mercier, 2019;
Structured Information Sequence	Structured information sequence involves organizing information in a logical and hierarchical order, typically using the inverted pyramid style where the most important facts are presented first, followed by less critical supporting details. This format contributes to journalistic neutrality by prioritizing factual content over commentary, minimizing subjective framing, and ensuring clarity for the audience.	Tuchman, 1972; Parent, 2021;
Quotations	Using direct quotes from diverse sources supports the objective presentation of multiple viewpoints, helping to avoid personal framing or filtering. This approach enables war correspondents to maintain journalistic neutrality by refraining from inserting personal opinions into their reports.	Tuchman, 1972; Gauthier, 1991; Parent, 2021;

Transparency	Transparency stems from being open about the sources and methods used in gathering information. It functions as a methodological practice that reinforces the ethical foundation of journalistic neutrality.	Macnamara, 2020; Parent, 2021;
Independence	Journalistic independence is achieved by keeping reporting free from external pressures or affiliations, including political, corporate, or personal interests that could compromise editorial autonomy. As a core professional value, independence supports journalistic neutrality without necessarily defining or guaranteeing it.	Schudson, 2001; Kellner, 2008; Ward, 2020;
Honesty	Though it is a broad moral value, honesty can be considered an underlying ethical principle that supports the pursuit of journalistic neutrality. Being truthful and transparent in their reporting to maintain the integrity of their correspondences and uphold journalistic credibility and reputation, war correspondents strive to report information as accurately as possible, avoiding any distortion of facts.	Gauthier, 1991; Parent, 2021;
Responsibility	Responsibility to the public involves acknowledging and promptly correcting errors to maintain the credibility of the journalist and the publication. Although journalistic responsibility is a broad ethical concept that does not directly define neutrality, it establishes the essential context in which journalistic neutrality is exercised and assessed.	Gauthier, 1991; Tumber, 2013; Ward, 2008; 2020.

Moreover, clarity, completeness, consistency, and a structured sequence of information, as outlined by Tuchman (1972), Fowler-Watt and Allan (2013), Mercier (2019), and Parent (2021), enhance the coherence and readability of war correspondence. In turn, transparency, independence, honesty, and responsibility – discussed by Gauthier (1991), Bell (1998), Schudson (2001), Tumber (2013), Ward (2020), and Parent (2021) – support journalistic ethics and a commitment to truth.

While neutrality remains a fundamental criterion for good journalism – achieved through an unbiased stance in reporting, free from personal feelings or favouritism – war correspondents strive, or should strive, to maintain precision and accuracy by presenting information in a manner devoid of bias (Parent, 2021, pp. 70-74). However, this aspiration can only be

sustained if supported by a set of specific traits that help anchor journalistic neutrality in practice. Without these traits of neutrality – whether defining, supportive, or associated – war correspondence may drift toward partiality and engagement. While not all of them are universally recognized as intrinsic to neutrality (for instance, a journalist may be honest or independent yet still adopt a biased stance), collectively they shape an approach to reporting that aspires to be unbiased, fair, accurate, responsible, and trustworthy – respecting the written word, the reading public, and, above all, the truth. This remains both an ethical ideal and a professional standard, particularly challenging yet essential in war reporting.

3. Theoretical framework: Pragma-enunciative analysis-tools

The theoretical framework outlined below appears particularly useful for the present article, which investigates how war correspondents balanced neutrality and engagement in their reports, within a historical context marked by tensions, constraints, and even physical risks, including injury or death.

War correspondences, as verbal productions, are enunciative acts that include an identifiable enunciator, a recipient, a time and place of utterance (such as front lines), a material support, a clear communicative function (informing or influencing), and an insertion into a socio-discursive space (such as the press or public opinion). For studying these texts, considered as any other verbal productions, Maingueneau argues that “the concepts of communication setting and scene of enunciation prove more appropriate” (2014, p. 149). These notions include elements such as the purpose of communication, the status of the partners, spatial and temporal circumstances, the medium, text organization, linguistic resources, and the enunciator’s positioning in relation to the event and audience (Maingueneau, 2014, pp. 147-154).

To identify the features of neutrality and engagement in war correspondence, the analysis of enunciative structures using linguistic tools can offer valuable insights into the correspondent’s attitude towards the events they report. This attitude is conveyed through discourse (war correspondence) and becomes visible through the process of modalisation,

explored by Vion (2004, pp. 96-110; 2007, pp. 193-224) in its enunciative, discursive, and dialogic dimensions. Vion (2011, pp. 235-258) highlights how modalisation not only signals the speaker's stance towards the subjectivity of statements but also reveals the interplay between modalisation, dialogism, enunciative polyphony, and strategies such as reported discourse, represented discourse, and enunciative effacement.

In a similar vein, Franck (2022, pp. 1-12) addresses aspects related to the classification of reported speech forms – direct, free direct, indirect, and free indirect – by adopting an enunciative and pragmatic perspective that considers both the speaker's communicative intentions and the contextual factors influencing the choice of reported discourse. This approach also acknowledges the speaker's positioning, which is shaped by communicative choices and the interactional context.

Demonstrating the omnipresence of subjectivity in language, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2009) argues that the production of a message is never the result of entirely free lexical or syntactic choices. These choices are shaped by various constraints – contextual, thematic, and rhetorical – as well as by the speaker's cultural competencies and ideological affiliations. Such factors influence enunciative positioning and are revealed through various subjectivity markers, such as deixis (personal, temporal, spatial), modalisers (nouns, affective, descriptive, and evaluative adjectives and adverbs, verbs, figures of speech), personal opinions, and the use of reported speech, thus paving the way for a pragma-enunciative approach to textual analysis (pp. 23-43; 48-210; 236-333).

In the case of war correspondents, their enunciative positioning is strongly influenced by the context in which they operate – reporting from unstable, high-risk environments – and by the discursive norms of war journalism, which impose specific thematic and genre-related constraints. These interrelated dimensions are particularly relevant for a pragma-enunciative analysis, which identifies enunciative markers and positions, and examines how the correspondent's subjectivity, expressed through engagement and positioning, shapes their reporting.

The pragma-enunciative analysis contextualizes statements based on who is speaking, when, and where, relying on enunciative pragmatics “as a methodological orientation to account for how written texts are contextualized in the act of reading” (Angermüller, 2011, p. 2992). It

examines enunciative markers – formal indicators such as deictics, logical-argumentative operators, nominalizations, suffixes, and typographical signs – that reveal the perspectives of enunciators, their varied voices in the text, their stance toward the objects of discourse, as well as their neutrality or engagement (Angermüller, 2014).

Central to Rabatel's enunciative theory, the concept of "point of view" ("point de vue" – PDV) refers to "any statement that predicates information about any object of discourse, providing not only details about the object (related to its denotation) but also insight into how the enunciator perceives the object, thereby expressing a PDV" (Rabatel, 2019, p. 170). The PDVs reveal the enunciator's stance toward the object of discourse, the roles of the enunciators, as well as modality and intentionality, through qualifications, modalisations, opinions, and value judgments (Rabatel, 2004, pp. 4-12).

The point of view (PDV) is closely tied to the propositional content (CP), which conveys the enunciator's stance toward the objects of discourse. As Rabatel explains, "propositional contents [...] also indicate the enunciator's position (axiological, ideological, rational, emotional, etc.) toward the objects of discourse" (Rabatel, 2016, p. 137). Thus, CP can reflect a neutral or subjective and engaged positioning through choices of tense, aspect, determiners, lexical categories, and modalisation.

Rabatel (2012, pp. 23-34) argues that statements do not merely convey information about the object of discourse but also reflect the enunciator's perspective on that object, as well as other, sometimes opposing, viewpoints, where the enunciator takes on a different role – observer, second enunciator, or modal subject. This perspective shift is linked to linguistic empathy, understood as the enunciator's ability to adopt another's point of view through autodialogism or heterodialogism. As Rabatel explains, "linguistic empathy involves putting oneself in another's place" (2016, p. 141), enabling the first enunciator to reposition himself and express his interpretations from a different angle.

Engagement in press narratives is rooted in the inherent subjectivity of discourse, manifested through lexical, syntactic, and organizational choices. It is expressed via personal opinions, subjective language, first-person narratives, and structural decisions that reflect the enunciator's stance. These markers of subjectivity "testify to a deliberate position

taken in constructing a report of words" (Rabatel, 2016, p. 132). They contribute to the affirmation of a point of view (PDV), which "in the linguistic sense, does not necessarily involve the formulation of an opinion; there is [point of view] whenever the choice or order of the terms of a proposition denotes the subjectivity of the enunciator, even in the absence of judgment or comment" (ibid.). These enunciative markers are not limited to "explicit words, thoughts, or comments but emerge at the level of perceptions and actions, which are imbued with intentionality and must be accounted for in the analysis of their discursive construction" (ibid., p. 144). As formal indicators, enunciative markers reveal the 'how' of discourse, guiding readers to interpret both who is speaking and how the discourse is structured.

These theoretical perspectives support a pragma-enunciative approach that reveals how subjectivity is encoded in the analysed propositional content. This enables an assessment of neutrality or engagement as reflected in the correspondents' linguistically constructed stances.

4. Methodological framework

Building on the theoretical foundation presented in Section 3 and drawing on the pragma-enunciative analytical perspective, the present study applies this framework to examine the discursive positioning of war correspondents in their battlefield reports and, where relevant, of the voices embedded in reported or represented speech. This perspective guided both the interpretative procedures applied to the selected war correspondences and the construction of the corpus.

4.1. Interpretation grid

The interpretation grid employed in this study (see *Table 3*) is designed to identify enunciative positions marked by neutrality or engagement in referenced samples of war reporting. It is structured around key analytical categories drawn from the pragma-enunciative framework developed by Angermüller (2011, 2014) and Rabatel (2004, 2012, 2016, 2019).

At the core of the interpretation grid lies the distinction between the *prime locutor* (L1) – typically the war correspondent – and the *prime enunciator* (E1), understood as the discursive instance that assumes responsibility for the utterances. The relationship between E1 and the objects of discourse – primarily detailed descriptions of battlefield actions – reveals the enunciative stance, which may range from neutral to overtly engaged, depending on the linguistic markers and rhetorical strategies employed (Angermüller, 2011, pp. 2995-2999; Rabatel, 2012, pp. 23-42; 2019, pp. 166-168).

The *point of view* (PDV) reveals the presence or erasure of the enunciator's intentionality and subjectivity, as manifested through linguistic markers that shape the representation of battlefield events and influence the reader's interpretation of the narrated combat scenes – what Rabatel refers to as propositional content (CP). A neutral PDV often reflects *enunciative effacement*, where the war correspondent's position regarding the narrated events is minimized through impersonal constructions and the avoidance of value judgments. This is visible in the use of passive voice, absence of personal pronouns, and preference for non-axiological descriptors (Rabatel, 2004, pp. 3-17; 2019, pp. 168-185).

Markers of subjectivity include deixis (personal, spatial, temporal), modalisers (such as modal nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, and figures of speech), and evaluative language. Their presence signals varying degrees of engagement, while their absence supports a neutral stance. These elements help determine the point of view (PDV) and assess whether the propositional content (CP) of the war correspondence reflects neutrality, characterized by impersonal constructions, passive voice, neutral language, and enunciative effacement, or engagement, marked by axiological elements, explicit judgments, or subjective involvement. Engagement becomes apparent when correspondents adopt clear stances, expressed through first-person pronouns (singular or plural), intention markers, verbs of judgment and belief that suggest emotional involvement, and affective or evaluative adjectives reflecting ideological positioning (Rabatel, 2004, p. 4; Angermüller, 2014, pp. 1-6).

Another major category is *polyphony*, which refers to the coexistence of multiple voices in the text. This includes *reported discourse*, where a *second locutor* (L2) and a *second enunciator* (E2) appear. The relationship

Finally, the grid considers *heterodialogism*, which concerns how different voices interact within the discourse. By analysing how these elements manifest in war correspondents' texts, the study assesses the balance between neutrality and engagement, highlighting the subtle discursive strategies used to build credibility, distance, or involvement. These strategies, grounded in linguistic choices and the interplay of multiple voices, allow the first enunciator (e.g., the war correspondent) to express his battlefield assessments with nuanced subjectivity (Rabatel, 2016, pp. 141-148).

The Grid for Analysing Neutrality and Engagement in War Reporting
Based on a Pragma-Enunciative Approach,
According to Angermüller (2011, 2014) and Rabatel (2004, 2012, 2016, 2019)

THE PRIME LOCUTOR (L1) war correspondent	THE PRIME ENUNCIATOR (E1) in syncretism	THE ENUNCIATIVE POSITION IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTS OF DISCOURSE							Erased point of view Enunciative effacement
		THE POINT OF VIEW (POINT DE VUE - PDV) (the enunciator's subjectivity; a deliberate position)							
		MARKERS OF SUBJECTIVITY							
		THE ENUNCIATIVE MARKERS						OPINION (judgment or comment)	
		Personal deictics (pronouns)	Temporal deictics	Spatial deictics	MODALISERS				
			Modal nouns	Affective and evaluative adjectives	Modal adverbs	Modal verbs	Figures of speech		
POLYPHONY reported discourses									
THE SECOND LOCUTOR (L2) embedded locutor	THE SECOND ENUNCIATOR (E2) a quasi-takeover of the objects of discourse	THE ENUNCIATIVE POSITION IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTS OF DISCOURSE							Erased point of view
		THE POINT OF VIEW (POINT DE VUE - PDV) (the enunciator's subjectivity; a deliberate position)							
REPRESENTED DISCOURSES (in the pragma-enunciative and cognitive sense)		THE ENUNCIATIVE POSITION IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTS OF DISCOURSE							
THE PRIME LOCUTOR (L1)	THE PRIME ENUNCIATOR (E1)	THE SECOND ENUNCIATOR (E2)	E1 changes the enunciative position 'Linguistic empathy'						
	hetero-dialogism		THE POINT OF VIEW – RECONTEXTUALIZATIONS E1 puts himself in the place of the second enunciator					OPINION (judgment or comment)	
			THE ENUNCIATIVE MARKERS						

By analysing these linguistic indicators, we can assess the levels of neutrality and engagement in war reports, thus shedding light on the

enunciative strategies through which war correspondents discursively frame the battlefield events they witnessed firsthand.

4.2. Selection of the corpus

The corpus of this research consists of frontline reports published between August 20 and October 3, 1877 (equivalent to September 1 to October 15, 1877, according to the Gregorian calendar) in newspapers selected for their national and international prestige, editorial policies, circulation, and their ability to maintain accredited war correspondents at the front. These newspapers include: *Le Temps* (France), *L'Indépendance Belge* (Belgium), *Românul* (Romania), *Gazeta Transilvaniei* (published in Romanian in Austria-Hungary), *Pester Lloyd* (published in German in Austria-Hungary), *The Daily News*, and *The Daily Telegraph* (United Kingdom)².

For the pragma-enunciative analysis, one war correspondence was selected from each newspaper, chosen from the total number of correspondences recorded during the analysis period, as detailed by newspaper (see Table 4). These correspondences were transmitted by war correspondents accredited by the Russian (*Le Temps*, *The Daily News*), Romanian (*Românul*, *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, *L'Indépendance Belge*, *Pester Lloyd*), and Ottoman (*The Daily Telegraph*) military commands, as indicated in their texts.

The data selection criteria included identifying war correspondences based on the following: (1) correspondences written by correspondents stationed on the battlefield at Plevna; (2) correspondents who directly observed the fighting at Grivitsa as eyewitnesses; (3) correspondences transmitted to the editorial offices of the selected newspapers by post or telegraph; (4) those published within the specified period; and (5) correspondences explicitly marked as "From our special correspondent on the battlefield", "From our private correspondent on the battlefield", "Newspaper's private

² Western newspapers, *Le Temps*, *L'Indépendance Belge*, *Pester Lloyd*, *The Daily News*, and *The Daily Telegraph*, used the Gregorian calendar (New Style), the newspaper *Românul* used the Julian calendar (Old Style), while *Gazeta Transilvaniei* marked the dates in both calendars. Conversion of the Old Style (O.S.) dates to New Style (N.S.) is done by adding 12 days for the 19th century.

correspondence from the combat area” or equivalent formulations, given that, at the time, the systematic signing of war dispatches had not yet become a widespread journalistic convention – an aspect that makes it difficult to identify the authors of some reports accurately.

Table 4

**Corpus – War Correspondences: Total and Selected
for Pragma-Enunciative Analysis**

Total war correspondences by newspaper (20 Aug. – 3 Oct. / 1 Sept. – 15 Oct. 1877, O.S. / N.S.)	Selected correspondences for analysis	Date of report / Place of writing / Report attribution	Publication date and newspaper details
<i>Le Temps</i> 11	1	Sept. 18, 1877, In front of Plevna, from our special correspondent	Sept. 26, 1877, No. 6005, p. 2
<i>L'Indépendance Belge</i> 13	1	Sept. 11, 1877, Poradim, Private correspondence for <i>L'Indépendance</i>	Sept. 22, 1877, No. 265, p. 2
<i>Românul</i> 17	1	3/15 Sept. 1877 (O.S./N.S.), In front of Grivitsa, a private correspondence for <i>Românul</i>	Sept. 7, 1877, Year XXI, p. 1
<i>Gazeta Transilvaniei</i> 10	1	31 Aug. 1877 (O.S.), From the surroundings of Plevna, special correspondent of <i>Gazeta Transilvaniei</i> on the battlefield	Sept. 20/8, 1877 (N.S./O.S.) No. 70, p. 1
<i>Pester Lloyd</i> 24	1	Sept. 10, 1877, Grivitsa, From our special correspondent	Sept. 25, 1877, Evening Ed., No. 219, p. 1
<i>The Daily News</i> 42	1	Sept. 11, 1877, Before Plevna, from another special correspondent	Sept. 14, 1877, No. 9797, p. 5.
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i> 54	1	Sept. 6 to 14, 1877, Near Plevna, from our special correspondent	Sept. 19, 1877, No. 6955, p. 5

Although this study does not pursue a quantitative analysis of the war correspondences that appeared across the selected titles between August 20 and October 3 (O.S.) / September 1 and October 15, 1877 (N.S.), it is worth noting that the sample for pragma-enunciative analysis was drawn from a total of 171 dispatches published during the reference period, all of which met the criteria outlined above. This overall total includes only those correspondences originating from the Balkan theatre of operations, excluding reports on the fighting sent from the capitals of the belligerent states – St. Petersburg, Bucharest, and Constantinople – as well as from other European capitals. Moreover, correspondences transmitted by news agencies (e.g., *Havas*, *Reuters*, *Politische Korrespondenz*, *Wolff*, *Agence Générale Russe*), those republished from other newspapers, and official communiqués sent by the political and military authorities of the belligerent states were excluded.

5. Findings: pragma-enunciative analysis of each war correspondence

The pragma-enunciative analysis reveals how war correspondents depicted the war scene at Grivitsa during the Third Battle of Plevna by identifying neutrality markers and engagement in their reports.

5.1. The Battles of Plevna – Le Temps

Dated September 13, 1877, this report by *Le Temps*'s special correspondent in the Balkans appeared in issue no. 6005 of the newspaper, published on September 26, 1877, under the heading *The Battles of Plevna* and the note *In front of Plevna* (Figure 1), on page 2, without the correspondent's name being specified.

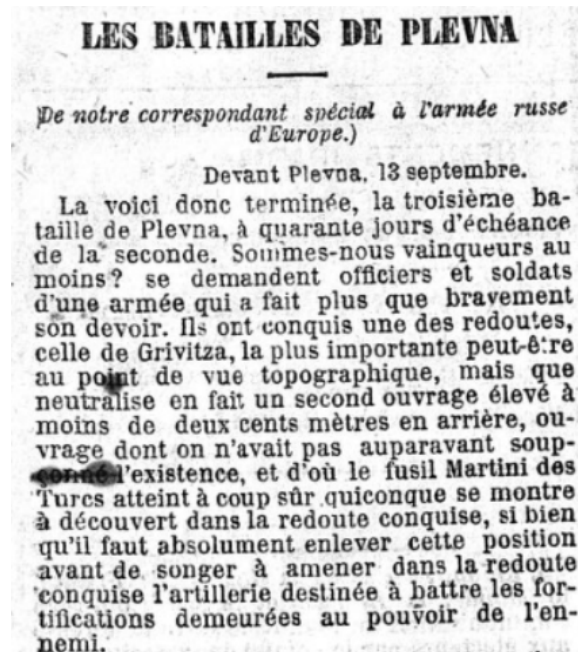


Figure 1. Opening of the war correspondence
(*Le Temps*, September 26, 1877)

As prime locutor, the war correspondent reports the events of the battle from the position of an eyewitness, with enunciative traces such as perceptual markers ("we heard," "we turned," "we could see"), spatial deixis ("the great redoubt of Grivitsa," "positions situated in front of the village"), and temporal deixis ("when on our right..."), highlighting his presence at the frontlines and the immediacy of action: "The disposition of the terrain prevented us from finding a favourable point to obtain an overall view of the attacks from the left. So, when on our right, we heard the burst of rifle fire from the attack of the centre, we turned at a trot to our observatory at the top of the great battery, from where we could see the attack on the great redoubt of Grivitsa and the positions situated in front of the village unfold. Unfortunately, we had to consider the horrible meteorological state of the atmosphere, and we only had an intermittent spectacle" (*Le Temps*, September 26, 1877, p. 2).

The correspondent provides a visual observation of the battlefield, noting both geographical markers and behavioural indicators to identify

troop positions and assess their conduct in the battle: "The Romanians occupy the far right of this line, and we were pleased to note that, after some oscillations denoting very excusable hesitations in a young army, the line of their fire is each time at the same height as that of the Russians" (ibid.). The correspondent's enunciative position is subjective, offering personal commentary on military tactics and battle outcomes. He employs various enunciative markers, including modalisers, such as adverbs, affective and evaluative adjectives, and verbs, which reveal his evaluations, assumptions, and attitudes toward the events being described: "**we were pleased** to note"; "**some oscillations** denoting **very excusable hesitations in a young army**".

Figures of speech are employed as well, such as metaphors ("a hail of projectiles", "concert of curses", "great baptism of fire"), hyperboles ("news flowed in all the rest of the night, but, alas! also the wounded"), to add depth by conveying emotions.

The text exhibits a degree of polyphony, incorporating the voices of other individuals through reported discourse. For example, it includes the direct speech of soldiers: "...there are also some Romanian soldiers struck, closer to the Russians than to their own ambulances. (...) « The fighting is hard », **they say**, « we have not yet been able to approach the redoubt, the two regiments have suffered horribly »" (ibid.). Similarly, the phrase "Are we at least victorious? **wonder** the officers and soldiers of **an army that has more than bravely done its duty**" (ibid.) introduces an enunciative polyphony by indirectly voicing the collective doubts and hopes of the troops. This reported speech weaves multiple perspectives into the correspondent's narrative, creating a rhetorical questioning that distances the narrator while conveying the uncertainty experienced on the battlefield.

Secondary locutors, specified by their function, provide insights into the performance of Romanian troops during this battle. The war correspondent conveys their observations and comparisons in reported speech: "The Romanians also seem to have honourably celebrated the great baptism of fire that their army is receiving. « They retreated at first, but then they fought like ours », **a non-commissioned officer tells me**. (...) The shooting from the centre weakens, and night has fallen, a damp, foggy and starless night, when **a young wounded officer** arrives and **tells us**: « The Grivitsa

redoubt is ours; it is within its walls that I was struck »" (ibid).

Descriptive elements (e.g., "parapets where the grass has not had time to grow", "embrasures so often breached", "light clouds of smoke", "lingering Russian riflemen") are also present providing a precise depiction of the situation: "The Turkish redoubt stands less than fifteen hundred meters away, with its parapets where the grass has not had time to grow, its embrasures so often breached by our guns, but always repaired by its defenders. A few light clouds of smoke barely surmount it, everything is finished on this side; on the left, a few lingering Russian riflemen are completing their retreat movement" (ibid.)

Of particular note, however, is the presence of affective modalisers (e.g., "horrible", "unfortunate") accompanying eyewitness descriptions: "I run to Radischovo, where I arrive around one o'clock. On the heights overlooking the village to the left are already lying one hundred and fifty or two hundred wounded, who are being transported as quickly as the limited number of available hands and stretchers at the divisional ambulance allow... At the bottom of the ravine, the scene is **horrible**: more than three hundred **unfortunate** soldiers, most of them from the 16th division, unable to go any further, have lain down on the rain-soaked ground waiting for means of transport" (ibid.)

This nuanced and compelling war report reflects the observable reality and the correspondent's perspective.

5.2. Romanian troops fighting at Grivitsa - *L'Indépendance Belge*

The newspaper *L'Indépendance Belge* no. 265, dated 22 September 1877, features on page 2 a report sent from Poradim on 11 September (Figure 2). Included in the *Affaires d'Orient* section and labelled as a *Correspondance particulière de l'Indépendance*, the text reveals the correspondent's enunciative positioning, which balances between a neutral stance and subjective engagement in depicting the Romanian troops' combat actions during the battle at Grivitsa.

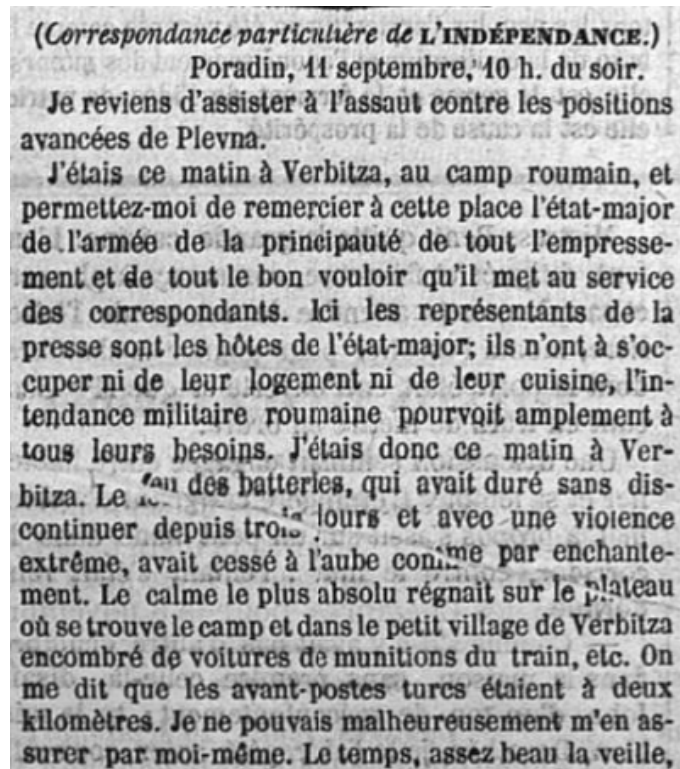


Figure 2. Opening of the war correspondence,
 (L'Indépendance Belge, September 22, 1877)

The correspondent establishes a direct connection with the readers, enhancing the narrative's authenticity. His personal account of his experience is tempered by precise descriptions of military events, aiming to provide a realistic representation of the situation on the ground: "**I return** to my observation post. The battle rages on. From all the embrasures of the redoubt, puffs of smoke rise. The crossfire must be causing terrible havoc in the ravine." (L'Indépendance Belge, September 22, 1877, p. 2).

The use of the first person introduces a personal point of view and emotional involvement in the events being reported: "**I have just witnessed** the assault on the advanced positions of Plevna."; "**I cannot tell you** what I felt at that moment."; "It was at this moment that **I could judge** the courage of which the Romanian soldier is capable. They hurled themselves forward with an irresistible fury" (ibid.).

The correspondent adopts the position of a privileged witness, relaying information from other sources, such as officers: **"I was still exchanging my impressions on this matter with an officer** from General Cernat's entourage...; They opened a terrible fire on our troops, **a wounded officer told me...**", which enhances the authenticity of his report. As Rabatel (2004, pp. 9-15) mentions, using reported speech is a strategic choice to lend authority and credibility to the information.

The selection of modality markers, such as belief and modal verbs, figures of speech, descriptive adjectives and adverbs, reveals the journalist's argumentative intent: "This silence was **terrifying, horrible...**"; The Romanian soldiers "were thrown forward with **irresistible fury**"; "The Turkish fire was becoming more and more intense..."; "The young Romanian army was about to receive its **baptism of fire**, a baptism, alas!, all too bloody" (ibid.).

The emotional registers imbued with discourse modalisation (e.g., "poor Romanian peasants", "incredible determination," "ravine of death", "murderous fire", "unseen enemy", "a long trail of the dead and the dying") are predominant, providing a detailed and dramatic glimpse into the conditions of war while conveying the brutality of the confrontation: "Well, these **poor Romanian peasants**, in their worn-out greatcoats and their bonnets adorned with turkey feathers, those who have been mocked so much, have proven that they know how to die, if not how to conquer. It is the blood of the ancient Dacians that flows in their veins. With **incredible determination**, they plunged into this **ravine of death**, pushed back, crushed, and decimated by the **murderous fire** of an **unseen enemy**. Still, they did not retreat an inch, did not hesitate momentarily, always advancing, constantly charging, leaving behind, alas! **a long trail of the dead and the dying**. There were acts of heroism that **I cannot fully recount**" (ibid.).

The correspondent appears as an active participant in the narrative, aiming to inform while simultaneously conveying his emotional experience, thus blending neutrality with engagement.

5.3. *Fighting at Grivitsa - Românul*³

On 7 September 1877, the Romanian newspaper *Românul* carried on its lead page a war report titled *Fighting at Grivița* (Figure 3), signed by Friedrich Lachmann. Introduced as *A Private Correspondence for the Newspaper Românul*, the dispatch was sent from the battlefield and dated 3/15 September 1877, *In front of Grivitsa*. At the time, Lachmann was also reporting for *Der Bund* (Bern), *Die Augsburger Zeitung* and *The Chicago Gazette*.

As a witness narrator, the correspondent seeks to objectify his reporting by providing factual details (e.g., “around 5 a.m.”, “attack columns”, “3rd and 4th Divisions”, “amidst a fog”, “planned time for the assault”) about the actions of the Romanian troops in their struggle to capture the Grivitsa redoubt, yet without eliminating descriptive adjectives (e.g., “continuous rain”, “decisive moment”, “steady fire”, “violent barrage”) that add vividness and context to the narrative: “Around 5 a.m., the attack columns of the 3rd and 4th Divisions gathered amidst a fog, as often happens; despite the **continuous** rain, the morale of the army was **excellent**... The planned time for the assault was in the afternoon. The artillery maintained a **steady** fire from all batteries on the redoubt. At the **decisive** moment, our artillery unleashed a **violent** barrage on the enemy fortifications” (*Românul*, September 7, 1877, p. 1).

³ As a political, commercial, and literary weekly publication, *Românul* (*The Romanian*), was founded on August 9, 1857, in Bucharest, and became a daily newspaper in 1859.

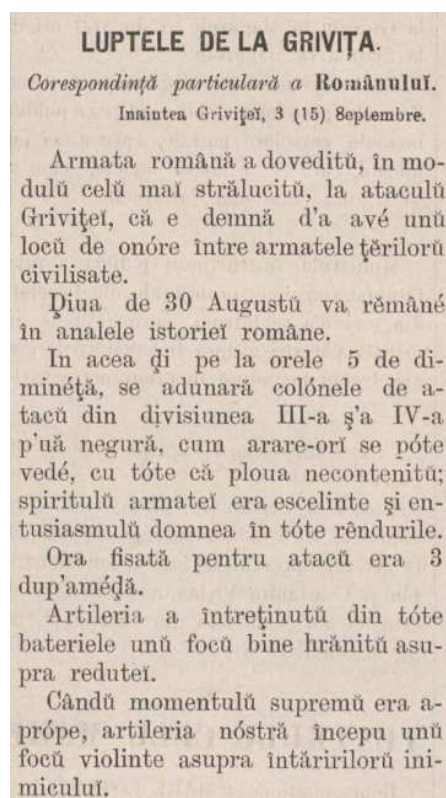


Figure 3. Opening of the war correspondence,
(*Românul*, September 7, 1877)

The correspondence incorporates subjective language elements reflected in the use of numerous affective and evaluative adjectives ("brilliant", "worthy", "excellent", "courageous", "terrifying", "bloody", "fierce", "striking"), modal adverbs ("unceasingly", "excellently", "exemplarily", "violently"), modal verbs, along with personal, temporal, and spatial deixis, as well as stylistic devices.

Figures of speech contribute to offering readers a sensory perspective of the battlefield actions, as illustrated in the following example based on a simile to describe the intensity of the enemy's response, likening the bullets fired at them to "a rain of lead": "The rain was falling even harder. At 3:10, when the Romanian columns began to approach the enemy positions, they were met with a **terrible onslaught**, a **rain of lead** denser than the one falling from the sky" (ibid.).

The frequent use of the inclusive “we” (“us”, “our”, “ourselves”) highlights that the correspondent feels solidarity with the Romanian army to which he refers (“**our** soldiers” and “**our** artillery”, “**we** recaptured the position”; “... the redoubt was in **our** hands”).

The correspondent’s engagement through evaluative and affective comments is evident in his emphasis on the hardships endured by the Romanian troops during the battle: “The battlefield is still **full of dead**, who cannot be buried because the Turks fired on medical personnel. Not only that: they also threw themselves on the wounded, mutilating them in **the most barbaric manner**” (ibid.) He also formulates a point of view through military expertise evaluations: “The losses are **truly significant**; however, thanks to **the sound decisions** of Captain Groza, who led the attack column as a staff officer, they remain **minimal in comparison to the intensity of the fire** the troops were exposed to. **Had the troops not been led in this manner**, the battalions would have reached the enemy positions with their ranks decimated, unable to continue the fight” (ibid.).

The correspondent expresses another evaluative position, praising the effective leadership of a Romanian army commander: “Colonel Anghelescu deserves congratulations for commanding troops that knew how to do their duty in **such a heroic manner**”; “Thanks to **the bravery and good leadership** of the troops, **we were able** to retake the position, driving away the enemy and causing them great losses” (ibid.)

This correspondence reflects the journalist’s emotional closeness to the combatants. Adopting the perspective of a flag-waving correspondent, it blends the objectivity of detailed factual reporting with the subjectivity of personal assessments and opinions.

5.4. Grivitsa redoubt captured – Gazeta Transilvaniei⁴

A war report titled *Grivitsa Redoubt Capture* was published on the front page of *Gazeta Transilvaniei* on September 8, 1877. It was written and

⁴ *Gazeta Transilvaniei* (*The Transylvania Gazette*) began publication on March 12, 1838, in Braşov, becoming the first information, political and cultural newspaper for Romanians in Transylvania, then part of the Austrian Empire and, from 1867 to 1918, of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy.

submitted by the Special correspondent of *Gazeta Transilvaniei* on the battlefield, dated August 31, 1877, mentioning *From the surroundings of Plevna* (Figure 4).

Luarea redutei Grivitz'a.

(Corresp. part. a „Gaz. Trans.“ de pe campulu de resbelu.)

Din apropiarea Plevnei, 31 Aug. (12 Sept.) a. c.
Din'a de St. Alessandru, (30 Augustu) fù destinata pentru ataculu Plevnei.

Dispositiunea atacului fù urmatórea: Divisiunea a 4-a romana se atace fortulu mare numitu „Grivicea“, care'lu avea in fația; in acelasiu timp divisiunea a 3-a romana se atace in flanculu dreptu, ér' trei batalióne russesci se atace in flanculu stengu alu divisiunei a 4-a.

La órele 3 din di colón'a de atacu a divisiunei a 4-a formata din: batalionulu alu 2-lea de venatori, batalionulu alu 2-lea din alu 5-lea regimentu de linia, 1 batalionu din alu 16-lea si unu batalionu din alu 14-lea regimentu de dorobanti, — porni spre atacu in tóta ordinea si liniscea.

La órele 3^{1/2} venatorii, cari erau desfasiurati in linia de tirailori, cari luasera cu sine si tóte uneltele trebuincióse pentru trecerea siantiului, precumu: gabióne,*) fasine, scari s. a. ajunsera pe crést'a dealului, cam la 3—400 metre departare de fortu. De aci incepù assaltulu cu tóta iutiél'a si fora de a trage focuri asupra fortului, de unde inamiculu ii batea cu focu de infanteria si cu srepnele intr'unu modu inspaimantatoriu. Colón'a cu tóta plói'a de glóntie inse inaintà rapede pana la siantiulu fortului, de unde inse atatu foculu catu si baionetele inamicului o respinsera astfeliu, in catu se retrase cu mari perdi, dér' in regula.

Figure 4. Opening of the war correspondence,
(*Gazeta Transilvaniei*, September 8, 1877)

As a firsthand observer, the war correspondent takes on the role of the primary source, describing the events by drawing on factual accounts. He meticulously presents the positions of the troops, details the attack by hours and phases, and depicts the intense atmosphere of the battle, marked by infantry and artillery fire: “At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the attacking column of the 4th Division, comprising the 2nd

Battalion of Riflemen, the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Line Regiment, one battalion from the 16th Regiment, and another from the 14th Dorobantsi Regiment, set out for the attack in perfect order and tranquillity". The correspondent also incorporates a real-time effect into his description: "**Today**, on August 31st, ... **as I write**, the cannonade continues. The outcome is unknown" (*Gazeta Transilvaniei*, September 8, 1877, p. 1).

His descriptions of the combat often carry an emotional tone, highlighting his affinity with the Romanian troops, with whom he seems to identify personally. This sense of identification is conveyed by the use of the inclusive personal pronoun "we" and its possessive form "our" in expressions like "our losses" and "our 4th division": "**Our losses** in soldiers and officers are very heavy. To give you an idea of the casualties sustained, I will mention here those of the 2nd Battalion of Riflemen... 350 wounded and dead out of 700 men, representing half of the personnel... **Our 4th division** is, I can now say, even more decimated, but the objective of its attack is at least in **our possession** (...)" ; "**our** cause"; "**we** gather"; "**we** regroup our forces"; "**we** await another order"; "**We paid** a heavy price for this" (ibid). He integrates dialogic elements into the text engaging the reader and maintaining fluidity in the development of the narrative: "To give **you** an idea of the losses..."; "At the moment I am writing **to you**..."; "Let **us** return to the 3rd Division..."; "**I can now say**...".

The correspondence's text contains personal, temporal, and spatial deixis but also abundant affective and evaluative adjectives, such as "unprecedented vigour," "heavy losses," "extraordinary vehemence," "terrifying combat," and "decisive success."

The correspondent of *Gazeta Transilvaniei* adopts a patriotic stance, practicing a "journalism of attachment" (Bell, 1998). Markers of subjectivity reveal his emotional connection with the Romanian troops: "God be with us and our cause!".

This way, the correspondence alternates between factual descriptions and evaluative comments, combining objective reporting with personal insights. This blend of detailed factual descriptions and subjective insights enriches the narrative and offers a deeper understanding of the correspondent's engagement with the events.

5.5. Romanian Troops at Grivitsa – Pester Lloyd

The special correspondent of *Pester Lloyd*, a German-language newspaper published in Budapest, filed a report from Grivitsa focusing on the actions of the Romanian troops at Grivitsa. The dispatch, written on September 10, 1877, appeared under the column *On the War*, featured on the front page of the newspaper's evening issue no. 219, dated September 25, 1877 (Figure 5).

From the very first lines, the correspondent immerses the reader in the atmosphere of the Grivitsa battlefield with the striking remark: "Cannon fire, from dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn – such is the order of the day" (*Pester Lloyd*, September 25, 1877, p. 1)

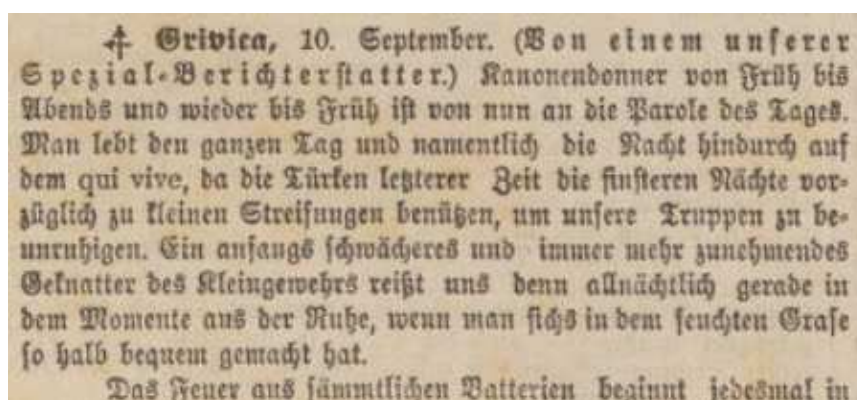


Figure 5. Opening of the war correspondence,
Pester Lloyd, September 25, 1877

The correspondent provides details in a neutral style about the order of battle, the positions and movements of the Romanian units, as well as the identification of commanders and their actions: "The batteries open fire, generally at half past four in the morning"; "The column, established for this purpose... was to depart at three in the afternoon"; "At the agreed time, the 2nd battalion of the 5th Infantry Regiment, commanded by Major Iarca, the 13th Dorobanti Regiment, led by Lieutenant Colonel Petrovanu, and a mounted artillery unit left the starting point heading toward the Grivitsa redoubt" (ibid.).

Along with descriptive passages recounting the military actions throughout the day, the journalist narrates his direct participation in the events in the first person: "Then, Captain Pruncu and about twenty men rushed and pulled the cannon back from its isolated place. However, there were no horses to put it completely safe. Since **I was riding** in the skirmish line, he asked me to run back and fetch a team. **I did this at once**, and under real rain of fire, **I managed to reach the artillery reserve**, where six horses were immediately placed at my disposal. **I returned** with them to the firing line, but **I took precautions (...)**"; "At around 10 at night **I rode**, together with Dr. Davila, to the central ambulance where **I found all the staff** busy putting definitive dressings on the wounded..." (ibid.).

Focusing on such vivid passages makes it clear that the correspondent does not just report the events but creates authenticity by showing active participation in the unfolding drama, thereby allowing readers to better grasp the chaos and intensity experienced on the battlefield.

His correspondence reflects both neutrality and engagement, as it combines observational detachment in factual descriptions with subjectivity conveyed through the use of the personal pronoun "I", modal nouns such as "selflessness" and "prowess," affective and evaluative adjectives like "formidable," "brilliant," "bold," and "unanimous," and figurative expressions like the metaphor "baptism of fire," commonly used in war reporting. These lexical choices convey the author's points of view, opinions, and attitudes, while reinforcing the emotional and evaluative tone of the report. By sharing his personal assessments with his readers, stating that "**I did not expect** in the least such a **bold attitude** towards the Turkish infantry, such **unanimously recognized prowess**, from a **young army** that had only **received its baptism of fire** today" (ibid.), the correspondent introduces a commendatory evaluation that adds a tone of praise to the report. This explicitly positive evaluation reflects a subjective enunciative stance and reveals the correspondent's affective alignment with the Romanian troops, distancing his account from a position of neutrality. His engagement becomes particularly evident through emotionally charged language and a superlative tone that conveys moral endorsement: "Victory was on **our side**; the mission had been **accomplished brilliantly**. From commander to soldier, the troops had shown an enthusiasm that deserved **the fullest appreciation**" (ibid.).

Although the correspondence aims to depict the events on the battlefield with a certain degree of neutrality, the frequent inclusion of subjective evaluations indicates the correspondent's positioning and engagement with the Romanian cause, shaping the reader's perception through a blend of factual description and personal commentary.

5.6. *The fighting at Plevna – The Daily News*

In its issue of September 14, 1877, No. 9797, page 5, *The Daily News* features two war correspondences from the Balkan front under the heading *The War. The Fighting at Plevna. Capture of Turkish Redoubts*. The first dispatch, titled *Near the Road to Lovtcha* and dated September 9, 1877, bears the byline *From our correspondent with General Gourko*. The second, *Before Plevna*, which forms the focus of our analysis, appears on the same page and is attributed *To another special correspondent*, written on September 11, 1877 (Figure 6).

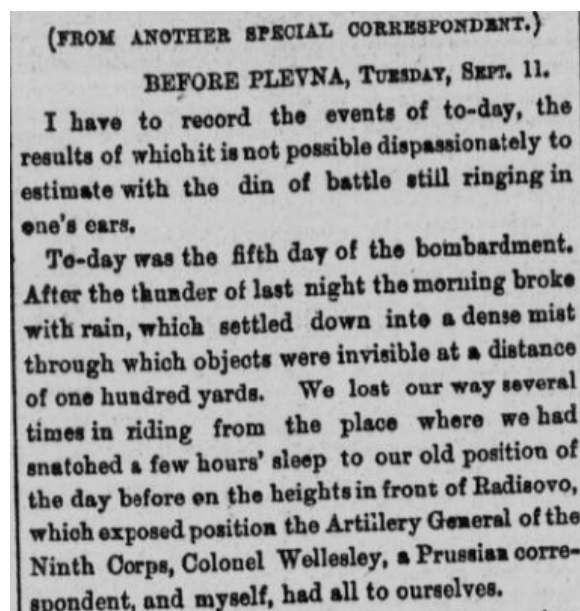


Figure 6. Opening of the war correspondence,
(*The Daily News*, September 14, 1877)

The report provides a detailed account of the Battle of Grivitsa, written in the first person by the field observer, whose enunciative stance is shaped by direct, participatory observation, as indicated by the use of personal, temporal, and spatial deixis (“I have to record...”, “today”, “still ringing in one’s ears”), as well as by epistemic and affective modalisation, expressions of uncertainty and judgment (“it is not possible dispassionately to estimate”, “steady action” “desultory fighting”): **“I have to record the events of today, the results of which it is not possible dispassionately to estimate with the din of battle still ringing in one’s ears. Today was the fifth day of the bombardment...”; “I found several batteries of Russian field artillery of the 31st Division in steady action against the first and second Turkish position on the central swell, and only a little to the right and rear of the infantry men still engaged in desultory fighting, as evidenced by the maintenance of a dropping fire”** (*The Daily News*, September 14, 1877, p. 5).

The correspondent strives to maintain neutrality by offering detailed descriptions of the battlefield conditions and military movements, as illustrated by precise, concrete depictions such as “The Turks were visible out in the open **between their first and second positions, on the central swell, toiling away** at spade work under the shell-fire of the Russian batteries” and “The Russian siege-gun battery **near us** was occasionally **firing** over the central swell at the entrenched camps on the northern ridge of the Turkish position, and occasionally **throwing** shells into the town of Plevna” (ibid.). These descriptions are characterized by their observational, matter-of-fact tone, relying on spatial deixis (“between their first and second positions”, “on the central swell”, “near us”,) and specific action verbs (“toiling away”, “firing”, “throwing”) that convey ongoing, visible military activity without evaluative or emotive language. Such discursive strategies serve to present the scene impartially, focusing on concrete facts rather than subjective interpretation, thereby reinforcing the correspondent’s effort to uphold neutrality.

To lend credibility to the report, the correspondent mentions his various observations of the battle as an eyewitness, clarifying whether or not he has visibility over the ongoing military actions: “About twelve, the fog begins to lift, almost as dramatically as it fell. **We can see** the line of the Turkish northern heights, but the intervening valley is full of

dense white smoke. Then presently **we get a glimpse** into, as it were, the interstices of smoke, and discern the Russian field batteries in the valley" (ibid.). Using the first-person plural indicates the presence of other correspondents in the press group as well.

The correspondent evaluates the reported statements of the military authorities, some of whom he appears to know personally, by employing discursive strategies that reveal his stance toward their assertions. This is achieved primarily through reported speech that conveys not only the content of what was said but also the correspondent's interpretative framing: "The colonel in command of the battery **told us with an assumption of indifference**, which **I am sure was feigned**, that **the fighting dying out was merely forepost work**, to clear the way for the grand assault against the redoubt on the isolated mamelon, which was to be made in the afternoon. **He may, indeed, have believed what he said**, but another tale **was told**, when for an instant a sharp eddy of wind blew fog and smoke away from the mamelon and slopes leading up."; "**My artillery friend** [General Skobeleff] **stated further** that all the four pounders of his division had been sent to the left on towards the Sophia road with intent, **he believed**, to hinder the Turks from any attempt to retreat in that direction; an attempt which **did not seem to be probable**" (ibid.). For instance, the phrase "told us with an assumption of indifference, which I am sure was feigned" reveals the correspondent's ironic distancing and skeptical stance towards the colonel's claim that "the fighting dying out was merely forepost work." This layered enunciation introduces a critical perspective, suggesting that the official narrative may conceal the true situation. Similarly, the reported speech of "My artillery friend [General Skobeleff] stated further..." combines a personal bond with the general and a cautious appraisal ("an attempt which did not seem to be probable"), which the correspondent relays without overt endorsement, thus preserving an impartial stance while subtly conveying his own evaluation.

Although the first-person perspective is present throughout the text, markers of emotional subjectivity, such as affective and evaluative adjectives, modal nouns, and adverbs, are notably absent, focusing more on factual and descriptive details. Through these pragma-enunciative devices – modulation of reported speech, epistemic markers, and expressions

of interpersonal stance – the correspondent positions himself as informant and critical commentator, mediating between official versions and observed realities, thereby balancing neutrality with subtle evaluation.

5.7. *Plevna from the Turkish side – The Daily Telegraph*

A comprehensive account of the battle of Plevna from the perspective of a war correspondent embedded with the Ottoman forces was published by *The Daily Telegraph* on September 19, 1877, No. 6955, page 5, under the title *Plevna from the Turkish side. Capture and recapture of redoubts. The battles described. Frightful aspects of the field* (Figure 7). In this report, written on 17 September 1877, *The Daily Telegraph's* special correspondent covers the period from September 6 to September 14, 1877, detailing the relentless assaults by Russo-Romanian troops on the heavily fortified Turkish positions commanded by Osman Pasha.

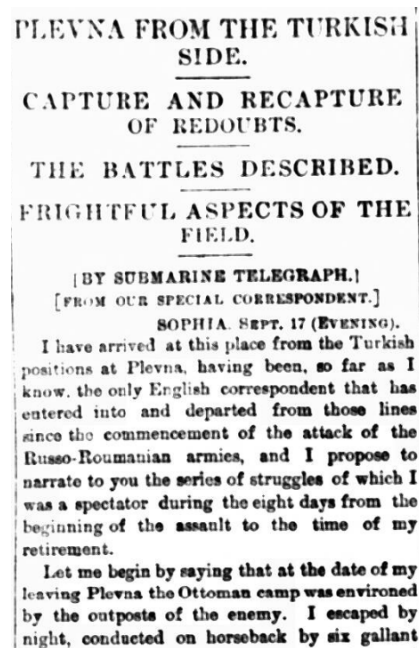


Figure 7. Opening of the war correspondence
(*The Daily Telegraph*, September 19, 1877)

The correspondent foregrounds his enunciative authority by positioning himself as the sole British observer with exclusive access to the Ottoman lines - an exceptional stance during the siege of Plevna - which serves to legitimize the forthcoming narrative: "**I have arrived** at this place from the Turkish positions at Plevna, **having been**, so far as I know, **the only English correspondent** that has entered into and departed from those lines since the commencement of the attack of the Russo-Roumanian armies" (*The Daily Telegraph*, September 19, 1877, p. 5). This opening move anchors the report in the experiential perspective of a primary locutor, embedded in the Turkish camp at Plevna, whose account is shaped by direct observation. He assumes the dual role of narrator and eyewitness to eight days of combat, using the first-person singular to show personal involvement and explicitly address the readers: "**I propose to narrate to you** the series of struggles of which **I was a spectator** during the eight days from the beginning of the assault to the time of my retirement." "**Let me begin** by saying that at the date of my leaving Plevna, the Ottoman camp was environed by the enemy's outposts. **I escaped** by night, conducted on horseback by six gallant Circassians (...) **I was** twenty-eight hours **in the saddle** without any repose, which was only gained when we reached Orhanie yesterday at midnight" (ibid.).

The correspondent located at certain observation points render the detailed representation of the battlefield dynamics that enhances the immediacy: "**I will describe** the Loftcha attack first. **As soon as** the movement began, **I went to the top of the ridge** and **saw** the Russians advancing in heavy masses of close column of battalions" (ibid.).

Through frequent visual and auditory imagery, readers are immersed in the scene through the employment of descriptive sequences and dramatic narrative rhythm, which at the discursive level serve to heighten emotional intensity and simulate immediacy: "Amid **ever-increasing slaughter** on both sides, the Turkish line once again received reinforcements, and then at **a sudden signal** - raising **a tremendous shout of 'Allah, Allah!'** and discharging simultaneous volleys - **they were seen to leap over the lips of the trenches** and **hurl themselves** with steel and clubbed muskets upon the Russians. There latter yielded, and **ran**, for the shock was intolerable" (ibid.).

The correspondent uses a rich array of modalised expressions and rhetorical devices to dramatically portray the atrocities on the battlefield, while also expressing a sense of empathy with the soldiers caught in the conflict: “**No sight, I think**, was ever seen before **like this** in warfare. It was the **fearful triumph of the breechloading arm** of precision. As it bravely crowned that **fatal plateau**, each successive Russian battalion was **mown down** by the **deadly fire** as ridges of wheat go prone to the earth before **reapers**. Again and again, it seemed that **scarcely a single man stood up alive** after the thunder and lightning of one of these **tempests of bullets**” (ibid.).

In this passage, epistemic modals such as “I think” and “it seemed” signal interpretative distance. At the same time, adjectives and nouns like “fearful triumph”, “deadly fire”, and “fatal plateau” express heightened emotional evaluation. Verbs such as “was mown down” and “stood up alive” intensify the scene's dramatic impact. At the same time, figurative language – particularly the simile “as ridges of wheat go prone to the earth before reapers” and the metaphor “tempests of bullets” – evokes the overwhelming destructiveness of modern warfare. Together, these enunciative choices generate an emotionally layered narrative grounded in personal observation and a sympathetic engagement with the events.

The emotional visual charge enhances the impact of the narrative: “**No pen can tell** – least of all while the nerves of an eye-witness are still shaken with the excitement and passions of such a spectacle – **what it conveys to the mind** to see the fair earth spread and hidden with the bodies of men (...) **miserably writhing** and struggling to rise and escape from **wounds that plainly doom them to a slower and more agonising end** than those happier victims who are **stretched so silently** beside them” (ibid.)

Along with evocative descriptions, the correspondent also shares explicit evaluations, – ranging from quantitative and factual to judgmental, both positive (about the Ottoman defence) and negative (concerning the Russian leadership), which reflect a combination of strategic assessment, personal opinion and subjective positioning: “**I judge** that the Russo-Roumanians drew nigh to us here in a mass of men about equal

to those directed against our other side.”; **“I estimate, from some experience of battlefields**, the dead and wounded that lay around Plevna after all this bloody work at between 6,000 and 7,000” (ibid.).

The correspondent’s interpretative language reflects his nuanced perspective, blending admiration for the Ottoman resistance, expressed through phrases like “superbly defended” and “indomitable resolve”, with condemnation of the Russian leadership, criticized for its “reckless” use of men “against the very muzzles of the Ottoman rifles”, while subtly critiquing the futility of the war, as underscored by the poignant remark on “sheer lack, at last, of more human blood to spill and squander”, which led them “to desist from their cruel undertaking”.

By blending expressive descriptions and evaluative judgments, the correspondent not only recounts the events but subtly critiques the destructiveness of war and the leaders’ decisions.

6. Discussion and conclusions

The results of the pragma-enunciative analysis applied to the selected correspondences highlight how war correspondents position themselves in relation to the events they report, shaping their points of view through enunciative stance, deixis and modal markers, stylistic devices, polyphony, and personal opinions. As witnesses and interpreters of the conflict, war correspondents construct narratives incorporating diverse voices, including those of military authorities, striving to balance neutrality with personally engaged perspectives.

The degree of neutrality versus engagement in each correspondence emerges from the interplay of these elements, as outlined below (see *Table 5 a, b*). Table 5 a, b provides a structured overview of war correspondents’ enunciative positioning regarding belligerent sides, battlefield scenes, human suffering and losses, and the outcomes of the fighting.

Table 5a

Enunciative Positioning in War Reporting

NEWSPAPER AND CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSED		<i>Le Temps</i> Sept 26, 1877 <i>Les batailles de Plevna</i>	<i>L'Indépendance Belge</i> Sept. 22, 1877 <i>Correspondance particulière</i>	<i>Românul</i> Sept. 7, 1877 <i>Before Grivitsa</i>
CORRESPONDENT'S ENUNCIATIVE POSITION – POINT OF VIEW		Detailed battlefield descriptions, subjective position, emotional engagement	Precise descriptions, personal perspective, clarity, consistency, structured information, emotional involvement	Factual details, military expertise, highly subjective, emotional closeness to Romanian military
THE ENUNCIATIVE MARKERS	DEICTIC MARKERS (Personal, Temporal, Spatial)	Frequent use of personal, spatial and temporal deixis	High presence of personal, spatial and temporal deixis	High presence of personal, spatial and temporal deixis, inclusive “we”
	MODAL MARKERS (Nouns, Adjectives, Adverbs, Verbs)	Moderate modalisation, evaluative and affective adjectives	Strong modalisation, expressive verbs, adjectives, adverbs	Strong modalisation, descriptive and evaluative adjectives
	FIGURES OF SPEECH (Similes, Metaphors, Rhetorical Devices)	Some rhetorical figures for emphasis, metaphors, hyperboles	Metaphors and rhetorical emphasis on suffering	Metaphors, similes and symbolic references
POLYPHONY (Reported Speech, Embedded Voices)		Includes voices of officers and other military sources	Incorporation of military accounts	Mix of military and patriotic testimonies
OPINION (Judgments and Comments)		Emphasis on reality effect and personal commentaries	Focus on personal observations emotional experience	Emphasis on evaluative remarks and interpretative judgments
NEUTRALITY <i>vs.</i> ENGAGEMENT		Moderate neutrality, mix of factual and emotional reporting	Engagement, emotionally charged language	Strong engagement, language reflecting patriotic attachment

Table 5b

Enunciative Positioning in War Reporting

NEWSPAPER AND CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSED		<i>Gazeta Transilvaniei</i> Sept. 8, 1877 <i>Grivitsa redoubt capture</i>	<i>Pester Lloyd</i> Sept. 25, 1877 <i>Grivica</i>	<i>The Daily News</i> Sept. 14, 1877 <i>The fighting at Plevna</i>	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i> Sept. 19, 1877 <i>Plevna from the Turkish side</i>
CORRESPONDENT'S ENUNCIATIVE POSITION – POINT OF VIEW		Factual descriptions, patriotic stance, affinity with the Romanian military	Detailed narrative, neutral style, accuracy, verification and engagement to express moral support for the Romanian military	Factual reporting, accuracy, fairness, structured narrative, expert analysis and descriptive details	Evocative description, nuanced perspective, direct observations, and immersive war scenes
THE ENUNCIATIVE MARKERS	DEICTIC MARKERS	High presence of personal, spatial and temporal deixis, inclusive “we”	Balanced use of personal deixis, inclusive “we”	Minimal personal deixis, emphasis on precise temporal and spatial references	Use of personal deixis for engagement, rich spatial deixis
	MODAL MARKERS	Strong modalisation, emotionally charged adjectives	Moderate modalisation, analytical tone	Low modalisation, preference for factual nouns and verbs	High modalisation, affective adjectives, strong adverbs
	FIGURES OF SPEECH	Vivid imagery, nationalist metaphors	Some rhetorical devices	Absent or minimal	Frequent use of similes and sensory descriptions
POLYPHONY (Reported Speech, Embedded Voices)		Military testimonials, Romanian patriotic voices	Multiple perspectives, including high-ranking officers	Reported statements, focus on military sources	Includes testimonies from soldiers and civilians

OPINION (Judgments and Comments)	Integration of personal interpretations and evaluative positions	Integration of individual evaluations and assessments	Limited use of personal judgments and comments	High neutrality, objective tone
NEUTRALITY vs. ENGAGEMENT	Overt engagement emotional tone, patriotic attachment	Moderate neutrality, leaning towards engagement with the Romanian cause	Focus on personal assessments and evaluative judgements	Moderate engagement, characterize d by an emotional tone, supporting the Ottoman cause

The correspondents from continental European publications such as *Le Temps*, *L'Indépendance Belge*, and *Pester Lloyd* infuse their reports with detailed neutral descriptions while also displaying marked emotional engagement through affectively charged language. These subjective accounts frequently include evaluative comments, often supplemented by military testimonies. Moreover, the frequent use of deixis enhances the “reality effect.”

Romanian publications reconcile patriotic engagement in the struggle for national independence with emerging principles of journalistic neutrality. The correspondents of *Românul* and *Gazeta Transilvaniei* stand out for their overt engagement, blending personal reflections, nationalist fervour, and support for the Romanian troops - features characteristic of the so-called “journalism of attachment” (Bell, 1998).

The report analysed in *The Daily News* prioritizes factual accounts, military expertise, critical assessments of strategies, and troop morale through a discursive construction that emphasizes a personal point of view. The text is notable for its rigorous structure, accuracy, fairness, supporting evidence, and the absence of overt emotional tones.

Although his correspondence follows the model of the Anglo-Saxon press, *The Daily Telegraph* correspondent focuses on creating an expressive description of the violence of war scenes, enhancing the readers’ immersion in the visual and auditory atmosphere of the battlefield.

We could explain the degrees of neutrality or engagement in these reports depending on the correspondents' journalistic training, the editorial lines, their emotional ties to the combatants⁵, and their national loyalties. Neutrality and engagement emerge as key markers of shifting reporting styles in the 19th-century press and the broader evolution of journalistic practices. This pragma-enunciative analysis falls within this reflection, highlighting the efforts of war correspondents to provide accurate and impartial information, while at the same time cultivating their personal and national attachments or adapting and responding to institutional constraints, whether imposed by editorial policies or by the military commands to which they were accredited.

Below is a comparative overview of the reporting styles across the analysed publications and the journalistic cultures they represent. It considers both the correspondents' discursive positioning in relation to neutrality and engagement and the broader implications of these approaches for press discourse and public perception (see *Table 6*).

Table 6

Neutrality vs. Engagement in War Reporting

PUBLICATIONS	NEUTRALITY VS. ENGAGEMENT IN WARREPORTING	OBSERVATIONS	IMPLICATIONS
ANGLO-SAXON REPORTING STYLE			
<i>The Daily News, The Daily Telegraph</i>	Factual, professional expertise, minimal emotional engagement, emphasis on impartiality, and non-engagement	Strong focus on accuracy, factuality, verification, structured narratives, supporting evidence-corroboration, quotations, and reliance on verifiable sources	Strengthens the perception of objectivity and journalistic detachment; adopts an evidence-based approach that enhances public trust in press credibility; prioritizes neutrality over personal viewpoints or national loyalties

⁵ For instance, the *Pester Lloyd* correspondent was embedded with Romanian troops for five weeks (August -September 1877) during the battles covered in his dispatches.

CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REPORTING STYLE			
<i>Le Temps</i> <i>L'Indépendance</i> <i>Belge</i> <i>Pester Lloyd</i>	Highly emotional, with frequent evaluative and affective language, moderate engagement	Adopts a more subjective tone, potentially shaped by editorial stance, national and personal biases; employs rhetorical strategies to engage the reader	Contributes to a more interpretative style of journalism, where emotion and national perspective influence the framing of events; enhances readability through clarity and structured reporting, though emotional involvement may introduce bias
ROMANIAN REPORTING STYLE			
<i>Românul</i> <i>Gazeta</i> <i>Transilvaniei</i>	Patriotic, blending nationalism with journalistic standards, overt engagement	High emotional investment and strong attachment to the national cause, often aligned with political and military perspectives, are reflected in the use of personal reflections to influence the narrative	Balances advocacy with journalistic ethics, though it may prioritize national sentiment over strict neutrality; it illustrates the coexistence of journalistic aspirations and patriotic rhetoric, highlighting the press's role in nation-building processes

In line with Parent's (2021) theoretical approach to journalistic neutrality, this pragma-enunciative analysis of war correspondence shows that Anglo-Saxon correspondents, aligned with the standards of their journalistic culture, tend to favour factual reporting based on their professional expertise. Their style prioritizes verifiable information and a structured, detached narrative, reinforcing the idea of journalistic objectivity. This positive perception of the British press's professionalism was acknowledged at the time, as evidenced in an Editor's note on the Battle of Grivitsa (Figure 8), published in the Romanian newspaper *Românul* on September 16, 1877: "There is not a single major British newspaper that does not make every effort to respect the truth. Whenever they report on confirmed events, they do so with precision" (*Românul*, September 16, 1877, p.2)

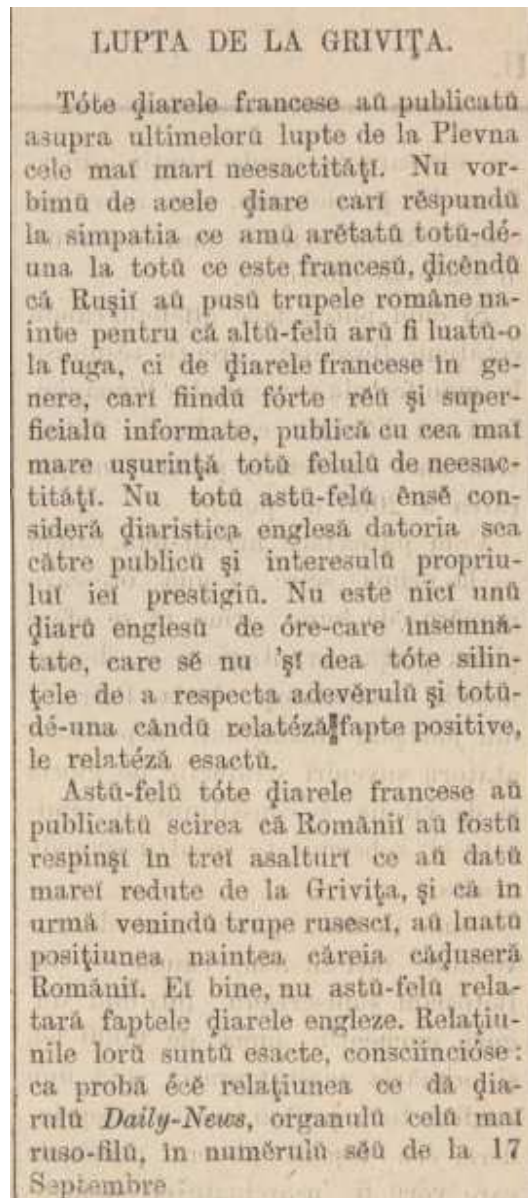


Figure 8. Editor's note on the Battle of Grivitsa,
(*Românul*, September 16, 1877)

In contrast, continental European correspondents from France, Belgium, and Austria-Hungary adopt a more emotionally involved reporting

style, frequently using evaluative language, rhetorical figures, and personal reflections. This approach can be partially attributed to the individual positioning of correspondents toward the war and the cultural and editorial traditions of their respective publications. This observation is corroborated by studies on the core professional values of journalism and newsroom cultures, which reveal significant cross-national differences in how journalistic neutrality is understood and practiced. These differences are shaped by broader cultural, ideological, and political contexts, as noted by Hanitzsch (2020) and by Donsbach and Klett (1993), whose study, *Subjective objectivity: How journalists in four countries define a key term of their profession*, is cited as a key reference by Schudson (2001) and by Parent (2021).

Romanian correspondents, in particular, demonstrate a strong patriotic commitment, marked by pronounced nationalist sentiments and emotional investments. Their accounts combine personal engagement with journalistic techniques, reflecting both their dedication to the Romanian cause and the broader role of the press in shaping national identity. While this patriotic engagement often guided the tone of Romanian war reporting, there was also an awareness, among more reflective voices within the press, of the risks of biased or inflated narratives. This dilemma is clearly articulated in the editorial on the responsibilities of the press during wartime (*Figure 9*), published in *Românul* on August 26, 1877, which recognizes the duty of the press to provide accurate and objective information despite the constraints imposed by patriotic engagement: “Of course, we would not wish for the Romanian press, regardless of its orientation, to contribute to confusion or foster false hopes. It is only natural for everyone to wish for good news about their country; however, it is the duty of the educated, of those who hold the journalist’s pen and aspire to legitimate recognition, neither to invent such news nor to exaggerate it” (*Românul*, August 26, 1877, p. 1).

În război, sunt pierderi și câștiguri, sunt lacrimi de durere și lacrimi de bucurie. Soarta armelor e mai schimbătoare de câtă timpul și mai nestatornică de câtă a vântului nestatornicie.

Ei bine, n'amă dori ca presa română, fie ea de ori-ce nuanță, să contribuie la confuziunea spiritelor sau la formarea unei încrederi factive. E'n firea lucrurilor ca totu omul să dorească știți bune pentru țara sa; e însă de datoria celor luminați, cari țin în mână pînă de cronici și aspiră la o legitimă reputație, ca nici să nu le invente, nici să nu le esagereze.

Figure 9. Editorial on the responsibilities of the press during wartime (excerpt)
(*Românul*, August 26, 1877)

War correspondents' points of view are influenced by their cultural background, journalistic and military expertise, individual affective connections, personal bonds, and vested interests, as well as contextual factors. This highlights the importance of situating war reporting practices within their historical framework, including the development of the press and ethical standards.

Regarding the implications for historical war journalism, the study highlights how war correspondents and the publications they worked for adhered, to varying degrees, to the professional standards of journalistic neutrality despite various pressures, including ideological, political, military, or personal affiliations, beliefs, and ideals.

The analysis applied to battlefield correspondences, though limited in number, highlights that one of the key aspects of journalism during the 1877-1878 war was the effort and professional competition among correspondents and publications to present factual information based on direct observation at the frontlines, offering readers an accurate portrayal of events. This approach was particularly evident in how correspondents accredited to the Russo-Romanian or Turkish armies reported the events. Their reports often appeared within the same newspaper pages – such as in *Le Temps*, *L'Indépendance Belge*, *Pester Lloyd*, *The Daily News*, and *The Daily Telegraph* – presenting opposing perspectives and diametrically different viewpoints

presenting opposing perspectives and diametrically different viewpoints from all belligerent parties. Consequently, comparing and contrasting military and civilian sources from both sides of the conflict was essential for providing a comprehensive understanding of the battlefield situation, ensuring the credibility of the reports, and enhancing the publications' reputation.

War correspondents' commitment to a fair and nuanced journalistic approach – one that incorporated not only facts but also context and diverse perspectives – significantly influenced the evolution of war journalism, shaping both how the war was reported and how it was perceived by the public. The practice of reflecting multiple, even opposing, viewpoints contributed to the advancement of professional and ethical norms in the press, where respect for factual truth, accuracy, independence, honesty, fairness, impartiality, and accountability became fundamental principles (Tuchman, 1972; Gauthier, 1991; Bell, 1998; Schudson, 2001; Tumber, 2020; Parent, 2021).

This study faces several limitations, including its reliance on a few reports from accredited war correspondents in the Russian, Romanian, and Ottoman camps, published in newspapers from the United Kingdom, France, Austria-Hungary, and Romania.

A potential future research direction would be expanding the corpus by incorporating a broader range of publications and correspondences. This would allow for a more comprehensive representation of how the war was reported, particularly in Russian and Ottoman newspapers, which were not included in the present study. Such an approach could further refine the understanding of war journalism practices across different cultural and political contexts.

The study highlights the nuanced nature of war reporting. It suggests a dynamic interaction between journalistic standards and correspondents' points of view on the events they report, shedding light on the evolving balance between neutrality and engagement in their coverage. As a phenomenon, this balance is not merely a historical remnant; it continues to manifest in contemporary times, particularly in the coverage of crises and armed conflicts, emphasizing a shift towards increased subjectivity in journalistic practices. Ultimately, from a practical perspective, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the importance of accurate and responsible journalism, particularly in times of war, for the proper functioning of democratic societies. It highlights the journalists' responsibility to provide complete and truthful information, ensuring that the press maintains its credibility as the Fourth Estate and its role as a watchdog of democracy.

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