

**Analysis of Turkish Media in the Russia-Ukraine War**  
თურქული მედიის ანალიზი რუსეთ-უკრაინის ომში

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**Abstract:** In general, the influence of the media on the process of shaping the bilateral relations and public perception of the countries is undeniable, which was clearly demonstrated during the First World War. In addition to providing the public with content information such as defamation, propaganda, defamation, murder, fake news and enmity, the media also actively deals with topics such as impartiality, friendship, peace, conflict resolution and mediation, hence it can be said , that the media can create the language of political communication, give events direction and be a party or protect neutrality, a clear example of this is the Russia-Ukraine war that started in February 2022, in which the media is actively involved. It is the media that creates the information background and influences the agenda of the society, which directly or indirectly affects the relations between the countries. Perception and knowledge of events developed in the world is mainly carried out through mass media Media, as an important tool of political processes, becomes especially important when it merges with the political sphere.

If we look at history, we will see that there are periods of upswing and downswing in Russian-Turkish relations. As for Turkey's attitude towards Ukraine, with the declaration of Ukraine's independence in 1991, Turkey chose the path of good neighborly relations and cooperation with Ukraine. In general, Turkey tries to play the role of a mediator in ensuring peace in the region. Accordingly, Turkey, in the current Russia-Ukraine war, offers the parties the role of a mediator in the field of conflict resolution. It must be said that there is a difference of opinion regarding this war in the Turkish society, which is well reflected in the Turkish media. The

media is a powerful mechanism for causing changes in the society, therefore this study aims to reveal the direction of the coverage of the Russian-Ukraine war in the Turkish media, especially in the social media, and how all this affects the relations between the interested countries. Within the scope of the research, the Twitter accounts of the 5 most read newspapers in Turkey were taken as basis. The last year's tweets of these Twitter accounts regarding the Ukraine-Russia War were analyzed. In the analysis, negative and positive attitudes about the war were measured. In the selection of newspapers, the distribution of right and left tendencies as well as the highest reading rate were taken into consideration.

**Key words:** Russia-Ukraine War, Public diplomacy, Turkish Media, Twitter

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პოლიტოლოგიისა და საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობების დოქტორი,

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**აბსტრაქტი:** ზოგადად, მედიის გავლენა ქვეყნების ორმხრივ ურთიერთობებსა და საზოგადოებრივი აღქმის ჩამოყალიბების პროცესზე უდაოა, რაც კარგად გამოჩნდა კიდევ პირველ მსოფლიო ომის პერიოდში. მედია, გარდა იმისა, რომ საზოგადოებას აწვდის ისეთი შინაარსის ინფორმაციას, როგორცაა ცილისწამება, პროპაგანდა, რეპუტაციის შელახვა, მკვლელობა, ცრუ ამბები და მტრობა, ის აქტიურად ეხება ისეთ თემებსაც, როგორცაა მიუკერძოებლობა, მეგობრობა, მშვიდობა, კონფლიქტების გადაწყვეტა და შუამავლობა, აქედან გამომდინარე, შეიძლება ითქვას, რომ მედიას შეუძლია შექმნას პოლიტიკური კომუნიკაციის ენა, მისცეს მიმართულება მსვლელობას და იყოს მხარე ან დაიცვას ნეიტრალიტეტი, ამის ნათელი მაგალითია 2022 წლის თებერვალში დაწყებული რუსეთ-უკრაინის ომი, რაშიც აქტიურადაა ჩაბმული მედია. სწორედ მედია ქმნის საინფორმაციო ფონს და ახდენს გავლენას საზოგადოების დღის წესრიგზე,

რაც პირდაპირ თუ ირიბად ახდენს გავლენას ქვეყნებს შორის ურთიერთობებზე. მსოფლიოში განვითარებული მოვლენების აღქმა და შემეცნება ძირითადად სწორედ მასობრივი ინფორმაციის საშუალებებით ხორციელდება. მედია, როგორც პოლიტიკური პროცესების მნიშვნელოვანი ინსტრუმენტი, განსაკუთრებით დიდ მნიშვნელობას იძენს მაშინ, როდესაც ის ერწყმის პოლიტიკურ სფეროს.

თუ გადავხედავთ ისტორიას დავინახავთ, რომ რუსეთ-თურქეთის ურთიერთობებში არსებობს როგორც აღმასვლის, ასევე დაღმასვლის პერიოდები. რაც შეეხება უკრაინასთან თურქეთის დამოკიდებულებას, 1991 წელს უკრაინის დამოუკიდებლობის გამოცხადებასთან ერთად, თურქეთმა უკრაინასთან კეთილმეზობლური ურთიერთობებისა და თანამშრომლობის გზა აირჩია. ზოგადად, თურქეთი, ცდილობს შეასრულოს შუამავლის როლი რეგიონში მშვიდობის უზრუნველყოფის საქმეში. შესაბამისად, თურქეთი, მიმდინარე რუსეთ-უკრაინის ომში, მხარეებს სთავაზობს შუამავლის როლს კონფლიქტის მოგვარების სფეროში. უნდა ითქვას, რომ თურქეთის საზოგადოებაში ამ ომთან დაკავშირებით აზრთა სხვადასხვაობა, რაც კარგად აისახება კიდევ თურქულ მედიაში. მედია არის საზოგადოებაში ცვლილებების გამომწვევი ძლიერი მექანიზმი. აქედან გამომდინარე, ეს კვლევა მიზნად ისახავს გამოავლინოს თუ რა მიმართულებით ხდება რუსეთ-უკრაინის ომის მსვლელობის გაშუქება თურქულ მედიაში, განსაკუთრებით კი სოციალური მედიაში და ყოველივე ეს როგორ ზემოქმედებს დაინტერესებულ ქვეყნებს შორის ურთიერთობებზე. ამ მიზნით, შერჩეულ იქნა 6 საინფორმაციო არხის Twitter-ის (2023 წლის ივნისი-ივლისი-აგვისტო) პოსტები. ნაშრომზე მუშაობისას გამოყენებულ იქნება „დისკურსული ანალიზის“ მეთოდი.

**საკვანძო სიტყვები:** რუსეთ-უკრაინის ომი, სახალხო დიპლომატია, თურქული მედია, Twitter.

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**Introduction.** Public diplomacy, a Cold War concept, is defined as an area of activity of international relations and communication process management. Media is used as a public diplomacy tool due to its ability to reach interlocutors quickly, easily, and effectively (Baritci, 2023)

All countries that are leaders in the globalizing world benefit from the power of media in the international arena (Ertekin, 2012). Media is the greatest power in conveying the activities of states (Yıldırım, 2015). States especially need international media organizations that will present developments regarding foreign policy to the world public from their own perspectives. Public diplomacy has a significant place in this understanding that states have (Baritci, 2023). Among the

application areas of public diplomacy, media stands out thanks to its power to reach people all over the world and create a certain impact on them (Yıldırım, 2015). Public diplomacy is defined in its broadest sense as “the process by which a government communicates with foreign publics to create an understanding of its nation's ideas and ideals, institutions and culture, as well as national goals and current policies” (Tuch, 1993). Technological developments have one of the biggest shares in the diversification and development of public diplomacy practices over time. In this process, media has emerged as the most important element in countries' ability to tell their own stories to others in the context of public diplomacy (Baritci, 2023).

The media affects many events, from the conversations of people around the world in their daily lives to the activities of senior executives and politicians (Bektaş, 2013). The role played by the media in determining the agenda is "not only bringing certain events and situations to the agenda, but also affecting the order of importance within the agenda itself" (İnceoğlu, 2015). What makes the media so important in terms of public diplomacy is its agenda-setting power. Although states attach great importance to international media organizations in their public diplomacy activities, naturally they cannot always control the flow of information. In other words, when the situation is evaluated from the perspective of public diplomacy, while states tell their own stories to gain legitimacy in the world public opinion, other media organizations continue to tell the stories of others. Therefore, the reflections of the developments in the world in the international media are of great importance (Kavoğlu, 2013).

As for one of the most popular forms of media, the emergence of social media has had a profound impact on political communication, transforming the ways of disseminating political information, forming public opinion, and engaging citizens in political processes. Social media platforms have democratized political communication, allowing individuals to voice their opinions, engage in discussions, and mobilize for collective action (Chadwick, 2017). Social media has revolutionized the distribution of political information and the shaping of the political agenda (Gibson & McAllister, 2017). Moreover, social media platforms are an alternative source of news for many users, facilitating the spread of information. Twitter, for example, provides a platform for collective action that allows citizens to rally around common causes and challenge political authorities (Lotan, 2011).

Turkey has been actively pursuing a peace-oriented policy in public diplomacy and world politics for the last 20 years. This approach, which reflects Atatürk's phrase "Peace at home, peace in the world", focuses on good relations with neighbors and the resolution of conflicts through negotiations. In this context, Turkey actively

undertakes a mediation role and produces peace-oriented solutions by bringing the parties together. Another important actor of public diplomacy and peace studies is the media, along with the states. The power of the media in establishing peace, in its constructive mediating role and in creating effective public support is undeniable.

In the light of this information, this research aims to determine, in the most general sense, whether the peace-oriented mediation approach of Turkish public diplomacy is seen in the Turkish media. The approach of the Turkish media in the Russia-Ukraine war, which started in February 2022 when Russian President Vladimir Putin declared a "special military operation" in Ukraine, was under scrutiny.

In this context, covering the last year of the war, between 5 October 2022 and 5 October 2023, the accounts of the 5 newspapers (Hürriyet, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Sözcü and Yeni Şafak) X (Twitter) that best represent Turkey's media structure, with their reading, following rates and ideological stances, were examined with Content Analysis and Ego Analysis. The aim of this analysis is to determine what kind of language the Turkish media used during the Ukraine-Russia war. In this context, answers to the following questions were sought in the research:

How many total tweets did each media platform post in the last year? What percentage of these tweets are about the Ukraine-Russia war?

1. Has the rate of war-related news decreased monthly in the last year??
2. What language was used in the context of Positive, Negative and Neutral in war-related news in the last year?
3. What is the month-based Tone Distribution and Ego Analysis of news tweets about the Russia-Ukraine war?
4. What are the prominent word bubbles from war-related tweets?
5. Does the Turkish media's presentation of the war coincide with Turkish policy?

The follower numbers of the X accounts of these newspapers are as follows: Hürriyet 4.3 million, Sabah 2.2 million, Cumhuriyet 3.5 million, Sözcü 1.7 million and Yeni Şafak 1.1 million. The appearances of newspapers' X accounts are as in the table.



## FINDINGS

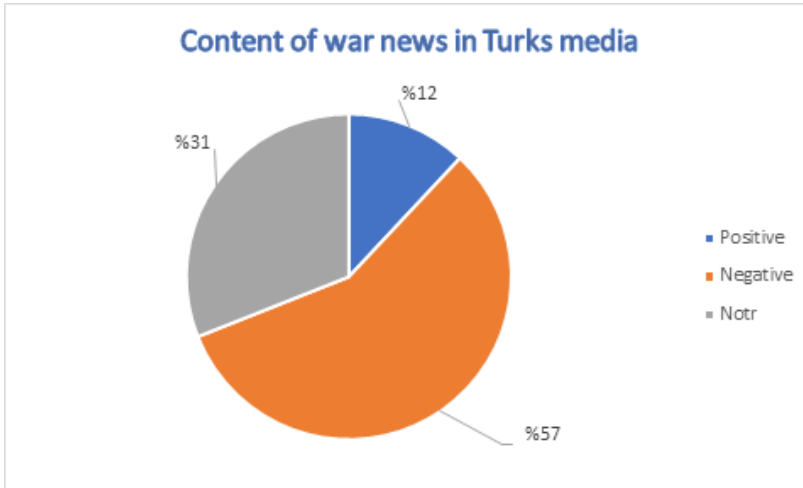
### Number and Total Volume of Russia-Ukraine War News in Turkish Media

The total volumes of tweets and the total number of news stories shared about the Russia-Ukraine war in the Turkish media in the last year are as follows;

Pages	Total Volume	Russia-Ukraine War
HÜRRİYET	42.3 K	406
SABAHA	61.3 K	404
CUMHURİYET	84.1 K	245
YENİ ŞAFAK	44. K	640
SÖZCÜ	75.1 K	640

Turkish media made an average of 467 news stories about the Russia-Ukraine war in X in the last year. News about the Russia-Ukraine war has decreased month by month in 2023. In the last months of 2023, almost no news was made. The visibility of the war in the media has completely decreased. Another noteworthy data in the table is that Cumhuriyet newspaper, which is left-oriented and has the highest value in terms of news volume, reported less about the war compared to other newspapers. Hürriyet and Sabah newspapers, which are right-leaning and positioned in the center, made news at almost the same rates. The Islamic-leaning Yeni Şafak newspaper and the left-leaning Sözcü newspapers made the same number of news.

### Content of Russia-Ukraine War News in Turkish Media



In the tweets of the five newspapers included in the analysis, negative words were used in 57% of the news about the Russia-Ukraine war. Negative words such as war, death, destruction, injury, against, reaction, retreat and challenge come to the fore in news content. On the other hand, the usage rates of positive constructive

words such as peace, agreement and reconciliation remained at 12%. The usage rate of neutral words is 31%. Despite Turkey's constructive, conciliatory, mediator and peace-oriented approach, Turkish media aims to increase reading rates by using more negative words for war.

## Data by Newspapers

### Hürriyet/All News Sharings

#### General View

Volume Information

Number of Shares

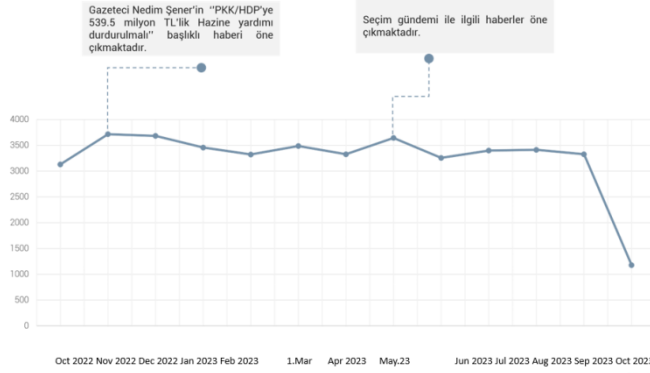
42.3K

Views

185.4B

Access

3.3B



Hürriyet Newspaper shared a total of 42.3 thousand tweets between 5 October 2022 and 5 October 2023. These Tweets reached 185.4 billion views and 3.3 billion Reach. The most seen news is generally related to Türkiye news and domestic politics.

### Hürriyet/Russia-Ukraine War Posts

#### Russia-Ukraine

#### War News

Number of Shares

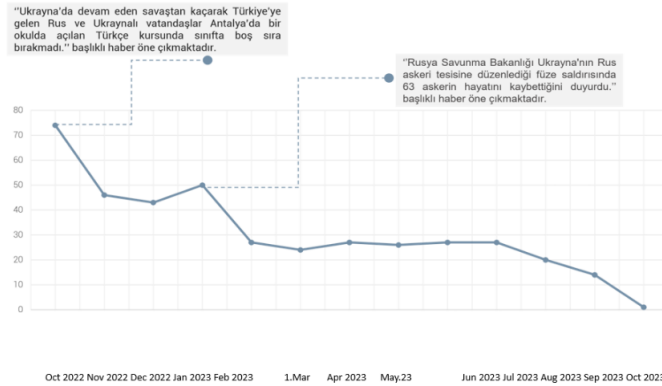
406

Views

1.7 B

Access

31M



Hürriyet's Russia/Ukraine War posts between October 5, 2022 and October 5, 2023 are 406 in total. These Tweets reached 1.7 billion views and 31 million Reach. The prominent news is mostly about Russian and Ukrainian citizens who came to Turkey from the war.

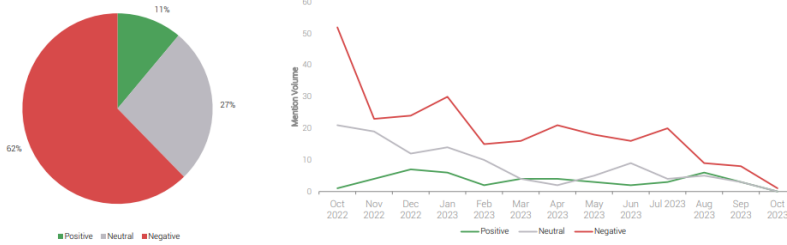


## Hürriyet/Word Analysis: Frequently Used Words

Words	Volume	Words	Volume
Ukraine	241	Russia-Ukraine	39
Russia	179	flash	35
war	167	news	29
Putin	56	Erdogan	27
Latest situation in the Ukrainian war	84	Russian	27
first	41	came	24
new	40	explained	46
Zelensky	40	EU	12

The first 5 words that stand out most frequently in Hürriyet's posts about the Russia-Ukraine War are Ukraine, Russia, war, Putin, the latest situation in the Ukraine war.

## Tone Distribution of Hürriyet/Savaş News – Ego Analysis Volume Information



When Hürriyet examines the posts about the Russia/Ukraine War, 62% consists of Negative, 27% Neutral and 11% Positive content. Hürriyet's use of more negative words about the war reveals that it is trying to attract attention by revealing more of the horror of war. The content of a more constructive discourse is 11%.

## Sabah/All News Shares

### General View

Volume Information

Number of Shares

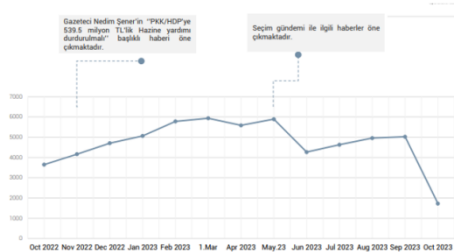
**61.3K**

Views

**159.9B**

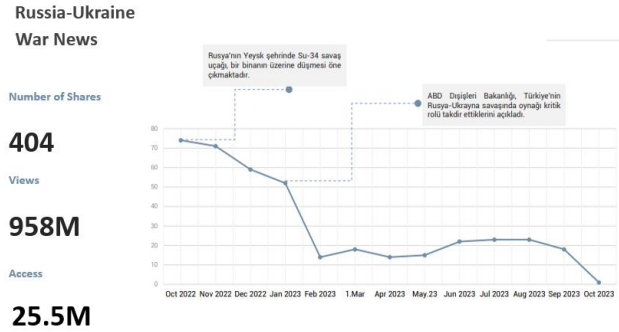
Access

**4.3B**



Sabah Newspaper shared a total of 61.3 thousand tweets between 5 October 2022 and 5 October 2023. These Tweets reached 159.9 billion views and 4.3 billion Reach. News content is focused on domestic politics, similar to Hürriyet.

### Sabah/Russia-Ukraine War Shares



Sabah's Russia/Ukraine War posts between October 5, 2022 and October 5, 2023 are 404 in total. These Tweets reached 958 Million views and 25 Million Reach. America's appreciation of Turkey's critical role in mediation is at the forefront of the news.

### Sabah/Word Analysis: Frequently Used Words

Words	Volume	Words	Volume
Russia	300	grain	48
Ukraine	280	USA	47
Russia-Ukraine	131	President Erdogan	43
war	158	continue	39
President	104	Foreign affairs	39
State	80	did	39
Minister	79	came	38
Putin	70	Defense	37
Erdogan	66	minister	36
Türkiye	52	meeting	20

The words Sabah uses most frequently in its posts about the Russia-Ukraine War are Russia, Ukraine, Russia-Ukraine, war, president.

## Tone Distribution of Morning/War News – Ego Analysis Volume Information



Sabah's posts about the Russia/Ukraine War are 56% consists of Negative, 31% Neutral and 13% Positive content.

## Cumhuriyet/All News Sharings

### General View

Volume Information

Number of Shares

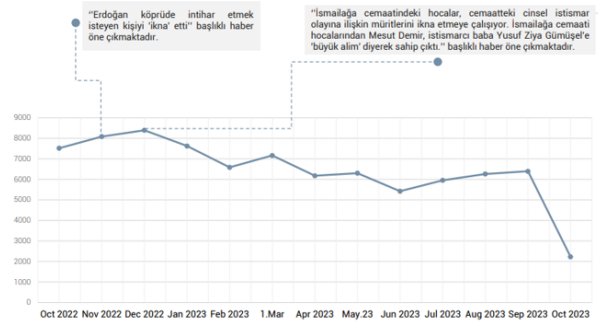
84.1K

Views

297.6B

Access

7.5B



Cumhuriyet Newspaper shared a total of 84.1 thousand tweets between 5 October 2022 and 5 October 2023. These Tweets reached 297.6 billion views and 7.5 billion Reach.

## Republic /Russia-Ukraine War Posts

Russia-Ukraine

War News

Number of Shares

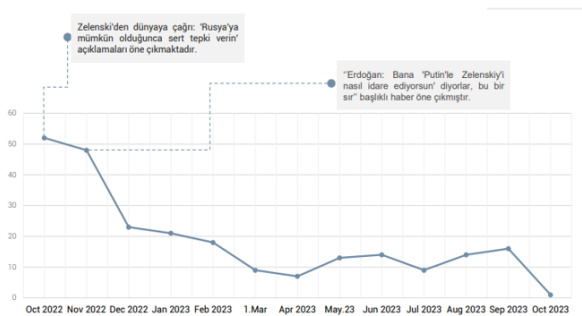
245

Views

850M

Access

17.7M



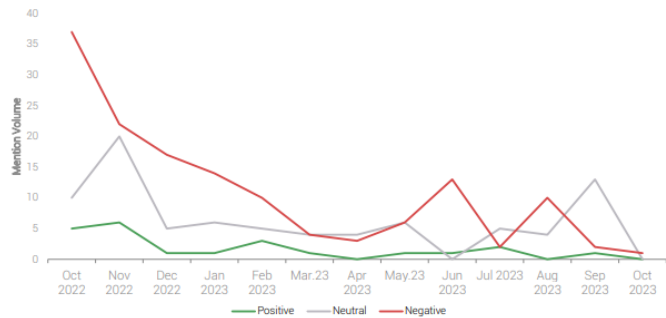
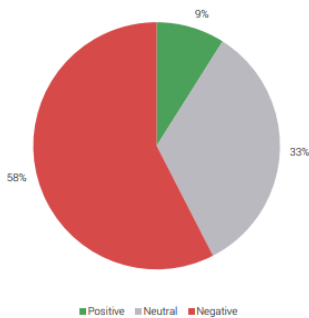
The Republic's Russia/Ukraine War posts between October 5, 2022 and October 5, 2023 are 245 in total. These Tweets reached 850 million views and 17 million Reach. The news about how Erdogan maintains the balance between the two countries attracts attention.

**Republic / Word Analysis: Frequently Used Words**

Words	Volume	Words	Volume
Ukraine	108	explanation	23
Russia	83	claim	11
war	74	Russia-Ukraine	9
Zelensky	29	reaction	9
Putin	18	output	9
USA	15	World	8
opposite	13	attack	8

The words Cumhuriyet uses most frequently in its posts about the Russia-Ukraine War are Ukraine, Russia, war, Zelenski and Putin.

**Tone Distribution of Republic / War News – Ego Analysis Volume Information**



When Cumhuriyet's posts about the Russia/Ukraine War are examined, 58% consists of Negative, 33% Neutral and 9% Positive content.

## Spokesperson/All News Sharings

### General View

Volume Information

Number of Shares

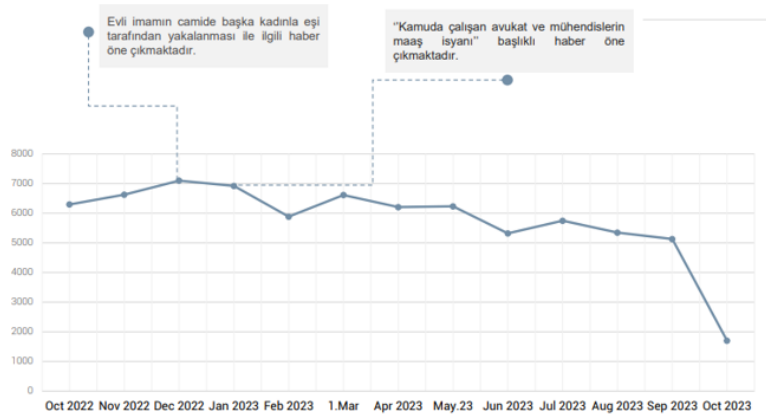
75.1K

Views

278B

Access

6.3B



Sözcü Newspaper shared a total of 75.1 thousand tweets between 5 October 2022 and 5 October 2023. These Tweets reached 278 billion views and 6.3 billion Reach.

## Sözcü /Russia-Ukraine War Shares

### Russia-Ukraine War News

Number of Shares

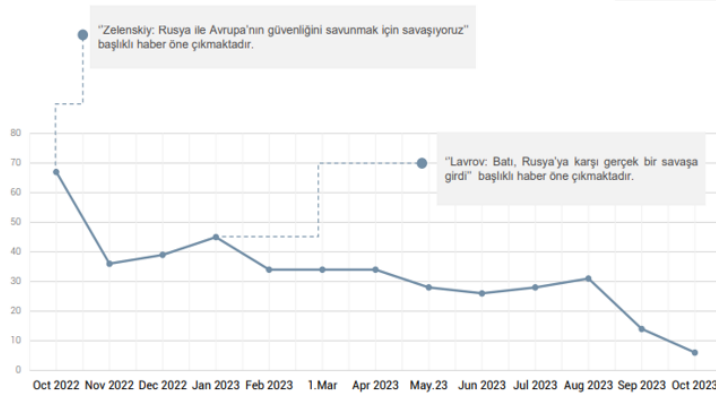
640

Views

680M

Access

30.6M



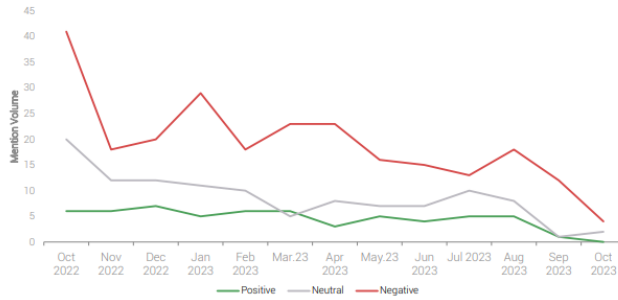
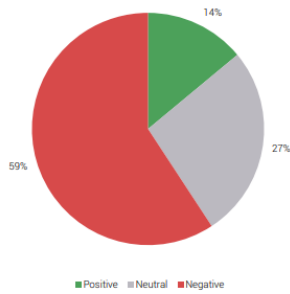
Sözcü's Russia/Ukraine War posts between October 5, 2022 and October 5, 2023 are 640 in total. These Tweets reached 680 million views and 30 Million Reach

## Word Analysis: Frequently Used Words

Words	Volume	Words	Volume
Russia	323	the plane	18
Ukraine	322	opposite	17
war	128	new	16
Russia-Ukraine	78	UAV	16
Zelenskiy	64	NATO	14
Putin	44	Türkiye	14
USA	36	EU	13

The words that Sözcü uses most frequently in its posts about the Russia-Ukraine War are Russia, Ukraine, war, Russia-Ukraine, Zelenskiy.

## Tone Distribution of Spokesperson / War News – Ego Analysis Volume Information



Sözcü's posts about the Russia/Ukraine War, 59% consists of Negative, 27% Neutral and 14% Positive content.

## Yeni Şafak/All News Sharings

## General View

Volume Information

Number of Shares

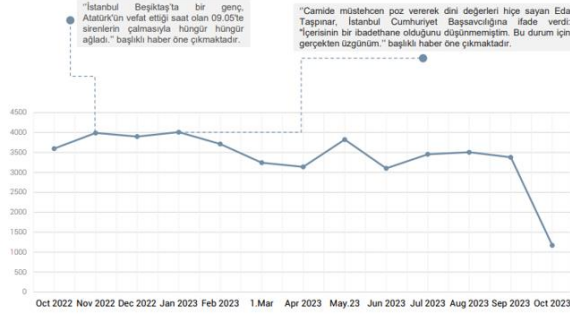
44K

Views

54B

Access

3.2B



Yeni Şafak Newspaper shared a total of 44 thousand tweets between 5 October 2022 and 5 October 2023. These Tweets reached 54 billion views and 3.2 billion Reach.

## Yeni Şafak /Russia-Ukraine War Posts

Russia-Ukraine

War News

Number of Shares

640

Views

680M

Access

30.6M



Yeni Şafak's Russia/Ukraine War posts between October 5, 2022, and October 5, 2023 are 640 in total. These Tweets reached 680 million views and 30 million Reach.

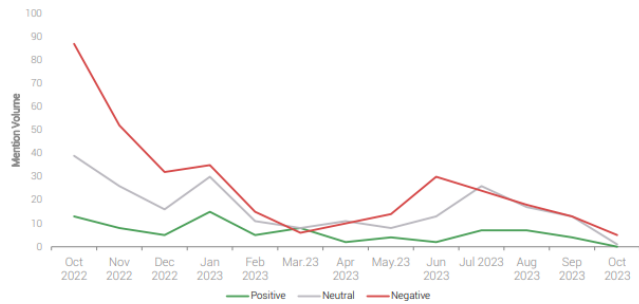
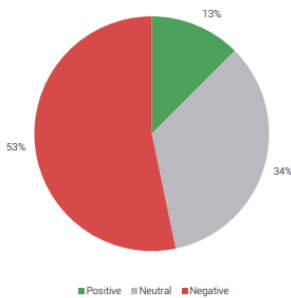
## Yeni Şafak /Word Analysis: Frequently Used Words

Words	Volume	Words	Volume
Russia	428	Erdogan	86
Ukraine	422	USA	80
war	225	President Erdogan	73
President	124	grain	64
State	106	Türkiye	63

Putin	101	Russian	54
Russia-Ukraine	99	opposite	49
President	95	Defense	49
Zelenskiy	46	Defense	49

The words most frequently used by Yeni Şafak in its posts about the Russia-Ukraine War are Russia, Ukraine, war, president, state, Putin.

### Tone Distribution of Yeni Şafak /War News – Ego Analysis Volume Information



Yeni Şafak's posts about the Russia/Ukraine War 53% consists of Negative, 34% Neutral and 13% Positive content.

**Conclusion.** Turkish media in the last year has made an average of 467 news stories about the Russia-Ukraine war in each media. News about the Russia-Ukraine war has decreased month by month in 2023. In the last months of the year, there was almost no news. The visibility of the war in the media has completely decreased. In the tweets of a newspaper included in the analysis, negative words were used 57% of the time in news about the Russia-Ukraine war. Negative words such as war, death, destruction, injury, against, reaction, retreat and challenge come to the fore in news content. On the other hand, the usage rates of positive constructive words such as peace, agreement and reconciliation remained at 12%. The usage rate of neutral words is 31%. Despite Turkey's constructive, conciliatory, mediator and peace-oriented approach, Turkish media aims to increase reading rates by using more negative words for war.

Hürriyet Newspaper shared a total of 42.3 thousand tweets between 5 October 2022 and 5 October 2023. These Tweets reached 185.4 billion views and 3.3 billion Reach. Hürriyet's Russia/Ukraine War posts are 406 in total. These Tweets reached



1.7 billion views and 31 million Reach. When the most used words are examined, the first 5 words that stand out are Ukraine, Russia, war, and Putin. When the tone distribution is examined, 62% consists of Negative, 27% Neutral and 11% Positive content.

Sabah Newspaper shared a total of 61.3 thousand tweets between 5 October 2022 and 5 October 2023. These Tweets reached 159.9 billion views and 4.3 billion Reach. Sabah's Russia/Ukraine War posts are 404 in total. These Tweets reached 958 million views and 25 Million Reach. When the most used words are examined, the first 5 words that stand out are Russia, Ukraine, President, War and State. When the tone distribution is examined, 56% consists of Negative, 31% Neutral and 13% Positive content.

Cumhuriyet Newspaper shared a total of 84.1 thousand tweets between 5 October 2022 and 5 October 2023. These Tweets reached 297.6 billion views and 7.5 Billion Reach. Republic's Russia/Ukraine War posts are 245 in total. These Tweets reached 850 million views and 17 Million Reach. When the most used words are examined, the first 5 words that stand out are Ukraine, Russia, War, Zelenski and War. When the Tone Distribution is examined, 58% consists of Negative, 33% Neutral and 9% Positive content.

Yeni Şafak Newspaper shared a total of 44 thousand tweets between 5 October 2022 and 5 October 2023. These Tweets reached 54 billion views and 3.2 billion Reach. Yeni Şafak's Russia/Ukraine War posts are 640 in total. These Tweets reached 680 million views and 30 million Reach. When the most used words are examined, the first 5 words that stand out are Russia, Ukraine, President, State and Putin. When the Tone Distribution is examined, 53% consists of Negative, 34% Neutral and 13% Positive content.

Sözcü Newspaper shared a total of 75.1 thousand tweets between 5 October 2022 and 5 October 2023. These Tweets reached 278 billion views and 6.3 billion Reach. Sözcü's Russia/Ukraine War posts are 640 in total. These Tweets reached 680 million views and 30 million Reach. When the most used words are examined, the first 5 words that stand out are Russia, Ukraine, War, Zelenskiy and Putin. When the Tone Distribution is examined, 59% consists of Negative, 27% Neutral and 14% Positive content.

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tes-i- <https://twitter.com/gazetesozcu?t=TbmHw-mpJdXhjS65bxOTuA&s=08>Yeni

Şafak gazetesi- [https://twitter.com/yenisafak?t=8yMyll7Iz\\_tkjF\\_kQRrUBQ&s=08](https://twitter.com/yenisafak?t=8yMyll7Iz_tkjF_kQRrUBQ&s=08)

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[https://twitter.com/Hurriyet?t=tmicY\\_rsGQ4jouTLwZcMQ&s=08](https://twitter.com/Hurriyet?t=tmicY_rsGQ4jouTLwZcMQ&s=08)

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