

**CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED NEWSPAPER
ARTICLES: A CASE OF FICTIONAL AND NON-FICTIONAL ACCOUNTS**

**SEÇKİ GAZETE HABERLERİNİN ELEŞTİREL SÖYLEM ANALİZİ:
KURGU VE KURGUSAL OLMAYAN ANLATILAR**

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ABSTRACT

Regardless of the specific fields or professions we are engaged with, our regular encounter with news media offers fertile ground for language studies. For example, in the realm of literary studies, a discerning analysis of novels necessitates a foundational grasp of language, power, and representation. As in the literary studies, media offers two modes of representations, namely fiction and non-fiction. Most of media's coverage are regarded non-fiction. However, if the coverage were non-factual, in other words not based on facts or manipulated, then it can simply transform into fiction. The present study endeavours to explore the utilisation of linguistic approaches, specifically Critical Discourse Analysis, as a fundamental tool for comprehending daily media events within the margins of fiction and non-fiction. By delving into the application of such approaches, this research seeks to enhance our understanding of the intricate interplay of language, power, and representation that permeates contemporary media discourse. The paper aims to conduct a comparative analysis of two newspaper articles addressing the crisis between Türkiye and Russia following the incident of Türkiye downing a Russian warplane. The selected articles are sourced from reputable Turkish newspaper 'Daily Sabah' and the Russian newspaper 'Sputnik'. The study begins with a succinct overview of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a foundational theoretical framework. Subsequently, a comprehensive analysis of the newspaper articles will be undertaken, employing both macro and micro-structural levels to uncover implicit ideological positions on the same incident. The macro-structural examination encompasses the scrutiny of headlines and leads within the articles, while the micro-structural assessment involves an analysis of discursive strategies, including lexical choices and presuppositions. This study concludes that linguistic approaches that enable the field experts to unpack the language can also be employed by diverse or non-professional readership for interpreting events in everyday life as in the example of critical discourse analysis.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Macro and Micro Structural Levels, Newspapers Articles.*

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ÖZ

Çalıştığımız belirli alanlar veya meslekler ne olursa olsun, haber medyasıyla düzenli olarak karşılaşmamız dil çalışmaları açısından bizlere verimli bir zemin sunmaktadır. Örneğin, Edebiyat çalışmaları alanındaki eserlerin kapsayıcı bir analizi için dil, güç ilişkileri ve temsiller hakkında temel düzeyde de olsa bilgi sahibi olmak kaçınılmazdır. Edebiyat çalışmalarında olduğu gibi medya da okurlarına kurgu ve kurgu dışı olmak üzere iki farklı anlatı biçimi sunar. Medya kapsamının çoğu kurgusal olmayan olarak kabul edilir. Bununla birlikte, kapsam olgusal değilse, başka bir deyişle gerçeklere dayanmıyorsa veya manipüle edilmişse, bu durumda anlatı basitçe kurguya dönüşebilir. Bu çalışma, dilsel yaklaşımların, özellikle Eleştirel Söylem Analizinin, günlük medya olaylarını kurgu ve kurgu dışı sınırları içinde kavramak için temel bir araç olarak kullanımını araştırmayı çalışmaktadır. Bu tür yaklaşımların uygulanmasını inceleyerek, araştırma, güncel medya söylemine nüfuz eden karmaşık dil, güç ve temsilin etkileşimini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, Türkiye'nin bir Rus savaş uçağını düşürmesi olayının ardından Türkiye ile Rusya arasındaki krizi ele alan Türk ve Rus iki gazete haberinin karşılaştırmalı bir analizini yapmayı amaçlamaktadır. Seçilen haberler popüler Türk gazetesi "Daily Sabah" ve Rus gazetesi "Sputnik" ten alınmıştır. Çalışma, temel bir teorik çerçeve olarak Eleştirel Söylem Analizine (CDA) kısa ve genel bir çerçeve ile başlar. Daha sonra, aynı olayla ilgili örtük ideolojik konumları ortaya çıkarmak için hem makro hem de mikro yapısal düzeyler kullanılarak gazete haberlerinin detaylı bir analizini sunar. Makro-yapısal inceleme, haberlere konu olan manşetlerin incelenmesini kapsarken, mikro-yapısal değerlendirme, sözcük seçimleri ve varsayımlar dahil olmak üzere söylemsel stratejilerin bir analizini içerir. Bu çalışma, daha çok dilbilim uzmanları tarafından dilin özelliklerini ortaya çıkaran dilbilimsel yaklaşımların, eleştirel söylem analizi örneğinde olduğu gibi aslında günlük yaşamdaki olayları yorumlamak için farklı veya profesyonel olmayan okuyucular tarafından da kullanılabilmesi sonucuna varır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Eleştirel Söylem Analizi, Makro ve Mikro Yapı Düzeyleri, Gazete Haberleri.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, access to news articles, various internet sites or media channels have become easy. Within this framework, the public needs to be aware of the hidden ideological discursive techniques that prevail in these fields, especially in news media. As Bell (1991) points out, the role of journalists is to make up stories instead of writing news articles. As the cliché opening of 'Once upon a time' in fairy tales, the journalists begin their story with "fifteen people were injured today when a bus plunged..." (p. 147). Hence, the journalists are writing about their own opinions, ideology, and values to plant the seeds of their thoughts into the minds of their readers. To create awareness and evaluate stories we are told in the media; we need discourse analysis to gain critical stance towards these kinds of stories in social media.

The aim of this paper is to compare two articles on the same event concerning the crisis between Türkiye and Russia after Türkiye's downing of a Russian warplane. The chosen articles are from

Turkish newspaper ‘Daily Sabah’ and a Russian newspaper ‘Sputnik’. Firstly, a brief review will be given of the Critical Discourse Analysis to provide a theoretical base for the study. Then, the analysis of newspaper articles will be made in terms of macro and micro-structural levels in order to surface any hidden ideological positions. The macro-structural level will comprise of headline and lead of the articles whilst the micro-structural level contains the discursive strategies such as lexical choice and presupposition.

2. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Wodak (2001) argues that the role of Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) is mainly concerned with “analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (p. 2). The use of language in discourse especially in newspaper articles can play a key role in the lives of readers. Fowler (1991) refers to language as a biased medium to construct specific ideological positions and resembles it to a blurry window. It can be inferred that language use is a powerful weapon so as to shape and control the public opinion and employ one’s ideological values. Everyday millions of people turn to media or newspapers to find out what’s going on in the world, however, Fowler (1991) states that ‘news’ as people rely on to find out ‘reality’ is actually nothing, but a ‘product’ served by particular bureaucratic industries in order to dominate their ideological power to the mass audience. Hence, with the means of CDA the analysts try to discover the hidden messages within the texts and want to expose the inequality and power abuse (van Dijk, 2003) also at the same time they help to enhance consciousness among people as this follows the route to emancipation (Fairclough, 2001).

According to Meyer (2001) CDA should be considered as an approach rather than one method which constitutes of extralinguistic factors such as society, culture, and ideology. He also points out that discourses appear in society and to understand these discourses, one needs to seek the meanings in its social environments, structures, or actors. As noted by Bell (1998), “[m]edia ‘discourse’ is important both for what it reveals about a society and because it also itself contributes to the character of society” (pp. 64-65). For the textual analysis of two newspaper articles, CDA has been chosen to discover the implicit messages and ideological standpoints. CDA includes more than one method and in this study more focus will be given to van Dijk’s Socio-cognitive approach as Li (2010) suggests, this approach is mainly useful to find out how discourse is applied to various fields so as to expose particular ideologies. In his framework, van Dijk uses two kinds of structures called macro and micro-structures when analysing news articles. The former analyses the ‘thematic’ and the overall aspect of a text while the latter concerns the

discursive techniques in the text such as lexical choice and syntactic features of articles (Fairclough, 1995).

In this part, the basic features, and the main focus of CDA for a better understanding of discourse has been reviewed. In the next section, the context of the paper will be presented so as to create awareness and gain insight about both newspapers and the intended topic to be analysed.

2.1. Context of the Study

The two newspaper articles chosen to be analysed are 'Daily Sabah' and 'Sputnik'. 'Daily Sabah' is a daily published online English newspaper in Türkiye. It provides various information and news at national and international levels. It was founded in 2014 and known to be in favour of the ruling government 'Justice and Development Party' in Türkiye. On the other hand, the Russian news agency 'Sputnik' is owned and run by the Russian government since November 2014. 'Sputnik' is online English news which also contains a radio. In both of these papers, the event concerning the downing of a Russian SU-24 fighter jet on 24 November 2015 by Turkish armed-forces following the violation of Turkish airspace will be analysed via CDA approach. Before this event, the relations between Russian and Turkish government were quite satisfactory as the two countries were trade partners. For instance, Russia provided most of Türkiye's energy and there were many Turkish products ranging fruit and vegetables to gear imported to Russia. However, after Türkiye downs Russian plane, the Russian government put restrictions on Turkish imports and imposed economic sanctions in diverse fields of economic cooperation with Türkiye. The two articles are about the same event regarding Türkiye's demand for an emergency meeting with NATO after the incident to inform its allies. With the use of CDA, the paper aims to find out if the articles are providing facts either based on fiction or non-fiction or using specific linguistic choices to strengthen their own ideological perspectives and attitudes.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

In light of van Dijk's (2001) influential insights, it becomes evident that undertaking a comprehensive discourse analysis is a formidable task, where even a seemingly modest paragraph may demand an extensive investment of time, spanning months, and culminating in numerous pages of thorough examination. With this fact in mind, and mindful of the constraints posed by the present paper, a focused approach will be adopted to inspect the articles primarily through the lens of macro-structure. This entails an exploration of elements such as the articles' headline, which serves as the initial point of engagement for readers, and the lead, a crucial segment that encapsulates the essence of the article's content, all within a succinct and attention-grabbing narrative.

Simultaneously, attention will be directed towards the micro-structural level, where discursive practices play a key role in shaping the articles' tone and message. A comprehensive analysis of lexical choices will be conducted, for it is through the selection of words and phrases that the writer conveys subtle nuances, evokes emotions, or infuses biases. Furthermore, the examination of presuppositions will illuminate the underlying assumptions and beliefs inherent in the article's construction, potentially revealing the writer's stance or ideological influences.

By navigating the balance between macro and micro-level analysis, a more profound understanding of the articles' communicative strategies and intended impacts can be attained. While the extensive scope of a complete discourse analysis remains unattainable within the confines of this paper, the chosen approach promises to yield valuable insights, shedding light on the articles' overall structure and the interplay of language employed to convey meaning and persuasion.

3.1. Macro Structural Level

When embarking on a textual analysis, it is probably best to concentrate first on the general-thematic aspect of the discourse. Van Dijk (2001) also encourages to start with the topic of the text (macro-structural analysis) as it provides the reader with an overall understanding of the discourse. In order to comprehend the general idea of a discourse, 'headline' and 'lead sentences' play an important role. The headline and lead in an article come before any news items and together they present the essential parts of the text functioning as a summary which interests and catches the attention of its readers (van Dijk, 1988). As stated by Bell (1991), "[s]ome headline producers may create only summarising headlines, while others seek to highlight the most intriguing aspect of a story" (qtd. in Seo, 2013, p. 778). The Russian newspaper Sputnik prefers to use a metaphor in its headline:

"Turkey Hiding Under NATO's Wing After Strike on Russian Su-24"

According to Li (2010), metaphor besides being a language use is also a concept which can highlight someone's thoughts and views about a topic. Similarly, the use of metaphors affect our "cognitive experiences and predispose us to see aspects of reality in certain ways" (p. 3454). Hence, Sputnik tries to shape public opinion and construct its own ideological position by disparaging Turkish government. This title appears to be the summary of the whole discourse, giving the writers stance regarding the shooting event and justifying the act of Russia with such a language strategy. The intended message seems to be instead of standing behind its action, Türkiye has run off to its ally 'NATO' for protection and support just as a little boy runs and hides behind his mother after carrying out a harmful and careless action. Also, this title seems to portray

the image of Türkiye as timid, vulnerable and irresponsible of its actions. Therefore, it can be understood that the Russian government is proceeding to shape the public mind-set and social thinking implicitly by inflicting its own ideology and values via its news agency.

On the other hand, the headline of Daily Sabah, “NATO confirms information provided by Turkey, supports territorial integrity of its ally” can be regarded as the summary of whole text, giving factual information to its readers. As Seo (2013) notes, these kinds of headlines are called ‘highlighting headlines’ that are selected from a part of the discourse. Therefore, the aim of this title seems to inform its audience with the important points regarding the event without word-games to form a certain opinion among its readers.

Another important part in a text is the lead sentence. According to Bell (1991) the lead sentence is a “directional summary, a lens through which the point of the story is focused, and its news value magnified” (p.183). The lead sentence in Sputnik:

“Turkey’s downing of a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 could aggravate tensions between Russia and the West, US defense expert Dave Majumdar suggests.”

The lead sentence is a direct quote from an authority making a suggestion on the outcome of the event between Türkiye and Russia. This use of quotation from an expert figure may stimulate its reader’s minds and increase the credibility in such a story. Interestingly, the Russian article mentions the downing of their jet by Türkiye, but it does not point out the reason for this act which is the violation of Turkish airspace. Thus, the writer aims to focus our attention to a particular aspect or side as opposed to another (Bax, 2010). The suggestion in the lead sentence also reinforces the polarisation between Russia and the West and goes a step further to blame Türkiye. As van Dijk (2001) states, CDA is mainly interested in the ideologically biased discourses and how they polarise between in-groups and out-groups (us and them).

This polarisation can be achieved by “‘positive self-presentation and negative other presentation’, in which our good things and their bad things are emphasized, and our bad things and their good things are de-emphasized” (p. 103). In this case, the act of Russia is being de-emphasised and Türkiye is put on the spot to stress the bombing event and create discomfort towards Türkiye amongst the public. With the use of language, the newspaper’s stance seems to affect the minds and feelings of the public simultaneously shaping the national stance of society.

3.2. Micro Structural Level

In van Dijk's Socio-cognitive approach to CDA, "[m]icroanalysis ...identifies syntactic and lexical characteristics of newspaper style, and rhetorical features of news report" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 30). Hence, in this part some of the aspects of linguistic choices such as lexical meaning and presupposition will be considered to indicate any underlying messages embedded in newspaper articles.

- Lexical Choice

According to van Dijk (1988), lexical choice is "an eminent aspect of news discourse in which hidden opinions or ideologies may surface" (qtd. in Li, 2010, p. 177). Therefore, the use of words or phrases by the journalist can hint several messages about their implicit political stance and ideological values.

In Sputnik, there seems to be some words or sentences that portray Russia as a victim of a bombing act. In its headline, besides using a metaphor relating to Türkiye, it also writes only 'Russian Su-24' instead of adding the words 'fighter jet'. In addition, it employs words such as 'sinister', 'treacherous', 'irresponsible gesture' regarding Türkiye's act of bombing a Russian fighter jet to protect its airspace. This implies that Russia is depicting itself as a victim who has endured a horrible irresponsible action even though it was the Russian jet that crossed the border and violated Türkiye's airspace in the first place. With the use of such word plays, Sputnik is trying to focus the public attention to the bombing event and de-focus the airspace violation by the Russian jet.

In Daily Sabah's article, the use of dramatisation or emotive lexis could not be detected. Instead, many direct quotations from authoritative figures such as NATO Secretary, NATO ambassadors and Russia's defence ministry can be found. By this way, the article possibly emphasises its neutral political stance and intends to maintain a factual news report. Meanwhile, it seems to keep its neutral stance by stating the expressions against Türkiye, for example, "many expressed concern that Turkey did not escort the Russian warplane out of its airspace."

Interestingly, both articles in Daily Sabah and Sputnik can be seen to contradict each other with their statements. In Sputnik, the article claims that there was no violation of Turkish airspace by the Russian jet and Moscow could provide this with objective monitoring data. On the other hand, Daily Sabah states that both Türkiye and NATO have confirmed that the Russian jet violated Turkish airspace. As Bell (1998) notes "the daily happenings of our societies are expressed in the stories we are told in the media" (p. 64). Accordingly, the news that we consider facts can turn

out to be merely stories of particular political and institutional opinions. Thus, one should be very careful and without making definite conclusions instantly, try to surface the hidden messages and ideologies embedded within the text.

- Presupposition

Richardson (2007) notes that “[a] presupposition is a taken-for-granted implicit claim embedded within the explicit meaning of a text or utterance” (p. 63). Hence, the use of presupposition is important for CDA, as in discourse a particular ideology is generally hidden in the implicit meaning of a text. As Fairclough (1995) proposes, presupposition in a text attempts to convince the reader or listener to regard the ideological perspectives as common-sense assumptions. According to Reah (2002), the three common ways to presuppose a meaning is firstly with the use of state verbs such as stop, begin and continue. Secondly, using the definite article ‘the’ and possessive articles and thirdly a presupposition can be triggered by means of ‘wh-questions’. (qtd. in Richardson, 2007, p. 63).

In Sputnik, there seems to be several sentences that imply hidden messages. For instance, in the line, “Interestingly enough, the picture of a potential conflict depicted by the US expert looks as if it was Russia that struck first, not Turkey”. This sentence presupposes a conflict between Türkiye and Russia, and it was Türkiye who started this conflict, but the blame is being put on Russia. This presupposition may be a way to picture Russia as a victim in the eyes of the public and gain approval for its actions from the mass-audience. In addition, the sentence “both Turkish and NATO war planners are now wary of Russia’s potential response to Ankara’s treacherous and irresponsible gesture” suggests a common-sense notion that Türkiye and NATO are planning a war against Russia; however Russia is being careful and cautious against such an event. Again, Russia’s attempts to create positive and watchful image of itself in the minds of readers can be detected. As I noted above, Sputnik may possibly be using the strategy of polarisation in which Türkiye and NATO are depicted as war planners and Russia as an innocent victim of an irresponsible act. Van Dijk (2003) argues that by means of presupposition in discourse to manipulate readers, writers generally convey their ideological messages implicitly which enables them an area of less public criticism.

In Daily Sabah, the use of presupposition appears to be limited as the article consists of direct quotations to explain the situation and inform its readers. In one of its sentence, “the assessments of other NATO members supported the Turkish version of events”. This presupposes that there is more than one version to the bombing event. However, Daily Sabah by making such statements seems to support the Turkish version and states that after many assessments made by NATO

members; the Turkish version is considered to be accurate information therefore making the other versions to be false accusations.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has analysed two newspaper articles from opposing media channels using CDA to surface any hidden ideological viewpoints. Hence, the role of newspaper articles can be regarded as paving a way to shape the understanding of readers. In the Russian newspaper Sputnik, some usage of discourse techniques in its article can be detected. Firstly, it seems to put forward the intended message with its title and the use of metaphor. Sputnik appears to picture Türkiye as vulnerable and in need of protection after an irresponsible action even when that was not the case at all. Employing strategies in discourse such as presupposition and selecting its lexis appropriately, Sputnik seems to put the blame on Türkiye solely and portrays Russia as a victim.

Also, it can be regarded that Sputnik is trying to hide the act which triggered this issue by de-emphasising the Turkish airspace violation and emphasising the shooting event. Therefore, it may be noted that Sputnik aims to create an image in the public eye relating to its own ideology and political stance with the use of specific linguistic forms. On the contrary, the Turkish Daily Sabah seems to provide its readers with the important and insightful information without much discursive strategies. Its usage of mainly direct quotations from experts can hint that its focus is mainly on introducing its readers with the factual and evidence-based information. However, it seems that Sputnik's accounts of the event rested on biased and partial information as CDA analysis has demonstrated.

As such, Sputnik's purported accounts fall into the margins of fiction, manipulating national and international public perceptions. That being said, Türkiye had to take some deterrent measures to protect its sovereignty under the international law as well as through the representations of media. Lastly, given the limitations of the paper, only a small part has been considered and analysed. For further study, a much more detailed analysis which looks at different discursive techniques can be made from different media and countries for a better understanding of the discourse embedded in news articles.

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6. APPENDIXS**Appendix I. Daily Sabah**

NATO confirms information provided by Turkey, supports territorial integrity of its ally

DAILY SABAH WITH WIRES

ISTANBUL

Published November 24, 2015



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg addresses a press conference at the NATO headquarters in Brussels, on October 6, 2015, ahead of a meeting of the alliance's defence ministers later this week.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) underscored that it supports the territorial integrity of Turkey, while confirming the information provided by Turkey regarding Turkey's shooting down of a Russian fighter jet along the Syrian border, which was discussed in an "extraordinary" meeting Tuesday.

"As we have repeatedly made clear we stand in solidarity with Turkey and support the territorial integrity of our NATO ally, Turkey," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told a news conference after the meeting of the alliance's decision-making North Atlantic Council.

General Stoltenberg also said that the information obtained by NATO complies with information provided by other allies and Turkey, confirming that the Russian SU-24 jet violated Turkish airspace. Stoltenberg also added that he has called on all parties to be prudent and to contribute to reducing tensions after Turkey downed a Russian jet which violated its airspace regulations.

Stoltenberg also stated that the situation is serious, but that he hopes for renewed contacts between Turkey and Russia. He said the assessments of other NATO members supported the Turkish version of events.

NATO deputy spokesperson, Carmen Romero, added that "NATO is monitoring the situation closely" and are in close contact with Turkish authorities.

Meanwhile, NATO ambassadors called on Ankara to show "cool-headedness" on Tuesday following an emergency meeting in Brussels.

Diplomats present at the meeting told Reuters that while none of the 28 NATO envoys defended Russia's actions, many expressed concern that Turkey did not escort the Russian warplane out of its airspace.

At the request of Turkey, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) held the extraordinary meeting at 6 p.m. local time (1600 GMT).

Meanwhile, the ambassadors of UN's permanent member countries in Ankara have been summoned to the Turkish foreign ministry. In addition, Russia's Charge D'affaires was summoned to Turkey's Foreign Ministry, while Moscow summoned Turkish Defense Attache in Moscow to the Russian Defense Ministry. Russia's defence ministry said it viewed the downing of the jet as an unfriendly act and it was working on a package of measures to respond to such incidents.

"We consider the actions of the Turkish Air Force an unfriendly act," the ministry said in a statement, adding that it had issued an official protest to the Turkish defence attache.

Turkish jets shot down a warplane believed to be a Russian-type SU-24 after it violated Turkish airspace near Turkey's southern border with Syria, Turkish presidential sources said.

The warplane went down near Syria's northwestern Turkmen town of Bayirbucak.

Turkey's military said the downed foreign jet was given 10 warnings in five minutes before being shot down by two F-16 warplanes.

"A warplane of unknown nationality that breached Turkish airspace over Hatay's [province] Yayladagi region at 9.20 a.m. [0720 GMT] was alerted 10 times in five minutes," Turkish General Staff said in a statement, adding that the F-16s' response was in line with rules of engagement.

The military added that Turkish planes patrolling the region encountered the warplane at 09.24 a.m. local time.

According to footage from the scene, the plane's two pilots could be seen ejecting safely before the aircraft hit the ground in a huge of plume of smoke.

2. Sputnik



Turkey Hiding Under NATO's Win After Strike on Russian Su-24

POLITICS

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Turkey's downing of a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 could aggravate tensions between Russia and the West, US defense expert Dave Majumdar suggests.

© AP PHOTO While Ankara insists that the Sukhoi Su-24 bomber violated its airspace, Moscow has provided objective monitoring data showing that there had not been any violation of Turkish airspace and the Russian jet was shot down on the Syrian side of the border.

In the wake of the incident Turkey has requested an emergency meeting with other NATO members, Dave Majumdar, the defense editor for The National Interest, narrates in one of his recent articles.

Citing US Central Command spokesman Col Steve Warren, the expert notes that US officials have denied "any involvement with the incident" and that they are now "working to establish exactly where the plane was when it was shot down."

The expert calls attention to the fact that as the Russian pilots immediately came under fire from militants on the ground as they parachuted down from the damaged plane. He classifies the actions of the insurgents as a war crime and a violation of the Geneva Convention.

But what are the possible consequences of the incident?

"If a conflict comes to a head, then there is plenty of room for serious military action," Majumdar suggests.

"The Turkish air force has more than 650 modern combat aircraft including F-16C/Ds, upgraded F-4 Phantoms and 737-based AWACS platforms," he notes, adding that Ankara could potentially expel Russia's expeditionary force deployed in Syria in the event of a direct conflict.



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The American expert speculates that Turkey's Navy Force (sixteen frigates, eight corvettes and dozen diesel-electric submarines) could make an attempt to cut off the Russian Black Sea Fleet from the Mediterranean.

"It could also try to invoke NATO's Article 5 clause — but that might not apply in this situation," Majumdar notes.

Interestingly enough, the picture of a potential conflict depicted by the US expert looks as if it was Russia that struck first, not Turkey.

Much in the same vein writes Andrew Bowen, Ph.D. is a Senior Fellow and the Director of Middle East Studies at the Center for the National Interest.

"The Turkish President's request for an extraordinary meeting of NATO ambassadors today in Brussels will likely serve as an opportunity for Ankara to request additional support both militarily and politically to ensure Turkey's border security, but also, as a way to deter any substantial Russian response to this incident. Erdogan will also likely use this as an opportunity to push the US to extend its deployment of Patriot Missiles along Turkey's border," Bowen elaborates.

If the conflict escalates, Russian-Western relations would likely deteriorate, experts note.



Apparently, both Turkish and NATO war planners are now wary of Russia's potential response to Ankara's treacherous and irresponsible gesture. It is also possible that some Turkish officials could have an interest in a hasty and emotional move from Russia in the wake of the attack.

However, the Kremlin has stated clearly that Russia is not going to wage a war against Turkey.

"We're not going to wage a war against Turkey," Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov told journalists on Wednesday, adding that Russia's attitude toward the Turkish people has not changed.

However, the Kremlin has a number of questions to Ankara.

Sergei Lavrov remarked that the incident looked like a preplanned provocation.

"We have serious doubts it was an accident and prepared footage of the jet downing suggests it wasn't. It all looks like a planned provocation," the Russian official stressed.

There is something really sinister about the incident. The question arises why Turkey chose not to use the emergency communication line with Russia before or after downing the Su-24 jet? The other question is: why did Turkey rush to request an emergency meeting with NATO immediately after it shot down the Russian bomber jet?

Meanwhile, experts try to guess what Russia's response to the Turkish strike would be like.

According to Dave Majumdar, Russia could suspend its energy supplies to Turkey in response to the Turkish attack. He believes that it would be the most effective move.

"A more effective Russian response might simply be to cut off Turkey's energy supplies. Russia supplies some sixty percent of Turkey's natural gas supplies," he reminds.

Anyway, the stakes in the Syrian conflict are becoming higher for all parties involved, Majumdar underscores.