SİYASİ SÖYLEMDE SÖYLEMSEL STRATEJİLERİN ANALİZİ: RUSYA-UKRAYNA SAVAŞI ÖRNEĞİ

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Özet

Bu çalışmada, Rusya Devlet Başkanı Vladimir Putin ve Ukrayna Devlet Başkanı Volodymyr Zelensky'nin 2022 yılında başlayan Rusya-Ukrayna savaşına ilişkin kamuya açık konuşmalarında kullandıkları söylemsel stratejiler analiz edilmiştir. Eleştirel Söylem Analizi (CDA) kapsamında bir yöntem olan Söylem-Tarihsel Yaklaşımı (DHA) uygulayan araştırma, her iki liderin de anlatılar inşa etmek, eylemleri meşrulaştırmak ve hem yurt içinde hem de uluslararası alanda desteği harekete geçirmek için dili nasıl kullandıklarını tespit etmiştir. Analiz beş temel söylemsel stratejiyi kapsamıştır: aday gösterme, yüklemleme, argümantasyon, perspektifleştirme ve yoğunlaştırma. Nitel bir araştırma tasarımı kullanılmış ve 10 konuşmadan oluşan bir örneklem esas alınmıştır. Bulgular, her iki liderin de konumlarını sağlamlaştırmak için iç ve dış gruplar inşa ederken, Putin'in kullandığı söylemin Batı ve Ukrayna'nın olumsuz tasvirleri yoluyla öz savunma ve ulusal kimliği vurguladığını ortaya koymuştur. Buna karşılık Zelenskiy'nin söylemi ulusal birlik, savunma ve uluslararası dayanışma çağrılarına odaklanmıştır. Bu çalışma, çatışmalar sırasında siyasi iletişimin daha derinlemesine anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunarak, dilin savaş sırasında kamuoyu algılarını şekillendirmede ve eylemleri meşrulaştırmada nasıl stratejik bir araç olarak hizmet ettiğini ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Söylemsel stratejiler, Vladimir Putin, Volodymyr Zelensky, Rusya-Ukrayna Savaşı, siyasal iletişim

AN ANALYSIS OF DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: THE CASE OF RUSSIAN –UKRAINIAN WAR

Abstract

This study analyzed the discursive strategies employed by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in their public speeches concerning the Russia-Ukraine war, which began in 2022. By applying the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), a method within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the research identified how each leader used language to construct narratives, legitimize actions, and mobilize support both domestically and internationally. The analysis covered five key discursive strategies: nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and intensification. A qualitative research design was employed, based on a sample of 10 speeches of Putin and Zelenksy about Russian-Ukranian War. The findings revealed that while both leaders constructed in-groups and out-groups to solidify their positions, Putin's rhetoric emphasized self-defense and national identity through negative portrayals of the West and Ukraine. In contrast, Zelensky's discourse centered on national unity, defense, and appeals for international solidarity. The study contributed to a deeper understanding of political communication during conflicts, revealing how language served as a strategic tool in shaping public perceptions and legitimizing actions during wartime.

Key words: Discursive strategies, Vladimir Putin, Volodymyr Zelensky, Russo-Ukrainian War, political communication

1. INTRODUCTION

Within 50 years, critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a systematic analysis of spoken and written discourse has emerged as a new research area in linguistics. It requires an emphasis on contextual features of discourse but with additional attention to linguistic elements of the contexts. In other words, it includes research strands presenting new perspectives and understandings of social events by posing questions and answers on power relations, social realities, identities, and their influences on societies rather than the mere linguistic analysis of the surface language use.

CDA is a methodological tool "that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (Van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). For Wodak (1999, p.186), CDA is a research program providing various theories and analytical methods. The concept of critical does not mean the concentration of negative aspects of discourse. On the contrary, it refers to;
• distinguish complexity and deny easy, dichotomous explanations,
• make contradictions transparent,
• be self-reflective while researching social problems.

CDA offers various methodological approaches to conducting studies, one of which is the discourse-historical approach (DHA) suggested by Wodak and Reisigl (2016). The approach which is the main methodological means of the present study includes identification of the context and the discursive strategies and their linguistic features in the context. The discursive strategy in this approach covers five categories: Nomination is related to the identification of social actors, objects, phenomena, events, processes, and actions. Predication is the positive or negative evaluation of them. Argumentation refers to the marshaling of claims of truth and normative rightness. Perspectivization is concerned with the mitigation of the writer's stance and the engagement of readers. Intensification or mitigation is softening an illocutionary force.

Political discourse has deserved considerable attention in numerous CDA studies. There exist many definitions of political discourse. Broadly speaking, it refers to any text conveying a political subject or a politically motivated subject (Wilson, 2015). According to Graber (1981), when political actors mention or argue about political matters for political purposes, political discourse occurs. Van Dijk (1997) emphasizes the social actors in the definition of political discourse. It covers speech or public release of professional politicians or political institutions in national and international contexts.

From the definitions, it could be assumed that the relationship between politics and discourse is deeply interconnected, as communication within politics necessitates specific linguistic patterns that inherently entail structures of authority and validation. The political discourse of leaders holds significant influence, as their words and actions extend to impact the overall perception of their political party, its values, and the actions of their opponents. Tailored to resonate with specific audiences, political discourse evokes emotions, aiming to captivate and engage listeners or readers. Yet political discourse goes beyond just exchanging ideas; it's a means for political actors not only to convey their thoughts but also to convince and bring together people around common beliefs and visions. To do this, they deploy various discursive and linguistic strategies and devices for the manipulation of ideologies.

One of the most catastrophic events of recent years is the war between Russia and Ukraine which started with the invasion of Russia into Ukraine on February 24, 2022. It is estimated to have caused tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilian casualties and hundreds of thousands of military casualties. By June 2022, Russian troops occupied about 20% of Ukrainian territory. About 8 million Ukrainians had been internally displaced and more than 8.2 million had fled the country by April 2023, creating Europe's largest refugee crisis since

World War II (The Guardian). Extensive environmental damage caused by the war, widely described as an ecocide, contributed to food crises worldwide. Russia's invasion of Ukraine put additional pressure on essential goods like food and electricity. Sanctions on Russia and lower output from both nations contributed to this outcome. Further cost increases led to inflation rates that far outpaced growth in wages.

Several studies have attempted to explain the properties of political discourse and the maintenance of power in this certain discourse (Bayram, 2010; Dunmire, 2012; Hart et al., 2005; Okulska & Cap, 2010; Renaldo, 2021; Wang, 2016). Recently, scholars have examined the discourse of the Russian-Ukraine War. Following a textual analysis method, Chiluwa and Ruzaite (2024) investigated the linguistic or discursive structures of the war speeches of Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky and found different linguistic and discursive strategies between these two leaders. Gregić and Božić, (2023) concentrated on the crisis management strategies used by Putin and Zelensky.

After World War II, the Russian-Ukrainian War grew to be one of the biggest tragedies in the world. Therefore, the present study intended to identify the discursive strategies used by Putin and Zelensky in their public speeches about the War. It is assumed that gaining an understanding of the discourse strategies in Putin and Zelensky's speeches might facilitate greater comprehension of Russia and Ukraine's diplomatic posture.

2. METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research design was employed in this study to analyze the discursive strategies used by Zelensky and Putin in their speeches about the war between Russia and Ukraine. According to Tenny et al. (2017), qualitative research focuses on generating hypotheses and exploring or understanding quantitative data, rather than collecting numbers or applying treatments like in quantitative research. In this sense, qualitative research design enabled us to identify the discursive strategies and the linguistic devices of these strategies in the war speeches of Zelensky and Putin.

2.1. Data Collection

To collect data systemically, the guideline of data collection for DHA studies suggested by Wodak and Reisigl (2016) was employed. During the process of data collection, this guideline was applied.

•specific political units: The data was derived from the videos of Putin, the president of Russia, and Zelensky, the president of Ukraine.

•specific periods: The data examined were collected between 2022-2023. This period encompassed the beginning of the War.

•specific social and especially political and scientific actors: The videos of Putin and Zelensky were selected because they are the presidents of the two nations.

• specific discourses: Only war speeches were exposed to analysis.

•specific semiotic media and genres: The videos were published on The Guardian and were collected since it is a global website.

There were 16 speeches of Putin and 24 speeches of Zelensky on The Guardian in the above-mentioned period. Five speeches of both Putin and Zelensky were selected from The Guardian randomly. The English transcripts of these speeches were downloaded and coded as S1 (speech 1), S2, etc. They were also categorized chronologically.

2.2. Data Analysis

To analyze the data, DHA taxonomy – an interdisciplinary variant of CDA proposed by Wodak and Reisigl (2016) – was employed. There are five categories of discursive strategies: nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and intensification or mitigation as explained in the previous section. Firstly, each researcher identified the discursive strategies in the transcripts of the videos individually. Then, the two researchers compared these strategies and decided on the final version of the analysis. Excerpts from the speeches were given to explain each discursive strategy.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study of the war rhetoric of Putin and Zelensky concentrated on the discursive strategies that encoded the propensities of language to express and transmit political ideas, intentions, and sentiments. The discursive strategies suggested by Wodak and Reisigl (2016) consist of five categories. Nomination strategy identifies the major social actors, objects, events, and processes, which are encoded linguistically in the deployment of deictics, membership categorization, and pronouns - specifically I and we versus you and they. Additionally, Van Dijk (2005) suggests that actor descriptions in discourse analysis include the neutral or positive portrayal of the in-group and the negative depiction of the outgroup.

Putin identified himself and his government as one whole body by adopting an in-group strategy with the use of the pronouns we and our, as seen in (1). This particular language use also marked a sense of nationhood and justification of the attack on Ukraine through the lens of Putin.

(1) And for this we will strive to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as to court those who have committed numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including citizens of the Russian Federation. We urge you to lay down your arms immediately and go home." (S1)

In the second extract, the employment of you and they as a representation of others indicated different groups. The sentence "They are still not stupid people" showed that although the Ukrainians were represented as an outgroup, they shared a history and culture with the Russians. Putin and the supporters of his government often emphasized that Russians and Ukrainians are one nation (Mankoff, 2022). The reason behind this emphasis was that Ukraine was a part of the Soviet Union. However, in 1991, Ukraine gained its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and since then it has supported a political orientation towards the West.

(2) The Ukrainian regime today does not have national interests. They are still not stupid people. (S3)

Another nomination strategy observed in Putin's speeches was the use of the first-person pronoun. In the example below, the use of the first person pronoun indicated that Putin's political authority to legitimize his actions.

(3) I am convinced that such a natural and necessary self-cleaning of society will only strengthen our country. In new realities, deep structural changes in our economy will be needed. (S2)

Concerning the nomination strategies deployed by Zelenksy, we could mention that he utilized several nomination strategies that rested on the construction of in-groups and out-groups. An interesting finding was that, unlike Putin, the first-person pronoun used by Zelenksy was an in-group strategy to create to build a national identity. In (4), he communicated with the Russian people as a citizen of Ukraine and he represented his nation as a citizen not as a president. The employment of we and our in (4) labeled a nation who gathered to defend their country and you referred to an out-group - Russians in our case but did not mark an enemy. The use of we in (5) was not an in-group strategy. Zelenksy emphasized Ukraine and Russia as two

independent countries and nations by the use of we in this example. In (6), you referred to Putin directly and marked him as the initiator of the war.

(4) Therefore, today I want to address all citizens of Russia. Not as a President, I am addressing Russian citizens as a citizen of Ukraine….. If your troops will attack us, if they try to take away our country, our freedom, our lives, the lives of our children, we will defend ourselves. (S1)

(5) We are separated by more than two thousand kilometers of the common border.

(6) Your leadership approved their step forward to the territory of another country (S1)

The use of nomination strategies by Putin and Zelensky in the Russia-Ukraine crisis showed similar patterns but different communicative purposes. Putin used an "in-group" strategy to represent Russia as a cohesive country, highlighting national identity and shared purpose. He placed responsibility on other parties to divert attention and mobilize support. On the other hand, Zelensky focused on fostering empathy and solidarity within Ukraine, presenting it as an "in-group" and rallying support for defense measures. Both presidents employed first-person pronouns but with different communicative purposes. This finding is in line with Sharndama (2016) who analyzed the discursive strategies used in the political inaugural speeches of six Nigerian governors from the 2015 inaugurals. In the study, first-person pronouns "we" and "I," as well as their variations "our" and "me," were frequently employed. Similarly, Chiluwa and Ruzaite (2024) examined the linguistic patterns of war rhetoric in Ukraine's war speeches by Volodymyr Zelensky and Vladimir Putin. The research revealed that Putin's war rhetoric emphasized national identity and shared objectives, while Zelensky focused on fostering empathy and solidarity. Putin used an in-group strategy to show him and his country as a whole, while Zelensky aimed to convey Ukraine's sovereignty. Both leaders used conditional remarks to demonstrate commitment, justifying military actions using self-defense and duty. They also used forceful language to emphasize threats and charges, while Zelensky focused on unity, fairness, and peace.

These results showed that Both Zelensky and Putin recognized the value of visibility. Putin employed several propaganda techniques, such as emotional appeal, factual distortion, strong language, and a "we versus them". These strategies sought to inspire and convince listeners regarding Russia's military action in Ukraine, encouraging morality and backing. By placing the audience in a position of condemnation, this rhetorical approach forced individuals to act and take moral and political responsibility for their choices.

The second discursive strategy is called predication which refers to the identification of social actors positively or negatively (Wodak and Reisigl, 2016). Negative labeling – describing a person or group by a negative label - was a predication strategy employed by Putin. He drew a demarcation between Russia and the outgroups which he labeled as, the Collective West, Western elites, patriots, and the Kyiv regime, as seen in (7) and (8) below. He saw them as fundamental threats to Russia. The negative labels semantically expressed threat and danger and to Putin, the main actor of the conflict between the two countries was the Collective West which disrupted peaceful relations between the two countries. Putin saw the Ukrainian people as part of the Russian nation and accused the Kyiv Regime of being an ally of the West. Wodak et al. (2009) mention constructive strategies as discursive strategies. Such strategies tend to build a certain national identity through fostering unification, identification, and solidarity, as well as differentiation. In (6), Putin used a differentiation strategy to mention his allies but constructed a national identity including Russians and Ukrainians.

(7) The collective West is trying to split our society, speculating on combat losses, and on the social and economic consequences of sanctions, to provoke civil confrontation in Russia. (S2)

(8) The responsibility for burning out the Ukrainian conflict, for the escalation, for the growth of its number of victims, is completely on the Western elites and, of course, on the Kyiv regime today, for which the Ukrainian people are essentially strangers. (S3)

Unlike Putin, Zelenksy employed a predication strategy to show how he and his nation were supported by other countries. Europe, the World, and the UN were mentioned to highlight the support he got from the World. His war which portrayed Putin negatively was another example of predication strategy. In example 10, Zelenksy utilized a vitriolic language rested on the negative construction of Russia as Russian terror. Anyone in the world served as a polarized language which left Russia alone and Ukraine and all other countries as an ally.

(9) Ukraine wants peace, Europe wants peace, and the world wants peace. And we have seen who is the only one who wants war. There is only one entity among all UN member states who would say now, if he could interrupt my speech, that he is happy with this war, with his war. (S4)

(10) I rule out that the settlement can happen on a different basis than the Ukrainian peace formula. The further the Russian terror reaches, the less likely it is that anyone in the world will agree to sit at one table with them. (S4)

Putin and Zelensky used predication strategies to frame their speeches on the war between Russia and Ukraine. Putin highlighted Russia's goals and activities while painting a negative picture of Ukraine. Zelensky focused on Ukraine's viewpoint and reaffirmed its sovereignty, emphasizing Russian troops along the border and the physical divide. Both leaders used conditional remarks to demonstrate their commitment and determination, contrasting Ukraine's desire for peace with Russia's alleged aggression. Buluc and Deac (2022) examined to demonstrate that his representations of Russia and its missions operate on a historical scale of eternity, Putin's strategic speech style was based on a language of separation reminiscent of the immediate aftermath of World War II. This emphasized the permanence and infallibility of his vision of Russia as a defender of its people, sovereignty, and culture against foreign, especially European, interferences. He always defended his country in a fearless and outspoken way but Zelensky presented Ukraine's stance as one of peacemaking.

The third strategy in the DHA taxonomy is the argumentation strategy. Wodak (2005) claims that this strategy highlights the instances in which speakers try to excuse or legitimize the positive or negative acts that they commit. According to Wodak (2006), there are various kinds of topoi, all of which center on the schemata of premise, then warrant, then conclusion. The speech does contain some pertinent topoi, albeit with a lot of variances. The term "topos" has its origins in Aristotle's rhetoric, where it is specifically mentioned and utilized widely in all types of persuasive speeches. Nonetheless, topoi have emerged as one of the essential argumentation strategies with the development of contemporary argumentative theories. Ten main topoi are included in Wodak's model. The types of argumentations are topos of threat and danger, topos of usefulness and advantage, topos of responsibility, topos of history, topos of finances, topos of burden, topos of reality, topos of numbers, topos of authority, topos of definition, topos of justice, and topos of urgency.

The topos of the below example were justice, threat, and danger. Putin tried to justify why he decided to conduct a special military operation. He claimed that he wanted to protect his citizens who had been tortured by the Kyiv Regime. The reason for this war according to Putin was to ensure the security of Russia against Ukraine and the World, which was a strategy to legitimize actions.

(11) I have decided to conduct a special military operation. Its goal is to protect people who have been subjected to torture and genocide by the Kyiv regime for eight years. (S1)

In (12), Putin and his country, Russia will strive to demilitarize and denizfy Ukraine since Ukraine has committed bloody crimes against Russian people as Putin claims. So, in this example, as it can be seen, Putin used a legitimate reason to make sense of his actions in this

situation. This is an example of a topos of responsibility in which Putin felt responsible for defending his country and nation. With Those, Putin meant Germany and its allies during World War II.

(12) And for this we will strive to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as to court those who have committed numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including citizens of the Russian Federation. (S1)

Zelensky did not justify or find excuses for his actions. The topos of his arguments were circled threat and responsibility. He constantly emphasized he had no option but to defend his country. He accused Russia of bringing horrible silence with its bombs. However, he never gave up giving hope to his citizens, as illustrated in 14. He was dissatisfied with the support of some world leaders. Comparing Ukraine with developed countries, he declared his disappointment for not being supported by the developed countries.

(13) On our land, we are fighting Russia, which brings horrible silence with its bombs. (S3)

(14) And then peace will come. To all our cities, the war is destroying. (S3)

(15) Every nation has the right to security guarantees, not only the largest nations, not only the most fortunate ones. (S4)

The employment of argumentation strategies by Putin and Zelensky paved the way for understanding their viewpoints, rationalizing their actions, and mobilizing the public in the Russia-Ukraine war. Putin used self-defense and duty as justifications for military actions against Ukraine, highlighting the need to reduce risks like unemployment and inflation. Zelensky emphasized Ukraine's right to self-defense, basic rights, and peace, using conditional remarks, human rights, and a prescription for peace. Both leaders used different approaches in tone, emphasis, and phrasing to support their claims and garner support. The finding is in line with Gomaa (2023) who found that Zelensky defended Ukraine against what he saw as an attempt to harm both the country and its citizens. President Putin discussed the risk that acts of prejudice against Russian speakers in Ukraine could result in genocide. As it can be understood, both presidents tried to defend their actions to justify themselves pointing out their citizens' safety.

Wodak (2005) defines perspectivation as the means of marshaling the speaker's or writer's point of view and showing involvement or distance", which is maintained by certain linguistic elements like deictics, metaphors, and discourse markers. In the following examples, Putin made use of tenses to show strength (16), discourse markers to imply certainty (17), and deictics (18) to mitigate distance to other countries.

(16) Whoever tries to hinder us, and even more so to create a threat for our country, for our people, should know that the answer to Russia will be immediate and will lead you to such a situation, which you have never encountered in your history. (S1)

(17) The responsibility for burning out the Ukrainian conflict, for the escalation, for the growth of its number of victims, is completely on the Western elites and, of course, on the Kyiv regime today, for which the Ukrainian people are essentially strangers. (S3)

(18) And for this we will strive to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as to court those who have committed numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including citizens of the Russian Federation (S1)

On the other hand, the perspectivation strategy was rarely observed in the speech of Zelensky. In (19), we see the use of deictic as a perspectivation strategy. This in the below example referred to the entrance of Ukraine to NATO.

(19) For years, we have heard about the supposedly 'open door', but we have also heard that we should not enter – and this is true and we must admit it. This is true and we need to admit it. I am glad that our people are beginning to understand this and consider themselves and our partners who help us. (S2)

According to Wodak (2005), intensification has to do with how strongly the speaker speaks. To that end, language strategies like diminutives, tag questions, ambiguous statements, hyperboles, and indirect speech acts are used. Since Putin was left alone in this war, it is not surprising that he did not use any indirect speeches. He always showed his determination in his political actions, so he did not employ ambiguous statements as an intensification strategy.

One of the prevalent strategies that Zelensky used as an intensification strategy was augmentation through repetition of words. Augmentatives give more intensive meaning to an argument. Verbs of saying and feeling are also the tools of intensification which is displayed in (20 and 21). The speech of Zelensky mostly covered emotional issues about how Ukrainian people were affected by this war (212). The use of imperative sentences by Zelensky was a tool for giving the listeners a position of authority, as seen in (23)

(20) We will not attack; we will defend ourselves. If you attack, you will see our faces, not our backs, but our faces. (S1)

(21) Punishment for the crime of aggression, punishment for violation of borders and territorial integrity, a punishment that must be in place until the internationally recognized bodies of the people, the order is restored, until the aggression stops and until the damages and losses for the war are fully compensated. (S4)

(22) Our children draw swooping rockets, not shooting stars. Over 400 children have been injured and 153 children died. And we'll never see them drawing. (S3)

(23) Tell the truth about this war on your social networks and TV. Support us in any way you can. Any — but not silence. (S4)

4. CONCLUSION

Political discourse, a subfield of discourse analysis that focuses on political discourse as a phenomenon of interest, including speeches, debates, and hearings, is the basis of this thesis's investigation. Political discourse, according to Apter (2001), alludes to frameworks and how they are typically organized or disorganized. It emphasizes symbolic capital as a kind of meaning as opposed to economic capital, which is a different kind of power. The current study examined discursive strategies in Volodymyr Zelensky and Vladimir Putin's speeches on the Russo-Ukrainian war. Comprehending the language traits and discourse patterns in the correspondence between Putin and Zelensky enabled a deeper comprehension of Russian and Ukrainian leaders' diplomatic stances. This thesis specifically looked at discursive strategies employed by these two leaders. Ten speeches made between 2022 and 2023 by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky were selected for the data collection. These two leaders' statements regarding the war were collected from The Guardian. These leaders' speeches were all examined using the discursive strategies proposed by Wodak and Reisigl (2016).

Putin and Zelensky utilized nomination strategies in the Russia-Ukraine crisis, with Putin using "in-group" to represent Russia as a cohesive country and Zelensky focusing on fostering empathy and solidarity within Ukraine. Both presidents acknowledged the importance of visibility, with Putin employing propaganda techniques like emotional appeal, factual distortion, strong language, and a "we vs them" approach. These strategies aimed to inspire and convince listeners about Russia's military actions in Ukraine, encouraging morality and backing. Putin and Zelensky used predication strategies to frame their speeches on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, contrasting Ukraine's desire for peace with Russia's aggression. Putin highlighted Russia's goals and activities, while Zelensky emphasized Ukraine's sovereignty and Russian troops along the border. Putin and Zelensky had different argumentation strategies to justify their actions in the Russia-Ukraine war. Putin justified military actions against Ukraine for self-defense and duty, while Zelensky emphasized Ukraine's right to self-defense, basic

rights, and peace. Their approaches varied in tone, emphasis, and phrasing to gain public support. Both leaders did not tend to utilize perspectivization strategy. Putin intensified the conflict by using strong language and declarations to emphasize threats and charges, exaggerating the implications of weakening Russia and blaming Kyiv authorities and Western elites. Zelensky used repetition and broadening to increase the emotional effect and mobilize support for Ukraine's cause, while Putin focused on generating fear, shifting responsibility, and establishing power.

The study was limited to ten speeches of Putin and Zelenksy. The dataset's breadth was constrained because it only included 10 speeches overall—five from each leader. The limited sample size limited the capacity to conduct a thorough analysis and draw broad conclusions about the whole spectrum of rhetorical techniques utilized by Putin and Zelensky. The small number of speeches could not fully represent the variety in their language, possibly missing significant subtleties and changes in rhetoric over time or in reaction to various events. Further studies may concentrate on the language of war through the compilation of war discourse corpus. A diachronic study of war discourse would also be a fruitful area for future studies.

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