



Ca' Foscari  
University  
of Venice

Master's Degree  
in Language Sciences

Final Thesis

**“I need ammunition, not a ride”:  
Political Discourse Analysis of  
Zelensky's war addresses to the  
Ukrainian and international  
community**

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**Matriculation number**

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**Academic Year**

2021 / 2022

*Dedicated to my brother, Kostya  
and my little sunshine, Zlata*

Yet another important period of my life is coming to its final point. This Master's degree has brought me a lot of memories and people who made it possible to get to the finish of a new beginning and I am so grateful to all of them.

To Professoressa Cesiri, for constant feedback and valuable advice.

To Julian and Eugene, for being the biggest chillers I have ever seen and for being the best cooking partners of vegan food.

To a very special girl Sasha, who was, is and will always be there for me.

To my close people scattered around the world because of shameful russian invasion.

To every friend met in Venice, Ca' Internazionale.

To Venice and Ca' Foscari, for welcoming me and becoming my second home.

To my family, for remaining strong in the darkest times and being able to find the right words.

And, finally, to myself, for being persistent enough to get through it.

Одягай найтепліші штани,  
Бо в підвалі померзнуть ноги  
Я любив тебе ще до війни  
І скажу про це в день перемоги

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation in Ukraine on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 has become one of the most discussed situations in the world. Despite all odds, Ukrainians continue to resist and fight for their freedom. The President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, is believed to have played a decisive role in the beginning of the war, successfully convincing Ukrainians, and the international community to hinder the Russian imperialistic plans. Political Critical Discourse Analysis (PDA), being a relatively young framework, offers us tools that can be used to analyze and uncover the hidden persuasive force of the Zelenskiy's speeches. This framework is believed to be one of the branches of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

CDA focuses on the impact of language on the production and perpetuation of power abuse, domination, ideologies, inequalities, and injustice through discourse, with a focus on social issues and global concerns. (Van Dijk, 2001a). CDA focuses on the relationship between language, power, and social structures and is concerned with the ways in which discourse contributes to and reflects the social and political realities of a particular time and place. CDA can trace its roots to Critical Linguistics, which was first introduced by Roger Fowler and Gunther Kress in 1979. CDA broadens the criticism perspective in discourse analysis studies and saw significant growth in the 1980s, with influential works such as "Prejudice in Discourse" (van Dijk, 1984), "Language and Power" (Fairclough, 1989), and "Language, Power and Ideology" (Wodak, 1989). This interdisciplinary field of study combines linguistic, social, and political theories to analyze and understand the ways in which power and ideology are expressed, negotiated, and established in social discourse.

At the same time, being a branch of CDA, PDA's primary focus is to analyze the linguistic and discourse aspects of political texts. Defining what constitutes political discourse can be challenging, but it is usually determined by the actors involved, such as politicians and the electorate. PDA specifically examines the speeches of political leaders, like Presidents, ministers, and other government officials, as they contain a wealth of material that can be studied. There have been numerous studies conducted on presidential speeches of the USA Presidents, including works by Stuckey (1989); Campbell & Jamieson (1990); Hart (1984); Snyder & Higgins (1990). However, the field of Political Discourse Analysis has yet to fully explore the

discourse of European presidential leaders. Despite the increasing interest in PDA as a means of understanding political communication, there remains a scarcity of studies that examine the speeches and discourse of presidents in Europe. This constitutes a significant gap in our understanding of political communication on the continent and highlights the need for further research in this area.

In late 2021, the Kremlin began increasing its military presence near the border of Ukraine, leading to concerns of a full-scale invasion. Despite denials from Russian officials, the media and politicians considered the buildup of troops as preparation for war. In February 2022, Russian President Putin announced a "special military operation" with the aim of restoring historical Russia and ending the existence of Ukraine as a separate state. Putin claimed the operation was necessary to save ethnic Russians and defend Russia against NATO. Despite a strong initial push, Russian forces encountered resistance from the Ukrainian army and suffered territorial losses throughout the year. The war resulted in significant civilian casualties, displacement, and refugees. By mid-August 2022, an estimated 6.65 million Ukrainians had fled to Europe, with 4 million receiving temporary protection. The war continues to have a significant impact on the population of Ukraine.

The war waged by Russian Federation in Ukraine has put President Zelenskyy in the spotlight of international political arena. His video addresses have been cited by multiple newspapers all over the world and his words inspired millions of Ukrainians and international community to withstand the Russian aggression. The presence of the numerous rhetorical devices, according to our theory, effectively employed by the President, has helped stabilize the situation in the country in the first hours of the invasion by appealing to the patriotic sense of Ukrainians, which led to prevention of further advance of Russian forces. Furthermore, his emotional appeals to international partners proved to be fruitful as more countries expressed their readiness to provide assistance to Ukraine.

Volodymyr Zelensky is a Ukrainian politician and former comedian who rose to fame with his comedic roles on television. He became the sixth President of Ukraine in May 2019, after winning a landslide victory in the presidential elections. Zelensky's background as an actor has played a significant role in his rhetoric skills and has made him a skilled orator. Zelensky's acting experience has also made him confident and

charismatic on the public stage. He is comfortable in front of a large crowd and knows how to command attention and hold the audience's interest. This confidence and charisma have made him an effective communicator, allowing him to express his ideas and opinions with clarity and conviction.

President Zelensky of Ukraine has made a commitment to keep his constituents and international partners fully informed about the current situation with the Russian invasion. He has opted to utilize videos as his primary method of communication, which are posted on his official website and various social media platforms, including Telegram, Facebook, and Instagram. Between February 23 and December 23, 495 videos were published. These videos are addressed to both the Ukrainian people and foreign parliaments.

Due to the limitations of this study, it is not feasible to analyze all 495 videos. Therefore, a representative sample of 14 speeches, totaling 14,017 words, was selected using the criteria of purposive sampling. The sample includes seven videos addressed to the Ukrainian public and seven videos addressed to foreign parliaments. The longest speech in the sample is 1538 words, while the shortest is 534 words. The video addresses and transcripts of these speeches can be found in Ukrainian, Russian, and English on the President's official website.

It is worth noting that the original language of speeches addressed to the Ukrainian and international public is Ukrainian, but the study will primarily focus on the English translations available on the President's website. A contrastive analysis will be conducted alongside the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to identify any discrepancies between the original and translated versions of the speech. The utilization and implementation of CDA tools proposed by Fairclough, Chilton, and van Dijk, as outlined in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, will be discussed in the context of the sample data.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the field of political discourse analysis, as well as its potential to inform our understanding of the ways in which political leaders use language to shape public opinion and influence political discourse. By providing a detailed examination of specific presidential addresses delivered by Volodymyr Zelenskyy, this thesis sheds light on the complex interplay

between language, discourse, and power in political contexts, and contributes to our broader understanding of the ways in which political discourse is constructed.

This research consists of four chapters and an introduction and conclusion. The first chapter aims to establish a theoretical framework by reviewing the literature on CDA, and Political Discourse Analysis, as one of its approaches. The second chapter focuses on the historical and political context of Ukraine from the day of Independence till nowadays. It discusses in detail how the Ukrainian nation was shaped through the 30-year period and a particular attention is given to the relationship with the Russian Federation. Chapter three provides broader background information on the life of Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Furthermore, it discusses how Zelenskyy's background made him a successful and convincing orator. The fourth chapter uses Political Discourse Analysis to examine a sample of 14 presidential addresses from the corpus and provides a qualitative understanding of the community's discourse based on the tools introduced by Fairclough, Chilton, van Dijk, Gunther Kress, and Theo van Leeuwen, which are detailed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. The conclusion summarizes and evaluates the findings, outlines the limitations of the study, and suggests future research directions.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Theoretical Background**

#### **1. Discourse Analysis**

Since the ancient times a language, both spoken and written, has been exploited in order to convey a certain meaning. The variety of means used to codify the meaning in the way the writer or orator wants it is referred to as rhetoric. The latter is believed to be a capacity of a speaker to create or observe a ‘text’ with respect to the persuasive force (Aristotle, transl. 1909, I). It dealt with the strategies of planning, organizing, and performing of a public speech in political and legal contexts. In other words, rhetoric is an art of good speaking skills. The field of rhetoric had remained one of the main disciplines of humanities until the emergence of new areas such as comparative linguistics and the appearance of structural analysis at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The most important works in rhetoric comprise that of Burke (1966), Young, Beck, and Pike (1970), Kinneavy (1971) and others. The discipline, which, perhaps, benefited the most from the field of rhetoric is the discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis, or more recently known as Discourse Studies, dates to the early 1970s, the period in which several most prominent works in this field were published: de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), Brown and Yule (1983) and van Dijk (1983). It is quite difficult to trace the roots of this area of studies, being relatively young, it originates from several disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities. This is the reason why it is crucial to note the importance of the research carried out by the linguists from Prague School in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, it must be pointed out that the area of discourse analysis is certainly interdisciplinary as it draws most of its procedural part from other fields. For instance, the position of the author in the text and the notion of a subject (Bakhtin, 1981) were vastly explored in literary criticism, while important insights into the nature of written texts and their genres have been provided by stylistics analysts. Semioticians, in their turn, have shown the nature of text as a linguistic sign and as a type of pragmatic communication (Eco, 1979; Sebeok, 1960). Discourse Studies has manifested various forms depending on the area of research to which it dedicated its interest. In France, for example, it was mainly influenced by formal linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure and philosophic

works of Foucault (Williams, 1999: 3). In the USA, on the other hand, major part was played by anthropology and sociolinguistics that concentrated on oral discursive practices (Angermuller, 2014: 2).

Since the term ‘discourse’ is going to be used multiple times in the current research, it is therefore quite reasonable to tackle the definition of this phenomena. In order to do so, we should first bring our attention to the notion of text. There has been an ongoing debate on how to define a text. According to Halliday, it is a sign of representation of a socio-cultural event embedded in a context of situation. Context of situation is the semio-socio-cultural environment in which the text unfolds. Text and context are so intimately related that neither concept can be comprehended in the absence of the other (1978: 60). Over the centuries, grammarians have been exploring so deliberately syntactic nature of individual sentences (syntax) and structure of words (morphology), while the fundamental aspects of text formation and information structure have been massively overlooked. Discourse analysts thus had to significantly shift the point of reference from much formal theoretical sophistication by providing interpretation of actual connected text: conversations, paragraphs, stories etc. (Essuman, 2014: 15).

Text, in this case, is not used in a sense that we are used to, but comprise both written and spoken conversations, video and photo materials, paintings, websites, human gestures, video games, and any other semiotic system that could constitute a tool for individuals to take social action (Jones et al., 2015: 5). Most discourse analysts agree that for a bunch of semiotic elements to be called a text, it must possess what is known as ‘texture’ (Jones et al 2015, Schiffrin et al 2001, Halliday and Hasan 1976, Schegloff and Sacks 1973). Texture is manifested through ‘cohesion’ and ‘coherence’. The first concerns the usage of syntactic and semantic resources of any semiotic system in order to hold a text as a one whole, while the latter refers to how various parts of the text are put in sequential order so that they make logical sense to its readers (Jones et al., 2015: 5). James Paul Gee in his chapter dedicated to analysing discourse of games stresses that in order to be amenable to discourse analysis, a text must exhibit properties of what he calls ‘packaging’ and ‘flow’ – the combination of different elements using principles of syntax and semantics, and the arrangement of these elements in some kind of temporal patterning and meaningful sequences. People use

the principles of combination and sequencing for enabling some kinds of actions or social practices (2015 :18).

It is widely accepted fact that when studying discourse researchers usually go beyond the sentence and are not limited by it. However, Zellig Harris (1952), the founding father of the term ‘discourse’ claims that discourse can be studied by the analogy with the sentence. For instance, Salkie (1995) points out that while grammar is “basically about how words combine to form sentences, text and discourse analysis is about how sentences combine to form texts”. According to Hovy and Maier’s (1994) paper “one of the first observations that one makes in analysing discourse is that it exhibits internal structure” (1994: 2). In other cases, the focus is shifted from the idea of structure altogether to the idea of discourse as social practice which must be examined according to the function it constitutes. In this regard, Fasold (1990: 65) stresses that discourse studies are a study of any aspect of language use. At the same time, Halliday and in their one of the most crucial works on linguistic side of discourse *Cohesion in English* base their opinion on the view that text is a “unit of language in use” that must be studied based on its role in the act of speech (1976: 2).

The notion of discourse is certainly a fuzzy concept as it relates to complex field of studies, namely ‘discourse studies’ or ‘discourse analysis’. According to S. Chatman (1978: 19), professor of rhetoric from University of California:

Each narrative has two parts: a story (*histoire*), the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what might be called the existents (characters, items of settings); and a discourse (*discourse*), that is the expression, the means by which the content is communicated.

As previously indicated, a discourse analyst is interested in the actual instances of communication. What is important is to track the people’s generalizations about the rules they make about language (aspect of cognition) and how they use those rules to interpret or create new discourses they have so far participated or will participate in (Johnstone, 2007: 3). The view of discourse as the social construction of reality sees texts as communicative units which are embedded in social and cultural practices. The texts we write and speak both shape and are shaped by these practices. Discourse, then, is both shaped by the world as well as shaping the world. Discourse is shaped by language as well as shaping language. It is shaped by the people who use the language

as well as shaping the language that people use. Discourse is shaped, as well, by the discourse that has preceded it and that which might follow it. Discourse is also shaped by the medium in which it occurs as well as it shapes the possibilities for that medium. The purpose of the text also influences the discourse. Discourse also shapes the range of possible purposes of texts (Johnstone, 2007).

We find notions such as racist discourse, gendered discourse, discourses on un/employment, media discourse, populist discourse, discourses of the past, and many more – thus stretching the meaning of discourse from a genre to a register or style, from a building to a political programme. This causes and must cause confusion – which leads to much criticism and more misunderstandings (Blommaert, 2005; Reisigl, 2007; Wodak, 2008a; Wodak and de Cillia, 2006).

In a classification by Bloor and Bloor (2007: 6-7), we could outline the following types of distinctions of discourse:

1. discourse refers to all the phenomena of symbolic interaction and communication between people, thought spoken or written language or visual representation
2. discourse has been used to indicate simply spoken interaction. Although nowadays we can specify written or spoken discourse.
3. discourse refers to communication that takes place in specific institutional contexts, for example, the discourse of law or medicine.
4. discourse is human interaction through any means, verbal and non-verbal;
5. discourse represents the whole communicative event.

Thus, it is rather logical to say that the discourse studies as a field draws the knowledge from other disciplines, for instance, linguistics (language study and use) or social sciences (to analyze interactions in social settings). We should also keep in mind psychology (the study of cognition) that deals with how people learn and how they are conscious of their knowledge and their beliefs, which control their language use and speech (Schiffrin et al. 2001: 349).

Initially, the discourse analysis meant essentially a descriptive and structuralist approach that did not surpass the boundaries of linguistics and anthropology. The interest in discourse analysis first involved mainly popular genres such as myths, stories, folktales and others. The scientists who worked with the field, concentrated

firstly on spoken discourse. However, according to Harris (1952: 3) an important observation about discourse was that:

Connected discourse occurs within a particular situation – whether of a person speaking, or of a conversation, or of someone sitting down occasionally over the period of months to write a particular kind of book in a particular literary or scientific tradition.

In fact, with the advent of Internet, a phenomenon that has started to occupy most of our attention, the researchers shifted their attention to written discourse.

It is well-acquainted now that discourse analysis can be studied from different theoretical and methodological approaches. Discourse analysis is not just one approach, but a series of interdisciplinary approaches that can be used to explore many different social domains in many different types of studies (Phillips and Jorgenson 2002: 1).

According to Van Dijk (1985), academic studies can be performed from a linguistic, anthropological, philosophical, sociological, poetical, psychological, historical or even communicative perspective. Discourse analysis is interested in analysis of a text that is full of the linguistic and organizational elements. It comprises all linguistic signalling present in the text that become a source for discursive interpretation. All the patterns that are discovered during the process of analysis become the potential foundation of new frameworks to discourse studies.

Wetherell (2001), outlines four approaches for analysing text from discourse perspective. First is considering discourse as a text. This approach focuses on the text itself, examining how language is used to convey meaning and how discourse structures are organized. This includes analysing the language used, the rhetorical techniques employed, and the overall structure of the text. Second approach regards discourse as social interaction. This approach examines how language is used to create social relationships and interact with others. It is focused mainly on analysing how power and social identities are constructed and negotiated through language use. Third approach focuses on discourse as practical activity. The idea resides in looking at how language is used to accomplish specific tasks or goals, such as persuading someone to buy a product or persuading them to vote for a particular candidate. Finally, Wetherell singles out the fourth approach, which views discourse as ideology. This approach examines how language is used to construct and maintain ideologies, or systems of

beliefs and values. This includes analysing how language is used to reinforce dominant power structures and ideologies, as well as how language is used to challenge or resist these ideologies.

As Crombie (1985: 7) states: “the study of discourse must involve the study of every aspect of language”, and that is why new tendencies and concepts continue to arise. So far, the approaches within the discourse studies vary dramatically as every researcher invents a new way of looking at language and working with a text of different modalities that would satisfy their research questions. Further we are going to list, though not exhaustively, approaches to discourse analysis.

Conversational Analysis is a method of studying spoken interactions. It aims to understand how people communicate with each other in social situations, particularly in face-to-face conversations. This approach was developed in the 1960s by sociolinguists, such as Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson, who were interested in exploring how people produce and interpret language in social contexts. Conversational Analysis focuses on the way in which people use language to communicate and how they coordinate their actions with one another through conversation. It is based on the idea that conversation is a social activity that is regulated by a set of shared rules and norms (Sacks et al, 1974).

Another type of analysis, so called Sociolinguistic variation analysis, founded by William Labov, is a subfield of sociolinguistics that focuses on the way language varies within and across different social groups. It looks at how language is used in different contexts and how it changes over time. Researchers in this field often study how language is used by different social groups, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and social class, and how it reflects and shapes social identities. This approach to language study aims to understand the complex relationships between language and society and how they shape one another (Labov, 1972: 240).

Post-structuralist theory and social theory analysis, on the other hand, is a method of analysing texts and social phenomena that is influenced by post-structuralist philosophy, which emphasizes the role of language and discourse in shaping social reality. This approach focuses on how language and discourse function to produce meaning and how they are used to exert power and control in society. It also considers the ways in which social and cultural context shape language use and how language

use reflects and reinforces social power dynamics. This approach has been developed and popularized by several scholars, including Michel Foucault (1972, 1981) and Jean-François Lyotard (1979).

The rise of digital media and technology has also led to an increasing interest in multimodal discourse analysis in recent years. This is a type of discourse analysis that examines how different modes of communication (such as language, images, sound, gesture, and layout) work together to create meaning in each context. This approach to discourse analysis emphasizes the importance of understanding how meaning is constructed through the combination of different semiotic resources. One of the key figures in the development of multimodal discourse analysis is British social semiotician Gunther Kress and his colleague from the Netherlands Theo van Leeuwen, together with whom he published the book in 1996 “Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design”, which gave rise to the multimodal analysis. According to Kress (2006), visual structures do not simply reproduce the structures of ‘reality’. On the contrary, they produce images of reality which are bound up with the interests of the social institutions within which the images are produced, circulated and read. They are ideological. Visual structures are never merely formal: they have a deeply important semantic dimension (47).

The last type of analysis, but not the least by the importance is Critical Discourse Analysis, which will be discussed in detail below.

### **1.1. Critical Discourse Analysis**

For the purpose of this thesis, the main attention will be given to Critical Discourse Analysis. Discourse is language use relative to social, political and cultural formations – it is language reflecting social order but also language shaping social order and shaping individuals’ interaction with society (Jaworski and Coupland 2006: 3).

Since the late 1970s, in their research Kress and Hodge (1979) have emphasized the urge to take into consideration the broader socio-political and ideological forces that shape many texts in a range of professional, public, and institutional contexts. Starting from the 1980s, this trend has become an important area for institutional and social discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989, 1995; Huckin, 1998; Kress, 1989; Pennycook, 2000; van Dijk, 1983, 1997).

When mentioning origins of CDA, “Critical Linguistics” must be given specific attention. CDA is considered to have its root in Critical Linguistics. Specifically speaking, CDA can be seen as a development of Critical Linguistics, which broadens the criticism perspective in discourse analysis studies (Tian Hailong, 2006). The term “Critical Linguistics was first coined in 1979 by two the most influential linguists within the area of CL, namely Roger Fowler and Gunther Kress. Their research has opened a way for new studies to appear. In the last few years in the 1980s, the research within CDA discipline significantly accelerated. Among the most influential, we should point out several works – Prejudice in Discourse (van Dijk, 1984), Language and Power (Fairclough, 1989), Language, Power and Ideology (Wodak, 1989). CDA emerged as a discipline in the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century after a symposium held in Amsterdam in 1991 where Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, Gunther Kress, Ruth Wodak and Theo van Leeuwen had a possibility to hold a discussion regarding the different theories and frameworks of CDA (Renkema, 2004; Titscher et al., 2000; Wetherell et al., 2001; Wodak, 2008a). The appearance of CDA approach was marked by the work of Van Dijk “Discourse and Society” in 1990, which was followed by collaborations between researchers of different countries.

From that point onwards, new journals have been published. Nowadays CDA can be considered an established paradigm in linguistics. Among all the journals, the most significant ones continue to remain The Journal of Language and Politics, Discourse and Communication and Visual Semiotics, Critical Discourse Studies. Additionally, a series of books titled Discourse Approaches to Politics, Culture and Society have been published. At the same time, multiple CDA scientific conferences took place. Overall, the field of CDA has gained its rightful place within the scientific circle.

What constitutes CDA then and would it be fair to identify it as a branch of discourse analysis? Fairclough (1995) states that:

By CDA I mean discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes: to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power, and to explore how the opacity of these

relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (132).

In the same manner, Richards and Smidt (2010) claim that CDA is a form of discourse analysis that takes a critical stance towards the way language is used, it aims to critically analyze texts and other types of discourse in order to uncover hidden ideologies, domination, manipulation, power, and racism underlying them. Many researchers such as Wodak and Meyer (2001), Van Dijk (2001b), Fowler (1991), Fairclough (1993), Batstone (1995), on the other hand, single out CDA as an analytical framework that is used to extract opacity and make everything clear to people, as well as to illustrate and analyse notions such as power, dominance, control, and ideology in language. Trask (2007), stresses the fact that CDA's main interest resides in finding answers to questions such as why was this text constructed at all? To what people or societies is it addressed? Which goal it pursues? Does the writer or speaker have concealed purposes? What hidden assumptions and biases underlie the text?

The significant difference between DS and CDS lies in the constitutive problem-oriented, interdisciplinary approach of the latter. CDA is therefore not interested in investigation a linguistic unit per se but in studying social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multidisciplinary and multi-methodical approach. Any social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, to be challenged and not taken for granted. (Wodak and Meyer, 2009)

Taking into consideration all the mentioned above, we could assume that CDA should be considered as a framework within the broader field of Discourse Studies. The difference of this framework resides in its profound interest to the social component of discourse. Trask (2007) emphasizes that CDA is basically interested in the social context in which a text is written. By analyzing the social nature of discourse, the CDA analysts also questions and uncovers hidden messages. Critical theories, thus also CDA, want to produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection. Thus, they are aimed at producing 'enlightenment and emancipation'. Such theories seek not only to describe and explain, but also to root out a particular kind of delusion. Even with differing concepts of ideology, critical theory seeks to create awareness in agents of their own needs and interests (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) summarized the main tenets of CDA as follows:

1. CDA addresses social problems
2. Power relations are discursive
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture
4. Discourse does ideological work
5. Discourse is historical
6. The link between text and society is mediated
7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory
8. Discourse is a form of social action.

Main theoretical basis for CDA is Systematic Functional Linguistics as developed by Halliday. Besides, it also draws knowledge and concepts from many other fields, for instance, sociology, psychology, ethnology etc. and use them within the discipline of linguistics. As in the case with the field of Discourse Studies, this framework is also comprised of researchers that were introducing approaches that dealt with perspectives of discourse. We will then briefly outline the most focal ones for CDA.

The first notable approach is Fairclough's Discourse Approach. Fairclough's (2001a) theoretical foundation have been originated within linguistics and studies in sociolinguistics. He focuses on language in its social context. "Language use is shaped socially and not individually" (Fairclough 1993: 63). Besides, inspired by Bakhtin's (1986) discursive practice and Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony, the researcher focuses on the relationship between discourse, power, and ideology. Fairclough, in his works, singles out a number of tools that could be applied within a framework of CDA of any text. Such is, for example, 'interdiscursivity' and 'intertextuality'. The former constitutes the interaction of different genres, discourse and styles in any visual or written text. In this case, the researcher also includes semiotic analysis and analysis of visual images (Wodak, Meyer, 2009: 126). On the other hand, according to Fairclough (2003), 'intertextuality', concept coined by Kristeva (1986), constitutes a bridge between language and social contexts. Linguistic analysis of Fairclough is based on a particular linguistic theory devised by Halliday (1994) 'Systemic functional linguistics'. According to this theory, language is a 'functional' phenomenon and all the linguistic features are seen as shaped by the social functions. Fairclough offers to analyze the modality present in a text, as the latter can contribute "to sustaining

particular relations of power and domination” and can be used as a call for action, resistance, defense and so on (Wodak, Meyer, 2009: 126). The researcher focuses in his analysis on the responsible social agents represented in a discourse. He researches how roles are being distributed in a text, whose voices are silenced and who is given more spotlight. Therefore, attention is given to the pronoun ‘we’, both exclusive and inclusive meaning of it. Another researched feature is the time and how a speaker shifts between tenses in order to construct certain realities. In the opinion of Fairclough, organization of a text, choice of vocabulary and syntax are also regarded as interesting in terms of CDA, more specifically how exactly these features impose power and ideology on a listener or reader (Wodak, Meyer, 2009: 126).

It is also worth to notice work done by Michel Pecheux (1982). Whose theoretical foundation is based on Althusser’s ideological theory and Foucault’s theory of discourse. In theory of Pecheux, discourse analysis is a combined analysis of ideological aspects of language use and of the materialization in language of ideology. In addition to the interest in political discourse, within this approach much research has been done on other types of written discourse such as religious, educational and in the workplace.

Similarly to Fairclough’s approach, Wodak’s Discourse-historical Approach, views discourse as a form of social practice (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 2001) The approach wants to explore how discourses, genres, and texts change in relationship to socio-political change (Wodak, 2001). The researcher employs a principle of triangulation. For investigating discursive construction of races, nations and ethnicities, Wodak combined historical, socio-political, and linguistic perspectives. Intertextuality, within this approach, also plays an important role.

Critical Linguistics Approach, closely led by ‘systemic’ linguistic theory of Halliday (1978, 1985) put the emphasis on grammar in its ideological aspect. The researchers in their works (Fowler et al., 1979; Kress and Hodge, 1979) specified how “meaningful grammatical choices contribute to reproducing relations of domination, grammar works ideologically” (van Dijk 1997: 263). This approach was mainly applied to the discourses of the press (Fowler, 1991), education and interview (Kress, 1985).

The Sociocognitive Approach is based on social representation theory, where discourse is considered as a communicative event. Van Dijk, who is one of the most influential representatives of this approach, argues that the analysis should be based on a sound theory of context. Three forms of social representations are relevant in this context:

1. knowledge (personal, group, cultural)
2. attitudes (not in the social psychology understanding)
3. ideologies.

Discourses take place within society and can only be understood in the interplay of social situation, action, actor and societal structures. (Wodak 2001: 27) Unlike Fairclough, Van Dijk (1993a) focuses on social cognition as the mediating part between text and society. Van Dijk (ibid.) defines the social cognitions as “socially shared representations of societal arrangements, groups and relations, as well as mental operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing and learning” (257). Van Dijk (2000a), in his approach, addresses the question of identifying ideological structures and social relations of power found in discourse.

## **1.2. Political Discourse and its Analysis**

Now we will turn our attention to the most important approach for our paper, namely Political Discourse Analysis. PDA can be defined as multi-disciplinary research that focalizes its attention on linguistic and discursive aspects of political texts. It is obvious to state the fact that PDA focuses on the analysis of ‘political discourse’. However, the difficulty resides in identifying which discourse can be considered political. It is usually accepted to identify this kind of discourse according to the actors or authors that perform the discourse, for instance, politicians and the audience (electorate). Presidents, ministers and other government members are considered to be the most common interesting with this regard, since their speeches usually contain vast material that can be closely examined by discourse analysts. Indeed, in the USA, studies of presidential speeches are numerous (Stuckey 1989; Campbell & Jamieson 1990; Hart 1984; Snyder & Higgins 1990). Chilton (2004), who is considered to be one of the prominent representatives of this approach, claims that politics is very largely the use

of language, even if the converse is not true - not every use of language is political (2004: 14). The scientist also states that the main question about PDA is “What does the use of language in contexts call ‘political’ tell us about humans in general?” (2004: 12). The emergence of this approach, according to Chilton, happened through transition of researchers from Chomsky’s generative theory to Halliday’s social semiotic and systemic-linguistic theory (2004: 10).

Categorizing a discourse as political does not imply focusing only on its participants. Another crucial notion here is that of ‘context’. The contexts can be viewed from a variety of perspectives: settings (when, where, why), occasions, intentions, political presuppositions and implicatures etc. That is, politicians talk politically also (or only) if they and their talk are contextualized in such communicative events such as cabinet meetings, parliamentary sessions, election campaigns, rallies, interviews with the media, bureaucratic practices, protest demonstrations, and so on (Van Dijk, 1998: 14). One of the difficulties in putting forward a theory of language and politics is that of defining exactly what counts as political language. Wodak and de Cilia (2006) claim that the key issue within research on language and politics resides in understanding what can be counted as politics and political action (713). The researchers note that ‘everyday language’ is continuously and unavoidably infiltrated by terms from institutionalized politics (709). Chilton (2004) and Joseph (2010) agree that context and situation are the ultimate aspect used to define a language as political or not, in their opinion, it is a matter of interpretation.

According to van Dijk (1997: 12), PDA should be able to answer genuine and relevant political questions and deal with issues that are discussed in political science. Having previously discussed the nature of positioning discourse in the paradigm of politics, we should examine more closely ‘political discourse’. It has been emphasized that both in politics and in political science, such discourse is primarily seen as a form of political action, and as part of the political process (Van Dijk, 1997: 20). This view is completely compatible with overall theoretical basics within discourse studies. Discourse is a form of social action and interaction (Atkinson & Heritage 1984; Boden & Zimmerman 1991; van Dijk 1985).

As regards the importance of speech in politics, politicians should possess the ability to express themselves clearly, since language is a means of communication, a

means of presenting and shaping argument and political argument is ideological, in that it comes from a series of beliefs (Beard, 2000: 18). The orator, during political public speeches, usually makes arguments for or against something that the government might do (or might not do) and explains how it can possibly create a better future. That something may represent an action that should be implemented: it might be going to war, signing a treaty, holding an election, raising a tax, making something illegal or vice versa, stating or giving opinion about past events that took place in the national history. Independently from the topic, the political speaker's main objective resides in making an audience like him and share his point of view. In fact, Wilson (1990) states that language of politicians not only conveys the message to the public but also it is not free from manipulation, deception, and persuasion. Similarly, Joseph (2006) illustrates that politicians and media owners use propaganda, deception, and manipulation in their speeches to achieve political goals and interests on one hand, and to diminish the value or reputation of their opponents on the other. Therefore, when creating political discourse, several things have to be kept in mind.

Each type of text has its specific communicative goal and its own addressee. Depending on which reaction one wants to trigger in a reader's or a listener's mind, different discursive and rhetoric means should be applied. Political speeches are usually prepared or written to give a feeling of spontaneous talk. Some of them are spontaneous but in most of the cases they are carefully planned. It is also worth bearing in mind that many political speeches are not written by the person who delivers them but by professional speech writers (ghost-writers); sometimes they are the result of collective work. According to Chilton, political parties employ publicists of various kinds, whose role is not merely to control the flow of information, but also to design and monitor wordings and phrasings, and in this way to respond to challenges or potential challenges (2003: 8). Another important factor is that the speaker has a monopoly of the floor, with the possible exception of interruption by hecklers, and so although it is a form of face-to-face discourse with the audience as a key participant, it is one sided in terms of verbal output (Bloor 2007: 115).

### **1.3. Tools for Analyzing Political Discourse**

Text producers, especially politicians use language in a particular way through using many different manipulative strategies to achieve their objectives. In this case, it would be important to identify the manipulative and implicative techniques that are used by text-producers to persuade people (Van Dijk, 1997). A vast variety of scientific papers has been elaborated on the topic of Political Discourse Analysis. Here we can single out critical ideological analysis of Pecheux (1969, 1982), Guespin (1976), critical anti colonialist studies of Dorfman & Mattelart (1972), authoritarian discourse analysis of Lavandera et al. (1986, 1987) and ethnographic discourse analysis of Sierra (1992). Discourses of this type are regarded as particularly interesting in this sense, because they provide researchers with a broad variety of fascinating material to compare and explore by recurring to different frameworks.

Since each genre is characterized by uniformity of structure and recurrent use of similar themes, it is quite reasonable that many scholars tend to conduct investigations on how similarly those themes are presented in different speeches. Many scholars have investigated and compared speeches of Presidents, analysing their rhetorical style (Bird, 2011), focusing on a particular recurrent theme (Gatta, 2010), genre itself (Weber, 2011), etc. The outlined above conception of politics and political discourse used within perspective of CDA leads to incorporation of a variety of socio-political themes and issues into the scope of PDA. The most researched ones are the following: race and racism; ideology; migration; language policies; refugees and war related topics. Since addressing all the stated above issues is not the goal of the current paper, we will focalize only on the research and work that has been carried out within the political discourse analysis related to the theme of war.

Interest of critical discourse analysts in the war related discourses has arisen as a consequence of the terrorist attacks that took place on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. It was back then that the ‘war on terrorism’ was proclaimed. These events, naturally, gave impulse to vast research on the discursive and linguistic phenomena of the discourses held at that time. In particular, PDA analysts looked into naming practices used by U.S. officials (Arkin 2005; Collins and Glover 2002), the use of metaphor (Lakoff 2001; Cienki 2004; Skinner and Squillacote 2010). Both editions of *Discourse & Society* (2004) and *Journal of Language & Politics* (2005) dedicated special attention

to the discourses of 9/11 and the Iraq War. Overall, the beginning 21<sup>st</sup> century was marked by several conflicts and wars such as Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and Second Karabakh War, Syrian war, Iraq war, invasion Russian Federation in Ukraine, etc, which gave a possibility to discourse analysts to explore the linguistic and political nature of the related discourses. Political language can be an effective measure in the transition out of conflict, as implied by the saying that belongs to Churchill: “jaw-jaw is always better than war-war”.

Language can support and promote war just as it can be used to support and promote peace (Schäffner and Wenden, 1999). Although, war makes part of the political domain, it also incorporates topics from other societal domains. In this way, a speech about war is not only about military actions, but also includes a variety of other topics such as the realm of refugees, economy, education, health care etc. Here we should also focus on the concept of intertextuality, namely, “when we speak or write, we often quote or allude to what others have said. When one text quotes, refers to, or alludes to another text (that is, what someone else has said or written), we will call this ‘intertextuality’ (Gee, 2014: 171). In other words, texts and contexts are in close connection: some formal features point outside the text, i.e., to previous texts which are related to it. In the account of Fairclough (1995), the existence of other previously produced texts leads to production of new texts from a variety of text types (genres, discourses). The researcher further notices the connection between interdiscursivity and intertextuality (Kristeva, 1980), where the latter is used to map the prior texts (already existing conventions) onto the present discourses (Fairclough 1995: 134).

It should be pointed out that the qualitative analysis conducted in this dissertation only partly followed the framework by Fairclough (1997) for political discourse analysis that we described earlier. Some theoretical foundations have also been based on the frameworks proposed by Paul Chilton, Van Dijk, Gunther Kress and van Leeuwen . Since PDA is rather a complex and multisided approach, it is normal to adjust current frameworks to one’s own needs, “... anyone engaged in their own discourse analysis must adapt the tools they have taken from a given theory to the needs and demands of their own study” (Gee 2014: 1).

Van Dijk (1997) gives importance to the analysis of so called ‘predicates of semantic macropropositions’. The macrostructure of a discourse is the structure of its global meaning, topic or theme (Van Dijk, 2005). According to his view, predicates of the macrostructures of political discourse tend to be future-oriented, which includes, perhaps, threats about the forthcoming changes, promises about future events. Interestingly, notes the researcher, references to the present tend to be negative, and those to the future positive. On the other hand, references to the past are ambiguous but are used, for instance, by opposing party as an instrument of argumentation, by contrasting once flourishing economy to today’s challenges; or by reinforcing an argument by referring to some historical event. Macropropositions (aka topics (van Dijk, 1980, 1987)) in political discourse very often display semantic and ideological polarization: Whereas ‘we’ are democratic, ‘they’ are not, and whereas ‘our’ soldiers, or those who share our cause, are freedom fighters, those of the ‘others’ are obviously terrorists (Chomsky 1985, 1987; van Dijk 1995a). This polarization is reached through usage of positive evaluations of ‘us’ and negative evaluations of ‘them’.

Each discourse genre has its own textual schemata, or in other words, conventional categories according to which we could identify certain genre. This is the case for political speeches, propaganda agenda, slogans in manifestations etc. Some of the parts are traditionally obligatory, such as Opening and Closing parts of Parliament sessions, while other parts are simply strategic, as in political speeches. (Van Dijk 1997: 29). Especially interesting in this regard is the argumentative part of political discourse. As an example of widespread argumentative strategy, we could take statements of nationalists or populists. Their strategy usually resides in appealing to the benefits for the People. The policies or standpoints of our group are represented as altruist, and those of the political opponent as egoist (van Dijk 1997: 30).

Van Dijk (1995a) claims that while carrying out analysis we should give closer examination to the conditions of local coherence, presupposition and entailment, indirectness and implicitness, strategies of description and representation, and so on. Here we might need to refer to the polarization strategy one more time, where ‘our’ group is good, and ‘their’ group is bad. One of the main semantic strategies is to make propositions with positive predicates about our own group rather explicit than implicit, rather direct than indirect. In other words, a political speaker would give all the details

about good deeds his party has done, without any presuppositions, while the problematic issues would be less elaborated on. The reverse strategy is applied in this case to ‘their’ group, making emphasis and giving full picture of bad decisions of the enemy, whereas achievements are not focused too much upon or not mentioned at all. Chilton in his book refers to polarization phenomena in different words, namely ‘legitimization’ (of the self) and ‘delegitimization’ (of the other). The strategies of legitimization could be including voters’ problems and will in the argumentative structure of your text, boasting about own achievements and positive self-presentation. In the contrary, delegitimization is associated with presenting enemies or opposition negatively. Speech acts of blaming, accusing and insulting are one of the most common with this regard (2006: 30). With this regards presupposition and entailment are widely used by speakers as the means of strategical structuring of information and are mainly recurred to in order to avoid challenge or rejection (Chilton 2003: 64).

Lexicon in political discourse is also exploited to strengthen an argument, mitigate some information, leave implicit or hide it. Researchers within the political paradigm have carried out studies on ‘political language’ (Edelman 1977, 1985; Herman 1992). Euphemisms are mostly used by politicians to describe negative aftermath of their actions or policies, in this way rendering softer undesirable information., “as when our bombs are called 'Peacemaker' and our killings of civilians among the Others as ‘collateral damage’” (van Dijk 1997: 33). According to Van Dijk (1997), these principles of using political language have been already thoroughly examined (Herman 1997; Chilton 1985, 1988; Shäffner 1985).

On the other hand, manipulation of grammar within political paradigm is more subtle than lexical variations. The strategies of syntax variation used to express hidden meanings in sentence are numerous. Paul Chilton, in his “Analysing Political Discourse Theory and Practice”, claim that “different syntax can be arguably related to different conceptualisations” (2003: 7). Special attention is usually dedicated to alternation of active and passive voice, nominalizations, repetitions, and other manipulations of syntax structures with the help of stylistic choices. One of the well-researched phenomena is the use of deictic pronouns. We can see a clear distinction in the use of pronouns, such as ‘I’ and ‘we’. The former is used when the orator wants to assume the responsibility for some actions and thus get some credibility from the

audience. This is what Aristotle calls *ethos*; in other words, it is a part of a speech where a speaker creates a positive image of himself to be more reliable in the minds of the audience. In the similar manner, the pronoun ‘we’ is used to create a higher level of proximity with the audience. This pronoun can refer to the nation as one whole, both to those who actually accomplished something in the past and those who live in the time of the speech, thus creating a continuing unity. Word order, according to van Dijk (1997: 34) has two types of political functions, namely, a) emphasis or mitigation through more or less prominent placement of words, and b) the ways underlying semantic roles are focused on. Here, van Dijk, is focusing on topicalization, where a word or a collocation is fronted in a sentence in order to emphasize, for instance, ‘our’ good deeds or, in the contrary, to put a stress on ‘their’ drawbacks or failures. Usage of active and passive voices is also proved to be effective in mitigating or stressing some information. In this way, active sentences will associate responsible agency with (topical) syntactic subjects, whereas passive sentences will focus on objects (e.g. victims) of such actions and defocus responsible agency by putting agents last in prepositional phrases, or leaving it implicit, as in the well-known headlines Police killed demonstrators vs. Demonstrators killed by Police vs. Demonstrators killed (1997: 34).

The rhetorical dimension must not be left out when it comes to political discourse. As we have previously mentioned, classical rhetoric was initially intended as ‘art of persuading’. First and most important domain within which rhetoric was originally used was and still is political discourse. Aristotle, in his “Rhetoric”, identified three main persuasive modes, namely *pathos*, *ethos* and *logos*<sup>1</sup>. *Pathos* appeals to the emotions of the audience, while *ethos*, which we mentioned earlier, appeals to the writer’s character and how he is viewed by the listeners or readers. Finally, *logos*, which we will concentrate on, appeals to reason and argumentative side of the speech. In other words, how and with which means, the orator manages to persuade their listener. Many research have been done in the area of ‘political rhetoric’ (Clinton 1988; Hirschman 1991; McGee 1985; Kiewe 1994 etc).

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<sup>1</sup> Both *ethos* and *pathos* appeal to the emotional part of the speakers (also called paraargumentative parts).

Some of the rhetoric strategies according to Coulthard (1985: 179-191) used by orators comprise vast usage of stylistic devices such as repetitions: at the level of sounds (alliterations, rhymes), words (polysyndeton), sentences (parallelisms), or meanings (semantic repetitions). They all follow general principle of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Additionally, numerous meaning-changing literary figures can be singled out: metaphor, metonymy, personification, climax, anti-climax, similie, periphrasis, antithesis, epithet, hyperbole, pun, oxymoron, zeugma, aposiopesis, litotes, euphemisms, rhetorical question, chiasmus, inversion, suspense. Stylistic devices remain one of the strongest means that are successfully used in order to give an auxiliary meaning, idea, or feeling. Stylistic figures often provide emphasis on the argument that is being presented. Analysts dedicated a lot of research to the usage of tropes and stylistic devices in political discourse and as effective rhetoric figures in general (Chilton 1985, 1987, 1995; Blommaert 1994; Read et al. 1990; Howe 1988; Hughes and Duhamel 1962; Brooks and Warren 1970; Pearsall 1998). Metaphor, in the account of Chilton (2003:51), “has long been recognised as important in political rhetoric”. Metaphor is now viewed as a simple recurring trope in the literary or oratory texts. It is, however, believed to help human mind conceptualise experiences and situations, in other words to create sort of schemas in our minds (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Chilton and Lakoff 1995). Political concepts involving leadership and political action conceptualised by movement or journey metaphors:

The *road* ahead will be long. Our *climb* will be steep. We may not *get there* in one year, or even in one term...<sup>2</sup>

According to Santulli (2011: 58), “journey metaphors and light-darkness metaphors are singled out as the most frequent and meaningful strategies adopted by the British statesman to re-create the fundamental myths of politics (Valiant Leader, Conspiratorial Enemy and United-We-Stand [Edelman 1971, Geis 1987]), assigning the roles of villain and hero, and transforming potential victims into a victorious army”. As another example Chilton mentions Adolf Hitler’s “Mein Kampf” where the source domain of microbes and disease is used to conceptualise his arguments. Using

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<sup>2</sup> Election victory speech of Barak Obama (2008, November 5). <https://www.npr.org/2008/11/05/96624326/transcript-of-barack-obamas-victory-speech>

the knowledge about what microbes do to human's body, he manages to exploit this metaphor in order to map the 'parasite' frame onto the 'Jew' frame within his rhetoric, thus 'a whole array of inferences is generated' (Chilton 2003: 52).

Chilton, in his framework of PDA, analyses many aspects of political discourse. In his opinion only through language tied into social and political institutions can one declare war, declare guilty or not guilty etc., for this purpose an orator must have the "requisite resources to make the speech act credible" (2003: 30). First such aspect that he addresses are the implicatures. This device allow speaker to convey some meaning without explicitly taking responsibility for it. These implicatures are based on violation of one of the four types of 'maxims' (Grice 1989: 26-7):

- I. Maxim of quantity. Maxim of Quantity. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- II. Maxim of Quality. Supermaxim: Try to make your contribution one that is true. Specific maxims: Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- III. Maxim of Relation. Be relevant.
- IV. Maxim of Manner. Supermaxim: Be perspicuous. Specific maxims: Avoid obscurity of expression. Avoid ambiguity. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). Be orderly.

It is possible to violate some of the maxims, for example the ones of quality and quantity, by saying half-truth or the opposite of truth. There are cases of what Grice calls flouting the maxims, for example, when the hearer is able to calculate that the speaker has the intent to communicate something nearby. In this situation speaker is not violating maxims but intends to reach some communicative effect. This effect is called implicature (Chilton, 2003: 35). In other words, implicature is denoted as the act of saying one thing by saying something else. Grice was making distinction between 'generalized' and 'particularized' implicatures. The latter is an implicature, which depends on particular features of the context, while the former is understandable without reference to any specific context.

Chilton focuses his attention also on the concept of 'face' coined by Goffamn (1967). In his concept of politeness, he gives introduces the ideas of the positive face (the need to be appreciated) and negative face (the need not to be disturbed). The

positive face is related to such para-argumentative part of persuasion as ethos. It is argued by Goffman that a listener (or reader) is more willing to trust to an orator who has established so called 'common ground'. Face threatening acts (FTAs) are the claims of a speaker that might provoke repulsion on the behalf of the interlocutor. As an example, we could take the simplest communicative act such as a request. In the case of request, we threaten our negative face and that is why we have to come to so called 'face work' in order to mitigate the aggressiveness of our orders, to minimize our criticism, to reduce the impact of FTAs. Facework is crucial in conversation and monologic speech, because if you preserve the face of the other you will also obtain therefore important effect from the point of your argumentation, persuasion; possibility of developing the communicative exchange that is beneficial for yourself. These notions of FTAs are also useful in comprehending strategies within political discourse such as forms of evasion, forms of solidarity and exclusion, and some devices of persuasion (Chilton, 2005: 40). A balance should be reached by politician between positive and negative face strategies. Regarding positive face, it is very common to evoke patriotic and brotherhood senses as well as highlighting national values. On the other hand, there is always a risk of negative face, which a politician should be always aware of and, thus, minimize any kind of threats to the freedom and security of the individuals.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Political and Social Context of Modern Ukraine**

#### **2. First decade of Independence**

As any country, Ukraine has gone through many stages on the way to what she is now. It is crucial to trace all the chain of events starting from the fall of USSR and ending with the ongoing Russian invasion in order to comprehend the nature of today's geopolitical situation in which Ukraine finds herself and understand why the role of the current President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has been decisive in mobilisation of the Ukrainian people and other nations against the Putin's war.

Following the fall of USSR, Russian Federation (RF) turned out to be unable to accept the self-determinism of Ukraine. This self-determinism has never been viewed as something serious within the Russian society, otherwise, in their opinion, it would threaten RF's self-identification as a dominant country. Thus, Ukraine was always treated as "younger sister country", whose people were still considered to be part of "great Russian nation" and not as independent geopolitical state. Many interviews and political speeches of the President of Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, support this statement. In his article "On the historical unity of Russian and Ukrainian people"<sup>3</sup>, he claimed the following 'Russians and Ukrainians are the one people, the one whole'. Therefore, it is important to understand that starting from the day of Independence of Ukraine from USSR, Russia has been trying to deprive Ukraine of her independence.

Constant attempts of RF to check the weak points of Ukraine regarding the defense of her own sovereignty and the response of NATO countries, in particular USA, have been usual practice. As political scientist Gai-Nyzhnyk notices, the first acute situation occurred in 2003 when Russia began the construction of an embankment in the direction of the Ukrainian island from Taman (2017: 79). About 150 meters of the dam appeared per day. According to ex-Prime minister of Ukraine, Yevhen Marchuk<sup>4</sup>:

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<sup>3</sup> Article by V. Putin "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians" <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181> [last access on 03.12.2022]

<sup>4</sup> Article Ukraine in 2003: the conflict around Tuzla <https://uatv.ua/uk/ukrayina-v-2003-rotsi-konflikt-navkolo-tuzly-ta-mobilna-revoljutsiya-video/> [last access on 18.11.2022]

The Tuzla provocation was the final part of the Russian Federation's operation against Ukraine to force it to sign an interstate agreement on the joint use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. Simply put, no foreign warships could enter the Sea of Azov after signing this agreement. Even if Ukraine invited, it was necessary to get the consent of Russia and vice versa.

This act of RF was certainly well-planned act of hybrid aggression against Ukraine. Only the decisive actions of the President L. D. Kuchma have not permitted the hybrid Russian act of aggression to grow into military conflict.

In 2004 presidential elections, RF openly supported the pro-Russian politician V. Yanukovych. That year was marked by first largescale revolution, so called 'Orange Revolution', which was organized by one of the leading candidates V. Yushchenko and his followers in response to alleged falsification of exit polls by Yanukovych. As a consequence of re-election campaign under control of independent invigilators, Yushchenko got the majority and became the President of Ukraine. However, the impact of Russia in the elections of 2004 is undeniable. The meeting of separatist parties in Donetsk in 2004, according to Mishchuk (2021) could lead to military aggression of Russia. However, probably RF was not ready to undertake those actions back at that time (27).

Hybrid actions of RF manifested themselves not only in military manoeuvres and threats. It led a political, economic, energetic, and most importantly gas war against Ukraine. In 2009, RF interrupted the export of gas to Ukraine, which led to a new crisis. In addition to the constant gas manipulations, many times RF was blocking the import of goods from Ukraine, which caused extreme loses of income for the latter. Furthermore, Russia was insistingly stressing the unacceptability of cooperation of Ukraine with NATO or European Union.

### **2.1. Hybrid war of Russia and Revolution of Dignity**

During election campaign of 2010 to the post of President, it comes as no surprise as Russia gives its explicit support to V. Yanukovych. As an aftermath, the actions of the pro-Russian president and RF itself triggered the worry within Ukrainian community. The dissatisfaction with the actions of the government grew. Overall, around 10-15 thousand people took part in a demonstration, blaming the President and the

Parliamentary majority of treason (Gai-Nyzhnyk, 2017: 113). While Yanukovich was in office, RF was pressing Ukraine as never before. The intrusion in every area of government, army and even education began. RF managed to make Ukraine declare its non-aligned status, thus, to pursue the anti-NATO direction.

Overall, 2010 has become the year when RF started systematic eradication of Ukrainian sovereignty, army, economics and language. Since 2010 the governmental financing of Ukrainian army was declining annually by 0,7 %. General military conscription was aborted in 2013, months before the Russian aggression in the eastern part of Ukraine and Crimean Peninsula. Highest governmental positions were taken by RF citizens who managed to get the Ukrainian citizenship from Yanukovich. All the combat effective departments, together with military equipment were basically dismantled or sent to Crimea in advance. The role of Ukrainian language was being constantly diminished in comparison to Russian, which was promoted in every possible way. Ukraine became an object of information and psychological influences, operations, wars, and her information defense was under massive threat (Initska, 2016: 29).

2011-2012 were the years of economic pressure on Ukraine. RF was threatening to cease the export of gas, was building North stream pipeline and at the same time was demanding for the unification of Naftogaz and Gazprom. Russia was pushing Ukraine to enter The Eurasian Customs Union (EACU) and refuse the association with the EU. A special document was devised with the title “A complex of measures necessary for integration of Ukraine to EACU ”. The goals of RF were stated as follows:

1. Prevention of Ukraine signing association with the EU.
2. Creation of influential chain of pro-Russian public and political forces able to keep Ukrainian government from unfavorable for Russia decisions.
3. Neutralization of political and media impact of EU integration supporters (Gai-Nyzhnyk, 2017: 149).

After a number of provocations, namely 2003 Tuzla and 2006, 2009 gas crises, as well as the war led by Russia in Georgia in 2008, the government of RF gained an assertion of the complete impunity on behalf of NATO and the EU. During 2008 Bucharest summit of NATO, Putin stated the following in his one-on-one meeting with G. Bush:

Ukraine is not even a state! What is Ukraine? A part of its territory is Eastern Europe, but a part, a considerable one, was a gift from us... if Ukraine goes to NATO, she will remain without the Crimea and the Eastern part – she will just disappear.

Therefore, RF was attacking Ukraine with all hybrid methods. Information manipulation centers were active alongside ubiquitous propaganda in order to make Ukraine integrate with Russia. Numerous organizations that were controlled or led by Russian agents – Party of Regions, Communists party, Batkivshina party, party of Russian unity, different orthodox organizations, political groups (“Donetsk Republic”) etc. Since 2008 Russian propaganda’s main goal was to infect the Ukrainian nation with the ideas of imperial chauvinism, the inferiority of other people in comparison to the world most spiritual people of Russia. A wide usage of media, cinema, show business, tv shows and other means played an important role in Russian cultural expansion in Ukraine (Mischuk, 2021: 34). These processes that threatened national security of Ukraine became even stronger as Victor Yanukovich took office.

In September 2013, the Cabinet of Ministers declared publicly about the inappropriateness of Association with the EU and expressed the intention to devise the steps necessary to enter the Customs Union with RF. Golovko et al. (2015) stresses that this decision came as a surprise and was unexpected for the public, because during the previous three years, the authorities recognized that association with the EU is a strategic goal of Ukrainian state (5). O. Kucher writes that the reason of Euromaidan was not only the decision of Yanukovich not to follow European vector, but also the feeling of people not being listened to (Kucher, 2015: 2). Among other reasons scientist P. Polianskii et al. (2015: 5) singles out the following:

- A threat for Ukrainian sovereignty as a consequence of being involved in tighter connection with Russian Federation;
- Ubiquitous corruption in government.
- Absence of political freedom, political repressions
- Impunity of government representatives
- Economic recession

Therefore, Ukrainian people did not accept the position of the government and went out in the streets for the demonstrations to support the Association with the EU. According to different sources, from 50 to 100 thousand people participated in it. The demonstrators demanded the dissolution of Supreme Council of Ukraine as well. Some

of the Ukrainian researchers (V. Holovko, S. Yanishevskii, 2015) claim that the Revolution of Dignity became a common attempt to save country from a forthcoming crisis at the beginning of XXI century. The development of Ukraine as a democratic country was declared as an aftermath of USSR fall, however, as a matter of fact, Ukraine was only copying the idea of westernized democracy, but the nature of the government processes did not meet the main requirement “government for citizen” (Boryak et al., 2016: 769-781).

On the 16th of January, as the protests grew stronger, the Parliament of Ukraine adopts “dictator’s laws” that banned any independent public, politic or journalist activity. The freedom and the rights of people were substantially decreased. Protestors rushed to the Parliament on 19th of January where three days later first victims among civilians appeared. Over the course of few weeks the number of victims grew to one hundred when masked snipers started to shoot people from the distance. On the 20th of February 2014, under the pressure of protestant, opposition and international mediators (France, Germany, Poland), Yanukovich agreed to renew the validity of 2004 Constitution that was limiting the power of the President. Yanukovich realized the failure of his intentions and decided to flee the country on 22nd of February 2014 to Russia. The Revolution of Dignity lasted more than 90 days. Consequently, more than 100 demonstrators died and many more were injured (Polianskiy et al., 2015: 14)

Using the momentum of absence of adequate army in Ukraine, RF annexed the Crimean Peninsula in February 2014. However, Russia did not stop there. In the contrary, the degree of media propaganda increased, most of which was promoting the narrative that the citizens of Southern and Eastern parts of Ukraine wanted to unite with Russia. At the same time RF ‘supported’ the so-called separatists on the East of Ukraine, in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk and deployed military actions against Ukrainian army. The Kremlin's strategy, which it implemented in Donbas and Luhansk in the period from May to August 2014, can be formulated as the maximization of violence while masking the actual presence. The main forces of Russian expansion in Donbas consisted of "militia", which contained mainly well-prepared Russian citizens, and total, massive propaganda within citizens of Donetsk and Luhansk. The main property of this propaganda was to blur the focus of people's attention and elimination of alternative sources of information. This includes both creating a set of

communication channels of the same type, as well as the mass production of so-called informational stuffing. Especially in the absence of alternative sources it played a major role in making people believe certain things. After the capture of the regional mass media, Russian forces switched the media broadcasting in the region to retransmission of Russian channels within first few hours. As a consequence, around the plans of Russia failed. International sanctions that hit Russian Federation and the growing will of Ukrainian people to withstand the Russian aggression, stopped the further advancing. Russia, however, managed to capture certain number of territories of Ukraine, including Luhansk, Donetsk and the annexed Crimea. Luhansk and Donetsk became internationally unrecognized quasi-state called “Luhansk People Republic” and “Donetsk People Republic” respectively. At the same time, Russian government held a referendum in Crimea, where with the threat of weapons and falsification of the polls managed to get the majority of votes. Thus, Crimean Peninsula, though not recognized by international community, became part of Russian Federation. Ukraine for Kremlin is important not only because of Crimea, it is because of the whole complex of geo-strategic and geo-economic factors (Ozidal, 2015: 90).

## **2.2. Shaping national identity anew**

After Yanukovich fled the country, a new president was elected. Petro Poroshenko, a businessman and a politician that played crucial role in ‘Orange revolution’ in 2004, took the office and declared strongly pro-European vector with the main aim that of cutting ties with RF. Petro Poroshenko and his government had tough challenges to tackle. First of all, they managed to sign an association with EU, which gave an opportunity to Ukrainians to travel and work abroad much easier. However, the association logically led to the need in ubiquitous reforms within the government itself. At that point Ukraine was in a deep recession and Poroshenko and his government managed to stabilize economy. Nevertheless, in 2016 the support of Poroshenko began to fall as he failed to provide progress in fighting corruption. We should note that Ukraine was remaining mostly oligarchic state at that time. Poroshenko failed as well to bring to account the responsible for the victims on the Maidan in 2014. His main vector of public policy was three notions, which constituted his electoral slogan of the 2019 campaign: “Army. Language. Religion”. In the three cases there were both positive and negative outcomes. For example, restoring the independence of the

Ukrainian Orthodox Church, recognizing it as equal in rights and canonical, a complete break with the Moscow Patriarchate became one of the elements of national security during Poroshenko's presidency. At the same time, he was promoting Ukrainian language on all levels. Ukrainian got a firmer position on television, radio and most importantly in schools. Furthermore, in the field of security, among the achievements of the president, it is worth noting the creation of a renewed army, which is among the five most capable in Europe, primarily because it has been fighting for a long time. The commander-in-chief managed to take control of the anarchized volunteer battalions, discipline them, and equip them with modern weapons. About a hundred units of new and modernized combat equipment were handed over to the army almost every month: tanks, armoured cars, artillery, aircraft<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, the people from Poroshenko's business circle were suspected of involvement in the purchase of goods for the army at inflated prices<sup>6</sup>. Most importantly, Poroshenko did not manage to unite people of Ukraine since his policies were mostly directed on the Ukrainian speaking part of the country, while the Russian-speaking part was completely disregarded. During 2014 and until the invasion of 2022, Russia officially denied the presence of its troops in the Eastern parts of Ukraine, trying to imitate the appearance of a legitimate power in Luhansk and Donetsk. The military conflict in the eastern regions between Ukrainian forces and Russian army developed into a static conflict. In 2015, the Minsk agreements<sup>7</sup> were signed by Ukraine and Russia as participating members, although disputes over the terms have led to stagnation in the implementation.

Since the very day of Independence of Ukraine, the division between East and West has been an acute problem within socio-political life. The obvious factor that led to this division is history itself that determined the dissimilarities in the social, economic, and political life of the South-East and West of Ukraine. An important

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<sup>5</sup> Article by Valeriy Maidaniuk, *Pros and cons of 5-year-presidency of Poroshenko*, 2019. <https://nasze-slowo.pl/zdobuti-ta-vtrati-p-yati-rokiv-poroshenka/> [last access 21.11.2022].

<sup>6</sup> Article by Steven Pifer, *ORDER FROM CHAOS Ukraine: Six years after the Maidan*, 2020 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/02/21/ukraine-six-years-after-the-maidan/> [last access 04.12.2022].

<sup>7</sup> For the original text of the agreement see <https://peacemaker.un.org/ua-ceasefire-2014>; Memorandum on the implementation: <https://peacemaker.un.org/implementation-minsk-19Sept2014>. Cf. D'Anieri, P., *Ukraine and Russia: From Civilized Divorce to Uncivil War*, Cambridge University Press, 2019, 246-249

feature of the east-west distinction is that the east represents the experience and cultural manifestations of left modernism, and the west – traditionalist (pre-modernist) way of life and worldview<sup>8</sup>. Ethnic Ukrainian territory consists of many historic geographic lands that, over the past centuries, were subjects of different countries. Nowadays, not even all ethnic lands constitute the modern Ukraine, and the constant division has provoked huge differences in the processes of ethnic identification of the people. The task of ethnic identification was even harder to fulfil considering the multiculturalism and multilingualism. Historically, Western parts of Ukraine have Ukrainian-speaking population, while Russian language prevails in the South-Eastern cities. This is evidenced by the results of the "R&B Group" study, which was conducted in 2010<sup>9</sup> in two cities - Donetsk and Lviv. It was called 'Ukraine. East-West: unity in diversity'. 400 respondents were interviewed in each city. One of the questions was about language. The native language of respondents in Donetsk is Russian (87%), in Lviv - Ukrainian (90%). In Lviv, they believe that the official language of the country has to be Ukrainian (92%), in Donetsk - Russian (89%). Thus, Ukrainian is used less often in the southern and eastern regions among Ukrainian native speakers. Nevertheless, following the fall of USSR, large number of the Russian-speaking citizens of mixed ethnic origin considered Ukrainian as their mother tongue, even though they were remaining Russophone (Bochkovs'ka, A. et al. 2008).

At the same time in the regions populated mainly by Russophones (Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk) a constant decrease in the ratio of Ukrainian native speakers could be seen. Here we should state the fact that due to various restrictions and discriminations based on language, administrative pressure to which Ukrainian language was subjected over the past centuries on the behalf of Kremlin, a significant percentage of Ukrainian population was devoid of usage of native language as a means of national communication and the main instrument of consolidation of a nation (Masenko, 2004: 53). If we examine the policies of every Russian ruler since 17<sup>th</sup> century regarding Ukrainian language it is easy to notice how Ukrainian language was gradually eradicated. During the era of Russian Empire, a number of laws were

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<sup>8</sup> Levtsun A. *East-West: War and Peace*. 2007. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2007/04/20/4417009/> [last access 12.11.2022]

<sup>9</sup> Dmytro Shruchalo, article: *Lviv and Donetsk - unity in diversity*. 2010. <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/1992844.html> [last access 04.12.2022]

proposed prohibiting the learning of Ukrainian in schools, the publication of books written in Ukrainian language, communication in Ukrainian etc. During the period of USSR, propaganda was continually spreading the idea that people who spoke Ukrainian language belonged to the “lower class”. That is why most of the Ukrainians were supposed to be switching to Russian in order to be considered as ‘one of them’.

In the opinion of Balabanov, Pashyna and Lysak (2019: 494), the main factors of the ‘regionality’ of the South-East and the West of Ukraine are the following:

- 1) different rates and means of assimilation, determined some features of these regions, the preference of those or other confessions, neighboring cultures, differences in ideas about property and other.
- 2) the “dissolution” of the Ukrainians by the foreign ethnic population of Russia, which was carried out by the imperial power at the end of the XVIII - II half of the XIX century and during the Soviet period, especially after 1939.

As a consequence of the complex process of ethnic identification of the regions of modern Ukraine and considering the impact of various socio-political and historical aspects, Ukrainian citizens from different regions tend to prefer distinct geopolitical direction. All the above stated has been complicating the ethnic identification of the Ukrainian People. Most clearly, comparing the East and the West, these complications manifest themselves in the political preferences, in interpreting the historical past, in language paradigm and the geopolitical preferences.

Identifying national heroes is also a problematic within Ukrainian community. There are two different interpretations of who support OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) and the UPA (the Ukrainian Insurgent Army) and those who do not. One comes from the Soviet era and is currently supported by Russian government. According to their version, the OUN and UPA were nothing but small radical groups of nationalists and collaborators with fascists who did not consider the will of ordinary Ukrainians to welcome Soviets on their territories. Even today, many historians agree that the war crimes of Bandera and the UPA must be critically looked at. However, neither the OUN nor the UPA can be considered as only ‘fascist collaborators’, disregarding the idea of the Ukrainian people’s fight for independence, the Great Famine of 1932-33, and other atrocities visited by the Soviets upon the region (Yurchuk, 2017: 115; Yekelchuk 2015: 56). Interestingly, how the Revolution

of Dignity resurrected the mythology around Stephan Bandera. It is undeniable that this figure plays a major role for right-wing groups in Ukraine who were among the protesters in 2014. Ironically, however, it is in response to the Kremlin's propaganda calling Maidan fascist and nationalist that many protesters who did not define themselves as nationalists started calling themselves 'banderivtsi' (the Banderites)<sup>10</sup>. According to Shevtsovska (2022), re-appropriating this pejorative term used by Russian media was a response to the Kremlin's attempts to present these peaceful protests as non-democratic and led by a small group of fascists (141).

Perhaps, we should also stress that the right groups gained somewhat more acceptance during the protests of 2014 when many demonstrators were killed. More organised, *Pravy Sektor* (Right Sector) and *Svoboda* (Freedom) (names of right-wing groups) activists were, therefore, more active, and visible (Shevtsova 2017; Yekelchuk 2015). At that point, many symbols stemming from OUN and UPA organisations found their way to the public discourse of that time. The most popular is the saying 'Slava Ukraini!' (Glory to Ukraine!) and the response, 'Heroinam Slava!' (Glory to the heroes!). These two and many others are still being used nowadays and have become part of national identity.

### **2.3. Echo of Soviet era**

Interestingly that the relevance of the problem of self-identification of Ukrainians with the Soviet ideological and its symbolic heritage arose at the beginning 1990s, but again escalated in 2014. Here we can note that the virtual presence of a state that disappeared more than 30 years ago is still very strong in the minds of the ordinary people.

However, much repressions and terror people went through during the Soviet era, the propaganda and eradication of any ethnic self-identification played the main part in creating the positive image of USSR in the minds of ordinary people who were born there<sup>11</sup>. About a fifth of the all-Union arrests and executions fell on Ukraine. In

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<sup>10</sup> Portnov, A. (2016): Bandera Mythologies and Their Traps for Ukraine. Open Democracy, 22 June, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/bandera-mythologies-and-their-traps-for-ukraine/> [last access 04/12/2022]

<sup>11</sup> Survey carried out by O. Razumkov Center in 2017 "Identity of citizens of Ukraine: value orientation aspects", about 27% respondents completely or almost completely agreed with the statement "I consider myself a citizen of the former USSR". This indicator is among Russian speakers grew to 33%, among people of retirement age it exceeded 43%, and on average residents of Southern Ukraine - 48%. See: National security and defense. 2017. No. 1-2, p. 28–30.

general, political repression in Ukraine lasted seven decades - from the very first days of Soviet power in 1918 to the end of the 1980s. The terror was purposeful and professionally organized. It affected almost all classes of the Ukrainian people - the intelligentsia, military, politicians, church, culture and art figures, and it hit the peasantry the most. It will probably never be possible to establish the exact number of the dead and convicted. According to the archives of the Security Service of Ukraine, from 1927 to 1990, more than a million people were arrested in Ukraine, of which 545,000 were sentenced to various types of punishment, at least 140,000 were executed<sup>12</sup>.

Alongside the repressions, Russia continued complete elimination and substitution of national Ukrainian history with universal Soviet one. According to Havriliuk (2017: 278):

In 1977, there were more than 47,000 monuments in Ukraine, among them: almost 27,000 monuments to the heroes and events of the Great of the Patriotic War, about 3,000 - monuments to Lenin, about 1,000 - communist party, revolution and civil war figures; 1346 - a monument of architecture and urban planning...

As you can see, Soviet monuments made up more than two thirds of the total massif, while more than half are "Great Patriotic" monuments. So, Ukraine, judging by the monumental "places of memory", had almost no non-Soviet history. In the opinion of Spivak (1988; 2010), colonised nations are always denied political and cultural self-representation; in the same manner, Ukrainians are not allowed to shape their history separately from Russia. In the contrary, their national memory is re-written and interpreted by someone else. Colonisation or occupation is presented as 'liberation'.

Another acute problem is the importance World War II had for Soviet Union and then Russia. The Great Patriotic War<sup>13</sup>, how Russian memory politics defines it, was a war that helped Europe get rid of fascism, in which the Soviet Army had the central role. While many Central, Eastern and Baltic countries recognize it as a subsequent Russian occupation, Soviet Union saw it as the liberation and the climax of people's unity (Alkatiri & De Archellie, 2021). As a consequence the annual celebration of 9<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Article (2012) on *Political repressions of the 1920s-1980s and problems of national memory formation*. <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/research/2012/12/26/105584/> [last access on 04/12/2022]

<sup>13</sup> This is how Russian memory politics defines it, at the same time all other world calls it 2nd WW.

of May Victory Day, was made the most important holiday in the Soviet and post-Soviet era. Every year a largescale military parade at the central squares of member-countries were held in order to demonstrate the military power. “The day is connected to a large number of rituals, some of them coming from the Soviet era, such as bringing flowers to the eternal flame burning next to the monuments, watching war movies (many of them from the Soviet times) on the TV, giving presents and postcards to a few veterans who have survived until today and singing patriotic songs” (Shevtsova, 2022: 7) These parades, however, apart from commemorating the heroic actions of our ancestors, were done with the idea of Kremlin to show the whole world that Russia won this war.

Despite the outstanding role of the Ukrainian people in the heroic struggle and victory over Nazism in the Second World War, their participation is systematically downplayed by the official Russian discourse, and this is exactly the approach popularized in the world by means of Russian propaganda. As a result, the victory in the Second World War is attributed only to the Russians. More than 9 million people were conscripted from Ukraine into the Soviet Armed Forces. During the war, the entire USSR lost 16.2 million servicemen, about 4 million of them were from Ukraine. 1.7 million residents of Ukraine returned from the Red Army with disabilities. For courage shown in battles, 2.5 million Ukrainians were awarded medals and orders, 2,070 were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, 32 twice, and one - Ivan Kozhedub - three times. The main decisive events on the Soviet-German front are connected with Ukraine. Almost 61% of the ground forces of the German army were defeated on the territory of Ukraine. Thus, victory over Nazism would be impossible without Ukraine and Ukrainians. This is evidenced by the huge losses suffered by Ukraine during the Second World War, the participation of Ukrainians in the Red Army and the allied armies of the Anti-Hitler coalition, and the anti-Nazi struggle of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army.

This is one of the many more reasons why during the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, the so-called “Leninopad” took place, which meant demolition of Lenin monuments all over Ukraine. In 2015, when Poroshenko came into office, a law was adopted, which prohibited Nazi and totalitarian regimes symbols. Therefore, the process of decommunization started in Ukraine. The monuments to the leaders of

USSR were removed. Moreover, streets and cities that got their names during Soviet era were gradually renamed.

The period from 2015 to 2021 was marked by gradual decommunisation of Ukraine. At that time, both the community and the government were trying to deal with their post-communist past in the process of shaping a postcolonial national identity while having an ongoing Russian aggression in Donetsk and Luhansk. Kyiv, as well as the people of Ukraine were steadily distancing themselves from the influence of Russia through language, enhancement of army, separation on the religious basis, and, especially, through the revision of national history. All of these processes were sending a clear message to the Kremlin. That is why the changes that took place in Ukraine were considered and discussed in the propagandistic media channels as strong rise of nationalists and radicals in Ukraine. The latter were compared by the Russian government to fascists and to the regime of Nazi.

To put it differently, the decision of Ukraine to move into the direction of Europe against the background of aggression on the behalf of Russia stopped Bandera being just a historical figure in the minds of ordinary Ukrainian people. Ukrainians saw it as a symbol of resistance, as a moment to define their country through everything that their aggressor is not, as a sign of independence and freedom – which does not necessarily have anything to do with the real historical figure of Stepan Bandera. On the other hand, Russia viewed the image of Bandera and ‘banderivtsi’, mythological Ukrainian nationalists aiming to kill the Russian-speaking population, as a means to invent “a narrative on the Nazification of Ukraine and the call for liberation of the ‘brotherly nation’ ” (Shevtsova, 2022: 142).

A sparkling of a hope within Ukrainian nation appeared as a young comedian, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, won the presidency of 2019 elections and took the office with absolute majority in the Parliament. His presidency was marked by several achievements and problems, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter together with his role and significance during the invasion of Russia in 2022.

#### **2.4. The large-scale invasion of Russia in Ukraine**

Putin tried to check the response of international community on multiple occasions, every time on a larger scale. Russia has been trying to restore its influence over the lost subjects. Such examples include Moldova (1992), Georgia (2008) and finally

Ukraine (since 2014). When the Crimean Peninsula was annexed in 2014, Russia held a referendum. It was a referendum that took place under military presence of Russia and, thus, cannot be considered legal. Kremlin carried out strong information campaign by creating unclear image of the events that happened in Crimea. Although, it was clear from the very first day that Russia was involved directly in annexation of peninsula, Russia was trying to hide the real situation. “Little green man” was how the Russian propaganda called the troops that were present on the peninsula, since they did not have any signs on them and were wearing green uniform. By annexing the Crimea, Russia has violated numerous international treaties:

- Paris Charter (1990)
- Russia and Ukraine Treaty of Partnership (1997)
- UN Charter Non-intervention provisions
- Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances (1994)

Even violation of all these treaties did not trigger a solid and serious reaction from international community. Extraordinary meeting of EU Heads concerning the Ukraine crisis took place on 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2014, where “in the joint statement, the EU leaders condemned Russia's unprovoked violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. They called on Russia to immediately withdraw its armed forces and allow immediate access for international monitors”<sup>14</sup>. At this meeting the actions of Russia aimed at recognizing Crimea as its integral part were also condemned. Nevertheless, the annexation of Crimea was considered as illegal world-wide, only in June 2014 EU introduced some sanctions, which included ban on import and export of certain goods and technologies from Crimea, on supply of tourism services; comprised restrictions on trade and investment and personal sanctions for Russian politicians. In November 2018, Russian ships opened fire on the Ukrainian Navy vessels in international waters, 24 Ukrainian sailors were taken as hostages and brought to Moscow<sup>15</sup>. The response of the EU included one more time personal sanctions. Annexation of Crimea, thus and subsequent provocations on the behalf of Russia did not trigger harsher response from the EU that failed to sanction the top officials and businessmen in Russia. It is also

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<sup>14</sup> Extraordinary meeting of EU Heads of State or Government on Ukraine, 6 March 2014, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2014/03/06/> [last access 02.12.2022]

<sup>15</sup> Article on *Tension escalates after Russia seizes Ukraine naval ships* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46338671> [last access 02.12.2022]

obvious that there was not noticeable change in the relationship between Russia and the EU. Considering weak international resolve it was only the matter of time before Russia would try to expand its appetite.

The plans of Kremlin to begin a full-scale invasion became apparent in the last months of 2021. At that point Russia started to grow the presence of her troops on the borderline with Ukraine. The estimated number of Russian troops deployed in and around Ukraine ranged from 100,000 to 190,000<sup>16</sup>. Kremlin did not deny the deployment of the troops but was constantly stressing that there was no invasion being planned. Multiple mass media, as well as international and Ukrainian politicians have repeatedly stressed the fact that the accumulation of Russian troops near the borders of Ukraine since November 2021 should be considered as Russian's preparation for war with Ukraine. The official representatives of Russia denied in every possible way in their statements that Russia is planning or intends to attack Ukraine. Almost at the same time, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation began an undisguised transfer of additional troops to the occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Even on February 22, after announcing the recognition of the self-proclaimed "DNR" and "LNR" within the borders of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine, Putin claimed that this did not mean war: "We expect, and I want to emphasize this, that all disputed issues will be resolved during negotiations between the current Kyiv authorities and the leadership of these republics"<sup>17</sup>.

However, around four o'clock Kyiv time (UTC+2) on February 24, the President of the Russian Federation, V. Putin, announced a 'special military operation'<sup>18</sup> stating the ultimate goals:

We will strive for the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine. And also the transfer to court of those who committed numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including citizens of the Russian Federation.

Although, since the very Day of Independence the nationalists' parties have never gained the necessary 5% threshold during Parliamentary elections in Ukraine and have

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<sup>16</sup> David Brown, BBC article on *Ukraine conflict: Where are Russia's troops?* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60158694>, 2022. [last access 04.12.2022]

<sup>17</sup> Article on Putin: Russia has recognized the DPR and LPR within the boundaries specified in their constitutions, 2022 <https://tass.ru/politika/13811295> [last access 05.12.2022]

<sup>18</sup> Putin's speech on the beginning conduct of 'special military operation' in Ukraine <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2022/02/24/my-budem-stremitsia-k-demilitarizatsii-i-denatsifikatsii-ukrainy-putin-obiavil-o-nachale-spetsoperatsii-v-ukraine-news> [last access 01.12.2022]

never had wide public support, the idea that the far-right groups are in charge of Ukrainian government persisted in Russian narrative starting from 2014.

According to Putin's address, this operation has the aim to restore the so-called "historical Russia" or the USSR. As he continues, Ukraine has no historical right to exist as a separately from Russian Federation. Claiming that the historical roots of Russia stem from Kyivan Rus, he states that the history of Ukraine began with Lenin. Putin declares Russians and Ukrainians one people. Furthermore, he stressed that millions of Russians that are being constantly subjected to repressions and need help, live on the territories that are historically belonging to Russia (Kremlin.ru 2021). At the end of the address, Putin warned third countries against interfering in the conflict, saying that "Russia's response will be immediate and will lead you to such consequences that you have never faced before in your history".

In the beginning the plan of Russia was to capture Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine within three days, which would eventually lead to absence of any resistance by the Ukrainian army, a friendly welcome on the behalf of Ukrainian citizens, mainly in Southern and Eastern parts, and the strategic control of the whole Ukraine until the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, Victory Day from fascism.

The significance of the Great Patriotic War narrative alongside the ubiquitously promoted idea of Ukraine being not an independent state but an integral part of Russia, as well as liberation of Ukraine from nationalism and fascism triggered a strong support on the behalf of different groups of Russia citizens and countries friends. In the view of the supporters of 'special military operation', so called 'brother country' must be saved from the West that tries to establish their influence there. Following the invasion of February 24, 2022 it comes as no surprise that the Russian government still is not ready to recognise the independence of Ukraine as sovereign state.

One of the main domestic narratives that is being propagated as reason for the 'operation' is the sacral mission of Russia to liberate ethnic Russians from fascists that hold the power in Ukraine, at the same time to defend the territory of Russia from the expansion of NATO that was said to be present on the territories of Ukraine. The Ministry of Defense of Russia even held a presentation where they stated that the United States allegedly spent more than \$200 million on biological laboratories in Ukraine that participated in the American military biological program.

Russians has conducted multiple attacks since the beginning of the invasion, perhaps, the most important one was on the capital. Having encountered a colossal resistance on the behalf of Ukrainian Army, Russian forces retreated from Kiev. In March, Russian forces managed to capture Kherson province that is situated in the Southern part of Ukraine. The following months were followed by massive territorial losses of Russia. In September, following a rapid offensive, Ukrainian forces managed to liberate occupied Kharkiv region, pushing Russians to the borderline. November was marked by liberation of Kherson.

An ongoing Russian's war atrocities have left tens of thousands of civilians in Ukraine died or injured. Some cities are partially or completely destroyed. According to the UNHCR statistics<sup>19</sup>, the number of refugees amounts to 5.2 million that had to flee to other countries. International Migration Organization claims that more than 6.6 million citizens of Ukraine were displaced from their cities to other safer parts of the country as of July 2022. This figure is 15% of the total population of Ukraine. Overall, according to estimates, about 13 million Ukrainians left their homes, fleeing the war to other regions of Ukraine or abroad. According to IOM, people continue to leave the east, south and north of Ukraine. According to UN data, 6.65 million Ukrainians left for Europe as of mid-August. Of them, almost 4 million - mostly women and children - received temporary protection in one of the European countries. European Parliament resolutions have highlighted the situation of women and children fleeing the war.

The EU and its allies, within and beyond NATO, have adopted hard-hitting sanctions aimed at causing severe damage to the Russian economy. During the month of the war, over 4500 personal sanctions were imposed on Russian politicians and oligarchs. Many countries including, the EU, closed their skies to Russian planes. This means that they can not only land or take off in these countries, but also fly over them. The EU, Canada, Britain, Switzerland, South Korea and Japan have disconnected a number of Russian banks from SWIFT. Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have banned citizens of the Russian Federation from entering with any tourist, sports or other types of Schengen visas.

Ukrainians did not rely only on international help. The beginning of the Russian's invasion in Ukraine gave a rise to a nationwide mobilization of Ukrainians

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<sup>19</sup> Ukraine refugee situation. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>. [last access 26.11.2022]

in the volunteering field. Ukrainians from different cities united from the first days of the war in order to protect their cities. Some citizens expressed their wish to join the so-called territorial defense that, along with the resistance movement and the preparation of Ukrainian citizens for national resistance, is a component of the National Resistance in Ukraine. Allegedly, 110 thousand of Ukrainians took part in territorial defence from the beginning of the war. A vivid example of another type of volunteering are Odessans, whose city was under constant threat of Russian subversive groups landing on the coasts:

On the seventh day, people collect sand on the Odesa coast, pack it in bags, load it into cars and deliver it to checkpoints for fortification. About fifty thousand bags are taken out of here every day<sup>20</sup>.

Today, in fact, the volunteer movement in Ukraine is enthusiastically discussed in many countries of the world, calling this phenomenon unique. The heyday of volunteering in our country came at the time of the Revolution of Dignity and the beginning of the war in Donbas. In an extremely difficult period, it was this movement that united society, created an effective structure of public organizations, groups of people ready to take on the solution of the most urgent and painful problems of the state. During the ongoing war, Ukrainians support the most vulnerable citizens – elderly and children, as well as helping people who were displaced from the bombarded cities. Perhaps, the most developed direction of volunteering remains military aid. Since every Ukrainian has a friend, relative or parent serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine there have been many fundraisers both small and big. The small fundraisers usually organized to collect money for military equipment or cars that are indispensable for carrying out military operations. At the same time, the bigger fundraisers are handled by famous bloggers or charity funds among such we should single out collection of donations for the legendary Bayraktar drones. One's collection of 13 million euro completed, the Turkish company decided to help the Ukrainians and hand the Bayraktars over for free, so the money were spent on a satellite from the ICEYE company, which helped Ukrainian forces to better plan their operations.

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<sup>20</sup> Article on *On Odesa beaches, sand is collected for roadblocks* <https://www.thesis.od.ua/2022/03/04/na-odeskih-plyazhah-zbirayut-pisok-dlya-blokpostiv/> 2022. [last access 23.11.2022]

Another such fundraisers was done for RAM II UAV drones where Ukrainians collected over 350 million hryvnias in one day.

Overall, despite the hopes of Kremlin to invade and conquer Ukraine over short period of time it has met an extraordinary resistance of Ukrainian people and mobilization of international community. In this thesis we will argue that the President Zelenskyy has become the driving force of the worldwide resistance to Russian aggression. To comprehend better the idea behind the above stated thesis we will examine more closely life of the incumbent President as well as we will try to understand what exactly qualifies him as skilled orator and manager that succeeded in convincing Ukrainians to withstand the aggressor's will to deprive a whole nation of its legitimate statehood.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **On the Way of Becoming National Leader**

#### **3. Biography of Zelenskyy**

The way the president speaks to fellow citizens and citizens of other states, his ability to communicate with the audience, command of the state language, peculiarities of communicative interaction with addressees - all this determines the specifics of the leader's perception in terms of image (Kondratenko, 2022: 314). For the Ukrainian presidential discourse the image of the current president of Ukraine, communication skills, which are primarily implemented in public speeches, are very important. In the account of Hyde (2008: 1), "Among their many attributes, heroes are people who exhibit greatness in some achievement and are admired for doing so. With their extraordinary actions and praiseworthy character, heroes thus 'stand out' from the crowd". This is the case of Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who has become the driving force of nationwide resistance against the Russian invasion. What rendered Zelensky capable of fulfilling the greatest duty, being a convincing President and an efficient Commander-in-Chief who leads his country in this dramatic moment of a world history?

Volodymyr Zelenskyy was born in Krivoy Rog on January 25, 1978. He went to first grade in Mongolia (Erdenet), where his family lived for a total of four years. Having returned from East Asia, Vladimir studied in the Krivoy Rog gymnasium 95 with profound study of English. While still a schoolboy, Zelenskyy not only took part in school theatrical performances and KVN<sup>21</sup>, but also performed in an ensemble. Also, the future politician and showman was a professional powerlifter and has the first category in weightlifting.

After finishing school, Vladimir went to study at the law faculty of the Krivoy Rog Institute of Economics. He graduated but never worked in the field. This is because in high school, he became seriously interested in KVN and participated in the student theatre. After the student theater, he moved to KVN team "Young Krivoy

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<sup>21</sup> KVN is a popular Soviet TV humor program of 1960s where teams compete by showing sketches to audience and judges. The abbreviation "KVN" stands for "Club of the Funny and Inventive".

Rog", and then to "Zaporozhye-Krivoy Rog-Transit". At first, Zelensky was engaged in the production of dance numbers and only then began to make independent numbers. Later they decided to leave "Tranzit" and created their own team "Kvartal 95"<sup>22</sup> where the showman became a captain and director of many interesting sketches. A year later they managed to get into the highest league of KVN, due to which they had to live in Moscow all the time. After leaving KVN, "95th Quarter" receives an offer from a Ukrainian TV channel to do humorous concerts based on their numbers. In addition, former KVN members are actively starring in various show programs. Soon their team launches the popular TV show "Evening Quarter" on "Inter", the author of which becomes Vladimir Zelensky. The commercial project becomes popular, and soon 'Kvartal' is reformatted into a studio. The production studio later launched a political cartoon series "Fairytale Rus", in which they caustically mocked Ukrainian politicians.

Their next project was the political comedy television series 'Servant of the People'. According to the plot of the series, history teacher Vasyl Holoborodko is secretly filmed on a video camera, where he swears, criticizing the government. The video is then posted on YouTube and gains a very large number of views. After that, the teacher receives money through crowdfunding from his students and registers for the presidential election. Winning the election, he becomes the President of the country. So, a simple, honest, and principled man, "one of us", history teacher Vasyl Holoborodko becomes the President. Unexpectedly for everyone, the country gets an unusual, as for a corrupt country, guarantor of the constitution. Interestingly, the episodes contain his future presidential objectives. According to the National Television and Radio Council of Ukraine<sup>23</sup>:

It [Servant of the People] contains materials (statements) of the protagonist V. Holoborodko, which duplicate the theses of the election program of the candidate for the post of President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyi and have signs of election campaigning.

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<sup>22</sup> In English translated as "95th Quartet"

<sup>23</sup> Ukraine National Council of Radio and Television (2019, April 17). <https://www.nrada.gov.ua/zatry-peredvyborchym-misyatsi-prysutnist-kandydata-na-post-prezydenta-volodymyra-zelenskogo-vefiri-1-1-dosyagla-14-vidsotkiv/?fbclid>

This is a story created for entertainment, a comic fiction, which then, in addition to television success, led to a unique in history political rise, which made its main character the real president of Ukraine. The political comedy *Servant of the People* became the most rated series of Ukrainian television according to the results of 2015<sup>24</sup>. The series was the leader in television viewing among the audience aged 18 to 54. More than 20 million viewers watched it in Ukraine. And on the official YouTube channel - 98 million people.

### 3.1. 'Politician-showman' phenomena

On the eve of 2019, 1+1 TV channel showed Zelenskyy's video address in which he officially announced that he would run for the presidency of Ukraine. The video was launched at 23.55 instead of the traditional New Year's greeting of President Petro Poroshenko. Seventh presidential election of Ukraine were regularly held in two rounds: March 31 and April 21, 2019.

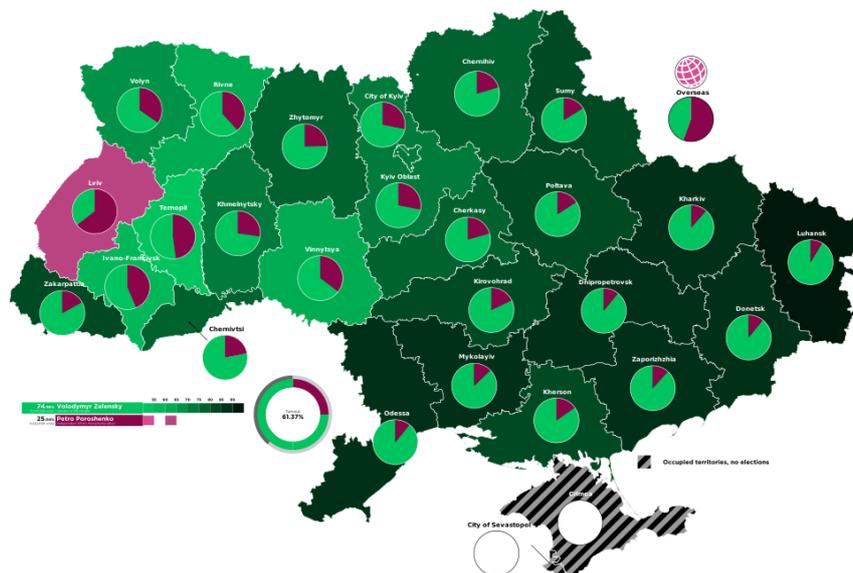


Figure 1: Result of 2019 Ukrainian presidential election runoff, result breakdown by top-level divisions.

In the regions of Ukraine, the leader of the first round Zelensky received 30.24%, 5 713 825 citizens voted for him. Poroshenko took second place - 15.95%, or 3 014 538

<sup>24</sup> Karmanska, J. (2015, December 04). Na Netflix mozna podivitis vzhe 16 ukrainskikh filmiv. Forbes UA. <https://forbes.ua/lifestyle/na-netflix-mozhna-podivitis-vzhe-16-ukrainskikh-filmiv-os-ikhniy-perelik-ta-pro-shcho-voni-04122022-10236#>

votes. In Luhansk and Donetsk regions, the pro-Russian candidate Yuriy Boyko became the leader of the voting (43.96% and 36.84% respectively). According to the exit poll and the preliminary vote count of the CEC<sup>25</sup>, 13 million 541 thousand 500 people (73.2% of voters) voted for Zelenskyy, and 4 million 522 thousand 300 people (24.4% of voters) voted for Poroshenko as seen from the Figure 1.

The slogan "Let's do it together!" became the key one in his election campaign. For three months, Volodymyr Zelenskyy gave only a few interviews and did not hold a single press conference for the national media. And yet, in three months, voters still heard his statements about how he sees the solution to the most painful problem for the country. In an interview with Dmytro Gordon<sup>26</sup>, Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that it was necessary to "talk to people from the Kremlin" about ending the war in Donbas, and that he was ready to negotiate with anyone. At the same time, he called the leaders of the "DPR" and "LPR" puppets of Moscow. He also stressed that he is a supporter of a general referendum on 'what to do with the territories of Donbas'. As for foreign policy, he assured of his commitment to Ukraine's course towards the EU and NATO but wants a referendum. Volodymyr Zelenskyy is generally a supporter of referendums on important issues for the country.

On July 21, early parliamentary elections were held. The political party of V. Zelenskyi, from which he was nominated for the post of president, received an identical name to the TV series, as if showing the connection between the image of the show and the political image of V. Zelenskyi. The pro-presidential party "Servant of the People" gained 43.16 % in the elections and received 124 seats, and majoritarian candidates from the party won in 130 constituencies, so the party received a majority in the parliament. Political expert, Balash Yarabik, noted in his interview<sup>27</sup> that the parliamentary majority of the pro-presidential party "Servant of the People" de facto turned Ukraine into a presidential republic.

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<sup>25</sup> Anonymous. (2019, April 26). Pidsumky druhoho turu vyboriv prezydenta Ukrayiny u faktah ta cyfrax. Slovo i dilo. <https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2019/04/26/infografika/polityka/pidsumky-druhoho-turu-vyboriv-prezydenta-ukrayiny-faktax-ta-cyfrax>

<sup>26</sup> Gordon, D. (2018, December 26). Interview with Volodymyr Zelenskyy. GordonUA. <https://gordonua.com/ukr/publications/zelenskyi-yakshcho-mene-oberut-prezydentom-spochatku-budut-polyvaty-brudom-potim-povazhaty-a-potim-plakaty-koly-pidu-609294.html>

<sup>27</sup> Miller, K. (2019, 22 July). Sluha narodu chi gospodar? Parlamentski vubori posiluiut` vladu novoho presidenta. Radio Svoboda. <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/30069701.html>

There are many factors that led to such a high electoral success of Zelenskyy. One of the main things is his electoral campaign promises to eradicate corruption and set Ukraine free from oligarchs. His most powerful attribute was the nonconformity to the traditional politics. He was promoting the unofficial style “of doing politics”. Digital communication of Zelenskyy during and after election campaign was full of unusual strategic moves. The communication of Zelenskyy with his voters comprised of successful usage of social media – videoblogging, launches of challenges, creation of online-platform, as well as involvement of voters in creation of political programme of the President. Thus, he was deliberately creating a bond between him and people. Unique particularity of this strategy is the common creation of so called ‘brand-identity’, where the power of brand-manager concentrated not only in the hands of the presidential headquarters but also involved an ordinary citizen (Bodnarchuk, 2020: 66).

The brand personality, represented by the personality of V. Zelenskiy himself, was created thanks to a competent digital strategy, namely: interaction with the voter – through Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and the official website of Zelenskyy. Years before and during his presidential term were marked by numerous unusual decisions regarding political and social life of a country. Such was the organization of debates on the biggest football arena in Ukraine, called Olympiyskiy Stadium where Zelenkskiy invited ordinary citizens and confidently defeated his main election opponent Petro Poroshenko.



*Figure 2: Poroshenko (left) and Zelesnkiy (right) debating on the Olympiyskiy stadium on April the 19th, 2019. Photo by Vqlentyn Ogirneko (Reuters)*

We can define Zelenskyy as a phenomenon of ‘politician showman’. Successfully applying the knowledge gained throughout the years of performance and acting, Zelenskyy managed to conquer hearts of Ukrainians. Additional attention should be dedicated to his creation, ‘Quartet 95’, which has held thousands of concerts all over Ukraine. We must stress that the content of the concerts was mainly including scenes from domestic life of ordinary Ukrainians, defacing the problems that they encounter daily “from dealing with negative consequences of healthcare reform to negotiating gender roles, encouraging people to laugh together at those problems and together find solutions” (Pisano, 2022: 8). On the other hand, many sketches were about political situation in Ukraine. Every actor had his/her own politician whom they imitated. It was producing a bonding effect within Ukrainian society. Ordinary people could laugh at the problems and peculiarities of political scene. At the same time, Zelenskyy and his team were constantly stressing out the common values and aspects that united the nation. Thus, the idea of national identification of people was reinforced in every possible way. Volodymyr Zelenskyi, who based his work on the principle "closer to the people and to be with the people" has devoted a significant part of his life to eradicate various forms of ethno-separatism and focusing society's efforts on countermeasures processes of disintegration of the country.

An example of the above stated fact could be one of the final musical performances titled “Where is thank you?”<sup>28</sup> made by Zelenskyy and other actors as a cover of a song “De spacito”. In this song, different ways of saying “thank you” or “you are welcome” are shown, which reinforces the idea that despite Ukrainians speak both Russian and Ukrainian and there is a strong dialectal variety in terms of words, nevertheless, they all can comprehend the meaning and speak without any barriers to each other. Jessica Pisano (2022: 7), claimed that Zelenskyy and his troop “mocked political corruption and incompetence, territorial incursions by Russia, and Western indifference to those attacks on the international order”. Additionally, Volodymyr Zelensky and other comedians from the Kvartal-95 Studio have been to the Donetsk region many times. They gave free concerts for fighters in the ATO zone, such was for example the concert at the Mariupol military base. As it became known, the artists of "Studio Kvartal-95" transferred 1 million hryvnia for the purchase of medicines for

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<sup>28</sup> YouTube video of the performance: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv5z\\_AslP64](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv5z_AslP64)

military personnel and personal protective equipment. "In general, I believe that all the stars of our stage are capable of doing this, raising money," Volodymyr Zelenskyy commented<sup>29</sup> on the donation for the army.

Nowadays, Zelenskyy is considered to be the President that have managed to unify Ukrainians. Nevertheless, considering stated above the process of unification had started long time ago. Zelensky and his Quartet 95 in their concerts were constantly trying to drag the attention from east against west Ukraine tensions among people. Since 2014 majority of Ukrainian politicians have tried to distance the social life of the country from Russian influence by reinforcing the importance of Ukrainian ethnicity in people's minds as well as extending the presence of Ukrainian language on TV, radio, books, and daily life in general. Considering that Zelenskyy is a Russian speaker it gave him a good opportunity "to show a way for Russian-speaking Ukrainians to fully identify with the Ukraine and to express their patriotism" (Pisano, 2022: 8).

### **3.2. Crimea and Donbas in Zelenskyy's policy**

Zelenskyy and his team won the elections of 2019 mainly due to the nationwide call for ending the ongoing war in Donbas region against Russians and separatists where daily losses occurred. According to United Nations Human Rights Organization (2022: 2), "the total number of conflict-related casualties in Ukraine from 14 April 2014 to 31 December 2021 to be 51,000–54,000: 14,200-14,400 killed and 37-39,000 injured" both civilians and armed forces. Back then, the candidate for the post of President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyi, in his pre-election program, promised, with the aim of achieving peace, to raise questions with the guarantors of the Budapest Memorandum and EU partners regarding Ukraine's support in its efforts to end the war, return the temporarily occupied territories and force the aggressor to compensate for the damage caused. Volodymyr Zelenskyi has repeatedly called the end of the war in Donbas his main task as president. But in two years his rhetoric has changed a lot. If during the election campaign he reproached Petro Poroshenko that he "didn't finish

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<sup>29</sup> Anonymous. (2014, August 20). Vladimir Zelenskyy i 95 kvartal perechislili 1 million given ukrainskim soldatam. Viva. <https://viva.ua/lifestar/news/28609-vladimir-Zelenskyy-i-studiya-kvartal-95-perechislili-1-million-griven-ukrainskim-soldatam.html>

the anti-terrorist operation in two weeks"<sup>30</sup>, then Zelensky began to admit that not everything in this matter depends on Ukraine.

The Normandy Four summit, where Russia, France, Germany and Ukraine that took place in December 2019 in order to come to resolution of East crisis in Ukraine did not have much success. In the beginning of his presidency, Moscow saw Zelenskyy as a perfect candidate for implementing the compromise on Donbas situation. However, after some time Russia understood the failure of its expectations. Researchers Moshes & Nizhnikau (2022: 6) noted that eventually “Zelenskyy’s inability to “compromise” and his growing political vulnerability created a situation in which Moscow began to explicitly treat him no differently from Poroshenko. Contacts between administrations were frozen”. Zelenskyy did not have any positive trends with the West either. The lack of international response after 8 years of conflict as well as enhancement of partnership of western countries with Russia and insufficient support for Ukraine only worsened the situation. Germany agreed to let the construction of gas pipeline “Nord Stream 2” between Russia and Europe. The USA, in its turn, did not block this decision either.

All the stated above challenges were triggering the overall dissatisfaction with Zelenskyy’s foreign policy and his inability to resolve the situation. Thus, the domestic problems only grew. The Kyiv International Institute of Sociology held a public opinion poll in October 2021<sup>31</sup>, according to which only 19.1% of respondents would vote for Zelenskyy, in comparison to the overwhelming support of 73% received during the 2019 elections. Zelenskyy was constantly attacked on media political channels. At the same time Ukrainians were demanding more clear ‘red lines’ that cannot be surpassed. Red lines refer to the unacceptability of any kind of compromise with Russian Federation in terms of Ukrainian territory.

The situation was getting more unstable also due to the actions of opposing party called “Opposition Platform”, whose representative were controlling large media channels on Ukrainian television broadcasting. This party is known for promotion of pro-Russian narratives in Ukraine, as well as critique on laws that promote Ukrainian

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<sup>30</sup> Anonymous. (2018, August 23). Poroshenko vibachilsya za slova pro shvidke zavershennia viinu v 2014 rotsi. Ukrainian Pravda. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2018/08/23/7189954/>

<sup>31</sup> Nationwide poll of Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. (2021, October 19). <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1063&page=1>

language and overall policymaking of the incumbent President. It is also known because of its leader, Viktor Medvedchuk, who is directly related to Putin, as the latter baptized his daughter. In February 2021, the National Security and Defense Council decided to close the channels owned by the pro-Russian party and its leader was accused of treason. Since 2019, Zelenskyy dedicated much of his efforts to fight oligarchism, which boosted his image in the eyes of people. During the election campaign and after it, Volodymyr Zelenskyi was repeatedly called a "puppet" of Ihor Kolomoisky<sup>32</sup>. "I am not a toy in the hands of Kolomoisky and I was not a toy in the hands of any oligarch. When they say that I am someone's toy, it is not true. This is done by mass media that belong to other groups," Zelenskyi denied during the election campaign. He assured that some investigations against the oligarchs will not be stopped, and he will not become a plan "B" for them. In general, the policy of Zelenskyy regarding the oligarchs in Ukraine went from 'benefiting' to 'restricting'. Because of the meeting between Zelenskiy and the richest people of Ukraine after election some positive outcomes were reached. Businessmen undertook certain commitments: Viktor Pinchuk will deal with problems and social assistance to the military, Renat Akhmetov and Ihor Kolomoisky will invest money in medicine, roads, and infrastructure of Donbas.

Massive efforts have been dedicated by President Zelenskyy to make partners from other countries realize that the international order had been broken after Russia's illegitimate actions towards Ukraine and its people. The task of using Ukraine's attractive foreign policy image as the most important factor for the country's success on the international arena was set by President V. Zelenskyy among the priority tasks of foreign policy. At the economic forum in Davos, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for the first time announced to world leaders about the development of a new national and global economic security. On August 23, 2021, opening the summit of the Crimean Platform in Kyiv, the President of Ukraine noted in his speech<sup>33</sup>: "Our territory was annexed by Russia, a state that is a member of the UN Security Council. The Crimean platform should become the centre of development and adoption of key international

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<sup>32</sup> Ihor Kolomoisky is one of the biggest oligarchs in Ukraine, and in the past - a business partner of the current head of state, Volodymyr Zelenskyi.

<sup>33</sup> President of Ukraine opened the inaugural summit of the Crimean Platform. (2021, August 23). Official Website of President of Ukraine. <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/prezident-ukrayini-vidkriv-inavguracijnij-samit-krimskoyi-pl-70269>

decisions regarding Crimea” (Zelesnkiy, 2021). According to Moshes & Nizhnikau (2022: 6), “the expansion of Ukraine’s diplomatic efforts regarding Crimea was, however, a qualitative change. The establishment of the Crimean Platform, a diplomatic initiative to restore Ukraine’s sovereignty over Crimea, was a substantial foreign policy success for Kyiv”.

Analysing the scenarios of the development of global problems of today, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the 76th session of the UN General Assembly very aptly commented on the words of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, spoken in Munich in 2007 and at the UN General Assembly in 2015<sup>34</sup>:

Any war can lead to the collapse of the entire architecture of international relations. It will be a world in which selfishness will prevail instead of collective work, a world in which there will be more and more dictation, and less and less equality, less real democracy and freedom. After all, what is state sovereignty? This is first and foremost a question of freedom, of free choice of one's destiny for each person, for the people, for the state.

With this speech of the Russian President, the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyi, was not the first-time warning world leaders that any war is the greatest threat to the entire civilization. That no one in the world feels safe anymore and cannot hide behind international law like behind a stone wall (Zelenskyy, 2021). Thus, the situation was remaining unstable both in the foreign and in the domestic field.

According to the poll organized by Kyiv International Institute of Sociology during January 20-21, 2022<sup>35</sup>, among the respondents, there are more people who believed that in the event of an invasion of Russia, V. Zelenskyy would not be able to function effectively as Supreme Commander-in-Chief - this was the opinion of 53.1% of respondents against 31.9% who believed that he was able to function effectively (and, according to in the last period, confidence has slightly decreased). At the same time, the prevailing message of international and Ukrainian intelligence were stressing the imminent invasion of Russian forces. On January 19, the US President, Joe Biden,

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<sup>34</sup> Speech by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the general debate of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly. (2021, September 23). Official Website of President of Ukraine. <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vistup-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimira-zelenskogo-na-zagalnih-70773>

<sup>35</sup> Nationwide poll of Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. (2022, January 24). <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1091&page=1>

stated that, in his opinion, Russia would invade Ukraine<sup>36</sup>. Instead, on January 28, the President of Ukraine, V. Zelenskyi, called on the West not to create "panic" <sup>37</sup>in his country due to the potential invasion of Russia, as constant warnings about the "imminent" threat of invasion endanger Ukraine's economy. V. Zelenskyi also added that "we do not see a greater escalation" than at the beginning of 2021, when Russia's military build-up near the borders with Ukraine began and made claims to the West amid widespread panic. Despite this, in February 2022, American and British intelligence repeatedly warned the authorities of Ukraine about the forthcoming invasion of Russia.

### **3.3. Managing full-scale invasion of Russia**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 has not only changed life in Ukraine and transformed the world, but also became a challenge for President V. Zelenskyi. Starting from the first day of the war, V. Zelenskyy delivered speeches and video addresses to the citizens of Ukraine, to the world communities, to foreign partners. These speeches and appeals are subject to basic rhetorical requirements, in particular they contain syntactic and stylistic figures and techniques that increase the verbal impact on the addressee. Due to the powerful influence of expressive syntax, the speeches acquired strong persuasive nature and became examples of presidential rhetoric in Ukrainian political discourse, which requires a thorough study. One of the genres of presidential discourses that gained popularity during the term V. Zelenskyi are the video addresses of the President of Ukraine.

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of the territory of Ukraine, the President has been addressing Ukrainians every day with the motive of conveying his position and calling on the residents of Ukraine to take decisive action. In addition, the President speaks before the governments of foreign countries, where his main goal is to encourage members of parliament, politicians, and ordinary citizens to actively support Ukraine against Russian aggression.

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<sup>36</sup> Harding L., Roth A., Borger J. (2022, January 20). Joe Biden thinks Russia will attack Ukraine – but will face a ‘stiff price’. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/19/russia-could-act-against-ukraine-at-any-moment-says-us>

<sup>37</sup> Rainsford S. (2022, January 28). Ukraine crisis: Don't create panic, Zelensky tells West. BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60174684>

Success of Zelenskyy's communicational skill was acclaimed by the world community. For example, Edward Segal in Forbes writes<sup>38</sup>: "Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's remarkable success in leading his country against Russia's invasion has a lot to do with what he says and how he says it". In the same manner, a journalist of The Hill newspaper, Evan Nierman notices<sup>39</sup> that "His [Zelenskyy's] genuine ability to stir empathy has mobilized European leaders with unprecedented support to Ukraine. And his emotional pleas have ratcheted up opposition to Putin and his invasion, underscoring the importance of effective communications in times of crisis".

Volodymyr Zelenskyy has become a symbol of Ukrainians that look up to him. For all his life he was a Russian speaker and only in 2018, on the eve of the upcoming elections, started to take classes in Ukrainian. For obvious reasons, as a head of Ukrainian state he had to know how to speak national language but in public he was always using Russian. As the invasion started and one of the main justifications of Putin was the protection of Russian-speaking people, Zelensky began to seem to stumble over Russian words in public. On such occasions, Zelensky would ask someone off camera, "How do you say that in Russian?", thus demonstrating that the presence of Russian language in his life has significantly decreased. Zelenskyy in this case simply transmits the way of life of ordinary Russian-speaking Ukrainians. According to the sociological research of the "Rating" group<sup>40</sup>, there is a decrease in Russian-speaking Ukrainians: in 2012, there were about 40% of such respondents, at the end of 2021 - 26%, and at the beginning of a full-scale war - 18%.

Zelensky's success is not limited to the things he said before and during the invasion of Russia. We should also focus on his personal attitude, the way he responded to the crisis. As soon as Putin declared the "Special Military Operation" and

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<sup>38</sup> Segal E. (2022, March 5). Zelensky's Most Effective Crisis Communication Strategies, Tactics And Techniques. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/edwardsegal/2022/03/05/zelenskys-most-effective--crisis-communication-strategies-tactics-and-techniques/?sh=650326796344>

<sup>39</sup> Nierman E. (2022, February 3). Zelensky shows the power of persuasion during time of crisis. The Hill. <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/596612-zelensky-shows-the-power-of-persuasion-during-time-of-crisis/>

<sup>40</sup> Nationwide poll conducted by Rating Group. (2022, March 25). [https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/language\\_issue\\_in\\_ukraine\\_march\\_19th\\_2022.html](https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/language_issue_in_ukraine_march_19th_2022.html)

invaded Ukraine, Zelenskyy, according to his words<sup>41</sup>, was getting phone calls from international leader with a proposition to get evacuated from Ukraine. As reported, a few hours after the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, it became known that the US government offered President Volodymyr Zelenskyy assistance so that he could safely leave the capital of Ukraine and avoid being captured or killed by the Russian military, but he refused the offer. This was stated at the briefing by the adviser to the head of the OPU Mykhailo Podolyak. "Russia's key intention is to remove the country's top leadership, create maximum panic and try to establish its puppet government," Podolyak said<sup>42</sup>. Chechen special forces were said to have a special task to assassinate Zelenskyy. According to a senior American intelligence official with firsthand information, the U.S. government requested that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky evacuate Kyiv, but he declined the offer. Zelensky reportedly stated: "The battle is here; I need weapons, not a means of escape," and was described as being in high spirits. We argue that the refusal from evacuation on the behalf of Zelensky united people of Ukraine. In this way, he demonstrated the bravery and readiness to withstand the forthcoming challenges despite the danger that was laying ahead of him, being number-one target of Russian forces. This gave people hope and symbolized a powerful signal to the whole world. In every possible way Zelenskyy is demonstrating his closeness with people, his readiness and in this way people of Ukraine can easily relate to him. President of Ukraine, unlike Putin, during the war always displayed the bravery.

Despite being the head of state, he was showing up in public, even in the cities that have been liberated from Russian occupants. Such was his visit on 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2022 to Izum, which was liberated from the occupiers, in the Kharkiv region or the visit to liberated Kherson on 14<sup>th</sup> of November. The President personally thanked the soldiers for the liberated Ukrainian lands, presented state awards and talked to the local citizens.

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<sup>41</sup> Braithwaite S. (2022, February 26). Zelensky refuses US offer to evacuate, saying 'I need ammunition, not a ride'. CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/02/26/europe/ukraine-zelensky-evacuation-intl/index.html>

<sup>42</sup> Anonymous. (2022, March 3). Volodymyr Zelensky survives three assassination attempts in days. The Times. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/zelensky-survives-three-assassination-attempts-in-days-xnstdfdfc>



Figure 3: Zelenskyy's visit to Kherson on 14th of November. Zelenskyy in the middle among officers of Ukrainian Forces with Kherson sightseeing in the background. Photo by the Office of President.

The President of Russia, on the other hand, is viewed as an antipode to Zelenskyy. Many videos and meetings are only evidencing his fear of any contact with people, even those who seem to be from 'a close circle'. Pictures on the Internet are flooded with Putin meeting his 'advisors' in Kremlin, but he is always shown as sitting on a 10-meter distance from them. The President of Russia is believed to have lost support of the close people, thus a demand for more serious safety measures are taken. Some newspapers<sup>43 44</sup> were reporting that Putin was afraid of COVID-19 virus and that is why he was distancing himself from people. On the other hand, a majority of newspapers believe that his fear of assassination makes him be more careful around people. According to senior advisor of Zelenskyy, Alexei Arestovich<sup>45</sup>, "Putin is very afraid that tsars who lose wars are not forgiven in Russia. He is fighting for his life. If he loses the war, at least in the eyes of the Russians, it will mean the end. The end of him as a political figure. And, perhaps, in a physical sense as well".

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<sup>43</sup> Shoaib A. (2022, December 18). Putin's ludicrously long table was an anti-COVID-19 measure to ensure 15ft between him and others, report says. Business Insider. <https://www.businessinsider.com/putin-super-long-table-kept-people-15ft-covid-fears-nyt-2022-12?r=US&IR=T>

<sup>44</sup> Rose M. (2022, February 11). Macron refused Russian COVID test in Putin trip over DNA theft fears By Michel Rose. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-kept-macron-distance-snubbing-covid-demands-sources-2022-02-10/>

<sup>45</sup> Anonymous. (2022, October 23). Putin boretsya za zhittia ta po bouetsia zamahiv, - Arestovich. Focus UA. <https://focus.ua/uk/world/538250-putin-boretsya-za-zhizn-i-opasaetsya-pokusheniy-arestovich>



*Figure 4: Putin's meeting with Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu (next to Putin) and head of general staff of Russian Army, in Kremlin on 27th of February 2022. Photo by Kremlin Press.*

Zelenskyy has gained authority and respect in the eyes of Ukrainian allies. Nowadays, 40 countries provide humanitarian and military support to Ukraine because of Russian aggression. Kiel Institute for the World Economy estimated that 93.8 billion euro were allocated for aid to Ukrainian government in order to defend its country. The president emphasized multiple times that from the very beginning of the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation, the leaders of Poland and Great Britain, namely Anjei Duda and Boris Jonson, as well as the citizens of these countries, supported Ukraine "not with words, but with real deeds". Attitude of the two Presidents towards Zelenskyy and Ukrainian people shows how Ukrainian President, with his sincere way of doing politics, managed to find a strong support abroad.

From the day when Putin proclaimed independence of DNR and LNR, on 21st of February, Volodymyr Zelenskyy has promised to record videos every day in order to inform Ukrainians about the situation regarding Russian actions on the territory of Ukraine. He has been successfully doing it so far as Ukrainians continue to show to Russia incredible resistance and regain territories one after another, thus, unveiling the myth about the omnipotent Russian Federation. The success is partly due to the managerial and oratorial skills of Zelenskyy displayed from the very beginning of the invasion. In the next chapter we will try to analyze more in depth how exactly the President of Ukraine managed to handle situation that seemed lost from the very beginning.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Political Discourse Analysis of Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Addresses**

#### **4. Sample Selection Criteria**

As stated in the previous chapter, Zelenskyy promised to keep Ukrainians fully informed about the situation regarding the Russian invasion. The President of Ukraine decided to use videos as a means of information channel. The videos are regularly posted on official website of Ukraine President and his social media, such as Telegram, Facebook, and Instagram. Overall, 495 videos have been published from 23<sup>rd</sup> of February till 23<sup>rd</sup> of December. The videos are addressed both to Ukrainians and international partners. Majority of addresses to international society comprise speeches to Parliaments of partner countries.

Given the limitations of this study, it is not possible to conduct a thorough examination of all the videos given by the President. However, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the discourse community, a sample of texts from the corpus must be selected. To ensure the sample is representative, criteria for selection must be established. For the purpose of this study, a criterion of purposive sampling was chosen, specifically, 7 videos published by Ukrainian President addressed to Ukrainian society and 7 videos addressed to Parliaments of other countries. This resulted in a sample of 14 speeches, adding up to a total of 14,017 words. The sample includes speeches of varying lengths, with the longest speech being 1538 words and the shortest being 534 words. The video addresses, as well as transcripts of these speeches, are available for viewing in Ukrainian, Russian and English on the official website of the President of Ukraine.

We must stress the fact that the original language of speeches addressed to Ukrainians is Ukrainian. We will, however, give more attention to the translated, English, version present on the website of the President. For this reason contrastive analysis will be also conducted alongside PDA in order to identify the incongruences between original and translated version of the speech.

The use and application of the CDA tools offered by Fairclough, Chilton, van Dijk, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen outlined in Chapter 1 of this dissertation will be discussed in the context of the sample data in the following section.

#### 4.1. Semiotic Visual Analysis of Video Messages

We will now take a closer look at 7 speeches delivered by Zelesnkyy in his video addresses to Ukrainians. First video published by the Office of President on 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, exactly one day before Russia invaded Ukraine. The video, being rather static, contains numerous semiotics that are worth pointing out. Zelesnkyy appears in the foreground of the video with the map of Ukraine in its recognized borders as of 1991, including Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk in the background, right corner. The map draws attention of a viewer as the borders are lightened with a blue color (one of the Ukrainian flag's colors), which implies the sovereignty and independence of the country. In the left corner of the background, we can see the flag itself with the Ukrainian coat of arms. Zelenskyy presents himself in the foreground as the President whose duty is to protect the country and its people. He is standing with a serious air, not using any gestures, looking directly at the recipient of the message. This is a vivid example of the usage of so-called *embrayage* that implies drawing attention of an audience and establishing an illusory extra-narrative space.



Figure 5 Volodymyr Zelesnkyy, delivering his speech on 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, 2022

The President is dressed in a black suit with a white shirt and a tie. Noticeably, it was the last video when Zelenskyy was seen dressed officially. With the beginning of large-scale invasion, the dress code of Zelesnkyy changed. In the following addresses he was appearing in a military clothing instead of official suit, which was symbolizing a change of peaceful times to the times of instability. Such a change in dressing can be compared to Churchill's siren costume that he was wearing during World War II. It creates a bond between a nation and a President, giving the ordinary people to understand that the President is on the same level and is not different from anyone else. Furthermore, it sends the message to the whole world that this country is at war and is protecting itself. American journalists emphasize that Zelensky could remain in official clothes as the commander-in-chief, as Churchill did when he visited the bombed sites of Coventry in a coat and a bow tie during the Second World War. However, this is of no use to the Ukrainian president. The fact that he opts for the most affordable item of clothing – a t-shirt – is as clear demonstration of solidarity with his people. President Zelensky, a former actor, clearly understands how clothes speak about what person thinks and how they can be used as a form of propaganda. After all, clothing, like music, movies, and literature, has long been used to convey political messages and influence opinion.



*Figure 6: Volodymyr Zelesnkyy, addressing Ukrainians from the Office of the President on 25th of February, 2022*

## 4.2. CDA of Presidential Addresses to Ukrainians

### 4.2.1. Textual Schemata and Role of Pronouns

All the analyzed texts follow structurally the same schema and share similar content pattern, namely: a summary of events and results of internal and external diplomacy, address to Ukrainians, address to Russians, address to Europeans. These elements may vary in terms of their position, but nevertheless can be found in all the seven speeches.

The summary of events and results of diplomacy is presented briefly by the President in an eloquent manner. Orator uses words such as ‘strengthened, introduced, supported, adopted, managed, approved’, which indicates that the government machine is working continuously, thus providing assurance to the people that the policymakers are fulfilling their responsibilities. Interestingly, how the tenses are intentionally interchanged between themselves. In these parts of the speech, the President is mainly using Present Perfect and Present Continuous sentences. The use of the former gives the sense of the implementation of the freshly adopted decisions and results, as in the following excerpt:

- (1) To cover the backs of our soldiers who are protecting us, we *have introduced* a state of emergency for 30 days on the entire territory of Ukraine. This decision was supported by 335 deputies of the Verkhovna Rada. A great defense coalition *has started* working.

Arguments are constructed through statements like ‘we have introduced a state of emergency’ and ‘our international partners are maximally mobilized to support Ukraine,’ which present a sense of proactive action and agency on the part of the speaker and their government. At the same time, the usage of the Present Continuous tense is implying the continuity, forthcoming changes and gives a hope about today, which is crucial in a situation when you live in uncertainty. President uses this tense more often when he speaks about the Ukrainian soldiers, using combinations like ‘our troops *are fighting* fierce battle’, ‘our soldiers who *are protecting* us’, ‘you *are brilliantly defending* the country’. Overall, Fairclough (1992: 95) argues that the organization of a text, choice of vocabulary and syntax, and the use of tenses are all important aspects to be considered in a discourse analysis as they impose power and ideology on the listener or reader.

The urge to action is exerted by Zelesnkyy through the change of modality in his speech. When he directly addresses his people and what they should do in order to withstand Russian aggression, several forms of modality that express different degrees of possibility, necessity, and directive are present. Let's take consider this part:

- (2) What *can* Ukrainians do? *Help* the national defense. *Join* the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and territorial defense units. Any citizen with combat experience will now be useful. It is up to you and all of us whether the enemy will be able to advance further into the territory of our independent state. *Please help* the volunteer community and the medical system, for example by donating blood.

For example, the President directly points out things that Ukrainians must do through the use of imperative verbs 'help', 'join'. The use of 'can' expresses the possibility of certain actions that can be taken by Ukrainians. The use of 'will' indicates the likelihood or probability of the usefulness of citizens with combat experience in the current situation. At the same time, the use of 'please' implies a polite request for citizens to take certain actions, though it is not a direct command.

Speeches of Zelesnkyy are not limited to him urging other people to do something, but also include recap of what he, as a head of state, has done or is doing in order to ensure stability of the country. Power relations are represented through the use of pronouns such as 'we', 'our' and 'I' by the President to assert his authority and position of power. We can see a clear distinction in the use of pronouns, such as 'I' and 'we'. The former is used when the orator wants to assume the responsibility of being the President:

- (3) Today, *I* spoke to the prime minister of the Netherlands, Mark Rutte. He assured *me* that his country is also preparing a package of sanctions... Today, *I* met in Kyiv with the president of Poland, Andrzej Duda, and the president of Lithuania, Gitanas Nauseda.

Collocations such as "I spoke", "I met" that we find in example 3, give the feeling to the receiver, in our case to the ordinary citizens, that the President is also fulfilling his tasks. Most importantly, Zelesnkyy is recurring to 'I' pronoun when he wants to be honest and frank with people:

- (4) *I* know that a lot of fakes are being produced now. In particular, that *I* allegedly left Kyiv. *I* stay in the capital, *I* stay with my people. During the day, *I* held dozens of international talks, directly managed our country. And *I* will stay in the capital.

In example 4, the President does not use inclusive ‘we’, but rather decides to recur to ‘I’ to unveil the truth about the state of affairs regarding himself. It is believed to be one of the crucial moments of the war, when Russian propaganda machine was massively spreading false news about President of Ukraine fleeing the country to Poland or USA. Zelesnky dedicated a part of his speech at the end of the second day of the invasion to tell his people that he is in the capital, working side by side with other governmental workers to maintain the normal functioning of the country. In the mentioned above excerpt we can see how the speaker shifts also in time. The personal pronoun ‘I’ is combined with verbs in all the three tenses: past, present and future. Thus, implying constant presence of the President in Ukraine.

On the other hand, Zelesnky uses inclusive pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ to create a sense of unity among the people of Ukraine and to exclude the people of Russia:

- (5) *We* are not afraid of Russia. *We* are not afraid to talk to Russia. *We* are not afraid to say everything about security guarantees for *our* state. *We* are not afraid to talk about neutral status.

‘We are not afraid’ is used anaphorically at the beginning of each statement of example 5, thus stressing the idea that ‘we’ as a nation are not afraid and we are ready to finish the war, even though we were not the one who started it. It is a good example of implicit polarization and good self-representation: while you, allegedly powerful states, are all afraid to confront Russia, we, on the other hand have the courage to do it. The use of personal pronouns such as ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘us’ emphasizes a sense of solidarity among the speakers and their audience. The use of ‘we’ and ‘our’ throughout the text creates an inclusive tone, implying that the speakers and their audience are working towards a common goal and that is of achieving peace and sovereignty of the country. At the same time, Zelesnky is recurring to inclusive ‘we’ when he refers to the nation as one whole, as he does on the second day of the war in the following example 6:



people. The words like ‘great’, ‘glory’, ‘endurance’, ‘mutual support’, ‘courageous’ can be found when addressing the nation and talking about the Armed Forces of Ukraine and, thus, the Ukrainians are attributed only positive characteristics. In the contrary, when mentioning atrocities brought by Russian army, Zelenskyy uses emotionally strong words that evoke negative connotations, such as ‘slaughter’, ‘aggression’, ‘vile’, ‘treacherously’, ‘viciously’, ‘inhumanly’.

We should bear in mind that the discourse of Zelenskyy is highly related to the topic of war. That is why the presence of military vocabulary, expressions and metaphors are inevitable. Here we are referring to conceptual metaphors discussed in theoretical part of this dissertation. The war metaphors are pervasive in Zelenskyy’s discourse:

- (8) We are fighting for our state absolutely on all frontlines: South, East, North, in many cities of our beautiful country. Fighting around the clock on the diplomatic frontline as well - it's easier to say with whom I did not speak to among world leaders today.

In example 8, the conceptual metaphor is built around the concept ‘DIPLOMACY – WAR’. The conceptual metaphor in this excerpt is the metaphor of ‘war’ or ‘battle’ being used to describe the actions of the speaker and their government. The use of phrases such as ‘fighting’ and ‘on all frontlines’ implies that Zelenskyy’s country is engaging in a struggle against ongoing war. Obviously, diplomacy has nothing to do with actual military actions, but in this way Zelenskyy shows that every single person is doing everything possible to win this war. This metaphor is likely being used to convey the seriousness and urgency of the situation, and to mobilize support for the speaker's actions. Let us also consider the following example 9:

- (9) It will not be possible to destroy our character. Kalibr missiles are helpless against our freedom.

‘Destroy’ is a verb semantically related to an action that a missile can cause. In fact, the reference to ‘Kalibr missiles’ invokes the metaphor of a physical attack or threat being made against Ukraine that combined with abstract meaning of freedom, Zelenskyy uses it to strengthen his argument about resilience of Ukrainian spirit in the face of an external threat.

In the presented below passage we can also identify a metaphor that is known worldwide and dates back to the times of Second World War:

- (10) What do we hear today? It's not just rocket explosions, battles, the roar of aircraft. It is the sound of a *new Iron Curtain* lowering and closing Russia away from the civilized world.

This is a vivid example of interdiscursivity, as the metaphor used in excerpt 10, namely 'Iron Curtain', was famously used by former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in a speech he delivered in 1946 that marked the beginning of Cold War. This metaphor is used to describe the division and isolation of Russia from the rest of the world. The metaphor compares the division to a physical barrier, an 'Iron Curtain' which is lowering and closing off Russia. According to Santulli, who was researching into the nature of the metaphor used by Churchill, an iron curtain serves not as a barrier to contain a fire, but rather as a barrier that creates an unbreachable divide and keeps Eastern countries hidden from the view of Western countries (2011, 58). The metaphor implies that Russia is being separated and cut off from the rest of the world, similar to how an iron curtain would separate and divide a physical space. Also, the idea of 'lowering' implies a sense of something that is being imposed, rather than something that is natural or happening on its own, which might further illustrate the idea of a deliberate separation from the civilized world.

At the same time, Zelenskyy further (example 11) alludes to metaphors of II World War and stresses that Ukraine does not want Cold war:

- (11) We know for certain: we don't need war, neither Cold, nor hot, nor hybrid.

'Cold War' metaphor is inserted within broader metaphor, in which the President is emphasizing that people of Ukraine do not want any type of war, regardless of its severity or nature.

#### **4.2.3. Appeal to Citizens of the Russian Federation, 'Us' - 'You' Polarization**

The main part of Zelenskyy's 'viral' speech, delivered on 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, contained address to the citizens of Russian Federation. Moreover, appeals to Russians were found in the successive speeches. This part of the discourse is vividly marked by Zelenskyy switching from Ukrainian language to Russian by the phrases like "And

further in Russian”, “I want absolutely everyone in Russia to hear me”, “If you hear us, if you understand us...”. The change of language is obviously a desire to appeal to a Russian ordinary citizen.

In his first address to Russian citizens, Volodymyr Zelenskyy skillfully built his discourse around the opposition between ‘us’, meaning the people of Ukraine and the President himself, and ‘them’, citizens of Russian Federation and its government. One of the key strategies he uses is logos, or logical appeal. The speaker first presents narratives of Russian propaganda regarding Ukrainian people and its government and then uses logical arguments to refute the accusation, as in the following passage 12:

(12) You are told that we are Nazis. But how can a people who gave more than eight million lives for the victory over Nazism support Nazism? How could I be a Nazi? Tell that to my grandfather, who went through the entire war in the infantry of the Soviet Army and died as a colonel in independent Ukraine.

The arguments presented by Zelenskyy have even stronger effect considering the common struggle of Ukrainian and Russian people during Second World War. He makes a wide appeal to the shared memory with Russians. This argument is further strengthened by the mention of the speaker's grandfather, who fought in the Soviet Army against Nazis and died as a Colonel in independent Ukraine. This is an example of an ethical appeal of an argument, which is based on the credibility and trustworthiness of the speaker. It is meant to establish the speaker's credibility and authority on the topic being discussed. As a counterweight to each false allegation Zelenskyy offers undisputable truths supported by ethical side of the question, which makes it difficult not to agree with. Here, on the personal level, the logic of presidential discourse plays a decisive role in unveiling the reality behind the allegations that have been being built up on the behalf of Russian propaganda:

(13) You are told that I will order an attack on the Donbas, to shoot and bomb without questions.

Zelenskyy continues (example 14) to appeal to his credibility by emphasizing his personal connection to the places and people affected by the conflict in the Donbas region:

- (14) Although there are questions, and very simple ones. Shoot at whom? Bomb what? Donetsk, where I have been dozens of times? Where I have seen people's eyes and faces? Artyom street, where I walked with friends? Donbas Arena, where I rooted with the locals for our Ukrainian guys at the Euro<sup>46</sup>? Sherbakova Park, where we drank together when our guys lost? Luhansk? The home where my best friend's mother lives? The place where my best friend's father is buried?

He is also using pathos, or an appeal to the emotions of his audience, by highlighting the memories connected to the places that he cares about. By emphasizing these personal connections and the human cost of war, Zelenskyy is trying to demonstrate all the absurdness of Russian narratives.

Reasoning of Zelesnkyy is based as well on the idea of the distinction of Ukrainians and Russians. He is constantly stressing the importance of justice, international law, 'every society's right to security' and self-determination. It is strengthened by the opposition of 'you-we' pronouns in example 15:

- (15) Many of *you* have been to Ukraine. Many of *you* have relatives in Ukraine. Some of *you* studied in Ukrainian universities, befriended Ukrainian people. *You* know *our* character. *You* know *our* people. *You* know *our* principles. *You* are aware of what *we* cherish. So please listen to yourselves.

'You', in this case the Russian people, who have a lot of bonds with Ukrainians, are not making part of 'we'. The President sums up this idea perfectly by making remark about culture and using a metaphor to better explain his thought in the example 16:

- (16) Neighbours always enrich one another culturally. However, this does not make them a single entity. This does not dissolve us in you. We are different.

In his attempts to convince citizens of Russia to believe him, Zelesnkyy was numerously pointing out to the importance of peaceful negotiations and his own attempts to reach out the Russian President in order to stop the war. For these purposes he was recurring to a stylistic device known as metaphor:

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<sup>46</sup> Volodymyr Zelenskyy refers to the 2012 UEFA European Football Championship

(17) Today, I initiated a phone call with the president of the Russian Federation. The result was silence. Although there should really be silence in the Donbas.

In the above passage, under ‘silence’ the President implies to the fact that the complete ceasefire was agreed<sup>47</sup> on December 2021 between Ukraine and Russia and nevertheless, Russian army continued provocations after this.

(18) And if the Russian leadership does not want *to sit down at the table* with us for the sake of peace, then perhaps, they will sit down at the table with you.

Example 18 contains the expression ‘sit down at the table’ meaning to negotiate and do peace talks. In these 7 speeches, at least 3 times Zelenskyy was calling for peaceful negotiations, both directly the President and through appeal to the citizens of Russia.

Finishing his biggest address to Russians Zelenskyy he asks a simple question ‘Do Russians want war?’, thus creating an allusion to a very famous song in the post-Soviet countries. The sentence said in original Russian language completely corresponds to an eponymous song written by a Russian poet. The idea to write a song that would express a protest against the war and a call for peace came to the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko in the autumn of 1961 during his trip abroad, since it was during his trips to Western Europe and the United States of America that he repeatedly heard the same question: ‘Do the Russians want wars?’. By asking this famous to Russian mind question, Ukrainian President gives to Russian citizens a possibility to answer it:

(19) I would very much like to answer this question. But the answer depends only on you, the citizens of the Russian Federation.

Overall, the structure of presidential appeal to Russian citizens is marked by high density of short asyndetic statements as if pointing to nothing but pure facts as in example 20:

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<sup>47</sup> Zinets, N. (2021, December 22). OSCE says ceasefire agreement reached for eastern Ukraine. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/osce-says-ceasefire-agreement-reached-eastern-ukraine-2021-12-22/>

(20) We are Ukrainians. We are on our land. You are Russians. Now your military has started a war. The war in our state.

#### **4.2.4. Call for an International Response to Aggression**

When addressing Europeans and the leader of the Western countries, President of Ukraine was stressing four general points. Firstly, President Zelenskyy implies that their partners are not providing enough support to Ukraine in the face of the Russian invasion. Secondly, he emphasizes the message that Ukraine is an integral part of Europe and that the crisis in Ukraine should be seen as a crisis for the whole continent. Furthermore, Zelenskyy emphasizes the urgency of the situation and calls for immediate action from European countries to address the invasion. Finally he is urging for international solidarity and action to stop the aggression, and to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Let us see further how these points are presented by Zelenskyy in his discourse.

Zelenskyy continues to exploit metaphoric pronouns to better equip his arguments:

(21) Cancellation of visas for Russians? Cutting off Swift? Full isolation of Russia? Recalling ambassadors? Oil embargo? Closure of the sky? Today, all this should be on the table because it is a threat to us, all of us, all of Europe.

In the passage 21, the use of ‘us’ and ‘all of us’ is a metaphorical way of emphasizing the collective nature of the threat that is being discussed. The speaker is suggesting that the invasion of Russia poses a threat not just to Ukraine, but to all of Europe as well. By using ‘us’ and ‘all of us,’ the speaker is trying to include Ukrainians within European community. He also tries to share responsibility among Europeans and their leaders, in order to encourage them to take action against the invasion. The metaphor implies that Ukraine is part of Europe, and that the fate of Ukraine is closely connected to the fate of the rest of the continent, which is a political stance that Zelenskyy is trying to convey.

The ideology about Ukraine being part of Europe not only territorially but also spiritually is constantly explored by Zelenskyy in his speeches:

- (22) ...every European in the capital can already come to our embassy and offer assistance. Demand from your governments more financial, more military assistance to Ukraine. For this help is a help to you. For it is a help to Europe. You help yourself.

Exploring the nature of presuppositions in the following passage, we can identify that Zelenskyy, in example 22, points out to a power imbalance between Europe and Ukraine, with Ukraine in need of assistance from Europe. The use of ‘demand’ and ‘more’ implies that Europe is not currently providing enough assistance. The phrase ‘you help yourself’ works as an implicature that Europe has a self-interest in helping Ukraine, thus presupposing that they will not just help to a random country, but to a state that prevents Russia from crossing so called ‘Rubicon’ and starting a III World War.

Implicature is a strong means to mitigate so called Face Threatening Acts. Zelenskyy recurs to implicatures in order to avoid blaming directly the West in their passive stance regarding the Russian invasion:

- (23) This morning we are defending our state alone, as we did yesterday. The world's most powerful forces are watching from afar.

In the presented above 23 example, Zelenskyy frames the situation in a way that positions Ukraine as the victim and Russia as the aggressor. He also positions other countries, particularly the world's most powerful forces, as passive and not taking responsibility for helping Ukraine. The powerful states here are described as ones who watches from afar. This statement is purely metaphorical, thus Zelesnkyy compares the situation to a cinema, where Western countries are merely watching a movie, instead of actively taking part in it in order to resolve the problem.

The use of modality verbs and imperative mood in Zelenskyy’s appeals to Europeans gives a direct message the Europeans and its leaders to take action and responsibility in stopping the aggression:

- (24) You *can* still stop aggression. We *must* act without delay. Ordinary people *can* also do their part of the job, I'm sure, in every country of the world, in each country of Europe.

In the above address, Zelenskyy is using modality verbs, specifically modal auxiliaries, to express the level of obligation, possibility, and ability. The use of ‘can’ implies a

level of ability or potential to stop aggression, while ‘must’ and ‘should’ indicate a level of obligation or necessity to act without delay. The use of ‘can’ and ‘must’ also implies that there is some agency or capability for both the Europeans and ordinary people to take action to stop the war. The use of ‘emphasize’ also shows that Zelenskyy is placing a significant importance on the role of everyone in stopping the war. The use of modality verbs in this address conveys Zelenskyy's urgency and appeal to the Europeans and its leaders to take action and responsibility in stopping the aggression. In his address on 26<sup>th</sup> of February, Zelenskyy claims the following:

(25) Everyone, I emphasize, everyone must do everything they can to stop this war.

The use of ‘must’ in in the passage 25 highlights the importance of collective action and shared responsibility, and the use of ‘do’ and ‘can’ in ‘everyone must do everything they can’ presents the idea that there are limits and opportunities to what people can do, but still, they have to do everything they can.

By means of pathos, Zelenskyy is tapping into the emotions of Europeans combining allusion and interdiscursivity related to the discourse of II World War in the examples 26 and 27:

(26) Tank columns and air strikes are as similar as something Europe has already seen a long time ago - during the Second World War and talked ‘never again’ about it. But this is it! Again. Now. In 2022. 75 years after the Second World War completion.

Zelenskyy is not merely mentioning the fact of the Word War happening not that long ago but also creates a vivid imagery in the heads of the recipient:

(27) Terrible explosions in the morning sky over Kyiv, bombing, hitting a house, fire - all this reminds of the first such attack on our capital, which took place in 1941.

If we look at this passage from linguistic point of view, an abstract situation is presented with abrupt wording. Asyndeton is a stylistic device in which conjunctions are omitted in a series of related clauses. In this sentence, the conjunctions linking the list of phrases ‘Terrible explosions,’ ‘bombing,’ ‘hitting a house,’ and ‘fire’ are omitted, creating a sense of abruptness and emphasizing the rapid succession of events. This passage effectively uses language to create a sense of urgency and danger and evokes emotions such as fear and tension in the listener’s mind.

President Zelenskyy finalizes one of his addresses to European leaders with the following words:

(28) If you, dear European leaders, dear world leaders, leaders of the free world, do not help us today, then tomorrow the war will knock on your door.

A number of different techniques were used in the above-mentioned passage in order to make an appeal to the European leaders. One of the key techniques is the use of direct address. By addressing the leaders directly and using phrases like ‘dear European leaders’ and ‘leaders of the free world,’ Zelenskyy is explicitly creates a sense of personal responsibility. He wants the leaders to feel that they are being called upon to take action. The modality of the sentence can be identified as conditional, the use of ‘if’ and ‘then structure creates a conditional relationship between the help and the consequence of not helping. The consequence is presented with a use of metaphor ‘the war will knock on your door’ to suggest that the war is something that can come to the leaders' own countries if they do not take action to help Ukraine.

#### **4.3. Addressing People and Parliaments of Other Countries**

As we anticipated in the beginning of this chapter, we will conduct an analysis of the first seven addresses of President Zelensky to Ukrainian foreign partners namely to: the Parliament of the UK, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, the Parliament of Canada, the US Congress, the Bundestag, the Knesset and the Italian Chamber of Deputies.

The given texts correspond structurally to the same genre. The textual schemata of the passages indicate that all of them belong to a genre of political speech, more specifically a speech delivered to a parliament. This is indicated by the opening salutation in each address "Mr. Speaker! Mr. Prime Minister! Members of the government, parliament, lords", "Dear Mr. Speaker, members of the Knesset" etc., which is typical of parliamentary speeches. Interestingly that in his speeches, Zelenskyy also addresses the citizens of the country, in whose Parliament a speech is being given: "people of Israel", "Dear Italian people!". During all his speeches, Zelenskyy is repeating the address to the ordinary people, the members of Parliaments and the President at least 3 times in various parts of the texts. This is done, on the one hand, in order to retain attention of the listeners as the speech can be long enough to

stay concentrated, but on the other hand, to draw the attention of specific recipient to a message that is going to be delivered.

#### **4.3.1. Intertextuality as a Means for Constructing Political Discourse**

All the analysed speeches are as we have mentioned are following similar structural pattern. Volodymyr Zelenskyy naturally incorporates historical events into his speeches. In our opinion, this strategy has become a hallmark of his rhetorical style, as he seamlessly weaves in events that are deeply rooted in the history of the country to whose parliament he is addressing. By doing so, Zelenskyy creates a powerful and persuasive discourse that connects the present with the past and conveys a sense of continuity and national identity. The concept of intertextuality plays a major role in helping to intertwine historical events of the past with the discourses of the present. In the opinion of Kristeva (1986: 32), intertextuality means “the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this history”. The insertion of history implies integration of historical events into a speech or writing, creating a composition constructed from past narratives. Let us dwell into a few examples. In his address to Bundestag, Zelenskyy, was constructing his discourse around ‘Berlin Wall’<sup>48</sup>:

(29) You are like behind the wall again. Not the Berlin Wall. But in the middle of Europe. Between freedom and slavery. And this wall grows stronger with each bomb that falls on our land, on Ukraine. With every decision that is not made for the sake of peace. Not approved by you, although it may help.

In example 29, Zelenskyy compares the situation in Ukraine to the situation behind the Berlin Wall, portraying Ukraine as being trapped between freedom (Europe) and slavery (Russia) and highlighting the devastating impact of ongoing conflict on the country. He also criticizes the lack of action by the Bundestag and the international community to bring peace to Ukraine, emphasizing that each bomb that falls only strengthens the wall of division and conflict. Zelenskyy continues to explain how Germany became dependent on Russia just because of the economy in the example 30:

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<sup>48</sup> The Berlin Wall was a physical barrier built by the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in 1961 to separate East Berlin from West Berlin and stop the flow of refugees from East to West. It stood as a symbol of the Cold War for 28 years, until its fall in 1989 and the subsequent reunification of Germany.

(30) Economy. Economy. But it was cement for a new wall.

Again and again the metaphor of building a new Berlin wall emerges in his address to appeal to the consciousness of German people and politicians. He stresses the fact that they built the imaginary wall in order not to see the actions of Russian. Then, suddenly Zelenskyy shifts from one metaphor to another in example 31:

(31) You can see it all. If you climb over this Wall. If you remember what the Berlin Airlift<sup>49</sup> meant to you.

Through this powerful imagery and critique, Zelenskyy is making a strong call for action and support from the Bundestag and the international community. Furthermore, he claims that there are people who supports Ukraine and those are the people “trying to break this Wall”, “everyone who is taller than any wall”. In his final peroration, example 32, Zelenskyy personally addresses the Chancellor Scholz:

(32) Chancellor Scholz! Tear down this wall.

Thus, he closes the chain of metaphorical events that reflect the reality, in which Germany first builds the Wall and, in the end, has the possibility to tear it down.

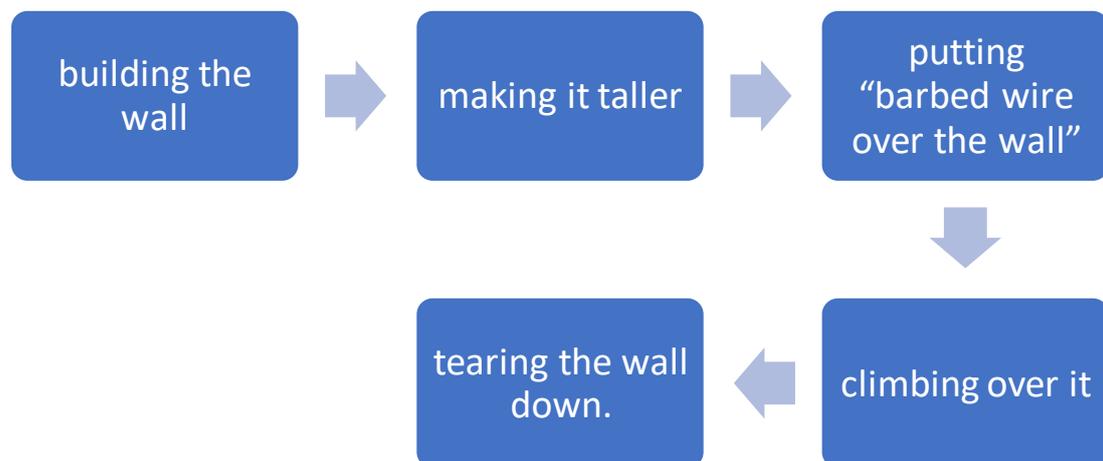


Figure 8 The sequence of presentation of the metaphor "Berlin Wall" in Zelenskyy's address to Bundestag

<sup>49</sup> The Berlin Airlift was a humanitarian and political operation in 1948-1949 in response to the Soviet Union's blockade of West Berlin. It involved the delivery of food, fuel, and other supplies to the city by air to counteract the blockade, ultimately resulting in the successful resupply of the city and the eventual lifting of the blockade.

Intertextuality can be traced in other speeches as well. For instance, addressing the Parliament of Great Britain, the President used the battle for Britain and Churchill's words and adjusted them to the Ukrainian struggle:

(33) We shall fight in the seas, we shall fight in the air, we shall defend our land, whatever the cost may be.

We shall fight in the woods, in the fields, on the beaches, in the cities and villages, in the streets, we shall fight in the hills ...

And I want to add: we shall fight on the spoil tips, on the banks of the Kalmius and the Dnieper! And we shall not surrender!

Zelenskyy quotes in the example 33 the famous words from Winston Churchill's speeches during World War II, highlighting the similarities between the situation in Ukraine and Britain's struggles during the war. By quoting Churchill, Zelenskyy seeks to evoke feelings of patriotism, bravery, and determination in the people of the GB. Overall, a specific place in the analyzed addresses is occupied by references to the speeches of the important historical figures, for example Zelenskyy mentions words of Shakespeare "to be or not to be" when addressing British Parliament; "I have a dream" speech by Martin Luther King, when seeking for assistance from the USA Congress. It plays an important role in the speech as it appeals to the patriotic feeling of the people.

Addressing Israeli Knesset, Zelenskyy employs intertextuality by referencing historical events that have shaped the past of the Jewish people and Ukraine as in examples 34 and 35:

(34) February 24 - this day has twice gone down in history. And both times - as a tragedy. A tragedy for Ukrainians, for Jews, for Europe, for the world.

He starts by mentioning the tragic event of February 24th, which has twice gone down in history. The first instance was the founding of the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany (NSDAP) in 1920, which took millions of lives and destroyed entire countries. The second instance was the criminal order issued 102 years later to launch a full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The President goes on to draw parallels between the historical tragedy faced by the Jewish people during World War II and the current situation faced by Ukraine,

where the Russian invasion is destroying their people, culture, and everything that makes them Ukrainian.

(35) They called it "the final solution to the Jewish issue". You remember that. And I'm sure you will never forget! But listen to what is sounding now in Moscow. Hear how these words are said again: "Final solution". But already in relation, so to speak, to us, to the "Ukrainian issue".

He highlights the fact that the term "final solution" is being used again in Moscow, just as it was used 80 years ago during the Holocaust. The use of historical references and parallels creates a powerful intertextual message, linking the past and present to emphasize the importance of the situation at hand and the need for action.

#### **4.3.2. 'Just imagine' – Rhetoric Power of Pathos**

Among other means of rhetoric massively employed by Zelenskyy in his addresses to the foreign Parliaments is pathos. This strategy is used when addressing the Parliament of Canada and the Chamber of Deputies of Italy. Zelenskyy projects the war situation in Ukraine onto the countries to whom he addresses. He compares the situation in Ukraine to the possible similar scenario for the other countries in order to appeal to emotional side of the listener. Let us consider now examples 36 and 37, in his address to Canada Zelenskyy keeps repeating word 'imagine' throughout the whole speech, every time presenting to a listener a stronger imagery:

(36) Just imagine... Imagine that at four in the morning each of you hears explosions. Terrible explosions. Justin, imagine that you hear it. And your children hear it. Hear missile strikes at Ottawa airport. At dozens of other places throughout your beautiful country, Canada. Cruise missiles.

The use of specific examples of cities in Ukraine, such as Sumy and Okhtyrka, and the comparison to the besieged city of Mariupol, makes the situation feel real and personal to the audience, eliciting a strong emotional response. He goes on, using emotional appeal, to convey the horrors of war. He is making a comparison between the peaceful and stable situation in Canada and the war-torn cities of Ukraine, painting a vivid and disturbing picture of what would happen if the war in Ukraine were to occur in Canada.

(37) From tanks - at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Direct guidance. When the fire started there. Can you imagine that happening to your Bruce Station in Ontario?

He evokes emotions of fear, concern, and empathy by describing the firing of artillery and the destruction of residential areas, schools, and kindergartens. This serves to create a sense of urgency and to drive home the point that war is a devastating and brutal experience that affects innocent people and communities. Same strategy was employed in the discourse delivered to Italian Chamber of Deputies, as in the following example 38:

(38) Imagine completely burned Genoa. After three weeks of total blockade. Bombing, shelling, which did not stop for a moment. Ruined Genoa, from which people are being evacuated, your wonderful people. On foot, by cars, by buses... Just to get to where it is safe.

Finally, we find similar use of pathos in Zelenskyy's address to the people of Israel but now appeal to emotion is done through the word 'feel':

(39) I want you to feel it all. I want you to think about this date. About February 24. About the beginning of this invasion. Russia's invasion of Ukraine. February 24 - this day has twice gone down in history. And both times - as a tragedy. A tragedy for Ukrainians, for Jews, for Europe, for the world. On February 24, 1920, the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany (NSDAP) was founded. A party that took millions of lives. Destroyed entire countries. Tried to kill nations.

In the example 39, Zelenskyy starts by saying "I want you to feel it all," indicating that the purpose of the following words is to create an emotional connection with the listener. The President then refers to the invasion of Ukraine and the formation of the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany, both of which are described as "tragedies". This use of language is meant to elicit feelings of sadness and anger, as well as to create a sense of shared history and connection between the Ukrainian and Jewish people. Zelenskyy also mentions the negative impact of these events on Ukrainians and Jews, emphasizing their real-life consequences and further emphasizing the emotional impact of the events. By appealing to the emotions of the audience, the speaker is attempting to persuade them to see the situation in a particular light.

### 4.3.3. Stylistic Figures

Stylistic devices remain one of the strongest means that are successfully used in order to give an auxiliary meaning, idea, or feeling. Stylistic figures often provide emphasis on the argument that is being presented. The investigated speeches contain a variety of such figures of speech. One of the most frequent devices used by Zelenskyy is repetition. Shilo (1996) highlights that repetition is a tool used by speakers to emphasize their ideas and make them more persuasive by presenting them in a noticeable and purposeful manner. Let us consider the following example 40:

(40) Against cities, against small towns. Ruined districts. *Bombs, bombs, bombs*, again *bombs* on houses, on schools, on hospitals.

In the above-mentioned address, Zelenskyy is making a strong and emotional appeal to the Parliament of the United Kingdom. The power in the address comes from the repetition of the word "bombs," which emphasizes the devastating and relentless nature of the violence being inflicted on the Ukrainian people and in a way lets a listener feel what Ukrainians go through during bombing. With the repetition he creates an illusion of being directly present at the very moment of shelling, when you do not have a way to escape the bombs and they just continue to fall, which is emphasized by the word "again".

Let us also consider the following example 41, in which Zelenskyy addresses Polish citizens:

(41) We understood each other. As a Ukrainian and a Pole. As Europeans. As friends. As parents who love their families and realize that our children must live in a world of equal good values.

The anaphorical repetition of the word "as" is used in order to emphasize and draw parallels between the different ways in which Ukrainian and the Polish people are connected. The repetition helps to support the idea that there are many commonalities between the two groups, and that these commonalities form a basis for a strong relationship. By using the word "as" multiple times, Zelenskyy is able to create a sense of rhythm and emphasis in his speech, making it more memorable and impactful.

The President consistently urged foreign governments to take decisive measures.

(42) Chancellor Scholz! Tear down this wall. Give Germany the leadership you deserve.  
And what your descendants will be proud of. Support us. Support peace. Support  
every Ukrainian. Stop the war. Help us stop it.

In the depicted context 42, the use of imperative mood and anaphora adds emotional and stylistic emphasis to the President's speech before the German government, enhancing its impact and delivering a powerful conclusion.

The President also made imperative appeals to other Parliaments, namely to the British government:

(43) Increase sanctions against the terrorist state. Recognize it as a terrorist state finally.  
Find a way to make our Ukrainian sky safe. Do what you can. Do what you have to.  
Do what the greatness of your state and your people obliges to.

In the presented above context 43, the use of gradation as a stylistic device heightens the tension and urgency of calls for assistance in the campaign, emphasizing not only what individuals are capable of, but also what the state and its people are obligated to do based on their greatness.

Among other stylistic devices that deserve attention in Zelenskyy's speeches are rhetorical questions:

(44) One can keep asking why we can't get weapons from you. Or why Israel has not imposed strong sanctions against Russia. Why it doesn't put pressure on Russian business. But it is up to you, dear brothers and sisters, to choose the answer. And you will have to live with this answer, people of Israel.

The presented above passage contains numerous rhetorical questions posed by Zelenskyy in his address to the people of Israel. Rhetorical questions are questions asked for effect or to make a point, rather than to elicit a reply. It is used here to engage the audience and make them think about their actions concerning the situation in Ukraine. These rhetorical questions contain urge to action, in other words, things that can be done by Israel in order to support Ukraine.

Zelenskyy also uses rhetorical question in order to express his disbelief about the claims international partners make:

- (45) They talk about escalation. How can it get worse? They say Ukraine is not in NATO now. Although "the door is open". But for whom are these doors and where do they lead if we are told that we will not be admitted.

The use of the question "How can it get worse?" in example 45 serves to emphasize the severity of the situation and convey a sense of despair or hopelessness. Additionally, the President's use of the question "For whom are these doors and where do they lead?" serves to create another stylistic device, namely – irony – in order to challenge the partners' assumptions and beliefs about the situation, and to question the validity of the promises that have been made. According to Pearsall (1998), irony involves using language that signifies the opposite of one's intended meaning, often for the purpose of adding humor or emphasis to a statement.

We also find many instances of ellipsis, which refers to the omission of words in a sentence or text that are understood but not stated explicitly:

- (46) Air bombs. A minute ago there were people alive. There was a family that just came there. They were alive. And now... You understand.

We can see that when used in writing, as in example 46, ellipsis is usually indicated by three dots (...). The use of ellipsis can help to emphasize a certain point or create a dramatic effect, and it is also used to convey a sense of unease, nervousness, or hesitation in a President's tone of voice:

- (47) You are helping us now - we really appreciate it. But still...

We find also instances of ellipsis combined with metonymy, as in the following passage 48:

- (48) When a Russian ship demanded that our guys lay down their weapons, they answered him...

In the passage 49 we identify "Russian ship" as a metonymy, and to be more specific, it is an example of synecdoche, a type of metonymy in which a part of something is used to represent the whole (Pearsall, 1998). Here, the phrase "Russian ship" represents the Russian soldiers. Zelensky decides to use the synecdoche, since the phrase that had been said by Ukrainian soldiers in response to Russian soldiers' offer

to surrender over the radio frequency became a symbol of resilience of Ukrainian people. At the same time, the use of ellipsis allows the President not to continue the exact wording of the phrase. Firstly, because it contains swear words, which would be inappropriate in a political discourse. Secondly, the phrase has become so famous that it does not need even to be finished.

(49) Our Freedom Square in Kharkiv and your Churchill Square in Edmonton. Imagine Russian missiles hitting its heart.

In the presented excerpt 49, the word "heart" is being used metonymically to represent the central and most important part of the city or square. In this case, the "heart" symbolizes the cultural, social, and symbolic significance of the Freedom Square in Kharkiv and Churchill Square in Edmonton. The use of this figure of speech helps to convey the severity of the impact of the missile strike and the magnitude of the loss that would result.

We find also instances of antithesis. It is a rhetorical device that involves contrasting two seemingly contradictory ideas or concepts within a balanced grammatical structure. This figure of speech utilizes parallelism in expression to highlight the opposition between ideas. (The Columbia Encyclopaedia, 2014). Antithesis is utilized by Zelenskyy ubiquitously to support his claims or create implicatures by presenting a contrast between two things:

(50) War always shows everything people are capable of. Who is strong. And who is weak. Who is wise. Who does not see the obvious. Who is honest and who is a hypocrite.

In the example 50, the President contrasts the qualities of strength and weakness. Thus, he creates the opposition between two groups: those who are wise and honest and those who are weak and hypocrite. By posing his opinion using antithesis, Zelenskyy implies that the listeners, international partners, must choose the group they want to be part of. It is also the case of the address to Bundestag, example 51:

(51) You are like behind the wall again. Not the Berlin Wall. But in the middle of Europe. Between freedom and slavery.

German people and politicians by the means of antithesis are presented with the choice either to promote freedom, by supporting Ukraine, or to give a way to slavery, which would mean the passivity in relation to the actions of Russian Federation.

We also found instances of antonomasia. The president intentionally refers to Russian Federation as to 'evil', thus attributing it a characteristic in order to create a memorable description:

(52) To protect Ukraine and protect Europe from this total evil that is destroying everything: memorials, churches, schools, hospitals, neighborhoods and all our businesses.

Antonomasia that is based on an implicature is creating an association in the mind of a listener 'Russia – evil'. We find another example 53:

(53) Ukrainians who fled to your country to escape from the evil that came to our land.

Finally, a large portion of stylistic devices used by Zelenskyy in his addresses are epithets. Epithets are used to create a strong emotional impact and convey the speaker's opinion or attitude towards the subject. When Zelenskyy brings up the war discourse, he usually uses the collocations such as "fierce war", "brutal war", "shameful war". At the same time, when trying to establish common ground with the Parliaments' members and the people, Zelenskyy uses positively connotated epithets that appeal to emotions. For example, addressing people of Great Britain he continually inserts in his discourse words like "great people", "great history", "great country", "great power". Similarly, willing to show the closeness of Ukrainian and Polish people, Zelenskyy exploits the following epithets: "extremely strong alliance", "fraternal kindness", "great Pole", "close friend".

## CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed the video addresses delivered by Ukrainian President Zelenskyy to understand the discourse community and the use of semiotic visual analysis in political communication. The sample of 14 speeches, consisting of 7 addresses to Ukrainian society and 7 addresses to international partners, were selected using purposive sampling and included a total of 14,017 words. The original language of the speeches addressed to Ukrainians is Ukrainian, but attention was given to the English version for the purpose of the study. A semiotic visual analysis of 7 speeches delivered to Ukrainians was also conducted and showed how Zelesnkyy used symbols, gestures, and dress to establish an illusory extra-narrative space, bond with the nation, and convey political messages.

The study has yielded several important observations. The analyzed speeches of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy delivered to his nation follow a common structure, with similar content patterns including a summary of diplomacy events and results, addresses to various groups, and a call to action. The use of tenses, modality, and pronouns play a crucial role in conveying power relations and exerting influence on the audience. The President's speeches demonstrate his authority through the use of “we” and “our”, and his agency through the use of present perfect and present continuous tenses. The use of modality in his addresses to the citizens of Ukraine conveys different degrees of possibility, necessity, and directive. The President also uses the pronoun “I” to assume responsibility and to be honest and transparent with the people.

The vocabulary and lexicon used by President Zelenskyy in his speeches show evident polarization, particularly when addressing the Ukrainian people and the Russian citizens. The use of military vocabulary, expressions, and metaphors are prevalent in his discourse, reflecting the war discourse. The conceptual metaphors used by Zelenskyy, such as the "DIPLOMACY - WAR" metaphor and the "Iron Curtain" metaphor, help to convey the seriousness and urgency of the situation, and to mobilize support for his actions. Additionally, the President's appeal to Russian citizens is marked by the use of the opposition between "us" and "them," highlighting the differences between the two countries. The President's ability to build his discourse

around these opposition creates a clear picture of the situation and helps to reinforce his message to his audience.

The President of Ukraine addresses Europeans and Western leaders with four key points. Firstly, he stresses that Europe is not providing enough support to Ukraine in the face of the Russian invasion. Secondly, he emphasizes that Ukraine is an integral part of Europe and the crisis in Ukraine should be seen as a crisis for the whole continent. Thirdly, he calls for immediate action from European countries to address the invasion. Finally, he urges for international solidarity and action to stop the aggression and protect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Throughout his discourse, President Zelenskyy uses various linguistic techniques to make his points more impactful. He uses metaphorical pronouns, such as 'us' and 'all of us', to emphasize the collective nature of the threat and to include Ukraine within the European community. He also uses implicatures to avoid blaming the West directly for their passive stance and emphasizes the urgency of the situation by using modality verbs and imperative mood in his appeals to Europeans. By tapping into the emotions of Europeans, President Zelenskyy combines allusion and interdiscursivity related to the discourse of the Second World War to strengthen his arguments. President Zelenskyy's discourse is an attempt to appeal to the Europeans and Western leaders to take action and responsibility in stopping the aggression, and to emphasize the importance of Ukraine as a part of Europe.

On the other hand, the analysis of President Zelensky's first seven addresses to foreign partners revealed that all of them belong to the genre of political speech delivered to a parliament. Zelenskyy effectively uses intertextuality as a means for constructing his political discourse by incorporating historical events into his speeches, creating a powerful and persuasive narrative that connects the present with the past and conveys a sense of national identity. He uses metaphors and references to historical figures, such as Churchill, when addressing Parliament of the UK and the Berlin Wall during his speech to Bundestag to make a strong call for action and support. Through his speeches, Zelenskyy aims to retain the attention of the listeners and draw their attention to the message he wants to deliver. By using intertextuality, he effectively weaves together a historical and cultural narrative that connects his message to the broader narrative of the country to which he is addressing.

Another rhetorical strategy employed by Volodymyr Zelenskyy in speeches to foreign Parliaments is the use of pathos, or emotional appeal. He projects the war situation in Ukraine onto the countries he is addressing, creating vivid imagery and comparisons to evoke fear, concern, and empathy in the audience. He uses specific examples of cities in Ukraine and the devastating effects of war to drive home the point that war is brutal and affects innocent people. In his address to the people of Israel, he uses the word "feel" to create an emotional connection and to elicit feelings of sadness and anger by referring to the invasion of Ukraine and the formation of the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany. The ultimate goal of these emotional appeals is to persuade the audience to see the situation in a particular light and to evoke a strong emotional response.

A variety of stylistic devices are employed in President's speeches to foreign governments. Repetitions, anaphora, imperative mood, gradation, and rhetorical questions are among the most prominent devices used by the President to convey his messages. These devices help to provide emotional emphasis and enhance the impact of the speeches. Repetitions, such as the repetition of the word "bombs," are used to create an emotional appeal and let the listener feel the devastating reality of the situation. Anaphora, such as the repetition of the word "as," is used to emphasize commonalities and draw parallels between people. Imperative mood and gradation add urgency and emotional emphasis to the President's calls for action. Rhetorical questions, such as "How can it get worse?" are used to engage the audience and make them think about their actions, and to convey disbelief or challenge assumptions and beliefs. The study has also revealed the frequent use of ellipsis, metonymy, antithesis, antonomasia, and epithets in his speeches. The use of ellipsis helped to emphasize a certain point and create a dramatic effect, while metonymy was utilized to create a more memorable and emotional connection between the speaker and the audience and helps to convey ideas more effectively. In the case of President Zelenskyy, metonymy is used to represent the Russian soldiers through the phrase "Russian ship" to emphasize the cultural, social, and symbolic significance of Freedom Square in Kharkiv and Churchill Square in Edmonton through the use of "heart". Furthermore, antithesis was used to present a contrast between two things and support claims. The President also frequently used epithets to create an emotional impact and convey his

opinions and attitudes towards a subject. These stylistic devices helped Zelenskyy to effectively communicate his message and connect with his audience. These stylistic devices, combined with the President's passion and commitment, make his speeches memorable and impactful.

The relevance of this research is centered on the enhancement of our comprehension of language and communication strategies used by politicians in addressing the issue of war. This type of analysis can reveal the underlying political ideologies, values, and goals, as well as the intended audience and purpose of the discourse. The results of this analysis can be useful for scholars, political analysts, and interested individuals in gaining insight into the discourse of political leaders and the shaping of public opinion. The research sheds more light onto how the argumentation strategies can be possibly used in the most effective way to appeal to the emotional side of the listener, and urge them to do certain things, such as providing immediate help and assistance to the defending party, mobilising the spirit of the listener to withstand the forthcoming challenges and so on.

The limitations of the present research should be acknowledged. One such limitation is that it primarily focuses on the textual analysis of the speeches delivered by Volodymyr Zelenskyy, while other modalities such as paralinguistic and nonverbal elements were considered to a lesser extent. This narrow focus on textual analysis may result in a partial representation of the discourse and overlook important cues that contribute to the overall meaning and effectiveness of the discourse. Another limitation is that the study was limited to the analysis of the translated English versions of the President's speeches. Translation can potentially introduce biases and alter the original meaning and intention of the discourse. These limitations should be kept in mind when interpreting the results and considering their implications for future research.

Future research directions in the field of political discourse analysis could expand upon the current study in a number of ways. One such direction could be to extend the analysis to non-English political addresses, as doing so would provide a more comprehensive view of the discourse and allow for cross-linguistic comparisons. This could shed light on the role of language and culture in shaping political discourse and provide insight into how political ideologies and values are expressed and communicated in different languages. Additionally, future research could also focus

on conducting contrastive analysis between the original and translated versions of the political addresses to identify any discrepancies and assess the impact of translation on the meaning and intention of the discourse. This type of analysis would deepen our understanding of the translation process and its impact on the interpretation of political discourse. These future research avenues hold the potential to contribute to the advancement of our knowledge in the field of political discourse analysis and the study of political communication.

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