

## الخطاب الروسي-الأوكراني الداعي إلى التعبئة: تحليل نقدي للخطاب

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الكلية المفتوحة / قسم اللغة الانكليزية

### الملخص

تناولت الدراسة تحليل الخطاب السياسي في زمن الحرب الروسية-الأوكرانية وخطابات الرئيس الروسي فلاديمير بوتين. اعتمدت الدراسة على منهجية تحليل الخطاب النقدي للكشف عن الاستراتيجيات اللغوية والبلاغية المستخدمة في خطابات بوتين، وكيفية توظيفها في التعبئة الجماهيرية وشرعنة سياسات التضحية بحياة الأفراد. تم التركيز على المنهج التاريخي-الخطابي، إضافة إلى استراتيجيات الشرعنة في اتخاذ ودعم القرارات أوضحت النتائج أن اللغة السياسية في زمن الحرب تُستخدم كأداة للهيمنة والسيطرة، حيث يتم توظيف المفردات اللغوية، التراكيب النحوية، والوسائل البلاغية لاستثارة العاطفة والعقل معاً. كما كشفت الدراسة أن التلاعب باللغة يعد سمة بارزة في الخطاب السياسي الحربي، إذ يُستخدم لتشكيل المواقف والأيديولوجيات وتوجيه الرأي العام نحو قبول سياسات الحرب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الخطاب السياسي، الأيديولوجيا والقوة، البلاغة، الدعوة إلى السلاح.

## Russian –Ukrainian Call to Arms Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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### Abstract

Convinced people to sacrifice their lives or the lives of others in warfare for the greater good or some noble cause is hard task. This study was design to examine the Russia-Ukraine war discourses presented by Vladimir Putin (Russian President). In the present study, the analysis has conducted both the linguistic and the rhetorical strategies of Putin's political discourse that reflects power and domination in war discourse. Hence, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was conducted as a methodological and procedures tool to investigate. Practically, What are the linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed by the examined speakers, and How do these linguistic strategies reflect power and ideology to mobilize and legitimize the policy of sacrificing the lives of people and the lives of others in the context of war? The study revealed the power of language in political speeches in different narratives of the war. This research reveals that in order to elicit the emotions of the public, reflect the beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies of power, word choice, grammatical constructions, and rhetorical devices were used.

**Keywords:** Call to arms, Political Discourse, ideology & power, Rhetoric

## 1. Introduction

The war discourse is the battlefield for the conflict for power and legitimacy between different ideologies, wherein, language is playing the role of hidden bullets. History has recorded many occasions where language was deployed as a form of action to frame ideologies for persuasive ends in call to arms, in which orators offer insights into a country's current and future perspectives by multifaceted messages. For example, the speeches of FD Roosevelt during the Second World War and later, the speeches of J F Kennedy, when leaders have convinced their people to sacrifice their lives or the lives of others in warfare for the greater good or some noble cause (Katea, 2018). Language is a formidable communication medium in which one can send messages and control minds. It is a key component in the political sphere to show the fight for power, expose ideology, and consider its impact in other spheres. Linguistic terms, devices and techniques are used in the political speeches of politicians in various ways to communicate and persuade others on their political beliefs and ideologies (Igiri, Awa, Ogayi, & Ngwoke, 2020). The focus of the world at the moment is on Ukraine and Russia. In this conflict, political leaders turn to international support in political, economic and social aspects through their narratives. Russia has been attempting to legitimate the attack, hoping for Russian and Ukrainian backing. Putin's military operations were aimed at "demilitarizing", he said in his speech, and denazify Ukraine", and to stop the West from locking a foot in Ukraine, harming the security of Russia. Ukraine authorities appealed for international help to halt the Russian invasion, meanwhile. The attack on Ukraine with geopolitical motives is a good example of what was meant by regionalization and re-regionization of the regional identity and borders (Brusylovska & Maksymenko, 2023). This attack will have short-and long-term impacts on all countries. In most countries, including those in the West, that back Ukraine and condemn Russia's actions against it, the president's speeches are believed to be a major source of information about opinion on the nation. Political leaders' speeches indicate their countries' policies in relation to Ukraine, and steer the countries in a certain direction regarding the country.

The power of the media that "influence[s] knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations, social identities" is mainly determined by the language used (Fairclough, 1995). Thus, the use of media as social practices is a way of expressing the speaker's opinion and ideology, so that it is less likely to objectively present and report reality (Tian, 2018). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an ongoing research area of language analysis which reveals the messages behind the speech. It explores the discourse connections to social power and, especially, how the discussion of powerful (dominant) actors and institutions presents, reproduces and legitimates the use of power. Abuse of Power is characterized by cognitive control and it shapes the minds of the citizens by dominating the public discourse and indirectly influencing the norms, values, attitudes and ideologies in favour of dominant groups (Van Dijk, 2003). The media has the power to shape perceptions and alter beliefs and CDA tackles different types of media discourse.

## 2. Call to Arms Discourse

The “Call to Arms Discourse” is a rhetorical tradition that makes use of rhetorical tactics of legitimization, hero–villain stories, and appeals to national identity to mobilize collective action, which is seen as morally imperative, when conflict happens. ‘Call to arms’ discourse, i.e. the language used to exhort killing or dying, is one of the key ways leaders engage with war. Graham et al. (2004) convincingly argue that a ‘call to arms’ speech is an enduring tool leader have used in a crisis to exhort ‘the masses’ to kill and die for a cause, simultaneously strengthening a leader’s hold on power whilst weakening the longer-term position of their institutions in the field of power (see also, Bourdieu, 1998). It is noted for its impact on the political communication in the United States and Iraq, especially in the War on Terrorism (see Katea 2018). “Call to Arms Discourse” is a term for the rhetoric of political leaders in effect to unite the populace for war or defense. It is not just a statement of war, but a clever rhetorical manoeuvre that severs relationships, rallies adherents and establishes villains and supporters. The discourse is studied in detail both in Western and Middle East contexts, to discover the role of language as a symbolic power. The terms Call to arms is not just a call to mobilize, but also to construct identity. Leaders affirm symbolic boundaries by designating who is and isn't part of the “nation” and what the “enemy” is. Such a talk can even increase polarization, but can also reinforce group solidarity in crisis situations. As of today, the Call to Arms Discourse is a rhetorical tool that continues to be powerful in international politics. Combines persuasion, legitimization and framing in order to influence public opinion and policy. Academic research has shown that such language can bring a population together in difficult times, but can also be used to misinform and manipulate.

### 2.1. Power and Ideology in Call to Arms Discourse

The war between Russia and Ukraine is more than a geographical conflict: it is a power and ideational one as well. It started with the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and has been steadily rising since the full-scale invasion in February 2022. This war is not only about geography, it is a conflict about the right to sovereignty and democratic self-determination on Ukraine's part and regional domination on Russia's. It is influenced by geopolitical, historical and ideological struggles. The battle serves as a case in point of the changing nature of world order and how this is affected by power struggles and ideological conflicts in it (Chilton, 2004). A fight for dominance, both domestically and internationally, is the fundamental cause of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine wherein, War-metaphor, ideologies, and the use of challenging verbs, such as fight, combat and counter, maintain power differences and authority.

Russia wants to recover its sphere of influence, especially over the post-Soviet republics, and this is reflected in its military activities. Ukraine plays an important strategic role for Russia due to its geographical location, its territory, its natural and cultural links. Losing Ukraine to the West would be a very geopolitical setback for Moscow. A realist approach to international relations sees power in terms of military strength, strategic position and the control of resources. For President Vladimir

Putin, Ukraine's desire for NATO and the EU membership, as well as its gradual drift toward the West, is a clear threat to Russian national security. Russia is seeking to return to its former glory, its Soviet territories, and to prevent the West encroaching further into the 'sphere of influence'. The purpose is to demonstrate the strength of the country to the rest of the world and especially to the Russian people, especially in the face of increasing sanctions and criticism from the West.

The battle for Ukraine is a fight for independence and for self-governance. Since Ukraine's independence in 1991, the country has been struggling with Russian and Western influence, with pro-Western and pro-Russian factions battling for influence. Ukraine has clearly decided to move forward Westward and strengthen ties with the NATO and European Union. Therefore, Ukraine's fight is not only against the Russian aggression, but also for its political, economic and ideological sovereignty, for the security of its borders. The power of Ukraine is the ability to defend its independence and to resist domination by others.

## **2.2. Hegemony in Call to Arms Discourse**

Hegemony is an important concept in political discourse in general and call to arms in more specific. This is because it is not considered as a "pure" kind of control, but rather as a symbolic process and a process that is gradually accepted by those who are dominated, which are the meanings that are produced and received as natural or self-evident. Historically, the concept of hegemony came from the writings of Antonio Gramsci (1971)

He (1971p. 14) describes it as a method by which hegemonic groups maintain their power by persuading subordinate groups rather than relying on external control. Linguistically. The concept of hegemony has been interpreted as a social practice, in which participants go through the reproduction of power relations. Hence, hegemonic is a soft power not controlled by external or physical force, but by acceptance and social agreements of those who control (Gramsci, 1971, p. 14). Then, hegemony is not only expressed in everyday communication, but also in institutional discourse-call to arms, since the usage of hegemony also indicates leadership (dominance) in political, financial, and ideological aspects of a community or society for persuasive ends (Fairclough, 2013).

In the CDA, hegemony is made more explicit in relation to the effect of the dynamic relation between the discourse, the trajectory of discursive practice, and the social structure in which this discourse is embedded (Fairclough, 2013). In call to arms discourse, hegemony is social practice aims to hypothesizing authority and fighting over power to be accepted and supported by others. Within this understanding, hegemony is a dynamic discourse rather than a static one (Blommaert, 2005, p. 167), in which, exclusion of Others views is assumed. Skilled speakers usually use language to influence or change their audience's preconceptions, thoughts, interests, or desires (Al-Bzour, 2019). Thus, people might also support policies or adopt false postulates in opposition to their beliefs because of speakers' language manipulation (Al-Bzour, 2019).

### 2.3. The Rhetoric of Call to arms Discourse

Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, in which speakers typically employ language to persuade audiences or change their preconceptions, thoughts, interests or desires. This is not restricted to written or spoken language, but also it covers “all modes of communication”, such as image, color and movement (Al-Bzour, 2019). To persuade others in order to sacrifice their lives or the lives of their beloveds in warfare for the greater good or some noble cause is not an easy discourse. Therefore, in call to arms discourse, rhetorical devices have a great impact on communicating the intended meaning in which charged language is deliberately chosen.

In the current study, the analysis tackles the triangulated rhetorical strategies: ethos, pathos, and logos, as rational components of persuasion as an audience will consciously evaluate the reliability of the speaker (Wisse, 1989, p.29). In this context, Amaireh (2023) presents a good understanding of each device. She (2023) outlines that ethos refers to the choice of words as the representation of the personality, character, credibility, expertise, intelligence, trustworthiness and authority of the speaker that effects audiences' reactions (Foss, 1996). Whereas, Pathos indicates the ability of the text to evoke the feelings and emotions of the listener, once by humor (Charteris-Black (2014) and other by fear or anger (Fortenbaugh, 2007). Finally, logos is the use of logic and reasoning to substantiate the speaker's claims. It is a powerful means of persuasion, as “man is a rational creature and wants some proof before believing in something” (Mohan, 2013, p.31). Logos contain a group of argument types that support the speaker's argument and claims: future predictions, parallel cases, dilemma appeals, and arguments from consequences. When it comes to ethos, Amaireh (2023), highlights three perspectives of the speakers' attitudes towards the speaker (as a person), the message (committed to truth), and the audience.

### 4. Methodology and procedure

In the war times discourse language is not a neutral means of communication. It is an ideological means of persuasion, wherein rhetorical languages (ethos, pathos, and logos) are tools of communication. This analytical study was designed to closely examine what the linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine by the investigated speakers, and how do these linguistic strategies reflect power and ideology that mobilize and legitimize the policy of violence through convincing people to sacrifice their lives of and the lives of others in the context of war? In doing so, some of the widely used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been applied in the study. Analytically, the DHA (Discourse-Historical Approach), wherein, several analytical categories are used, such as referential, predication, perspectivation, argumentative strategies (Topoi) and the strategies of intensification and mitigation (Resigil & Wodak, 2001), along with some of the legitimization strategies on the representation of social actors (Van Leeuwen 2007) have been practiced.

To achieve the aim(s) of this critical study, Vladimir Putin (Russian President) speeches were analyzed due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The selected data were download form an authentic source- Kremlin website, and read carefully. The study follows the main premises of

the DHA (Reisigl and Wodak (2015) . The first is Nomination which is directed to the social actors, social entities, and social phenomena through means such as membership categorization, deictics, metonymy and metaphor in the course of the linguistic description of the object in question in a specific context. The second strategy is Predication, which provides the evidence for the question asked in the first strategy about the traits, objectives, attributes, and properties that have been specified (ibid, 2015, pp.51-52), therefore the first –nomination and the second – Predication will be integrated in one section as each one complete the second. This is to determine how these discursive qualifications, negative and positive attributes of the social were attributed. The third strategy is Argumentation that examines arguing and questioning the claims or the truth that has been communicated by the social actors through the Topos. The fourth strategy is perspectivization, which is used to ask from which perspective or point of view these previous three strategies are expressed; in short, it looks at the involvement or distance of the social actors using deictics, direct or indirect discourse, quotation marks, and discourse marks (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015, p. 33). Finally, the intensification/mitigation strategy questions whether the utterances are intensified or mitigated with the use of diminutive particles, vague expressions, intensifiers and hesitations (ibid., 2015, p. 33).

## 5. Data Analysis and Discussion

This part of the study represents a practical section to examine Putin's Call to arms discourse in light with the DHA strategies. After presenting a brief profile of the speaker, and the context of the selected speech, the nomination & predication strategies will be the analysis in one section. Then the strategies of perspectivization, argumentation, and intensification and the mitigation will be analysed respectively. To use this toolkit, the data should be broken down into their discursive strategies, their thematic framing and the positioning of ideologies inherent in the DHA's as it focuses on language as a way of creating social reality, legitimizing power and telling a history.

### 5.1. A brief profile of Putin

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin is a Russian politician and former intelligence officer was born 7 October 1952. in March 2000 he was elected to his first term as president of Russia. He was re-elected in 2004. Putin was the prime minister of Russia from 2008 to 2012 while the country was being led by Dmitry Medvedev, who was not a member of the Putin administration. After being elected in a year in which allegations of electoral frauds and protesting against the election, he retook the presidency in 2012 and was re-elected in 2018. During his third presidential term, Russia annexed and occupied Crimea, and has backed a war in eastern Ukraine in a series of military incursions. During his fourth term as president, Putin in February 2022, launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a move that received international condemnation and caused the expansion of sanctions. He declared a partial mobilization in September 2022, and illegally annexed four Ukrainian oblasts to Russia.

## 5.2. Context to the speech

On 21 February 2023, Vladimir Putin's addresses the Federal Assembly. The speech made in Moscow came on the eve of the 1-year anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In 13216 words the speaker was mostly blaming the West for the war, and Russia was suspending an arms control pact called the New START. The speech was delivered nearly a year after the launch of the Russian invasion of Ukraine (24 February 2022). For the first time since the war started, Putin was not able to attend the annual address. The speech was broadcast throughout occupied Ukrainian territories and attended by Members of both houses of parliament, military commanders, and Russian officials, who were symbolically reinforced by U.S. President Joe Biden's visit to Kiev the previous day to express support for Ukraine.

## 5.3. Analysis and discussion

The present section presents a critical rhetorical analysis of the discursive strategies the Russian President, Putin adopted to persuasively deliver his strategy of confronting Ukrainian's regime. In doing this, DHA analytical tools have been applied, alongside how they have been applied for persuasive ends. This part introduces a detailed analysis of referential and predication strategies, strategies of involvement\detachment, argumentation strategies and strategies of intensification and mitigation.

### 5.3.1 Referential and predication strategies

Knowing and explaining those who have positive or negative attributions that correspond to social actors or actions are very decisive in forming the strategy in-group or out-group, which is the most popular persuasive strategy in public speeches. In that case, Putin distinguished the social actors into two groups in a way that fitted the purpose of 'self' representation versus negative 'other'. It seems that vagueness does not appear as part of Putin discourse. He clearly, groups the Kiev regime, USA, NATO, Naze and their Western handlers under the label of the negative actor(s) where negative attributions were given such as "neo-Nazi regime", "betrayal", "terrorist", "poison". Whereas, certain references, such as, 'we', our country, etc. were grouped under the category of positive self, where positive characteristics are attributed like "protector of "historical lands", Our war is not a war it is "a special military operation". The following presents a systematic analysis of these referential and predication strategies.

- **The Positive-negative presentation of social actors and actions: Describing the in/out-group**

The positive self-representation in Putin's speech extends from the speaker himself, known as 'I', 'my' and 'me' to Russia\ Russians and its realisations of "we", 'us'. (see Table 1). These references

have more functions, such as showing authority, taking the audience in confidence and emoting the audience, as in the example below:

One year ago, to protect the people in our historical lands, to ensure the security of our country and to eliminate the threat coming from the neo-Nazi regime that had taken hold in Ukraine after the 2014 coup, it was decided to begin the special military operation. Step by step, carefully and consistently we will deal with the tasks we have at hand. (6-11 lines)

In the above extract, the speaker nominates and positions Russia as the **protector** of “our historical lands” and “our people.” In the context of negative representations, the Ukraine’s government was labeled as a “**neo-Nazi regime**”, who starts the aggressive attacks. This is to legitimize his (in grope) action(s) or activity and delegitimize Other’s (out group) actions. He frames them as illegitimate and dangerous due to the historical background of Nazi in people minds and memories. The speaker, then emphasizes that his action “war” is not a war but a “**special military operation**”, This can be seen a sort of euphemism to soften its perception in one hand, and as a means to stop their war as in “Let me reiterate that they were the ones who started this war, while we used force and are using it to stop the war” (lines 88-90) on the other hand. One more example of the positive referential strategies the orator presents is a combination of themes that stretch from personal authority as Commander-in-Chief’ who protect others life “We are defending human lives and our common home” (lines 94-95).

In order to evoke the emotions of fear and dangerous of Kiev’s regime and its attempts in one side, and to highlight the aggressive face of the West –*out group*, the speaker reminds the audience with a historical event as in “I would like to recall that, in the 1930s, the West had virtually paved the way to power for the Nazis in Germany. In our time, they started turning Ukraine into an “anti-Russia” (125-127), as they “plan to finish us once and for all” (line 181). However, the speaker defeats their goals confirming that “Our soldiers, our heroes are fighting for this, for their ancestors, for the future of their children and grandchildren, for uniting our people” (lines 272 273). Furthermore, he adds that “we will respond accordingly, because this represents an existential threat to our country” affirming that “it is impossible to defeat Russia” (line 185).

Another strategy of positive – negative representation that take the audience into confidence is the strategy of distinction. Accordingly, Putin shows the positive side of his war and the negative one of the Kiev’s regime and its Western handlers- *out group*, as in the following extract:

Look what they are doing to their own people. It is all about the destruction of the family, of cultural and national identity, perversion and abuse of children, including pedophilia, all of which are declared normal in their life. They are forcing the priests to bless same-sex marriages. Bless their hearts, let them do as they please. (line 189-193)

The above excerpt introduces how the Kiev regime and its handlers work together to destroy the Ukrainian society and its social values, norms, and tradition by spreading vices such as “abuse of children”, “bless same-sex marriages”. By spreading and naturalizing these vices, they consciously aim to distort Ukrainian family, cultural and national identity. These outcomes as Putin described is ‘a spiritual disaster’ Wherein “we [will not do that] must protect our children, ... We will protect our children from degradation and degeneration.” He advises his people “to look at the holy scripture and the main books of other world religions” (line, 197) affirming that people, the citizens of Russia will never behave like the Kiev regime and the Western elite. By doing so, they have given them [the Kiev regime and the Western leaders] a moral assessment, as we are like true brothers and sisters, “which means that we have become even stronger, and we will do everything in our power to bring back the long-awaited peace to our land and ensure the safety of our people” as Putin stated, therefore, he praises and thanks them all for their supports and positive attitudes.

### 5.3.2 The strategies of Perspectivization

This section highlights the methods and strategies Putin uses to place his position and views about the ongoing war,- actions and actors wherein positive and negative attribution are expressed. The discourse of blaming Kiev’s regime, NATO, Western leaders, and US and their thoughts and aims, expresses Putin’s opinion and views about them not about the Ukraine people “We are not at war with the people of Ukraine “(line 159). Putin presents himself as the **guardian\protector of national destiny**. He uses the personal pronoun (I) 129 times. as he belief that Ukraine occupied by the Kiev regime and its Western handlers and their people –Ukrainian have become hostages of the Kiev regime and its Western handlers. By his authority and position as the leader that will run the war to victory, wherein the speaker uses the pronoun ‘we’ than ‘I’ for its emotional affect as exemplified below:

we will do everything in our power to bring back the long-awaited peace to our land and ensure the safety of our people. Our soldiers, our heroes are fighting for this, for their ancestors, for the future of their children and grandchildren, for uniting our people (lines 271-274).

In order to expand on the aforementioned of negative actors and actions of Kiev’s regimes and its followers, the speaker points and evaluates the Western elite as threat and raiders to his Country-Russia. He clearly exposes their goal as “they plan to finish us [Russia] once and for all.” Practically, “they plan to grow a local conflict into a global confrontation.” (lines 181-183). He adds that the warfare of Kiev’s regime and Western handlers exceeds the military actions, it is an open war that attack everything even the economy i.e., initiated the sanctions. To put in Putin’s tongue’ “As I have already said, the West has opened not only military and informational warfare against us, but is also seeking to fight us on the economic front” (lines 368-370). However, Putin clearly, challenges all these aggressive activities saying that “[..] they have not succeeded on any of these fronts, and never will”

Meanwhile, the speaker does not neglect the role of economy in running the war. He states the military actions and economic procedures fight hand in hand in the same battleground. To put that in Putin's words "Of course, national defence is the top priority, but in resolving strategic tasks in this area, we should not repeat the mistakes of the past and should not destroy our own economy" (lines 417-419). By saying that the speaker proves and confirms his leadership, authority and power in running the war in one hand, and ensures the audience that he/ governmental team is expertise in running the protection war, and they are ready to overcome and defeat their enemies not only in battlefield, but also in economic one "The Russian economy, as well as its governance model proved to be much more resilient than the West thought" (lines 384-385).

The next strategy, where Putin crosses his involvements in the discourse of going to war, is the strategy of description. Putin presents two different attitudes to describe the negative action and actors as well as the positive. He negatively, describes the Other i.e. Kiev's regimes and its Western handlers and their aggressive goals and plans to defeat and destroy his country[Russia], and in positive one to represents his soldiers, heroes who are fighting to prevent this aggression. Following this strategy- the strategy of trustworthiness, Putin enhances his self-image through the acts of patriotism of his soldiers and fighters under his leadership to achieve a noble and honorable action – protect our country. After presenting himself as a leader of the great Patriotic War- war of protection, Putin uses one of "we" realisation, it is the possessive pronoun "our". This is to reflect and confirm his involvement- one of them-, and they work as one team for a noble activity – to protect Russia that deserves to give up our lives. The speaker uses the active pronoun "we" 67 times. After presenting himself as trustworthy, powerful leader and discussing the core of the speech, Putin reports some of the landmark achievements that his government have recently achieved during his period as a strategic principle to front the current and future danger and threat of Western systems, as elaborated in lines: 392-393, 404-407, 407-408, 410-412, 419-421, 426-427, 428-429m and 437-438.

Another strategy in which Putin arranges himself in a positive place is the method of narration. He narrates an utterance as in the next quotation:

Let me remind you that back in 2014, the Kiev regime sent its artillery, tanks and warplanes to fight in Donbass. We all remember the aerial footage of airstrikes targeting Donetsk. Other cities also suffered from airstrikes. In 2015, they tried to mount a frontal assault against Donbass again, while keeping the blockade in place and continuing to shell and terrorise civilians. Let me remind you that all of this was completely at odds with the documents and resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council, but everyone pretended that nothing was happening. (lines 81-88).

The above quotation was a good introduction to pave and legitimize Putin's decision of launching the war – productive war on one hand, and to confirm that his decision comes as a reaction to protect his people – self-defense. In Putin's words "[they] the ones who started this war, while we

used force and are using it to stop the war.” (lines 89-90). Using historical sad events and memories evoke the emotions of the audience to show sympathy and support to the decision of war.

One more method to enhance Putin’s trustworthy is the strategy of praising and thanking that present how the gentleman the speaker is. According the speaker uses the word “thank” 11 times all to the Russians for their courage and resolve in fronting the treat of enemy. The best example of this thanking statement is:

I would like to thank our heroes, soldiers and officers in the Arm Betrayaly and the Navy, the Russian Guards, the secret services staff, and all structures of authority, the fighters in Donetsk and Lugansk corps, volunteers and patriots who are now fighting in the ranks of the BARS combat army reserve. (lines 229-231)

Apologizing is another way to support Putin’s nobility when he apologies form those people who forget to mention them in his thanking statements, as in “I would like to apologise that I will not be able to mention everyone during today’s speech.” (line 233).

### 5.3.3. Argumentation strategies

This section keeps track of what and how argumentation strategies or topoi, content-related argument schemes that connect the arguments with the conclusions and therefore justification is required (Reisigl & Wodak 2001, Kader, 2016). Analytically, what are the discursive strategies Putin uses to connect his claims or proposals to certain conclusion. In other words, how Putin proves that his war is an effort to degrade the treat and danger of Kiev’s regime and its masters- Western handlers, NATO, and US, and it is not a combat war? The following sub-sections discuss the evidences, assumptions and premises presented by Putin to argue that our war is a protective war not an aggressive war, and it is a special military operation aims to move the threat away from Russian’s borders.

- **The topos of responsibility**

Clearly Putin bears the Kiev’s regime and its masters- Western handlers, NATO, and US a colossal responsibility to the threat that threaten Russian’s borders, as in the following primases:

- ” prior to the special military operation, Kiev held negotiations with the West about the delivery of air-defence systems, warplanes and other heavy equipment to Ukraine (lines 26-28)”
- “They increasingly incited the Ukrainian neo-Nazis to stage terrorist attacks in Donbass” (lines 21-23)
- “The [Ukrainian] officers of nationalist battalions trained at Western academies and schools” (line 23)
- “Weapons were also supplied” (line 24)
- “The United States and NATO quickly deployed their army bases and secret biological laboratories near Russian borders” (lines 30-31)

All these premises address the Federal Assembly in Moscow, as an attempt to justify and legitimize the war continuity. The speaker presents these information as facts delivered by an authentic source.

- **The topoi of humanitarianism, Justice and Abuse**

The negative representation of actions and actors is not restricted to the military actions and their plans. In this situation, the speaker presents part of his negative argumentation to show the violation of human rights committed by Kiev's regime and its followers to destruct families, culture and identity. Moreover, they naturalized and normalized these violations as part of their life. One of the best example that portraits the violation of humanity in general and child right in particular is "[they encourage] abuse of children, pedophilia, all of which are declared normal in their life, and forcing the priests to bless same-sex marriages. (lines 191-193). Whereas, "We in Russia have always seen it that way and always will: no one is going to intrude into other people's private lives, and we are not going to do it, either." (lines 195-197). It seems that Putin binds. his rhetorical effects in terms of contradiction between US\Them activities.

One more example of breaching the human rights by Kiev's regime and its Western supporters is the right of life. In this regards, Putin in comparative way explain how Kiev's regime and its supporters violate the humanity. He describes them as serial killers "Their hands are also stained with blood [...], they gambled on people's lives," (line146). While Russia- the speaker and his administrative team work hard to maintain and protect these right "Russia sincerely made every effort to achieve a peaceful solution" (line 38).

Another seen of showing the speaker humanity is when Putin call to pray for those soldiers and civilians who sacrificed their life for Russia, as in "I would like to ask you to pay your respects to our fellow soldiers who were killed in the attacks of neo-Nazis and raiders, who gave up their lives for Russia, for civilians, the elderly, women and children" (lines 275-277). One more humanitarian seen is the unlimited support and care to the Russian's families of those who gave up their lives for Russia. This kindness proves Putin nobility (trustworthy) and to evokes the audience 's emotions of sadness for persuasive ends. The next quotation is the best example to portrait this seen: (for more examples see lines 288-300)

Our duty is to support the families that have lost their loved ones and to help them raise their children and give them an education and a job. The family of each participant in the special military operation must be a priority and treated with care and respect. Their needs must be responded to immediately, without bureaucratic delays. (lines 281-288)

Highlighting the significant of social relations -family ties, enhances the speaker's sociality in protecting and maintaining family relations. In this respect, Putin "believes that [...], all those taking part in the special military operation, including volunteers, must benefit from a leave of absence of at least 14 days every six months without counting the time it takes them to travel to their destination." (lines 226-230). These statements show how the speaker cares and considers the importance of family atmosphere wherein fathers meet their wives and children.

### • The topos of danger or threat

In several instances Putin clearly classifies the Kiev's regime, Western leaders, NATO, and US the main source of threat and danger that threaten Russia's borders and its national security. The speaker uses the verb (threat) 8 times to describe the action(s) don by them. Let us mention just one example for its global dangerous consequences, "We also recall the Kiev regime's vain attempts to obtain nuclear weapons; they discussed this issue publicly." (lines 28-30). The potential distraction of this threat is not limited its negative affects around Russian's borders, but it goes beyond it. Therefore, a Preemptive military operation is required as threat was growing by the day.

A critical reading to Putin's discourse, uncover to types of threat: the direct and indirect one. The direct one was run directly by Kiev's regime, as in "Kiev held negotiations with the West about the delivery of air-defence systems, warplanes and other heavy equipment to Ukraine" (lines 27-28), and "the aerial footage of airstrikes targeting Donetsk". While the indirect one was led by those who, support, supply and train Kiev's regime in its aggressive enemy, as in the following examples respectively:

1. "The United States and NATO quickly deployed their army bases and secret biological laboratories near Russian borders"
2. "NATO's expansion to our borders, the creation of new deployment areas for missile defence in Europe and Asia."
3. "The officers of nationalist battalions trained at Western academies and schools, and Weapons were also supplied."

One more critical perspective to Putin's speech, we can infer another type of threat beside the military one. It is the cultural threat that aims to assassinate Ukrainian's social values, norms, customs, and tradition. In lines 191-193 Putin's presents a comprehensive example to actualize the social threat,

"[they] abuse of children, including pedophilia, all of which are declared normal in their life. They are forcing the priests to bless same-sex marriages" (lines 191-193)

It seems that Kiev's regime and its alliances target Russian's culture, traditions, and religion as a tactic to move the conflict form outside borders to its local environment. This as Putin indirectly attributed comes to compensate their failure in fronting Russian's troops in the battlefield. In doing so, Kiev's regime and its alliances use the strategy of lying and deception to attacking historical facts and distorting cultural and religious believes. However, "we were doing everything in our power to solve this problem by peaceful means, and patiently conducted talks on a peaceful solution to this devastating conflict" (lines 15-17). However, "Behind our backs, a very different plan was being hatched [...] engaged in political chicanery." Hence, showing some power and authority by Putin is required in this critical situation, as exemplified in the next coming sections.

- **The topos of authority**

In response to those challenges and aggressions against Russian's national security by Kiev's regime and its handlers, Putin exercises his power and authority through the collective pronoun "we" as part of his rhetorical persuasive strategy. By doing so, Putin integrates the power of President and one of Russian people., as in "we will respond accordingly, because this represents an existential threat to our country" (183-184). It seems that Putin binds his official position- president of Russia, and his military background (expert) to articulate challenge utterances such as "they too realise it is impossible to defeat Russia on the battlefield" (line 185). By using the noun (impossible) in negative mode, he does not give the Kiev's regime and their supporters any possible chance to win the battle. This expresses the authority of military expert – Commander, who is qualified enough to defeat the opponents.

Another type of power and authority that Putin practices is the soft power, when the speaker uses wisdom and wet for persuasive ends. This strategy shows how Putin and his team do their best to solve the problem peacefully by negotiation not by guns. As such Putin reduces or increases his responsibility of declaring the war. The following is a good example of that strategy:

"we were doing everything in our power to solve this problem by peaceful means, and patiently conducted talks on a peaceful solution to this devastating conflict "(lines 16-17)

One more strategy the spear utilizes is the strategy of thanking and praising. In more than 11 times, Putin thanks and apprises Russian's people for their positive, honorable attitudes, and patriotic stand toward Russian's justice war, 'My dear friends, I would like to thank everyone, all the people of Russia for their courage and resolve.' Giving thanking is a persuasive strategy that maintains and increases the power of the speaker specially when it attributed to those who believe the right of Russia to be strong. This method also enhances the position-rank of the speaker than those who received these thanking statements.

Using the speech act of “promise” can be seen as a rhetorical strategy Putin employs to show and practices his presidential authority and power. Giving promise and commitment needs an authoritative person to make it actual. In this context, Putin promises his people and commitment himself to design and develop programs and then follow up their application. Whereas, Western leaders’ promises were just a political chicanery, as Putin exposes that “the promises of Western leaders, their assurances that they were striving for peace in Donbass turned out to be a sham and outright lies.” Linguistically, Putin designs his top of power and authority on positive-negative attribution.

### 5.3.4 The strategies of intensification/mitigation

In war discourse intensifying or mitigating certain actions or actors is a significant persuasive strategy to grasp the attention of the audience for persuasive ends. In this respect, Putin follows the structure of comparison to present many contrastive situations. For instance, he amplifies the nature of the Kiev’s regime as terrorists, ghouls, and neo-Nazis. Describing them with these negative adjectives evoke the emotion of fear for their bad historical background they have, their hands are also stained with blood, “we saw terrorists and neo-Nazis in their ranks.” (line 153). For more example see lines 652-654. On the other hand, the orator mitigates his actors and actions by presenting them as those who use discussion, patient, and negotiation instead of weapon to ensure the safety of their people. One more example of comparison can be outline in “Let me reiterate that they were the ones who started this war, while we used force and are using it to stop the war.” (lines 378-379). Putin summaries strategies of intensification/mitigation by amplifying the Kiev’s war as bloody, and hands are also stained with blood one aims to finish and destroy Russian, and mitigating his war as special military operations, lunching for protective Russians people, and help Ukrainian people. The next two quotations depict the comparative wars respectively:

1. [Our war aims]to protect the people in our historical lands, to ensure the security of our country and to eliminate the threat coming from the neo-Nazi regime that had taken hold in Ukraine after the 2014” (lines 7-10)
2. The Western elite make no secret of their goal, which is, I quote, “Russia’s strategic defeat.” What does this mean to us? This means they plan to finish us once and for all. (lines 181-182)

## 6. Conclusion

The discourse of going to war is one of those complicated discourses wherein political ideologies are fighting for persuasive ends. The main objective of this study is to examine Putin’s “Call to arms” discourse during the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. Then, one of the significant Putin’s speeches delivered during the Presidential address to the Federal Assembly 24/2/2022. Was chosen for analysis. Analytically, the study investigated the strategic tools of persuasive language in Putin’s political discourse with the help of the DHA methodological categories

including, "referential, predication, perspectivization, argumentative strategies (*Topoi*) and the strategies of intensification and mitigation".

In respect to the major findings, the analysis found that **comparison** is the main rhetorical strategies, Putin used to promote his protective war, and to get audiences' support. He employed a comparison style as a scale to highlight the positive and negative actor / actions representations. Linguistically, Putin used attributive language to prove and persuade the national and international communities that his war is a protective not aggressive aims to move the Kiev's regime threat from Russian's borders. One more finding is the rhetorical used of pronouns. In many situations, the orator used 'We' than 'I' wherein I is required. This is not to reduce or weaken his official position President, but to enhance his power and authority as a normal Russian citizen (*pathos*) has a right to defend, fight, and die for his country.

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