

Discourse and language of war: A comparison of the linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed in Russian, United States, and Ukrainian presidential speeches



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ABSTRACT

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In the context of war, political speeches employ emotionally charged language in the form of linguistic devices, in an attempt to persuade the audience and appeal to their emotions. This study examines how the Russia-Ukraine War was presented by Russian President Vladimir Putin, US President Joe Biden, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. This study identifies the linguistic features as well as the rhetorical strategies employed in the three presidential speeches which reflect the power and dominance of the conflicting parties in the Russia-Ukraine war. Therefore, a critical discourse analysis of three presidential speeches on the Russia-Ukraine War was conducted. The study analyzed and compared the use of vocabulary, semantic structure, grammatical devices, and rhetorical strategies used by the three presidents to reveal the extent of language manipulation and ideologies in the context war. The study revealed the power of language in political speeches in three different narratives of the war. The findings of this study indicate that word choice, grammatical structures, and rhetorical devices were employed to evoke public emotions, to reflect power and influence beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies. The study revealed that language manipulation is clearly evident through the use of linguistic strategies such as powerful word choices, pronouns, modals, tenses etc., as well as emotional and logical appeals in the form of rhetorical strategies.

Contribution/ Originality: This study is a critical discourse analysis of how linguistic and rhetorical strategies are used in political speeches in the context of war and reflects upon the power and dominance of the conflicting parties. It analyzes political speeches at the lexical, grammatical and textual level of discourse.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a powerful communication tool for delivering messages and manipulating people's minds. In political contexts, it plays an essential role in demonstrating the struggle for power, revealing ideologies, and reflecting on their implications in other domains. Political actors rely on different linguistic terms, devices, and techniques in their political speeches to communicate and convince other people about their political beliefs and ideologies (Igiri, Awa, Ogayi, & Ngwoke, 2020). Currently, the world's attention is directed toward the tension and conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Through their narratives, political leaders in this conflict seek international support on political, economic, and social levels. Russia has tried to legitimize the attack, seeking support from Russians and Ukrainians. In his speech, Putin declared the purpose of his military operations to "demilitarise

and denazify Ukraine”, and to prevent the West from establishing a foot held in Ukraine, which threatens Russian security. Meanwhile, Ukraine officials sought support from the international community to stop the Russian invasion. The attack on Ukraine for geopolitical reasons is a clear example of regionalization and the reshaping of its regional identity and borders (Brusylovska & Maksymenko, 2023). The consequences of this attack will affect all countries, both in the short and long runs. With most countries, particularly in the West, supporting Ukraine and decrying Russia’s actions against it, presidential speeches are considered a key source of information regarding national viewpoints. Speeches by political leaders reveal their countries’ policies toward Ukraine, and direct nations toward a particular perspective. The power of the media that “influence[s] knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations, social identities” is mainly determined by the language used (Fairclough, 1995). Hence, media discourse, as a form of social practices, reflects speakers’ viewpoints and ideologies and is therefore less likely to objectively represent and report reality (Tian, 2018). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a continuously developing field of language study that uncovers hidden messages behind speech. It addresses the relationships between discourse and social power and particularly provides insight into how the talk of powerful (dominant) groups and institutions presents, reproduces, and legitimizes the abuse of power (Van Dijk, 2003). Abuse of Power involves cognitive control and influences people’s minds by dominating public discourse and talks to indirectly influence their norms, values, attitudes, and ideologies to the advantage of dominant groups. Given media’s significant role in shaping views and changing beliefs, CDA addresses media discourse in its different forms.

1.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) offers a new research perspective within the discourse analysis field, with multi- and diverse theoretical frameworks (Van Dijk, 2001). While researchers have approached CDA in different ways, most agree that it is a multidisciplinary field, regardless of the framework applied. CDA is a social phenomenon that entails multi-disciplinary and multi-methodological procedures (Wodak, 2014). Although all approaches used in CDA differ in their technical descriptions, they center on the principle of moving back and forth between the macroanalysis of institutions, power, and social formation through text constructs, and the microanalysis of these texts based on linguistic, literary, and semiotic analysis (Luke, 2002). They also share certain analytical concepts such as power, ideology, dominance, class, race, discrimination, social structure, and hegemony (Van Dijk, 2001). In other words, they are problem-oriented and shed light on ideologies and power through systematic and intersubjective analyses of written, spoken, or visual data (Wodak, 2014). Power is considered a defining feature of CDA, given that language can be used to signal power, express it, challenge it, and change its distribution in a social hierarchical structure overtime (Wodak, 2011). In CDA, texts show differences in power amongst public speakers. Texts are described to be “sites of struggle” since they indicate different discourses in which power is encoded and ideologies compete for dominance (Wodak, 2011).

A pioneer in the CDA field of research, Fairclough (1995); Fairclough (1989); Fairclough (2001) and Fairclough (2013) stated that discourse is a language of social practice that is process affected and regulated by social structures (Fairclough, 2001). He identified three properties of CDA: relational, dialectical, and transdisciplinary. The relational aspect of CDA deals with social relations and ‘relations between relations. This complex group of relations not only addresses people relations, but also describes the kind of relation between communicative events, such as conversations, with a complex set of discursive objects, such as discourses and languages. In other words, discourse gives meaning to these complex sets of relationships. Fairclough argued that texts in discourse analysis are considered part of the entire process of social interaction, which also involves the analysis of both productive and interpretative analysis processes. The two previous processes dealt with text as a product and a resource.

Discourse analysis deals with ‘how texts work within sociocultural practice,’ since the use of language is a kind of social practice (Fairclough, 1995). This analysis addresses both textual form and structure at all language levels and textual organization, such as argumentation structure and generic structure; this, in turn, means that

ideological and critical analysis may be applied at every level. Fairclough’s critical approach to discourse integrates micro and macro analysis and clarifies the connection between social processes, the properties of texts and relations, including ideology and power. Power and discourse are combined together as parts of each other. In view of this, he shows a link between power, representing hegemony, and discourse practice, representing intertextuality. His framework draws on the concepts of intertextuality (texts before and after), interdiscursivity (discourse and genres in texts), and hegemony (political, ideological, and cultural dominance in a society) (Wang, 2006). Fairclough proposes a conception of ideology within a text that considers different aspects of language of language at different levels, considering ideological relationships with structures and events (Horváth, 2009). The transdisciplinary aspect of the analysis involves different approaches, disciplines, and frameworks. Extra-discoursal structures (including orders of discourse, vocabularies, political and economic structures, and relationships with the country and institutions) shape discourse, which is also responsible for shaping and reshaping structures (Fairclough, 1995). In textual analysis, linguistic analysis and intertextual analysis play a complementary role, with linguistic analysis centered around the selectivity of linguistic systems in a text (including traditional levels of language analysis such as grammar, vocabulary, semantics, and intersentential cohesion and text structure), whereas intertextual analysis pertains to orders of discourse (including discourse, narratives, and genres) (Fairclough, 1992). The intertextual analysis of texts mainly depends on society and history, as resources are accessible within orders of discourse and draws attention to how these resources are transformed within the texts. Fairclough also argues that intertextual analysis bridges the gap and connects language in text and social contexts, mediating his three-dimensional model of discourse analysis. Fairclough presented a multifunctional perspective of texts in which cognition and representation of the world and social interaction concurrently arise. His analytical approach describes three elements of discourse: text (spoken or written), interaction, and the entire context (see Figure 1). Fairclough’s three-dimensional discourse analysis model describes linkages in a discursive event. This discursive event should include three dimensions: spoken or written language (text), social practice, and discourse practice involving the production and interpretation of texts. This analysis was based on three stages: description, interpretation, and explanation. Description is the stage of identifying and categorizing the formal features of the analyzed text. The interpretation stage analyzes the relationship between the text and interpretation or the ‘cognitive processes of participants’ (p. 27). The last stage of explanation addresses the relationship between interaction and social context. Fairclough maintained that his focus is on the political domain (in relation to domination and power) within the social practices facet analysis. In this analysis, social practices and texts are mediated by discourse practice, and the nature of these practices determines and shapes text production and interpretation. The link between language, on the one hand, and social-cultural structures and practices, on the other hand, is described as bi-directional. Language affects the cultural and social contexts in which it is used while being influenced, in turn, by its groundedness within a specific social and cultural practice frame (Horváth, 2009).

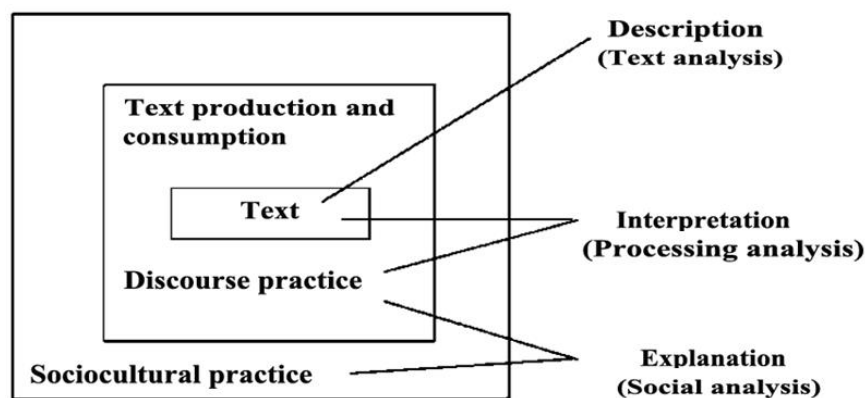


Figure 1. Fairclough (1995) three-dimensional discourse analysis model.

On the contrary, Van Dijk's approach to CDA is framed on selective toolkits that emphasize social and cultural resources and contexts for comprehending and using texts, which are more oriented toward cognition, meaning, and identity (Luke, 2002). Van Dijk (2001) addresses the macro level versus the micro level in his CDA theoretical framework. CDA establishes a connection between the micro level, which includes discourse, language use, communication, and interaction, and the macrolevel of analysis, which deals with dominance, power, and inequality among social group members. Ideological analysis within the framework of critical discourse analysis is a multidisciplinary approach based on the interface between society, discourse, and social cognition (Van Dijk, 1995). Ideologies were conceptualized to connect cognitive representations accounting for discourse and individual interaction (microlevel analysis) with societal position and the formation of social groups (macrolevel analysis) (Van Dijk, 1995). Discourse analysis is described as ideological analysis, given that discourse might establish or emphasize social group attitudes and positions in a broader socio-political context, legitimizing the elites' actions, dominance, and power abuse (Van Dijk, 1995).

1.2. Transitivity

In the Systemic Functional Linguistics model, language is a resource for delivering meaning and constraining experiences (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In other words, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs are revealed through the choice of particular structures and grammar in speech. It is claimed that a grammatical clause represents processes such as doing, sensing, being, having, and saying; and it is a proposition dealing with questioning, requesting, ordering, expressing attitudes, or appraisals (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) argue that transitivity as a grammatical system represents experience through a set of process types, each explaining a particular aspect of the experience. Transitivity is used to analyze texts, and the distribution of its processes is also identified to uncover speakers' motivations behind a particular choice (Wang & Lyu, 2018). Since transitivity reflects experience, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) distinguished between outer experience as actions and events and inner experience as the process of consciousness. The grammar used distinguishes between things that happen in the external world or when people perform actions and the state of replaying, reacting, and reflecting on the outer world.

The process types are material, mental, existential, verbal, relational, and behavioral. From an experiential view, the processes are described as the core of the clause that centers on the events in which the participants engage (Wang & Lyu, 2018). The six processes of transitivity identified by Wang and Lyu (2018) are classified into two main types: processes stress motion, including material, mental, verbal, and behavioral processes, and processes stress states, including relational and existential. The material process deals with doing something or performing physical actions and includes the actor and the goal or receiver participants. The mental process involves presenting thoughts, desires, and feelings in people's minds (inner experience). Verbal processes deal with the exchange of ideas by participants (such as speaker, receiver, and target), and the user typically uses verbs such as talk, say, and tell. The behavioral process includes mental and physical behaviors, and the meaning of the clause identifies these behaviors. The relationship between two entities identifies a relational process. The existential process refers to the presence of an object. Material, relational and mental processes are considered the main types of transitivity in the English system (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

1.3. Rhetoric

As a concept introduced by Aristotle, rhetoric deals with persuading audiences through speech or writing. 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). Others claim that the contemporary view of rhetoric covers "all modes of communication", not restricted to written or spoken language, such as images and

movements (Andrews, 2019). Rhetorical devices used in political speech play a significant role in conveying the intended meaning. These devices, such as the type of argument, repetition, use of pronouns (personal pronouns), and word relations, are deliberately chosen as techniques to employ language to serve the goals and intentions of the speakers. Aristotle's traditional rhetorical classification (identified in literature) includes several categorizations, and the current study addresses the three rhetorical triangles, namely ethos, pathos, and logos, as part of the speech discourse analysis. These subtypes were selected based on the speech type examined in this study.

The persuasive strategies used in the text analysis (identified in Amaireh (2023)) are the ethos (or ethical appeals) that focus on how the selection of words reflects the personality, character, credibility, expertise, intelligence, trustworthiness, and authority of the speaker; the pathos (or emotional appeals) that evoke the audience's feelings and emotions, such as love and fear; and the logos (or logical appeals) that deal with logic and reasoning to confirm the speakers' claims. Logos include a set of argument types that support the speaker's claims and arguments, such as future predictions, parallel cases, dilemma appeals, and arguments from consequences. Concerning ethos, she identified three speakers' stances toward the speakers themselves (reflecting their personalities), the message (dedication to the truth), and the audience.

1.4. Background to the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

The European country of Ukraine was a former constituent republic of the Soviet Union, which gained independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Russian Federation began its invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The start of conflict dates back to the Maidan Uprising wave of demonstrations that happened in Ukraine in 2013 against the president's decision not to proceed with signing the agreement between Ukraine and the European Union for the sake of Russians benefits. Prior to this, in 2008, Ukraine applied for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership. At this time, the NATO allies welcomed Ukraine's membership without declaring a specific chronology for accession. Ukraine's wish to join NATO was a source of conflict between Ukraine and Russia that surpassed their borders (Rubio, 2022), and in 2014, Russian troops annexed four Ukrainian regions. The identity issue of the Russians-Ukrainians and its consequent ongoing events, including the Crimea province's annexation by Russian troops and the Russian movements launched in the Eastern Ukrainian provinces in 2014 to fulfill the Novorossyia (New Russia) project, was the fundamental cause of the current crisis (Kuzio, 2019).

The escalating tension in the relationship between NATO and Russia was another cause of the Russian attack on Ukraine. In 2021 and 2022, this tension has increased, given that Russia has expressed concerns about the NATO deployment of troops in Ukraine and expansion near Russia's borders. On the other hand, NATO representatives requested a halt in Russian troop build-up near Ukrainian borders. The failure of negotiations between the NATO-Russia Council in the January 2022 Brussels summit led to the attack and breakdown of this cooperation. The long-standing relationship between NATO and Russia was associated with mutual mistrust, accusations, enmity, and 'security dilemma' concerns (Bezerra, 2022). The invasion and conflict have not only influenced the disputing countries; the whole world is suffering from its political and economic impacts.

Three presidential speeches were selected for critical discourse analysis to reveal their positions on the attack. The chosen speeches represent the positions of the US (representing the countries supporting Ukraine), Russia, and Ukraine toward this attack. The analysis focused on the speeches' content, language use, and style. The study presents a three-level thorough discourse analysis of the three speeches and sheds light on linguistic strategies employed in the context of war. It further reveals the differences in the degree of employment of rhetorical devices used to convince and manipulate public opinion. The study captures how status and power played a major role in word choices made by the three presidents.

1.5. Studies on the Discourse Analysis of Political Speeches

Previous critical discourse analysis studies of political speeches, given by various leaders and politicians from dominant groups, have examined how values, beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies are constructed through discourse and language choices. These studies have explored these aspects in respect of the models used in each research.

In terms of the analysis of ideology in political speech, [Nasih and Abboud \(2020\)](#) studied the language used in speeches of two Iraqi politicians, Barham Salih (the former president of Iraq) and Ayad Allawi (the former prime minister), was examined to understand how they conveyed their ideologies and beliefs to influence their audience. The study applied Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model of critical discourse analysis, encompassing micro-level and macro-level analysis, along with ideological principles framed under the general principle of 'positive self-presentation' and 'negative other-presentation'. The results revealed that Allawi employed a wider range of discursive structures and expressions in his speeches, including authority, burden, illustrations, and generalization. These elements were used to convey formality and articulate more pronounced ideological view points compared to other politicians.

Moreover, [Abdul Ghani and Hussain \(2021\)](#) studied Biden's victory speech to unveil the ideologies concerning the US vision within global pandemic and socio-political affairs. The study highlighted the national and international responses to his speech. Applying Fairclough's three-dimensional model, this investigation unveiled that deliberate repetition, word choices, and speech structures served to convey ideologies of unity and inclusion. These elements collectively contributed to a positive reception, domestically and internationally.

Political speeches during times of war offer insights into a country's current and future actions and their repercussions for the involved parties. In a study conducted by [Sarfo and Krampa \(2013\)](#), a thorough discourse analysis was undertaken to examine how terrorism was addressed in the political speeches of Bush and Obama. The utilization of emotionally charged expressions and vocabulary in their presidential speeches revealed a positive promotion and legitimization of anti-terrorism, contiguous with negative perceptions of terrorism. Additionally, their speeches incorporated notions such as 'context control', 'power', and 'mind control' to elucidate their beliefs, attitudes and potentially their future actions.

[Ma'arif and Maksun \(2022\)](#) conducted a critical analysis to examine the propagation of Russophobia in Antony Blinken's (Foreign Minister) speech at the UN Security Council in 2022, following the Ukraine invasion. The language employed in the speech constructed negative beliefs and ideologies toward Russia, which was portrayed and discredited as a 'common enemy'. The speech also promoted other ideologies, such as the proactive role of the US positioning itself within the realm of peace initiatives and its commitment to 'security efforts', as well as its disputes with Russia.

Political speeches often convey multifaceted messages about the dominant groups wielding power and control over their constituents. A study by [Alenizi and AbuSa'aleek \(2022\)](#) revealed how identity and significance were represented in a speech delivered by Trump in Saudi Arabia. The choice of sentence structures and vocabulary facilitated his transition between multiple identities he assumed as the President of America, 'defender of American citizens', the guarantor of global safety and security, 'a well-educated and knowledgeable person', and 'a businessman'. These identities were interwoven with discussions pertaining to security, peace, America, terrorism, the region, and Saudi Arabia in the context of his speech.

The purpose of the analysis is to answer the following questions:

1. What are the linguistic and rhetorical strategies, in the context of war, used in speeches of the three presidents?
2. How do these linguistic strategies reflect power and ideology?

2. METHODS

The current study analyzes three speeches delivered by three presidents on February 24, 2022, when Russia attacked Ukraine as a result of the conflict between the two countries. These speeches represent the viewpoints of the countries in conflict and their allies. The speeches selected as primary data for the analysis were those of Russian President Vladimir Putin (posted on Kremlin website), US President Joe Biden (posted on White House page), and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (posted on President's website). The speeches were collected from the official presidential webpage of each country.

For the analysis, Fairclough (1992) critical discourse analysis framework was applied. The analysis involved identifying the linguistic features of each speech, providing interpretation within the social and historical contexts, and revealing the hidden ideology in the language used in each speech.

2.1. Data Analysis

The following section focuses on text analysis in order to answer the research questions of the study. The texts analyzed were three speeches by three presidents regarding the start of the escalation of Russian military forces against Ukraine. The speeches represented the narratives of the disputed countries, namely Russia and Ukraine, on one side, and Ukrainian supporters/ allies representing the West. The analysis revealed their attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies.

2.2. Text Analysis

This section comprises an analysis of vocabulary utilization, lexical relations, synonymous expressions, grammatical structures encompassing sentence types, modals, and pronouns, transitivity, as well as the employment of rhetorical devices in the speeches of the three presidents. The framework of the critical discourse analysis carried out in this study is outlined in Figure 2 below.

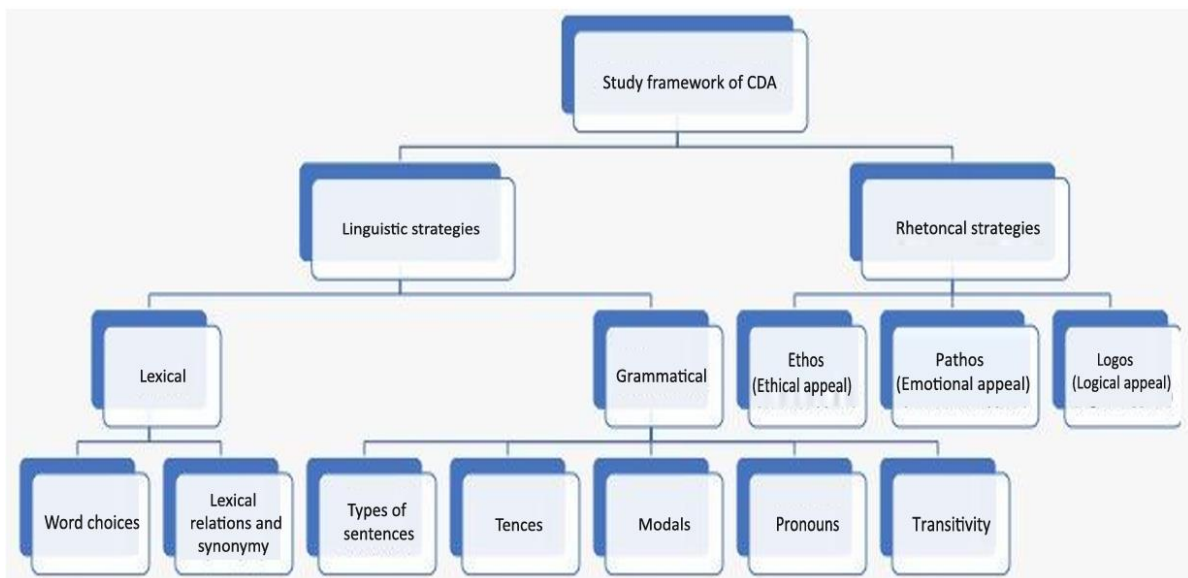


Figure 2. Framework of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) adopted in the study.

2.3. Vocabulary

In text analysis, word choice and frequency reveal themes and main ideas of speech. Even using a particular vocabulary, the speakers' ideologies, attitudes, and authority can be predicted. Regarding the frequency of keywords in Putin's speech, the analysis showed that the most frequent words were: Russia, Ukraine, war, the United States, NATO countries/allies, and military power (or operations) (see Table 1). Other expressions such as power, USSR,

freedom, international law (Or relations), threats were also less frequent than in the first group. Words such as Russian security and borders, weapon, bloody crimes, aggressors, human, and attacks were also included in the speech. Examining Putin's frequently repeated words in his speech reveals his focus, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes. In the beginning, he gave a background on the origin of the problem to prepare the audience for the upcoming event and directed specific statements to Russians, Ukrainian citizens, the Ukrainian Armed forces, and the Russian Armed forces to encourage them, request their support, and justify his decision regarding the attack on Ukraine.

Table 1. Frequency of words mostly used in the speeches.

Word(s)/ Putin	Freq.	Word(s)/Biden	Freq.	Word(s)/Zelenskyy	Freq.
Russia	37	Russia / Russian	32	Russia / Russian	13
Russia- (Motherland/Home/State/Country)	10	-		-	Nil
Russian border	4	-	Nil	-	Nil
Ukrainian border		Ukrainian border	2	Our border	1
Russian security and sovereignty	5	Security/ Mutual security	2	Sovereignty	1
Threat	7	Made-up threat	1		Nil
Russian people	4	-	Nil	Russians	4
Ukrainian people	3	Ukrainian people	4	Ukrainians	5
US politicians/US political scientists/US journalists	3	America/American people/Power/Oil	5	-	Nil
USSR	8	-	Nil	-	Nil
NATO countries	10	NATO countries	16	-	Nil
Power	9	Power	5	Power	1
War	20	War	5	War	5
Bloody crimes/Military	3	Bloody crimes/Military	5	-	Nil
Weapon	5	Weapon	1	-	Nil
US/United States	14	US/United States	11	Us/United States	1
Terrorism	6	-	Nil	-	Nil
US Allies/The West	4	Our allies/NATO Allies/Alliance	16	Our allies/NATO allies/Alliance	1
Ukraine	20	Ukraine	18	Ukraine	8
Empire of lies	3	-	Nil	-	Nil
International law/Relations	7	International law/ Stage	2	International organizations	1
Military power/Infrastructure/Operations	10	Military power/Operations	5	Military power/Operations	1
UN security council's sanction/UN charter	5	UN security council's sanction/UN charter	1	-	Nil
Ukrainian Regime/Junta	4	-	Nil	-	Nil
Nazi/Nazism	6	-	Nil	-	Nil
Freedom	6	Freedom	4	-	Nil
Illegal	2	Illegal	6	Illegal	2
Humiliation	2	-	Nil	-	Nil
Human	4	Human	4	-	Nil
Genocide	2	Genocide	1	-	Nil
Integrity	2	Integrity	1	-	Nil
Morality and ethics	1	-	Nil	-	Nil
Attacks	3	Attacks/Cyber attacks	7	Attack/Attacking	2
Aggression/Aggressor	5	Aggression/Aggressor	6	-	Nil
Ability		Ability	8	-	Nil
Sanctions	2	Sanctions/Our sanctions package/Strong sanctions	3	Sanctions/Our sanctions package/Strong sanctions	2
Putin	Nil	Putin	15	-	Nil
Bully/Bullying	Nil	Bully/Bullying	2	-	Nil
Tyrant	Nil	Tyrant	1	-	Nil
Protect	2	Protect	4	-	Nil
Enemy	2	-	Nil	Enemy	5

The part of the speech addressing Ukrainians and their Armed Forces focused on their intertwined shared history, values, and traditions as a country of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The citizens were separated and distinguished from the Ukrainian regime. Ukraine, as part of the former Soviet Union, is distinguished from Ukraine today in his speech. Biden mentioned Putin by name 15 times in his speech and employed word choices such as tyrant, aggressor and sinister actions to describe Putin as well as powerful verb choices such as “degrade Putin’s ambitions and ability”. He used forceful choices of verbs to threaten Russia’s economy and military such as limit, stunt, impair, cut off, strike a blow, hurt, hit squeeze etc. He referred to Russia 32 times, Ukraine 18 times and NATO Allies 16 times and sanctions 3 times. He further employed word choices such as aggression and aggressor six times. Zelenskyy referred to Russia 13 times and used the word enemy five times in reference to Russia; however, there was no direct reference to Putin throughout his speech but referred to him as Russia’s president and referred to his leadership.

He referred to NATO Allies once and the sanctions twice. Interestingly, both Biden and Zelenskyy employed the word “war” five times each.

2.4. Lexical Relations and Synonymy

Lexical relations in any text connect words and sentences and create cohesion. One of these relationships uses synonymy to avoid repeating words. The three speeches analyzed were characterized by using synonyms to maintain and repeat the same idea (see Table 2).

Table 2. Synonyms used in speeches.

• Putin word choice (Synonyms)	• Biden word choice (Synonyms)
1.Today’s Ukraine / Post-Soviet states	1.Baseless/Outlandish / False claim
2. The dissolution of the USSR/The disintegration of the USSR/ The collapse of the Soviet Union	2. Days ahead/Over time/ Years to come
3. Our people/Citizens	3. Our people/Citizens
4.Today’s Russia/Modern Russia	4. Strike a blow/Degrade ability/ Hurt their ability/Hit/ Squeeze
5. Territories bordering/ Territories adjacent	5. Cut off/ Stopped/ Reduce/Blocking/Stunt
6. a fact/ A reality	6. Penalties/ Sanctions/ Limitations
7. A peaceful conflict settlement/ To settle the situation	7. Provocation/Justification
8. Eight years/Eight endless years	8. No confusion/ No cover up
9. The west/Those who tries to interfere from the outside	9. Limit /Stunt/ Impair/ Reduce/Their ability
10. Stay idle/ Passively observe	10. Affirm/ Strengthen
11. High cost/Tremendous cost	11. Crystal clear/ No doubt
12. International terrorism/ Extremism.	12. Actively working/ Coordinating/ Working closely
13. Deceived us/ Played us	13. Assault /Attack
14. Parrot it/ Imitate its behavior	14. Hurt/ Suffer/Endure
15. Finish us off/ Destroy us	15. Prepare/Take steps/Plan/Map out next steps
16. Treaties/ Agreement	16. Transparent / Clear
17. Russia/Our Motherland/Our fatherland	17. Full/ Total
18. Fake/Sham	18.Ordered/Authorized/Activated
19. Humanitarian catastrophe/Loss of human life	19.Earsed/Extinguished
20. Threat/Peril	20.Tyrant/Sinister actions
21. The West/Western partners/Western colleagues/ The Western bloc	21.Apply/Impose
22. Incredible/ Shocking	22. Protect/Secure
23. The whole World/ The international community	23.Actions/ Moves/Response/Work
24. Rudely/Unceremoniously	• Zelenskyy’s word choice (Synonyms)
25. As I said/ I reiterate	1.Troopers/ Army / Forces/ Paratroopers/ Soldiers
26. They didn’t leave us any other option/ Had no other choice	2. Social media/ Instagram
27. Colleagues/ Compatriots	3. Difficult / Problematic
28. Go home/Return to their families	4. Independent State/Ukrainian State
29. Chemical weapons/ Weapons of mass destruction	5. Rocket explosions/ Roar of aircraft/ Battles
-	6. Russian federation
-	7. Leadership/ President of Russia

This feature of good speech influences the audience. For example, in Putin's speech, there were many synonyms, such as the dissolution of the USSR/the disintegration of the USSR/ the collapse of the Soviet Union. He purposely repeated meanings using different words to emphasize certain ideas. Other words, such as Russia/our Motherland/our Fatherland, were used to stress that the country was no longer part of the Soviet Union, and the current concern was to protect the homeland. Words like 'played us/deceived us' or 'finish us off/ destroy us' were also used to refer to the West's actions toward Russia. This intentional linguistic manipulation of words creates a state of influence on the audience. Using informal words, such as compatriots/ comrade, to address the Russian Armed Forces or the Ukrainian Armed Forces creates closeness and intimacy with them.

Biden's word choices focused on the use of synonyms that imply force such as apply, impose, hit, cut off etc. Biden also employed synonyms of the word "clear" to condemn the actions of Russia and its president, word choices such as crystal clear, no doubt, transparent, etc. Biden frequently employed word choices related to present and future planning and actions such as actively working, coordinating, working closely, prepare, take steps, plan and map out next steps. Zelenskyy was the only president to refer to social media specifically Instagram in an attempt to plea to Russian people and evoke them to act against their president. His word choices were mostly centered on emotional appeal and emphasizing the strength of Ukraine and its people. In terms of word choices to describe war on the ground President Biden employed synonyms with general reference to war such as attack, aggression and war, whereas President Zelenskyy employed specific terms to describe the situation on the ground such as battles, rocket explosions, and roar of aircrafts.

2.5. Grammatical Structures

The types of sentences, modals, and pronouns used in any text contribute to its general meaning and serve the speaker's intentions. The analysis of the speeches in this study addresses the areas of grammar mentioned below.

2.6. Type of Sentences and Modals

The text's use of particular structures or sentences is significant. Each function is in the text, whether the sentence is declarative, imperative, or interrogative (see [Table 3](#)). Looking closely at Putin's speech, we found that most sentences were declarative, and this type was used to give information about something. Putin started talking about the relationship between Russia and the West, the international treaties and agreements, NATO and expansion toward Russian borders, some models of West interference in other regions, Russia and today's Ukraine relations, as well as his decision to start the attack on Ukraine.

Some interrogative statements were also used to raise inquiries about Western interference, as he called it in Russian affairs. These questions direct the audience's attention to the origin of the problem and the proposed solution. Regarding imperative sentences, there are few examples of indirect imperatives or requests for permission. For example, he said, "Let me remind you" or "I urge you". This type of sentence was mainly used when Putin talked about Russia, Ukraine or when he addressed the Ukrainian army.

The interrogative mood was not used by Biden and used by Zelenskyy three times. The declarative mood was heavily used by Biden as in "We have been transparent" whereas scarcely used by Zelenskyy as in "No one will be able to convince or force us". Both Presidents, Biden and Zelenskyy used the imperative mood, however Biden used it more frequently to express emphasis such as "Make no mistake".

Examining the tenses used in speech is important for indicating past, present, and future actions. For example, in Putin's speech, the tense of verbs in most sentences was present or future to show the current situation and the expected future actions toward Ukraine (see [Table 4](#)).

Table 3. Type of sentences.

Mood/Examples	Type
• Putin's speech	
"Let me remind you that the people living in territories ...were not asked how they want to build their lives when the USSR was created or after World War II" /I urge you to refuse to carry out their criminal orders	Imperative
Why is this happening? / What are we to expect?	Interrogative
I believe in this, in our common future/ We always need to be strong.	Declarative
• Biden's speech	
I will do everything in my power to limit the pain the American people are feeling at the gas pump. As I made crystal clear, the United States will defend every inch of NATO territory with the full force of American power. I've authorized the deployment of ground and air forces already stationed Let me also repeat the warning/ Let me say it again Make no mistake	Imperative
Nil	Interrogative
Freedom will prevail/ America stands up to bullies. We stand up for freedom. This is who we are. And Putin's aggression against Ukraine will end up costing Russia dearly — Economically and strategically. We will make sure of that. I know this is hard...../We have been transparent....	Declarative
• Zelenskyy's speech	
Please go out to the squares/Help people, ensure normal life/Help the national defense/ Join the ranks of the armed forces	Imperative
What do we see at this hour/What do we hear today? What can Ukrainians do?	Interrogative
No one will be able to convince or force us	Declarative

The present tense was mainly used to talk about the current threats to Russia's security by the NATO expansion plan through Ukraine and its consequences, which, in turn, would lead to future actions and official responses by attacking Ukraine. For instance, he maintained, "It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory", "We are aware of this", and "We are extremely realistic in our assessment". The future tense represents threats and plans for future action toward Ukraine. The past tense was mainly used to refer to the relationship between Russia as a post-Soviet country and the West and to remind his audience of previous events that might emphasize current events, such as the West's attack on other countries. He described the arrogant, disrespectful, superior West as neglecting other countries' interests, indicating the old tension between Russia and the West. The past tense also provided context and background for current events.

Zelenskyy, on the other hand, relied heavily on using the present simple as well as the 'if conditional sentences' whereas Biden frequently employed the present simple, present perfect, progressive and passive and scarcely employed the if conditional.

Modals contribute to sentence meaning and show speakers' certainty, probability, ability, authority degrees. Modals effectively represent the power of political leaders and influence people's beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes toward their actions (see Table 5). Examining Putin's speech, the most frequently used modal was 'will' which indicates future predictions or actions. "Russia will respond immediately" and "We will achieve the goals" exemplify future actions and promises. The speech was delivered on the first day of the Ukrainian attack. The modal 'can' was also repeated ten times to indicate possibility and not allowed or permitted actions. It was used to warn and threaten the West of its intentions to expand near Russian borders by accepting Ukraine to join NATO.

Table 4. Types of tenses.

Putin/ Grammar	Biden/Grammar	Zelenskyy/Grammar
This should have been done/ All necessary decisions ..have been taken.	This should have been done/ All necessary decisions ..have been taken.	Yes we have losses/ Yes we see that many Russians are shocked
I urge you....	I have authorized..../ I have ordered/I have authorized/ I have also spoken.../	The enemy is pushing out of the occupied Crimea/ The enemy is slowly advancing
It could be...	It will strike./ It will degrade / It will hurt..../It will be a major hit	The Ukrainian army stopped the enemy's attacks
It shouldn't be as dirty as it is now....	we are going to stunt/ We are going to impose/ We are going to impair	Your military has started a war
One should not be modest	One should not be modest	It is very important/ It is up to you/It seems that
We will achieve/ We will not let this happen	We will achieve/ We will not let this happen/ We will keep up/ We will make sure of that/ we will provide	I am in constant contact/If you do not help/If you hear us/If you understand us
I made a decision.../They didn't leave us any other option.	I spoke/ I assured/I ordered/ I said	Enemy paratroopers are blocked/ Reliable defense is built/We emphasize that/ Ukraine offers
Let me remind you/ Let me reiterate	I want to be clear/I know /I will do everything in my power	Everything that Russia has done can now be burned
we are acting to defend ourselves from the threats	they cannot be erased/ They cannot be extinguished	No one will able to convince or force us
It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory.	We are prepared/We stand up for freedom/We are closely monitoring/ We are actively working	
	America stands up /If it did, the consequences for America would be much worse	
	Putin has unleashed/ The Russian military has begun/Vladimir Putin has been planning this /The Russian government has prepared	
	Putin chose this war/ Putin declared war	

Putin uttered, “We cannot stay idle and passively observe these developments”, “Russia cannot feel safe... while facing a permanent threat from...Ukraine”, and “We always need to be strong, but this strength can take on different forms”. As it is known that ‘must’ and ‘have to’ are both the strongest in meaning among other modals, they were used in limited contexts to indicate necessity and obligation in this speech. Modalities can be classified into relational modals (reflecting the degree of authority, such as must, should, may, and shall) and expressive modals (showing the possibility of truth) (Abdul Ghani & Hussain, 2021). As one of the authority modals, “must” showed his authority and power when he asserted that “They must know that Russia will respond immediately”. Another example for threat is in “We have to take bold and immediate action”.

The modal ‘will’ was most frequently used in Biden’s speech for it occurred 33 times whereas 23 times in Putin’s speech and only four times in Zelenskyy’s speech. The modals ‘could’, ‘must’ and ‘have to’ were used only by President Putin and neither President Biden nor Zelenskyy used them.

Table 5. Types of modals.

Modals/Putin	Freq.	Modals/Biden	Freq.	Modals/ Zelenskyy	Freq.
Will	23	Will	33	Will	4
Can	10	Can	5	Can	3
Could	2	Could	Nil	Could	Nil
Should	6	Should	4	Should	1
May	3	May	1	May	Nil
Must	2	Must	Nil	Must	Nil
Have to	3	Have to	Nil	Have to	Nil

2.7. Use of Pronouns

The frequency of particular pronouns in speech is an indicator of meaning. In Putin’s speech, for example, the personal pronoun ‘I’, which generally indicates the authority and power of the speaker, was used 32 times. The repetition of this pronoun indicates Putin’s power as the president of Russia and his dominance over his audience, especially when he stated “I made a decision to carry out a special military operation”. As Table 6 shows, the pronouns ‘we’, ‘our’, ‘us’ were used 48,49, and 18 times, respectively in Putin’s speech, to indicate closeness and intimacy with the audience and refer to joint group work. When Putin addressed Russian citizens to rationalize the attack on Ukraine and seek support to defend Russia’s security, he said “We are acting to defend ourselves from the threat created for us” and “We will achieve the goals we have set”. Other pronouns, such as, ‘they’ and ‘it’ were frequently used in his speech to refer to the West and their actions and positions towards Russia. For example, Putin claimed, “They prefer to avoid speaking about international law”, “They sought to destroy our traditional values”, and “The United States has not changed its position. It does not believe it is necessary to agree with Russia”. There were a few examples of using the pronoun ‘you’ to address Russians or the Ukrainians as one nation, considering their shared values, culture, and histories.

The most frequent pronoun employed by Biden in his speech was the pronoun ‘we’, which was used 46 times whereas Zelenskyy used ‘we’ eight times. Interestingly, both Putin and Zelenskyy employed the pronoun ‘you’ eight times whereas Biden did not use it at all. The most frequent pronoun employed in Zelenskyy’s speech was the pronoun “our” 14 times. The pronoun ‘It/s’ was the most frequent pronoun employed by Putin which was used 64 times, whereas used 15 times in Biden’s speech and nine times in Zelenskyy’s speech. The pronoun ‘They’ was employed 26 times in Putin’s speech, whereas 11 times in Biden’s speech and three times in Zelenskyy’s speech.

Table 6 below presents the frequency of use in pronouns across the three speeches.

Table 6. Types of pronouns.

Pronouns/Putin	Freq.	Pronouns /Biden	Freq.	Pronouns/Zelenskyy	Freq.
I	32	I	14	I	3
We	48	We	46	We	8
Our	49	Our	32	Our	14
Us	18	Us	Nil	Us	5
They	26	They	11	They	3
My	4	My	2	My	Nil
Your	7	Your	Nil	Your	4
He	Nil	He (Putin)	4	He (Putin)	Nil
It/Its	64	It/Its	15	It/Its	9
Them/Themselves	7	Them	1	Them	2
You	8	-	Nil	You	8

2.8. Transitivity

Transitivity and its processes contribute to the meaning of sentences or structures, especially in speech, given that they reveal the characters of speakers and shed light on their beliefs, experiences, attitudes, and ideologies. Transitivity in speech through the structures and selectivity of words reveals the speaker’s experience in the real world and their inner world. The three analyzed speeches revealed how transitivity and its processes were employed to deliver their intended meanings. Putin’s speech identifies material, relational, mental, existential, and verbal processes. The material displayed his power and authority, considering that this type had actors and goals. Sentences like “We will achieve the goal”, “The purpose of this operation is to protect people”, and “We have been hearing an increasing number of statements coming from the West” are clear examples of the material process that show the actions and responsibilities of the president of Russia and his people toward their country.

In contrast, the mental process deals with the speaker’s thoughts, feelings, and desires and can be subjective. Putin directly expressed his beliefs and feelings toward his country and Ukraine, considering their shared history,

and toward the West, who considered Russia their enemy. The relational process addresses the attributes and the relationship between things in “the future of Russia is in the hands of its multi-ethnic people” and “it is our strength and our readiness to fight ...for building a reliable future for your home, your family, and your Motherland”. The speech highlighted issues regarding NATO expansion, Russian security, the irresponsible West and Russians’ interests, illegal military operations in other regions of the World, the Ukrainians and their regime, and plans to attack Ukraine. The other processes namely the existential and verbal were also found but in limited contexts to either to indicate the existence of a threat as in “It is not only a very real threat to our interests but to the very existence of our state,” or to state or convey information, as in “I spoke about our biggest concerns and worries”. However, there was no evidence of quotations taken from other people’s words.

Table 7. Types of processes.

Examples of process	Type
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putin’s speech 	
We will achieve the goal/I hope my words will be heard.	Material
We will not make this mistake the second time/ We see a tremendous loss in human life	Mental
I will explain what this means/ What I am saying now does not concern	Verbal
We will seek to demilitarize and denazify/The future of Russia is in the hands of its multi-ethnic people.	Relational
It is not only a very real threat to our interests but to the very existence of our state/Russia cannot feel safe, develop, and exist while facing a permanent threat	Existential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biden’s speech 	
Us and every NATO Ally will meet our commitments	Material
We will limit their ability/We have cut off Russia’s largest bank/ We will defend every inch of NATO Territory	
We stand up for freedom/ It is unfolding as we predicted/ The entire world sees clearly what Putin and his Kremlin are all about/ Let me say this again	Mental
Article 5 which says that an attack on one is an attack on all/ History has shown time and time again how swift gains eventually give way to grinding occupations.	Verbal
This is who we are. /This is critical to me/We will keep this drumbeat of those designation against corrupt billionaires.	Relational
There is no doubt/And the good news is/Putin chose this war	Existential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zelenskyy’s speech 	
Ukraine offers to return to peace/Russians are already calling on social media	Material
Everyone should take care of their loved ones/ It is up to you and all of us	Mental
No one will be able to convince us or force us to give up our freedom	Verbal
This can be called an operational pause/They are reliable, they are our men/ The war in our state/ We are Ukrainians	Relational
Yes, we, unfortunately have losses, losses of our heroes. / We see it/ You are Russian; your military has started a war.	Existential

The number of sentences used in the material process of Biden’s speech is relatively larger than those used in Zelenskyy’s speech. For example, he said, “We will defend every inch of NATO Territory.” This example from Biden’s speech shows that Biden is trying through determination to gain the confidence of the audience. Both Presidents Biden and Zelenskyy used sentences in the mental process. Zelenskyy for example depicted the thoughts of the audience by saying “it is up to you and all of us” and Biden by saying “the entire world sees clearly what Putin and his Kremlin are all about.” Biden employed frequently verb forms that belong to the verbal process such as “let me say this again. Zelenskyy also used verbs that belong to the verbal process such as “Glory to Ukraine!” Table 7 shows examples on the types of processes employed in the three speeches.

2.9. Rhetorical Devices

Concerning ethos, Putin’s speech reflected his personality, character, and authority as having sound judgment, a thoughtful leader who makes decisions to protect his people, and showed a sense of responsibility toward his

people. The frequent use of the pronouns 'I' and 'we' aimed to create integrity and harmony with his supporters (mainly Russian and Ukrainian citizens). However, the pronoun 'we' was used more often than the pronoun 'I'. For example, he stated, "We all know that having justice and truth on our side is what makes us truly strong", and "We are acting to defend ourselves from the threats created for us". He wanted to gain the audience's support regardless of the consequences of this decision. Putin claims that the attack on Ukraine was for his people's security, life, traditions, and values. He claims the current attack is also for the benefit of the Ukrainian people to make their free choice and get rid of the present regime, who plunder and humiliate the people. At the end of his speech, he addressed Russian citizens, Ukrainian and the Russian Armed Forces to justify his actions and gain their support as partners in these actions. He used words such as comrade, dear compatriot, devoted soldiers and officers, your home, your Motherland, and our common future.

Biden, as one of the most powerful world leaders, appeals ethically to the audience by relying heavily in his speech on the use of the pronouns 'I' and 'We'. In his speech he appeals to the American public, the Ukrainian people and the world at large. He needed to establish his credibility and gain the trust of the American people to ease their suffering from a rise in oil prices at the pump due to the War. For example, he tries to show compassion toward the American public by stating, "I know this is hard and that the Americans are already hurting". He also repeatedly used the pronoun we to express power and gain trust to proceed with his actions, for example, he mentions the measures taken so far by stating, "we have cut off Russia's largest bank" and future actions such as "we will limit their ability". Biden also employed lexical items that reveal ethical appeal such as 'partners' and 'allies' to give assurance that his orders are credible and come with coordination with other partner countries.

However, Zelenskyy holds a vulnerable position among the three leaders as his country is under attack and apparently, he was the least among presidents in the employment of the pronouns 'I' and 'we' which could be due to his relatively short speech when compared to Putin's and Biden's speeches. The ethical appeal seems evident in his speech in statements such as "we are Ukrainians" and "we are on our land", it is clear that he is eager to prove his credibility and claim rightful protest against Russia's actions. He extends his ethical appeal in using the pronoun 'I' in statements such as "I spoke today with many leaders" and "I am in constant contact with leaders" in an attempt to gain the trust of his people and strengthen his position in defending his country. He further employed ethos in the form of lexical items such as "help people" and "ensure normal life" in an attempt to reach out to politicians and journalists to defend democracy and freedom.

Regarding pathos, Putin's speech was characterized by an emotional appeal from the beginning. By manipulating appeals, he tried to evoke feelings and emotions to convince his audience and justify his actions toward Ukraine. He started his speech by blaming NATO countries representing the West for their intention to expand power towards Russian security, regardless of their repeated protests and concerns. The words used to describe the West are 'arrogant' and 'irresponsible', forcing their disdainful desires toward others. He stated, "We saw a state of euphoria created by the feeling of absolute superiority...coupled with the low cultural standards", and "Those who refuse to comply are subjected to strong-arm tactics". He then addressed illegal military operations organized by the West in other countries, such as Libya and Syria. His later actions justified his manipulation of words to describe the West's operations and missions against certain countries. For instance, he asserted, "The illegal use of military power against Libya...ruined the state...pushed the country towards a humanitarian catastrophe". Later, Putin tried to gain support by stirring their belonging to the country's emotions. He repeatedly asserted that he was forced to take these actions toward the Ukrainian regime, not the people. For example, he said, "We had to stop that atrocity, that genocide of the millions of people who live there and who pinned their hopes on Russia, on all of us," referring to Donbass people's republics in Ukraine.

In terms of pathos, Biden appeals emotionally to the audience's feelings and evokes their feelings of anger and pity from the beginning of his speech by stating that "The Russian military has begun a brutal assault on the people of Ukraine without provocation, without justification, without necessity" and further used powerful words to

stimulate the audience as he described Putin as an “aggressor” and a “Tyrant” who “rejected every good-faith efforts”. His word choice throughout the speech shows clear manipulation in refuting Russia’s claims as he asserted that “we saw a staged political theater in Moscow” and used phrases such as Russian “outlandish and baseless claims”. Biden further clearly attempts to evoke the feelings of the American people to justify the US involvement through using phrases such as “America stands up to bullies” and “we stand up for freedom”. The closing statements in Biden’s speech are clear manipulation to emphasize his credibility and strengthen his position by employing words such as “liberty”, “democracy” and “human dignity” and to stir empathy he further draws the comparison between “democracy and autocracy” and between “sovereignty and subjugation” and closes with the emphasis that “freedom will prevail”.

Zelenskyy on the other hand, emotionally appealed from the opening statement of his speech as he tried to stir the audience’s emotions with the question “what do we hear today?”. He then tries to up lift the spirits of the Ukrainian people and stimulate optimism and courage by stating that “the Ukrainian army stopped the enemy’s attack” and by asserting that “our armed forces are doing great”. He further emotionally appeals for sympathy and sadness by asserting that “we unfortunately have losses, losses of our heroes”. Zelenskyy further stirs and evokes the emotions of Russians in an appeal to have them act against their government by asking them to “speak on Red Square or somewhere else on the streets”. He further declares bluntly that “No one will convince or force us, Ukrainians, to give up our freedom, our independence, our sovereignty” in an attempt to appeal to the audience for compassion, pity and sympathy. Clearly, in his closing statement Zelenskyy appeals emotionally to politicians and community leaders and journalists to do their duty to defend their country.

Putin’s logical appeal was based on using logic and reasoning to support his argument. He used different techniques to convince his supporters and perhaps opponents. He, for example, applied the maximization-minimization type of argument when he set a comparison between his action to defend Russia by stating “Russia cannot feel safe, develop, and exist while facing a permanent threat from the territory of today’s Ukraine” and the actions of United States in some regions of the World by stating “the United States brought its law...this created bloody, non-healing wounds and the curse of international terrorism”. Another type of argument employed in the speech is the dilemma appeal technique, which focuses on the problem and the solution. Putin for example, addressed Ukrainian people and military forces and urged them to defend Russia from direct threats targeting them by the NATO and Ukrainian regimes. His appeal to the Ukrainian Armed Forces was that “You swore the oath of allegiance to the Ukrainian people and not to the junta” and “I urge to refuse to carry out their criminal orders” He further asks them “to immediately lay down arms and go home.” Another aspect of argument used by Putin was implying power and force by threatening those who interfere and threaten Russian security. In this respect, he clearly said, “No matter who tries ...to create threats for our country, our people, they must know that Russia will respond immediately”. In addition, Putin tended to raise questions in his speech in an attempt manipulate peoples attitude and justify his actions. He asked questions such as “What is the explanation for this contemptuous and disdainful attitude to our interests and absolutely legitimate demands?” and “How can we respond to that?” in which all require a response and solution. It appears from the results that Putin used different arguments to deliver messages to his audience.

Biden employed logic and reasoning throughout his speech in an attempt to appeal logically to both the American people and the international community at large. He employs word choices throughout his speech in the form of predictions of the results that will be reached from the actions taken against Russia such as “It will degrade their ability”, and “it will be a major hit to Putin’s long-term strategic ambitions”. He also employs statistics and facts as a device of reasoning such as mentioning the number of troops (175, 000) that Putin moved in attempt to prove that Putin has been “planning this for months”. Biden provides numbers in his speech as proof to strengthen his argument. In an attempt to appeal logically to the audience on that the US will not engage in the conflict, he states that “although we provided over \$650 million in defensive assistance to Ukraine...our forces are not and will

not be engaged in the conflict". The other technique Biden employed is the maximization-minimization type of argument through drawing the attention of the American Public to his sympathy towards their current suffering at the "gas pump". At the same time, he maximizes his argument to steer them toward approving his actions by stating "this aggression cannot be unanswered. If it did, the consequences for America would be much worse". Dilemma appeal as a technique is also employed by Biden. Biden tends to provide the problem and the solution in his argument as in "Putin's actions betray his sinister vision for the future of the world" and then he gives the solution that the "The United States and our Allies and partners will emerge from this stronger, more united, more determined, and more peaceful". Throughout Biden's speech there are instances where he logically threatens Russia by asserting that "If Russia pursues cyber-attacks against our companies or our critical infrastructure, we are prepared to respond".

Logical appeal was clearly evident in Zelenskyy's speech. He employs the dilemma appeal in the form of presenting the problem and the solution as a logical technique as in his statement "Ukraine did not choose the path of war. But Ukraine offers to return to peace". The maximization-minimization technique was evident in Zelenskyy's speech as a form of logical appeal stating that they have losses but they also have captured Russian soldiers and destroyed many Russian aircraft. Zelenskyy further employs mentioning facts as a technique of logical reasoning to appeal to Russians to convince them of the wrong doing of their leadership. For example, he states simply in the form of an analogy, "We are Ukrainians. We are on our land. You are Russians. Now your military has started a war". Zelenskyy concludes his speech by unleashing the prominent alarming logical threat to international leaders "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".

3. DISCUSSION

Discourse analysis of any text sheds light on the message the speakers aim to deliver, revealing their thoughts, beliefs, interests, and ideology to their audience and how they interpret and understand them. In agreement with Horváth (2009), ideology presented in political speeches resides in texts where the ideological point of view can be identified when the texts are analyzed. The speeches were thoroughly examined and analyzed. The three speeches represent the dominant group voices of the disputing parties that influence or shape public views and augment conflicts. Fairclough shows the link between power and discourse as an interrelated area. In this study, the power and authority of each speaker was recognized. They focused on the same issue, representing different perspectives and powers in different contexts. Putin's speech was not only a justification of the attack on Ukraine as a security issue, but also a direct threat to the West in general and NATO, particularly for expansion near Russian borders. It seems that Russia was not satisfied with losing control over Ukraine and Ukraine becoming an ally to the West, which was considered a real threat to Putin's ambition of a new Russia (or 'Novorosyia' in Kuzio (2019)) bringing Ukraine back under his control. He clearly distinguished between Ukraine as the former territory of the Soviet Union and today's Ukraine, as he named it, to spell out his dissatisfaction with the current regime. Zelenskyy's speech was almost an urge and appeal for Ukrainian people to stand with their armed forces to defend their country against this 'operational pause', for Russians to stand against their president to stop his war on Ukraine, and for the West as friends to support Ukrainians and interfere with stopping the Russian invasion and defending democracy. The speech did not threaten Putin's actions but promised to stand with his people to defend their land. In contrast, Biden's speech, representing the West's allies' standpoint, condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine as a brutal assault and promised Russia would face the consequences of their war choice. The US and its allies' sanctions and actions taken against Russia supported democracy and freedom in Ukraine.

Fairclough maintained that discourse is a social practice. In society, discourse has meaning, and it is through discourse that the relationships between participants are revealed (Abdul Ghani & Hussain, 2021). Placing text or speech within a context can also help understand and interpret it. Accordingly, it becomes meaningful. As Abdul

Ghani and Hussain (2021) pointed out, analyzing discourse also reveals speakers' cultural and political identities and social class. The speeches as a discourse revealed much about the type of relationship between the disputing dominant groups. The strong language of accusation and warnings indicated tension, hostility and a gradual deterioration of the relationship between Russia, the West, and Ukraine. Biden described Putin as an aggressor who chose war and gave a false justification despite Biden's frequent warnings of Putin's intention of war. Zelenskyy warned the West that if they did not help Ukraine today, the war would knock on their doors tomorrow. In contrast, Putin disagreed with the US, responsible for forming the Western bloc or "empire of lies", as he called it, that targeted Russia. Despite his opposition to the US, he still admits that the US is "A great country and a system-forming power". However, his speech directly threatened the West's response to their standpoint against Russia and repeatedly accused the West of intentionally imposing force on other countries to comply with their interests and punishing those who refused to obey by using power. The speeches indicate the prolonged tension in the relationship between Russia, the West, and Ukraine.

Referring to the past is a technique used to persuade the public by connecting past events with current and future events. This issue was obvious when Putin repeatedly referred to the Soviet Union and its collapse and how this led to the World division. He also reminded the Ukrainian people of their shared history and interests, separating them from their regimes and urging them to stand against them. Appeals to logic and reason throughout the three speeches aimed to convince the audience of their coming actions. Employing logos in political speech is a distinctive feature that guarantees control over minorities or less powerful groups and alters beliefs in the general favor of the dominant groups. For example, the maximization-minimization technique was evident in the three speeches. Biden used this technique to gain the trust of the American people to justify his actions to justify the indirect involvement of the US in the war and characterize his actions as credible. He also relied on the 'statistics and facts' technique when he mentioned the number of Russian troops participating in the attack, indicating that Russia's decision to invade Ukraine was premeditated. Putin applied the maximization-minimization argument by comparing his military actions to defend Russia and the United States' military actions in some world regions. Putin aimed to legitimize his military operation in Ukraine and prepare the international community to accept the circumstances by encouraging them to consider the West's previous illegal actions that the international community permitted and legalized. For Zelenskyy, the technique was used to comfort and stimulate the courage of Ukrainians, regardless of their losses, to capture Russian soldiers and destroy Russian aircraft as well as the argument he presented to his allies that they will be next if they do not help Ukraine.

One common feature of the three speeches was that they ended with a particular speech addressed to people or citizens in their countries and other groups. Addressing the public is a persuasive technique that grants speakers full support for their actions, creates a state of intimacy, and evokes emotions as partners and team members. Biden ended his speech with blessings to protect the American troops and Ukrainian people. Zelenskyy addressed Russians and appealed to them to go out and protest against their president, and addressed the Ukrainian people asking for their help to join the ranks of the armed forces and territorial units and volunteer to help the medical system. In Putin's case, his speech ended with particular words directed at Russians and Ukrainians, asking for their support in this war; reminding them of their shared history, values and declaring the intentions of freeing Ukrainians "who pinned their hopes on Russia" from the current regime. Putin also addressed the Russian Armed Forces, requesting their support and encouraging them to defend their country, while his speech was also directed toward the Ukrainian Armed Forces urging them to retreat from this war and stand against their regime.

Language manipulation by political speakers as the authoritative power and dominant group serves to clarify their opinions and publicize their perceptions and attitudes toward influencing people's minds and emotions (Rozina & Karapetjana, 2009). The frequency of certain expressions or specific vocabulary or structures in political speech, such as pronouns, word choice, modals, and sentence types, are purposely employed to reveal political speakers' beliefs and ideologies and rationalize their future intentions and actions. The frequency and selection of specific

words in Putin's speech were intentionally used to announce and justify his plans to attack Ukraine. Russia, Ukraine, war, military operations and the NATO were frequently mentioned in his speech to reveal his intentions in the coming stage and lash out his threats to Ukraine and the West. Biden frequently used words such as Putin, Russia, Ukraine, NATO, and sanctions, as well as tyrant, aggressor, and sinister actions to describe Putin and Russia's military operations. Biden's choice of verbs such as "limit", "and "degrade" indicated massive sanctions against Russia in response to their attacks on Ukraine. In contrast, Zelenskyy's speech used fewer repeated words. Zelenskyy referred to "Russia", "the enemy", and "war", with no direct mention of Putin. Instead, he referred to Russia's president. His speech was less directly threatening toward Russia, relying more on the responses of allied countries and friends. Language use in political speech shapes the context in which it is used. The repetition of the modal 'will' (mainly in Putin's and Biden's speeches) or some pronouns 'I', 'we', 'our' shows seriousness in the decisions made and indicates dominance and power. The repetition of the pronouns 'we' and 'us' in the three presidential addresses to their people was intended to engender a sense of camaraderie in the nation's military decisions and actions. Political leaders employ plural pronouns in political speeches to make the audience feel importantly involved as partners, regardless of their passive role in reality, to legitimize the government's political decisions.

Closely examining the world's reactions to Putin's speech and the announced intentions of a full-scale attack on Ukraine, his decisions and intentions were widely condemned and questioned and were considered defiant. Russia's intention to recalibrate Ukraine within the Russian sphere of influence was the prevalent general global perspective on Russia's attack or invasion (as some call it). In the Guardian's UK edition, he was described as a "tyrant" who is ready to kill citizens and rob his people to fulfill his crazy "imperialist dream," and the invasion was described as "unprovoked outrage" that flouts international laws. In the Washington Post newspaper, Putin's attack on Ukraine was considered the largest security threat since the Second World War in Europe, in which Russia has been exposed to a significant risk to satisfy his "sweeping ambition" of healing the Ukrainian regime. However, the West announced continued support for Ukraine as part of Europe, considering the threat was also directed at the West. Others believe that the war initiated by Russia was somewhat between the 'West and the Rest' as portrayed in the Pakistani media (although Russia was not supported in their media) and that the West, as a Ukrainian friend, was responsible for Russia's attack as it did not defend Ukraine nor prevent this attack (Tarique & Shaheen, 2023). China chose to remain neutral by refusing the word 'invasion' to refer to Russians' actions in Ukraine and requesting all disputed sides to show self-control (Aljazeera news).

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined how the Russia-Ukraine War was presented in three presidential speeches by conflicting parties: Russian President Putin, US President Biden, and Ukrainian President Zelenskyy. The focus of the study was to closely examine how the manipulation and choice of vocabulary, grammar, phrasing, semantic structure, and rhetorical devices in each speech served to convey speakers' beliefs, attitudes and ideologies about the war to their audience. Language in political speeches effectively reveals a speaker's personality, character, and power. The whole world was attentively waiting for the official statement of the participating parties in the war at the beginning of Russia's escalation in Ukraine. The statements revealed much about the development of military actions in the conflict. Putin's speech revealed power and dominance, and he tried to legitimize the war from the beginning of his speech. He threatened NATO allies and the Ukrainian regime. Biden's speech, representing the views of the West and NATO allies, also reflected power and a promise to take serious actions, including economic sanctions against Russia. His speech also appealed to logic to gain American trust and show compassion for the negative impact of rising oil prices due to the war. In contrast, Zelenskyy's speech revealed a relatively vulnerable position. Each president tried to establish their credibility and justify their actions by relying heavily first on the support of their

citizens and second on the international community. The three presidents through word choices and grammatical devices also tried to evoke emotions to gain support and influence their audience's beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies.

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