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RUSSIAN INFLUENCE STRATEGIES IN TURKISH MEDIA AND THE MEANS OF RESISTING THEM

B a c k g r o u n d . *Russia strives to create a negative image of Ukraine within Turkiye using Turkish media sphere amidst the Russo-Ukrainian war. The Russian influence on the Turkish media sphere was researched by Gölcü, Nurlanova, Samet, Baykal and Durmuş. However, the narrow set of data was not sufficient to produce strategies to resist Russian propaganda about Ukraine in Turkiye. Objectives. We aimed at identifying means of influence that Russian propaganda uses to persuade the Turkish population to perceive Ukraine negatively and to find ways of countering them.*

M e t h o d s . *In this work, we use corpus, discourse and content analysis to establish both quantitative and qualitative understanding of the problem. In this research we implemented corpus analysis to involve the use of computer-assisted techniques to investigate large amounts of textual data of a written language, discourse analysis for identifying ideology and propaganda in media and content analysis for reducing the possibility of the influence of prejudice on the results*

R e s u l t s . *We found that not only pro-Russian media outlets we studied (Sputnik, Aydınlık) were spreading Russian rhetoric, but also neutral websites (Sabah, CNNTürk) were creating a platform for messages which undermine trust in Ukraine and its government. Lexemes like "regime", "nazis" and "drug addicts", emotionally charged phrases and euphimisation apply suggestive influence to create a negative perception of Ukraine in consciousness of the population of Turkiye.*

C o n c l u s l o n s . *Based on the results, we suggest means of multitopical positive storytelling as the main strategy of resisting Russian propaganda in Turkiye for Ukraine. The further studies in this sphere should consider analyzing the response of Turks to the proposed methods of resistance and develop positive storytelling keywords to the topics we recommended.*

K e y w o r d s *: media linguistics, corpus analysis, Turkish media, Russian propaganda, Russo-Ukrainian war.*

Background

Media has become ubiquitous, being a part of nearly every person's daily life. Therefore the language of media is gradually becoming a more frequently used resource of studies. It allows researchers to access big amounts of relevant and contemporary samples of language that reflects people's ideas and the global circumstances. The Russo-Ukrainian war is still a part of every countries agenda and for a good reason, thus influencing the way other countries perceive Ukraine is actively used by Russia as a part of their hybrid war strategy.

The Republic of Turkiye is one of many countries where Russian narratives and efforts of generating a backlash against Ukraine play a considerable role in public opinion. Consequently researching the means of Russian propaganda in Turkiye of 2022–2024 is of high **relevance**. Diverse types of media produced by the pro-Russian media outlets in Turkiye and anti-American narratives expedite the creation of a negative image of Ukraine and impact the policies and economic decisions implemented within the country. The **aim** of this research is to assess the way Russian hybrid warfare against Ukraine is used in the media sphere of Turkiye and to find ways of countering them.

Literature review. The roots of media linguistics are traced back to the end of the 19th century when an article regarding the content of the newspapers in New York was published by Speed in 1893 (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 5). The evolution of the media and quicker access to information with the invention of the Internet stimulated scholars to realize the need of studying mass media more actively than before. The new flow of information through media was so overwhelming that a new sociological concept "information society" emerged in 1980's (Grynyuk, 2022, p. 99). The notion of information society was described by Webster (Webster, 2014, p. 7) through five major perspectives (technological, economic, occupational, spatial and cultural). In Ukraine the shift in the relation between society and media was not ignored by linguists and laid the basis for a new discipline – media linguistics (Shevchenko, Syzonov, 2021, p. 28*)*. In the United States the language of media, specifically social media, is a topic which interests not only linguists, but also psychologists and sociologists. The psychological approach of analyzing social media posts demonstrated in the work *Gaining insights from social media language: Methodologies and challenges* of Kern et al. (Kern et al., 2016) aims to identifying emotional charge of the messages which were posted on Facebook. The work *Researching language and social : A student guide* by Page et al. (Page et al., 2022) *media*gives a structured introduction to the linguistic analysis of social media. In this research authors state that currently social media pose a high interest for scholars, but are often neglected by them. European media studies of last years are heavily influenced by the works of Dijk who developed a critical discourse analysis approach (van Dijk, 2021), which is partly used in this research. The above researches show us how dominant groups use discourse to reproduce power and control, often at the expense of marginalized groups.

In Ukraine early works in this sphere were published by Oleksandr Potapenko who analyzed media-discourse of the English language. His recent works highlight the rhetorical techniques President Zelensky's speeches incorporate. He argues that utilizing different messages Zelensky's speeches successfully target different audience (Potapenko, 2024, p. 45). The media linguistic approach to the Ukrainian media was developed by Larysa Shevchenko. She introduced media linguistics to the Ukrainian academia which resulted in numerous papers on theoretical fundamentals, dictionaries

and textbooks. Dmytro Syzonov also contributed to understanding the notion of media text and media discourse and worked together with Shevchenko on compiling the media discourse dictionaries. According to Shevchenko and Syzonov media-discourse is a kind of discourse which is used to inform the audience about any occurrence through various media channels (Shevchenko, & Syzonov, 2021, p. 22).

In Turkiye the study of media linguistics is not developed significantly. However, there are scholars who analyze the language of media discourse within a specific topic. Hakan Alp identified the means of spreading the hate speech against the Romani people in media and the tendency of using the word "çingene" (gypsy) in the negative way through the discourse analysis of Ekşi Sözlük, which is a popular Turkish forum (Alp, 2016, p. 160). His other works focus on the hate speech use and transition of mass media from the paper format to the digital one. The other researcher Banu Baybars together with Murat Akser contributed to analyzing propaganda and censorship in Turkish media. They conclude that Turkish media has a high level of oppression of the political opposition media (Akser, & Baybars, 2023, p. 172) and uses disinformation to support the superiority of the governing political power (Akser, & Baybars-Hawks, 2024, p. 12). Abdülkadir Gölcü predominantly focuses on analyzing disinformation and media discourse, which resulted in numerous works valuable from the media linguistic standpoint. One of his researches studied the publications of *Sputnik* media outlet, which is a pro-Russian media, in Turkish. The set of texts included news articles published within February 18th and May 28th 2022 time-frame. Despite the limited corpus of texts the researchers were able to classify some manipulation techniques used by the platform: misleading conclusions derived from real facts, manipulation with facts by highlighting negative actions of "their" (Ukrainians) and soften "our" (Russian) ones through lexical devices, storytelling, titles and biased experts and witnesses (Gölcü, & Nurlanova, 2022, pp. 243–246). These results were important for realizing the problem of the influence Russian propaganda creates on Turkish-speaking population. Some other Turkish scholars also conducted analysis of media texts which were published in Turkish about Ukraine, but the amount of data they analyzed was not sufficient to make general conclusions. One research aimed at studying the news reports of the Voice of America and *Sputnik* media outlets, but the scope of 5 articles from each media limits the conclusions to stating the fact that articles of both media depict the same fact from opposite perspectives and that both media are used as propaganda tools (Samet, & Baykal, 2023, p. 372). Another research was focused on analyzing Twitter posts of Ukrainian and Russian embassies in Turkiye and as the result of examining 113 tweets of the Russian Embassy and 346 tweets of the Ukrainian Embassy it is stated that embassies have different view on the occurring events, use different lexemes to describe them. It is also clear that the Ukrainian Embassy was more active in the social media than the Russian one (Durmuş, 2023, p. 65). The limited amount of analyzed content is an obstacle to making fundamental conclusions about the media coverage of the Russo-Ukrainian war in Turkish. In this research a three year worth amount of data was analyzed to understand the current state of the Turkish media sphere in terms of influence of the Russian propaganda.

Suggestive linguistics, which is closely entwined with media linguistics as one of the most common fields for implication of it, studies how language influences people's behavior, with Orwell (Orwell, 1946) and Chomsky (Chomsky, 1988) often seen as its main founders. Orwell showed how euphemization was used in the British press, while Chomsky's propaganda model explained the main ways media can shape public opinion. In Ukraine, this field is more clearly defined, with a strong focus on the media as a tool of suggestion. The works of Kompantseva (Petryk et al., 2023) and Nakonechna (Nakonechna, 2023) were especially important for our research, as their classifications of suggestive devices helped us analyze Russian hybrid warfare narratives.

Methods

The diversity of approaches used by linguists when researching the language and implications of media often is shared with one of sociology which is a sign of media linguistics being situated closely to sociolinguistics, cognitive and psycholinguistics (van Dijk, 2002, p. 108). Among methods scholars used in this field Syzonov (Syzonov, 2015, p. 56) highlights content analysis and discourse analysis. In order to provide sufficient data for these two methods we also used the method of corpus analysis which was the primary one for this research. The combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis in this research allowed us to analyze data avoiding bias.

In this research we implemented corpus analysis to involve the use of computer-assisted techniques to investigate large amounts of textual data of a written language, known as corpora. Though traditionally seen as a methodological tool rather than a theoretical framework, corpus analysis increasingly complements qualitative approaches like discourse analysis and content analysis enabling empirical exploration of different phenomena in language. (Vaughan, & O'Keeffe, 2015). We used it to identify patterns through the frequency of the linguistic features of propaganda.

To create the corpus we identified the most visited websites of Turkish media of various political orientations using the website www.similarweb.com, which acquired different statistical data about numerous websites on the Internet. The balance of the attitude towards Ukraine was preserved by selecting 4 popular websites, 2 of which are clearly pro-Russian (the percentage of websites' share of the total traffic of Turkiye is in parentheses) *Sputnik* (0.59 %), *Aydınlık* (0.32 %) and 2 which remain neutral *CNNTürk* (1.03 %), *Sabah* (3.4 %). Although the percentage of traffic share looks very low, the actual place in the rating of all news websites is more explanatory. Sabah is 8th most visited news website, *CNNTürk* is 22nd, *Sputnik* is 37th, and *Aydınlık* is 57th. The top 60 most popular websites cover up to 78 % of the whole Turkiye's traffic which justifies the choice of the media outlets. Then we used code-based method to accumulate all the articles about Ukraine from the mentioned websites that were publish in the period of 2022–2024. It is obvious that not all of them was possible to obtain, therefore we were not able to keep the ratio of the amount of articles of each website equal. The total number of articles is 23961. The percentages of each medium's number of articles is following: *Sputnik* 41 %, *Aydınlık* 17 %, *Sabah* 31 %, *CNNTürk* 11 %. Despite the fact that pro-Russian subcorpus is greater than the neutral one, the amount of words allows for the accurate and unbiased research. The total number of words in the corpus is 5 million. Each website has the following percent of that number: *Sputnik* 40 %, *Aydınlık* 26 %, *Sabah* 24 %, *CNNTürk* 10 %. The calculated margin of error of the corpus data is less than 5 % which stands for its credibility. After the process of collecting the data we uploaded it to the SketchEngine platform which allows an intricate research to be conducted and the corpus

to be accessed by any researcher at any time following the link (https://ske.li/turkmediaukr). This corpus-analysis-platform has a wide range of tools for quantitative and qualitative analysis of Turkish media news texts.

Content analysis was the first method to be developed among the mentioned above through numerous researches in 1930's – 1940's and the umbrella term for the methodological findings was first used in 1948 by Berelson whose latter works spread this method among many other humanity sciences and stimulated the creation of other methods, like discourse analysis (Krippendorff, 2018, pp. 8–16). According to the definitions of Krippendorff (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 18) and Berelson (as cited in Lychkovska, 2002, p. 5) content analysis is a research technique for making objective, valid, quantitative and qualitative inferences from texts in any medium within their context. Lychkovska (Lychkovska, 2002, p. 6) states that the unity of the genre of the texts that are analyzed is a key element and that the quantitative characteristic of this method leaves little space for subjective interference. Analyzing the media produce of the Russian warfare with content analysis reduces the possibility of the influence of prejudice on the results.

Discourse analysis perceives linguistic data differently from the content analysis. Instead of focusing merely on words, phrases and sentences it works at the larger scale of texts and set of texts which are called discourses (van Dijk, 2021, p. 1). This point was made by Dijk who identified ideological implications in the news articles (van Dijk, 2002; 2021a), using discourse analysis. We agree with the statements of Dijk (2022, p. 6) which demonstrate the relation between discourse and cognition. This view unites multiple levels of linguistic units under the concept of discourse in order to draw conclusions about the ideological, doxastic and epistemic semantics. Shevchenko and Syzonov (Shevchenko, & Syzonov, 2021, p. 54) and Wodak (Wodak, 2017, p. 134) indicate that discourse analysis is capable of portraying a broad overview of the research problem for its inclusion of the context into the scope of analysis. Therefore discourse analysis is a useful tool for identifying ideology and propaganda in media. We used discourse analysis and content analysis to identify the techniques which Russian propaganda exploits to influence the image of Ukraine.

Results

The creation of the corpus revealed many methods that Russian propaganda uses to influence the public opinion in Turkiye. As a result of using corpus analysis method we identified high frequency of occurrence of key words and markers which meant to affect the image of Ukraine. The following analysis of these lexemes through the methods of content and discourse analysis shows that the Russian propaganda has been negatively influencing the Ukrainian image in Turkish society. Russians used media to undermine the trust to President Zelensky and Ukrainian government by creating a negative image through the lexemes like "a drug addict" "illegitimate", to dehumanize Ukrainian soldiers by calling them "radical nationalists" (as a way to justify killing them) which all led to perceiving Ukraine as a lesser country. Even though the messages that contain the reference to the World War 2 are frequently irrelevant for Turkish readers, for the lack of Turkiye's participation in that war, the overall knowledge about the horrors of Nazism assists in reaching the Nazi-narrative's goal of dehumanizing Ukrainians.

The multi-methodical analysis that we conducted demonstrates that there is a significant amount of Russian influence on the Turkish media-sphere. It contributes to the negative perception of Ukraine by Turks and it is of vital

importance to consolidate all the effort to effectively minimize and occlude the impact Russian propaganda has on its accidental consumers. There are some reasons of mirroring Russian approach and utilizing their strategy is ineffective. The first one is the significant resource difference of Ukraine and Russia which results in inability of Ukraine to create as much content as Russia. The second point is the long-ago established infrastructure of pro-Russian media-specialists in Turkiye whom Russia uses to convey their narratives. The third reason is the Turkish censorship that will not allow to spread the Ukrainian messages about the war through popular bloggers using realistic terms, like "war", "terrorist state" etc., instead of euphemisms. We suggest the approach of positive storytelling as an alternative way of creating a positive image of Ukraine. Common successful stories and historical background of Ukraine and Turkiye are the key to changing the Turks' perspective of Ukraine and making the change long-lasting. Basing on results we acquired within our research we propose such key means of creating Ukraine's positive image to resist Russian propaganda:

1. positive storytelling (success stories of Ukrainians and Turks in each other's countries and stories with happy ending);

2. common geography (Black sea region);

3. common traditions (hardworking nature of both nations in agriculture, importance of family values and respect to the elderly);

4. joined efforts of revitalizing extremely endangered Turkic languages in Ukraine (Crimean Tatar, Kypchak, Karaim, Gagauz, Urum languages);

5. trusted partnership and friendship (Ukraine's help during the forest fires and earthquakes in Turkiye);

6. common historical background (recognition of the sovereignty of Ukrainian People's Republic by Ottoman Empire, wars between Russian and Ottoman Empires, common battles of Crimean Khanate's rulers Giray Khans and the cossacks, Turkic heritage of South-East Ukraine).

The use of the frameworks mentioned above and the topics that they include will result in the recipients in Turkiye perceive Ukraine less as a "commonsensically" (stereotypically) negative country, because of the Russian interference, but as a trusted and appreciated friend over the Black sea with common history. We see the future perspectives of this research as incorporation of it into the strategical planing of the media outlets that produce messages about Ukraine for the Turkish audience.

Farther researches in this field should consider identifying the keywords for creating positive image of Ukraine.

Discussion and conclusions

The development of the linguistic studies of the 20th century was accompanied by the development of understanding the nature of the language and its functions. The background of the media linguistics lays within the change of the approaches and their difference.

Suggestive linguistics studies the ways language affects people's behavior. Suggestion is persuading a person to doing irrational actions or believing in irrational concepts (Kallio, 2021, p. 23). The foundations of this area of linguistics laid in the works of Humboldt who considered suggestion as one of sounds functions for prehistoric people (Tyshschenko, 2007, p. 223). Although suggestive linguistics is not identified as a separate subject of scientific research in Western European and American linguistic schools many research selected analysis of propaganda and its influence on the population as the main focus of their research. Orwell (Orwell, 1946) indicated main euphemisation patterns which appeared frequently in the

British press. Similarly, Chomsky (Chomsky, 1988) derives the propaganda model which consists of five parts, including advertising, media-outlets dependence on the ownership, approval of the authority, backlash and "anticommunism". This model is certainly dated, but it highlights the presence of the suggestive influence studies in the linguistic studies worldwide. The term suggestive linguistics is commonly used in Eastern European linguistic schools. This discipline facilitated the emergence of the perception which embodied media as one of the means of suggestion. In our research we studied the ways of influence through media executed by the Russian hybrid warfare.

Suggestive influence can be expressed in the text through many different devices. According to Kompantseva (Petryk et al., 2023, p. 176) and Nakonechna (Nakonechna, 2023, p. 47) there are many ways of making suggestive influence on readers. Through the research of the approaches used to classify the means of suggestive influence of Russian media, we identified classifications of Kompantseva and Nakonechna as the most valid. We combined the classification of both of these researchers to classify the examples of Russian suggestive influence observed in the Turkish media texts.

Synthesizing two classifications Kompantseva (Petryk et al., 2023, p. 176) and Nakonechna (Nakonechna, 2023, p. 47) resulted in the following list:

1. emotionally charged rhetoric;
2. appeal to authority;
3. lack of credible and/or verifiable sources;
4. selective emphasis;
5. unfounded logical leaps;
6. name-calling and other logical fallacies;
7. usage of fear-mongering tactics;
8. repetitive rhetoric and lack of source diversity;
9. presenting inaccurate or misleading information;
10. usage of conspiracy theories as a source;
11. unaddressed internal inconsistency;
12. issue oversimplification;
13. attacking specific social groups;
14. topic polarization;
15. conflation of multiple ideas, terms or concepts;
16. lack of correction even after it has been corrected;
17. bandwagon effect;
18. bias or expert involving to manipulate;
19. informality, poor grammar or spelling;
20. hoaxes or scams;
21. specificity and imagery of keywords;
22. rhetorical questions;
23. imperative phrases;
24. euphemisation.

Russian propaganda utilizes a wide spectrum of kinds of suggestive influence in its texts to conduct such informational operations.

One of the most clearly demonstrated elements of the suggestive influence in the text *is emotionally charged rhetoric*. It is expressed by a wide range of vivid stylistic devices (metaphors, epithets, similes, etc.). The example of it is observed in the interview of a pro-Russian resident of Mariupol published on the *Aydınlık* website on November 14th 2024. Phrases like *"hayatımız cehenneme dönmüştü"* (our life turned into hell), *"tüylerinin ürperdiğini anlatıyor"* (she tells she would get goose bumps), *"anlatırken gözleri doluyor"* (her eyes fill with tears while she is telling her story), *"cehennemde yaşıyorduk"* (we lived in hell) provoke reader's empathy and let the message of "Azov Brigade's and Kyiv regime's war crimes" root deeply into the subconsciousness. The same method is used by the Sputnik media that on

March 15th 2022 posted an interview of a man who supposedly was hiding from Azov soldiers with his wife and two children. The article uses phrases like *"çocuklar çığlık atıyordu"* (the kids were screaming), *"bize insan değilmişiz gibi davranıyorlardı"* (they treated us as if we were not people), *"çocuklar ağlıyordu… yalvarıyorlardı"* (the kids were crying … begging). It is important to note that every propaganda article does not use only one suggestive inference device, but rather combines some of them to ensure the effect it has on a recipient. Examining the mentioned articles shows that it also utilizes such devices as *non-credible sources* (it is impossible to verify if interviewed people existed or said what was written), *selective emphasis* (avoiding descriptions of Russian war crimes), which results in bias.

Analyzing the timeline of our corpus we realized that both the amount of articles per week decreased significantly as well as the amount of certain methods became less common overtime. These more aggressive methods like *usage of conspiracy theories as sources* and *name-calling* were expressed in calling President Zelensky a cocaine addict (*"kokainman"*), accusing Ukrainian soldiers of using drugs (*"uyuşturucu bağlısı"*), stating that Ukraine has biological laboratories (*"biyolojik laboratuvar"*) for developing biological weapons. Obviously, such narratives which seem to be directly adopted from mainstream Russian propaganda were published predominantly in pro-Russian media and the absurdity of accusations reduces with time. However, many examples *of specificity and imagery keywords, that with repetitive rhetoric* was meant to create a solid association for the image of Ukraine, were still used even in 2023. The most vivid instance of it is calling Ukrainians *"neonazi", "nazi", "ırkçı"* (racist), *"aşırı sağcı"* (ultra right) or *"aşırı milliyetçi"* (radical nationalists). The occurrence of these naturally takes place in pro-Russian media, but also in quotes presented in neutral media outlets like *Sabah* and *CNNTürk*. The reason for the reduced use of the presented methods since 2023 is the reduction of the effect it has on recipients. Messages that are overloaded with repetitive information overtime demonstrate decreased interest of the audience. Similar phenomenon is possible to observe with overall frequency of the publication of articles about Ukraine. At the beginning of the Russian invasion into Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine in 2014 there were many articles in global media depicting the topic, with time it decreased greatly even in Ukraine. The exact same thing happened since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Russia in 2022. Therefore some messages as well as some repeated examples of suggestive influence methods cannot be used constantly, otherwise they do not evoke the same amount of emotional response. The fact *Sabah* and *CNNTürk* post quotations which include manipulation techniques because they are performing their journalistic duty of showing the truth without subjective interpretation is questioned by the ratio of using the phrases *"Kiev rejimi"* (Kyiv regime) and *"Kremlin rejimi"* (Kremlin regime) or *"Putin rejimi"* (Putin's regime) in neutral media (see Fig. 1). The frequency of calling the government of Ukraine a "regime" is far higher than calling the same way the Russian government. This results into unequally shaped perception of the two countries which is opposite to the intended goal of the neutral media. As expected pro-Russian subcorpus uses the phrase "Kiev rejimi" (Kyiv regime) almost in all cases (88.6 %). Phrases like *"Zelenski rejimi"* (Zelensky's regime), *"Ukrayna rejimi"* (Ukraine's regime) and *"Neo-nazi/nazi rejimi"* (Neo-nazi/nazi regime) in rest of the cases (see Fig. 2). This put's neutral media in the situation where their phrasings unnecessarily copy Russian propaganda.
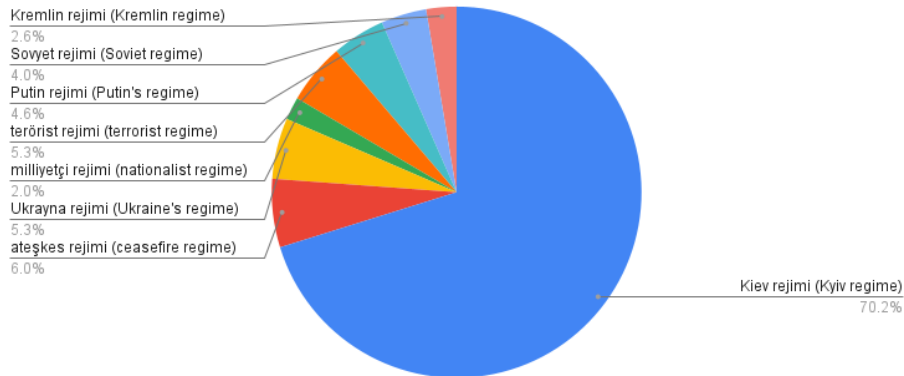
Fig. 1. The usage of the word "rejim" (regime) in the neutral subcorpus
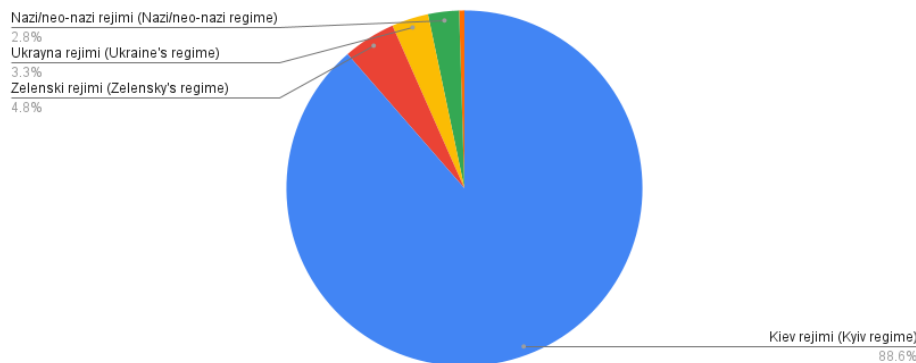

Fig. 2. The usage of the word "rejim" (regime) in the pro-Russian subcorpus

In other instances quotations become a way for spreading Russian *repetitive, misleading, euphemistic rhetoric, which conflates several concepts and attacks a specific group*, namely Ukrainians. The phrase *"Donbas'ın kurtarılması"* (liberation of Donbass), which is used is a perfect example of distortion of reality as it is used in the context of Russian occupation of this eastern Ukrainian region, was used 17 times and even by neutral media in the form of the quote. The euphemisation of the word "war" in Russian rhetoric created several terms that were actively used by pro-Russian media during 2022 like *"özel askeri operasyon"* (special military operation) and *"(askeri) harekat"* ((military) intervention). Quoting Russian military officers or representatives of the Russian government inevitable led to letting substitutions for the phrase "Russo-Ukrainian war" flow into the article. However, even without quoting Russians many media preferred lexemes with neutral connotation like *"kriz"* (crisis), *"sorun"* (problem), *"Ukrayna'daki durum"* (situation in Ukraine), *"yaşanan çatışmalar/dram"* (occurring clashes/drama). This also concords with Turkiye's official position and lexemes President Erdoğan uses to describe Russo-Ukrainian war: *"askeri harekat"* (military intervention), *"Ukrayna'daki kriz"* (crisis in Ukraine), *"Rusya'nın işgali"* (Russian occupation), *"savaş"* (war). Due to the censorship restrictions that are implemented in Turkiye there are limitations on using phrasings that may drastically differ from the governmental ones. It is supported by the rating of the Internet Freedom conducted by Freedom House (https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores). It sets Turkiye at 58th place (31 points) out of 72 countries which were analyzed and defines it as "Not Free". At the same time Baybars and Akser also argue that media is oppressed and limited (Baybas & Akser, 2023, p. 172; 2024, p. 12) *Conflating different concepts* when targeting the image of the Ukrainian military pro-Russian media created

various messages to attack anything which is related to Ukraine. On December 24th 2023 *Aydınlık* published an article accusing Ukrainian mercenaries (*"paralı asker"*) of fighting in Israeli-Palestinian war on the side of Israel. This utilized two negative concepts for Turks: soldiers without morals and Israel. During 2022 *Aydınlık* was publishing Russian statistics of the Ukrainian losses, *Sputnik* continued even in 2024. The statistical data of the number of killed soldiers and prisoners of war provided by the Russian sources were unrealistically increased. Ultimately, as we demonstrated above quoting and mentioning representatives of Ukraine and Russia makes a significant positive and negative influence on the perception of Ukraine. The final founding is the frequency of occurrences of names of the governmental representatives of different countries. The ratio of usage of names of Russian and Ukrainian officials clearly demonstrates the correlation between the amount of mentions of country representatives and bias for this country's interests (see Fig. 3). The pro-Russian subcorpus includes 7,000 mentions and quotations of Russian officials which is 66 % of all the mentions. *Aydınlık* and *Sputnik* refer to the Ukrainian officials 24 % of time, mentioning Biden occurs 6 % of cases. A very clear sign of the pro-Russian orientation and adoption of rhetoric is the fact that references to Erdoğan occur the least amount of times (4 %). On contrary neutral Turkish media refer to the Ukrainian and Russian officials approximately equal amount of times (34 % and 30 % respectively) (see Fig. 4). The rest of instances one can observe mentions of the Turkish and American governmental representatives (25 % and 11 % respectively). These examples of appeal to authority and expert involving to manipulate are another suggestive influence devices which are used to manipulate and distort reality.
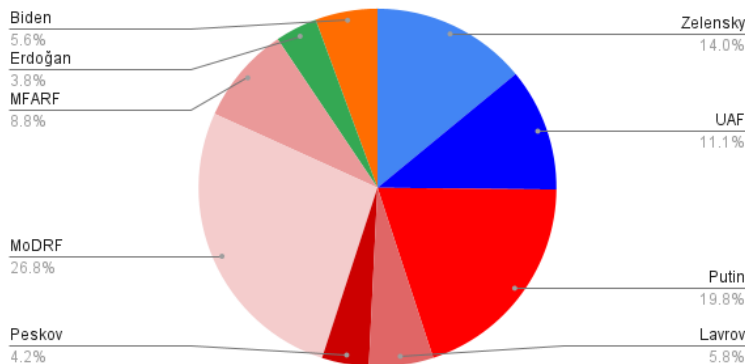
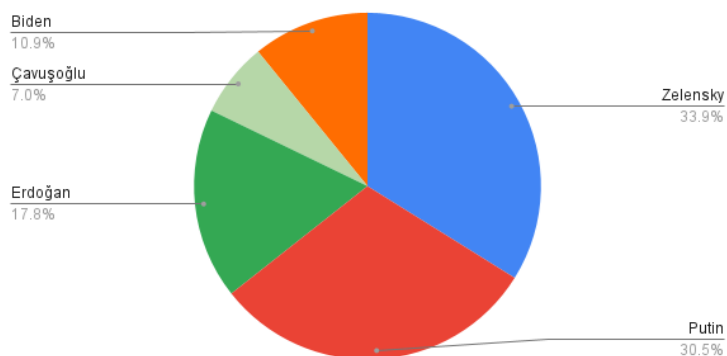**Fig. 3. References to the countries' officials in the Russian subcorpus**

Fig. 4. References to the countries' officials in the neutral subcorpus

After conducting the discourse analysis of the corpus we identified the strategy Russian hybrid warfare follows: 1) creating a negative image of the rival; 2) committing an action negatively perceived by society; 3) accusing the rival of committing the action via mass-media; 4) informational of kinetic "punishment" of the rival for the action.

In addition, Russian hybrid warfare uses another strategy which does not belong to the news articles themselves, but rather to the comment sections. This strategy involves using Turkic peoples of Russia (Kalmyks, Tatars, Karakalpaks, Chuvashes, Kumyks, Yakuts, Karachaym Tuvans, Khakas, Altaians, Dolgans, etc.) to produce comments under news-posts about Ukraine. Emphasizing the shared cultural, historical and ethnic heritage between the Russian Turkic peoples (around 11 million people) and Turks, these users, including bots, create suggestive influence on Turks convincing them that Ukraine is a "failed state", a country of "nazis", "sold to the West". These rhetorical patterns are another strategy for researches to consider, when constructing a messaging resistance model for Ukraine.

Therefore, to counteract this aspect of Russian propaganda, we suggest crafting communication strategies that are resilient to manipulations in the comment section and resonate across cultural boundaries. We believe that developing news content that cannot be easily targeted or discredited by Turkic-Russian users is a promising approach. For instance, narratives emphasizing universal values such as family integrity or individual success stories have a smaller chance of being negatively reinterpreted. These types of stories have the potential to promote a more favorable perception of Ukraine while minimizing the effectiveness of manipulative discourse. Further research should explore the spectrum of topics which will be optimized to neutralize information warfare.

Discussion and conclusions

This study shows that Russian hybrid warfare is conducting suggestive influence on the population of Turkiye to create a negative image of Ukraine through the Turkish media sphere. Emotionally charged, misleading, repetitive rhetoric which uses non-credible sources, specificity and imagery keywords and produces conspiracy theories to attack a specific group, namely Ukrainians, is the suggestive strategy which we observed in the Turkish media texts about Ukraine. This is the first research to include such a high amount of data and suggest specific pathways to oppose Turkiye-targeted Russian propaganda for Ukraine. These key means of creating a positive image of Ukraine in Turkiye through media are simple to be implemented and operate on a separate "battlefield" of the informational war. Instead of challenging Russian hybrid, which has obvious domination in terms of resources, in reacting to their negative claims we recommend following our 6 key means of messaging based on the positive storytelling. It is preferable for further researches to consider effectiveness of our proposed key messaging topics, analyze the news video discourse and develop keywords which will develop positive perception of Ukraine in Turkiye.

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СТРАТЕГІЇ РОСІЙСЬКОГО ВПЛИВУ В ТУРЕЦЬКИХ ЗМІ ТА ЗАСОБИ ПРОТИДІЇ ЇМ

В с т у п . *Росія прагне сформувати негативний імідж України в Туреччині, використовуючи медіапростір цієї країни на тлі російсько-української війни. Вплив Росії на турецький медіасегмент досліджували Ґьольджю, Нурланова, Самет, Байкал і Дурмуш. Проте обмежений обсяг емпіричних даних у цих дослідженнях виявився недостатнім для формування ефективних стратегій протидії російській пропаганді про Україну в Туреччині.*

Мета. Виявити засоби впливу, які використовує російська пропаганда для створення в турецького населення негативного сприйняття України.

М е т о д и . *Застосували корпусний, дискурс і контент-аналіз для формування як кількісного, так і якісного уявлення про проблему. Також залучався корпусний аналіз, що включає використання комп'ютерних методів для дослідження великих обсягів текстових даних мови, дискурс-аналіз для виявлення ідеологчно забарвлених повідомлень і пропаганди в медіа та контент-аналіз для зменшення ймовірності впливу упереджень на результати.*

Р е з у л ь т а т и . *Ми з'ясували, що не лише проросійські медіаресурси (Sputnik, Aydınlık), а й формально нейтральні вебсайти (Sabah, CNNTürk) створюють інформаційний майданчик для поширення повідомлень, які підривають довіру до України та її уряду. Використання лексем на кшталт "режим", "нацисти", "наркомани", емоційно забарвлених фраз і евфемізмів чинить сугестивний вплив, формуючи негативне сприйняття України й свідомості турецького населення.*

В и с н о в к и . *На основі отриманих результатів пропонується використовувати позитивний сторітелінг як основну стратегію протидії російській пропаганді в Туреччині з боку України. Подальші дослідження в цій сфері мають зосередитися на вивченні реакцій турецької аудиторії на запропоновані методи протидії та розробці ключових слів позитивного наративу для рекомендованих нами тематичних напрямів.*

К л ю ч о в і с л о в а : *медіалінгвістика, корпусний аналіз, турецькі ЗМІ, російська пропаганда, російсько-українська війна.*