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Bachelor's thesis

**IDEOLOGY IN POLITICAL NEWS
(based on British and American Media Coverage of the War in Ukraine)**

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Білявська К.В. Ідеологія в політичних новинах (на основі висвітлення війни в Україні британськими та американськими ЗМІ). — Бакалаврська робота.

Бакалаврська робота присвячена дослідженню ідеологічної репрезентації війни в Україні в англомовних медіа та детальному аналізу лінгвістичних і візуальних засобів, які медіа використовують для її представлення.

Для досягнення поставленої мети було визначено такі завдання: дослідити формування та функціонування ідеології в медіадискурсі; проаналізувати вплив лінгвістичних і візуальних стратегій на суспільне сприйняття конфлікту; дослідити позитивні та негативні образи учасників війни в британських та американських медіа, а також їхню мультимодальну репрезентацію.

За допомогою дискурсивного аналізу було досліджено структурні та прагматичні закономірності медіатекстів. За допомогою критичного дискурс-аналізу було досліджено протиставлення "свій/чужий" в медіадискурсі про війну та лінгвістичні засоби її реалізації, зокрема стратегії маркування, персоналізації, евіденційності, гри чисел та аналогії. Мультимодальний дискурсивний аналіз допоміг дослідити взаємодію візуальних і вербальних елементів у процесі конструювання цілісного образу конфлікту. Було проаналізовано фотографії, карикатури та обкладинки журналів, зокрема їхню кольорову гаму, композицію та символіку. Оскільки проблема ідеологічного фреймінгу охоплює соціальні, політичні та лінгвістичні аспекти, було застосовано міждисциплінарний підхід, що дало змогу поєднати знання з лінгвістики, медіазнавства та комунікацій для комплексного аналізу.

Дослідження показало, що дискурсивні стратегії в політичних новинах реалізуються за допомогою різних лінгвістичних і стилістичних засобів, зокрема оцінних іменників та прикметників, метафоричних виразів, персоніфікації, маркерів атрибуції, прямих цитат, статистичних даних, історичних алюзій, епітетів та імпліцитних порівнянь. Ці лінгвістичні засоби формують ідеологічні інтерпретації конфлікту та впливають на сприйняття аудиторії.

Аналіз також показав тісний зв'язок між вербальними та візуальними стратегіями. Фотографії, карикатури, обкладинки журналів, типографіка та кольорова символіка підсилюють ідеологічні значення, створені вербальним текстом, і разом формують єдиний ідеологічний наратив. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані для подальших наукових розвідок у галузі медіалінгвістики, політичної комунікації, мультимодального дискурсивного аналізу та критичного дискурсивного аналізу.

Ключові слова: ідеологія, медіадискурс, дискурсивні стратегії, мультимодальність, британські ЗМІ, американські ЗМІ, війна в Україні.

ABSTRACT

Biliavska K. V. Ideology in Political news (based on British and American Media Coverage of the War in Ukraine). — Bachelor's thesis.

The bachelor's thesis is devoted to the study of the ideological representation of the war in Ukraine in English-language media and a detailed analysis of the linguistic and visual means that media employ for its representation.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives were set: to investigate the formation and functioning of ideology in media discourse; to examine the influence of linguistic and visual strategies on public perception of the conflict; to analyze the positive and negative images of the participants of the war in British and American media and to investigate their multimodal representation.

With the help of discourse analysis, the structural and pragmatic patterns of media texts were examined. Applying critical discourse analysis, the "us/them" opposition in media discourse about the war and the linguistic means of its realization were investigated, with particular attention to labelling, personalization, evidentiality, the number game, and analogy. Multimodal discourse analysis helped to examine how visual and verbal elements interact in constructing a coherent image of the conflict. Photographs, caricatures, and magazine covers were analyzed, including their color schemes, composition, and symbolism. Since the problem of ideological framing covers social, political, and linguistic aspects, an interdisciplinary approach was applied, making it possible to combine knowledge from linguistics, media studies, and communications for a comprehensive analysis.

The research demonstrated that discursive strategies in political news are implemented through various linguistic and stylistic means, including evaluative nouns and adjectives, metaphorical expressions, personification, attribution markers, direct quotations, statistical data, historical allusions, epithets, and implicit comparisons. These linguistic means shape ideological interpretations of the conflict and influence audience perception.

The analysis also showed a close connection between verbal and visual strategies. Photographs, caricatures, magazine covers, typography, and color symbolism reinforce the ideological meanings created by the verbal text and together form a unified ideological narrative. The findings can be used for further research in media linguistics, political communication, multimodal discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis.

Keywords: ideology, media discourse, discursive strategies, multimodality, British media, American media, war in Ukraine.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, we don't just consume news, we are constantly immersed in it. The global information space has evolved into more than just a way to share facts — it has become a platform where different interpretations of reality compete for our attention. In this environment, British and American media outlets do not just "report" on events; they often act as powerful tools of ideology, helping to shape how the public understands international politics. Because the language used in news is rarely neutral, looking at how ideology is hidden in plain sight within these texts is a fascinating and necessary task for modern linguistics.

The relevance of this research is especially clear in our current era of "soft power" and information warfare. With the ongoing War in Ukraine, Western media coverage provides a crucial case study. By looking at how these outlets use specific words and images, we can see how they guide public opinion, justify political decisions, and create a narrative.

The object of this study is the ideological representation of the war in Ukraine and its key figures within British and American political media discourse. Its particular focus is on how linguistic choices in news reporting construct, reinforce, and transmit underlying ideological meanings.

The subject of the research involves specific discursive and multimodal strategies and the means of their realization, which are used to build and spread ideological messages.

The material of the research is drawn from 72 articles (97 pages) published in newspapers and journals such as The Guardian, The New York Times, The Economist, The Washington Post, BBC, and others.

The aim of this paper is to uncover how these media texts operate by examining the specific linguistic and visual techniques used in British and American political news. The aim of the paper has determined the following **objectives** of the research:

1. to investigate the theoretical side of media discourse and see how it functions as a carrier for ideology;
2. to examine the analytical approaches applied in media discourse studies: discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, and multimodal discourse analysis;
3. to identify and analyze key discursive strategies and linguistic means of their realization used by British and American media to frame the War in Ukraine;
4. to investigate the role of multimodal elements, including visual imagery and spatial layout, in constructing ideological perspectives alongside verbal texts in Western media discourse.

The study uses both general and specific linguistic **methods**, quantitative and qualitative analyses to fully collect and organize the analyzed material:

- a descriptive method;
- a method of sampling;
- semantic-component analysis;
- discursive analysis;
- critical discursive analysis;
- multimodal discourse analysis.

These objectives aim to enhance understanding of media discourse as a space where language and power interact, showing how linguistic choices in political news construct ideology and how Western coverage of the War in Ukraine shapes public perception and social cognition.

The **novelty** of this research is reflected in its broad examination of media discourse from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The study utilizes various frameworks such as Critical Discourse Analysis to deconstruct written narratives, Multimodal Discourse Analysis as a separate approach to investigate visual imagery. By applying these different perspectives to the representation of the War in Ukraine and the intersection of war in British and American media, the paper offers a more

nuanced understanding of the specific strategies used to convey ideology across various layers of communication.

The **theoretical significance** of this study lies in its contribution to media linguistics, particularly in demonstrating how mass communication functions as a key channel for ideological transmission. The study emphasizes the significant role of media discourse in the formation of public attitudes and the construction of social and political narratives.

Focusing on discourse related to the War in Ukraine, the paper provides insight into how media communication influences audience perception.

The study also identifies several key discursive strategies, including labelling, personalization, and evidentiality. It examines how these strategies are implemented in both verbal texts and visual materials through different analytical perspectives. This contributes to a deeper understanding of how media messages are constructed to guide interpretation and shape public attitudes and social understanding.

The paper is organised as follows: an introduction, two chapters, conclusions, summary and references. The work is illustrated with tables (Appendix).

The introduction outlines the relevance, defines the aim, object, subject, gives the insight into the theoretical significance of the scientific research and provides information about the structure.

The first Part, "Ideology in Media Discourse," explores the theoretical foundations of media studies, the role of mass media as a vehicle for ideology, and the distinct methodological frameworks of discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, and multimodal discourse analysis.

The second part, "News on the War in Ukraine in British and American Media," focuses on the practical implementation of discursive strategies in verbal texts. It also investigates the role of multimodality in political news, using a separate analytical lens

to examine how photographic materials and visual layouts contribute to ideological framing.

The general conclusion summarizes the findings of the research. The appendix provides the results of the study and the systematized material used for analysis.

The results of the research presented in the bachelor's thesis were discussed and published following the Ukrainian Scientific Conference “СУЧАСНА ФІЛОЛОГІЯ: ЛІНГВІСТИКА, ЛІТЕРАТУРОЗНАВСТВО, ПЕРЕКЛАДОЗНАВСТВО, ФОЛЬКЛОР” (Kyiv, 2025).

1. IDEOLOGY IN MEDIA DISCOURSE

1.1 Media discourse in language studies

In the contemporary linguistic paradigm, the exploration of language has transitioned from the analysis of static, abstract systems to the investigation of language as a dynamic social practice. This shift has placed the concept of discourse at the center of academic inquiry. It is no longer viewed primarily as a sequence of sentences or a formal linguistic structure. Instead, as Fairclough [21] argues, discourse is understood as a socially embedded communicative practice that incorporates the text, the social context, and the participants involved. Within this framework, media discourse serves as a primary site where linguistic choices intersect with institutional power and social influence.

The study of media discourse requires a multifaceted approach that accounts for its socially oriented nature. As Halliday [27] established, language functions as a "social semiotic," meaning it is a system of signs used to create and negotiate social meanings. Unlike interpersonal communication, media discourse is characterized by an inherent power asymmetry. Journalists, editors, and media corporations hold the authority to frame events for a mass audience. This process is rarely a neutral transmission of facts. Rather, it is a deliberate communicative act that reflects the institutional goals of the media outlet — and, importantly, the ideological frameworks those institutions seek to reproduce.

The ideological dimension of media language has been central to linguistic inquiry since Fowler's [24] foundational argument that all news is a social construct saturated with ideology. Every lexical choice carries ideological weight. Whether a conflict is called a "war," an "invasion," or a "special military operation" is not a neutral decision — it reflects the worldview of the institution producing the text and works to make that worldview feel natural to the audience. Richardson [42] builds on this point by showing that newspapers consistently use specific linguistic patterns to frame social actors and guide readers toward preferred interpretations of political events. The

language of news, in this sense, is never purely descriptive. It is always evaluative and always ideological.

Central to this analysis is the relationship between media discourse and media text. While discourse represents the entire process of social interaction, the media text serves as the concrete, observable product of that process. By analyzing these texts, linguistics can uncover the underlying structures that allow media to function as a tool for shaping public consciousness. With the introduction of socio-cognitive frameworks, scholars began moving away from viewing news reports as objective accounts of reality and started treating them as carefully constructed narratives.

This shift was firmly established by van Dijk [47], who proposed a socio-cognitive model for analyzing news. He argued that news should be examined through both its microstructures, such as lexical choice and syntax, and its broader thematic macrostructures. Most importantly, van Dijk showed that these structures do not simply organize information — they encode the shared beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies of the groups that produce and consume media [50]. Which voices are quoted, which facts are foregrounded, and which details are omitted are all ideological decisions that shape how audiences understand political reality.

This idea is further developed by Fairclough [22], who demonstrates how public discourse has become increasingly persuasive and rhetorically calculated over time. Martin and White [35] contribute to this discussion through appraisal theory, which offers practical tools for identifying evaluative language in texts. Through the categories of attitude, engagement, and graduation, their framework reveals how writers position both themselves and their readers ideologically — even through language that appears objective on the surface.

The language found in political news is also deeply connected to the concept of social evaluation. As Fowler [24] notes, even seemingly neutral descriptions in media discourse are saturated with expressive means that shape public opinion. Conboy [17] reinforces this point by showing how the press relies on a recognizable ideological

register — a set of recurring vocabulary, narrative conventions, and rhetorical figures — that makes its worldview feel natural and self-evident. The press does not simply reflect reality. It actively constructs a specific version of it through the strategic use of metaphors, labels, and evaluative language [11].

Modern linguistics therefore treats media discourse as a ideological and multidisciplinary phenomenon. As Ukrainian researchers have also noted, the study of political and media discourse must account for both its communicative functions and its role in reproducing social power [1, 3]. The interplay between linguistic strategies, cognitive processes, and social practices continuously shapes the ideological landscape of modern political communication. This makes the critical analysis of media language not just an academic task, but a necessary tool for understanding how public reality is constructed and contested.

1.2 Mass media as the vehicle of ideology

The relationship between mass media and ideology is a very important part of modern linguistic and communication studies. As established in the previous section, media discourse does not merely reflect reality in a neutral manner. Instead, it actively constructs it. Therefore, mass media institutions function as the primary vehicles through which ideological frameworks are produced, distributed, and normalized within society. This process is not incidental but is built into the very structure of media production.

The inherent ideological nature of the press was prominently articulated by Roger Fowler [24], who argued that all news is a social construct heavily saturated with ideology. In media discourse, every linguistic choice — from the selection of specific lexical items and metaphors to syntactic structures — carries ideological weight and reflects a particular worldview. By repeatedly framing events through specific linguistic patterns, the media "naturalizes" these perspectives. As Chouliaraki and Fairclough [16] observe, this allows subjective ideological stances to be presented to the audience as objective "common sense," effectively masking the power dynamics at

play. The concept of news values is the criteria by which events are selected and framed as newsworthy and further explains how media institutions shape what audiences perceive as significant or relevant [13].

To understand the mechanics of this transmission, it is essential to apply the socio-cognitive approach developed by Teun A. van Dijk. He defines ideology as a foundational system of beliefs shared by a social group, which organizes their social practices and attitudes [50]. Within this framework, discourse serves as the crucial interface between cognition and society [48]. Because mass media possesses unparalleled reach and institutional power, it becomes the most effective platform for the discursive reproduction of these ideologies. By controlling the narrative, media outlets can influence the "mental models" that the broader public uses to interpret political and social events.

This ideological transmission is particularly evident in the realm of political news. Political discourse and media discourse are elaborately intertwined, as mass media provides the vital communicative space where political actors interact with the electorate [7]. In this context, media discourse acts as a fundamental tool of political communication. As noted by Ukrainian researchers N. Diachenko and V. Khalin [3], modern political discourse relies extensively on specific communicative strategies to persuade and shape the opinions of the target audience. These strategies are often designed to simplify complex geopolitical issues into binary oppositions. It guides the recipient toward a preferred ideological conclusion.

Ultimately, mass media serves as an arena where different ideologies compete for dominance. The language used in political news is never merely descriptive; it is a strategic instrument designed to establish or maintain social power relations [4]. Recognizing mass media as a vehicle of ideology is therefore a requirement for critical linguistic analysis. It shifts the analytical focus from what the media reports to how the linguistic and rhetorical organization of the text shapes public perception and social reality.

1.3 Methods of analysis

To explore how the linguistic and rhetorical structure of media texts influences public perception and contributes to the construction of social reality, it is necessary to apply a clear and comprehensive methodological framework. The study of language in contemporary linguistics has moved away from viewing language as a static, abstract system toward understanding it as a dynamic social practice. Investigating how ideologies are embedded within media texts requires analytical tools capable of bridging the gap between linguistic micro-structures and societal macro-structures. To establish such a framework, it is first necessary to understand the multifaceted nature of discourse itself.

Discourse is not a homogeneous phenomenon. According to Foucault [23], the "order of discourse" is strictly regulated by society; it determines who has the right to speak, what can be said, and how it must be interpreted within a specific context. Because human activities serve distinct social functions, language naturally fragments into distinct types of discourse. Each of them emerges from unique social needs and power dynamics. For instance, academic discourse operates on strict structural rules and precise terminology to objectively share knowledge [21]. In contrast, institutional discourse often serves to manage personnel and normalize corporate control [9, 23].

However, one of the most intentionally structured types of communication is political discourse. It emerges inevitably wherever there is a struggle for power, governance, and public influence. Political discourse is rarely neutral; its inherent functions are persuasion, the legitimation of specific actions, and the mobilization or marginalization of social groups. Ukrainian researchers note that modern political communication relies heavily on targeted communicative strategies to shape the electorate's worldview [1, 3]. Furthermore, this discourse heavily utilizes "positioning theory," where language is actively used to dynamically construct the identities of "us" (allies, patriots) versus "them" (enemies, threats) in real-time communication [2, 51].

Ultimately, these various discourses converge and are amplified within media discourse. Mass media acts as the primary arena where political, corporate, and social narratives compete for public attention. Journalists and media outlets do not simply act as passive mirrors reflecting political speeches or global events; instead, they actively filter, recontextualize, and reframe these events to align with editorial policies and national interests [17]. As digital and social media platforms continue to expand, recent research on digital discourse emphasizes that this meaning-making process has become even more complex and multimodal [20, 30].

Understanding this wide range of discourse types raises an important question: how can such a complex phenomenon as political news about international conflicts be analyzed effectively and accurately? Surveying British and American media coverage of the war in Ukraine presents a specific challenge. Such media coverage involves a complex combination of political statements, military terminology, and editorial framing. For instance, the specific ways headlines label political actors, or how military advances are framed as either "liberations" or "occupations", are rarely accidental, reflecting underlying ideological priorities. Attempting to decode this by utilizing a single, traditional linguistic method — such as purely grammatical or semantic analysis — would yield superficial results. It would identify what was said but completely miss why it was said and whose interests the text serves.

Therefore, the investigation of ideology in political news demands theoretical and methodological pluralism [55]. Contemporary linguistic research requires "methodological triangulation" — the integration of several complementary analytical tools to examine a text from multiple angles, thereby increasing the depth and validity of the findings [25]. To thoroughly deconstruct how ideology is woven into the fabric of British and American political news, it is necessary to employ a tiered approach. First, General Discourse Analysis will be utilized to understand the foundational communicative strategies and structural organization of the texts. Second, Critical Discourse Analysis will provide the lens to expose the hidden power dynamics and ideological manipulations disguised as objective reporting. Finally, acknowledging

that modern news is intensely visual, Multimodal Discourse Analysis will be applied to investigate how images and layout contribute to the overarching ideological message.

1.3.1 Discourse analysis

Discourse Analysis (DA) serves as the fundamental methodological bedrock for examining language in its active, natural state. Traditional structural linguistics historically confined its scope to the internal mechanisms of language, analyzing phonemes, syntax, and isolated sentences. In contrast, Discourse Analysis operates on a macro-level, shifting the analytical focus from the abstract rules of grammar to the practical application of language in real-world social interactions. In the context of media and political studies, DA is not merely a technique for reading texts; it is a comprehensive framework for understanding how communicative events are structured, how meaning is negotiated between the author and the audience, and how pragmatic and stylistic choices reflect the realities of the social world.

The theoretical foundation of modern Discourse Analysis is deeply indebted to M. A. K. Halliday's systemic functional linguistics. Halliday established the paradigm of language as a "social semiotic" — a system of meaning potential inextricably linked to the culture and society in which it operates [27]. According to this perspective, whenever a journalist writes a political news report, they simultaneously fulfill several communicative functions: they represent a specific version of reality (the ideational function), they establish a relationship with the reader (the interpersonal function), and they organize these meanings into a cohesive narrative (the textual function) [28]. Therefore, DA requires the researcher to analyze a news article not as a static collection of facts, but as a dynamic social action where grammatical structures are selected for specific pragmatic purposes.

A central principle of Discourse Analysis is the absolute dominance of context. Meaning in discourse is never self-contained within the words themselves; it is heavily dependent on the context of the situation. In media discourse, this context includes the

historical background of the reported event, the political affiliation of the newspaper, and the broader geopolitical climate. For example, the phrase "defense of sovereignty" carries a drastically different pragmatic weight when used in a peaceful diplomatic assembly compared to its appearance on the front page of a newspaper during an active armed conflict, such as the war in Ukraine. To systematically map how these contextual factors shape the structural organization of the text, DA employs specific analytical frameworks, such as Frame Analysis. Conceptualized by Erving Goffman, framing suggests that journalists do not simply report events; they select, emphasize, and exclude certain facts to construct a specific cognitive narrative [25]. For instance, in reporting international conflicts, a British newspaper might frame a foreign leader's action as an "unprovoked aggression" through specific lexical chains, while another outlet might frame the same action as a "strategic geopolitical maneuver."

Another crucial dimension of DA is the investigation of Positioning Theory and stancetaking. Developed by B. Davies and R. Harré, positioning theory examines the discursive production of "selves" and "others" [18]. In political news, language is constantly used to assign roles and moral coordinates to political actors. Discourse Analysis meticulously tracks how pronouns, adjectives, and transitivity systems (such as active versus passive voice) are utilized to position individuals within a social hierarchy. A classic DA application involves analyzing pronominal choices: the use of the inclusive pronoun "we" acts as a powerful strategy of solidarity, uniting the government, the public, and allied nations under a shared moral umbrella. In contrast, the pronoun "they" is used to construct the "other," distancing and frequently dehumanizing the opposition to establish artificial boundaries between in-groups and out-groups.

Furthermore, standard Discourse Analysis pays significant attention to rhetorical figures and stylistics within media texts. In political journalism, complex geopolitical phenomena are frequently explained to the public through conceptual metaphors and specific tropes. As noted by L. Mykashovska and I. Biliuk in their study of headlines, political discourse heavily relies on metaphorization to evoke specific emotional

responses [8]. When analyzing coverage of the war in Ukraine, DA identifies the semantic fields used by journalists. Comparing the conflict to a "chess match" utilizes a game metaphor implying rational calculation, whereas describing the situation as a "bleeding wound" utilizes a biological metaphor evoking an immediate sense of urgency and a moral imperative for intervention. DA catalogs these expressive means and evaluates their pragmatic effect on the target audience.

In summary, Discourse Analysis serves as an essential methodological tool for examining the structural, stylistic, and pragmatic features of media texts. It provides a highly detailed, descriptive map of the communicative strategies utilized in British and American political news. However, while DA excels at descriptive analysis, it possesses inherent limitations when confronting the deeper, often invisible layers of political communication. Standard DA can identify that a journalist has framed a protest as a "riot" and track the lexical choices used to construct that frame, but it does not inherently possess the critical vocabulary to explain why a specific corporate-owned newspaper consistently chooses that frame, or how that choice serves the ideological interests of the ruling elite. To bridge this gap — to move from merely describing the structure of a text to critically exposing the asymmetrical power relations, hidden biases, and ideological dominance embedded within it — the research must transition to a more politically engaged methodology. This necessity leads directly to the application of Critical Discourse Analysis.

1.3.2 Critical discourse analysis

While general Discourse Analysis provides the necessary tools to dismantle the structural and pragmatic mechanics of a text, it frequently remains at the descriptive level. To move beyond describing how a media text is constructed to explain why it is structured in a specific manner — and whose interests it ultimately serves — the research must adopt a fundamentally critical perspective. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is not merely a methodology; it is a politically and socially engaged academic movement. It operates on the core premise that language is never neutral [14]. Instead, as Wodak [54] asserts, discourse is viewed as a form of social practice that both reflects

and actively reproduces unequal power relations, ideological dominance, and social hierarchy.

In the realm of political news, CDA is an exceptionally powerful analytical instrument. Mass media institutions are not isolated, objective observers of reality; they are deeply embedded within the economic and political structures of their respective nations [33]. Thus, the news they produce is inherently ideological. CDA seeks to expose the underlying agendas within these texts, revealing how journalists and media owners use subtle linguistic strategies to manipulate public opinion, manufacture consent, and legitimize specific political actions. To comprehensively analyze the representation of political events in British and American media, researchers typically synthesize three foundational schools of CDA: Norman Fairclough's socio-cultural approach, Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical approach, and Teun A. van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach.

Fairclough [22] revolutionized media analysis by introducing a three-dimensional framework that connects the micro-level of the text to the macro-level of society. According to this model, any communicative event must be analyzed through three intertwined lenses: the text itself (grammar and vocabulary), the discursive practice (how the text is produced, distributed, and consumed), and the social practice (the broader ideological impact of the text on society). When analyzing an article regarding foreign military aid, this model prevents the researcher from looking solely at semantics. It demands an inquiry into whether the text reinforces national ideologies or institutional goals [10]. For instance, the growing marketization of public discourse means that news is often written to generate emotional engagement rather than objective understanding [21]. An article might utilize sensationalist vocabulary not for factual accuracy, but because the institutional goal of the media outlet is to maximize readership by triggering public anxiety.

Furthermore, Ruth Wodak emphasizes that discourse is always historically situated [53, 54]. The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) asserts that the ideological framing of a current political event cannot be fully understood without

acknowledging the historical narratives to which a specific society has been subjected [41]. DHA is particularly relevant for analyzing the discursive strategies of justification and legitimation. For example, when British media frame the ongoing war in Ukraine, they frequently draw explicit or implicit parallels to Winston Churchill and the Blitz of London during World War II. By historically aligning the current conflict with Britain's own wartime resilience, the media outlet weaponizes history through language to legitimize strong military support in the eyes of the British public.

The most crucial theoretical framework for analyzing the psychological and ideological impact of news comes from Teun A. van Dijk. He bridges the gap between text and society by introducing the concept of social cognition — the shared mental models, beliefs, and ideologies of a specific group [46]. The primary function of mass media is to manage and shape these mental models among the public [47]. The cornerstone of his analytical method is the "Ideological Square," a structural strategy of polarization that perfectly encapsulates political discourse [48]. The media inherently divides the world into an in-group ("Us") and an out-group ("Them"). To maintain ideological dominance, media discourse follows a strict set of rules: it emphasizes the positive properties and actions of the in-group while emphasizing the negative properties and actions of the out-group. Simultaneously, it actively mitigates or hides the negative actions of the in-group and the positive actions of the out-group.

This ideological polarization is constantly visible in international conflict reporting and is executed through specific grammatical and lexical strategies. The most direct ideological tool is lexicalization, or labeling [24]. When representing the out-group, the media relies on terms with strong negative connotations, such as "regime" or "dictator," whereas the in-group is described using positive or neutral terms like "government" or "defenders." Additionally, transitivity and voice serve as classic CDA strategies for mitigation. If the in-group commits a controversial act, the media often utilizes the passive voice or nominalization to obscure agency, causing the perpetrator to disappear from the sentence entirely. Conversely, if the out-group commits the exact same act, the active voice is strictly employed to assign direct blame. Finally, to

emphasize the severity of an enemy's actions, media discourse frequently employs the strategy of evidentiality and the number game [29]. By strategically deploying specific statistics and authoritative sources, journalists transform numbers into moral arguments, designed to maximize emotional impact and solidify the out-group's villainy.

Ultimately, Critical Discourse Analysis equips the researcher with tools to prove that phenomena like syntax, lexical choice, and historical metaphors are never random. They function as carefully designed instruments that construct a particular ideological reality and subtly influence readers to accept a predetermined worldview. However, despite its immense analytical power, applying CDA exclusively to the verbal text presents a methodological blind spot in the modern era. Today, British and American news reports are accompanied by high-resolution photographs, interactive infographics, and specific spatial layouts. An article might possess a relatively neutral text yet carry a deeply biased ideological message through the aggressive framing of its cover image. Textual CDA cannot decode these non-verbal mechanisms. To fully deconstruct the contemporary mass media message in its entirety, the research must expand its methodology to include the visual dimension.

1.3.3 Multimodal discourse analysis

Modern mass media, particularly British and American political journalism, operates within a profoundly visual and digital landscape. News is no longer distributed merely as blank sheets of text; it is delivered through highly stylized digital platforms, interactive interfaces, and structurally complex pages. Recognizing that language alone cannot account for the entirety of media meaning-making, contemporary linguistic methodology has experienced a vital "visual turn," culminating in the development and application of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) [19].

The main reason for using Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) is the basic idea that meaning in human communication is rarely created through a single semiotic mode alone. Instead, it emerges as a combination of multiple interacting modes,

including written and spoken language, images, illustrations, typography, and spatial layout [29]. In the context of political news, these non-verbal elements function not as mere aesthetic decorations, but as powerful, ideologically loaded communicative strategies. They are strategically deployed to frame the reader's perception, evoke specific emotional responses, and establish an overarching ideological tone before the textual narrative is even processed.

To systematically decode these non-verbal strategies, MDA relies heavily on the theoretical bedrock of "visual grammar," a concept pioneered by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. In their seminal work, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, they argue that visual communication possesses a structured set of rules analogous to linguistic syntax [31]. Just as grammatical syntax organizes words to assign agency and action, visual grammar organizes images to represent social actors, construct power relations between the viewer and the viewed, and arrange information into a coherent ideological message. The methodology of MDA operates through several key analytical dimensions to extract these meanings.

One of the central methods within MDA is the analysis of camera angles and visual framing, which dictate the audience's perception of power dynamics. In visual grammar, vertical and horizontal angles are never arbitrary; they are spatial representations of social hierarchy. The methodology examines whether a subject is photographed from a low angle, which structurally forces the viewer to "look up," thereby projecting dominance, authority, and control onto the subject [32]. Conversely, it analyzes the use of high angles, which visually minimize the subject, rendering them vulnerable, powerless, or subordinate in the eyes of the mass audience [31]. The semiotic analysis of photojournalism confirms that news images are never neutral records of events as they are carefully composed to produce specific ideological meanings for the audience [15].

Another crucial dimension is the measurement of social distance and the gaze. MDA applies principles of proxemics to visual texts, analyzing how the framing of a shot regulates the degree of intimacy or alienation between the news subject and the

reader. It goes from extreme close-ups to wide, objective shots. Furthermore, the methodology categorizes images based on the subject's gaze. Kress and van Leeuwen [31] distinguish between "demand" images, where the subject looks directly at the camera to establish an imaginary relationship and demand a response from the viewer, and "offer" images, where the subject's averted gaze offers them up as an object of passive observation. Identifying these mechanisms is essential for understanding how media cultivates empathy or detachment toward different political actors, particularly in wartime reporting.

Beyond photography, MDA extends its analytical scope to typography and spatial layout. Fonts and graphic designs carry distinct modalities and structural weight [52]. The methodology assesses how the size, boldness, and stylization of typography function as semiotic markers of urgency or authority. Additionally, the spatial organization of the page is analyzed through the concepts of the "Ideal" and the "Real." Researchers examine how media outlets place emotionally charged, ideologically promising information (the Ideal) at the top of a page or screen, while relegating factual, grounded details (the Real) to the bottom, thereby guiding the reader's cognitive processing of the news structure.

Finally, the method investigates the phenomenon of intersemiotic complementarity. This involves analyzing the complex interaction between the visual and verbal modes to determine how they create a unified or contradictory message [34]. In media discourse, an image is typically "anchored" by a headline or caption. As noted by Ukrainian researchers such as Lukianets [6] and expanded upon by Tan and E [45], MDA evaluates whether the verbal text merely reinforces the visual meaning, whether the image clarifies an ambiguous text, or whether the two modes deliberately contradict each other to subtly undermine a stated political position.

By integrating Multimodal Discourse Analysis into the broader analytical framework alongside structural Discourse Analysis and CDA, researchers obtain a comprehensive methodological toolset. This combined approach is indispensable for

deconstructing the complex, multi-layered ideological constructs that define modern British and American political journalism.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1 has established the theoretical and methodological foundations necessary for analyzing the representation of political events in mass media. The transition in modern linguistics from viewing language as an abstract structural system to a dynamic social practice demands that media discourse be analyzed as a powerful mechanism of social influence. As demonstrated, mass media institutions do not merely act as neutral transmitters of information; they function as primary vehicles for ideological reproduction, strategically framing events to align with specific political, economic, or national interests.

To decode the complexities of British and American political news, particularly regarding the ongoing war in Ukraine, a multi-tiered, triangulated methodology is required. General Discourse Analysis provides the fundamental tools to examine the structural and pragmatic organization of a text, including lexical choices, metaphors, and basic framing. However, because general DA lacks the capacity to critically expose hidden power dynamics, it must be supplemented by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Utilizing the socio-cognitive and discourse-historical frameworks of scholars such as Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak, CDA allows for the deconstruction of the "Ideological Square" and the revelation of how media texts legitimize in-groups while marginalizing out-groups [48].

Finally, acknowledging that contemporary media is inherently visual, the integration of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) completes the analytical paradigm. MDA provides the "visual grammar" necessary to understand how camera angles, spatial layout, and typography interact with the verbal text to emotionally and ideologically anchor the reader. Together, this synthesized theoretical framework provides a robust toolkit for Chapter 2, where these concepts will be practically applied to investigate the discursive and multimodal strategies utilized in Western media coverage of the war in Ukraine.

2. NEWS ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN MEDIA

2.1 Discursive strategies in political news

For the practical analysis of political news, researchers frequently employ the concept of discursive strategies. A discursive strategy is defined as a systematic communicative plan, utilizing specific linguistic techniques, adopted to construct meaning, shape interpretation, and achieve persuasive or ideological goals [36]. These strategies reveal how language functions not just as a neutral tool for information transfer, but as a deliberate mechanism of influence and power within media communication [16].

The study of these strategies is deeply rooted in the theoretical frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis, established by scholars such as Teun A. van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, and Ruth Wodak [45]. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, their foundational research proved that political communication is never entirely objective. Instead, linguistic choices are inextricably linked to social interests and power relations [49]. Within this framework, discursive strategies are understood as the specific, deliberate patterns of language use that allow political actors and media institutions to guide public perception and legitimize political actions.

In modern political news, journalists rely on these strategies to organize complex geopolitical events into accessible, persuasive narratives for mass audiences. This reliance becomes especially visible during periods of international crisis and armed conflict [39, 40]. When reporting on the war in Ukraine, British and American media must rapidly explain military decisions, diplomatic shifts, and humanitarian crises. Consequently, media discourse acquires a much stronger evaluative function [8]. It does not simply describe events; it actively participates in shaping public understanding of reality by emphasizing certain political actors positively while marginalizing others.

These strategies are identified through meticulous textual analysis. Researchers examine lexical choices, grammatical structures, metaphors, quotations, and evaluative

language within the media text. In Western coverage of the Ukraine conflict, these linguistic patterns are frequently used to execute van Dijk's "Ideological Square" [45]. They systematically maximize the virtues of the "in-group" (Ukraine and its democratic allies) and maximize the vices of the "out-group" (the Russian Federation). Recurring forms of representation, such as the repeated use of emotionally charged labels, reliance on intelligence authorities, numerical data, or historical comparisons — indicate the active presence of a specific discursive strategy.

Therefore, the analysis of these strategies provides a vital methodological tool for investigating how British and American media represent the war in Ukraine. It reveals how micro-level linguistic choices actively contribute to the construction of macro-level political narratives. The following subsections examine five major discursive strategies systematically utilized in Western reporting on the conflict: labelling, personalization, evidentiality, number games, and analogy. Each strategy performs a distinct communicative function, contributing to the overarching ideological framing of the war.

2.1.1. The discursive strategy of labelling

The discursive strategy of labelling, frequently referred to in linguistics as lexicalization or nomination, is a fundamental linguistic tool used to express ideology in news discourse. Established as a critical analytical category by scholars such as Roger Fowler [19] and further developed within the socio-cognitive framework of Teun A. van Dijk [45], this strategy demonstrates that the selection of a specific noun, adjective, or phrase to categorize an actor or event is never a neutral reflection of reality. Instead, it is a deliberate process of social evaluation.

Labelling is utilized extensively in mass media because it acts as a powerful cognitive shortcut. It instantly assigns a moral and political framework to a subject, dictating the reader's empathy before they process the factual details of the report. The primary mechanism of this strategy relies on deliberate lexical choice and nominalization, turning complex geopolitical processes into concrete, value-laden entities.

According to van Dijk [45], labelling is the primary mechanism executing the "Ideological Square." It is systematically used to apply positive lexical items to the "in-group" (Us) and intensely negative lexical items to the "out-group" (Them). In the coverage of the war in Ukraine, British and American media utilize strict lexical dichotomies to enforce the boundaries between the aggressor and the defender. This labelling strategy is heavily relied upon to simplify geopolitical complexity, legitimize Western military and financial aid, and maintain unwavering public solidarity.

To demonstrate how this strategy manifests in contemporary political journalism, below are examples of labelling found in leading British and American newspaper articles throughout the conflict.

1. "Now we see him for what he is, a blood-stained aggressor who believes in imperial conquest." [79]

This example demonstrates the discursive strategy of labelling through the emotionally charged expression "*blood-stained aggressor*." The label constructs Vladimir Putin as a violent and morally corrupt political actor directly responsible for bloodshed. Simultaneously, the phrase "*imperial conquest*" frames Russia's actions within the discourse of colonial expansionism and authoritarian aggression. Such labelling intensifies negative evaluation and encourages readers to perceive the invasion not as a geopolitical dispute, but as an illegitimate imperial project.

2. "Mr. Putin will go down in history as a butcher." [53]

The metaphorical label "*butcher*" functions as a strong evaluative characterization. It associates Putin with cruelty, brutality, and mass killing, reducing his political identity to that of a merciless perpetrator of violence. The label also carries moral condemnation and historical judgment, positioning him negatively within collective memory. This type of labelling contributes to the delegitimization of Russian leadership in Western media discourse.

3. "Ukraine's Heroic Zelensky Unites Divided Americans Against Putin." [89]

The adjective "*heroic*" serves as a positive label that constructs Volodymyr Zelensky as a courageous and inspirational wartime leader. Through this strategy, the media personalizes the conflict and creates a favorable moral contrast between Ukraine

and Russia. The label promotes solidarity with Ukraine while simultaneously strengthening the positive image of Zelensky as the embodiment of democratic resistance.

4. *“It is the behavior of a cornered, nuclear-armed state that perceives itself in terminal decline.”* [106]

In this example, the labels “*cornered*” and “*terminal decline*” depict Russia as weakened, unstable, and dangerous. The metaphor of a “*cornered*” state evokes the image of a desperate animal acting unpredictably under pressure. Such labelling frames Russia as both threatening and vulnerable, contributing to a discourse of instability surrounding the Kremlin.

5. *“Ukraine has long pushed for Western countries to put more economic pressure on Russia, choking off the profits it can access from its energy industry to fund its war effort.”* [92]

The phrase “*fund its war effort*” labels Russia primarily through militaristic and aggressive activity. Additionally, the metaphor “*choking off the profits*” constructs sanctions as a necessary restrictive mechanism aimed at weakening Russia’s capacity to continue the war. This labelling reinforces the representation of Russia as the aggressor whose economic resources directly sustain military violence.

6. *“The Kremlin’s war machine.”* [90]

The metaphorical label “*war machine*” depersonalizes the Russian state and presents it as a systematic mechanism of destruction. The phrase implies organization, efficiency, and continuous production of violence. Such labelling intensifies the perception of Russia as militarized and expansionist while legitimizing sanctions and international resistance against it.

7. *“I cannot believe this is being done in your name, or that you really want the pariah status it will bring to the Putin regime.”* [53]

The word “*regime*” functions as a politically loaded label frequently associated with authoritarian or undemocratic governments. Instead of referring neutrally to the Russian government or administration, the media uses this label to delegitimize Putin’s

power and emphasize repression, lack of democracy, and concentration of power. This contributes to the ideological polarization typical of political news discourse.

8. “*Hideous and barbaric venture by Vladimir Putin must end in failure.*” [53]

The adjectives “*hideous*” and “*barbaric*” operate as strongly negative evaluative labels. They morally condemn Russia’s actions and frame the invasion as uncivilized and unacceptable within modern international society. The phrase encourages readers to perceive the war not only as politically wrong but also as ethically monstrous.

9. “*The battle for Ukraine is not just a battle for territory; it is a battle of ideas, of historical narratives, and of conflicting visions of the future.*” [75]

The repeated label “*battle*” expands the meaning of the conflict beyond military confrontation. Through metaphorical labelling, the war is framed as an ideological and civilizational struggle involving competing values and historical interpretations. This strategy elevates the conflict to a broader symbolic level and increases its perceived global significance.

10. “*four years into its brutal and ill-fated war.*” [69]

The adjectives “*brutal*” and “*ill-fated*” label the Russian invasion as both morally violent and strategically doomed. The expression shapes reader perception by presenting the war as destructive, unsuccessful, and irrational. This type of evaluative labelling contributes to the negative ideological framing of Russia’s military actions in Western media coverage.

11. “*Kremlin forcing big firms to join 'witch-hunt' against internet rebels, claims report.*” [88]

The phrase “*witch-hunt*” is a negative label that shows the action as unfair and aggressive, not normal or legal. It suggests unjust punishment. The words “internet rebels” label people online as opposers of authority, making them seem like a group resisting power. Together, these labels create a clear opposition between the Kremlin and those who are portrayed as resisting it.

12. “*Ukraine struggles to cope with America's destructive peace plans.*” [77]

The word “destructive” is a negative label that evaluates the peace plans as harmful rather than neutral or beneficial. It already guides the reader’s judgment before any explanation is given. The phrase “peace plans” is also used in a loaded way, because it contrasts positively valued “peace” with a strongly negative adjective, creating tension and skepticism about the initiative. Overall, the labeling frames the plans as damaging to Ukraine and shapes a critical perception of the U.S. role in the process.

13. “*As Ukraine strikes deeper inside Russia, the paranoid Putin retreats further into paranoia.*” [111]

The label “*paranoid*” is a negative evaluative characterization that presents Putin as mentally unstable and overly suspicious, rather than politically rational. The repetition of “*paranoia*” intensifies this judgement and strengthens the psychological framing of his behaviour. The verb “retreats” also contributes to negative labelling by suggesting withdrawal and loss of control.

In summary, the strategy of labelling acts as a functional tool for ideological polarization. By deploying value-laden metaphors and emotional descriptors, Western publications construct a rigid moral dichotomy between the "barbaric" out-group and the "heroic" in-group. These lexical choices are not merely descriptive; they serve to manage public perception, legitimize political intervention, and frame the conflict as a binary struggle between good and evil.

2.1.2. The discursive strategy of personalization

Personalization in political media discourse is a strategic mechanism that frequently uses personification. This strategy attributes human qualities, emotions, and agency to abstract concepts or institutional entities. By shifting the focus from impersonal systemic forces to individual human narratives, complex political realities feel more intimate. This acts as a powerful tool for building empathy. It establishes a direct psychological bridge between distant geopolitical events and the everyday experiences of the reader.

Beyond individual actors, personalization is primarily employed through symbolic representation and narrative construction. Complex ideologies or state actions are often given human attributes to make them more approachable. These symbols are integrated into dramatic storylines where political events are framed as immersive narratives. It captures public attention and fosters a deeper, more visceral understanding of the conflict at hand.

Ultimately, the power of personalization lies in its emotional appeal. By attributing human experiences, such as suffering or resilience, to political entities, the discourse taps into the audience's capacity for empathy. This emotional investment is crucial for managing public opinion. It ensures that the narrative is processed as a moving human story that demands a moral response rather than a dry analysis of foreign policy. In British and American reporting, this strategy ensures that the war in Ukraine remains a deeply personal concern for the domestic audience.

1. *"Moscow just does not want peace: as Trump and Putin speak, Russia's behavior on the battlefield and at the negotiating table tells a different story entirely."* [64]

The capital city "*Moscow*" stands in for the entire Russian state — its government, military leadership, and political establishment — all reduced to a single stubborn personality. The verb "want" is the language of human desire, and its application here strips Russia of strategic complexity, presenting it instead as an irrational actor simply refusing to cooperate.

2. *"Europe is facing a huge decision on an unprecedented plan for Ukraine."* [65]

"*Europe*" is portrayed as a single person "*facing*" an important decision. Such personification hides the complexity of European institutions and political disagreements between states, creating instead an image of a unified actor standing at a critical historical moment. This strengthens the sense of urgency and responsibility in the discourse.

3. *"The EU has committed to financing Ukraine for the next two years either way."* [65]

The word “*committed*” gives the European Union human qualities associated with loyalty and personal dedication. Instead of presenting financial support as a bureaucratic decision, the media frames the EU as a dependable partner morally obligated to stand by Ukraine. This personification encourages emotional trust in the institution.

4. *"Kyiv is paying the price of the upheaval with constant churn and relentless loss."* [67]

The city of “Kyiv” is personified as a victim. The phrase emphasizes suffering, endurance, and sacrifice, transforming the city into a symbolic victim of aggression. Such framing makes the consequences of war feel more personal and emotionally engaging for readers.

5. *"Russia's economy is struggling. But that won't bring Putin to the negotiating table for years."* [66]

It gives an abstract economic system human characteristics of exhaustion and weakness. This personification creates the image of Russia as a vulnerable actor under pressure, reinforcing the narrative that sanctions are causing visible damage.

6. *"Washington warned on Tuesday that Russia could attack Ukrainian government facilities in the coming days as Moscow said it would show “no mercy” over an assassination it has blamed on Ukraine."* [71]

By using the name of the capital city as a personified agent of “warning,” the discourse creates an image of a singular, authoritative voice. This simplifies the coordinated efforts of various state departments and intelligence agencies into a single communicative act. It portrays the government as a watchful guardian speaking with one mind.

7. *"NATO renews membership vow to Ukraine."* [57]

The use of the word “vow” is deeply personal, often associated with marriage or sacred promises. Applying this to a military alliance like NATO personalizes a strategic partnership, framing it as a human-like bond of loyalty and protection. This elevates a geopolitical treaty to the level of emotional and moral commitment.

8. *"The UN appealed for \$5.6 billion."* [109]

The United Nations is personified through the verb “*appealed*,” which resembles a human plea for help and compassion. Instead of sounding like a formal institutional request, the statement becomes emotionally charged and humanitarian, encouraging readers to respond with empathy.

9. “*Europe will have to boost defense spending to levels that would completely dwarf the current cost of backing Ukraine.*” [65]

“Europe” is personified as a rational actor capable of planning for the future and making strategic decisions. This framing presents increased defense spending as a logical and necessary response, encouraging readers to perceive military support for Ukraine as an act of common sense and responsibility.

10. “*Kyiv has spent the last eleven years pouring time, money, and effort into reinforcing the fortress belt.*” [87]

In this construction, the city of Kyiv is not merely suffering, as in example four, but acting — planning, investing, and building with foresight and determination. The personification here creates an image of a city as a strategic agent, almost a military commander, whose long years of preparation are now paying dividends. The phrase “*pouring time, money, and effort*” evokes the human experience of dedicated labor and sacrifice.

11. “*The West should do whatever it takes to help Ukrainians survive the winter.*” [60]

The statement calls on Western countries to do everything possible to help Ukrainians get through the winter, highlighting the need to protect people and support them during difficult conditions. It uses personalization to create empathy by focusing on human suffering. The phrase “survive the winter” is an idiom that emphasizes how serious and harsh the situation is.

12. “*By not tapping Russian assets for Ukraine, Europe showed its fear.*” [117]

This example shows personalization because “Europe” is treated as a single person-like actor. The phrase “*showed its fear*” gives Europe a human emotion. This simplifies complex political decisions and presents them as an emotional reaction rather than institutional policy.

13. *“On one side, White House special envoy Steve Witkoff will be in Moscow for the latest round of peace talks with the Kremlin over the Ukraine war.”* [115]

In this sentence, “*Kremlin*” functions as a form of personalization through institutional personification. The abstract political structure of the Russian state is represented as a single actor involved in negotiations, which gives it human-like agency. Instead of describing multiple government bodies or officials, the discourse simplifies them into one unified “speaker” or decision-maker.

14. *“Ukraine's fate in 2026 will define the international order.”* [128]

This example shows personalization through abstraction of agency and human-like “*fate*” attribution to a state. The country “*Ukraine*” is presented as a single entity with a “*fate*,” which is a concept usually associated with human life. This gives the state human-like existence and destiny. The phrase also attributes strong agency to Ukraine’s situation, suggesting that it has the power to influence the global system.

2.1.3. The discursive strategy of evidentiality

Evidentiality is a discursive strategy used to indicate the source of information and the degree of certainty behind a statement. In media discourse, this strategy is essential for establishing the credibility and authority of a report. By signaling whether information comes from firsthand observation, official reports, or expert intuition, journalists provide a basis for the audience to trust the reliability of the news.

In political reporting, evidentiality is implemented through several specific linguistic mechanisms. Journalists frequently use attribution markers such as “according to” or “as reported by” to link information to specific authorities. This practice distances the media outlet from the claim while grounding the report in external expertise or governmental power. Furthermore, direct quotations add a sense of authenticity. Using the exact words of political actors serves as a linguistic signal that the information is a primary, unfiltered source.

Similarly, the presentation of official pronouncements from government agencies or international bodies treats these as “fact-based” foundations. Because these

sources carry significant institutional weight, the information is positioned as verified knowledge rather than mere speculation.

1. *"According to local monitoring channels and the Ukrainian air force, the attack involved more than 200 drones launched simultaneously across multiple regions, making it one of the largest single strikes of the war."* [55]

The marker "according to" identifies specialized institutional and technical sources. By referencing the "air force" and "monitoring channels," the report utilizes expert validation, implying the information is based on technical surveillance rather than journalistic speculation. This distances the outlet from the raw data while using the authority of military and civic monitoring infrastructure.

2. *"An intelligence dossier this week claimed that Russian operatives had been systematically targeting Ukrainian government officials abroad, with at least a dozen plots uncovered across five European countries in the past year alone."* [88]

The mention of an "intelligence dossier" acts as a documentary evidential marker. The existence of a structured investigative document frames the allegations not as journalistic inference but as the findings of a dedicated institutional process, lending the report an air of classified authority.

3. *"The scale of the internet crackdown is documented in a new report according to an investigation by RKS Global, an advocacy group for internet freedoms, which tracked over 300 separate instances of VPN blocking across Russian regions in a single month."* [83]

This is a clear use of expert validation through a third-party organization. By explicitly defining RKS Global as an "advocacy group for internet freedoms," the discourse provides a descriptive qualifier that establishes the source's specialized knowledge and reliability in this specific domain.

4. *"Three Western intelligence officials from different countries told AP that Russia has been accelerating the recruitment of sabotage operatives across Europe, with training facilities identified in at least two countries bordering NATO territory."* [88]

The use of source triangulation strengthens evidentiality. By indicating that multiple independent sources confirm the same trend, the media suggests a consensus of expert opinion, which significantly increases the report's credibility.

5. *"Putin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told AP he didn't see 'any need' to comment on the allegations, adding only that Russia categorically rejects what he described as a coordinated Western disinformation campaign."* [89]

Directly citing an official refusal to comment serves as an evidential check. It provides a balanced view by presenting the out-group's official stance as a primary source, ensuring the narrative remains grounded in the actual communicative acts of all parties involved.

6. *"Ukraine struck Russian oil refineries, officials said, just hours after the United States granted Moscow another waiver on oil sanctions, a sequence of events that Western analysts described as deliberate and strategically timed."* [68]

The report utilizes attribution to unnamed officials to provide a basis for a complex geopolitical event. The deliberate vagueness of "*officials said*" is itself an evidential strategy — it invokes institutional authority while protecting the identity of sources whose disclosures may not be formally authorized.

7. *"The Russian Ministry of Defence responded by announcing only that the country's air defenses had intercepted 258 Ukrainian drones overnight, making no reference to the refineries struck or the fires reported by independent monitors across three oblasts."* [68]

Reporting on an official pronouncement from a state body treats the information as a "fact-based" foundation. Citing a high-precision figure provides a documented record of the official state narrative, regardless of whether that narrative is contested by other sources.

8. *"Russia is now spending nearly 40% of its budget 'on aggression,' NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said, adding that the alliance's own intelligence assessments suggest the figure may be even higher when classified procurement is factored in."* [90]

The use of direct quotation from a high-level political figure serves as an authoritative source signal. By quoting the head of NATO, the journalist presents the information as verified knowledge backed by the institutional weight and intelligence capabilities of a major international body.

9. *"According to the Washington Post, which reviewed internal Ukrainian government documents, Zelensky's team had privately acknowledged that holding the remaining Donbas territory would require a level of Western military support that had not yet been formally committed."* [116]

By stating that internal government documents were reviewed, the report strengthens its credibility using primary sources rather than hearsay. This strategy presents the journalist as an investigator uncovering hidden information instead of merely repeating public statements. The contrast between official public narratives and private documents creates the impression that the article reveals a deeper and more objective truth.

10. *"The strikes have damaged or destroyed about 20% of Russia's refining capacity since early 2024, according to an assessment by The New York Times based on satellite imagery, energy market data, and interviews with three independent analysts."* [94]

This example demonstrates evidential layering by combining several forms of proof, including satellite imagery, market data, and expert analysis. Each type of evidence supports the others, making the claim appear more reliable and difficult to challenge. As a result, the report presents the information as carefully verified and strongly supported from different perspectives.

11. *"Senior U.S. and European officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly, said the peace framework presented to Russia had been substantially revised following direct objections from Kyiv."* [115]

The phrase "speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized" is a common evidential marker in political journalism. It signals that the information comes from insiders with direct knowledge of the issue, while also

explaining why their identities cannot be revealed. This framing increases the credibility of the report by presenting the anonymity as necessary for sharing sensitive but trustworthy information.

Overall, evidentiality is an important strategy in media discourse because it helps journalists present information as reliable and trustworthy. By using official statements, expert opinions, documents, and anonymous sources, the media strengthens the credibility of news reports and influences how audiences understand political events and war-related issues.

2.1.4. The discursive strategy of number games

The number game is a discursive strategy that relies on the strategic use of quantitative data. By incorporating statistics, percentages, and financial figures, writers can fortify their arguments. In discourse analysis, this technique is seen as a way to project an image of scientific precision. It moves a statement from the realm of opinion into the realm of objective fact, making the claims much harder for an audience to contest.

The persuasive power of this strategy rests on the assumption that numbers are neutral and self-evident. In political media, the number game often provides an authoritative "veneer" to a specific narrative. Whether the figures relate to economic growth or military casualties, their primary function is to lend a sense of reliability. This institutional weight makes discourse appear more grounded and professional.

Here are some examples from media to prove this point:

1. " *Currently, strikes at distances of 20-plus kilometres are twice as many compared to March, and at distances of 30-plus kilometres, they are four times as many, showing a clear acceleration in Ukraine's long-range drone capability.*" [55]

The media uses growth multipliers "*twice as many*" and "*four times as many*" makes the military escalation appear clear and measurable. Instead of simply describing change, the numbers create the impression of rapid and unavoidable growth in Ukraine's drone capabilities.

2. *" Kyiv plans to scale up drone production to more than seven million units in 2026, a figure that would make Ukraine one of the largest producers of unmanned aerial systems in the world."* [55]

The large figure of “seven million units” creates a sense of massive industrial scale. By presenting the number as a future expectation, the media frames Ukraine as becoming technologically strong and independent.

3. *" Russia is now spending nearly 40% of its budget 'on aggression,' NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said, adding that the figure represents the highest proportion of military expenditure recorded by any major economy since the Cold War."* [90]

The percentage “40%” simplifies Russia’s budget into an easy-to-understand figure that suggests heavy militarization. The comparison with the Cold War adds historical importance and makes the situation appear more dramatic.

4. *" Russia's National Welfare Fund has declined by 57% since the start of the war, dropping from a reserve designed to cushion the economy against external shocks to a depleted emergency buffer that analysts warn may be exhausted within two years."* [66]

A specific percentage like “57%” provides a layer of precise evidence to support the claim of financial depletion. Combined with warnings from analysts, the statistic also creates the sense that Russia’s economic problems may continue to worsen in the future.

5. *Ukrainian drone strikes sent average refinery throughput plummeting to its lowest level since December 2009, wiping out nearly two decades of capacity growth in a matter of weeks."* [55]

Referring to “the lowest level since December 2009” places the event into a broader historical context. This comparison makes the damage especially severe and emphasizes the long-term impact of the attacks.

6. *"Russia's energy revenues had nearly doubled in March, to \$19 billion, from \$9.75 billion in February."* [68]

The contrast of two specific financial figures (\$9.75 billion vs. \$19 billion) illustrates the strategy as a tool for highlighting economic shifts. Presenting the starting and ending points allows the numbers to "speak for themselves," creating a factual foundation for the narrative.

8. *" The port facility struck by Ukrainian sea drones is more than 1,500 kilometres from Kyiv — and, notably, closer to Tehran than it is to the Ukrainian capital, underscoring the extraordinary range at which Ukraine is now conducting offensive operations."* [84]

The mention of "1,500 kilometres" and the comparison with Tehran emphasize the extraordinary range of Ukraine's operations. This numerical comparison makes the strike feel larger in geopolitical significance.

9. *" Emergency services confirmed that 224 personnel and 56 pieces of equipment were deployed to the site within the first hour of the strike, as fires burned across an area of more than 40 hectares."* [68]

The use of precise integers "224," "56," and "40 hectares" — creates technical accuracy and procedural transparency to the report. These specific counts make the description of the emergency response resemble an official operational log rather than a journalistic narrative. The effect is to ground the event in physical, measurable reality, making the scale of the destruction feel documented and verified rather than estimated or approximated.

10. *"Russia has captured 1,714 square miles of Ukrainian territory over the past twelve months — an area slightly larger than the state of Rhode Island — at a cost, Western officials estimate, of more than 120,000 casualties."* [123]

Comparing the captured territory to "*Rhode Island*" helps readers better imagine the scale of the occupation. The addition of casualty figures suggests that Russia's territorial gains came at an extremely high human cost.

In summary, the number game turns complex political and military events into simple, measurable facts. By using statistics instead of just descriptions, the media makes its reporting feel neutral and scientific. This objective image makes it harder for

the audience to argue with the claims. Ultimately, the strategy uses the authority of numbers to make a specific narrative seem like an undeniable truth.

2.1.5. The discursive strategy of analogy

The strategy of analogy works by comparing new or complex situations to familiar ones to make them easier to understand. In discourse analysis, this is used to build a "frame of reference." By linking a current event to something the audience already knows, the writer can simplify difficult ideas and influence how people feel about them.

These comparisons can be very direct or more subtle. Their main goal is to shape public opinion by using the past to explain the present. In political media, analogies turn abstract policies into relatable stories. This helps the audience grasp the "logic" of a situation through the lens of a well-known scenario.

By connecting today's politics to famous historical moments, journalists guide the reader's response. It makes the narrative feel more grounded and convincing. Below are examples of how the Western press compares the war in Ukraine to historical events to help the audience interpret the conflict.

1. *"We are seeing acts of war, attacks on civilians and destruction not seen since World War II, and Putin's barbaric venture must end in failure."* [53]

This analogy links the current level of destruction directly to World War II. By bypassing all modern conflicts, the media suggests that the situation in Ukraine is a crisis of historic proportions. It frames the war not just as a local fight, but as a global event that matches the most significant struggle in Western history. Russia is implicitly cast in the role of Nazi Germany, and the implication — that the aggressor must be stopped at all costs — follows naturally from the historical parallel without ever needing to be stated directly.

2. *"In effect, what Ukrainians are letting us do is extend 1938 — to go back and do what should have been done then, before the catastrophe became irreversible."* [82]

The reference to 1938 invokes the Munich Agreement, at which Britain and France chose appeasement over confrontation, handing Czechoslovakia to Hitler in the

hope of avoiding war. By suggesting that supporting Ukraine "extends" that year — effectively replaying it with a different outcome — the discourse frames the present conflict as a second chance to correct one of history's most condemned decisions. This analogy is particularly powerful because it transforms passive non-intervention into an active moral failure, implying that any hesitation to support Ukraine is not merely a policy choice but a repetition of a catastrophe the West has spent nearly a century regretting.

3. *"Zelenskyy invokes Churchill as he calls on the UK to do more to help Ukraine, drawing a direct parallel between Britain's darkest hour and the existential struggle Ukraine faces today."* [81]

By aligning the Ukrainian president with Winston Churchill — the defining symbol of British wartime resolve — this analogy transforms Zelenskyy's appeal into a continuation of British heroic history rather than a request from a foreign leader. The invocation of Churchill is not accidental: it speaks directly to a British audience's deepest national mythology, connecting Ukraine's resistance to the spirit of the Blitz and the Battle of Britain.

4. *"Not even the Nazis beat them like that, they said, sobbing — words that hung in the air as a measure of how completely ordinary language had failed to capture what they had witnessed."* [74]

This analogy uses the Nazi occupation as a benchmark for cruelty, invoking the ultimate historical symbol of evil to describe Russian conduct. By giving voice to victims who claim the current violence exceeds even that standard, the media uses reported speech to introduce the most extreme possible historical comparison while maintaining a degree of journalistic distance.

5. *"Boris Johnson labeled Putin a 'blood-stained aggressor' who believes in imperial conquest — language that drew immediate comparisons to the rhetoric used to describe Hitler in the years before the Second World War."* [79]

The description of Putin as a "blood-stained aggressor" who believes in "imperial conquest" creates a historical analogy with the language once used to describe Hitler before the Second World War. Instead of making a direct comparison,

the discourse subtly encourages readers to associate Putin with past images of dictatorship and expansionism. This strategy allows the audience to draw their own conclusions, making the comparison feel more natural and persuasive while strengthening the negative portrayal of Russia's actions.

In summary, analogies help the audience understand the war by comparing it to famous moments from the past. By linking today's events to well-known history, like World War II, the media makes the conflict feel more familiar and urgent. These comparisons turn a complicated political situation into a clear story of right and wrong. Ultimately, using history in this way helps the media guide public opinion and justify the need for action.

The analysis of the five main discursive strategies — labelling, personalization, evidentiality, number games, and analogy shows that British and American media represent the war in Ukraine through a carefully constructed narrative. These linguistic strategies demonstrate that the media does not only provide information about events but also shapes the audience's understanding of them through specific ideological and moral perspectives.

2.2 Multimodality in British and American news discourse

2.2.1 Multimodality in Media Discourse

In contemporary linguistic research, the study of media discourse has moved beyond purely verbal texts. Scholars now explore the broader concept of multimodality. This approach recognizes that meaning is no longer produced by language alone. Instead, it is a composite construct generated through the interaction of multiple semiotic modes. These modes include written words, photography, layout, color, and typography [38]. In British and American political news, an article functions as a multimodal construct. Here, visual and verbal elements are inextricably linked to fulfill specific ideological goals.

The theoretical groundwork for this field was primarily established by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen [26] in their seminal work on the "grammar of visual

design." They argue that visual communication, much like linguistic syntax, follows a structured set of rules. These rules allow it to represent social actors and establish power relations. In this framework, images do not merely illustrate a story. Instead, they perform independent discursive work. For instance, the "gaze" of a subject in a photograph can "demand" an emotional response through direct eye contact. Alternatively, it can "offer" information for objective observation by looking away. Similarly, camera angles serve as markers of social hierarchy. A low-angle shot can visually empower a leader, while a high-angle shot can render a subject vulnerable or subordinate.

Beyond the mechanics of individual images, scholars such as Carey Jewitt [24] and Kay O'Halloran emphasize the importance of "intersemiotic complementarity." This refers to the way different modes work together to reinforce a unified narrative. This synergy is especially potent in digital journalism.

The first image presents a Ukrainian national flag flying in front of destroyed residential buildings in Borodianka (Appendix 1). This visual example demonstrates how ideological meaning is constructed through symbolism, color contrast, and composition. The bright blue and yellow of the flag sharply contrast with the grey ruins in the background. Such visual opposition creates a symbolic distinction between hope and destruction, or resilience and violence. The placement of the flag in the foreground visually prioritizes Ukrainian national identity, even amidst the surrounding devastation.

From a multimodal perspective, the image works with accompanying political headlines and news reports. Together, they frame Ukraine as both a victim of aggression and a symbol of resistance. The destroyed civilian infrastructure evokes emotional reactions such as sympathy, shock, and humanitarian concern. At the same time, the national flag functions as a powerful ideological symbol. It reinforces narratives of unity, sovereignty, and survival. As a result, the image guides the audience toward a morally charged interpretation of the conflict.

The second image shows President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressing the British Parliament during the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Appendix 2). This is a clear

example of personalization and emotional framing in multimodal political discourse. Zelenskyy appears in military-style clothing rather than formal political attire. This choice creates an image of authenticity and shows solidarity with ordinary Ukrainians and soldiers. His serious facial expression and direct mode of address establish a strong emotional connection with the audience.

The visual framing is strengthened by historical references in the accompanying article. In the text, Zelenskyy invokes Winston Churchill and the British experience during the Second World War. Through this interaction between verbal and visual elements, the discourse constructs Zelenskyy as a modern wartime leader defending democratic values. The parliamentary setting also legitimizes his political position. It visually demonstrates international support and solidarity. The image functions as more than just documentation of a speech; it is a persuasive tool that humanizes the Ukrainian leader and emotionally engages Western audiences.

The third image depicts anti-tank hedgehogs placed in Kyiv during the invasion (Appendix 3). This example demonstrates the use of historical analogy and symbolic representation. These anti-tank barriers are strongly associated with defensive measures used during the Second World War. This connection immediately creates historical parallels in the mind of the audience.

The fourth image presents a TIME Magazine cover featuring a quotation by President Volodymyr (Appendix 9). This image constructs its meaning through the deliberate combination of national symbolism and political rhetoric. It presents Ukraine not simply as a country at war, but as a moral force within a broader ideological conflict. The flat red background removes all contextual details — there is no flag, battlefield, or crowd. As a result, the composition focuses entirely on a single figure placed beneath the overwhelming weight of the typography. Zelenskyy stands at the very bottom of the frame, visually reduced by the large amount of negative space above him. The typography gradually increases in size and ends with the isolated, bolded word “Nobody.” This word does not merely describe isolation; it performs it visually. His side profile and averted gaze present him as a figure for contemplation

rather than a dominant leader. In addition, his muted olive jacket contrasts sharply with the aggressive red background, emphasizing his solitude even further.

The linguistic dimension strengthens this interpretation with equal precision. The subtext consists of four short declarative sentences describing lost territory, thousands killed, and declining global support. Their sharp, report-like rhythm avoids emotional warmth and forces the reader to confront each statement individually. The repetition of the word “Nobody” changes what could have been a motivational slogan into an acknowledgment of lonely and unsupported conviction. Finally, the title *The Lonely Fight* unites the visual and verbal elements of the cover. Together, they construct Zelenskyy as a leader who continues to maintain belief despite growing uncertainty and lack of collective confidence. In this way, the cover goes beyond simple documentation and actively shapes public perception by creating a narrative of burdened and isolated resolve.

By presenting military obstacles within an urban civilian environment, the image produces a sense of urgency and danger. The visual comparison between modern Ukraine and wartime Europe encourages readers to interpret the conflict through the lens of historical memory. This ideological framing positions Ukraine as a defender of European democratic values against authoritarian aggression. The image also works multimodally with headlines and political commentary. These texts repeatedly compare the war in Ukraine to historical European conflicts. As a result, the audience is encouraged to perceive the current war not as an isolated regional event, but as part of a larger historical struggle with global significance.

2.2.2 Multimodal Strategies in Political News

The practical application of multimodal discourse analysis is perhaps most visible in political caricatures. These images do not merely illustrate the news. Instead, they condense complex ideological arguments into a single, highly persuasive frame. By using the "visual grammar" of Kress and van Leeuwen [26], we can see how British and American media use these drawings to execute the Ideological Square [49]. These

caricatures systematically maximize the perceived "vices" of the out-group while guiding the audience toward a specific moral conclusion.

The first caricature employs a powerful historical analogy by depicting Vladimir Putin in Napoleonic attire (Appendix 4). He is shown riding a red-colored map of Russia like a horse, using reins to pull at a burning map of Ukraine. This visual choice directly supports the labelling strategy of "imperial conquest". By dressing Putin as a failed 19th-century conqueror, the artist suggests that his goals are outdated and destined for defeat. The use of the color red for Russia — symbolizing both blood and historical aggression — contrasts with the orange flames of Ukraine, visually framing the invasion as a destructive, personal obsession.

A similar strategy of animalistic labelling is found in the image of the massive Russian bear swiping at a yellow-and-blue map of Ukraine (Appendix 7). This uses a well-known analogy to represent Russia as a raw, predatory force. The "paper airplanes" flying around the bear, decorated with the flags of Western allies, act as a visual number game. They represent the collective international response. However, their flimsy material suggests that sanctions or diplomatic aid may be insufficient to stop such animalistic violence. This creates a sense of urgency, encouraging the audience to feel that stronger intervention is a moral necessity.

Visual personalization is also used to represent political hierarchies and influence. In the split-panel cartoon, the artist uses scale and positioning to show power relations. In the first panel, Donald Trump is shown making a loud claim about "Biden's weakness." (Appendix 6) In the second panel, a giant, looming Putin stares down at a tiny version of Trump tucked into his suit pocket. This dramatic change in scale visually "labels" Trump as a tool of the Kremlin rather than an independent actor. This supports the personalization strategy by reducing complex international alliances to a simple relationship between a "boss" and a "subordinate".

The theme of leaders as "tools" is extended in the caricature showing a shirtless Putin wearing a tool belt. Among his actual tools is a small, smiling head of Donald Trump (Appendix 8). Putin is shown demanding "respect" from a calm, stoic Zelenskyy. The visual contrast between Putin's aggressive, shirtless appearance and

Zelenskyy's composed, standing posture creates a clear moral dichotomy. Following van Dijk's framework, the in-group leader (Zelenskyy) is visually "maximized" in virtue through his quiet strength. Meanwhile, the out-group leader (Putin) is "maximized" in vice by being shown as a demanding and irrational bully.

Next, the image of Putin blowing out birthday candles on a Russian-flag cake — with the Grim Reaper standing behind him — serves as a moral evaluation (Appendix 5). This uses symbolism to turn a moment of celebration into an omen of death. The grotesque exaggeration of Putin's facial features is a form of visual labelling that associates him with cruelty and physical decay. By placing the figure of Death in the "Ideal" section of the layout, the artist suggests that the inevitable result of the "Putin regime" is destruction.

Furthermore, the strategy of victim-blaming and gaslighting is personified in the caricature of Putin riding a predatory bear as it mauls a civilian (Appendix 10). The man, wearing a t-shirt labeled "Ukraine," is shown in a defensive, vulnerable position, yet Putin's speech bubble reads, *"Stop threatening me!"* This creates a sharp semiotic contradiction: the visual evidence (the massive bear attacking a smaller human) shows blatant aggression, while the linguistic element (the demand to stop being threatened) represents the Kremlin's narrative of "preemptive defense." By using this irony, the artist highlights the absurdity of the out-group's rhetoric, framing the "threat" from Ukraine as a purely fictional justification for raw imperial violence.

The cyclical nature of this aggression is most profoundly captured in the two-panel "then and now" caricature (Appendix 11). The artist uses the "before" and "after" structure to illustrate a total moral and physical decay. In the 1999 panel, the use of Boris Yeltsin's head as the "chassis" of the tank visually communicates the labeling strategy of Putin as a product of the previous regime's failures. Putin is shown as a small but calculating figure, using the Chechen War as a literal vehicle for his political ascent.

In the 2022 panel, the "visual grammar" shifts toward the grotesque. The tank's "head" has evolved from a recognizable human (Yeltsin) into a bloated, featureless, and dehumanized pink mass, symbolizing the calcification of the Putin regime. The

figure in the hatch is now headless, a powerful visual metaphor for a leadership that has lost its rationality or "moral compass." The alteration of the flag from *"Putin for President"* to *"Anyone but Putin"* completes the moral evaluation: the war in Ukraine is framed not as a strategic move, but as the final, destructive stage of a "grim cycle of history." By removing Putin's head in the second panel, the artist suggests that the dictator has been consumed by the very machinery of war he used to gain power, shifting the audience's perception from fear of a "mastermind" to the horror of a mindless, runaway machine of destruction.

Ultimately, these multimodal strategies work in perfect harmony with linguistic ones. They bridge the gap between distant political events and the reader's own emotions. Through caricature, the media ensures that the war in Ukraine is not just understood as a geopolitical conflict. It is seen as a relatable human drama involving heroes, villains, and clear historical lessons.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 2

The analysis conducted in this chapter shows that British and American media coverage of the war in Ukraine is not a neutral presentation of events. Through five main discursive strategies together with multimodal elements, the media actively shapes how the conflict is interpreted and evaluated by audiences.

Labelling is used to construct clear moral categories between the opposing sides. At the lexical level, this strategy is realized primarily through evaluative nouns and adjectives with strong negative connotations applied to Russian actors — *"butcher," "blood-stained aggressor," "hideous," "barbaric," "ill-fated"* — and positive evaluative adjectives such as *"heroic"* reserved for Ukrainian figures. Metaphorical labels like *"war machine"* and *"imperial conquest"* further depersonalize Russia and frame its actions as systemic and criminal. These lexical choices do not simply describe reality but guide the reader toward a specific moral interpretation from the very beginning of the discourse.

Personalization makes the conflict more direct and emotionally engaging. Its main linguistic instrument is personification — the grammatical attribution of human qualities to abstract entities through verbs. Expressions such as "*Kyiv is paying the price*," "*Moscow does not want peace*," or "*the EU has committed*" assign emotions, desires, and agency to cities and institutions. Active verb constructions «*Kyiv spent eleven years preparing*," "*Washington struggled to achieve a breakthrough*."

Evidentiality strengthens the perceived reliability of media reports through specific attribution markers and reporting verbs. The strategy relies on syntactic constructions such as "*according to*," "*as confirmed by*," and "*officials said*," as well as direct quotation and embedded clauses like "*speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly*."

The number game contributes to a sense of objectivity and precision. It relies on numerical precision ("*57% decline*," "*1,714 square miles*," "*92% interception rate*"), temporal anchors ("*the lowest level since December 2009*"), growth multipliers ("*four times as many*"), and geographic comparisons ("*closer to Tehran than to Kyiv*"). These numbers make the situation appear more structured and easier to evaluate.

Analogy places the conflict within familiar historical frameworks through allusion and intertextual reference. The main stylistic figure is historical allusion to World War II, the Munich Agreement of 1938, and the figure of Churchill. Also, implicit comparison, which activates cultural associations without direct statement. Epithets such as "*the biggest land conflict since World War II*" and metaphorical constructions linking Putin's rhetoric to "*the language of the 1930s*" guide the reader toward predetermined moral conclusions through already settled historical judgement.

Multimodal elements further reinforce these discursive strategies. Images such as the Ukrainian flag over bombed building, caricatures of Putin in historical or animal-like forms, and magazine covers like TIME combine visual and verbal elements to intensify meaning. These visuals do not merely illustrate the text but actively participate in constructing ideological interpretations of the war.

Overall, these strategies work together to shape a coherent and emotionally charged representation of the conflict. The media does not only report facts but also organizes them into recognizable moral and narrative patterns. As a result, the reader is guided toward a structured understanding of the war, where meanings appear clear and self-evident. This shows that even factual news reporting is always influenced by framing, selection, and interpretation [12].

CONCLUSION

The research examined how ideology is constructed and transmitted in British and American media coverage of the war in Ukraine through discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, and multimodal discourse analysis. It explored both the theoretical foundations of media ideology and its practical realization in journalistic texts and images, showing how linguistic and visual choices systematically shape public understanding of the conflict.

The theoretical part of the study demonstrated that mass media cannot be viewed as a neutral or objective transmitter of information. Instead, it plays an important role in producing and reproducing ideological meanings. Drawing on the works of Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak, it was shown that media language is always influenced by social structures, political interests, and relations of power. In particular, van Dijk's concept of the "Ideological Square" [49] was useful in explaining how media discourse tends to emphasize positive information about one group (the in-group) while emphasizing negative information about another group (the out-group). These patterns are not random, but repeated and systematic across different texts.

In the practical part of the paper, the representation of the war in Ukraine within British and American media was analyzed. The findings revealed that personalization was the most frequently utilized strategy in representing the conflict, occurring in 33% of the analyzed material. This was followed by the strategy of labelling (28%), the number game (14%), analogy (7%) and evidentiality (18%). These statistics indicate a strategic preference in Western media for emotional engagement and moral categorization, positioning Ukraine as a justified, heroic defender while framing Russia as an illegitimate aggressor.

The analysis further demonstrated that these strategies are implemented through specific linguistic means. Evidentiality, the number game, and analogy primarily rely on factual appearance and structural precision, utilizing attribution markers like "*according to*" or "*officials said*," as well as numerical data such as percentages and

growth multipliers. Labelling, personalization, and victimization make extensive use of stylistic figures, including evaluative adjectives ("*blood-stained*," "*heroic*"), metaphors ("*war machine*," "*butcher*"), and personification, which attributes human desires and emotions to inanimate subjects like "*Kyiv*" or "*Moscow*".

Furthermore, the investigation of non-verbal materials, such as photographs and political caricatures, identified victimization and analogy as the most common strategies in visual representations, accounting for 40% of the samples analyzed each. This was followed by personification, which each appeared in 20% of the visual materials. These elements, analyzed through "visual grammar", use color contrast, scale, and composition to reinforce the verbal narrative and emotionally anchor the reader.

Based on the conclusions from both the theoretical and practical parts, it can be concluded that British and American media coverage is structured around a stable ideological framework. The strategic use of linguistic devices and visual materials highlights that even factual news reporting is influenced by framing and interpretation. Further research in this field can contribute to a deeper understanding of how these multifaceted communication strategies shape global perceptions and societal dynamics.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1



February 2023

<https://www.reutersconnect.com/item/a-ukrainian-national-flag-flies-in-front-of-a-destroyed-residential-building-in-borodianka/dGFnOnJldXRlcnMuY29tLDIwMjM6bmV3c2lsX1JDMk1EWjk3NlVXQg>

APPENDIX 2



<https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/europe/100000008245195/zelensky-british-parliament-ukraine.html>

APPENDIX 3



<https://www.forbes.com/sites/pauliddon/2022/11/29/not-seen-since-world-war-ii-the-worrying-precedent-many-are-evoking-for-the-ukraine-war/>

APPENDIX 4



<https://www.washingtonpost.com/comics/2022/03/19/vladimir-kazanevsky-cartoons-ukraine-putin/>

APPENDIX 5



<https://voxeurop.eu/en/ukraine-four-years-destruction-war/>

APPENDIX 6



Illustration by Nick Anderson, February 2022

https://www.berkshireeagle.com/opinion/columnists/jeff-robbins-america-sleeps-as-trump-hands-putin-what-he-wants/article_cd6fb86e-7aaf-4a72-88a8-6dbb53f90f80.html

APPENDIX 7



<https://www.politico.eu/interactive/brexit-deal-theresa-may-ukraine-russia-donald-trump-migration-cartoon/>

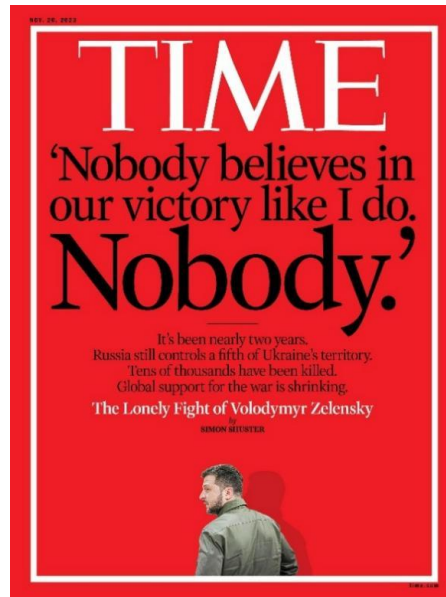
APPENDIX 8



Illustration by Jimmy Margulies, March 2025

<https://comicskingdom.com/jimmy-margulies/2025-03-05>

APPENDIX 9



The cover of the November 20, 2023, issue of TIME Magazine

<https://time.com/6329188/ukraine-volodymyr-zelensky-interview/>

APPENDIX 10



Illustration by Lianhe Zaobao, February 24, 2022

<https://www.cartooningforpeace.org/en/editos/from-the-ukrainian-crisis-to-the-war-in-ukraine/>

APPENDIX 11



Illustration by Steve Bell, The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/picture/2022/mar/03/steve-bell-russia-foreign-policy-ukraine-chechnya-cartoon>

APPENDIX 12

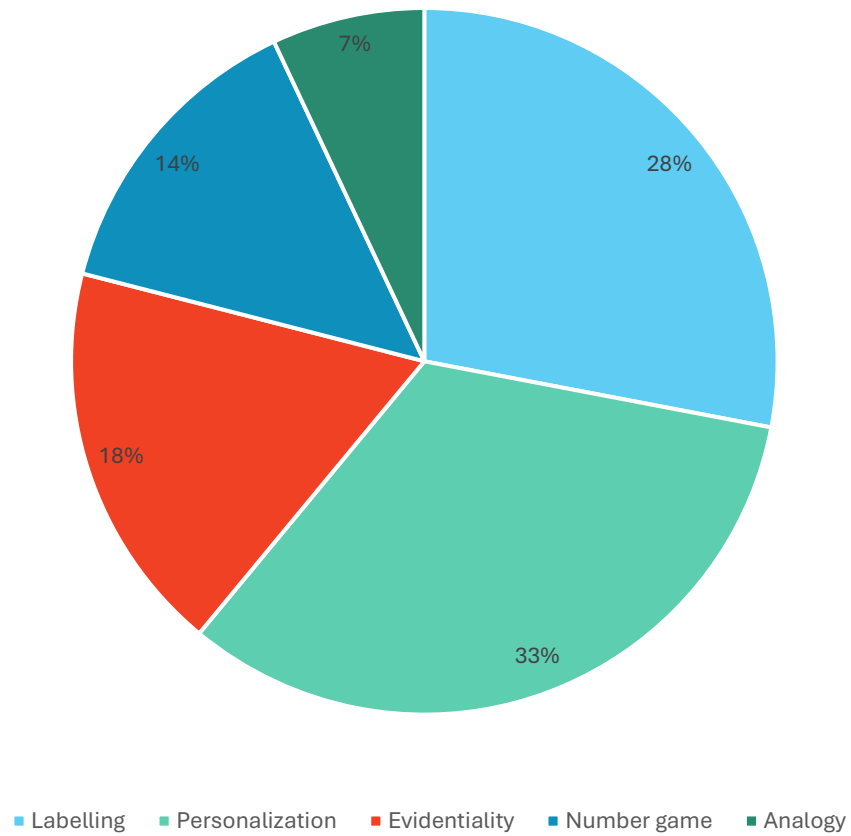


Illustration by Rob Rogers, March 2022

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APPENDIX 13

Quantitative ratio of the use of discursive strategies in news about war in Ukraine



APPENDIX 14

Quantitative ratio of the use of discursive strategies in multimodal discourse

