

**The Russia-Ukraine Crisis in American Political News: Van  
Dijk Model of Analysis**

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## المستخلص

تقدم هذه الدراسة تحليلًا نقديًا لنصين إخباريين أمريكيين باستخدام نموذج Van Dijk (2006) لاستقصاء امكانية اللغة في أن تشكل عقول القراء فيما يتعلق بالأزمة الروسية الأوكرانية. يحاول البحث استكشاف المعاني الأيديولوجية الخفية المضمنة في النصوص المختارة من خلال أسلوب التحليل النوعي. يتم إجراء تحليل البيانات باستخدام استراتيجيتي Van Dijk (2006) للعرض الذاتي الإيجابي والعرض السلبي للآخرين والتي تتحقق من خلال استقصاء استراتيجيات لغوية أخرى مثل: اختيار الكلمات، والتكرار، والاستعارات، واستخدام أدوات العطف و الدمج. نجحت هذه الدراسة في تحديد بعض الاستراتيجيات اللغوية الأساسية وفي فهم كيفية استخدامها بمهارة من قبل مؤلفي النصوص المختارة لتحقيق هدف البحث. تشير النتائج إلى أن استخدام استراتيجيات معينة للتحليل النقدي للخطابات في النصوص الإخبارية يلعب دورًا أساسيًا في إيصال بعض المعاني الأيديولوجية التي تعكس المواقف السياسية للكاتب ، وأن هناك أيديولوجيات محددة تظهر إما ضمناً أو علناً في بعض النصوص الإخبارية الأمريكية.

## الكلمات الدالة :

تحليل الخطاب النقدي، نموذج Van Dijk لتحليل الخطاب النقدي، النصوص الإخبارية الأمريكية، الأزمة الروسية الأوكرانية

## **Abstract**

This study provides a critical discourse analysis of two American news texts using Van Dijk model of analysis (2006) to investigate how language can shape people's minds regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The study tries to explore the hidden ideological meaning encoded in the selected texts through a qualitative method of analysis. The data analysis is conducted by using two macro-strategies of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation which are realized by other linguistic strategies such as: word selection, the use of repetition, metaphors, and the use of conjunctions. The study has identified some essential linguistic strategies and looked at how they are conducted skillfully by the authors of the selected data to achieve the main aim of the research. The findings of the study indicate that using particular CDA strategies in news texts plays a fundamental role in communicating certain ideological meanings that reflect the writer's political stances and that there are certain ideologies yielded, either tacitly or overtly, in selected American news texts.

*Keywords:* Critical Discourse Analysis, Van Dijk's framework, American news texts, ideologies, Russia – Ukraine crisis

## **I. Introduction**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a linguistic approach that focuses on exposing issues related to language, power, and ideology. The general properties of CDA, according to van Dijk (2011), can be seen as focusing mainly on social problems of political nature rather than simply examining discourse structures independently of their social and political contexts. In recent years, scholars from a variety of fields, including linguistics, have given political discourse a lot of attention. Political discourse analysis, according to Van Dijk (1997), has a lot to offer political science because it can address important political issues and increase public awareness of political processes or realities. CDA has been applied in many studies in relation to political discourse. Teun A. Van Dijk is one of the most prominent figures of CDA, whose work focuses a lot on media and political discourse. Van Dijk (1995) discussed that CDA contributes to the field of linguistic studies in media discourses either spoken or written as it is focused on discovering hidden meanings, the relationship between language and context, the power of language use in different disciplines, in addition to highlighting texts as reflecting ideological, social, cultural, and political ideologies. Van Dijk (1985) discussed that texts are not only used to provide readers with reality. They, also, based on the ideological viewpoints of the persons and organizations involved in their production, form the reality.

The Russia-Ukrainian conflict is a remarkable political event that is up for discussion these days. This issue is a matter of concern of many countries, including Russia, Ukraine, and America. The reasons for the crisis that evolved in Ukraine are partly rooted in the country's historical and cultural division

between the West and the East, in addition to its economic importance in the world's arena. The current study is motivated by this issue of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and tries, through the use of CDA strategies, to explore how the language of American news texts display this conflict to the public.

### **1.1 Objectives of the study**

To find out how language features that are used in American political news texts can construct certain ideological perspectives about the Russia-Ukraine crisis in people's minds.

### **1.2 Significance of the study**

Critical discourse analysis can raise language user's consciousness, help people understand the deep meaning of texts and improve their sensitiveness to the language. In the current study, the analysis of the selected data reveals the ideologies of each of the authors of the selected articles through analyzing these authors' language characteristics. It is also beneficial for language learners in terms of their reading and critical thinking skills.

### **1.3 Hypothesis of the study**

The selected newspaper articles attempt to ingrain certain ideologies about the Russia-Ukraine crisis in the public's minds through certain language characteristics.

### **1.4 Key Research Question**

1. What ideologies are constructed through each of the newspaper articles to shape the public's opinion about the Russia-Ukraine crisis?

2. How does the writer of each article employ certain linguistic strategies to establish these ideologies about the crisis?
3. How does each of the articles exhibit the strategies of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation to influence the public's perception of the Russian-Ukraine crisis?

## II. Literature Review

This section provides background information and definitions of key terms in the research, in addition to an overview of previous research done on the same topic of this study, as well as the new insights that this research introduces.

### 2.1 Definitions of key terms

**Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):** According to Maretha (2019) “Critical discourse analysis is a perspective, a position or attitude taken in a discourse study discipline that involves various disciplines: discourse analysis, psychology, history, social sciences, or linguistics.”

**Discourse:** Crystal (1992) states: “Discourse is a continuous stretch of language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit.”

**Ideology:** According to Schieffelin (1998), ideology is seen as sets of beliefs, conceptualizations of ideas, that even if assumed neutral in themselves, by representing social reality in printed texts get manipulated by parties of interest.

**News texts:** News text, according to Maretha (2019), is a text taken from the mass media including magazines, newspapers, and from the internet. News texts provide information or news about

current events or current events that are worthy of being told to the public.

## **2.2 Related studies**

### **2.2.1 Van Dijk's Model of CDA and the theme of ideology in previous studies**

Van Dijk's model of CDA has been used enormously in various genres analysing the critical phenomena which leads to the emergence of a certain ideology. It is a powerful approach for exploring the theme of ideology in language. It helps reveal the ways in which ideologies are embedded in discourse, how they are used to maintain power dynamics, and how alternative discourses can challenge and reshape dominant ideological narratives.

One study that argues how using CDA strategies can reveal particular ideological meanings in political texts is the study conducted by Ahmadian and Farahani (2014). The study aims to investigate the ideological differences in the discourse between the The Los Angeles Times and Tehran Times utilizing Van Dijk's ideological framework: macro-strategies, which are positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. The findings of the study manifest various contradicting ideologies in both the newspapers as derogatory terms were used in injecting countless negative ideologies against each other. One such example which was posted against Iran is the phrase "a country which tries to develop a nuclear weapon". This phrase gives a horrifying ideology to the society as it is seen as a threat. Thus, it is revealed that prejudice appeared to be one of the main ideology between the America-Iran relationships as the most powerful

possesses a positive ideology meanwhile the less powerful is specified to a negative ideology.

Another study that uses Van Dijk's framework to analyze the theme of ideology is the one done by Darweesh and Abdullah in 2016. This paper analyses Donald Trump's disparaging view of women in the light of critical discourse analysis. It seeks to look into the structural, lexical, and rhetorical devices used by Trump to denigrate and undervalue women. To achieve this, the researcher examines some of Trump's views on women in various contexts using a multifaceted model adapted from Mill's (2008) and Van Dijk's (2006). Results of the analysis reveal Trump's evaluation of women, which reflects his ideology about the superiority of males on females and how such ideological beliefs are ingrained in language and are difficult to be changed.

Another study that discusses how using CDA analysis can uncover certain ideologies in political texts is the study conducted by Aldosari (2020). This paper presents a critical discourse analysis of Nelson Mandela's defense speech 'I am prepared to die' during his trial in 1964. The main research question of this study is: what are the ideological meanings Mandela tries to communicate through his speech, and how are these ideologies conveyed by CDA strategies? The study uses Fairclough (2013) and Van Dijk (1993, 2001, 2014) models of critical discourse analysis to explore the hidden relations of power and ideologies that have been encoded in Mandela's defense speech. The analysis goes on two levels: the lexical and the pragmatic levels of analysis. Results of the study reveal that Mandela managed, in his speech, to employ four CDA strategies, including lexical selection, using specific terms of address, the utilization of rhetorical devices, and the skillful employment of



organized argumentation in order to advocate freedom and condemn racial discrimination in South Africa.

In recent years, Al Soraihi (2022) conducts a linguistic analysis of selected spoken texts of Princess Reema Bint Bander Al-Saud, a Saudi woman leader who is nowadays serving as the Saudi ambassador to the United States of America. The study uses Van Dijk's theory and Norman Fairclough's model of analysis to the theme of Ideology as a tool to analyze the Princess' speeches. The study focuses on both the rhetoric and the persuasive patterns based on the linguistic structures proposed by the two theories. This paper is able to identify some key linguistic strategies and how they are conducted in a proficient way by Princess Reema Bint Bander with a focus on the idea of Saudi women empowerment. This research adopts a qualitative method based on observations and thematic interpretations of selected texts of a public speech given by Princess Reema. In addition to that, this study examines the linguistic and the stylistic markers that Princess Reema used in her public remarks that makes her address sounds very persuasive and convincing. This research concludes by identifying some linguistic themes that Princess Reema indicated in her speech, including the concepts of conservatism, socialism, and liberalism feminist ideology.

In the same year, 2022, another study focusing on analyzing the theme of ideology in political speeches was published by Saadeen and Al-Bzour. This study provides a critical discourse analysis of Donald Trump's remarks disputing the results of the 2020 US presidential election. This study examines the linguistic elements in five speeches given by Donald Trump following the announcement of the results of the US presidential election using Van Dijk's framework for critical discourse analysis. In order to uncover the ideologies of positive

self-representation and negative other-representation, which reflect the macro-level of text analysis, the data analysis focuses on the use of 25 discursive devices described by Van Dijk (2006). According to the study's findings, Trump used most of the discursive methods, with a focus on the following in particular: lexicalization, evidentiality, example/illustration, number game, polarization, actor description, hyperbole, categorization, victimization, and authority. Additionally, the macro-level research reveals that Donald Trump used both the ideologies of positive self-representation and negative other-representation, but he tended to favor the latter. The data also demonstrate that Trump portrayed himself and his followers favorably while painting other individuals badly by highlighting their unethical behavior throughout the election, using these discursive tactics to promote his rejection of the results of the election and appeal to Americans' empathy.

### **2.2.2 The Russia – Ukraine crisis in previous studies**

One study that investigates the Russia-Ukrainian crisis is the study conducted by Svetlana Tsirkunova in 2016. This study aims to exploring the role of metaphor in constructing the meaning of political discourse. The study adopts a critical discourse analysis and G. Lakoff's conceptual metaphor theory in order to identify the most productive means for semantic configuration of the metaphors used by British and American media. The study concludes that the metaphorical system offered by Lakoff is insufficient for conceptualizing the US policy regarding the Ukraine conflict, and claims that the choice of cognitive construals is governed by the context in which they are used.

In recent years, Sliesarieva (2020) held a study that examines the discourse developed in response to the decision to block Russian web sources. The study adopts the model of critical discourse analysis by Fairclough (1995) and framing analysis by Pan & Kosicki (1993). This qualitative study examined articles, TV stories, user comments, and political speeches from Ukrainian online media. The research provides answers to questions about the prevailing discourses in society regarding how the government approaches Internet regulation, as well as the key points of contention and refutations, and media framing. The findings demonstrate that the debate was caught between the two dominating discourses of national security and free speech, and that alternatives to limits did not appear on the public agenda.

In 2022 Raza & Malik's study seeks to examine how Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky are ideologically portrayed in BBC web profiles in order to determine how socio-political ideologies are ingrained with the use of semiotic resources in images and the captions that accompany them. The chosen data, which consists of nine photographs with captions and details, is evaluated using Fairclough's model for representing social events and van Leeuwen's model for social actors, all of which are included in Machin's framework for multimodal analysis. The results of the study indicate that BBC's profiles are far from neutral and that they have portrayed Putin as inflexible, extremely powerful, and a menace while portraying Zelensky as kind but fearless in the face of conflict and political strife.

Meanwhile, Khusnia and Sumarlam (2022) conducted a study in same context. The study uses Van Dijk model of analysis to examine the BBC's online news media coverage of Biden's

speech amid Russia's and Ukraine's invasions as well as the violence that followed in reaction to Vladimir Putin. The aim of the study is visualizing the text in terms of its structure, social setting, and social cognition. Results of the study show that based on a macro-structural analysis, Biden gave Putin a brief explanation of the sanction right away. The disconnection of Sberbank, the biggest bank in Russia, as well as the Credit Bank of Moscow and the Russian Agriculture Bank was another sanction that Biden highlighted. On the micro structural analysis level, Biden wanted the readers to support him.

### **2.2.3 Significance of the Current Study**

While there has been a significant amount of research conducted on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, a closer examination would likely reveal a substantial body of research across multiple disciplines and regions. At present, most of the related researches on the Russia-Ukraine conflict focus on the political, historical, economic, or humanitarian dimensions of the conflict. Only few research has conducted a linguistic analysis of news texts about that issue, the thing that is highly needed to reveal how different media portray the conflict, which terms they use, and how these choices influence the audience's understanding and perception of the events. To cover this gap, the present study intends to carry out a critical analysis of the Russia-Ukraine conflict-related American news texts using Van Dijk's theoretical framework with the aim of making a good contribution, not only to the field of CDA, but also to the field of politics and to many people who are concerned about the current issue of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

## **III. Theoretical Framework**

This section introduces and describes the theory in the light of which the investigation in this research goes.

### 3.1 Van Dijk Model of Analysis (2006)

The theoretical framework employed in the study is based on Van Dijk's model of analysis (2006), which he called "Ideological Square". In 2004, Van Dijk's seminal work, *Politics, Ideology and Discourse*, proposes a worthwhile framework for political discourse analysis. Van Dijk (2004) argues that

The social organization of the field of politics, and hence of politicians and political groups, is largely based on ideological differences, alliances and similarities. The overall organization of social beliefs as a struggle between the Left and the Right is the result of the underlying polarization of political ideologies that has permeated society as a whole ... Indeed, political ideologies not only are involved in the production or understanding of political discourses and other political practices, but are also (re)produced by them. (p. 11)

Van Dijk (2004) defines political discourse not only in terms of discourse structures but also in terms of political contexts. He emphasizes that merely noting, for instance, that the well-known "political" pronoun we is frequently used in political discourse is insufficient. It is important to link this kind of usage to certain aspects of the political context, such as who is speaking, when, where, and with whom.

The framework developed by Van Dijk (2006) appears to be a systematic practical method for investigating ideological polarization of political discourses. In this framework, Van Dijk

introduced different strategies for analyzing ideological discourses. These strategies are the following:

Emphasize Our good things

Emphasize Their bad things

De-emphasize Our bad things

De-emphasize Their good things (Van Dijk, 2006, p.734).

The ideological square is one of the most powerful elements in Van Dijk's discourse analysis work. The goal of this framework is to incorporate the production and interpretation of discourse to the textual analysis. By using the schema indicated above, Van Dijk attempts to demonstrate how texts portray some persons or groups favorably as 'we' and other people or groups negatively as 'they'. He believes that the speaker/writer speaks/writes as a member of a social group and addresses recipient as group member; ideologically biased context models. Thus, he analyzes ideology in discourse taking into consideration both the linguistic context and situational context of the texts.

Rashidi & Souzandehfar (2010) portrayed this square as a fundamental dichotomy, with a focus on "positive self-representation and negative other-representation". Bello (2013) states that actors are polarized by this square into ingroups and outgroups in which the former emphasizes their positive features and ignores their negative ones; while the latter emphasizes their negative features and ignores their positive ones. Therefore, the essential focus of political speeches, texts, interviews, or news texts is devoted to the favored issues of group or party. In other words, the objective of these texts/speeches is to spot the light on our well-done achievements, while linking issues like war, violence, drugs, and a lack of liberty with political opponents (Van Dijk, 2006).

## IV. Methodology and Data Collection

This section aims to explain the design of this research and the methodologies used in gathering the data.

### 4.1 Research Design

The current study follows a qualitative research method used to investigate the linguistic means used in the selected American news texts to influence public's opinion and to construct certain ideological perspectives about the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

### 4.2 Data Collection

The data under analysis consists of two news texts selected from two American newspapers; The New York Times and Washington Post. The choice of the newspapers is initially determined by the choice of the country which these newspapers represent. Since the Ukraine crisis is considered as the stimulus for the confrontation that emerged between East and West, the United States is chosen as one of the main countries involved in the confrontation. That is the first reason for selecting these newspapers. Language is another reason for the choice of these newspapers as both of them broadcast their news in English. Finally, since the current study is interested in how interpretation of news contributes to the formation of ideologies, the selected newspapers needed to be popular and well-known. The following table illustrates the types of the newspapers, the types of the selected articles in these newspapers and the language in which these articles are published.

Newspaper	The New York Times	Washington Post
Type of newspaper	Print newspaper	Online newspaper

Type of article	Editorial	Editorial
Language	English	English

The following table illustrates the headlines of the articles under analysis, their dates of publication, authors' names, and word count.

Newspaper	Article's headline	Date of publication	Author's Name	Word count
The New York Times	Behind Austin's Call for a 'Weakened' Russia, Hints of a Shift	April 25, 2022	David E.Sanger	1568 words
Washington Post	<b>1443 Biden calls Russia's war in Ukraine a 'genocide'</b>	April 12, 2022	Tyler Pager	1416 words

The following part provides the main themes as well as the political and social contexts of both articles.

#### 4.2.1 Article 1: Behind Austin's Call for a 'Weakened' Russia, Hints of a Shift

**Theme of the articles:**



The main theme of the article revolves around the evolving dynamics of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, with a specific emphasis on the role and tactics employed by the United States, particularly under President Biden. It discusses the U.S.'s diplomatic, economic, and geopolitical responses to Russia's military action in Ukraine and its desire to weaken the country of Russia.

### **Political and Social Context of the article:**

The article was published on April 25, 2022, following Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken's and Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin's III visit to Kyiv, Ukraine, which aimed to demonstrate the United States' steadfast support to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in their struggle against Russian aggression. During the visit, Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin met with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, Minister of Defense Oleksiy Reznikov, Head of Presidential Administration Andriy Yermak, Chief of Defense General Valeriy Zaluzhny, and Ambassador Oksana Markarova. They discussed America's unwavering support for the Ukrainian government and people, particularly the substantial aid the country provides for Ukraine's needs in terms of security, governance, the economy, and humanitarian relief.

#### **4.2.2 Article 2: Biden calls Russia's war in Ukraine a 'genocide'**

The article's central theme centres on President Biden's designation of Russia's activities in Ukraine as a "genocide." The article also looks at Biden's attempts to address the economic effects of the situation in Ukraine on American food and gas prices. In addition, it discusses the United States' intentions to

increase military aid to Ukraine in the midst of increasing geopolitical difficulties.

### **Political and Social Context of the article:**

The text of the article quotes President Joe Biden just before he boards Air Force One on Tuesday, April 12, 2022, at Des Moines International Airport in Des Moines, Iowa, in order to return to Washington. Biden accused President Vladimir Putin of attempting to "wipe out the idea of being a Ukrainian" and stated that Russia's war in Ukraine amounted to a "genocide." The text is situated in a complex political and social landscape formed by major powers' agendas and interactions with other countries. It also involves considerations of the impact on the people of Ukraine, humanitarian issues, public opinion, and the economic ramifications of the conflict.

## **V. Data Analysis**

This section presents specific CDA strategies employed by the authors of the selected articles to reflect their or the presented country's ideologies and communicate their intended meanings to the audience. In the subsections below, four main linguistic strategies will be analytically focused on in both articles: (i) words selection, (ii) the use of repetition, (iii) the use of metaphors, and (iv) the use of conjunctions. This section also highlights the use of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation through detecting the above linguistic features in the selected data.

### **5.1 Article 1: Behind Austin's Call for a 'Weakened' Russia, Hints of a Shift**

## Words Selection

One of the skillful CDA strategies writers use to express their views is the selection of specific words and/or phrases (Sornig, 1989). In the current data, the author used this strategy to communicate his intended meanings. The following examples demonstrate how particular words are employed in the article.

### Example 1:

- 1- That is the date when Mr. Putin ordered his forces to **invade** Ukraine..
- 2- Mr. Biden said his goal with Russia was to “sap its economic strength and **weaken** its military..
- 3- **degrade** Russian military power...
- 4- Mr. Putin believes that his conventional military forces are being **strangled**...
- 5- Russia’s military adventure will be **ruinous**..
- 6- Russian war **atrocities** have become more evident..

In the above extracts, the use of words such as "invade", "weaken", "degrade", "strangle", "ruinous", "atrocities", and "conflict" convey a sense of aggression and hostility, and contribute to establish the overall tone of the article as one of tension and enmity between the United States and Russia. These examples highlight the use of negative-other presentation strategy in the article. The author tries to portray Russia in a negative way and ingrain in readers’ minds that Russia, in this conflict, is the source of destruction, aggression, and threat not only for Ukraine, but also for the U.S. and the whole world.

### Example 2:

- 1- he was simply **helping** a **small, struggling democracy** **defend** itself

In the above extracts, the choice of words such as "struggling", "small", and "democracy" contributes to portraying Ukraine as fragile and weak, the thing that triggers the public's sympathy to its side. This also emphasizes the idea of presenting Russia in a negative way, making it the source of struggle, while presenting Ukraine positively as the democratic side that suffers to maintain its freedom. In addition, by using the words "defend" and "help", the author conveys a sense of protection and support provided by the U.S. to Ukraine. This also highlights the positive presentation of the United States, as being the guard of democracy.

Example 3:

- 1- Mr. Austin's **carefully orchestrated** declaration that the United States
- 2- It has imposed sanctions that were **explicitly designed** to stop Russia's military from developing and manufacturing new weapons.
- 3- The sanctions.... has worked — with **mixed success**
- 4- years of **continuous contest** for power and influence with Moscow

The choice of words such as "carefully orchestrated", "explicitly designed", "mixed success" and "continuous contest" conveys a message that the United States has a great sense of planning, intentionality and cautiousness. The author wants to emphasize the strategy and thoughtfulness the U.S. holds in front of the whole world in general, and Russia in particular. This also enhances the positive presentation of the United States and impose a threat to Russia as well.

### The use of Repetition (within cohesion framework)

The use of repetition in a text brings clarity to an idea and makes it memorable for the reader. The following examples show the use of repetition in the current article and the significance of employing it.

#### Example 1: Austin's Call for a '**Weakened**' Russia

America's goal is to see Russia so "**weakened**"

The United States wants "Russia weakened to the point where it can't do things like invade Ukraine"

American goal as a **weakened** Russian military

"sap its economic strength and **weaken** its military for years to come."

In the above examples, the word 'weakened' is repeated 5 times throughout the whole article. Repeating the word 'weakened' is used effectively to assure the main theme of the article which is the American goal to 'weaken' the power of Russia. The author repeatedly uses this word to emphasise that the conflict is not just a battle over control of Ukraine, rather, it is a direct combat between Russia and U.S.. The use of repetition also highlights the fact that achieving this American goal will take time and effort. The repetition is meant to convey the idea that the U.S. is keeping up its pursuit of this objective in spite of any dangers or difficulties that may arise. Additionally, the repetition of the word 'weaken' strengthens the idea that Russia is losing the war and is coming out of it in a weakened position. This aligns with the ideology of portraying Russia as the villain in the conflict that needs to be weakened and fighten against.

Example 2: “it would no longer have the **power** to invade a neighboring state”

“Putin’s oft-stated belief that the war is really about the West’s desire to choke off Russian **power** and destabilize his government.”

“years of continuous contest for **power** and influence with Moscow”

“a degradation of Russia as a **power**”

As shown in the above examples, the word ‘power’ is repeated 4 times throughout the whole article. Similar to example 1, repeating the word ‘power’ is employed to emphasize the theme of the article which is the ‘power’ of Russia and the American goal to weaken this power. The repetition of the word ‘power’ is also used to highlight the fact that the crisis in Ukraine is being driven by a struggle for influence and power between the two countries of Russia and the U.S.. Hence, this repetition contributes to portraying Russia as the opposing force in front of the whole world and reinforces the ideology of diminishing Russia's power.

Example 3: “President Biden entered the **war** insistent that he did not want to make this a contest between the United States and Russia.”

“Direct confrontation between NATO and Russia is World **War** III”

“Russian **war** atrocities have become more evident”

“It has worked to cut off the oil and gas revenues that drive its **war** machine.”

“Putin’s oft-stated belief that the **war** is really about the West’s desire to choke off Russian power”

“Russia is emerging from the **war** in a far weaker position”

Another significant repetition in the text is the repetition of the word "war", being mentioned 6 times in the article. The word "war" is used repeatedly to highlight the ideology of gravity, being attached to the situation in Ukraine and the possibility that it could turn into something far more serious and devastating. It also emphasises how the conflict affects not just Ukraine, but the entire world and has the potential to have an international influence. The repetition of this word also enhances the presentation of Russia in a negative way.

### **The use of Metaphors**

As a discourse element used to to invoke an imaginary picture in readers' minds, metaphor is an effective tool used in news texts to to convince the audience into perceiving the truths and the beliefs as a whole. The following extracts show and analyse the employment of metaphor in the article.

Example 1: years of continuous contest for power and influence with Moscow that in some ways resembles what President John F. Kennedy termed the “**long twilight struggle**” of the Cold War.

The statement expresses the United States' views about the future. The metaphor in “**long twilight struggle**” compares the ongoing struggle for power and influence between the two nations to a prolonged period of fading light. This metaphor suggests that the battle is not a sudden or one-time event, but rather a long-term, continuing struggle that will continue for a long time. The metaphor also serves to convey the idea that the situation is not going to be resolved anytime soon and it will have a long-term impact on the relationship between the U.S. and

Russia. In addition, the metaphor in “long twilight struggle” is chosen carefully by the article’s author to show how Russia is portrayed negatively as a threat to the whole world, and to ingrain this ideology in the minds of the public.

Example 2: “In time, **it will bleed into consumer goods**, making it harder for ordinary Russians to buy the iPhones and Androids that seem nearly as ubiquitous on the streets of Moscow as they are in New York.”

This statement explains the impact of U.S. export controls against Russia on high-tech components on the Russian economy. Using this metaphor makes the readers visualize the Russian economy as a person who is bleeding as a result of the injuries caused by the war. This metaphor is used by the author to guide the readers to believe in and support the American goal of weakening Russia. In addition, language is employed skilfully by the author in this part as it conveys a threatening message, being made from America against Russia.

Example 3: the strategy is to **drive home the narrative** that Russia’s military adventure will be ruinous, and that it is a conflict Mr. Putin cannot afford to sustain.

This metaphor in ‘drive home the narrative’ compares the U.S’ attempt to communicate a message to the action of driving a vehicle, implying that the United States is actively working to push forward a specific narrative about the situation in Ukraine, in order to awake people and influence the way people perceive the conflict. This metaphor uncover the fact that shaping public opinion is an essential component of the United States strategy and that they are actively working to do so. This example



promotes the ideology of threat being issued from the American side against Russia.

### **The use of Conjunctions (within cohesion framework)**

The use of conjunctions is significant as it helps analyze the relationships between different elements within a text and understand how these connections contribute to the overall discourse. In the current article, conjunctions, along with other linguistic elements, help the researcher go beyond surface-level meanings to uncover ideologies, power relations, and communicative strategies embedded in the text. The following examples and analysis highlight the employment of conjunctions in this article.

Example 1: He has committed to keeping American troops out of the fight, and has resisted imposing a no-fly zone over Ukraine that would risk putting American and Russian forces into direct combat. **But** over the longer term, Mr. Austin's description of America's strategic goal is bound to reinforce President Vladimir V. Putin's oft-stated belief that the war is really about the West's desire to choke off Russian power and destabilize his government.

Although this article is basically talking about America's goal to weaken Russia, the above example contrasts between the US resolve to refraining from using American troops and the possible long-term impact that their actions could support Putin's belief that the US is in the war because it wants to weaken Russia. By using these contradicting thoughts, the author wants to ingrain, implicitly, a certain ideology in the public's mind; that is the conflict is actually between the U.S. and Russia and that it aims, indeed, to weaken the Russian power evermore. At the same time,

the example highlights a positive presentation of the U.S. as it emphasizes its keenness not to impose any threat to Russia, though it poses a direct, yet covert, threat.

Example 2: It is a possibility that was barely conceivable eight weeks ago, **but** is regularly discussed today.

The statement is talking about the possibility that President Putin starts a cyberattacks on the West or use his nuclear weapons against them. The contradiction employed by the word 'but' here is a powerful tool used by the author to enhance the negative presentation of Russia by highlighting how the situation is in a rapid state of becoming very risky.

Example 3: Philip M. Breedlove, the top NATO military officer, added that he was glad of Mr. Austin's language, **even if** it risked provoking Russia, because "the Ukrainians have to believe that we intend to give them what they need, because that is what will be required for them to win."

The use of the conjunction "even if" expresses America's recognition of the possibility of provoking Russia as a potential risk or consequence of the U.S. actions. However, in spite of this potential risk, the example also emphasizes the intended assistance for Ukraine and the willingness to meet obstacles or unfavourable responses. Speaking with "even if," Philip M. Breedlove highlights devotion and tenacity. It implies that showing steadfast support for Ukraine is more important than the risks or difficulties involved with upsetting Russia. The overall message conveyed by the conjunction is one of encouragement and solidarity for the Ukrainian people. It suggests that there is a dedication to giving people everything they need to succeed in

spite of the risks. This contributes to uncovering the ideology of threat, being imposed from the American side toward Russia.

## 5.2 Article 2: Biden calls Russia's war in Ukraine a 'genocide'

### Word selection

Word selection in the current article plays a crucial role in delivering a specific ideology since it shapes the reader's vision, frames the story, and helps them comprehend what happened. Here are examples illustrating how word selection contributes to conveying particular ideologies.

Example 1:

- 1- the effects of Russian President Vladimir Putin's **invasion** of Ukraine on the higher prices Americans are paying for gas and food.
- 2- Biden suggested that is exactly what Russia is doing as it commits **atrocities** in Ukraine
- 3- Russian forces have dramatically escalated the **brutality** of their **attacks** in Ukraine
- 4- his desire to denounce the **brutal onslaught**
- 5- stand up to **evil**

The selection of words like 'invasion', 'atrocities', 'brutality', 'attacks', and 'onslaught' is powerful in the article and conveys a strong condemnation of Russia's actions. The choice of these words reflects the views of the author about the situation as a systematic attempt to eradicate Ukraine's identity and destroy it, rather than just a military campaign. Referring to the events as 'Putin's invasion of Ukraine', and to president Putin as 'evil' puts the emphasis on Putin as the aggressor, the thing that boosts the negative presentation of Russia employed by the author in the text.

#### Example 2:

- 1- it is rather an organized effort to **erase** Ukraine's identity as an **independent** nation.
- 2- a slaughter of **unarmed** civilians
- 3- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who has repeatedly decried Moscow's actions against his country and **appealed** for international help

In the above examples, using words such as 'erase', 'identity', and 'independent' is a subtle choice made by the author to arouse the public's feelings strongly. In addition to being geopolitical, it appeals to a sense of injustice or violation by depicting the fight as an insult to the fundamental nature of Ukraine. It emphasizes the wider effects on the nation's identity and autonomy, going beyond the purely military or territorial components of battle. Using the word 'unarmed' highlights the helplessness and gullibility of the Ukrainian citizens, being impacted by the war. The choice of the word 'appealed' suggests that Zelensky's desire for help is genuine and acceptable. It emphasizes how serious the crisis is by implying that the situation in Ukraine merits attention and action from other countries. The above examples help in promoting the positive presentation of Ukraine through triggering the public's empathy toward this country.

#### **The use of Repetition (within cohesion framework)**

Repetition is used frequently and effectively in the present article. Here are some example and an analysis that highlights the significance of repeating certain words many times throughout the article.

Example 1: "Russia as committing a "**genocide**" in Ukraine,"

“He later told reporters he intentionally used the word **genocide** in his speech”

“Has Russia committed war crimes or **genocide**”

“We have not seen a level of systematic deprivation of life of the Ukrainian people to rise to the level of **genocide**”

The word ‘genocide’ is repeated 16 times through out the whole article. The repetition of the word ‘genocide’ in the text serves to emphasize and reinforce President Biden's harsh denunciation of Russia's activities in Ukraine. The word is used several times in the text to indicate how serious the situation is. This repetition is effectively used to sway the reader's opinion and generate moral indignation and a sense of urgency over the purported crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine, the thing that enhances the negative presentation of Russia through out the text and construct the ideology of threat being linked to Russia's actions.

Example 2: “a dictator declares **war** and commits genocide”

“We have seen **war** crimes”

“condemning Putin and the **war** in Ukraine”

“administration officials have become more open about calling the atrocities in Ukraine **war** crimes”

“Putin said Tuesday that his invasion of Ukraine is going as planned and vowed to continue the **war**”

Another significant repetition in the text is the one of the word ‘war’ being repeated 11 times. The use of this words multiple times stresses the fact that the conflict has escalated to a state of war, highlighting the severity of the hostilities and the wider

ramifications of the current military actions, and enhances the ideology of gravity of the conflict in the minds of the public. This repetition aims to manipulate the reader's interpretation and present the events as a major armed battle and not merely a simple argument or political tension. This choice of language emphasizes the high stakes and potential consequences associated with the conflict and reinforce the author's intended negative presentation of Russia in front of the whole world.

Example 3: “the effects of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine on the higher **prices** Americans are paying for gas and food”

“The president, appearing in Iowa, was discussing his plans to keep gas **prices** down”

“the president and Democrats seek to respond to rising **prices** that have become a growing political problem”

“with energy **prices** spiking in large part because of the Ukraine war”

“to bring down the **prices** and address the Putin **price** hike”

The word "prices" appears frequently in the text (6 time), which is important since it draws attention to the negative effects of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on the economy, especially with regard to the cost of necessities like food and gas. This repetition is significant as it draws the reader's attention to the economic ramifications of the conflict by connecting the decisions and actions to how price fluctuations directly affect on individuals and households. Referring to people's daily lives and needs contribute in forming an ideology of economic devastation

in people's minds, the thing that arouses the public's anger against Russia and reinforce portraying it in a negative way.

### **The use of Metaphors**

Example 1: He often appears **torn** between his desire to denounce the brutal onslaught and the fact that certain terms have legal definitions that can trigger specific actions.

The above highlighted example uses figurative language to convey a sense of conflict or internal struggle experienced by president Biden. The phrase "torn between" is a metaphorical expression that suggests a person facing a difficult choice or conflicting emotions. It paints a picture of being pulled in different directions, highlighting the internal dilemma. That pictures enhances the positive presentation of America, being portrayed as the wise responsible party that fights against Russia, which is portrayed as the evil side.

Example 2: He has increasingly taken to calling the current price surge "**Putin's Price Hike**"

This metaphor is used to link the economic challenges, particularly rising gas prices and food costs for Americans, directly to the actions of Russian President Vladimir Putin. By labeling the economic difficulties as "Putin's Price Hike," the metaphor attributes the challenging economic consequences to Russia's aggressive actions. Hence, the use of language here strengthens the ideology of economic devastation proposed through out the whole text.

### **The use of Conjunctions (within cohesion framework)**

Example 1: “For God’s sake, this man cannot remain in power,” Biden said. The White House quickly cleaned up the comments and Biden later said he was not “articulating a policy change” **but** rather expressing his “moral outrage” at Putin’s actions.

In the above example the conjunction "but" is used to indicate a change in the statement's direction, suggesting that the second statement clarifies or modifies the first. In this instance, Biden's first remarks convey a strong belief that Putin should not hold onto power, but his later clarification adds a subtlety by stating that Biden's remarks were more about voicing moral outrage than they were about announcing a shift in official policy. The example strengthens the positive presentation of America in general and president Biden in particular.

Example 2: “We expect Russia will continue to launch air **and** missile strikes across the rest of the country to cause military **and** economic damage, to cause terror,”

The repeated use of the conjunction ‘and’ in this example aims to join two connected but separate ideas, highlighting a cumulative effect and the multifaceted nature of Russia's expected actions. This example is employed effectively to portray Russia in a negative way.

Example 3: The president also announced that the Environmental Protection Agency will allow a gasoline blend known as E15, which is 15 percent ethanol, to be sold over the summer — a measure cheered by corn and soybean farmers who say it will reduce gas costs **but** long resisted by some energy and environmental groups.



The conjunction ‘but’ is used in the example to explain that despite the favourable response from farmers, there is a strong resistance from some energy and environmental groups over the announcement of president Biden regarding prices. This contrast draws attention to the diverse viewpoints and concerns raised by the president’s announcement. While using the conjunction "but" provides a balanced picture of the situation, it highlights the difficult responsibility that president Biden holds as a result of the conflict caused by Russia’s invasion to Ukrain, the thing that highlights the ideology of gravity of the situation. That example enhances not only the positive presentation of America, but also the negative presentation of Russia.

## **VI. Findings and Conclusion**

### **6.1 Findings**

This section presents the findings and conclusion of the study based on the analysis of the selected data. After analyzing the data qualitatively in the light of Van Dijk’s model of analysis (2006), the researcher has managed to find answers to the key questions of this research. The first and second questions of this study are: What ideologies are constructed through each of the newspaper articles to shape the public’s opinion about the Russia-Ukraine crisis?, and How does the writer of each article employ certain linguistic strategies to establish these ideologies about the crisis? The following results of the analysis provide an answer to these two questions.

#### **Article 1: Behind Austin’s Call for a ‘Weakened’ Russia, Hints of a Shift**

The analysis of New York Times newspaper's article reveals three remarkable ideologies constructed by the the article's writer about the Russia- Ukraine conflict.

Firstly, the article emphasized the ideology of **Russia's weakening**. The writer of the article has successfully managed to establish this ideology through the use of the linguistic element of repetition. As demonstrated in examples 1 and 2 of use of repetition above, the writer's repetition of the words 'power' and 'weaken' multiple times through out the whole article was adelibrate repetition with the aim of highlighting the American goal to weaken Russia and its military power.

Secondly, the ideology of **gravity** was highlighted through the analysis of the article. As explained above in example 3 of the use of repetition, using the word 'war' many times was effectively employed to show the extend to which the situation in Ukraine becomes so risky and destructive not only for the country of Ukraine, but for the whole world as well.

Thirdly, the analysis uncovered the the ideology of **threat** being emphasized in different meanings. The metaphor of "long twilight struggle" highlighted in example 1 above formed the ideology of describing Russia as a threat towards Ukrainians, the U.S. and the entire world. At the same time, the writer reassured the ideology of threat in more examples in the article, while making the threat directed against Russia, not only posed by it. The two metaphors of 'it will bleed into consumer goods' and 'to drive home the narrative' shown in examples 2 and 3 above conveyed a threatening message from the United States against Russia. Another linguistic element employed by the writer to highlight the ideology of threat against Russia is the use of conjunction. The use of 'but' and 'even if' in examples 1 and 3

illustrated above has effectively presented the challenging tone and the hidden threat imposed against Russia from the American side.

## **Article 2: Biden calls Russia's war in Ukraine a 'genocide'**

The analysis of newspaper's article published in Washington Post marks three noticeable ideologies constructed by the the article's writer about the Russia- Ukraine conflict.

Firstly, the analysis of the article uncovered the ideology of **economic devastation**, being attached to the war between Russia and Ukraine. The writer managed to construct this ideology through the use of the linguistic elements of repetition and the use of metaphor. In example 3 of the use repetition, the analysis of selected extracts of the article highlights the significance of mentioning the word 'price' several times and linking it to people's daily needs. The employment of this repetition was meant to play on people's emotions on one hand, and shape their opinion about the idea of economy destruction being connected to the Russian invasion on Ukraine on the other hand. Additionally, the metaphor in "Putin's Price Hike", explained in example 2 above, also reinforces the ideology of economic devastation in the public's perception.

Secondly, and similar to the New York Times' article, the ideology of **gravity** is detected as being established in Washington Post article as well. The writer employed repetition and the use of conjunction to convey this ideology. In example 2 of repetition, the writer used the word 'war' eleven times throughout the article in order to explicitly spot the light on the severity of the conflict and the damaging effects of it on the entire world. The same aim was achieved through the use of the

conjunction ‘but’ in example 3 above, where the writer raised the struggle that president Biden is engaged in as a result of the prices’ crisis caused by Russia’s actions.

Thirdly, the ideology of **threat** and presenting Russia as a threat to the whole world is ingrained in the readers’ minds, according to the analysis conducted above. The use of repetition was a successful employment of language to establish this ideology. The choice of the word ‘genocide’ and the repetition of it sixteen times throughout the text is a direct and brave declaration of how the U.S. views the actions done by Russia in Ukraine.

Finally, and with reference to the research questions number 1 and 2 of this research, both articles, according to this research’s analysis, construct the ideologies of gravity and threat. Additionally, the New York Times article establishes the ideology of Russia’s weakening, while Washington Post highlights the ideology of economic devastation. Both articles employ the four linguistic features of word selection, the use of repetition, the use of metaphor, and the use of conjunctions to promote these ideologies. While both articles managed successfully to use language to establish these ideologies in people’s minds, the New York Times article has provided more examples and demonstrated better use of these linguistic features to reflect the writer’s views about the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The third question of this study is: How does each of the articles exhibit the strategies of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation to influence the public’s perception of the Russian-Ukraine crisis? The macro-structure analysis of the texts done through the four linguistic features mentioned above provides an answer to this question as follows:

### **Article 1: Behind Austin's Call for a 'Weakened' Russia, Hints of a Shift**

Article 1 manifested the employment of negative other-presentation in many parts of the article, according to the analysis of this research. The country of Russia was portrayed negatively in many occasions throughout the text. The selection of words such as "invade", "weaken", "degrade", "strangle", "ruinous", "atrocities", "war", "struggle", "agression", and "conflict", along with making use of repetitions, conjunctions and metaphors as shown above, all enhance portraying Russia as the negative side. On the other hand, the writer also employed these linguistics elements to portray the United States positively. Example 1 of the use of conjunctions as well as the choice of words such as "carefully orchestrated", "explicitly designed", "mixed success" and "continuous contest", which are illustrated in example 3 of word selection, promotes the positive presentation of America as the powerful side that fights against the destructive actions caused by Russia. The article also portrays the country of Ukraine in a positive way, by refering to it using words such as "struggling", "small", "defend", and "democracy".

### **Article 2: Biden calls Russia's war in Ukraine a 'genocide'**

With a better empoymment of the strategies of positive self-presentation and negative other-presenation than article 1, article 2 makes a remarkable use of language to portray the countries involved in the conflict either positively ot negatively. The writer explicitly portrays Russia in a negative way almost in every part of the article. Referring to the Russian invasion to Ukraine using harsh words like 'invasion', 'atrocitis', 'brutality', 'attacks', 'evil', and 'onslaught' expresses America's biased position against Russia and its desire to show the whole world that terrible

image of the Russian authorities. On the other hand, the writer maintained a positive presentation of both America and Ukraine through the use metaphors and conjunctions, as shown above in examples 1 of the use of metaphor and examples 1 and 3 of the use of conjunction, as well as referring to Ukraine using words such as ‘erase’, ‘identity’, ‘unarmed’ and ‘independent’.

## 6.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the current research presents a critical discourse analysis of two American political articles by Van Dijk framework of analysis (2006). The research concludes that American political news discourse is a type of discourse that is characterized by linguistic features that, despite being conveyed in a situation of powerlessness, represent the ideology and power of its users. Results of the research show that the writers of both articles used the strategies of positive self-representation and negative other-representation, with more emphasis on using negative other-representation to portray Russia negatively, the thing that manifests America’ biased position against Russia and shows up its tools of using media to influence the public’s thoughts about the country of Russia. Furthermore, the examination of the selected data demonstrates that language, in general, is a useful instrument for spreading ideologies since it can be manipulated to forward the goals of its users and shape the opinions of its receivers.

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