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Agonal concepts and communicative strategies in European and Ukrainian media discourses after February, 24

Агональні концепти та комунікативні стратегії в європейському та українському медіадискурсах після 24 лютого

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the issue of agonal concepts and strategic communications as a result of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation. Considering the ongoing war, it is considered necessary to investigate the Ukrainian and European media discourse and strategic communications as a system consisting of invariant and variable components that can be projected in mass media messages, as well as the transformation of such a system. The purpose of the research is to carry out a comprehensive analysis of agonal concepts and communication strategies in European and Ukrainian media discourse after February 2022. The research methodology is the following methods: content analysis method, discourse analysis method, critical discourse analysis method, historical analysis method, cross-method - cultural comparative analysis, and sociological method. This thematic study examines the agonal concepts and strategies of communication in European and Ukrainian media discourses after February 2022. It

Анотація

Стаття присвячена питанню агональних концептів та стратегічних комунікацій внаслідок повномасштабного вторгнення російської федерації. Враховуючи триваючу війну, вбачається за необхідне дослідити український та європейський медіа дискурс та стратегічні комунікації як систему, що складається з інваріантних і варіативних компонентів, які можуть бути спроектовані в повідомленнях ЗМІ, а також трансформацію такої системи. Метою дослідження є проведення комплексного аналізу агональних концептів та комунікаційних стратегій в європейському та українському медіа-дискурсі після лютого 2022. Методологією дослідження є наступні методи: метод контент-аналізу, метод дискурс-аналізу, метод критичного дискурс-аналізу, метод історичного аналізу, метод крос-культурного порівняльного аналізу, соціологічний метод. У цьому тематичному дослідженні розглядаються агональні концепції і стратегії комунікації в європейському та

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is investigated which strategies prevail in the Ukrainian and European media fields. The study shows how political leaders and the media use different levels of engagement, commentary, and content to demonstrate strength, unity, and stability during times of significant international tension. Attention was also drawn to how messages from the Russian Federation affect the international agenda. It is concluded that the strategic use of communication can become a powerful tool in the conditions of international crises.

Keywords: agonal concepts, concept, commutative strategies, media discourse, political discourse.

Introduction

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on the morning of February 24, 2022, communication becomes a crucial tool for managing the situation on the ground and shaping public opinion. Social networks, mass media, and the statements of politicians play a necessary role in promoting crisis communication.

Narratives and communication from the government of Ukraine, Russia, and the world call for research into the linguistic features of the presentation of this or that material. Also, more and more attention is paid to the speech acts used by the leaders of the states after February 24, 2022, including President Zelensky's speech acts in his communication on Twitter during the crisis situation in Ukraine at the beginning of the war. The object of the research is agonal concepts and communication strategies in the European and Ukrainian media discourse after the full-scale invasion.

To study the agonal concepts and communication strategies in European and communication media discourses after the beginning of the war, the following questions were asked:

- What communication strategies are used in European and Ukrainian media discourses after the war?
- What speech acts are used in communication in the European and Ukrainian media space, and what are the consequences of their use?
- What role, if any, do intercultural factors play in communication?

Because in the modern world, media discourse plays a significant role in the formation of public perceptions and the perception of various concepts, an important topic that is actively

українському медіа-дискурсах після лютого 2022. Досліджено, які стратегії переважають у українському та європейському медійному полі. Дослідження показує, як політичні лідери та ЗМІ використовують різні рівні залучення, коментарів і контенту для демонстрації сили, єдності і стабільності під час значної міжнародної напруженості. Також звернено увагу, як впливають меседжі РФ на міжнародний порядок денний. Підсумовано, що стратегічне використання комунікації може стати потужним інструментом в умовах міжнародних криз.

Ключові слова: агональні концепти, концепт, комутативні стратегії, медіадискурс, політичний дискурс.

discussed in the European and Ukrainian media is the topic of agonal concepts - concepts related to struggle, rivalry, and conflicts. During the research, the task was set to test three key hypotheses.

The first hypothesis is that the consideration of agonal concepts and communication strategies depends on the context: political, socio-cultural, economic, etc.

The second hypothesis is that the media use linguistic strategies to enhance or reduce the impact of agonal events to form certain images that are understandable for perception.

The third hypothesis is based on cultural characteristics. In particular, it is assumed that different cultural contexts in Europe and Ukraine can determine the specific features of agonal concepts in the media.

The research on agonistic concepts and communicative strategies in European and Ukrainian media discourses post-February 24, 2022, employs a diverse range of qualitative and quantitative research methods:

Content Analysis: used to systematically study the content of media messages, analyzing texts, publications, audio, and video contexts to identify patterns, themes, and prevalence in media representation of agonistic concepts.

Discourse Analysis: investigates how language constructs and reflects social reality, focusing on linguistic structures, rhetoric, and framing techniques in media texts to understand how agonistic concepts are linguistically constructed and transmitted.

Critical Discourse Analysis: applied to analyze power relations and ideology in media discourse, emphasizing how language is used to reproduce or challenge social structures and power dynamics related to agonistic concepts.

Historical Analysis: traces the historical evolution of media discourse in the context of the full-scale invasion and operation in Ukraine since 2014, studying archival media content over time to identify changes and persistence in the representation of agonistic concepts.

Cross-Cultural Comparative Analysis: compares media discourses from European and Ukrainian sources, highlighting common characteristics and differences to understand how agonistic concepts are formulated and discussed in different cultural and media contexts.

Sociological Method: generalizes the prevalence of certain discourses and views among different social groups, providing a quantitative assessment of public opinion, attitudes, and awareness of agonistic concepts in media discourse.

Social Network Analysis: analyzes social networks, including platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, to explore how agonistic concepts are discussed, shared, and debated online. This includes the analysis of user content, comments, and interactions.

The study on agonal concepts and communication strategies in European and Ukrainian media discourses yields several noteworthy implications:

Tools Employed in Media Discourses:

The identified tools, including appeals to emotions, messenger control, publication control, propaganda, and disinformation, indicate the strategic nature of media communication. Recognizing and understanding these tools are essential for comprehending the dynamics of information dissemination.

Speech Acts and Political Priorities:

Political leaders consistently reference specific topics in their communication strategies, aligning with priorities and resonant themes to achieve political objectives. This finding emphasizes the deliberate use of language to shape public opinion and consciousness.

Intercultural Factors in Communication:

The study underscores the significant role of intercultural factors in communication. For Russia, common history and culture with Ukraine play a role, while Ukraine leverages intercultural factors to emphasize identity and independence. Cultural context influences how information is transmitted and perceived, highlighting the importance of understanding the "spirit" of a country and its culture in shaping effective communication.

Contextual Dependence of Agonal Concepts:

The confirmation that the consideration of agonal concepts and communication strategies depends on the contextual factors in a country—political, socio-cultural, economic—underscores the dynamic nature of media communication. This implies that strategies need to be adapted to the specific context in which they are applied.

Softening or Sharpening Perception through Media:

The study validates that media communication is instrumental in shaping public consciousness by either softening or sharpening the perception of agonal events. Linguistic strategies employed by the media contribute to the formation of specific, comprehensible images for the public, influencing how events are perceived.

Cultural Context Impact on Agonal Concepts:

The study confirms that cultural context, including historical and cultural characteristics, significantly influences how agonal concepts are presented and received in the media. This insight emphasizes the need for culturally sensitive communication strategies.

Moving forward, the study suggests the necessity of exploring the specifics of propaganda use in European and Ukrainian discourses and its impact on public consciousness. This avenue of research could provide deeper insights into the dynamics of information dissemination and its implications for societal perceptions.

Theoretical Framework or Literature Review

The following scholars paid attention to the study of agonal concepts and communication strategies in European and Ukrainian media discourses during the war in Ukraine:

- The work of Larsson and Fanny Einarsson (2023) analyzed social networks and the message used by the President of Ukraine



Zelenskyi in social networks. It was concluded that President Volodymyr Zelenskyy uses communication for advocacy, informing, and influencing others. In his communication, Zelenskyi uses various speech acts, but the most common speech act is an assertive speech act. With the help of assertive speech acts, Zelensky informs and reassures the recipients of messages. The results and analysis show that Zelensky tends to use assertive speech acts and expressive speech acts to convey information about the past and present. Expressive speech acts often include information about what has been done or what support has been received, as well as expressions of gratitude. Directive and commissive speech acts are used to influence the addressee, they are related to future actions. The researcher's remarks and generalizations are interesting because they reflect the main messages that the high-ranking official probably intended to convey.

- Albatool Fahad Alyahya (2023) conducted a critical analysis of world publications in the context of information coverage. The author noted in the attitude analysis that both articles used all the elements of the attitude subsystem to influence their readers' opinions and attitudes, albeit with opposite goals. It was concluded that both news articles expressed both positive and negative attitudes towards the invasion of Ukraine, albeit in different ways. The Washington Post mainly focused on the negative aspects of the invasion and gave positive coverage of the United States' response to the Russian attack. In contrast, The Moscow Times reported positive actions by both sides. A study by Bozhuk (2022) aimed to investigate the leading strategic communications and strategic management in the context of war. The author concluded that PR technologies play an essential role in strategic management. Cristian E. Guerrero-Castro (2013), in his work, investigated strategic communications in the field of defense. The main conclusions of the author, with which we agree, are that strategic communications in the field of security and national defense aim, within the framework of their mission to support the national strategy, to achieve deterrence, legitimacy, and freedom of action in the international system.
- Juan Pablo Villar García, Carlota Tarín Quirós, and Julio Blázquez Soria (2021) identified strategic communications as a key factor for hybrid

deals. Gery W. Ryan and H. Russell Bernard (2000) examined the fundamental principles for defining the agonal concepts and communication strategies considered in this study as theoretical foundations.

- Ivar Ekman and Per-Erik Nilsson (2023) investigated the peculiarities of the Ukrainian information front in the conditions of war. The author investigated the effect of "rallying around the flag" when support for state institutions increases dramatically during a crisis, and the voice and messages of leaders carry more weight than in peacetime. The widespread opinion in society that Ukraine is waging a just war, as well as the fact that Ukrainians perceive the war as existential, gives communication efforts, both domestically and abroad, a very strong basis. Narrative lines generated by this reality – how Ukraine fights not only for itself but also for the future of the international order and the protection of democracy in general; how Ukraine conducts a just and legal war, observing international law - are understandable and correspond to the facts existing on the ground. However, the main challenge for this narrative framework is that it must be one that the respondents described as "true". In addition to the research materials analyzed in this report, the authors noted several instances in which Ukrainian communication contradicted the narrative: when photos of dead Russian soldiers were published early in the war when Ukraine's report of a missile landing on Ukrainian territory was untrue.
- A study by Chaban, Zhabotynska, and Knodt (2023) challenged the main narratives about Ukraine on Russian platforms. The authors obtained results that demonstrate the "behind-the-scenes mechanisms" which the Russian propaganda media use to provide a special emotionally colored perception Ukrainians by russians.
- Kurnyshova's (2023) study explores the relationship between resilience and agency as two sides of the same coin, and discusses how agency functions as a productive negation in the sense that refusing to compromise with the advancing Kremlin is "Russian peace." Also interesting in our opinion is the author's position regarding the concept of regulatory agency, which considers sustainability as a strategy of relying on one's forces, which, at the same time, due to its regulatory compatibility and compliance with the principles of democratic governance, opens promising



- ways for the final integration of Ukraine into the Euro-Atlantic institutional and normative structures as a state capable of contributing to common security.
- Cornish, Lindley-French, and Yorke (2011) questioned general statements about strategic communications and national strategies. At the same time, Tbvānase Taseņte (2023) analyzed in detail the online communications of world leaders during the war in Ukraine. It was noted that Joe Biden, Ursula von der Leyen, and Jens Stoltenberg used a variety of means to spread their messages - from press conferences and video calls to social networks and other digital platforms. It is concluded that the communication strategies of Joe Biden, Ursula von der Leyen, and Jens Stoltenberg during the crisis in Ukraine had a significant impact on the conflict. It is impossible not to agree with these conclusions because both the leaders who condemn the war in Ukraine and the leaders who deny supporting Ukraine influence the course of the war and history.
 - Benabid (2022) examined the communication strategy in the war in Ukraine and concluded that Ukraine's strategy is supported by a narrative communication process that emphasizes storytelling. Being in a disadvantageous position from a military point of view, Ukraine demonstrates aggressiveness, even vitality, which is surprising. At the same time, Moscow continues to experiment, looking for the optimal dosage of communication to highlight the conflict, as well as to strengthen its power inside the country about its own population.
 - Selvarajah and Fiorito (2023) investigated the public's attitude towards the war in Ukraine. The authors tested two hypotheses. The first is that international newspaper reports in the first five days of Russia's war in Ukraine contributed to the International Criminal Court announcing that it would investigate credible allegations of Russian war crimes in Ukraine. The validity of this hypothesis was established by evaluating the "accessibility effect" and the "applicability effect" of the "media agenda" using quantitative analysis and frame analysis. Eight newspapers from four selected countries published 30 news items linking Russia to war crimes in Ukraine. The second hypothesis that there may be a functional relationship between the application of international law in the ICC and coverage of events in the international mass media was also confirmed thanks to the obtained results.
 - Baylor (2022), in his work, compares two opposite approaches to conducting information warfare, which are used by President Zelensky and Russian dictator Putin. The president of Ukraine is directly addressing world leaders with messages about the current war situation, while the leader of the aggressor country limits his public appearances, preferring instead a non-public company of disinformation. In the opinion of the author, Ukraine is currently defeating the enemy on the information front.
 - Ángel Moreno Rubio (2022) examined in detail the discourse of the President of Ukraine during the war. It is concluded that Zelensky's discourse contributes to the spread of the Ukrainian narrative and achieves its goal of gaining international support. Zelensky has recognized the means of soft power and emotion in the Western world and is using them to the best of his ability to put pressure and sanctions on Russian Federation. Without it, he would have been defeated very quickly. It is inappropriate to compare the media field in the first months of the war and the media field in the general duration of almost 2 years of the war, because it changes dynamically.
 - Yusktiv, Karpchuk, and Pelekh (2022) researched the structure of strategic communications during the war. The authors consider strategic communications as a system consisting of invariant and variable components that can be projected in mass media messages. The study analyzed the messages of the Insider Ukraine telegram channel for the first 100 days of the war and found out that Ukraine's strategic communications during the war consisted of the following invariant components: interactive communications of Ukraine, operational communications of Ukraine, non-operational communications of Ukraine, operational and non-operational communications with the Russian Federation. Thanks to this study, the structure of strategic communications in general and during the first days of the war in particular became clear.
 - Horban (2015) analyzed the issue of information warfare against Ukraine and the means of its conduct. In the study, the theoretical concept of information aggression was determined using the example of Russian interference in the

internal affairs of Ukraine, and the methods and tools of conducting information warfare were considered. We agree with the author's position regarding theoretical generalizations and definitions of key concepts.

- Denisyuk (2021) studied the impact of propaganda and counter-propaganda in detail. The author's main conclusions concern ways of controlling propaganda. In the opinion of the author, with which we agree, to build a countermeasure strategy in the information war, it is necessary to take into account the experience of EU countries in countering disinformation flows, and the national information policy strategy should provide for the use of a multi-level and complex approach while paying attention to indicators such as the development of information infrastructure, the information processing industry, compliance with the rights and freedoms of citizens in the information society.
- In the study of Tutar and Bağ (2023), through critical discourse analysis, an attempt was made to reveal the discourses of two leaders with their implicit and connotative meanings beyond their actual meanings. Thus, the statements of Putin and Zelensky were analyzed according to Van Dijk's model of critical discourse analysis. At the same time, in the reflection of the rhetoric of each of the leaders in the media, it can be seen that both sides pay attention to each other's statements. In their speeches, leaders follow tactics and strategies like chess moves. At the same time, in his patriotic discourse, Zelensky emphasizes that the country's security can be ensured by the loyalty of the entire people and soldiers. We agree with the author's conclusions, as they reflect the reality of the discourse, both in Ukraine and Russia.
- Shkvorchenko, Cherniaieva, and Petlyuchenko (2021) discovered the question of linguistic approaches and modern communication technologies in political discourses in Europe and the USA. The study revealed that the primary distinction between the political discourses of Europe and the United States lies in the modes and methods of communication, the distribution formats, and the extensive indicators of population inclusion in communicative interactions within political discourse.
- Parahonsky and Yavorska (2022) challenged news coverage of war and peace. Romanova (2022) investigated the question of how to

promote the involvement of European and Ukrainian local and regional authorities in the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine in the context of properly constructed communication. We believe that the research data are crucial for understanding the informational impact on war and post-war reconstruction.

Methodology

The study of agonistic concepts and communicative strategies in European and Ukrainian media discourses after February 24, 2022, involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

In particular, the method of content analysis was used to investigate issues of media discourse. The purpose of using this method was a systematic study of the content of media messages. The applied use of this method is found in the analysis of texts, publications, both audio and video context, to understand and identify patterns, themes, and prevalence of discourses in the media field. Thanks to this method, regularities and repetitions of themes, frames, and language used in media representation were revealed.

Using the method of discourse analysis, the question of how language constructs and reflects social reality was investigated. The essence of this method is utilized to research the use of language, including linguistic structures, rhetoric, and framing techniques in media texts. As a result of the application of this method, it was investigated how agonistic concepts are linguistically constructed and transmitted in media discourse.

The use of critical discourse analysis is applied to the analysis of power relations and ideology in media discourse. This method makes it possible to focus attention on ways of using language to reproduce or challenge social structures and dynamic positions of power structures. With the help of this method, it became possible to study how media representations contribute to or challenge existing power relations in the concept of agonistic concepts.

The method of historical analysis played an equally important role in the research. In particular, the purpose of this method was to trace the historical evolution of media discourse in the context of both the full-scale invasion and the operation in Ukraine since 2014. The essence of this method is the study of archival media

content over time, to identify changes and persistence in the representation of agonal concepts. With the help of research using the method of historical analysis, it became clear how historical events and changes shape media narratives.

The method of cross-cultural comparative analysis helped to compare media discourses in different cultural contexts and take into account cultural differences. Thus, an analysis of media content from European and Ukrainian sources was carried out, and their common characteristics and differences were revealed. With the help of this method, an understanding of how agonal concepts are formulated and discussed in different cultural and media contexts is obtained. The benefit of the sociological method was intended to generalize the prevalence of certain discourses and views among different social groups. Thanks to this method, the quantitative assessment of public opinion, attitude, and awareness of agonal concepts in media discourse was analyzed. In addition, an analysis of social networks was carried out to study the discourse on social network platforms. Including, but not limited to, an analysis of user content, comments, and interactions on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram was conducted to explore how agonal concepts are discussed, shared, and debated online.

In the work, we aim to outline both theoretical foundations and present a new theoretical basis. With the help of a combination of theoretical material and practical work, it became possible to conduct a comprehensive study and understanding of agonal concepts and communicative strategies in European and Ukrainian media discourses after February 24, 2022.

The choice of research methods in the study of agonistic concepts and communicative strategies in European and Ukrainian media discourses after February 24, 2022, is justified based on the specific objectives of the research:

Content Analysis:

Rationale: This method is chosen for its systematic approach to studying the content of media messages. It enables the analysis of texts, publications, audio, and video contexts to identify patterns, themes, and prevalence of discourses in the media field.

Objective Alignment: Content analysis aligns with the objective of revealing regularities and

repetitions of themes, frames, and language used in media representation, providing a comprehensive understanding of the content landscape.

Discourse Analysis:

Rationale: This method is applied to investigate how language constructs and reflects social reality, encompassing linguistic structures, rhetoric, and framing techniques in media texts.

Objective Alignment: Discourse analysis is apt for exploring how agonal concepts are linguistically constructed and transmitted in media discourse, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the role of language.

Critical Discourse Analysis:

Rationale: This method is employed to analyze power relations and ideology in media discourse, focusing on how language reproduces or challenges social structures and dynamic power positions.

Objective Alignment: Critical discourse analysis is chosen to study how media representations contribute to or challenge existing power relations within the context of agonal concepts, aligning with the research's aim to uncover the influence of discourse on power dynamics.

Historical Analysis:

Rationale: This method traces the historical evolution of media discourse, specifically in the context of the full-scale invasion and the operation in Ukraine since 2014.

Objective Alignment: Historical analysis is essential for identifying changes and persistence in the representation of agonal concepts over time, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of how historical events shape media narratives.

Cross-Cultural Comparative Analysis:

Rationale: This method is chosen to compare media discourses in different cultural contexts and account for cultural differences.

Objective Alignment: Cross-cultural comparative analysis facilitates the exploration of how agonal concepts are formulated and discussed in diverse cultural and media contexts, enhancing the study's cross-cultural insights.

Sociological Method:

Rationale: This method is employed to generalize the prevalence of discourses among different social groups, providing a quantitative assessment of public opinion, attitudes, and awareness.

Objective Alignment: The sociological method aligns with the aim of analyzing public discourse by quantitatively assessing opinions, attitudes, and awareness related to agonistic concepts, with a specific focus on social network platforms.

Overall, the combination of these methods, spanning qualitative and quantitative approaches, allows for a thorough examination of agonistic concepts and communicative strategies in European and Ukrainian media discourses, aligning with the research's dual focus on theoretical foundations and practical insights.

Results and Discussion

Regarding the first task regarding communication strategies used in European and Ukrainian media discourses after the war:

Communication battles for influence take place over narrative when competing or opposing positions attempt to gain legitimacy and success through narratives that favor them. The actors here seek not so much to communicate around supposedly verified facts but to appeal to emotions and feed the audience with interpretive models favorable to them. It is tempting to assume that Russia, like any belligerent state, is simply reworking the communication strategies well documented and grouped under the term "hybrid warfare" to achieve its goals. Such strategies include deception, information and psychological operations, social media, audiovisual propaganda, and old Soviet methods updated by Moscow, in particular, based on theories of reflexive control. One caveat is that these strategies are never easy to implement because they target mixed audiences: the enemy, the local population, the media, and international public opinion. They also entail risks for the communicator related to the intensity of media coverage of the conflict, in terms of audience and/or political costs (OECD portal, 2022).

In addition, the media, when covering crisis situations, are considered both in the cycle and in the content. The media are questioning the rules of the game not only in traditional media ecosystems (print and television) but also in state and military control over information flows. It is

observed that continuous coverage of war (rolling news) is no longer the prerogative of the mainstream media. In an unprecedented initiative, volunteer editors documented the Russian invasion of Wikipedia as it unfolded, even if it meant departing from the original goal of the free encyclopedia.

There is a strategic demarcation of the scope of topics. Mass media actually use framing processes that involve selecting what is considered relevant and provoking specific interpretations by emphasizing only certain aspects of a topic.

Since the 2010s, the Russian Federation has shifted its communication strategy, recognizing the significance of "soft power" tools. The Kremlin has been actively working to regain control over messages in audiovisual media, investing steadily in social media to shape and present its perspective on events, including the causes, progression, and outcomes of various conflicts (Nato Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, 2023).

After the beginning of the war in Ukraine American social media also made an attempt to curb the flow of fake news from Russian-controlled media outlets. In a report published on April 7, 2022, Meta (Facebook's parent company) said it had taken action against a group of hackers who were trying to spread false information that Ukrainian forces had surrendered. In addition, under Council Regulation (EU) 2022/350 of March 1, 2022, the EU Electronic Communications Office also amended existing regulations. The new regulation banned the broadcasting (and other activities that contribute to the broadcasting) of Russia Today and Sputnik TV channels. The ban on content distribution, encompassing cable, satellite, IP television, websites, and video-sharing applications, applies to channels such as RT - Russia Today (in English, UK, Germany, France, and Spanish) and Sputnik.22. EU's diplomatic head, Josep Borrell, justified the decision by citing the Kremlin's systematic use of information manipulation and disinformation as an operational tool in its attack on Ukraine (Council of Europe, 2023).

Therefore, the communication strategy takes into account both challenges and pays attention to possible obstacles. At the same time, it would be fair to note that states form strategies anticipating possible challenges and moves of rivals.

Regarding the second question, about what speech acts are used by communications in the European and Ukrainian media space and what are the consequences of their use:

It was possible to compare the most frequently used keywords in the online speeches of three world leaders. Simultaneously, it is observed that leaders use different themes during the crisis; there is very rarely a consensus on the direction of communication.

Thus, Jens Stoltenberg's public speech focuses on key words such as "support", "allies", "security", "contribution", "defense", "war", "invasion", "powerful", "NATO", etc. Joe Biden's speech focused more on domestic policy issues than on the crisis in Ukraine; the most frequently used words are "inflation," "economy," "families," "jobs," "honor," "Americans," "prices," "taxes," etc. Ursula von der Leyen focuses on topics such as "energy", "sanctions", "solidarity", "fuel", "climate", "fuel", "RePowerUE", "cooperation", "the future", etc.

Zelenskyi seeks to distinguish himself from ordinary politicians. To do this, he works to be perceived as an ordinary citizen without luxuries, and the best way to achieve this is through close and direct communication, influential symbolic actions, and messages. In this way, Zelenskyi needs to convince the international community to support Ukraine and punish Russia for the invasion. If Zelenskyi can convince public opinion to support more and more countries, the chances of gaining more support increase, as public opinion can influence policy decisions through the CNN effect. He concentrates his entire convictions in five main messages: the bravery and patriotism of the Ukrainian people; an appeal to Putin to meet with him and stop hostilities; convince NATO to provide a no-fly zone over Ukraine; and an explanation of why and how the world should support Ukraine.

It should be noted that these primary messages may be accompanied by secondary ones, depending on the situation and the audience. However, limiting himself to five messages, he strives to be direct and clear in his speeches and constantly repeats them. An example of the use of secondary messages is an appeal to public opinion, parliaments, or governments of third countries.

Regarding the third question on the role of intercultural factors in communication, we note the following:

Our understanding of the world is shaped by historical distances in our mind maps, influencing memory, identity, and political decisions. Emotions, integral to long-term memory, often lead to a "rosy" view of the past and a critical stance on the present. Cultural resonance, a key concept, uses salient and emotionally charged frames in media and political communication. This resonance attracts attention and influences identity by shaping emotions. For the Russian audience, attitudes toward the USSR form a cornerstone in their long-term mental maps, affecting perceptions of the common past with Ukraine. Currently, Russian authorities have a positive view of the Soviet period, while Ukrainian representatives, with different identity narratives, hold mixed or negative views, especially after the 2022 Russian aggression and invasion of Ukraine.

The findings of the study significantly contribute to our understanding of communication strategies employed in European and Ukrainian media discourses post-war, addressing three key questions:

Communication Strategies and Challenges:

Insights: The study highlights the nuanced communication battles for influence, where actors prioritize emotions and interpretive models over verified facts. Russia's utilization of "hybrid warfare" strategies, including deception, information operations, and propaganda, is contextualized, acknowledging the challenges of targeting mixed audiences and potential risks for communicators.

Contribution: Understanding the complexity of communication strategies provides insights into how narratives are constructed and legitimized, emphasizing the importance of emotional appeal in shaping public perception during conflict.

Media's Evolving Role in Crisis Situations:

Insights: The study notes the evolving role of media, not only in traditional ecosystems but also in challenging state and military control over information flows. Continuous war coverage is no longer exclusive to mainstream media, as observed through volunteer editors documenting the Russian invasion on Wikipedia.

Contribution: Recognizing the transformation of media dynamics underscores the shifting landscape of information dissemination, influencing how crises are covered and documented in non-traditional platforms.

Speech Acts and Themes Used by World Leaders:

Insights: The study analyzes the speeches of world leaders during the crisis, revealing divergent themes and word choices. Leaders like Jens Stoltenberg, Joe Biden, Ursula von der Leyen, and Zelenskyi employ distinct keywords, reflecting their communication priorities and strategies.

Contribution: Examining the speech acts provides valuable insights into how leaders shape narratives, with each emphasizing specific themes to influence public perception and international support. Zelenskyi's focus on direct and clear messages, coupled with repeated key points, illustrates a deliberate communication strategy.

Role of Intercultural Factors in Communication:

Insights: The study emphasizes the impact of historical distances and cultural resonance on shaping identity and political decisions. It explores the "rosy" view of the past and contrasting attitudes towards the USSR in the Russian and Ukrainian audiences post-2022 invasion.

Contribution: Understanding intercultural factors elucidates how historical memory and emotional resonance influence public attitudes, providing context for divergent perspectives and potential areas of tension in media communication.

In summary, the findings enhance our understanding of the multifaceted nature of communication strategies in the context of conflict, shedding light on the challenges, evolving media roles, speech acts of world leaders, and the role of intercultural factors. These insights contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding media discourses in the aftermath of war.

Conclusions

As a result of the research on agonal concepts and communication strategies in European and Ukrainian media discourses, the following conclusions were made:

1. The following tools are used in Ukrainian and European media discourses after February 24, 2022: appeal to emotions, control over messengers, control over the place of publication, propaganda, and disinformation.

2. Regarding the speech acts used in communication in the European and Ukrainian media space and the consequences of their use, it should be remarked that political leaders have a set of topics to which they constantly refer. These topics are priorities and those that resonate with the population to achieve political goals.
3. Intercultural factors in communication play a significant role. Thus, these factors allow Russia to conduct communication activities, taking into account the commonality of history and culture with Ukraine. At the same time, for Ukraine, intercultural factors make it possible to turn to identity and independence. In addition, cultural factors influence the spread of information among individual countries, because the population will perceive better what is closer to the "spirit" of the country and culture.

The first hypothesis was tested and it was confirmed that the consideration of agonal concepts and communication strategies depends on the context in the country where these concepts are applied: political, socio-cultural, economic, etc. As for the second concept, it has been confirmed that communication in mass media is used for softening or sharpening perception, building public consciousness and public perception. The analysis of Ukrainian and European mass media on issues of war coverage confirmed that the media use linguistic strategies to strengthen or reduce the impact of agony events, to form certain images that are understandable for perception. The third hypothesis, which is based on cultural characteristics, is also proven. Thus, the analysis shows that the cultural context affects the agonal concepts in the media. In particular, historical and cultural characteristics influence how information is transmitted and perceived by the public and decision-makers.

Regarding further scientific research, we consider it necessary to investigate the peculiarities of the use of propaganda in European and Ukrainian discourses and its influence on public consciousness.

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