
RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Biden's First Speech on the War in Ukraine from the Perspective of Ideological Square Model

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses Biden's first speech on the war in Ukraine. The aim is to reveal the underlying ideologies and messages communicated through it. The speech prescribed was taken from the official website of the American Presidency Project. Made up of 1984 words, the speech lasted for 13 minutes and 50 seconds. It was subjected to analysis from the perspective of van Dijk's Ideological Square Model. The results show that Biden employed eight discursive strategies, which are Actor Description, Consensus, comparison, Evidentiality, Values expression, Victimization/criminalization, National self-glorification, and Presupposition. To legitimise his new severe sanctions on Russia, President Biden tried to export an image of himself and his allies as defenders of liberalism, humanitarianism and democracy against Russia and its president, who has initiated an 'unnecessary' war on Ukraine.

KEYWORDS

Russia; Ideology; War; Putin; Biden; Ukraine

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1. Introduction

The relationship between Russian Federation and the United States is an example of a relationship that is based on both hatred and interest. This relationship is marked by an armed race that seems to have no end (Puspita, Al Farauqy, and Sunarti, 2019). Despite their continuous efforts to overcome tensions translated into a number of agreements, such as the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks in 1960 and 1979, stability seems to be an end hard to achieve. One of the problems facing the betterment of their relationship is ideological. As a new world order is currently being formed, Russia, among other nations such as Turkey and Iran, opposes the idea of a unipolar order led by America. As pointed out by Hanna Notte, an analyst at the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, Erdoğan, Putin and Raisi "share a view of the world as multipolar, where countries outside of the west should have a say on how things are run" (The Guardian, 2022). After having enjoyed its leadership of the world since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US today has more rivals and competitors, especially at the economic and military levels (Wright and Blackwill, 2020). Recently, American expansion to east-European countries has been 'perceived in Moscow as a security threat' (Pavel, 2022, p. 8). As a result, Russia reacted by invading Ukraine on February 24, 2022. To protect its interests, the US did not hesitate to interfere, providing Ukraine with military and humanitarian aides, as will be seen in the speech under analysis. Thus, the US and Russia have ever since been involved in an ideological war. The ideological aspect of the war is what concerns the researchers in this study. Biden's speech, delivered on the same day Russia launched its invasion, has carried a number of messages.

2. Literature review

2.1 Related Studies

Critical Discourse Analysis has been used by many researchers in their analyses of political discourses. Speeches delivered by influential figures like presidents and ministers are not ideologically-innocent. Tensions between nations such as Pakistan and India, Serbia and Kosovo, and America and Russia involve not only armed conflicts but also ideological ones. President Biden's statements on different occasions tend to attribute negative nominations to Russian Federation while attributing positive ones to his country and allies (Linkevičiūtė, 2021). For both the US and the EU, the Russian Federation today, under the governance of Vladimir Putin, is being more ambitious and is clearly threatening peace in the EU and the Atlantic. The recent meeting of NATO heads of state and governments in Madrid concluded that Russia is the most significant threat to NATO members. China comes second, while terrorism is third (NATO, 2022). Thus, Both of Russian Federation and the Republic of China is considered by NATO members more dangerous threats than 'terrorism', a term associated with Islam since the events of 9/11. Western discourses contained highly embedded Islamophobic/anti-Islamic statements more often. For example, Khan *et al.* employed the Ideological Square Model to analyze former US president Donald Trump's anti-Islamic discourses since he announced his candidature for the presidency (Khan et al., 2019). The findings showed that there was always this self-other binary in his statements using specific rhetoric strategies typical to the conservative party, such as populism and victimization. Their observation is that he often presented Islam as a violence-loving religion while presenting himself as a patriotic politician. This anti-Islamic discourse is one of the commonalities between the two major American Parties. Speeches delivered by Barrack Obama and Hillary Clinton often targeted militant and non-militant Islamist organizations such as Al Qaeda, Hamas, and ISIS (Gadalla, 2012; Khan et al., 2019). The role of the media in this regard cannot be underestimated. The propagation of ideologies relies heavily on media platforms for the propagators to have access to their targets across the globe. Thus, the control of the media is a very fundamental contributor to controlling the masses (Linkevičiūtė 2021). Some studies (Apirakvanalee and Zhai, 2022; Hussein, 2017; Khan et al., 2019; Mahdavi and Mokhtari, 2019) have found that Western media, such as BBC and the New York Times tend to put their opponents in the 'them/other' category and represent them negatively – emphasizing their bad characteristics and de-emphasizing the good ones. Discourse strategies such as national self-glorification, disclaimer, and polarization are shared across the board among the Occidental media. Thus, it is transparently clear that most studies that were carried out using the Ideological Square Model have come to a similar conclusion which is that the orthodox tendency in Western discourse, be it at the level of politicians or media, is to negatively represent the Other while positively representing the Self. The aim here is to use the same model in the analysis of current American president Biden to unearth the ideology(s) transmitted through his speech delivered on the same day Russian troops started invading Ukraine.

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Van Dijk founded the cognitive approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (Henceforth, CDA). He defines CDA as "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political contexts" (Van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). CDA's preoccupation is to unveil the ways in which discourse is used to counter and control the minds and actions of the dominant groups and to protect their interests. Richardson makes the following statement, ' [...] CDA is an approach to language use that aims to explore and expose the roles that discourse plays in reproducing (or resisting) social inequalities' (Richardson, 2007, p. 6). In tune with the above definitions, Wodak and Meyer assert that CDA investigates "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009, p. 2). Thus, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, and legitimized through language use (i.e. discourse). There are three major approaches to CDA: Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach (Van Dijk, 1998, 2004, 2006), Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2003) and Wodak's discourse-historical approach (Wodak, 2001, 2015a; Reisigl, 2017). The researchers finally chose the socio-cognitive approach to analyse the speech in question.

2.3 Ideology

The key concept here is ideology. From an etymological perspective, the origin of the term traces back to the French scholar Destutt de Tracy who proposed a new field of science to be called *idée-logie* (i.e. the science of ideas), which would later become 'ideology' (Mah, 1987, p. 5; van Dijk, 1998, p. 1). Another peculiar figure in this regard is Karl Marx, who is widely recognized as the one to have introduced the term to the intellectual sphere, but the term never got a systematic treatment by its 'founder', which, as Gramsci put it, "a conception of the world which has never been systematically expounded by its founder" (in McCarney, 1980, p. 1). Marx and his fellow Engels considered ideology to be the prevailing ideas of a certain age serving the ruling class or, in Marx's terms, 'superstructure', which controls the means of production (Van Dijk, 1998). Despite the enormous literature written in favour of ideology, its definition is still "as elusive and confused as ever" (van Dijk, 1998, p. vii). In a nutshell, however, the commonsense conceptions of ideology are summarized as: (1) "they are false beliefs", (2) "they conceal real social relations and serve to deceive others", (3) "beliefs others have", and (4) "they are socially or politically self-serving nature of the definition of truth and falsity" (van Dijk, 1998, p. 2). Here the researchers will adopt Van Dijk's definition of ideology "as the basis of the social representations

shared by members of a group" (Van Dijk 1998, p. 8). This means that a group of people rely on their respective ideologies to organize the multitude of their respective social beliefs, which dictate what is considered wrong or right, good or bad and act according to that (Van Dijk, 1998).

2.4 Ideological Square Model

Ghauri & Umer assert that the Ideological Square is a model advanced by van Dijk in his approach to CDA (2019). The major thesis of this model is that political speeches and discourses usually create a binarity of positive self-representation and negative other-representation (Ghauri and Umer, 2019). Van Dijk suggests that 'this analytical tool is well suited for exploring and highlighting the polarization of 'us' vs. 'them', where the speaker and his or her allies are considered to be 'us or in-group', while his or her opponents are placed in the 'them' or 'out-group' category' (Van Dijk, 1998, 2004, 2006, as cited in Khan et al., 2019, p. 5). Furthermore, Van Dijk theorizes that there are two levels of analysis: micro level and macro level. At the macrostructure level, there are four strategies that are considered integral parts of ideological discourses which tend to emphasize how bad They are and how good We are or that mitigate their success and our failures (Van Dijk, 1989). The Ideological Square Model is very helpful when subjecting political or media discourses to analysis where the 'Self' vs. 'Others' dichotomy is constantly constructed (Reynolds, 2019; Khan et al., 2019). Van Dijk came up with 25 rhetorical discursive strategies that help expose ideologies underpinning a given discourse (Van Dijk, 2006, as cited in Khan et al., 2019, p. 6).

The current study revolves around the portrayal of Russia and President Putin in President Biden's speech. It attempts to uncover the ideological underpinning of the relevant speech using the Ideological Square Model. The researchers will not go through all the rhetorical discursive strategies but will be selective of the most relevant ones. Two strategies of the 25 strategies will be slightly modified. Norm expression will be modified into values expression. And victimisation strategy will be added to 'criminalisation' since the speech seems to use both strategies.

3. Methodology

The present study was carried out using a qualitative research design which is described as being flexible, continual and evolving (Glaser et al., 1968). The reason why the researchers opted for this design is that it overlooks the quantity of the data collected. The selection of data in discourse studies focuses on the quality of that data and not its quantity (Baker, 2006). A speech delivered by current American President Joe Biden was selected and subjected to analysis using van Dijk's Ideological Square Model. The analysis aimed at making explicit the way the speaker represented himself and his allies, on the one hand, and his opponents, President Putin and his allies, on the other. The researchers took eight elements of the Ideological Square Model. Each one was analyzed separately. These selected elements were observed time and time again in President Biden's speech. The speech lasted for 13 minutes and 50 seconds, consisting of 1984 words. The researchers analyzed only President Biden's speech without integrating his exchange with reporters. The researchers took the speech prescribed from the official website of the American Presidency Project. The link for the speech is attached in the Appendix.

Concerning sampling, it is worth mentioning that the orthodox thinking in discourse studies is not to have a large sample size to ensure valid and reliable findings, but it is sufficient to have a small sample size of the corpus to meet the aims of the research. According to Potter and Wetherell, the main concern in discourse analysis is not the sample size but rather the variety of ways the language is used (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, as cited in Bondarou and Ruël, 2004, p. 7). With regard to data collection in discourse studies, it is noteworthy that CDA, according to Glaser and Strauss, "sees itself more in the tradition of Grounded Theory" (Glaser et al., 1986, cited in Wodak and Meyer, 2001, p. 18). This essentially means that data collection does not have to be conducted in one phase "but might be a permanently ongoing procedure" (Wodak and Meyer, 2001, p. 18). Therefore, an analyst can freely add or delete data whenever needed. Therefore, the researchers did not put every single sentence in the speech into analysis but picked and chose the ones that would answer the research question of this study. The sentences and utterances that were analyzed contribute to the exportation of President Biden's ideology to his recipients.

4. Results and Findings

Josef Robinette Biden Jr. was elected the 46th president of the United States after defeating former president Donald Jr. Trump. He is a member of the Democratic Party. On 24 February 2022, he delivered a speech declaring his authorization of severe sanctions against Russia in the wake of its war against Ukraine. The following is an analysis of his speech using the ideological square model.

In terms of macro-strategy, the speech is clearly based on the binarity of **positive self-presentation** vs. **negative other-presentation**. This polarization, spread out all over the speech, can be seen in the following two excerpts:

"The Russian military has begun a brutal assault on the people of Ukraine Without provocation, without justification, and without necessity. This is a pre-meditated attack", and

"America stands up for bullies; we stand up for freedom. This is who we are. Let me also repeat the warning I made last week. If Russia pursues cyber attacks against our companies and critical infrastructure, we're prepared to respond".

The first two statements were stated at the very beginning of the speech. Apparently, President Biden starts his speech with a harsh and straightforward attack against the Russian military. This is an attempt made with the intention of leaving a negative impression about Russia all along as he presents his arguments for authorizing very harsh sanctions on Russia. The last excerpt was stated as President Biden was ending the speech. He ended the speech with a mention of the values that America is known for over the years, such as "freedom" and "democracy". This values expression strategy will be subject to an analysis subsequently. Thus, admittedly, President Biden has successfully realized the macro principles of the Ideological Square Model:

- Mitigate positive things about them
- Emphasize positive things about us
- Mitigate negative things about us
- Emphasize negative things about them

At the micro-structure level, the researchers will target the following strategies: actor description, consensus, comparison, evidentiality, values expression, national self-glorification, presupposition, and victimization/criminalization. Each strategy will be tackled separately.

4.1 Actor description

The actor President Biden has given a number of descriptions of Putin and the Russian military, as is evidently shown in the excerpts below. The expressions and phrases targeted will be put in bold:

"Vladimir Putin has been planning this for months as something we have been saying all along."

"Putin declared his war."

*"Putin is the **aggressor**."*

*"Russia's **aggressive actions**"*

"His troop presence in Belarus and the black sea"

*"Within hours of Russia's unleashing **its assault**."*

*"The **Russian propaganda** outlets will keep trying to **hide the truth** and **claim success** for its military operation against a made-up threat."*

*"Putin and his **criminal allies**"*

*"Putin will be a **pariah** on the international stage."*

*"**Tyrants** like Putin and his armies"*

First, it is evident from the above that President Biden has no consideration for Putin as a president of the largest country the world over as far as territory is concerned. In terms of economic power, Russia was ranked the eleventh largest economy in the world last year, with oil and gas making its backbone (Statista, 2022). However, all of that did not at all prevent the speaker from describing him as a "criminal", "pariah", and "tyrant". Second, diplomatically, presidents tend usually to put titles such as "Mr." or "President" before uttering the name of another president. However, the speaker does not use any of those titles throughout his speech which would only be interpreted as showing disrespect to President Putin. Third, in the first, second, third, fifth, and ninth excerpts, the speaker tries to portray his target as a single person who acts individually and exercises monopoly. This act of monopolizing all kinds of power is referred to as authoritarianism. According to MerriamWebster, authoritarianism refers to 'favoring a concentration of power in a leader or an elite not constitutionally responsible to the people'. The speaker thus views his opponent as an authoritarian ruler. The speaker considers his 'ideological enemy' (van Dijk, 1998), President Putin, also as a liar. The seventh excerpt says that President Putin is someone who makes use of propaganda, hides the truth, and claims success against a made-up threat. Thus, the speaker makes it clear from the beginning that the world is dealing with a tyrant, criminal, authoritarian, liar leader.

4.2 Consensus

The following excerpts show the consensus strategy employed by the speaker:

"The United States is not doing this alone."

"For months, we have been building coalition partners representing well more than half the global economy."

"27 members of the European Union including France, Germany, Italy as well as the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and many others to amplify the joint impact of our response."

"I spoke with the G7 leaders this morning, and we are in full and total agreement."

"Our actions and those of our allies and partners"

"There is no doubt no doubt that the United States and every NATO ally will meet our article 5 commitment which says an attack on one is an attack on all."

It is crystal clear from the above that the speaker, President Biden, is in a strong consensus with his allies and partners. This would definitely strengthen his position and attitude against his opponent, President Putin. In fact, the speaker's emphasis on this aspect aims at weakening President Putin's morale. Also, the fact that the "Other" is depicted as acting alone in isolation from the rest of the world while "We" act in a coalition and alliance is indeed very crucial in the demonization process of the enemy. It is noteworthy that this method of collective and consensual movement adopted by the US since the end of the Vietnam War plays two crucial roles: (1) boasting its coalition against whatever enemy is out there and (2) bringing the public opinion to its side. Having all the European countries, in addition to the economically powerful Japan, Australia and South Korea, on the American side while the African and South American countries adopt at least the neutral approach is most definitely a plus for the US in its conflict with Russia. No country would be happy to be in Russia's position since it would bring about extraordinarily heavy economic, strategic and military consequences.

4.3 Comparison

The following excerpts show the comparison strategy employed by the speaker:

"And at the very moment that the United Nations Security Council was meeting to stand up for Ukrainian sovereignty to stave off invasion, Putin declared his war."

"Putin has unleashed a great pain on them, but the Ukrainian people have known 30 years of independence."

"Putin has committed an assault on the very principles that uphold the global peace, but now the entire world sees clearly what Putin and his criminal allies are really all about."

"The United States and our allies and partners will emerge stronger, more united and more determined and more purposeful. And Putin's aggression against Ukraine will end up costing Russia dearly economically and strategically."

"Putin's choice to make a totally unjustifiable war on Ukraine will have left Russia weaker and the rest of the world stronger."

"Liberty, democracy, and human dignity, these are the forces far more powerful than fear and oppression."

"In the contest between democracy and autocracy, between sovereignty and subjugation, make no mistake."

The excerpts above reveal the kind of war the two countries are involved in. In light of these excerpts, it appears as if the war is not held between two nations as it has always usually been; rather, it seems it is held all over the world between the combatants, good and evil, democracy and autocracy, freedom and subjugation. In this case, the US represents democracy and freedom, while Russia holds the torch of autocracy and subjugation. The comparison strategy employed by the speaker might have gone extreme, picturing Russia as a country that is planning to take over all the eastern countries. The first excerpt says that President Putin has undermined the UN Security Council meeting to stave off the war by launching it immediately on Ukraine. This gives the impression that President Putin is willingly going to war instead of peace. The excerpt under 18 and 19 boast that impression. The excerpt under 20 shows the state of the relationship between the US and its allies and partners before the war, which was weak, disunited, undetermined and unpurposeful. This means that the motives behind American actions towards this war are not only to defeat Russia and cost it economically, militarily and strategically but, equally importantly, to bring the US and its allies and partners together again. It is worthwhile here that rising voices in Europe, especially in France and Germany, calling for an army independent of NATO and the US was sufficient enough for fueling a war at the borders of these nations in an attempt to force them to abandon their plans completely. Thus, by the end of the war, the US will have (1) silenced those voices in Europe and (2) weakened its historical enemy, at least militarily and ideologically. The 21th excerpt actually stresses that. The comparison strategy used by the speaker aims at justifying his severe sanctions on Russia as well as winning the sympathy of the rest of the "freedom-loving" world.

4.4 Evidentiality

The following are excerpts that show the use of the evidentiality strategy:

"The United States is not doing this alone. For months, we have been building coalition partners representing well more than half the global economy. 27 members of the European Union, including France, Germany, and Italy, as well as the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and many others, to amplify the joint impact of our response. I spoke with the G7 leaders this morning, and we are in full and total agreement."

We're going to impose major, and we're going to impair their ability to compete in a high-tech 21st century economy. We've already seen impact of our actions on Russian currency in the ruble, which early today hits its weakest level ever, ever in history." The Russian stock market plunged today. The Russian government is borrowing rates spiked by over 15 percent."

*There is no doubt that the United States and every NATO ally will meet our article 5 commitment which says an attack on one as an attack on all. **Over the past few weeks, I ordered thousands of additional forces to Germany and Poland as part of our commitment to NATO.***

"But, history has shown time and again how swift gains in territory eventually give way to grinding occupations, acts of mass civil disobedience and strategic dead ends."

The bolded parts are cases of evidentiality. Generally speaking, the US seems strongly committed to its principle of collective and cooperative action-making and taking. In the 24th excerpt, the speaker presents a piece of evidence that the US is not doing all this alone by calling the countries involved by names, or at least the ones that are powerful enough to make a difference in the conflict. The 23rd excerpt is a clearly-stated piece of evidence that the sanctions imposed on Russia are really achieving what they were set out to achieve. That is, the Russian currency, Ruble, is hitting its weakest level ever. The speaker in the 26th excerpt states that the Russian government is resorting to debts, which is a piece of evidence for the deterioration of the Russian stock market. Also, under 27, the speaker speaks of article 5 of NATO treaty. As a piece of evidence for the commitment of the US to this article, he says he has sent additional forces, counted in thousands, to Germany and Poland. Last but not at least, the speaker presents history as a lesson which teaches that swift gains of territory never end in a favorable way for the occupants as it causes civil disobedience and other negative effects. Taking history as a lesson is another independent strategy, but it is more or less the same as the strategy at issue. It seems as though the speaker is assuring the allies and partners of the US of America's commitment to its alliance with them, especially not long ago when the US unexpectedly withdrew its military forces from Afghanistan, leaving its allies in shock. The unilateral decision-making and taking that characterized American policies over the last few years caused its allies to reconsider their attitude towards America. Middle East countries are a case in point. The recent new orientation towards the east would not have taken place prior to the American withdrawal from Afghanistan. As America is approaching a possible war with China, the former felt the urge to regain the trust of its allies and partners, east and west.

4.5 Values expression

The following are instances of values expression strategy employed by the speaker:

"We stand up for freedom."

"But it is the vision that the United States and freedom-loving nations everywhere will oppose with every tool of our considerable power."

"Liberty, democracy, human dignity, these are the forces far more powerful than fear and oppression."

"In the contest between democracy and autocracy, between sovereignty and subjugation, make no mistake."

"Freedom will prevail."

The excerpts above show the kind of value-system that the US claims to defend. "Freedom" and "democracy" are mentioned time and time again more often than any other value. Through all the instances above, the speaker categorizes the players involved in this conflict in terms of how they treat freedom:

- Freedom fighters (the Russians)
- Freedom seekers (the Ukrainians)
- Freedom defenders (the Americans)

The speaker in the excerpt under 31 accuses his enemy of causing fear and oppression to the detriment of human dignity, liberty and democracy. The excerpt under 32 stresses that, indeed. The speaker, thus, exports to the public his conception of the Russian-Ukrainian war. However, it could be argued that the US is the one responsible for this war by coming dangerously closer towards the Russian borders. Ukraine has already promised to stay neutral towards future conflicts between the West, represented in America, and the East, represented in Russia. Ukraine's hopes to join the European Union and NATO left no choice for the Russians other than launching a real war. The West, as well as Russia, realizes the huge gap in military power between NATO and Russia. Hence, having NATO forces along the Russian borders with Finland, Norway, Turkey, Estonia, and Latvia is seen as extremely dangerous for the national security of Russia and its allies. The American attempt to further add Ukraine to the list, which will supplement the pressure on Russia, forced the latter to act militarily. Russia's actions, thus, appear to be mere reactions to external threats. What's more, the principle that a Russian person would say, 'a person's freedom ends where another man's freedom begins' is not given any consideration by the Westerners. Giving Ukraine freedom to join the EU or NATO puts Russia and some of its allies in danger since that will put them in direct confrontation with the West. Hence, their freedom will certainly be affected.

What can be sensed by the excerpts above is an attempt to globalize a particular value-system at the expense of others. This monopoly of values has led to many deadly wars, such as the Iraq War.

4.6 National self-glorification

The speaker uses the self-glorification strategy as shown in the following excerpts:

"We have been building a coalition partners representing well more than half the global economy."

"We provided over 650 million dollars in defensive assistance to Ukraine just this last year."

"I've also spoken with defense secretary Austin and chairman of joint chiefs general Millay about preparations for additional moves should they become necessary to protect our NATO allies and support the greatest military alliance in the history of the world NATO."

"We stand up for freedom. This is who we are."

"They have repeatedly shown that they will not tolerate anyone who tries to take their country backwards."

"Putin's action betrays sinister vision for the future of our world; one more nations take what they want by force. But it is the vision that the United States and freedom-loving nations everywhere will oppose with every tool of our considerable power."

This strategy of self-glorification is spread out all over the speech, albeit sometimes not straightforward. Under excerpt 34, the speaker is clearly taking pride in his country's capability to mobilize countries whose economies together represent well more than half the global economy against an overseas enemy threatening America's position as a superpower. This is not what any country out there is capable of doing. Similarly, not any country is capable of providing over 650 million dollars for Ukraine in one year, as shown in the excerpt under 35. Under 36, President Biden is talking about NATO being the most powerful coalition not only in the present but in the world's history. The US, being a world superpower, feels the responsibility of protecting both itself and all its allies, especially NATO members, from Russian threats. This is surely something to be proud of. Self-glorification is obviously clear in the next excerpt, where the speaker tells us who his people are: people who stand up for freedom. There lies in the excerpt a sort of history-glorification as US history is known for wars and battles for freedom and democracy. The speaker in excerpt 38 says Ukrainians are not yet ready to abandon their developing country for the 'back-warded' Russians. Knowing that Ukraine has western inclinations, the implication in the speaker's statement is that Ukraine will continue developing as long as it is not taken over by Russia, the 'bringer' of destruction and backwardness. In the last excerpt, the speaker talks about the readiness of the US and freedom-loving nations to oppose Putin's sinister vision for the future of the world. Thus, the war is not only between freedom and subjugation but also between development and backwardness. To win the sympathy of the world, the self-glorification strategy was used in the discourse to classify the West as representing certain positive values while the Russians represent other negative values. The self-glorification strategy in the speech is, thus, employed to serve political interests.

4.7 Presupposition

The following excerpts are instances of used presupposition strategy:

"He rejected every good faith the United States and our allies and our partners made to address our mutual security concerns through dialogue to avoid needless conflict and avert human suffering."

"It'll strike a blow to their ability to continue to modernize in the military."

"And I want to be clear; the United States is not doing this alone."

"Gas companies should not exploit this moment to hike their prices to raise profits."

"But this aggression cannot go unanswered. If it did, the consequences for America will be much worse."

Excerpt 40 presupposes a difference between President Putin, who sought this needless conflict and human suffering, and President Biden, who contrarily did not. In other words, it is a war between a peace-seeking nation, the US, and a peace-destroying nation, Russia. Exporting this binary image to the public strengthens and legitimizes any future American actions against Russia. The next excerpt presupposes that the United States is responsible for the modernization of the world and that it is the United States that holds the baton against those who disobey its orders. It also presupposes that the United States was comfortable allowing Russia to modernize before the war. Normally, one would do everything in their power to prevent their enemy from growing, especially at the military level. This war, thus, was inevitable. The 42nd excerpt presupposes that the United States will not make the same mistake it made in the Vietnam War. This statement is directed to the American public, who does not want their army to be involved alone in a war that does not concern them. It is also addressed to Russia, which may, as a result, feel that it is facing America and all its allies, whose number is calculated in the dozens, as the speaker would reveal afterwards. In excerpt 43rd

lies a presupposition that America's gas companies are profiting from this war by raising prices. This accusation is implicated and not explicit to avoid any clash with these companies. The last excerpt reveals another reason for harsh American reactions to Russian actions. The speaker knows and informs that Russia will do more harm to the US in the future if it is not punished today. That is, America is pursuing its interests with these sanctions, which may undermine all its claims that it is defending freedom and humanity. Although this fact is dangerously overtly put here, it is the logically presupposed fact in the speaker's statement. Thus, this war is considered by President Biden and his administrative staff as a war of America on an equal footing with Ukraine.

4.8 Victimization/criminalization

The excerpts to follow reveal the victimization/criminalization strategy used by the speaker:

"The Russian military has begun a brutal assault on the people of Ukraine Without provocation, without justification, and without necessity."

"Putin is the aggressor."

"As promised, we're adding the names to the list of Russian elites and their family member that were sanctioned as well."

"For months, we have been working closely with the private sector to harden our cyber defenses and sharpen our ability to respond to Russian cyber attacks as well."

"This is a dangerous moment for all of Europe, for the freedom around the world."

"Putin has committed an assault on the very principles that uphold global peace, but now the entire world sees clearly what Putin and his criminal allies are really all about."

"Liberty, democracy, human dignity; these are the forces far more powerful than fear and oppression. They cannot be extinguished by tyrants like Putin and his armies. They cannot be erased from people's hearts and hopes by any amount of violence and intimidation. They endure. In the contest between democracy and autocracy, between sovereignty and subjugation, make no mistake. Freedom will prevail."

The victim vs. criminal dichotomy is deemed crucial in the process of polarization. The speaker begins his speech by putting the Other in the position of a criminal. The speaker makes that transparently clear in excerpts 46 and 50, where he uses the words 'aggressor' and 'criminal' to describe the Other(s) (i.e. President Putin and his allies). Not only that, but the speaker also promised to punish the "corrupt" Russian elites because they profited from this war. The speaker speaks in general terms without specifying who they are (generalization strategy). Surely this would boast of his goal (i.e. classifying the other as criminal) to legitimize his punishment. President Putin is always presented as the offender, for example, as shown in excerpts 45, 46, 48, and 50 which say that President Putin has launched an unjustifiable and unnecessary brutal and aggressive war against Ukraine. In excerpt 49, he is presented as a threat not only to Ukraine or the American 'empire' but to the entire world. Presenting him as a tyrant surrounded by corrupt billionaires who make cyber-attacks against others, threaten global peace and freedom, is dangerous for Europe, fight democracy, liberty, human dignity and sovereignty, and creates intimidation, oppression, fear, violence, and subjugation is sufficiently enough for imposing unmerciful sanctions not only on his regime but on the country as a whole. On the other hand, the speaker, along with his allies, the 'guardians' and 'gatekeepers' of all those highly valued principles, appear in a defensive position. They fight against fear, oppression, violence, intimidation, autocracy and subjugation. Thus, it is not only a war between two states but a war between two value systems.

5. Conclusion

This article examines the speech given by President Biden regarding the conflict in Ukraine to uncover the fundamental beliefs and ideas conveyed in it. Having applied the Ideological Square Model to this speech, the results show the use of a number of discursive strategies that had ideological purposes. The 'us-them' binary was the main feature that characterized his speech. The overall impression one might have after listening to the speech is that Russia creates an existential threat to all humanity and the modern world. The Russian president is portrayed as a freedom-fighter and stability-hater. Thus, the general ideologies embedded in Biden's speech are liberalism, humanitarianism, and democracy. America, in this war, defends all these ideologies against President Putin and his army. President Putin is anti-liberal and undemocratic since he monopolises all kinds of freedom in his own country and wants to impose the same system upon another weak neighboring country. He embodies subjugation, intimidation, tyranny, authoritarianism and violence. He is also against human welfare reflected in his launching of an unnecessary war on Ukraine. This 'Russian-phobic' representation in President Biden's speech mobilizes his audience against President Putin, especially since the

speech is delivered by the head of a super power. Thus, imposing sanctions, regardless of their severity, both on the ruling elite and the Russian people alike, will have legitimacy and justification.

This article reveals the underlying ideologies, power relations, and values that are latent in the language and rhetoric used by political leaders, i.e., President Joe Biden, in this case. It also discloses how language is used to construct and shape public perception of the conflict and how it positions the United States in relation to the Russo-Ukrainian war. Nevertheless, the researchers acknowledge that this study has a number of limitations, namely, data limitation, subjectivity, and time sensitivity. The analysis is limited to one speech which might not capture the complexity and nuances of the political situation. Moreover, the analysis may be influenced by the researcher's prejudices and opinions, which may alter the interpretation of the language used in the speech. Finally, due to the fact that political discourse and events are continuously changing, the interpretation of a speech may change considerably as new information becomes available. Future studies in this research area could include comparative analysis with other speeches of world leaders to compare and contrast views and beliefs. As an alternative, studies might analyze political discourse relating to the war between Russia and Ukraine longitudinally to pinpoint patterns and changes in language use as events unfold.

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Appendix

President Biden's speech:

The Russian military has begun a brutal assault on the people of Ukraine without provocation, without justification, without necessity.

This is a premeditated attack. Vladimir Putin has been planning this for months, as I've been—as we've been saying all along. He moved more than 175,000 troops, military equipment put into positions along the Ukrainian border. He moved blood supplies into position and built a field hospital, which tells you all you need to know about his intentions all along.

He rejected every good-faith effort the United States and our allies and partners made to address our mutual security concerns through dialogue to avoid needless conflict and avert human suffering. For weeks—for weeks—we have been warning that this would happen. And now it's unfolding largely as we predicted.

In the past week, we've seen shelling increase in the Donbas, the region in eastern Ukraine controlled by Russian-backed separatists. The Russian Government has perpetrated cyber attacks against Ukraine.

We saw a staged political theater in Moscow: outlandish and baseless claims that Ukraine was about to invade and launch a war against Russia, that Ukraine was prepared to use chemical weapons, that Ukraine committed a genocide—without any evidence. We saw a flagrant violation of international law in attempting to unilaterally create two new so-called republics on sovereign Ukrainian territory.

And at the very moment that the United Nations Security Council was meeting to stand up for Ukraine's sovereignty, to stave off invasion, Putin declared his war. Within moments—moments—missile strikes began to fall on historic cities across Ukraine. Then came in the air raids, followed by tanks and troops rolling in.

We've been transparent with the world. We've shared declassified evidence about Russia's plans and cyber attacks and false pretexts so that there can be no confusion or coverup about what Putin was doing. Putin is the aggressor. Putin chose this war. And now he and his country will bear the consequences.

Today I'm authorizing additional strong sanctions and new limitations on what can be exported to Russia. This is going to impose severe costs on the Russian economy, both immediately and over time. We have purposefully designed these sanctions to maximize the long-term impact on Russia and to minimize the impact on the United States and our allies.

And I want to be clear: The United States is not doing this alone. For months, we've been building a coalition of partners representing well more than half the global economy.

Twenty-seven members of the European Union, including France, Germany, Italy—as well as the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and many others—to amplify the joint impact of our response.

I just spoke with the G-7 leaders this morning, and we are in full and total agreement. We will limit Russia's ability to do business in dollars, euros, pounds, and yen to be part of the global economy. We will limit their ability to do that. We are going to stunt the

ability of—to finance and grow the Russian military. We're going to impose major—and we're going to impair their ability to compete in a high-tech 21st-century economy.

We've already seen the impact of our actions on Russia's currency and the ruble, which early today hit its weakest level ever—ever—in history. And the Russian stock market plunged today. The Russian Government's borrowing rate spiked by over 15 percent. In today's actions, we have now sanctioned Russian banks that together hold around \$1 trillion in assets.

We've cut off Russia's largest bank—a bank that holds more than one-third of Russia's banking assets by itself—cut it off from the U.S. financial system. And today, we're also blocking four more major banks. That means every asset they have in America will be frozen. This includes VTB, the second largest bank in Russia, which has \$250 billion in assets.

As promised, we're also adding the names to the list of Russian elites and their family members that are sanctioning—that we're sanctioning as well. As I said on Tuesday, these are people who personally gain from the Kremlin's policies, and they should share in the pain. We will keep up this drumbeat of those designations against corrupt billionaires in the days ahead.

On Tuesday, we stopped the Russian Government from raising money from U.S. or European investors. Now, we're going to apply the same restrictions to Russia's largest state-owned enterprises, companies with assets that exceed \$1.4 trillion.

Some of the most powerful impacts of our actions will come over time as we squeeze Russia's access to finance and technology for strategic sectors of its economy and degrade its industrial capacity for years to come.

Between our actions and those of our allies and partners, we estimate that we'll cut off more than half of Russia's high-tech imports. It will strike a blow to their ability to continue to modernize their military. It will degrade their aerospace industry, including their space program. It will hurt their ability to build ships, reducing their ability to compete economically. And it will be a major hit to Putin's long-term strategic ambitions.

And we're preparing to do more. In addition to the economic penalties we're imposing, we're also taking steps to defend our NATO allies, particularly in the east. Tomorrow NATO will convene a summit—we'll be there—to bring together the leaders of 30 allied nations and close partners to affirm our solidarity and to map out the next steps we will take to further strengthen all aspects of our NATO alliance.

Although we provided over \$650 million in defensive assistance to Ukraine just this year—this last year, let me say it again: Our Forces are not and will not be engaged in the conflict with Russia in Ukraine. Our Forces are not going to Europe to fight in Ukraine, but to defend our NATO allies and reassure those allies in the east.

As I made crystal clear, the United States will defend every inch of NATO territory with the full force of American power. And the good news is, NATO is more united and more determined than ever. There is no doubt—no doubt—that the United States and every NATO ally will meet our article 5 commitments, which says that an attack on one is an attack on all.

Over the past few weeks, I ordered thousands of additional forces to Germany and Poland as part of our commitment to NATO. On Tuesday, in response to Russia's aggressive action, including its troop presence in Belarus and the Black Sea, I've authorized the deployment of ground and air forces already stationed in Europe to NATO's eastern flank allies: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania.

Our allies have also been stepping up, adding—the other allies, the rest of NATO—adding their own forces and capabilities to ensure our collective defense. And today, within hours of Russia's unleashing its assault, NATO came together and authorized and activated—an activation of response plans. This will enable NATO's high-readiness forces to deploy and—when and where they're needed to protect our NATO allies on the eastern boundaries of Europe.

And now I'm authorizing additional U.S. Forces and capabilities to deploy to Germany as part of NATO's response, including some of U.S.-based Forces that the Department of Defense placed on standby weeks ago.

I've also spoken with Defense Secretary Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Milley, about preparations for additional moves should they become necessary to protect our NATO allies and support the greatest military alliance in the history of the world—NATO.

As we respond, my administration is using the tools—every tool at our disposal to protect American families and businesses from rising prices at the gas pump. You know, we're taking active steps to bring down the costs. And American oil and gas companies should not—should not—exploit this moment to hike their prices to raise profits.

You know, in our sanctions package, we specifically designed to allow energy payments to continue. We are closely monitoring energy supplies for any disruption. We have been coordinating with major oil-producing and -consuming countries toward our common interest to secure global energy supplies.

We are actively working with countries around the world to elevate [evaluate]* a collective release from the Strategic Petroleum Reserves of major energy-consuming countries. And the United States will release additional barrels of oil as conditions warrant.

I know this is hard and that Americans are already hurting. I will do everything in my power to limit the pain the American people are feeling at the gas pump. This is critical to me.

But this aggression cannot go unanswered. If it did, the consequences for America would be much worse. America stands up to bullies. We stand up for freedom. This is who we are.

Let me also repeat the warning I made last week: If Russia pursues cyber attacks against our companies, our critical infrastructure, we are prepared to respond.

For months, we've been working closely with our private—with the private sector to harden their cyber defenses, sharpen our ability to respond to Russian cyber attacks as well.

I spoke late last night to President Zelenskiy of Ukraine, and I assured him that the United States, together with our allies and partners in Europe, will support the Ukrainian people as they defend their country. We'll provide humanitarian relief to ease their suffering.

And in the early days of this conflict, Russian propaganda outlets will keep trying to hide the truth and claim success for its military operation against a made-up threat. But history has shown time and again how swift gains in territory eventually give way to grinding occupations, acts of mass civil disobedience, and strategic dead-ends.

The next few weeks and months will be hard on the people of Ukraine. Putin has unleashed a great pain on them. But the Ukrainian people have known 30 years of independence, and they have repeatedly shown that they will not tolerate anyone who tries to take their country backwards.

This is a dangerous moment for all of Europe, for the freedom around the world. Putin has a—committed an assault on the very principles that uphold global peace. But now the entire world sees clearly what Putin and his Kremlin allies are really all about. This was never about genuine security concerns on their part. It was always about naked aggression, about Putin's desire for empire by any means necessary: by bullying Russia's neighbors through coercion and corruption, by changing borders by force, and ultimately, by choosing a war without a cause.

Putin's actions betray his sinister vision for the future of our world, one where nations take what they want by force. But it is a vision that the United States and freedom-loving nations everywhere will oppose with every tool of our considerable power.

The United States and our allies and partners will emerge from this stronger, more united, more determined, and more purposeful.

And Putin's aggression against Ukraine will end up costing Russia dearly, economically and strategically. We will make sure of that. Putin will be a pariah on the international stage. Any nation that countenances Russia's naked aggression against Ukraine will be stained by association.

When the history of this era is written, Putin's choice to make a totally unjustifiable war on Ukraine will have left Russia weaker and the rest of the world stronger.

Liberty, democracy, human dignity—these are the forces far more powerful than fear and oppression. They cannot be extinguished by tyrants like Putin and his armies. They cannot be erased by people—from people's hearts and hopes by any amount of violence and intimidation. They endure.

And in the contest between democracy and autocracy, between sovereignty and subjugation, make no mistake: Freedom will prevail.

God bless the people of a free and democratic Ukraine, and may God protect our troops.