Master thesis in Culture, Communication and Globalization from AAU

A comparative study on how current war-leaders, Russian president Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, use discourse in their speeches during the current war between their countries, to legitimize their actions and address the issues of war. An investigation of which discourses they use to frame different agendas throughout the war.

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Abstract

In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea and 8 years later launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The invasion took place on the 24th of February 2022 and on the same day, president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin gave an extensive speech to the Russian people. A speech that was translated into English and published on his government's official website. The speech included a direct threat from Putin to anyone who wanted to interfere. Today, two years later, the war between Ukraine and Russia is still ongoing. Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy has addressed his nation through daily video updates but he has also given speeches to international institutions such as NATO and EU and nations around the world, pleading for their support in the war. This research investigates Putin's speech from the 24th of February 2022, a speech from Zelenskyy to US Congress on the 16th of March 2022, Putin's new year's speech from December 31st, 2023, and Zelenskyy's new year's speech from December 31st, 2023. The speeches are analyzed through theory and methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis. This research uses the three-dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis by key author, Norman Fairclough, within the field, and combining it with a modern approach to Critical Discourse Analysis by David Machin and Andrea Mayr by taking visual semiotics into account through a multi modal approach. Analysis of each of the four speeches are then investigated further in a comparative analysis, which finds Putin and Zelenskyy having several similarities in their use of both visual- and rhetorical tools. It also finds similarities in some of the discourses presented, and that they both use specific discourse to gather support or create unity and alliances from their respective audiences, whether it be the Russian people, US Congress or the Ukrainian people. Furthermore, the study finds a significant difference in how the speakers frame the outside world through discourse. Putin discursively creates the West and the outside world as an enemy to Russia and attempts to exclude them from the war through direct threat. Zelenskyy continuously attempts to create and strengthen alliances and relations with the outside world, whether it be another nation or a powerful institution to include them in the war and plead for them to take action and interfere to support Ukraine. The comparative, critical discourse analysis of speeches by Putin and Zelenskyy held during the war between their respective countries reveal their hidden agendas, as well as issues, while it shows how they use rhetorical and visual strategies to legitimize the actions they take in the war.

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Introduction with problem formulation

On the 24th of February in 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion on Ukrainian territory which initiated the largest war in Europe since World War II. On the same day, President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, gave an elaborative speech to his people in which he stated his launch of a special military operation, which would become the only way he addressed the invasion of Ukraine throughout the war (Kirby 2023). In his speech he reasoned for the invasion by claiming the goal was to help '*demilitarize*' and '*denazify*' Ukraine (ibid). The invasion of Ukraine seemingly did not go as easy as planned and it has been filled with retreats and new attacks, however neither Ukraine or Russia has capitulated, and today, two years later, the war is still ongoing.

8 years before Russia launched their full-scale invasion in Ukraine, Ukraine experienced a revolution. The Ukrainian people demonstrated against their president Yanukovych and when he refused to sign a popular free-trade agreement with the EU, the demonstrations turned into a revolution, known as the Maidan Revolution (Ormiston 2023). Yanukovych tried to turn Ukraine pro-Russia, but it led to his departure from parliament (ibid). Shortly after, Russia suddenly monopolized Crimea (ibid). Ukraine was accused by Putin of being under a Nazi rule when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, and again in 2022 when Russia launched its' full-scale invasion on Ukrainian territory. Additionally, Putin blames NATO's expansion eastwards in Europe of escalating the situation and of being a threat Russia had to act on (Kirby 2023).

The outside world now looked to the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who was sworn in, in 2019 (Tanyarattinan & Wilson, 2019). Zelenskyy has a law degree but had only worked in the entertainment industry in theater and film. In 2015, he stars in a TV-show called 'Servant of the People' about an average man who becomes president (Ray 2024). The TV-show becomes a huge hit and ends up paving the way for Zelenskyy's real-life road to presidency in 2019 (ibid). Within the first weeks of war, Zelenskyy starts addressing the outside world through online connections (Adams 2022), and on March 16th, 2022, he addresses the US Congress, where he is met with standing ovations (ibid). Zelenskyy's speeches are tailored to his audience, whether it be the US Congress, British Parliament or the Ukrainian people, and gathering international support is on top of his agenda (ibid).

In 2022, Putin had been in powerful positions in Russia since 1999 (Ray 2024). In 1999, Putin was acting as Prime minister in Russia but due to president Yeltsin's resignation, Putin was appointed as president later that year, and then won election in 2000 to become elected president (ibid). 4 years later he was reelected, but in the beginning of 2008, he had to step down, but was then appointed as Prime minister again, later that same year, thereby staying close to power (ibid). In 2012, Putin was again elected as president and started serving his third term as president of Russia (ibid). During his third term the conflict with Ukraine took speed with Russia annexing Crimea (Ormiston 2023). In 2018, Putin was elected for a fourth term as president and even though electoral fraud was observed in several places during the election, his campaign declared it an *"incredible victory"* (Ray 2024). In 2020 Putin got rid of term limits for presidents (ibid) and a new presidential election was not held until the beginning of 2024 amidst the war between Ukraine and Russia. The 2024 election unsurprisingly led to another win for Putin, which means he is moving towards having been in the highest seats of power in the Russian Federation for three decades (Liffey 2023). As Putin is navigating war during his now fifth term as president, Zelenskyy is navigating his first term as president. However, a term that had a rising start for Zelenskyy with support from the Ukrainian people and internationally through his handling of the war. Recently Zelenskyy's popularity in Ukraine has declined and that becomes visible in newer speeches to the people, as he tries to unite them and regain their support (Golovin 2024).

The war started with a lot of retreats from the Russian troops but then followed new advances (Kirby 2023). In 2022 Russia obtained capture of Ukrainian cities Mariupol and Melitopol (ibid), but then suffered defense failure when Ukraine managed to sink Russia's flagship Black Sea battle cruiser (ibid). By the end of 2022, Russia was facing the difficulties and uncertainty of war (Gressel 2024). In 2023 we first saw a somewhat stagnated war, but as the year went by, Ukraine was unable to take back some of the territory Russia had gained and by the end of 2023, Ukraine was the one facing the difficulties and uncertainty of war (ibid). Two days before 2023 came to an end, Russia launched a missile and drone attack on Ukraine (Gressel 2024) and then on the 31st of December 2023, Putin gave an annual new year's speech to the Russian people without any mention of the war in Ukraine. Instead he focused on uniting the Russian people's support for his upcoming election. On the same day, Zelenskyy gave a new year's speech to the Ukrainian people, praising the people as warriors and encouraging them to keep fighting.

In this research project I will be conducting multi modal critical discourse analysis on Putin's speech from the day of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Zelenskyy's speech to US Congress in early 2022 and both Putin and Zelenskyy's new year's speeches from 2023. After conducting the critical discourse analysis on all four speeches I will be comparing the findings in a comparative analysis of all four speeches and of Putin and Zelenskyy as speakers. The aim is to show how different discourses used in their respective speeches have specific purposes for the speaker's goals in mind, while they also potentially can reveal such a purpose but also the challenges and issues the speakers are facing at the time of speaking. In this investigation, the analysis will shed light on which challenges Putin and Zelenskyy face at the given time of their speeches, and what they have chosen to focus on, to find their agenda and see how they approach and prioritize their goals and issues in the social world through discourse. The thesis and problem formulation guiding the research is the following:

How do Russian president Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy use discourse in speeches to legitimize actions and address war issues? And which discourses are they using to frame their different agendas throughout the current war between Russia and Ukraine?

Methodological framework

In this chapter, I will be presenting the methodological framework guiding this research, such as the research design, the dataset, the ontological and epistemological standpoint as a researcher, discourse analysis and quality of research.

This is a qualitative study. The qualitative seeks to understand *how* something works and understand social processes and concrete actors (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 13 – 14). It is a field of inquiry that moves away from attempting to do objective research and instead comes to terms with the understanding that any research is shaped by the researcher's subjectivity (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 15). For this research, I seek to describe and understand how President Putin and President Zelenskyy use discourse in their speeches to legitimize their actions and to address the issues of war? Also, specifically which discourses they are using to frame their agendas from the beginning of the war till facing 2024.

A Comparative Case Study

This research is designed as a comparative case study. A case study is a detailed investigation of single examples (Flyvbjerg in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 506) and has always been an integral

tool when investigating social science phenomena (Ishiyama & Breuning 2011: 293). I will be analyzing 4 different speeches held by Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Vladimir Putin in an attempt to find patterns and meanings, to follow with a comparison of the speakers and their speeches. The comparative approach seeks to find and understand both differences and similarities within cases and it provides nuanced, context-based and in-depth knowledge on specific situations (Flyvbjerg in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 498 – 506), as well as the qualitative aspect of a case study includes the possibility of identifying alternate explanations, new variables and/or complexities of such variables (Ishiyama & Breuning 2011: 293). This research aims to understand the messages the two different leaders are sending to the people of their respective countries and out into the world.

As a qualitative study, this research is highly context dependent and does in-depth investigation on single cases rather than large numbers of systematic investigations, as one would see in quantitative work. Previously, using case study as a method has received critique for a number of reasons. Such as for being biased and verifying the researcher's subjective opinion (Flyvbjerg in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 500). It is true that qualitative research will have bias and some degree of subjectivity, but that is no reason to discard it, that is how one learns and gives nuance to understand reality, because society and human behavior can rarely be generalized or predicted (Flyvbjerg in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 502). Even more, case studies have received critique for its' generating of context-dependent knowledge and that such kind of knowledge is not as valuable as general theoretical knowledge (Flyvbjerg in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 500). However, it is the case studies' close connection to reality that develops competences to be able to understand human behavior and conduct valuable research (Flyvbjerg in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 501), additionally it allows for developing contextually rich, in-depth knowledge on the observed phenomena (Ishiyama & Breuning 2011: 293). Furthermore, it can be argued that using case studies as a method is how one moves from being at a beginner's level within a field towards the expert level, due to the fact that experts operate on grounds of knowledge derived from large numbers of context-, concrete- and single case knowledge within one's field of expertise (ibid). This underlines case studies' and case knowledge's crucial part in learning and development (ibid). Neither qualitative-nor quantitative research can replace one another, both is needed in society (Flyvbjerg in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 502). Qualitative research offers depth, where quantitative research offers width, and the role of case studies are therefore not only complimenting towards quantitative methods, but of equal value (Geddes in Ishiyama & Breuning 2011: 294).

For this research I have chosen four different speeches held during the war between Russia and Ukraine. Two speeches given by president of Russia, Vladimir Putin and two speeches given by president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Choosing cases is an important component when doing a comparative study and therefore random sampling is not the way to go for this research. The speeches have been carefully selected by choosing two speeches from Zelenskyy and two speeches from Putin.

I have chosen a speech by both Zelenskyy and one by Putin, both given during the early days of the war, when Russia first invaded Ukraine. These are chosen to portray both Putin and Zelenskyy's take on the war back in early 2022, when it first started. Furthermore, I have chosen a speech by each of the two leaders, both given around the break of New Years of 2023/2024, where the war is still ongoing and have been for almost two years at that time. Additionally, because a new year can call for change and it seemed interesting to see the two different leaders' take on such a specific time. I have chosen speeches given by each of the leaders around the same time periods in an attempt to be able to fairly compare their rhetoric, since their speeches are held during the same time in history and their societies, and therefore, are also surrounding the same events in the war. In addition to that, I choose a set of two speeches from different times during the war and with a rather large time-gap between them, to be able to discover a possible development in their rhetoric from the beginning of the war till a more present time in the war.

I will briefly describe the chosen speeches for analysis and their context below.

1) Address by the President of the Russian Federation from the 24th of February, 2022

On February 24th in 2022, President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, addresses his nation in the early morning through a pre-taped 28-minutes long video from Kremlin, Moscow. A full-scale Russian invasion of Ukrainian territory followed on that same day.

A screen-printed text-version of the speech can be found in Appendix A.
An online link to the Russian government's official website with a video of the speech can be found in the bibliography.

2) Address by the President of Ukraine to US Congress from the 16ᵗʰ of March, 2022.

Less than a month after the Russian invasion of Ukrainian territory, the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the members of US Congress through an online video meeting lasting about 20-minutes.

A screen printed text-version of the speech can be found in Appendix B.

An online link to the Ukrainian government's official website with a videorecording of the online meeting can be found in the bibliography.

3) New year's address by the President of Ukraine from the 31ˢᵗ of December, 2023.

Late in the evening on the last day of 2023, the President of Ukraine addressed his nation in a 20-minutes long pre-recorded video of him giving a new year's speech.

A screen printed text-version of the speech can be found in Appendix C.

An online link to the Ukrainian government's official website with the the new year's speech on video can be found in the bibliography.

4) New year's address by the President of the Russian Federation from the 31ˢᵗ of December, 2023.

The President of the Russian Federation addressed his nation late in the evening on the last day of 2023 as well, in a short pre-recorded video of him giving a speech. The video lasts about 8 minutes.

A screen printed text-version of the speech can be found in Appendix D.

An online link to the Russian government's official website with a photograph from the speech and and a textual version of the speech can be found in the bibliography. Another online link from YouTube to a videorecording of the speech can also be found in the bibliography.

Ontology and epistemology of this research

In this section I will be reflecting on the ontological and epistemological standpoint of this research. Simply put, ontology is the researcher's view on reality. It is about what determines what can be considered as real, where epistemology is about knowledge. What is considered knowledge and how does one create or access knowledge?

The approach for this research is based on social constructionism, which is an approach and a term that covers a range of theories on culture and society, but generally it agrees that all human knowledge and any feeling of- or relation to what exists in the world has a social construct, which is the ontological standpoint of what is considered real (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 5). Social constructivism is diverse and there are different ways to approach it, however, a critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge and historical and cultural specificity are two key premises all approaches agree on (ibid). These two premises entail how there is not one objective truth about the world and that our knowledge about the world is shaped by the time and culture we live in (Burr and Gergen in Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 5 - 6). Furthermore, there are two additional premises agreed on within all social constructivism. The first one being a link between knowledge and social processes, which means that how we understand the world is both created and maintained by social processes, this premise is highly relevant for CDA (Burr & Gergen in Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 6). The second premise being a link between knowledge and social action, which means that social understandings and social knowledge lead to social actions/social consequences (ibid).

In social constructivism, and in discourse analysis, language is an essential placeholder (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 9). Discourse analytical approaches claim that any access to reality goes through language (ibid). They claim language create representations of reality that contributes to construct reality (ibid). Thus, any object or representation is considered real, but gain meaning through discourse (ibid). Therefore language generates and constitutes the social world, and changes in language changes the social world (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 10).

The social constructivist approach moves into the epistemological standpoint of this research as well, how I, as a researcher, gain my knowledge. Social constructivism combined with the methodological tool of hermeneutics, gives the research an interpretive focus, which aligns with the method and theory, discourse analysis, chosen for this research. CDA and particularly Fairclough, is occupied with change and by using some of the key concepts within CDA, intertextuality and interdiscursivity, one can gain insight and knowledge about the role of discourse in the processes of social change, while keeping the interdialectic relationship between discourse and social practice in mind (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 139 - 140). However, as mentioned, these specifics will be unfolded in the chapter on theoretical framework and in a following section within this chapter of methodological framework.

Hermeneutics translates to interpretation or translation (Schmidt 2022). According to hermeneutics, everything we do or say is interpretation, which means hermeneutics has moved from being interpretation of texts to being a humanistic and philosophical way of relating to the world through interpretation and understanding (ibid). It is through interpretation of texts, signs, and other sources that we reach an understanding of ourselves, others or a phenomenon (ibid). Human beings are dependent on others, such as through language. Language has potential to create meaning and identity, while it is also a necessity to be able to participate in conversation, and conversation is a necessity to self-interpretation (Taylor in Schmidt 2022), and to be able to investigate a person's self-interpretation, one must use language as a means and method to capture the true meaning (Schmidt 2022).

Within hermeneutics, a rhetorical figure of a hermeneutic circle is used as a principle to reach an understanding. The principle says that any interpretation happens within the structure of a circle, that entails a whole of meaning and parts of meaning (ibid), which operate dependently on one another within the circle. The hermeneutic circle is supposed to illustrate how one never starts a process of understanding with nothing, one uses the knowledge one already has and throughout the process one gains new knowledge that can be used in interpretation and to achieve new knowledge, and thus the circle continues (Schmidt 2022). Additionally, a consequence within the hermeneutic way of understanding and conducting research is that subjectivity is inevitable since one's own understanding continuously takes part in the process (ibid). However, by being transparent with one's work and working process one is able to assess and discuss one's choices and what meaning they have for the research, while also showing the previous interpretations of others that one is inspired by (ibid) and how one's own new interpretations and understandings can be a contribution to the scientific field for future practice and interpretation (ibid).

Just as social constructivism moved from the ontological horizon towards the epistemological horizon, the hermeneutics moves form the epistemological horizon towards the ontological. Within hermeneutics one cannot separate language from content or meaning, which means that any language is a way of viewing the world in what is said and what meaning the said carries (Gadamer 2007: 416). This can be related to the parts of meaning and the whole of meaning in the hermeneutical circle. Inspired by Hans-Georg Gadamer, a key figure within philosophical hermeneutics and source of inspiration (Jørgensen in Gadamer 2007: vii), one can look into the example of learning a foreign

language in relation to the process of understanding in the hermeneutical circle. One would assume learning a foreign language will widen one's horizon of understanding and knowledge and even change one's worldview. Horizons is a term used widely by Gadamer to capture the width and depth of one's worldview. Gadamer argues that simply learning a foreign language is not enough to widen one's horizon (Gadamer 2007: 416), one needs to interact with the language by conversating with people who speak it or study literature of the language, only then can one's view of the world change. However, no matter what one does, one still brings their own view of the world with them in the process and therefore the result can never be complete in meaning assessment (ibid), and thus, it highlights the previously mentioned unavoidable subjectivity in the hermeneutic process of acquiring new knowledge.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is both theoretical and methodological (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 4), therefore, it will have a section in this chapter on methodological framework, but the theoretical part and the specific discourse theories used for this research will be described in detail in the chapter on theoretical framework.

Discourse analysis is not a single, homogenous approach, but a field of different and diverse approaches to conduct discourse analysis (Phillips in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 297), and it is exactly that diversity and the differences that allows for creative dynamics in the field of discourse analysis, as long as one recognizes the numerous different approaches in discourse analysis (ibid). The differences between different approaches within the field of discourse analysis creates different perspectives and knowledge, and that is exactly why, it is considered useful to combine both different types of discourse analysis and to combine discourse analysis with other theories and methods, that are not even placed within the field of discourse analysis (Phillips in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 298), which is also considered the argument for combining two theories of discourse analysis within this research and of choosing exactly those two theories that implement both a multimodal element and one of social practice. The chosen theories being the Critical Discourse Analysis by Norman Fairclough, and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis by David Machin and Andrea Mayr, two newer players on the field of discourse analysis.

The common denominator of all the different approaches to discourse analysis is the view on discourse as a construction of reality, which means the way we speak and what we say creates reality, represents it and gives meaning to the world (Phillips in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 299). Furthermore, they agree that discourse does not take one steady form, it is interchangeable and context dependent (ibid). Additionally, any social constructivist approach to discourse analysis considers power as a tool that can both be suppressive and productive, and is present in all kinds of social practices, never belonging to a single person or institution (Phillips in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 299 – 301). Power is continuously related to knowledge, and knowledge is created through discourse and therefore, power is connected to discourse as well (ibid).

In the analysis of this research project, I will be applying the theoretical framework of CDA by using Fairclough's three-dimensional framework to conduct and structure the analysis of each 4 speeches, while implementing the concepts and ideas of both Fairclough's theory and the investigative tools provided by the theoretical framework of Machin & Mayr (2012 & 2023)

Critical Discourse Analysis and Norman Fairclough's approach

Fairclough is considered a key author within the field of CDA, his first work appeared at the same time as the development of the field of CDA gathered speed. Fairclough's approach to discourse analysis is critical, and that differs it from other kinds of discourse analysis. Fairclough's approach and the general CDA approach still agrees with the general common denominators mentioned above, but where it differs is for one the distancing to the post-structuralist view (Phillips in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 302), which has a lot in common with social constructivism and some view post-structuralism as a sub-category to social constructivism (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 7). To different theorists and discourse analysists the role of discourse in the constitution of the world plays similar, but different, parts. In a post-structuralist approach, such as Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory (1985), discourse is considered a complete constitutive factor to the social dimension (Phillips in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 303), whereas in CDA, discourse has an interdependent and dialectic relation with social dimensions (ibid). Furthermore, CDA continuously uses sociology and culture theory in collaboration, or as part of, discourse analysis, such as in Machin and Mayr's theory with their multimodal approach, which includes elements from media and culture theory, and Fairclough's three-dimensional framework and model for CDA, where it is made clear how discourse fills a dimension of social practice, but not all dimensions of social practice (Phillips in Brinkmann &

Tanggaard 2015: 308). Fairclough's three-dimensional model will be explained and unfolded further in the chapter on Theoretical Framework, however, in short, the model contains three analytical dimensions, one of text, one of discursive practice and one of social practice. Those three dimensions are to support and assist one another in the analysis and its' findings (ibid). Fairclough's definition of discourse is as the use of language as a social practice, meaning it is a constitutive part of social practice as mentioned above. Furthermore, discourse is defined as language used within a specific social field, such as politics, and additionally, discourse is defined as a specific way of speaking in order to give meaning to events from a specific perspective, such as nationalistic discourse, feministic discourse, etc. (Phillips in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 309). Fairclough's definition of text is a wide definition. It is not excluded to written and printed documents, but includes all kinds of communication, such as tv-shows, webpages, transcripts, interviews, etc. (ibid). However, Fairclough has not himself come up with a model for analysis of pictures or videos even though those falls under his definition of text (Phillips in Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 310, and that is where other theorists approaches to CDA becomes useful and reasonable to use in collaboration with Fairclough, such as will be done in this research, by including Machin & Mayr's (2012) multimodal approach to CDA, where the visual semiotics are of great consideration.

The purpose of Fairclough's research is to bring forward detailed information about what happens and what follows when one writes and talks as one does (ibid). It is a complicated process and there is no simple approach to the interpretation of one's research through CDA, which is shared with numerous other qualitative approaches to research, but Fairclough's aim to document the analysis thoroughly through attention to little details and observations is substantial to both CDA in general, but specifically to Fairclough's approach (Fairclough 2008: 13)

Quality in research

In qualitative research the researcher must be transparent with one's work to ensure quality. It is important to show every step of the process, to let the reader look over one's shoulder, which enables them to take their own critical stance towards the research (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015: 523). One must show the process from research design through analysis to results and everything in between. To ensure quality in this research I have attempted to share my theoretical perspective, my choices and the reasons and reflections behind them and have shared my motivation for this research to give the reader an opportunity to understand the premise of the research and researcher and to be able to

consider alternative options. Furthermore, I have made a thorough case description of both case and actors therein, why this is relevant and how it has an international dimension as was a criteria for this thesis. Additionally, my analysis is filled with examples of observations from my data for the reader to assess the grounds of the results that are found in the research. As mentioned in previous sections, construction of meaning happens during the researcher's interpretation, which is inevitably subjective, which means that I, as researcher, affect my research and its' reliability, however through multiple examples throughout the analysis I have attempted to explain thoroughly which choices are made, why and what I discover through these choices. This is done to strengthen both transparency and reliability. I will try to account for possible limitations and its' effect on the overall research project. As touched upon briefly in earlier sections, in relation to social constructivism, all knowledge and therefore also findings from this research are socially constructed as well. It is interpreted through my subjective view and understanding of the world, as well as I have chosen the theories used for this research, which will shape the research's outcome. This can be perceived as a limitation or an issue in social constructivism, how the researchers are continuously placed within the research area, through the hermeneutical circle, and thereby affect the knowledge we produce (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999: 32). Therefore, one must realize that an absolutely, transparent research project can never be achieved, however, this highlights why the description of one's whole process must be as transparent as possible and one must acknowledge, that the results could have been different (ibid).

Throughout this research project I refer to the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia as '*war*' and '*conflict*', thereby recognizing it as an actual war and conflict between those two countries. To clarify, that is my personal perception of the conflict, while that perception is not a shared, worldly consensus.

Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I will be introducing the theoretical framework guiding this research. The main theoretical and methodological framework for this research is the rhetorical tool of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This research will be guided by two different theorists' approaches to CDA. I will start by introducing CDA as a concept, touching upon a few of the key authors within the field, moving on to introducing the choices of theorists for this research and unfolding their approaches towards CDA. I will be using Norman Fairclough's approach to CDA which have been in the field since 1989. Then, I will be moving on to another and newer approach to CDA, the Multimodal Critical

Discourse Analysis approach by David Machin and Andrea Mayr from 2012. Machin & Mayr states that their theory draws on key authors in the field, such as Fairclough, however Machin & Mayr introduces visual-, sound-, and material features alongside the linguistic and social concept of CDA.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides tools for detailed analysis of language in texts and spoken language (Machin & Mayr 2023: 1). It is both a method and a theory, using aspects from different fields, both the linguistic and the social, and encourages an openness to combine the social and the linguistic as it seems sensemaking for your specific study (Fairclough 2008: 8). Language can be persuading, manipulating, concealing, ideological. Furthermore, language is connected to power, ideology and control and it creates meaning and worldviews and CDA helps to thoroughly uncover how (Machin & Mayr 2023: 2-3). Being critical is essential to the practice of CDA (Machin & Mayr 2023: 9). By being critical in the detailed descriptions of language being made when doing CDA, you can reveal ideologies, ideas, taken-for-granted knowledge, absences and much more that makes people think in specific ways (ibid).

CDA broke through within its' field in the 1980's. Key figures within the field are considered to be authors such as Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk and others (Fairclough 2008: 9). Since then, many others have given their take on CDA and it has become an influential practice that takes up a lot of space within the field of discourse analysis and linguistics (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000: 447). For this research the work is centered around political discourse, which is a topic where both Wodak and Fairclough's approach seems applicable. Wodak (1995) takes a discourse-historical approach to CDA, following the history of sayings, phrases, arguments, etc., using original documents, ethnographic research and contemporary discourse (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000: 450). Fairclough has developed a three-dimensional framework for CDA with the first dimension being discourse as text, the second dimension is discourse as a discursive practice and the third dimension is discourse as a social practice (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000: 448-449). These dimensions will be elaborated on in a following section about Fairclough's CDA. However, it is both due to Fairclough's manifestation of his theory of CDA within the field but also due to the third dimension in his framework, that is concerned with ideology and hegemonic processes and which feature discourse has in that (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000: 449), which seems crucial to incorporate into this analysis of war discourses from leaders of countries in a current and on-going war.

CDA has received critique for only using texts as objects for analysis, especially within politics and political economy (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000: 460). CDA has been critiqued for a lack of consideration towards situations and conditions for producing such a text and furthermore for its' linguistic focus (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000: 461). Back in the 90's, Kress (1997) argued for an incorporation of visual images into the concept of discourse analysis and thereby suggested moving towards a multimodal approach to CDA (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000: 450). Since Kress pointed towards a need for multimodality in CDA a lot has happened within the scene of visual images. In modern society today, a lot of meaning is communicated through visual aspects and not solely through text and language (Machin & Mayr 2012: 1). A vast share of the speeches that has been given throughout the war between Russia and Ukraine have been video- and audio transmitted for the rest of the world to see, which is why this research saw a need for an incorporation of a multimodal approach to Fairclough's classical CDA. Therefore, this research will be combining theoretical and methodological framework from both Fairclough's CDA and the Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) by David Machin & Andrea Mayr from 2012. There is not one single, homogenous way of conducting CDA, and MCDA is another approach and a combination of Fairclough and Machin & Mayr is a yet another approach. Machin & Mayr seek to reveal ideologies and power relations in text or speech just as in classical MCDA, however the development within visual communication in modern society is their argument of why MCDA is needed within the field today (ibid). MCDA provides an opportunity to investigate which effect the visual has on the speeches given in the war between Ukraine and Russia.

I will now be moving onto unfolding first Norman Fairclough's approach- and three-dimensional framework for CDA, and secondly, Machin & Mayr's multimodal approach to classical CDA in the following section.

Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

As mentioned previously, Fairclough is considered a key figure within CDA and has been part of the scene since 1989, when he published his work Language and Power. In this chapter I will attempt to put Fairclough's understanding of discourse and CDA into words and then moving onto introducing his three-dimensional framework for conducting CDA.

To Fairclough, discourse is both spoken and written language (Fairclough 2008: 15). Discourse both shapes the social world and is shaped by the social world (Fairclough 2008: 10). Discourse is part of the social world, but the social world and its' practice reaches beyond what is discursive, it has values, cultural practice, and much more (ibid), which entails that discourse is both shaped and limited by class, social relations, institutional relations, systems, norms and conventions (Fairclough 2008: 17). Telling the discursive and the social apart and operating within that gap is important to understand and be able to use his three-dimensional framework for CDA, which we will return to later in this section.

His understanding of discourse and its' relation to the social world is that he considers discourse a social practice that is socially constructed (Fairclough 2008: 15), which means that it is a way of acting in relation to the world, in relation to other people and a way of representing the world (ibid) and furthermore, it is a way of giving meaning to the world (Fairclough 2008: 18). Additionally, discourse takes part in constructing identities and social relations between people and likewise, systems of knowledge and meaning (ibid), and when one uses CDA in their research it is to map out the connection and relation between discourse, language, and social practice (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999: 76). You investigate the importance of already existing orders of discourse and wide social practice, which means that discourse is both producing and reproducing of the social world (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999: 77 – 78).

It is important to note that Fairclough is concerned with the power structures of the world. He is constantly criticizing the capitalist economy and the development of globalization in the world (Fairclough 2008: 14) and his considerations of power is only positive when it falls out fruitful for society's weakest (ibid). However, this by no means conflicts his theory to be useful on whatever issue, as long as it is centered around a social problem, then it is applicable and the theory is exactly designed to uncover such problems (ibid).

Fairclough's three-dimensional framework for CDA

Fairclough has developed a three-dimensional model which works as an analytical framework for conducting a CDA. One needs to cover all three dimensions in an analysis of a communicative event. The first dimension consists of discourse as text where you focus on the linguistic features of the text, in the second dimension, which is discursive practice, you look into the processes related to the production, distribution and consumption of a text and in the third dimension, which is discourse as a social practice, you investigate the wider social practice the communicative event belongs to

(Jørgensen & Phillips 1999: 66). The three-dimensional framework seeks to unite three different analytical traditions; linguistics, macrosociology and the interpretive microsociology (Fairclough 2008: 28), thereby doing CDA becomes a multidisciplinary activity (Fairclough 2008: 30). See a visible image of the model below before I move on to elaborating on the three dimensions.
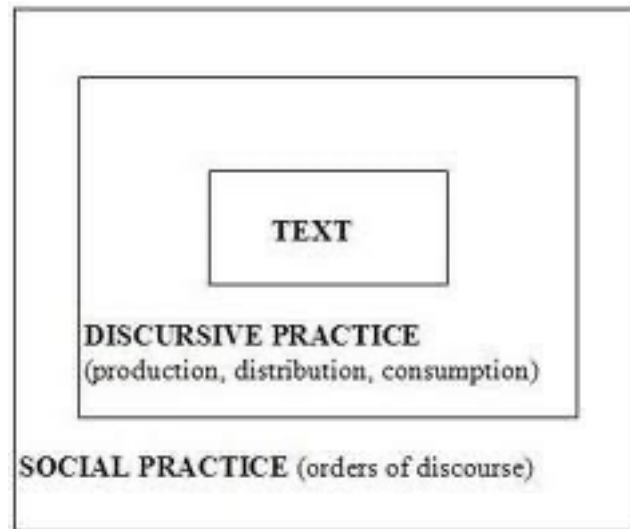
Fairclough's three-dimensional model, 2001

The first dimension: text

According to Fairclough, discursive practice is manifested in a linguistic form, which means both oral and written language (Fairclough 2008: 26). Fairclough calls this dimension describing, where the next two dimensions are interpretive (Fairclough 2008: 29). In this dimension you investigate bits and pieces consisting of words and longer bits of text, which consists of meaning combined with linguistic forms (Fairclough 2008: 30). A text is full of potential, and an important connection is the one between a text's meaning potential and its' interpretation (Fairclough 2008: 31), and once an interpreter give a text one or few meanings, it is reduced (ibid). A text is always multifunctional (ibid). Fairclough claims the analysis of text and meaning are inseparable units (Fairclough 2008: 30 – 31). Fairclough suggests looking into choice of words, grammar, cohesion and structure when conducting the text analysis (ibid), furthermore, he divides the text analysis into power of expression - such as promises, requests and threats, coherence of texts, repetition, connectors, synonyms, rhetorical schemata, and intertextuality (Fairclough 2008: 32 - 34), which moves into the analysis of discursive practice, while still being related to text. Together, these make an analytical concept (ibid). This is also visible, in the way that the text-dimension lies within the discursive dimension in the model. This takes us to the next dimension in the three-dimensional framework.

The second dimension: discursive practice

In this dimension one investigates production processes, distribution processes and consumption processes. These vary depending on what kind of text and social factors are involved (Fairclough 2008: 35). Consumption can be collective or individual since a text is consumed differently depending on which social context it is presented in (Fairclough 2008: 36). Furthermore, different texts bring different results, they can lead to a change in practice, and some can even lead to war (ibid). Production processes and interpretation are socially conditioned (Fairclough 2008: 37). They are conditioned by available resources such as discourse orders, norms, conventions, etc. made up of previous social practice (ibid). Additionally, they are conditioned by the current social practice which they take part in (Fairclough 2008: 38). In this dimension, you want to look into the power of expressions, as mentioned briefly in the previous section. The power of expressions can be how a question or sentence has different potentials; does it come out as a promise? A question? A threat? Etc. That potential can be both direct and indirect, such as something that is said as a direct question can indirectly be an order (Fairclough 2008: 40). Then, you move onto coherence. When investigating coherence, you find if the text, as a whole, is meaningful (Fairclough 2008: 42). You find if a text is coherent by finding links that an interpreter automatically will make between sentences and text-parts (Fairclough 2008: 43). Lastly, one must move onto intertextuality. Intertextuality entails how texts are filled with parts of other texts (ibid). A text can relate or respond to the other text in different ways, it can agree with it, honor it, humiliate it, contradict it, etc. (ibid). Intertextuality underlines how it is about all the previous texts and discourses that an interpreter bring with them in the process of interpreting the text in question (ibid). Fairclough is inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin in the use of intertextuality and within CDA Fairclough takes the term further and introduces interdiscursivity (Fairclough 2008: 11 – 12). Interdiscursivity is the relation between discourses, their common features, differences, changes, relation to events and how these are combined (ibid). Fairclough talks of manifest intertextuality, which is when another text is referred to explicitly (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999: 44), such as through quotation. Intertextuality creates change within social practice and the orders of discourse, which are constantly open to change (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999: 84 – 86). The orders of discourse consists of genres, discourses, style and relations between those (Fairclough 2008: 12).

The third dimension: social practice

The third and last dimension of Fairclough's three-dimensional framework is concerned about discourse as a social practice, which means one investigates the social, communicative event, the text in question is a part of. In this dimension you move away from the textual and move on to the social basis. In this dimension, Fairclough is concerned with the issue of power and ideology and the terms hegemony, ideology and power struggles are a necessity to know and investigate within this dimension.

Ideology is created through society's power relations and dominant forces or groups. Ideological discourses produce, reproduce and change the relations of dominance in society (Fairclough 2008: 45 – 48). This means that not all discourses are ideological. Ideologies are created within society and if people are able to look beyond class, gender, cultural groups, etc., they are able to look beyond the ideologies as well (Fairclough 2008: 51). Fairclough considers ideologies as constructions of reality build into different dimensions of discursive practices (Fairclough 2008: 46). Discourses are ideological, whether the discourse is highly or less ideological, it contributes to maintaining relations of power or dominance, and if so, they must be fought against with an opposing discourse, or power (Fairclough 2008: 13). Ideologies can become so embedded into a discourse that it becomes completely naturalized and is perceived as common sense, and that is where they are must efficient, argues Fairclough (Fairclough 2008: 47). Ideology is embedded into both structures and events of discourse and social practice (ibid). Fairclough argues that ideology is not textual, it cannot only be found in texts, since he considers texts as moments in social practice and ideological discourses as processes between people (Fairclough 2008: 48), which is also why this focus is placed within the third dimension of social practice in Fairclough's framework.

Additionally, Fairclough is concerned with hegemony. Within the economic, political, cultural and ideological domains in society hegemony means leadership and dominance. However, more than dominance, it is power within alliances with different social forces and groups in society (Fairclough 2008: 52). Fairclough's interest in hegemony is inspired by that of Antonio Gramsci from 1971 and his analysis of western capitalism (ibid). Hegemony is never permanent and the hegemonies present in society are constantly challenged through power struggles (Fairclough 2008: 55), power struggles that take place on national and political levels as well as within institutions, families, courtrooms, etc. (ibid). The power struggles are fought by people and groups and they use power by creating alliances with others instead of dominating others. Those alliances equals power, but power that can easily be

dominated by other groups and thereby taken away (ibid). The orders of discourse can then be understood as the discursive aspect of what makes a hegemony. This means that the production, distribution, articulation and consumption of discourse is part of the hegemonic power struggle that continuously either contributes to maintaining the existing power and dominance relations in society or to change them (Fairclough 2008: 53 – 54). Hegemony centers the gaze on change, which is another important aspect to Fairclough. The intertextuality of both text production and text interpretation allows for creativity (Fairclough 2008: 58), when being creative with current and previous discourses it creates innovation within the structures and orders of discourse, and in that way a discursive event can either contribute to maintaining current hegemonies in society or it can contribute to changing the already existing hegemonies through power struggles (ibid).

In the end Fairclough states that discourse analysis works in collaboration with other theories and practices, since, as he claims, social reality has both discursive and non-discursive elements, and therefore a collaboration with other theories or perspectives can widen one's research and the possible discoveries to be made (Fairclough 2008: 93 – 95).

Therefore, I will now move on to unfolding Machin and Mayr's multimodal approach to CDA with elements new to the classical version of Fairclough's CDA.

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis by David Machin & Andrea Mayr

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) has its' origins from CDA. The authors, Machin and Mayr, argue that CDA has its' origins from Critical Linguistics (Machin & Mayr 2012: 2), where it is argued that culture, at least what we consider culture, and language are inseparable entities, meaning that language influences how we view the world (Machin & Mayr 2012: 3). Machin and Mayr first published their work as a book in 2012, and then published a second edition in 2023. Their focus lie on showing 'how' a text makes meaning instead of uncovering 'what' meaning it makes (Machin & Mayr 2012: 10). It is done by looking into what semiotic resources is being used in the visual and linguistic features of a text or speech. Their theory can show what meaning potential something has but cannot uncover or reveal what meaning the audience retrieves from the text or speech (Machin & Mayr 2012: 16). MCDA is a systematic tool for analysis of meaning communicated through language and other semiotic resources (Machin & Mayr 2012: 6). The word multimodal refers to the fact that within this theory and the field of CDA, language is not considered

as 'one' thing, language does not stand alone (Machin & Mayr 2023: 11) and doing a multimodal version of CDA allows for a closer look into different kinds of communication in a systematic way, similar to CDA and Fairclough's approach (ibid).

A social semiotic view of language

Machin and Mayr approach language and other kinds of communication such as images, sounds, etc. as a set of semiotic resources, options and choices (Machin & Mayr 2023: 21). In MCDA one must seek to find how communication is used in a social context to create meaning in society by investigating the authors choices (Machin & Mayr 2012: 17 - 18) and describe these semiotic choices in detail in one's analysis (Machin & Mayr 2022: 29).

Furthermore, Machin and Mayr introduce a large toolset for analysis of those semiotic resources and choices that are to be found in different kinds of communication, to uncover the author's priorities of communicating meaning (Machin & Mayr 2012: 30). I will be elaborating on some of the presented tools found useful for this research, starting with the visual semiotic choices.

Visual semiotic choices

The visual semiotic choices are the non-linguistic features of communication, which in the case of this research, will be the videos of Putin and Zelenskyy while conducting their speeches in question for this research. You can approach the analysis of visual semiotic choices by looking into iconography, attributes, settings and salience.

Iconography is whether an image denotes or connotes something (Machin & Mayr 2012: 49). Denoting images documents something particular, such as an event, while connoting images communicate ideas and values (ibid). **Attributes** are objects and elements in the image that communicate specific ideas and values (Machin & Mayr 2012: 52). When looking into attributes, one must investigate how such are represented and what such elements in the image can suggest or communicate (ibid). An attribute could be a national flag in the front of the frame, such as on a counter, to communicate proudness and nationalism of a country. **Settings** can symbolize and show general ideas. It can specify something about the place in the image, such as it being a fun place to be or it can symbolize something, such as optimism with a light and open space (Machin and Mayr 2012: 52 – 53). **Salience** is where you find what is important, what has been chosen to stand out in the frame or to draw the audience's attention towards (Machin & Mayr 2012: 54). One must look for

symbolism in the form of cultural objects, size, color, tone of elements and additionally, focus, foregrounding, backgrounding and overlapping in the visual image (Machin & Mayr 2012: 54 - 56).

Lexical analysis

Machin and Mayr also present a lexical analysis, where one looks at the words in a text. They speak of the basic choice of words as **word connotations**, which is what makes the audience interpret what is communicated by bringing a set of associations to each chosen word (Machin & Mayr 2012: 58). Additionally, they speak of excessive description as **overlexicalization**. Overlexicalization points towards the author trying to persuade the audience about something being either problematic or has a sort of ideological contradiction (Machin & Mayr 2012: 37). In opposition to overlexicalization, they speak of **suppression**, which is a kind of lexical absence. It is a way of simplifying what one is communicating (Machin & Mayr 2012: 39). In addition to that, they mention the use of **structural oppositions** by mentioning opposing concepts such as good vs. bad (ibid), which helps indicate towards the audience, how they should evaluate the participants being mentioned in a text (Machin & Mayr 2012: 40 – 41). All these lexical choices are made by the author to either indicate being 'one of them' with the audience or power over one's audience (Machin & Mayr 2012: 42).

Speech and Speakers

Machin and Mayr present a chapter where one looks into evaluating the social actors, signifying broader discourses, ideas and values present, but not too obvious in a communicating event (Machin & Mayr 2023: 79), this includes both visual and textual representations. Machin and Mayr argues there is no neutral way to represent a person (Machin & Mayr 2012: 70). When a person or a social actor is being quoted, the author has chosen how to express the person they are quoting (Machin & Mayr 2012: 57), it can be neutral or it can be describing (ibid). However, in this sense, a 'neutral' or simple way to mention an actor, is not neutral at all and could indicate that the author is taking focus away from that person or that the actor is not important, of maybe they do not need a description at all. Whatever verb is chosen to quote another social actor can communicate othering, sympathy, togetherness, legitimacy, etc., will either say something about the social actor or their actions (Machin & Mayr 2012: 78).

Within MCDA it is also important to investigate whatever person is being depicted in the visual image. This can be done by paying attention to their gaze. If one looks directly at the audience, or the camera, it is a way of visually addressing them and demand a response (Machin & Mayr 2023: 94).

If one looks away from the audience it invites us to observe and no expectation of a response (Machin &Mayr 2023: 95), additionally, it can invite us to imagine what the person in the image is looking at or thinking about if they are looking at something outside the frame of what we, the audience, can see (ibid). Furthermore, we can look into the poses of the person or people in the image. Open arms and an open posture can communicate availability and appear approachable (Machin & Mayr 2023: 96) and vice versa with a closed posture or crossed arms. A smile invites us to smile back (Machin & Mayr 2023: 95). Is the person looking up or down? Are they communicating optimism or worry? Do they take up space? Are they performing? Are they sitting still or are their pose suggesting activity (Machin & Mayr 2012: 75). Additionally, the position of the person in the image communicates what the audience are to think and feel about that person (Machin & Mayr 2012: 97). The angle can show whether it is someone to engage with, a face-to-face angle involves the audience, a side view detaches the audience and if the audience gets close to a person it communicates togetherness (Machin & Mayr 2012: 97 – 101). In one's analysis, one must explain the person in the image's representation to reveal the authors wishes for communication with the shown image (Machin & Mayr 2012: 76).

Within the topic of representation of people, Machin and Mayr make use of Ideological Squaring. A term first introduced by Teun Van Dijk in 1993. Ideological squaring is a way of controlling the meaning one communicates about a person (Machin & Mayr 2012: 78). It concerns the choice of words when representing a person, classification of a person, representing them in a personal or impersonal way, naming or not-naming them (Machin & Mayr 2012: 78 – 80). How this is done can show humanization and who to feel empathy for in a situation (Machin & Mayr 2012: 80). Additionally, one can investigate the pronouns used in a text, such as the use of 'us' and 'them', which is a way of making statements and concealing power relations (Machin & Mayr 2012: 84).

Machin and Mayr moves from representation of people towards representation of action, where they speak of transivity. Transivity is about which social actors are included in a text and as doing what to who (Machin & Mayr 2012: 104). Transivity is a way of activating or passivating social actors (Machin & Mayr 2023: 153). Activating a social actor will often portray power or dominance and is a positive way of representing a social actor, while passivating a social actor can dehumanize or background an actor or their action (Machin & Mayr 2023: 153 – 154). In addition to transivity, Machin and Mayr mention nominalization, which is replacing a verb with a noun. It is a way of concealing an actor by using passive verbs instead (Machin & Mayr 2013: 137). To exemplify, an act

of nominalization could be the sentence "Civilians were killed during a bombing", which is then a passive sentence. If one wishes to active such a sentence, it would instead be "American civilians were killed during a bombing by Chinese forces". Nominalization simplifies and reduces events and hides actors and those affected by action (Machin & Mayr 2012: 143 – 144).

Furthermore, Machin and Mayr highlight the importance of metaphors. Metaphors can hide underlying ideologies, they can become naturalized and appear as common sense, they can explain complex situations in simpler terms, they can persuade the audience, they can validate information and much more (Machin & Mayr 2012: 162 – 165). Machin and Mayr argue metaphors are a fundamental part of the human process of understanding (Machin & Mayr 2012: 163).

Lastly, Machin and Mayr talk about an author's commitment to what they say. They mention both modality and hedging. Modality is using phrases such as "I promise …" or "I believe". Committing to one's words communicates certainty and factuality, while it can conceal time and power (Machin & Mayr 2012: 186). Hedging is being unprecise, non-transparent and avoiding commitment to one's words (Machin & Mayr 2012: 192), when hedging an author will often use a sentence such as "some people believe…", which is a way of suggesting something specific, without committing to it or stating who else commits to it (ibid).

MCDA provides a wide range of tools for a systemic approach to conduct a critical discourse analysis on both text, image, event and what else either is part of or the communicative event takes part in and to additionally draw out ideologies and features hidden to the common audience. Furthermore, it agrees with many of the analytical steps of Fairclough's three-dimensional model. Both Machin and Mayr's MCDA and Fairclough's CDA and three-dimensional framework will be used in collaboration for this investigation and the approach will now be unfolded in the following chapter on analysis.

Analysis of speeches

In this section I will be conducting a critical discourse analysis on 4 different speeches held by either Zelenskyy or Putin during the war between Ukraine and Russia. I will be combining the theoretical framework of Fairclough's CDA and Machin and Mayr's Multimodal CDA for the analysis. The speeches are arranged in chronological order. It must be noted that all speeches are analyzed in an

English translated version from both governments' official sites, even though they are all held in their original language, Russian or Ukrainian. It is possible some elements of meaning or value from the original language have been lost in translation. All the chosen speeches are audio- and videotaped in their original language, and these videos are used in the analysis' as well to pick up on meaning or value that might not be visible or clear in text alone.

The analysis will be structured through the three-dimensional framework of Fairclough. Analysis of each speech will be divided into sections of a textual dimension, a dimension of social practice and lastly a dimension of discursive practice. Within these dimensions I will incorporate the investigative tools of Machin and Mayr's multimodal approach, where I consider them most relevant. It is difficult to divide the dimensions completely, and some of the tools from Machin and Mayr, and even tools from Fairclough's own approach, can seem fitting in multiple of the dimensions, however, that is how these dimensions work. They affect one another and therefore different terms can seem relevant in multiple sections, but one is to understand the dimensions as having fluid boundaries and not as rock-solid distinctions. First, I will conduct a critical discourse analysis of Putin's speech from 2022, secondly, I will do the same to Zelenskyy's speech from 2022, followed by a brief comparison of those two speeches and findings from analysis, before I conduct a critical discourse analysis of both Putin and Zelenskyy's new year's address from 2023/2024. I will finalize the analysis with a comparative section, where I compare the findings of Zelenskyy as speaker, Putin as speaker, their new year's speeches and the overall findings from analysis on all four speeches.

Address by the President of the Russian Federation. February 24th, 2022, 06:00

On February 24th in 2022, President Vladimir Putin addresses his nation. The speech was published for the rest of the world to see as well. The first step in this analysis will be looking at the textual dimension. The whole analysis will be based on the written edition of Putin's speech on the 24th of February 2022 alongside with the video- and audiotaped edition of his speech. Below I have inserted a screenshot of the video of the speech in question for reference while reading the analysis. Putin gives an extensive speech to convince the Russian people that they are at war with the West and attempts to ensure the support from his people by persuading them to believe his actions are necessary to defend Russia.

Dimension of text

The video of Putin giving his speech on the 24ᵗʰ of February is denoting the event, where he is sitting in a chair in an office giving this speech. Putin is centered in the middle of the frame, surrounded by a national flag on either side of him. On the left side the bright colors blue and red from the Russian national flag are visible and on the right side you see bright blue and red color as well, with golden edge on the flag, as well as part of the Russian coat of arms in gold. A national flag communicates nationalism, national affection, a sense of proudness and purpose. Furthermore, as attributes, the flags stand out in the frame as the most bright and colorful objects and additionally, they take up a lot of space in the visual image, which means they show Russia as of the highest value and in the center of attention. In addition to the flags, you see two landline phones and a fax machine on the right side of Putin. These electronics are seemingly very outdated and can make his threats of cutting-edge weapons and nuclear weapons seem ironic:

> *"As for military affairs, even after the dissolution of the USSR and losing a considerable part of its capabilities, today's Russia remains one of the most powerful nuclear states. Moreover, it has a certain advantage in several cutting-edge weapons. In this context, there should be no doubt for anyone that any potential aggressor will*

face defeat and ominous consequences should it directly attack our country." (Putin 2022).

However, these attributes may have another meaning to the people of Russia, where landlines are still in use and smartphones and internet aren't used by the whole nation yet (Expat 2017). If that is the case, then these seemingly outdated electronics communicate an equalness to the people of Russia by not flashing newer or more modern electronics than what the Russian people have at home. The setting of the speech is seemingly an office space, which specifies seriousness and portrays Putin as a man at work, since an office is associated with work.

Putin's speech is relatively long and filled with adjectives and specific word connotations throughout to affect the audience's interpretation of what is said. Putin initiates the speech with speaking of events in Donbass, which he describes as tragic: *"I consider it necessary today to speak again about the tragic events in Donbass ..."* (Putin, 2022). A few days prior to the speech there had been violent attacks in the Donbass area in Ukraine between Russian armed forces and Ukrainian civilians. The Russian government and the Ukrainian government blamed each other for the attacks (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Using an adjective as 'tragic' in this sentence, both underlines the Russian position of not taking the blame for these attacks and it communicates sympathy for those affected by the situation. Putin connects descriptive words to either a situation or an actor in his speech. He describes the western politicians in NATO as *'irresponsible'* and describes their actions against Russia as threats and as *'rude'* and *'unceremoniously'*: *"I spoke about our biggest concerns and worries, and about the fundamental threats which irresponsible Western politicians created for Russia consistently, rudely and unceremoniously from year to year. I am referring to the eastward expansion of NATO, which is moving its military infrastructure ever closer to the Russian border."* (Putin, 2022). Additionally, he continues to speak of actions by NATO and question them and paints a picture of NATO and the west as a patronizing and overall unlikeable:

> *"Why is this happening? Where did this insolent manner of talking down from the height of their exceptionalism, infallibility and all-permissiveness come from? What is the explanation for this contemptuous and disdainful attitude to our interests and absolutely legitimate demands?"* (Putin, 2022).

Putin links the countries of NATO and the West together. His formulations portrays Russia as the innocent victim in the matter and NATO as the perpetrator against Russia, when he questions NATO's actions and calls Russia's demands *'legitimate'*. Putin continues with linking words with

negative connotations to NATO countries and the West throughout his speech. He uses words and formulations that are unsubtle in meaning, such as *'low cultural standards and arrogance', 'a kind of modern absolutism', 'the feeling of absolute superiority', 'pushed through decisions that suited only themselves', 'white power', 'hypocrisy'* and *'empire of lies'* about them to strengthen the picture he is painting and the associations he is linking NATO countries with.

Additionally, Putin gives examples of wrongdoings throughout history by this perpetrator. First, he states: *"there are many examples of this"* (Putin, 2022), of such wrongdoings that is. Then he exemplifies with a *'bloody'* military operation without the UN Security Councils sanction:

> *"First a bloody military operation was waged against Belgrade, without the UN Security Council's sanction but with combat aircraft and missiles used in the heart of Europe. The bombing of peaceful cities and vital infrastructure went on for several weeks. I have to recall these facts, because some Western colleagues prefer to forget them"* (Putin, 2022).

In this quote, Putin both describes a violent action taken by NATO, by saying *'bloody', 'military operation', 'combat aircraft and missiles'* and *'bombing of peaceful cities'.* Furthermore, he portrays NATO as a criminal, by stating that action was taken without permission from the UN. Then adding the comment: *"Western colleagues prefer to forget",* which presents them as hypocritical and fake. He continues with similar examples of such actions: *"the illegal use of military power against Libya …"* (Putin, 2022) and "*The combat operations conducted by the Western coalition in that country [Syria] without the Syrian government's approval or UN Security Council's sanction can only be defined as aggression and intervention."* (Putin, 2022) to strengthen the negative framing of the West and NATO. Multiple examples paired with frequent use of negatively loaded words are a kind of overlexicalization. Putin uses excessive description to persuade the audience about the correctness of what he is stating by giving various examples of bad action taken by the West and NATO countries and wrap them in words with negative associations. Furthermore, he creates a structural opposition between Russia and the West, where Russia is the good and the West is bad. It has already been showed how negatively he frames the West, and briefly we have touched upon his framing of Russia as the innocent victim.

As the rhetorical tools of overlexicalization, word connotations and structural oppositions works in Putin's favor to portray the West as bad, it works to portray Russia as the good as well. He states that

Russia has attempted to do *'honest'* work with the US: *"... the new, modern Russia, its readiness to work honestly with the United States and other Western partners, ..."* (Putin 2022), and of freedom being a Russian value: *"Freedom guides our policy, ..."* (Putin 2022), which contributes to highlighting Russia as good. He follows with speaking of Russia's actions in Ukraine, where the conflict started and the war first unfolded: *"For eight years, for eight endless years we have been doing everything possible to settle the situation by peaceful political means. Everything was in vain."* (Putin, 2022). In this quote he is showing Russia as a good actor in the conflict, the one who tries to keep the peace, and by stating that *'everything was in vain'* he also removes the blame from them in this conflict, as if their efforts to keep the peace just weren't enough against the other part in the war, the part to blame, Ukraine. He speaks again of the situation in the Donbass area, where the Russian invasion of Ukraine started (Fitzgerald & Davis 2024):

> *"... you cannot look without compassion at what is happening there. It became impossible to tolerate it. We had to stop that atrocity, that genocide of the millions of people who live there and who pinned their hopes on Russia, on all of us. It is their aspirations, the feelings and pain of these people that were the main motivating force behind our decision to recognise the independence of the Donbass people's republics."*
> (Putin, 2022).

Here Putin paints a picture of Russia as a good and humane actor in the situation by using *'compassion'* and by saying *"it became impossible to tolerate"* and *"we had to stop that atrocity, that genocide ..."*, as if the actions by the other part in this conflict were so vile that the Russians' humanity and goodness just wouldn't allow them not to act. Combining that with saying: *"millions of people ... pinned their hopes on Russia"* portrays Russia as a savior and protector from the bad. Stating that these people's hopes were *'the main motivating force'* for Russia, strengthens the portrayal of the good Russia, the savior. This structural opposition between Russia and the West, but also between Russia and Ukraine, is a way of portraying the social actors in the speech, however such a portrayal often signifies broader discourses, ideas and values present in a speech, which is why, this leads to the discursive dimension of analysis.

Dimension of discursive practice

As mentioned in theory, Machin & Mayr (2012 & 2023) states how there is no neutral way to represent a person, and in the previous section we established Putin's way of framing Russia as good and both Ukraine and the West, including NATO countries, as bad.

Throughout the speech Putin does not mention anyone by name. Zelenskyy, as president of the country Russia is in conflict with, could have been meaningful to mention. By not mentioning Zelenskyy by name or title at any point he represents him as unimportant, which puts Zelenskyy in the background of the speech and whole situation's focus and to be portrayed as unimportant is a negative framing of him.

A handful of times in the speech, Putin links NATO countries and Ukraine with Nazism. He claims there are neo-Nazis and far-right nationalists in Ukraine and that Russia is trying to save the people of Crimea and Sevastopol from these: *"Focused on their own goals, the leading NATO countries are supporting the far-right nationalists and neo-Nazis in Ukraine, those who will never forgive the people of Crimea and Sevastopol for freely making a choice to reunite with Russia."* (Putin 2022). As mentioned in the textual dimension, Putin speaks of freedom being a Russian value, which creates coherence, since he then states *'freedom'* as a Russian value and that the people of Crimea and Sevastopol made a *'free'* choice to reunite with Russia. These two statements go hand in hand and at the same time points towards *'freedom'* not being a value or a right in Ukraine. In addition to this, he makes a comparison to WWII and Hitler:

> *"They* [leading NATO countries, neo-Nazis and far-right nationalists in Ukraine*] will undoubtedly try to bring war to Crimea just as they have done in Donbass, to kill innocent people just as members of the punitive units of Ukrainian nationalists and Hitler's accomplices did during the Great Patriotic War* [WWII]." (Putin 2022)

And states:

> *"Your fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers did not fight the Nazi occupiers and did not defend our common Motherland to allow today's neo-Nazis to seize power in Ukraine."* (Putin 2022).

Creating a link between NATO countries and some people in Ukraine with Nazism and Hitler are a whole order of discourse in the social world since WWII. One can be assured that many people consider *'Nazi'* to be an offensive word and something you do not want to be associated with after their actions during WWII. Furthermore, this is a well-known discourse that almost any audience will recognize and interpret as bad. It thereby enhances and secures the good vs. bad opposition created by Putin.

To further enhance the good vs. bad opposition, Putin uses *'us'* and *'we'* against pronouns as *'them'* or *'they'*. He uses *'we'* and *'us'* to gather a collective Russia, creating a sense of togetherness for the people of Russia, the government and himself in sentences such as *"... we see a tremendous loss in human life"*, *"We remember this and will never forget"* and *"... it has shown us ..."* (Putin, 2022), while creating a distance between the Russian population and the other *'them'* he speaks of. *'Them'* being Ukraine, the West and NATO countries. Using *'them'* and *'they'* creates an otherness and distance to them: *"... they have deceived us, ..."* and *"... they have played us."* (Putin, 2022) and thereby he creates the classical *'us'* and *'them'* distinction, paired with the structural opposition of good and bad it gives contrast and affects the interpretation of the audience. Using *'we'* also communicates commitment to his statements, but furthermore he uses the pronoun *'I'*, which shows modality in the text: "*I consider it necessary today to speak again about the tragic events ..."*, *"I reiterate: we are acting to defend ourselves"* and *"I urge you to immediately lay down arms and go home."* (Putin 2022). This degree of commitment to his statements makes them appear certain and factual, and that certainty rubs positively off on him as a strong character. Additionally, it affects the consumption of his speech and the power of his expressions, so when he says: *"Dear compatriots, I am certain that devoted soldiers and officers of Russia's Armed Forces will perform their duty with professionalism and courage."* (Putin 2022) it seems like a simple statement of hope and good belief in his people, however, indirectly it may be consumed and received as an order. At another point in the speech, Putin makes a direct threat to the outside world:

> *"I would now like to say something very important for those who may be tempted to interfere in these developments from the outside. No matter who tries to stand in our way or all the more so create threats for our country and our people, they must know that Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history. No matter how the events unfold, we are ready. All the necessary decisions in this regard have been taken. I hope that my words will be heard."* (Putin 2022)

Such a direct statement as the above is hard to give other potential to than being a direct threat, and even though he states it is directed to anyone, it indirectly seems addressed to NATO countries, since he has mentioned them several times in his speech as being in opposition to support Russia. Fairclough states how consumption of a text can lead to social change, and some can even lead to war (Fairclough 2008: 36), which is relevant in this case and a definite potential. In addition, the whole speech can appear as a warning to the outside world. Even though the speech is given in Russian and

addressed to the people of Russia, it is posted online with an English, lingua franca, translation, therefore it seems possible that this speech was intended for more to see than just the Russian civilization. Furthermore, the speech can be viewed as a form of interdiscursivity, an answer to other discourses in the current social practice and orders of discourse at the time of the speech. When the speech was given, the conflict was discussed worldwide and still is. Several countries were expressing their support to Ukraine and Ukraine were asking for help from the outside (Leblanc 2022). Putin's speech can be perceived as an attempt to change the current discourse, by framing the West and Ukraine as the 'bad' instead of a victim in the conflict and by holding Ukraine responsible for the situation, whereas the more common discourse seen in the West were Ukraine as the victim in the conflict and Russia as the perpetrator. The speech can create change in the both the orders of discourse and in social practice, therefore, its' interdiscursivity bounces between the dimension of discourse and the dimension of social practice.

Dimension of social practice

As mentioned, Putin speech can be perceived as an attempt to change the orders of discourse, which can be seen as a challenge to the current hegemonies in the world. The current hegemonies being powerful NATO countries, an alliance, and Ukraine that is creating an alliance with NATO (BBC 2024). Ukraine has applied to become a member of NATO and even though they will not be granted membership until the war between Ukraine and Russia is over, they have formed an alliance, received support during the war and have history of working together since 1991 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union (USSR) (ibid). Putin attempts to change that alliance's dominance in the world by framing them in a bad light in his speech. Therefore, his speech becomes part of a political power struggle within society to change the order of discourse by bringing other, more uncommon, discursive framings of such alliances and their actions into the world and into the current orders of discourse.

Putin discursively constructs a specific reality in his speech. He is conducting the speech at the escalation of a crisis that will turn into war and he uses powerful rhetorical tools to persuade his audience to share his point of view. His position as president grants him power and as president, he is considered a knowledgeable figure. Furthermore, the speech is pre-recorded and then broadcasted to the world, which means that it reinforces a power structure of Putin as the dominant leader giving a speech in a format where it is not possible to question him or the discourses he is laying out. Putin's

powerful position can therefore not be challenged during the event of the speech and the speech's reception is dependent on the audience, but as discourse and event, it contributes to Putin maintaining his powerful position in Russian society.

I believe the speech can be perceived as Putin reasoning for the events that followed, which was an invasion of Ukraine and start of a war that is still ongoing today. At the same time, it was a direct message to anyone outside of the conflict to stay out and a threat of consequences if other countries wish to interfere. It creates fear and anxiety in the world and must affect the actions that are and aren't being taken in the social world afterwards. Putin's words are something to consider before acting and his speech can be perceived as a successful challenge towards the current hegemonies of the world and showing himself and his country as a powerful figure in society.

Address by the President of Ukraine to US Congress. March 16th, 2022, 17:27

On March 16th in 2022, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addresses the US Congress through an online video and audio-connection. The video of the speech has been published online on the Ukrainian government's official website with an English translation of the speech in text. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022 Zelenskyy has addressed his nation about the developments in the war, however only a few days into the war he started addressing other nations and institutions as well, as with this speech. Below I have inserted a screenshot of the video of the speech in question for reference while reading the analysis. Zelenskyy gives a speech where he directly pleads for help from the outside world and from President Biden in person, while portraying Ukraine and himself as a friend and an ally to the US.

Dimension of text

In the video of Zelenskyy giving his speech to US Congress on the 16th of March 2022, you start by seeing his reception in Congress through a live-streamed connection and the introduction he is given, as well as seeing the afterwards reaction and applause to his speech, however, these parts of the video will not be taken into account in the analysis, in an effort to put it on the same footing as the video of Putin giving his speech on the 24th of February 2022, that does not involve a reception or reaction from the outside.

In the video, one sees Zelenskyy sitting down in an office space giving the speech. To the left side in the video, one can see an attribute of a large Ukrainian flag in bright yellow and blue with a gold fringe in the bottom. The bold and bright colors of the Ukrainian flag stand out in the frame and communicates patriotism and national affection, while it shows Ukraine as the center of attention. To the right, Zelenskyy is seated in a brown leather chair. The camera is zoomed in on Zelenskyy, only his chest and face are visible in the frame and is foregrounded, which makes him appear likeable, as with the saying "*we get close to the people we like and keep a distance to the ones we don't*" (Machin & Mayr 2012: 97*)*. Zelenskyy is wearing a green t-shirt, which have become something of a trademark for him during this war (Friedman 2022). Zelenskyy has chosen to wear clothes that appear as army

attire because of its' green military color and a coat of arms on the chest, instead of the typical white shirt or a suit for politicians (ibid). The green t-shirt communicates a hardworking man because of its' associations with army attire and in this case the hard work is fighting a war. It makes it appear as if he is coming straight from fighting in the streets and about to get back out there as soon as he is done speaking, instead of hiding behind a desk, which makes him appear strong and involved. Therefore, it is not to be disrespectful towards the US Congress, where one would usually wear formal clothing, instead it is to appear as one with his people who are physically fighting this battle (ibid).

When nearing the end of his speech, he asks the congress to see a video with different clips from Ukraine as it looks now due to war. Before showing the video, he says: *"I ask you to watch one video now. Video of what Russian troops did on our land. …"* (Zelenskyy 2022) and right before the video starts, he says: *"Please watch…"* (Zelenskyy 2022). By repeating this request for congress to watch he appears humble and recognizes that the images they are about to see aren't pleasant and can be hard to watch. By saying this before the video, he does not just recognize it, he tells the congress what to feel about what they are about to watch and thereby influences their reactions. The video he shows starts with a couple of short clips from Ukrainian cities in sunshine, with children playing and people smiling. Probably clips with tourism purposes, from before the war. Then the screen turns dark and clips of bombings, buildings destroyed, people crying, children being carried away from war scenes, hospitals, blood and ends the video with a black screen and white text that reads: 'Close the sky over Ukraine' (Zelenskyy, 2022). The clips in the video are emotional and hard to watch, they show a great degree of violence. The first clips from before the war connotes happiness, while the clips from during the war both denotes and connotes tragedy. Ending the video with the white text is a plea to congress to act now. The video clips work as reasoning for that plea and involves the people of the congress's feelings into a following decision. After the video, Zelenskyy switches from speaking in Ukrainian to speaking in English, the native language of the people in US Congress. That transition is Zelenskyy making an effort towards the people he is addressing, while it also makes what he then says, in English, appear of highest importance, which is why he says it in English to be sure they understand him.

Zelenskyy uses his words to paint a picture in people's minds. He uses metaphors to both simplify complex events and to influence his audience's understanding of events. *"Russia has attacked more than just our land and our cities. It went on a brutal offensive against our values. Basic human values.*

It threw tanks and planes against our freedom." (Zelenskyy 2022). In this quote, Zelenskyy uses a metaphor of throwing something at someone, to paint a violent picture of tanks and planes being thrown directly at someone, and furthermore, connecting it to a basic human value, freedom. You cannot throw a physical thing towards a value, however, we understand the metaphor and it paints a vivid picture in one's mind of Russia's actions. Furthermore, Zelenskyy frames Russia and Putin as a perpetrator, first with the above example where he states that Russia has attacked Ukraine on multiple levels. Later he refers to Putin and Russia as *"the aggressor"* (Zelenskyy 2022) and speaks of Russia as a military machine: *"However, now, in the darkest time for our country, for the whole of Europe, I urge you to do more! ... Until the Russian military machine stops."* (Zelenskyy 2022), which is another metaphor. A whole country and their actions are not a mechanic machine, however by calling them "the Russian military machine" it simplifies the situation and persuades the audience's interpretation and understanding of Russia and their actions in the war as violent and as something that needs to be put a stop to, like one could do with a machine. In addition to his portrayal of Russia as a violent perpetrator, Zelenskyy speaks of Ukraine and its' people with words filled with good connotations: *"I have the honor to greet you on behalf of the Ukrainian people, brave and freedom-loving people."* (Zelenskyy 2022), in this statement he both declares how he is proud of the Ukrainian people by saying that it is an honor to greet the US Congress on their behalf, and additionally by calling them *'brave'* which associates to heroic, and *'freedom-loving'*, which Zelenskyy himself mentioned earlier in the speech as a basic human value.

In the speech, Zelenskyy addresses his audience both formally and humbly by calling them *"Ladies and Gentlemen",* while he also addresses them as *"Americans"* and *"friends"*. When calling them *"Ladies and Gentlemen"* he is being respectful, when calling on *"Americans"* he is addressing the American people as well as the congress, and when calling them *"friends"* he is establishing their relationship and is being friendly towards them, however, it also puts pressure on them. It is expected to support your friends, which means that if the Americans and Ukrainians are friends, then America should support and help Ukraine during this time of war. Zelenskyy mentions two tragic events from American History, Pearl Harbor and September 11th:

> *"Remember Pearl Harbor. Terrible morning of December 7, 1941. When your sky was black from the planes attacking you. Just remember that"* (Zelenskyy 2022)

and

"Remember September 11th. A terrible day in 2001, when evil tried to turn your cities into a battlefield. When innocent people were attacked. Attacked from the air. In a way no one expected." (Zelenskyy 2022).

By mentioning these he shows his own knowledge about American history as well as he wakes a collective memory for the Americans to wake feelings of sympathy of Ukraine's current situation. Then he states: *"In your great history you have pages that will allow you to understand Ukrainians. Understand us now. When it is needed most."* (Zelenskyy 2022), which is to say and show a like-mindedness and understanding between the Americans and the Ukrainians, due to the American's history, and to anchor their relationship with one another. However, Zelenskyy's examples of Pearl Harbor and 9/11 are not random, since both examples involve attacks from the sky and that strengthens the need of Zelenskyy's request to 'Close the sky over Ukraine', which we saw in the video he showed to congress, and that leads us to the dimension of discursive practice.

Dimension of discursive practice

In the speech from Zelenskyy to US Congress he uses a metaphor to make a request for help and support in the war. He thanks the US for the support Ukraine has already received, however he uses the metaphor *"Close the sky over Ukraine"* (Zelenskyy 2022) to make a specific request for the US to help establish a no-fly zone over Ukrainian territory with consequences if violated. The metaphor simplifies the request to affect the audience's reaction towards the request. By mentioning two tragic events from American history that involved attacks from the sky, he strengthens his request. By saying *"remember that"* (Zelenskyy 2022) he urges the Americans to remember that feeling of being attacked from the sky to persuade them to help Ukraine in this situation, and states: *"Russia has turned the Ukrainian sky into a source of death"* (Zelenskyy 2022) to support the picture he is painting even more with another metaphor of '*a source of death',* that paints a violent and dark picture in the audience's minds. Furthermore, he calls it *'terror'* and states that: *"This is a terror Europe has not seen for 80 years!"* (Zelenskyy 2022), which is a comparison to WWII that happened 80 years ago and are events defined as tragic worldwide. Additionally, he pressures the congress by saying: *"And you also know that they are available. But on land. Not in the Ukrainian sky. They do not protect our people."* (Zelenskyy 2022). This clarifies that he knows the Americans have the means to help them, now everyone who listened in on the speech knows as well and can pressure Congress to use their aircrafts.

In addition to mentioning the tragic events of Pearl Harbor and 9/11 from American history, Zelenskyy mentions Mount Rushmore, which is an American National memorial of the first presidents of the USA:

> *"I remember your Rushmore National Memorial. The faces of your prominent presidents. Those who laid the foundations of America. As it is today. Democracy, independence, freedom and care for everyone. Everyone who works diligently. Who lives honestly. Who respects the law. ... We in Ukraine want the same for ourselves. All that is a normal part of life for you."* (Zelenskyy 2022).

By mentioning Mount Rushmore he communicates shared values of democracy, independence and freedom. This is to show a like-mindedness between Americans and Ukrainians. Additionally, he creates coherence in the speech by returning to the value of freedom multiple times in his speech and declaring it a basic human value. Furthermore, he creates intertextuality and interdiscursivity by quoting the famous Martin Luther King, a minister who paved the way in the American civil rights movement (Carson & Lewis 2024):

> *""I have a dream" - these words are known to each of you. Today I can say: I have a necessity. The necessity to protect our sky. The necessity for your decision. Your help. And it will mean exactly the same thing. The same thing you feel. When you hear: I have a dream."* (Zelenskyy 2022).

First, he uses manifest intertextuality by quoting Martin Luther King directly, and afterwards by stating that these words are known to the audience. He then uses interdiscursivity by altering the words of Martin Luther King to fit Ukraine's current situation: *"I have a necessity."* (Zelenskyy 2022). Using this discourse creates a connection between the US and Ukraine and is an attempt to wake feelings of understanding and recognition in his audience.

Zelenskyy uses modality in his speech by committing to his statements when using the pronoun 'I': *"I am grateful to President Biden …"* (Zelenskyy 2022) and *"I am proud to greet you from Ukraine, …"* (Zelenskyy 2022), by involving himself in the speech he gives the audience a person to respond and relate to, while it also makes him appear honest and sincere. In addition, he names both Putin and Biden by their last name, and Biden by his function as President as well. By doing so, he recognizes the power Biden has as president of the USA, while it also pressures Biden because it confronts him and demands a response. In the speech Zelenskyy shows his appreciation for support received from Biden: *"I am grateful to President Biden for his personal involvement, for his sincere commitment to*

the defense of Ukraine and democracy around the world." (Zelenskyy 2022) which is expressed as a compliment and portrays Biden as good. He finishes the speech with addressing Biden again:

> "*And as the Leader of my nation I am addressing President Biden. You are the Leader of the nation, of your great nation. I wish you to be the Leader of the world. Being the Leader of the world means to be the Leader of Peace.*" (Zelenskyy 2022),

which is an expression that has the power to be received as a friendly challenge to Biden to live up to his full potential, and states that Biden has the power to pave the way for the rest of the world on how to act in this situation by saying that he wishes for him to be the leader of the world, and clarifying that means to be the 'leader of peace' and indirectly stating that peace is found by putting a stop to Russia's "military machine". That statement takes us to the dimension of social practice.

Dimension of social practice

Zelenskyy uses both visual and rhetorical tools to persuade US Congress to strengthen their alliance in one way or another, and in that way his speech is highly ideological. In his speech he constructs the reality he wants the audience to see by playing on their feelings, talking of shared values, waking collective memories, showing them visual pictures of the horrors in Ukraine, which is all to affect the audience and influence their further acts in the conflict. The setup of the speech can be a vulnerable situation to Zelenskyy since congress can choose to break the connection at any point and exclude him, however at the same time he is able to "hide" behind the screen and not actually be there in person, which means he too can break the connection if uncomfortable. In addition to that, there are certain power structures in place, he, as president of a nation has authority and as leader of a nation at war, respect as well, which means that he at no moment during his speech was questioned or challenged on what he said or displayed to the audience.

Zelenskyy's speech to US congress shows and anchors his alliance with the US and their hegemonic relationship. The fact that this discursive event takes place and Zelenskyy is given the time in US Congress to deliver his speech points toward some sort of alliance between the US and Ukraine has already been formed. Additionally, this speech to US Congress is one in the line of many speeches given by Zelenskyy to other nations and institutions worldwide, to create alliances with the outside world, using discourse to gain power over Russia in this conflict.

The US appears as the most powerful unit within the hegemonic relationship of Ukraine and the US due to the position of Ukraine asking for help and support from the US. However, one can also

perceive the speech as an attempt to strengthen that alliance and take it further, if the US either answers and meets the request from Ukraine or by creating a whole new alliance as Zelenskyy also suggests:

> *"… we need new ones. New institutions. New alliances. And we offer them. We offer to create an association - U-24. United for peace. A union of responsible states that have the strength and conscience to stop conflicts. Immediately. Provide all necessary assistance in 24 hours. If necessary - weapons. If necessary - sanctions. Humanitarian support. Political support. Funding. Everything necessary to preserve peace quickly. To save lives."* (Zelenskyy 2022).

Such a suggestion is a power challenge of the current hegemonies of the social world. Ukraine is not a part of the strong and powerful alliance NATO, even though they have worked with them, they are not a member yet and will not become so during the war (BBC 2024), therefore suggesting a new alliance or association is challenging that existing alliance of NATO countries and instead creating a new one with Ukraine in the main seat to gain more power. And seemingly, creating and strengthening alliances with the outside world appear as the main goal of speeches such as this one.

Comparative analysis of speeches from 2022

For this section I wish to compare the findings from Putin's speech given on the 24th of February 2022 and Zelenskyy's speech given on the 16th of March 2022. I want to start by addressing the fact that the speeches have different audiences. The speech by Putin is a pre-recorded speech published to the people of Russia. The speech is given in Russian and is started by addressing the citizens of Russia as *'friends'*. The speech has been translated into English, a common international language, and has been published on the government of the Russian Federation's official website, alongside a video- and audio recording of the Russian speech. The speech by Zelenskyy is given to US Congress through a live online connection with video and audio, that has later been posted on the Ukrainian governments official site with a video- and audio recording of Zelenskyy giving the speech to US Congress, alongside an English translation thereof. The majority of Zelenskyy's speech is given in Ukrainian, however he finalizes the speech in English, also as a common international language, but furthermore, the native language of his audience. I want to emphasize why analyzing a speech by Putin given to his civilization and comparing it to a speech given by Zelenskyy to a legislative body of another country is actually putting the two speakers on the same footing for analysis, which were a necessity in order to make a comparative study of their speeches. It is a key difference within the

two leaders how they approach the international world in fighting this war. Within days of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022, Zelenskyy started addressing nations and institutions of the international world, creating alliances, and directly requesting support and help in the war on a daily basis through speeches (Rácz 2023), and he still has that same approach today. Russia took a contrary approach. Instead of forging alliances, he threatened the outside world to interfere, and accused the West of having been working against Russia historically, and in his speech the war seemed as much of a conflict with the West as a conflict with Ukraine. Even though the speech was addressed to the people of Russia, it was published on Putin's own governments official website for the world to see and translated into English for the international world to understand his threat if they wished to interfere. Putin's strategy is mainly about convincing and gaining the support from his own civilization, which may also explain why he in his speech framed their invasion as a *"special military operation"* instead of war: *"I made a decision to carry out a special military operation"* (Putin 2022). That framing can be perceived as an attempt to distance the actions from Russian society (Rácz 2023), while Zelenskyy involves his society and addresses the Ukrainian nation every day with updates on the war. Therefore, the contrary approaches to involving the outside world shows one of the biggest differences between Putin and Zelenskyy, while it also demonstrates each of their core approaches to fighting the war, and thereby these two speeches, one given to Russian society, another given to US Congress, demonstrates just that and equates the speeches for analysis.

Visually and rhetorically, the two speakers have much more in common than in their approach to involving the outside world. In both speeches the camera zooms rather close to both Putin and Zelenskyy, connotating that they are people whom it is okay to get close to, that they are likeable to the audience. Additionally, they both use their national flags as attributes to communicate patriotism, proudness and putting their country in the center of attention. They are both placed in an office setting portrayed as men at work, while Zelenskyy has chosen to wear a green t-shirt to be portrayed as a man of the people, Putin is in a suit, but has the attribute of outdated electronics visible in the frame. Those electronics aren't fancier than the ones owned by his people, and in that way, he communicates an equalness to his people as well. Both speakers mention *'freedom'* as a core value to their people, a value to fight for. Additionally, they accuse one another of trying to take freedom away from other people. Putin accuses Ukraine of not letting some of the Ukrainians make a free choice: *"... the leading NATO countries are supporting the far-right nationalists and neo-Nazis in Ukraine, those who will never forgive the people of Crimea and Sevastopol for freely making a choice to reunite with*

Russia" (Putin 2022), and Zelenskyy accuses Russia of fighting their right to freedom: *"It[Russia] threw tanks and planes against our freedom."* (Zelenskyy 2022). Zelenskyy himself defines freedom as a basic human value, which explains the excessive use of *'freedom'* from both speakers, since it is a value that is very likely to wake recognition and be agreed on by any audience.

Both leaders use words with negative associations about one another. Zelenskyy describes Putin as an *'aggressor'* and Russia's actions as *'terror',* while Putin doesn't even mention Zelenskyy, giving him no attention in his speech, while he accuses the Ukrainians of being *'far-right nationalists'*. However, this underlines the argument about their different approaches to handling this conflict. Throughout Putin's speech, this construction of 'good' vs 'bad' dominates and works to persuade his audience, his people, to support his actions. While it does not take up as much space in Zelenskyy's speech, that is focused on convincing the Americans and the US Congress about the need of their involvement in the war, by playing on their history and showing hard-to-watch images to obtain their sympathy, that will hopefully lead to action.

Finally, both speakers challenge the current dominating alliances of the world society. Putin does so by creating a negative picture of the West, who is in alliance, and trying to remove some of their power by changing the societal discourse about them. Zelenskyy challenges the dominating alliances by asking more of them and suggesting a new alliance, which is an attempt to strengthen Ukraine's position in their alliance with western countries and thereby change the dominating hegemonies of the social world and challenge the alliances of member countries of NATO and EU, which Ukraine is not a part of (yet). Thereby, Putin and Zelenskyy may use similar tools to persuade their respective audiences, but their whole approach towards the conflict and involvement of the outside world are completely contrary. Putin is being exclusive of the outside world and, in some degree, of his own people as well to keep a distance between them and the war, and to secure that his own people will not work against him. Zelenskyy makes a huge effort in being inclusive of the outside world and his own country by involving other countries of the world and powerful institutions to gather support and to appear as a man of the people by dressing as them and keeping them in the loop through daily war-updates.

On the evening of the last day of 2023, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addresses the Ukrainian nation by publishing a prerecorded video of him giving a New Year's speech. A video of the speech has been published online on the Ukrainian government's official website with an English translation of the speech in text. Below I have inserted a screenshot from the video of the speech in question for reference while reading the analysis. Zelenskyy gives an ideological speech to try and maintain the relations of dominance he has in Ukrainian society as president by portraying himself as a needed authoritative figure both to and with the people and anchoring the Ukrainian identity within the minds of his audience.

Кожен із нас цього року боровся, працював, чекав, допомагав, жив і сподівався.

(Presidential Office of Ukraine, 2023)

Dimension of text

In the video of Zelenskyy's new year's speech, you start by seeing a 6-seconds long clip of a Ukrainian flag blowing as if in the wind, with a Ukrainian text introducing the president's new year's speech. Then the image shifts to a videorecording of Zelenskyy sitting by his desk in his office speaking towards the camera. Throughout the speech, the setting of Zelenskyy sitting in his office is the most dominant, however the video continuously shifts back and forth between Zelenskyy in his office and videos from the current war in Ukraine, videos of the Ukrainian people and some of Zelenskyy greeting his people at work and a mobile-phone recorded video by Zelenskyy himself, during one of the attacks in the war. Throughout the different clips you can hear the audio of Zelenskyy giving his new year's speech. While the video is showing Zelenskyy speaking to the public in his office, the video is denoting the actual event of Zelenskyy giving a new year's speech, however

when the video shifts to different clips from throughout the war, the video is connoting the ideas and values Zelenskyy wish to communicate through his video. He speaks of the Ukrainian people standing united and working hard:

> *"And I want to thank all our people, our strong nation. Everyone who is here today. Everyone whom I want to tell: I am proud of all of you. ... Everyone who has put their lives on hold. ... Everyone who says: "I am working, and this is not a feat, but a duty. ... And victory is not received or granted – it is gained."* (Zelenskyy 2023).

While Zelenskyy states that being a hard worker or fighting in the war is something to be proud of through his words, the value of being a hard worker for one's country is strengthened through videoclips of Ukrainians at work, smiling and cooperating with others, which paints a positive picture of working hard or fighting for Ukraine by making it look good and pleasant in the video.

In the clips of Zelenskyy giving the speech, he is placed in an office setting with dark wooden materials. The camera moves from side to side, showing the viewer increasingly more of the setting and increasingly more attributes. The attributes are a small Ukrainian flag which communicates national affection. On his desk, a pile of books signaling knowledge, but also random papers laid out, symbolizing busyness and portraying Ukraine's president as having work to do, as if he was working right up until the point where they started filming the video. Besides his desk, a larger Ukrainian flag is present and behind him is a board filled with military chevrons. The camera zooms in on the chevrons as Zelenskyy mentions them in the speech: *"Behind me then was a painting – a landscape of the Ukrainian land. Today, behind me are the chevrons of our warriors. And each of them speaks of our land, our sky, all of our Ukraine, our people, what we have accomplished and what we will achieve. ..."* (Zelenskyy 2023). In combination with Zelenskyy's words, the chevrons as attributes communicate proudness. That is communicated through the attribute itself, which is a symbol of status and service for one's country, and through Zelenskyy giving it attention in the speech, which signifies importance and recognition of military work of Ukrainians. The flags as attributes communicate national affection and proudness, which is a consistent theme throughout the speech: proudness of Ukraine. On Zelenskyy's desk there is a framed picture of him and his wife, which portrays him as a family man. Additionally, it suggests that Zelenskyy is a caring man by having the photo on his desk, which makes marriage and family appear as something he treasures. The office setting has more objects and elements present than in many other videos of Zelenskyy giving speeches, which could be to show Zelenskyy in a nice setting that appears more like a home with

personal objects to communicate a sort of optimism, while the dark colors of the wood can keep the seriousness of Ukraine's current situation in the frame. The objects in the image are unfocused, and Zelenskyy is always the one in focus in the video of him in his office, which shows that he, as president and as speaker, is the one we need to direct our attention towards, while the elements mentioned help strengthen his arguments and appearance. On the note of appearance, Zelenskyy wears a green sweatshirt, sticking to what earlier in this paper has been called his trademark during the war. The green color of the sweatshirt makes it appear as army attire, since that is the color of typical army attire. It makes the audience associate him with the army and in collaboration with the attribute of random papers scattered on his desk, makes him appear as a man steady at work, hard at work and involved in the war, both politically and physically.

As in Zelenskyy's speech from 2022 to US Congress, metaphors are highly present in this speech as well. Firstly, by speaking of Ukraine as a living and breathing thing, instead of geographical area as it is: "*Ukraine is alive. Ukraine lives. Ukraine fights. Ukraine advances, Ukraine overcomes the path. Ukraine gains. Ukraine works. Ukraine exists*" (Zelenskyy 2023). Such a metaphor as this helps simplify the extensive and complicated actions that are being taken by the Ukrainian people and their government in a time of war, and not by the geographical area that it is. However, this metaphor becomes almost naturalized and is a way of gathering every action taken by people and institutions in the geographical area of Ukraine as a collective unit. Additionally, the repetitiveness of using metaphors about what Ukraine does clarifies that Ukraine and Ukrainians has its' own identity and thereby breaks with Ukraine's previous connection to the Russian regime during the USSR. Zelenskyy uses metaphors to strengthen the feeling of national affection and national identity, while speaking of the value of freedom: *"You did not surrender a single blue-and-yellow heart. Not a single kilometer of our freedom."* (Zelenskyy 2023). In this quote, two metaphors are present. First, *'a single blue-and-yellow heart'*. By calling it *'a single blue-and-yellow* heart' he clarifies that he is speaking of Ukrainians, since the colors of the Ukrainian flag is blue and yellow, and thereby the metaphor states that no Ukrainian have surrendered. At the same time, he is communicating national affection of Ukraine, by stating that their hearts are painted in the colors of their country, because the heart is being associated with feelings, love, and affection due to the naturalized and common metaphor of such being navigated through the heart (Sheridan 2018). Secondly, *'Not a single kilometer of our freedom"* is a metaphor to emphasize how the Ukrainians have not surrendered territory or compromised their values in the last year of war. Freedom cannot be measured in kilometers since it

is not a distance, but a value and a feeling. But, by using measurement language it both shows that freedom is a great value to the Ukrainian people, since he states *'not a single kilometer'* which is a large distance in comparison to centimeter or just meter. Additionally, it could be a reference to the fact that Ukraine has been able to hold most of their territory throughout 2023 and the war has been stagnating in a sense, with Russia having to pull back their forces multiple times throughout the year that has passed (Maynes, 2023). Zelenskyy's use of these metaphors helps anchor the feeling of a Ukrainian identity within his audience and to encourage them to continue to fight in the challenges they are facing in 2024, by stating that they overcame the struggles of 2023 and then he uses the metaphors to simplify all the complex events of war and make it more consumable to the common audience by focusing on the outcome through metaphors.

As mentioned earlier, 'proudness' is a consistent theme in Zelenskyy's new year's speech. He mentions the word *'proud'* multiple times. Directly, it indicates that he, Zelenskyy, is proud to be president, to be the leader, of the Ukrainian people and their actions and that the Ukrainians should be proud as well of their independent Ukrainian identity. Indirectly, it can work to encourage the Ukrainian people to continue their hard work when praised by their leader. With such wording one can draw parallels to a parent being proud of their children, which makes Zelenskyy appear as a father figure to the Ukrainian people, possibly to insert himself in a needed position for the Ukrainian people.

Dimension of discursive practice

As touched upon earlier in this research project, how one represents an actor discursively can never be neutral. In the dimension of text, I touched briefly on the visual representation of Zelenskyy himself, through attributes in the frame and his green clothing. Additionally, he uses the pronoun 'I' multiple times in his speech, which is a way of using modality. Using *'I'* shows commitment to his statements and it makes him appear strong and certain of the things he says, such as *"I am proud of every Ukrainian warrior. As long as you stand, Ukraine stands."* (Zelenskyy 2023), which also makes it easier to believe in his statements as audience, since his certainty and confidence as speaker will influence the audience. Additionally, it anchors the framing of himself of a father figure to the Ukrainian people, by affirming them that he, their president, believes in and is proud them, while it also places him in the centre of the movement against the Russian invasion. In the speech, the word *'us'* can be counted 15 times and *'we'* can be counted 31 times in his new year's speech. This

excessive use of *'us'* and *'we'* is a rhetorical way of convincing the people of Ukraine that they are in it together with President Zelenskyy. Furthermore, it can be perceived as motivating or encouraging to gather the people and Zelenskyy as one with a shared experience, just like in the statements about being proud of his people as their leader, which points towards a president who is trying to encourage his people to stay motivated in this fight and to keep fighting. Zelenskyy states:

> *"676 days ago, at this very place, I addressed you, Ukrainians, and reported the beginning of a full-scale war. We did not know then what lay ahead. Many did not believe we would last a week. Few believed we would make it through 2022, let alone standing through 2023. And today we are facing 2024."* (Zelenskyy, 2023).

This quote taps into the discourse of encouragement of the Ukrainian people to keep fighting in this ongoing war. The quote works by commending how much the Ukrainian people have overcome since the war first began, and then stating that they are now facing another year of war, to show the audience, the people of Ukraine, that they can overcome whatever 2024 will bring, because they already did that back in 2022 and 2023.

Typically, an excessive use of *'us'* and *'we'* in political speeches are seen used together with an excessive use of *'them'* and *'they'* to create a clear distinction between an *'us'* and a *'them'*, however this is not the case in this speech. This speech is all about the *'we'*, which is the Ukrainian people, and thereby clarifies that this speech is targeted towards the Ukrainian people, and it is a speech for them. Zelenskyy does however make another distinction in his speech, a distinction between citizens and refugees:

> *"Someone stayed here, in Ukraine, someone fled, someone was besieged, someone evacuated their children, someone went to the front, someone rescued others, someone saved their family, someone left and stayed there, and someone left and returned home. To Ukraine. And these are stories of people, stories of men and women. Those who could not stay at home and went to the front. And those who could no longer stay abroad, somewhere far from home, and returned. After realizing and saying to themselves: "I do care. I am needed. Needed for victory, needed for Ukraine." Those who proved: I am stronger than fear. Those who proved: I am stronger than doubts. Because I know that one day I will have to ask myself: who am I? To make a choice about who I want to be. A victim or a winner?* **A refugee or a citizen?** *And everyone*

knows the answer. And the answer is Ukraine. Because Ukrainians are stronger together. So it's time to be together!" (Zelenskyy 2023).

In this quote, Zelenskyy refers to the millions of Ukrainians who have fled the country since the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24th in 2022 (AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES 2024). In the above quote, it can appear as though Zelenskyy is attempting to normalize any action taking by his people during the war by stating the different reactions: *"someone stayed here, ... someone fled, ... these are stories of our people"* (Zelenskyy 2022) as if both actions are in the same pool, however, when he continues the quote and states *"those who proved: I am stronger than doubts. ... who I want to be. A victim or a winner? A refugee or a citizen?"* (Zelenskyy 2022), he associates the ones who stayed or came back with being *'stronger than doubts'*. Furthermore, he associates refugees with victims, and citizens with winners by first asking the question of who one wants to be: *"a victim or a winner?",* then asking the same question, in the same rhetorical arrangement, simply replacing the word *'victim'* with *'refugee'* and the word *'winner'* with *'citizen'.* That way of arranging his words portrays refugees as victims, and citizens as winners. In addition to that, the above quote has a power of expression as a plea to the Ukrainians abroad. By starting with the attempt to normalize different reactions on war, but then shifting the focus towards coming back to Ukraine after having left, and then asking a rhetorical question about who one wants to be and ending the quote with *"So it's time to be together!"* (Zelenskyy 2023), which comes out as a request towards the Ukrainians who are staying abroad. A request for them to come back and fight for their country and *'be together'* with fellow countrymen, that was possibly made by Zelenskyy because of a need of more men to strengthen their defense against Russia. However, the distinction made between citizens and refugees, alongside with a tightening of conscription and mobilization laws in Ukraine in the months that followed the speech, did not land positively with Ukrainians living abroad (Morgunov, Stern & Ebel 2024). One can argue that this rhetoric was intended to both praise the Ukrainians who stayed or came back to Ukraine, while pressuring the ones abroad to return now, however, the reception of this seemingly backfired.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy how Zelenskyy speaks of *'victory'* multiple times in his new year's speech, while *'peace'* is only mentioned once as a final remark in his speech, alongside *'victory'*: *"And to our Ukraine – victory and peace. Happy New Year, Ukrainians!"* (Zelenskyy 2023). Throughout the war, it has become a known discourse that peace for Ukraine will only be gained if it comes through victory (Fogh Rasmussen & Yermak 2024), because peace without victory is

considered to be on the cost of territory or negotiation with terrorists, which is something Russia is now considered as by many Ukrainians (Zelenskyy 2022). In addition to that, any negotiations of peace that could be made ny Ukraine with Russia aren't considered as final, or as having a guarantee that Putin and Russia won't just attack Ukraine again in another territory, since they have already attacked Ukraine three times within the last 10 years (Moens et. al. 2024). Therefore, the discourse of peace and victory throughout the war has become so that *'victory'* is the word to use, when speaking of gaining peace. Peace needs to be gained through total victory, and therefore saying *'peace'* is not enough to capture the true meaning of what kind of peace and how to come to that peace. This helps explain why the word '*victory'* takes up space in Zelenskyy's speech, and '*peace'* does not. An extra twist to this discourse is that in the Ukrainian language the Russian word *"мир"*, which translates to peace, is used. The Ukrainian and Russian word:*" мир"* does not only translate to peace, but it also translates to world, and that is understood then as a Russian imperialistic worldview (Bridge to Moscow), which has caused many Ukrainians to refer to the word *"мир"* (peace), as *"Russian peace"* during the conflict (ibid). Therefore, using the word *'peace'* when speaking to the Ukrainian people in Ukrainian would be received negatively, which emphasizes Zelenskyy's sparse use of *'peace'* and frequent use of *'victory'*. With that, I wish to move onto the dimension of social practice.

Dimension of social practice

As touched upon briefly in the dimension of text, the video of Zelenskyy's new year's speech shifts from a dominant clip of Zelenskyy giving the speech at his desk to several different videoclips from Ukraine, showing them at work, fighting, helping one another, Zelenskyy greeting several of them and a mobile-phone recorded video of Zelenskyy in his office during a bombing with a front turned camera, showing that it is filmed by himself (Presidential Office of Ukraine 2023). These different clips are used as a tool to paint a positive picture of Zelenskyy as president, a positive and encouraging picture of the Ukrainian people and to strengthen the alliance between Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people. An alliance that is build up in society through hegemonic structure of him as the democratically chosen leader of Ukraine, dependent on the support of his people. Zelenskyy's popularity skyrocketed when the war first broke out in 2022. He was an actor and comedian who turned to politics and became the president of a country. When war broke out, he started showing his worth and was met with applause and support (BBC News 2022) (Tanyarattinan & Wilson 2019). But throughout the war Zelenskyy's popularity has declined (Golovin 2024). One can view the new year's speech with its' focus on the Ukrainian people as a power challenge to Zelenskyy's

popularity's descent. Zelenskyy is in need of support from the Ukrainian people, if he wants to continue being their democratic leader, and to maintain the current power balance and hegemonic relationship between him and the people. Which also explains the need for Zelenskyy to portray himself as a father figure to the Ukrainian people in his speech, to both mobilize the Ukrainian people to stand united but also to be united in supporting him. The speech as an event does not allow for Zelenskyy to be challenged, since the speech is pre-taped and edited, he can't be questioned or challenged during the event. Therefore, the speech as event contributes to maintain the existing hegemonic relationship and Zelenskyy's position of power and control in society, however what follows the event, the audience's reception of the speech, places power with the people and can affect the further hegemonies of Ukrainian society. As mentioned in the previous dimensions of this analysis, the speech appears to be an attempt to encourage and motivate the people of Ukraine during a time where they are entering a third year of war. Zelenskyy depicts himself as their ally when showing a self-taped videoclip of him exposed during a bombing and clips of him meeting and greeting the people as their president while they are working.

Address by President of the Russian Federation. December 31st, 2023, 23:55

Shortly before midnight on the last day of 2023, President Vladimir Putin addresses the Russian nation by broadcasting a video of him giving a New Year's speech. The Russian government's official website has published an English translation of the speech on their website alongside a picture from the recording of the speech. A video of the speech was found elsewhere online. Below you will find the photo from the Russian government's official website of Putin giving the new year's speech for visual reference while reading the analysis. Putin gives a new year's speech that focus on uniting his people to gain support as their leader in the upcoming election that was, and that he did end up winning, extending his period of Russian leadership towards a third decade in power (Liffey 2023), while also portraying Russia as a country in stability through a traditional new year's speech.

Dimension of text

The pre-recorded video of Putin giving his New Year's Speech on the 31st of December in 2023 was published shortly before midnight. The video is initiated with music and videoclips from Moscow showing the Kremlin, the capital city's citadel and its' different buildings, a Russian flag blowing in the wind, a large clock and then white text in Russian, introducing Vladimir Putin, president of Russia, on the occasion of New Year's Eve. The video clips of the Kremlin, a place featured on UNESCO's world heritage list (World Heritage Convention) in collaboration with audio of music and trumpets, initiates the speech in a majestic way. Then the frame clips to Putin giving the speech in front of a view of the Kremlin, most likely to be recorded using a greenscreen, meaning that the speech was pre-recorded in a studio. In the background one can see a big clock counting down until midnight on New Year's Eve. Putin is wearing a suit, red tie and a dark jacket, which is formal wear that makes him appear presentable and serious, since it is an outfit associated with special occasions or business, such as politics. New Year's Eve being the special occasion in this case and Putin being the politician as leader of Russia. When Putin is done giving his speech the frame shifts to showing short videos from Moscow and the Kremlin, a Russian flag, and a shining red star on top of a building. The red star is a symbol of communism to many and dates back to the 20th century and Josef Stalin, dictator of the Soviet Union (Chapple 2018). In this video, it first and foremost is seen as a beacon of

Russia and of Moscow, but the star's history and portrayal in the new year's speech video indicates taking pride in the country's history and honoring the now dissolved USSR. It becomes ever more important due to the current situation of war between Ukraine and Russia, where Russia is attempting to take over a geographical area in Ukraine that used to belong to the USSR. Therefore, one could wonder if the star implies Russia trying to return to a ruling position as during the USSR. Additionally, Putin mentions the word 'motherland' when speaking:

> *"And the main thing which has united us is the destiny of the Motherland. There is a deep understanding of the utmost importance of the historic period which Russia is going through, those ambitious goals which society is facing and the colossal responsibility for the Motherland which every one of us feels."* (Putin 2023).

As noted prior, this is an English translation of the speech, which was originally given in Russian. 'Motherland' is therefore a translation of the Russian word *"ро́дина"*. In this speech Putin only uses 'motherland', however in the speech from 2022 he uses both 'fatherland' and 'motherland', and I have found that '*fatherland*' and '*motherland*' are English translations of two different Russian words (Bartlett 2006). While the Russian word that translates into '*fatherland*' is a direct translation, it seems that the Russian word that translates into '*motherland*' is more of an interpretation (ibid). I am not able to provide a better translation of the word, however, it is important to note that '*ро́дина*' cannot necessarily be directly translated to '*motherland*', since it is as much associated with one's birthplace or where one's kin is originating from (ibid), meaning that 'motherland' does not grasp all the potential of the Russian word '*ро́дина*', which Putin originally used. Putin choosing to use '*motherland*' in this speech and stating that every Russian feels a responsibility for the Motherland could indirectly indicate that Putin is not just speaking of the geographical territory of Russia, but about the geographical areas that once were Russian, during the USSR, which could be a way of imprinting a purpose of the current fight, the war between Ukraine and Russia within the audience. It is not possible to determine if that was the purpose with choosing to use '*motherland*' rather than '*fatherland*'. However, it is a noteworthy choice of word and a potential meaning of such a choice, however, if we were to determine that was the meaning of '*motherland*', that would reduce the meaning potential of the texts, an inevitable part of interpretation (Fairclough 2008: 31), just like the choice of translating *"ро́дина"* to '*motherland*' can have reduced the text. With this clarification of the word '*ро́дина*' I wish to highlight the word's potential of having more meanings.

The national flags blowing in the wind shown both before and after Putin gives his speech, communicates national affection, and as we saw Russian flags in the speech from 2022 as well, it becomes a clear indicator of both proudness of one's country but also purpose for one's action and what the speech is about. Speaking of visible semiotics, this speech is rather simple, and the setting is a traditional setting for a new year's speech. This makes Putin and what he is communicating appear straightforward, while it depicts a president giving a new year's speech in the same format as he has done many years prior. This also means that he is giving no attention to the current situation of war between Russia and Ukraine, and thereby Russia does not come across as a country in crisis. The traditional video-setting can therefore be seen as a way of communicating stability to the audience, the Russian people. Additionally, Putin's new year's speech is relatively short and the part of him speaking only lasts about four minutes. The speech is clear and precise and stays within the theme of New Year's Eve by reminiscing accomplishments from the year that have passed without going into detail:

> "*We have worked very hard and accomplished a lot over the past year. We were proud of our common achievements and happy about our successes. And we were firm, protecting the national interests, our freedom and security, and our values which continue to be our unshakeable foundation.*" (Putin 2023).

And continuing by speaking of the year that lay ahead:

> "*The upcoming year of 2024 has been declared the Year of the Family in our country. And a true big family is of course a family with children, where you find care and attention, warm-heartedness and support for the parents, love and respect for each other.*" (Putin 2023)

Again, not dwelling in detail, but speaking of typical societal values of family, love and respect. However, the elaboration on family, which he makes by stating what *'a true big family'* is, is to connote emotion. A family can be many things, but *'love', 'care', 'children', 'warm-heartedness'* and *'support'* are all positive words that speak to the emotions of the audience, and it ends up taking a lot of space in the rather short speech. This indicates family values as important to both Putin, while they are values the majority of his audience will agree with. Additionally, Putin creates coherence in his speech by sticking to the theme of New Year's Eve by arranging the speech as mentioned above with looking back and then looking forward, by mentioning *'new year'* and *'2024'* multiple times throughout the speech and finally ending with a note of congratulations to his people: *"Happy New Year, friends! Happy 2024!"* (Putin 2023), which puts a knot to the red thread on the theme that has

been present throughout his speech and has made it come out meaningful through coherence. In addition to that, he mentions the word '*motherland*' twice in the beginning paragraphs of his speech and then returns to use it three times when finishing the speech. By returning to the same substantial word in the speech, he strengthens the coherence in the speech, because the word will be recognizable to the audience. The coherence of his speech moves us along towards the dimension of discursive practice.

Dimension of discursive practice

The speech is addressed to the people of Russia, whom Putin refers to as '*friends*' multiple times in his speech, as we also saw him do in the speech from the February 2022, when the full-scale invasion of Ukraine was first initiated. When addressing the people of Russia as his '*friends*' he is establishing their relation, while he is also presenting them as his supporters, and he is theirs. As mentioned in the analysis of Zelenskyy's 2022 speech, people expect support from their friends, which means, Putin must expect support from his people, whom he addresses as '*friends*'. It shows an underlying discourse from Putin about needing to secure support from the Russian people. In the speech, Putin does not address or represent other actors than himself and the Russian people, his audience. Putin makes no mention of '*Ukraine*' or '*war*' in his new year's speech, not even mentioning the '*special military operation*' as he before has referred to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine as (Putin, 2022). However, a single quote in his speech can be perceived as a fleeting recognition of the war by addressing the Russian military:

> "*I would like to address our military personnel – everyone who is on duty, who is on the front lines fighting for truth and justice. You are our heroes. Our hearts are with you. We are proud of you and we admire your courage.*" (Putin, 2023)

In this quote he recognizes the Russian people fighting for their country. He shows both his own and the country's support for the military personnel. When speaking of representation of actors, one speaks of passivating a social actor can be a way of backgrounding them and their actions (Machin & Mayr 2023: 154). Putin does not grand Ukraine attention but remains focused on his own people and country. And the above quotation is the only thing that can be perceived as a sparse recognition of the ongoing war. Additionally, Russia instated a new law making more Russian men eligible to be drafted for military on the same day as the speech (Doornbos 2024). With that in mind, one can also view the quote as a way of portraying going into the military as something honorable by calling military personnel '*our heroes*' and stating "*… we are proud of you and we admire your courage*"

(Putin 2023), which could be an attempt to influence the audience to be more positive towards this new law, by portraying military as something honorable. Furthermore, this shows how the current social condition of war and practice of a new law has influenced the production of the discourses in Putin's new year's speech.

Before moving onto this dimension of discourse, coherence in Putin's speech was analyzed, however another element that creates coherence in the new year's speech is Putin's rhetorical use of the pronoun *'we', 'our'* and *'us'*:

> *"**We** are bidding farewell to 2023. Very soon it will become part of history and **we** will have to move forward, create the future.*
>
> *We have worked very hard and accomplished a lot over the past year. **We** were proud of **our** common achievements and happy about **our** successes. And **we** were firm, protecting the national interests, **our** freedom and security, and **our** values which continue to be **our** unshakeable foundation.*
>
> *And the main thing which has united **us** is the destiny of the Motherland."* (Putin 2023).

The pronouns mentioned above the quotation have been marked in bold in the quote to demonstrate the frequent use thereof. These pronouns create a feeling of togetherness between Putin and his audience, the Russian people. He continues to use these pronouns frequently throughout the entire speech and it demonstrates that the speech is both addressed to and is about the people of Russia. At the same time the focus on *'we'* creates coherence throughout the speech because it continuously is about the same actors. Additionally, Putin uses the pronoun *'I'* a few times in the speech: *"I know that right now you feel the love of your nearest and dearest, the powerful and sincere support of millions of Russian citizens, the support of the entire people."* (Putin 2023). Using 'I' is a way of committing to his statements. It shows certainty and makes what he says appear factual. In this case it portrays Putin as capable of speaking on behalf of the military personnel fighting at the frontier, whom the statement is about.

Dimension of social practice

As mentioned in the dimension of text on visual semiotics, the video of Putin giving his new year's speech is somewhat traditional in setting and composition. And as mentioned in the dimension of discursive practice, Putin only makes one passing and hedging reference to the current social situation of his country being at war with Ukraine, by thanking the fighting military personnel. By using the

traditional composition of giving a new year's speech and avoiding talking about the current situation of conflict he is firstly repeating old discourses, since the whole structure of the new year's speech and its' topics about family, respect and support have been seen before. Secondly, he is reinforcing the already existing power structures in Russian society - and thereby does not challenge the current hegemony in society. Instead, his speech is contributing to maintaining the current hegemony in Russian society, where Putin is dominant as having been their leader for two decades (Ray 2024), by not being creative with a discursive event such as this. Thereby, this is a way for Putin to stay in power and manifest his alliance with the people of Russia. Another thing that strengthens his alliance with the people is painting a picture of a stable country, by conducting the new year's speech in the same way as done before. Additionally, by avoiding talking about or recognize the war between Ukraine and Russia, which can be received as calming towards the people, since it moves focus away from the war and makes the social situation of Russia seem ordinary and as what the people have been accustomed to since before the war. In addition to that, the new year's speech as a discursive practice highlights a build-in construction of reality in Russian society and makes the speech highly ideological by depicting the existing power relations in Russian society. Those power relations being Putin, the dominant leader, choosing what to shed light on and by making the discursive choices discussed above. Thereby, he reproduces that societal power relation. However, if the audience, the Russian people can look beyond the already existing structures of power in their society and thereby changing that ideology and challenge Putin's power dominance, it will not succeed as ideological.

Furthermore, Putin had an upcoming election when giving this new year's speech. Even though all oppositional forces against him were seemingly suppressed and there were no doubts about how the election would unfold in Putin's favor (Liffey 2023). The setup of the new year's speech and its' themes of unity, togetherness, and portraying Russia as a country in control, could be an effect of that upcoming election. Last year, Putin strayed from the traditional setup of a new year's speech and gave the speech in front of a troop of soldiers and addressed the *'special military operation'*. This year, focus seems to lie elsewhere than on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Comparative analysis

In this section I will compare the speeches that have been analyzed in the chapter on analysis. The section will start by first comparing the findings from Zelenskyy's speech from the 16th of March 2022 with his new year's speech from 2023, to possibly find a pattern of rhetorical strategy of

Zelenskyy and/or development in his rhetoric since the war first began. Secondly, I will to do the same by comparing Putin's speech from the 24th of February 2022 with his new year's speech from 2023. Thereafter, a comparison of Zelenskyy and Putin's new year's speeches, and finally a comparison of all four speeches by Putin and Zelenskyy's that have been analyzed in this research project and a comparison of Putin and Zelenskyy as speakers.

Comparison of Zelenskyy's speeches

Zelenskyy took the time to thank the Ukrainian people in his new year's speech in an attempt to persuade the audience into supporting him as their leader. He elaborated on deeds and values in a time of war. He made use of both rhetorical tools, such as metaphors, and visual tools, such as attributes to symbolize national affection, and videoclips that connote values of hard work, unity, and proudness of one's country. Tools used to strengthen his support from the people to reproduce the relation of dominance he has in the social world in his working title as president. Zelenskyy's new year's speech is addressed to the Ukrainian people. That is made clear in it being a new year's speech to Ukraine, and in his opening line: *"Dear people! Dear Ukraine!"* (Zelenskyy 2023) and in the greeting to finalize his speech: *"And to our Ukraine – victory and peace. Happy New Year, Ukrainians! Happy New Year, Ukraine! Glory to Ukraine!"* (Zelenskyy 2023). Additionally, who the audience is, is clarified throughout the speech with the frequent use of *'we'* and *'our'* in the speech, which makes the speech coherent. However, as Zelenskyy mentions in the speech: *"Having held 120 meetings at the level of leaders this year alone, which brought us 156 defense support packages alone."* (Zelenskyy 2023), he has addressed the international world throughout the war. The speech to US Congress from 2022 being an example thereof. By mentioning that how he has obtained these '156 defense support packages' he portrays himself as necessary to Ukraine, as the man who gets the means. A way of portrayal probably chosen due to his declining popularity in Ukrainian society. While the majority of his actual speeches are addressed to the outside world and the Ukrainian people have instead gotten videotaped updates from their president daily during war, this 2023 speech is addressed to his people, and thereby the format differs from many of Zelenskyy's other speeches held since the 24th of February 2022. As found in the analysis of Zelenskyy's speech from the 16th of March 2022, he directly asks the outside world for help, and in the case of that speech, it was the US Congress and President Biden he was asking to interfere in the war by either closing the sky, forming an alliance with Ukraine, or providing them with military artillery. Such direct pleas for help can be found in multiple speeches from Zelenskyy. Among others he has addressed the UN, the EU, Japan,

British Parliament, France and many more. However, the new year's speech from 2023 is addressed to the Ukrainian people and does not include any direct pleas for help towards the outside world. Instead, an indirect plea was found to the Ukrainian people, both the ones staying in Ukraine and the ones staying outside of Ukraine. A plea for them to keep fighting and keep working in the war. Even though the audience is different, the two speeches by Zelenskyy has many commonalities and show a certain style of Zelenskyy. In both speeches he wears green clothing to be associated with the army and appear as coming in straight from fighting in the streets to give a speech, portraying himself as a busy man of both political and physical skills, and with constant work to do. In both speeches he uses the attribute of a Ukrainian national flag in the frame to communicate national affection and to center the audience's gaze on Ukraine. Additionally, he uses visual semiotics of including other videoclips than the one of him speaking in the videos of his speech. In the speech to US Congress, he showed a video with tapes from Ukraine from before the war and during, that demonstrated the horrors of war, to affect the audience's feelings and gain sympathy. In the new year's speech, he showed tapes from during the war of Ukrainians smiling at work and greeting their president. Which is to affect the audience's feelings positively and to portray them as strong, and to strengthen their alliance. In addition, both Zelenskyy's speeches have been long, allowing him to profoundly make his case and make excessive use of both visual and rhetorical tools, such as metaphors dominating throughout both speeches, such as *"a single blue-and-yellow heart"* (Zelenskyy 2023) and "*It [Russia] threw tanks and planes against our freedom."* (Zelenskyy 2022), to both simplify actions for understanding and to rhetorically construct images in the minds of his audience to persuade them to agree with him.

Comparison of Putin's speeches

Putin's speech from February 2022 is long, as both Zelenskyy's speeches have been, whereas his new year's speech is short and determinate, pointing towards Putin trying to persuade his audience in 2022 about the situation with pressure from the West being problematic and in need of action. While the shorter new year's speech from 2023 shows Putin simplifying Russia's current situation. On the 24th of February 2022, Putin presents a long speech where he uses the speech to paint a negative picture of the Western countries of the world and NATO-alliances. Giving the West more attention than Ukraine, whom is the country Russia launched a full-scale invasion of on the same day. The thorough negative framing of the West can be perceived as Putin's way of convincing his people to agree with him, which seemed like the main focus of his 2022 speech; to convince the people of Russia to stand by Putin and agree with his worldview. While another focus seemed to be to keep the outside world out of the conflict by directly threatening any involvement from outside parties in the Russia/Ukraine

conflict. At the same time, Putin consciously avoided speaking of the conflict in terms of '*war*'. In the 2022 speech he referred to it as '*a special military operation*' that he was conducting in Ukraine, while he avoided speak of it all together in his new year's speech on the last day of 2023. By not addressing the conflict or recognizing it as war, he manages to rhetorically distance it from Russian society, which could be an attempt to communicate stability to the Russian people and remain in control, in both 2022 and 2023. In 2022 for the Russian people to be convinced of the righteousness of his actions and support of those, and in 2023 to calm society and gain support for the, at the time, upcoming presidential election in Russia. However, in 2023, the new year's speech from Putin is short and coherent by sticking to the theme of New Year's Eve throughout, which strengthens the communication of stability, as well as his choice of doing the new year's speech in a traditional style visually, through choosing a traditional background of Moscow and the Kremlin.

Comparison of New Year's speeches

On the last night of 2023, leaders Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed each of their nations in a new year's speech. Neither of the speeches were conducted live, but pre-recorded and edited to add visual semiotics. Putin attempting to portray a stable Russia and gather support from his people. Zelenskyy focusing on a Ukrainian identity and portraying himself as a necessary figure for Ukraine to win the war. Both leaders made use of their national flags in each of their respective videos. Putin's speech is initiated with a videoclip of the Kremlin and then clips to a video of a Russian flag, blowing in the wind at night, on top of a building. Zelenskyy's speech was initiated with a Ukrainian flag covering the whole screen and moving as if blowing in the wind. Thereby both speakers initiated their speeches by using the same visual tool to communicate national affection and putting their country in the center of attention. Furthermore, in both speeches, the video clips from showing the speaker to showing other tapes that connotes more than just the speaker in person. Putin uses videoclips of Russia's capital city and shows off their monuments, while Zelenskyy uses videoclips of the Ukrainian people and himself. These videoclips from both Putin's and Zelenskyy's videos places their countries within a frame of national. While the videoclips in Putin's speech present majestic buildings and symbolize Russia's history, Zelenskyy focusses on being both proud of and in alliance with his people, through tapes of him greeting his people and meeting them at work. Furthermore, on the note of similarities, Zelenskyy uses the attribute of a framed picture of him and his wife, which symbolizes love and family as valuable to him, while Putin instead speaks of family and love to show its' value to him. In that way both speakers plead to the emotions of their audience and portray themselves as men who treasure the value of love and family.

Both Putin and Zelenskyy address their military and thank them for their service in their new year's speeches. Putin only somewhat addresses the war going on in a thankful passage towards military personnel: *"I would like to address our military personnel – everyone who is on duty, who is on the front lines fighting for truth and justice. … We are proud of you and we admire your courage."* (Putin, 2023). Addressing that there are people fighting at the front, is as close as one gets to see Putin recognize the war going on between Russia and Ukraine. He manages to do so without mentioning the word *'war'*, without mentioning the other country *'Ukraine'* and without addressing the conflict as *'a special military operation',* as he has done prior. Thereby he succeeds in acknowledging his people fighting in the war, without acknowledging the current conflict a war, and continues to keep his speech simple and keep crisis and conflict out of his portrayal of Russia in the speech. Zelenskyy, on the other hand, does not avoid mentioning war in his speech. Zelenskyy's speech is long, and *'war'* is mentioned 13 times throughout, while he also refers to the Ukrainians fighting in the war as *'warriors'*: *"I am proud of every Ukrainian warrior. As long as you stand, Ukraine stands"* (Zelenskyy 2023). Thereby he recognizes the struggle of being at war and acknowledges people's efforts in war. However, the two speakers have their honoring of military personnel in common, to encourage their people to take part in fighting for the military of their respective countries, but it is how they approach such a doing that is different. Putin's way of doing so is short and precise, and the true meaning behind it is made implicit, in not elaborating on what they are fighting for, where or with whom, which is done to keep his people calm and portray Russia as in stability. Zelenskyy's way of honoring his military is much more explicit and involves details about their actions and multiple adjectives to magnify his statements. It is a form of overlexicalization. Zelenskyy's speech thereby avoids simplifying the situation and instead persuades the audience about its' problematic, which works to argument and justify Ukraine's and Zelenskyy's actions.

In both new year's speeches, Zelenskyy and Putin make heavy use of the pronoun *'we'* and other similar pronouns such as *'us'* or *'our'* to express a relation and a bond between them and their people, while speaking both to and for them. Both speakers were in need of heightening the amount of support from their people at the time of their new year speeches. Putin had an upcoming election, while the support to Zelenskyy in Ukraine had been steadily declining (Golovin 2024). Using *'we'* help manifest an alliance between speaker and audience and indirectly reinforce the already existing power structures in society (Machin & Mayr 2012: 84). Furthermore, Putin addressed his people as *'friends'*

to anchor their supportive relation and framed his speech around uniting the Russian people: *"Work for the common good has united society. We are united in our thoughts, deeds and in battle, on weekdays or holidays, displaying the main traits of the Russian people – solidarity, mercy, fortitude."* (Putin 2023). Back in 2022, Putin addressed his people as '*friends*' as well, where Zelenskyy addressed the members of US Congress and the Americans as 'friends' in his speech from 2022. Both show an attempt to steady a supportive relationship between either a leader and his people, or a leader and a possible alliance. Which moves us towards the next part of the comparative analysis of comparing Putin and Zelenskyy as speakers through findings from all four speeches analyzed in this research.

Comparison of Putin and Zelenskyy's speeches and as speakers

In length and excessive use of rhetorical tools Putin's speech from 2022 has similarities with Zelenskyy's speeches, while his short new year's speech in 2023 stands out. The short length of his new year's speech, and how he continuously sticks to the theme of a new year without swaying, can make the speech appear as a formality. In addition to that, Putin sticks to formal wear in a suit and tie in both of his speeches, communicating exactly formality. Furthermore, Putin's formal wear stands in contrast to Zelenskyy's army looking attire in both of his speeches, making him appear as a man of the people and hard worker. Seemingly, Putin does not wish to be associated with the working class, instead he rhetorically constructs an alliance with the people, through using '*we*' and addressing them as '*friends*', but not as one of them. Instead, he positions himself in power as their leader. One of the things which make him appear powerful and as a strong leader is the degree of commitment to his statements in both of his speeches that he constructs by using the pronoun '*I*' several times. Zelenskyy does the same. By using '*I*' they show certainty of what they are saying by including themselves in their rhetoric and makes what they are saying appear factual, because of their degree of certainty and commitment to their words. It makes both Putin and Zelenskyy appear as both strong and intelligent leaders in control, who have their affairs in order. The usage of '*I*' thereby seems to be a powerful tool when speaking to an audience as a figure in power.

The biggest difference in the speakers can be found in the argument made in the comparison of Putin's speech from the 24th of February 2022 and Zelenskyy's speech from the 16th of March in 2022 about their approach towards the outside world. In the speech from the 24th of February 2022 it was found how Putin directly threatened the outside world if they interfered: *"I would now like to say something very important for those who may be tempted to interfere in these developments from the outside. No*

matter who tries to stand in our way ... they must know that Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history." (Putin 2022). Which is Putin using the *'strong-arm tactics',* that he himself accuses the West of using against Russia in his 2022 speech. This tactic is used to keep the outside world away from the conflict through fear. In the new year's speech from 2023 Putin keeps the focus on his country, Russia, by not mentioning the outside world. Zelenskyy has an opposite approach by addressing international institutions and countries around the world, pleading for their help and solidarity in the war, as seen in the speech to US Congress in 2022. Here it can be seen how he directly asked them for military interference: *"I have a necessity. The necessity to protect our sky. The necessity for your decision. Your help"* (Zelenskyy 2022). In Zelenskyy's new year's speech from 2023 he did not address the outside world, but focused on his own country, which is a similarity to how Putin conducts his speeches. However, Zelenskyy does mention the outside world, his many speeches thereto, and recognize the help they have been given from the outside. Zelenskyy's involvement of the outside world is him constructing himself as the connection between Ukraine and the EU and the rest of the West to the Ukrainian society, by mentioning the many speeches to international institutions he has given. At the same time he constructs a discourse about Ukraine being the only thing standing between Putin and Europe as a shield, which is to highlight the outside world's need for Ukraine as well as Ukraine's need for the outside world. He thereby frames Ukraine and the outside world as having a interdependent relationship. In general, it is the mentioning of the outside world and their involvement that shows a clear difference between Putin and Zelenskyy as speakers in this conflict. Putin excludes the outside world, while Zelenskyy includes them. Putin's exclusion of the outside world is an approach that shows his focus on persuading and convincing his audience, the Russian people, and his supporters, about his ideology and his worldview, while at the same time creating a sense of fear through threats to the outside world, to keep them out of his business and avoid their involvement.

Conclusion

In this research project I have investigated which discourses President Putin and President Zelenskyy use in specific speeches held during the current war between Russia and Ukraine. This project sought to find the following through analysis of a speech from both Putin and Zelenskyy in the early days of war, and through a new year's speech from each of them almost two years into the war. Putin, president of the Russian Federation, gave a speech on the 24th of February 2022, the same day as the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine started. In the speech, Putin voiced his need to insert a *'special*

military operation' in Ukraine, which would become Putin's way of addressing what developed into war, to discursively create distance between Russia and the actual war going on. In the speech, Putin constructs a good actor vs the bad actor. The West, NATO and Ukraine being the '*bad'* and Russia being the '*good'*. Through multiple examples of negative action taken by the West throughout history, comparing them to Nazi actions from WWII, framing NATO's eastward expansion as a threat to Russia and by claiming there are currently Nazi forces in Ukraine, he uses his speech as reasoning for the full-scale invasion about to launch at the same time as giving the speech back in 2022. This framing of the West as *'bad'* is done to convince the Russian people and possible allies out in the world to agree with Putin's worldview and as reason for his actions. Additionally, it challenges a common discourse order in the world about the West by constructing a different discourse about them through multiple negative examples and historic references. Ukrainian president Zelenskyy's immediate reaction to the full-scale invasion was conducting speeches to other nations and powerful institutions through online connections. Less than a month after the Russian invasion, Zelenskyy gave a speech to US Congress on the 16th of March 2022. In this speech, Zelenskyy directly asks for help from The US Congress and from President Biden himself. He frames himself as likeable to the Americans and anchors their relation by naming Biden by name, which gives him attention and recognition. Additionally, by playing on the Americans emotions through mentioning historic events from American history and using manifest intertextuality by quoting Martin Luther King. Similar to Putin, Zelenskyy uses WWII as a reference for the horrors Ukraine are experiencing now, which works as a common historic reference, the only difference being that Putin compares the West to Nazi actions from WWII and Zelenskyy compares current Russian actions to horrors known from WWII. Then, almost two years into the war, Zelenskyy gives a new year's speech to the Ukrainian people. Zelenskyy's new year's speech has several commonalities with Putin's speech from the 24th of February. Both of these two speeches are long, and the length and extensive rhetoric is used to convince their audience, either Russian or Ukrainian society, to stand united around their respective presidents. In Zelenskyy's new year's speech, he uses the pronoun '*we'* and '*us'* extensively, to anchor a relation with his people and portray himself as one of them. Putin does the same in his speech from 2022, where he uses it to portray himself as in alliance with his people, but furthermore, Putin does it to construct a distinction between the Russians as '*we'* and the West as '*them',* to unite the Russian people while creating distance between them and the outside world. In Zelenskyy's new year's speech, he takes the chance to ask for help again, however this time it is not from an outside party but from his own people. He encourages the Ukrainians to keep fighting and encourages the

ones who have fled to return to Ukraine to fight for their country. In his speech he also puts a lot of effort into framing himself as a hardworking man through a desk with several books and messy papers laying around, and by wearing green clothing, suggesting he is out fighting with the army. Green clothing, instead of typical political wear such as a suit and tie, has become a trademark for Zelenskyy throughout the war. While Putin sticks to traditional formal wear in both speeches to symbolize seriosness and professionalism. On the last day of 2023, Putin gives a speech to his people as well. However, Putin's speech differs from the other speeches by being short and direct. Furthermore, it uses the setup of a traditional new year's speech through a background of the Kremlin, wishes of love and family for the Russian people in 2024, and again, he makes no mention of the war. This setup is chosen to communicate stability to the Russian people before Putin's upcoming election. In addition to that, Putin gave the speech at a point in the war, where the situation was looking brighter than it had the year before, and therefore he could prioritize communicating stability to keep the Russian society calm, even at a time of war. At the same time, Zelenskyy's popularity had been declining up until the 2023 new year's speech, which explains why Zelenskyy needed to conduct a longer speech with the purpose of uniting his people and gather their support. A big difference in Putin and Zelenskyy's speeches is how they address the war. Putin continuously avoids using war-terms and makes little or no mention of Ukraine. This approach highlights Putin's agenda of persuading the Russian people of his actions being right and to keep stability in Russian society. In 2022, Putin gave a direct threat to the outside world in his speech to create fear of interference. Through analysis, the approach towards the outside world has been found to be the biggest difference in the two speakers. At some point or another, both speakers have needed to address the outside world. Putin needed to threaten them to stay out of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, so that outside powers wouldn't threaten his hegemonic position. In opposition to that, Zelenskyy has pleaded the outside world to interfere throughout the world, either through sanctions, military action, aid and/or military equipment. He has continuously worked to create and strengthen international relations and alliances to strengthen Ukraine's hegemonic position. Thereby, Putin is exclusive of the outside world in the conflict, while Zelenskyy is inclusive of the outside world. Both speakers use both visual and rhetorical tools to legitimize their actions and to frame events in a specific lighting. They are both zoomed in on in their videos, which symbolize that the audience should like them, since we get close to the people we like. They both use attributes of flags to communicate national affection of their countries. They both speak of how proud they are of their people and military personnel, framing themselves as authoritative figures to the people. Both use '*I*' in their speeches, thereby committing

to their words which makes their words come out as certain and factual and portrays themselves as strong leaders who are in control and are taking control. They both use '*we*' extensively in their speeches when speaking to their people to unite them with them as presidents. They both draw parallels to WWII to frame the other negatively. Their excessive use of the resources available to them, show how they are discursively trying to convince their audience to support them and agree with them. The findings from this research project points towards Putin having an agenda to frame the West as the enemy to his own people and possible other nations for them to support him, while he threatens the West if they wish to interfere, because their interference could threaten his power position and possible victory in the war. It also points towards Zelenskyy as working to ensure continuous support from his people, while creating and strengthening alliances with the outside world on top of his priorities, which is done in need, and to strengthen his and Ukraine's position in the current conflict and in the world order in the future. This comparative study has been able to reveal some of Putin and Zelenskyy's agendas during a time of war, while it also highlights their differences and similarities as speakers. To be able to completely generalize, one would have to expand the data in the investigation by including other discursive events, such as interviews and research a larger number of speeches than the time and page limit of this project allows for.

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