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HOW DISCOURSE ANALYSIS CAN HELP IDENTIFY NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS

Kyiv, October 2022

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This document presents approaches to discourse analysis and provides the example of an algorithm for building a discourse that poses threats to Ukraine's national security. The document can be used as a guide for further development of a tool to assess various aspects of discourse, and discern the constructs and markers used as part of ideological normalisation of violence, justification of violation of international law, and neglect of human rights.

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Contents

Introduction. What are these materials designed for

Manipulations are part of propaganda, and propaganda is part of war. This is emphasised by many modern researchers and journalists. "Verbal violence produced physical violence," writes Mark Thompson in his book *Forging War*, disclosing the unfolding narrative of discord and the onset of war in former Yugoslavia[1].

The more different platforms are developed, including print materials, digital platforms and digital social networks, the more audiences are reached and influenced.

The ongoing war waged by Russia and its allies against Ukrainian statehood has a propaganda component as a precondition. The funds spent by the Russian state to support media continue to grow and are reaching massive amounts. In 2022, the maintenance of foreign broadcasting by Russia Today[2] TV channel has cost the Russian Treasury 28.6 billion RUB[3] (approximately, 387.1 million USD).

The German Government's response to information broadcast through Russia Today's German editorial office showed that it did not accept the content and positioning of the channel. Germany's media regulator requested the European satellite operator, Eutelsat 9B, to disconnect the German editorial office of Russia Today from the platform, which the latter did in December 2021.

The entire Russian machine and an army of propagandists are working to justify war.

The arsenal of manipulations is old and notorious, e.g., twisting words, being tight-lipped, evading answers, etc; twisting what was said and distorting the speaker's opinion. The question under examination, however, is about the mechanism of specific manipulations.

The purpose of this research study is to show how underhand manipulation can be uncovered.

The study is a contribution from the team of the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research to counter wartime challenges, and is part of its ongoing efforts to build a resilient and open society based on respect for human rights and civil liberties.

Thanks to the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and as part of "Civil Liberties and National Security: A Balance of Protection with UCIPR" project, UCIPR has initiated practical use of tools of analysis of texts posing threats to national security and human rights.

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1   Thompson M. Forging War: The media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina. University of Luton Press. Revised Edition. 1999. p. 330.

2   Russia Today legal entity is TV News autonomous non-profit organisation.

3   Federal Law No. 390-ФЗ of 06.12.2022 "On the Federal Budget for 2022 and the 2023–2024 Planning Period" // Official Internet Portal of Legal Information. http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202112070016

This research study clearly describes manipulation techniques and explains how to analyse a particular text. Researcher and sociologist Olha Dziuba has been a pioneer in analysing one of the texts that helped shape the body of Russian chauvinism, using a combination of methods developed by semioticians, linguists, philosophers and philologists in the 19th-21st centuries.

Mastering these analysis tools will enable people to move from emotional dissatisfaction to understanding what a propaganda speech is aimed at, and how exactly the author constructs it to incite dissatisfaction or call to action.

Svitlana Kononchuk,
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Political Research

SECTION I. THE POTENTIAL OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS TOOLS
I.1. WHAT DOES DISCOURSE MEAN, AND WHY ANALYSE IT?

Section I. The potential of discourse analysis tools

I.1. What does discourse mean, and why analyse it?

In a broad sense, the concept of discourse is related to the particular genre or topic of a statement. There are 'political', 'conservative', 'medical', 'racist', and other discourses. Although this meaning is superficial, it indicates the constitutive essence of discourse, namely the idea that

a. statements have a structure;
b. there are particular rules by which texts are created;
c. these rules are used in a text as a kind of 'marker';
d. the availability of these 'markers' makes it possible to 'identify' a text as belonging to a particular discourse.

About 20 different theoretical approaches to discourse analysis have been developed. This has its advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, uncertainty and diversity discourage scientists from using this method in their research. On the other hand, discourse analysis is very flexible. The main thing is that the discourse analysis-based study of a text makes it possible to describe all social structures standing behind its construction and to anticipate potential social consequences due to the further development of particular discourses. After all, language serves to communicate information and, at the same time, reflects and constructs a system of relations in society.

< i > Discourse analysis helps reveal hidden meanings in what seems to be 'natural'. Some elements of a discourse are never questioned, but used as 'self-evident', as something that cannot be expressed in any other way. For example, the concepts of 'west Ukraine' and 'east Ukraine' have circulated in everyday political discourse for many years, without being analysed or reflected on by the general public, as if it was clear to all that this reflects the essence of the natural state of things. The use of this version of naming geographical regions of Ukraine divides the country into two parts, perceived as different and separate. By analogy, it is possible to compare how the names of the two separate states of North Korea and South Korea sound. This division, mirrored in the language structure, was for a long time unconsciously considered the only possible option. There is, however, another option: it is possible to speak about the 'east of Ukraine' and the 'west of Ukraine' within the borders of the same country. The articulation of the names 'west Ukraine' and 'east Ukraine' worked to establish in public consciousness the concept of 'different Ukrainians' in our country, primarily two types of Ukrainians. For years, this language habit overshadowed the fact that the diversity of cultures and traditions in Ukraine is much more complex, and that, despite diversity, neither territorial nor other identities of Ukrainian citizens serves as a basis for dividing them into hierarchical parts, the 'right' or the 'wrong', depending on the point of view.

In summary, we take as a starting point that **discourse is a set of (implicit) explicit rules for expression in a particular situation and in a particular context**. Discourse is neither the whole language, nor a separate text, nor a separate utterance. It is a set of rules which makes the statement possible as it is here and now.

>>   **Discourse is a set of rules which makes the statement possible as it is here and now.**

Discourse is the (un)conscious 'force' (norms, scheme, rules) that forces the subject of the statement to speak/keep silence and to choose these very words in this very order and in this very way. Speaking about discourse, we in fact speak about social practice in which emphasis is placed not only on analysis of discourse production processes, but also on what is said (discourse products).

In further considering different approaches to discourse analysis, we will see how definitions for discourse differ and how they affect research study tools.

Advantages of the research study of discourse(s).
1. The research study of discourse helps to understand already established social relations in order to understand their potential consequences.
2. Making changes in discourse, supplementing it with different interpretations of events, disclosing hidden manipulations and power relations behind a particular discourse offer an opportunity to change the said discourse in favour of population groups who are limited in their ability to express themselves, whose interests are not taken into account and whose rights are restricted.
3. The opportunity to evaluate a focus of changes in social relations.

The most radical theorists of discourse, e.g., Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, believe that there is nothing social outside of discourse. They defend the idea that any phenomenon, even a natural one, has no meaning in the social and has no influence on the social until it receives its interpretation, its name in discourse, and until it takes its place in the order of discourse. Hence, casualties of a natural disaster could be explained in discourse as a "punishment of the gods for sins" and have relevant social consequences, or they could be explained by the "negligence of the authorities which ignored the warnings of scientists and did not take action to evacuate the population", which would result in completely different social actions and effects. <<

The discursive power of different subjects is different. The media space, political discourse, and discourse of the authorities have greater discursive power and therefore greater influence on the social. Yet in today's information world, discursive power is potentially gained by everyone who has access to the Internet and social networks.

Hence, discourse analysis means a set of analytical tools to describe the structure of rules used to construct a statement within the framework of a particular discourse; a demonstration of who can say what, when and how, and of the potential social consequences of this discourse.

Practical application of discourse analysis according to Theun van Dijk[1]: <<

– **consultations of politicians responsible for the dissemination of discourse that affects the actions of citizens;**
– **citizen awareness-raising on tools of manipulation, disinformation in the media;**
– **development of professional ethical codes for journalists, PR specialists, etc.;**
– **cross-cultural business relationships;**
– **cooperation with public organisations in countering manifestations of social inequality and discrimination.**

[1]   Dijk T. Discourse and Power. Palgrave MacMillan. New York. 2008. pp. 23–26

SECTION I. THE POTENTIAL OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS TOOLS
I.2. DISCOURSE AND IDEOLOGY. WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE LOOKING FOR
WHEN ANALYSING DISCOURSE?AND WHY ANALYSE IT?

I.2. Discourse and ideology. What exactly are we looking for when analysing discourse?

In its broad philosophical context, ideology means 'false consciousness', something that denies the truth and distorts objective reality. Yet, according to the theory of discourse, reality is given to us through language, which is constructed socially and historically and therefore can never unambiguously reflect reality. There is no correlation between words and real objects, because any definition or name given to a thing or phenomenon within a discourse is built into the language's own authoritative, hierarchical structures. That is why in the theory of discourse, the notion of 'ideology' often loses the negative connotation it has in common use.

Michel Foucault, the philosopher who laid the foundations of discourse theory, avoided using the term 'ideology' precisely because of the above considerations. From his point of view, any discourse was ideological in nature.

Theun van Dijk discerned between 'ideologies' as belief systems of particular social groups and 'knowledge' belief systems shared by all society members, accepted by everyone as a given. It should be mentioned that only the fact of 'truth' by consensus distinguishes 'knowledge' from 'ideology'. It is changed in the consensus in respect of particular phenomena that construct new ideologies.

However, far from all discourse theorists hold this particular view of ideology. According to Ruth Wodak[4], ideology is a factor of public support for the power of particular social classes, which manipulate social masses to get social benefits.

The UCIPR`s project team propose to use neutral definitions for the concept of 'ideology' in discourse theory.

The availability of elements of political ideologies in political discourse indicates the interests of social groups on whose behalf political activities are being conducted. In actual fact, the researcher's efforts are aimed at identifying elements of manipulation and discrimination in political discourse.

While identifying structural elements of discourse, we are therefore primarily looking for:

– authorities reproducing unequal separation of power;
– manipulative attempts to consolidate power within particular social groups with the aim of redistributing social benefits to their advantage;
– populist discourses;
– discourses that exclude particular social groups from social interaction, etc.

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4   Wodak R. Do Que Trata a ACD – um Resumo de sua História, Conceitos Importantes e seus Desenvolvimentos. Linguagem em Dis(curso). 2004. V. 4. n. esp. pp. 223–243.

I.3. Special aspects of individual approaches to discourse analysis

Below are listed the primary areas of discourse analysis, with an emphasis on discourse aspects studied within the framework of each approach.

I.3.1. Discourse as a social practice

This methodological tradition derives from the understanding of discourse as a historically determined social practice. As Michel Foucault[5] put it, discourse is a culturally constructed representation of reality, not an exact copy. What is important is the significance attached to the standpoint of the speaker, who defines what he/she says and how they say it, and what effect it causes. For Foucault[6], an important building block towards the understanding of discourse is not only its social and historical essence, but also a particular 'confinement' of discourse within a particular 'discursive formation'.

According to representatives of the French school of discourse theory, the meaning, purpose, structure (and effect) of what is said change depending on the speaker's standpoint. Consequently, the speaker is not the author of a statement, but a standpoint the individual takes to make a particular statement. To underline that, Pedro de Souza[7] gives an example of the phrase "it is raining", where the speaker's standpoint may differ depending on whether it was stated as meteorological news or as a poetic line of a song. Moreover, any individual may take the subject's standpoint, and the same individual will not remain the same subject in two standpoints. To take a particular standpoint, the individual has to make a choice between the given sets of standpoints in each particular situation. Pedro de Souza gives examples of two media statements: "Let me say, the country is on the rise" and "They say the country is on the rise". In the first case, the journalist takes the standpoints of a person who makes a statement and at the same time a person who speaks out. Conversely, in the second case, the journalist takes the standpoint of a person who speaks out, but does not make a statement.

The idea of imaginary formations is also important in this area. Michel Pêcheux emphasises that in any discursive process there is "a series of imaginary formations designating the positions, which A and B ascribe to themselves and to one another, and the image they have of their own position and of the position of the other"[8]. These imaginary formations also determine the possibility, form, and essence of what can be expressed in each of the subject standpoints. Specifically, voters have unspoken assumptions about the statements of members of a particular political party.

On the other hand, the subject of the statement can always 'predict' an image of his/her reader/listener. Moreover, the subject of the statement can always assume what is 'already-heard' or 'already-read' by the audience. Michel Pêcheux calls it the "pre-discursive conditions of discourse".

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5   Foucault M. The Archaeology of Knowledge. Translated from the French by A.M. Sheridan Smith. Pantheon Books. New York. 1972. pp. 21–30.

6   Foucault M. *Ibid*. p. 107.

7   Souza P. de. Análise de Discurso. Florianopolis, 2014. p. 128

8   Pecheux M. Análise Automática do Discurso (AAD-69). In Gadet, F. & Hak, T. (Eds.), Por Uma Análise Automática do Discurso: Uma Introdução à Obra de Michel Pêcheux (5th ed., pp. 59–158). Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2014. p. 82.

SECTION I. THE POTENTIAL OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS TOOLS
I.3. SPECIAL ASPECTS OF INDIVIDUAL APPROACHES TO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Hence, the French school of discourse analysis focuses on detailing the structure of relationships between the subject of the statement and the audience, describes the audience's discursive memory and discursive formations, and places particular statements on a map of discourses.

I.3.2. Organisation of discourse

It is essential in discourse analysis to consider the conditions for discourse production[9]. These can include both the circumstances of the statement and the socio-historical context. It is also important to pay attention to the type of discourse organisation, which means evaluating the nature of relationships between the statement participants and establishing whether there is an ambiguity and/or play on words and meanings in the text. The *game* discourse is characterised by free, symmetrical relationships between all communication participants where everybody can express his/her opinion and avoids imperative statements or value judgments regarding the standpoints of other communication participants; the *polemical* discourse means an equal dialogue where value judgments can be expressed, but neither party can dictate anything to the other; *authoritarian* discourse is a one-person pronouncement of the truth without the opportunity for others to speak up or challenge what is said, as there is a clear and unambiguous imperative.

I.3.3. Critical discourse analysis

Norman Fairclough proposes a three-dimensional analysis model[10] composed of:

–   analysis of text production and consumption (level of discursive practice);
–   analysis of language structure (text level);
–   analysis of changes in discourse or reproduction of the current discourse and potential social consequences of these discourses (level of social practice).

Vocabulary, grammar, coherence, and text structure are studied at the text level to understand how the text is organised and how its parts fit together into a unified whole.

At the level of discursive practice, specific aspects of text production, dissemination and consumption are considered, and the context, speaker's intentions, semantic integrity, and references to other texts are analysed.

The above analysis aims to verify how this discourse is reproduced in society, in which social groups, and by what means it is perceived and understood.

Ideologies, meanings, prejudices, and metaphors as well as economic, political, cultural, and ideological orientations available in discourse are considered at the level of social practice. This makes it possible to study the preservation of the existing order or changes caused by this discourse in society and among social groups. One of the areas of social practice analysis is identification of institutional and organisational conditions for the functioning of particular discourses.

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9   Orlandi E.P. Análise de Discurso: Princípios e Procedimentos. Pontes. 2009. p. 100.

10   Fairclough N. Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method in Social Scientific Research. Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis. 2001. 5(11), pp. 121–138.

According to Norman Fairclough, social development lies in the area of interdiscursivity, e.g., through the relationship between a discourse and other, geographically or historically distant discourses, or through the penetration of discourse from one area of activities into another area's discourse (the author gives an example of the penetration of economic discourse into the area of education). A combination of heterogeneous discourses in different variations causes a shift in meanings and contexts and, as a result, a change in social actions.

The above concept makes it possible to comprehensively analyse discourses, find 'shift' points in them, and describe all possible discriminatory practices.

I.3.4. Historical discourse analysis

Ruth Wodak draws attention to the following three dimensions of the actual text planning and production:

– socio-psychological (communicative functions, affectivity, conflict type, time and place, etc.);
– cognitive (plan, frame, scheme, script);
– linguistic (text-thematic macro-structure, text sort, text type, realised text).

The above theory makes it possible to:

– analyse differences in the text construction, depending on the topic and context;
– identify differences in perceptions of the texts;
– trace connections between discourses, texts, topics, and genres.

Moreover, the analytical tools of historical discourse analysis provide for such applicable procedures as defining the discourse of difference: "us and them discourse" (categorisation and evaluation, positive self-description); argumentation strategies (responsibility or blame ascription, description based on binary oppositions, scapegoat strategy, victim/agent substitution), and linguistic realisations (unreal scenarios, comparisons, analogies, assumptions, generalisations, rhetorical questions, hints, euphemisms, etc.).

I.3.5. Word – action

American researcher James Paul Gee refers to discourse as 'language-in-use'. He focuses on analysis of structures of actual language use and on the triune essence of discourse as particular ways of "saying, doing and being"[11]. The author argues that the essence of language is not limited to information alone, but always includes activity and identity. To understand what was said means not only to perceive the information, but also to know who the author of the statement is and what he does. Moreover, Gee discerns between discourse(s) (with lowercase 'd') and Discourse(s) (with capital 'D'), limiting discourse(s) to verbal expressions, and adding to Discourse not only words, but also things, gestures, facial expressions and, in the long run, everything essential to a particular statement, i.e., everything based on understanding of the text and language in their broad terms.

Hence, Gee views discourse analysis's objective as clarifying the role of "meanings, social languages, imagined/narrated world, intertextuality, Discourses and Conversations" in separating or unifying people[12].

11 Gee J.P. An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method. Routledge. 2014. p. 30.

12 *Ibid*, p. 107.

SECTION I. THE POTENTIAL OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS TOOLS
I.3. SPECIAL ASPECTS OF INDIVIDUAL APPROACHES TO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

I.3.6. Key definitions and concepts

Ernesto Laclau, in his turn, describes discourse as follows, "We call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of articulatory practise. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call discourse"[13]. The above definition can be understood through Laclau's key idea of the signifier's identity construction mechanism (according to Laclau, 'element' means a signifier whose identity is not fixed in discourse). The signifier acquires meaning only through relations with other signifiers and is in a state of continuous redefinition. Signifiers coalesce into discourses through chains of equivalence and the logic of opposition. Laclau's theory is very fruitful in identifying and describing various discourses and their struggle to establish dominant meanings.

I.3.7. Cognitive analysis

Theun van Dijk is widely recognised for his approach to the study of social problems within a Discourse-Cognition-Society triangle "where none of these dimensions can be experienced in strict isolation from the others"[14]. The quote demonstrates van Dijk's specific approach, which emphasises the mental structures of the subject.

I.3.8. Conversation analysis

Instruments developed by conversation analysis theorists (Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff) are aimed at studying phenomena typical of oral speech[15]. This approach analyses the positioning of interlocutors in relation to one another, facial expression, various exclamations, coughing, laughter, etc. It is not very suitable for analysing written texts.

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13   Laclau E., Mouffe C. Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Verso. London. 1985. p.105.

14   Van Dijk, Teun A. Discourse and Power. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. p.16.

15   Schegloff E.A. Some Other "Uh(m)"s. Discourse Processes. Vol. 47. no. 2. 2010. pp. 130–174.

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I. 4. WHAT DO DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS HAVE IN COMMON?

I. 4. What do different schools of discourse analysis have in common?

The purpose of discourse analysis is to see the hidden. Different approaches have different tools for uncovering these hidden, different angles from which we start to see the social structures behind the text.

Most discourse analysis theorists share the following views:

– true-false concepts in discourse analysis do not correspond to the 'real', because a condition for the existence of the 'real' with its characteristics in the 'social' is a deliverable of the discursive, which in turn is historically and culturally determined;
– language is knowledge, and language structures correspond to knowledge structures; there is a relationship between knowledge and social behaviour on one hand and between knowledge and social processes on the other;
– a basis for discourse analysis is criticism of "what goes without saying" and analysis of latent structures underpinning "things that everyone understands";
– the form itself is the content and cannot be separated from the content; they can be analysed only together; discourse analysis is impossible without studying the context;
– discourse has power potential, and the redistribution of power is linked to the reorganisation of the knowledge structure;
– the focus of the researcher's attention shifts from analysis of functions to analysis of functioning on one hand, and from analysis of content to analysis of meanings on the other.

Standard methodological guidelines notwithstanding, there are differences between different approaches to discourse analysis in terms of such basic provisions as a relationship between the social and the discursive, the subject's freedom, and the source of social development. These differences also affect the choice of analytical tools.

Section II. What can be found in a text through the use of different approaches?

II.1. Evaluation objectives

Discourse analysis requires the researcher to set up particular research criteria and make an intellectual effort aimed at "understanding the text". "To understand, I would say, is to know that the meaning could be different."[16] As long as we think that another meaning, other forms of expression, or other words are impossible in this context, we are still inside a discourse and are therefore unable to analyse it. **The first step towards analysis** is to adopt this point of view.

If the text could be different, the logical question follows: why is this text the way it is? What caused this statement; what forces, interests, ideas, or values are behind it, and what was the purpose of the speaker? Why did he/she choose these particular words; what was he/she guided by consciously and subconsciously?

These questions can be answered using tools developed by different theorists of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis tools represent a series of questions, the answers to which can be found in the analysed text in the form of special linguistic 'markers' pointing to social relations simultaneously reproduced and/or changed through the text.

Hence, **the second step of analysis** is to choose the necessary tools. The choice of tools is determined by **the goal and objectives** of the research study.

In our case, with the aim of identifying discourses that pose threats to Ukraine's national security, the focus could be on the following objectives:

– identification of elements of hate speech, discrimination, and negative alienation of Ukrainians/Ukrainian citizens;
– search for discourse characteristics that have negative social consequences for interaction with Ukrainians/Ukrainian citizens;
– evaluation of dangerous ideas and myths in the text about Ukraine as a state and Ukrainians/Ukrainian citizens.

It is obvious that texts similar to the one by Timofey Sergeytsev proposed for analysis are full of elements of discrimination and hate speech which could easily be read without using discourse analysis tools. However, it is not enough to merely establish the fact of discrimination in the text. It is important to scrutinise which ideas and opinions underpin this discrimination, which language means are applied to incite it, which goal is set by the author of the text, which audience is addressed, what response the author expects from readers after reading the text, and to what degree the national security threat in this text is dangerous.

To achieve the set objectives, each theoretical approach to discourse analysis can offer its respective tools. The analytical tools described below exhaust neither the possibilities of each approach nor the subjects for analysis hidden in the text. Since this document is intended for familiarisation purposes, it

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16 Orlandi E.P. Discurso e Leitura. São Paulo, Cortez. 1988. p. 116.

is impossible to disclose and show all available areas of analysis. Laclau's theory would make it possible to describe the struggle of different discourses in more detail, show the logic of their confrontation, and unveil the relationships between their elements.

It should also be mentioned that the analysis process is not necessarily a consistent transition from one question to another. It is always a return to and finalisation of previous questions.

Moreover, the research study deliverables may trigger the researcher's emotional reactions of acceptance, denial, anger, insult, etc. In this case, it is recommended to analyse individual responses to the information received (why do I feel this way? Can my beliefs affect the results?) to make the conclusions as clear as possible. It is impossible to fully attain this goal, because going beyond any rules means going beyond language to where no more words are needed, but one should make the attempt, in order to enhance analytical skills and achieve better results.

II.2. Presentation of findings of an analysis of T. Sergeytsev's text "What Russia should do with Ukraine"

II.2.1. General context of text production

Context analysis is an integral part of any approach to discourse analysis because, as defined earlier, discourse means a "text in context", and it is context that significantly influences features of the text construction.

Sergeytsev's text "What Russia should do with Ukraine" was posted on the website of the Russian state media conglomerate RIA Novosti on 3 April, 2022[17]. At the time of text publication, Russia's war against Ukraine, which it still calls a Special Military Operation (SMO), has been waged for more than a month. Russian troops have already left Kyiv oblast: the Ukrainian military enters Bucha on 1 April, and the first photo and video footage of war crimes committed by the occupiers appears on 2 April. Meanwhile, the idea that the "SMO is going according to plan" continues to spread in the Russian media space, where the events in Bucha are declared to be orchestrated.

The Russian text entitled "What Russia should do with Ukraine" is a 'continuation' of a year-old text entitled "What Ukraine we don't need" by the same author.

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17   Sergeytsev T. What should Russia do with Ukraine. April 03, 2022. Translated by M. Kravchenko on April 4, 2022, https://medium.com/@kravchenko_mm/what-should-russia-do-with-ukraine-translation-of-a-propaganda-article-by-a-russian-journalist-a3e92e3cb64. A scanned copy of the source is available on the website of the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, http://resource.history.org.ua/cgi-bin/eiu/history.exe?&I21DBN=ELIB&P21DBN=ELIB&S21STN=1&S21REF=10&S21FMT=elib_all&C21COM=S&S21CNR=20&S21P01=0&S21P02=0&S21P03=ID=&S21COLORTERMS=0&S21STR=0016451

SECTION II. WHAT CAN BE FOUND IN A TEXT THROUGH THE USE OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES?
I.2. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS OF AN ANALYSIS OF T. SERGEYTSEV'S
TEXT "WHAT RUSSIA SHOULD DO WITH UKRAINE"

II.2.2. Work with memory – based on the French school of discourse analysis

We will start our analysis with an assessment of **discursive memory** at the time of text production. This phase implies the search for answers to the question of what the audience needs to know to understand this text. The author dedicates the text to explaining what the 'denazification of Ukraine' means. He suggests that this term, this phenomenon, is not yet sufficiently understood by the audience. Hence, which discursive memory does this text refer to?

It is the concept of 'Nazism' and all its derivatives, including 'Nazi regime', 'Nazi system', 'Nazi attitudes', 'Nazi violence', etc. that form the basis for discursive memory. This concept has had powerful negative connotations since the post-World War II era, and has received an additional emotional charge in Russia's socio-political discourse in recent years. The Nazis in this discursive memory are not ordinary people, but otherworldly evil incarnate, and all they deserve is to be exterminated by all means. Hence, calling a country 'Nazi' and its nationals 'Nazis' is strongly associated with all things typical of Nazism and justifies negative social actions against these nations or countries.

In pro-Kremlin media rhetoric, the term 'Nazism' was also long associated with the Ukrainian Government. Soon after the Revolution of Dignity, the Ukrainian Government started to be called 'Nazi'. The term 'junta' was initially used, which refers to another discursive memory and, accordingly, evokes other additional meanings in the reader. Unlike the term 'junta' which negatively colours only the ruling elite, the term 'Nazism' has a stronger emotional colouring and allows characterising wider circles of Ukrainian society in this way.

Imaginary formations are also important conditions of the text production. According to French discourse analysis theorists, there are four main formations, which can be identified by answering the following questions:

Question 1 discloses **the image of the subject of the statement from the standpoint of the subject of the statement**: *Who am I to speak to them this way?*

The author's image from the subject's standpoint is represented by a person who has a certain media power and is qualified enough to explain to an audience the historical meaning of the country leadership's foreign policy actions. The author writes from the subjective standpoint of a political technologist, an "expert in the political domain", i.e., an educated person with a rich vocabulary who knows how to structure his texts and influence the opinion of the audience. This is confirmed by the journalistic style of the text, the use of such structuring elements as lists, available definitions for concepts, elements of scientific-style phrases, e.g., "to take a practical turn", "the fact itself constitutes its subject", "in the case of the formula", "basis of constituent processes to create a new republican statehood", etc.

This standpoint of the 'political technologist' and 'political expert' mirrors the standpoints of the media and cultural elites, which are hierarchically (politically, or in terms of status) above those for whom this text was written. By creating this text, the author shows he belongs to those close to 'political bosses', to those who have the right to explain something to the audience and to the 'people'.

Question 2 discloses **the image of the audience from the subject's standpoint**: *Who are they to speak to them this way?*

The author has a particular image of his audience. First of all, the place of the text publication, RIA Novosti website, already shapes the image of the reader of this resource, represented in general by the 'Russian people', an 'average Russian'. It is obvious that while the text contains some elements of sci-

entific discourse, it is not scientific, i.e., it was not created for the same 'equal' 'elite' of which the author thinks he is a part. At the same time, he considers the reader of this paper as educated enough to start reading an article that contains the words 'ambivalent' and 'amorphous'.

Question 3 characterises **the image of the audience from the standpoint of the audience**: *Who are we that he can speak to us this way?*

The text contains verbal markers and signifiers that indicate a community united by a shared vision of the world. These are people who believe themselves to be intelligent enough. These are people for whom the idea of Russia's unique historical path has a special meaning. These are people who consider themselves as part of the great and powerful state of Russia. These are people who are proud of their country, their government, and the image that their country has created of them around the world. The title of the article, "What Russia should do with Ukraine", is the most revealing about its reader. Everyone who really believes that Russia has the right (right of force, moral right, and so on) to 'do' something with another state will read this article with pleasure. Such readers believe Russia has the right to do something, because from their point of view, it 'can', 'wants', 'must' do something according to its historical specificity and uniqueness. These are readers who will never think "why 'should'?" "What does 'should' mean?" "Should on whose behalf?" "And what is Russia?" "Who exactly is going to do it all?"

Question 4 describes **the image of the subject of the statement from the standpoint of the audience:** *Who is he to speak to us this way?*

From where does this subject have the power to express himself this way? Who gave him this power? From the audience's point of view, the author is a journalist and columnist, he says pleasant and interesting things, he is intelligent, he writes about the strengths of Great Russia and the weaknesses of hated Ukraine. In other words, it seems that Sergeytsev's discursive power in this text is based on the compliance of what he says with the expectations and desires of the audience, as well as on the fact that it is published in a 'respected' resource.

Next, we would like to analyse **the purpose of creating this text**.

The title of the text contains a call to action, "What Russia should do with Ukraine". Does this mean that the purpose of the text is to call the audience to particular action (regarding Ukraine)? We have already found out that the audience is represented by the 'Russian people'. But is Russia identified with the Russian people in the text? Let's go back to the question: what does it mean that Russia should do something with Ukraine? What kind of a subject of action is Russia?"

The relationship between the subject of the statement and the audience is characterised by distancing. The author does not use markers that could identify him with the audience, e.g., "like each of you, I", "we all want", "we all understand", "our common goal", etc. There is no call to action, e.g., "Rise up, great people!" "Come on, let's crush the Nazi bastards!" etc.

Conversely, the text is devoted to "what Russia should do with Ukraine", as if the author is writing about some big and distant objects that have no direct relationship with the audience. All rhetorical techniques are aimed at distancing events from the particular reader, presenting everything that happens as a historical fact, a necessity that lies beyond the will of the individual and does not affect his/her everyday life.

We also see that the text is not very emotional, nor gives rise to deep passions, whereas the texts for the 'public' should be more emotional (and Sergeytsev could use these techniques). Instead, the text is quite 'cold' and voluminous, with some paragraphs duplicating thoughts. In other words, it is definitely

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not a "text that sells" and, moreover, does not sell a particular action. The text is created as if the author does not count on the fact that the audience will carefully read it or read it to the end.

Hence, what is the purpose of the author, the purpose of creating this text?

The main purpose is discursive normalisation of Russia's military operations in Ukraine, and justification of its aggression against another state (which we will consider below in more detail). The following secondary goals are also used to attain the main purpose:

– description not only of representatives of the Ukrainian authorities, but of all Ukrainians as Nazis against whom any restrictions and repression could be applied;
– presentation of Russia's actions not only as necessary, but as those of significant historical and civilizational value;
– reassurance of Russians that "everything is under control", that there is a particular, clear and detailed action plan;
– Russians' conviction that "they don't need to do anything, as everything will be done by 'Russia' as a state".

Is it possible to conclude that if the text does not call the reader to a direct negative action, it is not dangerous? We really do not see in the text that Russians are called to personally go and kill Ukrainians. Yet, the objectives and basic ideas of the text are dangerous in terms of shaping the identity image of Ukrainians in Russia's discourse and the delineation of the role of Russians in Russia. We can already see that this text is toxic not only for Ukrainians, but also for Russians. Below we will examine in more detail the discursive tools of constructing the signifier of 'Ukraine' and Ukraine's identity and will touch on Russian identity as it appears in Sergeytsev's text.

II.2.3. Interdiscourse and discourse type

Using Brazilian discourse analysis tools, we will analyse interdiscourse and characterise the type of discourse unfolding in this text.

Many cases of interdiscourse refer to the so-called historical discourse and are not accidental, as the availability of these discourses is justified by the speaker's motive to strengthen his argumentation. The historical events referred to by the author, as well as recent historical events, are a means of legitimating the author's opinion and serve as a basis for justifying Russia's military operations in Ukraine.

An appeal to historical events is a popular means of legitimating political decisions, especially in the area of international relations. This very option of legitimation, which can be called 'traditional' because referring to history as an authority is a kind of traditional legitimation, is an effective discursive method, suggesting convenient tools for 'generalising' and 'placing blame'. We will discuss this later.

Another means of strengthening the argumentation is the use of legal discourse elements: "establishment of people's self-government institutions", "mass investigations aimed at establishing personal responsibility for war crimes", 'lustration', "the inclusion of a set of anti-fascist and denazification norms in the constitutions of the new people's republics", etc. The availability of these elements also facilitates legitimation and enhances the credibility of what is said.

As discussed earlier, the authoritarian type of discourse is a one-person proclamation of the truth without the opportunity for others to speak up or challenge what is said; it provides a clear and unambiguous way of interpreting events.

The author is not the one who communicates someone's words, he only emphasises, "pronounces the truth" and thereby is in the position of a 'spokesman', a source of discourse. The author is categorical in his statements and conclusions. This is confirmed by the imperative modality and confidence in the described future. Elements of dialogue with discourses defining the main signifiers differently than the author are not found. Such signifiers as 'Ukraine', 'Russia', 'West' are clearly defined.

The signifier 'Ukraine' is defined as a "state that does not have the right to sovereignty and self-determination, because it is massively Nazified". The 'Russia' signifier is defined as a state that has suffered historical injustices from the 'West' and has a special mission to be the only leader in the "global decolonisation process".

This discourse type, coupled with the fact that it shapes a negative identity of the 'Ukraine' signifier among its audience, is dangerous because it emphasises the 'truth' and leaves no other options for the attitude to events and their development.

Since we defined above the purpose of the text as to convince the audience of the correctness of military operations in Ukraine, the reader has no other option but to calm down and make sure that things go right, because the author is confident of this and provides robust evidence.

II.2.4. Critical discourse analysis

N. Fairclough's three-dimensional analysis consists of analysis of discursive practice (analysis of genres, text production conditions, context, intertextuality, text function, the power of the speaker's intent), analysis at the text level, and analysis of social practice.

At the text level, we suggest considering the text modality and the use of metaphors. Modality is a correlation between the statement's content and reality, and the attitude of the subject of the statement to what is said. It concerns whether the author of the text asserts something or doubts or regrets, etc.

There are **three types of modality** in this text: a fact in the future, certainty ("it will be this way"); imperative ("must/must not"); probability/presence of doubt ("can/can't/ not possible").

We see that all the red marks indicating the speaker's confidence in the future are primarily at the end of the text. In other words, the author enhances the effect of his statement and uses the categorical objective modality to shape an image of the future for his reader to assure him that things will turn out exactly as described: "Russia will follow its own way, not worrying about the fate of the West, relying on another part of its heritage – leadership in the global process of decolonisation."

There are many imperative statements; the entire text is permeated with the words 'must', 'must be', 'should (do)', 'necessity'.

At the same time, the author does not always use a strong imperative. Weaker statements are often found. Let's take as an example the phrase "denazification can only be carried out by the winner". This sentence in Russian could have been formulated in a more imperative manner, e.g., "Denazification can only be conducted by the winner."

If we study in more detail usage of 'can be' modality, it becomes clear that the author often uses **nominalisation**, i.e., replaces the subject with a process or phenomenon. Specifically, the concepts of 'denazification' and 'lustration' appear in many sentences as the subject, as something that acts on its own, without the participation of an active subject of action. Even in this passive voice sentence, "Denazification can only be conducted by the winner", the word 'denazification' is put at the beginning

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of the sentence and is the subject of the sentence and the subject of the action. This technique helps conceal the real actor, the one who acts. Going back to the previous conclusion that the purpose of creating this text is to normalise Russia's actions in Ukraine in the reader's mind, it becomes obvious that achievement of this purpose is possible through concealing the real subject of the action. The 'denazification' in this text appears as an independent phenomenon, as something historically conditioned, Russia appears simply as a conduit of this impending doom. Ukraine is doomed to denazification because of its 'wrongness', and 'denazification' is a logical consequence of Ukraine's guilt.

Similarly, the author chooses a noun instead of a stronger verb in the list of "steps of denazification". For comparison: "...the necessary initial steps of denazification can be defined as follows: <u>the elimination</u> of armed Nazi formations..." and "initial steps of denazification can be defined as follows: <u>to eliminate</u> armed Nazi formations...".

The text is in scientific style, but the author uses some comparisons, metaphors, epithets and even 'lyrical digressions'.

Let's take a look at one example: "The denazification of Ukraine is at the same time its decolonization, which the population of Ukraine will have to understand as it begins to free itself from the intoxication, temptation, and dependence of the so-called European choice". 'Intoxication', 'temptation' and 'dependence' are literary and psychological metaphors, used in the text to describe the 'deception' to which Ukrainians have succumbed. These words at the end of the text are intended to "convey to the reader" at the emotional, not rational, level, a particular situation in which Ukrainians have found themselves, assure the reader that Russia is doing everything right and that Ukrainians need to be freed from some illusions.

II.2.5. Us–them discourse, blame-shifting and responsibility-shifting strategies

Below we will focus on analysis of we–you discourse and argumentation strategies, in particular blame-shifting and responsibility-shifting, according to Ruth Wodak.

'We' is mentioned only twice and only in the first two sentences: "We wrote about the inevitability of Ukraine's denazification as early as last April. We do not need a Nazi, Banderite Ukraine, the enemy of Russia and a tool of the West used to destroy Russia."

Who are 'we' in this paragraph? Does the author mean himself by saying "we wrote"? He had no co-authors of the previous text. Well, it is acceptable in scientific discourse to use 'we' instead of 'I', because collective work is implied. Most likely, Sergeytsev used 'we' in this sense. On the other hand, the author hides behind this 'we' and does not want to name himself as the author and source of meanings. He wants to present the text as the result of the expression of some general, group, social interests. The second 'we' indicates the broad understanding of this 'we', in particular of all Russian citizens.

Hence, we-discourse means a discourse about Russians. How is the identity of a Russian shaped according to this discourse? First and foremost, it should be noted that the identity of Russians is shaped through the image of Russia. Russian citizens themselves do not appear in the text. It has to be emphasised that even Ukrainian citizens are characterised in a more diverse way – 'Nazi authorities', 'Banderite elite', 'Ukrainian voter', 'last two Ukrainian presidents', 'internal anti-fascists', 'average Ukrainian', 'mass of the population', 'Armed Forces', 'territorial defence', 'national battalion', 'peaceful population', and others – whereas the image of a Russian is disclosed only through that of 'Russia'. In other words, Russians are proposed to identify themselves with the entirety of Russia, pure and simple. Conclusions could be drawn from this fact as well, but after all, not about Russians.

Us-discourse, notably Russia, is characterised by justice, sacrifice, selflessness, leadership, friendship, care, caution.

Them-discourse, notably Ukrainians, is characterised by 'anti-Russianism', cruelty, hostility, and menace. According to the logic of the text, the following words describe Ukraine in the best way possible:

"Nazi, Bandera Ukraine, Russia's enemy, and the West's instrument to destroy Russia."

In other words, the author presents Ukraine as the main threat to Russia, yet not an independent one, but the West's instrument. It is explicitly emphasised (although not explained in any fashion) that Ukraine is the enemy.

Moreover, the blame is placed on Ukraine. 'Denazification' is a payback for 'Nazification'.

"The Banderite elites must be eliminated; their re-education is impossible. The social "bog," which has actively and passively supported them through action and inaction, must go through the hardships of war and internalize the lived experience as a historical lesson and the redemption of its guilt".

In other words, this article differs from the previous one in that it blames not only individual 'Banderites' and the 'Nazi elite', but also the majority of the population who supported 'Nazis' in power.

The danger of this article is that the reader is suggested not to divide Ukrainians into 'good' and 'bad', but instead agree that they all are 'bad' and that Russia will separate 'good' Ukrainians on its own, if any.

II.2.6. 'Myths' used in the text according to Ernesto Laclau

The discourse analysis theorist Ernest Laclau proposes many interesting analytical tools, but now I suggest searching for 'myths' in the text and analysing the struggle of discourses. A myth, according to Laclau, is a kind of 'empty signifier' that does not mean anything by itself but organises the entire social space around itself.

In Sergeytsev's text, such myths are 'Russia', 'Ukraine' and the 'West'. We have already described 'Ukraine' and 'Russia'. Attention should now be paid to another important myth in this discourse, the 'West'. It has to be mentioned that any generalisation in the form of the name of a country, region or territory, or other geographical feature as a socio-political unit, is a myth. In reality, there is no monolithic phenomenon like the 'West', the 'East', etc. Certainly, it is sometimes convenient to say so, but one should always understand that there is an infinity of meanings of this signifier which cannot be generalised in any way at the same time, i.e., it is the classic 'empty signifier', according to Laclau. We can speak about the empty signifier when we all use concepts and believe we understand each other, but no one can clearly explain what exactly we mean. Other similar examples of 'empty signifiers' are the concepts of 'safety', 'happiness', 'love'. In Laclau's opinion, the 'West' signifier is a myth, which means that it does not point to any particular object of reality, while simultaneously being the subject of action in the discourse.

Hence, the 'West' in this text is the antithesis of Russia, an ungrateful, treacherous, hostile, manipulative, and even degrading formation capable of harming any nation for the sake of its own interests. In other words, while justifying a war in Ukraine, everything in Sergeytsev's text is presented as though Russia is waging a war with the West.

Although authoritarian, the text is not a single discourse and contains elements of other discourses. In fact, Sergeytsev attempts to anticipate possible objections to the thesis that "not all Ukrainians

are Nazis". He writes that the hypothesis "good people – bad government" does not work. Interestingly, this discourse is the one inherent in Russia's socio-political discourse, whereas Ukraine's discourse rather affirms the idea that "Every nation gets the government it deserves." As Sergeytsev argues with the Russian audience, he refutes those very discourses capable of discerning between "good Ukrainians" and "bad Ukrainian government".

Another moment of struggle of discourses can be found in the following statement: "The denazifier state, Russia, cannot take a liberal approach towards denazification."

It is an unexpected statement, because it seems that nobody thought that something else could be said about liberalism in this discourse. Yet, since liberal ideas are being confronted all the time, there is no getting around this fact. Emphasis should be placed on the statement that there is no way of playing liberal with Nazis.

Moreover, the author also attempts to fight the Western discourse of choice, having presented the matter as if it is all an illusion, and choice is in fact a degradation, etc.

This argument weakens the text in general. The recognition of the existence of other discourses, although denying or ridiculing them, leaves less room for creating one's own discourse. Also, it becomes clear that other discourses and other opinions are still represented in Russia's discursive space.

II.2.7. Focus of discourse

According to J.P. Gee, the main outcome of a particular evolving discourse is whether it serves to unite or divide people.

To understand this, Gee suggests answering a series of questions, some of which we have already answered, e.g., what meanings are associated with the basic things and groups? How are identities shaped? To which symbolic value system does the author refer? What activities and practices are relevant to this text?

We can answer other questions raised by Gee.

Which relationships are shaped as a result of this text?

The identification of Ukrainians with Nazis, the spread of the idea that Ukraine threatens Russia, along with the discourse's authoritarian nature, completely distances and excludes Ukrainians from any constructive social interaction. The only reaction prompted by the text is support for any action of Russia towards Ukraine.

At the same time, Ukraine as a state, as a player on the political scene, is denied subjectivity due to its "conquest by the West". Furthermore, Ukraine is objectified by Russia's intentions and shown as incapable of resisting and of having the right to self-determination; Ukrainians do not think rationally and logically, they are deceived by the West, they are "in a daze", etc. Objectification serves as an excuse for aggressive actions towards this object because of the logic of "if someone/something cannot act independently, one can act for someone/something, restrict the actions of someone/something". Specifically, this is confirmed by the statement that "Ukraine is the tool of the West".

What benefits are considered in this text, whose interests do they serve, and how is it proposed to share them?

The only benefit considered in this text is a particular historical project on the role of Russia as a 'deco-loniser' and 'denazifier', the restoration of 'historical justice', a revanchist 'victory' over the West through the

conquest of Ukraine, the establishment of its power on Ukraine's territory. Access to this benefit is in line with the imperial ambitions of Russians to expand their territories and international influence, demonstrate their power and capabilities to other countries. The material consequences of receiving access to this benefit are not outlined in any way, which suggests that its importance lies in a specific value domain.

Since the author of the text speaks not on behalf of ordinary Russians, but on behalf of the Russian elite, which is confirmed by the absence of identification with or appeals to his audience, and the absence of a call for active action, he defends the interests of the Russian political elite.

What links are shaped between things and groups of people in this context, and do these links promote unification or separation?

In the text, we see markers of unification around the idea of Russia's special historical mission and its opposition to Ukrainians. On the other hand, the text is an attempt to unite and generalise all Ukrainians through defining them as 'Nazis' "conquered by the West", an "instrument to destroy Russia". Hence, this unification of large groups of people at the opposing poles creates a basis for large-scale confrontation and conflict.

Conclusion. The findings of the text evaluation

We will summarise the results of the discourse analysis regarding whether T. Sergeytsev's text poses a threat to the national security of Ukraine.

The text reveals the following discursive characteristics that may have negative social consequences:

–   elements of discrimination and negative alienation of Ukrainians and citizens of Ukraine, manifested in the 'we–they' negative opposition, shifting of the blame onto Ukrainians, identification of a Ukrainian with a Nazi;
–   normalisation, trivialisation of the war in Ukraine, justification of any war crimes;
–   historical, legal legitimation of Russia in its claim to be the 'denazifying state';
–   authoritarian type of discourse that leaves no option for attitudes towards Ukrainians and events in Ukraine other than full support for war;
–   calls to support the overthrow of Ukraine's constitutional system;
–   rejection of the subjectivity of Ukraine as a state, which makes possible any action against citizens of Ukraine in terms of its interaction with Western countries and with Russia.

The research study of the text has helped reveal the technique of discourse construction that clearly indicates existing threats to Ukraine's national security.

How discourse analysis can help identify national security threats

Awareness-raising materials

Olha Mykhailivna Dziuba

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The Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research is a non-governmental organisation that has been working since 1991 to strengthen democracy and civil society in Ukraine.

"Civil Liberties and National Security: A Balance for Protection with UCIPR" project, which is being implemented in 2022 with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is aimed to assess the changes in the exercise of the right to access information and freedom of expression in Ukraine due to the introduction of the legal regime of martial law, and to develop a technique for identifying discourse that poses threats to human rights and national security.

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