
Power relations in the deployment of linguistic resources by world leaders during the Russian-Ukrainian war

Matthew Abua Ebim^{1*}, Eno Grace Nta², Okune Sunday Tasen³

^{1,2&3}Department of English & Literary Studies, University of Calabar, Nigeria. ¹ebim.abua@unical.edu.ng,
²enogracenta@yahoo.com, ³stokune@unical.edu.ng

*Corresponding author

Received: 12 March 2022 | Accepted: 19 April 2022 | Published: 28 April 2022

Abstract: On the 24th of February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in a war that has drawn widespread condemnations, criticisms, and reactions from world leaders. While an infinitesimal figure has spoken in support of the invasion, most world leaders have outrightly condemned the action of the Russian government led by Vladimir Putin who in the process of justifying his actions, claims that the reason for the invasion was to “de-nazify” the Ukrainian government policies. Ironically, Putin himself is a product of Nazism, a system of government that he strongly supported in his prime. Moreso, in the days of the USSR, the Russian government had been accused of the same offense the Russian government is accusing Ukraine of. Therefore, this is a clear case of linguistic labeling embellished in the exercise of power as a justification for the activity carried out by a more superior force. The theoretical framework of CDA was adopted in this study because it focuses squarely on the projection of ideology and the intersection of power play in any form of discourse. It also brings out indices of hidden meanings in texts and tries to proffer solutions to societal problems from the perspective of language use. The study reveals cases of polarization, ideological projection, the deployment of linguistic resources in form of labeling to justify the actions of Putin over the Ukrainians. There is also the deliberate attempt to “annex” or “conquer” the less powerful using application of force through the policy of “imposition”.

Keywords: Linguistic resources, Power relations, Russia, Ukraine, World leaders

Biographical notes: Matthew Ebim Abua holds a PhD in English Language from the University of Lagos, Nigeria. He lectures courses in Applied Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Semiotics and Stylistics.

Eno Grace Nta is a Professor of Discourse Analysis and Applied Language Studies at the University of Calabar, Nigeria.

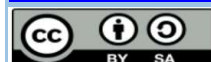
Okune, Sunday Tasen PhD, teaches Applied Linguistics, Discourse Analysis and Stylistics in the University of Calabar.

1. Introduction

The Russian-Ukrainian war cannot be said to have started on the 24th of February 2022. This assertion emanates from the fact that before the invasion of the Ukrainian region, there were a series of meetings between the two countries. There were also negotiations and complaints from both parties. While the Russians had accused the Ukrainians of planning to join NATO, a move viewed by Russia as injurious to its existence, Ukraine seemed to view that union as the safest thing for its existence. Amidst the back-and-forth negotiations that collapsed, the Russian government led by Vladimir Putin decided to invade Ukraine as a way of preventing Ukraine from joining NATO. Amid the invasion, Ukraine ran to NATO but there seems to be a logjam because North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO on its own cannot engage in a war to defend a country that has not fully become its member. Therefore, the fate of Ukraine hangs in the balance as the Russian soldiers continue to pummel the country.

In the wake of the declaration of the war, there was an outright condemnation of the actions of the Russian government. A lot of world leaders condemn the government of Vladimir Putin for the violation of the rights of an independent state while other allies of Russia clapped for and supported the actions of Russia. Those who view the Russian invasion as inimical to Ukraine are of the view that an independent country should not come under such an attack whereas those who support Russia are of the view that there is no need to keep an enemy within a short distance. The implication is that if Ukraine joins NATO, Russia will no longer be secured within the borders of Ukraine and

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other neighbouring countries. The essence of this paper, therefore, is to critically examine, describe and interpret the speeches of the world leaders' views on the war in Ukraine. The speeches of those who spoke in favour of the war as well as those who spoke against the war are considered here for analysis because such speeches do not only indicate the leaders' capacity to project their different ideologies but also point the direction of world politics at a very critical moment.

2. Literature review and Theoretical framework

In this study, we adopt the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis as the theoretical framework. The specific focus is on van Dijk's model of CDA which aims at unraveling the underlying ideology in discourse. It is also deeply rooted in media discourse where data/texts are elicited from the media and subjected to a detailed form of analysis. For Van Dijk, this was possible through the study of media reports by critically looking at the concept of racism with specific reference "to the representation of ethnic groups and minority tribes in Europe". The application of the theory to the texts revealed cases of polarization, discrimination, and ideological disposition, this is because no work exists in a vacuum, as every writer is said to operate within a given tradition that has preceded him.

The above approach is captured at the structural level of analysis, explanations, reception, or even comprehension (Boyd-Barret, 1994; Okune (2006:1). Flowing from this line of thought, Ebim (2019) asserts that CDA is an approach that is targeted at enabling an assessment of what is meant when language is used. Writing on the poetry of Niyi Osundare which focused on the role of politicians in governance, Ebim (2021) says the study examined the choice of language in the poem to take out important pieces of information that are relevant to the African continent nay the Nigerian social life. While also commenting on CDA, Fairclough (1989) opines that "his approach is to help correct the vast negligence of the significance of language in creating maintaining and changing the social relations of power". The aim, therefore, is "to raise awareness as to how language can be effectively used to influence the dominance of one group over the other", (1989:10). Fairclough (1989: 10) opines "awareness is the first step towards the emancipation of a dominated people" and he did this by stating that "in discourse, the subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing, and they are unaware of the potential social impact of what they do or utter". Always, the media is accused of hiding information from the masses either knowingly or otherwise. While researching the activities of the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria, Ebim (2021) observes that "there seems to be information which the media is hiding from the masses with the continuous use of the name "Shekau" in their reportage. The study opines that if the war against the Boko Haram sect must be won, then there is the need for effective collaboration between media practitioners, security agencies and the populace".

Just as a part of Ukraine has been annexed by Russia, some parts of Nigeria have consistently asked for independence, and this has been met with stiff opposition. Ebim (2016:10) observes that there was constant suppression from the federal government in a bit to conquer the minority people of the oil-producing Niger Delta region of the country. This propensity to persistently conquer places the majority in a vantage position over the minority. All the above are anchored on the projection of ideology as facts "that discourse loses its ideological load, paradoxically, will make a fundamental ideological effect: "Ideology works through disguising its nature, pretending to be what it is not" (Fairclough, 1989: 92). Ebim (2017) opines that "the issue of linguistic labeling in the media is a serious one... and amidst these competing voices, there is the need to critically evaluate the various labels associated with militants as seen in the media and this was done through the application of the Socio-Political Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA), to explicate the growing importance of CDA and its socio-political concern to revealing inequalities of power as a standard approach to media texts". Now, if "linguists insist only on the formal aspects of language, they foster the development of this ideological effect; then naturalization occurs in this way and people can hardly if ever, understand that their routine and usual behaviors make ideological effects on society".

2.1. Van Dijk's Ideological Square

The concept of 'ideology' as van Dijk observes: is often used in the media and the social sciences, but it is notoriously vague. Its everyday usage is largely negative, and typically refers to the rigid, misguided or partisan ideas of others: we have the truth, and they have ideologies (1995: 56). However, in contemporary times, the notion is used in a more neutral, descriptive sense, for instance, to refer to belief systems (Ebim, 2017: 250). Generally, ideologies play a role in the legitimization of power abuse by dominant groups. One of the most efficient forms of ideological dominance is when also the dominated groups accept dominant ideologies as 'natural' or 'common sense' which could also be referred to as 'hegemony' (Gramsci, 1971). These mental models control the 'contents' of discourse, and if they are polarized, it is likely that discourse will also show various types of polarization. Van Dijk observes that ideological discourse often features the following overall strategies of what might be called the 'ideological square':

- Emphasize Our good things
- Emphasize Their bad things
- De-emphasize Our bad things
- De-emphasize Their good things.

These overall strategies may be applied to all levels of action, meaning, and form of text and talk. Thus, political speeches, interviews, programmes, news reports, or propaganda typically focus on the preferred topics of 'our' group or party, on what we have done well, and associates opponents with negative topics, such as war, violence, drugs, lack

of freedom, etc. For instance, an ugly incident involving an enemy— like a terrorist attack-- will thus appear on the front page, in a big article with big negative headlines. In other words, there are systematic means to examine discourse at various levels when looking for ways ideologies are (not) expressed or enacted in such discourse: Whenever a meaning is associated with good things it tends to be associated with the in-group and all structural properties of the discourse may be brought to bear to emphasize such meanings. And the opposite will be the case for the “Others”, opponents, or Enemies.

2.2 Power relations in media discourse

In the field of CDA, power relations play a significant role. The ultimate objective is to describe and explain how social power abuses, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted in talk and texts (Fairclough 1989; Van Dijk 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The focus is on the social relations of individuals in terms of the enactment of power between groups either in actions or mindsets. In the application of discursive tools, powerful participants tend to control the actions and contributions of non-powerful participants by constraining their freedom of action or influencing their ideologies or attitudes.

Even though the issue of power relations is not necessarily a one-sided affair there is always the possibility of resistance from the oppressed. According to Michael Foucault (1996: 22), power and resistance appear as a complex mixture in form of a struggle. Power is exercised in different forms. For instance, in a military setting, power is coercive (dwelling on the use of force, commands, and sanctions) whereas, in a democratic setting, power is persuasive. This persuasive nature of power in a democratic setting is achievable using manipulative linguistic resources which according to van Dijk (2006b) involves “legitimate mind control”.

It should be noted that those in positions of power achieve it through privileged access to valued social resources such as wealth, access to public discourse. The implication is that dominant groups can influence other people through their links to the media industry. This, therefore, emphasizes the objectivity of the media industry (van Dijk 1996, 2006). It is also possible that media practitioners can exercise power over the readers of their media content. According to Fairclough (1989), “they have the sole right to include and exclude materials from their contents at will.

2.3 Ukrainian war as a struggle for power

The originating theoretical framework in situating this kind of study emanates from the discourse of power, institutions, and economic and political orientations. Here we view human beings as producers and consumers of cultural beliefs systems taking effects from hegemonic orientation. We, therefore, try to encode and decode meanings of texts as they relate to media reports on the Ukrainian war. This approach to textual analysis takes its roots from the scope and struggle for coercive tendencies and the power of negotiation as it has to do with the members of the audience.

According to Hall (1973: 23) “the audience does not simply passively accept a text---social control” this implies that there is usually room for manipulation in such a discourse for political, and economic purposes. Such a situation can easily culminate into what Ebim (2016: 8) refers to as “ moral panic” while enunciating the traumas of the people of the Niger Delta region of the Nigerian south-south region of the country as he explicated the level of oil pollution resulting in environmental despoliation and the suffering of the people (Ebim 2016: 3).

Hall (1973) in encoding and decoding television discourse, tries to uncover the need for an objective explication of texts as a way of proffering solutions to societal problems states that “ a message must be perceived as meaningful discourse and meaningfully de-code” before it would be considered to have any effects, in use or satisfaction of any need. He divides the coding system into four forms which he lists as discussed in the table below:

Hegemonic	Professional	Negotiation	Opposition
“When the viewer takes the connoted meaning, full and straight ... and decodes the message in terms of the reference-code in which it has been coded, [it operates] inside the dominant code”	“It serves to reproduce the dominant definitions precisely by bracketing the hegemonic quality, and operating with professional codings which relate to such questions as visual quality, news and presentational values, televisual quality, 'professionalism”	“It acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations, while, at a more restricted, situational level, it makes its ground-rules, it operates with 'exceptions' to the rule”	“It is possible for a viewer perfectly to understand both the literal and connotative inflection given to an event, but to determine to decode the message in a globally contrary way, before this message can have an 'effect' (however defined), or satisfy a 'need' or be put to a 'use', it must first be perceived as a meaningful discourse and meaningfully de-coded”

Table 1: Approaches to media discourse and crises resolution
(Curled from Hall 1973)

3. Research methodology

Data

From a methodological perspective, we draw from a socio-cognitive approach to CDA. This model takes into consideration the semantic, semantic and contextual meanings of lexical items in any form of discourse. Altogether, a total of 45 texts were generated from the websites of CNN and BBC media outfits. The data were labeled as D1-D45 for easy identification, codification, and interpretation. The data were elicited based on the reactions of world leaders within the first two days of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Although the speeches were long their specific and significant aspects as they relate to this study were chosen and subjected to a linguistic interpretation. The data were randomly collected.

Table 2: Data presentation

Country/ Group Leader	Statement	Lexical Choices	Linguistic Significations
D1. Russian President Vladimir Putin	"special" military operation in eastern Ukraine, in response to what is termed Ukrainian threats. warned other countries not to intervene, declaring they will face " consequences they have never seen " if they do"	"special" "military operation", "Ukraine, "threats", "consequences"	Justification, ferocity
D2. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky	"The government was introducing martial law throughout the country after "	"Martial law" "treacherously attacked" "Nazi Germany" "World War Two years" "path of evil", "freedom"	Rebuke, condemnation, reprisal
D3. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg	"Russia's attack simply is a deliberate, cold-blooded and long-planned one"	"Russia's attack" is "a deliberate, cold-blooded and long-planned invasion". "a brutal act of war", and a "cold-blooded & long-planned invasion."	Condemnation, caution, threats
D4. U.S. President Joe Biden	"The people of Ukraine are suffering an unprovoked and unjust attack" President Putin is chosen the premeditated war that will bring the catastrophic loss of life and human suffering, " Russia alone is responsible will be the death and destruction this attack will bring, and the United States and its allies and partners will respond in the united and decisive way. The world will hold Russia accountable"	"suffering" "an unprovoked and unjustified attack" "military forces" "a premeditated war" "catastrophic loss of life and human suffering," "death and destruction" "allies" "partners" "accountable"	Condemnation, caution
D5. Group of 7 (G-7)	"large-scale military aggression " " integrity, sovereignty " " unprovoked and completely unjustified " , " serious violation " " international law " " breach of the United Nations Charter " " Budapest Memorandum"	"large-scale" "military aggression" "integrity, sovereignty" "unprovoked", "unjustified", "serious violation"	Caution, condemnation
D6. NAC	"Condemn [Ing] in the strongest possible terms Russia's horrifying attack on Ukraine " " the serious violation of international law, "very heavy economic and political price " "in line with our defensive planning"	"Condemn [Ing]" "horrifying attack" "unjustified and unprovoked" "grave violation" "Budapest memorandum, and the NATO-Russia Founding Act." "Very heavy economic and political price" "non-escalatory."	Condemnation, caution
D7. (OSCE)	"(Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe). "Strongly condemns Russia's military action against Ukraine. This attack on serious Ukraine puts the lives of millions of people at risk and is to a gross breach of international law and Russia's commitments"	"Russia's military action" "grave risk" "breach of international law"	Condemnation, caution
D8. AUSTRIA	"Ukraine has become the victim of another Russian aggression Russia has chosen the path of violence. In these difficult hours, we stand with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people"	"victim", "aggression" "path of violence"	condemnation
D9. BELARUS	" [we] must be found you to prevent bloodshed and massacre. The entire infrastructure is reported to you it has already been destroyed. It was known you it everyone, including Russia. No ground operation, the single shot, the single death will start the full-scale war. This must be prevented. " " [t] her Belarusian army is not taking part in the Russian special operation in the Donbas "	"bloodshed" "massacre" "full-scale war",	Caution, condemnation
D10. BULGARIA	"The efforts for de-escalation of the conflict in Ukraine and [leading to rising tensions throughout the whole region.	"de-escalation" "conflict" "rising tensions" "violation of international law and by military means."	Caution, condemnation
D11. CZECH	"Russia is trampling on the elementary principles of European security architecture, international law, and peaceful coexistence between nations"	"Unjustifiable and unfounded aggression" "trampling" "peaceful coexistence" "war, chaos and suffering"	Caution, condemnation
D12. DENMARK	"Russia's invasion of Ukraine is noted that Russia will face consequences will be its actions"	"invasion" "a free and sovereign nation" "consequences"	Caution, condemnation
D13. ESTONIA	"Condemn [Ing] the wide-ranging military attack by Russia against Ukraine " the disregarding " international order and several international agreements. " " Russia's attack against Ukraine today is completely unacceptable"	"Condemn [Ing]" "attack", "unacceptable" "violates" "humanity."	Caution, condemnation

D14. EU	"Accused Putin of ordering " atrocious acts of aggression against sovereign and independent country music, and innocent people. " Calling the attack an " outrageous violation of Ukraine's sovereignty " that threatens the stability of " Europe and the whole international order"	"accused" "Putin" "atrocious acts of aggression" "sovereign and independent country", "innocent people" "outrageous violation", "threatens"	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D15. FINLAND	"Flagrant violation of international law"	"flagrant" "violation"	Caution, condemnation
D16. FRANCE	"In breaking his word and refusing the path of diplomacy, in choosing war, President Putin is not only attacked Ukraine: He has decided you it trample Ukraine's sovereignty ... He has decided you it commit the most serious violation of peace and stability of our Europe has seen in decades"	"Breaking his word" "refusing the path of diplomacy" "choosing war" "attacked" "trample" "sovereignty" "commit" "violation" "peace"	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D17. GERMANY	"a blatant violation of international law." "There is no justification for it."	"a blatant violation of international law." "No justification"	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D18. GREECE	"Flagrant violation of international law and universal values." "The violation of international legality." a "clear violation of international law and our values." Russia "to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty and to end its aggression."	"Flagrant violation" "universal values." "The violation of international legality." "Territorial integrity" "aggression."	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D19. ITALY	"Full and unconditional solidarity"	"solidarity" "imposes" "tough sanctions" summoned"	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D20. POLAND	"a criminal aggression in Ukraine"	"condemned" "a criminal aggression" "stop Putin" "fiercest possible sanctions" "support"	Caution, condemnation
D21. ROMANIA	"Very grave breach of international law, and Ukraine's sovereignty and integrity." "This will be met with the strongest reaction by the international community inflicting massive consequences and a most severe cost."	"condemned" "military aggression" "very grave breach" "sovereignty and integrity" "strongest reaction" "inflicting massive consequences"	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D22. SPAIN	"a completely unjustified aggression, of unprecedented gravity, and a flagrant violation of international law that puts global security and stability at risk."	"condemned" "military invasion" "a completely unjustified aggression, of unprecedented gravity" "flagrant violation" "risk" "demand" "cessation" "hostilities" "troops" "blatant violation of international law."	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D23. UK	"Unprovoked attack"	"condemned", "launched", "unprovoked attack" "impose massive sanctions" "hobble" "economy" "peace" "respect"	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D24. AU	"Imperatively respect international law, the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine." "Establish an immediate ceasefire and open political negotiations without delay, under the auspices of the U.N., ... in the interests of peace and stability in international relations."	"ceasefire" "political negotiations", "interests", "peace"	Precautious, Caution,
D25. KENYA	"reiterated its earlier remarks in support of Ukraine, calling attention to the potential humanitarian and refugee crises that are likely to stem from further violence and a wider conflict, the U.N. 's structure stems from the ruin of World War II and gives the U.N Security Council members significant responsibility"	"Humanitarian and refugee crises", "violence" "conflict", "ruin" "WWII"	Caution, condemnation
D26. SA	"Immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine in line with the United Nations Charter, which enjoins all member states to settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice are not endangered."	"withdraw" "forces" "disputes" "peaceful means" "international peace" "endangered" "peaceful resolution" "resume diplomatic efforts"	Accusation, Caution, condemnation
D27. KAZAKHSTAN	There was no official comment from the government, but it was reported in the country's media that there was absolute silence from the government quarters.	"Silent" "evacuation" "peacekeeping force."	Indifferent, silence
D28. PAKISTAN	"exciting"	"exciting" "hoped" "this Ukrainian crisis is resolved" "peacefully."	Support
D29. CHINA	"The U.S. has been fueling the flame, fanning up the flame, how do they want to put out the fire?"	"Delayed response", "conflict", "put out the fire"	Indifferent, silence
D30. JAPAN	"Infringe upon Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, constitute a serious violation of international law prohibiting the use of force, and	"Russia's military actions", "Russia's attacks", "infringe", "serious violation"	Condemnation, caution, and accusation

	are a grave breach of the United Nations Charter.”		
D31. MALAYSIA	“Express sadness about the recent developments in Ukraine. The government also stressed its effort to ensure the safety of Malaysians in Ukraine”	“sadness”, “safety”	Sad, caution
D32. SINGAPORE	“Singapore strongly condemns any unprovoked invasion of a sovereign country under any pretext. We reiterate that the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Ukraine must be respected.”	“cessation”, “Russian military action”, “condemn”, “unprovoked”, “invasion”, “pretext”	Caution, condemnation
D33. SOUTH KOREA	“Ukraine's sovereignty, territory, and independence must be respected.”	“The use of force” “innocent casualties” “justified”	Rejection, caution
D34. TAIWAN	"Opposes unilateral changes to the status quo by force or coercion and calls on all parties concerned to continue to resolve their differences through peaceful and rational dialogue."	“condemnation”, “invasion”, “emergency evacuation”, “changing the status quo” “like-minded partners” “resolve” “peaceful and rational dialogue”	Condemnation, caution
D35. THAILAND	“Calls for principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity”	“Peaceful settlement” “dialogue”	Caution, advisory
D36. IRAN	"Ukraine crisis simple percentage rooted in NATO's provocations"	“Ukraine crisis”, “NATO’s provocations.”	support
D37. ISRAEL	“Tel Aviv is "ready and prepared to provide humanitarian assistance to the citizens of Ukraine”	“Humanitarian assistance”	caution
D38. SAUDI ARABIA	"Full implementation of Security Council Resolution 2202, which was unanimously adopted in 2015 and calls for has ceasefire in eastern Ukraine and the simultaneous withdrawal of all heavy weapons by both sides to”	“Full implementation of Security Council Resolution 2022”, “ceasefire”, “withdrawal”, “heavy weapons”	Condemnation
D39. SYRIA	“Supported Putin's decision to recognize the two "separatist" regions in Ukraine as an independent. In comments carried out by the state-run Syrian News Agency, Foreign Minister Faisal Medad was reportedly said that the government of President Bashar al-Assad " will cooperate”	“supported Putin’s decision” “recognize the two “separatist” regions”, “independent”, “cooperate”	Support -
D40. TURKEY	"This attack, beyond destroying the Minsk agreements, is the serious violation of international law and pose a serious threat you it the security of our region and the world	“attack”, “destroying”, “grave violation” “invasion” “unjust”, “unlawful” “political unity”	Condemnation, caution
D41. UAE	“Affirmed the importance of good faith dialogue and diplomatic efforts, supported to return to the Minsk agreements, affirmed the importance of international law and the A charter, and pointed out humanitarian obstacles”	“affirmed” “good faith dialogue”, “diplomatic efforts”,	Indifferent
D42. CANADA	“Calling on Russia to cease all hostile and provocative actions against Ukraine and to withdraw all military personnel from the country. Trudeau announced that hey plans to meet with G7 partners and NATO allies to”	“condemned” “Russian aggression” “peace”	Caution, condemnation
D43. CHILE	“Condemned Russian aggression ”	“condemned” “Russian aggression” “peaceful solution to the conflict”,	Caution, condemnation
D44. MEXICO	“Rejecting the use of force in Ukraine and supporting the UN Secretary General's position in favor of peace”	“Rejecting the use of force” “supporting the UN Secretary General’s position in favor of peace”	Rejection, condemnation
D45. NICARAGUA	“Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega backed Russia's position on Ukraine as contained in media reports is that Ukraine s interest in joining NATO represents a threat to Russia.	“backed Russia’s position”, “threat to Russia”, “NATO” “war”, “defending itself.”	Support-

4. Data interpretation

This analysis is carried out on the belief that language plays a significant role in shaping the way things are done, actions are carried out, and the way politics is played in the world. It is also built on the foundation that language can control the actions of political players and using language, a lot of positive changes can be achieved in the world just like language has the negative ability to destroy the world or set it on the path of war.

For instance, in data D1 (see Table 2) above, Russian President Vladimir Putin was ferocious in justifying his actions with “special” in the declaration of war in Ukraine and by extension warns of “consequences they have never seen”. Responding to the threat, in data D2, the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy did not only rebuke he also condemns and promises a reprisal attack if Putin fails to curb his aggression. He says "As of today, our countries are on different sides of world history. Russia has embarked on a path of evil, but Ukraine is defending itself and won't give up its freedom no matter what Moscow thinks,”.

The threats and counter-threats of the rhetoric above are closely followed by condemnation, caution, threats in data D3 that attack is “a deliberate, cold-blooded and long-planned invasion”. “a brutal act of war” and a “cold-blooded & long-planned invasion.” “We will further increase, and we are increasing, our presence in the eastern part of the alliance, and today we activated NATO’s defense plans that give our military commanders more authority to move forces and to deploy forces when needed.”. As if in a show of power and demonstration of force, the United States president Joe Biden in data D4. Also condemns and cautions Russia: “President Putin has chosen a premeditated war that will bring a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering.”. “Russia alone is responsible for the death and destruction this attack will bring, and the United States and its allies and partners will respond in a united and decisive way. The world will hold Russia accountable.”

The G-7, NAC, OSCE, and AUSTRIA all cautioned and condemn the actions of Russia in Ukraine. In data D5, D6, D7 & D8 they all spoke in unison calling the world’s attention to what they term an act of injustice and brutality in an independent state. D5=Group of 7 (G-7): “large-scale military aggression” “integrity, sovereignty” “unprovoked and completely unjustified”, “serious violation” “international law” “breach of the United Nations Charter” “Budapest Memorandum”. D6=NAC: “Condemn [Ing] in the strongest possible terms Russia’s horrifying attack on Ukraine”. “a grave violation of international law, including the UN charter, . . . the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, the Budapest memorandum, and the NATO-Russia Founding Act.” “Very heavy economic and political price” “in line with our defensive planning to protect all Allies, to take additional steps to further strengthen deterrence and defense across the Alliance.” “Measures are and remain preventive, proportionate and non-escalatory.”

D7= “We strongly condemn Russia’s military action against Ukraine. This attack on Ukraine puts the lives of millions of people at grave risk and is a gross breach of international law and Russia’s commitments”. D8. Austria= “Ukraine has become the victim of another Russian aggression Russia has chosen the path of violence. In these difficult hours, we stand with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.”

From data D9 BELARUS, D10 BULGARIA, D11 CZECH, D12 DENMARK, D13 ESTONIA all cautioned and condemned the actions of Russia. Such cautious and condemnations are captured in the following linguistic choices: “bloodshed and massacre”, “sustainable solution to the crisis cannot be found through violation of international law and by military means”, Russia’s “unjustifiable and unfounded aggression against Ukraine, is trampling on the elementary principles of European security architecture, international law, and peaceful coexistence between nations, which it cynically invokes. After years of laboriously built stability, Russia is bringing war, chaos, and suffering to Europe, not only to countless innocent Ukrainians but also to its citizens and other Europeans”, “a free and sovereign nation has no place in Europe in our time.” “The wide-ranging military attack by Russia against Ukraine” as disregarding “international order and several international agreements” and “Russia’s attack against Ukraine today is completely unacceptable and violates international law, the attack constituted a complete disregard for not only international law but the fundamental principles of humanity.”

Another group of leaders chose to indulge in accusation and counterpropaganda. Such can be found in D14 EU, D15 FINLAND, D16 FRANCE, D17 GERMANY, D18 GREECE, D19 ITALY, D20 POLAND, D21 ROMANIA, D22 SPAIN & D23 UK. Such accusations are captured in the following language choices: “atrocious acts of aggression against a sovereign and independent country, and innocent people.” “Flagrant violation of international law” “trample Ukraine’s sovereignty”, “serious violation of peace and stability” “a blatant violation of international law without justification for it.” “Flagrant violation of international law and universal values.” “The violation of international legality.” a “clear violation of international law and our values.” Russia “to respect Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty and to end its aggression” “a criminal aggression on Ukraine” a “very grave breach of international law, and Ukraine’s sovereignty and integrity...that will be met with the strongest reaction by the international community inflicting massive consequences and a most severe cost.”

D24 AU, D25 KENYA D26 SA all tow the path of caution. The call for respect among member states, while the Kenyan government reiterated its initial support in favour of the invaded country. In the crises, some countries outrightly supported the actions of Russia in Ukraine while others either kept silent or chose to be indifferent. Such are labeled as D27 KAZAKHSTAN, D28 PAKISTAN, D29 CHINA, D36 IRAN, D38 SYRIA, D40 UAE & D44 NICARAGUA. The linguistic choices of such leaders painted a picture of their disposition.

For Iran, the “Ukraine crisis is rooted in NATO’s provocations” thereby supporting the actions of Russia and blaming NATO for standing behind Ukraine. In the case of SYRIA, their support is anchored on the Putinian support for the separatist states in the neighborhood “will cooperate. While the United Arab Emirates remains indifferent by affirming “the importance of good faith dialogue and diplomatic efforts, supported a return to the Minsk agreements, affirmed the importance of international law and the UN charter and pointed out humanitarian obstacles” the government of Nicaragua outrightly supports the Russian aggression in Ukraine. “Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega backed Russia’s position on Ukraine...Ukraine’s interest in joint NATO represents a threat to Russia” in sarcastic expression, the president stated “If Ukraine gets into NATO, they will be saying to Russia let's go to war, and that explains why Russia is acting like this. Russia is simply defending itself.”

D30 JAPAN “clearly infringes upon Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity constitutes a serious violation of international law prohibiting the use of force and is a grave breach of the United Nations Charter.” D31 is a clear case of expression of sadness over the incident. D32 demands cessation, and strongly condemns the war. D33 is of the view that “Ukraine’s sovereignty, territory, and independence must be respected...the use of force that causes innocent casualties cannot be justified under any circumstances” D34 demand “changing the status quo” D35 Calls for “peaceful settlement to the situation through dialogue in accordance with the U.N. Charter and international law” that upholds the “principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.”. D36 ISRAEL Tel Aviv is “ready and prepared to provide humanitarian assistance to the citizens of Ukraine.”. D37 SAUDI ARABIA calls for “full implementation of Security

Council Resolution which was unanimously adopted in 2015 and calls for a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine and the simultaneous withdrawal of all heavy weapons by both sides to create a security zone". D38 TURKEY claims that "the attack is a grave violation of international law and poses a serious threat to the security of our region and the world." D41 defines action as provocative while D42 condemned Russian aggression "despite repeated calls for dialogue by the international community to reach a peaceful solution to the conflict, as established in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations.". D43 rejects a forceful approach).

4.1. Key findings

From the analysis so far, one notices that leaders represent not only their thoughts and attitudes of themselves but also show the ideologies, beliefs, and socio-political constraints of their society. As van Dijk (2009: 66) opines "contexts have a controlling power and can influence and control what people say and especially how they say". One can therefore say that lexical choice, syntax, topic turning, strategic feature, metadiscourse resources, and many other properties of different styles of writing and speaking are controlled by the context in which the text or event takes place. One can also say that "our understanding of various events and social problems depends on our context models and ideologies; the cognition of the participants of an interaction is one of the most important aspects of the 'context' of talk and text. It includes the knowledge, beliefs, or intentions of participants of interaction, and mental processes of production and comprehension of text and talk (van Dijk, 2006). In this analysis, the position of any scholar, his/her ideology, knowledge, context model, etc., affected his/her communication manner"

Notable tenets of van Dijk's Socio cognitive model as found in the data under review can be categorized as: Hedge: in the data, we noticed that "hedge" was used more frequently by the various speakers. This is a clear demonstration of the fact that the speakers are aware of the importance of using 'hedge' in public discourse. 'Hedging' can be a useful means in argumentations for the speakers to gain acceptability and solidarity. It could be used as a sign of humility and respect to others as a way of giving an opportunity for either agreement or rebuttal. Boosters: these have the second level. The degree of its use by the speakers is lower in the data. This term is used by the speakers to highlight common knowledge to support the actions of the Russian government. Oftentimes, speakers make use of this linguistic resource to demonstrate the significance of their beliefs. It is also used to showcase the level of power that a particular leader wields. Attitude Marker: the leaders used this for a limited time. This is adopted to highlight the importance of their ideological belief. The leaders used this resource to communicate their feelings and beliefs. Like other discourse elements, also metadiscourse marker is under the control of context models and their related factors. Engagement Marker and Self-mention: were the next biggest areas of difference. These strategies have a mediator role in the relationship between leaders' arguments and their discourse communities.

One can therefore say that CDA integrates the various linguistic theories and approaches in producing a social and discursive process to highlight the assumptions made by the more powerful on the less powerful. However, Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach attempts to link cognitive theories and approaches with linguistics. He observes that "critical discourse studies is a critical perspective, position or attitude within the multidisciplinary approach as it intends to shed light on covert ideologies in the social practice. He, therefore, proposed a triangulation of the interrelationship among discourse, cognition, and society (Van Dijk, 2009). This triangulation emphasizes the cognitive phenomena which are connected to the discourse structure and ways in which social inequality, domination, and ideologies occur. To discover the social representations, attitudes, and ideologies of social actors, the connection between the structure of discourse and the structure of society should be viewed. Van Dijk (2009) pointed out that white group domination leads to social inequality, racism, and domination in certain countries. Moreover, the top-down model in CDA is focused as discourse reveals the typical form of injustice in society".

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we observe the tendencies of divisiveness in the various responses by the world leaders about the Russia-Ukraine war. There is a sharp division among the world powers in their reactions. This stems from their observations of past events as Okune (2011) argues "historical antecedence that give rise to art form, in the first place, necessitates its thematic features. Negritude literature was a child of historical circumstances that gave a voice to Francophone students in France. They suffered racial discrimination because of their skin colour". For instance, the allies of Russia such as: Nicaragua, Syria, Iran and Pakistan think that the presence of NATO in the corridors of the Russian government in form of an alliance with Ukraine will rather weaken the powers of Russia and possibly clip her wings. However, those who support Ukraine such as: USA, Canada, Germany, Mexico etc see nothing wrong with the Ukrainian government joining or becoming a part of NATO. In all these verbal engagements/logistics, there seems to be a sharp disconnect with what the world stands to achieve: peace. The contrastive views of the world leaders are represented in the data used in this study will rather place the world on a collision course because none of the interlocutors has proposed an accepted route to a peaceful resolution of the crises that will be accepted by both parties. While the Russian government led by Vladimir Putin claims to be right in whatever it is doing now despite the level of destruction that it has caused to Ukraine and by extension the whole world, the Ukrainian government on its part has consistently claimed to be right in proposing to join and become a member of NATO, an idea that is deemed inimical to the Russian government. The study, therefore, opines that the various linguistic resources that have been deployed have not found the right rhythm to solve the problem at hand. Moreso, the various world leaders should devise other

means of ensuring peace in that region of the world through a more diplomatic approach using appropriate linguistic devices.

Funding

This research paper received no internal or external funding.

ORCID

Matthew Abua Ebim  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4902-5009>

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