

Elements of War Propaganda in Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Crisis Communication

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ABSTRACT

Propaganda refers to the conscious or unconscious attempt to manipulate a specific group in order to achieve a desired goal. Particularly in English-speaking countries it becomes synonymous with deceit and falsehood. While scientific literature abounds with studies on wartime propaganda in various historical periods, only a small portion delves into the analysis of propaganda usage by individual politicians during wars. Similarly, a limited number of studies focus on the analysis of wartime propaganda in the public speeches of politicians during contemporary conflicts in a technologically advanced information and communication context. This paper examines the communication aspects of the Russian-Ukrainian War, with a specific focus on the communication of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy. By analyzing publicly available speeches of President Zelenskyy, the study explores whether elements of wartime propaganda are recognizable in his speeches and to what extent they occur. The analysis is based on the systematization of Anne Morelli's ten principles of wartime propaganda, serving as the foundation for a generic

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framework or analysis matrix. The research has shown that Zelenskyy consistently employs elements of wartime propaganda in his speeches, with a twofold higher occurrence in international compared to national speeches. In international speeches, Zelenskyy tends to strongly focus on accusing the enemy of atrocities and initiating war, while in national speeches, he leans more towards boosting the morale of his own people, emphasizing the struggle for justifiable goals, and highlighting enemy losses. The examination of the occurrence of propaganda elements throughout the analyzed period indicates a constant presence in national speeches, while in international speeches, the occurrence increases over time.

Keywords: public relations, crisis communication, wartime propaganda, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Russian-Ukrainian war

Introduction

In the second half of February 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin requested and received the approval of the upper house of the parliament for the deployment of military forces abroad, i.e. in two regions in eastern Ukraine (Reuters.com, 2022). Although Russian officials have continuously refuted theses about a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine (Tass.com, 2021; Tass.com, 2021a; Politico.com, 2021), it still happened and caused one of the most relevant and the most intensively followed modern wars in the media. Both opposing parties engage in information campaigns at national and international levels, readily accusing each other of employing “propaganda” (Tass.com, 2023; Mirovalev, 2021). Moreover, accusations of the use of propaganda also come from third parties such as Iran or the USA (Reuters, 2023; Whitehouse.gov, 2022).

Propaganda can be defined as the conscious or unconscious manipulation of the opinions, perceptions and behavior of a certain group in order to achieve a certain goal (Willcox, 2005). In general, propaganda is mostly negatively associated with war conflicts, especially the Second World War and the Nazis in Germany. Even Adolf Hitler in his work “Mein Kampf” presented the thesis that the loss of Germany in the First World War was influenced by the loss in the second battle – propaganda (Tomić, 2017). However, history shows that elements of propaganda can be found before, but also after the Second World War and the Russian-Ukrainian war. Moreover, it was used by Alexander the Great and Emperor Maximilian I (Kunczik and Zipfel, 2006), Adolf Hitler and Franklin D. Roosevelt (White, 1949) and, more recently, George Bush and Vladimir Putin (Hiebert, 2003; Van Herpen, 2015).

There are numerous studies that have dealt with propaganda in different periods of war, from the First and Second World Wars (Lasswell, 1971; Kallis, 2005; Doob, 1950), the Cold War (Rawlsey, 2016; Bernhard, 1999; Schwalbe, 2005), to smaller war conflicts such as the Gulf Wars (Taylor, 1992; Hiebert, 2003; MacArthur, 2004). However, there are actually few studies that used a systematic analysis of the speeches of individual politicians during the war (White, 1949; Doolan, 2022; Selb and Munzert, 2018; Larres, 2018). Also, a good part of the public speeches of politicians during the war has not been researched in the circumstances of the modern information and communication context, that is, the global reach of the Internet and modern information and communication technologies. Precisely because of this, the Russian-Ukrainian war represents an opportunity to study the elements of propaganda in public speeches in real time with a direct global reach.

The main goal of this research is to analyze the communication aspects of the Russian-Ukrainian war conflict, with a special emphasis on the communication of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Through a structural analysis of the publicly available speeches of President Zelenskyy, the use of war propaganda principles in his public speeches is researched. The research is focused on the identification of specific elements of propaganda and attempts to determine their presence in Zelenskyy's speeches. It starts from the systematization of the principles of war propaganda by the Belgian author Anne Morelli, who, based on previous analyses, in her book "Principles of War Propaganda", derived ten models of argumentation, i.e. ten principles that are characteristic of war propaganda (Morelli, 2004).

Likewise, the work is focused on the analysis of the variation in the use of propaganda elements in speeches directed at different target audiences. An in-depth analysis is conducted with the aim of determining the connection between specific propaganda principles and the target groups addressed by President Zelenskyy. Ultimately, the research tries to determine changes in the occurrence of propaganda principles in Zelenskyy's speeches during the analyzed period.

Definition of propaganda

In the time before the emergence of mass media, and thus mass communication, international relations took place behind closed doors and were often shrouded in secrecy. Today, that element has not completely disappeared, but it is undeniable that in the modern world it is difficult to conduct international relations without taking public opinion into account. National and global public opinion has become an indispensable factor in the evaluation and creation of foreign policy decisions. In this sense, it is undeniable that national public opinion, as well as media management,

influence the outcomes of international conflicts (Tomić, 2012). Moreover, when states engage in international conflicts, they utilize public opinion at both national and international levels as a crucial tool, which becomes an integral component alongside classic conventional power tools (McNair, 2011). As early as 1936, in his work “Propaganda”, Edward L. Bernays stated that manipulating the opinions of the masses is an integral and vital element of a democratic society (Bernays, 1936). We can trace the word propaganda throughout history, and its real meaning can be detected as far back as the 16th century, when Pope Gregory XV established a committee of cardinals to oversee missionary activity, which he called the “Congregatio de Propaganda Fide”. Initially, the word “propaganda” referred to the board of cardinals itself, while later it included their activity of propagating religion or political doctrines (Marlin, 2013). It spanned from ancient times through the Middle Ages and the Napoleonic era to wars and revolutions in the first half of the 20th century (Ibid, 2013).

Propaganda as a special term in everyday speech took on the characteristics of a negative meaning, with a strong association with Nazi Germany and its propaganda activities. Propaganda is frequently associated with fraud, manipulation, “brainwashing”, and lies, inevitably carrying a stigma of negativity and dishonesty. Mainly, the opposing parties try to identify the opponent’s communication as propaganda with the aim of defaming the opponent and presenting only their own information as true. In this sense, in English-speaking countries, a strong connection can be observed between the word propaganda and attempts to lie and deceive (Jowett and O’Donnell, 2018; Marlin, 2013).

Within the scientific literature, there are numerous analyses and interpretations of propaganda activities that do not necessarily offer a unique definition of propaganda. Young (1966) points out that propaganda implies the dissemination of ideas, attitudes and opinions, but the listeners or readers are not informed about the ultimate intentions and goals. Doob (1948) emphasizes that in this case it is a systematic action aimed at controlling the attitudes of groups and individuals. Miller (1976) offers a simple definition according to which he says that propaganda is “an attempt to influence others towards a certain goal, by influencing their opinions and feelings” (according to Šiber, 1992: 6). In principle, Šiber unites their definitions and offers a unique one: “Propaganda is a deliberate and planned action to change and control attitudes in order to create predispositions for a certain way of behavior” (Šiber, 1992: 6).

Propaganda can be studied from a whole range of perspectives – through historical, journalistic, political, sociological, psychological, and interdisciplinary perspectives (Jowett and O’Donnell, 2018). The historical perspective implies the study of

past practices of propagandists and the effects of propaganda. The journalistic perspective focuses on understanding news management and shaping information. The political perspective recognizes the importance of analyzing the ideological background of practitioners and their influence on public opinion. The sociological perspective emphasizes the importance of observing social movements and the emergence of counter-propaganda, while observing propaganda through a psychological perspective means studying its effects on individuals (Ibid). The interdisciplinary approach, which mostly includes a combination of these perspectives, often takes into account the study of propaganda in the context of the construction of certain ideological meanings within the mass media (Burnett, 1989).

Ellul offers a categorization of propaganda into four pairs of opposite types. First, he highlights political versus sociological propaganda, emphasizing that political propaganda, unlike sociological, is more deliberate and calculated, with clearer and quite precise objectives. The second pair is agitation versus integration propaganda. Agitation represents one of the most visible types of propaganda and is usually of a revolutionary nature, often used by politics to incite the population to sacrifice, such as war or increased productivity. On the other hand, integration propaganda aims to integrate the individual into society. The main purpose of such propaganda is to induce individuals to participate in all aspects of society and adhere to all social truths and behavioral patterns. Such propaganda is more long-lasting, extensive, and complex (Ellul, 1973).

Furthermore, Ellul (1973) mentions vertical versus horizontal propaganda. It is vertical propaganda that people perceive most often and it happens top-down, that is, from a certain leader to the people. Horizontal propaganda implies technology within the masses, not top-down. The leader of the group is a kind of animator or moderator of the discussion, who allows the actors within the groups to act and condition each other, but the individual who joins the group does so on the basis of distorted information. Horizontal propaganda is characteristic for smaller groups of 15 to 20 people. Ultimately, Ellul offers irrational versus rational propaganda. While irrational is characterized by what we usually perceive as elements of propaganda – myths, symbols and emotional rhetoric, rational propaganda appears on the surface as scientifically based truth, and incorporates figures and analysis, but is mostly mystification (Ellul, 1973).

Certain authors in their definitions label propaganda negatively, but there are also those who offer a neutral definition. Authors who define propaganda as a negative definition most often associate it with manipulation, hidden and morally questionable goals, while neutral ones try to avoid such moral judgments within the definitions. Leonard Doob is among the authors whose definition of propaganda

carries negative moral connotations. In his definition, Doob's definition suggests that propaganda involves attempting to "control the behavior of individuals toward goals that are deemed unscientific or of questionable value in society at a particular time" (Doob, 1966: 240). Interestingly, in the beginning of his study of propaganda, Doob was devoid of any attempt to morally judge propaganda, but at a later stage, probably due to the influence of the Second World War, he nevertheless offers a definition that has a moral judgment (Willcox, 2005).

On the other hand, Taylor states that propaganda is "an attempt to influence the public opinion of the audience through the transmission of ideas and values" (Taylor, 1979: 28). The very use of the word "attempt" within the definition means neutrality because it implies that the emphasis is on the purpose of the activity and not on the result (Willcox, 2005). Also, Vernon McKenzie (1938) offers a neutral definition of propaganda, pointing out that "the true meaning of propaganda is the dissemination of information, whether true or false" (according to Marlin, 2013: 10). Ultimately, one of the most prolific authors in the field of propaganda, Jacques Ellul, made a move away from the negative connotations of propaganda and stated that there is no difference between propaganda used in the name of authoritarian regimes and in the name of democracy (Willcox, 2005).

Ellul (1965) represents one of the authors who tried to expand the definition and see propaganda as a sociological phenomenon, and not something that people produced on purpose (according to Jowett and O'Donnell, 2018). However, Jowett and O'Donnell critically examine Ellul's definition and underscore the necessity of premeditation in defining propaganda. Thus, Jowett and O'Donnell define propaganda as deliberate and systematic (Jowett i O'Donnell, 2018). Jowett and O'Donnell's definition places emphasis on limiting the range of what can be interpreted and recognized as propaganda, but on the other hand, it prevents wider application to various aspects of contemporary communication, which does not necessarily have to be pre-planned. Hence, considering Doob's well-founded assertion that propaganda is primarily rooted in cultural phenomena shaped during socialization, it is reasonable to infer that certain elements of propaganda may arise without clear intention and expectations (Willcox, 2005).

In this sense, it is quite reasonable within the framework of this research to start from the definition of Willcox, who says that propaganda is "a conscious or unconscious attempt by the propagandist to advance his goal through the manipulation of the thinking, perception and behavior of the target group" (Willcox, 2005: 17). Willcox's definition is sufficiently broad to encompass various facets of the contemporary complex information-communication context. The definition brings together the various elements of propaganda mentioned by the authors, from the conscious

and negative view of propaganda on the one hand, to the unconscious and neutral view on the other. But it also includes the opinions and perceptions discussed by Doob and the behavior Šiber writes about. Following in the footsteps of Willcox, this paper starts from the assumption that attempts to manipulate or influence can occur without the conscious intention of the communicator, that is, that propaganda does not necessarily have to be conscious and intentional. Likewise, as Willcox states (Ibid), we cannot unambiguously define propaganda as good or bad in all cases, and we cannot always see it as negative for society in general. Therefore, the authors start from the assumption that in the context of a crisis such as war, where context, events and communication change in short periods, it is plausible to use a broader framework for defining a crisis that will be multidimensional and flexible.

Crisis communication and war propaganda

Although there are indeed different definitions of crisis, as well as interpretations and understanding of the term itself depending on the context, certain common features can be determined very precisely. Boin et al. (2017), starting from their definition of crisis, state three key components, i.e. characteristics – threat, urgency and uncertainty. Given the plurality of definitions and the ambiguity and multidimensionality of the concept of crisis, it is necessary to explore to what extent war, as a specific political and social event, can be categorized as a crisis.

While Clausewitz is often dubbed the “philosopher of war” and his philosophy remains a reference point for many authors to this day, Rapoport (1968) fundamentally questions this assertion, arguing that Clausewitz represents just one of several different philosophies of war. Rapoport (Ibid) offers three philosophies of war – political, eschatological and cataclysmic. Political philosophy is summed up in the definition of war put forward by Clausewitz: “a violent act with the intention of forcing our adversary to do our will” (Howard and Paret, 1976: 75). Clausewitz assumed that the decision on war should be made based on the calculation of rational political leadership to fulfill a certain goal (Williams, 2008). On the other hand, according to Rapoport (1968), eschatological philosophy starts from “the idea that history, or at least some part of history, will culminate in a “final” war that will lead to the unveiling of some great plan – divine, natural or human” (Rapoport 1968: 15). Ultimately, the cataclysmic philosophy of war sees war “as a catastrophe that befalls some part of humanity or the entire human race” (Rapoport 1968: 16). In this sense, cataclysmic philosophy views war as a kind of punishment from God or as an unwanted consequence of an international system that has features of an anarchic order (Williams, 2008).

Howard (2002) provided a very generic and general definition, stating that war is “an armed conflict between organized political groups” (Ibid: 1). James (1988) introduces the criteria and states that there are two key ones – the participants must be nation-states and the conflict must lead to a thousand or more combat casualties. Contemporary changes, which are characterized by the occurrence of asymmetric conflicts and wars, have certainly devalued the first criteria, and Williams (2008) is on the trail of this, dividing armed conflicts into state and non-state armed conflicts. In this sense, already at the end of the 20th century, a different perspective appears in the literature, that is, the introduction of the term “new wars” that differ from the “old” ones in terms of goals, methods and financing systems (Kaldor, 1999).

Within the literature on crises and crisis communication, there is no consensus on whether war can be characterized as a crisis (Schleicher, 2016). Sellnow and Seeger (2013) put a strong emphasis on surprise and unexpectedness as an important factor in most crises, and in this sense they do not classify war as a crisis because “most often it is the outcome of some extended conflict and as such it is not surprising” (Ibid: 5). Analyzing international crises and conflicts, Brecher and Wilkenfeld (2000) point out their connection, but also emphasize that they are not synonymous. They state that “a crisis can break out, last and end without violence, let alone war” (Ibid: 6). However, they further suggest that war can be seen as a subset of crises, explaining that “while all wars stem from crises, not all crises result in war” (Ibid: 7). James (1988) is on the same track, who, like Brecher and Wilkenfeld, suggests that war can be characterized as a special type of crisis.

Nohrstedt (2016) claims that regardless of whether Habermas’ or Luhmann’s crisis theory or management-interactionist theory is taken into account, war should be characterized as a crisis for several reasons. The author starts from the assumption that fundamental material and social values were called into question during the war, informational needs and functions are very difficult to satisfy, and legitimacy and political leadership are called into question. Therefore, in this context, taking into account all the arguments that the authors present in the discussion about the character of the war as a crisis, this research characterizes the Russian-Ukrainian war as a crisis.

Given the circumstances of the war, which, as previously noted, represent a form of crisis, the imperative to mobilize public opinion becomes paramount. In this sense, propaganda is a tool that has undoubtedly been used in numerous wars. Historical records say that Alexander the Great already organized a special unit that was engaged in writing war reports, which were then multiplied and distributed with the aim of spreading propaganda. Propaganda was also used by Emperor Maximilian I, who took advantage of the invention of the press and tried to manipulate the print media

in terms of war reporting with the aim of influencing the mood in the empire. In the end, a prominent example is Emperor Rudolf II who used periodicals to spread propaganda against the Turks (Kunczik and Zipfel, 2006).

Qualter (2020) highlights the replacement of traditional mercenary armies with national armies as one of the key points in the development of the importance of war propaganda. He argues that this transformation placed a demanding task before governments: convincing people that the goal of winning the war was worth the sacrifice. Therefore, as Qualter (Ibid) suggests, it becomes evident how the influence on human consciousness emerges as a new significant arena of conflict, becoming as crucial as, for example, the production of weapons or the treatment of the wounded. The mass media certainly provide an additional dimension in war propaganda, and already during the First World War they became one of the key instruments of propaganda (Kunczik and Zipfel, 2006; Taylor, 2003).

One of the most famous propagandists who will be remembered in history is the Reich Minister of Propaganda and one of Adolf Hitler's closest collaborators, Joseph Goebbels. Goebbels and German propaganda during the Second World War therefore represents an unavoidable element of the wider discussion on war propaganda. Doob (1950) broke down Goebbels' propaganda into nineteen simple rules, and they include issues such as the importance of public opinion research, centralized management of propaganda, the importance of using recognizable phrases and slogans, developing an optimal level of fear, enabling the projection of aggression, etc. (See more: Doob, 1950).

Kris and Leites (1947) state that war propaganda has two general goals – to maximize the participation of the population in the activities of the group and to minimize the share of the enemy in the activities of their group (according to Šiber, 1992). Therefore, the role of war propaganda is first and foremost the building of a common group identity, strengthening the identification of as many individuals as possible with the leadership of the state and deepening collective self-confidence and trust in the possibility of achieving goals. Likewise, the goal is to act on the opposite side, i.e. to bring unrest through an attempt to create divisions in the opposite group, an attempt to create animosity towards their leadership and to raise doubts about their value orientation and war goals (Šiber, 1992).

War propaganda in the literature is mostly defined through individual elements that the authors consider to be an indispensable part of propaganda and communication during the war. George C. Bruntz talks about the psychological techniques of war propaganda and in this sense states that there is propaganda of enlightenment, despair, hope and particularistic and revolutionary propaganda. Bruntz places

the greatest emphasis on the enemy and its population, stressing the need to refute the adversary's falsehoods that are placed on the population, efforts to destroy the enemy's morale, or attempts to antagonize factions within the enemy (Bernays, 1942). The factors of war propaganda were analyzed by Harold Lasswell, who offered six of them in total: (1) Attributing the blame for the war to the enemy, (2) Appealing to unity and victory in the name of history and religion, (3) Emphasizing selfless "state" goals, (4) Convince the people that the enemy is to blame for the war while showing examples of the enemy's corruption, (5) Convince the people that unfavorable news is basically a lie of the enemy, (6) Complement all these factors with terrible stories (Ibid).

British diplomat Lord Arthur Ponsonby followed Lasswell's footsteps and published a publication "Falsehood in Wartime" (1928) and analyzed the role of Allied propaganda in the "Great War". Drawing inspiration from Ponsonby's analysis of propaganda, Belgian author Anne Morelli, in her book "Die Prinzipien der Kriegspropaganda" (2004), analyzes the key elements of war propaganda across ten chapters, examining its use in various conflicts, from the world wars to those in Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, or Iraq. Morelli lists a total of ten principles of war propaganda: (1) We do not want war, (2) The opposing side is solely responsible for the war, (3) The enemy has demonic traits, (4) We fight for a good cause, not for selfish goals, (5) The enemy intentionally commits atrocities. When we make a mistake, it is always unintentional, (6) The enemy uses illegal weapons, (7) Our losses are insignificant, and the opponent's are huge, (8) Our cause is supported by artists and intellectuals, (9) Our mission is sacred, (10) Whoever doubts our reports is a traitor (See more: Table 1). In contrast to Lasswell and others, Morelli provides a more detailed analysis of the elements of war propaganda, making her systematization the most suitable theoretical foundation for this research. In her analysis, she focused exclusively on systematizing the elements of war propaganda, avoiding attempts to delve into the morality of the intentions of certain parties (Morelli, 2004).

Research methodology

The research aims to examine the presence and frequency of propaganda elements in the public speeches of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, based on the principles outlined by Anna Morelli (2004). Accordingly, the following research questions were defined:

1. Are elements of war propaganda recognized in the public speeches of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy?

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2. Can differences be identified in the occurrence of elements of war propaganda in the speeches of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy which are addressed to the international and national public?
3. Which elements of war propaganda are the most represented in the speeches of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy?

Table 1 Anna Morelli's principles of war propaganda

Tablica 1. Načela ratne propagande Anne Morelli

We do not want war.	Due to the general unpopularity of the war and the events of the war, politicians emphasize their opposition to the war before and during the declaration of war.
The opposing side is solely responsible for the war.	Politicians try to justify the reasons for entering the war by placing the blame on the opposite side, that is, they claim that the other side is forcing them to take such steps.
The enemy has demonic traits.	Stabilization of public opinion in wartime is achieved by creating an image of the enemy. Such a procedure is more effective when the enemy is personalized and an attempt is made to endow the enemy leader with some kind of demonic traits.
We fight for a good cause, not for selfish goals.	Politicians often publicly communicate goals and motives that seem undeniably justified, while genuine ones like economic or geopolitical ones are rarely communicated.
The enemy intentionally commits atrocities. When we make a mistake, it is always unintentional.	Politicians try to create the impression that war crimes are committed exclusively by the opposing side, and in the event that it is proven that their side did it, they justify it by mistake or coincidence.
The enemy uses illegal weapons.	In war, politicians try to show that their side respects the "rules of the game", unlike the opponent.
Our losses are insignificant, and the opponent's are huge.	Support during the war largely depends on the success of military operations, and in this sense, politicians try to reduce their own losses and at the same time increase the opponent's ones.
Our cause is supported by artists and intellectuals.	The warring parties try to win the support of public figures (artists, showbiz stars, intellectuals) in order to justify their goals and motives.
Our mission is sacred.	Often in the events of war, warring parties look for justifications for their goals and motives in faith and religion.
Whoever doubts our reports is a traitor.	In times of war, each warring party tries to promote its truth and criticizes those who doubt their reports as traitors and those who do not love their country.

Source: Morelli, 2004; Kunczik and Zipfel, 2006; Tomić, 2017; Pedrini, 2017

In order to identify the elements of propaganda in the communication of Ukraine during the Russian-Ukrainian war, an analysis of the content of the publicly available speeches of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy was used. The Russian-Ukrainian war is certainly one of the most exposed events in the media today, and in this sense, Zelenskyy's speeches are a frequent topic of various newspaper articles. Nevertheless, in this research, the focus is on the analysis of the official speeches of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy published on his official website, and not on the analysis of media content. Such an approach enables a more precise detection of propaganda elements, because the analyzed content represents complete and directly transcribed speeches, while on the other hand, media content can represent "filtered" materials and editorial or journalistic bias (Holt and Major, 2010).

The methodology based on content analysis in this case is one of the most appropriate when it comes to structural analysis of already defined propaganda indicators. Also, content analysis implies reliability in the sense that the data represent the same meaning for all users and the possibility of replication in the sense of the possibility of standardized comparison (Krippendorf, 2004; Grbeša and Šalaj, 2018). It is important to emphasize that the speech analysis is not intended to determine the results of propaganda on the public, but exclusively to determine the elements of propaganda in President Zelenskyy's speeches.

The sample for this research was collected from the first two months of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war and consists of a total of one hundred and twelve official speeches of President Zelenskyy. The first two months of the war were marked by intense and important events that have characterized the conflict so far, and the sample relating to those days includes a large number of speeches. The covered period and the specified number of speeches enable a sufficiently wide database, and on the other hand, it makes the research practical and resource sustainable. All speeches were taken from the section of Zelenskyy's official website where they were published in English translation and were filtered according to the dates from February 24 to April 24, 2022. Speeches are categorized based on their target audience, comprising national speeches directed towards the Ukrainian people and international speeches intended for the global community, international institutions, and other nations' peoples and governments.

The study employed deductive content analysis, utilizing a predefined generic framework – specifically, a matrix built upon Anna Morelli's ten principles of war propaganda (See Table 1). Morelli (2004) elaborated and systematized the principles of war propaganda in detail, which greatly facilitates the detection and classification of elements of war propaganda in speeches and thus justifies its applicability for this

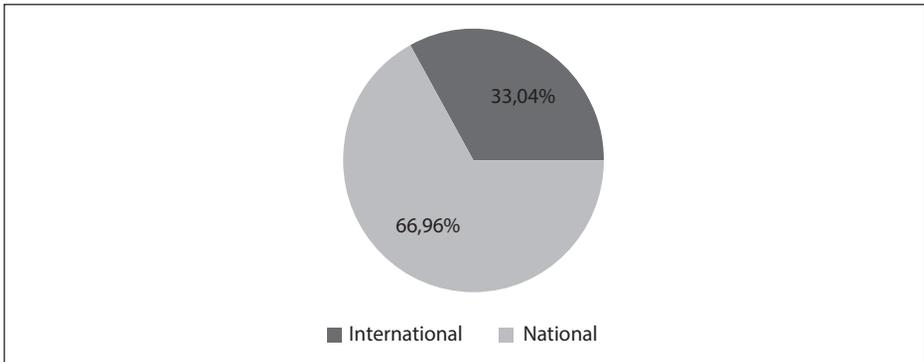
type of research. Each of the elements of propaganda is operationalized and applied with the aim of speech analysis. For example, the principle "The opposing side is solely responsible for the war" implied the identification of parts of the speech in which the enemy, i.e. Russia, was portrayed as the sole culprit for the outbreak of the war, or the principle "We do not want war" implied the statements in which Zelenskyy emphasizes that they are focused on peace and are against war. In this sense, the analysis of the speech involved the identification and categorization of specific statements and parts of President Zelenskyy's speech with regard to the ten specified principles of propaganda. It's crucial to note that while precisely defined categories for propaganda elements are employed in the analysis, individual statements or speech segments may pose borderline cases and be open to various interpretations, presenting an additional challenge in this type of analysis.

Results

In the initial two months of the full-scale war, Volodymyr Zelenskyy employed the term "propaganda" in various forms a total of twenty-two times, and almost every time he used the word in a negative connotation, thereby trying to defame the opponent and accuse him of lying or concealing the truth. Interestingly, he predominantly utilizes the term "propaganda" in national speeches, whereas he references one of its variations in only three international speeches.

The segregation of all the analyzed speeches based on the target audience addressed by the President of Ukraine Zelenskyy shows that his speeches were twice as much aimed at his own people than at the international public. Out of the total number of speeches, the President of Ukraine Zelenskyy addressed his own people seventy-five times (75), while he addressed the international public a total of thirty-seven times (37) (See: Figure 1). A structural analysis of the occurrence of propaganda elements in Zelenskyy's speeches revealed that that he employed one of the elements of war propaganda a total of six hundred and seventy-six (676) times across all his speeches. So, in his one hundred and twelve speeches addressed to the Ukrainian people and international actors, Zelenskyy used a total of six hundred and seventy-six elements of war propaganda, which means that he used an average of 6.06 elements of propaganda per speech.

By differentiating the analysis by individual elements of propaganda, we come to the conclusion that not all ten studied elements of propaganda occur in all speeches, but also that certain elements are not used by Zelenskyy at all in the analyzed speeches. Namely, Zelenskyy uses a total of eight elements in his speeches during the analyzed period, while the elements "Our cause is supported by artists and intelle-



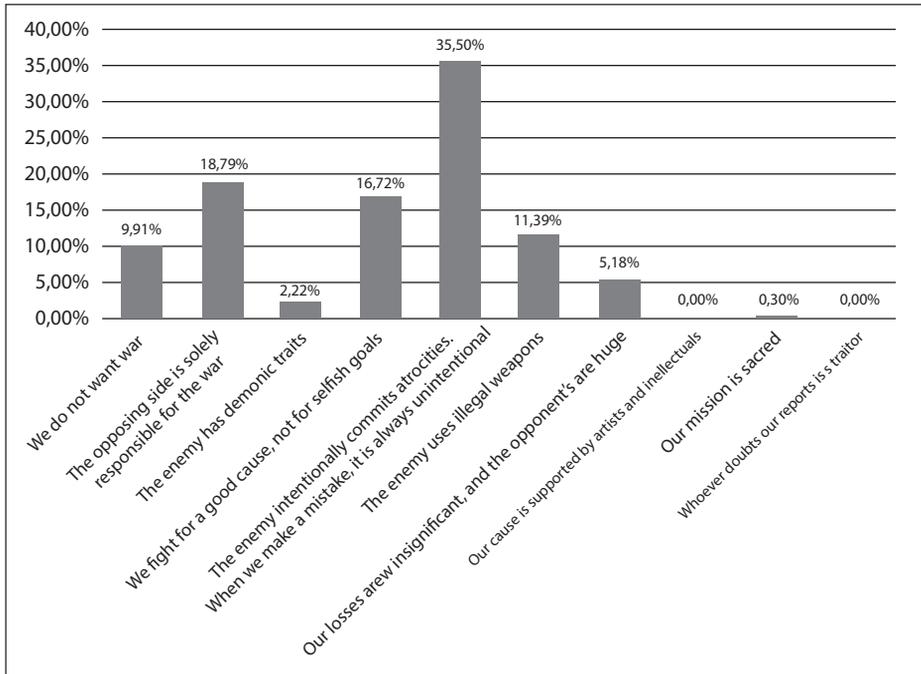
Graph 1 Incidence of international and national speeches

Grafikon 1. Pojavnost međunarodnih i narodnih govora

ctuals” and “Whoever doubts our reports is a traitor” do not occur in his speeches. The analysis showed that Zelenskyy’s speeches are absolutely dominated by the element “The enemy intentionally commits atrocities. When we make a mistake, it is always unintentional” (35.50%). Zelenskyy’s speeches abound with such elements and he persistently repeats them, and it is interesting that in more than 2/3 (81%) of all speeches he uses this element at least once, which is not the case for any other element. On the other hand, the elements “The opposing side is solely responsible for the war” (18.79%) and “We fight for a good cause, not for selfish goals” (16.72%) occur almost two times less frequently. This is followed by the elements “The enemy uses illegal weapons” (11.39%), “We do not want war” (9.91%) and “Our losses are insignificant, and the opponent’s are huge” (5.18%). Ultimately, the elements “The enemy has demonic traits” (2.22%) and “Our mission is sacred” (0.3%) occur only a few times in all of Zelenskyy’s speeches (See: Figure 2). It is interesting that in his speeches, when Zelenskyy uses the element “The enemy has demonic traits”, he almost never personalizes the opponent, but exclusively the leadership of that country, portraying them mainly as evil and terrorists.

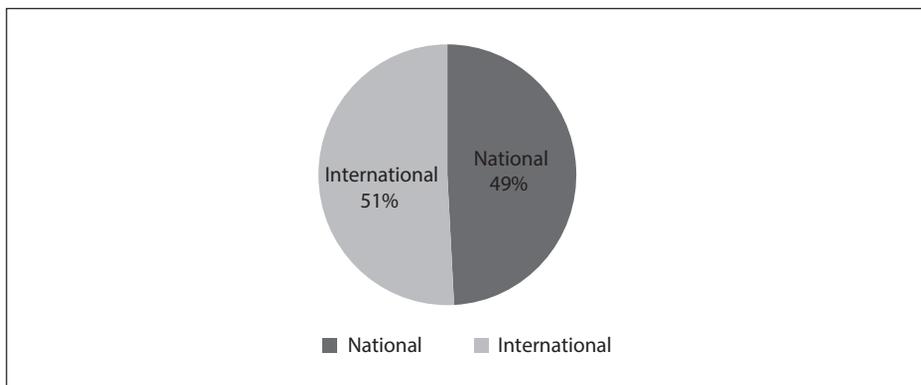
When we look at the total number of speeches and the total number of propaganda elements, we can see that, in general, the occurrence of propaganda elements is slightly higher in international than in national speeches, with a difference of almost two percent (See: Figure 3). Such data are particularly interesting if we compare them with the number of speeches addressed to the people and international actors. Specifically, although the number of analyzed international speeches is half that of national speeches, over fifty percent of the total propaganda elements occur in international speeches.

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Graph 2 Occurrence of certain elements of propaganda across all speeches

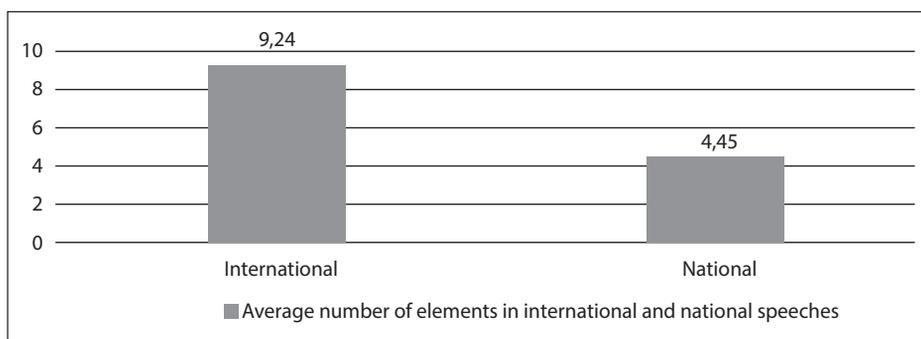
Grafikon 2. Pojavnost pojedinih elemenata propagande u svim govorima



Graph 3 Incidence of elements of propaganda in international and national speeches

Grafikon 3. Pojavnost elemenata propagande u međunarodnim i narodnim govorima

Such analysis reveals only a superficial occurrence of propaganda elements, prompting further analysis of the occurrence of elements in speeches based on the number of national and international speeches. Such a structural analysis enabled a deeper insight and showed that the number of all elements of propaganda per individual speech is more than twice as high in international than in national speeches. In one international speech Zelenskyy uses an average of 9.24 elements of propaganda, while in one national speech 4.45 elements of propaganda are used. Such data clearly show that the President of Ukraine Zelenskyy changes the intensity of the use of propaganda in his speeches depending on the target audience he is addressing, and that the intensity increases exceptionally when he addresses the international public – international institutions, governments of other countries, etc. (See: Figure 4).

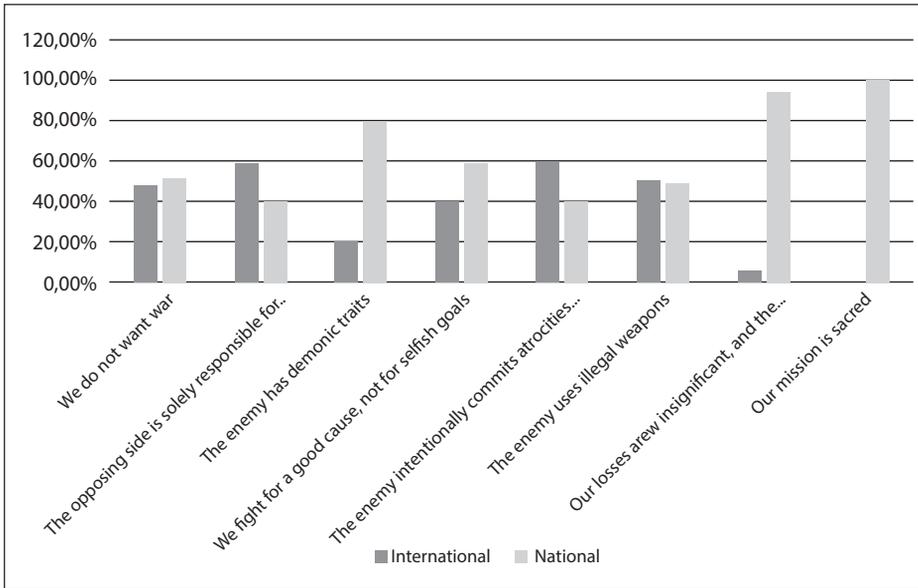


Graph 4 Average number of elements in international and national speeches

Grafikon 4. Prosječan broj elemenata međunarodnim i narodnim govorima

The analysis of the distribution of individual elements in international and national speeches reveals that they are almost evenly split – half of the analyzed elements are more prominent in international speeches, and the other half in national speeches. The five elements of propaganda that are more strongly expressed in national speeches are “We do not want war”, “We fight for a good cause, not for selfish goals”, “The enemy has demonic traits”, “Our losses are insignificant, and the opponent’s are huge” and “Our mission is sacred”. A notably stronger occurrence can be observed in the elements “We fight for a good cause, not for selfish goals” and in “Our losses are insignificant, and the opponent’s are huge”, suggesting that Zelenskyy, when addressing his people, aims to boost morale among citizens (See: Figure 5).

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Graph 5 Distribution of individual elements of propaganda in international and national speeches

Grafikon 5. Raspodjela pojedinih elemenata propagande u međunarodnim i narodnim govorima

Conversely, three elements are more prominent in international speeches: “The opposing side is solely responsible for the war”, “The enemy intentionally commits atrocities. When we make a mistake, it is always unintentional” and “The enemy uses illegal weapons”. A stronger presence is especially evident in the elements “The opposing side is solely responsible for the war”, “The enemy intentionally commits atrocities. When we make a mistake, it is always unintentional”, indicating that Zelenskyy seeks to garner additional support from international actors and isolate Russia through intense accusations against the enemy (See: Figure 5).

However, to determine the occurrence of elements in the speeches for different target audiences more precisely, an analysis was conducted separately for international and national speeches (See: Table 2). This deeper insight revealed that the intensity of the occurrence of certain propaganda elements is very similar and differs only in two elements. The intensity order of occurrence of propaganda elements in international and national speeches varies between the two parts. The intensity order of occurrence is altered by the elements “We fight for a good cause, not for selfish

Table 2 Incidence of elements of propaganda in individual speeches

Tablica 2. Pojavnost elemenata propagande u pojedinim govorima

INTERNATIONAL SPEECH		NATIONAL SPEECH	
The enemy intentionally commits atrocities. When we make a mistake, it is always unintentional.	42,40 %	The enemy intentionally commits atrocities. When we make a mistake, it is always unintentional.	28,44 %
The opposing side is solely responsible for the war.	21,93 %	We fight for a good cause, not for selfish goals.	20,06 %
We fight for a good cause, not for selfish goals.	13,45 %	The opposing side is solely responsible for the war.	15,57 %
The enemy uses illegal weapons.	11,40 %	The enemy uses illegal weapons.	11,38 %
We do not want war.	9,36 %	We do not want war.	10,48 %
The enemy has demonic traits.	0,88 %	Our losses are insignificant, and the opponent's are huge.	9,88 %
Our losses are insignificant, and the opponent's are huge.	0,58 %	The enemy has demonic traits.	3,59 %
		Our mission is sacred.	0,34 %

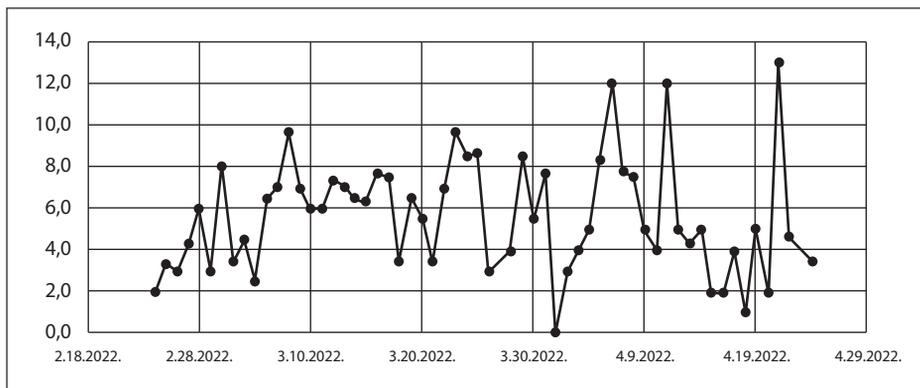
goals” and “Our losses are insignificant, and the opponent’s are huge”, which exhibit greater intensity in national speeches. This deeper insight essentially confirms the previous analysis and suggests that Zelenskyy, in his speeches directed to the people, aims to bolster morale and encourage citizens, as Šiber suggests, “to deepen collective self-confidence and trust in the possibility of achieving goals.” (Šiber, 1992).

Although the element “The enemy intentionally commits atrocities. When we make a mistake, it is always unintentional” is the most intense in occurrence when you look at international and national speeches, it is also where you can see the biggest difference. Specifically, Zelenskyy uses this element 13.96% more in international speeches than in national ones. Similarly, a significant difference is observed with the element “Our losses are insignificant, and the opponent’s are huge”, which is almost unused in international speeches, but occurs much more frequently in national speeches (See: Table 2).

Analyzing the changes in the occurrence of propaganda elements throughout the entire period, we can observe that the frequency of the elements increases as time progresses (See: Figure 6). This data, though interesting, is easily explained. The correlation between the occurrence of propaganda elements over time and the occurrence of international speeches over time is 0.84, indicating that the number of

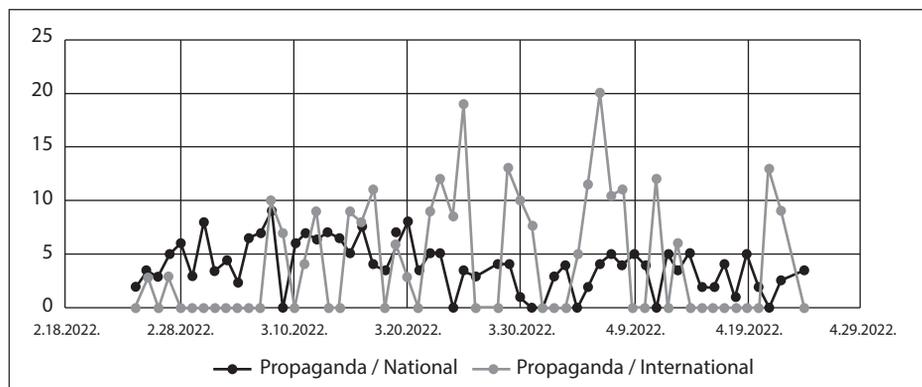
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propaganda elements grows exponentially over time due to the increasing number of international speeches. When examining the temporal distribution of propaganda in national and international speeches, we note that the intensity remains stable in national speeches over time, while in international speeches, intensity rises after a month of war (See: Figure 7).



Graph 6 Timeline of the incidence of propaganda elements in all speeches

Grafikon 6. Vremenski prikaz pojavnosti elemenata propagande u svim govorima



Graph 7 Timeline of the incidence of propaganda in national and international speeches

Grafikon 7. Vremenski prikaz pojavnosti propagande u narodnim i međunarodnim govorima

Conclusion

Literature abounds in research dealing with propaganda in different periods of war, but few authors have undertaken research analyzing the speeches of specific politicians during wartime. Moreover, a significant number of politicians' public speeches during wartime have not been analyzed within the framework of modern information and communication contexts. In this sense, the analysis of Zelenskyy's publicly available speeches proved to be quite justified.

However, there are actually few studies that used a systematic analysis of the speeches of individual politicians during the war (White, 1949; Doolan, 2022; Selb and Munzert, 2018; Larres, 2018). Also, a good part of the public speeches of politicians during the war has not been researched in the circumstances of the modern information and communication context, that is, the global reach of the Internet and modern information and communication technologies. Precisely because of this, the Russian-Ukrainian war represents an opportunity to study the elements of propaganda in public speeches in real time with a direct global reach.

The intention behind employing Morellini's ten principles of war propaganda as a framework for analyzing Zelenskyy's public speeches was solely to identify the occurrence and types of propaganda used by Zelenskyy, without making moral judgments or evaluating the effectiveness of propaganda communication. In this sense, the analysis showed that Zelenskyy, on average, uses elements of propaganda to a large extent in all his speeches. The occurrence of propaganda elements is twice as high in international speeches than in national speeches, which indicates that Zelenskyy is probably trying to influence the international community more strongly with propaganda in terms of evoking empathy, sympathy and getting help. The elements of propaganda that he dominantly uses in his speeches are negatively directed at the opponent, with an emphasis on accusing the enemy of committing crimes.

Accusing the enemy of atrocities and the beginning of the war was particularly emphasized in Zelenskyy's speeches addressed to the international community and the peoples and leaders of other countries. In this context, it would be reasonable to conclude that Zelenskyy purposefully uses this type of propaganda due to the desire to evoke empathy and sympathy for his country and people from the international community on the one hand, and thereby get the help he requests in almost every international speech. On the other hand, with this type of propaganda, he probably tries to provoke the condemnation of Russia, which is consequently also related to the sanctions against Russia that Zelenskyy demands in most of his international speeches. In the same way, he often addresses the Russian people, trying to use propaganda to act on the opposite side, that is, to deepen doubts about their war aims

and create animosity towards the leadership of their country. In national speeches, a significantly higher percentage of words, phrases and sentences are evident, which emphasize that the Ukrainian people are fighting for a good cause, i.e. correct goals. Likewise, in a significantly higher percentage of national speeches, the opponent's losses are emphasized, while in international speeches it is hardly mentioned at all. The presence of propaganda principles emphasizing the righteousness of the goals and the losses incurred by the opponent may suggest an effort to boost the morale of the domestic population, which is logical considering the need to defend certain territories, but also general inferiority. Such use of elements of propaganda in speeches addressed to the people coincides with elements of war propaganda that are often repeated in literature, such as strengthening collective self-confidence, strengthening group identity, etc.

The temporal occurrence of propaganda elements in Zelenskyy's speeches throughout the analyzed period shows that there is a kind of constant in national speeches throughout the entire period, while there is an increase in international speeches after the first month of the full-scale war. Such an increase in the occurrence of propaganda elements in international speeches is correlated with the increase in the number of international speeches over time. The analysis of the occurrence of propaganda elements over time opens additional questions such as the correlation between the stronger occurrence of propaganda elements and key events during the war, which certainly represents a good basis for further research on this topic. In this context, for the purpose of comparison, it is desirable that further research go into deeper analysis of the propaganda of the Russian side in order to obtain more complex insights into the approaches to information and communication activities in the Russian-Ukrainian war.

The contemporary context shaped by the all-encompassing digitization has created prerequisites for the transmission of information and content like never before. Such a context consequently enabled political leaders to influence the perception of the military conflict in real time and reach a large number of people in a short period of time. The analysis of Zelenskyy's speeches indicates that politicians can be aware of such a context and use it to influence, for example, the understanding and perception of war events at the international level, and thus achieve more significant support for the achievement of their goals. The conducted deductive content analysis was found to be methodologically justified for the analysis of President Zelenskyy's public speeches, but this constitutes only a part of the overall information and communication strategy of Ukraine in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Therefore, this research can represent a basis for further research on propaganda activities that includes other communication channels such as social networks and the media.

Also, the sample used for the mentioned research includes speeches in the period of the first two months of the full-scale war, but in subsequent research, the possibility of an additional extension of the research to the further course of the war opens up, which would enable a more detailed and comprehensive overview of Zelenskyy's use of propaganda.

In any case, the conducted research provides a broader understanding of the use of war propaganda in crisis communication during the war period and provides insights into the tendencies of politicians in choosing communication strategies depending on the target audience. An additional value of this research is the opening of new topics in the field of propaganda and crisis communication, which, through further research, can expand the existing knowledge in this field.

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Elementi ratne propagande u kriznoj komunikaciji Volodymyra Zelenskog

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SAŽETAK

Propaganda označava pokušaj svjesnog ili nesvjesnog manipuliranja određenom skupinom kako bi se postigao željeni cilj te posebice u zemljama engleskoga govornog područja postaje sinonim za prijevaru i laganje. Znanstvena literatura obiluje istraživanjima ratne propagande u brojnim ratnim razdobljima, ali se mali dio njih odnosi na analizu upotrebe propagande pojedinih političara tijekom rata. Isto tako, neznatan broj istraživanja odnosi se na analizu ratne propagande u javnim govorima političara za vrijeme ratnih sukoba koji se zbivaju u suvremenom i tehnološki razvijenom informacijsko-komunikacijskom kontekstu. Ovaj rad analizira komunikacijske aspekte rata na primjeru rusko-ukrajinskog rata, sa specifičnim fokusom na komunikaciju ukrajinskog predsjednika Volodymyra Zelenskog. Analizom javno dostupnih govora predsjednika Zelenskog ispituje se prepoznaju li se elementi ratne propagande u njegovim govorima i u kojoj mjeri se oni pojavljuju. Polazi se od sistematizacije deset načela ratne propagande Anne Morelli koja služi kao podloga za generički okvir, odnosno matricu analize. Istraživanje je pokazalo kako Zelenski u svojim govorima u prosjeku uvelike upotrebljava elemente ratne propagande i da je pojavnost elemenata dvostruko veća u međunarodnim nego u narodnim govorima. U međunarodnim govorima Zelenski je snažnije usmjeren na optuživanje neprijatelja za zlodjela i iniciranje rata, dok se u narodnim govorima više usmjerava na podizanje morala vlastitog naroda, odnosno na isticanje borbe za opravdane ciljeve i apostrofiranje protivničkih gubitaka. Ispitivanje pojavnosti elemenata propagande u analiziranom razdoblju ukazuje na konstantu u pogledu pojavnosti elemenata u narodnim govorima, dok se u međunarodnim govorima pojavnost tijekom vremena povećava.

Ključne riječi: odnosi s javnošću, krizno komuniciranje, ratna propaganda, Volodymyr Zelenski, rusko-ukrajinski rat