

UDC 32.019.5:075(=161.1):355.48(477:47)

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DOI <https://doi.org/10.24919/2522-4565.2025.61.10>

To cite this article: Matseliukh, I. (2025). Krytychnyi dyskurs analiz pryntsyypiv propahandy J. Goebbelsa u vysvitleni viyny Rosii proty Ukrainy [CDA of Goebbels's Principles of Propaganda in RT's Coverage of Russia's War on Ukraine]. *Problemy humanitarnykh nauk: zbirnyk naukovykh prats Drohobyt'skoho derzhavnoho pedahohichnoho universytetu imeni Ivana Franka. Seriya «Filolohiia» – Problems of Humanities. «Philology» Series: a collection of scientific articles of the Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, 61, , 86–99*, doi: <https://doi.org/10.24919/2522-4565.2025.61.10> [in English].

CDA OF GOEBBELS'S PRINCIPLES OF PROPAGANDA IN RT'S COVERAGE OF RUSSIA'S WAR ON UKRAINE

Summary. *The present paper looks into the connections between the propagandistic concepts of the Nazi Germany known as Joseph Goebbels's Propaganda Principles and modern discursive practices of Russia's state-funded news provider RT International through critical discourse analysis.*

The purpose of the paper is to analyze the similarities and discrepancies between J. Goebbels' principles of propaganda and the modern media practices of RT International in the service of ideology that has been used for years to justify Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The paper attempts to refute the assumptions of Russian media outlet RT that it fights Nazism elsewhere, but does so by resorting to the same Nazi techniques, including legitimization tools, emotional manipulation, the use of symbols and slogans, and other discursive means to influence public opinion.

With the method of critical discourse analysis or CDA established and developed by N. Fairclough this research investigates the biased journalistic discursive practices on RT. These include representation techniques and textual analysis to identify tendentious language.

The paper applies a CDA approach towards the lesser researched discursive practices of a recently established Russian news provider RT and seeks to uncover its hitherto unexplored systematic textual techniques in the service of ideology.

This research brings to light the selective and biased presentation of information, repetition of key messages, framing of news stories to align with specific ideological perspectives on RT. The paper also solicits further research into the concept of propaganda and the studies of contemporary media communication.

Key words: *ideology, Goebbels's propaganda principles, critical discourse analysis (CDA), Russia's war on Ukraine.*

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Бібліографічний опис статті: Мацелюх, І. (2025). Критичний дискурс-аналіз принципів пропаганди Й. Геббельса у висвітленні війни Росії проти України на каналі RT. *Проблеми гуманітарних наук: збірник наукових праць Дрогобицького державного педагогічного університету імені Івана Франка. Серія «Філологія», 61, 86–99*, doi: <https://doi.org/10.24919/2522-4565.2025.61.10> [in English].

КРИТИЧНИЙ ДИСКУРС-АНАЛІЗ ПРИНЦИПІВ ПРОПАГАНДИ Й. ГЕББЕЛЬСА У ВИСВІТЛЕННІ ВІЙНИ РОСІЇ ПРОТИ УКРАЇНИ НА КАНАЛІ RT

Анотація. У статті досліджено зв'язки між пропагандистськими концепціями нацистської Німеччини, відомими як принципи пропаганди Йозефа Геббельса, та сучасними дискур-

сивними практиками російського провайдера новин RT International засобами критичного дискурсу-аналізу.

Метою статті є аналіз подібностей та розбіжностей між принципами пропаганди Й. Геббельса та сучасними медіапрактиками RT International на службі ідеології, роками використовуваної для виправдання повномасштабного вторгнення Росії в Україну в лютому 2022 р. Зроблено спробу спростувати висловлення російського каналу RT про те, що він бореться з нацизмом, хоч робить це засобами нацистських технік, включаючи прийоми легітимації, емоційні маніпуляції, використання символів і гасел та інші дискурсивні засоби впливу на громадську думку.

За допомогою методу критичного дискурсу-аналізу, або КДА, створеного та розробленого Н. Ферклоф, це дослідження викриває упереджені журналістські дискурсивні практики RT, до яких належать методи репрезентації та дискурсивно-критичний аналіз тексту для виявлення пропагандистських мовних тенденцій.

У статті використано метод КДА щодо менш досліджених дискурсивних практик нещодавно створеного російського провайдера новин RT і розкрито досі не вивчені системні текстові техніки ідеологічного спрямування. У ній висвітлено вибірккову та упереджену подачу інформації, повторення ключових повідомлень, обрамлення повідомлень новин відповідно до конкретних ідеологічних настанов RT. Вона також заохочує до подальших досліджень концепції пропаганди та вивчення сучасної медіакомунікації.

Ключові слова: ідеологія, пропагандистські принципи Геббельса, критичний дискурс-аналіз (КДА), війна Росії проти України.

Problem statement. In terms of obtaining and processing information, our age may be designated as the age of unrestricted handling of facts, foregrounding and hedging, interpretative freedom and fake news. However, according to Eurostat survey of 2021, 47% of the EU residents aged 16-74 years detect questionable information on news websites or social media, nevertheless, only 23% do verify the truthfulness of the content. Furthermore, the propensity towards dramatic information, sensationalism and negativity makes it easier to smuggle unverified content (Oddo, 2018:23; Jowett & O'Donnell, 2005:231).

Such a state of public news perception creates a fertile ground for propaganda dissemination. "It can succeed in circulating only if it continually induces new audiences to recognize and recontextualize it on a mass scale" (Oddo, 2018:3). Propaganda is a weapon: "the word may prove as deadly as a missile, if its trajectory is professionally, and ruthlessly, managed." (Gumula 2021:252)

In the first months of Russia's war on Ukraine, the state owned broadcasting channel RT considerably increased the amount of anti-Ukrainian content, specifically conjuring up the image of a neo-Nazi revival, and spreading accusations against the West. In the 2,688 Ukraine-related news stories published in the first four months of Russia's full-scale invasion of February 24, 2022, one comes across 52 references to Adolf

Hitler and one to his chief propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. The latter, being notorious for disseminating propaganda in the Third Reich, prompted our interest in unveiling RT's propaganda and looking for the common techniques between the two (Zhovtko, 2016; Holub, 2025). There are similarities between Hitler and Putin in terms of their meteoric rise to power, silencing their nations by spreading propaganda and misinformation, creating and demonizing the enemy of the state, assuming an absolute political power and annexing the neighbouring territories (Burke, 1973:198ff). A skillful management of the information space has long become a priority for RT and Sputnik (Kayali & Chiappa, 2024), which are the key international broadcasters and centralized sources of Russia's propaganda (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2015:4).

In view of the above, the purpose of this article is to identify the common principles of propaganda for J. Goebbels and RT, critically analyze the corpus in terms of content distribution, substantiate the presence of political bias by textual evidence, define the principles of tendentious discourse via the excerpt analysis of the corpus.

RT in the light of recent investigative publications. In 1945 in Berlin, up to 6,800 manuscript pages of Goebbels' diary from January 21, 1942 to December 9, 1943, were salvaged by American authorities. The general assumption is

that the manuscript reflects Goebbels' propaganda tactics that were later organized into 19 principles to be found in Leonard W. Doob (1950:422ff) or on the web (Goebbels, s.a.). Some of the aspects of the comprehensive analysis of Goebbels's strategies include the control of information, emotional manipulation, the use of symbols and slogans, repetitions and fact suppression, the then and now media tactics that aim to influence public opinion and behavior.

Notwithstanding the 80-year-long time span between Goebbels's principles and RT's present-day journalistic ethics, the concept of propaganda inextricably aligns with the theories of ideology, hegemony and power (Herman, 2000; Jowett & O'Donnell, 2015; Benkler, et al., 2018; Carañana, et al., 2018). However, the intensity of RT's ideological spin calls for renewed efforts towards impartial analysis including the relevant historical, ideological, epistemological and critical discourse analysis of the Russian version of propaganda on RT (Zienkowski, 2021; Tuhina, 2024; Tril, 2023; Sussex, 2016).

Despite a considerable number of publications by Ukrainian journalists (Osnach, 2015; Zhovtko, 2016; Holub, 2025) and institutions, such as Stopfake and the Institute of Mass Information (IMI), which investigate the themes and narratives on RT and RIA Novosti, there is a lack of linguistic investigations, especially in the sphere of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Articles by Paul & Matthews, (2016), Richter (2017), Matter, et al., (2023) investigate either factual side of the news or cling to cluster-quantitative solutions based on computerized algorithms. However, the recent research by Koppel and Hansson (2022) employs CDA discursive tools of nine strategies to analyze linguistic means of RT's retorting the blame against Russia.

The purpose and methods of research. For this article we randomly selected 67 Ukraine-related news stories published on the RT website from Feb. 24 to June 22, 2022. By the critical discourse analysis of the language and content of our corpus, we come to these conclusions: a) RT may report facts, but does so in a discursively biased manner employing different CDA techniques of representation, e.g. presuppositions and implicatures, modality and nominalizations; b) domination of the typical bipolar presentation of the confrontation between Russia and the

West; c) reviving the Nazi narratives and attributing them to Ukrainian national identity; d) typical presentation of the collective West as an enemy; e) constant repetition of the information that justifies Russia's aggression; f) aggressive wording in the titles, along with the extensive use of attention-riveting means, such as puns, alliteration, oxymoron, punctuation; g) frequent reliance on authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization, along with myth dissemination.

Thus, the **goal** of the article consists in unveiling the discursive journalistic techniques of RT's representation of Russia's war on Ukraine via the CDA of our corpus and prove that some of those techniques correspond to the propagandistic principles of J. Goebbels.

The achievement of this goal includes the accomplishment of the following **tasks**: a) identifying the discursive textual means of ideological bias via CDA; b) shortlisting the propagandistic principles to those that are language-focused; c) relating the findings of the CDA of the corpus to the above; d) providing analysis of the repetitive cases of ideological bias via the constructive and impartial CDA approach; e) defining the concept of the unit of biased discourse, which should contain one or a few manifestations of CDA-defined means of biased textual representation, and may extend from a syntagm to paragraph.

The research **methods** comprise: a) identifying and analyzing discursive means responsible for the biased representation; b) explaining the textual discursive function and the affinity of the above via the CDA tools of representation; c) employing CDA means of presuppositions and implicatures, suppression and omission, emotional and optional attributes, as well as any turn of speech in the service of ideological purposes that may constitute a unit of research (Fairclough, 2003:5); d) defining the role of authorization and rationalization, moral evaluation and partially mythopoesis in the ideological discourse as more subtle ideological leverages. Other CDA tools, such as narrative structure manipulation or intertextuality, are also taken into account as long as they are used tendentiously and serve the ideological slant of RT.

Material presentation. Most of Goebbels' principles of propaganda (Goebbels, s.a.) refer to the logistics of information management, e.g. No 1 - 6, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19; and to the quality

of information, e.g. 7 - 10. Among the aforementioned principles we find four, 11, 12, 14 and 18 that relate to CDA analysis and ideological power distribution. No 11 *Black rather than white propaganda must be employed when the latter is less credible or produces undesirable effects* closely refers to the journalistic policies of RT, which focus on undermining the prestige of the enemy; as we may witness from selections (01) and (02), where Russia increasingly emphasizes that it wages war against the West, justifies its “denazification” and “demilitarization” goals in Ukraine and defends the ethnic Russian speakers.

A news story titled, *Britain tells Russians to use VPN*, renders seemingly factual information about the war and Russia’s strikes on Ukraine. However, as might be expected in (01), RT reverses the blame for the Bucha atrocities perpetrated by the Russians, a story resembling the shooting of Boeing 777-200ER MH17 on 17 July 2014. The inclusive, “including Bucha,” mentions the town, where massive numbers of civilians were killed by Russia, as if in passing. “Kiev claims” (misspelling and thus disregarding Ukraine’s capital Kyiv ever since RT’s foundation in 2005) assumes lack of evidence and justification. Nominal group “with staged scenes of brutality” inflicts blame unequivocally by tightly “packaging” information into a closed nominal construct, esp. “staged” that unwittingly conjures up the make-believe world of the theatre; with a similar discursive trick in “falsely attributed,” where the adverb is inseparable from the predicate.

The discursive use of the definite article “the” is especially noticeable here, as Ukraine-related discourse is deprived of it, as the signifier of the secondary meaning of “known” or “given,” as if excluding the presupposed familiarity of *images, evidence, atrocities*, though the latter is defined by a restrictive construct. However, the *allegations* from Russia are presented as supposedly familiar information (Fowler, 1991:171).

(01) [Boris] Johnson was referring to images from Ukrainian cities, including Bucha, which Kiev claims to be evidence of atrocities perpetrated by Russian troops. Moscow has denied the allegations and insists the Ukrainian government is manipulating public opinion with staged scenes of brutality, which it falsely attributed to Russian soldiers.

In the following excerpt (02), RT tries to inflict truthfulness of their claims with discursive tools. It is taken from the news story titled *Russia warns of Ukrainian false-flag chemical attack*. RT created quite a big campaign around the alleged biological weapons developed in Ukraine with the US funding. The subtitle is peculiar by how impudently RT applies its techniques, “Kiev’s script writers” are trying to frame the Russian military, *Defense Ministry claims*, where the initial nominal construction, metaphorical and ironic, tightly packs information as if it cannot be questioned but taken as a given. The verb *frame* again implies inflicting an artificial outlook and aggressiveness against the Russians.

It starts with the usual time and space indicators that pose no suspicion as they are typical for the newscast; the nominal group, “a sprawling ... across Ukraine,” presents the idea as non-questionable, with semantically rich verbs “sprawling” and “scattered,” and contains the key information in a closed syntagm. However, whether RT is right or wrong, the harm has been done as, according to systemic functional linguistics by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:65ff), the rheme part is the provider of new information, for the sake of which the utterance started in the first place. The rheme segment in the second sentence extends after the formal “It claims that...” and displays an array of nominal structures that contain contextually inseparable structural and notional entities and is more likely to be retained in long-term memory, “secret installations,” “questionable research,” “biological weaponry.” The hedging of “allegedly” amplifies “claims” and serves as an indicator of objectivity.

(02) Over the last two months Moscow has been publishing information about a sprawling network of US-funded biolabs scattered across Ukraine. It claims that the secret installations have been involved in questionable research and allegedly in the development of biological weaponry.

Around that time, however, BBC News reported that it was unable to independently verify the claimed documents cited by General Kirillov, who allegedly uncovered them in the first days of Russia’s invasion, and stated: “Russia has claimed without any evidence that biological weapons are being developed in laboratories in Ukraine with support from the United States.”

Unlike RT, it acknowledges the lack of proof (Robinson, O. et al., 2022).

The above methods are typical on RT, as statistically 46% of all news stories are of anti-West content, and 15% of anti-Ukrainian, as calculated by titles alone. The explanation of excerpt (04) features exactly 700 times, i.e. every 3.4 stories, in the first four months of the Russo-Ukrainian war, and 17 times in our corpus. It even disregards the news story's content, the most bizarre occurrence of which happened when RT pasted it in a story about Ukraine's Kalush Orchestra winning the Grand Final of the Eurovision Song Contest on May 14, 2022 in the news story, *Ukraine wins Eurovision*. Such discursive practice amounts to a CDA tool of naturalization, and is related to Goebbels's principles 13 and 14.

Inside the excerpt (03) "*Kiev's failure...*" and "*Moscow's eventual recognition ...*" are presented in closed nominal constructs that exclude doubt in its verity. The representational modality is that of extreme determination and ultimatum, "*will never join,*" "*insists,*" "*denied claims.*" The passage ends with a peculiar negation that does not contain a structural negative indicator, which would discursively be a more accepted version; in its stead, however, the lexical form "*denied*" is used, which is much weaker structurally, and the rest of the sentence reads as an assertive statement.

(03) *Russia sent its troops into Ukraine in late February, following Kiev's failure to implement the terms of the Minsk agreements, first signed in 2014, and Moscow's eventual recognition of the Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. ... 'Kiev insists the Russian offensive was completely unprovoked and has denied claims it was planning to retake the two republics by force.*

Principle 11 pervades the corpus to the highest degree, so that no positive context is present when Ukraine or the West are in focus. The key discursive means of rendering such content are nominalizations, positioning in sentences, modality choices, lexis selection, which produce an impression of Russia's righteousness.

Adhering to principle 12 *Propaganda may be facilitated by leaders with prestige*, RT frequently places full-length authored articles on its feed, predominantly from the Anglophone world, thus discrediting the West from the inside. Their

names are usually preceded by their exhaustive credentials unlike those of western leaders. Statistically, the name of the American president is more likely to be used alone than that of the Russian one. It is one of the indicators of RT's bias in the representation of actors or the use of authorization (van Leeuwen, 2008:105).

Among the numerous pictures on RT news feed, Putin usually features either alone or against the backdrop of the highest state dignitaries, which consolidates his position as a strong leader. Needless to say that his power rests on his grip on the bunch of cronies with whom he usurped power in Russia in all aspects of economic, political and social life, as taken from the 2023 TED Talk titled *Dasha Navalnaya: Lessons from my father; Alexey Navalny*. Putin's worst enemy Bill Browder exposed Putin's power of bullying and extortion of Russian "elite" in his 2019 TEDx Talk titled *«How I figured out the Achilles heel of Vladimir Putin.»* Nevertheless, the Russian opposition was effectively silenced and part of the population believes in Putin's propaganda, which still testifies to the effective power of Russian multimedia.

RT's stories try both to discredit Ukraine and its European partners and put Russia in a more appreciative light at their expense. In excerpt (04) from the news story *Ukraine threatens NATO member* the lack of a unified stance of the EU against Russia's aggression is brought forward. Simultaneously, it is preoccupied with the state of European economies. It must be one of the more subtle moves of RT to cozy up to those who cherish some remnants of sympathy towards Russia.

(04) *Ukraine has consistently called on other European countries to stop buying Russian energy resources, claiming that by doing so they are financing Moscow's military offensive.*

In turn, Russian President Vladimir Putin has accused European leaders of committing economic "suicide" by attempting to give up Russian energy.

In addition, Ukraine is portrayed as a disintegrating factor for the EU, with a history of such intentions, *consistently*, whose political insight is further questioned in lexeme *claiming*, which presupposes alternative routes of financing the Russian army. The discursive marker, *In turn*, reverses the narrative into an agreeable plane, again with the dominating Russia's agency.

The accusations towards European leaders signal some concern on behalf of the Russian leader, who, as if questioning their sanity, proclaims such steps severed from reality by lexeme *attempting*.

In its coverage, RT treats social actors selectively; not only Putin, who is mentioned 89 times, but every voice of the Kremlin, Peskov - 24, Zakharova - 19, Lukashenko - 4, and others, induce the sense of trustworthiness, when the stories list or come from high-profile individuals, displaying their full credentials, making strong authorization statements.

Principle 14 *Propaganda must label events and people with distinctive phrases or slogans* is evident in the way RT labels events, political entities and personalities. According to the corpus, RT usually refutes the claims of the West, as in (05), where it accuses western media of omitting vital information, while never calling Russia's war on Ukraine "a war." The excerpt is taken from an article titled, *51 years of RFE/RL: How the CIA-founded American state run media outlet survived the Soviet collapse to fight Cold War 2.0*, by Daniel Kovalik from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, who often features on RT with pro-Russian content. The subtitle, *Originally established as an anti-Bolshevik endeavor, RFE/RL has thrived as US-Russia relations have nose-dived*, presupposes the accusatory reality for RFE/RL, which did nothing to mend the collapsing relations, thus implying that it was financed for that reason. And against this assumed background Russia is seen if not in positive, then at least in neutral light.

Discursive markers, "*while in fact*," effectively prepare the reader to take in the just disclosed "facts." The architectonics of this longer passage culminates twice, in the sentence, "*This missing ... consumer*," and the final "*But, I suppose, ... vice versa*," which serve as summaries and as parables. But identifying the eight-year-long proxy war in Donbass as "*conflict*," and Russia's war on Ukraine as "*crisis*," RT serves the purpose of averting attention from the war as there are numerous conflicts around the globe at any given time. Furthermore, the wording of the conflicting sides is obviously off balance, indicating the extending favor to the latter, which include two geographical names "*the Russian ... Donbas*," while the former receives only the mis-

spelled name of the capital "*Kiev*." Furthermore, Russia's involvement in the "conflict" is non-existent, instead the readership is led to believe that Ukraine is waging war against its own people, i.e. *the Russian-speaking population of the Donbas*.

(05) [...] *much of the current Ukraine coverage in the West would lead the audience to believe that the crisis started suddenly in February of this year with the Russian offensive, while in fact there has been a conflict between the government in Kiev and the Russian-speaking population of the Donbas for the past eight years, claiming 14,000 lives. ... Moreover, referring to the Russian speakers in the eastern part of Ukraine as "pro-Moscow," as the Economic Times and nearly every other Western news outlet does, fails to capture the very real grievances of these people who have been militarily attacked by their own government for years... But, I suppose, one person's propaganda is another person's news, and vice versa.*

In the mid-paragraph of excerpt (05) above, the discursive *Moreover* signals the disclosure of more disquieting information, i.e. RT reproaches the ET and western media collectively for misinterpreting political alliances in the east of Ukraine. What is excluded from RT's discourse is its own constant references to Ukrainians as Neo-Nazi, misspelling the names of Ukrainian cities, politicians and other personalities, thus depriving them of dignity and individuality. In addition, such discourse helps establish the reason for the "liberation" of Russian speakers and whitewash Russia of its atrocities.

The author of the above article, apart from his credentials, teaches International Human Rights at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, and has written a book titled *No More War: How the West Violates International Law*. Thus, "*I suppose*," though not so persuasive in terms of modality, certainly causes ideological harm, esp. that the author writes from inside the USA, indirectly implying that he has reasons to oppose the US mainstream politics. A very peculiar function is fulfilled by "*But*," followed by a piece of wisdom; it implies the failure of the West to grasp the "truth" in Russian interpretation and sets a boundary between the guilt and the righteousness. In fact, in each of the news stories RT refutes the uncouth information, making this one of the key features across our corpus.

Propagandistic principle 14 means that events and people must be either easily recognized or quite familiar to the audience to evoke a desired response; they must be utilized again and again, but only in appropriate situations. In addition, labeling events, people, their decisions and the whole nations unwittingly attaches a degree of judgment, favorable or otherwise, since labeling, per se, is an instance of intertextuality, and as such, it is a carrier of the traditionally attached discourses, values and connotations. In its propagandistic webcast RT resorts to labels from the recent history from WWII onwards, referring to earlier events, as a token of a deeper historical insight.

The author of the article, *Under the Wolfsangel: The uncomfortable truth about radical ideologies in Ukraine*, from which excerpt (06) is cited, Olga Sukharevskaya, is referred to as a Ukrainian-born ex-diplomat, jurist, and author based in Moscow, and it is the only reference to the country of birth among the individual authors, most of whom come from the US, Europe and Russia; as such, it must bear its connotations, among others, Russia as haven for intellectuals and professionals.

The word combination, “*uncomfortable truth*” features seven times throughout the corpus and, along with other conspiracy theories, such as *US-funded biolabs*, *right-wing rock festival Asgardsrei*, seemingly draws RT’s readers to a secretive confab. Lexeme *littered* evokes emotions of repulsiveness and unwanted multitude and simultaneously disparaging attitude to *Nazi symbols and slogans*. Discursive marker, *In particular*, brings into focus the word-for-word bilingual analogy as another proof of this repulsive ideology, disregarding the fact that the presence of the right sector in Ukrainian politics amounts to a negligent degree, 1.8% of votes to the Supreme Council of Ukraine. This fact is persistently overlooked by RT.

(06) *The most common are the Azovets military camps organized by the Azov Battalion, where children from the age of 7 are taught to engage in war and sabotage. The entire training system is littered with Nazi symbols and slogans. In particular, the Ukrainian chant ‘Ukraine above all’ is directly derived from ‘Deutschland über alles’.*

Excerpt (07) below, taken from a news story, *Ukraine asks G7 for \$50 billion*, towards the end

of the passage implicitly projects the idea of the invincible might of the Russian army, which, moreover, comes from Ukraine’s President, Volodymyr Zelensky as a warning, and with which notion the paragraph comes to a close. However, the final prophecy is given in reported speech with shared authorship with RT, where, again, there is no structural negation, and at will, it may read as a possibility, particularly the “*fall under the tanks*” metaphor bears a semblance to the grim reality of Prague in 1968 in the Operation Danube.

(07) *However, even amid a constant stream of military support by the US and its NATO allies, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky tweeted a video calling for the rest of the world to #ArmUkraine-Now – complete with a very specific grocery list of desired equipment. Should countries fail to deliver, the Ukrainian leader claimed, Poland, Moldova, Romania, and the Baltic states would quickly fall under the tanks of the Russian Army.*

Another strong ideological feature of this sample is the wording “*specific grocery list of desired equipment*.” This is a breach of journalistic ethics of impartiality, since it is an inexcusable policy of stalling the help for the suffering nation by likening its efforts to acquire arms to a shopping experience. Such stark intertextuality surely evokes everyone’s shopping experience with or without a list, but it is a ubiquitous experience of selecting goods at will and for more imaginative readers a lampoon might emerge with a personified Ukraine pushing a shopping cart. This undoubtedly causes irreparable harm.

By the above example (07) we argue that not only does RT resort to Goebbels’s propagandistic principles, but also to one of Hitler’s ideas of Nazi propaganda efforts in chapter 4 of *Mein Kampf*: *All propaganda must be presented in a popular form and must fix its intellectual level so as not to be above the heads of the least intellectual of those to whom it is directed* (Hitler, 1943:153ff).

There are a number of news stories that may be classified under this principle, e. g. titled ‘*Not possible*’ to dump gas for green energy – official; *Banned for being Russian: The tennis stars set to miss Wimbledon*, *Can the West survive without Russian oil?* found on the RT website and 27 in the corpus for the present article.

Principle 18 *Propaganda must facilitate the displacement of aggression by specifying the targets for hatred* highlights the need for a critical

evaluation of propaganda's impact to prevent the potential societal unrest and redirect social reactions towards the enemy.

In a news report from NBC Chicago, Singh Sanjesh et al. (2024) writes the following, sustaining a neutral reportage style in (08), where no attributes are resorted to:

(08) *For the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, the IOC banned Russia and Belarus from participating due to their involvement related to the war in Ukraine.*

RT's interpretation (09), from a news article *Ukrainians boast about witch hunt against Russian athletes* of Aug. 5, 2024, nevertheless, poses the ban as unrelated to the war in Ukraine, which is still "*the Ukraine conflict*." Adjective "*numerous*," and nominal group "*a blanket international ban*" tend to picture an enormous weight of such grievances on none other than "*holders of Russian and Belarusian passports*." Discursively, they are not in the least connected to the war, so that the message reads like a racist invective on the ground of nationality.

(09) *Officials in numerous sports issued a blanket international ban on holders of Russian and Belarusian passports following the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict in 2022.*

The corpus is replete with tendentious formulations and content representation tactics that try to whitewash Russia and its leader of the war crimes and amounts to around 30 examples.

In our corpus this principle is directed to 1) disintegration of the EU, found in 26 cases; 2) undermining the foundations of NATO, in 30; 3) ascribing the neo-Nazi doctrine to Ukraine and its allies, in 44; 4) partial treatment of Ukrainian refugees, in 7; 5) discouraging military and humanitarian aid from abroad, in 6, total 123.

Apart from punchy headlines, story-long leads, flashy pictures, video links and occasional cross-references to alternative sites, RT offers a feedback section of readers' comments, which is inundated with predominantly impersonalized accounts, either supporting or tolerating the Kremlin policies (Clark, 2020). These comments largely come from Russian troll factories as described in alternative sources (Walker, 2015; Kim, 2016).

As contrasted against the main text, they hold an attractive and still thrilling status of a megaphone of diverse ideas from ordinary citizens, not from the editorial board of professionals.

The fact that whoever stands behind these queer accounts – *Ethical Western Slave, Buddha On English Hill, Max 777, PeterPiper, Sub Atomic Particle, etc.*, – might be one of "us," the readers, does attract certain audiences. Another quality that makes them so appealing is their colloquial style, i.e. relaxed, spoken discourse, requiring little intellectual efforts to digest the content, e. g.:

1) *NATO's Partnership for Peace program»... the best example of an oxymoron to date.*

2) *The cunningness of United Snakes of West was backed then by abundant supermarkets and starwars.*

3) *Now, Alibaba and Reliance supermarkets and hypersonic missiles have tilted the balance a lot*

4) *NATO is like a Bacteria, once it has infected one area, it keeps on expanding into the next area, eventually it consumes and kills host.*

5) *Not NATO alone, capitalist anglosaxon culture in its entirety. Greed for quick riches drives madman individualism carrying guns and cut throat mindset.*

Comment 1) points out a literary trope reviving the Cold War style that is picturing NATO as a war-mongering alliance, but what is the likelihood that an average reader, on the spur of the moment, would reach for literary terminology studied in high school and never resorted to since then? No 2) encapsulates evaluative nominalizations and a stark pun, aiming to discredit the EU and presents it as the US's staunch follower. Noun groups "*The cunningness of United Snakes of West*" and "*abundant supermarkets and starwars*," partially preserve the same oxymoronian thread and employ highly intense, evaluative and emotional adjectives. No 3) might be authored by the same "troll" since oxymoron is used here per se, "*supermarkets and hypersonic missiles*." This post tells volumes about the "friendly and brotherly" but in fact belligerent policy of Russia towards the neighboring states. No 4) might have been authored by the same literati, since a simile is foregrounded, "*like a Bacteria*." Though there is nothing informative or enlightening about the comparison, except its derogatory comment without factual proof. British researcher Adam Gargani (2014:208ff) analyzed the effect of similes in limited contexts where they draw upon themselves more sense even if out of their contextuality – the more striking the more memorable.

No 5 starts with the negative “*Not*” and restrictive “*alone*”, creating a cognitive void that prompts a search for more options, and a better acceptance of the next offered concepts, that might align with the reader’s own search results. Furthermore, the content enhances the global scale of the phenomenon in question, it offers abstract nouns “*entirety*,” “*greed*,” and two- and three-component nominalizations, “*madman individualism*,” “*capitalist anglosaxon culture*,” “*cut throat mindset*,” which bear a propensity to occur in more academic and intellectual contexts, rather than in an urge to post a casual comment. In addition, the misspelling does not stand a match to the exuberant figures of speech, but rather serves as a blague. It is only natural to assume that such “comments” are generated by painstaking and meticulous work of trained professionals.

Apart from striking comments, the corpus is replete with catchy phrases and memorable turns of speech. Out of the 67 titles 42 contain either a figure of speech or non-typical journalistic practices, e.g. ‘*It takes two to tango*’, but West ‘*breakdancing alone*’ – Lavrov, ‘*Russian salad*’ sours mood at NATO summit – media, some are metaphorical, *Anti-Russian sanctions may stop Finnish diesel cars* – media, some are outright vulgar, e. g. ‘*Go f**k yourselves*’, *Zelensky aide tells Western officials*. They are rarely neutral in their appeal, which speaks volumes about RT’s journalistic practices. “*Modern Russian propaganda is cleverly targeted, technically adept and cynically fact-free. It is also enjoyable*,” quoted Edward Lucas and Peter Pomerantsev (2016:10).

Conclusion. In this article we tried to establish connections between some of J. Goebbels’s principles of propaganda of 1943 and RT’s journalistic practices of 2022 during the first months of Russia’s full-scale invasion into Ukraine. As a result, principles 11, 12, 14 and 18, are directly related to RT’s discursive practices of spreading ideological bias, while No 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 19, i.e. 7 out of 19, are partially related. The remaining principles, No 1, 3, 7, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, are either unrelated to the content of our corpus or

resist linguistic analysis.

If we assign a relative quantitative value of 1 to unrelated to RT’s practices principles, value 2 to partially related, and 3 to fully applicable, we receive 23.5%, 41% and 35%, respectively. 41% relates to partially applicable principles, i.e. half of it, 20.5%, may be added to 35%, resulting in 55.5%, from which we can assume that RT follows the principles of Nazi propaganda in approximately 5.55 news stories out of 10. In most of these 5.55 stories Russia litters the information space with disinformation, biased interpretations, dubious references, all in the name of the Russian version of “truth” in seven international languages across the globe.

In the light of the aforementioned, RT International caters for modern audiences and different readers’ tastes extensively using presuppositions and implicatures, authorization and moral evaluation, intertextuality, highly attractive page layout, sensational content, multimedia and graphics. In conclusion, RT International is ahead of its rivalries in terms of attraction and persuasiveness, and might serve a basis for developing anti-propagandistic techniques (Drapak, s.a.). RT coverage proves to be a fertile ground for scholars researching tendentious discourses, propaganda-uncovering activists, journalists and political writers, students and researchers of mass media and communication. RT extensively employs professional journalists as native speakers, initially 70 foreign journalists out of 300, but it withholds current information on staff compilation. Thus the focus of the future research may concern such CDA aspects as stylistic choices, presuppositions in the language of headlines, the balance between the authenticity and accessibility for various audiences, the dominating rhetoric of RT relative to the warring parties. Comparative studies of similar stories covered by RT and the leading world news providers, such as the BBC or CNN, could test the viability of CDA approach, provide a deeper insight into the composition of propagandistic discourses and enrich the depository of CDA studies.

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