

Article

# Linguistic Transformations and Strategic Communication in Wartime Ukraine: Ethical Challenges, Media Narratives, and National Mobilisation

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## Abstract

*This study analyses how the war in Ukraine has transformed linguistic practices, communication strategies, and ethical paradigms within media and academic discourse. Specifically, it examines how language functions as a tool of national mobilization, identity formation, and information resistance. A descriptive sociolinguistic design was employed. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 100 participants, including journalists, linguists, and media professionals. Data were analysed using content analysis, sociolinguistic analysis, and ethical analysis to identify linguistic shifts, communication patterns, and ethical dilemmas in wartime contexts. Findings indicate that linguistic transformation in Ukraine extends beyond lexical innovation to include: (a) the emergence of neologisms, (b) changes in communication ethics, and (c) the adoption of strategic narratives that promote national unity. Media discourse has emerged as a key instrument for countering disinformation, mobilising citizens, and shaping international perceptions of the conflict. Wartime linguistic transformation in Ukraine represents a comprehensive process of cultural and ideological adaptation; language has evolved into a strategic mechanism for resilience, ethical awareness, and global communication. The study offers a valuable model for understanding linguistic change during armed conflict.*

**Keywords:** Discourse of war, Ethical challenges, Linguistic transformations, National mobilisation, Transformation of communicative strategies

## Introduction

The transformation of linguistic research during wartime is a multifaceted process that encompasses not only changes in language practices but also substantial shifts in ethical and communicative approaches. Amid the ongoing conflict with Russia, which began in 2014, Ukrainian linguistics—particularly within the media sphere—has undergone profound changes. While fulfilling their traditional role of information dissemination, media outlets have become crucial instruments for shaping national identity and public opinion.

Wartime demands place media professionals—journalists and linguists—on the frontlines of the information war, requiring adaptability to new conditions while



maintaining accuracy, ethical standards, and communicative effectiveness. Journalists working in high-risk environments often witness military actions firsthand, and their professional activities are intertwined with real-life danger (Hanaqtah, 2019). Simultaneously, their responsibilities extend beyond conventional reporting. In the context of information warfare, they actively counter disinformation, propaganda, and manipulation, which necessitates a high degree of professional responsibility and swift responsiveness to rapidly evolving circumstances. Consequently, the media function not only as channels of factual communication but also as vital instruments for fostering national morale, supporting social cohesion, and advancing democratic processes in Ukraine.

The transformation of linguistic research in wartime entails shifts in lexical repertoires and rethinking communicative principles in response to global challenges (Nkhata & Jimaima, 2020). This evolution encompasses ethical standards, terminological precision, and contextual sensitivity (Ryabchenko et al., 2019). The present study aims to analyze the changes that war has introduced into Ukrainian media linguistic strategies, identify the principal ethical dilemmas and emergent trends in wartime discourse, and examine the influence of European ethical standards on Ukrainian linguistic practices.

Investigating linguistic practices during wartime yields deeper insights into how national communication systems adapt to the challenges of the twenty-first century. Moreover, it highlights the role of media and strategic communication in national mobilisation, the cultivation of civic unity, and the crafting of a robust information strategy under wartime conditions.

The theoretical landscape motivating this study draws on four interconnected strands. First, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides tools to interrogate how power relations, ideological commitments, and intertextuality shape wartime narratives and media governance. Second, the sociolinguistics of conflict offers a lens for understanding how language shift, code-switching, register variation, and audience design unfold under crisis conditions, including the social life of neologisms as they move from coinage to conventional usage. Third, enregisterment and neology illuminate the lifecycle of linguistic innovations in hostile contexts, tracing patterns of diffusion, institutional uptake, and potential resistance. Fourth, information warfare theory links linguistic practices to strategic aims—mobilization, legitimacy, counter-propaganda, and international framing—highlighting how discourse operates within broader strategic objectives.

In this context, the study advances several core assumptions. Neologisms arising during wartime do not merely reflect lexical creativity but enact social reconfigurations—redefining threats, resources, and belonging. Ethical norms in wartime journalism are dynamic, balancing the right to information against the risks to lives, operational security, and national stability; thus, ethical judgments are often contested, transparent, and context-dependent. Strategic narratives and metaphors—such as resilience, defense, sovereignty, and sacrifice—are deployed differently across domestic and international audiences, with language choices calibrated to influence credibility, unity, and policy receptivity. Finally, the battle space extends

beyond the battlefield to include digital and informational arenas where platforms, algorithms, and networked publics shape the velocity and reach of discourse, thereby redefining contemporary notions of public persuasion and social cohesion.

The study engages with a dynamic and high-stakes setting where language becomes a central instrument of policy, culture, and identity. It contributes theoretically by integrating CDA, sociolinguistics of conflict, and information warfare perspectives to articulate how wartime discourse shapes legitimacy, resilience, and public trust. Methodologically, it foregrounds triangulated data sources—professional expert voices, media content, and policy documents—to capture both practice and normative frameworks. Practically, the research offers insights for journalism education, newsroom governance, and language policy in crisis contexts, emphasizing ethical gatekeeping, responsible framing, and the design of information ecosystems that resist manipulation while preserving democratic legitimacy.

To anchor the analysis, this introduction clarifies several central terms. Neologisms refer to newly coined words or phrases that emerge in response to the war's unique social and military realities, including calques, loanword adaptations, and blended forms. Ethical standards in wartime journalism denote decisions about truth-telling, sourcing transparency, casualty reporting, consent, and risk management under conditions of danger and potential state surveillance. Strategic narratives are the configured stories and metaphors that seek to shape domestic sentiment and international opinion, often balancing symbolic power with pragmatic communication goals. Information warfare encompasses the deliberate use of information and messaging to influence audiences, degrade adversary credibility, and mobilize support, integrating both overt propaganda and counter-propaganda strategies.

The research engages with ongoing debates about how contemporary warfare expands the role of language in political life. It addresses gaps in studies of wartime discourse that tend to foreground either heroism and propaganda or technical linguistic change in isolation. By foregrounding the interaction between linguistic innovation, ethical decision-making, and strategic communication, the study offers a nuanced account of how Ukrainian media professionals navigate the pressures of competing narratives, audience expectations, and international scrutiny in a protracted, multi-platform conflict.

## **Literature Review**

The study of the impact of crisis periods on linguistics is crucial because it provides insights into how changes in political and social conditions transform language practices and communication strategies (Hardini et al., 2019). Armed conflicts typically trigger the rapid adaptation of linguistic structures to new realities, driven by the need to develop specialised linguistic forms reflecting the situation's specificity and adjust communication models to mobilise society and preserve national unity (Hall et al., 2021).

One of the most extensively studied cases is the transformation of linguistic practices in countries experiencing military conflicts. Reisach (2021), in a study based on the Yugoslav Wars (1991–2001), demonstrated that during periods of intense hostilities,

linguistics served not only as a tool for information dissemination but also as a medium for political manipulation. With warfare accompanied by propaganda and information operations, significant attention was directed towards changing terminology and narratives to shape the international perception of the conflict.

Similar trends were observed during the Iraq War (2003–2011), where linguistic studies focused on analysing language strategies used to legitimise military actions and manage public opinion through the media (Saurwein & Spencer-Smith, 2020). Notably, terminological manipulation played a significant role in these strategies, differentiating between military operations and war while intensifying the use of lexical units to frame concepts of terrorism and global security (Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2020). Examining these practices sheds light on how language strategies become powerful tools in the struggle for political influence (Petre et al., 2019).

In the context of Ukraine's full-scale war, researchers have also highlighted significant shifts in linguistic practices accompanying the development of communication strategies during wartime (Ciuriak, 2022). Following Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, Ukrainian media and state authorities actively worked to develop a unified information policy. This policy involves crafting a cohesive narrative and employing innovative linguistic constructs to combat disinformation and propaganda (Ryskina et al., 2020). A notable example is the establishment of the United News strategic communication platform, uniting major television and media outlets to deliver centralised official information. Within this framework, the linguistic aspects of messaging and their role in mobilising the population have become a significant focus of linguistic research (Struk et al., 2022).

A critical area requiring attention is the evolution of vocabulary and stylistic communication techniques during armed conflicts. In such circumstances, linguistic strategies are often designed to inform and mobilise public opinion, shaping perceptions of national security, patriotism, and national unity. Research by Nedashkivska and Kushmar (2017) revealed that linguistic forms used during wartime aim to achieve semantic precision and emotional resonance, influencing public attitudes toward unfolding events.

Another critical avenue of inquiry is the role of social media in shaping linguistic strategies during conflicts. Studies indicate that platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Telegram have become rapid news dissemination channels and spaces for developing new linguistic norms and social imagery (Macagno, 2022). In this context, linguistics has transformed into a tool to support political narratives and enhance society's mobilisation potential.

The investigation of the impact of crisis periods on linguistics remains an essential domain as language undergoes profound changes and acquires new communicative functions during such times (Moten, 2020). Crises, particularly armed conflicts, significantly influence language practices as society demands linguistic adaptation to new social, political, and cultural realities. Analysing linguistic transformations in wartime helps understand how communication evolves into a strategic tool for mobilisation and the formation of national identity.

Thus, previous research demonstrates that war is a powerful catalyst for changes in language practices and communication strategies. Linguistic studies during crises are

invaluable for analysing language changes and understanding how language can be used for mobilisation and societal opinion management. Investigating these processes in the Ukrainian context provides deeper insights into how language adapts to wartime conditions and how its role evolves within national security and identity strategies.

Taking into account the above, this study aims to test the following hypotheses:

**H0:** The war has brought about significant transformations in linguistic practices and ethical paradigms employed by Ukrainian media, as well as a restructuring of communication strategies aimed at national mobilisation and shaping international perceptions of the conflict.

**H1:** The development of strategic communication, including the adaptation of linguistic forms and narratives, has become a critically important tool not only for effectively disseminating information but also for strengthening national unity, countering disinformation and manipulation, and managing public opinion.

The war in Ukraine is a powerful catalyst for significant transformations in linguistics, particularly in the context of media and communication strategies. This study posits that the war has led to profound changes in linguistic practices and ethical paradigms employed in Ukrainian media and the restructuring of communication strategies encompassing both national mobilisation and the international perception of the conflict. Specifically, the hypothesis suggests that the development of strategic communication, including adapting linguistic forms and narratives, has become a critically important tool for effectively disseminating information and strengthening national unity, countering disinformation and manipulation, and managing public opinion.

A key component of this process is the integration of European ethical standards into Ukraine's communication strategies, which could contribute to the establishment of a more comprehensive and ethically grounded approach to wartime discourse. This discourse continues to evolve alongside the progression of the war.

To test this hypothesis, the study analyses linguistic transformations in Ukrainian media since the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, focusing on the role of language in both internal mobilisation and the broader international information space. The research also examines the ethical challenges and dilemmas linguists and media professionals face as they adapt to wartime conditions. It evaluates how these adaptations reflect broader shifts in global communication practices during conflicts.

## Methodology

Significant changes are occurring in linguistic practices and ethical paradigms applied in the media during the war in Ukraine. This study aims to examine the transformations of linguistic practices, the adaptation of narratives and communication strategies in the media, and the ethical challenges that arise in adapting communication to the conditions of war. The hypothesis is that strategic communication, including adapting linguistic forms and narratives, is crucial for

disseminating information, strengthening national unity, countering disinformation, and managing public opinion.

A descriptive methodology has been employed to test this hypothesis, allowing for a detailed exploration of various aspects of linguistic transformations and communication changes related to the war in Ukraine.

### ***General Design***

The study employs a descriptive research approach, which enabled a detailed examination of the transformations in linguistic and communication practices during the war and the identification of ethical challenges and issues faced by media professionals and linguists.

### ***Data Collection***

*Qualitative approach:* The study employs qualitative methods for data collection, as changes in linguistic practices and communications require an in-depth analysis of context and interpretation of individual experiences.

*Interviews:* Interviews were the primary data collection method, providing more detailed information on personal linguistic practices, language changes, and attitudes towards the war. They were conducted with participants who had experience in the media sphere and were actively engaged with media platforms.

The study's object was the linguistic transformations that have occurred in Ukraine since the beginning of the war, particularly in the media, as well as the changes in ethical paradigms governing language expression in the context of war.

### ***Sample***

A purposive sampling method was used to select 100 participants for the study, including journalists, linguists, bloggers, and media channel developers. The sample comprised respondents of various ages and social and professional groups, ensuring a diversity of perspectives and linguistic practices.

### ***Questionnaire***

The Impact of War on Linguistic Practices:

- How has the war changed the participants' attitudes towards the language they use in everyday life and the media?
- What new linguistic forms or narratives have emerged in the media and everyday communication?

Identity and Economic Factors:

- How does identity (national, linguistic) influence the respondents' linguistic behaviour?
- How do economic factors, such as the prestige of a language, shape language choices during the war?

Intergroup Relations and 'Otherness':

- How do intergroup relations influence language choices, particularly between Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking individuals?
- How are ideological differences reflected in the linguistic practices of the participants?

#### Changes in Linguistic Practices Due to the War:

- How has the war influenced language choices and attitudes in mobilising national unity and countering disinformation?
- How do linguistic changes reflect the processes of "self-Ukrainisation"?

#### Interview Design

1. *Introductory Section:* The conversation begins informally to establish rapport, determine the social and professional context, and explore the participant's linguistic practices.
2. *Questions:*
  - Language skills and knowledge of foreign languages.
  - Attitudes towards the Russian and Ukrainian languages and changes in language preferences during the war.
  - The prestige and market value of languages during the war.
  - The languages used by the participants and the languages they are learning or wish to learn in the context of the war.
3. *Conclusion:* A discussion on attitudes towards "other" ideological groups and changes in the perception of language and cultural identity during the war.

#### Analytical Approaches

1. *Content Analysis* was used to examine how the influence of war and ideological beliefs alters linguistic practices. Key phrases, ideas, and narratives will be highlighted and analysed for meaning and context.
2. *Sociolinguistic Analysis* allowed for the assessment of changes in language attitudes and practices among different social groups and the study of how these changes reflect relationships between linguistic and ideological groups.
3. *Ethical Analysis* was conducted to evaluate the ethical challenges of adapting communication strategies in war, particularly regarding disinformation and manipulation.

#### Expected Result

The aim of the study was to:

- Determine how the war alters linguistic practices in Ukraine, mainly through adaptation to new political and social realities.
- Investigate how the media adapt their narratives and linguistic strategies for national mobilisation and international influence.
- Evaluate the ethical challenges media professionals and linguists face in the context of war.

## Results

The study involved 100 participants: journalists, linguists, bloggers, media channel developers, and representatives of various social and professional groups. This allowed us to obtain diverse views on language transformations and communication strategies during the war in Ukraine.

**Table 1. Results of the survey on linguistic transformations during wartime**

Indicator	General sample data	Category	Data in percentages
Number of participants	100 respondents:		
	Journalists		35%
	Linguists		25%
	Bloggers and media activists		20%
	Media channel developers and technical specialists		20%
Age category	18-30 years old		40%
	31-45 years old		35%
	46-60 years old		20%
	60 years old and older		5%
Geographic coverage	Kyiv and big cities		60%
	Small towns and rural areas		40%
Main results	Communication strategies and narratives		90%
	Strategic broadcasting		85%
	The impact of national mobilization and support		92%
	The role of video content and its production		78%
	Language transformations in the media		85%
	Language manipulation		68%
	Ethical challenges and the problem of disinformation		90%

Source: authors' own development.

**Narratives of Resistance** 90% of participants noted that the most prevalent narrative in Ukrainian media is the theme of heroic resistance by the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Military successes, even minor ones, are portrayed as significant achievements, emphasising Ukraine's moral superiority.

**Strategic Communication** – 85% of respondents confirmed that the narratives disseminated via social media and official reports are carefully controlled and tailored to specific audiences. This includes highlighting military accomplishments, such as the effectiveness of Western-supplied anti-tank and air defence systems, while omitting information about Ukrainian military losses.

**Impact on National Mobilisation and Support** – 92% of participants acknowledged that the primary goal of the communication strategy is to unite Ukrainian citizens during wartime and promote national mobilisation. Patriotic narratives and calls for resistance are actively employed to achieve this aim.

**Ideological Unity** – 78% of respondents noted that the media creates a unified informational space where the image of the "hero" is personified by the Ukrainian serviceman. This space also disseminates messages intended to instil pride in one's country.

**The Role of Video Content and Its Production** – 88% of participants highlighted that video content is a primary channel for disseminating information about military events. Videos recorded directly from the battlefield, as well as footage of operations involving the destruction of Russian troops and equipment, are widely used in the media. Furthermore, 76% of participants pointed out that such content often adopts aesthetic features reminiscent of war-themed video games, accentuating the dynamism and "heroism" of Ukrainian military actions. This content is not only produced by professional videographers but also by military units themselves, often through specialised press officers operating on the frontlines. A crucial part of this strategy is supporting high-quality content production by military journalists and filmmakers, which enhances viewers' emotional engagement.

**Linguistic Transformations in the Media** – 85% of participants observed shifts in media language practices, particularly an increased use of the Ukrainian language. Since the onset of the war, the use of Ukrainian as a symbol of national unity and the struggle for independence has markedly intensified. Additionally, 72% of respondents confirmed that Ukrainian-language content had become significantly more popular and widespread than in the pre-war period, when Russia had greater influence in Ukrainian media. Simultaneously, 25% of respondents noted the persistence of bilingualism in the media, driven by the need to reach a broader audience.

**Linguistic Manipulations** – 68% of participants observed a trend in the media toward simplifying and revising ethical standards to create more appealing and clear messages that can quickly gain popularity and circulate through digital channels.

**Ethical Challenges and the Problem of Disinformation** – 90% of respondents identified the management of disinformation and information filtering as a critical challenge. Strict control is maintained at the media level regarding which messages and images can be published to avoid causing panic or granting an advantage to the enemy. Additionally, 78% of participants emphasised the importance of withholding open information about Ukrainian military losses. While this approach helps maintain morale, it also poses risks to international transparency and may lead to legal repercussions.

The survey results demonstrate that the war in Ukraine has led to significant transformations in linguistic and communication practices. Strategies for national mobilisation, glorifying Ukrainian soldiers, and using digital technologies to create and disseminate content have become pivotal elements of communication policy. At the same time, media language practices have shifted towards the active use of the Ukrainian language, which is emerging as a symbol of unity and resistance. Simultaneously, the communication strategy leverages linguistic manipulation to maximise its impact on target audiences. Ethical challenges related to transparency and information security remain critical in wartime, necessitating a careful balance between maintaining security and shaping appropriate narratives for the international community.

In the context of war, digital information plays a crucial role (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020). However, this information front continuously evolves, involving diverse forces and methods that require constant adjustments to meet rapidly changing needs. From the outset, Ukraine has utilised the concept of an "image war," employing visual content to achieve its objectives and leveraging its cultural and political proximity to the West (Yablochnikova, 2023). Ukraine's official communication is meticulously crafted, employing a wide range of tools and registers to capture the attention of diverse target audiences in the contemporary information space. This strategy is distinguished by its ability to use humour and sarcasm, combining them with emotional, intimidating, or provocative elements.

Regarding communication structure, the Ministry of Defence's social media channels exemplify this unconventional approach, with their Twitter account filled with humorous and sarcastic posts in the form of memes, trolling, and striking commentary (Denysiuk et al., 2021). Reports on Russian losses are often accompanied by quotations, sometimes attributed to prominent military or political figures and occasionally to iconic personalities and characters from modern culture. This branding of Ukraine's communication starkly contrasts with Russia's traditional, formal methods.

This communication skillfully appeals to emotions, blending contemporary internet codes with traditional rhetoric. In addition to its effectiveness in capturing attention in an oversaturated information space, Ukraine leverages the emotional aspect, consistently seeking to evoke sympathy and portray its soldiers as altruistic heroes. Animals are significant in this strategy (Lahodynskyi et al., 2023). The Ministry of Defence's accounts frequently feature videos of Ukrainian soldiers rescuing animals affected by Russian bombings. The essence of this strategy lies in humanising Ukrainian soldiers, contrasting them with Russian forces, which are depicted as brutal, mainly through the exposure of their war crimes (Popelyuk & Naumov, 2021). These videos also aim to engage a broader audience, particularly those sensitive to social, humanitarian, and environmental issues.

The application of this strategy was particularly evident during the flooding caused by Russia's destruction of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant on 6 June 2023. Authorities widely disseminated images of animals affected by the flooding, emphasising the potential ecocide committed by Russia in Ukraine. Another prominent example of using animals to evoke sympathy abroad is the mine-detection dog named Patron. After receiving a medal for dedication from President Zelensky in May 2022, Patron became a mascot for the Ukrainian army and the Ministry of Emergency Situations (Antonyuk & Chernysh, 2022). His image was actively used on social media, aiding fundraising efforts for the military, notably to support injured soldiers during demining operations.

Thanks to their mastery of social media codes, participants in Ukraine's communication strategy during the war successfully implemented an active and appropriate approach in modern media.

One of the most distinctive features of linguistic transformations during wartime is the heightened activity of neologisms. Changes in linguistic studies during the war, particularly the intensive creation of neologisms, represent a crucial component

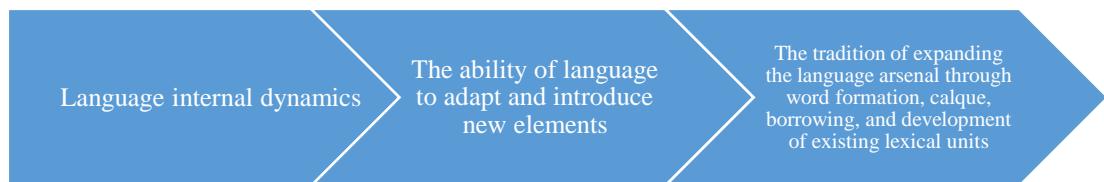
reflecting the rapid transformations of the linguistic environment driven by numerous external and internal factors (Akut, 2020). Linguistic processes intensify significantly under wartime conditions, which can be attributed to several key extralinguistic factors (Table 2):

**Table 2. Key Extralinguistic Factors in Linguistic Transformations**

Factor	Explanation
Reflection of social transformations in society	During the war, language reflects the changes taking place in society. Neologisms become a means of identifying new realities and cause a change in citizens' perceptions and reactions to crisis situations (Awadh & Shafiull, 2020). Each new term contributes to the cultural context, forming new concepts and assessments.
Openness to innovation	The growth of technological achievements and the expansion of the information space encourage the formation of new terms (Čilić & Plauc, 2021). In war conditions, it is necessary to quickly adapt language to new realities, especially in areas such as military operations, information warfare and everyday life, which causes the emergence of new language units.
Growing role of technological progress	Modern technologies, especially digital platforms, create a favourable environment for the emergence of new terms related to war (Frleta & Frleta, 2019). This has become an important factor in the spread of new language units, which are rapidly gaining popularity in society.
The intellectual level of citizens	Increasing levels of education and intellectual demands contribute to the development of precise and multifaceted use of language to describe complex phenomena, including military strategies, changes in governance, and economic reforms. This leads to new terms that can have technical and emotional content (Freixa & Torner, 2020).

Source: authors' development.

No less important are intralinguistic factors, which also significantly influence the creation of neologisms (Goltsova & Chybis, 2021). Among such factors, the following can be distinguished (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Intralingual Factors Influencing the Creation of Neologisms.**

Source: (Trudgill, 2022).

It should be noted that linguistic processes during the war respond not only to external challenges but also organically integrate into the traditions and characteristics of the Ukrainian language, maintaining its integrity (Strashko, 2022).

Neologisms that emerged during the war period serve as important linguistic markers of this time, as they encapsulate the full range of emotions and experiences of Ukrainians. They reflect not only the realities of war but also the psychological states through which the people pass – fear, hope, anger, heroism, and resilience. These terms have become integral to the contemporary linguistic landscape, actively shaping new perceptions of the surrounding world. Neologisms are organically absorbed into the Ukrainian linguistic worldview, forming new

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meanings and concepts that help society adapt to changes while preserving national identity. The active creation of new words during the war demonstrates how language responds to external events and assists society in forming new images, perspectives, and views on Ukraine's future.

The transformation of linguistic research during wartime in Ukraine has shown how participants in the communication strategy actively and effectively adapt their linguistic practices to the conditions of digital warfare. Through a deep understanding of social media and media codes, they created an adaptive strategy that meets the demands of the modern information space. This has allowed for the preservation of national unity and effective influence on international public opinion, demonstrating a high level of flexibility in adapting linguistic forms and narratives to new realities.

## **Discussion**

The success of the communication strategy implemented by Ukraine during the war reflects the essence of the conflict itself, as, since 2014, the country's civilian population has played a pivotal role in the communication sphere. This process, which took place in the context of military threats, indicates that in Ukraine, functions typically belonging to state institutions in other countries are often carried out by citizens themselves (Shkvorchenko, 2020). Over the years, numerous civil society organisations have identified the threat from Russia, actively working to raise awareness and mobilise the population to ensure unity and counter information attacks.

The transformation of communication strategies resulting from this process became a crucial element of success at all stages of the war, particularly during the full-scale invasion of 2022. Structures and networks established before the war proved essential for the effective mobilisation of citizens, which became a key factor in ensuring the resilience and effectiveness of the state during the war. Today, thanks to prior awareness-raising efforts, the population actively supports war efforts, understanding that this conflict is both military and existential.

The war has also brought significant changes in the linguistic practices and ethical paradigms employed in Ukrainian media. Specifically, this concerns the restructuring of communication strategies, including mobilising national consciousness and managing international perceptions of the invasion. The narratives promoted by the press actively incorporate patriotism, making civilians an integral part of the war process, especially in the era of digital media and social networks (Ilie, 2021).

Therefore, the hypothesis of this study is confirmed: the war led to radical changes in linguistic practices and communication strategies related to national mobilisation and international perceptions of the full-scale invasion. According to Ferrara et al. (2020), such changes have become an essential component of the overall strategy of a country under attack, where the role of the civilian population and modern media is decisive for ensuring success on all fronts of the war.

The development of strategic communication in Ukraine during the war has become a critically important tool for effectively disseminating information and

strengthening national unity, countering disinformation and manipulation, and managing public opinion. With its high level of awareness and ability to actively seek the truth, Ukrainian civil society has become an integral part of this process. In related research, Bradshaw et al. (2020) emphasise that, in crises, at the outset of war or conflict, people demonstrate remarkable autonomy, combining personal initiatives with a culture of volunteerism. In this regard, the population actively uses social networks to share encouraging videos for their fighters, call for resistance to aggression, and organise fundraising for war efforts (Bradshaw et al., 2020). Ukraine's civil society, prepared for such challenges since 2014, continues to play an essential role in combating Russian disinformation and propaganda (Vasishth & Gelman, 2021). In this context, Silva et al. (2020) stress that various civil society organisations, including StopFake, Detector Media, and the Ukraine Crisis Media Center (UCMC), have actively collaborated with government agencies to detect and block information threats. Their cooperation with state bodies, such as the Ministry of Culture and Information Security, the National Security and Defence Council, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has helped neutralise several networks operating in the Kremlin's interests.

At the same time, the resilience of Ukraine's civil society largely fuels the narrative power of Kyiv's propaganda, which is actively disseminated through social networks. The country's citizens have become not only consumers of information but also active participants in the communication strategy, publishing stories about the daily hardships of the war and supporting the morale of the national army. Memes created by civilians have become an essential part of this process, turning into cultural commodities. Popular images, such as a tractor pulling a Russian armoured vehicle or memes with the phrase "Russian warship, go f\*\*k yourself!" have become symbols of resistance, on which initiatives for financing the war have been based.

The transformation of linguistic research during wartime is a significant aspect of studying linguistic changes and communication strategies in times of crisis (Nenadić, 2019). In Ukraine, the war has become a powerful catalyst for changes in communication practices and language behaviour, ideological narratives, and cultural representations. Studying linguistic transformations in such contexts allows for a deeper understanding of how global crises and wars alter linguistic strategies and how adapting linguistic forms and narratives becomes necessary for effective information warfare.

As the experience of other countries shows, crisis periods significantly impact linguistic practices, transforming not only the vocabulary used but also ethical paradigms and mechanisms for transmitting information (Susser et al., 2019). In wartime, many narratives become political and emotionally charged, actively using symbols, memes, trolling, and even elements of cultural irony (Sætra & Mills, 2022). Such changes can also be observed in Ukraine, where the swift adaptation of linguistic forms and narratives has helped strengthen national unity, mobilise citizens, and counter external propaganda.

Groups like the North Atlantic Fella Organisation (NAFO) exemplify a new type of communication network, where anonymous volunteers, without a centralised structure, use humour, sarcasm, and internet trolling to combat Russian

disinformation (Van Peer, 2021). Such groups not only influence the information space but also raise funds for military needs, financing the purchase of drones and other essential resources for the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Since these organisations operate without strict control, their decentralised nature allows them to adapt more quickly to the changing conditions of war and respond effectively to the constantly evolving challenges of the information landscape.

Thus, Ukraine's experience during the war demonstrates how changes in linguistic practices and communication strategies can become vital factors in the struggle for national security and international support. Civil society, which actively uses modern media and digital communication tools, plays a key role in mobilising, creating narratives, and engaging in the information war. This experience also underscores the importance of adapting linguistic and communication strategies to wartime conditions, helping to strengthen national unity and effectively influence international perceptions of the enemy's full-scale invasion.

## Conclusion

The study's results highlight the importance of linguistic and communicative transformations caused by the war in Ukraine. The active use of new linguistic forms, particularly neologisms, and the modified communication strategies reflect the society's flexibility and adaptability in times of crisis. The war has catalysed the emergence of new terminology that mirrors social transformations and military realities. Neologisms emerging during this period serve as lexical innovations and cultural markers of the time, helping Ukrainians adapt to the changes occurring around them. Communication during the war actively contributes to strengthening national unity and mobilisation. Patriotic narratives, glorifying military achievements, and creating "heroic" images help boost public morale and maintain international support. This is a critical element of the strategy that enables Ukraine to preserve social cohesion effectively in the face of external aggression.

Linguistic and communicative transformations, such as the creation of neologisms and the adaptation of language strategies to wartime conditions, represent a crucial element of Ukraine's national mobilisation and international support. These changes demonstrate how language and communication can address the challenges of the modern information environment, preserve national identity, and flexibly shape new perspectives on the country's future.

Despite the insights provided by this study, certain limitations remain. The research is based on the analysis of only 100 respondents, which restricts the ability to generalise the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the study covers a specific period, limiting a comprehensive analysis of linguistic changes throughout the entire duration of the war. Given the dynamic nature of the conflict and the constant shifts in information flows, it is essential to conduct further research across different phases of the war to identify the evolutionary trends in communicative strategies and linguistic practices.

The prospects for future research primarily concern long-term studies on the evolution of communicative strategies. Further investigations at various stages of the

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war are necessary to assess how communication strategies and linguistic practices adapt during a prolonged military conflict. This will allow for a deeper understanding of changes in national mobilisation, strategic narratives, and adapting media and language strategies to emerging challenges.

Given the significant international dimension of the war in Ukraine, conducting comparative studies between Ukrainian and other international communication strategies is also critical. Such research will help identify common trends in information campaigns and the unique application of communication tools during warfare in different countries.

Another promising direction involves examining the role of digital platforms and social media in linguistic transformations. Analysing how new technologies facilitate the emergence of neologisms and reshape the linguistic environment during wartime will provide insight into the mechanisms of disseminating new linguistic forms and their societal impact. Future studies should address broader and more profound aspects, including the long-term dynamics of linguistic change, cultural and social factors, and the influence of emerging technologies on the development of communication strategies in 21st-century warfare.

This study analyses how the war in Ukraine has transformed linguistic practices, communication strategies, and ethical paradigms within media and academic discourse. It examines how language functions as a tool of national mobilization, identity formation, and information resistance under conditions of armed conflict. Employing a descriptive sociolinguistic design, the research collects qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with 100 participants across journalism, linguistics, and media professions, and triangulates these accounts with content from broadcast transcripts, social media posts, official press releases, and policy documents. Data are analyzed to identify linguistic shifts, communication patterns, and ethical dilemmas in wartime contexts. Findings reveal that linguistic transformation extends beyond lexical innovation to include neologism emergence, shifts in communication ethics, and the adoption of strategic narratives that promote national unity. Media discourse has become a key instrument for countering disinformation, mobilizing citizens, and shaping international perceptions of the conflict. Overall, wartime language is a dynamic mechanism of resilience, ethical awareness, and global communication, offering a model for understanding linguistic change in armed conflict.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has precipitated profound transformations in linguistic practices and communicative strategies, impacting both media discourse and scholarly analysis. This study investigates how language functions as a tool of national mobilization, identity construction, and information resistance under conditions of armed conflict. By integrating sociolinguistic theory with insights from information warfare and ethical journalism, the research illuminates how linguistic innovation and narrative construction contribute to resilience and international perception. The theoretical framework draws on Critical Discourse Analysis to examine power relations, ideology, and intertextuality in wartime narratives; sociolinguistics of conflict to explain language shift, code-switching, audience design, and the social life of neologisms under crisis; enregisterment and neology to trace the

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lifecycle of neologisms from coinage to institutionalized lexicon; and information warfare theory to connect linguistic practices with strategic aims such as mobilization and legitimacy. The study is guided by research questions about how neologisms emerge and diffuse, what ethical tensions arise in wartime journalism, and how strategic narratives and metaphors structure mobilization and international reception.

A descriptive sociolinguistic design was employed to capture language-in-use, ethical deliberations, and mobilization strategies across media environments affected by the Ukraine conflict. The study draws on semi-structured interviews with 100 participants drawn from journalism, linguistics, and media professions—reports, editors, media managers, linguists, and PR professionals—across diverse regions (east and west Ukraine; urban and rural) and organizational types (state media, independent outlets, NGOs). Purposive sampling ensured access to expert insight, supplemented by snowball sampling to reach networked perspectives within professional communities. Interviews explored language choices, audience targeting, ethical decision-making, and responses to misinformation; in addition to interviews, content data from broadcast transcripts, social media posts, official press releases, and policy documents were collected to triangulate participant accounts. All procedures adhered to ethical guidelines, with informed consent obtained and safeguards implemented to protect participant safety in potentially dangerous contexts. The analytic approach involved a multi-stage coding process: open coding to identify themes related to neologisms, ethics, narratives, and counter-disinformation, followed by axial coding to link linguistic shifts to ethical decisions and mobilization outcomes. A constant comparative method tracked changes across war phases, and triangulation across sources and researchers supported robustness. Reflexivity statements documented researchers' positions and potential biases, and where feasible, member checking was employed to validate interpretations. Software such as NVivo or Atlas.ti may be used for coding, with a data management plan and codebook appendix to enhance transparency and reproducibility.

Findings are organized around four core themes: neologisms, ethical dilemmas in wartime media, narratives and mobilization, and counter-disinformation mechanisms. A taxonomy of neologisms emerged, comprising military terminology, civilian resilience lexicon, humanitarian discourse, and information-war terms. For each lemma, glosses, usage contexts, and diffusion pathways were traced, revealing how neologisms function as cultural markers signaling shifts in social reality and strategic priorities. Recurring ethical tensions included disclosure versus protection, sensationalism under time pressure, sourcing integrity, and the ethics of depicting casualties; decision-making heuristics for content approval, risk assessment, and stakeholder influence varied across state media, independent outlets, and NGOs. Metaphors and framing—defense, resilience, sacrifice, sovereignty—shaped domestic and international reception, with audience design analyses showing language choices aligned with policy objectives and humanitarian messaging to sustain national cohesion while cultivating external legitimacy. Counter-disinformation mechanisms mapped concrete workflows for verification, cross-referencing with official sources, rapid corrections, and platform-specific moderation, with consideration given to

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speed-accuracy trade-offs, amplification risks, and identity markers involved in misinformation propagation.

The findings contribute to theoretical refinement and practical understanding in several dimensions. The results extend Critical Discourse Analysis and sociolinguistics of conflict by detailing how neology and ethical discourse function within information warfare to shape legitimacy and resilience. For journalism, the study offers actionable implications for ethics training, crisis communication, and newsroom governance under acute risk, emphasizing transparent sourcing, audience-aware framing, and responsible handling of sensitive content. Language policy and education emerge as important considerations for post-conflict restoration, orthographic debates, and media literacy initiatives aimed at strengthening resilience against disinformation. The international dimension highlights how domestic mobilization narratives interact with international framing, informing public diplomacy and cross-national media literacy efforts. Collectively, these insights illuminate how wartime language operates as a dynamic instrument of national mobilization and international perception.

The study's conclusions must be understood in light of several limitations. The sample comprises 100 participants, which constrains generalizability to the broader population. The analysis captures a specific temporal snapshot within a dynamic conflict, limiting a comprehensive account of linguistic changes across the entire duration of the war. The content corpus reflects accessible sources within safety constraints and may bias representation toward particular media ecosystems. Recognizing these limitations invites careful interpretation and motivates broader, longitudinal inquiry.

Future research should pursue longitudinal, stage-by-stage investigations of linguistic and ethical shifts during prolonged conflict and into post-conflict normalization. Comparative cross-national studies can reveal universal versus culture-specific patterns in wartime discourse and information campaigns. Technology-focused analyses should examine algorithmic amplification, bot networks, moderation policies, and digital literacy interventions shaping discourse and resilience to disinformation. Socio-political and regional variations warrant deeper exploration, including how regional identities within Ukraine intersect with language choices and mobilization narratives. Finally, post-conflict language policy warrants attention—orthographic debates, language rights, and education—to understand language dynamics in the aftermath and in ongoing crises.

The research foregrounds participant safety, risk assessment in both physical and online settings, and robust data governance to protect sensitive political content. Dissemination practices emphasize contextualization of neologisms and slogans to avoid amplifying propaganda while preserving analytical value. Reflexivity and transparency are maintained through detailed methodological documentation and adherence to approved ethical protocols, ensuring responsible conduct throughout the research process.

For journalism education and training, the study advocates integrating crisis communication ethics, rapid verification protocols, and audience-sensitive framing into curricula and professional development. Newsroom practices should emphasize standardized procedures for ethical gatekeeping, source transparency, and responsible depiction of casualties and human suffering. Public diplomacy and media literacy initiatives should inform policy discussions on international messaging strategies and resilience against misinformation, balancing the need to inform with the imperative to avoid amplifying harmful content. Collectively, these implications offer practical guidance for journalists, educators, policymakers, and international communicators navigating wartime discourse.

The present analysis demonstrates that wartime language operates as a dynamic instrument of national mobilization and international perception. Through the emergence of neologisms, evolving ethical norms, and strategically framed narratives, language enables Ukraine to navigate the modern information environment while sustaining social cohesion and external legitimacy. These insights lay a foundation for future research, policy development, and practical interventions in crisis communication and language policy.

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