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Lara Ryazanova-Clarke

Russian linguistic culture in the era of globalisation: A turn to linguistic violence

1. Introduction: Perceptions of violence in Russian linguistic culture

Violence is deeply ingrained in the linguistic culture of any society; however the normative level, salience and the place of violence in the discursive repertoires vary substantially, reaching their peak in the 'ages of extremes' (Steinmetz 2011). Vladimir Putin began his ascendance to the pinnacle of Russian power with a verbal threat: when asked at a press-conference in September 1999 how Russian authorities would react the terrorist attacks in Moscow attributed to the Chechen insurgents he promised to 'finish them off in an out-house'. Twelve year later, his current presidency began with an insult. He called the people who took to the streets in protest against his return to power 'bandar-logs', the idle chatting monkeys from Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, and compared their white ribbons—the symbol of their democratic values—to condoms. While the first presidential utterance was taken as a witticism even if of an ambiguous quality[1], the second marked a watershed in the style of communication between the authorities and the public and became a pretext to the discursive shift to violence of some magnitude.

Russian linguistic culture increasingly registers the perceptions that the public atmosphere is rife with violent vibes. The signs of the shifts in tone arrive from writers and intellectuals intently reflecting on the Russian language: Lev Rubinshtein, Vladimir Sorokin, Liudmila Ulitskaia and Dmitrii Bykov, to name just a few. The award-winning writer Liudmila Ulitskaia, for example, has produced a number of metalinguistic observations in which she expressed grave concerns that Russia is 'ill with aggression' as it 'moves steadily day by day further away from European civilisation' (2014a).[2] In her view, those who are responsible for coining aggressive derogatory names for other nations such as *amerikosy* ['Yanks'], *ukropy* ['Dill'][3], *zhidy* ['Yids'], *kitaezy* ['Chinks'] put the very survival of the world in danger (Ulitskaia 2014b). The prominent intellectual and publisher Irina Prokhorova has defined Russian society as 'human-hating' [*chelovekonenavistnicheskoe*], in which 'violence as a mode and norm of existence penetrates all of us and our lives through and through. Look at our language of polemics: there are endless wishes to see each other dead' (Prokhorova 2015).

This chapter explores the discursive processes that engender these perceptions. Its main argument is that in the years coinciding with Vladimir Putin's current presidential term (since 2012), linguistic culture in Russia has entered a different phase which may be defined as a turn to discursive violence. The era of globalisation has played an important part in this turn. Russian discursive violence acquired an international dimension as it developed hand in hand with the Kremlin's military escapades outside the borders of the Russian Federation. Since 2014, the public discourse has negotiated meanings against a constant background of war themes narrating and legitimising the annexation of Crimea, stirring and agitating for war in Eastern Ukraine, posturing with Turkey and articulating Russian military presence in Syria. As these discourses have become the staple of day to day news and discussions they affected the choice of linguistic resources and further public valorisation of these resources. By examining two key manifestations of the violent turn—silencing and weaponization of language—the chapter discusses the prominent discursive types, strategies and articulations that compound it.

2. Conceptualising linguistic violence

Much of the literature related to current linguistic violence in Russia concerns the pragmatic perspective and focuses on notions of impoliteness and growing aggression (see for e.g. Dymarskii 2008; Levontina 2012 & 2016; Pertova and Ratsiburskaia 2014; Weiss 2016). Widening the field, Valerii Efremov (2013) and Maksim Kornev (2015) draw attention to the widespread phenomenon of Russian digital aggression. The war of words taking place in virtual spaces has also been explored in relation to the

Crimean crisis (Pasholok 2013) and to the legitimisation strategies in the contestation of history (Kukulin 2013). Scholars have pinpointed that aggression and the continuous production of language of hatred is linked to the situation of the Russo-Ukraine crisis and revival of propaganda (Gatov 2015a & 2015b & 2015c; Gaufman 2015; Kachkaeva and Fossato 2016; Krongauz 2014; Pynnönniemi and Rácz 2016; Turkova 2014; Weiss 2005). Finally, looking at the discourse as a whole, Konstantin Skorkin (2014) argues that hate language has shifted from the marginal fields to become a 'core of public discourse', causing the 'barbarisation of public space'. However, a comprehensive assessment and analysis of linguistic violence in Russia today is only now beginning to appear (Ryazanova-Clarke 2015 & 2016) and requires further elaboration on the mechanisms and tools involved.

The position of this chapter is that linguistic violence may be construed as a verbal action which inflicts a symbolic injury (Kaplan 2009: 71). There are, of course, many ways in which language may be involved in inflicting damage. In addition to often accompanying physical violence directly, linguistic violence concerns the situations in which language (or no language) records, precedes and assists in instigating violent acts. As O'Connor succinctly put it, discourses of violence relate to 'language that accompanies acts of violence, language that reports or reclaims acts of violence, language that leads to violence and violation, language that is itself a violation' (1995: 309). Being 'speakable', linguistic violence can also be 'unspeakable': there may be situations in which violence may be constituted as silence (O'Connor 2000; Jaworski 1993 & 1997 & 2003; Labov 1991) and silencing, censorship and other forms of language control (Anthonissen 2008; Thiesmeyer 2003). Linguistic violence has a highly performative nature (Agamben 2009; Austin 1962; Butler 1998) and actualises both the illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts. It is contingent and contextual, and, as William Gay (2007) posits, it resides in subjectivity relying on perceptive, emotive and interpretative structures.

Violence is articulated, perpetuated and perceived in discourses (Reisigl 2006; Reisigl & Wodak 2001; Wodak 2015; Wodak & Richardson 2013; Wodak et al 2013). In this sense, negotiations of language as violence or non-violence take place in a social forum which Ernest Laclau describes as 'a vast argumentative texture through which people construct their reality' (1993: 341). In this chapter, both verbal and non-verbal forms are construed as constituting manifestations of discourse (Laclau 1993, Laclau and Mouffe 1985). Moreover, discursive initiation, interpretations and performance of linguistic violence are embedded within particular 'fields of action', while 'discourses and discourse topics "spread" to different fields, … cross between fields, overlap, refer to each other' (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 383). The following sections examine material within three main fields of action – legislation, the 'grey area' beyond the law, and the state controlled media. The sections trace how particular forms of expression, or particular actions which stop expression are conducive to violence. Data has been obtained from a database of laws and state controlled media discourse produced in Russia between 2012 and 2015 and whose contents or ways of expression received a wide public resonance.

Recent research has identified that in comparison with the linguistic cultures of Western democracies, Russian public communication experiences specific problems of mutual misunderstanding and deficiencies in communication strategies (Vakhtin & Firsov 2016). This general state of public discourse has suffered a further shift, towards saturation with violence, since the Russian Duma elections in the autumn 2011. The context for that was a dramatic change on Russian political scene. The apparent manipulations of the voting system shocked the Moscow public in Spring 2012 (Gabowitsch 2017), when after having formally sidestepped for one term into the role of Prime Minister, Putin returned to the Kremlin as Russian president. His return, which for many Russians had dubious legitimacy, became a notable watershed in the power relations in Russia. It has reconfigured the 'authoritarian consensus' (Rogov 2015), or the unspoken 'contract' between the authorities and the public which insured the previous stability of the Putin regime. According to the previous 'deal', the public was deemed to accept the 'imitational democracy' established under Putin's rule and to look away from the authoritarian trends and corruption at the top. In exchange, the public received from the state a share of high oil revenues which, beyond creating enormous oligarchical wealth, trickled down and translated into a growing standard of living for the population. This allowed a certain support for the pensioners and the disabled, and

engendered the emergence of the middle class (or at least, its semblance) (Gudkov 2014, Shevtsova 2014). The 2011-12 anti-Putin mass street protests in Moscow demonstrated that the liberal public was no longer content with the previous deal. What ensued was the hardening of the regime into what Nikolai Petrov (2014) has termed 'Stalin-lite', a regime that has turned more openly towards the policy of threat and selective showcase-style repressions (Gel'man 2015). The inevitability of violence and fear was now stipulated as a condition in the new 'pact' the authorities offered to the public. A spate of draconian repressive laws was adopted by the Kremlin-controlled Duma, and numerous court cases and show trials against not only activists but often, randomly targeted individuals[4] became a staple of everyday news. A mobilisation model of the authoritarian consensus began to be developed after the annexation of Crimea, accompanied by a change of the official stylistics to the rhetoric of 'a besieged fortress' (Petrov 2014: 57). The public display of violence and production of fear were now offered by the Kremlin in exchange for the image of a strong nation assertively acquiring new territories and bringing awe to external enemies. This image began to be disseminated on official television channels and the public was invited to share. Moreover, having annexed part of the Ukrainian territory, leading a proxy war in Ukrainian Donbass, and intervening in the conflict in Syria,[5] Russian state violence spilled overboard and became international, leading to a political confrontation with the much of the developed world. The country's aggressive foreign policy is pursued to a chorus of 'patriotic' propaganda directed towards internal consumption while, from the point of view of external consumption, Russia has been using its international multilingual media outlets RT and Sputnik, making some observers suggest that these have become one of the major information threats for today's European democracy (EU Parliament 2016). (See Chapter XXX for a discussion of RT)

Sarah Marsden and Alex Schmid (2011) have devised a typology of political violence in society by positioning political action of a state within a range between the state of peace and civil war. The first level is *persuasive politics* characterised by the rule of law, constitutional procedures and the politics of compromise. The second level is *pressure politics* whereby the state actor uses oppression manifested by such actions as manipulation of electoral process, censorship, harassment and misuse of legislation. Finally, there is the level of *violent politics* whose characteristic actions are violent repression, assassinations, state terrorism (such as torture and disappearances), massacres and counter-insurgence (Marsden and Schmid 2011: 161). Using Mardsen and Schmidt's scale, it appears that against the background of pressure politics that have taken place throughout Putin's rule, marked by the establishment of Kremlin control over the media, election manipulations and even murders of several journalists, developments since the protests of 2011 point to the acceleration of this trend and more frequent occurrences of the elements of violent politics. Indicative of the shift are the increased harassment of the opposition figures (such as Mikhail Kasianov of the Parnas party and the group of activists around Alexei Navalny's Foundation for the Fight with Corruption), the use of sentences on criminal charges against peaceful protesters; the kidnapping and smuggling of several Ukrainian citizens out of their country, of which the most prominent figure was the military pilot Nadezhda Savchenko who was tried at a Russian court in 2016. Even more striking was the still unsolved political assassination of the oppositional leader Boris Nemtsov in February 2015.

3. Silencing

In 2012 three members of Pussy Riot rock group members stood trial for singing an anti-Putin song in a Moscow cathedral. In protest at their incarceration the performance artist Pavel Pavlensky sowed his mouth shut. This violent image of inability to speak may be construed as a powerful metaphor of silencing freedom of expression in the 'third-term' Russia. The increased silencing by the Russian state has indeed become a sign of a manifest move towards symbolic violence in public communication.

Silencing is conceived as a discursive act, a socially constructed practice (Luhmann ctd. in Thiesmeyer 2003: 4). According to Lynn Thiesmeyer (2003), silencing is linguistic on the part of both the silencer and the silenced, it is 'a way of using language to limit, remove or undermine the legitimacy of another use of language' (Thiesmeyer 2003: 2), either in the form of physical speaking or by disabling the unacceptable discourse. The authority for silencing resides in such institutional entities as government, legal systems, law enforcement structures, and so on. Contrary to Thiesmeyer, Christine Anthonissen

commenting on the regime of the 1980s South Africa, advances a wider view of silencing which includes both linguistic and non-linguistic means. Both, she claims, dictate what can and cannot be said and are positioned '[b]etween the two extremes of imposing silence by killing the speaker and achieving silence by self-censorship of a speaker' (Anthonissen 2008: 401).

The growing elements of violent politics in Russia (including non-linguistic extreme actions) make the inclusive parameters suggested by Anthonissen especially relevant for the discussion of the contemporary Russian situation. As Rogov has noted, between 2014-2016 'the broadening of repressive practices has acquired a systemic character as they become more and more the structural element of political management' (2016). Despite the fact that the investigation of Boris Nemtsov's assassination has not been completed at the time of writing this text and despite the widely held view that the organisers and instigators of the hit will unlikely ever be named, it is clear that shutting down the liberal opposition discourse was an obvious result, and possibly an intention, of this murder. It might be seen as symbolic that Nemtsov was gunned down next to the Kremlin wall a few hours after he presented a fiery criticism of Putin's policy in Ukraine live on air on Echo of Moscow radio station (Nemtsov 2015).

3.1. Acceptable speech and discursive displacement: The legal field

Silencing occurs as a mechanism of society's symbolic struggle for discursive domination and legitimacy and the right to formulate the doxic relations to the outside world (Bourdieu 1991). Discursive suppression leads to the state of linguistic culture in which the monological -- that which expresses a single point of view -- form of speaking is normalised, dominating over dialogic and polyphonic communication while the alternative (unacceptable) discourses receive little or no access to the public fields and become devalued in symbolic capital.

3.1.1 Media and the internet

In this respect, criminalisation of verbal activity through law production has emerged in Russia as a key instrument of silencing and suppression of what is considered by the authorities to be unacceptable discourse. Actions have been conducted within a scale ranging from completely 'switching off the sound' to replacing or partially replacing by force unacceptable discourse with an acceptable alternative. Here, much of the violence is primarily initiated in the legal field of action. One of its manifestations is the series of restrictive laws that aim to disrupt and assert state control over individual expression on the internet. In the words of the liberal Novaia Gazeta's observer Kirill Martynov, 'within almost five years of its work, the State Duma in its current composition did not only ban everything it could imagine but also reduced the country's political discussion to the exchange of opinions on what else could be banned' (Martynov 2016).[6]

Suppressing 'extremist' speech on the pretext of fighting terrorism is part of the cluster of quasi-legal actions of the Russian authorities. Andrei Richter provides a detailed analysis of how the government has consistently encroached on the Mass Media statute whose article 4 provided for the 'Inadmissibility of misuse of the freedom of mass communication' (Richter 2012: 291). The adoption of the extremism statute and other legislation amendments brought concerns for fighting extremism -- the notion of which was gradually expanding – to overtake concerns for any violations of media freedoms and journalists' rights (Richter 2012). Maria Kravchenko of the Moscow based analytical Centre for Nationalism, Xenophobia and Human Rights 'Sova' notes that abuse is inherent in the legal discourse, produced by the low quality and vague wordings of the anti-extremist statutes which engender a possibility for a disproportioned limitation of freedoms including freedom of expression. She observes that since around 2012, 'the mechanisms for suppression of the oppositional and simply independent forms of activity began to be consciously formed' (Kravchenko 2015: 100). The 'space of the illegal' covered by the anti-extremist laws was expanded to punish expressions of opinion (for example, the statutes on 'historical revisionism', or 'separatism') to such a degree that their literal interpretation would require mass repressions.

Since 2012, the Federal Agency Roskomnadzor[7] has stepped up its activity to become a de-facto institution performing selective but systemic and effective internet censorship (Soldatov 2015). Among the measures for putting a full barrier to unacceptable speech was the blacklisting of sites, especially after the 2014 amendments to the Law 'On information, information technology and the protection of information'[8]

(also called after the name of the amendments' proposer, the 'Lugovoi Law'). unfinished sentence?. The novelty of the Lugovoi amendments was that no court ruling was required to cut off public access to the 'culprit's' site. Thus, in 2014, in the implementation of the law, three independent online electronic news and analytical resources were blocked indefinitely – *Ezhednevnyi zhurnal* (ej.ru), *Grani* (grani.ru) and *Kasparov* (kasparov.ru) together with the popular anti-corruption Aleksei Navalnyi blog, which, following several court cases, was unblocked eighteen months later (Andreeva 2015). According to the grassroots watchdog Roskomsvoboda, apart from these prominent and apparently politically motivated resources, by the time of writing, over 1,120 000 sites have been blocked in total, of which 85% blockings had no reasonable grounds (Roskomsvoboda 2016). Prior to this, Russia did not apply any regulation to the internet whatsoever.

In addition, measures for discourse devaluation and partial replacement are provided, in the Law 'On regulating information exchange with the use of information and telecommunication networks',[9] known among the public as 'the bloggers law', by which popular bloggers with 3,000 and over visits a day are equalled to media outlets. They have to be registered with the authorities and comply with media standards in respect of checking the information published.

An attack on the freedom of communication provided by the internet continued with the package of laws initiated by Duma Deputy Irina Iarovaia and Senator Viktor Ozerov; these were adopted in June 2016, again as part of the anti-extremist statute. Among other measures, internet posting and re-posting containing 'calls for or justification of terrorism' are to be treated as those published in the mass media and be penalised by up to seven years of imprisonment[10]. Already deemed as a law that, if implemented by the letter, could put the Russian telecommunication systems at the brink of collapse (Latsinskaia 2016), the new statute obligates mobile communication operators, internet providers, and IT companies (the 'organisers of the distribution of information on the internet') to keep the content of communication for six months and provide the secret services with decoding keys to be able to access coded messages (Federal Law No 374-FZ; Meduza 2016). Despite being called by the Presidential Council for the Development of Civil society and Human Rights 'unconstitutional, contradictory and legally imprecise' (Obrashchenie 2016), the package of statutes was sped through the Duma and signed by Putin on 6 July 2016.

A complex of measures has been used to suppress the voice and influence of independent and liberally minded cable television stations. Blocking broadcasting licences and the exclusion from cable and satellite offerings for television channels have served among other silencing mechanisms implemented towards the Moscow based channel Dozhd' and the Siberian Tomsk TV-2. Thus a controversial question posed on the channel Dozhd' about whether the Siege of Leningrad had been inevitable was used as an excuse to begin a harassment campaign against the channel. In the course of this campaign Dozhd' lost distribution rights from many cable operators (Reshenie 2014). In the case of TV-2, it was an alleged fault of the local transmission centre that allowed the authorities to stop the broadcasts of the channel and to squeeze it off air and into an online format (Tomichi 2014). As if that was not bad enough, a law was passed in July 2014, which introduced changes to advertising rules, banning advertising for pay to view television companies.[11] Consequently Dozhd' found itself cut off from advertising revenues resulting in pluralism in Russian media diminishing even further (Reporters 2014).

Commenting on the spate of Russian recent laws on the media and the internet, the Head of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia desk of Reporters Without Borders Johann Bihr summarised that 'continuing the trend of the past two years and coming at a time when control of information is at the heart of the conflict in Ukraine, these laws constitute a grave attack on media pluralism, internet freedom and the constitutional right to freedom of expression' (Reporters 2014).

3.1.2 Harassment of the opposition: The case of Alexei Navalny

An increasing persecution of opposition politicians and journalists is another form of social practice aimed at muting alternative discourse and monologizing Russian social life (Roshchin 2016). This practice regularly occurs in the legal field of action albeit, in many cases, with dubious legitimacy. A stark example of this is the series of criminal investigations and court cases launched against the anti-corruption campaigner

and opposition politician Alexei Navalnyi. Navalnyi rose to prominence as a charismatic popular leader during the 2011-12 Moscow protests and since then, he has continued to exist 'in the state of half-freedom' (Pastukhov 2014). In 2013 Russia's Investigative Committee re-opened a previously failed investigation regarding his involvement in the purported embezzlement of timber, which an independent Chicago-based law firm who studied the case materials called undoubtedly politically motivated (Weiss 2013: 75). In the middle of his campaign for the Moscow mayoral elections for which he intended to stand, Navalnyi was tried and sentenced to five years in prison, a sentence that was later commuted to five years' probation. An odd twist occurred when Navalnyi was released suddenly after sentencing and was allowed to continue his election campaign – observers explained this as the Kremlin's intention to use him as a credible opponent for the mayoral incumbent Sergei Sobianin and legitimise the election (Weiss 2013; Laruelle 2014). However, Navalnyi managed to take advantage of this opening and used the a priori doomed campaign to defy silencing. His vehement and creative campaign during which day-in day-out he spoke directly to thousands of voters was a vehicle to let his suppressed discourse be heard, which promoted the western path in Russia's development and democratic and anti-corruption values. Eventually he surprised both his supporters and opponents by the result of 27 percent against the predicted 8 percent, while Sobianin 'won' with 51 percent. Navalnyi's ability to capitalise on the temporary break and to get the oppositional message across using simple props and a battalion of grass-root supporters, was a formidable tour de force. He managed to recalibrate and re-valorise the alternative discourse, which seems to be the reason why yet another criminal investigation, this time against him and his brother, Oleg, was accelerated. In December 2014, an even more absurd court trial concluded, in which the brothers were found guilty of fraud in their business dealings with the French cosmetics company Yves Rocher. Despite the fact that Yves Rocher later admitted that no harm was done to the company, Oleg Navalnyi was sentenced to 3.5 years in a penal colony while Aleksei received another 3.5 year probation. Navalnyi was denied a right to speak to his supporters again: while the second investigation was going, for many months he was kept under house arrest with no permission to use post, telephone or the internet to communicate with the outside world (Naval'nogo otpravili 2014).

At all stages, the particular emphasis by the law enforcement agencies on depriving Navalnyi of speech suggests that controlling and mitigating his discursive presence was probably the prime objective of these manipulations. His sentences ensured that due to having criminal convictions, he was excluded for an observable future from standing for public offices (Justice 2013). This has become even more obvious when a new wave of silencing of Navalny began soon after he announced that he would run for President against Vladimir Putin in 2018 elections. His campaign work to set up offices across the country has been constantly disrupted by the police (Politsiia prishla 2017), in March 2017, Navalny was again arrested at an anti-corruption rally which he organised, and spent 15 days in jail. The story of Navalnyi also demonstrates that the use of criminal law for muting the critical voices of public figures in Russia today may be very nuanced, non-linear and complex, and in a Foucauldian way, might be exercised by many, possibly even conflicting actors. However ultimately, notwithstanding some courageous shows of resistance, the use of the law to disable alternative discourse achieves a great deal of success by taking the most active leaders out of the legitimate political process.

3.2 Outside the law

For Aleksei Navalny, the consequences of opposing the Kremlin have not stopped at receiving politically motivated sentences. On 28 April, on the way to give a public talk, he was attacked by a member of the radical pro-Kremlin group SERB who flung a green dye ('*zelenka*') laced with a chemical into his eyes. This resulted in potential loss of sight requiring an urgent operation abroad (Palazzo 2017; Ufimtseva 2017). The attacker was caught on camera as he was throwing the substance but a month later, he has not been questioned. This case demonstrates that many forms and techniques of suppressing speech by the state have moved far beyond the field of legitimate action.

Among the spectrum of such techniques of tackling unacceptable discourse are cyber-attacks on web sites and discursive disruptions on behalf of Kremlin-controlled bots and trolls[12]. In broadcast media, these techniques include the production of alternative discourses by manufacturing pseudo-news and

television ‘documentaries’ which contain falsified or illegally obtained material in order to discredit and humiliate the opponents[13]. Censorship of mainstream media is yet another form of practice in which ‘silence becomes a tool of socio-political oppression’ (Anthonissen 2008: 404). Despite the fact that censorship is prohibited by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, main television channels put pressure on editors and presenters, draw black lists of opposition figures[14] and are compliant to instructions and scripts for their information programmes which they receive from the Kremlin. Such prompts guide the production of the ‘correct’ authorised discourse, serving as a discursive framework in its production. Proof of this was provided in March 2016, when the journalist Ilia Barabanov had obtained and published documents which supplied themes, perspectives and keywords recommended for use in television discussions of current affairs. The document contained recommendations that an analysis of the situation in Ukraine should focus on the following key representational devices: ‘the atmosphere of lawlessness, a growing chaos, Nazis in key state posts; an orgy of criminals deranged by their own impunity; the economy tumbling down into the abyss’ (Opublikovany instruktsii 2014).

Modern technologies and social media have been exploited for their ability to spread the preferred discourse instantly and to erase and distort the other. In 2012, the clandestine Kremlin practices of discursive displacement expanded to a franchise known as the ‘troll factories’. Located first in a small resort of Olgino near St Petersburg and later on, at the address of 55 Savushkina Street in St Petersburg these are organisations officially known by the label of ‘Internet Research Ltd’. This ‘research’ organisation is financed by the ‘Concord’ holding headed by the Russian President’s personal cook Evgenii Prigozhin. Several former employees of the ‘troll factory’ tell a story of around four hundred employees sitting at their computers in a four-story office block producing blogs 24 hours a day for a good salary. The team of ‘Kremlin-bots’ is divided into several groups. One group produces daily instruction notes – the so called ‘technical tasks’ that ensure the prevalence of the dominant discourse in bloggers’ contributions; another one writes blogs and comments on social media platforms such as LiveJournal, Twitter, Facebook and VKontakte, and the third group comments on the current news in Russian and increasingly in other languages in international online media. In a 12-hour shift they are expected to produce around 150 comments (Rezunkov 2015; Walker 2015).

The trolls are instructed to engage in a curious creative exercise of sociolinguistic constructivism: they have to construct for themselves various linguistic masks displaying different discourse-specific identities (Zimmerman 1998). Each troll writes under several invented names from several false accounts and mimics a variety of speech styles which, in their view, should represent the typical voices of, for example, a trusting patriotic housewife, a pensioner, a sceptical member of intelligentsia, or an earnest soldier eager to give his life for Vladimir Putin. In addition to instructions, compliance with the preferred discourse is facilitated by regularly organised political information sessions and distributing analytical notes in which recommendations on the ‘appropriate’ stance on events and personalities are provided (Burkhard 2015; Rezunkov 2015).

The former employee Tat’iana has shared one such analytical note recommending how to spin the oppositional punk group Pussy Riot:

> <…> it has to be highlighted that the participants of the group who openly propagate anti-government sentiments are suffering from a complex personality disorder. <…> the group is not popular among Russian citizens. Russians openly despise Pussy Riot and criticise all their actions. This is a deserved reputation for a group whose main objective is anti-government and anti-Russian propaganda. (Rezunkov 2014)

As Vasilii Gatov has argued, the violent linguistic performance produced as part of the technocratic routine of the Kremlin trolls who daily go into their office, follow instructions and churn out the prescribed number of blogs, may be construed as ‘the banality of evil’ described by Hanna Arendt and Theodore Adorno (Gatov 2015).

4. Weaponisation of language

4.1 Re-emergence of propaganda

The discursive displacement that Russian trolls are studiously working on may be called opinion management and manipulation, often described within the concepts of disinformation and propaganda. According to Jowett and O'Donnell, propaganda is a subcategory of persuasion in communication, 'the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist' (2012: 7). Notably, in almost a quarter of a century after the end of the totalitarian Soviet regime, propaganda has become again a much discussed dominant macro-strategy of Russian communication space. The onslaught of the media and, first of all, television propaganda coincided with Ukraine's Maidan protests and accelerated after the fall of President Viktor Ianukovich, aiming to achieve a 'post-Crimea authoritarian mobilisation' (Yaffa 2014; Rogov 2015). According to Joshua Yaffa, this process has been 'unprecedented in the post-Soviet era, implying or inventing dark suspicions about Western motives in Ukraine while painting Russia's own meddling as a heroic answer to the call of justice' (2014).

Propaganda was ingrained in the political operations of the Soviet totalitarian system so that its new incarnation cannot but rest on its heritage and collective memory. Pynnönniemi and Rácz (2016) observe that the ingredients of success in Russian media propaganda (or 'strategic deception', as they call it) are rooted in the mix between the evocation of the well-developed Soviet propaganda machine and absorbing the new tools afforded by contemporary communication technologies. Due to this combination, or to use another term, the post-modern hybridity, Russian propaganda discourse has demonstrated strength, fluidity and an ability to ever change and morph.

Propaganda is construed to be a form of weaponization of language, serving as a device of communication distortion and construction of the enemy (Pratt 2009). As Altheide has argued, power, media propaganda and popular culture usually find a conceptual linkage through the politics of fear that ultimately resides in discourse (2006: 117). Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss (2014) posited that the re-introduction of propaganda meant that many of Russia's instruments of soft power have been turned into the weapons of 'hybrid' war, whereby the cultural sphere, mass media and economy are weaponised. At the same time, the scale of use of the tactics of such hybrid war have recently accelerated to the level at which, in Andrei Okara's words, it has become 'one of the connectors, one of the foundations of the contemporary Russian political system' (Svoboda 2016).

The revived propaganda was quick to create a distinguishable set of tools and discursive practices which contributed to the establishment of what Vadim Shtepa (2016) calls post-modern totalitarianism.[15] This is in effect a media product, in which aggression became a 'new norm'. It kept the war in the focus of the information field for months, blurring the 'hot' war on the ground with the information war and blended news with genres of popular culture, turning war reporting into a series resembling a soap opera (Kachkaeva 2015).

Several key figures came to prominence as the main shapers of the discursive characteristics which have rapidly grown to be the recognisable hallmarks of the antagonistic quality of Russian public discursive culture. These include a plethora of programme presenters such as Vladimir Solov'ev, presenter of 'The Sunday Evening with Vladimir Solov'ev' [Voskresnyi vecher s Vladimirom Solov'evym] show ('Rossiia' TV channel); Petr Tolstoy, presenter of 'Politics' [Politika] (2013-2016) and 'Time Will Tell' [Vremia pokazhet] (2014-2016) talk shows (the First Channel), Andrei Norkin with his shows 'The Norkin List' [Spisok Norkina] (2014-2015) as 'The Meeting Place' [Mesto vstrechi] on the NTV. Provide transliterations of titles in [ ]- word count is OK to do this. Regularly featuring television personalities include the leader of the nationalist and populist 'Liberal Democratic' Party Vladimir Zhirinovsky, right-wing philosopher and writer Alexander Prokhanov, the Duma deputies Irina Iarovaia and Semen Bagdasarov. One of the most prominent among them is Dmitrii Kiselev – the presenter of the weekly 'News of the Week' [Vesti nedeli], a Sunday 'analytical' programme aired on Rossiia TV channel. Critics claim that Kiselev's presentation style is characterised by a paranoid worldview, hatred, warmongering and a non-discriminate use of untruths (Pomerantsev & Weiss 2014: 11; Yaffa 2014). In addition to his television stardom, in 2013, Kiselev was appointed by Presidential decree as the head of the newly launched state-owned international news agency Russia Today [Rossiia Segodnia], the position which earned him a title of 'a latter-day minister of propaganda' (Yaffa 2014).

4.2 The language of Dmitrii Kiselev: *Manufacturing violent contexts and fear*

Many episodes of 'News of the Week' have earned notoriety; however, one which aired on 16 March 2014 caused an unprecedented shock among many viewers and critics. It was Dmitrii Kiselev's articulation of a threat to reduce the United States of America to 'radioactive dust'. Here I analyse an excerpt of this programme's episode as an illustration of the strategies employed by the new generation of Russian propagandists in manufacturing violent contexts, create divisions, construct an enemy and engage in speech acts of threat.

> Earlier, Americans said they began freezing the preparations for the G8 summit in Sochi planned for July. They say, 'Boycott Russia, we've got nothing to say to them. But if this is the case, why does Obama keep on phoning Putin and, in addition, speaks with him for hours? For example, on the 1st of March, their conversation lasted for as much as 90 minutes. And on the 7th of March, he also rang. They spoke in January and February, but Obama kept on sitting and sitting [in front of the phone]. Granted, this might be a coincidence,
>
> [a chyron appears: a photo of Barak Obama with the caption 'as the hair turns grey' [*sedina v golovu*]
>
> but to be frank, his contact is not that simple. According to the opinion polls published on Friday,
>
> [a chyron appears: a table with portraits of Obama and Putin, with questions and figures. 'Would you call Vladimir Putin a strong [*sil'nym*] or a weak leader? 78%: strong [*sil'nym*]. Would you call Barak Obama a strong or a weak leader? 45%: strong.']
>
> Americans themselves consider Putin a much stronger [tougher, more efficient] [*kuda bolee krepkim*] move endnote 16 here? Yes, please leader than Obama. This can be seen in the diagrams.
>
> [a chyron reads: 'into radioactive dust']
>
> And Russia is the only state in the world able to turn the United States of America into radioactive dust. I do not know whether this is coincidence but here we are, Obama rang Putin on 21 January -- probably tried to put pressure on him yet again -- and literally the next day, on 22 January, an article appears in the official press outlet of the Russian government, in which in simple terms it is spelled out how our system of guaranteed nuclear retribution operates. The Perimeter. Dead Hand – this is how it has been known in the USA. I totally recommend you read it. The point is that even if men at our commanding positions go silent after the enemy's nuclear attack, the invincible system will send our strategic rockets flying out of shafts and submarines in the correct direction. Do find it yourself – it is a publication on the site of Rossiiskaia Gazeta from 22 January – highly interesting! Enter 'The Perimeter System' in your search.

As Wodak reminds us, the politics of fear produces simplistic, anti-intellectual explanations and solutions (2015: 67). The excerpt from 'News of the Week' follows this pattern: the world pictured in it demonstrates a Manichean dichotomy of 'us' and the 'enemy'. The enemy, epitomised by the President of the United States Barak Obama, is discursively diminished by ironic humiliation picturing him to be an insistent caller to Putin. In Kiselev's rendition, Obama's 'extravagant' behaviour of frequently phoning Putin and speaking for hours is a sign of Obama's weakness: the unrequired relentlessness and length of his calls are linguistically emphasized and over-specified. The devices used are informal style and irony articulated by the verbal expressions *pozvanivaet* ['keep on phoning'] and *razgovarivaet chut' li ne chasami* ['speaks for hours']. Equally, modal particles *mol* ['they say'] and *azh* ['as much as'] are markers of the informal, demotic register while the latter indicates that the quality it refers to (the 90 minutes of conversation) exceeds the expected norm, which is supported by the detailed list of dates when Obama contacted Putin. To further construct the meaning of Obama's 'weakness', the presenter engages the topos of authority, quoting some alleged American polls which indicate that a large majority of Americans think that Putin is stronger than their own president. For more humiliation meted out at Obama, the description of him avidly

seeking Putin's attention is subtly laced with homoerotic overtones. During the programme the chyrons with keywords, pictures and diagrams support Kiselev's narrative. The passage about Obama's frequent and insistent calls features a corresponding written note saying *sedina v golovu* ['as the hair turns grey']. The public can easily recognise in this the first part of the Russian proverb *sedina v golovu – bes v rebro* ['as the hair turns grey, one gets possessed by lust'] and see in it a hint at Obama's sexual infatuation with his conversation partner. The homosexual overtones in Kiselev's description of Obama are contrasted to Putin's highlighted strength (which is overlexicalised with the use of two adjectives -- sil'nyi and krepkii) and in the context of non-reciprocity, show Obama as weak, needy and ridiculous. This comparison is still not clear to me, if the Kiselev extract intimates that Obama is desirous of homosexual contact with Putin (rather than having this forced on him? Please could you add a line to explain.

In contrast, Putin is represented indirectly, seen at a respectful distance and with some element of passivization as Kiselev pictures him on the receiving end of the phone relations with Obama. This affords his image an overtone of mysteriousness – a quality that possibly pertains, in Kiselev's rendition, to power. The presenter approbatively qualifies Putin as *ne-prostoi* ['not that simple'], playing out the qualities of toughness and strength through the demonstration of the Americans' appreciation of him.[16] The implied connection between Obama's telephone call and the next day's *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* article about Russia's miraculous nuclear capabilities also indirectly stresses Putin's machismo and decisiveness.

And yet, does the linguistically diminished and humiliated 'enemy', who, despite the sanctions ('boycott') imposed on Russia, resorts to peaceful negotiations, merit the nuclear threat? The second part of the programme's excerpt contains exactly that as it relates to (and promotes) the newspaper article and presents the viewers with a picture of a total existential apocalypse. The story goes that if Russians were to die in the purported American nuclear attack, the so-called 'Perimeter' system would automatically launch 'guaranteed' final nuclear retribution strikes into the euphemistically named 'right direction'. There is little in Kiselev's account that bridges unambiguously a cause and effect of the dreadful event. His presupposition—that the enemy's nuclear attack which would trigger the 'Dead Hand' nuclear response is inevitable—is not supported by the earlier part of the text. In fact, all the evidence given by Kiselev and related to the US and Obama leads to the opposite view: that Obama's America is a weakling, humiliates itself and has a soft spot for Putin. The flawed relation in which a proposition has two mutually exclusive presuppositions produces a confusing, irrational message~~, in which two truths are mutually exclusive~~. This also creates an impression that for the speaker, the war, be it real or the information one, can be waged with no specific casus belli or even indeed an objective. The violence in Kiselev's narrative of the nuclear attack appears therefore senseless and his speech act of threat appears unjustified and, by this token, sinister and dangerous.

In the meanwhile, Kiselev's threatening move continues building discursive divisions into 'us' (*nashi sistemy, nashi komandnye punkty* ['our systems', 'our commanding positions']) and 'the enemy' (*vrazheskaia ataka* ['enemy attack']). His performance of threat gains a rhetorical force as it reaches a poetic high register in the description of the Russian nuclear 'Dead Hand' system. It is manifested in the use of the biblical world *vozmezdie* ['retribution'] and in the choice of lofty euphemisms such as *zamolchat* ['go silent'] to refer to the death of Russian commanders and *otpravit v polet* ['will send flying'] rather than *vystrelit* ['will shoot']. The sense of disturbance is created by Kiselev's use of attributes which stress the inevitability of the Russian counter-attack: *neuiazvimaia sistema* ['an invincible system'] and *garantirovannoe vozmezdie* ['guaranteed retribution']. As he delivers these words, Kiselev appears to be gleefully sadistic especially when he adamantly commends to his viewers the article about the 'Perimeter' promising a 'highly interesting' experience. The deadly war and its technologies are thus offered for a Sunday afternoon titillating read, thus virtualising the threat and presenting it as entertainment (cf. Higgins 2008; Wodak 2015).

Kiselev's linguistic performance ~~of threat~~ has to be interpreted within the televisual context, so that its visual side can be construed as an ingredient of his discourse of threat. He possesses a certain theatrical gift that works as an additional instrument in his violence production toolkit. Yaffa aptly describes Kiselev's on-screen behaviour thus: 'At 60, he has a round, soft face <…> and a smile that is at once cherubic and

menacing. His delivery is dynamic and highly mannered — he paces across the set and punctuates his points with the hand gestures of an overeager mime. He might make his fingers dance in the air or glide his hand across his body' (2014). These mannerisms and gestures – emphatic, beguiling and menacing – fill the studio with some dark underhand atmosphere and have an effect of equally mesmerising and abusing the public. Kiselev's delivery is supplemented with him favouring a certain prosodic pattern of specific lengthening and stretching of certain key words (for example 'to put pressure' [da:vit']), which renders a tone of superiority and contemptuous sneering, in relation to the subject of discussion.

4.3 Language of the Ukrainian conflict: vocabularies of division and hate

Narration ofthe conflict in Ukraine in the dominant discourse has carved up a space in Russian linguistic culture, which eagerly lent itself for production of violence. This was pivoted on discursive key words, i.e. the words that determine the overall tenor of communication, while significations were divided by the front lines. The journalist Il'ia Barabanov who worked in the war zone in Ukraine recollects that both sides of the conflict created their own distinguishable sets of vocabularies, by which they would immediately recognise their own or the enemy sides (Vilnius 2016). This proves Mary Pratt's argument that linguistic weaponization constructs the enemy: 'War by its adversarial logic produces multilingual scenarios; linguistic difference marks others, and others easily become enemies' (Pratt 2009: 1525).

Many of the emerging keywords marking the enemy were terms of abuse, in other words, hate language. The difference with the hate language which usually exists on the margins of a language society is that the Ukrainian conflict brought hate language right into the Russian mainstream and filled the public discourse of the Kremlin-supported newspapers and television channels. Contrary to the practices of fact-based balanced journalism, these words are responsible for inciting hostility and mobilisation of the public including its preparation for accepting a full-blown war as inevitability (Guseinov 2015a). From the outset, the state controlled Russian media qualified the anti-corruption and pro-European events in Kiev as a 'fascist' and 'Banderovite coup' and set out to discredit it (Guseinov 2015b). Discreditation was hinged upon a small number of key words responsible for the circulation of hate and resentment such as *fashist* ['fascist'], *banderovets* ['Banderovite'], *ukrop* ['dill'], and *maidanutyi* ['Maidan-deranged'] and others. While the word 'fascist' since the Soviet period has been a designation of absolute evil, other terms were lexical innovations coined to bear derogatory connotations towards the Ukrainian side. Among those words, the noun *ukr* is a stump compound derived from *ukrainets* ['Ukrainian'] Is this a separate abusive term from *ukrop*?, while the denigratory Is this a linguistic term? label *ukrop* ['dill'] (also related to ukrainets, ukrainskii ['Ukrainian', noun and verb] originally came from an ironic abbreviation of the phrase *ukrainskii patriot* ['Ukrainian patriot']. The Russian use of it was possibly triggered by it being a homophone to the Russian reference to the common herb dill, the comparison with which produces an abusive dehumanising semantics of edible grass. The abusive innovation *maidaun* is a compound of 'Maidan' and 'down', a deriding reference to a person with Down's syndrome, while the adjective *maidanutyi*, also from 'Maidan', is associated by rhyme with an obscenity.

Both sides of the conflict were involved in the 'linguistic arms race': the creation of abusive terms also took place in the counter-discourse articulated by those who disagreed with Russia's annexation of Crimea and invasion of Ukraine. For the euphoria displayed by the majority in Russia on the incorporation of the peninsula into the Russian Federation, they coined *krymnash* ['Crimeaisours'] - a hashtag-and-meme culture-inspired one word blend, which functions both as a noun and an interjection. This term inscribed the derogation of the liberals towards the blind, uncritical acceptance of the violation of international law. Those who shared the *krymnash* mood were termed by the cognate *krymnashisty* ['Crimeaisoursists']. Another term of derogation coined by Ukrainian supporters was *vatniki* ['quilted cotton wool jackets'], or simply *vata* ['cotton']. This word's semantic expansion, whose source comes from Soviet style primitive clothing, originated in online social groups and referred to Russian simple minded and brainwashed nationalistic militarists. The noun *kolorad*, an abbreviation of *koloradskii zhuk* ['Colorado beetle'] came into being as a negatively connoted metaphoric interpretation of the Russian commemorative V-day ribbon of St George's orange and black colours; the ribbon was also worn in the East of Ukraine to indicate the affiliation with pro-Russian separatists.

As soon as the terms of hatred and abuse were established in the vernacular, public discourses engaged in the renegotiation and revalorisation of their in-group negative references, applying a 'talking back' strategy and producing counter-discursive meanings aiming to rehabilitate their meanings. For example, in January 2015, the Altai State University launched, among school children and students of the area, a patriotic essay competition with the topic '"The quilted cotton wool jacket" is a proud word' (Altaiskim uchashchimsia 2015). On the other hand, Ukrainian President Petr Poroshenko sported a bunch of dill on his military uniform insignia as a sign for the resignification of the word (Korobatov 2015), and a Ukrainian patriotic party with the name of Ukrop was registered in 2014, adopting a picture of dill as its symbol.

4.4 Linguistic archaization

Alexander Etkind points out that post-Soviet Russian cultural space has been generally biased towards the past (2013:45). However, for a long time linguistic culture treated the language associated with the Soviet period and known as 'wooden language' or 'Newspeak' (*novoiaz*) as obsolete, destined for the dictionaries of the old epoch (Ryazanova-Clarke and Petrov 2015; Ryazanova-Clarke 2015a). When dominant public discourses began to demonstrate a profusion of the lexicon from the past, especially from the eras of the Second World War and the Cold War, this was linked to the violent discursive turn.[17]

According to Mikhail Bakhtin, every word bears sediments of memory of its past contexts (1992: 293). This means that when recycled language is used in contemporary contexts, old forms with their ideological 'accents' are not fully reproduced, but 'rented', or 'ventriloquised', while present and past contexts enter into a dialogue to produce and negotiate new meanings (Holquist 1983: 2). Such 'linguistic mnemonics' (Ryazanova-Clarke 2015a) often facilitate the development of a 'usable past' in regard to the Soviet heritage, activating through the revived language resources particular knowledge frames containing certain Soviet ideological views, opinions, emotions and attitudes.

The lexicon of the 'Great Patriotic War' has been actualised in the Russian media narration of the conflict in Ukraine. The Ukrainian government side as well as the military skirmishes in the East of Ukraine were described through recycled terms which tend to spark highly emotional negative associations, for example, *banderovtsy* ['Banderovites'], *karateli* ['death squads'], *fashistskie molodchiki* ['Fascist thugs'], *natsistskie zakhvatchiki* ['Nazi occupiers'], *szhech' zazhivo* ['to burn alive'], *kollaboratsionisty* ['collaborationists'], *tretii Reikh* ['Third Reich'], *zverstva* ['bestial violence'], *zamuchit'* ['to torture to death'], *shturmovye otriady* ['assault battalions'], *prikhvostni* ['henchmen'], *posobniki* ['accomplices'], *diversanty* ['saboteurs'], *Ilovaiskii kotel* ['the Ilovaisk "cauldron"']. From the Cold War period, the term *khunta* ['junta'] used in Soviet propaganda to castigate the coup in Chile under General Pinochet, was dredged out to form the collocate *kievskaia khunta* ['Kievan junta'] which became an official term to relate to the Ukrainian elected government after Ianukovich. Conversely, The pro-Russian separatists were referred to by historical terms with positive connotations, for example, *opolchentsy* ['militiamen'] which during the Patriotic War meant volunteers of the people's resistance movement defending their land, and *boitsy* ['fighters']. The media barrage of loaded historical lexicon was unrelenting – for example, the frequency of the word *fashizm* ['fascism'] increased more than six-fold in May 2014 in comparison with the same month in 2013 (Gaufman 2015).

The War words call upon a collective memory of the bloodiest period in the twentieth century and the atmosphere of Stalin's totalitarianism in which the War was conducted and won, the period responsible for a deeply seated trauma among the Russians. These recycled words, that had absorbed the historical 'ideological accents' of violence and suffering, turn out to be effective tools for public opinion manipulation and mobilisation, whipping up an indignant and militant mood. They evoke knowledge frames which tap into the current Kremlin regime's ideological memory pantheon in which a fight against fascism has the highest symbolic value. The conflict framed as a fight by the forces of good against fascism resurrects in the minds of millions a sense of a simple black and white division of the world into in and out groups, allowing for a simplified enemy construction.

At the same time, over seventy years after the War ended, resources of its narrative are reproduced after a long lapse of time and seem to belong to the mediated, not immediate memory of the current generation. The poet Lev Rubinshtein uses his perfect pitch for a linguistic nuance to describe the archaic character of such linguistic memory:

> 'if we can judge by the content, form and smell of their… public philosophising, one would suggest that all their worldview, wisdom, and impressions about the world order and human nature are rooted in those very old, sodden and tangled Soviet newspapers, which were used by their grandads in the villages as stoppers for bottles of moonshine.' (Rubinshtein, FB blog, 8 April 2016 https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100000022518126&fref=ts).

Seemingly loaned from disused history textbooks and Soviet patriotic films, linguistic mnemonics of the War takes the recipients of this antiquated language through a horror story and at the same time provides the teleology of an inevitable victory and triumph derived from the knowledge that the fascists were defeated by Soviet power and Stepan Bandera was executed.

It has been observed that the forms of recycled Soviet language which began occurring in public discourse around 2010 were aimed at capturing and perpetuating the Soviet ritual (especially, of the Victory Day), at producing pathos and restoring the Soviet Grand Narrative of the Great Victory (Ryazanova-Clarke 2015a: 177-81). In contrast, the kind of violent ventriloquising of the 'third term' Russia, does not so much attempt to produce the coherence of the historical narrative but rather appears to stylise and imitate it. The War language stimulates the Hegelian 'passion for semblance' plunging its recipients into a fantastic simulacrum of tantalising false memories and cinematic images. Addressed primarily to the 'sofa warriors'— the passive consumers of media narratives—the archaic War language offers them the opportunity to perform the role of imitators, players of military games and reconstructors of a violent historic past. The atmosphere of historical re-enactment rather the real war in Ukraine was supported by the fact that some of the leading fighters in the East of Ukraine – such as had the Russian officer Igor Girkin (aka Strelkov) – had a background in replays of historical battles (see for e.g. Grishin 2014; Bykov 2014; Wilson 2016: 488).

Similarly, the report by the newspaper *Izvestiia* out of the battle for the Donetsk Airport in May 2014 demonstrates the production of discourse whose violent content is hinged on the imitation of WWII language.

> The Deputy Prime Minister of the Donetsk People's Republic Andrei Purgin told Izvestiia that in the area of the Donetsk Airport there are *corpses of the believers* who came to reconcile the fighting sides. The *death squads burned them alive*, their corpses lie together with the rest next to the Airport building. On 26 May the Mayor of Donetsk Aleksandr Lukianenko confirmed the death of no less than 40 people as a result of the *retribution operation* conducted by the Ukrainian militant groups in the area of the Donetsk Airport and the city. "Our primary task is to unblock the airport building, *gather corpses*, *pull out the wounded*. It is impossible to help them at the moment because of the *constant shooting by snipers*," Purgin said. (*Izvestiia*, 28 May 2014, The italics are are mine)

The majority of the ventriloquised language of WWII used in the passage serves the purpose of delineating and demonising the adversary. The Ukrainian military fighting the Russian Special Forces for the territorial integrity of their country are described as 'death squads' [boeviki], their actions are qualified as a 'retribution operation' [karatel'naia operatsiia] resulting in 40 deaths. As one would not normally translate *boeviki* with such an emotive phrase as 'death squads', and above you also give *karateli* with this meaning, for clarity and for the non-specialist I think this needs more elaboration. Suggested amendment: The Ukrainian military fighting the Russian Special Forces for the territorial integrity of their country are described as undertaking a 'retribution operation' [karatel'naia operatsiia] resulting in 40 deaths. As such, this term allows their designation as *boeviki* [rebels] to take on the more emotive connotation of 'death squads'. The actions of the Ukrainian side are also represented as 'burning' the victims 'alive' [*sozhgli*

zazhivo], they are referred to as 'snipers' who shell constantly, ignoring humanitarian concerns. The antiquated linguistic resources are successful here in the production of horror: expressions 'burned alive' and 'retribution operation' suggest that the victims did not just get caught in the cross-fire but that their death was inflicted by a sadistic pre-meditated intention. The victims are referred to as 'believers' who arrived to deliver peace – something that further emphasizes the godless brutality of Ukrainian perpetrators. The language choice therefore implicitly compares the victims with those during the Patriotic War whose villages were occupied by the Nazi troops and who suffered from the enemy's atrocities.

Similarly to Kiselev's television text discussed above, the Izvestia narrative presents an apparent logical deficiency which contributes to its grotesque and gratuitous violent impact. The reader cannot work out what exactly happened and why the innocent believers had such a terrible death. Moreover, the reader would be puzzled to explain why the article expresses little sympathy for the victims. Contrary to the rules of the 'ideological square' described by van Dijk (1998), the text consistently constructs no positively represented 'in-group', as the members of the 'in-group' are repeatedly referred to disrespectfully as *trupy* ['corpses'] rather than the more habitual *pogibshie* ['the perished']. It seems that the strategies to produce a violent narrative in this case predominate over other matters. This leaves an impression that the games of indulging with the archaic language in the public discourse produces narratives that are unbelievable and unreal.

5. Conclusion

Patricia O'Connor proposes that violent language does reflect on the quality of a society, giving a glimpse of its violent course, and that 'we should look to the discourse of and about violence as a key into the construction of a violent society' (1995: 309). The 'third term' Russian turn to linguistic violence appears to incorporate a complex and interconnected system of macro- and micro-strategies, through which society's shift to violent politics manifests itself. In many instances discussed in the chapter, violence is being normalised, narrowing the space in society for dialogue and compromise. This may be seen in the various forms in which silencing of unacceptable discourse takes place and how the former is replaced with a dominant and preferable one. This is also manifested in the forms of linguistic weaponization, whose mechanisms are both informed by the Soviet practices and exploit the affordances provided by modern technological development. The 'third term' has been marked by the return of full-blown propaganda and disinformation and, alongside that, the Soviet 'ideologically accented' language, related to the violent and traumatic narratives of the 'Great Patriotic' war, has received a ventriloquized iteration. These strategies produced not only fear but also illusion, imitation and unreality, thus widening the gap between the language sign and its meaning.

There is a final point to make. The conflict with Ukraine and the consequent tensions with the Western world have been essential factors in the recent development of Russian violent linguistic culture. 'Russia's globalisation oddity' (Ryazanova-Clarke 2017: 444), a version of globalisation Russia proposes to the world in which Russia is a major global power with its own spheres of influence, can be convertible into linguistic elements. It has therefore as much of a global dimension as an internal significance that Russian public discourse has adopted the language of conflict. This language constructs the enemy and carves up divisions between neighbouring peoples, and the language which humiliates and degrades the Western opponents, producing fear among the fellow citizens.

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[1] See, for example, Krongauz 2008: 9, where the author calls this verbal incident ‘an anecdote’.
[2] Here and elsewhere all translations from Russian are mine - LRC.
[3] Reference to Ukrainians
[4] Here one can list the Pussy Riot trial, the imprisonment of seemingly randomly selected individuals who took part in the anti-Putin demonstration on his inauguration day of 6 May 2012, and more recently, the jailing of Ildar Dadin, a peaceful activist who was sentenced for 2.5 years in prison for repeated individual anti-government street protests.

[5] To be sure, the roots of Russia's isolationist policy could be traced from earlier than 2012. It was developed from the so called 'Westphalian concept of sovereignty', which, according to Russian interpretation, pitted national interests and institutions against the supranational legal system, and which Russia was applying to itself (Antonov 2014; Bowring 2013).
[6] A number of prominent cultural figures from theatre, film and television such as Konstantin Raikin, Kirill Srebrennikov, Vladimir Pozner, Andrei Zviagintsev have publicly expressed disagreement with the supression of freedom of cultural expression, which did not materially affect the adoption of the laws in question.
[7] Roskomnadzor – Russian Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Telecom, Information Technologies and Mass Communications established in 2008.
[8] Federal Law 398-FZ 'On Information, information technologies and information defence' Amendments of 28 December 2013 (*Rossiiskaia Gazeta* 30 December 2013).
[9] Federal Law 97-FZ 'On regulating information exchange with the use of information and telecommunication networks', of 5 May 2014. https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_162586/ (14.05.2017)
[10] Federal Law No 374-FZ 'On introducing amendments to the Federal Law 'On Counteracting Terrorism', adopted 6 July 2016, http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_201078/ (14.05.2017)
[11] Federal Law 270-FZ 'On Introducing Changes to Article 14 of the Federal Law 'On Advertising', of 21 July 2014, http://www.garant.ru/news/554812/ (28.11.2016). Later on and after Dozhd' and TV-6 were substantially damaged, in February 2015, Putin partially revoked this law (http://1nnc.net/archive/508579.html (28.11.2016).
[12] Both bots and trolls aim to shift, disrupt and pollute online communication. While bots are 'automated meaning makers' (Murthy et al. 2016: 4953), trolls are masked or anonymous but real humans (see also Internet trolling 2016).
[13] For example, a documentary 'The Anatomy of Protest' (2012, NTV) in which the left wing oppositional leader Sergei Udaltsov and his assistants were accused of organising mass protests and subversion of the regime; the film was the main evidence in a criminal case against him which resulted a 4.5 years of prison sentence. The demonstration of secretly filmed scenes of intimate life of the oppositional Parnas party leader Mikhail Kasianov in the documentary 'Kasianov's Day' (2016, NTV) resulted in the collapse of the party just before the Duma elections.
[14] An admission to this matter was made, on a number of occasions by the veteran of Russian TV and popular interview programme host Vladimir Pozner (Pozner 2012; Tsenzura 2016).
[15] It has been known that Vladislav Surkov, since 2013 a presidential aide and allegedly one of the grey cardinals behind Russian propagandist discourse, is very well versed in postmodern theories and has written postmodern fiction under the pen name of Natan Dubovitskii (Ryazanova-Clarke 2011; Shtepa 2016). Dubovitskii's 2014 story 'Without a Sky' is about the next world war in which everybody is fighting against everybody.
[16] In his choice of words on the topic of the American poll, Kiselev resorts to the tool of 'calculated ambivalence' and instead of the adjective *sil'nyi* ['strong'] to qualify the noun 'leader', expected in the context, he uses the phrase *krepkii lider* which could be understood as 'strong', 'tough' or even 'efficient' (as in *krepkii khoziaistvennik* – an efficient, hands on manager). Thus the adjective Kiselev uses keeps the semantic vagueness and absorbs all three positive connotations.
[17] It has to be noted that connections between the conflict and the 'Great Patriotic War' were also copiously made in Ukraine. For example, Ukrainian President Petr Poroshenko called the Ukrainian Army 'anti-terrorist' operation against the Russian backed separatists 'the Partiotic War', and the death in the 'anti-terrorist operation' of the 23 year old grandson of the Second World War veteran Ivan Zaluzhnyi was framed as a link between the two wars. On the other hand, Ukraine also engaged in deconstruction of the symbols and narratives of the Great Patriotic War by, for example, replacing the Russian commemorative ribbon of St George with the British-US poppy (see for e.g. Sergatskova 2015).