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**KRISTINA
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**DEBUNKING OF FAKE NEWS IN TELEGRAM
IN 2022: COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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Dissertação apresentada ao IADE - Faculdade de Design, Tecnologia e Comunicação da Universidade Europeia, para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Comunicação Audiovisual e Multimédia realizada sob a orientação científica do Doutor Milton Cappelletti, Professor Auxiliar da Universidade Europeia.

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palavras-chave

Notícias falsas; Verificação os fatos; Verificação de dados; Telegrama; Guerra Russo-Ucraniana; Análise de conteúdo

resumo

As manchetes dos principais meios de comunicação mundiais foram alteradas quando a guerra entre a Rússia e a Ucrânia começou. O desmascaramento de notícias falsas tornou-se uma importância fundamental no trabalho da mídia de notícias, pois informações não verificadas estão levando à perda de respeitabilidade. Existem certos procedimentos de checagem de fatos que são bem reconhecidos pela sociedade internacional de jornalistas. Ao contrário das regras geralmente aceitas, as políticas de publicação do Telegram diferem de muitas redes sociais, pois no Telegram não há moderação de conteúdo publicado que dá uma grande oportunidade de produzir notícias falsas e como resultado disso - desinformação em massa rápida. Apesar do Telegram ser uma das redes sociais que mais crescem, há poucos estudos sobre desmascarar notícias falsas no Telegram.

Portanto, esta pesquisa realizou um estudo comparativo entre os canais anti-falsos do Telegram russo e ucraniano durante uma semana de março de 2022, a fim de descobrir os procedimentos de desmascaramento que foram usados pelos autores desses canais. Juntamente com as pesquisas de análise de conteúdo que são introduzidas por Lasswell e Bardin, o autor utilizou, durante a investigação, as abordagens metodológicas que ganharam grande popularidade na era moderna - a era da «pós-verdade». Para fins do estudo, o autor buscou a diferença nas políticas de desmascaramento entre os canais russos e ucranianos. Para entender as intenções dos canais, o autor analisou o pano de fundo emocional, subtextual e alegórico das publicações.

Os canais do Telegram usam conteúdo provocativo em que o pesquisador encontrou elementos de propaganda. Este estudo descobre que há conteúdos diferentes nos canais do Telegram de ambos os lados do conflito. Os canais do Telegram utilizam instrumentos semânticos para aumentar a audiência. As descobertas seriam benéficas para a comunidade jornalística, bem como para todo o público, que deveria cuidar da verificação das informações e fazer uma melhor checagem de fatos.

Keywords

Fake News; Fact-checking; Data Verification; Telegram; Russian-Ukrainian War; Content Analysis

abstract

The headlines of the leading world media have been changed when the war between Russia and Ukraine started. Debunking of fake news became a key importance in the work of news media as unverified information is leading to the loss of respectability. There are certain procedures of fact-checking that are well-recognized by the international journalist society. Unlike generally accepted rules, Telegram publishing policies differ from many social networks, as in Telegram there is no moderation of published content that gives a great opportunity to produce fake news and as the result of it - quick mass disinformation. Despite the fact that Telegram is one of the fastest growing social networks, there are few studies about debunking fake news in Telegram.

Therefore, this research carried out a comparative study between Russian and Ukrainian anti-fake Telegram channels during one week in March 2022, in order to discover the debunking procedures that have been used by the authors of those channels. Along with the researches of content analysis which are introduced by Lasswell and Bardin, the author used, during the investigation, the methodological approaches that gained widespread popularity in the modern era - the era of «post truth». For the purpose of the study, the author sought for the difference in the debunking policies between Russian and Ukrainian channels. In order to understand the intentions of the channels, the author analyzed the emotional, subtextual and allegorical background of the publications.

Telegram channels use provocative content in which the researcher found elements of propaganda. This study finds out that there is different content on the Telegram channels of both sides of the conflict. Telegram channels use semantic instruments in order to increase the audience. The findings would be beneficial for the journalist community, as well as for the entire audience, who should take care of verification of information and do better fact-checking.

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	ix
List of Tables.....	x
List of Abbreviations.....	xi
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Contextualization.....	1
1.2. Personal motivations.....	3
1.3. Research question.....	5
1.4. Objectives.....	5
1.5. Hypothesis.....	5
1.6. Methodology.....	6
1.7. Dissertation structure.....	6
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
2.1. The era of post-truth.....	8
2.1.1. Chronology of the phenomenon.....	8
2.1.2. User Generated Content.....	13
2.2. Fake news and Fact-checking.....	14
2.2.1. Definition.....	17
2.2.2. Procedure.....	19
2.2.3. Dissemination.....	20
2.3. Data verification.....	22
2.3.1. Verification on the Internet.....	22
2.3.2. Auxiliary platforms and algorithms.....	25
2.3.3. Truth-O-Meter classification.....	31
2.4. Telegram.....	36

2.4.1. History of the phenomenon	36
2.4.2. Features of Telegram platform.....	38
3. RESEARCH DESIGN.....	40
3.1. Method of Content analysis.....	40
3.1.2. The examples of content-analytical research.....	42
3.1.3. Political text content analysis.....	46
3.2. Investigation plan.....	49
3.2.1. Material pre-analysis.....	52
3.2.2. Material exploration.....	65
3.2.3. Treatment of results.....	74
4. DISCUSSIONS.....	89
5. CONCLUSIONS	94
5.1. How to continue this research?.....	95
Bibliography	97

List of Figures

Figure 1. Illustration from the web-site of RIA News.....	4
Figure 2. Lasswell's 5W communication model (1948).....	28
Figure 3. Scale of Truth-O-Meter presented by Poynter.org (2018).....	34
Figure 4. The range of categories frequency of the channels.....	79
Figure 5. The comparison of the frequency of the categories mentions depending on the origins of the channels.....	82
Figure 6. Presentation of the results of intentions from Russian anti-fake channel «War with Fakes».....	86
Figure 7. Presentation of the results of intentions from Russian anti-fake channel «AntiFake. Foundation».....	86
Figure 8. Presentation of the results of intentions from Ukrainian anti-fake channel «Anthology of Lies».....	87
Figure 9. Presentation of the results of intentions from Ukrainian anti-fake channel «StopFake».....	87

List of Tables

Table 1. Tools to check the authenticity of images.....	26
Table 2. Resources to get information about a domain or web-site.....	27
Table 3. Extensions and sites which warn user about an unreliable source of information.....	28
Table 4. Platforms that helps to verify information.....	29
Table 5. Factchecking list for critical mind and verification based on Mantzaris (2018).....	30
Table 6. Self-elaborative model of analysis table.....	49
Table 7. Content analysis guidance by Bardin (1979).....	51
Table 8. Scheme of process of pre-analysis stage.....	53
Table 9. Results of floating reading step and selection of choice of documents step.....	55
Table 10. Comparison model table of the Russian anti-fake channels.....	58
Table 11. Comparison model table of the Ukrainian anti-fake channels.....	59
Table 12. Final anti-fake Telegram channels selection at the end of pre-analysis stage...	62
Table 13. List of examples of publication text from the categories of analysis.....	69
Table 14. Accounting matrix (table) established for counting rules steps of the material exploration stage according to Bardin (1979).....	73
Table 15. Total results of the qualitative and quantitative analysis.....	76
Table 16. Table of the frequency of the categories mentions.....	78
Table 17. The comparison of the categories mentions in pairs of the channels.....	80
Table 18. Calculations of the categories codifications.....	85

List of Abbreviations

ABC - American Broadcasting Company

AP - Associated Press

BBC - British Broadcast Corporation

CNN - Cable News Network

EU - European Union

FSB - Federal Security Bureau (Russia)

IP - Internet Protocol

IT - Information Technology

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NBC - National Broadcasting Company

TV - Television

UGC - User Generated Content

UK - United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

US, USA - United States (of America)

Introduction

1.1. Contextualization

Had this study been written a year ago, it certainly would have been about the Covid-19 pandemic. But on February 24, 2022, an event occurred that pushed all other topics out the front pages of the news. Russia has announced a so-called Special Military Operation in Ukraine. Within one day, many objects throughout the territory of Ukraine were subjected to rocket and bomb attacks. This was accompanied by ground troops offending the positions of the Ukrainian forces, and assaults were dropped as well. Two Slavs brotherhood countries began military fights with each other.

Reasonably soon, large territories had been captured in the south and east of Ukraine, which cut off access for Ukrainians to the Sea of Azov. As a result of military assistance provided by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) countries to Ukraine, the advance rate of Russian troops has been reduced, especially because the Russian army claims to use tactics of minimal losses. Nevertheless, even officially recognized military losses by both sides amount to thousands of people. The Russian army had occupied about 20% of the territory of one of the largest countries in Europe, capturing many towns and villages, and the most memorable episode of the war was the almost two-month siege of the city of Mariupol and the Azovstal plant. These military operations were reported in every media all over the World.

Many countries have imposed sanctions on relations with Russia. Those led to the destruction of many supply chains around the world and to a disbalance in world trade, especially in consumption of the main materials of Russian export - grain, fertilizers, non-ferrous metals, and the most important energy resources - oil and gas. Together with the huge amount of unsecured money that all countries had injected into their own economies during the pandemic, these events caused huge inflation, which led to the impoverishment of many people from Lisbon to Tokyo, Johannesburg and Los Angeles. That is why the Russian-Ukrainian war has been occupying the

minds of people around the world for more than half of the year. In addition, NATO intervention may lead to the direct nuclear clash, which introduces an element of critical anxiety into the life plans of mankind.

All these issues are the subjects of active propaganda from the media resources of these countries. Since most of the Russian media are currently banned in NATO countries and Ukraine and, vice versa, the media platforms of the so-called “unfriendly countries” are banned in Russia (the Meta corporation is generally classified as an extremist organization). As a consequence, Telegram has become a platform where both sides of the conflict are equally fully present and have equally free access.

In today's society, dominated by technology and new media, it is becoming increasingly difficult to determine what is true and what is false. Today, the speed of information submission plays a crucial role and prevails over quality. This leads to fake news. The spread of fake news has become widespread. This is done by both ordinary users of social networks and editorial offices of authoritative mass media. Nowadays, the issue of the need for fact-checking and verification is extremely acute. This determines the relevance of the chosen topic.

Thus, the problem of this research lies in the lack of scientific information about the exposure of fake news using fact-checking methods on the Internet, especially on the Telegram platform. Recently, fake news has been widely disseminated, based on the political positions of the authors of news channels and other editorial offices. People who are not used to critical thinking are prone to the perception of fakes due to lack of information. There is no unequivocal answer to the question why the audience believes fakes, since there are many factors that influence people's mind.

Nowadays, in most countries of the world, the media continuously attempts to have a destructive impact on the minds of citizens. Every time they read or listen to the news, they are exposed to a stream of information, including disinformation, that imposes a certain point of view. Fake news

can be spread by journalists, political organizations, and misleading users. Fake news, written on purpose, aims to evoke a certain emotion and create conflict due to the polarity of opinions regarding information that is far from reality. It becomes more difficult to distinguish truth from lies in information war conditions. This is an acute problem in the field of information technology and in the context of hybrid wars. The speed of information submission plays a crucial role and prevails over quality. This leads to dissemination of fake news and the need for debunking.

1.2. Personal Motivations

The motivation for conducting this research emerged from the personal concern of the author of the work in relation to the spread of fake news in the information war. After the war between two countries started on February 24, 2022, the author of the research, as many people, could not stop reflecting on the news, making them the main source of information. The first feeling when the author began to read the news was an incredible concern about their veracity. Due to the fact that it is the author's Homeland that was accused of the crime, against this emotional background, it had been decided to highlight the work that would convey the importance of verifying information in the conditions of the information war.

The author was concerned about the huge amount of fake information that was distributed on the Internet, especially on the free Telegram platform, where people get a great amount of news every day and, despite their skepticism and cleverness, have the propensity to believe every media product, whether it responds and matches their emotional background. The author noted that the language of reporting in the Telegram channel sounds very convincing and has a very strong influence on public opinion, and there are journalists who know the best way to influence the audience.

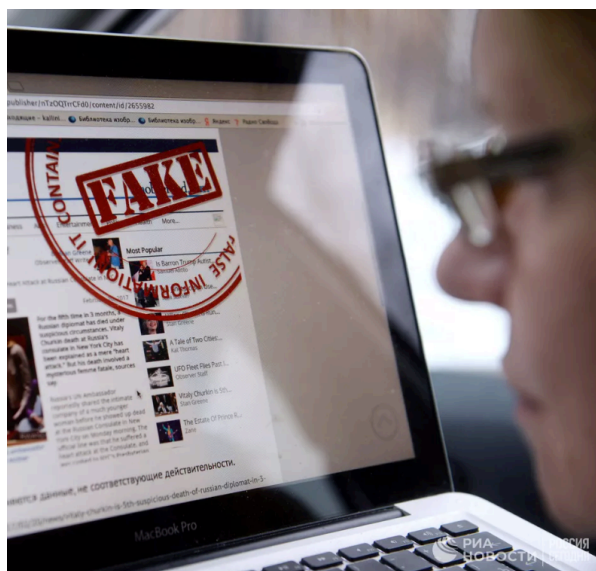
After the conversations with people from both sides of the conflict, the author made the assumption that the majority do not realize the volume of disinformation that can be spread on

the Internet. The author has a conviction that people don't think about their own fact-checking and don't check the news for their authenticity. As it turned out, in a crisis and stress, people begin to believe in information that suits their emotional background. This was the main reason for the development of this research work - the audience's conviction that unverified information should always be questioned.

The motivation of this work is expressed in the desire to inform people that it is necessary to develop critical thinking and always rely on facts, to check the sources of information. It also shows the interest in analyzing the work of anti-fake channels and how they refute and fight fake news. There is no doubt that the anti-fake content of the Telegram channels can also be used as an element of propaganda which is used by the government for its own purposes to manipulate public consciousness.

The motivation of this work was to show people how disinformation can affect relationships between people, as this is a conflict between two important countries, one is the author's homeland, the other is the country of the author's friends. The motivation was also to conduct a study that could be presented to future researchers, colleagues, friends and anyone who is interested in fighting disinformation on the Internet during the Information War.

Figure 1



Note: Illustration from the web-site of RIA News

1.3. Research question

How anti-fake Telegram channels fight disinformation during the Russian-Ukrainian War 2022?

1.4. Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

1. Describe the era of post-truth and how it changed the strategy of constructing a media text.
2. Identify the key components of the fake communication in post-truth conditions.
3. Study the terms of "fake news", "fact-checking", "verification".
4. Analysis and comparison of the journalistic policy between the channels.
5. Qualitative and quantitative assessment of the data through the method of content analysis.
6. The procedures for debunking fake news in accordance with content analysis are based on the Bardin methodological approach.

1.5. Hypothesis

We presume that:

H1: Fake news has the opportunity to become a propaganda weapon.

H2: Telegram is a democratic, accessible platform for publishing provocative content.

H3: War generates an endless amount of disinformation on social networks.

H4: With the advent of social media, the necessity of debunking fake news has increased.

H5: Authors of Telegram fact-checking channels use debunking of fake news as a key element of their content.

H6: Bardin's Method of Content Analysis may be applied for the qualitative and quantitative research of the media texts in the Telegram channel.

1.6. Methodology

In the course of the work, the author used general scientific methods as analysis, synthesis, generalization, deduction, concretization. Empirical methods include observation and comparison. In the research design chapter, the author used the method of content analysis by Laurence Bardin (1977) for the analysis of publications in Telegram channels. For the semantic analysis of the text according to Bardin, the author partially integrated the method of intent analysis, which assessed the intentions of the authors of the channels. The methodology of intent-analysis refers to private sociological methods. During the authors investigation there were created self-collaborative tables in order to collect and present information. Third chapter will provide a deeper explanation regarding the methodological approach.

1.7. Structure of this dissertation

The dissertation consists of five chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, discussions, conclusions and bibliography. The introduction outlines a brief background of the research problem and motivations to conduct the studies. In the second chapter, the theoretical foundations of studying the era of post-truth, fake news, fact-checking, verification data and the Telegram platform were considered. In the third chapter, the content analysis of the publications of the selected Telegram channels was carried out. In the discussions chapter, we discuss the collected results after content analysis, then we validated the hypotheses and identified limitations. In conclusion, we summarized the results of the work and supplement ideas for further research works. The bibliography list consists of 78 sources.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The era of post-truth

2.1.1. Chronology of phenomenon

In 2016 Oxford Dictionaries declared the word “post-truth” as Word of the Year (2016). The compilers of the dictionary explained the term as the word describes circumstances in which objective facts are less important in shaping public opinion than appeal to emotions and personal convictions.

In the post-truth era, as defined by Keyes (2004), the borders blur between truth and lies, honesty and dishonesty, fiction and nonfiction. Post-truthfulness builds a fragile social edifice based on wariness. It erodes the foundation of trust that underlies any healthy civilization (Keyes, 2004).

Thus, post-truth is a media condition characterized by the blurring of the boundaries between objective information and fake news. This is a symptom of abundance: there is too much information in the context of globalization, the presence of a large number of alternative sources to check it, so the audience trusts the old, familiar sources focused on meeting the different needs of readers, and does not seek to verify the accuracy of information (Kozhemyakin, 2011).

On April 7, 2017, a new feature appeared in the Google search engine that would help the user to verify the accuracy of the information, which can be provided upon request. This is explained by the fact that the original goal of creating Google’s search engine was to help people find useful information and quality content.

The process of media influence on public consciousness has constantly concerned Western theorists, primarily American sociologists since the First World War. It has been argued that the impact of the media is significant, lightning-fast, ubiquitous. Lasswell (1948) and Lipman (1922)

contribute to the research on an attempt to form extended and solid generalizations, which could explain the significance of information effects on public processes.

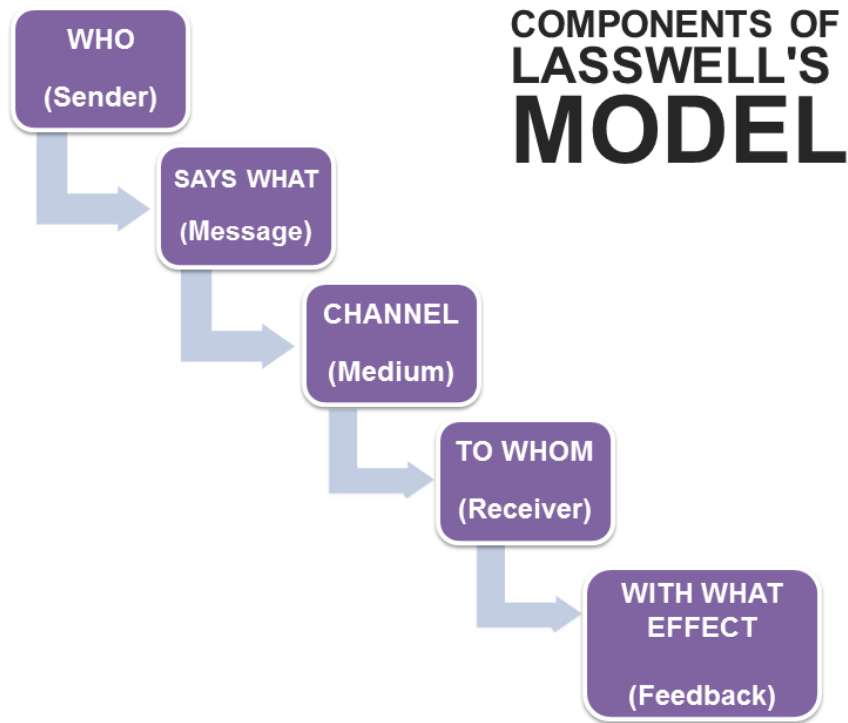
Scientists are still giving their contribution a high rating till today; it is regarded as a programmatic masterpiece and a spread of the Declaration of Independence of communication study (CityStoryCoventry, 2014).

It is even believed that all of the Communication Studies are regarded as comments of Lasswell's thesis, because it involves a lot of basic content of communication. Overall, the significance of this paper is mainly reflected in two aspects: first, from the internal structure, the analysis of the various elements of the communication process; second, from an external function, summarizes the social role of communication activities.

Lasswell is the founder of studying propaganda texts in mass media with the help of content-analysis, for this purpose he analyzed about six million words in mass media articles. He clearly put forward the communication process and its five basic elements, they are: (Who) said (what) to (whom)? And said that through (what channel)? And then achieved (what effect)?

Figure 2 represents the famous Lasswell's 5W model, which is concise, clear and became the classical model of communication process.

Figure 2



Note: Lasswell's 5W communication model (1948).

The ability of media to produce influence was recognized by Rogers (1997) as one of the main factors of determination of people's social behavior. He marks the influence on personal values, decisions and acceptance. His investigation in parallel with other theoretical researchers created the area which later became known as media influence theories.

Those basic generalizations were carried out within the framework of propaganda theory, which is not accidental and justified by the events of that time. In order to unite the efforts of everybody against the invader, it was necessary to strengthen the ties between individuals and convince people to work with all their will, instill hate for the enemy and make them think first of all about their homeland. Propaganda was the main meaning to achieve the purposes. During the crusade, every method was good to be used: books, photographs, films, posters, leaflets, radio signals.

Similar techniques were turned to be notorious during the 1940 and 1944 United States presidential election campaigns (Lasarsfeld et al., 1944).

By the end of the Second World War, a new paradigm had emerged, according to which the influence of the media on public opinion should be insignificant. Scientists began to talk not about the ability of the media to influence public opinion, but only about their ability to strengthen the attitudes already existing in society.

Grushin (1967, 1979, 1987) broke out the paradigm by introducing the concept of mass consciousness, undermining the increased information impact and expanding the range of available information. Firsov (1985) studied sociological publications in the media for 30 years, noting the typical changes in approaches to the coverage of similar materials, taking into account the demands of an era.

Hovland (1953) specified the main principles of determination of the influence mechanisms on the public consciousness, revealed the social content and showed how media effects on society.

The aspects of the media's influence depend on the specific socio-political situation in society. Festinger (1957), Klapper (1960) and Berkowitz et al. (1973) emphasized the danger of developing cognitive dissonance from the impact of mutually exclusive information and supported the need to generalize the existing material, to turn it into more comprehensive analysis of available research and paradigms, as well as the creation of qualitatively new theories that allow studying the problem of media influence, penetrating more deeply into the mechanisms that determine the perception of the media in society.

Over the past 100 years, the daily life of a person has changed quite radically. Use of various technical devices, the development of transport, communications has led to the fact that people have begun to devote much less time to physical labor and much more to the comprehension of the world around us and our place in it. This information has become another driving force of

human progress, and the possession of it has become a necessary part of a fulfilling life. During the period of time the information, like the thermodynamic value of entropy, constantly increases, and finally, the average person's brain stops responding to all news, and most of all to those that are the most simple and mundane.

Two methods of attracting the public attention came to the top - hype and fake news, and if the first ones are built primarily on highlighting topics from the news flow and creating headlines, then the second ones have other reasons and have in their nature a desire to misinform, manipulate our consciousness and credibility (Bandura, 1986). During periods of military conflicts, their influence on the minds becomes dominant (Bryant et al., 1994). There is an expression, that the truth is a first victim of every war, being replaced by propaganda.

In the framework of Lasswell's (1948) theory, the power of propaganda is associated with the vulnerability of the human mind, and not with the characteristics of specific messages. Any economic crisis or political conflict, according to the researcher, is potentially dangerous because it leads to mass psychosis and aggravates the sensibility of individuals to propaganda influence.

Lippmann's ideas (1922) were also characterized by skepticism as well as in Lasswell's works. He doubted that a person was able to independently navigate the world around him and make reasonable decisions about how to act in a given situation. As key reasons, he called the complexity of the environment characteristic of that time, the danger of certain political forces and the insufficiency of information sources. He also shared fears about the destructive influence of propaganda and believed that the seriousness of the threat required a restructuring of the political system - the creation of a certain mechanism that would exercise acceptable but strict control over the content of the media.

Lippman (1922) suggested, in particular, the formation of an investigation bureau whose task would be to analyze information, redirect it to the elites for decision-making, and determine what information should and should not be known to people.

2.1.2. User Generated Content: identification of the key components of the fake communication in the post-truth era

The growth of User Generated Content (also known as UGC) in social networks and media is the main reason for the increase in the proportion of unverified news. The virtual space of the blogger generation makes it possible to share information that would not be produced by traditional journalism, defining its status as unreal and low-quality.

User-generated content (also known as UGC or consumer-generated content) defined by Beveridge (2022) as original, brand-specific content created by customers and published on social media or other channels. UGC comes in many forms, including images, videos, reviews, a testimonial, or even a podcast.

The User Generated Content (also known as UGC) began to appear in the media long before the advent of the Internet - these were letters from readers that were published in newspapers since the XVIII century. Headings “They write to us” and similar ones, entire departments for working with reader’s letters have survived to this day, and it was in correspondence with readers that became the first experience of applying UGC.

UGC also existed on radio and television in the form of live calls to the air. The next stage in the development of UGContent was, in fact, the Internet: the media - newspapers and magazines - began to open their own sites, which had the ability to leave comments.

Further, in addition to comments, polls and voting also began to appear on media websites - the active participation of the audience in the life of the media became an attractive tool for customers. As for Baranova affirmation (2017), the increase in the participation of users in its generation is traditionally associated with Web 2.0 - a second-generation network for the development of the Internet, based on changes in user behavior. Web 2.0 was launched in 2005

and has given the media the technological ability to create tools for reaching new audiences and provide them with an increasing number of opportunities to participate in the life of the media.

However, with the development of social networks, the need to interact with the media to create content for users has disappeared - due to the emergence of instruments that allow not only to send independently any information to the global information space, but also to distribute it rapidly (Khramova, 2015).

In the context of globalization, key features of new media can be called multimedia, interactivity and hypertextuality. Immediacy, variability, implication became the specific characteristics of information in the media sphere, which made it possible to transform it into a demanded consumer product, the production and distribution of which is served by a separate branch of the creative economy - the media industry (Somaini, 2017).

The danger of an increase in the amount of UGC lies in the fact that the original source of the message that got into the global information field in this way - an ordinary user of a social network - does not bear any responsibility for its verification, veracity and consequences of publication. In such conditions, the reliability of the source inevitably decreases, and a favorable environment appears for the dissemination of false information, or so-called Fake News (Collins Dictionary, 2022).

2.2. Fake news and Fact-checking

The number of fakes on the web had increased by 50% in the first half of a year 2021 (Interfax, 2021). About 1.5 million of fakes had appeared since the beginning of operation in Ukraine (Izvestia, 2022).

In March 2018 the Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers published a large-scale study of posts and reposts on the social network Twitter, according to which fake news spread on the social network at a tremendous rate - about 70% faster than the true ones. Aral et al. (2018) came to the conclusion that in addition to the algorithms for the functioning of the social network, which allow the rapid spread of fake news, the human factor also leads to such a speed - most often, deliberately false news is published on a topic that is currently relevant, they are accompanied by hot headlines and provocative eyeliners to encourage you to read the news. This hypothesis is confirmed not only by the speed of the spread of fake news, but also by the coverage group that received them. According to the same study (the sample included 126,000 tweets published during the political period of 2016-2017), truthful news attracted an average of about 1,000 visitors on site, while fake news could reach up to 100,000 people (Aral et. al., 2018).

Craig Silverman (2014), an employee of the Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University in the USA, came to the same conclusions back in the fall of 2014. He created a special program called Emergent, which is able to analyze the distribution of viral content on the Internet and calculate how much of this or that information was shared by users over a certain period of time. After studying dozens of different news stories that appear in the media with the help of his program, Silverman (2014) came to the conclusion that, on average, deliberately false news gets more coverage and is distributed by users faster than news that refutes these fakes (Silverman, 2014). It is worth saying that Silverman by himself heads one of the most disputed platforms - BuzzFeed News.

Vosoughi et al. (2018) and Sobol (2018) concluded that untruth sneaks much further, faster, deeper and wider than the truth, in all categories of information. So, for example, a true message will be read by 1,500 people in 60 hours, while for a false message in the same conditions the term is less than 10 hours. Political disinformation is the leader in terms of spread rate. Among other popular topics, researchers identified terrorism, natural disasters, tragedies, science

(Hradziushka, 2015). Pew Research Center (2016) reported that 23% of surveyed American Internet users disseminate information, even knowing that it is unreliable.

BuzzFeed News (2016) carried out that 75% of Americans cannot distinguish false information at all. The reason for the spread of fake news is that the majority of content consumers perceive all information in the media as the truth. This allows journalists to release false data, knowing that only a small part of the audience will decide to fact check.

The 2022 edition of Reuters Digital News Report (OberCom, 2022) reveals that 7 out of 10 Portuguese are concerned about what is real or fake on the Internet. Crossing the concern with the legitimacy of online content and the trust in online news, it appears that the Portuguese who trust the most news tend to be more concerned with falsehoods.

The political news that Portuguese find more false or partially correct - political matters (34.4%). Trust in the news is related to the perception of the existence of disinformation. Well, more than half of the respondents who say they don't trust the news (53.1%) found false or partially incorrect content about the pandemic. In turn, only 39.4% of those who trust news in general found false or partially incorrect content. (OberCom, 2022).

Another reason for the spread of fake news is that in the modern world the model of information consumption on the Internet has changed. Today, people prefer to learn about news not on the website of a particular online publication, but with the help of news aggregators, or social networks (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2012).

2.2.1. Definition

Fake and fact-checking as two sides of the same media process

The category of reliability and related problems of reflection and social construction of media reality occupy an important place in modern research. Reliability of reported information is one of the hottest topics discussed at various corporate platforms. A great number of professional and civic projects appear under the name “fact-checking”, the main goal of which is the verification of media information. In the light of the above, the relevance of the study is due to the need for theoretical understanding of the categories of “fake news”, “fact-checking” of reliability in the field of social networks and mass media and identifying its specifics in the practical activities of journalists.

The concept of fake is based on the ability of the audience to compare and qualify real and false news. The concept of fact-checking becomes associated not only with the possibilities of its verification, but also with the most cognitive activity of the media audience. In this regard, researchers identify a new speech genre - Fake News (Dorofeeva, 2019; Issers, 2014). According to them, Fake News is false, that is deliberately produced and then deliberately disseminated, it is designed to take advantage of the full range of media possibilities. There are both well-disguised Fake News and inappropriate Fake News; both of them are spread due to economic, commercial, financial or, most often, political interests. No one can ban Fake News, as the creator of a fake is often unknown. Not everything that is false is Fake News by itself, sometimes it is the result of an editorial error in verifying messages and their sources (Dorofeeva, 2019).

Fakes are often so plausible that they are not even in doubt. For example, the notorious case of a special edition of The New York Times, with a release of one million copies, which was distributed throughout the country on November 12, 2008, was a fake from the first to the last page. The special issue was a 14-page newspaper, its design and writing style was identical to that of The New York Times. But the edition was dated July 4, 2009, and the unchanged slogan at

the top of the front page “All the news that deserves to be printed” was changed to “All the news we hope to print” (Portyakova, 2008).

Until recently, the publication of various sensations and hoaxes was the destiny of tabloids and gutter press. Today, Fake News are rapidly entering the information space of quite respected media. The reason for this is seen in the fact that Internet became a source of information for every media outlet, but it is often impossible to track the authenticity in the flow of quoting a sensational newsbreak, and the media, trying to be as informative as possible, fall into the trap of sensational information - a Fake.

The concept of Fake News appeared back in the 2000s, when television and Internet shows began to appear in the United States that performed parody news as real ones - for example, The Onion news project, which covered fictional news as well as real ones (Tandoc-jr et al., 2017). In 2017, this term was made popular and fashionable by the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump. In addition to CNN, the previously recognized standard of verified news, accusations of publishing and spreading lies from the US President were awarded to NBC, The Washington Post, The New York Times and BuzzFeed, which published a 35-page report on Trump and his surroundings ties to Russia.

It got to the point that the prestigious American publishing house Collins (2017) announced the phrase Fake News as the word of 2017. The publisher defined the term as false, often sensational information circulated under the guise of news. According to Collins, the use of the term Fake News increased by 365% during 2017.

According to research by GlobeScan commissioned by the BBC World Service in 2017, 78% of the world's population is concerned about Fake News. Internet users from Brazil are the most worried about this problem - 92%. In Russia, this figure was 83%. Only 15% of Russians surveyed said they did not see any problem in the spread of Fake News (BBC Russian, 2017) .

Today, Fake News is not only a tool for political games and content for satirical entertainment projects, but a global problem in the information market. This is because Fake News appears in the information space more and more often, moreover, on a variety of scales: regional, federal and international.

2.2.2. Procedures

To begin with, it is important for a potential fake news creator to assess the resources available: time, money, email and fake social media accounts (Lepekhn, 2018). The author states that time is oddly enough, but it really takes a little time - from an hour to a day. This interval includes the creation of the news itself and the time for its dissemination; money is when a small amount can come in handy to promote the message. But, as a rule, this may not require financial resources; fake social media accounts: from 3 to 5 to spread the publication among social media users; and email that take from 3 to 5 fake email addresses to send news to the media.

After that, the process of creating fake news directly begins: writing the text, preparing several rewrites with a high percentage of uniqueness; selection, editing of images and photos; creating a hot, biting headline; preparing a database of journalists and media contacts for future email distribution (Lepekhn, 2018).

When the hoax is written, the most important thing is to “hide” the source of the message. As a rule, the method of empirical generalization is used. In fake publications, the following constructions are often found: “social network users are discussing”, “the majority has decided”, “media reports”. This is done in order to absolve ones of responsibility for false information. And some media, in pursuit of sensation, oddly enough fall into such a trap of intruders (Lepekhn, 2018).

Once fake news is online, it needs to be continued. One can do this in the following way: write about how the message was perceived on social networks; continue talking about the incident; provide expert commentary on a topic.

The continuation must also be sent to the editors of the media, journalists, and published on social networks. It is worth trying to place the text in large venues. The audience of these sites is quite active, you can get an active discussion of the message.

Thus, creating fake news by oneself may not be difficult. What one needs: a good idea, a well-thought-out plan, a hot or socially acute topic and, of course, access to the Internet. It turns out that almost any person can influence the opinion of a large number of people and the media.

2.2.3. Dissemination

As a result of spreading false information, journalists of various publications are increasingly discussing such a professional activity as fact-checking, which indicates verification, procedure or method of verifying the reliability of the facts received in the media.

The Cambridge Dictionary (2022) defines fact-checking as the process of checking that all the facts in a piece of writing, a news article, a speech, etc. are correct.

Graves et al. (2019) defined fact-checking as a traditional meaning in journalism that relates to internal procedures for verifying facts prior to publication, as well as a newer sense denoting stories that publicly evaluate the truth of statements from politicians, journalists, or other public figures.

Fact-checking appeared in the first half of the 20th century, and grew into a separate profession in the 1930s in the USA. First, fact checkers checked the data in the materials of non-professional journalists and worked with UGC. Particular attention during the verification was given to statistical data, numbers, names, etc. Today, fact-checking in authoritative publications is not only technical work with information coming to the editorial office from outside, but also checking the materials of staff correspondents.

Every respected media in the world has its own standards for fact-checking and verification of information - they are part of the editorial policy and, as usual, include approximately the same set of rules: search for the original source or confirmation from several independent sources; checking sources; polling the opposite side; doubt and distrust of social networks.

All these actions can help journalists to help in the fight against the spread of false news and release information that refutes the fake (Kortnev, 2015). To combat inaccurate information, the world's information technology (IT) giants - Facebook and Google - create projects in which the world's largest media are involved. The media, meanwhile, are launching fact-checking sections and web pages on their websites (e.g. ABC News, AP, The New York Times, Polígrafo). There are also separate publications aimed specifically at exposing fake news on the Internet, for example, Factcheck.org and Snopes.com.

Another important area of work is improving the skills of moderators, who need to be taught how to identify Fake News. Back in 2014, the American magazine Rolling Stone published a story about a rape at the University of Virginia, despite of the fact that there was not even a single confirmation, except the words of the alleged victim herself. After the publication of the material, journalists from many other publications - including The New York Times - drew attention to inaccuracies in it. Rolling Stone had withdrawn its material and, moreover, asked the Columbia School of Journalism to investigate its own methods of work. The School had come to the conclusion that the standards of journalistic work were disrupted, and the Rolling Stones not only

agreed with the arguments of the report, but also published it on their own website with the subtitle “Anatomy of a journalistic failure” (Coronel et al., 2015).

In his article for RosBusinessConsulting, media expert Andrey Miroshnichenko (2017) writes that fact-checking in today's media should be directed not against lies, but against one's own temptation. According to Miroshnichenko, false news appearing on the Internet should be considered not so much as disinformation, but rather as meeting the information needs of the public. Not only the public, but also the journalists themselves want to get a “hot” and interesting fact for a large number of people, which weakens their vigilance and complicates the process of fact-checking. It is difficult to resist the temptation to publish such information even for the employees of world-famous editorial offices with their professional standards - and this will only stimulate the emergence of fakes until society develops immunity to them.

2.3. Data verification

2.3.1. Verification on the Internet

A great importance is paid in journalistic practice to the procedure for verifying information, the reliability of which is established by comparing it with data obtained from other sources, as well as other methods. According to Leontiev (2008), the most common ways to check statements in a journalistic text are direct method - direct comparison of a media event with real events; comparison with the statements of other participants in the event; and bringing additional data, including from several independent sources (the so-called intelligence principle).

The information has paramount importance when the journalist received it directly from real life and which has documentary evidence (fixed in writing, on photo, audio, videotape with obvious evidence of authenticity). The information offered to the audience should be accompanied by links to the source of information, while it is desirable to have an endorsed text of the interview, a

duly made copy of the document, an exact reference to a book or article, etc. If the information does not have documentary evidence, then this kind of information should be used with caution, this information may be exaggerated, may be insignificant, or accidental (Prokhorov, 2012).

There seems to be a basic formula for objectivity, which includes such requirements as an accurate reflection of reality (snapshot of reality), neutrality (avoid becoming involved in the event), impartiality (form no prejudicial friendships with actors in the event), reliability, which is achieved through reference to authoritative sources, separation fact and commentary, balance of positions, etc (Willis, 1991).

A reference to the source of information does not always mean its reliability, especially when the source is a fake expert. In journalism, an expert is a significant person whose authoritative opinion increases the credibility of an edition or publication. But there are cases when an expert can turn out to be a fake. For example, political freaks and scandalous personalities often act as experts.

Modern media cannot prevent the appearance of Fake News on the Internet - false information is published by people who are engaged in it thanks to the current development of social networks and finds its audience bypassing the media. It is possible that in the future the dissemination of false information will be prevented, either due to new tools and services of the world's largest IT companies, or due to the fact that the distribution of Fake News will become unprofitable: not only professional journalists, but also ordinary people will stop reflecting on fakes, trained to recognize them. According to a survey by the sociological service Odoxa, commissioned by the publications France Info and Le Figaro, 79% of French citizens support the bill proposed by President Emmanuel Macron to combat fake news (The Connexion, 2018).

Among those, it may include the introduction of fact-checking courses into the school curriculum. Activists from the French newspaper Le Monde are attending schools with lectures already, where they talk about methods for recognizing fakes. A similar initiative has also been

launched in Germany - the course “Computer Science and Media Studies” is taught in the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

Until such initiatives have become widespread, and there are no total feedback results, increasing the level of media literacy of the planet's population, the media and social networks can only respond to the appearance of unreliable information in the information environment after the fact, prevent the spread of fake news and refute them.

The main factors that deform the main postulates of journalism, journalists include: objective impossibility to reflect the reality in its entirety; the commercialization of the press; media that focused on entertainment; the tendency of modern media to inflate sensationalism and conflicts; the priority of efficiency over accuracy; using of anonymous sources and unverified information; fakeness of the modern information environment; declining level of professionalism among journalists.

Among the reasons for the spread of disinformation are also propaganda, political influence on the media, and personal gain.

Issues of professional integrity have become more acute in the era of the Internet, digital media and the new sources of information and multimedia tools for collecting content (social networks, the blogosphere, crowdsourcing, online user comments, interactive communication, freelancing). Mansurova (2009) enters the debate with the statement that extensive leaks of data from various special services is a fact that has become a characteristic sign of modern history. The investigation has become one of the most discredited genres of Russian journalism: after publications that are unreliable in terms of the source, their content is less discussed, but more often - the alleged customers who provided the materials and placed an order to media, and the cost of the order. The result of following these “traditions of creativity” has been accepted as the right to imitate reality, followed by a decrease in confidence in a particular publication and in the press in general.

Some researchers consider the terms “fact-checking” and “verification” to be synonymous. However, Bannikov and Sokolova (2018) distinguished between these concepts. According to scientists, verification is one of the methods of working with information, and fact-checking is a format for preparing materials. The researchers believe that the description of the verification process cannot be of interest to anyone except the verifier himself, which is why verification does not give us a new product, while for fact-checking, the description of the work of a journalist to check an information is an important format-forming feature.

The subject of fact-checking is media material or a public statement of an official person. Fact-checking as a format of journalism does not allow the use of anonymous sources.

Thus, fact-checking is a format of journalism that checks the authenticity of factual statements in the statements of public figures and media materials. Fact-checking deals only with factual claims and, as a form of journalism, checks for fake news.




2.3.2. Auxiliary platforms and algorithms

There is a special algorithm for self-verification of messages. According to Graves (2016) there are the basic rules of the fact checker: the first rule is to work with the primary source: its search or confirmation of information from several independent sources. It is important for a journalist to remember that fact checking from different sources should not be neglected. It is also worth taking a comment from the respected expert. But it is important to remember that you need to separate the source from the comment. Second rule is to take into account the opinion of the opposite side. It doesn't matter how many sources a journalist analyzes, as long as they all have the same opinion. In this case, the work loses its objectivity. Every issue has at least two sides. And the journalist is obliged to work with each of them. Third rule is to remember that facts are more important than time. Most often, fake news appears in the media due to the editors' pursuit

of the speed of information delivery. If a journalist or editor is not sure about the authenticity of a particular report, it is better to spend time checking it than to prepare a retraction later. Fourth rule is to pay attention that social networks do not always contain reliable data. Every journalist should demonstrate caution for information published by social media users. As a rule, it is an environment where the most notorious fakes are born.

Journalists and media literate audiences have the opportunity to check the media message with the help of specific tools. As a rule, these are websites and other technical means that allow to determine the authenticity of information. They allow researchers to verify the authenticity of not only text information, but also photo and video content. To check the authenticity of images, there are the following tools presented on Table 1: FindFace, Google Search, FotoForensics, JPEGSnoop.





Table 1

FindFace	Google Search	FotoForensics	JPEGSnoop
			
<p>Russian service that allows to search for people using photos posted on the VKontakte social network.</p>	<p>Google Search by Image looks for the uploaded image and determines where it was previously posted. In some cases, the resource gives information about who or what is shown in the picture.</p>	<p>Service works on the principle of Google Search by Image; provide information about higher resolution copies.</p>	<p>Free program for Windows that lets you know if an image has been edited before or not, and also extracts metadata: date of shooting, camera type, lens settings. If verified, such data can be extremely valuable.</p>

Note: Tools to check the authenticity of images.

The explorer can use the following resources to get information about a domain and a site: WHOIS, SimilarWeb, PC-CY, 2ip presented on Table 2.





Table 2

WHOIS	SimilarWeb	PR-CY	2ip
			
<p>This service helps to find information about who the domain is registered to, the date of registration, as well as the location of the registrar.</p>	<p>Service for collecting, measuring, analyzing and providing data on behavioral patterns, statistics on the involvement of users of websites and mobile applications.</p>	<p>Specialized portal that contains useful tools for webmasters, optimizers, marketers and copywriters. Some of them can be used for free. In addition, the site has sections “Exchange of sites”, “News and articles”, a question-answer service on the subject of the portal and an SEO forum.</p>	<p>Online hosting revise that learn all about the IP address, including location and domain Information.</p>

Note: Resources to get information about a domain or web-site.

There are extensions and sites that warn the user about an unreliable source of information. These helpful resources presented in Table 3 and include: BS Detector; Media Bias Fact Check; Snopes.com; Project Fib.




Table 3

BS Detector	Media Bias Fact Check	Snopes.com	Project Fib
			
<p>Chrome extension that adds a warning label to questionable sites and identifies questionable links on social media posts. This is an extension for browsers that warns the Internet</p>	<p>Chrome extension that adds an icon to news sites denoting their political bias.</p>	<p>This site allows to check the facts on the URL of the news. Upon request, the resource determines whether messages are authentic or false. All fake news has been archived on the site. As</p>	<p>Chrome extension that claims to detect fake news on your Facebook news feed.</p>

Note: Extensions and sites which warn user about an unreliable source of information.

There exist platforms in cases there is a need to verify information: Pipl.com; People.yandex.ru; WebMii. Platforms visually presented on Table 4.

Table 4

Pipl.com	People.yandex.ru	WebMii
		
<p>In this platform, to get the result, the name and surname of a person should be entered, and the system will start searching for him in social networks.</p>	<p>Russian resource for searching people on social networks. It operates within the Runet, however the search can be set not only by name, but also by age, place of residence, work, study.</p>	<p>As on previous platforms, search by name works. A significant difference is that a person is not searched for in social networks, but for a mention of a name on the Internet. For example, famous people find their fake accounts this way.</p>

Note: Platforms that helps to verify information.

Despite the availability of modern means of checking information, every journalist must have a critical mind and his own checklist for verification. Below is a template that researchers can modify and change to suit one's needs. Fact-checking list presented on Table 4 for the researchers (Mantzaris, 2018):

Table 5

1.	We are looking for the original source or confirmation from several independent sources.
2.	We ask the opposite side.
3.	<p>We check each source:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does he really have access to information? • Is his information sufficient to confirm the information? • Has he given confirmed information before? • What is his motivation? • Does he agree to list himself as the source? • Maybe someone knows more about the event than he does?
4.	<p>If the source is on a social network, we check in another way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was the account created? • Is there only reposts in the news feed or is there copyright content? • Is there a link between the newsbreak, the profile, and the pages the source follows? • Check photos and videos previously uploaded by the user. • Is the person on other social networks? Is he active there? • Who is the user's friend? Are there suspicious accounts in "friends"? • Are user's photos unique? • Check the output data of the pictures that the user sent (date, time, location).
3.	We are looking for a maximum of additional data and we double-check everything.
4.	<p>We ask questions to ourselves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have a personal interest? • Do I have in mind the result I want to validate? • Am I trying to fit the facts to an idea that has already formed in my head?

Note: Factchecking list for critical mind and verification based on Mantzarlis (2018).

Having said that, the most important thing when reading the news is a critical approach and professional distrust. It is necessary to answer the question about what confuses somebody in this

message, whether it was really like that. A list of errors that a fact checker can make (Nichols, 2017): using as evidence the statements of the media and journalists who do not rely on the original source (this can lead to inherently incorrect arguments and subjectivity); selection of information from a false source (such an error leads to a loss of time and, as a result, the message loses its relevance, finding true arguments is becoming increasingly difficult); neglecting the rules and the principles of fact-checking (leads to the impossibility of determining whether the thesis is true or false); misinterpretation of data, timing, etc. (leads to erroneous argumentation, the lack of tools to create an evidence base); use of invalid assumptions (such an error leads to a violation of the construction of logic and evidence); lack of analytics, conclusions, comments (this omission leads to an erroneous verdict, allegations of engagement and lawsuits); using to prove the thesis voiced by one speaker, references to the statement of another speaker (this error can be described as an output addressing error); using an irrelevant fact (in this case, we are talking about material that is not of interest to the audience); and lots of indirect data - as a result, the text is overloaded and difficult to read (this leads to a decrease in reader interest).

2.3.3. Classifications. Truth-O-Meter

The Internet has given rise to new resources, such as social networks. About a quarter of the entire population of the Earth is registered on Facebook. For many of them, social networks are the main source of information. This fact became the basis for the third revolution - produced by the Internet in the field of media: realizing the importance of their products in terms of disseminating information, many social networks decided to take advantage of this situation and turn it to their own benefit. Special tools were created to do this, they allow users and media to publish content directly on social networks (rather than a link to a third-party resource, for example, the website of a TV channel or an online newspaper) and smart feeds were introduced - algorithms that determine the interests of users and try to show them the most relevant content. Such algorithms allowed social networks to decide independently what content to show to a larger scope of users, and what to a smaller one.

In 2017, a group of scientists led by Shenchen Shao of Indiana University Bloomington also studied the phenomenon of fake news spreading on the social network Twitter. In particular, scientists created the Botometer online platform, which tracked who owns an account that spreads fake news - a person or a bot. It turned out that much more misinformation is spread by bots (Wallace, 2018). There is no doubt that bots are created and programmed by people and act in the interests of a particular person or group of people. But it has also been proven that modern social networks, albeit indirectly, present opportunities for the large-scale dissemination of fake news.

In 2003, a non-profit project of the University of Pennsylvania was founded - FactCheck.org, which, as its mission, outlined the following activities: to serve like a nonpartisan, nonprofit consumer advocate for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics. It monitors the factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players in the form of TV ads, debates, speeches, interviews and news releases (Factcheck.org, 2022).

Similar project known as PolitiFact.com, launched in 2007, was created by the editors and reporters of the independent Florida-based Tampa Bay Times. A little later, another PunditFact project appeared on the basis of this resource, dedicated to fact-checkers. In 2013, the resource published a set of principles for its work (PolitiFact.com, 2013). Let us consider its most significant provisions.

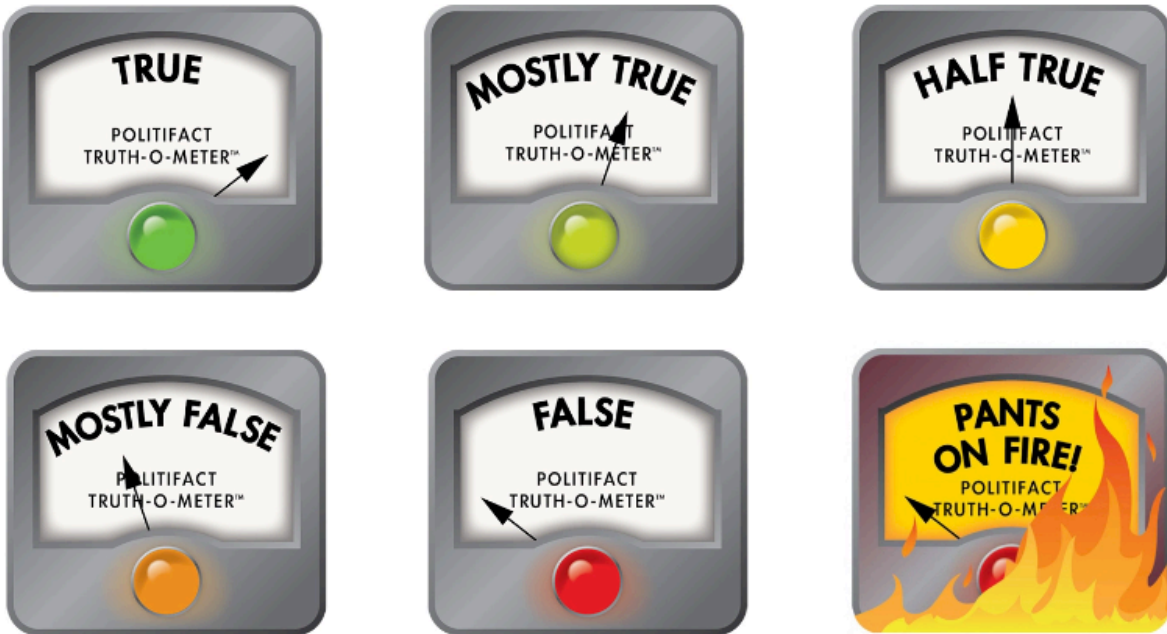
PolitiFact checks the statements of politicians, the claims of groups involved in the political discussion, the statements of experts, observers, bloggers, political analysts, participants and creators of talk shows on political topics, media publications. At the first stage of fact-checking, claims are selected for verification. Every day, PolitiFact and PunditFact are looking for the most important political statements. The search radius includes politician's speeches, news, press releases, advertising brochures, television and radio programs, and publications on social networks.

Checkers weed out opinions and minor mistakes associated with loss in translation. They select only those facts and statements, which can raise wonder in an ordinary person: is this true? At the second stage, the sources from which the disputed information was obtained are checked (transparency and on-the-record sources). After checking, a list of sources is published, where each of them has a mark on the scale. The audience is given the opportunity to choose whether to trust them or not.

The assessment of the accuracy and reliability of statements takes place on a scale from true to false (the Truth-O-Meter), where the extreme degree of lies receives the lowest rating - "Pants on Fire". PolitiFact checks the statements of politicians, the claims of groups involved in the political discussion, the statements of experts, observers, bloggers, political analysts, participants and creators of talk shows on political topics, media publications. At the first stage of fact-checking, claims are selected for verification. Every day, PolitiFact and PunditFact are looking for the most important political statements. The search radius includes politician's speeches, news, press releases, advertising brochures, television and radio programs, and publications on social networks.

The scale of Truth-O-Meter presented in Figure 3 and it consists of six levels: TRUE – the statement is accurate and reliable; MOSTLY TRUE – the statement is accurate but needs clarification or additional information; HALF TRUE – the statement is partially accurate and reliable, but it omits important details or does not take into account the context of the statement; MOSTLY FALSE – the statement contains elements of truth but ignores important facts that may give a different impression of the statement; FALSE – the statement has nothing to trust; PANTS ON FIRE – the statement is not only false, but also laughable.

Figure 3



Note: Scale of Truth-O-Meter presented by Poynter.org (2018).

Funke (2018), describes the Truth-O-Meter scale as a scale which is based on the principles, such as: words matter (the editors pay special attention to the form of the statement, whether it is a dry representation of a fact, or whether it has softening words and expressions); context matters (the editorial considers the full context in which the statement is immersed, takes into account the comments made before and after the statement, the reason that gave rise to it, and the point of view of the person to whom the statement belongs); burden of proof (the obligation to prove the authenticity of the statement lies with the person making this or that statement, therefore it is the authors of the texts who are responsible for their words and provide confirmation); statements can be right and wrong (when evaluating a statement containing two or more factual statements, the editors give an overall assessment of the reliability and accuracy of the statement, taking into account the accuracy and reliability of each of them); and timing (the decision on the reliability of the statement is made taking into account the time when it was made and the information available at that time).

The direct process for Truth-O-Meter rulings is carried out by one author, who writes an expert article and arranges the material on a scale from true to false, accompanying his conclusions with evidence. This material is then reviewed by a group of editors, which includes at least three people who make a final verdict. The result of the check is published on the site, where each reader can contact the editors if they find an error. Then an additional check will be carried out, and based on its results, notes will be made in the published material about the adjustment and its reason.

Today, such projects cover not only the political sphere, but in general every area that becomes an object of attention of journalists. An example is The Fact Checker, a popular fact-checking project run by the Washington Post (2022). The motto of the project is presented in the form of a quote from the British journalist, publisher and politician Charles Scott (2022), which has become an aphorism: “Comment is free, but facts are sacred”. Designed by Glenn Kessler.

It is worth mentioning that in social networks, it became possible for users to mark posts as fake - each such mark lowered the rating of the post (Facebook, 2022). But, after some time, it turned out that such a measure was not effective - over time, those who deliberately disseminated false information were able to adapt to it and even increase the coverage of Fake News. Each fake mark that lowered the rating of a particular post had no effect on the source's rating: due to high engagement (a high percentage of clicks on hot headlines), it remained high, which raised fake posts back in the news ribbons (BuzzFeed News, 2016).

2.4. Telegram

2.4.1. History of the phenomenon

Social networks that do not use preliminary moderation (read - censorship) or independent expertise, as in many offline and online scientific publications, are becoming prominent in the world. One of the most odious networks, but at the same time gaining wild popularity all over the world after the military events of February 2022 in Ukraine, is Telegram and its news portal Telegraph.

Telegram's position shouldn't come as a surprise for those who are familiar with the history of Vkontakte, a platform similar to Facebook for the Russophone world created by Durov in 2006. The social network was once criticised for its lax moderation of pornography and pirated content. Ahead of the massive anti-government protests in Moscow in December 2011, Durov refused to follow the order of the Russian security service (FSB) to shut down opposition groups. Later, he wrote that he did so not because he supported the opposition movement but because he didn't want users to migrate to foreign platforms. Despite the ban everybody can use it because of the very complex structure of IP-addresses and algorithm of encryption, invented by Durov and his company. That is the reason nobody can block it, until there is coverage of the Internet.

Telegram had been started as a simple messenger - in the same way as WhatsApp or WeChat. Its outstanding feature is an ability to disseminate a message directly to the mobile phones of hundreds of thousands of people through channels and mega-groups. At the same time, unlike other platforms, Telegram does not algorithmically address content on its users and does not feature a centralized news feed. As a result, users are less likely to inadvertently encounter radical content on Telegram (Bermet, 2021).

Instead, audience growth and information spread on Telegram are dependent on off-platform promotion. New users are typically directed to information through links on other social media sites, fringe news websites, or via real world events such as demonstrations.

Telegram combines the functionality of a messaging app with a social network. Users can create groups, which can be open or closed to the public, and can contain up to 200,000 members. These channels — something most other messaging apps don't have — allow administrators to broadcast information to a huge number of followers (by comparison, WhatsApp limits groups to 256 members, and one message can't be sent to more than 256 contacts at once. Signal limits groups to 1,000 users, and forwards to five chats). Recently, Telegram expanded its broadcast options to allow for live video and audio streams to an unlimited audience, promoting them as “Your own TV or radio station”.

At the end of 2021, the number of active Telegram users worldwide reached 400 million people, which brought the social network to 5th place in the world, and with the departure of Tik-Tok from Russia in March 2022 and legal difficulties with the functioning of Meta services (Facebook, Instagram), Twitter, Google (YouTube) and also, with the blocking of the information activities of Russian media resources in NATO member countries, the social network has attracted many new subscribers in many countries of the world. According to Statista (2022), after the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine military conflict, the number of active users exceeded 500 million people. Reuters Institute Digital News Report (2021) noted that Telegram usage doubled in some countries over the last year. It is used for sharing and accessing news by 23% of respondents in Nigeria, 20% in Malaysia, 18% in Indonesia and India, 14% in Singapore, and 13% in Turkey and South Africa. Telegram is not only growing in the Global South; western markets like Italy and Germany have seen growth, too.

2.4.2. Features of Telegram platform

Telegram's functional versatility and privacy-protecting settings, as well as its anti-censorship policy of fairness to all regardless of political views, have made it popular with a wide range of groups around the world: from pro-democracy protesters in Hong-Kong, Belarus, and Thailand, to Islamic militants and far-right extremists in Europe, and even journalists in Ethiopia and Azerbaijan. It has also been used as a marketplace for drugs and leaked databases. An increasing number of people use Telegram as a source of news. Unlike Facebook or Twitter, the different channels users subscribe to are not mixed together into a single stream of posts. Rather it's a multitude of separate streams of information. There are no algorithms to make popular posts more prominent.

In Telegraph (which is available not only to the media, publishers or bloggers, but to everyone in general), users can publish text, highlight the desired sections of text in italics or bold using markdown, provide the text with a heading, necessary photos or videos, and publish it. After that, you can send a link to your material in Telegraph by sending a message to Telegram or publish it in your channel in a popular messenger. One of the key innovations is that, along with the release of Telegraph, Telegram developers have added the Instant View function to their messenger, which allows you to view material published in Telegraph directly in the application (similar to Facebook Instant Articles and Snapchat Discover).

The actions of the Telegram management fit into the trend of creating services for publishing content within social networks. The popularity of anonymous Russian political channels on Telegram was a response to the information vacuum created by state censorship and opaque institutions. As the investigative journalists of Projekt Media (2022) mentioned, such channels created an illusion that some well-informed insiders are telling the truth while hiding behind nicknames.

One of the hungriest audiences for this sort of misinformation have been the people who should know better: journalists and public officials. In Ukraine, such channels have also thrived. Despite

having far more freedoms than their neighbor, Ukraine's media is still largely dominated by powerful oligarchs who act as kingmakers, backing certain parties and politicians. Trust in it is low. So, when Ukraine went through an unprecedented change of the ruling class, anonymous Telegram channels became part of the influence operation on new leaders.

Holnburger (2022) said that while the app had been used by German far-right groups before the pandemic, a mass migration of German users to Telegram occurred in March and April 2020. He noted that dissemination is much quicker on Telegram than on Facebook, and targeted more precisely, and there's also another unique feature: disinformation spread by voice notes.

Telegram provided a good backup for those who have a large following on major social media but want to talk about controversial things they might be censored for on other platforms. Journalists can use Telegram to monitor and report on misinformation and extremism, as in the examples given above. But it can also be used to disseminate high-quality journalism, to interact with sources, and grow audiences.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Method of Content analysis

Content analysis is a common method that has many options and allows to conduct a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the content of text arrays with the aim of subsequent interpretation of the identified numerical patterns. (Shalashnaya, 2022). According to author, content analysis is a translation into quantitative indicators of mass text information with its subsequent statistical processing. The main operations of content analysis were developed by American sociologists Berelson and Lasswell. An important contribution to the development of content analysis procedures was made as well by Russian and Estonian sociologists, especially A. Alekseev, Yu. Vooglaid, P. Vihalemm, B. Grushin, T. Dridze, M. Lauristin (Yadov, 1987).

The researchers consider that content analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative research data. The key feature is that it is a method for analyzing data that describes reality, but that cannot be counted. It is suitable to analyze documents such as interviews, field diaries or videos. According to Laurence Bardin (1979), one of the most useful research methods is content analysis as follows.

In other words, it is a method for analyzing data that describes and illustrates reality, which can not be quantified. Content analysis is used to analyze documents such as interviews, articles and other categories of text, but as well it can be used to analyze illustrations, videos and other media objects. It is important to bear that it is one of the most common methods in the practice of studying the content of mass communication.

Content analysis is a translation into quantitative indicators of mass text information with its subsequent statistical processing (Forman, et al., 2007).

Content analysis belongs in its type to the methods of positive empirical science (Grushin, 1987). According to author, this is exactly the reason why content analysis is fundamentally different from semiological approaches to the analysis of texts as the empirical verification of approaches is very problematic.

In general, empirical approaches are characterized by the development of hypotheses, the collection and classification of data, the development of experimental methods for testing hypotheses and the reliability of results. Within the framework of semiotic approaches, the central task is to decode the semantic structures of the text, while special attention is paid to the analysis of the cultural context, the genre specificity of the message (Nazarov, 2022).

The content analysis method is focused on conducting an objective, measurable and verifiable study of the content of mass communication messages. With the help of content analysis, it is possible to determine the degree to which the message corresponds to the intentions of the communicator and the specifics of the channel, to study the relationship between the characteristics of the message and the attitudes of the audience, as well as its real and communicative behavior.

Despite the fact that every content analysis includes different types of procedures, they have common features in one way or another. One of the most common is the definition of content analysis that is an objective, systematic and quantitative description of the explicit content of communication (Berelson, 1952).

3.1.2. The examples of content-analytical research

The quantification of textual material was very widespread before World War II, and in the 40s a special procedure called “Content analysis” was developed for it. Research using the content analysis method is widespread in the practice of studying mass communication throughout the world. Content analysis was introduced into research practice in connection with the needs of journalism. The first attempts to conduct statistically accurate measurements of various aspects of the content of newspapers, to identify the dynamics of changes in their subject matter, were observed in the United States in the 80s of the XIX century. Since then, content analysis has become an integral part of improving editorial policy. Moreover, as content analysis spread, more and more attention was paid to research methods, primarily to improving the criteria for classifying texts (Lippman W. 1922).

Certainly, the possible results of applying content analysis are determined by the goals and objectives of the study as a whole - they can be very diverse. Note in this regard that the field of application of content analysis is also extremely wide. It can be applied both in a society that is in a stable state, and in the case of other, specific conditions. Widely known in this regard is the practice of using content analysis in the United States during World War II (Larson 1988).

The purpose of these studies was to determine the political line of a newspaper, to identify what contribution - positive or negative - American publications made to maintaining the morale of the people in connection with the aggressive actions of German Authorities . Based on the results of the analysis, the US Supreme Court made decisions to close some publications. A significant contribution to the scientific support of these studies was made by such a well-known specialist as Harold Lasswell (1949). With the help of specially developed categories of content analysis, it was determined, for example, how much the published materials coincide with the thesis of German propaganda. In addition, content analysis made it possible to identify the frequency of occurrence of pro- and anti-American, British and German topics in the information source, comparing it with the reference publication.

The content analysis technique was also used to compare the nature of the coverage of a particular event by different publications, as well as to determine the ratio in the information flow of materials provided by each of the confrontation parties.

Content analysis is also an effective research technique that allows you to identify the nature of displaying or informing about specific problems, features of forming the image of certain countries or regions. For example, using content analysis, the question of how the image of Latin America appears in the news sections of the US press was studied (Farris et al., 2018). It was found that most often this continent was spoken of in the context of earthquakes and volcanoes. In the 1970s, there were further changes in the nature of the presentation of the continent, the primary focus of the content analysis was on the description of the change of dictators and a superficial presentation of the situation in the banana republics (Lorimer, 1994).

One of the well-known projects, built mainly on the use of content analysis, is associated with the activities of a group of mass communication researchers at the University of Glasgow (UK) in the 70-80s. During this period, they published several works, which reflected the results of the study of mass communication materials on industrial conflicts, events in the international and domestic life of Great Britain. There was the central question of whether television news coverage is truly objective and unbiased. In the course of studying the display of, for example, industrial conflicts, a selection of video recordings of all British television news broadcasts for one half of 1975 was made. Moreover, plots on the topics of industry and the economy were specially considered. In this case, special procedures were used that increased the degree of accuracy and adequacy of the proposed categories of analysis (Glasgow Media Group, 1976, 1980, 1982).

The main conclusion of the authors was that television news broadcasts about industrial conflicts are characterized by a selective focus on individual sectors, a focus on the forms of implementation and effects of conflicts, and not on their causes. The idea that news is by no means neutral in and of itself, but is the product of its presentation has been confirmed in the

course of other content-analytical studies of television. Their subjects were the nationwide miners' strike, the Falklands War, and the events in Northern Ireland (Glasgow Media Group, 1976, 1980, 1982).

Historical development of content analysis predetermined its characteristics. One of the founders of this method, Berelson (1952), notes that a high degree of accuracy is required when comparing single-order data. Further, when there is enough material to justify the effort associated with its quantitative processing, and if this material represents areas of study. Quantification is necessary when there is not enough text material that it cannot be covered without total estimates. Quantification is possible provided that the studied qualitative characteristics appear with sufficient frequency (Berelson 1952).

It is most advisable to use quantitative analysis if qualified texts are compared with other, also quantitative characteristics. For example, the features of the content of media messages expressed in statistical distributions that are compared with the number of subscribers, their opinions about these materials, in our case in reactions, also expressed in numbers.

According to Bardin (1979), the content analysis is focused on the study of explicit, obvious content. Moreover, an important circumstance is the semantic or interpretative unity in the interpretation of the content by all participants in the communication process, as well as by the researcher. In other words, classifying content fragments into certain categories, the researcher assumes that the corresponding fragments were similarly and unambiguously understood by both the communicator and the recipient. That is why, content analysis is applied primarily to clear, well-defined content.

The quantitative orientation of the content analysis method is also important. The premise here is that the quantitative characteristics of the text are its important parameters, allowing a researcher to draw certain conclusions. It is significant that within the framework of content analysis, no differences are made in terms of the degree of significance between the units under study - the

focus is only on the frequency of their occurrence.

The ability to test the put forward hypotheses in relation to a specific content involves operating with specific units that allow a researcher to classify the material with the necessary degree of detail (Bardin, 1979). In this regard, the researcher is faced with the task of determining the categories of analysis, units of analysis and units of account.

Bardin (1979) stated that the highest level of abstraction element in the content analysis technique is the category of analysis. Categories of analysis should be related to the conceptual scheme of the study as a whole. In the current practice of research, as a category of analysis, a brief expression of a certain problem is considered, with respect to which the content components will be classified.

A unit of analysis is a piece of content that corresponds to a category of analysis. Usually semantic and qualitative units of analysis are distinguished. The semantic unit of content analysis can be, for example, any idea, a socially significant topic. A word, a statement, a title, a paragraph, a character, etc. is often used as a unit of analysis (Bardin, 1979).

A unit of account is some characteristic of the text, the presence or absence of which makes it possible to identify the features of the content: the unit of account can be, for example, the time allotted for the coverage of an event. The most common way to measure content characteristics is to count the frequency of their use (Bardin, 1979).

Adequate use of the method of content analysis is associated with the observance of a number of conditions. Let us note the most important of them in relation to text analysis. The categories used should be clear, acceptable for description and understandable to those working with texts. The categories of analysis should be mutually exclusive, built in such a way that one interpreted fragment of the text could not be simultaneously attributed to two different categories. In addition, the proposed categories should be equally acceptable for the analysis of all publications

that are the subject of the study. It is also important that the systematic use of categories by different researchers would make it possible to obtain the same results.

Finally, content analysis involves a selection from the general population of texts under study. In this regard, the problem of the representativeness of the sample population is of great importance.

3.1.3. Political text content analysis

The question of representativeness plays a specific role when analyzing political texts. According to Lisovsky et al., (2000), the content analysis method is used at the initial stage of political research when analyzing the general situation in the region. To collect geographical, economic, demographic, historical, cultural information and data on the political situation, one cannot do without analyzing various statistical data. They can be contained in newspapers, magazines, various industries and specialized collections, or they can be stored in computer databases.

When conducting political content analysis, it should be taken into account that messages are published and accordingly compiled with a specific purpose - to inform, describe, appeal, prescribe, self-defense, disinformation. Therefore, when analyzing, it is necessary to interpret their content in the context of the goals pursued by the authors, which also need to be determined. Finally, the method of dissemination of a particular message should also be taken into account. An election leaflet distributed to a voter list is an example of a message with a limited or special scope. Although daily newspapers are addressed to a wider range of readers, this range varies from newspaper to newspaper. In any case, it is important to assess the degree of accessibility of interesting messages (Lisovskiy et al., 2000).

Different authors have different ways to divide stages of political content analysis. According to Prokhorov (2012), the political content analysis is carried out in four stages. First stage is to determine the set of sources or messages under study using a set of specified criteria that each

message must meet: type of source (press, television, radio, advertising and propaganda materials), type of messages (articles, notes, posters), parties involved in the communication process (sender, recipient or both of them together), message size (minimum volume or length), message frequency, message distribution method, message distribution location, message appearance time.

For example, if we are interested in how the newspapers covered a particular election campaign, the population we are looking for, might include all pre-election newspaper publications (message type) with a size of one newspaper column (message size) published in dailies (message frequency) that were Delivered to subscribers (message distribution method) of the city or county (message location) within a month before the start of the election (message time). Other criteria can be used as needed, but the ones listed above are the most common.

Second stage is to aggregate a selective set of messages. In some cases, it is possible to study the entire population determined at the first stage, since the cases (messages) to be analyzed are often limited in number and are readily available. However, sometimes content analysis must rely on a limited sample drawn from a larger population. In general, sample sizes are usually larger than those required for other types of research (due to the availability and relative cheapness of initial data).

Third stage is to define a unit of analysis - a separate element or feature of the message that we are going to study. The simplest element of a message is the word, and it can be used in content analysis in the most direct way.

Fourth stage is direct analysis procedure: depending on the objectives of the study, content or structural content analysis can be used. The simplest procedure for meaningful political content analysis based on the study of words, topics and messages, i.e., content, is that certain keywords are set and the frequency of their use in messages is calculated. However, the use of non-standardized indicators can lead to erroneous conclusions. To avoid them, it is advisable to

consider not just the number of words used, but their share in the total number of words. In addition, the same word can be used in a variety of contexts that change its meaning up to the opposite.

According to Lisovsky et al., (2000), the context of the political content analysis can be taken into account in two ways: either using the opinion of referees, in other words - coders (it can be the researcher by himself), either there should be added into consideration a second unit of analysis - a topic (a certain combination of words or concepts embodied in a phrase, in a sentence, in a paragraph). Although the second method explains the context of the use of individual words, it does this at the expense of a significant complication of the entire procedure.

Even more difficult task is associated with the need to attribute specific assessments to key references - whether this reference is given in a positive or negative sense, for or against the object of interest to us, etc. In this case, two of the most well-known ranking methods can be used: the Q-sort method (Stephenson, 1953) and scaling by pairwise comparison (Triantaphyllou et al, 1994). These methods are based on the judgments of a group of arbitrators about the meaning and strength (intensity) of a certain term.

Both senders and recipients of messages, or the researcher by himself and representatives of the population can be involved as referees. Along with words, topics and other elements that reflect the content of messages, there are also other units that allow for structural content analysis. It is possible, for example, to consider the length of time or the amount of printed space that is devoted to a subject of interest to us in a particular source, to count how many words or newspaper columns are given to each of the candidates during a certain election campaign. The researcher should also pay attention to the form of the message (the way the message is presented); the presence of a photo; the size of the title; the placement; the degree of emphasis; the size, etc.

3.2. Investigation plan

In order to structure the literature review and prepare the creation of an appropriate instrument for data collection, an analysis model was created to help to elaborate the answers to the research question applied to our work:

How anti-fake Telegram channels fight disinformation during the Russian-Ukrainian War 2022?

Table 6

MODEL OF ANALYSIS		
CONCEPTS	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS
Telegram	Channels	Russians
		Ukrainians
	Publications	Structure
		Delivery
	Content	Anti-fake
		News
Disinformation	Fake news	War
		Propoganda
	Communication	Visual material
		Language
	Publishers	Fact-checking
		Intentions

Note: Self-elaborative model of analysis table.

The analysis model presented in Table 6 was built on two concepts. The first concept referred to the area of the studied context - the Telegram social media platform, which has three dimensions of this concept: channels, publications and their internal concept. For channels, indicators of language were taken into account, for publications - indicators of their structure, and for content -

indicators of its components. The second concept related to disinformation and considered three dimensions. The first dimension was the characteristic of the expression, which corresponded to the need to understand its application, namely in what cases fake news is used in war and propaganda. The second dimension is related to communication and is based on the elements of communication between publishers and readers. The third dimension relates to publishers who combat disinformation through fact-checking procedures and who pursue the same intensity in their publications. The results of these indicators answer our research question on how anti-fake Telegram channels fight disinformation during the Russian-Ukrainian War 2022.

Bardin's methodological approach of content analysis was chosen to conduct our research work, as her method is well applied to the way how we want to collect the data of the observation material of media resources - Telegram channels, and the way of interpretation of the results.

As we described before, the main features of Bardin's content analysis are: the search of the true meaning of the message; comparison of messages considering different receivers or different situations involving the same receivers; placing standardized messages in front of others; aiming to an objective, systematic and qualitative description (Bardin, 1979). Her specific procedures are well matching our objectives on what we are focusing on in our research work - we are focusing on the way to verify the semantics of the data. In other words, our research aims to understand the true meaning of the text, in our case - understanding of publications of anti-fake Telegram channels and the way the publications are expressed. We used step by step guidance according to Bardin, as she presented stages with steps on how to perform content analysis, as shown on the following Table 7.

Table 7

CONTENT ANALYSIS GUIDANCE BY BARDIN (1979)		
STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
Pre-analysis	Material exploration	Treatment of results
1. Floating reading. 2. Choice of documents. 3. Preparation of materials. 4. Formulation of hypothesis.	1. Division: choice of units of meaning and context. 2. Categorization and codification. 3. Choice of counting rules.	1. Quantitative and/ or qualitative analysis. 2. Inferences. 3. Interpretations.

Note: Content analysis guidance by Bardin (1979).

We decided to use Bardins method of content analysis as her methodology is well-known in the World. Upon checking we found mentions of Bardin around 30.000 times in research papers and other scientific works according to Google Scholar.

The reason we used the Bardin method of content analysis as within her research framework, it is assumed that, based on knowledge of the content of mass communication materials, the researcher can draw conclusions about the intentions of the communicator or the possible effects of the message, as the meaning of the message can be relatively retrieved from itself. It is no coincidence that among the goals of content analysis listed above, both the motives of the communicator and the likely effects of the influence of the content on the audience stand out. Bardin's content analysis, applied to our research work, helped to suggest the accuracy and thoroughness of the measurement, as we were deriving aspects of the content of a huge volume of publications of media texts, and her method of codification practically helped and essentially simplified the task.

Unlike survey methods, Bardin's content analysis allowed us, as researchers, to draw conclusions about social phenomena and explore a large text array, highlighting aspects that do not lie on the surface. Using her method of analysis, we were able to consider the text of the studied publications as an objective (but indirect) reflection of the interests of the parties involved in the

process of covering common topics. Using her text analysis, we were able to judge with a certain degree of certainty the behavior, attitudes and other characteristics of the authors of publications, and by collecting the results of a quantitative measurement of the parameters of the content of publications, we were able to consider them as part of the social functioning of the press.

3.2.1. Material pre-analysis

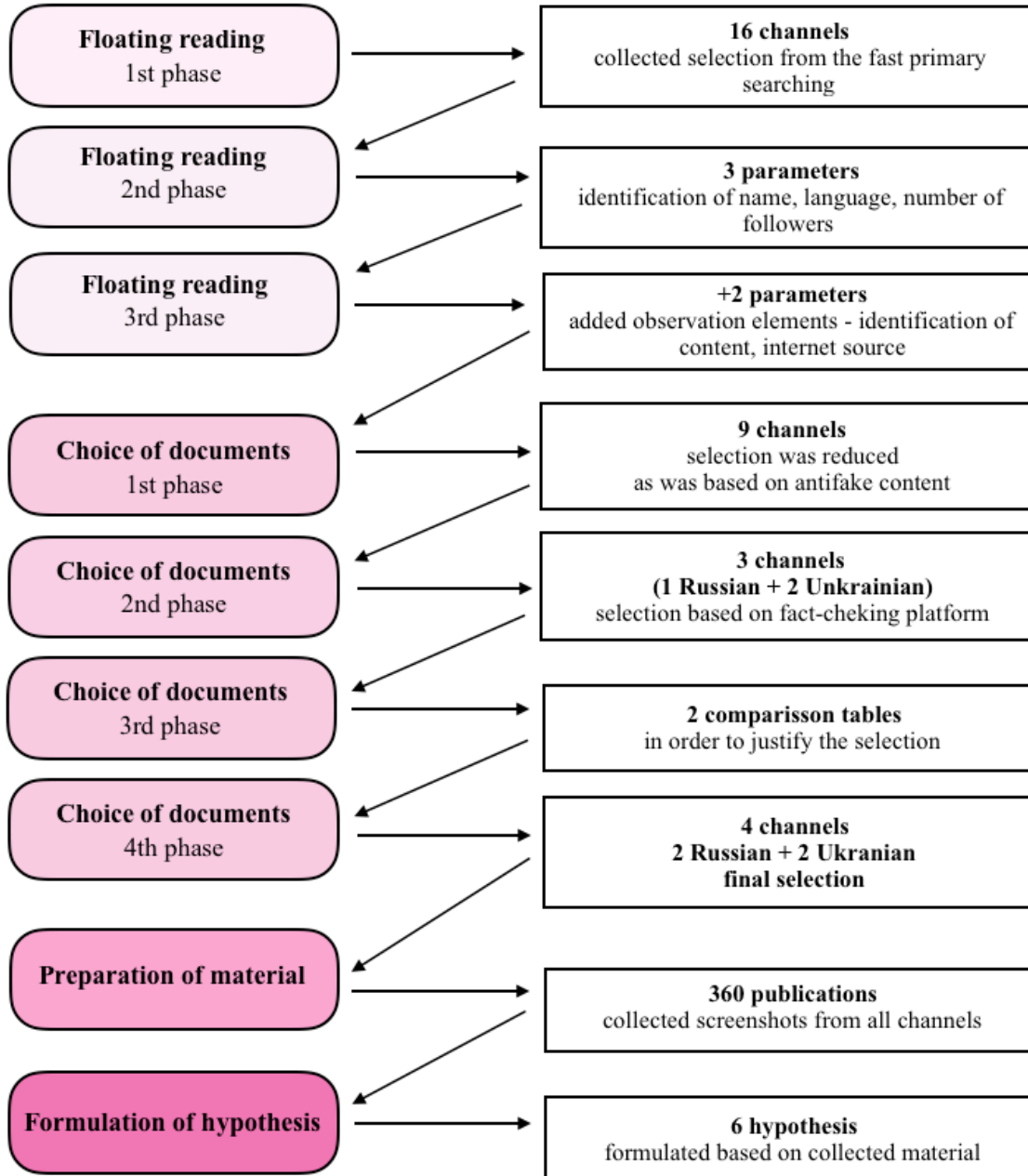
According to Bardin's step of pre-analysis, it is important to initially prepare the material for further qualitative analysis. We followed the principles of Bardin's selection of the material observation, specifically: floating reading (as attraction on the first contact with the data collection documents); choice of documents and material preparation (as attention to collect the complete information of the topic); and formulation of hypotheses that belong to the content of selective material to observe. At this stage Telegram channels were chosen and specified. The exploration and organization of all data material had been carried out. The task was to understand the main ideas of the Telegram channels on our specific topic during the war between Russia and Ukraine and to organize them, establishing and presenting on the tables to better understand the differences between the channels and their content.

Pre-analysis as a first stage is the most important stage in our research work due to concrete selection of Telegram channels. Pre-analysis stage took the most amount of time as it needed to be explored deeply in the internal presentation of each channel. We decided to present visually the scheme of the process we made at the pre-analysis stage applied to our research work. The following table includes our actions at each phase of pre-analysis steps and its results. The following table shows that almost each step of pre-analysis was divided into several self-determined phases, specifically: floating reading step, that was divided on 3 phases; and choice of documents step, that was divided on 4 phases; except preparation of materials, when we collected all screenshots from the publications of final sample in digital folders and formulation of hypothesis that was elaborated at the end of pre-analysis stage in our research work.

The scheme of the process of pre-analysis stage applied in our research work is presented on the following self-elaborative Table 8:

Table 8

SCHEME OF THE PROCESS OF PRE-ANALYSIS APPLIED TO RESEARCH WORK



Note: Scheme of process of pre-analysis stage.

During the 1st phase of the floating reading step was aimed to identify and determine the potential number of channels on chosen research topic. Since the topic was set at studying news during the Russian-Ukrainian War 2022 and specifically about the conflict between countries, the Telegram channels were explored through the platform search option, using keywords such as: “Ukraine”, “Russia”, “News” and “War”. The channels were searched according to the principle of using the global search tool integrated into the Telegram platform. At this phase Telegram had been investigated for the presence of channels covering events in Ukraine and initially, there were multiple channels selection results, but only 16 channels of these multiple results were selected from the top rating platform search and which were related to our Russian-Ukrainian War 2022 research topic.

For the 2nd and 3rd phases of floating reading step and for further convenient study and identification of differences between channels, a table was created to summarize the floating reading observation results, which were divided into main parameters, such as: channel name; language (based on the language of publications), number of followers (amount of users that were subscribed for channel); content (based on type of the channel, whether it’s news channel of anti-fake channel); and internet source (based on connections to their own fact-checking platform).

During the 2nd phase of floating reading, we entered and translated the name of each 16 channels into a table and entered the number of followers. During this phase we also determined 7 Russian-language channels and 9 Ukrainian-language channels, based on the language of publications. We obtained the data on the table.

During the 3rd phase of floating reading, in order to understand the fundamental basis of each channel we used deeper observation of the internal elements of the channels. We went through a general brief analysis of their content to understand whether channels publicize news in their own certain manner, whether channels refute certain news and facts. As one of the main parameters were to investigate if channels are based on external websites and have their own fact-checking platforms outside of the Telegram. This phase observation took a sufficient amount of time.

We decided to establish a visual self-elaborative table that demonstrated results of the floating reading stage of pre-analysis. The data obtained is presented on the following self-elaborative **Table 9.**

Telegram channel's selection during pre-analysis.					
Floating reading step					
	2nd phase			3rd phase	
№	Name	Language	№ of followers	Content	Internet source
1	«War with Fakes»	Russian	723 529	antifake	https://войнасфейками.рф
2	«War with Fakes. Analytics»	Russian	66 680	antifake	https://войнасфейками.рф/analitika/
3	«AntiFake. Foundation»	Russian	76 097	antifake	N/A
4	«Bad peace War with Fakes»	Russian	63 598	antifake	N/A
5	«Fakes Graveyard»	Russian	40 093	antifake	N/A
6	«For the truth»	Russian	34 410	news channel	N/A
7	«Burevestnik. News»	Russian	4 141	news channel	N/A
8	«TRUTH. Ukraine»	Ukrainian	1 028 191	news channel	N/A
9	«Ukraine Online. News War»	Ukrainian	994 278	news channel	N/A
10	«Mariupol Now»	Ukrainian	169 856	news channel	N/A
11	«Ukraine: Operatively»	Ukrainian	156 577	news channel	N/A
12	«STOP FAKE in Dniepr»	Ukrainian	38 573	antifake	N/A
13	«Detector Media»	Ukrainian	4 807	antifake	
14	«Stop Fake in Ukrain»	Ukrainian	4 346	news channel	N/A
15	«Anthology of Lies»	Ukrainian	4 221	antifake	
16	«StopFake»	Ukrainian	2 640	antifake	

Note: Results of floating reading step and selection of choice of documents step.

According to Bardin's next step of pre-analysis is the choice of documents that is based on a collection of material that is appropriate with our research problem. To make the selection of materials we needed to reduce the primary selection of 16 channels as it would be a high amount of publications to observe. At this step the fundamental base of the channels was revealed as much as possible, it was important to determine the authors of channels and their methods of dealing with fake-news. It was important to understand what verbal language authors of channels use and how they refute disinformation. Our selection was based on anti-fake content of the channels and fact-checking platforms of the channels outside Telegram.

Considering all these factors, it turned out that not all Telegram channels from our research were created in addition to the already existing fact-checking platform, most of them started their activity at the same time period as the Russian-Ukrainian War 2022 started, and most of the channels were created by civilians of both countries. Their methods of publication of the information were unprofessional - without following any fact checking procedures. However, the authors accordingly followed anti-fake procedures of publications and were based on their own publication policies. Therefore, for our research, it was important to organize the correct observation material and select the channels with anti-fake content which was based on primary fact-checking procedures.

At the 1st phase of choice of documents step, after detailed observation of the primary floating reading selection, only nine channels: five Russian language and four Ukrainian language were identified as anti-fake channels with the anti-fake content that matches our main research selection goal. The selection was visually presented in the previous table covering the selection of nine channels in light and deep green colour.

During 1st phase as delving into the organics and chronicle of publications, channels had been separated from the channels that generally cover news and events in Ukraine, and began to pay more attention to channels that fight disinformation and are anti-fake in their publication nature, which was clearly justified by the text structure of publications such as: "fake/truth" which based

on analytical approach to methods for debunking fake news. Undoubtedly, the general news channels, which were created by the joint efforts of citizens, also reflect a certain approach to exposing fakes. Their methods were to publish as much visual material as possible, such as photographs and videos from the war territories. Their methods can also be considered as a fight against Kremlin (Russian) propaganda, but it is not professional, so we decided not to consider such channels while reducing selection in the next phase.

At the 2nd phase of choice of documents step, we reduced our selection to three anti-fake Telegram channels: one Russian and two Ukrainian, which included «War with Fakes» (Russian), «Anthology of Lies» (Ukrainian) and «StopFake» (Ukrainian). During this phase we were based on the obtained parameter of internet source from the pre-analysis results table. We decided to reduce our selection to the channels which are based on their own fact-checking methods which were justified and presented on their web-sites as fact-checking platforms. Initially, as it was presented on the table, there were two Russians and three Ukrainian channels that have their own fact-checking platform, but after more observation attempts we determined that two Russian channels: «War with Fakes» and «War with Fakes. Analytics» are related as they are from the same fact-checking platform, therefore we removed «War with Fakes. Analytics» from our selection.

As for three Ukrainian channels there were three channels related to fact-checking platforms, however at this phase we were not confident with our selection. And since we needed one more Russian channel and well-established documents choice from Ukrainians channels, we decided to compare previously determined nine channels, in fact already eight anti-fake channels in the next phase.

During the 3rd phase of choice of documents steps in order to compare eight anti-fake channels and to finally justify the credibility of our final four Telegram channels selection we decided to establish a self-elaborated comparison table model with self-elaborated criteria of content elements based on initial floating reading notes. The content elements that were determined and

counted (if included or not) in the following table were: visual material (photos, videos); text publication structure (truth/fake publication organization; emojis used in text; hashtags for easier search); activity (as level of interaction between channel and audience proved by reactions and comments under publications); authority (in order to determine credibility proved by own stamp on the visual material and by links to original news sources); fact-checking platform (as link to own web-site).

It was important to scan all details in content elements in order to prove the effectiveness and justification of our final channels selection. The data obtained is presented on the following Table 10 and Table 11.

Table 10

COMPARISON TABLE MODEL (of Russian antifake channels)						
content elements			War with Fakes	AntiFake. Foundation	Fakes graveyard	Bad Peace War with Fakes
1.	visual material	photos/ videos	included	included	included	included
2.	text publication structure	truth/fake	included	included	included	not included
		emojies	included	not included	not included	not included
		hashtags	included	included	not included	not included
3.	activity	reactions	included	included	included	included
		comments	included	not included	not included	included
4.	authority	stamp on pictures	included	included	not included	not included
		links to resources	included	included	included	included
5.	fact checking platform	link to own web-site	included	not included	not included	not included

Note: Comparison model table of the Russian anti-fake channels.

Table 11

COMPARISON TABLE MODEL (of Ukrainian antifake channels)						
content elements			Anthology of Lies	StopFake	Detector Media	Stop Fake in Dniepr
1.	visual material	photos/ videos	included	included	included	included
2.	text publication structure	truth/fake	included	included	not included	included
		emojies	included	included	not included	included
		hashtags	included	not included	not included	not included
3.	activity	reactions	included	included	included	included
		comments	included	not included	included	not included
4.	authority	stamp on pictures	included	included	included	not included
		links to resources	included	included	included	not included
5.	fact checking platform	link to own web-site	included	included	included	not included

Note: Comparison model table of the Ukrainian anti-fake channels.

At the 4th phase of choice of documents step, we fixed our choice on four anti-fake Telegram channels: «War with fakes», «AntiFake| Foundation», «Anthology of Lies», and «StopFake». Two of them are published on Russian language: «War with fakes», «AntiFake| Foundation»; others are published in Ukrainian language: «Anthology of Lies», «StopFake».

In order to present and justify the final selection a visual table was created the following criterias: name of the channel; logo of the channel; country to which channel belong (as determined from the official description of the channels in Telegram or as official information on their fact-checking web-site that they belong to); organization (either the publishers are journalists or experts from nearby area, as obtained from the official information on their web-site or channel description); number of followers (amount of users that were subscribed for channel); internet

source (based on connections to their own fact-checking platform); number of post per week (week from 21st to 27th of March 2022, before first official negotiations); content (to highlight anti-fake content); and self-observation notes (according to obtained material from their web-sites and channel description).

The criteria of the country that the channels belong to was based on the division of channels into Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking, as the topic is covered on both sides of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine from their point of view, we determined that each channel relates to a specific country.

The organization's criteria was based on official representation of publishers on the headlines on their own web-site or channel description. We determined one journalistic channel and one expert channel from each country, which justifies the credibility of channels in terms of professionalism of publishers and their independence from politicians and conflict itself.

The criteria of number of followers shows the huge difference between Russian channels and Ukrainian channels. We assume that Russian channels were well-followed even before the War, as Russian publishers had already been using Telegram for a long time to fight with disinformation and spread their content because of the platform's possibility of being anonymous.

As for Ukrainian channels, we assume that experts and journalists mostly publish their works on their own official fact-checking platform, however, this did not affect the quality and quantity of publications as the channels still remained active. The criteria of internet sources shows that three channels have their own official fact-checking platform, however there is only «AntiFake. Foundation» as a channel exists only in Telegram, as we assume that the publishers of this channel are afraid of the current Law under Criminal Code of the Russian Federation on the dissemination of false news.

To justify the selected timeframe it was necessary to explain that the chosen timeframe was just a month after the Russian-Ukrainian war started on 24th of February 2022. At this time the emotional background of both publishers and readers reduced and the publications and the content of the posts became more balanced. Also the week from 21st to 27th of March 2022 was a week leading up to the first official negotiations which took place in Istanbul, Turkey on 29th of March, 2022. The week leading up to the negotiations in various mass media increases the pressure to influence the outcome of the negotiations. This week has been a busy one in terms of quantity and content. The data obtained and presented on the following Table 12.

Table 12

ANTIFAKE TELEGRAM CHANNELS				
Name	«Война с фейками» <i>«War with fakes» (eng. trans.)</i>	«АнтиФейк. Основа» <i>«AntiFake. Foundation» (eng. trans.)</i>	«Антологія Брехні» <i>«Anthology of Lies» (eng. trans.)</i>	«StopFake» <i>«StopFake» (as orig.)</i>
Logo				
Country	Russia		Ukraine	
Organizatio	Experts	Journalists	Experts	Journalists
Nº of followers	705 659	118 877	4 118	2 969
Internet source	Antifake platform войнасфейками.р	Only Telegram channel	Fact checking platform voxukraine.org	Antifake platform stopfake.org
Nº of posts per week	120	112	98	30
Content	antifake			
Observations	Professional anti-fake content from the journalists and analytics with justifications; rubrics from civilians and military fake announcements + translation to different languages.	The original anti-fake content is published only in Telegram because of the possibility for the authors to be anonymous as there is currently a Law in Russia about disinformation in	Professional anti-fake content by the journalists from Ukraine; based on independent fact checking platform «Vox Ukraine»; includes analytical rubrics where journalists check shared articles and	The content is founded from an educational anti-fake platform by the graduates of Ukrainian journalistic school. The content of the channel fights the propaganda and spread of disinformation in the media.

Note: Final anti-fake Telegram channels selection at the end of pre-analysis stage.

During preparation of the material step of pre-analysis we fixed all 360 publications from the final selection of the channels by screenshots and divided them into digital folders for further observation. Channel «War with Fakes» consisted of 120 publications, and channel «AntiFake. Foundation» of 112 publications, channel «Anthology of Lies» of 98 publications, channel «StopFake» of 30 publications.

According to Bardin's (1979), the last step of pre-analysis is formulation the hypothesis that belongs to the final collected material of four selected anti-fake Telegram channels under our study. Based on the previous practical observation of selected channels, we determined the following six specific hypothesis in order to justify them after further methodological content analysis steps while interpreting the results. As for current hypothesis we presumed that:

- Selected anti-fake Telegram channels cover the same categories, but publish a retraction of specific news that are close to the narrative of their own channel;
- Each selected anti-fake Telegram channel selectively approaches the choice of published content for its own audience;
- Selected anti-fake Telegram channels tried to maintain neutrality in the presentation of the material;
- Russian anti-fake Telegram channels are more neutral in terms of published content, as in Ukrainian anti-fake channels the negative content is initially published, from the point of view of the affected country;
- Selected anti-fake Telegram channels, adhering to neutrality in presentation, thereby convince their audience of impartiality and independence, which increase the level of confidence in themselves and in their published material;
- Anti-fake Telegram channels, in order to attract an audience, initially choose «hot topics» news, which pay attention to unreal, offensive, «mystical» news that initially looks like fake;

In order to conclude pre-analysis stage the limitations of the process were highlighted. The most limitation of this stage was time for the observation of the material. The difficulty included the volume of the channels that need to be observed promptly, as there are over 50 channels in Telegram under our research topic. Our goal was to find channels which had fact-checking procedures and wouldn't be deleted in the future. There was a risk not to find even one channel with fact checking methods by the specialists in journalistic area. As it was explained earlier in the theoretical part of our research work that Telegram, as a social media platform, does not have any platform policies in prohibited content to show and gives the publishers the opportunities to spread the content over the platform being anonymously and not being caught by law and the government. Thus, in our research work the pre-analysis step was done manually through a huge volume of primary material.

The main practical disadvantage of Bardin's methodological approach on pre-analysis stage is the limitations in floating reading step. Since Bardin's identifies floating reading as a quick primary research, was the reason we expand the floating reading on several phases. In the 2nd and 3rd phase of floating reading we made a deep observation as we discussed, it was an important part and needed a much deeper observation. As well one of the Bardin's limitations of pre-analysis is a limited choice of documents stage, since to make a better selection, we decided to establish a comparison tables between final selection of the channels, which already can be considered as a «pilot» content analysis, that would prove the worthiness and credibility of final selection. With that we needed to identify and compare significant differences between the channels in terms of their internal content in order to show that different channels in two different languages and which belong to two different countries have sufficient reason in further exploration. As for Bardin's, she doesn't establish the comparison method on her methodology step, but we decided to include it and applied for our research work.

3.2.2. Material exploration

At this stage of Bardin's content analysis methodological approach, we are going to follow the procedures for the material exploration stage involving the division of the context. Since our research is aimed at exploration of massive information through the 360 publications, it was necessary to prepare a basis scheme of its further exploration. Within the connections with our hypotheses, we needed to involve the internal linguistic meaning of the content and its impact on the reader and that exactly became a reason since we decided to involve a part of previously mentioned methodological approaches of intent-analysis of the Soviet sociologists. The intent analysis was proved as a well co-partner of content analysis in the Soviet Union and we decided to include a part of this method together with Bardin's content analysis that in pairs can be well-worked and applied to the research of media texts.

According to Bardin's content analysis, the mentioning of certain elements of the text and the frequency of their mention is generalized emotional assessments (positive/negative); The structure of the text dividing into sentences establishes semantic content which means what exactly is mentioned inside the meaning of the text which produces the dynamics of the development of situations, as from our research example: how different channels coverage the same event from their point of view. By collecting the data in the material exploration stage we used following principles such as: semantic (from the meanings of codes); syntactic (from the organization of the sentence structure); lexicon (referring to the position of words); expressive (through what the person who sent the message meant).

In our research we used intent analysis to determine the differences between the channels as well as their codification. In our study of media texts from two sides of the conflict, intent-analysis allowed us to analyze the social problem of the mass media influence on individual and group consciousness. In comparison with other approaches, intent analysis acts as a contextual and complex method for studying speech content, as it helps to reproduce the relationship between the spoken word and the psychological characteristics of the speaking subject - the authors of

publications from different channels, which are characterized by interpretability. We adhered to the contextual nature of the intent analysis when analyzing publications, assessing the intentionality of the speech content and taking into account the conditions of the situation, the parameters of the social and cultural context (the roles of the communicants, their status, interpersonal relationships and the feedback responses).

According to Bardins at the division step of choice of units of meaning we are going to identify the unit of analysis and unit of account which will be used for qualitative and quantitative data exploration. In the case of this present research work the units of analysis were identified as a part of the text/source that belonged to further established categories. Depending on the categories chosen, the units of analysis were identified as topic and informational occasions during certain events, in our case the unit of analysis was publication in each Telegram channel. We used publications to be counted as a unit of analysis since in our situation it was necessary to characterize the text, namely each publication. We determined the type of material and its emotional coloring, noted the presence or absence of semantic elements.

As Bardin explains, that unit of analysis identifies as subtext and evaluation, specifically: what are the authors of news and materials trying to convey to readers? Is there anything else besides informing, for example, a positive or negative assessment of the phenomena or actions of significant people? All of these questions were applied for intent-analysis involved in content analysis in our research work. Units of analysis have a risk to be incorrectly interpreted, therefore they are considered on the background of broader linguistic or content structures that indicate the nature of the division of the text, within which the presence of contextual units analysis that were identified in categories.

Further, it was necessary to establish a unit of account which helped to quantify the relationship between the unit of analysis and the categories with its codifications. In order to count a huge amount of units of analysis, we identified a unit of account which is «l» (as a mathematical accounting unit). The unit of account is a measure of the number of repetitions, manifestations or

mentions of the part of the text/source that should be accounted for. In our case, the unit of analysis considered not words, phrases or sentences, but a large amount of text inside one publication. We identified a unit of analysis as one publication, which consists of a group of sentences, and the unit of account as an «1» accounting unit.

According to Bardin's second step of the material exploration stage is categorization and codification (which in our case belongs to identification of categories of analysis). At this step our main task was to divide certain publications (which consist of paragraphs of words and phrases which summarizes introducing certain ideas) and consider them into certain categories (which elaborate certain events) and finally name them in order to establish categories of analysis. This process is called encoding: grouping recording units that have similar characteristics. The categories were defined objectively and consistently.

According to the Bardin methodological approach, the categories of analysis can be determined as research problems, ideas, or topics. Such categories can be, for example, mentioned in the text, features of the studied phenomena and characteristics of the text itself (its volume, structure, emotional coloring, etc.). At this step we did not set the categories of analysis in advance, but determined them in the process of working with text in publications. In this case, we were able to mark the parts in the text publication that were appropriate and relevant for the identified themes of publications before it's categorization, for example the following definition elements which include: element that is repeated in the text; element that draws attention to itself, suggests, seems surprising; element that the author of the text notes as important; element that that encountered during the observation of the topic.

At this step we were based on our approach of publications in antifake chanel from the previous pre-analysis stage, initially we identified 23 categories which consisted of certain thematic events from all 360 publications. Since at this step the identification of categories of analysis should be specific, we decided to merge few categories that were similar to each other, in order to reduce

sample of categories of analysis. We structured 15 categories that are presented in following list with the explanation:

1. Vladimir Putin (publications of the President of Russian Federation).
2. Volodymyr Zelensky (publications of the President of Ukraine).
3. Debunking of fake news (publications of technology for detecting fake information, guidance and tips for fact-checking).
4. Mobilizations (publications about civilians that are afraid of being drafted to join the armies).
5. Blockade of Mariupol, Ukraine (publications that cover the events in Mariupol; especially evacuation of the population through humanitarian corridors).
6. Russia as an aggressor country (publications about critics forward Russian country as a representative of a terrorist state).
7. Foreign mass media opinion (publications of journalistic contents from foreigners media).
8. Opinions from analytics (publications of shared opinions from recognized experts, well-known national artists and media figures).
9. Block of Social Media platforms (publications about block of social media platforms from Meta company: Facebook and Instagram in the territory of Russia).
10. Sanctions against the Russian Federation (European sanctions against Russian citizens and the government).
11. Military actions and operations (publications that illuminate details of military operations by Armed forces of the Russian Federation and Armed forces of Ukraine; fights for air superiority, and shelling on civilian targets).
12. Heavy losses of troops (publications that count the losses of civilians, soldiers and military equipment from both sides of the conflict).
13. Ukrainian refugees (publications about provision of «refugee certificates» for Ukrainian refugees on the territory of Russia; difficulties of accommodating Ukrainian refugees in Europe and their behavior among the European mentality).
14. World support for Ukraine (publications about mental, financial and military support from NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and European Union).

15. Bullying and mystification (publications that are based on direct provocative background and contain information that has no connection with the reality and considered as “Paints-on-Fire” publications by the Truth-O-Meter scale without any fact checking procedure).

According to Bardin’s principles of codification operations, this section will identify the codification of the established categories of analysis. In order to better explain the encoding process and provide certain examples the following self-elaborative Table 12 was established.

Table 13

Examples of publication text from the categories of analysis.	
1	Vladimir Putin.
	FAKE: Russian President Vladimir Putin refuses to negotiate with Vladimir Zelensky. TRUTH: Russian President Vladimir Putin has never refused to meet with his Ukrainian counterpart Vladimir Zelensky, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in an interview with Serbian media, which is broadcast on the website of the Foreign Ministry. At the same time, the minister noted that the meeting has not yet taken place, because it must be well prepared, this is of fundamental importance. (<i>AntiFake. Foundation; 27 March, 2022</i>)
2	Volodymyr Zelensky.
	FAKE: Zelensky promised to put the issue of denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine to a referendum. TRUTH: "Final compromises in the negotiations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation will be decided by a referendum," Zelensky said. This concerns the issues of security guarantees, temporarily occupied territories. However, there was not a word about "denazification" and "demilitarization" in the president’s address, as both terms are formal pretexts for war contrived by Russia. (<i>Anthology of Lies; 22 March, 2022</i>)
3	Debunking of fake news.
	To determine a fake, it is needed to pay attention to the emotionality of headlines and text: excessive pressure on the reader's feelings most often betrays fakeness. There is a check on the reliability and credibility of the sources indicated in the material. It is especially necessary to try to recognize the possible unrealistic nature of the picture, as it is often noticed that the image was made with the help of special applications. First should be to find out if there are statements by a participant in a conflict situation or accusations that are general and unsupported by facts. It is important to rely on critical thinking, analyze the purpose of the author of the material. (<i>AntiFake. Foundation; 22 March, 2022</i>)
4	Mobilizations.
	FAKE: In the Rostov region, letters are circulating online that talk about the mobilization of students to participate in a special operation in Ukraine. TRUTH: The Ministry of Education of the Rostov Region denied the information about the mobilization of students to participate in a special operation in Ukraine. (<i>AntiFake. Foundation; 22 March, 2022</i>)

5	Blockade of Mariupol, Ukraine.
	<p>FAKE: Russia is starving the civilian population of Mariupol. This was stated by Robert Menendez. (US Senate Committee Chairman of Foreign Relations).</p> <p>TRUTH: The problem of delivering humanitarian cargo to Mariupol does exist. Responsibility for the humanitarian catastrophe lies with the Kyiv authorities, who do not agree on the schedule of humanitarian corridors, and local nationalists, who hold the civilians of Mariupol as human shields. (<i>War with Fakes; 23 March, 2022</i>)</p>
6	Russia as an aggressor country.
	<p>The United Nations refused to accept Russia's resolution because of the cynicism of the "document" - after all, it was Russia that started a war in Ukraine, began to bomb civilian facilities, kill civilians, and create a humanitarian catastrophe on Ukrainian territory. The Russian media immediately reacted to the emergency special session of the United Nations on Ukraine, which started on March 23. During the UN Security Council, the countries rejected the Russian "humanitarian" resolution, which the Kremlin promoted ostensibly to "protect the civilian population" of Ukraine. (<i>StopFake; 26 March, 2022</i>)</p>
7	Foreign mass media opinion.
	<p>FAKE: Foreign media strictly follow the standards of independent journalism, obligatorily present the points of view of all parties to the conflict and give them equal space on their pages.</p> <p>TRUTH: Most Western media are actively involved in covering the conflict in Ukraine as a tool of pro-Ukrainian propaganda. (<i>War with Fakes; 21 March, 2022</i>)</p>
8	Opinions from analytics.
	<p>FAKE: Russian media spread a comment by Czech political scientist Oskar Krejci, who stated that the Czech Republic allegedly has claims "to the western territories of Ukraine." This quote was presented in the headlines as the opinion of the country as a whole.</p> <p>TRUE: Political scientist Oskar Krejci, who spreads pro-Russian rhetoric, does not represent the official position of the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and in every possible way provides assistance during a full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation. (<i>StopFake, 22 March, 2022</i>)</p>
9	Block of social Media platforms.
	<p>FAKE: A rumor began to spread on social networks that the State Duma is working on an initiative to legally restrict the operation of VPN services when using the social networks Instagram and Facebook from Meta (a banned organization in the Russian Federation).</p> <p>TRUTH: Information about this is not true, said the head of the Duma Committee on Information Policy, Information Technology and Communications Alexander Khinshtein. "I don't know about such initiatives. We didn't work them out," Khinshtein said. (<i>AntiFake. Foundation; 22 March, 2022</i>).</p>
10	Sanctions against the Russian Federation.
	<p>FAKE: French biotech corporation Sanofi is halting operations in Russia and Belarus and cutting off supplies of all medicines.</p> <p>TRUTH: The company is indeed moving away from advertising spending in Russia and Belarus. However, Sanofi company will continue to supply life-saving medicines and vaccines. (<i>AntiFake. Foundation; 24 March, 2022</i>)</p>
11	Military actions and operations.

	<p>FAKE: On March 25, 2022, a number of mass media of the Russian Federation and pro-Russian Telegram channels decided to republish documents that allegedly testify to the planned attack by the leadership of Ukraine on the "Republic of Donbas". The conclusion about the preparation of the "offensive operation" was made on the basis of the statement of the official representative of the Ministry of Defense of Russia.</p> <p>TRUTH: In the document published by the Russian mass media, there is no mention of the "offensive on Donbas", but it is about a training camp in the Lviv region. However, there is no mention of a "planned offensive" in the text of this document. As the National Guard of Ukraine (NGU) explained to StopFake that the document is not secret and has nothing to do with Donbas.</p> <p><i>(StopFake; 25 March, 2022)</i></p>
<p>12 Heavy losses of troops.</p>	
	<p>FAKE: Since the beginning of the special operation, the losses of the Ukrainian army amounted to 1,300 people. Such numbers were cited by Volodymyr Zelensky on March 12.</p> <p>TRUTH: According to the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, for the month the losses of Ukrainian troops amounted to: 14,000 dead and about 16,000 injured. <i>(War with Fakes; 25 March, 2022)</i></p>
<p>13 Ukrainian refugees.</p>	
	<p>FAKE: Residents of European countries are outraged by the rudeness and bad manners of Ukrainian refugees. 8 years of nationalist propaganda about the superiority of the Ukrainian nation led to this.</p> <p>TRUTH: Russia has been feeding the false narrative for weeks now that Ukrainian refugees misbehave abroad and abuse European help and support. The purpose of this narrative is to discredit Ukrainians in the eyes of Europeans, as well as to undermine the confidence of Europeans in their governments providing assistance to Ukraine. <i>(Anthology of Lies; 24 March, 2022)</i></p>
<p>14 World support for Ukraine.</p>	
	<p>The European Union will help Ukraine with the reconstruction after the war - for this purpose, the Eurocouncil should organize an international conference to collect funding within the framework of the Solidarity Trust Fund of Ukraine. The EU also called on the Commission to continue to provide technical assistance to help Ukraine implement the necessary reforms. The European Council noted the support for refugees from Ukraine and stated that special attention should be paid to the needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population. <i>(Anthology of Lies; 25 March, 2022)</i></p>
<p>15 Bullying and mystification.</p>	
	<p>FAKE: A video is actively circulating on the net that shows a Russian-speaking woman who talks about how in the German city of Euskirchen in North Rhine-Westphalia, a crowd of refugees from Ukraine allegedly beat a 16-year-old "Russian boy" to a pulp, as a result of which he soon died.</p> <p>TRUTH : This story is a complete fabrication. The police of the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia and the police of the city of Euskirchen stated that there were no crimes in and around Euskirchen that could be related to the events described. <i>(StopFake; 21 March, 2022)</i></p>

Note: List of examples of publication text from the categories of analysis.

For the codification process we identified the codes that according to semantic content analysis, the following codification was used in order to make an intent-analysis. The purpose of intent analysis in content analysis was to identify the intentions of authors in publications. The structure of intent blocks was evaluated in the text related to the mentioned categories, and also calculated the frequency of intentions in publications, which was estimated by the form of speech expression. Irregular frequency of positive, negative and neutral speech intentions was noticed in our calculation. This calculation was carried out with an objective assessment of the researcher due to understanding of the linguistics specifics. The codification of intentions was based on the basis of the linguistic narrative and the emotional intention of the text.

The positive codification - «+» was applied to publications in which authors raised the morale of their readers. As an example there were some publications which contain a share of sarcasm, as in the example of news about sanctions to Russia. The negative codification - «-» was applied on publications that humiliate and tease with their presentation, as well as publications that can cause hatred for the enemy and encourage their audience for the same feeling. The neutral codification - «0» was applied on publications where authors of the channels express their thoughts in a neutral way, without trying to covertly impose their opinion and adhering to respect and subordination. To summarise at this step we identified the codification elements that were presented: «+» as positive code; «0» as neutral code; and «-» as negative code.

At the last step of the material exploration stage for the choice of counting rules we established an accounting matrix that had a form of self-elaborative table where we manually entered the obtained results. We presented the following Table 14 as accounting matrix for counting procedure.

Table 14

№	Name of categories	Name of antifake channel												total category mentions from all channels	total intention mentions of codifications		
		channel 1			channel 2			channel 3			channel 4				+	0	-
		+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-				
1	category 1																
2	category 2																
3	category 3																
4	category 4																
5	category 5																
6	category 6																
7	category 7																
8	category 8																
9	category 9																
10	category 10																
11	category 11																
12	category 12																
13	category 13																
14	category 14																
15	category 15																
	total intentions on channel																
	total publications on channels																
	total number of overall publications																

Note: Accounting matrix (table) established for counting rules steps of the material exploration stage according to Bardin (1979).

To collect qualitative analysis data, a table was developed that counted all units of analysis and their codification. Categories were arranged vertically from top to down in a row, and channels were placed horizontally from left to right, and in each of them there were three codifications squares. Further, to calculate the overall results, in the lower part of the table, under the

categories, we counted the total number of intentions (from codifications) from each channel and under it we confirmed and counted the total number of publications on the channel from the research week timeline. On the left side of the table, after each category we counted the total overall number of mentions of the category from all channels and then separately divided and counted what intentions it consisted of. The total mentions of three intentions were counted separately from all channels and were assigned on the left part of the table.

3.2.3. Treatment of results

In this section, according to Bardin's content analysis model, in order to make inferences and interpretations there was a necessity to understand the data collection material in depth, seeking a basis in theories and in the reality of concrete facts, who produced the message and who received it.

As the method applied to our work, we as researchers answered questions such as: what is the reason for unleashing the conflict in Ukraine is presented by the both sides as the main? What is the overall image of the sides engaged in the conflict in the informational and socio-political programs of this or that channel? What are the differences in the coverage of the same events in the materials of the sides to the conflict? The range of such questions had been very wide and we chose the main ones.

At this stage for better comprehension of treatment of the results, we were referring to the theoretical material from the literature review section applying the Lasswell's 5W communication research model, which Bardin had also employed in her methodology.

The inferences identify some characteristics of the message during answering the questions: what was the source of the message and which channel made publication, why the publisher decided to use particular language, what were his intentions, what specifically was said in the publication, whether the researcher feel a subtext and hidden messages or not and what effect the publication created during the readers feedback. At this step, abduction at the beginning of interpretation had been changed by deduction while making conclusions. It was easier to start with abduction as there are a huge number of “highly-likely” materials with an incomplete set of observations. Later some of them had been excluded, which had been expected to make the researchers' scope more verified.

Earlier the quantitative analysis based on Bardin’s method had been identified, adding new procedures for the further interpretation of the results. The data calculations are presented in the following Table 15.

Table 15

№	Name of categories	Name of antifake channel												Total category mentions from all channels	Total intention mentions (codifications)		
		War with Fakes			AntiFake. Foundation			Anthology of Lies			StopFake				+	0	-
		+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-				
1	Vladimir Putin.	0	5	0	1	6	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	18	1	12	5
2	Volodymyr Zelensky	0	1	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	10	0	5	6
3	Debunking of fake news	0	3	2	0	5	2	0	8	2	0	6	3	31	0	22	9
4	Mobilizations	0	2	5	0	5	4	0	4	0	0	1	0	21	0	12	9
5	Blockade of Mariupol, Ukraine	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	12	0	9	3
6	Russia as an aggressor country	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	6	10	0	2	1	23	0	12	12
7	Foreign mass media opinion	0	2	1	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	9	0	4	5
8	Opinions from analytics	0	2	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	8	0	5	3
9	Block of social Media platforms	0	3	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	6	0
10	Sanctions against the Russian Federation	6	8	5	7	11	3	3	2	1	0	1	0	47	16	22	9
11	Military actions and operations	5	7	7	2	10	4	0	8	1	0	2	0	46	7	27	12
12	Heavy losses of troops	0	6	3	0	3	3	0	8	0	0	0	0	23	0	17	6
13	Ukrainian refugees	0	4	1	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	12	0	10	2
14	World support for Ukraine	0	1	7	1	3	1	8	6	0	0	2	0	29	9	12	8
15	Bullying and mystification	6	9	11	0	9	9	0	8	6	0	3	3	64	6	28	29
	Total intentions on channel	17	55	48	12	65	35	11	61	26	0	21	9				
	Total publications on channels	120			112			98			30						
	Total number of overall publications	360															

Note: Total results of the qualitative and quantitative analysis.

When assessing the data, first of all, attention was drawn to the variability of distribution of mentions of categories, which gives a base to confirm the previously compiled hypothesis that the channels cover the same categories in their publications, but with different frequency and consideration. Although some categories have more mentions than others, we could get data from seven to 64 mentions.

Categories related to Russia are more mentioned in Russian channels, such as “Sanctions against Russian Federation”, “Military actions and operations” and “Mobilizations”, in comparison with categories concerning Ukraine on Ukrainian channels, such as “Russia as an aggressor country” and “World support for Ukraine”. This could be due to the fact that the authors of publications were focused on their audience; they also reflected on the reactions by their audience following each publication. The existence of feedback gave the authors the reason to promote these categories further.

Focusing on our data collection, the most mentioned categories, which discussed different sides of the conflict closely and actively, were determined. Based on the data, we can infer about the intentions of the authors and the presentation of information from different sides of the conflict. On the self-elaborative Table 16 below the mentions of the categories are presented.

Table 16

Mentions of the categories						
Category		War with Fakes	AntiFake. Foundantion	Anthology of Lies	StopFake	Total mentions
1	Vladimir Putin	5	7	5	1	18
2	Volodymyr Zelensky	4	3	3	0	10
3	Debunking of fake news	5	7	10	9	31
4	Mobilizations	7	9	4	1	21
5	Blockade of Mariupol, Ukraine	3	3	3	3	12
6	Russia as an aggressor country	1	3	16	3	23
7	Foreign mass media opinion	3	4	2	0	9
8	Opinions from analytics	3	2	2	1	8
9	Block of social Media platforms	3	4	0	0	7
10	Sanctions against Russia	19	21	6	1	47
11	Military actions and operations	19	16	9	2	46
12	Heavy losses of troops	9	6	8	0	23
13	Ukrainian refugees	5	4	2	1	12
14	World support for Ukraine	8	5	14	2	29
15	Bullying and mystification	26	18	14	6	64
Total of publications (from each channel)		120	112	98	30	
Total of publications (overall)		360				

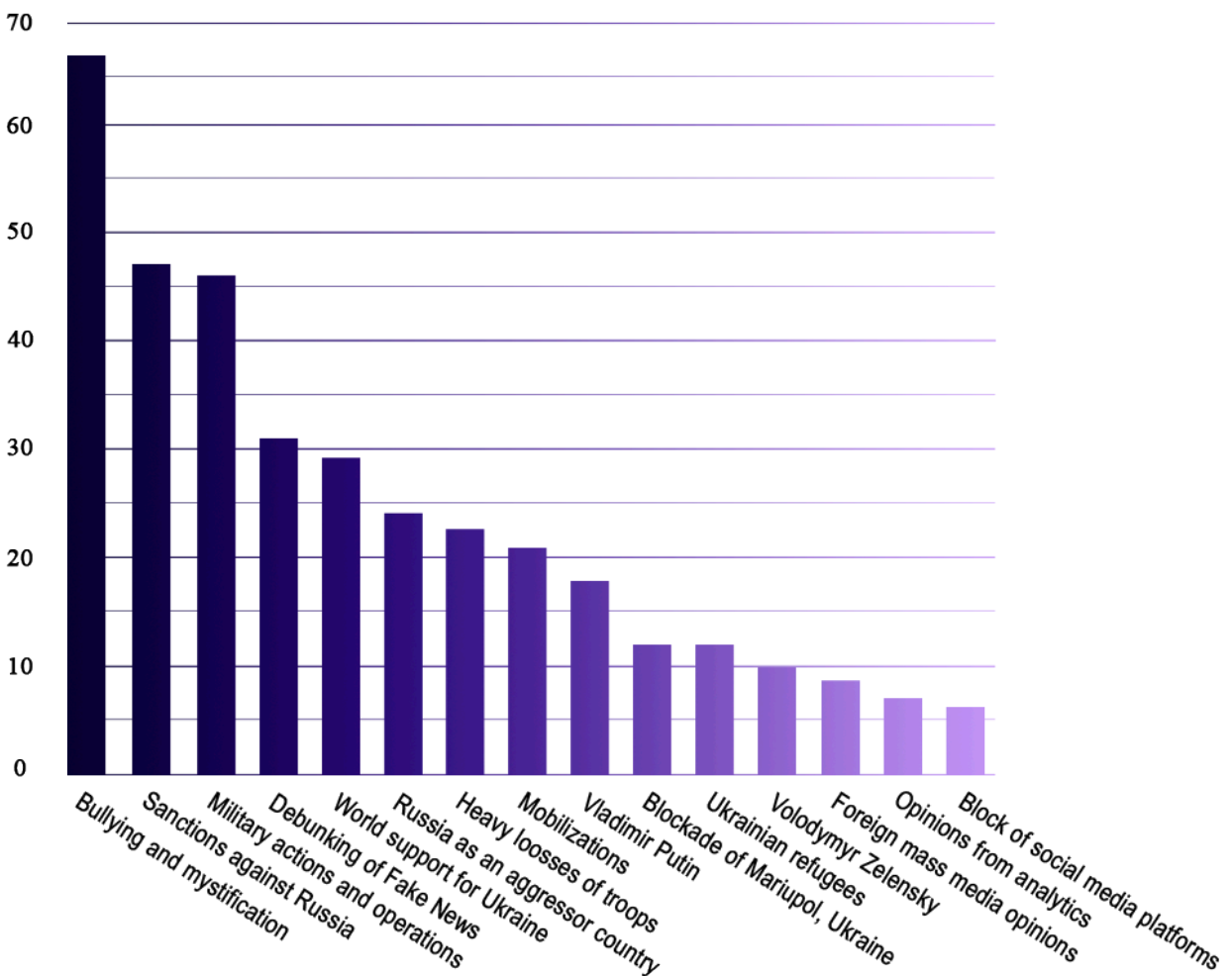
Note: Table of the frequency of the categories mentions.

According to our results, the leader of the themes discussed from all channels is «Bullying and mystification» which can be concluded that both of the channel's authors from Russia and Ukraine used the same method of covering the "Paints-on-Fire" news that were initially considered as fake news. They refuted them, thereby attracting the attention of their readers by the uniqueness of the news and the publication. Publications of this category produced the effect of the reader's reaction and heated debates and discussions ignited in the comments.

On the channels of both sides of the conflict, there are publications where the authors of the channels debunk the fake news about the relationship between Russians and Ukrainians, publishing it in their own manner where we can feel a personal attitude and subjectivity which

break the deontological journalistic code. The authors of the channels debunk news about people’s conflicts, thereby provoking their readers to express their own opinions. Due to the fact that the discussions and reactions under the category continue further, the authors continue to publish more and more rebuttals, that is why this category occupies a leading position in our list. The following Figure 4 illustrates the range of categories frequency.

Figure 4



Note: The range of categories frequency of the channels.

In order to present separately the summarized results of the categories mentioned from both channels in pairs the separate table was created. It was important to consider the results and compare them in pairs from different sides of the conflict. The following self-elaborative Table 17 summarized the comparison between the pairs of channels.

Table 17

The comparison of the categorie’s mentions in pairs.			
	Category	Russian «War with Fakes» and «AntiFake. Foundation»	Ukrainian «Anthology of Lies» and «StopFake»
1	Vladimir Putin	12	6
2	Volodymyr Zelensky	7	3
3	Debunking of fake news	12	19
4	Mobilizations	16	5
5	Blockade of Mariupol, Ukraine	6	6
6	Russia as an aggressor country	4	19
7	Foreign mass media opinion	7	2
8	Opinions from analytics	5	3
9	Block of social Media platforms	7	0
10	Sanctions against Russia	40	7
11	Military actions and operations	35	11
12	Heavy losses of troops	15	8
13	Ukrainian refugees	9	3
14	World support for Ukraine	13	16
15	Bullying and mystification	44	20

Note: The comparison of the categories mentions in pairs of the channels.

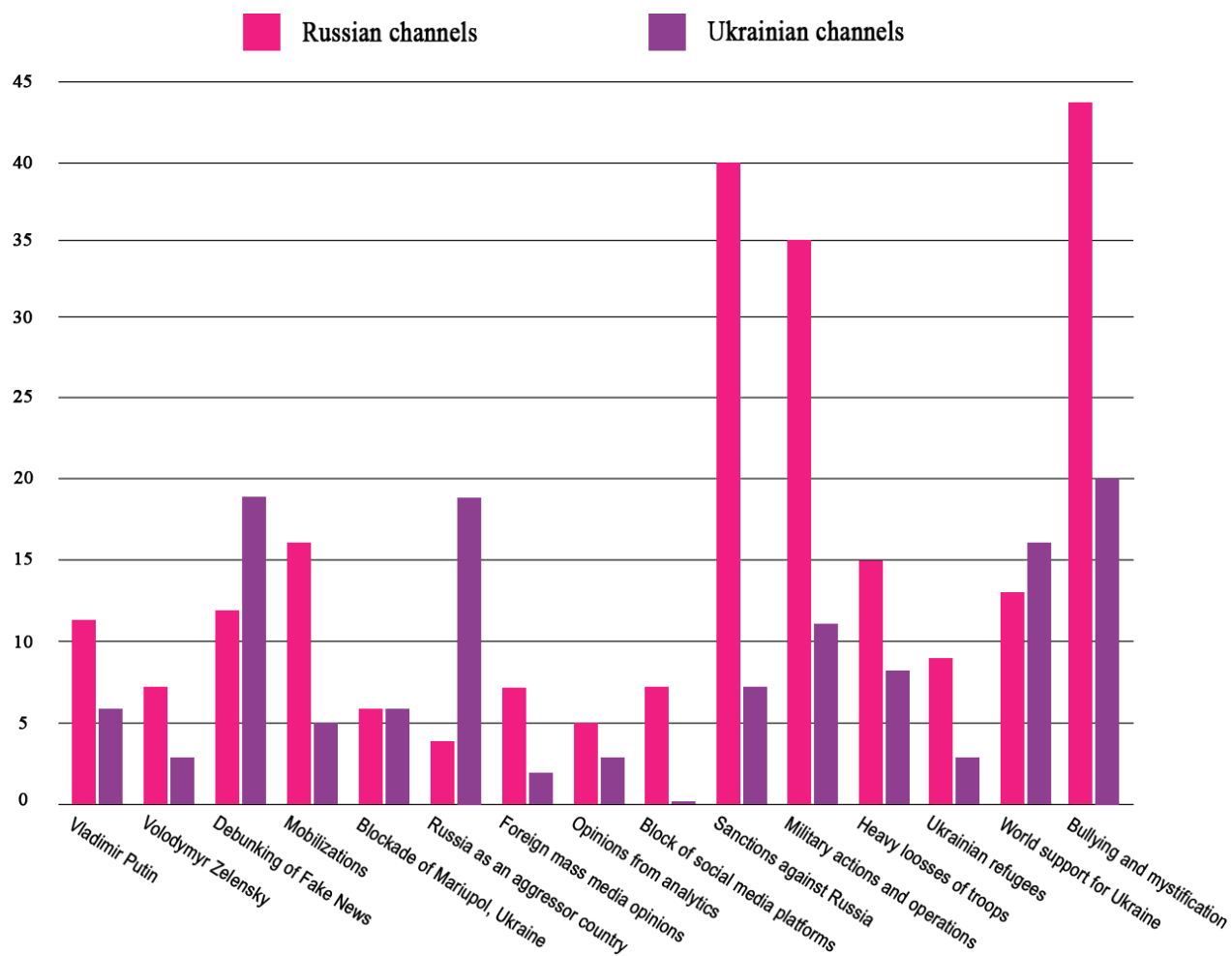
According to the comparison of the mentions three themes were chosen that had the most popularity on Russian channels, which is proved by the number of publications. If «Bullying and mystification», which takes a leader position on both channels, would be excluded, then on the first place comes «Sanctions against Russia» which can be explained by the fact that the Russian people want to be aware of the events regarding the restrictions from other countries at the international level, because the sanctions directly influenced and changed the plans of many Russian citizens for their living and their future, without their allowance.

In the second place comes «Military actions and operations» and this interest can be explained by the fact that the discussion of military operations is the very essence of war and consists in understanding events in practice: what is happening and what are the consequences. The goal of the Russian channel's authors was to raise patriotic spirit by informing of their own military victories and enemies' defeats.

In third place is the «Mobilizations» which can be explained by the mass caution of civilians and the fear that the government can mobilize them for a war. That's why people want to be aware of information about the rules of mobilization, whether it may concern them and whether they can be mobilized. Based on the definition of the most popular categories on Russian channels, we can conclude that the most popular categories and their debunking affect the authors of publications and their readers emotionally and encouragingly. Highly discussed categories raised the most excitement for the Russian audience from the psychological point of view.

The following Figure 5 demonstrate the comparison of the frequency of the categories mentions depending on the origins of the channels.

Figure 5



Note: The comparison of the frequency of the categories mentions depending on the origins of the channels.

Referring to the data, the most popular categories on Ukrainian channels were three categories, except the leading «Bullying and mystification». Category «Russia as an aggressor country» had clinched the first place, which may be explained by the fact that on the Ukrainian channels Russia was discussed as a country that started the war on the Ukrainian land. In most publications there was the persecution of the Russian people.

The news articles that were debunked included insults and accusations of Russians in the death of the Ukrainian people, thereby provoking readers to debates and emotions. The most negative attitude was addressed to Russian civilians who support Putin's regime and named Russian people as “servants of evil”, as we could read during our analysis. These statements were accompanied by headlines and photographs representing the opponent in the worst possible way.

At the second place there is «Debunking of fake news» which is important for the content of any anti-fake channel and its popularity proves, that the Ukrainian channel's authors notified their readers constantly that the news needs to be checked. Since the authors published this in order to reach the main tasks of the anti-fake channel. The narrative publications were structured technological methods of fact-checking, which should be notified while reading news outside the channel.

At the third place is «World support for Ukraine» which allowed us to infer that the authors of the channels were focused on their audience and covered categories that were important to all Ukrainian nation. The publications debunked that there was no help to the Ukrainians. According to publications, Ukrainians were being supported a lot by the World and especially by EU countries and the audience of the channels reacted positively to this, sharing their emotions and also expressing gratitude to the world and Europe for the assistance provided. All the most popular themes in Ukrainian channels showed what exactly the Ukrainians are discussing the most, and they are distracted either by the negative discussions about Russia, or, on the contrary, kind words of gratitude for the help they have received by people from all over the world, which once again proves that the popularity of these categories was based on the emotional connection to the readers.

It should be noted that such categories as “Vladimir Putin” and “Vladimir Zelensky” were more often mentioned on Russian channels. As for the category «Debunking of fake news» was noted that the Russian channels paid less attention to the procedures of fact-checking than the Ukrainian channels.

The category «Mobilizations» was less mentioned on the Ukrainian channels. The category «Russia as an aggressor country» was almost never mentioned on the Russian channels.

Such categories as «Foreign mass media opinion» and «Opinions from analytics» were mentioned more on the Russian channels than on the Ukrainian ones, and it may be inferred that Ukrainian channels were indifferent to the opinion of foreign media, on the contrary the authors of Russian channels were driven by curiosity what foreign media and analytics thought about the situation.

«Block of social media platforms» category is absolutely not covered by the Ukrainian side, which may be explained by the complete detachment from events that did not concern them.

As for the category «Sanctions against Russian Federation» both channels mentioned it with the same frequency, which may be explained from the psychological point of view by the desire to gloat over the failures of the enemy.

The category «Military actions and operations» is mentioned less on the Ukrainian channels, which may be explained by the fact that during the first months of the war Ukraine did not have any military plan. The Ukrainian channels were focused more on the «Heavy losses of troops» category, which may be explained again from a psychological point of view by the presentation of losses of the enemy as their own success. It was inferred that the Russian channels did not want to cover the truth about the losses of Russian troops in order not to raise panic reaction on their own channels.

Such a category as «World support for Ukraine» was mentioned with the same frequency on all channels.

In addition the codifications of categories were accounted for, since it was necessary to draw conclusions on hypotheses that were formulated after the pre-analysis stage of our content analysis. The codifications were aimed to explain the intentions of the authors of publications. Additional interpretation of results were conducted in separate circle charts. The conclusions about the intentions of the authors of each channel were evaluated. The following self-elaborative Table 18 presents an assessment of intentions from each channel.

Table 18

Results from the codifications of categories.												
Channel name	War with Fakes			AntiFake. Foundation			Anthology of Lies			StopFake		
Codifications	«+»	«0»	«-»	«+»	«0»	«-»	«+»	«0»	«-»	«+»	«0»	«-»
Mentions	17	55	48	12	65	35	11	61	26	0	21	9
Total amount of publications	120			112			98			30		

Note: Calculations of the categories codifications.

From the data we can see that the number of mentions of the Russian channel «War with Fakes» is positive - 17 (14% of the total), neutral - 55 (46% of the total), negative- 48 (40% of the total). The number of negative mentions exceeds the number of positive ones by 3 times.

The number of mentions of the Russian channel «AntiFake. Foundation» is positive - 12 (11% of the total), neutral - 65 (58% of the total), negative- 35 (31% of the total). The number of negative mentions exceeds the number of positive ones by 3 times.

The number of mentions of the Ukrainian channel «Anthology of Lies» is positive - 11(10% of the total), neutral - 55 (48% of the total), negative- 48 (42% of the total). The number of negative mentions exceeds the number of positive ones by 4 times.

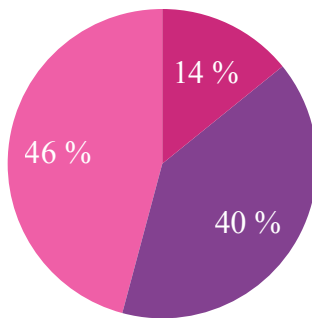
Finally, the number of mentions of the Ukrainian channel «StopFake» is absolutely not positive - 0 (0% of the total), neutral - 21 (70% of the total), negative - 9 (30% of the total).

The codifications were counted and presented in the previous self-elaborated table. The following charts were created to present the difference of intentions from each Telegram channel visually and identify the positive, neutral and negative intentions from the authors who published the debunking content.

The codifications were counted and presented in the previous table. The following Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9 were created to visually present the difference of the intentions from each Telegram channel and visually identify the positive, neutral and negative intentions from the authors who published the debunking content.

Figure 6

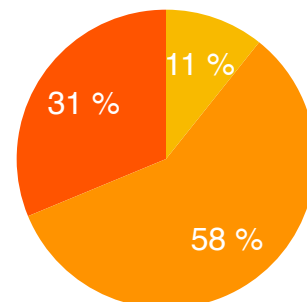
● Positive ● Negative ● Neutral
«War with Fakes»



Note: Presentation of the results of intentions from Russian anti-fake channel «War with Fakes».

Figure 7

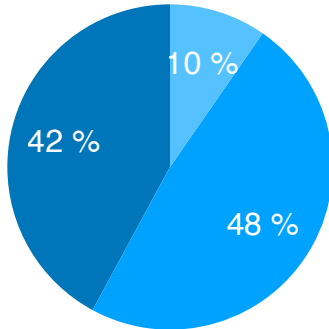
● Positive ● Neutral ● Negative
«AntiFake. Foundation»



Note: Presentation of the results of intentions from Russian anti-fake channel «AntiFake. Foundation».

Figure 8

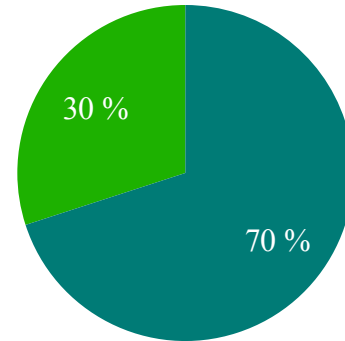
● Positive ● Neutral ● Negative
«Anthology of Lies»



Note: Presentation of the results of intentions from Ukrainian anti-fake channel «Anthology of Lies».

Figure 9

● Positive ● Neutral ● Negative
«StopFake»



Note: Presentation of the results of intentions from Ukrainian anti-fake channel «StopFake».

Based on data, we proved that all selected anti-fake Telegram channels cover the same categories, but publish a retraction of specific news that are close to the narrative of their own channel. The basis for justification layed on the results as well visually presented in the column chart that showed that Russian channels mostly mentioned the categories that have a relation to their own country such as consequences from the war applied to Russia.

As well, the same was proved for Ukrainian channels that mentioned mostly the categories which were related to the events in Ukraine and were directed to the Ukrainian civilians. Based on that we proved that each selected anti-fake Telegram channel selectively approached the choice of published content for its own audience.

According to data, we proved that all anti-fake Telegram channels tried to maintain neutrality in the presentation of the material. Considering the linguistic as semantic purpose for the intentions of authors it was proved that the Russian anti-fake Telegram channels were more neutral in terms of published content, as in the Ukrainian channels negative content was published from the point of view of the affected country. It may be explained by the infer that the Russian channels behave from the base of a power and that's why they were perceived as more confident. As for the Ukrainian channels, the authors paid more attention to the emotional background of the publications, making the inspiration as an additional power that influenced the audience.

However, it was not justified that all anti-fake Telegram channels, adhering to neutrality in presentation, thereby convince their audience of impartiality and independence, which increased the level of confidence in themselves and in their publications. Despite their declarations as an independent channels they still can not raise awareness in their reliability as they publish more material which satisfies their narrative.

It may be inferred that antifake Telegram channels pay more attention to unreal, offensive, “mystical” content that initially looks like fake news, in order to attract an audience.

4. DISCUSSIONS

This research intends to study Telegram channels which are searching for unverified news published by the enemy and fact-checking them. Channel authors usually use methods of investigation which were adopted by the world community of fact-checkers, but as well they employed their own way. The authors complement emotional narratives to publications that they are debunking. Channels are using publications of deliberately provocative content in order to pay attention to the channel which may be considered as a fight with disinformation, as they attract the audience to subscribe to their channel.

As part of the study, it was determined that fake news as a phenomenon has existed since dateless time. With the help of the Internet, fake news has become widespread, and especially has found its ideal environment in social platforms like Telegram. Having studied a number of definitions of the concept of "fake news", the following is taken as the basis of the study - this is a message stylistically created as real news, but completely or partially false. It was determined that with the advent of fake news, it comes a time to refute them. Fact-checking as a procedure performs the most important task - it checks the authenticity of information.

The theoretical observation and literature review under our research topic showed that there is little existence of research that reveals the debunking of fake news, especially in the Telegram channel.

It was revealed that the authors of Telegram channels use fake news not only to refute them, but also to express a hidden opinion and promote their interests, which were identified by the scientific community as elements of propaganda. These include the desire to bring harm to the reputation of a competitor and to increase the audience's interest in their own political position. It was noted that even anti-fake Telegram channels, who declare fighting with fake news, do not hesitate to publish unverified information. Sometimes this is due to poor quality of checking the data, in other cases - to deliberate distortion of facts in order to disseminate provocative

propagandistic content. The study found that the Telegram channels are debunking each other's published content: Russian channels considered publications that are from the Ukrainian channels and vice versa.

The study also showed that Telegram channels don't use the methods and principles recognized by the international community of fact-checkers. These channels declare themselves to be anti-fake, but they do not follow journalistic principles. The data indicates that Russian channels are more active in Telegram, and it may be concluded that the Ukrainian channels on the contrary pay more attention to their own website as a platform.

The data proves that Telegram channels adhere to neutrality in publications, thereby trying to show their independence. By presenting the news in a neutral way, the channels demonstrate to their audience their impartiality in relation to the conflict situation. It has been noticed that in Russian Telegram channels, one of the most mentioned categories "Sanctions against Russian Federation" is discussed with sarcasm, thus the authors of the channels are trying to express their hidden opinion that the sanctions are more harmful to Europe than to Russia.

The results also indicate that a large percentage of publications are presented as debunking fake news, but in fact the revelations by themselves are also fake, and this is illustrated by the number of mentions in the "Bullying and mystification" category. There is bullying in publications, which is an insult, not an exposure. Exactly the same conclusion can be drawn about "mystification", which is a phenomenon when fakes spread further on the internet, or revelations are based on news that, in principle, do not exist. In such publications, the source of information is not attached, while the channels still create fake retractions. That is why this category is the most popular in the collected results.

The study indicates that fake news has the potential to be used as a weapon of propaganda. In this research there is no check of the propaganda elements in detail, however the analysis of the publications shows that there is a presence of linguistic expressions, which may lead to

assumption that fake news may contain the same elements as propaganda, such as emotionality and commitment to hot headlines.

The study demonstrates a correlation between observations about messages that are aimed to force a mass audience response/reflection, which illustrates the inherent features of propaganda as it was described by Lasswell (1948), as well as Lipmann (1922), who claimed that political media texts have elements of mind control. This study doesn't prove that Telegram channels influenced their audience as propagandistic, but the existence of the elements of propaganda was definitely discovered, which makes the hypothesis possible.

The content analysis method applied to this research proves the hypothesis that Telegram is an environment for both spreading and for debunking fake news. As it was explained earlier in the theoretical part of our research work that Telegram, as a social media platform, does not have any platform policies in prohibiting content and gives the publishers the opportunities to spread the content over the platform anonymously and not afraid of being caught by the justice.

In the course of the analysis, the author revealed a statistical observation that the number of publications on anti-fake channels has increased rapidly since the beginning of the war. At the pre-analysis stage, it was noticed that the channels before the beginning of the war had generated about 10 publications per week, and during the war the amount came to 100 publications per week. This observation proves the hypothesis that disinformation reaches a large scale during the war.

This study proves the need for verification of information in line with the theory of Khramova (2015). This work shows that any unverified content in Telegram needs to be fact-checked. It was found that users frequently generate their own content that does not pass any filtering and penetrates the pages of social networks, thinking that their reputation does not suffer, because it does not exist. But the reputation of a serious mass media resource such as a Global Media

Platform, which may repost a publication, may suffer, that is why verification and fact-checking is needed.

The analyzed data pays attention to the fact that more than 90 percent of the publications of the selected Telegram channels follow content that relates specifically to exposure of fakes, also there are publications of bullying and mystification. The data proves the hypothesis that anti fake Telegram channels are specialized on their debunking content.

The results support the theory that indicates method of content analysis as an appropriate procedure to analyze media publications, especially a huge amount of publications. The method applied to this research helped to analyze 360 publications of media text, and its encoding processes that were based on Bardin's methodological approach helped to group and to collect the data.

However, the method of content analysis has limitations to observe and make conclusions of the research problem. In fact, a generally accepted methodology for analyzing publications in a Telegram has not yet been developed, this can be explained by the fact that the platform appeared relatively recently, which is why the methodology for studying texts in a Telegram, taking into account all the specifics of the platform, has not yet been developed.

For evaluating media messages, the methodological choices were constrained by content analysis, which made it possible to increase the quantitative and qualitative calculation, but still, in order to correctly determine the intentions of the authors, it is necessary to compile several tables for each characteristic and analyze each publication by words. This also requires knowledge in the field of linguistics, Journalism, Sociology and Psychology.

During the research, it was noticed that Bardin's content analysis is limited, as it leads to certain difficulties at the pre-analysis, as there were not enough additional steps for deeper sampling. The need to comprehend the subtext in publications imposes restrictions, but this can be explained by

the fact that the Slavic nations have a tendency to allegorical language, which is a national linguistic trait.

The reliability of the data is impacted by the selected short period of time of one week from 21st till 27th of March 2022, which is very small for an accurate assessment and determination of which category is more mentioned on the channels. Within the changes of the war, the popularity of the category, as well as the intentions of the authors may change. The obtained results are representative only for the selected time period.

The generalizability of the results is limited by time and insufficient information about Telegram and fact-checking platforms in Russia and Ukraine. The study would be more complete if there were more scientific researches about the debunking of the fake news in Telegram. The research is extensive and the time frame of this work imposes restrictions on detailed analysis and study.

5. CONCLUSIONS.

This research aimed to identify the methods of debunking fake news in Telegram channels during Russian-Ukrainian war 2022. This study was focused on the authors of the Telegram channels and their procedures to debunk fake news using fact-checking methods.

After conducting the research, the hypothesis were confirmed, and the inference was made that the debunking of fake news, as a procedure, is used to fight disinformation on the internet during the information war. The results of the content analysis of publications and author's intentions demonstrate that fake news may influence the attitude towards people from Russia and Ukraine. The intentions of the Telegram channels in published content change people's mind. While analyzing anti-fake content of Telegram channels, the researcher obtained insightful data about procedures that channels use to fight with disinformation. However, the results indicate that Telegram channels, despite all their good intentions, still belong to one more instrument of propaganda.

The research has shown that methods of text analysis may be used to solve a wide range of problems in various social sciences. Text analysis, in particular, content analysis, can be effectively used as an information warfare technology tool to compare the political positions of various sources of information, changing these positions over time, and reflect various current events and theoretical concepts.

In this work, the content of antifake channels on the modern Telegram platform was analyzed. The researcher collected in detail established revelations on fake news on specialized antifake channels in Telegram, which are fact-checked, investigated the methods of exposing fakes. Therefore, due to the results of the analysis, it can be assumed that the debunking methods relate to propaganda. The appearance of a large number of fake news on social network Telegram, may be explained by safety and impunity of authors.

The purpose of the study was to understand the intentions of the channels and it was interesting to comprehend and justify the relations of both nations to each other with the help of scientific analysis. It may be noted that in Telegram, the authors use informal language for presenting information and publishing. This research explored the methodology of debunking fake news for the audience, which should pay attention to make a verification of the information on the internet, especially while reading news. The novelty of the work can be explained by the relevance of the military situation of the Russian-Ukrainian War 2022. With the help of this work, it is possible not only to observe, but also to record the actual data of the impact from the information war.

The significance of this thesis is to demonstrate that the mass media maintain the trust of the readers and that's why people should take care of verification of information and do better fact-checking. This research may be interesting to students and professors of journalistic divisions, as well as to independent journalists and scientists involved in fact-checking, finally to the audience/users/people who independently check media reports for accuracy. In the course of the study, when conducting a content analysis, some changes and additions were made to the methodology. In this research the content analysis procedure is supplemented with self-elaborative tables that can be used by future researchers in the selection and comparison of the channels. All the information provided allows researchers, as content consumers, to verify information independently, using critical thinking and working with sources, to identify fake messages. There is a hope that research will serve as a good platform for improvement and expansion, as well as the development of such kinds of dissertations.

5.1. How to continue this research?

Further research is needed to use more methodological approaches for the analysis of media texts. As it was mentioned before, the author had been limited while using only methods of content analysis. It should be taken into consideration to include methodological approaches from areas of journalistic, sociology and even psychology.

Another way in which this research could be continued is collecting information from the audience. The research contains only analysis of the authors and their publications, and does not include the feedback from their readers. It may be an additional procedure to conduct a survey and collect data which categories are more interesting to the audience. It could be analyzed from the survey of the customers and gain more data about which channels they believe, what type of content attracts their attention, what method helps them in verification.

Additionally, this research could be improved by studying the dynamics of channel activity from the beginning to the end of the War. The behaviour of selected channels can be investigated in detail with the help of inclusion of other social networks. This way future researchers can have a broader perspective and complete information about methodology of debunking fake news through comparing content, activity, publication structure and differences in authors' intentions on different social networks.

Finally, it could be extremely interesting to transform this research into a fact-checking study. The further avenues could include a separate content analysis of fact-checking platforms of Russian, Ukrainian or foreign authors and their debunking methods. To collect information it could be important to include social surveys as well and to understand whether people check and verify the information while reading news. It would be important to find out if they need fact-checking platforms, what they rely on while reading the news, how they determine that the news are fake, do they look at sources or they are based on feelings, and in general, do they even consider anti-fake channels are necessary or they think about them as another instrument of propaganda.

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