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RHETORICAL ARGUMENTATION AS A PUBLIC ACTION: THE CASE OF VOLODYMIR ZELENSKYY'S PRESIDENTIAL RHETORIC

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Abstract: *The article examines speeches delivered by Volodymyr Zelenskyy and focuses on analysis of rhetorical strategies implemented by the current Ukrainian President in the aftermath of Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine. The authors drew attention to the usage of political correctness and political incor-rectness as tools of rhetorical argumentation identified in speeches of Ukrainian President. To illuminate this area, they made an attempt to assess the efficiency of Volodymyr Zelenskyy's „going public" strategy in terms of the rhetoric efficiency in order to state and promote official position of Ukrainian authorities on the international arena.*

Keywords: Presidential rhetoric, political (in)correctness, political persuasion, leadership, Russia's war on Ukraine

1. Introduction

On 24 February 2022 the Russian Federation launched a full-scale illegal invasion of the territory of Ukraine that led to a wide range of implications not only for the Ukrainian state, but for the world stability and security in future as well. It was Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the president of Ukraine, who became the key political figure actively engaged in convincing Western democracies to support Ukraine. Unprecedented usage of rhetoric and everyday addresses to different target groups of listeners led to increasing public, political and economic support for Ukraine on both domestic and international arenas.

Therefore, the major purpose of the article is to study the case of Volodymyr Zelenskyy in terms of the rhetorical argumentation as a public action on the international scene. Authors aim to explain the connection between presidential discourse and decisions that changed not only the situation in the battlefield in Ukraine, but also led to significant change in the transatlantic alliance and the relationship between the collective West (United States of America, the United Kingdom, the European Union) and Ukraine. Additionally, it is of equal importance to grasp the political reasons and motives that led to particular rhetorical argumentation. The article's assumption is that despite the West's display of solidarity and willingness of assistance for Ukraine Zelenskyy's rhetoric deliberately included politically incorrect messages addressed at Western democracies (U.S., UK, EU) as a collective actor that led to positive changes regarding the tempo and scale of Collective West's decision-making on their support of Ukraine in its fighting against Russia.

To accomplish the above-mentioned purpose, the main research task is to conduct comparative analysis of presidential rhetorical approaches to individual and collective international actors such as heads of Western states, national parliaments and international organizations. In order to evaluate the efficiency of Zelenskyy's rhetorical strategy, particular focus is put on the usage of political correctness and political incorrectness as rhetorical tools of presidential addresses. Delivering speeches on Russia's war in Ukraine, President Zelenskyy frequently used politically correct expressions to speak about the activity of the Ukrainian troops intentionally reducing negative effect on listeners or avoiding description of real situation on the ground. Simultaneously, while speaking about the acts of violence and atrocities committed by Russian army, or while speaking about the policies of the international allies who were unwilling to increase economic and political pressure on Russia, President Zelenskyy deliberately emphasized the negative aspects of their activity with the help of politically incorrect expressions.

The article is structured accordingly: the following section briefly explains the methodology and a research framework of the article. Then, attention is paid to the studies devoted to rhetoric as a political tool of presidential persuasion and leadership. Within such an approach, the authors made an attempt to assess whether rhetorical argumentation implemented by Ukrainian president led to the increase of his leadership among key international political

actors. Furthermore, the article presents the outcomes of the content-analysis of Zelenskyy's political addresses with a particular accent on his usage of political (in)correctness as an instrument of rhetorical argumentation aimed at getting international support for Ukraine.

2. Methodology and research framework

The major purpose and research task of the article determine application of a specific set of research methods in terms of political communication. First, it is a method of theoretical analysis of the scientific literature used in the subsequent section of the article. It is applied in order to analyze a wide range of scientific sources devoted to the connection between presidential rhetoric and presidential leadership and the role of the presidential rhetoric in the decision-making process.

Meantime the empirical part of the article combines quantitative linguistic analysis and qualitative rhetorical analysis and is based on two leading methods: process tracing and discourse analysis. The methodology of process tracing is employed in order to conduct a qualitative analysis of key political developments in the relationship between Ukraine and its western allies regarding the support of the European application for the EU and NATO membership, and increase of military support for Ukrainian army. On the other hand, the discourse analysis was based on a qualitative study of Volodymyr Zelenskyy's rhetoric with particular emphasis on his key addresses to the international institutions and organizations aimed at promoting the vision of Ukrainian authorities regarding the joint political, economic and military support for Ukraine in its resistance to Russian aggression.

Tackling the issue of presidential rhetoric of Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the research framework is based on analysis of the rhetorical involvement into the decision-making process and negotiations between Ukrainian authorities and their western allies, its influence on particular policy frame and the language that was used to promote the given policy. In order to define and to assess the political persuasion tools used by President Zelenskyy during different periods of the Russo-Ukrainian war, the authors selected presidential international addresses and studied the dynamics of the international responses to Ukrainian official appeals and proposals.

In terms of chronological limitations of conducted analysis, the authors selected the speeches of President Zelenskyy delivered from 24.02.2022 to 24.01.2023 which makes it

possible to illustrate the efficiency of presidential rhetorical argumentation as a tool of foreign policy making and to expose how it evolved during the first year of the full-scale war in Ukraine. To be more precise, the authors divided the analytical framework into the following chronological stages related to crucial political decisions on Ukraine made by its western allies:

1. 24.02.2022 - 23.06.2022 - from a full-scale Russian military invasion of Ukraine to the decision of the European Council to grant candidate status to Ukraine;
2. 24.06.2022 - 30.09.2022 - from the decision of the European Council to grant candidate status to Ukraine to Ukraine's formal application for fast-track NATO membership;
3. 1.10.2022 - 23.11.2022 - from Ukraine's formal application for fast-track NATO membership to the resolution of the European Parliament designating Russia as a "state sponsor" of terrorism due to its actions in Ukraine;
4. 24.11.2022 - 24.01.2023 - from the resolution of the European Parliament designating Russia as a "state sponsor" of terrorism due to its actions in Ukraine to German official announcement to provide Ukraine with Leopard 2 tanks.

The narrow focus on the presidential addresses of Volodymyr Zelenskyy is explained by his unprecedented rhetorical engagement as a public action on seeking international support for Ukraine in its struggle against Russian aggression. Additionally, it was President Zelenskyy who first announced certain arguments that were further reinforced by key Ukrainian authorities in their political discourse.

3. Literature overview. Rhetoric as a political tool of presidential persuasion and leadership

While speaking about the role of communication in the sphere of politics, Robert E. Denton stresses that the essence of politics is "talk" or human interaction. Such interaction may be formal or informal, verbal or nonverbal, public or private, but it is always persuasive, forcing us consciously or subconsciously to interpret, to evaluate and to act. As a conclusion scholar states that "communication is the vehicle of human action" (Denton, 1994, 3).

Denton illustrates statements delivered by Aristotle who recognized the natural kinship of politics and communication in his writings *Politics* and *Rhetoric*. In the former, he established that humans are "political beings who alone of the animals [are] furnished with the faculty of

language". In the latter, he began his systematic analysis of discourse by proclaiming that "rhetorical study, in its strict sense, is concerned with the modes of persuasion". Thus, it was recognized over twenty-three hundred years ago that politics and communication go hand in hand because they are essential parts of human nature. Furthermore, Denton asserts that because communication is the fundamental process of human interaction, it is only through communication that individuals find community. More specifically, institutions, legitimacy, statutes, leaders, sanctions, interests, ideologies, and coalitions are socially constructed through language (Denton, 1994, 3). Clearly, neither politics nor government can exist without communication. This statement is shared by Paul Chilton and John Joseph who argue that political actors recognize the role of language because its use has effects, and because politics is very largely the use of language (Chilton, 2004, 16; Joseph, 2006, 111).

When it comes to presidential rhetoric, Mary E. Stuckey's statement that "Presidents can no longer choose whether to engage in public leadership, only what form that leadership will take" (Stuckey 1991, 3) vividly proves the significance of presidential rhetoric studies not only in the United States of America, but in every democratic state whose president decides to use rhetoric as a political tool of persuasion and leadership. As George C. Edwards and Stephen J. Wayne put it, effective, responsible presidential leadership can play a vital role in providing the coherence, direction, and support necessary to articulate and achieve national policy and political goals (Edwards and Wayne 2009, xxii.).

As for persuasion types, Karwat (Karwat, 2009, 28-29) underlines two major ones:

- intellectually – rational (based on common interests and mutual cooperation);
- emotional (based on feeling of responsibility, mutual respect, general security, etc.).

According to the scholar, persuasion that is based on emotions may easily transform into manipulation, or sometimes, such type of persuasion is, in fact, a hidden mask of manipulation.

In addition to that, Richard Neustadt defined the chief executive as a sort of super administrator, one who eschews the flash of rhetorical tricks in a public forum for the intellectually substantive coordination of the government's constituent parts. In fact, Neustadt argued that the President should be an effective negotiator with his political colleagues. He wrote that the President "does not get action without argument…[since] presidential power is the power

to persuade" (Neustadt, 1990, 11).

In terms of other scientific reflections on account of presidential rhetoric and its role in presidential persuasion policy, it is important to underline the diverse ideas expressed by George Edwards who successfully proved that presidential rhetoric in the United States does matter. Even though it may differently influence the President, its influence has been always important. On the one hand, Edwards advances the strongest arguments for the central role of persuasion in the presidency, but on the other, shows negative outcomes caused by the presidential rhetoric. In his book *Public Presidency,* he quotes the words of Abraham Lincoln: "public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail, without it nothing can succeed". Further, he states that these words pose what is perhaps the greatest challenge to any President: to obtain and maintain the public support. Scholar emphasizes that this is the main task of the public presidency. Why is the public presidency such a critical component of presidential politics? Edwards answers it in the following way: as every student of the presidency quickly learns, the President is rarely in a position to command other to comply with his wishes. Instead, he must rely on persuasion (Edwards, 1983, xiii-xix).

In the political dimension, however, the link between leadership and rhetoric has been an uneasy one. Since ancient times, political leadership via rhetoric to influence the public has often been seen as dangerous. As for scholars who raise critical voices about the unreal nature of political leadership by rhetoric, Jonathan Rauch (Rauch 2000, 25) detected that people unknowingly "think a really fine President soars on majestic wings of inspiring rhetoric…[However], lofty rhetoric is no substitute for sound judgement in a tight corner". Taking into account these conceptions, Dorsey points that rhetoric is not about a union of a speaker and an audience who have the responsibility to share the means to define and to enhance their existence at any particular moment in time. Instead, being rhetorical appears to mean that someone is verbally creating a deceptive and ultimately detrimental reality in order to maintain control over someone else (Dorsey, 2002, 8).

However, Martin Medhurst makes an effort to react to all the criticism stated above and notices that an attempt to keep rhetoric apart from presidential leadership – to take the "rhetorical" out of the rhetorical presidency – brings with it its own set of limitations. For example, scholars who assume the negative connotation of rhetoric as being emotional rather

than enlightening, that rhetoric may be only useful in the realm of policy talk among elites, unnecessarily constrain the perspective of presidential leadership. Scholar emphasizes that embracing the dynamic changes in society – technological, cultural and spiritual – and examining how such changes affect a President's public and private messages, allows for richer and more diverse perspectives on the act of human communication as a means of political leadership (Medhurst, 2005, 5). What is more, Mary Stuckey labels the President as "interpreter-in-chief" who uses television as the means to distribute stories about the community: the President uses such stories not only to promote policy but also to influence conscience of the community (Stuckey, 1991, 4).

Due to the specific focus on the rhetoric of Zelenskyy as a political tool of his presidential persuasion and leadership, it appears topical to focus one's attention on military rhetoric. Campbell and Jamieson admit divisions of opinion that arise over the line to be drawn between appropriate actions to defend the nation and offensive use of the nation's military capabilities. The authors argue that the choice of rhetoric is dependent on the particular purposes and may be employed „only so long as it remains a functional response to the exigencies". That, in turn, illustrates the dynamic nature of certain rhetorical type and rhetorical action which change under the pressure of existing circumstances or purposes in order to find better forms „to achieve their ends". (Campbell and Jamieson, 1990, 106).

In this regard the following section of the article summarizes the research of rhetorical type employed by Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his "going public"[1] on Ukrainian resistance to Russian illegal aggression.

4. Categorization framework of Zelenskyy's international addresses

The empirical part of conducted research is based on the interpretative analysis of 100 presidential addresses of Volodymyr Zelenskyy[2] delivered on the international arena in terms of chronological framework that was described in the methodology section. As a matter of fact, the

[1] The principle of *going public* was described by Samuel Kernell who stated that the President must present his politics to the audience in order to get the support and be successful. According to the scholar, the chief executive *"goes public"* strategically managing the press as a means to generate support for his agenda by holding staged rallies, releasing selected information at designated times, and delivering major messages. More on this topic see: Samuel Kernell, *Going Public. New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 1986.

[2] All the political addresses that were analyzed in the article were retrieved from: https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/speeches

analyzed addresses contain a wide range of political correctness and political incorrectness aimed at persuading international decision-makers to change the transactional style of foreign policy making into the transformational one. Therefore, the authors shifted their attention towards the selection of politically (in)correct speech fragments and expressions in order to explain the persuasion strategy implemented by Zelenskyy toward the international public. The following sections of the article take a thorough look into the role of rhetorical argumentation and usage of politically (in)-correct expressions as tools of persuasion used by Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

In fact, the term “politically correct” has been accompanied by numerous definitions. Traditionally it has been used with ideas and decisions that are politically wise. Today, "politically correct" is being used as a "kind of linguistic jujitsu" to disable an opponent's diversity argument. "It is the case that words are weapons in political discourse, and they always have been" (Chow, 2016). In its turn, the term “politically incorrect” means failing to avoid language or behavior that may offend particular groups of people. “The cost of political incorrectness is that the speaker seems less warm, but they also appear less strategic and more ‘real,’” says Asst. Prof. Juliana Schroeder. “The result may be that people may feel less hesitant in following politically incorrect leaders because they appear more committed to their beliefs” (Counts, 2019). In this regard the case study of Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s presidential rhetoric seems to be topical and necessary to understand its impact on the development of the western position toward Russia’s war on Ukraine.

To be more precise, *political correctness,* in terms of the international rhetoric of Zelenskyy that is analyzed in given study, refers to expressions and statements that changed the description of particular people, actions or facts in order to reduce the negative tone of the message, to hide the truth and consequently to promote a particular course or policy. The very same purpose of policy promotion is applied in the definition of *political incorrectness* that refers to the deliberate change of descriptive presentation of certain people, actions or facts in order to increase the negative connotations associated with them.

Thus, the categorization and comparative analysis of politically (in)correct expressions and political reasons for their usage make it possible to define connection between the rhetorical argumentation of Zelenskyy and Western sanction policy against the Russian Federation. What is more, it poses a question on the presidential rhetorical impact on international consensus

regarding such milestones of EU-Western relations as granting EU candidate status to Ukraine, official reaction to Ukraine's application for a fast-track membership, designating Russia a "state sponsor" of terrorism by the European Parliament, or unexpected decision of German government to provide Ukraine with such offensive weapon as Leopard 2 tanks.

It is of utmost importance to point out that the international support for Ukrainian appeals was not unanimous and therefore President Zelenskyy repeatedly argued for the need to transform the Western vision on the strategical significance of Ukraine and its democratic future.

Having conducted the content-analysis of selected international addresses delivered by Ukrainian president since 24 February 2002, authors divided the expressions that were used in both politically correct and politically incorrect manner into the main groups they were referred to:

1. Freedom and Democracy: 427 expressions (218 politically correct versus 209 politically incorrect).
2. Conflict terminology and politically correct change for military campaign in Ukraine: 679 politically correct expressions.
3. Security implications: 358 expressions (53 politically correct versus 305 politically incorrect).
4. Helping Ukraine, its importance and reconstruction: 930 expressions (410 politically correct versus 520 politically incorrect).
5. Collective West and its Unity: 790 expressions (189 politically correct versus 601 politically incorrect).
6. Russia, its aggressive actions and consequences for its war crimes: 803 politically incorrect expressions.
7. Crises as a consequence of war (energy, food, migration): 379 politically incorrect expressions.
8. The UN reform: 65 politically correct expressions.

The total number of analyzed expressions amounts to 4431 units that were analyzed manually in order to reveal the major elements of rhetorical strategy implemented by president Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his communication with different audiences.

As it is shown from a quantitative perspective on the proportionate usage of different

rhetorical tone, unsurprisingly, each of the group had different number of politically correct and politically incorrect phrases that could be primarily explained by the political and military context of given speeches. All in all, it is vocabulary that either increases or decreases the negative emotional connotation of the message that was a central element of Zelenskyy's rhetorical argumentation. Thus, selected examples of political correctness and political incorrectness are analyzed qualitatively in search of line of official argumentation of Ukrainian authorities aimed at convincing the western allies to increase pressure on Russia.

5. Zelenskyy's rhetorical argumentation: interpretative analysis

As a matter of fact, international rhetoric of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy illustrates both rhetorical continuity and adaptation to altered circumstances. The section of the article is focused on the interpretative analysis of rhetorical argumentation delivered by Volodymyr Zelenskyy and political context of his "going public" with certain line of arguments.

As it was mentioned in the methodology section, the article is based on combination of quantitative linguistic analysis of politically correct and politically incorrect expressions used by President Zelenskyy and qualitative rhetorical analysis of selected speeches delivered to foreign audiences in context of their impact on the international political decision-making process on Ukraine. The classification of selected expressions into eight main groups described in the previous part makes it possible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of their usage by Zelenskyy and his rhetorical adaptation to changes caused by military developments in Ukraine or political developments in cooperation with western allies.

As it has been shown, the most frequent expressions referred to the three major categories:

1) issue of "helping Ukraine", its importance for the international order, the need to support its victory over Russia and the importance of post-war reconstruction - 903 units;
2) Collective West and its Unity: 790 units;
3) Russia, its aggressive actions and consequences for its war crimes: 803 units.

Such a division of rhetorical accents vividly illustrates the major purpose of Zelenskyy' rhetorical message at different stages of the war since 24 February 2022: the Russia's war against Ukraine cannot be won without political and economic engagement from the side of western

democracies and their political consensus on supporting Ukraine's fighting for freedom and democracy:

I'm sure people will show how they support us. But politicians must also support freedom. All of them. They must support the struggle for life. We are waiting for meaningful steps. From NATO, the EU and the G7. We know that the Russians have already begun to lobby their interests. These are the interests of war. We know that they are working with some partners. We know that they want to put this issue out. The struggle against war. But this is the war that needs to be put out. Our firm position will be represented at these three summits. At these three summits we will see: Who is a friend, who is a partner, and who betrayed us for money. Life can be defended only when united (President of Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Speeches).

The quote above summaries Zelenskyy's argument on the need to stay together in the face of Russia's aggression. At the same time, it does have politically incorrect shadowing in reference to those western politicians who were reluctant to support Ukraine in the first weeks of full-scale invasion.

In this regard, it comes as no surprise that the Freedom and Democracy category comprising the expressions related to basic democratic values that are at stake in Russia's war on Ukraine served as persuasion tool in Zelenskyy's arguments on the need to increase the international support for Ukraine. Interestingly enough, out of 427 analyzed units 218 were used in politically correct manner stressing the Ukrainian efforts to protect the democratic future of Ukraine and Europe overall. The central message that Ukrainians "are fighting not only for Ukraine, but also for the security of the European Union!" has been repeatedly used by President Zelenskyy in different circumstances and for different audiences.

Meanwhile 209 expressions from the Freedom and Democracy category were used in politically incorrect context indirectly accusing hesitant position of certain Western states regarding the support of such decisions as granting EU candidate status to Ukraine. Examples below serve as illustrations of the intentional usage of political incorrectness to show the connection between transactional style of doing business with Russia by certain European politicians and its implications for freedom and democracy in Ukraine and in the European Union as a whole. These indirect accusations, however, were aimed at encouraging those politicians to change their approach to Russia from cooperation to isolation. Some examples below prove it.

- Address to the Parliament of Netherlands embraces numerous measures necessary for pressurizing Russia for its crimes that would help Ukraine in resisting aggression:

Freedom must demonstrate that it protects and provides for people better than tyranny, which has enjoyed a massive flow of money for oil, gas and other raw materials for decades… Together with other EU countries, you have to do everything possible so that Russia does not have the resources to continue this war, the war in Europe, and so that there is no political opportunity to hide criminals. Close your ports to Russian ships! (President of Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Speeches).

• Address to the Parliament of Denmark appeals to the unity of the European Union and its intention to maintain solidarity with Ukraine:

That is why I call on you to raise the issue of solidarity in the defense of freedom, in the defense of humanity at the level of the European Union…Everyone knows very well who in the European Union opposes humanity and common sense. Who does nothing at all to help establish peace in Ukraine? This must stop, and Europe must stop listening to any excuses from official Budapest (President of Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Speeches).

• Address to the Parliament of Portugal demonstrates Ukrainian president intention to get support from Portugal in several spheres, not only in military one, but also in the sphere of business activity. And President Zelenskyy demands increasing sanctions from businesses in Portugal:

When we turn to the nations of the free world for help, we say simple and clear things. We need weapons to protect ourselves from the brutal Russian invasion, which brought to our people as much evil as the Nazi invasion did 80 years ago. Leopard tanks, armored personnel carriers, Harpoon anti-ship missiles - you have them and you can help protect the freedom and civilization of Europe with them. Therefore, I appeal to your state to provide us with this assistance. We need increased pressure of sanctions on Russia, because only sanctions can force Russia to seek peace and deprive the Russian military machine of resources (President of Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Speeches).

Similar role was performed by the expressions from the Security group that concentrated on the role of Ukraine's victory for the European security and peace. Unlike Freedom and Democracy group of expressions, the Security group predominantly consists of politically incorrect units versus politically correct ones: 305 versus 53 respectively. By asking "Why must we do this together?" Zelenskyy gives a clear answer that "Each of you understands that Ukraine is not the last target of Russian aggression".

Political speech is purposefully-oriented which is to change status quo. It is a means of political, military and information struggle and Ukrainian case is a typical example of the situation when Ukrainian President makes everyday efforts delivering speeches, informing the world community about the situation in the country and persuading allies to stand with Ukraine.

"Every political speech is pragmatically oriented, i.e., it has strategic and tactical tasks" (Khudoliy, 2014, 200). A peculiar feature of presidential rhetoric of Volodymyr Zelenskyy was providing his audience with a solution that must be adopted by the addressee of the speech. Examples below clearly illustrate the solution promoted by Ukrainian president in terms of issue of security:

The European Union must finally adopt a principled decision and close ports to Russian ships…It is not normal when some European companies are still hesitant whether to leave the Russian market or not. And it is not normal when someone still hopes for cooperation with Russia in the energy sector. There can be no concessions to bandits! Only new sanction strikes against them (President of Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Speeches).

In his speeches President Zelenskyy stressed the necessity for Western countries, global and European institutions, to be united facing the challenges after the Russian aggression:

The world must make a choice. The UN must make a choice. The UN Security Council must make a choice. The International Committee of the Red Cross must make a choice. The OSCE must make a choice. EU countries must make a choice. NATO countries must make a choice. The G7 and G20 countries must make a choice. The US must make a choice and take this important step. Recognize Russia as a sponsor of terrorism. This time has come. Long ago. The global countdown has started. And then there are only 2 options. Determination, and therefore an end to the crimes and atrocities of Russia, or – more bomb explosions from these terrorists (President of Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Speeches).

Ukrainian leader expressed his point of view that Russia should be punished for the crimes committed in Ukraine. And the statement like that is quite numerous in his speeches:

A Special Tribunal should be created to punish Russia for the crime of aggression against our state. This will become signal to all "would-be" aggressors, that they must value peace or be brought to responsibility by the world. We have prepared precise steps to establish such Tribunal. They will be presented to all states. Ukraine will appeal to the UN General Assembly to support an international compensation mechanism. We count on your support. Russia should pay for this war with its assets. It is also a punishment. This is one of the most terrible punishments for Russian officials, who value money above everything else (President of Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Speeches).

The war initiated by the Russian Federation led to complex and unpredictable consequences, so Europe as well as the rest of the world face enduring crises migration, energy, food, finances, geopolitics etc.: "Due to the Russian war against Ukraine, Europe is experiencing the biggest migrant crisis in decades. When else was it that 12 million people lost their home and security in just a few months? Only World War II comes to mind." (President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Speeches).

And geopolitical crisis, enforced by the Russian warfare, illuminated problems within the United Nations. As a result, President Zelenskyy expresses his thoughts about reforming the organization due to its inability to tackle current vital problems:

We can ensure UN reform. So that all states abide by international law, so that no one violates the world order. The UN system and, in particular, the UN Security Council today do not provide a fair representation for most nations of the world. The voices of entire regions of the planet often cannot be heard when it is vital. If this reform had already taken place, we today would be able to respond to any aggression - not just that of Russia - at a truly global level (President of Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Speeches).

Furthermore, one could have observed interesting feature of Zelenskyy's rhetorical argumentation comprising the exchange usage of politically correct and politically incorrect expressions. On the one hand, the interpretative analysis of expression from the group of politically correct change for military campaign in Ukraine demonstrates the attempt to decrease the negative impact on the listener and concentrate on cause of Ukrainian fight in order to persuade the international public in the need to constantly strengthen the support for the Ukrainian state. On the other hand, a significant number of expressions belonged to the group that highlighted the dramatic implications of energy, food or migration crises caused by Russian continuous aggression and barbaric attacks on civil infrastructure in Ukraine.

Such a rhetorical choice of Volodymyr Zelenskyy made it possible to send a clear twofold message to different target groups of his addresses: 1) despite dramatic losses and personal tragedies Ukrainian people continue to fight for the sake of their right to live in a free and democratic state; 2) Ukrainian defeat in the war will lead to unpredictable implications for European and Western security and functioning of liberal democracy system.

Interestingly, major messages promoted by Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his public addresses were reflected in political discourse of key EU institutional actors such the European Parliament or the European Commission. While analyzing political addresses delivered by presidents of key EU institutions one can easily find a wide range of repeated appeals and declarations to develop a more active role for the EU in the eastern region and transform the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union in light of the Russian war against Ukraine (Zheltovskyy, 2022, 221). What is more, there has been reached an agreement on the European forum regarding the commitment to the EU enlargement as – "a geostrategic investment in a stable, strong and united EU" (Zheltovskyy, 2022, 673).

6. Conclusion

Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine has led to unprecedented and extraordinary Ukrainian resistance of different dimensions. In addition to military struggle, Ukrainian diplomacy has employed a wide range of tools aimed at building international alliances and coalitions against Russia. As a matter of fact, the president of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy has become the main political actor associated with Ukrainian resistance. His regular TV messages to Ukrainian people and political addresses to national parliaments, international organizations and institutions led to promotion of Ukrainian vision of state development and unprecedented international support for its fight against Russian barbaric invasion.

The conducted analysis provided credible arguments in favor of the major assumption of the article that rhetorical argumentation of Zelenskyy played a significant role in the Western foreign policy shift in context of current and prospective relations between the collective West and Russia. As a matter of fact, aggressive Russian policies and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine have become a trigger for the reconsideration of the EU leadership in the Eastern Partnership region and a clear change of leadership style from transactional to transformational one. That shift led to EU unanimous support for granting the EU candidate status to Ukraine, strengthening sanction policy against Russia and bringing the issue of the EU enlargement back on the table of EU political agenda.

It is necessary to emphasize that conducted analysis of rhetorical addresses delivered by Ukrainian president makes it possible to confidently assert that usage of politically incorrect messages was deliberately chosen as a rhetorical strategy of Zelenskyy. What came as a surprise was the fact that the political incorrectness was used by Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his communication with Ukraine's biggest geopolitical allies despite the West's declared solidarity and unprecedented support for Ukraine. The idea behind such a rhetorical actin was to influence the tempo and scale of the western decision-making process on Ukraine. Therefore, the implementation of politically incorrect constituents of presidential addresses and indirect rhetorical attacks on western states regarding the scale of their support was an inseparable element of Volodymyr Zelenskyy's "going public" strategy.

Overall, the interpretative analysis of Zelenskyy's public rhetorical argumentation makes it possible to draw the following conclusions:

- regular rhetorical addresses to the international audiences have become an inseparable part of presidential political agenda;
- rhetorical argumentation was based on the white-black rhetoric that left no room for hesitance on support for Ukraine and could be summarized as follows: either you are with democracy or with the tyranny;
- the structure of rhetorical addresses centered on three major categories of expressions related to Ukraine, Collective West and Russia. As a matter of fact, the rhetorical addresses delivered by Zelenskyy positioned Ukraine in equal partnership with western democracies and put pressure on western politicians to increase and strengthen sanction policy against Russia;
- a significant number of addresses delivered in the first months of Russia's full-scale invasion were characterized by dominance of politically incorrect expressions aimed at indirect accusation of the EU states as a collective actor and particular politicians who expressed their opposition toward strengthening the sanction policy against Russia or crucial for Ukraine decisions such as granting the EU status to Ukraine;
- presented rhetorical argumentation of Zelenskyy as part of his public action aimed at increasing international support for Ukrainian state and army in particular resulted in unprecedented political decisions made by western partners such as EU candidate status for Ukraine or significant increase of weapons' delivery to Ukraine;
- reaching the diplomatic aims of Ukraine was reflected in change of tone of Zelenskyy's rhetoric which became more positive and concentrated on the strategical importance of Western - Ukrainian cooperation.

Despite the conducted research, there is no clear indication whether presidential rhetoric of Volodymyr Zelenskyy will continue playing a vital role in his policy agenda and be used as a tool of persuasion in foreign policy making. However, it is obvious that the rich database of Zelenskyy's presidential addresses will be a source of scientific interests among scholars interested in political communication and presidential rhetoric in particular. What is more, the database may serve as primary sources for researches doing analysis of Americanization of

political speech on the example of presidential rhetoric. In its turn given article has made an attempt to contribute to the discussion on the role of rhetorical argumentation delivered by a head of state in times of war and presented speech examples and application of political correctness and political incorrectness as key rhetorical instruments of presidential public action.

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