

SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL MYTH IN RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA ABOUT UKRAINE

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Analysing the history of the Russian state, it can be concluded that the concept of political myth has accompanied Russian humanity for centuries. Political myth has remained up-to-date and even more: with the development of the media it has acquired new qualitative characteristics. The collapse of the Soviet Union and Vladimir Putin's coming to power announced a new stage in state-building: a return to the imperialist tradition. The executive of the Russian Federation aims to revive the great power that Russia was in Soviet times and to rebuild the lost spheres of influence in the international arena and in the individual states of the former Soviet Union.

The Russian people tend to trust state historical concepts of a nationalistic nature. This attitude is explained by the fact that constantly reliving certain historical moments creates in the mind of Russian citizens a sense of satisfaction and hope for a better life. Thanks to this, the state power transforms the political myth into a source of Russian national identity.

However, Oksana Romanyuk, executive director of the Institute of Mass Information, emphasises that Russian consumers have a very low level of critical thinking [1]. Because the specificity of hybrid war is that not only military aspects, but also diplomatic, economic and informational means are used to achieve strategic goals. An element of

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hybrid war is the conflict of interpretations, i.e. confrontation of narratives with opposing versions of events. This allows media to create propaganda content for audiences who are not interested in the objectivity and veracity of information, but in the source that produces it.

Among the hundreds of myths and falsifications used in Russian propaganda, the myth “Ukraine is not a real state” is worth noting. According to the myth, Ukraine is a state where around 70 per cent of the population consider themselves to be one nation with the Russians. It is emphasised that Ukrainians are afraid to admit this because of the aggressive, violent Ukrainianization carried out by the Ukrainian executive [2]. Citizens of Ukraine who do not support integration with the Russian nation are considered nationalists and Russophobes. That is why it is no coincidence that during the speech to the Russian people, president Vladimir Putin said that modern Ukraine was created by Lenin [3].

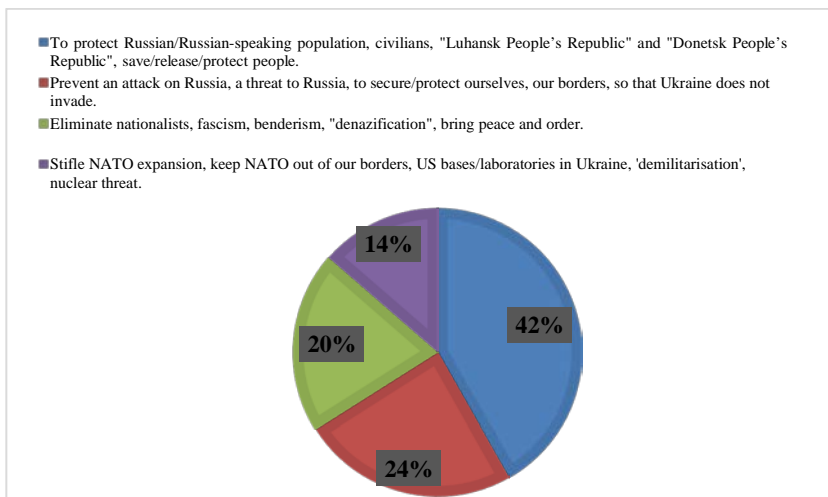


Figure 1. Why do you think Russia started a "special operation" in Ukraine? (most popular responses)

Source: [4]

Using pseudo-historical arguments in his speech, Russian president aimed to explain the reason for Ukraine's further expansion – Russian Federation is trying to save Europe and the whole world from 'Ukrainian fascists' (20 per cent of respondents believe that Russia started the war to eliminate neo-nazis, fascists in Ukraine).

Moreover, as can be seen, the majority of respondents (43 per cent) believe that the Russian Federation started the war in order to save and protect Russians and Russian-speaking population. In contrast, 24 per cent of the population believes that Russian Federation has protected itself against an invasion from Ukraine.

By using active forms of propaganda in the media space against the Ukrainian state, Russian Federation aims to legitimise its military actions on Ukrainian territory. Political myth begins to explain the internal and external policies of the Russian state: the expansion of the state's territory through annexation, the subordination of the media space to the executive power, etc. The impact of propaganda can only be stopped if population awareness of the problem is raised.

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PHILOLOGICAL SCIENCES

WORD-FORMING MEANS TO DENOTE NEGATION

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Affixation is one of the ways to create new words by attaching word-forming means – suffixes and prefixes – to the base of the word, which dramatically changes the semantics of the derived token. Varieties of affixation in the German language are:

a) suffixation – word formation with the help of suffixes (*Arbeit* – *Arbeiter* – *Arbeiterin*);

b) prefixation – creation of words with the help of prefixes (*machen* – *ausmachen* – *zumachen*).

Affixes as word-forming means do not function as independent words, their role is to create new words. Among the large number of German affixes with the meaning of negativity, purely German prefixes and suffixes and borrowed prefixes are distinguished.

Negative prefixes include *un-* and *miss-*, negative values can also be expressed by *zer-*, *ab-*, *ent-*. The most productive negative prefix in the German language is *un-*:

- *zufrieden* – ***unzufrieden*** – dissatisfied;
- *abhängig* – ***unabhängig*** – independent;
- *der Mensch* – ***der Unmensch*** – brute.

With the help of this prefix nouns, adjectives and verbs are formed, this prefix is not combined with verbs. If the adjective does not have a corresponding antonym, it is always possible to form a derived word with the negative prefix *un-*. Otherwise, when the word, in this example,

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the adjective has a direct antonym, then it is impossible to form an objection with the prefix *un-*:

- *lang – kurz* (not *unlang*);
- *hoch – tief* (not *unhoch*);
- *leicht – schwer* (not *unleicht*).

The prefix *miss-* is one of the few prefixes that joins nouns and verbs and gives words a negative connotation:

- *das Missmanagement* – mismanagement;
- *die Missernte* – bad harvest;
- *die Missfarbe* – ugly colour;
- *missdeuten* – to misinterpret;
- *missraten* – unsuccessful;
- *missverstehen* – to misunderstand.

The prefix *ent-* is also a word-forming element and, along with rich semantics, expresses a reversible meaning, i.e. denies the meaning of the verb to which it is attached.

- *entkleiden* – to undress;
- *entlaufen* – to escape;
- *entdramatisieren* – not to dramatize;
- *entmagnetisieren* – to demagnetize.

Negative prefixes *ver-* and *zer-* can also convey a negative meaning. The prefix *zer-* gives verbs the meaning of separation, destruction, fragmentation:

- *schlagen* (to beat) – *zerschlagen* (to break up);
- *stören* (to disturb) – *zerstören* (to destroy);
- *brechen* (to break) – *zerbrechen* (to shatter);
- *stören* (to disturb) – *zerstören* (to destroy).

The prefix *ver-* gives the verb the meaning of incorrect or erroneous action:

- *sprechen* (to speak) – *versprechen* (to pledge);
- *achten* (to respect) – *verachten* (to despise);
- *sehen* (to see) – *versehen* (not to notice).

In addition to negative prefixes in the German language, it is possible to deny with suffixes. The suffix *-los* is one of them. When adding the word-forming unit *-los* to the base of the noun, an adjective is formed with the meaning of the absence of something. With the suffix *-los* you can also form words with a positive colour, for example:

- *problemlos* – without problems;
- *zweifellos* – without doubt;
- *fensterlos* – without window;
- *geräuschlos* – without noise, noiseless;
- *herzlos* – heartless;
- *kinderlos* – childless;
- *perspektivlos* – without perspective.

Borrowed negative prefixes – prefixes that entered the German language from other languages, this includes prefixes: *a-*, *an-*, *ar-*, *ant-*, *anti-*, *de-*, *des-*, *dis-*, *non-* (*Antifaschismus*, *Desinformation*, *demontieren*, *Non-Conformist*), which also contribute negativity to the words. Almost every borrowed negative prefix has a synonymous prefix of German origin:

- *demaskieren* – *entlarven*: to reveal, expose;
- *demontieren* – *abbauen*: to dismantle.

Thus, the analysed lexical units formed by affixation have a wide thematic range. Further observations of current vocabulary to identify the structure and semantics of vocabulary innovations are considered to be appropriate.

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