



Standard Application form for students applying for a +2 or +3 studentship in the Arts and Humanities

(September 2023 entry)

1. Studentship applied for (please tick):

- 2 years FT/ 4 years PT funding (for those who have already started a PhD programme)
- 3 years FT/ 6 years PT funding

2. Named studentships you wish to be considered for (see guidance for details):

- Global Majority studentship
- Philosophy Pathway studentship for female Global Majority candidates
- Broken Pipeline studentship (UK only)

3. Candidate's details:

Name:	
Application / Registration number:	
Address:	
Town:	
Postcode:	
Country:	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

Nationality/Resident Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> UK or Irish National <input type="checkbox"/> UK Settled status <input type="checkbox"/> EU National not resident in the UK <input type="checkbox"/> EU National resident in the UK for the past three years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
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4. Project details:

Mode of Attendance a. Full time b. Part time

Project title:	Legitimation of the Invasion of Ukraine by Russian State-Affiliated Television Programmes: Framing and Blaming
Pathway:	Linguistics
Institution:	Lancaster University

5. PhD Proposal:

5a) Please describe the proposed research (**up to 1500 words**). The word limit includes bibliography or references, tables, figures, table/figure captions and footnotes. Please include a word count.

Background

The Russia-Ukraine war that started on 24 February 2022 has immediately become the centre of the world's attention. There already appears to be tens of thousands of casualties on both sides (Ljunggren et al., 2022), not to mention the refugee crisis in Europe caused by almost 8 million Ukrainians fleeing the war ("Ukraine Refugee Situation", 2022). It comes as no surprise that an issue of such magnitude would attract scholarly attention across disciplines, including linguistics, particularly in the field of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). For example, Ebim et al. (2022) study Putin's speeches and note that he justifies the "special military operation" by arguing that it was required to defend Russia from "Ukrainian threats".

Russian state-affiliated television has been studied in the recent years as well, and the focus of such research has often been the depiction of the situation in Ukraine. Kaltseis (2021) uses CDS and metaphor analysis to analyse metaphors in Russian TV talk shows during the annexation of Crimea, and Khaldarova (2021) adopts the multimodal approach to uncover how Ukraine's portrayal changed from "brother" to "enemy" after Euromaidan. However, all of the aforementioned research into Russian government-controlled television has been conducted before February 2022, when the conflict escalated, which also forced the official government discourse to adapt and become even more hostile to Ukrainians in order to legitimise the "special military operation". What is more, the Russian government discourse and its manifestation on television seems to not have been studied in relation to the invasion at all.

Research Questions

The overarching research question the project addresses is as follows:

1. What legitimisation and delegitimation strategies does Russian state-affiliated television exploit to justify the war on Ukraine?

More specifically, I focus on framing and blaming in Russian state-affiliated media discourse to address the following research questions:

2. How are the two sides of the conflict framed within Russian state-affiliated media discourse?

3. How is blame for the escalation of the conflict distributed in Russian state-affiliated media discourse?

Data

Data will be centred around four key events of the war: the start of the invasion (February 24th), the announcement of "partial mobilisation" (September 21st), the annexation of Ukrainian territories (September 30th), and the abandonment of Kherson (November 10th). These events have been some of the most significant in defining the war, and Russian officials have been forced to adjust their rhetoric in response to each of them. A similar chronological approach was taken by Claessen (2021) to study "geopolitical othering" in Russian official discourse on the events in Ukraine prior to the annexation of Crimea. She established the three most significant stages of the crisis and linked the data analysis to these time periods in order to trace change in discourse.



In the proposed study, I will focus on the Channel One programme “Time” (episodes of approx. 40 min) and “Evening with Vladimir Solovyov” (episodes of approx. 2 h 30 min) on Russia-1 that aired on each of the dates outlined above and were among the first ones to report and comment on new developments. 4 broadcasts of each programme, 8 in total, will be analysed.

The broadcasts I will need to conduct research are easily accessible online, as every programme is archived and available on the respective channel’s website. Due to the nature of the data and its public accessibility, no copyright issues are expected. I will collect, complete a verbal transcription of, and code the data manually.

Methods of Analysis

The proposed study will conduct a qualitative analysis based on frameworks in the field of Critical Discourse Studies, including legitimisation strategies (Van Leeuwen, 2007; Reyes, 2011), framing strategies (Charteris-Black, 2013), and blaming strategies (Hanssen et al., 2022).

Berger & Luckmann (1966) state that “Legitimation provides the “explanations and justifications of the salient elements of the institutional tradition”, and “explains” and “justifies the institutional order”. Van Leeuwen (2007) claims that legitimisation answers the question “why” — namely, why should something be done. To answer RQ1, I will rely on the combination of Van Leeuwen’s (2007) framework distinguishing between four types of legitimisation strategies (authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation, and mythopoesis) and Reyes’ (2011) framework outlining five strategies of legitimisation in political discourse (through emotions, through a hypothetical future, through rationality, voices of expertise, and altruism).

According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980), metaphor is extremely common in everyday language, and “we define our reality in terms of metaphors and then proceed to act on the basis of the metaphors”. Semino (2008) argues that “the choice of one metaphor rather than another has consequences for how a particular issue is ‘framed’”. The proposed research will investigate the framing of the war in Ukraine by Russian state-affiliated media through its use of metaphors in order to answer RQ2. Critical metaphor analysis (Charteris-Black, 2013) will be used, as consisting of four steps: contextual analysis, metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation, and metaphor explanation.

Finally, to investigate the dynamics of blame in Russian state-affiliated media discourse and answer RQ3, I will utilise the framework proposed by Hanssen et al. (2022), in which they draw upon appraisal analysis (Martin & White, 2005) in order to analyse blaming strategies. They argue that four categories within the Judgement subdomain (judgements of propriety, veracity, capacity, and tenacity) allow for a distinction to be made based on what aspect of the actor, action or outcome is evaluated.

Timeline and Original Contribution

I plan to engage in reading relevant works in my field for the first 6 months of my PhD, then spend next 6 months collecting data and selecting appropriate samples of TV programmes for qualitative analysis. Another year will be spent conducting the analysis, and the final year will be dedicated to writing up my dissertation.

I am not aware of any studies on legitimisation of the invasion of Ukraine by Russian state-affiliated media that have been undertaken before, and I hope that this project will be a valuable addition to the already existing and forthcoming body of linguistic research on the Russo-Ukrainian war. National focus has been present in past studies of legitimisation, including on China (Ho, 2022), the US (Oddo, 2011), Iran (KhosraviNik, 2015), and others. The proposed research will perhaps be the first to focus on Russia and will potentially be applicable to other cases of non-democratic countries whose media are in the hands of the government, thus advancing the study of state-affiliated media discourses in a general sense but also paving the way to conduct future research on Russian state-affiliated media discourse in relation to the “special military operation” in Ukraine. More generally, applying the proposed methodological tools to this particularly unique set of data opens up the opportunity to reflect on them and potentially develop them further.

References:

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- Claessen, E. (2021). The making of a narrative: The use of geopolitical othering in Russian strategic narratives during the Ukraine crisis. *Media, War & Conflict*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506352211029529>
- Ebim, M. A., Nta, E. G., & Tasen, O. S. (2022). Power relations in the deployment of linguistic resources by world leaders during the Russian-Ukrainian war. *Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Literary Studies*, 2(2), 45–53. <https://doi.org/10.57040/jlls.v2i2.192>
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- Ho, J. (2022). #FleeingWuhan: Legitimation and Delegitimation Strategies in Hostile Online Discourse. *Applied Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amac061>
- Kaltseis, M. (2021). «Крым возвращается домой!» Metaphorische Suggestion von Zusammengehörigkeit in russischen TV-Talkshows anlässlich der Krim-Annexion 2014 und mögliche Anknüpfungsbereiche im



Russischunterricht. In J. Fuchsbauer, W. Stadler, & A. Zink (Eds.), *Kulturen verbinden – Connecting cultures – Сближая культуры. Festband anlässlich des 50-jährigen Bestehens der Slawistik an der Universität Innsbruck* (pp. 235–257). Innsbruck: University Press.

Khaldarova, I. (2021). Brother or 'Other'? Transformation of strategic narratives in Russian television news during the Ukrainian crisis. *Media, War & Conflict*, 14(1), 3–20. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lancs.ac.uk/10.1177/1750635219846016>

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Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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Reyes, A. (2011). Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions. *Discourse & Society*, 22(6), 781–807. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926511419927>

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Van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in discourse and communication. *Discourse & Communication*, 1(1), 91–112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481307071986>

Word count: 1493

5b) Please provide information on how the proposed research engages with issues relating to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Sustainability (max 100 words)

Focusing on one of the most detrimental events of 2022, the proposed project sets out to examine how the war on Ukraine has been legitimated in Russian state-affiliated media. The wider contribution the study has the potential to make is that of a broader understanding of how CDS can be applied in countries with government censorship, which is an issue significantly under-researched. Given the fragile state of peace in many parts of the world, studying how governments legitimise different kinds of military action is more important than ever in order to prevent such occurrences in the future.

6. Qualifications, professional/ practical experience

Year awarded	Qualification type	Qualification Subject	Awarding institution	Class or GPA
2022	BA	Linguistics	National Research University "Higher School of Economics" (Moscow, Russia)	8.87/10 (Honours)
2023	MA	Discourse Studies	Lancaster University	Current average 80% (expected Distinction)

**Description of professional/
practical experience (max 350
words):**

In my final year as an undergrad, I worked as a Teaching Assistant to [REDACTED]: History and Culture of the USA, America through Foreign Eyes, and Establishing a Professional 'Self' through Effective Intercultural Communication. I created and graded exam tasks in the form of multiple-choice tests, transferred questions and grades to the university's online system, and communicated with students regarding any questions they had about the course. Additionally, I helped plan seminars, suggested topics to cover in class, found and compiled necessary class materials.



7. Supervision

Please propose the supervisory team for your project:

Institution	Supervisor
Lancaster University	

8. Research Training and resource needs (max 150 words for this section)

Please give details of the anticipated research training needed for your PhD project, including difficult language training. Please give details of the kind of resources you will potentially need during your PhD. Please also indicate whether your research project will require you to undertake research abroad.

As discussed with my proposed supervisor, I will need training and guidance in coding spoken data manually and the software that can be used for these purposes. I believe that the resources available at Lancaster University will be sufficient to fill this gap in the initial stages of my PhD without any issues. Any additional gaps in my broader knowledge of sociological research methods, philosophy and ethics can be filled by attending Postgraduate research training offered by Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, which includes modules such as Introduction to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences, Quantitative Research Methods, Risky Research: Ethics, Reflexivity, and Risk, and many others. Specific modules that I need to attend and when to attend them will be discussed in greater detail with my prospective supervisor prior to commencement of my PhD study. The proposed project does not require undertaking research abroad or difficult language training.

9. Collaboration with External Partners (max 150 words for this section)

Please give details of any potential collaboration you will develop with external organisations during your PhD programme (industry, cultural organisation, government bodies etc) including possible placements.

N/A

10. References / Transcripts

- Your institution will need to attach two references and your transcript(s) from your programme application to this application form.

11. Acknowledgement

I confirm that the information I have provided in this form is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge at this date. I fully understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the relevant forms are submitted to the relevant office in due time and that any missing information may render my application incomplete and ineligible. I authorise the North West Consortium DTP to disclose to the AHRC any information that is relevant to my application.

Signature: (Type Name if submitted electronically)	
Date:	30.01.2023



