

The Art of Persuasion: A Cognitive-Linguistic Analysis of Diplomatic Discourse in a Trump-Zelensky Oval Office Meeting

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a cognitive-linguistic analysis of persuasive strategies of Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky in their meeting on February 28, 2025. Integrating Cognitive Linguistics (Langacker, 2013; Talmy, 2000) and Framing Theory (Entman, 1993; Matthes, 2023), the analysis examines how each president constructs narratives through their linguistic choices. The methodology involves qualitative discourse analysis of their dialogue during Oval Office meeting, focusing on construal operations (categorization, metaphorization, and granularity) and framing techniques (for example, "America First," blame attribution, appeals to shared values). Findings reveal Trump's preference for binary categorization, combat metaphors, and a transactional frame, aligning with transactional nationalism. In contrast, Zelensky employs existential categorization, higher granularity, and value-based appeals, emphasizing sovereignty and loss. The study contributes to understanding the cognitive mechanisms underlying diplomatic persuasion and the linguistic construction of international relations in high-stakes encounters.

Keywords: Political discourse, cognitive linguistics, framing theory, diplomatic communication, Ukraine conflict

INTRODUCTION

Diplomatic meetings between leaders are important moments in global relations, where the way language is used can greatly impact political outcomes. Today, with competing stories and the strong influence of information, the words chosen during these meetings are not just for communication but are powerful tools to shape political realities (Entman, 1993; Matthes, 2023). The meeting between Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky on February 28, 2025, is a good example of how language works in a high-pressure diplomatic situation.

While the analysis of political and diplomatic discourse is well-established, a specific research gap exists in the comparative analysis of high-stakes diplomatic encounters through the integrated lens of Cognitive Linguistics and Framing Theory. Previous research has often examined leaders' rhetorical styles in isolation or focused on broader political communication without delving into the specific cognitive mechanisms that underpin persuasive strategies in a direct, dyadic interaction between figures with starkly contrasting worldviews. This study addresses this gap by dissecting the cognitive-linguistic fabric of the dialogue between Trump and Zelensky.

To guide this investigation, the study poses the following research questions:

- i. How do Trump and Zelensky employ distinct cognitive-linguistic construal operations to construct persuasive narratives during their diplomatic meeting?
- ii. What specific framing devices characterize Trump's discourse in relation to transactional nationalism?

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- iii. Which linguistic patterns dominate Zelensky's rhetoric in functioning to garner international support and emphasize Ukrainian sovereignty?

Based on the theoretical framework, the study forwards the following hypotheses:

- i. H1: Donald Trump's discourse predominantly features binary categorizations (e.g., "winners" vs. "losers"), combat metaphors, and a transactional frame that simplifies complex issues into clear-cut deals, reflecting his "America First" approach.
- ii. H2: Volodymyr Zelensky employs existential categorization (framing the conflict as a matter of survival), utilize higher linguistic granularity to detail the human and material costs of the conflict, and make value-based appeals to democracy and international law.
- iii. H3: The direct comparison of their dialogues reveals that the clash between Trump's transactional framing and Zelensky's value-based appeals constitutes the central rhetorical and cognitive dynamic of the meeting, highlighting their fundamentally different political objectives.

This study looks closely at the dialogue from this meeting, using framing theory to understand the persuasive methods used by both leaders. The goal is to reveal the views and aims of Trump and Zelensky through their choice of words, helping the reader better understand how language and power interact in diplomacy. The analysis uses ideas from Cognitive Linguistics, focusing on how people interpret language (Langacker, 2013; Talmy, 2000), and Framing Theory (Entman, 1993; Matthes, 2023), which studies how stories are built and shared. The study will start by explaining the key theories, then analyze the speeches of Trump and Zelensky, compare their language strategies, assess how their words reflect transactional nationalism and value-based appeals, and end with a summary of the main findings and their importance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research in Cognitive Linguistics (CL) has fundamentally reshaped our understanding of language as an active organizer of thought rather than a passive mirror of reality. Langacker's Cognitive Grammar (2013) and Talmy's work on cognitive semantics (2000) demonstrate that speakers employ a set of mental operations, collectively known as construal operations to structure their linguistic representations of people, events, and experiences.

In Cognitive Linguistics, construal operations such as categorization, metaphorization, and granularity are central to how speakers shape meaning. Categorization involves grouping entities into conceptual classes, allowing us to organize diverse experiences under coherent labels (Rosch 1973, 1977; Lakoff 1987). Metaphorization then projects structures from concrete source domains onto abstract target domains so that we understand complex or intangible ideas by likening them to more familiar experiences (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 1999). Finally, granularity refers to the level of detail and specificity chosen when describing a scene or event, enabling communicators to foreground particular facets of reality while backgrounding others.

Framing Theory complements the CL perspective by illuminating how communicators selectively emphasize certain aspects of reality to shape audience interpretation. Entman (1993, 2004) and Matthes (2023) define frames as cognitive structures that guide individuals toward particular problem definitions, causal explanations, moral judgments, and policy recommendations. Through deliberate lexical choices, rhetorical devices, and narrative structures, speakers can render some ideas salient while downplaying others, steering listeners toward preferred interpretations.

Although the foundational work in CL (Cohen & Lefebvre 2005; Lakoff 1987; Rosch 1973, 1977) and Framing Theory (Entman 1993, 2004; Iyengar 1991) has illuminated the cognitive and communicative mechanics of language more broadly, their intersection remains underexplored in the

context of high-stakes diplomatic dialogue. Crunch-point encounters such as the 2025 Trump-Zelensky meeting offer a fertile testing ground for examining how national leaders deploy construal operations and framing techniques in real time to construct persuasive narratives. By integrating the CL concepts of categorization, metaphorization, and granularity with Entman's framing functions, this study maps the specific linguistic strategies "America First" slogans, patterns of blame attribution, and value-based appeals that leaders use to advance transactional nationalism, assert sovereignty, and mobilize support. In doing so, it fills a critical gap in the literature on the linguistic construction of international relations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design centered on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), specifically informed by the integrated theoretical framework of Cognitive Linguistics (CL) (Langacker, 2013; Talmy, 2000) and Framing Theory (Entman, 1993; Matthes, 2023). This approach is chosen for its suitability in uncovering the underlying cognitive mechanisms, persuasive strategies, and ideological underpinnings embedded within political language during a high-stakes diplomatic encounter (Van Dijk, 2001).

Data Collection and Source

The sole data source for this study is the complete verbatim transcript of the February 28, 2025, Oval Office meeting between President Donald J. Trump and President Volodymyr Zelensky (Zelensky, V., 2025). Treated as a publicly available political record, the transcript is drawn from official presidential archives, reputable news agencies (e.g., Associated Press, Reuters), and government websites that routinely publish such documents, ensuring its authenticity. The unit of analysis consists of the dialogue turns of both presidents, with particular attention paid to those utterances that illustrate the core analytical concepts of categorization, metaphorization, and granularity.

Analytical Framework and Procedure

The analysis employs an integrated approach, drawing on the Construal Level (CL) and Framing frameworks, and systematically unfolds in several stages. Initially, the entire transcript undergoes a Close Reading and Familiarization process, involving repeated and intensive engagement to develop a deep understanding of its context, flow, and overarching rhetorical dynamics. Subsequently, the theoretical framework's key concepts are operationalized through explicit definitions tailored for coding. Within the Construal Operations of CL, this includes identifying Categorization (grouping entities/events via lexical and grammatical choices), Metaphorization (conceptual metaphors mapping source domains onto the Ukraine conflict/international relations), and Granularity (level of specificity in descriptions). Complementarily, the Framing Devices from Framing Theory are analyzed by Identifying specific slogans or labels, Analyzing patterns of blame attribution, Identifying value-based appeals, and discerning the embedded core problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and treatment recommendations within each leader's discourse.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Cognitive Linguistics and Construal Operations

Cognitive Linguistics is a theory that shows a strong connection between language, the human mind, and their physical experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Langacker, 2013; Talmy, 2000). It highlights that language is not separate from human thinking but is closely linked to how they understand and see the world around them (Langacker, 2013; Talmy, 2000). A key idea in Cognitive Linguistics is "construal," which means the different ways people can think about and describe a situation using language (Langacker, 2013; Talmy, 2000). How someone chooses to describe an event or thing is not random but shows their mental view and tries to guide the listener's focus

and understanding in a certain direction (Langacker, 2013). So, by studying the specific words used in the Trump-Zelensky conversation, a reader can learn how each leader is shaping the situation in their mind and trying to affect how the other sees it.

Categorization

Categorization is a basic mental process where humans group things based on similarities, helping them understand and organize their experiences (Cohen & Lefebvre, 2005; Rosch, 1973). Language is a key in showing and strengthening these groupings, as it provides the names and structures that shape how we think about categories (Lakoff, 1987; Rosch, 1977). In politics, binary categorization, which means dividing issues or people into two opposing groups like "us vs. them," is a common way to persuade (Lakoff, 1987). This method makes complex situations simpler by creating clear divisions, often to build unity within one group while separating from another (Lakoff, 1987). By emphasizing the good traits of one group and the bad traits of the other, speakers can convince their audience to see things their way (Lakoff, 1987). Existential categorization, on the other hand, defines the core nature or role of something, like a leader calling themselves a "wartime president" (Zelensky, 2025). This kind of categorization greatly affects how people view and understand the actions and goals of that person or situation.

Metaphorization

Metaphorization, in Cognitive Linguistics, is seen as an important mental process where one idea is understood in terms of another, usually something more concrete (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999). "Conceptual metaphors are not merely linguistic devices but rather shape our thoughts and language, particularly when dealing with abstract concepts such as politics and international relations" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For example, combat metaphors describe political issues as fights or battles, often creating a sense of urgency, identifying enemies, and justifying strong actions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). These metaphors can strongly affect how people feel and help gain support for certain policies by showing a situation as a competition with winners and losers. On the other hand, journey metaphors explain political goals and diplomatic processes as journeys, suggesting progress, challenges to overcome, and a final goal (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). These metaphors can frame political efforts by focusing on the path ahead and the obstacles that must be tackled to succeed.

Granularity

Granularity means the amount of detail used to describe something in language (Talmy, 2000). "Speakers possess the ability to adjust their level of granularity to either emphasize or downplay specific aspects of a situation" (Talmy, 2000). Low granularity uses general and vague descriptions, while high granularity provides very specific and detailed information (Talmy, 2000). How much detail is given can affect how believable or emotionally impactful a statement feels. For example, low granularity might create a broad, general impression, while high granularity can make the speaker's claims seem more factual and reliable (Talmy, 2000).

Framing Theory

Framing Theory explains how people, groups, and societies organize, understand, and talk about reality (Entman, 1993; Matthes, 2023). At its heart, "framing" means actively choosing certain parts of reality to highlight in communication (Entman, 1993, 2004; Matthes, 2023). This is done to encourage a specific interpretation, like defining a problem, identifying its causes, making moral judgments, or suggesting solutions (Entman, 1993). Framing is a strong way to shape public opinion and influence policy by focusing on some parts of an issue while ignoring others (Entman, 1993; Matthes, 2023). Different types of frames are important in politics. Issue frames focus on certain policy details or aspects of an issue, affecting how it is understood and handled (Matthes, 2023). Episodic frames show issues through individual stories, specific events, or personal examples, often stirring emotions and leading people to blame individuals (Iyengar, 1991). Thematic frames, on the other hand,

look at issues in a bigger picture, focusing on patterns, causes, and broader factors, which often lead to blaming society or systems (Iyengar, 1991). Furthermore, Entman (1993) outlined four key functions of frames: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies. Studying how these functions appear in the Trump-Zelensky conversation will help the reader understand their persuasive goals.

ANALYSIS OF DONALD TRUMP'S DISCOURSE

Construal Operations in Trump's Statements:

Binary Categorization

Donald Trump's speech during the meeting often uses clear opposites to explain situations and people. He frequently frames things in terms of "either/or" choices. For example, his statement, "Well, if I didn't align myself with both of them, you'd never have a deal," presents a simple choice: either work with both sides (including Putin) to make a deal, or fail to make one. This reduces the complicated political situation to a straightforward necessity. Similarly, when he says, "I'm not aligned with Putin. I'm not aligned with anybody. I'm aligned with the United States of America," he creates an "us vs. them" scenario, showing himself as fully committed to American interests and suggesting any cooperation with others is only to serve US goals. This framing emphasizes his loyalty to the United States (Lakoff, 1987). Additionally, Trump compares himself to past presidents by saying, "That wasn't with me. That was with a guy named Biden who was not a smart person. That was with Obama... Obama gave you sheets and I gave you javelins." Here, he uses a contrast of "smart/effective" versus "not smart/ineffective," placing himself in the positive category. This simplification is meant to boost his own image while criticizing his predecessors.

Combat Metaphors

Trump's words are full of combat and game metaphors, showing the Ukraine conflict and diplomatic meeting as a fight or competition. He says, "You want me to be tough? I could be tougher than any human being you've ever seen," which presents him as strong and ready for conflict. His comment to Zelensky, "You don't have the cards right now with us," uses a gambling metaphor to show Ukraine as being in a weak position and relying on the US. This creates a power dynamic where the US is in control. The most striking example is his repeated accusation, "[shouting] You're gambling with the lives of millions of people. You're gambling with World War Three," which portrays Zelensky's actions as risky and potentially disastrous. This high-stakes gambling metaphor is meant to create fear and push Zelensky to follow Trump's preferred plan. Also, when Trump says Zelensky is "not winning this," he frames the conflict as a competition with a clear goal of victory, further emphasizing a combat-focused view (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Low Granularity

In the conversation, Trump often uses language with low granularity, meaning he avoids giving specific details and uses vague terms (Talmy, 2000). For example, when talking about deals, he mentions saying "really terrible things about Putin" but doesn't explain what those things are. He describes Zelensky's emotions as "tremendous hatred," using strong words without giving clear examples. Similarly, when discussing US aid, he talks about "\$350 billion" and "military equipment" but doesn't specify what kind, how much, or when it was provided. This lack of detail can create a general impression but might also seem imprecise or intentionally unclear. For instance, while "\$350 billion" sounds like a big number, without context, its actual significance and Trump's role in providing it remain uncertain. This approach contrasts with Zelensky's more detailed mentions of specific events and agreements.

Framing Techniques in Trump's Discourse

"America First" Frame

A key theme in Trump's speech is his clear focus on putting the United States' interests first. He firmly states, "I'm aligned with the United States of America, and for the good of the world, I'm aligned with the world," making it clear that his main loyalty is to America. This shows that his actions and decisions are primarily based on what he believes benefits the US. Even when he says he is "aligned with the world," the phrase "for the good of the world" suggests that this global alignment depends on it supporting American interests. Additionally, his statement, "Because of us," when talking about Ukraine's chances of success, emphasizes that US involvement is the key factor and that American interests are central to the situation. This "America First" approach runs throughout his speech, shaping how he views the conflict and handles diplomacy.

Blame Attribution

Trump often uses blaming as a way to make his point (Entman, 1993). He criticizes earlier administrations, saying, "That was with a guy named Biden who was not a smart person. That was with Obama... Obama gave you sheets and I gave you javelins." By comparing himself to them, he tries to show that his actions were better and to shift blame for past problems or the current situation onto them. He also blames Zelensky, claiming that "the hatred he's [Zelensky] got for Putin" makes it hard to make a deal. He further criticizes Zelensky for not being thankful enough, suggesting he doesn't appreciate US support. By blaming others, Trump tries to avoid criticism of himself and his policies while defending his own actions. This approach is clear when he downplays events before his presidency by saying, "I was not here" when Zelensky talks about Crimea's occupation in 2013.

Transactional Frame (Implicit)

Trump's words suggest that the relationship between the US and Ukraine is more about making deals than shared values. His statement, "Well, if I didn't align myself with both of them, you'd never have a deal," shows that his involvement depends on both sides benefiting. He also repeatedly asks for gratitude, saying things like "You have to be thankful" and "You got to be more thankful because let me tell you, you don't have the cards with us." This shows he sees US support as something Ukraine should appreciate, and that future help depends on this gratitude. The phrase "you don't have the cards with us" highlights that the US has more power in this situation, making Ukraine reliant on American support. This makes the relationship seem more like a trade-off than a partnership.

ANALYSIS OF VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY'S DISCOURSE

Construal Operations in Zelensky's Statements

Existential Categorization

Volodymyr Zelensky often describes himself as a "wartime president" (Zelensky, 2025). This is not just a simple label but a way to highlight his role and the serious situation he is dealing with (Lakoff, 1987). When he says, "I am a wartime president," Zelensky draws attention to the extraordinary challenges he faces and the huge responsibility he has to ensure his nation's survival. This description stresses the seriousness of the conflict in Ukraine and shows how important his diplomatic efforts are for protecting his country and its people. By calling himself this, he influences how people see his actions, goals, and the urgency of his calls for international help.

Journey Metaphors (Potentially Implicit)

In the meeting, neither participant used clear journey metaphors like "path to Europe." However, Zelensky's diplomatic efforts and his steady focus on achieving peace and security for

Ukraine can be understood through the idea of a journey (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). His statements about the need to "end the destruction of your country" and his wish for a solution to the conflict hint at moving away from war toward a future of peace and stability. Even though this idea is not directly stated in the conversation, the overall message about Ukraine aiming for a secure future despite aggression fits with the concept of a journey. In this journey, obstacles need to be overcome to reach the goal. It also suggests that Zelensky often sees Ukraine's goals as part of a journey toward a safer, more connected future, with help from other countries being vital to deal with the difficulties along the way.

High Granularity

Zelensky's statements are more detailed compared to Trump's often unclear language. He talks about the occupation of "big parts of Ukraine, parts of the East and Crimea" starting in "2013," giving a clear timeline for when the conflict began. He mentions past presidents such as Obama, Trump, and Biden to show how long the issue has lasted. Zelensky explains his attempts to bring peace, including the "bilateral conversation" and the "deal I signed with him [Putin], Macron and Merkel" in "2019," which involved a "ceasefire." He points out that this ceasefire was broken, people kept dying on the contact line, and agreements about prisoner exchange and gas contracts were also ignored. His question to Vance, "What kind of diplomacy, JD, are you talking about? What do you mean?" shows his frustration with what he sees as a lack of understanding of Ukraine's situation. By using specific details and historical context, Zelensky makes his story more believable and highlights the long history of the conflict and the failures of past diplomatic efforts.

Framing Techniques in Zelensky's Discourse

Appeals to Shared Values

Zelensky's speeches emphasize shared values like sovereignty, territorial integrity, and respect for human life (Entman, 1993). He often talks about the occupation of Ukrainian territory ("he occupied big parts of Ukraine, parts of the East and Crimea") and the killing of people ("he just occupied and took he killed people," "people are been dying on the contact line"). These points highlight the importance of national sovereignty and the value of human life. Zelensky uses these examples to show the conflict is not just between two sides but actually it is about breaking important principles that matter to the whole world. He expresses frustration about the lack of action against the aggression ("during 2013 nobody stopped him," "during 2014 till 2022 the situation was the same, that people are been dying on the contact line. Nobody stopped him"), which shows his appeal to the need for stopping suffering and defending international rules.

Moral Amplification

Zelensky does not directly use phrases like "war crimes" here, but his words highlight the moral aspect of the conflict and condemn the aggressor's actions (Entman, 1993). He describes Russia's actions as "he just occupied and took he killed people," "he broken the ceasefire He killed our people, and he didn't exchange prisoners we signed the exchange of prisons but he didn't do it," which show the injustice and suffering faced by Ukraine. When he questions diplomacy in light of these actions ("What kind of diplomacy, JD, are you talking about. What do you mean?"), it reflects his moral outrage and tries to prompt a similar reaction from his audience. By talking about the loss of lives, broken agreements, and disregard for basic humanitarian principles, Zelensky seeks to provoke strong moral condemnation of Russia's actions and supports the argument for stronger international involvement.

Emphasis on Sovereignty and Loss

A key focus in Zelensky's speeches is on Ukraine's independence and the heavy losses it has suffered due to the conflict (Entman, 1993). He often talks about the occupation of Ukrainian land, stressing the breach of the country's borders and its right to make its own decisions. When he mentions

"big parts of Ukraine, parts of the East and Crimea" being taken over, it shows the seriousness of this violation. He also speaks about people "been dying on the contact line" and the lack of progress in prisoner exchanges, highlighting the deep personal toll of the war. By bringing up these points repeatedly, Zelensky wants Trump to see the severe danger Ukraine is in and the vital need for ongoing global help to protect its independence and prevent more deaths and loss of land. This approach aims to show how serious the situation is for Ukraine and the urgent need to act.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Contrasting Construal Operations:

A significant contrast emerges in the construal operations employed by Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky. Trump exhibits a clear preference for binary categorization, simplifying complex issues and actors into opposing categories, such as being aligned with the US versus being aligned with Putin (Lakoff, 1987). This simplification serves to create a clear dichotomy and reinforce his nationalist perspective. In contrast, Zelensky utilizes existential categorization by identifying himself as a "wartime president" (Zelensky, 2025), immediately establishing the high stakes and the nature of his leadership (Lakoff, 1987). Regarding granularity, Trump's discourse is characterized by low granularity, using vague language and lacking specific details, particularly when discussing US aid or potential deals (Talmy, 2000). This broad approach contrasts sharply with Zelensky's use of high granularity, where he provides specific dates, locations, and details of past agreements and events, lending a sense of factual grounding and urgency to his statements (Talmy, 2000). While explicit journey metaphors are absent in this excerpt for both leaders, the broader context of Zelensky's diplomatic efforts often implies a journey towards peace and security (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), a conceptualization less evident in Trump's transactional approach.

Contrasting Framing Techniques:

The way the two leaders present their ideas shows clear differences in their views and goals. Trump often uses an "America First" approach, focusing on what benefits the US the most. He frequently blames past leaders and even Zelensky for the challenges in solving the conflict. Trump's words suggest a transactional mindset, where US help depends on what the country gains and how much appreciation it receives. On the other hand, Zelensky talks about shared values, stressing ideas like sovereignty and the importance of human life. He highlights the unfairness and suffering caused by the conflict. Zelensky also repeatedly points out Ukraine's sovereignty and the losses it has faced, showing the serious danger his country is facing.

7.3 Table: Comparative Analysis of Linguistic Strategies:

Category	Subcategory	Trump's Dominant Use	Zelensky's Dominant Use	Example from Dialogue
Construal Operation	Binary Categorization	"aligned with the United States of America" vs. (implied) "aligned with Putin"; "smart" vs. "stupid president"	(Less prominent in this excerpt)	Trump: "I'm not aligned with Putin. I'm not aligned with anybody. I'm aligned with the United States of America..." Zelensky: "I'm not playing cards right now, I'm very serious Mr President. I
	Existential Categorization	(Not prominent)	"wartime president"	

					am a wartime president."
					Trump: "You're
					gambling with the lives of millions of people. You're gambling with World War Three."
	Combat Metaphor	"tougher than any human being you've ever seen"; "You don't have the cards right now"; "gambling with World War Three"	(Less prominent in this excerpt)	(Potentially implicit in broader discourse)	(Not explicitly present in this excerpt)
	Journey Metaphor				Trump: "We gave you, through the stupid president, \$350 billion."
	Low Granularity	"tremendous hatred"; "\$350 billion"; "military equipment"	(Less prominent)		Zelensky: "So he occupied it on 2013 so during a lot of years... Me like a new president in 2019 I signed with him. The deal I signed with him, Macron and Merkel."
	High Granularity		(Less prominent)	Mentioning occupation in 2013; Minsk agreements with Macron and Merkel in 2019; broken ceasefire	Trump: "I'm aligned with the United States of America..."
Framing Technique	"America First" Frame	Explicitly stating alignment with the US	(Less prominent in this direct form)		Trump: "That was with a guy named Biden who was not a smart person. That was with Obama..."
	Blame Attribution	Blaming Biden and Obama for past actions; blaming Zelensky for hatred and lack of thankfulness	(Less prominent in this direct form)		Trump: "You have to be thankful you don't have the cards."
	Transactional Frame (Implicit)	Emphasis on deals and expectation of gratitude	(Less prominent)		Zelensky: "...he just occupied and took he killed people."
	Appeals to Shared Values	(Less prominent in this direct form)	Emphasizing loss of life	sovereignty and	Zelensky: "He broken the ceasefire He
	Moral Amplification	(Less prominent in this direct form)	Highlighting suffering	injustice and	

Emphasis on (Less prominent in this direct Sovereignty and Loss form)	Repeated references to occupied territory and casualties	to he occupied big parts of Ukraine, parts of the East and Crimea."
		killed our people, and he didn't exchange prisoners..."
		Zelensky: "So he occupied big parts of Ukraine, parts of the East and Crimea."

TRANSACTIONAL NATIONALISM VS. VALUE-BASED APPEALS

Alignment of Trump's Language with Transactional Nationalism

Donald Trump's words in the dialogue match the idea of transactional nationalism (Entman, 1993). He focuses on making a "deal," shown by his statement that not aligning with both parties would stop any agreement. This view sees international relations as transactions, aiming to get benefits for the United States. His repeated calls for Zelensky to be "thankful" for US support highlight a transactional way of thinking, where aid is seen as something that needs to be repaid with gratitude. His clear statement of being "aligned with the United States of America" shows the nationalist side, meaning his main focus is on his country's well-being and interests. This way of thinking makes international relations depend on getting something in return for the US, fitting the idea of transactional nationalism, where self-interest and tangible benefits guide diplomacy.

Alignment of Zelensky's Language with Value-Based Appeals:

Volodymyr Zelensky's way of speaking is more focused on values (Entman, 1993). He talks about the occupation of Ukrainian land and the loss of lives, which connects to the basic ideas of national independence and the importance of human life. By pointing out the aggression and the human suffering caused by the conflict, Zelensky tries to make the international community, including the United States, feel empathy and a moral duty to help. His request for President Trump to "stop him" (meaning Putin) is based on the idea of stopping more suffering and following international rules. Even though he mentions the help Ukraine has received, he mainly talks about the serious danger to his country and the need for ongoing support because of shared values like freedom and self-rule. This way of speaking focuses on moral reasons and shared responsibility to deal with the unfairness Ukraine is facing, which is different from Trump's more deal-focused approach.

CONCLUSION

This analysis of the conversation between Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky shows that they use very different ways to persuade others, based on their unique viewpoints. Trump's way of speaking uses clear-cut categories (Lakoff, 1987), war-like comparisons (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), and simple details (Talmy, 2000). It follows an "America First" approach (Entman, 1993), focusing on assigning blame and treating international relations as deals. His words fit well with the idea of transactional nationalism (Entman, 1993).

On the other hand, Zelensky uses methods like sorting ideas by their deeper meaning (Lakoff, 1987), being highly specific and detailed (Talmy, 2000), and focusing on shared values while highlighting moral reasons (Entman, 1993). He often stresses Ukraine's sovereignty and the human impact of the conflict. His way of speaking shows a "value-based approach" (Entman, 1993) to build international support by appealing to fairness and the importance of stopping more suffering.

The way Trump and Zelensky use language shows clear differences in how they see the world and their goals in this diplomatic meeting. Trump's focus on deals and gratitude shows he takes a

"transactional approach," while Zelensky's focus on sovereignty and loss connects to "a different set of motivations rooted in shared values." To understand how diplomatic talks work and how agreements can be reached in important international discussions, it's important to study these ways of thinking and presenting ideas. More research could look into how well these different styles work in other diplomatic situations and with different groups of people. It could also study more examples of diplomatic talks to find common patterns and their effects on global relations.

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