



The Coverage and Reception of
the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict



Finanțat de
Uniunea Europeană
NextGenerationEU



Planul Național
de Redresare și Reziliență



UNIVERSITATEA
LUCIAN BLAGA
— DIN SIBIU —

What happened to the “special (military) operation”?

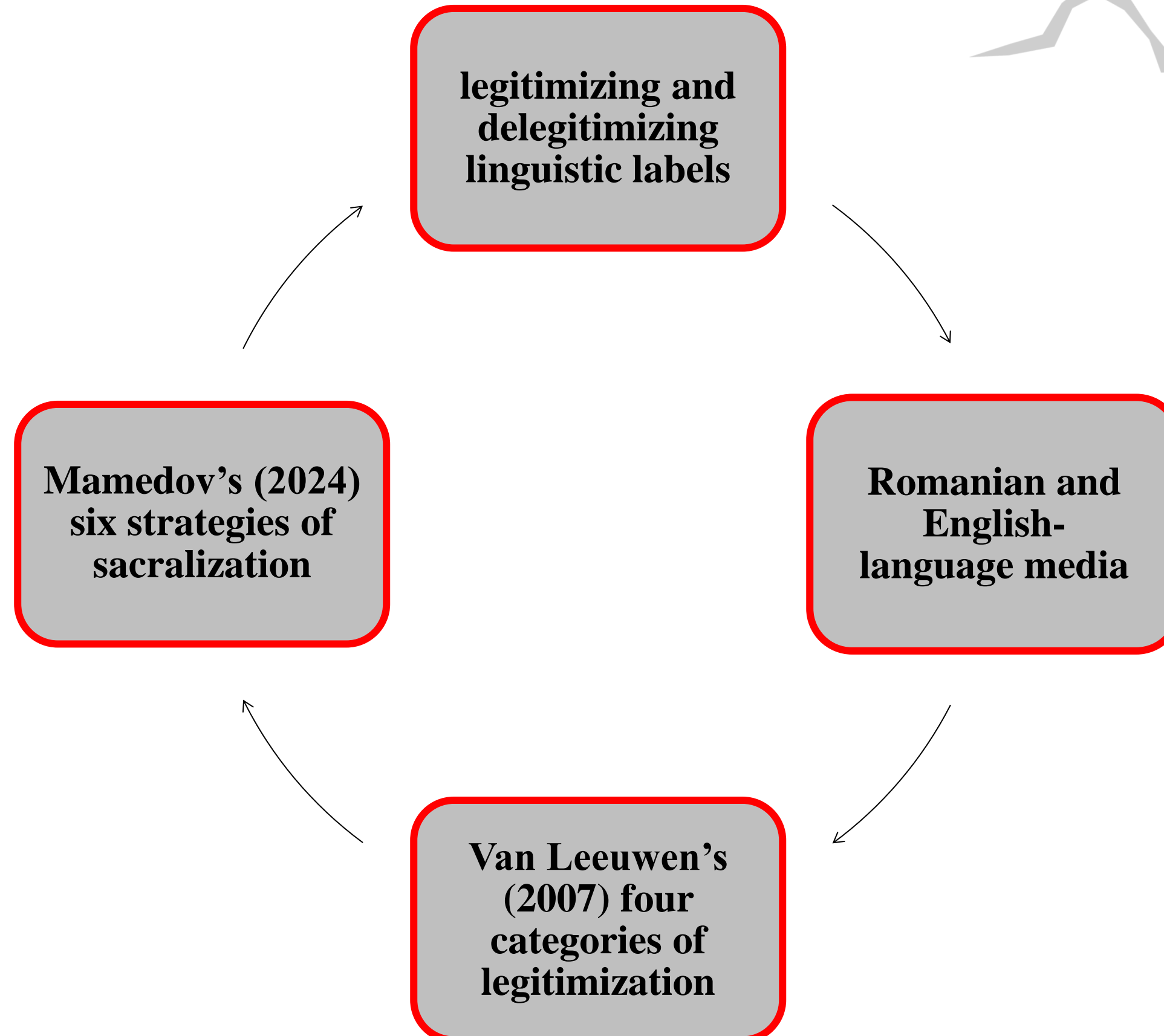
**The story of a (de)legitimizing and (de)sacralizing linguistic label
of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the Romanian and English-language media**

David MORARIU
Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu

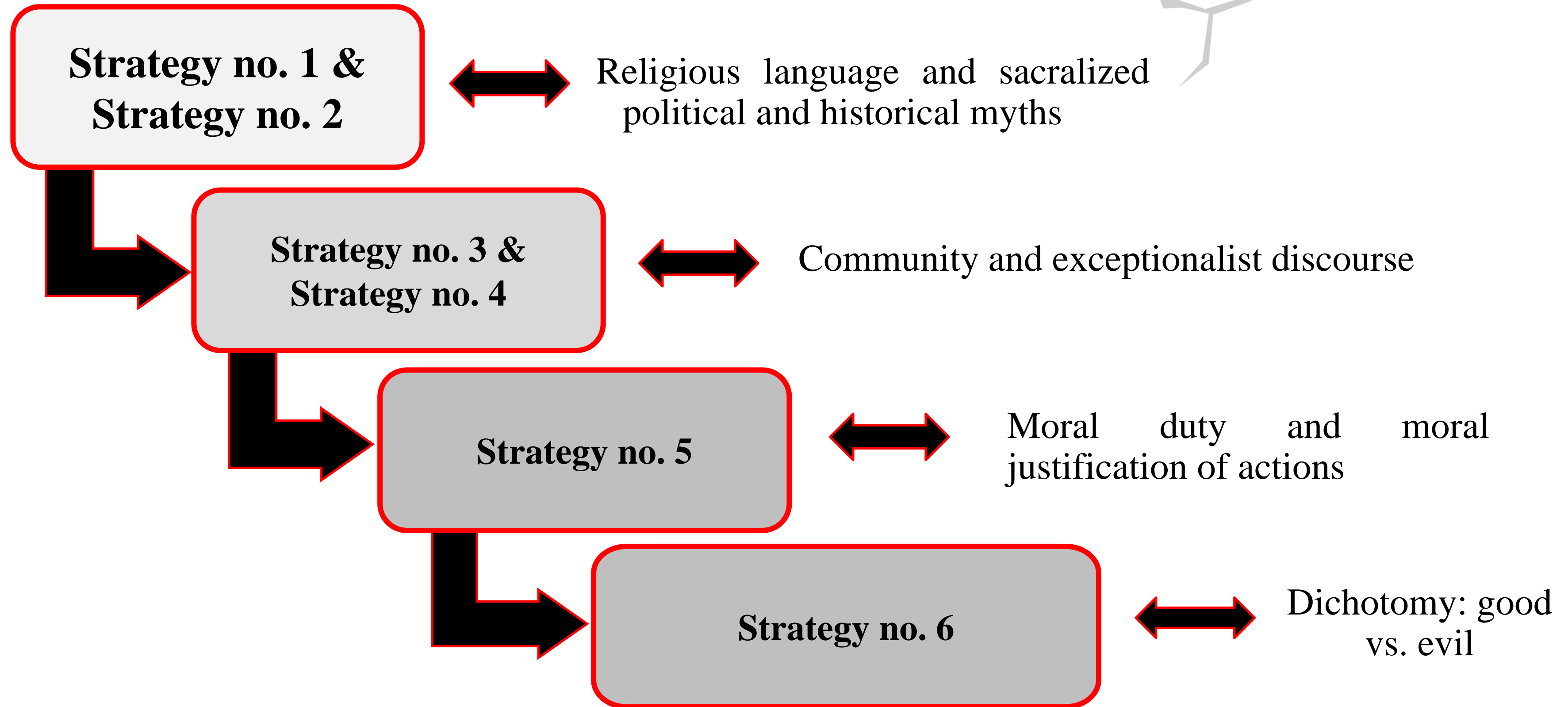
**Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the
Mediation of Russian-Ukrainian War:
Language, Representation, Society, Culture**

July 9–11, 2025

Preliminary information



Theoretical Framework (Mamedov 2024)



How Does this Approach Relate to Linguistic Labels?

- Andrey Kelin: “war” vs. “civil war”;
- Thematic analysis of KWIC: “special military operation” (Molek & Dragomir 2025):

Polish mainstream
media
(139 occurrences)

Recontextualization

Neutralization

Data & Methodology

Romanian-language
corpus (2000+
entries)

The diagram consists of two large, light-gray, arrow-shaped boxes pointing towards each other, meeting at a central point. The left arrow points right and the right arrow points left. Both arrows have a thin red border. The entire diagram is enclosed within a thin red rectangular frame. In the top right corner of the slide, there is a faint, light-gray graphic of a tree branch.

English-language
corpus (2000+
entries)

Selected Results

English-language corpus (83 occurrences)

- parenthetical clauses and explanatory discourse (n = 28): “Russia calls this invasion a *special military operation*” or “Kremlin refers to the invasion using *special military operation*”;
- **MUST**: “it must be called a special military operation” or “it must be referred to as a special military operation.”;
- quotation marks (n = 16): “echoic use of language” (Wilson and Sperber 2012);
- noun phrases (n = 12): “Kremlin-approved narratives”, “Russia’s own description of its invasion”, “the preferred term in Russia for the invasion of Ukraine”, “the Russian term for its war in Ukraine”.

Selected Results

English-language corpus (83 occurrences)

- Putin as the main AGENT (n = 5) => Verbs: “to announce”, “to insist on calling”, “to describe”, “to order”;
- Modifiers (n = 3): “so-called”;
- Affectively charged words: “failing special military operation” or “Moscow’s inept handling of the special military operation”;

Selected Results

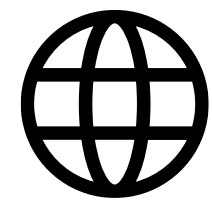
Romanian-language corpus (103 occurrences)

- Affectively charged words: “special military operation” = “term sold by Moscow”, lies”, “pretext”;
- Parenthetical clauses = top editorial choice (n = 34);
- Putin as the main AGENT (n = 10) => Verbs: to conduct, to announce, to name, to order;
- Modifiers (n = 7): “so-called”;

Selected Results

- “special (military) operation” = label of legitimization and of delegitimization and context-dependent;
- sacralized dimension: recent history textbooks introduced in Russian schools = unified community;
- strategy of blaming (Chiluwa 2024) => Dmitry Peskov: “It started as a special military operation, but once that group formed there, when the collective West joined Ukraine, for us it became a war. I am convinced of that. And everyone must understand this”.

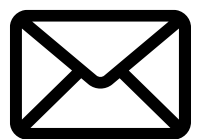
Contact



grants.ulbsibiu.ro/corecon



grant.corecon@ulbsibiu.ro



david.morariu@ulbsibiu.ro

Find us on our social media!

