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Migrant Image as an "Other Some" in the Russian Mass Media

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Abstract

This article reveals the main approaches and methods of forming a perception stereotype of the migrant image as "other some" in the Russian mass media. The authors of this article analyzed three federal print publications - "Rossiyskaya Gazeta", "Trud" and "Komsomolskaya Pravda", characterized as mass editions, which enabled to make the most complete coverage of several segments of the readership and to highlight the most widespread meaning of the "migrant" concept in the public consciousness. The study of the dynamics of using the "migrant" concept for the period of 2000-2013 in the Russian print media made it possible to conclude that there were shifts towards a positive assessment of "other some". If the "language of enmity" was used in the public consciousness to form the migrant image at the beginning of the period under investigation, which led to the consolidation of migrant phobia, then the situation changed by 2013 - the migrant image was more often associated with a victim of interethnic tension and corruption. The new migrant image is the image of a migrant who has not found a better life, but has adopted Russia as a second home and therefore trying to adopt new standards and living conditions and helping to solve many of the social and economic problems of Russian society.

Keywords: Migrant, Concept, Stereotype, Image, Language of enmity.

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Introduction

This article is aimed at revealing the main approaches and methods of forming a perception stereotype of the migrant image as "other some" in the Russian mass media.

We use the "migrant" concept in our work, formed in the language consciousness as a meaningful concept, which includes a set of mentality and material features. This approach enables us to explore the migrant image as emerging not only from political, economic, social, cultural realities, but also psychological, intellectual, emotional features of the migrant perception, and to explore ways of forming stereotypes in the migrant image perception by understanding the process of constructing the interethnic relations in the mass media.

The beginning of forming the theoretical and methodological practices of studying the "other some" image - imagology - had been laid in 1950-1960 in France and Germany, and thereafter it was developed in the works of many Western researchers (Dukic, 2009; Beller & Leerssen, 2007; Leerssen, 2007; Moyle, 2004; Swiderska, 2013; Taramaa, 2007). In Russia, the development of the theory of image formation began later - at the turn of 1990-2000 (Marshuba, 2015; Menert, 2003; Oschepkov, 2010a and 2010b; Papilova, 2011; Polyakov, 2014). The individual view on forming the ideas about "other some" was also developed within the framework of ethnic and social psychology (Aronson et al., 2005; Stefanenko, 2009). To analyze the data obtained by us during the study, we also studied a layer of historiography devoted to the problem of "other some" image (Zemskov, 2015; Mukha & Kurbalenko, 2014; Maksimova, 2014; Repina, 2012). A special place among these works is occupied by the works devoted to the formation of the "enemy image" (Savelyev, 2010; Senyavskiy & Senyavskaya, 2006).

The image is one of the basic concepts of the humanitarian direction of modern science. There are a huge number of different interpretations of this concept, but it is important to define the image as a form of reality perception in the human mind in the context of this study.

In addition, it is necessary to mention the researchers who studied the stereotypes and their influence on the formation of "other some" image (Katz & Braly, 1933; Oakes et al., 1994; Lippmann, 1922; Ageyev, V. S. (1987). M. Cinnirella (1997) notes that a stereotype is not a frozen category and can change under the influence of historical, political or socio-economic reasons. It distinguishes active (those that are currently being reproduced in the media sphere) and dormant (sleeping) stereotypes; depending on the conditions, the latter can be actualized and should be the subject of expert attention, since they can have a strong influence on the inter-ethnic relations.

In his stereotype understanding M. Cinnirella develops the concept of social identity of H. Tajfel (1963), according to which the personal identity depends on the group one, while the social group members tend to a "positive" social identity and increase the status of their group, opposing themselves to others; thus, the commonality of attributes is emphasized within the group, and differences are distinguished outside the group.

In scientific definitions, the "migrant" concept is often viewed from theoretical positions, but does not reflect the public perception of the "migrant" notion, which is based on associative meanings formed in linguistic consciousness. We offer to study the "migrant" concept through a conceptual approach.

It is important to note that most of the studies of the concept are conducted in the field of cognitive linguistics, which, in turn, is divided into linguocognitive and linguocultural directions. Within the first one, the concept is understood as "a unit of mental or psychic resources of our consciousness and that information structure that reflects the knowledge and experience of a person; as an operative content unit of memory, mental lexicon, conceptual system and linguamentalis, the whole picture reflected in the human psyche" (Kubryakova, 1996).

The linguistic and cultural notion of the concept is formed in the collective linguistic consciousness under the influence of language, culture, habit, custom of a certain community. This way of forming the concept is more closely connected with the linguistic expression, with the national linguistic and cultural specifics, in contrast to the linguocognitive approach taking into account the individual psyche.

As V. Teliya clarifies (2002), "the "concept" is, above all, the verbalized cultural meaning in the linguocultural texts, and it is a linguocultural concept - the semantic unit of the culture "language" - "by default".

At that, according to Yu. Stepanov (1997), the concept "exists not in the form of clear notions, but as a "bundle" of concepts, notions, knowledge, associations, experiences, which are accompanied by the word in the human mental world: the concepts are not only thought, they are experienced. They are the subject of emotions, sympathies and antipathies, and sometimes clashes".

These two approaches of cognitive linguistics to the concept study complement each other, having counter-directed vectors: the concept in linguocognitology is "the direction from individual consciousness to culture", and linguoculturology considers the concept as "the direction from culture to individual consciousness" (Karasik, 2004).

Thus, we can formulate the main features of the "concept" notion:

1. The concept includes a set of material and mental (spiritual) features, combines realities and abstractions, and therefore has an objective and subjective character.
2. The concept is also a mental education, systematically built by various factors, interconnected on the basis of psychology, culture, social experience.
3. The concept includes not only a semantic meaning, but also emotional and psychological components.
4. The concept is reflected by semiotic signs and linguistic expressions.
5. The concept actualizes the meanings in the answers to the individual questions, who comprehends what is happening.
6. The concept may be individual and national; the national concept is related to the "mentality" concept, which is a stable set of mental, intellectual, emotional and cultural features inherent in one ethnic group or nation.
7. The concept is a dynamic thought-creation process that develops, complements and deepens the subject under study.

Based on the concept features we have synthesized, we offer to consider the "migrant" concept as a conceptual set of knowledge about essential circles of migratory components and images formed on the basis of migration reality and under the influence of intellectual, psychological, emotional, cultural and verbal relations.

Methods

The chronological period of the study covers thirteen years (2000-2013). We selected the key dates in the history of Russia as milestones for measuring the design of the "migrant" concept in the federal print media: 2000 is the beginning of V. Putin's first presidential term, because three quarters of migrants have begun to come to Russia after 2000 according to a number of sociological studies; 2005 is the first year of V. Putin's second presidential term and the year of starting the implementation of the "National Projects" to resolve the most topical social problems; 2009 is the first year of D. Medvedev's presidential term;

2013 is the first year of V. Putin's third presidential term. Thus, we monitor the formation of the migrant image in the mass media at key political moments of the Russian state.

The empirical basis of the study was made up of three federal publications: "Rossiyskaya Gazeta" as a government publication, the newspaper "Trud" as a quality publication and the newspaper "Komsomolskaya Pravda" as a mass publication. These publications in aggregate cover most segments of the press readership and, consequently, form the "migrant" concept, which corresponds to the most common one in the public consciousness.

When carrying out the research, we applied the following methods:

- 1) An inclusive analysis of the material of mass culture selected for study, which enabled us to identify the methods of forming the journalist image.
- 2) Content analysis and structural analysis of the content of journalistic works that compiled an empirical base for the purpose of studying the change in the "migrant" concept.
- 3) Comparative analysis of the migrant image in different types of printed publications in the period from 2000 to 2013.

Discussion

The coverage of external migration in the Russian mass media is connected with a multifaceted set of problems: migration and demography; migration and security; migration and crime; migration and economy; migration and education; migration and ethnic conflicts; migration and globalization; migration and politics.

The production of ethnically colored information plays an important role in performing the task of constructing the migrant image in the mass consciousness. The mass media mention the nationality, country of origin, language and other characteristics of migrants, which facilitate the identification and association of migrants with the situation that has become an informational occasion for a particular mass media.

Mention of nationality in publications or in television and radio broadcasts in a positive tone causes the audience's interest in other peoples, their life and culture. From the point of view of the nation mentioned in the material, such information promotes the creation of a sense of honor and pride, encourages respect for ethnic and national dignity. If an emphasis is placed on nationality or religious affiliation in a negative tone, then such information may arouse dislike, form and record negative stereotypes about the ethnos in the audience.

The distinctive feature of ethnic stereotypes is their historical stability, they are much more conservative than social stereotypes and less subject to any changes. They can act as a myth or symbol that underlies a particular national community. However, the stability of stereotypes is relative; they can change very quickly in the case of the necessary confluence of circumstances.

H. Bausinger indicates that stereotypes simplify orientation in society and despite excessive generalization, they tend to generalize the real features of social groups, they also become a mean of generating a new reality, as they create possible identification models (Beller & Leerssen, 2007). D.H. Pageaux (1981) believes that the stereotype is not a sign generalizing the presentation of multiple meanings, but a signal that refers to one meaning, a sign of unambiguous communication, of a blocked culture. T. Van Dijk (1991) believes that this leads to the emergence of a new type of discrimination - media racism.

Conclusions

According to our study, we can make the following conclusions.

1. The building of relationships between the indigenous population and visitors, and hence the stability of society, depends on those stereotypes that are formed in the public consciousness in the form of concepts. In the framework of the problem under consideration, we are talking about the "migrant" concept. The perception of "other some" reflected in myths and phobias, enables us to measure the degree of mutual trust and build intercultural and interethnic relations as a specific type of interaction. Mass communication as a process of production and reproduction of mass consciousness, as well as the information dissemination, makes it possible to form a language consciousness in which the internal psychological state of the individual acquires special significance in the perception of the surrounding reality.

2. The Russian population had a strong influence on forming the newcomer image, the bearer of a different culture, the perception of "alien" as an "enemy". By using this tradition, the media in general and the Russian press in particular apply techniques and methods similar to those used to create the "enemy" concept when creating the "migrant" concept. Using the "language of enmity" to consolidate the identity of the "migrant" image led to the fact that this term almost completely lost its social meaning and acquired a pronounced ethnic coloring: migrant is a "non-Russian" person who is incapable and unwilling to assimilate, illegally/semi-legally has moved to a "Russian" region with the goal of displacing the indigenous population, related to criminal structures and/or engaged in illegal activities.

3. The content analysis of the federal press for the period of 2000-2013 made it possible to reveal the dynamics of the "migrant" concept in the linguistic consciousness of Russian society. There are obvious shifts towards a positive assessment of the "other some". If in 2000 the migrant was perceived as a low-skilled worker, a native of an unfavorable (most often southern) region illegally residing in Russia and ready to take on any work, even criminal, then by 2013 it was formed the migrant image that had not found that better life he dreamed of, but accepted Russia as a second home and therefore trying to adopt new standards and living conditions and helping to solve many of the social and economic problems of Russian society; he is more often associated with a victim of interethnic tension and corruption in the Russian federal press.

Thus, our study confirms that the mass media can contribute to the emergence of migrant phobia as a special form of prejudice and discrimination, and can hinder its development.

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