

rului de a alege calea sa de dezvoltare. Cu alte cuvinte, conflictul real, obținând forma unui conflict artistic, se transformă într-o expresie de idei ce aparțin autorului.

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KEEPING RUSSIAN IDENTITY: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF „RUSSKOYE SLOVO”

Rezumat

Păstrând identitatea rusă: analiza discursului public a ziarului „Russkoe slovo”

În articol este prezentată analiza etnologică a ziarului „Russkoe slovo” («Cuvântul rusesc») în perioada anilor 2013–2015. Autorul arată puncte de ancorare a discursului despre grupuri etnice: memoria istorică și tema limbii prin care este reprezentată etnia în mass-media. Autorul analizează mai detaliat memoria istorică reflectată în ziar, mai ales cronologia creată de „Russkoe slovo” și modurile de a conecta trecutul cu prezentul. Acest articol oferă, de asemenea, o analiză a memoriei istorice ca două narative – una personificată și una obiectivă.

Cuvinte-cheie: grupuri etnice, analiza discursului, puncte de ancorare a discursului, memoria istorică.

Резюме

Сохраняя русскую идентичность: дискурс-анализ газеты «Русское слово»

В статье приводится анализ газеты «Русское слово» в период 2013–2015 гг., выявляются узловые точки дискурса об этнических группах: историческая память и тема языка, через которые происходит репрезентация этничности. Автор подробнее останавливается на отражении исторической памяти в выбранном издании, анализируя временную линию, отраженную в газете, и способы связи прошлого с настоящим. Так-

же в статье приведен анализ исторической памяти на уровне объективированного нарратива и персонифицированной истории.

Ключевые слова: этнические группы, дискурс-анализ, узловые точки дискурса, историческая память.

Summary

Keeping Russian identity: Discourse analysis of „Russkoye Slovo”

The article provides the analysis of the „Russkoye Slovo” newspaper in 2013–2015. The author reveals nodal points of discourse about ethnic groups: historical memory and the language issue that build the representation of ethnicity. The author gives a more detailed analysis of the historical memory reflected in the newspaper, analyzing the timeline reflected in this edition and the mechanisms of past-present connection. The article presents the analysis of the historical memory on the level of an objectified narrative and on a personified one.

Key words: ethnic groups, discourse analysis, nodal points of discourse, historical memory.

Medialization of the modern world is one of the main arguments for analysis of media as an important source for research projects. The basis for this scientific tradition was formed by Lasswell and his team in the

forties of the XX century when this group developed quantifying methods for unstructured data [6, p. 18; 9, p. 221]. Birmingham school of Cultural Studies laid the basis for media analysis [8, p. 58] as well specifying media as an independent area of research.

Anthropology also has a long tradition of dealing with press materials in cases when it was impossible for an anthropologist to go to the field and use classical methods of participant observation. It started with „remote ethnography” in the works of R. Benedict during World War II and after a gap in the 80s there was one more peak of interest towards media [3, p. 3]. It is still a developing area in anthropology that is known as media anthropology nowadays [10]. This paper presents an approach that combines ethnological and sociological perspectives, as it detects „the system of relationship between social and ethnic factors in all areas of life, on the one hand, and interethnic relationship on the other hand, finding significant regularities and contradictory tendencies in ethnically marked social space” [5, p. 86].

One of the key questions that define the quality of researches based on media analysis is the question of representativeness of the analyzed text corpus. From my point of view, the newspaper „Russkoye Slovo” („Russian Word”) that presents itself as the main voicer of the Russian speaking population of Moldova, is one of those platforms that have potential for mobilization of the ethnic identity of its readers.

In order to understand the mechanisms used for ethnicity representation I have analyzed all the issues of „Russkoye Slovo” printed in the period of 2013–2015. The advantage of the analysis of this particular newspaper is that it is focused mainly on ethnic and cultural topics. It is quite a rare case for the press edited in Moldova.

The program of the „defense” of the Russian speaking population of Moldova was documented in the first issues of the newspaper. Thus, in the second issue (No. 2 of 10.02.1993), the article „Omissions are the seeds of conflicts. Notes in the margin of the draft of the Education act in the Republic of Moldova” says: „considering the peculiarities of the „Russkoye Slovo” newspaper, we will speak for those people who are not Romanian native speakers” (No. 2 of 1993). At the same time, I presuppose that the analysis of the content of a newspaper doesn't allow the researcher to make any conclusions about the way the content affects its audience. This paper is an attempt to describe the leading mechanisms of representation that are connected to ethnicity and will dwell upon one of them.

During 2013–2015, 135 issues of the newspaper were printed (7 of them were doubled): 45 in 2015 (3 doubled), 47 in 2014 (4 doubled), 43 in 2013 (no doubled). We also took into consideration the publications in other newspapers during the analyzed period and the first issues of „Russkoye Slovo” as material for comparison. Averagely issues of the analyzed newspaper con-

tain 16 pages (except for some numbers that have 20 pages), the first page often has no text (just photos).

The research design is based on E. Laclau and Ch. Mouffe's discourse theory and their idea of nodal points of discourse „discourse is formed by virtue of partial fixation of meanings around some nodal points. Nodal point is a privileged sign, around which other signs become ordered and significant” [7, p. 57]. At the same time the analysis of media texts amplification was held in the framework of critical discourse analysis [1, p. 1]. Both approaches are implemented through qualitative methods; the results of quantitative processing of data are used only as illustrations. This decision is based on D. Yanow's ideas that „methodology” is usefully seen as „applied ontology and epistemology”, and the language of qualitative and quantitative has increasingly become a proxy for differences, largely unarticulated, between positivist and interpretivist philosophical presuppositions concerning the character of social realities and their knowability» [4, p. XVIII]. It means that the combination of qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative content analysis is, in fact, the mixture of the ontological and epistemological basis of these methods. Moreover, the mixture of methods shakes the foundation of positivism and makes the researcher closer to interpretivism [2, p. 36-40], which problematizes the necessity of quantitative data processing and inclusion of these results in the research design.

The analysis of the content of press publications showed that the representation of ethnicity derives from references to the following topics that build the discourse of this edition:

- historical events: all the publications that describe the past of Moldova and Russia in different historical periods as well as biographies of personalities that affected the cultural or historical connections between the two mentioned countries. All the texts of this group evolve deep friendship between the population of Russia and Moldova. We have also included the texts that describe the history of holidays and anniversaries in this group.

- language issue: There are very many publications about the role of the language and the way Russia contributed to keeping the Russian language in Moldova, about the importance of keeping it etc. This topic includes the greatest variety of discourses including political and economic ones. To illustrate that this topic consumes a large proportion of the whole newspaper space, we will present the results of frequency analysis. The manipulation of the data for 2015 showed that the word „language” is on the 13th place (732 occurrences) and on the 8th place in 2013 (1642 occurrences) compared to absolute frequency of the leading word („we”) in both 2015 and 2013 about 2000 occurrences for one year.

A little bit less important, but also stable and significant, is the mechanism of ethnicity representation

through territories description (specifically city and region branding of Russian Federation as historical homeland) and the religious issue (orthodox holidays, public speeches of Patriarch etc.).

All the mentioned topics and nodal points of discourse draw the distinctions and sustain the „us-them” dichotomy using political / politicized discourse in most cases. At the same time, the topic of language issue unites all the Russian native-speaking ethnic groups, which is not such a common practice for this particular newspaper, and we can find a lot of examples of publications that reflect the ethnic diversity of Moldova that is adjacent to Moldovan nationhood. If we compare the content of „Russkoye Slovo” to the Russian press, we will see that such newspapers like „Izvestiya” (close to „News”) and „Novaya Gazeta” („New Newspaper”) depict Moldova without giving any details on the ethnic structure of the country, Moldova is represented as ethnically homogenous and the distinctions are connected to some other (bigger) categories. It can be interpreted through the difference between self-representation and the representation of „the other”, as self-representation has more details and sees grounds for more distinctions inside a particular community. At the same time, we could see that the analyzed newspaper melts down some distinctions focusing on identity based on language.

The comparison with first issues of the newspaper shows that in 1993 „Russkoye Slovo” was trying to make sense of the new conditions for the ethnic minorities and finding new limits and social boundaries. Today, we see clear distinctions but earlier many texts about the new terminology were published, especially in the first issues of the newspaper. Thus, in No. 2 of the newspaper, 1993, in the article „Omissions are the seeds of conflicts. Notes in the margin of the draft of the Education act in the Republic of Moldova”, the journalist argues the term of „allochthonous citizens” referring to the fact that every citizen of Moldova is an autochthonous one, because everybody pays taxes and lives on this territory for a while. One more article about the status of the Russian speaking population of Moldova appears in No. 3 of 17.02.1993. One of three broadsides of the first page of this issue is: „Are we not a national minority? Is a national minority not us?”. The author of the article presents his position on the issue of the origin and evolution of the term „national minority”: „National minority” is a word from pre-war custom. But representatives of small Eastern ethnic groups were called this way in that period. I imagined a real representative of national minorities accordingly. And suddenly I turned out to be exactly the one”. It is quite interesting that the term „ethnic minority” is also criticized there. This criticism is based on a competing discourse constructed in „Sfatul Tsarii” newspaper. G. Ghimpu published an article that claimed that there was only one nation in Moldova and some ethnic groups. That is

the reason why a Russian speaking journalist perceived that term as an attempt to limit the rights of those who were transferred from „national minority” to „ethnic minority”, even though today this term is used in neutral context in this newspaper. Due to the limited space of this paper we will focus on the analysis of historical events.

Historical events. This is one of the key topics of the analyzed discourse; it is also one of the most frequent topics in last three years. Analyzing this topic we proceeded from A. F. Filippov’s idea that he claimed in his paper „Construction of the Past in the Communication Process: Theoretical Logic of Sociological Approach” about social memory: „The experience of intercommunion remains in the memory of an individual insofar as needed for operational projection of actions, for references to what was before, for arguments, estimations, anticipations. Simple repetition of an event doesn’t give it the status of memorable past. Social memory is thematization of the moments presented in current interaction in the mode of significant past. They point to the passed, but they motivate, involve, paralyze reflection as relevant present” [11, p. 118]. So analyzing the topic, we tried to trace the timeline and see its limits and to evolve the mechanisms that let us construct the connection between past and present.

As the analysis shows, the historical topic is reflected in two perspectives: 1) historical events are described (this discourse is more estranged and objectified), 2) biographies of cultural and historical figures are given (more personified).

The earliest event depicted in 2013–2015 is the foundation of the Moldovan statehood. Thus, there is an article about the celebration of the 665th anniversary of the Moldovan statehood on December, 25 („665th anniversary of the Moldovan statehood was celebrated in Chisinau”) in No. 1 of 2015. This article is also one of interest because of the mechanism used for building past-present connection through the description of celebrations.

It is worth saying that an impressive amount of publications in the newspaper, in general (we can also add the texts about different festivals of culture or language, as well as orthodox holidays), and the ones about historical events and figures is devoted to celebrations. Most of the described celebrations create the discourse of history that unites Russia and Moldova. At the same time this topic is developed in a broader framework of „Slavic space” that involves the concept of the so called „Russian world”. As one of the most eloquent examples, the celebration of the Day of Slavonic Alphabet and Culture can serve. „It was born, – as the article claims: – a quarter of century with love to Slavdom” (No. 19 of 2015), in Bulgaria and since 1863 it is celebrated not only in that country. A picture of the celebration of this holiday was on the front page of the issue of May, 24. It was also described in details in the next number No. 20

of 2015). There is also another holiday that is quite close by its narrative to the one mentioned above – the Day of Russian spiritual culture in the Republic of Moldova (see No. 36-37 of 2013).

It is notable that the period between the foundation of the Moldovan statehood and 1812 is not depicted in the newspaper. In No. 5 of 2013, there was a note about a re-publication of the book by V. Nazarevsky (the first edition bears the date of 1911), and „the starting point of this action is the scientific conference on the topic of the role of 1812 in the destiny of Russia and Moldova” („100 books about the centenary of the Civil War”, No. 5 of 2013). The edition of books about historical events is also one of the ways of connecting past and present.

Next part of the reflected timeline is mostly sustained by the usage of the second, biographical and personified perspective. We can't find such time gaps or strict boundaries here, they are more blurred and they mostly coincide with the years of life of the important figures mentioned in publications.

The most detailed written period is the period from the end of the 18th century and the whole 19th century. In many cases, it is connected with the biography of A. S. Pushkin, who is a very significant personality in Russian-Moldovan relationship. More than that, there is a museum of Pushkin in Chisinau that is another platform that works as a newsmaker for the newspaper „Russkoye Slovo”. It describes many events that take place there. For example, an exhibition dedicated to Griboedov's 220th anniversary („A poet and a diplomat” No. 1 of 2015), Yershov's 200th anniversary („Tale of sense, if not of truth! No. 8 of 2015) and an exhibition dedicated to Byron („Regent of our dreams” No. 1 of 2013) are reflected in the analyzed articles. The connection between past and present is given through the activity of an intellectual club: it is built on the events that are organized by different communities, clubs, organizations that are involved in the keeping and extension of Russian culture and the Russian language in the Republic of Moldova.

The end of the 19th century is depicted through the biography of an architect that is important for Chisinau – A. V. Schyusev. The preparation for the celebration of his 140th anniversary link past and present („Who needs him, this Schyusev?” No. 2 of 2013).

The main focus in the description of the 20th century is the Great Patriotic War. It falls into many detailed small events connected to the War and it is depicted in the figures of heroes of the War fighting for their big country. For example, there were some repeated publications about the 100th anniversary of a submariner and a veteran A. Marinesco (No. 1 of 2013). It is remarkable that there is a big difference between the first and last issues of the newspaper if we analyze the terminology, but there is no difference in the way this War is represented. Thus, one of the most stable issues for publication about the Great Patriotic War is the battle of Stalin-

grad. Such publications constantly appear in the issues printed in February.

In general, we should say that the texts devoted to this War and its memory can be met not only in the issues that are printed on special events like May, 9 or June, 22, but almost in every issue of the newspaper. The reason for such publication can be different: arrangements for the celebration of the Victory Day, notes about the results of identification of the unknown soldiers and their reinterment, the anniversary of St. George Ribbon, etc.

As we mentioned above, one of the research interest of the analysis of this topic was to trace the timeline represented in the newspaper. So it starts with the Moldovan statehood and it lasts till today, it basically has no end, it describes the „historical present”. It is mostly presented with the depiction of the achievements that Russia has. Thus, in No. 4 of 2014 we can find an article „Ideology of the Leader” (with the standing head „Contemporary History”) that makes a connection between the achievements of Gorbachev (in 1988) and Putin. The author claims that Russia is now accepted on the international level as a powerful actor. The mechanism of linking past and present is based on the parallel drawn by a journalist.

The analysis of „Russkoye Slovo” newspaper for 2013–2015 shows that the representation of ethnicity in this newspaper is based on such nodal points of discourse as history, language, territory and spirituality. Detailed analysis of the historical topic lets us think that this newspaper draws the timeline since 14th century till nowadays. There are also some periods or events that are described much more specifically, in our case, it is the XIX century and the Great Patriotic War. Their representation is built not only on the description of „objectified” events but it is also connected to the personified line that describes significant personalities. The best example of such a personality is A. Pushkin whose name is interconnected with both history and the museum that is a platform for the development of a dialogue between Russia and Moldova. This effect of augmented reality when the present is by the past can be achieved with the usage of such mechanisms as: 1) the description of holidays that are devoted to certain historical events or the events from the life of significant figures, 2) the description of the activity of different communities that keep Russian cultural heritage, 3) the construction of historical parallels made by journalists.

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