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IMAGOLOGY AND FORMATION OF THE IMAGE OF RUSSIA IN FOREIGN MEDIA

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Abstract

The article reveals the construction of the image of Russia that exists in the space of a foreign-language cultural community using imagological approaches. Being originally an area of literary criticism and comparative studies of "Other" images created in literature, now imagology is represented as a branch of social and humanitarian knowledge. Imagological approach is to focus "Other" with study of the purposeful formation of the country's image. Today becomes important to understand the vision of another, to decipher another discursive code in connection with the growing tension in international relations, political instability, the deepening confrontation of leading powers and socio-cultural disasters. Under the influence of a number of factors of non-linguistic nature, the national image of Russia is subjected to conceptual modification. Language becomes the most important guide to the world of "foreign" meanings, the mentality and views of another people, Systematization of language means of expressing identified the following destructive technologies: intentional news framing. changing the pragmatic focus, deconstructing stereotypes, the use of aggressive and conflictogenic vocabulary; the use of conflictogenic themes and points of confrontation. The study of the image of Russia and Russians formed by modern Western media suggests its progressive negativization with the identification of certain destructive technologies.

1. Introduction

Originated in the 50s of the XX century (Carré, 1947) as a research area of comparative-historical literary studies, imagology, thanks to Gyuard (1951), has shifted attention from the study of literary influences to the perception of ¨Other¨. The extreme point of view on the imagology is reflected in the position of Dyserinck (1966). Considering the image of another country in literature, Dyserinck (1966) even questioned the existence of national identity, and presented the nation as a temporary mental construction, a model of thinking. The original position in the study of the image of others is presented in the works of Pageaux (1989). Pageaux believed that one should not pay attention to the credibility of the discourse about a foreign country. The purpose of imagology should be the study of techniques for an image constructing. Today imagology studies the image of "Other" on the example of literary texts, explores ideas about another people / country with the help of cultural patterns and value systems, analyzes stereotypical images of " other " ethnic groups, countries, and cultures in a foreign perceiving consciousness, and describes the technology of creating images as part of discursive practices.

Fundamentals of imagology formulated by Dyserinck were developed in the writings of contemporary scholar Leerssen (2016), which studies the national character as discursive representations of ethnotypes (stereotypical attributions of national character). Leerssen talks about the decline of printed fiction and the growth of other information environments (as cited in Zocco, 2018).

Being originally an area of literary criticism and comparative studies of "Other" images created in literature, now imagology is represented as a branch of social and humanitarian knowledge that studies the formation of an image (a person, organization or country) with a specific purpose. The key concept of imagology is image. The media image of the country is becoming an important direction of the state's information policy. The effective use of virtual space and mediatization of communication promote the image of the country and its leaders.

2. Problem Statement

Recently, interest in imagological subjects has increased in Russia (Mingda, 2017; Set'ko, 2016; Trykov, 2017; Uryadova, 2015). However, some of the Russian scholars do not share the position of H. Dyserinck, believing that such an approach serves as a good basis for the process of globalization, but it leads to the weakening of national consciousness and erasure of national identity. Russian scholars study the mental models that H. Dyserinck insisted on, but from the perspective of self-identification of a particular nation and their objectification in the literature (Oshchepkov, 2010). Russian research is based on the concepts of M.-F. Gyuard and D.-A. Pageaux, who paid great attention to patterns of perception. of the "Other" and techniques for constructing its image. Russian scholars argue about the field of imagology research: to study only hetero-image or auto-images as well (Ryabchikova, 2018).

Catalan writer Xavier Roig notes in his book "L'enigma rus" (the Russian Enigma) that the origin of the bad image of Russia in the West is a puzzle that has never been clarified, so it remains an enigma. This was the case during tsarist times, during Soviet times, during communism and now the image of Russia remains the same (Benítez, 2019).

The image of Russia in the culture of another country / other countries can be attributed to the branch of knowledge, which is called "territorial image" or "image of the territory". According to the criteria of image classification, the image of Russia is collective (not individual), Two other criteria – the sign of the formed attitude (positive / negative) and the content are subject to description, since they depend on the specific situation. The genre typology of the media texts studied covers news and factual genres.

3. Research Questions

One of the key concepts of imagology is the opposition "own – other / foreign", For the researcher the study of the image of Russia is supposed to be at the junction of two key concepts of imagology – the national auto-image and the hetero-image formed in the Western press.

The study sets the following research questions:

– What kind of information is chosen to transfer the image of Russia?

– What technologies are used to build the image of Russia?

– Do existing stereotypes influence public opinion?

4. Purpose of the Study

The objective of the research is as follows:

– to study the perception of Russia by the media consciousness of the Spanish-speaking countries;

– to analyze different forms of 'otherness' regarding the image of Russia;

– to describe the technology of creating images as part of discursive practices.

5. Research Methods

To study the image of Russia in the Western media, the theoretical and methodological principles of imagology were taken as a basis. They can be summarized as follows.

1. It is important to study the image of the "Other" in the perceiving consciousness of another information environment.

2. The image of the "Other" and its national identity is represented as a discursive object.

3. The Image of the "Other" appears as a mental construction, a model of thinking in the perceiving consciousness.

4. Stereotypes as mental constructions are characterized by certain dynamics.

The study analyzed materials from Spanish-language media of 2018–2020 (el País, el Mundo, ABC) using discourse analysis, cognitive approach, lexical, semantic, and linguostylistic analysis.

6. Findings

6.1. Dependence of the country's image on the news alignment

The structure of the image of Russia is multicomponent. The components of the image of Russia are: the domestic political image, the foreign policy image, the image of the head of state and others. The Spanish media sets an information "agenda", its news framing in relation to Russia.

Thus, a significant place in news blocks is given to negatively marked headings: conflictos geopolíticos con la participación de Rusia *geopolitical conflicts with the participation of Russia*, escándalos diplomáticos *diplomatic scandals*, espionaje *espionage*, mafia rusa *Russian mafia*, corrupción rusa *Russian corruption*, oposición rusa *Russian opposition*, devaluaciones de la moneda nacional rusa *devaluations of the Russian national currency*, criminales rusos detenidos en España *Russian criminals detained in Spain*.

There are significantly fewer positively marked or axiologically neutral headings: el potencial energético ruso *Russian energy potential*, viajes oficiales de altos cargos rusos *officials' visits*, el mercado ruso *the Russian market*.

Media directly participate in creating the image of Russia, focusing the audience's attention on some events and leaving others out of the picture, demonstrating a selective attitude towards the thematic repertoire ans news content.

The second most frequent technique is the discussion of conflict-related topics, the use of points of confrontation. Such points of confrontation can be identified in relation to the territory of the former Soviet Union: Russian language (in Ukraine and Baltic States); war in Donbas, etc.

Another common technique is to belittle the role of Russia in the international arena, which is linguistically expressed in such terms as: minimizar el papel de Rusia *minimize the role of Russia*, minimizar el aporte decisivo *minimize the decisive contribution*; inservible (la ayuda humanitaria rusa para enfrentar Covid-19) *useless (Russian humanitarian aid to fight Covid-19)*.

Rusia "indignada" con EE. UU. por minimizar su papel en la II Guerra Mundial.

A pesar de que la URSS tuvo más de 27 millones de víctimas en la confrontación con los nazis, Estados Unidos solo destacó su propio papel y el de Gran Bretaña para ganar la guerra. (https://www.semana.com/mundo/articulo/rusia-indignada-con-ee-uu-por-minimizar-su-papel-en-la-ii-guerra-mundial/670389)

Cada cierto tiempo Moscú denuncia "los intentos evidentes de minimizar el papel y el aporte decisivo de la Unión Soviética a la victoria" (http://www.rfi.fr/es/europa/20190902-segunda-guerra-mundial-rusia-reivindica-su-guerra-patriotica-pese-las-sombras)

En dos artículos separados, el diario de Turín 'La Stampa' denunció que el 80% del material enviado por Moscú era "inservible" (https://www.elperiodico.com/es/internacional/20200415/ayuda-rusia-italia-coronavirus-doble-filo-7927509).

6.2. Negatively marked vocabulary as a means of forming a reader's position

Analysis of news articles from Western Media has revealed certain destructive technologies in creating the image of Russia. The most common technique is the use of aggressive and conflictogenic vocabulary: danger, threat (real, main), as well as negatively marked metaphors: "hot breath of the Russian bear", "floating corpse of Russia", etc.

One of the classification criteria for the image of Russia is the sign of the attitude formed by the audience. Using examples from an electronic publication https://www.elespanol.com in the period from January to April 2020, it is possible to predict the position that readers are forming.

El crudo se hunde: se deja un 8% tras la negativa de Rusia a recortar la producción.

La OPEP no logra un acuerdo con Rusia y el crudo se desploma.

El precio del petróleo se desplomó este viernes ante el fracaso de las negociaciones entre la OPEP y Rusia para recortar aún más la producción de crudo.

La UE acusa a Rusia de difundir 'fake news' sobre el coronavirus para sembrar pánico.

El Kremlin asegura que las acusaciones son "infundadas".

Rusia interfirió en el 1-O para "dañar la democracia española", según expertos en 'fake news'.

El Parlamento Europeo estudia la desinformación generada desde Rusia para desestabilizar políticamente a la UE a través del espectro digital.

Rusia prohíbe la entrada de ciudadanos chinos para frenar la epidemia de coronavirus.

Rusia estrena una central nuclear en barco, ¿un "Chernóbil flotante"?

These examples allow us to model the sign of the attitude formed as a classification criteria for the image of Russia as you can see from the Table 01.

Table 01. Sign of the formed attitude (positive / negative)

Negatively marked lexical units	Sign of the formed attitude (negative)
la negativa de Rusia Russia's refusal	(-)
no logra un acuerdo con Rusia fails to reach agreement with Russia	(-)
el fracaso de las negociaciones entre la OPEP y Rusia the failure of negotiations between OPEC and Russia	(-)
acusa a Rusia de difundir "fake news" accuses Russia of spreading " fake news"	(-)
la desinformación generada desde Rusia para desestabilizar políticamente a la UE Russia's disinformation to politically destabilise the EU	(-)
Rusia prohíbe la entrada de ciudadanos Russia prohibits the entry of citizens	(-)
un "Chernóbil flotante" a " floating Chernobyl"	(-)

The presented tools are formally characterized by lexemes of negative semantics: la negative the refusal, el fracaso the failure, difundir "fake news" spread "fake news", desestabilizar destabilize prohíbir prohibit; verbs in the negative form: no logra Russia doesn't make it.

The constructed model with negatively marked lexemes imposed on the addressee creates an artificial image formed for the purpose of hidden impact of the target audience.

6.3. Stereotypes and Changing the Sign Assessment

Ways to create stereotypes about Russia can be traced on the example of the questionnaire of Myra Leon Basurto, a student of the faculty of political science of the National UniversityFederico Villareal, which summarizes the image of Russia that has developed in the ordinary citizen of Peru through the media.

– Russia is communist, socialist.

Russia is great and powerful.

Russia is America's natural enemy. The Americans are the good and the Russians are the bad. Thanks to films like Captain America, youth still believe this.

– Russia is thought to be extremely strict with its customs and repressive with human freedom.

You have a stereotypical image of the Russians. White, in fur coats, drinking vodka, playing with bears, always angry women.

There is an idea that Russians are very cold, unfriendly people. This I believe because of the large number of films in which they are painted in this way or as spies and also because their language is considered to sound like "shouting" or "orders".

Vladimir Putin is the most famous Russian for Peruvians. He is the vivid image of authority and power. For example, when there is news that a thief was released or when the police do not know the whereabouts of a murderer it is common to hear "This would not happen with Putin".

(https://es.quora.com/Cu%C3%A1nto-conocen-los-peruanos-de-Rusia-de-su-gente-y-de-su-cultura-Qu%C3%A9-imagen-de-Rusia-tienen-en-Per%C3%BA)

The image of Russia formed in Peru under the influence of cinema is represented by hetero-stereotypes, which clearly differ from the auto-stereotypes that exist in the minds of Russians.

Within the framework of hetero-stereotypes, we can consider the lexical and semantic compatibility of the Spanish adjective ruso Russian, given in the work of Pirozhenko (2015).

Among the presented lexemes, there are several that characterize material values and objective phenomena: ensaladilla rusa Russian salad, té ruso Russian Tea, frío ruso Russian Cold, nieve rusa Russian snow, baño ruso Russian bath, matrioshka rusa Russian matrioshka, troika rusa Russian troika, revolución rusa Russian Revolution, iglesia rusa Russian church. Others are stereotyped. forming national identity with negative axiological content: ruleta rusa Russian roulette, ruso borracho Russian drunk, mafia rusa Russian mafia, espía ruso Russian spy, locura rusa Russian madness.

The idea of Hugo Dyserinck that etnostereotypes are temporary mental constructions is confirmed in modern discourse. Ethno-cultural stereotypes about Russia are also characterized by certain dynamics foreign media. Thus, the metaphor of the "bear" became widespread in the 1980s and the stereotype "vodka" was updated in the 1990s (Orlova, 2013). At the same time, the metaphor of "Russian bear" – el oso ruso, mostly is related to political discourse and represents Russia as something big, dangerous. aggressive and unpredictable.

Objects of material culture may also be subject to political coloring. In particular, we are talking about Souvenirs from Russia – matryoshka, matriuska. – muñeca rusa, The text criticizes the policy of Mariano Rajoy by comparing it with a matryoshka doll and pointing out that it is a useless artifact.

Our democracy believes that efficiency is about opening windows on all sides. It is like a desperate split, like the Russian matryoshkas, which are just a useless sequence of colored boxes – parecido a … esas muñecas rusas ... una sucesión inútil de cajitas pintadas (González, 2011).

Changing the pragmatic focus and mark of assessment contributes to the negativization of the image of Russia.

Any information is supplemented by existing stereotypes in the public mind. Media reality creates new stereotypes. It has become fashionable to combine the concept of "Russian" with the word "hacker" (see Figure 01, 02). This takes on grotesque forms and is presented in the form of Internet memes (http://www.like-a.ru/?p=49626). Internet memes act as a spontaneous creative product of cyberspace users, reflecting their worldview and reaction to a topic that is relevant to society.

Figure 01. #RussiansDidIt

Figure 02. Russian hackers

The number of accusations against Russia has become critical in the Western media. Playing with stereotypes using the hash tags #RussiansDidIt and #RussiaDidIt is gaining incredible popularity and is applied ironically to any unpleasant incidents (see Figure 3).

Figure 03. World leaders reach agreement

The core structure of Russia's image in the Spanish press is generally negative. It is possible to identify such traits as aggressiveness, authoritarianism, the weakness of the government, corruption. Positive elements are insignificant and located on the periphery of the image structure of Russia.

7. Conclusion

1. The Image of Russia in the Western media is very different from the approach created by classical Russian literature, which described the world of the "Other" not as "alien", but as "different".

2. The research material taken from publications in Spanish shows that the image of Russia and Russians, according to the mechanism of formation and dissemination, is not natural and spontaneously formed.

3. The Image of Russia is created intentionally for the purpose of providing emotional and mental impact and is introduced into the mass consciousness of the Western reader with the help of various tools and techniques.

4. Systematization of language means of expressing identified the following destructive technologies: intentional news framing. changing the pragmatic focus, deconstructing stereotypes, the use of aggressive and conflictogenic vocabulary; the use of conflictogenic themes and points of confrontation.

5. The study of the image of Russia and Russians formed by modern Western media suggests its progressive negativization with the identification of certain destructive technologies.

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