

RUSSIAN CULTURE IN FOREIGN LYRICS: PRINCIPLES OF LINGUISTIC CULTUROLOGY

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The article focuses on the methods of lyrics analysis applied in linguistic culturology. The author shows that song contexts can be used in linguistic research as the source of information revealing cultural background, mentality and national values. The emphasis is laid upon the concept of Russia which is studied in American and European lyrics in English. It allows the author to discover various associations Russia evokes in foreign mentality. The author concludes that the attitude to Russia is double-natured: geography, politics and economics influence the formation of negative associations in foreign mentality while the traits of character of a Russian person as well as appearance of Russian women evoke the positive ones.

Keywords: concept, discourse, lyrics, Russia, culture, mentality, national character.

Language and culture, these are two phenomena that are being defined separately are really bound up with each other in complex and sometimes contradictory ways. On the one hand, language discloses cultural reality, as words express ideas and beliefs, they make our mental formations visible [8]. On the other hand, according to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, the structure of the language influences the manner in which one thinks and behaves [24]. It's difficult to say which category has a larger influence on another, but they definitely have a kind of active interaction, which has already been proved by the studies in linguistic culturology.

Songs are both part of the language and part of culture. They represent quite complex discourse that is very close to modern reality and reflects the facets of the present-day picture of the world. This research aims at analyzing the specificity of the Russian culture perception depicted in American and European lyrics in English.

Living in the globalized society it is vital to be able to step beyond your own culture and function with other individuals from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds [16]. An important principle of effective transnational interaction is the ability to synthesize the cultures/languages/rhetorics/spaces for a constructive communicative outcome [6]. Thus, it is current to study language and culture in tandem in order to become successful in intercultural communication. The novelty of this research lies in the fact that it goes beyond the study of the peculiarities of the Russian national culture; it represents the way it is perceived, which can be helpful for understanding the friction points that can arise in transnational encounters.

The following theoretical and empirical methods have been applied: analysis of scientific methodology of linguistic culturology and discourse studies, semantic analysis of the words denoting the concept of Russia, semantic analysis of contexts and associative flow, quantitative estimation, the method of continuous sampling.

The interaction of language and culture has been studied worldwide since the 50s of XX century [3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 21, 24, 25]. In Russia the interrelation of language and culture is analysed

within the scope of linguistic culturology. It appeared in the 90s of XX century in the linguistic school headed by V. Telia and has been developing rapidly ever since. Culturology analyses person's identity in nature, society, history, art and other spheres of social and cultural life. Linguistics focuses on the ideology that is reflected in the language in the form of mental models of linguistic world-image. The subject matter of linguistic culturology is language and culture being in a form of a dialogue, i.e. in a form of close interaction.

In Russia linguistic culturology defines culture as a mosaic built of numerous linguocultural concepts³ each of which reflects the values and the world perception of a nation and bears specific traits of an individual that are predetermined by cultural background. This definition of culture shows that the analysis of linguocultural concepts is the key to understanding a certain discourse community.

Any linguocultural concept acquires its visible form in the language, for example in phraseology, onomastics, folklore, literature, media, etc. So, the main methodology of linguistic culturology is borrowed from linguistics [11, 23]. However, the integrative nature of this discipline allows us to use the methods of culturology, ethnolinguistics and cultural anthropology as well.

According to G. Slyshkin, a linguocultural concept is "a clot of culture in person's mentality" [17]. It is highly subjective as it is formed in mind synthesizing such abilities as memory, imagination and assessment. It is important to differentiate the term "linguocultural concept" from the term "concept" in its general meaning. The latter usually refers to something objective, logical and does not have any reference to images and symbols predetermined by cultural background. While every "concept" has got only a notional component (the meaning), every "linguocultural concept" has got two more components: a figurative and an axiological one [7]. This is a kind of criteria that helps distinguish linguocultural concepts. For instance, the works in linguistic culturology prove that Friendship, Fate, Life, Privacy, Liberty, Health, Beauty, etc. are linguocultural concepts [2].

"Russia" can also be defined as a linguocultural concept. In addition to rational characteristics, it has got irrational ones disclosing emotional and evaluative perception. It is not just the name of a geographical object with its political and economic system, but also a cultural phenomenon causing specific mental reflections which differ in all parts of the world.

A detailed analysis of the Russian national culture is presented in the works by A. Wierzbicka, Zalizhyak, Stepanov [20, 25, 26]. This research is the first attempt to observe the peculiarities of the Russian culture depicted in musical discourse. Lyrics have already been proved to be a reliable source of information about national culture, mind and mentality [4, 12, 19]. Basically, discourse studies open new horizons in the analysis of the social production of meaning and cultural values [1, 14, 18, 22].

Any linguocultural concept acquires its visible form in the language by means of words. The lexical unit "Russia" is the most frequent one in lyrics and forms the base of the concept under analysis. Other words and expressions denoting Russia can be classified as adjectives denoting indigenously Russian phenomena and three groups of nouns specific for Russian culture: geographical names, personal names and borrowings from Russian.

The group of geographical names is represented by such lexical units as Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad, Siberia, Red Square, the Kremlin, Gorky Park.

³ Linguocultural concept - the term used by V. Karasik, V. Krasnykh, V. Maslova, G. Slyshkin, Yu. Stepanov, etc.

The group of personal names consists of two subgroups: the names of famous personalities (Lenin, Stalin, Krushchev, Rasputin, Putin, Medvedev, Shirinovski) and the names of simple Russian people (Olga, Natasha, Ivan, Tamara, Tatiana, Marina, Nina, Svetlana, Anastasia, Aljosha, Pavel, Serjosha, Valodya, Jury, Grigori).

The borrowings that express Russian cultural realia are Tundra (arctic prairie), balalaika (a musical instrument), czar or tsar, kasachok (a kind of dance), Kalinka (a Russian folk song), samovar (a national fire pot), Vodka, Bolchevik (at the beginning of XX century the Bolsheviks were the majority fraction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, hence their name), KGB (State Security Committee), Katushas (arms used during the World War II and also called Stalin's Organs).

Adjectives representing the image of Russia are not frequent. These are mainly the words "Russian" and "Siberian". In lyrics they usually become part of the expressions that refer to specifically Russian phenomena: for example, Russian doll, Russian lullaby, Russian winter, Russian hill, Russian nights, Russian reggae, Russian Roulette, Russian life, Russian Tundra.

The expression "Russian Doll" can be used in two ways: either in its direct meaning (a toy consisting of a set of wooden figures of different sizes, usually painted like a woman) or in a metaphorical form for picturing a Russian woman.

Russian Roulette is a game in which you risk killing yourself by shooting at your head with a gun that has a bullet in one of its six chambers. This notion shows the idea that a Russian person always relies on the fate (if you are not prescribed to die this particular day, you won't). It usually appears in the lyrics about broken destinies. For example, in the following context life difficulties are described by means of the simile based on this notion: Russian Roulette like dancing with death I carry on (J. Armatrading. Russian Roulette).

The usage of the lexis mentioned above in song contexts shows some most common associations that Russia evokes in foreign mentality.

The key idea of the Russian culture is bitter cold: e.g. Middle winter cold winds blow from the trees the snowflakes drifting, swirling round like ghosts in the snow (Iron Maiden. Mother Russia). Two close themes – cold and darkness – can be combined in one topical flight. The song "Siberia" by Backstreet boys has got metaphoric character describing emotional pain as the heart being in Siberia and feeling cold and dark because of the break in relations: Then my heart did time in Siberia 'cause it's all so dark and mysterious.

Another characteristic of the Russian culture is the motif of loneliness, which is quite often intensified by the motif of cold: e.g. How does it feel when you're alone and you're cold inside... I'm livin' lonely, stranger in Moscow (Michael Jackson. Stranger in Moscow).

National symbols play an important role in conceptualization. These may be images from nature or national cuisine. Lyrics represent such symbols of Russia as an eagle and a bear: e.g. ...in Moscow the eagle rocks the bear tonight. (Scorpions. Restless Nights). Vodka is thought to be a kind of a national drink: e.g. Went off to school and learned to serve the state, followed the rules and drank his Vodka straight (Joel Billy. Leningrad).

The concept of Russia also comprises the ideas of Russian-European and Russian-American relations. In the song "The Wind of Change" by Scorpions the hope to be closer with Russia is expressed by the simile "like brothers". The metaphor "let your balalaika sing what my guitar wants to say" denotes the interrelation of Russia (balalaika) and Europe (guitar): Did you

ever think that we could be so close, like brothers... for peace of mind let your balalaika sing what my guitar wants to say.

In the lyrics by Stewart Al Russia and America are described as two strongest countries at the edge of 1984. It is noted that they have much in common, but they lack mutual understanding: Russians and Americans, driven by the past, the third world moves in the shadows you cast, Russians and Americans can turn the world to dust, so much to live for, so much undiscussed... So much in common and so little trust... The footsteps of history are left where you step.

Some modern American rock songs represent Russia as a tough country: Russia, you try to kill people with fire, that's not going to happen 'cos I'll pull an all nighter... (James and the Midnight Snacks. Russia). This vision causes a kind of natural reaction which is also tough.

The band Drunktank uses the metaphor describing Russia as having "the heart of stone". In the song "Russians" by Sting the image of N. Krushchev awakes fear.

On the contrary, quite a number of foreign songs express positive attitude to Russia. For example, Clem Snide uses a tender epithet "Sweet Russia", Iron Maiden poses "Mother Russia dance of the tsars hold up your heads and be proud of what you are". In the same song Russia is depicted as being the great empire in the past: Mother Russia poetry majestic, tells the time of a great empire.

Appearance and the national character of Russians are characterized by foreigners mainly in a positive way. Quite often they single out the beauty of Russian women: e.g. Moscow girls make me sing and shout (Beatles. Back in the USSR), those Russian girls are dancing queens (Nina Hagen. Russian Reggae), my Russian doll, skin like moonlit snow (Rialto. Russian Doll).

Modern songs are focused on describing Russian women not only as beautiful, but also passionate. This can be explained by a current tendency to expose sexuality and admire it openly. For example, it is illustrated in the song by Deepcentral: Let the fire in your eyes, burn like hell, Russian girl / You're a devil in disguise, love me now, Russian girl.

Russian national character is thought to be composed of 3 constituents:

- Strong will: e.g. Yes, your people have strength and perseverance (Pinkerton Thugs. Russia).
- Courage: e.g. Mother Russia, do not suffer, I know you're bold enough (Red Hot Chilly Peppers. Around the World).
- Pride: e.g. Your pride is a glimmer of hope in a world of discontent Russia! (Pinkerton Thugs. Russia).

Indeed, foreign lyrics show various facets of the concept of Russia varying in axiological colouring. Musical discourse is only one of the aspects of concept verbalization. That is why further research is needed to make firm judgements about the nature of the Russian culture perception in the globalized world.

Linguistic methods of lyrics analysis are effective for those types of research that are aimed at revealing cultural specificity. Practical usage of these methods makes it possible to describe the image of Russia created by foreigners. Thus, the basic components of the concept of Russia observed in European and American songs are the role of fate in the life of a Russian person, the image of cold Siberia and Tundra, darkness, loneliness. Alongside with these rather negative characteristics, foreigners single out the beauty of Russian women, strong will and courage. So, the concept of Russia is double-natured: geography, politics and economics influence the

formation of negative associations in foreign mentality while Russian national traits of character and the appearance of Russian women evoke the positive ones.

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