

A Comparative Analysis of the Latin American and Russian Nationalist Media Discourse

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Abstract

The author reviews how contemporary parties in Latin America and Russia use the print media for realizing their political strategies. During the research, conducted by applying the methods of the discourse analysis, were revealed some language tools which express the traditional nationalist discourse opposition - "us vs. them". Besides were identified techniques of political communication being embraced by politicians in the creating of the image of the enemy and in the reinforcement of fear and misunderstanding. For example, the ones that make the United States a common enemy of Latin America and Russia, or that explain the need to formulate a clear-cut differences between Russia and the Western European countries.

Relations between the neighbors are not always friendly. In turn, the countries located at a considerable distance from each other, sometimes appear to be more similar than the neighboring countries. In a global world dramatically increases the interdependence of nations trying to find reliable allies and partners.

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries re-escalated the struggle between liberalism and communism. It turned out, that the current politics until now is a conflict of different countries' private interests. These contradictions may be resolved only in case of the humanity's consolidation. However, this universal equality seems to be unattainable even in the democratic countries.

The growth of such an inequality has led to rejection of the liberal consensus, that didn't produce the anticipated results. Perhaps the easiest way out of this difficult situation was using of the nationalist discourse. If we assume that the "liberal consensus" has already been achieved in developed countries, it is easily supposed why nationalism seems to be more universal than any other ideology.

And if in old days nationalism was just a sacred idea, at present time, it was successfully transformed into a popular and efficient political technology. With the help of the nationalist media discourse contemporary parties in Latin America and Russia may hold their positions and consolidate their power.

Historically, Russia and the relatively developed countries of Latin America have always been part of the world capitalism's second tier. Despite the prerequisites of independent origin of capitalism existence, modernization proceeded here too unevenly.

General globalization of political and economic elites didn't place high emphasis on the fact that modern people continue to stay within national states limits, the space of the current national policy. Life within this framework is more convenient. So some people think that it is safer to be part of a particular nation and not a part of the international community. For the reasons given above despite the continuous formation of new independent states, the nation-state remains the most effective political institution, that brings together a wide variety of social groups.

Nationalism discourse's popularity in Russia and the countries of Latin America is also related to frustration in the global world of justice superimposed on discrediting its historical myth.

By means of the nationalist media discourse local contemporary ruling parties also trying to be legitimized through the creation of a national myth, without which a nation simply cannot exist.

In addition, some leaders of the described countries (Putin, Zhirinovskiy, the late Chavez, Morales, etc.) often use the nationalist discourse while interacting with the opposition. Addressing themselves to the represented in their countries leaders of protest movements, they demand of them to forget or postpone the existing conflicts and contradictions that could weaken the nation in the face of external and internal enemies. For instance, in May 2011 while on the subject of the opposition forces, which are financed from abroad, "Putin quoted Kaa's words, with a wry smile on his lips: 'Come to me, Bandar-log!' It was as if he really believed he had the rioting 'monkeys' fully under his control"(Roxburgh, 2013).

Finally, using the nationalist discourse ruling elite aims to discredit the nationalist opposition, accusing it of extremism and separatism. For example, on the threshold of Putin's anniversary Russian print media ("Komsomolskaya Pravda", "Argumenty i Fakty", "Russkiy Reportior" etc.) were actively discussing the following President's statement: "One must not undermine our moral principles, destroy the country. What will remain then?"

Citizens of the described countries often perceive globalization processes almost equally. On the one hand, Russians and Latin Americans are aware of the impossibility of separate existence and say nothing against the further integration with Western Europe and USA. But on the other hand- they do not believe that the interaction with the West would bring them benefits instead of the harm (Gariboldi T. La política estadounidense hacia América Latina en la post-Guerra Fría. - Mode of access: <http://www.monografias.com/trabajos/politiusa/politiusa.shtml>).

These states of public opinion are used by representatives of local nationalist groups who declare that the signing of cost-effective international agreements, foreign investment, etc. - are the part of a long-term and sophisticated global financial elites program required to occupy the rich in minerals countries.

Since the fruits of globalization were not only the formation of new economic relations, but also the social disintegration, which was also associated with the vulnerability and dependence of national markets, we cannot be surprised that the nationalism is prospering in many developing countries. Some researchers (Жирнов & Шереметьев, 2008; Kacowicz, 2008; González Manrique, 2006.) even suggest that the success of the political leaders who adhere to a moderate or radical nationalist views, are a consequence of globalization.

In modern Russian society issues of nationalism are one of the most controversial. A serious study of them is impossible without trustworthy terminological apparatus, the lack of which often takes the discussion of the scope of science in the field of political demagoguery (Миллер, 1997). In recent years there have been many articles on this topic. Some of them are devoted to the nationalism in general. The others - to the Russian, European or Latin American nationalism in particular. Russian scientist A. Panchenko (2012) supposes that the growing number of these studies can be attributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union, on account of many foreign writings on nationalism in general have become available in Russia.

Along with increased scientific interest in nationalism there're also intensified interest in the specific nationalist discourse and its common markers.

One of the most characteristic properties of the use of the term *discourse* is the lack of having a single meaning interpretation. Discourse is the object of interdisciplinary research (Михалёва, 2009). On the one part the term *discourse* is often understood as a speech practice. And on the other part, discourse is a complex phenomenon associated with a variety of extra-linguistic circumstances and speaker's objectives (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, Vetter, 2000; van Dijk, 1989; Harris, 1952).

Of course, researchers of the nationalist discourse are not interested in discourse in general. They study its specific form that has the distinctive features and the specific signs.

Professor Elena Sheigal from the Volgograd State Pedagogical University in 2000 wrote that the distinctive markers of the traditional nationalist discourse opposition "us vs. them"/ "friend or foe", that could be found in the Russian print media are the following:

- deictic signs containing a distancing component. For example: and others of that ilk, these, there, from overseas etc.;
- signs of derogation of the concernment. For example: any, all sorts of, a kind of etc.
- signs of distrust of the opponent. For example: ostensibly, so-called, notorious etc.
- In the same book she mentions the following markers of the "friend" (Шейран, 2000):
- lexemes that represent the unity and compatibility. For example: together, all of us, united, union, association etc.
- lexical units with the "I'm a friend" connotation. For example: friends, comrades, brothers and sisters, fellow countrymen, compatriot etc.

The method of discourse analysis used in our study allowed us reveal the mentioned special language tools which express the traditional nationalist discourse opposition "us vs. them" in Russia and in Latin America and review how the markers of autarkic nationalism are used in their print media.

The critical discourse analysis includes a specific, linguistic, textual analysis. This fact distinguishes it from all the other methods that focus mainly on the rhetorical analysis. Norman Fairclough from the Lancaster University identifies the following text analysis components:

- the text (speech, writing, visual image, or a combination);
- discursive practices;
- and a social practice (the social context etc.).

Using this scheme as a base, we supplement it with some components. For example, except text's external characteristics, we will also consider its semantic constructs. To achieve this we will use the discursive strategies typology proposed by Oxana Karpenko.

Since the beginning of new millennium in Russia and in the Latin American countries, there is no political force that does not use some of the nationalist concepts. Anatoly Chubais's "liberal empire", "non-systemic" opposition's "liberal patriotism, patriotic chorus of the United Russia and A Just Russia, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela Bolivarian Dream and Argentina's fight for the Falklands require the use of the nationalist discourse.

Of course, some nationalistic elements don't make party nationalistic. Therefore, the majority of Russian and Latin American parties are definitely not nationalistic. Quite the reverse, a negative attitude towards nationalism is a cultural dogma and ethical canon not only in Russia but also in Latin America. Therefore, the print media in Russia and in Latin America are trying to clearly differentiate nationalism and extremism, racism and patriotism.

That's why Russian and Latin American leaders prefer to be called patriots, not nationalists. In particular, Evo Morales has repeatedly made a declaration of love for Bolivia, and recently called to expel from the national football team all the players who do not play in the national championship. Although we cannot forget that Putin, quite the contrary, once publicly called himself and Medvedev "Russian nationalists in the finest sense of the word" (Соловей & Соловей, 2010). Thus we can say that the rise of patriotism in conjunction with the social requirements for order and justice has caused an unprecedented phenomenon of local political leaders along-term popularity.

In the Russian government daily newspaper (Rossiyskaya Gazeta) prevails balanced approach of the nationalism's understanding: the newspaper discriminates the concepts of nationalism, chauvinism and fascism", and tries to appear objective and impartial.

Some Russian and Latin American journalists focus on the "problems of native population". They generate and bring to a wider audience an ethnic interpretation of many conflicts. Thus they form the social perception of any conflict involving different ethnos people as ethnic (Верховский, 2011). In Russia they mainly write about wild and warlike Caucasians. And in Latin America about the cholo's fight for justice and human rights.

This nationalism, also called indigenismo, occupies the most privileged position in countries with the highest indigenous population level. For example, in Ecuador, Peru, and, of course, Bolivia where the current President Evo Morales (an Indian-kokalero) recently became the worst enemy of Bolivia's native population. This happened because the president allowed the construction of a new highway "... right through the heart of Indian country". Of course, this confrontation could not pass unnoticed by the Latin American printed media.

Another feature that brings Russian and Latin American patriotic discourses together is the special role played in these countries by religion. Medvedev attends all important divine services and can be named more Orthodox than Vladimir Putin (Верховский, 2012). The Catholic Latin American nationalism is designed to point out the religious unity of Latin Americans who live all around the world. Moreover, this community is also related to the supranational pride, with a commitment to traditional ideals and true, and not "tainted" by the Protestantism and atheism of Catholic church.

The Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2008 also contributed to strengthening of populism and nationalism. The total collapse of large financial institutions, the down trend of business, fall in exports and imports, increased debt burden etc. has allowed the nationalists argue that the close economic cooperation is useless and dangerous.

Owing to an above-listed factors in Russia and in the Latin American countries returned nationalism, which is called the autarkic. This means that some political leaders have begun to talk about the advantages of such an economic system "in which a country produces all the things it needs as opposed to buying them from another country" (LDOCE, 2000).

It being known that the current Russian government sometimes encourages its citizens to buy goods that are produced by local companies, regardless of whether they are high-quality. That's why our President Vladimir Putin personally endorses the new Lada Kalina and informs "Komsomolskaya Pravda" readers that he prefers milk products "Prostokvashino" just because they are made in Russia.

Despite the fact that today complete economic autarkies are rare, in most countries you can find the advertising slogans, which contain the same information message - our goods give you the best fit as you're a citizen of our country or a resident of our city. For example: "DKNY jeans - the official uniform of New York", "I am Canadian" (Molson Canadian beer), "Lyubyatovo - from the heart of Russian fields", "Lada Priora. In all the country's roads", "Costa Rica: no artificial ingredients", "In Mexico and all around the world, beer is Corona" etc.

Perhaps the most aggressive type of contemporary Latin American nationalism is the nationalism directed against the United States of America. It can be found everywhere: in the local tabloids (La Jornada, El Espectador, Clarín etc.) and in the authoritative newspapers (El Comercio, El Universal, La Nación etc.). Its markers are extremely diverse and creative. For example, the use of abusive nominations such as "Yankees" and "gringos", and also the utilization of visual

communication - caricatures, collages and so on. Here we can mention the Ecuador's President Rafael Correa visit, in which he said that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad can be called his friend just because he's an implacable enemy of the United States. Certainly, these words were discussed very actively not only in Ecuador, but also in the rest of Latin America.

The process of spread the nationalist ideas in Russia and Latin America is quite intense, and the influence of the nationalist discourse markers on the public opinion is quite substantial. Local people want to believe that they deserve more, that they are doing everything possible to achieve this, that a happy and prosperous future didn't come because of corrupt politicians, bad management and even better - alien and hostile external forces.

The construction of images of the "Other" and "Himself" is a form of the political myth. Constructs that are present in the nationalistic discourse have all the features of political myth. They are all-sufficient (Wartman, 2006) because the information contained in the myth answers most of the questions of the society, traditional (Wartman, 2006) and almost invariable. They are often used to justify the innovations offered by the new political elite. Of course they are also stereotyped and historical in the sense that they can easily create new stereotypes and interpret the actual historical events in a certain way (Gellner, 2006). Mentioned characteristics transform political myth and its components into one of the basic values of society.

In general, the made media publications analysis shows that the "negative" and "positive" Russian and Latin American nationalist discourses do not contradict, but rather complement each other. As a consequence, the combination of negative discourse (nationalism = fascism) and positive discourse (nationalism = love for country) implicitly affirms: "If you love Russia, Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil etc. you have to do something for your country".

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