

CDSSES 2020**IV International Scientific Conference "Competitiveness and the development of socio-economic systems" dedicated to the memory of Alexander Tatarkin****INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND COMMUNICATIVE-CULTURAL MEMORY IN THE MEDIA-COMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT**

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Abstract

The work is devoted to the influence of intercultural sensitivity and communicative-cultural memory on the development of media communications and involves identification of a repertoire of identifications, building Russians' discursive identity in the English-language media space. In this study, communities are representatives of the institutional environment – official media journalists and non-institutional environments - bloggers and writers. The stories' analysis results show that Russian and non-Russian communicators use similar facts in stories about Russians, but appraisal positions are often the opposite. In Russian journalists' discourse, one can see a characteristic feature of Russians, which probably does not fit into the framework of thought of the rest of communicators - a manifestation of the Russian duality "in almost all aspects of behavior." Non-Russian cultures representatives mostly broadcast the presumption of a negative assessment. We believe that such dissimilarity in the construction of identity reflects the insufficient level of intercultural sensitivity and the previously formed cultural and historical memory and is explained by an attempt to apply the experience of the cultural memory, the "recreated past" to the interpretation of the "other". These differences are now being used by political actors to support specially organized "informational confrontations" and popularize "threats". Since all communicators belong to "hot" societies (according to A. Assman), this probably requires a constant search for dialogue, striving for constructive communication, development of media communications in the modern information space.

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Keywords: Communicative-cultural memory, discursive identity, intercultural sensitivity, media- communications, Russians



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1. Introduction

Modern media transformations contribute to the growing interpenetration of cultures and actualize special importance of intercultural communications, which, in turn, affects the functioning and development of socio-economic systems. In the context of active processes of globalization and glocalization, the current geopolitical situation, the manifestation of actors' identity as communicators is of great importance in this process.

Approaching our research context, we can say that today Russians seem to be the main source of all threats to peace. Indeed, the "Russian threat", in addition to the coronavirus (COVID-19), is perhaps one of the most popular topics on the agenda of Western media today.

For example, Michael Clarke, professor of defense studies at London King's College spoke about gloomy predictions about Russian behavior in *The Atlantic*: "Putin's aggressive opportunism could take on more dangerous forms for us. The nature of Putin's leadership is that he cannot stop. He has to push, go forward."¹

Sept. 16, 2020 United States secretary of defense Mark Esper said: "We see Russia as a challenge right now... <> And Russia remains a persistent danger to U.S. elections, both through its sophisticated propaganda campaigns along with American intelligence concerns of pernicious cyber-attacks"².

A group of Russian researchers, Ilyushkina and Chudinov (2019), based on corpus technologies, analyzed methods of metaphorical modeling of Russia's image in the modern American press. Scientists concluded that dominant metaphorical models determine the three prevailing negative trends in representing the image of Russia and modern Russian political discourse, based on metaphorical "images of enemies", namely, the negative image of the country's leader ("Russian President –Tsar"), the negative overlook of the country ("Russia – bear"), conflicts between Russia and the USA ("There is the Cold war between the US and Russia") (p. 27). Indeed, "The society's normative climate regulates the expression of stereotypes. <...> Social context, then, shapes stereotypes of particular social groups through social representations and normative regulations within society" (Grigoryan et al., 2019, p. 2).

Analyzing the nature of the so-called "Russian threats" Simons while speaking in 2018 at the Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies of George Washington University, notes:

Soon after Vladimir Putin's initial election success in 2000, several observable changes occurred in Russia's international relations and foreign policy. The combination of a more focused political will with economic recovery thanks to higher oil prices enabled Russia to take a more ambitious and active stance in international affairs than had been the case during the Yeltsin years (Simons, 2019, p. 29).

The scientist emphasizes the geopolitical growth of Russia's role and summarizes: "As U.S. presence and influence wanes, Russia has been successful at taking advantage of these specific circumstances and projecting itself as a consistent, reliable, and dependable actor that has demonstrated its willingness to stand by its allies and partners" (Simons, 2019, p. 32).

¹ *The Atlantic*: The Pandemic's Geopolitical Aftershocks Are Coming (2020, May 19). August 21, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/05/coronavirus-pandemic-second-wave-geopolitics-instability/611668/>

² Paul, D. (2020, September 16). Shinkman Esper Downplays Russia's Threat: Not a Challenge in the Future. September 17, 2020, <https://www.usnews.com/news/world-report/articles/2020-09-16/defense-secretary-esper-downplays-russias-threat-not-a-challenge-in-the-future>

In addition to increasing Russia's competitive attractiveness, which is seen as a “threat”, we believe that the assessment of the meanings of hostility may be the product of reduced level of intercultural sensitivity, understanding of Russia's specific culture, as well as a result of different cultural memories and communication behavior patterns mastered by communicators. For example, in 2019, Polish journalist Andrzej Michniewski spoke out:

“Russia is a European country. The only question is to make sure that it knows its cultural differences and understands what it brings to the European picture. The basis of the modern confrontation propagandized is ‘misunderstanding of intentions in the actions of Russians’, which is caused by civilizational and cultural differences”³.

Developing the idea of the communicators misunderstanding reasons in the “Russia-West” opposition, Russian researcher Lubskiy (2018) and states that there is a project in Russian state policy on the formation of an all-Russian identity. Reflections on Russia as a specific Eurasian civilization and Russians distinguished by a unique civilizational identity, are summarized by a research group led by Shkaratan et al. (2015). In previous studies we proved that, for example, the translated meanings in the “messages” of the state Russian media correspond to the “symbolically oriented” mentality of Russians, when the TV channels form media reality, the actors really approve that Russia follows a “special path” (Sumskaya & Sumskoy, 2018, p. 594).

British scientists Byford et al. (2020) consider the peculiarities of Russians and Russia a problem for Russian studies:

Rather more problematic in Russian studies, in fact, has a distinctive kind of Russian (or Soviet) exceptionalism, which can be found even in some of the best scholarship on Russia. Exceptionalism informs a great deal of Russia’s intellectual and political history, from the messianism found in Dostoevskii’s late work to Vladimir Putin’s view of Russia’s unique national destiny on the world stage. Needless to say, these kinds of essentialized notions of Russianness have long fallen out of favour in academia, but an implicit, quieter, exceptionalism continues to exist in Russian studies. This is not, of course, to deny either specificity or uniqueness to things ‘Russian’ (or, say, ‘Soviet’). It is certainly not to say that identifying some historically or culturally distinctive structure, pattern, or empirical manifestation as specifically ‘Russian’ (or ‘Soviet’) is to automatically fall foul of the sin of ‘exceptionalism’. Rather, the issue is one of avoiding making this exceptionalism methodological; in other words, of studying things ‘Russian’ (or ‘Soviet’) as exceptional by default. It is a question of recognizing that the identity of things labelled ‘Russian’, specifically as that which Russian studies studies, is an ever-shifting construct with multiple, competing meanings, in flux across space and time, produced by variously positioned agents with a myriad different claims and agendas (p. 9).

³ PASE bez Rossii. Vremya pokazhet [PACE without Russia. Time will tell] (2019, January 18). January 21, 2019, <https://www.1tv.ru/shows/vremya-pokazhet/vypuski/pase-bez-rossii-vremya-pokazhet-vypusk-ot-18-01-2019>

All these discussions actualize the study of Russians' identity and its displays in the context of intercultural dialogue with the aim of developing media communications in the modern information space.

2. Problem Statement

The theoretical basis for the study are 3 blocks of theoretical concepts. First, it is the concept of discursive identity by Lydia Enina. Secondly, the concept of communicative and cultural memory by Jan and Aleida Assmann, the author's own interpretation of communicative and cultural memory. Third, the theory of high and low contextual cultures by Edward Hall, the models of Russian cultural traditions by Mira Bergelson.

2.1. Concepts of discursive identity

There are two main traditions of understanding identity in the humanities – a "hard" and a "soft" concept. In Russian linguistics, the rigid concept of identity is more common. From these positions, "identity is considered as a psychological process of identifying oneself (another) with any community, moreover, this process is influenced by life experience and social environment. Language occupies a "middle" position between consciousness and reality, respectively, the result of psychological the process of identification" (Chepkina, 2017, p. 19). According to the "soft" concept, identity is capable of transforming into current communication, and due to having the properties of dynamism, multiplicity and situationalism discursive identity is always an intermediate incomplete identification process. A discursive identity (individual or group) is a set of identities organized in a discourse on a network basis. Identity semantics may be similar, complementary or mutually exclusive, but all identities, structurally and semantically heterogeneous, are connected to the same discursive concept. The author of the theory of discursive identity, the Russian scientist Enina (2016), states: "... A discursive identity is like a river flow that cannot be stopped but can be photographed". Identifications of different thematic areas could construct discursive identity (p. 160).

We agree with Chepkina (2017) and Enina: by the identity of Russians they mean the following:

A network of discursive identifications, the meaning of which is related to self-attribution or attribution to a group of persons of belonging to a community, united not only based on citizenship of the Russian Federation and communication with the territory of the Russian Federation, but also based on the Russian language, based on a connection with the history of Russia and with a vision of its development, based on cultural values and lifestyle (p. 26-27).

In such case, the role of a person's memory is important.

2.2. Concepts of communicative-cultural memory

Jan Assmann distinguishes between two poles: communicative (the recent past) and cultural memory (the distant past). Aleida Assmann (2006) states:

Both individual and collective memories are not always useful, they often represent a source of aggressive myths and a basis for conflict. Memories are equally harmful and useful for survival; they are a means of inciting violence and at the same time a means of appeasing (p. 277).

For this study, we use the term communicative-cultural memory, meaning by this a personal subjective memory, which is influenced by the formed experience of the community's cultural memory to which the subject belongs, and which affects the communicative behavior of the subject in the present tense. We use the concept of communicative-cultural memory, which we interpret as a set of the most essential cultural signs and communicative practices that promote identification with their cultural-historical community, with their country, and are personally significant for an individual "here and now" (Simons et al., 2019, p. 924). Our judgments are confirmed by the work of Rosa Giménez Moreno and Juan José Martínez Sierra (2017), who used the application of corpus linguistics methods and formulated the concept of "communicative identity" in the scientific field based on the analysis of linguistic variants of communicative and register-modulating roles in online communication.

2.3. Concepts of culture types and the importance of intercultural sensitivity

Edward Hall's theory of high and low-contextual cultures is well known. This theory is used to classify various aspects of culture and society, including national and organizational institutions. In high context cultures, information is said and defined in non-linguistic contexts: behavior, reaction, appearance, hierarchy, status. In low context cultures, communication between individuals is the transmission of information in a sign or letter code. Words, not the context, are essential – people often express their opinions and desires verbally, without assuming that this will be understood from the situation of communication. It is speech (written and oral) and the conversation's details that allow the recipient to receive and analyze the message correctly. It is common for people from low context cultures to speak directly, openly, by calling things by their names, to speak out on the topic under discussion, and not to keep their thoughts to themselves.

As for the concretization of the importance of intercultural sensitivity of Russians, we shall turn to one authoritative Russian scientist Bergelson (2003), who believes:

«One of the most effective ways to deal with intercultural misunderstanding is training for intercultural sensitivity... putting some effort into analyzing what this behavioral feature may denote and how it is related to other facts of Russian culture may help to avoid negative reaction and at some point may even prove very helpful for understanding problems of the group dynamics» (c. 98)

Moreover, Bergelson (2003) reveals the peculiarities of Russian culture based on "models preserved in consciousness" (p. 110). She argues (and we agree with this) that the Russian way of thinking is influenced by the coexistence of three cultures in Russia: traditional, Soviet and modern. According to the professor, "the main differences in this culture are <...> between traditional inherited from the Soviet system and Western cultural models. One of the problems of intercultural media-

communication may be the understanding of which cultural model is being held by the person you are currently dealing with" (Bergelson, 2003, p. 97).

We believe that the subjective position of text authors influences the construction of discursive identity. This position can be based, inter alia, on their own communicative-cultural memory, conditioned by the traditions of national / state culture, formed identity-based on the country's collective cultural memory.

Therefore, all of the above theoretical concepts are important not only for the construction of discursive identity in the analyzed media materials, but also for understanding the reasons for the differences in Russians' discursive identity, broadcasted by Russian and international communicators.

3. Research Questions

Let us suppose the discursive identities of Russians in the media texts of Russian and non-Russian authors are different. Is this an indicator of reduced intercultural sensitivity, reflection of belonging to different contextual cultures and the influence of communicative-cultural memory on the authors' position of the analyzed media texts?

4. Purpose of the Study

The objective is to detect the differences in the Russian discursive identity construction by Russian and international communicators in English-language media and to reveal the influence of intercultural sensitivity and of communicative-cultural memory, text authors belonging to different cultural traditions on broadcasting their position in the English-speaking media space.

5. Research Methods

Constructing Russians' identities in the analyzed materials, the network principle of organizing a theoretical concept of discursive identity by Enina (2016) was used. The selection of texts for analysis is based on the quality criteria of storytelling formulated by a team led by Joe Lambert, Executive Director of StoryCenter in Berkeley (Lambert et al., 2003).

At the empirical stage of work, the discursive methods, comparative analysis of English-language stories are used. All the stories involved in the empirical stage of work were created by representatives of major and reputable companies/organizations: "The New York Times" (New York, USA), "The Guardian", (London, Great Britain), NPR (Washington, USA), "Russia Beyond" portal (Moscow, Russia), "Understand Russia: stories about everyday life in Russia" (Moscow, Russia). In total – 22 stories about the Russians.

Almost all texts are authorship. In this study, communities are representatives of the institutional environment- official media journalists whose publicly broadcasted judgments depend on the social and political position of the media, and non-institutional environments- bloggers and writers who embody a politically unformalized, creative community. All communicators are united by one thing: they are the creators and translators of stories about Russians in English, which is well known to be the language of international communication. Besides, all authors of messages have baggage assigned to different

collective memory, which, according to our position, is reflected in their communicative behavior, coding of meanings in messages, interpreting certain events, symbols, and behavioral features of Russians.

Non-Russian authors are representatives of low-context cultures, for whom most of the information is contained in words, rather than in the context of communication, is characterized by a clear and precise assessment of all the topics and issues discussed.

To construct the discursive identity of the Russians, a special text analysis technique was applied, which includes 3 criteria: the subject of identification (Russian and non-Russian communicator), topical identifications (12 directions), the estimated position of the subject of communication in relation to the identification of Russians. The results were recorded in the coding matrix. We take into account the fact that the decoding of information was carried out by representatives of one cultural model, which, in a sense, makes the results of the study somewhat arbitrary. At the same time, it can give a certain impetus for further mirror studies in this direction.

Thus, Russians' discursive identifications can be revealed, and the construction of the identity of Russians is implemented based on 12 thematic areas identified in the text. The data obtained can be interpreted from the perspective of the theory of communicative and cultural memory of A. Assmann, the theory of high and low-contextual cultures E. Hall, представления about intercultural sensitivity and the concepts of cultural models of Russians according to Bergelson.

6. Findings

In this study, themed identification areas were found: Political, Economic, Welfare, Historical, Religious, Professional, Legal, Military, Territorial, Value, Everyday Culture and Russian Literature, Civilization.

Based on discursive analysis of the English texts of Russian and international journalists, identifications of the identity of Russians, constructive meanings relevant to the addressees were identified, while Russian storytellers act at the level of correlation of themselves and the described heroes with the Russian community, and international ones assign a group of people belonging to Russia, its culture and values. We will give only one example of analysis, which is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Identification of the Russians' identity

Russian media texts	Non-Russian media texts
Political (discourse)	
State leaders' characteristics "Ambitious Prince Vladimir", "ordered to destroy the statues of the old gods", "sent his military leaders and their army to baptize people". People "would never have tried to change their ancient faith if it had not been for the influence of the elite". "Stalin <...> is both a cruel tyrant and a wise statesman...". "Many consider Stalin the central figure of Russian history of the	State leaders characteristics "A very disciplined, iron-willed, fanatical and non-sentimental man" (about Lenin), "a KGB officer who has reached the top of power in the midst of chaos and reestablished the order" (about Putin). Activity on the Russian level: "We must stick together, follow Putin, ban any opposition, even sacrifice our civil rights." (Karl OveKnausgaard «A Literary Road Trip Into the

20th century”. Yeltsin - “high level of corruption, chaos and political instability”, “defaulted”, “conducted a catastrophic “shock therapy”.	Heart of Russia. In the land of Tolstoy, Turgenev and now Putin, what are the stories Russians are telling themselves?» (New York, USA), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/14/magazine/a-literary-road-trip-into-the-heart-of-russia.html International activities)
International activities “The period of Peter the Great's Russian expansion.” “Emperor Alexander I made great efforts to create a “European Concert”. “Victory over Nazi Germany” – “liberation of all peoples of Europe, including Russia” “from plague and pestilence”. “Western countries applaud Gorbachev for dismantling the Soviet threat.”	“ideology of military might and patriotism”, “a rattling parade of tanks and soldiers' stomping.” “Russia deserves to be a worldwide power”. («A River of Pictures of the Dead From Russia’s Sacred War» (USA, New York), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/10/world/europe/russia-immortal-regiment-parade-victory-day.html)

Discursive meanings

Political processes in Russia's history are predetermined by the historical "absolute centralization" of power and the scale of the tasks to be solved. The features of most of Russia's major leaders are pragmatism, willingness, authoritarianism, the scale of plans, and indifference to the "cost of living" of the individual. People's traits: obedience, patience, distrust in power and reforms. Russia's international activity is most often based on a "defensive" ideology of "countermove"; it has a significant, sometimes key impact on world politics.	Political leaders of the country are strong authoritarian personalities who promote artificial "homogeneity" in the society, priority of "state" obligations over personal rights. The internal policy demonstrates the gap between the interests of the authorities and those of the people. Opinions that go beyond the official ones are persecuted. Foreign policy is defined as forceful, aggressive towards countries with different political orientation, countries of Western democracy.
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Text-generating practices: conceptual codes

The dynamics of assessments of the political situation both inside and outside the country periodically shift from the relative and short-lived “norm” to long periods of “decline”. Codes: “Absolute centralization”; “totalitarianism”, “authoritarianism”.	Situations are assessed as going beyond the “norm” with a clear “madness”. The declared goals of the Russian “elite” in the Russian and non-Russian policy of the country are identified as “false”, “malicious”, “insidious”. Codes: the country's leaders are authoritarian and aggressive. The society is given artificial “homogeneity” under the strict supervision of the “towering towers of the Kremlin”.
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Based on the analysis of journalistic stories, we came to conclusion that Russian and international communicators use similar facts when narrating about Russians, however, the estimating positions are almost opposite.

The key difference in the discursive construction of Russians' identity, in our opinion, is in the "time" category (field of History). International authors are ready to discuss the past ("Historical plots and conflicts are still not resolved", "So it was under the kings <...> so it remains to this day", "The train is overloaded like in Scandinavia 100 years ago") and the present Russia ("economy crisis"), translating the position of backwardness, tragedy, inefficiency of socio-economic processes. It is as if they are not ready to consider the country ("great ideas that will never be realized"), voluntarily or involuntarily formulating a message about the exhaustion of Russia's potentials. Russian journalists, constructing the identity of Russians in the past and present of the country, are capable to see through the figures of "tyrants and wise

statesmen", through "violent actions of the elites" the possibility of a "project of modernization of Russia." Russian-speaking actors' message is that "society is beginning to revise the past and discuss the future." The presence and absence of a possible "image of the future" is a watershed line in the construction of the identity of Russians, conditioned, in our opinion, by the communicative-cultural memory of communicators of the Cold War period and is explained by an attempt to apply their experience of cultural memory, their "recreated past" to the interpretation of the "other".

In Russian journalists' discourse, one can clearly see a characteristic feature of Russians, which probably does not fit into the framework of thought of the rest of communicators - a manifestation of the Russian duality "in almost all aspects of behavior." For example, Stalin is both hated and respected, the current political position of Russia is scolded, but defended.

We believe dissimilarity in understanding of the identity is a reflection as a result of decreased intercultural sensitivity, and belonging to low context cultures. The result is read in the texts of non-Russian communicators: there is no possibility to anticipate the behavioral characteristics of Russians, except for the main ones: openness, hospitality and "defensive life position".

However, according to Assman, there is a convergence in the cultures of Russian and non-Russian storytellers - it belongs to "hot" societies, in which the need for change is based on history as a driving force for development. Apparently, this is what urges us to constantly seek dialogue in the modern field of media communications.

Thus, the Norwegian writer takes a grandiose, in fact, action - he travels across Russia "from edge to edge" and based on his experience of acquaintance with Russian classical literature and personal perception of reality he tries to understand therefore formulates the current idea of Russians. As if supporting the message of the author, Zagidullina (2019) in their work develops the idea of the extreme importance of literary historicism for the transmission of national identity, because "one of the functions of literature is to consolidate the nation and national identity <...> literature is the quintessence of the 'national spirit', and the tradition of the cult of genius is still in demand" (p. 191).

At the same time, the researcher convincingly proves the disappearance of the leading social role of literature in modern Russia, therefore its function as part of the necessary code for transmitting national identity is no longer relevant. Perhaps this is why Russians remain not entirely clear for an international storyteller.

In the analyzed texts, Russian journalists, first of all, broadcast "Soviet" and "traditional" cultural models, according to Bergelson (2003). This is probably important for the implementation of the "detuning" of the Russians in the modern geopolitical situation. In addition, it helps to reproduce a proven successful "defensive position".

In this case, we again note the duality, since even during the period of literary "decentralism" according to Zagidullina (2019), Russian authors, constructing the identity of Russians in the discourse, lay the meanings not of the modern, but of the traditional and Soviet cultural model according to Bergelson (2003). Duality here appears in "what we have and what we show". Apparently, multidimensionality and multi-leveling are an important component of the identity of Russians.

7. Conclusion

Under the conditions of global media transformations, which are caused, among other things, by the influence of a policy and economics that ensure the selection of the important in the media and is of great importance in the formation of a collective national memory, the discursive identity of Russians is constructed in different ways, which is obvious. In the course of our work, we concluded that intercultural sensitivity and the communicative and cultural memory, which affects the construction of discursive identity, influences the evaluative positions and interpretations of actors. They are formulated with similar thematic identifications in the end, but different meanings are close to traditional stereotypes. Unfortunately, the Cold War period's communicative memory still leaves Russians, especially "distant strangers" from the perspective of other linguistic cultures, and negative evaluative meanings could be, inter alia, the result of a lack of sensitivity and misunderstanding of the special Russian culture.

The study showed that non-Russian journalists understand the inapplicability of the "formalized patterns" in the process of choosing Russians' identifications. Vladimir Putin, the President of the Russian Federation, once noted that Russia, as the philosopher Konstantin Leontyev figuratively said, has always developed as a "blooming complexity". And it seems that the results of our study confirm this statement.

We believe that recognizing the peculiarities of the communicators reflecting the level of intercultural sensitivity and subjective positions influence that reflect the assigned experience of communicative and cultural memory on the construction of identity can be used to develop dialogue in the modern media and communication environment.

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