

DOI: 10.17223/23451785/1/27

Language Construction of National Identity in the Internet Discourse: “Who Are the Rusins and What Language Is Rusinian Like?”

I. I. Babenko, O. V. Orlova

Tomsk State Pedagogical University
60 Kievskaya Str., Tomsk, 634041, Russia
E-mail: uchim.russkij@tspu.edu.ru

Языковое конструирование национальной идентичности в интернет-дискурсе: «Кто такие русины и на какой из языков похож русинский язык?»

И. И. Бабенко, О. В. Орлова

DOI 10.17223/18572685/41/6

Published in in: Rusin. 2015. Vol. 41. Is. 3. pp. 79–89 (In Russian).

URL: http://journals.tsu.ru/rusin/&journal_page=archive&id=1271&article_id=23103

Modern scholars distinguish 3 historically established versions of national and linguistic self-determination of the Rusins: Russian, Ukrainian and Rusin. Competition for these versions has always escalated and the nationality question maximized during situations of social change, social mobilization, political, geopolitical crisis and transformations. The aggravation of Russian-Ukrainian relations, which occurred as a result of the events in 2014, stimulated a communicative network activity, the study of which could be a key to the current state of public opinion regarding the identification and self-identification of Rusins.

Socio-cultural and contextual analysis of the online discussion regarding the Rusin question allows us to reconstruct the actual current disposition of the 3 traditional (Russophile, Ukrainophile, Rusinophile) options of Rusin ethnic identity in the context of contemporary socio-political challenges.

The ethnonym Rusin in different contexts reflects a polar ethnic identity status. Rusins consider themselves as 1) an independent group, not of Ukrainian identity; 2) a part of Ukrainian identity; 3) a part of

Russian identity; 4) True Russian, but not identical to modern Russian, believing their language and culture to be more ancient, primordial. The complex and ambiguous meta-linguistic reflection is mainly focused on the issue of “detuning” from closely related language and cultures.

The subject of Rusin ethnic identity is discussed in the context of sharp Russian and Ukrainian polemics which is explicated in the leitmotifs of Ukrainian independence and the Russian World. Statements about ethnicity by Rusins are a means to demonstrate, in particular, a social and political position. Opposition to ethnic integration and globalization, desire to create a linguistic and cultural core of ethnicity, “detuning” from the power poles of Russian and Ukrainian are the focus of the formation of national consciousness.

The increase in the degree of conflict in Internet discussions about Rusin subjects leads to the general displacement of an axiological focus of the discourse from the positive to the negative. In determining the ethnic status of Rusins, the communicants demonstrate, in descending order of importance, Rusinophile, Russophile and Ukrainophile attitudes instead of the previously dominant Rusinophile, Russophobic and Ukrainophobic ones.

Keywords

Language construction, national identity, Rusins, internet discourse.

Innesa I. Babenko, Tomsk State Pedagogical University (Russia).

E-mail: uchim.russkij@tspu.edu.ru

Olga V. Orlova, Tomsk State Pedagogical University (Russia).

E-mail: uchim.russkij@tspu.edu.ru