DISCOURSE AND MIGRATION IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA: A STUDY OF SELF-OTHER CHARACTERIZATIONS AND SEMANTIC AMBIGUITY

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Discourse and Migration in Contemporary Russia: A Study of SELF-OTHER Characterizations and Semantic Ambiguity

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Abstract
This paper explores how SELF and OTHER are characterized in the Russian migration discourse in the autumn of 2006 and searches for some possible linguistic sources of vagueness with regard to the highlighted semantic attributes of discourse referents. Specifically, it investigates the role played by semantically ambiguous expressions used especially in pro-governmental media. The frequency of characterizations of SELF-OTHER discourse referents in Moderate and Radical corpus is calculated on the basis of a specifically compiled taxonomy. The study demonstrates that a considerable number of characterizations for SELF and OTHER in Moderate corpus are ambiguous with regard to the semantic attributes highlighted in such characterizations. The results imply that semantic ambiguity can be used strategically by the governmental groups to convey the ideology of ethnicism towards migration. However, it is possible to partially resolve such semantic ambiguity using specific heuristics suggested in this paper.

1. Migration Discourse in Russia in 2006

Migration Discourse in the Russian Federation in the second half of 2006 can be characterized by prolific media reporting which appeared due to the following major events. First of all, interethnic riots in the small Karelian town of Kondopoga, which started at the end of August 2006, resulted in a vigorous discussion in the Russian media on the issue of migration, self and migrant identities and interethnic relations. Secondly, a Russian-Georgian crisis broke out at the end of September-beginning of October 2006. It had major repercussions not only at the intergovernmental level, but also at the level of security or, rather, an alleged lack of security arising from a large number of Georgians or кавказцы ‘Caucasians’ on the Russian territory. Finally, a governmental act was issued in November 2006 setting out limits for the visas issued to foreigners as well as introducing working restrictions for migrants which represented a legislative outcome of the first two events. Apart from that, a vivid discussion was launched by the Russian media with regard to the governmental resettlement project of the so-called соотечественники ‘fellow nationals’. The meaning of this expression was entirely negotiated by the participants of discourse. Both governmental and right-wing groups participated in the opinions exchange on the aforementioned events. The amount of publications discussing migration, migrants, the Russian people, “foreigners”, “fellow nationals” and non-Russian in general soared.

A notable discourse analytic line in the research on migration discourse in 2006 was taken by Kozhevnikova (2007). One of the important changes to instances of what was classified as hate language became the “ethnization” of concepts previously not laden with ethnic content, such as ‘migrant’, ‘citizen of ....’, ‘native of...’. According to Kozhevnikova (2007), the word ‘migrant’ became fully void of its social connotation and obtained exclusively “ethnic” overtones. Having analysed the instances for “objects of hate language”\(^1\), Kozhevnikova summed up the results which are presented in the table below:

\(^1\) This paper classifies such objects of hate language as OTHER discourse referents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>September 2006</th>
<th>October 2006</th>
<th>November 2006</th>
<th>December 2006</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generally ethnic xenophobia</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasians as a whole</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people from the region</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the Caucasus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chechens</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Major objects of hate language

Kozhevnikova (2007) acknowledges that hate language is becoming more indirect, symbolic and rhetorically sophisticated and that the mass media choose to allude to cultural stereotypes. She also recognized that the currently used methodology of monitoring cannot account for such changes and has to be substantially modified for use in the future.

Preliminary analysis of the corpus of articles on migration that I collected during late August 2006 to mid-Nov 2006 demonstrated that the characterizations such as гражданин ..., мигрант etc. cannot be classified as ethnonyms out of hand. I am going to prove in this paper that depending on the type of discourse and communicative intentions of interlocutors characterizations can be classified as either ethnonyms, politonyms, demonyms or just remain unresolved with regard to the semantic attributes highlighted in the characterization in a specific text or text abstract. This linguistic phenomenon will be referred to as semantic ambiguity and it will be discussed in Section 2. Section 3 describes the data and methodology selected for the analysis of this data. Section 4 gives the results of the study including statistical results and it finishes with a discussion.

2. Semantic Ambiguity in Linguistics and Migration Discourse

Amongst a variety of approaches to lexical meaning, this paper espouses a cognitive semantic view that lexical meaning is conceptual and it corresponds with a concept held in the mind of the interlocutor and such concept is based on subjective and sensory experience. While traditional semantics sees semantic ambiguity as involving two lexemes (cf. Lyons 1977), cognitive semantics identifies various degrees of salience or entrenchment with regards to multiplicity of meanings (cf. Tuggy 1993). According to Tuggy (1993), various senses are constructed on the basis of a schema and its elaborations and they exist to the degree that they are established (entrenched) in speakers’ minds through repeated usage. It can be illustrated in the following figure:
In relation to migration discourse the figure can be exemplified through the use of the word *migrant*. A constitutes a conventional meaning, i.e. conventionalized through dictionaries: migrant is a person who relocates himself/herself from one place to another. Meaning B (C etc.) is a context-dependent meaning constructed online within a unit of discourse, such as a text, a paragraph, a clause. Consider the following examples:

(1) Впрочем, многие эксперты считают, что ФМС завышает число нелегальных мигрантов (SP). Тем не менее, даже они признают, что только в Москве – 1-1,5 миллиона мигрантов (SP), которые официально не зарегистрированы. (Radical Corpus, Text 15, 15/09/2006)

(2) Только лишь совсем потерявшие память и совесть «эксперты» рассказывают байки вроде: «Мигранты (E)отнимают у местных (E) работу, поэтому русские мужики(E) спивают». (Moderate Corpus, Nezavisimaja, 23/10/2006)

Example (1) is an abstract from the text on the Federal Migration Service managing the issue of migration. The OTHER characterization *Мигранты* corresponds with its conventionalized socio-political meaning, without highlighting any ethnic attributes. Example (2), on the other hand, appears to foreground the non-Russian origin of the ‘migrants’ opposing them to the Russian autochthonous population. However, not always semantic ambiguity of characterizations in migration discourse can be resolved straightforwardly. Section 4.1 will continue the discussion of more complicated cases and explore how specific heuristics assist in constructing the meaning of ambiguous characterizations.

3. Data and Methodology

3.1. Data

For the purpose of investigating the characterizations of discourse referents SELF and OTHER in migration discourse a corpus of texts was collected during late August 2006 to mid-November 2006. Two main sources were used for the compilation of two sub-corpora called Moderate Corpus and Radical Corpus within my corpus.

The first source represents a website of the Moscow City Council, which contains regularly updated materials on various contemporary social issues, such as security, children, health service etc., from both local and well-known federal newspapers and magazines, or, rather, their online versions (http://mpress.ru). The newspapers and magazines in this corpus are well-known for their relatively moderate views with regard to highly controversial social topics and are non-oppositional, i.e. they represent an ideology broadly similar to that of the contemporary Russian government.

Another part of the corpus reflects the views of an oppositional movement with a clearly defined anti-migration stance. An alternative corpus has been compiled from the material on migration found on the websites of the Movement against Illegal Immigration (Движение Против Нелегальной Иммиграции, henceforth DPNI): http://www.dpni.ru. The DPNI is known as an ultra radical group that became prominent in the Russian political
landscape during 2005-2006 in connection with the alleged upsurge of “Anti-Russian” attacks. The DPNI website consists of the compilation of analytical articles and various news items from other newspapers and journals.

The size of the two–sub-corpora is presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Number of Texts</th>
<th>Number of Words</th>
<th>Number of analysed usages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43,270</td>
<td>1,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14,110</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Corpus size

3.2. Methods and Notation

The method of analyses adopted for this study is corpus-based quantitative and qualitative analysis of discourse and it is informed by Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1995) and Text World Theory (Werth 1999). The current study shares with CDA views on discourse as a communicative event realized in a particular socio-cultural context, it explores the use of language with relation to power and follows the CDA analytical framework “identification – interpretation – explanation”. The study follows the main postulates of Text World Theory in that various types of information such as word meaning, discourse and world knowledge are used simultaneously to reach the best interpretation of a text.

At the stage of identification of SELF and OTHER characterizations for discourse referents, I performed the tagging of the following linguistic items: nouns, pronouns³ and attributive adjectives⁴. These linguistic items were assigned specific semantic attribute(s) which were highlighted in a particular characterization. Table 3 shows a taxonomy which was constructed on the bases of the semantic attributes prominent in the analysed texts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonym</th>
<th>Semantic attributes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnonym</td>
<td>Nationality /Ethnicity</td>
<td>азербайджанцы</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>славянская внешность</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>...швили</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonym</td>
<td>Geographical location</td>
<td>москвичи</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-politonym</td>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>гражданин ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working relation</td>
<td>незарегистрированные работники торговли</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legal-illegal status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Taxonomy of SELF-OTHER categorization

However, the above taxonomy is merely an idealized representation of the characterizations in question in their conventional meaning (meaning A in Figure 1). Additional meanings (meanings B, C etc.) which appear in the analysed abstracts of migration discourse demonstrate a

³ Referential ambiguity was resolved before tagging.
⁴ Only characterizing adjectives in expressions such as грузинский бизнесмен or славянской внешности
considerable ambiguity with regard to the semantic attributes highlighted. For instance, the semantic attributes foregrounding nationality/ethnicity, geographical location, citizenship, socio-political status appear to shift. Some characterizations such as гастролер, мигрант, гражданин..., выходцы с Кавказа, москвичи, коренное население, соотечественники became so ambiguous that specific heuristics had to be introduced in order to identify or approximately identify their semantic attributes (Section 3.4). Such approximation resulted in an extended taxonomy with the following taxonyms: Ethnonym (E), Ethnonym Ambiguous (EA), Demonym (D), Sociopolitonym (SP), Sociopolitonym Ambiguous (SPA), Ambiguous (A). The addition of the ambiguous status to ethnonyms and sociopolitonyms means that the probability of this semantic attribute to be highlighted is very high with the heuristics applied to the identification of semantic attributes. The tag “Ambiguous” means that it was not possible to resolve the semantic ambiguity on the basis of the suggested heuristics.

The tagged items were calculated manually in each corpus and the results appear in the tables in Section 4.2.

While creating the above taxonomy and calculating the frequency of characterizations for SELF and OTHER as discourse referents I was also interested in the function of specific semantic attributes highlighted in discourse on migration. Thus, my research questions can be summarized as follows:

1. To what extent does “ethnicization” of characterizations for discourse referents SELF and OTHER take pace in Moderate and Radical Corpus?
2. What taxonyms are the typical characterizations of SELF and OTHER discourse referents in each corpus?
3. To what extent is it possible to resolve semantic ambiguity using specially designed heuristics?
4. What is the discursive function of typical characterizations and semantically ambiguous expressions in migration discourse?

Each example in this study, as a rule, contains the dichotomized pair SELF-OTHER. OTHER characterizations seem always to appear in the presence of SELF characterizations (cf. Titov 2003). It is useful, therefore, to analyse the semantic content of the OTHER characterizations with respect to the SELF characterizations in order to attempt to resolve arising semantic ambiguity. The formants of this pair are distinguished graphically through underlining for SELF discourse referents and through bold font for OTHER discourse referents, e.g.: Львиная доля россиян, недовольных засильем инородцев на рынках, как раз такие люди. When semantic attributes are assigned, the tags (E), (EA), (D), (SP), (SPA), (A) are added in brackets.

3.3. Heuristics for Assigning Semantic Attributes

In approaching the analysis of characterizations in migration discourse, several principles of the current analysis have to be outlined:

- migration discourse is seen as a communicative event realized in a particular socio-cultural context;
- a text placed in its communicative setting is seen as a basic unit of analysis;

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5 This is precisely the phenomenon noticed by Kozhevnikova (2007).
characterizations of discourse referents are analyzed and presented at textual sub-levels, such as a clause, a supra-sentential unit (several clauses within a paragraph), a paragraph.

The heuristics for assigning semantic attributes include the consideration of the following factors:

1) extralinguistic factors:
- specific discourse-driving events are responsible for many event-specific taxonyms
- subjects of a speech situation are expected to produce taxonyms specific to their category entitlement

2) local linguistic factors:
- direct reference/allusion to discourse-driving events generating specific taxonyms
- evocation of cultural stereotypes containing ethnonyms is likely to generate ethnonyms
  - words such as этнос and its derivatives, славянский, национальность, ксенофобия, ксенофобский, диаспора within accessible context, i.e. within the same meaningful discourse unit (clause, supersentential unit, paragraph) signal the presence of ethnonyms
  - if one member of dichotomized SELF-OTHER pair/formant of a semantic chain demonstrate the semantic attribute “ethnicity” then the other member/formant is likely to demonstrate the same semantic attribute

Section 4.1. gives a detailed description how these heuristics work on the corpus.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Assigning Semantic Attributes

This section serves to illustrate how the heuristics suggested above was used to identify taxonyms and assign semantic attributes to SELF-OTHER characterizations of discourse referents found in my corpus.

- specific discourse-driving events are responsible for many event-specific taxonyms

Three events caused an upsurge in media publications on migration: 1) Riots in Kondopoga (28/08/2006 until mid-September 2006); 2) Russo-Georgian crisis (end of September - beginning of October); 3) parliamentary debates on various aspects of migration legislation, i.e. a governmental act setting out limits for the visas issued to the foreigners as well as introducing working restrictions for migrants (appear in the corpus from early October. My hypothesis suggests that the first event generates a large number of ethnonyms, the second event generates an approximately equal number of both politonyms and ethnonyms and in the third case the mostly used taxonyms will be politonyms. Table 4 demonstrates the number of SELF-OTHER characterizations appearing in three sets of texts generated by each of the three discourse-driving events:
Table 4. SELF-OTHER characterizations in the texts generated by 3 discourse-driving events.

The statistical information in the table supports the suggested hypothesis. The highest number of ethnonyms appears in the publications after the riots in Kondopoga. The Russo-Georgian crisis generates an equal number of ethnonyms and politonyms for SELF discourse referents whereas ethnonyms are used to characterize OTHER discourse referents three times more often than politonyms. The discussion of the proposed or issued legislation on migration generates a larger amount of sociopolitonyms for both SELF and OTHER. However, a lot of SELF characterizations remain unresolved for ambiguity. These primarily concern debates on соотечественники ‘fellow citizens’ the examples of which will be discussed in the next section.

- subjects of a speech situation are expected to produce taxonyms specific to their category entitlement

My hypothesis suggests that specific subjects of discourse situations are expected to produce taxonyms of a specific type. For instance, in the interviews with the politicians or public figures renowned for their extreme right positions now or in the past then mostly ethnonyms will be quoted, e.g.:

(3) Владимир Жириновский, конечно, своим «глаголом», как всегда, «жег сердца людей».

Similarly, most of characterizations appearing in the Radical corpus in the articles produced by the DPNI will be ethnonyms, e.g.:

(4) Продавщиц из местных(Е), стоящих за прилавками, санэпиднадзор обязан проверять на разные заболевания, в т.ч. венерические. Но кто и когда проверит их черноволосых хозяев(Е)? А наркотрафик?
Кто не знает многократно опубликованные милицейские данные: наркотики провозят таджики (E), продают цыгане (E) и азербайджанцы (E), крышуют чеченцы (E)!
Если твоим сыновьям (E) предложили наркотик, благодари за это иммигранта (E). О бытовом мусоре и говорить нечего. Кто в доме хозяин?!
Ответь себе сам, если ты русский (E), живущий на земле своих отцов!
Сопредседатель НДПР, А.Н. СЕВАСТЬЯНОВ (Radical Corpus, Text 2, 3/10/2006)

The above abstract is taken from an article which appeared on the DPNI site and which quotes the words of Alexandr Sevastyanov, the leader of the extremist radical movement National Imperial Party of Russia. Both SELF and OTHER characterizations in the abstract are unambiguous ethnicisms.

If the interview is given by a politician or a public figure who demonstrates a category entitlement in a specific field, various types of taxonyms as characterizations are expected. For instance:

(5) Председатель комитета Госдумы по конституционному законодательству и государственному строительству Владимир Плигин (SP) вчера рассказал журналистам о поправках в российское миграционное законодательство, которые вступят в силу 15 января следующего года. Если строго следовать букве законодательства, легализовать трудового мигранта (SP) станет легче, но наказание за использование работодателями (SP) нелегалов (SP) будет намного строже. (Moderate Corpus, Время новостей, 25/10/2006)

Example (5) is a typical example of a parliamentary discourse which often appears in the corpus. Pure sociopolitonyms are used in this type of discourse.

- direct reference/allusion to discourse-driving events generating specific taxonyms

Frequently some discourse-driving events become part of a large background knowledge structure and mere mentioning of such events in discourse can activate the inferential chain allowing for the generation of specific inferences. For instance, the name Kondopoga if it appears in the text not directly describing the discourse—driving events in Kondopoga will still indirectly allude at these events highlighting the ethnic attributes of SELF and OTHER discourse referents. For example, an article which appears in Radical corpus under the title “В ожидании новой Кондопоги” does not describe the situation in Kondopoga. The article starts with the title that contains a direct reference to the events in Kondopoga and finishes with the sentence “Интересно, успеют они еë изучить до того, как произойдёт новая Кондопога?” (RC, Text 13, 18/09/2006). Such framing can activate a background knowledge structure which describes the conflict in Kondopoga in ethnic terms.

- evocation of cultural stereotypes containing ethnonyms is likely to generate ethnonyms

Very often OTHER characterizations describe physical appearance, names or occupation. Description of people’s physical appearance frequently contains reference to the colour of the hair or skin colour as in Examples (6):

(6) a. Но кто и когда проверяет их черноволосых хозяев (E)? (RC, Text 2, 3/10/2006)

b. Его тут же начали обижать носатые брюнеты (E), которых на рынке большинство (MC, Профиль, 16/10/2006)

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6 According to Potter (1996), authoritative actors are endowed with specific category entitlement that allows them to speak with authority on certain topics by virtue of their membership in a specific group.
If names are mentioned, often it is the stereotypical first or last names or typical Georgian or Armenian last name endings, e.g.:

(7) a. Посмотрите, кто там фигурирует в различных задачах, упражнениях: ивановы(Е), петровы(Е), сидоровы(Е). А где махмудовы(Е), саркисяны(Е), юсуповы(Е) (МС, Москвичка, 1/09/2006 г.)

b. ...швили (Е), гоу хоум! (МС, Газета, 5/10/2006)

The stereotypical occupation for the migrants from the Caucasus and Middle Asia is considered trading in the markets, although various occupations are quoted in the articles. Both Moderate and Radical corpus demonstrate numerous references to торговцы 'tradespeople' and рынки 'markets'.

(8) Каждая четвертая студенческая койка в общежитии продана нелегальным торговцам с рынка (Е, СП). (МС, Российская газета, 28/08/2006)

It is not accidental that the riots in Kondopoga had a spillover effect on legislation with relation to the markets:

(9) По словам Константина Полторанина (СП), особенно квоты затронут мегаполисы: "В Москве не нужно столько людей, работающих на рынке (Е, СП)". (МС, Коммерсант, 1/11/2006)

Here the meaning of the vague characterization людей 'people' can be only constructed through accessing the background knowledge structure containing cultural stereotypical information about the markets in contemporary Russia, i.e. markets are the workplace of the non-Russian people from the Caucasus and Middle Asia.

- words such as этнос and its derivatives, славянский, национальность, ксенофобия, ксенофобский, диаспора within accessible context, i.e. within the same meaningful discourse unit (clause, suprasentential unit, paragraph) signal the presence of ethnonyms

(10) a. Нет, надо не стесняться называть этнический конфликт - этническим, говорить, кто его спровоцировал. И нужно напоминать, что не только хозяева(Е) должны быть гостеприимными, но и приезжие(Е) - уважать законы и местные обычай. (МС, Московские Новости, 6 октября 2006)

b. Сейчас шестеро подозреваемых, лиц кавказской национальности (Е), уже задержаны, остальные трое нам известны, и мы надеемся, что они(Е) сами явятся в милицию. (МС, Власть, 11/10/2006)

c. Бытовой конфликт кавказской национальности (МС, Газета, 5/09/2006)

d. Собственно, вопрос даже не в том, есть в России ксенофобия или нет. Есть, в той или иной степени она избежна в любом государстве. Куда хуже то, что наша почва, банальные коммунально-бытовые условия дают массу поводов для общего недовольства жизнью, которое рано или поздно будет проецироваться на вполне конкретных просто богатых или просто кавказцев(Е). И совсем паршиво, что в какой-то момент отправная точка, тот же кондопожский ресторан «Чайка», забудется. Вместо вполне конкретной уголовщины останется лишь абстрактная ненависть, бессмысленная и беспощадная. (МС, Газета, 5/09/2006)
Example (10a) demonstrates how the meaning of semantically ambiguous dichotomic expressions *хозяева* and *приезжие* is constructed by means of ethnically-laden expression *этнический конфликт* revealing them as ethnicisms. Example (10b) shows how ethnicity is discussed in the ambiguous expression *каucasской национальности* which acts as a frequent generalized characterization especially in criminal news for anyone originated from the Caucasus region. The same effect can be observed in Example (10c) where the personification of a conflict is achieved through mentioning the nationality of its participants. Example (10d) mentions *кавказцев*, an ethnonym appearing in the context framed by *ксинофобия* and reference to the discourse-driving event which took place in the Kondopoga restaurant “Chaika”.

- if one member of dichotomized SELF-OTHER pair/ formant of a semantic chain demonstrate the semantic attribute “ethnicity” then the other member/formant is likely to demonstrate the same semantic attribute

Some characterizations can be perceived as lexico-semantic chains which are related to each other through lexico-semantic connections. Following Hasan (1984), I argue that such chains belong to the same common semantic field, i.e. they demonstrate the same semantic attributes, e.g.:

(11) *В ходе исследования были опрошены более 3 тыс. респондентов – представителей пяти основных этнических групп – русского большинства (E), татар (E), азербайджанцев (E), армян (E), грузин (E).*

Example (11) shows the specification of the non-specified более 3 тыс. респондентов, building a dichotomized lexical chain SELF (русского большинства)-OTHER (татар, азербайджанцев, армян, грузин). The hierarchy of interethnic relationship is built while breaking the principle of the alphabetic listing and placing the Tatars closer to “the Russian majority”, not due to ethnic closeness, but most probably due to political closeness (Tatarstan is an autonomous republic within Russian Federation).

(12) *Разговор о «гостях с юга» АЭ, о «понаехавших» к нам АЭ азербайджанцах, армянах, грузинах, таджиках, представителях прочих национальностей, у нас АЭ либо неминуемо влечет за собой констатацию дремучей ксинофобии русского народа, который не понимает счастья жить бок о бок с работающими представителями других культур, либо превращается в суровый плач на тему «русских людей обижают». (MC, Вещь, 28/08/2006)*

Example (12) demonstrates a semantic chain built on the principle of highlighting ethnicity as a semantic attribute. The semantic chain for OTHER contains the following members: «гостях с юга» АЭ, азербайджанцах, армянах, грузинах, таджиках, представителях прочих национальностей, представителями других культур. Ambiguous terms in the lexical chain of synonyms «понаехавших» азербайджанцах, армянах, грузинах, таджиках are contrasted with русского народа, русских людей which cataphorically corefers with к нам, у нас. The referential ambiguity of the pronominal characterizations with a high degree of certainty can be resolved considering the semantic attributes of ethnicisms русского народа and русских людей. The chain of ethnonyms is explicated through qualifying phrases представителями прочих национальностей and работающими представителями других культур, both indicating the labelling of the lexical items in the synonymic chain as cultural ethnonyms. The expression «гостях с юга» can be regarded as a prime example of a semantically ambiguous demonym, as it demonstrates a very vague description of a geographical location. I suggest that the ethnic characterizations
представителях прочих национальностей and представителями других культур
conditions or highlights semantic attributes of all other members of this chain. All in all, it
seems plausible that all the characterizations of the two dichotomized pairs SELF and OTHER in
Example (12) are ethnonyms.

(13) Впрочем, у каждого из присутствующих были и личные ассоциации на обсуждаемую тему.
«Африканцы(Е)-старшекурсники, например, вручают землякам(Е)-первокурсникам памятки, когда,
в какие дни и часы лицам с неславянской внешностью(Е) лучше в городе не появляться. Среди них
наиболее опасными считаются День десантника и день рождения Гитлера», — поделился

Example (13) demonstrates the semantic chain for the OTHER which contains the following
characterizations: Африканцы(Е)-старшекурсники, землякам(Е)-первокурсникам, лицам с
неславянской внешностью. Similarly to the OTHER characterization in (10d) кавказцев,
африканцы is a generalized representation of the people originating from a specific
gеографical part of the world. However, I suggest that it is the last member of the
аforementioned semantic chain, i.e. an ethnonym that emphasizes the non-Slavic appearance
conditions the semantic attributes of the other members of the chain.

To sum up, this section demonstrates in a greater detail how the heuristics for assigning
semantic attributes works on some representative patterns from the corpora. It is not possible
tо discuss all of the usages in this section, nevertheless, I will attempt to show some of the
interpretatively difficult cases in the next section.

4.2. Statistical Results

The frequency of the characterizations for the discourse referents SELF and OTHER was
calculated according to the types of taxonyms outlined in Section 3.2 in both corpora. The
results are presented in Table 5:

| Frequency of DR characterizations for SELF(1) and OTHER(2) in Moderate Corpus |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ambiguous                  | SociopolitonymAmb          | Sociopolitonym              |
| 0.31                       | 0.38                       | 0.35                       |
| Sociopolitonym             | Demonstrym                 | EthnonymAmb                |
| 0.29                       | 0.14                       | 0.42                       |
| Ethnonym                   | EthnonymAmb                | Ethnonym                    |
| 0.17                       | 0.01                       | 0.2                        |

| Frequency of DR characterizations SELF(1) and OTHER(2) in Radical Corpus |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ambiguous                  | SociopolitonymAmb          | Sociopolitonym              |
| 0.29                       | 0.34                       | 0.34                       |
| Sociopolitonym             | Demonstrym                 | EthnonymAmb                |
| 0.17                       | 0.02                       | 0.03                       |
| Ethnonym                   | EthnonymAmb                | Ethnonym                    |
| 0.01                       | 0.01                       | 0.03                       |

Table 5. Frequency of DR characterizations SELF and OTHER in Moderate and Radical corpus

The results show that both in Radical and in Moderate Corpus ethnonyms are the most
frequent means of characterization for OTHER discourse referents, also their number is
considerably higher in Radical Corpus where such taxonyms prevail (0.71 in Radical Corpus
versus 0.42 in Moderate Corpus). These are expected result, since the radical rhetoric with
regard to migrants first of all focuses on the ethnic differences. Ethnonyms as SELF
characterizations are less significant in Moderate Corpus than in Radical Corpus (0.29 in
Moderate corpus versus 0.6 in Radical corpus). Instead, sociopolitonyms are the most frequent
means of SELF characterizations in Moderate corpus. This can be explained by larger semantic
chains for OTHER discourse referents. This can also be explained by the tendency of the authors.
of the publications to use various political figures of the Russian Federation for SELF characterizations in constructing the dichotomic continuum SELF-OTHER. Often, SELF sociopolitonym(s) and OTHER ethnonym(s) appear in one dichotomic pair, e.g.:

(14) Выступая на заседании московского правительства, директор образовательного центра № 109, заслуженный учитель Евгений Ямбург (SP) привел характерный пример из своей жизни - во дворе на спортивной площадке играют в футбол представители, как говорится, одной южной национальности. Тут же гуляет бабушка с внуком (AE), которая со страхом говорит о футболистах (AE) - они (AE) скоро нас (AE) всех завоюют. Далее учитель (SP) приводит слова своего приюта (AE) - трудно не стать националистом, когда ты сажаешь цветы на клумбе перед домом, а их тут же растаптывают опять-таки «южане» (AE). (MC, Тверская, 13, 9/11/2006)

Both examples demonstrate patterns of represented discourse where various discourse referents, specifically those having category entitlements in the area the text is discussing, i.e. the topic, offer their characterizations of SELF and OTHER discourse referents. Example (14) contains both instances of represented discourse and represented discourse in represented discourse. The utterance produced by a public figure, the director of an educational centre, which is a SELF characterization.

Another example represents the co-construction of meaning of OTHER characterizations in an interview with the head of the Federal Migration Service Konstantin Romodanovskiy:

(15) Вчера на заседании столичного правительства обсуждались меры по повышению эффективности действий мэрии в области межнациональных отношений. Мэр Москвы Юрий Лужков (SP) признал, что эти отношения ухудшаются. "За последние два года нам все больше приходилось принимать правоохранительные и волевые решения по борьбе с ксенофобией", – заявил мэр. Глава ГУВД Москвы Владимир Пронин (SP) сообщил, что с начала года в Москве выходцы из стран ближнего зарубежья (AE) совершили более 25 тыс. преступлений, причем число преступлений с применением огнестрельного оружия выросло на треть (MC, Коммерсант, 8 ноября 2006)

The question by a journalist in the above adjacency pair of a political interview contains two OTHER characterizations as represented discourse: нелегальный таджик and легальный русский. Thus, the journalist recontextualises the words of the interlocutor, deliberately turning the discussion about migrants (all previous uses were classified as sociopolitonyms) into ambiguous characterizations. The conventional meaning of таджик and русский contain reference to the semantic attribute ‘nationality’ and thus can be perceived as ethnicisms which the journalist uses in a provocative manner. The interlocutor is willing to answer the question without challenging the semantic attributes characterizations but reinterpreting his own words

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7 The notion of represented discourse is taken from Johansson (2005), which means that the discourse subject refers to other speakers discourse subjects and other contexts: “In the co-construction of meaning, the speakers recontextualize material from other context, usually the other speaker’s utterances, in some manner in the ongoing interaction” (Johansson 2005: 217)
in a more acceptable manner. The answer contains only generalized characterizations which seem to be unambiguous sociopolitonyms and represent a case of the vague language, i.e. hedging, typical for provocative political interviews.

As the statistical results demonstrate, ambiguous expressions remain unresolved mostly in Moderate corpus for both SELF (0.17 ambiguous ethnonyms, 0.14 pure ambiguous taxonyms) and OTHER characterizations (0.14 ambiguous ethnonyms, 0.02 ambiguous sociopolitonyms, 0.03 pure ambiguous characterizations). The number of ambiguous characterizations for both SELF and OTHER in Radical corpus was found to be insignificant. This leads us to the conclusion that the use of semantic ambiguity is typical of moderate pro-governmental discourse on migration. The next section will discuss the discursive purpose of such semantically ambiguous characterizations in migration discourse.

I would now like to focus on specific instances of semantically ambiguous expressions in my corpus that remained unresolved and were considered as pure ambiguities. The most essential ambiguous characterization for the category of SELF which was negotiated amongst the discourse subjects throughout the corpus was «соотечественники». The Federal Law “On the federal policy of the Russian Federation towards the fellow citizens living abroad” from 24.05.1999 defines соотечественники in the following way:

1. Соотечественниками являются лица, родившиеся в одном государстве, проживающие либо проживавшие в нем и обладающие признаками общности языка, религии, культурного наследия, традиций и обычая, а также потомки указанных лиц по прямой нисходящей линии. 2. Под понятием "соотечественники за рубежом” (далее — соотечественники) подразумеваются: граждане Российской Федерации, постоянно проживающие за пределами Российской Федерации (далее — граждане Российской Федерации, проживающие за рубежом); лица, состоявшие в гражданстве СССР, проживающие в государствах, входивших в состав СССР, получившие гражданство этих государств или ставшие лицами без гражданства (далее — лица, состоявшие в гражданстве СССР)... (Federal Law of the Russian Federation 99-FZ, http://document.kremlin.ru/doc.asp?id=060205)

This contradictory conventionalized legislative interpretation already contains a wide scope for ambiguities. Specifically, references to religion and common language in Section 1 separate Orthodox, Russian-speaking communities from non-Orthodox, non-Russian speaking, however, Section 2 suggests that citizens of the former Soviet republics could also be considered ‘fellow citizens’. According to this definition, a large part of the population of the Russian Federation cannot be considered ‘fellow citizens’ as they practice religions different from the Orthodox religion. The vagueness of the above definition that gives no common criterion according to which particular persons can be classified as a ‘fellow citizen’ caused vivid discussions on meaning negotiation in which common people, public figure and politicians actively participated. Some of them are reflected in the examples below:

(17) Особые привилегии получат те, кто подпадает под президентскую программу «по оказанию содействия добровольному переселению соотечественников, проживающих за рубежом». Причем соотечественниками (А), по словам Ромодановского, будут признаны не только русские, но и все те, кто хорошо говорит по-русски, интересуется культурой и жизнью страны и «близок по духу россиянам». (МС. Газета, 29/10/2006)

(18) Если говорить о самом термине «соотечественники» (А), то в первую очередь мы подразумеваем под ним русских (Е), татар (Е), башкир (Е), чеченцев (Е) и людей других национальностей (Е), которые исконно проживали на территории России. Ведь у таджиков (Е) и узбеков (Е) есть своя родина. Но термин расширен для тех граждан бывшего Советского Союза (АЕ), которые близки к нашей культуре, традициям, языку. (Профиль, 23/10/2006)
Both (17) and (18) describe as a соотечественник a person of any nationality, who technically can belong to the referents from both categories SELF and OTHER. Example (17), which contains an instance of represented discourse. The head of the Federal Migration Service evokes purely ‘ethnic’ semantic attributes and a non-specific “closeness in spirit” which rebukes the complete meaning of the legal term соотечественники. Example (18) excludes religion as a classification criterion to define соотечественники, however, the characterization людей других национальностей makes the term more referentially ambiguous, highlighting ‘ethnic’ semantic attributes.

4.3. Discussion

This section serves to explicate discursive functions of the most frequently used taxonyms, i.e. ethnonyms, and semantic ambiguity in Moderate corpus.

As we could see from the statistical results, Radical corpus uses a much higher number of ethnonyms referring to both SELF and OTHER discourse referents. This is something to be expected from a radical right-wing movement, and this is the kind of ideology that most radical anti-migrant groups and parties practice on a regular basis. In this paper I refer to the concept of ideology by Van Dijk (1998). Distinguishing between positive and negative ideologies, Van Dijk identifies ideology as social cognitions shared by the members of a group and it can be expressed, construed or legitimated by discourse. Amongst negative ideologies, Van Dijk quotes ethnicism as an example of a racist ideology. I suggest that the term social cognitions should be replaced by a more pragmatically oriented notion of cognitive assumptions. Taken-for-granted cognitive assumptions about SELF and OTHER underlie the interlocutors’ system of beliefs and can be shared, construed or legitimated in discourse.

It can be seen from the statistical results that the preferred way of characterizing OTHER in migration discourse in the autumn of 2006 both with the right-wing anti-immigrant movement DPNI and the pro-governmental mass media show striking similarities. I can therefore suggest that the ideology chosen to categorize the migrants in the autumn of 2006 was the ideology of ethnicism within both pro-governmental and right-wing migration discourse. The DPNI stated on their website that the Russian government started using the anti-immigrant ideology offered to the public of the Russian Federation by the DPNI a long time ago. Alexander Belov, the leader of the DPNI, issued the following statement in this respect:

"Речь идёт, конечно, не о приватизации нашего замысла, а о том, что власть перешла на наш лексikon." (Moscow News, 16-22.02.2007).

The head of the analytical group “Merkator” Dmitriy Oreshkin states that a more serious problem is in that the public opinion is formed by the government:

"Два года тому назад никому бы и в голову не пришло считать грузин врагами. Источником представления народа о чужих и врагах служит власть, а не сам народ"... (МС, Газета, 20/10/2006)

If we perceive of the contemporary Russian society as a social institution containing diverse ideological-discursive formations, associated with different groups, then the above quotation fully corresponds with Fairclough’s description of a dominant IDF:

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8 Van Dijk’s (1998) social cognitions are composed from beliefs, different types of memories and social representations. In a sociologically-oriented study of ideology, Walsby (1947) refers to the main ideas underlying any ideology as logically implied, taken-for-granted cognitive assumptions. A cognitive-pragmatic approach by Sperber & Wilson’s (1986) explains how Speaker and Hearer share the cognitive environment when Hearer picks up allusions made by Speaker on the basis of assumptions about each other’s cognitive environments.
Institutional subjects are constructed, in accordance with the norms of an IDF, in subject positions whose ideological underpinning they may be unaware of. A characteristic of a dominant IDF is the capacity to ‘naturalize’ ideologies, i.e. win acceptance for them as non-ideological common-sense. It is argued that the orderliness of interactions depends in part upon such naturalized ideologies. (Fairclough 1995a:27)

I argue that one of the linguistic means of such naturalization is the extensive use of unresolved semantic ambiguity by the pro-governmental media which is reflected in vague, indirect language. Semantic ambiguity is used strategically with the purpose of naturalization and legitimization of discourse.

5. Conclusions

This socio-cognitively oriented study demonstrates that both in Radical and Moderate corpus the ideology of ethnicism is chosen to characterize OTHER in the Russian migration discourse in the autumn 2006. It is also used by right-wing radical discourse subjects to characterize SELF discourse referents. One of the ways to convey this ideology is to evoke semantic attributes that focus primarily on ethnic origin, but also on physical appearance and names in non-ambiguous expressions. Another way is to use semantically ambiguous expressions with the ‘non-ethnic’ conventionalized meaning. Some extralinguistic or local linguistic clues can give target audience possibilities for the resolution of such ambiguities. Some of such extralinguistic and local linguistic factors are listed with annotated examples in the heuristics suggested in this paper. Thus, the paper demonstrates how some conventionalized meanings are negotiated in contemporary discourse showing at times completely opposite interpretations.

References