

## RUSSIA(N) IN CONTEXT: ASPECTS OF METAPHOR IN THE RUSSIAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Marina VRACIU<sup>1</sup>

1. Assoc. Prof., PhD, Dept. of Slavic Languages, "Al.I. Cuza" University of Iași, Romania  
Corresponding author: marina.vraciu@gmail.com

### Abstract

Cross-cultural communication resorts to the study of metaphors as convenient vehicles for the analysis of various aspects of the perception of the world, of 'the Other' and of the mechanisms of power to control both. Communication in politics has emerged as a subject in Russian linguistics with the fall of the Soviet system. This paper presents some aspects of the political metaphor in the Russian political discourse of the late 1990s grouped according to their four sources: "human", "social", "nature" and "artefacts". This brings forth a composite retrospective image of Russia which was designed to rekindle the interest of students of Russia(n) in their subject.

**Keywords:** *metaphor, politics, cognitive linguistics, corpus linguistics, Russia.*

In a changing world, the study of Russia(n) undergoes various patterns of reconstruction: the study of 'the other' in various political contests, the facultative/compulsory syllabus of a predominant presence, an interest in mentalities related to Culture/culture etc. Any of the above-mentioned context brings in an interest in imagological representations and cultural stereotypes. These are studied in relation to specific languages, which, according to Wierzbicka, Apresjan have isolated the stereotypes.<sup>1</sup>

Ideally, all of the above could be carried out against the background of the study of the language *per se*. In practice, the language teacher is supposed to rely, increasingly, on the general human features involved, in order to attract attention to the subject. The study of metaphor offers one such motivating perspective<sup>2</sup>. For instance, one of the most common stereotypes related to Russia, the bear, appears in studies of cross-cultural communication in various spheres of human activity has been particularly focused on this metaphor summarized relatively recently,

among others, by Andrea de Lazari<sup>3</sup>. The Polish specialist in cultural studies explores one of the most widely spread (self)images of Russia(n) along with other stereotypes of Russia as Siberia, alcohol excess and some folk symbols – the *balalaika*, *samovar*, *matrioshka*.

The study of national symbols and 'cultural constants'<sup>4</sup> grown into stereotypes of artefacts has migrated into new fields. Cross-cultural communication and the study of western business culture in Russia, Russian business culture as well as the sometimes striking presence of the (wealthy) Russians in the Western Europe and the non-presence of Russian gas might have rekindles in interest in the subject. A list of Russian 'cultural constants' includes this animal along with other basic concepts in their Russian specific apparel: the house (*dom*), nature (field – *pole*, *step'*; trees – *beriozka*, the birch tree); animals; artifacts.

'Cultural constants', stereotypes and metaphors function with a specific impact in political discourse. Eversince Lakoff and Johnson's seminal study (1980)<sup>5</sup>, metaphors have reentered the field of language studies. Studies of metaphor in Russia have been creative in the study of language and politics involves various aspects. Nowhere else (except literary discourse) is the metaphor more prominent than in the political discourse.

Both basic approaches in the study of political discourse, the descriptive and the critical one, involve approach focuses on the study of political behaviour of the politicians as used by them in the process of persuasion and manipulation. Classics in the field Bourdieu and Fairclough<sup>6</sup> have made it possible to assess problems of language as an instrument of power and unveil

social discrimination expressed in discourse. As a political instrument, the study of discourse focuses on the behaviour of linguistic procedures: language manifests itself as an instrument of influence on society for the accomplishment of clearly set political objectives.

The general characteristics of political discourse govern language use: the intentional ambiguity coming from the density in the meaning of the discourse; the dissimulated nature of political discourse which invites one to see beyond the directly expressed and offers what the audience wishes to hear, by resorting to allusion, euphemism, clichés, shocking words, slogans; the dissimulated nature of political discourse is recalled by the obsession with the image; its imperative nature; the polemic nature.

As the main tool used by politicians in following their goals, language and correlated aspects substitute the former violent instruments of fight and grow to prominence, which explains the growing interest in the studies in this area. Political discourse analysis in Russia is mainly concerned with (1) the systematization of the scientific apparatus in use and of the methodological approach and (2) the restoration of the national tradition of discourse analysis. A traditional subject in Russian linguistics, language and politics as a subject within the study of communication in the sphere of politics has been openly revived in Russia. Having emerged relatively recently in the ex-Soviet space, it employs various methodologies, both traditional (rhetoric, semantics, stylistics) and recent (cognitive science). The study of communication in politics involves the study of language phenomena involved, text and discourse, either in a historical perspective or descriptively, the study of the interinstitutional discourse, mass-media and other varieties.<sup>7</sup> The interest of Russian linguists in the study of political discourse has considerably developed over the last decade.<sup>8</sup>

#### FOUR SOURCES FOR POLITICAL METAPHORS

The following classification follows the generally acknowledged grouping of metaphors. Based on a philosopher's approach<sup>9</sup>, it includes

information sampled from several sources: Chudinov 2001.<sup>10</sup> Seriot 1999<sup>11</sup>; Baranov and Kazakevich 1993<sup>12</sup>; the Russian National Corpora and some dictionaries: a dictionary of Perestroika<sup>13</sup>, Baranov and Karaulov 1991, 1994<sup>14</sup>. The human, social, animal and artifact spheres as sources for metaphors are illustrated and discussed.

##### 1. Human

The metaphorical image of the political world created by man is significantly anthropocentric. As God created man in his own image, so have humans metaphorically created/conceptualized the political reality in a manner similar to their own body and its functions, their own needs, genetic relations or other. The physiological metaphor is one of the most traditional and detailed structures from the national political discourse.

The lack of political liberties has been mostly presented as a smothering, in which man dreams of at least a gap of fresh air instead of liberty. The scarcity of information is traditionally connected to the lack of spiritual food. The Soviet walls used to have "eyes and ears" and the citizens used to be warned off speaking on certain topics. A successful political career in older times could result from a "flexible backbone", "a good organization of the mind", a "pleasant smell" and a strong organism endowed with perseverance and capacity to work hard.

Russia as a whole, its large regions, political and state structures used to be and occasionally still are presented as an undivisible single biological organism (one single body):

Russia is a huge space, an immense organism which nothing or anything could hurt. (A. Laertskii)<sup>15</sup>/Россия – это огромное пространство, огромный организм, с которым никто ничего не сможет поделаться (А. Лаэртский).

There is no need to reestablish the regional (rayon) councils. This would only mean taking one step further toward the crumbling of the unitary municipal organism. (I. Silin) – В восстановлении подобия райсоветов нет необходимости. Это было бы шагом к дроблению единого городского организма. (Я. Силин).

Letting go of Chechenya would mean cutting off a part from the unitary body of Russia, and therefore let it be shared into four pieces. (A. Kavtorev)/ Отпустить Чечню – это отрезать часть единого *тела* России, а значит, допустить ее четвертование. (А. Кавторев)

In the political discourse metaphors act as an argument in favour of the unity and indissoluble nature of a particular object.

Both in the scientific picture of the world and in trivial representations, the functional organs are responsible for any sphere of life. The different parts of the body and its functions are employed in building metaphors; the head (face, neck, chin etc.), neck, trunk (abdomen, back), hands and legs are involved. The political metaphor associated to organs generally characterizes the role of the corresponding institutions (regions, parties, officials etc.) The representative of the president embody the executive authority:

In *grefologies*<sup>16</sup> small and medium businesses are referred to as the backbone of market economy. (V. Khorev) – О мелком и среднем бизнесе в «гребологии» говорится как о «*хребте*» рыночной экономики (В. Хорев).

The basic functions of the brain and its metonymical replacement are conceived as generally responsible for the management of other organs:

The deep contrast between the amount of salaries paid to public and private employees represents a necessary condition of the “drain pump” in the big businesses sphere of interest of. (G. Seleznev) – Резкий разрыв в уровне зарплаты бюджетников и частного сектора – необходимое условие «перекачки *мозгов*» в сферу интересов крупного капитала (Г. Селезнев)

As for the organs of perception, their prototypical role is the assessment and collection of data:

The financial crisis and government resignation offered a serious chance to the deputies/MPs to make the *al dente* resilience test of presidential power. (K. Sergeev) – Финансовый кризис и

отставка правительства дали депутатам серьезный шанс попробовать «*на зуб*» прочность президентской власти. (К. Сергеев)

The body parts have no task as a prototypical function, but the same concept can behave like an organ (‘one has to think one’s own head’) and as a body part (he struck his head). Particularly, the face, back, body and legs can serve for space orientation and can be treated as a group of metaphors:

The Russian army should stand facing the borders and with its back to the country. (G. Yavlinski) – Российская армия вообще должна стоять *лицом* к границам и *спиной* к стране. (Г. Явлинский)

Yeltsin’s clique has turned the whole of Russia upside down. (I. Pesterev) – Ельцинская клика всю Россию поставила с ног на *голову*. (И. Пестерев)

Yeltsin has jumped from head to head as in a marsh. (A. Kovalev) – Ельцин прыгал по *головам*, как по кочкам на болоте. (А. Ковалев)

The metaphorical model “Russia today is a sick mechanism” has been largely used in the propaganda political discourse at the end of the twentieth century. Conceptual metaphors sometimes group together with vectors of aggression and anxiety and reflect desolation, dark premonitions, doubts and spiritual wounds caused by the state of the native country and the feeling of powerlessness. For instance, the traditional concern for the ailing in the Russian national consciousness was only too naturally transferred to Russia:

Communism has been a serious disease for Russia. It might have been sent to us in order to relieve us from some more terrifying plague. (late Patriarch Aleksej II) – *Тяжелая болезнь* постигла Россию в обличье коммунизма. Может быть, она была попущена нам, чтобы избавить от какой-либо более страшной грозившей нам *чумы*. (Патриарх Алексей Второй)

If a society has no interest in politics, then we have a healthy and prosperous society. Interest in politics aggravates social diseases. (V. Kucheriuk)



Significantly, the political discourse exhibits, on a large scale, not only the metaphorical use of names of physical illnesses, but also that of phsyhic illnesses (schizophrenia, dementia, paranoia, alchoholism and the rapid spread of drug addictions) which affect the whole country, its main regions and organs, political leadersm financeers etc.

In the “red belt”, the last-spring fits of anti-Yeltsin paranoia were made particularly visible last spring. (V. Nosarev) – В «красном поясе» приступы антиельцинской *параноии* прошлой весной были особенно заметны (В. Носарев)

The metaphorical sense generated by this group of metaphors can be summarized in images, as follows: the country is in agony/on the death bed in disgrace; the Russian elites consists of people with physical and spiritual ailments who cannot be expected to act reasonably. Nevertheless, the mere mention of serious illnesses active in the Russian society tends to entice compassion for the native country and the wish to help her.

Considering the metaphors of kin, the metaphorical model “The state is a family” exhibits the relations between the state and the citizens, country leaders (the tzar, president, secretary general etc.) and the people, between the local authorities, regions and other subjects of political activities. The metaphor of kin is used on a large scale in the political discourse in the Russian Empire (the Tzar was considered the father, the Tzarina the mother, Mother-Russia, the other Slavic peoples brothers, and orthodox peoples are perceived as brothers) has a long traditions. This model migrated into the Soviet political discourse: as poet Mayakovsky wrote, the party and Lenin are brotheres. In other cases, Lenin appeared as a greatfather, while the young memebers of his part were his greatchildren. Stalin was currentl called the “father of nations”, but this percption changed after the după demascarea of the cult of his personality. The Brezhnnev was dominated by the conceptual metaphor of the great family of the brotherhood of peoples (the parties), each individual (and not only) experienced a filial feeling as a reaction to the paternal (maternal) care of the communist part and Soviet government.

Russia used to be seen by the Russians as a unitary family made of peoples, regions, parties and citizens; as a single family, the country can designate historically the unity of the Eastern Slavs or even as that of all peoples or nations in the Soviet Union.

We (the Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians) were unconquerable when we were united. We have common roots, we are a single family. (V. Putin) – Мы (русские, украинцы и белорусы) были непобедимы, когда были вместе. У нас общие корни, мы – *единая семья*. (В. Путин)

Traditionally, the political leader of the country is the father while the other citizens are introduced as his chidren. This tradition continued into the Gorbachov era, who used to call himself (often ironically) the ‘father of *perestroika* and *acceleration*’.

The father of perestroika and acceleraion has acknowledges that his life’s purpose was the annihilation of communism. (I. Smolina) – Отец «перестройки и ускорения» признался, что целью всей его жизни было уничтожение коммунизма. (И. Смолина)

The citizens of Russia can be introduced as brothers and sisters, children of the same mother – Russia; there still exist brotherly connections between the states, society and state, and also between other subjects and political activity.

In reality, Moscow has won another diplomatic victory, whereas Kiev, on the contrary, has stepped toward economic dependance on the Big Brother (“МК”) – На самом деле, Москва одержала новую дипломатическую победу, а вот Киев, напротив, сделал шаг на пути к полной экономической зависимости от «*большого брата*». («Рейтинг слухов», “МК”)

The presidential elections can be (and have been) presented metaphorically, often ironically, as a betrothal, the following period as a rehearsal, the recently elected president and the country as the groom and the bride, the investment as a wedding, and the following period as the honeymoon. The offer to occupy an important state position in the country. The marriage and the beginning of a life together can be presented

in a graphic manner as acceptance and the first period of work under a new government:

The honeymoon of the government and of the people began with a rape. (B. Nemtsov) – *Медовый месяц* между правительством и народом начался с попытки изнасилования. (Б. Немцов).

As early as the summer of 1990, Russia has started the negotiations with the other Union republics about a peaceful divorce. (F. Selov-Koverdyayev) – Еще с лета 1990 г. Россия начала переговорный процесс с другими союзными республиками о «мирном разводе». (Ф. Шелов-Ковердяев)

## 2. Society

A frequent question and an ample possibility to develop the metaphorical models owe to the fact that in the Russian national consciousness today political reality used to be and still is frequently understood, structured and realized on the basis of the concepts of crime, war, theatre, circus, play, sport. The basic metaphor of Russia as a criminal society has become one of the most dominant models in the political discourse of the last two decades. The metaphor of crime presents the contemporary reality of Russia as an underground world, where there is no place for human relations. Many citizens prove a surprising indulgence toward criminals, look for and find various excuses for them, and genuinely believe that in “this country” it is impossible to live in harmony with the laws, because the rigour of the Russian laws is compensated by the lack of compulsory enforcement.

In the contemporary political discourse, the Russian citizens are metaphorically presented constantly and without any legal basis, as gangsters, criminals, stealers, ruffians, criminals, prostitutes, gangsters, murderers:

The agrarian fraction is represented a bunch of thuggish frauds. (V. Zhirinovski) – Аграрная фракция – это политические *мошенники*. (В. Жириновский)

The people who have prepared such a ruining budget have nothing to do at the White House. (A. Kuvayev) – Людям, подготовившим такой *грабительский* бюджет, просто нечего делать в елом доме. (А. Куваев).

In the Russian consciousness the criminal is not necessarily an enemy of society, but is often seen as a person of courage pushed by despair to act according to lawless rules, the prisoner and victim of a possible mistake:

The leaders of the “agrarian Gulag” have not forgotten to promise help to the farmers. (S. Razin) – Лидеры «агрогугага» не забыли пообещать поддержку фермерам. (С. Разин)

The metaphor of crime is permeated by the conceptual vectors of anxiety, danger, aggression, artificiality, by the contrast between “we” and “the others”, which obviously answers the needs of the contemporary political discourse. Nevertheless, the active use of crime metaphor in politicians’ speeches has a clear influence on the public assessment of the situation in the country: it suggests that society represents a structure of criminal connections and relations, that crime is a rule in Russia. Similar perceptions can be directly affected by the level of criminality in Russia.

Lakoff and Johnson have demonstrated the importance of the conceptual metaphor “Argument is war”. If *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) had been written in Russian, “argument” could have been replaced by “Russia”. The basic metaphor “Russian reality is an endless” war, or “Russia today is a militarized society, a country where a permanent civil war is going on” holds an important position in the figurative representation of Russian contemporary reality. The military metaphor brings along conceptual stereotypes of problem solving and limits the quest for alternative solutions to social problems. The metaphor model presents Russian reality as “the war of everybody against everybody”. Politicians, parties, business people, journalists and the majority ordinary citizens are in a permanent contest with somebody: they *advance, go at close quarters, defend, tread on mines, hide away in the trenches, occupy, leave or come to strategical positions, use heavy artillery, smoke curtains* and other means necessary for war actions. Political actions resort to various military occupations: civil war is fought by *scouts, guardians, assault soldiers, saboteurs, strategists, partisans, commando units* etc.

The colourful style of governor Kondratenko, filled with such expressions as the *fifth column*, *saboteurs*, *people in the backstage* does not surprise anyone. But the governor's opponents believe that this step was caused by the wish to postpone elections. (G. Kravchenko) – Красочный стиль губернатора Кондратенко, который обычно изобилует выражениями «пятая колонна», «диверсанты», «мировая закулиса» сам по себе никого не удивляет. Но противники губернатора считают, что демарш вызван желанием перенести выборы. (Г. Кравченко)

Political, labour, creative associations or any other groups are often referred to, in the Russian contemporary political discourse, as an *army*, *division*, *regiment*, *platoon*, *guard*, *the fifth column*, *druzhina*<sup>17</sup>, *partisan unit* etc. any organizations should have a headquarters, *avanposturi de luptă* and other military structures.

*Штаб* губернатора давно наметил стратегию избирательной кампании. (С. Буров) – The governor's headquarters suggested a strategy for the elections. (S. Burov)

To designate specific war actions, texts of political propaganda are used in a colourful manner and involve the following nominative units: *cavalry attack*, *retreat from the trenches*, *to be in a defensive*, *to bombard*, *a se întinde pe ambrazură*, *seige*, *campaign*, *preparation of artillery*, *torpedoing*, *blockage*, *sabotage* or the *adjustment of shooting*.

The third war is on. We are ready to take risks and go for a bayonet fight. (V. Starodubtsev) – Идет третья мировая война. Мы готовы рисковать собой и *идти в штыковую*. (В. Стародубцев)

The Duma is in a state of "calm before the attack". The soldiers are getting ready for new campaigns. (К. Порова) – Дума типа «*затишье перед атакой*». Бойцы готовятся к новым *походам*. (К. Попова)

In contemporary Russia, political activity is conceptualized, as a rule, as a war operation. In the consciousness of politicians, the deputies from other parties are not politicians who suggest another solution for Russia's prosperity, but soldiers of the enemy army which should be conquered.

Another widely spread metaphorical model, "Life is a theatre" functions in various spheres of communication. This rather traditional metaphor has seen a violent revival in Russia at the end of the twentieth century: on the *political scene*, according to the previously drafted *scenarios designed by the hands of experienced directors*, *comedies*, *tragedies* and *farces* are performed, with the *actors* (occasionally helped by *prompters*) *act their parts*. The theatrical metaphor is frequently replaced by the metaphor of the *circus performance*, with *clowns* and *magicians* replaced by political *tamers*, *acrobats* and *Lilliputians*, *bicycle-riding bears* in the *political arena*. The performers themselves are rather amusing, but the public's disposition is somewhat troubling. The pragmatic potential of this metaphorical model is defined by the conceptual vectors of *deceit*, *artificiality*, *imitation of reality*: the subjects of political activities do not live their own lives, but their destiny will be played by somebody else:

The pre-election performance is on. The play is going on, which made it difficult to be defined: *comedy*, *tragedy*, *drama*, *farce*, *tragical comedy* – all have mixed on the scene. (D. Nikanorov) – Предвыборный *спектакль* – в полном разгаре. Продолжается действие, жанр которого трудно поддается определению: *комедия*, *трагедия*, *драма*, *фарс*, *трагикомедия* – все смешалось на сцене. (Д. Никаноров)

The organizers who inspire and draft political campaigns are the *authors*, *conductors*, *directors*, *puppeteer*, *producers*, *script writers*, *prompters*, *Karabas-Barabas*<sup>18</sup> etc. The same category includes processes involving the preparation of the performance: *costume rehearsals*, *first nights*, *castings*:

Such a president could seem dangerous to the influences circles in the Western Europe, which have already made their own scenario about Russia. (A. Anokhin) – Такой президент может показаться опасным для влиятельных западных кругов, уже *составивших свой сценарий* развития России. (С. Анохин)

The Kremlin conducts the State Duma. (V. Sokolova) – Думой *дирижирует* Кремль. (В. Соколова)



The graphic and sometimes unpredictably carnivalesque political life in Russia during the last decade of the twentieth century might remind of a play in which a dumb audience acts as a supreme judge:

In the first act of the political drama, Putin's entourage managed to share all the key positions. In Act II, they suddenly started to persuade the world that everything was fair. (M. Rostovski) – В первом акте политической драмы путинское окружение успело поделить все ключевые посты. А во втором – вдруг начали убеждать, что все по-честному.” (М. Ростовский).

The combination of the metaphorical models of “life is a game/play” and “life is a sport competition” is widely spread in different spheres of communication, but not associated with any particular role played by sports in society. In the political discourse, the metaphor of game usually carries a pragmatically negative meaning: it is considered that by respect shown to themselves, their work, the company of political people should be also honest. The accusation of “undercover play” is one of the most frequently used in the Russian political discourse. In political texts one constantly uses communication tactics as, for instance: “appeal to sincerity”, appeal to constructive cooperation, which do not always correspond to the practices of use of “political games”. Many political metaphors are focused on team sports. The most commonly known sports (football, basketball, tennis, hockey) imply teams led by captains (government, president, governor etc.), whose composition includes not only the main players, but also reserve players and are led by trainers who elaborate the game strategies and tactics:

Boris Yeltsin had doubts until the very end about whether he should candidate for the second mandate with such a rating. And there is no one on the reserve bench. (A. Gamov) – Борис Николаевич до последнего сомневался: идти ли на второй срок с таким рейтингом. А на скамье запасных – ноль. (А. Гамов)

Not having scored the desired three percent, Zhirinovski lost his status of base team player. (A. Ptitsyn) – Жириновский, не набравший

заветных 3 процентов, окончательно утратил статус игрока основного состава. (А. Птицын)

The distinction between *favourites, leaders and winners (champions)* transfers into the political discourse, where the favourites and the leaders are not always the same. Sometimes *outsiders* can get best results, despite the fact that they were formerly seen without any chances in the competition. Political life often provides situations which make it possible to resort to political concepts:

And who was on top of the list of favourites in the electoral race of April 1999? (G. Iavlinski) – А кто возглавлял список фаворитов предвыборной гонки в апреле 1999? (Г. Явлинский) –

Today our town is under the spell of the pretendand who took the Olympus by storm. (G. Letov) – Сегодня наш город оказался под обаянием претендента, штурмующего Олимп. (Г. Летов)

Frequently success means being accepted into the national team, participation in the Olympics or in prestigious competitions, mention in the Premier League championship of the country (other teams play in the first, second and regional leagues). The structuring of political success is constantly used in the political discourse:

There is nothing more offending for a player in the second political league than to lose his leading position. But the order of arrival is extremely important. (L. Vershnina) – Нет ничего обидного для игрока «второй политической лиги» проиграть лидеру. Но вот каким ты пришел к финишу – вторым, третьим или последним – очень важно. (Л. Вершинина)

### 3. Nature

Traditionally, one makes the distinction between living nature, wild nature and mineral life (landscape). In order to change the social consciousness after the Revolution of October 1917, an “attempt at the organic mode of thinking (represented by the metaphor of organism, of plants, tree, man), with deep roots in Russian society, with mechanical, rational thinking fixed in the metaphors of construction, equipment, engines” was made.<sup>19</sup> Zoomorphic imagery

represents one of the most traditional conceptual fields among the national political metaphors. Within the last decade of the twentieth century these metaphors were actively used to describe contemporary Russian political life. Animal-related concepts can be met in the political discourse much more frequently than the images associate to fish, birds and all other beings which do not belong to mammals. In the Russian political metaphor today predominant are generic names (beast, animal), while widely spread images are related to specific animals: wolf, cow (ox, calf), goat, (tom-) cat (kitten), horse (stud, mânz), bear, sheep (lamb), pig (wether, piglet):

In the tense moments of the skirmish, a nervous Putin would either lay back in the armchair, like a panther before its jump, or would stiffen at the table. (V. Suhoverhov) – Путин в напряженные моменты схватки то нервно откидывался на спинку кресла, то в напряжении, подобно пантере перед прыжком, то застывал за столом. (В. Суховерхов)

The use of zoomorphic metaphors in the political discourse is alive in the mythological consciousness of peoples, in folklore and in different literary traditions; specific animal features appear as variants of the metaphoric code: the rabbit signifies cowardice, the pig – dishonesty, the calf – stupidity etc. Only a few zoomorphic metaphors take on a positive emotional charge. These are generally representations of man under the image of a vulture, eagle, tiger, lark, and the Russian lion – strong, confident, the owner – lord of the taiga has been one of the most spread:

The image representing a bear with an axe (the axe in Russia is an image of courage) is not understood by the people. (I. Levada) – Предложенный образ медведя с топором (топор в России – образ решительности) оказался народу понятным. (Ю. Левада)

In the first half of the 1990s the particularly frequent image of a big, hungry, avid, all-encompassing, omnipresent octopus supposedly sucking the blood of its victims came to life. Used in the political discourse to characterize the

newly emerged Mafia-like organizations, the Communist Party or the KGB, this metaphor supported by a popular movie.

Moscow is an octopus; a pack of officials used to look after casting. (A. Novikov) – Москва – спрут. Свора чиновников, привыкших заниматься распределением. (А. Новиков)

Millions of people ask for measures against the criminal octopus. – Миллионы людей требуют принятия мер против *спрута* преступности." (обращение ГКЧП)

The prototypical images of aggression, greed and cruelty are represented by sharks, wolves, tigers, ravens, wild animals, while the helpless soft victims come in the imagery of lamb, carp, sheep. The traditional symbol of love and peace is the dove which contrast with the hawk. Metaphoric images spread for signifying experienced politicians are the old wolf, aged bear, in contrast to the dogs and the young wolves and tigers:

The energetic and professional *young wolves* will be either the same age or even younger than the president. (V. Soloviov) – «Молодые волки», энергичные профессионалы – это будут или ровесники президента, или даже люди моложе его. (В. Соловьев).

The herd and pack has; domestic animals in a herd are looked after by a shepherd. These images can be used metaphorically with relation to the leader of human groups:

In any society, as in a pack of wolves, there must be a leader. (D. Aiatskov) – В любом обществе, как и в стае волков, должен быть *вожак*." (Д. Аяцков)

The relations between political parties and individual politicians, actions between social and economic subjects of reality in the contemporary political discourse are displayed by means of zoomorphic metaphors which make it possible to express aggressivity and cruelty and, occasionally, the rashness of political fight. The most commonly used symbols are that of the skirmish, devouring, biting, picking, pinching, barking and howling:



The relations between the candidates fall into the following patterns: those who bite more savagely and those who spill more venom. (Ural Apple, a flyer) – Взаимоотношения кандидатов укладываются в схему: кто кого больше укусит и ужалит. (листовка «Уральское Яблоко»)

These wild cubs do show their paws at the Russian people. (K. Petrov) – Вот эти зверята и оцетинились на народ России. (К. Петров)

Political discourse often resorts to metaphoric interpretations of characteristic actions of certain animals. For instance, cockoo sinking predicts longevity, chameleon changing colours represents people of unstable opinions, oistiches hiding their heads represent the people who would not know the naked truth:

Sensing a harsh political winter, the money flows have flown away to the warm countries and will be back only after the improvement of the climate conditions. (A. Razin) – Предчувствуя суровую политическую зиму, финансовые потоки улетели в теплые края и вернутся только после смягчения климатических условий. (Н. Разин)

The zoomorphic description of typical actions committed by politician frequently resort to names for parts of the animal body in order to bring in evidence of aggressivity: politicians show their teeth when needed or take out their fangs, jeer, use their strong paws and sharp clawss. Branchia and tentaculae can also show aggressiveness:

While the governor struggles running about like a mounse in a trap, criminal authorities have spread their tentacles among the prosecution. (T. Kravcenko) – Пока губернатор крутится, как блоха на стекле, криминальные авторитеты запустили свои щупальца в правоохранительные органы. (Т. Кравченко)

Another traditional conceptual field of the national political metaphor is represented by th plant-shaped images. Based on the essential metaphors correlated to the archetypal perception of the world in which everything has roots and fruits from seeds and beans, on Russian ground they feature the old oak-tree, birches and poplars,

the Russian field and forest, the flowers in the meadows. These appear in many images and have been already been used as national symbols.<sup>20</sup> The role of plants in the political language is significantly compared to their importance in mythopoetic representations.

During the last decade of the 20th century the study of the conceptual metaphor Contemporary reality in Russia is of a vegetation\*, as many political realia had plant-like images-logos.

In the desription of animal-like metaphors some names of spedific creatures – the dog, wolf, bear, tarantula, shark etc.) which can become a basis for metaphors. Things are diferent in the category of plant-shaped metaphor. Relatively regular are only the metaphors connected to an apple (development of the political action Apple, and boabab, related to BAB which referes to the name of Boris Abramovich Berezovski).

В Петербурге яблоневое дерево прижилось и дает неплохие плоды. (Б. Пипия) – In Petersburg the apple-tree has grown/acustomed to the climate and does not yield a bad fruit. (B. Pipia)

До тех пор, пока корни не вырваны, баоБАБы будут жить и дальше. (А. Хинштейн) – As far as the roots are not torn out, the баоBABs will stay alive. (A. Einstein)

The part of plants category is based on two orientation metaphors: the oppositions between the lower part (root, which is hidden, deep, true source of power and energy) and the uppr part (branches, tops) which is a sphere of power. The second orientation metaphor is related to the relation cause-effect (roots, seeds) and effect (fruit, harvest).

Traditionally, roots symbolize the source of strength and the power of the tree, and exactly because of the roots there is a tree-top and its leaves can grow. In political metaphor, these images frequently reflect the cause-effect relationship and the devotion to the policy of the native region.

У социализма в России глубокие корни, уходящие не только в советскую эпоху, но и в седую даль веков, к соборности, обязанности, коллективизму. (С. Хвалынский) – Socialism in Rusia has deep roots which go down not only to

the Soviet epoch, but also back into the depth of centuries, to Catholicism-Sobornost, obligatii, collectivism. (S. Hvalynski)

Вечно живой *корень* России – провинция. Наше движение идет оттуда. (Э. Лимонов) – The ever-living root of Russia is the province. It is the province that has generated our movement. (E. Limonov)

A typical metaphorical image in the Russian politics is the branch of authority, a metaphor usually emphasizes a certain equality of the branches with common roots (the electoral mandate), with responsibilities implying cooperation:

What is needed here is the detailed and patient contribution of all the branches of power, with a view to eliminate all the social-economic roots of criminality. (P. Grigoriev) – Тут нужна кропотливая работа всех *ветвей* власти по ликвидации социально-экономических корней преступности. (П. Григорьев)

Frequently, the seeds and grains, as roots, metaphorically show the causes of some processes; flowers in particular and especially fruit are a symbol of results:

The President has planted with his own hand the seeds of its (nomenklatura's) future revolt. (I. Burtin) – Президент своими руками посеял *семена* ее [номенклатуры] будущего мятежа. (Ю. Буртин)

The life cycle of plants metaphorically shows the dynamics of the development of some subjects from the political reality:

Who was Gennadi Dziuganov on that autumn day of 1991? A ridiculous clerk who tried to persuade us that some living entity could grow from the ashes of the former Communist Party. (S. Shakhrai) – Кем был Геннадий Зюганов в осенний день 1991 года? Смешным функционером, пытающимся убедить, что сквозь пепел, оставшийся от КПСС, *прорастет* что-то живое. (С. Шахрай)

The nursery and the hothouse have a pragmatically aggressive potential. In political discussions nursery is always the source of

something unwanted while the hothouse represents a symbol of cosy conditions, which are harmful to the vigour of future life:

The very organs of inspection today are the main nursery of corruption. (G. Yavlinski) – Ведь именно органы инспекции сейчас – главный *рассадник* коррупции. (Г. Явлинский)

Other plant metaphors symbolize the conditioning of plants by the cause-effect relation, taking care of, the need to have strong roots to develop a crown and fruit, which emphasizes the role of the local soil and other traditional metaphors of the Russian national consciousness.

#### 4. Artefacts

Creative work is an activity of conceptualizing the world. The house (home) is the most important concept in the human consciousness and a traditional source for the Russian culture as a source of metaphoric expansion. The metaphorical representation of *realia* and social processes as the house (including its construction, renovation, demolition) is one of the most important traditional models for political discourse. The conceptual metaphor “the state is a house” represents one of the models which can prove the influence of political events on the images in the political language. In Russian history political leaders have been either those who vehemently rejected the actions taken by their predecessors in building the new state and those who only planned to improve the old system.

Among the political leaders of the twentieth-century destroyers Lenin and Stalin and Yeltsin, while their support group includes Khrushchev and Brezhnev. A special position is held by those who contributed to the improvement of the situation in the country (Iurij Andropov and Mikhail Gorbaciov), who, demonstrating devotion to the socialist option, made plans for a substantial improvement of the system. Significantly, during about the last quarter of a century, the socialist anthem of the Soviet Union stated that the old world would be destroyed ‘to the foundation’ (“до основания”) and only after that ‘we, ours will build a new world’ (“мы наш, мы новый мир построим”)<sup>21</sup>.

One of the numerous symbols of ruin has become the change in the name of the country and state symbols. The communists used to speak insistently about the Soviet Union as of one single great construction in which they managed indeed to build quite a lot, and managed to destroy even more. In political metaphors the essential components of a building – its goundation, façade, walls, roof, doors, windows, attic and some other components have functions of reinterpretation:

The foundation of society is the revival of the peasant class (A. Rutskoï) – *Фундамент общества -возрождение крестьянства.* (А. Руцкой)

For centuries Russian has been a wall against the West. Minkin will clean and polish the government façade of the democrats. (V. Zhirinovski) – *Веками Россия была стеной для Запада. Минкин вычищает до блеска правительственный фасад демократов.* (В. Жириновский)

We have reached this economic crisis and poverty because of the widely opened borders... Can we speak of any order at all in a house without doors and locks? (V. Zhirinovski) – *К экономическому краху и обнищанию мы пришли из-за раскрытых настежь границ. Разве можно говорить о порядке в доме, если нет в доме дверей и замков?* (В. Жириновский)

The first designed building of a house is metaphorically named by the creation of some political structures, the development of society and country as a whole. The ‘common European house’, legal and global order and even hapinness and harmony have been also invoked in Russian political discourse:

The building of a new state is a science. (V. Ovchinnikov) – *Строительство новой государственности – это наука.* (В. Овчинников)

The construction of the parrty is not built from top to bottom, but from the bottom to the top. (S. Shoigu) – *Строительство партии идет не сверху вниз, а снизу вверх.* (С. Шойгу).

During Yeltsin this metaphor relating to the recent past was used mostly ironically. New processes were described by different images:

People should vote against Yeltsin... against the patchwork of a project of a new constitution. (S. Shangin) – *Надо голосовать против Ельцина... против срочно подчищаемого и подмазываемого проекта «новой конституции».* (С. Шаньгин).

We do no longer need any support for a regime which has compromised itself, but a constitution for the people. (V. Salov) – *Нам нужна не еще одна подпорка для скомпрометировавшего себя режима, а народная конституция.* (В. Салов)

Significantly, the state as a whole could not be found among the beneficiaries of the concepts under discusssion: the governing party declared that a new society was under construction, the communist opposition fought for the return to the Soviet past, but nobody wanted to return to the ideas of the Gorbachev regime:

If insteda of houses there will be narrow chambers,the country will fall down to pieces.” (V. Zhirinovski) – *Если вместо дома будут узкие клетки – страна будет разваливаться.* (В. Жириновский)

The family is a house slowly falling down every day. Today the window-sill goes out, tomorrow – the theshold, the day after tomorrow – the window is broken. It you do not repair it, it will collapse. (N. Maslova) – *Семья – это дом, который рушится каждый день. Сегодня отвалится подоконник, завтра – порог, послезавтра треснуло стекло. Если вы не будете его ремонтировать, он развалится.* (Н. Маслова)

In contemporary Russian political metaphor, the three standards show different emotive potentials: construction is often correlated with positive emotions; invoked in the mid-1980s, positive emotions of reconstruction and reparation gradually turn to irony, and destruction sends off to the idea of sickness and addression. With the chage of the political system the question of house property gained in importance. The concept of lodgers metaphorically points at the inhabitants of the country and their isolated regions. People who live in the house can be either owners or lodgers:



The state is one house with common roof and walls. It has to obey the same rules. (V. Alekseev) – Государство – это единый дом с общими стенами и крышей. В нем необходимо соблюдать единые правила. (В. Алексеев)

After the organization of Cernomyrdin's movement "Our house is Russia" (*Nash dom – Rossiya*) the problem of Russia as a house for her citizens began to be understood somewhat differently. The opponents of those politicians started talking about illegal privatizations, about the fact that in the new prestigious house there is room only for certain groups of inhabitants. Gradually the need to build regional houses and enforce order in them came to the fore.

Strakhov's programme originates from the supporting "Our house is Russia"; this "house" is to be used by leaders at all levels, by commercial and official bank structures. (the message of the Veterans Committee of the Sverdlovsk Region, 1996) – Программа А. Страхова вытекает из поддержки объединения «Наш дом – Россия». Но этот «Дом» – для руководителей всех уровней, коммерческих структур и банковских деятелей. (обращение комитета ветеранов Свердловской области, 1996)

Traditionally, the metaphor of the house is associated with some positive pragmatic significations: the house is a refuge for the hardships of life, the home of the family, symbol of fundamental moral values and of the dynamic building, plans for the future and the need for a better life, respectively. In the language of Soviet propaganda, the house was built for people who were seen as *bolts* in a *mechanism*. The party apparatus managed this mechanism and had to keep a firm hand on the *steer-wheel*, use political *levers* and *conveyors* properly, *press the pedal* at the right time and be aware of the secrets *springs*. In order to maintain the efficiency of the mechanism (the Soviet people, the builder of communism and fighter against the world imperialism) one needed occasionally to *tighten the bolts*, *change the old rusted parts*, *repair the engine*, *transmission* or any other parts of the *machine* which had *worn out*.

Soviet mechanical metaphors reappeared with a high frequency during the *perestroika*,

a time of particularly unstable social relations. The use of the metaphor of mechanism makes it possible to unveil the unclear aspects and imperfections of the subject.<sup>22</sup> More recently, the mechanical metaphor was used in contexts whose content demanding an analysis of the causes of past failures and the final regulation of the mechanism, which was its state and structure:

Russia and its state system can no longer live within a provisional scheme, threatened as they are any moment with a shortcircuit or a conflagration. (B. Yeltsin) – Россия, ее государственная система не может больше жить по временной схеме. В любой момент она грозит замыканием или пожаром. (Б. Ельцин)

One of the most dangerous diseases in Russia today is the costly and inefficient bureaucratic apparatus. (E. Savostianov) – Одна из самых опасных болезней России сегодня – разболтанный, дорогостоящий, неэффективный бюрократический аппарат. (Е. Савостьянов)

In other examples, political propaganda activities tend to influence the consciousness of the citizens, which is metaphorically represented as a leading mechanism, as a technological process:

Grigori Yavlinski has remarked that the worst way of solving this problem is by tightening the screws. (O. Gerasimenko) – Григорий Явлинский заметил, что решать эту проблему путем закручивания гаек – хуже всего. (О. Герасименко)

One can never know what measures the Electoral Commission is going to take against the candidates who resorted to dishonest technologies and administrative levers. (A. Vogulski) – Неизвестно, какие меры примет избирательная комиссия против кандидатов, которые используют не только грязные технологии, но и административные рычаги. (А. Вогульский)

Such contexts still shape in the readers' consciousness the emotional and pragmatic meanings associated to the subjective perception of political activity as a 'soulless' force which neglected individual concerns.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study of a language and culture through its basic metaphors Russian could be reconstructed in relation to area or media studies, research in the field of politics. The appeal to human emotions and mind which informs the *logos* of political discourse can be used to motivate the students. The fact that the *ethos* and *pathos* of politicians might be (and most often than not *is*) far from the values one teaches in class does not prevent the teacher and the student from examining their linguistic performance. Making the linguistic portraits of politicians might turn into an instance of poetic justice.

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4. The term was introduced into Russian cultural studies by the linguist Jurij S. Stepanov. *Konstanty. Slovar' russkoj kultury*. Moskva. 1997. Second edition 2004. *Jazyki slavjanskix kul'tur. (Constants. A Dictionary of Russian Culture)*. One of the concepts selected is 'money', discussed in E.Ju. Bulygina. *Leksicheskoje voploshčeniye koncepta 'dengi'v sovremennoj publitsistike*. In: "Otrazhenie russkoj jazykovoj kartiny mira v leksike i grammatike". Novosibirsk. 1999. (*The lexicalization of the concept of 'money' in contemporary journalism*). Also on the topic: M. Vraciu. *On the Concepts of 'money' and 'business' in Russian Culture*. In: "Language, Culture and Change (I)", Iasi: Timpul. 2009: pp. 304-312.
5. George Lakoff. M. Johnson. *Metaphors we Live By*. Chicago. 1980. See also: Lakoff's *Metaphor and war: The metaphor system used to justify War in the Gulf* // D. Yallet (ed.). *Engulfed in War: Just War and the Persian Gulf*. Honolulu, 1991; *Women, fire, and dangerous things*. In: "What categories reveal about the mind". Chicago; London, 1987.
6. Bourdieu, Pierre (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity. Pierre Bourdieu *Despre câmpul politic*. Traducere de Camelia Runceanu. Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași, 2012.
7. Fairclough, Norman (1989) *Language and Power*. London: Longman. Second revised edition 2001.
- Among the various methodological directions the cognitive one holds first place, followed by the traditional rhetorical approach and discursive directions. Complex approaches have been summarized relatively recently in Romania as well, as mirrored in the collective work edited by Rodica Zafiu. *Limba și politică*. București: Editura Universității din București. 2007. / *Discourse and Politics*. Roventă-Frumușani. Analiza discursului: Ipoteze și ipostaze. Tritonic. București. 2004./ *Discourse analysis: hypotheses and hypostaphes*.

## Endnotes

1. Anna Wierzbicka. *Semantics, Culture and Cognition: Universal human concepts in culture-specific configurations* (1992). The work of the Polish-Australian linguist was preceded by that of the Russian linguist (she credited) Jurij D. Apresjan; *Leksicheskaia semantika. Sininimicheskie sredstva jazyka. Moskva. 1974./ Lexical semantics. The synonymical means of language*. A relatively recent paper on Wierzbicka's approach to Russian by the author of this article: Duša, toska, sud'ba, sau limba rusă din perspectiva etnolingvisticii: o privire asupra concepției Annei Wierzbicka. In: "Romanoslavica" nr. XLV. București: Editura Universității București. 2009. pp. 89-101. [http://www.unibuc.ro/uploads\\_en/29527/23/Rsl45.pdf/](http://www.unibuc.ro/uploads_en/29527/23/Rsl45.pdf/). / Duša ('soul'), toska ('longing'), sud'ba ('fate'), or on Russian from an



8. As monographs and collection of articles by Gavrilov, Karasik, Klimov, Tomaševski, Ciudinov Un rol important l-au avut publicațiile periodice. În revista "Politica" există rubrica permanent prezentă "Discursul politic". În anul 2003 a fost realizată lansarea celei de-a doua reviste – "Știința politică" (Nr. 3). Un centru important al discursologiei a devenit almanahul "Discursul Pi" ce a avut o contribuție semnificativă în dezvoltarea analizei de discurs. Ju.N. Karaulov Ju.N. *Russkij jazyk I jazykovaja lichnost'*. Moskva. 1987./ The Russian language and linguistic personality.
9. I.I. Kravchenko. *Politicheskaja mifologija: vechnost' i sovremennost'*. In: "Voprosy filosofii". No. 1. (Political mythology: eternity and the present day.)
10. Rossija v zerkale metaforicheskom zerkale: kognitivnye issledovanije politicheskoi metafory. Monografija. 1991-2001. Ekaterinburg, 2001 / Russia in a metaphoric mirror: a cognitive study of political metaphor. A monograph Other works by this author can be found in the Reference section.
11. Patrick Seriot. *Russkij jazyk i analiz sovetskogo politicheskogo diskursa: analiz nominatsij // Kvadratura smysla. Frantsuzkaja shkola analiza diskursa. Mskva, 1999. (The Russian language and the analysis of the Soviet political discourse an analysis of nomination. In: "The Quadrature of Meaning: The French school of discourse analysis".)*
12. Baranov A.N., Kazakevich E.G. *Parlamentskie debaty: traditsii I novatorstvo*. Moskva. 1991./ Parliament debates: tradition and innovation. Baranov A.N. *Jazykovye igri vremen perestrojki*. In: "Fenomen politicheskogo lozunga". // Rusistika. 1993. No. 2. (*Puns in the times of Perestroika*). Baranov A.N., Karaulov Ju.N. *Russkaja politicheskaj metafora: Materialy k slovakju. M., 1991./ The Russian political metaphor. Data for a dictionary*.
13. *Slovar' Perestroiki*. Edited by V.I. Maksimov et al. Sankt-Peterburg. 1992.
14. Baranov A.N., Karaulov Ju.N. *Russkaja politicheskaj metafora: Materialy k slovakju. M., 1991./ The Russian political metaphor. Data for a dictionary*.
15. For obvious reasons the names of the politicians quoted have not been given in full.
16. Pun on the personal name of politician German Gref and the common noun *graphology*.
17. A military guard, or army in Old (Kievan) Rus, the name of the first Russian state.
18. *The negative charater in the Russian version of Pinocchio's story* (by Carlo Collodi), *Buratino* (by Aleksei Tolstoy).
19. A.N. Baranov. *Jazykovye igri vremen perestrojki*. In: "Fenomen politicheskogo lozunga". // Rusistika. 1993. No. 2. (*Puns in the times of Perestroika*)
20. Stepanov 1997.
21. In 2000, the music (composed by Alexander Alexandrov, 1883-1946) of the Soviet national anthem was restored with Sergey Mikhalkov (1913-2009) writing the new lyrics.
22. Baranov and Kazakevich 1991.