

Research

BORDERS AND BORDER ZONES: DIFFERENCES AND EQUALITIES

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THE NOTIONS OF “A BORDER”, “A FOREIGN COUNTRY (ABROAD)” AND “A FOREIGNER”: IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE USSR (RUSSIA) AND BULGARIA

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Abstract. A border and related concepts of “abroad” and “a foreigner” are analyzed from the linguistic, semiotic and sociocultural points of view with regard to the USSR (Russia) –Bulgaria relations. In spite of being very close to, even regarded as the 16th republic of the USSR and imitating many Soviet ideas, Bulgaria was a foreign country. The reasons for that on the lingua-cultural data partly of biographical character are discussed in the paper. The border can be a synonym to the language barrier, which exists or does not

exist between native speakers of Bulgarian and Russian. The new developments of mutual Russian-Bulgarian language communication on the Bulgaria seashore provide us new data of the symbolism of temporal and spatial borders.

Keywords: border, abroad, foreign, Bulgaria, Russia, USSR, sociolinguistics, semiotics

Introduction

Among many publications on the border in its direct and symbolic meanings and manifestations, analysis of the concept of a frontier¹⁾ between former socialist countries has not yet been undertaken. The study of the corresponding notions of “abroad” and “a foreigner” applied to two brother socialist countries and peoples also has not been carried out.

Still, there is much being happening in the field of boundary research. In 1976, the Association of Borderland Studies (ABS) was founded and developed into a broad academic network with many conferences, publications, exchange of ideas on international frontier issues.²⁾ The Association publishes the “Journal of Borderland Studies” which periodically discusses the most topical problems.

During just this (2014) year there are several conferences on this theme organized, among them the conference Borders and border zones: differences and equalities, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria; Contextualizing Changes: Migrations, Shifting Borders and New Identities in Eastern Europe October, 4-8, in Sofia, Bulgaria; Berlin Border Seminar, November 8-10 in Berlin, Germany (to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Fall of the Wall), the conference of the mentioned above ABS - Post-Cold War Borders: Global Trends and Regional Responses (Joensuu, Finland – St Petersburg, Russia, June 8-13, 2014) and others. The academic interest reflects the political and economic situation, as well as the rise of the everyday discourse on the notion of the

border. This interest in the contemporary borders is supported by the drastic changes in the frontiers which take place in front of our eyes. Speaking of Russian foreign policy we keep in mind the latest events in the Ukraine and the Crimea and political and public discussions that followed. Several months after the revolution in the Ukraine and the annexation of the Crimea Russia as a response to the Western restrictive decisions adopts sanctions (since August 6, 2014 and they are going on) against the import of the food from the EU, the USA and other countries which brings the population back to the Soviet times of isolation, when behind the borders, “abroad”, the country was surrounded by Western enemies. In modern Russia, the mass media’s dominating style is aggressive and is turned against many countries, blaming them in many ‘sins’. Actually, in the newest Russian policy we are witnessing an unexpected impressive reoccurrence to the former Soviet socialist isolation and reluctance to the openness.

These changes bring to life memories of the former Soviet times and return of the “old-new” imperial perception of the borders, friendship, fraternity and abroad. Thus the topicality of the multifaceted nature of the borders is still here and is even growing. The relevance of the borders in the socialist and post-socialist newest time has especially to be discussed in full.

Aims, data and methodology

The modern life being so dynamic, permanently supplies us with new facts in all the spheres. Nowadays synchrony quickly turns into diachrony, new events immediately become history. Konstantin von Eggert, one of the prominent Russian journalists writes on that:

I just came across a one-year old comment on Pussy Riot by Ksenia Luchenko in the Colta magazine. I got the impression that it all took

place 20 years ago. I think that in time of two years our comments of today would be accepted as if coming from the ancient times.³⁾

So the modern scholars of the former socialist countries have a very important task to follow the novelties and – which is probably even more important – to analyze the reception of this data by the society and the comments.

Another task of the scholars is while keeping on the historical memory, to give evidence to what they have seen and experienced themselves. This type of analysis is known as “biographical studies” and is very productive in the field of cross-cultural investigations (more on this see a special issue of “Bulgarian Ethnology”, 2004, № 4). The role of self-reflection and autobiographical commentaries is getting more adepts in humanities.

In my academic biography, this is the case of Bulgarian-Soviet (Russian) relations on various levels in different situations and types of communications. The paper is based on my own explorations and observations since 1973 when as a student of Moscow state University I started to study Bulgarian language at the Department of Slavic Philology at the faculty of Philology. My experience can be denoted also as inclusive observation, because I traveled a lot to Bulgaria, beginning from the second year at the University, and almost every year after it. It also includes field research in Bulgaria, as well as simultaneous translation and work with the official delegations in the Soviet Union. The 40 years which I have spent studying and then teaching Bulgarian, communicating with Bulgarians and visiting the country gave me a lot of material, which I can use for linguistic and sociocultural analysis. Another prospective for analysis of these observations gives the fast developing intercultural communication studies, which, by the way, have not been investigated as far as any two socialist countries are concerned.⁴⁾

This paper methodologically falls into the field of historical sociolinguistics, and intercultural studies since during the last 25 years depicted great changes took place, and the temporal border – the perestroika drew new spatial lines and borders. Such a study, partly based on personal memory, is very important nowadays, since, as we can judge when we talk to younger generations the history is being wiped away⁵⁾, it is important to understand the relations between former socialist countries and their contemporary development. Many of the details in the relations between Russia and Bulgaria trace back into the socialist part.

The aim of my paper is to dwell upon the semantics and symbolism of a border as represented in the vocabulary of Russian and Bulgarian languages, to explore the specifics of the borders(s) during the socialist time and finally to examine whether Bulgaria and the Soviet Union have seen each other as alien and as foreign countries, and the people as foreigners.

The border and allied notion of abroad are huge topics and it is impossible to touch upon the whole problem in one article. The point is that there is no physical contact land-border between Bulgaria and Russia, as it has never existed during the Soviet times. Neighborhood, spatial contact are the obligatory characteristics of a *border* as: (1) the edge or boundary of anything, or the part near it and (2) the line separating two political or geographical areas, esp. countries.⁶⁾ Lacks of contact borders, closeness of the languages and mentalities (occasionally misleading) historical background, draw the Russian – Bulgarian relations as a very complicated and ambiguous picture.

Words, notions and ideology

The definition of a border in Bulgarian and Russian languages and its synonyms gives a lot to symbolic and axiological apprehension of the borders. The Russian and Bulgarian corresponding terms are more important to us with the details in their definitions, semantics and pragmatics. Russian definition of

граница “the border” makes accent on the idea of dividing the territories,⁷⁾ while the Bulgarian dictionaries underline the division of neighboring countries.⁸⁾ The Russian word for “abroad, (in, to) foreign countries” *заграница* (literally “behind the border”) correlates with the Bulgarian words *задграница*, or *чужбина*. The second word gives a clue to the Russian – Bulgarian similarities and yet differences. Yes, there is the same word in Russian, but stylistically in the modern language it is different, it belongs to folklore and denotes a faraway country, not necessarily a foreign country. The Russian for “a foreigner” is *иностранец*, while the Bulgarian synonym is *чужденец*, which emphasizes the idea of “somebody else’s” as opposed to “our own”.⁹⁾

This opposition strongly alludes to ideology. One would suggest that the definition and the examples in the dictionaries of socialist period would include many ideologemes, but this is not true. At least the dictionaries do not give that much, just occasionally the examples of the word usage would be a quotation from the classics of Marxism-Leninism (“For an internationalist the question of a border is of second or even tenth importance”, V. Lenin), or some facts of the biography of the Communist leaders (“Stalin achieved minimization of car export from the foreign countries”). The very socialist concepts of the border, the foreign countries and the foreigner are exclusively based on politics which is reflected in the Soviet art, as we can see in poems, films, pictures of that time. “The locked border”,¹⁰⁾ guarders of the socialist borders, enemies and diversionists, etc are depicted in many songs and poems, which the Soviet people had to learn by heart from their childhood.¹¹⁾

Заграница (Russian), *задграница* (Bulgarian), *abroad* developed into a mythologeme, even something more, this is a mythological semantic and symbolical field which corresponds with the division of the Universe into oppositions of “good-bad”, “my own-somebody else’s”, “familiar-unfamiliar”, “rich-poor”, etc. While the official discourse emphasized the bad and negative features of the foreign countries (“Мир чистогана и коррупции, где все

продается и все покупается» (The world of money and corruption, where everything can be bought and sold”, as Venedikt Erofeev describes in his novel “*Moscow – Petushki*”), the non-official discourse regarded foreign countries very attractive. The metaphors – the iron curtain, the slang *за бузром*¹²⁾ – “behind the rock”, as an obstruction, like the Berlin wall. Many people wanted and still want to go abroad.¹³⁾ Going abroad was a dream of many Soviet peoples, and while the Western countries were visited by a very limited amount of people (mostly officials), the socialist countries were reached easier. One did not need an entry visa to go to the countries of the socialist block, but the permission to leave the USSR, to cross the border was obligatory.

The countries which belonged to the socialist camp, were characterized by very strong and distinctive borders with the “Western capitalist world”, while inside, especially between the republics of the USSR, the borders were less strict. So we can talk of ranking the borders according to their ideological power. This hierarchy alludes to the hierarchy of the grade of foreignness alluded to every single country, see below.

In the case of my study the very question of the importance of a shared frontier is very important. When we talk of Soviet and Bulgarian life- whether the border was virtual, or it was real. In some cases the notion of border vanishes and Bulgarians and Soviets saw each other as brothers, even not as neighbors.

Needless to say, that these notions are very important from the point of view of politics, geography and ideology and in the times of total ideological change the very essence of the border is being conversed. The touristic boom after the perestroika affected first of all the destinations to the West, while Bulgaria is often chosen as the place for quiet residency in the old age.

Does the language and culture make a barrier in Russian – Bulgarian communication?

The roots for understanding

The “feelings” towards a foreign language are very important, and in some cases they dominate over other reasons, as for example in the situation of choosing the country where to emigrate, like the case with the Russian emigration after the October revolution (Анастасова, 2005) and the choice of many Russians nowadays to spend much time in Bulgaria. A documental on Bulgaria with a commercial flavor and message shoot by Russians intends to attract people to buy apartments on the Bulgarian Black sea shore. It accentuates the closeness between the Russians and Bulgarians. The interviewee Vlad Nikolov argues, that there is no language barrier between them, there is no need in social adaptation, even the ABC is the same, Cyrillic. “The word Rusophile is the most frequent in Bulgaria”, - argues Vlad.¹⁴⁾

We can partly agree with these words of an advertising real-estate seller. Russia had always played a decisive role in the political, economical and cultural history of Bulgaria, and the Russian language took significant place in Bulgarian-Russian relations. The changes in the Bulgarian language in the era of socialism starting from the very first signs of the Soviet Russian influence have been studied by Bulgarian scholars (Андрейчин, 1952; 1957; Леков, 1953; Москов, 1964). For over 40 years Bulgaria was a member of the vast ideological union under Soviet (Russian) domination.¹⁵⁾ This union has worked out its own language and rituals, which reflected the official ideology and influenced the languages and ritual systems of all the members of the socialist camp. The changes of the Russian language towards the newspeak by the end of the 40s, when Bulgaria joined the socialist camp were remarkable. The affiliated countries after the Second World War together with the doctrine, atheism, social values, etc. received ideological clichés and symbols “ready” for usage and copying. Bulgaria appeared to be one of the most loyal

socialist countries, having accepted the very language (in its broad sense) of the governing ideology.

The official discourse, the language of the newspapers was more or less comprehensive for the two peoples. It generated the simplified view on the Bulgarian language as Russian, but “spoiled” and slightly changed by adding the components *-ta* at the end of the words (like *страната*).¹⁶⁾

Bulgarian language of the official documents of 60-70s imitates the Soviet *langue de bois*, e.g. the suggestion of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party to join the USSR:¹⁷⁾ “The discussions of the further rapprochement, and then cohesion of Bulgaria with the USSR are very vital now”. Some of the passages remind ingenious George Orwell’s statements, but over-simplified, with wrong logic interpretations: “People see the sovereignty as availability of food and dwelling. This is the sovereignty – happiness and well-being of the people. We are working for the people, not for the formal conditions”. It reads that the cohesion will bring not dependence, but freedom. To paraphrase Orwell (“Freedom is slavery”), as to understand this document, we should say “Dependence is freedom”.

Keeping in mind, that the aims of bringing up Bulgarian youth were mostly oriented towards brainwashing in the Soviet style with regard to all its semantic and logic ambiguity. Thus “boundless”, “unlimited” love toward the USSR, the Communist Party of the USSR and the Soviet people should be congenital and well-perceived feature of each socialist worker; the friendship between Bulgaria and the USSR should grow and strengthen; Bulgarians are seen as part of the Soviet nation.”¹⁸⁾

Four decades of such brain-washing imprint several generations and still leave marks in the Bulgarian mentality, politics and everyday life. The Soviet code is still there; occasionally it is seen through the memories of the Bulgarian socialist past, still very vital in Bulgarian society. This past is seen through very close relations and “unlimited” brotherhood with the USSR and

its peoples. There were political jokes in these times “What will happen if Bulgaria join the USSR? There will be nothing, even tomatoes”. This memory can be seen through many artifacts remembered from the Soviet times, but most from the structure of festive time, similar in the two countries. During the socialist time the Soviet ritual year has been a way mark for Bulgaria and other socialist countries. The ritual calendar of Bulgaria has been secondary and derivative from the one officially declared in the USSR. The Soviet Day of the October revolution was officially celebrated as a red-lettered day. Apart from the Soviet holidays there was a set of red lettered or memorial days which alluded to the Socialist or revolutionary history of the country. The political “language” of the festivals was very close (Македонска, 1967).

Even during socialist times though Bulgarians had nice season festivals which were not official but really popular - March, 1st marked the beginning of the spring and it was a must to exchange red and white threads tied together in a beautiful composition and wish a prosperous and healthy year. The Russians who had friends and colleagues in Bulgaria, all knew about that and regularly received red and white ornaments with a greeting card. Other non-formal customs and festivals have not been forbidden and persecuted. During the Socialist times the General Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party Todor Zhivkov appraised the folk New Year ritual *soorvakane* and every year pioneers would perform this custom in his residence.

The roots for misunderstanding

When it comes to the everyday communication, though, barriers have often been there often there, mostly because of the fact that Bulgaria has its own Balkan borders, contacts and neighbors. The idea of Balkan linguistic Union, or League includes the idea of many common things in the Balkan countries. Of course, it relates to the language grammar and vocabulary, even

intonation and the pitch of voices. This makes Bulgarian language very different from the other non-Balkan Slavic languages, including the Russian one.¹⁹⁾

The first acquaintance shows the huge differences behind the seeming Slavic similarities. Not to mention the opposite direction for gestures for ‘Yes’ and ‘No’, which impresses Russians (and other European peoples) and occasionally ruins the communication. Even the Slavic personal names are rather different – Bulgarian names *Petya*, *Vasya*, *Vanya* denote women, while in Russia they are men’s names. Vice versa a Russian men’s name *Slava* (short for *Vyacheslav*, *Rostislav*, etc.) in Bulgaria denotes a woman. Even similar proper names would have different short home names, e.g. *Margarita* in Bulgaria is never *Rita*, like in Russia, while *Nina* is the short for *Irina* in Bulgaria, but not in Russia. Bulgarian names have a bigger variety, very unofficial names – the short ones can be used as the official passport names (*Sashka*, *Katya*) which shocks Russians. There are many more differences in the meaning of Slavic words, like Bulgarian *направо* in Bulgarian means “straight” while in Russian “to the right”, comp. Bulgarian *майка* (Russian ‘T-shirt’), *стая* (Russian “a room’), etc.

The Balkan characteristics make Bulgarian very different from Russian language, but aligns it with other languages of the Balkan peninsula – the Greek, Albanian, Romanian, Serbian and Macedonian. We have also to keep in mind the 5 hundred years of Ottoman yoke which facilitated borrowing of many Turkish words in Bulgarian vocabulary; the multi-lingual situation in Bulgaria; close relations with neighbouring Balkan countries due to migration, etc. Turkisms (every 60th word in Bulgarian speech is not Slavic, Стaмeнoв, 2011, c. 78) and syntactic peculiarities make Bulgarian language difficult for understanding, as many Soviets reported and now the Russians, who reside now in numbers in Black sea resorts²⁰⁾ in Bulgaria, confirm it.

The situation is helped with the one-direction strategy – Bulgarians used to learn the Russian language, then after perestroika there was a gap of

10-15 years, and now due to commercial reasons the need for knowing Russian language has revived.

Nowadays Russian-Bulgarian communication can take place far from Russia and Bulgaria. Bulgarians, for example, often work as guides in many Spanish, Greek, Cyprus resorts, where many Russians go for vacations. The Russian language in these situations again gains the status of lingua franca, here the socialist language education helps a lot, in any foreign countries (Мустайоки, 2011). Usually those who have studied Russian during the Soviet times have a good command of the language. Протасова (2011) argues that the Russian language of the Bulgarian guide for Russians in Cyprus apart from several Bulgarian features, some strategies of poor vocabulary (synonyms, generalization, depiction in case of lack of a precise word) is excellent. The Russian language of younger generation, those who had to learn the language to work in the places of the “Small Russia” on the Black seashore, is very poor. It lacks synonyms, grammar. Occasionally the Russian and Bulgarian talk Bulgarian-Russian, while each member of the communications pretends he uses the “foreign” vocabulary.

Is Bulgaria a foreign country for Russians and vice versa?

Among the socialist countries there was a hierarchy of their Westernization and freedom. On the top was Yugoslavia and Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovak republic, and Romania and Mongolia as the source of hard currency for “Beryozka” shops. For a specialist in Bulgarian studies like myself there was a long path of several interviews to obtain the permission to go to the country where the language I have been studying was spoken. Bulgaria was a launching pad for traveling to Western capitalist countries.²¹⁾

The prominent Russian writer Ljudmila Ulitskaya recollects of her first trip abroad: “I first went abroad to Poland in 1963 or 1964. Though is it is well known ‘A hen is not a bird, and Poland is not abroad’. In the reality it did

look as a foreign country. We were eager to know Poland then, we tried to read Polish magazines, etc. My first real meeting with the West took place in 1986 when I went to the USA.”²²⁾

There always has been an asymmetry in the relations between the USSR (Russia) and Bulgaria. The Soviet Union as a huge country with already three decades of Soviet rule when Bulgaria joined the Socialist camp. The USSR dominated, and the Russian language was lingua franca for millions of citizens of foreign socialist states. Still, Bulgaria was always in the Soviet media. It was also in minds of the Soviet citizens, since the labor, student and tourist and official delegations exchange was large. After the decay of the socialist camp, the situation has drastically changed. During the last twenty years the information from the two countries usually is almost zero, increasing when there is a real news event. The tourist destination is mostly oriented towards Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, during the last two years the interest towards Russia has been enlarged, because of the political and governmental problems which are associated through the socialist ideas with the USSR and the Russian communists. The Soviet past is still present in the mutual relations, but there are many innovations, too.

In the Soviet times Bulgaria was one of the closest to the USSR countries and by many peoples was taken as the sixteenth republic of the USSR. The famous joke went as “A hen is not a bird and Bulgaria is not abroad”.²³⁾ The idea that Bulgaria is not a foreign country, or not 100% foreign country is still very popular, for example somebody is writing on the Facebook: «Хотя Болгария это не за граница, что это я» [Though Bulgaria is not a foreign country, what am I telling].²⁴⁾ From the other side, the USSR (Bulgarian *Sajuz-a* – the Union, the short for the USSR) and Russia, and the Russian (Soviet) people are seen as brothers (the famous Bulgarian word *братушки* which denotes the Russians). This point is also ambiguous, and rather complex, since nowadays the historical relations between the countries which had official

versions of attitudes to the Russian-Turkish war and the Second World War is interpreted in pole evaluations. For example, Russians now say that Bulgaria was on the side of Germany during WW2, while Bulgarians do not hide their antipathy towards the Russians and their role during the Russian-Turkish war. They also are critical towards the so called September revolution of 1944 and blame the Soviets for killing many Bulgarians.²⁵⁾

What the Soviet visitors could see in Bulgaria was less governmentally regulated, less officious. More Western culture was present – cinema, translated books, more pop-culture, fashion magazines. Western goods came from Yugoslavia. Bulgarian clothes were of special interest to the Russians. Fur coats, shoes, leather, children stock are still remembered as something luxurious for a Soviet man. “A trip to Bulgaria was possible through good connection, and a suede jacket bought there for 100 leva looked like a message from Jupiter”, - writes Anton Krasovski on his page in Facebook (15.05.2014).

Bulgaria was a foreign country for the Soviet people, as well as the USSR was a foreign country for Bulgarians. In this context though the traditional oppositions as “socialist – capitalist, bourgeois”, “just – unjust” and others were not that sharp, in spite of the fact that other contrapositions like “our own – somebody else’s”, “familiar – unfamiliar” remained relevant.

Furthermore, the everyday life – the food, alcohol²⁶⁾ and the cafes, hospitality, architecture are very different from the Russian. (Some of Bulgarians see common things with the Ukraine, back in the 1980s Kiev reminded my tourists Sofia because of the greenery and the streets.) The Soviet reception of Bulgaria as an easier, more colorful, country and younger, since the youngsters were seen in the street cafes. Bulgarian diet and the food differ from the Russian culinary habits. I realized that when I worked for the first time as a guide for a group of Bulgarians and they urged desert after the lunch – which is not a must for a Russian.

Conclusion

Today the Russian Federation is steadily going 'Back to the USSR'. The borders of the country are being re-examined, the former Soviet Republics are seen as "our own, the Russian". Meanwhile, the former Soviet republics and the socialist countries see their development in getting away from Russia, and the Ukrainian example is quite impressive. Many things which happen now are seen as purely imitational – various samples are being imported from the Eastern or Western practices, from pre-revolutionary Russia, or the Soviet times. This is "somebody else's experience", as show some scholars. They argue that imitation is the obligatory stage in education, it is the first step towards producing something "our own", new. But, it is positive. if the imitation leads to creative work. when it is imitation for imitation sake – it is not productive and positive (Шар-Чудновская, 2009).

It is valid for the contemporary relations between Russian and Bulgaria. Needless to say those in Bulgaria as well as in Russia the society is ideologically divided into those who appreciate the socialist era, remember and appraise it, and those who do not stand it. This is a relevant issue for reception of the two countries as foreign, or not. The situation is much more complicated than just having two groups. In Bulgaria, we can talk about Sovietophiles and Sovietophobes as well as about Russophiles and Russophobes.

Occasionally one can read a message like "We are not against Russia, we are against communism which is still present in our country",²⁷⁾ but still in many spheres it is so difficult or just impossible to draw a line between the Russian and the Soviet. Now Russian is a synonym for Soviet and socialism for many Bulgarians. This is obvious in the contemporary political oppositional discourse. The famous Bulgarian politician Sergey Stanishev (half-Russian, half-Bulgarian) is accused of being pro-Russian and pro-Communist.²⁸⁾ We will not discuss this question here, because of its ambigui-

ty²⁹⁾ and its development – since the events the Ukraine add indistinctness in the post-Soviet-Bulgarian relations.

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NOTES

1. To avoid ambiguity and errors of terms I will use the English words *border*, *boundary* and *frontier* as synonyms.

2. https://www.uef.fi/documents/1019717/0/UEF_ABS-Booklet_Final.pdf/6023391a-f0ff-453e-8e85-90198a8cc9bd

3. <https://www.facebook.com/konstantin.voneggert?fref=ts>

4. Second language acquisition requires good knowledge communicative skills and vast extra-linguistic field of knowledge. This can be obtained mostly in real communication (nowadays partly in the virtual ones), which during the era of “the iron curtain” was not possible. Even the best Soviet translators, who would know by heart the language and the vocabulary of Dante, Shakespeare, Guy de Maupassant, etc. would not know how to communicate in everyday situation.

5. When lecturing and alluding to Soviet times we recommend the students encyclopedias and monographs, because they do not have a clue what we are talking about (Сарнов, 2002; Душенко, 2005; Мокиенко & Никитина, 1998; Куріна, 1995; 2009; Вейсс, 2000).

6. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, London, 1995.

7. *Толковый словарь русского языка*. Москва, 2009.

8. *Речник на българския език: том 1*. София, 1977.

9. Interestingly to note, that in the Slavic languages, including Bulgarian and Russian, this opposition is easy to express with corresponding words “свой – чужой”, while in other languages suitable words are lacking.

10. Compare the Soviet movie “The locked frontier” (1938), etc. (Душенко, 2005, p. 453).

11. Those texts usually praise the heroes and their heroic deeds, like Sergey Mikhalkov’s famous poem “В глухую ночь” (“In the night”), the Soviet song on the border patrol soldiers “On the banks of the river of Amur”.

12. The expression *За бугром, за бугор, из-за бугра* (literally “behind the hill”) which is a slang for ‘abroad’ (=заграницей, TSYU: 64) was activated after the Perestroika, since late 1980s, cf. *Правда, они там «за бугром» немного оторвались от нашей действительности* [Though abroad they have forgotten a bit our reality] (Радзинский, 2007). The examples are taken from www.ruscorpora.ru.

13. There are many jokes about the Russians’ attitude to the trips abroad, e.g. “The Russian are dreaming about two things: to drive away not Russians from Russia and to live abroad”. Another joke alludes to the Brezhnev’s time: “A movie star came to the USSR and asked Brezhnev to open the borders for the Soviet citizens. He replied: “So you are eager to stay alone with me?”

15. For the notion of ideological language union during the Soviet times and the process of its disintegration - see Седакова (2008).

16. The seeming simplicity of Bulgarian was a frequent reason for students to choose it as their third language. It was and still is a common place in discussing the Bulgarian language with the Russian people, who have not tried to communicate with a Bulgarian who does not speak Russian. The fact is that the Bulgarians better understand Russians than vice versa.

17. Historical facts confirm that the Communist Party and personally the General Secretary Todor Zhivkov made official application to the Soviet government and its leaders (Nikita Khrushchov at that time) to be accepted in the premises and state structure of the USSR. Nikita Khrushchov did not support this application. Not long time ago the Bulgarian documents were published, as the President of Bulgaria Rossen Plevneliev said that this act was the worst treason of the country was this willing to become 16th republic of the USSR. Thus the archival materials were open to the public discourse and they showed that the leaders of the Bulgarian Communist Party all voted “Bulgaria to be presented to the USSR”.

18. <https://www.facebook.com/frujinblog/photos/a.1402528226674778.1073741828.1396528177274783/1407358592858408/?type=1>
19. Sedakova, I. The image of the Russian language in Bulgaria in the light of linguistic and other unions. *Colloquia Balkanica*, Warszawa (in print).
20. These communications are now very intense, because many Russians have bought real estate in Bulgaria. Bulgarians now have to talk Russian because of commercial, not ideological as before, needs. The Russian language turned into one of official languages in some Bulgarian recreational regions (<http://www.tass-press.ru/c4/352704.html>. 15.11.2013).
21. There was an ordinance that before to go to a Western country one has to visit at least one socialist country.
22. <http://www.colta.ru/articles/90s/3758>
23. Same joke was used for Mongolia. In spite of the fact that Mongolia was very poor, and there were no capitalist goods in this country, the person on a business trip was paid by checks, which he could use to buy in Russian “Beryozkas” clothes and goods of excellent quality.
24. <https://www.facebook.com/stella.ivanov.3?fref=ts>
25. Some comments are very hostile, e.g. “enough with the propaganda on the fraternal friendship and Slavic relationship. We see, how Slavic brothers are being slaughtered in the Ukraine. The interest of Russia is not to keep on the international agreements and to overtake the neighboring territories of the states with Russian minorities,
- http://www.dnevnik.bg/bulgaria/2014/08/26/2368889_ministerstvo_na_otbranata_oficialno_obiavi_rusiia_za/
26. The Russian way of drinking strong alcohol – the whole glass, impressed Bulgarians. They call it *наекс* and comment that Russians are drinking like that.
27. <http://www.plovdiv-online.com/plovdiv/item/49275-m%D0%B0gwosnitzi-pr%D0%B0sht%D0%B0t-bsp-v-nebitieto>
28. See an “anti-Stanishev” essay alluding to his “Russianness” and affiliation with socialism in a very negative way:
- <http://www.svobodata.com/page.php?pid=12422&rid=20>

29. The definitions and the very concepts of the ‘Russian’ and ‘Soviet’ have been thoroughly studied by academic scholars in many discourses (Kamusella, 2012). Still, even in Russia *русский* and *российский* remain vague notions.

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