**Rhetoric of Russian protest movement in a global context**

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Numerous public protests all over the world, starting from Arab Spring, Spanish Indignants, Occupy movement in New York, and followed by other uprisings in more than 80 countries were related by world media rather to economic crisis than to political situation in a particular country where demonstrations and revolts took place. The Guardian reported in the beginning of 2012: the protest camps have become a sign of outrage at economic inequality. Rhetoric of global protests developed in social networks and at the rallies or protest camps, being vivid, spontaneous and aggressive.

The essential content of these protest actions is expressed by formula “We are 99%” commonly used by Occupy movement and referring to unequal distribution of wealth among the population. This formula obviously implies the idea of economic equality and fairness, incorporating protest movements’ rhetoric into traditional for western democracy “fairness agenda” associated with various fields, such as state reforms, or international law, or citizen participation. The notion of “fairness” became a pivotal concept which shaped the public global discussion urged by the protest movements. Though the term is not homogeneous in its meaning and can be used in different ways by different actors and for various agendas, the context of global protest was mostly appealing to “fairness” traditionally explained via “justice” and ‘legitimacy” and primarily implemented in the economic sphere.

Russian protest movement aroused in response to parliamentary and presidential electoral campaigns and elections deemed as “unfair”. Judging on this key word we can claim that at the cognitive level of speech expression Russian protests are to a certain extent comparable to other world movements, expressing their discontent with unfairness. But due to language and mentality the main concern articulated by the Russian protesters in social networks or during the rallies was not of economic or even political nature, but rather corresponding with key concepts of Russian culture laying in the grounds of Russian national worldview, “culture laden” words in terms of A. Wierzbicka.

As opposed to main European languages, Russian concept of “fairness’ is not directly linked with the concept of law. Russian fairness strongly relies upon concepts of morality and traditions. While referring to any action as “unfair”, Russian language implies obligatory moral evaluation. This semantic subtlety produced the placards with key words “shame” or “immorality” which together with the expression of personal emotions like “I do care” or “He has stolen your vote” visibly prevailed on demands of legality of elections. Discussion of probable negotiations with authorities in opposition media was also conducted not in terms of law, but in terms of a better choice.

Understanding themselves in a global context, Russian protesters replied to “We are 99%” with a motto “We are 146%”, ironically referring to the electoral fraud, which again is evaluated not as a violation of law, but as an immoral action. And this dialogue between slogans reveals the same implicit contradiction between discourse of protest in Russia and other world. As well as “You don’t even imagine us”, another language evidence of emotional discontent and even insult.

Unlike global protests, involving people from low-income strata, Russian protesters, particularly those who participated in the rallies in Moscow, apparently belonged to middle-class as described in several pilot researches implemented by different sociologists, Olga Kryshtanovskaya for instance. Presumably as a consequence, the Russian protesters did not produce any economic demands, while in a period prior to electoral campaigns economic concerns discursively prevailed over political interests.

Neither did they produce any significant political utterances, neither in nor in speeches by leaders of several parties, mostly focusing on general idea of discontent and protest understood as opposing to everything with personal reverence to Churov and Putin. Russian protest ideology was split, and people coming to rallies faced the necessity of choice between different rallies conducted in different places and appealing to different values. This choice for many of protesters was unacceptable, therefore they used slogans and placards, neutral in relation to opposition political parties.

That is why placards “Putin, give us a snowy winter back!” or “Hamster straightened shoulders”, both ironical or self-ironical, fall within a context – context of carnival, mockery and destruction by means of comic. Apparently this sort of political utterances is focused on a speakers mental sphere, his or her feeling of discontent and self-irony emerging from understanding the complete absurdity of the situation: blaming authorities in all the troubles. So Russian protest in its rhetorical representation had mostly emotional and aesthetical nature, being different from traditional propaganda and sounding less aggressively, particularly in comparison with Arab Spring.

The fact is that rally is not intended to create new political comprehension. On the contrary, it helps to supports familiar conceptions, and political leader’s performance at the rally serves to inform audience of already developed idea in an intelligible form. Rally demands from the speaker some short capacious speeches and slogans to be written on the sign or a poster. In such laconic forms there are no semitones, only pros and cons, as in speeches of Alexey Navalny, discovered as orator during the protest rallies. Remarkably both Navalny and Putin use at the same communicative model of a rally the same rhetorical devices: shouting into the crowd the identical short exclamations, identical short questions, demanding identical short answers. Yet it is not an oratorical plagiarism, but the rule of a genre. This means that a rally cannot be a part of constructive political dialogue. It is just a way to draw attention to a problem and to keep the supporters.

 Authority and opposition dialogue on rallies was substituted for altercation of slogans and labels: «Russia without Putin and Medved» v. «We trust Putin», «Swindlers and thieves» by Navalny v. «Stop jackaling». Further development of this type of dialogue leads either to revolution (some physical actions at least) when the aggression is splashed out at the peak, or to peaceful negotiations not in the streets or squares, but at the offices. Global context gives us various experiences on this subject, while Russian opposition slowly changes the rhetoric and preferred genres.