

The Image of Russia in the Modern Mass Media Discourse of the United Kingdom

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The image of Russia in the media is one of the essential factors in shaping the opinion of Western society about the country. Despite the fact that mass media political discourse is created by professional journalists, it also reflects the opinions and values of politicians and ordinary citizens. Thus, the image significantly affects the decision-making process of foreign states in relation to Russia.

In the modern age, under the circumstances of globalization and digitalization, an international image of a state plays a crucial role. An impressive image is an important tool for representing the interests of a country on the international arena. The image has an influence on many spheres of cooperation. For example, it can affect an investment flow from abroad, the success of the tourism industry, country's participation in international organizations, etc.

This work is aimed at analyzing the image of Russia in the modern mass media discourse of the United Kingdom created in the current political situation. Some of the already existing researches in the field of Russian image in the British mass media are discussed in this work. Their results are compared with the results of this study. The research is based on the example of articles recently published in the BBC and The Guardian. The purpose of the work is to determine how the special military operation affects the image of Russia created in the mass media discourse of the UK.

There have already been some works concerned with the topic of Russia's image in the British mass media discourse. We have studied some of them, for example, The formation of the image of Russia in the British political mass media discourse by K.P. Posternyak and N.B. Boeva-Omelechko [4], The evolution of the Russian Image in the English discourse by I. Telesheva and I. Denisova [5], and Russia's Portrayal in the Mirror of International Mass Media: The Role of Cultural Context by O.B. Maximova [3], The metaphorical image of Russia in the British media: a corpus research practice by Fedoseeva M.O. [2], The image of Russia in the English-language media by Loginova A.S., Tarasenko V.V [1], and so on. The results presented in these works are quite the same. The image of Russia reflected in the mass media sources of the UK is exclusively negative. Russia is introduced as an aggressive and hostile country. We would like to mention that all these researches were conducted in 2015-2021 years, before the beginning of the special military operation. Yet, their results are in line with the results of our brief analysis of the BBC's and the Guardian's most recent articles. It is notable that Russia has been considerably represented in the media of the UK in recent years. Russia-related articles are highly topical and journalists writing them are prone to give them emotional coloring and subjective evaluation. According to the researches, even before the Ukrainian crisis of 2022, the

depiction of Russia as a hostile country persisted in the mass media discourse, which made it hard to get rid of the stereotypes connected with Russia.

Having analyzed some of the articles published in the BBC News, we made a conclusion that the BBC News makes an effort to seem objective and unbiased in its approach to Russia. Though the authors' attitudes are not expressed directly, as in the articles by the Guardian, the columnists still seek methods to express their disapproval of Russia's policy by means of ironical comments and specially selected quotations.

To draw a final conclusion, we would like to note that an analysis of some articles from the Guardian and the BBC News has shown that a depiction of Russia as an aggressive and unpredictable state has deteriorated, as the articles make pessimistic predictions for the future communication with Russia describing it without certainty. In comparison with the previous researches mentioned in this work, the image of Russia in the mass media of the UK at the background of the Ukrainian crisis seems to have decisively worsened. The tone of the majority of analyzed articles is rather blaming, as the columnists tend to be more opinionated while describing the current situation in Russia and in Ukraine.

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