”Menu po-russki”: Russian as a new commodity in Catalonia

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According to the estimates, this year about a million Russian tourists (or should we say Russian-speaking tourists) are expected to visit Catalonia, while they were only a quarter million in 2009. The 400% growth of Russian(-speaking) tourism within a five-season period has had a considerable and evident impact in shops, restaurants, bars, and all the tourist-oriented services and establishments in Barcelona and on the beach areas of Costa Brava (north of Barcelona) and Costa Daurada (south of Barcelona). The purpose of this case study is to analyze the degree of commodification of Russian language in Catalonia and its vitality during and beyond the tourist season. The study will rely on linguistic landscape fieldwork and interviews with owners of hotels, restaurants, and shops, and Russian tourists, conducted in several tourist destinations in Barcelona and in Costa Brava and Costa Daurada.

Keywords: tourism, Russian, language commodification.