

Title: Linguistic Strategies of the Imperial Appropriation of the Colonized
Author: Yuri Shevchuk, Columbia University

The process of colonization of the subaltern by the imperial center involves a complex set of discursive and linguistic strategies designed to facilitate the cultural assimilation of the non-Russian peoples and eventual loss of their original identity, their full disappearance within the Russian culture. The paper will analyze the most typical mechanisms of language manipulation that engage various levels of language structure (writing and pronunciation, lexical semantics, vocabulary, and syntax) and result in the appropriation of the colonized (in this case study, the colonized is Ukraine and its culture).

The paper will start by outlining three principal types of texts or narratives on Ukraine differentiated from the point of view of their source of origin: 1) the hegemonic master narrative of the empire (primary); 2) the counter-narrative of resistance generated by the colony (secondary); and 3) the outside narrative, originating outside the opposition “imperial center vs colonized periphery” (in this case these are English speaking world (tertiary). The complex and asymmetrical interrelationship between these three types of narratives, on the one hand, and languages (Russian, Ukrainian, and English), on the other, used to create them will then be described.

This in turn will lead to a detailed analysis of specific strategies of language use from (1) spelling, transcription and transliteration of proper names, (2) reconfiguration of the referential meaning of cultural identity designators (*otchizna, otechestviennyi vs vitchyzna, vitchyzniani, ukrainsk'kyi, respublikans'kyi, mistsevyi*, etc.), (3) manipulation with lexical collocability (obligatory attributes for such nouns as *Ukraina, stolytsia, tsentr, respublika*, etc. and privileging of *Radianska (Sovetskaya) Ukraina* over *Ukraine* with no attribute), (4) specific use of syntax (*na Ukrainie vs v Ukrainie; na Ukrainu vs v Ukrainu*).

Implications of this analysis for the teaching of Ukrainian as a foreign language in North American universities will be discussed in the conclusion of the paper.