

**The image of Russia as presented by Russia Today in August-September 2014:
Linguistic and cultural analysis**

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Mass media and information technologies have a substantial impact on their target audience and on the way people perceive the world. We literally live in the information field created and thoroughly developed by mass media. The subjectivity of any information, therefore, is unquestionable. The power of mass media often lies, among other things, in the use of linguistic tools that convey the message, creating a specific image of an event, and thus influencing the receiver's perception of it.

In the present day, taking into account the global political situation, it is of utmost importance to understand what image of the country is shown to the world. Russia Today is a worldwide news channel that focuses primarily on the affairs concerning Russia. Its main aim, as stipulated in the mission statement, is to provide an international audience with the Russian viewpoint on major global events. The necessity of the present research is derived entirely from the aforementioned. Being a channel with over 700 million viewers worldwide, RT has been creating an image of Russia that is internationally recognized and referred to. To study what exactly this image is, how the country is portrayed to the English-speaking world, and what the linguistic tools that helped create this image are, have become the main objectives of this research.

The theoretical basis of the work lies in the sphere of imagology, or the study of images, including those of countries. [1,2] The subject has drawn the attention of specialists in different fields, including culture studies, politics, and social studies. [3,4]. The methodology of the analyses of media discourse is largely owed to the works of T.Dobrosklonskaya. [5] Following her patterns, this study firstly uses content analysis of the lexemes that fall into specific image-creating categories. Secondly, the research goes on to conducting a more profound linguistic analysis on the levels of morphemes, lexemes and syntax. In order to conduct the research, there have been chosen all news texts posted on the official RT website in the period of August-September 2014, which have made up a corpus of 109 texts.

All of the methods enumerated above have brought this study to the following results. Content analysis has proven the main topics to be the involvement of Russia in the events in Ukraine (103 words "Ukraine", 24 words "war", 22 words "Kiev", 8 words "troops" in the total word count), the sanctions imposed on Russia and its counter-sanctions (78 words "sanctions"), and Putin's actions as President of Russia (102 words "Putin", 109 words and derivatives of "President"). One of the topics that have received coverage is the reaction of the Communist party on the events in Russia (40 words and derivatives of "communist"). The relationship with the West has also been discussed (41 words "NATO", 10 words "UN", 4 words "USA", 11 words "America").

Linguistic analysis has given a more detailed picture of Russia's image as presented by RT. Since this channel focuses mainly on presenting the news, its media discourse tends to be strictly informative and formal. However, there are connotations and subliminal messages intertwined into the texts. Thus, Russia is presented as an opposition to the Western democracies, having its own opinion and taking another stand on the global issues. For instance, the statement "...sanctions will protect the Russian gene pool against the low quality drinks" in the context of Russia's counter-sanctions towards main Western beverage producers like Coca-Cola, reveals

the Russian take on the quality of such. Discussing the censorship of the information on the Internet, one of the texts quotes: "*The data must be stored inside our country. Those who have started to panic all want to control the information about our citizens for their own business purposes*". The stress on the fact that "in *our country*", there are different rules than in other parts of the world, is notable. The word "panic" betrays the disregard or derogatory view of the public opinion on the matter. It is also interesting that Donetsk and Lugansk are referred to as "republics", the events of February-March 2014 as "accession of Crimea", thus reiterating Kremlin's viewpoint on these topics.

Overall, the conclusions of the research are as follows. The image of Russia presented by RT is strictly conventional and supporting all the official government's statements on the main issues concerning Russia. Hence, the country is portrayed as a party not involved directly into the civil war in Ukraine, opposing the West on many levels, strong enough to introduce counter-sanctions on Europe and America, and frowning upon the decisions of the Western democracies in connection to the events in Ukraine. Russia is a country that has its own ways of governing and living, and appears in the texts of RT like a strong, independent democratic country. The analyzed texts, however formal, convey these messages mainly through the use of specific lexemes on the levels of connotations, associations and metaphors.

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