

Salvatore Del Gaudio

## ON THE NATURE OF "SURŽYK": DIACHRONIC ASPECTS

### 1. Introduction

In the last decade, interest in Suržyk has considerably increased, gaining a central position in the debates about language policy, language planning and sociolinguistic issues concerning Ukraine.

Various attempts to classify Suržyk have thus far been made, from a perspective determined by the branch (field) of studies and the interest of the researcher.

The majority of publications have interpreted this "mixed language" as the product of causality (circumstances) - especially in the first prescriptive writings on this topic -, or have tried, from a functional perspective, to subordinate it to specific categories: *prostorečie* (Ukr. *prostoriččja*) (Trub 2000: 52); *pidgin* / *creole* etc. Almost all the studies about this mainly oral "language" variety have adopted a mere synchronic perspective, even when trying to provide a "typology" (Bilaniuk 2005: 121-135) of this non standard language.

After a few months spent in Ukraine to accomplish my field work, I reached the conclusion that this presumed mixed language is even more complex than the majority of studies so far available seem to suggest.

On the basis of practical and theoretical activity aimed at understanding the origin and causes (development) of Suržyk, I also came to the conclusion that, in order to arrive at a reasonable explanation of this phenomenon, one should consider other parameters, such as the regional (dialectal) - diachronic developments of the Ukrainian language itself, which contributed to the formation of this so called "Russian-Ukrainian" hybrid.

Here, I will focus on the interpretation of some diachronic language features, leaving aside other aspects that would go far beyond the scope of this paper.

Diachronic insights and references might not always be as accurate as language historians would expect. However, I will provide concrete evidence that Suržyk is not exclusively the product of language contact, namely the admixture effect of Russian linguistic elements on Ukrainian but also the result of other factors. This multilayered language phenomenon can be seen as the manifestation of different stages in the historic development of the modern

Ukrainian language, in which dialect continua, fossilized Russian expressions, and lexical items all interact in creating this too often stigmatized non standard language variety.

In addition, I shall introduce the concept of “prototype” Suržyk, more appropriate for a classification of my data, better conveying the idea of Suržyk’s specific, recurrent and generalized linguistic features.

## 2. Current definitions of Suržyk and the concept of “Prototype” Suržyk

In this section I shall compare four quite recent definitions of Suržyk. I do so, not because I wish to follow a certain linguistic tradition, but rather as a necessary attempt to delineate the object of my investigation. I will then introduce a new concept: that of “prototype” Suržyk.

### 2.1. Let us first begin with four established definitions:

1. “... *Ukrainian and Russian, in the form of a hybrid – surzhyk – a non standard language that incorporates elements of both*”. (Flier 1998: 113)

This first pragmatic definition originates from Flier (*ibidem*), and synthetically renders the idea of what people mean by the term “Suržyk”; it is easily comprehensible, especially for the novice. However, its simplicity is somehow inadequate to render justice to such a complex phenomenon.

2. Суржик (букв. – суміш жита з пшеницею, ячменю з вівсом *іт. ін.*, а також борошно з такого зерна) – мова, в якій штучно об’єднані без дотримання літ. норм елементи різних мов. Ужив. переважно щодо укр. Просторіччя, засміченого невмотивовано запозиченими, (внаслідок укр. – рос. Інтерференції). (...) Суржик – це збіднена мова, позбавлена нац. колориту, краси й виразності. Найпоширеніший у побутового мовленні, звідки проникає на сторінку газет і журналів, книжок і брошур. *Боротьба з С.* – одне з гол. завдань у галузі підвищення культури укр. мови (...). (Ukrajins’ka mova. Encyklopedija 2000)

This second definition can be seen as an attempt to summarize the theoretical views on Suržyk expressed in articles published in the last years of the 1990s, and resembles the formulation made by their Ukrainian authors. There is still the underlying idea that this language mixture has been artificially constructed, without logic, or organizational discourse. The attempt to classify it as a kind of *prostorečie*, at least with reference to its function in Ukrainian society, clearly derives from Trub’s article. The bias of dealing with a “broken,” impure and

inadequate "language," expression of local folklore, is still apparent, along with the purist call to fight back and inhibit its development.

3. *"...поширена в Україні розм. назва ненормат. індивід. мовлення певної особи та соціолекту певної групи, що будуються на основі змішування, інтерференції елементів двох і більше мов". (Taranenko 2004: 665-668)*

This third point represents only one of the several aspects of the ample space dedicated to this topical question in Ukraine. Above, I have established the salient points for our discussion; namely, that Suržyk is still considered by and large as kind of "oral speech," pertaining to specific individuals or to specific social groups, the consequence of the interference and mixture of elements of two or more languages.

4. *"Suržyk conceptually unites various kinds of language mixing, serving as the antithesis to the concept of linguistic purity. Suržyk started as an informal term and now figures prominently in public discourse, a key player in the post-independence struggle over language values". (Bilaniuk 2005: 104)*

Point four is a successful attempt at classification: for the first time, a definition clearly formulates and emphasises the fact that the label "Suržyk" covers more than one kind of language mix, regardless of the degree of interference, and the language(s) involved. This definition supports my view that it was in fact crucial to arrive at a reliable linguistic classification of Suržyk, necessary to determine the kind of "language" under investigation.

2.2. My second step consists in setting specific parameters for an appraisal of Suržyk; to do so, a new classification concept must be introduced. The term "Prototype" Suržyk seems to most appropriately convey the idea that there exists a Suržyk "Typus," serving as a stable medium for everyday communication, functioning as L1, particularly for those speakers who do not have any other language resource to properly communicate. This Prototype Suržyk shows recurrent cross-linguistic morpho-syntactic constructions and basic lexical items, and extends over broad regional areas, from East to West. There are, of course, regional and local variations. But if these variations are compared against the underlying linguistic "system" of Suržyk, it is evident that there are sufficient general characteristics to permit communication between speakers from separate regions. Obviously, regions which, historically, were under the Russian Empire have a larger number of lexical and grammatical items in common than those in the South-western part of the country. Notwithstanding,

in the course of my field work I noted many basic similarities, even in regions where people would be expected to use only Ukrainian<sup>1</sup>.

### 3. Levels of Investigation

3.1. This observation of language praxis in Suržyk speakers, and my examination of their linguistic features, leads me to suggest that, for an appropriate description of this essentially oral speech of Ukraine, three levels need to be considered:

A) A diachronic linguistic perspective since Suržyk contains language elements representative of older stages in the development of Ukrainian. There is evidence of grammatical and lexical features functional both in Russian and Ukrainian throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A contemporary speaker, coming from a rather strong language planning (a purist's) perspective, would consider such forms as exclusively "Russianisms<sup>2</sup>" or Suržyk.

B) Dialect change: dialectal partitions along with dialect continua played, and still play, a determining role in the formation not only of the literary Ukrainian language, but also in the diachronic composition of Suržyk.

C) Suržyk is obviously also the result of prolonged language contact<sup>3</sup>, synchronic as well as diachronic, where specific linguistic, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic parameters have contributed to the creation of this non-standard

<sup>1</sup> The synchronic results as well as the dialectal aspects contributing to the formation of a generalized Suržyk type will not be treated, as previously mentioned, in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> One may object that the 19<sup>th</sup> century "Russianisms" could have also been the result of a strong Russian Influence which culminated in Imperial Russia with the edicts against the use of the Ukrainian language (*Valuev's circular 1863* and *Emskyj ukaz 1876*). To this purpose I wish to remind that several presumed "Russianisms", which I prefer to define local (dialectal) elements of a not fully standardized "Ukrainian", appeared in texts even prior to 1654 (the year marking the "unification" of Ukraine with Moscow). Moreover these elements can be found in texts of Western Ukrainian provenience, dating back to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. in territories directly subject to the Polish influence. (cf. Ohienko 2004: 146-162). These presumed "Russian" forms, common to the "Ukrainian" language well before Ševčenko's and Kotljarev'skyj's works, can be considered as grammatical and lexical components of the different Ukrainian varieties before standardization took place. These lexemes are also reported in Hrinčenko's dictionary. A final remark concerns the changed language consciousness of contemporary speakers of standard Ukrainian. In course of time, forms apparently extraneous to the current way of speaking, have been perceived as either Russianisms or Suržyk.

<sup>3</sup> It is clear that under the generic label of "language contact" and sociolinguistic causes, a whole series of sub aspects need to be taken into account: the role of the Russian adstrat; the situations in which code-switching and code alternation are determinant, just as the importance of linguistic accommodation. To what extent can be spoken of interference and fossilization etc.

language, or, in more recent terminology, *fused lects* (Auer 1999: 309-332) / (Bilaniuk 2005: 122)

3.2. As already stated above, in this paper I shall concentrate upon specific diachronic aspects of Suržyk, or probably Ukrainian, postponing discussion of the last two parameters for later occasions.

I will undertake to demonstrate the relative abundance and recurrence of lexical and grammatical items which contributed to the formation of Prototype Suržyk, too often identified as either Russian elements in Ukrainian and/or stigmatized as Suržyk. My investigation is based on authoritative literary samples, derived from late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century literary sources.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. Examples and interpretation

In this section, I shall present a few language samples from literary texts with recurring equivalents in the variety defined above as "Prototype Suržyk." A linguistic commentary about the nature of these presumed Russian words in Ukrainian, or hypothetically Suržyk, will complete the section.

##### 4.1. Examples

###### From: Natalka Poltavka<sup>5</sup>

###### • **Natalka**

1. *Єсть* же люди, що... (First act, 1<sup>st</sup> scene, p. 218)
2. *У нас єсть пословиця.* (First act, 2<sup>nd</sup> scene, p. 220)
3. Ось підіть лиш в неділю або в *празник по Полтаві*, то побачите..., що і *розказати* не можна. (ibidem)
4. Він *не виноват*. (First act, 4<sup>th</sup> scene, p. 228)
5. *В надєжду* на бога. (ibidem)
6. І він жив і так же пам'ятує *об нас*, та боїться *вернуться*. (ibidem)
7. *Я жизнь* свою *ненавиджу*... (Second act, 10<sup>th</sup> scene, p. 245)

###### • **Терпулыча**

8. *Лучче* б була я умерла... (First act; 4<sup>th</sup> scene, p. 228-229)
9. Чотири *годи* уже. (ibidem)

<sup>4</sup> It is highly probable that documents of the last two or three centuries may contain traces, if not more evident features, of this presumed language mixture. At the present stage however archive documentation has not yet been investigated.

<sup>5</sup> Cf.: Іван Котляревський 1982. *Поетичні твори, драматичні твори, листи*. Київ: Наукова думка.

10. ... *замуж* тебе *оддати*. (ibidem)  
 11. Я так *привикла* к своєму безталанню... (First act, 6<sup>th</sup> scene; p. 232)

• **Petro**

12. Я нарочно прийшов *сюда*... (Second act, 4<sup>th</sup> scene, p. 238)

• **Mykola**

13. *Чого ж* ти не своїм голосом крикнув? (Second act, 4<sup>th</sup> scene, p. 238)  
 14. Четвертий уже *год*. (ibidem)  
 15. *Подожди ж* мене тут. (ibidem)  
 16. Наталка *обіщала на час сюда* вийти. (Second act, 9<sup>th</sup> scene, p. 243)

**From: Moskal'-Čarivnyk**

• **Fyntyk**

17. Знаю *трохи-немного*. (First act; 1<sup>st</sup> scene; p. 252)  
 18. *Добре-хорошо*. (ibidem)

• **Tetjana**

19. ... *а для чого* мене любите? (First act; 1<sup>st</sup> scene; p. 253)  
 20. Я *боюсь* бога і люблю свого чоловіка. (ibidem)  
 21. *Хазяїна нема дома*. (First act; 2<sup>nd</sup> scene; p. 254)  
 22. *Три неділі* уже тому (First act; 11<sup>th</sup> scene; p. 272)

**From: Šel'menko-Denščyk**<sup>6</sup>

• **Šel'menko**

23. ... так *тогді* вже, тее-то, і *охвицери* до мене ... (First act, 3<sup>rd</sup> scene, p. 226)  
 24. Та й я *проти* нього... (First act, 4<sup>th</sup> scene, p. 229)  
 25. Ради *стараться*... (First act, 4<sup>th</sup> scene, p. 232)  
 26. Нема та й нема! А кріпко було його *треба-нада*. (Second act, 1<sup>st</sup> scene, p. 235)

**From: Mykola Džerja**<sup>7</sup>

• **Ніч на Дніпрі**

27. Усі *ждали* (323)

<sup>6</sup> Cf.: Григорій Квітка-Основ'яненко 2005. *Повісті - П'єси*. Харків: Фоліо.

<sup>7</sup> Cf.: Іван Нечуй-Левицький (1988). *Микола Джеря: Повісті, оповідання, нариси*. Київ: Веселка.

28. Поналивали *стакани* чаю. (321)  
 29. І високе та глибоке синє *іонсьське* небо. (321)  
 30. *Бо од* Києва *до* Вишгорода гори оступились... (321)  
 31. На radoшax постанoвали *їхать* гуртом... (321)

• **Повість: Микола Джеря**

32. ...стелятьcя чудoві *городи*... (17)

• **Баба Параска та баба Палажка**

33. *Іду я така сердита* ...А Солов їха до мене: *Чого* це ти не скажеш...(246)  
 34. Я *взяла* та й зайняла постать серед різи; думаю: „*лучче* я *одступлюсь од* тебе“. (246)

**From: Ševčenko's private correspondence<sup>8</sup>**

35. „*Твого лиха я не возьму на себе, а свого тобі не оддам. Так що ж з тих писем? Папір збавлять та й годі. Воно, бач, і так і не так, а все таки лучше, коли получили, прочитаєш хоч одно слово рідне ...*  
 36. „*Ще письмо, котре найдеш у моєму письмі запечатане, оддай Івану Степановичу Димовському і поклонись йому од мене*“.

4.2. The table below gives a schematic representation of the speech parts taken from the examples above.

**SCHEME OF ARCHAISMS<sup>9</sup>**

**NOUNS:** воздух, время - времня, глава – голова, год, город; дурак, жизнь, замуж, квіток/цвіток, краска, лъкарство, мыр/мир, мысль, надежда, *письмо*, побъды, пожар, пословиця, празник, совът, стакан, старик, труд, тыква, фамилія, *хазяїн*, час, шутка, язык .

**PRONOUNS:** который, кто/хто.

<sup>8</sup> Cf.: Тарас Шевченко 1964. *Листи, нотатки, фол'клорні записи.* (= *Повне зібрання творів у шести томах. Том 6*). Київ: Академія Наук Укр. РСР. See also: Bilanjuk (2005: 109).

<sup>9</sup> Some of the words reported in the table stem from Hnatjuk's paper (Hnatjuk 2006: 44-48). They are representative of the kind of language in which Skovoroda (1722-1794) wrote his philosophical and literary works. Hnatjuk's contribution has revealed particularly useful for our argumentation.

**ADJECTIVES:** общий, красный, прежній, древняя, любезный; дово́лний\ доволен – задово́лений, каждый/кождий, украше́нный.

**VERBS:** вернуться; *возьму*; ждали; їхати; начати/начинати; обіщала; *оддам*; одступлюсь; подожди; *получили*; протів; привикла; ненави́джу; оддати; оставити/оставляти; дьлать, кушать, стараться; строїти - построить, приказал, обучал; єсть.

**PREPOSITIONS:** от/од + gen.; к + dat.; по + dat.; об + acc.

**ADVERBS:** добре-хорошо; сюда/сюди; лучше/лучче/лутче; в конце; много (= багато), нельзя, где, ко(г)да, то(г)да - тогді; трохи - немного.

**PARTICLES and Conjunctions:** да “та”, если/если, но, будто, или (disjunctive conjunctions)

**NUMERALS:** первый; четвертый.

**PREDICATIVES:** У нас єсть; треба - нада.

### 4.3. Notes about the language

These examples show evident lexical and grammatical forms which a contemporary speaker/reader would classify as either Russian influx on Ukrainian or, worse, stigmatize as Suržyk.<sup>10</sup>

If we compare the sentences above with contemporary prototype Suržyk, we immediately notice striking grammatical and lexical similarities. Although these examples do not present a complete picture of all the lexical items which have equivalents in the modern sub-language, such phrases nonetheless recur quite frequently; in addition, they show doublets used in folk speech, as in examples (17) and (18).

<sup>10</sup> It is worth pointing out that, even among Ukrainians with a higher education or philological degree, this “purist” attitude towards language is quite popular. In their view, all language forms *not* corresponding to the contemporary classification criteria of standard literary Ukrainian are immediately dismissed as Suržyk, without considering the possibility that such forms could have been, at some stage, integral parts of the Ukrainian lexicon and grammar.

However, questions concerning psycholinguistic factors affecting people’s language selection and evaluation, as well as the role of linguistic consciousness will be not dealt with here.



Certain characters' speech does contain more Russified set phrases and/or pet phrases, such as *"тес-то як його,"* etc. - such as Voznyj's, for example. These are not at all infrequent in some elder Suržyk speakers; however, I deliberately did not report their language in order to avoid criticism from scholars who maintain that specific characters are well-known for using this kind of "mixed language".

Even Ševčenko's language, particularly when he spoke (wrote) in unofficial situations, reveals traces of features common to a whole generation of authors, still found in contemporary prototype Suržyk. Scholars have various views on the use of certain features, perceived as Russianisms. Bilaniuk (2005:109) in her most recent publication suggests: *"Despite Ševčenko's desire for Ukrainian, he included quite a few Russianisms in his own letters to his brother, so that a reader today could even label some passages as Suržyk. But because the Ukrainian language was not yet standardized, it is not really appropriate to call this language Suržyk."*

However, a few lines later, she does not exclude the possibility that we are in presence of dialectal elements<sup>11</sup>. (...) *"I have italicized non-standard forms that would have been seen as Russian-influenced according to the contemporary Ukrainian standard, although some of these could be interpreted as dialectisms that happen to be similar to Russian"*.

The selection criterion of lexical items, with special reference to the nouns, was made according to two basic principles. First of all, some very common and recurring words were presented, for prototype speakers of Suržyk would not use a particularly complex vocabulary. These words are still in use in present-day Suržyk.

We should also bear in mind that many of these words have co-existed for long time with a doublet. In fact, words such as *язик, краска, цвіток, голова* etc. had a concurrent form; e.g.: *мова, фарба, квіток, глава*; which was eventually accepted in the normative Ukrainian lexicon, and became the only standard available form.

Indeed, the opinion expressed by Hnatjuk (2006:47) confirms the postulation: *"(...) наведені слова, зокрема й церковнослов'янськи, широко вживалися в народі поряд з іншими синоніми, частина з яких увійшла до складу сучасної української літературної мови"*.

Other nouns, as for example, *"хазяїн"*, though still part of the standard Ukrainian lexicon, are often replaced, due to their formal (and sometimes semantic) similarity to the Russian equivalent, by a term felt more appropriate;

---

<sup>11</sup> Once again the term dialect has to be regarded in its broader sense. Since the "dialect(s)" here meant is the way Ukrainian people indeed spoke in the area subject to the Russian empire, and these forms were considered part of their language.

in our case, with the word “*господар*“, wrongly considered more Ukrainian; therefore a sentence like (21) can be easily designated as Surżyk.

The adjectives may present the following suffixes: *-ый, -ая, -яя*, etc. The examples reported in the scheme derive from Skovoroda’s writing; however, such forms can be found, in gradually decreasing way, throughout 19<sup>th</sup> century Ukrainian literature. The modern reader may be inclined to judge such forms as being Russianisms or Surżyk, overlooking the fact that even in normative grammars of the Ukrainian Language, these forms are defined as “literary, stylistic” devices of poetry of the past.

The short form of adjectives appears to have a much wider diffusion than would be the case in contemporary standard Ukrainian. Surżyk speakers do not show wide use of the short forms, but they are likely to say: *доволен/довольна* in place of *задоволений*.

Presence of the adjectival affix *-ен/н*, can also to be seen as a typical characteristic of Surżyk.

Indefinite pronouns show the pair *каждый/кожий*, still in use in some dialectal varieties. So far, I have no recorded Surżyk examples of the standard Ukrainian *кожний*.

The most striking verbal features, apart from some clear infinitive forms kept in Russian, but not in standard Ukrainian, as in the doublet: *начати/начинати* – *почати/починати*, are undoubtedly the infinitive suffix in *-ть*, distinctive of several dialectal varieties, and consequently, of Surżyk. The past tense of the masculine is marked by the ending in *-л*; even though Surżyk can occasionally have two concurring endings, with clear prevalence of the Ukrainian *-в*.

Finally, the verb “*получить*“ found in Ševčenko’s letter in its past tense form, is still quite widespread, and rooted in the speech of several western Ukrainians, whose language otherwise can be identified with Ukrainian<sup>12</sup>.

Adverbs and prepositions also offer interesting points. The majority of scholars who have considered the nature of Surżyk, would affirm that prepositions as *от / од*<sup>13</sup>, *к* (instead of their standard Ukrainian counterparts *від, до* etc.), and the alternation of adverbs like *сюда/сюди* etc. are to be attributed to a rather strong Russian influence or adstratum. Literary texts seem to imply a totally different outcome, since they provide instances which perfectly reflect the actual Surżyk situation, where we can have either “*сюда or сюди, добре*

<sup>12</sup> I wish to remind that the use of this verb, especially in its meaning of “if it will happen / *если получится*“, belongs to those prototypical Surżyk (recurrent) features, which I noticed in the speech of people coming from Western regions, and whose language was substantially Ukrainian.

<sup>13</sup> In connection with the issue whether or not the phonetic realization of *од* instead of *от* depends on the phonological context, can be confused, since both in Surżyk as well as in dialectal/archaic Ukrainian it occurs without a specific constrain; as in (34)

*and/or хорошо*“, or even both possibilities alternating in the same statement. It is interesting to observe the prepositional phrases expressed by *no* + dat.; and *ob* + acc.; the former occurs mainly in modern Russian, though its use is still mentioned in some Ukrainian grammars and dictionaries, even though a contemporary pure Ukrainian speaker would be unlikely to use such a construction, considered non standard.

The specification of a topic used to be expressed in Ukrainian also by means of *o* + acc., although this construction is quite rare even in Suržyk.

The use of the conjunctions and particles reported above is characteristic in Suržyk; in fact, we seldom hear, at least in the varieties examined, the following: *але, або, та, коли* etc., but rather their corresponding archaisms *ес(т)ли, но, или, да*<sup>14</sup> and so on, just as *когда* expressing a temporal adverb will often replace *коли*. However, it's important to remember that, in this respect, similar forms could be interchangeable in Russian, also; for example, *коли* (with the stress placed on the first syllable) is considered to be a colloquial and obsolescent synonym of *если*. (Wade 1992: 501).

Similar cases do underline the close historic-cultural and linguistic ties of the eastern Slavic group of languages.

There are nonetheless due exceptions to suggested patterns; for example, suržyk will not select the adverb *нельзя*, preferring to it its Ukrainian semantic equivalent *не можна*; perhaps because the former is not suitable to an economic way of speaking, where the negation is simply expressed by the same predicative form preceded by a negation. *Багато*, on the other hand, seems to enjoy a larger success than *много*, at least in some areas or individual speakers, although both may recur in the same oral text.

With more explicit reference to sentences taken from Skovoroda's works, as in the "Aesop's Fable" (Hnatiuk 2006: 45 - 46), we are likely to find such sentences as "*Разговор, называемый алфавит, или Букварь мира*" – or further (...) "*для учеников поэтики (...)*".

Or else the wide usage of the word "*фамилія*", as in (37a.): "*Имя ему Фридрик. Родовое же, или фамильное, прозвание, или, как обычно в народъ говорят, фамилія*".

Apart from evident lexical forms common to modern Russian, we can notice in these examples a tendency to express the genitive singular of masculine nouns in *-а*; and the genitive plural of masculine nouns in *-ов*, in contrast to modern Ukrainian, where we have *-ів*. These endings are typical of some Suržyk varieties, and they represent specific dialectal features<sup>15</sup> of the Charkiv area.

<sup>14</sup> The conjunction *да*, corresponding to standard Ukrainian *та*, is not used, at least in Suržyk, any longer with this function but only as a particle, whose Ukrainian counterpart is *так*.

The use of an imperfective passive participle in its adjectival function “*называемый*” adheres to the contemporary Russian model.

## 5. The Convergence of Archaisms and Surżyk

The codification of the term Surżyk is to be attributed to Hrinčenko's (1909) dictionary, and even if it existed prior to that time, it designated a concrete mixture of “mixed grains or flour made thereof.” This rural concept was gradually extended to serve as metaphor denoting “language mixing.”

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, well before the Emperor's edicts (1863 - Valuev; 1876 - Emskyj) officially forbidding the use of the Ukrainian language, the relationship between the linguistic – dialectal boundary of Russian and Ukrainian was quite different from the one we observe today. One could argue along with Shevelov (1966) that before the Ukrainian language became relatively well established, especially after the embodiment of Galician elements (from 1876 until approximately 1920), supra-regional dialectal features typical of the Northern and South-Eastern regions played a considerable role, as a result of the geo-political and cultural partition of the country. To put it with Shevelov (1966:2): “*Hingegen gewann das Problem der geographischen Schichtungen um so größere Bedeutung, weil es durch die politische Trennung der ukrainischen Länder noch verschärft wurde...* “. And a few lines further: (...)“*Von der Kraft mundartlicher Einflüsse auf die Schriftsprache mag jene Tatsache ein beredtes Zeugnis ablegen, daß der Autor in einer unlängst herausgegebenen Übersicht über die ukrainischen Mundarten nicht nur jeden Typ, sondern sogar fast jeden Untertyp der ukrainischen Dialekte durch Abschnitte aus den Werken der Schriftsteller des 19./20. Jahrhunderts illustrieren konnte. Denn diese Schriftsteller haben, obwohl sie sich der Schriftsprache bedienen, den Text teilweise absichtlich, manchmal aber auch unbewusst so sehr durch Züge ihrer lokalen Mundart gefärbt, daß sie einem Dialektologen als Material dienen können.*“ (ibidem)

Shevelov's opinion can only support the thesis that specific Ukrainian dialectal elements<sup>16</sup>, carried along in the speech of ordinary people, gradually resulted in the formation of that (mainly oral) language, later to be called “Surżyk”.

<sup>16</sup> By the term “dialectal” here, in its broader sense, is roughly meant the kind of Ukrainian (even the one used in prose) as it was spoken and written in the area between Kyjiv and Charkiv, including Poltava and, to a lesser extent, the area around Čerkasy in the first half of the nineteenth century. It should be reminded that the newly founded University of Charkiv (1805) was actually the only influential cultural centre where the Ukrainian literature and culture was somehow cultivated.

It's worth remembering that an entire series of words and grammatical constructions, as listed above, were perceived in those days as part of the Ukrainian-Russian common stock, whereas nowadays they are stigmatized either as Surżyk, or dismissed as Russian elements in Ukrainian. (Hnatjuk 2006:45- 47)

Ohnienko's view (2004: 328 – 329), in his paragraph dedicated to Ukrainian archaisms, offers useful support of the argument that archaisms have contributed to the formation of Surżyk, and that they constitute part of its lexicon and grammatical constructions. He writes: "*Архаїзми словникові з бігом часу позникали зовсім з нашої мови (...)*".

A few lines further he observes "*(...) Проте архаїчних форм у нашій мові позосталося немало, тільки ми не відчуваємо їх за архаїзми. - Говірки наші, особливо західно – українські,<sup>17</sup> переповнені різними архаїзмами (...)*" And then, speaking about the choice made by some literary men in trying to reproduce particular stylistic effects in translating, for example, Shakespeare or the Bible, he adds: "*Громадянство не підтримало цю Кулішеву ідею про староруську мову, вбачаючи в таких архаїзмах просто церковнослов'янізми або москалізми*".

A final remark substantially confirms the theory that maintains that an evaluation error has led us to regard apparently Russian forms solely as the result of interference, and the major cause of Surżyk.

In fact, he concludes: "*(...) У нас наші архаїзми, коли вони однакові з виразами російськими, зуть русизмами, а це погляд зовсім не науковий (...)*".

However, it remains a difficult task, even for language historians, to draw a neat boundary between those features which can be considered part of the Ukrainian language, and those which pertain to Russian.

## 6. Conclusion

In this article, I have tried to demonstrate that several expressions, words and grammatical constructions, at first sight of dubious (spurious) origin, represent nothing other than older stages of the Ukrainian language. During the long process of formation and emancipation of Ukrainian, these language fragments have gradually converged to form that non-standard speech which I have defined "prototype Surżyk" with regard to its constituent morpho-syntactic elements. The introduction of this new concept was necessary in order to present a proper socio-linguistic evaluation of the acquired language data (delimited and classified on the basis of specific language traits, peculiar of this mainly oral

<sup>17</sup> Even though Western Ukrainian dialects keep archaic features, here Ohnienko's opinion can be, without hindrance, extended to the dialectal areas object of the present study.

language variety which serves as the true medium of expression for many people).

Finally, I am convinced that Suržyk needs to be investigated along three research directions: a) on a synchronic level within the language contact theory, and to a lesser extent sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic; b) in a dialectological perspective, for an interaction between standard Ukrainian and dialectal/regional subdivisions has always existed; and c) according to the diachronic axis, using the meagre material available: literary sources and, wherever possible, not easily accessible documents/manuscripts.

Although this paper has not explored the full scope of all three points, the evidence I have presented and analysed in support of point (c) clearly reveals something of the true nature of Suržyk.

### Literature

- Auer, Peter 1999. "From Codeswitching via Language Mixing to Fused Lects: Towards a Dynamic Typology of Bilingual Speech", *International Journal of Bilingualism* 3 (4), 309-332.
- Bilaniuk, Laada 1997. "Speaking of Surzhyk: Ideologies and Mixed Languages", *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* XXI, 1-2, 93-117.
- Bilaniuk, Laada 2004. "A typology of Surzhyk: mixed Ukrainian-Russian language", *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 8 (4), 409-425.
- Bilaniuk, Laada (2005) *Contested Tongues: Language Politics and Cultural Correction in Ukraine*, Cornell University Press.
- Del Gaudio, Salvatore (2006). „Vom ukrainisch-russischen Sprachkontakt zum Suržyk“, Peter Cichon (Hrsg.) *Gelebte Mehrsprachigkeit. Akten des Wiener Kolloquiums zur individuellen und sozialen Mehrsprachigkeit, 5./6.XI. 2005, Wien*, 100-112.
- Flier, Michael S. 1998. „Surzhyk: The Rules of Engagement“, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* XXII, 113-136.
- Geist, Katharina 2003. „Суржик как стилистический прием в современной украинской литературе, *Nonstandardlexik in der Ukraine. Aktuelle Situation und Aspekte der Forschung*, Wien. Unpublished PhD Dissertation.
- Horbatsch, Olexa 1988. „Das ukrainisch-russische Sprachgemisch ("suržyk") und seine stilistische Funktion im Werk von Volodymyr Vynnyčenko und Olexander Kornijčuk“, *Slavistische Studien zum X. Internationalen Slavistenkongreß in Sofia*. Köln-Wien, 25-41.
- Shevelov, George Y. 1966. *Die ukrainische Schriftsprache 1798 – 1965*. Wiesbaden.
- Reuther, Tilmann 2006. „Zur sprachlichen Situation in der Ukraine: Ukrainisch und Russisch in der Ostukraine und in Kiev 1991-2005“, *Wiener Slavistischer Almanach, Sonderband 65*, Wien, 295-313.

- Гнатюк Л., 2006. "То якою ж мовою писав Григорій Сковорода?", *Диво-слово* 3, 44-48.
- Гринченко, Б.Д. 1909. *Словарь украинского языка*, Том IV, Киев, 231.
- Квітка-Основ'яненко, Г. 2005. *Повісті - П'єси*. Харків: «Фоліо».
- Котлярєвський І., 1982. *Поетичні твори, драматичні твори, листи*, Київ: Наукова думка.
- Лингвистический энциклопедический словарь* 1990. Москва.
- Масенко, Л. 2004. *Мова і суспільство*. Київ.
- Нечуй-Левицький, І. 1988. *Микола Джеря: Повісті, оповідання, нариси*, Київ: Веселка
- Огієнко, І. 2004. *Історія української літературної мови*, Київ.
- Тараненко, О. 2000. "Просторіччя.", *Українська мова. Енциклопедія*. Київ, 498.
- Шевченко, Тарас 1964. *Листи, нотатки, фол`клорні записи (= Повне зібрання творів у шести томах. Том 6*. Київ: Академія Наук Укр. РСР).
- Труб, В. 2000. "Явище «суржик» як форма просторіччя в ситуації двомовності", *Мовознавство*, 1, 46-58.
- Українська мова. Енциклопедія* 2000. Київ: Українська Енциклопедія, 616.
- Українська мова. Енциклопедія* 2004. Київ: Українська Енциклопедія, 665-668.
- Флаєр, Майкл 2000. "Суржик: правила утворення безладу", *Критика*, 6, (32), 16-17.

### Аннотация

#### О природе суржика: диахронический аспект.

В последнем десятилетии значительно вырос интерес к определению суржика как со стороны американских антропологов, так и со стороны лингвистов разных стран.

Еще недавно, этот специфический украинский феномен исследовали почти исключительно в рамках узкого круга параметров, предпочитая синхроническую перспективу. В большинстве публикаций о суржике этот так называемый «смешанный язык» рассматривали как результат случайных факторов; классифицировали его как пиджин/креол или относили его к категории просторечия.

В научных работах последнего времени предпринималась попытка определить «типологию» этого, в основном, устного варианта языка.

В данной статье поставлена цель показать, что природа суржика объясняется не только с точки зрения социолингвистической теории и языкового контакта на синхроническом уровне, но также и в диалектологической и диахронической перспективах. Введение понятия «**прототипа**» суржика очень важно для анализа лингвистических данных, собранных в результате полевого исследования. Это понятие является центральным в предлагаемой статье и важным для исследования феномена суржика.