Commodification of Russian in Cyprus, Finland, and Montenegro

Aneta Pavlenko¹, Natalya Eracleous²

¹Temple University, USA
²University of Cyprus, Cyprus

In the past decade, Russian has emerged as the second most common foreign language (after English) in linguistic landscapes of Cyprus, Finland, and Montenegro. We will draw on the linguistic landscape fieldwork and interviews conducted in Limassol, Cyprus (August 2011), Kotor, Montenegro (May 2012) and Helsinki and Samiland, Finland (January 2014) to examine conditions for valorization and commodification of Russian in the local service industries. Our comparative analysis of linguistic landscapes in the three settings identified both similarities (e.g., in the types and genres of signs) and differences, with differences particularly pronounced in the amount of monolingual Russian texts (greatest in Montenegro) and in the amount and types of errors indicating non-native authorship (greater in Cyprus and Finland). We will link these findings to somewhat different modes of Russian participation in the local economies.

Keywords: linguistic landscapes, Russian, language commodification.