

3 Othering and Positioning During a Time of War

Reigniting Discussions of National Identity

As discussed in Chapter 2, *identity* is already a complex and complicated construct on its own. It is especially difficult to ask participants to discuss something that they are not used to having to meta-discursively consider. However, this discussion becomes simultaneously more difficult but more practiced when a major event occurs that makes individuals question what identity means. A time of war in the home country is just such an event. Individuals are then drawn into rampant Discourses of what it means to be loyal to a place, loyal to ideas and loyal to identities. They are forced to revisit what it means to claim certain identities when the popular discourses around those identities shift and change.

Tensions in Ukraine began to grow stronger from November 2013 through February 2014 when the Maidan (i.e. EuroMaidan) protests were occurring in Kyiv, and they reached an extreme turning point in February 2014 when 88 people were killed during the protests, and former President Yanukovich fled among rumors that he was being supported by Russia's government (Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, September 2014). Following this, Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014, pro-Russian separatists declared an (officially unrecognized) independent republic in Eastern Ukraine in May 2014, and the Malaysia Airlines tragedy occurred in Eastern Ukraine in July 2014, as a result of pro-Russian separatist missile fire.

In August 2014, data collection for the current project began, with the first interviews occurring in September 2014, and continued throughout additional war-related developments, including the election of a new Ukrainian Parliament (with a separate one elected in the East), Putin's confirmation that the annexation of Crimea was purposeful, the coming and going of additional ceasefires in the war zone, and Ukraine's banning of Soviet symbols in favor of European ones.

A timeline of key events discussed by participants during their interviews is given below:

- **November 2013–February 2014:** Maidan in Kyiv
- **February 2014:** 88 people killed in Kyiv, and former President Yanukovych flees
- **March 2014:** Crimean Peninsula holds contested referendum and is annexed by Russia – internationally not recognized as legal
- **March–April 2014:** Ukrainian troops withdraw from Crimea, and Russian troops begin to support pro-Russian occupation of Eastern Ukraine
- **May 2014:** Pro-Russian separatists in Luhansk and Donetsk declare independent republic after referendum not recognized internationally
- **July 2014:** Malaysia Airlines tragedy in Eastern Ukraine
- **August 2014:** Fighting spreads in Eastern Ukraine, now supported by Russian military
- **September 2014:** Ceasefire signed but then violated four days later
- **October 2014:** New Parliament elected; Eastern Ukrainian pro-Russian separatists hold own election
- **January 2015:** Donetsk Airport falls to pro-Russian rebels
- **February 2015:** Ceasefire signed but never occurs; another Eastern city falls to pro-Russian rebels; Russia continues to send military and weapons into Ukraine
- **March 2015:** Putin confirms purposeful plans to annex Crimea; Western countries impose new sanctions on Russia
- **April 2015:** Another ceasefire comes and goes; Ukraine announces plans to implement military conscription; G7 and EU Summit focus on Ukraine

The events preceding the current Ukrainian–Russian war, most notably the Maidan protests from November 2013 through February 2014 in central Kyiv, reignited discussions of identity for a great many Ukrainians. A number of Ukrainian researchers found empirical evidence of a rise in national identification following the events of Maidan. In particular, when analyzing a survey of 1800 residents of Ukraine conducted by the Institute of Sociology at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine before Maidan and shortly after Maidan, Shulga (2015) found a marked increase across all age groups in identifying nationally as a citizen of Ukraine (compared with identifying primarily as a resident of the town or region where they live). This increase in national identification was most prominent in the 18–30-year-old age group, with 58% of respondents primarily identifying with nationality in 2013 and 75% of respondents identifying this way in 2014 (Shulga, 2015: 237). Importantly, this survey provided actual empirical data for trends that had been noticed by many, researchers and non-researchers alike. The question of nationality has gained in importance for

Ukrainians, particularly younger adults (Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, April 2014). This is significant, as this is the generation which is coming into junior and senior leadership positions. Their perspectives on what is important for the nation will have great influence on the directions the country takes in the not too distant future. Therefore, it seems that a rise in national consciousness is not just something remarked upon by a few – rather, it is mass repositioning of a collective self set to impact national and international relations in the future (cf. Bondarenko, 2008).

Furthermore, the Institute of Sociology at the National Academy of Sciences in Ukraine also surveyed Ukrainian residents' opinions of the events of Maidan, including the EuroMaidan and Revolution of Dignity protests. Examining these surveyed opinions, Vyshniak (2015: 171–172) found that the majority of Ukrainians in all regions, except for the Donbas region in Eastern Ukraine (in the war zone) approved of the Maidan protests. Some regions, such as Western Ukraine and the Kyiv capital region had extremely high approval rates (83% and 79%, respectively). Meanwhile, the anti-Maidan events organized by Yanukovych and his supporters were only approved of by 6.5% of the entire Ukrainian population, never reaching 20% approval, even in war zone areas.

These findings regarding age and region are particularly relevant for the interviews that I conducted with Ukrainian young adults throughout 2014 and 2015. All 38 of the participants in these interviews were between 18 and 40 years old, and they come from different regions of Ukraine. They grew up with the Orange Revolution as a major event in their lives, and they felt the echoes of this through the Maidan events, which significantly took place in the same location as the Orange Revolution a decade earlier. As in the discourse-historical approach (Wodak, 1996, 2001; Wodak *et al.*, 1990), the analysis present in this book will consider relevant historical events in order to understand the full extent of people's discursive meaning making practices. Without also considering historical texts, we do not get a full understanding of current Discourses (Blommaert, 2005; Bondarenko, 2008).

The Current Study

Based on the discursive and sociolinguistic variation findings from the 2009 pilot study (discussed in Chapter 2), which connected ideologies with language use and discursive topics, the current full study was launched in early 2014 after receiving university Ethics Committee approval. Thirty-eight semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews were conducted by myself with Ukrainians between 18 and 40 years old, throughout 2014 and 2015. Participants between 18 and 40 years old were chosen because this age range means that these participants grew up during the switch from Russification to Ukrainisation policies, including the language policy changes and ensuing ideologies.

Twelve of the interviewees currently live in Ukraine (three from each of the sociohistorically politically defined regions – West, Central, East and Black Sea regions (Himka, 2015; Vyshniak, 2009, 2015)). The other 26 live in diaspora communities (12 in North America, and 14 in New Zealand). All members of the diaspora communities emigrated from Ukraine at the age of 16 years old or older. This specific detail was necessary for the phonological study but is still an interesting detail of note here. Participants were recruited via the friend-of-a-friend approach, beginning with my own Ukrainian networks and working outwards through recommendations, from which participants self-selected to participate. While this friend-of-a-friend approach undoubtedly yielded an above-average number of participants with similar views, this was not always the case. In fact, some participants in the New Zealand diaspora community referred to others by name for their ‘extremely different views’.

However, it is important to clearly acknowledge that the use of an expanded network approach (i.e. friend-of-a-friend) does not allow for generalizability of results in the way that more representative sampling might. Future studies looking to be generalizable would need to extend a wider net for the goal of recruiting a participant sample more statistically representative of the Ukrainian population, and this would need to include people both inside and outside of the researcher’s own networks. That being said, the current study did not seek to represent the views of all Ukrainians, but instead to locate emergent trends across participants interested in discussing these sensitive issues. Repetition of emergent discursive topics may suggest emergent Discourses for some Ukrainians, but this does not mean they are relevant to all Ukrainians. Despite the limitations of this approach, I still chose it as the preferred method, as the subject matter was sensitive in content at times, and it was important that participants know they could trust me to protect their information and to not push them in an uncomfortable direction. For many, discussing these highly sensitive political issues also felt dangerous. Therefore, it was of utmost importance that a chain of trust be established before the interviews began and continued afterwards.

Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and 2.5 hours, depending on how much the interviewee wanted to talk about each topic. Some participants found their narrative retellings of the events of Maidan to be particularly cathartic and chose to discuss them at length (they were always given multiple opportunities to change topics or end the discussion). All interviews were done individually, one-on-one with me, except for Lev and Raisa who chose to do their interview together. The full participant list can be found in the appendices.¹

Similar to the interviews conducted for the pilot research (see Chapter 2), English was also used as the dominant language of the interviews out of necessity for the discourse analysis, as it is my language of greatest proficiency that I share with the participants. As was done for the pilot

interviews, I discussed this at length with the participants before we began the interviews, and I assured them that they could use Ukrainian and/or Russian any time they would like, including to clarify meaning or ideas. While some participants made use of other languages (e.g. see Klara's joke in Appendix E), English was used the majority of the time. Whenever an issue of major importance arose, such as the discussion of terminology associated with the war (see the next section below), we spent time talking about the words and ideas being expressed to clarify crosslinguistic meaning. As a result, the excerpts drawn upon in such cases are those of which I am confident in the participants' conveyed meaning. Furthermore, if any questions arose when I was interpreting their meaning, I asked the participants, thus staying as true as possible to their intent. While there is undoubtedly variation in meaning when speaking across languages, the steps described above help to mitigate any loss or confusion of meaning.

Data coding and analysis were done using the Grounded Theory (emergent category) approach via NVivo 10 software (cf. Charmaz, 2014). The guiding theoretical approaches for the analysis were the post-structuralist view of identity (see Chapter 2) and an interactional sociolinguistic discourse analysis with a critical lens.

Interactional sociolinguistics (IS) is an approach to discourse analysis that comes from the work of John Gumperz. According to Gumperz's approach, interaction is studied through discourse to determine how people create meaning moment-to-moment (1982, 2005). Gumperz was highly influenced by work in anthropology and sociology, in addition to linguistics, which laid the groundwork for the foundational ideas of IS. Some of these foundational ideas include the fact that conversational participants rely heavily on semantic inference in the construction of meaning (Gumperz, 2005; Rampton, 2017), which also connects to Bakhtin's ideas of intertextuality (1981). Along with inferences, conversational participants provide contextualization cues, which can be used by the receiver to interpret the message (Gumperz, 2005; Rampton, 2017; Schiffrin, 1996). This is also similar to Bakhtin's idea that both conversational participants must have access to the same intertextual referents in order for the intertextual message to be interpreted (1981). Interactional sociolinguistics therefore draws upon meaning making during the entire interaction and across interactions to interpret interlocutors' discourse.

Furthermore, a critical lens is adopted for the IS conducted in this book. In applying a critical lens, both the local and larger societal contexts must be considered. As Heller (2001: 118) explains, 'Without an ability to situate those local practices in time and space it is difficult to know what to make of them.' Therefore, to maintain a critical focus, IS analysis should equally look to 'large-scale cultural forces, to local contexts of practice, and to the fine details of discursive form and content,' (Bucholtz, 2001: 166). This approach differs from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (cf. Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) in that while CDA

‘strongly relies on linguistic categories’ (Wodak, 2009: 28), the approach taken in this book critically analyzes narratives as pieces of social interactions, through which sociocultural constructs are evidenced and negotiated through discourse. Thus, both the local and larger societal contexts influence the narratives and therefore inform the analysis. Through this incorporation of the local and larger societies, participants’ realities, ideologies and identities are formed, challenged, negotiated and re-negotiated again and again, moment-to-moment throughout the course of their discursive interaction.

Naming Ideologies by Naming Events

When looking at participants’ retelling of events of the Ukrainian war, even the naming of the events as a ‘crisis’, ‘conflict’, or ‘war’ carries with it a particular positioning and associated symbolic value (Ellis, 2006). As argued by Pavlyuk (2015), by occupying Crimea in 2014, Russia officially violated Article 2 of the 1949 Geneva Convention and entered into an act of war. However, semantically calling something a ‘war’ tautologically implies that there is an outside political aggressor, while calling something a ‘crisis’ implies an event originating from within the country upon which it is impacting, and calling something a ‘conflict’ implies equal responsibility between the two parties. Therefore, calling the events in Ukraine a ‘conflict’ would appear to assign equal responsibility to Ukraine and Russia, while calling the events a ‘crisis’ would imply that it is primarily Ukraine’s responsibility to resolve these issues. Most importantly, perhaps, calling the events a ‘war’ assigns responsibility to Russia as the aggressor on Ukrainian soil. As Pavlyuk (2015) argues, this issue of terminology has been something of which political and media outlets in Ukraine and Russia are very much aware, as they have received many financial resources from various parties to further the public’s uptake of particular terminology (Pantti, 2016).

During the interviews, I alternated between terms during the questions, so as to see what terms the participants would choose to use themselves. Some participants matched my own terminological alternations, signifying no one particular preference. However, more often than not, the participants had very strong views about the appropriate terminology that should be used and would correct me. In one such example below, Maxim corrected my terminology, directing me to use the term ‘war’. Maxim is 31 years old and is from the central Kyiv-region of Ukraine, still lives there, and identifies as Ukrainian.

Corinne: um, and
 what are your feelings,
 about the current,

political situation and war,
in Ukraine

Maxim: uh current political situation and war?

Corinne: yeah

Maxim: uh you mean about the war?
uh in Eastern part?

Corinne: yeah um,
just however,
I always like to leave it open to however you want to call it
so ((laughs))

Maxim: ah

Corinne: whether you
feel more comfortable calling it war or political situation,
conflict,

Maxim: well it is true,
there is a war,
in the Eastern part,
and uh, we need to,
to understand that,
everybody knows it,
but due to some, specific moments, in the policy
u:h our politicians u:h
don't say it uh like
clearly that there is a war

As can be seen above, when I referred to the events in Eastern Ukraine as 'the current political situation and war,' therein offering up two possibly alternating terms, Maxim questioned my use of both terms. He then continued on to correct me, saying, 'uh you mean about the war?' Noticeably, not only does Maxim correct my terminology to *war*, but he also uses the definite article 'the', indexing the assumed shared intertextual referent to the current events that had taken center stage in Ukrainian consciousness as *the* war.

Another important point to note about Maxim's correction of my terminology is that while correcting someone has the potential to other them (Dervin, 2012; Fine, 1994; Hatoss, 2012), that is not the approach that Maxim takes. Rather, he phrases the correction as a question, implying that I have misspoken: 'uh you mean about the war?' Additionally, by

indexing the assumed shared intertextual referent, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, Maxim is highlighting our assumed shared knowledge of the events taking place. Likewise, he connects with the unknown, yet assumed, mass population saying, ‘everybody knows it’. However, this is quite different from how he positions politicians in the lines that follow. He begins by setting them up in opposition through the use of ‘but’ at the start of the turn, and he continues to say ‘u:h our politicians u:h don’t say it uh like clearly that there is a war.’ In this statement, Maxim is continuing to align with the masses through the use of ‘our’, even while positioning the politicians in somewhat of an opposition because they don’t say clearly that there is a war. This positioning of ‘us’ (the people) versus ‘them’ (the politicians) occurred frequently throughout the interviews (cf. Beliaeva & Seals, 2019).

When Friends Become Enemies

Another common feature of the interviews was the linear progression that marked individuals as ‘those who used to be friends but who then became enemies’. Effectively, this progression allows participants to quickly and simply access a narrative of tragic betrayal and loss, that of the ‘friend become enemy’. Furthermore, by discursively invoking an implied timeline (‘then’ to ‘now’), the interviewees are also able to imply that these events happened alongside the development of the war, the timelines therein paralleling each other. This time and space construction indexes stories of the war by placing the timelines alongside each other, while also personalizing the experience by referencing people the interviewees personally know. Thus, personal narratives draw upon the chronotope (Bakhtin, 1992 [1981]) of the Ukrainian war, bringing the individual stories together into a more powerful collective experience. As Bakhtin (1992 [1981]: 84) defines the chronotope:

... spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.

The concept of chronotope thus allows for a socioculturally contextualized merging of space and time, such as how people cognitively process events, spaces and places together as one. As further explained by Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain (2013), the chronotope is a useful construct in particular for understanding how those in diaspora or transnational communities connect with multiple places and times: ‘when people migrate from one place to another, they bring such a sense of their place of origin with them, and they use it in the construction of local immigrant spaces by indexing aspects of it in their positioning’ (Liebscher &

Dailey-O'Cain, 2013: 18). Through the discursive connection with this chronotope, Ukrainians are able to share in the collective experiences of being affected by the Ukrainian war, even if they themselves are not currently in Ukraine.

An example of drawing upon and contributing to the shared chronotope is shown below in a story told by Lyuba, (25 years old, from Eastern Ukraine, living in New Zealand). In the following example, Lyuba discursively moves between times and places, at times retelling her mother's story, and at times placing events in the present.

Corinne: Mhm and um

Do you know any people directly involved in the events?

Lyuba: Well, my- my parents obviously still live in, the Sloviansk, which is where, the whole action's happening, so that's pretty scary and they had to: run away at some stage um... And it was- it's- it's quite a unique, um, set of events because, all of a sudden it divides people into these two distinct categories and... just to give you an example my parents live in an apartment building which is about ten stories high and one of my mum's best friends lives in the building next door. Well, my mum's friend supports the movement towards Ukraine becoming closer with, Russia and, you know, promoting closer economic ties and so on and so forth. Um, so she's been attending all the, events for basically the rebels, and um she ended up, giving them the key to the rooftop of the apartment building where they placed a couple of snipers when, things were really, getting bad. And so they- that's the kind of thing that really... ((exhales loudly)) tests a friendship and- and really draws you into

one camp or the other
 and: you just kind of-
 you have to choose
 and then it doesn't matter that you've been friends for ten years or
 whatever.
 All of a sudden,
 you're just on, different sides.

In this example, Lyuba begins by talking about her parents and where they live. She then references her current emotions ('so that's pretty scary'), drawing herself into the story. Lyuba then continues by briefly telling of a past event when her parents had to run away, which she then quickly brings back into a present tense, beginning with 'it was' and self-corrects to 'it's quite a unique, um, set of events'. This then leads into the more universally generalizing statement, 'all of a sudden it divides people into these two distinct categories', commenting as an omniscient narrator on the events that have occurred.

To then highlight her point, Lyuba initiates a narrative, following a structure that fits well within that outlined by Labov and Waletzky (1967): 'just to give you an example'. She then establishes the setting and tells a story in the present tense of her mother's friend and next-door neighbor who has been attending pro-Russian events. However, up through this point, any evaluation of her mother's friend's behavior is intertextual and depends on prior knowledge of Lyuba's own position on the events that have taken place in the war, as well as background knowledge of key players and events in the war to date. However, the 'friend to enemy' complicating action begins in the narrative when Lyuba switches tenses in the next few lines to tell what her mother's friend did: 'Um, so she's been attending all the, events for basically the rebels, and um she ended up, giving them the key to the rooftop of the apartment building where they placed a couple of snipers when, things were really, getting bad.' In the previous lines, Lyuba has now constructed her mother's friend as the 'other' who has now betrayed Lyuba's family, using evaluative terms such as 'rebels' and 'really, getting bad', as well as terms that draw semantically upon war and danger, such as 'snipers'.

Lyuba then summarizes, concluding her narrative and evaluating the events by saying that such things are what 'tests a friendship', places you 'in one camp or the other', and 'you have to choose'. Most powerful is Lyuba's concluding statement: 'and then it doesn't matter that you've been friends for ten years or whatever. All of a sudden, you're just on, different sides.' This statement again highlights the timeline of friend to enemy over the course of the events of the war, such that even 10 years of friendship

cannot outlast the events of the war. Even through Lyuba is telling her mother's story and is not physically present at the location herself, she is able to draw upon the chronotope of the Ukrainian war to bring the listener into the events of the war, intertextually drawing upon master narratives, including those of friend turned enemy.

Likewise, Gleb (38 years old, from Eastern Ukraine, living in New Zealand) drew upon the Ukrainian war chronotope. His narrative also shows how time and space become one transportable, accessible whole when discussing the complexity involved in narratives of the 'other' wherein friends become enemies.

Gleb: I feel pain for them because I'm one of them.

But it's- it's a social science,
if you're moving towards eighteenth century, you will be colonized.
They don't understand that,
and they like-
and instead of saying like 'Oh, what made you Ukrainian,'
you know,
'you are my friend,
you are normal guy,
what made you say we Russians are fascists?
Maybe there's something going wrong,
maybe we should look around,
maybe we should- maybe we should-
Russians should come together and discuss.'
Instead they saying me like
'Why you calling me fascist?
We didn't- we didn't vote for- to tanks went to Ukraine.'
Well, but if you think we are bro- friends and brotherhood nation,
I never heard you voice of opposite.
You- so instead of saying like w-
instead of posting something like
'What a horrible story,
my Ukrainian friend called me fascist,
isn't it freaking alarming?'
He don't post this,
he send me like
'Why do you call me fascist,

why are you abusing me?’

They don’t understand.

What your nation is doing you’re responsible for that,

it’s not um, it’s not some aliens doing it,

it’s not Putin’s doing himself,

it’s not Putin running in Ukraine and- and- and, and doing that.

They don’t understand.

...

But I mean it’s horrible to say,

because it’s- it’s my brothers,

like they’re same brothers,

I am same XXX Russian,

and again I have Russian culture,

but I see my c- my, both my people,

both my nations are in huge trouble.

This one becau- because of this attack,

and this one because of the schizophrenia.

And like- and as I said,

both of them,

it’s like so painful.

Immediately, Gleb positions himself as both the same and as different from Russians, as he is a Russian-dominant speaker himself and thus feels a personal connection through the language. As he states, ‘I feel pain for them because I am one of them.’ While relating himself emotively and experientially with Russians, Gleb simultaneously distances himself by continually referring to ‘them’, rather than using the construction ‘we’ or ‘us’ (Fligstein, 2008; Wodak & Boukala, 2015). He continues with this discursive distancing by saying ‘they don’t understand that’, with ‘they’ meaning Russian people.

Gleb continues his discussion, bringing time and space even closer together by voicing the individuals he is discussing. Furthermore, he also voices what they could have potentially said in dialogue, therein bringing the possible into the actual, joining together narratives of what could have occurred with what has actually occurred. Through Gleb’s voicing of his interlocutor, he positions himself as ‘normal’, while at the same time revealing that this conversation could occur as the result of him saying ‘Russians are fascists,’ which is a very interesting juxtaposition indeed. He then comments on this constructed dialogue, saying, ‘Instead they saying me like, “Why you calling me fascist? We didn’t – we didn’t vote for – to

tanks went to Ukraine,” wherein the constructed dialogue of what he actually experienced lacks the claiming of responsibility and softness found within the constructed dialogue of what could have possibly been said. Even though both the possible and the actual are in response to a heavy, direct comment from Gleb, the focus of Gleb’s narrative is not on what he said himself. Rather, the focus is on his perception of his interlocutor’s self-positioning, which he expresses as a simultaneous self-re-positioning from ally to non-ally.

The juxtaposition of what did happen versus what could have happened continues with another constructed dialogue immediately after. Following this second dialogue, Gleb again directly positions Russians as outsiders, as the ‘other’, stating ‘They don’t understand. What your nation is doing you’re responsible for that.’ Once again, the discussion of responsibility plays a major role in how Gleb positions his interlocutor. By denying responsibility for events of the war, Gleb sees his Russian interlocutors as distancing themselves from the master narrative of shared loss and grief found within the Ukrainian community’s chronotope of the Ukrainian war. As such, the Russian interlocutors become the ‘other’ and are discursively positioned as such by Gleb. He furthers this point by specifically stating, ‘it’s not Putin’s doing himself,’ again highlighting the role of the individual and showing how, for Gleb, individual responsibility is key, as it is individuals who are sharing the master narrative of grief and loss.

Finally, Gleb shows how complex this othering from ‘ally’ to ‘non-ally’ can be for one’s own self-positioning. As discussed in Chapter 2, identity is always multi-faceted and complex. An event such as a war in the home country highlights this complexity, as war with others also can become war with self. In the example above, Gleb says, ‘But I mean it’s horrible to say,’ reflecting a dialogic echo of how others could perceive his negative preceding statements. He furthers this by saying that the aforementioned Russian interlocutors are his ‘brothers’, and he emphasizes his sameness with them through a shared Russian culture, therein aligning currently high-stakes aspects of his identity with theirs. He then says that ‘both my people, both my nations are in huge trouble.’ While simultaneously aligning in this statement with both Russian and Ukrainian monolithic cultures, Gleb is able to also highlight a binary divide through the use of ‘both’. Therefore, while he has long identified with the Russian language, which is itself used by many Russian and Ukrainian-identifying people, the focus has now shifted from what is shared to what is divided. By highlighting this divide, the shared experience of ‘being Ukrainian’ during a time of war is reinforced by simultaneously constructing Russian-identifying individuals as the ‘other’ who do not experience the same master narrative losses and pain.

Crucially, the othering that occurs through a negative naming event such as ‘fascist’ is not unidirectional. Rather, this word itself has come to stand for the intertextual dialogues of lack of empathy and fighting

espoused by all sides (usually discussed as the ‘two sides’). Lesya (28 years old, from Western Ukraine, living in the United States) tells her own story of how the term fascist was used against her, rather than by her. Her narrative also includes the discussion of ‘brothers’ turned ‘enemies’.

Lesya: I- yeah,

I- I don’t understand how that is possible
because up until last year we were brothers, you know,
brotherly countries,
um and now, you know,
suddenly we are fascists.

I mean how the heck is that even possible?
And this other friend of mine,
she was like ‘yeah you guys discriminate against Russians’
and this and that
and ‘you hate foreigners,’
like what are you talking about?

I went to a foreign-

I went to a Polish school,

I grew up with Russian parents living in the heart of Lviv,
which is considered to be, you know,
the nationalist city quote un-quote.

I mean it’s completely not true
and everybody knew about it,
but suddenly since this conflict started, you know,
we’re the enemy

and I don’t know if it’s the propaganda is that good
or Russians are just used to being told what to think from years and
years of communist rules, you know,
maybe that’s why,

but um yeah,

it’s- it’s ah-

it’s frustrating

and mind boggling that they don’t- that they’re- the-
that Russians have this diffic- different opinions all of a sudden
and all of a sudden they need to ah show their s- strengths to the US
and all this stuff,

and you know I- I- I asked some of my friends, you know,
 if you like Russia so much go back and live there?
 You know, go back to Russia and support your president, you know,
 put your mouth where you mind is
 or your money is-
 I don't know the expression, but whatever,
 ah yeah,
 but no,
 they still live here.
 They hate Ukraine
 and they love Russia
 so it's very frustrating, yeah.

Notably, Lesya's narrative begins with an evaluative orientation (Labov & Waletzky, 1967) very similar to that found throughout many of the Ukrainians' narratives – that is, a seeming suspension of reality where the individual doesn't 'understand how this [war] is possible.' Such a statement speaks to the importance that a vast number of individuals had placed on the shared commonalities, including shared heritages, on either side of the national border between Ukraine and Russia. The war currently taking place calls into question for many this heretofore assumed reality of commonality superseding difference. The resulting identity struggle (Norton, 2000) and conflict that takes place is discursively constructed as a lack of understanding and/or belief.

While Lesya is providing her orientation, she also makes an interesting shift in position, wherein 'we' goes from being inclusive of Ukrainians and Russians, to 'we' meaning just Ukrainians: 'we were brothers' ... 'suddenly we are fascists' (cf. Beliaeva & Seals, 2019). Through this transition of semantic meaning, Lesya also merges time and space, again drawing upon the chronotope of the Ukrainian war, creating a perceived reality in which all individuals throughout Russia and Ukraine experience this event collectively, no matter where or when they are.

As Lesya's narrative continues, she takes on the defensive stance. Discursively constructing her friend as the aggressor, Lesya voices her friend as being the first to do the othering, by saying, 'Yeah you guys discriminate against Russians,' and 'You hate foreigners.' This then allows Lesya to respond defensively to the other positioning she has experienced, calling into question the believability of such othering: 'like what are you talking about?' She then provides her own backstory as a way to self-position as a transnational, transcultural, translingual individual, intertextually drawing upon Discourses of openness and willingness to accept others that go along with such positionings.

Lesya continues her narrative, expressing her disbelief at being positioned such that ‘suddenly we’re the enemy’, with ‘we’ continuing to stand for her and other Ukrainians. She then begins an attempt at reasoning aloud, saying she’s not sure why this has happened, that maybe it’s the propaganda (meaning Russian propaganda), or maybe ‘Russians are just used to being told what to think from years and years of communist rules, you know.’ In this latter statement, Lesya has named Russians as the other, while also assigning responsibility of this divisiveness to the Russian government, not the people themselves.

However, after this mitigated think-aloud, Lesya then presents a still mitigated (‘you know’), yet also more direct, response to the other-positioning that she has expressed thus far, when she states that she asked her interlocutors why they don’t return to Russia. While Lesya has named her interlocutors as friends, the speech that she indirectly reports, while mitigated, is still othering and confrontational, reflecting the conflict experienced by an unexpected situation of friends becoming enemies, and of fluid borders becoming rigid.

The disbelief and sense of displacement expressed in the interviews as a result of the war is further discussed by Ruslana (28 years old, from Eastern Ukraine, still living in Ukraine) who was both emotionally as well as literally physically displaced by the war. At the time of the interview, Ruslana was living in another country on an internship that she had secured before the war began.

Corinne: So, you’re on an internship for a few months there,
and where- what city did... you come from,
and where will you go back to when you’re done?

Ruslana: Er, actually, it is a very tough q- question,
because I came from, er, Lugansk,
but my city is... right now it is closed, er...
because of the rebels.
They have their own requirements, their own regulations,
and people there wait to return back to their homes.
For example,
my parents and I,
we left Lugansk, uh, at the end of July,
and, er, then we couldn’t ret- return back home,
because all trains and all buses,
they were canceled,
and we gathered to- to live, er, in Kyiv,
in our capital,

in my sister's apartment, er, for one month,
 then I, er, went to... [country],
 and my parents,
 they are still, er, in Kyiv.
 So, I don't know where we'll return back,
 I- I hope that it will be Lugansk,
 but I'm not sure.

Ruslana's story was emotionally difficult to learn, as she lost so much in the events of the war (discussed more in Chapter 7). As Ruslana explained during the course of her interview, not only was she experiencing the struggle of physical displacement from the events of the war, but she also lost access to her heretofore imagined future and has to decide on new future goals. The events of the war forcibly erased her planned future trajectory, requiring her to process the current events and simultaneously plan a new future for herself. This turn in events brings identity struggle (Norton, 2000) and renegotiation (Seals, 2013) to the forefront of Ruslana's daily live, and subsequently to the forefront of her discourse.²

In telling her story, Ruslana connects with the Ukrainian war chronotope, merging time and space into one so that her reality is transported to the recent, current and future struggles she faces in Eastern Ukraine, even though she is not currently in Ukraine herself. She also shows the struggle she faces, especially in regard to having both allies and enemies in the same location – the place which she calls her own home. First, it is interesting to note that every time Ruslana names her city, she uses the Russian version of the name – Lugansk (Luhansk is the Ukrainian version). She shows her embodied connection with the city, calling it 'my city'. She then positions the pro-Russian Ukrainian separatists within the city as not belonging to the city in the same way that she does, referring to them as 'rebels' and stating that the city is closed because of them, therein making it so that she cannot return to her own city and home. She further distances herself from the rebels, specifying that 'they have their own requirements, their own regulations', which are different from the ordinary residents who want to return home. Therefore, while the rebels are occupying the city, they are preventing the ordinary 'people' and her co-residents from returning to their homes. Even though many of the rebels are from within Luhansk also themselves, they are positioned as no longer having a rightful claim to the city, having violated the rights of the ordinary people to live there.

Ukrainians but not Ukrainians

For many of the interviewees, the acts of the rebels in violating the rights of ordinary citizens of Ukraine were too much to accept. For these

interviewees, the rebels had revoked their right to be considered Ukrainians and could no longer be identified as such. As such, the rebels were called many things, but ‘Ukrainian’ was not one of them. The denial of this identity label further contributed to the interviewees’ discursive othering of the rebels as a way to build further figurative distance between them. An example of this is given in the interview with Larysa (31 years old, from Eastern Ukraine, still living in Ukraine).

Larysa: Because, the people who left there,
 they are from, er... cl-
 like those Ukrainians with Ukrainian passports,
 yeah, because they are also participating in this
 but as I said I can’t call them Ukrainians,
 I don’t have any respect for them.
 Er, they are coming from smaller towns,
 er... from... er, mine towns,
 er... th- they- they don’t want to perceive any other... occupation
 and they just got the guns in their hands,
 and they feel like the kings.
 So, there is a lot of robbery, erm, violence,
 just like this,
 because now they have the gun,
 they used to have not much,
 maybe some money for beer, er,
 but ((laughing)) now they could have everything,
 so there is a lot of... apartment robbery... ((smacks lips))
 Er... such things.

In this example, Larysa first establishes the national original and technical identity of the rebels of whom she is about to speak, referring to them as ‘those Ukrainians with Ukrainian passports’. In so doing, she establishes that she is not currently talking about rebel fighters who come from anywhere else other than Ukraine (such as Russia). She then says that, however, she ‘can’t call them Ukrainians’ because she doesn’t have respect for them. For Larysa, Ukrainian identity is a bonded identity, tied to mutual respect for one’s countrymen/women. By violating the rights of Ukrainian citizens to reside in their own homes, and by attacking pro-Ukrainian views and ideals, the rebels are also seen to have violated the mutual respect expectation, thus losing the right to call themselves Ukrainians.

However, what arises next in Larysa's argument is a multi-voiced echo of stereotypes that have surfaced regarding who the rebels are. While the stereotypes may be true for some, they are not true for all. However, the nature of the stereotypes, such as 'coming from smaller towns... mine towns ... don't want to perceive any other occupation... guns in their hands... feel like kings... robbery... violence... used to have not much... maybe some money for beer...' makes it easier to discursively paint the rebels as the enemy other. By assigning all socially unacceptable behaviors and characteristics to the rebels, they are repositioned as the undesirables of society and thus very different from anyone whom Ukrainians would want to call their own. Therefore, the behaviors of the rebels become less shocking, and simultaneously, it becomes easier to discursively distance them from all other Ukrainians.

One Nation, One People

Occurring alongside the Discourse of rebels losing the right to call themselves Ukrainians is the Discourse of 'true' Ukrainians establishing and reinforcing between each other a collective impression of what it means to be Ukrainian. Within this Discourse is also the underlying dialogic echo of the ideology that 'if you're not with us, you're against us.' Presupposed is that if you are not part of this new ideological 'one nation', then you are not Ukrainian; you are an 'other'. Ilya (33 years old, from the Black Sea region of Ukraine, still living in Ukraine) explains this in his interview.

- Corinne:** What do you think um has been what-
what are the main ah factors that led to the changes recently?
- Ilya:** ... ah I think that Ukrainians have become one nation
ah according to the definition nation,
is just the people having a political will to live together,
and ah we have never had this political will.
If you take for example our ally XX,
the last century for instance,
ah there you know-
there were a-always Ukrainians who didn't know that they are
Ukrainians-
that they were Ukrainians,
and ah for example
if-if you take this XX period
...
then there still times where Russia try to intervene Ukraine-

to attack Ukraine,
 um for the first time XX history,
 then many Ukrainians just didn't know what state they lived in.
 Um er, and now everything looks different,
 Er, you know,
 just- um Ukrainians have understood-
 understood that they are together,
 ah I think Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, or XX,
 so I feel that we are united,
 and ah I've been to Kyiv recently,
 and er the first thing that I noticed er
 was the number of people ah speaking Ukrainian.
 Ah mm so we in Kyiv er never look so,
 XX the majority of Kyiv inhabitants er spoke Russian.
 Now it's different, um ((laughter))
 Ok.

Ilya explains that previously, a shared national political identity was not seen as an important part of being Ukrainian. Ilya's sentiment is reflective of the previously mentioned findings in recent Ukrainian research, detailing the rise in importance of national identity for young people in Ukraine (Shulga, 2015; Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, April 2014). Ilya further confirms these findings by stating that within the last century there were always Ukrainians who did not consciously know that they were Ukrainian, meaning that national identity was not as important as local identity (Shulga, 2015; Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, April 2014).

Ilya's discussion of the rise in importance of national identity becomes further complex when he introduces a complicating factor in the form of Russian interference: 'then there still times when Russia try to intervene Ukraine – to attack Ukraine.' He then creates a cause and effect relationship, explaining that he sees Russia's attacks on Ukraine as the reason why Ukrainians did not have a strong shared national identity: 'then many Ukrainians just didn't know what state they lived in.' However, Ilya then compares this continuous past to events of the present, saying that 'now everything looks different... Ukrainians have understood... that they are together... that we are united', therein showing the importance placed by some Ukrainians in a perceived shared national identity.

Notably, Ilya's narrative then ends by drawing language into the equation, saying that on a recent trip to Kyiv, he noticed 'the number of people ah speaking Ukrainian.' Ilya explains that traditionally, the Russian

language featured much more prominently in Kyiv than did the Ukrainian language, which has been confirmed by statistics (see Chapter 1) as well as by other interviewees. This same connection between the rise of a shared national identity and a change in linguistic practices is further commented on by Larysa (31 years old, from Eastern Ukraine, still living in Ukraine).

Larysa: It's like everybody of us wa- was pushed to think,
 yeah, it's, er, absolutely personal thing of course, er,
 to think of who they are,
 on what side they would ((laughing)) like to be.
 Er, as- er, we don't have a- any civil war going on here,
 it's, er, it's occupation.
 But, er, you just start thinking about those questions,
 because they are becoming... pr- pra- primarily.
 Er, it's not economics, or wage, or... workplace,
 but it's like who I am,
 what language I need to speak,
 what language I would like to prefer to speak.

Similarly to Ilya, Larysa positions Russia as an outside driving force that mobilized the Ukrainian people into developing one shared national identity – 'Ukrainian'. While Larysa removes a direct responsible actor in the sentence 'It's like everybody of us wa- was pushed to think', this comment comes in the midst of the portion of her interview discussing the Ukrainian war. She then follows this by saying people had to decide 'on what side they would like to be', implying that there are definitely separated 'sides' that are at war. However, she then further clarifies that she does not see these sides as existing within Ukraine and between the Ukrainian people. Rather, she states that there is no civil war; rather, 'it's occupation'. By specifically negating that the fighting is a civil war and instead calling it an 'occupation', Larysa is drawing upon the semantic meanings of these words to indicate that she sees the war as a taking of territory by an outside nation, which is also reflective of the intertextual master narrative of Russia attacking Ukraine. So, while some of the occupiers are from within Ukraine, Larysa sees them as outsiders belonging to Russia and as not having any internal allegiances to Ukraine or to the Ukrainian people.

Also similar to Ilya, Larysa then brings language into the discussion of national identity. When talking of identity ('to think of who they are'), she separates professional and socioeconomic identity from linguistic identity, relating language specifically to identity by saying, 'it's like who

I am, what language I need to speak, what language I would like to prefer to speak.’ Interestingly, Larysa has also separated need from desire: ‘need to speak’ versus ‘like to prefer to speak’. However, for her, both aspects of language (needing and preferring) still factor into identity. Therefore, both language preference and use contribute to linguistic identity. This aligns with previous research findings into language and identity that have found that both language preference and use contribute to multilinguals’ identities, as well as current and future language investment (Norton, 2000, 2013; Norton Peirce, 1995; Seals, 2013, 2017a, 2017b). Therefore, growing up in a multilingual country and having national identity directly challenged by the war are two factors that have contributed to some Ukrainians’ views of language preference and use as also being an integral part of identity (cf. Osnach, 2015).

Being Ukrainian is Speaking Ukrainian

Furthermore, an important component to being part of the national ‘us’ (meaning Ukrainian people with the right to call themselves Ukrainian) for many of the interviewees, was specifically the ability and willingness to speak the Ukrainian language. This Discourse was common throughout some of the interviews, but there was also caution around this idea presented in other interviews (discussed later in the chapter). For both viewpoints, a dialogism exists within and between them, such that when each person gave their personal views on this issue, they were responding to past historical events that they have learned about, responding to recent events and discourses that they have heard, and were anticipating future reactions based on their position on this delicate issue.

For participants who ascribe to the belief that being Ukrainian means being able to speak the Ukrainian language, they are drawing largely upon Discourses of national identity, as well as those of official language policy. As mentioned previously in Chapters 1 and 2, Ukrainians have had a tumultuous linguistic history, many times during which the Ukrainian language was not allowed. Therefore, claiming the Ukrainian language as part of Ukrainian national identity firstly serves to enhance and protect the status of the language (cf. May, 2006; Ricento, 2006). Secondly, it also allows Ukrainian speakers to push back against prior Discourses of the Ukrainian language as rural, lower in status, undesirable, etc. (Bilaniuk, 2003). Thirdly, tying language to nationality is a seemingly natural and expected occurrence among young people in a country who are finding more importance in the idea of a shared national identity and what that might look like (cf. Braha, 2011; Shulga, 2015).

This third idea in particular is shared by Klara (30 years old, from Central Ukraine, still living in Ukraine). In her interview excerpt, below, she too ties linguistic identity to a developing national identity, as well as

attributing both of these to the push-events in the previous year of the Ukrainian war.

Klara: With this situation that's going on right now,
with the political situation,
and with the society to beg- to being... more grown up, in the last-
becoming more grown up in the last year,
people are more willing to, er, start learning Ukrainian,
and using.

Klara attributes the Ukrainian society 'becoming more grown up' to the events of the Ukrainian war during the year preceding the interview. She views the political turmoil as having been responsible for pushing Ukrainians together into a more unified national whole. As such, she equates this unified national identity with national maturity – 'growing up'. Furthermore, Klara also equates the formation of a unified national Ukrainian identity with learning and using the Ukrainian language. By saying 'to start' learning the language, she implies that until that point, many Ukrainians had not known or used Ukrainian, which is in fact true (Paniotto & Kharchenko, 2015). As discussed in Chapter 2, the number of Ukrainians who self-reported speaking abilities in the Ukrainian language rose after the Ukrainian war began (Paniotto & Kharchenko, 2015). Like Klara, many Ukrainian people saw speaking Ukrainian as a necessary part of a 'true' Ukrainian national identity, and therefore began to learn and/or use it more than they had previously (Csernicskó, 2017).

Similarly, Larysa, comments on the expectation that people living in Ukraine speak the Ukrainian language:

Larysa: Because it is Ukraine,
and we have only one national language, er,
which is Ukrainian,
it was always like this, er,
the constitution, er, never got changed...
But just for me this is the right way of things,
and er then there is no controversy.

By drawing upon political Discourses (e.g. national language and constitution) in the establishment of her expectation, Larysa is also giving her opinion more institutional symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). She is drawing upon the power of political establishments when she draws upon their discourse in order to symbolically support her position. It is often harder for people to disagree with institutional symbolic capital than it is to

disagree with a simple opinion or personal experience (i.e. embodied symbolic capital) (Bourdieu, 1986; Meadows, 2009). Therefore, Larysa is dialogically drawing upon similar past and present discourses, while intertextually linking them to political Discourses, therein positioning herself in a more powerful, knowledgeable position through which to share her opinion. Simultaneously, Larysa denies voice to any alternating opinion of powerful languages throughout Ukraine's past and present history by clearly saying, 'we have only one national language... it was always like this... the constitution never got changed... this is the right way of things... then there is no controversy.' By eliminating space for the counter-discourse, Larysa has further supported her own position that a part of the national Ukrainian identity is the use of the Ukrainian language.

At the same time, by equating the knowledge and use of the Ukrainian language with national identity, this simultaneously implies that someone who does not speak the Ukrainian language is not 'as Ukrainian' as someone who does speak and use the language. This position can be found embedded in Larysa's discourse above, and it is also found in Kalyna's discourse below. Kalyna (37 years old, from Western Ukraine, still living in Ukraine) presents a view found among some of the participants, but a view familiar to many more.

Kalyna: Well uh I think that being Ukrainian is uh speaking Ukrainian language.

Corinne: Mm-hm.

Kalyna: It's absolutely naturally.

And uh, uh I told you uh later-

before that that uh I can't understand uh,

people who call themselves Russian-speaking Ukrainians.

Well, uh I told them,

you know, you should call yourself people who live in Ukraine and speak Russian.

But I can't uh, take you like, a-

accept you like Ukrainians but don't uh, who, who don't speak uh Ukrainian language.

It's, it's such a mm, controversial thing for me,

I- I- I just can't accept this.

Kalyna begins by describing a view very similar to that of Larysa – that 'being Ukrainian is speaking Ukrainian.' She then more directly states, however, that 'I can't understand uh, people who call themselves Russian-speaking Ukrainians,' therein positioning Ukrainians who speak Russian as unusual, unexpected and not the norm. However, what is

interesting about this is that given Ukraine's linguistic history, it is actually the linguistic expectation that linguistic oppression via Russification would lead to language shift for many people, resulting in more speakers of Russian (Del'Gaudio, 2011). Additionally, increasing globalization in the world makes it more likely that people are moving across borders, and therefore more likely that Russian speakers would be living in Ukraine (whether Russian speakers due to recent relocation or past family heritage). Yet, there is an expectation in Kalyna's discourse that in order to be Ukrainian, you must have the Ukrainian language as your dominant language, such that this is the language people hear you speaking on the street or in the home.

As phrased by Kalyna, there are some Ukrainians who view Russian-dominant speaking Ukrainian people as 'people who live in Ukraine and speak Russian', i.e. not 'true' Ukrainians. This discursive distinction is also interesting – that living in a place is not enough to give a person access to the national identity of that place. Rather, language also becomes a key requirement for full access to the shared national identity.

Lesya (28 years old, from Western Ukraine, living in the United States) provides more insight into the dialogic nature of where this linguistic identity othering came from. At the time of this interview, Crimea was still officially part of Ukraine; it had not yet been annexed by Russia. Even since, many Ukrainians still refer to Crimea as part of Ukraine, not accepting Russia's illegal annexation of the territory.

Lesya: When you go to the Eastern or the Crimea,
 um everybody sp- spoke Russian,
 still speaks Russian in the East and in the Crimea,
 and sometimes because I'm so used to speaking in Ukrainian when
 I'm back home,
 I would speak Ukrainian to them.
 They would look at me and answer rudely in Russian,
 and you know, I felt kind of discriminated against for using the
 national language.

In this example, Lesya speaks in the present tense, 'when you go', which suggests that her experience is seen as a universal occurrence, existing outside of any specific timeframe, that it would be expected to happen at any point in time. In the line that follows, she also self-corrects from the past tense 'spoke' to the present tense 'still speaks' to again suspend time in her narrative. In Lesya's story, she went to the Crimean peninsula where she spoke the Ukrainian language to the people of Crimea, which is linguistically Russian dominant (see Chapter 1; Del' Gaudio, 2011).

Within Lesya's narrative, two major things are occurring. The first is that she is recalling a negative experience that impacted upon her own

language ideologies and became part of the dialogic narrative upon which she draws when defending her right to use the Ukrainian language. The second thing that is happening in her narrative is that she is again drawing upon institutional symbolic capital to support her own position as a Ukrainian speaker and to 'other' the Russian speakers who reacted negatively towards her. She does this by describing their actions as 'rude' and by using words such as 'discriminated', while also reminding the listener that in legislation Ukrainian is the national language of Ukraine. Therefore, since Crimea was part of Ukraine at that time, there was an expectation that the people of Crimea would also use the Ukrainian language, or at least not react negatively towards someone else for doing so. Since the people of Crimea responded negatively towards a Ukrainian speaker (Lesya), they are then positioned by her as being in the wrong. This further reinforces the ideology that being Ukrainian means speaking Ukrainian.

Crimea and Eastern Ukraine (both Russian occupied areas during the war) were referenced many times throughout the interviews as examples of places that were in the wrong and not 'truly' Ukrainian because of their preference for the use of the Russian language. In a later part of Klara's interview, she brings up Eastern Ukraine as a counter example to the majority rest of Ukraine when it comes to language preference and use.

Corinne: Um, so, what do people in Ukraine think about the Ukrainian language?

Klara: ... Well, there are several opinions.

Erm... First of all...

not all of them speak Ukrainian.

Er, wh- the people who speak Ukrainian,

they respect this language,

and they... want it to be... more... involved,

and more used.

Erm, and many people who-don'- who doesn't speak,

they would like to speak better,

or- speak- or speak better Ukrainian, um...

Er, but I also... met... people,

mostly from Eastern region,

where the- again, war is,

who... who are not really willing to... learn... Ukrainian.

Er, but they also are not really willing to live in Ukraine.

It is first notable how in answering my question about thoughts on the Ukrainian language, Klara begins by setting up a dichotomy between

people who speak Ukrainian and people who do not. Therefore, immediately it is implied that the use of the language is connected to attitudes towards the language. She then states that ‘the people who speak Ukrainian, they respect this language.’ Therefore, again, use is assumed to be tied to attitude, wherein all speakers of Ukrainian also respect Ukrainian. On the other side, Klara states that there are also people who do not speak the language, but here use is not directly tied to attitude. Rather, it is intention of use which is tied to attitude. For example, Klara specifies that there are many people who don’t speak Ukrainian, but ‘they would like to speak better.’ This group goes without further comment. However, they are compared against the next group through the beginning conjunction ‘but’, which implies that the group who would like to speak better Ukrainian is also a positively positioned group because it is intent that matters.

The last group is described by Klara as including ‘people, mostly from Eastern region’ ‘who are not really willing to... learn... Ukrainian.’ Immediately, Klara has positioned this group in a more negative light due to their perceived unwillingness to learn the Ukrainian language. Klara also positions them negatively, while specifically mentioning that this is the war zone, without that actually being directly relevant to her point, therein showing that she is drawing upon the negative semantic connotations associated with the war zone. Finally, Klara connects this group’s perceived unwillingness to learn Ukrainian to their status as ‘others’ (i.e. not ‘true’ Ukrainians) by saying, ‘but they also are not really willing to live in Ukraine.’ This last statement is a very powerful indicator of this group’s outsider status, as through it they have been figuratively relocated outside of the ideological national border of Ukraine.

Focusing on the Individual

It is important to note that the ability and willingness to speak Ukrainian was not a requirement in the eyes of all of the interviewees. In fact, the majority of interviewees, no matter where they were from, stated that it was much more important that a person internally and consciously feels Ukrainian, no matter what language that person uses. While statements of language proficiency being equated with national identity proliferate ideological Discourses, there are many societies and cultures which do not feel that language proficiency is necessary to claim an in-group identity (e.g. Māori in New Zealand, cf. Ngaha, 2004). Therefore, it is not surprising to find many people, especially those who identify transnationally, focusing more on individual self-identification, regardless of language use or preference.

Lana (early 30s, from the Black Sea region of Ukraine, now living in New Zealand) is one such person who expresses this view, as shown in her interview excerpt:

Corinne: ((laughing)) Um, and,
 so how do you identify yourself,
 you said Ukrainian,
 is that both nationally and ethnically?

Lana: ((sighs)) Er, I-w-...
 yeah I think I:...
 Mmm, ((smacks lips)) when I was living in Russia,
 and you know when, I wasn't really thinking about like, well,
 which- which culture I belong to,
 because I think it's most...
 recently when it was,
 all that revolution took place and...
 you really think that who you are and which side you support,
 and... u:m, and I made a decision that I am more Ukrainian
 because all-
 I have like a lot of friends,
 Russian- Russian guys,
 but... um,
 I found that,
 it's something wrong there,
 you know, when you're talking to people,
 and you understand that you not really on the same wave?

Corinne: Yeah.

Lana: So,
 and then when I met Ukrainians in New Zealand,
 I understand that,
 that's community I belong to actually,
 ((laughing)) so...
 Yeah, so my: eth-
 let's say, um, ethnical,
 identity happened,
 really like in late twenties,
 ((laughing)) my late twenties.
 ((inhales)) Not like when I was a teenager.
 Because I think at that time it wasn't really... like that...

critical to think,
 are you Russian or are you,
 Ukrainian?
 But now I think it's- it's time to made-deci- er,
 make a decision for yourself.

Lana begins approaching her answer to my question about self-identification by first telling a short narrative. This functions to give more experiential and embodied symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Meadows, 2009) to her claims, which is especially important in her construction of self as a transnational individual. An additional part of this is Lana's placement of herself as having lived in Russia, which positions her as being able to speak knowledgably not just about Ukraine (where she is originally from), but also about Russia, and the encompassing ideologies associated with each. She in part uses this experiential discourse to mitigate the next part of her narrative where she de-identifies with Russian culture: 'I made a decision that I am more Ukrainian' and that the more she socialized with Russian friends, the more she decided that she did not identify with Russian culture in the same way as them. Crucially, Lana also points to the events of Maidan and of the Ukrainian war as being her 'awakening' point to this new sense of self, wherein her Ukrainian identity came to the forefront.

Simultaneously, Lana then continues establishing her transnational identity by next bringing her story to New Zealand and talking about the Ukrainians she met in New Zealand. By focusing on her identity narrative of being Ukrainian while transporting across time and space to New Zealand, Lana is able to blur physical borders, which contributes further to the establishment of a transnational identity (cf. Piller & Takahashi, 2011). Furthermore, Lana's invocation of the Ukrainian community of New Zealand in itself is a transnational positioning, as the New Zealand Ukrainian community welcomes speakers of Russian, Ukrainian, English and those who feel some connection with Ukrainian culture regardless of their personal backgrounds. It is this transnational Ukrainian-New Zealander community to which Lana refers when she says, 'that's the community I belong to actually.'

At the end of Lana's narrative, she again stresses the importance of critically deciding on consciously claimed identities, no matter what those identities might be. This conscious claiming of identities dialogically echoes the claims of other young Ukrainians in this chapter about what they see to be the important emergence of conscious identification (cf. Braha, 2011). Lana further emphasizes this by saying, 'But now I think it's- it's time to... make a decision for yourself,' therein intertextually drawing also on the discourses of the Ukrainian war pushing young Ukrainians to renegotiate identities (Tsentri Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva,

April 2014). However, it is just as important to notice that throughout this discussion of self-identification, Lana never mentions language. In fact, Lana herself is a Russian-dominant speaker who is working on developing further Ukrainian language proficiency, along with several other languages. She identifies with the New Zealand Ukrainian community, which has accepted people from a wide range of national, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Lana reflects these views in her own discussion of identity, explaining that for her, what is most important is consciously identifying with something/someone, regardless of specifics such as languages spoken.

Another interviewee from within the New Zealand Ukrainian community also expressed this same opinion. Denys (37 years old, from Central Ukraine, living in New Zealand) also regularly expressed his transnational identity throughout his interview. Affiliated with both the local Ukrainian and Russian communities in New Zealand, he connects these to the master narratives of conflict between Ukraine and Russia that are discussed internationally.

Corinne: How about between the communities themselves?

The Ukrainian and Russian communities.

Denys: Ah the thing is that um

so if- if- even if you take the people who identify themselves as Ukrainians,

doesn't mean that they are in one community,

and the same as about Russian community.

We have a lot of Russian friends,

they are don't-

they don't- ah-

so if we talk about the Russian community as a community,

which was organized by the embassy,

it's one group of people.

I know another group of people who trying to not ah kind of touch-

ah like trying to isola- isolate themselves from this group,

ah and-

Corinne: Makes sense.

Denys: So especially at this moment,

ah today when all this stuff happening in Ukraine and in Russia,

ah ((4 seconds)),

yeah so,

and I have lots of friends who- who are natively Russian,

lots of friends here,
 so it's- ah we communicate on a personal level,
 ah doesn't mean that we communicate on a- ah community level.

Corinne: Yeah, yeah.

Denys: So it's- community's-
 Ukrainian community is more community of friends than
 community of Ukraines,
 ah therefore even on- ah before-
 before Christmas we had this Christmas party in [city] centre,
 lots of ah Russian friends were invited just to spend time with
 children,
 so it doesn't really matter ah which community you belong to.
 It's on a personal level.

In this excerpt, Denys begins his discussion of community by first establishing the complexity of identification and belonging. As he says, 'even if you take the people who identify themselves as Ukrainians, doesn't mean that they are in one community,' and he says it is the same for those who identify as Russian. In fact, Denys has drawn upon ideas that socio-linguists have long associated with communities of practice (CofP) – namely, that people belong to many different CofPs and interactionally highlight different aspects of their identities within any given context, which are often different for different CofPs (cf. Wenger, 1998). Denys also draws upon post-structuralist conceptions of identity, especially as multiple, fluid and dynamic (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Norton, 2013). By highlighting the negotiable aspects of individual identity, including the aspect of struggle associated with at times conflicting identities and ideologies (Norton, 2000), Denys is able to further focus on the dynamic nature of identity, which is especially highlighted within transnational communities, such as the Ukrainian and Russian communities of New Zealand.

Denys further emphasizes interpersonal identity, as opposed to monolithic conceptions of identity, similar to Lana's discussion in the previous example. As Denys says, 'Ukrainian community [in New Zealand] is more community of friends than community of Ukraines.' By making this distinction, Denys is specifically downplaying the importance of national identity in favor of interpersonal relationships and identities, which he further emphasizes with his summative statement: 'so it doesn't really matter ah which community you belong to. It's on a personal level.' Since Denys has emphasized the importance of interpersonal relationships, it also makes sense that he has not discussed any one language as being more important than another either. As further confirmed at other points with

Denys, he does not see language use as connected with national identity. Rather, for Denys, as for many Ukrainians, identity is fluid, and as such, does important relational work with others, which is discussed further in Chapter 7.

Further Remarks

Beginning by revisiting the events of the Maidan protests and the Ukrainian war to date, this chapter then continued by connecting the war events to the period of time during which the participants for the main study were interviewed. While Chapter 2 introduced and discussed the participants of the pilot study in 2009, this chapter introduced the participants of the full study, who were interviewed throughout 2014 and 2015. The beginning of this chapter also included further background information about the study, such as who the participants are, why and how they were chosen, and the methods used in this study. A focus was particularly given to the choice of Interactional Sociolinguistics with a critical lens and exactly what this means.

The chapter then transitioned into a discussion of how the Ukrainian participants talk about the war. In particular, this chapter has focused on how Ukrainians discursively ‘other’ individuals and groups seen to be in ideological opposition to themselves. One such way this is done is by first of all specifically naming the recent events in Eastern Ukraine as a war. By naming events as a war, rather than as a conflict or as a crisis, responsibility is discursively placed upon an outside party attacking the region (in this case, that responsible party is Russia) (Pantti, 2016; Pavlyuk, 2015). Therefore, the terminology used is a powerful indicator of individuals’ positioning and stance in regard to the events taking place (Ellis, 2006).

In further analyzing discursive othering, it was found that the events of the war have a clear disrupting effect upon interpersonal relationships and identity negotiation (Beliaeva & Seals, 2019). Border wars make the individuals affected question what they had previously assumed to be a fairly stable reality. In this case, participants questioned their previous assumption of commonality and shared history superseding difference. Rather, their focus fell to the chronotope of the war, which discursively and cognitively connected all Ukrainians and Russians due to a shared time-space longitudinal experience, regardless of when or where they currently were (Bakhtin, 1992 [1981]). It is this discursive connection with the chronotope of the war that enabled the Ukrainian participants to collectively share in the experience of being affected by it, even if they were currently living outside of the country itself (Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain, 2013).

Additionally, participants discussed the idea of who had the right to call themselves Ukrainian. In these discourses, being Ukrainian was much more than where a person lives. Rather, it also involves an investment in and upholding of shared ideals (cf. Norton, 2000, 2013; Seals, 2013,

2017a, 2017b). Where these ideals were violated, the violators were discursively positioned as outsiders, no longer able to call themselves Ukrainian. Therefore, the shared experience of the war also had the effect of highlighting ideas of what it means to be Ukrainian. For some, what it means to be Ukrainian also includes speaking the Ukrainian language (cf. Osnach, 2015), and they drew upon intertextual references to institutional symbolic capital (such as state language status) to make this point. For others, being Ukrainian also means focusing on the individual and the embracing of transnational identities and experiences, for which participants usually drew upon narratives of personal experience, therein making use of embodied symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Meadows, 2009).

The responses from participants also highlight the important reminder that not everyone from the same region, from the same age group, now living in the same location, or even speaking the same language agrees on all aspects of the war in Ukraine. However, what many tend to do is to find ways to identify with those like them. Furthermore, some individuals further identify with those like them by highlighting the differences of those unlike them and then using these differences to ‘other’ the latter group (cf. Bucholtz, 1999; Seals, 2017b). This then makes it easier to position the other as automatically different and therefore easier to disagree with.

Finally, as discussed by Fialkova and Yelenevskaja (2016), it becomes easier for people to surround themselves with those like them nowadays with social media, such that people (including those within the diaspora) often see only a majority of like-minded views reflected back at them. This includes the type of information and news sources that are shared, therein influencing the development of opinions and Discourses (Fialkova & Yelenevskaja, 2016; Voolaid, 2013). This then takes us into Chapter 4, where the focus becomes how participants position these others whom they see as responsible for the war.

Notes

- (1) Although 38 people took part in the interviews, not all of their interviews are represented in the current book, due to the necessity of keeping focus on a limited set of topics. That being said, no voices are silenced either. Their opinions and experiences are echoed in excerpts found throughout this book, just stated in a more illustrative way by other participants. Those interviewees who do not appear in the current book have still shown up in conference presentations and will continue to appear in future publications.
- (2) Throughout Ruslana’s interview, I was amazed at how composed and forgiving she was. Even though years of study and her planned future had just been lost, she was willing to forgive and move forward into the unknown. Her interview was a true example of the strength and positive outlook of the Ukrainian people, including those who took part in this project.