

5 Renegotiating Identity and 'Changing Your Mother Tongue'

A common theme throughout the interviews, and one that became more common as time went on, was the discussion of 'changing your mother tongue.' On the surface, this unique turn of phrase appears to be in part due to translation of the term 'рідна мова' into English. In Ukraine, the term 'рідна мова' has multiple meanings, depending on how it is being used and by whom. These meanings range from language of national identity to the language one grew up speaking; however, even individuals in Ukraine disagree on the exact meaning of this term in Ukrainian (Shimeki, 2007; Vyshniak, 2009). However, the meaning of the term 'mother tongue' in English as used by the participants in the phrase 'changing your mother tongue' focuses more on the projected transition into a regular, dominant usage of the Ukrainian language. More specifically, the participants used this term to refer to the case wherein a person (sometimes even themselves) actively worked to shift their dominant language used from Russian to Ukrainian, and to simultaneously internally shift the language they most identified with from Russian to Ukrainian.

The idea of 'changing your mother tongue' as the participants discuss it is highly reflective of a commonly discussed belief in Ukrainian life that there is a strong binding tie between experiences and language. As stated by activist Sergiy Osnach (2015, n.p.), 'Мова та історична пам'ять — дві взаємопов'язані складові ідентичності' (language and historical memory are two interconnected identities).¹ This belief has led to several language related movements in the wake of Maidan and the Ukrainian war, including the bilingual day of solidarity, centred in Lviv and Odessa on February 26, 2014 (cf. Csernicskó, 2017). On this day, people participating in the event in Lviv (Western Ukraine) spoke in Russian, and those in Odessa (Southern Ukraine) spoke in Ukrainian. For most participating in the event, this meant using a non-dominant language in their regular interactions that day as a way to show solidarity across the country and to highlight the importance of a single Ukrainian national identity (cf. Shulga, 2015; Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, April 2014). Yet, public

Discourses of bilingualism do not sit well with everyone, as evidenced by prominent Ukrainian sociolinguist Larisa Masenko arguing that the current bilingual campaigns hurt the Ukrainian-speaking minority who live in Russian-language-dominant areas of Ukraine (Masenko & Orel, 2014).

The complexity of views in Ukraine regarding language make the ‘changing your mother tongue’ concept even more fascinating. On a theoretical level, this perceived concept of being able to change one’s mother tongue has implications for our understanding of how language is embodied and how the conscious awareness of this embodiment can serve as a tool for the individual in their attempt to reposition themselves in their view, as well as in the views of others. Furthermore, connections between embodiment, language shift, conscious language use and sociolinguistic identity further contribute to a narrative that redefines what it means to actively belong to a particular community of practice – in this case, self-identifying Ukrainians who position themselves as aligned with Ukraine and disaligned with Russia during the ongoing Ukrainian war.

Embodied Language

Research into how language is embodied has brought much understanding to what people have felt for a long time without necessarily having a way to talk about it. I will always remember giving a talk on heritage languages as embodied, and person after person coming up afterwards to tell me their stories and how much this concept resonated with them. Bucholtz and Hall (2016) in particular, have made a huge contribution to this field of inquiry recently. As they describe, language is quite literally embodied – that is, it is the body itself that allows us to produce language in order to communicate. Furthermore, they cite research on indexicality (e.g. Carr, 2011; Silverstein, 2003, 2005) to show how ‘sociocultural beliefs about language rely on indexical iconization... such as when speakers perform stereotyped “gay speech” through the flap of a limp wrist or parody “teenage girl talk” with the accompanying embodied posture of taking a selfie with a cellphone’ (Bucholtz & Hall, 2016: 178). They also cite research on the voice itself and stylistic features of the voice indexing perceived social categories and membership of those (e.g. Podesva, 2007, 2013; Zimman, 2013).

Perhaps the most poignant part of Bucholtz and Hall’s (2016) article for the current book is when they discuss embodied discourse and how we quite literally talk the body into being (Bucholtz & Hall, 2016: 181; see also Goodwin, 2000 and Zimman, 2014). It is this third mentioned point which resonates so strongly with other work with multilingual speakers and embodied language.

For example, in research with multilingual youth of migrant families, Krumm (2001, 2004, 2010) found evidence of how even youth are so conscious of their embodied multilingualism that they represent their languages visually within a ‘stick figure portrait’ of a body itself. As Krumm

(2004) notes when discussing these linguistic identity portraits, 'Many migrants have developed multilingual identities, that is, the languages they have acquired during the migration process are no longer felt to play a conflicting role, but have become part of their lives and personalities' (Krumm, 2004: 65). In repeating the linguistic identity portraits, but with young children, Seals (2013, 2017b) likewise found that even young children already felt a sense of embodied language, filling in blank figures to reflect an inner presence of each language (societally dominant as well as heritage languages) with which they identified. Children were also able to narrate their drawings, such that this think-aloud activity helped provide insight into how children conceptualized their relationship between language and identity through internalizing languages in the body itself.

However, as discussed in this chapter, researchers need to be mindful to not allow embodied languages in the multilingual context to appear static. Rather, as this chapter shows, even an internalized sense of languages can shift and change, reflecting ideologies and contextual positionings. Through the 'changing your mother tongue' narratives in this chapter, it becomes clear that even a multilingual sense of embodied languages should be thought of as indexing other sociocultural ideals and aspects of identity.

Dialogic Echoes

Throughout the discourses of changing their mother tongue, the participants connect dialogically with aforementioned master Discourses, such as the Ukrainian language being connected to Ukrainian identity (cf. Braha, 2011), and the rise in importance for young Ukrainians in identifying nationally as Ukrainian (cf. Shulga, 2015). The interviewees living in the Ukrainian diaspora also have intertextual dialogic echoes of home country Discourses in their diasporic Discourses, though each is still its own. To illustrate this point, an excerpt is presented from an interview with Ilona (35 years old, from Western Ukraine, now living in the United States).

Ilona: With Ukrainians,
 most of them speak Russian,
 but um, lately we've been making a point of,
 um if, people understand Ukrainian,
 I, only speak Ukrainian.

When Ilona begins, she unexpectedly discursively positions Ukrainians on the outside of herself, naming the group and then saying that 'most of them speak Russian'. This indicates that in this instance, she is referring to Ukrainians still in Ukraine. She then repositions herself, however, as a member of the Ukrainian group of whom she is now speaking, shifting

focus to talk about what ‘we’ve been making a point of’. She then continues this shift, discussing personally the actions that she is taking. As she says, the point that she and other Ukrainians (broadly) have been making is that ‘if, people understand Ukrainian, I, only speak Ukrainian.’ Therefore, while Ilona begins by drawing intertextually on the historical practices of many Ukrainian people in Ukraine, her discursive positioning shifts to allow her to dialogically include her own voice as well as those of Ukrainians globally. Her final shift to a more personal focus (‘I’) still carries with it the previous intertextual references she has just made in setting up her point and allows her to draw upon the home country master narrative of Ukrainian language use being a part of Ukrainian identity. The dialogic connection with home and host country Discourses during discussions of changing a mother tongue become even clearer in other interviews, which are discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter.

A Previous History

One of the ways in which many participants in the diaspora, as well as in Ukraine, legitimized stories of changing the mother tongue was to focus linearly on what they saw as the historical nature of this movement, therein providing more symbolic capital for what some consider a controversial move. This was particularly common for those who positioned themselves on the periphery of the movement. That is, these participants were taking part in the actions while expressing some resistance to the idea of fully aligning with more obviously political aspects of the movement, such as drawing direct connections between language use and political identity. Rather, a subgroup of participants within the larger group of those actively changing their mother tongue saw their own efforts to change their mother tongue as being connected longitudinally to historical practices of Ukrainians in Ukraine (cf. Bondarenko, 2008). An example of this positioning can be found in the excerpt from an interview with Denys (37 years old, from Central Ukraine, living in New Zealand).

Denys: Ah nationally yeah,

I- I at the moment, I identify myself as Ukrainian,
p- probably like ten years ago I- I wouldn’t care.

Corinne: Yeah.

Denys: Um now yeah,

I- I identify myself as Ukrainian,
even so my f- ah probably my grandmother was-
my grand- grandmother from Poland,
and other grand- grandmother was from Russia,
and so all kinds of blood.

Corinne: Yeah.

Denys: And all kinds of relatives,
all nationalities,
but ah yeah, I was born in Kyiv so.

Corinne: Yeah, and so you mentioned it's more important now to identify yourself as Ukrainian,
could you talk a little bit more about that?

Denys: Yeah, so ah basically,
when- when I came to Kyiv at the age of fourteen,
it was like- like three last years of my school,
and er I didn't know U- Ukrainian at all.

Corinne: Oh really?

Denys: Yeah, and it was a Ukrainian environment,
so it was rather hard for me to get into it,
but ah it's not the language,
'cause Ukrainian is my second language,
it's not the first one,
like I- that all- it just that I hav-
I heard it, ah like, I w-
I started to live in Ukrainian society ah bit late in my life,
but ah- but I can understand it freely,
and I can talk,
and I try to talk sometimes, and ah yeah,
my wife tells I'm getting better at it.

Corinne: [[[laughs]]]

Denys: [[[laughs]]] ah it's not really that hard,
and I- 'cause you know, when yo- er,
there's probably a lot of people in e- in ex Soviet Union ah,
they didn't have nationality,
especially if you can see from- from your face,
it's ah- therefore it was-
I- I think for every person,
it's kind of important at some point in life to identify yourself,
so that's- that's probably the reason why I started thinking about ah,
it's not because of-

I identified myself as Ukrainian probably before the oldest er
Maidan,
ah in- happened in two thousand and thirteen probably,
ah- probably even before the Maidan in two thousand and four,
ah but ah yeah I- I-
I remember that ah in two thousand and four,
I just kind of formulated this idea that,
yeah I am Ukrainian,
it's- it's not- it's just- ah it was a straight idea,
just,
I have a nationality,
ah before that,
I just you know,
I just normal person,
I don't care.

Denys begins by first drawing a more common distinction found within the interviews – between ‘then’ and ‘now’. As Denys says, ‘at the moment, I identify myself as Ukrainian, p- probably like ten years ago I- I wouldn’t care.’ By beginning his self-identification with ‘at the moment’, we see Denys’s clear understanding of identity as constantly shifting, which also matches the rest of his interview. Furthermore, by then stating, ‘I identify myself as Ukrainian,’ followed by information about his family’s connections to Russia and Poland, Denys shows the complexity of identifying in any particular way in a post-Soviet space. By drawing upon his family’s multicultural background, Denys also highlights that he could choose to identify with any of these places, but he has currently chosen to identify with Ukraine.

Then, in comparing the present time to 10 years prior, Denys draws upon intertextual references to current Discourses of the increasing importance of national identity for Ukrainians (Tsentrl Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, April 2014), as well as providing an intertextual link to the Orange Revolution, which occurred a decade prior. While some Ukrainians point to the Orange Revolution as the first time they consciously identified with a national identity, other Ukrainians point to the recent EuroMaidan events as this consciousness raising event. However, after indexing the importance of the current events in Ukraine for establishing a current positioning in regard to Ukrainian national identity, Denys continues by further drawing connections to the past and attributing his consciousness raising to events in his life that occurred before either EuroMaidan or the Orange Revolution. These connections serve to

contextualize the current events and rising importance of national identity in Ukraine as something that has been developing, not something that occurred suddenly from nowhere.

Denys relates his Ukrainian identity negotiation story through a narrative that begins when he was in secondary school and had just moved to the capital city of Kyiv. As Denys explains elsewhere in his interview, his family moved around a lot, much of which was in Eastern Ukraine and Russia, so he also encountered many different people, cultures, languages, dialects and ideologies. Denys begins by explaining that when he moved to Kyiv as a teenager, 'it was a Ukrainian environment, so it was rather hard for me to get into it, but ah it's not the language, 'cause Ukrainian is my second language, it's not the first one.' While having difficulty integrating into his new environment at first, Denys is careful to specify that it was not the language that was a problem. This explanation also requires an intertextual understanding of Kyiv to know what Denys is referring to. In Kyiv, both Russian and Ukrainian languages are frequently used. Since these two languages were first and second languages for Denys, he would not have had a problem with the use of both in Kyiv.

Denys then continues to explain this, saying, 'I started to live in Ukrainian society ah bit late in my life, but ah- but I can understand it freely, and I can talk, and I try to talk sometimes, and ah yeah, my wife tells I'm getting better at it.' The reference Denys makes to living 'in Ukrainian society... late in life' again draws upon intertextual knowledge shared during the interview, that Denys spent much of his life in Russian-dominant regions of Ukraine and in Russia. Therefore, this comment is one of many found throughout the interviews that speaks of the importance of an approach such as interactional sociolinguistics that foregrounds interpreting discourse in the context of the entire interaction, as well as drawing upon prior known knowledge of the participants to interpret their discourse. Denys's reference to trying to sometimes speak Ukrainian is another example of this. At the time of the interview, Denys was already using Ukrainian often, especially due to his wife's encouragement, and he and his wife, Vira, had already been pillars of the local Ukrainian community during that point, a place where they both made use of the Ukrainian language. It is this shared prior knowledge upon which we both drew, which led to our shared laughter in the line following Denys's comment.

In the next part of Denys's narrative, he then draws upon more intertextual references to Soviet history, as well as to larger Discourses of ethnicity and phenotype found internationally: 'there's probably a lot of people in e- in ex Soviet Union ah, they didn't have nationality, especially if you can see from- from your face.' The reference Denys makes to not having a nationality is reflective of the fact that when the Soviet Union collapsed, each nation-state that was then formed also chose its own policy in regard to who would be granted citizenship and how that would

happen. Citizenship was not automatically granted for residents in all of these new countries. Notably, in countries such as Latvia and Lithuania, new requirements had to be met if people wanted to be granted citizenship in these countries. For other countries such as Armenia, citizenship laws did not take effect until years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, therein affectively leaving people ‘without nationality’ (Makaryan, 2006).

Denys then returns to a reflection of his own moment of Ukrainian identification. First, Denys is careful to specify that his own consciousness raising occurred before either national movement – EuroMaidan of 2013 and the first Maidan that is associated with the Orange Revolution of 2004. However, 2004 still remained an important year for Denys in terms of national identification. As Denys explains, ‘I remember that ah in two thousand and four, I just kind of formulated this idea that, yeah I am Ukrainian, it’s- it’s not- it’s just- ah it was a straight idea, just, I have a nationality.’ This particular dating of events is interesting because Denys has also been careful to separate his own self-identification moment from the national movements in 2004. While the events occurring in Ukraine in 2004 undoubtedly contributed to influencing Denys’s establishment of a national identity, it is important for him to position these events, and subsequent events such as language choice and use, as personal, rather than political.

During this excerpt, Denys also establishes his ideological position, that ‘it’s kind of important at some point in life to identify yourself.’ While Denys mitigates the directness of this statement through the use of ‘kind of’, his position is still clear. However, this mitigation and Denys’s own historical narrative show that while he aligns with the idea that self-identification is important (in this case national identification), he still positions himself on the periphery of the national identification and changing you mother tongue movements.

Constructing a historically situated narrative was also a discursive technique used by Kyrylo (early 20s, from Eastern Ukraine, now living in the United States). This is evidenced in an excerpt from Kyrylo’s interview below, when he brought up the language shift that had occurred within his own family in Ukraine.

Corinne: mm hmm

Kyrylo: So my dad who is from Dnipropetrovsk and uh,
 he spend all his childhood in village,
 um he:-
 like he is Ukrainian,
 totally Ukrainian,
 but he- his level of Ukrainian language is not so strong as my mom’s
 who has Russian roots,

and uh never talked Ukrainian language,
but right now,
she make incredible uh success with Ukrainian language so,
she can speak it fluently almost.

Corinne: Yeah and what do you think about that?

Kyrylo: It's- it's, amazing,
and I want to- I want to- people in Ukraine use this language,
not only official- uh as official language,
but also uh, their kids,
even though like my family for example,
if my mom dad and my sister?
She's uh right now, uh eleven years old.

Corinne: mm hmm

Kyrylo: S:o she speak to her friends at school in Ukrainian language,
and uh, at home they speak uh uh Russian language ((laughing))
with my sister,
and she's answering in Russian language,
though she can't uh write uh Russian language.

Corinne: [mm hmm]

Kyrylo: [She can] write only Ukrainian,
because they-
I- I'm not sure does they have uh uh Russian language at school?
I'm pretty sure that they don't have it?
But, she can she fluently speak Russian language,
and uh feel like it's first language for her?

Corinne: mm hmm

Kyrylo: Because she was born in Dnipropetrovsk.

Corinne: mm hmm

Kyrylo: And uh, at school?
She start school and uh kindergarten uh in Kyiv?
And all, kids and uh, teachers speak with these kids only Ukrainian
language,
which is uh strategically really really good for Ukraine.

Corinne: mm hmm

Kyrylo: So then after, twenty: thirty years,
these kids will rise to young professionals,

and in their professional um, fields they will speak Russian,
and u:h Ukrainian language, not Russian language so,

Corinne: [Yeah].

Kyrylo: [But because],

I'm, the generation who is like in between Russian and Ukrainian
language,

and uh for example,

it just how- how strong,

your motivation is to speak Russian or Ukrainian language.

Kyrylo chose to begin his story by first realigning the chronotope of his narrative to an earlier time and space – that which is connected with his parents' childhood. He explains, 'So my dad who is from Dnipropetrovsk and uh, he spend all his childhood in village, um he:- like he is Ukrainian, totally Ukrainian.' By first orienting his father to a life in a Russian-language-dominant Ukrainian city and emphasizing that his father is 'totally Ukrainian', Kyrylo is dialogically anticipating and preemptively responding to any criticisms arising from the master narrative of needing to speak Ukrainian to be considered Ukrainian, with which his father does not align. However, Kyrylo has also used this example to emphasize his mother's story, which as he says, 'his level of Ukrainian language is not so strong as my mom's who has Russian roots, and uh never talked Ukrainian language, but right now, she make incredible uh success with Ukrainian language so, she can speak it fluently almost.' Through this example, Kyrylo emphasizes the unexpected result of his mother, who has Russian roots and never grew up speaking Ukrainian, becoming nearly fluent in Ukrainian as an adult. Through this short story, Kyrylo has drawn dialogically upon Ukrainian expectations that most Russians do not speak Ukrainian, as well as the current narrative of changing one's mother tongue to further align with the ideology that most Ukrainians do or should speak Ukrainian. Since Kyrylo's family lives in Ukraine, Kyrylo also implies through his story that his mother at least partially identifies as Ukrainian, as a person living in Ukraine who has learned Ukrainian. This is further emphasized by Kyrylo's phrasing, stating that his mother has 'Russian roots', not that she herself identifies as Russian.

When I asked Kyrylo what he thinks of his mother learning the Ukrainian language, he replies very enthusiastically: 'It's- it's, amazing, and I want to- I want to- people in Ukraine use this language, not only official- uh as official language, but also uh, their kids.' Kyrylo positions the action of learning Ukrainian as a very positive one, which aligns again with the ideology that Ukrainians should know and speak Ukrainian, at least for official and business purposes. However, Kyrylo also uses his

story as an example of what he sees to be positive language shift within families towards the Ukrainian language. This statement continues to intertextually reference the rise in the perceived importance of national identity for young Ukrainians (Shulga, 2015), which is seen as embodied and enacted through the use of the Ukrainian language.

Kyrylo then continues his story of language shift among Ukrainian youth by giving the example of his young sister who has been raised at home speaking Russian but who uses Ukrainian at school, and as a result speaks Russian dominantly but writes in Ukrainian. Kyrylo ties these linguistic events to regional locations, which is another common Discourse in Ukrainian society. He explains that she speaks Russian 'because she was born in Dnipropetrovsk,' which is in Eastern Ukraine, but she writes in Ukrainian because 'she start school and uh kindergarten uh in Kyiv,' which is the country's capital city, located in the center of Ukraine. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, Kyiv historically had the regular presence of both the Ukrainian and Russian languages. However, with Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1991, there also came an expectation from the public that Ukrainian should be used at the official level, which includes the capital city of Kyiv. Therefore, it is upon this history and these Discourses that Kyrylo intertextually draws when he makes regional comparisons, with Dnipropetrovsk being the city of Russian language and Kyiv being the city of Ukrainian language.

Kyrylo further aligns with the master Discourse that Ukrainians speak the Ukrainian language by stating that this language shift among Ukrainian children is 'strategically really really good for Ukraine.' He then continues emphasizing his focus on full language shift, not multilingualism, by predicting that in the future 'after, twenty: thirty years, these kids will rise to young professionals, and in their professional um, fields they will speak Russian, and u:h Ukrainian language, not Russian language so...' While at first Kyrylo mentions multilingual use of Russian and Ukrainian, he self-corrects to say the Ukrainian language but not the Russian language, therein implying language shift among the current young people of the country.

After discussing what he sees to be the ideal situation of language shift in Ukraine, Kyrylo then returns to the present and to his own language abilities, saying, 'I'm, the generation who is like in between Russian and Ukrainian language, and uh for example, it just how- how strong, your motivation is to speak Russian or Ukrainian language.' Interestingly, while Kyrylo had positioned the children of Ukraine as influenced by an outside force (education) which can lead them through language shift, Kyrylo discusses his own generation's linguistic abilities as embodied but also as tied cognitively to motivation. Therefore, for Kyrylo, and for many Ukrainians, language is seen as not a stable force. Rather, the language you speak is seen as tied internally to motivation, which is also the supportive reasoning behind the ideas present in the movement to change one's mother tongue.

An example of this reasoning and of how it is seen as having been enacted in practice comes from Ilya. Ilya (33 years old, from the Black Sea region of Ukraine, still living in Ukraine) grew up speaking Russian and identifying as a Russian speaking Ukrainian. However, as he explains, he subscribes to the changing one's mother tongue ideology that is growing in presence among Ukrainians.

Ilya: Originally I am a Russian speaking Ukrainian,
now I just ah-
now we have shifted to Ukrainian-
and speak Ukrainian in everyday life and ah forever ((laughter))
...
on purpose
...
now everything looks different er, you know,
just- um, Ukrainians have understood- understood that they are
together
...
so yes I am trying to change my mother tongue.

Corinne: Um I've talked to some people who have said that they are-
that on purpose they're trying to change their mother tongue from
Russian to Ukrainian.
Is that something that you are doing as well,
or is it not quite that much?

Ilya: XX so yes I am trying to change my mother tongue,
but you know, I always felt this controversy in myself
ah my, ah parents for example,
ah well are Russian speaking,
although my mother er now-w- also tries to- to shift to Ukrainian,
ah she has really problems with that because er um
her education in Ukrainian was- was quite poor in Soviet times,
mm and so my relatives a-always claimed that they were-
and they- they are Ukrainians,
and er they spoke Russian,
so I always believed that Russian is er- is not the very mother
tongue of mine and my-
by the way my grandpa my grandma,

they were Ukrainian-speaking ah people from the Voronezh region,
 which is in Russia um and ah,
 so y-y-y-
 what else,
 but what's er characteristic of that ah is that
 when they moved from a small city-
 from Voronezh region to Kharkiv,
 which is in Ukraine actually,
 they ah ah they turn to-t-to Russian, you know,
 so it is ah there's XX habits of Ukrainians ah to switch to Russian
 when they move to a big city
 because XX it was um- was something- something- you
 know- know,
 s- something X tradition about Ukrainian,
 so it was er conceived as a rural language,
 as something provincial and some- something uncivilized,
 and so on and so forth.

Ilya begins his narrative by establishing a 'before' and 'after' trajectory, not unlike the structure used in conversion narratives (Castillo Ayometzi, 2007; Griffin, 2009). In so doing, Ilya is able to disconnect from his 'previous self' and instead re-position himself in light of his current actions and beliefs. For Ilya, this includes the shift from speaking Russian to speaking Ukrainian: 'Originally I am a Russian speaking Ukrainian, now I just ah- now we have shifted to Ukrainian- and speak Ukrainian in everyday life and ah forever.' By naming himself as previously 'a Russian speaking Ukrainian', Ilya is dialogically echoing the negative positioning of this identity label, as was seen presented by Kalyna in Chapter 3. He then states that 'we' (he and his family) have shifted to Ukrainian, speak Ukrainian every day, and will do so 'forever', thus speaking to Ilya's re-positioning of himself as a Ukrainian speaker, which he sees as an important enough part of his identity to continue doing so 'forever'. He then pauses and says that this switching from using Russian to using Ukrainian in everyday life is 'on purpose', therein further speaking to the importance with which he views being a Ukrainian-dominant speaker for his identity.

In further explaining his goal to change his mother tongue, Ilya explains that 'now everything looks different er, you know, just- um, Ukrainians have understood- understood that they are together.' Through this statement, Ilya expresses the perceived importance of embodying a particular sociolinguistic identity, that of the Ukrainian speaking

Ukrainian, in order to belong to the ‘together’ in-group of positively positioned Ukrainians (Braha, 2011). This also draws dialogically upon the ideological master narrative that ‘real’ Ukrainians speak Ukrainian, which was seen throughout Chapters 3 and 4.

Ilya further demonstrates how dominant language use has become an embodied component of those attempting to change their mother tongue to Ukrainian. As Ilya says, ‘I always felt this controversy in myself ah my, ah parents for example, ah well are Russian speaking.’ Ilya explains that he felt an internalized identity struggle (cf. Norton, 2000) due to identifying as Ukrainian but speaking Russian, a language that his parents also use and that he therefore grew up speaking. As Ilya relates, speaking Russian but identifying as Ukrainian caused him a sense of internal conflict, which in part motivated his decision to attempt to embody a Ukrainian speaker identity, therein attempting to resolve this struggle within himself.

To further justify his self-positioning, Ilya draws upon his family history in a very interesting way. First, he excuses his mother’s dominance in Russian by attributing it to poor Ukrainian language teaching during the Soviet era. Since the Soviet Union (the central governing region of which is now the Russian Federation) was responsible for Soviet era education, this contributes to a further distancing from Russia for Ilya, as he blames them for his mother’s low Ukrainian language abilities: ‘so I always believed that Russian is er- is not the very mother tongue of mine and my-[family].’ In this way, the former Soviet Union is positioned as responsible for denying his family the linguistic identity of Ukrainian language speakers, which is something that Ilya feels is his right. As evidence of this, Ilya explains further about his family linguistic history: ‘by the way my grandpa my grandma, they were Ukrainian-speaking ah people from the Voronezh region, which is in Russia.’ Interestingly, even though Ilya mentions that his grandparents were born in Russia, this is not the focus of his example, and this is not even an allowance that he makes in regard to their positioning or identity. Rather, his focus is on them being Ukrainian language speakers. Even though they lived in what is today Russia, they spoke the Ukrainian language, and therefore Ilya feels that speaking Ukrainian is part of his heritage.

Ilya then continues to tell his grandparents’ story, as a means of explaining why he did not grow up speaking Ukrainian. He explains that even though his grandparents ended up moving to a city in Ukraine, the fact that it was a city and not a town or village meant that the trend then was to use the Russian language. This in fact has been supported by linguistic research, showing that Soviet ideologies resulted in a construction of the Ukrainian language being perceived as ‘backwards’ and ‘rural’, while the Russian language was constructed as ‘forward moving’ and ‘urban’ (Bilaniuk, 2003; Kulyk, 2011). It is in part in response to this positioning that the current ‘speak Ukrainian’ movements in Ukraine have

taken place and why they have gained so much force, as advocates attempt to overcome the negative positioning of Ukrainian from past Discourses. These are the historical events and ideologies which Ilya is referencing. However, he then joins the dissenters of these past ideologies by trivializing this past view through his statement: 'and so on and so forth,' which is a discursive equivalent of 'blah blah blah,' therein denying legitimacy to the claims associated with this statement. Thus, Ilya has once again realigned with the pro-Ukrainian language position.

A Recent Event

Other participants who discussed the 'change your mother tongue' ideology emphasized the recent events that led to this position. For these participants, past events were not emphasized nearly as much as recent events, if at all. Therefore, they attributed the 'change your mother tongue' ideology directly to the events that they themselves recently experienced (as opposed to those retold by older family members). In particular, the events of EuroMaidan and the Ukrainian war were named as leading to this unique linguistic ideological movement. Milena (20 years old, from Eastern Ukraine, still living in Ukraine) provides an example of this in her interview excerpt.

Corinne: Do you think there's been... any...
change in opinion... recently,
or in the last couple of years?

Milena: Mm-hmm, like, er...

Corinne: [About... Russian and Ukrainian.]

Milena: [Yeah. Yes, right.]

Mm-hmm.

I think, yes, especially... due- to- th-
due to the... mmm, situation in Ukraine,
what happened, like, three months ago...
and, yeah...

Also, I want to say about patriotism.

Mmm, because, for example... er...

when... somebody ask you one year ago,

where- where do you from, er, all people, er, answered them, like...
erm... modestly,

that they are from Ukraine,

and almost nobody knows- no- almost nobody kno- knew, where
is Ukraine.

And right now, erm, almost everybody... er, has the... the f- mmm, the national flag...
 some national, er, dresses,
 and they- they started to speak in Ukrainian.
 Because, even, er, when-I- er, when I came to my university,
 all my tutors, er, tutors are speaking... Russian.
 But due to the situation in Ukraine,
 they started to er, to... speak in Ukrainian,
 like, in order to respect- in order to support Ukraine, so...
 something like that.
 So yeah,
 I think that... situation change,
 and real change.

Before delving into a discourse analysis of Milena's interview, it is important to first acknowledge that her answer was in response to the question I posed to her, which focused on recent years. However, while there is a possibility that some of her response may be due in part to my prompting, it is important to note that nearly half of the respondents answered this question in the negative and proceeded to explain that the language ideologies present now had been so for a long time. Therefore, this prompt was a way to get participants to discuss language ideologies directly, especially as tied to a timescale, whether past or present.

The excerpt above begins with me asking Milena if she thinks anything has changed during the past few years in regard to the Ukrainian and Russian languages. She answers affirmatively and then narrows the time focus even further to the past few months. Since Milena's interview was held in October 2014, she is referencing the events of the Ukrainian War and Maidan. As Milena states, 'I think, yes, especially... due- to- th- due to the... mmm, situation in Ukraine, what happened, like, three months ago...' Specifically, Milena points to the period approximately three months prior, which is the time during which the Ukrainian war first escalated. During the period Milena refers to, the war zone in Eastern Ukraine (including Donetsk and Luhansk) declared themselves to be an independent republic, the Malaysia Airlines tragedy happened in Eastern Ukraine, and fighting in the war zone intensified, supported by the Russian military. Milena points to this period of intensification as the time during which she also sees opinions about the Russian and Ukrainian languages significantly changing.

Milena then continues by relating the topic of changes in language ideologies to national ideologies and identification: 'Also, I want to say about patriotism.' As Milena is in Ukraine, and we are talking about

Ukraine, we can understand that Milena is referring to patriotism as related to Ukrainian patriotism. By also stating 'I want to say about...' without simply talking about patriotism, Milena has made a clear move to take the conversational floor (cf. Shaw, 2000) in her topic initiation (cf. Sacks *et al.*, 1974). This taking of the floor allows Milena to continue her discussion of patriotism uninterrupted, which makes sense as a discursive strategy because, for some, patriotism in the context of Ukraine is a controversial topic.² Therefore, by making this conversational move, Milena is simultaneously intertextually referencing the potential controversial nature of this topic, and dialogically anticipating and responding to any of these concerns.

Milena then provides an example of what she means by patriotism and why she has connected this concept to my question of recent language perception and ideologies. She begins her example by reorienting our timeline to one year in the past: 'when... somebody ask you one year ago, where- where do you from, er, all people, er, answered them, like... erm... modestly, that they are from Ukraine, and almost nobody knows- no-almost nobody kno- knew, where is Ukraine.' In the context of Milena's example, 'somebody' and 'them' refer to those outside of Ukraine who are not already familiar with Ukraine. This is a common story related by Ukrainians – that when interacting with non-Ukrainian identifying people outside of Ukraine, more often than not the latter have no idea where Ukraine is located or what it means to be Ukrainian (see Chapter 6). Therefore, Milena is drawing upon this common narrative to situate the contrast between 'then' and 'now' which she is setting up. Noticeably, Milena also states that Ukrainians would answer this first question 'modestly', therein further setting up a counter example to the idea of patriotism. Furthermore, this discussion of modesty intertextually draws upon other common Discourses in Ukrainian culture, in which Ukrainians frequently position themselves as gentle, kind, soft-spoken and peace-loving people.

This previous positioning is then contrasted by Milena with what she sees as a shift in ideologies, identification and self-presentation, with national identity coming to the forefront for Ukrainians. This aligns with previous findings of the rise in importance of national identity for young Ukrainians (see Chapters 2 and 3). Milena discursively illustrates this change in identification and positioning by pointing specifically to the changes in both visible appearance and language use, therein drawing a connection between the two and further showing the embodied nature of language choice and use during this time of war in Ukraine: 'And right now, erm, almost everybody... er, has the... the f- mmm, the national flag... some national, er, dresses, and they- they started to speak in Ukrainian.' The national dress that Milena is referring to is the vyshyvanka embroidery – a particular style of embroidery unique to Ukraine, which has also risen in symbolic importance as being representative of



Figure 5.1 Photo of Ukrainian embroidery⁴

Ukrainian identity, as shown in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 (cf. Brown, 1994). For Milena, and for many Ukrainians, speaking Ukrainian has become as symbolic a sign of Ukrainian national identification as wearing vyshyvanka embroidery.

Milena then provides a second example that stresses what she sees as an ideological shift across domains of language use: ‘Because, even, er, when-I- er, when I came to my university, all my tutors, er, tutors are speaking... Russian. But due to the situation in Ukraine, they started to



Figure 5.2 Photo of Ukrainian girls wearing vyshyvankas and traditional vinok flower crowns at a celebration⁵

er, to... speak in Ukrainian, like, in order to respect- in order to support Ukraine, so... something like that.' In this example, Milena draws upon a more formal setting – that of the university context. Furthermore, she does not focus on language use between friends, but rather the language used by her tutors,³ who have a higher level of authority. As Milena explains, she perceived all of her tutors to primarily use the Russian language, but she says that they have recently switched to using Ukrainian. She directly attributes this to the events of Maidan and the Ukrainian War ('the situation in Ukraine'). Milena sees the change in preferred language use as being sociopolitical and as directly tied to Ukrainian national identity. Through this example, Milena connects again intertextually to the Discourse of the Ukrainian language as being tied to Ukrainian national identity, and she positions a switch in preferred language use as being located fairly recently in time, being universal across people in the Ukrainian space, and being tied directly to the Ukrainian war (Shulga, 2015; Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, April 2014).

In another example, Denys (37 years old, from Central Ukraine, living in New Zealand) also sees a change in preferred language use as being a recent event, though he does not locate it in time as near to the present as does Milena. Rather, Denys describes this change in preferred language use as something that has developed within a particular generation of Ukrainian people.

Denys: Well I think that ah we have a new generation of people, who are like between their twenties and ah thirty-five or fourties, and I know many people who specifically ah ((4 seconds)) started to speak like they- they declared that they will speak Ukrainian.

Corinne: Mm-hm.

Denys: XX- and they started to learn it, and to speak solely into Ukrainian, and switch to other languages only when they need to a- according the- the situation, if someone doesn't understand them or different environments, but in- ah in the companies. And ah at work, ah home parties and everywhere, it's- they- they specifically choose to- to speak Ukrainian, so it's like- call it patriotism or whatever.

Corinne: [Yeah ((laughter))].

Denys: [[(laughter)]]

Ah some of them tell me- told me that they like it just- just because that they-

they want to learn it,

and that's the best way to learn if you force yourself to speak.

In this excerpt, Denys points to a very specific age range of people whom he sees as being those taking part the most in the effort to change their mother tongue. The age group that Denys points out ('like between their twenties and ah thirty-five or fourties') also matches the recent sociological research published in Ukraine of Ukrainians who have placed more emphasis on national identity (e.g. Shulga, 2015), as well as the demographics of those who were interviewed for this study. Furthermore, as shown throughout this chapter, as well as in the previous chapters, there are a number of people from all different regions and demographics within this age group who attribute a conscious preference for the Ukrainian language to a rise in Ukrainian national identity. Therefore, it is not surprising that the vast majority of participants in this research are familiar with the effort to change one's mother tongue taking place among Ukrainians, and that some are even taking part in this effort themselves. As Denys mentions, even though he himself is not taking part in this effort directly, 'I know many people who specifically ah... started to sp- like they- they declared that they will speak Ukrainian.' By also self-correcting from saying individuals merely started to speak Ukrainian to saying that individuals 'declared' they will speak Ukrainian, this also speaks to the consciousness of this effort for those taking part.

Denys then further elaborates on his explanation, saying that those taking part in this effort to change one's mother tongue 'started to learn it, and to speak solely into Ukrainian, and switch to other languages only when they need to.' This aspect of switching to the Ukrainian language, wherein individuals use only the Ukrainian language and only switch when necessary again dialogically echoes the Discourse of 'real' Ukrainians speak the Ukrainian language (Braha, 2011), as well as the Discourse of the Ukrainian language being a marker of Ukrainian national identity (Shulga, 2015). However, there is also another intertextual reference implied in Denys's statement, and that is of the long history of the Ukrainian people accommodating to others if other people do not understand the language they are using. Researchers have documented the Ukrainian people's well-intentioned non-accommodation, such that individuals will continue using their preferred language in an interaction, but only so long as others can understand them (cf. Bilaniuk, 2010).

This behavior of friendly non-accommodation comes from a long history of multilingualism in the country, such that people could understand multiple languages, and it was therefore not a problem to hold a

multilingual conversation, with each participant maintaining their language of choice. However, the terminology ('non-accommodation') as well as the description of this behavior during interaction has often been misinterpreted as being ill-intentioned and as an unwillingness to accommodate. Yet, as explained, it is not ill intention, but rather unnecessary for the interaction. Rather, each participant would rather that their interlocutors use the languages with which each is most comfortable. Linguistic accommodation (Giles & Coupland, 1991) is therefore only utilized when a language in use is not understood in the course of the interaction. However, while this has been a long-standing practice in Ukraine, it has not had the same level of conscious language choice about it. Therefore, it is better explained as having previously been *translingual interaction*, with the current more conscious practices being explained as *friendly non-accommodation*. It is the latter behavior which is referenced by Denys when he talks about people only switching from Ukrainian to another language 'when they need to'.

As the excerpt above continues, Denys explains that the Ukrainian language is also what is being used across domains of language use: 'but in- ah in the companies. And ah at work, ah home parties and everywhere, it's- they- they specifically choose to- to speak Ukrainian, so it's like- call it patriotism or whatever.' An interesting aspect of Denys's discourse here is that he began this section with 'but', which is usually used when contrasting ideas. However, it is not immediately clear what ideas he is contrasting, since he continues to talk about the preferred use of Ukrainian. This, however, is when Denys again draws upon a shared intertextual understanding of sociolinguistic interaction in Ukraine in order to create this contrast.

As previously explained, Ukrainians have historically engaged in translingual interaction, and many of those taking part in the conscious use of Ukrainian now engage in friendly non-accommodation. However, as also previously mentioned, friendly non-accommodation still focuses on the interaction between individuals and pays mind to the linguistic needs of the individuals engaged in this interaction, therein still implying that shifts in language (e.g. from Ukrainian to Russian) may still occur in the course of the conversation, even by those practicing friendly non-accommodation.

This contrasts with the second part of Denys's explanation (following 'but') in which he is discussing conscious language choice and use not between specific individuals, but within an entire domain, and in fact across domains. Therefore, it is across the domains of work, home and 'everywhere' that these Ukrainians are asserting their preferred language, rather than passively taking part in translingual interaction or negotiating the use of friendly non-accommodation. Therefore, while language choice and use may be negotiated in individual interactions as needed, this does not preclude the asserted preference for the Ukrainian language across

domains of language use. It is this asserted preference across domains that Denys refers to as ‘patriotism’.⁶

Notably, Denys ends this explanation by providing room in Ukrainian use for another group of people – those not taking part in conscious, purposeful language use for political purposes nor taking part in the efforts to change one’s mother tongue. Denys explains that this additional group ‘they like it just- just because that they- they want to learn it, and that’s the best way to learn if you force yourself to speak.’ By using the mitigator ‘just’, Denys implies that this referenced group does not have the same political motivations as the other groups. Rather, there are still Ukrainians who are consciously using the Ukrainian language in an effort to learn it because they have never previously acquired it (see Chapter 1 for a brief linguistic history of Ukraine). Denys is careful to be clear that this does not, however, mean that this group of Ukrainians learning Ukrainian are doing so for any specific political reason, therein dialogically responding to any arguments that might be made against his previous discussions of sociopolitical motivation behind using Ukrainian.

This attribution of political motivation in beginning to speak the Ukrainian language is what Ksusha (36 years old, from Central Ukraine, living in the United States) references below.

Ksusha: And um, some people make a conscious effort to start to speak Ukrainian,
it’s just a political statement...
political cultural statement.

As evidenced by Ksusha’s excerpt, there is a prevalent Discourse among Ukrainians, especially those of the young adult generations, who see the ‘conscious effort’ of beginning to speak the Ukrainian language at this time in Ukraine’s history as a ‘political cultural statement’. That is, language is seen as tied to political positioning and cultural identity, both of which contribute to the rising Ukrainian national identity (Braha, 2011; Shulga, 2015; Tsentri Doslidzhennya Suspil’sstva, April 2014). For many young Ukrainians, making the conscious effort to learn and use the Ukrainian language at this time is seen as a deliberate self-re-positioning in alignment with the rise of Ukrainian national identity.

As further evidence of the conscious identification with a particular language being perceived as a simultaneous identification with the rising Ukrainian national identity, Ruslana (28 years old, from Eastern Ukraine, still living in Ukraine) discusses in this excerpt her deliberate attempt to change her mother tongue. As Ruslana was working in another country on an internship at the time of her interview, the reference to ‘back home in Ukraine’ also references her daily lived experiences outside of the scope of her internship.

Corinne: So, and, um, back home in Ukraine,
what languages do you use?

Ruslana: Umm... ((smacks lips)) at home I used to speak Russian language...
before the war.

Then, uhm... it was just a protest,
um, I started speaking Ukrainian.

And also, um,

I had, er, a mission, abroad, and, er,

I was very... unsatisfied when people mixed me with Russian, er,
with Russian citizen because I was speaking Russian language.

And that was so unpleasant for me,

that I decided just to change my mother tongue and just to start
speaking Ukrainian.

Because I, er, don't want that people... could mix me with Russian...
um, citizen.

Corinne: [So, er...]

Ruslana: [Because...]

Corinne: [²Sorry, go ahead.]

Ruslana: [²Yeah.]

Because, of course,

language, it, erm, identifies... the person,

and if a person speaks Russian, er,

everybody will think that he is from Russia.

But, I don't want-

I don't want that.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, participants often initiated a discussion of language shift, especially as related to the Ukrainian war, without my direct prompting in this area. In the case of Ruslana's excerpt, my question had to do with the languages she uses in Ukraine, which triggered a response from her about language shift and the Ukrainian war, therein showing the semantic relationship between these topics. That is, my mention of language use in Ukraine cognitively primed connected events for Ruslana, which in this case means the Ukrainian war and language shift. As explained by Ruslana, 'at home I used to speak Russian language... before the war. Then, uhm... it was just a protest, um, I started speaking Ukrainian.' Ruslana begins like many of the Ukrainian participants, orienting the story to a period of time before the Ukrainian war and then pulling it forward towards the present time, therein showing

the notability of this particular event in their chronotopic reconstruction of space and time. Furthermore, Ruslana related her initial use of the Ukrainian language as a protest action, therein showing the political nature of language shift for many of these participants.

Ruslana then gives an example of an event that motivated her to join in the attempt to change her mother tongue. As she explains, she went overseas, and people thought she was Russian because she was speaking the Russian language, 'And that was so unpleasant for me, that I decided just to change my mother tongue and just to start speaking Ukrainian.' This dialogically echoes many Ukrainians' stories of being abroad (such as Milena's narrative earlier in this chapter) and being mistaken as Russian. However, while once this implicit erasure of Ukrainian identity was not particularly poignant for many Ukrainians, the rise in national identity has meant that many Ukrainians, such as Ruslana, now find this mistaken identity 'so unpleasant'.

Ruslana attributes this mistaken identity to the fact that she was speaking the Russian language. In fact, it would not be uncommon for speakers of Russian from other countries outside of Ukraine to not know exactly where Ruslana was from, as Russian is one of the most spoken languages in the world with over 267 million speakers, including native speakers from throughout the Russian Federation, as well as from countries such as Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia and the United States, to name only a few (Simons & Fennig, 2017). However, while this may not be an uncommon event, it was unpleasant enough for Ruslana that she says she then decided to change her mother tongue to Ukrainian. Her identity as a Ukrainian citizen (and not as a Russian citizen) was seen as more important to her than using a more widely spoken language internationally. Through this decision, Ruslana shows her clear positive identity practices towards Ukrainian and simultaneous negative identity practices towards Russian (cf. Bucholtz, 1999; Seals, 2017b). Through these identity practices, language has once again become symbolic of sociopolitical identity and national allegiance.

Ruslana herself makes the direct connection between language practices, sociolinguistic identity, sociopolitical identity and national allegiance. She does this most clearly at the end of her excerpt when she states, 'Because, of course, language, it, erm, identifies... the person, and if a person speaks Russian, er, everybody will think that he is from Russia. But, I don't want- I don't want that.' Ruslana's statement that language identifies the person has two meanings. First, this statement expresses the idea that language is tied to identity – a very common concept across cultures and languages, frequently commented on by people of all walks of life, especially those with a personal connection to a particular language, such as a multilingual speaker whose first language is a minority language in their current setting (Braha, 2011). The second meaning of Ruslana's statement is that people draw upon social constructs of language, especially in

regard to culture, nation and ethnicity, when positioning others in interaction. Therefore, within interaction, interlocutors will often identify and position others in part according to the language used by that person. This is the exact situation upon which Ruslana comments in this excerpt from her interview. Recognizing the habit of people to position others in this way, and herself trying to disassociate with the Russian identity label, Ruslana decided to adapt Ukrainian as her primary language of use.

Views from the Diaspora

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, discussions of changing one's mother tongue take on an additional layer in the Ukrainian diaspora. These Discourses dialogically reflect the home country Discourses, while simultaneously reflecting the needs and experiences of the host country diaspora communities. As a result, while still intertextually connected to the home country Discourses, the underlying motivations for changing one's mother tongue take on a slightly different character, reflecting the different challenges faced by diaspora communities, particularly regarding the character of language shift.

An example of the changing mother tongue Discourses from within the Ukrainian diaspora communities can be found in the excerpt below. Gleb (38 years old, from Eastern Ukraine, living in New Zealand) discusses his ideas about the efforts to change one's mother tongue and the additional considerations that he has as a member of the Ukrainian diaspora in New Zealand.

Gleb: Well, like, Russian is naturally because I grew up with this-
with it,
so I use it naturally at home,
and trying to speak more with my kids,
so they have strong Russian language too.
But now I'm thinking about maybe switching them to Ukrainian.
It's a bit hard practically
...
But I'm thinking about maybe teaching my daughter Ukrainian
...
Uh, so I want her to understand like um f-
to XXX herself more to Ukrainian culture.

As Gleb explains, Russian is the language that he grew up speaking, therein making it the language that he feels is most natural for him to use, especially since he did not move outside of a Russian-speaking region

until he was already an adult. However, the next part of Gleb's excerpt is where his story shifts slightly from those who still live in Ukraine: 'and trying to speak more with my kids, so they have strong Russian language too.' If Gleb still lived in a Russian-speaking region, there would not be such a concern of his children not being able to acquire the Russian language themselves as well. However, because Gleb and his family now live in New Zealand, and the dominant language of New Zealand is English, Russian is now a heritage language and no longer a societal language. Therefore, as Gleb implies, it is not assumed that his children will automatically have strong Russian language skills, and it is instead his responsibility as one of their parents to use Russian in the home with them if he wants them to be able to use it also (cf. Seals, 2017a).

The next part of Gleb's excerpt then dialogically echoes Discourses of both the home and host countries: 'But now I'm thinking about maybe switching them to Ukrainian. It's a bit hard practically.' The first sentence about 'switching' his children to Ukrainian is an echo of the change your mother tongue efforts in Ukraine. The second sentence, however, also echoes common concerns for people living in the diaspora – that is the question of how to help their children acquire, use and maintain the heritage language(s). In this case, switching from Russian to Ukrainian would also mean that Gleb would be facing the challenge of supporting his children's heritage language use in his non-dominant language. Therefore, he would be facing the difficult challenge of helping them acquire and maintain it while simultaneously working to strengthen his own abilities in the language. Furthermore, there are far more Russian language teaching materials and resources than there are Ukrainian language materials and resources, given the relatively larger number of speakers in diaspora communities around the world. It would thus also be more of a challenge to find and acquire supporting resources in Gleb's efforts to strengthen his children's Ukrainian language abilities (Seals & Olsen-Reeder, 2017).

However, as Gleb continues to explain, challenging as it may be, he is still carefully considering the option of taking part in the Ukrainian change your mother tongue efforts due to his view of the Ukrainian language being an embodied component of Ukrainian culture: 'But I'm thinking about maybe teaching my daughter Ukrainian... Uh, so I want her to understand like um f- to XXX herself more to Ukrainian culture.' For Gleb, teaching his daughter the Ukrainian language will also allow her to access more of the Ukrainian culture and to feel more closely tied to Ukrainian culture. Therefore, changing mother tongues from Russian to Ukrainian is not just a question of sociopolitical identity or of national identity, it is also a question of which heritage language to promote from within the home in a host country where neither language is spoken by a majority of the population.

A final point of note from Gleb's excerpt is that it is his daughter whom he specifically mentions. However, Gleb has both a daughter and a

son. This specification also intertextually draws upon historical ideologies of language in Ukraine. As Bilaniuk (2003) has explored and explained in-depth, traditionally in Ukraine, Russian was seen as the language of progress, of business outside of the home, and of men. The Ukrainian language was traditionally seen as the language of tradition, of family inside of the home, and of women. Women have also traditionally been seen as the keepers of the Ukrainian language. Therefore, it is interesting to note that Gleb has specifically mentioned his daughter in the context of switching to the Ukrainian language. Whether consciously or not, Gleb has intertextually drawn upon another historical Ukrainian Discourse around language ideology, embedded within the context of the more recent changing your mother tongue Discourse.

In another interview, Lana (early 30s, from the Black Sea region of Ukraine, now living in New Zealand) also discursively illustrates the dialogic echoes from home and host country that occur in her narrative about changing her mother tongue. As shown in the example, Lana's account has a similar focus to that of Gleb, illustrating the dual considerations that members of diaspora communities must make in heritage related matters.

Lana: U:m:, uh I just made, this deci- decision for myself,
I don't know is there any movement and what kind of help they can,
provide for that but...
Erm, and my boyfriend,
his native language is Ukrainian.
So, but he also speaks er Russian?
And sometimes we speak Russian,
then, 'Oh, we should stop that,
let's- let's speak Ukrainian',
and we swap to Ukrainian,
so... er, and I think when- when I, will have kids,
I think I definitely will try to speak them,
Ukrainian,
and English,
and try to exclude Russian.
I know that, it's-
it's maybe sounds a bit mean but,
um, yeah,
they should really know who they are.
((laughter)) [I think so.]

Corinne: [Yeah, and-]

And, um, what do you think is-
what is, er, really driving that decision for you,
do you think?

Lana: Er, yeah,
as I mentioned before I think it's because, um,
when you speak language,
that language, er, make up your consciousness?
So, i- it makes your minds- your mind.
And... yeah,
and e- especially,
when I came, in New Zealand,
and when I met a lot of people from a lot of different, er,
backgrounds?
Like, Chinese, Indian, Nepalean, a:nd Arabian, other,
and I wa- and I have- um I-
one of my supervisor,
he is from, um-
he is from... um, Basel,
it's Switzerland?
And- and he ki-
he speaks with his kids in er, German,
and, for me it was just amazing how,
this just simply, s- sound,
interactions,
so just think like if you think about physical,
like physical part or scientific part,
it's just sound waves.
And how those sound waves?
Help to communicate with er people,
it is amazing ((laughs))
So, yeah,
and, um, sorry I forgot the question.

Corinne: The, reason behind, switching for you is?

Lana: Yeah, I think that I-

I just want to feel, er that I'm more Ukrainian.
 And, er, because I missed a lot,
 of that culture,
 I want to catch up,
 and, I want to,
 become, Ukrainian.
 ((laughs)) Like, proper Ukrainian.

When Lana begins talking about her choice to change her mother tongue (in response to my previous question 'I've heard some people talking about a movement to change their mother tongue. Have you heard about that at all?'), she says, 'U:m:, uh I just made, this decisi- decision for myself, I don't know is there any movement and what kind of help they can, provide for that but...' For Lana then, the decision to change her mother tongue was a personal decision that she does not attribute to any outside movements nor to any particular direct influences from other people. For her, the decision to change her mother tongue is a personal one. This is interesting because while this decision reflects underlying ideologies also found in Ukraine such as language being tied to identity (as she discusses later in the excerpt), her decision has not, at least consciously, been affected by the changing mother tongue Discourses found in the home country.

Lana then continues her explanation by providing an example from her everyday life in New Zealand: 'Erm, and my boyfriend, his native language is Ukrainian. So, but he also speaks er Russian? And sometimes we speak Russian, then, "Oh, we should stop that, let's- let's speak Ukrainian", and we swap to Ukrainian.' As Lana comes from a part of Ukraine that is Russian language dominant, she herself grew up speaking primarily Russian. As she explains, her boyfriend in New Zealand has Ukrainian as a native language but also speaks Russian. Therefore, Lana and her boyfriend share Russian as a common language, and it thus makes sense that they would use this common language for everyday interaction. However, as Lana explains, she is now making a conscious effort to use the Ukrainian language instead. In fact, as she voices herself in this example, she issues a directive ('we should stop that'), which is rather direct pragmatically in New Zealand English and is often associated with stopping a negative behavior. This thus positions the act of speaking Russian as a negative behavior for Lana, which is remedied by speaking Ukrainian instead.

The next part of Lana's explanation closely mirrors Gleb's excerpt above, and in fact mirrors many of the motivations explained by the Ukrainians whom I interviewed in New Zealand, the United States and Canada. As Lana explains, her future plans for her children do not include

the Russian language: 'so... er, and I think when- when I, will have kids, I think I definitely will try to speak them, Ukrainian and English, and try to exclude Russian. I know that, it's- it's maybe sounds a bit mean but, um, yeah, they should really know who they are.' When Lana imagines her future children, she constructs their imagined identities (Kanno & Norton, 2004; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007) as still embodying a sense of Ukrainian-ness. Because of this, she says that she plans to speak to them in the Ukrainian and English languages but to exclude the Russian language. Since Lana explains elsewhere in her interview that she plans to live in New Zealand at least in the anticipated future, it makes sense that she says she will use English with her children, as this is the dominant language in New Zealand. In then choosing a second language, however, she (like Gleb) discusses choosing Ukrainian over Russian. Even though Russian is Lana's native language, she says that she will choose her less dominant language (Ukrainian), which further supports her earlier statement that she is working on changing her mother tongue.

Lana also goes one step further in her narrative than Gleb did by saying that she will also purposefully exclude the Russian language. Lana's reason for this is that 'they should really know who they are,' which for Lana means the use of Ukrainian and not the use of Russian. Therefore, according to Lana's explanation, it is the knowledge and use of the Ukrainian language that allows one to embody what it means to be Ukrainian. In this part of her excerpt, Lana also anticipates negative reactions towards her decision, double-voicing those opposing views by saying 'it maybe sounds a bit mean'. However, she also uses this as an opportunity to answer this critique, reasserting her positive identity practice that being Ukrainian means speaking the Ukrainian language. This view carries with it a dialogic echoing of Discourses in the home country, but in framing her position as a decision for the imagined identity of her future children, Lana is also drawing upon diaspora Discourses of heritage language use and maintenance.

When I then asked Lana to explain more about the motivation for her decision to use Ukrainian and exclude Russian in the future (a very purposeful negative identity practice), she says, 'as I mentioned before I think it's because, um, when you speak language, that language, er, make up your consciousness? So, i- it makes your minds- your mind.' Once again, Lana is drawing intertextually upon ideologies held by some Ukrainians in Ukraine, dialogically echoing these home Discourses. Like Olesya in Chapter 2, Lana also subscribes to a Sapir-Whorfian type belief that language is related to consciousness and therefore affects the way you think (see Casasanto, 2012). Similarly, as noted by Braha (2011), people who are more conscious of their own sociolinguistic ideologies are also more conscious of specific language usage. Therefore, Lana's purposeful move towards Ukrainian and away from Russian speaks to her high level of conscious sociolinguistic identity negotiation. To

further exemplify Lana's belief of the connection between language and culture, she begins naming a variety of cultural backgrounds from which New Zealanders come, but she then loses focus as the conversation becomes more abstract.

After indirectly requesting that I repeat the focus of the question, Lana answers by returning to her idea of speaking the Ukrainian language as embodying Ukrainian culture. As she explains, 'I just want to feel, er that I'm more Ukrainian. And, er, because I missed a lot, of that culture, I want to catch up, and, I want to, become, Ukrainian. ((laughs)) Like, proper Ukrainian.' In Lana's explanation, it is interesting to note that she references not currently feeling as Ukrainian as she would like to feel. This is particularly striking, as Lana is from Ukraine and grew up in Ukraine. However, she states that she 'missed a lot', presumably by growing up in a more Russian-dominant area of Ukraine. Therefore, even though Lana grew up in Ukraine, it is not the particular positive identity association with Ukraine that she would like to have.

To feel 'more Ukrainian', for Lana, means associating more with the Ukrainian language and with traditional Ukrainian (i.e. non-Russian) culture. In order to achieve this, Lana is focusing on the Ukrainian language as a means through which to access and embody the particular type of Ukrainian culture that she desires to have, that is, her idea of 'proper Ukrainian'. Thus, while Lana's ideas about language use being an embodiment of Ukrainian culture dialogically echo Discourses of being Ukrainian found in Ukraine, these ideologies have also impacted upon Lana's sense of self, marking her identify as not a 'proper Ukrainian' because she did not grow up with traditional Ukrainian (i.e. non-Russian) culture and language. This is important to note because it displays both what is to be gained and what is potentially to be lost by such Discourses of a particular language embodying a particular culture. Even though Lana is from Ukraine, by not meeting the current preferred Ukrainian identity model, she feels less a welcome member of her home country, less than a 'proper Ukrainian'. Therefore, there is a tale of caution in a narrative such as hers – that in the process of establishing a unifying national identity, people must also be careful to not unintentionally ostracize those who do not meet the preferred definition of belonging.

Further Remarks

This idea of being able to 'change one's mother tongue' to which many of the participants ascribed, challenges previously existing conceptions of how language is embodied. For example, most sociolinguists have argued that language allows the speaker to index particular sociocultural aspects with which they choose to affiliate in an interaction (Blommaert, 2005; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Mendoza-Denton & Hall, 2010), and this also matches the current data for this project. However, still others have

argued that language is completely inseparable from identity because this is how we ‘construct, tell and retell our life stories’ (Prescher, 2007: 193). However, it is this latter conceptualization of the embodiment of language that the present data challenge. Rather than being inseparable from one’s sociocultural identity, many of the participants in the current study view language as something that is embodied in such a way that it reflects one’s identities *and* ideologies, such that a change in reflexive positioning can also mean a change of language embodiment.

Understanding this view of language embodiment also has implications for how we understand communities of practice. For some of these speakers, what you *do* in the context of the war is not in itself enough to grant you membership to this community of practice. Rather, it is the incorporation of *both* positive and negative identity practices that matter the most – that is, practices that align with Ukraine *and* disalign with Russia (cf. Bucholtz, 1999; Seals, 2017b). For speakers who were more invested in changing their mother tongue, they saw it as necessary both to speak Ukrainian and to stop speaking Russian. However, not all participants held this view, as will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

Additionally, those taking part in efforts to change their mother tongue linearly positioned these practices differently. Some participants discursively constructed this practice as something that is tied to prior historical events, while some participants constructed it as a more recent occurrence tied directly to the events of the Ukrainian war. For the former group, they situated their discourses of changing their mother tongue in historical movements, therein drawing more upon institutional symbolic capital. This group also did not view language as a stable variable. Rather, they viewed language as intrinsically tied to motivation, such that efforts to change the mother tongue were a way to actively attempt to resolve the inner conflict that some self-identifying Ukrainians currently felt as speakers of Russian.

For the speakers who connected the ‘change your mother tongue’ efforts directly to the recent events of the EuroMaidan protests and the Ukrainian war, speaking the Ukrainian language has become as symbolic for them as is wearing Ukrainian embroidery, such as the vyshyvanka. Many of the young Ukrainians in particular felt that a purposeful effort to change one’s mother tongue to Ukrainian was a conscious self-re-positioning that aligned with an increasingly popular singular construction of Ukrainian national identity (Shulga, 2015). Additionally, alignment with this rising national identity also made the implicit erasure of Ukrainian identity no longer acceptable (cf. Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil’sstva, April 2014). For example, for Ukrainians such as Ruslana, it was no longer a minor offense to be called Russian by those who did not know better; instead, this was now deeply troubling to her sense of self and in need of correction, even if it meant speaking an internationally less commonly used language.

Finally, a view from Ukrainians in the diaspora provides further considerations. Some of the participants from within the diaspora were also taking part in this movement because they too felt that knowing and using the Ukrainian language embodies what it is to be Ukrainian. However, while echoing these Discourses from the home country, members of the diaspora also faced additional challenges regarding language choice and use. Already living in English-dominant host countries, choosing between Russian and Ukrainian also meant choosing which heritage language to pass on to future generations (cf. Seals & Olsen-Reeder, 2017). This was particularly difficult for individuals such as Gleb who are Russian-dominant speakers. Deciding to pass down Ukrainian as a heritage language instead of Russian to his children also means teaching himself the language well enough to then teach it to them. Therefore, members of the diaspora taking part in this movement also face the difficult challenge of helping children acquire and maintain a language that is not the former's own dominant language – a difficult balance to strike in the midst of generational language shift.

Notes

- (1) Author's translation.
- (2) Some Ukrainians attribute discussions of 'patriotism' to leftist radical views about Ukraine asserting its authority and banning all things Russian.
- (3) 'Tutor' is a term commonly found in British, New Zealand and Australian English. In North America, the equivalent term is most often 'Teaching Assistant,' though the term 'tutor' in these former contexts is also at times used to refer to any university teaching staff.
- (4) Photo by *Bruin* and accessed via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ukrainian_Embroidery_offered_at_Soyuzivka.jpg
- (5) Photo by *Serdechny* and accessed via Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ukrainian_girls_wearing_vyshyvankas_at_the_Independence_Day_celebration.jpg
- (6) In saying 'patriotism or whatever', Denys has minimized the effect of the word 'patriotism', which has a negative, leftist radical connotation for some Ukrainians.