Speaking Correctly: Error Correction as a Language Socialization Practice in a Ukrainian Classroom

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This study uses a language socialization approach to explore the role of Ukrainian language instruction in the revitalization of Ukrainian as the national language. Based on 10 months ethnographic observation and videotaping of classroom interaction in two fifth-grade Ukrainian language and literature classrooms, it focuses on corrective feedback targeting children’s use of Russian forms and considers how these practices are shaped by the imperatives of Ukrainian language revitalization and language ideologies that valorize ‘pure language’ as the sole legitimate variety of Ukrainian. The analysis reveals how corrective feedback is socializing children into speaking pure language and into dominant Ukrainian language ideologies that proscribe language mixing as a violation of the natural boundaries between languages, thus preserving a distinct Ukrainian language as an emblem of a distinct Ukrainian nation.

Mastery of the native language is not an entitlement but the duty of a patriot.

‘Language duties of a citizen’ (posted in a Ukrainian classroom)

Nearly 20 years after independence, Ukraine continues to debate how to define itself in relation to the former dominant power, Russia. Ukrainian uneasiness about Russian influence is often expressed through concern about the integrity and even survival of the Ukrainian language. The language has long been an identity marker as a symbol of internal unity and external differentiation. But today, although Ukrainian is the state language, it is far from hegemonic in its titular nation. Not only is there a substantial ethnic Russian population, but many ethnic Ukrainians speak Russian as their primary language (Arel 1996, 2002; Bilianiuk 2005; Pavlenko 2006; Bilianiuk and Melnyk 2008), and Russian dominates in popular culture. In addition, many Ukrainian speakers do not speak Standard Ukrainian, but a Ukrainian/Russian hybrid called surżyk that is widely viewed as a residue of the ‘Russification’ of Ukrainian life and culture (Flier 2000; Bilianiuk 2005).

As part of its nation-building project, the state is representing Ukraine as a nation of Ukrainian speakers (Arel 2002) and has embarked on a program to cleanse the language of perceived Russian influences and encourage more
widespread use of literary (i.e., Standard) Ukrainian. A primary site for this effort is the nation’s schools, all of which teach Ukrainian as an obligatory subject. Yet while Ukrainian language politics and language attitudes have received increasing scholarly attention in recent years (e.g. Arel 1996, 2002; Bilaniuk 2005; Bilaniuk and Melnyk 2008), I know of no research that has examined how Ukrainian language policies are being implemented at the classroom level or how these attitudes are being transmitted to the first post-Soviet generation of Ukrainians.

This article takes a language socialization approach to explore the role of Ukrainian language instruction in the revitalization of Ukrainian as the national language. Based on 10 months ethnographic observation and videotaping in two fifth-grade classrooms, it focuses on a recurrent feature of classroom interaction: corrective feedback targeting children’s use of Russian forms. Taking the position that standards of linguistic correctness are socially constructed (Bourdieu 1980/1991; Silverstein 1996), I analyze these feedback practices as a manifestation of an ideology of ‘pure language’ (čysta mova) that originated in response to the historical position of Ukrainian as subordinate to Russian and the perceived need to establish it as a distinct language suitable for representing a distinct nation. I further argue that in addition to socializing children into the ways of speaking deemed to constitute Ukrainian language competence, these practices are socializing them into pure language ideologies that define what this competence consists of.

SOCIALIZATION INTO A LINGUISTIC COMMUNITY

This research is situated at the intersection between two fields of inquiry, language socialization and language ideology. It examines how Ukrainian schoolchildren are being socialized into a linguistic community (Bourdieu 1980/1991; Silverstein 1996, 1998, 2000), defined as ‘groups of people by degree evidencing allegiance to norms of denotational…language usage’ (Silverstein 1998: 402). What unites a linguistic community is not a set of language practices, but a set of language ideologies that define what counts as legitimate language. In the modern nation-state, this language is the national language(s) that has been standardized and legitimated through institutionalization in government, media, and education. This language subsequently becomes ‘the theoretical norm against which all linguistic practices are objectively measured’ (Bourdieu 1980/1991: 45), and language usage that deviates from standard norms is viewed as incorrect.

By drawing attention to verbal behaviors deemed to be problematic and responding to them in particular ways, corrective feedback routines constitute a central locus for socializing novices into a linguistic community. Recognition of the socializing function of corrective feedback has long had a place in language socialization research. In their pioneering studies of child language
socialization in Samoa and among the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea, Ochs and Schieffelin (1984, 1995; Ochs 1984, 1988; Schieffelin 1990) revealed how feedback practices reflect underlying cultural beliefs and values and demonstrated how participation in corrective feedback routines socialized children into social roles and relationships and into local understandings regarding what constitutes appropriate language behavior. The role of corrective feedback in language socialization has also been noted in several studies conducted across a range of classroom contexts. In an early classroom application of the paradigm, Poole’s (1992) analysis of interaction in two English as a Second Language classrooms identified a preference for feedback strategies identified by Ochs (1984, 1988) and Ochs and Schieffelin (1984, 1995) as typical of white middle class American caregivers. Based on these observations, Poole concluded that teaching practices are in large part culturally motivated and that language classroom interaction conveys implicit cultural messages. Duff’s research in dual language immersion high schools in Hungary (1995, 1996) found that during student lectures in some English-medium classrooms other students self-selected to request clarification or correct presenters’ language errors and even corrected teachers’ language errors, practices unheard of in traditional, teacher-directed Hungarian classrooms (Duff 1995). Duff’s analysis revealed how these practices were socializing both students and teachers into new ways of relating to knowledge and authority that mirrored democratization and educational reform that were then ongoing in post-Communist Hungary. In a study of the linguistic expression of respect in a village school in Thailand, Howard (2004) analyzed teachers’ selective correction of children’s inappropriate use of honorific particles as a strategy through which children come to associate honorific registers of Standard Thai with formal aspects of classroom discourse. She further noted how insistence on usage of these particles only during certain classroom activities served to structure and socialize children’s attention and participation in the classroom. Finally, Jacobs-Huey (2007) examined negative feedback provided in response to use of terminology deemed to be unprofessional in an African-American cosmetology school. She analyzed these responses as evidence of the importance of language in the construction of expert identities within the community of professional African-American hair stylists and the socialization of novices into proficient use of professional language as a means of claiming expertise.

These studies have suggested that corrective feedback practices are not motivated solely by teachers’ personal philosophies or notions of pedagogical efficacy, but embedded within larger social, political, and cultural systems of belief about norms of language use and expectations regarding the responsibility of novices in upholding these norms. In addition to its role in regulating language use, classroom corrective feedback contributes to a range of goals that reflect the values of the communities in which the classrooms are situated.
CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Language and nation in Ukraine

The perception of a struggle between Ukrainian and Russian for linguistic and cultural dominance has long reverberated in Ukraine. Ukrainian and Russian evolved from the same parent language (East Slavic) and are syntactically similar, but differ phonologically. They also share a stock of words from East Slavic as well as Russian and international words that entered Ukrainian via Russian (Shevelov 1993; Bilaniuk 2005). Ukrainian also reflects influence from Polish, resulting from a long period of Polish rule over the territory that began to ebb in the mid-17th century. By the late 18th century the decline of the Polish state had led to the partition of Poland among Prussia, Russia, and Austria, and Ukrainian territories were divided between the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which controlled the western regions of Galicia, Bukovina, and Transcarpathia, and the Russian Empire, which controlled the rest. This division was to last, under various governments, until the end of the Second World War, when post-war agreements ceded control over western Ukrainian regions to the Soviet Union (Magocsi 1996).

This history had a profound effect on the development of the Ukrainian language. First, outside political domination meant that for centuries Ukrainian had few, if any, public functions, and by the early 20th century language shift to Russian was well under way among the upper classes and urban residents in Russian Ukraine (Shevelov 1989). In addition, the division of the territory into multiple political units complicated the process of creating a standardized language that would be accepted across all ethnic-Ukrainian territory. Finally, the process of language standardization became enmeshed with issues of national identity and political sovereignty.

In the mid-19th century the Ukrainian language became the focus of a nascent nationalist movement constructed around a common European ideology that viewed possession of a unique common language as an essential element of nationhood (e.g. Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; Irvine and Gal 2000). This belief inspired efforts to purify and standardize Ukrainian in order to establish it as a legitimate language distinct from Russian or Polish by eliminating forms deemed to be ‘foreign’ in favor of those grounded in the supposedly unique and authentic norms of village dialects (Wexler 1974). These activities greatly alarmed Russian imperial authorities, who regarded them as a threat to the inherent unity of the Ukrainian and Russian languages and thus the Ukrainian and Russian peoples. From the imperial Russian perspective, Ukrainian was a dialect of Russian, malorossijskoe narečje ‘the Little Russian dialect,’ and attempts to claim otherwise were viewed as separatism. From 1876 to 1905 public use of Ukrainian (in newspapers, theaters, etc.) was banned in Russian Ukraine (Wexler 1974; Magocsi 1996).

Following the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Ukrainian became an official language of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and was for a time actively
promoted under a policy of \textit{ukrajinizacija} ‘Ukrainization’ (Wexler 1974; Shevelov 1989; Martin 2001). However, by the late 1920s seemingly apolitical activities such as reforming the lexicon to eliminate Russian-influenced forms had come to be seen as an expression of hostility towards Russia and a correspondingly positive orientation towards Poland, a crime known as \textit{treasonous irredentism}. In a series of show trials beginning in 1929, more than one Ukrainian linguist disappeared into the gulag for \textit{language sabotage}, that is, producing dictionaries or grammars accentuating differences between Ukrainian and Russian (Martin 2001). Meanwhile, although Ukrainian-medium schools and a Ukrainian language press continued to operate, perceptions of Ukrainian as a village language and the prestige of Russian furthered ongoing language shift (Shevelov 1989; Martin 2001). There was also a tendency towards convergence between the languages, both as a consequence of increased language contact as well as Soviet language policies. For example, when Ukrainian had two possible morphological or syntactic forms, reforms in the 1930s established those resembling Russian forms as the only permitted variants in Standard Ukrainian (Wexler 1974; Shevelov 1989).

\textbf{The Ukrainian linguistic community}

With independence in 1991 and its subsequent installation as the sole state language, Ukrainian has expanded into arenas previously dominated by Russian, such as higher education, television broadcasting, and government administration. Yet despite Ukrainian’s increased status, many commentators have expressed concern about the lingering effects of Russification. The years since independence have seen a revival of tendencies towards linguistic differentiation and purification; many of the reforms of the 1930s have been reversed, and the legitimacy of forms thought to have originated in Russian has again come under question (Taylor 1998; Bilaniuk 2005).

But concerns about the purity of Ukrainian can also be found among the general population, where they are manifested in widespread negative attitudes towards the hybrid language known as \textit{surżyk}. While linguists reserve the term for a ‘hybrid in which the entire grammar of Ukrainian…contains Russian-influenced elements or distribution not otherwise represented in an identical function in Contemporary Standard Ukrainian’ (Flier 2000: 114), Ukrainians may identify as \textit{surżyk} any infiltration of Russian into Ukrainian speech (Arel 1996; Bilaniuk 2005). Critics of \textit{surżyk} characterize it as an unnatural product of centuries of linguistic oppression and cite its existence as a threat to Ukrainian national consciousness. In response, a small industry has sprung up dedicated to its eradication, including style manuals, newspaper columns, and a program on Ukrainian state radio. The valorization of pure language, once the province of an intellectual elite intent on establishing Ukrainian claims to nationhood, has become ‘naturalized’ (Bourdieu 1977) in Ukraine as a dominant ideology, affecting how language is used and evaluated at the level of everyday language practices (Bilaniuk 2005).
THE STUDY

Data collection

Data were collected during the 2003–2004 academic year in fifth-grade Ukrainian language and literature classrooms at two schools in a small city in south-central Ukraine. In the late 1990s I had taught English at the local pedagogical university, and contacts there put me in touch with two schools regarded as having good Ukrainian language programs. One, a general education school, had been using Ukrainian as the medium of instruction since the late 1940s, making it one of the first in the city to do so. The other, a gymnasium specializing in physics and mathematics, was originally a Russian-medium school, but switched to Ukrainian following independence. In October I began observing Ukrainian classes at both schools at least once per week and taking field notes. Upon obtaining written informed consent from teachers, children, and parents, I began videotaping classes using a digital video camera and shotgun microphone mounted on a tripod and stationed at the back of the classroom. In total, data comprise field notes from 88 lessons (66 h) and video recordings of classroom interaction from 42 lessons (31.5 h).

At the end of the school year I interviewed the Ukrainian teachers and principals at both schools. These interviews, lasting approximately 1 h, were conducted in Ukrainian and were audio-recorded. Interviews with teachers included questions about their assessments of students’ proficiency in Ukrainian, their teaching philosophy, and what they saw as the primary goals of Ukrainian language instruction, as well as questions about specific activities that I had observed in class. Although teachers’ busy schedules permitted only one formal interview, teachers sometimes chatted with me informally during breaks and shared their thoughts about the lesson. To get a better understanding of the curriculum and school cultures, I also collected textbooks and other materials and attended several school events.

Parents completed questionnaires regarding their occupations, native language(s), language of education, and language(s) used within the home. In addition, 20 parents consented to an interview. With one exception, I conducted these interviews in Ukrainian or Russian, depending on the interviewee’s preference. The exception was a parent who was also a graduate student in English; this interview was in English. Interviews included questions regarding language use in the home and at work, feelings about having their child educated in Ukrainian, and what they wanted their child to learn about the Ukrainian language and culture. They were audio-recorded and lasted approximately 30–45 min.

Finally, my status as a native speaker of English made me a valuable commodity, and I was invited to speak with students in advanced-level English classes at the pedagogical university and both focal schools. One conversation with a group of undergraduates was audio-recorded with their consent;
in other cases I made subsequent notes on language-related issues that arose during these discussions.

Data analysis

Two Ukrainian assistants completed rough transcriptions of the recorded classroom data. Based on these transcriptions and a review of videotapes, I identified instances of corrective feedback, using the definition of correction delineated in Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks: ‘The replacement of an “error” or “mistake” by what is “correct”’ (1977: 362) and prepared detailed transcripts of these segments (see the Appendix at Applied Linguistics online for transcription conventions). Analysis of the data is based on the original languages; however, for presentation purposes I have translated transcripts into English. When unsure about a passage I have checked with a native speaker consultant, a Ukrainian instructor at an American university.

Analysis of classroom data incorporates both microanalysis of corrective feedback sequences as well as macro-level analysis. The microanalysis considers (i) the nature of the error or trouble source, (ii) who initiates and who completes the correction, and (iii) the outcome of the correction (i.e. whether there is uptake). The macro-level analysis draws upon field notes, classroom texts, and interviews, as well as observations of language use in the local community and informal conversations with friends, neighbors, and other local residents in order to situate these practices within a larger context.

While I have made every attempt to incorporate an emic perspective, I also acknowledge the effects of my own position as a researcher, applied linguist, foreigner, and competent but non-native speaker of Ukrainian and Russian. I had lived and worked as an English teacher in Ukraine for three years prior to beginning this research (including one year in the city where the research was conducted); nevertheless, I was still an outsider in this community. Participants referred to me as ‘our American guest,’ and curiosity about me and my interest in Ukrainian (which many found puzzling) motivated many parents to consent to an interview and undoubtedly shaped how they responded to my questions. Finally, while my language skills were sufficient to allow me to analyze classroom interaction and conduct interviews in both Ukrainian and Russian, as a non-native speaker I have relied on multilingual research assistants and friends to help me understand nuances in the data; thus some of my interpretations have been filtered through theirs.

Setting

Although the majority of the city’s residents are ethnic Ukrainians, industrialization, the presence of an air force base and several higher education institutes, and the city’s reputation for a salubrious climate drew people from throughout the Soviet Union. Both Ukrainian and Russian are heard on its streets and are used interchangeably at public events, reflecting
assumptions that everyone at least understands both languages. I was also informed that local etiquette requires answering a person in the language in which he or she addresses you, and the ability to switch easily between Ukrainian and Russian is a requirement for service jobs such as salesclerks.

At the time of this study, 33 out of 35 schools in the city used Ukrainian as the medium of instruction, a reversal of the situation before independence, when only two used Ukrainian. Although Ukrainian-medium schooling has met with resistance in some regions, it had been accepted among the parents I spoke to, who agreed that children would need Ukrainian proficiency in order to attend university or find a job. In addition, many parents, including some who identified themselves as Russian, stated categorically that children should know the national language of their country. Most indicated that they also wanted their children to be proficient in Russian.

But while Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism was valued, I heard many complaints about language mixing. This problem was not seen as limited to Russian-speakers who had learned Ukrainian as a second language, but as afflicting native Ukrainian speakers as well. For example, in an audio-recorded conversation with pedagogical university undergraduates, a young woman commented:

I think that here in Ukraine we have the problem, uh, a big problem of purity of speech. Because the majority of our people, even rather well educated . . . mix Ukrainian words and Russian words in their speech. And they can speak neither pure Ukrainian nor pure Russian. And we often speak suržyk as we call it. [English in original]

When I asked why mixing was a problem, another student answered, ‘Because the speech is not correct, it is not pure,’ while a third added, ‘It isn’t so beautiful.’

The perception that suržyk is spoken by ‘the majority of our people, even rather well educated’ was echoed by some of my interviewees. This situation was not seen as an individual problem, but a social one, attributed to past Russian dominance. For example when I asked a child’s mother about her native language, she identified it as Ukrainian, but added

But I lived at the time when there was the Soviet Union, and our native Ukrainian language was rather polluted . . . where we live in our territory . . . here very many Russianisms have come about. And that language, which has been polluted by Russianisms has been preserved up to the present time, unfortunately. [Ukrainian in original]

Similarly, a school principal, after bemoaning children’s tendency to speak what she characterized as suržyk, commented, ‘I would love it if the children spoke pure Ukrainian. But that will take years. Because they have implanted the Russian language in us.’ [Ukrainian in original]
Other native Ukrainian speakers negatively evaluated their own speech when measured against the standards of pure language. For instance, a parent described how he came to realize that his Ukrainian was actually *suržyk*:

I started learning English and one day I woke up and thought why am I using Russian words, you know, *suržyk*, ah, everyone uses it, I still use some Russian words, but I woke up and I thought why do I speak so badly in Ukrainian. I’m learning a foreign language and I don’t know my own language. [English in original]

Such comments illustrate the complex relationship between language ideologies and language practices. Many in this community occasionally mixed languages or used what they themselves characterized as ‘Russianisms.’ However, these same speakers labeled such practices as *necýsta* ‘impure’ and incorrect. While speaking pure language was viewed as an exception, it was nevertheless held up as the ideal to which everyone should aspire.

**Participants**

Although the focal schools differed in many ways, the corrective feedback observed in the two classrooms was strikingly similar. This analysis will focus on the class at one school, the gymnasium. One of the largest schools in the city, it had 1,066 students and 64 teachers and a reputation for academic excellence. Following the state-mandated curriculum, fifth graders had four 45-min Ukrainian language lessons and two Ukrainian literature lessons per week. They also studied Russian for 2 h per week.

At the time of this study the Ukrainian teacher, Viktor Viktorovych (hereinafter VV) was completing his 26th year as a teacher. He had been teaching at the school since 1985 and had taught the parents of several children in the class. VV was regarded as an excellent teacher of Ukrainian, and his classes were often observed by pedagogical university students.

A total of 24 children from this school participated in the study. Their parents were educated professionals, such as engineers, economists, or computer programmers. Slightly over half the children (13/24) were of Ukrainian ethnicity; that is, both parents identified themselves as Ukrainian. One of the children was Russian, and one was Armenian. The remaining children were of ‘mixed’ ethnicity; that is, one parent self-identified as Ukrainian and the other as Russian (eight) or Polish (one). However, ethnic affiliation did not necessarily correlate with home language use. Only five children came from homes where exclusively Ukrainian was used, nine came from homes where exclusively Russian was used, and nine used both. The Armenian child spoke Armenian at home and, according to his mother, spoke Russian with neighbors and playmates. That is, nearly 80 per cent routinely used Russian outside of school. The influence of Russian could also
be seen in children’s language practices during breaks, when Russian was commonly used.

All parents claimed to know both Ukrainian and Russian and to have Ukrainian-language print material in their homes. I observed no connection between a child’s home language and standing in the class; several students who received top grades came from Russian-speaking or bilingual homes. None of the Russian-speaking parents whom I interviewed felt that their children were disadvantaged by the difference between their home and school languages, noting that the children had been studying in a Ukrainian-medium school since the first grade and were therefore (in their view) fully competent in Ukrainian. VV agreed that Ukrainian-medium schooling had given the current group of fifth graders better command of the language than what he had observed in earlier generations of students. However, he also expressed concern about the dominance of Russian in many children’s lives.

**Language in the classroom**

The classroom layout, with three parallel rows of student desks facing front, lent itself to the preferred lesson format, teacher-directed whole-class discussion. Children were expected to be active participants, and at the end of each lesson VV assigned grades based on the quantity and quality of each child’s contributions. Classroom language use reflected assumptions that the children were Ukrainian–Russian bilinguals. With a few exceptions, the public discourse of the classroom was in Ukrainian, and the language curriculum emphasized metalinguistic analysis, stylistics, and spelling rather than instruction in grammar or pronunciation such as what one might find in a second language classroom. On the other hand, VV also drew upon children’s knowledge of Russian. For example, he sometimes asked children to provide Ukrainian equivalents for Russian words, explaining that such exercises would help them distinguish between languages. He also occasionally quoted Russian poetry and invited children to join in his recitation.

Regardless of the children’s backgrounds, Ukrainian was considered to be their **ridna mova** ‘native language’ by virtue of their status as Ukrainian citizens. As the language textbook declared, ‘the Ukrainian language is the national language of the Ukrainian nation…. Therefore the Ukrainian language is the native one for each Ukrainian’ (Peredrij *et al.* 2002: 4). In class VV routinely referred to **naša ridna mova** ‘our native language’ or **naša ukrajins’ka mova** ‘our Ukrainian language.’ He also spent time on activities designed to generate pride in the achievements of Ukraine and the beauty of Ukrainian, explaining to me that when children feel patriotic, they will want to study and use their national language. Children were surrounded by reminders of their obligation to learn Ukrainian, such as the document ‘**Language duties of a citizen**’ (quoted at the beginning of this article) that was posted on
the wall and a poster in the hallway that directed them to ‘love your nation, your land; study its customs, traditions; seek to learn and perfectly master the native Ukrainian language.’

Mastery of the language meant speaking it correctly. Speaking correctly was always relevant; ‘slidkujte za sovjju movoju,’ literally, ‘look after your language,’ was a frequently heard admonition, and VV once reminded the class, ‘Although this is literature [class] we do not forget about the fact that we express our opinion in the literary Ukrainian language.’ Corrective feedback targeting children’s language use was pervasive, and in ten months of observation I noted only a handful of instances in which a hearable error was not corrected.

While any language error could trigger correction, most correction targeted Russian or Russian-influenced words. These targets can be broadly divided into three categories:

1. Russian words not in the Standard Ukrainian lexicon.
2. Words in the lexicons of both languages but pronounced following Russian phonological norms.
3. Russianisms, that is, words that follow Ukrainian phonology (and which may be used by some Ukrainian speakers) but are seen as (i) originating in Russian or (ii) evincing Russian patterns for word formation.

In other words, while use of Russian was acceptable in certain limited contexts, boundaries between languages were to be maintained.

‘DOING CORRECTING’

Consistent with the teacher-centered orientation of classroom interaction, the most common type of correction was teacher-initiated teacher-correction, in which VV both indicated a trouble source and provided a replacement, usually in the same turn. Correction typically occurred immediately following the trouble source, often interrupting the turn in progress, a strategy that regularly resulted in uptake of the correction in the child’s next turn. This format resembles what Jefferson (1987) calls exposed correction, in which the ongoing talk is briefly interrupted as the parties engage in the business of ‘doing correcting.’ But as Jefferson notes, this shift is collaboratively achieved; that is, it requires that both parties display an orientation to the fact that correcting is now being done (1987: 99).

The excerpt below illustrates the collaborative nature of corrective feedback routines. During a literature lesson the class was discussing a story about a boy’s pet pigeon. As punishment for the boy’s skipping school to play with his pet, his father takes the bird with him when he goes on a trip to another part of the country. As the excerpt begins, VV calls on Slava to summarize this portion of the story.
As Slava explains how the story’s protagonist (Stepanko) was punished, he uses komandyrovka to refer to the father’s business trip (line 3). In line 4, although Slava’s turn has not reached a point of possible completion, VV intervenes to initiate and complete a correction, replacing komandyrovka with vidrjadžennja. Slava could subsequently continue from the point at which he was interrupted, but he instead redoes the problematic portion of his turn to incorporate vidrjadžennja (line 5). He thus displays understanding of VV’s prior turn as a correction and implicitly aligns with VV’s stance that komandyrovka is problematic.

The problem with komandyrovka does not lie in its referential meaning; komandyrovka and vidrjadžennja refer to the same entity (‘business trip’), and the Soviet-era Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language lists them as synonyms (Academy 1970–1980, vol. IV: 240). However, komandyrovka (Russian komandirovka), which is based on a loanword from German (kommandieren ‘to order’), has two features marking it as a word that came into Ukrainian via Russian: (i) retention of the German infix -ir-, characteristic of Russian borrowings from German but rejected by Ukrainian purists (Wexler 1974: 65, 163) and (ii) the nominal suffix -ka signifying the result of an action, considered by some to be a Russianism. Vidrjadžennja, however, is a nominalization of the Ukrainian verb vidrjadžaty ‘to dispatch, send forward’ using the nominal suffix -nnja, a Ukrainian alternative to -ka (Wexler 1974: 176). That is, the form of komandyrovka links it with Russian and a now-discredited Soviet language policy decreeing that foreign borrowings were to take the same shape in Ukrainian as they did in Russian (Wexler 1974: 189). While not all speakers would consider komandyrovka to be incorrect, these participants orient to it as an error, interrupting the ongoing activity to replace it with another word. This correction sequence conveys an implicit message that ‘Ukrainian’ forms such as vidrjadžennja are preferred over ‘Russianized’ ones. This message was understood by at least one other
child, who later chose the word *vidrjadžennja* when referring to the father’s business trip.

Corrective feedback such as this occurred on average a half dozen times in every lesson. Children were well socialized into their role in these routines; I noted few instances in which children failed to take up a correction, either by redoing their turn or repeating the replacement word. This role positioned children as novices who had not yet mastered the ability to monitor their linguistic output, but who were nevertheless expected to recognize and replace an incorrect form once it had been called to their attention. Through participation in these routines, teacher and students collaboratively constructed and displayed understandings that the norms of Ukrainian language usage included avoidance of words that were Russian or Russianisms.

**APPROPRIATING PRACTICES OF CORRECTION**

Children’s readiness to take up replacement forms does not, in itself, indicate that they understood the nature of their errors, and placement of teacher-correction immediately following the trouble source left little opportunity for children to display this understanding by initiating a correction. However, children occasionally demonstrated an ability to recognize a potential trouble source in their own or other’s speech. The following excerpts contain two instances of child-initiated correction as evidence of children’s sensitivity to the presence of Russian words as an error.

During a literature lesson VV read aloud two poems, ‘Winter’ and ‘I Love Spring,’ and asked which season the author described best. As the first excerpt begins, Petja is explaining why he preferred the poem ‘Winter.’

**Excerpt 2a**

**Rhyme (02/26/04)**

Trouble source is in *boldfaced italics*

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<th>Petja</th>
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<th>Petja</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td><em>Tut i:: uh nu u:h rifma</em></td>
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While Petja has difficulty articulating his thoughts in this demanding task, he eventually succeeds in stating his first point: ‘the rhyme is good’ (line 1).
As Petja nears the end of this utterance, VV looks away (line 2). However, upon returning attention to Petja (line 4), VV interrupts him to initiate and complete a correction. Using the format ‘not X but Y,’ he explicitly rejects rifma (Russian ‘rhyme’) and replaces it with ryma (Ukrainian ‘rhyme’) (line 5). Petja acknowledges the correction by repeating ryma (line 6).

Thus far this exchange has followed the usual pattern, with the student following the teacher’s lead in affirming the problematic nature of using the Russian variant of a loanword. However, Petja’s turn in line 1 contains another potential trouble source: xorošaja ‘good.’ This word is a cognate from East Slavic, but Petja’s usage follows Russian norms in both morphology (the adjectival suffix -aja vs. Ukrainian -a) and phonology ([xoróšaja] vs. Ukrainian [ xoróša]). It is not clear whether VV has noticed this word, as he was not attending to Petja when it was uttered (see lines 1–2). In any case, his usual role as correction-initiator is pre-empted, as seen below.

Excerpt 2b
Rhyme (02/26/04)
Trouble source is in boldfaced italics

6 Petja  Rym[a.
      Rhy[me (Ukrainian)
7 C→  Student  I ne xorošaja a dobra
           [And not good (Russian) but good (Ukrainian)
U:h dobre: nu dobre rifm- uh
U:h it nicely: well nicely rhy- uh
8 U/TS→ Petja  rymuje,
rhymes.
9 C→ VV  rymuje i:: tut () bil’še bil’še s:liv uh pro zymu u:h
          rhymes a::nd here () are more more w:ords uh about
10 U→ Petja  winter u:h

Even before Petja finishes repeating ryma, an unidentified male student self-selects to correct the second trouble source. Employing the same ‘not X but Y’ format, he rejects xorošaja and replaces it with dobra, another word meaning ‘good’ (line 7). By appropriating this format and linking his utterance to VV’s prior talk through use of the coordinating conjunction i ‘and,’ the student formulates his utterance as a continuation of VV’s turn in line 5, thus taking on the teacher’s authoritative voice as he takes on his role of initiating correction. He thus moves beyond the limited role usually allotted to students in corrective feedback routines and takes responsibility for regulating the norms of classroom language usage.

VV does not acknowledge this correction or give any sign that he has heard it, but continues gazing at Petja with no change in facial expression. However,
Petja has noticed. Although he has already completed his point about rhyme, Petja returns to the trouble source turn and begins to reformulate it from ‘The rhyme is good’ to ‘It rhymes nicely,’ incorporating the replacement word in its adverbial form dobre ‘nicely’ (line 8). However, Petja again encounters trouble, this time with the verb. He utters what appears to be the start of the word rifmuet (third person singular of the Russian rifmovat’ ‘to rhyme’), but cuts off before completion (ryfm-). Both this cut-off and the uh that follows signal the possibility of an upcoming correction initiation (Schegloff et al. 1977: 367). VV provides the form rymuye (third person singular of the Ukrainian rymuvaty ‘to rhyme’) in line 9, which Petja repeats before moving on to his long-delayed second point (line 10). Although Petja does not make this correction himself, by breaking off his utterance before completion he has displayed awareness that it is potentially problematic.

These incidents illustrate children’s emerging ability to monitor linguistic output to avoid Russian forms. This ability requires both (i) linguistic knowledge to recognize distinctions between languages and (ii) social knowledge to realize that such distinctions are relevant to speaking correctly. Such instances demonstrate that as children participate in corrective feedback routines, they are not simply repeating the teacher’s corrections, but appropriating the practices of correction that will enable them to take on more responsibility for monitoring their speech in line with pure language norms.

APPROPRIATING IDEOLOGIES OF CORRECTNESS

The implicit messages regarding the inappropriateness of language mixing conveyed in these corrective feedback routines occasionally surfaced in the form of explicit metalinguistic commentary. For example, during an exercise in which children were generating synonyms for xuriovyna ‘snowstorm,’ a child suggested v’juha, which appears to be the Russian v’juga ‘blizzard’ with [g] (voiced velar stop) altered to [h] (voiced pharyngeal fricative) in accordance with Standard Ukrainian phonological norms. In response, VV waved his hand, shook his head laterally and stated, ‘V’juha is a Russianism’ before turning to call on another child. Through routine deployment as negative feedback, designating a form as ‘Russian’ or ‘Russianism’ became equivalent to labeling it ‘incorrect.’ Children occasionally used these terms in similar ways, as seen in the following.

This incident occurred during a language lesson as the class was reviewing homework in which they had provided antonyms for certain words. As Excerpt 3a begins, VV calls on Marko to suggest an antonym for lahidnyj ‘gentle.’
Excerpt 3a
That’s Russian (02/05/04)
Trouble source is in **boldfaced italics**

1  VV

2  VV  *Bud’ laska Mar*  *[ko.]*

3  TS→  Marko  *Please Mar*  *[ko.]*  *

4  VV  *Jakyj?*


6  C→  VV  *Hru*  *[byj.  Rough.]*  *

((Turns away from Marko))

In line 3, Marko offers *grubyj* ‘rough,’ a cognate from East Slavic distinguished by its pronunciation: /grúbyj/ with an initial /g/ in Standard Russian and /hrúbyj/ with an initial /h/ in Standard Ukrainian. Marko’s pronunciation follows Standard Russian norms. In line 4, VV indicates a problematic hearing with ‘*Jakyj?* ‘What?’ As Marko’s turn was spoken in partial overlap with VV’s prior turn, VV may not have heard it; alternatively, VV may be prompting Marko to self-correct. Marko responds to this repair initiation as indicating an uncertain hearing and repeats the word without alteration (line 5). VV then corrects him by saying the word with word-initial [h] as in Standard Ukrainian (line 6). However, he does not overtly indicate that Marko’s pronunciation was problematic, nor does he provide an opportunity for Marko to take up the correction, as he closes the sequence by turning away even before he has completed his utterance (line 6). That is, neither party explicitly orients to the word as an error. However, another child has a different agenda.

Excerpt 3b
That’s Russian (02/05/04)

7  VV  *Šče jakyj.  What else.*

8  VV  *((Points to Dar’ja))


10  VV  *((Turns away from Dar’ja, walks to his right))

11  VV  *Suvoryj. Ditky vam ne zdajet’sja šče tu na žal’ Cruel. Children doesn’t it seem to you that here unfortunately*
VV

nemaje toho sumnivnoho /e/ /y/ (.) jakýj nam tak potřiben?
we don't have that that alternating /e/ /y/ (.) that we need?

VV

Hrubyj (.) do reči, ce ukrajins'ke slovo takož.
Hrubyj (.) by the way, is a Ukrainian word also.

VV next calls on Dar'ja, who begins by stating, ‘That’s Russian’ (line 9). As she does not specify a referent for the demonstrative cja ‘that,’ it is unclear whether it is Marko’s pronunciation or the word itself that she is labeling as ‘Russian.’ In either case, Dar’ja problematizes her classmate’s answer before offering a replacement, suvoryj ‘cruel.’ As children in this classroom were rewarded for identifying and correcting classmates’ factual errors, Dar’ja may have sensed an opportunity to bid for recognition.

However, Dar’ja’s claim is problematic in several respects. First, it is misleading (the word exists in Ukrainian) and unnecessary (VV has already corrected Marko’s pronunciation). In addition, children were supposed to correct classmates only when VV invited them to do so. Dar’ja has not only self-selected, but she has targeted a word that VV has implicitly accepted, which could be interpreted as challenging his authority. In his following turn VV distances himself from Dar’ja both physically (walking away from her, line 10) and verbally. He first negatively assesses her suggestion of suvoryj, noting that it does not meet the requirements of the exercise (lines 11–12). He then expressly disagrees with her claim, declaring that hrybyj (with stress on the word-initial [h]) is also a Ukrainian word (line 13). Dar’ja’s attempt at making a correction is thus unsuccessful. Nevertheless, this episode demonstrates her awareness of the importance of pure language norms in the classroom and how these norms could be invoked to claim superior knowledge.

SOCIALIZATION INTO SPEAKING CORRECTLY

The preceding provides a limited but representative sampling of the organization and targets of corrective feedback that occurred in this classroom. Children’s family backgrounds were not reliable predictors of their propensity to use Russian words; Slava (Excerpt 1) came from a bilingual ‘mixed’ family (Russian mother, Ukrainian father), Petja (Excerpt 2) from a Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainian family, and Marko (Excerpt 3) from a Russian-speaking Ukrainian family. Over the course of my observations all of the children in the class were corrected for Russian-influenced errors, most on numerous occasions.

Of course, it is the business of language teachers to correct errors. But how is error defined? Labeling a form incorrect can be grounded in a number of criteria, such as incongruity with the structure of the language or communicative inadequacy. However, many of the forms corrected in this classroom were well fitted to Ukrainian norms. For example, Russianisms such as komandyrovka ‘business trip’ or v’juha ‘blizzard’ do not violate Ukrainian phonological
rules, and in terms of form there is nothing to distinguish them from legitimate loanwords such as *ryma* ‘rhyme’ (which may have entered Ukrainian via Polish). Nor can it be argued that Russian forms obscured the speaker’s meaning. As Schegloff *et al.* (1977: 380) have noted, if the understanding of a turn is sufficient for an ‘other’ to make a correction, it is also sufficient for that ‘other’ to produce a sequentially appropriate next turn instead of a correction. The ability of VV or another student to supply a replacement word demonstrates that these forms presented no barrier to comprehension, nor would they prove troublesome outside the classroom, where both Ukrainian and Russian are understood.

Yet words may be referentially accurate, linguistically plausible, and perfectly comprehensible, but still be judged incorrect in terms of social meaning. These words were incorrect because they were associated with the ‘wrong’ language. While it is not unusual to discourage use of non-target languages in language classrooms, this practice rests on an assumption that languages are discrete entities with clearly defined borders, an assumption difficult to support when set against the language practices of this bilingual community. Indeed, when I mentioned a Russian form that one of the children had used in class, Ukrainian-speaking acquaintances would often admit that they used that form as well.

Moreover, the boundaries between Ukrainian and Russian are not as clear or impermeable as this strict compartmentalization of languages implies. In addition to cognates, many distinctions between Standard varieties (e.g. Russian [g] vs. Ukrainian [h]) become blurred or disappear at the dialectal level. The treatment of a word such as *komandyrovka* ‘business trip’ as an error despite its inclusion in the official (Soviet) Ukrainian dictionary further suggests that these corrections cannot be explained solely in terms of a ‘Ukrainian only’ philosophy; they also involved judgements regarding what should or should not be accepted as Ukrainian.

The authority of pure Ukrainian seems to have been accepted in this classroom. Children displayed willingness to uphold pure language norms regardless of their own diverse ethnic or linguistic backgrounds; for example, although Dar’ja (Excerpt 3) came from a mixed (Russian mother, Ukrainian father) Russian-speaking family, she did not hesitate to disapprove of a ‘Russian’ word. And although it is possible to read children’s use of Russian as resistance to these norms, participants themselves did not orient to it as such. While disobedient behavior could draw a strong rebuke, I never observed VV scold children for using Russian words, and he informed me that he did not penalize them for language mixing, feeling that they could not yet be held accountable for their language use. For their part, while children occasionally challenged VV on issues such as grades or the acceptability of an answer, they regularly took up corrections without protest. That is, all parties treated use of Russian forms as inadvertent errors rather than as deliberate acts of resistance. Within the classroom, pure language had become a dominant language ideology.
CONCLUSION

The impact of these corrective feedback practices extends beyond the walls of the classroom. While serving the pedagogical goal of teaching children to speak Ukrainian ‘correctly,’ these practices were also socializing children into a particular understanding of what ‘speaking correctly’ means. As children participated in corrective feedback routines, whether by taking up a teacher’s replacement word, correcting themselves, or correcting classmates, they displayed allegiance to ideologically mediated standards of correctness that proscribe language mixing as a violation of the natural boundaries between languages, thereby reifying and naturalizing pure Ukrainian as the standard upon which all Ukrainian language practices can be evaluated. While at odds with community language practices, such standards were quite consonant with community language ideologies and were vocally supported by many community members, including the parents of some of these children. They also reflected and validated the valorization of pure language evoked through state-sponsored efforts to revitalize Ukrainian and establish it as a distinct language suitable for representing a distinct nation.

In bringing together two complementary research traditions—language socialization and language ideology—this study has underscored the histori-cized and ideological nature of corrective feedback routines in this classroom and illustrated how seemingly mundane classroom practices may be implicated in larger sociopolitical phenomena. It therefore contributes to an emerging body of language socialization research that has explored the impact of every-day socializing activities and their governing language ideologies on the complex processes of linguistic reproduction and change in multilingual socie-ties (see Garrett and Baquedano-López 2002). In particular, these findings have implications for the role of schooling in language standardization and revitalization, areas that thus far have received little attention from language socialization researchers. As this study has shown, the discourse of the language classroom, a setting where appropriate ways of speaking are overtly displayed and promoted, is a potentially rich site through which standard language ideologies are reproduced, sustained, and transmitted.

SUPPLEMENTARY DATA

Supplementary material is available at Applied Linguistics online.

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NOTES

1 In the 2001 All-Ukrainian Population Census, 17.5% of respondents identified their ethnicity as Russian (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine n.d.).

2 In a survey, when asked for ‘language of preference’ one-third of those who self-identified as ethnic Ukrainian designated Russian (Arel 2002: 238).


4 A gymnasium is a selective public school that offers intensive instruction in certain subjects along with the regular curriculum.

5 I acknowledge, however, that those critical of current language education policy may have been reluctant to air their views to a stranger.

6 Russian is no longer an obligatory subject in Ukrainian schools, and many have dropped it from the curriculum. According to the principal, Russian at this school was retained at the request of parents.

7 All names are pseudonyms. Following Ukrainian practice, I refer to the teacher by his first name (Viktor) and patronymic (Viktorovych), derived from one’s father’s first name. This is a formal mode of address equivalent to Mister with a last name.

8 A table detailing students’ ethnic and linguistic backgrounds can be found at Applied Linguistics online.

9 The exercise focused on words containing e or y, whose pronunciation varies depending on stress, and the stress pattern of the antonym was supposed to differ from that of the original word.

10 Participants demonstrated no concern about the Polish origin of many words in the Ukrainian lexicon, nor did classroom use of English borrowings such as supermodel ‘supermodel’ or dyzajner ‘designer’ generate any response. This apparent inconsistency underscores the selective nature of pure language ideologies (e.g. Annamalai 1989).

11 As an anonymous reviewer has pointed out, what counts as ‘Standard Ukrainian’ is far from resolved. While discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this article, interested readers are referred to the account in Bilaniuk (2005).

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