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Linguistic Biographies & Communities of Language of Russian Speakers in Great Britain

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LINGUISTIC BIOGRAPHIES AND COMMUNITIES OF LANGUAGE OF RUSSIAN SPEAKERS IN GREAT BRITAIN

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Appendices

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DECLARATION

This thesis is the sole work of the author. No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted previously by any other candidate for another degree or qualification at Durham University or any other university or institute of learning.

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ABSTRACT

In migration, language undergoes crucial changes. Not only are the linguistic practices of migrants reshaped in the new environment, but migrant displacement has a major effect on the way language users see and talk about language as such, especially in relation to linguistic varieties they encounter or acquire as part of their migrant experiences. Migrants' transforming attitudes to language also interfere with other, non-linguistic areas of their lives – family relationships, career pathways, networking with fellow migrants, and daily interactions with the host environment. The way a layperson considers 'their' language in relation to the language of 'others' plays a crucial role in their identity construction – both as a factor and a domain for expression. The sociolinguistic context of a new culture is a defining factor in the transformation of one's metalinguistic thinking.

This thesis focuses on post-Soviet Russian-speaking migrants in the UK and explores their linguistic practices, language attitudes and discourses on language(s) as a key factor in their cultural integration in the host society. It is based on ethnographic fieldwork (in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and the discourse analysis of printed and online documents) conducted between 2011 and 2014, principally in the North-East of England. The central argument of the thesis is that the cultural phenomenon of 'Russophonism' (*russkoiazychie*) presents a dynamic model which functions in two ways. Firstly, it is a frame to express shared meanings of belonging to the post-Soviet domain, through which individual linguistic identities and community practices are expressed. Russophonism also influences migrants' on-going relationship with and views of their home countries and the FSU context in general. Secondly, migrants' understanding of Russophonism is a flexible tool to interpret current migrant experiences and to create new meanings of what being a migrant in the UK implies both for their personal life trajectories and for their self-presentation as a group.

CYRILLIC TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

(used in this text and based on the Library of Congress system)*

Cyrillic	Latin	Cyrillic	Latin
Аа	Aa	Рр	Rr
Бб	Bb	Сс	Ss
Вв	Vv	Тт	Tt
Гг	Gg	Уу	Uu
Дд	Dd	Фф	Ff
Ее	Ee	Хх	Kh kh
Жж	Zh zh	Цц	Ts ts
Зз	Zz	Чч	Ch ch
Ии	Ii	Шш	Sh sh
Йй	Ii	Щщ	Shch shch
Кк	Kk	Ъ	''
Лл	Ll	Ы	Y y
Мм	Mm	Ь	'
Нн	Nn	Ээ	Ee
Оо	Oo	Юю	Iu iu
Пп	Pp	Яя	Ia ia

* Except for citations from secondary sources (e.g. Boym, Yelenevskaya) and convensionalised spelling (e.g. Mayakovsky, Trotsky).

Quotations from interviews are not transliterated but provided in Cyrillic and accompanied by English translations in footnotes. Necessary notes about code-switching or language mixes are made to these translations.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMC	Computer-Mediated Communication
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGL	English as a Global Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FSU	Former Soviet Union
ITC	Information and Communication Technology
L1	First (Native) Language
L2	Second (Target) Language
ONS	Office of National Statistics
RFL	Russian as a Foreign Language (*РКИ*, as a Russian-language equivalent)
RLT	Russian Language Teaching
RSL	Russian as a Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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INTRODUCTION

Language in migration: The case of Russian speakers

Members of migrant groups usually find themselves caught between two cultural frameworks that influence their experience in new settings. One of them is structured by their previous environment and constitutes their 'baggage' throughout migrant trajectories; the other is the new reality which they are supposed to adjust to and integrate into. The way migrants interpret their position towards both these frameworks is usually subject to their reflections, particularly during the initial period of settling down in a new place. This time of adaptation to a different system, while realising the extent of their attachment to the previous one, interferes both with their judgements expressed as a part of 'voicing' migrant experience and with their everyday cultural practices or other pragmatic implementations of their cultural background. This process of re-interpretation does not necessarily develop as a gradual, unproblematic transition from one cultural system to another through changing identities or acquiring new skills, but may involve the merging of symbolic meanings, referential frameworks or cultural practices in order to create new, hybrid or multi-layered phenomena (Kalra et al. 2005; Koutrolikou 2012; Rassool 2004).

What happens at the micro-level of individual or group reflections is significantly influenced by, but not necessarily aligned with, the macro-level representations of migrant groups which various official discourses of both host and home countries construct (Ager 1997; Vertovec & Wessendorf 2006). Being subject to categorisation within a host social structure and cultural environment, members of a migrant group also establish connections with their 'homeland' by emphasising their belonging and attachment to a particular cultural domain or by highlighting their origins in a particular geo-historical time-space. These different dimensions may clash in their opposing expectations towards what the status and cultural image of a migrant group should be, but they may also provide a new, transformed, transnational understanding of identities, belonging or cultural embeddedness. As S. Vertovec argues, these new evolving 'cultural repertoires' depend on

a range of identity-conditioning factors: ... histories and stereotypes of local belonging and exclusion, geographies of cultural difference and class/ethnic segregation, racialised socio-economic hierarchies, degree and type of collective mobilisation, access to and nature of resources, and perceptions and regulations surrounding rights and duties (Vertovec 2001: 578).

One of the major areas to grasp these different co-existent layers and axes of interpretation of a migrant group in a new context is their language practices and the discourses that they build around the uses of particular languages. The social implications of language use and discourse are crucial for a migrant context since, according to M. Heller, language is a 'set of resources which circulate in unequal ways in social networks and discursive spaces, and whose meaning and value are socially constructed within the constraints of social organisational processes, under specific historical conditions' (Heller 2007: 2). The role of the linguistic environment is therefore two-fold: it is a symbolic system in which the bases of cultural meanings are encoded and it is a means of communication to express and transfer these meanings both in its native environment and beyond. Both functions are central to individual or group understandings of identity (Downes 1988; Gumperz 1982; Hymes 1977); both are significantly reinterpreted once put in a new language environment (Gubbins & Holt 2002; Ogulnik 2000; Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004; Todeva & Cenoz 2009; Urcioli 1995). The juxtaposition of everyday speech practices and ideological attitudes towards the languages at hand provides one of the important insights into the way migrants perceive and perform their changing identities more generally, since, as Vertovec and Wessendorf stress, 'languages not only have a communicative value, but they are also crucial regarding the ways we see the world and as markers of individual and collective identities' (Vertovec & Wessendorf 2006: 181).

The case of post-Soviet Russian-speaking migrants sets a particularly convincing example of how communicative pragmatics and cultural identification become reinterpreted by migrant groups in new host environments. Starting in the early 2000s and going through the 2010s, the most recent migrant flows from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) to the West share similar historic backgrounds of Soviet legacies, but are significantly different in the way their home countries address them at present. The combination of these two frameworks is best revealed through migrants' views on language. Most of them tend to share either

actual life experiences or common cultural narratives of the USSR as a space where language ideologies and cultural politics were aimed at the linguistic unification and standardisation of a vast, extremely heterogeneous group of people (Ager 1997; Anderson & Silver 1983; Bazylev 2009; Bilaniuk 2005; Blommaert & Verschueren 1998; Spolsky 2003).

This idea contrasts with the diversity of paths that different post-Soviet countries have chosen regarding the Russian language after the collapse of the USSR, and the effect these diverse policies have had on the identity of 'Russian speakers' in each country. Obviously, the experience of being a 'Russian speaker' in Latvia or Estonia differs greatly from that in Armenia, Kazakhstan, or Moldova – and the differences involve not only the official discourse on the statuses of these linguistic minorities in a certain country, but also the micro-level of individual identities and patterns of association among Russian speakers (Abdualev 2006; Berdicevskis 2014; Cara 2013; Cheskin 2013; Ciscel et al. 2000; Dietrich 2005; Garibova 2009; Jacobson 2002; Korth 2005; Kosmarskaia 2002; Kulyk 2011; Pavlenko 2011a; Platt 2014). These differences in interpretation and self-presentation as a 'Russian speaker' become obvious in the context of migration across the FSU space (Darieva 2005; Flynn 2003; Pilkington 1998), but more so in a different language environment, for example, that of a West European country, such as the UK.

Native, near-native or advanced knowledge of Russian has continued to be the basis for establishing links between migrants from different FSU countries in new language environments of the host countries (Komarova 2007; Perotto 2014; Willett 2007). The way this shared knowledge of Russian is used internally, as a marker of commonality in migrant community-building, is also reflected in the external context, as a categorising tool for researchers of post-Soviet migrancy from the perspective of both host and home countries (Bronnikova 2010; Brua 2009; Eriksson 2015; Moin et al. 2011). Yet the essence of this shared 'Russian-speaking-ness' in terms of its sociolinguistic, cultural or communicative elements is rarely questioned by either the migrants or the researchers and is usually reduced to the idea of a post-Soviet lingua franca.

It is the argument of this thesis that studying the 'naive', unprofessional, first-hand understanding of what the phenomenon of 'Russian-speaking-ness'

entails for its users in communicative and sociocultural terms provides a more nuanced picture of current patterns of migrant self-positioning and integration. Another dominant factor to consider is the social, linguistic and cultural environment which surrounds this group and therefore influences the way Russophonism of post-Soviet migrants evolves in interpretations of its speakers as they gradually adjust to this new environment. The latter's influence may be as specific as the stereotypical images of the Russian language, its speakers or its place in the system of languages that are shared by UK residents and translated to the migrant group. It may also include more general ideas on migrant tendencies, geopolitical judgements or sociocultural interpretations that are circulated by the media of the host country and reproduced by its population (as, for example, the clichéd term 'Londongrad' which has appeared in the British media to refer to Russian presence in the UK in general, reinforcing the largely negative stereotypes about the group; cf. Dukes 2015).

To contextualise what follows and to introduce the main theoretical fields at the intersection of which this study was carried out, I will start by presenting three 'snapshots' related to the subject of this project and coming from different areas of the fieldwork involved. Each of them illustrates a particular academic perspective on how language as a social factor is relevant to current migration studies.

Snapshot 1: Language between self-identification and statistics

When the 2011 Census data on the UK residents' first language was officially published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in January 2013, it caused extensive online discussions among Russian-speaking migrants, mostly those residing in London.[1] The main reason for this uproar was that the data showed relatively low numbers of UK residents (approximately 67,000) who named Russian as their main language. The allegedly ubiquitous presence of Russian on the streets of London was adduced as one of the core counter-arguments and many

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[1] See, e.g. *New (Re)Cycle. Blog Aleksandra Smotrova*, 12.12.2012, available from: http://smotrov.livejournal.com/98635.html; *Zapiski emigranta (inostrannogo shpiona)*, 08.02.2015, available from: http://moscowlondon.livejournal.com/628976.html; *Zhurnal nabliudenii za prirodoi veschei*, 13.01.2013, available from: http://sharla-tanka.livejournal.com/258210.html; *Forum Expat.su*, available from: http://expat.su/forum/viewforum.php?f=6&start=27 (all accessed 25/07/15).

Russian-speaking migrants questioned the published results by drawing on their personal experiences as representatives of the 'Russian-speaking group'. Some of the reported figures (ranging from tens of thousands to over two million) were based on individual accounts and calculations presented as online personal statements of Russian-speaking migrants; others were collectively organised projects which presented 'survey results' contesting the ONS reports. The most significant of the latter was introduced as a 'sociological study' conducted by one of the largest diasporic associations, the 'Russian-speaking Community in Britain', and was extensively supported by the Russian World Foundation, the cultural initiative of the Russian authorities to promote the idea of 'the Russian World' in its near and far abroad. According to this project, the number of Russian speakers in the UK ranged between 100,000 and 167,000.[2]

The difference between these estimates was not purely down to methodology but was also ideological, in the sense that different agencies understand, construct and represent the 'Russian presence' in the UK differently. In their article on language and human rights of migrant communities, Piller & Takahashi (2011) claim that 'the question of the obligation of states towards non-citizens ties in with the question of "critical mass"' – whether there is a sufficient number of speakers to guarantee language protection (Piller & Takahashi 2011: 580). The question of counting the numbers of these speakers is crucial for the way they are recognised as a minority community by different states. The case of Russian speakers in the UK demonstrates that the same community might be presented as either too small to be an important part of the host country's cultural diversity or large enough for another country to include it among its communities 'abroad'.

What is crucial here, though, is the perspective of the migrant group itself, their ongoing discussion of who a 'Russian speaker' is (or should be) and what other, non-linguistic traits are inherent to this category. On the one hand, accepted statuses of 'Russian speakers' outside the mainland Russophone space are relevant for migrants' self-identification and for gaining their own 'voice' since, as P. Bourdieu argues, 'speakers lacking the legitimate competence are de facto

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[2] 'A social research project on problems of integration, assimilation, civic activism and maintenance of national identity of Russian-speaking diaspora in the UK' (available from: http://www.obshina.org/socialProject/, accessed 25/07/15).

excluded from the social domains in which this competence is required, or are condemned to silence' (Bourdieu 1991: 55). For many of the participants of these discussions, the Russophone phenomenon also exceeds a strictly linguistic definition and refers to a common historic past and repertoire of cultural memories (Morgunova 2013). It also involves certain types of metalinguistic reflexivity and mind-mapping of the world (Yelenevskaya & Fialkova 2002; 2003).

The approach of the official UK statistics to measuring its migrant population provoked Russian-speaking migrants to reconsider their own position towards the host society and the post-Soviet space, especially regarding discourses around 'the Russian language and Russian speakers abroad'. Their self-identification with Russian in migrant settings obviously relates to Soviet cultural legacies and attempts to reconsider them within the FSU societies. But the geographical, cultural and social distance from their home countries also provides a useful rhetorical tool: in their new identity-building they are more likely to make generalisations about the whole post-Soviet area as a more or less homogenous unit. In terms of the Russian language, this new migrant context, therefore, emphasises commonalities in language uses and attitudes more than it stresses the differences in, say, regional variants or local discourses on Russian that are so characteristic for Russian-speaking communities across the FSU. This perspective helps to construct the overarching cultural identity of a 'Russian speaker' (hence, e.g. 'The Russian-speaking Community in Britain', mentioned above).

The only 2011 census data which was not questioned by most of the migrant commentators was evidence of high concentrations of Russian-speaking migration in or around London. In fact, in many lay calculations, proposed estimations about Russian-speaking Londoners could easily be extrapolated to the whole country, and vice versa. This concentration of migrants in the capital means that other regions, which have been less attractive to and therefore less populated with Russian-speaking residents, have none, or at least a less distinctive, tradition of imaging the group at a national level. They therefore often have to refer to and reproduce general, 'London-centric' representations, which may in practice contradict their local realities of Russian-speaking presence.

Snapshot 2: The '(in)visibility' of migrant communities

The second 'snapshot' proves the point discussed above. When I started doing this research in 2011 and was asked about it by local people, they were surprised that anyone would want to study Russian-speaking migration in the North East of England as, they were convinced, all the Russians live in London and are fabulously wealthy. [3] The opinion that 'there are no Russians here' was also expressed by a representative of a local city council when we started discussing current migration to the region during a formal reception. Interestingly, the reception was for Russian guests visiting the region at that time, but also included a substantial group of local Russian-speaking residents, most of whom the council staff had known personally for many years. Moreover, some of the post-Soviet migrants whom I interviewed later on were likely to make this same argument, even though they were 'living proofs' to the contrary. Two of my female informants, both native in Russian and married to local men, whom I interviewed separately, reported that they 'missed speaking Russian', and assured me that there were no Russians in the region, only in London 'where things were different'. Yet, as it turned out later, they lived less than 4 miles away from each other and knew about each other's presence.

Therefore, the second strand of issues regarding Russian-speaking migration that this thesis will be tackling considers the interrelation between self-representations of this migrant group, on the one hand, and the exterior stereotypical understandings of it by the UK population. This fact puts into question the 'inherent' cultural identity of a Russian speaker as such or, at least, the migrants' willingness and preparedness to perform it proactively in a local cultural context. Another cornerstone of language image and functionality at the regional level is the set of gender roles and expectations concerning language behaviour as (re)produced across the migrant group.

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[3] This was the period of the most intensive court hearings in the Abramovich vs. Berezovsky trial, which was being broadly covered by the UK media. The quintessential representation of this stereotype was later performed in the reality show '*Meet the Russians*' (Fox, 2013) one of the opening lines of which straightforwardly stated that 'it is estimated that 300,000 Russians now live in London, a number of these would be considered super-wealthy, some even richer than the Queen'.

In their discussions of the phenomenon of 'invisibility' in migration studies, researchers emphasise different factors to explain this effect. Some claim that the 'invisible' patterns of migrant presence in the host environment testify to its high degree of self-sufficiency, as migrants create a strong community which provides for most of their needs – socialisation and assistance, employment in its niches and stable links with their country of origin (King et al. 2008). Others, on the contrary, see 'invisibility' as an outcome of migrants' successful integration into the host environment, the reaching of the point of full immersion in the host culture (Juul 2011).

The alleged 'invisibility' of Russian-speaking migration in the peripheral regions of the UK, such as the North East, is of a different kind. Firstly, it is strengthened through contrast with this migrant group's legendary size in the capital. It obviously has different patterns for community-building here as compared to London-based initiatives or, indeed, the community of some other, more numerous, migrant groups in the region, e.g. Chinese or Polish communities (Gangoli et al. 2006; Stenning & Dawley 2009; Wei 1994). And secondly, as will be argued in more detail in this thesis, one of the major factors for this 'invisibility' stems from the way Russian-speaking migrants understand and relate to the Russophone cultural context and perform their language identities regarding their gender roles, social statuses and communicative spheres.

Snapshot 3. Linguistic landscapes and sociolinguistic environments

The third snapshot comes directly from Durham University and dates back to February 2012, when I noticed a message in Russian written on the whiteboard in one of the study rooms (Fig. 1). It said '*Тагил рулит!*', 'Tagil rules' and was clearly made by a Russian-speaking student as a fleeting joke. But the fact that it stayed there for over a week, in contrast to any other lines in English which were readily erased, made me think about the presence of Russian in the linguistic landscape of the region in general, its image as a foreign and/or minority language, and its 'recognisability' among local residents or other migrants. Indeed, the extent of (in)visibility of a migrant group may have parallels with the recognition their language has within a new cultural context and the symbolic associations it establishes with other idioms.

Figure 1. The '*Тагил рулит!*' ('Tagil rules!') note in St. Aidan's College, Durham University. February, 2012. Photo taken by the author.

Linguistic landscapes of modern urban and semi-urban spaces, which include a variety of publicly visible items of information in different languages, provide their inhabitants with 'linguistic deposits' – short glimpses on how the multilingual environment around them functions and which linguistic resources it uses to speak to them (Backhaus 2007; Blommaert 2013b; Gorter 2006). In terms of a more classical sociolinguistic perspective, they provide material for a 'diagnostic of social, cultural and political structures inscribed in the linguistic landscape' (Blommaert 2013b: 3).

The presence of Russian in the linguistic landscapes of urban spaces is obvious in countries with numerous Russian-speaking migrant groups, e.g. Israel (Ben-Rafael 2006) or Finland (Protassova & Reponen 2011). But Russian might also appear in the linguistic landscapes of regions which are less popular destinations for Russian-speaking migrants in particular and global migration flows in general, of which the North East of England is a telling example. The

implications of these environments for Russian as one of their minority languages are twofold. Local inhabitants treat Russian as a new linguistic variety in the area and seek to place it through their 'folk-linguistic' associations with other migrant languages in the landscape, usually by reducing it to certain salient features that have little to do with the language itself, such as the perceived 'Russian accent' in English. Facing these reductive, stereotypical associations, Russian migrants gradually adjust to the new 'language guise' given to them and incorporate it as a resource in their community building in the new environment. Significantly, the fact that Russian has no history as a migrant variety in the local linguistic landscape, gives more flexibility to the incoming Russian-speaking migrants to shape their 'Russophone' identity.

Outline of the thesis

These three examples define the main focus of this thesis – a culturally and socially specific concept of 'Russian-speaking-ness' as understood, employed and performed by post-Soviet migrants in the North East of England. They also contextualise it within broader areas of academic expertise which I adopt in my analytical approach to this subject. The field of *cultural and identity studies* focuses on the particular socio-historic context in which the phenomenon of Russophonism, '*русскоязычие*', has developed into a complex cultural system which exceeds purely linguistic terms (Byford 2009a; Cheskin 2013; Darieva 2008; Protassova 2004; Slavica Helsingiensia 2008). Contemporary *migration studies* place emphasis on the process of unfolding personal migrant trajectories and the establishment of migrant association networks based on common origins or shared views, which in turn affect migrant integration to the host environment and shape connections with their home countries or other migrant communities worldwide (on post-Soviet migration within and from the FSU space see, e.g. Buckley et al. 2008; Münz & Ohliger 2003; Pilkington & Flynn 2006; Riazantsev 2013). This research is also embedded in the field of *linguistic anthropology* – both in its classical paradigm (Fishman 1965; Gumperz 1982; Gumperz & Hymes 1972) and contemporary developments which explore complex multilinguistic sites and competent multilingual speakers who tend to shift from straightforward switching between idioms to interacting with the linguistic resources at hand in a more

complex and identity-driven way (Blommaert 2010; Blommaert & Rampton 2012; Gardner & Martin-Jones 2012; Gubbins & Holt 2002).

The main aim of this research is to explore the way linguistic factors influence personal trajectories and community-building patterns of Russian-speaking post-Soviet migrants in the UK. The principal site for the fieldwork stage, the North East of England, makes an obvious contrast to the 'super-diverse' space of London, the main destination for migration flows. It is a peripheral location which Russian-speaking migrants know very little about, especially in terms of its sociolinguistic properties. Migrants' strategies of self-presentation as a new group in this environment focus on the shared understanding of 'Russophonism' as a tool to create a culturally distinct group. The methodological focus on the way migrants talk about and use Russian while referring to their current experience is influenced by a twofold aim – to capture both discourses on language(s) and their actual usage in migrant contexts.

This thesis consists of seven chapters and a coda. The first two chapters are introductory and aim to contextualise the subject of Russophonism in migration by providing a sociohistorical analysis of the concept itself and by charting the analytical framework used to grasp its development in a very particular migrant context. Chapter 1 discusses recent academic investigations of Russian-speaking communities worldwide, with particular focus on the different ways in which they conceptualise the role of language in them. This chapter also summarises the historical evolution of 'Russophonism' of the (post-)Soviet space in order to contextualise the idea of Russian as a 'lingua franca' of post-Soviet migration.

Chapter 2 presents the analytical framework and methodological procedures of the research. It brings together three strands of recent language studies – 'folk linguistics' and other research on 'naive' metalinguistic reflexivity; the interconnected understandings of language and identity as socially constructed and culturally determined phenomena; and the 'sociolinguistics of globalisation' which makes a radical shift in the way migrant linguistic repertoires are analysed. This chapter also outlines the research design for this study and discusses the advantages, limitations and ethical considerations of the collection and analysis of data as well as the role of the researcher in her reflexive methodology.

The remaining five chapters and the coda discuss the concept of 'Russophonism' from the perspective of Russian-speaking migrants residing in the North-East of England and its role in various areas of their migrant trajectories and community activities. Chapter 3 introduces the attitudes which Russian speakers of the region share towards the language. It traces shifts in the way migrants experience and explain their belonging to the Russian-speaking domain. As their perceptions of the status and image of Russian in relation to English (and its regional varieties) and/or other FSU languages change in the new language environment, so does their perception of themselves as speakers of the language.

The core set of language attitudes towards Russian have many important parallels with the way Russian-speaking migrants acquire, see and use English throughout their lives. This is the topic of Chapter 4, which focuses on the notion of 'Russian English'. By adopting the theory of variable, culturally determined 'Englishes' together with a biographical approach to language learning as a social practice, this chapter looks into the skills in, images of, and encounters with English as presented in migrants' narratives. It establishes dominant areas of language awareness which Russian-speaking users of English refer to as a threshold in their linguistic and cultural competence, particularly in relation to the most common regional dialect, Geordie.

Personal language attitudes and patterns of linguistic behaviour interfere with many areas of migrant lives, one of the most sensitive of which is family interactions. Chapter 5 explores different aspects of transcultural migrant families and the way language is conceptualised as an integral part of them. It introduces the concept of 'language desire' which determines the sense of closeness and intimacy in intercultural couples. The discussion then moves to intergenerational communication by employing the idea of 'a child as a boundary' for cross-cultural interactions both in mixed marriages and transnational extended families of Russian-speaking migrants.

Moving from the most intimate circle of familial ties to the competitive sphere of job-hunting and career-building, Chapter 6 focuses on the 'economic' role of Russian in migration, starting with its perceived role in individual employment strategies and continuing to the sphere of migrant entrepreneurship built specifically for or around a 'community' shaped around language. This chapter

thereby provides the necessary shift from the individual level of linguistic biographies and metalinguistic judgements to the group level of community building and migrant networking.

The latter is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, which examines the limitations of the concepts of 'speech community' or 'language community' when applied to Russian-speaking migrant networks in North-East England. Two distinct community hubs are examined here – Russian language weekend schools of North-East England and a 'student' society based in Newcastle. I propose to frame the communities created in this way as 'communities of speech practice', given that they are based not on a common language, i.e. Russian, but on particular ways of using this language and discourses on the language use.

Finally, the Coda turns back from the level of communities and shared linguistic practices towards the level of individual performance and multilingual personhood. Based on the paradox of advanced bilingual repertoires and reluctant cross-linguistic experimenting, it discusses scarce examples of 'metalinguistic creativity', or 'playful' modes of self-expression across different languages, seeking to understand reasons for the dearth of these practices among Russian-speaking migrants. Finally, the Conclusion to the thesis provides a summary of the results of this research and discusses methodological issues of exploring the group in an English-speaking and other foreign-language contexts.

CHAPTER 1. RUSSIAN SPEAKERS ABROAD: HISTORICAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT

1.1. Russian-speaking migration through different analytical lenses

Approaches to the study of Russian-speaking migration vary considerably and could be classified according to the viewpoint of research interest, which can be quantitative, purpose-based, group-oriented, culture specific or identity focused. Each of them has its own history of development, dominant research questions and areas of exploration. However, the primary distinction between them is their respective conceptualisation of migration and of how it should be consequently studied.

A *quantitative approach* adopts a macro-analytical perspective to describe, explain and predict human mobility and migration on an international scale. Supported with the evidence of statistical data, it organises chaotic individual movement into migration flows. Post-Soviet migration has significantly influenced general mobility trends, especially in the first decade after the collapse of the USSR. This transformation did not just alter the numbers, with migration flows increasing significantly both within and outside the FSU space (Tishkov et al. 2005). It also challenged the field of migration theory itself by providing the case of a global economic and political change revealed through growing migration flows. R. Brubaker (2010) argues that, in contrast to interwar international politics, when borders moved over people, the collapse of the USSR gradually changed the pattern into the movement of people over borders, 'thus creating the post-Soviet internal and external membership politics in Russia and other successor states' (Brubaker 2010: 69). Newly formed FSU states obviously needed time and resources to adjust their migration policies and statistical instruments in response to the new international dimension of human flows (Heleniak 2008; Smith 1999).

Since the collapse of the USSR, which was thoroughly analysed from the perspective of global migration trends (Buckley et al. 2008; Di Bartalomeo et al. 2014; Molodikova & Diuvel 2009), the quantitative approach has also engaged with broader issues of an economic and geopolitical nature. Post-Soviet migration, especially that from and among Central Asian countries, has shifted the rates of global remittances (World Bank 2011). Russian-speaking migrants from different

FSU countries have restructured labour markets and mobility trends in many countries within and outside the post-Soviet space (Münz & Ohliger 2003). High numbers of post-Soviet migrants have also changed the conceptual understanding of their place and status, reshaping the academic perspectives of particular receiving countries. For instance, the significant growth of Russian-speaking migrants to Finland shifted their representations from a historic minority of pre-Revolutionary settlers towards a heterogeneous migrant group whose language of communication has become the third most used in the country (Protassova 2004; Protassova & Reponen 2011). Another example comes from the Israeli academia which, driven by increasing numbers of post-Soviet migrants, rapidly turned its attention to the heterogeneity of the group (Raijman & Semyonov 1998) and analysed its composite structure by elaborating categories empirically, based upon their differing integration strategies (Haberfeld et al. 2000). Research on 'returning' ethnic minorities from the post-Soviet space to European countries (e.g. ethnic Germans in Germany, Greeks in Greece) has also shifted its focus from the economic benefits of these migrant groups' integration into a given national economy towards the question of the cultural specificity of their identities and lifestyles (Dietz 1999; 2011; Hionidou 2012). Some European countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Greece, Poland) have experienced a considerable re-balancing of their most numerous migrant minorities since the collapse of the USSR (TNS Qual+ 2011).

In the geopolitical realm, post-Soviet migration trends are integrated into broader conceptualisations of power distributions within the FSU area and the dominance of the Russian state both as a political successor of the USSR and a key migration destination for post-Soviet citizens (e.g. Melvin 1995; Saunders 2014; Tishkov 2007). For the sake of large-scale databases, especially those used for governmental statistical services, migration flows are measured by the criteria of nationalities, countries of origins, or other, externally set parameters which provide accountable, but sometimes oversimplified glimpses of mobility trends and thus eliminate subtleties of migrant identities (Gingras 2010; Ponomarjovs 2009). Quantitative analyses of post-Soviet mobility within and outside the FSU space are also involved in discussions of language politics and changing ideologies both as a resource of statistical information and as a tool for advocating the

redistribution of linguistic resources and the rights of access to them by the emerging (or constructed) language minorities (O'Reilly 2001; Pavlenko 2008).

Another area of investigation can be identified as a *purpose-based approach* to Russian-speaking migration, focusing on particular groups driven by common causes, motives or purposes for international mobility (especially economic). This strand classifies individual migrant trajectories into distinctive clusters and explores them as phenomena of a broader transnational scope. One of the dominant categories here includes labour migrants who move seasonally or settle more permanently in other countries due to international differences in average wages and work opportunities. In this respect Russian-speaking migration is studied from two different angles – as part of East and Central European labour migration within the EU space and other developed countries (Procoli 2004; Ruhs 2006; Woolfson 2007); or as evidence of the intensifying process of post-Soviet worker mobility within and from the FSU space (Grigoriev & Osinnikov 2009; Korobkov & Zaionchkovskaya 2004; Meteliov 2006). Adaptive strategies of migrants are explored through the lens of socioeconomic analysis, and their place in a general labour market is prioritised over the matter of local identities, out-of-work activities, emergent networks and cultural initiatives. A distinctive and much debated case of purpose-based professional migration of Russian speakers concerns the mobility of scientists and academics (Chiswik 2011; Riazantsev & Pismennaia 2013).

The analysis of particular migrant categories may, of course, be carried out from different perspectives simultaneously. Matters of gender, for example, may be positioned at the intersection of purpose-based and group migration (see below). On the one hand, post-Soviet labour migration has been shown to be predominantly male (e.g. Riazantsev 2007), while women constitute a distinctive migrant group with a shared objective related to their gender roles in different social contexts – working environments (Riazantsev & Tkachenko 2008), family reunions (Gapova 2004), or international marriages (Johnson 2007; Klingzeis 2004). In this respect, post-Soviet female migration is often tackled by the purpose-oriented approach, which accentuates gender as one of the resources available for international mobility. On the other hand, female migrants become a coherent group constituted both internally, within the group, and externally, through discourses of recipient cultures. The former might be revealed and

explored through specific network-building patterns (Sobennikova 2010), self-identification processes (Sarsenov 2004) or (reluctant) attempts to form their distinctive 'voice' (Remennick 2004b). This group also presents a controversial subject for ideological representations and stereotyping in media or cinematic narratives in their new host countries (Näripea 2014; Pekerman 2012).

In contrast to the purpose-oriented approach, which prioritises the rationale of migration, *group-oriented studies* leave aside the initial drive to move, focusing instead on the existence of migrants within new environments and their distinctiveness as social and cultural groups. This area presents one of the most diverse conceptualisations of what a migrant group actually is – whether it is constituted by inherent shared characteristics such as their ethnic origins (Laitin 2004; Lewin-Epstein 1997; Markowitz 1995; Morawska 2004), or religious beliefs (Chervyakov et al. 1997; Hardwick 1993), or is shaped by a particular context of the new host environment and therefore focuses on its own successful integration (Garner 1988; Hume & Hardwick 2005), or is determined by particular forms of mobility, sociability or network formation which are characteristic of the migrants' country (or countries) of origin (Leibert 2010).

An important methodological consideration for group study is the employability of concepts which are central for classical migration theory but need to be reshaped in the context of Russian-speaking migrant groups. One of the key discussions treats conceptual limitations of terms such as 'group', 'community' and 'diaspora' regarding different categories of migrants, the most problematic of the three being the concept of 'diaspora'. As R. Brubaker (2005) argues, this concept has recently seen unprecedented proliferation, which has involved 'stretching' and 'diffusion' in its meaning and areas of use – not only across the disciplines as a heuristic tool for exploring migration in the historical context but also as 'a category of claim', or practice-based normative of migrant existence and self-presentation.

The applicability of the term 'diaspora' to certain historic and cultural settings of Russian migrancy might seem appropriate and advantageous. This is especially the case with the post-1917 wave of emigration, which has been presented as a case of diaspora both by the émigrés themselves and those studying them later (e.g. Hsu 2010). Another much-cited case would be the 'unwanted

Russians' who found themselves outside the borders of the Russian Federation following the breakup of the USSR, their controversial status attracting both political and academic interest (Kolstoe 1995; Laitin 1999; Melvin 1995; Shlapentokh et al. 1994). While conceding that none of the successor republics were homogenous in ethnic, linguistic or national terms, many Russian politicians and scholars alike proposed to see the 25 million Russians (or even the 36.5 million native speakers of Russian) living in other FSU countries as effectively a new 'diaspora', in the sense of a group in exile from its 'motherland' (Flynn 2004; Radulescu 2002).

The current understanding of these 'diasporas' usually connects the term to the transnational order of contemporary migration and revitalises its area of concern in this sense (Knott & McLoughlin 2010; *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 2014, esp. the afterword by H. U. Gumbrekht). However, apart from established links within the group, its specific idea of 'lost homeland' and compactness of its borders, the diaspora also implies a particular development of the cultural sphere of its 'exile' experience. Changing patterns of cultural reproduction and the creation of new forms of artistic expression constitute the idea of culture away from culture, or 'making culture while living through differences' (Kalra et al. 2005: 37). The hybridised forms of meanings, interpretations and practices develop from the mainstream cultural domain of a home country through new material conditions of a hosting environment (Bhabha 1994; Kuortti & Nyman 2007).

It is precisely this process of reshaping cultural patterns that defines the *cultural approach* to migration studies. In relation to Russian culture abroad, this area is particularly well developed due to the history of Russian emigration in the 20th century, on the one hand, and the academic tradition of viewing culture as embedded into the physical space within national borders, on the other. Research on 'Russian culture in exile' shifts the focus from human mobility, interaction and life experiences towards the question of the displacement and hybridisation either of the 'Russian culture' in general (Williams 1972) or its specific areas (Bethea & Frank 2011; Wanner 2008). One of the core concepts of culture 'in exile' is the existence of language outside of its 'mother country' (to be discussed in more detail below).

The area which ties together the group approach and cultural explorations is the strand of *identity studies* in contemporary migration. This viewpoint tends to be found at the opposite end of the spectrum to that of the macro-analysis of global mobility trends and deals with identity-building process at the level of either personal experiences or group interactions (usually following identity politics 'from below', e.g. Cheskin 2013). The term 'identity' has itself been questioned as an analytical category. Following Brubaker & Cooper (2000), it is necessary to distinguish among various strands that employ the term 'identity'. Among them are, for example, the one that focuses on identification and self-presentation of singular individuals or the one exploring collectiveness as well as political uses of the term to convey this shared belonging. On a more personal level, identity studies have focused on the way Russian-speaking migrants perceive or perform their identification – be it within professional activities of 'translingual' and 'transcultural' Russian-writing authors (e.g. Rubins 2014; Wanner 2008) or less elaborate, lay expressions of this identification in cross-cultural communications (Willett 2007). In fact, this approach puts the emphasis on 'identity talk', or else on particular uses of the languages at hand for the sake of self-presentation – whether deliberate or situational. On the one hand, this view delegates the agency of identification to presenters themselves (cf. Ries 1997); on the other hand, considerable importance is ascribed to the means of this communication (Savkina 2013).

At the group level, studies focused on identity have explored different kinds of common grounds for perceived commonality – shared past and memory practices (Cheskin 2012); constructed informative and communicative unity (Adoni et al. 2006; Zilberg & Leshem 1996); claiming their rights in negotiating statuses with titular groups (Flynn 2007a; Voutira 2006); or positioning the group as a classical diaspora abroad (Byford 2014; Riazantsev & Pismennaia 2012). In contrast to the group approach, however, the identity-based one not only grasps the commonality of migrant experiences or similar patterns of coping with new challenges; it also seeks to establish the ideological implications of this interpreted unity and the channels through which it is stated, hence the interest in the process nature of identity-in-making.

1.2. Historical perspectives on Russian-speaking communities worldwide: From émigrés to Russians abroad

In the pre-revolutionary Russian Empire most records of international emigration referred to the migration of marginalised population categories: extreme religious sects (e.g. the dukhobory religious community who left Russia for Canada in 1896, cf. Makarova 2012; Schaarschmidt 2012); ethnic minorities (e.g. Crimean Tatars whose lands were conquered during various imperial colonisation campaigns; cf. Williams 2001); deprived social groups (e.g. low-skilled labour migrants; cf. Kukushkin 2007; Poliakov 2006); or political exiles (e.g. Herzen and Kropotkin, to name but the best known figures; cf. Hughes 2011; Slatter 2003). By the end of the 19th century emigration rates started to grow considerably, with the majority migrating from the Eastern European regions of the Russian Empire mostly heading for the USA, and the estimated numbers of these resettlements exceeding 4 million people (Kabuzan 2004). Polish Jews were by far the main ethnic group of these late-imperial resettlements. By some estimations they numbered almost 2 million migrants, over 78% of which moved to the United States (the second most popular destination was Palestine with the concept of 'aliya' determining the decision). Most of these Polish Jews immigrating to the United States were, due to the citizenship, registered in fact as 'Russian' (Kabuzan 2004) and many of them did have a fairly good command of Russian, in addition to other languages (Budnitskii 2008).

After the October Revolution and the establishment of the new Soviet government, the volume of migration grew dramatically. The rises and falls in migration flows caused by major events in Soviet and world history (especially war and revolution), formed a sequence of 'emigration waves' (Akhiezer 1999). Each 'wave' of 'Russian emigration' is usually presented as having its own distinctive ways of defining cultural belonging, linguistic identities and interactions with host environments. The first ('white') wave of migration numbered five million migrants and was directed mainly towards France, Germany, and Eastern Europe. It had a mostly urban character, which resulted in the significant growth of Russian communities in the capital cities of those countries. In contrast to previous migration flows, this wave included ethnic Russians as well as Ukrainians and Jews who were predominantly Russian speakers. A significant part of it was formed by the Russian nobility and the

intelligentsia, which, as elite groups, had a crucial influence on the formation of the 'exilic' and 'diasporic' character of this migration (Beida 2014; Glenny & Stone 1990; Kelly 1998; Suomella 2004) and specifically on the development of the term 'Russian Abroad' (*russkoe zarubezh'e*; cf. Raeff 1990).

The process of 'restoration' of the main educational, cultural and social institutions of Russian origins outside of Russia involved: a. the development of educational systems (e.g. Raian (2005) notes that in 1922 there were 66 schools for Russian migrant children only in Harbin, over a hundred of them by 1929, and a higher educational institution, Harbin Polytechnic Institution, was established there in 1920); b. maintenance of Russian-speaking media (e.g. Zelenin (2007) describes language attitudes of Russian-speaking communities as compared to the actual uses in émigré media); c. promoting cultural initiatives (Pitches 2012; Vaganova 2007; Vasiliev 2008); d. establishing professional communities (Aksenova 2011; Beliaev 2005; Kaznina 2009) . The concept of 'Russian émigré culture' refers mostly to the interwar period and has been extensively explored (Flamm et al. 2013; Kelly 1998; Slobin 2013), with 'Russian émigré literature' as its central locus (Bethea & Frank 2011; Poltoratskii 1972; Struve 1996; for anthology see Mikhailov 2004).

The language itself was also subject to this conservative behaviour, though constant exposure to other languages altered the Russian of these groups considerably. L. Granovskaia (1995) refers to the language as being 'dispersed' ('*в рассеянии*'), scattered and therefore prone to influences from other languages in contact. In line with her metaphor, other researchers also explore inconsistencies of the 'Russian language abroad' thus dogmatising the idea of a language out of its 'metropoly' (Glovinskaia 2001) as an 'endangered' cultural form (see also Zemskaia 2001). Moreover, while émigré communities were focused on the preservation of Russian culture, the emergence of significant, if peripheral, translingual creative writing in the context of other cultures was also typical. One of the first studies of multilingual writers with hybrid identities is Beujour 1989 (followed by Besemeres 2002; Livak 2003).

The second wave of Russian-speaking migration immediately after World War II was directed towards Western and Central Europe, as well as the USA, and it is still viewed as 'the least researched due to its political and historical

ambiguity' (Morgunova 2007: 19). In comparison to the outstandingly rapid development of Russian culture abroad accomplished by the 'first wave', the 'second wave' was less articulate about its integrity as a group. Most of the migrants were forced to move due to their ethnic identities or political conflicts with the Soviet state (Poliakov 2007), and their migration trajectories exploited the first wave enclaves as staging posts on their way to new territories.[4] The most obvious case here deals with ethnic Germans migrating from Kazakhstan, Volga regions or Siberia to Germany among other displaced groups (Antons 2014). Dietz (2000) estimates over 12 million German refugees from Eastern Europe and the USSR coming to Germany in the late 1940s, with 8 million arriving to West Germany. Even though they 'belonged' ethnically to the country of destination, their identification as 'Soviet' migrants put barriers on their way to desired integration. Public discussions around the extent of the 'German-ness' of these migrant groups had already started during the interwar period (the first resettling, as discussed in Casteel 2008). Later on, communication with these groups further revealed social and cultural differences of Soviet Germans who felt closer to other Soviet migrants than to Germans living in Germany (Römhild 2004). V. Irwin (2009) argues that it is language attitudes and behaviour which play a crucial role in understanding group identities of Russian Germans and Jewish Soviet migrants while both categories are native in Russian and fluent in German.[5]

The third wave is considered to be the lengthiest – initiated in the mid-1950s, it lasted for thirty years and came to its end soon before the collapse of Soviet Union (Vishnevskii & Zaionchkovskaia 1994). Due to ideological pressure, social obstacles and cultural intolerance of the late Soviet era, this wave mainly consisted of dissidents and ethnic minorities, predominantly of Jewish origins (Lewin-Epstein et al. 1997). Most of the migrants reached the USA and Israel as their final destinations, joining the ethnic enclaves of previous waves. For its duration and relatively low volumes of migrants per year this emigration flow was perceived as an ordinary process of the social life within the country (Budnitskii 2008) but was

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[4] For example, over 70,000 ethnic Estonians would choose to retreat with the German troops during the World War II and seek asylum in post-war Europe (Germany, Sweden, and Finland) to move later to the USA, Canada or Australia (Vetik & Helemae 2011).

[5] A close example of hybrid identities and questioned belonging comes from the group of post-Soviet migrants of Polish origin from Kazakhstan and their cautious perception in the mainland Poland (Iglicka 1998) and 'Soviet Greeks' resettling in Greece (Voutira 2006).

viewed as a ideological 'defection' of the Communist regime by its Western opponents (Zolberg 1989). However, this wave was considered distinctively different from previous inflows especially due to its 'Soviet' character that seemed to prevail over any other – ethnic, religious or intellectual (Orleck 1999). Research on these migrants was mostly focused on practical issues of social integration and inclusion (Brua 2009; Chiswick & Wenz 2006; Delgado-Gaitan 1994). Academic interest in the distinctive identities of these groups began developing rather late (for linguistic distinctiveness of Russian speakers in Australia see Garner 1988; Kouzmin 1982; 1988; for the US context see Andrews 1999; Olmsted 1986).

The so-called fourth wave of Russian-speaking migration (which started in the 1990s), however 'global', was at first directed towards Germany, Israel, or the USA, countries with pre-existing and long-standing Russian communities from previous waves but later started to aim at other countries of Europe (e.g. Finland) and worldwide (e.g. China, Turkey) (Rosstat 2014). The collapse of the Soviet Union influenced new migration trends within and outside the FSU space – with changing patterns of mobility into, out of and across Russia (Tishkov et al. 2005). Yet, however important intra-FSU mobility was in this period, in a broader geographical perspective, the post-Soviet migratory 'wave' to the countries of the 'far-abroad', or *dal'nee zarubezh'e*, is significant as something of a 'bridge' or intermediary stage between the historical 'waves' of 20th-century Soviet migration (and the analytical traditions to explore each of them) and new, 21st-century migration tendencies (and concepts used to analytically describe them). As Snel et al. (2000) note, there are four distinctive features of this 'fourth', post-Soviet wave: new geographic patterns, new types of migrants, new judicial statuses and new migration strategies, which all together lead to 'increasing pluralisation and fragmentation of migration and migrants' (cit. Kopnina 2005: 31).

Over the recent decade, the character of Russian emigration and immigration has considerably changed. Leaving peaks of intensive mobility behind, Russia as well as the post-Soviet space in general are still 'in motion', as A. de Tinguy argues, considering contemporary Russia a country of emigration (2004; 2012). A major political and rhetorical shift has been made by the Russian state itself towards understanding these migrant communities worldwide as 'compatriots' abroad, thus inherently connected to the 'mainland' through their embeddedness in a Russian-language culture (Byford 2012; Tishkov 2007). In its turn, this shift has

had significant consequences on the way the Russian language is conceptualised as the 'soft power' tool in the Russian state's pursuit for its dominance worldwide (Gorham 2014; Ryazanova-Clarke 2014; Yelenevskaya & Protassova 2015).

On the whole, studies on post-Soviet migrancy are rather diverse; recent issues discussed in this research involve as varied areas of enquiry as identity formation and cultural politics (e.g. Isurin 2011; Protassova 2004); statistical characteristics of migrant groups (Riazantsev et al. 2014); transnational networks they establish (Elias & Zeltser-Shorer 2006; Fialkova 2005); community-building practices and interaction with other groups (Komarova 2007). Most of these enquiries are conducted within specific intellectual and academic frameworks that have been elaborated to grasp peculiarities of migrant contexts. All of these have their own connection with the concept of shared language, and practices, discourses and meanings this common language entails in migrant settings (Phipps & Kay 2014). Therefore, to contextualise my research, I will focus below on two areas of interest: firstly, the UK as a destination and a receiving environment for post-Soviet migrants; and secondly, the importance that the concept of 'shared language' has acquired in understanding and exploring post-Soviet Russian-speaking migration.

1.3. Russian-speaking migrants in the UK: The community under study

The change of analytical perspective that occurred at the turn of the 21st century is due to the transformations in general migration patterns, numbers and tendencies worldwide. The UK as a destination country has experienced this shift especially after the A8 Accession to the European Union in 2004 (e.g. Bauere et al. 2007; Burrell 2012; Eade & Valkanova 2009). Furthermore, the treatment of the UK's growing diversity has also been reconsidered (Reitveld 2014; Vertovec 2006). In fact, as Vertovec (2007; 2010) has consistently argued, the quantitative growth and composite shifts in migration to the UK have driven the public, media, governmental and academic understanding of its structure to another interpretational framework – the long negotiated image of a migrant 'other' embedded in the British historic context and political regulations was replaced by a dynamic changing interplay of quite various, socially and culturally heterogeneous, mobile and transnationally oriented flexible migrant groups which

are to be recognised by dominant discourses of immigration. Both of these recent transformations have had their effect on the way Russian-speaking migration to the UK is addressed.

The history of Russian-speaking migration to the UK has its roots in cross-cultural liaisons dating back to the 16th century but was never numerous nor homogeneous – the majority of Russians made short educational, tourist or diplomatic visits (Cross 2012). The situation changed with the increase in the number of political refugees in the second half of the 19th century, while the flow became more numerous after 1917, when the first wave of Russian migrants fled to Western Europe seeking refuge from the Soviet state (Kaznina 2009; Komandorova 2011). In line with the common spirit of Russian émigrés of this wave, those who moved to London established their own networks and cultural initiatives (Kaznina 1997; 2004). Many of these migrants had high levels of education and professional expertise which they managed to employ within the new British context – they became involved in dialoguing with the British culture in spheres of literature, theatre or music (Beasley & Bullock 2013; Cross 2012; Peaker 2006; Pitches 2012) and academic explorations (Makarova & Morgunova 2009; Muckle 2008). In general, Russo-British international communication has always exploited cultural linkages (Roberts 2000), and the new Soviet government also saw the opportunity of diplomatic interactions through promoting the culture of a 'new state' (Lygo 2013). Public perception of the Russian émigré community was rather sceptical and cautious in terms of their political views (Hughes 2011; Kaznina 2009).

Although in the course of the 20th century Russian-speaking migration to the UK followed roughly the dynamics of general migration waves elsewhere, it also experienced the peculiarities of its receiving environment. Due to relatively small numbers of migrants and the traditionally high status of British culture among Russians, the early migration was neither able nor eager to form a distinctive closed community isolated from the exterior culture (Kaznina 2009). On a more global level of Russian émigré representations worldwide, this resulted in a comparatively insignificant place of British-based Russian migration within its transnational network – it was marginalised within the European context by stronger and more numerous diasporas of, for example, France or Germany and was in the shadow of the American migration in the English-speaking domain. This

image of 'Russians in Britain' continued to develop further – though the UK has never ceased to be popular with politically or ideologically driven Russian-speaking refugees (e.g. Zinik 2008), a strong coherent community was not formed or recognised within the country or at the international level till the end of the 20th century (Teren'tiev 2007).

Discussions on the exact numbers of Russian, Russian-speaking or post-Soviet migration present in the UK nowadays have never ceased either in media and public discourses or in academic accounts. One of the most referred to estimations comes from the IOM mapping report which stated 'nearly 600,000 Eastern European migrants' to the United Kingdom with almost 15% of them being 'Russian nationals' (IOM 2007). The latest UK Census (2011), however, counts no more than 67 thousand Russian speakers (main language), with 46 thousand Russian-born residents and 36 thousand Russian nationals (ONS 2012). The number of Ukrainian-born persons in the UK in 2008 was estimated to be approximately 15 thousand residents (Kubal et al. 2011).

One of the first detailed studies of post-Soviet Russian migrants as a group comes from Helen Kopnina (2005; 2006) who carried out her fieldwork in London and Amsterdam in the late 1990s. Focusing on the way social associations among migrants are established and reproduced, she made two related arguments – weak and scattered association ties did not produce a strong community, but developed a network of subcommunities of loose boundaries. She also questioned the 'visibility' of these migrants at a group level within contemporary transnational contexts (Kopnina 2005). Despite the fact that her research was carried out before the declared increase of Eastern Europeans coming to Western countries in the mid-2000s, her arguments start a particular academic tradition to view post-Soviet Russian-speaking migrants to the UK as a distinct group within larger East-European flows (e.g. Black & Markova 2007). Therefore, later research of Russian speakers in the UK has dealt primarily with explaining the outer 'invisibility' and inner chaotic and loose structure by prioritising particular areas of common experiences.

For example, D. Malyutina (2013a) stresses the importance of informal relationships, friendship ties in particular, among migrants. The way these, cosmopolitan and racialised relationships are developed is highly influenced by

the wider context of a super-diverse transnational space of London. A. Byford (2014), on the other hand, focuses on the performing practices of Russian-speaking communities of Britain arguing that the idea of 'community' as it is should be re-considered in the light of these practices – they are not just significant and meaningful for the group to reproduce or represent its internal coherence but constitute this community ad hoc: by performing a community this ambivalent group becomes one.

In dealing with the composite structure of 'Russian presence in the UK' (Makarova & Morgunova 2009), O. Morgunova suggests different areas and patterns of 'invisibility' which post-Soviet migrants experience (Morgunova 2009). It is their broader social background and belonging to larger migrant categories (e.g. labour migrants or high-skilled professionals, spousal migrants or Russian-speaking EU-citizens) which influences their presentation as a group (also Morgunova 2007). Morgunova's main argument is that practices of migrant self-observation are present mostly in the virtual environment, and that their online discussions of the categories of and boundaries between 'us' and 'the other' help construct a specific discourse of belonging to a larger, 'European' continuum. One of the side effects of this intensive construction is the re-setting of the Russian migrants' attitude towards other categories (e.g. the 'West' as the 'Great Other') and the re-negotiation of their belonging to certain imagined units (e.g. the European 'civilised' cultural space) (Morgunova 2010).

The idea of a Russophone online space as a site for building community ties and a major arena for its self-presentation as a group has recently been explored by I. Kozachenko (2013) who uses the ITC approach to deconstruct both the technological means and the discursive practices of community-building among Slavic migrant groups in the UK. According to his research, it is through the online interactions among migrants that their multiple identities and association networks are maintained. Each of these 'imagined communities' is constructed by a distinctive set of symbols and discourses drawn from the historical past or recent nation-building strategies of FSU countries. At the same time, individual identification of their participants may combine overlapping narratives belonging to different communities and thus form new, hybrid identities. More generally, the question of one quasi-diasporic unit of 'Russians in the UK' vs. numerous migrant communities based on different bases ('supra-national', 'national', 'ethnic', etc.) has

not been resolved yet and depends on the analytical perspective – some put emphasis on geographical proximity of most Russian-speaking migrants in London, considering it a sufficient base for community-building (Teren'tiev 2007), others differentiate within the group, defining quite specific ethnic or cultural subcategories (Parhomovsky & Rogachevsky 2000).

The shift from researching the Russian-speaking community (or indeed communities) as a coherent group linked by social ties and practices towards the understanding of the post-Soviet Russian migration as a distinctive cultural group has been provided by A. Pechurina (2009; 2010; 2011) who stresses the visual component in realising their identities at home and beyond. The shift from external presentations in public spheres aimed at the community itself or other contact groups towards more private spaces of interpersonal communication and self-identification (Pechurina 2009) enables her to find the objectifiable grounds to start the unravelling of a 'Russian identity'. Reported belonging to 'Russian diasporic communities' is therefore connected to the everyday practices of different waves of Russian-speaking migrants (Pechurina 2010). This focus on cultural practices and interpretations as inherent to a migrant group of shared origins has also been presented in other research on Russian-speaking migration which highlighted different areas of migrant experiences, such as dietary regulations and practices (Bronnikova & Emanovskaia 2010) or working communications and environments (Morgunova & Morgunov 2007). One of the central practices for negotiating and communicating identities is family interaction, especially that concerned with the upbringing of children, including the problem of generational divisions and connections (Yudina 2014).[6]

The search for commonality within this group shifts from strictly cultural or sociolinguistic experiences towards examining interconnections of historic background, national affiliations and imagined communities. A. Byford (2009a; 2009b) explores the discursive potential of the 'imaginary USSR' as an interpretative tool for reconsidering a common Soviet past (or cultural mythologies around it) in the new migrant context. Though presented as more

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[6] More linguistically oriented studies of parent-child interactions in the context of bi- or multilingual families have been conducted by Shukurova (2012) with her focus on Russian-English-Icelandic interactions and Gordeeva (2006) who explores 'Scottish English' as a dominant vernacular among the second generation of Russian-speaking migrants in Scotland.

culturally grounded and less politically oriented, the idea of post-socialist commonality influences the way social mobilisation activities (Bronnikova 2010) or quasi-patriotic associations (Morgunova 2013) are performed and perceived by Russian-speaking migrants themselves. A parallel with the British context is drawn by Bronnikova (2014) in her exploration of the formation of the 'expatriate' Russian-speaking political community in France after the Russian political events of 2011. But what seems relevant to all these cases is the context of London as a main hub for establishing contacts and carrying out any collective activities. Another aspect of involving national dimensions into migrant community building is the interest of the Russian authorities to integrate 'Russian diasporas worldwide' into their international positioning (the particular case of British 'Russian compatriots' is discussed in Byford 2012, a detailed critical study of Russia's diaspora politics is carried out by Le Noan 2012).

The focus on cultural identities and shared backgrounds of post-Soviet migrants has lately evoked a series of studies on methodological and ethical issues where researchers, being Russian speakers themselves, have turned their reflexive thinking towards the relationship between the 'researcher' and the 'researched' (Malyutina 2013b; Pechurina 2014). Both of these authors highlight the interrelation between, on the one hand, their personal migrant experiences, cultural background and communication patterns with fellow migrants, and, on the other, the dynamics of their academic investigation into constructions of 'Russian identity' in migrant contexts. As Mayutina (2013b: 119) puts it, for researchers this process usually entails 'representing subculture as a way of representing themselves'.

Language promotion and distribution has also been a significant area of Russian presence throughout the 20th century – from a near absence of Russian language instruction at the end of the 19th century, the UK education system turned towards introducing the language as a constituent part of foreign language training, in many cases involving Russian émigrés into the professionalisation of the field (Muckle 2008). The latest reports of Russian as a foreign language available for learning at different education levels in the UK, however, stress the discrepancy between relatively low numbers of native speakers residing currently

in the UK[7] and its potential educational importance – it was ranked eighth out of the top ten 'global' languages in the latest foreign language analysis of the British Council (Tinsley & Board 2013). What is particularly interesting in the latter report, though, is the difference in the number of school graduates who take the Russian exam (it has recently become the fifth popular choice for A-levels in languages across England) and the UK's adult population who report speaking Russian at a basic level (1%) (Tinsley & Board 2013).

Apparently, the increase in the educational promotion of Russian is, above other factors, influenced by the influx of 1.5 or second generation of the post-Soviet or East-European migrants (i.e. children who moved to the UK with their parents in their early childhood or were born in the country after one or both of their parents resettled). Most of them share cultural heritage and, though might not be native in Russian, tend to be fluent in it, or find it easier to learn as well as a language worth studying. This instrumental and symbolic status of Russian among larger non-native migrant groups in the UK is therefore contradicted by the relatively low numbers of those who name it their main language (i.e. 67 thousand UK residents). As a result, the post-Soviet and East-European migration of the last decade has changed the idea of Russian presence in the UK both in quantitative and qualitative terms.[8] The shift has also been considered in the light of emerging theoretical frameworks of understanding new migration flows to and processes within the UK.

1.4. Maintaining the Russian language abroad: Practices, vernaculars, meanings

The variety of approaches to the study of Russian-speaking migration outside of the FSU might be widely divided into two main groups that deal with the idea of migrant community in their own ways. From one point of view, the migration

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[7] That being so, the number of schoolchildren speaking Russian in London in 2008 was three times higher than in 1998 (Eversley et al. 2009).

[8] One of the recent cinematic interpretations of the growing 'East-European' presence in multicultural London is presented in D. Cronenberg's *Eastern Promises* (2007) and is discussed as an example of the paradox of Britain 'as a multicultural society in the wake of migration from the Eastern bloc' which after all turns out to be 'tied to the ideas of ethnic and national loyalty and of cultures as a secluded sphere' (Butt 2010: 245).

process is seen as a crucial event to the whole body of national culture which may influence the system of heritage culture or at least form its crucial part (Flamm et al. 2013; Livak 2003; Poltoratskii 1972). One of the integral parts to consider within this cultural perspective is language and the understanding of its place, functions and development in the context of migration in all its complexity. Arguments and research on the pragmatic functions and symbolic values of migrants' language correspondingly reveal a whole set of controversial ideas, such as local variations of standard language, the place of emerging vernaculars within the continuity of language, their interactions with the standardised variety of the national language, and so forth. Even considering the heterogeneity of Russian-speaking communities abroad, the aim of this approach is to provide an analytical perspective which frames a whole variety of 'Russian languages' abroad in a systematic way.

Unsurprisingly, the main body of research on 'Russian language abroad' comes from Russia-based scholars and is carried out in Russian. One of the first and most extensive works is by L. Granovskaia (1995), followed by detailed studies by E. Zemskaia et al. (2001) and M. Glovinskaia (2001). More localised perspectives include 'regional' studies on Francophone contacts in France and Canada by N. Golubeva-Monatkina (1999), the Australian context (Antsypova 2005), or as pan-linguistic and international a region as the 'Eastern Abroad' of Oglezneva (2009). What all these studies have in common, though, is their perspective on language as the main object, subject and actor of transformations, whereas speakers' verbal interaction, attitudinal shifts or changing discourses on languages in use are eliminated from the analytical framework, and therefore it is the language not people that is viewed as a 'migrant' (Pfandl 1994). Peripheral of this field of language studies is the investigations in concepts as presented in text corpus (Lisovskaia 2010).

Another perspective treats migrant communities as groups of people sharing a basic cultural and historical heritage and interacting with other groups, of both migrant and host origins, thus presenting their distinctive identities or reshaping their understanding of cultural patterns under new circumstances. In this case, again, language can become the main field of investigation – as it is in the classic sociolinguistic study of Russian-speaking migrants in the USA by D. Andrews (1999; 2004), which focuses on language interferences in situ, locating them in a

wider socio-cultural and communicative context. This work starts the American tradition of studying migrant Russian-speaking language practices from the sociolinguistic perspective, with a focus on the traditional concepts of code-switching, language domains and bilingual performances (Davidiak 2012; Gregor 2003; Polinsky 1996).[9]

However, shared language can also be viewed as an active social factor which plays an important role in migrant identity formation. V. Irwin (2009) shows how differently two communities of Russian-speaking migrants in Germany shape their identities as a group by reflecting on their linguistic behaviour and language attitudes. For L. Isurin (2011) consistent changes in language use, along with identity transformations and cultural adaptation, reveal certain inner patterns of building migrant communities in sociolinguistically different contexts, such as Germany, Israel, and the USA. Shared language becomes a common ground for building new migrant communities in such different contexts as Israel (Niznik 2003), Ireland (Smyth 2010) or Japan (Nikiporets-Takigawa 2007), becoming a key identification tool for large numbers of post-Soviet migrants (Riazantsev et al. 2014).

Researching the 'Russophonism' (*russkoiazychie*) of migrants as a distinctive factor on their way to social integration, however, may find various theoretical conceptualisations depending on the local strategies of engaging migrants. Two slightly different approaches have been developed in Israel and Finland. The Russian-speaking migrant population of Israel is estimated to be approximately one million, which makes one sixth of the whole population of the country, one of the largest proportions of Russian-speaking migrants in a given country worldwide (Yelenevskaya & Fialkova 2003), with Russian language gradually becoming one of Israel's main languages (Schwartz 2008). Post-Soviet migration to Israel has its specificity in many respects: for most newcomers this change of the country of residence is framed as 'repatriation', or 'ethnic return' migration, which implies a different social status within the host environment (Niznik 2003). However, along with the opportunity to avoid the sense of 'otherness' which most

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[9] More practical implementations of this approach include methodological reflections and teaching guidelines for Russian as a heritage language – the concept itself being highly symptomatic of the American framework of minority language studies (Kagan 2005; Kagan & Dillon 2001).

migrants face, one of the key factors of integration to a new culture and economy, i.e. proficiency in the host language, is more at issue (Cheswick & Wenz 2006).

Most scholars who focus on the Russian-speaking diaspora in Israel explore the variety of linguistic issues this community deals with in its everyday life: language maintenance within the group (Donitsa-Schmidt 1999) and changes in Russian of the community (Naidich 2004; 2008; Kopeliovich 2010b), linguistic integration into the Hebrew-speaking society (Golan & Muchnik 2011; Remennick 2004a), and the development of 'Russian Hebrew' as a distinctive vernacular of the group (Markowitz 1993) and a significant background in further developing one's linguistic skills (Ellinger 2000). For the linguistic features of intra-generational (Remennick 2003a) and cross-generational (Kopeliovich 2009; Remennick 2003b; Schwartz 2008; Schwarz et al. 2009) communication, the main stress is put on the question of linguistic integration and its importance for the family as a communicative unit – the pragmatics of Israeli research is based on the idea of maximum cultural adaptation of further generations both individually and as 'cultural interpreters' for their elder relatives. Finnish research into its Russian-speaking communities also focuses on integrating younger generations, predominantly by transferring their empirical findings into practical suggestions for different educational contexts (Latomaa & Suni 2011; Protassova 2008). This is aimed at promoting multilingualism as a merit for both native Finns and bilinguals from migrant and minority communities (Lahteenmaki & Vanhala-Aniszewski 2010).

On a more individualised level, Russian-speaking identity in a foreign-language environment becomes intertwined with other social, professional or personal characteristics of migrants (Mustajoki & Protassova 2004). One of the realms of bilingualism in migrancy deals with gendered language practices and attitudes – this may involve contexts as diverse as migrant entrepreneurship (Gold 2014), the stigmatisation of a language image (Sverdljuk 2012), mixed marriages (Klingzeis 2004), but most particularly motherhood in multilingual settings (Kopeliovich 2010a; Madden 2008; Protasova & Rodina 2005; Ringblom 2012). Cultural practices and patterns of language behaviour shared by post-Soviet migrants are also argued to be constituent in shaping professional careers and establishing specialist networks (Dolguileva 2012; Gapova 2011; Riazantsev & Pis'mennaia 2013). Another active dimension of exploring language, identity and

profession focuses on 'translingual' writers of Russian-speaking origins, stressing their bilingualism as socially and culturally relevant for their creative practices, the reverse side of their transcultural writing being the impact they make for 'voicing' shared migrant experiences.[10]

With this variety of approaches towards contemporary Russian-speaking migration in general and its language-related issues, the core concept of language may be considered in its relation to migrant experiences, the multilingual environment and socio-cultural implications which belonging to a particular language entails. In this respect, Russian-speaking culture has developed its own background based upon the historicity of 'Russian-speaking-ness' as a cultural concept and a strong component of governmental ideologies and policies (e.g. that of Russification) which defined its development as a state (or, in most FSU countries, minority) language.

1.5. The phenomenon of 'Russophonism' in historical perspective

The Russification campaign initiated in the 1860s was the first attempt of the Russian state to generalise scattered linguistic identities under the umbrella of Russian-speaking culture and therefore could be seen, as M. Dolbilov argues, as a 'discursive link between "borderland policy" and various empire-wide priorities of the Great Reform era' (Dolbilov 2004: 246).[11] These policies, however, were applied to different ethnic and social groups in different parts of the empire and to different extents. By the end of the tsarist regime, Russian had become an important social marker within the country – most titular elites of the empire

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[10] A. Wanner sees the 'translingualism' of these writers as an over-arching phenomenon relying less on linguistic contacts with the language of host culture and more on a particular mode of creative writing these contacts evoke (Wanner 2008; 2011). Gillespie (2010) is more particular in exploring how French and Russian realia merge in Makine's writing. Breininger (2014) explores Russian-language writing in contemporary Germany for common patterns of self-identification and presentation to others. Wickström (2008) connects different channels of migrant cultural initiatives through observing common practices linked to them. K. Sarsenov (2004) puts her emphasis on the interrelation of language, gender and spousal migration in examples of contemporary writing by émigrés from the FSU.

[11] For detailed analysis of developments in physical anthropology, ethnography, history studies and education policies for administrative purposes of the empire in the course of late 18th – early 20th century see the collection of essays on discourses and rationalisations of Russia's territorial and ethnical diversity by Gerasimov et al. (2009).

considered it as an integral part of their linguistic repertoires whereas large numbers of ethnic communities lacked any knowledge of it (Laitin 1999; Pavlenko 2011b). Another important aspect of making the scattered population of the empire more 'Russian' was shaped by growing volumes of in-country migration and the increasing mobility of human resources after the administrative reforms[12] and introducing large-scale construction projects to peripheral areas.[13] Therefore, Russian gradually became not only the language of official administration and formal communication with the central lands, but also the language of urbanisation and professionalisation as compared to more traditional, rural, culturally specific areas of ethnic groups and minorities.

A significant transformation of the status and expansion of Russian came with the Soviet era and its ideological turns in language policies, controlling linguistic contacts and discourses on language. Starting off as a new linguistic culture to communicate the revolutionary messages to wider audiences and to give voice to the people, however 'unrefined' in social, cultural or strictly linguistic terms (Gorham 2003), the language ideology of early-Soviet times was particularly well-grounded in academic research on dialects, variations and subtleties of pragmatics theoretically reconsidered by 'Marxist sociology', a vague analytical framework of the early 1920s (Brandist & Chown 2010). This campaign, however, was shortly replaced by an intensive promotion of a canonical literary Russian language throughout the USSR. As M. Smith (1998) argues, 'in a sweeping act of metaphorical thinking, the Bolsheviks took the part (the Russian Federation) for the whole (the Soviet Union) maintaining the primacy of Russian language and culture for both' (Smith 1998: 5). Moreover, in these circumstances, acquiring the official language of the canonical 'speech community' provided personal gain in access to social resources.

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[12] For example, in Azerbaijani areas (Eastern Transcaucasia), the proportion of Russian settlers grew significantly in the late 19th century and was the largest minority, especially in bigger cities and administrative centres. Whereas the space remained distinctively heterogeneous, Russian-speaking administration created a high social status of the Russian language for other ethnic groups (Swietochowski 2004: 14-15).

[13] For the crucial role of railway projects in increasing in-country mobility in late-imperial Russia see Randolph & Avrutin 2012; for peasant migrants' experiences in the Far East see Kessler 2014, and for the role of Russian professionals in Central Asia see Morrison 2008.

The main focus of Soviet language ideology implied constant prioritising of Russian as a main language of education, culture and power, which resulted in the discrepancy between the status Russian language and ethnic vernaculars of the USSR had. This prioritising of Russian received its results in the shortest time: although national languages were formally promoted within the republics, their practical usage appeared to be quite low. Despite the declared usage of national languages 'in schools, executive committees, courts and the press … in the normal course of business', low teaching standards of these languages and their practical inappropriateness were an issue for the Soviet education system (Rudman 1967: 15; 98). In terms of contact linguistics, language policies also affected the development of local languages by ensuring Russian was the main source of neologisms as well as the base for grammars for these languages. The dominance of Russian, therefore, was not only in terms of language statuses, domains or usages, but also on a pragmatic level of influence and interference (Pavlenko 2008: 7). Ozolins (1996) cites even more extensive changes to the languages of the former Soviet republics as a consequence of Soviet language policies, arguing that 'Russian loan words, expressions, and other items were adopted to such an extent that even the syntactic patterns of republic languages began to change' (1996: 187).

As a result of this language ideology and its strategic implementations, Russian gradually became the main language of communication for many non-Russian ethnic groups of the USSR. By the 1960s over 10 million Soviet citizens of non-Russian ethnic origins named Russian as their main language (e.g. Dzhunusov 1962). By the 1980s this number, however, remained at roughly the same level (Itogi 1989) but mostly due to the shift in identity politics of minorities and growing propensity of non-Russian groups to re-identify ethnically. Linguistic assimilation, especially that of small ethnic categories in European Russia, influenced their very high rates of ascribing themselves to the group of Russians (Anderson & Silver 1983).

To describe the interrelation of Russian and regional languages in the late Soviet era, Laitin et al. (1995) refer to the idea of 'unassimilated bilingualism', or 'the retention of the language of the region for use in the majority of social domains, while learning Russian for delimited purposes' (1995: 140). The social and cultural discrepancy between the statuses that the Russian language and the

ethnic vernaculars obtained in different parts of the USSR were not simply the issue of instrumental pragmatics in a bilingual environment, but also involved the inequality of their symbolic meaning as cultural capitals and social resources. As B. Spolsky (2003) mentions, the sociolinguistic scope of Soviet space was 'in practice multilingual in various degrees, but in ideology by-and-large monolingual' (Spolsky 2003: 148), which had its effect on the individual pathways of FSU countries after the collapse of the USSR.

With independence, in 1991, the FSU republics gained the right to reconsider the statuses of languages in the context of their nation-building practices. The variety of post-Soviet reconsiderations of this 'unassimilated bilingualism' ranged from keeping to the dominance of Russian in official discourses and everyday practices (e.g. in the Belorussian case, cf. Lilja & Starzhynskaia 2015) to stigmatisation of Russian as a means of communication and Russian-speaking minorities as 'non-citizens' (e.g. Latvia, cf. Tsilevich 2001). Russian-speaking inhabitants of these countries, who were mostly monolingual, found themselves in a position of 'unwanted' diasporas. The use of this term, as discussed above, is problematic in current migration studies. This is especially so due to at least two major factors – the ambiguous relationship of a purported 'diaspora' to 'mainland' Russia and the Russian state's attempts to claim the belonging of these groups to a wider 'Russian world', a strongly ideological concept exploited in Russia's policy towards its post-Soviet legacies in its near abroad. One of the core concepts to analyse this relationship is the framework of 'home/land' (Flynn 2007a) and its interpretations by the Russian communities of FSU countries. As M. Flynn (2004) argues, migration from the FSU republics to Russia in the course of the 1990s was hardly perceived by resettling migrants themselves as their 'home-coming' to the land of their historical origins, but presented a space for active re-construction of the idea of 'home' in new settings. Kosmarskaia stresses that Russian-speaking residents of other FSU republics also hardly see Russia as their 'lost homeland' and thus can be hardly referred to as 'diasporas', this concept being an ideological tool of the Russian media (Kosmarskaia 2002; 2005). The discursive construction of the 'Russophone space' by Russian authorities, nevertheless, is carried out through referring to these 'diasporic' groups outside the nation and stressing the status of Russian as a lingua franca for all FSU communications (Gorham 2014; Ryazanova-Clarke 2006; Saunders 2014).

Although the first post-Soviet decade saw significant out-migration of Russian speakers from FSU countries towards other destinations in Europe, Asia or the Americas, the Russian-speaking groups that remained were treated by the new post-Soviet states diversely. While some conceptualised them as a linguistic minority that was offered a space in the national framework of linguistic diversity (e.g. Ukraine, cf. Kulyk 2011), others labelled them as 'non-citizens' (e.g. Estonia, cf. Feldman 2006) or chose to see them as a 'remnant' diasporic group that was expected to integrate into the new social and linguistic order (e.g. Turkmenistan, cf. Dietrich 2005). At the same time, over the past decade, the Russian Federation itself has heightened its attention to these groups in its 'near abroad', its reaction to Ukrainian events of 2013-2014 serving as the climax of this 'soft power' strategy, and the issue of addressing Russian-speaking minorities in FSU space has again gone beyond the intra-national level (Hudson 2015).

Current language policies of FSU countries vary depending on their national strategies of self-presentation and establishing contacts with neighbours, but they generally fall into one of the following broader categories, by geopolitical zone – Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Baltic States and the East-European (loosely, 'Slavic') space. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, with high levels of competence in titular languages and relatively small numbers of Russian speakers, have adopted strong nationalising strategies which required them to relegate the status of Russian to a minority language internally, while prioritising it as a medium of international affairs externally – mostly because the initially planned shift to English as a main foreign language proved not so easy to achieve.[14]

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been more open towards Russian, both at the formal level (with both countries providing it with the status of an official language) and in the de facto sense (Russian still operates as one of the languages of education, culture and everyday communications). In particular domains Russian still dominates over Kyrgyz or Kazakh languages in both republics as B. Korth's ethnography of language attitudes to Russian and Kyrgyz (2005) or

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[14] On the nationalist state-building of Central Asian republics see Abashin 2012; Roy 2000. On the status and maintenance of Russian in Uzbekistan see Abdullaev 2009. On Russian-speaking communities and their status in Central Asia see Flynn 2007b. The discrepancies of official educational policies and local activists' strategies in the context of revitalisation of Russian in Central Asia are demonstrated by Ferrando 2012.

Darieva's study on Kazakhstan (2005) demonstrate. In fact, Kazakhstan has long been the context for multilingual experiences of diverse ethnic communities (e.g. Koreans (Kim 2005) or Germans (Pohl 2008)) which makes it a developing space for various in-coming and emigrating human flows.

Transcaucasia, in contrast, had no need for intensive de-Russianisation since Russian was less well represented there, so these countries transformed the status of Russian to a foreign or second language, albeit of its high status (especially in Azerbaijan and Armenia), and a key part of the titular language speakers' multilingual repertoires – for example, alongside Turkish (Akopian 2010; Blauvelt 2013; Garibova 2009).

East-European FSU countries, with the exception of Belarus, proclaimed their titular languages the only state languages, but the degree of their shift from using Russian has varied significantly. Belarus being the most loyal to Russian, as G. Miazhevich (2012) shows, the choice of language in Belarus would be influenced by other, non-ethnic or national identities – religious affiliation or the type of settlements. What it means in a larger context of worldwide migration is that Belorussians are more likely to remain Russian-speaking in other contexts than adhering to their Belorussian linguistic identity (in a historic perspective, Kukushkin's (2007) study of labour migration of Ukrainians and Byelorussians to Canada proves the point).

Nowadays Ukraine is one of the most strained terrains of language negotiations at both official and interpersonal levels, and Russian has usually been involved in the discourse of trauma and repressions of the past (Ryabchuk 2006). The struggles, tensions and confrontations of Russian and Ukrainian have been extensively studies by L. Bilaniuk (2003; 2005) and V. Kulyk (2007; 2011; 2013). The ambiguity of Ukrainians as a migrant group in terms of linguistic identities has also been discussed in different host contexts (e.g. Rubchak 1993).

Moldova's proportions of Russian speakers have been decreasing since the collapse of the USSR. Interestingly, M. Ciscel (2012), while exploring the attitudes towards Russian in Moldova where levels of L1 Russian speakers are still quite high, has revealed that with the relatively high proficiency in English, speakers of Romanian and Russian, though quite fluent in one another's languages, prefer

English as a means 'to join or potentially displace the role of the local language in which speakers are not dominant or native' (Ciscel 2012: 5).

The Baltic states have adopted arguably the most aggressive policy towards Russian, switching to their national languages in all spheres and eliminating Russian from most areas of public communication. However the three republics are rather different in their attitudes towards the language and Russian-speaking minorities. Latvia is most explicit in its anti-Russophone policies (Hughes 2005), thus encouraging its Russian speakers, not ethnic Russians, to articulate their identity most distinctly in the grassroots opposition to the hegemony (Cheskin 2013; Platt 2014). Estonia, as a country where Russian-speaking groups have a long history of being 'minoritised' (Isakov 2000; Tishkov 1993), has seen a recent shift towards exploring the possibilities of engaging the group into its environment through community initiatives (Jacobson 2002; Vetik & Helemae 2011) as well as the extents of 'receptive multilingualism' of Estonian-Russian contacts (Bahtina-Jantsikene 2013). The status of the Russian-speaking population in Lithuania is more beneficial in terms of their rights as a minority group (Pavlenko 2008) but they are still viewed as one of the main categories for emigration, mostly due to the economical instability of the country (Aptekar 2009).

1.6. Russian-speaking migration today: Language and identity on the move

Focusing on the dynamics of Russian-speaking groups and the image, status and functionality of the Russian language within the FSU space is highly relevant to understanding how attitudes towards languages among Russian-speaking migrants are formed in the migrant context of the UK. One of the most obvious implications of the current heterogeneity of 'Russian speakers' as a migrant category is the diversity in both language skills in Russian – levels of competence, areas of usage, practical background of language use – and language attitudes which Russian-speaking post-Soviet migrants demonstrate. Another one is their metalinguistic background which influences the way they adapt to new linguistic realities and their cultural expectations towards the destination country.

Firstly, the status, image and functionality of the Russian language has been defined by countries in the post-Soviet space in rather different ways – from a neglected language of non-citizens to an official foreign language to the main

language of the state. This variation influences the motivation for Russian native speakers to emigrate from the country: the FSU republics where the Russian-speaking minority's status has been most compromised have prompted this group to migrate more eagerly to Russia or elsewhere. It also has its effect on the way post-Soviet migrants who are both native and fluent in Russian use the language in the new context and on the symbolic meaning they start to ascribe to the language outside of the FSU space. These two dimensions define migrants' ways of identifying with Russophone culture as such and shape their community-building practices based on the shared language.

However, it is not only their relation to and competence in Russian that defines linguistic behaviour of Russian-speaking migrants in a new foreign-language culture. The other important factor of their sociolinguistic portfolio is the sociolinguistic background they have become used to. A nation-state recently built around a language identity (e.g. Turkmenistan), or a bilingual country with symbolic diglossia (e.g. Belarus), or a country whose cultural space is filled with ongoing linguistic arguments (e.g. Ukraine) provide significantly different patterns for the way their citizens think about languages and their sociocultural functions in general. These patterns play a part in migrants' strategies to integrate into a foreign-language environment as well since the capability to handle multilingualism as a social norm is largely determined by the historical as well as the more recent past of the migrants' country of origins.

The reluctance of Russian-speaking minorities of FSU countries to accommodate linguistically and culturally to the new realities of the post-Soviet order has been explored from a variety of perspectives (e.g. Abdullaev 2006 for Uzbekistan; Avina 2005 for Lithuania; Cheskin 2012 for Latvia; Kemppainen et al. 2008; Jurgens 2013 for Estonia; Tokmantsev 2012 for Armenia; not to mention quite low attitudes of Russian speakers of other Slavic-speaking countries, Belarus and Ukraine, towards titular languages, cf. Bilaniuk 2005; Koriakov 2002). The distinction between the *de jure* language policies of FSU states and the *de facto* distribution of linguistic resources in everyday communication has built a sociocultural environment which Russian speakers of these countries have become accustomed to in recent decades. This discrepancy shapes their sociolinguistic attitudes and patterns in the new migrant context. For example, it influences migrants' understanding of how multilingualism functions and how the hierarchy

of languages, idioms or dialects as a space of manifested power and inequality is structured. It affects their changing patterns of language behaviour, the direction of their metalinguistic reflexivity or cultural practices related to language maintenance and transfer (the extent and area of language which is transmitted, viewed as important, or prioritised in migrant communication). Another crucial factor for further integration which Russian-speaking migrants from the post-Soviet space share is their educational background in the relevant foreign language (English) and their cultural expectations towards the host country (the UK), which were formed through their socialisation in Soviet and post-Soviet decades. Finally, Russian-speaking communities of post-Soviet countries are mostly based in urban areas and are therefore more used to city lifestyles and cultural practices, which in terms of sociolinguistic background means that they will more likely privilege standardised or high-level language varieties.

The Russian language has gradually reshaped its geopolitical image within the FSU space: at the level of international communication it has become strongly associated with the ideological zone for exercising 'soft power' by the Russian Federation and ongoing negotiations of their independent profiles by other FSU countries. Regarding Russian-speaking migration worldwide, this idea has offered a space for making regular claims on declared belonging and unity of vast, otherwise heterogeneous groups of post-Soviet migrants, the 'diasporic' nature of their communities and a strong attachment to the 'mainland' Russian culture. The idea of 'whose' these dispersed and faceted migrant groups are considered to be has lately become a prioritised issue for geopolitical claims and decisions (Saunders 2014) but also influenced the way Russian-speaking migrants worldwide make symbolic connections between the language and Russian state.

At the level of interpersonal communications and linguistic identities Russian has become a medium for virtual communications within the Russian sector of the Internet, which in its turn played its instrumental role in establishing worldwide virtual networks – first, to associate those Russian-speaking residents of now non-Russian-speaking FSU countries but also to provide a comfortable space for community-building and expression of identities of Russian-speaking migrants worldwide (Khvorostianov et al. 2011; Morgunova 2012). In many ways, this shows how the idea of Russian as a lingua franca for the USSR transformed through digitalisation of communications into the formation of 'Runet', Russian-

language virtual space (e.g. Fialkova & Yelenevskaya 2005; Gorham 2011). Mapping these emerging virtual communities of post-Soviet Russian-speakers has also become subject to academic perspectives (Evgrafova et al. 2012).

The juxtaposition of various identities of migrants (involving religious, national, ethnic, political, cultural or economic affiliations) has provided further development of 'Internet Russian' as a more flexible, vivid and democratic idiom not only for communicating different (offline) experiences and for establishing social or information-sharing networks but also for performing new cultural practices and linguistic identities that emerge due to this online mediation (Morgunova 2010; Yalcin et al. 2011). The virtual environment of communication has also affected the ways migrants become involved into offline cultural practices – both with other compatriots and local residents.

CHAPTER 2. LANGUAGE IN MIGRATION: LINGUISTIC RESOURCES AS EXPERIENCED BY RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MIGRANTS IN THE UK

2.1. Theoretical perspectives on language in migration

Exploring the way Russian-speaking migrants perceive and use their language skills and attitudes in a new cultural context requires a clarification of some conceptual standpoints. The central one is concerned with the idea of 'language' and its relations with other spheres of migrant experience. This issue has to be treated both analytically and empirically – by employing a particular conceptual framework and developing coherent methodological guidelines. This chapter will also present the research design of this thesis and discuss the advantages, limitations and ethical implications of empirical data obtained during the study.

The way language is viewed as an important factor in migration should also be defined more precisely in terms of whose perspective is considered dominant, and which factors play a crucial part in changing behaviour and emergent narratives of the migrant present. All people tend to form judgements about their own language and about the features it gives to its native speakers, its connection to other idioms and its status within the global language space. Evidently, this set of assumptions is highly influenced by the language ideologies native to their home country, which, as I. Piller (2015) argues, are the bridge which connects linguistic and social structures as 'they rationalise and justify social inequality as an outcome of linguistic difference' (Piller 2015: 1). However, this raises the question of the extent to which migrants reproduce ideological discourse within their narratives on native language away from home. What is the way other linguistic varieties interfere with this long-standing ideology and for which purpose? Does this changing language mind-mapping have its implications in migrants' biographical narratives? Which other factors might be important to the process of this change? To consider these questions, the first part of this chapter analyses the limits of folk linguistics and naive linguistic metareflexivity (Folk Linguistics 2012, Golovko 2014, Niedzielski & Preston 2003) as an area for grasping changing language ideologies and language culture of Russian-speaking migrants.

Apart from abstract judgments about the interrelations of languages and social images of their most stereotypical speakers, language use and discourse on

language play a significant part in other social and cultural activities (Gal & Irvine 1995). The context of migration re-actualises many established social meanings regarding language issues, e.g. what the communality of speakers of the same language is based on, or what role one's native language plays in their identity. These issues shift the focus of analytical perspective from migrants' ways of talking about languages (and including them into their own life narratives, for example) to actual uses of them as culturally meaningful practices. Both aspects of the social implications of language – its meaning for group solidarity and community-building (Morgan 2014; Silverstein 2010) as well as personal dimensions of identity presentation (Gumperz 1982; Ogulnick 2000) – are re-interpreted as well as re-constructed within the new settings; and so they need to be grasped in the making.

Another aspect of migrants' language integration is the present situation of language variation in the host environment. The factors that come into effect here are twofold – the objectified sociolinguistic settings of the region (and country on the whole) are interconnected with common discourses on languages and their practical expressions. The latter is particularly ambiguous in its effect; a recent shift of academic perspectives on multilingualism inherent to migrant groups has already made its way into a broader discourse on languages presented within the country (Creese & Blackledge 2010; Vertovec 2007 for the UK). At the same time, migrant regimes and regulations have gradually emphasised the importance of a standardised language variety as a reliable measure to control migrants' access to the country (Blackledge 2009b; Goodman 2011; Ryan 2008). These controversial developments are opposed by local perspectives on language variation, standardisation and vitality. The North-East of England is the example of a region with a long-standing tradition of building its own local identity on, besides other factors, its linguistic uniqueness and language attitudes while often having to face negative images coming from the outside (Watt 2002). How does this external sociolinguistic context influence the way Russian-speaking migrants perceive their current experiences and shape their identities? One of the ways to analytically capture this transformation is by employing the theoretical background of the sociolinguistics of globalisation which reconsiders the core notions of language, linguistic proficiency and language identities within the emerging migrant contexts

and reproduced language ideologies (Blommaert 2014; Blommaert & Rampton 2012).

The interrelation of these three areas of theoretical interest in exploring Russian-speaking migrancy in Britain requires particular methodological categories to be put into focus. Firstly, attention towards changing language attitudes and metalinguistic judgements, as well as their coherence with personal narratives, demands concepts of 'linguistic biography' (Meng & Protassova 2001; Vershik 2002) and 'migrant life trajectory' (Kelly 2013) to be introduced into the analysis. They differ in the way they refer to collected narratives – 'linguistic biography' focuses more on the languages mentioned in the autobiographical narrative, their subjective meanings and developments throughout informants' lives (discourses on language in the context of personal biographies) (Pavlenko 2001a; 2003a). The idea of 'life trajectories' shifts the focus to the practical realisations of language ideologies and the idea of the mastery of a language as part of one's migrant biography – the past and present uses of language(s) as mentioned and explained by its speaker (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004; Rampton 2010a; Todeva & Cenoz 2009).

These two analytical concepts suggest the interrelation of methodological strands in grasping folk metareflexivity in the making. Constructed 'linguistic biographies' are the products of analytical interpretation of spontaneous acts of life telling (of which in-depth interviews with a biographical component provide a relevant example) whereas the category of 'life trajectories' underpins the created congruity of one's life span presented against the backdrop of human mobility. Both highlight the role of research as a reflexive 'reconstructor' of social meanings across diverse individual narratives. However, the very context of communication with informants as a social practice carries analytical implications, making the shift towards produced narratives or observed interactions as moments of collective reflexivity. As D. L. Wieder (1977) argues, the very process of 'storytelling organizes the perceptual world by making observable and understandable the patterns of collective life and the individual activities which contribute to those patterns', while accounts of one's own life, i.e. autobiographical storytelling, are essentially 'features of the very scenes which they describe' (Wieder 1977: 4). This also applies to everyday social interactions which include constant self- and peer-observation during conversation (e.g. turn-taking, making references, etc).

Including these practices of expressing social meanings through communicative practices into research focus expands its methodological scope towards the area of ethnomethodology. The link between studies of folk metalinguistic thinking and ethnomethodological enquiry is clear: the former uses the latter's perspective as a particular epistemological tool in its attempts to deconstruct normative and attitudinal presuppositions 'lay people' reproduce while talking about languages. As T. Taylor highlights, '[l]ike all discursive practices, metalinguistic practices are normative: that is, one's participation in metalinguistic practices ... is the subject of normative attention and reflexive regulation' (Taylor 2015: 5). The ethnomethodological combination of attentiveness to macro-level structures of social institutions and a micro-analysis of everyday interactions or face-to-face communication, e.g. in the interview settings, reveals how empirical social practices are performed for the sake of identity-building and produced by and for group membership.

The social implications of language use and its role in migrant settings, furthermore, are grouped according to two levels of reference: while association networks depend on language as a source of emerging *forms of communality*, personal attachment drives the *presentation of identity* as a speaker of this language. The former therefore focuses on community-building and its practical implications for Russian-speaking migrants as a united group. The latter makes a necessary shift from the 'ethnography of language' (an exploration of changes in the way language operates within the migrant community and survives the multilingual competition) towards the 'ethnography of speaking' (the way language is used in ad hoc speech acts as well as active reflections on language as a vital component of migrants' identities; cf. Gumperz & Hymes 1972; Hymes 1977). This methodological turn also has implications regarding the role of the researcher, her interaction with the 'researched' and interviewing as a particular genre of language practice and communication (van Enk 2009) – these issues will also be considered further on.

Doing ethnographical research in the context of polylinguistic complexity postulated by the theory of superdiversity (Rampton 2013; Vertovec 2010; to be discussed in more detail later in this chapter) requires a consideration of the ways 'language' and 'the linguistic' are constructed both by individual speakers and by a broader discourse of 'folk theories of language'. Beyond other factors, these

interpretations are influenced by linguistic landscapes of both physical and virtual spaces frequented by migrants (Pennycook 2010; Varcasia 2011; for Russian speakers Fialkova & Yelenevskaya 2005; Nikiporets-Takigawa 2010). The ethnography of overlapping, non-linear and emergent linguistic resources that are available to and employed by migrants (Blommaert 2013b) requires a series of conventional ethnographic methods with slightly amended agendas and areas of use. This matter is to be discussed in the final part of this chapter.

2.2. Language attitudes and symbolic interpretations of language

An area of sociolinguistics which deals with lay speakers' considerations about their, and other, language varieties, i.e. folk linguistics, has stressed the social meaning of these considerations as a way to conceptualise not only the images of language varieties, but also the images and social roles of native speakers of particular languages (Niedzielski & Preston 2003; Preston 2010). Implicit evaluations of sociolinguistic 'guises' – the most stereotypical perceptions of individual speaking habits – are made by most people on a regular basis. This process has been extensively explored as a mainstream analytical procedure which connects linguistic variations and the wider social context (Cargile et al. 1994; Lambert et al. 1968; Downes 1988; Santello 2013; for Russian in the FSU countries see, for example, Bilaniuk 2003; Ciscel et al. 2000; Lahteenmaki & Vanhala-Aniszewski 2010). First of all, it reveals the ways dominant language ideologies and policies make their way into personalised judgements and attitudes of single speakers. Secondly, it shows how personal ideas about differences between speakers of various languages are transformed into social behaviour.

Interiorising language ideologies includes making general, culturally based predictions about the connections between one's language and its function in describing the surrounding social reality. The most popular of these considerations deal with the perceived 'authenticity' of one's native language which – for them – describes 'the world as it is' (regarding Russian speakers, see, for example, Polinichenko 2009). Another one, based on the first assumption, suggests a higher hierarchical position of the speaker's own language among others (Kashkin 2002; Polinichenko 2009). As M. Gorham (2009) argues, these assumptions are also the inherent part of national 'language cultures' which include language ideologies

(discourses on language), language economies (values ascribed to different genres and modes of speaking), and language technologies (various media of communicating the language) (Gorham 2009: 169).

For post-Soviet Russian-speakers this folk-linguistic view is highlighted by the remnants of language ideology inherited from Soviet times and then eventually re-considered by new states in various ways. In a broader sense, lay considerations about language as such are intervened with naive theories of nationalism, power relations and social order. The hierarchy of language varieties established by governmental institutions is explained in their perspective by prioritising particular factors: the inherent attachment of the language to the territory of the nation-state; the unproblematised 'continuity' of the 'life' of a particular language within otherwise changing national borders; the historisation of a particular language identity, viewed as characteristic of the country in question (Blommaert & Verschueren 1998; Bourdieu 1977; Meadows 2014; Schmid 2001).

A widely-shared view on linguistic changes which happen within such a context considers language as a confined symbolic system, usually conceptualised as a 'living organism' (e.g. Whitney 2013; for Russian see Krongauz 2007; Verbitskaya 2013). This metaphor is exploited by both naive interpretations and academic discourse. Its most significant implication is the assumption of 'stability', i.e. the maintenance of balanced development. Arguments around these issues are commonly viewed as crucial indicators of social transformations or cultural changes within a particular linguistic space (for the Russian-speaking context, see Lunde & Roesen 2006; Ryazanova-Clarke 2009; Strenge 2012; Vepreva 2005). This prioritised metalinguistic discourse is reinforced via official media and governmental measures to establish dominant boundaries for distinguishing 'self' from 'other' on the borders of a linguistic community (Popova 2012). It also presents a case for constant negotiations about language norms and practices as indicators of loyalty, belonging or neglect within this 'imagined' group (Krongauz 2015).

The status, role and image of Russian as conceived through naive interpretations in post-Soviet spaces have both common historic origins and various modern trajectories. Relatively homogenous, Soviet language ideology started from the dawn of Bolshevik power (Smith 1998), reached its peak in the

Stalinist era (Petrov & Ryazanova-Clarke 2015) and proceeded to the late-Soviet declaration of a 'multilingual state' with subsequent impoverishment of many Soviet languages through actual domination of Russian throughout the USSR (Ozolins 1996; Pavlenko 2008). This process has then been variously re-interpreted in particular cases of each FSU state. Key areas of restructuring include not only the pragmatics of language usage, distribution and access, but also the symbolic dimension of metalinguistic discourses (Nomati 2010; Pavlenko 2009; 2011a; for post-Soviet Russia e.g. Ryazanova-Clarke 2015). For example, with a large part of the Georgian population retaining fluency in Russian, the latter's image and status in Georgia has been subject to transformations and is now claimed to be replaced in its symbolical standing by English (Blauvelt 2013). By contrast, post-Soviet Ukraine needed to invest far more in re-establishing its understanding of language identities, ethnic origins of population groups and national consolidating drives which would define the country's language policy or metalinguistic rhetoric (Bowring 2014; Kulyk 2007; 2013). Due to ongoing migration across the FSU space and online communication within the Russian-speaking Internet sector, these different language cultures are confronted and negotiated in emergent patterns of post-Soviet inter-cultural dialogue (Ryazanova-Clarke 2014).

However, once out of this space, metalinguistic reflections are confronted with other discourses on language, other language cultures, and different patterns of linguistic behaviour. Changing settings of new migrant realities have been proven to provide a particularly sensitive environment for enabling more detailed and emotionally charged linguistic thinking – the reflection on language practices and attitudes in their relation to a changing social and cultural milieu (Keating & Solovova 2011; Moin et al. 2011; Yelenevskaya 2012; Yelenevskaya & Fialkova 2002). A clash of ethnolinguistic perspectives and sociocultural realities evokes the understanding of one's cultural belonging and active linguistic practices defining one's identity in the making. Consequently, the period of particularly active integration – the first years of migration – is considered to be the most sensitive and focused on reflexivity about linguistic and cultural differences. The rise of 'language awareness' of Russian-speaking post-Soviet migrants have been discussed in Komarova 2007; Protassova 2004; Remennick 2003b; Yelenevskaya & Fialkova 2003.

One of the methodological considerations which define the exploration of this heightened reflexivity about language and its socio-cultural implementations is the inherent overlapping of different historical regimes of language ideologies (Soviet, post-Soviet and others) which melt into individual language attitudes and perspectives. Dominant means of transferring these ideological views on language has always been secondary and higher education, as the exposure to different educational cultures provides a more diversified layering of particular language cultures. Thus, a cohort of post-Soviet migrants who have extensive experiences in both Soviet and post-Soviet education contexts, as well as other, more 'globalised' environments, present a case where different attitudes and discourses on Russian language in its interaction with other idioms are blended together to create the common grounds for group practices and consequent shared identities. Moreover, further migrant experience also gradually influences migrants' ways of understanding and exploiting different languages. This continuous sociolinguistic awareness develops with the acquisition of new linguistic and communicative norms. The progress of this awareness within both personal biographies and group self-understanding is best expressed through the concept of 'trajectory' which binds together individual biographical turns and shifts in the formation of collective identities.

2.3. Social implications of language use and discourse on language(s)

Language attitudes are, on the one hand, a constituent part of language culture in Gorham's (2009) understanding of the term as a triumvirate of ideological, economic and technological aspects of language uses. On the other, they are an integral element of the 'language regard' (Preston 2010) – an interactively constructed attitude that laypeople have towards speakers of other linguistic varieties. The development of a 'language regard' is situated at the intersection of language ideologies in home countries, individuals' exposure to different cultural, educational and social practices, and their experiences of integrating into different language environments. Taken as an independent subject of study, this set of perceptions and views provides an understanding of folk mind-mapping, of common discourse on language development and functioning as well as the formation of stereotypical images associated with speakers of particular languages

(Cargile et al. 1994). This area of sheer reflexivity, however, easily overcomes its boundaries to interconnect with other, less language-specific domains of social life. For instance, shared views on languages, linguistic isolation or accessibility may influence patterns of community-building and economic integration (Nawyn et al. 2012). Common perceptions of differences between close linguistic varieties can be perceived by their users as a key factor in setting state borders or defining national identities (Urciuoli 1995; Vakhtin 2011a). Attitudes to languages and their variation have their effect on the way speakers identify themselves and others, develop social practices and build association networks and communities. However, they also reflect crucial changes in the socio-cultural environment, such as shifts that occur in migration, as well as broader, collective social crises, such as transformations in dominant political cultures, communicative environments or identity-building processes within nation-states (e.g. those experienced by all former Soviet states after the collapse of the Union).

Language discourses in migration are usually involved in two distinct processes: that of the migrants' changing patterns of self-identification as speakers of a particular language and that of their building new association networks based on a common language background. As D. Evans (2015) argues, the interrelation of language and identity concerns different accounts of cultural life: a) a sociocultural domain in which language within a social context finds its own meanings; b) the rationally driven usage (when grammatical language reflects one's rational view); and c) the insides of an existential self which constantly interacts with the fluidity of linguistic meanings and interpretations (Evans 2015: 15). Of these three, the first one tends to depend the most on the changing sociocultural settings and it is here that the link between language and identity becomes most acute. Continuous negotiation of language identity with the local context is established by performative acts of speaking, of individually expressing one's linguistic self.

But it is not only these acts of speaking which influence the identity patterns – other language-related practices or single events can also be significant in this respect. A. Pavlenko (2001a) argues that foreign language learning as a culturally distinctive process may have its effect on reshaping one's understanding of self, particularly if reflected upon within the context of cross-cultural life writing (Pavlenko 2001a; 2001b). N. Lvovich (1997) confirms this by exploring her own transformed identity in the changing multilingual settings of her life trajectory.

This fusion of the two realms of personal experiences brings out an important issue of a methodological nature. Actual language practices are as such constituent of the way language identity is constructed ad hoc, and the research focus here should be on particular choices made within spontaneous speech. Understanding broader language-related practices as symbolic manifestations of one's changing language identity, in contrast, requires a certain reflexive effort from the speaker – this might be autoethnographical, fictional or non-fictional writing, diary entries, or any other kind of written communication. However, as recent research argues (e.g. Gee et al. 2001), the context of focused talking or 'storytelling', e.g. during an interview, may also launch the reflexive process upon one's language identity which would be similar in its functioning to the 'life writing' of (semi)professional authors.

However idiosyncratic the expression of self through language (or through reflecting upon language) might be, it still operates in accordance with the more general level of a social group, as that provides ready-made templates into which the individually negotiated identity 'can be placed or against which it struggles to articulate itself' (Meinhof & Galasiński 2005: 134). This shifts the focus of analysis from the language which a group of people is native or fluent in towards their personal understandings of how using it in different contexts makes them feel as a single unit and what this language tells about their identities, separately and as a group. Evidently, the social context is a crucial background for these understandings to unravel, and from this perspective, different migrant setting may reshape the identities of groups of the same language. They also have their influence on the way intra-group or interpersonal communication among fellow migrants is formed and maintained – differences in their migrant background (the length of residence, legal status or further prospects, and so on) define the patterns and roles of this interaction.

There is also a link here to the levels of state language ideology in the way individual linguistic identities are expressed. In the case of the current language ideology of the Russian state and its reflections in media discourse and public discussions, linguistic activities are ascribed a particularly strong ideological identity-value (Strenge 2012). Some of these ideologically charged statements provide the basis for the broader strategies of the Russian state within the FSU space for claiming the maintenance of the 'Russian world' (Ryazanova-Clarke

2014; Yelenevskaya & Protassova 2015). In respect to Russian-speaking migrants abroad, however, this corpus of ideologised assumptions comes into play in including the group into a larger, 'imagined community' with which, in fact, they may have little in common regarding the social meaning of language. What is important is that once the imaginary commonality is brought to light, it usually quickly dissolves. The symbolic link between the language, the nation state which is thought to embody it and the primordial understanding of language identity may strongly contradict local migrant interpretations of the language in their life trajectories.

2.4. The theory of superdiversity in language studies

After considering the social implications of language in a migrant context, the issue of how to understand the concept of 'language' itself needs to be addressed. In light of the changing patterns of migration, this concept has, along with others, been drastically revised in academic discourse. The reason for that lies not only in the way people change their language practices in multilingual migrant settings, but also in the way they shift their conceptualisations of languages at hand (individual level) as well as their patterns of community-building based on shared languages (group level).

During the 20th century linguistics has put forward different conceptualisations of 'language': it is presented as a relatively homogenous group of speakers (e.g. Saussure), as an inherent element of the rational mind (e.g. Chomsky), and as a semiotic practice of communicating through the use of linguistic signs (e.g. Grice). These approaches were readily adopted by political authorities or knowledge institutions to govern language processes within nation states (Gal & Irvine 1995; Heller 2010).

Counter to long-standing traditions of understanding and policing language as a cultural object circumscribed by borders to a particular territory, post-modernist sociolinguistics treats the concept of language as a phenomenon increasingly inherent to dynamic and layered environments (which may not coincide with state borders any longer) and flexible human interactions, most of which are initiated through constant migrant mobility. The focus is two-fold here: on linguistic landscapes as (mostly urban) sites of multilingual practices, new

emerging literacies and multimodal communication (Blommaert 2013b; Canagarajah 2013) and on individual repertoires as sets of linguistic resources and contesting language attitudes and normativities (Blommaert & Backus 2013). The practical combination of the two areas, flexible and multimodal communicative practices in plurilingual settings, has been explored with reference to 'language crossing' (Rampton 2005), 'translanguaging' (Garcia 2009) or 'polylanguaging' (Jørgensen et al. 2011). If 'languaging' refers to the human agency involved in social activities of using a language to achieve communicative goals, 'polylanguaging' is a term that refers to practices that are intended to deal with linguistic features, or resources, which stem from different 'languages' and therefore trespass the terrains of any 'pure language' as such (Ag & Jørgensen 2013). This term offers an important shift from 'bilingualism' ('trilingualism', 'multilingualism', etc.) as static settings which necessitate the 'switching' to one particular language at a time towards more interactive, dynamic and subject-driven practice of operating among and throughout different linguistic resources simultaneously (Stavans & Hoffman 2015).

This shift has its own effect on individual life trajectories as well. Biographical research which focuses on the development of linguistic resources through one's life (Blommaert & Backus 2012; Busch 2010; Pavlenko 2007; Schupbach 2008) argues that everyday life experiences and reflections of dominant or conflicting ideologies on language interact in the development of communicative practice and the employment of linguistic resources at hand. The constant process of perceiving and evaluating one's own and others' repertoires goes beyond the language domain and provides for individual conceptualisation of social practices, access to symbolic resources or authority for normativity. The discrepancy between personal, mobile and translocal repertoires, on the one hand, and norm-driven institutionalised expectations on language performance, on the other, becomes an area of constant re-negotiations.

This mismatch, however, does not necessarily happen in the outside realm of 'mobile' speakers and 'rigid' standardisation regimes. The conflict of language practices changing due to new communicative environments and language expectations based on the cultural background is unfolding within migrant experiences, when one's own current linguistic behaviour does not fit in their set images of, say, 'ideal speakers of language', 'intentional uses of language' or

'switching between languages' (as discussed in Rampton 2014). This clash does not only constitute a field of constant metalinguistic reflections, but also brings inevitable changes to the way personal identities are perceived, expressed and delivered through (multi)lingual means available to speakers (Canagarajah 2013).

Official discourses on emerging 'polylingual' practices may have promoted cultural and linguistic diversity as a socially approved norm (Rietveld 2014), but hegemonic language ideologies are still often seen to dominate popular media discourse (Conboy 2006) and governmental ideologies on language education and maintenance (Gal 2012; Heller 2010). From a bottom-up perspective, tensions arise between emerging communities which are constituted by transnational practices of migratory trajectories, labour mobility and multilingual portfolios, on the one hand, and long-standing ideas about the functionality of lingua francas across vast territories and regional commitments to 'linguistic ecologies', on the other (Garner 2004).

The principles of communities being formed on the basis of a shared language have also changed in the light of new regimes of mobility and multilingual communication. Language communities are groups of people who organise their speech performances based on norms of denotational code (i.e. 'language') which they believe they share. Speech communities, in contrast, are constructed as plurilingual social formations whose normative communicative practices are organised at the intersection of two or more language systems (Rampton 2010b; Silverstein 2010). Historically, these formations would be found in field ethnographies of localised, peripheral spaces of nation-states, especially if the latter were involved in imperial, colonial or globalising projects (Schieffelin et al. 1998). To refer to the reality of multilingual orders created by new migratory dynamics, S. Vertovec has introduced the term of 'superdiversity' which intends 'to capture a level and kind of complexity surpassing anything many migrant-receiving countries have previously encountered' (Vertovec 2010: 87). This context has also revised the way communities are built – the classically marginal locus of 'speech communities' has shifted towards these vibrant environments, but has been subject to relevant adjustment in its use (Rampton 2010b).

The post-Soviet region has traditionally been a rather diverse space in ethnolinguistic terms. The collapse of the USSR catalysed the need in FSU republics

to reconsider in a variety of ways the relationship between language, country and self-identification (Spolsky 2003). Post-Soviet practices of dealing with Soviet sociolinguistic legacies have altered not only the speakers' views and attitudes towards languages (mostly, their relationship to Russian as the Soviet lingua franca), but also actual repertoires and resources that people have become used to under the overarching label of 'Russian language'. While scholars seek to conceptualise this variety by exploring emerging non-standard 'Russian languages' of different sites within the FSU space (e.g. Berdicevskis 2014; Lilja & Starzhynskaya 2015; Smagulova 2014; Vakhtin et al. 2010), the study of post-Soviet migrancy to other locations beyond this space is yet to re-discover this inconsistency of the language ideology of Russian as a lingua franca, the practical implementations of its different usages, and the flexible sets of resources tagged as 'Russian' by different Russian-speaking users. A new cultural environment which also carries its own sociolinguistic characteristic provides a significant backdrop for these discoveries.

2.5. 'Superdiversity' in the North-East of England?

Although there are reportedly 68 languages used in present-day North-East England, their share in the overall linguistic landscape is rather modest – less than 3% of the current population of the region (approximately 71 thousand people) claimed their main language to be other than English (ONS 2012). The most widespread second main language is Polish, with over 8,000 speakers.[15] In the top 10 of languages spread in the region, French, ranked 10th, with below 2,000 speakers, is the only other European language. Other common languages, especially Cantonese, Bengali, Urdu or Panjabi (ranking 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th respectively), have a relatively long history of well-established migrant

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[15] While this ranking is consistent with overall census statistics, it does not quite correspond with the list of top 5 countries of birth for residents in the region; there Poland comes fourth after India, Germany and China. This discrepancy of rankings is due not only to the character of migration (Polish mobility is more recent and more likely than any of the others mentioned to be 'pendulum migration'), but also to the language behaviour of the group in question, who are more likely than the others in this top five to keep their native, 'homeland' language at hand specifically due to this new, super-mobile and super-diverse migration flows gradually coming to all parts of the country. To contextualise the region, this structure of residents by their origins is rather uncharacteristic of the general distribution in England and Wales and finds similarities only with the North West, where the number of Polish migrants is also relatively low.

communities in the Tyneside area (e.g. Gangoli et al. 2006; Wei 1994), whereas the significant presence of Polish (alongside other Central and East-European languages) dates back to the A8 Accession of 2004 (e.g. Fitzgerald 2007).

North-East England is one of the least favoured destinations for in-country migration: as of 2007, only 3.6% of British citizens moved to the North East, which is the lowest number for all regions, especially if compared to ten times higher volumes of incomers for London and the South East region (35.5%, according to ONS 2010). Due to such low interregional migration, the North East tends to be underrepresented in the mental maps of people inhabiting other parts of the country, especially those residing in London and its surrounding areas – the region perceived as the 'centre of national gravity' in laypeople's reflections (Wales 2006: 1) and the quintessential space for the bloom of superdiversity (Vertovec 2006; 2007). Based on this, North-East England would not seem to constitute a relevant example of a highly mobile, ethnically and linguistically diverse region of the UK. In fact, it is usually viewed and presented as homogenous regarding its local varieties of English as well, with the tag 'Geordie' being applied to the territory of Tyne and Wear (Inoue 1996), or even the whole North-East region (Pearce 2009). In reality, however, this is an area of considerable variety of local accents, which are clearly recognised, carefully distinguished and symbolically interpreted by the area's inhabitants (Pearce 2009); it is also an area historically prone to developing metapragmatic stereotypes based on dialectical features and speaking peculiarities (Snell 2010).

From the perspective of new migrant groups, this sociolinguistic backdrop has several implications. It is a peripheral, though integral part of the more general multilingual continuum which is organised around its more affluent and 'superdiverse' centre, London, some areas of which have more than 40% of population born abroad and therefore have developed, among others, a 'London multi-ethnic vernacular' (Rampton 2013). The region might be less abundant in terms of actual cases of cross-lingual heteroglossia and developed supra-ethnic language varieties; it still carries, however, particular features of the wider space – the UK as a whole – which has come to be perceived as 'superdiverse'.

Firstly, the North East is subject to the same media and policy-making generalisations of contemporary Britain as a multilingual country overall. There is,

therefore, a set of language attitudes and expectations which are transferred 'from above', delegated to the region from an all-country perspective. Migrant communities are scrutinised based on the potential input they can provide for maintaining of an image of the UK as a multilingual country. Mobility flows are less intense than elsewhere, which in its turn makes official representations of migrant communities opt for traditional, long-existing diasporas (e.g. Chinese, cf. Wei 1994) rather than newly emerging ones. Due to the region's unpopularity with in-country and foreign newcomers, their cultural perception of the North East tends to be dominated by the monolithic image that they have of the contemporary UK: Stenning & Dawley (2009) stress that regarding many British regions, of which North-East England is exemplary, the local, regionalised perspective is missing from the general analysis, which tends to focus on macro-level flows and national effects. The strategies of migrant integration are also based on this generalisation: as Stenning & Dawley (2009: 279) demonstrate, migrants' 'extensive and diverse intraregional geographies of employment' are much closer to those of fellow migrants elsewhere in the UK than those of indigenous workers in the region.

As there is an apparent lack of multiethnic diversity (as compared to other regions), metareflexivity in the North-East focuses on everyday linguistic performances of 'non-standard' English and locally developed schemes of sociolinguistic value (Beal 2004; Snell 2010). These differ significantly from the emerging norms of multilingual spaces in terms of their treatment towards foreign varieties and accents, but obviously share a similar interpretational frame. This disjoints the whole body of (the English) language into strands of significantly variable linguistic resources which convey important social meanings to their attentive users. Language ideology which sets the background to localised sociolinguistic registering may crucially interfere with the language ideologies that new migratory groups bring to the region with them. The images of a non-native speaker of English as well as of a speaker of a non-standard variety become a field of intercultural and cross-linguistic negotiations.

Due to the recent history of post-Soviet migrancy to the region, there is a lack of established ways of representing Russian speakers as a coherent or even present community in the region. The outcome of this is twofold: the emergent group becomes subject to generalisation both/either by being subsumed in representations of other, more numerous migrant communities of the region (e.g.

recent East European migration, where Polish migrants would be the most numerous) and/or by being viewed through the lens of representations of the broader, UK-wide Russian-speaking presence (where images of 'Russians' in London tend to dominate). Consequently, these stereotypical perceptions play a significant part in the way individual migrants and the group they are seen as representing are identified. Furthermore, it is the marginal status of North-East England in the national context that shapes primary sociolinguistic encounters of Russian-speaking migrants in the region and has its own effect on the way their metalinguistic perception of the linguistic diversity of the region is gradually formed. Their preliminary unawareness of the sociolinguistic context they gradually become part of and the way they see 'English' and its standard variety tend to define their encounters with the regional identities and influence their further judgements about speakers of local linguistic varieties.

2.6. Methods of data collection and analysis

Ethnographic fieldwork which explores interrelations of particular linguistic resources, language uses and discourses on language is inherently multi-methodological (Newman & Ratliff 2001). This is not only because of the interdisciplinary character of the analytical framework of such research, but also due to the tangled nature of the phenomenon itself. Firstly, one simultaneously deals with both levels of language action involved in the analysis – the 'object-level' and the 'metalevel' (Blommaert 2006), i.e. speech acts themselves and constant interpretations of these acts and of the communication contexts they function within. Secondly, the interdisciplinarity of the object under study is constructed by linguistic, social and ideological dimensions. The intersection of these dimensions leads to a further mixing of linguistic usages, particular discourses on language and social practices connected to them. Consequently, a crucial purpose of research design is to ensure the 'high tolerance for ambiguity' in approaching the issue (Rampton et al. 2014: 2). Employing diverse methods is a way to grasp the complexity of the phenomenon in its different manifestations. This study is based on a variety of methods to obtain and analyse empirical data, namely interviews and participant observation as central ones, in conjunction with a virtual ethnography of online interactions of Russophone migrants living in the UK and

the discourse analysis of offline and online media and single texts produced by and for this migrant group.

2.6.1. Interviews

Semi-structured in-depth interviews for this study were conducted in 2011-2014, with several stages of data collection. Short trials of the interview guide were piloted in late 2011 (one of these interviews included into the main database). The first main stage of fieldwork was carried out in May-July 2012. This was an intensive two-month-long period of interviewing which produced a substantial part of data for analysis (28 interviews) and involved mostly an extensive, snow-balling recruitment of interviewees. It also led to further refinement of procedures of sampling, interview focus and procedure, which shaped the second, more prolonged period of data collection (December 2012 – March 2014), which resulted in further 15 interviews.

A number of 52 audio recordings with a total length of over 64 hours were used as a data corpus of this study which was then categorised into the following groups: the main stock (34 audio recordings) comprises interviews with Russian-speaking migrants of the region; an additional group (7 recordings) consists of interviews carried out with Russian-speaking migrants resident in London; 4 interviews represent the material from Russian-language weekend schools of the region and also of Edinburgh (as an additional case study for comparison purposes); there was also a short series of three expert interviews held with various professionals of the EFL sphere in Russia (Moscow, St Petersburg, Samara); and 4 supplementary interviews were conducted with family members of current migrants, as well as 'transnational' professionals who regularly visit the UK for business or spend time here during working sessions. A list of audio recordings used in the research as well as main socio-demographic data of the interviewees is available in Appendix 1.

Recruitment: Criteria, procedure, sampling

One of the key criteria for interviewing was the interviewee's proficiency in Russian, accompanied with a migrant background of the FSU space and continuous exposure to English in the present. The focus, however, was not on the 'objectified'

(near-)native competence in Russian, but on the familiarity with Soviet and post-Soviet language cultures and ideologies, predominantly through acquiring them in educational contexts (primary, secondary, or higher stages). The experiences of framing language ideologies of Soviet and different post-Soviet contexts may vary due to the place of origin, ethnic background, age or social strata. The focus of participant recruitment was therefore on the transitory cohort of those belonging to the 'last Soviet generations' and those born or, most likely, raised in post-Soviet settings of independent republics (more specifically, the cohort born in the decade of 1979-1988). This group, however, is different from what A. Yurchak (2013) or A. Byford (2009a) refer to as 'the last Soviet generation' in their respective work. For Yurchak it is a generation born in the mid1950s-60s – those who experienced the period of 'late socialism' as their early adulthood. For Byford, it is the group of those born from the mid-1960s – beginning of the 80s, who were exposed to the Soviet reality to the extent of being able and willing to construct the post-socialist phenomenon of the 'imaginary USSR' as a referential frame for interpreting their current migrant identities. My idea is to shift the age scale further and focus on the 'very last' generations of those who were born approximately during the last decade of the USSR and thus had little experience of actually living in that country but were nonetheless raised in it. Despite the crucial social transformations of the post-Soviet era, remnants of Soviet values or identities have still persisted through dominant cultural discourses and public views on culture and language (Lunde & Roesen 2006; Strenge 2012; Vepreva 2005). Over two thirds of my respondents fall into this age group. Several extreme cases of older and younger Russian-speaking migrants were also explored, mostly for the sake of comparison (two women aged 55-65 and eight people aged 15-25).

Another criterion for recruitment was the informants' relatively short period of residence in the UK. As argued by sociolinguists studying laypeople's awareness of languages in migrant contexts (e.g. Schwartz 2008; Yelenevskaya & Fialkova 2002; 2003), it is in the early stages of migrant integration that a major part of metalinguistic observations is made. I have assumed that the first 1-4 years of one's experience as a migrant in a new linguistic environment would be the most indicative for how the interaction of different language ideologies is absorbed and interiorised. Of the main stock of my informants, over 70% have a migratory experience of 1 to 4 years, while the rest of respondents have a longer period of

residence in the UK (up to more than 20 years). To capture the process of language reflexivity more widely, different migrant trajectories were included in the sample: post-Soviet migrants with inter-FSU or worldwide migratory experience (approximately a quarter of informants) as well as those arriving in the UK straight from their home countries (the remaining three quarters).

A geographic criterion of recruitment focused on migrants currently residing in the region of North-East England. Recruitment involved both the major Tyneside conurbation and smaller settlements of the region. The largest of these, Durham, Darlington, or Morpeth, were complemented with the villages of Annfield Plain, Bearpark, Coxhoe and Spennymoor. Migrant participants outside the region were based in London (as a control group for the comparison of changing patterns in language use and discourses in a highly diverse and multilingual environment, comprising 7 interviews in total).

The recruitment of potential migrant interviewees was carried out by three interconnected means:

1.   Snowball recruitment – asking interviewees to advise other potential informants, making initial contact with them through these acquaintances;

2.   Targeted appeal to potential participants in social spaces inhabited by Russian-speaking migrants (weekend schools, Russian-style parties, student societies' activities, East-European shops, Orthodox church services);

3.   Online searches for particular key interviewees as part of virtual ethnography (Russian-speaking forums, chats and websites, 'Russian presence' in social networks and blogs).

The general strategy for choosing participants in this study combined random and targeted sampling – the former was used during the earlier, more extensive stage of fieldwork whereas the latter was adopted to collect more specific data on key community-building activists or informants with particularly diverse and non-mainstream migrant trajectories and experiences. A final group of participants presents a vast geography of post-Soviet countries – with at least a couple of informants from each of the FSU clusters discussed in Chapter 1, the majority of post-Soviet countries (10 in total) are presented by migrants currently residing in the region.

Gender and education level were also among significant factors for initial sampling but preliminary calculations were considerably corrected during fieldwork stages. Gender-wise, the final participant group has a strong imbalance towards female migrants (with over 70% of women in the main group of interviewees). This, however, is the result of various factors of a both objective and subjective nature, which in turn provides insight into the gender and social structure of Russian-speaking migrancy in the region. Firstly, women are usually viewed as more eager to participate in ethnographic interviews, especially if a researcher is also female (Broom et al. 2009). In objectively quantitative terms, though, the tendency of female FSU migrants outnumbering male ones characterises general trends of post-Soviet migration to the UK – according to the latest data published by ONS for 2013, the proportion of Russian-born female and male UK residents is almost 2:1 (31,000 to 18,000); the same rates are observed for Ukrainian-born migrants as well (18,000 to 9,000), whereas gender disproportion is less likely to be the case for other, more numerous and dominant trends of post-Soviet migrants, such as those coming from Latvia (47,000 female vs. 36,000 male migrants) and Lithuania (81,000 female vs. 63,000 male migrants).[16] This gender imbalance seems to be heightened in North-East England by the economic situation of the region – with the highest rate of unemployment in the UK to date (8.5%), the lowest numbers of foreign-born residents (under 5%) and relatively stagnant business and tourist spheres, it presents an unlikely destination for categories of Russian-speaking migrants where males tend to predominate (e.g. highly-skilled professionals; while this has been changing over recent decades, the part of female migrants in this category is still under 30%, see Kofman 2013). It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that gender proportions presented in this study follow general trends for the region.

Selected informants, however, present a variety of migrant categories in terms of their statuses, rights to reside and legally work in the country (long-term study or work visa, ILR, EU citizenship, British citizenship), occupational spheres (academia, catering, IT, marketing, law, teaching) and financial backgrounds (from

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[16] The data report '01.Population of the United Kingdom by Country of Birth and Nationality tables, 2013' released on 02/07/15 and based on the Annual Population Survey (2013) is available at: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Population+by+Nationality+and+Country +of+Birth#tab-data-tables. (Accessed 17/07/2015)

unemployed or self-funded students to highly-skilled professionals in computer sciences or business administration). Educational levels of Russian-speaking participants are also varied – from those with only a secondary school diploma (3 interviewees) to PhD degree holders (7 respondents), with the majority possessing at least a university degree from a post-Soviet country (over two thirds of the sample). Experience of some education in the UK is arguably a significant factor in changing linguistic patterns and language attitudes of migrants – the exposure to the educational context diversifies the set of areas and skills to master, on the one hand, and tends to intensify reflexivity on differences in language uses and discourses. Two interviewee groups of roughly equal numbers are presented in the main stock – those who have received (or are in the process of obtaining) a degree in the English-speaking context and those who have only (post)Soviet qualifications.

Interviewing and transcribing procedures

The average interview lasted 50-60 minutes. Most interviews were carried out in Russian with occasional switches to English or, less often and produced by informants only, languages of other FSU countries. No preliminary preparation was required from participants, since the aim of the interview was to achieve talk that was as spontaneous as possible. For the same reason the interview started with very general and broadly formulated questions.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the interview, its procedures and outcomes in advance. Most of the interviews (particularly those from the first stage of fieldwork) were based on the set guide (see Appendix 2), combining two different parts – a more monologic, biography-based narrative as a warm-up and informative base, followed by questions on more specific aspects of the informant's experiences relevant to this research project. All audio-recordings were fully transcribed, mentioning occasional code-switching, personal idiosyncrasies and paraverbal communication. Transcripts are fully anonymised, with each participant being ascribed a pseudonym. Other personal names mentioned in interviews were shortened to initials with the exception of well-known public figures, when they were referred to in an impersonal way. References to geographical locations have been left untouched.

There were a number of unsuccessful attempts to interview. Some of these were due to the informant's last-minute decision not to be interview (3 instances) or to an objective interruption to the interview (1 instance). There were also a few formally successful audio recordings, yet which were not used in analysis because of their insufficient informativity, comprising of short and uninformative replies, narrative incoherence, or thematic irrelevance (4 instances). All these cases were nonetheless included in the analysis in other ways, as opportunities to reflect on miscommunication between the 'researcher' and the 'researched'.

The researcher as fellow migrant

The duality of my position as investigator and fellow migrant was both beneficial and risky. While there were advantages associated with data collection, as discussed above, the downside lay in ethical dilemmas involved in obtaining personal information. The extent of engagement and participation in community and migrant association activities during my observation sessions will be discussed further on, and the issues to consider while conducting in-depth interviews were also of importance in my fieldwork.

My initial introduction to the empirical field was through several key 'guides' who were not only my interviewees (some of them at the piloting stages) but who also helped me develop my contact network in several directions. At first, these were any Russian-speaking people I could meet in the region. After gaining more information from them and other sources about the field, I targeted my search on the 'leaders' of local migrant initiatives (family clubs, student unions, weekend schools, church services, small business projects) or those who made their presence most visible (active bloggers or participants of online social networks). My third stage was aimed at the least 'visible' (or almost 'invisible') Russian-speaking migrants who were hardly engaged in any fellow support associations. All of them, however, proved very keen and enthusiastic. At some point, this situation of 'guided' fieldwork had to be taken critically. My position as an 'old friend', 'new contact' or 'fellow migrant' was extremely helpful in terms of engaging new participants into the research, but sometimes was difficult to avoid for the sake of the diversity, representation and validity of obtained data. At times, I felt it was better to refuse an informant's offer of introducing me to his or her peers. This strategy prevented the dissemination of any private information which

could have happened in case of interviewing a group of close contacts and avoided informants 'adjusting' their answers in line with the opinions of others in their contact group (e.g. the more dominant ones).

More importantly, I had to keep in mind the risk of obtaining overly personal information interwoven into narrations that were otherwise of direct interest to my research. My way of dealing with the issue included the continuous balancing of two roles, that of an involved and friendly communicant and that of a distanced rational explorer. This entailed constant reflexivity on my own interview questions and their relevance to my programme of research: am I posing questions as an interviewer guided by my research objectives or as a lay fellow migrant who is merely interested in a nice chat? Sticking to this line of communication was helpful in preventing any undue intrusion into the informant's personal life – which could have happened without the interviewee's realisation or as part of their susceptibility to 'open up' in front of an active and engaged listener. At first glance, the interview guide did not include any sensitive or provocative questions to discuss. Even so, some participants preferred to avoid discussing some areas prompted by the guide (mostly personal issues related to family or intimate relationship). Some of these 'gaps' or 'silences' nevertheless presented new turns in my analysis, e.g. I empirically arrived at the concept of 'muteness' as a communicative strategy and a life experience.[17]

Another area of my personal concern was connected to the researcher's level of involvement in the issues discussed by interviewees. On the one hand, relating to personal experiences of respondents helped me establish hidden links in their interpretations and reflections; on the other, there was always the risk of 'thinking into' empirical data my own understandings and generalisations. A way to keep a safe balance of being an empathic insider and an investigative researcher has been for me to put the right emphasis on the concept of 'autoethnography' and to move from introspective writing ('auto-ethnography') towards personalised, but shared experiences of a community to which I also felt I belonged ('autoethno-graphy') (cf. Wolcott 1999).

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[17] On the 'silenced' experiences of current migrants to the EU see, e.g. Christopoulou & Lazaridis 2012; on Russian speakers in this context see Yelenevskaya & Fialkova 2003.

These considerations were the result of my reflections about the interconnections of the data I was collecting, the personal profile of myself as the investigator and the primary methodology of the research. My native competence in Russian, which I initially assumed to be an obvious asset in my further fieldwork, later led to reflections of a methodological nature. Sharing native competence in a language is convenient in terms of communication but is more challenging when the focus of analysis turns to linguistic normativity and metalinguistic reflections. When speakers share a language as a means of communication, they tend to share same metalinguistic practices and cultural patterns of language use (Agha 2007).

For ethnographers doing research in their native culture this fact emphasises the importance of reflexivity upon the fieldwork as a communicative practice (e.g. am I using my competence in the language only as a means of establishing contact and collecting required data, without interference in the quality of this data due to the fact of sharing the same language with my informants?). In this case, I had to constantly remember to question not only my interlocutor's understanding of 'language in the social context', but also my own normative assumptions about it, which was often rather more demanding. The most challenging area of the fieldwork, therefore, was to manage the risk of informants' slipping into a 'you should know what this means' mode of explaining their metalinguistic judgements to me as a fellow Russian speaker and thereby establishing a presumed common ground of shared presumptions about the language and its cultural or social implications. One of the ways to deal with this involved my adopting the ethnomethodological approach of sidestepping social norms by 'breaching' the expected flow of conversation (e.g. by answering 'no, I don't know what this means' and asking questions that prompt the informant to articulate fully 'the unsaid' grounds on which a particular judgment was based).

On the formal side of conducting ethnographic interviewing, I provided each interviewee with a short overview of my research, its purposes and questions, as well as a form to acknowledge their consent. This document included their consent to the use of the transcripts of their interviews in this research as well as to transferring gathered transcriptions to further storage in the Oxford Archive of Russian Life History (an example of a consent form is available as Appendix 3). My

intent was also to assure them that the highest level of anonymity and data-protection was my priority in dealing with interviews at all research stages.

2.6.2. Participant observation

As Rampton et al. (2014) stress, participant observation plays a crucial role in ethnographic enquiry of linguistic resources in superdiverse contexts, particularly because 'the processes involved in learning and adjusting to different cultural practices are themselves regarded as potentially consequential for the analysis' (Rampton et al. 2014: 4) – hence the twofold role of a researcher within this process: that of an attentive observer of these cultural practices, and that of an active participant of the 'learning and adjusting' process. My own position as a (potential) insider of different communities and migrant associations of the region provided me with the necessary access to their functioning and activities, helping me obtain first-hand data without delay or misrepresentation.

On the other hand, my personal background of a fellow migrant and a female researcher as well as my position inside multiple communities across the region proved informative of social implications of language in migrant settings. For example, when talking to migrant families, I noticed that it became a 'female responsibility' to communicate with me about their collective migrant experiences. The interviewing process was at times gladly delegated to wives or mothers as 'talking heads' for the whole family who would interact with another female migrant. Some would interpret my intentions of a researcher as part of my larger 'migrant agenda', e.g. as a means of extending my network in order to find a permanent job or a local spouse and then settle in the country for good. Others would consider the very act of interviewing as proof of my loyalty to their group or association, while my status of a migrant novice was deemed sufficient to recruit me as a new devoted member. For me, this was another area of reflection on the specific social roles and expectations that Russian-speaking migration of the region had towards a fellow female migrant.

The main stock of data comes from my field notes taken during participant observation sessions at the events associated with the Russian-speaking migration life in the region. These vary considerably and include: classes, special events and staff meetings in Russian schools; student Russian societies' events and get-

togethers; formal events and public manifestations (mostly outside the North-East region); Russian and (post-)Soviet holidays and social clubs' activities; other events held within the community or connected to the Russian language and culture represented in the region or beyond in the UK (for a full list see Appendix 4). Some of these observations also included photo and video material as well as short audio recordings and pieces of interviews transcribed right on the spot – these were understood as video or audio field notes, to be used at the stage of analysis. My fieldwork notes started as early as December 2011, when I was brought to an Orthodox Church service, and I took them regularly from then on, especially during my intensive initial fieldwork stage (May-July 2012) and the second, 'targeted' period (December 2012-December 2013), but occasionally also at other times.

Keeping a fieldwork diary itself was an interesting subject for metalinguistic analysis. Observing a speech community in a context of another language (including that of writing a thesis in English) raises the question of language choice for capturing the event in its multilayered bilingual reference. In fact, employing different vernaculars to describe an observed activity was an appropriate instrument for initial analytical procedures. For my focus in applying the method of participant observation in general was to capture not necessarily the *language patterns* (code switching or grammatical interference, occasional word inventions or hesitations in speech), but *language attitudes* as reflected in spontaneous practices of different social contexts of migrant lives.

These occasional practices tend to create a pattern of growing competence not only in the communicative sense (how, when and which linguistic resource to use appropriately), but also in terms of the creative exploration of multimodalities at hand – finding one's own ways of expressing multilingual identities through the variety of available means. According to C. Kramsch (2009: 29), 'to survive linguistically and emotionally the contradictions of everyday life, multilingual subjects draw on the formal semiotic and aesthetic resources afforded by various symbolic systems to reframe these contradictions and create alternative worlds of their own.' I further explore the perspectives and limitations of these practices in the Coda at the end of the thesis. It is this emergent pattern of multilingual literacy and performance produced as a community practice which was my primary concern while conducting ethnographic observation. In contrast to the

narrativisation and reflexivity of individual migrant experiences, this process entailed group work and collaboration. As J. Blommaert (2013a: 8) stresses, this 'submolecular' perspective on language usage in society helps to capture 'a panorama of differences, all relevant and all related to features of social environments.'

2.6.3. Discourse analysis and virtual ethnography

Data collected for the project also included some fictional and non-fictional literature, printed and online media resources, documentary and feature movies produced by, for or about Russian-speaking migrants in the UK and other countries (a list of used resources is available in Appendix 5). In addition, virtual ethnography was carried out on forums, chats, blogs and social network groups of Russian-speaking migrants residing both in North-East England and in the UK at large (Internet sites are listed in Appendix 6). Another important source of information is the stock of over 80 interviews stored in the Oxford Archive of Russian Life History. Conducted in 2007-2008 with Russian-speaking migrants in London and other places in Southern England, these provided a crucial starting point for my own research in the region of North-East England (more information on the database is available in Appendix 7). All of these three sources were incorporated into my research design as supplementary methods, used mostly to contextualise particular points from my own fieldwork and interviews with migrants. They also seemed especially relevant at the preliminary stages of research as sources of first-hand information about the way Russian-speakers perceived their migrant experiences, most importantly, in linguistic terms.

Analytically, my intention was to apply the same two-fold perspective to deal with the texts I gathered – as sources of information on language discourses among the group ('speaking about the language(s)') and as documents of written speech ('speaking in the language(s)'). In this respect, this material helped me to restore the variety of contexts in which judgements about language and narrating migrant experiences were presented – from the interviews (unprepared, spontaneous, oral performance) to participant observation (the 'natural' environment of everyday speech acts and interactions) towards texts performed by professionals or amateurs for a target audiences (written, planned

performances aimed at addressees) and online communication and blog writing (due to specific language norms, Internet communication is usually placed between the normative written and spontaneous oral speech).

Due to a relatively low number of Russian-speaking migrants in the region, I expanded the scope of my search to the UK in general, with some occasional references to other contexts (mostly the USA and Germany), especially in the case of 'professional migrant' writers. I also tried to connect these methods with my main ones in the way I recruited my informants – for example, some interviewees were found through Russian-language forums and social networks, and a few of my respondents recommended particular websites or blogs they frequented. To align methods in chronological terms, I referred to materials printed (posted) within the timeframe of my main fieldwork, starting from December 2012 to March 2014 (with a few later references).

Using virtual ethnography as a means of capturing 'meaningful practices through the shared understandings which render ... a contribution to a [group] as a form of social action' (Hine 2000: 11) poses additional ethical considerations. Whereas most Internet communication is considered public due to its free availability, personal posts on blogs or in private discussions in virtual communities are a sensitive area of analysis. My approach was to avoid using any material which could not be accessed freely, without the special permission of the author. The only exception to this was my access to some social network groups which had a 'closed group' status and therefore required a granted access to join. Most of them were locally based and therefore primary to my research interest, so I applied to become a member and was approved by the administration who, in most cases, were already familiar with my project and status of researcher. I also opted for analysing more general communications rather than private discussions, while still providing anonymity to users I quoted or referred to.

2.7. Conclusions

The importance of language as a sociocultural factor which shapes Russian-speaking migrants' experiences of individual life paths and practices of community leads towards a re-definition of key concepts. Shifting my focus from the actual usage of languages towards making judgements and forming attitudes about them,

I address the area of folk theories of language which seems particularly relevant for capturing the composition of language ideologies and discourses acquired at different stages of life. In order to grasp both set language attitudes and expectations and their impact within one's biography, I define two dimensions of material. The first one includes discussion of general questions concerning languages and their speakers' images, while the second deals with practices of narrativisation in which one's migrant trajectory is presented in the light of their language practices (conceptualised as a 'linguistic biography').

The communicative functions of a language are always tightly connected to its symbolic value and social connotations. This study focuses on two levels of interpretation: the way language attributes influence an individual's (self)identification as a speaker of particular language and provide the means for presenting this identity to others; and the process of making associations and building communities on the basis of shared language in a foreign-speaking environment. I understand both of these as social practices which are constructive (in the sense that they are involved in the making of one's identity or networks), presentational (i.e. performed to make an effect on the audience), and interactive (constantly re-defined through contacts with others – their actions, perceptions and feedback).

But to explore the links made by migrants between their linguistic background and their migrant present, a larger context of the new host environment needs to be included in the picture. Moreover, the concrete regional setting of the North East that I focus on empirically, which has a distinctive cultural, sociolinguistic and economic profile, needs also to be considered as part of the broader context of the UK and its latest tendencies of in-country migration. Such contextualisation proves relevant, first and foremost, at the institutional level of dealing with the current migration and cultural implications that it entails. How Russian-speaking migration is placed within a larger diversity of migrant communities in the region depends on the way it is perceived in the broader national context, as well as in its relation to other, more numerous or traditional migrant communities of the region.

Another way the broader context of migration studies plays its role at a local level is the emerging academic tradition of dealing with contemporary

migration. It presents current composite structures of urban environments as 'superdiverse'. This term is used not only in the sense of great variation in their places of origins, cultural backgrounds, economic practices or linguistic profiles, but also in the way these large volumes of migrants transform environments around them. Languages are argued to present too rigid a structure to survive this high-mobility pattern and cease to exist as definite repertoires for multilingual migrants. Instead, they use linguistic resources – genres, styles, registers – which have different origins, and are ascribed different symbolic values and different practical, instrumental purposes. In the case of North-East England, the environment is hardly becoming 'superdiverse' in its full sense, but the fact of being part of the larger UK space with London as its centre has its effect on the way current migration in the region is perceived both by the migrants and by the locals.

CHAPTER 3. LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND 'FOLK LINGUISTICS' OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MIGRANTS IN THE UK

3.1. The field of 'folk linguistics' and its subject

A large number of disciplines within the broad area of linguistics construct their theories based on empirical data separated from the attitudes and judgments made by their informants about the language under study.[18] Others, however, make this evaluation their subject of enquiry and focus specifically on the way ordinary speakers perceive, treat and interpret the language in use. This is the key area of 'folk linguistics', whose concern is to grasp the way 'naive' theory of language is formed and functions (Golovko 2014; Preston 1994). Speaking in a wider anthropological context, 'folk linguistics' deals with the 'emic' approach to language as opposed to the 'etic' (and thus fundamentally exterior) constructions of, for example, classical structural linguistics in the traditional Saussurian sense.[19] The study of folk linguistics was first proposed shortly after the introduction of this methodological opposition, in 1966, when Henry Hoenigswald suggested that linguists should pay attention not only to 'what goes on' (in language) but also to 'what people think of what goes on' and 'what people say goes on' (cit. Niedzelski & Preston 2003: 2).

This new approach was at first focused on the exploration of folk taxonomy – the linguistic terminology and its interpretations shared by native speakers, naive dialectology and linguistic varieties in contact, and so forth. The consequent turn of the research towards the social and cultural context of folk definitions and attitudes occurred due to the emerging interest of linguistic anthropology in speakers' language behaviour. As argued by D. Hymes, '[i]f the community's own theory of linguistic repertoire and speech is considered […], matters become all the more complex and interesting' (1972: 39). Folk linguistic analysis would also 'include accounts of what people say of the reactions to language' (Niedzelski &

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[18] This chapter has been reworked into an article and published in the special issue of *Russian Journal of Communication* on new realities of 'Global Russian' (Kliuchnikova 2015).

[19] The opposition of 'emic' and 'etic' approaches, first introduced by K. Pike (1967) in his reflections on principles of categorization and structuring in phonetics, later made its way to the field of linguistic anthropology to initiate a corpus of studies in 'ethnobotany' and other fields exploring 'native' ways of categorization.

Preston 2003: 29) and therefore deal with metalinguistic reflections, the choice of linguistic resources and common images of one's native or other (contact or distant) languages, as well as shared stereotypical judgements about their users.

Within the area of applied linguistics, the systematisation and analysis of the views lay people may have about language-related topics is taken into consideration as well. The practical application of those ideas to everyday problems would include specific areas of language mastery, teaching and use, language policies and standardisation, language variations and contacts, multilingualism and bilingual practices, language assessment and testing (Wilton et al. 2011). However coherent the idea of 'folk linguistics' might appear to have become recently, variation in the views of national academic schools on its methodological and analytical potential is striking. While English-speaking linguists are preoccupied largely with investigating communities of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds in their language behaviour and attitudes towards the standard language and its non-standard variations (mostly through extensive participant observation and interviewing of the community's members),[20] other traditions have predominantly focused on the image of standardised language as perceived by its users and thus explore implicit language attitudes and metalinguistic reflections in media, public speech or naive linguistic enquiries.[21]

The idea of exploring language behaviour and attitudes as a crucial indicator in the times of major social transformations has caused a burst of research carried out within folk linguistics of the FSU countries on the speakers' perceptions of changing statuses and domains of languages.[22] However, there has been relatively little attention paid to the attitudes of Russian-speaking migrant

[20] Various examples of research of this kind were carried out during the late 1980s – early 1990s, evoked by the interest in migrant vernaculars of host languages and their bilingual practices (e.g. Garcìa & Evangelista 1988).

[21] The most vivid examples come from Russian-speaking folk linguistics with its attention to archived materials, internet usages, and media texts as a main data source for exploring rather wide comprehensive subjects (e.g. Folk Linguistics 2012). In the sense of the closeness to other national schools of linguistic analysis, therefore, Russian-speaking folk linguists would tend to address non-Western languages, e.g. Japanese (Alpatov 2008).

[22] One of the most detailed and extensive studies on post-Soviet attitudes towards Russian was conducted by Vepreva (2005). Other recent examples of research on language attitudes and behaviour in the FSU countries include B. Korth's (2005) studies of Kyrgyzstan and L. Bilaniuk's (2003) paper on language status and attitudes in their relation to gender in contemporary Ukraine.

communities outside the FSU area towards Russian. The major focus of interest here has tended to be code-switching patterns or language domains' distribution, while there is little or no focus on the way Russian speakers conceptualise and explain their actual uses and declared attitudes. Several researchers have even argued in favour of defining 'Russian of the abroad' (*iazyk russkogo zarubezhia*),[23] as a specific linguistic entity characteristic of (supposedly) all migrant communities using this language as their main means of communication in a modified form that evolved through constant linguistic contacts with their new host environments.[24]

The very idea of theoretical construction of the specific metalinguistic phenomenon of 'the Russian language of the abroad' provides a particular focus on the Russian language as highly standardised and thus subject to policies and planning carried out by Russian authorities. This term also refers to the rhetoric of constructed borders which entail a speech community of the language, the accessibility of its standardised variant to speakers residing outside the Russian Federation, and the linguistic rights of these speakers. These implications, however macro-level they might seem, involve issues of language ideologies and attitudes which are expressed by different speech communities both within Russia itself and worldwide and are closely related to the ways Russian-speakers' identities are shaped and reproduced in an everyday communicative context.

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[23] The concept of *zarubezh'e* lies at the intersection of the notions 'abroad', 'foreign' and 'émigré'. In this respect the idea of 'Russian', which originally refers to the language and thus makes the communities under study 'Russian-speaking' and coming from diverse areas of the former Russian Empire or the USSR, becomes tightly connected to the idea of state borders and the issue of current citizenship of Russian Federation. The adjective *rossiiskii* (relating to the state borders of the Russian Federation) is replaced here by the word *russkii*, which is understood by some researchers as synonymous with the Russian-speaking continuum (Elistratov 2002). This way of delegating all the legacies of previous migration waves to Russia was also further developed in a less academic but more ideological context of the Russian government's resettlement programme *'Sootechestvenniki'* ('Compatriots').

[24] The most coherent and detailed analysis here is probably by Zemskaia (2001) – the scholar who introduced the term *iazyk russkogo zarubezh'ia* ('the language of Russia's abroad') into academic discourse. Other similar concepts had appeared already in the mid-1990s and had continued to be used subsequently, such as Granovskaia's (1995) *russkii iazyk v rasseianii* ('Russian language in dispersion'). A recent development of this term includes 'the Russian language outside the nation' (Ryazanova-Clarke 2014) and critically re-examines the relation between the language and state borders.

3.2. The 'folk linguistics' of Russian-speaking migrants in the North East of England

In this chapter I will examine the attitudes of Russian-speaking migrants living in the North East of England towards Russian in the context of their current language use. The informants were all native or near-native speakers of Russian (in the latter case their native language was the language of one of the FSU republics). They all share the experiences of acquiring Russian through extensive exposure to a mono- or bilingual environment (that of the former USSR), and not via intensive foreign language learning. However, their current multilingual settings present a significant influence on their views and behaviour patterns which consequently make a shift in their overall metalinguistic judgments and attitudes, especially towards their (former) main language as well as any other linguistic varieties they face in their everyday communication.

Methodologically language attitudes are usually captured through two different approaches. One of them deals primarily with the speakers' direct, straightforward attitudes towards the languages in question, such as whether they are considered beautiful or ugly, easy or difficult to master, valuable or useless, variable or constant, restricted to particular communicative contexts, and so forth (e.g. Kashkin 2002). The other approach, in contrast, is based on the presumption that the language reflexivity process operates much less straightforwardly, prioritising attitudes towards speakers of a particular language (Lambert et al. 1968; for a study of 'Finns as seen through Russian eyes' see Sternin 2000). Images of speakers of other languages, however, are usually explored through their representations in particular speech genres (e.g. Shmeleva & Shmelev 2014 on jokes about non-standard, 'ethnic' variants of Russian).

Since my aim is to explore the Russian-speaking migrants' attitudes toward the Russian language as diversely as possible, I employ both these perspectives. The direct language attitudes provide a better understanding of the mind mapping and language mythology Russian-speaking migrants in the English-speaking environment share. The indirect attitudes draw a more detailed picture of cultural interactions they are exposed to and take part in. In the long run, these two layers provide a better understanding of how the migrant identities are formed, how

migrants establish their belonging to Russian-speaking environments and how their image as a group is shaped.

In my interview guide I included a corpus of questions that focused on the ideas and images Russian-speaking migrants have towards the Russian language they use in their daily life as well as its standardised version. The 'Russian literary norm', *литературный русский язык*, capturing the assumption of an existing linguistic standard, was brought up regularly by the interviewees themselves. These reported relations between this normative variant and their current practices reveal speakers' interpretations of language ideologies, their views on language policies, and their understanding of the responsibilities of the state and of lay speakers regarding Russian.[25]

The 'subjectivism' and personalised attitudes in these lay metalinguistic conceptualisations also reveal numerous emotionally charged experiences and evaluations regarding one's own status as a speaker of a particular language. The background knowledge obtained through native language acquisition in any monolingual context is confronted in a foreign language environment, and the issues of (multi)linguistic identities are brought up vividly. In this respect the very context of an interview – a protracted focused conversation about one's experiences and practices as a migrant – triggers the process of this linguistic reflexivity, prompting the speaker to recall concrete examples of their linguistic behaviour (choice, usage, switching) in a multilingual environment. Whereas the focal point of my analysis is the way Russian is perceived by it speakers, their evolving multilingualism and attitudes towards the phenomenon of multilingualism itself provide vital contextual insight. The connections between Russian and its speakers are revealed through personal narratives of certain levels and aspects of attachment which also explore the individual levels of control and responsibility towards the Russian language and, more generally, Russian-speaking culture.

I am also interested in the way this reflexivity works in the sense of taxonomy and perceived relatedness of Russian and other languages involved – the titular languages of the FSU countries as well as English (with its regional and

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[25] For similar views of Russian speakers on government's duties in language planning and maintenance see Kulyk 2013 for Ukraine; Strenge 2012 for Russia.

social variations). These mentioned relations among different idioms set an imagined horizontal network and a vertical hierarchy where Russian is accorded a certain place based on its reported status, pragmatic significance or context of use.

The indirect, speaker-oriented language attitudes of Russian-speaking migrants that I was keen to grasp are concerned with the attitudes towards the speakers of a particular language (English, Russian, or other FSU languages) shared by a larger community as well as the way these attitudes influence common communication patterns with the speakers in question. These would also include reflections on language interest and behaviour patterns, reported language attitudes from the speakers of other languages (mostly English-speaking locals) as well as lay interpretations of core concepts which were marked as characteristic and exemplary of the discussed languages by the informants themselves. The latter also provide a glimpse on the way 'naive ethnography', lay considerations of the 'ethnic character' of other communities, develops through interpretations of linguistic behaviour (on folk ethnography see Wästerfors 2008).

Therefore, to analyse these scattered reflections I set out four dimensions – those of (a) 'correctness', which organises the expressed attitudes regarding the ideas of language standardisation, planning and power; (b)'emotionality', which explores migrants' personal engagement and attachment towards Russian; (c) 'status', which deals with the perceived relationship and subordination among languages and (d) 'image', which unravels the variety of images of the language which Russian-speaking migrants produce themselves or receive from their interaction with other language speakers.

3.3. The 'great and mighty Russian language'

From all the informants that I interviewed most Russian-speaking migrants coming from the FSU countries name Russian as their native language. Only three of the interviewees (originally from Latvia, Armenia and the western part of Ukraine) named it as their second language, the one they studied at school, used in higher education and employed periodically, basically in communication with other migrants from the FSU. The context of my interviews with these three informants was exemplary of this usage: although I did not offer any language as compulsory for our conversation, they all spontaneously stuck to Russian

throughout their interviews and always 'switched back' if they started speaking English. The reason for this was not just their 'linguistic politeness', but also habit or eagerness to use this occasion to practice their conversational Russian.

For example, as one of the informants, Lianna, 45, originally from Armenia and a native speaker of Armenian, who does not use Russian in her everyday life in migration, said, she was particularly glad to receive a job offer requiring her Russian language skills since this would 'freshen up' her Russian and enable her to 'finally make use of' it, something which – she had no doubt – would be needed some time or another in her life (032-F-38-NCL). Those reporting their ethnic origins being different from Russian – like Denis, 16, with the mixture of Moldavian, Jewish, Serbian and Russian ('Cossack') origins (019-M-16-SPM), or Evgeniia, 26, half-Korean half-Russian, but brought up in Russia – might still stress their belonging to a 'Russophone world' and thus to Russian culture. As Evgeniia puts it:

> *Я этническая кореянка, выросшая на Дальнем Востоке, сейчас живу тут* [in Newcastle] *и замужем за англичанином. Кто я? Конечно, русская, потому что говорю по-русски, и культура эта – она мне родная.* (005-F-26-BLT)[26]

The connection between the two – the language they exploit and the legacy of Russian-language culture appeared very strong, even for those who were too young at the point of the dissolution of the USSR and did not have extensive (or any at all) experience of living in the Soviet Union.

Others also stress the communication skills and areas which are implied by the Russian-speaking context – a particular sense of humour or a number of common themes find the expression of 'sharing the same language', being able to talk to each other not only strictly linguistically but in a wider discourse of common patterns of communication:

> *Большинство* [sic] *я придерживаюсь русскоязычного населения – у нас общее представление, общий менталитет. В таких компаниях я чувствую себя свободнее – у нас общие темы для разговора, и мы всегда*

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[26] *I am ethnically Korean, grew up in the Far East, and now live here [in Newcastle] and am married to an English man. Who am I? Of course, Russian because I speak Russian, and this culture is native to me.*

можем поддержать какой-то разговор и любую тему. (028-M-26-NCL)[27]

Whatever the actual uses of the language by migrants are (see as an example the 'awkward' beginning in the previous quote), with the perceived dominance of Russian as a language of education and culture comes the very strongly articulated idea of its standardised variant, or 'literary' norm (*литературный язык*), or – using Turgenev's much cited formula – 'the great and mighty Russian', *великий и могучий русский язык*.[28] This image is highly ideological in the sense of belonging and responsibilities it implies as well as tightly connected to school experiences recollected by most of the informants (cf. Arapov 2006).[29]

The idea of 'grammatical correctness' (*грамотность*) is named among other crucial features of an educated person whereas respect for the norm is something that defines a true Russian speaker. To legitimate the dominance of the standard version and the speakers' responsibilities to preserve this linguistic unity, Evgeniia, 26, even draws the parallel between English and Russian:

Как в Англии есть королевский английский, на котором говорят в парламенте... Есть часть, которая все равно по-русски правильно не

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[27] *Mostly [sic], I engage with the Russian speaking population here – we have common outlooks, common mentality. I feel more at ease in companies like this – we share themes to discuss, and we can always follow general conversation for any chosen topic.*

[28] With its origins found in one of the verses in prose by the Russian writer I. Turgenev (*Русский язык*, 'Russian language', 1882), it transformed considerably in its wider, out-of-context use. First of all, it lost two other definitions which were originally in Turgenev's line: 'The great, mighty, truthful and free Russian language!' ('*Великий, могучий, правдивый и свободный русский язык*'). It has also gained its ideological meaning in Soviet times (basically through the system of primary education) and nowadays is still present in a pedagogical context as a way to promote and justify the importance of learning Russian grammar and culture, e.g. as an epigraph in school or university study books (e.g. Vvedenskaia et al. 2005). This shortened formula was also later adopted by 'naive/lay linguists', activists of Russian language who propose dubious ideas 'academically supported' by their own explorations (see the account on the nature and tendencies of this 'lay linguistics' in Bazylev 2009; Polinichenko 2010).

[29] In his overview of the wider evolution of 'patriotic education' in the Soviet and post-Soviet primary schools V. Bezrogov (2013) particularly mentions the late Soviet era (1970-80s) as a stage when Russian language becomes one of the concepts on which the whole patriotic education system was constructed. This is still the case today when 'the topic of the Homeland was the core theme of the study of Russian language and literature more generally' (Bezrogov 2013: 120).

будет говорить, но есть же врачи, учителя, вот мы должны говорить правильно. (005-F-26-BLT)[30]

Thus the way to treat grammar rules of the native language is linked to a much broader scope of social and cultural characteristics (background and social status, profession and beliefs).[31]

The idea of a language standard being preserved through school education is also revealed through the opinion expressed by one of the informants claiming that the only people who speak 'proper Russian' are, in fact, 'teachers of Russian and Russian literature':

Кто говорит на чистейшем русском языке? Без фразеологизмов, без сленга? Преподаватели русского языка и литературы! Всё. Больше никто не говорит. Потому что даже адвокаты, финансисты или врачи – у них всех есть свои профессиональные слова, которые они используют. (019-M-16-SPM)[32]

The idea of standard Russian shared and translated by the schoolteachers also correlates with the understanding of what makes a native speaker of Russian – once this standardised version is mastered, the right to be a native speaker is also obtained. Those informants who studied in Russian-language schools in their countries of origin feel their belonging to Russophone culture as unquestionable, although some of them may acknowledge their lack of practice in some specific spheres of oral or written Russian. For example, Marat, 26, originally from Uzbekistan, who considers himself a native Russian speaker with minor knowledge of Uzbek, mentions his total ignorance of 'business Russian' as a specific linguistic genre which, to his knowledge, 'must be taught in universities' and which he had to master as if it were a foreign language skill:

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[30] *Like there is the Queen's English in England, which they speak at the parliament... There is some part who would never speak correct Russian, but there are doctors, teachers, and it is us who have to speak correctly.*

[31] As Comrie et al. (1996) argue in their extensive study of the Russian language in the 20th century, in contrast to other countries where 'educated speakers use non-standard varieties in many types of situations' (Comrie et al. 1996: 5), in the Russian-language speech community 'the distribution is mainly social rather than functional' (Comrie et al. 1996: 6).

[32] *Who speaks this perfect Russian? Without idioms, without slang? Teachers of Russian language and literature. That is it. No one else. Because even lawyers, financiers, or doctors – they all have their own professional words, which they use.*

Было сложно привыкнуть к бизнес-русскому языку, наверное,
большинство людей учились ему в университетах в России.
Приходилось сидеть вечерами, слова выписывал, смотрел в словарях
потом, понимал, что они значат. (028-M-26-NCL)[33]

However, even those coming from the very centre of the Russian-speaking world, namely Moscow, have also acknowledged particular domains of language as unfamiliar to them. Viktoriia, 23, said that she found the formal language of the school reports and other official documentation alien when she came upon it during her internship back in Moscow (031-F-23-NCL). Natalya, 37, mentions her lack of knowledge of dialects and regional varieties of Russian, claiming to be acquainted only with standardised versions which she refers to as 'Russian of the media' and 'Moscow Russian':[34]

Я по России ездила мало, знакома только с русским языком телевизора
и московским русским языком, поэтому мне даже сложно сказать
[about variation in Russian]. *То есть для меня это просто русский язык и*
всё. (017-F-37-DHM)[35]

Since learning the standardised version of Russian continues during school years it is also dependant on developing certain skills while neglecting others. Public speaking or writing is not mentioned among the activities informants feel comfortable with (or even reported to be troublesome by some of them). Arina, 25, draws a parallel between her writing skills in Russian and in English and blames herself for 'hypercorrection' and perfectionism which make her 'get stuck' ('*залипать*') on her assignments for too long (016-F-25-NCL). Mariia, 28, mentions that she was first made aware of the skill of giving a public speech during her study at the British university whereas she felt no experience in this sphere even in her

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[33] *It was difficult to get used to business Russian, most of the people back in Russia must have learnt it at university. I had to sit in the evenings, write out words and then look them up in a dictionary to understand what they meant.*

[34] Regarding the overall Russian speech community in historical perspective Comrie et al. (1996) also note the dominance of standardised version coincided with the strengthening of the educated Muscovite variant, especially in the sense of pronunciation norms.

[35] *I did not travel much around Russia so I am only familiar with the Russian language of television and the Muscovite Russian, so it is difficult for me to comment on [variation in Russian]. I mean, for me this is just 'Russian language' and that is it.*

native language (010-F-28-NCL). The lack of some specific linguistic skills is more strikingly revealed through the educational process for both of them.

Reading, in contrast, is perceived as a central skill which is required to improve one's language and which ultimately defines an 'educated' person. For most it does not even matter what to read at all since the process has symbolic value in and of itself:

> *Просто нужно читать и в формат вписываться, что ли. Важно дать человеку те книги, которые ему интересны с самого начала. Тебе интересна, там, я не знаю, Дарья Донцова с Оксаной Робски– ради бога, читай, хоть что-то для начала. Это повысит твой уровень – пойдешь на 'Войну и мир'.* (013-M-26-NCL) [36]

Since the standardised version of Russian is considered of such great value, a certain fear of making a mistake – a core attitude transmitted in Soviet and post-Soviet Russian-language schools – appears to dominate much of informants' linguistic behaviour. In a less official context, say, that of online written communication (writing emails or online chatting, using social networks or blogging on the regular basis), the fear of making a mistake is outweighed by the speed and spontaneity of the message transmitted and the above norms of 'grammatical' Russian cease to apply. As Kristina, 27, who values 'good, proper Russian', states:

> *Отношусь плохо* [to mistakes] *…. Когда я сама пишу, то я частенько не думаю о грамотности, потому что интернет, все дела, это же неформальное общение.* (018-F-27-NCL)[37]

This devotion to the idea of a standardised linguistic norm also raises the question of who should be responsible for maintaining its integrity. Along with the individual's personal responsibility, this is partially delegated to the government

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[36] *One just needs to read and fit into the framework, so to say. It is crucial to give a person the kind of books that they will enjoy from the very beginning. If you feel interested in, I don't know, Daria Dontsova or Oksana Robski – please yourself, read at least these for a start. This will upgrade your level – up to 'War and Peace' eventually.* [Both names mentioned in this quote are of popular Russian pulp fiction writers of the turn of the 21st century: D. Dontsova is an author of the 'ironic detective stories' and O. Robski is a 'naive ethnographer' of the Russian elite's lifestyles.]

[37] *I think low* [of mistakes]... *When I myself write, I quite often do not focus on my correctness because it is Internet, all the stuff, it is informal communication.*

which is expected to keep the language 'safe', 'pure' and 'unchanged' (see also Argent (2014) on the 'health' of the language in Russian media discourse). When it came to certain recent changes to the standardised variant of Russian, some informants felt it as a personal issue and commented critically on the innovations:

> *Вот мне совершенно не нравится, что сделали кофе среднего рода. Кофе – он мой, всегда. По-моему, хотят разрешить 'звОнит' – это будет совсем кошмар.* (005-F-26-BLT)[38]

With the school standard of literary Russian which, when transmitted, makes a person 'educated' comes the above-mentioned fear of making a mistake and hence reluctance of any linguistic creativity. Slang or jargon words – the ones that do not fit into the standardised version properly – are ascribed either to youth (or '*те, кто ещё не до конца образованные*', '*not educated enough*' 005-F-26-BLT) and to the lower or marginal social strata (or '*гопота*',[39] to quote Marina, 28, 010-F-28-NCL). Migrants, however, also tend to marginalise themselves and thus include themselves in this 'misfit' group due to their reported loss of 'proper' Russian, which may itself threaten the standardised norm since they are exposed to other languages and are inevitably prone to loans and borrowings. This issue of migrants' personal attachment to their native language and their perception of their own linguistic behaviour as a 'threat' to the normative standardised variant will be discussed in more detail further on.

3.4. Russian taken personally: Changing patterns of linguistic behaviour

Due to the significance that language acquires in their lives, leading to forms of personal attachment to the language, my informants have felt obliged to adopt special linguistic behaviour which revealed both their attitudes towards their native language and their ambivalent status as its speakers outside of its 'natural habitat'. Their personal engagement is shown not only through their emotional descriptions of Russian, but also through the sense of guilt or shame they express

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[38] *I do not appreciate it at all that they have made 'coffee' neuter. Coffee – it is mine* [using masculine gender]*, always like that. I guess they are planning to allow 'zvOnit'* [a wrong stress] *– that is going to be complete mess.*

[39] A slang word referring to a particular social group of youths known for their rough behaviour, often including petty street crime and hooliganism.

regarding various issues. The lack of time to communicate in Russian or transfer it 'properly' to their children, the decline of their grammatical competence, borrowings and loans they occasionally use in their Russian, or little interest in the present Russian cultural life were all among specific causes for this increasing feeling of 'guilt'.

All these also result in drastic changes in their linguistic behaviour towards their native language. There are numerous reports of the sense of 'estrangement' which evolves after a period of everyday bilingualism and means perceiving their own language as strange, unnatural and thus requiring some additional attention and effort. Particular words may sound 'unreal' or 'wrong'. One of the informants felt this way towards the translation of the English word 'customer' as '*покупатель*'. This actually is the most adequate translation of the word into Russian, but in her experience it sounded 'awkward'.

Another tendency of this 'estrangement' is the invention of new words following the formal rules of Russian grammar to explain their English analogies. For example, the imperfective form of a Russian verb *проголодаться*, i.e. *проголадываться* was introduced by another informant to explain to her mother the English expression 'to feel peckish' (005-F-26-BLT). Natalya, 37, describes the process of 'hypercorrection' in which she gets lost while switching to Russian from English, which makes her feel 'a foreigner' in Russian:

> *Мне уже значительно проще говорить по-английски, чем по-русски. То есть я сейчас говорю – мне почти как на иврите или на французском. Я стараюсь вспоминать падежи, строить фразу, то есть эта гиперкоррекция у меня уже определённо есть. То есть когда я езжу в Россию, то где-то через неделю это пропадает, я себя уже чувствую настоящим носителем русского языка. А вот в таких вот ситуациях – да, чувствую себя иностранцем, который пытается с трудом вспомнить весь русский язык.* (017-F-37-DHM)[40]

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[40] *I already feel more comfortable speaking English rather than Russian. That is I am speaking now – and it feels almost as if it is in Hebrew or French. I am trying to remember the cases, put the phrase properly, so I definitely have this hypercorrection in me. When I travel to Russia, I start losing it after a week or so, and I begin feeling as a proper native speaker of Russian. But in situations like this – yes, I feel as a foreigner who tries and is hardly able to remember all Russian language at once.*

The most obvious way to overcome this estrangement is extensive communicating in Russian, which some of the informants argue to be possible only in the natural, native environment (see the quote above and account from Nina, 29):

> Я последний раз приезжала в Россию, и мои друзья даже говорят: 'Вот говорим на русском – но что-то не то!' Ну, может быть, строение предложения. Но я как бы не ощущаю сейчас, что я *struggle*, что мне трудно говорить. Иногда бывает, когда долго не общаешься. Может быть, потому, что английский язык – он, говорят, легче грамматикой. И ты не забудешь его никогда, естественно. Но вот русский язык, именно классическая русская речь – он, да, может тебе исковеркать. (024-F-29-WST)[41]

Being exposed to constant bilingualism therefore gives Russian-speaking migrants the feeling of estrangement from Russian and requires the additional labour of controlling the way they use Russian. This may result in the 'hypercorrection', constant 'linguistic awareness' or simply the sense of guilt. Interestingly, all three of these were demonstrated by one Russian-speaking migrant, originally from Moscow but living in the UK for most of his life. He refused to be interviewed on the grounds of his feeling he would not be able to contribute – he was too aware of his changing Russian to converse in it, found himself irritatingly slow in composing sentences in Russian wishing to make them sound 'just right' and felt impossible to himself to speculate about Russian or Russian-speaking bilingualism exclusively in English or switching from one language to another. He migrated to the UK with his family in his early school years and now, being in his mid-20s, even though he has continued using Russian occasionally (and even provided some private lessons for his university peers at ab initio level), he feels particularly reluctant to discuss any of his metalinguistic considerations since, as he puts it, he would 'think too much about *how* to say something, not *what* to say'.

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[41] *Last time I visited Russia, my friends kept telling me, 'Wow, we speak Russian but something is wrong here!' Well, it might have been the structure of sentences. But I do not feel that I am struggling* [uses in Eng.] *now, that it is difficult for me to speak. It sometimes happens when I do not communicate for a while. Maybe the reason is that, as they say, English is easier grammar wise. And it is impossible to forget it, naturally. But the Russian language – the classical Russian speech as it is – yes, it may get corrupted through it.*

Whilst these extremes of linguistic awareness are rare, the more widespread tendencies include 'returning to the roots', i.e. turning attention to Russian-language literature, especially the 19th and turn-of-the-20th-century classics. The importance of reading as a particular linguistic skill, as mentioned above, is reinterpreted in the new, migrant context as a way of 'recharging' one's sense of belonging to Russophone culture in general. The formula of Evgeniia, 26, who reported going for her volume of Chekhov whenever she started feeling that she was losing her grip over Russian (005-F-26-BLT), could be extended to other, less directly language-related practices, such as the act of purchasing volumes of Russian 'classics' which are brought back from visits to Russia and then simply put on the shelves – often without any signs of them being actually read (see also Pechurina 2010: 119-120; 124-126).

In contrast, reading more recent Russian-language fiction is interpreted in a more pragmatic way – as a form of entertainment that simultaneously and conveniently serves the purpose of maintaining connection with current cultural life in Russia. In this case, however, the books, as physical objects or material artefacts embodying a particular national culture, carry less significance in themselves and can be easily replaced by electronic copies, for example. As Olga, 42, who 'guiltily confesses' to spending far too little time maintaining her Russian, describes her reading practices:

> *Я стараюсь читать – и вот это я могу более или менее сделать – я стараюсь, ну, как минимум, романа три-четыре в год по-русски прочитывать. Скорее современную литературу – Дину Рубину, Пелевина, вот что-то в этом духе, но это больше для себя, конечно.* (003-F-42-NCL)[42]

Other efforts made to maintain Russian-speaking status include material culture, e.g. gadgets and devices that have a Russian alphabet keyboard or computer software to transliterate the Latin alphabet. For individuals, having such gadgets might be simply a token of respect towards other Russian speakers or,

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[42] *I try to read – and here is something I can afford more or less – I try to read, as a minimum, three or four novels in Russian per year. It is most likely to be some modern writing – Dina Rubina, Pelevin, something like that, but it is more for myself, of course.* [Both names mentioned in the quote are popular contemporary Russian-language writers. Dina Rubina will be discussed below; Viktor Pelevin is a modern fiction writer, the author of numerous postmodernist novels.]

even more so, a respect for the Russian language. Thus, for Svetlana, 29, the absence of a Russian keyboard on her PC is yet another reason to feel guilty ('*ой да, это безобразие с моей стороны, конечно!*', '*oh yes, this is surely outrageous of me!*', 029-F-29-NCL), given that her peers claim it to be one of the mandatory features every gadget of theirs should have.

While feelings of estrangement and loss of belonging dominates the emotional experiences of migrancy, the approach towards this 'great and mighty' standardised version of Russian is not pragmatic or communicative but more symbolic and interactive. This variety is not treated as a means of communication through which actual interactions with the 'homeland' or other Russian-speaking spaces are held, but as a means for migrants to reassert their sense of belonging. 'Reading', generally viewed as a passive linguistic skill, thereby transforms into a symbolic act involved in wider processes of migrants re-confirming their identities.[43]

While reading keeps migrants 'connected' to Russophone culture in general, speaking to their compatriots back in the FSU countries represents another area to explore their new identities. Technically, it requires more effort than before since it now includes constant awareness of a bilingual repertoire and of the need to stick to only Russian. Sometimes this is due to the poor English skills of their communicants, specifically migrants' parents who are usually referred to 'totally incompetent in English' ('*с английским ну совсем плохо*', 023-M-29-NCL) and experiencing misunderstanding while talking to their migrant children ('*иногда совсем не понимают, о чем я*', 002-F-25-DHM) and, therefore, 'poor things' ('*бедные*', 017-F-37-DHM).

In other situations emphasis on 'correctness' is aimed at escaping any negative reaction from other compatriots in general. This fear of being frowned upon for code-switching or using occasional English words while communicating to other Russian speakers could be based on their own previous attitudes toward such linguistic behaviour:

> *Про иностранные слова, это самое ужасное, я так не любила этих людей, когда я была в России, думала, ну, что за выпендреж? И тут я*

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[43] On symbolic practices and cultural mythologies of reading in the late Soviet and post-Soviet discourse see Lovell (2000).

сама сижу и не могу вспомнить слово, и это так ужасно. (005-F-26-
BLT)[44]

However, communication to other Russian-speaking migrants (both those
residing in the UK and based elsewhere in the world) seems less stressful in this
sense since constant hyper-correctness is no longer obligatory. Nina, 29, uses the
terms 'English-speaking' (*говорящие по-английски*) and 'at our place' (*у нас*),
referring to her present British environment, when she explains that it is perfectly
normal to use occasional English words or switch to English while communicating
with other Russian-speaking migrants because 'they will understand you anyway'
(024-F-29-WST). Ekaterina, 24, also claims she is much more likely to use English
words or phrases while talking to her friends who also live outside Russia than
with those who stay there even if their English is good enough to understand her
using English terms to describe local realia (030-F-24-SSH). Therefore Nina's
formula of 'being understood' as an excuse for keeping the bilingual option may
refer not exclusively to the informative level of speech, the pragmatics of phrases
as such, but also to a wider context of migrants' communicative patterns which
would include the 'hypercorrection' for interaction with those residing in the
country of origin while adopting a 'looser' style while communicating with other
migrants of the same background.

In fact, while paying extra attention to their own speech performances,
Russian-speaking migrants remain quite sceptical about the general patterns of
linguistic behaviour in Russia (or other FSU countries). For example, the same
practice of occasional loans and borrowings (especially from English) made by
their former compatriots, becomes a major area of criticism, given that they, from
their more 'expertly' vantage point, see these 'bastardised' uses of English as, in
one way or another, inappropriate:

Иногда меня шокирует сам язык. То есть я вижу, что они явно взяли
слово из английского языка, там, 'креатив', например. Я думаю: 'Бог ты
мой, что это такое! Что они сделали с русским языком!' Или что-то я
такое читала, что 'была проведена атака на Иерусалим', что это

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[44] *Foreign words, this is the worst, I used to despise those people when I was back in Russia, just kept*
thinking, 'what is with that showing off?' And here I am – sitting and failing to remember the right
word, and this is simply terrible.

такое – то есть это 'terrorist attack on Jerusalem', бог ты мой, русский язык хуже моего! (017-F-37-DHM)[45]

Others tend simply to highlight the clumsiness of these borrowings, while perceiving them as irrelevant since, to them, Russian is 'rich enough' already:

Русский язык достаточно богат, и в него не нужно вносить вот эти вот слова, которые на русском абсолютно ничего не значат. Почему, есть же такое же слово в русском. Я считаю, что русская речь должна быть именно русской. Мне самой это слух режет. (031-F-23-NCL)[46]

Although their 'awareness' and reported attitudes towards code-switching and linguistic purity in the communicative context may be expressed quite openly, the fine line between speaking, on the one hand, to 'mainland' citizens who reportedly perform 'better' in Russian, and on the other, to fellow Russian-speaking migrants living in the same host country, divides two distinctive varieties of Russian that migrants develop, which could be referred to, quite loosely, as 'Russian-1' and 'Russian-2'. Therefore, the following judgement by Nina, 29, about her linguistic behaviour and language standards is not paradoxical or oxymoronic but represents a perfectly logical sentence performed in one of these varieties (the fluctuating vernacular of migrant speech, i.e. 'Russian-2') on the subject of the other (the highly standardised, and to some degree imaginary, version of 'mainland' Russian, i.e. 'Russian-1'):

Я сама не испытываю проблем с русским, я никогда не struggle, чтобы найти слово по-русски. (024-F-29-WST)[47]

In fact, as migrants settle within a new English-speaking environment, these two varieties become more divided and develop their distinctive images in respondents' reflections. One of the core features is their emerging 'gender'

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[45] *Sometimes it is the language itself that shocks me most. That is I see that they have taken a word from English, like 'kreativ', for example. And I think, 'Oh my god, what is that? What have they done to the Russian language!' Or I read something like 'there was an attack on Jerusalem', what is that? It is 'terrorist attack on Jerusalem'* [uses in Eng.], *oh god, their Russian is worse than mine!*

[46] *The Russian language is rich enough, and there is no need to introduce these new words to it which simply do not mean anything in Russian. I reckon that Russian speech should be specifically Russian. It gives me chills hearing that.*

[47] *I myself do not experience any troubles with Russian, I never struggle* [uses in Eng.] *to find a Russian word.*

interpretation (cf. Pavlenko 2001 on language ideologies and gender in bilingualism). The migrant vernacular becomes ascribed a distinctly 'feminine' image, firstly, due to the gender imbalance of the Russian-speaking population in the region in general but also, secondly, because of the issue of the upbringing of children, which becomes an area of utmost language concern and is usually viewed as a 'woman's responsibility', in Natalia's words:

> *Русский язык – это как какой-то вид домашней работы, потому что я женщина, я была бы как-то обязана заниматься русским языком с детьми.* (017-F-37-DHM)[48]

However, migrants who do not have children of their own also stress the predominantly female 'voice' of their migrant communications in Russian and therefore contrast it to the more standardised version from mainland Russia which becomes distinctly 'masculine' to them: [49]

> *Так как я тут не очень часто говорю по-русски, то есть где-то пару раз в неделю с мамой по скайпу, и ещё иногда с подружкой из Глазго...и теперь мне кажется, что я так привыкла к русскому языку в женском исполнении. А потом, когда я еду в Россию и слышу мужчин, говорящих по-русски, особенно в Москве, там, например, в метро, на эскалаторе – все эти объявления, которые делает мужской голос, да ещё и с такой странной интонацией, и вот тогда мне становится совсем не по себе. Я прямо буквально чувствую угрозу, исходящую от этого голоса, потому что я отвыкла слышать мужскую речь по-русски...* (026-F-33-NCL)[50]

The emphasis on grammatical correctness of 'Russian-1', the language of the 'mainland', accords with the recent initiative which was first introduced by linguist

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[48] *Russian language is like a kind of home chore for me because I am a woman, I would be obliged to somehow do some Russian with my kids.*

[49] Gender roles and expectations towards linguistic behaviour and 'language chores' as perceived by Russian-speaking women will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

[50] *As I do not speak Russian a lot here, that is just a couple of times per week with my mom via Skype and with a female friend from Glasgow, I have started feeling now that I am so used to Russian performed in a female voice. And then, once in Russia, I hear men speaking Russian, especially in Moscow, in the underground, for example – all these announcements made by a male voice, and with that weird intonation as well, and then I feel really uncomfortable. I can feel the threat coming from that voice because I am so not used to hearing male speech in Russian...*

enthusiasts in Novosibirsk and then developed to become all-Russian and finally global. 'Total Dictation' ('*Тотальный диктант*') is an annual competition that takes place on the first Saturday of April at the same time at different venues all over Russia and in any other countries willing to join the campaign. It involves a collective practice of writing a text specially prepared by one of the contemporary Russian writers or journalists on an issue somehow related to the present state of Russian language and culture. The idea to test the level of literacy and grammatical competence of all those who volunteer to participate is also supplemented by raising the linguistic awareness of the attendees.[51]

In practice the initiative began resembling that of a secondary school examination in Russian and is thought by organisers and attendees to be quite a reliable way of assessing one's level of competence. All participants are invited to hand in their writings to be checked for spelling and punctuation mistakes and are awarded a mark from 1 to 5, as in a secondary school. The campaign of 2013 was particularly controversial because it opened up participation to Russian speakers living outside the borders of the Russian Federation, giving the right thereby to affirm their belonging to the global Russian-speaking community. The author who was given the task of preparing and dictating the text was Dina Rubina, a Russian-language writer who had migrated to Israel a long time ago (on Rubina's work see Ronell 2008). The controversy over her participation in the campaign was generated by some commentators questioning Rubina's status as a truly 'Russian' author (based on the fact that she did not have Russian citizenship at that moment) and challenging her 'right' to lead this competition for this reason.[52]

Thus the idea of the state as a provider of the rights to be fully eligible to name Russian as one's native language was once more revealed to connect to the

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[51] As it is put on the official web-page of this project, the 'Total Dictation' initiative is aimed at promoting grammatical competence as a trend, a fashion, a prerequisite of becoming a successful and self-confident person. Available from: http://totaldict.ru/about. (Accessed 20/07/2015)

[52] One of the first claims made by a Russian journalist well before the event (http://www.kp.ru/daily/26042/2956369, accessed 20/07/2015) was followed by a more official account from an established Russian writer (http://www.rospisatel.ru/bondarenko-rubina.htm, accessed 20/07/2015).This was finally supported by the local authorities of Ulianovsk, one of the venues, where the governor replaced the original text by a more 'politically correct' one (produced by a local author). In relation to the formula of 'the great and mighty Russian' this debate around Rubina's right to perform as a truly 'Russian' writer evidently concerns the issue of her current citizenship since Turgenev himself who, as was mentioned by some discussants, spent most of his life out of Russia, is not doubted as belonging to 'Russian' culture.

secondary schooling system as a base for both mastering the language and accepting mainstream language ideologies. But for Russian-speaking communities all over the world this campaign has also become a strong indicator of their linguistic identity.

Russian-speaking participants of Total Dictation in the UK in 2013 numbered around 50 people at two venues (London and Cambridge) and reported their sense of excitement and responsibility before the event ('a feeling just like before an important exam', 'have you all revised the rules?') and their pride of being a competent Russian speaker afterwards ('it is so nice to know that Russian is not forgotten and – what's crucial – we all want to be more competent in it'). 'To socialise with compatriots' was not a dominant reason cited for attending this event (reported only once) ceding priority to the wish to 'test oneself' and 'improve one's competence in Russian' since the lack of grammatical correctness was something participants claimed to be 'suffering from'.[53]

In 2015 the campaign of 'Total Dictation' was held in North-East England for the first time. Organised by one of the Russian-speaking migrants currently residing in Newcastle, the event took place in a public library and was attended by 12 participants, most of whom were from Russia, although a few came from other FSU republics and some had in fact studied Russian as a foreign language. Based on the diversity of the attendees' language backgrounds and relations towards Russian, this event had the purpose of bringing together people interested in the language itself while sharing the same idea of assessing one's own competence in it by undertaking the 'dictation'. On the level of symbolic representation, though, the idea of the Russian language belonging to the Russian state was highlighted by specific markers – e.g. the flag of the Russian Federation, placed on the wall of the venue and an opening video filmed by official organisers back in Russia, introducing the Russian language as Russia's 'virtue', on the one hand, and as a 'global', world language, on the other (Fig. 2).

The juxtaposition of discourses on what Russian should represent – a language that both a foreign learner and a native speaker feels personal interest in

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[53] All quotes are taken from the messages left by participants at the events' pages of the 'Total Dictation' in Facebook: London event (https://www.facebook.com/events/430175933727418), and Cambridge event (https://www.facebook.com/events/453040661431089). Both accessed 20/07/2015.

Figure 2. The '*Тотальный диктант*' ('Total Dictation') event held in Newcastle in April 2015. Jesmond Library, April 18, 2015. Photos taken by the author.

or a national emblem which helps to reunite all speakers of this language

worldwide in this symbolic practice of complying with its most standardised

variant – emphasises the tangled relationship of native speakers of the language towards the Russian state as its 'natural habitat'. 'Russia' thereby becomes a 'mainland' rather than a 'homeland', since it is the former notion that highlights the connections made by Russian-speaking migrants both from Russia and other FSU countries between the language's standardised variant and the territory which claims its rights to it through this symbolic practice. By performing in the 'Total Dictation' event post-Soviet migrants reflect on the Russian state's responsibility to maintain this standardised high norm and promote it worldwide. This is another example of how the language is conceptualised as a 'soft power' instrument at the level of folk, 'naive' theories of language.

3.5. The status of Russian through the relationships between languages

While feeling the estrangement from their native language or constant awareness of their bilingualism, which made them attentive to the context and the addressees of their communication, most of the informants still felt entitled to make judgements about the language – to assess whether it was 'evolving' in the right direction or whether it was perhaps following the wrong path; how it should be treated by the government and its speakers. Another area of their reflexivity involved the issue of how Russian relates to other languages – both in the post-Soviet space and worldwide.

My informants describe Russian as 'rich' and 'beautiful' (014-F-50+-NCL), 'great' (005-F-26-BLT), 'interesting' and 'old' (029-F-29-NCL), and they do so above all in contrast to other languages of the FSU, which they call 'less significant' or 'simpler' (013-M-26-NCL). The way native Russian speakers describe, for example, Kyrgyz, Latvian or Ukrainian, however, differs significantly from the way these languages are perceived by their native or advanced non-native speakers with a good command of Russian as well. For many, Russian speakers vs. those using only titular languages of other post-Soviet countries is perceived as matching the opposition between urban and rural dwellers or between the educated and the

uneducated. This contrast is especially significant for those coming from Central Asia, namely, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in my informants' cases.[54]

The formula of 'Russian language, great and mighty' is used – in many cases half-jokingly – in the attempt to generalise and express what all Russian-speaking migrants 'should' feel towards the language. The same division is set in respect of the language's importance and usefulness in the global context. While Russian 'will always be needed at least in certain domains' (*всегда в жизни пригодится, хотя бы в чем-то*, 014-F-50+-NCL), other languages and their significance are likely to be mocked (e.g. '*Латвийский язык поможет тебе собирать клубнику в Ирландии'*, '*The Latvian language will help you collect strawberry in Ireland'*, 027-M-24-NCL).

However distant Russian may be perceived from the linguistic reality migrants are exposed to, it is never placed outside of the European context, but included in a language continuum that unites the European and Russian territories, constructing one common linguistic space. Moreover, it makes its way to the list of European languages of 'great nations': English, French, German and Spanish. However, from the perspective of Russian-speaking migrants, the UK's geographical location and language history make English closer to the USA and other English-speaking countries (Canada, Australia, New Zealand) than the rest of Europe – the dichotomy of English-speaking vs. 'continental Europe' is rather frequent in their narratives (017-F-37-DHM; 027-M-24-NCL; 018-F-27-NCL). In its turn, Russia, especially linguistically, while included in the European continuum, is at the same time 'othered' or even slightly exoticised by the speakers themselves or in their presentations of the locals' perspectives on them:

> *Мне кажется, что он* [the Russian language] *скорее входит в когорту европейских языков, но таких, более сложных европейских языков. То есть он выглядит менее экзотическим, чем языки Азии и Африки, но в то же время, в контексте Европы, тоже экзотическим языком.* (017-F-37-DHM)[55]

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[54] For a recent discussion of how competence in Russian has become one of the crucial factors for constructing urban vs. rural opposition in contemporary Bishkek see Flynn & Kosmarskaya 2014.

[55] *I think that it* [the Russian language] *is more likely to be included into the cohort of European languages but those more complex European languages. It seems less exotic than languages of Asia or Africa, but at the same time, within the European context, it is an exotic language as well.*

In other accounts this ambivalence in defining the status of Russian may be expressed through stressing its particular 'complexity' and 'difficulty to learn' (at least for most speakers of European languages), but not exactly its 'exotic' nature (027-M-24-NCL).

In general, the attitude of Russian speakers towards Russian matches, in fact, their attitude towards English in many ways, especially in terms of how they imagine its 'greatness' and 'significance' as well as the range of its practical implementations in various spheres. However, the two languages are presented as reflecting other broader cultural stereotypes. While English is seen as logical and instrumental (especially in its American variant), Russian is said to fail to express formal logic but to be useful for expressing affect and emotionality.[56] This difference in reported images of Russian and English by the migrants generally corresponds with the findings of linguists exploring the concepts of 'language' as reflected in written texts of the two cultures. As D. Polinichenko (2004) argues, in Russian paremiology the abstract term 'language' is expressed by stressing its might as an organ of speech somewhat alienated from its users whereas English usage stresses its instrumentality in achieving personal, mostly material, benefits.

English was named by many of my informants as the key factor that determined their destination for migration in the first place.[57] The practical value of Russian is also stressed, but its significance is not obviously connected to the daily lives of Russian-speaking migrants in the UK. However, the status of 'global language' which is definitely ascribed to English, tends also to be used towards Russian (especially by those coming from other FSU states). The understanding of Russian as a cross-country lingua franca at least within the former USSR borders defines it as also having this 'global' status. It is also mentioned as a common communication language for most of the FSU migrants abroad – as Marat, 26, describes the circulation of Russian within migrant communities:

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[56] '*Вот в английском нельзя сказать слово 'родненький', как объяснить, что он мне родненький. Нет каких-то вот 'сынуля', 'доча' - либо son, либо daughter*'. ('*Well you cannot say the word 'dearest'* [uses Russian diminutive] *in English, how am I to explain that he is my dearest? There is no 'sonny' or 'daught'* [uses Russian diminutives] *– it is either 'son' or 'daughter'.)* (005-F-26-BLT)

[57] '*Английский язык – основной язык, разговорный по всему миру, за ним будущее, поэтому изначально выбирала англоязычную страну*'. ('*English language is the main language, the main communicative language around the world, so I was thinking of an English-speaking country from the very start.*') (029-F-29-NCL)

Со всеми общение проходит нормально, нет никакого колоссального разделения или различия, все мы были когда-то одной страной. В принципе на русском разговаривают все. Может быть, у кого-то это не доминирующий, но язык. (028-M-26-NCL)[58]

Thus Russian language creates a 'buffer zone' for all FSU migrants, which is available for urgent communication, but lacks its symbolic obligation and provides separate zones for closer, intra-ethnic relations. Regarding language attitudes this situation of various backgrounds gives metalinguistic reflections a new turn – whereas the very idea of a highly standardised version of Russian becomes ascribed to a 'mainland' Russian-state or wider post-Soviet space, the Russian in use, their flexible 'Russian-2', may become more variable in its speakers' accounts. Some of the Russian-speaking migrants start to pay more attention to differences in local varieties of Russian and in the long run learn to define the origins of different speakers by their vernaculars. For example, Denis, 16, claimed to be particularly successful in recognising the different accents of fellow migrants (thereby engaging in 'folk dialectology'):

Один из моих друзей из Харькова говорит с сильным хохляцким акцентом. Я сам из Молдовы – мы говорим быстро и часто невнятно, и это многих раздражает. Есть азербайджанский, дагестанский, казацкий акцент. (019-M-16-SPM)[59]

Dmitrii, 24, 'specialised' in the distinctive vocabularies and jargons of particular local origins:

Чикса – от прибалтийского русского такого слова никогда не услышишь, это чисто московское. К тому же, прибалты никогда так много не матерятся, ну, если только из Риги – вот те, да. (027-M-24-NCL)[60]

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[58] *Communication goes okay with everyone, there is no enormous gap or difference, we all used to be one country. Generally speaking, everyone speaks Russian. For some of us it might be not their dominant language but still.*

[59] *One of my friends is from Kharkov and speaks with a strong 'khokhol'* [pejorative for 'Ukrainian'] *accent. I am from Moldova myself – we speak fast and somewhat indistinctly, which irritates many people. There is an Azerbaijani, Dagestani, Cossack accent.*

[60] *'A chick'* [uses slang] *– you will never hear a word like that from a Russian from Baltic states. Also, Baltic Russians never swear that much, well probably those from Riga – oh yes, they do.*

Many Russian-speaking migrants believe Russian to be not just a 'very difficult language' (005-F-26-BLT) but also requiring rather specific qualities from those trying to learn it. Moreover, English-speaking locals may be differentiated by their 'capacities' to master Russian. According to some informants, older generations in the UK are more likely to be interested in Russian and apparently achieve better results in learning it (as well as having some basic knowledge of the language already). The younger local population, in contrast, seems poorly informed and lacking interest, making its fleeting judgements on Russia based on the stereotypes, or '*судят о России по BBC и тому, что все пьют водку*', as Nikolai, 23, puts it (*'make their judgement about Russia based on BBC reports and the 'everyone-drinks-vodka' statement'*, 021-M-23-NCL). A similar correlation is (predictably) said to pertain to the level of education: the higher it is, the more likely an English-speaking person is to grasp the 'right' idea of Russian as a language.[61] In its extremes this 'idea' may appear to have a truly primordial meaning, as Nina, 29, puts it talking about her 'unique' friend who managed to learn Russian at an exceptionally high level:

> *У моей подруги бывший парень, кстати, очень хорошо ему удалось выучить русский язык, буквально за три года. ... Но у него самого стереотип – он мог бы быть русским. ... Нет в нем такого английского вот. Ну, не знаю, он ближе вот к нашей душе. Вот я бы его даже представила таким деревенским парнем, который водку пьет. Вот я не знаю, что-то у него такое русское, древнее, на Руси. Мужики жили на Руси – вот что-то такое в нем есть, да. И он до того понимал вот эти мелкие всякие наши. ... То есть он мог уже переделать что-то, это до такой степени тонкости, очень надо влиться в язык.* (024-F-29-WST)[62]

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[61] Interestingly, these observations were typical for those informants who were employed in retail (024-F-29-WST), education services (034-F-26-DRL) or catering, working as waiters (027-M-24-NCL) or barmen (025-M-32-DRL) and thus communicating regularly and intensively with customers as part of their daily working routine.

[62] *My friend's ex-boyfriend, by the way, made a lot of progress in learning Russian, literally in three years. ... But he had this stereotype about him – he could have been Russian without doubt. There is nothing very English about him. I don't know, I felt he was closer to our soul. I could imagine him as a village guy drinking vodka. Well I do not know, there is something so Russian, of ancient Rus times, in him. Like those blokes who lived in Rus – there is something quite like that in him as well. And he was so good in gripping all our small things. ... So that he could transform some words, and this is so expert, you need to really blend in the language for that.*

Thus the juxtaposition of Russian and English expressed regarding the languages themselves in their practical advantages and limitations, once it concerns the speakers, shifts into the field of 'national character'('*менталитет*'), the concept which is particularly popular among Russian speakers in their lay metalinguistic reflexivity.[63] The reverse process of shaping the images of Russian-speakers by the speakers other languages, however, also plays a significant part in the way migrants reconsider their situational linguistic behaviour and personal views on abstract language matters.

3.6. Portraying the Russian speaker: Self-imaging and outer reflections

One of the ways in which migrants express their language attitudes in everyday experiences is through their reactions to Russian speech in the given, non-Russian language environment. The lack of social networking among Russian speakers in the region was an area of concern for many of my interviewees – I encountered the same formula of their being 'no solidarity among migrants' ('*нет сплочённости*') as an ultimate diagnosis of the local Russian-speaking community in many narratives (005-F-26-BLT; 027-M-24-NCL; 028-F-26-NCL; 052-M-42-NCL). At the same time, most informants report the feeling of excitement they experience when catching occasional Russian-language speech in the British streets. It is not only a matter of recognising Russian as such. Its speakers will also be analysed – their accents, the informal and non-standard uses will be spotted and a short linguistic portfolio will be drawn based on these observations (see the rise of 'folk linguistic awareness' discussed above). No further action is likely to be taken, however: scarce communicative conventions for such occasions make any improvised contact hardly worth it (mainly because of the reported heterogeneity of the group). The essence of this paradox was expressed by Kristina, 27, who first claimed to feel especially lonely lacking enough Russian-speaking communication but then mentioned:

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[63] In their lay interpretations, speakers back in Russia tend to connect the idea of 'national character', '*менталитет*', among others, with the idea of inherent monolingualism (see, e.g. Krongauz 1999).

Я ищу общения, я ищу качественного общения, я ищу нормального общения, но не так уж я ищу, чтобы тут со всеми русскими обняться и вот плакать… (018-F-27-NCL)[64]

Occasional native Russian speech on the streets is met with some wariness, mostly due to a sense of unpredictability of what one might expect from these encounters. The context of migrant displacement heightens expectations of interaction with fellow Russian-speakers; it heightens also expectations of what might come out of these interactions; yet it also unsettles interactional conventions making them unlikely to be 'normal'. Pre-existing stereotypical representations of 'Russians in Britain' are often adopted by migrants in the very early stages of their experiences in the UK. Evgeniia, 26, recollects how she imagined 'Russians in Britain' even before she moved to the country:

Когда мне сказали: «Как насчет Англии?», у меня было такое «ааа!», Англия – это же, наверное, для супер-богатых, это же только для каких-нибудь наших олигархов, это же такое прямо… (005-F-26-BLT)[65]

However critical and stereotypical the Russian-speakers' attitudes towards the image of their speech community in general might be, an earnest and eager interest in the language from outside of the group always finds strongly positive feedback. Many migrants admit their surprise at how little local residents know about their country of origin, and how unfamiliar they are of Russian language and culture in general. However, they also start to observe and comment on the phenomenon that might be broadly referred to as 'foreigners' Russian'. This very schematic 'repertoire' is constructed from certain common words in Russian that speakers of other languages happen to know, or basic Russian phrases recognised internationally, which are tied by general ideas others share about Russian communication patterns.

This 'foreigners' Russian' usually includes words or phrases that are misinterpreted or put in a wrong context. One of the most widespread examples mentioned by several interviewees is the phrase 'Na zdorov'e' ('*На здоровье*'),

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[64] *I seek communication, I seek communication of a certain quality, I seek normal communication, but I am not that desperate as to embrace all Russians here and cry on their shoulder…*

[65] *When they asked me, 'How about England?', I had this 'aaaaaaah' feeling. England should be for those super-rich guys, like our oligarchs, it is something like that…*

which foreigners believe is a traditional Russian toasting phrase, namely 'Cheers', but which Russians actually use in the meaning of 'You are welcome' in reply to someone expressing gratitude.[66] Interestingly, some of these frequent examples of 'foreigners' Russian' can end up being deliberately 'misused' by Russian-speaking migrants in an ironical way: the above-mentioned 'Na zdorov'e' was used during one of the 'Russian style' parties that I attended as a toasting phrase to mock the others' distorted idea of 'Russianness'.

Due to this widespread lack of knowledge and interest in the linguo-geographical details within the overall post-Soviet migrant group, the Russophonism for some migrants from the FSU countries other than Russia has become a forced but convenient dominant in their way to present themselves to others – either British locals or migrants of other backgrounds. In many instances a 'speaker of Russian' ('*русскоязычный*' or '*русскоговорящий*' in Russian) may be understood by others as synonymous to a 'Russian citizen' ('*россиянин*') or a 'person of Russian origin' ('*русский*'), which is obviously not always the case. However, some tend to 'give up' their attempts to distinguish among these terms and therefore tend to ascribe themselves to all of these statuses for the sake of saving time refining the differences. Once they are known to speak Russian, many of their new contacts would automatically assume their Russian citizenship, which they (often reluctantly) admit. Those of ethnic Russian origins adopt this new 'imaginary' status more eagerly than those of other ethnic origins. It is also the case for migrants coming from the countries whose titular languages are closer to Russian, i.e. Ukraine and Belarus. Others switch to 'Russia' as a place of origin once they face regular ignorance of their native country among locals or other migrants. Kristina, a Russian-speaking Ukrainian, comments: [67]

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[66] The confusion might have stemmed from the way Russian hosts say it in the sense of 'Help yourself' while offering food or drinks for their guests, which foreigners misinterpret as a phrase for 'Cheers'. There is a 'broken', mispronounced variant of the word, 'nostrovia'.

[67] Obviously, the main bulk of fieldwork for this thesis was conducted before the start of 2014, when Ukraine, arguably, became more familiar to general UK public due to extensive media coverage and probably not that interchangeable with Russia in Russian-speaking migrants' perception.

Говоришь им, что ты из Украины, а в ответ такой взгляд – 'а где это?' Да в Африке! ... В какой-то момент мне это надоело, и я стала говорить, что я из России. (018-F-27-NCL)[68]

While introducing themselves to a mixed, Russian and non-Russian speaking audience, migrants tend to specify their origins gradually, first presenting themselves (in English) as simply 'Russian' and then specifying (in Russian) their actual country of origin within the FSU space. At a cultural event in Durham, which I attended as part of my fieldwork, I witnessed the following exchange. A woman introduced herself in English as 'X. from Russia' and when another one exclaimed 'Me too! Whereabouts in Russia?', she answered, in Russian: 'Well, Kazakhstan, actually' ('*Вообще-то из Казахстана*'). The other one also switched to Russian in her reply: 'Oh, I am from Uzbekistan myself!' ('*Да я сама из Узбекистана родом!*').

3.7. Conclusions

The intensity and regularity of communication in Russian both within the community and with the former compatriots may vary greatly among Russian-speaking migrants – from sporadic and nearly forced contacts to everyday and extensive interactions. Whichever the regularity, their reported language attitudes and interpretations reveal major tendencies sculpted by their current migrant experiences in a multilingual context of the UK. One of these shifts deals primarily with the inner, in-group transformations of their previous views on the language and entails the issue of belonging and experiencing borders through linguistic behaviour and discourse. The other one is more of an interactive nature and is drawn by the relations within a broader, cross-linguistic scope.

Being brought up in the Russian-speaking context outlined by traditions of (post-)Soviet education of all levels and tight connection of the language to a specific representation of the Russophone culture, informants tend to adopt and be constantly reproducing the idea of the dominance of the standardised version of Russian which in its turn implies a level of control upon and responsibilities of its users. Drawn to maintain its 'greatness and might' by their own linguistic

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[68] *You tell them that you are from Ukraine and receive such a look in reply, like 'where is that?' Well, in Africa! ... At some point, I was so tired of it that I started saying that I was from Russia.*

behaviour, they also tend to set up a net of identity connections through addressing this language variety. On the other hand, their migrant present unfolds new communicative patterns and norms which are eagerly employed for their use in the general inter-migrant communication.

This split to two distinct levels establishes new boundaries and zones prone to a new process of identity building. Firstly, this happens through re-considering their relationships with the 'standard' Russian by viewing it not as a means of communication or as a sociolinguistic trait of their social or cultural background, but as a symbolic representation or source of their belonging which becomes the addressee of their, mostly passive interactions. Secondly, by evaluating the process of their multilingual present as 'marginal' in respect to this 'standard' variety, they also put into question their own status as a distinct group, placing themselves in the periphery of the linguistically united concept of the 'great and mighty Russian'. In this respect, the above-mentioned concept of 'the Russian language of the abroad', *язык русского зарубежья*, might be reconsidered here not as a strictly linguistic variety described by a set of classical sociolinguistic features (code-switching, inference, borrowings and fusion of languages at hand) but as an in-group metalinguistic conceptualisation of their identity and status in relation to the 'mainland' domain of Russian.

In a broader perspective of relations between languages and the images of their speakers, Russophone migrants deal with multilinguistic heterogeneity by framing it according to their emergent migrant experiences. Russian, therefore, is ascribed the level, status and prevalence analogous to that of English (this fact in itself being a rich resource for further metalinguistic statements and explanations). Other FSU languages tend to be presented as hierarchically subordinated to Russian. At the level of the speakers' attitudes, however, the comparison of Russian and English goes through significant alterations, mostly driven by English-speaking locals' stereotypical interpretations of Russian-speaking migrants. Having marginalised their own position within the Russian speech continuum, migrants start learning more about this image imposed on them extrinsically, however scattered and vague, in order to re-shape their position and identity in the constant communicative process with speakers of other languages. Looking at their native language through foreigners' eyes, they employ their metalinguistic

means of conceptualisation to acknowledge their experience as one of the various migrant groups in the diverse environment of the UK.

CHAPTER 4. 'RUSSIAN ENGLISH': LINGUISTIC BIOGRAPHIES OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MIGRANTS IN THE NORTH-EAST OF ENGLAND

4.1. 'Russian English': On the concept and its development

It is a truism that migrants moving to a new country bring with them their own social and cultural baggage, which is both distinctive and diverse. The latter is, however, not limited to sets of established home traditions or culturally-specific ideas about how to fashion their migrant communities in the new environment. This 'baggage' also includes pre-existing frameworks for engaging with and interpreting the host setting; it presumes pre-established patterns for dealing with the specificities of this new, very concrete, reality. These interpretative frameworks have their own history, rooted in the broader history of the migrants' society and culture of origin, and that society's relationship to the world at large and to specific parts of that world. But this history is also embedded and embodied in the migrants' own individual biographies.

The relationship that migrants form towards the *language* of the country of destination and eventual settlement is particularly important in this respect since language in its broadest sense performs such a central role in encoding all other aspects of the new social and cultural environment. This relationship is, however, quite often established well before migration is considered even as an idea, let alone a reality; for example, in the process of learning a foreign language at school. Things are complicated still further if this 'host' language happens to be English, which has over the past century, and particularly over the past couple of decades, become a truly global language – a language that can, in reality, no longer be seen as specific to a set of countries or national communities. Indeed, English is now perceived as having a large number of global varieties, known as 'world Englishes', which are formed through specific processes of translinguistic interaction (Nelson 2011: 11, 13).

Despite the fact that global EFL teaching has become increasingly standardised over last decades, there are still distinctive local traditions of treating and studying English. This includes a distinctive 'Russian variant' of 'English', which I will refer to as 'Russian English' and which encapsulates the particular way

in which Russian speakers from across the former Soviet Union learn, use and reflect upon English. The idea of 'Russian', or, more precisely, 'Russophone' English as a specific 'variety' characteristic of post-Soviet learners and characterised by its own linguistic, discursive, contextual and communicative features is highly relevant for better understanding the ways in which Russian-speaking post-Soviet migrants experience their integration into the English-speaking host environment.

The idea of 'Englishes' as a number of linguistic varieties which reflect regional or social idiosyncrasies of its (native and non-native) users was introduced in the late 1970s after Braj Kachru's earlier attempt to reconsider the analytical paradigm for language varieties of indigenous populations of overseas British colonies.[69] Since then it was institutionalised as a subject of academic research and recognised more generally by non-academic audiences.[70] While this is a recent field of research, its theoretical framework has already been considerably developed: from post-colonial studies of areas formerly dominated by English-speaking authorities and 'presenting descriptions and analyses of the linguistic ecology' of these former colonies (Omoniyi & Saxena 2010: 3) it has moved on to the studies of the globalised world with a focus on transnational migrancy and multilingualism as prerequisites of new, post-modern, super-diverse urban environments.[71]

The most obvious outcome of this is the fact that concrete 'Englishes' have been acknowledged and investigated quite differently. One of the ways to explain the diversification of 'world Englishes' analytically is Braj Kachru's model of three concentric circles – the inner, the outer and the expanding ones: whereas English is a primary language and mother tongue for the inner circle (UK, USA, Australia,

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[69] Kachru's article on the 'Indianness' of English (originally published in 1965) founded the new way to avoid sticking to the relations between the notion of the 'language standard' and 'deviations' from it by introducing such terms as 'contextualisation' and 'nativisation' into sociolinguistic analysis (Kachru 1996).

[70] The International Association of World Englishes founded in 1992 has been actively developing the study of indigenised varieties of English. The result of academic effort to promote the idea popularly includes the study of hip-hop culture and language (Pennycook 2007) as well as introducing the idea of English becoming 'global' through its creolised varieties (e.g. Crystal 2003).

[71] As Omoniyi & Saxena (2010) claim, the sociolinguistics of globalisation has 'prompted scholars of world Englishes to extend the frontiers of investigation beyond intra-state communicative regimes to look at English in inter-state and transnational relationships and communicative contexts' (Omoniyi & Saxena 2010: 4).

Canada) and a lingua franca for those in the outer circle (Asian and African territories of the former British colonies), the expanding circle involves literally all other areas across the globe which use English as a language of international communication (Kachru 1992). Some of these may, however, lean 'towards the so-called English homeland varieties of the United States and Britain in terms of attitudes and preferences' or facilitate the development of the World Standard English Language, or English as a Global Language (EGL). The latter goes 'beyond World Englishes in accommodating varieties beyond and beneath the nation-state' (Canagarajah 2013: 61) and, as some expect, might even eventually replace the British and American varieties 'at the top of the hierarchy' (Omoniyi & Saxena 2010: 9).[72]

However the extension of the expanding circle to all other regions outside the inner and outer ones is in fact an example of generalising presumption – whereas some of the new 'world Englishes' from this circle have become mainstream for academic interest (e.g. 'Chinese English' being one of the most popular ones, cf. P. Ghim-Lian Chew 2010), others are yet to be explored (as a vivid example of the latter, 'Bulgarian English', cf. Georgieva 2010). Apparently, within this classification, the variety of 'Russian English' finds itself at the very periphery of the 'expanding' circle, and is yet to be properly situated and defined (Ustinova 2005).

The variety, however, can obviously be defined, as Z. Proshina has argued persuasively in favour of the coherence of 'Russian English' as a distinct linguistic variety:

> There is no doubt that Russian English has its own linguistic features at all language levels: phonetic (e.g., non-discrimination of short and long vowels, devoicing final consonants, more level intonation), grammatical deviations (e.g., dropping the verb ending -s, confusion of the Past Simple and Present Perfect tenses, the Past Simple and Past Progressive; breaking word order rules); lexical innovations, pragmatic and stylistic differences (e.g., Russians

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[72] The idea of the hierarchy or concentric structure of 'Englishes' has been questioned lately. Yano (2001), for example, proposes a simpler distinction between mesolects-basilects (the varieties of regions where English is a primary, mother, main or official language) and acrolects (the varieties of English for international communication or public domestic utilization), i.e. areas where EGL is just one among a range of languages used for particular (e.g. commercial or professional) purposes.

often sound more formal and categorical due to a number of reasons, of both linguistic and extralinguistic character). (Proshina 2005: 437)

What is more important, 'Russian English' needs to be treated diachronically as it developed since the Second World War, firstly in the context of the Cold War and secondly in the post-Soviet era. Indeed, as A. Pavlenko shows, from the 1920s onwards, the foreign-language learning methodology in the USSR developed within an explicitly ideological framework, aimed at 'using "the language of the enemy" to promote the ideological agenda of socialism and communism' (Pavlenko 2003b: 322). N. Yuzefovich (2005) even calls the earlier variety of 'Russian English' – 'Soviet English', emphasising this highly ideologised nature. In light of a partially shared recent geopolitical history, as well as linguistic filiations, other researches go as far as proposing 'East-European English' (EEE) as an emerging local variety (Salakhayan 2012: 331). This suggests that what is known as 'Russian English' is more likely to refer to a set of specific linguistic attitudes, ideas and discourses, rather than the linguistic outcome of 'contextualisation' of English initially proposed by Kachru and referred to by Proshina in a quote above.

The line between 'Russian English' and a linguistic phenomenon known as 'Runglish' ('Ruglish') is fine but clear. The newspeak term 'Runglish' refers primarily to the product of linguistic contacts of Russian and English speakers in intercultural working or business environments, or, in a more general context, can also be applied to the specific idiom of the Russian-speaking diaspora, particularly the residents of Brighton Beach, NYC, used for its in-group communication.[73] In contrast to the idea of 'Runglish', which mostly refers to a certain number of purely linguistic processes of vocabulary borrowings or mergers and grammatical interferences, which are manifested both on an individual and group level, 'Russian English' constitutes a wider phenomenon which deals not exclusively with uses of language(s) but also – and mostly – with attitudes, expectations and patterns which explain and dominate linguistic behaviour of Russian-speaking non-native English users (Proshina 2014).

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[73] For an outsider view on this 'hybrid language' see Feuer (2005), for an insider and much more emotionally charged overview see Tolstaia (2001).

To escape any ambiguities of the 'Russian English' discussed further, I employ a biographical concept of 'linguistic biography' as a 'term designating the dynamics of language choice, linguistic preferences and competence in a multilingual individual' (Vershik 2002: 40). While this term is not used widely in current sociolinguistic studies, its analytical potential regarding capturing the changing settings and linguistic behaviour of migrants' life trajectories is evident.[74] However, quite a number of studies of linguistic behaviour and conceptualisation in multilinguistic environment seem to rely on the idea of 'linguistic biographies' without actually employing the term.[75]

In what follows I will therefore be particularly interested in the 'Russian English' of Russian-speaking migrants of the North-East of England, which I define through a number of dimensions:

1. diachronically, I am interested in the way their past experiences of learning English reveal the tendencies of EFL teaching ideologies and practices of Soviet and post-Soviet Russian-speaking contexts as (re)evaluated through their current migrant experiences in an English-speaking country;

2. contextually, my intension is to place 'Russian English' of this particular group in their new migrant environment where a number of different 'Englishes' meet not only on a pragmatic level of daily communication but also as a set of discourses on English and its users in this environment;

3. pragmatically, I focus on linguistic behaviour patterns and language attitudes towards English rather than the technicality of bilingualism in action or emerging idioms of this bilingual community;

4. methodologically, I use the biographical narrativisation of linguistic experiences and their rationalisations provided by my informants which helps to grasp the changing patterns of trajectories of sociocultural acquisition through linguistic practices characteristic of Russian-speaking migrants in all the stages of

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[74] One recent example of the study of linguistic biographies of migrants is Bhatnagar's (2008) exploration of the way immigrant children gradually adjust to the English- and French-speaking school environment.

[75] For example, one of them is N. Lvovich's autobiographical research which looks at how she herself progressed through particular linguistic skills and language attitudes over the course of her life (1997).

their EFL studies, both in their home countries and in English-speaking host environments.

In this chapter I will follow the logic of the linguistic biographies of Russian-speaking migrants in the North-East of England by engaging their autobiographical narratives and metalinguistic reflections into the analysis of 'Russian English' both as a 'Russian-speaking' discourse on English and as a sociolinguistic dimension of Russian-speaking migrants' trajectories of integration in the region:

- I will first contextualise the theme by giving a short overview of Soviet and contemporary traditions of Russian(-speaking) EFL practices in general.

- I will then move to observing a very particular set of Russian-speaking migrants' recollections and explanations of how this 'Russian English' was formed through their foreign-language study before their migration to the UK.

- My next step will be to draw on the specific linguistic 'events' which serve as symbolic crossroads transforming the subjects' linguistic behaviours and statuses according to their new environment. I will see how their 'Russian English' is developed further during the unstructured acquisition of English in everyday interactions.

- I will then proceed to characterise the way Russian speakers in the UK treat and deal with their encounters with a local variety of English, namely the Geordie dialect.

- My last point will be to focus on migrants' reflections on the way they perceive local residents dealing with their 'Russian English'. I will here look also at how their own 'Russian English' changes in the light of interlinguistic and interethnic contacts.

4.2. English in a Russian-speaking context: A socio-historic perspective

A 2013 study shows that Russian citizens today are more likely to know English than any other foreign language (37% claim at least some knowledge of it).[76] Most of them assess their skills as basic (33%) whereas an advanced level is claimed by

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[76] The survey conducted by an independent research agency with over 1000 respondents across 43 regions of Russia showed that 57% of Russian citizens claimed some knowledge of at least one foreign language (irrespective of their level of ability). German came second (19%), while French and Spanish ranked third and fourth respectively, together gaining less than 5% (Asis 2013).

a relatively small group (8%). Unsurprisingly, English has also been named as the most 'desirable' foreign language to study, which not only raises the question of possible motivations for learning,[77] but also requires more detailed investigations of what 'knowing a foreign language' might mean to Russian-speaking learners. In regard to this, yet another, earlier sociological poll (conducted in May 2007 and involving over 2660 respondents; Levada 2008), designed specifically to present the respondents' self-assessment of their actual skills in a foreign language, showed a rather different picture: 76% stated that they did not have any or only very limited knowledge of any foreign (European) language, only 5% claimed fluency in all spheres, whereas a significant category of respondents identified with the statement 'I can read and translate with a dictionary' (20%), which represents a distinctive practice of foreign language learning characteristic of Soviet teaching methodologies.[78] These results drive to the idea of particular ways foreign languages, English in particular, are learned, treated and used in the Russian-speaking space now and in the historic perspective of teaching methodologies and learning experiences of Soviet and early post-Soviet times.

After the revolution of 1917, the long-standing tradition of language learning was discontinued by new Soviet state as a remnant of the old educational ideology. With an overall massive transformation of the education system and its strategies during the 1930s, foreign language learning was also put in the focus of these reforms, acknowledged as both an important skill and a discipline to be studied throughout the educational period (Zabelishinskii 1931). However, despite this initial drive, further development of foreign language teaching was highly ineffective due to the drastic gap between a quickly progressing methodology and expertise and its low practical applications at all educational levels.

The post-Stalin period witnessed a considerable drive to develop the teaching of foreign languages, predominantly at school level. The decree of the USSR's Council of Ministers of May 1961 'On the Improvement of Studying of

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[77] With every fourth respondent expressing a wish to learn English at some point in their life, most of them specify that they need English mostly for recreation or as purely 'symbolic', not practically directed knowledge.

[78] This practice has also turned into a concept to describe a certain level of foreign language proficiency which is often used officially or semi-officially, for example, in job application forms. The formula itself gained a commonly shared meaning of a prolonged, widely accepted but mostly inapplicable skill developed throughout school and university years.

Foreign Languages' generally made foreign language learning a widespread and encouraged activity within different age cohorts, with the greatest emphasis being placed on English. However, the popularity of foreign language learning was the result of the value that knowing any foreign language had for internal career paths, rather than its usefulness in international communication, given that international travel and interaction was so restricted (Matthews 1982: 28). Two principles of foreign language studying followed the reforms – the development of specific methodology and the lack of potential communicative practice.

The methodology of teaching foreign languages was based on presenting a language as a field of theoretical knowledge rather than a practical tool for intercultural communication. In his exploration of education in Soviet schools J. Muckle (1988) argues that the principle of 'unity of consciousness and action', proposed theoretically by methodologists, in teaching a foreign language to schoolchildren usually meant that 'without attention to grammar [it] gives poor results and that the method of inviting pupils to deduce grammar rules for themselves is wasteful of time' (Muckle 1988: 151). Another tendency of foreign language teaching was the increasing ideologisation of the syllabus contents: the main area of linguistic expertise was given to three interacting 'themes' which pupils would have to acquire: 'the pupil and his immediate surroundings', 'our country' and 'countries where the language learnt is spoken' (Muckle 1988: 153). Therefore, all teaching materials were designed in a way to ensure that learners 'would not be "contaminated" by the languages they were learning' (Pavlenko 2003b: 323), and most course books of late Soviet times were aimed at insulating the learner from the 'pernicious bourgeois influence', *тлетворное буржуазное влияние* (Litovskaia 2008: 106).[79]

Since the Stalin era, the 'foreigner' speaking an unknown language had been turned into a figure that could be denounced as a potential spy or enemy. While in the Stalin years foreigners could be arrested in the streets merely because of their speech (Papernyi 2007), later recollections of foreign exchange students residing in Moscow during the late 70s – early 80s also reflect on the suspicion, distrust and

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[79] One of the most popular examples of these supplementary materials is the course designed by N. Bonk which soon became an object of *defitsit*. This book was even referenced in the set phrase 'to learn English by Bonk', *'учить английский по Бонку'* [sic] which was widely used in late Soviet times (Pavlenko 2003b).

even hostility towards them from locals as a result of their unusual language (Lvovich 1997). The memoir of a foreigner living in Moscow in post-Soviet years also describes numerous episodes where the author was being pointed at or refused communication because of her 'foreign accent' (Ventsl 2012).[80] The effect this ideologically constructed and socially maintained attitude to foreigners had on the EFL teaching in late Soviet times was that 'the English language was taught as a dead language' (Ter-Minasova 2005: 446).

Post-Soviet times caused a number of 'tangible cultural dislocations' which put the Russian education system in a state of continuous transformations (Isaakyan 2006: 137). However, Webber's 'geological approach' to exploring the teaching profession in Russia shows 'very little variation discernible across the decades, a reflection of the comparatively far greater degree of continuity and far lower amount of change that characterised the Soviet teacher-education system' (Webber 2000: 92-93). This is the case also with the teaching of foreign languages, with post-Soviet educational practices in both schools and universities still carrying some of the recognisable imprints of Soviet traditions.

This particular, 'Soviet', way of studying a foreign language has recently become a subject of a well-developed discourse of ironical deconstruction, the most illustrative examples of which are the mock 'course books' or exercises which reproduce the Soviet layout and design, but that are aimed at re-mastering one's 'Soviet/Russian English' and transforming it into one which, in sociolinguistic terms, would be closer to EGL and more apprehensible in international communication (see, e.g., Esquire 2005). What is interesting about the new discourse is that it provides not just useful information on survival grammar and conversational English, but also constitutes a thick network of symbols and meanings which refer ironically to Soviet realities, most particularly, to recollections of school experiences, representations of Russophone culture, or stereotypical images of what 'Soviet' and 'post-Soviet' might mean abroad.

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[80] In his recent fictional novel based in the mid-2000s Moscow, A.D. Smith accounts of the specific 'language game' which Russian-speaking locals involved him as a foreigner in: *'The Russian girls always said they wanted to practise their English. But sometimes they also wanted to make you feel that you were in charge, in their country but safe in your own language... I was on my way to being fluent, but my accent still gave me away halfway through my first syllable. Masha and Katya must have clocked me as a foreigner even before I opened my mouth'* (Smith 2011: 11-12).

Since the 1990s, Russian EFL teaching has also attempted to engage with the wider international context of language training, and international standards are now being employed in many contexts of formal learning and assessment. The correspondence of these two dimensions in current foreign language teaching is described by I. Kolesnikova (2005) who suggests that these are best represented through two different 'approaches to organising teacher training courses': one of them is government-led, still carries much from Soviet methodologies and is conducted in Russian, while the other is mainly organised by international charity organisations and is run in 'global' English (Kolesnikova 2005: 471). However, according to EFL teachers coming from outside of the country, contemporary EFL teaching in Russia is only half-way towards recognising 'international English' and is still governed by the idea of 'pure language and prescriptive grammar', instead of accepting the possibility of multiple correctness. Russian EFL variant of English is usually presented through the 'British/American English debate', rather than the flexible 'global' variety (McCaughey 2005: 459).

Despite the growing field of academic research on 'Russian English', the learning portfolio of Russian-speaking students of foreign languages has been under-explored. The actual skills and knowledge they obtain, as well as the attitudes and meanings formed during the process of study are, however, exemplary of how the idea of 'Russian English' is reproduced by its speakers. I will focus on the corpus of narratives from current Russian-speaking migrants in the North-East England to explore the way their 'Russian English' is formed, perceived and employed in an English-speaking context.

4.3. Russian-speaking migrants reminiscing on learning English

The 'Russian English' variety as seen within Russia (and other FSU countries) might considerably differ from that of Russian-speaking residents in an English-speaking country. Therefore I will examine the biographical narratives and reflections on the language-learning process of my informants to understand the way 'Russian English' is constructed and reported on by them. This biographical approach and narrative accounts provide perspective on what may be called 'Russian English abroad', or a set of recollections on EFL learning experiences revisited from the viewpoint of a non-native migrant living in an English-speaking

environment. Some of these considerations exemplify general attitudes towards EFL teaching techniques, acquired skills and the image of English as a language shared by its Russian-speaking learners. Others accentuate core features of migration-specific linguistic behaviour and language reflections.

Considering the experiences of post-Soviet migrants dealing with different images of English – that of a schoolroom or a university audience and the one they face while communicating with native speakers or other migrants, my argument here is that the most common skills the informants recollect from their learning past are more likely to be 'non-skills' or capacities that are in fact highly inadequate in most standard communication. However, they become 'non-skills' only in an English-speaking environment, whereas their symbolic or practical value can otherwise be rather high in a Soviet and post-Soviet home context. These might involve linguistic as well as generic skills which consequently play an important role in the way people evaluate their linguistic experiences in a new migrant environment. The idea of 'linguistic biographies', personal trajectories and experiences regarding linguistic behaviour and practices as narrated by informants, demonstrates how linguistic resources are assessed, controlled and explained in culturally specific contexts.

Most of the informants started to study a foreign language (predominantly, English) already as children, commonly from their first grade (age 6-7) and continued throughout their school years (most of them also while studying at university):

> *Ну, я же начала с нуля, в четыре года, там правда было вообще 'май литл дол из вери смол', потом у меня был английский в школе, с первого класса.* (005-F-26-BLT)[81]

This gradual language learning at different stages of the education process provides an ongoing, routine and habitual context of acquiring English. As one of the informants puts it, *'I have been learning English for most of my life'* (021-M-23-NCL). Yet, as they were keen to stress in their narratives, difficulties in communicating in the language they had been learning for so long was one of the first experiences they faced after moving to the country where this language is

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[81] *Well, I started from scratch, when I was four, but it was very basic, like 'my little doll is very small'* [parodies Russian accent], *and then I had English classes at school, from the first grade.*

spoken. One of the informants called his English 'horrible' even though he had
been taught it for nine years at school:

> *Вообще ужасный был английский, когда я сюда приехал* [2004]. *Учил его*
> *с первого класса, но знал на уровне 'кошка', 'собака', 'раз-два-три'.* (027-
> M-24-NCL)[82]

Others use the adjective 'school' (*школьный*) to describe the level of English
proficiency as a working euphemism to address their poor level at the point of
migration:

> *К моменту переезда в Англию у меня был довольно средненький такой*
> *уровень, школьный, я совсем мало понимал, а английскому научился уже*
> *здесь, в Англии.* (023-M-29-NCL)[83]

Others seem less critical of their pre-existing English language skills,
especially regarding their familiarity with grammar which they had to 'rote learn'
(*зубрить*) for a long time, after which they found that it had formed a 'solid basis'
for their further, more practical acquisition of the language later on. While some
address this practice humorously, focusing on particular aspects of grammar they
experienced especially tiresome or useless,[84] others perceive this knowledge as an
obvious asset in their relations with English-speaking peers later on, feeling in the
full right to 'correct their mistakes'. This is the case of those migrants who
undertook high school or college education courses in the local area, where,
according to them, they were sometimes 'the only foreigners in the class':

> *Даже были моменты в колледже – я поправлял сам англичан. Такая*
> *немного смешная ситуация, но было и такое.* (028-F-26-NCL)[85]

Most of the recollections, however, refer to schools which specialised in
teaching English and which were supposed to be particularly good and prestigious

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[82] *My English was horrible when I came here. I had studied it from the first grade but knew nothing
more than 'cat', 'dog', 'one-two-three'.*

[83] *By the moment of moving to England, I had a very average, school level, and I could understand
quite little but learnt English here, in England.*

[84] For example, one of the informants started monotonously chanting the forms of irregular verbs in
a thick Russian accent, starting with 'be-was/were-been', 'begin-began-begun', which in her
memory was the most vivid experience of English lessons in her school (031-F-23-NCL).

[85] *There were moments at college – I corrected mistakes the English made. It is a bit of a funny
situation but things like that did happen.*

to study in. What motivated to study was not interest or desire to learn a new language but, more likely, the prestige and high career expectations that come with learning English. As Mariia, 28, reflects on her learning path:

> *Английский для школьной программы я знала неплохо, экзамены вступительные и выходные сдавала на отлично, но уровень был низкий... Английский мне просто не было стимула учить, поэтому относилась прохладно.* (010-F-28-NCL)[86]

So the reason the majority of my informants seemed satisfied with the way and level of English teaching they received in their schools is mostly because they did not feel any particular need to learn English, or any other foreign language for that matter.[87]

Memories on teaching techniques and activities seem quite homogenous.[88] While active skills, such as writing or speaking, were usually underestimated, passive skills were narrowed to a limited number of certain kinds of exercises – for example, the skill described as 'reading and translating with a dictionary' (*читать и переводить со словарем*), which my informants referred to regularly. Facing new requirements and their specifications while entering foreign universities or applying for jobs abroad, some mention their realisation that this formula which they were using in their application forms back in the Russian-speaking context meant practically 'nothing'. Anton, 26, shares his experience of complying with a UK-based PhD programme language requirements and the deep feeling of 'many lost years spent in vain in school': *'кому нужно тут, что я "читаю и перевожу со словарем"'* ('*who needs my "writing and translating with a dictionary" here*', 006-M-26-NCL). As a result, he had to spend over a year 'boosting up' his general English, attending internationally designed courses and preparing for an international test in English.

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[86] *I knew English well enough for the school programme, I passed my entry and graduation exams with an 'A' but my general level was rather low... I did not have any motivation to learn English so felt rather indifferent towards it.*

[87] Kristina, 27, recollects, '*в школе английский почти не учила – был такой предмет, но я им особо не интересовалась*' ('*I did not study English at school – it was one of the subjects but of no interest to me*') (018-F-27-NCL).

[88] This homogeneity in recalling the schooling experiences has its effect in the way Russian-language weekend schools for migrants' children are organised, viewed and run. See Chapter 7 for more details.

The other activity also widely mentioned by migrants who studied in Russian-speaking schools or universities as typically inherited from the Soviet tradition is the practice of learning 'topics' (*учить топики*)[89] which mostly entailed learning by heart short texts on different issues, specially produced for this purpose by EFL methodologists and abridged for certain levels. This practice transformed what was imagined as a basis for developing the active and productive skill of spontaneous speech into a prepared monologue on sets of subjects. Significantly, these 'topics' served also as a tool for ideological upbringing: they not only created images of the countries that used the language studied, but also provided the ready-to-use representations of the learners themselves in case they needed to communicate to native speakers in the future and covered all the 'significant' themes ('About myself', 'My family', 'My Day', 'My future profession', and so forth, the idea being to recite them using the first person and thereby to adopt the persona they created).[90]

The most popular opening phrases of these 'topics' have also made their way into the allegorical usage of this 'broken', unnatural English of the school education.[91] In the context of current Russian-speaking migrancy these learnt texts have become significant markers of the linguistic baggage migrants share. A number of the most characteristic opening phrases are repeatedly used as 'tags' for describing this common experience or for communicating with compatriots back in Russia to set a common ground discursively. The most obvious example of these, 'London is the capital of Great Britain' (pronounced with a dramatic, thick Russian accent), has become a catchphrase used extensively both in the FSU countries (e.g. for commercial purposes, advertising language courses, in tourist online forums or

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[89] The way the word 'topic' itself became rooted into Russian-speaking EFL teaching as a borrowing referring to a very specific practice is also remarkable especially in contemporary discourse. As EFL experts argue, this practice being 'the utmost form of what Soviet schooling presented' has lately become a 'scapegoat' for those promoting 'westernised', international and predominantly skills-oriented way of EFL teaching and assessment (049-EXP-EFL). Although this activity is regularly criticised, it is still popular in Russian-language schools, and the word 'topic' itself, having been transplanted to Russian as a loan, has made its way back into 'English', i.e. its professional variety used by Russian EFL teachers (see Sergeev 2003).

[90] The way informants perceive and assess these 'topics' and the images they were prompted to obtain corresponds with the interrelation of the 'other' and 'ours' as discussed by M. Litovskaia (2008).

[91] As with the 'reading and translating with a dictionary', these catchy phrases may be used to refer to the level of English competence, however, in a rather informal, unofficial manner.

by learners themselves to characterise their levels of linguistic competence) and beyond (e.g. in Russian migrants' blogs or, to use a particular example, by a Russian-speaking migrant activist in London who decided to use the line as a name for his podcast series on London's history and modern times).[92] The translingual mixture of Cyrillic and Latin scripts to present the phrase featured on the London Underground Oyster card holder appeals to a quite particular audience – 'Russian-speaking Londoners'. It connects their shared cultural background with current mobility practices by merging both linguistic resources at hand (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. An oyster card holder – promotional merchandise for the 'London in 40 steps' excursion enterprise established by a Russian-speaking migrant residing in London. Available from: http://londopolia.com/oystercard/. Accessed 09/07/2015.

The commonality of teaching methods and activities described by the informants contradicts, however, with the usually 'broken' English of their school teachers. As Iana, 33, refers to a well-known Russian joke to characterise her own experience of learning English,

Так как я учила язык в этой конкретной школе и у этой конкретной

учительницы, то я легко могла общаться только с теми, кто учил

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[92] Interestingly, the mentioned (thick) 'Russian accent' is rendered in written speech by transliterating the English pronunciation into Cyrillic, i.e. '*Лондон из зэ кэпитал оф...*' Available from: http://moscowlondon.livejournal.com/628719.html. (Accessed 22/07/15).

английский там же – в той же школе и у той же учительницы. (026-F-33-NCL)[93]

Characteristically, this 'specific' English was usually the only source for training listening skills which Russian-speaking migrants were exposed to during their EFL studies. Only one of them, Nataliia, 37, who studied in a 'specialised' English school in Moscow, remembers listening to the BBC as part of her lessons:

Когда мы учились в Москве, то слушали БиБиСи, поэтому в Англии было проще понимать, чем в Америке. (017-F-37-DHM)[94]

Others followed the pattern described by M. Litovskaia (2008) in her research, when the only listening practice most of the foreign language learners had was the speech of their peers or teacher. Consequently, any chance Russian-speaking interviewees could find to practice their English with a native speaker was deemed important and worth the effort for those who realised their low communicative skills. As Mariia, 28, puts it referring to her joining the religious society led by English-speaking missionaries (she uses occasional borrowings from English to describe this practice of engaging in an English-speaking context):

Было такое Greenhouse society, немного религиозное, и я начала ходить в их церковь, в основном потому что там было multinational society, было весело, были праздники и hot chocolate. Английский там начал как-то расти – я вижу нэйтива, и я вижу смысл какой-то учить язык. (010-F-28-NCL) [95]

More generic linguistic skills which were developed in the wider context of school or university education entail the already-mentioned 'fear of making a mistake', a cross-language attitude towards linguistic behaviour which dominates many narratives about learning experiences on the whole. This attitude (as the one

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[93] *As I was studying the language in this particular school and with that particular teacher, I could easily communicate only with those who studied English there – at the same school with the same teacher.*

[94] *When we studied in Moscow, we listened to BBC so it was easier for me to understand* [speech] *in England than in the USA.*

[95] *There was this Greenhouse society, a bit religious one, and I started going to their church mostly because there was this multinational society* [uses in Eng.]*, it was fun, they had celebrations and hot chocolate* [uses in Eng.]*. My English started to advance there – I see a native* [uses in Eng., i.e. native speaker]*, and I can see the use of learning the language.*

of correcting others' grammatical mistakes discussed in Chapter 3) rapidly transfers to their new studying activities. As Alisa, 22, describes her writing habits during the MA programme,

> *В период написания каких-то пейперов, я до сих пор очень сильно не уверена в своей английской речи, все пейперы мне пруфридит Е. [husband]. Я просто не хочу показаться неграмотной, не хочу, чтобы были ошибки. Можно назвать это комплексом, но я не хочу, чтобы у меня были ошибки.* (043-F-22-DHM)[96]

Apart from mastering the specific and generic skills (or rather non-skills), the process of learning a foreign language entailed the appropriation of the wider cultural context. Since the image of the UK (and, less often, other English-speaking countries), with its focus on cultural, social and geographical information communicated in an ideologically-biased way, was an obligatory and extensive part of English language classes,[97] many of the informants still recall this knowledge incorporated in their learning experiences. These were mostly outdated and romanticised glimpses which, as informants invariably discover, have little resemblance to the reality they found once they migrated. As Evgeniia, 26, admits:

> *Англия, и я представляла себе высоких мужчин, в смокингах, высоких шляпах, с тростью, и чопорных англичанок в чепчиках. Каково же было мое разочарование, когда ни чепчиков, ни вообще одежды, а какие-то синие - не синие, а даже оранжевые – британки, в fake tan'e, с пятью layers of eyelashes, и всё такое* (laughing). (005-F-26-BLT)[98]

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[96] *At the time of writing some papers* [uses a Russificated version of an English word]*, I am still extremely insecure about my English, and E.* [husband] *proofreads* [uses a Russificated version of an English word] *all my papers* [uses a Russificated version of an English word]*. I just don't want to look uneductated; I don't want to make mistakes. You can call it a complex but I do not want mistakes in my speech.*

[97] Exercise-wise, this part of a course was also supplemented by a corpus of 'topics', specially prepared texts presenting a highly ideological image of English-speaking countries, or ideologically correct textbooks which treated realia of the Soviet life in quite an unnatural English (for a vivid example, see Kolpakchi 1975).

[98] *England, and I would draw a picture of tall men wearing tuxedos, high hats and carrying a stick, and prim English women in bonnets. You can imagine how disappointed I was when I came to Newcastle and – no bonnets, not much clothes at all, but these blue – not blue, even orange British women, in fake tan* [uses a Russificated version of an English word]*, with five layers of eye lashes* [uses in Eng.] *and all this stuff.* (laughing)

In this quote the interference of the English lexis sets a well-articulated, almost indexical border between the reproduced discourses on language and language speakers the informant had before and her own actual engagement into the new environment.

Through their newly acquired migrant experiences Russian speakers of the North-East of England are revisiting their background knowledge of English as well as recollections and re-shaping attitudes towards EFL teaching traditions they were exposed to. Whereas most of the skills they possess are re-evaluated in the new settings, some prove not to be required at all (such as the memorising and retelling of 'topics'), others seem to be uprooted from social and cultural practices they were meant for in the post-Soviet context (as 'to read and translate with a dictionary' which still can be quite a meaningful formula for various in-Russian contexts).

The way narratives about EFL learning have little or no connection to present migrant experiences of Russian speakers indicates the idea of two different linguistic repositories and two parallel sets of competencies – one has been built up during their first time in the UK as migrants (or shortly before their migration) and includes survival skills for the new environment; the other seems to be irrelevant in its former meaning but provides them with a well-habituated space with well-known symbols and activities which are open for further re-adjustment in the new context. Processing data from the 'topics', for example, may become not only a stable information platform for use in communication with locals and other migrants, but also a reference frame for interpreting others' communication skills and knowledge areas, which in the long run plays its role in the formation of images of local and other migrant groups.

4.4. Russian speakers in Britain: First encounters, new identities

The first encounters with native speakers of English, being very memorable experiences for Russian speakers, might evoke very different, almost opposite responses – from a total withdrawal from any contacts with English speakers to 'diving into' the new linguistic environment through all possible means of communication. For Viktoriia, 23, this fear of communication was expressed in her voluntary withdrawal from any social contacts with the environment, limiting it

only to a brief exchange of details with her boss and occasional chats with her online game partners, and so far she describes her 'communicative barrier' as unbridgeable (031-F-23-NCL). But Evgeniia, 26, reflects on her progress with finding her style in interacting with locals in English, which is opposite to Viktoriia's experience, mostly due to the communicative 'ease' which she has because of language immersion:

> *Даже когда с новыми людьми общаешься, ты с ними по-другому общаешься. Ты уже знаешь внутренние шутки, телевидение английское, всякие шоу, у тебя уже темы общие появляются. Совсем другой experience быть как insider, да, внутри, да, чем когда ты только в университете, из англичан только преподаватели, и то – если сильно повезло.* (005-F-26-BLT)[99]

However, the extent of this 'integration' is estimated quite modestly both in the sense of the time needed for full 'acclimatisation' and the development of skills required. At the very beginning, even basic tasks are viewed as difficult and daunting, regardless of the 'objective' level of language competence, as Olga, 42, a holder of a specialist diploma in English, recollects:

> *Вообще ничего не понятно было, был ступор. Людей на улицах, людей в магазинах – вообще не понимала. Реально я чувствую, что за этот год у меня улучшился английский, не столько расширился вокабуляр, сколько появилась уверенность. Но по телефону позвонить до сих пор – да ты что!* (003-F-42-NCL)[100]

This 'growing confidence' influences the way higher levels of language competence become involved in everyday interaction. Natalia, 37, who spent years in another English-speaking environment, also refers to the problem of

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[99] *Even if you start communicating with new people, you talk differently to them. You already know all the insider jokes, English TV, all these shows, you have common themes to talk about. A totally different experience* [uses in Eng.] *is to be an insider* [uses in Eng.]*, right, to be inside, yeah, from when you are just at university, the only English people you see are your lecturers – and that is if you are lucky enough.*

[100] *Everything was so unclear, I felt the block. People in streets, people in shops – I could understand nothing. I can feel now that during this year my English got so much better, not only because of broader vocabulary but mostly because of this confidence. But making a phone call is for me still – oh my god!*

'understanding the locals', but her idea of this process includes matters of style, register and discourse rather than basic communicative skills, as mentioned above:

На четырнадцатом году проживания в Англии проще понимать англичан, хотя муж американец, но он тоже уже давно живет здесь и, похоже, 'стилизировался'. (017-F-37-DHM)[101]

For most informants these encounters are not their first occasions of meeting native speakers of English and practicing their language skills. However, the new cultural environment challenges their previous communicative competence and fluency in English. If it is not a new skill which needs to be acquired (e.g. speaking over the phone), then it is the expanding knowledge of regional differences in 'style' and the adjustment of their own linguistic behaviour accordingly. Through experiencing these differences in their own communicative practice, migrants also start to observe their own cultural patterns, make decisions regarding the necessity to alter their linguistic habits and elaborate new strategies of communication and self-presentation.

Further developments of their 'Russian' variety of English are affected by the new experience of being 'othered' as migrants – the identification happens during the first moments of a communication act and influences its further development, at least in the initial stages. As many of the informants note, one of the first questions they face during a spontaneous conversation is 'Where are you from?' I witnessed one of my informants, Artiom, 32, engage in such an exchange and I asked him about it afterwards. He said that although he gets asked this question quite frequently, it never leads to a meaningful conversation. To him, the question seemed a 'discursive trigger', a gesture to designate his status of 'otherness', and nothing else, since, as he puts it, 'they are not even interested in hearing the answer' (025-M-32-DRL). The response most migrants tend to choose is consequently rather evasive: instead of giving their exact country or town of origin (something a question like this might expect as a logical answer), they may mention the place of their current residence in the UK as a way of avoiding the discussion of their migrant background.

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[101] *During my fourteenth year of living in England it feels easier to understand Englishmen, even though my husband is American, he has been living here for a while and seems to have 'stylised' himself enough.*

The linguistic feature initiating this dialogue line is evidently the foreign accent. Interestingly, among all the problems with language migrants would recall, pronunciation was never one of the central ones. This, however, is far from typical for Russian-speaking migration more generally. Researchers have noted that migrants perceive their distinctive 'Russian accent' as a significant obstacle to integration: it can affect an employee's career (Remennick 2002); become a focal point for a crisis of self-identification (Spolsky 2000), or serve as a strong indicator of social stigma (Remennick 2004b). I propose to explain this irregularity in my own corpus of interviews by the distinctive sociolinguistic context of the region in which I carried out my field work (to be further discussed in greater detail). The North East of England is characterised by a mix of strong local accents with Geordie as the main one. This significantly affects linguistic expectations towards accented speech in general and 'loosens' normativity regarding a foreign accent as well, which has its effect on the way non-native speakers subjectively assess their own performance in English.

Claiming their narrow vocabulary, slow command, or grammatical errors as communication barriers, hardly anyone would mention their accent as being inappropriate or difficult to understand. Though many of them are aware their pronunciation is not perfect, and were good at identifying the 'Russian' accent in others and some could even produce it in an exaggerated manner, they would not conceptualise their accent as a barrier or an obstacle, more like a distinct feature which defines them as a particular linguistic group. Informants, however, reported that their accent was described back to them as 'too serious' ('чересчур серьезный'), 'quarrelsome' ('как будто все время ругаемся'), or 'intense' ('слишком эмоциональный') but made no objections or observations to this point. As Nina, 29, shares:

> *Моя подруга сказала, как её муж видит наш русский язык: ему кажется, что мы ругаемся, вот когда мы нормально говорим . Может, мы как-то громко – мы когда с ней встретились, он аж ушел, он думал, что мы ругаемся.* (024-F-29-WST)[102]

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[102] *My friend told me how her husband sees our Russian language: he feels that we quarrel all the time, even when we speak in our usual manner. We might speak too loudly – we met once with her and he even left – he thought we were in the middle of a fight.*

As mentioned earlier, some symbolic features of migrants' 'linguistic baggage' may become re-interpreted and used in other modalities to gradually re-evaluate the whole idea of 'Russian English' according to the locals' perceptions and attitudes towards non-native speakers. To illustrate the point, the distinction of this 'Russian accent' with its communicative connotations is not just recognised by the migrants but also usually becomes adopted and used in suitable communicative contexts. One of the informants, perfectly adapted in linguistic terms for his working life, describes his tactics with accentuated speaking to draw additional attention from his colleagues:

> *Когда на работе надо сказать что-то реально важное, чтобы до них дошло сразу, я включаю 'русский акцент'. Вот сразу схватывают.* (009-M-27-LND)[103]

Therefore the foreign accent labelled as 'Russian' becomes a stereotypical sociolinguistic signifier which communicates 'Russian-ness' to English speakers and also transforms into an identity marker for other migrants. This cross-linguistic awareness that rises as bilingual competence grows may involve other areas of linguistic behaviour where the distinct 'Russian mode' can be switched on. As one of the Russian-speaking bloggers describes her experience:

> *Сегодня на работе что-то всё меня так достало, что я "включила русскую". Did LOTS of straight talking. Сижу мучаюсь угрызениями совести теперь....* (Ямми, 11/05/2015)[104]

The process of linguistic integration for those whose English skills are at a lower level and need to be developed often involves attending language classes run especially for migrants by local councils. Beyond linguistic training itself, these courses usually provide migrants with the opportunity to adjust to the new social and cultural environment and to their statuses within it. Of all informants that I interviewed who had attended such courses, none felt enthusiastic about them. Dmitrii, 24, arrived in the UK with a very basic command of English and, though he managed to find the job quickly, also signed up for the language courses in

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[103] *When I need to say something really important at work, so that everyone understands it at once, I swith on my 'Russian accent'. They immediately get it.*

[104] *Today at work I was so fed up with everyting that I 'switched the Russian on'. Did LOTS of straight talking.* [Uses the phrase in Eng.] *Now I am siting here, torn apart by strong remorse...* Available from: http://yummy-glutton.livejournal.com/43650.html. (Accessed 22/07/15)

Newcastle. What this course did, in addition to and more significantly than providing linguistic training, was to turn Dmitrii into a 'migrant' who shared this status with other fellow newcomers to the region, starting with the non-Europeans, and then adding the East Europeans, with whom Dmitrii was now expected to identify in one way or another:

> *Был бесплатный курс для иностранцев в колледже. В основном там были типично какие-то африканцы, арабы, курды, Иран, Ирак, на тот момент поляки начали уже приезжать.* (027-M-24-NCL)[105]

However, he gave up quite quickly, mostly because he considered the courses 'too easy' and 'useless', aimed at those who 'couldn't say a thing' in English ('*вообще по-английски ни слова не могли*'). His experience is echoed by that of Kristina, 27, who came to the UK with a very limited knowledge of English and was eager to expand it in any way possible. Her first steps were to enrol on a course for migrants in Darlington where she was surprised not that much by the ethnic diversity of her course mates, but rather by the 'European presence' in the 'migrant' classroom as such ('*надо же, на курсах английского в основном были европейцы!,*' 018-F-27-NCL). Courses for migrant mothers which she decided to switch to once she had her child were much closer to her expectations of what a composite structure of migrants in the UK should look like ('*а там уже, как надо, Польша, Азия, Китай, Африка*', '*there everything was as it should be – Poland, Asia, China, Africa*', 018-F-27-NCL).

Common expectations about what a 'migrant' should look like seem to have formed not just by following the general image of the 'migrant other' constructed by the media, but also through ideas about 'Europeannes' which Russian-speaking migrants share. Morgunova (2007) argues that Russian migrants in the UK tend to rely on the concept of a 'European identity' in order to bridge the cultural differences with the host environment and to establish the non-ethnic, civil closeness between their own and the host culture against the usually racialised image of 'the other' which is embodied by migrants coming from other, non-European backgrounds. This idea of 'Europeannes' as a unifying frame dominates

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[105] *There was a free course for foreigners in a college. There were mostly these typical African and Arab people, Kurds, Iran, Iraq, at that moment the Poles had just started to arrive.*

other narratives as well – many Russian-speaking migrants are critical towards the word 'migrant' itself in relation to them. As Nikolai, 23, recollects:

> *Был такой случай, до сих пор не могу его себе как-то объяснить. Меня одна девочка у клуба назвала эмигрантом. Я говорю: да я из России! А она: а, значит эмигрант! – и ушла. Это как так вообще: из России – значит, мигрант сразу? Что ты несёшь вообще?! Я тут учусь, а не собираюсь твои налоги отнимать или твой хлеб жрать. Очень неприятно было.* (021-M-23-NCL)[106]

Those who have attended language courses for migrants stress that they were aimed less at boosting their communicative skills and more at understanding the real status of a migrant in the structure of the local society. As Kristina, 27, says:

> *На курсах мне никакой аспект не был сложен – мне сложно общаться в жизни! Там специально обученные люди на курсах, они привыкли. А потом! … я просто confused, и всё.* (018-F-27-NCL)[107]

A clear distinction is made here between two ideas of 'language' which are treated and evaluated separately. 'Language' as a subject to study in a classroom is a familiar domain where most of the informants feel quite confident (as they are used to 'learning English for their whole lives'). 'Language' as a medium of successful communication within the host society is new and disconcerting, not only due to their lack of experience in developing communication skills in a foreign language, but also because in these situations they are required to act 'the migrant'. The very communicative setting places them in this role in a way that they did not entirely expect.

The specific variety of English is obviously one of the main indicators of their migrant, non-native origins for local residents. Nina, 29, while talking about

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[106] *There was one time, I still cannot quite explain it to myself. One girl called me an immigrant near a club. And I say: but I am from Russia! And she is like, well, that means you are an immigrant! – and went away. How is that possible at all – from Russia meaning being a migrant? What are you talking about?! I study here, I am not going to take away your taxes or gobble your bread. It was very unpleasant.*

[107] *No particular aspect during the course was difficult for me – I struggle more with communicating in real life! There are these specially trained people at the courses, they are used to it. But then!... I am just confused* [uses in Eng.] *and that's it.*

her experience of working as a shop assistant, comments on the most typical way her foreign accent was met and interpreted by local customers:

> *Часто спрашивают: 'Вы с Польши?' Я говорю, нет, с России. 'О, с России...' Более им как-то нравится, что я с России, а не из Польши. Может быть, тут поляков много, работу отнимают или что-то, но когда с России, мне кажется, они как-то более хорошо относятся. Люди, наверное, которые более культуру знают. Я не знаю почему. Большинство – им интересно. Начинают даже разговаривать, что они тоже были или по-русски пытаются разговаривать.* (024-F-29-WST)[108]

This account seems particularly illustrative of the way the 'Russian accent' is classified by UK residents. Due to the recent influx of migrants from different destinations – a situation quite uncommon for the North-East – local residents have developed their own sociolinguistic expectations of how a particular foreign accent should sound like and where a person is most likely to come from. The accented speech, though still uncommon and 'othered', is now readily detected and ascribed by the local population to the most numerous and hence most familiar migrant groups. As elsewhere in the UK, Poles front the wider group of 'East-European migrants' who are grouped as such not only because of their relatively close geographical origins or their vaguely understood common 'communist' past, but also because of the way their respective Englishes are perceived as similar.[109] Theirs, therefore, is the most commonly recognised accent which is often faultily ascribed to all other migrants from the larger East-European cluster. What it means referring to the Russian-speaking migrants is that this outer, etic categorization starts to influence their linguistic experiences in the long run in a two-fold way.

For many Russian-speaking migrants, the fact that they are sometimes being erroneously identified as Poles at first also means that the common image of

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[108] *They usually ask me, 'Are you from Poland?' And I say, 'No, from Russia'. 'Oh, from Russia...' They seem to like it more that I am from Russia, not Poland. Maybe there are lots of Polish people here, they take all the jobs or something, but when they get to know you are from Russia, they have a better attitude. Probably people who know more about [our] culture. I don't know why. For most of them it seems interesting. They even start talking – yes, they have been [there] as well, or they try to speak Russian.*

[109] For a discussion of the way the Polish accent in English is perceived by English native speakers see Gonet & Pietrón 2004.

a 'Polish migrant' may become a crucial referential point in interpreting their life in the UK. In a quote above, Nina highlights the difference between Russian speakers and the Poles which she finds important in defining her migrant identity. For Dmitrii, 24, the post-2004 A8 migration from Eastern Europe is an event on his timeline to differentiate between the 'non-migrant' and 'migrant' periods in the region:

> *Когда мы приехали сюда, в Ньюкасл* [2002], *тут ещё вообще никого не было* [of other migrants]. *То есть абсолютно ни-ко-го. Даже поляков. Сейчас уже трудно такое представить, да?* (027-M-24-NCL)[110]

Casual associations made by locals between Russian-speaking migrants and Polish migrants, or East-European migrants as a broader group, prompt the former to define their own identity, in contrast to other migrant groups, through their attachment to the Russian language. This self-identification with the 'Russophone space' as culturally different from 'Eastern Europe' might become a particularly sensitive issue for those migrants who are from regions bordering Poland. As Iuliia, 25, admits, she always tries to present her Russophonism as merely a linguistic choice of convenience, whereas her geographical origins (Western Ukraine) should not be mistaken with Polish areas. In her presentation to others then she finds herself stuck between the two: her Russian-speaking linguistic identity which she tends to (but is not usually willing to) stress since it is 'easier to understand for locals' than her Ukrainian origins, and her West Ukrainian background which is geographically closer to Poland (002-F-25-DHM).

However, Russian-speaking migrants also attempt to rationalise the idea of close association with Polish migrants and adapt their behaviour accordingly, mostly by occupying the peripheral space in the broader East-European migrant group. Russian-speaking migrants tend to use Polish, Lithuanian or 'East-European' shops – not only to do their shopping, but also for communication to other migrants in Russian via ad boards, but here their 'presence' is rather minor compared to other migrant communities frequenting these places (Fig. 4).

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[110] *When we came here, to Newcastle* [2002], *there was no one here yet* [of other migrants]. *And I mean absolutely no one. Even the Poles. It is difficult to imagine this now, isn't it?*

Figure 4. Russian language 'presence' in the largest East-European shop in the region: the only ad on the news board that contained Russian was a small handwritten bilingual Russian/Latvian ad for a room sublet (circled in purple). Newcastle, Malgosia's Shop, Newgate Shopping Centre, March 2015. Photo taken by the author.

The Russian-speaking presence in the host cultural context is indexed through occasional uses of the word 'Russian' by English speakers in new, non-standard contexts. These occasional usages re-interpret for Russian-speaking migrants what 'Russianness' is in the local perspective and which cultural or social characteristics are ascribed to a 'Russian'. For example, one of the informants discusses the idea of employing the adjective 'Russian' by his English-speaking colleague to describe something particularly emotional or exaggerated:

И он посмотрел фильм, там какие-то страсти, он на работе потом говорит: 'Тебе бы понравилось', я говорю: 'Почему?' и он так, задумался, 'ну, такой он, очень Russian' [laughing]. (025-M-32-DRL)[111]

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[111] *And he watched that movie, some passions going there, and later at work, he says, 'you would have liked it', and I ask, 'why?', and he is like, thinking it over, 'well it is so very... Russian'* [laughing].

Another informant, however, was taken aback by her neighbour's occasional jargon:

Если бы мне сказали, что 'my neighbor is Russian', то да, 'мой сосед из России', и что? Оказывается, что это значит, что 'моя соседка занимается проституцией'. То есть просто 'Russian' означает 'проститутка'. Я была в шоке, то есть я об этом не знала. Может быть, конечно, потому что я из России, а англичане – люди вежливые, никто мне об этом не сказал до этого [laughing]. *Но вот это у меня был шок, я не знала, что это какой-то эвфемизм.* (017-F-37-DHM)[112]

These various connotations of the term 'Russian' which migrants discover in their interaction with English speakers are rare and idiosyncratic, but they add to the further development of migrants' metalinguistic reflexivity on the differences between the two languages and – in a broader sense – communication patterns and cultural practices of their respective native speakers.

4.5. 'Russian vs. English': On social distance and language difference

Apart from the purely linguistic features – pronunciation and accent, vocabulary and fluency in oral speech, writing skills and listening comprehension – a significant realm of what the idea of 'Russian English' also entails is the differences of basic concepts and communicative patterns the two languages – Russian and English – have, which unravels through contradictions in the new variety of 'Russian English' that migrants develop. Occasional discoveries of these tensions often trigger their metalinguistic reflexivity.

One of the most problematic areas in this respect is the difference between common patterns of establishing social contacts and maintaining social distances in conversation.[113] Most of the informants discuss their struggling with getting

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[112] *If anyone said to me that 'my neighbour is Russian'* [uses Eng.]*, well yes, that means 'my neighbour is from Russia', so what? But it turns out that it means that 'my [female] neighbour is a prostitute'. So 'Russian' simply means 'a prostitute'. I was shocked, I hadn't heard about that. It may be due to the fact that I myself am from Russia and English people are very polite so no one told me about it before [laughing]. But this was quite a shock for me, I had no idea it was some kind of a euphemism.*

[113] The explorations of proxemics as a physical distance between interlocutors (introduced by Hall and later developed into a specific area of cultural studies) is by all means important in grasping

new contacts, setting a proper distance and maintaining the adequate connection with local people, but most importantly – their particular problem is 'the inability to initiate or even be engaged in a small talk' (*не могу ни начать, ни поддержать этот small talk*, 007-F-29-LND).

The concept of 'small (or social) talk' is regularly brought into the discussion of communication challenges and due to its cultural specificity is not translated to Russian. Argued to 'enact social cohesiveness, reduce inherent threat values of social contact and help to structure social interaction' (Coupland 2003: 1), small talk was recognised by my informants as one of the crucial communication tools to have in the British social context, but one particularly difficult to attain for a Russian-speaking person. Whereas the accented speech of post-Soviet migrants is recognised as a difference, which they have turned into a self-presentational tool, the art of 'small talk' is conceptualised as a core communicative rule and activity which is apparently impossible to master for an outsider.

Natalia, 37, compares her experience of participating in two different kinds of 'small talk' – American and British – in favour of the latter particularly because of the social distance maintained through it:

> *Сравнивая Англию с Америкой, в Англии мне жить гораздо легче, потому что они делают small talk, но это уж совсем small talk: они говорят о погоде, видно, что вежливые люди, но они не пытаются лезть ни к кому в душу. Американцы – нет, в Америке если не улыбаться все время и не интересоваться личной жизнью других все время, то ты считаешься человеком недружелюбным.* (017-F-37-DHM)[114]

This distancing through the practice of 'small talk' can also be transferred to the whole variety of other areas of communication – from the process of making

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the cultural differences as well but the social distance, as discussed further, is more significant for migrants contemplating linguistic patterns at work.

[114] *If I compare England and America, it is much easier for me to live in England because they do small talk* [uses in Eng.]*, but it is literally 'small talk'* [uses in Eng.]*: they talk about weather, so it is obvious that people are polite and do not try to interfere with one's personal life. Americans – no way, in America, if you do not smile all the time and seem interested in other's personal life all the time, you are considered an unfriendly person.*

and delivering decisions to extralinguistic patterns of social behaviour. In all of these instances the dramatic difference in interpretations of cultural meanings behind each social gesture is perceived by Russian-speaking migrants as painful and difficult to comprehend:

> *Тебе кажется, что тебя ударили кинжалом в спину, а с точки зрения англичан это было бы не вежливо – прийти и что-то тебе высказать прямо в лицо. То есть ты должен сам понять, что не получилось, ну, в следующий раз, но лучше об этом не говорить. … На это жалуются не только мои русские коллеги, но и коллеги с континентальной Европы.* (014-F-50+-NCL)[115]

In a more emotional account, communicative conventions of the British as perceived by Russian-speaking migrants are not simply difficult to understand but also impossible to adopt:

> *Они больше улыбаются друг другу, но это как холодные улыбки. Это вот чисто знак вежливости, потому что так надо, не потому что они действительно чувствуют тепло друг к другу, а вот так надо. Я тоже за собой начала замечать, что я даже дома – у меня даже настроение плохое, а И.* [husband] *на меня посмотрит, и я так* [demonstrating a smile]. *А И. мне говорит: 'боже мой, не улыбайся мне так никогда!'* (018-F-27-NCL)[116]

Communicative conventions which are explained as commonly 'Russian' by migrants themselves include being too pushy or straightforward in arguments, over-emotional and frank in setting up social contacts. The reflections on this particular area may range considerably – from the disappointment over sale failures of a shop assistant:

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[115] *You feel that you have been stabbed in the back but for English people that would have been so impolite – to approach you and tell something right into your face. That is you need to understand on your own that it did not quite work out – well, next time then, but you'd better not pronounce it. It is something not only my Russian colleagues complain about but also my colleagues from the continental Europe.*

[116] *They smile more to each other but these are cold smiles. It is simply a sign of politeness because things should be that way, not because they really feel close to each other, it is just how it should be. I also started noticing that even at home, even if I have a bad mood, but when I.* [husband] *looks at me, I do that* [demonstrates a smile]. *And I. says, 'Oh my god, never smile like that again!'*

Как у нас в России говорят: 'Брать будете?' Как по-русски. А тут так нельзя, мне потом покупатель сказал, что я была слишком pushy, не гони коней, мол. Просто знаешь, разные культуры, разное общение, у нас же надо кричать об этом, мол, берите, пока есть! А тут надо дать покупателю самому понять. Подтолкнуть его, но не слишком толкать к этому, чтобы он не чувствовал, что он обязан это купить. (024-F-29-WST)[117]

The other extreme in this scale of interpretation of differences is the pride of 'being a Russian' through acting in a particularly 'Russian way'. Natalia, 37, comments on her identity of a 'Russian woman':

Один мой коллега сказал мне, что когда он увидел, что на работу подает русская женщина, то ему это не понравилось, потому что есть такой стереотип, что русские женщины, они наоборот такие, агрессивные, очень прямые. Вот этот стереотип мне нравится больше! Пусть лучше они думают, что русские женщины более прямые. (017-F-37-DHM)[118]

Whatever the reaction is, both cases represent a cause to re-consider what communicative patterns are expected and how the distance criteria work to build up an argument or a proposition. In general, the variety of these examples illustrates how the ambiguities between two different scales of social relationships represented by the linguistic systems of 'Russian' and 'English' are being negotiated through these constant experiences of migrants' training of their 'Russian English' voices.

The discrepancy between the two systems of relations is also the subject for academic research. One of the most prominent explorations of the concepts of

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[117] *As they say in Russia, 'Are you going to take this?' in our Russian way. But you cannot do it like that here, one customer told me that I was too pushy* [uses in Eng.], *kinda 'don't rush it'. You know, it is just the difference between cultures, different communication, we have to shout about it, saying 'grab it while the stock lasts'! And here you need to give your customer freedom to make their own decision. To give them a nudge, but not push it, so that they do not feel obliged to buy this stuff.*

[118] *One of my colleagues told me that when he saw that a Russian woman was applying for the job he did not like it because there is this stereotype of Russian women being aggressive, very straightforward. Well this stereotype is much more to my liking! It is much better if they think that Russian women are direct.*

social distance in Russian and English were carried out by A. Wierzbicka (1997). As she argues in her study of the concept of 'friendship' in the two languages:

> [i]n Russian the categorization of human relations is particularly richly developed, in comparison not only with Western European languages but also with other Slavic languages. <…> The wealth of Russian words for different categories of human relations (in addition to kin) provides evidence of Russian culture's special interest in the realm of human relations (Wierzbicka 1997: 57)

whereas

> [t]he semantic history of the word 'friend' [in English] confirms the validity of Tocqueville's observation that 'democracy does not create strong attachments between man and man, but it does put their ordinary relations on an easier footing. (Wierzbicka 1997: 54)

Natalia's discussions of the shades of meaning in the expression 'to be friendly', as used in the British context, confirms Wierzbicka's conclusions and develops her argument further by reflecting on the communicative strategies of friendliness:

> *Вот я, например, не знала, что такое 'to be friendly'. Вот мне муж часто говорит, что кто-то там 'is not friendly'. Я думаю, почему 'not friendly'? С моей точки зрения – хороший человек, просто немножко замкнутый. …И мне муж сказал, что нет, 'to be friendly' – это как раз когда ты улыбаешься, и делаешь small talk, и это 'to be friendly'. То есть про меня можно сказать, что I'm not friendly, потому что у меня такой чисто московский подход к отношениям и людям. То есть когда я иду в магазин, я улыбаюсь, но я не разговариваю с кассирами о погоде. То есть я вежливо отношусь, при этом стараюсь не смотреть никому в глаза, если это им не нравится… Я поняла, что не знала, что такое на самом деле 'to be friendly', что это связано с какими-то внешними выражениями дружелюбности.* (017-F-37-DHM)[119]

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[119] *Myself, I had no idea what 'to be friendly'* [uses in Eng.] *actually meant. My husband keeps telling me that such and such 'is not friendly'* [uses in Eng.]. *And I keep thinking why 'not friendly'?* [uses in Eng.]. *I find that person good if somewhat reserved. … And then my husband told me that no, 'to be friendly'* [uses in Eng.] *means being smiley and doing small talk* [uses in Eng.]*, that is 'to be friendly'.*

These discrepancies between communicative models of Russian and English speakers serve as an actual example of the theoretical dichotomy of two strategies of politeness as introduced by Brown & Levinson (1987). Following Goffman's concept of 'face' (Goffman 1967), this mode proposes the idea of face as the 'public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself' [sic] (Brown & Levinson 1987: 61). It consists of two interrelated sides – the negative face, whose main asset is the freedom of imposition; and the positive face, based on commonality and solidarity. In English-speaking cultural contexts, British in particular, many speech acts are seen as a potential threat to both of these faces,[120] in other cultures these acts are not considered face-threatening at all. Maintaining mutual faces, however, is not just the case of politeness but involves the re-establishment of conventional social distance. Breaking the patterns of this ritualised behaviour might be particularly offensive to other communicants.[121]

Involving the theory of communicative politeness into my discussion of narrated experiences of interaction differences Russian-speaking migrants discover with communicative modes of British culture (as they perceive it), I suggest that their discourses align with what Brown & Levinson conceptualise as 'negative politeness', or preference to keep safe the negative face of the communicants whereas Russian cultural patterns reproduced by migrants in their everyday interactions lack this attention to maintaining the negative face.[122] Since politeness is a crucial strategy of 'saving face' of all participants engaged in

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That means that I should be classified as 'I'm not friendly' [uses in Eng.] *because I have this authentically Muscovite approach to relationship and people. That is when I go shopping, I do smile but wouldn't talk about weather to cashiers. I am polite and try not to look someone in their eyes directly if they do not fancy it.... I have realised that I did not know what 'to be friendly'* [uses in Eng.] *actually meant, and how it is connected to some exterior expressions of friendliness.*

[120] As M. Stewart (2005) concludes in her paper on politeness in the UK, 'British English tends towards negative politeness and favours off-record strategies in carrying out certain face-threatening acts. It seems, at least, that to be British a healthy degree of paranoia can help' (Stewart 2005: 128).

[121] Knowing about these conventions and being capable of applying them appropriately is an area of social competence which is closely related to linguistic proficiency. I. Dubinina (2010) shows this by exploring the pragmatics of asking for a favour among heritage Russian speakers in the USA. While performing their speech acts in impeccable Russian, they do not quite fulfil the task as they continue to apply politeness and communicative norms shared by Americans, not native Russian speakers (Dubinina 2010).

[122] On the linguistic level this perceived cultural difference is regularly expressed through the notion of British people being too or 'over-polite' ('*чересчур вежливые*', 030-F-24-SSH).

communication, acts which in any way threaten the negative or positive face of a hearer or speaker become the most urgent threats for the whole communication. Therefore, the 'transition' from one culture to another seems quite problematic for Russian speakers – hence the repeated narratives of communication failures made in the adjustment to local language standards, communicative patterns and culture models in general.

Some communicative failures and also most 'common' stereotype features of Russian-speaking migrants might be explained through this discrepancy. However, the level of the threat towards a negative face of the other as well as effort required to amend one's social behaviour according to the common patterns may vary significantly. For Ekaterina, 24, this 'fixing' involved her automatic copying of the pattern disregarded earlier:

> *Мне казалось, на меня и в магазине люди косо смотрят, и в транспорте…* [I thought] *это мой английский корявый, но я же правильно говорю вот… Потом мне Н.* [husband] *просто посоветовал: ты говори 'thank you' почаще. И я начала практически через слово… И мне помогло в общем, да.* (030-F-24-SSH)[123]

Others, on the contrary, treat this discrepancy as a meaningful communicative space which helps to express their 'non-British' identity by both performing differently for the sake of 'disguise' and interpreting it as a symbolic gesture of their otherness:

> *В Англии есть такое представление, что англичанином можно только родиться. То есть можно получить гражданство, но это другое. Как бы они рассматривают иностранцев как другой, людей другого сорта. Но – с другой стороны – это создает такую буферную зону, в которой можно скрыться. То есть 'да, она из России, она этого не поймет, она ведет себя, как она должна и как она хочет'.* (017-F-37-DHM)[124]

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[123] *I felt they were looking weird at me in shops and in public transport…* [I thought] *that was because of my clumsy English but I do speak quite correctly. And then N.* [husband] *just recommended me to say 'thank you' more often. And I started saying that as my every other word. And it did help, yes.*

[124] *There is an idea in England that in order tobe English you have to be born here. You can get citizenship but that is so different. They tend to treat foreigners as others, people of a different sort. But – on the other hand – this creates such a buffer zone which you can hide in. So 'yes, she is from Russia, and she won't understand it, she behaves the way she should and wants to'.*

4.6. Russians meeting Geordies: 'Russian English' in the North-East England

The study of language attitudes and local vernaculars considers not only the way speakers perceive their native language and its varieties or treat foreign languages in use but also explore the way regional or sociolect varieties of one language are acquired, evaluated and used by its non-native speakers. In a wider context this process addresses quite a range of factors which influence the way cross-cultural communication develops, as well as the views on local varieties by non-native speakers (which in their turn also characterise the patterns of these migrants' integration to the new linguistic environment). The UK region in which I have conducted my fieldwork is distinctive in many respects, including, especially, its sociolinguistic makeup.

The North East of England is a region with a strong and distinctive identity which by some accounts stems from its geographical location and results in being 'more independent, more self-centred, more provincial … than … any other great industrial area of England' (Mess 1928: 25). Regarding the sociolinguistic portrait of the region this distinctiveness is concentrated in the Geordie dialect, a variety considered by linguists to be an adaptation of Northumbrian 'characterised by the rolling "burr"' but with later infusions of the 19th century in-country migration flows (Robinson 1988: 189) which gave the name to a particular local identity and promoted a sense of community in the region. Historians argue that the most characteristic features of the dialect were in fact claimed as unique to this emerging urban variety in the 19th century and the same repertoire of key features has been used by speakers and writers to the present day, 'albeit often in performative contexts' (Beal 2009: 138), functioning as a powerful indicator of a local identity. Throughout its history, the Geordie accent has been perceived variably by other English speakers: while in 1933 J. B. Priestley mentioned it as one of the most 'barbarous, monotonous and irritating' dialects of England, the Geordie dialect is also named among the most popular language varieties due to its signification of the 'fierce pride and loyalty to the area' (Robinson 1988: 189).

One of the reasons the Geordie dialect has been preserved as comparatively invariable over the past decades is that the local population still has overall relatively limited contact with other cultures and idioms. Historically, the Tyneside area, as well as the whole North East region, has never played an active role in in-

country migration. However, even though the region is still among those with the lowest rates of migrants when compared to other British regions, it has witnessed a more significant growth in numbers of migrants in recent times.[125] Yet sociolinguistically, this region is still a peculiar context to settle in – firstly, because of the prominent regional dialects, and secondly, due to the relatively low familiarity of the local population with foreign-accent speech and, consequently, little experience in what is known as 'foreigner talk', a genre used by native speakers of a language to communicate with foreigners. [126]

From the perspective of 'folk linguistics' and language attitudes, linguistic varieties are most commonly analysed within the field of perceptual dialectology that deals with the subjective interpretations of dialects and sociolects that speakers are exposed to.[127] It also concerns itself with the social attractiveness of the idioms and the way native as well as non-native speakers prioritise different features of these idioms in their attitude statements. In relation to Russian-speaking migrants of the North East of England, including the perceptual dialectology as a part of the overall analysis will take the form of exploring the way the relation of 'a standardised norm' vs. 'a regional variety' in non-native language is interpreted by Russian speakers (direct attitudes), how the speakers of this dialect are perceived (indirect attitudes), and how their linguistic image and behaviour influence communication patterns between the two groups. It will also look into the reciprocity of linguistic contacts from the perspective of language expectations and stereotyping which – once expressed by the local dialect speakers – may influence the way migrants perform both linguistically and socially.

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[125] As the latest ONS Report (2014) states, the level of non-UK-born residents of the Northern English regions is 4%, as compared to 5% in the rest of England (excluding London) and 18% in London (ONS 2014).

[126] The number and character of varieties which constitute the linguistic environment can also influence considerably the formation of language attitudes. Recent research by Torgensen (2012) on a specific variant of the UK capital's English, the so-called Multilingual London English, or MLE, explores its uniformity in relation to ethnicity and geographical location of speakers and shows that multi-ethnicity which is strongly associated with the larger cities both by their inhabitants and smaller towns' dwellers provides specific traits of the speech that have proved to be more relevant than geographical factors. Thus the diversification of the linguistic environment leads to the gradual elimination of regionalisms or local dialect features in the speech.

[127] For the specific methodology of perceptual dialectology in its most classical sense see Preston 1989; for most recent developments see Hansen, Schmidt et al. 2012 (esp. Part 2).

Linguistic biographies of current Russian-speaking migrants of the North-East of England may vary as for the 'route' of their migrating trajectories and thus present different schemata of sociolinguistic adjustment. Those for whom Newcastle or the surrounding region were the first migrant experience tend to produce stronger attitudes towards the local variety than those who have been gradually adjusting to the English-speaking environment – i.e. moving from places which seemed more suitable for their listening skills (e.g. those with standard American or 'Received Pronunciation' British accents) to areas where one encountered accents that were rather more challenging to follow.[128]

Those migrants for whom the region of the North-East of England was the first destination point of their migrating trajectory felt quite surprised with the main local dialect, Geordie. As most of them had at least the basic level of English grammar and vocabulary and some practice in communicating in English before, they felt quite confident on their way to the region. However, most of them faced the Geordie dialect for the first time and failed to adapt to it immediately. Marat, 26, shares his experience:

> *При переезде в Ньюкасл* [from London] *основная проблема была с акцентом. Для меня английский всегда был 'нормальный, разговорный язык', ну, который я в школе проходил и который видел в Египте, когда разговаривал с англоязычными людьми. Но когда я приехал сюда, я понял, что язык – это только одна проблема, есть ещё такая вещь как акцент, диалект. Конечно, ходит слух, что ньюкасловский диалект, Geordie, это самый сложный, ну, тогда я полностью с этим согласился, потому что я вообще не мог понять, что… произношение и вообще суть слов, потому что настолько язык коверкался этим диалектом, что мне сначала было очень сложно – люди не понимали меня, я не понимал их.* (028-M-26-NCL)[129]

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[128] Based on informants' recollections, native English accents and varieties are ordered into an hierarchy where the 'RP' English is considered the easiest for understanding, followed by American English, and then come all regional dialects of Great Britain (whereas the US area seems quite homogenous).

[129] *When I moved to Newcastle* [from London]*, my main problem was to deal with the local accent. English had always been a 'normal language of communication' for me which I had studied at school and faced in Egypt when I talked to English speakers there. But once I moved here, I did realise that the language itself was just one problem, and there is also such thing as a local accent, a dialect.*

Some still find themselves half way through mastering the accent after years spent in the region:

Geordie - как к нему можно привыкнуть? (laughing) *Только через практику, наверное.* (025-M-32-DRL)[130]

Others are more positive in their estimations of the practical values of their exposure to Geordie:

Здесь тоже есть акценты, Geordie, когда я не всегда понимаю, в особенности некоторые слова. Зато я выучила много новых слов, которые принадлежат именно этому диалекту, локальному. (017-F-37-DHM)[131]

Whatever the personal attitude towards the dialect is, most of the informants considered it 'funny' or 'horrifying' in terms of personal attitudes, 'undermining' in relation to the 'standard' English (as they perceive it), 'unusual' and 'unexpected' according to the expectations of English they had before and 'unworthy' of acquiring by a non-native speaker of English.[132]

Apart from the accent, other striking features of the Geordie dialect include some typical words and expressions, the most salient of which to the informants' knowledge are 'aye' and 'cheers'[133]:

Самое первое слово, которое я услышал из диалекта Geordie, было слово ауе, которое я никогда не понимал. Что у человека ни спросишь – он тебе на все отвечает 'Ай'. В моем понимании 'Ай' это было ну как 'я' [I],

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Apparently, there has been rumour that the Newcastle dialect, Geordie, is the most difficult one, well, I had to agree with that completely as I couldn't understand at all what... the pronunciation and the gist of words on the whole, because the language got so corrupted by the dialect, that it was so difficult for me at first – people wouldn't understand me, and I couldn't understand them.

[130] *Geordie – how can you get used to it?* (laughing) *Only through constant practice, most likely.*

[131] *There are also some accents here, like Geordie, that I do not quite understand, especially some of the words. But I have learnt many new words that are part of this local dialect.*

[132] Most of these accounts coincide with the main results of Mikhaleva's (2007) experiment with English speakers and Russian-speaking bilinguals who were asked to understand, report and assess audio-recordings of number of Northern English accents and dialects.

[133] As these examples show, not all the recounted words are inherent to the regional dialect as it is, some may just represent a wider slang of youth or the peculiar vocabulary of a social strata and be previously unknown by the migrants who are willing to add it to the 'regional specificities of language'. The other account of a similar nature was another informant's hesitation on whether the word 'ta' presents an example of the Geordie talk or not (006-M-26-NCL).

да? Почему человек все переводит на себя?... Потом нашлись добрые
люди, которые мне объяснили. ... Или вот слово cheers, например. Тоже
мне было непонятно. Всегда там в школе проходили 'thank you', ну и
такие, обычные слова. Так что чиирз, ай, хауэй там… Нет, нашлись
люди, которые поправляли и объясняли. (023-M-29-NCL)[134]

However, in these descriptions of local distinctiveness purely linguistic characteristics are supplemented by accounts of the stereotypical speakers of Geordie as well as of their language behaviour in everyday encounters with migrants. Geordies are often presented as unexpectedly open-hearted and ready to help a stranger, but sometimes unwilling to deal with those who speak English with a foreign accent:

А потом оно как-то так получается – вначале первый раз как не пошел
разговор, а потом они как сдаются, они не хотят напрягаться, чтобы
как-то понять тебя, вот так вот что ли. (018-F-27-NCL)[135]

The poorly developed skill of 'talking to a foreigner' which includes both tolerance to accented speech and the ability to get the message through to a non-native interlocutor results from the wider socioeconomic context of the 1990s – 2000s. According to the recollections of one of the migrants who arrived in the region in 2002, Newcastle and its environs represented a remote region badly accustomed to migration and thus overtly hostile to newcomers. The idiom he uses ('speak through the clenched teeth', '*говорить сквозь зубы*') describes the social climate in the region at the turn of the 2000-s through its communicative specifics of reluctance and lack of credit to foreigners:

Ньюкасл был нетронутым, таким немного девственным городом, в
котором, казалось, проще закрепиться мигрантам. Иностранцев здесь
было очень мало, местное население не привыкшее, поэтому расизм
имел место быть, не буду скрывать. Реагировали сквозь зубы. Это

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[134] *The first word from the Geordie dialect that I heard was the word 'aye', which I could never understand. Whatever you ask, the answer is 'aye'. In my understanding, this was like 'I', right? Why would anyone pass everything on to themselves?... It was only later that some kind people explained it to me... Or the word 'cheers', for example. It was not quite clear as well. We had always come across 'thank you' or other regular words at school. So 'cheers', 'aye, howay man'... But no, there were people who corrected me and explained them.*

[135] *And then it somehow turns out that way – if the conversation has not gone well at first, they give up and do not want to bother to understand you, that is something like that.*

чувствовалось. Первое время было даже сложновато в колледже учиться. (028-M-26-NCL)[136]

Since then migration flows have considerably reshaped local attitudes, making foreigners and their non-native English speech more ordinary and mundane although expressions of surprise at the sound of a foreign accent still seem to persist:

Мне казалось, что меня не поймут, обсмеют и скажут, что она тут вообще делает, продает мне. А потом ничего такого не было. Но иногда бывают такие круглые глаза на мой акцент. Сразу обращают внимание не на то, что я говорю, а на мой акцент: а откуда это вы? Некультурно, конечно, но спрашивают. (024-F-29-WST)[137]

Notwithstanding a more general acknowledgement of foreigner speech, the skill and willingness to engage in the special mode of 'talk targeting a foreigner' is still relatively rare:

Проблемы были и до сих пор есть. Первое время вообще не понимала, что говорят, понимала прекрасно на курсах – потому что специально обученные люди там. Я думаю, они моего акцента не понимают. Как говорит мой муж, они слушают не твои слова, они заостряют внимание на твоем акценте и слушают твой акцент. (018-F-27-NCL)[138]

However, lay accounts from other native English speakers (those who do not bear such a strong regional accent and are not used to the dialect of the North East) provide Russian speakers with a further rationale to marginalise the local variety as 'deviation' from the linguistic 'standard' of the country:

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[136] *Newcastle was a pristine, somewhat chaste city in which, or so it seemed, it was easier to settle down for migrants. There were very few foreigners here, and locals were not used to them so some racism did come up, I should say. They replied through the clenched teeth. One could feel it. At first, it was even a bit difficult to study at college.*

[137] *I thought that no one would understand me, they would laugh at me and ask what I thought I was doing here, selling things to people. But then, nothing like that ever happened. Sometimes I see these huge eyes as a reaction to my accent. They immediately switch from what I am saying to them to my accent: and where are you from then? It is a bit uncivilised, of course, but they do ask.*

[138] *There have been problems, up till now. At first, I could not understand a thing they said to me, but I was doing fine understanding what they told us at those courses because people working there are trained for that. I think they do not understand my accent. As my husband says, they focus on your accent and listen only to it.*

А потом мне сказали, что их почти никто не понимает, даже сами
англичане, что можно так сильно не переживать. (003-F-42-NCL)[139]

However, apart from the strictly linguistic characteristics of the Geordie
speech, in a wider communicative and cultural discourse, most Russian-speaking
migrants that I interviewed describe the Geordie group as abundantly
communicative, good-humoured and easy-going – and in this set of stereotypical
traits they turn out to be closer to the migrants' idea of themselves than the more
'standardised' speakers who are better aligned with the image of a 'typical British
person' that Russian speakers acquire through studying English in Russia (Karasik
& Iarmakhova 2006). To highlight the difference between the standardised English
that Russian-speaking migrants are more used to and a local linguistic variety,
which is 'exotic' to them, the term 'polyglot user', as used by one of the informants,
acquires new shades of meaning:

На данный момент я бы не сказал, что я такой супер-полиглот
английского языка, сейчас есть какие-то Geordie, которых я не
понимаю, тем более пьяные Geordie, это вообще отдельная песня. (027-
M-24-NCL)[140]

Thus Russian-speaking migrants transfer their own ideas about the
standard and variation in languages to the local sociolinguistic realm. They do not
categorise it as an undermining 'broken' vernacular which requires little extra
work to master but comprehend the regional variety as a possible alteration of the
'English language' (however 'wrong' or far from the language standard) which has
the status of a separate linguistic repertoire which requires additional effort to
grasp.

4.7. Conclusions

Whereas the theory of the variety of world Englishes has been increasingly popular
in academic discourse for a number of decades, for many of the 'expanding circle'
varieties it has focused predominantly on their 'domestic' usages of English and

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[139] *And then someone told me that literally no one understands them, even the English people, so I shouldn't worry so much about it.*

[140] *At the moment, I would not call myself 'super polyglot' user of the English language, as there are Geordies whom I can't understand, especially drunk Geordie – this is a totally different story.*

developing discourses of English as a global language they have. More particularly, the 'Russian English' idiom has been introduced into analysis only recently and has been explored quite peripherally – in the sense of one yet emerging localised variety influenced by the EGL.

The specific language variety of Russian-speaking learners of English, however, provides a complex case of the intersection of different approaches and methodologies from the perspective of EFL teaching and a set of characteristic uses and attitudes at the level of its users. This variety is more vividly revealed during its interaction with other 'Englishes', first and foremost with those of the 'inner circle' used by locals in the UK. The way Russian-speaking migrants treat, use and interpret their own 'vernacular' is not just a matter of sociolinguistic interest but also a case of new identities being discovered, accepted and reproduced through the changing linguistic behaviour patterns.

Rooted in the Soviet and post-Soviet methodologies and practices, the set of 'skills' Russian-speaking migrants perceive as having at their disposal end up becoming 'non-skills' since they are not applicable in real situations of everyday communication or for work or study in their new country of residence. Thus they have to reconsider most of these 'skills' either as 'remnants' of their previous linguistic biographies and centerpieces of the narratives about their learning experiences or they are to be re-interpreted when employed in a new context as markers of their distinct identities of 'Russian speakers in the UK'.

Whereas during their first encounters with British settings migrants are made to re-arrange these 'skills' and knowledge so as to 'tune in' and follow the general communication rules, they also face the challenge of calibrating their identity of a Russian-speaking minority to the new diverse background. Since the interpretation frame of linguistic varieties which has already been established in the new context places them in a relative proximity with other groups (forming together the cohort of East-European migration), Russian speakers should accustom themselves to this disposition and adjust to it both in their linguistic behaviour and wider self-presentation patterns.

The 'Russian English' variety is distinctive not only language-wise but also at a higher level of communicative practices and metalinguistic conceptualisations. Its idiosyncrasy reveals hidden discrepancies of social distance and collaboration

principles which are characteristic of the English (British) and Russian cultures. The way migrants discover and explore these differences as well as their approaches to interpreting them in their new statuses provides a new realm for investigation of what the 'Russian English' variety is.

Put in a radically new context in terms of the juxtaposition of linguistic variability and language standardisation, namely that of North-East England, Russian-speaking migrants adjust to the local vernaculars and ways of interaction which differ considerably from those they were taught at school or acquired later on. Their previous unfamiliarity with the regional identity in question and the sociolinguistic means to express it, faces low interest in increasing multilingualism on the part of the locals and their weak command of 'foreign talk' as a specific genre. Nevertheless, this initial conflict is negotiated through a sequence of mutual 'comprehensions' when the local population explains and routinises the 'Russian-speaking presence' while post-Soviet migrants employ their existing conceptualisations to rationalise local linguistic varieties.

On a more general level the 'Russian English' of this migrant group no longer represents a variation of this 'domestic appropriation' of EGL which most 'expanding circle' world Englishes are in essence. Its current position of a contact idiom developing at the intersection of other 'Englishes' (those of 'inner', 'outer' and – to a lesser extent – 'expanding' circles) moves its status through the margins of the 'outer circle', also making it a resourceful discourse for emerging identities of the ambiguous group of 'Russian-speaking users of English in the UK'.

5.1. Language and familyhood in migrant contexts

No individual migrant's life trajectory is drawn without the impact primary social groups have on it. Family relations are one of the most relevant ones in terms of defining the way the individual's identity is constructed and performed (e.g. Cigoli & Scabini 2007; Jenkins 2014). In relation to identity construction, family functions both as a factor which influences the way most routine and basic personal preferences are formed (for example, individual communicative patterns or consumption practices, as Epp & Price (2008) have shown) and as a domain for the expression and negotiation of one's familial role in relation to other ones they perform in a broader context, e.g. the interlocking of parenthood, grandparenthood, professional identity and adulthood in urban settings, as discussed by Reitzes & Mutran (2004). Moreover, the very concept of 'family' is culture-specific and may have various linguistic connotations for speakers of different languages (as Shulgina & Fang (2014) demonstrate on the way this concept is defined in Russian and Chinese).

However, in recent decades the very idea and character of family has undergone further changes due to the increasing human mobility worldwide. Current migration tendencies influence its structure, dynamics and relationship ties maintained across countries and cultures, languages and locations (Brahic 2013; Song 2010; Zechner 2008; Zontini 2010; for Russian-speaking migration see in particular Vuorinen 2004). Baldassar & Merla (2013) stress that mobility across national borders does not simply re-form families and influence the way family roles are performed transnationally, but transforms the whole idea of care circulation within families into a new (trans)cultural phenomenon. Thus the concept of transnationalism has recently made its way from migration studies towards the field of contemporary family research, ascribing to the 'transnational family' the benefit of constant cultural and social transformation, or the ability 'to reconstitute and redefine themselves over time contingent on spatial practicality and emotional and material needs' (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002: 3). Unsurprisingly, many of those most conventional concepts which were particularly characteristic

of family studies have been reconsidered in the light of migration, mobility and heterogeneity they bring into the familial realm (e.g. the concept and practices of 'motherhood', as argued by Bernhard et al. 2005, Fedyuk 2012 and Kang 2012).

One of the most obvious examples of this re-consideration is the challenge to the use of the generational approach to family analysis, which in its essence deals with processes of cultural transmission and congruence in family dynamics where the socio-cultural background is viewed as relatively stable. In this respect, King et al. (2008) claim that, for instance, intergenerational patterns of language acquisition which are 'both reflected in and reflective of societal patterns' (2008: 913) can be conceptualised as 'family language policies', which bring together the impact of language ideologies families share and the dynamics of family language practices. In case of monolingual language development, these policies are straightforwardly influenced by parental language practices and ideologies; in a bilingual or multilingual environment, however, the intergenerational transmission of both language(s) and language attitudes is a 'much more dynamic, muddled, and nuanced process', involving issues of the children's language acquisition, cognitive development, cultural identification and the very relationship with parents and grandparents (King et al. 2008: 917). Obviously, for migrants with complex trajectories, diverse cultural baggage and a multitude of (often conflicting) identities, the pattern of generational continuity hardly ever works as the individuals concerned had planned and imagined them, whereas a whole set of new issues becomes priority, which these 'family language policies' need to respond to (Falicov 2005; Gomez 2007; Heath et al. 2011; Vuorinen 2004). In this context the sense of 'familyhood' (a term that I will use to refer in a conceptual, abstract way to the sense of emotional belonging and attachment to a 'family', and more specifically, in the migrant context, to the 'feeling of collective welfare and unity even across national borders' (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002: 3), as well as the meanings and expectations evoked by these feelings) may considerably differ across family members. Those who are exposed to cross-cultural experiences are particularly likely to have to redefine the very core of what 'familyhood', including the concepts of 'closeness', 'intimacy', 'belonging', 'trust' or 'parenting', imply to them (e.g. Ryan et al. 2009). The 'emotional transnationalism' of family identities, which has been recently introduced into family therapy, for instance, explores to what extent these basic concepts can be reshaped within new

settings (Falicov 2005). The way transnational motifs are built into the family narratives of current migrants worldwide can be seen as their means of rationalising these new family-building strategies (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff 2004; Stone et al. 2005).

In this chapter I explore the spectrum of family issues in the context of migration through the way different linguistic resources are prioritised, used and ascribed meanings by the migrants themselves. As their own families develop in the new environment, they have to negotiate different referential frames to interpret their relationships within these families, as well as define their own standpoints for what 'familyhood' means to them. The dimensions of interest that I will focus on below include spouse relationships, parenthood, and maintaining ties with relatives within extended families. I will examine them all primarily from the personal perspectives of Russian-speaking migrants and their emerging identities. Questions of language appear highly relevant to migrants in their narratives on different family experiences, and analytically, I apply and develop two different concepts which link together linguistic issues, emotional experiences and transforming identities – 'language desire' and 'child as a boundary'.

The concept, through the lens of which I will examine the complexity of couples' relationships, especially between speakers of different languages, is that of *'language desire'*. This concept was developed by K. Takahashi, who defines it as the 'desire for identity transformation, for a mastery of the desired language, and/or for friendship/romance with a speaker of the desired language – all of which intersect with each other' (Takahashi 2012: 421). Being a recent introduction to the social anthropology of language learning and gender studies, it allows for different possible interpretations to be deployed in further investigations.

Some researchers are interested in the linguistic resources this 'language desire' stems from and influences further.[141] For example, Kubota (2008; 2011)

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[141] Although the concept of 'language desire' is obviously connected to that of 'the desire to learn a language', i.e. the relatively trivial issue of 'motivation', these concepts are not synonymous. 'Language desire' is a 'complex multifaceted construction that is both internal and external to language learners, and is not linked to the success in the straightforward fashion' (Piller & Takahashi 2006: 59). The way 'language desire' is also based on the stereotypical images of its native *speakers* has its parallel with Esperanto. This artificially designed language without its native speakers is considered by some critics a failed project, particularly because of the lack of personal

considers the emerging variations of languages (predominantly, of English) that are elaborated for the purpose of romantic relationship exclusively, exploring the way gender and intercultural communications shape the way a particular language is acquired and used by its non-native learners. Shardakova & Pavlenko (2004) argue that the way certain American Russian-language textbooks construct the image of a Russian-speaking woman as a desirable and available 'traditional wife' (deploying for this purpose common general gender stereotypes found in the American media), plays a significant part in the process of language learning of a particular English-speaking male target audience.

Another way of exploring 'language desire' has been to focus on the way gender expectations are met and questioned within the interactions of students and teachers of TESOL worldwide (Appleby 2011). One of the first studies of the correlations in gender behaviour in intimate relationship and foreign language learning is Polanyi's research of American students of Russian during their year-abroad (1995). Analysing male and female experiences in terms of their 'linguistic gain' from their staying in the Russian-speaking environment, she concluded that men were more successful in socialising and forming romantic relationship with Russian women (benefitting linguistically from this), while female students reported their reluctance to interact with Russian men due to their overly aggressive behaviour (which resulted in lesser 'linguistic gain' when they were tested upon return).

Much wider implications of the term are possible through the perspective on negotiating identities of partners in a 'linguistic intermarriage' (Piller 2001) or, indeed, any romanticised cross-cultural relationships involving speakers of different languages (Piller 2007). The understanding of 'language desire' in this context can range from a primarily descriptive one (concerning a certain romantic interest that learners of foreign languages might have towards speakers of respective languages; cf. Piller 2001) to a more thorough examination of why people worldwide 'desire' to learn English and how these wants might redefine their own personalities, identities and everyday practices without their realisation. Piller & Takahashi (2006) conceptualise this relationship in terms of power (in the

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attachment to it – for example, Reagan (2005) goes as far as referring to the 'feeling of disgust', which may be considered an opposite to the 'language desire' for natural languages.

sense personal desires stem from regular systematic impositions) but also stress its similarities to the Bakhtinian term of heteroglossia (in terms of connecting macro-scale ideologies and micro-level everyday interactions).[142] Cameron & Kulick (2003) follow the general argument that a wide variety of 'inner', personalised states (such as taste, intuition, shame and anxiety) are, in fact, actively constructed in language and discourse at macro-levels (2003: 101).

In this chapter I propose to use the concept of 'language desire' to explore the (reported) reciprocity of language attitudes and choices involved in the relationship of couples. I do that through an interpretative frame which one of the partners, specifically, a Russian speaker, appeals to while explaining her husband's linguistic behaviour patterns towards her native language in the context of their relationship or family life. Feelings and motives towards a foreign language become 'mirrored' in personal narratives on close relationships with speakers of this language, which gives insights into how personal interactions are linked to language proficiency, motivation and attitudes. This micro-level perspective arguably provides further understanding of how macro-level language ideologies and discourses on language, gender and family are adopted in personal narratives of migrants.[143]

Given the different linguistic identities introduced by couples into their family life, the issue of their (possible) children's linguistic and cultural upbringing becomes a major focus of concern. As M. Anderson argues, in circumstances of familial bi-culturality the child becomes 'the boundary', or more 'a zone for – and of – reflection and a tangible symbol for parental [...] cultural claims' (2002: 114). Obviously, language matters in this constant claiming do not deal exclusively with linguistic skills as such and their progressive mastering also involves a complex set of cultural meanings, patterns and practices which are perceived as significant and meaningful in the wider process of upbringing (Fogle & King 2013; King et al. 2008). Ultimately, this complex is concerned with the way parenthood is performed and the sense of family is mediated to the next generation. The

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[142] As Piller & Takahashi argue, 'individual's desires and expressions thereof are structured by the discourses of desire, the values, beliefs and practices circulating in a given social context' (2006: 61).

[143] On intimate romantic relationships and performances of 'love' by post-Soviet female migrants in Turkey as a key factor in their transnational mobility see Bloch (2011).

changing meaning of 'being parents' in a multicultural and bilingual environment connects the wish for unity within the close family circle (i.e. 'familyhood' as described above), with multiple differences in the linguistic and cultural baggage of closest family members. These meanings and practices are developed mostly on a micro-scale interpersonal level, but macro-level cultural and social discourses are also said to infiltrate the everyday essence of multicultural family interactions. For example, discussing Russian-speaking parents in intercultural marriages in Israel, Lomsky-Feder & Leibowitz (2010) analyse cultural labelling, exclusion and re-socialisation which take place within a family that brings together different cultural models. Here 'family members portray the encounter in terms of struggle, and not in terms of a cultural pluralism that enriches both them and their children' (Lomsky-Feder & Leibowitz 2010: 121).

In the analysis that follows I shall adopt the concept of the *'child as a boundary'* to define the ways Russian-speaking migrants deal with their linguistic assumptions, as revealed through their rationalisations about their children's linguistic skills, desires and behaviour. This concept proves useful not just in analysing families of mixed background (e.g. Russo-British, where this 'boundary' lies within the family unit itself and provides a zone for negotiations for the closest relatives involved in upbringing), but also for Russian-speaking couples raising their children in the English-speaking context (for this 'boundary' still pervades their family experiences, while moving towards the 'frontline' of their interaction with the host environment in the context of managing their child's socialisation).

The other aspect of the idea of cultural 'boundaries' within migrant families focuses on the way relationships across generations are maintained. To explore the way intergenerational ties are re-enacted through gender roles and expectations in families, I will extend the discussion of boundaries to the image of the 'babushka' (*бабушка*, Russian for 'grandmother'). This culturally specific construct connects ideas about 'home', gender roles within the family and patterns of children's upbringing as perceived and shared by Russian-speaking migrants.[144] The

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[144] For the disintegration of generational gender roles in new migrant environments see Poskanzer 1995. Gender roles within families in the post-Soviet Russian context have also been subject to considerable transformations (for even earlier examples of 'discontinuity' see Sternheimer 1985). For many migrants, especially those of second generations, the role of the 'babushka' grandmother becomes crucial in their self-narratives (for recent examples of these personalisations of family roles see Seitz 2006; Shalev 2011).

expectations of the 'babushka' as an 'explicit symbol of affinity and kindness and an essential and vigorous institution of family support and child-rearing' (Fogiel-Bijaoui 2013: 725), characteristic of Russian culture, change in the host society according to the re-disposition of parenting experiences towards the second generation of migrants. Following recent research on the interactive patterns between generations and the cultural role of the 'babushka' in the understanding of Russian-speaking post-Soviet migrants in Finland (Tiaynen 2013), Israel (Fogiel-Bijaoui 2013), Latvia (Novikova 2005) and the US (Nesteruk & Marks 2009), I see this term as emblematic of broader perceived differences in mixed family interactions among Russian speakers. More specifically, I explore the way in which the idea of the 'babushka' is used in the Russian-speaking migrants' articulation of their attitude towards and evaluation of these differences. This term also helps to reveal connections of linguistic identities, family roles, gender expectations and power relations within an extended family of transcultural origins.

5.2. Family Portraits: Russian-Speaking Migrants' Family Experiences through the Prism of Their Linguistic Identities

Most of the informants I have interviewed live in the UK with their families – spouses (partners) and children, less often with their parents, siblings or other relatives as well. The families can be grouped roughly into two major categories – 'Russian-speaking' and 'mixed' ones. This depends on whether the family is focused around a core couple made up of two Russian speakers from the former FSU space or one native Russian speaker and a native speaker of another language, in most cases English.

While 'Russian-speaking' families might vary in terms of the respective geographical, social or ethnic origins of each spouse, as well as their migrant histories and experiences, the dominant factor defining their family interaction patterns is the priority given to Russian as the main medium for communication – in both intra- and inter-generational interactions. Moreover, the greater the difference in their previous backgrounds, the more likely Russian is to become a unifying idiom and common communicative space of their partnership. The examples of Kristina, 27, and her husband Vlad, 29, or of Anna, 24, and her partner

Nikita, 26, illustrate this point. While Kristina and Vlad are both from Ukraine and have a minor age difference, they grew up in two quite distinct regions – Western and Eastern Ukraine – and have different languages that they consider native (Ukrainian and Russian respectively). However, when it comes to their interaction within their family unit, it is Russian, not Ukrainian, or *surzhyk*,[145] they have chosen as the main means of communication in the family and the language to bring up their child, who was born in the UK. The other couple is even more diverse geographically – born in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan respectively, they name Russian as their main language, but differ in terms of language attitudes and linguistic baggage that each of them has. Whereas Anna is a Latvian-Russian bilingual and sees Russian as just one of the idioms she is proficient in (beside Latvian and English), Nikita sees Russian as the only language he feels comfortable to communicate in. In their experience Russian also becomes the language of a particular domain – the privacy of home and family life. In Nikita's own words:

> *Зачем я буду проводить свое время с какими-то местными – я лучше домой пойду, меня там А. ждёт. … А с ней можно и поговорить нормально.* (013-M-26-NCL)[146]

Sharing Russian as their main language of communication, these families also engage in particular collaborative mastering of English, depending on the different challenges their migrant life provides. The coalition of their skills in the host language differentiates across domains and spheres each of the partners feels better in. Thus, particular genres, registers or other linguistic resources become 'attached' to one or the other member of the couple. Mariia, 28, mentions that since her fiancé is much more confident in speaking over the phone and has more experience in dealing with the official language of British authorities, it is he who is responsible for any communications of this kind in their family. Valentina, 25, on the other hand, reproaches her husband for being quite shy and inexperienced in informal socialising in English and takes on the role of maintaining good relations

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[145] A combination of Ukrainian and Russian most often spoken in rural communities in central and eastern regions of Ukraine which, according to L. Bilaniuk (2005), 'conceptually unites various kinds of language mixing, serving as an antithesis to the concept of linguistic purity' (Bilaniuk 2005: 104).

[146] *Why would I spend my time with locals when I could just go home and there is A. waiting for me there?... And we can talk to each other just fine.*

with English-speaking neighbours through the routine of everyday British 'small talk'. This 'specialisation' of family members in different genres or spheres of communication is not limited to couples and can involve other relatives. Marat, 26, remembers his role as interpreter for his mother who initially struggled to understand the local accent. Similarly, Oksana, 55, often served as a reading mentor to her mother, when the latter tried to develop her reading skills in English.

While Russian-speaking migrant families shape their linguistic identities and form their new linguistic strategies by setting the boundaries between the domains of Russian and English on the border between their home and private life, on the one hand, and their working or educational environments, or the everyday public sphere, on the other, 'mixed' families cannot have such a strict distinction between language domains and thus tend to vary more regarding their linguistic attitudes and behaviour in family-related issues. These families are based on mixed marriages between Russian-speaking migrants and either local British citizens or – less often – other migrants. Regarding gender patterns, the majority of the marriages I encountered consisted of a Russian-speaking wife and an English-speaking (mostly, British) husband,[147] but were quite diverse in terms of the age of both spouses and their previous marriage experiences. For most of these couples, moreover, the issue of legal registration of their relationship was not a matter of personal choice and belief, but a prerequisite for their families to exist at all due to British immigration policy and visa requirements.[148] Two main considerations follow this fact: firstly, for these families the complex tangle of family, migrancy and linguistic issues also involves the whole dimension of citizenship and legal rights, and this influences not only the formal, bureaucratic exterior of a relationship, but also the way roles and relations are established in new

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[147] The only exception was a family of a British wife and a Russian-speaking husband in their 20s, where the husband had migrated to the UK with his family almost 10 years before he met his wife, so his loyalty to Russian as his mother tongue was quite weak. His refusal to be interviewed stemmed from his concern whether he was a 'proper Russian speaker' or not, although I had a long and detailed conversation with him and his wife off the record.

[148] The rare exceptions are those Russian-speaking migrants who are either EU citizens, e.g. come from one of the Baltic states, or have become British citizens before their current relationships, e.g. have been resident in the UK for long enough or were initially in the position of a refugee.

families.[149] Secondly, due to the character of these marriages, for many Russian speakers family becomes the main (or even the only) cause for migration and thus dominates the way they perceive, interpret and accustom to these new social settings of their spouse's country of residence.

In what follows I shall draw on the family experiences of both groups. I will focus my primary attention on issues characteristic of mixed families as specific environments for negotiating linguistic, ethnic and civic identities. My main concern is with the way the languages of these families provide an arena as well as a tool for Russian-speaking migrants to express these emerging identities. The seemingly less 'complex' category of purely Russian-speaking families presents not only a counter-example to the mixed families' group but also unfolds different realms of transcultural and translingual experiences involved in their current migrant life. Tensions between various identities within mixed families usually serve as an adequate cause to verbalise the experience and express one's position towards it, in other words, place it as an emphasised topic within their family life narrative. The other group's experience may lack this obviousness of expression, or even be hidden (muted) in personal accounts. However, this 'silence of consent' in Russian-speaking partnerships can also be eloquent of shared views on the communicative patterns of 'family life' in general or for this specific language group.[150]

In my analysis I do not analyse 'family life' as such – its everyday interactions or routines – but the way migrants perceive it and construct their discourses of what this 'family life' means to them, specifically regarding their linguistic choices, problem zones and matters of concern. Furthermore, my analysis prioritises (of necessity, given the wider remits of this research) the perspective of the Russian-speaking migrant at the expense of their English-speaking partner, or indeed their Russian-speaking relatives left back in the home country.

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[149] Kofman (2004) refers to marriage migration as becoming more politicised in this sense. The opposite example of the way linguistic matters enter the legal discourse of citizenship and migrancy is the UKBA's (Home Office's) continuous refinements on the language requirements for all categories of migrants entering the UK, with an increasing emphasis on the immigrating spouse's linguistic qualifications (Blackledge 2009a, 2009b).

[150] On communicative functioning of 'eloquent silence' in various social contexts (based on R. Jakobson's classical model of message functions) see Ephratt (2008).

5.3. Language desire and interlanguage couples

A number of my Russian-speaking informants described their first experience of learning English as uninteresting and disconnected from their lives (as discussed in Chapter 4). Their encounters with native speakers of English, however, were presented as turning points in their motivations to master the foreign language skills further, as well as to establish new contacts with English speakers or other learners of English worldwide. As the main strategy for communication in English was through online discussion, the correlation of the two purposes of improving language and making English-speaking friends is usually very strong. In the following quote from Alisa, 22, these intentions are merged into one single explanation:

> *По интернету это было так – заводить друзей из других стран и просто переписываться с ними, да, ну, как бы так – практиковать английский с ними.* (043-F-22-DHM)[151]

For many of the Russian-speaking wives their first encounters with their future spouses were also linked with practicing their language skills (for example, Ekaterina, 24, remembers her husband helping her prepare for her international English exam online, 030-F-24-SSH). The reverse correlation is also possible – their first interest in a native speaker influences the way they treat the language more generally. Margarita, 28, who admits to going on her first dates with a bilingual dictionary, remembers her initial fear of becoming involved with a foreigner:

> *Сначала я думала: страшно с иностранцем заводить отношения. С ним же говорить придется. Ну а потом так получилось, и буквально через неделю он увез меня.* (047-F-28-DRL)[152]

For others their experience of romantic relationship with an English-speaker was not only connected with their language practice but also with their first visits to the UK. As Nina, 29, recollects:

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[151] *It was this way in the Internet – to make friends with people from different countries and just talk to them, right, so to speak, practising your English with them.*

[152] *At first I was afraid to start a relationship with a foreigner. I would have to talk to him. But then it all turned out that literally after a week together he took me away with him.*

Я уже не помню, как все точно было, но мне пора была уезжать, а так не хотелось обратно в Россию, и тут как раз у нас совсем разгорелся роман с моим бывшим мужем. (024-F-29-WST)[153]

Therefore the consequent reason to migrate (or stay in the country for those who were already in Britain) usually has the complex structure that includes personal engagement in the relationship, feeling more confident in the language by practicing it in real settings, with its native speaker, and a better general acquaintance with the country itself. These levels become mixed up in the migrants' narratives – hence 'falling in love' is gradually associated with a person, their language and their country. The initial 'language desire' becomes reinforced by the romanticised context.

The dynamics of a romantic relationship with an English speaker are also paralleled with the experiences of developing proficiency in the language – both at the level of its direct use (vocabulary, grammar, fluency of speech) and in the context of mutual comprehension. Growing closeness creates a couple's 'interlanguage'. This concept could be analysed in two ways: either as a subjective, idiosyncratic version of L2 acquired by a non-native speaker through their unique experience and influenced by their native language structures,[154] or, quite literally, as an 'inter-language', a specific inter-personal communicative space of the couple formed through routinised patterns of their everyday talk and life together.[155]

The initial 'language desire' of Russian-speaking learners results in a growing ability to understand and deal with a specific variety of their partners and their closest reference group, which influences the way their own language proficiency is escalated. For example, Evgeniia, 26, while reporting how fluent and diverse her own English became after she had first met her husband, also notes which characteristics of his own personal idiosyncratic use of English have

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[153] *I don't quite remember everything in details now but it was time for me to leave but I didn't want to go back to Russia so much and right at that time our romance with my now ex-husband heated.*

[154] The term was first introduced to the second language acquisition (SLA) research by L. Selinker and since then has referred to the 'second language learners' developing (partly instable, transient) knowledge of a target language (L2)' (Kasper 2010: 141). In contrast to creole or pidgin varieties, which characterise particular groups of speakers, the term describes intersubjective ways of acquiring L2.

[155] Which, in its turn, can also be subject to language attitudes and stereotypical labelling, as shown by Giles & Fitzpatrick (1984).

migrated into her speech. Some of these, looking 'indecent' to her, she subjects to euphemistic correction, sometimes even seeking to change her husband's language behaviour as well:

> *Лучше бы я не знала английский мат, меня вот Д.* [husband] *научил, как-то так, и теперь нет-нет, да и бывает. Причем у обоих. Я ему говорю: Д., надо как-то нам пере-, сокращать это, и мы иногда стараемся. Tuna, oh shhh... shugar! или oh fff.. flower!* (005-F-26-BLT)[156]

The inter-language of couples forms as a particular variety which may entail elements of both languages, English and Russian, and is interpreted by the migrants not as 'English', but as an idiom of their intimate interpersonal communication which might be narrow in its themes or vocabulary, and rather distant from the standard language they wished to acquire after moving to the country, while also specifying the growing closeness with their partner which is considered particularly valuable. In the respect of developing closeness and mutual interpretability, what is stressed as the main indicator of 'true intimacy' is not the clarity of what is said, but the right recognition of the unsaid. This 'communicative silence' becomes eloquent as a sign of 'true intimacy', and this is particularly evident in counter-examples which lack this 'mute' mutuality of comprehension, especially if it is achieved in relationship with other speakers of English. Evgeniia, 26, laments the absence of this kind of communication with her English husband:

> *Когда я что-то пытаюсь быстро ему объяснить, какую-то вещь сказать, которую сама ещё не знаю, как сказать, она у меня в голове ещё не, как бы не укрепилась. То есть X.* [a female friend with Arabic background] *бы меня поняла, потому что мы примерно на одной волне, да? Другие бы меня поняли, да. А Д.* [husband] *- он ещё вечно чем-то занят, то есть то телевизор смотрит, то в компьютер играет, то есть он меня слушает вполуха и не может вникнуть, что я ему*

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[156] *I wish I did not know English obscene vocabulary, D.* [husband] *has taught me somehow and now it happens sometimes. Both of us, moreover. I say to him, 'D., we need to stop this', and sometimes we try to do that. Like, oh shhhhh... shugar! Or oh fff.... flower!* [uses Eng.]

пытаюсь сказать. А я сама сбиваюсь... (laughs) *И я ему объясняю!* 'What are you talking about? What are you talking about?' (005-F-26-BLT)[157]

To Evgeniia, this inability to define and interpret not a sequenced and organised speech but merely a potential for speaking corresponds to the incompleteness of their communicative space as a couple, which leads to further communicative desire aimed outwards, beyond their coupledom:

> *Мне обязательно нужно с кем-то говорить, и мне мужа – просто мало, я не могу насладиться одним человеком. Я его люблю, все, но мне нужны другие люди для общения.* (005-F-26-BLT)[158]

In comparison to this lack of understanding within the unsaid, many Russian-speaking couples, while talking about their relationship, put particular stress on the way they find comfort in each other, mostly thanks to this communicative silence through understanding. Mariia, 28, is particularly explicit of this feeling of unity:

> *Мне в принципе достаточно П.* [fiancé] *сейчас. Может быть, это у меня период такой вот, влюбленно-романтически-предсвадебный. Но вообще я говорю, мы с П., ну, может быть, мы ещё люди такие, как-то мы так нашли друг друга, волну друг друга, что нам в принципе достаточно друг друга. Мы можем сидеть дома, разведясь по разным комнатам и уткнувшись в компьютеры, встречаясь на завтрака-обеды-ужины и вечерами, но то есть нам так комфортно от этого. ... Мне не хочется заводить себе друзей, чтобы вот общаться.* (010-F-28-NCL)[159]

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[157] *When I try to explain something to him quickly, to say something which I haven't quite thought through myself, it is not quite settled in my head yet, so to speak. So X.* [a female friend with Arabic background] *would understand me quickly, because we are on the same wave there, right? Others would understand me as well. And D.* [husband] *– he is usually busy doing some other stuff, either watching TV or playing computer games – he listens with half an ear and can't make what I am telling him. And I keep losing the track....* (laughing) *And I have to explain it to him!* 'What are you talking about? What are you talking about?' [uses Eng.]

[158] *I always need to talk to someone and my husband is never enough for me, I can't get enough from one single person. I love him, and all that, but I just need more people for socialising.*

[159] *I find P.* [fiancé] *enough for me now in terms of communication. It may be just a phase in my life, this loving-romantic-engagement one. But even generally speaking, P. and myself, we are probably of this kind of people who have found each other, each other's wave, and are content with each other's company. We can spend time at home, sitting in different rooms and looking at our laptops, and meet only for our meals together and in the evening, but we feel so comfortable about that. ... And I don't want to make friends with anyone to socialise now.*

The less linguistic effort is required to gain the desired communicative unity and interpersonal balance, the more natural and close the relationship is considered to be. The explicit linguistic interactions become the crucial realm for evaluating the intimacy within the couple, the co-direction of their communicative strategies and the negotiation of their common interactive space. Which concrete linguistic realm (whether 'English' or 'Russian') this takes place in is not in itself considered to be of primary importance when explaining the differences or misunderstandings in a couple's interactions.

The specificity of a relationship with an English-speaking partner finds its reflection in my informants' observations on the language of affection, intimacy and partnership relevant to the British context – both at the level of common usages or collocations and in personal accounts of English-speaking communicants. One of these metalinguistic reflections deals with the difference in attitudes towards partners and compares it to the Russian-language context:

> *Мы как-то с иностранцами обсуждали, в чем разница выражений 'to love somebody' и 'to be in love'. По-русски это в принципе одно и то же. В то время как здесь, как объясняют англичане, это совершенно разные вещи. Кто-то сказал: 'I love my wife but I'm not in love with her', и я подумала: 'Да, это как-то интересно'. То есть на русском мы не скажем: 'Я люблю свою жену, но я в неё не влюблен'. Вот в этом плане я запомнила, что это трудно перевести. Или вот commitment тоже, из той же серии. Я вот не знаю, как перевести commitment. Вот таких выражений масса.* (017-F-37-DHM)[160]

However, it is not just the (folk) linguistic subtleties of definitions which come as a meaningful difference in the interpretation of closeness, but also the way other native speakers explain and assess the cross-linguistic relationships that

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[160] *Once we were discussing with other foreigners what the difference between 'to love somebody'* [uses Eng.] *and 'to be in love'* [uses Eng.] *is. It is pretty much the same in Russian. Whereas here, as English people have explained to me, these are two totally different things. Someone said, 'I love my wife but I am not in love with her'* [uses Eng.] *and I thought, 'Yes, it is kinda interesting'. We won't say it in Russian that way, 'I do love my wife, but I am not in love with her'. Regarding this I just remembered that it was difficult to translate. Or the word 'commitment'* [uses Eng.] *is also of that sort. I simply do not know how to translate 'commitment'* [uses Eng.]*. And there are a lot more of expressions like this.*

migrants become involved in, thus revealing a different discourse on the intimacy of couples:

> *Как моего парня мама обо мне выразилась, она сказала на английском, и мне было очень приятно, что она очень рада, что её сын нашел такую девушку, чтобы заиметь с ней ребенка. Вот по-русски звучит не очень красиво – что он, меня нашел, чтоб ребенка заиметь? А на английском оно звучит красиво* ['to have a child together']. *Поэтому мне было очень трудно перевести это* [моей] *маме, что она сказала. То есть я перевела, но оно не передает то, что на английском.* (024-F-29-WST)[161]

However idiosyncratic this phrase may have sounded, it referred to a more general context of accepted intimate relationships and the language one uses to talk about them, which migrants gradually acquire through their experiences. The mismatch of terms and real practices signified by them in two different contexts – that of Russian-speaking origins and a new British setting – becomes especially distinctive at the more ambiguous states, such as the way Russian speakers conceptualise the term 'partnership' in distinction to 'marriage'. Their individual understandings of the term do not quite follow the formal status of the civil partnership as an official parallel to the civil marriage, but create a speculative opposition to their own idea of a 'civil marriage'. The idea of 'partnership' thereby becomes a focus for debating ideas that different cultures have about trust, intimacy and commitment in a relationship. Whereas some of my informants strongly criticise the (Western liberal) notion of 'partnership' as too loose and lacking a proper sense of commitment,[162] others see it as, in fact, expressive of 'true commitment', but only in a given cultural context (specifically the

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[161] *As my boyfriend's mom has said about me, she said that in English and I was pleased to hear that she was glad that her son had found such a girl to have a child together. It doesn't sound quite right in Russian – what, he found me only to have a baby? And it sounds really nice in English. So it was quite difficult for me to translate it to my mom, the thing she said. I did translate but it does not communicate the message which was there in English.*

[162] Kristina, 27, expresses her doubt in any other form of engagement that the official marriage by referring to the concept of partnership as being 'artificially created' – apparently, in contrast to a traditional marriage: *Как это у них тут все называют – партнер, что это вообще? Непонятно, что придумали, и просто для того, чтобы было меньше нормальных таких, обычных браков. (How do they call it - partners, what is this? Very confusing, and is simply to reduce the number if normal, usual marriages.)* (018-F-27-NCL)

contemporary UK, in distinction to contemporary Russia).[163] Others still find this notion to be the only one suitable for encapsulating the intimate coupledom that they seek.[164] Russian-speaking migrants are inclined to assume contrasting norms of spousal behaviour in the two cultures:

> *Что у русских свои недостатки, что у англичан – свои. Русские вон гуляют, посмотришь: постоянно изменяют. Англичане более какие-то – да, то есть я совершенно спокойна за Д.* (005-F-26-BLT)[165]

The idea of this informal mutual agreement in the absence of legal regulations of the relationship is, however, contradicted by the official procedures to gain the statuses of citizenship or residence, which entail language assessment and cultural formatting certifications and thus are seen by the migrants as official tests legislating the trustworthiness of their intimate relationships. Artiom, 32, interprets his experience of passing through the 'Life in the UK' exam as attesting his commitment to his partner:

> *От того теста мало впечатлений, так-то почти ничего не помню, что там, факты, что надо было. Скорее такое было, типа, вот, 'хочешь с ним жить – надо доказать, что правда хочешь, что у вас всё серьёзно'.* (025-M-32-DRL)[166]

Standardised testing procedures perceived as checking the commitment of a migrant spouse to invest in a long-term partnership involve both linguistic examinations and cultural awareness tests, both of which are formalised official 'versions' of what qualities and skills a model applicant should demonstrate, but are hardly acquired in the natural environment of daily interactions. The effort of passing linguistic and cultural certification brings official discourse into an intimate relationship, but also encourages many Russian-speaking partners to

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[163] As Nina, 29, explains her loyalty to the concept of partnership being reasonable only in this country, due to the standards of trust and commitment within couples.

[164] Artiom, 32, admits that his migration to the country with civil partnership for same-sex couples was for him the only way to escape social stygmatisation he experienced back in the provincial Russian context.

[165] *Russians have their drawbacks, English men have their own ones. Russians cheat easily – look, they do it all the time. But the English are calmer in this sense – I am totally sure in D.*

[166] *That test left little to remember, I don't remember much, some facts, other things required. It was more like 'if you want to live with him, you need to prove it, to prove that everything is that serious between you'.*

wish for a kind of reciprocity in the effort. This is most likely to be expressed through their expectations of the mutuality of the 'language desire' they have (even if it is framed in a mostly practical way). As Margarita, 28, puts it:

> *Я ему говорила несколько раз, чтоб он учил. У нас есть книги и диски, но он почему-то не хочет. Я покупала и пыталась его учить, но пока безрезультатно. Может, он и хочет, но нет мотивации или как. Я б хотела, чтобы он выучил. Конечно, мне удобнее, я просто говорю по-английски. Но я бы на его месте начала учить.* (047-F-28-DRL)[167]

Less often than not, their own 'language desire' is indeed reciprocated through the English-speaking spouse's interest in Russian, which evolves in parallel to or even in anticipation of the relationship with their Russian-speaking partner. In some cases, studying Russian becomes a cause for further romantic engagement between a tutor and a tutee, but only if the student expresses a particular drive to grasp the language. As Elina, 37, a former English-language teacher for Russians-speaking children and a teacher of RFL for English-speaking adults, recollects:

> *Например, мой муж был моим студентом – он нет, он всё изучил. Но у него стимул, наверное, был изучать русский язык. И дополнительные уроки, и в общем это... И вот сейчас, когда он просматривает свои учебники и то, что он маленькие сочинения писал, то так: неужели это я? Я говорю: да, было время!* (041-F-37-НХН)[168]

Elina's narrative provides insight into the development of 'language desire' as evolving from the 'desire to learn a particular language' towards 'the desire to learn the language of one's beloved'. It firstly introduces the evolution of 'language desire' and its coincidence with the dynamics of relationship in mixed couples. The initial wish to study a language turns into a more culturally oriented interest which is gradually localised in interpersonal communication and a romanticised

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[167] *I told him a number of times that he needed to start learning. He has books and CDs, but he doesn't want to for some reason. I bought these myself and tried to teach him, but in vain so far. He might want it but does not have any motivation. I would love him to learn it. Of course, it is more convenient for me now when I simply speak English. But if I were him, I would start learning.*

[168] *For example, my husband was my student – and he studied everything. But he might have had his motivation to study Russian. Some extra classes, and all that... And now when he looks through all his textbooks and those little essays he used to write, he is like, 'was it actually me?' and I say, 'Yes, these were the times!'*

relationship. The dynamics of this relationship is mirrored in the language learning sphere where the initial passion diminishes to a level of routinised calls to previous experience. The above mentioned reminiscence over old notebooks containing 'little essays' is one of a number of forms this practice may employ, among which is the occasional reciting of a favourite poem in Russian, watching a film, listening to music, or stumbling upon teaching materials. Whichever the form, this practice becomes interpreted by a Russian-speaking partner as belonging to a form of 'family history', or of the evolution of their relationship, and receives their reaction in this context. Some spouses position this ritualised reference to past language learning practices as an attempt to prompt a renaissance of this 'language desire' (or find ways to excuse its apparent decline), as Elina herself explains later: '…*у него пока много работы, но он обязательно собирается продолжать*…' ('…he has a lot of work now but he is determined to continue by all means…', 041-F-37-HXH).

Ekaterina, 24, also considers the lack of her husband's practice of Russian as temporary and linked to his being too busy at work (030-F-24-SSH). Others see this decrease of 'language desire' from a more pragmatic perspective and feel that it is in their right to open the argument on the matter:

> *У нас есть диски, он должен его учить. Я сказала, в августе будешь сам общаться, как хочешь. Переводить я не собираюсь. Вот общайся, как знаешь. Он все мечтает: вот, я выиграю в лотерею, и мы поедем во Владивосток на полгода, а я там выучу русский.* (005-F-26-BLT)[169]

Regardless of what the strategy the Russian-speaking partner adopts, they present their English spouse needing to learn Russia as a sort of family obligation, or a chore to be regularly performed at home, as proof of loyalty and devotion to the spouse.[170] The interpretation of the 'language desire' and linguistic efforts of moving towards familial bilingualism as characteristic of an 'ideally balanced'

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[169] *We have the CDs so he has to study it. I told him that he would be communicating all on his own in August* [while in Russia]*. I am not going to translate for you. Interact as you can. His dream is to win a lottery and we will go to Vladivostok for 6 months and there he will learn Russian.*

[170] This is not to make generalisations, but my own observations of the Russian-speaking spouses were that the strategy of excusing husband's lack of interest in Russian by his current business tended to be employed by the wives who were (financially) dependent on their husbands, whereas the other strategy, of 'confronting' their lack of motivation, belongs to those who were more independent and, particularly, have jobs of their own.

mixed family is also often accentuated through the theme of (future) children. As Evgeniia, 26, suggests:

> *Я ему говорю: смотри, дети пойдут – мы с ними будем строить против*
> *тебя планы на русском языке. Будем давать тебе смешные прозвища.*
> *Но ты не знаешь и не поймешь ничего!* (005-F-26-BLT)[171]

5.4. The child as boundary: Gendering the language upbringing process

Regardless of their current marital status, migrant experiences or relationships with locals or other migrants, all of the informants strongly believe that their (hypothetical, future) children will be able to speak Russian. For many of them it is a matter of nature, not nurture: they see native fluency in Russian as something that should be inherent in their offspring; the opposite of this appears 'strange' or even 'unpleasant' to the would-be parent:

> *Мне будет, наверное, неприятно, если они не будут говорить по-русски,*
> *если, например, в той стране, где мы будем находиться, они по-*
> *английски будут говорить, и только по-английски, то мне будет*
> *странно говорить дома по-английски с детьми. Да, я, наверное, хочу,*
> *чтобы... Но я думаю, что по-другому никак.* (013-M-26-NCL)[172]

Their early encounters of parent-child communication in mixed English-Russian families, which might even predate their own migration, involve strong emotional reaction as 'wrong' or 'abnormal' and are subject to criticism:

> *Я помню, например, у меня соседка замуж вышла за американца и*
> *уехала в Америку. Я помню, сын приехал, она с сыном приехала, ну, там,*
> *года четыре ему было - он ни слова по-русски не говорил, и я помню, я ей*
> *говорила: как?! Как это он у тебя?.. "Ну, мы по-английски говорим, так*
> *получилось. Если вырастет – захочет, изъявит желание изучать*

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[171] *I keep saying to him, just you wait, once our kids are born, we will start making plans against you in Russian. We will call you funny names. But you don't know a thing so won't be able to understand that!*

[172] *I am mostly likely to feel uncomfortable if they happen not to speak Russian, if in the country where we will be at that moment, they speak only English, then I will feel really weird talking to my own kids in English at home. Yes, I think I would like it that... But, honestly, I think there is no other way.*

русский – пожалуйста, если нет – нет". Я говорю: ох, так нельзя, надо!...
(041-F-37-HXH)[173]

However, after a certain time spent within the new, predominantly English-speaking environment and while observing other families' experiences of dealing with (potentially) bilingual contexts of mixed or migrant couples, the informants become less categorical and more understanding of variable linguistic behaviour of younger generations:

Мы как-то летели из Москвы в Лондон, и была семья: муж англичанин, жена русская и двое детей. Но дети разговаривали на русско-английском: 'Look, look, это река!' Знаешь, я просто сидела и думала... Но по-другому, наверное, никак? Хорошо, что они знают хотя бы, что такое река! (005-F-26-BLT)[174]

Nonetheless, whatever the outcome of the child's actual linguistic behaviour, Russian-speaking migrant parents find it ethically important that they remain concerned with this issue, doing what they can to transmit their native language to their child. The counterexample of parental neglect towards Russian as a 'heritage' language provides reason for reproach and incomprehension of parental motives and explanations:

Я знаю одну девочку из России, муж у неё индус, она ребеночка родила, и разговаривает она с ним на английском. Причем английский у неё – не самый лучший, у меня был английский лучше, чем у неё. И я ей говорю: 'А что ж ты с ребенком-то?...' Типа 'а зачем ему?' Ну, думаю, что за дура. Ребенку-то и намного лучше будет, если он и на русском, и на

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[173] *I remember how my neighbour got married to an American and moved to America. I remember her son, how she came back with her son who was four or something like that, and he couldn't say a word in Russian, and I remember myself saying to her, 'How? How is it possible for you?' 'Well, we speak English and it went this way. When he grows up and wants to learn Russian, then so be it, but if not, it is ok too'. And I say, 'Well no, you can't do it like that, it is a must!...'*

[174] *We were once going from Moscow to London by plane and there was a family: an English husband, a Russian wife, and two kids. But children were speaking Russo-English: 'Look, look,* [uses Eng.] *this is a river!' You know, I was sitting there and thinking... But there is no other way to it, is there? It is good they know what the river is called!*

английском. Это и развитие, и ему может пригодиться дальше в
жизни... И мне это странно. (003-F-42-NCL)[175]

The multilingualism of migrant families (like the one from the quote above) is not considered a sufficient excuse for the Russian-speaking parents' lack of motivation to try to transmit their native language to their children as an idiom of equal importance to English (or whatever the other parent's mother tongue might be). But it is not the value of Russian per se which is stressed here, but the importance of *parental obligations*, which for a Russian speaker are expected to include transmitting Russian, their understanding of nurturing a child. One of the informants, Aliona, 29, comments on her own situation, where she transfers her own understanding of parental responsibilities onto her husband, who is also a migrant, but not a Russian speaker:

> *Вот у меня у мужа ещё ребенок есть, старший – ему девять лет. Он по-*
> *испански не говорит, представляешь? Только по-английски. И так*
> *ужасно: вот мы приезжаем туда, приехали к ним, к его маме и папе, и*
> *он не может – со своими бабушкой и дедушкой не может говорить. И*
> *он ему переводит. Ужас. И он ещё такой ленивый – не хочет учить.*
> (007-F-29-LND)[176]

But this common understanding of the task of the parent to provide the child with all the resources to inspire him or her to start speaking Russian turns out to be gender-specific. Male informants hardly demonstrate any awareness of possible challenges or, indeed, failures that one might encounter on the way, relying implicitly on the inherent abilities of their (hypothetical, future) children.[177] Women, even if they are not currently planning to have children of

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[175] *I know a girl from Russia whose husband is Indian and she gave birth to a child and speaks only English to him. And mind you, her English is not perfect, it is even worse than mine. And I say to her, 'And what are you going to do about the child?' And she is like, 'why would he need it?' And I think, oh what a fool. It would be so much better for the kid if he could speak both – Russian and English. It is good for his development and may come handy afterwards, in his life. It seems so bizarre to me.*

[176] *My husband has another child, the older one – he is nine now. And he doesn't speak Spanish, could you imagine? Only English. And it is so terrible: we arrive there, to his parents' house, and he can't do it – he can't speak to his grandparents. And he translates for him. Horrible. And he is so lazy – doesn't want to teach.*

[177] In this respect Pavel's, 29, uncertain planning seems quite characteristic of the 'male' view on the subject: *'Дома-то мы все равно будем по-русски разговаривать, поэтому, я думаю, они все*

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their own, are more reflective and versatile in considering the issue. As Nina, 29, puts it:

> *Конечно, я хочу, чтобы мой ребенок говорил по-русски. Но я и не хочу её путать, отвлекать от английского, понятно, что она останется здесь жить, и ей нужен тогда будет английский. Я вообще хочу сделать research на эту тему, узнать, чтобы не было проблем у неё с грамматикой.* (024-F-29-WST)[178]

The other difference in the way men and women interpret the linguistic identities of their hypothetical children is the perspective of migrant trajectories. While women are more conscious of the current environment as one in which they might end up rearing a child (as, for example, in Nina's argumentations above), men tend to prioritise their own migrant trajectories as a determining factor, and define their children's linguistic development accordingly. In the words of Dmitrii, 24:

> *Однозначно будут говорить на русском. Потому что как бы план в моей жизни состоит в том, что я тоже не планирую здесь оставаться. И в Россию я вернусь однозначно.* (027-M-24-NCL)[179]

Gender-based strategies of explaining and maintaining the children's exposure to Russian become even more distinctive in their realisation, when the child is born, and, especially in cases of mixed marriages, that the reality is much more complex, bringing with it a whole host of new issues to handle. The issue of transmitting Russian to the next generation is of primary concern to the Russian-speaking mothers in mixed families. The condition of bilingualism strikes them as one in which their child is bound to develop linguistic 'abnormalities' in Russian:

равно как-то это впитают в себя' ('*We will speak Russian at home anyway, so I think they will still soak it in'*, 023-M-29-NCL).

[178] *Of course I do want my kid to speak Russian. But I don't want to confuse her, distract her from English because it is obvious that she will stay here to live and she will need English for that. I want to do some research* [uses Eng.] *on this topic, to find out what to do so that she doesn't have troubles with her grammar.*

[179] *They will definitely speak Russian. Because my life plan so far is not to stay here for the rest of my life. And I am definitely going to come back to Russia at some point.*

А так, если он говорит по-русски, то с таким акцентом – я говорю, у тебя как будто русской крови-то вообще нету! Вообще ужас – англичанин! Ну все равно ещё что-то понимает... (041-F-37-HXH)[180]

What seems particularly threatening in this scenario is not the child's inability to perform in Russian, but the failure of a mother herself to perform her 'motherhood' as a set of responsibilities she has towards different parties in her closest environment. The first of these is her non-Russian husband, whose claim on understanding all family interactions seems indisputable. Since few husbands achieve an appropriate level of Russian and the idea of the development of a secret language between mother and child against the father is rarely more than a rhetorical ploy, Russian-speaking mothers tend to prefer English as the medium of communication for the triad of parents-child, while Russian occupies a peripheral position in this context.

In case where there are three languages in the family the dilemma becomes more complicated. The quote from Aliona, 29, illustrates the diversity of issues a mother deals with while elaborating her linguistic behaviour towards her newly-born child:

Я вот не знаю, как с ребенком быть с языком. С ней надо говорить по-русски, чтобы она учила русский, да? И надо вообще-то говорить только по-русски с ней. Допустим, я же с мужем говорю по-английски... Мне кто-то говорил, что так можно, они же дети и будут понимать, что с мамой по-русски, а с папой по-английски или по-испански, к примеру. ... Но это сложно именно для нас, потому что так сложно переключаться. Это раз. А во-вторых, то, что муж не знает русского, а я не знаю испанского, то когда я с ней говорю по-русски, то он как бы из этого разговора выключается. А иногда мне хочется, чтобы он тоже знал, о чем, что я ей говорю. Мне приходится говорить по-английски, или как – говорить по-русски, а потом переводить? Пока я так и не решила. Пока она маленькая, но уже надо начинать. Я с ней говорю, но иногда я с ней говорю по-английски, и для неё это может быть

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[180] *And then, if he speaks Russian to me, it is with such a strong accent that I say, 'it looks as if you don't have any Russian blood in you at all! Horrible – a pure English man!' But he still can understand just a little...*

проблематично – разделять. Говорят, что нужно только на одном языке говорить с ребенком, тогда она будет понимать. А папа думает только на испанском. Ну не знаю, как это у нас получится или нет. Я надеюсь. (007-F-29-LND)[181]

However important the relationship of the primary triad is, it is not exclusive in its influence on the mothers' behaviour. Her belonging to the Russophone culture is highlighted by her duty to impart this 'Russophonism' to her children. The levels on which this responsibility evolves include family relations and the link between generations, her referential group of friends and peers, other Russian-speaking migrants who, in the absence of a consolidated community, still pay considerable attention to the way their children are brought up and taught to use Russian. To provide a counter-example of these circles of responsibility being ignored (though reflected on), these are Natalia's explanations of how 'wrong' her behaviour is while bringing up her two sons:

Мне все говорят, что мне нужно как-то поменять приоритеты и больше заниматься языком, вот этой сферой, с детьми. В основном, это мои бедные родители, которые хотят общаться с внуком. У него есть какой-то русский язык, но его не достаточно, чтобы общаться. Помимо этого, так говорят мои русские друзья, которых очень мало. И помимо этого, так говорят мои коллеги-иностранцы, потому что они считают, что я как-то предаю свое сообщество иностранцев (laughing) *тем, что не учу детей русскому языку и как-то этим не занимаюсь. То есть русский язык – это как какой-то вид домашней*

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[181] *I don't quite know what to do about my child's language. I need to speak Russian to her so that she learns it, right? And it is necessary to speak only Russian to her. But I talk to my husband in English... Someone told me that it is a way out, they are children so they will understand that they need to speak Russian to their mom and Spanish or English to their dad, for example. ... But it is confusing for us, because it is so difficult to switch. That is one thing. Secondly, my husband doesn't know Russian and I don't know Spanish, so when I speak Russian to her, he seems to be excluded from the conversation. And sometimes I want him to know what we are talking about. And I have to speak English or what, do I say that in Russian and then translate? I haven't decided yet. She is too little now but it is time to start now. I do talk to her but often in English and it might be so problematic for her – to separate these two. They say you need to use just one language to speak to your child and then they will be able to understand. And her dad thinks only in Spanish. So I don't know if we will manage, or fail. I only hope.*

работы. Потому что я женщина, я была бы как-то обязана заниматься русским языком с детьми. (017-F-37-DHM)[182]

Different levels of responsibility might entail different requirements for what getting children to 'speak Russian' might actually mean. Whereas a certain level of fluency is required to fulfil the expectations of the older generations, the way to communicate with grandparents is almost always mediated by the mother herself who can reasonably direct the interactions according to her child's language skills and her parents' (or other relatives') interests. The necessity of such a transcultural mediator during these interactions was evident to most of the mothers I interviewed. Their aim was hardly to provide their children with full fluency in Russian, but more a hope to generate a sense of attachment to the wider cultural context associated with the Russian language.

One of the ways of trying to make Russian native to the child is to restructure the regular English-speaking environment into a Russian-learning one, especially by enrolling into this process those who communicate with the child the most – the father in particular. This is combined with attempts to revive the husband's own desire to continue his studies of Russian, by re-shaping his initial, romantic interest in the language into a new parental one. As Elina, 37, shares:

У нас сейчас С. [husband] опять возьмется за русский язык. Он говорит: если я начну, то может быть... Вот надо заняться серьёзно. Потому что сами знаете, как русский сложно потом изучать, если сейчас не дать ему знания русского, то потом уже всё. (041-F-37-HXH)[183]

Another means is to reshape the child's peer circle, by introducing into it other children from Russian-speaking migrant families. The idea and hope of inspiring one child by the example of others is a key area of work of Russian-

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[182] *Everybody tells me that I need to change my priorities and spend more time with my kids teaching them the language and such. Mostly this comes from my poor parents who want to communicate with their grandson. He has some Russian but it is not enough to communicate. Besides, it comes from my Russian friends, of whom I do not have many. And apart from them, it is my foreign-born colleagues who consider me a traitor of our foreign community* (laughing) *because I do not teach my kids Russian and do not do much about it. So Russian is some kind of a house chore. I am a woman so I would be expected to teach Russian to my children.*

[183] *S. [husband] will get back to his Russian again. He says that if he starts then may be... But we need to take it seriously. Because you do know how difficult it is to study Russian at a later stage, if we do not give him some basic knowledge of Russian now, it may be all gone later.*

language schools and parents' clubs. Most Russian-speaking parents that I have interviewed follow the logic of Elina:

> *Я думаю, что если он начнет ходить в школу, увидит, что другие детишки говорят по-русски, да, мальчики... Но вот так вот пока не получилось.* (041-F-37-HXH)[184]

As is clear from these quotes, much of this is in the realm of wishful thinking. This is mostly due to the dominance of the English-language environment and the communicative norms functioning in it. Therefore, Russian-language acquisition is also presented as a way for a child to engage in Russian language culture, and a way for parents (mothers) to practise a 'Russian style' of upbringing (for which the word *воспитание* is used). Zbenovich & Lerner (2013) argue that for post-Soviet Russian-speaking migrants in Israel this concept becomes central in inculcating a 'Russian identity' to Israel-born generations, mainly as a factor in establishing power relations both with their children and local residents. Transmission of two cornerstone characteristics of this identity (*воспитанность*, 'good manners', and *обязанности*, 'obligations') infiltrates language child-rearing and justifies the effort.[185]

Considerations about the bilingual environment into which a newborn baby arrives start even before the moment of birth and entail many spheres of life. The initial negotiation usually involves the careful cross-cultural name-picking that would satisfy the linguistic requirements of both cultures – the easiness of spelling and pronunciation in Russian and English is of greater importance than just the personal preferences of parents or other relatives.[186] Where, however, the translatability of the name is not met, a baby is usually given an official English

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[184] *I think that if he starts attending the school and sees that other kids also speak Russian there, yes, even boys... But it has not happened that way so far.*

[185] For Russian-speaking migrants in the North-East England this context of culture-oriented and identity-building process of linguistic education is linked to the phenomenon of Russian-language weekend schools which are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

[186] Nina, 29, or Aliona, 29, both from mixed-marriage families, note their extra-effort to choose a 'proper' name for their newly-born daughters which would sound rather conventional in both languages and be easy to read out for English and Russian speakers.

name, with its double of like-sounding Russian equivalent for domestic, private use of Russian-speaking relatives, first of all, mothers.[187]

This distinction between Russian- and English-speaking domains in the earliest stages of the child's life develops through particular genres Russian-speaking mothers use to communicate within their families. This includes especially 'baby-talk', or 'motherese', which presents a non-standard, limited and specific language variety which is, however, especially suitable for communicating emotions and attachment to infants. It has become a culturally-specific language of mothering and care while alone with the child, thus constructing a closed mono-lingual space of utmost intimacy (e.g. Smagulova 2014).[188] Being sometimes self-conscious about their 'broken' English (especially accent-wise), some Russian-speaking mothers feel reluctant to be the first one to expose their child to this language.[189] Their lack of practice in the genre of English 'baby-talk' also prevents any involuntary switching between languages in this genre. Thus, due to the low estimation of their own appropriateness as speakers of English and no previous knowledge of what communication with babies might involve in it, Russian-speaking migrant mothers tend to choose Russian as the first language to build the interaction with their children.

However, in any social situation involving other (possible) communicants who do not speak Russian, they tend to switch to English, especially if the setting requires full accountability of their messages to the whole audience. Two examples which I witnessed during my fieldwork illustrate this point. Kristina, 27, while answering my questions, was simultaneously keeping an eye on her 2-year-old daughter who was investigating the space of the crowded café where we met. She regularly talked to her daughter, giving warnings or entertaining her, and as long as the child was at our table, she used Russian only. However, once she headed towards other tables, leaving our own space of Russian-language interaction, my

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[187] E.g. the name Erin is transformed into *Ариша*, Isabel becomes *Белка* (which also means 'squirrel' in Russian, which makes it a 'secret' name deciphered only by other Russian speakers).

[188] The strategy of using 'baby-talk' with their children corresponds in informants' narrative with their use of 'pet-talk' and 'object-talk' (i.e. ways to communicate with their pets, cars, electronic devices etc.), that is, in the words of one informant, 'when they are really alone with themselves' (*'когда я уже совсем наедине сама с собой'*, 043-F-22-DHM).

[189] See Evgeniia's account on her friend who speaks only English with her baby even though 'her English is not the best one, and obviously worse than hers', i.e. Evgeniia's.

informant switched to English, even while addressing her daughter exclusively. This switching happened every time the child crossed this invisible border of our space and outer environment. When I asked her about that later, she stressed the performance of her parental accountability, which included the switch of language, depending on the audience:

> *Мне кажется, так принято, и надо делать по-хорошему. Это мой ребенок, я за неё в ответственности, пусть знают, что она со мной, я её не бросила, слежу.* (018-F-27-NCL)[190]

Another young Russian-speaking mother always switches to English once entering a children's playground since, as she explains, it is an overcrowded place where minor accidents are always possible and to prevent any misunderstandings from other users she feels it is safer for her child to be spoken to in English there. Both cases show how linguistic behaviour within the mother-child dyad becomes strongly influenced by public context and social surroundings. The older the child, the more necessary it becomes for Russian-speaking mothers to stick to English in various social environments, thereby losing an exclusive linguistic connection with the child that Russian provides, something they invariably (say they) regret.

This particularly concerns the highly valued experiences of their children's 'first-time-evers' which are perceived as 'untranslatables', different, alienated forms that are similar to experiences of their own childhood. For example, the idea of Arina's child 'celebrating her first birthday in an English, British manner', meaning it is no longer the birthday of a little Russian girl, matches the following passage from the autobiographical writing by N. Lvovich (2012) who experienced similar differences when observing her US-bred children:

> My emotional response to a frustrating life in the untranslatable is a compulsive desire to make myself known and understood and to regain the complicity and the intimacy of my first language and culture that used to embody family and home. Although I comfortably use English at home, it is not in English that I rode my first bike, scribbled my first letter, got drunk with my buddies in the park, or made love for the first time. (Lvovich 2012: 252)

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[190] *I think it is the common rule and it should be done like that ideally. It is my child, I am responsible for her, so they will know that she is with me, I haven't lost her, and am keeping an eye on her.*

The growing number of British children's experiences that seem 'untranslatable' to their Russian-speaking mothers results in the process of 'othering' Russian in children's usage and perspective, but also provides a space for instant cultural negotiations between children and their Russian-speaking parent(s) as the children grow up.

Another transformation in language image which is revealed through communications with the second generation is that Russian usually becomes gendered as female (and even spoken of as 'girly'), given that children hear it mostly from their mothers (even if both parents are Russian speakers, it is the mother who reinforces Russian as a family language to them) or from the (predominantly female) language teachers at weekend schools:

> *Вот сейчас у него такая - если я говорю, что по-русски, он говорит, что 'по-русски только девочки говорят'. То есть я говорю по-русски, там, девочка, которая живет - его друга мама - тоже девочка.* (041-F-37-HXH)[191]

Since the subgroup of 'Russian wives' arguably constitutes one of the major clusters within Russian-speaking migration in the UK, one which O. Morgunova (2009) describes as a 'hidden community', the gendering of Russian as 'female' language goes beyond the child-rearing domain. My proposition is to go further in referring to this community as socially 'mute'. Their language becomes not just pushed out from the everyday communication of their closest family but is also marginalised at the level of genre variety, taking the form and register of baby-talk and functioning in the private sphere of mother-child communication. Therefore, the image of the language which most Russian-speaking migrants were exposed to in the (post)Soviet culture and which they keep reproducing at the level of language attitudes, Russian-1, 'the great and mighty Russian language' (as discussed in Chapter 3), is present in their metalinguistic thinking, but is not actually present in their new everyday practices. It is not simply replaced by Russian-2, with its flexible vocabulary and loose normativity, but is reduced to a very specific genre and is extensively gendered as a 'female' variety. Both of these

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[191] *He is like this now – if I ask him to speak Russian, he says that 'only girls speak Russian'. That means that I speak Russian, another girl who lives close – his friend's mom – she is a girl as well.*

considerably limit the functionality and the social contexts of the usage of Russian that bilingual children are exposed to as a consequence.

Despite this 'muting' on different levels, however, Russian-speaking wives feel their responsibility to perform successfully in their 'motherhood', that is to transfer their native language to children. Their family and biographical narrations present mixtures of different voices sounding accordantly or discordantly, but belonging to other referents – spouses and relatives from their home countries, fellow-migrants or locals. Their own voice in this polyphony tends to be concealed and intimately directed towards their own children whose ambivalent and 'imperfect' bilingualism they struggle to face.

Their only reason to speak out is in favour of their children's education in Russian language and literature, which, in fact, is also performed through adopting the many voices of others – those of language schools' administrations, 'bilingualism experts' from the web, their relatives back in their home country, and so forth. In contrast to the exploration by Urwin et al. (2013) of the way different voices are interconnected in motherly narratives of a young Bangladeshi in London, Russian-speaking mothers tend not only to internalise current voices from their reference groups, but also to enliven their own experiences of past times – (post-)Soviet schooling ideologies and practices, childhood memories, long-lasting language habits – in order to put all these in the kaleidoscope of their own narratives, substituting their own clearly performed voices.

One of the benefits that this position of 'hidden' identity offers to Russian-speaking mothers is the common ground of experiences with other migrant mothers in the UK. The situation with (m)other tongue for children may become a potential stage for sharing their concerns on motherhood, belonging to different cultures and the closeness of emotions, experiences and narrations with their children. As Aliona, 29, a social scientist herself, acknowledges in her own attempts to observe migrant communities in Britain:

> *Вот как ты к ним подступишься – да никак. Только к женщинам и можно. Женщины-мигрантки – с ними можно на почве детей. Теперь мне тоже много есть что сказать.* (007-F-29-LND)[192]

[192]*How would you approach them – there is no way to that. Women are the only group. You could approach female migrants regarding children upbringing. And now I myself have a lot to say about it.*

Apart from engaging in interactions with other migrant mothers to construct a communicative field for sharing experiences and discussing possible strategies of coping with the bilingual challenges that their children's upbringing entails, Russian-speaking parents also have to reconsider their relationship to other family members – both the in-laws in the new country and their relatives left back in their home countries.

5.5. Cultural boundaries and family roles in extended families

The role that the intimacy of relationships with partners or children plays in migrants' negotiations of new identities must be extended into a larger context of 'familyhood', including especially the question of keeping contact and maintaining family ties with older generations (parents from both sides). Russian-speaking migrants come from a certain cultural context with its expectations on roles carried out by different members, ideas of how family communications should be carried out, and the distances among different family units, which find parallels as well as counter-examples in the new context of a mixed marriage in the UK. Moreover, couples of Russian-speaking origins are also to review their ways of dealing with other members due to the family dis-location that their new migrant experience brings them.

Narratives of family issues involving older generations are, therefore, interesting from two standpoints – as personal interpretations of differences in maintaining relationship with British in-laws and, secondly, as revealing the changing roles migrants' own parents play in their family life. Obviously, the difference between a grandfather's and a grandmother's roles and functions in a transnational family is highly relevant to practices involved in the upbringing of transcultural children.

First encounters with a new family are usually interpreted through comparing its character to the one back home. What comes first in describing differences is the range of communicative patterns among family members which reveal the migrants' own understandings of what a 'proper' family relationship should be. For example, Evgeniia, 26, in her recollection of the first meeting with her in-laws mixes up the 'traditional family' and 'family with traditions' linking

both to the idea of its solidarity as a single unit (their being '*дружные*') viewed as its main advantage:

Семья не скажу, что очень традиционная, что у них есть какие-то традиции. К сожалению! И как-то у них, не знаю, у нас, в моей семье, мы более дружные. У них семьи - они как-то все больше пьют. Д. пить не любит, поэтому он не любит к родителям ездить, это я его всегда уговариваю, чтобы мы поехали к его родителям. (005-F-26-BLT)[193]

This 'traditional' friendliness among family members for her is revealed through the explicit interest towards anyone from the closed circle of relatives and the continuous communication flow during any family gathering, traditionally maintained by the mother:

Когда у нас появляется новый человек в семье, ... мама моя садится с папой, в основном, мама, конечно, и они разговаривают. Мама разговаривает и узнает: кто, что, то есть уделяется много внимания... У них же - вообще ни вопросов, ни "кто твои мама с папой", ни "где ты", им не интересно. Мне кажется, им неинтересно. Мне было очень странно - когда я сама о чем-то рассказываю, только тогда меня слушают. (005-F-26-BLT)[194]

Yet this lack of open interest, however, is not interpreted as a sign of neglect or indifference as such, but more as a failure to maintain the family's sense of closeness and unity. The boundaries of a closed family circle and the crossing of its boundaries by a newcomer are not marked in the oral communication, but more through other, non-verbal gestures. As Evgeniia herself notes, one of the ways to show her belonging to the family was, among others, the practice of giving Christmas presents; while she was in the status of a 'girlfriend', her future husband's parents would present her a 'rather small bag' for Christmas. The bag,

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[193] *I wouldn't call their family a traditional one, they do not seem to have a lot of traditions. That's a shame! And in their family, well I don't know, we are so much closer in our family. And in their families they mostly drink. D. doesn't like to drink so he doesn't like going to his parents and it is always me who talks him into visiting them.*

[194] *When someone new enters our family, ... my mom usually sits with my dad, mostly just my mom, of course, and they talk. My mom gets to know the person while talking: who they are, what they are, she pays a lot of attention... At their family, there were no questions at all, no 'who are you parents?', no 'where are you from', they are not interested. I think they are not bothered. I felt very strange – if only I spoke out and told them something, only then they would listen to me.*

however, grew much bigger (as big as the one for her sister-in-law) once she became an official wife. These non-verbal indicators of growing closeness and rituals welcoming the migrant into the new family were interpreted positively by my informants. However, the lack of verbal communication familiar to them as 'family talk' was still perceived as significant. To counter this, they sought to restore the 'balance' of verbal vs. non-verbal communication within the extended family by turning more actively to their own relatives back at home, trying to find an appropriate place for them in this new, cross-cultural family network.

One of the major ways to do that is by re-examining the relationship with their own parents, who are usually left back home, and by engaging the English-speaking partner into these communications. Giving birth to the first child in a mixed marriage is considered a sufficient reason for a visit by a Russian-speaking spouse's mother. This is so even though most of the Russian-speaking wives are rather well integrated into practices of motherhood networking within local communities. Most of them attend special courses and trainings while pregnant and during the first months after the delivery, communicate with many of the fellow-mothers in the neighbourhood and, all in all, perceive their motherhood as a good reason to build up their new communicative network.

Even though they receive much information and support on childcare from welfare services and peer mothers in the new context, the practice of 'calling out' for a Russian-speaking grandmother is a central part of the migrant mother's cultural re-enactment of her motherhood. The grandmother comes about the time baby is due and stays usually up to six months 'to help her daughter with the baby'. However, the essence of this assistance seems more symbolic than practical and involves the 'vaccination' of a Russian identity in a novice of motherhood. This prolonged visit may also be repeated later, when the need to establish the context of a Russophone culture seems particularly urgent. Yet again, no specific practices are required – it is simply the presence of a 'babushka' which seems sufficient in the situation of a growing English-speaking-ness of a bilingual child. Therefore, one of the main reproaches that Russian-speaking daughters put to their mothers is when they too end up switching to English in the new context. As Elina, 37, puts it:

Даже вот мама моя приехала, полгода моя мама была у нас здесь, я думаю, чтобы хоть она по-русски – но она тоже на английский перешла. (041-F-37-HXH)[195]

The extent to which the work of inculcating the Russophone identity in a cross-cultural family is connected to the role of 'babushka', the maternal grandmother, is also revealed through the gendering of the son-in-law's language repertoire. Many of the informants reported that the minimal basic vocabulary their spouses knew was most likely to be connected to their interactions with their mothers-in-law. By contrast, male-to-male communication with their fathers-in-law is both minimised and often non-language-specific, for example, involving general gestures, exclamations or other extra-linguistic means of communication. As an example cited by Evgeniia suggests:

Я их как-то оставляла - папу с Д., когда они там ружье чистили. … Мне надоело переводить постоянно. Я говорю: Сами разберетесь. Вот они разбирались, Д. говорит: Все понятно. Папа просто ему показывал наглядно. (005-F-26-BLT)[196]

The extreme development of these (generally short) 'vaccination' visits is babushka's permanent residence with her daughter's family. In this case, her function often does not involve predominantly domestic chores, but is most likely to be that of child-minding and cultural upbringing, which almost takes the form of 'home schooling' in the Russian language, literature and general culture. Oksana, 55, argued that her mother who had moved in with them at a later stage was the main tutor in 'Russianness' for her teenage daughter whose level of understanding had grown considerably since then. In the absence of any Russian-speaking relatives in her house, Svetlana, 29, wishes for 'another me, but older and wiser' to have enough time and expertise to teach her 3-year-old son Russian.

Research on Russian-speaking migrant families and on the way they involve older generations in matters of child upbringing, in communication with other relatives, or in family decision-making, has shown that strategies of involving

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[195] *Even my mom came and spent six months with us here, I hoped she would speak Russian – but no, she switched to English as well.*

[196] *I left them alone once – my dad and D., while they were cleaning the gun. I got so fed up with translating all the time. And I said, 'you will catch up'. So they did. D. said that everything was clear. My dad would just show everything to him.*

maternal grandmothers into the family may differ considerably from one culture to the next. A. Bloch (2011) describes how mothers of Russian-speaking female migrants in Turkey are involved in family-building from the very beginning and how they strongly influence their daughters' choices in partners, migration and starting families of their own. A. Poskanzer (1995) employs the metaphor of *матрёшка*, 'The Russian Doll', to describe the model of a three-generational family (grandmother, mother, child) which is seen as a culturally-specific, self-contained social unit formed to meet, firstly, the hardships of post-Soviet social perturbations during the 1990s and, in then, after migration, the challenges of integration faced in the new host society. Lomsky-Feder & Leibovitz (2010) discuss an 'intergenerational coalition of women' (the migrant wife and her mother) as a duumvirate which aims to distance the local husband from child-rearing to 'advance their style of parenting' and, consequently, establish the 'Russian feminine territory' and usurp the power in the family (Lomsky-Feder & Leibovitz 2010: 116). In my own fieldwork material, the pattern of integrating the Russian-speaking maternal grandmother into a new cross-cultural family is shown to have primarily a symbolic meaning, rather than a pragmatic purpose.

5.6. Conclusions

The way linguistic identities and practices of communication of Russian-speaking migrants are integrated in their family life extends to different areas, influencing the ideas of closeness, trust, role distribution and solidarity with other family members – both in the new context and back in home countries.

The concept of 'language desire' shows how the intent to learn a language and the motivation to master one's skills in it correspond with the way a desire for a romantic relationship with a native speaker of this language is formed, dealt with and transforms in a growing intimacy of a bilingual partnership. The patterns which influence further development of this language desire are rather different for Russian-speaking migrants and their English-speaking spouses – at least as they are perceived by the Russian-speaking halves of these couples. The 'language desire' of Russian-speaking wives drives them to continue mastering the language itself and integrate into the culture. But as their sense of closeness to their partner grows, so does their understanding of what successful communication in a couple

should involve. So they also start to expect the mutual comprehension of what is not articulated through words. This wish for 'understanding the unsaid' as the utmost degree of closeness between partners also influences the way communication with the couple's environment is performed. For example, those Russian-speaking couples who claim that this type of communication characterises their relationship may, as a consequence, also speak of the shortcoming of not being fully integrated into the English-speaking environment (since they get enough and more meaningful kinds of communication with each other). What is more, they might even speak of losing the previously experienced connectedness with their family members back home (who are living in a very different social reality), prioritising the sharing of common migrant experiences with their partner.

Those Russian-speaking migrants who have English-speaking partners, however, reflect on 'language desire' as a way of explaining the partners' caring and understanding of their effort to establish the communicative unity within the couple and within their family unit more generally, especially in the context of raising a bilingual child. Hoping for reciprocity of effort, they usually plan to facilitate the realisation of language learning by providing their partners with materials, services and settings, as best they can. However, in practice, such efforts rarely go beyond the stage of wishful thinking.

This, however, increases the distance between a child and the language, changing their own perspective to Russian from the 'language of one of the parents' to a 'foreign language one of their parents wants them to study'. While Russian is usually the language of mother-child intimacy of the very first stages of upbringing, its form is never standard but represents a specific genre of mother-talk, which as time goes by and social contacts with the English-speaking environment start dominating becomes 'othered' in the bilinguality of a child's family life. Therefore, Russian is quite regularly seen by children themselves as an idiom of their early years, the language of intimate relations with only one parent and, in gender terms, a female language.

When discussing their efforts of cultivating their children's passion for Russian language and culture, Russian-speaking mothers tend to evoke as the key imparter of 'Russophone upbringing' the traditional figure of the 'babushka',

embodied by their own mother, who is expected to 'vaccinate' children with the righteous emotional appeal towards their mother's language. Therefore, by enforcing the gendering of Russian as a language of women, Russian-speaking mothers tend to transform their care for their children's bilingualism into the focal point of their motherhood, and their children's achievements or failures in acquiring their second language as a way to assess their own performance as mothers. Since this becomes both a troublesome emotional experience and an uneasy practical task of their migrant lives, they start to explore the issue, communicating over this with migrant mothers of other linguistic backgrounds, both via the Internet and offline. They also network more intensively around this specific issue with fellow Russian-speaking migrants, especially women, thereby extending this discourse outside their own family unit through establishing associations to support each other in this task. Arguably the central role in this is played in networks created around weekend language schools and associated parent clubs, which is to be discussed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 6. LANGUAGE(S) AT WORK: INDIVIDUAL MIGRANT CAREER PATHS AND ETHNOLINGUISTIC ENTREPRENEURIAL STRATEGIES

6.1. Language as resource and capital in migrant career-building

In contrast to personal relationships in the context of bilingualism of transcultural families, which significantly alter migrants' perception of intimacy, kin closeness, family roles and expectations, and involve private domains of life pathways, one of the examples for public communications most migrants are involved in are their working experiences. Language factors have become particularly important in the current job market (Duchêne & Heller 2012). Indeed, mastering the particular set of linguistic skills for a job position often becomes a long and complex process for non-native speakers and may depend significantly on various factors: area of professionalisation (Duff et al. 2000); migrant's cultural and social background (Collins et al. 1995); their socio-demographic characteristics (Miller 2000); urbanisation levels of working environments; and local agendas towards hiring migrant staff (Forde & MacKenzie 2010).

As a public domain, working environments also provide migrants with long-term and diverse exposures to locals' and other migrants' behaviour patterns, language attitudes and communication norms. These social, cultural and linguistic factors are of importance for migrant employment, constructing a communicative multilingual field where different linguistic resources collaborate or collapse. As Shubin & Dickey (2013) argue in relation to East-European migration to the UK, adjusting to the language and cultural practices at a workplace is always a two-way process which involves mutual adaptation. Multilingualism in the workplace may also be viewed as a particular case of the economy of linguistic resources which play a crucial part in work efficiency and productivity, individual career developments and collaborative efforts or profits. The focus of language economics as an academic field of expertise is in fact aimed at exploring the way language attributes of workforce, suppliers and target markets correlate with the economic strategies of businesses of different scales. As Grin et al. argue, the language characteristics of a multilingual enterprise are important in all spheres of its development: its internal communication policies, production and retail of goods, external communications (Grin et al. 2010: 20). These authors' perspective is at the

macro-level of organisations as actors in the market, but the same approach may arguably be used in the microeconomics of linguistic resources for individuals in their pursuit of profit, career or business development.

In the case of Russian-speaking migrancy, linguistic issues become particularly tangled: since linguistic identity is one of the strongest factors for their self-realisation as a migrant category, its further development in the context of the local labour market is influenced by diverse exterior factors of public domain communications. Moreover, due to the inherent heterogeneity of the group, its component structure is revealed most evidently in the context of professional realisations. The factors which bring in this kaleidoscopic structure include differences in levels and quality of education; fields of professional expertise; countries of origin and therefore visa regulations; broader regional and cultural backgrounds; financial issues and access to educational resources in the new context. Obviously, these crucial parameters significantly alter career trends and job expectations within Russian-speaking post-Soviet migration in Western Europe. Many surveys have focused on different aspects of this integration: culturally dependent patterns of social behaviour at work (Morgunova & Morgunov 2007); ethnic origins of entrepreneurial strategies (Kapphan 2000; Mesch & Czamanski 1997); stereotypical and often stigmatised images of Russian-speaking labour migrants that they have to face in their everyday communications (Sverdljuk 2012); and so forth.

However, it is not my intention to grasp the heterogeneity of this group work-wise. In this chapter I will examine the role linguistic issues play in work-related activities and, therefore, the way language is perceived as a purposeful resource in job-seeking, career development or entrepreneurial activities. In terms of language economics, my focus is on the variety of linguistic *attributes*[197] and their ways of becoming linguistic *resources* for building careers and engaging in new job markets in two distinctive roles – as foreign, non-native job applicants or entrepreneurs and as speakers of a particular language, i.e. Russian. Empirically, I focus on the set of subjective accounts of Russian-speaking migrants of the North-

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[197] The term conventionally refers to actors' first language capacities as well as their skills in other, non-native languages in a mostly objective, descriptive way in the context of statistical analysis of the returns these joint language skills have in multilingual repertoires (e.g. Grin & Vaillancourt 1997).

East of England regarding their experiences and expectations in careers and business opportunities that the local environment offers to (and imposes on) them, with particular focus on the topic of 'language'. Based on biographical narratives and personal accounts of wider migrant networks, my analysis will address two specific dimensions: firstly, the level of personal working trajectories as perceived by the migrants themselves and their strategies of adaptation to the English-speaking (and often multicultural) workplaces; secondly, the field of local business initiatives and the ways the Russian language becomes an important part of these endeavours.

These two levels of analysis provide a more specific perspective both on some of the more abstract language assumptions and on concrete linguistic skills as they are adjusted and re-considered through the process of economic and professional integration. Both of them are exposed to the effect of two sets of factors – those of their migrant background (including their linguistic 'baggage' as discussed in Chapter 4) as well as the conditions of a new environment which catalyse cultural transformations and linguistic hybridity. Moreover, in its general line of argument this chapter presents a meeting point of two domains that are explored by the thesis as a whole: individual migrant trajectories conceptualised as linguistic biographies of Russian speakers of the region; and communities of language, or primary social associations based on the idea of a shared language.

Therefore, in this chapter I briefly outline these two dimensions of work-related issues for Russian-speaking migrants and the ways internal and external factors influence them while developing migrants' working pathways in the new host environment of the UK:

•   Individual career experiences expressed through the prism of language-related issues: the way their linguistic skills are actualised (sometimes rather emotionally or painfully), altered and further developed within new working contexts;

•   The adaptation to the role of the non-native employee which involves dealing with requirements of workplaces and establishing communications in the working context, while negotiating their identity of Russian speakers;

•   The role of the Russian language as a main source for developing local ethnic enterprises or, more broadly, cultural projects oriented towards the migrant

community;

• The way the multicultural environment reshapes the image of the Russian language as such and Russian-speaking migrants as a group and provides transcultural opportunities for business initiatives.

6.2. Languages and careers: Experiences of career trajectories and of multilingualism in the workplace

For many Russian-speaking migrants coming to the UK, the issue of finding a job becomes tightly connected to the question of their linguistic skills, language expectations and communicating their professional aspirations through available linguistic resources. Due to the diversity of recent migration, career patterns and areas of employment may differ significantly within the group. As O. Morgunova (2009) argues, there are three major categories of Russian-speaking migrants formed according to the right to work in Britain: highly-skilled professionals (mainly from Russia and other non-EU post-Soviet countries), 'Russian wives' (both of British husbands or their Russian-speaking spouses from the first category), Russian-speaking EU citizens (many of whom come for seasonal labour or engage in manual or low-skilled jobs). These categories present merely an approximate classification of migrant groups, but it provides what R. Waldinger (1986) calls 'the opportunity structure', or a framework of legal possibilities to enter the new labour market and local demand for particular skills each category possesses.

Therefore, the main characteristic of these three groups is their right to work in the UK, but the ways in which they approach their working experiences are rather different. My intention here, however, is to discover a certain similarity of patterns in which migrants involve language issues in their individual working experiences. The evidence of how linguistic attributes become valuable resources in career pathways is, therefore, not only beneficial in purely economical terms.[198] This process of translating attributes to resources also – and mostly – includes

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[198] In fact, as recent research shows, despite the commonly shared assumptions that 'linguistic and cultural traits characterising immigrants are somehow economically valuable' and – in the first place, for them – 'no positive net earnings differentials for speakers of those [migrant] languages [who have incorporated their native skills into job-seeking strategies] can be reported' (Grin et al. 2010: 71).

creating narratives which ascribe symbolic value and meaning to certain language strategies that (reportedly) lead to economic integration and benefits.

These I approach as a two-fold process: 1. the practice of transferring their own working skills into the new settings and building up their employable profiles through extended translation of relevant skills and capabilities; and 2. the interpretation of their position of a non-native employee within a new English-speaking working environment.

6.2.1. Migrant job-hunting and the 'asset' of Russian

Performances in the job-seeking process have been shown to be quite flexible depending on the communication context of job application procedures even for applicants who are native in English.[199] For migrant applicants, however, these transformations of speech performances become even more striking since they involve different levels of their language competence – from basic linguistic skills and general comprehensibility to internalising public discourses on migrant integration and linguistic assimilation into their own biographical narratives focused on work and employment (Cederberg 2014). On the whole, the idea of 'trajectory' as a framework for analysing the process of adaptation to the norms of the labour market, seems especially appropriate for describing migrant experiences,[200] especially regarding the way their linguistic skills and other capabilities are gradually readjusted.

One of the first steps in a migrant career pathway deals with the process of 'translation' which goes beyond the literal translation of information from one language to another and includes a broader transcultural practice of accommodating skills, qualifications and experiences.[201] This process of self-

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[199] E.g. an Australian survey, which focused on English-speaking applicants in job interviews, has demonstrated that even native speakers are exposed to linguistic transformations of various levels, for example, the accommodation of accent in their spontaneous speech performances (Willemyns et al. 1997).

[200] The idea of a career pathway, or a migrant employment trajectory in its relation to linguistic integration, presents a narrower, more localised variation of the idea of 'linguistic biography'.

[201] The idea of 'translating experience' is more common to research on translingual literary experiments and autobiographical writings by professional writers (e.g. on Russian-speaking immigration creative writing see Besemeres 2002; Wanner 2011), but the potential of employing

advertising as a potential employee within the current labour market raises the question of expertise in how this 'translation' should be performed and also what actors are engaged in this process. Based on the empirical data collected, my observation is that this practice may be realised through two different strategies, which I have dubbed 'calibration' and 'delegation' strategies.

Some of my informants described in detail their ways of adapting to the presentation and communication skills required for a particular job position by acquiring the necessary genre of oral and written performance, as well as reshaping their own linguistic skills and experiences. Affecting diverse aspects of self-presentation and the communication of one's own employability while job-hunting, the adaptation to market demands in the new context becomes dependant on the way linguistic patterns of this environment are acquired. This may start at rather early stages of a job application, or even before that, at the point of correlation of an advertised position and one's own experience.[202] For many of those who went through the process of elaborating their working profile, this seemed to need adjustments on many levels: from simplifying the spelling or pronunciation of their names[203] to prioritising records of experience gained within the host country over that obtained in their country of origin.[204] The process of this 'localisation' draws an apparent parallel to the 'localisation' of multimedia products which enter new national markets and have to be 'adapted' not only through a straightforward translation of the text, but also through 'translating experiences' (O'Hagan 2007). In contrast to this, however, lay and subjective

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the concept to lay migrants and their experiences of accommodating available skills while presenting themselves as employable applicants is also worth exploring.

[202] As Nina, 29, recollects, she was eager to apply for her future post in a retail company mostly because 'working in customer service', when put in English, felt more appealing than '*быть продавщицей*', as it is used in Russian due to the connotations these two descriptions entailed. This determined her choice in subsequent job searches.

[203] One of the respondents stresses that one of his initial steps was to simplify his three-syllable Russian name into a short one-syllable one to use specifically for job-seeking purposes and, later, work communication. Another informant stressed her initial worries that the rejections she received from employers at the early application stages were due to her unconventionally sounding and 'particularly Russian' longish surname.

[204] For example, Fedor, 27, calls his strategy of rearranging his educational background in order to emphasise British-based, yet not graduate, education a 'necessary trick' to attract potential local employers (009-M-27-LND).

attempts of migrants are usually linked to strong emotional experiences of understanding their own employability in the local markets:

> *К нам в университет пришли делать презентацию, и себя расписывали, что работа-работа-работа! И после я к ним подхожу, говорю: вот, я такой-рассякой. Есть ли шанс, что вы меня возьмете к себе? А они мне: это вряд ли. Потому что, дружок, нужно разрешение на работу. Я думаю: ну что за сволочи. ... И потом я взял большой-большой журнал, в котором были все работодатели, которые принимали на IT студентов, и стал подавать по списку с первого по сотый. Это уже было делом принципа. Половина из них меня игнорила.* (009-M-27-LND)[205]

Gradually this accommodation becomes strategic and develops into a style of performance at numerous job interviews.[206] This strategy, which I here define as 'calibration', is more characteristic of migrants who were initially involved in some form of high or furtherer education in the UK (a Master's degree or PhD course, professional courses or college diploma). It is therefore most likely to be tightly connected with the idea of learning and acquiring new skills which are viewed as necessary for further job-seeking – either at the universities' Career Offices or less formally, through peer communications and establishing contact networks. Regardless of the scale of this 'learning', it is essentially embedded in mastering the necessary genre, which is needed for the application procedure and further work in an English-speaking working environment. For example, Marat, 26, remembers his being totally inappropriate during his first job interviews, which included not only his way of speaking or presenting himself, but also his non-verbal behaviour and general appearance:

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[205] *They came to our university with a presentation and started describing this work-work-work! And afterwards I came to them and introduced myself as such and such. 'Is there a chance that you will hire me?' And they are, like, 'hardly. Because, our dear friend, you need to have a work permit'. I think, what bastards. ... And then I took this big, enormous catalogue with a list of all employers in the IT area who hired students and started applying to all of them from the list, from the first one to the hundredth. It was a matter of principle for me then. A good half of them just ignored me.*

[206] One of the informants mentions going to job interviews which were unlikely to turn out successful as a part of gaining experience (010-F-28-NCL); another one points out how her competence in presenting herself in an 'employable' way grew gradually after a series of interviews (022-F-27-LND).

Я же не знал, как себя вести вообще… я, например, не знал, что на интервью надо в костюме приходить. На вопросы надо отвечать определенным образом, я потом только начал готовить их заранее. (028-M-26-NCL)[207]

Further on, he also parallels the two linguistic repertoires he had to acquire at the start of his career – Business Russian and Business English were equally new and relevant in his job. The narrative of Nina, 29, focuses on 'English courses of IT competence', which she chose to attend not for purely pragmatic language-learning needs, but also for reworking this experience into necessary 'triggers' in the CV, which consequently increased her employability in the region.

Evidently, those who employ the strategy of 'calibration' are more likely to pursue a more qualified professional position and prefer to invest their efforts in elaborating the required skills while avoiding any mediators in dealing with job applications. As a safe compromise between the two strategies, the way of partial delegation in the job-seeking process would draw a line between written and oral communication, leaving the latter in its initial stages to professional agencies:

Лучше через агентство искать работу, чем напрямую, мне кажется. Даже они всегда могут представить тебя положительно работодателю. Лучше, чем ты можешь быть на CV. Тем более, если ты сам его составил. (022-F-27-LND)[208]

For many of them feedback of other migrants looking for jobs also presents an irrelevant and time-consuming distraction. See, e.g. this blog account:

Но факт есть факт – всё что я находила во время быстрого сёрча - это всякие форумы с нытьём и рассуждением о том, почему все англичане тупые. А я внезапно считаю, что процент тупарей среди

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[207] *I wouldn't know at all how to behave… I had no idea you have to wear a suit for your interview, for example. You need to answer their questions in a certain way, I started preparing those in advance only later.*

[208] *It is better to look for a job via an agency than on your own, I suppose. They can always present you in a positive light to an employer. Even better than you might look in your CV. Especially if you made it yourself.*

англичан не больше чем среди минчан. Одним словом, я с форумами во
взглядах не сошлась и действовала по наитию. (Viales, 02/04/2014)[209]

In most extreme cases, as with Ekaterina, 24, who was aspiring to a career in medicine, peer experiences almost stopped her from sitting the professional exam which other fellow migrants described in online discussions as 'impassable' mainly due to linguistic requirements:

Я поначиталась, что люди писали, и думаю, ну значит, не сдам. Просто
так пошла – ну и не сдам… Но там и не было ничего особенно сложного,
да – долго, много надо знать, но всё вполне посильно. (030-F-24-SSH)[210]

Therefore, employing the strategy of calibrating by 'acting instinctively' works in two ways: as the practice of 'translating experience' in the most adequate and appropriate way (by learning the style and genre of self-presentation) and as the precaution of avoiding the 'white noise' of unsuccessful peer attempts which collectively construct the images of especially inaccessible jobs for migrants by stressing the communication gaps of various kinds within the application process.

In contrast, many other migrants arrive in the UK looking for prompt employment in low-skilled, manual or assistant work and thus constitute the group of labour migrants or refugees from the FSU republics. They tend to turn to government centres for guidance through all necessary stages and also usually receive language support as a prerequisite of their successful integration:

Насчет работы было сложно, потому что ладно – я, у меня был язык. У
братишки тоже был язык. У родителей, естественно… Ну как бы был,
но очень такой, слабый, ну, понятно, женщина в возрасте, у неё был
такой небогатый английский – что она когда-то в школе проходила.
Первое время она училась – училась языку. (028-M-26-NCL)[211]

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[209] *But this is a fact – everything I found during this quick search* [uses Eng.] *were these forums with all the nagging and discussions why all English people are stupid. And I, unexpectedly, do not think that the percentage of dumb people among the English is any higher than among Minsk citizens. To put it shortly, as I didn't see eye to eye with these forums, I had to act spontaneously.* Available from: http://viales.livejournal.com/312061.html. (Accessed 24/07/2015)

[210] *I read so many of people's accounts that I convinced myself I would not pass. So I went just for the sake of it – I was not thinking of passing. But there was not anything particularly difficult there, yes, it took a while, you needed to know a lot, but everything was manageable.*

[211] *It was difficult in terms of work, because ok, I knew the language. My brother knew the language, Parents, apparently… They kinda had some knowledge, but very minimal, which is understandable, a*

In many ways these migrants are less mobile in their adaptation to the requirements of the labour market and therefore prefer to adopt the 'delegation' strategy. Their gradual linguistic socialisation becomes framed by the field of work and job-seeking, hence the perceived close interrelation of language level and success in a professional career.[212] Local agencies help with the translation not only of documents but of 'career chances' as such, showing their clients how to promote themselves to interest local employers the most.[213] As Dmitrii, 24, puts it, 'they translate not your CV, but your experience' (027-M-24-NCL).

By adapting themselves to the labour market, most migrants tend to re-consider their own attitudes towards the skills they obtain as native or near-native speakers of Russian. The link between language proficiency and employability (or 'to have a language', as expressed in the quote above) re-interprets migrants' self-positioning as 'native speakers of Russian' and sets their aspirations for future careers in some way connected to this capability. Snezhana, 27, explains her growing awareness of her Russian as an employable skill:

Поначалу я смотрела такую вот работу, где русский язык вообще не нужен. Но потом общение с другими людьми, и они говорят, что в принципе русский язык - это большое преимущество, потому что много, много сейчас работают с Россией и с российскоговорящими странами. И быть русской, говорить по-русски свободно – это большой плюс, и при этом говорить по-английски свободно – это большой плюс, потому что, ну, сама понимаешь, что иностранцы, они как бы ни учили русский, они никогда не будут им владеть в такой степени. Наверное, я

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mature woman would have just some very basic English – something she had studied at school. And at first she studied a lot – she learnt the language.

[212] The relation of successful migrant employment and language competence has been extensively discussed in academic literature (e.g. Brush & Vusupuram 2006; Duff et al. 2000). As early as the 1970s-80s, migration researchers proposed the term 'working migrant language' which was then conceptualised as a creole-like variety spoken by low-skilled migrants (for the example of 'Gastarbeiterdeutch' see Pfaff 1981).

[213] See Forde & MacKenzie 2010 (esp. pp. 35-36) for an example of how companies shift their recruitment strategies to adapt to a particular group of migrant employees (in this case recruiting staff with Polish language skills, advertising in migrant media, etc.).

так думаю. Это не пререквизит, но это дополнение к уже имеющимся знаниям. (022-F-27-LND)[214]

From an inadequate and unconsidered skill, competence in Russian becomes a strategic asset which reorganises migrants' priorities both in defining the job they aspire to and in developing ways of looking for it. The strong confidence that migrants display in Russian as their conquering advantage in the job market has few limitations regarding repertoires, areas of employment or previous job experience. They treat job offers with intentions of finding their bilingual niche and using Russian as a central resource for building a career. For many of them this becomes a long and disappointing experience, which, however, provides a broad field for subjective explanations of why their pursuit for a job with Russian-speaking requirements does not succeed.

However experienced in often difficult local working opportunities (e.g. those specific to the North-East of England), migrants remain very positive about their prospects. They are convinced that their native (or near-native) competence in Russian will become a key requirement for some particular job. In fact, wishing for a position where Russian would be a requirement is prioritised over the desired or relevant field of professional expertise.[215] The explanations for why they have not found such a job includes different rationalisations: from blaming their own lack of attention and effort in the job search[216] to the economic unpreparedness of the region to capitalise on the Russian markets. Apparently, one of the key factors for Russian-related job vacancies is the level of urbanisation or centrality of location, with London evidently leading in this ranking:

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[214] *At first, I was looking for a job which did not require any Russian at all. But then I spoke to other people who told me that my Russian is a major advantage because a lot of companies work with Russia and Russia-speaking* [sic] *countries too. And to be Russian and use the language as a native speaker is a big advantage because, well you know, even if foreigners, however hard they try to learn it, will never be able to use Russian at the same level. It is my opinion. This is not a prerequisite, but a supplement to the knowledge you already have.* [Note also her unintended linking of language with the Russian state through her idiosyncratic '*российскоговорящие*', i.e. Russia-speaking.]

[215] Evgeniia, 26, holding a local MA degree in law, stated that she would prefer a job requiring her Russian skills over a position in paralegal (005-F-26-BLT). Marat, 26, described a number of jobs that he had in different business areas, which at some point required his language skills (028-M-26-NCL).

[216] Natalia, 37, stressed that Russian becomes one's advantage only if one is smart enough to convert it into one's advantage (017-F-37-DHM).

В Лондоне – чаще намного [вакансии, где требуется русский язык],
даже если сейчас открыть, в Лондоне будет хотя бы четыре вакансии,
там, 4-5 вакансий. В Ньюкасле – нет. Так не знаю, вообще что с
работой здесь – вообще разговаривать на эту тему не хочу. Вообще все
тааак печально! Кошмарно. (005-F-26-BLT)[217]

For others, this 'disappointing' state of the Newcastle and regional labour
market also has its own positive sides, namely that it is a comparatively small-scale
job market, which makes job hunting an easier, more comprehensive and
manageable task:

Лондон и окружающие районы, ну как – под-Лондон?, естественно, там
все намного дороже, а для эмигрантов это очень сложно – найти
сначала нормальные работы, да и вообще привыкнуть к ценам и
узнать что как. В Ньюкасле легче. И вообще Ньюкасл – самый бедный
район страны считается экономически. И здесь, я бы сказал, полегче,
потому что он как бы на отшибе. (027-M-24-NCL)[218]

This theorising is supported by Marat's reference to the anticipated
probability of Russian becoming a highly required employment skill as the region
is going to develop to reach the standards of other, economically more successful
areas (namely the English South):

Здесь как бы нельзя сказать, что русский язык очень нужен. Но как бы
ситуация постоянно меняется. Я не удивлюсь, что завтра может
здесь возникнуть какая-то новая должность, где русский язык будет
доминирующим в этой должности, да? Я считаю, что потенциал здесь

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[217] *There are much more of these* [vacancies with Russian as a requirement] *in London, if you open it
now, there will be at least four-five vacancies of this kind. There is nothing like that in Newcastle. I still
do not know what to do about work here – I don't even want to talk about it. Everything looks so sad!
Horrible.*

[218] *London and the surrounding areas – how do you call it, sub-London? – everything is so much more
expensive there, and it is so difficult for migrants to find a decent job, to get used to those prices and to
know how things work. It is easier in Newcastle. And generally, Newcastle is the poorest region of the
country, as it is considered, in economic terms. And it makes things easier, I'd say, because it is on the
periphery.*

все-таки существует. Нельзя сказать, что все потребности языковые происходят только на юге. (028-M-26-NCL)[219]

The terms to express the inequality of Russian-related jobs in the country may, therefore, vary – centre (London) vs. periphery, urbanised post-modern spaces vs. industrial remnant lands, southern vs. northern regions. Having acquired a strong connection between language skills and employability and facing the current labour market of North-East England, Russian-speaking migrants attempt to rationalise the absence of vacancies requiring Russian language skills through introducing different *modes* in which the job market functions – in opposition to its actual state, they construct their own, 'subjunctive mood' of future probabilities and awaiting opportunities. For some, this opportunity becomes tightly connected to their 'nomadic' migrant trajectories or unstable family circumstances, as Svetlana, 29, recalls:

> *Я когда переехала в Лидс, мне пришло письмо о такой работе – office assistant, Russian-speaking and English-speaking, я на неё подала – ну ладно, сдуру, думаю: всё равно не примут. А вы знаете, мне позвонили. Но я её пропустила – даже не знаю, как. Потом и другая была, в Лонгбентоне... Но куда я с маленьким ребенком. Да ну и здесь, наверное, какая-то подвернется. Постоянно какие-то подворачиваются.* (029-F-29-NCL)[220]

In the end, though, most have to resign themselves to a position which is less suitable to their linguistic portfolios and experience, namely the position of a non-native speaker within the working environment – a social role which most of them have never experienced before. Therefore, by slowly adapting themselves to the employability standards of local labour markets, migrants tend to reconsider their assets and abilities. Since some of their previous skills seem to be of little

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[219] *No one can really claim that Russian is so important here. But the situation changes all the time. I won't be surprised if tomorrow there is a job position where Russian is a domineering requirement, right? I think that there is some potential here. You cannot claim that all the language requirements happen only in the south.*

[220] *When I moved to Leeds, there was a letter for me offering such a job – an office assistant, both Russian- and English-speaking, and I applied for it – just for the hell of it, without any hope, thinking they would not take me any way. And you know, they called me. But I missed it, don't know how. There was another one, in Longbenton... But where would I go with my little child? But there might be something here for me as well. They happen all the time.*

relevance to the current demands, which puts them in a less favourable position in tough competition for jobs, they turn to their Russian competence and interpret it as a strategic resource which becomes their dominant factor in filtering job offers as well as an unexpropriated commodity of almost universal employability.

6.2.2. Non-natives at work: Loci of constraint, domains of comfort, spaces for self-presentation

Discourse studies of interactions at work frequently focus on the process of negotiating identities and roles employees perform during their everyday working interactions (Holmes & Riddiford 2010; Kendal & Tannen 1997; Kostogriz & Peeler 2007; Li 2000). Their speech performances exemplify the 'emphatically negotiable phenomena' which are 'dynamic, socially determined, contingently mutable, and emergent within the symbolic processes' of these interactions (Firth 1995: 11). One of these roles is that of a 'non-native employee', which stresses the way language use indexes different aspects of social or economic inequality dominating the 'linguistic market' of employability in various occupational spheres (Roberts 2010). Though non-native language ability is often considered to be one of the dimensions of 'otherness' in many social contexts, various accounts of job-related experiences shared by Russian-speaking migrants are hardly traumatic or exemplary of discriminations towards them as non-natives. Whereas many admit that the degree of significance connected to the non-native origins of the employee depends on the job area,[221] it is not the lower level of command in English which is experienced as an obstruction. In fact, for professionals who work in IT, computer-science or other areas where language is not key, the use of English as a main

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[221] The highest standards of linguistic performance are reported to be in the 'customer-related area' where communication skills are of the highest priority as well, therefore '*если искать какую-то работу, и там хоть что-то связанное с общением, то есть если клиенты где-то есть, то это всё, это сразу нужен навык общения очень хороший, сленг понимать, манеры нужно перенимать*', as Anton, 26, explains ('*if you look for any work, and there is something at least vaguely referring to communication, meaning customer services, then that is it, you will need to have excellent communicative skills, understanding of slang, usage of manners*', 006-M-26-NCL). He mentions IT services, in contrast, as an example of an almost language-unspecific job, where he is confident to find a place almost anywhere: '*А мне в моей области, если я не буду ресерч делать, то я могу в компанию какую-то устроиться* [в Европе]*, там, программистом, а программистам - в любом мало-мальски большом городе что-то есть*' ('A*nd for me in my field, if I am not going to do any research* [uses in Eng.]*, I could get a job of a programmer in a company* [in Europe]*, in any city there will be a vacancy like that*', 006-M-26-NCL).

language of work presents a comfortable tool of dividing the domains of personal and professional communication. For example, Pavel, 29, who works in a locally based research laboratory staffed mostly with international employees, explains how the way to address his boss, who is also a Russian-speaker, in English implies 'talking business' (that is performing in the role of an employee, especially in written discourse) whereas switching to Russian at occasional breaks would mean speaking more informally and outside of the working context.

But apart from strictly linguistic matters, being a non-native colleague for some informants means that their embeddedness in Russian-speaking culture might be difficult to shift in order to adopt local standards of communication. As Nikita, 26, puts it:

> *Само что ты русский, оно не препятствует. Препятствует вот этот вот акцент, и вообще вот это вот культурное наследие. А русские, как я понимаю, они в плане перенятия этих британских манер - это очень затруднено. Русскому человеку отказаться от своих манер, от своей культуры очень тяжело. Скорее хочется навязать свою культуру другому.* (013-M-26-NCL)[222]

The above mentioned emphasis on the question of 'accent' has already been discussed earlier (see Chapter 4 on 'Russian English') as one of the examples of how Russian speakers employ their linguistic features for further re-interpretation in an English-speaking context. But managing the linguistic image may go far beyond 'playing around' with such distinctive markers as the Russian accent, involving various other aspects of communication and techniques of self-presentation.

The image of a 'non-native colleague' becomes an opportunity for migrants to re-consider their own professional realisation, communication patterns and esteem factor as a part of a working collective. Being a non-native employee automatically presupposes carrying their own 'cultural baggage' which is ambiguously assessed in terms of effectiveness in the working environment. For

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[222] *The fact that you are Russian does not put any barriers. The accent does, however, and so does cultural heritage in general. And Russians are very limited in terms of adopting these British manners. A Russian person finds it extremely difficult to get rid of their own manners, their own culture. They are much more eager to impose their culture on someone else.*

example, Natalia, 37, stresses the 'beneficial' contribution which non-native colleagues make to the team:

> *Когда мы нанимаем кого-то, то всегда говорим, что хорошо бы каких-то иностранцев, так как это будет интересно, у них всегда есть какой-то культурный багаж.* (017-F-37-DHM)[223]

Another way to secure the image of a 'non-native employee', especially in any project work, is the idea of their 'responsibility' which usually stands for the lack of vocational mobility outside the common occupation and, in respondents' views, speaks in favour of a participant of a non-British origin, in contrast to a local:

> *Если человек из Англии, он может год поделать-поделать, а потом скажет: А-а, пошло оно! – и уйти. И всё. А если человек откуда-то приезжает, то у него хоть какая-то заинтересованность закончить эту работу, потому что потом какая-то дальше возможность есть либо в Европе, либо здесь, либо ещё где-то остановиться.* (023-M-29-NCL)[224]

But the role of a non-native colleague also increases the chances of miscommunication and therefore potentially a decline of productivity, which may be caused by the lack of accountability a non-native colleague demonstrates. Many employed migrants interpret their role in terms of a general strategy of 'othering' non-native members of staff, but a few of them suggest the way to employ this 'othering' to their own benefits. For example, for Natalia, 37, a highly-skilled professional working in an international team, this idea of foreigners being 'people of some other kind' is liberating in a way that it provides a protective 'buffer zone' that provides a negotiated space for presenting her Russian-ness within the non-native role:

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[223] *When we look for some new staff, we usually say that it would be better to hire someone foreign as it should be more interesting, they will have their cultural baggage with them.*

[224] *If it is an English person, they may work for a year or so and then decide 'oh, get off!' and to quit. And that is it. But if it is someone from far away, they have at least some interest in completing the job, because it gives an opportunity to settle somewhere in Europe, or here, or elsewhere.*

С другой стороны, это может иметь и позитивные моменты. Потому что можно сказать, что 'а вот у нас в России так, ничего не могу с этим делать'. (017-F-37-DHM)[225]

In strictly linguistic terms, this 'othering' of a non-native employee's image may lead to their re-adjusting the boundaries between themselves and others. The example of such a rearrangement concerns the standard English (as seen by migrants), its local variety (Geordie as the main dialect) and their own, non-native, 'Russian' variant of the language (as discussed in Chapter 4). As Nina, 29, a retail customer assistant at a shopping mall, argues, her own non-native linguistic performances are usually considered by her customers as 'Russian Geordie', a 'localised' version of 'Russian English', which they perceive as more 'their own' than the normative standard of the London area. Another significant way in which both locals and Russian-speaking migrants draw the distinction between 'Geordie English' and 'standard English' is in terms of class status, which each of these variants is ascribed from a folklinguistic perspective. It is for this reason too, that the 'Russian Geordie' of a non-native shop assistant might be perceived by locals as a 'closer' language variant to their own, than the native, but 'posh' one would be.

The on-going re-adjustment of one's own identity within the space provided by the role of a non-native employee exceeds the bounds of linguistic proficiency as such or the mastering of particular genres or styles required for finding a job position in a new environment or differentiating domains of one's own professional and personal communication. This process also entails a more complex idea of re-working one's own resourceful image of a speaker of a certain foreign language for the sake of their career development. The space for this active construction may be invaded by symbolic acts of self-presentation which entail explicit manifestations of their more general assumptions on what belonging to a particular language-based culture means.

For example, Evgenii, 24, has been practicing the routine of weekly emails to his colleagues (of various, mostly non-English origins) in which he would give them some information about the Russian language. For example, he would introduce a couple of new letters and provide exercises on this material. He had no

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[225] *On the other hand, it may have its positive side as well. Because you can always say that 'it is how we run things in Russia, and I can do nothing about it'.*

prior experience of teaching Russian (or, indeed, any other subject) and his work colleagues revealed little enthusiasm for learning Russian, but he said he was determined to continue 'as long as it takes' for the sake of *his own* language identity. This extreme case exemplifies, however, a more widespread practice of overt manifestations of Russian-speaking origins in an English-speaking and often multilingual workspace. Other examples may include less elaborate and not necessarily language-focused practices, which yet reflect the migrants' attachment to a broader Russophone culture. For example, for Soviet Victory Day of 9th May, one of informants usually brings to his workplace a war photo of his ancestors and a 'Georgian ribbon', which usually serves as an excuse to start telling his colleagues about the origins of these symbols and their historical background. Whereas his habits illustrate his own understanding of being a Russian-speaking colleague and add up to his general performance of cultural identity, in terms of workplace economics his behaviour becomes less effective in terms of general productivity.

Therefore, the role of a 'non-native employee' is maintained mostly through the 'othering' strategy performed not only by local members of staff but by non-native personnel as well. What it gives in terms of communicative space is the free zone for negotiating differences and misunderstandings, whereas in cultural terms this space serves as an arena for performing one's distinctive identity. Many Russian-speaking migrants take this opportunity to invest their resources as employees (work time, efforts, colleagues' attention, etc) into a symbolic reproduction of their belonging to a Russophone culture.

6.3. Making language work: Strategies of incorporating Russian into entrepreneurial initiatives

Research on migrant business endeavours in host markets has been primarily carried out in the context of 'ethnic entrepreneurship', which is usually developed along two dimensions – that of legal status, or the 'opportunity structure' discussed previously, and that of the cultural predispositions of running a business tied to the 'ethnicity' of potential entrepreneurs (e.g. Levie 2006). Less studied are the economics of migrant identity – namely, how particular factors of migrants' self-understanding and self-presentation become re-interpreted as capital or

resource for their business projects.[226] This resource is, however, highly flexible and adjustable to both in-group demands and opportunities and to external, local market perspectives and restraints. This is particularly true for linguistic resources that may become of key importance for a non-migrant minority language group (for the case of Welsh in the UK see Johns-Evans et al. 2011) or for a particular migrant population (for Russian speakers of different ethnic origins in Germany see e.g. Kapphan 2000). Indeed, as recently argued by Grin et al. (2010), though the influence of linguistic factors in 'ethnic businesses' is often taken out of the economic analysis of these enterprises, employing a non-local language as a key resource has considerable economic consequences for the sector in question. Therefore, I will focus on the way 'Russian-speaking-ness' becomes a particular employable resource for post-Soviet migrancy in their business endeavours – both within the group and beyond its fluid borders.

6.3.1. 'Working for the community'
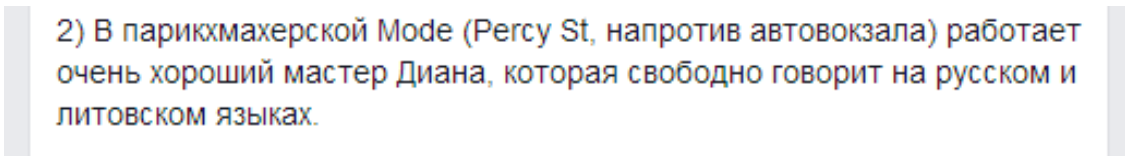
There are a number of strategies for incorporating Russian into building a local business. One of them involves placing the language as a central asset, targeting the services offered specifically to a Russian-language clientele. Another strategy takes language as a significant resource in promoting business to other, non-native audiences. Addressing a target group in their native language in a broader, multilingual environment, yet which is dominated by another language, namely English, is expected to raise their interest in the business because of its exclusivity and expected credibility. Therefore, if post-Soviet migrants start their own small business (e.g. a hairdresser's, tailoring services, massage parlour, a food shop or catering facilities), they tend to promote themselves in two distinctive registers: a) by giving a general, non-specific advertisement in English for the wider clientele; and b) by stressing language skills and cultural familiarity as a specific 'perk' for Russian-speaking migrants in the locality.

Since there is no obvious area or district in the North East of England where Russian-speaking migrants are more likely to reside or spend their time, when advertising services specifically to fellow Russian-speaking migrants they use

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[226] For an example of this transferability of identity markers among Russian-speaking Jewish migration to Israel see Mesch & Czamanski 1997.

primarily computer mediated communication (CMC) online social network groups, chat and forum platforms, personal blogs and thematic websites. In online self-advertisement the double-targeting usually works as bilingual set-up websites or groups / pages in social networks where bilingual communication becomes a norm of addressing potential clientele and regulars. For example, one of these entrepreneurs, a Russian-speaking hairdresser now residing locally, particularly differentiates between two registers in the way that all her professional jargon and terms are in English but some of her responding comments to those put in Russian are performed in Russian as well. Therefore, her positioning of a UK-based and English-speaking professional becomes evaluated in Russian by part of her clientele, which clearly divides the two spheres in her bilingual business.

Another strategy to engage as many potential customers as possible is to recruit someone to 'advertise' their services informally, across this individual's own personal contacts. As one of the posts in a locally based Russian-speaking group on Facebook shows (Fig. 5), this strategy of 'linguistic specialisation' is usually unobtrusive and does not conflict with the representation of this person as an employed hairdresser working for an English-speaking local business.

> 2) В парикхмахерской Mode (Percy St, напротив автовокзала) работает очень хороший мастер Диана, которая свободно говорит на русском и литовском языках.

Figure 5. An ad about a bilingual, Russian-Lithuanian hairdresser in Newcastle. Facebook group 'The USSR in Newcastle', post of 20.03.2014.

It is also mainly used by labour migrants from within the EU who present a specific sub-category of the Russian-speaking group. These migrants are mostly bilingual in Russian and another language of one of the Baltic states (usually Latvian or Lithuanian). Since they are granted access to work within the EU, this group reinterprets their language background in the new perspective of local business and transnational mobility. Russian becomes one of the languages not only for job employment or communication with other workers within a new working environment, but also gains the status of a 'translocal' language of small business. In practical terms, this means advertising in Russian for larger groups of

migrants with various language backgrounds, but with similar migrant trajectories and practices.

A specific example of using the distinct variant of Russian comes from a variety of entrepreneurs dealing with international deliveries – they mostly provide services between Latvia (and/or, less often, Lithuania) and the UK, but they choose Russian as the main language for advertising in order to reach larger target audiences. Since many of their potential customers might be non-native in Russian, the language chosen is very basic, almost 'truncated' as it is tailored to the language portfolios of these categories (Fig. 6).

With most Russian-speaking migrants the linguistic 'extra' performed by local enterprises seldom works as a successful advertising catch. What it refers to for them is a prerequisite or indirect evidence of 'Russian presence' in the region. As Pavel, 29, admits,

> *Я только через Фейсбук видел, кто-то говорил или спрашивал, что вот русская парикмахерша. 'Зайди, спроси Елену. Она тебя постrouter хорошо'. А так – сам никогда не натыкался.* (023-M-29-NCL)[227]

Later on, however, he also uses this example as his proof that a 'Russian community' (in his own definition) is present in the region. Therefore, what for some migrants (mostly those who are bilingual or non-native in Russian) becomes one of the possible areas of their expanding clientele, others usually see as a 'diasporic' marker which helps them to build their own considerations of what forms Russian-speaking presence might take in the region. This deployment of the Russian language as a resource in local business activities, does not, however, result in the establishment of stronger community ties. These businesses fail to build a regular and loyal clientele who would treat using such services as a distinctive identity marker for their customership. There is no additional symbolic significance ascribed to Russian-speaking professionals: no one values them specifically as a 'Russian-speaking hairdresser' or a 'Russian-speaking dentist'. Consequently, there is, in fact, no clearly defined client group whose boundaries would be set by this self-presentation, whose members would be sensitive to differences a Russian-speaking specialist has beyond their strictly linguistic skills.

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[227] *I only saw it on Facebook, someone asked about or just mentioned a Russian hairdresser. 'Go there, ask for Elena. She will give you a nice hair cut'. But I have never come across one myself.*

Figure 6. Advertisements of delivery services from Latvia (Lithuania) to the UK and back. Russian-language Facebook group of the North-East of England 'Russian Passion UK', posts of 06.05.2014, 21.08.2014, 04.10.2014.

Since there are no shared perceptions of this kind, the Russian language is performed as one of the commodity characteristics which belongs to the same category as price, location or range of available services. Its advertising, moreover, is similar to what A. Byford (2009a) refers to as 'the networks of exchange', particularly due to their ambiguous borders, unstable links and heterogeneous statuses and positions of migrants involved in these networks. Seen from the perspective of language, rather than its speakers as a particular social group, these endeavours present the process of commodification of linguistic resources and transfers them from the symbolic capital of a shared past and occasional, chaotic communication of compatriots to a characteristic of service which adds to its total cost and competitiveness in the local market.[228]

The other strategy of 'making language work', however, treats 'Russian-speaking-ness' as a distinctive factor for collaboration and community-building which, according to the entrepreneurs themselves, should be supported by a number of 'diasporic initiatives', working as indicative markers that prove this community to exist in the first place. Analytically, these 'initiatives' offer a new turn in the understanding of the concept of 'imagined community' as introduced by Benedict Anderson (1983) and discussed in relation to Russian-speaking migration in the UK, e.g. by I. Kozachenko (2013), who highlights the symbolic nature of cultural myths and shared narratives as boundary markers between related Slavic groups and new technological means as facilitators of these 'imagined communities', or A. Pechurina (2010), for whom the 'imagined' sense of these migrant communities is centred in people's ways, whether intentional or not, of recreating the feeling of belonging to the shared 'Russian-ness' with the help of material objects.

In my own analysis, however, Anderson's notion of an 'imagined community' becomes twisted in its sense – instead of highlighting a community's constructed nature through common ideology or reinterpreted history, or focusing on particular ways of recreating the community as such, I question the existence of this community as such and highlight its speculative nature. The community as such is 'imagined', i.e. rhetorically constructed as a common theme of discussing

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[228] As F. Rossi-Landi proposes, in this sense, 'a linguistic community presents itself as a sort of immense market, in which words, expressions and messages circulate in the same way as commodities do' (cit. and translated by Grin et al. 2010: 32).

migrant experiences in general or 'designed' as a hypothetical target group for consuming the products, symbolic and/or material, of diasporic entrepreneurial initiatives. Public manifestations of the community's existence (i.e. a specifically Russian shop or restaurant) which are set to target this 'community' in the first place, sooner or later become economic failures due to the lack of clientele from this non-existent 'community'.[229] In an economic sense, therefore, the 'resource allocation' influencing general efficiency of an established venture and commodifying 'Russian-ness' as its main business idea mismatches the 'resource distribution', or strategic considerations of existing target audiences.

However, what these business endeavours achieve is that in many migrants' narratives they are translated into a symbolic domain and thus become iconic markers of this 'imagined' community for many scattered migrants who usually refer to them in their narratives as evidence of the alleged community as such. This 'rumoured' or reported community is re-constructed in recollections such as the following one:

> *Я слышала, что когда-то где-то, вроде в Гэйтсхэд, было русское кафе – называлось "Самовар". Но потом я где-то в интернете читала, что они сказали, что оно уже закрыто. Наверное, что-то и было.* (018-F-27-NCL)[230]

Yet another way of setting up an 'in-group' business to address Russian-speaking migrants directly is by providing services for individual needs of newly arriving migrants. This idea of specialised migrant network support turned into a business activity, however, rarely succeeds. Although many migrants note that guidance from other, more experienced compatriots was especially appreciated at the initial stages of their integration (some received help with employment and accommodation, others consulted peers about official procedures or documentation), they feel reluctant to interpret this assistance as a payable service due to the closeness of their migrant experiences and background. The formula of

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[229] My use of the term 'community' at this point is broad and mostly empirically based. I refer to the idea of commonality and group-construction of Russian-speaking migrants expressed in my ethnographic data. For a more detailed theoretical discussion of what kinds of 'communities' are developed in the region on the basis of shared language see Chapter 7.

[230] *I heard that some time ago, somewhere, probably in Gateshead, there was a Russian cafe called 'Samovar'. But I read about it later in the Internet, they said it got closed. There might have been something of this kind then.*

'some people helping out' ('*Спасибо, помогли добрые люди, подсказали, что делать*', 028-M-26-NCL) describes this logic aptly: sharing expertise on common migrant issues is seen as untranslatable into the discourse of gaining benefit, providing paid services or commodity exchange.

This phenomenon stems from the relatively small-scale and scattered migration which has not yet established its own patterns of engaging newcomers. Any occasional relationships among fellow migrants are here usually based on neighbourly assistance or one-off reciprocal help. In this context any attempt at professionalising migrant assistance is seen as redundant, while an overly assertive promotion of services might even look to the migrant clientele as potentially fraudulent. This rationalisation usually stems from the migrants' re-interpretations of common belonging to a wider socio-historic post-Soviet background and appeals to their own previous experiences. Therefore, services advertised and run in Russian become associated with a particular business culture which also brings its own conceptualisations of demand, trust and 'fair play'. For example, an advertisement for detailed (and probably redundant) administrative support for Russian-speaking migrants becomes labelled as typically 'Soviet-like' by one of its readers, as their comment reads (Fig. 7).

Other Russian-speaking migrants mention this particular style of running the business, which they intentionally label as 'Soviet-like', in reference to other local initiatives which are presented as specifically 'Russian'. For example, this is the way they describe what was previously known as a 'Russian shop' – a small shop which opened in Newcastle circa 2009, specialising in Russian and FSU products, but which then closed down in less than a year. For some of its former customers the most distinctive factor of its 'Russian-ness' is the set of norms in relationships of customers and shop staff. Evgeniia, 26, describes her experience of visiting the shop as 'horrible', especially due to the reported rudeness and arrogance of the shop assistant, who seemed 'so Soviet' to her that she decided to go to the next-door Polish shop instead in order to buy what she needed (005-F-26-BLT).

Others are more detailed in their interpretations of what made this 'Russian shop' so particularly 'Russian', or even 'Soviet' to them:

Мы там хотели творог - смотрим, творог. И там бумажка написана, а творога - ничего не лежит. У них просто прилавки какие-то, такие советские прилавки, ценники, там даже ни холодильников не было, ничего, даже не знаю, где он все хранил. В общем нужно спросить у него - принеси мне вот это вот. Как в маленьком таком магазинчике раньше, и то в России такого уже нету. И мы такие: 'Творог есть?' 'Ну, есть...' 'Дайте!' 'Сейчас нет'. И мы всё, у нас культурный шок уже. Ну, написано же 'творог', напиши, что нет. 'А когда будет?' 'Ну, может, на следующей неделе будет...' 'Ну лаааадно... Придем на следующей неделе'. (013-M-26-NCL)[231]

What makes this quote particularly interesting is not only the evocation of the Soviet era or a particular construction of 'Sovietness', but also the remark that this 'Soviet-type' business culture does not *even* exist in 'contemporary Russia'.
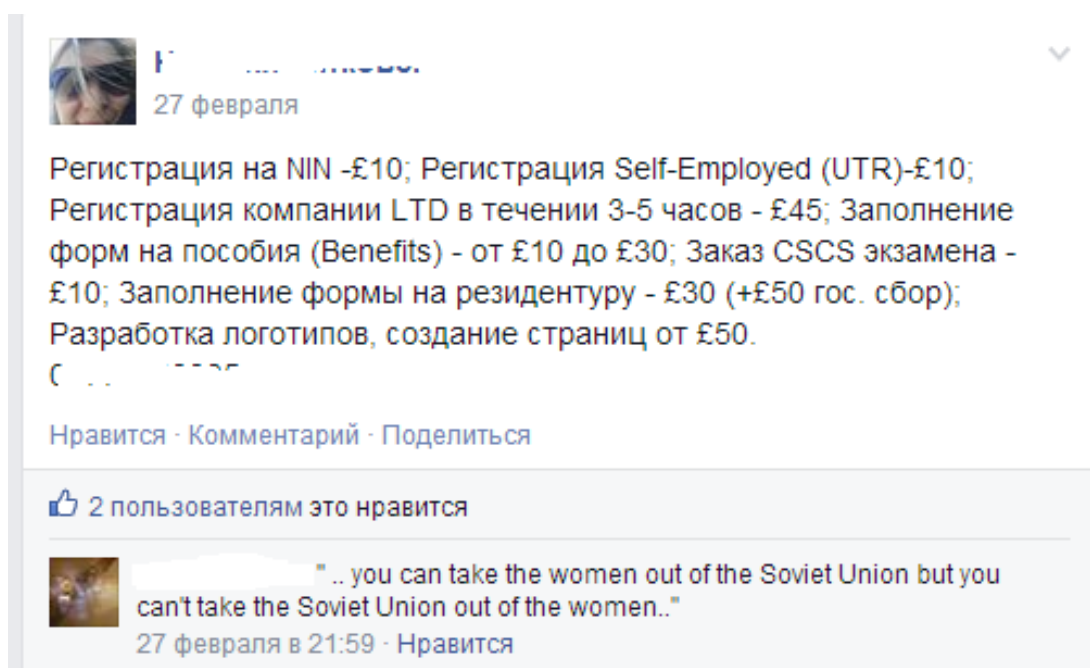
Figure 7. An online ad about services for Russian-speaking migrants and a comment on it. Facebook group 'Russian Passion, UK', post of 27.02.2014.

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[231] *We wanted some cottage cheese – and there it was. But only the label, with no cottage cheese around. They have stalls like that, that Soviet type, labels, no fridges at all, nothing, I have no idea where he stored all the stuff. So you have to ask him – bring me that thing. Like this kind of a small shop, and yet, there is nothing like that in Russia now. And we go like, 'You've got cottage cheese?' 'Well, yeah...' 'Would you give us some?' 'Not now'. And that's it for us, culture shock. There is a sign saying 'cottage cheese' – you should write if it is out of stock. 'And when is it likely to be?' 'Well, maybe next week...' 'Oh okaaaaay... We'll drop by next week then...'*

And this comes from the informant, Nikita, 26, who has grown up in Kyrgyzstan and had never spent more than a couple of days in Russia, waiting for a connecting flight in Moscow.

The culture of a 'Russian-speaking' business is also reflected in the attitudes of the owners themselves, but for them it comes into play more obviously in the context of encountering locals as customers. One of the examples comes from the former owner of a Russian restaurant who was explaining the intricacies of running an ethnic business in Newcastle. When she mentioned a visit from the local newspaper's reviewer, she emphasised the excellence of food and the high standards of service which were appreciated by the reviewer. But the 'rules and traditions', which, in her words, are inherent to Russian culture, apparently contributed negatively to the review, thus demonstrating the complexity and vagueness of cultural codes which are associated with the phenomenon of Russophone culture and were necessarily enabled in the migrant enterprise of this kind:

> *И потом о нас он написал в газете. Что-то ему понравилось, что-то...*
> *на что-то следовало нам внимание обратить, но, допустим, так как в*
> *наших правилах - мы же там действовали как в наших правилах, как в*
> *наших традициях, не оглядываясь на англичан. Естественно, для них*
> *что-то там было, ну, непривычное. Но в плане еды ему понравилось все,*
> *и 'можно даже', говорит, 'вам пять звездочек ставить'.* (020-ScZ-
> NCL)[232]

Business-wise, the specific 'Russian' allure which the restaurant's owners were so eager to promote significantly restricted the target clientele; after all, the restaurant closed down not only because of reluctant Russian-speaking customers, but also due to the uneasiness of locals in an 'untranslated', exoticised and thus incomprehensible and culturally uncomfortable domain. This strategy of 'presenting Russian-ness as it is' also prevented the introduction of a Russian-language culture as a culture of a migrant minority in the urban settings of then culturally homogenous Newcastle. Therefore, neither the timing nor the cultural

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[232] *And then he wrote about us in a newspaper. He liked some things, others... We had to work on other things, but, say, as our rules have it – we acted there according to our rules, our traditions, without looking up to the English. Apparently, there was something unusual to them. But he liked everything food-wise and said that we deserved five stars there.*

agenda seem to have been appropriate for establishing the ethnic business like this for both reasons – the internal, in-group and external, contextual ones. The question of quality of in-group business endeavours depends not only on the insufficient quantities of Russian-speaking migrants in the region to build up a coherent group with its consumer preferences; it is also due to the weakness of the community as a bridging concept and strategy for collaborations. 'Working for the community' is so far a rhetorical tool which helps to 'call into being' something which is yet to be formed.

6.3.2. Placing Russian in the local market

Running a business 'based on the ethnic identity of particular cultural products' in the UK has long been argued to depend greatly on the drive and customs within the migrant community itself (Mars & Ward 1984: 3). Economically, these business endeavours rest upon one of three models – that of an ethnic niche operating according to the rules of any capitalist routine; the cultural model, which prescribes entrepreneurial character to particular ethnic groups; and the resistant model, which explores strategies of overcoming racist or any other prejudicial restraints of the local settings (Jenkins 1984: 231). These approaches tend to look at migrant minorities as closed and defined groups which interact mostly with the local environment by presenting their identities in a straightforward and pre-determined way.

However, the linguistic landscaping of contemporary cities has altered significantly over the last decades and has therefore not only re-shaped cultural backgrounds or everyday interaction patterns, but has also provided a niche for new business endeavours. [233] The very fact of cultural diversity that emerging migrant communities are put in becomes a valuable resource and flexible strategic tool for developing local entrepreneurship (Sahin et al. 2007) whereas being 'multilingual' gains more potential economic benefit than performing a well-developed voice in a single language.

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[233] See e.g. Backhaus 2007 (the example of multilingualism in Tokyo) or Blommaert 2010 (for examples of 'multilingualisms' in urban landscapes of European and Asian countries).

Therefore, Russian-speaking entrepreneurship has recently attempted to exit the limitations of a market confined to their fellow migrants; instead, Russian-speaking entrepreneurs have started to explore the local business opportunities from this multilingual perspective. Their strategy is to employ a mainstream (or even stereotypical) set of language expectations and metalinguistic associations that local citizens or other migrants demonstrate and make them work for promoting Russian language and culture to these groups.[234] What 'Russian language' as a trade mark provides for developing businesses is devised by the entrepreneurs themselves based on their own understanding and image of Russian (or rather their understanding of what language attributes can be turned into something marketable). This includes their understanding of the position of Russian in relation to other languages in the local environment.

The image of Russian as 'exotic' yet close to the European space is further elaborated by enthusiasts who are engaged into providing language-related services to their fellow migrants.[235] These mostly involve Russian language weekend schools for migrant children, which are aimed at transmitting Russian language and culture to the next generations in a very particular educational context (see Chapter 7 for a detailed analysis of their activities). When they discuss local perceptions of Russian, the organisers of these schools tend to rework the stereotypes that develop around the language for their own benefit, making the most of them to develop a 'saleable' image of Russian as a foreign language (RFL). The lack of genuine interest or need for Russian among locals is re-interpreted into the idea of RFL as a time-consuming process of relevance only to certain, very peculiar audiences. As one of the informants (the head of one of the Russian language weekend schools in the North East) claims, only those non-Russians who have business contacts with Russia or can afford extravagant travelling are interested in RFL; others are rarely motivated to learn it at all (040-ScZ-NCL).

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[234] For recent exploration on how migrant networks compete with other, non-network related factors such as language attitudes and hierarchies or other social associations in defining language uses of multilingual migrants in England, see Hilmarsson-Dunn & Mitchell 2011.

[235] A detailed discussion of the image of Russian as perceived and re-produced by migrants themselves is provided in Chapter 3. For the discussion of the Russian language and culture as the West's 'Other' see Cheauré 2010.

This idea is further developed into the exclusivity of language learning services: since the demand is low and narrowed to specific areas, the way to present Russian courses is deliberately academic. Therefore, the only originally 'in-group' initiative which goes beyond the community level, advertising itself further, to wider audiences, is that of Russian language weekend schools for children. A way to 'objectify' their emergence as a vital necessity for both Russian-speaking migrants and other local residents involves the establishment of 'Russian culture centres' that are supposed to promote Russian culture widely within the region, with their target audience being vague and ambivalent and their goals ephemeral if discussed at all (Fig. 8). What these schools provide, however, is the professionalisation of initially amateurish 'community work' of language maintenance by providing for it a pseudo-academic formalised context. Therefore, setting themselves a time-distant and ambitious purpose, some of these schools attempt to enter the market of foreign language learning through the safe path of community initiatives and reaching towards those target audiences that they have in mind based on their own understandings of language imaging.

Figure 8. Screenshot of the front webpage of one of the websites dedicated to promoting a 'Russian language and culture centre' in the North-East England (http://russiancentre4u.com/centre.html), last accessed 22.11.2013. The website is no longer available.

Other ways of elaborating a position and a voice within the growing number of ethnic communities of the country is to find a distinctive place which Russian has in the growing variety of locally present migrant languages by establishing a relationship with them. To do so, entrepreneurs have to work with locally produced stereotypes towards languages which are present in their environment. The perceived closeness or distance between these languages is usually based on what these languages 'sound like' to locals, whereby their respective cultures also become labelled as 'close'. When it comes to Russian-speaking migrants, this categorisation involves drawing the group into the broader cluster of 'East-European migration', which initially does not quite correspond to their own understanding of cultural linkages and shared backgrounds.[236] But in the long run this belonging to 'East-European migration' also starts to influence both their metalinguistic reflexivity and their business pragmatics. Thus, originally 'Russian', in the sense of Russian-speaking, businesses of the area are increasingly resorting to the label 'East-European' as a part of their commercial self-presentation and promotion within what can be called 'double-dealing' strategy.[237]

For example, a Newcastle-based food shop called 'Food Paradise' (Fig.9) opened in 2013 and presented an example of this strategy, employing as many potential target audiences as possible through its positioning. Firstly, it was presented as a 'Russian shop' (in Cyrillic) for a Russian-speaking audience through its main marketing channel, a Facebook group called '*Русский магазин* FOOD PARADISE *в Ньюкасле*' [sic], where all interactions between its representatives and customers were held exclusively in Russian. Its more precise meaning was, however, a 'Soviet shop', due to its purchasing strategy of supplying goods from various FSU countries, which most stereotypically represented products from every Soviet republic: not only Latvian bread, Lithuanian cheese or Ukrainian sausages (which can be found in most East-European shops in the area) but also Georgian wine, Armenian cognac or spice sets for making traditional Central Asian food, *plov*. In developing its image as specifically 'Russian' (that is, belonging to the

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[236] The way Russian-speaking migrants are surprised to be associated with and try to distance themselves from, for example, Polish migrants of the region was discussed in Chapter 4.

[237] The process of symbolic consolidation of various, otherwise not necessarily related ethnic migrant communities is, of course, not exclusive to the overarching term of 'East-European' but might also include the culturally elaborated phenomena of 'pan-Asian' or 'Mediterranean' as presented in migrant entrepreneurship.

post-Soviet culture of contemporary Russia), the management promoted other, very specific goods which, in their interpretation, were most likely to embody the 'Russian-ness' that recent Russian-speaking migrants might adhere to. For example, the online advertisement mentioned in Fig. 9 uses the juxtaposition of Orthodox icons and alcohol for this purpose.

21 февраля

Теперь в продаже алкоголь!!!
Имеются православные иконы!!!

Русский магазин"FOOD PARADISE " в Newcastle.
Участники: 110

Figure 9. An ad promoting new stock arrivals. Facebook group 'Russkii magazin FOOD PARADISE v Newcastle' (Russian Foodstore 'Food Paradise' in Newcastle), post of 21.02.2014. The Facebook group is no longer available.

This shop 'translates' into English, unconventionally, as a 'European Food and Delicatessen Shop', a line which is evidently demonstrated on its windows and is supposed to be the first thing which a passerby's eye catches (Fig.10). This parallel to other East-European food vendors of the region obviously deals with the shop's location – there is a large Polish shop two-minutes-walk away, as well as other businesses of most visibly represented communities (Indian, Chinese, Arabic, etc.). The shop closed down in May 2015.

This 'layering' of culturally specific contexts by engaging different linguistic resources and symbolic spaces to address target audiences is exemplary of two interconnected processes to which the North East has become gradually exposed recently: one is its constant development into a more culturally diverse habitat of many communities with the polyglossia of their voices to express themselves; the other deals with a more particular example of one of these groups re-interpreting its identity in a broader context and engaging itself gradually into the process of its

multilingual self-presentation within one of the essential domains, establishing its place in the local field of small businesses.

Figure 10. The front shop window of the 'European Food and Delicatessen Shop' (Russian Shop 'Food Paradise') in Newcastle (closed in May 2015). March 2015. Photo taken by the author.

6.4. Conclusions

The interconnections of linguistic resources and language reflections become involved in migrants' integration into the host community in many ways. Work-wise this set of language-related issues becomes significant at both the individual and the group levels. Personal migrant trajectories reveal how available skills become readjusted for the demands of a new labour market, some of them being translated rather straightforwardly, others requiring a more precise procedure of reshaping to make them employable in the new context. This process of transfer also involves the development of new characteristics of migrants as potential employees – e.g. their re-consideration of (near)-native proficiency in Russian as an employable skill. For many of them a mostly 'holistic' approach to language supposes that being a native speaker of a language would automatically imply

operating professionally in this language in any area of expertise. Therefore, they tend to prefer the strategy of looking for any position which requires competence in Russian while explaining a low offer of such vacancies by the peripheral location of the region or its current economic state. Either delegating the work on self-presentation as job applicants to local agencies or coping with the process on their own, Russian-speaking migrants prioritise their native level of Russian over other skills they have to offer.

Having found a position in an English-speaking environment, migrants face a new role they are to acquire at the workplace, the role of the non-native employee. The domain and intensity of this role may differ significantly from one area to another, depending on the professional field, on the number of other non-native colleagues and on the locals' familiarity with this role. What is present invariably, however, is the interactive space where this 'guise' is to be performed accordingly. The migrants' accommodation in their new role is usually linked to their awareness of their own linguistic identity and may be interpreted in various ways: as an interactive zone which provides space for negotiations and reduced expectations on their linguistic performance and communication skills, as a limiting barrier which secludes the non-native employee from career opportunities or as a potential arena for presenting their own linguistic identity to other staff in the most obvious and beneficial way, converting it into their symbolic capital.

Starting one's own business, in its turn, entails addressing the right audiences with accurate messages in carefully chosen words, which also evokes the long-shot balancing of interior and exterior positioning. Russian is employed as a working resource in business activities in different ways, but mostly as one of the possible characteristics of offered services, thus involving Russian speakers only as a part of the clientele and on common grounds with other, non-Russian customers. Marketing Russian as part of a service of 'professional help' to new migrants is often approached sceptically by the target migrant clientele. Finally, Russian may be conceptualised as a core factor for community building and thus operate as a distinctive cultural code for communicating (i.e. marketing) the services to the audience, running the business itself and presenting it at the same time as defining for the 'community' (whatever sense entrepreneurs themselves put into this term). Whichever strategy migrant entrepreneurship chooses, it becomes aware of the

important factor of external expectations and stereotyping which influences the niche for local ethnic businesses.

There are two main areas of the entrepreneurial activities of Russian-speaking migrants that are oriented towards the broader British audience and are aimed at presenting 'Russian language presence' to them. The first domain includes strategies of including Russian into the language learning market of the region. Based on their own assumptions, migrant entrepreneurs, who are most often also weekend school teachers, offer their services to non-natives of Russian, creating the flavour of exclusivity around otherwise rather common foreign-language courses. The other domain deals with the variety of migrant voices and accents on the local arena and puts Russian into a broader network of languages due mainly to non-linguistic – social, cultural and geographical – factors. Russian-speaking entrepreneurship reacts to this categorisation by gradually adjusting to multilayered self-positioning and presentation to different audiences – that of ethnic Russian origins and a wider post-Soviet group, East-European migration in the region as well as local English-speaking residents. Potential contradictions between and clashes of different perspectives of self-presentation in Russian-speaking business activities – aimed at the group itself, targeting local audiences, placing the Russian-speaking migrant strand within a broader migrant context – raise a far-reaching question: is Russian-speaking migrancy simply 'lost in translation' or is it finding its way to speak the many languages of a growing diverse cultural and commercial environment?

CHAPTER 7. COMMUNITIES OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MIGRANTS OF THE NORTH-EAST OF ENGLAND: LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND SPEECH PRACTICES

7.1. Language community, speech community or community of practice?

The aspects of migrant lives discussed in earlier chapters include their language uses and attitudes towards the varieties of both Russian and English, ongoing transformations of familyhood in transcultural marriages or extended family relations, and current work and study experiences in the new country. However various in their origins and domains of activity, these aspects share two common grounds. The first one is the sense of *modification* or transformation of previously established attitudes or patterns in the new social and cultural settings. The linguistic baggage of 'Russian English' and discourse on Russian are re-viewed through new, migrant lenses; family roles and ties are re-bound and re-interpreted due to mixed memberships and localities; working careers or educational paths take turns according to the new statuses and requirements of the field. Identities are re-considered and re-shaped according to the newly acquired statuses. The second refers to the scale of these transformations which primarily involve *personal* biographical experiences and life trajectories, even if placed in a larger socio-cultural context. What Russian-speaking migrants of the region present as a distinctive group is distilled through analytical exploration of individual narratives and accounts. In this context, Russian-speaking migrants emerge as a social group largely through their common characteristics, rather than their ideas of belonging to the same 'community' or their shared efforts of building one.

This chapter, in contrast, deals with different forms of social organisation Russian-speaking migrants constitute specifically in a new cultural context. The idea of belonging to the same group, which is evoked by their migrant status, might be developed on the various bases for such grouping and, therefore, vary in its limits and criteria for 'membership'. My focus will be on the issue of 'shared language', namely the question of 'Russophonism', or *русскоязычие*. The latter may be framed by the migrants in various ways: as the transmission of 'heritage' language to the next generation; as the basis for interactive communication within a larger, and actually quite diverse, Russian-speaking migrant group; as a special symbolic code for fulfilling diverse cultural needs (e.g. as a language of 'art' or

'literature' they are used to, or the 'voice' through which their Orthodox identity is expressed); or as a marker of particular forms of material culture (which is best captured by in-group business endeavours like a Russian shop or restaurant). However diverse these framings might be on individual levels, Russophonism as the basis for creating *communities* deals with only some of them and has three implications for its interaction with other ways migrant associations are formed.

Firstly, this group-building is based on perceived differences from other similar or related communities – those of other immigrant minorities in the region (through the commonality of their official statuses or informal lifestyles) and vastly-scattered groups of migrants of the same FSU background in other countries. Secondly, the existence of Russian-speaking associations of migrants from post-Soviet countries does not exclude the development of other, more localised or specified initiatives or groupings which can be based on common local origins,[238] professional[239] or ethnic identities.[240] These smaller-scale groups in some respects parallel what Helen Kopnina (2005) refers to as 'subcommunities', 'based upon common background … [and whose] members are linked by social networks characterised by trust and the fulfilment of mutual expectations' (Kopnina 2005: 99-100). Thirdly, it does not imply the dominance of (or high level of proficiency in) Russian in their current language repertoire or previous linguistic biographies.

The basis of Russian-speaking-ness of this migrant group is therefore not exhausted by the communicative pragmatics of Russian as a 'lingua franca' for scattered individuals or sub-groups. It also encapsulates a particular set of attitudinal and discursive views of language as a social factor. Therefore, this chapter investigates the specific strategies of collaboration of post-Soviet migrants which use Russophonism as a common ground in the process of community-building.

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[238] E.g. 'sub-groups' of expats from the same country, city or even urban district; examples from fieldwork include a group of Kazan's Tatars or Russian-speaking natives of Bishkek.

[239] E.g. small-scale networks of IT-specialists or people developing their career in medicine in the North-East of England and establishing informal contacts among Russian-speaking colleagues in the same field.

[240] Some of Russian-speaking migrants can also manifest their belonging to a more localised culture, e.g. Belorussian nationality, Dagestani origins, or Tatar family ties.

A set of core terms to be used in what follows needs some detailed defining. This applies, first of all, to the notion of 'community' itself and especially its particular types known as 'language community' and 'speech community'. Stemming from the distinction made by F. Tönnies in the late 1880s between 'community', *Gemeinschaft*, and 'society', *Gesellschaft,*[241] the concept of 'community' has been employed by different areas of academic expertise, which developed it in a variety of directions. It changed rapidly over the 1960s, with the diversification of the fields in which it was employed,[242] and later, in the late 1990s, when new areas of social life provided the space for the development of new types of communities (virtual communities,[243] communities of practice,[244] etc.). This resulted in the diversification of meanings ascribed to the term and its often somewhat loose interpretations. However, the term 'community' may be defined by core parameters which add up to its specificity and which, in P. Selznick's sociological perspective, include historicity, identity, mutuality, plurality, autonomy, participation and integration (Selznick 1994). In a later and more term-focused discussion by Wood & Judikis (2002), the essence of community is defined by four key factors of a group of people: a) a sense of common purpose(s) and interest(s); b) the acknowledgement of interconnectedness; c) respect towards members' individual differences; d) commitment to the integrity and well-being of the whole group (Wood & Judikis 2002: 12).

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[241] Both being types of positive association of people, 'community' is characterised by the perception of it as 'real and organic' by its members in contrast to the 'imaginary and mechanical structure' of a 'society' (Tönnies 2002: 33).

[242] In anthropological perspective, the term 'community' was especially recognised in relation to ethnographical fieldwork and the position of insiders and outsiders of a group under study and thus issues of access and interpretability of fieldwork data. In relation to language this approach posed a perspective of language endangerment, maintenance or revitalization which a closed group of indigenous speakers faced on daily basis. For a recent example of anthropological research on language as a key factor for community-building of a closed group see, for example, Meek 2010, who interprets the process of preserving an idiom by a Northern-Athabascan community through the classical lenses of 'language danger' and 'revitalisation' (though efficiently developed into the levels of socialization, civic integration and political discourses of resistance).

[243] On the 'virtual community' concept as applied to post-Soviet Russian-speaking migration see Elias & Zeltser-Shorer 2006; Fialkova & Yelenevskaya 2005; Sapienza 2001; Schmidt et al. 2006b.

[244] On the way particular Russian discourses are built within communities of practice see Goodfellow 2015 (for online gaming communities), Gurova 2012 (for cross-border consumer practices of Russians in Finland).

What this definition means in relation to a group of speakers of a particular language, is the crucial observation that it requires more than just a certain level of proficiency in the same language to make this group a community as such.[245] This perspective significantly re-shapes the way a 'language community' is explained, particularly in a multilingual context. For some researchers, the term 'language community' stands for a group of any number of people who use a language for part, most, or all of their everyday communication (Romaine 2013). In its extremes, a language community in this sense may prove helpful when dealing with broader issues of ethnicity and political power, when the sense of 'imagined' communities of larger scale is unravelled through a shared language as 'a proxy for ethnicity' and the level of 'language communities' is to be related to 'such outcomes as democratic stability, ethnic violence, and economic growth' (Laitin 2000: 153). But what is more important for understanding the notion of a community of language is 'the perceived solidarity and interaction based on reference to a particular language' as well as identifications of people belonging to this community (Romaine 2013: 447). Therefore, the 'image of their communion' (Anderson 1983: 15), which in B. Anderson's perspective is crucial for the sense of nationhood and for individual perceptions of common grounds for this unity, becomes also a question of language borders. In the case of Russian-speaking migrants, it involves complex entanglements of ideas on the USSR's geographic space, Russophone hegemony, and the post-Soviet cultural background of current migrants. This complexity inevitably brings in confusion in terms of the nature, membership and boundaries of the newly-formed communities as simply referring to the sharing of a particular language (i.e. Russian, as an alleged 'lingua franca' for diverse groups). Indeed, 'imagining' a wider community of its users does not grasp differences in the cultural mechanics of (re-)production of their identities. The concept of 'language community', placed in the context of Anderson's theory of imagined communities, introduces therefore the issue of normativity inherent to every language, determining its uses and sociolinguistic patterns as strictly corresponding to national borders or state educational standards. In theoretical terms, it would be more correct therefore to use the term 'language community' to describe the groups of people 'encompassed under this measure of normativity'

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[245] As expressed by Judikis, 'sharing a common language and religion does not imply we are a community' (Wood & Judikis 2002: 73).

(Siverstein 1998: 407) and producing common practices due to these (broadly defined) linguistic norms. Its empirical implications deal with the notion of the 'imaginary Soviet Union' re-invented by post-Soviet migrants, which may presuppose the same old operational patterns of Russian for the new migrant environment as well.[246] On the other hand, the sense of belonging to this language community becomes re-interpreted in cultural terms and enacts the 'Russian-ness' 'away from home' which in its turn poses the question of Russia's current monopoly over the Russophone cultural heritage.[247]

In contrast to the macro-level analysis and the dominance of linguistic normativity and state language politics, which the term 'language community' implies, the current use of the term 'speech community' provides space for exploring language as a source for active interpretational processes. Taking for granted that 'language represents, embodies, constructs and constitutes meaningful participation in society and culture', this concept also emphasises the way an 'intelligible symbolic and ideological communication system' (i.e. the normative system of a language) receives new interpretational frameworks across different social contexts (Morgan 2014: 1). It 'takes on the characteristics of register-alternates and hence begins to serve as indexically pregnant modes of performing ("voicing") identities' (Silverstein 1998: 407).[248]

What this means for Russian-speaking communities is that their ways of referring to and using the language may be a crucial factor not only for their self-construction as a group, but also for their differentiating among each other. This becomes evident in the way professional Russian-language teachers in three FSU countries – Latvia, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan – discuss the role that Russian has for those they teach. Teachers of RLT in Latvia build the identity of the language they teach against the backdrop of official strategies of othering this language in

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[246] For discussion of post-Soviet 'diasporic' discourses on Russian language and culture within the UK see Byford 2009a.

[247] In relation to material culture and re-creating home patterns in the new environment Pechurina (2010) focuses on the notion of Russian-ness as central to her analysis of belonging to migrants' cultural origins, although noting that this identity is 'contradictory and ambiguous' and no division of 'Soviet vs. Russian' can be drawn either across generations or within places of origins (Pechurina 2010: 76-77).

[248] For a further analysis of the process of elaborating the indexical potential of language for the sake of community-oriented practices see Siverstein 2003.

most public domains. The Russian language is connected predominantly to the ethnic and cultural identity of native speakers of Russian, which is a particular 'Latvian Russian identity' that these teachers share (Cara 2013). Russian-language teachers in Tajikistan, who mostly work with the local population, non-native in Russian, are determined to prepare them for labour migration to Russia (or, less often, other FSU republics, e.g. Kazakhstan). For them Russian is a means of communication in a working environment, which is supposed to be grasped at a basic level in the shortest time possible. For this reason they also keep in regular touch with 'mainland' Russia in order to be informed of current language usage in the working environment (Nagzibekova 2010). Turkmenistani RLT professionals are both native, 'second native' and non-native speakers of Russian, but the basis that connects their practice is a strong orientation towards the standard variety and the idea of 'grammatical correctness'. Since the language is used in the country sporadically and mostly in written forms of limited functionality (local ads, public signs), RLT practice has been moving from training a vital communicative skill to teaching an abstract school subject, like maths or biology (Permanov et al. 2010). These three examples highlight the considerable differences that the same language in the similar contexts of post-Soviet republics can have at the level of its indexical importance and of the social practices relevant to maintain it.

Since the mid-1960s, after being introduced into the active usage in linguistic anthropology (and later beyond its field), the term 'speech community' has been used to signify a group of people sharing the knowledge 'of rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech', i.e. the knowledge 'of at least one form of speech, and knowledge also of its patterns of use' (Hymes 1977: 51). In fact, in some respect this was a euphemism that was used to describe the specificities of idioms or repertoires of different classes, or, as W. Labov suggests, of the 'participation in a set of shared norms' about the use of language elements (such as pronunciation patterns, accentuations, vocabulary variations or discourse compliance) which 'may be observed in overt types of the evaluative behaviour' and becomes evidence of social strata or regional markers (Labov 1972: 120-121).

What the latest explorations on this term emphasise, however, is the process during which speakers of the shared language start to construct the new, common meanings of the way they use this language, which in the long run form culturally specific concepts that unite them into a particular 'speech' community.

Beside the 'plurilinguality' of these communities (both in the sense of languages and linguistic repertoires or genres at hand), the significant characteristic of these communities is their common practice of re-establishing indexical meanings of linguistic resources. As S. Romaine (2013) argues, speech communities, to some extent, present a more particular example of what Wenger (1998) calls 'communities of practice' – informal groups of regular communication, each of which has 'a shared repertoire of communal resources that binds its members together in mutual agreement', which include, in the particular case of speech communities, common ways of communication, as well as linguistic choices and attitudes (Romaine 2013: 447).

It is important therefore to differentiate between, on the one hand, 'language communities' as social groups whose members are 'oriented to the denotational norms' (i.e. those referring to the literal meanings of words in the language) and, on the other, 'speech communities' as involving 'norms of indexicality' (i.e. norms that engage less straightforward associations established through social practices or cultural expectations and point to particular bits of social knowledge on the language unit under question). In making this distinction, my intention is to show how the commonality of language provides further social practices evoked by new migrant settings which consequently lead to establishing social contacts and networks of interaction and support, i.e. the way a 'language community' of Russian speakers through their shared practices of maintaining the language ('community of practice') becomes a group of subjects who establish a very particular way of performing their identity of 'Russian speakers' in the process of elaborating new conventional meanings for language practices ('speech community', or 'community of speech practices').

Based on my fieldwork in the North-East of England, my analysis will cover two different kinds of such speech communities which treat and use Russian in two perspectives – one of them, characteristic of Russian-language weekend schools, provides an attempt at 'localising' Russian as a language of a migrant community situated in the diverse British environment; the other, developed predominantly by local Russian-speaking societies, is mostly focused on maintaining a (usually nostalgic or retrospective) image of Russian as the language of belonging to the specific (and sometimes imagined or considerably re-interpreted) past.

The first part of this chapter therefore focuses on Russian-language weekend schools and parents' clubs, their structure and development as well as the micro-politics of their interactions with British authorities and other migrant initiatives. It analyses the way Russian language is used by these migrant initiatives from two standpoints – as a core part of an educational process and as the common-sense signifier of a broader cultural interpretation of Russophonism which it entails. The second part examines the way Russian-speaking communities emerge as *the* way of re-interpreting a common (post-)Soviet past as well as a shared migrant present through practices of language use. The most vivid example of such a community in the region is the so-called 'USSR of Newcastle', i.e. 'The United Student Society of Russian speakers in Newcastle'.

7.2. Russian language schools in the North East of England

My ethnographic fieldwork, conducted primarily between December 2011 and December 2012, included participant observation and interviews with school administrations, teaching staff, parents and – less often – children. It included visits to schools at different stages of the academic year and on a variety of occasions (regular classes, informal parents' meetings, and special occasions, such as school celebrations and matinees).

There are three major 'agents' in this field within the North-East. They all developed quickly and somewhat chaotically, often restructuring depending on shifts in strategy, especially that concerning preferences of their target audiences. These are: 1. the 'Zaika' school in Newcastle (established in 2007, it also initiated the opening of its branch in Chester-le-Street in October 2012 but ceased its activities in that region later on); 2. the 'TeremOK' school (established in 2010, it was situated in Middlesbrough until the summer of 2012, but from the 2012-2013 academic year has started to operate in Darlington, it also has a currently inactive branch in Newcastle, known as 'Kalinka'); and finally, 3. the 'Dlia Tebia' school in Newcastle, set up in 2011. A concise portrait of these three institutions is better made in the wider context of other schools and educational courses of the kind in

other parts of the UK (especially London and Southern England or, indeed, Scotland).[249]

One of the most evident peculiarities of these schools is their recent foundation and their comparatively small number of regular pupils. The oldest (and the largest) Russian weekend school in the region ('Zaika') was founded in 2007, and the newest one ('Dlia Tebia') – in 2011. The average number of pupils varies greatly throughout an academic year, but seldom exceeds 30-35 pupils for the whole school. One can compare this with the Russian weekend school in Edinburgh, 'Russian Edinburgh', which has more than a hundred regular pupils for the whole year, this number seems important with regards to the way it is run and promoted. The school's staff usually interpret the instability of the number of pupils throughout an academic year by the shift from the 'conscientiousness' (*сознательность*) of parents characteristic for the start of an academic year to a more or less inevitable decrease of enthusiasm, and the general 'tiredness' of both children and parents in later months.

This instability is also reflected by the general ambiguity of the schools' missions and strategies. Firstly, there is the instability of their self-definitions, which can drift from their marketing themselves as a 'family club' to becoming a 'Russian culture school' or else an 'arts school' or a more general 'educational centre', without immediately invoking an explicit Russian identity or the context of a primary weekend school, apart from through their Russian name, 'Zaika', 'Teremok', 'Rostok', 'Dlia tebia'.

These names are left untouched primarily for broader marketing purposes, for easy recognition and identification. However, they are rarely referred to by these names by parents or pupils, the most popular way of identifying them being by the name of their founder or director. Thus the usual way for parents to present the school their children attend in a conversation is to put it as 'we go to X.' This key position of heads of schools demonstrates the intersection of different domains of command it implies: it entails regular school management and its

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[249] Data used for this comparative perspective come from the ethnographic fieldwork of A. Byford collected in 2007-2008 in Russian weekend schools of London, Oxford and Kent. Ethnographic materials on Scottish schools was gathered by myself and consists of a series of interviews and participant observation sessions in the 'Russkii Edinburgh' school (October 2012) and participation at a methodological conference of Russian-language schools of Scotland in Dundee (October 2013).

promotion both among the potential clientele in Russian-speaking circles and beyond, with local authorities and other migrant groups; furthermore, the head of school is usually the one who deals with drama classes and school performances play a prominent role in maintaining communication with parents.[250]

As far as the schools' educational programme is concerned, the number and types of classes available in each school are very flexible, which helps the school management to promote their services as different to those of their competitors.[251] Slight alterations of programmes are mainly influenced by the availability of staff in each academic year, but the list of core classes is similar for all schools and includes Russian language and literature (with 'speech development' for younger groups or a preparation course for GCSE for teenagers extending the core programme), and a large compulsory module of 'arts', such as drama, crafts, music (mostly singing), or dancing. In contrast to the larger institutions of London or Scotland, these schools do not include any sciences or maths in their curriculum, even though there may be some available staff for teaching, for example, mathematics or economics.[252]

School staff is mostly female,[253] and as a result of this gender imbalance, there is a significant influence on how the mission of the schools is articulated by both staff and the most committed parents. For them, the idea of transmitting the language to the next generation as a central experience for Russian-speaking female migrants prevails over the idea of transmitting the language through a particular educational context similar to those back in their home countries. The fluctuation of the schools' curricula is also paralleled by the indecisiveness about teaching materials. In two of the schools the choice of core course books is yet to be made (Russian-language teachers mostly use their own copies of books for

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[250] This is rarely the case in larger schools, where the responsibilities of teaching and administrating are usually divided among staff.

[251] As one of the directors stated while showing me around their school, they supposed it to be a novelty of learning language through arts, exclusive for their own school in the region.

[252] Though some schools of the region have personnel potentially available for teaching sciences (e.g. a certified economist), they have re-qualified into teachers of Russian language and culture nonetheless. In contrast, mathematics is one of the core subjects for some other Russian schools in the UK, included into the conceptualisation of 'Russian education'.

[253] For all three schools there is only one male teacher of crafts (he is also husband to the head of school).

ordinary Russian schools or find materials online, browsing specialised web-sites). In the third school the initially chosen textbook was replaced with one provided to the 'diaspora' by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, as soon as the opportunity for this arose.[254]

Parents of the core audience for schools' services vary greatly in their origins, background education or current statuses. Whereas the proportion of mixed and Russian-speaking families who attend the schools are estimated by the staff as mostly equal, it is predominantly a Russian-speaking mother who initiates the first visit and is further responsible for her child's performance; she is also more active in making suggestions about the learning process or maintaining informal communication with other parents. As many of them live quite far away from the schools' venues, arranging an appropriate place for the parents to socialise during their children's classes becomes as important an issue for school management as teaching itself. A school's administration is usually familiar with the parents' careers and biographies whereas parents might know much less about the teachers' backgrounds or professional credentials.

Whereas schools are familiar with each other's initiatives and attentively follow what each other are doing to attract clientele, they usually choose to remain silent about the presence of other actors in the field, deliberately avoiding any acknowledgements of their rivals. For example, being active in most of the social network groups for Russian speakers in the region, the school representatives are always aware of other contestants' moves (a new post, link or photo/video material they share in the group) and fire back quickly by posting something very similar, almost identical, but with reference to their own school. Therefore, in contrast to many other schools in the UK, they feel reluctant to collaborate or associate into any professional network with their closest colleagues (as well as

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[254] The first one the school used, *Russian as a Foreign Language (For Kids)*, was written by N. Vlasova, a Russian-language trainer and methodologist in Israel who published a series of materials on RFL based on her extensive teaching experience. The second one, *Russian Language and Reading for International Schools* by Dronov et al. was specially written for, published and distributed by the Russian World Foundation, a Russian government supported cultural council for promoting Russian language and culture worldwide. These two publications exemplify two contrasting frameworks of educational provision for 'Russians outside the nation': one developed by local professionals who focus on practical aspects of dealing with bilingual children and the other developed by Russian authorities who take this opportunity to insert an ideological component into language learning.

rivals) in the field.

All the features of Russian-language weekend schools of the North-East can be explained by the general character of migration to the region – its low numbers and professional paths (compared to central regions) and scattered residence (Newcastle, which is the most obvious centre for an accumulation of initiatives, is small compared to London, Glasgow, or Edinburgh, given that its population is less than 300 thousand). In the sense of access to teaching-related resources, the peripheral position puts schools at a disadvantage when compared to other institutions of this kind, especially those situated in (or close to) London or regions with strong identities, of which Scotland is the most vivid example.

7.2.1. Back to school: Institutionalising language maintenance among Russian-speaking migrants

The emergence of schools in the region is seen by both parents and teaching staff as something natural, and expected. The former express their gratitude towards heads of schools for stepping in and organising these initiatives, thus filling in the lacunae. Even those who do not yet have children (but are planning to have them in the future) comment that there is need for such schools.[255] As one of the directors puts it:

> *Как создалась школа... наверное, необходимость появилась её создания. То есть родители, с которыми мы общались и которые хотели, что дети, родившиеся здесь и приехавшие сюда, может быть, как-то соприкоснулись с русским языком, традициями и культурой. Потому что здесь, в английских школах, ну или в этих садиках, этого нету. То есть совершенно другой подход к детям. Совершенно другой подход к обучению, то есть не такой, как у нас. И наверное - поэтому такое*

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[255] Elina, 37, in her interview comments appraisingly about the head of the Russian school they attend. Marat, 26, who does not have children of his own, also comments on her activities as 'quite a feat'. Evgeniia, 26, feels anxious about her future children as she is not sure whether there is a Russian school in the region 'such as those they have in London' and feels 'relieved for her children' once I tell her about the two schools that exist in Newcastle.

желание возникло, научить детей тому, чему когда-то научились мы, в своё время в нашей стране, в наших школах и садиках. (020-ScZ-NCL)[256]

In the director's narrative, her school's emergence is portrayed as spontaneous and inevitable, as arising out of a kind of 'diasporic' need that migrant parents have to give their children at least some contact with 'Russian language, traditions and culture'. The school is supposed to provide them with a taste of the kind of education that they themselves had received in their childhoods, the essence of which is very different to the model of upbringing offered in English schools and kindergartens, in which these children are now being raised, of necessity. The assumption here is that these schools offer access not only to specific cultural content, but also entail a distinctively 'Russian' form of educational socialisation. Both content and form are, moreover, presented in an ahistorical way and are constructed primarily through the othering of the host culture and education.

One of the starting points relevant to the way Russian-language schools are run is the role of teachers. As reflected upon by many respondents, the ideal of a 'teacher of Russian language and literature' back in Russia and other post-Soviet countries is associated with a considerable amount of symbolic capital. This idea is identified with the virtues of serving society, of altruism, of disinterestedness regarding economic benefits of their profession, and this is further associated with the duty of promoting and transmitting to others the normative – standardised, as well as in a way sanctified – variant of the national language. As one of the respondents put it, they are the only group who speak the 'proper Russian' (019-M-16-SPM).[257] Therefore, the staff of newly formed language schools in the region (who are rarely professionally trained for this) understand themselves as taking

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[256] *How the school was created... there must have been the necessity for it to appear. There were parents who we interacted with and who wished for their children who were born here or came earlier to somehow get in touch with Russian language, traditions and culture. Because here, in English schools or nurseries, there is nothing like it. The approach to children is totally different here. A totally different approach to teaching, so unlike ours. And this might have been the reason why this wish emerged – the wish to teach children what we were taught in our time, in our country, in our schools and kindergartens.*

[257] For the symbolic value of the standardised version see particularly Chapter 3. For the interconnection of language teaching and compulsory cultural upbringing within a secondary school context as seen back in Russia, see the 2013 Resolution of The Russian Congress of Russian Language and Literature Teachers (Rezoliutsiia 2013).

on this idealised role of the 'teacher of Russian'. They do not just copy the primary function of this role, namely to teach language, but they also assume the attitudes towards the broader image of a 'Russian-language teacher' that other Russian-speaking migrants would also share. This acquired 'professionalisation' may go even beyond that and expand towards teaching Russian to (mostly adult) speakers of other languages – firstly, to English-speaking spouses of other Russian-speaking migrants, and further, to the local public. Although novice teachers interpret their work as a form of volunteering for the common benefits of the 'community' and stress the non-profit nature of their occupation, their posts do come with some benefits. Being parents themselves, most of the teaching staff place their own children into these improvised schools. However, wages tend to be paid only to those teachers who do not have their own children attending classes and therefore have no 'personal' interest in the overall teaching process.

Whether volunteering or working as hired staff, hardly any of the teachers have any special professional training in teaching RFL or RSL, only few have university diplomas in pedagogy or relevant practice of teaching to schoolchildren. Taking up new teaching responsibilities does not affect their normal linguistic behaviour patterns. Indeed, even when communicating on behalf of the school, they do not make any attempt to control their linguistic idiosyncrasies, nor do they put in any extra effort in checking spelling, grammar or punctuation (for example, in internal school announcements or external recruiting advertisements). Being a native (or often just fluent) speaker of Russian with the strong desire to teach it to a 'second generation' seems sufficient for the new status of teacher. Their initiative therefore is based on their ambition to take on the responsibility for the group as such and thus to proclaim it a community with its own, quite specific needs. Establishing a new school and recruiting pupils requires reaching out to a wider group of migrants by using personal channels of communication as means of advertising and promoting their new enterprise. A range of different communicative circles become gradually involved in recruiting potential clients from locally resident migrants:

> *Это было как бы очень просто: бумажку положили, написали список людей, которые могли бы быть заинтересованы точно, рядом - те люди, кто - может быть, и ещё третья колоночка - те люди, кого мы просто знаем. И пришли к выводу, что да, наверное, необходимость*

назрела в этом. И первая наша встреча была тех людей, которые друг
друга знают. Кто-то кому-то сказал, кто-то позвонил, кто-то
списался - вот мы пришли, начали заниматься. Потом, когда по поводу
как новых людей - это тоже получается, сарафанное радио говорит.
Все-таки оно работает больше и лучше. Но у нас через интернет, через
сайты, через подачу объявлений, через развешивание объявлений в
русских магазинах, в польских магазинах, и так далее. (015-ScR-
DRL/NCL)[258]

Given the absence of any previous experience in teaching Russian to
bilingual children in an institutional context, the issue of what is actually
transmitted to pupils during classes becomes a question of what these teachers
know (and were taught themselves) and what they feel as lacking in their
children's cultural context. Apart from linguistic skills as such, this gap concerns
the idea of 'schooling' itself, i.e. the idea of imparting to the children the specifics of
the organisational culture of the 'Russian school'. This seems particularly
important to both parents and teachers.

For many parents the desire of transmitting their native language to their
bilingual children is as important as showing them what they would deem a
'proper' form of schooling (based on their own experiences as children). Therefore,
many express their negative attitude towards the UK schooling system and style of
teaching, in comparison to the ones they are used to:[259]

Это образование с 4 лет, нёрсери, заложило очень нехорошую основу –
привычки нехорошие, и она [daughter] *особо ничего не учила вроде, а вот*

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[258] *It was kinda very easy: we put a sheet of paper and wrote a list of people who were most likely to*
get interested, next to them – people who might get interested, and the third list was for people we just
happened to know. And we came to the decision that yes, probably, there was a necessity in this. And
our first meeting was for people who simply knew each other. Someone told someone else, someone
made a phone call, someone wrote a message – and here we were, and that was the start of our
classes. Then, regarding new people – this also happens, the word of mouth does work. It works better
and more effectively. But we had Internet, websites, online advertising, putting announcements in
local Russian shops, Polish shops, and so on.

[259] The practice of normative comparison of schooling systems in their country of origin and the
host environment seems quite widespread among Russian-speaking migrants worldwide – the US
system was seen by post-Soviet refugees as 'insufficiently rigorous' (Delgado-Gaiatan 1994: 150).
Recent Finnish attempts to include learning Russian as a heritage language at different levels of
education, however, have proved sufficient to parents in their aspirations for children's proficiency
in Russian – 56% agreed this would be enough for their language practice (Protassova 2008).

разболтала. Потому что у нас приходят учиться, а не общаться. Здесь же приходят общаться, в начальную школу особенно. Учения никакого. (004-F-55-СХН)[260]

This parental urge to transmit different norms of schooling is doubled by the school management's dreams of developing into something close to the standards of their own schooling experiences, what in their own words is called an 'academic school' of Russian language.[261] The ideal of a 'Russian' school, therefore, is not fully expressed by the 'teaching of Russian in Russian' formula, the sheer linguistic aspect of the education process, nor is it exhausted by the number of subjects and their content, but also necessarily includes the institutional order a Russian school contains: timings and workloads, financial independence and institutional status; but, most specifically, the set of norms and codes of behaviour which were traditional for schooling practices that Russian-speaking migrants themselves were exposed to. Moreover, these norms have less to do with the pedagogical models, cognitive frameworks or learning processes and more with the ideas of disciplinary forms, power relationships and subordinate behaviour (Fig. 11).[262]

Therefore, teaching staff of these weekend schools are usually caught between two frames of reference: the necessity to teach bilingual children Russian at any cost; and the re-invoking of a 'proper' school based on their own Soviet experiences. Hence one Russian language teacher's lamentations about the children's reluctance to use Russian during school breaks and her strict directions to them to answer only in 'full sentences' because this was 'not any local school'. Hence another teacher's regret over some of the children's dislike of Russian classes and her

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[260] *This education starting at the age of 4, nursery* [uses in Eng.]*, has put a very unhealthy base – wrong habits, and she* [daughter] *did not study anything properly, but started to take things very loosely. Because our schools are for studying, not for communication. Here they come to school to socialise, especially if it is a primary school. And there is no education involved.*

[261] *Моя-то идея - создать именно академическую школу русского языка. Чтобы мне не было стыдно за то, за проведение уроков, за уровень этих уроков и за результат - самое главное.* (*My own idea is to build a proper academic school of Russian language. So that I do not feel ashamed of it, of teaching classes, of the level of these classes and of the result – which is the most important bit*, 015-ScR-DRL/NCL)

[262] This practice finds its parallels in the way post-Soviet Russian-speaking Israeli migrants conceptualise the idea of '*воспитание*' (upbringing) by highlighting its principals of '*воспитанность*' (breeding, manners) and '*обязанности*' (duties) over language training as such (Zbenovich & Lerner 2013).

assertive lecturing in which she drills them on how to sit and how to raise their hand during lessons. Hence the particularly high regard among teachers for those rare children who regularly travel back to Russia for a period long enough to study there in an ordinary secondary school and who are thus exposed to Russian schooling experiences. The teachers' idea of the school being performed in this abridged version usually prevails over their initial intention to amuse and involve children into admiring the Russian language and culture.
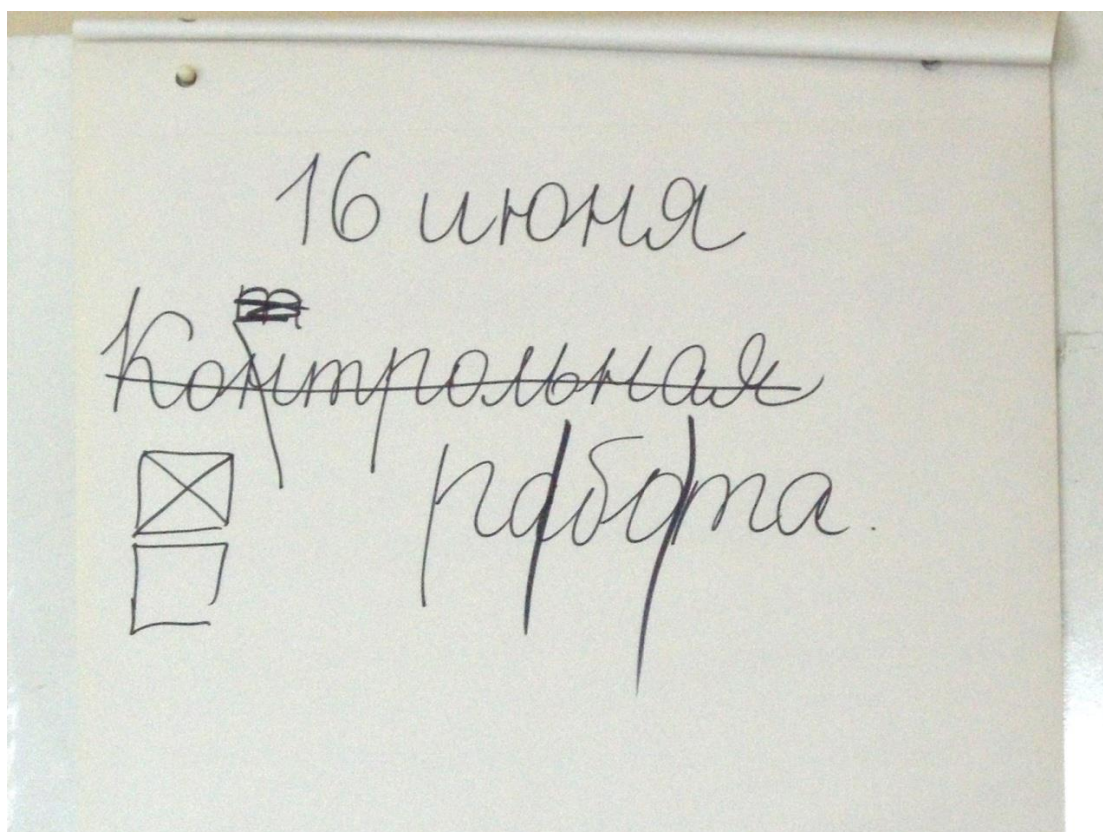
Figure 11. Russian grammar class following traditional rules of Russian-school *урок* ('class'). Russian-language weekend school 'Zaika', White Swan Centre, Killingworth, Newcastle. June 2012. Photo taken by the author.

The only point of negotiating between the two school systems is the way specific school subjects are chosen. School staff compromise between classes of Russian language and literature and a number of arts classes (drama, music, crafts, dancing etc.), which they consider to be a safe balance between the expectations that parents have from a 'Russian school' and extracurricular activities that would be typical for weekend undertakings in the UK schooling context. The incompatibility of these two frameworks might be rather unexpected but dramatic

– for example, a class in crafts may fail because a teacher's instructions to depict 'autumn' and her expectations based on the Russian stereotyped concept of this season met with misunderstanding from children who did not experience the change of seasons so vividly or precisely (for an example of specifically 'Russian' representation of autumn as displayed by another school see Fig. 12). Another example comes from a drama class dedicated to impersonating different animals where the teacher spent most of her time showing the correct 'Russian' way to act as a hare, a bear, or a squirrel.

The Russian language, as the main focus of all the studies in weekend schools, is thus viewed by teaching staff not as a common language of command (a 'Russian school' is not just a school where teaching is led in Russian), or a pragmatic skill to be taught (a 'Russian school' is not just a language course for younger children), but as a complex of different elements enacting particular cultural origins, some of which might be of a non-verbal nature (what the 'Russian autumn' looks like or how a 'Russian bear' should move). This cornerstone of Russian-language schools is most important for granting teachers credibility in educating children:

> *Мы договорились – и в принципе родители пошли нам на встречу, им это нравится – что вместе с русским языком как языковым уроком у нас есть ещё и танцевальные занятия. Немножко песенок - насколько мы это можем, немножко драмы, поскольку это тоже все вместе. Но это тоже очень все хорошо, потому что занятия проходят на русском языке, музыка звучит русская, песенки звучат только тоже русские.*
> (015-ScR-DRL/NCL)[263]

This status of a 'real' Russian school which teaching staff seeks to affirm sometimes exits the close circle of Russian-speaking migrants and influences the ways Russian school administration carries their outer communications – say, with the British local authorities and other migrant groups with related initiatives.

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[263] *We agreed on this – and parents mostly gave it green light, they liked the idea – that in addition to Russian as a language class we would arrange for dance classes. A bit of songs – as far as we can do this, a bit of drama, because it also goes together. But this all is also very good because these classes are also run in Russian, music is Russian, songs are also performed only in Russian language.*

Figure 12. Russian language weekend school '*Для тебя*' ('For you'), children's art exhibition '*Золотая осень*' ('The Golden Autumn') presented in the Oxford Centre, Longbenton, Newcastle. November 2012. Photo taken by the author.

As a minority group's desire to maintain their linguistic and cultural individuality by promoting their heritage language to the second generation, Russian-speaking schools might be subject to municipal acknowledgement and support. The obvious requirement for such collaboration is to master a specific discourse of communicating to authorities on such matters. However, this seems rather problematic for these schools' management in two respects. Firstly, they do not feel they fit the concept of an (ethnic) 'minority' that would need support from the local authorities at all. As one of the directors shares from her personal experience of interaction with the local council:

Нет, они поддерживают, но они поддерживают другие культуры. Скажем так, тех людей, которые приезжают со стран третьего мира. То есть они больше продвигают, развивают их традиции, их культуры. Помогают им деньгами и всем. ... Мы туда не входим. Я так думаю, что они, наверное, считают, что мы и так более прогрессивная народность

или нация, я не знаю, как это сказать. То есть мы не такие вот, как

другие, поэтому мы вполне можем сами обойтись. (020-ScZ-NCL)[264]

While the previous quote explains this framing as the preferred one of the British local authorities, the issue clearly stems from the inability of Russian-language schools to comply with the required linguistic genre and discourse of communication. As the head of another school admits, her interaction with the local council officials was more an example of mutual misunderstanding: in hope for any support from the officials she presented her school as a very successful, rapidly developing endeavour, but received nothing but 'good wishes for further development'. In her afterthoughts she understood that her way of presenting the school lacked at least two parameters: the minority status of the community initiating the project and a greater specificity and explicitness of its requests. What her version of presenting the school had in abundance, instead, is the characteristic manner of self-presentation that a school in Russia might adhere to in its communication with higher authorities, i.e. showing its achievements in the best light while keeping quiet about its most urgent needs or failures. The gap between two stereotypical communication patterns – that of the local council responding to another migrant initiative to support and that of the Russian school head keen to show her enterprise to its best advantage – eventually led to miscommunication.

Superimposing the image of an 'academic' Russian school on real-time communications with other migrant communities is also often misleading. The vision of any Russian school as an important and serious establishment of education (or even, in the Russian tradition, of 'enlightenment', *просвещение*) provides a particular, sometimes distorted interpretation frame for evaluating other, neighbourly initiatives. For example, the management of one of the schools was particularly critical about regular gatherings of another migrant group taken during their own classes in the same community centre because they were 'too loud' 'singing and enjoying themselves' while Russian teachers were trying to 'work', doing their important business of teaching Russian. The other example

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[264] *No, they do support, but they tend to support other cultures. Let's put it that way, people who come from the third world countries. They promote them more, support their traditions, their cultures. They help them with money and everything. … We do not belong to that group. I suppose that they may think that we are a progressive ethnicity or nation already, I don't know how to say that. So we are not quite like the others and thus can live without it, on our own.*

comes from yet another community centre where a Russian school rented a number of rooms and attempted to make their presence most visible by occupying stands with children's drawings or craftwork – the head of this school said it was her particular initiative to show 'their face' in order to prove their significance as compared to other, 'less important' classes of, for example, knitting or handcraft.

Migrants' own ideas of what an educational institution should look and act like ultimately affect the self-presentation modes and communicative patterns used by Russian-language schools much more than the framework of immigrant initiatives expected in the British context. The initial idea of 'transmitting the native language to the next generation' is developed into the goal of 'teaching Russian properly' which, in its turn, requires to establish the 'right' educational settings of a Russian school. Even though this strong connection is mostly present in the scattered interpretations of the school management or, less often, regular staff, rather than in some carefully articulated educational programme, it demonstrates the way language as a code system triggers a broad scope of social expectations and statuses engaged in its maintenance.

7.2.2. Russian language taught in Russian weekend schools: To whom it may concern

Most of the teaching staff interpret their pupils as bilinguals and therefore quite different from their native Russian-speaking parents as well as teachers by virtue of the fact that most of the children were born in the UK and all of them were growing up in a different cultural context to that of the adults. And even if both of their parents are of Russian-speaking origins, their children switch to English as their main means of communication once they enrol in a British school. However, in the opinion of the teaching staff, this idea of 'bilingualism' has to do with a lot more than strictly linguistic skills and language practices. For them, gaining proficiency in Russian while growing up in a foreign-language context also involves developing a wide range of cultural, social and cognitive skills which are different to those that, according to them, are developed in the British schooling system.[265] Therefore, in the view of the teachers, learning Russian at a weekend

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[265] *Мне кажется, что британское - оно такое более узкое, и за рамки которого выходить нельзя. Мы нашим детям предлагаем разные варианты, что если так не получается, можно*

school should not only include language training adjusted to their level of competence and age group, but should also aim for the broader normative process of inculcating the 'right' skills, views and attitudes.[266]

The difference between teaching staff and their pupils is perceived by the former as a gap which cannot be bridged by any methodological attempts due to its 'inherent', intrinsic nature:

> *И очень большая работа проходит у педагогов, потому что надо адаптировать тот русский язык, который мы изучали, который был преподнесен нам в университетах и институтах в России, мы должны это адаптировать на тех детей, которые здесь идут. ... Они приходят без языка, они не знают понятий, понятий, предположим, вот тех, которые впитаны в России с молоком матери. Потому что когда мама рассказывает: 'ой, вот давай мы наденем валеночки, давай мы наденем галошики, шарфик', вот такое. Тут дети снег некоторые не видели...* (015-ScR-DRL/NCL) [267]

In this quote, the mother's role in the process of linguistic education and cultural upbringing is presented through the idea of nurturing a child. However, what is to be 'nurtured with mother's milk' refers to a complex set of ideas,

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так, если так нельзя, то можно так. А они говорят: а нас в школе учили так, и по-другому мы делать не можем. Вот с этим очень сложно справиться. (*To me, the British one is narrower, and you cannot go outside set frames. We suggest different variants for our children, if it doesn't work this way, it may go some other way. And they reply, it is not how we were taught at school, we won't do it any other way. It is difficult to manage this*, 021-ScZ-NCL)

[266] This idea of Russian-language teachers that implies a set of other skills and knowledge embedded in language proficiency provides an example of what A. Wierzbicka calls the 'naive axiology', or 'the ways different speech communities show, in their speech practices, different hierarchies of values' (Wierzbicka 2002: 402, 428).

[267] *And our teachers do this enormous job of adapting the Russian language which we studied, which was our subject in Russian universities and institutions, we need to adapt it for the kids who come to our school here. ... They come without any language at all, they do not know the basic concepts, the ones that are nurtured with mother's milk in Russia. Because when a mother tells, 'oh, let's put these felt boots, let's put our little galoshes, a little scarf', all that. And here some children have never seen snow*... This lack of methodological attempts to deal with bilingual education of children outside of the Russian-speaking environments is not, of course, the only way RSL teachers worldwide view this task (see, e.g. Madden 2008; Protassova & Rodina 2005; Protassova & Rodina 2007). In fact, some of the teachers in the schools I visited were aware of the latest study manuals, but they seemed unconvinced and considered the problem of bilingual education to be 'too complicated', requiring a versatile approach and plenty of fine-tuning.

symbols and meanings understood as inherently comprehensible to any native speaker, but difficult to transmit to a non-native learner in a classroom context.[268]

Since children attending the schools are 'othered' in the way they think ('bilingual', 'British' or 'English' seem almost interchangeable, synonymous with the broader concept of 'the other'), the very attempt to transmit this complex set of inherent Russian-ness might seem unsuccessful from the very beginning. Content wise, there might be substantial gaps in presenting information, e.g. on the history of the Russian state or the plots of important texts, or while presenting the origins of certain culturally specific realia. One of the school matinees, for instance, included a show performed by 'skomorokhi', and when children started rehearsing for the show and asked who these people were, the teacher introduced them simply as 'kinds of clowns', without making any references to the Russian historic or social context. On a more abstract level, teachers may refer to the wider cultural context of Russophone culture quite inconsistently, establishing connotations which are not obvious to children or which require 'intuition' as a strategy for understanding.

There may be two ways in which teachers address the ambiguity and discontinuity of a course they run. They either justify the study of Russian as potentially useful for bilingual children, persuading both children and parents to follow the course with them; or else they give their pupils a passive role in the learning process and resort to simply asking them to memorise and formally reproduce particular structures, rather than understand and employ them in the future. This second strategy slips into 'performing the study of Russian' rather than actually studying or acquiring the language.

To raise children's interest in Russian as well as motivate parents to collaborate with the school, teachers tend to highlight the benefits of fluency in a foreign language in the English context as well as the growing importance of Russian in business, academia or commerce within the region. These explanations are rarely based on the real socioeconomic or cultural situation, especially as it

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[268] This lay interpretation has its parallels in a professional conceptualisation and practical methodologies of teaching Russian to 'heritage speakers', i.e. those who relate to Russian as a 'language of personal relevance' (Kagan & Dillon 2001: 508) and thus 'cannot be viewed either as native speakers of the target language or as foreign language learners, and are best treated as a separate population requiring their own curriculum and materials' (Kagan 2005: 213).

applies to the North-East of England. Instead, teachers attempt to construct a hypothetical future in which a bilingual child with advanced Russian is likely to become a well-integrated citizen. Their translation of this abstraction into real life includes, among others, references to language tests and examinations of different levels, e.g. A-levels or GCSE. Communication with children on this matter requires a lot of negotiation – they argue that time spent in Russian-language schools will save them preparation time for Russian exams in the future.

To involve parents into this strategy of 'bargaining', teachers stress, if not exaggerate, the importance of fostering their children's study of Russian. In the teachers' eyes, parents ought to practise Russian more at home, as a way of extending the work that they do at the weekend schools. They tell parents that this is 'for children's future' (020-ScZ-NCL). Narratives of 'failed parenthood' are central to these explanations of the parents' role in the language-learning process:

> *Потому что я знаю одну семью здесь. То есть они приехали сюда, у них дочка пошла в школу - не знаю, в какой класс, но она школу закончила и поступила в университет. И столкнулась с такой проблемой, что потом приехала маме домой и сказала: 'почему ты меня не научила русскому? Ты сама говоришь по-русски, меня не научила, и вот если бы я знала русский вот в университете, я бы могла что-то там. Какая ты, – говорит, – бессовестная, мама'.* (020-ScZ-NCL)[269]

An entirely different strategy is directed at younger children. To make them more involved in the learning process, teachers in fact usually minimise the children's need to understand what they are studying or why, e. g. instructing them to recite Russian (mostly rhymed) texts, sometimes without even imparting a clear understanding of their meanings. The purpose of this practice is purely demonstrative, and it is also usually used at regular school celebrations attended by the pupils' parents. This performance to convey the children's progress in the domain of Russophonism is designed to convince parents of the effectiveness of classes and to thus legitimate the role of the teachers in the process of cultural

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[269] *Because I know one family here. They came here and their daughter went to school – I don't know which grade, but then she finished the school and entered the university. And she faced a problem after which she came back home to her mom and said, 'Why didn't you teach me any Russian? You speak Russian yourself, but didn't teach me, and if only I had known some Russian at the university level, I could have done something and something. Aren't you ashamed, mom?' – she says.*

upbringing. In this scenario language learning practices are arranged not around children as active learners, but around their parents as a key component of the cultural mechanics of enacting Russian-ness. This orientation on parents has its own effects on the way the educational process is organised and carried out. The initial decision to go to a Russian-language school is usually made by a mother, who finds herself struggling with the linguistic upbringing of her child. Her child's success in language learning becomes a crucial resource for establishing her status as a 'good' and 'caring' parent. Moreover, the decision of whether the child should continue with attending the Russian school remains in the hands of the mother.

What a school provides in return for this parental effort is a series of regular performances carried out in the form of children matinees and staged as a way of accounting for the work done in the course of the year, a display of achievements that the parents are invited to evaluate and appreciate. The academic year of the school is therefore organised in a sequence of stages of preparation for a new performance, the occasion for each of them being a celebration that is considered particularly 'Russian'. The schematic school calendar includes a number of these 'accountable' points: a New Years' celebration, Women's Day in March, Victory Day in May, the end of the school year, the beginning of a new one, 'Autumn Day' usually coinciding with the Teacher's Day in early October.

In fact, schools concentrate the whole educational process around these performances due to the importance both they and parents attach to these events, in the words of one informant:

> *В конце каждого, допустим, ну, четверти, скажем так, они показывают какие-то представления, там, концерты, родители всё это видят, они очень довольны, больше ничего им не надо.* (020-ScZ-NCL)[270]

These events even have a sense of examinations: preparations for such performances may be prioritised over every other class and define the school's curriculum for the coming term. For example, all classes may have similar vocabulary activities dedicated to the upcoming performance's theme, and as the

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[270] *At the end of each term, so to say, they make some performances, like concerts, and parents see all this and are very happy, they don't ask for anything else.*

Figure 13. New Year performance '*Муха-Цокотуха*' ('Buzzy-Wuzzy Fly') & 'Yolka' in Russian-language weekend school 'Zaika', White Swan Centre, Killingworth, North Tyneside. December 2011. Photos taken by the author.

date approaches, many classes might be dismissed in favour of rehearsals of the

show. These performances are held to demonstrate the children's progress – not

just in learning the Russian language but also in understanding their belonging to Russian culture. However, the way Russian language and its cultural context is presented in these performances has little in common with children's real-life experiences in Britain but addresses the ideas of what a Russian celebration should look like to their parents. My first encounter with this mismatch was during a New Year's celebration in one Russian-language school which, apart from other compulsory items on the programme, included a 'yolka for children' [sic] – a mystery to many of them, who had no idea what to do during this bit of the evening (Fig. 13).

To provide further accountability for parents, performances usually include tests and challenges for children which testify to their progress in acquiring the language. The role of the children in this performance is not to entertain or engage the audience, but to persuade the attending parents of the successes of their 'diasporic' parenthood. The most telling example of this activity was the challenge that was set at one of the events where the children had to compile a phrase from a handful of letters that they were given. The right answer, 'Mamin den'' ('Mother's Day'), is an emblematic intersection of references the occasion implied: the linguistic activity was envisaged as the children's gift to their mothers. The test, however, also performed children's biculturalism, which, as already mentioned, the staff at these schools are so keen to develop: the more common Russian celebration of 'Women's Day' was here combined with the UK-style 'Mother's Day' (Fig. 14).

Regular classes and occasional performances also play an important role in developing communication networks among parents who otherwise express little or no interest in establishing any contacts with their compatriots in the region. What comes first as polite interactions while waiting for their children usually evolves further into mutual help around the education of their children, which in the long run builds up strong association ties beyond the domain of their children's linguistic upbringing. Thus, Russian language, while being an initial cause for arranging the schools, provides a reliable filtering procedure – the parents' loyalty towards it and their participation in the learning process objictifies common grounds for further community-building, while shared visions on Russianness help to maintain the primary communication space.
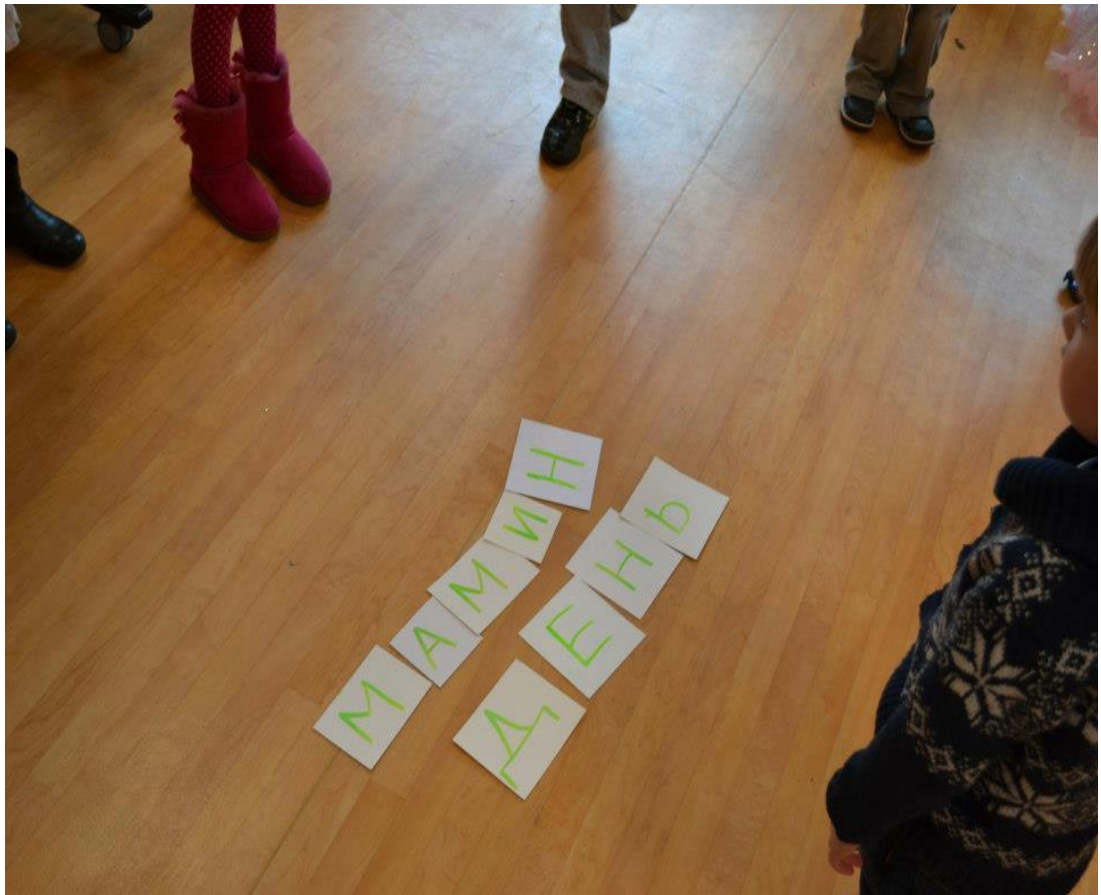
Figure 14. The 'Women's Day' / 'Mother's Day' / '8th of March' celebration at the Russian-language school 'TeremOK', Hummersknott Academy, Darlington. March 2013. Photos taken by I. Stirling and E. Dye.

7.3. 'The USSR in Newcastle': Russian speakers, unite!

Russian-language schools in the region are examples of rather impermanent and shifting community-hubs which change their locations and are usually anchored in a residential area of smaller towns of the North East. A Russian-speaking community in Newcastle is a rather different example of a larger association of post-Soviet migrants in the region. The community once started as a student society of Northumbria University in 2010, and the key reason to base the society there was, according to one of the organisers, that this university gave permission for people from outside of the university to join its student societies and clubs. It soon expanded its membership beyond students and welcomed all Russian-speaking migrants of the region – students of other educational institutions, young professionals, 'Russian wives', and labour migrants from EU countries.[271] However, since the core of the group are still mostly students, the average age of the society's membership is 20-24 and its yearly turnover is quite significant. In a larger scale, the community is quite well-known among Russian-speaking migrants of different backgrounds currently residing in the region, but attracts quite specific groups of younger and more 'flexible' or 'nomadic' migrants, who rarely have families of their own and usually enjoy freelance or short-term employment.

The society's urban character is also influenced by its members' life styles and habits. Their activities include a wide range of leisure forms, informal gatherings on particular occasions (linked both to the academic year and to traditional Russian celebrations), and regular intensive communications online, mostly in the Facebook group of the same name (Fig. 15). It is difficult to give an estimate of the real size of the 'community'. The online group's membership is 488 subscribers (as of 24.07.2015), but the number of attendees of real-life events may vary from just a dozen to 45-60 people. The structure of this community is concentric in shape, with distinct circles of involvement: 1. The core group of 4

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[271] This expansion of its initial boundaries to a wider audience has proved to become a key factor to its survival and development through years, especially as compared to another local students' society of Russian speakers, that of Durham University. With high fluctuation of students, minimal numbers of those settling in the region, and well-developed, though isolated university infrastructure, Durham students' society has not so far made its way from a feeble sporadic initiative to a constant community. The other reason for its underdevelopment is the lack of common grounds for language use – obviously, Russian-speaking students of post-Soviet origins and foreign students of Russian language see its purposes and practices quite differently.

organisers. 2. The close circle of the most active members (around 10-15), who are all familiar with each other. 3. Those who have a stronger interest in only certain areas of community's activities (sports, parties, online discussions, etc.). 4. Those usually present at the most significant real-life gatherings. 5. The outermost circle is composed of those whose presence is minimal and limited to (usually silent) joining of the online group or simple awareness of community activities.

A newcomer would most probably follow the path through these circles gradually, starting with the outer one, and acquainting him- or herself with the group's members, routines and communication patterns along the way. As Ekaterina, 24, recollects, she was a 'silent' (inactive) member of the Facebook group for almost a year, following its posts but feeling shy ('*стеснялась*') to participate either in online discussions or in real-life gatherings since she was not quite aware of community norms and patterns towards different categories of migrants (030-F-24-SSH). When she was backed up by other female migrant who was also curious about getting involved, they attended the nearest gathering together, and latter she made her way towards the group centre, playing an important part in organising events. Acquiring the community's codes involves a gradual process of familiarising oneself with the practices and language of the group and then engaging in its consequent reproduction.

As for the four founders of the group, they are slightly older than the average age, in their mid- to late 20s, have lived in the region for 3-8 years and come from three different former Soviet republics (Latvia, Lithuania and Uzbekistan), with Russian being their main language of communication. They are also fluent in English and report different levels of proficiency in languages of their countries of origins. They are usually responsible for organising most of the general events for the whole community as well as representing it in any external communications. The name for this community, 'The United Student Society of Russian speakers in Newcastle' ('The USSR in Newcastle') was proposed by one of them and was accepted as 'something everybody liked' (027-M-24-NCL). With the further development of the society this title has received a more symbolic than literal meaning: firstly, the organisation is no longer exclusively for students, and secondly, given that a large number of members were born after 1991, the allusion to the USSR hardly corresponds to any factual commonality of origins.

Figure 15. A logo created for the Facebook page of 'The USSR in Newcastle' by one of its active members (used from June 2014 till the present moment, as of 24.07.2015), its earlier variation (used in March-June 2014) and an alternative variant suggested by one of the members but never used as an 'official' logo of the group. Facebook group 'The USSR in Newcastle'.

What this Soviet allusion stands for, however, is a quite specific understanding of Russophonism which, in its turn, defines the shared identity of the community's members. All practices of the community involve this 'Russianness' as a prerequisite – the celebration of the New Year, Victory Day, Women's Day, or the 1st of September 'Back to School' Day are labelled as characteristically 'Russian', this term entailing a complex and ambiguous mixture of meanings. Most of them also require all attendees to be prepared, including bringing special costumes or props, and engaging in short performances, whereas the organising team deals with all other necessary arrangements. Thus, the first stage of every gathering presents an example of enactment of the celebration and is usually followed by less demanding and more relaxed partying. Venues are usually specially hired for the occasion, with special arrangements from the community organisers, but if time runs out before the gathering is over, members move to other places, such as a pub or a bar where they join Newcastle locals. This schematic three-staged structure of performing-communicating-integrating tends to dominate every gathering.

My argument regarding this community concerns both its structure and purpose. This group of Russian speakers presents a fusion of a 'speech community' and a 'community of practice' whose main idea is in the conventionalisation of their shared identities through shared experiences over time. Since 'a community of practice that is central to many of its participants' identity construction is an important locus for the setting down of joint history, allowing for the complex construction of linguistic styles' (Eckert 2009: 11), the idea of combining the notions of a 'speech community' and a 'community of practice' seems particularly appropriate in this case.

7.3.1. 'The USSR in Newcastle' as a community of practice: Nostalgia or imagination?

Following Selznick's (1994) idea of historicity as one of the key factors for community-building in general and Eckert's (2009) claim about a community of practice being crucial to 'settling down the joint history' of identities, the shared past of the 'USSR of Newcastle' as a speech-practice community needs to be understood quite broadly. As mentioned, due to the diversity of previous

experiences, substantial differences in ages and countries of origins, as well as levels of proficiency in Russian, the commonality of the past in its factual sense seems almost impossible. Nor is it possible in the more recent, migrant or re-migrant past, primarily because of high levels of mobility inherent to most of its short-term participants. The means by which this shared past is restored, however, is the sequence of collective acts of nostalgic 'remembering' of 'Soviet' cultural mythologies, which are embodied in ritualised communal practices, commonly accepted symbols and patterns of in-group communication.[272] I will focus on each of these areas of community-building practices of the 'USSR' group below.

Personal nostalgic recollections combined with imaginative accounts on what 'Soviet' life could have been like construct the shared interpretations of the past as a chronotope of common belonging. Regular gatherings are organised to reinforce this sense of belonging by reproducing most well-known ritualised practices of celebration (New Year or Maslenitsa), commemoration (Victory Day), or self-identification (Russian parties). Since most of them require costumes or other, sometimes minimal ways of 'impersonating' a common idea of belonging, the idea of an outlined performance with a set of characters and a speech sequence prepared by the core members is usually realised during the first part of these gatherings and it is more obvious for those occasions which are well-developed in the general Russophone culture. For example, New Year celebrations usually request fancy dress or at least masks or some kind of party clothes, while the scenario is usually copied from those of (post-)Soviet 'iolkas'.

If the occasion is less straightforward, it may provide polysemantic ambiguities of the core concepts involved. For example, 'Russian parties' require some accessories that symbolise 'the country of origin' – national flags, ethnic clothes or accessories, or items with something written in an FSU language on them. Most attempts to comply with the requirement result in simply drawing one's country's flag on clothes or body, which turns a 'Russian' party into an international 'congress' of representatives of FSU countries, usually with a Soviet flag on the wall as an overarching emblem of the gathering (Fig. 16).

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[272] My use of the term nostalgia is quite broad here, with primary reference to S. Boym's interpretation of nostalgia as a rebellion against the orderly time and a desire to turn history into collective mythology (Boym 2001).

Figure 16. One of the 'Russian parties', an offline get-together for the 'USSR in Newcastle' community. November 2012. Photo by A. Leonenko.

The celebration of Victory Day in May, furthermore, which in the Russian tradition is linked to World War II battles, involves the participation of local veterans (most of whom were in the British navy and took part in Arctic campaigns) and thus broadens the image of the 'Fatherland's Victory Day' to a Russo-British joint celebration and commemoration practice (Fig. 17).

The presence of the Soviet flag (Fig. 16, 17), as much as the other related symbols or symbolic actions does not hold any particular meaning aside from confirming very broadly the common 'historic' background of the attendees. None of them would refer to any particular gathering as representing their own, current or previous way of marking the occasion. However, most would agree that such a celebration is exemplary of the tradition of a vaguely distant past of their 'common origins'. The appeal to Soviet times, however, in itself does not carry with it detailed historical associations, and its purpose is primarily to legitimise Russian as a common language for enacting and communicating this 'imagined' common past. Nor does the symbolic appeal to the USSR refer to any particular territory

Figure 17. The 9th of May 'Victory Day' celebration organised by the 'USSR in Newcastle' community. (1) May 5 2012, Gateshead, photo taken by E. Mazurs. (2) May 11 2013, Gateshead, photo taken by B. Dougamatov.

since its open boundaries are ready to engage any Russian-speaking newcomer.

One of the celebrations of the New Year started with each participant introducing

themselves to the rest by saying their name, city of origin and, preferably, current occupation. By the end of this introduction one of the organisers toasted to 'Russian language uniting all these territories together' even though some of the attendees were not from the FSU countries but from places as diverse and distant from the former territory of the USSR as Bulgaria, Serbia or the UK.

Reflecting on the commonality of this past becomes more complicated if there is a need to present the community to others, especially within the reference frame of 'cultural diversity'. The presentation of the Russian-speaking student society at a Diversity day in Newcastle in March, 2013, for instance, proved this disconnection of historical eras and discontinuity of geographical space, when the most stereotyped symbols of Russian culture (a samovar, the cord of *sushki*, a folklore kerchief and a handmade doll) shared the presentational space with the same Soviet flag and the USSR map, as well as a row of mini-flags of different post-Soviet countries (Fig. 18).

Figure 18. 'Russian stand' at the Newcastle University Diversity Day. March 2013. Photo taken by E.Burakova.

Therefore, the sense of belonging to a Russian-speaking background goes beyond its linguistic realm and includes a set of cultural practices attributed by

members themselves to particular geographical origins and the historic period of the Soviets and includes essentially new ways to celebrate major occasions, new communicative patterns of socialising in oral and written (mostly online) speech. Significantly, though, these practices have little in common with either individual habits of the members or previous communal practices they were used to in their native cultures. What they have instead is a 'community' which is constituted by these specific practices and requires periodic enactment to prove its existence. Learning its way of expression or, moreover, creating such expression as an individual entails extra effort which does not come naturally, since it requires consistent strategic involvement in its maintenance.

This condition results in the reluctance of most of the members of this community to initiate any new projects or to support the ongoing endeavours in a more active and imaginative way, leading consequently, to the establishment of only fairly weak association ties among them. As most of the enthusiasts argue, the moderate reaction of the 'audience' to any of their undertakings is explained by a 'consumerist touch' ('*потребительской нотой*', 028-M-26-NCL). They predominantly experience their belonging to the community as 'natural' and therefore effortless, whereas to the core members the idea of maintaining the community is inevitably linked with the idea of 'common effort', which is distributed unevenly and becomes mostly their concern. This misunderstanding is interpreted in two perspectives facing each other: for the organisers, or others who are closer to the core of the community, the problem lies in the newcomers or those from periphery circles not having lived long enough in the new cultural context and not having as yet 'matured' in their migrant statuses. In the words of one of the organisers, *не все ещё поняли, где они, что и как* (*'not everyone has understood where they are, how things are here'*, 028-F-26-NCL). For the newcomers themselves, however, what is being proposed is in fact a genuinely new, yet-to-be-acquired style of communication, which gives the allure of exclusivity, prompting feelings of 'shyness' and 'feeling inappropriate'. As Margarita, 28, admits: '*сначала было стрёмно'* (047-F-28-DRL).

On the other hand, this concentric and weakly associated structure presents the lack of hierarchies within the community based on the rights to claim Soviet legacies and therefore provides an extensive area for cultural reinterpretations or imaginary associations. For example, a man of non-Russian origins may claim his

personal attachment to Russia's military forces, or a woman with non-native Russian language can perform a Russian folk song as one of 'our grandmothers'. Therefore, this community is not one built on the shared historical past or similar personal experiences, but one realising itself in its migrant present and invoking its commonality by performing shared belonging to the ephemeral chronotope of the 'imagined' origins and reinterpreting the presents of its members by creating a routine of communal practices. The language for this communication within the community is also re-captured through new, migrant lenses.

7.3.2. The language of 'the USSR' – towards the transculturalism of speech practices

Just as the temporal and spatial coordinates of this imaginary 'common' past and territory are quite optional, so is the normativity of language used by the participants of this 'community'. This looseness of standards is explained by a wide range of levels of command of Russian among the participants, as well as the strong influence of online communication patterns which are more flexible in the sense of correctness and normativity of the oral or written speech of the communicants. For example, the requirement of using Cyrillic script which can be crucial for many other online communication spaces (such as earlier chats or other groups in social networks – both Russian-based and international) is not articulated in the group's self-description webpage. Indeed, the only request on behalf of the organisers is to use Russian as 'the official language of this forum', with no further definitions or regulations of communication flows. Since the virtual platform offers more flexibility in access and interaction, it also influences the way other scripts (mostly Latin used in English or in Russian), code systems (including emoticons) and languages (with occasional code-switches between Russian and English presented in any of the two scripts) are included in the communication.

Being quite characteristic of general Russian-language communication on the Internet,[273] these trends, however, are less liable to any critical reaction due to the loose normative regime of the community as such. The idea of maintaining a

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[273] On the issue of current interference of Internet modes of communication with standardised versions of language see, e.g. Krongauz 2013. On wider processes of cultural heterogeneity, see the collected articles in Scmidt et al. 2006a.

standardised version is also quite unpopular and the idiosyncrasies or interlanguages of particular speakers are not commented on in any way. This variable and relaxed linguistic behaviour of active online group members blurs their linguistic identities – native speakers of Russian, second-language learners or even foreign language students, the only common ground of their interconnections being communication in this virtual vernacular of Russian.

As for real-time communication within the community, however, these patterns are less obvious and are expressed at the level of language choice, not the level of in-language interference. All general communication, especially the 'official' one of organisers towards other members, is always held in Russian, the language of the first, performative stage of gatherings is often excessively standardised or clichéd reproducing the most common schemata of official discourses. The more 'serious' an occasion is, the more prolonged and officialised these introductions are, the peak of all being the Victory Day in May. However, later on it becomes more relaxed and occasional switches to any other language (mostly, those of FSU countries) take place in closer circles during the interacting stages of gatherings. Therefore, Russian acts here, firstly, as a communicative ground which brings together different smaller-scale migrant groups, and, secondly, as a space of compromise which can serve as a 'buffer zone' for further interactions.

The Russian used within the community is a particular idiom of transcultural interaction of people with diverse linguistic backgrounds and linguistic skills who are keen, nevertheless, to maintain their unity as speakers of the same language specifically because of their migrant status. This idiom is tolerant of other scripts and accents, foreign vocabularies (e.g. English or FSU languages) and dialect words, non-standard grammar, punctuation or spelling, as well as CMC norms of online communication, which are partly adopted even in the offline interactions of community members (Fig. 19).

This transitory nature of language practices within the community is also influenced by wider English-speaking communication settings which migrants become gradually adjusted to. As students form a major part of the community and many of them perform actively in other, international initiatives of their universities or peer groups, their extensive communication beyond this

community and the Russian-speaking area in general exposes them to a versatile version of 'globalised English' which, apart from its particularities in linguistic uses, entails a set of language attitudes and communication patterns.
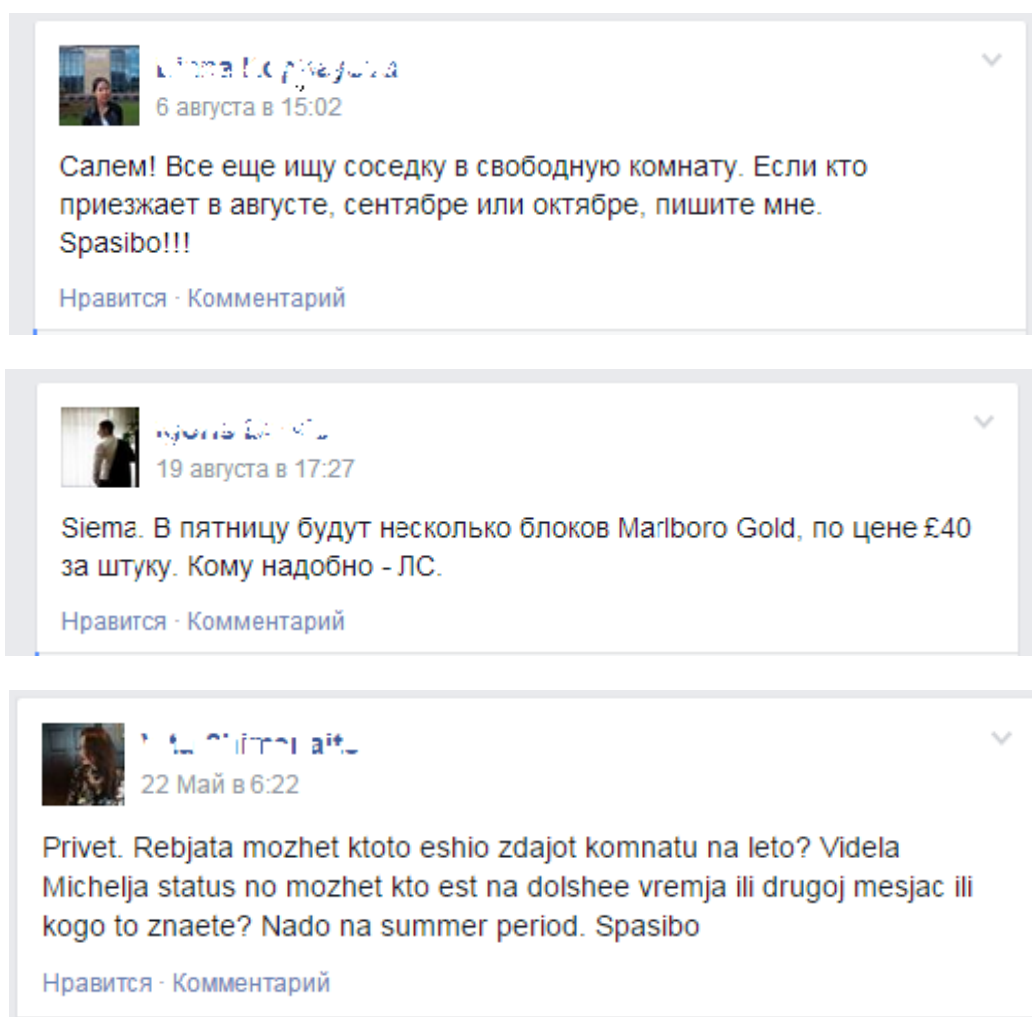
Figure 19. Posts written in 'online Russian'. Facebook group 'The USSR in Newcastle', posts of 06.08.2014, 19.08.2014, 22.05.2015.

Through growing competence in this idiom, their attitudes towards Russian become substantially influenced by the uses of and attitudes towards English within a multicultural, often non-native English-speaking environment. This 'translation' of newly acquired linguistic experience to more common premises of Russian involves the transition of language's image and functionality as a means of transcultural communication – Russian becomes an 'English' for this particular community. Since language practices in the community involve speakers with diverse backgrounds in Russian, and hence with different attitudes and uses, it becomes duplicated in real-life communications as well. For example, there are few

cases of normative correction among migrants, with speakers instead acknowledging regional differences in pronunciation, lexis or idiomatic usage and displaying interest in varieties of Russian. Thus, no obvious claims are made within the Russian-speaking community to the legacy or norms of Russian language (say, by citizens of Russia when communicating with citizens of other FSU countries, or by the more educated in relation to the less educated). This provides a micro-scale counterexample to the Russian government's claim to Russophone legacy as part of its using language as a tool of 'soft power' (see Ryazanova-Clarke 2006).

In this respect, the historically rooted and highly ideological formula of Russian being the 'Language of friendship and cooperation of the peoples of the USSR' (Bilinsky 1981) seems to undergo significant re-interpretations, almost regaining its actuality in the new migrant circumstances. As a convenient lingua franca and buffer zone (both products of 'cooperation', yet hardly of 'friendship') for intercultural communications of post-Soviet migrants, Russian becomes a more localised, appropriated, 'closer to home' version of 'global English' which is used to train their general interactive skills and reshape metalinguistic outlooks for transnational communication elsewhere.

My main argument that these two types of communities of Russian speakers are particular examples of 'communities of speech practices' finds its counterexample in other Russian-speaking initiatives for groupings which do not, however, produce new interpretational frameworks of the 'Russian language'. One of them, Russian-language Orthodox services in the region, seems to resemble the gatherings of a 'community' brought together by shared feelings and common aims. However, these services simply provide one of the possible 'codes' to fulfil religious needs of otherwise quite diverse audiences (Fig. 20).

Russian-speaking services are just one of the various linguistic and cultural scripts to maintain a wider (and by no means language-specific) Orthodox identity, the choice of a church and service being a matter of personal convenience, as expressed by one of the informants:

Есть греческая [церковь]*, и туда ходят русскоязычные. Есть русская,*
туда ходят вообще все. А я вот хожу в ту, в которую начал ходить, и
решил так и продолжать. (019-M-16-SPM)[274]

Similar to religious identities, material culture preferences also fail to build a strong distinct community around, for example, a Russian shop or restaurant, which would produce its own way of communication among its membership or beyond it. These initiatives for maintaining migrants' identities of post-Soviet origins do not bring any new social meanings towards their practices connected to the consumption and re-production of 'Russian-ness'.

Figure 20. An online ad about services available at the Parish of St George, Newcastle's Orthodox Church. Source: http://www.russianorthodoxnewcastle.com/services/ (last access 09 July 2015).

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[274] *There is a Greek* [church], *and some Russian speakers go there. There is a Russian one, and everyone goes to that one. And I keep going to the one which I have started attending, I have decided to continue with going there.*

In contrast, speech practices of the Russian-speaking community tend to adjust their previously formed metalinguistic attitudes and language images to a new cultural environment of an English-speaking but international and variously proficient society which most of the members of this community are exposed to daily. Creating an imagined commonality of belonging to a Russophone culture does not entail any claims on hierarchy within the community based on linguistic proficiency or cultural background, its concentric structure enables it to practice this performance of transcultural communication for further socialisation in the new environment. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the term 'community of practice' provides 'a framework of definitions within which to examine the ways in which becoming a member of a community interacts with the process of gaining control of the discourse appropriate to it' (Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999: 175). By adopting this perspective to define community practices of the 'USSR in Newcastle', the way of mastering the knowledge and skills required by a newly acquired migrant status becomes more explicit in its translingual dimension.

In a larger analytical perspective, the concept of 'communities of speech practices' expands the research focus on diversity of Russian-speaking migrant associations into the new sociolinguistic realm. While providing an opposition to Kopnina's conceptualisation of subcommunitites (Kopnina 2005), it seeks to avoid generational or Russian-culture-oriented approach of studying the mechanisms of 'enacting Russian culture away from mainland' (those of Pechurina 2010) by putting Russian into a multilinguistic scope of a migrant present. It also shifts the focus from the 'theatrical enactment' of community for others, through which this community is symbolically constructed for its members as well (Byford 2014), towards a regularised and repertoire-oriented speech practices of community which help to objectify its necessity to its (potential) members.

The two examples of communities discussed in this chapter follow the general division between two variants of Russian analysed in Chapter 3. Russian-1, as a highly standardised, norm-oriented and culturally embedded idiom of the post-Soviet repertoire, is central to community building in Russian-language weekend schools with their prioritising of language normativity, a particular educational context of transmitting language to migrants' children, and the broad cultural connotations of what a 'Russian-speaking identity' should be. Russian-2, in contrast, is a highly flexible, variable and accessible variant of language, which is

reinforced by online and offline communications that the Russian-speaking 'student' community performs.

7.4. Conclusions

Although the Russian language provides a basis for community-building, the ways to use it and to conceptualise its use may differ according to the attitudes and expectations that community members share about it. Therefore, these cases of migrants' associations on the basis of a common language are not simply 'language communities' of minority groups in exile from their main habitat. They present particular 'speech communities' which, based on the outlines of their migrant experiences, construct new systems of indexicality on the Russian language (different to the ones they were used to) and establish new contacts between their local practices as migrants and their belonging to broader, extra-regional categories of Russian speakers.

Russian-language weekend schools are built around one of the core needs Russian-speaking migrants have – that of transferring Russian language and culture to the next generation. However straightforward it may sound, this process entails a variety of social and cultural factors related to the idea of language education and upbringing. In the institutional way, the Russian language is strongly associated with Russian traditions of schooling with its normativity, discipline and subordinance which, to the extent possible (and inevitably imperfectly), is reproduced in the new status of a migrant cultural project.

The image of Russian translated to children also addresses their Russian-speaking parents in a greater way than the children themselves. The whole process of linguistic education is built around the accountability of a school's efforts in inculcating 'Russianness' to children, which takes forms of regular performances that serve as de facto 'reports' on children's progress, both in their linguistic studies (which may be quite superfluous) and in demonstrating loyalty towards the culture of their parents (which may itself be 'staged' in a manner of amateur performances). In a wider community sense this active position of schools in establishing the accountable interpretation of Russianness sets common grounds for further interaction and integration of Russian-speaking migrants of the region.

Russian-speaking associations of post-Soviet migrants can also take the form of 'communities of practice' which create cultural meanings of their shared identities through these communication practices. Gathered on the basis of Russophonism, they use the latter as a cultural paradigm for re-interpreting their pre-migrant past, migrant present and further trajectories. Regular references to the Soviet legacies present a mixture of nostalgic experiences of the real past with an imagined chronotope of common belonging based on discourses of (relative) linguistic unity. Almost ritualistic re-production of cultural forms of this 'co-created' past and their imagined belonging to it is altered by the migrants' transcultural present and by the interference of virtual realms of interaction. The latter also influences the way Russophonism is re-interpreted – from the Soviet-era image of the 'language of friendship and cooperation of the peoples' it transforms into yet another idiom of their transcultural experiences in the English-speaking environment, adopting many of the functions and images English as the main language of international communication provides.

Despite commonalities of linguistic and cultural baggage, migrant trajectories or current statuses, the ways Russian-speaking migrants form their speech communities, therefore, may vary considerably and may rely on the way they implement their Russian-speaking-ness in the new host environment and conceptualise it according to their life trajectories. In the North-East of England, these directions exemplify two different ways the language of a group is understood and performed in this group's repertoire. The first one is more characteristic of those who plan to stay in the host country while preserving their ties with their country of origin and it presents a gradual process of translating the language into a cultural heritage of a minority group. The other one, adopted by those who are less committed to the current place of residence and view their further trajectories as more diverse but less certain, presents an attempt of constructing an ambiguous flexible commonality for transit migrations and transcultural communications and provides Russian with an efficient shift from the language of a common past towards the highly flexible and mobile idiom of newly formed migrant experiences.

CODA: THE CHAPTER THAT COULD HAVE BEEN

C1. Language creativity and translingual playfulness

During the initial stages of my PhD project, I planned to dedicate one of chapters to the way Russian-speaking migrants in the UK explore their bilingual potential through creative activities that involve a number of available linguistic resources. My intention was to discern their main strategies and to understand the rationale for these creative techniques. The core concept of 'linguistic ludicity' dominated my preliminary considerations about the purpose and functions of these possible innovations, and I planned to devote part of my fieldwork to capturing ad hoc demonstrations of such bilingual playfulness.

In general, the ludic potential of language is associated either with active, explorative ways of learning a new idiom – be that the first language a child acquires through cognition and reproduction, or a foreign one which is often mastered with comparison to a native language,[275] or a specific vernacular or dialect developed through some social activity, most often mediated through flexible online environments.[276] As many anthropologists argue, the playful drive of human interactions may also lead to creating a new 'language' which is to become acknowledged as a distinctive local vernacular (for example, Australian English, as discussed by Sussex 2004) or a creolised idiom (such as local creative inventions of bilingual Hong Kong residents, addressed in Luk 2013). The situation of constant bilingualism tends to create a specific context that is particularly conducive to developing ludic forms of linguistic creativity (Kellman 2000).

Apparently, multilingualism as a state of constant operative polyphony has been proven to reinforce the creative urge of human interactions. As A. Kharkhurin (2012) argues, multilingualism, even in its most imbalanced forms, where one of the languages is prevailing over other(s), influences a number of cognitive

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[275] The potential of this playfulness is the subject of analysis of applied linguistics. See Liang 2012 for her research of linguistic transformations within online role-playing activities in foreign language study; also Belz & Reinhardt 2004 for the investigations of individual developments of ludic German in online project collaborations.

[276] One example would be so-called 'E-Japanese', an informal language for CMC, which, due to a combination of a number of scripts, provides opportunities to play with standard orthographic conventions to create a desired 'ludic' effect (Gotlieb 2010).

processes that in turn 'lead to an increase in their creative performance' (Kharkhurin 2012: xiii). A multilingual environment provides an opportunity for bilingual minds to creatively explore its limits. The reasons for this proactive exploration may include a wish for self-expression, communication or identification, but the environment itself seems not to be enough to automatically switch on this 'ludic' regime for multilingual speakers. Indeed, despite my initial assumptions, in my fieldwork I have, in fact, found very little evidence of any 'ludic' initiatives among the group under study, at least in the way that would explicitly operate both sets of linguistic resources – English and Russian. This apparent absence of 'language games' among the migrants I encountered is likely to be due to a number of factors of which three seem most relevant to the situation in the region: in-group communication patterns; professional expertise in languages; and personal linguistic backgrounds.

Due to the relatively low numbers and territorial dispersion of these migrants, an evident lack of strong network ties or even occasional spontaneous contacts in public spaces has resulted in an absence of developed in-group communication patterns or norms which would prompt the drive for playful interactions and inventive language practices based on everyday bilingualism. The exception to this rule is to be found in computer-mediated communication (CMC), which has, because of its hybrid discursive nature, been analysed as a form of 'silent orality' (e.g. Soffer 2010). In the case of Russian-speaking migrants worldwide, CMC creates a space for combining two perspectives of their 'old' and 'new' country in expressing their emerging cultural identities (e.g. Fialkova & Yelenevskaya 2005).

Another way to explore the potentials of multilingual conditions is the professional training and expertise in languages, communication or creative writing. Indeed, even in a monolingual environment, ludic experiments are more likely to be found in repertoires of professionals – writers, journalists, linguists etc. – rather than 'regular' native speakers. The predisposition of bilingual minds towards creating new ways of expressions has been extensively researched in the field of professional literature created by migrants themselves (e.g. Besemeres 2002; de Coutivron 2003; Suleiman 1998; Wanner 2011 or Zinik 2011 on Russian-speaking migrant contemporary writers specifically), thus engaging both personal narratives of migration, dislocation or exile and a professionalised use of linguistic

resources at hand in their capacity as writers. Reflections on 'bilingual games and agency, translingual imaginary, hybridity, "in-betweenness", nomadism, or "mettissage"' (de Courtivron 2003: 1) by writers themselves or academia worldwide (e.g. Suleiman 1996) explore fundamental issues of identity, creativity and belonging expressed through linguistic and discursive means.

However, experimental linguistic practices arguably involve not only professionals, but also lay migrants who are exposed to the same experiences of migration, dislocation and multilingualism. In fact, in many ways they might be more likely to appear in the context of the truncation of linguistic resources rather than their over-development.[277] But rare linguistic games among Russian-speaking migrants that I encountered are not to be explained only by low numbers, irregular contacts or general unpreparedness for creative experiments. One of the cornerstones for maintaining linguistic practices is the set of attitudes towards language(s) and normative linguistic behaviour by bilingual speakers themselves.[278]

Multilingual environments usually provide a productive field for any bilingual mind, even with lower levels of linguistic training or no professional training in creative language practices. Therefore, the lack of anticipated creative activities might be influenced by imposed attitudes towards norms of linguistic behaviour. Indeed, as argued in Chapter 3, Russian speakers' admiration of highly standardised, 'classical', literary norm of Russian dominates over any urge to explore bilingual limits. The sense of belonging to the 'Russian-speaking continuum' through shared norms and practices leaves little space for bilingual manoeuvres on the margins. Rare counterexamples illustrate the point providing a scarce contrast to wider creative passivity and inertness.

Another obvious limitation of the study of these ludic initiatives is of a methodological nature and connected to the difficulties of capturing these games 'in action'. Being mostly a marginal practice of everyday communications, they are

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[277] As I. De Courtivron suggests, 'one can be inhabited by bilingualism even if one does not speak two languages fluently but writes from the absence of what should have been' (de Courtivron 2003: 7).

[278] In this respect Sussex's distinction between linguistic 'creativity' as potential of morphological innovations and 'ludicity' as inherent state of 'deep-rooted playfulness' with language(s) illustrates the lack of recognition most acutely (Sussex 2004).

rarely reflected upon by migrants themselves and thus are not mentioned in their narrative as worthy of note (nor are they likely to be a frequent subject of metalinguistic reflexivity of bilingual speakers). They tend to occupy specific areas of self-presentation and are therefore rarely employed by informants within the genre of an ethnographic interview (especially when it is conducted in Russian with rare switching to other languages) or during recurrent participant observation sessions. Being mostly marginalised in everyday speech practices, these ludic experiments also tend to exist in non-mainstream, ambivalent spheres of communication which are less exposed to standardisation or normative expectations – online or cell-text interactions, casual fleeting half-phrases or even self-speaking.

This epilogue provides a micro-perspective on these scattered individual examples of linguistic creativity and outlines possible dimensions of bilingual creative activities of Russian-speaking migrants in the UK (and, to some extent, other host countries).[279] I focus on three levels of linguistic creativity and reflexive speech performances:

● The primary level of word-formation and usage at which linguistic resources are merged to create new 'polyphonic' structural items (which I refer to as 'stereowords');

● Language games at group level which involve practices of self-referencing and linguistic 'anchoring' of migrant experiences, employing clichéd speech and stereotypes to convey the poetics and pragmatics of bilingual experiments;

● 'Naive autoethnography' as a personalised quasi-literary practice and narrativisation of its development in accordance with migrant life trajectories.

Given that the number of required examples from the North East is rather low, I have also included data which come from other regions of the UK and have been discovered primarily through virtual ethnography on the Internet.

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[279] Evidently, I do not view this absence of envisaged practices as 'abnormal' or 'undesirable'. My intention is to explore the possible limits of bilingual creative expansion in order to contextualise the mainstream phenomena and ideologies.

C2. On 'stereowords': Bilingual creativity in miniature

The term 'linguistic creativity' implies not only a cognitive predisposition and ability to actively discover translingual terrains; it is also influenced by the speakers' willingness to push the boundaries of the common from the standardised version of 'language' they adhere to towards its less conventional margins. The most common practices of Russian-speaking migrants lie within the domain of bilingual inference (partially covered by the tag of 'Runglish') and includes a blend of two languages characteristic of many bilingual contexts and abundantly explored by linguists (e.g. Gregor 2003). Pragmatically, this phenomenon represents the process of establishing domains of languages, with occasional borrowings and semantic parallels caused by constant bilingualism, which develops with little reflexivity towards the creative potential of linguistic convergence. Whatever the attitude towards this process and the models of linguistic behaviour to interact with it, most informants see it as almost inevitable or 'natural' for their bilingual habitat.

My focus, however, is on a rather rare, yet distinctive, practice of merging linguistic resources for the sake of exploring the creative potential that this provides. The examples discussed below come from a very basic level of word formation. The process of what M. Epstein (2011) calls 'lexicopoeia', the art of creating new words (or, in his terms, 'lexicopoems'), usually deals with emerging lacunae of meaning which require introducing new terms to refer to them in a language. However, put in the context of multiple languages, the creative process might engage more than one idiom, becoming an act of translingual, and, arguably, also transcultural creativity. Following Epstein's argument of 'predicting' new words which are to fill in the lacunae new experience provides, I propose to transform his own 'pre-dicted' word of 'stereotext', a 'multilingual writing using multiple languages to convey the multidimensionality of thought and imagery by emphasizing the variety of associative connections' (2011: 98), and explore the concept of 'stereoword' – a single structural unit which combines at least two distinctive linguistic codes (i.e. two different languages) to form the ultimate meaning of the term.[280]

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[280] Their difference from bi-code messages of, say, Russian-English signs or other visual attractors which may use both scripts as closely as within one single lexical unit (for discussion see, e.g.

My argument here is that, apart from bilingualism as such, this practice also involves a specific, transcultural interpretation of wider social and cultural connotations of the linguistic components used.[281] The 'stereowords' that I will discuss below express the way Russian-speaking migrants seek to describe the new environment through linguistic means they possess, while placing their own migrant experience in the process of creating these words.[282] The following examples come from one Internet blog-account held by a Russian-speaking migrant residing in Edinburgh at the time when the blog was accessed. Though the primary language of all entries is Russian, the author occasionally switches to English, mostly in quotes or referring to local 'voices'.

Poshлость (n.), poshлый (adj.)

A blend of two languages, this word has already found its semantic niche in a wider British-based Russian-speaking migrant vocabulary. Being difficult to identify in oral speech and highly unconventional for formal writing, its main area of use is online communication (blog entries, discussion boards, forums, etc.). It stems from the Russian word 'пошлый' (vulgar, common), which Vladimir Nabokov described as 'utterly Russian' and thus 'untranslatable' with a single English word. This dilemma, however, put into the context of bilingualism, finds a new turn by adopting its 'utterly English' homophone, the adjective 'posh'. This juxtaposition of two scripts provides further development to its connotative components through this transliteration. The Oxford Dictionary explains the adjective 'posh' in its specific British usage as 'typical of or belonging to the upper class';[283] thus the new adjective 'poshлый' refers to the idea of a British 'upper

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Angermeyer 2005) lies primarily in the compulsory multiplication of meanings and connotations both languages provide, based on the word pun which makes these 'stereowords' possible in the first place.

[281] I also seek to take the 'ludic lexical inventiveness', as discussed, for example, by Bagasheva & Stamenov (2013) in their study of monolingual morphological creativity, to the new domain of expressing cultural (or rather – transcultural) experience through means of lexical playfulness.

[282] Similar examples come from recent 'translingual' writing of Russian-speaking professional authors in other countries, e.g. Michael Idov, a NYC-based writer in his debut novel 'Ground Up' (2009) tends to create new words by combining Russian and English words to convey the irony of migrant entrepreneurship. For example: *The Doghouse didn't have a kitchen per se (...). Even calling it a kitchenette would be pushing it. A non-kitchen. A* kitchen*nyet.* (Idov 2009: 57)

[283] Available from: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/posh?q=posh. (Accessed 23/07/2015)

class' as viewed and understood by a Russian-speaking migrant who finds particular aspects of the cultural environment responding to their understanding of the term and attributes it to them. Examples of usage include:

> *Poshлая (c) сеть супермаркетов Waitrose решила запустить в Твиттере кампанию.* (Старая зануда, 21.09.2012)[284]

> *Из неопробованных poshлых (c) видов 'спорта' остался еще bowling...* (Старая зануда, 29.09.2013)[285]

> *Не учитывать можно, если, скажем, размеры дома или сада или транспортная обеспеченность или близость к чему-то является приоритетом по сравнению с poshлостью района.* (Дневник воскресной мамы-утки, 23.01.2013)[286]

Whereas the word has also been used in other contexts (for example, by Russian speakers in Russia, in the identical, mixed script), the difference in meanings of the 'mainland' Russian and Russian-speaking migrant contexts is influenced by the difference of cultural connotations. The adjective 'posh' correlates with the distinctive idea of 'glamour' in the Russian discourse (or, more precisely, its Russified version, *гламур*, which in its turn also presents a modified meaning of the English original).[287] The word 'poshлый' in the 'mainland' Russian context is less socially oriented and looser in its usage than the distinctively class-related 'poshлый' of British Russian speakers, which reveals the stereotypical image of the 'UK's upper class' they might develop over time.

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[284] *Poshlaia supermarket chain Waitrose has decided to run a Twitter campaign*. (Staraia Zanuda, 21.09.2012). Available from: http://froken-bock.livejournal.com/1571369.html. (Accessed 23/07/2015)

[285] *There is bowling as one of poshlyi kinds of 'sports' left untried.* (Staraia Zanuda, 29.09.2013). Available from: http://froken-bock.livejournal.com/1802759.html. (Accessed 23/07/2015).

[286] *One can ignore that if, for example, the size of the house or garden or transport availability or closeness to something are prioritised over the poshlost' of the area*. (Dnevnik voskresnoi mamy-utki, 23.01.2013). Available from: http://callis.livejournal.com/793582.html. (Accessed 23/07/2015)

[287] Cultural analysis of what this terms implies in modern Russian discourse is presented by Goscilo & Strukov (2010), who claim that the developing 'glamour' culture of Russia in the 2000s is 'a visible index not only of increased affluence but also of state allegiance to capital and its need to produce cultural symbols' (2010: 1).

Усчавствовать (v.)

This is another example of a 'stereoword', but one that is in fact a personal idiosyncrasy (still awaiting, perhaps, to be picked up by other users). Its embeddedness in migrant transcultural experiences nonetheless puts it in the same group as the previous one. The verb 'усчавствовать' is formed on the basis of the Russian verb 'участвовать' (to take part, to participate) whose downscale or colloquial pronunciation wrongly puts another 'v' after the vowel in its radical (making it *учавствовать). This 'mispronunciation' might sometimes be even spelt in this incorrect way, which makes the word a commonplace in signalling the low literacy level of those who misspell it. In the bilingual context this problematic linguistic zone provides a potential lacuna for incorporating the informal British derogatory word 'chav' which refers to 'a young lower-class person typified by brash and loutish behaviour and the wearing of (real or imitation) designer clothes'.[288] Located in the middle of the Russian verb, the British slang transforms its meaning to 'taking part in an activity of a low rank' and ascribes it quite specifically to a certain (lower) social strata, as in the following example:

> *Решила первый раз поусчавствовать в игре 'boxing day sales'.* (Старая зануда, 26.12.2012)[289]

The newly-developed word is highlighted by its link to a particular practice which is presented as an 'untranslatable' cultural experience inherent to the migrant's new environment. Through double-anchoring the practice in two linguistic realms (and thus drawing the subjective parallel between the two groups – British chavs and semiliterate Russian speakers) this new experience is interpreted in this transcultural perspective.

The two translingual words discussed above are obviously not the only examples of verbal creativity Russian-speaking migrants express.[290] Moreover,

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[288] Available from: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/chav?q=chav. (Accessed 23/07/2015)

[289] *I decided to take part at the game called 'boxing day sales' for the first time.* (Staraia zanuda, 26.12.2012). Available from: http://froken-bock.livejournal.com/1628313.html. (Accessed 23/07/2015)

[290] Other examples might include word-plays based on homophony of English and Russian words which provides additional layers of meaning (e.g. 'trendy-brandy' which uses the English lexemes of 'trendy' and 'brand', both referring to fashion and adapted to a Russian colloquial expression of 'тренди-бренди(-балалайка)' coming from a children's rhyme and meaning 'gibberish'). The

other linguistic levels, such as syntax or grammar, also provide a potential area for further explorations.[291] However, the fact that both of these examples refer to some extent to migrants' considerations over the characteristics of British class as perceived through the migrants' own experiences puts them in the position of 'the others' who are, on the one hand, well-informed and culturally literate, yet, on the other, marginalised, and not subjectively belonging to any particular class in the British system.

However, whereas their transcultural status puts them in this constant position of 'othering' themselves from both their mainland language community and the host community of their new environment,[292] this 'outsider status involving multiple identities' can develop into a 'precious resource' for creativity, 'especially in an environment that validates "multiculturalism" or "hybridity" in whatever guise' (Wanner 2011: 8). While A. Wanner discusses the role of 'the outsider' assumed by professional migrant writers, my argument is that this 'outsider' perspective can be easily expanded to the broader community of Russian speakers abroad. Indeed, if they ever find themselves struggling to find the word to describe the particular bit of social reality that they face in their migrant everyday life, one of the options that they always have is to create a word of their own.

C3. 'I am Russian and I cannot keep calm': Labelling belonging in language games

For a particular group to realise its boundaries, the issue of its language is one of the central ones. The 'group language' in this respect does not necessarily imply

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bilingual proximity may also be based on similar sounding, but antonymous terms, like in 'truly-не вру-ли' (by Tania, 31 in personal communication) where the 'ли' (whether, if) put to the end of Russian 'не вру', 'I am not lying' to rhyme it to the English 'truly' questions the credibility of the whole expression and gives it a self-consciously ironic twist.

[291] To illustrate the point, the use of the definite article 'the' in Russian texts in the meaning of 'that of its kind, the most typical one for local settings' has recently been introduced in blog entries and comments. See, for example: *The китайская девочка прошлых лет, получив всего одну награду, очень обиделась. Аборигены восприняли как должное. Куда им против superior race...* (Старая зануда, 13.06.2014) (*The* [uses Eng.] *Chinese girl of earlier years got really offended by receiving just a single award. The aborigens took it for granted. How can they compete with the superior race* [uses Eng.]... (Staraia zanuda, 13.06.2014). Available from: http://froken-bock.livejournal.com/1940109.html. Accessed 23/07/2015.

[292] As M. Epstein argues, 'transculture overcomes the isolation of symbolic systems and value determinations and broadens the field of "supra-cultural" creativity' (Epstein 2009: 330).

only using this or that pre-existing linguistic system for in-group communication (e.g. Russian-speaking migrants choosing Russian as their dominant medium) but also entails the matter of language norms and patterns of behaviour. A minority group operating within a larger language continuum would work out their own set of rules to run their language practices. The most famous example of such linguistic subculture is the 'Olbanian' ('olbanskii') language of active Russian Internet users in the early 2000s (Berdicevskis & Zvereva 2014; Krongauz 2013). In some respects language standards and norms are established on the basis, or at least with accordance to, usage frequencies by native speakers. Therefore, the question of frequency of use becomes significant in setting the boundaries of larger language communities. From the perspective of language recognition, this community creates a frequency continuum which has a unique, hardly reproducible usage as one of its poles and a clichéd expression which is so widespread and over-used that its meaning has almost vanished.

Put in the context of bilingualism and, therefore, two different systems of language standards and frequencies, migrants experience this linguistic incongruity as having potential for language games. My focus in the analysis of in-group playful experiments of Russian-speaking migrants is based on these margins created by frequent uses: from almost unintelligible messages which are to be deciphered by 'connoisseurs' only to widely-used clichéd formulas which are reinterpreted with new meanings. However different the linguistic means of exploring the margins might be, the idea of re-interpreting the rules of the language in a playful manner defines the overall strategy of these bilingual experiments.

One such marginal area concentrates around the symmetries and analogies between Russian and English as the two language systems that Russian-speaking migrants use on a daily basis. The fact that these analogies are not evident to local native speakers sets off the language game of disguise. A simple solution is to use the Latin alphabet for transmitting messages to other Russian speakers in unusual contexts. One of the examples that come from my fieldwork in the North-East of England is a personalised UK car number plate which a migrant used as a canvass for presenting her identity and national belonging. She specially purchased a number that contained the initial letters of her home town as well as the international telephone code and the initial letters of her home country.

Undecipherable by English-speaking locals, this message is being successfully 'cracked' by other Russian-speaking migrants of the region and interpreted in several ways: as a manifestation of her loyalty to her place of origin; as a signal of common linguistic and cultural background; as a potential invitation for further contact on the basis of this shared 'code'. This example being one way of exploiting the semantic margins of standard message structure of a car plate to its owner's advantage (many ways of self-presentation have proved to be successful and thus popular among other car-owners, whatever linguistic background they have), it illustrates the position of a marginal linguistic space as potentially productive for playful manifestations of one's identity and belonging.

Another area for potential exploitation is set by clichéd phrases which are recognised by native speakers of each of the languages almost unquestionably, but from a non-native or bilingual perspective might contain areas of ambiguous meanings which could be played upon in the context of migrant communication. One of these puns was delivered by a livejournal user in an online discussion of the range and nature of Russian-speaking migrancy in the UK and London in particular. This discussion was engaging for most discussants, and the formula '*кому на Руси жить хорошо, тот живет в Лондоне*' ('*the one who lives well in Rus' lives in London'*)[293] was called upon as a particularly successful example of playing with both Russian clichés and stereotypes of Russian migrancy in London. Based on the title of N. Nekrasov's classical poem '*Кому на Руси жить хорошо*' (*Who Lives Well in Russia*), and thus interpreting the 'Russian question' through mid-19th-century means, this phrase has been widely used in Russian public discourse ever since. It was extended into a joke line much later, in the early 2000s, and was aimed at Russian exile oligarchs who had moved to London. But within a different context and social environment, performed by a 'common' Russian-speaking migrant in the context of a heated debate, this phrase shifted its connotation from internal ironical references to particular political figures (say, R. Abramovich or B. Berezovsky) towards a much broader migrant group. This act highlighted the double identity of the group: on the one hand, its embeddedness in Russophone culture (with 19th-century literature as its highlight within the framework of what I have called 'Russian-1') and, on the other, its stereotypical

[293] Zapiski emigrant (inostrannogo agenta), 08.02.2013. Available from: http://moscowlondon.livejournal.com/628976.html. (Accessed 23/07/2015)

misrepresentation by Russian and British media as consisting principally of oligarchs and the politically involved (Hollingsword 2009).

The other area of exploring clichés of the language is offered by the English-speaking environment. Apart from ludic uses of paralinguistic markers such as accent or intonation, Russian-speaking migrants tend to adjust traditional British phrases to the needs of their self-presentation. For example, one of the most widespread examples, the phrase 'Keep calm and carry on' in its characteristic visual layout becomes reworked into 'I am Russian and I cannot keep calm' in the same graphical design. This same phrase has been adopted as a representation of other ethnic or national identities as well (e.g. 'Italian', 'Turkish' or 'Romanian'), showing how language games become commodified in these cross-cultural representations. As this sign is put on many merchandise items, some migrants find it an appropriate vehicle for the manifestation of their identity of 'Russian migrants'. An example of a real-life context where this manifestation becomes especially 'playful' is officialised communication at the state borders which is centred across legal statuses, checked via formalised and emotionless interaction. When one of my informants bought herself a passport cover with this line, she aimed to bring her multilingual identity, as well as an ironic commentary on the clichéd language of authority, into the official, highly formal and standardised, context of migrant border-crossing.

The on-going exploration of these two extremes of language normative usage helps to playfully express the marginal position of Russian-speaking migrancy in both English-speaking Britain-based linguistic discourse and Russian language online communication.

C4. The book yet to be written: On narratives of migrant experiences

Z. Zinik (2011) in his discussion of emigration as a 'literary process' argues that, apparently, no novel written in Russian outside of Russia should be referred to as 'emigrant' prose just because of its origins, nor should the length of migrant experience be considered as making this writing 'emigrant'. In fact, even a piece written in English and not obviously related to the author's migrant experiences may be considered a better candidate for the category of 'emigrant prose'. To illustrate his point, Zinik refers to Nabokov's *Lolita*; a more up-to-date example

may include Mikhail Idov's *Ground Up* (2009, translated by the author into Russian as *Kofemolka*, published in 2010).[294] Leaving aside the refinements of literary criticism, which are not the focus of my research, I would like to treat the interaction of migrant experiences and creative writing from a different angle: rather than deciding on whether a text belongs to 'emigration literature' or not, I am interested in looking at the ambivalence of migrant identifications which prompt individuals towards expressing their changing identities through a creative writing process.

In this respect my analysis is not focused on literary pieces as such, especially those authored by professional writers (recent examples of which have been published in the UK as well).[295] It is mostly because in case of professional writing, the process of translating one's work is in part similar to any other translation of working experience and finding one's voice within a foreign-language professional field while reaching out to new audiences.[296] I also exclude from my analysis various examples of so-called 'naive ethnography' and other genres of unprofessional migrant writing. In many ways this genre is quite broad and may include forms of 'journalistic' accounts of current everyday experiences as if reported back to former compatriots (Batler 2011; Zabotkina 2010), epistolary writing, which follows the classical style of 'journey journals' and finds its authentic voice in intimately addressing an imaginary recipient 'back home' (Vakhtin 2011b), or essays on a broad range of issues performed from the viewpoint of a (post-)Soviet emigrant who, despite many years spent abroad, is still engaged in dialogue with their home culture (Zinik 2008; 2010). Whatever the exact form is, this genre is oriented to a particular readership, real, potential or imagined by the author, which determines the style and register of writing itself.

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[294] In his introduction to the Russian translation of the novel, Idov draws a parallel between self-translation and plastic surgery that would be inevitably required to re-shape an author's identity and to customise the outline of the text to another linguistic reality (Idov 2010).

[295] For a satirical representation of 'East-European' migration in some recent popular fiction see M. Lewycka's *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* (2005). For a detailed overview of Russian-speaking prose authors, literary critics and poets currently residing in the UK, see Chuprinin 2008.

[296] This sector of literature, usually labelled as 'migrant writing' and addressing other migrants and native readers, is considered an integral part of a national literature of a hosting country. For a discussion of places and functions of migrant literature as an integral component of national literatures in the 20th century see King et al. 1995. For a discussion of translingual identities of migrant writers in exile see Englund & Olsson 2013.

The main aim of this writing, even though non-fictional in its essence, would be to create a comprehensible representation of a host culture and its peculiarities to migrants' eyes.

My intention here, however, is to focus on the very process through which migrant experiences are turned into creative writing and this drives my attention not towards realised, completed literary practices, but to narrativisations of their prospective possibility – personal descriptions of 'imagined' writing, and texts that are yet to be written. The focus of this analysis is the interconnection of identity, mobility and creativity which are presented and explained in the form of naive autoethnography – both as writing about the self in migrant transition and as life trajectory performed through a literary project. In its initial phase, it is neither addressed to a particular relevant readership, nor does it search for a niche in the professional sphere of creative writing, but explores issues of personhood, agency and transformation in situ.

The example that is central to my discussion here is the project of a novel which one of my informants, Evgenii, 24, presented in his interview as his response to the constant negotiation of cultural, linguistic and professional identities in which he was involved in his everyday life. His idea for a literary experiment is different from autobiographical writing as such, but is close to what is known in anthropology as autoethnographical writing.[297] Migrancy in this case becomes a necessary strategy of inspiring and nourishing a creative process which is based on the heterogeneity of author's identities that he feels he needs to be systematised and formed into a narrative of his life experiences:

> *Многие-многие-многие люди пытались и до меня это сделать, но*
> *конечной целью своей собственной жизни я вижу написание романа.*
> *Собственно об этом все мои записи и есть, то есть я создаю образы,*
> *идеи, распределяю их, о чем я там хочу поговорить, но он уже в*
> *трехтомник превратился. Я ещё ни одного слова не написал из текста,*
> *но я даю себе двадцать, а то и тридцать лет на то, чтобы это*
> *сделать. Потому что я ориентируюсь на классику типа Умберто Эко*

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[297] In her book on the autoethnographical method in anthropology, itself written as an autoethnography, Carolyn Ellis argues that this method requires systematic sociological introspection and constant emotional recall to understand the personal experiences the ethnographer lives through, to explore a 'way of life' (2004).

"Маятник Фуко" или Джеймс Джойс "Улисс". То есть мне надо очень много знать для того, чтобы это сделать, и именно для этого я езжу по странам. И, собственно, я планирую лет через десять, если получится, если у меня хватит профессионализма, переключиться на область литературную в какой-то степени. (048-M-24-DHM)[298]

Presented in the form of a life-time journey, his own migration trajectory is conceptualised by Evgenii as a way of steady intellectual maturing and professional advancement. His reference to Joyce's *Ulysses* as his literary guide puts himself in an ambiguous position: he is an author recreating the Odyssean myth in his writing while also being a traveller determined to realise the cultural myth of a journey as his life project. I. Sandomirskaia (2001), referring to the 'journey myth' as one of the key metaphors of European culture, argues that it has been crucial to understanding home, nation and belonging, as well as gender. The Odyssean journey through the world, based on an active search for profound knowledge before returning home, has been culturally ascribed to masculine self-identification (which by the same token defines its feminine counterpart in terms of home-bound immobility embodied by Odysseus' faithful wife Penelope).[299]

In fact, metaphorical representations of contemporary migration as an Odyssey through culturally diverse spaces have been widely adopted by the media as well as by academia.[300] L. Arcimavičienė's (2008) cross-cultural study of

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[298] *Many, many, many people before me tried to do the same, but I see writing a novel as a final purpose of my life. All my notes are mostly about that, I create images and ideas, distribute them according to what I want to talk about, but it has grown into a three-volume piece already. I have not written a single word from the final text yet but I am giving myself twenty, or even thirty years to do that. Because I orient my work towards the classics, like Umberto Eco's* Foucault's Pendulum *or James Joyce's* Ulysses. *That means that I need to know a lot to do that, and that is the main reason for my travelling across countries now. And my plan is to switch to the literary area in ten years or so, if I happen to manage that, if I have enough professional skills for it.*

[299] It is not surprising therefore that the migrant who frames his own journey in Odyssean terms is male. This gendered opposition of 'home' and 'journey' might be particular important to the Russian-speaking culture where the concepts of home, land and nation are obviously feminised. In fact, K. Sarsenov (2004) conceptualises contemporary Russian women's migrant writing as the constant 'outwitting' of the vestiges of the cultural myth of migration as an 'Odyssey of masculinity'.

[300] For instance, the term of Odyssean refugees, as contrasted to Rubicon refugees by D. Joly (2002), refers to the 'refugees who nurtured a collective project in the land of origin and took it with them in the land of exile' (2002: 3) has little in common with the life/literary project of Evgenii, but draws an obvious parallel with the group of Russian-speaking 'professional protesters' – contemporary political refugees who continue their oppositional activities in the ongoing dialogue with Russian-state authorities (Kliuchnikova 2013).

metaphorical language on migration in British and Lithuanian online media shows that comparisons of contemporary migration to an adventure in the manner of the Odyssey are much less common in both languages than comparisons with the challenge for survival in an alien environment faced by Robinson Crusoe. Arcimavičienė also explores how the metaphor captures the way migrant agency is presented in the media of both the UK, as the host country, and Lithuania, as the sending one; both countries lean towards depersonalised representations of migration as displaced human flows.

By contrast, in personal narratives of mobility, such as that told by Evgenii, the focus shifts from the trajectory or the environment towards the process of self-identification, which is presented as both the purpose of the journey and an integral part of its progression. Evgenii's idea of migration as a way of gaining a deeper understanding of himself is hardly characteristic of many other migrants in the region. However, what it articulates is an imaginary picture of the process and the circumstances of multiple, and sometimes contrasting identities he finds and expresses in his everyday life. For him, as for some of other migrants, the idea of cosmopolitanism, on the one hand, and of belonging to a distinctive cultural heritage, on the other, seems unproblematic. At first, he states:

> *Когда я первоначально формировал свой план путешествия по миру, у меня в голове была такая картинка. Вот если инопланетянин прилетит на планету, он посмотрит, там, на моих друзей и скажет: а, ну эти ребята русские. Посмотрит там на англичан, скажет: а эти ребята из Англии. Посмотрит на меня и скажет: а вот этот человек с планеты Земля. У меня была такая идея интернационализации, конечно.* (048-M-24-DHM)[301]

But further on he also stresses his attachment to the Russophone culture which has become evident for him only 'through contrast', in the context of other, host cultures:

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[301] *When I formulated my initial plan of travelling around the world, I had the following picture in my head. If an alien comes to our planet, he will look at, like, my friends and say: ah, these guys are Russian. He will look at the English and say: and these guys are from England. Then he will look at me and say: and this man is from the Earth. I had this idea of internalisation, apparently.*

Я русским себя чувствую здесь больше, чем я себя чувствовал в России в этом смысле точно. ... Теперь я понимаю, что я русский, да. Более того, я очень это ценю. Я очень уважаю страну, конечно, в которой я вырос, и считаю, что мне очень повезло в силу того, что вот она на стыке. Она на стыке, и духовная жизнь там доведена до предела по сравнению со странами... пожалуй, во всем мире. Но мне сложно, конечно, так глобально утверждать. Но вот критическая концентрация там очень высока, там очень высока. (048-M-24-DHM)[302]

For Evgenii, the negotiation of these two contrasting sides of his identity becomes a two-fold prerequisite of his literary attempts: being 'international' becomes instrumental to the gathering of new material for his reflections and provides the desired grand scale for literary generalisations; belonging to the Russophone culture, on the other hand, provides him with a specific tool of analytical thinking while also serving as an indicator of his emotional development.

While the interplay of cosmopolitanism and Russophonism structures the arena of his prospective writing, other identities also find their respective niches in his kaleidoscopic self:

Я не англичанин. Хотя когда я был в Москве, я ходил все время в плаще, в шляпе, с зонтиком, если нужно, и меня многие в Москве называли англичанином. И я себя в определенной степени чувствую англичанином из-за вот этой чопорности и манерности. Но... С тем же успехом я чувствую себя - у меня была кличка среди знакомых - "Чехов", по тем же примерно причинам. Я даже сижу иногда так же, как он. (048-M-24-DHM)[303]

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[302] *I definitely feel much more Russian here than I used to feel back in Russia in this sense. ... Now I do understand that I am Russian, yes. Moreover, I have started to appreciate it a lot. Of course, I respect the country which I grew up in, and consider myself lucky that it is situated at the intersection of cultures. It is cross-cultural and the spiritual life there is brought to its extreme as compared to... well, actually all countries in the world. But it is difficult for me to make such global judgements. But this critical concentration is very high there, extremely high*.

[303] *I am not an English man. However, when I used to live in Moscow, I would wear a long raincoat, a hat, carry my umbrella, when necessary, and many Muscovites would call me an Englishman. And I do feel like an Englishman in a way due to my primness and mannerism. But... I am almost as comfortable with it as with feeling my connections to – I had this nickname among my friends – Chekhov, because of similar reasons. I sometimes even sit the way he did*.

His image of an 'Englishman in Moscow' described in its juxtaposition with his reported resemblance to 'Chekhov' finds a curious historical parallel in the personal writings of Evgenii Zamiatin who, while serving as a professional engineer in the UK in 1916-17 (with occasional visits to Newcastle), was caught in the middle of discovering his literary identity. While praised by some critics for his attention to the Russian language, he was also largely discredited as being too 'English' in his style. The complexity of identities interwoven in Zamiatin's literary self was best described by Aleksandr Blok, who, meeting him in 1918, noted that Zamiatin was 'a Muscovite Englishman' (cit. Kiurtis 2013). However, the overall Odyssean experience of Zamiatin made a dramatic turn – after his short return to post-Revolutionary Russia in the early 1920s he was exiled and spent the rest of his life away from Russia.[304]

Without by any means implying any parallels with Evgenii's 'literary' project, the case of Zamiatin's 'Englishness' in Soviet Moscow provides a vivid example of how a composite identity is elaborated through life experiences, performed in developing creative writing and assessed from different standpoints. For Evgenii, his ideology of identity is centred on the possibility of belonging to various contexts simultaneously, if only declared or wished for. The urge to become more 'internationally grounded' is not only his strategy to cope with expected or experienced diversity of various settings, but a necessary tool of self-presentation as an active actor, an author of created identities and characters:

> *Но определенное желание интернационализироваться сохраняется, и это, скажем так, видно в контингенте персонажей в моем романе. Потому что - ну, там случайным образом получается так, что двое из Норвегии, но остальные все по одному из, из разных стран. И двое из России - все-таки двое из России! То есть если меня складывать, то я: двое из России и по одному из тех стран, в которых я буду бывать. ... В*

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[304] The contradiction of author's dialoguing identities and international experiences to the political unambiguity of the Soviet state was best described in a verdict-like review by L.Trotsky in 1922: 'В конце концов, автор сам островной человек, и при том с маленького островка, куда он эмигрировал из нынешней России. И пишет ли Замятин о русских в Лондоне, или об англичанах в Петрограде, сам он остается несомненным внутренним эмигрантом'.('After all, the author himself is an island man, a man from a small island which he migrated to from present-day Russia. And whether Zamiatin writes about Russians in London or Englishmen in Petrograd, he himself will undoubtedly remain an insider emigrant', L.Trotsky, *Vneoktiabr'skaia literatura*, cited in Kiurtis 2013).

общем получается пока очень хорошо. И если это будет продолжаться дальше в том же духе, то, может быть, и дети смогут это перенять, эту атмосферу перекати-поля определенного в мире. Может быть, мы тогда и дальше будем продолжать ездить какое-то время, а может быть, мы вообще вернемся в Россию. (048-M-24-DHM)[305]

His idea of 'belonging a bit more' to the Russian context than to any other one contradicts the open-ended idea of his life trajectory as well as of migration as an intentional life strategy. His 'Ulyssean' self-exploration against various cultural backgrounds influences the conceptual drift of the characters in his novel and proposed turns of its plot but does not lead up to a narrated homecoming. Where it finds its home zone, however, is the linguistic domain of his imagined novel. Being a Russian speaker with a good level of English and even elementary skills in Chinese, Evgenii develops the idea of multilingualism as the necessary polyphony of voices through which the main characters express their individual cultural identities and which the author explores as various sides of his personhood:

Но есть мечта. Написать каждый кусочек на своем языке. Это вряд ли достижимо. [Person 2: *И не понятно, как это читать!*] *Нет, с тем, чтобы потом отдать профессиональным переводчикам, которые переведут. Или сам я могу перевести на все языки, если нужно. ... В романе три части. И первая рассказывает об 11 персонажах из разных мест, это 11 разных глав, 11 маленьких рассказов. Они пересекаются, но это не важно. И вот они, скорее всего, их - поскольку это создание образа персонажей, и для меня в том числе, их я буду пытаться писать на том языке, из которого происходит персонаж. По крайней мере, для себя.* (048-M-24-DHM)[306]

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[305] *But the certain wish for internationalisation is still present, and this is obvious from the range of characters in my novel. Because, just by chance, there are two of them from Norway, but each of the others represents a single country. But two are from Russia – there are still two of them! So if you put my personality together, there will be: two from Russia and one from each country where I will spend time. ... So everything looks good so far. And if it is going to go the same way, then my kids will also be able to take over this atmosphere of a certain rolling stone in the world. Maybe we will then continue travelling for a while, another option is that we will return to Russia all together.*

[306] *But I have a dream. I want to write each part in its own language. It is hardly achievable.* [Person 2: And it is not clear how to read it!] *No, the point is to give it to professional translators later on. Or I can do that job myself, translating to all these languages, if required. ... There are three parts in the novel. And the first one tells a story of 11 characters from different places, these are 11 different*

This interrelation of the author's self and his migrant identities through the composition of characters in the designed novel makes him call it 'schizophrenic', but obviously vital for his understanding of creating his own life narrative/path:

Я же езжу-то по странам, из которых роман, а 11 персонажей - это по-своему, у меня такая шизофрения в определенной степени действует, это фактически 11 граней моего понимания жизни. То есть пишу о себе (laughing). (048-M-24-DHM)[307]

What dominates his strategy of exploring these multiple identities through fictional characters and their storylines is the issue of various language(s) and his ability as an author to acquire the necessary voices in each one of them. The dilemma of 'writing for oneself' (and, in some ways, 'writing the self') vs. 'producing for the audience', which is hardly an issue in other aspects of the project, becomes crucial at this point. The perspective on language performance as a normative practice, which should be widely comprehensible, influences the very core of personal authorship. This is the only sphere where the agency of creative process can be compromised and external, 'professional' expertise might be required:

Это будет коряво, скорее всего, как вот я сейчас могу на английском в принципе написать, но это далеко от литературного языка. ... Может быть, придется обратиться за помощью к профессиональным лингвистам, которые помогут, с которыми мы будем это обсуждать. Вообще, может быть, будет коллектив авторов. Такое, в принципе, возможно. Это, конечно, слабость, и надо сделать все самому. (048-M-24-DHM)[308]

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chapters, 11 short stories. They intersect but it is not important. And here they are, most likely, because it is the creation of characteristic images, and I will try to write each piece using the language the character comes from. At least, in a draft for my own use.

[307] *I travel around the countries which my novel consists of, and those 11 characters are in a way, it is my schizophrenia in action, these are principally 11 sides of my understanding of life. That is I am writing about myself.* (laughing)

[308] *It is most likely to be clumsy, the way I can write in English now, but it is so far from the literary language norm. ... Maybe I will resort to professional linguists who may help me, with whom I can discuss all this. Actually, there might be a group of authors. It is likely, in general. It is a weakness though, and I have to do everything myself.*

Thus, despite everything, Evgenii seems concerned that his personalised idiosyncratic language might be considered 'clumsy' by 'authoritative' linguists. So much so that he appears ready to forego the authorship of this most personal story of his life and place it in the hands of an 'authoritative' authorial collective.

The entanglement of an unwritten novel and the author's own imagined multiple trajectories is presented as a two-way process. The twists and turns of the plot are projected on his life experiences and even tend to influence his choices (e.g. the inclusion of Norwegian characters makes it obvious to him that he will need to live in Norway for a while). At the same time his observations on the cultures he explores in his migrant journey become gradually included in the narrative design (e.g. his current experiences of life in the UK are to be included despite the initial plan). But what dominates the narrative about this life/writing project is the issue of language as a means of self-expression. As Evgenii explains, the composite structure of the first part where various identities are expressed through the polyphony of voices develops into two more general parts which, apparently, interact with his core selfhood:

> *Но! Есть ещё две другие части, и они общие. И на каком языке будут эти две части - ответ прост: не знаю. Пока не знаю. Это колоссальнейшая проблема для меня... Может быть, это будет английский, после там какой-нибудь Австралии, где как бы... Или, может быть, это будет русский, и я вернусь в Россию. У меня, на самом деле, роман и жизнь очень сильно связаны. (048-M-24-DHM)[309]*

Here the issue of language choice, which is presented as more crucial than the issue of plot or narrative style, re-interprets the Odyssey motif of an adventurous exile on his way back home. The final destination for this multi-sited and eventful wondering is, in fact, the return to the only possible language to express the wonderer's selfhood, namely his 'native' language, the return to which becomes congruent with his coming back home, back to his 'native' land, after a long linguistic journey through all manner of other languages.

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[309] *But! There are two more parts which are general. And the answer to the question about the language for these two parts is simple – I don't know. I don't know yet. It is an enormous problem for me... It might be English, after the time spent in Australia or wherever. Or this may be in Russian, and I will return to Russia. The link between the novel and my life is very strong, actually.*

C5. Conclusions

Multilingualism as a prevalent setting for migrant lives provides much opportunity for creative initiatives. The ease with which the multilingual space can be explored by bilingual speakers, though, significantly depends on the set of language attitudes and patterns of linguistic behaviour which migrants share. In more general terms, linguistic creativity in a multilingual context exemplifies possible strategies of cultural integration or hybridisation, the confrontation of new emerging forms of cultural identities in migrant groups and surviving remnants of domineering cultural ideologies of their pre-migrant past.

The priority of standardised versions, the rigidness of linguistic behaviour and inactivity in the exploration of language margins make this creative zone unpopulated and unpopular. Rare examples of playfulness and creative drive stress the vast potential of its resources which could be explored on many levels of ludic experimenting: lexical inventiveness, language games in group definitions, and entire life narratives as vehicles for new imaginary selves entangled with new adopted identities. All of these form an arena for expressing transcultural experiences and presenting oneself, but they also remain strongly limited and structured by the prior linguistic behaviour patterns and language attitudes shaping the metalinguistic realities of migrants' lives.

Experimenting with the two languages and their semantic systems is carried out in the form of casual 'inventions' of new, double-coded, words whose meanings are dependent on both languages and refer to very particular areas of experience available to migrants exclusively. The outline of developing a 'secret language' for the group is further developed at the level of group representations when individual manifestations of belonging and collective creative re-workings of stereotypes re-establish the boundaries of this migrant group. The way to explore current intersections of multilingualism, cultural heterogeneity, and creative agency in one's life trajectory as an unfolding narrative of migrant self is presented as an unending and multidimensional discovery of realms for self-expression where the literary, the imaginary and the creative are merged with the everyday, the social and the practical.

The way individual Russian speakers establish their relationship with the host and home cultures and define their own place at the intersection of both can

vary considerably but tends to explore the limits of hybridisation rather modestly. The demarcation line between two the cultural realms is reproduced through the distinction between two varieties of Russian that migrants become proficient in. Proactive explorations of the 'peripheral spaces' are the only exclusion to that framework but they are usually attributed a low value as 'bastardisations' of cultures.

The classical strand of post-colonial studies which explores matters of cultural hybridisation argues that this process ascribes new meanings to old, colonial forms of cultural hegemony and reinvents localised post-colonial cultural forms (Bhabha 1994). This approach, however, focuses on the relationship between a colonising society and a colonised regional culture and their co-dependent development after the colonisation era. The case of Russian-speaking migrants adds to the discussion of hybridity as a post-colonial phenomenon as it shifts its focus to the intersection of two former 'colonising' cultures, which proves even more challenging to transfer into a new hybridised, transcultural mode. Rigid post-colonial language attitudes of Russian speakers, therefore, prevent them from creating a new, translocal and transcultural space for their migrant identities to be performed and their migrant communities to develop. Instead, their metalinguistic reflections prompt them to separate their cultural experiences and adopt multiple linguistic guises which hardly ever merge.

CONCLUSION

The way migrants use Russian in a foreign-language context is influenced by their ideas about its general image, sociocultural connotations and, most importantly, the connections they establish with the language as its native or near native speakers. All of these are, in turn, the result of language ideologies which Russian speakers were exposed to in the Soviet and post-Soviet cultural spaces and which they experienced most vividly within the educational context. In a foreign-language environment, however, these ideas become re-considered and re-interpreted as an integral part of personal life narratives and as loci of identity presentation.

The most obvious of these transformations includes a re-evaluation of personal recollected experiences in learning foreign languages in their native-language environment and their current appropriateness to a new foreign-language context. What they come to acknowledge in the first instance is that the way language was presented in their school or university context is rather distant from the actual communicative practices they are required to be confident with in many social spheres of life – an educational or working environment, everyday interactions in public space, speech delivery in any context, and so forth. These are not linguistic skills per se (such as grammar, vocabulary or accent), but other aspects of language that they report challenging and have to rediscover. These are primarily the higher levels of language use – discourse, communicative pragmatics and, more generally, metalinguistic ideas that define the language image and the relationship between its (normative) standard and vernacular variants. These areas of linguistic expertise have obvious linkages to other, non-linguistic areas of migrant experiences as well, with the dominant process of inductive discovery of what 'Russian English' is.

Most previous research on the role of language in Russian-speaking migration in an English-language context focuses on the way English 'interferes' with the standard Russian grammar and vocabulary in 'truncated' usages, or on how non-native speakers of English make their progress towards normative 'proficiency' in the target language, or else on how migrants build a new 'speech community', creating their own, 'secret' language to preserve shared identities or

cultural heritage. The way Russian speakers integrate into the sociolinguistically distinctive region of North-East England provides an example of shifting the focus away from languages as bordered areas of knowledge (which might end up 'corrupted' by misuse, straightforwardly and progressively mastered, or merged into an exclusive, highly contextualised means of communication for a close community). Instead, as I have argued in this thesis, Russian-speaking migrants acquire an idea of English as a multi-sited, diverse and scattered linguistic phenomenon. Moreover, the way they come to understand particular, non-standard variants of English, such as Geordie, can play an important role in how they construct both the 'host' environment and their own identity within it. Geordie, as a particular regional variety of English, which Russian-speaking migrants tend to downscale in their personal perception as non-standard and thus 'imperfect', has, however, important consequences in their metalinguistic representations: the constructed hierarchy of different variants of English is a field for contesting language identities and discourses on how English should be spoken and presented, where there might be a place for non-native users of the language as well.

The gradual process of moving from the expanding circle of non-native English speakers towards the outer circle of (however imbalanced) bilinguals brings Russian-speaking migrants to change their language practices and attitudes towards English. Their position on a 'Russian English' within the structure of different varieties of 'Englishes', therefore, is not marginalised by a 'non-native' label (since they might, for instance, claim that this variety is actually 'closer' to the 'standard' one than the local variety of Geordie), but is subject to constant negotiations with speakers of other variants of English. In fact, their cultural attachment to another 'great' language, as they see it, i.e. Russian, is a major factor in their self-presentation both in relation to local native speakers and other non-native migrants in the area.

But what meaning does this attachment of post-Soviet migrants to the Russian language have? The Russification of Soviet territories was often conceptualised in terms of the 'lingua franca', a single communicative medium intended for numerous speakers of other languages to interact in, which, however, also led to the ethnic Russification of non-Russians (e.g. Anderson & Silver 1983; Kreindler 1985; Ostler 2010). Russian-speaking migrants in European contexts are

more likely to explain the importance of the Russian language in their lives in a different manner – not by the communicative potential of the language for composite post-Soviet migrant flows, but in terms of its associations with culture. From the individual perspective, this interpretation means prioritising belonging to the Russophone culture (the identity aspect) over establishing contact in Russian with fellow migrants (the community aspect). This explains the relatively high numbers of Russian-speaking migrants who strongly associate themselves with the Russian-language culture (notwithstanding their actual linguistic skills or cultural backgrounds), yet the relative under-development of Russophone communities as such, both in the UK and other European countries. The contacts Russian-speaking migrants feel obliged to establish are not with other migrants of similar linguistic background but with the language itself. It also usually involves broader representations of the Russophone culture they are accustomed to.

The image of this culture is largely based on personal memories of cultural upbringing and therefore may be presented in nostalgic terms. What is more important, though, is how associations with the language are maintained in the migrant context and how this is relevant to performing a Russian-speaking identity. One of the ways of doing this is the symbolic practice of appealing to the 'great Russian culture', especially representations of 19th and early-20th-century Russian literature. This practice may be irregular, chaotic or mostly declarative; it might involve different activities (reading the classics, using them as symbolic markers of identity at home, performing an attachment to Russophone culture online, or making spontaneous visual manifestations of this Russian-speaking identity), but it is invariably carried out towards the language and culture in general, rather than towards its real speakers.

Another means through which migrants reinterpret their belonging to the Russophone space is through the establishment of a particular 'pedagogical' context that then allows them to transmit or explain 'Russianness' to others, less well informed about it than they as 'carriers' of the language and the culture might be (their children, partners, English or foreign-language colleagues, etc.). This symbolic connection between their cultural identity and a pedagogical framework stems from their own life experiences and is explained through their autobiographical narratives. It is strongest when exposure to the education system was longer (the higher the level of education, the greater the need to become an

'educator'). Actual ways of realising this need may vary – from getting involved in teaching Russian language and culture to other migrants' children to seeking a job centred around proficiency in Russian as its key skill to amateur initiatives to 'teach Russian' to non-Russian-speaking colleagues, friends, in-laws or other contacts. All these cases, however variable, have one thing in common: they minimise interactions with fellow migrants in a peer-to-peer manner, while assuring a slightly condescending (vertical) character of 'educating' others. In the long run this tendency leads to weak horizontal networks of association among Russian-speaking migrants as a group, while maintaining strong language identities of individual Russian speakers.

The evidence from my fieldwork explains, therefore, the paradox of 'invisibility' that Russian-speaking migrants in the North East are being ascribed, both by English locals and by the migrants themselves (the 'there are no Russians here' maxima, mentioned in the Introduction). Due to their strong attachment to the Russophone culture, it is precisely with this culture, or rather with a particular idea and construction of it, rather than with their fellow migrants, that they wish to have a connection. The image of the language they possess as part of their 'cultural baggage' determines the character of these connections with the language in their migrant environment: they are passive rather than active, standard-oriented rather than diverse, respectful and subordinate rather than instrumental and purpose-driven.

Russophone migrants' language attitudes towards Russian also dominate their more general metalinguistic judgements. In this respect, their image of the English language, their understanding of its structure, and their interaction with its varieties are to a great extent influenced by their image of Russian as a language. This correlation is revealed, for example, in their declared attitudes towards English regional dialects, lower-class sociolects and other non-standard variants of English and, by extension, the attitudes that Russophone migrants have towards their speakers. Their respect for the standardised variety does not simply define their linguistic strategies of advancing their English in the local context but it also influences patterns of interaction and self-presentation regarding speakers of other varieties. This is the reason why a Russian-speaking migrant puts their respectful attitude towards standard norms of English higher than the need to be on friendly terms with the locals. This is also why s/he feels obliged to correct

mistakes in their speech and why many Russian speakers prefer to avoid English-language classes for new migrants, given the orientation of these classes towards teaching migrants 'survival English' while paying little attention to the question of linguistic standards and norms.

Further implications of these personal strategies of involvement of 'Russian English' into migrant lives stress cultural connotations it has in contrast to other non-native variants of English. In the long run, this process of self-discovery as speakers of English has two major consequences: migrants' cross-linguistic awareness expands, whereas the boundaries between languages they use become more and more blurred. This is not limited to bilingual practices of code-switching or code-mixing, but interferes with the area of metalinguistic thinking (i.e. involves higher levels of language organisation – discourse, register, politeness regime, etc.).

Personal explorations of these blurred linguistic resources are rather rare and involve both a high awareness of language cultures in contact, not just linguistic resources involved, and a specific 'playful' mode to merge these domains according to current migrant experiences. Therefore, the areas in which these translingual experiments are most prone to appear and to become established as a communicative practice are online interactive contexts which are more flexible and welcoming for new, virtually presented identities to arise. The issue of comprehensibility of these translingual practices, however, is based on the understanding of what a 'community of language' means to the users themselves and how through different language practices their belonging to these communities is established and maintained.

What this means at group level is the development of a new linguistic variety which is constituted through constant exposure to the English-speaking environment and is used among migrants with similar experiences. This 'Russian-2' variety is a phenomenon of 'the language outside its nation', not only in the sense of purely linguistic interferences which reshape its structure, but also with regard to its communicative norms and areas of employment. It is a highly flexible, mobile and unsystematic variety which exists in oral or online interactions and dominates migrant communication. In contrast to the standardised 'Russian-1',

this idiom is not subject to control or regulations – on the contrary, its existence is guaranteed by the migrant, marginalised status of its users.

Both variants co-exist in active repertoires of Russian-speaking migrants and are distinguished from one another, firstly, by attitudes towards each of them and, secondly, by specific language practices ascribed to each of the variants (what is communicated, to whom, in what context, and with what result). The difference between these practices is rather obvious in the way migrant communities are built on the basis of practices involved. Where 'Russian-1' enacts respect to the literary norm and standardised uses of the language, 'Russian-2' emphasises the flexibility of norms and the mixing of code systems, while entailing variable levels of competence in the language. While the former variety inspires community-building on the basis of Russian-language weekend schools, the latter is exemplified by more flexible and mobile 'student societies'. Although generational difference is important – weekend schools are run and visited by more mature migrants with their children, while 'student societies', not exclusively for students, attract also youthful migrant professionals or Russian-speaking spouses – the main distinction between them is based on the language practices cultivated by each of them. Therefore, there are individual migrants belonging to both types of communities at the same time. The level of Russian is also not crucial, so non-native speakers may participate in both of these types of communities. The focal element in each case, though, is the ability to recognise, perform and contextualise particular speech practices that are central for this type of community. By engaging in these speech practices migrants re-establish performatively their belonging to Russophone culture.

Migrant personal experiences involve blending linguistic resources at hand and their cultural meanings (i.e. performing in one language, English, as the stereotypical Russian speaker would, highlighting the linguistic features to produce an extra effect on the English-speaking audience). In parallel to this strategy, the level of group associations is also determined by interactive contacts with other migrant communities and British residents. One of the ways this interaction influences their functioning is the category of 'East-European migration' which is an umbrella term used in the local host environment and is supposed to include post-Soviet migrancy, although it has become dominated by Polish migrants. This category may be interpreted by Russian-speaking

communities in different ways. One of the strategies is to conceptualise post-Soviet 'Russian-speaking-ness' as a similar umbrella term and to engage in 'loose cultural translation'. While presenting themselves as 'East-European' to other migrant communities and local residents, Russian-speaking migrants stay '(ex)Soviet' for those on the 'inside' by enforcing the discourse of the shared language as the 'buffer zone' for various post-Soviet migrant subgroups. This discourse creates a flexible communicative space which they use for making contacts with other post-Soviet migrants (however fluent in Russian), but which does not interfere with other migrant identities they might have (specific ethnic origins, religious or professional affiliations, cultural specificities, etc.). The other way to absorb this extrinsic category of 'East-European-ness' is by expanding the boundaries of Russian-speaking communities and involving in community events certain other, non-native speakers of the language, Bulgarians or Serbs, for instance, and framing this expansion as expressive of 'pan-Slavic unity'. Shifting communicative norms and linguistic regimes of practices within these communities towards less constrained, more flexible patterns makes the language used by their members more like 'global English' than 'Soviet Russian' and the interactive space created by this transition less 'post-Soviet' (as limited by the historical legacies of language ideologies of the USSR) and more 'East-European' (in terms of the growing 'super-diversity' of migrant structures of the UK and the blurring of languages in contact).

This changing metalinguistic outlook develops gradually both at individual and group level under the influence of migrant statuses and cultural environments around Russian-speaking migrants in the UK. Its influence on other, less language-oriented areas of social life becomes evident in situations of clashes with other metalinguistic ways of thinking that Russian speakers might have. Issues of belonging and inclusion to a speaking community are not limited to the particular 'talk', or linguistic genre, to be mastered and translated further, but also include group norms on the metacommunicative meanings of it – i.e. who is most likely to use it, which contexts are most appropriate, and how loyal to group values its users should be. As a result, growing confidence in language norms and communicative patterns of a host society developed by Russian(-speaking) migrants is viewed as an exclusive factor by their mainland compatriots. As migrants adapt to a new sociolinguistic environment, they do not only restructure their linguistic repertoires by including other resources and by understanding the

limits of their employment, they also become adjusted to other ways of perceiving their belonging to a 'home' culture, linguistic, civic and national identities, as well as to their having the performative resources to express them.

The methodological approach which I employ to explore these changing patterns and attitudes in language use concerns the very concepts of 'language' and 'linguistic identity' as referring to post-Soviet Russian-speaking migration in general. A theoretical shift should be made from standardised notions of language (which, in relation to their speakers, are usually considered as objectified and exclusive attributes a person possesses through their lifetime) to the idea of linguistic resources which are dynamic, hierarchical, and culturally determined. Some of them may be ascribed particular meanings due to developing migrant trajectories and changeable multilinguistic settings; others can move to peripheral positions or acquire functions beyond strictly linguistic domains as symbolic indicators of personal belonging or group identity politics. This is particularly true for such a diverse and ambiguous group as 'Russian speakers' in societies without strong historical traditions of Russian-speaking migration, such as the UK.

The above approach, which I have followed in this thesis, provides further development to issues of migrant trajectories and to their interpretations of cultural experiences. My methodological standpoint has focused on linguistic biographies of migrant lives and has explored shifting domains of linguistic expertise, communicative behaviour and the limits of translatability as well as of migrants' interpreting strategies. This has enabled me to grasp the linguistic identities of post-Soviet migrants in their flow, development and representation, exploring the peripheral, or almost marginal, areas of their multilingual experiences.

One of the important concepts in changing linguistic behaviour and expectations is gender. As the discrepancy of 'Russian-1' and 'Russian-2' progresses, so do their gendered representations. The culturally defined image of the motherland transforms into a masculinised interpretation of the official language of the state whereas the flexible, yet non-standard and peripheral migrant variety of Russian becomes ascribed a particularly 'feminine' voice of the migrant majority. This dichotomy has its effect on the gender roles in cross-cultural partnerships and inter-generational communications, community-building

strategies and performing migrant identities beyond the Russian-speaking group. Further investigation of this correlation between changing language behaviour and gender roles in migration may include the issues of sociolinguistic variability among different categories of migrants, professionalising 'migrant motherhood' as a strategy of career building in host settings, or transforming concepts of 'kinhood', 'cultural upbringing', and 'citizenship' in the relations of first- and second-generation migrants.

In terms of community analysis, my focus has entailed the epistemological shift from 'language communities' as social groups whose members are oriented to the denotational norms of a language (i.e. can speak Russian to a certain level) to 'speech communities' as involving shared norms of indexicality which are discursively mediated through social interaction (i.e. groups that treat and employ their particular way of using Russian as a socially significant marker). The commonality of language in new migrant settings leads to establishing new social contacts and networks of interaction and support, reinterpreting previous experiences and developing emergent strategies of self-identification. Therefore, 'Russian-speaking-ness' as a dynamic concept has two aspects: 1. It is a historically transmitted model of shared cultural meanings (belonging to a post-Soviet cultural domain with its codes, attitudes and mythologies). 2. It is a flexible model for interpreting current cultural experiences and creating new meanings and practices responding to the transcultural challenges of host environments. This distinction between two interconnected levels, which the cultural concept of 'Russophonism' has in relation to social and cultural experiences of migrants, has much in common with the classical approach to cultural structure and its dynamics, as introduced by C. Geertz in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973):

> The term 'model' has, however, two senses – an 'of' sense and a 'for' sense – and though these are but aspects of the same basic concept they are very much worth distinguishing for analytical purposes. In the first, what is stressed is the manipulation of symbol structures so as to bring them, more or less closely, into the parallel with the pre-established nonsymbolic system, … by expressing their structure in synoptic form – as to render them apprehensible; it is a model of 'reality'. In the second, what is stressed is the manipulation of the nonsymbolic systems in terms of the relationships expressed in the symbolic… Here, the theory is a model under

whose guidance physical relationships are organised: it is a model for 'reality'. (Geertz 1973: 93).

To conclude my observations in a manner in which I started, I shall provide another snapshot from the field. It is an image which comes from another part of the UK – namely a photo that I took in Bournemouth in April 2014 (Fig. 21). It captures a part of an advertisement board near one of the 'East-European shops' which actually features a shop sign in Cyrillic, saying '*Сказка*' (Fairytale). This is an example of 'loose cultural translation' which I discuss in Chapter 6 in which I describe the dual and flexible, external and internal, positioning of Russian-speaking migrant entrepreneurship in the UK marketplace. My main argument of the way in which Russophonism, or *русскоязычие* as a cultural phenomenon is re-examined by its users in new migrant contexts, finds its visual expression in this photo.

The broad space of this advertisement board presents a particular communicative channel for the migrant group which the shop targets as its main customers. The ways it is inhabited by different interpretations of what 'Russian-speaking-ness' means to different communicants exemplify its openness as a 'cultural model'. It is simultaneously available as a signifier for various cultural interpretations and discourses, each of which highlights its peculiar connotation as a language of a migrant group. The Soviet-style merchandise poster in the background which advertises typically 'Soviet' products in a characteristic visual layout represents the embeddedness of current Russophone culture in the Soviet period with its 'rough tongue of posters', as V. Mayakovsky called it.

A larger part of this 'space' is taken by a present-day colourful poster in Latvian, which includes also a translation into Russian. This interpretation of what 'Russophonism' means puts Russian-speaking migration into a larger context of East-European migration. Its most numerous groups – Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian migrants – dominate local interpretations of what the 'East-European flow' means and define migrant priorities in the self-presentation of 'East Europeans' in general. Thus 'Russian-language presence' is more likely, in fact, to appear in a context where it is doubled by the same line in Lithuanian or Latvian, but it also functions as a connecting means to approach these other groups, which

are linguistically different, but have similar migrant backgrounds and trajectories in the UK.

Figure 21. Ad board near the 'East-European shop' called '*Сказка*' ('Fairytale') in Bournemouth, April 2014. Photo taken by the author.

The variety of individual hand-made ads in Russian exemplifies the diversity of vernaculars and usages of the language which a broad group of Russian speakers from FSU countries might demonstrate. Casual lexical borrowings from English, non-standard grammar, switching between two scripts or neologisms are all features of 'Russian-2', a flexible, multi-centred, migrant-oriented linguistic variety. And the central ad in this photo is a personal ad from a local English speaker offering a language tandem for a native Polish speaker, which highlights the tendency of stereotypical representation of broader 'East-European migration' through Polish migrants as a central group.

What the 'Russophone' phenomenon means for post-Soviet migrants in an English-language context is, therefore, many different things at the same time and none of them quite in and of themselves. 'Russian' is here not exactly a reproduced 'lingua franca' from the Soviet times. Nor is it a minority language that thrives as common currency in most FSU countries today. It is not merely a peripheral

component of an 'East-European' migrant flow that is otherwise dominated by non-Russian groups. It is not straightforwardly the consolidating factor for a 'diaspora', whether in the Russian-speaking areas of the 'near abroad' or in the wider world. Nor is 'Russian' just an 'exotic' language, one among a number of them in the multicultural melange of developed Western states, subject to stereotypical associations made by the local, host-country, population. In the contemporary UK context, 'Russophonism' is a dynamic concept which engages all of the above interpretations and creates a base for a host of (multi)language identities, speech communities and self-presentation practices, which Russian-speaking migrants develop and share.

APPENDIX 1.

LIST OF INTERVIEWS AND INFORMANTS

The list that follows contains interview codes, pseudonyms and short biographical data for all the participants interviewed for this project. All informants have consented to their interviews being used in this research. Most have also confirmed willingness to pass fully anonymised transcripts of their interviews to the Oxford Archive of Russian Life History (http://www.ehrc.ox.ac.uk/lifehistory/index.html/) for storage and future use. The consent form that every informant was asked to sign is presented in Appendix 3.

The main list refers to 34 semi-structured ethnographical interviews with Russian-speaking migrants who currently reside in the North-East England.

This is followed by a list of additional 18 interviews with different groups: 1. informants residing outside of the North East region (London), 2. individual or group interviews with weekend school staff (North East England and Edinburgh), 3. EFL teachers and professionals in Russia-UK educational contacts in Russia, 4. Russian residents with short-term working experience or partnership with migrants in the UK.

All interviews were conducted, transcribed and coded by the author between 2011 and 2014.

Interview code	Pseudonym	Date of the interview	Sex	Age	Place of residence	Residence in the UK, years	Place of origins (city/town, FSU republic)	Education level	Languages
MAIN DATABASE									
001-F-60+-NCL	Tatiana	10.12.11	F	61	Newcastle	20+	St. Petersburg, Russia	PhD (kandidat)	Russian, English, French
002-F-25-DHM	Iuliia	16.05.12	F	25	Durham	2	Lvov, Ukraine	MA	Russian, Ukrainian, English, German
003-F-42-NCL	Olga	18.05.12	F	42	Morpeth	15	Gomel, Belarus	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
004-F-55-CXH	Oksana	20.05.12	F	55	Coxhoe	10+	Kostroma, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
005-F-26-BLT	Evgeniia	24.05.12	F	26	Blaydon	3	Vladivostok, Russia	MA	Russian, English
006-M-26-NCL	Anton	31.05.12	M	26	Stanley	2	St.Petersburg, Russia	PhD	Russian, English
010-F-28-NCL	Mariia	05.06.12	F	28	Newcastle	1	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	MA	Russian, English, French
012-F-24-NCL	Anna	06.06.12	F	23	Newcastle	4	Riga, Latvia	MSc	Russian, Latvian, English
013-M-26-NCL	Nikita	12.06.12	M	26	Newcastle	3	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	PhD (student)	Russian, English
014-F-50+-NCL	Irina	17.06.12	F	47	Newcastle	9	Yekaterinburg, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
016-F-25-NCL	Arina	18.06.12	F	25	Newcastle	2	Kazan, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
017-F-37-DHM	Natalia	19.06.12	F	37	Durham	10	Moscow, Russia	PhD	Russian, English, French, Hebrew
018-F-27-NCL	Kristina	20.06.12	F	27	Newcastle	2	Vinnitsa, Ukraine	High school	Russian, Ukrainian, English

019-M-16-SPM	Denis	22.06.12	M	17	Spennymoor	4	Chisinau, Moldova	High school	Russian, Moldavian, English
021-M-23-NCL	Nikolai	29.06.12	M	23	Newcastle	5	Moscow, Russia	MSc (student)	Russian, English
023-M-29-NCL	Pavel	23.06.12	M	29	Newcastle	6	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	PhD	Russian, English
024-F-29-WST	Nina	24.06.12	F	29	Washington	6	Makhachkala, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
025-M-32-DRL	Artiom	25.06.12	M	32	Darlington	4	Perm', Russia	High School	Russian, English
026-F-33-NCL	Iana	22.09.12	F	33	Newcastle	4	Saratov, Russia	PhD	Russian, English
027-M-24-NCL	Dmitrii	09.12.12	M	24	Newcastle	10	Riga, Latvia	BA (student)	Russian, English
028-M-26-NCL	Marat	10.12.12	M	26	Newcastle	11	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	College	Russian, Uzbek, English, Tatar
029-F-29-NCL	Svetlana	11.12.12	F	29	Newcastle	3	Moscow, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
030-F-24-SSH	Ekaterina	12.12.12	F	24	South Shields	2	Moscow, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
031-F-23-NCL	Viktoria	16.02.13	F	23	Newcastle	2	Moscow, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
032-F-38-NCL	Lianna	17.02.13	F	38	Newcastle	3	Gyumri, Armenia	PhD (student)	Armenian, Russian, English
033-F-42-DHM	Veronika	25.02.13	F	42	Durham	2	St. Petersburg, Russia	PhD	Russian, English
034-F-26-DRL	Nadezhda	08.03.13	F	26	Darlington	2	Khabarovsk, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
041-F-37-HXH	Elina	19.11.13	F	37	Hexham	8	Odessa, Ukraine	MA	Russian, Ukrainian, English

042-F-40+-SSH	Zoia	25.11.13	F	38	South Shields	1	Togliatti, Russia	PhD (kandidat)	Russian, English
043-F-22-DHM	Alisa	18.03.14	F	22	Durham	1	Moscow, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
044-F-34-DHM	Aleksandra	22.07.14	F	34	Bearpark	8	Rostov, Russia	Specialist Dipl	Russian, English
047-F-28-DRL	Margarita	10.03.14	F	28	Darlington	5	Cherepovets, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
048-M-24-DHM	Evgenii	18.03.14	M	24	Durham	1	Moscow, Russia	PhD (student)	Russian, English, Chinese
052-M-42-NCL	Aleksei	15.04.14	M	42	Newcastle	8	Novosibirsk, Russia	PhD	Russian, English, Ukrainian
ADDITIONAL INTERVIEWS									
(1) Russian-speaking migrants based in London:									
007-F-29-LND	Aliona	28.05.12	F	29	London	3	Moscow, Russia	MA	Russian, English
008-M-34-LND	Afanasii	29.05.12	M	34	London	5	Moscow, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
009-M-27-LND	Fedor	29.05.12	M	27	London	6	Samara, Russia	MSc	Russian, English, Spanish
011-F-20-LND	Dariia	04.06.12	F	20	London	12	Nikolaev, Ukraine	BA	English, French, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian
015-F-31-LND	Alina	01.03.14	F	31	London	2	Samara, Russia	MSc	Russian, English
020-F-50+-LND	Malika	19.09.14	F	50+	London	10+	Astana, Kazakhstan	MSc	Russian, English, Kazakh
022-F-27-LND	Snezhana	16.06.12	F	27	London	4	Samara, Russia	MSc	Russian, English

(2) Russian-language schools' staff:									
039-ScT-MDL	'TeremOK' School (2 people)	19.06.12	F, F	45	Middlesbrough /Darlington	3	Yekaterinburg, Russia/Aktyubinsk, Kazakhstan	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
040-ScZ-NCL	'Zaika' School	22.06.12	F	40+	Newcastle	6	Tallinn, Estonia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
045-ScZ-NCL	'Zaika' School	22.06.12	F	50+	Newcastle	6	St. Petersburg, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
046-ScRE-EDB	'Russian Edinburgh'	05.10.12	F	40+	Edinburgh	7	Chelyabinsk, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
(3) EFL professionals in Russia:									
049-EXP-EFL	Ivan	20.07.12	M	32	-	-	EFL teacher, trainer	PhD (kandidat)	Russian, English
050-EXP-EXM	Anastasiia	22.08.12	F	27	-	-	EFL teacher, certified ESOL examiner	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English, French
051-EXP-EEA	Iuliana	29.08.12	F	33	-	-	Education Abroad Officer	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
(4) Russia-based informants involved in transnational work projects or partnerships:									
035-F-26-SAM	Vera[1]	10.07.12	F	26	-	-	Samara, Russia	PhD (kandidat)	Russian, English
036-F-25-SPB	Valentina[2]	15.07.12	F	25	-	-	St. Petersburg, Russia	Specialist Dipl.	Russian, English
037-F-23-MSC	Kseniia[3]	19.12.13	F	23	-	-	Moscow, Russia	MA	Russian, English
038-M-28-SAM	Aleksandr[4]	22.07.12	M	28	-	-	Syzran', Russia	PhD (kandidat)	Russian, English

[1] Based in Russia, has been a team member of international multisite research project which requires her to make constant brief business trips, mainly to London.
[2] Residing in Russia, has been involved in relationship with a Russian-speaking partner currently staying in the UK (Anton, 26).
[3] Currently living in Moscow, graduated from Newcastle University in 2013 (MA) and spent over a year in the North-East England.
[4] Based in Russia, has participated in a number of international research schemes and projects for most of which spent a number of months in the UK.

GUIDE FOR IN-DEPTH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Миграционная история

1.   Расскажите о том, где вы родились, какое образование получили, где работали до отъезда?

2.   Расскажите, как вы уехали в Великобританию. Как и кто принимал решение об отъезде? Какова была реакция семьи, друзей, близких?

3.   Были ли у вас знакомые в ВБ до отъезда? Связывались ли Вы с ними до отъезда, сразу после прибытия в страну? Каким образом поддерживались отношения до приезда, после него?

4.   Расскажите, когда, зачем и как Вы начали учить английский язык. На каком уровне был Ваш английский перед отъездом? Знали ли Вы другие языки?

5.   Были ли Вы за границей до отъезда в ВБ? Общались ли с иностранцами? На каком языке? Какие впечатления остались после общения?

6.   Как Вы готовились к переезду? Как и какую информацию искали при подготовке?

7.   Расскажите о Ваших первых впечатлениях о стране. Кто помогал вам в первые месяцы? Каким образом? С какими трудностями столкнулись? Что показалось неожиданно легким? Что соответствовало ожиданиям, а что удивило?

8.   С кем вы общались первое время после приезда (как часто, каким образом)? Были ли проблемы в общении (с кем, какого рода)? Были ли проблемы с языком (как Вы с ними справлялись, кто помогал Вам в этом)?

Связи с Россией (родной страной)

1.   Вы выезжали на родину с момента отъезда? Как часто, с какой целью, на какое время, с семьей, детьми? Чем вы занимались по приезде домой? С кем встречались?

2.   Попробуйте вспомнить, люди, которые остались в России – с кем Вы сейчас поддерживаете отношения? Как изменился этот круг с момента Вашего переезда в ВБ — стал шире или уже, изменился ли состав?

3. Кто из этих людей приезжал к Вам в гости? Как часто? Были ли встречи с друзьями, знакомыми, которые приезжали не лично к Вам в гости, а по работе, учебе, в отпуск?

4. Каким образом Вы поддерживаете связь с родственниками, друзьями, с какой периодичностью? О чем обычно говорите, что обсуждаете? На каком языке разговариваете?

5. Как думаете, Ваше общение как-то изменилось после Вашего отъезда: темы, продолжительность, активность в поддержании разговора? Понятны ли Вы друг другу? Приходилось ли Вам когда-либо уточнять значение каких-либо русских слов у Ваших близких или — наоборот — объяснять им какие-либо местные термины, ходовые «словечки»?

6. Какой информацией обычно обмениваетесь? Отправляете ли друг другу подарки, посылки, денежные переводы? Делают ли Вам специальные «заказы» на подарки, другие покупки?

7. *(Если есть дети)* Общаются ли они с родственниками из России? Вы отправляете детей на каникулы? На каком языке они говорят: с Вами, в семье, с ближайшими друзьями, с близкими людьми из России (других стран)? Какие языки и насколько хорошо знают Ваши дети? Довольны Вы ли этим? Если нет, пытаетесь ли Вы исправить ситуацию? Как?

8. *(Если есть супруг(а), партнер)* Поддерживает ли Ваш муж/жена какие-то контакты с вашими близкими в России? Был(а) ли он(а) или его/её родственники, друзья когда-нибудь в России? Говорит ли по-русски? Делает ли попытки улучшить свое знание русского? Какими ещё языками и насколько хорошо владеет? На каком языке Вы общаетесь? Бывает ли, что вы не понимаете друг друга именно из-за того, что язык иностранный для кого-то из Вас? Как Вам кажется, ограничивает ли разница во владении языком, на котором Вы разговариваете, Ваше общение с супругом/ой?

9. Постарайтесь вспомнить всех людей, с которыми Вы общаетесь сейчас (друзья, хорошие знакомые, коллеги, с которыми установились дружеские отношения). Как бы Вы определили, какую роль они играют в Вашей жизни? Как Вы поддерживаете это общение? (через сайты/социальные сети в Интернете, телефон, смс, мейл, скайп — обсудить каждый вид коммуникации) На каком языке Вы общаетесь с ними?

10. Завели ли Вы близких друзей после переезда (кто они, на каком языке общаетесь)? Возможно ли поддерживать близкие отношения на расстоянии (в пределах одного государства, через границы, говоря на разных языках)?

11. А в Интернете Вы с кем-то общаетесь? (Как изменилась виртуальная сфера общения с переездом?) На каком языке?

12. Чувствуете ли Вы потребность, чтобы поехать в Россию в отпуск, на каникулы, на праздники? Хотите ли вернуться обратно, когда приезжаете в Россию?

13. Вспомните, когда Вы первый раз пересекали границу. Какие были ощущения? Какие чувства Вы испытываете сейчас, когда проходите паспортный контроль? Есть ли разница между пересечением границы с ЕС и Россией? Что в Вашем понимании значит "граница"? Для чего (и для кого) они нужны?

14. Вы следите за новостями, за тем, что происходит в России? Откуда Вы получаете эту информацию? Следите ли Вы за культурной жизнью России?

15. Читаете ли Вы книги, газеты, журналы? На каком языке?

Языки – использование и отношение

1. Как бы Вы оценили Ваше владение английским языком сейчас (словарный запас, грамматика, произношение и акцент, специфический сленг/жаргон, формальный/неформальный стили)? В каких сферах Вашей жизни эти ограничения во владении английским языком проявляются наиболее ярко, какие частично? Какие из них не затрагивают вовсе?

2. Начали ли Вы за время пребывания здесь учить новые языки (какие, почему, на каком этапе сейчас)? Хотели бы Вы в будущем выучить другие языки (какие, зачем, как)?

3. На каком языке Вы думаете? На каком видите сны? Представьте, что Вы внезапно и сильно испугались, обрадовались, удивились — на каком языке Вы скажете/подумаете первое, что придет в голову?

4. Какой из языков, которыми Вы владеете сейчас, является основным? Почему Вам так кажется? Устраивает ли Вас это?

5. Бывает ли, что Вы не можете вспомнить слово, хотя абсолютно уверены, что знаете его? В каких ситуациях, на каком языке, в общении с кем это случается? Как Вы справляетесь с такой ситуацией? Что чувствуете?

6. Бывает ли, что Вы не знаете слова, которое произносит собеседник или которое Вам встречается в тексте? Как Вы поступаете в таких случаях? При использовании какого языка скорее всего случится подобное? (Было ли такое с родным языком? Какие чувства испытывали?) Бывало ли, что Вас совершенно не понимали? Или

наоборот — чтобы вы не могли понять, что именно Вам хотят сказать? На каком языке? Что Вы делали? Как Вы себя чувствовали?

7. Бывает ли, что в разговоре Вы постоянно «переключаетесь» с одного языка на другой? Как часто, в каких ситуациях, с кем именно? Как Вам кажется, это нормальная ситуация? Помогает ли это общению, затрудняет ли его? Как Вы вообще относитесь к людям, использующим подобное «переключение»?

8. Что, по-вашему, делает язык родным? Кто может считаться носителем языка? Может ли человек с нуля выучить иностранный язык так, чтобы знать его на уровне носителя?

9. Как вам кажется, может ли человек одинаково хорошо владеть сразу несколькими языками? Можно ли выразить мысль, чувство, идею одинаково хорошо на любом языке? Можно ли перевести на другой язык любой текст? А лично для Вас всегда ли языки, которыми Вы владеете, взаимозаменяемы?

10. Есть ли непереводимые слова в русском и английском языках, с которыми Вы сталкиваетесь? Как Вы бы перевели на русский язык слово community, есть ли ему аналоги или синонимы? Как Вы считаете, есть ли вообще такое понятие? А вообще существует ли русская община в ВБ? В других странах? От чего это зависит?

11. На Ваш взгляд, чтобы занять достойное место в современном обществе, сколькими (и какими) языками владеть, в какой степени? Какими языками и в какой степени Вам хочется, чтобы владели Ваши дети?

12. Многие обеспокоены положением русского языка сейчас, другим же современный этап развития языка кажется естественным. Какова Ваша позиция? Почему Вам так кажется? Обсуждаете ли Вы этот вопрос с кем-либо?

13. Существует мнение, что нет единого английского языка, но есть много разных «английских». Как Вы относитесь к такому утверждению? Сталкивались ли с разными вариантами английского? В каких ситуациях, кто говорил на них? Есть ли один «правильный», «стандартный» вариант (какой, кто на нем говорит, где он используется, зачем нужен)? Можно ли это утверждение применить к русскому языку: един ли он или есть несколько «русских» (каких)? Есть ли стандарт русского языка (кто говорит на нем, зачем он нужен, в каких ситуациях используется)?

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Linguistic biographies and communities of language of Russian-speaking migrants in the UK

Thank you for agreeing to take part in our research on Russian speakers living in Great Britain.

The recording and transcript of your interview will be used for academic purposes only. We will destroy our copy of the audio file of your interview within two years of the completion of the present study. The interview transcript and any publications that draw on the information that you have given us in it will be fully anonymised. A pseudonym will be used where appropriate. Before the transcript is finalised, you will be given the opportunity to read and approve the text, confirming that you have no objections, making any amendments, as required.

The transcript of your interview, fully anonymised and approved by you, will be stored at the Oxford Russian Life History Archive (http://www.ehrc.ox.ac.uk/lifehistory/index.htm) in strict confidentiality, separately from any personal details (such as this consent form). Once archived, the transcript will be available indefinitely for vetted academic research purposes only.

If you do not wish to have the transcript stored for future academic use, beyond the present study, you may opt out (see below). In this case, the transcript of your interview will be used in the present study only and will not be archived for the future.

The Data Protection Act and copyright legislation require us to obtain a signature from you indicating that you consent to the above and to the use of quotations from your interview transcript for research purposes.

I consent to the use of the data that I provide in the interview, with the above conditions.

     YES   NO

I consent to the storage of the interview transcript at the Oxford Russian Life History Archive (http://www.ehrc.ox.ac.uk/lifehistory/index.htm).

     YES   NO

Name:

Date:

Signature:

LIST OF PLACES AND GROUPS FOR PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Recurrent visits

Russian-language school "Zayka" (Newcastle) – Dec 2011, May-June 2012, Oct 2012

Russian-language family club "Teremok" (Middlesbrough, then Darlington) – June 2012

Russian-language school and cultural centre "Dlia Tebia" (Newcastle) – Oct-Nov 2012

Orthodox Church services (Durham, St Mary the Less) – Dec 2011, June 2012, Dec 2012

Russian Orthodox Church services (Newcastle, St George's) – Dec 2012, Feb 2013

Russian wives' tea-party and get-togethers (Newcastle, Chester-le-Street) – May-July 2012, Feb 2013

Durham University Russian Society events (Durham) – Feb-March 2012

Newcastle 'Students' Society events (Newcastle) – Dec 2011, March-May 2012, Oct 2012, Dec 2012, May 2013

The 'Russian World' Centre events (Durham) – Apr 2013, Oct-Dec 2013

One-time occasions

Informal Old New Year Celebration (Newcastle) – Jan 2012, Jan 2013

Russian speakers' of Durham informal get together (Durham) – Dec 2011

Russian Pancake Party, Ustinov College (Durham) – Mar 2012

Russian President's election (Edinburgh) – Mar 2012

Russian poet's performance (London) – Mar 2012

Russian-speaking expats get-together and gig (London) – Mar 2012

World Cup 2012 Russia-Poland football match outdoors broadcast (Newcastle, Earl Grey's Monument) – June 2012

World Cup 2012 Russia-Greece football match outdoors broadcast (Newcastle, Earl Grey's Monument) – June 2012

World Cup 2012 Ukraine-England football match pub translation (Newcastle, Earl Grey's Monument) – June 2012

Russian-language school 'Russian Edinburgh' (Edinburgh) – Oct 2013

Practical conference of Russian-language schools and education providers of Scotland (Dundee) – Oct 2013

Russian-English wedding ceremony (London) – Oct 2013

European Language Day (Durham) – Sept 2014

APPENDIX 5.

MIGRANT LITERATURE , MEDIA AND MOVIES

Migrant literature

a. Fiction

Hollingsworth, M. (2009) *Londongrad: From Russia with Cash. The Inside Story of the Oligarchs.* Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers.

Idov, M. (2009) *Ground Up.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Idov, M. (2010) *Kofemolka.* Moscow: Corpus.

Kaminer, W. (2002) *Russian Disco*. London: Ebury Press.

Kucheruk, D. (2010) *Chuzhie.* Kiev: Azimut-Ukraina.

Lewycka, M. (2005) *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian.* London: Penguin Books.

Sakin, S. and Teterskii, P. (2001) *Bol'she Bena*. Moscow: Aksian.

Tolstaia, N. (2001) Inostranets bez Pitaniia. Inspektor Russkogo Iazyka. In: Tolstaia, T. & Tolstaia, N. *Sestry*. Moscow: Podkova. p. 118-30; 354-63.

Vapnyar, L. (2006) *Memoirs of the Muse.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Vapniar, L. (2012) *Memyary Muzy.* Moscow: Azbuka.

Vapnyar, L. (2008) *Brocoli and Other Tales of Food & Love.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Vapniar, L. (2012) *Brokkoli i Drugie Rasskazy o Ede i Liubvi.* Moscow: Azbuka.

b. Non-fiction

Batler, O. (2011) *Moia Malen'kaia Britaniia.* St Petersburg: BHV-Peterburg.

Frir, O. (2008) *UK dlia Nachinaiushchikh.* Moscow: Tsentr-Poligraf.

Tolstaia, T. (2001) Politicheskaia Korrektnost'. In Tolstaia, T. & Tolstaia, N. *Sestry*. Moscow: Podkova. P. 297-330.

Tolstaia, T. (2012) Russkii chelovek na randevu. Nadezhda i Opora. Russkii Mir. In: Tolstaia, T. *Den'*. Moscow: Eksmo. P. 307-41; 385-90; 445-59.

Vakhtin, N. (2011) Pis'ma iz Anglii. *Zvezda.* [Online] 6. Available from: http://zvezdaspb.ru/index.php?page=8&nput=1643. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Zabotkina, O. (2010) *Kostroma – Durham: Angliiskie Zametki*. Kostroma: Vetluzhskii Krai.

Zavialova, V. (2014) *Britaniia. Mind the Gap ili Kak stat' svoim*. Moscow: Al'pina-NonFikshn.

Zinik, Z. (2008) *Pis'ma s tret'ego berega.* Moscow: Nauka.

Press

Angliya – Nashi na Ostrove. Weekly newspaper. Available from: http://www.angliya.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

The Business Courier. On-line newspaper and portal. Available from: http://thebusinesscourier.co.uk. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Dostizheniya. Monthly newspaper . Available from: http://www.achievementsnews.co.uk. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Pulse UK. Weekly newspaper. Available from: http://pulse-uk.org.uk. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

RussianMind. Quarterly magazine. Available from: http://www.russianmind.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russian UK. Quarterly magazine. Available from: http://www.russianuk.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Movies

a. Documentary

Angliia v obshchem i v chastnosti. (2015) Documentary series (10 episodes). Ddirected by V. Spirin. Russia: Pervyi Kanal.

Meet the Russians. (2013) Reality TV show (9 episodes). Directed by E. Walsh. UK: Ricochet & Fox.

Rich, Russian and Living in London. (2015) Documentary film. Directed by P. Steele. UK: BBC2 & True Vision North MMXV.

Russian Dolls. (2011) Reality TV show (12 episodes). Directed by J. Carita and K. Coe. USA: Left/Right Films.

Russkie bez Rossii. (2003) Documentary series (13 episodes). Directed by N. Mikhalkov. Russia: Rossiiskii Fond Kul'tury.

Shkola angliiskogo. (2010) Documentary film. Directed by A. Savenko. Russia: CloudpicturesTV Studio.

b. Feature films

Bigga than Ben. (2008) Feature film. Directed by S. Halewood. UK: Swipe Films.

Drugoe Nebo. (2010) Feature film. Directed by D. Mamulia. Russia: LeopArt.

Eastern Promises. (2007) Feature film. Directed by D. Cronenberg. UK & USA: Focus Features, BBC Films.

Immigrant. (2013) Feature film. Directed by B. Shurchin. USA: Buffalo 8 Productions.

Immigrants (LA Dolce Vita). (2008) Animated film. Directed by G. Csupo. USA: Grand Allure Entertainment.

Velkam Hom. (2013) Feature film. Directed by A. Nikonova. Russia: Utopia Pictures.

APPENDIX 6.

INTERNET SOURCES

Blogs

Beznadezhnaia Immigrantka. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://desp-immigrant.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Dnevnik voskresnoi mamy-utki. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://callis.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

English in Russia. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://alex-j.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Iammi. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://yummy-glutton.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Impossible is Nothing. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://mong-inc.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Kovarnii Albion. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://gap-themind.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Na Obitaemom Ostrove: Kudriavaia Zhizn' Pozhiloi Kosmopolitki. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://notabler.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

New (Re)Cycle. Blog Aleksandra Smotrova. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://smotrov.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Obo vsiom po-nemnogu. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://rkabalin.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russian Baby in the UK. Blogspot blog. Available from: http://russianbabyinuk.blogspot.co.uk. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russkii v Anglii. Blogspot blog. Available from: http://rusinuk.blogspot.co.uk. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Staraia Zanuda. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://froken-bock.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

U kazhdogo svoi tarakany. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://erisena-tenecka.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Viales. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://viales.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Zapiski emigranta (inostrannogo agenta). Livejournal blog. Available from: http://moscowlondon.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Zhurnal nabliudenii za prirodoi veschei. Livejournal blog. Available from: http://sharla-tanka.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Facebook groups

Durham University Russian Society. Facebook group. Available from: https://www.facebook.com/groups/38433358593. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Durham University Russian-Speaking Society. Facebook group. Available from: https://www.facebook.com/groups/DURSS. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Newcastle Russian School – Dlia Tebia – Russkaia Shkola Iskusstv. Facebook group. Available from: https://www.facebook.com/groups/211128278933305. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russian Passion, UK. Facebook group. Available from: https://www.facebook.com/groups/russian.passion. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russians in UK. Facebook group. Available from: https://www.facebook.com/groups/174311159293470. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russian-speaking Ladies in Newcastle. Facebook group. Available from: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1536458336618716. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

United Student Society of Russian speakers in Newcastle (USSR in NCL). Facebook group. Available from: https://www.facebook.com/groups/150525994993808. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

'Zaika', Russian children school and club. Facebook group. Available from: https://www.facebook.com/groups/zaika.club. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Forums

Russian London – Russian Forum in UK. Available from: http://www.rusforum.co.uk. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russians in London. Available from: http://www.russians-in-london.co.uk. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russkii Forum v Anglii 'Ponaekhali tut'. Available from: http://www.ponaehalitut.co.uk. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russkii Forum v Anglii, Velikobritanii, Londone. Available from: http://stenka.co.uk. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

RuTalk.co.uk. Available from: http://www.rutalk.co.uk/forum.php. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Livejournal communities

London - Russian speaking community. Livejournal community. Available from: http://ru-london.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russian-speaking community in the United Kingdom. Livejournal community. Available from: http://ru-uk.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russian Ads Board in the UK. Livejournal community. Available from: http://doska-uk.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Russian-speaking learners of English and friends. Livejournal community. Available from: http://ru-learnenglish.livejournal.com. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Vkontakte (Russian-speaking social network) groups

Russians in Great Britain. Vkontakte group. Available from: http://vk.com/club678283. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

Soviets in the UK. Vkontakte group. Available from: http://vk.com/club42631. (Accessed 14/07/2015)

APPENDIX 7.

THE OXFORD ARCHIVE OF RUSSIAN LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEWS

The stock of over 80 transcribed interviews stored at the Oxford Archive of Russian Life History: www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/russian/lifehistory was referred to for context. The interviews coded 'Oxf/AHRC-UK' and originally conducted as a part of the project 'Russian National Identity from 1961: Traditions and Deterritorialisation' (2007-2011)', directed by Professor Catriona Kelly and sponsored by AHRC, were kindly provided to my disposal for this research.

The interviews were carried out by Dr Andy Byford during the period of November 2007 – December 2008, predominantly in London (35 interviews), Oxford (13 interviews), Winchester (7 interviews), Cambridge (5 interviews), and other locations in southern England as well as Wales. Interviewees (questioned either individually or along with their family members) come from diverse regions of the FSU space and have resided in the UK from a couple of years to decades. There is also a number of interviews held with the heads and staff members of Russian language weekend schools in London (3 batches of interviews), Oxford (2 batches of interviews) & Kent, supplemented with some additional ethnographic material.

I have not used any of these interviews in my final text directly, by quoting or straightforwardly referring to the material in the thesis. However, they proved to be helpful in contextualising my own ethnographic data by providing a wider perspective for my own, localised observations, especially for Chapter 7 on communities.

SEMINAR PAPERS, CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS STUDY

2012

'Protest language of Russian migration: anti-election mass meetings in Europe 2011-2012', 'Negotiating Ideologies II: Inclusion and Exclusion in Russian Language and Culture', Princess Dashkova Centre, University of Edinburgh, UK. October 5, 2012.

'"The importance of learning Russian": Strategies of self-imaging, community-building and professional networking in Russian language schools of Great Britain', 'Migration and Integration in Europe and Russia: New Challenges and Opportunities', Centre for Independent Social Research, Centre for European Studies (EU Centre) and Centre for German and European Studies, St.Petersburg, Russia. November 16-18, 2012.

2013

'Iazyk protesta russkogo zarubezhia: Protestnye aktsii v Evrope v 2011-2012 gg.', 'Russia in search of its public language', European University in St.Petersburg, Russia. January 15-17, 2013. Conference proceedings, pp. 47-50.

'"Russian English" and "British Russian": The Development of a 'Folk Linguistics' among Russian-speaking Migrants in the UK', 'Language and Superdiversity', University of Jyvaskyla, Finland, June 5-7, 2013.

'"Your mother tongue in your father's country": strategies of conceptualizing and implementation of children's bilingualism by Russian-speaking mothers in transnational families of Great Britain', 'Family and Migration', Vilnius, Lithuania, July 17-19, 2013.

'"Touching the origins": Social and Cultural characteristics of the Russian language taught in Russian weekend language schools of Great Britain', 'The problems and methods of teaching Russian Language in Scotland', an opening conference for the Collaborative Project, Dundee, October 5, 2013.

'"Creative community" or "linguistic misfits": Translingual practices and transcultural identities of Russian-speaking migrants in the UK', '"Middle" and "Creative": Emerging Russian Social Groups in Language and Culture', Princess Dashkova Centre, University of Edinburgh, UK, October 25-26, 2013.

'"The USSR in Newcastle": Iazykovye ideologii i praktiki sozdaniia soobshchestv post-sovetskikh migrantov severo-vostochnoi Anglii', 'The Post-Soviet Space as a Language Project : The Practices of linguistic and cultural construction', Centre for Research in Humanities, RANEPA, Moscow, Russia, December 20-21, 2013.

Kliuchnikova, P. (2013) The Language of Protest, Belonging and Exclusion: Russian anti-election campaigns in Europe (2011-2012). *The Ideology & Politics Journal.* 2 (4). p. 38-59.

2014

'"The USSR in Newcastle": The language for shared identities and community-building practices of Russian-speaking post-Soviet migrants of the UK', 'Post-Soviet Diasporas: Identities, Linkages, Transformations', Carleton University, Canada, March 20-21, 2014.

'Language(s) at work: Translating experiences, developing repertoires and communicating careers of Russian-speaking migrants in the UK', BASEES Annual Conference, Cambridge, UK, April 5-7, 2014.

'Post-Soviet migrant communities in the North-East of England: "Meet the Russians"?', 3rd Ruppin International Conference on Immigration and Social Integration, Ruppin Academic Centre, Israel, May 19-20, 2014.

'Belonging and Exclusion in the protest language of Russian anti-election campaigns in Europe', PG Conference on 'Protest', Glasgow University, UK, May 28-29, 2014.

'"Russian-speaking" as "post-Soviet"? On social factors of the shared language identities of migrants from the FSU countries in the UK', 11th IMISCOE annual conference 'Immigration, Social Cohesion and Social Innovation', Instituto Universitario de Estudios sobre Migraciones (IUEM), Spain, August 27-29, 2014.

'"Aren't you ashamed, Mom?": Narrativisation of motherhood and strategies of children's linguistic upbringing of Russian-speaking mothers in the UK', 'Migrant Mothers caring for the future: creative interventions in making new citizens', London South Bank University, UK, September 18-19, 2014.

'Language games, playful modes and multilingual creativity of Russian-speaking migrants in the UK', 'Giving Voice to Cultures: Practices of Russia-Britain Cross-cultural Communication in the 21st century', Princess Dashkova Centre, University of Edinburgh, UK, December 12-13, 2014.

2015

'The importance of being ~~earnest~~ polite: Interpretations of discourse markers of social structure and interactional order by Russian-speaking migrants of the UK', BASEES Annual Conference, Cambridge, UK, March 28-30, 2015.

'"USSR in Newcastle": Language Ideologies and Practices of Community Building of Russian-speaking migrants in North-East England', Seminar on Transnationalism and Migration Studies, Dept. of Anthropology, European University at St. Petersburg, Russia, March 31, 2015.

'The Nostalgic, The Imaginary, and the Transcultural: The "Soviet" discourse of Russian-speaking migrants of North-East England', 'Memories and Identities in Central and Eastern Europe', IARCEES Annual Conference, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, May 7-10, 2015.

'Switching to the post-post-Soviet? Language practices, cultural identities and new communication spaces of Russian-speaking migrants in the UK', 'Past the "Post-": Theorizing the Post-Post-Soviet via (New) Media and Popular Culture', University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, June 11-12, 2015.

Kliuchnikova, P. (2015) Language attitudes and 'folk linguistics' of Russian-speaking migrants in the UK. *Russian Journal of Communication*. 7 (2). p. 79-92.

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Abdullaev, E. (2006) Russkie v Uzbekistane 2000-kh: identichnost' v usloviiakh demodernizatsii. *Diaspory.* 2. p. 6-35.

Abdullaev, E. (2009) Russkii iazyk: Zhizn' posle smerti. Iazyk, politika i obshchestvo v sovremennom Uzbekistane. *Neprikosnovennyi zapas.* 4 (66). Available from: http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2009/4/ab21.html. (Accessed 31/07/2015)

Adoni, H., Caspi, D. & Cohen, A. (2006) *Media, Minorities, and Hybrid Identities: the Arab and Russian Communities in Israel*. New York: Hampton Press.

Ag, A. & Jørgensen, J. (2013) Ideologies, Norms, and Practices in Youth Poly-Languaging. *International Journal of Bilingualism.* 17 (4). p. 525-39.

Ager, D. E. (1997) *Language, Community and the State.* Exeter: Intellect Books.

Agha, A. (2007) *Language and Social Relations*. Cambrdge: Cambridge University Press.

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