LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ON THE MARGINS

GLOBAL/LOCAL INTERACTIONS

Edited by
Sjaak Kroon and Jos Swanenberg

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Contents

9 Expanding Marginality

Linguascaping a Transcarpathian Spa in South-Western Ukraine

Petteri Laihonen and István Csernicskó

Introduction

According to Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2013, pp. 3–4), peripheral areas with distance to the power and economic centers and nonstandard and anti-normative phenomena can become centralized in certain areas such as in tourism, which can also benefit from their particular local cultural politics and policies that at times go against established norms. This chapter examines how multiple language ideologies are displayed through the 'linguascape' (Heller, Jaworski, & Thurlow, 2014, p. 432) of a contemporary multilingual tourist attraction in a peripheral region of Ukraine. That is, we explore how language is conceptualized in the Transcarpathian Oblast of Ukraine, and why and how some languages are used and others are absent in the realm of tourism and how these processes contribute to the escaping of the region's marginality.

The Transcarpathian Oblast (Закарпатська область, also 'Zakarpattia' or 'Zapakarpattya') is the most western administrative region of Ukraine, bordering Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania (see Figure 9.1). The oblast has a population of nearly 1.2 million inhabitants, and it is bordered by the Carpathian Mountains to the northeast, and the Tisza River to the south. The mountains, rivers (e.g. the source of the Tisza), lakes, old castles and spas made the region a tourist destination as early as the 19th century.

From the early 20th century to the present day, Transcarpathia has belonged to several states. With each change of state affiliation, the status of what counts as a minority and a majority language has also changed (see Csernicskó & Laihonen, 2016). Transcarpathia is also often mentioned as a region that is 'unusual within Ukraine, with relatively high percentages of ethnic minorities who speak their eponymous language' (Dickinson, 2010, p. 53). Among the regions of Ukraine, Transcarpathia is peripheral (see Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013) from several viewpoints. To begin with, it has remained largely unknown and essentially invisible for sociolinguistics. Beyond the general trend in current research to focus on metropoles, it is still peculiar, for instance, that Pavlenko

Figure 9.1 Transcarpathia in Ukraine (© István D. Molnár, www.naturalearthdata
.com).

(e.g. 2008, 2009) in her works often deals with different Ukrainian re-
gions and cities, yet Transcarpathia is never mentioned. This may be
regarded as evidence that Transcarpathia does not fit the general models
of explanation of the post-Soviet space, or Ukraine either.

This chapter looks at language ideologies in a multilingual space
presently caught between Western European visions of modernity and
post-Soviet transition. Language ideologies typically serve the interests
of certain groups, whereas other groups get marginalized by dominant
language ideologies (Kroskrity, 2000). Transcarpathia has throughout
its history played the role of a tiny geographical periphery of empires
and nation states. Distant capitals (Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Moscow
and Kyiv) have all drawn their language policies on the languages in
education and administration in Transcarpathia (see Csernicskó &
Laihonen, 2016 for details). Such policies have their foundation on na-
tional principles, which most often give little respect to local perspec-
tives and sociolinguistic realities. Batt (2002, p. 157) summarizes the
economic perspective on Transcarpathia as follows: '[I]t has always been
the most remote, inaccessible, economically backward region of what-
ever state it has belonged to.' Politically, the region has had little say to
its affairs or national matters either, even though the dominant powers
have all recognized the region's particularity around European histori-
cal turning points (1918–1919, 1938–1940, 1991–1992) by promising
autonomy for the region; however it has never been put it into practice
(Magocsi, 2015).

From the viewpoint of its hybrid linguistic formation (Csernicskó &
Laihonen, 2016; Dickinson, 2010), the speakers of different vernaculars
in Transcarpathia have been marginalized, on the one hand, by what

Pennycook (2012, p. 18) has called the western European 'normative vision of modernity' where purity and coherence are expected from 'nations, languages and cultures'. On the other hand, taking a post-Soviet perspective, Bilaniuk (in Dickinson, 2010, p. 54) describes the legacy of Soviet language ideology as an emphasis on purity and correctness in language perhaps driven by the ideology of imposing a strong central authority on the peoples and languages of the former Eastern Bloc, but without the emphasis of official monolingualism typical for Western Europe. The language spoken by the majority of the inhabitants is named Rusyn in other countries, where it has been officially recognized as a minority language (e.g. in Slovakia, Hungary and Poland), but in Transcarpathia, it has been officially categorized as dialectal Ukrainian since 1946.

Everyday language use in Transcarpathia is often devalued by speakers of standard Ukrainian and Rusyn speakers alike as 'bad' Ukrainian, consisting of isolated peripheral dialects 'mixed' with Hungarian, Polish and German expressions (e.g. Dickinson, 2010). In other words, Transcarpathia is a cultural and linguistic periphery both for its numerous minorities (e.g. Hungarians, Romanians, Slovaks, Germans etc.) and its majority population, Rusyn, whose language and ethnicity has been integrated into Ukrainian after World War II. The concept of 'superdiversity' (Vertovec, 2010) has not yet been systematically applied to regions that belonged to the former Soviet Union. Due to its historical development, Transcarpathia has always been characterized by a high amount of diversity and it is nowadays certainly participating in processes of globalization. In this chapter, we will, however, mainly focus on digital forms of complexity that accompany Transcarpathian processes.

Thurlow and Jaworski (2010, p. 130) state that 'tourism is de facto a quintessentially semiotic industry – a site of fierce cultural and symbolic production'. The study of language ideologies in touristic materials can shed light to why some languages are displayed, used in different functions or commodified (see Heller, Pujolar, & Duchêne, 2014) and why others have been removed (see Pavlenko, 2008) from different touristic spaces. Finally, the processes of change in language ideologies (see Silverstein, 1979) accompany most important political, cultural and economic transformations, such as the breakup of the Soviet Union and recent developments in contemporary Ukraine.

Peripheries often have the potentiality to move to focus with changes in perspective (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013). In this chapter, we first look at contemporary representations of and discourses on Transcarpathia and its linguistic situation to show how the apparently 'peripheral multilingualism' (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013, p. 6), that is, non-standard, devalued and deemed useless linguistic repertoires and practices, can be revalued and commodified in tourism as a cultural asset. Then we situate our study within current theories and sociolinguistic

methods of analyzing the intersection of language and tourism. In the empirical section, we ask how language is conceptualized in Transcarpathia through its representations both generally and specifically. For the latter, we consider the case of one tourist attraction, a recently designed and developed hot springs spa resort and hotel. In the final section, we discuss the implications of the findings for local inhabitants and their linguistic repertoires as well as to the opportunities and challenges for their linguistic practices to be revalued as valuable and useful.

Contemporary Representations of Transcarpathia's Linguistic Situation

Before 1918, Transcarpathia belonged to the Kingdom of Hungary and to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The peace treaty that ended World War I ceded the region to Czechoslovakia. From 1938 to 1944, it was again a part of Hungary, after which it was annexed by the Soviet Union from Czechoslovakia in 1946. Since 1991, it has been part of an independent Ukraine. The Ukraine Today portal of the Rada (the Ukrainian parliament) states the following: 'No other oblast of Ukraine has such national diversity as does Zakarpattya: it is inhabited by representatives of 80 nationalities' (Rada, 2015). Regarding Transcarpathia, the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (2015) states that it 'has been for long a convenient junction between the countries of northern and southern, eastern and western Europe'. These passages suggest that in contemporary official Ukrainian discourses, diversity, borders and transnational mobility are connected to Transcarpathia. It is notable that official sources seem to even exaggerate the multiethnic and multilingual character of the region. In a closer reading of the number of so-called nationalities or ethnicities, it is difficult to come up with 80 different ones, at least in significant numbers of people. According to Thurlow and Jaworski (2010, p. 131), such an 'exaggeration of cultural differences' is typical for 'touristic representations of language(s)'. It is these representations to which we turn next.

Lonely Planet's online travel guide provides a global interpretation of Transcarpathia's 'otherness' (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010, p. 131). The guide describes the region in the following manner:

> This corner of the world, where the Soviet Union once faded out and Europe took over, is a melting pot of Hungarian, Slovak, Ukrainian and Roma cultures and has a fascinating social mix. It's also the home of Ukraine's best red wines and most impenetrable dialects.
>
> (*Lonely Planet*, 2015)

The *Lonely Planet* text also conceptualizes multiculturalism as consisting of certain named cultures. Here, however, the number of different

cultures is reduced to four from the previous 80 nationalities. As a meta-linguistic commentary, *Lonely Planet* mentions the region's 'impenetrable dialects'. For the English-speaking reader, it might not be clear which dialects the text is referring to, even though from a western European ethnolinguistic nation-state worldview, Ukrainian dialects seems to be a safe assumption (cf. Dickinson, 2010). In addition, the *Lonely Planet*, in its English-only text, assumes a reader that is knowledgeable in Slavic languages and their regional varieties, knowledge which is most likely beyond the grasp of a typical reader of the travel guide (cf. Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010, p. 144).

The *Lonely Planet* passage suggests two conclusions. First, the linguistic diversity of Transcarpathia may be erased and diminished to a set of recognizable categories displaying widespread linguistic hierarchies. Second, even in the case of global English-only materials on Transcarpathia, metalinguistic touristic discourses go beyond the typical practices of mentioning a local language and commenting on the local inhabitants' competence (or lack thereof) in English (see Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010, p. 143).

Peripheral Tourism and Language(s)

According to Thurlow and Jaworski (2010, p. 9), communication between tourism providers (hosts) and tourists is fundamental to the construction 'of the touristic experience, the meaning of culture and space, as well as to each other and their identities'. Kallen (2009), in turn, established that being a tourist is about breaking away from home and everyday routines. Language has a direct role in that process: 'The "foreign" language (…) offers an immediate sense of transcendence from the mundane, and a token of authenticity in the new surroundings' (Kallen, 2009, p. 271). Beyond having a break from everyday routines and finding authentic experiences, safety is also an important need for a tourist. According to Kallen (2009, p. 272), this need translates into the possibility of understanding and being understood at the tourist destination. From this point of view, the *Lonely Planet* description of Transcarpathia contains no assurances of linguistic safety for the English reader.

Kallen (2009, p. 274) also describes the touristic experience as 'the representation of the country or region'. Peripheral multilingual regions in Western Europe and Canada have been studied from the point of view of languages and tourism, most notably in a volume by Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2013) and in a special issue by Heller, Jaworski and Thurlow (2014). For instance, Kelly-Holmes and Pietikäinen (2014) describe how in Sámiland English as a touristic lingua franca, Finnish as the national language – and the language of most everyday local communication – and the Sámi languages as so-called authentic indigenous languages alternate during a touristic show. A common trait for the

Western European linguistic minorities investigated is that the use of a minority language is most often explained as a way to discursively construct authenticity through using a characteristically local code, which is always accompanied by a national language or lingua franca translation (see Moriarty, 2014). In this manner, authentic (local) and safe (global) touristic experiences (Kallen, 2009) are offered simultaneously.

Thurlow and Jaworski (2010, p. 14) state that their study was based on English-speaking British tourists. What is more, Heller, et al. (2014) propose a general model of understanding tourism as a part of the economic history of the West and its post-capitalist stage, thus restricting their investigation historically to Western Europe and North America. With regards to the nation-state, as Brubaker (2011) has suggested, a 'post-multinationalism' stage began after the collapse of the Soviet Union in countries such as Ukraine. That is, multicultural federations (the USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia) have been divided into smaller units, such as Ukraine, which have then begun nation-building enterprises. These efforts have in turn been encouraged by post-World War II Western European models of diversity management, which themselves are based on the hegemony of one language over the domains of politics, education, media and administration. From this backdrop, we can hypothesize that tourism and the role of languages in Eastern Europe will also divert from rather than converge with Western European development.

Tourism and Language(s) in the Post-Soviet Space

The Austro-Hungarian Empire was famous for its tourism industry, and especially for its luxurious spas. In Transcarpathia, such past forms of luxury are still visible, especially in the architecture, but the mobility between different regions and countries has not been restored. In interviews that we conducted, local inhabitants recalled with nostalgia the period of workers' tourism during the Soviet era (1945–1991) as the time when everybody had the chance to travel in groups to Leningrad, Sochi and even to the Soviet Far East. The well-known Soviet restrictions to travel to the west were seldom mentioned. In Transcarpathia, the Soviet era came to an end in 1991 when Ukraine declared independence. Immediately afterward, the economy collapsed.

Pavlenko, in her discussion of Russian tourism (2015), found that the post-Soviet privatization of the economy in Russia quickly resulted in a new wealthy class interested in tourism. In Ukraine, however, a somewhat stable currency was established only later, around 1996. In Transcarpathia, the new forms of income have been based on informal forms of border trade, border transportation and seasonal work in European Union countries (see Csernicskó & Laihonen, 2016).

There are few studies on tourism inside the post-Soviet space. However, Pavlenko (2015) has recently studied the touristic habits of Russians in the west. Furthermore, Muth (2015) and Marten, Ladziņa, Pošeiko, & Murinska (2013) have examined the post-Soviet Baltic States from the point of view of languages in tourism. According to Pavlenko (2008), Russian was removed from the post-Soviet space beyond Russia soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The removal included especially the 'elimination of Russian from official paperwork, official communication, the state-sponsored media and public signage' (Pavlenko, 2008, p. 282). However, as Pavlenko (2015, p. 4) indicates, at the same time a lot of 'mid-market' Russian tourists began to travel to the bordering regions where everyday competence of Russian is still common. Furthermore, Pavlenko (2015) establishes that Russian tourists typically spend a lot of money and seldom speak any language other than Russian. Accordingly, Marten, et al. (2013) describe how at Baltic touristic sites, Russian has been replaced by English on the surface level (e.g. in public signs, the names and webpages), but on the spot, Russian remains the lingua franca, and sometimes, even the language of communication between the local hosts. As Muth (2015) documents, in the case of the recent revival of the Lithuanian health tourism sector, Russian patients were targeted by capitalizing on the knowledge of Russian language and culture by nurses and doctors. This indicates a recent paradigmatic change from so-called de-Russification (i.e. Russian language removal) to a stage where western medical expertise is now advertised and provided in a touristic package that accommodates Russian linguistically as well as culturally (Muth, 2015). Ryazanova-Clarke (2014, p. 12) even posits that a reemergence of Russian beyond Russia is taking place due to its perceived transnational economic value.

Method and Data

Our chapter examines the linguascape of a contemporary multilingual tourist attraction in Transcarpathia, next to the EU border. The linguascape denotes an extended notion of the linguistic landscape (Kallen, 2009), including all kinds of images, symbols and forms of interaction and discourse, spoken and written, included in tourism. In line with Kallen (2009, p. 274), in such discourses and interaction, the tourist often has the role of being addressed, being the audience or being an observer. He adds that the tourist can also shape the linguascape (Kallen, 2009, p. 274).

In this study, we follow the methodological strands of Heller, et al. (2014) by focusing on the discourses of tourism, readable in the linguistic landscape (e.g. Kallen, 2009) and online materials (e.g. Muth, 2015; Pavlenko, 2015), all of which we treat as manifestations of language

ideologies. In line with Heller, Jaworski and Thurlow (2014), we are interested in the semiotic (non)representations of cultures and languages in the tourism of a multilingual region. We also contribute to the discussion on the periphery-center relationship as conceptualized in Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2013).

As data we use touristic materials available in Transcarpathia and online. Ethnographic insights on Transcarpathia in this study are based on two sources: (1) long-term research by Csernicskó, who is a researcher native to Transcarpathia and competent in Hungarian, Ukrainian and Russian (see e.g. Csernicskó, 2013) and (2) the readings and numerous visits to the region by Laihonen, a foreign researcher competent in Hungarian, and especially, the one-month fieldwork carried out by him in two villages in November 2012. During this fieldwork, 40 interviews were carried out in Hungarian and approximately 1,000 photos were taken. For this chapter, all references to tourism in the data set were mapped and complementary data were gathered to find alternative perspectives and phenomena not included in the data. In the empirical section, we focus on multimodal materials from various sources, including the Internet, where we were especially searching for the linguistic practices and reviews of tourists that have visited Transcarpathia.

Language(s) in the Field: The Sociolinguistic Context

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, flows of migration and travel in general have changed their main directions from east to west. This change of direction is observable in the interviews with local people. In the past, study, work and (Soviet-type) tourism often included sojourns to the east, whereas now the target destinations are more often in the West. The spread of English is visible also in Transcarpathia as a major sign of the new western orientation. However, knowledge of Russian as a functional lingua franca still supersedes English, whereas English is now the lingua franca in the symbolic realm (see Pavlenko, 2009, p. 258). According to our experience, English is rarely of any help in getting by in Transcarpathia. Instead, knowledge of Ukrainian, Russian or Hungarian is needed. While browsing online for comments on tourism in Transcarpathia (see 'Languages online' below), we found that there are few in English. As Pavlenko (2009, p. 258) has already pointed out for other parts of Ukraine, English with little clear informational content is also often used in advertising for its believed emotional value.

In the two censuses carried out in Ukraine (in 1989 and in 2001), the three major languages spoken by the inhabitants of Transcarpathia were Ukrainian, Russian and Hungarian (for detailed census information see, Csernicskó & Laihonen, 2016). In the field, the first Slavic language of the majority of Transcarpathians is often conceptualized

as a dialect of Ukrainian that is distinct from any other dialects (e.g. Dickinson, 2010, p. 60). Before Transcarpathia's annexation to the Soviet Union (1946), the local Slavic vernacular was conceptualized as the Rusyn language (see Magocsi, 2015). Still today, there is a considerable distance between the local vernacular and standard Ukrainian. Such differences, however, are often explained as local peculiarities, changing from village to village. According to Dickinson (2010), the local Slavic dialects are viewed negatively as hybrid or 'bad' Ukrainian by Ukrainian speakers from other regions. Standard Ukrainian is used in national media and in highly formal contexts; however, in everyday interaction, it indexes people from other regions of Ukraine. In addition, Russian is still often used as the formal register by those grown up in the Soviet Union.

The amount of ethnic Russians in Transcarpathia did not exceed 5% even during the Soviet era, but Russian was the language of social advancement and interethnic communication in the region. The censuses suggest that between 1989 and 2001 about half of the 1.2 million inhabitants have removed Russian from their language repertoire (see Csernicskó & Laihonen, 2016). This removal is of course only symbolic, and can be explained as a display of the willingness to participate in the Ukrainian nation-building project. Dickinson (2010, p. 71) suggests that, from a 'Ukrainian nationalist ideology' perspective, in local interethnic communication 'Russian language use is interpreted as a form of resistance, as the impolite refusal to learn Ukrainian and, by extension, refusal to recognize the change in regime from the Russian-dominated Soviet Union to the developing Ukrainian nation-state'. Nevertheless, during her fieldwork in Transcarpathia, Dickinson (2010) discovered other ideologies as well, ones that are in favor of retaining Russian in the region. These include acknowledging the Soviet legacy of Russian as the 'language of interethnic communication', and an economic ideology, where Russian is viewed as a business asset. In any case, together with the imperative to erase Russian from the public space and official use in Transcarpathia, it is a general expectation that Russian-speaking tourists should have no trouble in being understood. On a major tourism portal for Transcarpathia (Zakarpattya tourism, 2015), most accommodation and other services advertise that they speak Ukrainian and Russian, in some cases, also Hungarian or English, and more rarely, German or Romanian.

According to *Ukraine Today* (Rada, 2015), tourism has the potential to become a leading economic sector in Transcarpathia. Domestic tourism is a popular choice for the middle class, since the EU countries and other touristic destinations require a visa. The webpages produced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (2015) state that most foreign tourists visiting Transcarpathia come from Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Russia.

The south-western swath of Transcarpathia can be considered a Hungarian enclave. The area on the eastern bank of the Tisza River has approximately 120,000 Hungarian-speaking inhabitants, as recorded in the 2001 census. For Hungarian heritage tourists (see Feischmidt, 2008), there are several culturally significant destinations in Transcarpathia. Some of the most well-known include the Verecke Pass in the Carpathian Mountains, the Hungarians' mythical place of homecoming to Central Europe around 896 CE; the castle of Munkács (Ukrainian: Mukachevo); and the remains of the Árpád line, the World War II Hungarian defensive line in the Carpathian Mountains. According to Feischmidt (2008, p. 122), 'national sites that lie outside the boundaries of the nation state (…) have particularly strong emotive power.' Such places in Transcarpathia have now been 'liberated' from the constraints of communist ideology and they have been restored and made available for visitors since the end of Soviet rule in 1991. Hungarian national heritage sites in Transcarpathia are now frequently visited by groups of Hungarian intellectuals, national-minded people (cf. Feischmidt, 2008) and pensioners, especially since the one-sided opening of the border after the Orange Revolution in 2004–2005. (Since 2006, no visa to Ukraine has been required for Hungarians or other citizens of western European countries.) Hungarian heritage tourism to Transcarpathia can be viewed as a part of what Feischmidt (2008) has called 'reconstruction of lost territories', a phenomenon she identified while exploring similar destinations in Romania. She introduced the term 're-territorialization' and defined it as a trend where 'certain places are (re)discovered and invested with new symbolic meanings, making them the target and locale of identity-search and creation' (Feischmidt, 2008, p. 119). There are various small Hungarian tourist agencies organizing trips to the Hungarian heritage sites in Transcarpathia. Such sites indicate a 'golden era' of the region, an era when it was not in the margins, but in the center of a historical Hungarian national event: 'home-coming', a national uprising, or a defensive line, the symbols and relics of which can all be easily commodified for the needs of post-socialist Hungarian heritage tourism.

Local Hungarians have also primarily targeted Hungarians from Hungary as sources of tourism. Most significantly, there is a network of village tourism providers who accommodate Hungarian groups and organize trips to Hungarian sites in Transcarpathia. We interviewed two hosts that were part of this network and they explained that there are many requests from Ukrainians as well, but that they prefer Hungarian guests, because Ukrainians are less dependable, tend to have many complaints and do not take care of the premises. That is why the network advertises mostly in Hungarian and on Hungarian forums. Finally, with regard to Hungarian tourism in Transcarpathia, we first and foremost observed that most Hungarians from Hungary come to Transcarpathia

for border trade, typically for petrol, which is much cheaper in Ukraine than it is in Hungary. Beyond the groups of heritage tourists, most Hungarians from Hungary have little information about Transcarpathia and they have concerns about safety in the region.

In this section, we have not described the relationship of the other languages and ethnicities to tourism. That is, our discussions of multilingualism and basic conceptualizations of language manifested in tourism in Transcarpathia is, at best, a partial one. For the rest of this chapter, we concentrate our study on a specific tourist destination in the westernmost swath of Transcarpathia, which has a Hungarian majority.

Kosohove Hot Springs Spa Resort

In this section, we examine a single tourist attraction in Transcarpathia, a thermal spa resort located near, what we call with a pseudonym, the Kosohove hot springs. In the 2000s, the spa has been refurbished and expanded and it has made a notable investment in cultural and linguistic commodification. It is also a significant site for the contemporary development of tourism in Transcarpathia. For instance, on the global portal of TripAdvisor, it is among the sites with the most reviews from the Zakarpattia Oblast.

The Kosohove hot springs spa resort in Transcarpathia received some global attention due to one of its promotional videos being chosen as the worst spa video for 2014. In the video, people in swimsuits dance around different pools to the 2012 global pop hit 'Gangnam Style' by the South Korean artist Psy (see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gangnam_Style). The Gangnam Style promo video gives an indication of how the spa uses multimodal semiotic resources including cultural symbols and different languages to address its potential customers.

The spa is located 200 meters from the Hungarian border, in the territory of a village where, according to the 2001 Ukrainian census, 96% of the inhabitants speak Hungarian as their first language. Recently, however, Ukrainians have also discovered the Hungarian enclave. In Ukrainian tourism, which is practiced by the new upper class, the Hungarian area has become a fairly popular destination.

Languages on Site: Hungarian

As a new phenomenon, Ukrainians from the eastern part of the country are even investing in tourist sites found in the Hungarian enclave. They regard the Hungarian image as a resource, as can be seen in Figure 9.2, which shows the main building of the thermal bath.

During the Soviet period, this tourist attraction was an open air spa, with a sanatorium next to it. Now a Ukrainian family from the eastern

Figure 9.2 'Iváncsó estates, thermal bath' in Hungarian (© Petteri Laihonen).

part of the country has invested in it and, instead of giving it a typical face-lift, they built a brand new, luxuriant bathhouse with several Hungarian symbols, such as statues of Hungarian kings and paintings depicting events from Hungarian history as well as Hungarian folk motifs. One of the rooms of the bath has a collection of Hungarian kings. In advertising for the spa, the term 'royal sauna' is used for this space. The captions for Hungarian images are in Hungarian only. The more symbolic the sign, the more likely it is to be in Hungarian only. The Hungarian aspect is also mentioned on the spa's homepage, which states that the bath was built in 'Austro-Hungarian style'.

Among local Hungarians, who use the Hungarian language for most of their everyday activities, however, the main text on the tower of the building and above the main entrance, *Iváncsó birtok* ('Iváncsó estates', see Figure 9.2), is seen as a sign of bad taste and putting on airs. It is common knowledge that the investor was not a Hungarian, so imitating the habit of bygone Hungarian nobles who possessed *birtok* (estates) and combining it with a Slavic name (*Iván* + *csó*) makes it a cultural and linguistic hybrid, rendering it kitsch in the eyes of local Hungarians that we interviewed. On top of that, it is a spa, not an estate, so the sign is clearly a misnomer as far as the locals are concerned. In this manner, the Hungarian linguistic identity has become commodified, and so Pujolar's (2013, p. 71) question about who has the right to represent local culture, including language, and how, is now being posed by the Hungarians in Transcarpathia as well.

Ukrainian and English

Most of the functional texts, however, are bilingual, in Ukrainian and Hungarian. For example, the spa's restaurants serve Hungarian dishes and their signs have Hungarian or Hungarian and Ukrainian bilingual inscriptions. Some of the texts are in English and Ukrainian (e.g. *Caution!*) and some are in English only *(Relax Zone)*. The signs with a text in English only are typically multimodal, with universal icons indicating 'silence' or 'rest'. In that way, there is no functional need to have a text in any language, but English-only signs can be seen to add to the image of this destination at the margins as 'modern' and 'global' in the same way the Gangnam Style video ad does.

In contrast, the menus in the spa's Japanese teahouse, its only non-Hungarian restaurant and the official signs regarding the contents of the thermal water are in Ukrainian only. In other words, the more functional (monomodal, informative and detailed) or official a sign is, the more likely it is to be in Ukrainian only. For instance, the quality of water is detailed in Ukrainian only. Throughout the spa, similar technical descriptions are in Ukrainian only. Also the homepage of the spa is available only in Ukrainian.

In general, a global mix is present: English is used in a place where the customers come from the eastern parts of Ukraine, combined with the decision to put a Japanese tea house in a Hungarian spa, together with bars and grills serving traditional Hungarian dishes. This indicates that the spa, as Pujolar (2013, p. 70) has expressed in relation to Welsh heritage tourism, is negotiating an 'aesthetic balance between providing local flavor and catering to the needs of contemporary customers'. In the case of the spa, it means building the image of a global or western tourist attraction, symbolized by the use of Hungarian emblems and language with some English language and Japanese culture mixed in. At the same time, however, the Ukrainian tourist is assured that all of this is available without having to go to the trouble of getting a Schengen visa and without having to cope with a non-Slavic language.

Languages Online: Russian

A further question concerns who the spa's customers are and what their language preferences are. During visits to the spa and in conversations with its staff, we have learned that most of the guests come from the eastern part of Ukraine. This information is supported by numerous customer reviews and comments on Google+ and TripAdvisor as well as on Facebook and on the Russian social networking site VKontakte. Most of the reviews focus on the spa facilities such as the thermal pools and 'royal saunas' or on the prices of services. A frequent evaluation of the spa resort is that it is a 'European' resort. Here are two examples

(in Russian) from TripAdvisor: (1) Все сделано на Европейском уровне! (Everything is done at the European level!), (2) Я в восторге, маленький кусочек Европы (I am delighted, a little piece of Europe). Such frequent remarks by Ukrainian tourists indicate that the resort is already a part of Western Europe, which can be reached without a visa. That is, the margins are constructed here as a part of the economic and cultural center, Western Europe. As one reviewer put it: 'It is like being abroad without crossing the border.'

The Hungarian character of the spa resort is often mentioned as well. For instance: отличный термальный курорт, альтернатива Венгрии (Excellent spa resort, an alternative to Hungary) or Сервис и бассейны не хуже чем в Будапеште (Service and the pools are not worse than in Budapest). The spa's Hungarian restaurants also received frequent positive remarks. In this manner, the European character is at times replaced with a Hungarian one. That is, the spa is a part of European Ukraine, but it has a Hungarian aspect as well. The negative reviews, especially on VKontakte and Facebook, deal with the prices, which are considered too high for Ukraine. Other comments state that the prices are acceptable because the spa's 'European' character justifies 'European prices'. There were relatively few comments by customers from Hungary and elsewhere, which supports the idea that Hungarians from Hungary prefer to visit health tourism sites in Hungary.

At the end of 2015, Google+ had 113 reviews of the spa, with an average rating of 4.4 out of 5. About 60% of the reviews are in Russian and the rest are in Ukrainian. One was in English. In a similar manner, a majority of reviews on TripAdvisor for the spa are in Russian, even though there are also several reviews in English. For the majority of guests, Russian is the language of writing reviews. It is commonplace knowledge that the Ukrainian population is bilingual (e.g. Bilaniuk, 2010) and this bilingualism has often been described as diglossic (cf. Kamusella, Nomachi, & Gibson, 2016). According to the 2001 Ukrainian census, 29.6% of the population is Russian speaking. Further, 39.5% of city dwellers, who make most of the tourists, claimed Russian as their first language in the census. In addition, Russian seems to be a review-writing lingua franca, just as elsewhere the lingua franca is English, as indicated by the English reviews in TripAdvisor by Ukrainian guests. In general, language use on the Ukrainian Internet is dominantly Russian (see Csernicskó, 2016, for details). As mentioned above, the spa website is available in Ukrainian only, which can be seen as both providing linguistic safety (Kallen, 2009) for domestic tourists and forming a linguistic political statement vis-à-vis the Russian-dominated online space in Ukraine.

No accommodations are made for Russian in writing by the spa itself, there is no sign of Russian in any of its materials and the souvenirs are

in Ukrainian only. The texts of the postcards and souvenirs indicate a commitment to Ukrainian nation-building efforts and their images to symbolic Hungarian nation building. Most significantly, the absence of Russian language and Soviet or Russian images in symbolic and functional signs is achieved. However, it is worth noting that this erasure also seems to be accepted by those that use Russian in their reviews. For example, no mention of language is made in the customer comments, indicating that Russian is still facilitated in the spoken realm. This can be interpreted as a local manifestation of the nationwide and normative pattern of mutual non-accommodation of Russian and Ukrainian, as described by Bilaniuk (2010), where Ukrainian as well as Russian speakers are expected to understand each other, and at the same time, display a preference for one of the languages in their own communication. Such a pattern creates a preference for monolingual signage in the Slavic languages, which is the case in the spa as well. In addition, in the spa's job announcements we found on VKontakte, applicants were required to speak either Ukrainian or Russian. That is, the spa management takes for granted that anybody speaking Ukrainian or Russian will be competent in the other Slavic language as well.

Conclusions

Tourism in the Transcarpathia region of Ukraine displays the region's complex and heterogeneous multilingualism (cf. Dickinson, 2010) along with the post-Soviet ideological tensions over Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism (cf. Pavlenko, 2008). Our study has also examined the practices of designing local vernaculars in different ways for different touristic target groups as manifestations of language ideologies in the present context of socioeconomic change, current identification processes and nation-building ideologies. Our study indicates that the region of Transcarpathia, as a periphery, can be brought into the center (cf. Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013) for Ukrainian tourists through the commodification of Hungarian language and culture as the most modern, European corner of the country. As one of the reviewers put it on Google+: Я в Украине, но как будто в Европе (I am in Ukraine, but it is as if I were in Europe). In this way, Transcarpathia's image is not that of a marginal, 'rural bastion' (Heller, et al., 2014, p. 544), which is a typical view of minority regions in the western world, even though the oblast is among one of the least economically developed and most rural regions in Ukraine.

Our case study of a spa resort indicated that the targeted tourists come from other Ukrainian regions, east of the Carpathians, the majority of which consists of wealthier, bilingual (Russian and Ukrainian) Ukrainians – what Pavlenko (2015) calls 'mid-market travelers'. This

group has recently lost access to its primary domestic touristic destination, the Crimea, and is thus seeking new attractions in western Ukraine, a need that can be seen in the continuing expansion of the spa. The use of Hungarian can be seen to contribute to both the discursive and symbolic construction linguistic authenticity and to constructing a Western European image, together with occasional English and global culture, such as the Gangnam Style promo video and the Japanese teahouse.

The extensive commodification of Hungarian for Ukrainian tourists by Ukrainian owners has been a source of some contestation by the local Hungarians, whose own village tourism network has targeted Hungarian heritage tourists from Hungary, thus combining Hungarian national pride and local profit (cf. Heller & Duchêne, 2012) in tourism. In these cases, Hungarian national heritage sites are brought into the center of Hungarian national ideology and commodified by local Hungarians as touristic services in Hungarian for Hungarians from Hungary (cf. Feischmidt, 2008).

Discussion

Linguistic diversity and multilingualism are a major resource for Transcarpathia, which has an iconic image in the region as a junction between east and west, and can thus be viewed as a mobile region in terms of periphery-center conceptualizations. Tourism has the potential of becoming a major source of income in the region. In these tourism sites, several local and (trans)national languages have already been utilized to produce instrumental and symbolic added value. Our case study focused on the westernmost swath bordering Hungary, which is inhabited mainly by Hungarians. For these inhabitants of Ukraine, tourism can provide a form of formal employment in the Transcarpathian region itself and a chance to remain in their home communities. For instance, the Hungarian-dominant municipality next to Kosohove spa has recently earned much-needed revenues from the spa (e.g. through community taxes and land sales). Also, the spa has employed many of the Hungarian-speaking inhabitants in the Hungarian-dominant villages nearby. In this manner, the spa has enabled the Hungarian population to find work in Ukraine, and thus, to remain in the region.

As in other traditional multilingual regions (e.g. Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen, 2014), there are linguistic tensions in Transcarpathia as well. As our analysis of the spa's use of Hungarian in its name (*Iváncsó birtok*) indicated, local Hungarians were concerned about issues of linguistic purity (cf. Kamusella, Nomachi, & Gibson, 2016; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011). Furthermore, the new opportunity to work in a touristic site intended for the Ukrainian majority population has revealed the lack of local inhabitants' language skills in standard Ukrainian or

Russian. For this reason, local villagers from the Hungarian-dominated region have been employed in only low-paying jobs as, for example, parking lot attendants and kitchen staff. The better paying and managerial positions have been filled by more multilingual city dwellers commuting some 50 kilometers to the spa every day. The reason for this, according to one of the managers, was that local Hungarians do not speak either Ukrainian or Russian well enough, and thus, they cannot be employed in jobs, which include extensive communication with customers. The unequal mastery of the norm is also an aspect of the discourses on peripheral multilingualism (see Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013). Further, the manager explained that at first all staff are only hired for three months, after which they have to pass a test of describing their tasks, work equipment, facilities and procedures in Ukrainian or Russian. If they fail this test, they are no longer employed by the spa. That is, in the case of the spa also, normative language ideologies are at work, which marginalize local rural inhabitants.

In the villages near the spa, the local Hungarians use mostly Hungarian in their daily lives. Their children attend Hungarian schools, which are considered essential by local Hungarian elite for producing standard Hungarian speakers in Ukraine and maintaining a significant Hungarian population in Transcarpathia (see e.g. Csernicskó, 2005). Knowledge of standard Hungarian is especially valuable when interacting with Hungarians from Hungary, including heritage tourism. However, recalling such encounters occasional marginalizing moments were also mentioned in interviews, when a local vernacular nonstandard or 'mixed' Hungarian expression was underlined by Hungarian metropolitan tourists.

In the Hungarian medium schools, Ukrainian is learned from the first year, but to little effect (see Csernicskó, 2015). Since Ukrainian independence in 1991, Russian is no longer taught in Transcarpathian schools. In the contacts with local Ukrainians, the local vernacular Rusyn is used, which is considerably different from standard Ukrainian (cf. Dickinson, 2010). For these reasons, the younger generation of Hungarians speak no Russian and only a little standard Ukrainian (Kulyk, 2013). This produces a further challenge for the local Hungarians to escape their marginality inside Ukraine.

Since 1991, there has been a major investment in teaching English in all Ukrainian schools. At the time of our fieldwork, English was taught from the first year in all schools. In addition, considerable help from Western European countries as well as from the United States and Canada (e.g. by sending volunteer teachers) has been provided to enhance the teaching of English in schools and other institutions. In Transcarpathia, however, English-speaking tourists are an exception. Russian is still used as the instrumental lingua franca in the region, in interethnic communication and in communication with tourists from other parts

of Ukraine and as a major digital language. Our study indicated that people in Ukraine with the most internal mobility are Russian speakers or use Russian as their touristic lingua franca. English is important for symbolic reasons and for targeting western European mobility. However, more investment in teaching Ukrainian and the reappraisal of Russian in educational language policy could enable better integration of Transcarpathian Hungarians and other linguistic minorities into the Ukrainian job market, such as the analyzed spa.

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