

Otherring *surzhyk* in implicit metalinguistic discourse

Introduction

Ukrainian-Russian language contact and the socio-cultural and political conceptualisations of it in metalinguistic discourse are an important dimension of the cultural interaction implied in the term Ukrainian-Russian borderland. Not only does the impact of the language contact on the contacting varieties in itself bear witness to the intensity of such interaction, the nature and extent of this impact on the respective varieties also provide us with information on the wider societal framework in which it took place. The historical development of Ukrainian-Russian language relations, the changes in status attributed to the contacting varieties and the frequent code-switching resulting in heavy linguistic interference (most profoundly affecting the Ukrainian language) make language contact a frequently discussed language issue in Post-Soviet Ukraine.

The positions taken in the language ideological debates on Ukrainian-Russian language contact form parts of wider narratives of the Ukrainian-Russian cultural encounter, and are intensely connected to conceptualisations of national identity and of nation-building in the Post-Soviet Ukrainian state. They are further informed by notions on other language-and-society-topics (the importance of language for national identity and uniqueness, standard language versus non-standardised varieties etc) and by the general political and socio-economic development of Post-Soviet Ukrainian society.

As is clear from the discourse born out of the Kuchmagate scandal, the latter influence is mutual, as positions on specific registers

and language varieties that emerge in the language ideological debates can enter the political debate and affect political issues. While the infamous Kuchmagate tapes, allegedly made by a tape-recorder hidden under a sofa in the presidential cabinet, are permeated by obscene language, a language variety frequently used by (purportedly) president Kuchma and some other major politicians and officials on the tapes is *surzhyk*, a pejorative term for ‘mixed’ language varieties emerging from Ukrainian-Russian language contact. Commenting on the scandal and its significance for Ukrainian society, analysts repeatedly pointed out the ubiquitous use of *surzhyk* on the tapes, which for some of them was as discrediting to the presidential team as was the sometimes sinister content – what the protagonists actually were saying or were being portrayed as saying. Negative notions on *surzhyk* established in language ideological debates here served to reinforce oppositional delegitimising discourse on the president and his rule¹.

This paper is not devoted to an analysis of Ukrainian language policies or of language ideological debates on the position of *surzhyk* in the language situation of Post-Soviet Ukraine. Instead, we identify two ways of speaking about *surzhyk*: *explicit and implicit discourse*. In explicit discourse, *surzhyk* is discussed as a matter in its own right, either in academic sociolinguistic or publicist texts or in broader discussions on language politics or language-in-society themes. Arguments are here often made in the context of wider language ecological relations in Ukraine, in which the significance of *surzhyk* for the ‘state and status’ of other language varieties, most importantly for the Ukrainian or Russian standard languages is discussed. For Ukrainophone language ideology brokers a key topic is the dangers and possibilities of *surzhyk* for Ukrainian language revitalisation – the reversing of the process of language shift from Ukrainian (dialects) to Russian, that has significantly altered the language situation in large parts of Ukraine during the last two centuries. Russophone ideology brokers here often emphasise the consequences for Russian language quality (by which is understood the mastering of Standard Russian) of linguistic Ukrainisation in the educational system in a situation where the language of instruction and dominant language outside the class might differ.

Furthermore, as in all debates studied in the contributions to the volume on language ideological debates edited by Blommaert (1999), the role for various language varieties in the nation-building process is a central theme that permeates the debates and intersects with most other aspects under discussion. We can rather safely assume that whenever surzhyk is discussed in explicit discourse issues of national identity are never far away. The status associated with the speaking and writing of various language varieties in Ukraine is another recurring theme in the debate on language policy and language rights for Ukrainian- or Russian-speakers in different parts of the country, and is a vital element in Ukrainophone accounts of how, historically, the present language situation has evolved.

If explicit discourse is the prime material for studies of language ideological debates, in this paper we focus on how language ideological notions on surzhyk are shaped by implicit discourse. As is underlined by several papers published in Schieffelin et al. (1998), the implicit workings of ideology is a central task of research on the interaction between language and society. For our purposes it is certainly interesting to study ideological presuppositions existing behind the surface in metalinguistic texts on surzhyk (e.g. homogeneity, the nation-state model, notions on the link between language maintenance, national identity and state survival, notions on individual language use and 'level of culture', on correctness, intimacy, levels of formality etc). Such presuppositions are indeed often explicitly stated in both mass media and expert discourse. In this paper the study of implicit discourse certainly means focusing on underlying assumptions in texts, but our use of the term has a slightly different focus. Here implicit discourse refers to cases where surzhyk, as sometimes in the Kuchmagate debates, is recalled in passing in order to shed light on occurrences not immediately related to metalinguistic discourse.

Unlike their status in explicit discourse, in implicit discourse language phenomena are never the main topic of discussion, but rather function as metalinguistic inserts in texts devoted to other subjects. There is thus no debate to study here. Blommaert and Verschueren argue that the absence of language as an individual issue from a text does not mean that the text is not informed by language ideological notions; in some cases this 'only reveals how much is really taken for

granted'.² Even though language issues as such were virtually absent from their material on Western European press coverage of interethnic relations and national identity, language figured prominently as an element in 'feature clusters, corresponding to 'natural', objective political units, which makes it a mobilizing force in interethnic conflicts', which 'obliterates the primarily social dimension of language'.³ A systematic analysis of assumptions on language and identity in contexts where language as such was not the primary issue allowed the authors to 'reveal a common frame of reference', which 'touch the very essence of popular linguistic ideology'.⁴

Here we take this approach one step further since we look for implicit discourse not in texts on a particular social or political topic, but in texts on a very wide variety of issues. Implicit discourse on surzhyk can be found in discussions on interpersonal relations and aesthetics as well as on collective identity issues. The heterogeneity of sources notwithstanding, we argue that implicit discourse as we understand the term here allows widespread notions on surzhyk to find outlets in contexts where they cannot be expected to be encountered.

A focus on implicit discourse in this sense gives us new information on the representations of surzhyk in Ukrainian language ideologies, since the various texts in which surzhyk is recalled re-shape tropes recognisable from explicit discourse by their specific stories, social settings or events. Although we have no indication of tropes in implicit discourse not having any equivalent in explicit discourse, we notice some differences in the frequency of certain main topics between explicit and implicit discourse, most importantly as the language-national-identity-link seems to be less prevalent in implicit than in explicit discourse and as language-as-symbolic-power is arguably more prevalent. Even more significantly, our sample of implicit discourse points to a more clearly marked predominance of negative views on surzhyk than is the case in explicit discourse, where positive or at least 'neutral' views more regularly make themselves heard. In this way implicit discourse indirectly provides information on what is considered legitimate language and laudable linguistic behaviour.

The following excerpt from *Arka*, a socio-religious monthly of the Greek-Catholic Church published in L'viv, can serve as an example of how surzhyk in implicit discourse is recalled as a powerful symbolic

resource shaping an argument otherwise not metalinguistic (all italics in the excerpts are mine).

Excerpt 1: ‘A significant part of the intermediate generation of contemporary city-dwellers is formed by immigrants from the villages who in their youth merged with the ranks of the proletariat. While their descendants were born in the city, neither the primitive architectural forms of the suburbs, nor the Russian-language musical environment, nor the Soviet school system could compensate for their lack of upbringing at home. *And from this we have yet another national phenomenon: the grand-children of pious orthodox villagers speak surzhyk and believe that their best possible social position is to be gained by participation in criminal structures.*” (Fitel’ 2000)

In the article in *Arka* the author uses surzhyk as a seemingly self-evident metaphor for alienation and moral degradation in the suburbs of Ukrainian urban centres. Perceived language decay here serves to illustrate a break with the past and a deterioration of values and traditions from the countryside. Implicitly, language and faith are connected as a backbone and yardstick of the moral order, as life in the Soviet Ukrainian suburbs turned the genetic off-spring of pious Ukrainian-speaking Orthodoxy into crude surzhyk-speaking gangster hopefuls. We should also note that the surzhyk-speaking world of suburban youth culture called into life by the author is described in negative aesthetic terms: the primitive architectural forms of the urban environment and the Russian-language music (presumably *estrada* and *popsa*, two frequent targets in Ukrainophone language-in-society-discourse).

This way of speaking about surzhyk suggests recognition in Ukrainian society of this language variety as a fact of life giving meaning to the various occurrences with which it is connected. Since surzhyk is recalled in passing without further explanation, authors assume a high degree of cultural competence among readers. What we refer to as implicit discourse is certainly shaped by references deliberately chosen by authors. Our sample in fact only consists of cases where the word surzhyk is mentioned. The implicitness here lies in authors evoking surzhyk in passing, without any extensive commentary, or in their rendering utterances of interviewees briefly touching on

surzhyk without commentary in the published text. Surzhyk thus, so to speak, does a part of the job for authors by serving as a shorthand for complicated social processes.

Since we do not focus on explicit discourse we needed to find material in which references to language politics and discussions on the 'state and status' of various language varieties cannot be expected to be found. To facilitate such an approach we instructed major search engines (Google, Yahoo, Meta, Rambler) to search for documents containing the word *surzhyk* in its various Ukrainian and Russian inflectional forms. In this way we avoided the somewhat depressing task of looking for implicit discourse in all and every publication not specifically devoted to language issues. We excluded irrelevant data (surnames based on the word *surzhyk*, messages in web forums as well as texts from explicit discourse) as well as all references from belletristics (whether written in *avtors'kyi* *surzhyk* or in the form of metalinguistic comments on language varieties and language use). Further we chose not to take into account the extensive discussions on the pros and cons of *surzhyk* as a comical device in mass entertainment, since this discussion is quite specific and requires special treatment.⁵

In the end we got a small sample of excerpts of implicit discourse, mainly published in electronic versions of Ukrainian newspapers and journals but to some extent also in web-only sources. The excerpts, sometimes in Ukrainian, sometimes in Russian, represent both national and regional sources. We should note that many excerpts can be found in printed sources as well as electronic, which makes their potential audience wider than the comparatively small but steadily growing number of regular Internet users in Ukraine. Some of the newspapers, such as the weekly bilingual (in separate Ukrainian and Russian editions) *Dzerkalo tyzhnia/Zerkalo nedeli* or government organ *Holos Ukraïny/Golos Ukrainy* are nationwide; some of them, such as *Postup* (L'viv) are significant on a regional level. The newspapers represent different orientations; if the Ukrainian-language *Postup* and *Doba* (Chernivtsi) clearly express Ukrainophone positions, the Russian-language *Kievskie vedomosti* is sometimes accused of Ukrainophobia (this is not to say, of course, that the language of a newspaper necessarily determines its language ideological position). Our

excerpts from newspapers feature both news reporting and analytical material by individual columnists. The journals (such as *İ*) and some of the cited web-only sources are important in intellectual or specialist discourse while some of our web-only sources are news-related and intended for a wider audience.

The fact that the sample is based on material available on the Internet obviously excludes excerpts of implicit discourse to be found elsewhere. Our material is therefore merely the top of an iceberg. We do believe, though, that it provides an interesting frame of comparison with tropes of explicit discourse on surzhyk, since it allows us to see textually structured language ideological notions on surzhyk somewhat closer to the ground than we mostly do in explicit discourse. With few exceptions our excerpts from implicit discourse show surzhyk and surzhyk-speakers as they take part in the multitude of everyday activities of Ukrainian society.

After a few remarks on the research field of language ideology and its relevance for our paper we proceed to a brief review of expert discourse on surzhyk. We then present our analysis of how surzhyk is constructed in Ukrainian implicit discourse. The analysis is divided into four thematic sections: surzhyk in interpersonal relations, surzhyk as bad taste, police surzhyk and surzhyk as a state of mind. The paper concludes with a short summary of our findings.

Language ideology

The research field of language ideology has in recent years become an important point of reference for the study of how language intersects with society and wider socio-cultural and political processes. As argued by Wingstedt, a language ideology 'includes ideas, values and beliefs about language, and not only about other specific languages/varieties or linguistic features, but also about other phenomena related to language and language use'.⁶ Research on language ideologies thus covers a wide array of topics, ranging from perceptions of the role of language for national identity and nation-building, linguistic hierarchies and language quality to the attribution of symbolic power to various language varieties and their speakers. At the most general level language ideology can be defined as 'shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world'⁷

and thus involves ‘cultural conceptions of the nature, form and purpose of language, and communicative behavior as an enactment of a collective order’.⁸

Language ideologies contain notions on historical and contemporary relations between different language varieties and on the status and social functions to be conferred on each of them. As language ideological notions on a language variety also are notions on the extra-linguistic qualities of its speakers⁹, they have an important function as social boundary markers and as tools for deciding who belongs and who does not. Language ideologies are thus not isolated from parallel notions on identity, power and prestige existing in a community, but contribute to a mutual reinforcement between linguistic and ‘extra-linguistic’ notions, in which the latter add meaning to notions on language and language use, while the former add meaning to events and occurrences not immediately concerned with language. For this paper the latter point is crucial: language ideologies are meaningful because they produce statements on specific language varieties in connection with extra-linguistic occurrences. In the words of Gal and Woolard: ‘images of linguistic phenomena gain credibility when they create ties with other arguments about aspects of aesthetic or moral life.’¹⁰

As we stated earlier, in this paper excerpts of implicit discourse are not part of any coherent language ideological debate on surzhyk; they cannot be, since speaking about surzhyk is never the primary aim of the texts from which they are taken. Language ideology does not come forward here as uniform or well organised systems of utterances competing for discursive hegemony. Recalling surzhyk in this way may be a strategy in relation to the main theme of the text, but not in relation to surzhyk itself, which here is only a tool, not the aim. Instead it enters a very diverse set of texts – an interview with an actor, a journal for car enthusiasts, an article on Ukrainian icons – through the back-door, in contexts where the reader has no reason to look for it. If explicit discourse announces its appearance to the audience through specific columns or key words in headlines, implicit discourse hits and runs, drawing on readers’ pre-existing frames of references, often shaped by tropes of explicit discourse. The ideology brokers (mostly journalists or their interviewees, not the profes-

sional linguists and writers so prominent in explicit discourse) do not consciously develop or challenge language ideological notions; they rather recycle them or refocus them, placing them into new settings, relying on frames of interpretation already there. The very fact of refocusing and of new contextualisations in the texts, however, informs notions on surzhyk much as the texts are informed by references to surzhyk. We believe this to be significant, since their appearance in relation to a wide variety of topics makes these constructs accessible to readers otherwise not paying special attention to texts from explicit metalinguistic discourse. In this way implicit discourse on surzhyk supports and communicates predominantly negative language ideological notions on surzhyk.

In the paper we refer to two semiotic tools of language ideology that link language with social phenomena (Irvine & Gal 1995; 2000), and that can be found in both explicit and implicit discourse. *Iconicity*, the perception of a connection between linguistic features and the inherent qualities of members of social groups, is frequently represented in Ukrainian metalinguistic discourse on surzhyk, which traditionally is constructed as indexing a low level of education, a 'low level of culture' and, in Ukrainophone discourse, 'national nihilism'. Several excerpts presented in this paper show how this often exploited tool can work in implicit discourse on surzhyk. *Erasure* – rendering persons, activities or sociolinguistic phenomena invisible by ignoring facts disturbing an ideological scheme – is arguably more common in explicit discourse on language politics and language rights, which are seen as exclusive domains of the standard languages. In implicit discourse, processes of erasure reduce surzhyk to a monolingual code, thus ignoring the socio-linguistic fact of surzhyk being one of the codes available to speakers of several varieties, including the standard languages. Our sample does not include any mentioning of surzhyk as part of an active code-switching strategy – in implicit discourse the surzhyk-speaker is emphatically monolingual. A consequence of this process of ideological erasure is that surzhyk-speakers emanate from implicit discourse as a distinct linguistic group; as there are Ukrainian-speakers and Russian-speakers, there are also surzhyk-speakers. In implicit discourse surzhyk thus is a *tertia mova* – a third language. In explicit discourse this is only one position of several.

Surzhyk in expert discourse

Although this is not the place for a detailed account of surzhyk as a linguistic or socio-cultural occurrence, the following section briefly reviews expert discourse on the language variety. Post-Soviet Ukraine has seen a growing publicist as well as academic interest in surzhyk resulting in quite a large corpus of metalinguistic texts reflecting on its place in Ukrainian society. As argued by Bilaniuk (1997; 1998), in folk discourse the term surzhyk can be used to designate a wide array of speech varieties differing from Standard Ukrainian, including Ukrainian regional dialects and even speech quite close to the standard. Therefore it should be noted that in some cases where our quotes refer to the speech of individuals or groups as surzhyk, some linguists might have chosen not to consider it as such. What is significant for our purposes, though, are the representations chosen by authors in the quotes.

Expert discourse basically agrees that surzhyk emerged when Ukrainian peasants from the end of the 18th century increasingly came into contact with a Russian-speaking environment, a development that was closely knit to the modernisation of Ukrainian society. This process accelerated when industrialisation facilitated working-class migration to Ukrainian cities from Central Russia and made parts of the Ukrainian peasantry urbanise. The Ukrainian cities, hosting the Russian civil and military administration as well as cultural, business, church and educational facilities, soon became areas of linguistic Russification.¹¹ This was the starting point for one of the classical dichotomies in East, Central, and Southern Ukrainian modern history – between an as urban, modern, and prestigious perceived Russian and as rural, obsolete and non-prestigious perceived Ukrainian language and culture. Reacting to this difference in status, the urbanising peasants tried to incorporate as many Russian words as possible in their speech in order to adjust to the new linguistic and cultural environment. In these parts of Ukraine surzhyk has served as a transitional stage in a language shift from Ukrainian dialects to Russian.

Many if not most accounts of surzhyk start with an exposition on the term's extra-linguistic meanings. Originally surzhyk designated a mix of cereals of poor quality relied on mainly in times of bad harvest.¹² This implicates impurity and second-rate status, qualities

that were later metaphorically transferred to surzhyk as a language variety, and that are rarely lost by authors emphasising the need for a pure, unmixed and distinct Ukrainian language.¹³ It is more seldom pointed out that the original connotations of the term specifically relate it to the struggle for survival under harsh rural conditions. If a common metalinguistic interpretation of the origin of the term capitalises on the poorer quality of the mixed flour as compared to the pure varieties it sometimes replaced, it would not seem unreasonable to argue that surzhyk in some circumstances kept hunger away. The metaphoric consequences of such an argument for metalinguistic discourse could then be that surzhyk, although not being a first hand linguistic choice saves the Ukrainian language from defeat in the centuries-long uneven competition from Russian, since it represents the survival of a Ukrainian language, albeit distorted. Indeed many Ukrainians linguists (e.g. Stavvyts'ka 2001) take the view that the glass is half full, that surzhyk still has a Ukrainian linguistic essence. The language ideological position 'better surzhyk than Russian' has grown increasingly important in Ukrainophone explicit discourse in recent years (see in particular Oles' Donii's 2003 article 'Long live surzhyk!'). We should note in particular here the pros and cons of the 'mock trial' of surzhyk, arranged and conducted by Ukrainophones of various generations and ideological convictions in Kyïv in early summer 2004. Since the arguments heard at this event are obvious parts of explicit discourse we do not delve on it here, but the fact that such an event took place and attracted a great deal of attention in the press and on television gives some idea of the resonance of metalinguistic discourse on surzhyk in Ukrainian society.

The standard Ukrainian dictionary defines surzhyk as 'elements of two or more languages, artificially united, not complying with the norms of the standard language; a non-pure language'.¹⁴ This can certainly be interpreted in a very broad fashion, since it does not explicitly exclude any kinds or degrees of linguistic interference (for this point see Koznars'kyi 1998). The definition points to a prescriptive linguistic tradition in which a strict distinction is upheld between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' language. This ideology is carried on in the definition of surzhyk offered by a contemporary encyclopaedia of the Ukrainian language, with the significant addition that

the term mainly applies to a Ukrainian *prostoričchia* contaminated (*zasmichenoho*) by unmotivated Russian lexical loans as a result of Ukrainian-Russian interference. Surzhyk is here specifically located to Ukrainian-Russian language contact and to Russian interference in a Ukrainian language variety. The language-national identity link is made explicit and is enriched by an aesthetic dimension, as surzhyk is condemned as ‘an impoverished language, deprived of national colour, beauty and expressivity’. The encyclopaedia concludes that struggle against surzhyk is ‘one of the most important tasks in improving the culture of the Ukrainian language’.¹⁵ This definition is representative of much explicit discourse on surzhyk, in the mass media as well as in expert publications, although the latter genre is going through changes in this respect.

Even though all researchers emphasise the importance of language contact and code-switching, there is no consensus in expert discourse on the linguistic and sociolinguistic content of the term surzhyk. While some communicative practices and contexts are generally seen as vital for the location of surzhyk, sometimes other types and contexts are included as well. If surzhyk is often associated with an unconscious monolingual code of ‘the uneducated’ or ‘the lower classes’, many Ukrainian linguists note its parallel existence as a stylistic device used by speakers of the standard languages in certain situations. As Ukrainian urban bilinguals frequently code-switch, the social portrait of the surzhyk-speaker is thus much more complex than is sometimes implied in metalinguistic discourse. For many researchers Ukrainian-Russian surzhyk is in fact the substandard variety of Ukrainian, relating in a similar way to Standard Ukrainian and territorial dialects as Russian *prostorechie* to its Russian equivalents. Kuznetsova (1999) argues that surzhyk is the L-variety in a diglossia internal to Ukrainian, where Standard Ukrainian is the H-variety. Bilaniuk suggests that with the emancipation of Standard Ukrainian and the continuing important role for Russian in many domains surzhyk today performs the role of the low variety in diglossia earlier performed by Ukrainian, while the two standard languages represent the high variety.¹⁶ Although most researchers consider surzhyk at least diachronically a Ukrainian language variety, a distinction is frequently made between ‘Ukrainian-Russian’ and ‘Russian-Ukrain-

ian' surzhyk (referring to different contexts of emergence and to the relative weight of the respective linguistic components).

While some authors emphasise the heterogeneity of surzhyk and the settings in which it is used, others prefer to restrict the term to more specific contexts. The linguist Oleksandra Serbens'ka views surzhyk in linguistic terms as a basically but not exclusively Ukrainian language variety with a varying amount of Russian elements. Surzhyk is 'multifaceted, having variants not described or studied even though they can be found in works of literature. Ukrainian-Russian surzhyk and, sometimes, Russian-Ukrainian is our reality.'¹⁷ As for the sociolinguistic locus of surzhyk she adheres to the traditionally predominant view on surzhyk-speakers in Ukrainian linguistics:

'Such a language is as a rule used by the *malointelihentna* [app 'less educated', 'less erudite', *N.B.*] part of the population, by people indifferent to any kind of linguistic problems. It is hard not to agree with statements made by our writers and publicists, that precisely the uneducated and the uncultured, for which only material values have any meaning, easily lose their language.'¹⁸

The evocation of this straightforward iconic relationship between language and social status causes a change in the fairly neutral academic tone of the previous passages. Surzhyk-speakers are described in strongly pejorative terms and identified by strictly material values and a perceived lack of education and culture. In excerpts of implicit discourse further on in the paper we will see examples of both tropes: surzhyk-as-low-level-of-culture and surzhyk-as-materialistic values and consumerism.

The culturologist Oleksandr Hrytsenko views surzhyk as a sociolinguistically broader occurrence. He considers several forms of surzhyk, ranging from the occasional expressive switches to Russian in Standard Ukrainian speech of intellectuals and the preservation of habitual Russian terminology in professional domains going through linguistic Ukrainisation, to the heavily Russified speech of the 'lower social groups', the Ukrainian substrate in the Russian speech of linguistically Russified Ukrainians and the use of surzhyk as a device for comedy and language games in contemporary Ukrainian entertainment and avant-garde literature.¹⁹ Surzhyk is here not restricted to

being a cultural artefact inherent to a certain segment of the Ukrainian population, but is regarded as a linguistic device potentially available for all bilinguals with different levels of linguistic competence for achieving communicative effects.

Hrytsenko's highly inclusive view is criticised for being unrealistically wide by sociolinguist Larysa Masenko,²⁰ whose interpretation is connected to the 'grand narrative' of the emergence of surzhyk as the language of urbanising peasants involved in a language shift from Ukrainian (dialects) to Russian (see Shevelov 1989). Masenko's definition emphasizes the social context and the pressure for assimilation on urbanising Ukrainian-speaking country-dwellers in the urban centres of Eastern and Southern Ukraine. Surzhyk for Masenko is thus certainly not the conscious insertions of expressive Russianisms in the speech of Ukrainian intellectuals; metaphorical code-switching is something very different from the monolingual surzhyk repertoire of speakers left in a vacuum between their native and their acquired language. While Masenko locates surzhyk to a similar social setting as does Serbens'ka, the stigma is in her interpretation a consequence of the language situation and the wider socio-cultural conditions giving birth to it.

The Ukrainian-Russian variety discussed by Masenko is clearly the one most commonly identified as surzhyk both by researchers and in Ukrainian public discourse. This identification of surzhyk mainly with Ukrainian and with the speech of ethnic Ukrainians is supported by other leading Ukrainian linguists. For Taranenکو surzhyk is 'the spoken language and main instrument of communication for the majority of the Ukrainian-speaking population of the country'.²¹ In expert discourse surzhyk is mainly identified with a historically subordinated ethnic Ukrainian speech community strongly affected by a process of language shift to Russian yet to be reversed.

The growing importance of Ukrainian as a language of prestige and power in Post-Soviet Ukraine has created preconditions for the emergence of a 'Russian-Ukrainian' variety of surzhyk. Russian-Ukrainian surzhyk has been most prominent in those formal domains where the use of Ukrainian as the sole state language gradually has diminished the previously dominant position of Russian. Trub notes the emergence in parliament of 'Russian surzhyk', when Russian-speaking deputies include elements of standard Ukrainian vocabulary in their

Russian speech.²² Furthermore, the increased use of Ukrainian in formal domains is not always accompanied by a corresponding increase in its use in informal domains. In the field of education, Russophone language ideologues often point out the risks of a *surzhyfication* of the language of Russian-speaking schoolchildren since Russian, being frequently used for informal communication, is not an obligatory subject in many schools, while Ukrainian is an obligatory subject and is increasingly used as the language of instruction.²³

We should further note the conviction among Ukrainian linguists that surzhyk is an extraordinarily wide-spread language variety, indeed a language of the masses. Estimating the number and sociolinguistic distribution of surzhyk-speakers in Ukraine is made difficult by the absence of any such category from official statistics and the quite meagre data available from sociolinguistic research, as well as by the lack of consensus among researchers on the linguistic characteristics of surzhyk as distinct from other language varieties existing in Ukraine. The quote from Taranenکو suggests though that among prominent Ukrainian linguists surzhyk is perceived to be a very wide-spread occurrence.

Ideologically for many committed Ukrainophones surzhyk represents a national tragedy, a result of Ukraine's centuries-long colonial predicament and a symbol of cultural erosion, while others more pragmatically may see it as a platform for reclaiming the Ukrainian language in mostly Russian-language areas or domains. Ukrainophone language ideologues tend to view surzhyk from a perspective of language revitalisation; they frequently point to the traditional role of surzhyk as an intermediary stage during language shift from Ukrainian dialects to Russian, and some of them (e.g. writer Oleksandr Irvanets' on the above-mentioned 'mock trial' of surzhyk) hope that it can now function the other way around. Others, most notably Russophones, sometimes see surzhyk as a natural result of Ukrainian-Russian cultural interaction, a bridge of sorts that enhances communication between the two cultures; in this view it is rather certain versions of Standard Ukrainian that represent the linguistic break with the past. The two main language ideological camps share the association of surzhyk with lack of education and linguistic discipline.

Speaking about surzhyk in implicit discourse

Section I: Surzhyk in interpersonal relations

As stated earlier, although there are links to language-and-national-identity-discourse in implicit discourse, here surzhyk is more often recalled in the context of language-as-symbolic-power. In other words, when the discourse is no longer national it turns social. The traditional association of surzhyk with low social status and lack of education (the perceived inability of speakers to ‘discipline themselves’ into mastering one or both standard languages) is still very much alive and comes to the fore in mass media discourse on interpersonal relations, family issues etc. As is shown in the reactions to the speech of president Kuchma and other leading functionaries, the ability of an individual to reach the highest echelons of power does not necessarily imply emancipation from this kind of judgements.

Surzhyk can in this respect be represented as an inherent quality of a person, as a feature characteristic of an individual. It can be seen as a general defect or flaw of character, not necessarily associated with a specific individual, but as a feature ultimately defining a person morally and aesthetically. Surzhyk is seen as an indication that a person is not *kul'turnyi* (‘cultured’), a Ukrainian and Russian word implying both education and good manners. Indeed, most of our excerpts of implicit discourse are from journalists or their interviewees mainly from the world of the arts or academia, representing the *intelibentsiia*, the social group most intimately associated with educational and wider cultural capital, but also demoralised by hard economic times in Post-Soviet Ukraine. With surzhyk widely being perceived to be a feature of the speech of the ‘uneducated’ and ‘lower social elements’, a class factor is clearly at work in some of the quotes, with non-standard language indexing lower social standing. It is interesting in this respect that none of our five excerpts of implicit discourse presented in this section can be assigned to a specific Ukrainophone or Russophone discourse: they all present surzhyk-speakers in a socio-cultural key where this distinction from explicit metalinguistic discourse is secondary.

The five excerpts in this section are taken from electronic versions of newspapers, both Ukrainian- and Russian-language. All emphasis

in the excerpts in this and the following sections is mine, as are the translations from Ukrainian and Russian.

Excerpt 2. A Kyiv specialist in the history of arts enumerates in an issue of the Ukrainian weekly *Dzerkalo tyzhnia* the qualities she prefers in representatives of the opposite sex:

‘One of the most important traits of a man is dignity: respect for and awareness of his own best qualities. His appearance has to be neat, but without excessive pedantry. I look, maybe not predominantly, but still, at the quality of his shoes. His hands ought to be clean and well kept; his nails should be nobly shaped. I examine the way he looks at things, what he fixes his eyes upon. It is very important that he is a good listener. No matter how fond he is of his lady his gaze has to be calm. *The speech of a man should also be calm and even, without surzhyk.* (Fefanova 2002)

Excerpt 3. A Ukrainian actor answers a question in an interview for the Kyiv Russian-language newspaper *Kievskie vedomosti* on whether he remembers any of his pioneer camp romantic involvements:

‘When I was a student of the Theatrical Institute, I often went to the pioneer camps to work as a squad leader. This was really a different kind of affairs. More important. One time they “asked me to leave” a camp since they thought that I was having an affair with a pioneer girl. There was this sweet girl from the first patrol. I cannot say that this was love, it was just interesting for us to spend time together, we didn’t even kiss ... After the end of her shift she came to visit me. *But this was a girl from a simple family, and I like it when a girl speaks correctly – either good Ukrainian or good Russian. I find surzhyk repulsive.* So our relationship faded away. The inability of a person to speak correctly bears witness to a low level of culture.’ (Savchenko 2003)

Excerpt 4. The author of an article in the Kyiv Russian-language newspaper *Segodnia* explains why parents in the city hesitate to invite a nanny to look after their children.

‘Do you know why the majority of parents send their children to incubators called “kindergarten”? Not always because they cannot af-

ford a nanny. They really want a nanny, but they are afraid. Yes, afraid: mums believe that any woman invited into their home is a malevolent slattern. The likes of the mild and caring Arina Rodionovna [Pushkin's nanny, *N.B.*] is nowhere to be found nowadays, and nannies *who wash the children's hands and don't tell fairy-tales in surzhyk* can only be found in a museum.' (Khramova 1998)

Excerpt 5. A columnist in the Ukrainian-language Chernivtsi weekly *Doba* relates an episode from a journey by train from Kyiv to Vienna:

'Yet another woman, *who spoke uncouth* [dykym] *surzhyk*, was going to the market in Khmel'nyts'kyi. Her only luggage was a shabby cart. When we went to sleep, the woman threw off some of her rags and her stained rubber boots, from which a "pleasant" aroma immediately arose. I felt with my whole body an urge to wash myself: my fingers, palms, hands, legs (even heels and calves) and back began itching, especially in places out of reach for my hand, and there was no-one to ask to scratch them for me on the road...' (Kryshstofa 2003)

Excerpt 6: A journalist, Vakhtanh Kipiani, writes ironically in the newspaper *Ukraina moloda* on Oleksandr Rzhavs'kyi, one of the candidates for the presidential elections of 1999.

'Deputy and businessman Oleksandr Rzhavs'kyi has enough spirit for a dozen competitors for the *bulava* of Leonid Danylovykh [Kuchma, *N.B.*]. Firstly, according to his declaration of income from the previous year he made close to 1.3. million hrivnia, which is a hundred times more than any of his competitors. Secondly, he has four children by, as he states himself, 'only one woman'. Thirdly, he is not in opposition, as you might have thought – he's 'alternative' ... *And, lastly, our hero speaks such a high quality surzhyk that it makes him close to the average Ukrainian and unites him with the noted Verka* [Serdiuchka, the surzhyk-speaking drag-queen of Ukrainian show business, *N.B.*]. (Quoted from <http://kipiani.org>)

In the first three excerpts from Ukrainian newspapers (two Russian-language, one with parallel Ukrainian- and Russian-language editions) surzhyk is presented as the linguistic equivalent of unwanted

traits of individuals in interpersonal relations, whether the relationship is man–woman or parents–nanny. In the first two cases speaking surzhyk is considered making a person inconceivable as a romantic partner. In **Excerpt 2** speaking surzhyk is one of several traits on the negative partner wish-list, equalled to being inattentive, unkempt and improperly dressed. The possibility of a surzhyk-speaking gentleman demonstrating all the other positive attributes enumerated seems to be beyond imagination. Speaking surzhyk is here most clearly associated with a lack of personal discipline.

In **Excerpt 3** a squad leader was removed from his position because of a suspected romantic involvement with one of the pioneer girls. The interviewed actor underlines that there was no affair, but also states quite clearly that there could not really have been one, since the girl, with her simple family background spoke surzhyk, a social fact apparently more important to him than the positive traits he found in her. Having told his story, the implicit discourse of the actor quickly transforms into an explicit metalinguistic comment, in which not speaking *correctly* is compared with a low level of individual culture. When asked if he could not have helped the girl with her language, the actor answers that he couldn't have back then, and adds on a somewhat humoristic note that the girl's mother did not approve of her daughter seeing a student of the Theatrical Institute, the disciples of whom she considered drunkards and womanisers. The surzhyk-speaking family is thus allowed a certain rhetorical compensation for the previous statements, a compensation played out on the same trope of lack of personal discipline that structures the actor's story of the failed romantic involvement.

In **Excerpt 4**, surzhyk is presented as a part of a parental 'nanny worst case scenario'. The logic of the quote is that a rough and careless nanny who ignores washing the hands of children in her care would also be inclined to tell them stories in surzhyk. Speaking surzhyk here indexes rudeness and lack of professionalism and devotion. Contributing to the alleged unwillingness of parents to entrust their offspring to the care of a surzhyk-speaking nanny could well be another underlying assumption: surzhyk can like any other language variety be transmitted through communication with its carriers. Hiring a surzhyk-speaking nanny thus implies a risk of interference from her

language in the language of the children. The point here is that the danger of surzhyk is not only linguistic, but is present also in its wider cultural connotations. In this quote, as indirectly in the two preceding ones, surzhyk is a part of an exterior world that ought not to be 'dragged into the house'; neither as a feature of a marriage-partner, nor as the speech of a nanny for the children. The *intelihentsiia* home is the bastion of good language that, considering the references in the excerpt to Russian High Culture as well as the Russian-language status of the newspaper, is in this instance probably Standard Russian. Just as surzhyk-speakers in excerpts 2 and 3 are placed outside the legitimate market of sexual relations, here their speech habits make them regarded as unfit for the labour market. In this way the semiotic process of iconicity enters implicit discourse, making assumptions about the essential personal qualities of individual surzhyk-speakers on the basis of their speech.

Excerpt 5 most expressively places surzhyk in a context of *kulturnist*' as defined by personal hygiene. The fact that the surzhyk-speaking woman was travelling to the market is maybe not surprising, since the market in explicit discourse is often mentioned as an important domain of surzhyk use. The woman's presence in the compartment is manifested by her surzhyk as well as by her shabby luggage and perspiring feet, while the description of the other female passenger not travelling in company with the surzhyk-speaker is neutral and does not contain any metalinguistic element. Although this excerpt may be located on the outer limits of the quotable it suggests the connection between personal and verbal hygiene (Cameron 1995) that is sometimes established in explicit discourse. It seems pertinent to ask whether the perspiring feet would have made their way into the newspaper had they belonged to a speaker of Standard Ukrainian.

Excerpt 6 is a piece of biting sarcasm culminating in ironic references to the 'high quality surzhyk' of Rzhavs'kyi. Surzhyk here clearly comes forward as a language of the masses, as speaking it brings a person closer to the average Ukrainian; in this case closer than the wealth and position of this individual would seem to justify. Implicitly the confluence of individual success and wealth with speaking surzhyk is presented as noteworthy; it cannot be left without a dry comment (this theme will be further developed in the following sec-

tion). As has been the case with other leading politicians and officials, success does not necessarily emancipate an individual who is labelled a surzhyk-speaker from ironic commentaries on his speech in journalist and publicist discourse. The ironic reference to the surzhyk of Andrii Danylko's notorious gender-crossing comedy act Verka Serduchka is clearly intended to add sarcasm to the image of the wealthy surzhyk-speaker. The excerpt shows how the combination of surzhyk and success in real life (outside the world of show business) can be ironically deconstructed in mass media implicit discourse, all in accordance with the dominating interpretation of language-and-symbolic power in explicit discourse.

Section 2: Surzhyk as bad taste

As opposed to the quotes in the previous section, the quotes in section 2 talk about surzhyk-speakers on a collective rather than on a specific or projected individual level. In the following four quotes implicit discourse relates surzhyk not only to a lack of discipline on the part of its speakers, but more specifically to notions on bad taste, artistic presumption and lack of self-criticism. As in the previous section, implicit discourse (especially in **Excerpts 7 and 8**) constructs speakers of surzhyk as *nekul'turni*, a notion which here is understood in terms of aesthetic preferences ascribed to surzhyk-speakers. This construct can be better grasped by a reference to two other social images supporting it: that of urban mass culture and of the *nouveau riche*.

Surzhyk can in this respect be seen as a Ukrainian linguistic expression of what the Russian linguist Nikita Tolstoi called 'the third culture', i.e. urban mass culture.²⁴ For Tolstoi this culture is in Russia linguistically represented by urban *prostorechie* (urban non-standard varieties of speakers from different territorial dialect backgrounds). Khimik, a Russian sociolinguist, referring to Tolstoi's scheme describes both the urban third culture and Russian *prostorechie* as characterised by 'moral laxity, crudeness, aggressiveness and stylistic monotony', attributes that are seen as inversions of more positive qualities such as freedom, unpretentiousness and expressivity.²⁵ For both Tolstoi and Khimik the 'third culture' is juxtaposed with both elite culture represented by Standard Russian and traditional folk

culture expressed in territorial dialects, in a scheme of cultural and linguistic stratification realised inside a solely Russian cultural system. Since the Ukrainian language situation is thoroughly shaped by centuries of intensive language contact between Ukrainian and Russian it is hardly possible to place surzhyk in such an unambiguously iconic relationship to urban mass culture in Ukraine (non-standard varieties of Russian, including local versions of Russian *prostorechie* also fulfil this function). In some of our excerpts, however, implicit discourse juxtaposes an urban or semi-urban, surzhyk-speaking mass culture with a genuine rural folk culture or with refined urban elite culture, both iconically functioning in what is considered to be proper Ukrainian.

Excerpt 7: In an article about Ukrainian icons published on the web site of the Kyïv Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church we are told how foldable brass icons manufactured in Russia in the beginning of the 20th century were not bought by Ukrainian villagers, but by an urban, surzhyk-speaking *petite bourgeoisie* that already had lost its ties to genuine popular culture.

‘As with the factory-made “old-style” icons from the *gubernii* of Moscow and Vladimir, in the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century Ukraine was flooded with these foldable icons by Russians traders in church paraphernalia. It was not the people who bought these things, but the philistine public of the cities and small towns. They spoke a Ukrainian-Russian language mix – surzhyk – and had already renounced the traditions of Ukrainian folk arts without creating anything of their own, which they could not have anyway. These Russian metal icons did not exert any influence whatsoever on the engraved icon of Ukrainian folk art.’ (*Ukrains’ka ikona...*).

In **Excerpt 7** surzhyk enters a juxtaposition of rural Ukrainian folk tradition with urban mass culture and the disoriented aesthetic preferences of the cities and small towns. The tastes of the ‘third culture’ are related to the process of language shift, which means loss not only of the mother tongue but also of a cultural code, a set of moral and aesthetic values providing the rural Ukrainian with a holistic and spiritually healthy world view. An individual adrift from the tradi-

tions and values associated with the mother tongue becomes incapable of telling good from bad. Language loss in urban conditions is connected with culture as consumption, not with culture as creativity. In this excerpt, surzhyk-speaking city-dwellers isolated from the native cultural traditions of the countryside did not manage to create any tradition of their own – and they could not have. Urban surzhyk-speakers are constructed as consumers with bad taste; having abandoned their language, they soon developed a fancy for kitsch. Surzhyk here represents a spiritual wasteland whose inhabitants are morally and aesthetically confused, having lost track of the organic values emanating from the native language in the native village. It stands for a condition in-between an abandoned native culture and a desired target culture, half-way acquired but not digested. The trope of language shift as a road to a social no-man’s-land has a long tradition in the language ideology of cultural nationalism (or, as Joshua Fishman would put it, positive ethnolinguistic consciousness)²⁶. In our next excerpt the image of urban mass culture merges with the image of the surzhyk-speaking *nouveau riche* in Post-Soviet Ukraine.

Excerpt 8: In an introduction to an anthology of essays about the city of L’viv published on the web-site of *Ї*, a journal for essays on literature, culture and politics, the author argues that while remaining a branch of the great European world, L’viv, since its inclusion in Soviet Ukraine after World War II also has become part of a ‘sovietised’ world. In Post-Soviet Ukraine, the author continues, the city became a refuge for *nouveaux riches* from the large cities of Donbas and Eastern Ukraine looking for a safe place to live and raise their children:

‘A small branch of the “sovietised” world. That is also a relevant remark. The city has become fashionable. People from Donets’k, Dnipropetrovs’k or from similar ...s’k and ...s’k, broadly speaking Soviet people, who understandably have grown tired of the bandit shoot-outs in their native Luhans’ks suddenly to their own big surprise in “the radical nationalist” (*banderiv’skyi*) L’viv found a quiet and beautiful European city, very suitable for an aristocratic upbringing of their descendants of mixed Krasnyi Luch and Huliaypole origins. *It is quiet also in the sense that the city seemingly offers no resistance at all to the surzhyk so habitual to the newcomers or to the plastic windows in the*

secession buildings and to the many foreign-made cars with Kyiv number plates parked on the pavement. This is, all in all, a summary of what the newcomers have brought with themselves to L'viv. What is worse, such a style is easily adopted by young people in L'viv not yet formed by the historical city environment. Following the example of "Kievans" and "Dnepropetrovians" [Ukrainian spelling here mocks Russian pronunciation, *N.B.*] they spray monstrous graffiti on the stone buildings of the Market Square.' (Mahdysh 2004)

While L'viv in this account bears all the marks of a harmonious, quiet city with deep historical roots and a rich cultural heritage, the crime-ridden native cities of the newcomers from Eastern Ukraine are all exchangeable and deprived of individual features. In the author's implicit discourse surzhyk is presented as part of a package of features forming the contribution of Post-Soviet Eastern Ukrainians to city life in L'viv, features seen as representing significant differences in behaviour and cultural outlook between locals and newcomers. Mixed speech here emerges next to bad taste (the plastic windows in the secession buildings) and a fancy for showing off combined with a lack of regard for others (parking fashionable *foreign-made cars* on the pavements). Not being rooted in a deep cultural tradition of their own, newcomers show complete disregard for the historic L'viv city environment. This cultural package is presented by the author as part of a unitary cultural style non-organic to L'viv, having been brought to the city by its true carriers, the 'Soviet' people from Eastern Ukraine. Surzhyk is thus related to 'being Soviet' and its place of origin is located to an infinite number of anonymous urban centres of Eastern Ukraine, whose lack of cultural distinctiveness and crime rate is surpassed only by the possibilities they offer for accumulating capital. Surzhyk here is not an attribute of the poor and the powerless, but the speech of Post-Soviet *nouveaux riches* from Eastern Ukraine, whose financial assets enable them to buy a place and a life for themselves in an environment not organic to them. Speaking surzhyk here indexes bad taste and lack of regard for others (in accordance with our previous discussion on interpersonal relations), reinforced by the opportunities offered by individual wealth. This is clearly the surzhyk of a third culture turned rich; surzhyk-speakers

are up-and-coming, but the effect of their abundant economic capital is (or should be) undermined by their lack of cultural capital.²⁷

The author here points to surzhyk-speakers being attracted not to Russian cultural traditions but to Central European, Ukrainian-speaking L'viv. The difference is that in the author's view, in L'viv it is not really local Ukrainian-speakers that set the cultural and behavioral norms; this is rather done by the newcomers, who not only do not adapt to established ways of life, but also influence young natives, offering alternative stereotypes of behavior. Interestingly, in the author's view the locals do not seem to offer any resistance to the cultural style of the newcomers.

In the following two excerpts surzhyk is associated with bad taste in the sphere of artistic creativity by being portrayed as the native language of the graphomaniac.

Excerpt 9: An author in the Kyïv Russian-language newspaper *Vechernye vesti* offers her readers an ideal type portrait of the graphomaniac, fond of writing amateur poetry with banal rhymes:

‘The graphomaniac ... is a romantic soul and a tender nature, although he often speaks surzhyk. His favourite poets are Pushkin and Esenin, whom he tries to imitate in his poems (sometimes achieving a superficial similarity). He has not read any “fresher” poetry – and why should he?’ (‘Nevinnye zhertvy poëzii’ 2004)

The author in **Excerpt 9** includes speaking surzhyk in her description of the personal attributes of the graphomaniac, which is underlined further in the article by an included quote in mock surzhyk portraying a graphomaniac seeking the author's help with the publication of his poetry. The key discursive marker here is the small ‘although’ linking the attributes ‘romantic soul’ and ‘tender nature’ with ‘often speaks surzhyk’, by which the author suggests a mutually exclusive relationship between these qualities and the social fact of speaking surzhyk. Obviously, in this excerpt authentic poetry and standard language are juxtaposed with graphomania and non-standard speech. Interestingly, however, the ideal of the surzhyk-speaking graphomaniacs of the article is the classical Russian poetic tradition, an ideal that for the author in this Kyïv newspaper is remarkable only by being

artistically somewhat conservative. Oddly enough, since the graphomaniac obviously writes in Russian, this is the only excerpt in our sample that implicitly recognises bilingual surzhyk-speakers (spoken surzhyk/written Russian). Surzhyk here indicates an orientation towards Russian high culture in a similar way as it for many Ukrainians served as a stage in a process of language shift from Ukrainian dialects to Russian. Although striving towards the linguistic and aesthetic ideals of Russian high culture, the surzhyk-speaking graphomaniacs of the article are by the author presented rather as living artefacts of Kyïv urban folklore. If surzhyk is uncompleted language shift, then graphomania is unrealisable literary ambition. Both represent a gap between the desired and the attainable, the restraints of individual capability on individual ambitions.

Excerpt 10: A Ukrainian writer argues in an interview in the official newspaper of the Ukrainian government *Holos Ukraïny* that the emergence in Post-Soviet Ukraine of a large number of non-professional publishing firms allows anyone with enough money to publish his writings, no matter their literary quality.

‘The heart of the matter is that there are no reviewers, no editors or even proof-readers in those “publishing firms”. They have no professional literates that could do at least some selection of the works for publishing. If you have the necessary amount of money, either your own or your sponsors’, you can immediately publish a full collection of your own graphomania or of your own insanity if you like. Some of those “works” are not blessed by divine inspiration. They are written in a petty local patched-up surzhyk – a kind of literary moonshine-distilling. The graphomaniacs find their way into the schools demanding that their works should be studied during class and outside the classroom.’ (Iuhov 2004)

In **Excerpt 10** surzhyk is yet again the language of graphomania, with the main problem discussed this time concerning developments in the publishing business in Post-Soviet Ukraine. As money in this account takes precedence over professionalism, liberalisation of the publishing market means liberalisation of control over language. In this semi-Romantic view writing is a calling, but certainly not for everyone seeking self-expression in poetry or prose, since the legitimacy

of every individual claim to literary genius is to be judged by specially trained literary functionaries working at the publishing houses. In Post-Soviet Ukraine this is not the case, which according to the interviewed writer allows local amateurs to find outlets for their works written in idiosyncratic brands of local surzhyk. Surzhyk here is what lurks beneath the surface, threatening to reach public attention whenever artistic standards are not supervised by specially trained professionals. As in **Excerpt 8**, surzhyk-speakers here can mobilise a certain amount of money, in this case at least for the publication of their literary works, and do not hesitate to promote their own writings in local schools, as part of the literary canon. If **Excerpt 8** told us of surzhyk-speakers' perceived lack of regard for others, **Excerpt 10** shows their unlimited self-confidence. The last two excerpts of this section illustrate the parallel workings of linguistic and professional gate-keeping. Keeping illegitimate language use at arm's length is part of upholding the values of professionalism and formal education as well as true literary genius.

In both sections 1 and 2 there is a distinct class flavour to some excerpts. By referring to surzhyk in implicit discourse journalists and publicists position themselves in the changing economic and socio-cultural landscape in Post-Soviet Ukraine. If surzhyk-speakers often are portrayed in terms associated with lack of power ('lack of education', 'low social elements'), some of the surzhyk-speakers in this section obviously are strong and dynamic individuals able to make their way in society, either as new urbanites and social climbers in Tsarist times or as people successfully doing business under the tough socio-economic conditions of Post-Soviet Ukraine. By juxtaposing economic success with perceived lack of social capital the authors here construct these surzhyk-speakers as successful *despite* their non-standard speech, lack of taste and bad manners. Implicitly, it can be argued, some authors in Post-Soviet Ukraine invert a self-image of being economically less well off *despite* their use of Standard Ukrainian, their refined taste and erudition. Since both excerpts 7 and 8 are quotes from articles written in a self-consciously Ukrainophone mode, this interpretation should though be balanced with references to the language-national-identity paradigm dominant in Ukrainophone explicit discourse.

Section 3: Professional surzhyk – the police

In the excerpts in this section surzhyk is portrayed as a code characteristic of a category of state employees, the police. If the previous excerpts mainly concern language use in informal domains, this section deals with language use in domains at the other end of the formality-informality continuum, where expectations on language use to comply with the standard both in speech and in writing are obviously stronger. With the exception of higher and middle-range officials formerly accustomed to speak Russian both in private and professional life but who in the 1990s with various degrees of success switched to Ukrainian when representing their office publicly, the police is maybe the professional category most associated with surzhyk in explicit discourse. As is seen in the following excerpts, this is reflected in implicit discourse as well. Although Ukrainian today is the sole state language and the most obvious choice for documentation, the position of Russian as a spoken language is still very strong in the police force. Remarks on police officers speaking surzhyk can therefore point to a lack of competence in both Standard Ukrainian and Standard Russian. The first excerpt in this section is from a regional newspaper, the second from a journal of the automobile business and the last from a news web-site.

Excerpt 11. A headline from a Ukrainian-language newspaper from the city of Vinnytsia introducing an article where a test of the professional state of the Ukrainian police force is presented.

‘Podgy, surzhyk-speaking, not knowing how to use a gun... That’s the portrait of the Ukrainian policeman.’ (‘Povnen’kyi...’ 2003)

The ironic manner in which this news item is presented accords well with the brevity of the article – this seemingly quite relevant story is treated as a short piece of infotainment rather than as an indication of a potential social problem. Speaking surzhyk here is as disqualifying for a policeman as is not being able to handle a gun or being in a bad physical shape. Most striking about the text is that it reveals yet another spectacular result: only 4% of the policemen in the survey showed positive results in a test on familiarity with the laws of the country. Unlike the police surzhyk, this quite extraordinary finding

is barely developed in the text, nor is it considered important enough to deserve mentioning in the headline.

Excerpt 12: In a Russian-language interview in a journal for automobile business, an officer in a special unit of the *Tytan* combat force is interviewed on car- and traffic-related issues. He concludes the interview with a comment on the professional characteristics of some Ukrainian police officers frequently in contact with Ukrainian citizens:

‘Unfortunately, far from all servants in the law-enforcing organs are decent. One should probably deprive some of the patrolling officers not only of the right to punish, but also of the right to speak. We very often receive phone calls with complaints from citizens about police officers, about their illegal actions and their unarticulated bellowing in surzhyk.’ (Misheniva 2003)

Since for many Ukrainians the image of the police force, especially maybe the traffic police, is one of wide-spread corruption, language ideological notions on normativity and appropriateness can be used to ‘strike back’ rhetorically by referring to the use of non-standard language among police officers. Police surzhyk can thus be constructed as the language of corrupt and *nekul’turni* civil servants pestering decent citizens with unjustified speeding tickets and harassing them in the streets. In **Excerpt 12** the interviewee, himself an officer of another branch of the law-enforcing agencies, takes this confluence of linguistic and legal misconduct of some policemen as a reason to question their right to speak as well as to carry out their duties. The combination of misuse of small-scale power and non-standard speech makes **Excerpt 12** the only one where there is an (albeit strictly rhetorical) call for the silencing of surzhyk-speakers. Struggle against corruption and abuse of power goes hand in hand with a struggle against bad language.

Excerpt 13: Police surzhyk is recalled in a very different context on the news and politics web-site obkom.net in a news item on *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.*, a new science fiction computer game that takes place in an imaginary Ukrainian post-catastrophe setting:

“The story is as follows: in the year 2006 at Chornobyl a new explosion takes place, which in a couple of years turns the forbidden zone into a zone from a story by the Strugatskii brothers [Russian science fiction writers, *N.B.*]. In this devastated territory, the game’s hero searches for artefacts and *simultaneously defends himself against various mutant monsters, surzhyk-speaking cops [menty], radiation and similar anomalies.*” (‘Liubiteli Doom’a...’ 2004)

Police surzhyk here enters the realm of computer games and science fiction, where it forms a part of the hostile environment the hero has to fight his way through. The cohabitants of the surzhyk-speaking policemen in the contaminated *zona* are as illustrious as they are telling: mutant monsters, the most appalling of which is reported to borrow its physical traits from then prime minister and presidential candidate Viktor Ianukovych. For the Ukrainian reader (and computer game consumer) there is an obvious chain of associations leading from the image of Ianukovych (who was twice sentenced to jail in his youth) to the lexeme *zona* (which also refers to the world of prison camps). Considering the remarks often made at the time in oppositional discourse on the non-standard speech of Ianukovych, the physical resemblance of one of the mutants to the former premier suggests a link between the two categories of protagonists of the game mentioned in the news item: the mutants and the surzhyk-speaking *menty*. Since the metaphor of mutation is occasionally employed in explicit discourse on surzhyk and surzhyk-speakers, implicit discourse on surzhyk in this small excerpt unintentionally interacts with tropes in explicit discourse.

The fact that the makers of the game chose to portray their police protagonists as surzhyk-speakers points to the relevance of the notion of police surzhyk. The notion seems to have an integrating role for the specific science fiction chronotope of the computer game; it is one of the constants connecting the pre- and post-catastrophe Chornobyl area. The designation of surzhyk-speaking *menty* as an anomaly (along with mutants and radiation) should not be understood as a denial of the reality of this occurrence in the material world, but rather as a statement on the phenomenon as such – although police officers speak surzhyk, it is an anomaly, because they interact in what should be the realm of the standard.

If on the one hand people are aware of the non-standard language use of police officers, on the other hand there are ideologically grounded expectations that the language of civil servants should be normative. Police surzhyk therefore comes forward as an anomaly and consequently as an object of ridicule and social caricature.

Section 4: Surzhyk as a state of mind

In our last section surzhyk is used as a metaphor in discussions on wider political and socio-cultural developments in Ukrainian society. Surzhyk and surzhyk-speakers are here recalled in passing by authors seeking to define ‘the state of the nation’ or to interpret the characteristics of Ukrainians as social beings and as political subjects. In this section the overarching themes of language-as-symbolic-power and language-and-national-identity largely conflate. Surzhyk is recalled as a metaphor for Post-Soviet Ukrainian society as a whole, sometimes with the implication of marginality and a permanent state of transition.

Excerpt 14: A journalist from the L’viv newspaper *Postup* analyses the mood prevalent in films shown at a Ukrainian youth film festival in the city:

‘The films anatomise the contemporary state of the Ukrainian soul: every-day realism is stylistically predominating with its characteristic surzhyk and poverty that, although formally convincing, is psychologically oppressive... But it is symbolic that hope remains: grown-ups speak surzhyk, but the children as a rule speak Ukrainian; while grown-ups reconcile themselves with their misery the children fight theirs with all possible means.’ (Ias’kiv 2002)

Surzhyk is here portrayed as a defining characteristic of everyday life in Ukraine and therefore as an obvious ingredient in Realist works of art. It is explicitly related to poverty and hard times; and thereby seemingly contributes to make the films ‘psychologically oppressive’. Speaking surzhyk is associated with a passive older generation used to succumb to the obstacles of life, while the ability to deal with problems is associated with their Ukrainian-speaking children. Fighting everyday grievances and speaking surzhyk is thus not shown as a cred-

ible option; in yet another evocation of normative language ideology the message is that to take control of your life you have to take control of your language. Language shift from surzhyk to (standard) Ukrainian is therefore in this two-fold iconicity not only a linguistic, but also an existential process, pointing to significant differences in the world-view of parents and their off-spring. Language and language use are presented as a battlefield for an intergenerational struggle for ‘the Ukrainian soul’.

Excerpt 15. Taras Vozniak, editor of the Lviv culturological journal *Ї*, suggests in an utterly pessimistic note on the state of Post-Soviet Ukrainian society that surzhyk is the linguistic manifestation of Ukrainian marginality:

‘So, we are moving from the “marginal from-nowhere” (in the national, social ...etc sense) to the “marginal nowhere-to-go”. We have nothing worth preserving (*neither our language, which is contaminated by surzhyk*, nor our social structure that has been annihilated by the whirlwinds of the centuries) and nothing to improve (because our starting position is too low). Therefore we are really neither left, nor right, we are, as states Roman Kis’ – marginals.’ (Vozniak 2000)

Excerpt 16: In the weekly *Molodyi Bukovynets*, the Chernivtsi writer and publicist Vasyl’ Kozheliianko comments rather self-ironically on the Ukrainophone intelligentsia’s failed expectations of Post-Soviet Ukraine. Instead of the Ukraine of their dreams they got:

‘some kind of unpredictable confused population that speaks surzhyk and watches entertainment shows on television at Easter. They vote accordingly – not for the Decent Professional Patriots, but for who knows who.’ (Kozheliianko 2004)

In these two excerpts from intellectual discourse surzhyk comes forward as a metaphor for a perceived amorphousness and apathy of a Post-Soviet Ukrainian society not united by a common sense of purpose and lacking a clear national identity. Surzhyk is here not necessarily as sometimes in explicit discourse presented as a key source of the ills of society, but rather as the linguistic equivalent of other unhappy historical developments.

In **Excerpt 15**, Ukrainians are presented as non-entities in national and social terms: having lost their traditional fabric of society under harsh historical conditions, their contaminated language cannot offer them comfort since it shares the fate of all the other national building-blocks. Since Ukrainians have virtually nowhere to start from, they cannot go anywhere and they are condemned to a condition of marginality, a predicament which is illustrated with a reference to a language variety often described as neither Ukrainian, nor Russian. A shattered society is thus paralleled by a shattered language. In **Excerpt 16**, the real Ukrainian population, as opposed to the one imagined by Ukrainophone intellectuals, speaks surzhyk and celebrates Christian holidays in front of the TV watching low quality shows produced for a mass audience and, finally, votes arbitrarily without ideological commitment for any candidate for whatever reason. Indeed surzhyk is portrayed as the language of the masses, even as a language of a population that is unpredictable (in linguistic terms ‘unfocused’) and confused. Arbitrary language thus is made to conflate with arbitrary political preferences.

We should probably not be manipulated by the ‘we’ in **Excerpt 15**; as in the following excerpt surzhyk-speakers here are presented as social Others, not a social group with whom the authors identify. They speak differently and have other values and priorities. As in our previous sections the implicit workings of language ideology iconically here knits together markers of social class and language.

Excerpt 17: Journalists from a website devoted to political analysis introduce a series of expert commentaries on the state of Ukrainian society on the twelfth anniversary of independence:

‘How important is the problem of identification? Our everyday practice bears witness that not that much is necessary for survival. *Surzhyk enables people to get rid of unnecessary linguistic tension*, and the new idols of mass consciousness – Verka Serdiuchka and the boxing Russian-speaking Klychko brothers – shows flexibility and the adjustable character of the contemporary Ukrainian, who is able to get out of every situation at home and who successfully promotes himself abroad.’ (‘Ukraïns’kii derzhavnii nezalezhnosti...’)

Excerpt 17 takes the most positive stand on surzhyk in our sample of implicit discourse. In our concluding example negative metaphoric usage of surzhyk is inverted and the in-between status of surzhyk becomes a virtue allowing Ukrainian society to make peaceful compromises and avoid extremism. Mass consciousness is positively identified with the capacity for survival of the Ukrainians, some of which like their famous compatriots even make it abroad (presumably either in the West as the Klychko brothers or in the East as Danylko). Notably, neither of these celebrities is known for their use of Standard Ukrainian; the Klychko brothers are quite consistent Russian-speakers and the Serdiuchka act performs generally in surzhyk or Ukrainian-accented Russian. This view on speaking surzhyk as a sign of tolerance and an effort to seek compromise and avoid extremism is not uncommon in explicit discourse but tends to be *virtually absent from* implicit discourse. When surzhyk is referred to in passing, negative representations mostly come to the fore.

Conclusions

This paper focuses on metalinguistic reflections expressed in passing in texts devoted to non-linguistic issues. Our point of departure is that language ideological notions on language use and language varieties are not only put forward in explicit discussions on language-and-society-themes (language ideological debates) but make their way into texts where language is not itself an issue. Metalinguistic reflections here catch readers unaware, as they come forward in contexts where they cannot be expected to occur. In implicit discourse metalinguistic reflections find new outlets and become available to readers otherwise not paying special attention to discussions on language and language use. In implicit discourse language ideological notions inform the contexts in which they are evoked, just as the notions are informed by the contexts. In our view, the study of cases where a language variety is evoked in passing in non-linguistic contexts can provide additional information on attitudes and beliefs pertaining to this variety. Implicit discourse in our use of the term should thus be understood as a complementary approach to the study of *surzhyk*, a 'mixed' variety of Ukrainian and Russian attitudes to which are discussed in this paper.

Although our sample of excerpts from implicit discourse on surzhyk is too small to draw far-reaching conclusions from it, it does provide us with some interesting insights and perspectives. First, unlike the case in explicit discourse, in implicit discourse language-and-national-identity themes seem to be less important than language-as-social-power themes. Although some of our excerpts clearly are influenced by reflections on language and national identity, in several excerpts surzhyk is presented as a feature of individuals or groups whose social position is lower than that of the authors or interviewees evoking them. Language in our sample is indeed more often iconically knit to perceptions of ‘culturedness’ and social class divisions than it is to issues of national identity or Ukrainian-Russian socio-cultural relations. Secondly, in comparison with explicit discourse surzhyk is here presented and evaluated in a simplified and pejorative mode. In implicit discourse surzhyk is almost without exception constructed as a monolingual code of speakers not commanding standard Ukrainian or Russian, and the speakers in some of the excerpts emerge as a separate speech community, with extra-linguistic values and practices differing from those of Ukrainian – and Russian-speakers. In explicit discourse this is certainly not always the case. Furthermore, with the exception of only one of our quotes, surzhyk is in our sample always evoked in order to underline negative aspects of occurrences under discussion. If neutral or positive notions on surzhyk are quite common in explicit discourse, implicit discourse therefore largely seems to be a discourse of othering.

Notes

1. It is curious to note that when Mykola Melnychenko, the security officer behind the recordings, published excerpts from the tapes, he chose to render most of the text in Russian, since most of the dialogues were conducted in a surzhyk variety close to Russian. A translation to Standard Ukrainian would according to Melnychenko make the text lose its spirit (*iziuminka*) (Melnychenko 2002, p. 4). The wide-spread Ukrainian practice of rendering excerpts of surzhyk speech untranslated, transcribed according to either Standard Ukrainian or Standard Russian orthography, was not applied. We should perhaps add that former president Kuchma, being very much aware of the non-standard features of his Ukrainian, considers them to be a result of interference from his native Northern Sumshchyna Ukrainian dialect, which shares many features with Russian and Belarusian.
2. Blommaert, Jan; Verschueren, Jeff 'The Role of Language in European Nationalist Ideologies', in Schieffelin, B/Woolard, K/Kroskrity, P: *Language Ideologies: Theory and Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998, p. 192
3. *Ibid*, p. 207
4. *Ibid*, p. 191
5. For Ukrainian works reflecting different language ideological positions on this issue see Hrytsenko 1999 and Taranenko 2003.
6. Wingstedt, Maria: *Language Ideologies and Minority Language Policies in Sweden. Historical and contemporary perspectives*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Stockholm: Centre for Research on Bilingualism 1998, p. 22.
7. Rumsey, Alan 'Word, Meaning, and Linguistic Ideology', *American Anthropologist*, 92:2, 1990, p. 346.
8. Gal, Susan; Woolard, Kathryn 'Constructing Languages and Publics: Authority and Representation', *Languages and Publics. The Making of Authority*, Manchester: St Jerome's Press 2001, p. 1.
9. Gal, Susan; Irvine, Judith T. 'Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation', Kroskrity, Paul (ed.) *Regimes of Languages*, Santa Fe, N.M.: School for American Research 2000, p. 37.
10. Gal & Woolard 2001, p. 3.
11. Strikha, Maksym 'Surzhyk', in *Narys ukrains'koi populiarnoi kul'tury*, Kyiv: Ukrain's'kyi tsentr kul'turnykh doslidzhen'. Instytut kul'turnoi polityky 1998, p. 631.
12. *SUM (Slovyk ukrains'koi movy)*, Kyiv: Naukova Dumka 1978.
13. See for instance Radevych-Vynnyts'kyi, Iaroslav *Etyket i kul'tura spilkuвання*, Lviv: Spolom 2001, p. 28.
14. *SUM* 1978, p. 854
15. *Entsyklopediia ukrains'ka mova*, Kyiv 2000, p. 616.
16. Bilaniuk, Laada 'Speaking of Surzhyk: Ideologies and Mixed Languages', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 21, nos. 1–2, June 1997, p. 95.
17. Serbens'ka, Oleksandra; Voloshchak, Mariia Aktual'ne inter'viu z movoznavtsem, Kyiv: Prosvita 2001, pp. 68–69.
18. *Ibid*, pp. 68–69.
19. Hrytsenko, Oleksandr 'Surzhyk', in *Narys ukrains'koi populiarnoi kul'tury*, Kyiv: Ukrain's'kyi tsentr kul'turnykh doslidzhen'. Instytut kul'turnoi polityky 1998, pp. 641–642.
20. Masenko, Larysa *Mova i suspil'stvo. Postkolonial'nyi vymir*, Kyiv: KM-Akademiia 2004, pp. 113–114.

21. Taranenکو, Oleksandr 'Movna sytuatsiia i movna polityka chasiv "perebudovy" ta derzhavnoi nezalezhnosti Ukraïny (kinets' 80-kh–90-ti rokov), in Iermolenko, Svitlana (ed.) *Ukraïns'ka mova*, Najnowsze dzieje języków słowiańskich, Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski. Instytut Filologii Polskiej 1999, p. 58.
22. Trub V. 'Iavishche "surzhyku" iak forma prostorichchia v sytuatsii dvomovnosti', *Movoznavsto* 1, 2000, p. 57.
23. Russophone language ideology sometimes applies the label surzhyk to varieties resulting from contact between Ukrainian and languages other than Russian, most commonly with Polish (e.g. in Galicia), Slovakian and Hungarian (in Transcarpathia). While language contact in Western Ukraine long has been an object for linguistic research, interference in Western Ukrainian speech varieties is evoked in language ideological debates mainly by Russophone ideology brokers seeking to challenge Ukrainophone claims to represent the true, non-contaminated (i.e. non-Russified) Ukrainian language. Efforts to revitalise Ukrainian in Post-Soviet Ukraine are portrayed as emanating from the politics of Ukrainian nationalism, which is seen as a predominantly Galician enterprise (directly or via émigrés from the region in Europe or North America). Linguistic Ukrainisation is thus constructed as linguistic Galicianisation, threatening not only the positions of Russian but also the 'genuine' Ukrainian linguistic traditions in Eastern and Southern Ukraine.
24. Tolstoi, Nikita *Iazyk i narodnaia kul'tura. Ocherki po slavianskoi mifologii i ètnolingvistike*, Moskva: Indrik 1995, pp. 16–17.
25. Khimik, Vasilii *Poètika nizkogo, ili prostorechie kak kul'turnyi fenomen*, Sankt-Peterburg: Filologicheskii fakul'tet Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta 2000, p. 249.
26. For an early example in Ukrainophone explicit discourse see Sydir Vorobkevych's poem *Ridna mova* ('Native language') from 1867.
27. This description could perhaps be put in the context of stories from L'viv urban folklore on the Post-War wave of migrants to the city from the surrounding Ukrainian-speaking countryside, stories with a similar emphasis on the 'odd' behaviour of newcomers not familiar with the complexities of city life. A significant difference between the stories is that while post-war migrants from the Ukrainian countryside lacked the economic capital of the modern Eastern Ukrainian newcomers, they as Galician Ukrainians possessed a significant cultural capital of authenticity and belonging to the region, which in the author's view contemporary surzhyk-speaking migrants lack.

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