Remembering Boris Badenov and Natasha Fatale

Teaching the "Language of the Enemy" in U.S. Public Schools

Timothy Reagan

Abstract

While there are many difficulties faced by world language educators, both teachers and students of certain languages—languages commonly identified with countries and cultures deemed to be hostile to the United States—often find themselves in uniquely paradoxical situations. This article begins with a brief anecdotal description of the personal challenge of speaking a "language of the enemy," and then turns to a discussion of world language education in the United States, emphasizing the distinction between the commonly taught languages (CTLs) and the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). Next, an overview of linguistic bias in the history of world language education, focusing on the cases of German and Russian, as well as both Farsi and Arabic, is provided, followed by a discussion of the uses of "soft power" in the promotion of a country's language and culture. After a brief analysis of the role of media in constructing images of different languages for public consumption, and the impact of such media efforts on the teaching of some of the LCTLs, the article concludes with a discussion of the fundamental dilemma that we face in teaching what are considered by many Americans to be the "languages of the enemy."

Keywords: world language education, less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), language attitudes

Timothy Reagan iis a professor of foreign language education in the College of Education and Human Developoment at the University of Maine, Orono. He is also Research Fellow at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, Siouth Africa. E-mail address: timothy.reagan@maine.edu

Introduction

> Don't speak the enemy's language: The four freedoms are not in his vocabulary. Speak American! (World War II Propaganda Poster)

As a general rule, scholars in educational foundations quite appropriately focus our attention on matters in the fields of anthropology of education, comparative and international education, history of education, philosophy of education, and sociology of education, as well as in discussions and explorations of how each of these can assist us to better understand particular issues and topics related to specific topics in educational thought and practice. Further, scholars in educational foundations are also concerned with providing critical perspectives on schooling, both in the US and elsewhere, and our work is often informed by work in critical theory, critical pedagogy, critical race theory, feminist theory, queer theory, social justice, and other scholarship that can help us place schooling in its social, cultural, economic, political, and ideological contexts. Finally, we offer focused analyses of particular aspects of contemporary educational thought and practice in different content areas and related to various sorts of pedagogical practices.

In this article, I explore some challenges in the teaching of particular world languages in the U.S. context. While there are many difficulties faced by world language educators, both teachers and students of certain languages—languages commonly identified with countries and cultures deemed to be hostile to the United States—often find themselves in uniquely paradoxical situations. I begin this article with a brief anecdote from my childhood, then briefly discuss the status of world language education in the United States, emphasizing the distinction between the commonly taught languages (CTLs) and the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). Next, I provide an overview of linguistic bias in the history of world language education, focusing on the cases of German and Russian, as well as both Farsi and Arabic, and then examine the contemporary uses of "soft power" in the promotion of a country's language and culture. After a brief analysis of the role of media in constructing images of different languages for public consumption, and the impact of such media efforts on the teaching of some of the LCTLs, the article concludes with a discussion of the fundamental dilemma that we face in teaching what are considered by many Americans to be the "languages of the enemy."

The Message of Rocky and Bullwinkle

When I was a child, many of the adults around me did not speak English as their first language. Most of them had come from Central and

Eastern Europe after the Second World War; a few, after the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. In addition to English, which they virtually all spoke fairly well, they also spoke a variety of other languages, including German, Hungarian, Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, and Yiddish. Our neighborhood was a polyglot one, fairly similar to the communities that many of them had left behind. People moved from language to language based on the person with whom they were speaking, what the topic was, and a host of other factors, and engaged frequently in code mixing and code switching.

It was not simply the fact of multilingualism that was an issue, though—it was also very much the particular languages that I was used to hearing. Russian in particular was a problem, as was English spoken with a Russian (or really, any sort of Slavic) accent. This was the midst of the Cold War, and the Soviet Union—which everyone I knew always called simply Russia—was the nemesis of the United States. Our country stood for democracy and freedom. We were on the side of right and truth and justice. The Soviet Union was a society in permanent opposition to all that we valued. They were fundamentally dishonest and untrustworthy, seeking to overthrow democracies around the world and replace them with totalitarian dictatorships aligned with Moscow. We led the world scientifically and technologically; the Soviet Union was backwards and underdeveloped. And yet, at the same time the USSR was extremely dangerous as well. In spite of its lack of scientific progress, it was competing with U.S. in the space race—and, somehow, often achieving extremely impressive accomplishments. Even more, there was the arms race—the Soviet Union had nuclear weapons, and was an existential threat to the United States. This was the era of nuclear fallout shelters and school drills to prepare us for the possibility of a Soviet attack, and also of a veritable army of Soviet spies attempting to infiltrate every part of American life. And the Soviets spoke Russian—the language that I heard around me every day.

Whatever ambiguities or confusions I might have felt about speaking Russian and the Soviet threat were intensified every Saturday morning, as I watched cartoons. From late 1959 to the mid-1960s, the children's television show *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends* was broadcast on the ABC and then the NBC networks. It was an extremely popular children's show; well-written, both children and their parents could enjoy parts of the show. Its two main characters were a flying squirrel named Rocky (Rocket J. Squirrel) and his somewhat dim-witted companion, Bullwinkle (Bullwinkle J. Moose), but also included in the show were a number of other supporting characters, including Dudley-Do-Right of the Canadian Mounties (who was constantly outwitting Snidely Whiplash, the villain, and saving Nell Fenwick, who was

more interested in Dudley's horse than in Dudley himself); a segment called "Peabody's Improbable History" (featuring a dog named Peabody and his boy Sherman, who engaged in time travel to retell and "correct" many historical stories), and "Fractured Fairy Tales," which involved new and humorous versions of well-known traditional fairy tales.

There was one additional feature of *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends*. The part of *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends* that was the cause for considerable puzzlement and concern for me, were the two major villains of the show, the spies Boris Badenov and Natasha Fatale. Boris and Natasha represented evil, writ large, and if they were funny, it was because they were so pathetically incompetent and inept. Indeed, they were inevitably so unsuccessful as to be a constant source of frustration to their foreign boss, the dictator called simply "Fearless Leader." Boris and Natasha both spoke with very heavy, and clearly identifiable, Russian accents.

Thus, on a weekly basis I was presented with two profoundly evil, anti-American characters who sounded all too similar to many of the adults I loved and respected. To be sure, the adults whom I knew were no fans of the Soviet Union or of communism, any more than those who spoke with German accents had been supporters of the Nazis. The people I knew had escaped, in one way or another, from the horrors of Nazi Germany, the pogroms, the camps and the Holocaust, the Stalinist purges, and the anti-Soviet and anti-Russian Hungarian Revolution. I knew and understood this, of course—but it was far from clear to me that other Americans were always as cognizant of it as they should have been. For most Americans, it seemed, Russians were Russians.

The State of the Field

Teachers of world languages in the United States face a number of challenges, many of them shared with other educators, but others that are unique. The reality of world language education is that only one in five K-12 students in U.S. public schools study a language other than English at all (American Councils for International Education, 2017, p. 7), and most do not begin the study of a second language until middle or high school and study the language for at most four years—a recipe for not succeeding in gaining competence in another language. The fundamental problem with world language education in the United States, though, is not merely that enough students do not study foreign languages, nor that they do not begin such study early enough, nor even that they do not continue the study of such languages long enough—although all of these are indeed serious problems. The real problem is that such study is not particularly effective for most students. In spite of significant

improvements in the teaching of foreign languages, Jacques Barzun's observation in the mid-1950s remains largely true:

> Boys and girls "take" French or Spanish or German … for three, four, or five years before entering college, only to discover there that they cannot read, speak or understand it. The word for this type of instruction is not "theoretical" but "hypothetical." Its principle is *"If* it were possible to learn a foreign language in the way I have been taught, I should now know the language." (1954, p. 119, my emphasis)

This point becomes especially clear when we consider the individuals in U.S. society who *do* in fact speak a language other than English. Of the total population in the United States, roughly 80% are native speakers of English, while 20% have some other native language. At the same time, only 10% of the total claim to have good language skills in a language other than English. Further,

> As of 2006 (the most recent year for which such data are available), the overwhelming majority of US adults who reported they could speak a non-English language acquired that language at home. Only a small percentage … acquired the language at school, reflecting the challenges faced by Americans of developing language proficiency after childhood. (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2017, p. 8)

This means that of the more than 230,000,000 native speakers of English in the United States, fewer than 2,000,000—less than 1%—are able to speak a language other than English well as a result of foreign language study in school (see Neuman, 2017).

Beyond the concerns with enrollments and issues related to the effectiveness of world language education, though, there is an even deeper challenge faced by world language educators in the United States. While specialists in all disciplines inevitably believe their fields to be unique (and uniquely important), there is nevertheless a general expectation that others outside of their discipline will at least acknowledge and recognize the value of the subjects that they teach. Thus, although many educators may have had negative personal experiences in studying mathematics, few would question the value of mathematics for students. On the other hand, the vast majority of teachers (and parents, politicians, and other adults) have had generally unsuccessful experiences learning foreign languages, and, even more, do not seem really to value such learning for students. To be sure, most people will give lip service to the idea that speaking a second language would be a good thing for students, but there is no clear commitment to taking steps to ensure that such a goal is accomplished in public education. Indeed, it is not even the case that English speakers merely find it difficult to learn other languages—as Richard Brecht, of the University of Maryland's Center

for Advanced Study of Language, has suggested, "It isn't that people don't think language education is important. *It's that they don't think it's possible.*" (quoted in Friedman, 2015, my emphasis).

Fewer than 10 million students in the US of the total student population were studying a foreign language during the 2014-2015 school year (see Table 1). Generally speaking, these students were enrolled in one of nine languages, which are those that are most typically offered in US public schools. These languages fall into two groups: the CTLs and the LCTLs. The CTLs – French, German, and Spanish – are each being studied by more than 250,000 students nationally, though only French and Spanish have enrollments in excess of 1 million students (American Councils for International Education, 2017, pp. 8-9). The remaining languages—Arabic, American Sign Language (ASL), Chinese, Japanese, Latin, and Russian—are the LCTLs, and of these, only ASL, Chinese and Latin are being studied by more than 100,000 students. In short, fewer than 20% of all US students were studying a foreign language, and of these, more than three-quarters were studying Spanish.

The Challenges of Teaching the Less Commonly Taught Languages

If foreign language educators in general face problems not typically addressed by other teachers, then teachers of the LCTLs are often in an even more difficult position. In spite of the significant challenges that teachers of Spanish, French, and German, must deal with, there are reasonable selections of excellent curricular materials (textbooks and ancilliary materials) available to them, there is some degree of both parental and student interest in them, there are powerful professional

Table 1
Total Enrollment of K-12 Students in Selected Foreign Languages, 2014-2015
(Based on American Councils for International Education, 2017, pp. 8-9)

Language	*Total Enrollment*
Arabic	26,045
ASL	130,411
Chinese	227,086
French	1,289,004
German	330,898
Japanese	67,909
Latin	210,306
Russian	14,876
Spanish	7,363,125
Total	9,659,660

organizations that advocate for the teaching and learning of the CTLs, often outstanding professional development and networking opportunities exist for these languages, and (especially in the case of Spanish) in recent decades approaches to teaching heritage language learners have been developed and widely implemented (see Bale, 2014; Kagan & Dillon, 2001; Wiley et al., 2014). In the cases of the LCTLs, none of these is necessarily true, though there is a large body of literature that addresses the teaching of the LCTLs (see, e.g., Brecht & Walton, 1994; Brown, 2009; Gor & Vatz, 2011; Walker, 1991; Walton, 1991; Wang, 2009).

It is worth noting here that while the teaching of many of the LCTLs does indeed face a number of powerful barriers in the United States—shortages of qualified teachers, poor quality and limited amounts of curricular materials, and a lack of interest and support among the general population among them—there are (at the present time) no explicit or legal restrictions at any level (federal, state, or local) that would, in either principle or practice, actually prevent the teaching of any language in a public school. This has not always been the case; as we shall see, there were indeed efforts to ban the teaching of German in public schools in many parts of the United States in the 20th century, and legislation and even constitutional ammendments were required to allow American Sign Language to be taught as a foreign language in many states (see Fonseca-Greber & Reagan, 2008; Reagan, 2011; Wilcox, 1988)—but no such barriers currently exist. Rather, the barriers that work against both student enrollments and program offerings in LCTLs are more practical in nature, and are often reinforced and strengthened by both direct and indirect messaging and narratives in the popular media (see Bell, 2008; Gershon, 2010; Hodges, 2015)—similar to those communicated by the case of Boris and Natasha, but also by messaging about such factors as the lack of concern with language learning in general, the difficulty (or impossibility) of learning particular languages, and the nexus of language and ideology more generally (see, e.g., Dodick, 2018; Dubskikh & Butova, 2020).

The Politics of Language

As many scholars have pointed out over the years, language is never neutral, and is always imbued in power relations (see, e.g., Bourdieu, 1982, 2001; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970, 1997; Fairclough, 2015; Mayr, 2008). These phenomena are reflected not only in issues relevant to foreign language education—they are also clearly present in the ways in which some language varieties are deemed legitimate and others non-legitimate (see Reagan, 2016, 2019), in official language policies (as well as in political efforts such as the English Only Movement) (see Baron,

1990; Nunberg, 1989; Tatalovich, 1995), and in the many ways in which we can see raciolinguistic ideologies in different societies (see Alim, Rickford & Ball, 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rose, 2016, 2019; Rosa & Flores, 2017). These political and ideological concerns are also present in the different ways in which bilingualism is conceptualized in US society. There is, for instance, a fundamental distinction in US society between popular attitudes toward élite bilingualism (represented, for example, in "Seal of Biliteracy" programs) (see Davin & Heineke, 2017; Davin, Heineke & Egnatz, 2018; Subtirelu, Borowczyk, Hernández & Venezi, 2019) and attitudes toward what has been termed folk bilingualism – a distinction that is often reinforced in educational settings in efforts toward addititive bilingualism in the former case and the more common commitment to subtractive bilingualism in the latter (see Pliiddemann, 1997; Roberts, 2010). With this contextualization of the political and ideological nature of language in mind, we turn now to a discussion of the politics of language and language education in their historical and contemporary contexts, with a focus on the role of linguistic bias in our society, followed by an analysis of the role of language and language promotion as a component of "soft power" in international relations.

Linguistic Bias in the United States

The history of linguistic diversity in the United States predates the establishment of the newly created United States in the late 18th century, just as does the ambivalence toward particular languages at different times in our history. Benjamin Franklin published the first documented foreign language newspaper in America in 1732; it was *Die Philadelphische Zeitung*, although it existed for less than a year (Moyer, 2015). In spite of this willingness to exploit the German language for commercial purposes, Franklin had a long-standing dislike for and distrust of German immigrants in Pennsylvania. As early as 1755, he wrote:

> As few of the English understand the German Language, and so cannot address them either from the Press or Pulpit, 'tis almost impossible to remove any prejudices they once entertain … They behave, however, submissively enough at present to the Civil Government which I wish they may continue to do: For I remember when they modestly declined intermeddling in our Elections, but now they come in droves, and carry all before them, except in one or two Counties; Few of their children in the Country learn English; they import many Books from Germany; and of the six printing houses in the Province, two are entirely German, two half German half English, and but two entirely English … the Signs in our Streets have inscriptions in both languages, and in some places only German … In short unless the stream of their importation could be turned from this to other colonies … they will soon out number us,

> that all the advantages we have will not in My Opinion be able to pre-
> serve our language, and even our Government will become precarious.
> (Quoted in McClarey & Zummo, 2012)

There is much in this extended passage that is informative not just about Franklin's time and society, but which is all too reminiscent of our own. Indeed, had the Atlantic Ocean not been an insurmountable barrier, one could almost imagine Franklin suggesting a huge wall to keep German immigrants out of the country.

In the decades following the end of the Civil War, there had been significant increases in the numbers of immigrants to the United States from a variety of European countries. The source of the immigrants over this period shifted as well, from mainly northern and western Europe to southern and eastern Europe. These "new immigrants" came increasingly from Greece, Italy, Poland, and Russia. Further, they were generally uneducated, tended to be from rural backgrounds coming to an increasingly urban and industrial American society, and (not unimportant at the time) were overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Jewish rather than Protestant, as was the norm for native-born Americans. The languages that these "new immigrants" spoke were seen as inferior to English, and an important (indeed, key) part of the Americanization process was for their children to transition to the English language as well as to Anglo-American cultural, economic, and political norms as quickly as possible. Although the matter was one of ethnicity, race, national origin, and religion as well as language—a clear example of intersectionality—having a native language other than English could all too often place an individual at substantial risk economically, socially, and even physically (see Kloss, 1998, pp. 32-33).

German, though, seems to have often been the exception that made the rule, so to speak. Prior to World War I, German immigrants and their descendants constituted by far the largest linguistic minority population in many parts of the United States, especially in the Midwest, and German speakers actively sought both to retain and to cultivate their language (see Kloss, 1998, pp.108-116). Institutionally, the two major places where such efforts were made to accomplish this were in the churches and the public schools. Although state education law typically either required instruction in English or made no mention of the expected medium of instruction (presumably because it was assumed that the medium of instruction was to be English), the reality in many parts of the country was quite different. In a *Report* of the State Supervisor for Public Education for the state of Missouri for the years 1887-1888, for instance, the situation with respect to German was described as follows:

> In a large number of districts of the State the German element of the population greatly preponderates and as a consequence the schools are mainly taught in the German language and sometimes entirely so. Hence, if an American family lives in such a district the children must either be deprived of school privileges or else be taught in the German language. In some districts the schools are taught in German for a certain number of months and then in English, while in others German is used part of the day and English the rest. (Quoted in Kloss, 1998, p. 110)

In fact, in some areas, such as both Baltimore and Cincinnati, there were actually official English-German bilingual education programs in the public schools (Fishman, 2014). In short, prior to the First World War, German was well-established and widely acknowledged, and even respected, in many parts of the United States. Further, in many schools German was introduced and taught as a subject (for students from both English and German-speaking backgrounds) beginning in the upper elementary school grades.

This completely changed with the entry of the United States into the First World War. Germany was an enemy power, and German-Americans very much targets of suspicion. Their language in particular marked them as suspect. The anti-German hysteria that emerged during both the First and Second World Wars was profound, and was manifested in a variety of ways both formally and informally, and in a number of different domains including legislatively and educationally (see Holian, 1998; Koning, 2009). As Kloss has argued,

> War with the homeland of the ethnic group, not racial aversion, gave rise to special laws pertaining to German-Americans in World War I … There were numerous cases in which German-speaking American citizens were attacked, beaten, injured, tarred and feathered, or deprived of their freedom, and where the cattle of farmers were driven away and private and community houses (including churches) of German-speaking people were damaged. The tarring and feathering, which occasionally resulted in death, became "a kind of popular open-air sport" in some states of the Far West. (1998, p. 54)

The National Council of Defense was established in 1916, and state and local versions of this body quickly formed around the country, with the primary goal of eliminating the use of the German language. As a 1918 notice form the Texas Victoria Country Council of Defense read, "The National and State Councils of Defense request that the use of the German language be proscribed among us …. We call upon all Americans to abandon the use of the German language, in public and private, as an utmost condemnation of the rule of the sword" (quoted in Kloss, 1998, p. 61). Laws were passed banning the use of German in public, over the

telephone, on the railroad, and in churches, and the largely language disappeared in schools. German newspapers in the United States ceased being published, and in some places there were public book-burnings of texts in German.

If a major war can result in the identification of a language as an "enemy language," and of its speakers as subject to suspicion and doubts about their patriotism and loyalty, it actually takes far less than a war to accomplish such an outcome. The Russian Revolution, followed in the aftermath of World War II by the Cold War, led to abiding suspicions of the Russian language and its speakers—in spite of the fact that the United States and the USSR had actually been allies and partners during the World War. The overthrown of the Shah of Iran and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with its vehement and often polemic rejection of and attacks on the United States, also led to deep-seated concerns about Farsi. Radical Islam and calls for *jihad*—as well as specific terrorist events, most notably 9/11—reinforced existing xenophobic (and Islamophobic) suspicions about Arabic. The growing economic and military power of the People's Republic of China (PRC)—and, most recently, questions and doubts about the origins of COVID-19 and the way in which the virus was handled by the government of the PRC in its early days—and of course building on the Chinese Communist Revolution, all contributed to comparable concerns about the Chinese language.

Language Promotion and "Soft Power"

Joseph Nye first introduced the concept of soft power in 1990, and it has proven to be an extremely useful concept in political science and the study of diplomacy and foreign affairs (Nye, 1990a, 1990b). There is an extensive literature dedicated to analyzing the use of soft power in different settings (see, e.g., Gallarotti, 2011; Nye, 2013; Rothman, 2011; Wilson, 2008). In essence, "soft power is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment. A country's soft power rests on its resources of culture, values, and policies" (Nye, 2008, p. 94). Soft power is thus contrasted with "hard power"— that is, power based on "the use of coercion and payment" (Nye, 2009, p. 160). All countries employ combinations of soft and hard power in their relationships with other countries, though some do so far more successfully than others. Although the use of soft power by the United States has been the focus of a great deal of the scholarly literature in recent years, it is useful to see how it is used to accomplish national goals in other contexts. One fairly recent example of this has the Russian use of soft power through its promotion of the idea of the "Russian World" (*Russkij Mir*) in its efforts to justify Russian actions in

Crimea and now Ukraine (Novossiia; see Bohomolov & Lytvynenko, 2012; Flavier, 2015; Nikita, 2017; Sergunin & Karabeshkin, 2015; Tsygankov, 2006, 2013). As Valentina Feklyunina has explained this phenomenon, "in the late 2000s–early 2010s, Russia's dominant identity was increasingly associated with the idea of a 'Russian world—an imagined community based on the markers of the Russian language, the Russian culture and the common glorious past" (2016, p. 773). Further, as Ammon Cheskin has commented, "Russian soft power has been subject to extensive academic and governmental scrutiny, especially in relation to Russia's aims of increasing its non-military influence in the post-Soviet space. Numerous studies have examined the soft power strategies and resources employed by the Russian state to improve its image abroad, and to further its foreign policy interests" (2017, p. 277).

One important aspect of soft power for many countries have been efforts to promote their languages and cultures, often through formal institutional organizations and bodies. This is precisely what the British Council, the Alliance Française, the Goethe-Institut, the Instituto Cervantes, and of course the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are all intended to accomplish. In some cases, the political and ideological goals—as well as the links to the country's foreign policy—are clearly stated, while in others such ties are underplayed by organizations of this type, which typically stress their cultural and linguistic functions.

Beginning in 2004, the Chinese government, initially through its Ministry of Education and more recently through the Chinese International Education Foundation, has sponsored Confucius Institutes in partnership with colleges and university in a variety of different countries around the world, including Australia, Canada, Israel, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The Confucius Institutes provide teachers, textbooks, and operating funds to promote the teaching of Chinese language and culture and to facilitate cultural exchanges. They have become increasingly controversial, though, and have been accused of giving the Chinese government excessive influence and control of curricular matters and suppressing academic freedom. In addition, there have been claims that the Confucius Institutes may also support industrial and military espionage. In the United States, there were more than 100 Confucius Institutes in 2017; today, there are fewer than 50, and the number is declining rapidly. In essence, however, the Confucius Institutes are simply examples of Chinese soft power (see Garrison, 2005; Hunter, 2009; Kurlantzick, 2007; Mingjiang Li, 2008, 2009), just as are similar institutions sponsored by other countries.

Conclusion

The close ties between language and power are reflected in many different ways. One of these is the relationship between a particular language and its speakers, on the one hand, and perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about the country or countries most closely associated with it in the minds of Americans, on the other hand. When events erupt and tensions between the US and another country (or group of nations, ideological powers, religious communities, etc.) become strained, attitudes toward the language associated with that country are foregrounded (see Kramsch, 2005; Kubota, 2006). Generally speaking, this has two effects. First, there are almost inevitably security concerns related to the need to increase our ability to access information through the language involved, and hence sincere efforts to recruit speakers of the language and support educational programs to prepare more individuals capable of functioning in it. Second, and somewhat contradictory to the first effect, suspicions arise with respect to anyone who speaks the language—perhaps more suspicions about those who speak the language natively, but even doubts about those who make the effort to learn the language and (understandably) seek to understand its speakers.

Language is a central aspect of both our individual and group identities. It can also, to some extent, mark us as insiders or outsiders in society. Historically, as we have seen, language in the United States, in conjunction with concerns about the loyalty of particular ethnic groups, has led to bans on the teaching of certain languages other than English, to public burnings of foreign language books, and even to bans on gatherings of individuals speaking particular languages. All of this was true, for instance, in the era of the First World War, and once again in the Second World War, during which the primary language targeted was German (see Holian, 1998). It was once again true during the Cold War, as the US had a somewhat schizophrenic attitude toward Russian and speakers of Russian -- questioning the loyalty and patriotism of speakers of the Russian language, while at the same time seeking to increase the numbers of students of Russian for purposes of national security.

Today, the US government (and the FBI, CIA, and NSA in particular) remains the primary employer of university graduates fluent in many of the so-called "critical languages" (Koning, 2009; Ryding, 2006). For example, as Sara Nimis and Stephen Nimis have observed,

> Teachers of Arabic today are constantly reminded of the strategic importance of Arabic. Many students are drawn to Arabic to enhance their competitiveness in seeking a career in politics, diplomacy, security, or intelligence work. The United States government acknowledges the

need for more expertise in Arabic language, and a better understanding of people who speak it. In 2006, the Bush administration launched the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), which included Arabic and Farsi among the languages critical to the nation's security and prosperity. (2009, p. 155)

At the same time, even as speakers of these languages are serving to further the US government's agenda (a controversial matter on its own) (Bale, 2014; Wiley, 2007), they continue to be viewed with suspicion, especially in the cases of languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Pashto, and Russian. Indeed, when Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman was presenting testimony related to the impeachment of President Donald Trump in 2019, his own loyalty and patriotism were repeatedly questioned—both because his family had immigrated to the US when he was a young child, and because of his ability to speak Ukrainian (a skill, it should be noted, that was essential to his job) (Bump, 2019). This suspicion (which I am tempted to label not merely xenophobia but paranoia) goes well beyond individual and idiosyncratic cases—it often permeates views of virtually all aspects of languages and those who study them:

> Critics of academics in Arabic language and related fields [and this applies to many of the other "critical languages" as well] have become increasingly active in working to control what they perceive as an un-patriotic sympathy among academics and students of Arabic toward the criticism of American foreign policy typically found in Arabic political discourse … (Nimis & Nimis, 2009, p. 156)

There is a fundamental paradox here that needs to be recognized. Merely speaking a language does not automatically lead one to be in sympathy and support for a particular national political or ideological régime, nor does it in any way threaten a person's loyalty and patriotism toward their own country. Nevertheless, "the dilemma *is* real: It is impossible to 'understand' in the sense of being able to decode words and actions without also learning to 'understand' in the sense of seeing a different worldview as human and containing its own logic" (Nimis & Nimis, 2009, p. 156, my emphasis).

References

Alim, H. S., Rickford, J., & Ball, A. (Eds.). (2016). *Raciolinguistics : How language shapes our ideas about race.* Oxford University Press.

American Academy of Arts and Sciences. (2017). *America's languages: Investing in language education for the 21st century*. Author.

American Councils for International Education. (2017). *The national K-12 foreign language enrollment survey report.* Author.

Bale, J. (2014). Heritage language education and the "national interest."

Review of Research in Education, 38, 166-188. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190514000245

Baron, D. (1990). *The English-only question: An official language for Americans?* Yale University Press.

Barzun, J. (1954). *Teacher in America*. Doubleday.

Bell, A. (2008). Language and the media. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 15*, 23-41. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190500002592

Bohomolov, O., & Lytvynenko, O. V. (2012). *A ghost in the mirror: Russian soft power in Ukraine.* Chatham House.

Bourdieu, P. (1982). *Ce que parler veut dire : L'économie des échanges linguistiques* [What talking means: The economics of linguistic exchanges]. Fayard.

Bourdieu, P. (2001). *Langage et pouvoir symbolique* [Language and symbolic power]. Éditions Points.

Bourdieu, P., & J-C. Passeron. (1970). *La reproduction : Éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement* [Reproduction: Elements for a theory of the educational system]. Éditions de Minuit.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J-C. (1997). Language and relationship to language in the teaching situation. *Beogradski Krug, 3-4*(1-2), 64-78.

Brecht, R., & Walton, R. (1994). National strategic planning in the less commonly taught languages. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 532*(1), 190-212. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716294532001014

Brown, A. (2009). Less commonly taught language and commonly taught language students: A demographic and academic comparison. *Foreign Language Annals, 42*(3), 405-423. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2009.01036.x

Bump, P. (2019, October 29). The fundamentally un-American attacks on Alexander Vindman. *The Washington Post*. Downloaded on November 20, 2019 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/10/29/fundamentally-un-american-attacks-alexander-vindman/.

Cheskin, A. (2017). Russian soft power in Ukraine: A structural perspective. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies, 50,* 277-287. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2017.09.001

Davin, K., & Heineke, A. (2017). The Seal of Biliteracy: Variations in policy and outcomes. *Foreign Language Annals, 50*(3), 486-499. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12279

Davin, K., Heineke, A., & Egnatz, L. (2018). The Seal of Biliteracy: Successes and challenges to implementation. *Foreign Language Annals, 51*(2), 275-289. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12336

Dodick, D. (2018). A study of the attitudes and motivation of high school foreign language students. *The Canadian Modern Language Review / La Revue Canadienne des Langues Vivantes, 52*(4), 577-595. https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.52.4.577

Dubskikh, A., & Butova, A. (2020). Media projects as a means of increasing motivation for learning foreign language by non-language students. *Problemy sovremennogo pedagogicheskogo obrazovaniya*, *68*(3), 79-82.

Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and power* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Feklyunina, V. (2016). Soft power and identity: Russia, Ukraine and the "Russian world(s)." *European Journal of International Relations, 22*(4), 773-796. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066115601200

Fishman, J. (2014). Three hundred-plus years of heritage language education in the United States. In T. Wiley, J. Peyton, D. Christian, S. Moore and Na Liu (Eds.), *Handbook of heritage, community, and Native American languages in the United States: Research, policy, and educational practice* (pp. 36-44). Routledge and the Center for Applied Linguistics.

Flavier, H. (2015). Russia's normative influence over post-Soviet states: The examples of Belarus and Ukraine. *Russian Law Journal, 3*(1), 6-32.

Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Educational Review, 85*(2), 149-171. https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.2.149

Fonseca-Greber, B., & Reagan, T. (2008). Developing K-16 student Standards for language learning: A critical examination of the case of Esperanto. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 5*(1), 44-63. https://doi.org/10.1080/1542758 0701696936

Friedman, A. (2015, May 10). America's lacking language skills. *The Atlantic*. Downloaded on March 13, 2021 from https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/05/filling-americas-language-education-potholes/392876/.

Gallarotti, G. (2011). Soft power: What it is, why it's important, and the conditions for its effective use. *Journal of Political Power, 4*(1), 25-47. https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2011.557886

Garrison, J. (2005). China's prudent cultivation of "soft power" and implications for US policy in East Asia. *Asian Affairs, 32*(1), 25-30. https://doi.org/10.3200/AAFS.32.1.25-30

Gershon, I. (2010). Media ideologies: An introduction. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 20*(2), 283-293. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43104264

Gor, K., & Vatz, K. (2011). Less commonly taught languages: Issues in learning and teaching. In M. Long & C. Doughty (Eds.), *The handbook of language teaching* (pp. 234-249). Wiley-Blackwell.

Hodges, A. (2015). Ideologies of language and race in US media discourse about the Trayvon Martin shooting. *Language in Society, 44*(3), 401-423. https://doi:10.1017/S004740451500024X

Holian, T. (1998). *The German-Americans and World War II: An ethnic experience*. Peter Lang.

Hunter, A. (2009). Soft power: China on the global stage. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics, 2*(3), 373-398. https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pop001

Kagan, O., & Dillon, K. (2001). A new perspective on teaching Russian: Focus on the heritage learner. *The Slavic and East European Journal, 45*(3), 507-518. https://doi.org/3086367

Kloss, H. (1998). *The American bilingual tradition* (2nd ed.). Center for Applied Linguistics.

Koning, P. (2009, February). Using languages in national security. *The Language Educator,* 32-37. Downloaded on March 20, 2019 from https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/tle/career-focus/TLE_01NatSecure.pdf.

Kramsch, C. (2005). Post 9/11: Foreign languages between knowledge and power. *Applied Linguistics, 26*(4), 545-567. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/ami026

Kubota, R. (2006). Teaching second languages for national security purposes: A case of post-9/11 USA. In J. Edge (ed.), *(Re-)locating TESOL in an age of empire* (pp. 119-138). Palgrave Macmillan.

Kurlantzick, J. (2007). *Charm offensive: How China's soft power is transforming the world.* Yale University Press.

Mayr, A. (Ed.). (2008). *Language and power: An introduction to institutional discourse*. Continuum.

McClarey, D., & Zummo, P. (2012). *Benjamin Franklin on German immigrants. Almost Chosen People: A blog about American history, and the development of a great nation*. Downloaded on June 26, 2021 from https://almostchosenpeople.wordpress.com/2012/04/12/benjamin-franklin-on-german-immigrants/.

Mingjiang Li. (2008). China debates soft power. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics, 2*(2), 287-308. https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pon011

Mingjiang Li. (Ed.). (2009). *Soft power: China's emerging strategy in international politics*. Lexington Books.

Moyer, S. (2014). Ben Franklin's German-language newspaper. *Humanities: The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities, 35*(6). Downloaded on June 26, 2021 from https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2014/novemberdecember/curio/ben-franklins-german-language-newspaper.

Neuman, W. (2017, May 18). Setting aside bureaucratic requirements. *Inside Higher Ed.* Downloaded on September 24, 2021, from https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/05/18/undergraduate-foreign-language-requirements-arent-particularly-effective-essay.

Nikita, N. (2017). Russian World in Ukraine: Soft power implementation in Crimea and "Novorossiia." *Rossijskij zhurnal issledovanij natsionalizma*, *1*, 38-44.

Nimis, S., & Nimis, S. (2009). Wanted: Languages dead or alive. *Alif: Journal of Contemporary Poetics, 29,* 149-170. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27929824

Nunberg, G. (1989). Linguists and the official language movement. *Language, 65*(3), 579-587. https://www.jstor.org/stable/415223

Nye, J. (1990a). *Bound to lead: The changing nature of American power*. Basic Books.

Nye, J. (1990b). Soft power. *Foreign Policy, 80*, 153-171. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1148580

Nye, J. (2008). Public diplomacy and soft power. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 616*(1), 94-109. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699

Nye, J. (2009). Get smart: Combining hard and soft power. *Foreign Affairs, 88*(4), 160-163. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20699631

Nye, J. (2013). Soft power and American foreign policy. *Political Science Quarterly, 119*(2), 255-270. https://doi.org/10.2307/20202345

Pliiddemann, P. (1997). "Additive" and "subtractive": Challenges in education for multilingualism. *Per Linguam, 13*(1), 17-28. https://doi.org/10.5785/13-1-197

Reagan, T. (2011). Ideological barriers to American Sign Language: Unpacking linguistic resistance. *Sign Language Studies, 11*(4), 606-636. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26190771

Reagan, T. (2016). The conceptualization of "language legitimacy." *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 13*(1), 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2015.1116950

Reagan, T. (2019). *Linguistic legitimacy and social justice*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Roberts, C. (2010). Bilingual education program models: A framework for understanding. *Bilingual Research Journal, 19*(3-4), 369-378. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.1995.10162679

Rosa, J. (2016). Standardization, racialization, languagelessness: Raciolinguistic ideologies across communicative contexts. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 26*(2), 162-183. https://doi.org/10.1111/jola.12116

Rosa, J. (2019). *Looking like a language, sounding like a race: Raciolinguistic ideologies and the learning of Latinidad*. Oxford University Press.

Rosa, J., & Flores, N. (2017). Unsettling race and language: Toward a raciolinguistic perspective. *Language in Society, 46*(5), 621-647. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404517000562

Rothman, S. (2011). Revising the soft power concept: What are the means and mechanisms of Soft power? *Journal of Political Power, 4*(1), 49-64. https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2011.556346

Ryding, K. (2006). Teaching Arabic in the United States. In K. Wahba, Z. Taha, L. England (Eds.), *Handbook for Arabic language teaching professionals in the 21st century* (pp. 13-20). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Sergunin, A., & Karabeshkin, L. (2015). Understanding Russia's soft power strategy. *Politics, 35*(3/4), 347-363. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9256.12109

Subtirelu, N., Borowczyk, M., Hernández, R., & Venezi, F. (2019). Recognizing whose bilingualism? A critical policy analysis of the Seal of Biliteracy. *The Modern Language Journal, 103*(2), 371-390. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12556

Tatalovich, R. (1995). *Nativism reborn? The official English language movement and the American states*. The University Press of Kentucky.

Tsygankov, A. P. (2006). If not by tanks, then by banks? The role of soft power in Putin's foreign policy. *Europe-Asia Studies, 58*(7), 1079-1099. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130600926355

Tsygankov, A. P. (2013) Moscow's soft power strategy. *Current History, 112*(756), 259–264.

Walker, G. (1991). Gaining place: The less commonly taught languages in American schools. *Foreign Language Annals, 24*(2), 131-150. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1991.tb00456.x

Walton, A. (1991). Expanding the vision of foreign language education: Enter the less commonly taught languages. In E. Silber (Ed.), *Critical issues in foreign language instruction* (pp. 160-185). Garland Publishing.

Wang, Shuhan. (2009). Preparing and supporting teachers of the less commonly taught languages. *The Modern Language Journal, 93*(2), 282-287. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40264062

Wilcox, S. (Ed.). (1988). Academic acceptance of American Sign Language. *Special issue of Sign Language Studies* (No. 59). Linstok Press.

Wiley, T. (2007). The foreign language "crisis in the United States: Are heritage and community languages the remedy? *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 4*(2-3), 179-205. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427580701389631

Wiley, T., Peyton, J., Christian, D., Moore, S., & Na Liu (Eds.). (2014). *Handbook of heritage, community, and Native American languages in the United States: Research, policy, and educational practice*. Routledge and the Center for Applied Linguistics.

Wilson, E. (2008). Hard power, soft power, smart power. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 616*(1), 110-124. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207312618