THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING IRISH: NATIONAL IDENTITY, CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY, AND LINGUISTIC AUTHORITY IN AN IRISH LANGUAGE CLASS IN THE UNITED STATES

Jennifer N. Garland

Abstract

This paper examines how orientation to cultural identities in an Irish language class in the United States is used to negotiate issues of authenticity and linguistic and cultural authority. The data were recorded in a beginning level Irish language class in Southern California, in which the teacher and all but one student were American. The Irish identity of the remaining student was highly salient to the other students and to the teacher, conferring authenticity and linguistic authority on him. The teacher's evaluations of the students ascribe authenticity and linguistic authority to the Irish student based on perceptions about his identity, in spite of his rejection of such authority. Thus, even when participants do not claim identity-based statuses, they may be imposed by others in a way that is consequential for interaction.

Keywords: Identity; Authenticity; Irish; Linguistic authority.

1. Introduction: The linguistic authority of the native speaker

There is a long tradition of romanticism in language ideologies in which language is equated with ethnicity, culture, and nationality (Dimmendaal 1992; Fishman 1991; Hill & Hill 1986; Myhill 2003). That is, a speaker of a particular language must be of the ethnicity, culture, and nationality of the home territory of that language, and a person of the ethnicity, culture, or nationality of a language's home territory must be a speaker of that language. Under this ideology, the native speaker is endowed with both cultural authenticity and linguistic authority. In language-learning situations involving endangered languages and heritage languages, the native speaker's authority as a linguistic expert is at its strongest because in language endangerment, there is an awareness of the dwindling numbers of native speakers so that those who remain are highly prized, and in heritage language situations, the native speaker is often a scarce and valued resource due to the distance between the language learning environment and the country where the language is spoken natively (England 2003; Errington 2003; Henze & Davis 1999; Jo 2001).

The relationship between national, cultural, or ethnic identity and linguistic authority can become complicated, however, if the mapping of language onto nation, culture, and ethnicity is undermined in some way. In this paper, I examine a complex case of linguistic authority in a language-learning context, involving language ideologies in an Irish class in Southern California. The site that provides the data for this study is unusual for several reasons. It is a cultural center, not a school; the learners are adults, not children; and the teachers are volunteers, not certified, paid experts.

Therefore, the power relations of many school-based learning situations are weakened or do not apply. Moreover, in the particular classroom that is the focus of the analysis, the teacher is neither a native speaker of the target language nor a native of the nation it belongs to, which further destabilizes the balance of linguistic authority in the class. The analysis examines the teacher's interactions with the predominantly American students in the classroom as compared with a student who is a first-generation Irish immigrant. The issue of nativeness becomes complicated with this student because his distance from the language (i.e., his need to take a beginning-level class in it) is due not to time away from his native country but to language obsolescence (i.e., the fact that Irish is not spoken as the community language in most of Ireland). Although the student is not a native speaker of Irish, he is a native of Ireland, and this adds a further weight to the precariously balanced scale of linguistic authority in the classroom. As the analysis demonstrates, given these factors, the negotiation and conferral of linguistic authority based on cultural authenticity emerges as a key issue in the classroom interaction involving the interpretation of participants' identities under romanticist language ideologies.

2. Cultural authenticity and linguistic authority in heritage language contexts

Research in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and ethnomethodology has shown that identity, rather than being an inherent property of individuals, is constructed in an ongoing way through interaction (Bucholtz & Hall 2004, 2005; Eckert 2000; Fenstermaker & West 2002; West & Zimmerman 1987). However, this does not imply that identities are created anew in each interaction, for at the same time, interaction is itself often shaped by the participants' perceptions of one another's identities. Participants have many opportunities in the course of interaction to position (Davies & Harré 1990; Harré & Langenhove 1999) or style (Cameron 2000; Coupland 2007; Thurlow & Jaworski 2006) themselves and others, using language to construct identities through discourse. Throughout this analysis and discussion, I use the term *positioning* to refer to this practice, but I mean it to be consistent with styling as used by the authors cited above. In order to understand issues of language and identity in the context of heritage language classes, where perceptions of cultural identity can have consequences for linguistic authority regarding the target language, it is necessary to investigate how participants construct expertise or authority for themselves and others as speakers by invoking their credentials as cultural members in interaction.

Although most work in the broader tradition of research on the linguistic construction of authority examines the ways in which individuals can claim expertise or authority for themselves within discourse on the basis of factors other than culture (Fox 2002; Heritage & Raymond 2005; Hill & Irvine 1993; Kottthoff 1997; Matoesian 1999; Raymond & Heritage forthcoming), there is now also abundant research showing evidence of a tight relationship between cultural authenticity and linguistic authority. Authenticity as an analytic concept has come to be viewed with skepticism by many sociolinguists, and recent research has challenged the notion that analysts can or should declare any particular speaker's use of language more authentic and hence more linguistically authoritative than another's (Bucholtz 2003; Coupland 2003). However, this perspective does not imply that the notion of authenticity is unimportant, as speakers can be seen to orient to such concepts in and through their interaction. As

noted above, in heritage language and language revitalization contexts, the ideological construct of authenticity is often particularly important because of potential mismatches between linguistic authority and cultural authenticity. Community ideologies linking language to cultural identity and authenticity are often involved in questions about who can legitimately speak indigenous languages and control their revitalization efforts, or how well the language being taught in revitalization programs represents the indigenous culture (Henze & Davis 1999; Hinton & Ahlers 1999; Wong 1999). Scholarship in other traditions also makes this point. Recent work on ethnically-marked varieties of English, for example, has shown how perceptions of individuals' cultural authenticity can be used interactionally to bolster their claims to linguistic authority as speakers of such varieties even when they are outgroup members (Chun 2004; Cutler 2003; Sweetland 2002). This perspective is valuable in showing the negotiated nature of both cultural authenticity and linguistic authority, but it leaves unexplored the ways in which individuals in interaction confer authority on others, even when it is not actively claimed by the participants on whom it is bestowed.

These issues converge in heritage language classes, in which linguistic authority may be conferred on certain participants, regardless of whether they seek to claim it, largely on the basis of their perceived cultural identity. In language classes, especially those which contain both heritage and non-heritage learners, some participants may be seen as (potential) experts based on the perceptions or assumptions of others about their ethnic or cultural identity, without regard to their actual ability in the heritage language (e.g., Jo 2001; Lee 2002; Potowski 2004). For example, Jo (2001) reports that the Korean heritage language students in her study found themselves in a catch-22 of cultural authenticity and linguistic authority. They were expected by non-Koreans (and sometimes by Koreans as well) to be good speakers of 'their' language, and when their low Korean language ability was made visible in the classroom, it was seen as a challenge to the authenticity of their cultural identity (especially relative to their native-speaker teachers).

The inauthenticating effect of classroom error correction is also noted by Jaffe (1999) in her ethnographic study of Corsican language revitalization. Jaffe's experience as a learner of Corsican shows how judgments of language competence can be used as a boundary maintenance device to delineate group membership. Native Corsican speakers often accused her of speaking Italian when she attempted Corsican early in her fieldwork, but as she gained acceptance in the community, the evaluation of her competence in the language became as exaggeratedly high as it had been originally exaggeratedly low. Hence, evaluations of her competence were directly tied to her status within the community (see also Wertheim 2005). Thus, those with the authority to evaluate linguistic performance, usually teachers and/or native speakers of the language (and perhaps linguists as well), also have the power to confirm or challenge the authenticity of others' group membership.

However, linguistic evaluators are also vulnerable to the evaluation of their own linguistic authority and their competence to make evaluations of others. Thus in heritage language classes, students can also evaluate the teacher's authority. As He (2004: 205) finds,

the expert-novice relation between the teacher and students in Chinese heritage language classes is not a clear-cut case of 'traditional' classroom practice; instead, it may take on a highly emergent quality as the participants ratify,

reverse, reject, or make irrelevant their prescribed role identities moment-by-moment.

In He's study, these shifts come about through challenges from the students, which lead to temporary shifts in authority. She notes that learning a heritage language involves negotiating alignments and affiliations with both the heritage culture and the dominant (in this case, American) culture. It is in part the position of the heritage language class as a border zone between cultures that allows for the destabilization of traditional role-based authority.

In the present study, the center of authority is not questioned by students, but it is destabilized by the fact that the teacher is not a native speaker of the language being taught. In these classes, it is the teacher who enacts shifts in authority when she defers to the identity-based authority of one student, who is of Irish nationality. In using the student's Irish nationality as a basis for his cultural authenticity and hence for his linguistic authority, the other students and the teacher simultaneously construct themselves and one another as American and therefore possessed of a lesser degree of linguistic authority. Such linking of Irish and American identities with the Irish language is closely tied to the status of Irish in Ireland and the United States, as discussed in the next section.

3. The Irish language in Ireland and the United States

Cultural authenticity and linguistic authority are important issues for Irish because of its history and its endangered status. Irish is officially the first national language of the Republic of Ireland, although it is only the native language of 20,000 to 30,000 of the Republic's nearly 4 million citizens (McCloskey 2001). These native speakers reside mainly in the Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) regions along the western edges of the country. Native speakers living in these areas are not the only speakers of the language, however. Approximately 260,000 people in Ireland claim fluency in Irish, and 100,000 or so use the language on a daily basis (McCloskey 2001). Additionally, as the first national language, Irish is a required subject in primary and secondary education, although in the majority of schools the medium of instruction for all other subjects is English.

The status of Irish in Northern Ireland, which remains a part of the United Kingdom, is somewhat different. The language had no official standing in Northern Ireland until the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which included provisions for the protection and support of both Irish and Ulster-Scots. Although Irish was generally available as a foreign language option in schools, it was not a required subject at any level. Since the Good Friday Agreement, the government of Northern Ireland has been committed to making optional Irish language classes available at all levels of schooling, but there is still no requirement that children study the language. Nevertheless, there has been a degree of interest and activism on behalf of the Irish language in Northern Ireland throughout its history, continuing to the present day. Often associated with political groups such as Sinn Féin and with nationalist discourses in general (O'Reilly 1997), the language has thrived mostly in urban areas, mainly Belfast and Derry. Almost all speakers of Irish in Northern Ireland are second language speakers, with the exception of some children who are raised with Irish as their first language (though by parents who speak it as a second language).

In the United States, Irish has had a much lower profile. Irish immigrants in the 19th century are often said to have had an economic advantage over other immigrant groups in that they came to the United States already knowing English. While most Irish immigrants did in fact know English, the fact that some were native Irish speakers has been largely ignored (McGowan 1994). Irish has had a presence in the United States, however, often serving as a symbol of cultural authenticity, along with traditional music and dance, for those seeking a more substantial sense of Irish culture than the 'leprechaun and shamrock' image popularized in the media (Callahan 1994; Kallen 1994). This seeking of 'authentic' cultural roots is not limited to the Irish, as research on white ethnicity in the United States has shown that once immigrant groups become established as 'American,' descendants often wish to (re)establish their ethnic or cultural identity through links to the country of their ancestors (di Leonardo 1984; Waters 1990). Irish language courses are available at some colleges and universities, but a large number of Irish language classes take place outside of academic settings in connection with Irish festivals and cultural organizations dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Irish culture in their local communities; such a class is the focus of this study.

4. Data

The data for this paper were recorded during five months of ethnographic fieldwork in a beginning level Irish language class in Los Angeles in which I was a participant-observer. The class is taught at a Celtic cultural center which also puts on plays and holds Irish music and dance events. Two class levels are offered, beginning and intermediate. The building is designed for the center's theatrical productions, so there are no designated classrooms. The intermediate Irish class meets in the theater section of the cultural center, and the beginning class is held in the back-room bar area behind the theater. The classes are offered at no charge to the students, and the teachers are unpaid volunteers. The teachers of both levels at the time these recordings were made were former students at the center who had taken over teaching duties from the previous volunteers. Both classes were taught using a textbook called *Progress in Irish* (Ní Ghráda 1980), which is designed for the grammar-translation method of language teaching. The classes meet in the evening for an hour once a week and are open-enrollment, so new students may start at any time, and some students attend only sporadically. Each class varies in size from week to week, but most nights during the period of this study the beginning class had five to eight students and the intermediate class had ten to twelve students. The students ranged in age from mid-twenties to mid-seventies and all had at least some Irish heritage. Their occupations included actor and other entertainment industry jobs, teacher, crane operator, psychotherapist, and retired police officer. When asked why they decided to study Irish, they listed reasons such as a desire to be closer to a parent's culture, having heard audio clips of prayers in Irish on a website and liking the sound of the language, membership in the Los Angeles Police Department Emerald Society (an organization of active and retired law enforcement officers of Irish heritage), anticipating travel to a Gaeltacht region of Ireland, and general enjoyment of Irish culture.

Twenty hours of audio and video recordings were made of both class levels; however, the examples that appear in this paper are all taken from the beginning level

class (the students in the intermediate class were all American, and so any negotiation of cultural authenticity and authority was of a different type than that examined in this paper). The excerpts are taken from classes in which six to nine students were present, one Irish and the rest Americans. The students who appear in the examples below are Dan, an Irish man; Will, an American man; and Kelly, an American woman. The teacher, Marla, is an American woman who has been teaching the class for approximately six months at the start of the recordings, having begun her study of Irish five years previously at the Celtic cultural center (although she has since moved on to take college-level and intensive courses in Irish). Dan, the focus of much of the analysis below, is from Belfast, Northern Ireland, and studied Irish in school for four years (from ages 11 to 15). Irish was not compulsory, but was offered among the foreign language electives. In regard to the relative status or importance of Irish outside the classroom, Dan says, "It might as well have been German." There were no particular incentives for him to learn or use Irish in Northern Ireland (for example, while many civil service jobs in the Republic of Ireland require applicants to pass an Irish language exam, there are no such requirements in Northern Ireland). Thus despite his previous exposure to the Irish language, both his self-selected placement in the beginning class rather than the intermediate level and his performance in class (although he is often more fluent than the American students, he is not always more accurate) indicate his lack of overall competence in the language. Nevertheless, Marla appears to attribute a certain amount of expertness in Irish to Dan, as will be shown in the examples that follow.

5. Analysis

When the identity of one participant is constructed in an interaction, other participants' identities are simultaneously constructed as well, through responses, reactions, alignments, and disalignments (e.g., Bucholtz & Hall 2005; He 2004). Mori (2003) and Hauser (2005) illustrate some of the ways that cultural identity can be demonstrated through interaction in which the identities of multiple parties are constructed at the same time. In both studies, participants in conversation exchange groups involving speakers of different languages can be seen to orient to the cultural identities of their interlocutors, even when speakers do not explicitly invoke their status as members of a particular culture or as native speakers of a given language. The analysis which follows shows how such orientations to cultural identities can be used to confer linguistic authority.

5.1. *Evaluating American students*

The following analysis illustrates the orientation of the teacher, Marla, to Dan's Irish nationality. In particular, it shows how she equates his nationality with cultural authenticity and thereby confers linguistic authority on him both through her evaluation of his responses and through her appeals to his "inside" knowledge. Marla's evaluation of Dan's performance can best be understood by first establishing her patterns of language use in evaluating the other students in the class, all of whom are American.

Interactions in the class typically follow the widely recognized three part initiation-reply-evaluation (IRE) framework (Mehan 1979) of student-teacher classroom

exchanges. Marla's evaluations are often marked by the use of discourse markers of agreement and disagreement such as *yeah*, *mhm*, *uh huh*, and *no* in her responses to students' translations. These evaluative discourse markers serve to help classify students' responses as either being correct, having minor errors, or being incorrect. In a randomly chosen 60-minute single-class sample of interactions with the American students, Marla produces 109 evaluations of student performance. She uses agreement and disagreement tokens in 60 of her evaluations and makes an additional 49 corrections with no agreement or disagreement marker. The distribution of the tokens can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Marla's use of agreement and disagreement tokens in 1 hour of class

Token	Number of occurrences	Type of correction
<i>no</i> <i>uh-uh</i>	9	incorrect verb form incorrect pronoun missing word incorrect word order
<i>yeah</i> <i>mhm</i> <i>uh huh</i>	51	none (correct answer) minor pronunciation errors
None	49	missing word pronunciation errors incorrect verb form incorrect word order incorrect word

No was consistently used to mark larger errors such as an incorrect verb form, pronoun, or word order, or a missing word. *Yeah*, *mhm*, and *uh huh* were used to mark correct answers (sometimes accompanied by a repeat of the student's correct answer) or preceding or following a minor correction of pronunciation, as in examples (1a) and (1b). (See Appendix for transcription conventions.) In (1a), Will is translating the sentence "It's a quarter past twelve" into Irish; in (1b), Lisa is translating the sentence "I go home at three o'clock."

(1a) no correction

Will; So <IR/Te s- Tá sé?>

[te ʃ- ta ʃe]

It is

Marla; <IR/ Tá sé> yeah,

[ta ʃe]

It is

(1b) minor pronunciation correction

Lisa; <IR/ Téim abhaile ar a tri a chlog>

[teim awala er ə tri ə klag]

I go home at three o'clock

Marla; <IR/ Téim abhaile ar a tri a chlog> mhm

[teim awala er ə tri ə xlæg]

I go home at three o'clock

In (1a) the student self-corrects, and Marla repeats his correct response followed by *yeah*, while in (1b) she includes a minor pronunciation correction in her repetition of the student's response followed by *mhm*. Other errors, including incorrect forms and larger pronunciation issues resulting in possible unintelligibility, were corrected without any use of these discourse markers. Correction with no agreement or disagreement token is illustrated in example 2 below. Kelly is translating "Say your prayers" into Irish and produces a form for "prayers" that is incorrect. The form she produces is close to the singular form "prayer" *paidir*.¹

(2)

Kelly; <IR/ abair do phaidre>
[faidrə]

say your praye-

Marla; <IR/ abair do phaidreacha>
[faidrəxə]

say your prayers

Table 1 provides a basic picture of Marla's use of agreement and disagreement markers in evaluating students' answers, in which the agreement tokens in evaluations mark an answer as at least mostly correct and mark any errors that are being corrected as minor.

The interplay of these patterns can be seen in example (3a), in which Will struggles to complete a translation. There is quite a bit of confusion early in the example. Will has difficulty with word order in the first half of the sentence, reversing the order of *doras* 'door' and *dúnta* 'shut,' and lines 8 through 19 include his translation attempts and Marla's corrections.

(3a)

1 Marla; Now let's go back to page seventeen now.

2 "The door is shut,"

3 "and the window is open."

4 Will.

5 (1.3)

6 Will; umm,

7 (1.9)

8 <IR/ Tá dúnta dora>?

be:PRES shut door (missing word-final [s])

Shut is a door-?

9 Marla; no <IR/ tá>,

is

10 Will; <IR/ Tá an dúntas>?

be:PRES the shut[s]

the shut is

¹ The form that should follow *do* 'your' in Example 2 is *phaidir* due to the lenition in the initial consonant of the noun which is triggered by *do*, so the form produced by Kelly could easily be heard as the singular form.

- 11 <IR/ dúnta doras>?
shut door
- 12 Marla; <IR/ tá> is your verb,
is
- 13 Marla; [right]?
- 14 Will; <IR/ [Tá] doras [ə] dúnta>.
 be:PRES door [ə] shut
A door is [ə] shut
- 15 Marla; No,
- 16 uh actually door is uh <IR/ doras>.
door
- 17 Marla; so you want <IR/ tá an doras>.
 be:PRES the door
the door is
- 18 Will; <IR/ Tá an doras dúnta>.
 be:PRES the door shut
The door is shut
- 19 Marla; <IR/ dúnta> yeah,
shut

Will struggles with pronunciation (lines 8 and 10) as well as word order (lines 8, 10 and 11). He omits the definite article in lines 8 and 14, and supplies it without a noun in line 10. All of his confusion culminates in the exchange with Marla in lines 14 through 17, where Marla appears to take his utterance in line 14 '*Tá doras [ə] dúnta*' as an English rather than Irish sentence, something like "door is [ə] *dunta*," that is, as an incorrect identification of the word for 'door.' Her interpretation may be due to a mishearing of Will's translation, given that his utterance of the verb *tá* is overlapped with her *right?* in the previous line. After Marla's prompts, Will finally produces the correct translation in line 18. Despite all of his struggles, however, it is noteworthy that the one constant element in his attempts is the correct placement of the verb *tá* at the beginning of the clause. By getting this part of the translation correct, Will shows that he has control of the Irish verb-initial word order. His demonstrated understanding of this element of the structure of Irish is relevant to the analysis of the rest of this example (3b), in which Marla's evaluation and correction shows no orientation to his control of this structure.

In (3b), which immediately follows (3a), although Will has mastered the first half of the translation, he omits the verb *tá* 'is' in the second half. Marla corrects him directly and immediately, providing instruction even about parts of the translation he gets correct, and there is no mitigation of the correction either through agreement tokens or other strategies.

- (3b)
- 20 Will; <IR/ agus fhuinneog>,
and a window
- 21 Marla; <IR/ agus tá>,
and is
- 22 Will; <IR/ agus tá>,
and is
- 23 <IR/ fhuinneog>,

a window

24 Marla; "the window."
25 Will; Which would be <IR/ an>;
the

26 uh::
27 "the window."
28 <IR/fhuinneo- fhuinneog>. [ʊno- ʊnog]
windo- window

29 Marla; Well <IR/ fuinneog> is windo:w,
[fwinog]
window

30 and it's a feminine noun,
31 Will; <IR/ an>;
the

32 <an fhuin- fhuinneog>?
[ʌn- ʊnog]
the win- window

33 Marla; <IR/ an fhuinneog>. [ɪnog]
the window

34 Will; <IR/ an fhuinneog>. [ɪnog]
the window

35 Marla; Remember the feminine nouns,
36 when you put "the" in front of them they aspirate.
37 so the F H in Irish,
38 is .. silent.
39 when you see an F H in a word,
40 go to the next vowel.
41 just ignore that F H.

42 Will; <IR/ oscail>. open:IMP
open

43 that's the last one right?
44 <IR/ an fhuinneog oscail>? the window open:IMP
the window open

45 Marla; and- yeah.
46 and <IR/ tá an fhuinneog oscailte>. be:PRES the window open:ADJ
the window is open

47 <IR/ oscailte> it's "open."
open

In line 20, Will begins the second half of the translation, omitting the verb *tá* 'is'. Marla corrects him immediately (line 21), supplying the verb in its place after *agus* 'and'. She does not wait for Will to finish his translation before providing the correction. This could be in part due to Will's less fluent delivery, since his hesitations provide a place for her to interject the correction.² In addition, she supplies the verb in its place rather than offer a correction that gives Will the opportunity for self-repair. The fact that she immediately supplies the verb for Will seems to imply that she does not expect him to know where it should go. Although it could be argued that his problems with word order early on in Example 3a give her good reason to think he does not have full control of Irish word order, the one word he consistently puts in the right place is *tá*. This example shows Marla correcting an American student's performance directly and without mitigating hedges or attempts to get the student to locate his own error. This explicit and unmitigated correction of Will and other American students contrasts with the treatment of Dan, the only Irish student in the class.

5.2. The interactional construction of linguistic authority

As a non-native speaker of Irish, Marla has to negotiate her linguistic authority as teacher in relation to Dan's linguistic authority as a cultural insider. This section will explore several ways in which Marla's evaluations of Dan's performance differ from her usual practice with the American students and show how these differences are related to ideologies about cultural authenticity and linguistic authority.

In the following example, Dan makes a mistake similar to Will's error in (3b). This time, however, Marla mitigates the force of her correction both by making reference to the textbook and the kind of Irish the class is learning and by using agreement tokens in her evaluation.

- (4)
1	Marla;	O:kay.
2		"The road is lo:ng,
3		and the chi:ld is ti:red."
4	Dan.	
5		(1.3)
6	Dan;	<IR/ Tá an bóthar fada>,
be:PRES the road long
The road is long,
7		(0.3)
8		<IR/ agus an páiste tuirseach>.
and the child tired.
9		(0.5)
10	Marla;	And <IR/ tá:>,
is
11		.. yeah.

² However, there appears to be a pattern in which Marla waits for the student to complete the translation before correcting minor flaws but immediately corrects more egregious mistakes. Carefully establishing this pattern would require additional study of the data, as pauses and disfluencies make coding difficult. In any case, this detail does not have consequences for the argument presented here.

- 12 .. <IR/ an páiste>,
 the child,
- 13 (0.3)
- 14 <IR/ tuirseach>.
 tired.
- 15 (0.7)
- 16 Say t- the <IR/ tá:> again.
 is
- 17 (0.9)
- 18 Dan; u:h,
- 19 (0.9)
- 20 <IR/ Tá an bóthar fada>,
 be:PRES the road long
 The road is long,
- 21 <IR/ agus an páiste>,
 and the child,
- 22 <IR/ tuirseach>?
 tired?
- 23 (0.3)
- 24 Marla; Okay and,
- 25 and <IR/ ^tá: an páiste>.
 be:PRES the child
 the child ^is.
- 26 <IR/ tuirseach>.
 tired.
- 27 (0.2)
- 28 Dan; oh <IR/ an- ^tá an páiste>,
 the be:PRES the child
 the- the child is
- 29 Marla; They may not do that in,
- 30 Dan; mm.
- 31 Marla; speech.
- 32 But we're,
- 33 Dan; Hmh.
- 34 Oka:y.
- 35 Marla; Alright.
- 36 "Who is there."

Dan's answer in lines 6 through 8 is correct except that it omits the verb *tá* 'is' from the second part of the answer. Marla corrects him with *and tá* followed by the agreement token *yeah* and the rest of the second sentence. She then tells him to *say the tá again* in line 16. The way she formulates the correction is direct (a command to say the word again) but assumes he will understand where the word should be placed. While it could be argued that the format of her utterance, *and tá*, in line 10 provides him with a clue for where the second *tá* should go (i.e., after *agus* 'and'), this method of correction is still less explicit than saying *agus tá* as she did with Will in line 21 of example 3b. Dan's response (lines 20-22), a repetition of his original answer, shows that he does not in fact understand where Marla wants him to add the second *tá* or even that a second *tá* is

- 13 <IR/ ag na pictiúir>.
 at the pictures
 14 Dan; <IR/ ## pictiúir>
 pictures
 15 Marla; is what they advise.
 16 <IR/ ag na pictiúir>.
 at the pictures

In line 5, Dan supplies the correct translation of the English sentence given by Marla, and she accepts the response with *uh huh* in line 6. She then provides a second sentence to be translated, which Dan attempts in line 9. His response this time is marked by a 0.7 second pause and a hesitation marker *uh* before the prepositional phrase *sa pictiurlann* 'in the cinema.' Marla seems to accept the translation with her *yeah* in line 11, but then provides a direct correction of the preposition in line 12, and finally supplies the whole prepositional phrase *ag na pictiúir* 'at the pictures.' This attention to the preposition may be related to the fact that Dan's proposed response, using the preposition *sa*, poses a problem for Marla in deciding how to respond. Some prepositions and other particles in Irish can trigger a change in the initial consonant of the following noun (depending on the gender of the noun, the specific particle or preposition involved, and the original initial consonant of the noun). *Sa* triggers this change, while *ag* does not. So Marla must choose whether to accept *sa* and correct Dan's pronunciation of *pictiurlann* (which should be *phictiurlann*, pronounced with an initial [f] instead of [p]) or to reject *sa* in favor of *ag*, which is used in the textbook and does not cause this type of phonological change. She selects the latter course of action. After an acceptance response from Dan in line 14, she mitigates the force of the direct correction by reframing it as advice rather than correction and by attributing it to *they* (presumably the authors of the textbook) in line 15. This example illustrates again that Marla orients to Dan's Irishness and his likely experience with the language and that this orientation affects her evaluations of his performance. In this case she asserts her authority as teacher by correcting Dan but suppresses her agency in the correction by invoking the textual authority of the book.

In the next example, Marla does not balance her own linguistic authority against Dan's presumed authority but directly invokes Dan's expertise by asking him a question based on his assumed familiarity with Irish in Ireland. In this case, rather than simply accepting an alternative form from Dan or mitigating her correction of his response as in Example 4, Marla singles Dan out to provide an alternative pronunciation once another student has provided a correct response. The portion of the interaction involving Dan begins on line 38; the preceding lines are included for the purpose of providing context. In the beginning of the example, Will is attempting a translation of the English sentence "Is the bicycle broken?"

- (6)
 1 Will; <IR/ An roth>?
 the wheel?
 2 (0.4)
 3 Marla; <IR/ An rothar>.
 the bicycle

- [bʌɪʃtə]
broken
- 35 Marla; .. m[hm].
- 36 Will; <IR/ [An bhf]uil an rothar briste>.
[bʌɪʃtə]
Q be:DEP:PRES the wheel broken
Is the bicycle broken.
- 37 (0.4)
- 38 Marla; or w- --
- 39 .. Dan you'd say <IR/ bris-> --
[bʌɪʃ]
brok-
- 40 (0.9)
- 41 <IR/ [briste]?
[bʌɪʃtʰə]
broken?
- 42 Dan; <IR/ [An- an bhfuil an] rothar briste>.
[bʌɪʃtʰə]
Q Q be:DEP:PRES the wheel broken
Is the bicycle broken.
- 43 (0.4)
- 44 Marla; <P> okay .. hm </P>.
(1.7)
- 45 #; ((sniff))
- 46 (1.1)
- 47 Dan; Or <IR/ briseadh> sometimes.
[bʌɪʃu]
broken
(0.4)
- 48 Marla; ((sniff) <IR/ briseadh>?
[bʌɪʃə]
broken
- 49 Dan; mm.
- 50 Marla; <P> <IR/ briseadh> </P>.
[bʌɪʃə]
broken
- 51 (1.0)
- 52 That would just be the--
- 53 yeah.
- 54 (2.0)
- 55 B-R-I-S,
- 56 (0.4)
- 57 .. E-A-D-[H].
- 58 Dan; [E-A]-D-H [yeah].
- 59 Marla; [yeah] .. yeah.

- 60 That's the other --
 61 (2.1)
 62 O:ka:y.
 63 So:.

After stumbling over the words for 'bicycle' and 'broken,' Will successfully completes the translation in line 36. At this point, Marla solicits an alternate pronunciation of *briste* 'broken' from Dan. In asking this question she is drawing on the fact that Dan is from Northern Ireland and would therefore likely be familiar with the Ulster dialect of Irish, in which the pronunciation of the *-te* ending is more palatalized than in the variety she uses and teaches in the class (elsewhere she identifies her pronunciation as a mix of Standard Irish and Munster Irish). Marla demonstrates her knowledge of Dan's dialect by guessing (correctly) what his pronunciation will be in line 41. Dan confirms her assumption by repeating the whole sentence using his pronunciation of *briste*. Marla responds with *okay* and is perhaps ready to move on as indicated by the short pause and soft *hm*, which may be preparatory to returning to the exercise in the book. After the long pause that follows, Dan volunteers another alternative form. This is not just an alternate pronunciation, but another form of the verb 'to break'.³ Marla's rising intonation on her first repetition of the form indicates surprise, but by line 54 she has moved on to beginning to demonstrate her understanding with *that's the*. Even though she does not complete the utterance, her use of the definite article implies that she knows the form and accepts it as a possible alternative to *briste*. In lines 57 through 59, Marla elicits further confirmation from Dan by spelling the form. She follows this with a double *yeah* on line 61 and the (again) truncated recognition *that's the other* on line 62. Marla's behavior in this interaction is only interpretable as a result of her orientation to Dan's Irishness. Her acceptance of not only the alternate pronunciation she expected but also an alternate form that she did not set out to elicit shows her strong tendency to give Dan the benefit of the doubt; 'alternative' pronunciations and forms from the American students are neither solicited nor accepted at any time during the class (presumably because there is no reason for her to believe that they would know any). In Marla's treatment of Dan in Example 5, she is once again using his nationality and her assumptions about him as a member of the category in order to position him as an expert.

Marla's assumptions about Dan's background are made explicit in the next example, which illustrates how she applies what she knows about the status of Irish in Ireland in ascribing to him a certain level of expertise. This example also shows clearly that the attribution of expert status to Dan is a case of linguistic authority being conferred rather than claimed, as Dan minimizes his linguistic knowledge when it becomes a topic of discussion among the class members.

- (7)
 1 Marla; Dan.
 2 "Will he be here next week."
 3 #Will; (SIGH) _<DUR=0.6>
 4 (1.0)

³ *Briste* is an adjectival form, and *briseadh* is a verbal noun form.

- 5 Dan; <IR/ An mbeidh sé anseo an tseachtain seo chugainn>
 Q be:FUT 3sM here the week this towards:us
Will he be here next week
- 6 Marla; mhm:,
 7 (0.5)
 8 "He wi:ll."
 9 (0.4)
- 10 Dan; <IR/ beidh sé>.
 be:FUT 3sM
he will be.
- 11 Marla; That's it.
 12 (1.9)
- 13 #Will; (SIGH)_<DUR=1.0>
 14 Kelly; (H) @@@
 15 Will; He does that way too we@ll.
- 16 Marla; @@
 17 (2.1)
 18 He's got several years.
- 19 Dan; It was the one before that I was worried about.
- 20 Marla; @@[@@@@@][@@]
 21 Jen; [@@@@@]
 22 Kelly; [@@@@@][@]
 23 Will; [@][@]
 24 Jen; [@] (H.)
- 25 Marla; You had this--
 26 You had this in school,
 27 right?
 28 (0.6)
- 29 Dan; Yeah yeah.
 30 a ^long time ago:.
 31 Yeah.
- 32 Marla; Ye:ah:,
 33 How many ^years did you have.
 34 (0.4)
 35 All the way through?
- 36 Dan; Nah,
 37 about four years.
- 38 Marla; Oh just four years,
 39 (0.5)
 40 mm.
 41 (2.3)
- 42 Marla; (COUGH) kay.
 43 (0.3)
 44 Well under hypnosis it'll all come back.
 45 (2.1)
- 46 Marla; <P> Alright. </P>
 47 (1.3)
- 48 Marla; Let's go ba:ck.

Dan answers Marla's prompt, after a brief pause, with a fluently delivered response in lines 5 and 10. After Marla's acceptance of Dan's answer, Will shifts position and sighs⁴. Kelly then laughs, which may indicate that she understands the reason for the sigh. Will comments in line 15 on the fluency of Dan's response, implying that Dan's quickness is not consistent with the usual answers given by the students. Marla then provides a reason for Dan's quickness in line 18, asserting that he has had several years of Irish before. She apparently makes this assertion based on the fact that he is Irish, for her next two questions clearly show that she does not in fact know how much Irish he has studied in the past.⁵ Here Marla is making use of what Sacks (1992) calls a membership categorization device; as Schegloff writes, "Any attributed member of a category (that is, anyone taken to be a member of the category) is a presumptive representative of the category. That is, what is 'known' about the category is presumed to be so about them" (Schegloff 2002: 21). The categorizing actions of Will and Marla together work to position Dan as an expert.

Although Dan seems to resist Marla's placement of him as an expert, Marla persists. Each time Dan responds by minimizing his authority, Marla produces another utterance that confers linguistic authority on him despite his resistance. His reply to Will, *it was the one before I was worried about* (line 19), implies that his quick answer was due to luck at having gotten an easy question. Marla then indicates again her assumption that Dan has previously studied Irish, phrasing it as a statement followed by "right?", a turn that appears designed to elicit Dan's agreement. Marla clearly would not make such an assumption about any of the American students, since it is based on her knowledge that Irish is a required subject in schools in Ireland. Dan's response in lines 29 and 30 that it was "a long time ago" again downplays his previous experience with Irish. Marla continues to pursue the topic by asking him how many years he studied Irish (note that this question assumes more than one year, and is followed by the suggested answer in line 35, *all the way through*). When Dan replies that he studied the language for four years, Marla indicates her surprise with *oh just four years* in line 38, in which the *oh* marks the information as news (Heritage 1984; Schiffrin 1987), and the *just* implies that she had expected a larger number. Her final joking comment indicates that she still thinks of Dan as having Irish locked away in his brain, since "it will all come back under hypnosis."

This example clearly shows Marla orienting to Dan's Irishness and applying what she knows about the category - in this case the fact that Irish is a required subject in primary and secondary school - to Dan as a representative of the category (even though the category and the assumptions based on it do not conform with Dan's own background). She uses the categorization to position him as an expert and explain his unusual fluency in answer to Will's mock complaint, even in the face of Dan's attempts to downplay its importance. The example illustrates again the way in which Marla

⁴ Will's earlier sigh in line 3, occurs just after he finishes making notes about the sentence he translated in his own immediately preceding turn and so it is not clear what provokes this first sigh.

⁵ In fact, her assumptions seem to be based on her knowledge of the status of Irish in the Republic of Ireland rather than Northern Ireland. It is unclear whether she knows about the differences in educational requirements between the two countries and has forgotten that he is from the North or whether she is unaware of the differences.

positions Dan as a cultural insider (that is, as one who possesses cultural authenticity) and therefore also confers linguistic authority on him.

6. Conclusion

These interactions from an Irish language class show that the American teacher orients to the cultural identities of the students as either Irish or American in her evaluation of the students' performance in translating sentences into Irish as well as in her expectations about students' previous experience. She attributes a level of expertise in Irish to the Irish student, Dan, even though he is in a beginning level class, and she treats him differently from the other (American) students. She actively solicits alternate forms from him and mitigates many of her corrections of his answers, often invoking the authority of the textbook and the kind of Irish contained therein.

All of these behaviors show that the teacher is not only orienting to the nationalities of the students but using that categorization to confer linguistic authority in the context of the class. Her evaluations serve to convert Dan's cultural authenticity into linguistic authority (even when he appears reluctant to take on such authority) and to simultaneously negotiate her own mitigated linguistic authority as a non-native teacher. She asserts linguistic authority over the American students in a much more straightforward manner than she does with Dan, to whom she cedes some of her authority.

These practices can be seen as instances of positioning. In this case, Marla positions her students as Irish or non-Irish through her treatment of their linguistic production in class. In the process of positioning Dan as Irish, through her appeals to his authenticity and assumed knowledge, she also positions herself and the other students as non-Irish. Speakers positioned as non-Irish in this class have a smaller range of acceptable Irish in their responses to questions and in their authority to evaluate the contributions of Dan, the only speaker positioned as Irish. Thus Marla groups herself among those with less authority when interacting with Dan, but she is able to position herself as a more authoritative speaker of Irish when interacting with the other members of the non-Irish group through her evaluations of their language use.

The interactional practices examined here are explainable in terms of the romanticist ideology that naturalizes a necessary connection of culture, ethnicity, and nationality to language. The potential political consequences of such a view are pointed out by Myhill (2003), who notes that under this ideology, groups who do not primarily connect cultural identity with native language may be seen as inauthentic and problematic members of society. In addition, the authority of the native speaker is of great importance to debates in both language endangerment and revitalization and heritage language environments, as those who create and oversee language learning programs in these situations debate the appropriateness of suggested standards for which variety of the language to teach. And as shown in this study and others, the romanticist ideology also affects the dynamics of language learning by granting some students greater linguistic authority than others, to the possible detriment of both groups.

Thus the phenomenon of conferral of linguistic authority on the basis of perceived cultural authenticity illustrated in this study is one which sheds light on the consequential ways that ideologies of language and nativeness can be enacted in the

negotiation and construction of identities, and on the importance of national identity in a world increasingly described in terms of transnationalism. Perceived cultural authenticity can lead interactional participants to confer linguistic authority due to the ideological association of language and culture, ethnicity, and nation; this in turn forms a resource for the intersubjective construction and negotiation of the identities of all participants in the interaction.

Appendix

Transcription conventions

Each numbered line in the transcript corresponds to a single intonation unit and may have one to three lines of gloss under it. The first is a broad phonetic transcription, enclosed in square brackets and only used when pronunciation is key to understanding the example. The second is a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss of the Irish, also provided only when it is helpful in clarifying the example. The third is a free translation of the Irish into English, shown in *italic font*. The transcription system is taken from Du Bois, Schuetze-Coburn, Paolino, and Cumming (1993) with the addition of my own convention for marking switches between Irish and English.

Symbols used in transcripts:

<IR/words>	utterances in Irish
?	appeal intonation contour
.	final intonation contour
,	continuing intonation contour
--	truncated intonation contour
:	lengthening of previous sound
-	truncated word
..	pause of less than .2 seconds
(n.n)	timed pause
^syllable	primary accent
<P> words </P>	low volume
L-E-T-T-E-R-S	spelling, alphabet letters
[words]	overlapped speech
@	laughter pulse
(SOUND)	nonverbal vocal noise, e.g., (COUGH)
#Name;	uncertain speaker attribution

Abbreviations used in glosses:

ADJ	adjective
DEP	dependent verb form
FUT	future tense

IMP imperative
 NEG negative
 PRES present tense
 PST past tense
 Q question particle

References

- Bucholtz, M. (2003) Sociolinguistic nostalgia and the authentication of identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7.3: 398-416.
- Bucholtz, M., & K. Hall (2004) Theorizing identity in language and sexuality research. *Language in Society* 33.4: 469-515.
- Bucholtz, M., & K. Hall (2005) Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies* 7.4-5: 585-614.
- Callahan, J. (1994) The Irish language in Pennsylvania. In T.W. Ihde (ed.), *The Irish Language in the United States: A Historical, Sociolinguistic, and Applied Linguistic Survey*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, pp. 18-26.
- Cameron, D. (2000) Styling the worker: Gender and the commodification of language in the globalized service economy. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4.3: 323-347.
- Chun, E.W. (2004) Ideologies of legitimate mockery: Margaret Cho's revoicings of mock Asian. *Pragmatics* 14.2/3: 263-290.
- Coupland, N. (2001) Dialect stylisation in radio talk. *Language in Society* 30: 345-375.
- Coupland, N. (2003) Sociolinguistic authenticities. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7.3: 417-431.
- Coupland, N. (2007) *Style: Language Variation and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cutler, C. (2003) 'Keepin' it real': White hip-hoppers' discourses of language, race, and authenticity. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 13.2: 211-233.
- Davies, B., & R. Harré (1990) Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 20.1: 43-63.
- di Leonardo, M. (1984) *The varieties of ethnic experience: Kinship, class, and gender among Italian-Americans*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Dimmendaal, G.J. (1992) On language death in eastern Africa. In N.C. Dorian (ed.), *Investigating obsolescence: Studies in language contraction and death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 13-32.
- Du Bois, J., S. Schuetze-Coburn, D. Paolino, & S. Cumming (1993) Outline of discourse transcription. In J.A. Edwards & M.D. Lampert (eds.), *Talking data: Transcription and coding methods for language research*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 45-89.
- Eckert, P. (2000) *Linguistic variation as social practice*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- England, N.C. (2003) Mayan language revival and revitalization politics: Linguists and linguistic ideologies. *American Anthropologist* 105.4: 733-743.

- Errington, J. (2003) Getting language rights: The rhetorics of language endangerment and loss. *American Anthropologist* 105.4: 723-732.
- Fenstermaker, S., & C. West (2002) *Doing gender, doing difference: Social inequality, power and resistance*. New York: Routledge.
- Fishman, J.A. (1991) *Reversing Language Shift*. Philadelphia, PA: Multilingual Matters.
- Fox, B. (2002) Evidentiality: Authority, responsibility, and entitlement in English conversation. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 11: 167-192.
- Harré, R., & V. Langenhove (eds.) (1999) *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of Intentional Action*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Hauser, E. (2005) Footing and identity in interaction at a conversation club. In B. Preisler, A. Fabricius, H. Haberland, S. Kjaerbeck & K. Risager (eds.), *The consequences of mobility: Linguistic and sociocultural contact zones*. Roskilde: Roskilde University.
- He, A.W. (2004) Identity construction in Chinese heritage language classes. *Pragmatics* 14.2/3: 199-216.
- Henze, R., & K.A. Davis (1999) Authenticity and identity: Lessons from indigenous language education. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 30.1: 3-21.
- Heritage, J. (1984) A change-of-state token and aspects of its sequential placement. In J. Atkinson & J. Heritage (eds.), *Structures of social action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 299-345.
- Heritage, J., & G. Raymond (2005) The terms of agreement: Indexing epistemic authority and subordination in talk-in-interaction. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 68: 15-38.
- Hill, J.H., & K.C. Hill (1986) *Speaking Mexicano: Dynamics of syncretic language in central Mexico*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Hill, J.H., & J.T. Irvine (eds.) (1993) *Responsibility and evidence in oral discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hinton, L., & J. Ahlers (1999) The issue of 'authenticity' in California language restoration. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 30.1: 56-67.
- Jaffe, A. (1999) *Ideologies in Action: Language Politics on Corsica* (Vol. 3). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Jo, H.-Y. (2001) 'Heritage' language learning and ethnic identity: Korean Americans' struggle with language authorities. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 14.1: 26-41.
- Kallen, J.L. (1994) Irish as an American ethnic language. In T.W. Ihde (ed.), *The Irish Language in the United States: A Historical, Sociolinguistic, and Applied Linguistic Survey*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, pp. 27-40.
- Kotthoff, H. (1997) The interactional achievement of expert status: Creating asymmetries by 'teaching conversational lectures' in TV discussions. In H. Kotthoff & R. Wodak (eds.), *Communicating gender in context*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 139-178.
- Lee, J.S. (2002) The Korean language in America: The role of cultural identity in heritage language learning. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 15.2: 117-133.
- Matoesian, G.M. (1999) The grammaticalization of participant roles in the constitution of expert identity. *Language in Society* 28.4: 491-521.

- McCloskey, J. (2001) *Voices silenced: Has Irish a future?* Dublin: Cois Life Teoranta.
- McGowan, L. (1994) The Irish language in America. In T.W. Ihde (ed.), *The Irish Language in the United States: A Historical, Sociolinguistic, and Applied Linguistic Survey*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, pp. 3-8.
- Mehan, H. (1979) *Learning Lessons: Social organization in the classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mori, J. (2003) The construction of interculturality: A study of initial encounters between Japanese and American students. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 36.2: 143-184.
- Myhill, J. (2003) The native speaker, identity, and the authenticity hierarchy. *Language Sciences* 25: 77-97.
- Ní Ghráda, M. (1980) *Progress in Irish: A graded course for beginners and revision*. Dublin: The Educational Company of Ireland.
- O'Reilly, C. (1997) Nationalists and the Irish language in Northern Ireland: Competing perspectives. In A. Mac Póilin (ed.), *The Irish Language in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Ultacht Trust, pp. 95-130.
- Potowski, K. (2004) Student Spanish use and investment in a dual, immersion classroom: Implications for second language acquisition and heritage language maintenance. *The Modern Language Journal* 88.i: 75-101.
- Raymond, G., & J. Heritage (forthcoming) The epistemics of social relationships: Owning grandchildren. *Language in Society* 35: 5.
- Sacks, H. (1992) *Lectures on conversation*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Schegloff, E.A. (2002) Tutorial on membership categorization. Unpublished manuscript.
- Schiffrin, D. (1987) *Discourse Markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sweetland, J. (2002) Unexpected but authentic use of an ethnically-marked dialect. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 6.4: 514-536.
- Thurlow, C., & A. Jaworski (2006) The alchemy of the upwardly mobile: Symbolic capital and the stylization of elites in frequent-flyer programs. *Discourse and Society* 17.1: 131-167.
- Waters, M.C. (1990) *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Wertheim, S. (2005) The linguistic consequences of presenting the fieldworker as celebrity and role model. Paper presented at the 104th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association.
- West, C., & D.H. Zimmerman (1987) Doing gender. *Gender and Society* 1.2: 125-151.
- Wong, L. (1999) Authenticity and the revitalization of Hawaiian. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 30.1: 94-115.