Central Asian Survey, 2013
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2013.771978

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Endurance of the Soviet imperial tongue: the Russian language in contemporary Georgia

Timothy K. Blauvelt*

Associate Professor of Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, Ilia State University, Georgia

This article will examine the role of the Russian language on the periphery of the post-Soviet space by using multiple sources of data, including original matched-guise experiments, to examine the language situation in contemporary Georgia. This is one of the former Soviet republics in which the use of the titular language was most intensively institutionalized and that most ardently resisted Russification, and one that today for various reasons is most eager to escape the legacy of its Soviet past and to embed itself in the global community. In Georgia the cultural and political influence of the former imperial centre has been greatly reduced, and Russian has been challenged in functional roles by the new international lingua franca of English. The direction that the Russian language takes in a place like Georgia may be a useful bellwether for such transformations elsewhere in the post-Soviet periphery.

Keywords: Georgia; Russian language; language policy; matched-guise experiment; post-imperialism

For all modern empires, language is an instrument for expansion and rule and also an adminis-trative challenge. Empires have made use of the language of the imperial centre to extend their legal and institutional systems and to create a sense of unity and shared identity; for the subjects, particularly those from ethnic or cultural minorities and in the periphery, the central language becomes a means to advancement and opportunity. For this reason, an extensive shared linguis-tic space emerges that is often one of the most enduring legacies of empires following their dis-solution. Language was a particularly intriguing aspect of Soviet nationality policy, as the regime devoted considerable resources to both supporting minority and peripheral languages and towards assimilation and consolidation around one central language: Russian. Throughout its existence, one of the main challenges to Soviet power was the attempt to implement uniform policy and propaganda campaigns in a complex multi-ethnic and multi-lingual environ-ment. The emphases of nationality policy varied over the course of Soviet history along a con-tinuum from coercion to concessions, from the encouragement of local languages to Russification policies that sought to consolidate and assimilate these ethnic groups to create a more uniform Soviet identity. Publishing and education in local languages were consistently supported, especially for those of the larger ethnic groups that possessed their own union repub-lics, and local elites in the national republics were able to give their titular language a degree of prominence in administration and public life that had not been possible before. In the Georgian SSR, for example, the local leadership was able to 'Georgianize' their republic to a degree that nineteenth-century Georgian nationalists could only have dreamed of. Unlike in some of the Central Asian republics and smaller (autonomous republic and oblast') level national regions, in Georgia (as in Armenia and Azerbaijan) the Soviet policy of 'indigenization' was successful from early on in institutionalizing the use of the titular language in a wide range of official and

*Email: timothy.blauvelt@iliauni.edu.ge

informal functions. At the same time, it was always clear that the central language of the Soviet regime (and supposedly the ultimate language of Soviet Communism) was Russian, and despite the concessionary policies towards local language use, over the course of many decades and by various means the regime was able to bring fluency in Russian to a vast majority of Soviet citizens of all ethnicities and to make Russian the crucial language for communication with the centre, among different nationalities within the union, and for higher levels of education and career advancement. Russian served as the central language of administration and the lingua franca throughout the USSR, and also a means of access to international literature, media and cinema.

Yet now, more than 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, what is the role of the Russian language on the periphery of the post-Soviet space? Does Russian still offer opportunities and serve both as a language of connection to the outside world and of communication among the different nationalities of the region, or are these functions being usurped wholesale by English and other world languages in the face of globalization and Westernization? This article will seek to address these questions by utilizing multiple sources of data in order to examine the state of the Russian language in contemporary Georgia, one of the former Soviet republics in which the use of the titular language was most intensively institutionalized and that most ardently resisted Russification – one that today for various reasons is most eager to escape the legacy of its Soviet past to move instead towards the West and embed itself in the global community. In Georgia the cultural and political influence of the former imperial centre has been greatly reduced (although not eliminated), and the former imperial language is challenged in functional roles by a new international lingua franca, English. The directions that the Russian language takes in a place like Georgia may be a useful bellwether for such transformations elsewhere in the post-Soviet periphery.

The state of Russian knowledge in Georgia

The leadership of contemporary Georgia has made headlines with its endeavours to improve the teaching and learning of the English language that on a broader level are connected to the nation's striving for incorporation into Western and European political and economic structures and are tied at the same time to resistance against what they see as neo-imperial tendencies on the part of the leadership of the Russian republic (particularly in the wake of the 2008 Russia–Georgia war). Although Georgia had long been a multi-ethnic republic with Russian serving as an inter-ethnic lingua franca, following the breakup of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the nationalisti-cally oriented Georgian independent leadership in the early 1990s, Georgian was declared the sole official language.[1] Russians and other ethnic minorities had to choose between adaptation to the new realities and permanently resettling in Russia or in their titular republics.[2] The majority of the ethnically Russian population chose to exit, and their percentage of the population declined from 6.3% in 1989 to 1.5% in 2002.[3] Many Armenians and to a lesser extent Azerbaijanis also left Georgia, although not in such large numbers. Educational opportunities in Russian persisted into the post-Soviet period, as there continued to exist Russian schools and sections in schools (as well as schools with tuition in other minority languages, such as Armenian and Azerbaijani) and Russian-language sectors and departments in the universities. Russian language education was and is especially favoured among non-Georgian minorities (and some Georgians as well – see Table 9) in Tbilisi and other urban areas, and a Russian-educated and -speaking milieu exists in Georgia that is distinct from an ethnic Russian identity.[4] While Georgian is considered the 'mother tongue' (deda ena) for most ethnic Georgians, Russian was considered by many not to be a truly 'foreign' language (like French, German or English), but rather a sort of second native language (regardless of how well they actually spoke it).

Although the contemporary Georgian leadership since the Rose Revolution has taken a much more 'civic' approach towards issues of citizenship and national identity with regard to ethnic minorities,[5] apparent 'de-Russification' inclinations have continued, such as the removal of Cyrillic street, metro and virtually all other public signage, the reduction of the number of Russian schools and school sectors, and the change of status of Russian as a school subject from a mandatory language taught from the first grade to an elective one from the seventh grade (while instead English has become compulsory from the first grade).[6] A recent law banning the dubbing of films in Russian on television and requiring subtitling in Georgian instead (and even rumours that Russian pop songs had been banned from cafes[7] and that all of the Russian schools and sectors would be closed)[8] coincided with policies of 'de-Sovietization' such as removing remaining Communist-era symbols and monuments.[9] The new leadership that came to power in the Georgian Parliament following the elections of October 2012 has thus far continued the language and education policies of the previous government.[10]

The popular perception, both inside the country and abroad, is that English has become the language of opportunity and advancement in contemporary Georgia; that the younger generations are mastering English and forgetting Russian; and that Russian has lost its previous cachet and prestige and is now spoken only by older people and national minorities. A much higher percentage of Georgians would prefer that English be a mandatory subject in schools than Russian, for example. Yet while it is most likely the case that English is a high-prestige language in Georgia as it is in much of the world, the popular ideas about the actual state of func-tional language proficiency may be misleading.[11]

Based on data from the Caucasus Research Resource Center's annual 'Caucasus Barometer' (CB) household survey 2008–11 as well as from their 2009 and 2011 Media Surveys and EU Surveys, the overall level of Russian proficiency among the population of Georgia is quite high. These surveys, based on face-to-face interviews with adults 18 and over with representa-tive sample sizes of 1800–2500, include respondents' self-assessments of their proficiency in Russian and in English, as well as questions about settlement type, age, gender and ethnicity. The percentage of the respondents in Georgia with high Russian proficiency[12] across all of these surveys is consistently around 70% (in a range from 67–76%), which is approximately the same level of USSR-wide Russian proficiency reported in the last Soviet census in 1989. Among residents of the capital city of Tbilisi, who make up nearly a third of the overall popu-lation of the city, the knowledge of Russian is particularly widespread, with nearly 90% claiming fluency. The urban population of other cities and towns is somewhat less, but still above the national average (around 75–80%), while Russian knowledge in the rural areas is consistently much lower (around 50–55%). These overall very high percentages, and especially those in the capital, demonstrate that Russian knowledge is still pronounced in contemporary Georgia, especially when compared to the state of English knowledge, which for the same levels of pro-ficiency average only about 19% for the overall population.[13] The functional utility of Russian in Georgia (and especially in Tbilisi) is further demonstrated from a different perspective in a census of engaged expatriates designed by the author and conducted in 2008 (reported in Gutbrod and Viefhues 2010) in which 72% of foreign respondents felt that the performance of daily tasks without assistants could be accomplished through knowing only Russian and no Georgian. Having some Georgian and no Russian would make accomplishing tasks easier for only a slightly larger number of respondents (81%), while 89% of them thought that such tasks would be difficult, very difficult or impossible without either language.[14] At the same time, Russian speakers rarely claim to experience discrimination because of their language, and are able to conduct everyday affairs in Russian without difficulty (Table 1) (Groce 2009).

Another category, aside from that of capital, urban and rural settlement type in which signifi-cant differences in Russian knowledge become apparent is ethnicity: in the 2009 and 2010

Table 1. Self-reported Russian ability in Georgia

		Settlement type			Age groups			Gender		Ethnicity	
	ALL	Capital	Urban	Rural	18–35	36–55	56+	Male	Female	Arm	Azeri	Geo
CB 2008												
High	69	86	75	56	70	78	57	72	67	97	73	66
Low	30	13	24	42	28	21	41	26	32	2	20	30
CB 2009												
High	69	90	79	47	66	77	62	73	64	94	35	69
Low	30	10	20	51	34	22	36	26	34	6	57	31
CB 2010												
High	72	92	81	54	68	80	67	74	70	86	50	72
Low	28	7	19	45	31	19	33	25	29	5	48	28
CB 2011												
High	74	88	83	47	72	82	69	78	70	92	44	74
Low	25	12	17	52	27	18	30	21	29	8	55	26
EU Survey 2009												
High	75	90	74	59	70	84	70	79	73	96	67	74
Low	25	9	27	41	30	16	30	21	28	4	33	26
EU Survey 2011												
High	76	89	73	52	67	84	74	81	72	96	90	75
Low	24	11	27	48	32	15	25	19	29	4	10	26
Media Survey 2009												
High	67	90		59*	61	74	64	72	61			
Low	33	10		41*	39	26	36	28	38			
Media Survey 2011												
High	67	84		59*	61	70	65	72	62			
Low	33	16		41*	33	26	34	27	38			

Note: Here and elsewhere the ‘don’t know’ and ‘refuse to answer’ responses are not excluded; *Categorized as ‘non-capital’ in these surveys.

Caucasus Barometer surveys ethnicity correlates with Russian knowledge with correlation coefficients of r ¼ 0.116** and 0.234** respectively. Nearly 95% of Armenian citizens of Georgia regularly claim fluency in Russian. The statistics among Azerbaijani citizens of Georgia are less consistent across the surveys, swinging from 35% to 90% claiming fluency (this variation is probably due to the small size of the sample of Azeris in the Georgia surveys), though overall the percentages seem to point towards a lower total, of around 50%. The percentages of ethnic Georgian citizens claiming fluency in Russian are about equal to the national averages. Thus Russian knowledge remains, as it was during the Soviet period, widespread among the national minority populations of the republic, especially high among the Armenians and some-what lower among Azerbaijanis, and is thus still a language that is able to serve as lingua franca among these ethnic groups, thus the reactions of these minorities to de-Russification tendencies are important. Primary and secondary schooling in Russian (or in both Russian and Georgian) is particularly prevalent among minorities (see Table 9). Although in one survey (EU Survey 2011) both Armenians and Azerbaijanis claimed a high level of fluency in Georgian, very few reported speaking Georgian at home. Armenians reported the highest percentages of speaking Russian at home, but these percentages overall are quite small (Table 2).

It is also interesting that increasing percentages of minority respondents prefer English as a mandatory subject in schools, while the percentage desiring that Russian be mandatory (which is particularly high among Armenians) appears to be decreasing (Table 3).

In general, knowledge of Russian in Georgia tends to positively correlate with urbanization, education level, employment and intelligence,[15] such that these factors seem to be the strongest predictors of Russian proficiency. In exploring these correlations for the Caucasus Barometer surveys for which the full datasets are currently available (2009 and 2010), the strongest such correlation in both surveys is with number of years of formal education (r ¼ 0.466** in 2009 and 0.470** in 2010) and level of education (r ¼ 0.460 ** in both 2009 and 2010). Settlement type, as discussed above, is also significant, in that rural residents rate their Russian knowledge lower than those in the capital (r ¼ 20.425** in 2009 and 20.353** in 2010). Intelligence and

Table 2. Languages spoken at home.

		By ethnicity				
	Total Population	Armenians	Azerbaijanis	Georgians	Russians	Other
CB 2008						
Armenian	5	83	0	0	0	0
Azeri	2	0	96	0	0	0
Georgian	89	12	4	98	40	51
Russian	3	5	0	2	60	40
Other	0	0	0	0	0	9
CB 2009						
Armenian	5	74	0	0	0	0
Azeri	5	0	97	0	0	0
Georgian	86	9	0	99	11	65
Russian	3	17	2	1	89	26
Other	0	0	0	0	0	9
CB 2010						
Armenian	4	80	0	0		0
Azeri	5	0	99	0		2
Georgian	82	8	1	97		84
Russian	2	11	0	1		46
Other	7	1	0	8		4

Table 3. Which languages should be mandatory subjects in schools (%).

		By Ethnicity				
	Total Population	Armenians	Azerbaijanis	Georgians	Russians	Other
CB 2009						
None	6	0	16	6	4	2
English	71	34	46	76	60	67
Russian	14	56	10	10	31	16
Turkish	0	1	0	0	0	0
Other	1	1	1	1	0	10
CB 2010						
None	7	0	5	7		3
English	71	53	38	74		70
Russian	16	41	29	13		23
Turkish	1	0	11	0		0
Other	0	0	5	0		0
CB 2011						
None	7	5	4	7		2
English	69	53	61	71		71
Russian	14	37	17	12		16
Turkish	0	0	0	0		0
Other	2	0	4	2		3

Russian knowledge positively correlate in a significant way in both years (r ¼ 0.273 ** in 2009 and 0.284** in 2010). Other factors, such as employment (r ¼ 0.111** in 2009 and 0.132** in 2010) and life satisfaction (r ¼ 0.112** in 2010), also show significant correlation, although they are somewhat weaker than the other factors. Finally, knowledge of English seems to correlate significantly with knowledge of Russian (r ¼ 0.300 ** in 2009 and 0.331** in 2010), and likewise all of the things that positively correlate with Russian knowledge also correlate with English knowledge. Thus knowledge of English and knowledge of Russian are by no means mutually exclusive, and ultimately 'good things go together', in the sense that skill in Russian in Georgia is part of the make-up of a prosperous, intelligent, educated and urban person.[16] And although monolingualism in Russian may have been common during the Soviet period in Georgia, it would seem that such a thing is now much rarer, especially among younger people. The CRRC surveys do not measure respondents' Georgian ability, but the data from the matched-guise experiment in Tbilisi suggest that most young Russian speakers in the capital are also proficient in Georgian (exhibiting reciprocal bilingualism), most likely the result, in part, of the fact that Georgian is at least a mandatory subject of study in all non-Georgian schools (a policy that has been less fully implemented in practice in some minority districts than in the capital) (Table 4 and 5).

Table 4. Crosstab: Russian and Georgian understanding (Tbilisi).

Count				
		geo_understand		
		High	Low	Total
rus_understand	High	479	6	485
	Low	146	2	148
Total		625	8	633

Table 5. Crosstab: Russian and Georgian speaking (Tbilisi).

Count				
		geo_speak		
		High	Low	Total
rus_speak	High	408	17	425
	Low	202	2	204
Total		610	19	629

The conception that Russian skills are especially weak among younger people is challenged by the consistent percentages of around 70% of those in the 18 –35 age range[17] who claim pro-ficiency in Russian. This is lower than the 80% range for the middle-age group of respondents (aged 36–55) who appear to be the most comfortable with Russian, but it is consistently higher than the most senior-aged respondents (56 and older), of whom around 65% claim Russian fluency. Thus although the youngest group seems slightly less fluent in Russian than their parents, they are stronger than their grandparents; and in any case, the levels of fluency are overall quite high. By comparison, although the younger respondents are the strongest in English, only 36% of them claim fluency (as do 11% of the middle-age respondents, and 2% of the senior ones), around half as many as those who claim fluency in Russian. Yet examining the younger age bracket in closer detail reveals a rather different picture. Using the two Caucasus Barometer surveys for which the full datasets are currently available (2009 and 2010), when this younger age group is broken down into approximately four-year brackets, a clear trend is visible of steadily decreasing knowledge of Russian, with people in the 33–35 bracket (the last to have received some secondary schooling in the USSR) having higher-than-average knowledge (77– 78% are fluent) while those percentages drop below the average for the younger age brackets. At the same time, knowledge of English shows an inverse relationship, with knowledge clearly increasing among the younger age brackets (Table 6 and 7).

Similarly, the self-reported language-knowledge scores from a matched-guise experiment among an even younger cohort (median age 16) conducted by the author in Tbilisi in 2010, although using a different scale, also showed strong English knowledge but even stronger Russian knowledge (see Table 8). These data would seem to indicate that there is a very real shift underway among the youngest respondents towards English and away from Russian, although it bears emphasizing that the percentages of those fluent in Russian remain quite high (around 60% or higher), and much higher than the percentage that are fluent in English (around 40% for the youngest and strongest age bracket).

Table 6. Georgians' Russian knowledge by age groups.

	18–22	23–27	28– 32	33–35	36+
CB 2009					
High	61	62	65	77	69
Low	39	37	34	23	29
CB 2010					
High	60	58	71	78	70
Low	39	42	27	20	30

Table 7. Georgians' English knowledge by age groups.

	18–22	23–27	28– 32	33–35	36+
CB 2009					
High	39	26	21	16	6
Low	57	68	71	79	86
CB 2010					
High	41	33	20	17	6
Low	53	61	76	79	88

Table 8. English and Russian knowledge from matched-guise experiment (Tbilisi).

	Total population	Georgians
English understand		
High	67	68
Low	29	28
English speaking		
High	57	59
Low	39	37
Russian understand		
High	74	71
Low	23	26
Russian speaking		
High	65	60
Low	31	36

If we consider the kinds of opportunities that are available for young people in Georgia (and especially in Tbilisi), both English and Russian knowledge seem to be clearly advantageous. In examining job vacancies on the most popular job site in the country (and one of the most popular sites on the Georgian Internet overall), www.jobs.ge, of the 316 announcements posted over an average 10-day period (in this case, 6–18 July 2012), we see the importance of language knowl-edge in general as 59% of them mention it as required or desired for positions. Of these, only 12% mention English alone, while 21% ask for both English and Russian proficiency. A further 9% mention English, Russian and Georgian, 5% mention only Russian, 5% other languages and 1% Russian and Georgian. Thus English overall is slightly more in demand (42% mention English either in combination or alone) than is Russian (mentioned by 36% in combination or alone). Russian knowledge is thus still a valued commodity on the job market, and even more so when combined with English. Thus the situation in Georgia illustrates a common problem among peoples and nations with 'small languages': despite the vibrancy of the state language on its own, in a globalized job market skills in other languages are popular. In Georgia there is no single hegemonic alternative, but rather a repertoire of languages that includes English and Georgian in addition to Russian (and perhaps other local and foreign languages) becomes desirable (Table 8 and 9).[18]

New spheres of use

To further understand the persistence of Russian fluency in Georgia and the ways that English may be challenging it in functional roles, we turn to some of the spheres of use in which knowl-edge of these languages may be considered important and useful and which might produce

Table 9. Language of schooling from matched-guise experiment (Tbilisi).

	Total	Georgians	Armenians	Azerbaijanis	Russians
Grades 1–6					
Georgian	53	60	6	13	0
Russian	37	30	83	69	100
Georgian and Russian	10	9	11	19	0
Other	1	1	0	0	0
Grades 7–9					
Georgian	56	64	0	0	0
Russian	34	27	80	71	100
Georgian and Russian	10	9	14	29	0
Other	1	1	0	0	0
Grades 10–12					
Georgian	59	67	8	13	8
Russian	33	25	69	67	92
Georgian and Russian	8	7	22	20	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0

on-going language contact. For the vast majority of the population of Georgia television is the primary source of information about current events: 88% of the population in both the 2009 and 2011 Media Surveys and 80–83% of respondents mentioned television as a means to spend their free time. Of those who receive information about current events primarily from television, in 2009 37% report receiving information from Russian TV at least monthly, and just 15% do so daily; in the 2011 survey those percentages dropped to 31% monthly and 8% daily.[19] Not sur-prisingly, those with stronger Russians skills get information from Russian TV more frequently, but even so only half of those (49% in 2009 and 50% in 2011) with advanced Russian do so at least monthly, and only 17 –19% of them do so daily (oddly, in the 2009 survey 8% of those with no Russian skills at all report getting information from Russian TV on a daily basis, and 3% in the 2011 survey, perhaps further evidence of the tendency of respondents to underestimate their Russian ability).[20] A much smaller percentage of the population receives information about current events from foreign or international (that is, non-Russian) television: 17 –18% at least monthly and only 2% daily in both the 2009 and 2011 surveys. Knowledge of English makes a significant impact on this, with the percentage of those with advanced English who receive information from international TV at least monthly rising to 57% in 2009 and 63% in 2011. Such people seem not to be using international TV as a resource with great intensity, however, as only 2% of those with advanced English did so on a daily basis in the 2011 survey. Those with advanced Russian skills also were more likely to get information from inter-national TV: 30% monthly in 2009 and 34% in 2011, and in 2010 4% did so daily). Thus there does seem to be a trend of increasing use of international TV as a resource for information, yet the degree of intensity of this usage is not increasing correspondingly.

Other media, such as newspapers or online sources, make up a small percentage of Georgian citizens' sources of information (although the use of the Internet increased slightly between the two surveys).[21] According to the 2011 Caucasus Barometer, 37% of the population report receiving information from the Internet at least once a month, 15% of whom do so daily. Among Tbilisi residents those percentages increase to 56% and 25%, respectively, and among younger people aged 18–35 to 58% and 25%. Forty-one per cent of the population uses the Inter-net at least monthly, and 28% use it daily. Among younger respondents (in the 18 –35 age bracket) 61% use the Internet at least daily and 44% use it daily. Similar percentages obtain regarding Internet usage among capital residents. Those with the most advanced Russian

Table 10. Internet usage in Georgia (%).

Search for Information	49
Facebook	28
Other Social Networking	41
Downloading Music/Movies	26
News	20
Games	14
Blogging	4
Forums	2
Shopping	2
Other	1

Source: Caucasus Barometer (2011).

skills use the Internet more frequently (43% daily, 56% at least monthly) compared to those with weaker Russian (only 21% of those with beginning Russian skills use the Internet at least monthly). Those with strong English knowledge are the most active Internet users, as 94% of those with advanced English use it at least monthly (and 85% daily), and 84% of those with inter-mediate English (64% daily) (Table 10).

Much of Georgian citizens' overall Internet use is devoted to Facebook (28%) and to other social-networking sites (41%). Those with better English seem to use Facebook more, as 42% and 40% of those with intermediate and advanced English respectively, but those without strong English skills also make use of it (24% of those with beginning English and 17% of those with no English knowledge), most likely through Facebook's Georgian language portal. It is not entirely clear what is meant or understood by 'other social networking sites', yet English seems to play much less of a role with these. Only 23% of those with advanced English use them, as opposed to 45% of those with beginning English and 48% of those without English. Those with stronger Russian skills are only somewhat more likely to make use of these other networking sites (33% of those with advanced Russian as opposed to 54% and 52% of those with beginning Russian or with no Russian respectively). Ethnic minorities are more likely to use these sites (63% of Armenians and 66% of Azerbaijanis, as opposed to 40% of Georgians). Georgians are somewhat more likely to use Facebook than Armenians (28% as opposed to 16%), and Azerbaijanis use it more than both (41%). Therefore it may be the case that 'other social networking sites' is understood to be Russian-language sites such as Odnoklassniki and VKontake, especially as there are few such sites in Georgian, Armenian or Azeri.[22]

As King (2012, 10) points out, television and film are 'seen to be two of the only contexts in which Russian is used in the lives of many people in Georgia'. After the news, movies are the second most common thing that Georgians watch on television, and a significant amount of Georgians' Internet use (26%) involves downloading music and films (these activities are not separated in the survey). Movie-download sites are among the most popular in Georgia, and much of the content of these sites (download.ge, avoe.ge, allmovies.ge) is Western films dubbed into Russian, but not Georgian.[23] According to the 2009 EU Survey, the majority of respondents disapprove of the recent law requiring the subtitling of foreign films (including Russian ones) or dubbing them in Georgian rather than in Russian, which is the standard practice on television throughout the post-Soviet space. Before this law, foreign films were most often shown on television on Georgian channels dubbed into Russian, and such dubbed films made up a substantial portion of the broadcast content (and to some extent they continue to do so, despite the law). Eighty per cent of respondents do not support this law, and only 10% do,

and very few of the respondents admitted to changing their views after being presented with several arguments in favour of subtitling versus dubbing. People with better English skills support the law somewhat more than the average and more than those without (26% to 8%, respectively) but the vast majority of them (72%) still are not in favour. Level of Russian knowl-edge seems to have little effect on respondents' opinion on this issue (it is notable that the lower the Russian knowledge the greater the 'do not know' response). Ethnic Armenians in Georgia are even less enthusiastic about subtitling (89% opposed) compared to Georgians, and Azerbaijanis seem more ambivalent (64% oppose and 31% either do not know or refuse to answer). Level of education and employment status have little effect on respondents' opinions. Probably the greater familiarity with dubbing and lack of experience in reading subtitle text (even in the state language) plays a role in this, as does the greater availability of films dubbed in Russian (compared to that of films either dubbed or subtitled in Georgian). The impression that results from this is that Georgians remain quite comfortable watching foreign films dubbed in Russian, and prefer this even to subtitling in their native language, which speaks to the contra-diction between the outward commitment to post-colonial de-Russification and inward prefer-ences for retaining Russian in some contexts.[24]

All of this suggests that although English presents some means of access to global and inter-national sources of information, communication, entertainment and culture, it has not yet dis-placed Russian in this capacity; when given the options many Georgians seem to fall back on Russian-language outlets as the more comfortable ones.

Matched-guise experiments in Georgia

In order to try to understand people's underlying attitudes towards Russian in Georgia and the directions in which things may be going, we turn to the matched-guise methodology. Described by Romaine (1995, 289) as 'one of the most well-known experimental paradigms used in obtain-ing evaluations to spoken language', the matched-guise experiment can isolate the cognitive mechanism of language status, and in turn forms of identity, in the mind of respondents. This makes it an ideal experimental design for studying status and/or identity in many different kinds of heterogeneous societies. In this experiment, speakers are recorded reading a text in mul-tiple languages, dialects or accents. The recorded voices are played for respondents, who are asked to give their reactions to the voices on various criteria. The respondents are given to under-stand that the voices they are evaluating belong to different individuals, and are not told that they are in fact hearing the same individuals reading text in different languages, dialects or accents (that is, in different 'guises'). Thus the respondents' reactions to the same speaker can be com-pared between the different guises, and these reactions are not distorted by the effects of directly asked questions (such as, for example, 'what do you think of such-and-such people'), and extraneous intervening variables are kept to a minimum as the text and the voices of the speakers are held constant.

Early matched-guise experiments showed, not surprisingly, that speakers received more favourable evaluations from all respondents when speaking in their more high-status guises. Later experiments revealed a counter-trend in that while lower-status language or dialect-group members might rate the higher-status guise more favourably on characteristics related to prestige or respect, they tended to rate their own speech guise more highly on 'affective or emotive' characteristics. Carranza and Ryan (1975) used factor analysis to isolate two distinct categories: solidarity or friendship on the one hand, and prestige or respect on the other. This approach was used to effect by Woolard (1989) in her study of bilingualism and ethnic politics in Catalonia and in Bilaniuk's work (1997, 2005) in Ukraine; the experiment constituted one of

the centrepieces of Laitin's 1998 study of Russian-speaking identity in several post-Soviet republics.

The author implemented an experiment using this methodology in Tbilisi in 2010, with native speakers of Georgian, Russian and English recorded in both their own languages and also in non-native ones (in Georgian, Russian and English in the case of the Georgian speaker; in Russian and Georgian in the case of the two Russian speakers; and in English and Georgian in the case of the English speaker). A sample of 655 high-school and university students in Tbilisi gave their evaluations of these recordings using questionnaires (see Appendix 1).[25] We see from this, as in similar experiments elsewhere, that people prefer most to hear speakers using their native languages. Georgian respondents[26] gave the highest ratings in both friendship and respect to the Georgian speaker in Georgian, and all of the speakers receive their highest ratings when they are speaking in their native languages. What is striking is that Georgian respondents rated the Georgian speaker low in respect but higher in friendship when speaking in Russian, and rated her higher in respect but low in friendship when speaking in English. Thus for young Georgians in Tbilisi, speaking English will gain you prestige, but people may not like you as much. A Georgian speaking in Russian is perhaps somehow more 'one of us' still (Figure 1).

Laitin found in all of his cases (although it was statistically significant only in Estonia and Kazakhstan) that that the more bilingual respondents were the less highly they evaluated Russian speakers in titular (that is, local-language) guises. From the results of our experiments, the oppo-site seems to be the case for Georgians: the better the Georgian respondents know Russian the more positively they relate to the Russians speaking Georgian on the friendship dimension. The effect here is small, but it is statistically significant. Unlike Laitin's findings, however, in Georgia it seems that bilingualism has no significant effect at all on respondents' ratings in the respect dimension. Bilingualism seems to have no effect in either aspect for Russian speak-ers' attitudes towards Georgians.

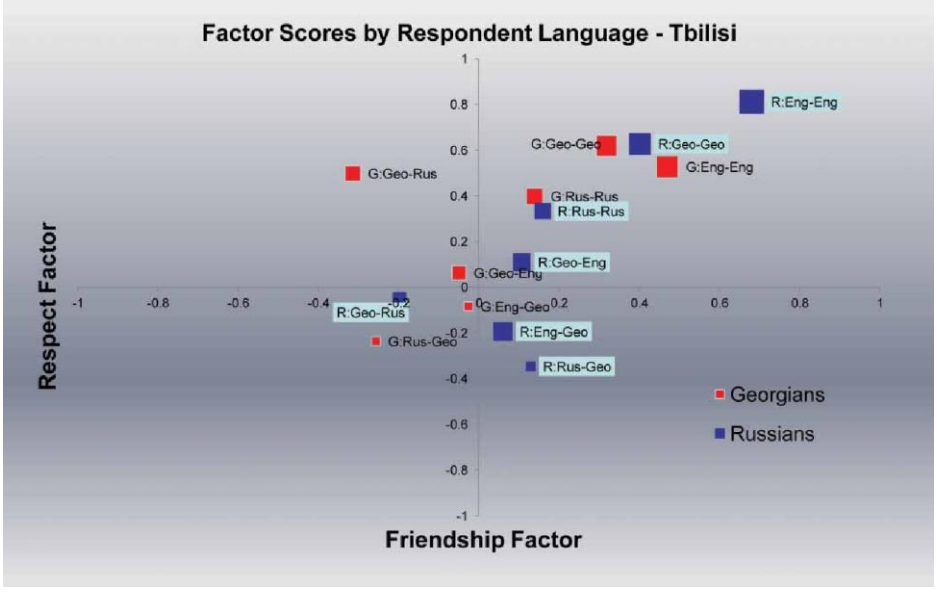

Figure 1. Factor scores by respondent language: Tbilisi.

Also striking is how the native English speaker receives the highest ratings among all the speakers when speaking in English. Laitin (1998) examined whether the titular respondents in several former Soviet republics showed more respect towards Russian speakers in Russian compared to titular speakers in their own languages, a condition that he referred to as 'colonial mentality' (and which he found in Kazakhstan but not in Ukraine or the Baltics). This clearly does not seem to be the case among Georgian respondents with regard to Russian, as they rate the Georgian speaker in Georgian significantly higher in both respect and friendship compared to the Russian speaker in Russian (and interestingly, the Russian respondents also rate the Georgian speaker higher, which is the reverse of a Russian colonial mentality). With regard to English, the Georgian respondents rate the English speaker in English higher in respect compared to the Georgian speaker in Georgian, something we might refer to as 'neo-colonialism' (that is, pres-tige accorded to the new global language rather than to that of the former colonizer). Yet at the same time, they rate the Georgian speaker higher in friendship, a result that seems to confirm the outcome with regard to the higher prestige but lower friendship for the Georgian speaker in English in Tbilisi. The English speaker in English rates significantly higher in both respect and prestige for the Russian respondents, and they also give the Russian speaker in English higher respect than friendship. At the same time, there seems to be little benefit among both Russian and Georgian respondents for assimilation to each others' languages. Among Russian respondents the Russian speakers gain some respect for speaking Georgian but little friendship, while Georgian respondents rate the Russian speaker in Georgian low in both aspects.

The same situation seems to obtain with regard to job status in Tbilisi. Respondents were asked the open question 'what profession do you think this person has' for each voice, thus allowing us to assess and compare the speakers' perceived professional standing in the different languages. For Georgian respondents the English speaker in her native language has the highest job prospects, while speaking Georgian is not as beneficial for her (and she rates slightly lower in this regard than the Georgian speaker in Georgian). The Georgian speaker rates highest in job status in Georgian, and perhaps unexpectedly she rates slightly higher in Russian than in English. The Russian speakers rate lowest of all when they attempt to speak in Georgian, suggesting that the prospects for minorities are not high even if they attempt to learn Georgian (Figure 2).

The results were similar among Russian respondents in Tbilisi, who rated both the English speaker in English and the Georgian speaker in Georgian highest. They showed little distinction between the Georgian speaker in English and in Russian, and rated their own fellow Russian speakers lowest when they spoke Georgian (and not significantly worse than the Georgian speaker in Russian). Thus speaking English fluently like a native speaker (or perhaps simply being one) may be the ticket to career success, but for citizens of Georgia knowing Russian is just as advantageous. At the same time, this seems to reflect the actual employment situation in Tbilisi described above, in which both Russian and English are advantageous for young people on the job market (Figure 3).

Turning to a variant of the experiment conducted in the same year in the Armenian-populated region of Samtskhe-Javakheti and the Azerbaijani-populated region of Kvemo Kartli, similar results obtain with regard to the status of Russian and the incentives for assimila-tion to the state and minority languages. The 'primordial solidarities' continue to be strong in both places, with Georgians rating the Georgian speakers in Georgian higher in both friendship and respect than Armenians in Armenian and Azerbaijanis in Azeri. Armenian respondents rank their own speakers significantly higher in both aspects, while Azerbaijani respondents rate their own speakers higher in respect but somewhat lower in friendship compared to the Georgians in Georgian. In both places all of the nationalities seem not to be favourably disposed to assimila-tion. Armenians speaking Georgian lose both respect and friendship among Armenian

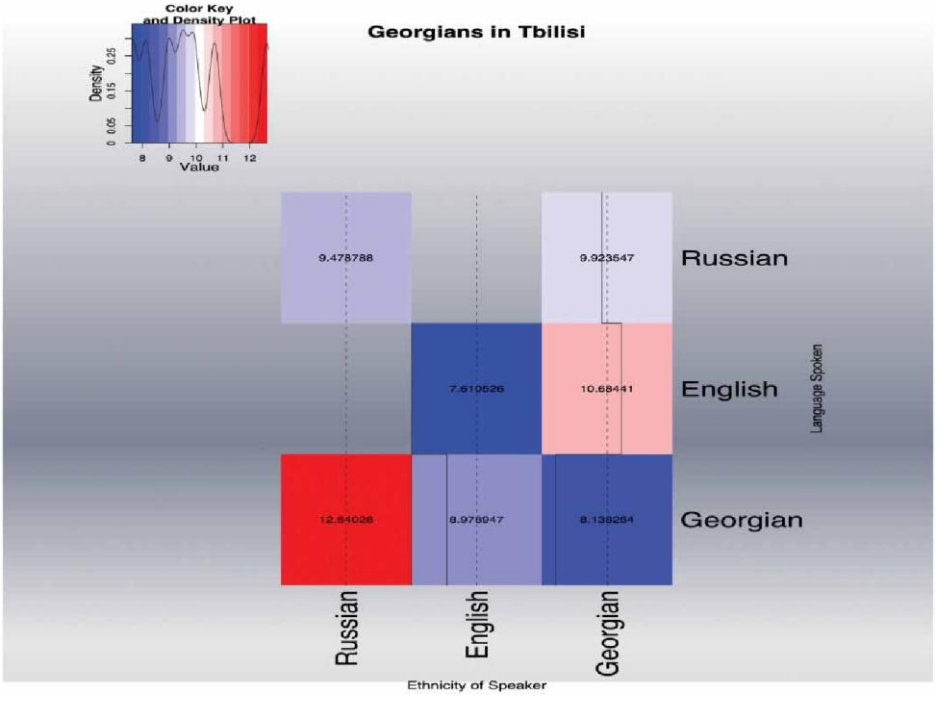

Figure 2. Georgians in Tbilisi.

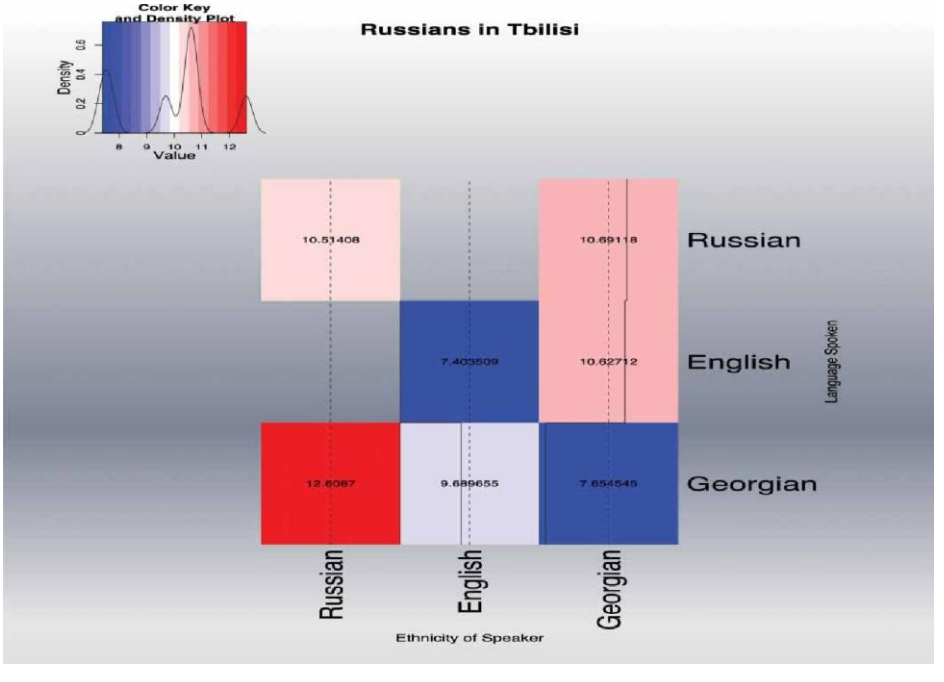

Figure 3. Russians in Tbilisi.

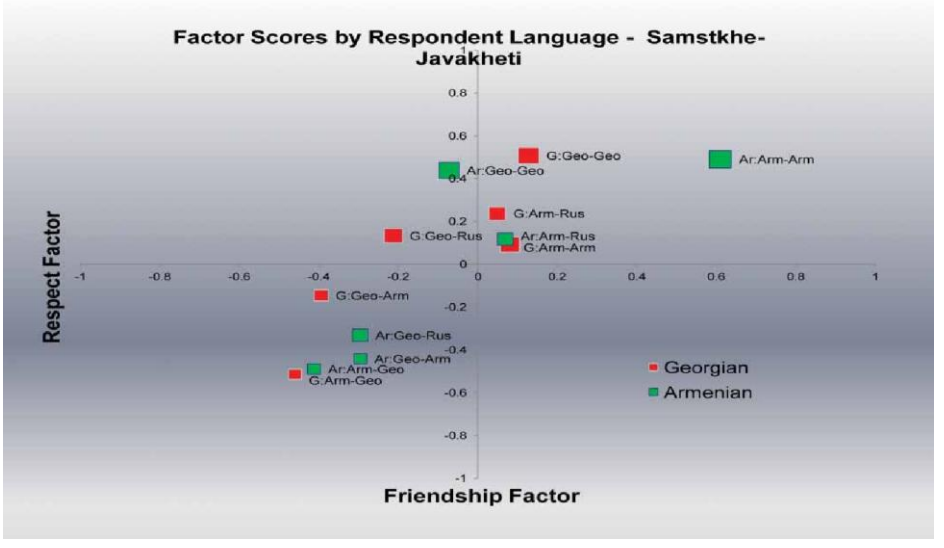

Figure 4. Factor scores by respondent language: Samstkhe-Javakheti.

respondents, and Azeris speaking Georgian gain slightly in respect but lose heavily in friendship. Georgian respondents in both places do not seem to reward the Armenian or the Azeri speakers for speaking Georgian. The Russian language, however, seems to take up the middle ground, as all the nationalities seem to punish both their own and the others much less when they speak Russian compared to when they attempt to assimilate, and in some cases speaking Russian deli-vers moderately constructive outcomes (such as in Samtskhe-Javakheti, where both Georgian and Armenian respondents give positive ratings to Armenians speaking Russian, and in Kvemo Kartli the Azerbaijani respondents give the Azeri speakers slightly more respect in Russian than in Azeri, although less friendship) (Figures 4 and 5).

Similarly, with regard to job status in Samtskhe-Javakheti, the Armenian speakers' prospects seem higher among both Armenian and Georgian respondents when they speak Russian than Georgian (although highest when they speak Armenian), and the Georgian speakers do better in Russian than in Armenian (especially among Georgian respondents). Azeri speakers rate poorly in whichever language they are speaking in, but they do slightly better in Russian com-pared to Georgian, and likewise the Georgians' job prospects are slightly higher in Russian than in Azeri. Thus the picture that emerges is that there are few career incentives all around for mutual assimilation to the state or local minority language for both Georgian and the minorities as well as that one is better off speaking in one's own language. But at the same time, Russian occupies a middle ground and can improve one's chances (especially when dealing with the other ethnic groups). Thus these results point as well to the continued functional role of Russian as lingua franca among Georgia's ethnic groups (as well with the other republics of the South Caucasus region), despite the efforts of the Georgian government to strengthen Georgian learning among the minorities (Figure 6).

The future of Russian and English in Georgia

In conclusion, it is beyond question that the majority of the overall population of Georgia retains functional fluency in Russian, 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Empire and despite the

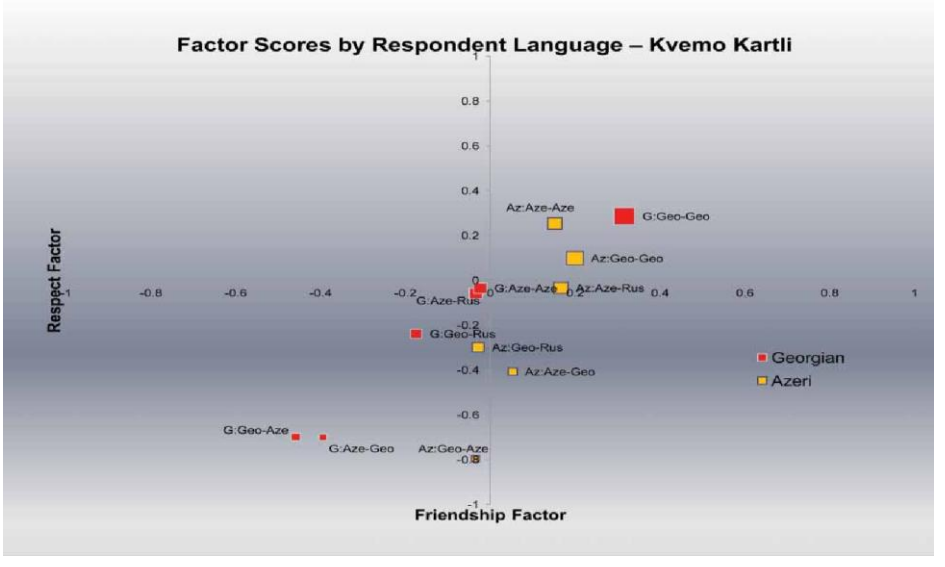

Figure 5. Factor scores by respondent language: Kvemo Kartli.

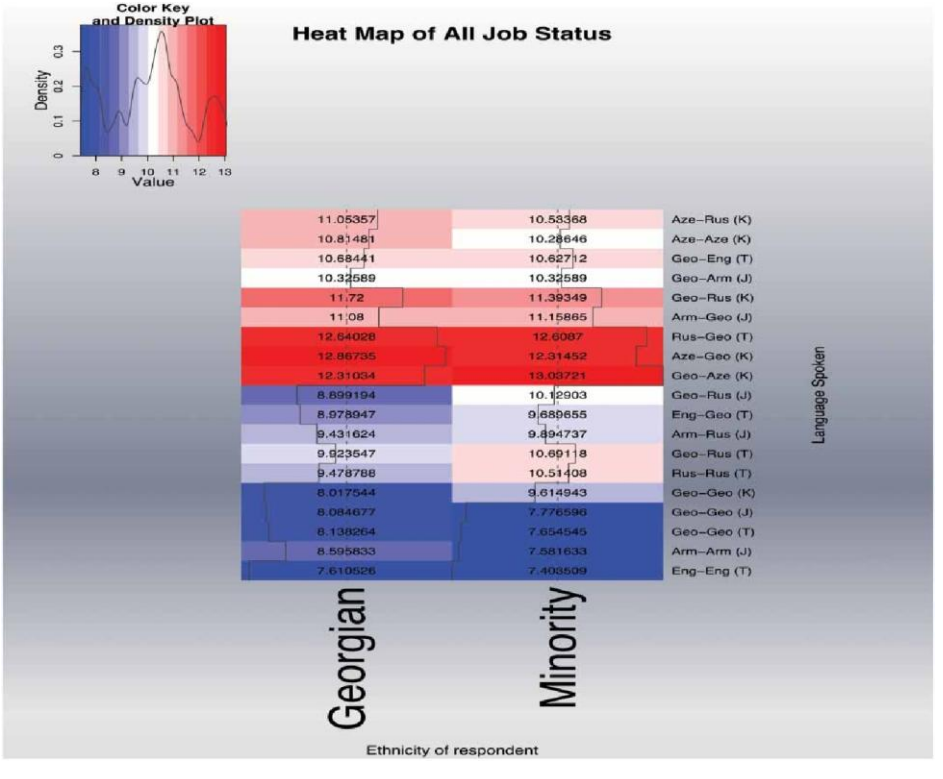

Figure 6. Heat map of all job status.

strained political relations with and the reduced direct cultural influence of the former imperial centre. Unlike Central Asian states such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Russian does not have official status (and is not likely to receive it in the future) or an active sphere of official or public use. The Georgian language is the exclusive official language (aside from the theoretical status of Abkhazian and exceptions for Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani in the educational sphere) and a key criterion of membership in the state's civic conception of Georgian national identity (although unlike in Baltic states such as Estonia and Latvia, no evaluation of language profi-ciency is required for naturalization). Ethnic minorities, and particularly Armenians and ethnic Russians, retain Russian fluency despite increasing knowledge of Georgian among the younger generation; Russian for the moment remains a useful tool for inter-ethnic communication and is beneficial for professional advancement. Russian fluency is particularly strong among residents of the capital city and is higher among the better off and better educated. English is making inroads into Georgian society; it has definitely replaced Russian as the prestige language, and state policy continues to be directed towards giving English primacy among foreign languages. Younger people, especially those who received primarily schooling after the end of the USSR, are slowly but surely showing increasing facility in English, although at a level that for the moment is still far lower than their facility in Russian. New media and the Internet offer resources in English, and the younger members of the population are those best positioned to take advantage of them. Yet at the same time people seem unready to jettison the more com-fortable and familiar sources available in Russian. On the practical level English has not dis-placed Russian either as an instrument of advancement or as a means of access to the outside world. The same predictors for superior Russian ability also pertain to superior English, such as increased intelligence, education and urbanization so that in many cases the same strata of the population who know Russian well are also those who are increasing their knowledge of English. The question of foreign-language learning, for the time being, is not an 'either-or' prop-osition, but rather one of creating and maintaining effective language repertoires. While for many people English is a language of prestige that will earn increased respect, the benefits to fluency are less tangible at the practical level. At the same time Russian is the more familiar, the language that Georgians are more comfortable with. If the current trends continue, English proficiency among younger people will eventually match or surpass Russian fluency, especially if the English-oriented educational policies of the government continue, and if the perceived prestige value of English is matched in the future by a similar shift in the necessity of English and the exclusion of Russian for practical career opportunities. The case of Georgia illustrates some of the challenges facing 'small cultures' in an increasingly globalized world and the need to interact both with large cultures nearby and also larger ones that exert influence on the global scale; it also illustrates well the contradictions between the postcolonial goals of identity building and individuals' goals of maintaining practical and advantageous language repertoires.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Jesse Driscoll for assistance in analysing the matched-guise experiment data and generating the heat maps and graphs based on that data; he would also like to thank Nic Wondra, Ekaterine Rostomashvili, Maya Giorgadze, Arpine Porsughyan and Maya Bashirova for their work in conducting the matched-guise experiments in Tbilisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. The matched-guise experiments were conducted with partial funding from the Caucasus Research Resource Centers, for which the author would like to extend particular gratitude to Hans Gutbrod, Koba Turmanidze and Davit Sichinava.

Notes

1. According to the national Constitution, Abkhazian also has official status in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia: http://www.parliament.ge/files/68_1944_951190_CONSTIT_27_12.06.pdf (accessed July 16, 2012).
2. Those smaller nationalities that did not have a titular homeland in the USSR, such as Kurds/Yezidis, Greeks or Assyrians, did not have such a choice, which perhaps explains their generally higher degree of assimilation into Georgian. I thank the anonymous reviewer for this point.
3. Russian emigration from Georgia was a trend that had been under way already in the late Soviet period, and had economic motivations as well as cultural ones. Russians made up 10.1% of Georgia's population in 1959, and they decreased steadily since then. I thank the anonymous reviewer for these points as well.
4. Many urban Armenians speak Armenian at home, but are educated primarily in Russian and are not literate in Armenian.
5. "Civic" in the sense of supporting opportunities for the use of minority languages such as Azerbaijani and Armenian (in schools and university entrance examinations, for example), but also making facility in the state language (Georgian) rather than ethnic heritage a primary criterion of membership in the new civic Georgian national identity.
6. http://www.baltinfo.ru/2011/02/04/V-Gruzii-russkii-yazyk-izymayut-iz-shkolnoi-programmy-mladshekl assnikov-186489 (accessed July 16, 2012). See also http://www.voanews.com/content/english-replaces-russian-as-top-foreign-language-of-study-in-ex-soviet-georgia/1528063.html (accessed November 21, 2012).
7. http://www.gazeta.ru/news/lenta/2011/01/28/n_1678054.shtml (accessed July 16, 2012).
8. http://www.gudok.ru/politic/?pub_id=402315 (accessed July 16, 2012).
9. http://www.eurasianet.org/node/63718 (accessed July 16, 2012).
10. See http://www.vz.ru/news/2012/11/2/605422.html, although there are indications that the controversial "Teach & Learn with Georgia" programme (http://www.tlg.gov.ge/) has been suspended and is likely to be downsized or eliminated altogether, and that a state governing body for the Georgian language may be reconstituted (such an institution not existed since 2005): http://vz.ru/news/2012/11/7/606022.html (all accessed on November 21, 2012).
11. In an unpublished study by John King (2010), Georgian university students were asked to estimate the percentages of Georgians older than and younger than 30 that speak English and Russian. The respondents greatly overestimated English knowledge for both age groups, and substantially underestimated the Russian knowledge of those under 30.
12. For the sake of convenience and ease of interpretation, I combine the categories of 'intermediate' and 'advanced' knowledge of Russian as 'high' proficiency and 'beginner' and 'no knowledge' as 'low' proficiency, with 'high' proficiency assumed to be equitable with functional proficiency (or non-assimilated bilingualism). As these ratings are self-reported, there is obviously a strong element of subjectivity involved.
13. And despite the likelihood, as John King (2010) points out, that people in Georgian will tend to exaggerate their English knowledge and underrate their Russian knowledge. One reason for this might be peoples' greater familiarity with Russian spoken at the native level as opposed to English, and thus their reluctance to rate their Russian highly if it falls short of native level proficiency. I thank Giga Zedania for this point.
14. Also interesting is that 84% of the foreign respondents reported either constantly or frequently having to interact with people who did not speak English or their native language.
15. In the Caucasus Barometer surveys the interviewers were asked to rate their opinion of the intelligence of the interviewees. Thus this variable refers to the subjective opinion of the interviewers.
16. The difference in Russian knowledge among males and females is small and not statistically significant, but it does seem that men are consistently slightly stronger than women.
17. The CRRC Online Data Analysis (ODA) tool uses these age brackets for all the surveys that are available on the site (http://www.crrc.ge/oda/). At the time of writing, only the 2009 and 2010 Caucasus Barometer surveys are publicly available, and allow more detailed analysis.
18. In keeping with Laitin's concept of "language repertoires" (see 1998:25). I thank the anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.
19. Russian TV stations can be received in Georgia through satellite and cable, and also in much of the country with a large antenna. According to the 2009 CRRC Media Survey, 40% of the overall population have satellite or cable TV, and 57% of Tbilisi residents have it. According to the 2011 Media

Survey those numbers increase to 43% and 59% respectively. Also in the overall population 59% of those with advanced Russian have satellite or cable TV access, while only 30% of those with no Russian knowledge do, and 60% of those with advanced English have access, as opposed to 38% without English knowledge.

20. According to the 2009 and 2011 Media Surveys, knowledge of Russian coincides with slightly increased trust in Russian TV stations such as ORT and NTV, although such levels are quite low (for example, in 2011 12% of those with advanced Russian trusted ORT (up from 4% in 2009), 5% did not (14% in 2009), while 83% were ether in the middle or did not offer an opinion.
21. Between the 2009 and 2011 Media Surveys the percentage of respondents who mentioned 'surfing the internet' as a means of spending their free time rose from 8% to 20%, and among younger respondents it increased from 17% to 36%.
22. The reasons for this might be subject of a separate investigation, and they might have something to do with the larger reach of Russian and English-language social media sites, or with the difficulties, at least initially, of creating such sites with local language scripts. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Russian sites such as Odnoklassniki were more popular in Georgia at first, but that Facebook has grown in popularity, especially with the introduction of a Georgian-language portal for the site (VKon-takte also now has a Georgian portal, but Odnoklassniki is available only in Russian and Ukrainian).
23. See www.top.ge.
24. As King points out, Georgian dubbing is often of poorer quality than Russian dubbing, and the selection of films dubbed into Georgian is clearly more limited. For more on the issue of film dubbing in Georgia, see the forthcoming dissertation by Perry Sherouse, "Secondary National Languages: Structures of Use and Expectation in Tbilisi, Georgia," University of Michigan, forthcoming 2013.
25. For further discussion of these experiments, see Driscoll and Blauvelt (2012).
26. Following Laitin (1998), we delineated respondents into categories of 'Russian-speakers' (i.e. russko-yazychnye, as opposed to ethnic Russians, or russkie) and 'titular' (here, Georgian speakers) based on the language of the questionnaires that they selected. Thus in the Tbilisi sample there were 107 Russian speakers (16.3%) and 548 Georgian speakers (83.7%). This delineation of identity correlated strongly with respondents' stated ethnic identity, and in the version of the experiment described below con-ducted in the minority regions of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti the respondents were deli-neated according to stated identity (Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani and other).

References

Bilaniuk, Laada. 1997. "Matching Guises and Mapping Language Ideologies in Ukraine." Texas Linguistic Forum 37: 298–310.

Bilaniuk, Laada. 2005. Contested Tongues: Language Politics and Cultural Correction in Ukraine. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Carranza, M., and E. B. Ryan. 1975. "Evaluative Reactions of Bilingual Anglo and Mexican American Adolescents towards Speakers of English and Spanish." International Journal of the Sociology of Language 6: 83–104.

Driscoll, Jesse, and Timothy Blauvelt. 2012. "Translation Bottlenecks and Truth Hierarchies: A Language Experiment in Post-War Georgia." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Nationalities Studies, April 19–21.

Groce, Alexander. 2009. "Social Pressures Facing Russian Speakers in the Former Soviet Union: Georgia: A Case Study." IREX individual Advanced Research Opportunities (IARO) Program Research Report. http://www.irex.org/system/files/Groce.pdf.

Gutbrod, Hans, and Malte Viefhues. 2010. "Climbing the Mountain of Languages: Language Learning in Georgia." Caucasian Review of International Affairs 4 (1): 169– 183.

King, John. 2012. "Changing Attitudes and Roles of Russian and English in Georgia." Fulbright Project.

Laitin, David. 1998. Identity in Formation: The Russian Speaking Population in the Near Abroad. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Romaine, Suzanne. 1995. Bilingualism, 2nd. Ed. Volume 13 of Language in Society. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Woolard, Katherine. 1989. Double Talk: Bilingualism and the Politics of Ethnicity in Catalonia. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

.

Appendix 1. Matched-guise experiment methodology

Tbilisi

The experiment in Tbilisi was conducted in 12 randomly selected schools around the city in both Georgian-language and Russian-language 'sectors' (while a number of schools in Tbilisi still retain 'sectors' in which tuition is conducted in Russian, there are no longer any schools in the capital classified as solely 'Russian' schools) and in three universities (Robakidze University, Ilia State University and the Sukhumi Filial of Tbilisi State University) over the course of three weeks in May–June 2010. The sample size was 655 respondents. Three speakers were used, each reading a text on Euclidean geometry (the same text that was used by Woodard and Laitin) in both Georgian and Russian. Speaker 1, Irma, is a native Georgian-speaker and Tbilisi-ite in her early 40s, and speaks without accent in Georgian and with a perceivable Geor-gian accent in Russian. Speaker 2, Becky, is in her mid-20s and grew up in a mixed Russian-Georgian household in Tbilisi. In the recording her Georgian speech has a slight but perceptible (especially to native Georgian speakers) Russian tinge, and her Russian is unaccented. Speaker 3, Irina, is a native Russian speaker (and ethnic Russian-Ukrainian) from Kazakhstan in her mid-40s who married a Georgian and moved to Tbilisi in her early 20s, and who speaks Russian without accent and with a perceivable Russian accent in Georgian. Thus we have one 'Georgian' (Irma) and two varieties of 'Russians', the slightly perceptible (Becky) and the fully perceptible (Irina). The respondents listened to the recordings, and were asked to evaluate the voices on questionnaires based on those used in Woodward and Laitin's experiments, with 15 characteristics (is this person intelligent, kind, hard-working, amusing, and so on) and one open question 'What profession do you think this person has?' This open question was coding using a 21-point scale worked out through a focus group at the Caucasus Research Resource Centers in June 1010.

Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli

Separate experiments using the same methodology were conducted in the predominantly Armenian region of Samtskhe-Javakheti in March 2010, and in the predominantly Azerbaijani region of Kvemo Kartli in April 2010.

The experiment in Samtskhe-Javakheti was performed in Armenian-, Georgian- and Russian-language schools in the cities of Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe, as well as in Akhaltsikhe State University, the region's only state-accredited higher-education institution. Four voices were used, two 'Georgians' and two Armenians. Recruiting speakers with the proper language repertoires (Georgian, Russian and Armenian) and accents proved difficult.

Georgian speaker 1, Lela, is an ethnic Georgian from Tbilisi in her mid-50s and a professor of Armenian studies at a Georgian university; she speaks both Armenian and Russian with a noticeable Georgian accent.

Georgian speaker 2, Viktoria, is actually an ethnic Armenian from Tbilisi in her early 30s and a native Georgian speaker. An actress at the Armenian Theater in Tbilisi, she read the text in Georgian without accent and in Armenian and Russian with a Georgian accent.

Armenian speaker 1, Narine, is a non-governmental organization (NGO) activist from Javakheti in her early 30s, and learned Georgian as a university student in Tbilisi. She is a native speaker of Armenian, which she speaks with the local Javakheti accent, and she speaks Russian and Georgian with a pronounced Armenian accent.

Armenian speaker 2, Satenik, is an Armenian from Yerevan in her mid-20s who is studying in graduate school in Tbilisi. She speaks broadcast-standard Yerevan Armenian, and speaks Georgian and Russian with an Armenian accent.

The overall sample size in Samtskhe-Javakheti was 328, of which 186 (56.7%) identified themselves as Georgians and 142 (43.3%) as Armenians. A total of 56.1% studied in Georgian schools, 27.7% in Armenian schools and 16.2% in Russian schools.

The experiment was conducted in Kvemo-Kartli in Azeri and Georgian-language schools in the Gardabani and Marneuli regions, as well as in two predominantly Azeri unaccredited higher-educational institutions

located there. Four voices were used: two Georgians and two Azeris.

Georgian speaker 1, Eteri, is an ethnic Georgian in her late 20s who works as a Georgian-language teacher in an Azeri school in a village outside of Gardebani. She is a native Georgian speaker and speaks Azeri with a noticeable Georgian accent.

Georgian speaker 2, Salome, is an ethnic Georgian in her late 20s from Tbilisi who works in an international NGO and graduated from a Turkish-run high school. She is a native Georgian speaker, and read the Azeri text with a pronounced Georgian accent.

Azeri speaker 1, Gulben, is a native Azeri speaker and a student from Marneuli in her early 20s who studies in Georgian in university in Tbilisi. She graduated from a Russian-language high school in Marneuli.

Azeri speaker 2, Nulifar, like Gulben is a native Azeri speaker and a student from Marneuli in her early 20s who studies in Georgian in university in Tbilisi. She graduated from an Azeri-language high school in Mar-neuli.

The overall sample size in Kvemo-Kartli was 598, of which 122 (or 20.4%) identified themselves as Geor-gians and 460 (76.9%) as Azeris. One hundred and thirty-six (22.7%) reported that they currently study in Georgian, 124 (20.7%) in Russian and 338 (56.5%) in Azeri. Thus here Azeris comprise 14.7% of the pupils in Georgian schools, and 83.9% of the Russian schools, while 95.1% of Georgians study in Georgians schools and only 4.1% of them study in Russian schools.