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Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries: Language Revival, Language Removal, and Sociolinguistic Theory

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Introduction

In December of 2007, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine announced that starting in 2008 all foreign-language movies shown in the country will have to be translated into Ukrainian via dubbing, subtitles, or synchronous translation.[1] There would be nothing attention-worthy about this announcement if the 'foreign language' category didn't also include Russsian, the native language of 30% of the population of Ukraine (www.ukrcensus.gov.ua), and one used and understood by the majority of the remaining 70%. The new law thus was not driven by linguistic needs, as it would be in the case of movies in French, Danish or Hindi. Nor was it driven by economic needs – the demand for Russian-language books and media continues to be high in Ukraine, and the measure may actually be detrimental to the already struggling film industry. In fact, it is the popularity of the Russian-language media – inconsistent with Ukraine's nationalizing agenda and political aspirations and alliances – that drives the new law whose purpose is to ensure that Ukrainian citizens live in a Ukrainian-language environment.

The announcement sparked a stormy debate in the media. Russian media have decried the law as yet another illiberal step taken by the Ukrainian government to deprive consumers of free choice and to impinge on the rights of Russian speakers.[2] President Yushchenko contradicted this accusation stating that Ukrainian language policy conforms to all liberal European standards and that Russian is the language of another country that would not allow Ukrainians to identify themselves as Ukrainian.[3]

This heated discussion is not unusual – rather, it is just another chapter in the ongoing saga of the Russian language in Ukraine (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008).[4] Nor are concerns about language status, policies and rights in the post-Soviet space limited to Ukraine. As will be shown in this collection, in the past two decades, post-Soviet countries as a whole have emerged as a contested linguistic space, where emotional exchanges over language-related issues are fodder for the daily news[5] and where disagreements over language- and

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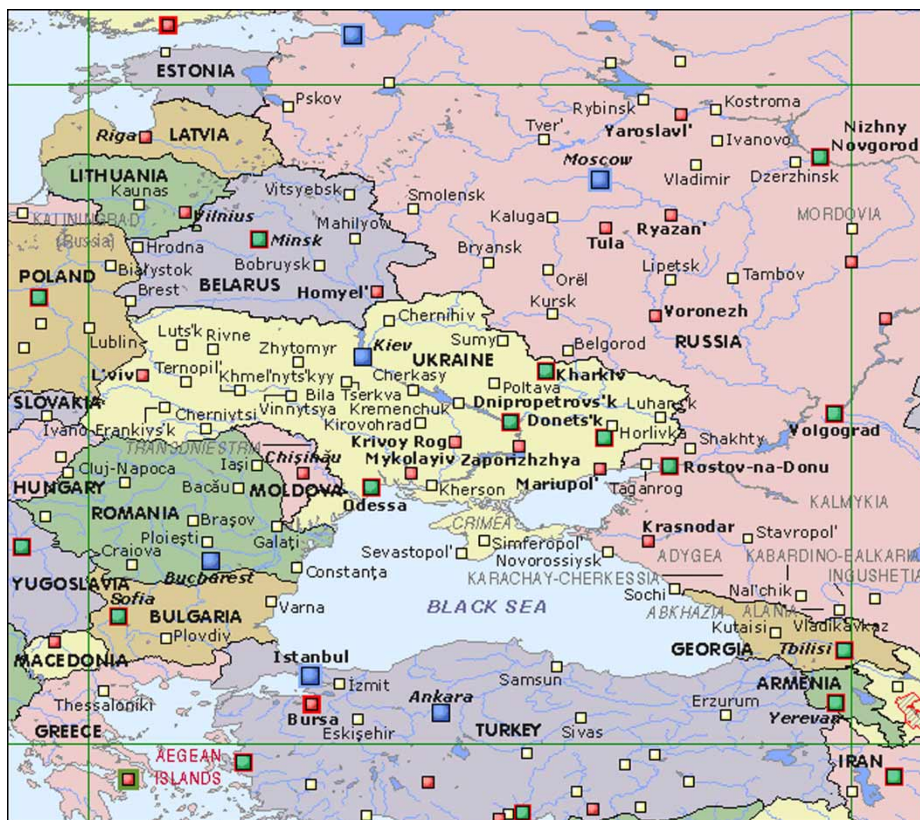

Map 1 (Source: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bo.html)

education-related decisions have led to demonstrations and at times even military conflicts and secession (cf. Ciscel, 2008).

For decades, and sometimes centuries, many inhabitants of what is now called post-Soviet countries have watched their native languages take second seat to Russian, the lingua franca of the Russian empire and then of the USSR. The dissolution of the USSR in 1991 has created conditions for a unique sociolinguistic experiment, in which 14 countries previously united by the same language and political system could renegotiate this linguistic imbalance, strengthen the status of the titular languages and snatch the safety net from under the feet of monolingual Russian speakers, imposing new linguistic regimes in the process of building new nation-states.

A comparative analysis of language shift outcomes and of challenges faced by the 14 states in implementing new language laws and restructuring educational systems offers a unique contribution to contemporary theories of language policy, shift, minority rights and language education. It is all the more surprising then that the post-Soviet context as a whole has been largely ignored in the scholarship on language policy and bi- and multilingualism. Foundational work in this area was conducted by political scientists, most

Map 2 (Source: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bo.html)

notably Laitin (1998), Kolstø (1995, 2002) and their teams, that rushed to the newly independent countries to document the change of linguistic regimes. Other cross-country investigations have been conducted by the interdisciplinary teams of Smith and associates (1998) and Landau and Kellner-Heinkele (2001), and, in the post-Soviet context, by the teams headed by Lebedeva (1995) and Savoskul (2001). The resulting monographs have documented the initial stages of the negotiation of national identities and laid the theoretical and methodological foundations for the future study of the area.

In the years that followed, linguistic anthropologists, sociolinguists and education scholars have joined the fray to examine sociolinguistic and educational changes in single countries (e.g. Bilaniuk, 2005; Ciscel, 2007; Korth, 2005). This work offered nuanced, detailed and theoretically sophisticated sociolinguistic portrayals of the countries in question but without the integrative drive displayed by political scientists. Moreover, until recently, investigations conducted by Western and local scholars proceeded in parallel, rather than in collaboration.

At present, we are witnessing a transition to a new stage in the study of post-Soviet sociolinguistics, ushered in by pioneering efforts of three scholars intent on creating conditions for sustained and systematic collaboration between East

and West. The efforts of Gabrielle Hogan-Brun have created conditions for such collaboration between Lithuanian, Estonian, and Latvian scholars and their international colleagues (Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun, 2008; Hogan-Brun, 2005a,b; Hogan-Brun *et al.*, 2007). The efforts of Ekaterina Protassova and Arto Mustajoki have united scholars of Russian diaspora from around the world (Mustajoki & Protassova, 2004) and spearheaded a large-scale international investigation of multilingualism in Central Asia under the auspices of the INTAS project (Orusbaev *et al.*, 2008; Smagulova, 2008).

In the same spirit, the first aim of the present collection is to support and expand the collaboration between scholars working inside and outside of the post-Soviet countries.[6] Its second aim is to introduce language developments in the post-Soviet countries to the larger scholarly community. The third aim is to begin the process of integrating and theorizing the findings and to reflect on the challenges these findings present for sociolinguistic theory, in particular with regard to articulation of minority rights of speakers of a 'postcolonial' language.

Since the post-Soviet context is not particularly well known to the majority of readers, I will use this introduction to provide a general background against which developments in particular countries can be better understood. I will begin by placing these developments in the sociohistoric context of language policies of the Russian empire and the USSR. Then, I will offer a comparative overview of the outcomes of language shift in 14 post-Soviet countries, separated into three geographic groups: Eastern European countries, Transcaucasus and Central Asia. Throughout, I will highlight historic, demographic, linguistic and sociopolitical factors that shaped distinct language shift outcomes in geographically close countries. Then, I will outline the contributions and challenges to contemporary sociolinguistic theory that emerge from this work and point to productive directions for future research.

Language Policies and Practices in the Russian Empire and the USSR

Russification in the Russian Empire

Despite its multilingual and multiethnic character, until the eighteenth century Russia had no consistent language policy (Belikov & Krysin, 2001; Weeks, 2001). Russification took place slowly or not at all, while Russian administration used translators to communicate with local populations. Peter the Great was the first to formulate consistent language policies with regard to ethnic and linguistic minorities: German was kept as the official language in the Baltic territories, Swedish in Finland, and Polish in the Kingdom of Poland (Belikov & Krysin, 2001).

In the mid-nineteenth century, the administration of Alexander II attempted to unify the empire through a number of measures, including the spread of Russian, and thus began articulating its russification policies. Alpatov (2000) and Weeks (2001) argue that these policies were not an across-the-board mandate, rather they applied selectively to particular ethnic and social groups. Thus, russification of Orthodox Christian Slavs, such as non-Catholic

Ukrainians and Belarusians, was considered critical. Russification of racial and religious minorities, such as Kalmyks or Uzbeks, was considered less important, and russification and assimilation of Jews was often forcefully prevented.

Class and social status were also at play – whether through added incentives of social and educational advancement, or through enforcement, russification measures often targeted primarily or exclusively local elites. To give but one example, upon annexation of Georgia the tsarist regime closed all Georgian schools and opened Russian ones, where Georgian was taught as an optional subject. Yet in 1860 Georgia had only 145 primary and secondary schools catering to 7850 pupils (1% of the total population) (Hewitt, 1985). Consequently, these measures did not have a wide-reaching effect.

The Georgian example also brings to attention the concomitant policy to limit the uses of other languages, replacing them with Russian. Once again, these measures were not applied across the board. Rather, they were taken in order to reduce the cultural power and influence of particular ethnic groups, such as Poles in Lithuania or Germans in Latvia and Estonia, and to subjugate groups that might foment nationalistic rebellions. Thus, in the European territories measures were taken to limit the uses of Polish, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Moldovan, Lithuanian and German and to replace them with Russian in primary education and in secular secondary and higher education. Russian-language newspapers came to replace local-language and bilingual newspapers. On the other hand, in Central Asia, the Russian language never moved beyond the bureaucratic structures, and native languages enjoyed an unprecedented revival.

As Belikov and Krysin (2001) point out, language policies were not consistently applied throughout the empire – rather, there existed numerous contradictions and discrepancies between laws and policies, on the one hand, and specific measures, on the other. Some laws and measures were met with either resistance or dismissal. Nevertheless, by the end of the nineteenth century, throughout the Russian empire, with the exception of Finland, secular secondary and higher education could only be obtained in Russian (Belikov & Krysin, 2001). After the revolution of 1905, a more tolerant language policy was introduced: numbers of minority language schools increased, and literature and periodicals appeared in a variety of languages, including Ukrainian, Belarusian, Polish, Georgian, Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian (Alpatov, 2000).

The goal of imperial russification policies was bilingualism of the titular elites, and by the time of the 1917 revolution, the elites throughout the empire had integrated Russian into their linguistic repertoires (Laitin, 1998). On the other hand, non-Russian peasants and members of many other social strata had neither incentives nor opportunities to develop competence in Russian.

Nativization and Russification in the USSR

Following the October Revolution of 1917, Bolsheviks began to remake the country in a new image. To do so, they needed to convey their ideas quickly to people who spoke over a hundred different languages and were often illiterate to boot (Liber, 1991; Smith, 1998). Consequently, early language policies advanced by Lenin and his followers aimed to support and develop national

and ethnic languages on the assumption that the new regime would be best understood and accepted by various minority groups if it functioned in their own languages. This support for national languages was part of a policy known as *korenizatsiia* (nativization or indigenization), which itself was part of a larger nation-building program that supported national territories, cultures, languages and elites in an attempt to organize the population into economically and administratively viable and stable national-territorial units. In this nation-building process, the Soviets drew and redrew borders, dissolved ethnic groups (e.g. Sarts), created new ethnicities and languages (e.g. Moldavians/Moldavian), reinforced boundaries between fluid identity categories and dialects (e.g. Uzbek/Tajik), formed new national territories (e.g. Turkmenistan), and eventually firmly embedded national categories into the very fabric of Soviet life (Edgar, 2004; Fierman, 1991; Hirsch, 2005; Martin, 2001; Slezkine, 1994).

The USSR is commonly viewed as a country that had the longest and the most extensive experience with language planning (Anderson & Silver, 1984). *Korenizatsiia* of the 1920s involved systematic efforts to ensure that local administrations, courts and schools function in local languages, to translate world literature into local languages, to standardize a variety of languages, to support the development of new literary languages, to create alphabets for languages that did not yet have literacy, to encourage Russians to learn local languages, and to teach local populations to read and write – and sometimes even speak – in 'their own' languages (Alpatov, 2000; Edgar, 2004; Fierman, 1991; Kreindler, 1982; Liber, 1991; Martin, 2001; Slezkine, 1994; Smith, 1998).

As a result of these initiatives, titular languages began to assume their functions across all domains, albeit to varying degrees. In Armenia and Georgia, two territories with large native intelligentsias, strong nationalist movements, and small Russian populations, national languages quickly assumed hegemonic functions (Martin, 2001; Suny, 1994). Great success was also achieved in Ukraine, despite strong opposition from Russians and russified titulars and minorities; belarusification was also making great strides, with documentation, press, and primary education shifting to Belarusian (Martin, 2001). On the other hand, in republics relying on Turkic languages advances were complicated by illiteracy and difficulties linked to language standardization and Latinization of the alphabets (Edgar, 2004; Fierman, 1991; Smith, 1998).

In the 1930s, concerns about bourgeois nationalism led to a wave of repressions and purges of national elites. Coupled with apprehensions about the poor mastery of Russian by non-Russians and the difficulties in implementation of Latin alphabets, these concerns led to retreat from linguistic nativization. The administration began to realize that 'presiding over 192 languages and potentially 192 bureaucracies was not a very good idea after all' (Slezkine, 1994: 445) and developed a new appreciation for Russian as a language of state consolidation, industrialization, and collectivization. Language propaganda began to glorify the great and mighty Russian language. However, a course towards the greater spread of Russian did not entail a complete rejection of the nativization policies. Native languages continued to be used in education, the arts and the press. Thus, between 1928 and 1938 the

number of non-Russian newspapers increased from 205 titles in 47 languages to 2188 titles in 66 languages (Slezkine, 1994).

The russification of the 1930s took a three-pronged approach that involved status and acquisition planning (Russian) and corpus planning (local languages) (Alpatov, 2000; Slezkine, 1994; Smith, 1998). In the area of acquisition planning, a 1938 decree declared Russian an obligatory second language in non-Russian schools. While most schools already offered Russian, the decree established a set of universal standards, centralized the curriculum, increased the number of hours dedicated to Russian, and made textbook publication and teacher training a priority. In doing so, it highlighted the role of Russian as the *de facto* official language of the country and a necessary prerequisite of a true Soviet citizen. As a standard, however, the decree remained unfulfilled and Russian language teaching in non-Russian schools continued to be uneven, particularly in Central Asia (Fierman, 1991; Smith, 1998). Three decades later, the 1959 educational reform gave parents the right to choose the language of instruction for their children. This law led to an increase in enrollment in Russian-medium schools, which offered opportunities for social mobility, and a rise in Russian-language competence.

In the area of corpus planning, a 1935 decree required the transfer of all Soviet languages with Latin alphabets to Cyrillic. As Latin alphabets had only just begun to be introduced, this decree did not change much in practice[7] but it did signal an important shift in language attitudes, as the change facilitated the study of Russian (Smith, 1998). Another corpus planning change involved efforts to base the grammars of local languages on the Russian grammar and to ensure that Russian was the only or at least the main source of neologisms. The result was a massive influx of Russian terms into local languages, in particular in domains concerned with socialism, communism, science and technology.

While tsarist russification may have been more blatantly aimed at people, Soviet russification was more pervasive – it was no longer just people who were russified but also languages, their lexicons, grammars, and orthographies, and even territories, russified as a result of state-sponsored migration. This argument, however, requires two caveats. First, to say that russification was pervasive does not mean that it was fully successful. Even when language policies and rapid urbanization supported russification, other factors, such as inefficient instruction, nationalist consciousness, and settlement and occupation patterns, counteracted its spread. In many regions of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus local populations had no need for Russian and little if any knowledge of it. For instance, in Georgia in 1970, 91.4% of rural and 63% of urban Georgians lacked Russian fluency (Suny, 1994). Georgians, Armenians and the titulars in the Baltic republics also engaged in passive resistance, refusing to either learn Russian or to use it even when they knew it (Raun, 1985; Suny, 1994). The resulting low levels of Russian-language competence continued to raise concerns of the Soviet administration that launched another Russian-teaching campaign as late as the 1980s (Fierman, 1991).

Secondly, russification in the USSR did not imply – at least outwardly – replacement of local languages with Russian. Rather, the government pursued a dual course, enacting russification policies at the same time that it maintained and strengthened national institutions (Gorenburg, 2006; Slezkine,

1994; Smith, 1998). As a result of this support and the massive spread of literacy, many national languages enjoyed linguistic and cultural revival, emerging as urban, literary and academic languages (Alpatov, 2000; Fierman, 1982; Snyder, 2003; Suny, 1994). In Georgia, by the 1950s Georgian-language theater, film, literature and scientific research began to flourish and more people spoke, read, and were educated in Georgian than ever before (Suny, 1994).

Most importantly, in the titular republics and in some areas of the Russian Federation secondary schools offered a form of bilingual education, whereby Russian-medium schools incorporated the study of titular languages and literatures, and titular-medium schools the study of Russian language and literature (for detailed discussion, see Lewis, 1972; for exceptions, see Smagulova, 2008). Russian, however, received more hours in the titular school curricula than titular languages in Russian-medium schools (Fierman, 1991; Lewis, 1972). Students were also required to study a foreign language, most commonly German, English or French. Education was also offered in non-titular languages, although the number of languages had steadily diminished over the years: in 1934–1940 primary and secondary education was offered in 65 languages, in 1976–1980 in 53, and in 1989 in 43 languages (Anderson & Silver, 1984; Belikov & Krysin, 2001; Lewis, 1972).

At the same time, titular languages in the USSR enjoyed the right to autonomy but not the right to equality (Smith, 1998). Minority languages were often disenfranchised – in some republics their speakers were subject to forceful assimilation to the titular languages (e.g. Uzbeks in Tajikistan or Abkhazians in Georgia) (Alpatov, 2000). As a result of this imbalance, Russian speakers could afford to be monolingual, speakers of titular languages aspiring to social advancement had to be bilingual, and minority language speakers had to be either bilingual (with Russian or the titular language as a second language) or multilingual. This situation had changed dramatically in 1991, when the USSR fell apart and Russian lost its status of a supra-ethnic language. Derussification and shift in the direction of titular languages emerged as the key goals of post-Soviet language policy and planning.

Language Shift in Post-Soviet Countries

As Fishman (2006: 318) reminds us, 'most language shift of formal and written language is caused or consciously facilitated'. In the post-Soviet context, unlike in postcolonial Africa (cf. Simpson, 2008), the intended shift was accompanied by a deliberate 'removal' of the 'colonial' language from the public sphere. This derussification, part of the more general de-sovietization process, included all areas where russification had previously occurred. In language use, it included elimination of Russian from official paperwork, official communication, the state-sponsored media and public signage. In language acquisition, it involved the closing or reduction in number of Russian-language schools and Russian-language tracks in higher education and either elimination of instruction in Russian as a second language or reduction in the number of Russian-language classes per week. In the area of orthography, several titular languages replaced Cyrillic with Latin. In

language corpora, some Russian neologisms were replaced with alternative terms, and geographic names underwent what Smith and associates (1998: 147) refer to as a 'toponymic overhaul', whereby Russian names were changed to local-sounding names (e.g. Frunze > Bishkek; Tselinograd > Akmola > Astana). Territorial derussification involved out-migration of Russian speakers (for a detailed discussion of the out-migration trends see Korobkov & Zaionchkovskaia, 2004).

Both language shift and derussification would have been fairly unproblematic if the populations of all 14 countries were homogeneous and consisted mainly of titulars who favored the titular language. Yet this was not the case. Four factors complicated the implementation of language shift and removal in post-Soviet countries, even though they did not apply to all countries across the board: (a) large populations of monolingual Russian speakers; (b) russification of members of the titular population; (c) multiethnic populations accustomed to relying on Russian as a lingua franca of interethnic communication; and (d) functional limitations of some of the titular languages.

To begin with the first factor, in 1991 the 14 countries were home to 25 million ethnic Russians and 36.5 million native speakers of Russian. Table 1 provides information on the numbers and proportions of titulars, ethnic Russians, and first language (L1) Russian language speakers, in each of the countries. The numbers of L1 Russian speakers are invariably higher than those of ethnic Russians because they include russified members of other ethnic groups (both titulars and minorities). Thus, in 1989, in Belarus, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Moldova and Ukraine, L1 Russian speakers constituted between 23 and 47% of the total population.

Immigrants come to a new country with full awareness that its inhabitants speak a different language and that they need to learn this language in order to conduct their business. The Russian-speaking population in post-Soviet countries does not easily fit this description because they woke up one morning to a political and linguistic reality not of their doing and found themselves involuntary – and at times unwelcome – migrants in what they had previously considered their own country. Their native language, previously used throughout the country, was no longer sufficient to ensure employment and educational opportunities. In Latvia and Estonia, russians who could not trace their residence to the pre-1940 states also found themselves stateless[8] and threatened with deportation (Laitin, 1998). The presence of this largely monolingual, Russian-speaking population created major challenges for the nation-building efforts of local authorities.

The second factor that complicated the intended language shift in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine, were the high levels of russification among the titulars, in particular those living in urban centers (see Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Giger & Sloboda, 2008; Orusbaev *et al.*, 2008; Smagulova, 2008). These titulars had shifted to Russian and, in many cases, displayed low levels of competence in the titular language. The new language shift in such contexts had to reverse the effects of the previous language shift.

The third complicating factor in some of the countries was the multiethnic and multilingual composition of the population, with Russian traditionally functioning as a lingua franca in interethnic communication and in commu-

Table 1 Numbers and proportions of titulars, ethnic Russians and L1 Russian speakers in Soviet republics in 1989 and in post-Soviet countries in 1999–2004 (based on the 1989 USSR Census and respective post-Soviet Censuses)

	1989	*1989*	*1989*	*1999–2004*	*1999–2004*	*1999–2004*
	Titulars	*Russians*	*L1 Russian speakers*	*Titulars*	*Russians*	*L1 Russian speakers*
Armenia	3,083,616	51,555	67,519	3,145,354	14,660	29,563
	93.3%	1.6%	2.0%	97.9%	0.5%	0.9%
Azerbaijan	5,804,980	392,304	529,723	7,205,500	141,700	N/A
	82.7%	5.6%	7.5%	90.6%	1.8%	
Belarus	7,904,623	1,342,099	3,274,235	8,159,073	1,141,731	
	77.9%	13.2%	32.3%	81.2%	11.4%	62.8%
Estonia	963,281	474,834	551,551	930,219	351,178	406,755
	61.5%	30.3%	35.2%	67.9%	25.6%	29.7%
Georgia	3,787,393	341,172	483,733	3,661,173	67,671	N/A
	70.1%	6.3%	9.0%	83.8%	1.5%	
Kazakhstan	6,534,616	6,227,549	7,800,575	7,985,039	4,479,618	N/A
	39.7%	37.8%	47.4%	53.4%	30.0%	
Kyrgyzstan	2,229,663	916,558	1,091,334	3,128,147	603,201	N/A
	52.4%	21.5%	25.6%	64.9%	12.5%	
Latvia	1,387,757	905,515	1,133,298	1,370,700	703,200	N/A
	52.0%	34.0%	42.5%	57.7%	29.6%	
Lithuania	2,924,251	344,455	444,390	2,907,300	219,800	277,318
	79.6%	9.4%	12.1%	83.5%	6.3%	8.0%
Moldova	2,794,749	562,069	1,008,486			
	64.5%	13.0%	23.3%	75.8%	5.9%	16.0%
Tajikistan	3,172,420	388,481	495,616	4,898,400	68,200	N/A
	62.3%	7.6%	9.7%	79.9%	1.1%	
Turkmenistan	2,536,606	333,892	421,332	N/A	N/A	N/A
	72.0%	9.5%	12.0%			
Ukraine	37,419,053	11,355,582	17,081,347	37,541,700	8,334,100	
	72.7%	22.1%	33.2%	77.8%	17.3%	29.6%
Uzbekistan	14,142,475	1,653,478	2,153,599	N/A	N/A	N/A
	71.4%	8.3%	10.9%			

nication between minority communities and the state authorities. To give but one example, in Georgia, even today, Russian may be used in oral and written communication between Armenian and Azeri communities and the state authorities because Georgian authorities are much more likely to understand documents in Russian than in Armenian or Azerbaijanian, while members of the local communities may be more fluent in Russian than in Georgian (Bezyrganova, 2006a; Bulghadarian, 2007; Kock Kobaidze, 2001; Popjanevski, 2006; Wheatley, 2006).

Last but not least, in some countries, most notably Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, titular languages were not sufficiently developed to immediately assume all relevant functions and required further corpus planning and standardization (Alpatov, 2000; Orusbaev *et al*., 2008; Smagulova, 2008).

As will be seen below, these four complicating factors, coupled with the historic, demographic, economic, social and political particularities of individual countries, have shaped distinct outcomes of intended language shift and removal.

Eastern Europe

Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova and Ukraine are located in the European territory of the former USSR (see Map 1). Between 1988 and 1990, all six countries proclaimed their titular languages to be the sole state languages. Upon achieving independence, they have begun implementing these laws. Since then, only one major change has occurred in these laws, when Belarus adopted Russian as a second state language in 1995. By 2007, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova and Ukraine have managed to raise the status of the titular languages and to spread their use to all areas of public life. They have also made significant steps towards derussification of the public sphere, which resulted in decreases in Russian-language competence among the titular populations (Arefiev, 2006; Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun, 2008; Ciscel, 2008). The degree of the shift however varies from country to country, with Belarus being the least and Lithuania most successful in shifting towards the titular language.

In Belarus, the adoption of Russian as a second state language has effectively hampered Belarusian language revival. At present, Russian functions as the *de facto* main language, while Belarusian plays a symbolic function, indexing the nation in official documents and public spaces (Brown, 2007; Giger & Sloboda, 2008). Secondary education in Belarus is offered in the two state languages, Belarusian and Russian, and two minority languages, Lithuanian and Polish, with 76% of the children attending Russian-medium schools (Giger & Sloboda, 2008). Both state languages and one foreign language are obligatory in secondary education. Higher education functions in both state languages, with the predominance of Russian. The population also favors Russian-language literature, TV and print media (Koriakov, 2002). This language situation makes Belarus a welcome refuge for Russian-speaking immigrants from other post-Soviet countries (Nechapaika, 2007).

Ukraine has succeeded in making Ukrainian the main language of the state government and political life and in spreading its use to all spheres of public

life. The presence of Russian, while reduced, has not been eliminated and in the eastern part of the country Russian is still used on a par with Ukrainian (Bilaniuk, 2005; Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Taranenko, 2007). This use is not restricted to members of the older generation – in eastern Ukraine, Russian still has a high status among the youth (Bilaniuk, 2005; Marshall, 2002). Secondary education is offered in Ukrainian (78% of all students) and in minority languages, most prominently Russian (21%) and also Moldovan, Romanian, Hungarian, Polish and Crimean Tatar (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Report, 2006a). The choice of the language of schooling is not fully up to the parents; rather, local authorities determine the number of schools operating in particular languages on the basis of the ethnic composition of the population, which may obscure the preferences of russophone Ukrainians (Hrycak, 2006). In some places the policies are established without any recourse to demographics. For instance, in the national capital Kyiv, Russian-language schools (with Ukrainian as a second language) have been largely eliminated and Russian-speaking parents have no choice but to send their children to Ukrainian-language schools where Russian literature is taught in Ukrainian translation. Higher education is offered in Ukrainian and in some regions, such as Crimea, in Russian. The informational space functions mainly in Ukrainian and Russian, only a few publications are available in other minority languages (Report, 2006a). This space continues to be a terrain of struggle, where policies privilege Ukrainian, while the free market forces favor Russian, in particular in the media and the book market (Taranenko, 2007).

Moldova has succeeded in shifting to the Latin alphabet, in restoring the titular language across all domains, and, to a degree, in recognizing the identity of the titular language as Romanian. The exception is the breakaway Transnistrian Republic that refused to acknowledge the 1989 language law and adopted three official languages, Russian, Moldovan (in the Cyrillic alphabet), and Ukrainian (for more on Transnistria, see Ciscel, 2008; Protsyk, 2006; Roper, 2005). The new laws and the military conflict over Transnistria led to out-migration of large numbers of Russian speakers from Moldova (Arutiunian, 2003; Dreizler, 2007; Skvortsova, 2002). Despite this migration, language shift and the derussification of the country are not complete: Russian is still widely spoken on the streets of Moldovan cities, public signage in urban contexts is often bilingual, the levels of Russian-language competence among the titulars remain high, and the levels of Moldovan/Romanian language competence among Russian speakers remain relatively low, possibly due to ongoing accommodation towards Russian speakers and to the negative perceptions of the status and usefulness of Moldovan/Romanian (Kolstø & Melberg, 2002).

Secondary education on the territory of Moldova is offered in Moldovan/Romanian, and in the minority languages Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauzi and Bulgarian, with Moldovan/Romanian obligatory in all schools. In the breakaway Transnistria, secondary education functions in the three official languages, with Russian classes mandatory in Moldovan- and Ukrainian-medium schools (Ciscel, 2008). In the rest of Moldova, Russian is no longer obligatory in the education system. Higher education functions predominantly in Moldovan/Romanian but Russian speakers have access to Russian-

language sections. Mass media function in Moldovan/Romanian and also in Russian and other minority languages.

In Estonia, secondary education is offered in Estonian (82.3%) and in the minority languages Russian, Finnish and Swedish, with Estonian an obligatory language in minority language schools (Rannut, this issue). Higher education is offered in Estonian. The media function in Estonian and in minority languages; Russian speakers have access to TV channels broadcast from Russia, Russian news on Estonian TV, and Russian press and literature (Maloverian, 2007).

In Latvia, the aim of the 2004 education reform is Latvian-only secondary education; its transitional phase involves bilingual schooling for Russian speakers where up to 60% of the subjects are taught in Latvian and up to 40% in Russian (Adrey, 2005; Hogan-Brun, 2006; Priedite, 2005; Schmid, 2008). The reform was subject of heated debates, protests, and demonstrations, with Russian-speakers appealing for protection of their minority rights and demanding Latvia's ratification of the Council of Europe Framework Convention (Hogan-Brun, 2006). These protests failed to alter the course of the education reform. Higher education in Latvia is offered in Latvian, with a few private institutions providing instruction in Russian. The informational space functions in Latvian and in minority languages, most visibly Russian.

Both Estonia and Latvia have succeeded in returning to the use of titular languages in all areas of public life but are still struggling with raising levels of titular-language competence among Russian speakers. These speakers – or their parents and grandparents – settled in the Baltics during the Soviet times, when Russian functioned as a *de facto* official language. As a result, many did not develop proficiency in the titular languages. To encourage these Russian speakers to either assimilate or emigrate, both countries have adopted stringent *ius sanguinis* citizenship laws that offered automatic citizenship only to citizens or descendants of citizens of the inter-war republics. In turn, the descendants of those who settled there after the integration into the USSR had to apply for naturalization and pass a language test and a history and civics test (for details see Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun, 2008; Galbreath, 2006; Rannut, 2008). Upon adoption, these laws had left over 30% of the population in Latvia and 25% in Estonia without citizenship (at present, the stateless constitute 18% and 9% of the respective populations) (Ozolins, 2003; Rannut, this issue; Uzulis, 2007). The new laws created major employment and educational hardships for Russian speakers with low-level titular language skills, because they could no longer occupy jobs in the public sector nor attend institutions of higher education (Aasland, 2002; Kolstø & Melberg, 2002; Savoskul, 2001; Siiner, 2006).

The response of the Russian community to these measures and resulting economic disparities was quite unexpected. Policy analysts predicted that they would either leave en masse or assimilate (Laitin, 1998). While approximately 10% of the Russian population of the two countries left in the early 1990s (Smith *et al*., 1998), the majority decided to stay, mainly due to the higher economic standard in the Baltic countries. Yet these speakers did not assimilate linguistically as rapidly as expected: almost two decades after independence, levels of Estonian and Latvian language competence are still lower among

Russian speakers than levels of Russian-language competence among Estonians and Latvians (Round 2000) of population and housing censuses, 2003; Rannut, 2008). This relationship appears to be slowly changing in the youngest generation where levels of Russian-language competence among the titulars are decreasing and levels of titular-language competence among Russian-speakers are on the rise (Arefiev, 2006; Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun, 2008; Rannut, 2008).

Lithuania is the most successful among the six Eastern European countries in implementing the shift towards the titular language and assimilating its non-titular populations. The evidence of this assimilation can be found in a 2002 survey, where Russian speakers reported using Lithuanian more frequently with their children (27%) and grandchildren (33%), than with their brothers and sisters (12%) and parents and grandparents (3–8%) (Hogan-Brun & Ramoniene, 2005). Secondary education in Lithuania is offered in Lithuanian and in the minority languages Polish, Russian and Belarusian; the percentage of students attending Russian-medium schools is steadily decreasing. Foreign language instruction includes two obligatory and one optional language, with English as the most popular first and Russian as the most popular second foreign language (Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun, 2008). Higher education functions in Lithuanian but a few institutions also offer instruction in English. The rapid rise of English raises some concerns about the threat it may present to the development of national identity (Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun, 2008). The informational space functions predominantly in Lithuanian. Some minority-language media are also available but Russian speakers complain about limited access to Russian-language publications (Radzevichiute, 2007).

Given the fact that in 1989 Lithuania had the most homogeneous population among the six countries (see Table 1) and the highest levels of titular-language competence among L1 Russian speakers (see Table 2), this success is not surprising. Yet a cross-country analysis shows that distinct language shift outcomes in the six countries cannot be fully attributed to demographics, rather they are shaped by an intricate interplay of sociopolitical, historic, economic and demographic factors. The success of the three Baltic countries in restoring the status of the titular language is best understood in the light of their history of incorporation into the USSR. Previously part of the Russian empire, between 1920 and 1940 Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia enjoyed independent statehood with titular languages used across all domains. Annexed by the Soviets in 1940, as a result of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, then invaded by the Nazi Germany, and then reannexed by the USSR in 1944, the three countries vehemently opposed the occupation and ensuing russification.[9] In 1991, their titular populations, returning to independence after a little more than four decades of Soviet rule, had high levels of national consciousness, language loyalty, and titular language competence, and negative attitudes towards all things Russian. These attitudes were consistent with the countries' political orientation towards the West and further strengthened by their accession into NATO and the European Union (EU).

According to Rannut (this issue), the accession is also part of the reason behind the slow rise of titular language competence among the Russian speakers: under pressure from the international community, the countries had

Table 2 Language fluency data based on the 1989 USSR Census and respective post-Soviet Censuses (fluent speakers include speakers who declare the language as the L1 or a fluent L2).

	1989	*1989*	*1999–2004*	*1999–2004*
	Titulars fluent in the Russian language	*Russians fluent in the titular language*	*Titulars fluent in the Russian language*	*Russians fluent in the titular language*
Armenia	1,374,580	17,315	N/A	N/A
	44.6%	33.6%		
Azerbaijan	1,863,712	56,687		
	32.1%	14.4%	8.2%	16.6%
Belarus	6,335,952	358,518	N/A	N/A
	80.2%	26.7%		
Estonia	333,426	71,208		N/A
	34.6%	15.0%	42.2%	
Georgia	1,212,665	80,898	N/A	N/A
	32.0%	23.7%		
Kazakhstan	4,195,221	54,063		
	64.2%	0.9%	75.0%	14.9%
Kyrgyzstan	830,720	11,196		N/A
	37.3%	1.2%	33.0%	
Latvia	947,797	201,669		N/A
	68.3%	22.3%	51.5%	
Lithuania	1,100,113	129,255		N/A
	37.6%	37.5%	60.3%	
Moldova	1,609,233	66,466	N/A	N/A
	57.6%	1.8%		
Tajikistan	968,726	13,763	N/A	N/A
	30.5%	3.5%		
Turkmenistan	716,819	8,500	N/A	N/A
	28.3%	2.5%		
Ukraine	26,837,304	3,899,247	N/A	N/A
	71.7%	34.3%		
Uzbekistan	3,215,908	75,937	N/A	N/A
	22.7%	4.6%		

to slow down the implementation of language and education reforms and make adjustments for minority language support and protection of minority rights (see also Adrey, 2005). Additional reasons include the shortage of bilingual teachers and textbooks and difficulties in creating and implementing workable titular language and bilingual curricula. Moreover, not all Russian speakers in Latvia and Estonia were eager to study the titular languages. Some were too old or unwilling to study the language of what they perceived to be a hostile host population (Aasland, 2002; Maloverian, 2007; Uzulis, 2007). Others found that the titulars reacted negatively to their attempts to communicate in the titular language, expressing condescension and anger at the 'broken' language (Siiner, 2006). More importantly, in both Estonia and Latvia, Russian speakers are highly concentrated in industrial cities and often have no everyday need for the titular language nor opportunities to practice it (Laitin, 1998; Siiner, 2006). In Latvia Russian speakers also appear to attribute less value to the titular language (Hogan-Brun, 2006) – instead of learning it, they have created an independent business community, where Latvian competence is not obligatory (Commercio, 2004).

Political orientation and the history of incorporation have also shaped distinct language laws and language shift outcomes in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. As seen in Table 1, in 1989, Ukraine housed the largest Russian-speaking population outside of Russia (more than 17 million, 33.2%), yet it is Belarus that made Russian the second state language, while in Ukraine it has no official status. This decision is best understood in the light of the processes of linguistic domination that for centuries operated on the territories inhabited by ethnic Belarusians that were in turn part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian empire and Poland. At the turn of the twentieth century, cities on this territory were inhabited by speakers of Yiddish, Polish and Russian, while 98% of ethnic Belarusians were peasants living in the countryside (Marples, 1999; Snyder, 2003; Zaprudski, 2007). Belarusian national revival, thus, lacked an urban base and never reached the proportion of the Ukrainian revival. As a result, the Belorussian republic, created by the Soviets in 1919, was seen by many as an artificial creation that cultivated a non-existent titular nation (Hirsch, 2005: 149–155). In 1924–1926 the republic had doubled in size through the addition of large territories – formerly part of the Russian Federation – inhabited by a mix of Russians and russified ethnic Belarusians, who opposed the perceived 'forced belorussification' (Hirsch, 2005: 152–154).

The belorusification that took place in the 1920s and the 1939 incorporation of the western territories that previously belonged to Poland did not tip the language balance in Belarus, in part because Poles did not support the use of Belarusian and had closed all Belarusian schools (Snyder, 2003). In post-war Belarus, rapid urbanization and dwindling numbers of Belarusian-language schools assisted further russification. As a result, Belarusians displayed the highest levels of russification and the lowest levels of titular language maintenance among the Soviet peoples (Marples, 1999; see also Table 2). The trends persisted post-1991: according to the 1999 Belarusian Census (www.belstat.gov.by), 81.2% of the population of Belarus self-identify as Belarusian, yet 62.8% of the same population uses Russian as their main

language, in and outside of the home. It is not surprising then that the popular vote in the 1995 referendum allowed the government to restore Russian to its status of the second state language.

A similar outcome was likely in Ukraine when a promise to make Russian a second official language got president Leonid Kuchma elected in 1994 (Bilaniuk, 2005) and in Moldova when the Communist government of Vladimir Voronin came to power in 2001 (Ciscel, 2008). Eventually though neither country elevated the status of Russian because they had much stronger nationalist movements than Belarus: already in the 1920s, Soviet leaders noted that 'while the Belorussians ''lacked'' national consciousness, the Ukrainians had too much' (Hirsch, 2005: 158). The opposition movements and titular language maintenance and loyalty were particularly strong in the more recently incorporated territories: western Ukraine, annexed in 1944, and Bessarabia, annexed in 1945 (Ciscel, 2007, 2008; Skvortsova, 2002).

The revival of Russian in Belarus is also consistent with the political orientation of the Belarusian government, led by the authoritarian Aleksandr Lukashenko. In 1991, Belarus was reluctant to leave the Soviet Union; since then the government has adopted a pro-Russian stance, incorporating the Soviet past into its conception of the modern Belarusian state and promoting the idea of historic, political, and economic unity with Russia (Marples, 1999, 2006; Smith *et al.*, 1998). In contrast, the Ukrainian government, oriented towards the West and motivated by the desire to be accepted into NATO and the EU, is loosening historic, social, political and economic ties with Russia and rewriting the history of Ukraine to serve its current political needs (Kuzio, 1998, 2005, 2006; Smith *et al.*, 1998). The return of Russian as an official language would be portrayed in this context as a first step on the road to becoming Little Russia, while the spread of Ukrainian is equated with acquiring a new European identity (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Kuzio, 1998). In Moldova, the view of the titular language as Romanian is similarly linked to a European identity (and an orientation towards Romania and the EU), while the view of Moldovan as an independent language and elevation of Russian to official status, are viewed as an orientation towards Russia (Ciscel, 2007, 2008; Roper, 2005).

At the same time, the situation in Ukraine is somewhat different from that in Moldova, due to the higher proportion of native Russian speakers, some of whom are russified titulars. Several reasons have been cited to explain the persistence of Russian in Ukraine, most commonly genetic similarities between the two languages and language ideologies that assign different values to these languages. Both in Belarus and eastern Ukraine, dominant language ideologies reproduce the historic urban/rural divide and position Russian as the language of urbanity, progress, high culture, science, technology, and the media, and Belarusian and Ukrainian as provincial, backward, rural languages, to be discarded in an urban environment (Bilaniuk, 2005; Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Giger & Sloboda, 2008). And while the status of Ukrainian has risen since 1991, it has not overtaken Russian. Consequently, just as Russian speakers in Ukraine raise concerns about linguistic discrimination, Ukrainian elites voice concerns about the low status of the Ukrainian language, its poor institutionalization, and the low quality of Ukrainian

literature and media (Bilaniuk, 2005; Kostenko, 2004). Official bilingualism is not viewed as a viable option by the country's political and cultural elites: they argue that 'without affirmative action in its favor, Ukrainian could not hope to compete' with Russian (Kuzio, 1998: 186).

In the near future, the six European countries are facing somewhat different language management challenges. Estonia and Latvia need to raise levels of titular language competence among Russian speakers, while simultaneously protecting their linguistic rights; in elementary and secondary education, educational authorities need to find optimal models for bilingual and multilingual instruction, produce appropriate materials, and train more bilingual teachers. The Baltic countries also aim to raise levels of competence in global lingua francas, including but not limited to English (Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun, 2008; Rannut, this issue). Ukraine and Belarus are primarily concerned with raising the status of the titular languages among Russians and russified titulars; Ukraine is also attempting to decrease the visibility of Russian and to increase the use of Ukrainian. Moldova continues to struggle with both the status and identity of the titular language, two conceptions of which, that of Moldovan as Romanian and that of Moldovan as an independent language, are competing in the public space (Ciscel, 2008).

Transcaucasus

The three countries of the Transcaucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (see Map 2), were the only countries where the national languages were already declared official under the Soviet regime. After the break-up of the USSR, these languages became the sole state languages (in addition, in Georgia, Abkhazian was declared official on the territory of Abkhazia). By 2007, the three countries have succeeded in expanding the use of titular languages across all public domains; Azerbaijan also implemented a transition from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet (Khruslov, 2006). In turn, spheres of Russian-language use and levels of Russian competence have significantly decreased (Arefiev, 2006; Khruslov, 2006). This success is not surprising: all three countries had long histories of nationhood and of linguistic and literary development, and, as a result, high levels of national consciousness, language loyalties, and titular language competence among titular populations (Smith *et al.*, 1998; Suny, 1994). Despite these similarities, the three countries differ in the outcomes of intended language shift, with Armenia being most and Georgia least successful in a shift to the titular language.

The present goal of language education in Armenia is trilingual competence, in the state language (Armenian), in Russian, and in another foreign language, commonly English, French or German. Russian is taught as an obligatory foreign language, from 2nd to 10th grade, between two and four hours a week (Aleksanian & Ter-Arakelian, 2001; Grdzelian, 2007; Report, 2003, 2006b). Secondary education is offered in Armenian and in five minority languages, Assyrian, Greek, Kurdish, Russian and Yezidi (Report, 2006b). Higher education functions mostly in Armenian, with Russian-language education available at the Russian-Armenian University and through commercial satellite campuses of Russian universities (Manvelian, 2007; Report,

2006b). The informational space functions in Armenian and in minority languages. Russian speakers have access to TV broadcasts from Russia, Russian-language news on Armenian TV, and Russian-language newspapers (Manvelian, 2007; Report, 2006b). Radio programs are also broadcast in Kurdish and Yezidi; print publications are available in Belarusian, German, Kurdish, Ukrainian and Yezidi (Report, 2006b).

Armenia is the most accomplished among the three countries in protecting the rights of minority language speakers. This approach is a result of a radical change in Armenian language policy that took place in 1999 with the election of the new president Robert Kocharian (Danielian, 2004; Khruslov, 2006). In 2001, Armenia joined the European Charter (EC) for protection of language minority rights, ratifying five minority languages: Assyrian, Greek, Kurdish, Russian and Yezidi (Krikorian, 2005; Report, 2003, 2006b). Speakers of these languages are entitled to education in their native languages, under state patronage and with obligatory study of Armenian; to information in the native languages; to TV and radio broadcasts in the native languages; to the use of free interpreters in court proceedings; and to the use of native languages in religious, economic and social activities (Report, 2003, 2006b). In 2001, the Armenian government also adopted a document on the Russian language in the educational system and the cultural and social life of the Republic of Armenia (Khruslov, 2006). Subsequently, several steps were taken to ensure that Russian language remains part of Armenians' multilingual repertoires enabling Armenia to maintain and expand its ties with Russia and other post-Soviet countries (Aleksanian & Ter-Arakelian, 2001; Danielian, 2004; Grdzelian, 2007; Khruslov, 2006; Report, 2003, 2006b).

In Azerbaijan, levels of competence in Azerbaijanian[10] are high both among the titulars and the ethnic minorities, while Russian continues to function as the best-known second or foreign language and in some contexts as the language of administrative communication (Popjanevski, 2006). Secondary education is offered in Azerbaijanian, in Russian and, for ethnic Georgians, in Georgian; other numerically small minority communities have only limited opportunities to study their mother tongues (Popjanevski, 2006). Azerbaijan is one of the few post-Soviet countries that did not reduce the number of Russian-language schools post-independence. According to Kaftan (2004), 378 schools in Azerbaijan offer Russian-language education to children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds (see also Alieva, 2007; Khruslov, 2006). In Azerbaijanian-medium schools, Russian is offered as a foreign language starting with 5th grade (Khruslov, 2006). Higher education establishments function in Azerbaijanian, Russian, English and Turkish, with Russian-language education available at the Baku Slavic University and through Russian-language tracks in other institutions (Alieva, 2007; Kaftan, 2004). Informational space functions in Azerbaijanian and in minority languages, most visibly Russian (Alieva, 2007); radio broadcasts are also available in Avar, Lezgin and Tat (Popjanevski, 2006). Despite the relative freedom, language attitudes in Azerbaijan fluctuate, and periodic debates erupt regarding the fate of the Russian-language media in the country and the threat they may represent for the purity of Azerbaijanian (Popjanevski, 2006).[11]

In Georgia, secondary education is offered in Georgian, Abkhazian (in Abkazhia), and in the minority languages Russian, Azerbaijanian and Armenian (ICG, 2006). Georgian is an obligatory language in minority-language schools and Russian is an obligatory second language in Georgian-medium schools, offered from 3rd grade on, for approximately three hours a week (Khruslov, 2006). Educators continuously bemoan the low quality of this instruction, the outdated pedagogical methods and textbooks ridden with errors (Bezyrganova, 2006a,b; Tumanova, 2007). The number of Russian-language schools has been drastically reduced in the country since 1991. By 2001–2002, Georgia had 63 Russian-language schools, located in Tbilisi, in villages inhabited by members of the Russian Dukhobor community, and in places with large minority populations (Khruslov, 2006; Kock Kobaidze, 2001; Wheatley, 2006). Russian-language schools also function in secessionist, formerly autonomous republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, supported by Russia. The language of higher education is Georgian and in Abkhazia Abkhazian; there are also higher education institutions functioning in English, Russian and Turkish. No universities offer instruction in Armenian or Azerbaijanian, as a result, minority students often have to seek educational opportunities outside of the country. Georgian media offer some news coverage in Abkhazian, Armenian, Azerbaijanian, Ossetian and Russian; minority members also have access to some Azerbaijanian, Armenian and Russian TV channels (NITG, 2007). The government funds some minority-language newspapers but support for minority-language media outlets is limited (Bochorishvili, 2007; Khruslov, 2006; Popjanevski, 2006) and references to an 'informational vacuum' are common (NITG, 2007: 68).

Georgia also differs from Armenia and Azerbaijan in the attitudes towards Russian as a lingua franca. While all three countries still incorporate the language in secondary education, in Armenia, Russian has experienced a second revival during Kocharian's 1999–2007 presidency, in Azerbaijan its position is relatively stable, and in Georgia its spheres of use continue to be reduced. These differences are well illustrated by the fact that official websites of the presidents of Azerbaijan (www.president.az) and Armenia (www.president.am) function in the state language, English, and Russian, while the website of the Georgian president functions only in Georgian and English (www.president.gov.ge).

The cross-country differences in the success of the language shift and in the treatment of minority languages and of Russian as a lingua franca can be partially explained by demographic factors. As seen in Table 1, Armenia is a largely monoethnic country with relatively small populations of minority language speakers. In contrast, Georgia is a multiethnic country, with over a dozen languages spoken on its territory (Smith *et al.*, 1998). Its most pressing priority, in the words of the Deputy Minister of Education and Sciences, Bela Tsipuria, 'is to promote the state language, rather than to protect the use of minority languages' (Popjanevski & Nilsson, 2006: 8). Of particular concern to the government are low levels of titular language competence among compactly settled Armenians in the Samtskhe-Javaheti region and Azeris in the Kvemo-Kartli region. In a survey conducted in December 2006, 74.5% of the respondents in Samtskhe-Javaheti and 83.1% in Kvemo-Kartli reported no

competence in Georgian (NITG, 2007). As a result, the communication between local administrations, in particular in the Samtskhe-Javaheti region, and the central Georgian authorities is still carried out in Russian (Bulghadarian, 2007; Kock Kobaidze, 2001; Popjanevski, 2006; Wheatley, 2006). This continuous reliance on Russian presents a major obstacle to implementation of language shift by the Georgian government.

In 2003, concerns about low levels of Georgian-language competence among minority populations gave birth to new language reforms, including state language testing of civil servants; these reforms in turn led to increased monitoring of the situation by international civil rights organizations (ICG, 2006; NITG, 2007; Popjanevski, 2006; Popjanevski & Nilsson, 2006; Wheatley, 2006). In November 2006, the United Nations Association of Georgia launched a four-year National Integration and Tolerance in Georgia (NITG) Program (NITG, 2007). The purpose of this program is to ensure that language minority rights are respected in the process of national integration. At present, members of minority communities claim that they lack economic and social incentives to learn the state language as even those with excellent Georgian-language skills have little chance for advancement in public administration (ICG, 2006: 22). They also request administrative status for their own languages, or at least for Russian as an administrative lingua franca (ICG, 2006; Popjanevski & Nilsson, 2006; Wheatley, 2006).

In addition to demographics, distinct language policies in the Transcaucasus, in particular those with regard to Russian, are shaped by political, social and economic factors. Azerbaijan maintains political and economic ties with Russia and with the Islamic world, in particular Turkey. As a result, Russian maintains its presence in the country, while Arabic and Turkish have also risen in importance. Georgia, in the past two decades, has experienced escalating political and economic tensions with Russia, over a variety of issues, including but not limited to control over the secessionist republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Bochorishvili, 2007; Papava & Tokmazishvili, 2006). In an interview published in a Russian-language newspaper in Georgia, Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili blamed these tensions for the lack of state support for Russian as a lingua franca: 'What changes if you know Russian? You can't get Russian visas, trade with Russia is going down, we have our own TV channels now. To have a career, you don't need to know Russian. You need to study English, Turkish'. (*Vechernii Tbilisi,* 31 January–2 February 2007; author's translation). At present, Georgia is allying itself with the West, in particular with the USA, and also with Turkey, with an eye on accession to the EU (Papava & Tokmazishvili, 2006). In contrast, Armenia, that has a long history of military and political conflicts with its Muslim neighbors, Azerbaijan and Turkey, depends on Russia for political and military support. Armenian trade with Russia is growing, offering new opportunities for the Armenian economy (Halpin & Hughes, 2007). Russia is also home to the largest Armenian diaspora in the world and the main direction for labor migration (Halpin & Hughes, 2007; Oganesian, 2007).

In the near future, the countries of the Transcaucasus are facing several language management challenges. To join the global marketplace, all three countries need to raise the level of competence in a variety of lingua francas:

English and Russian in Armenia; English, Turkish, Arabic, and Russian in Azerbaijan; and English and Turkish in Georgia. Georgia furthermore is concerned with raising levels of titular language competence among minority populations.

Central Asia

In 1989–1990, the five Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (see Map 2), proclaimed titular languages the sole state languages and Russian the language of interethnic communication. In 1991 the new regimes began implementing these laws. Several changes in the laws occurred in the 1990s: Uzbekistan downgraded the status of Russian to that of other minority languages (1995), while Kazakhstan (1995) and then Kyrgyzstan (2000) elevated Russian to an official language of the country. By 2007, all five countries succeeded in raising the status of their titular languages, expanding their spheres of use, and raising levels of titular language knowledge; in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, the titular languages have become the only languages of official communication and documentation; Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan also implemented the transition from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet (Abdurasulov, 2007a,b; Kobyl, 2007; Korth, 2005; Orusbaev *et al*., 2008; Sarkorova, 2007; Smagulova, 2008).

In turn, the spheres of Russian language use have narrowed in Central Asia, both as a result of language policies and as an outcome of migration. The combined out-migration of Russian speakers and ethnic Germans and in-migration of members of the titular nationality from other countries have significantly changed the numbers and proportions of Russian speakers with regard to the countries' populations (Smagulova, 2008; Smith *et al*., 1998; see also Table 1). Numbers of Russian-language secondary schools and Russian-language tracks in higher education have been reduced (in Turkmenistan, all Russian-language schools have been closed). In Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, Russian-language media have also decreased in scope, visibility and accessibility (Nazaryan, 2007). As a consequence, Russian-language competence has decreased, particularly in younger populations, schooled after 1991, and in rural populations (Abdurasulov, 2007a; Arefiev, 2006; Korth, 2005; MacFadyen, 2006; Nagzibekova, 2008; Orusbaev *et al*., 2008; Smagulova, 2008). The five countries also display some differences in the extent of language shift and the degree of derussification.

In Kazakhstan, language shift is still in progress, its present foci are the transfer of all the paperwork from Russian to Kazakh, the elevation of the status of Kazakh and of the levels of Kazakh-language competence, and standardization and modernization of Kazakh (Smagulova, 2008). The goal of Kazakh language education, according to president Nazarbayev (2007: 52), is trilingual competence in 'Kazakh as the national language, Russian as the language of interethnic communication, and English as the language of successful integration in the global economy'. Secondary education is offered in Kazakh and Russian, and for minority populations in German, Tajik, Tatar, Turkish, Ukrainian, Uyghur and Uzbek (Fierman, 2006; Smagulova, 2008). Kazakh is required in all Russian and minority-language schools, while

Russian is an obligatory second language in Kazakh-medium schools. Higher education functions in Kazakh and Russian, while informational space is still dominated by the Russian-language media (Abdurasulov, 2007b; Khruslov, 2006). Kazakh publishers produce books in Kazakh and Russian; to support the goal of trilingualism, they also publish trilingual children's books, in Kazakh, Russian and English (www.almatykitap.kz). These policies and practices raise conflicting concerns. Some see the ongoing kazakhization, in particular that of the paperwork, as discrimination against the non-titulars many of whom have low levels of Kazakh competence, while others view the omnipresent Russian and the rising visibility of English as major obstacles to Kazakh language revival (Abdurasulov, 2007b; Baygozhina, 2007; Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2007; Rivers, 2002).

Similar concerns about the fate of language revival are raised in Kyrgyzstan, where Russian also functions as an official language (Korth, 2005; Orusbaev *et al.*, 2008). The Kyrgyz education system promotes multilingual competence in Kyrgyz, Russian, a foreign language, and, where relevant, a minority language (Orusbaev *et al.*, 2008). Secondary education is offered in Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Russian and Tajik, with Kyrgyz required in non-Kyrgyz-medium schools and Russian in non-Russian-medium schools. Higher education is offered in Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek, English, Turkish and Arabic (MacWilliams, 2003), while mass media are available in Kyrgyz, Russian, and several minority languages (Korth, 2005).

In Uzbekistan, after the vigorous derussification of the first decade of independence (cf. Alpatov, 2000; Podporenko, 2001; Smith *et al.*, 1998), there has been a shift in the official attitude and a growth of interest in and the popularity of Russian (Bashatova, 2006; Kobyl, 2007; Nazaryan, 2007). At present, secondary education is offered mainly in Uzbek but approximately 300,000 students of different ethnicities study in Russian-medium schools (Khruslov, 2006). In Uzbek-medium schools Russian is offered as a second language for two hours a week from 1st to 11th grade (Bashatova, 2006). Higher education functions in Uzbek, Russian, Karakalpak and English; in some disciplines, education is also available in Kazakh, Tajik and Turkmen (www.gov.uz; www.edu.uz). Mass media function in Uzbek, Russian, and minority languages.

Originally, Uzbek authorities aimed to implement a shift from Russian to English as a lingua franca yet such a shift proved difficult to accomplish due to the lack of resources and qualified teachers (Hasanova, 2007). Surveys conducted in 2001–2002 and in 2006 in Uzbekistan's largest cities, Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara, among 3000 representatives of different ethnicities, showed that English played a very minor role in interethnic communication, professional language use, and the use of the media (Nazaryan, 2007). In contrast, Russian was the language of interethnic communication for 96% of the respondents, in particular those working in multiethnic workplaces; the respondents also favored Russian-language media or media in Russian and Uzbek (Nazaryan, 2007; for similar results, see MacFadyen, 2006).

In Tajikistan, secondary education is offered in Tajik and in four minority languages, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Russian; in 2004, instruction in Russian as a second language was made obligatory from 2nd to 11th grade

(Nagzibekova, 2008). Higher education is offered in Tajik, Uzbek and Russian. The shortages of qualified teachers and appropriate textbooks affect all areas of Tajik education and are particularly visible in Uzbek- and Turkmen-medium instruction, because in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan the titular languages shifted to the Latin alphabet, while in Tajikistan Cyrillic was preserved (Nagzibekova, 2008). Mass media function in Tajik, as well as in Uzbek, Russian, and other minority languages.

In Turkmenistan, secondary and higher education function in Turkmen as do the media (Abdurasulov, 2007a; Khruslov, 2006). Under the authoritarian regime of president Niyazov, Turkmenistan implemented language, education, and employment policies that favored members of the titular nation and discriminated against non-titulars, and in particular members of the two largest minority groups, Uzbeks and Russians, leading to significant out-migration (Abdurasulov, 2007a). At present, according to Abdurasulov (2007a), the situation is dire for remaining Russian speakers: there exists only one Russian-medium school in the country's capital, Ashkhabat; Russian TV channels are available only through satellite TV; only one Russian-language newspaper, *Neitraln'nyi Turkmenistan*, is sponsored by the state, while newspapers and magazines published in Russia are available only through private sellers.

A cross-country comparison shows that the five countries differ in their policies regarding Russian. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan Russian was upgraded to an official language, while in the other three countries it functions as a language of interethnic communication, be it *de facto* (Uzbekistan), *de facto* and *de jure* (Tajikistan) or *de jure* only (Turkmenistan). Russian has also assumed the role of an international lingua franca in these three countries, as seen in the fact that their governmental websites function in the state language, Russian and English (www.gov.uz; www.turkmenistan.gov.tm; www.prezident.tj). These differences are consistent with respective conceptions of the state: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are nationalizing states, while Kazakh and Kyrgyz governments opted for civic states that integrate the non-titulars (Bingol, 2004; Orusbaev *et al.*, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 1998).

The different approaches are also linked to proportions of Russian speakers in the countries' populations, their roles in the local economy, and the levels of russification among the titulars. As seen in Table 1, in 1989 in Kazakhstan there were almost equal proportions of Kazakhs (39.7%) and Russians (37.8%), with native Russian speakers constituting close to a half of the country's population (47.4%). In urban centers, Russians (50.8%) outnumbered Kazakhs (27.1%) (Fierman, 2006). In Kyrgyzstan, L1 Russian speakers were a minority but a sizeable one (25.6%). As seen in Table 2, these Russian speakers displayed low levels of competence in Kazakh and Kyrgyz. Even more importantly, in both countries, many members of the titular populations, and in particular urban elites, were russified, favoring Russian language, literature, and culture, and displaying low levels of competence in and loyalty to Kazakh and Kyrgyz (Dave, 1996; Fierman, 2006; Korth, 2005; Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001; Rivers, 2002; Smith *et al.*, 1998). Consequently, in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan educational and institutional policies initially had to raise levels of titular language competence among titulars and non-titulars

alike. In the interim, Russian had to be restored to an official status to preserve political and economic stability and to prevent out-migration of Russian speakers who played important roles in the countries' economic infrastructure.

In contrast, the populations of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan displayed high levels of national consciousness and titular language competence among the titulars and lower levels of russification (Edgar, 2004; Smith *et al.*, 1998; see also Table 2). As seen in Table 1, in 1989, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan housed significantly smaller proportions of native Russian speakers than Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, even though the actual numbers of ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in Uzbekistan were higher than in Kyrgyzstan. Over the last two decades, the numbers of Russian speakers in all five countries were reduced by migration, prompted by economic difficulties, interethnic conflicts, and, in Tajikistan, by the civil war (Jonson, 2006; Kobyl, 2007; Sarkorova, 2007; Savoskul, 2001; Smith *et al.*, 1998).

In addition to demographic and sociolinguistic factors, distinct language policies and language shift outcomes in Central Asia are also shaped by economic and political alliances. The governments of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan maintain close political and economic relations with Russia, while the governments of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan, with their largely Muslim populations, initially oriented themselves towards Islamic countries, such as Turkey and Iran (MacFadyen, 2006). Post-9/11, the region attracted attention from the West, in particular from the USA, forcing Central Asian countries to formulate foreign policies that balance their relationships with Russia and the USA (Jonson, 2006). Russia responded to this development by strengthening its economic, scientific, and cultural collaboration with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, in particular in the energy sector (Khruslov, 2006; Nagzibekova, 2008).

The change in attitude towards Russian is also explained by the fact that the shift to English did not prove as easy to achieve in Central Asia as was initially hoped for (Nazaryan, 2007; Orusbaev *et al.*, 2008). Consequently, the governments of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have begun expressing concerns about the loss of competence in Russian and are undertaking measures to reverse this language attrition; they now receive aid from the Russian Federation in the form of Russian-language textbooks, professional development materials, and training for Russian-language teachers (Dubovitsky, 2007; Nagzibekova, 2008). In both countries, Russian is also the key resource for work migration, be it to Russia or to other post-Soviet countries, such as Kazakhstan (Dubovitsky, 2007; Kobyl, 2007; Sarkorova, 2007).

In the near future, the five Central Asian countries need to address common language management difficulties: shortages of qualified teachers of titular, minority, and foreign languages; scarcity of textbooks; the lack of standardized terminologies; resistance to titular language learning on the part of the Russian-speaking population; and low levels of English-language competence (Hasanova, 2007; Korth, 2005; Nagzibekova, 2008; Orusbaev *et al.*, 2008; Smagulova, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 1998). Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan will also continue status planning efforts and attempts to raise levels of titular language competence (Orusbaev *et al.*, 2008; Smagulova, 2008).

Post-Soviet Multilingualism and Sociolinguistic Theory

In traditional sociolinguistics, language planning is viewed as an inherently positive process that aims to support minority languages (cf. Baker, 2006). In critical sociolinguistics, language planning is viewed as a political process in which 'policies often create and sustain various forms of social inequality' (Tollefson, 2006: 42). Studies reviewed here provide ample evidence that in most post-Soviet linguistic regimes language policies promote the interests of the dominant ethnonational and political groups. Yet the research collected here goes beyond confirming what we already know about language policy. Insights into the relatively unexplored process of language removal offer an important contribution to sociolingustic theory, while questions about minority rights of speakers of a 'postcolonial' language present an important challenge for both theory and practice of language policy-making. In what follows, I will discuss these contributions and challenges and point to fruitful directions for future work in the field.

Contributions: Language management in late modernity

In postcolonial Africa, most new governments opted to retain colonial European languages as official languages, because in many cases there was no single indigenous language known by a clear majority of the population; even in places, like Somalia, where there was one such language the lack of standardization precluded an immediate transition (Simpson, 2008). In contrast, all post-Soviet countries had more or less standardized titular languages – consequently, in their nation-building efforts the new governments emphasized these languages and tried to downgrade or even remove the 'colonial' language Russian. The discussion above and papers in this collection show that there exists significant variation in how successful individual countries have been so far in the implementation of the intended language shift and in the derussification project. The analysis of challenges experienced by the new nation-states offers a more nuanced understanding of factors affecting language management outcomes in late modernity.

To begin with, we saw that language policies, and social, economic and educational opportunities structured by them, affected but did not determine language shift outcomes. For instance, a decade ago, Laitin (1998) predicted that civic, employment, and educational benefits would tip a cascade of competitive assimilation of Russian speakers in Latvia and Estonia, whereby some may even become monolingual in the titular languages. This cascade has not occurred, and a decade later levels of Latvian and Estonian-language competence among Russian speakers in the two countries continue to be low (Rannut, 2008).

The analysis of the situation shows that, in addition to language laws, language planning outcomes, in the case of a lingua franca, are affected by three clusters of factors. The first involves the ethnic and linguistic makeup of the country's population and the patterns of settlement. In Armenia and Lithuania, for instance, the ethnic and linguistic homogeneity of the population facilitated the shift, while in Georgia the multiethnic make-up, compact settlement of the minority communities, and ongoing ethnic tensions, favor

continuous reliance on Russian as a lingua franca. The second cluster involves linguistic and ideological factors that shape attitudes towards particular languages. In Ukraine and Belarus, for instance, these ideologies may position Russian as a language of progress, urbanity, and high culture, and Ukrainian and Belarusian as languages of backward peasantry (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Giger & Sloboda, 2008). The third and the most important cluster involves regional and global forces – including transnational cash, migration, education, and communication flows – that mediate language maintenance, shift, and use in late modernity. These forces favor investment in regional and global lingua francas, such as Russian and English, at times at the expense of local languages.

Russian remains the language of a major political, military, and economic superpower of the geopolitical region, its main energy supplier, and an important cultural, informational and academic center. Thus, it has retained its status of a regional lingua franca, spoken by political, cultural, and business elites in most post-Soviet countries. Laitin (1998) approached post-Soviet countries as relatively insular and thus had failed to consider the influence of the regional and global forces on language decision-making. It turned out that speakers of a regional lingua franca do not behave as immigrants or minority language speakers traditionally do. They are aware that while Latvian or Estonian proficiency may facilitate social mobility within Latvia and Estonia, Russian proficiency facilitates transnational business contacts across the post-Soviet space and within the Russian diaspora around the world. In Latvia, Russian speakers successfully drew on such transnational commercial networks to establish an independent business community that became their ethnic 'economic niche' and reduced the pressure to learn the titular language (Commercio, 2004; Khruslov, 2006). Kronenfeld (2005) further points out that even when Russian speakers do send their children to titular-language schools their purpose is integration and bilingualism, rather than assimilation and a shift to Latvian or Estonian.

Lingua francas also facilitate transnational labor migration flows. In the post-Soviet space these flows, critical for the economy of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Central Asia, are disproportionately oriented towards Russia and thus require Russian language maintenance (Dubovitsky, 2007; Kobyl, 2007; Korobkov & Zaionchkovskaia, 2004; Sarkorova, 2007). Outside of the former Soviet territory, these flows are now directed towards China, Germany, Turkey, Mediterranian countries and United Arab Emirates, thus requiring competence in English or local languages (Korobkov & Zaionchkovskaia, 2004). In the Transcaucasus and Central Asia, knowledge of Russian, English, Turkish and Arabic, also facilitiates study abroad or at transnational universities (cf. MacWilliams, 2003). Consequently, in many post-Soviet countries the titulars study both English and Russian as languages of opportunity (Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun, 2008; Nagzibekova, 2008).

Patterns of language use in the post-Soviet space have also been shaped by the development of new information technologies. Cyberspace has wrestled control over media production and consumption away from the states and facilitated information flow in both Russian and English, thus assisting in the learning of English and in the maintenance of Russian, either as a first or as a

second language. Saunders (2006) shows that cyberspace also facilitates the creation of transnational communication networks where Russian-speakers from across the world can create and perform new global identities. In several countries, Russian remains omnipresent in the entertainment market, via popular TV channels and powerful music and publication industries. In Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, for instance, Russian-language media remain popular among titulars and non-titulars alike (Korth, 2005; Nazaryan, 2007; Podporenko, 2001). Kobyl (2007) argues that in Uzbekistan Russian remains the second language of the intelligentsia, because the quality and diversity of Russian-language publications, including literary and scientific translations, still supersede Uzbek-language publications.

These are interesting developments, because in the early 1990s, independent post-Soviet governments did not consider Russian the language of transnational communication and globalization. Rather, they had hoped to replace Russian with English, thus joining the global marketplace, while dissociating themselves from the former colonial power. It turned out that this shift was easier to accomplish rhetorically than practically – two decades later throughout the post-Soviet space, including the Baltic countries, levels of Russian-language competence still supersede those of English (Hasanova, 2007; Nazaryan, 2007; Round 2000 of population and housing censuses, 2003). In Armenia, for instance, large portions of library holdings are in Russian and for many people it is still easier to read English-language authors in Russian translation than in the original (Oganesian, 2007). The same holds for other countries in the Transcaucasus and Central Asia. Given relatively low levels of English competence, difficulties of access to English-language publications and resources, and already present Russian-language resources, several independent governments, including those of Armenia and Tajikistan, decided to reinvest in the study of Russian as a second language (cf. Nagzibekova, 2008).

The research reviewed here situates post-Soviet language management not only in a geopolitical context but also in a historical context. The work by Hirsch (2005), Martin (2001), Smith (1998) and others draws attention to the dialectic nature of language management processes, revealing an ongoing balancing act between russification and nativization trends in Soviet language planning. This fluctuation is also observed in post-Soviet policies, where the first independence decade emphasized nativization, while the second decade witnessed a realization of the importance of Russian as a regional lingua franca.

From this historical perspective, two aspects of language management in the post-Soviet states are particularly interesting. The first is a striking similarity between language shift outcomes in the 1920s (during the nativization campaign) and in the 1990s: both times, Armenia and Georgia restored the hegemony of the titular language in record time, Ukraine engaged in an aggressive ukrainization campaign eliciting resistance from Russians and russified titulars, while Belarus hesitated and eventually refused to give up Russian (Hirsch, 2005; Martin, 2001). This historical continuity suggests that linguistic tensions in Belarus and Ukraine predate the USSR and that Soviet

russification policies failed to erase national consciousness in countries where it was traditionally high (see also Snyder, 2003).

The second intriguing aspect is a historical discontinuity between the fluid and multiple identity categories that existed on the territory of Central Asia prior to the 1920s and the five independent nations that emerged after the collapse of the USSR (Edgar, 2004; Fierman, 1991; Hirsch, 2005). This discontinuity suggests that the categories constructed by Soviet language and nationality planners have been reified and naturalized throughout the twentieth century to the point where they have become an imagined reality for the peoples of Central Asia, or, for that matter, some of the population of Moldova (Ciscel, 2008).

Challenges: Postcolonialism, diaspora, and minority language rights

The post-Soviet context also offers several theoretical challenges to contemporary sociolinguistic theory. The first involves the applicability of the term 'postcolonial' to the post-Soviet situation. Some scholars argue that this term applies just as much to post-Soviet countries as it does to post-1947 South Asia or post-1958 Africa (Druviete, 1997; Kuzio, 2005; Masenko, 2004). Laitin (1998) points to differences in the incorporation of different republics, some of which, like Ukraine, existed on relatively equal terms with the center, while others, like Kazakhstan, were subjugated in a classic colonial model. Other scholars argue that as a whole the Soviet Union was neither fully colonial nor federal, rather it was a multiethnic state that contained elements of several systems: Similar to Western colonies in Asia and Africa, Soviet republics did not have a *de facto* right to national self-determination, yet unlike the colonies they had systematic support for national territories, cultures, languages and elites (Hirsch, 2005; Martin, 2001; Smith *et al.*, 1998). This unique configuration has been referred to as 'federal colonialism' (Smith *et al.*, 1998), 'an empire of nations' (Hirsch, 2005) and even 'an affirmative action empire' (Martin, 2001).

Unfortunately, scholars writing about post-Soviet contexts often ignore the multiple facets of Soviet language and education policies reducing them to 'linguistic russification' even in contexts, where local languages were fully institutionalized. Future scholarship needs to take into account the duality of Soviet nationality policies that had created many of the nationalities that claimed independence seven decades later (Edgar, 2004; Hirsch, 2005; Martin, 2001).

The second challenge for sociolinguistic theory involves articulation of the status of Russian speakers in post-Soviet countries. Since 1991, this population has been variably referred to as a 'new Russian diaspora', 'language minority', 'immigrants', 'non-citizens', 'aliens', and even 'occupiers' (for detailed analysis, see Laitin, 1998; Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2007). The term 'Russians' is inappropriate for this population because it involves members of many ethnic groups: Russians, but also Belarusians, Ukrainians, Kazakhs, Jews, Tatars, and many others who see Russian as their mother tongue. The multiethnic nature of this linguistic minority undermines the link between language and ethnic identity commonly made in debates about minority language rights (cf. Baker,

2006; May, 2001) and presents a challenge to both policy makers and ethnic mobilizers.

The term 'diaspora' commonly refers to 'a population living in a society distant from the homeland that its leaders claim as their own, and to which they expect one day to return' (Laitin, 1998: 31). This definition does not fit the population that found itself in the newly independent countries and decided to remain there – hence Laitin's (1998: 29) term 'beached diaspora'. Zevelev (2001) further points out that the term 'diaspora' is not politically expedient for the Russian-speaking population: rather, it is politically convenient for Russia, because it emphasizes the people's connection to Russia rather than to the states they reside in. The term is equally convenient for nationalizing elites because it turns large groups of people into non-titulars, minorities, and thus 'foreign elements', rather than the state-forming nations (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2007). Most importantly, the term 'diaspora' does not capture an internal reality – most Russians living in post-Soviet countries do not see Russia as their homeland, instead they identify with their states of residence (Barrington, 2001; Barrington *et al.*, 2003; Verschik, 2005).

The term 'immigrants' common in discussions of Russian speakers in the Baltic countries is equally problematic because the original 'settlers' did not cross national borders to settle there, while their children and grandchildren were born in their new homeland. This term and its stronger versions serve the interests of nationalizing elites by positioning Russian speakers as outsiders or aliens not entitled to rights. This position draws on the view that the rights of indigenous people (national minority groups) deserve explicit protection, while the rights of immigrants (ethnic minority groups) do not; only national minorities can demand the formal inclusion of their languages and cultures in the civic realm (May, 2001, 2006). Given that all settlements are products of migration, what remains unclear in this approach is exactly how long should a group reside on a particular territory before it is accepted as autochtonous.

These considerations lead us to the third and the most formidable challenge posited by the post-Soviet context – the challenge to the common view of 'majorities' and 'minorities'. Prototypical minority languages are languages of local importance, spoken by relatively small ethnic groups, and endangered by majority languages to which minority language speakers may shift after a generation or two. Russian, a regional lingua franca and a mother tongue of a multiethnic group of people, does not fit neatly in this traditional dichotomy, and thus requires a more nuanced understanding of the linguistic continuum, not least because Russian speakers in post-Soviet countries do ask for protection of their minority language rights.

As seen in the discussion above, post-Soviet countries differ in the degree to which they articulate minority language rights and guarantee their protection. To date, Armenia is the only country that has officially ratified five minority languages (Report, 2003). Constitutions of several other post-Soviet countries guarantee minorities' rights to use their languages in the private domain (tolerance-oriented rights). Some countries also recognize minority languages in the public domain (promotion-oriented rights), ensuring their use, for instance, in public education. This approach may take two forms. Georgia adopted a territorial language principle (May, 2001) with regard to Abkhazia,

whereby the use of Abkhazian as a second state language is limited to a particular territory. Other countries adopted a personality language principle (May, 2001) where rights are attached to individuals but institutionalized (e.g. through mother-tongue education) only in places where institutionalization is warranted by numbers of speakers of a particular language.

The debate over Russian-speakers' rights has been particularly prominent in Latvia and Estonia, where citizenship rules and education reforms elicited numerous complaints on the part of Russian speakers. Several Baltic language policy makers and scholars have argued that European minority-rights views are not directly applicable to the Baltic situation where titular languages were effectively minoritized and thus endangered under the Soviet regime, while a *de jure* minority language was majoritized (Druviete, 1997; Jubilus, 2001; Ozolins, 2003). To attain a *de facto* status of a national language the titular language had to reassert its status against a former lingua franca. Russian speakers, in this view, are not entitled to minority language rights because they are not a true language minority but a 'majoritized minority', since their language was spoken or at least understood by the majority of the country's population.

According to the numerical definition of majority/minority, in 1991 Russian was indeed a majority language in the Baltic countries, because more people at that point had competence in Russian than in the titular languages. Yet if we follow May (2006: 255), the distinction between majority and minority groups 'is not based on numerical size, but on clearly observable differences among groups in relation to power, status, and entitlement'. In this view, in 1991 Russian speakers became a language minority in post-Soviet countries, where power, status, and entitlement became the privileges of nationalizing elites, while non-titulars have been relegated to political, social, and economic sidelines by the 'ethnopolitics of exclusion' (Aasland, 2002; Alpatov, 2000; Laitin, 1998; Savoskul, 2001; Smith *et al*., 1998; Zevelev, 2001). This shift in power relations is commonly ignored in the 'majoritized minority' argument. The argument also displays a problem of long-term validity: given high rates of Russian-language attrition among titulars in the Baltic countries, this status may no longer be valid among the younger generations.

This ongoing debate deserves a close attention from sociolinguists because it has great potential to transform our understanding of minority language rights. To date, however, the thorny issue of the rights of speakers of 'postcolonial' languages has not yet found its way into the work on minority language rights (Kymlicka & Patten, 2003; May, 2001). Furthemore, while Russian speakers constitute the largest and the most visible language minority in the post-Soviet space, they are not by any means the only one. As shown in the discussion above and in the papers in this collection, all post-Soviet countries are home to a variety of language minority populations, and many of these populations continue to struggle for their rights.

Directions for future work

To address these and other theoretical challenges, future research in the post-Soviet context will have to be an interdisciplinary endeavor, incorporat-

ing the research on the history of the Russian empire, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the USSR (e.g. Edgar, 2004; Hirsch, 2005; Martin, 2001; Smith, 1998; Snyder, 2003), debates in political science and political theory (e.g. Kolstø, 2002; Kymlicka & Patten, 2003; Laitin, 1998), and insights from the study of national and local economies (e.g. Aasland, 2002; Commercio, 2004; for ways to incorporate economy in the study of language, see Grin, 2006). To present a more balanced and objective coverage, this work will need to include multiple perspectives and to follow the contributors in this volume in forming international collaborations and in drawing on sources in several languages.

Interdisciplinarity is also critical from a methodological viewpoint. Until recently, most studies of post-Soviet countries relied on survey and census data. As seen in this collection, these sources are extremely valuable and will remain important in years to come. However, they cannot remain the exclusive data source due to their multiple limitations, such as ambiguous or limited questions, non-response rates, and social desirability effects (for discussion of problems with Soviet and post-Soviet census and survey data, see Alpatov, 2000; Arel, 2002; Smagulova, 2008; for a more general discussion, see Baker, 2006: 38–39). Recent work in the field at large and in the present collection supplements census and survey data with data gathered through ethnographic methods, participant observation, individual and group interviews, linguistic biographies, analysis of media texts, and experimental data from matched-guise tests (e.g. Bilaniuk, 2005; Ciscel, 2007; Laitin, 1998; Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001). Future work aiming to demonstrate effectiveness (or lack thereof) of particular language laws and policies or to document language shift also needs to examine actual changes in levels of language competence and patterns of language use.

In terms of topics, the bulk of the work to date has focused – not surprisingly – on the changes in language and education policies taking place in the 14 countries and on the fate of Russian. Papers in this collection centrally address these issues but also point to other fruitful research directions, such as renegotiation of ethnic, linguistic, and national identities; the status of other minority languages; intergenerational transmission of minority languages including but not limited to Russian; articulation of minority language rights; the spread of lingua francas; language contact phenomena; attrition of Russian as a second language; and the change in linguistic landscapes.

Last but not least, scholars working in this area need to address an important public relations problem: While members of the profession are convinced that bi- and multilingualism and bilingual education constitute an important resource in the modern world, some national mobilizers promote a competition view of multilingualism, where additional languages present a threat to the national language. In Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, for instance, some members of national elites argue that English and Russian are a threat to the purity and development of the titular languages (Baygozhina, 2007; Popjanevski, 2006). In Lithuania, some parents fear that the early teaching of English theatens the development of national identity (Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun, 2008). And in Ukraine, even the term 'bilingualism' has acquired a pejorative connotation as a code word for 'russification' and is equated with 'double-dealing' and 'forked tongues' (Taranenko, 2007; see also

Bilaniuk, 2005: 8–10).[12] One can only hope that in the future linguists and educators working in this area will play a more prominent part in the public arena, following an example of Bill Fierman, an expert on Central Asia, who regularly takes part in debates and gives interviews to the Kazakh press on the benefits of bilingualism and linguistic tolerance (www.baiterek.kz).

The contradictions and tensions characteristic of the post-Soviet context are also reflected in this collection. Discerning readers will see that some of the contributors disagree with each other and with the editor as to the directions language planning should take in the post-Soviet space, and which languages should be supported, when, how, and for what purpose. We see this disagreement as a productive way to generate debates that in turn could lead to more extensive studies and – we hope – to the development of more democratic forms of minority integration and language policy-making, in which 'non-dominant ethnolinguistic groups can shape the language policies that affect them' (Tollefson, 2006: 52).

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Notes

1. http://www.filmcommission.org.ua/en/index.php?option = com_content& task = view&id = 70&Itemid = 1
2. http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/index.php?id = 148&listid = 58420; http://www.ukranews.com/eng/article/93429.html
3. www.president.gov.ua/en/news/data/19149.html
4. see also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_language_in_Ukraine
5. A search for articles on 'Russian language in the Near Abroad' on the website of the information agency Regnum (www.regnum.ru) retrieved 24 items for January 2008.
6. This collaboration is now taking place within the framework of the AILA Research Network on multilingualism in post-Soviet countries.
7. The only exception here was Moldovan where de-Latinization of the script affected the population used to Romanian (Ciscel, 2007).
8. Other post-Soviet countries granted automatic citizenship to all those residing on their territory.
9. Snyder (2003: 98) notes an inconsistency in these arguments: 'Lithuanians took for granted that the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was illegitimate, but that the incorporation of Vilnius that followed was legitimate'. Vilnius, now Lithuania's capital, was under Polish rule between 1920 and 1939, Stalin transferred it to Lithuania; it was also claimed by Belarusian national elites (Snyder, 2003: 80–81).
10. Scholars vary in their references to the language as Azerbaijanian or Azeri; in the present article, the term 'Azerbaijanian' is adopted following the offical English translation of the Constitution of Azerbaijan (www.president.az).
11. The president Ilham Aliev actually had to interfere to protect a popular Russian-language game show (www.regnum.ru, 1/10/08).

12. This negative attitude towards bilingualism is not a new phenomenon: Throughout history, bilinguals in monolingual societies have often been treated with suspicion as people with shifting political allegiances and moral commitments (Pavlenko, 2005: 24–27).

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