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The Politics of Russian-Language Film Showings in Post-Soviet Georgia

A law was implemented in Georgia in 2011 that required all foreign films to be shown with Georgian state language dubbing or subtitling. At that time, Russian was the default language of film showings. A year later, the largest movie theater in Tbilisi was fined for showing films in Russian language without Georgian state language subtitling or dubbing. This fine, however, had little effect on film-showing practices. I describe how media-language politics involved collaboration among social actors in the Georgian Ministry of Culture, the movie theater industry, and the film-dubbing industry. To do so, I develop the concept of dormant law: a mostly unenforced hard law that codifies aspirational conditions. Through the possibility of selective activation, dormant law functions as a latent instrument of politics. In political and popular discourse during President Saakashvili's era (2004–2013), social actors framed Russian as a potentially hazardous symbolic resource embedded in infrastructure, whereas they framed English as either harmless or enriching to "Georgianness." In film-language debates, citizens and politicians reflected on the meanings of "international" languages, in contrast with Georgian. The Film Law manifested a hierarchy of social value in which English and Russian were competing codes, iconic of possible future Georgian modernities. [movie theaters, language politics, media law, post-Soviet studies, Georgia]

One overcast afternoon in 2012, I was with a group of Georgian acquaintances on Rustaveli Avenue, the main drag in downtown Tbilisi. Instead of traipsing toward Old Tbilisi, as we had planned, we were impelled indoors by dark clouds gathering on the horizon. We went into the Rustaveli Movie Theater, located across from the (now former) Parliament building. As we walked into the lobby, a girl from the group named Samantha¹ turned to me for reassurance: "You know Russian, right?" she asked in Georgian. "Yeah, I speak Russian," I responded. Most of the movies playing at the theater were Hollywood films with Russian dubbing. Like many filmgoers in Tbilisi at this time, my acquaintance was not aware that Russian-language-only film showings were technically illegal. In 2011, during then-President Mikheil Saakashvili's era (2004–2013), a law was passed that required all showings of foreign films to have Georgian state language dubbing or subtitling. This promotion of Georgian was also a way to challenge Russian as the longstanding default language of foreign media consumption. Russian film dubbing is an inheritance of Soviet practices and remains a widespread phenomenon in the former Soviet Union. The Film Law² and its discontinuous enforcement is a window into the contradictory place of Russian linguistic code in Saakashvili-era Tbilisi.

The main institutional focus in this article is the Rustaveli/Amirani Movie Theater complex and business holdings (hereafter, Rustaveli Holdings). During the period of this research (2011–2012), its website described the company as "a diversified film & entertainment group leading [the] Georgian market with over 90% share."³ I conducted interviews

with Rustaveli Holdings representatives in which they discussed their position in the market, the audience for films, the language of film showings, and the law that mandated all films be shown with Georgian state language dubbing or subtitling. Rustaveli Holdings controlled a near monopoly on public film showings, which made its negotiation of legal compliance and interactions with the Ministry of Culture and the movie-going public crucial. At the time, Rustaveli Holdings operated five theaters with eight screens, which included all major cinemas in central Tbilisi as well as several regional centers. Rustaveli and Amirani, the proprietary sites, were two landmark theaters that had been revamped and equipped with Dolby Digital and 3D technologies. As Rustaveli Holdings was the dominant force in the market, legislation pertaining to film showings had the potential to directly impact its business practices.

The law governing film and television broadcast language (hereafter, Film Law) was initiated in 2009, underwent revision, and was amended by Amendment 3115, *mot'khovnebi pilmis demonst'rat'oris da pilmis chvenebis mimart* (Demands on Film Demonstrators and Film Showings).⁴ This amendment, written in mid-2010 and enacted on January 1, 2011, specifically addressed the broadcast language of films. It specifies:

pilmis demonst'rat'oris mier pilmis (mat shoris, dok'ument'uri da animatsiuri pilmebis) k'inodarbazshi chveneba shesadzlebelia mkholod pilmis p'irveladi ts'armoebis enaze, sakartvelos sakhelmts'ipo enaze sazaldebulo subtitrebis an gakhmovanebis p'irobit.

Film demonstrator showings of films (among them, documentary and animated films) in movie theaters is possible only in the film's original language of production on the condition of having obligatory *Georgian state language* subtitles or dubbing.⁵

This was in distinction to the then-common practice of showing foreign films in Russian, the language in which they were usually received through distribution channels. While enacted on the first day in January, film-language practices did not immediately change.

In the event of a violation of the Film Law, the offending party was subject to a fine, which increased with subsequent violations. According to a lawyer at the Ministry of Culture, the fine for the first violation of the Film Law was 1,500 lari (around US\$750), then 3,000 lari for a second violation, and increasing to 10,000 lari for a third and continuing violations (personal communication, September 12, 2012). Beginning in 2011, when the law went into effect, Rustaveli Holdings was given a warning and a grace period in which to come into compliance. On January 31, 2012, Rustaveli Holdings was fined 1,500 lari. According to Mr. A.⁶, a manager at Rustaveli Holdings, the fine was specifically for showing films in Russian. As he put it, the fine was much less than what dubbing would have cost ("jarima iq'o amaze bevrad nak'lebi rats gakhmovaneba dajdeboda," personal communication, February 29, 2012). At their proprietary locations, Rustaveli Holdings frequently showed films in English language without Georgian state language dubbing or subtitling, but it was not fined for this, even though this too was in violation of the law. No other movie theaters, aside from Rustaveli Movie Theater, were fined for violations of the Film Law.

The news that films would no longer be shown in Russian generated a variety of reactions that I explore here by examining interview materials, official documents, and Facebook exchanges. Evidence for the differential treatment of Russian and English comes from communications with and materials produced by the Georgian Public Broadcasting, Georgian National Communications Commission, Georgian National Film Center,

Amirani Movie Theater, Rustaveli Movie Theater, Movie Theater Georgia, and Cinema House Kolga.

Russian and English: Icons of Competing “Modernities”

As scholarship in linguistic anthropology has demonstrated, language use is a critical sign of national belonging, group alignment, political allegiance, and symbolic power. Susan Gal (1987) has argued that the evaluation of linguistic codes is a response to the political-economic order. In particular, she has argued that codeswitching practices are reflective of various forms of resistance to a symbolic order of domination. The Georgian case that I present here builds on what Gal has termed “speakers’ responses to macrohistorical processes” as a way to understand linguistic differentiation (1989, 357). This occurred in a political milieu during which law was mobilized to challenge the symbolic functions of Russian. Gal (2012) has pointed out that within Europe, the “pride” and “profit” axes of differentiation have long constituted the ideological value scales by which both state actors and citizens have assessed particular linguistic forms. That is, particular linguistic forms have served as indexes of pride or profit, which are values held in contrastive opposition. In the Georgian case, pride and profit did not emerge as local categories of linguistic differentiation. Nevertheless, the ways that social actors imputed the social values of linguistic codes (Georgian, Russian, and English) involved contrastive logic similar to Gal’s description.

Let me first establish the relative positions of English and Russian within Tbilisi by means of a statistical snapshot of self-reported competences.⁷ According to a large-scale survey conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center in 2013 in Tbilisi, 49 percent of respondents self-reported their Russian-language knowledge as “advanced” and 39 percent reported it as “intermediate.” By contrast, 16 percent self-reported English-language knowledge as “advanced” and 22 percent self-reported it as “intermediate.” This means that 38 percent of respondents self-reported English knowledge as “advanced” or “intermediate” as compared to 88 percent, who self-reported their Russian knowledge as “advanced” or “intermediate.” In schools in 2010, “English became compulsory from the first grade in schools . . . while Russian is optional” (Amirejibi-Mullen 2011, 284). In addition to promoting English, language policies in Georgia during the Saakashvili era promoted Georgian language in public spaces. The consequences of language policies on minority populations in Georgia have been complex (Akerlund 2012; Amirejibi-Mullen 2011, 277–88). Controversies over the iconic function of Russian language in movie theaters took place against larger shifts in language policy that affected multiple domains of public life. In Georgia, movie theaters are primarily a destination for financially privileged youth who can afford the price of tickets. The majority of filmgoers are under the age of 19, according to Rustaveli Holdings’ internal research. From my personal observation, most movie theater attendees are groups of teenagers, or youth accompanied by their parents or other kin. Movie theaters are a public site for the consumption of foreign media, which is why legislation is a barometer of the values associated with certain linguistic codes.

The debates on film language must be contextualized within the various political and social webs in which Russian language has historically been entangled in Georgia. Once a language of “modernity” in the time of the Soviet Union, Russian still possesses essential practical significance in the region.⁸ Georgians often reckon contemporary concerns, trajectories, and historical indebtedness with reference to the Soviet past in Tbilisi, as well as in Georgia more broadly (Frederiksen 2013; Koch 2013; Mühlfried 2014). Such references, however, whether as historically determinative forces, ghostly ideologies, or material realities, are not the only force at work in shaping Tbilisian concepts of Georgia’s relationship

to categories such as “modernity” and “Europe.” Present-day hierarchies of value among lingua francas crystallize Georgia’s place in what Michael Herzfeld (2004) has termed the “global hierarchy of value.” That is, the largely implicit social and political meanings of linguistic code in Georgia are part of the ongoing process of participating in evaluative regimes in which “Europe” figures as a hierarchically superordinate point of reference. Further, politicians and citizens link English and Russian to different imagined national trajectories.

Saakashvili’s political aspirations for Georgia ennobled a “European” version of “modernity” as desirable. As he put it in a speech in 2011, “The radical reforms that we launched since 2003 in every part of the society had one purpose—the European transformation of Georgia, turning our ancient European nation into a modern, democratic and European state.”⁹ Malkhaz Toria (2014) has noted that revolution in Georgia was not simply political but “required a mental scouring” as well, in which “Soviet mentality,” as Saakashvili termed it, would be abolished (320). Saakashvili cast alignments with Russia as “backward,” and as impediments to reaching Euro-normative standards for modernity. For example, after mandatory English lessons were implemented for all students beginning in the first grade, in 2011 Saakashvili announced that all Russian schools in Georgia would be eliminated. He rationalized it in this way: “We are not against the Russian language. If tomorrow Russian becomes a universal language for communication, if the Chinese, Norwegians, and Americans need Russian to succeed in life, we will have to study it as well.”¹⁰ In part, this was because Russia—and Russian language—had been tainted with the infelicities of a failed version of modernity under socialism, which, by extension, permeated Georgian self-understanding. By symbolic association through language, Russian culture and politics was unappealing to Saakashvili not only because of the failure of socialism but also because Russian language usage was an index of Georgia’s subordination to Russia in the global hierarchy of value. The promise of a Euro-normative modernity was one in which Georgians were invited to see themselves as a nation equal to others, in cultural and moral terms. That Saakashvili cast this egalitarian leveling as necessary in the first place belies the sense of insecurity Georgians felt with respect to the categories of “Europe” and “modernity” (Manning 2009, 2012).

The emergence of governmental threats of fines for improper language use is bound up with concerns about crafting linguistic practices that would align citizens with desirable forms of Euro-normative modernity. This form of modernity was, at times, discursively posed against either a failed version of modernity linked to the Soviet past or to an undesirable present-day vision of modernity connected to Russia. Managing signs of “Russianness” reflected concern over avoiding historically conditioned hierarchies that manifested a subordinate cultural, political, or economic position for Georgia. As one reviewer of this article pointed out, “doubts about Russian as a first order language of modernity date back to 19th century Georgian discourse about language and civilizational modernity.” In nineteenth-century Georgia and Russia, France (and hence, French) was emblematic of European “civilization.”¹¹ Socialism reconfigured aspirational linguistic hierarchies by making Russian code iconic of an alternate civilizational modernity. Saakashvili’s policies directly challenged the role of Russian as an intermediary between Georgia and Europe.

In the Georgian case, citizens and commenters have interpreted the lack of congruence between law and practice in various ways: as testament to governmental failings, the power of nefarious private business interests, or even undesirable but enduring characteristics of the Georgian psychological type expressed through Georgian institutions. Social actors often attributed unreliability, inefficiency, or unpredictability not to individual caprice but to pervasive psychological patterns understood as manifest in “Georgianness” itself. For

example, I recounted to a friend how I had searched in vain for an elusive office building, and when I called the cell number of the contact I was scheduled to interview, the number no longer worked. My friend simply smiled and said, “*sakartveloa!*” (It’s Georgia!). Attributing perplexity, unreliability, or confusion to Georgia or Georgianness was common when I explained to friends and acquaintances what I had been able to piece together about the law on film showings in Georgia and its discontinuous, *ad hoc* enforcement. Within a common recourse to complaints about the pervasiveness of unreliability within institutional structures in Georgia, I detected a tacit comparison to a different kind of relationship among the state and its laws, perhaps existing only in the imagination: that a law would be continuously and clearly enforced and be readily transparent and predictable. This imaginary of orderly, transparent, continuous enforcement is not a product of post-Soviet political formations, though some popular and scholarly discourses have been predicated on finding political, economic, or social differences between “post-Soviet” and “Western” formations along these lines: the imaginary of orderly enforcement and the political valence of dormant law is equally present in regimes of law elsewhere. Movie theater business representatives, governmental lawyers, and sound studio managers all conceived of their collaborative work as ensuring compliance with the Film Law.

Legal compliance is not located between broken unreliability and idealized transparency.¹² Drawing from Sanders and West, Paul Manning observes, “Ideologies of transparency and conspiracy share the same underlying ontology of power” (2007, 175). To begin or conclude with “transparency” or “corruption” misses the network of relations that create and maintain social and material infrastructure.¹³ As Sally Moore puts it, “A rule-focused compliance/deviance approach reduces the colorful hurlyburly of social life and the dynamic logic it has for the actors to so arid a pair of pre-selected and pre-interpreted obedience categories, that [an] understanding of what is actually going on on the ground may be blocked” (1978, 3). This article works toward illuminating the way that Georgian social actors constructed legal compliance piecemeal across institutional settings (from government, to movie theaters, and to sound studios) while choreographing an ever-shifting state of adequacy. New business alignments and, indeed, a new film-dubbing industry emerged as direct consequences of the Film Law. Adding the dimensions of language politics to what Andrea Ballester (2012) refers to as the technicalities, techniques, and technologies of transparency renders visible the solidification of socially charged hierarchies of “international” languages produced by but not explicitly codified within law itself.

The Rustaveli Movie Theater maintained an English-only schedule of movie showings without Georgian language dubbing or subtitling, even after the Film Law was enacted. Rustaveli Holdings representatives did not see this as a violation of the Film Law, except “in idea.” At Cinema House Kolga, another Tbilisi movie theater, only English-language films were shown, without Georgian state dubbing or subtitling, and Kolga representatives also did not view this as a violation of the law. Rather than moralizing these perspectives as misdeeds or disobedience, I argue that there were two crucial reasons why this perspective was possible: (1) movie theaters lacked information regarding the details and goals of the Film Law, and (2) movie theaters representatives understood that the Film Law was implicitly intended to target Russian (not English) language for removal from public spaces, even as it was ostensibly a promotion of Georgian language.

In 2011 the Rustaveli Movie Theater began regular English-language-only showings, and even advertised these showings on a dedicated portion of their website. The market for these showings was the English-language expatriate community. Those who show films in movie theaters in Tbilisi understood the Film Law as impacting Georgian citizens, not English-speaking expatriates living in Georgia. English-language accommodations,

although technically illegal, were not construed as such. Instead, those in the movie theater business regarded English-language showings as outside of the scope of the law. Unlike Russian language, English language was invisible to the law. The Rustaveli Movie Theater accommodated English-speaking patrons with English-language showings, but not Russian-speaking patrons with Russian-language showings. Of course, there would have been no need for Russian-language accommodation as the vast majority of foreign films continued to be shown with Russian dubbing.¹⁴ This reflects a hierarchy of value among “international” languages: English was a harmless, or even a beneficial, necessity, whereas Russian was a possible hazard and the real target for legislation.

During one interview at Bravo Studios, my interlocutors assumed that because I was asking about film-language issues, I must belong to this purportedly vocal and insistent Tbilisi expatriate group. My puzzled response immediately dissuaded them of the notion. In an interview at Rustaveli Holdings in November 2011, Mr. A. explained that the Rustaveli Movie Theater organizes get-togethers for diplomats and their families, at which English-language films are shown in their original language. In 2012 I tracked down the Anglophone expatriate who spearheaded these regular film showings to ask him about the logistics. He was unaware of the Film Law and had no idea about the specifics of importing or showing films in Georgia. In sharp contrast, Mr. A. was well informed about the Film Law. In an interview in February 2012, Mr. A. rationalized English showings and posited a division between what he called the “idea” (in this case, the letter of the law) and the reality that would be tolerable to the government. As he put it, “In the law, this [the permissibility of showing films in English] is not written. I am certain that the government will not have a problem with that, that is, why films are showing in English without subtitles, but really in idea it is a violation.”

Fines: “A Bit of a Symbolic Thing”

I organized two interviews with Mr. A., one in late 2011 and the other in early 2012, just after Rustaveli had been fined for the first time for violation of the Film Law. My research assistant, Ani, conducted the first interview, which was recorded and transcribed. I conducted the second interview with Ani present, and it was also recorded and transcribed. Both interviews were conducted in Georgian. During the second interview, the conversation turned to the fine that Rustaveli had received for violating the Film Law by showing films dubbed in the Russian language, with neither dubbing nor subtitling in Georgian. Mr. A. stated, “*es jarima tsot’ a simboluri raghats iq’o*” (This fine was a bit of a symbolic thing). Mr. A. stressed that discussions with the government were ongoing and the contents of this law were being reconsidered. Rather than positing competing interests, Mr. A. stressed collaborative efforts between Rustaveli Holdings and the government. The nature of the collaboration, however, was ambiguous during the interviews, partly from Mr. A.’s pronoun use.

At times when he used the first person plural *chven* (we) and the first person plural possessive *chveni* (our), it referred to Rustaveli Holdings. One example is when Ani asked about a technology to make reading subtitles more comfortable:

Ani: *da is t’eknologiebi, rom akhsenet.*
Mr. A.: *ra vitsi, chveni midgoma aris, rom subt’it’rebas isev dublireba jobia* [emphasis added].
Ani: And these technologies that you mentioned.
Mr. A.: Well [literally, What do I know], our approach is that dubbing is better than subtitling.

At other times, however, *chven* also included the Ministry of Culture, with whom Rustaveli Holdings appeared to have a close working relationship. For example, Mr. A. elaborated after he explained that the fine was more of a symbolic action:

Mr. A.: *shekhvedrebits iq'o manmade k'ult'uris saminist'rostan da mok'led raghats ekhlats dghemde **chven** gvakvs shekhvedrebi da midis mushaoba magaze, rom es dublirebis tema dalagdes* [emphasis added].

Mr. A.: There were also meetings before that with the Ministry of Culture and, in short, something that still now, today, *we* have meetings and work is ongoing to settle the topic of dubbing.

Ani then inquired whether or not there existed any benefit or incentive system for dubbing.

Mr A.: *sakhelmts'ipos mkhridan?*

Ani: *k'i*

Mr. A.: *aaa. akhla zustad magaze midis saubari. . . . raghatsa dakhmareba iq'os mati mkhridan, imit'om rom rtulia ak'eto dubliazhi kveq'anashi, romelits dzalian pat'ara aris da romlis bazris masht'abits ar q'opnis ubralod imas, rom gaketdes egeti dzvirpasi produkt'i.*

Mr. A.: From the government side?

Ani: Yes

Mr. A.: Ah. Just now a conversation is going on about that. . . . There should be some kind of help from their side, because it is difficult to do dubbing in a country that is very small and also for which the scale of the market is not enough just so that such an valuable product can be made.

In the ongoing conversation to which Mr. A. alluded, it was unclear who were the participants. The implication was that representatives from Rustaveli Holdings and the Ministry of Culture were discussing ways to make compliance attainable. Dubbing, as Mr. A. put it, was a difficult proposition in a small country. Rather than comprising competing interests, institutional actors were collaborating to reach a mutually beneficial result. Mr. A. did not regard ideological considerations for language selection as part of the crucial conversation about law implementation; in other words, Mr. A. viewed beliefs about the proper place of Georgian language with respect to films as outside the domain of either the Ministry of Culture or Rustaveli Holdings. Although the Ministry of Culture was technically a government agency, Rustaveli Holdings related to them as an enforcement arm with whom they could negotiate, and not as the origin of interests that created the idea or reality of the Film Law. Informants, including a lawyer at the Ministry of Culture, claimed that Saakashvili was the originator, or principal (to use Goffman's [1981] term), of this Film Law. For example, when Mr. A. used the phrase "*sakhelmts'ipos mkhridan*" (from the government side), the *sakhelmts'ipo* (government) was metonymic of Saakashvili, not the governmental structures that enacted or enforced the Film Law.

"The government side" was in contrast with Mr. A.'s own domain, Rustaveli Holdings. As a business entity, Rustaveli Holdings had multiple components beyond the movie theaters themselves. For example, I had an e-mail exchange with a representative of the distribution arm of Rustaveli Holdings in order to better understand how film supply was structured. I posed a question in which I characterized Rustaveli Holdings as having a monopoly on the movie theater market, as at the time they controlled over 90 percent of the market. The representative resisted the term "monopoly" to describe Rustaveli Holdings' position in the Tbilisi movie theater market, and even suggested that Rustaveli and Amirani theaters, despite having the same management, were "competitors."¹⁵

The Film Law had the de facto effect of creating, without incentives, a new Georgian film-dubbing industry that emerged through a partnership between Rustaveli Holdings and Bravo Studios (Sherouse 2015). Bravo Studios was the exclusive provider of dubbed film products for Rustaveli Movie Theater. As I detail below, Bravo Studios conceptualized their work as fulfilling contracts with Rustaveli Holdings, not as ensuring that Rustaveli Movie Theater complied with the Film Law. The arrangement between Rustaveli Holdings and the Ministry of Culture similarly was about upholding an agreement to have a certain percentage of films dubbed in Georgian, not about satisfying the implicit ideological thrust of the law: to remove Russian-language presence from film showings entirely.

Facebook: Audience Feedback

The primary vehicle for the Rustaveli and Amirani theaters to interact with their customers, and vice versa, was the joint Rustaveli/Amirani Facebook page, on which film-language issues frequently arose. For example, a management representative from Amirani Movie Theater cited this Facebook page as the main method to receive unofficial audience feedback. As of early April 2012, the page had received nearly forty thousand “likes,” indicating that there was a large audience interacting, usually passively, via this social medium.¹⁶

Rustaveli and Amirani management representatives indicated that perceived demand influenced film selection and film language. Facebook was a way to register this demand for upcoming releases, although Rustaveli Holdings also relied on official research to understand these demographics and to cater to customer preferences.

From the posts and commentaries on the Rustaveli/Amirani Facebook page over the course of a year, a few common trends emerged. The primary purpose of the page is to advertise upcoming films, which usually takes the form of posting film posters with Georgian state language titles or embedded YouTube trailers. Release dates or showing times are listed above or beneath film images. Commentaries on such posts most commonly included the questions, “*ra enazea?*” (In what language is it?) or “*ra enaze ikneba?*” (In what language will it be?). The most common answer was simply “*rusulad*” (Russian). Other commenters asked for clarification about release or showing dates or voiced excitement about upcoming releases or opinions about the films. The question about film language appeared for nearly every release. Information about the language of film showings (which were often entirely in Georgian) was never listed on the original posts from the theaters. This suggests a strategic omission. When a film was to be shown in English, it often was mentioned under the heading, perhaps because English would attract a different audience.

In addition to not listing the language on the Facebook announcement, Rustaveli/Amirani managed the perception of film language in public space in other ways. For example, the film posters lining the theaters’ façades were always printed with Georgian-language titles, taglines, and cast names. Further, online trailers were created that borrowed heavily from the English-language version, but they omitted any actors speaking. Instead, a typical trailer was a shortened version of the original with a Georgian voiceover at the beginning and then a language-less preview. This gave the impression that the film would be shown in Georgian. For example, consider the action film *Mission Impossible 4—Ghost Protocol* (or as advertised in Georgia, *sheusrulebeli misia 4*). It was the fourth movie in the *Mission Impossible* series in which Tom Cruise plays the protagonist, Ethan Hunt. In this release, Hunt must track down a terrorist who plans to launch a nuclear attack on the United States from Russia. In the trailer that Rustaveli Holdings released, there was a voiceover hyping the film.¹⁷ The actors, however, did not speak in this version. This enabled the theater to avoid the language choice issue, as they were showing this Hollywood film with only



Figure 1: Georgian movie poster for *Mission Impossible 4* (Author's photograph)

Russian dubbing. The Georgian trailer was strategically designed to avoid indicating the language of the film. Showing a film dubbed in Russian without Georgian subtitles or dubbing was technically against the law. *Mission Impossible 4* was shown only in Russian in all Tbilisi locations, with no Georgian or English dubbing or subtitling. Although the movie is in English, the version available in Georgia was that which came through Russia and had been imprinted with Russian dubbing. Omission of information about the language of the film is not a clear indication of the Rustaveli Holdings representatives' ideologies, constraints, or decision-making process with respect to film language advertising or its lack thereof. However, because the film poster and trailer advertisements gave the impression that the film was to be shown in Georgian, the omission seemed deliberate (Figure 1).¹⁸ Additionally, the language of any Rustaveli/Amirani's film showings is in no way secret;



Figure 2: Facebook Announcement on May 2, 2012

“Rustaveli / Amirani / Apollo Batumi

Films only in Georgian, or in the original with Georgian subtitles.
Russian films will no longer be shown at our locations (forbidden by law)”

one can simply inquire at the ticket booth, look at the printed list of showings posted next to the ticket kiosk, or read the Facebook postings in order to determine in which language a film is shown. The relative scarcity of movie theaters makes the issue of monitoring less about surveillance and more about strategic enforcement.

There was an enduring expectation that movie theaters were cultural domains in which Russian actively functioned as a sort of unmarked language of cultural belonging activated through film. Rustaveli/Amirani made emphatic declarations via Facebook that all film showings would be in Georgian, but this did not reflect the reality of what one saw at the movie theater. Because of this, on Facebook, patrons typically ascertained the language of film showings by posting questions; one could no longer be confident in assuming that a film would be in Russian, as announcements to the contrary made it seem as if it would no longer be the normative language of film showings. Nevertheless, in practical terms, the teenagers with whom I spoke assumed that newly released films would be shown in Russian. They were largely unaware of the law that sought to promote Georgian state language as the new default.

Another reason that patrons inquired on Facebook about the language of film showings was that the images—film posters, trailers, and promotional materials—were most commonly provided in Georgian, irrespective of the language of the film showing. In May 2012, a couple of months after Rustaveli received its first fine for showing Russian-language films, a Facebook post announced that only Georgian language (or original language with Georgian subtitling) films would be shown. This announcement generated a great deal of commentary and feedback, much of which lamented the low quality of Georgian dubbing or discussed the annoyance of reading subtitles; these were two recurrent themes in public discussions of dubbing and subtitling in Georgia. In an effort to pacify annoyed customers, Rustaveli/Amirani attempted to reassure patrons that the quality of dubbing would increase and emphasized that this decision was based on the law, not on their own caprice (Figure 2).

On the Facebook page one month later, posts appeared that contradicted the announcement that films would be shown only in Georgian or in the original with Georgian subtitles (Figure 3 and Figure 4).



Figure 3: Announcement on June 20, 2012.

“‘The Dictator’

See it in theaters:”

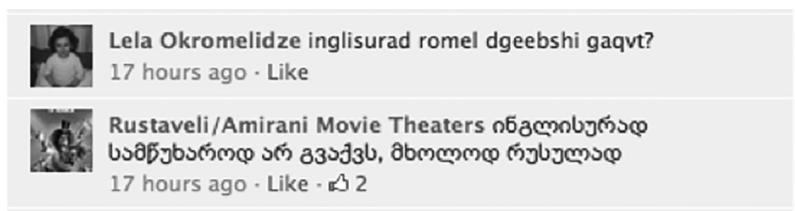


Figure 4: Comment on June 20, 2012 Announcement.

“Lela Okromelidze: On which days do you have English?

Rustaveli/Amirani Movie Theaters: Unfortunately, we don't have English, only Russian”

At around this time, I conducted an interview at the *k'ino sakartvelo* (Movie Theater Georgia), located near the Didube Metro station in Didi Dighomi, in the northern part of Tbilisi. The movie theater was not part of the Rustaveli Holdings network, but the Movie Theater Georgia representative indicated that they had a positive business relationship with Rustaveli Holdings and shared resources and distribution contacts, although the details of this arrangement remained vague. I inquired about the fine that Rustaveli Holdings had received earlier in the year. The representative acknowledged that he knew of this. I asked if Movie Theater Georgia had been fined for film-language law violations, and he responded no. Then he gave a smile and said, “*chven suptad vmushaobi*” (We work properly; literally, cleanly), indicating that they were not in violation of any law. The employee working at the ticket booth downstairs later told me and my new assistant, Ele, that films were frequently shown in Russian at Movie Theater Georgia without any Georgian state language subtitles or dubbing, which she regarded as normal. A movie poster for *The Dictator*, a Hollywood-made film shown exclusively in Russian in Tbilisi, hung outside as Ele and I waited in the summer heat at the nearby bus stop. The representative’s disavowal of illegality was at odds with what was occurring in terms of compliance to the specifications of the Film Law. It is unlikely that the Movie Theater Georgia was given a different set of Film Law compliance standards.

In contrast to the movie theaters that were negotiating the fraught terrain of Russian-language film showings, the Cinema House Kolga, in Tbilisi, showed only English-language films, with neither Russian nor Georgian state dubbing or subtitling. Cinema House Kolga is located at the former *k'inos sakhl* (Film House) near the fast food restaurant McDonald’s, which is next to the Rustaveli metro stop. According to its website, the cinema prides itself on being the “only theater in Georgia to show English-language films three times a week.”¹⁹ In 2012, however, it reported on its website, “Regular English-language shows have been suspended indefinitely.” Kolga then did only private showings from their archive of films. It had been told to stop public showings of current films through an anonymous phone caller. A Kolga representative called the Georgian Copyright Association (GCA) to try to learn what the anonymous phone call was about, but the GCA did not know anything about it. It turned out that rather than being from the GCA about the language of film showings, the call was from a film distribution company telling Kolga to stop showing films because it was concerned with how Kolga’s English-language showings were affecting Rustaveli/Amirani. A Kolga Team representative confirmed by e-mail that the cinema was collaborating with the film distribution company affiliated with Rustaveli/Amirani to coordinate their respective film programs. Kolga reopened in late April 2012 and recommenced showings of English-language films. When I inquired about the legality of showing English-language films, the Kolga Team representative assumed that the Film Law applied only to TV stations, not movie theaters; Kolga was “not a broadcasting station” but “like a club for foreigners living in Georgia and English speaking Georgians” (personal communication, April 8, 2012). The Kolga Team representative believed that showing English-original language films without dubbing or subtitling would not be in violation of this law.

The case of Cinema House Kolga demonstrates that the English-language film showings were neither perceived to be a violation of the law nor considered problematic for the industry or the government. The Kolga Team representative focused on the Broadcasting Law of 2009 rather than the amendment pertaining to film showings (the Film Law), which would be directly pertinent to their business practices. Rustaveli Holdings’ market control of new releases, and their profitability, was the primary concern. A representative of Rustaveli Holdings told me that English-language showings were still not that popular, and therefore comprised a small fraction of their business. Nevertheless, English-language showings

were a significant enough concern for Rustaveli Holdings' bottom line that they wanted to coordinate showing schedules with Cinema House Kolga to ensure that business was channeled first to Rustaveli and Amirani Movie Theaters. Rustaveli Holdings coordinated the movie theater industry in ways that were beyond the strict letter of the law with respect to film language. Rustaveli Holdings capitalized on existing English-language demand, although the fulfillment of this demand was technically in violation of the law.

Consistency and Compliance

Compliance was the main rubric within which Rustaveli/Amirani and the Ministry of Culture understood their institutional roles with respect to issues of language in film showings. Although they ostensibly represented different interests, the Ministry of Culture lawyers as well as Rustaveli's representatives were concerned how to effectively run the film business in Georgia within the somewhat restrictive parameters of the Film Law. As with the film-showing restrictions, oversight, monitoring, and enforcement of the law were selective. There were many possible reasons for this. Patrons ascribed nefarious explanations (such as "corruption") to the selectivity of monitoring and enforcement. The rubric of corruption was a larger discursive trend in which social actors, from regular citizens to Western NGOs, cast doubt on the efficacy of Saakashvili's relationships with semigovernmental organizations.²⁰ In the purported lacuna between law and enforcement, ideologies about the hierarchy of languages and their meanings emerged as central (and shared) concerns for all social actors, regardless of their positions.

Compliance was an interinstitutional negotiation rather than a top-down mode of bringing law and behavior into congruence. Social actors and institutions calibrated compliance in terms of adequacy. Understanding the Film Law and its consequences need not proceed from either disparaging Georgian practices as lacking credibility or sense or assuming that Georgia is intrinsically faulty and, hence, prone to "corruption."²¹ Alena Ledeneva has described how informal, personal networks functioned alongside and within formal structures in the Soviet Union and Russia (Ledeneva 1998, 2006). Such approaches emphasize the fragility and limitations of the formal-informal dichotomy and put pressure on social theorists not to take such rigid divisions for granted in analysis. In this case, Saakashvili's notion that Georgianness must be protected from potentially damaging symbolic influences (in the form of Russian language) in order to safeguard a teleology toward "Europeaness" hinged on an ideology that equated Westernness with social progress, formal (impersonal) systems, and efficiency. Ironically, under Saakashvili, the means to safeguard this teleology toward a Euro-normative vision of future modernity directly engaged existing "informal" networks.

When researching governmental and nongovernmental organizations in the film and television industry, I found I was directed almost exclusively toward legal representatives, even when I specified that I was interested more broadly in how organizations actually conducted business and applied the law. This was because my initial questions concerned the functions and applications of legal measures. There was no privileged position within the diffuse matrix of governmental functionaries, lawyers, private businesses, and creative experts from which a full "reality" of the contemporary film dubbing and subtitling industry was visible, as no such thing existed. Instead, participants in this industry saw themselves divided into nonoverlapping roles: technical, creative, legal, or administrative capacities. To take these divisions as signs of insufficiency, corruption, or lack of transparency risks ascribing malfeasance to the structure of bureaucratic compartmentalization in general. For example, any questions I posed regarding the logistics of film dubbing were treated as the domain of creative specialists, whereas queries about law compliance and language

choice were relegated to the domain of legal specialists. Institutional actors viewed these two niches as existing in separate spheres, and management figures were reluctant to speak about how either domain functioned. In this industry, at least, management was charged with coordinating projects without getting involved in creative or legal dimensions. Managers viewed legality as a separate and specific issue rather than as a general concern on which all employees would be aware. Initially, it seemed puzzling that creative workers had only a dim understanding of the legal issues dictating in what languages film showings must be, but this was because they viewed their own work as separate from the public space. In other words, they were charged with rendering a strong creative product, not with considering Georgian-language issues, except insofar as they made the film more or less intelligible. Indeed, as I learned from a manager at *kartuli k'ino* (Georgian Film), a film production studio, the creative issues associated with film dubbing have their own universe of concerns, as well as a rich history.

Georgia in Context: Russian-Language Films in Post-Soviet Space

How does Georgia stand in relation to other post-Soviet contexts in which film language has become a vector of concern over national alignment? In post-Soviet spaces, as elsewhere, the interrelation of language policy and media involves the “interplay between the producers’ market calculations and ideological biases, on the one hand, and the consumers’ preferences, on the other” (Kulyk 2013b). This interplay rests against the institutional constraint of demonstrating compliance, or as Volodymyr Kulyk puts it, “respect for the norms of the law and licenses” (ibid., 1423). The Ukrainian case forms a useful contrast with the Georgian case because of shared inheritances of Soviet linguistic division; that is, between titular language and Russian as lingua franca. This is, also, because of the differing demographics in terms of ethnicity between Ukraine and Georgia.²² Further, another motivation for putting the Georgian and Ukrainian cases in conversation emerged from the ethnographic material itself: Mr. A. likened the situation in Georgia to that in Ukraine, stating *egeti p'roblema uk'rainashits* (the same problem was in Ukraine as well). While linguistic code can be a contentious political concern in both places, debates on the use of Russian in Georgian public spaces lack the language-to-ethnicity connection that has rendered the Ukrainian situation at times volatile. Differences in ethnicity aside, Russian as a symbolic resource in both Georgia and Ukraine has come to occupy a similar social role as a ubiquitous, at times politically charged code connected in part to a past Soviet version of modernity. Further, the central logic of the language policies affecting media in both Ukraine and Georgia has been the effective demotion of Russian, which the governments of both countries have pursued indirectly.

In the Ukrainian case, Laada Bilaniuk notes, “The translation of foreign movies was the focus of controversy in 2006, as lawmakers required Ukrainian translations and media companies protested that this was financially unfeasible” (2010b, 115).²³ In movie theaters, distributors resisted accommodating Ukrainian language, due to cost, as they were “unwilling to pay for the translation of Western films into Ukrainian (instead of buying copies with a Russian-language soundtrack from Russian intermediates)” (Kulyk 2013b, 1429). Until 2006, almost all films in Ukraine were shown in Russian (ibid., 1426–27). The 2006 amendment in Ukraine specified that national television and radio channels should broadcast at least 75 percent in Ukrainian language (Bilaniuk 2010b, 114). Beyond economic concerns, the ideological reasons for selecting one language or the other were important. Historically, Ukrainian had been “treated as a provincial, lower prestige language” (Bilaniuk and Melnyk 2008, 365) with respect to Russian, which was the higher-prestige language. In Ukraine, the “choice between Ukrainian and Russian is often portrayed as

shorthand for the choice between two political and cultural allegiances: with Russia, in the case of Russian language, or with Europe and the West, in the case of Ukrainian" (ibid., 340).²⁴ The symbolic status of Russian in Ukraine does not cleanly indicate Russian allegiance, however, as Kulyk (2013a) demonstrates in a 2012 survey. Further, Kulyk argues, "Ukrainians value the titular language more than they actually speak it," which he attributes to "moderate and inconsistent language policy" (ibid., 20).

In both Ukraine and Georgia, ambiguity arose in the language and interpretation of the laws themselves. Bilaniuk and Melnyk note, "The Ukrainian Constitution is somewhat contradictory or vague on issues of language use" (2008, 350).²⁵ A similar form of ambiguity appears in the Georgian case. Article 5, Section 2 of Amendment 3115 of the Broadcasting Law states that the Broadcasting Law is *skhva sak'anonmdeblo akt'ebit* (supported with other legal acts). The particular supportive legal acts are not named in the document, so the word *skhva* (other) points away from the document itself but toward no particular location or legal source. Such ambiguities are deliberate. By phrasing the laws in a fashion that leaves them open to interpretation, policymakers avoid specifying the concrete boundaries of compliance; instead, they create a new field of possibilities, not a rigid disciplinary mechanism.

Dormant Law: Toward a Social Theory of Aspirational Legislation

Discursive practices born from the implementation of the Film Law made tangible symbolic hierarchies of value for Russian and English as "international" languages. Concerns about the language of film showings were reflective of how, under Saakashvili, national linguistic values became the object of scrutiny. The tension between Russian as a harmless necessity and as a sign of danger, decay, and domination of Georgian culture is a crucial component in understanding Russian's fraught and contradictory associations in the public sphere. When I referred to the Film Law as a "ban" on Russian, one respondent instead reframed it as a promotion of Georgian language. Part of this respondent's reframing is a resistance to seeing the elimination of Russian as the central impetus. Rather, for that respondent, and for others, the law should be understood as an expansion and promotion of Georgian. A second dimension of this reframing is that the metapragmatic effect of a ban is that it calls attention to the banned object, a process which engenders increased circulation and reflection, much like sanctions against taboo language can result in increased use of taboo forms (Fleming and Lempert 2011). Both the law and this particular respondent avoid using the word "ban." This prevents endorsing or legitimizing the default state of affairs in which Russian language predominates in this cultural domain.

Although subtitling is more affordable than dubbing, movie theaters avoid subtitling because it is unpopular with audiences. Production of Georgian-language dubbing is expensive and is a relatively undeveloped industry in Georgia, except for animated films, for which the audience is mostly children. Under the Film Law, no financial measures were provided to support this industry, or for alternative measures to produce Georgian state language subtitles or dubbing. In movie theaters, most films were in foreign languages. The social and economic value of such films derives in part from connecting viewers with present-day new releases. For those who were aware of it—management in the film-showing industry, lawyers in the Ministry of Culture, and a segment of the film-going audience active on Facebook—one consequence of the Film Law was that it engendered reflection on the place and significance of each language. The mismatch between the aspirational legislation regarding language in Georgia and the practicalities that movie theaters must negotiate to remain profitable speaks to the rift, alluded to by patrons and institutional actors alike, between "governmental" ideals and lived realities.

Movie theaters are interfaces between “foreign” cultural products and local audiences. Language education policy is only one force structuring the linguistic landscape in Tbilisi. As Ali Igmen (2012) demonstrates in his analysis of Soviet culture club activities and membership in Kyrgyzstan, reckoning the scope, quality, and influence of soft power is crucial in making sense of the Soviet past and its remnants. Film language, however, is not strictly about soft power because networks of international film distribution have economic implications as well. The Film Law and its implementation calibrated economics, social values, political policies, and institutional orientations. Although the Film Law was technically hard law, governmental and business actors cast its implementation as effectively soft law. This had repercussions for the way in which it functioned as a legal instrument. It is worth bearing in mind that soft law, as Abbott and Snidal point out, can provide “the benefits of hard law at lower cost” (2000, 434). Rather than writing off the Film Law as an inadequately implemented and poorly enforced “hard” law, I contend that the Film Law became a venue through which the symbolic hierarchy of Russian, Georgian, and English was worked out. The film law is a *dormant law*, that is, a hard law that can become selectively activated but otherwise is unenforced and codifies aspirational conditions.²⁶ In a sense, all laws are dormant until they are enforced. The concept of dormant law, however, allows that aspirational conditions inhere in largely unenforced hard laws as politically charged latent potentials. In turn, by attending to a dormant law, social actors can negotiate its social meanings, including the consequences of its uneven implementation.

Focusing on recent legislation and debates about film dubbing and subtitling is not intended as criticism of the Georgian government. Attending to changes in Russian-language presentation in public spaces in Tbilisi reveals the forces and fissures of the official–unofficial dichotomy, which often figures in explanatory narratives for societal discontents. Movie theaters and the broadcasting industry were intermediaries charged with translating official laws into actual practices for audiences that were usually unaware of these constraints, given that the law was not publicized except in 2012 in a Facebook post that was met with confusion and debate. The Ministry of Culture is thus an intermediary, not a monolithic entity emanating a nonnegotiable and rigid “law.”

A focus on the interinstitutional emergence of compliance moves the conversation away from issues of morality and justice and squarely into what Moore terms the “hurlyburly” of social life (1978, 3). By considering compliance as a process, the guiding concern of both governmental and nongovernmental actors involved with film showings is oriented toward profitable business practices while remaining within emergent parameters of acceptability. Seemingly unheeded or selectively followed laws are one result of a system in which both sides actively accommodate each other. Such modes of mutual accommodation are by no means restricted to post-Soviet political conditions, but instead are part and parcel of the way that certain forms of law function. It comes as no surprise that social actors voiced various forms of discontent with the state of Georgian politics, not restricted to film showings, by drawing attention to the mismatch between aspirational legislation and practical considerations. This should not misdirect analytical attention away from the ways that a hierarchy of social value for “foreign” codes began to be worked out in the process of compliance. Even without mentioning particular languages (except for “state language”), interpretive work took place in which citizens classified English as iconic of a desired modernity, whereas Russian was part of a pervasive but perhaps doomed other trajectory.

In Georgia and elsewhere, language politics emerge in the discursive space between law and implementation. The Film Law, which all the social actors with whom I spoke

linked to Saakashvili, challenged Russian's role as intermediary between Georgia and the cultural products of elsewhere. Institutional, social, and economic factors militated against the success of this law, a measure through which Saakashvili sought to promote Georgian language in a sphere dominated by Russian. It remains unclear what the place of English will be in the domain of foreign film consumption in Georgia. The promotion of English as a beneficial lingua franca, which has taken place in school settings as well as in public spaces, including movie theaters, suggests that it may gain traction as a new first-order language of modernity. Even if English competence soars, Russian competence plummets, and the film importing industry is vastly restructured so that commodities no longer move through Russian centers, the structural position of Georgian with respect to languages of modernity—Russian or English—remains secondary and subordinate. This linguistic hierarchy, conditioned by social, historical, and infrastructural forces, will remain a point of friction. Beyond changing the form of linguistic mediation, becoming “European” suggests something else: reducing mediation to the “source” of cosmopolitan civilization.

Notes

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1. All names in this article are real, unless otherwise noted.
2. Section 1 (General Regulations), Article 5 (Demands on Film Demonstrators and Film Showings) of “*erovnuli k'inemat'ografiis sakhelmts'ipo mkhardach'eris shekheb*” (“Law on State Support to National Cinematography.”) The issuer is the Parliament of Georgia.
http://www.gnfc.ge/uploads/files/erovnuli_kinematografiis_saxelmcifo.pdf, accessed February 9, 2017.
3. <http://rustaveli.com.ge>. The website did not work as this article went to press. It was accessed January 2, 2013.
4. All translations in this article are my own, unless otherwise noted. I follow Shukia Apridoniadze's system for transliteration of Georgian.
5. Emphasis added. The literal translation of *sakartvelos sakhelmts'ipo enaze* is “in Georgia's state language.” I have rendered this as “Georgian state language” to emphasize that this is the language of the state, which is officially the Georgian language. However, in the disputed territory of Abkhazia, for example, which is not currently under Georgian governmental control, the official language is Abkhaz. A movie theater in Abkhazia would technically be compliant with the Georgian law if it showed a film in Abkhaz. The status of the disputed territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia does not have any direct bearing on the Film Law, and is beyond the scope of this article.
6. This is a pseudonym.
7. I bracket a discussion of the meaning and implications of “competence” as an analytical term (Hymes 1972). These statistics are useful in comparing self-reported

“competence” in Russian versus English, even if they have the side effect of treating language as an abstraction separate from its contexts of use.

8. Timothy Blauvelt (2013) asserts that, historically, Georgians considered “Russian . . . not to be a truly ‘foreign’ language (like French, German or English), but rather a sort of second native language” (190).
9. Statement of the President of Georgia and the President of France, Freedom Square, on October 7, 2011. http://egypt.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=594&info_id=12805, accessed October 5, 2015.
10. “Saakashvili Closes Down Russian Schools in Georgia,” accessed October 4, 2015. <http://www.rt.com/politics/saakashvili-russian-schools-education>.
11. For more on the historical roots of civilizational modernity in Georgia, see Manning 2012.
12. For more on transparency, see the symposium in *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 2012.
13. For a discussion on the politics of transparency, see Hetherington 2011.
14. This was still the case when I visited Tbilisi on a follow-up research trip in 2015.
15. Natia Meparishvili, PR and advertising manager of Amirani Movie Theater, made similar comments about “competition.” “News on the Movie Business in Tbilisi,” The Financial, <http://www.finchannel.com/world/georgia/19821->, accessed February 9, 2017.
16. By March 2016, they had received over 265,000 “likes,” which indicates that the audience—and hence the significance of this mode of engagement—has increased.
17. They indicated that the film would be shown in four theaters: Apollo, Rustaveli, Amirani, and Movie Theater Georgia. Compare the Georgian trailer (http://youtu.be/DSEB8yOFq_c, accessed January 24, 2017) to the Russian-language trailer (<http://youtu.be/nQU65mNTbmQ>, accessed January 24, 2017), which is identical to the original English-language trailer (<http://youtu.be/V0LQnQSRc-g>, accessed January 24, 2017) except that it has been dubbed into Russian. In the Russian version, it is clear that the film is dubbed; also note that the Russian trailer is longer than the Georgian one (at 2:17 minutes as compared to 1:06 minutes). The Georgian trailer is essentially only the middle of the Russian trailer: the section without actors speaking.
18. The absence of language debates in promotional venues is very similar to the situation in Ukraine. As Laada Bilaniuk states, “The absence of discourse about language choice in promotional media related to television was in stark contrast to the heated debates surrounding language regulation” (2010a, 183).
19. <http://kolga.geoweb.ge>, accessed January 27, 2013. The website did not work as this article went to press.
20. For an example of this corruption discourse, see Rimple 2012.
21. This narrative of corruption often involves placing Georgia on a telic trajectory toward an imagined “West” that is maximally transparent and “democratic.” For a critique of this approach in treating Georgian organized crime, see Slade 2013. For a historical account of the Imaginary West and its significances and ambiguities in Soviet socialism, see Yurchak 2013.
22. As Timothy Blauvelt (2013) has noted, the population of ethnic Russians in Georgia has declined “from 6.3% in 1989 to 1.5% in 2002” (190), continuing a longer-term trend of immigration that began in the late Soviet period, when “Russians made up 10.1% of Georgia’s population in 1959” (206). By contrast, according to the 2001 census in

Ukraine, 17.3 percent of the total population was Russian. Geographically, western Ukraine has a much lower concentration of ethnic Russians than eastern Ukraine. For more details from the 2001 census, including a breakdown by region, see State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality> (accessed September 23, 2015).

23. Bilaniuk and Melnyk elaborate, “Film distributors protested that dubbing in Ukrainian is financially unsustainable, but eventually agreed to legislation stipulating that ‘the distributing companies are under an obligation to bring the quota of dubbed (soundtrack of subtitled films) foreign production movies to 50% (and to 100% in children’s films) from the total amount of prints for each film title, imported in Ukraine’” (2008, 363, internal citations removed). This is strikingly similar to the Georgia case, in which the “quotas” typify the terms of negotiation for television, radio, and movie theater language. Also, the treatment of children’s films (often glossed in legal documents in Georgia with the term “animated films”) is identical, in the sense that it is a domain in which dubbing predominates. This reflects the notion that subtitling is categorically inappropriate for children.
24. Elsewhere, however, Bilaniuk has noted that English functions as a prestige language epitomizing “worldliness” and “affording wider opportunities than Ukrainian” (2005, 183).
25. For example, Bilaniuk noted, “The Law on Television and Radio Broadcasting, passed in December 1993 by the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament of Ukraine), specified that 50 percent of broadcasts must be produced in Ukraine, and that television and radio organizations must conduct broadcasts in the state language (Ukrainian) but that broadcasts for particular regions could also be conducted in the language of minorities who reside there compactly. The law did not specify what constitutes a ‘compact’ population, and whether ethnicity of primary language was the determinant of a minority population. These ambiguities, and the lack of enforcement measures, facilitated the prevalence of Russian language broadcasting, allowing television companies to capitalize on the availability and popularity of older Soviet films and newer imports from Russia” (2005, 178, internal citations removed).
26. Thanks to Brandon Hunter for this phrasing.

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