

HEIKO F. MARTEN/SANITA LAZDIŅA/SOLVITA POŠEIKO/  
SANDRA MURINSKA

## **Between Old and New Killer Languages? Linguistic Transformation, Linguae Francae and Languages of Tourism in the Baltic States**

### **Summary**

This chapter explores the Linguistic Landscape of six medium-size towns in the Baltic States with regard to languages of tourism and to the role of English and Russian as *linguae francae*. A quantitative analysis of signs and of tourism web sites shows that, next to the state languages, English is the most dominant language. Yet, interviews reveal that underneath the surface, Russian still stands strong. Therefore, possible claims that English might take over the role of the main *lingua franca* in the Baltic States cannot be maintained. English has a strong position for attracting international tourists, but only alongside Russian which remains important both as a language of international communication and for local needs.

### **Résumé**

Ce chapitre explore le paysage linguistique de six villes de taille moyenne dans les États Baltes, en particulier le langage touristique et le rôle de l'anglais et du russe comme *linguae francae*. Une analyse quantitative des affichages et des sites web touristiques montre qu'à côté des langues nationales, l'anglais est la langue dominante. Cependant, des entretiens révèlent malgré tout que le Russe est toujours très présent. Par conséquent, l'idée que l'anglais pourrait supplanter la *lingua franca* majoritaire dans les États Baltes ne peut pas être défendue. L'anglais occupe une place importante pour attirer les touristes étrangers, mais seulement à côté du russe qui reste une langue de communication importante aux niveaux local et global.

### **1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

This chapter reports on Linguistic Landscape research in the Baltic States. Its main aim is to analyse language practices and attitudes in six medium-size towns: Druski-

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ninkai and Alytus in Lithuania, Rēzekne and Ventspils in Latvia, and Narva and Pärnu in Estonia. The towns were chosen on the grounds of being close to international borders and/or by their focus on tourism.

The investigation was guided by the following questions: How does the LL reflect the societal transformation from the Soviet world to an orientation towards Western Europe? To which degree is English gaining influence as a lingua franca, and how does its position relate to Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian as the State languages and to Russian as the lingua franca of the Soviet realm and the first language of still a considerable number of residents? How do tourism and the proximity of international borders influence the LL?

In the following, we will first give a short overview of multilingualism in the Baltic States. After an introduction to the theoretical background of this chapter, we will then provide an analysis of quantitative LL data, of relevant tourism web sites, and of interviews conducted in the six towns.

## **2 Multilingualism in the Baltic States**

The Baltic States have in the past 20 years gone through heavy societal transformation, from (geographically and culturally) the most Western Republics of the Soviet Union to being among the easternmost EU member states. This transition has been affecting all levels of society – the political system, administration, the economy, ideologies and attitudes of the population. Today, this process is not over – there are still areas with conflicting ideologies and attitudes, and views on the Soviet Union and the presence of the Russian language are still hot potatoes in society.

The status of languages has therefore been regularly a reason of political debates and occasionally of unrest. In particular, this affects the transition from Russian as the Soviet lingua franca to a focus on the three “titular” languages Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian respectively, which during 50 years of Soviet occupation had become second-class languages. The proportion of the population with Russian as their L1 had increased heavily due to the in-migration of workers. Therefore, the situation was characterised by asymmetrical bilingualism: Whereas almost the entire population knew Russian, Russian L1-speakers hardly knew Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian. High-level domains in society were dominated by Russian. The proportion of Russian-speaking inhabitants was highest in Latvia (34% of the population in 1989), slightly lower in Estonia (30%), and considerably lower in Lithuania (9%, Hogan-Brun et al. 2008, 67).

Since the 1990s, the three governments’ language policies have aimed at a reversal of this societal language shift. Today, the titular languages are dominant, but since most Soviet-time migrants have stayed in the Baltic States, Russian continues to be a strong language in all parts of society except public bodies. Language acquisition policies have, for the Russian-speaking population, aimed at ensuring compe-

tence in the titular languages, whereas English is today the first foreign language taught in schools. In addition, there has been a certain re-awakening of regional languages (Võru in Estonia, Latgalian in Latvia, Žemaitian in Lithuania). Language legislation requires that the titular languages be exclusively used in signage by public bodies, whereas on private signs they may be sided by any other language if these are not more dominant than the titular language.

### The Baltic States

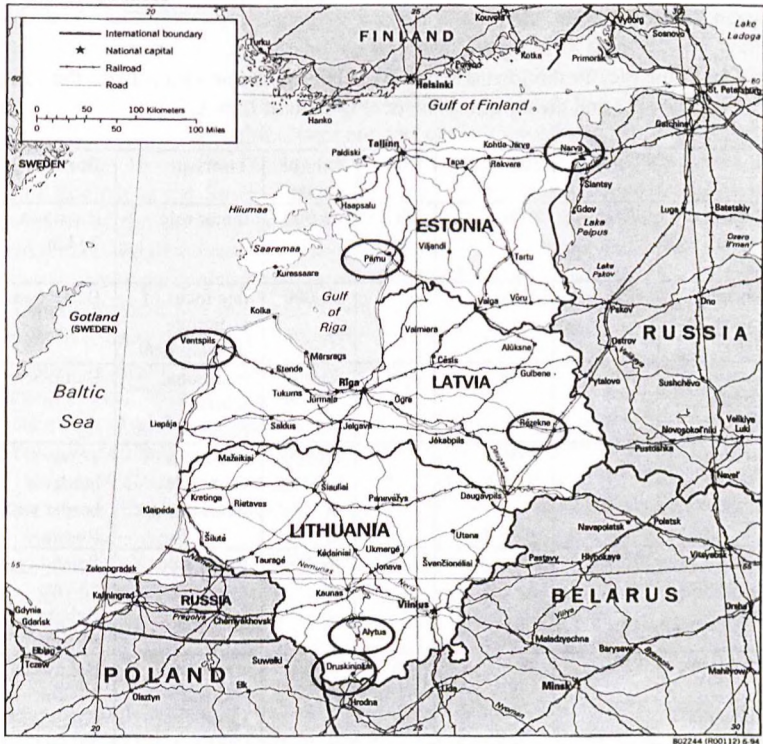


Figure 1: The towns in which the research was conducted

There has been relatively little research on the LL in the Baltic States so far. Besides our own activities (e.g. Lazdiņa/Marten 2009, Pošeiko 2009 and 2010, Marten 2010 and 2012), there are only a few studies such as Muth (2012) on Vilnius or Brown (2012) on Võru, none of which has included all three countries. The towns chosen in our project (cf. Figure 1) are, in the standards of the Baltic States, medium-sized



towns and regional centres. Four towns (in particular Druskininkai and Narva, to a lesser degree Rēzekne and Alytus) are closely located next to international borders (with Russia, Belarus and Poland respectively), whereas Ventspils and Pärnu are coastal towns. One town in each country (Pärnu, Ventspils, Druskininkai) focuses explicitly on tourism – Druskininkai and Pärnu are two also internationally reknown spa resorts. At the same time, Narva is an exception among our research areas in that it has a large majority of Russian-speakers – both as a result of its historical location on the border between Russian- and Western-oriented political entities, but also because of Soviet-time migration.

Table 1: Ethnicities in the towns under investigation. Information from the towns' web sites and the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia.

City	Titular nation	Russians	Poles	Inhabitants	Tourism	Border
Rēzekne (Latvia, 2010)	47%	44%	3%	35 000	minor role	Russia ca. 70 km
Ventspils (Latvia, 2010)	55%	29%	-	43 000	one focus of economic development	Baltic Sea
Pärnu (Estonia, 2008)	74%	14%	-	43 000	traditional tourism resort	Baltic Sea
Narva (Estonia, 2008)	4%	87%	-	66 000	one focus of economic development	Town border is border with Russia
Alytus (Lithuania, 2006)	97%	1%	1%	67 500	minor role	Poland ca. 55 km; Belarus ca. 65 km
Druskininkai (Lithuania, 2006)	82%	8%	6%	17 000	traditional tourism resort	Belarus ca. 10 km; Poland ca. 30 km

Table 1 shows the main ethnicities in the towns. Rēzekne and Ventspils have the most balanced composition of the titular population and Russians. Pärnu and Druskininkai are similar in their dominance of the titular nation, with sizeable minorities (Russian and Polish), whereas Alytus and Narva are the most monoethnic towns – with Alytus being Lithuanian- and Narva Russian-dominant.



### 3 *Linguae Francae* and the Role of LL for Tourism

#### English and Russian as *Linguae Francae*

In the scientific discussions on *linguae francae* and global language hierarchies, the analysis of English as a global language has been one of the most prominent debates of the past decades. Part of this discussion is the question whether English is “taking over” as the sole world language. The paradigm developed by Kachru since the 1980s looks at English as a language present almost everywhere, but with largely differing functions. Where English is an everyday language of many people, authors speak of the “inner” (English as L1) and “outer” (English mostly as L2) circles. In contrast, many other countries belong to what has been labelled the “extended” or “expanding” circle. The Baltic States are part of the expanding circle, but one might argue that they have gained this position only throughout the past 20 years, since the role of English in the Soviet Union was clearly limited. Crystal (2003, 28) writes that “most of the states of the former Soviet Union” belong to those parts of the world where “English has still a very limited presence”, although he calls the former Soviet Union “a particular growth area” (Crystal 2003, 113).

This rather neutrally descriptive paradigm of English stands in sharp contrast to authors like, most prominently, Robert Phillipson, who has labelled English a “killer language” by arguing that English is slowly taking over fundamental roles of other languages. This “diffusion of English” paradigm goes hand in hand with a spread of the ideology of global capitalism which is carried by English to the detriment of local cultures and languages and multilingualism (Phillipson 2009, 20-21).

The role of Russian in the global language scale has been characterised by being one of a handful of “super-central languages” in contrast to English as the only “hyper-central language” (cf. Calvet 2006, 61). Crystal (2003, 4) lists Russian among those second-rank languages which “have also developed a considerable official use”. In the Baltic States, Russian has been abandoned as a compulsory language, and it has therefore since about 1990 lost “many of its supercentral functions in the former Soviet Empire. English took over these linking tasks almost everywhere” (de Swaan 2001, 13). Yet, as Mikhilchenko/Trushkova (2001, 281) note, “the actual language competence of people changes quite slowly” and “Russian continues to maintain its high functional use and power”. They argue that Russian might on ex-Soviet Union territory “either become a *lingua franca* or a widespread foreign language”. Outside the ex-Soviet Union, however, the role of Russian is limited to the Russian diaspora and to a very limited role as a foreign language in higher education, media and business – thereby not reaching in any way the role of English (ibid, p. 283). In total, the authors see that “Russian has real opportunities of being an important regional language” (ibid., p. 288). Although it is the 7th strongest language in the world in terms of native speakers, the limitation to Russia and its neighbours hinders Russian from being a true world language.

When transferring the 3-circle-model from English to Russian, we might argue that the Baltic States during Soviet times belonged to a Russian “outer circle” (with a tendency more to the “inner” than to the “extended” side). There was a large number of L1 speakers, but it dominated in particular as a wide-spread L2 and a language of interethnic communication. In our context, it is therefore of interest whether the multilingual situation in the Baltic States is currently moving from an imbalance between the State languages with Russian to an imbalance between the State languages and English, and what the position of Russian and English is when contrasted to each other.

### Languages of tourism

The second theoretical issue in our chapter is the role of the LL in tourism. Tourism has been explored from an LL perspective by e.g. Thurlow/Jaworski (2010) regarding the semiotics of luxury tourism. Of more relevance for us is the role of languages for tourism as described by Kallen (2009, 271): for tourists, languages signify foreignness, being away from home, exotic places, pleasure or adventure. Kallen (2009, 275) anticipates 4 types of perceptions of tourists with regard to the LL: 1. a wish to get an authentic experience; 2. a need for security (i.e. not missing important information because of language barriers); 3. breaking away from normal routines; and 4. engaging in a journey of transformation – in order to create “special” memories.

We will therefore explore which role the LL plays in tourism in the Baltic States and how tourist services and language practices relate to each other. Also here, it is of interest to analyse if English is taking over the roles of Russian, and to see which role other international languages play. In the following, we are therefore focusing on LL items connected to tourism – in hotels, tourist information centres (TICs) or museums.

## 4 Quantitative Data from the 6 Towns

In our research, we documented all signs in the six town centres (i.e. the main shopping and administrative streets following Cenoz/Gorter 2006). In total, we found 23 languages. Table 2 summarises the first languages on the signs. It indicates how the titular languages dominate, followed by English, and with some distance, by Russian.

As Table 3 indicates, there is a remarkable difference in the percentage of multilingual signs in all towns. Narva, the town with the highest proportion of Russian L1 speakers, has the highest proportion of multilingual signs (42.4%). The three most dedicated tourist towns, Ventspils, Pärnu and Druskininkai, range between 35.9% and 30.3% multilingual signs. The lowest number of multilingual signs is found in

Alytus (16.6%), which is not surprising given its lack of tourism orientation and the largely monoethnic population, but also in Rēzekne (25.4%) with its almost equal composition of ethnic Latvians and Russians, and the additional component of Latgalian (cf. also Marten 2010 and 2012 on Rēzekne).

Table 2: Total numbers of first languages on signs in the six towns

Language	Amount of signs	%
Latvian	1326	27.9
Estonian	1016	20.8
Lithuanian	1017	20.8
English	730	15.1
Russian	325	6.7
German	38	0.8
Latin	35	0.7
French	22	0.5
Latgalian	16	0.3
Italian	15	0.2
Spanish	12	0.2
Polish	4	0.1
others	42	1
Unclear (i.e. unreadable, code-mixing or other reasons why a clear assignment was not possible)	238	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>4833</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3: Mono- and multilingual signs in the Baltic States

Rank	Town	Monolingual signs	Multilingual signs
1	Narva	57.6%	42.4%
2	Druskininkai	64.1%	35.9%
3	Pärnu	66.3%	33.7%
4	Ventspils	69.7%	30.3%
5	Rēzekne	74.6%	25.4%
6	Alytus	83.4%	16.6%

For getting more insight into languages in tourism, we separately investigated signs related to TICs, information stands, billboards, hotels, cultural centres and museums. Table 4 shows the numbers of monolingual and multilingual signs in the tourism sector: What is remarkable is the high number of multilingual signs in contrast to the much lower number of multilingual signs in the total data base: of the 415 tourism-related signs, 215 (51.8%) are monolingual and 200 (48.2%) are multilingual. 180 (or 83.7%) of the monolingual signs are in the titular languages. A few, however, are



in Russian (6.5%) or English (9.3%) – thereby a remarkable 16.3% of the monolingual tourism signs break legal regulations.

Table 4: Monolingual and multilingual signs in the tourism sector

Number of languages on a sign	Absolute	Relative
1 language	215	51.8%
2 languages	159	38.3%
3 languages	32	7.7%
4 languages	9	2.2%

Table 5 gives an overview of the languages found on these tourism-related signs.

Table 5: Languages on signs in the tourism sector

Town	Total	Titular languages	Russian	English	German	Latin	Polish	French	Italian	Finnish	Swedish
Rēzekne	66	62 93.4%	12 18.2%	14 21.2%	2 3.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ventspils	35	33 94.3%	7 20.0%	15 42.9%	0	1 2.9%	0	0	1 2.9%	0	0
Alytus	53	50 94.3%	0	17 32.1%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Druskininkai	144	136 94.4%	13 9.0%	62 43.1%	3 2.1%	0	6 4.2%	1 0.7%	0	0	0
Pärnu	23	21 91.3%	5 21.7%	14 60.9%	0	0	0	1 4.3%	0	0	0
Narva	96	72 75.0%	61 63.5%	41 42.7%	2 2.1%	3 3.2%	0	1 1.0%	0	1 1.0%	1 1.0%
Σ	415	374 89.7%	98 23.5%	163 39.1%	7 0.2%	4 0.1%	6 0.1%	3 0.1%	1 0.0%	1 0.0%	1 0.0%

The titular languages dominate also on the touristic signs: they are present on more than 90% of them. The exception is again Narva, where Estonian is present on only 75% of the signs, and also only in Narva is English (42.7%) not stronger than Russian (63.5%). In Alytus, Russian was not found at all; of the other towns, Russian is less present in Druskininkai (9%) but shows a fairly similar level in Rēzekne, Ventspils and Pärnu (18.2% to 21.7%). English is weakest in Rēzekne (21.2%) and Alytus (32.1%), stronger in Druskininkai (43.1%), Ventspils (42.9%) and Narva, with Pärnu at the top with 60.9%, where the town's focus on tourism seems to play a major role. In Narva there are even some monolingual Russian signs related to tourism, but signs without the titular language occasionally also exist elsewhere.

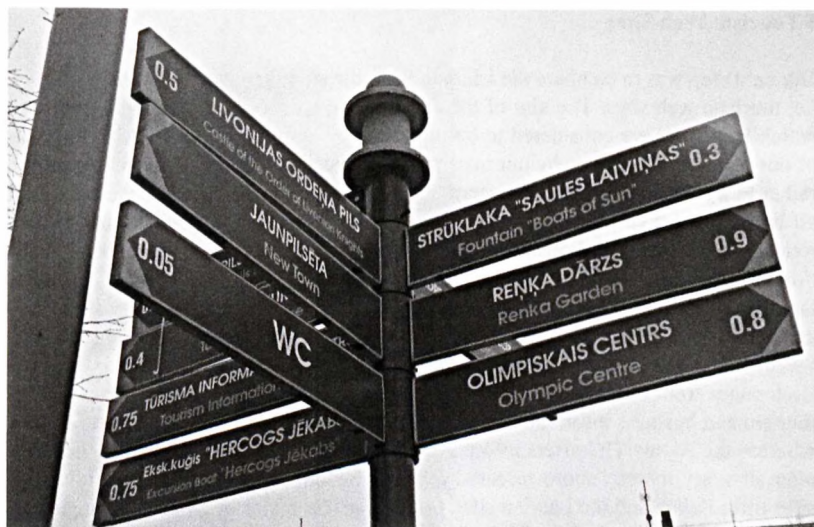


Figure 2: Tourist information in Ventspils (Latvian and English)

Other languages are rare on touristic signs. The strongest presence was found in Druskininkai, where the proximity of Poland can be felt in a few situations. Whereas there is some presence of German, French, Swedish and Finnish in Narva, there is interestingly no Finnish, Swedish or German in Pärnu. Belarusian or Ukrainian were not found at all, not even in Druskininkai, in spite of its reputation as a spa in the entire ex-Soviet Union, and the fact that the Belarusian state owns a hotel and a sanatorium there (which operates in Russian, but also has information in Lithuanian). Regional languages (Latgalian) do not feature at all. There are also no signs in Estonian/Latvian/Lithuanian outside the titular states – Russian and English are taken as granted in communication with the Baltic neighbours. In total, Lithuania is the country with the least presence of Russian in tourism. Estonia is the country where Russian is strongest – in particular in Narva, whereas Pärnu is more on one level with the Latvian towns under investigation. At the same time, Estonia is also the country with the highest appearance of English.

The specific results from the LL in the tourism sector thereby confirm the analysis of the entire data base, albeit with some modifications. The titular languages dominate, English is stronger than Russian, and other languages hardly appear. The only exception is Narva where Russian and Estonian are by far more balanced. German and French as classical languages of tourism play only minor roles, whereas other languages are directed by local needs – Polish appears only in Druskininkai, and the only instances of Swedish and Finnish were found in Estonia.

## 5 Tourism Web Sites

Our next step was to compare the LL data from the streets to data from virtual space, i.e. touristic web sites. The aim of this comparison was to gain broader insight into which languages are considered to be important by actors in tourism. Also this part of our research was driven by our interest in the question whether tourism is oriented rather to a post-Soviet or to a Western audience. The six official town web sites are all in the respective titular language, English and Russian; only Druskininkai theoretically offers pages in Polish and German, but they did not have any content at the time of investigation. The TIC sites show a more diverse picture: Besides the titular languages, English and Russian (in this order except for Ventspils and Druskininkai) are present everywhere, but in addition Narva's site has pages in German, Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian, whereas in Pärnu the only additional language is Finnish. Both pages from Latvia have a German and a Lithuanian version. The Druskininkai tourism and business information centre provides its site also in Swedish and Polish, whereas the Alytus TIC offers information in Polish, German and French. The Estonian sites are thereby more oriented towards Scandinavia, whereas the Lithuanian sites offer Polish and the Latvian sites Lithuanian. Of major international languages, all except Pärnu have sites in German, whereas only Alytus offers a version in French.

As the next step, we investigated the web sites of all hotels with internet presence in the six towns. In Narva, the sites exist in Estonian, English, Finnish and Russian (Hotels Inger and Narva), and additionally in Swedish (Hotel King). The vast number of hotels in Pärnu show a diverse picture: Estonian, English and Finnish are omnipresent, but there are individual hotels without Russian (Hotel Emmi). Many hotels have sites in other languages, most often in German and Swedish, but also in Latvian (e.g. Hotel Willa Wesset). Interestingly, Hotel Koidula Park's site opens at first in English before you may choose Estonian. In Ventspils, in addition to Latvian and English, Hotel Dzintarjūra has versions in Lithuanian and Russian, Hotel Jūras brīze in Russian and German, Hotel Vilnis in Russian, whereas Olimpiskā centra Ventpils does not have additional languages. The two major hotels in Rēzekne have web sites in Latvian, English, Russian and German. The websites of the large number of hotels in Druskininkai are usually (but not always) in Lithuanian, English, Polish and Russian; German is less frequent. In Alytus, Hotel Park Conference Centre offers its web site in English, Lithuanian, German, Polish and Russian, Hotel Dzukija in Lithuanian, English, Russian and Polish, whereas Hotels Ode, Senas namas and Vaidila only use Lithuanian and English.





Figure 3: Hotel information in Druskininkai featuring Lithuanian, English, Polish and Russian

In total, the picture is thereby quite diverse: The orientation of Estonia to Scandinavia becomes apparent, as does the presence of Polish in Lithuania, where the occasional lack of Russian is remarkable. Whereas there is a certain presence of Lithuanian in Ventspils and of Latvian in Pärnu, there is no presence of Latvian or Estonian in Lithuania. Among international languages, again, German is regularly present, whereas French almost does not feature at all. The order of English and Russian is interesting: English is most frequently offered as the second language (after the titular language), whereas Russian is usually offered only third, and sometimes even further at the bottom of the list. In Lithuania, the order of Polish, Russian and German varies.

## 6 Attitudes to Languages in the Tourism Sector

In order to identify attitudes and ideologies behind the language practices, we conducted and recorded about 30 loosely pre-structured interviews with persons working in the tourism sector and with locals who were present at places of relevance for

tourists. The interviews were conducted in Russian, Latvian or English, depending on the interlocutors, and aimed at gaining insight into perceptions of languages on signs and into the language policies by hotels, museums or TICs.

### Russian vs. English

When we inquired about Russian, most informants stressed the local rather than the international role. In this, respondents related Russian to the titular languages rather than to English. In Narva, we identified two types of attitudes towards Russian. Example 1 from an interview with a museum employee shows a prototypical negative attitude to Estonian. The informant stressed that locals (in particular the generation over 40-50) in places where Estonians are a local minority do not even understand information important for everyday life:

Example 1 “Now we have such a policy... You buy something and don’t know what it is... From the product affiches, people here can’t get information” (Narva, 2010).

Similarly, an informant in a church stressed that

Example 2 “Russian people they are Russian people, and anyway you can’t make them Estonian, it is senseless” (Narva, 2010).

Example 2 shows that some Russians look at requirements to know Estonian as a way of loosing their ethnic identity. It is remarkable in this context that in particular in Narva we encountered many sceptical reactions to our research. Respondents in shops repeatedly (and without us inquiring about it) stressed that all official documents and the shop names are Estonian, and that customers may address the shopkeepers in that language. At individual occasions we were asked to document our identity as (non-Estonian) researchers; people were obviously afraid that we were under-cover language inspectors. Another example was a German-style pub which had a menu in several languages (Estonian, Russian, English), but ordering food or drinks in any language except Russian (Estonian, English, German) was impossible. Interesting in this respect is also the frequent practice of writing Russian with Latin fonts (“Ujut”, “Metšta”, “Čeburashka”) in Narva. Upon our enquiry, respondents stressed that they are trying to fulfil legal requirements by making the names look “less Russian”.



Figure 4: Font-mixing in Narva: The Russian shop name “Чеburashka”, named after a Soviet-time children cartoon character, written in Latin fonts except for the initial letter. The explanation of shop (beebikeskus, “baby centre”) is in Estonian

The alternative view is a more loyal, pragmatic attitude to the situation. Our informant in the museum in Narva explained that

Example 3 “We are citizens, we have passed [the language test], learned, we are not shy to speak this language [Estonian], but when you wish they [the Estonians] are also switching to Russian” (Narva, 2010).

A remarkable conclusion by one respondent in a shop in Narva was:

Example 4 “Estonian is the state language, but Russian is for communication” (Narva, 2010).

Whereas the examples from Narva document the role of Russian as a local language, an employee in the Druskininkai TIC emphasised the role of Russian also as a language of tourism and of international communication:

Example 5 Informant: “Mostly tourists come from countries around us: Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Kaliningrad, Poland. (...)”

Researcher: And from Belarus?

I: Also from Belarus.

R: And in which languages do tourists take information in your centre?

I: I think the most popular language is Russian” (Druskininkai, 2010).

On the role of touristically relevant information in English on signs or in brochures, one respondent from Narva answered:



Example 6 “I think here in Narva should be more written signs, information in Russian. In English, no... We don’t have... Why English for us? We have to know and use our own languages” (Narva, 2010).

Similarly, our informant in the Druskininkai TIC answered with regard to visitors from neighbouring countries:

Example 7 Researcher: “And people from Latvia or Estonia they don’t complain that there is no information in Latvian or Estonian, just in English or Russian, or...?”

Informant: Mostly no. Most people know Russian.

R: And people from Latvia mostly take it in Russian?

I: Mostly, yes, in Russian, some, some take it in English” (Druskininkai, 2010).

The example from Hotel Laisves in Druskininkai confirmed the continuing role of Russian as a *lingua franca*:

Example 8 Researcher: “What languages do tourists use?”

Informant: Russian and Polish. English is not used often. English very rarely. Really there are few people who come and speak very good English. Only, let’s say, young Poles come who come and know English. But we speak Russian (with them) too” (Druskininkai, 2010).

Examples 7 and 8 show that English is not seen as the more “natural” language to be used in the tourism sector. Similarly, the receptionist of a hotel in Druskininkai explained why the hotel has a Lithuanian name:

Example 9 “It is usually in big cities where names are in English. But our town is small and we didn’t think that we have to do something in English. We just called it in our own language and that’s it” (Druskininkai, 2010).

Another example from a hotel in Druskininkai, however, showed that both Russian and English are needed as *linguae francae*. To the question if more signs on streets should be in Russian, the respondent answered that Russian is useful “because in Lithuania we have many Russians and many Poles come who also understand Russian, but of course English should be there too.” It is therefore less a question of either Russian or English, but more a perception of both languages being important today.

In order to get more insight into perceptions of English, we occasionally asked more provocative questions. This is an example from a butcher in Rēzekne:

Example 10 Researcher: “Why is there nothing written in English? Today it is en vogue to use English.

Informant: No, we live in Latvia. In whatever country you are, everything is in the State language” (Rēzekne, 2010).

On the other hand, in a clothes shop with an English name in Rėzekne, the explanation was that “it is more interesting, it sounds more attractive”. We can conclude that English in less touristic situations has a certain prestige for some respondents, whereas others reject this role. In tourism, on the other hand, pragmatic attitudes prevail: English is seen as important, but to a lesser degree than Russian – which stands in contrast to the quantitative results. This conclusion is confirmed by our data from Alytus, where we found generally very little awareness of LL issues. Many unimaginative names of shops (e.g. “Shoes” for a shoe-shop, “At the park” for a café opposite a park) in Lithuanian showed that the LL reflects little orientation towards tourism or to languages as marketing instruments.

### Neighbouring and regional languages

A second focus of our research was the role of regional and neighbouring languages. In contrast to the opinion expressed in example 8, another informant in a hotel in Druskininkai revealed a different perception of Polish visitors:

Example 11 Researcher: “And in which languages do tourists mostly speak with you?  
Informant: Of course in Lithuanian, in Russian, English and Polish. When Poles come they don’t speak any other language, only their own” (Druskininkai, 2010).

Similarly, the Rėzekne TIC stressed the importance of information in different languages, including neighbouring languages:

Example 12 “I think that those languages will also be used in the future – Latvian, Russian, English, German should be added and those of our neighbours, Estonian and Lithuanian. It is obvious that when you can give people material in their own language, this is one of the best marketing tools which you can have” (Rėzekne, 2010).

We then also inquired about regional languages. In an interview in the TIC in Druskininkai, we asked:

Example 13 Researcher: “What can you say about regional languages in Lithuania or dialects, about Žemaitian and others? Do they play any role in tourism? (...)  
Informant: Sometimes it is difficult to understand (...) the people from other parts of Lithuania if they speak fluently in a regional language.. (...)  
R: Yes, but do you think if you put here some information in Žemaitian, which reaction would there be from people who are not from Žemaitia and from people who are from Žemaitia? What do you think?  
I: I think that variety is the same, they only pronounce differently endings, so... there are not a lot of differences” (Druskininkai, 2010).

This answer reflects that the TIC does not have any particular interest in using local linguistic traditions for touristic purposes. On the other hand, an interview in the TIC in Rėzekne highlighted the touristic potential of Latgalian:

Example 14 “The Latgalian language for people from Vidzeme or Kurzeme (other regions of Latvia) will be even more difficult than English or German. But they are interested in Latgalian in small portions. When they come they enjoy a lot if their hosts speak Latgalian, even if they often don’t understand a lot. But reading, they surely wouldn’t.”

“Tourists are looking for something interesting – but it has to be on a professional level. It can’t be the language just for the sake of the language, something has to come with it.”

“Foreigners appreciate Latgalian even more than Latvians, this is what we should understand. We should orient ourselves to foreign tourists.”

This opinion suggests that Latgalian is interesting for tourists, that they might like to listen to it or see a menu in Latgalian as part of an experience which makes their trip more exotic. Therefore, we conclude that Latgalian has a potential as an original, specific element which could attract tourists and also have a marketing value and thereby create additional income (through selling booklets, maps, souvenirs), yet within certain limits.

## 7 Conclusion

The results of our quantitative research show that the main language in the LL of the Baltic States, next to the titular languages, is English, except for Narva where Russian is more important. This view is confirmed by the quantitative investigation of tourism-related signs and web sites. Yet, our interviews reveal that this is a rather superficial view: Russian is by far more important than reflected in the LL. This applies to the needs of the local population, but also to tourism where Russian is still an important lingua franca. Comparatively monolingual environments exist in those places which do not focus on tourism, i.e. in Alytus and Rēzekne, whereas the use of Polish in Druskininkai reflects the proximity of the border with Poland. In Pärnu and Ventspils, there was more stress on English than elsewhere, whereas other international languages are rare.

In total, our research therefore enables us to assign 3 functions to English in the Linguistic Landscape of the Baltic States. First, it is used for names of shops, hotels, cafes etc, such as the club “Amber”, a shop “Office day”, or a “100% China restaurant”, sometimes also in forms of code-mixing as in the hotel “Grand Spa Lietuva”. Second, English is a language of practical information for tourists in shops, banks or booklets. Third, English is a language of conversation in touristic contexts. Yet, the preference of English is also a question of generation, it is used mostly by young people.

Russian, on the other hand, is a language of daily conversations of locals in Rēzekne or Narva, but also for touristic purposes in Druskininkai. The second function of Russian is to provide written information for local people, in particular in Narva, for instance the working hours of shops, service information or advertisements. A third function is its role alongside English as a tourist language in written information in hotels, spas etc.



Table 6: Functions of English and Russian in the Baltic States

English	Russian
1. Shop names etc. (written)	1. Local information (written)
2. Information: shops, banks, menus, booklets (written)	2. Tourist information (written)
3. Tourist guides, mostly for young people (oral)	3. Daily conversations (oral)

Therefore it can be argued that the Baltic States are to a certain degree in a transformation process from Russian to English, but this is very slow. In many situations, local needs and the needs of Russian as a neighbouring language are still more important. This applies even in the tourism sector. As it was stressed by one respondent in Rēzekne – many shops received English names in the beginning of 1990s, when people wanted to show their orientation to the West and avoid Russian.

Today, people think more pragmatically, and Russian is seen as a language to address both locals and tourists from the ex-Soviet Union. English and Russian have in common, however, that both have a potential to attract tourists and business customers. English is a means for orientation in more tourist-oriented towns, and at the same time seen as more neutral than Russian. Russian evokes more emotional reactions – as a language of Soviet occupation, or, by Russian speakers, as an every-day language which should be more widely present.

When looking at the 3-circle-model of English, the Baltic States are today full-fledged members of the expanding circle. The view of English as a “killer language” which destroys local linguistic traditions, however, is too strong. Russian, at the same time, keeps its outer-circle position as a lingua franca and as an L1 of parts of the population, even though it has moved more to the periphery in the past 20 years. Instead of seeing English as a threat, it is therefore legitimate to speak of English as a language alongside other languages: It has taken some lingua franca functions for a younger, Western-oriented audience, but hardly manages to get access to the core functions of Russian. At the same time, the titular languages are stable both on written signs and as oral languages for internal communication within each of the Baltic States.

When looking at the 4 roles of languages for tourists as identified by Kallen, we can first summarise that an authentic experience exists regarding the titular languages – they are so regularly present that visitors get a clear picture that they are the dominant languages in the Baltic States. Yet, the very moderate use of regional languages such as Latgalian shows that there is hardly any attempt to exploit the entire linguistic repertoire of the Baltic States for touristic purposes, even if our interviews revealed that there might be a potential in doing so. Second, tourists are encouraged to use languages in which they feel secure. Regarding Russian, this is strongest in Narva, but even in Lithuania with its relatively small number of Russian speakers, Russian is regularly present for touristic purposes. Yet, it is also possible

to receive all tourist services in English. Third, the linguistic aspect of breaking away from normal routines can hardly be seen in the LL: Practicing other languages for the sake of the linguistic experience is possible, but not a focus of tourism in the Baltic States. Finally, the aspect of a “special” experience in which language is a major tool of creating memories is also not dominant. Quite the contrary – for tourists from the Baltic States and other post-socialist countries the linguistic experience can be neglected, although Western tourists might perceive their visit to the Baltic States from this exotic perspective. In total, however, it is pragmatism which characterises languages practices in the Baltic States – in the LL but even more so in oral communication. In this, English plays an important role today, but it has not “taken over” all functions formerly fulfilled by Russian.

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### Web sites (all accessed January 30, 2011)

#### Municipalities:

Narva: [www.narva.ee](http://www.narva.ee)

Pärnu: [www.visitparnu.com](http://www.visitparnu.com)

Rēzekne: [www.rezekne.lv](http://www.rezekne.lv)

Alytus: <http://www.ams.lt/New/index.php?Lang=34&ItemId=27350>

Ventspils: <http://www.ventspils.lv/News/frontpage.htm?Lang=LV>

Druskininkai: <http://www.druskininkai.lt/index.php/lt/>

#### TICs:

Narva: <http://tourism.narva.ee>

Ventspils: <http://www.tourism.ventspils.lv/>



Alytus: <http://www.alytus-tourism.lt>  
Druskininkai: <http://info.druskininkai.lt/>  
Rēzekne: <http://www.rezekne.lv/index.php?id=89>  
Pärnu: <http://www.visitparnu.com>

Hotels:

Narva:  
Inger: [www.inger.ee](http://www.inger.ee)  
Narva: <http://www.narvahotell.ee>  
King: <http://www.hotelking.ec/en/restaurant.html>

Pärnu:

Emmi: <http://www.emmi.ee>  
Willa Wesset: <http://www.weset.ee/weset/index.php>  
Koidula Park: <http://www.koidulaparkhotell.ee>

Ventspils:

Dzintarjūra: [www.dzintarjura.lv](http://www.dzintarjura.lv)  
Jūras brīze: [www.hoteljurasbrize.lv](http://www.hoteljurasbrize.lv)  
Vilnis: [www.hotelvilnis.lv](http://www.hotelvilnis.lv)  
Olimpiskā centra: <http://www.hotelocventspsils.lv>

Rēzekne:

Kolonna: <http://www.hotelkolonna.com/public/29192.html>  
Latgale: [www.hotellatgale.lv](http://www.hotellatgale.lv)  
Druskininkai general hotel web site: <http://www.hotel-druskininkai.lt/>

Alytus:

Alytus Hotel Park Conference Centre and Residence: <http://www.nemunaspark.lt/>  
Dzukija: <http://www.hoteldzukija.lt>  
Ode: <http://www.ode.lt/>  
Senas namas: <http://www.senasnamas.lt/>  
Vaidila: <http://www.vaidila.lt/>

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia: <http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/dati/data-23959.html>

Map of the Baltic States: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Baltic\\_states\\_utexas.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Baltic_states_utexas.jpg)