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Introduction and Contextualization

This chapter deals with current issues in bilingual education in the framework of language and educational policies in Latvia, and also outlines similarities or common tendencies in the two other Baltic states, Estonia and Lithuania. As commonly understood in the 21st century, the term ‘bilingual education’ includes ‘multilingual education, as the umbrella term to cover a wide spectrum of practice and policy’ (García, 2009: 9).

Multilingualism in the Baltic states, as in many other European countries, is observable best in linguistic practices (in formal oral communication, in situations of informal language use, in public written texts, etc.). This contemporary diversity of codes and registers is increasingly reflected also in formalized educational contexts. Unlike the traditional way in which the instruction of languages and of subjects took place largely separately (monoglossic ideology), multilingual and multidisciplinary instruction has become more frequent. This approach may be labelled ‘heteroglossic ideology’ (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; De Korne, 2012; García, 2009); in recent years it has also been described as part of translanguaging (Adamson & Fujimoto-Adamson, 2012; Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García, 2009).

The disadvantages of monoglossic ideology are evidenced in its lack of consideration of social reality, in that it ignores the diverse multilingual practices observable in society: the use of multiple languages or dialects, code-switching within a single speech act, and so on. Speakers as participants of speech acts possess plurilingual repertoires, which they vary in different contexts depending on the situation. The monoglossic ideology in current bilingualism research, in this sense, is contrasted with views ‘based on Bakhtin’s (1981) use of heteroglossic as multiple voices. A heteroglossic ideology of bilingualism considers multiple language practices in interrelationship’ (García, 2009: 7).

At present, the heteroglossic ideology is reflected in the educational sphere through the expression of alternative, non-traditional views (ideologies) in the planning and implementation (language management) of language instruction. This can be seen as a deconstruction of boundaries

between languages, areas of study and even social roles (teacher as student and student as teacher). As such, the heteroglossic ideology is also in sharp contrast to traditions of a monolingual habitus which through discursive practices create a linguistic environment in which the use of one major language of society is considered the norm. In particular, in states whose identity is rooted in the 19th-century concept of the nation, the state, its educational system and society at large interact in postulating and maintaining the dominance of monolingual practices (see for example Ellis *et al.*, 2010; Gogolin, 2008; Gogolin & Kroon, 2000). Replacing the monolingual by a more multilingual habitus in education is, at the same time, difficult, as it is essential for shaping more respect for the coexistence of different codes as well as their interaction in globalized realities.

The process known as translanguaging is present in education as the transition from one language to another in a given speech situation, for instance through code-switching (also called ‘flexible bilingualism’), in multilingual group works, translations, text syntheses in multiple languages, and so on. Translanguaging is described also as a process in which code-switching is seen as a tool in pedagogical approaches through which meanings in classroom settings are negotiated, in particular multilingual ones (Adamson & Fujimoto-Adamson, 2012).

In this chapter, we will first give an overview of the current socio-linguistic situation of Latvia and provide relevant background information in order to provide a context for the recent developments in multiform models of bilingualism (for an overview of patterns and practices of multilingualism in the Baltic states, see Lazdiņa & Marten, 2019). The chapter deals with languages at schools as subjects and as instruction tools and it highlights recent important changes in these, including new ideologies, approaches and models (e.g. heteroglossic versus monoglossic ideology, and the CLIL approach).

The chapter then turns to the interplay between less used languages and international languages (particularly English), their prestige and functionality in the educational domain and future challenges. From an economic perspective (Grin, 2003), regional languages with a small number of speakers (e.g. Latgalian in Latvia) are the most endangered languages, but also for less used national languages such as Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian it is necessary to define their roles in the globalized world of the 21st century, including in education. For that reason, it is very important to identify motivation and utilitarian reasons for maintaining and learning regional or less used national languages and to create an attractive, student-friendly learning environment using digital tools and multilingual approaches. Positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity among students, parents and other social actors are crucial for the development of language or educational policies for the protection and promotion of multilingualism. In this sense, this chapter discusses current issues in educational policies and acquisition planning with regard

to regional, minority, official and international languages of Latvia in the context of the Baltic states; acquisition is seen here as a continuation and aetiological result of sociolinguistic processes.

The linguistic environment of Latvia in the context of Baltic states

With a population of 1,986,096 in 2015,¹ the Republic of Latvia is the second largest of the three Baltic states (Lithuania² has a population of 2,957,532 and Estonia³ of 1,313,271). The dominant language of Latvia nowadays is Latvian. It is the only official (state) language and the first language of around 60% of the population. The 2011 population census revealed that Latvian is the main everyday home language of 62.1% of the population (Latvijas Republikas Centrālā statistikas pārvalde, 2013). Russian is the biggest minority language, spoken as a first language by around one-third of the population (37.2% of the population claim it to be their first home language).

All three Baltic states are post-Soviet transformation societies, with complex patterns of multilingualism. In short, the degree of multilingualism in terms of the proportion of the population for whom a language other than the titular language of the country is the dominant language gives a ranking of Latvia > Estonia > Lithuania; that is, Latvia has the highest proportion of minorities, Lithuania the smallest.

Latvian and Russian

Most Russian L1-speakers (or their ancestors) came to Latvian territory during Soviet times. In 1989, less than 10% of the Russian-speaking population were traditional Russian-speakers (e.g. Russians who had come to the territory as part of an administrative elite in Tsarist times, but also 'Old Believers' who settled in the area of contemporary Latvia in the 17th century, after being expelled from Russia for religious reasons) and their descendants (Apine & Volkovs, 2007). In the perception of the ethnic Latvian population, there is a large gap between these 'old' Russians, who are referred to as 'our' Russians, and Soviet-era migrants (Lazdiņa *et al.*, 2011); while the former are seen as traditional locals, the latter are largely perceived as immigrants.

Whereas Russian was the dominant language in all domains of higher prestige during Soviet times, Latvian has replaced Russian as the language of administration and the state since the re-establishment of Latvian independence in 1991. Data from 2008 from the longitudinal 'Language' research study (conducted since 1996) show that in situations where the use of language is regulated by official rules, such as the Language law, for instance at workplaces, the speaking of Latvian during the period 1998–2008 increased rapidly and dominates today. In contrast, in situations where language use is more a matter of individual choice (e.g. on the street, in shops, in communication with friends) Russian is spoken

more often (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2008). In many domains, however, Latvian society functions fully bilingually – there are schools with Latvian and Russian as languages of instruction, media in both languages and there are no restrictions on everyday practices. This reflects the aim of official Latvian language policy since 1991, which has been to develop Latvian as the ‘integrating language’ of Latvian society, that is, to create sufficient competence in Latvian among non-L1 speakers of Latvian and to promote its use in different domains. Russian, on the other hand, continues to play an important role in society not only as the L1 of about one-third of the population but also as a widespread second language and lingua franca for international purposes. As a language of inter-ethnic communication within Latvia (between ethnic Latvians, ethnic Russians and persons who migrated to Latvia from other Soviet Republics), Russian is still of importance among the population which grew up during Soviet times, whereas in the younger generation communication is more balanced between Latvian and Russian.

Similarly, Estonian census data from 2012 reveal that 68.7% of the population of Estonia defined themselves as Estonians and 24.8% as Russians (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2012), and similar proportions used the respective language at home. In Lithuania, the ethnic composition is more dominated by the titular Lithuanians (84.2% in 2011, with 6.6% Poles and 5.8% Russians) (Statistics Lithuania, 2011). In the census, almost all (99.2%) ethnic Lithuanians claimed Lithuanian as their mother tongue, while ethnic Poles (77.1%) and Russians (87.2%) displayed slightly lower percentages of equivalence of ethnicity and mother tongue, whereas smaller minorities showed much lower maintenance of the language of their ethnicity (Belarusians 18.4%, Ukrainians 31.9%). Consequently, 0.6% of the population claimed two mother tongues (usually Lithuanian and Russian or Lithuanian and Polish) (Statistics Lithuania, 2011).

Lesser-used varieties

The only two languages besides Latvian which are mentioned in the Latvian constitution are Livonian and Latgalian. Livonian is an autochthonous Finno-Ugric micro-language which does not have any traditional mother tongue speakers anymore, but continues to be used as a language acquired in a formal environment as part of a small revival movement of enthusiasts by a handful of ‘new speakers’, that is, ‘individuals with little or no home or community exposure to a minority language but who instead acquire it through immersion or bilingual educational programs, revitalization projects or as adult language learners’ (O’Rourke *et al.*, 2015: 1).

Latgalian, on the other hand, is a Baltic variety closely related to Latvian. The Latvian state officially recognizes Latgalian as a ‘historical variant of Latvian’. From a perspective of European languages it may be classified as a regional language and relates to Latvian in similar ways

as, say, Kashubian to Polish, Scots to Scottish English or Low German to Standard High German. In linguistic terms, Latgalian has a number of structural features (*Abstand*) and a separate historical development, including a tradition of a written standard (*Ausbau*), which allows for a classification as a language in its own right. The debate on the perception of Latgalian was fought somewhat fiercely in academic and political circles, but the view offered by the ISO classification as one of two varieties alongside Standard Latvian under the umbrella of the Latvian language (similar to Bokmål and Nynorsk in Norway, for example) seems to be a feasible compromise (SIL International, 2017).

In cultural and historic terms, Latgalian is connected to the region of Latgale, the eastern-most of the four Latvian regions, which borders Russia and Belarus in the east and south-east, and according to some views extends towards the border with Lithuania in the south. In the 2011 Latvian census, 8.8% of the population (165,000 individuals) reported that they use Latgalian on an everyday basis, and in the region of Latgale 35.5% answered that they used Latgalian regularly.

In the context of the Baltic states, the sociolinguistic situation of Latgalian is comparable to that of the Võro language, the language of the central part of south Estonia. Two hundred years ago this variety was represented in its written form by the Tartu dialect and

its popular name was the Tartu language ('tarto kiil') but today the gravity of action for their own language has carried to Võromaa. Metaphorically, in the 11th hour the Võro people have come to see that the local language/dialect has value and the undergoing language shift should somehow be reversed. Contemporary South Estonian is for its users primarily an emotionally close language of the home and local landscape, which cannot be forced upon other South Estonians. (Saar, n.d.)

There are fewer users of Võro than of Latgalian – approximately 70,000 active and passive users of this language all around the world (Saar, n.d.).

In Lithuania, there is no such strong tradition regarding regional languages and their use in education or other public domains. However, similar to the situation in Latvia and Estonia, in addition to standard Lithuanian there are dialects somewhat corresponding to ethnographic regions. The Samogitian dialect is unique and is sometimes called a language and is used on some local signs (Žemaitis, 2015).

Minority languages

Other languages of Latvia are traditional minority languages such as Polish or Lithuanian. Like Russian, these are not recognized by law as official languages, but they enjoy financial and institutional support in certain areas such as education or culture. However, in the 2011 population census only 0.1% of the population stated that they use Ukrainian in everyday communication, and this is also the case for Polish and

Lithuanian. Similar minority languages exist in Estonia and Lithuania. In comparison with both other Baltic countries, however, Lithuania is ethnically more homogeneous (see above).

It has to be added that many non-Russian minorities during Soviet times did not speak the language of the ethnic group they claimed to be part of, resulting in a Russification of formerly non-Russian speakers (e.g. ethnic Belarusians or Poles). This is one of the reasons why Russian has remained the lingua franca among ethnic minorities even after the Baltic states regained independence in 1991. The Russification of non-Russian minorities was also visible in the educational domain: in the Soviet period, the division of schools was based on the language of instruction (i.e. schools with Russian as the main language of instruction and schools mainly operating in Latvian, Estonian or Lithuanian). The Soviet education system and the dominant position of the Russian language in the public sphere had a severe impact on the skills of ethnic minorities in the titular languages. According to the 1989 census of the Soviet Union, only 15% of Russians in Estonia and 22% of Russians in Latvia were fluent in Estonian and Latvian, respectively (Pavlenko, 2008).

International languages

The most common foreign language in Latvia today is English, albeit with a lower level of competence than in many western European countries. As a lingua franca, English has been on the rise in recent years, but Russian still continues to play an important role as a language of communication with other former Soviet states. German has largely lost the importance which it had in the territories of today's Latvia and Estonia before the independence of the Baltic states in 1918 and the repatriation of most ethnic Germans to Germany in 1939. German as a traditional strong foreign language in the region is in decline (only around 8% of the inhabitants of Latvia have knowledge of German). Other foreign languages are rare.

In Lithuania, the situation is similar: competence in Russian and English correlates with the age group, as becomes apparent from the results of the census 2011. As shown in Figure 9.1, English and Russian remain the most popular languages among young people in Lithuania. In 2011, almost half of those with a command of English were aged 15–29. Persons having a command of Russian mostly were older than 30.

Similar tendencies regarding the correlation between a command of English or Russian and age are seen in Estonia. Soler-Carbonell argues:

Younger Russian speakers, for their part, are learning more Estonian (as well as English) than the older generations, who tended to be more monolingual in Russian. Among younger speakers, English becomes a viable option in case Estonian (or a mixture of Estonian and Russian) is not enough to get by and communicate effectively. (Soler-Carbonell, 2015: 9–10)

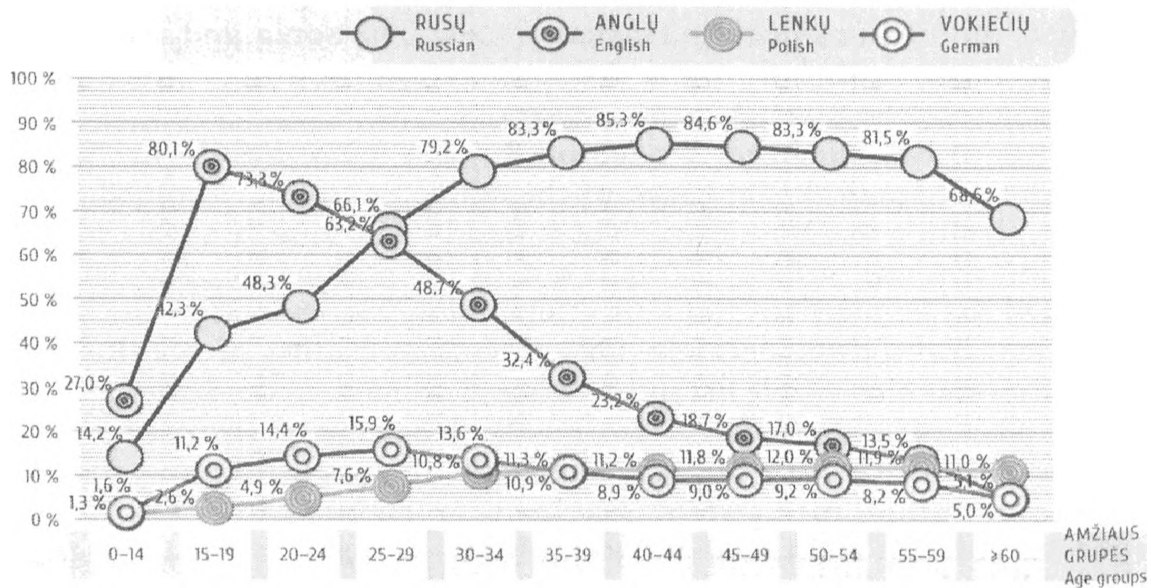


Figure 9.1 Population by command of languages and age group
Source: Lietuvos Statistikos Departamentas/Statistics Lithuania (2012: 33)

In summary, we can conclude that all three Baltic states are Post-Soviet transformation societies with strong official language laws which declare the titular languages (Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian) as only state languages, but also with a high proportion of ethnic and linguistic minorities – in particular Russians in Latvia and Estonia. In spite of expanding the functions of the titular languages after the Soviet period, Russian today continues to play an important role in society as a native language and a widespread second language and lingua franca.

The most common foreign language in all three Baltic States today is English. As a lingua franca, English has been on the rise in recent years, but Russian continues to play an important role as a language of communication with other countries of the former Soviet Union.

Lesser used varieties such as Latgalian in Latvia and Võro in Estonia realize functions of regional languages and can be observed in oral or written use, including in school. In Lithuania, there is no such strong tradition regarding regional languages and their use in education or other public domains. However, the Samogitian dialect is sometimes called a language and is used on some local public signs.

Languages in Education

As mentioned above, two school systems (Russian and Latvian) existed in Latvia until the mid-1990s as a legacy of the Soviet period, each with its own curriculum. Ethnic Latvians mostly went to schools

with Latvian as the language of instruction, while ethnic Russians and other minorities overwhelmingly attended schools with Russian language instruction. After the re-establishment of Latvian independence, other minorities (Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Jews and Roma) restored the educational and cultural infrastructure which had been destroyed during Soviet times. Schools or classes were supported by municipal governments and the Latvian Ministry of Education; some support was also given from outside Latvia. In these schools, schooling in Latvian was accompanied by instruction in the native language and culture (Muiznieks, 2004).

A new law on education was adopted in 1998, and since 1999 minority schools in Latvia (in practice, mostly Russian-medium schools) have been providing bilingual education, first in primary schools, followed by secondary schools in 2004. According to Muiznieks (2004), 'in early 2003 minority secondary schools already had a curriculum in which about 52 percent of all instruction took place in Latvian/bilingually, and 48 percent took place in minority languages'. Since 2004, secondary schools have been entitled to determine which subjects are taught in Latvian, but the total proportion should amount to at least 60% of all subjects (that is, 40% can be taught in minority languages or bilingually). Since 2018, new reforms regarding the schools of ethnic minorities have been under discussion and partly implemented. Already in pre-schools, starting from the age of five, new education guidelines will be introduced in the school year 2019/20, providing a bigger role for the Latvian language in the learning process. A new bilingual education model will be introduced in grades 1–6 ensuring that at least 50% of the subjects are taught in Latvian, and in grades 7–9 ensuring that at least 80% of the study content in 2019/20 will be in Latvian. The final exams at the end of grade 9 will be held entirely in Latvian. Starting from the school year 2021/22, all subjects of general education in high school (grades 10–12) will be taught only in Latvian, while children of ethnic minorities will continue to learn their native language as L1; literature and other subjects related to culture and history will be taught in the respective minority language.

In all Latvian schools the first foreign language (English) is taught from grade 1, the second foreign language (usually German or Russian) from grade 6.

Changes in bilingual education policies in Latvia and in instruction in Latvian as a second language since the 1990s

More than 20 years have passed since the Latvian government first started to offer four models for organizing bilingual education in minority schools (i.e. mostly schools with a Russian focus). In all four models there is a fixed number of hours to be spent on language and literature in both Latvian and the minority languages. Subjects are taught in Latvian,

Russian or bilingually. In the beginning it was difficult to determine how teachers interpreted the term ‘bilingually’: interpretations included, among others, speaking in Russian but using key terms in Latvian and Russian (i.e. speaking in two languages during lessons) to communication in Latvian but providing texts for reading at home in Russian.

The difference between the models is mainly quantitative: how many subjects are taught in which language – and how quickly is Latvian introduced as a language of instruction. The choice of model depends, on the one hand, on the ideologies of the school principals, who are forced to react to parents’ demands to adopt a Russian-dominant or a more balanced bilingual path, not least in times of demographically decreasing numbers of children, which threaten schools with the possibility of closure if they cannot attract enough parents and hence pupils. On the other hand, the model chosen often simply depends on the proficiency in Latvian of the teachers in these schools, most of whom are L1-speakers of Russian. The following is a short overview of all four models applied in primary schools, that is, from grade 1 to grade 9 (in all cases, the minority language and its literature are additionally taught in the minority language, and Latvian language and literature are taught in Latvian):

- (1) In model 1, the only subject taught in the mother tongue (in most cases Russian) is mathematics in grades 1–4 (and health in grade 5). Other subjects, such as sciences and arts, are taught bilingually (in total around five subjects).
- (2) In model 2, the only subjects taught in the pupils’ L1 are computer science (one hour in grade 7) and physics/chemistry (four to five hours in grades 8 and 9). In this model more subjects are taught bilingually (typically 10 subjects).
- (3) In model 3, during the first school years more subjects are taught in the L1 and the number of subjects taught in Latvian gradually increases every year. In grade 9, almost all subjects are taught in Latvian or bilingually.
- (4) In model 4, mathematics, the sciences, sports and arts are taught in the L1 until grade 3, and from grade 4 these subjects and others (in total around seven subjects) are taught in Latvian or bilingually.

All four models have in common that they aim to guarantee a sufficient command of Latvian for successful participation in Latvian society. In Choumak’s terms, models 1 and 2 are ‘hard transitional’, and models 3 and 4 ‘soft transitional’ (Batelaan *et al.*, 2002).

The most popular model in terms of how often they were chosen by schools was model 3 – that is, a gradual transition to Latvian as a language of instruction. In 1999/2000 it was chosen by about half of the 244 minority schools (LVA, n.d.). In addition to these four standard models recommended by the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science,

however, minority schools are given the opportunity to develop their own models.

As in Latvia, educational reforms in the 1990s were also carried out in Estonia. A bilingual education reform was implemented in the form of an immersion programme for Russian-speaking students, similar in its overall goals to Canadian French immersion programmes.

In spite of the low competence in Latvian among parts of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia, the implementation of bilingual education in Latvia repeatedly met with protests from Russian-speakers who argued in favour of more protection of their mother tongue. Even though competence in Russian among ethnic Russians in Latvia was (and is) not under threat and the regular use of Russian in most domains of society continues, these protests received much attention in the media. The results of the reforms were, however, largely positive: during the first 10 years, Latvian language skills among youth increased dramatically. In 2009, the Latvian Language Agency conducted a survey in which one of the questions addressed Latvian language skills. Among people with a language other than Latvian as L1, 64% of the respondents in the age group 17–25 years answered that they knew Latvian well, 30% claimed moderate skills and 6% answered ‘difficult to say’ (LVA, 2012). This shows that, in comparison with the period before the educational reform, knowledge of Latvian as a second language has improved considerably.

It was not only the bilingual education reform in itself that had an impact on competence in Latvian as a second language. It was a synergistic process in which sweeping changes took place also in the teaching of Latvian as a second language. An analysis of textbooks (Lazdiņa, 2007) showed that the focus of these books until the middle of the 1990s was on the development of competence in reading and writing Latvian. There was no integrated attempt to acquire all four main language skills (i.e. also speaking and listening). Since the middle of the 1990s, however, major changes have taken place in the selection of the texts. Earlier textbooks predominantly included fictional texts; special attention was given to analysing descriptions of wartime events as well as of Soviet life. Since the middle of the 1990s, however, the stylistic diversity of the texts has grown enormously, with much greater consideration being given to the typical interests of pupils in different age groups. Also with regard to grammar, major changes occurred. For a long time, there was a focus on structures in the acquisition of Latvian, and a dominance of form over semantic and pragmatic aspects of language. This was accompanied by rote memorization of isolated, context-unrelated forms. The cardinal changes in the middle of the 1990s introduced functional-pragmatic methods of language acquisition, with topics relating to everyday life, including different types of business correspondence, work with authentic texts and acquisition of communicative units which are used to express everyday needs in authentic contexts.

Classroom observation research from 2007, led to the conclusion that teachers of Latvian as a second language during their lessons often did not allow unplanned discussions initiated by pupils (Lazdiņa, 2007). In this sense, the inflexible, prescriptive approach to grammar or vocabulary tasks which did not allow for an extension of discussions among teachers and pupils about alternative lexical items or grammatical forms meant a continuation of old methods: pupils' individual thinking and the development of a 'feeling' for the language and the skills to use words or forms most appropriate in a given context were discouraged, even if the teaching materials had been improved. During classroom observations, it was also possible to notice that language acquisition was more successful and pupils were more active if the status-oriented (teachers versus students) communication was sometimes alternated with personality-oriented communication which allowed for respect between each other as equal partners. It was concluded that classroom discourse which was more similar to communication outside the teaching/learning environment, with different participants guiding the communication, was more likely to provide successful acquisition of Latvian as a second language.

The teacher's role has recently changed even more due to access to contemporary educational resources. For instance, open educational resources in the internet have promoted new teaching styles in which planning and conducting lessons are shared among pupils and teachers, which allows for more interaction among them and active participation.

Through these reforms, the Latvian school system has moved from a strict monolingual habitus based on a monolingual ideology of keeping languages separate (Latvian versus Russian schools), except for dedicated lessons in which foreign languages were taught, towards a more multilingual habitus in which the use of more than one language has become more common. This applies in particular to minority schools and reflects language practices in society. Whereas societal practices in Latvia include frequent translanguaging, with elements of Latvian, Russian and other varieties (Nau, 2003), more research needs to be carried out to see whether the more multilingual ideology has led to more multilingual practices in the classroom, or whether parallel monolingualism (i.e. only one language is used in a specific lesson) dominates. A small survey conducted by one of the authors of this chapter among teachers of German in Latvia in 2017 indicates that teachers of foreign languages are mixed in their attitudes and practices. Out of 40 respondents, 25 answered that they switch between German and Latvian and/or Russian, while the other 15 answered that they use mostly or only German; no teacher claimed to use – besides the teaching materials in German – mostly or only Latvian or Russian. In addition, 35 respondents answered that they frequently or occasionally use examples from other languages (e.g. English), while only five claimed that they rarely or never do so. Regarding code-switching or code-mixing, only four out of the 40 teachers answered that they considered such practices in

communication with their students *outside* the classroom very or rather negative and 16 rather or very positive (20 respondents were neutral about this; the mean score was 3.38 on a scale from 1 = very negative to 5 = very positive); 16 respondents were very or rather negative about such practices during lessons (while 14 were very or rather positive and 10 neutral; mean score 3.03; in comparison, the means for code-switching or code-mixing with friends and family were 3.53, in informal situations in public 3.48 and in formal situations e.g. with authorities 2.70). In total, these results imply that a ‘heteroglossic turn’ towards a more multilingual habitus is seen as a reality and as desirable by some of the teaching community, whereas others are more reluctant to adopt such practices – and that teachers are considerably more critical about the use of more than one language in formal contexts than in more informal ones.

CLIL as a continuum of bilingual education

At the turn of the century, a bit later than the bilingual education reform in minority schools, the CLIL approach (content and language integrated learning), denoting the use of a foreign or additional language for the teaching of curricular content, started to spread across Latvia. In order to improve pupils’ skills in English, teachers of different subjects from Latvian, Russian and other minority schools were invited to consider CLIL from different perspectives: to integrate the teaching of language and subject, to learn to use the Moodle platform, and to develop information literacy in general, including diverse digital tools. These activities have continued; in 2011–2014, for instance, the Latvian Language Agency organized eight courses which aimed to familiarize about 100 teachers with CLIL methods (Lapinska, 2015). It was predictable that teachers from bilingual schools would be more active than teachers from schools with Latvian as the sole language of instruction: the former have experiences in bilingual (Latvian–Russian) teaching and would likely be more open to expand the principles that they have worked with to an additional language – English. For Latvian schools, on the other hand, a move from a monolingual habitus to a bilingual (Latvian–English) one or to multilingual models of teaching is seen as revolutionary.

Currently, there are more than 10 schools in Latvia which use the CLIL approach for teaching history, management, geography, physics and other subjects. In most cases, English is used as an additional language of instruction for children with Latvian or Russian as a mother tongue, but there are some initiatives regarding the languages of Latvia’s neighbouring countries (Lithuanian, Estonian) which could be learnt at schools using CLIL methods. A model with Latvian/Russian and English for teaching different subjects would be appropriate also for families who return to Latvia from other European countries (often the UK and Ireland) (Lapinska, 2015).

Regional languages in education

Another topic which has raised attention in parts of the education system of Latvia is the teaching of Latgalian. Data suggest that Latgalians consider it to be advantageous to know Latgalian in addition to other languages. Research from 2009 which analysed attitudes towards Latgalian showed that its speakers are generally quite positive about it. When responding to the question ‘What role, in your opinion, should the Latgalian language have at school’, only 23% of the more than 9000 respondents answered that they did not wish Latgalian to be used at school in Latgale at all, while the other 77% of the respondents did: 8.3% preferred Latgalian-medium education, 10.5% wished to see Latgalian as a compulsory second language and 58.2% wanted it to be offered as an optional subject (Šuplinska & Lazdiņa, 2009). These answers indicate that the population in Latgale is in favour of Latgalian education at school, albeit mostly on a voluntary basis.

When in the early 1990s Latgalian activists, after decades of prohibition, launched a number of Latgalian-related events in the educational sector, such as competitions for school children and Latgalian summer camps, their activism succeeded in establishing afternoon classes in Latgalian (about Latgalian culture, literature, but also language lessons) in several schools, culminating in academic programmes which include courses in Latgalian language and literature. For the 20 or so year up until 2011, however, this was based only on individual teachers’ initiatives, without an official curriculum created at the national level for all schools of Latgale. Neither was particular information specified for integration into the curricula of Latvian language and literature for pupils of other regions (even the simple fact that two written traditions have been coexisting in Latvia has been widely ignored).

Recently, however, the situation has slightly changed. In September 2013, ‘regional studies’ (*Novadmācība*) as a school subject has been introduced in the town of Rēzekne, the regional centre. It started as an initiative by Rēzekne Academy of Technologies and has been supported financially by Rēzekne municipality. This optional subject may be chosen by pupils in the schools of Rēzekne in order to familiarize them with the history of Latgale, the Latgalian language, culture and literature (currently this subject is introduced also in another schools of Latgale and partly supported by Ministry of Education and Science).

The main idea of the course is to develop literacy in Latgalian and to create a local identity, a feeling of belonging to the region. One of the aims is that young people, after studying in Riga or abroad, come back to the region of Latgale and employ their skills for the benefit of the region. The main language of the course is Latgalian but, as teachers have reported,⁴ pupils do a lot of translanguaging between Latvian, Latgalian and sometimes Polish (in the Polish secondary school in Rēzekne). This

was a reason to start a debate with teachers about flexible models of bilingualism not only in informal situations, but also using translanguaging as a pedagogical tool (reading texts in one language, discussing them in another and reporting in a third language). In this way, pupils can make use of their wider linguistic repertoires – according to the needs of specific contents, or for the benefit of language acquisition.

Teachers report that the regional studies course is popular not only among pupils whose families and friends use the Latgalian language but also with pupils who are less connected to Latgalian culture and language, implying that there is an interest in the subject beyond core circles of activists and the speech community. The biggest problems are with studying and teaching the written standard, largely because of the lack of tradition of writing Latgalian since the 1930s, which has even rendered many regular users of Latgalian illiterate in this variety. Another major challenge for teachers is how to work without any fixed curriculum and with a lack of adequate teaching materials. Teachers of Latgalian have reported: ‘We are a group of enthusiasts which was created predominantly among teachers of Latvian. And we ourselves have made a syllabus. Let us see how it will develop, how this syllabus will be accepted’ (LRT, 2014). A conclusion drawn from the teacher training courses is that teachers have been familiarized with the concept of societal multilingualism in theory – but they do not know how to apply it to the classroom or to create multilingual teaching materials. In general, they are not against translanguaging or against using different languages for teaching purposes, but they are not convinced about how to do it.

The situation is similar with regard to the regional language of Võro in Estonia. Brown and Koreinik (2019) report that in 2015 the language was taught on a voluntary basis once per week in 16 primary and secondary schools, which amounts to about 40% of the schools in the traditionally Võro-speaking area. Instruction in Võro usually begins in third or fourth grade and continues until the sixth or seventh grades with ‘home studies’, a class comparable to regional studies in Latgale. Since 2011, Võro has also been promoted through language ‘nests’ in public kindergartens. Here, teachers use Võro as the main language for a whole day or even two per week (Brown & Koreinik, 2019).

Regional languages: Their economic value and education

In many situations, economic reasons for learning or not learning a regional or minority language are more relevant for individuals than a societal ideology which aims at the protection and promotion of the language, advocated by language policy makers or activists (Lazdiņa, 2013). Many people want to understand how they can benefit from skills in a specific language. Latgalian is not an exception to this: the perception of the economic effect of the use of Latgalian and the instrumental motivation of its users (i.e. the usage of Latgalian in order to benefit from

it) is stronger than the integrative motivation to protect and promote Latgalian as a regional language (Lazdiņa, 2013). The non-market value of a small language, for instance relating to opportunities to access a culture or to integrate into a community through knowing a language, may play a role but where economic benefits of its use are perceived it is far easier to develop language and educational policies for the protection and promotion of a language than where no economic value is evident.

Grin (2008: 2) emphasizes how important it is for regional or minority languages to be perceived as having at least some kind of positive economic impact: 'It may help to win over to the cause of RMLs [regional or minority languages] some social actors (including media people and politicians) who may be a priori opposed to such policies'. Using economic arguments such as its usage value therefore provides the opportunity to convince people who look at language mostly from a utilitarian perspective. For policy makers it is usually rather complicated to prove the need to create language maintenance efforts purely on the grounds of cultural heritage. This point is made explicitly by Grin (2003: 24):

If economics can make useful contributions to the analysis of language policy, it is not so much because it brings linguistic and economic variables in relation with each other (with causal links flowing in either direction), but rather because it helps to look at different choices about language in terms of advantages and drawbacks.

It is remarkable to note that the spread of Latgalian to a wider range of domains (tourism, culture industry, etc.) and the more explicit perception of the economic value of Latgalian seem to have an impact on current issues in language-in-education planning (for more about this process from the perspective of holistic educational policy planning see Lazdiņa, 2013).

In the ideological reactions to perceived needs of languages for economic purposes, there is therefore a remarkable interplay between attempts to achieve more openness towards international languages and the increased value which is assigned to regional languages. On the one hand, it is possible to observe the increasing role of English, as expressed in the adoption of lessons using the CLIL approach with English as the medium of instruction in schools in Latvia or as shown in linguistic landscape research on Latvia (Marten, 2010, 2012; Marten *et al.*, 2012; Pošeiko, 2015). On the other hand, there is also an increased concern for local, small languages (e.g. Latgalian or Võro). The educational situation in the Baltic states is also influenced by international policies, such as European educational projects which reflect this tendency. The LangOER (Language Open Educational Resources) project which was conducted between 2014 and 2016 addressed questions such as:

How can less used languages, including Regional and Minority languages, benefit from Open Educational Practices (OEP)? How can Open

Educational Resources (OER) be shaped to foster linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe? (LangOER, n.d.)

This project has also taken place at the Rēzekne Academy of Technologies in Latgale, where researchers, teachers, students and stakeholders have worked together to create interesting online-based methodologies for learning both Latvian and Latgalian – in line with the development of modern, learner-oriented tools which pay tribute to existing patterns of multilingual repertoires in a region. The project has been based on the observation that less-used languages face the risk of linguistic/cultural dependence in the fast-evolving OER/OEP educational landscape currently dominated by English in many European countries. In this sense, all stakeholders in this project who are working on bridging the gap between regional, national and international levels as part of a heteroglossic European ideology contribute to creating a multilingual environment at school. The aim is to reflect the authentic linguistic landscape not only inside school but also outside formal learning environments (as reflected in public signs, media, cultural events, business communication and other domains). Language teaching thereby has the task to create competent language users who, depending on individual situations, can code-switch from one variety to another, for example from Latgalian to Latvian and English or vice versa.

In addition, the research conducted as part of the LangOER project as well as the work with students and teachers has revealed that there is not enough transparency in curricula and teaching aids. Teachers are trained in how to create multilingual competence, how to take into account different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of learners, or in technical opportunities to teach a subject and at the same time integrate the existing language skills of pupils. The great challenge, which was addressed in the teachers' course, was therefore to learn how to apply various digital tools for this purpose. Successful instruments and teaching strategies included, for instance, the creation of subtitles in Latvian, Russian or Latgalian for short video lectures in English taken from the internet. In this way, globalized contexts are localized and recontextualized in local teaching situations. A new challenge in education will be to bring together the multilingual competence of pupils and their digital 21st-century citizenship. At the same time, they will need skills such as the ability to move from deep reading to scanning a text for its main ideas. Arguably, these features of new learners are similar internationally; therefore it seems useful to do research on them in international teams.

Conclusions

In the globalized world of the 21st century, there are arguably no countries with entirely monolingual societies. Yet, a monolingual habitus

is still present in the education systems of many countries and long-term processes are often needed to replace the underlying monolingual ideologies by more multilingual approaches. Summarizing the current situation of languages of education in the Baltic states, we thus find several tendencies. On the one hand, the shift from Russian to Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian as the main languages of Baltic societies has, since the 1990s, generated new practices in education. Different models of bilingual education have been developed and these have replaced the previously largely monolingual educational ideologies. This also applies to improving skills in the titular languages among members of the minorities, in particular L1-speakers of Russian. These changes in educational language policies have not only created a new generation of bilinguals, they also reflect a gradual transition from an ideology of parallel monolingualism (separate Russian and Latvian, Lithuanian or Estonian schools, with other languages being taught as foreign languages in specific lessons) to a more multilingual ideology. This applies in particular to practices in the minority schools – the schools targeted at the majority population have kept their monolingual habitus to a greater degree.

On the other hand, the reaction to both global necessities and the activism for the recognition of regional cultures and languages have diversified the presence of languages and language practices at school. Recent developments have strengthened less-used regional languages in education and opened the education systems to the presence of international languages, in particular English, which is being taught from early ages.

Bilingual or multilingual dimensions of the education systems are no longer perceived as a separate field of the humanities in the same way as language is not seen only as a tool of communication; rather, it is a tool for constructing social meaning. Languages and content cannot be kept in separate drawers, as, in society at large, people are regularly translanguaging and code-switching when reading, listening, watching television or engaging in online or face-to-face communication. Therefore, the integration of content (i.e. other subjects) with language learning using interdisciplinary approaches and translanguaging habits has become a topic of discussion among teachers and researchers. Observations and reports indicate that the use of individual linguistic repertoires is also appreciated by at least parts of the teaching community.

Yet, even if monoglossic ideologies have, *de facto*, in many situations been questioned by more heteroglossic ideologies, and the monolingual habitus in the form of a strict separation of varieties in educational settings has in many places been replaced by a more multilingual habitus, the question remains over how to expand awareness of the multilingual realities among educational practitioners as well as political stakeholders. Which didactical, technical, digital and linguistic tools are most appropriate in which teaching processes? What can we learn from each other in different multilingual and multicultural contexts – and how can we create

a unified academic capacity and in the same time remain diverse? In this chapter, we hope to have provided some insights into processes and discussions which may help to create educational environments adjusted to 21st-century multilingual realities – even though more research is needed to understand the long-term effects of changing language-in-education policies in interaction with general developments in the societies of the Baltic states.

Notes

- (1) Statistic from Centrālās statistikas pārvaldes datubāzes, at http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/Sociala/Sociala__ikgad__iedz__iedzskaitis/IS0032.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=09cbdccf-2334-4466-bdf7-0051bad1decd.
- (2) Statistic from <http://countrymeters.info/en/Lithuania>.
- (3) Statistic from <http://www.stat.ee/en>.
- (4) In spring 2015, 49 teachers participated in teacher training courses organized by the Rēzekne Academy of Technologies with the aim of enhancing the use of less-used languages in school during learning about new digital tools. Questionnaires (open questions after the course) but also observations and notes during training courses collected useful data for understanding urgent issues and generating further discussion.

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