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Ulrich Ammon, Jeroen Darquennes, Sue Wright

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Die Einstellungen und die Politik der nationalen Sprachinstitute in
Europa zu Englisch als europäische Lingua franca
European National Language Institutions' Attitudes and Policies towards
English as the European Lingua Franca
Positions et stratégies des institutions linguistiques nationales en
Europe face à la question de l'anglais comme lingua franca européenne

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Anschriften der Herausgeber/Editors' addresses/Adresses des éditeurs

Ulrich Ammon, Universität Duisburg-Essen, Fakultät für Geisteswissenschaften/Germanistik,
Campus Duisburg – SK202, Bismarckstr. 67, D-47057 Duisburg

Jeroen Darquennes, Pluri-LL – Groupe de Recherche sur le Plurilinguisme, Département de Langues et
Littératures Germaniques, Université de Namur, Rue de Bruxelles 61, B-5000 Namur

Sue Wright, Centre for European and International Studies (CEISR), University of Portsmouth, Park Building,
King Henry I Street, Portsmouth PO1 2DZ, United Kingdom

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English in Latvia

Symbol of European Identity, Tool for Career Promotion or “the Third Force”?

1 Introduction

“If a spiritually healthy person, well knowing, that he has to leave this world some day, still cares about his health, lives his life as long as possible, why would a nation deliberately go down the pit, a nation, whose life, as the life of many lives, is strong and indestructible, understandably, if this nation shows a healthy spirit, if it knows to value its life and does not hurry to blindly sell its own soul and change it for the life of an unfamiliar shadow. The heart and core of a nation’s life is the language”, the founder of Latvian modern linguistics Kārlis Milenbahs wrote more than a 130 years ago (Milenbahs 1881: 15). The times have changed the world and we use different terminology however the questions of a national identity and language as the main of its constituting elements remains in the centre of media, politicians’ and scientists’, humanitarian and social scientists’ in particular, attention.

Plurilingualism and societal multilingualism are global phenomena, although there is no reliable recent analysis about how models of language coexistence in different countries have been designed and implemented. All countries are unique with regard to their language situations. Therefore their attitudes towards language interrelation and contact languages are equally unique. Nevertheless Europe has abided by common international standards and possesses a common theoretical knowledge basis the policy of each European country is unique as it is impacted by the respective country’s own historical experience that has formed the public opinion. Language planning efforts that work well in one region may fail in another due to different political, cultural and economic situations as well as because traditionally widespread standpoints or also stereotypes within a society.

There are two main approaches in the European and global language policy discourse; the first one treats languages as merely instrumental for communication in some cases rejecting any ideological aspects of language and doubting the concept of a nation-state with the official language as the unifying factor; the second one sees language as a symbol of national/ethnic identity. The discussions continue to take place because at their core they touch upon such never-ending questions as: what is identity; what elements it consists of; is identity part of an objective reality or it is a subjective feeling; is identity (or at least its elements) recognised as a value to be consciously cultivated and protected, and if so - how do we achieve that. It is important to emphasise especially that this question of identity does not have any

direct origin relationship with the actual hierarchy or legal status in a competing languages situation. Language as identity is mostly regarded as a 'non-negotiable' and yet difficult to define value which has anchored itself in ingrown or learned level of social consciousness. This ideal fits in also with the existing real-time situation and may be observed both in attitude to language as well as in linguistic behaviour. One could propose the assumption that in the area of language a mythical stereotyping takes place. This relates to the community and quite possibly to its formulations on reality which is a meaningful and expressive factor in a definite culture or subculture. Stereotypes usually are characterised as having evolved from insufficient information and understanding, thus morphing into something that has been simplified but is sufficiently strong in itself to assume a clear identity. In the distribution of multi-media, these stereotypes gain a much greater sales opportunity and thus are reinforced as they come into common usage. In the sphere of language the situation becomes more complicated because it seems as if nobody has the right to criticise other members of society for their incomplete understanding on some indispensable aspect of their everyday existence.

Uldis Ozolins has stated that, "there are few countries in the world in which language policy has been more central of all the issues of a nation's life and politics than in the Baltic States" (Ozolins 1999: 6). Indeed, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia despite of their rather different language situations at present could be called language-centered countries and societies. Similar to the other Baltic States Latvia embodies the "language as heart and core" approach both in its official language policy and within the public opinion. There are obvious historical, geopolitical and psychological reasons for it and these attitudes cannot be changed voluntarily over a short period of time even if policy-makers, scholars, NGO activists or anyone else would like to do so. Only twenty years have passed since the Latvian speakers were subjected to overt or covert Russification, the sociolinguistic functions of Latvian were restricted, and the re-established Republic of Latvia put much of well-considered and systematic efforts to ensure maintaining of Latvian in a very competitive language situation. The historical experience and high profile of language issues in everyday discourse heavily influence attitudes towards the English language as a newcomer in Latvia's language market. "The perception of multilingualism and the EU stance differs because of the contradictions and reflects the huge variety of linguistic situations. The Baltic experience tends to highlight that the imposition of the EU standards (unclear as such) on the basis of a synchronic situation in the new member states without taking into account the diachronic aspect can be counterproductive negatively affecting the consolidation and integration of the population" (Veisbergs 2013b: 52). Thus, the Latvian case study may add some additional aspects and nuances to the universal pool of basic knowledge on models of language coexistence and competition and the attitudes towards the English language as a global *lingua franca* in particular.

2 Language situation in Latvia

This paper will not touch upon the detailed analysis of the very important concept of Latvian language as the official State language since this has been widely discussed in countless other publications (Druviete 1997; 1998; 2010a; 2010b; Druviete 2013; Baltiņš et al. 2008; Hogan-Brun et al. 2009; Language Situation 2012; Ozolins 1999; Skadiņa et al. 2012; Veisbergs 1993; 2013b etc.). Although, some background information seems necessary.

History and national development. The Republic of Latvia has been founded in 1918. The first independence period was from 1918 till 1940. After fifty years of incorporation into the USSR the independence was established in 1991. The foundation of the renewed Baltic State is the principle of the legal continuity of the state.

Latvian, one of the two living Baltic languages of the Indo-European language family, is the sole official State language in the Republic of Latvia (status renewed in 1988) and one of the official languages of the European Union. There are about 1.5 million native speakers of Latvian (1.2 million in Latvia), approximately 500 thousand people know Latvian as L2.

Latvia could serve as a model for studying the influences of other languages and cultures. Since the consolidation of the Latvian ethnos during 10-12th centuries, Latvians have always had direct contacts with some other languages, e.g. Livonian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Belarusan, Russian as neighbouring languages, with Russian, Polish, Swedish and German as languages of cultural exchange and official languages, with Latin as a language of religious ceremonies for Roman Catholics. The language standardization was spontaneously existing already in the pre-written language establishment period, i.e., until the 16th century. After the "Livonian War" (1558-1583) today's Latvian territory fell in the hands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Polish-Lithuanian rule only lasted until the Polish-Swedish War (1600-1629) after which Latvia was ruled by the Swedes for about half a century. After the Great Northern War (1700-1721) between Sweden and Russia today's Latvian territory became part of the Romanov Empire of Tsar Peter the Great (*Treaty of Nystad* 1721) in which it functioned as one of the most developed provinces. In 1918, after the implosion of the Russian Empire, Latvia declared its independence and signed a peace treaty with Russia in 1920. The first period of Latvian independence came to a halt after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed on August 23, 1939. On June 17, 1940 Latvia was occupied by the Soviet Army. Only WWII interrupted the period of Russian rule in Latvia: German forces occupied Latvia from 1940 until 1944. After 1944 Soviet occupation brought Soviet rule to Latvia again. The three Baltic States have survived such massive ethno-demographic changes after the incorporation into the USSR (repatriation of 60 000 Germans in 1939, deportations of 200 000 Latvians to Syberia in 1941 and 1949, emigration of 120 000 Latvians in 1944, forced immigration from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine as a result of Soviet industrialisation). The number of Russian-language speakers increased more than 4.5 times since

1935. There is no other region in Europe which has survived such massive and forced ethnodemographic changes during such a short period of time. Massive immigration into Latvia was partially stopped only in 1990. After 50 years of occupation Latvia declared its independence on May 4, 1990 and was recognized as an independent state on August 21, 1991. In February 1999 Latvia joined the World Trade Organization, in March 2004 NATO and as from the 1st of May 2004 it is a full member of the European Union, is becoming a member-state of the OECD.

Ethnodemographic composition. In 2013 there slightly more than 2 million inhabitants in Latvia. The present ethnic composition reflects the complicated political and ethno-demographic history of this territory. Several types can be distinguished among ethnic minorities in Latvia nowadays: unique autochthonous minority – Livonians or Livs (no native speakers left; around 210 people knowing the basics of the language) (Ernštreits 2011), traditional allochthonous non-contact minorities – Gypsies, Jews, Germans, Poles, traditional allochthonous contact minorities – Lithuanians, Estonians, Belarusians, Russians, immigrant minorities – Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians. There are no regional compact minorities except for some border regions. The minorities in Latvia are equally spread in the whole territory of the state. The law guarantees the rights of all people to use and develop their language. The state finances primary education in 8 minority languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Belarusian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Romani, Yiddish/Hebrew), and there are about 200 national cultural heritage associations. There are Sunday schools in almost 30 languages in Latvia. In January 2013 the ethnic composition was as follows: 61.2% Latvians, 26.3% Russians, 3.5% Belarusians, 2.3% Ukrainians, 2.2% Poles, 1.3% Lithuanians, 0.3% Jews, 2.6% others (www.data.csb.gov.lv: accessed 18.11.2013). Because of a high level of linguistic assimilation (Russification) among speakers of languages other than Latvian and Russian the notions of a national (ethnic) minority and a linguistic minority do not coincide in Latvia. For example, only 2.1% Belarusians, 3.7% Ukrainians, 9.5% Poles declared the respective languages as their native languages (2000 Census); the survey by the Latvian Language Agency in 2009 provided similar results (Language Situation 2012: 52-54).

Economic developments and dynamics of population. Due to negative birth-rate and high emigration level (mostly to Ireland, Great Britain and Germany) the dynamics of Latvia's population is decreasing. In 2012 Latvia had a negative natural growth (-4.5%) and the third largest net outflow in the EU (-5.8%) (http://epp.Eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-20112013-AP/EN/3-20112013-AP). However, Latvia is implementing a very strong macroeconomic adjustment program – with international financial support – in response to the 2008 financial and balance-of-payments crisis. A firm recovery has taken hold, with real GDP expanding rapidly in 2011 and 2012. The 2012-13 *Global Competitiveness Report* of the World Economic Forum ranks Latvia 55 out of 144 countries. Yet Latvia continues to face major long-term challenges: unemployment and poverty rates are still high, the working-age population is falling and income levels are still low by the EU standards (*Republic of*

Latvia: Selected Issues. IMF Country Report No. 13/29, International Monetary Fund, January 2013). However, continuously growing emigration and improvement of economical well-being of the state in the near future is expected to trigger immigration mostly from Russian-speaking countries thus creating new challenges for the language situation in Latvia.

Latvian language skills and language use. During twenty years of independence there has been a considerable progress in Latvian language skills among minorities. During the 1989 Census the Latvian language skills were declared by 18-20% of minority representatives. According to the 2000 Census 59% Russians, 55% Belarusians, 54% Ukrainians, 65% Poles declared Latvian language skills (in the 2011 Census the question on language skills was not included). The number of minority representatives having no Latvian language skills at all is diminishing – 78-80% in 1989, 22% in 1996, 9% in 2000, 8% in 2009 (Language Situation, 2012, 38-39). Young Russian-speaking people in the age group 17-25 possess a rather good knowledge of Latvian: 64% have a good command, 31% claim to know the language at a moderate level. As the data of the 2009 survey show, 76% of Latvians have a good command of Russian but only 45% of minority representatives claim to have a good command of Latvian. The state ensures rights of every resident to master Latvian. However, high level skill of the State language still pose a problem in Latvia although the general attitude towards language skills is mostly positive. To the question “Should the residents of Latvia know Latvian?” most respondents gave a positive answer: 49% held the view “Yes” and 31% “Rather yes” (Ibid. 46).

Summary. The most distinctive feature of language situation in Latvia is a great discrepancy among Latvian language skills, language attitudes and language use. The actual hierarchy of languages in a multilingual society can better be characterised by their sociolinguistic functions rather than by their legal status. At present, there is almost a balanced situation between Latvian and Russian. There are different political and economic factors in favour of the use of each language. The strongest positions Latvian has in federal and municipal governments. Latvian instead of Russian has become the state and local government working language and language of office work. The change of visual images (signs, advertisements, information) has also taken place. The position of Russian is very strong in private enterprises, primary and secondary education (although bilingual education is being successfully introduced in Latvia), quite strong in police, public transport and health care. Aggressive expansion of a Russian language information environment in Latvia is increasing the competition between Latvian and Russian. The outcome will be determined by a number of factors: elaboration and adoption of laws on electronic media and higher education institutions, the influence of immigration from Russian-speaking countries (including illegal immigration, education policy).

The surveys reflect a high level of linguistic tolerance amongst Latvians, on the other hand they highlight some features of still pertaining minority complex and linguistic indifference which could be harmful for future prospects of Latvian. In

this transitional situation psychological factors are extremely important. We must take into account both the psychological resistance of Russian-speakers who from a position of political and economic dominance have become a minority still enjoying linguistic self-sufficiency, but also the “minority complex” of Latvians. Readjustment in the public opinion concerning the language hierarchy in Latvia has taken place only gradually. “Latvia is still in the process of recovering from the impact of mass immigration and segregation of its education system by language imposed by the Soviet regime from the 1950's through the 1980's /../ The diminished role of Latvian created an anxiety about its gradual extinction” (Skadiņa et al. 2012: 41). The situation of the Latvian language in Latvia does not correspond to the traditional positions of the official State language in a unitary monolingual state even after twenty years after the independence. Therefore some precautions against the other languages still exist among part of the general public despite of a rather high level of foreign language proficiency.

3 Language legislation and national institutions for language

In Latvia the status of Latvian has been renewed together with the national flag and anthem. In 1988 the Supreme Council of Latvia (still part of the Soviet Union at that time) adopted an amendment to the Constitution which proclaimed Latvian the sole official State language. In 1989 the first post-independence Language Law was adopted (amended in 1992). Since 1 September, 2000, the Law on State Language (1999) is in force together with 12 Regulations by the Cabinet of Ministers.

The Law consists of 26 articles covering all the aspects of language policies for promoting Latvian. The purpose of this Law shall be to ensure:

- 1) the preservation, protection and development of the Latvian language;
- 2) the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage of the Latvian nation;
- 3) the right to use the Latvian language freely in any sphere of life in the whole territory of Latvia;
- 4) the integration of national minorities into Latvian society while respecting their right to use their mother tongue or any other language;
- 5) the increase of the influence of the Latvian language in the cultural environment of Latvia by promoting a faster integration of society (Article 1).

The Law regulates the use and protection of the state language at state and municipal institutions, courts and agencies belonging to the judicial system, as well as at other agencies, organisations and enterprises (or companies), in education and other spheres. It does not regulate the use of language in the unofficial communication of the residents of Latvia, the internal communication of national and ethnic groups, the language used during worship services, ceremonies, rites and any other kind of religious activities of religious organisations.

Language policy involves a complex of activities with regard to the languages spoken in the state, to their functional subdivision, to the individual and collective rights of their speakers and on the determination of language research and development. State institutions are created and provided with a legal instrumentarium for its completion with the intermediary involvement of state institutions. Language policy in Latvia was developed on a strict basis of the sociolinguistic theory bearing in mind the pre-war traditions and the experience of many foreign countries. It was developed by aligning with international instruments of minority rights, following recommendations of international experts and ensuring civil society development and harmonious integration of ethnic minorities. The official language policy was supported by academic research at the Latvian Language Institute which still is the leading scientific institution carrying out research in sociolinguistics (www.lula.lv).

In March 1992, the State Language Centre - the governmental institution responsible for implementing of language policy - was founded in Latvia. The State Language Centre oversees the the State language Inspection Board and is responsible for the development of the Latvian language and terminology in the context of the EU legal translations. Two permanent commissions worked under the auspices of the State language centre: The Latvian Language Expert Commission and the Commission of Toponyms (www.vvc.gov.lv).

There were significant changes in language policy institutions in 2002-2004 in order to strengthen the positions of the State language in Latvia and to guarantee its competitiveness as the one of the official languages in the European Union. In 2003 the State Language Agency (since 2009 – the Latvian Language Agency) was established. In order to foster sustainable development for Latvian it organizes publishing of methodological and informative materials, provides language consultations, carries out research of the dynamics of sociolinguistics processes, organizes the Latvian language tuition in Latvian diaspora and foreign universities (www.valoda.lv).

In order to provide for a coordinated operation of the judicial, pedagogical and linguistic directions of enactment of language policy the Guidelines of the State Language Policy for 2005-2014 were adopted (Valsts valodas 2007).

It is very important to stress that the background concept of language legislation in Latvia has been based on the dichotomy “the Latvian language – the other languages”. The Article 5 of the State Language Law states that “for the purposes of the Law any language other than Latvian is considered as foreign language”. An exception could be applied only to the Livonian language. Therefore the legal approach does not allow any exclusive status for English in comparison, for example, with Russian or the other EU languages.

4 English in the linguistic market of Latvia

4.1 Language skills

Latvia's accession to the European Union has changed the linguistic reality (actually not in any great leaps and bounds), however, not so much the attitude towards multilingualism. According to the data of the Adult Education Survey (2011) carried out by the Central Statistical Bureau, 95% of Latvian adults aged 25 to 64 know at least one foreign language, but 5% do not know any foreign languages (self-perception). According to the latest data of the EU Statistical Office *Eurostat* at least one foreign language is known by 65.7% of the EU population on average. What concerns knowledge of foreign languages, Latvia is the third in the European Union right after Lithuania, where at least one foreign language is known by 97.3% of the population, and Luxembourg, where at least one foreign language is known by 98.9% (http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-26092013-AP/EN/3-26092013-AP-EN.PDF).

The above mentioned survey states that the majority of the Latvian population – 46% know two foreign languages. It is followed by 36% of population who know one foreign language, but three and more foreign languages are known by 13% of adults. The majority of adults – 57% - know Russian. 49% know English, but 18% of the population know German.

Table 1: Knowledge of foreign languages of population by the number (per cent)

	Total	Males	Females
Know 1 foreign language	35.6	37.7	33.8
Know 2 foreign languages	46.2	44.2	47.9
Know 3 foreign languages	13.1	12.0	14.2
Do not know any foreign language	5.1	6.1	4.1

Table 2: Knowledge of foreign languages of population by sex (per cent)

	Total	Males	Females
Russian	56.6	57.4	55.8
English	48.9	46.3	51.3
German	18.3	17.2	19.3
Lithuanian	1.9	2.0	1.7
French	1.7	1.0	2.4
Polish	1.5	2.0	1.1
Ukrainian	1.3	1.4	1.1

The results of the 2008 survey by the Latvian Language Agency demonstrated that the self-appraisal of the English language skills both for Latvians and Russian-speakers are similar: 14% of Latvian-speakers and 16% of Russian-speakers possess a good command of English, 19% and 21% - claim to have moderate knowledge, but 23% and 16% have basic knowledge of English. Irrespective of the first language better skills of English are marked by the residents of Riga, younger respondents and also by the respondents with a higher level of education and income. In comparison: 8% of Latvian-speakers and 6% of Russian-speakers have a good or moderate command of German, but 24% and 18% have basic knowledge. French language skills possess no more than 2% in both linguistic groups (Language Situation 2012: 42-44).

4.2 English in education and research

The task of the European educational systems is to raise linguistic personalities being able to communicate in their mother tongue (“..to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts; in education and training, work, home and leisure” (*Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC)*) and in foreign languages “according to one’s wants or needs. Communication in foreign languages also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding. An individual’s level of proficiency will vary between the four dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and between the different languages, and according to that individual’s social and cultural background environment, needs and/or interests” (Ibid.). In other words, the Recommendations call the educational systems to develop multilingualism and harmonious balance among globalization, internationalization and European integration, on the one hand, and cultural and linguistic identity, and sovereignty of the states, on the other hand.

During the 2009 survey the respondents were asked for their opinion on which foreign languages have to be taught at schools in Latvia. The majority of respondents (92.4 %) admit the necessity to learn English, whereas 69.8% Russian, 57.6% German, 19% French, 9.5% Swedish, and 7.3% Spanish. The opinion of both Latvian and Russian groups coincide; it was typical that people with a higher level of education more often recognise the necessity to learn English.

4.2.1 English in general education

The Latvian education system is generally structured at four levels: pre-school education (ISCED 0), basic education (ISCED 1 and 2), secondary education (general and

vocational, ISCED 3), and higher education (ISCED 5 and 6). At a pre-school level, education of 5-6 year olds is compulsory. Basic education is compulsory, lasting nine years, after which students may choose to continue their studies either in general secondary schools or in vocational secondary education institutions.

During the Soviet period English was taught in general education schools to approximately half of the students (the other half studied mainly German; for all Latvian students Russian was compulsory). Although, as A. Veisbergs mentioned, "English teaching, nevertheless, had a similar status to that of Latin, as there were no opportunities of ever using it" (Veisbergs 1993: 37).

At present there are two foreign languages compulsory in all the general education and vocational schools. The Latvian language is obligatory in all the educational establishments with Russian as the main language of instruction (27.1% of students have Russian as the main language of instruction in the school year 2013/2014, 0.55% studied in Polish). Russian is not obligatory in schools with Latvian as the language of instruction, although approximately one-third of the students study it as the second foreign language.

Table 3: Teaching of foreign languages in general schools in 2012/2013 (per cent)

	Total	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-9	Grades 10-12
Students learning foreign languages	100	100	100	100
1 foreign language	48.9	79.6	26.3	17.9
2 foreign languages	47.7	19.9	72.3	70.6
3 and more foreign languages	3.4	0.5	1.4	11.5

The majority of students (97.9%) are learning English, followed by Russian (39.7%). German is learnt by 13.4% of students, but French by 2.2%.

Table 4: Teaching of foreign languages in general schools by language (per cent)

Students learning	Total	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-9	Grades 10-12
English	97.9	97.4	98.4	98.5
Russian	39.7	15.2	63.5	57.4
German	13.4	6.5	11.7	29.0
French	2.2	1.1	1.0	5.8

85% of the total number of students in general schools are learning foreign languages. In primary education (grades 1-6) 73% of students are learning foreign languages, in basic education (grades 7-9) – 98%, but in secondary education (grades 10-12) all pupils are learning foreign languages. 51% of students who learn languages are learning two and more foreign languages. In 810 schools English has been taught for 133 988 students or 90% out of the total number (grade 1-90, 42 727 students (grade 10-12) (Izglītības 2013: 4-5). Final centralized exam in English is obligatory for all the graduates of secondary schools.

Without the languages mentioned before students at schools also learn Arabian, Danish, Estonian, Italian, Japanese, Hebrew, Chinese, Latin, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Finnish, Spanish and Swedish languages (<http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/notikumi>: accessed 17.11.2013).

4.2.2 English in higher education

Graduates of general secondary and vocational secondary schools are eligible for admission to higher education. Since 2004 all higher education institutions enrol students on the basis of the results of centralised examinations passed at the end of secondary education. However, higher education institutions may still organise one or several additional entrance examinations, aptitude tests or a competition with an emphasis on subjects pertinent to the chosen programme. Among compulsory centralized examinations along with the Latvian language and mathematics is also the English language examination.

The Latvian higher education system is part of the Bologna process and correspondingly follows the so-called 3-cycle system where the 1st cycle includes an academic or professional Bachelors degree, the 2nd cycle includes an academic or professional Masters degree and the 3rd cycle includes the Doctoral degree. Academic credits in academic and professional programmes may be transferred in order to adjust one's education path to one's specific needs.

Latvia has 61 accredited institutions that provide either academic or professional higher education. Excluding colleges, there are 34 higher education establishments, 17 of them state-founded. About 50 percent of students enrolled in public academic education study in the two largest state universities - at the University of Latvia and at Riga Technical University. The fact is that enrolments have fallen steadily during the last five years. This reflects the decline in Latvia's birth rate over the past two decades and the emigration wave since 2004. Altogether, there are 94 462 students enrolled in the study year 2012/2013. Out of them only 29 438 students or 35% have state-financed study places while the remaining 65 per cent have to ensure their own financing. In 2012 around 40 per cent of all students were enrolled in social sciences, business and law fields, while only 24 per cent pursued their studies in engineering, manufacturing, construction, natural sciences, mathematics and the IT.

Latvia as a European Union Member state and one of the most successful Bologna process member states is also subjected to the changes in linguistic environment and developing multilingualism. The *Law on Institutions of Higher Education* (2006) allows our universities to develop additive multilingualism while protecting Latvian as the main language in education. The Section 56 states:

“The study programmes of State-founded institutions of higher education shall be implemented in the official language. The use of foreign languages in the implementation of study programmes shall be possible only in the following cases:

- study programmes which are acquired by foreign students in Latvia, and study programmes, which are implemented within the scope of co-operation provided for in European Union programmes and international agreements may be implemented in the official languages of the European Union. For foreign students the acquisition of the official language shall be included in the study course compulsory amount if studies in Latvia are expected to be longer than six months or exceed 20 credit points,
- not more than one fifth of the credit point amount of a study programme may be implemented in the official languages of the European Union, taking into account that in this part final and State examinations may not be included, as well as the writing of qualification, bachelor and masters works; and
- study programmes, which are implemented in foreign languages are necessary for the achievement of the aims of the study programme in conformity with the educational classification of the Republic of Latvia for such educational programme groups: language and cultural studies and language programmes. The licensing commission shall decide the conformity of the study programme to the educational programme group.”

This formulation allows Latvia not to repeat the approach of most European states which have nearly lost their official languages in the higher education and science and are trying to restore their functions. However, this approach has been subjected to criticism, too (*Republic of Latvia: Selected Issues. IMF Country Report No. 13/29, International Monetary Fund, January 2013: 36-37*).

In 2011 the Latvian Parliament (*Saeima*) adopted amendments to the Law on Institutions of Higher Education that will introduce several important changes in the regulations concerning the activity of institutions of higher education; these changes are aimed at improving the quality of education. The Law sets forth stricter rules for developing and licensing a study programme and for selecting the academic staff. As of 1 September 2014, at least 5% of the academic staff of each institution of higher education will have to be foreign visiting professors, and visiting lecturers who have held an academic position at an EU-accredited institution of higher education outside Latvia during the previous five years. There are no language proficiency demands for visiting professors; however, in order to occupy permanent positions among the faculty, high level Latvian language skills are required.

The number of foreign students in Latvia is considerably smaller when compared to with the potential possibilities to offer educational service and compete both in the higher education market in Europe and Asia. In the study year 2012/2013 there were 2 617 international students (or 3% out of the total number) in Latvia; out of them 1 274 studied at the six biggest universities (*Universitāšu 2012*). In the study year 2013/2014 there were 4 477 international students (or 5% out of the total number) in Latvia. There are 32 BA study programmes, 46 MA study programmes, 5 doctoral study programmes in English out of appr. 800 programmes in total (information

provided by the Ministry of Education and Research 22.11.2013). One of the most important prerequisites for foreign students' attraction to Latvia is providing information about the country and study possibilities and simplified bureaucratic procedures (visas, permissions for residence and jobs). "At the same time, the higher education study language is also an essential issue that has to be solved: allowing to use foreign languages more as well as providing the higher education study infrastructure" (Stankevičs 2012: 80).

As mentioned above, the choice of studying language in the higher education institutions established by legal persons is free; except for very few programmes in English the rest have preferred to implement programmes in Latvian or Russian (persons studying in Russian mostly come from the CIS countries). The state universities according the Law on Higher Education may implement programmes either in Latvian or in any other official language of the European Union. In practice it means English.

As an illustration let us consider the practice of two leading universities in Latvia. The University of Latvia is the leading university in the country. There were 16 720 students in 2012, out of them 540 international students, 381 Erasmus students. In study year 2013/2014 there are the following study programmes in English: Professional Study Programmes: Medicine, Bachelor Study Programmes: Asian Studies, Chemistry, Computer Science, Culture and Social Anthropology, English Philology, French Philology, German Philology, International Economics and Commercial Diplomacy, Modern Language and Business Studies, Optometry, Master Study Programmes: Baltic Sea Region Studies, Culture and Social Anthropology, Educational Sciences, Educational Treatment of Diversity, English Philology, European Studies, German Philology, International Business with specialization in Export Management, International Migration and Social Cohesion, Orientalistics, Pedagogy, Romance Language and Culture Studies.

The University of Latvia accepts the following internationally recognized English language tests: TOEFL IBT: score of at least 53 for Bachelor's level programmes; at least 80 for programme "Medicine" and Master's level programmes, TOEFL PBT: score of at least 480 for Bachelor's level programmes; at least 550 for programme "Medicine" and Master's level programmes, IELTS: score of at least 4.5 for Bachelor's level programmes; at least 6 for programme "Medicine" and Master's level programmes, Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English: B2 level for Bachelor's level programmes; C level for Master's level programmes; C2 for Master's degree programme "English Philology", First Certificate in English (FCE): B2 level for Bachelor's level programmes, Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English: B level (C1 level for Master's degree programme "English Philology" only), Pearson Test of English: B2 level for Bachelor's level programmes.

An autonomous unit of the University of Latvia Riga Graduate School of Law acting completely in English. This higher education institution offers BA studies in Law and Business, Law and Diplomacy, MA studies in International and European

Law, Law and Finance, Legal Linguistics, Public International Law and Human Rights, Transborder Commercial Law and European Union Law and Policy. There are 58 international students out of 476 in total in the study year 2013/2014.

Riga Stradins University has a considerable number of international students (13.7%) of the total student number. At the Faculty of Medicine, the number of international students stands at 40%. In the study year 2013/2014 there are 1 050 foreign students; majority of international students are from Germany (443), Sweden (176), Norway (125), as well as from Finland, UK, Portugal, Spain, Israel, Italy, Sri Lanka, Turkey and other countries (<http://www.rsu.lv/fakultates/arvalstu-studentu-nodala>: accessed 17.11.2013).RSU provides full-time studies in English in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. All applicants except native English speakers must demonstrate their English language proficiency by submitting documents that testify their knowledge in English.

4.2.3 English in research

As in other European countries English is becoming the leading language for science. Latvian scientists are successfully participating in EC funded research framework programmes and other international projects. During FP6 (2002-2006) there were 1 027 different projects submitted and 245 (21%) were supported. In the period of FP7 (2007-2011) up to November 2011 there were 813 projects submitted from which 181 projects (22%) received funding from EC. 15 of supported projects in the period of FP7 had coordinators from scientific institution in Latvia. However, Latvia has rather low rates of international publications in English. Based on the number of international publications, Latvian researchers are falling behind their colleagues in Estonia and Lithuania (<http://www.openaire.eu/lt/open-access/country-information/latvia>: accessed 23.11.2013). The reasons are more of financial or management than of linguistic nature although the usage of English instead of Latvian has been widely discussed among researchers as well as in mass media. English is prevailing in sciences, e.g. scientific journals as "Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences" (Part B), "Mechanics of Composite Materials", "Magnetohydrodynamics", "Automatic Control and Computer Sciences", "Chemistry of Heterocyclic Compounds", "Chemistry Journal of Latvia" publish articles entirely in English. The main concern is the gap between the language used in academia (=English) and language used in everyday communication (= Latvian). Latvian is a language with rather developed terminology in almost all branches of modern science; since 2004 all the legislative acts of the EU are being translated into Latvian. Nevertheless, more and more scientists experience problems in discussing their field of studies in Latvian due to inability to use even existing Latvian terms. In humanities and social sciences the situation is better; Latvian still is the leading language although researchers widely publish in English (and German), too. There is a considerable state support for translation and terminology development (Silis 2012; Zauberga 2008) and also legis-

lative actions in order to promote use of Latvian in science. The language of research activities according with the “Law on Reseach Activities” is a matter of free choice, however, the Section 11 (5) of the “Procedures for the Conferral of a Doctoral Degree in Science stipulates that “Works required for the acquisition of an academic degree shall be submitted in the official language [= Latvian] or in a foreign language with a translation of an extended summary in the official language attached thereto. A public defence may take place in the official language or in a foreign language – upon an agreement with the author and with the approval of the relevant Council for the Conferral of a Doctoral Degree in Science”.

The tendency to give priority to English could create restrictions in the development of the Latvia language because “a single global language not only contributes to the advancement of science through wider communication, but also hampers its progress by disregarding the cognitive potential of other languages” (Ammon 2010: 155). This trend can lead to a deficit of appropriate linguistic means of expression and an inability to communicate in languages such as Latvian language in certain professional fields (Skadina et al. 2012: 52). Already in 2005 the European Commission has been forced to admit that “it needs to be recognized that the trend in non-English-speaking countries towards teaching through the medium in English, instead of through the national or regional language, may have unforeseen consequences for the vitality of those languages” (Strategy 2005: 6).

These unforeseen consequences may appear in various dimensions. If the language poorly functions in certain sociolinguistic domain (in this case – in higher education and science) this domain loss has a direct impact to several other domains and quality of the respective language in general (e.g. terminology processes, academic writing, scientific popular literature et al.). Taking into account the hierarchically subordinated education system (pre-school, basic, secondary, vocational, higher, lifelong education) linguistic transformation in one phase inevitably would be followed by changes in language teaching and learning ideologies and practices throughout the system. Therefore Latvian authorities being aware of the detrimental effects of subtractive bilingualism in higher education take appropriate steps in order to protect full-blooded functioning of the official language in all phases of systems of education and research. We agree that “[l]anguage use in science is not isolated in closed compartments. A similar shift of language use and partial loss of domains can be observed in business and commerce, 13 in international politics, not to mention tourism and pop-music. The more English becomes the dominant or even exclusive language in these domains and, perhaps, others as well within the present non-Anglophone countries, the more the standard languages of these countries are devaluated. With time this may lead to a diglossia, i.e. a split of communicative functions of the indigenous languages and English. This means that important matters in politics, economics, and science would be dealt with mainly or exclusively in English, and the use of native languages would be limited one day to the f-domains of family, friends, and folklore. The existing national languages

would become socially and functionally limited regional languages under English as the all-European standard language (Stickel 2010: 19-20).

5 Impact of English on the development of Latvian

The Latvian language standardization was spontaneously existing already in the pre-written language establishment period, i.e., until the 16th century. When in the 17th century the first Latvian norm sources appeared, one can talk about more or less conscious language standardization and purification (Blinkena 1994/95).

In the 20s-30s of the 20th century the Latvian language has formed into a polyfunctional language with an established system of styles and well-developed terminology. For political reasons and administrative pressures Latvian linguists could not affect the shrinking of the sociolinguistic functions of Latvian during the Soviet period therefore the retention of language quality and even its perfection were set as major tasks. The Terminological Commission of the Latvian Academy of Sciences published 15 terminological dictionaries and more than 50 bulletins in various fields of science and technology. Studies of Latvian were carried out, a two-volume grammar of the modern Latvian language and eight-volume dictionary of the Standard Latvian had been compiled. Latvian is well represented on the digital space. The National Library of Latvia is creating the Latvian National Digital Library "Letonica", including digitised collections of newspapers, pictures, maps, books, sheet-music, and audio recordings. The online collection of Latvian literature includes 200 full text works and collections of 22 authors with a total volume of 22,000 digitised pages. Among corpora collected are the *Balanced Corpus of Modern Latvian* (ca. 3.5 million running words), the *Latvian Web Corpus* (ca. 100 million running words), the *Corpus of the Transcripts of the Saeima's (Parliament of Latvia) Sessions* (more than 20 million running words), the *Corpus of Early Written Latvian Texts*. The availability and application of language technologies in widely used systems and regulations for the use of Latvian in computer systems have been developed (Skadiņa et al 2012). The impact of English on Latvian therefore has been documented and widely discussed.

Steady English borrowing began at the first half of 19th century, at first through German and later Russian. The first Latvian dictionary of foreign words contained 35 borrowings from English. On the eve of the WWI there were approximately 600 English borrowings (Baldunčiks 1989: 31). At the end of 20th century the first dictionary of anglicisms (Baldunčiks 1989) contained more than 1500 entries: full loanwords, hybrid-loans, abbreviations etc. based on more than 25,000 citations extracted from more than 120 Latvian dictionaries and encyclopaedias and 56 terminological bulletins, Latvian fiction, scientific and technical literature, records of colloquial speech. After regaining of independence there are significant increase of borrowings in such spheres as music, sports, politics, also in colloquial speech and Latvian slang. Since

the 1990's English has become the main contact language and intermediary language. The influence of English is felt in grammar constructions, spelling norms, also there is some impact to the Latvian phonetic system. A. Veisbergs reckons that 4000-5000 new borrowings except specific terms have been added. The constant development of society brings new objects, phenomena and new notions into existence, and they all have to be named. English has direct and indirect effect on Latvian word stock especially in colloquial speech. "There is a much greater gap between the written and spoken language in Latvian than in English. Another difference is that English word formation has been very much left to develop on its own (of course, analogy and common sense affect it) while Latvian word formation has to a great extent been governed and monitored by linguists" (Veisbergs 2013: 8).

Despite of rather puristic traditions (Strelēvica-Ošiņa 2010) there are rather tolerant attitudes among majority of Latvian linguists, language planning institutions and general public towards interferences and borrowing from English. The most popular opinion is that "the impact of English is strong, it will grow stronger, it is inevitable, but it is not a direct threat. The real threat is language choice change, e.g., from Latvian to English. This however, depends on individuals, their choice, on legal systems, language regimes and this is where language policies and business comes in" (Veisbergs 2008: 31).

6 Conclusions

In a formal sense, language should not be classifiable as a symbol in the regular meaning of that word – as a reflection of the reality of a socially important element with traditionally encoded meaning. Nevertheless, English in Latvia carries symbolic functions – these of European identity. Language is a value, it is a part of the common wealth of Europe, and it is the basis for national and European identity. At the same time it is recognised and understood that language differences create a multitude of problems of both an economic and political nature. On the one hand, the European integration thus provides renewed chances for further development of Latvian (translation, interpretation, terminology development). On the other hand, there are a lot of factors (e.g. globalization, integration, tendencies to linguistic homogeneity, distribution of international mass media, ideology which evaluates languages from the point of view of market economy, asymmetrical supranational cooperation) which favour the widely spoken languages like English, French and German.

The importance of English in Latvia's "language market" will increase; on the one hand, it even strengthens positions of Latvian, counterbalancing Russian in regional contacts and introducing concept of multilingualism in everyday life ("the third force"), on the other hand, among certain proportion of Russian-speakers learning of English is considered more important than learning of Latvian, thus

hampering the increase of Latvian language skills and use among the population. Evaluation of the language competition at the present situation in Latvia allows to conclude that “English as the second most widespread foreign language does not claim the sociolinguistic functions that are performed by Latvian and Russian, it is not competitive yet with Russian in everyday speech” (Baltiņš et al. 2008: 157). At the same time dual feelings take place: “Looking back into history there always seems to be some domineering language affecting Latvia, many people feel that as soon as the Russian dominance was stopped, the English started” (Veisbergs 1993: 37).

The point is not about how “to reconcile national language pride with English language usage” (Wee et al. 2103) but how to maintain language, namely the Latvian language, in the situation of marked language competition with two world languages with much more higher economic value. It must be noted that language competitiveness in Latvia and the position of the Latvian language will be strongly influenced by economic factors, more so in future than in the past twenty years. Economic motivation for the use of Latvian language, as opposed to Latvian language ability, is still at an inadequate level, with regard to the free market of goods and services transactions and workforce migration, which will lessen its competitiveness. One must consider the possibilities of how to compensate for this fall in economic motivation not only with legislative but also financial resources, as well as, to deliberately influence public thinking to strengthen the idea (consciousness) that a national state and a state language is a value that far exceeds any comparison with the philosophy of the consumer society.

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