

# Surveying Language Attitudes and Practices in Latvia

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As a heritage from the Soviet period (1945–1991) about 500,000–700,000 (mostly Russophone) persons (military persons, workers and others) lived in Latvia with little or no command of Latvian. During the same period, the Russian language had replaced Latvian in the public administration. Following the restitution of independence in 1991, one of the key questions for the Latvian Government was the development and implementation of a successful language policy. For this purpose, a State language law was elaborated, followed by the Education Law and the Citizenship Law, which also addressed the language issue. The design and implementation of these laws caused a heated public debate. In this paper, the legislation process (the design and amendments of the laws) will be juxtaposed with what happens on the ground (through quantitative and qualitative survey results).

**Keywords:** Latvian, language attitudes, language policies, language use, qualitative and quantitative analyses

## Introduction

After the incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union, numerous Soviet military persons were brought into the country immediately, followed soon after by their families. In the 1950s and 1960s, Soviet policy concentrated on the industrialisation of Latvia, and a large number of workers from the Soviet Union followed. These immigrants arrived from different Soviet Republics, and they all shared a common language, Russian, as their countries had already been Russified between the two world wars. Even large countries, such as Ukraine and Belarus, switched to Russian during the Soviet annexation. The term Russophone is commonly used to describe these groups of people of different origins who share one language, Russian.

Even though the number of non-Latvian speakers grew rapidly, policies failed to integrate these newcomers into Latvian society. On the contrary, from the very beginning, a policy of segregation was practised. Within the school system, Russian-speaking children were not expected to integrate into Latvian school classes. Instead, Russian classes were created in Latvian schools. As the number of Russophone students grew, two-stream schools were introduced, with Russian-medium and Latvian-medium classes respectively. Once demand had further increased, a switch to all-Russian schools was made.

Russian school children attended school for 10 years, and Latvian pupils for 11 years, to learn Russian properly. The choice of school categorised students and divided society. Children who attended a Russian school (in Latvia) had more chances of success in the Soviet Union. If, on the other hand, parents

chose a Latvian school, they and their offspring were labelled as 'narrow nationalists'.

Soviet immigration policy resulted in a drastic change in Latvia's demographic composition. According to national Census data, the percentage of Latvians had decreased from 77% in 1935 to 53.7% in 1979, while that of Russophones increased from 10.3 to 40% during the same period. In 1991, about one fifth of 2.5 million inhabitants reported that they did not have a sufficient command of Latvian, and in the seven biggest cities (Riga, Daugavpils, Liepaja, Ventspils, Jelgava, Jurmala, Rezekne) Latvians were a minority. Suburbs of modern housing were built to accommodate the immigrants. Decisions and policy strategies were made in Moscow, with the result that society became segregated. The official State administration was conducted in Russian. Hence, after regaining independence in 1991, one of the key questions for the Latvian Government was the development and implementation of a successful language policy. A restrictive language law, a language level proficiency testing system and inspection mechanisms with provisions to impose fines were introduced to address this problem (Language Development State Program, 2002; Language Policy Realisation in Latvia; State Language Centre 1992–2002).

This paper will present a very brief overview on evolving legislative provisions, with a particular focus on the development and implementation of the laws on the State language, on education and citizenship. This will then be juxtaposed with what happens on the ground, through findings from quantitative and qualitative surveys.

## **Implementing Language Change**

The main objective of Latvia's language policy is to guarantee the status of Latvian as the only official language in Latvia. This continues to be a complex process, which involves an inversion of the Soviet time language hierarchy. In addition, as this is not only a political process, but a fact which affects the everyday life of all inhabitants in Latvia, both mentally and emotionally, every step of this development causes heated debates in society.

Several laws were adopted to steer Latvia's language policy. Gradually, the restrictive early versions of the State Language Law were replaced with a more moderate one to bolster the status of the Latvian language. Additional language knowledge demands were introduced in the laws of education and citizenship. This section presents a brief overview of constitutionally anchored regulations to govern language practice in Latvia.

### **The state language law**

The first public mention of granting the Latvian language official status was made in 1988 near the end of Soviet rule in Latvia. In the following year, the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR (Soviet Socialist Republic) accepted that the Latvian language should have State language status on the territory of the Latvian SSR (alongside Russian). In 1992, following further amendments to this directive, Latvian was established as the only official language. It took

seven more years before the State language law was adopted in 1999, with further amendments in the years 2000, 2001 and 2002.

In the interim period, the following measures were taken. In 1992, the Ministry of Justice established a State Language Centre with responsibility for the legislative aspect and the implementation of the law. Transitional directives were introduced to regulate the use of the Latvian language. Special commissions were set up nationwide for the certification of the level of Latvian language skills of speakers of languages other than Latvian. A controlling agency, the State Language Inspectorate, was subsequently established to oversee whether and how the law was implemented and adhered to.

### **The education law**

A law on language status can only serve as a regulating instrument, whilst education is a more effective tool to promote language learning and use. Around 1994, after the confusion of the first years of independence and feelings of insecurity about the future, there was an expectation among the Russophone population that the so-called Russian schools with their orientation towards Russia and the Russian language would continue to exist in independent Latvia as a parallel school system. However, this separate education system was seen to be disengaged from the Latvian state and located in a different informational and linguistic space. Hence the stabilisation of the language-in-education system in Latvia was and continues to be a politically explosive issue.

The first steps to adapt the educational system to the changing needs of an independent State go back to the summer of 1995, when the existing legislation on education was amended. According to this, two subjects in elementary schools and three in high schools now had to be taught in Latvian from the school year 1996/7. In 1998, the Law on Education and General Education was passed, and in 1999, models for bilingual education in Russian-medium schools were approved.

The overall aims of the bilingual education system are to: (1) provide Russians and other minority ethnic groups with an opportunity to access the government's general education programme; (2) learn the official state language; and (3) maintain other (minority) languages and cultures.

Current debates revolve around the percentage of Latvian minority language instruction in Grades 10–12. The original law stated that as from autumn 2004, instruction in Grade 10 would take place *only* in Latvian, and that by 2007, all final exams in Grade 12 would be offered solely in Latvian. The version which was finally passed in the Parliament in spring 2004 stipulates that 60% of the subjects should be taught in Latvian and 40% in the minority language. Furthermore, whilst the exams in Grade 12 are offered in Latvian, students have the option to provide their answers in the language of their choice, which can be in Latvian or in a minority language.

### **The Citizenship Law**

After the restoration of independence in 1991, all persons who were citizens of Latvia on 17 June 1940 (the date of the first Soviet occupation of Latvia) and

their descendants were granted Latvian citizenship. The regulation of the status of about 700,000 persons who had settled in the country after this date was accompanied by heated and emotional debates. Whilst many of these immigrants requested Latvian citizenship, Latvians were discussing how to impose restrictions in this context: There was a fear that a sudden surge in naturalisation would result in an organised vote to reunite Latvia with Russia.

The Citizenship Law was passed in 1994, and a Naturalisation Board was established in the same year, with administrative branches throughout Latvia. The debates continued because of the (so-called 'windows') quota system, which determined how many and what kinds of persons were allowed to be naturalised every year. In 1998, following recommendations made by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), a referendum was held that led to the deletion of the 'window' restrictions. Simultaneously, and on the basis of the same recommendations, all children born in Latvia after 1991 were to be granted citizenship if their parents applied for it.

At this point it became clear that Latvia's ethnic composition would remain broadly as it was. Government policies would have to increasingly address and reflect the ethnic rights and social, economic and political needs of the diverse population in order to promote social integration. After 1998, the legal status of those immigrants who were permanent residents of Latvia but who had not been naturalised yet was determined as 'non-citizens' (*nepilsoņi*). Today, they have almost the same rights as the citizens, except that they are not allowed to vote or become state employees (school teachers are not state employees), and they do not have to serve in the army. They can naturalise at any time after five years of permanent residence in Latvia. The naturalisation requirements involve the successful completion of a test on competence in Latvian at the lower intermediate level, on Latvian history and the Constitution, and on payment of an administrative fee (for more information see Hogan-Brun, 2003: 134).

In addition to these laws, there are also regulations on the level of language proficiency needed for persons entering different professions. These requirements for various professional categories are summarised in a catalogue entitled 'Profesiju standarti' ([www.izmpic.gov.lv](http://www.izmpic.gov.lv)). The National Programme for Latvian Language Training (NPLLT) was created in 1996 to help the various target-groups affected by the laws meet these legal requirements.

## Measuring Language Use

The development and implementation process of the above-mentioned laws have an impact on people's everyday life in Latvia. The attitudes to the laws themselves and their implementation process vary considerably, not only among Latvians and non-Latvians, citizens and noncitizens, but also depending on the residents' region, profession, social class and political affiliation and (last but not least) their language knowledge level. In addition, the extremely rapid changes in society (democratisation, access to a free market, admission to NATO and EU), mixed with the heritage from the Soviet period, influence the interpretation and realisation of the laws. As early as 1996, the NPLLT,

together with national and international institutions, raised the question of how to develop criteria to measure the changes in language attitudes and use. Modern independent survey science had only recently been introduced in Latvia, and some of the social scientists of the recently founded Baltic Data House showed an interest in the language issue. Following comprehensive discussions, basic questions relating to a longitudinal survey to measure changes in knowledge of Latvian over time, including language attitudes, language use and language improvement were elaborated. The questions had to be short and concise in order to fit in with the Data House Survey, but simultaneously they had to be clear and targeted to reflect the dynamics of the process of language development over the years. Since 1996, NPLLT has carried out an annual quantitative survey entitled 'Language'. In general, the questions have remained the same throughout the years, with only a few adjustments.

These 'Language' surveys have been included in a monthly block of questions to Latvian residents, administered by the Baltic Data House, which became the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences after 2002. Each time, about 2000 respondents participated at 210 sample points throughout Latvia. The surveys are performed using computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI). A multi-stage random sampling method is applied to ensure the representativeness of the survey sample, which covers residents of Latvia aged between 15 and 74. The results obtained have been additionally weighted by gender, age, nationality, social status and type of residence, according to recent data elicited by the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia. In all surveys, the first language of half the respondents is Latvian, for the other half it is Russian or another language. It needs to be emphasised that all the data of people's language skills levels and the control question about the officially obtained language proficiency level are 'self-evaluated'. The latest survey results were compared to the previous ones to show the dynamics of the process. What follows is an analysis of the answers to the survey questions obtained from 1996 to 2004.

In response to the question 'how would you rate your knowledge of Latvian in general?' (Figure 1), which was put to those respondents whose native language was not Latvian, the following results were obtained.

The percentage of respondents who reported themselves as having no knowledge of Latvian has decreased by 10% since 1996, with a parallel increase of 8% in those claiming the highest level of Latvian language competence. The reasons for this apparent slow but constant rise in those claiming a knowledge of the Latvian language might reflect changing attitudes and a greater motivation to learn it due to language competence requirements for professional purposes and for naturalisation.

When age groups are taken into account, differences become obvious between people who were 20 years old or less at the time of the restitution of independence and those over 36 years of age (Figure 2). In the first age group (15–24 years), the percentage of those claiming the highest language level has grown from 8 to 25%, with a simultaneous decrease in those admitting to zero knowledge from 8 to 5%. In the older age group (50–74 years), whereas the

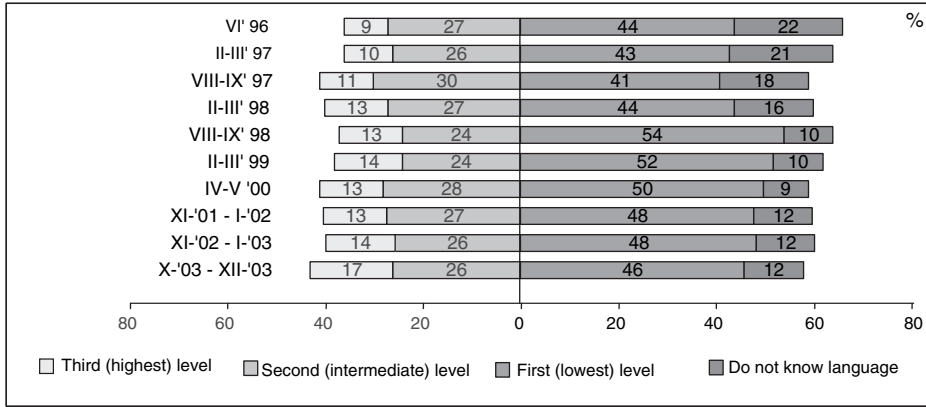


Figure 1 Self-evaluated knowledge of Latvian

rate of the zero level group has dropped from 41 to 21%, that of those claiming the highest language competence has gone up by 3% since 1996.

This suggests that young people are much more motivated and interested to learn Latvian to a high level, probably because the prestige of Latvian has increased. It is also taught more effectively and in a user-friendly manner. Furthermore, high-level language skills enhance access to better jobs.

Among the older generation, claims to increased language knowledge can also be noted, but are limited to the lowest level. The main reason for this is their lower starting point and their lack of experience in learning other languages, as Russian satisfied all their communication needs in the past. Now, by not being able to access information in Latvian, they were becoming outsiders in a fast developing society, which in turn had a knock-on effect on their own attitudes towards Latvia. None of these factors is conducive to their efforts to learn the language.

From a language policy point of view, the survey confirms that education is the most effective instrument to promote language learning. For purposes of forecasting potential changes that may result from the above-mentioned school reform, it would be of interest to divide current and past students into groups of 15–20 and 20–35 year-olds respectively, to ascertain what effect the bilingual learning experience of those aged between 15 and 20 years had on their evolving competence in Latvian (cf. Djačkova, 2003: 17f).

The surveys also indicate that the use of Latvian by speakers of other languages is more or less limited to the workplace (Figures 3 and 4). Here, the use of Latvian seems to have grown from 9% in 1996 to 20% in 2003. However, our findings showed that the percentage of those respondents whose native language is Latvian and who claim to use *only* Latvian in their workplace has dropped by 10% during the same time span. These changes are counter-balanced by increasingly bilingual attitudes and a greater use of Russian among Latvians as well as Russians. Further investigations are needed to shed more light on the development of these trends. Possible reasons are as follows:

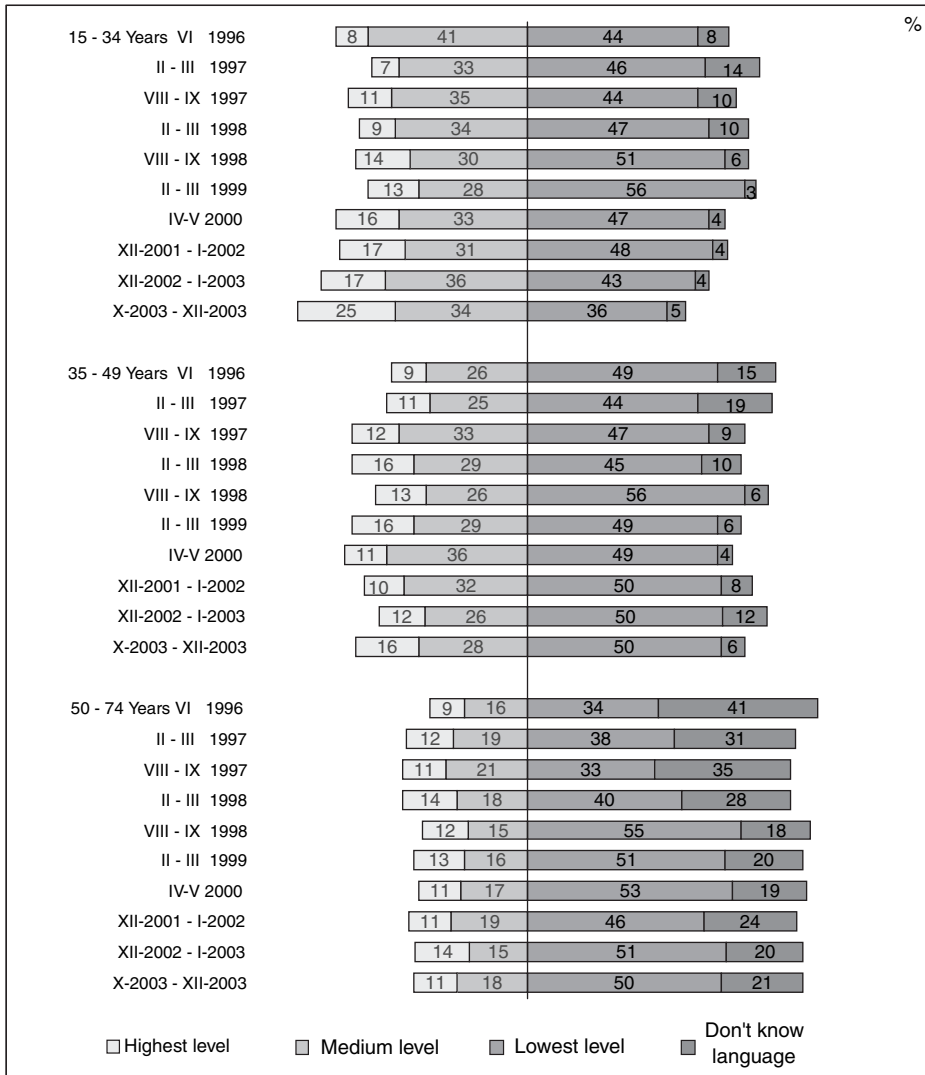


Figure 2 How would you evaluate your knowledge of Latvian? (division by age groups)

Many enterprises are ethnically segregated, and if Latvians work in a Russian business, they are likely to use that language or a mixture of the two. On the other hand, more and more Russophones apply and get public (State) jobs where Latvian is required, which could explain their growing willingness to communicate in Latvian at work.

An in-depth evaluation of the intricacies of changing language behaviour in Latvia requires a qualitative approach. This would need to take into account the type of work environment in which a communicative interaction is taking place, as well as allowing for the collection of data on aspects of language in action, such as codeswitching. This aspect has not yet been covered by the surveys.



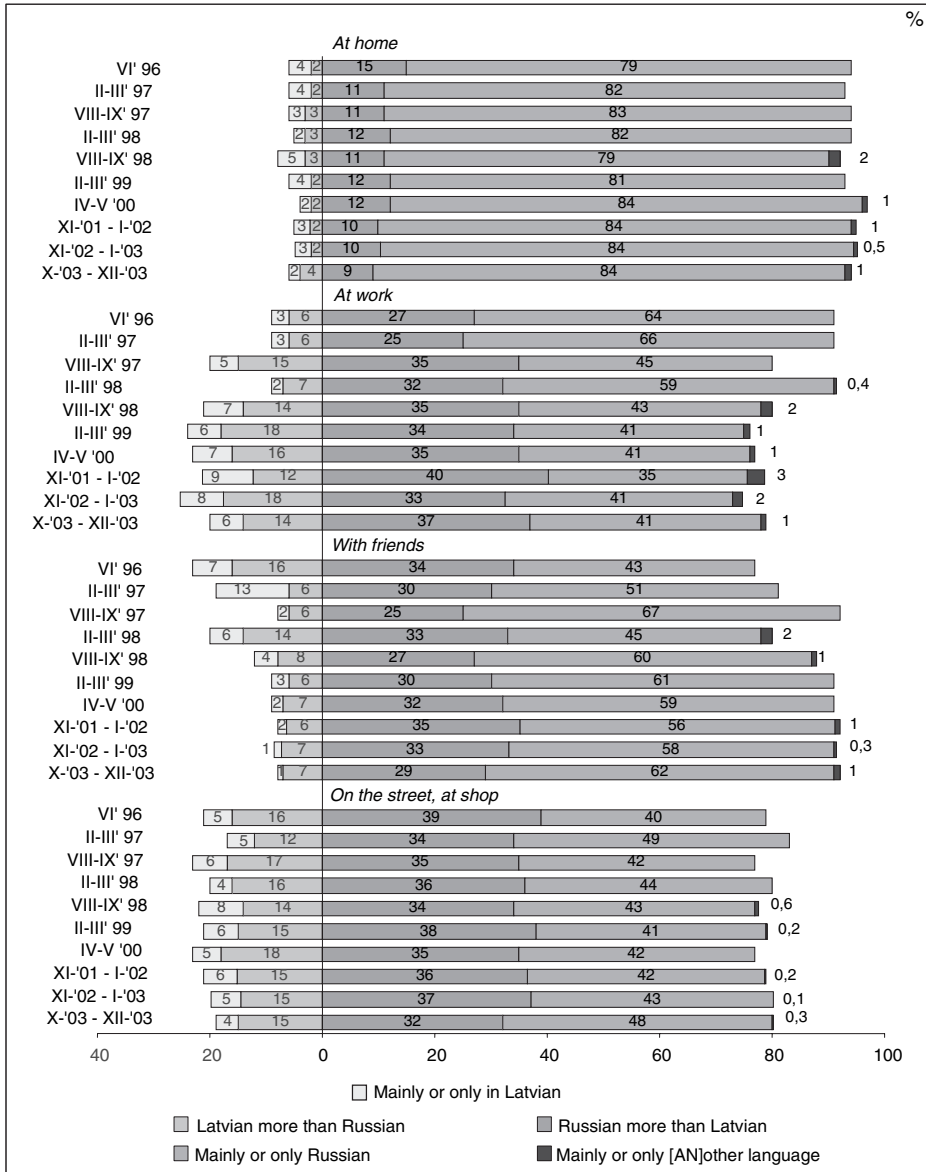


Figure 3 What language do you speak ...? (respondents whose native language is Russian)

### Reasons for Choosing Latvian or Russian: Quantitative Information

The reasons amongst the population in Latvia for choosing either Latvian or Russian vary considerably and will be the subject of discussion in this section.

Overall, the three situations in which the Russian-speaking inhabitants tend to interact in Latvian that are most frequently mentioned are: (1) if one is addressed in Latvian, (2) if the interlocutor does not understand Russian, and



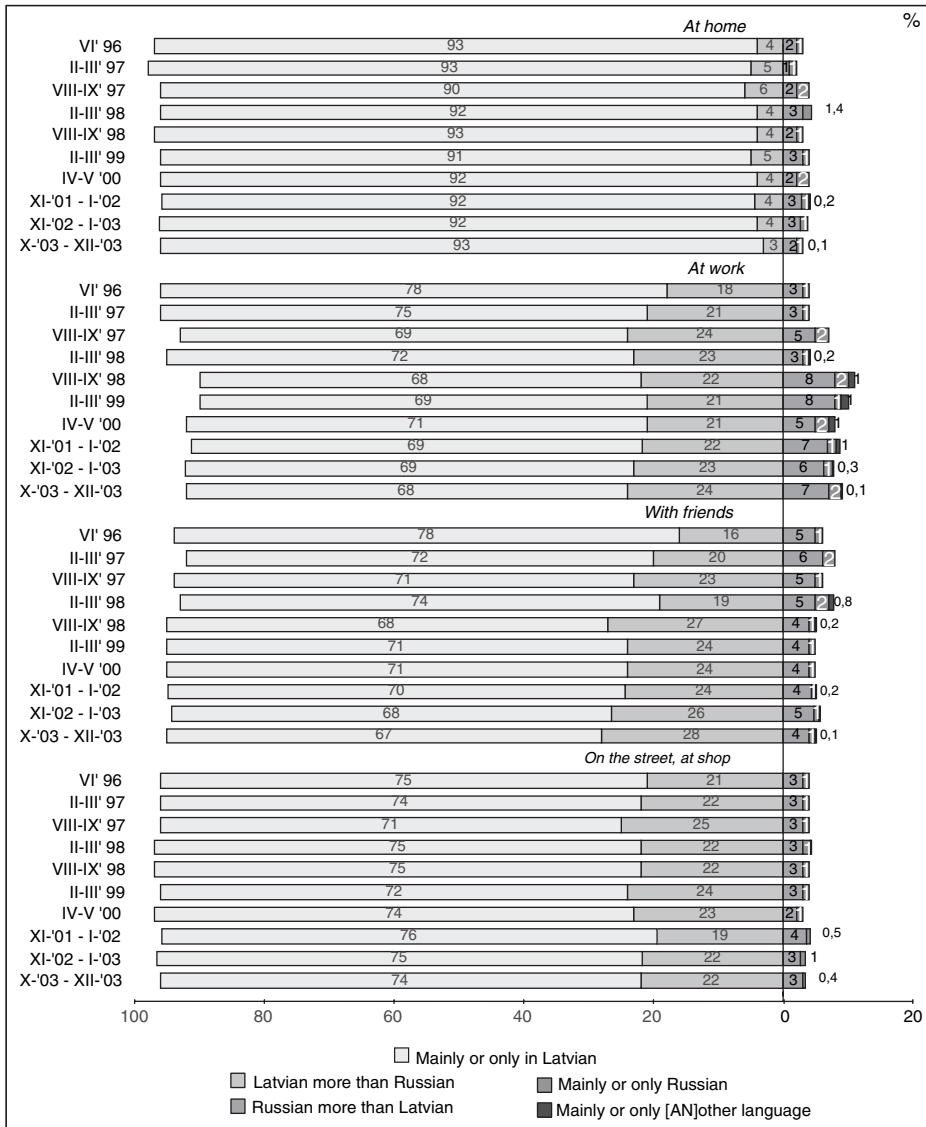


Figure 4 What language do you speak ...? (respondents whose native language is Latvian)

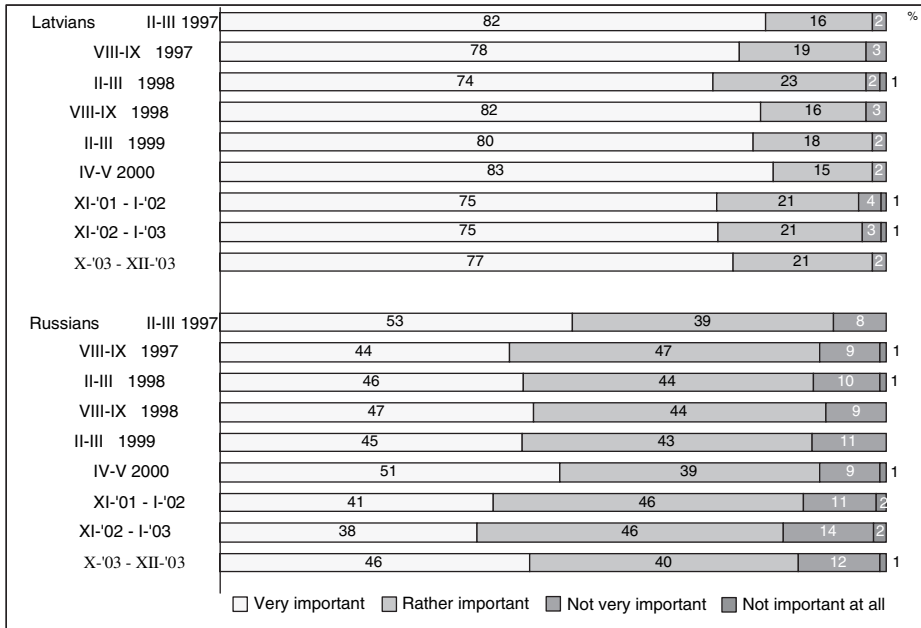
(3) in state institutions. The question that arises is how the use of Latvian can be promoted and its language environment expanded.

Forty five percent of respondents whose native language is Latvian consider that if Latvians speak their own language with representatives of other nationalities it is the most effective way to promote the use of Latvian. Latvians also stress the self-initiative of non-Latvians. The instruments which are perceived by Russian speakers to be most effective in facilitating the use of Latvian are the teaching of Latvian in preschool and secondary general schools (34%) and the offer of inexpensive or free courses of Latvian (33%).

The perceived importance of mutual language competence amongst the Russian-speaking community in present-day Latvia however varies considerably. Consistently since 1997, almost 95% of all the inhabitants in Latvia consider that it is important to know the Latvian language, 75% also stress the importance of English and slightly less (70%) that of Russian (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2003: Language, 2004). About 98% of Latvians and 85% of Russians regard a mastery of Latvian as very or rather important. In contrast, 60% of Latvians and more than 80% of Russophones find that knowing Russian is very or rather important. About 80% of Latvians and more than 70% of Russophones perceive that a mastery of English is important. While the attitude of speakers of Latvian to competence in different language has stayed more or less unchanged during the timeframe of the surveys, the Russophone speakers have undergone slight attitudinal changes. The percentage of those who accept the importance of Latvian has decreased by 6% since 1997, and whilst Russian language skills are still considered to be important, a knowledge of English is also accepted as more desirable (up by 7%) over the same period. The main increase took place at the end of 2003, when Latvia's accession to the EU was more or less decided.

Concerning the question of how important it is to have a good command of Latvian, the opinions of Latvians and Russophones diverge (Figure 5). Since 1997, about 80% of Latvians regard this issue as very important and 15–20% as rather important. For nearly 50% of Russophones, a good command of Latvian is seen to be very important, for about 40% it is rather important, and about 10% find that this is not at all the case. This reflects the Latvian attitude towards the language learners. If you learn Latvian, you have to do so properly. It has been one of the concerns of the National Programme for Latvian Language Training to convince both teachers and learners that you cannot learn a language without using it, and consequently making mistakes is a natural part of this process (see also Djačkova, 2003: 94f).

Despite the fact that most non-Latvians regard knowledge of Latvian as important or rather important, the level of their self-evaluated actual language competence does not correspond with this proclaimed view. Our data show hardly any changes during the eight years of the survey. Forty-five percent of all Russophone respondents are completely or rather satisfied with their Latvian language knowledge level. Analysed by the parameter of their self-ascribed language proficiency level (zero, low, medium, high), and compared with their answers to the questions of whether they find their knowledge of Latvian sufficient and whether they want to improve their Latvian language skills, we obtain the following picture: of the zero level respondents, about 15% are satisfied with their situation, and the percentage of those who intend to better their skills has decreased from 56% in 1996 to 33% in 2003. About 25% of the respondents with the lowest language knowledge level are satisfied with this, and about 70% (with slight variations throughout the years) want to improve. Fifty-six percent of the medium language knowledge level respondents find that this is sufficient for themselves but almost 70% still want to improve their language skills. Of those with the highest language level, nearly 95% regard this as sufficient, whilst 36% want to improve their skills (compared to 23% in 1996). These results reflect not only a drive for



**Figure 5** In your opinion, how important is it for the residents of Latvia to have a good knowledge of Latvian?

improvement but also the wish and need for training as a substitute for an unsupportive language environment.

One of the instruments the Latvian authorities have used to promote state language use is bilingual education in minority schools. According to the 2003 Annual Report and the public statistics of 2004 produced by the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science (<http://www.izm.gov.lv/default.aspx?tabID=7&lang=1&id=799>), there are 159 (15.2%) Russian-medium schools with 79,302 students (in 1998/99 there were 105,806 students) and 138 (13.2%) two-stream schools with 11,907 students (13,632 students in 2001/2). There has of late been a heated debate regarding the percentage of Latvian as a medium of instruction to be introduced in secondary schools. The last ruling of the Latvian Parliament in spring 2004 confirmed the proportions of the minority language programmes as follows: at least 60% of the subjects should be taught in Latvian and 40% in the minority language. The respondents are polarised on two extremely different questionnaire options. Whilst some regard the latest education reform as appropriate, others disagree with it fundamentally.

Overall, there has been a remarkable increase of Russian-speaking children attending Latvian schools (from 22% in 2002 to 32% in 2003). Respondents whose native language is not Latvian and whose families have school-age children were therefore asked about their choice of school for their offspring. The data show that the most significant factor influencing their decision was linked to their own competence in the state language. The higher the level of respondents' knowledge of Latvian, the greater the possibility that their children are registered in a Latvian school. Our survey data reveal that this

trend has recently progressed to include parents whose language knowledge is more limited.

Results from such quantitative surveys are an important instrument to monitor the effectiveness of state language policy and to point out processes, tendencies and challenges elicited by political or other means. Whilst it is evident that an actual change in language use is limited to the workplace, the survey data also reveal that people want to improve their knowledge of the Latvian language and are asking for free courses. But this information is not enough to elaborate means as to how to address current language needs adequately. For this purpose, qualitative surveys are necessary, which will be the subject of discussion in the following section.

### **Qualitative Information Explaining Language Behaviour**

Even if the quantitative survey 'Language' shows valuable data about the linguistic processes in Latvia, it does not reflect the present-day problems and interests of society. Additional qualitative survey data are needed to explain the language behaviour in society.

The qualitative set of data which will be introduced here are from a twice-repeated survey (carried out by a group of social scientists) among army recruits who have not mastered Latvian, and from an investigation on opinions regarding the state language (carried out by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences) among minority school pupils and their parents. The first survey has followed up language use and knowledge of seven call-up cohorts, the second is a focus-group analysis. They were commissioned by the National Programme for Latvian Language Training with the following intention. The NPLLT has been training army recruits since 1997. These recruits form a homogeneous group drawn from across Latvia. They should therefore be expected to produce information and interesting findings concerning the investigation of Latvian as a second language following the introduction of bilingual education reform with its better teaching methods and materials.

#### **Survey of army recruits**

The surveys among non-Latvian speaking army recruits show that Latvian language courses within basic military service improve their language knowledge considerably. These qualitative data also reveal that the basic language level of the recruits entering military service is growing year by year, which is evidence that the bilingual education reform has impacted on their language knowledge.

However, the findings also uncovered the fact that the recruits use Latvian less at the end of the basic service period than in the beginning. A qualitative exploration into the language habits of both Latvian and non-Latvian recruits who were interviewed highlights the complexity of interrelated factors influencing their eventual behaviour.

Firstly, the recruits are split up on a linguistic basis. This fact has caused resentment among Latvian recruits, because while the Latvian speakers are ordered to clean the barracks, their Russophone colleagues attend language

classes. Secondly, the latter complain that the former do not communicate in Latvian with them. The Latvian-speaking recruits explain that it is much easier to interact with the other group in Russian, because the dialogue is faster and more precise this way, and they do not see why they should harass the Russophone recruits to speak rudimentary Latvian. Furthermore, they also claim that they want to seize the opportunity to improve their own Russian skills.

These qualitative findings suggest that the well meant intention to provide language courses for army recruits is actually segregating them instead of aiding integration. Such data can support results from quantitative surveys and help to formulate positive direct action (Dunska *et al.*, 2003).

### **Survey of attitudes of parents and pupils from minority schools**

The individual interviews of the focus-group members – parents and students – confirm many of the findings of the quantitative surveys but additionally explain the reactions of the people involved. Whilst the information obtained appears contradictory, it provides clues as to how to proceed with language planning and where to set priorities.

The main motivation to learn Latvian is likely to be one of the following: competence in the state language is seen as a means to maintain a position or advance one's career, to pass a language proficiency test, to naturalise, or to help one's children with their homework and motivate them to learn Latvian. On the other hand, an absence of motivation to learn Latvian is based on the fact that it is sufficient to know Russian in day-to-day life in Latvia.

Formerly in a dominant position, the Russians regard the learning of Latvian as imposed. This explains the paradox that on the one hand instrumental motivation promotes the learning process but on the other hand it creates psychologically negative feelings regarding the acquisition of the language. This means that for the State policy to be successful, one of its tasks will need to be to create and promote a positive attitude regarding the use of the Latvian language in society generally, and among individual non-Latvians (see also Jeantheau, 2004).

Such seemingly contradictory findings regarding attitudes among non-Latvian speakers are also registered concerning their language behaviour. The Latvian language is mainly used in the public domain – in public institutions, in schools, and at the workplace. In the semi-public sphere – in the streets, shops and on public transportation – language use is mixed but still subject to the State Language Law and the language requirements of specific professions. In private life, Russian is spoken in Russophone communities. Despite the fact that the Russians themselves use Russian in informal contacts with Latvians, they have now come to expect that Latvians will interact with them in Latvian.

In the formal environment, which is regulated by the State Language Law, many Russians expect Latvians to communicate in Russian. The tradition and wish to use Russian in communication with authorities is still deep-rooted in the Russian speaking population, which reflects the traditions of language use in Soviet times. In the informal sphere, the tradition of interacting in Russian is continuing in mixed communities. Several reasons account for this: most

people in Latvia know Russian well, the communication is performed faster and with greater precision in Russian, and Latvians tend to use the opportunity to brush up their Russian skills (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2003).

## **Concluding Remarks**

The above data demonstrate that the promotion of Latvian as the state language entails more than providing language courses and an effective language learning methodology. Of equal importance is the generation and fostering of positive attitudes in all segments of the population, amongst Latvian speakers as well as the Russophone community. These are vital means of consolidating society and often risks being undervalued politically. Thus language policy-makers need to go beyond their targeting of instrumental motivation in their language management procedures. If this does not happen, well meant reforms, such as the education reform, can be completely misunderstood and cause additional tensions in society.

As regards bilingual education, which is offered at the lower levels of minority schooling, discussions tend to polarise around two extremes. On the one hand, many parents, quoting official state policy statements, claim that bilingual education is needed to promote the Latvian language, integration and equal opportunities in Latvia, thus providing all inhabitants with the same starting positions and access to the labour market (see also Hogan-Brun & Ramonienė, 2004: 71f). In the opinion of others, bilingual measures have been developed to discriminate against the minorities, or implemented to solve problems relating to the teaching of the Latvian language in minority schools. Other parents generally approve of bilingual education, but not in their own children's classes. This suggests that, for their own offspring, parents are asking for the continuation of a general education in Russian as before, an attitude which has been reinforced by opponents of the education reform (see also *Analysis of the Bilingual Education*, 2003).

Many parents declare that they have a right to choose the language of education (Russian in this case) for their children. The above-mentioned qualitative survey uncovers mental and emotional details, which could have been crucial cues for policy makers in the run-up to the education reform. A careful analysis of such signals could provide for a smoother implementation of other reforms in the future.

For the promotion of peaceful, sustainable language diversity, a careful, sensitive and very flexible language policy and implementation procedures are necessary. One of the main aspects to take into consideration with respect to attitude changes in a transitional society is the need for time. Whilst it can be tempting for policy makers to aim for fast results, language status, language attitudes and language use, and motivations for language learning do not change swiftly. Therefore, successful practice is only possible if state ideology and policy are kept in balance with day-to-day reality.



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### **Related webpages and sites**

Citizenship Law. On WWW at <http://www.ttc.lv/New/lv/tulkojumi/E0031.doc>  
 The Constitution of the Republic of Latvia. On WWW at <http://www.ttc.lv/New/lv/tulkojumi/E0013.doc>  
 Education Law. On WWW at <http://www.ttc.lv/New/lv/tulkojumi/E0121.doc>  
 Ministry of Education and Science. On WWW at <http://www.izm.lv:8080/en/default.htm>  
 National Agency of Latvian Language Training. On WWW at [http://www.lvavp.lv/frameset.php?PHPSESSID=5d93e03a232dd8d924b780b714fed34d&lang\\_code=\\_eng](http://www.lvavp.lv/frameset.php?PHPSESSID=5d93e03a232dd8d924b780b714fed34d&lang_code=_eng)  
 Naturalization Board of the Republic of Latvia. On WWW at [http://www.np.gov.lv/index.php?en=par\\_en&saite=par\\_en.htm](http://www.np.gov.lv/index.php?en=par_en&saite=par_en.htm)  
 Official Language Law. On WWW at <http://www.ttc.lv/New/lv/tulkojumi/E0120.doc>  
 Prasības valsts valodas zināšanu apjomam [State language requirements for proficiency tests]. On WWW at <http://isec.gov.lv/valval/zinapj.shtml>  
 Profesiju standarti [Language requirements for certain professions]. On WWW at <http://www.izmpic.gov.lv>  
 Statutes of the State Language Centre. On WWW at [http://www.minelres.lv/NationalLegislation/Latvia/Latvia\\_LangRegCentre\\_English.htm](http://www.minelres.lv/NationalLegislation/Latvia/Latvia_LangRegCentre_English.htm)  
 Valsts valodas inspekcija [State Language Inspectorate]. On WWW at <http://www.tm.gov.lv/index.php?aid=413> (Latvian); <http://www.tm.gov.lv/index.php?mid=49> (English)  
 Valsts valodas komisija [State language commission]. On WWW at <http://www.vvk.lv/>