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Introduction

The Latvian language belongs to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European language family. It is the official state language of Latvia. There are only two living Baltic languages that are official state languages – Latvian and Lithuanian. About 1.4 million native Latvians speak Latvian and, atypically for a minor language, a relatively large number of non-native speakers speak Latvian. The increasing use of Latvian in Latvia may be attributed to a successful language policy. The language is also protected and promoted in Latvian communities abroad.

The state language policy is supported by strong academic education and research in language and literature. Apart from education facilities in three Latvian Universities – The University of Latvia in Riga, Liepaja University in Liepaja (located in western Latvia) and Daugavpils University (located in eastern Latvia), there are two special academic research units – the Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia, which has an academic staff of 41 employees, and the Institute of Literature, Folklore, and Art of the University of Latvia, which has an academic staff of 42 employees. Strong co-operation between educational and research organizations, participation of core researchers in the education process and *vice versa* promote the development of the Latvian language in both fields.

In the Latvian Language Institute, the main areas of research are dialectology and areal linguistics, onomastics, grammar, lexicology and lexicography, sociolinguistics, terminology, and studies of language culture.

Research topics in the Institute of Literature, Folklore, and Art include the history of Latvian literature, literary theory, comparative literature, Latvian folklore, Latvian theatre, and musicology.

In the University of Latvia, the Faculty of Humanities was created in 2010, when the former Faculty of Philology and Arts was merged with the Faculty of Modern Languages. The origins of the Faculty can be traced back to 1919, when, alongside natural and technical sciences adopted from the Riga Polytechnic Institute, a Faculty of Philosophy and Linguistics was formed. This faculty focused mainly on the Baltic languages, literature, history and culture studies.

Nowadays the Faculty of Humanities conducts scientific and innovative studies in the fields of linguistics, literary theory, folklore, arts and anthropology, as well as in regional and interdisciplinary studies. The large number of students (more than 2,000), lecturers and scientific researchers makes the Faculty of Humanities one of the biggest faculties at the University of Latvia.

Seven departments in the Faculty of Humanities offer study programs in various scientific fields and sub-fields: Department of English Studies, Department of Oriental Studies, Department of German Language and Romance Languages, Division of Classical Philology and Anthropology Studies, Department of Lettonic and Baltic Studies, Department of Slavonic and Russian Studies, and Department of Contrastive Linguistics, Translation and Interpreting. Guest lecturers from European and Asian universities are invited, and there are various exchange programs for students.

In Liepaja University, the Faculty of Humanities and Arts was established in 2000 as a result of restructuring the faculties that existed at that time. Its origins can be traced back to the Faculty of Latvian Language and Literature, which was established in year when Liepaja University was founded.

The Faculty of Humanities and Arts offers study programs in one of the following fields: new media art, foreign language teaching (English, German, or Russian), computer design, product design, Baltic philology and culture.

The Faculty also offers higher level studies in the new media art, Latvian philology, arts, literature and communication, didactics of languages, literature and culture.

Two research organizations are affiliated with the Faculty – the Humanities Institute of Courland and the Laboratory of Research in the Arts.

The Humanities Institute of Courland was founded in 2007. The staff of ten researchers is engaged in several approved research topics: Latvian folklore, the history of Latvian literature, the history and theory of theatre and cinema, history and theory of musics, Latvian diachronic and synchronic linguistics. The Institute also includes the Folklore and Language Center.

In Daugavpils University, the Faculty of Humanities is affiliated with the Institute of Comparative Studies, which was established in 2003 in order to develop systematic comparative (synchronic and diachronic)

research in several areas of the humanities in the context of one culture or several cultures.

This issue of *Humanities and Social Sciences: Latvia* introduces a small part of research carried out in the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia.

In the first article, Andrejs Veisbergs, Prof. *Dr.habil.philol.*, Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia, elaborates on the “Development of the Latvian Language, Purism and Prescriptivism.” The study is based on the assumption that language is in a state of flux; it is viable and can adapt to the changing world. Nevertheless, one often hears a pessimistic view of the changes occurring in the Latvian language, and one hears calls for halting or retarding these changes. Latvian linguists frequently seek a Golden Age of the language in an unspecified period in the past. The author discusses the extra-linguistic and intra-linguistic processes that drive language change, surveys the new media with their specific language varieties, and addresses sociolinguistic issues that will determine the fate of the language. He also outlines the problems of linguistic purism and its manifestation in the context of the Latvian language.

The second study by Prof. *Dr.philol.* Gunta Ločmele, Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia, analyses distinctive features of the Latvian language of advertising. The paper deals with phenomenons such as compression of information in Latvian advertising, reiteration, personalization, inclusion, elements of graphic design in written texts and expressive language means. Different types of advertising use language devices somewhat differently; however, the trend to develop the use of language in advertising is common to all types. The use of language in advertising is determined by various factors – time, space, and an understanding of culture and language in general by people who create advertisements. Badly written advertising texts that often are hidden translations from English do not foster the interest of consumers. However, a positive multicultural impact benefits the development of the Latvian advertising language.

Ilze Rūmniece Prof. *Dr.habil.philol.*, Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia, elaborates on the topic “The Language of Poetry in Ancient Lexicographic Materials (Suda and Pindar).” A distinctive feature in the works of researchers who analyze prose style in antiquity is the use of excerpts from poetic language/poetry texts. It is well known that poetry as a form of verbal expression enjoyed a special role in ancient cultures and traditions of education. This is why it is important to evaluate

the role of quotations from or references to the language of poetry in the ideas and arguments of ancient theoreticians of language or, as shown in this article, in lexicographic material as an arsenal of the facts of language.

The section on academic life provides information on the most recent publications in the humanities and introduces readers to the guest of the issue, namely the famous language specialist academician, professor *Dr. habil. philol.* Aina Blinkena. The current issue of *Humanities and Social Sciences: Latvia* contains a review of her recent publication *Latvian Punctuation: Everything about Punctuation Marks and Their Use*.

Acad. Raita Karnite
Supervising editor

Development of the Latvian Language, Purism and Prescriptivism

Andrejs Veisbergs

Prof., Dr.habil.philol., Faculty of Humanities, University of Latvia

Language is in a state of flux; changes show that the language is viable and that it can adapt to the changing world. Nevertheless, one often hears a pessimistic view of the processes occurring in the Latvian language, and one hears calls for halting or retarding the changes. Latvian linguists frequently look for the Golden Age of the language in an unspecified period in the past. This paper reveals the extra-linguistic and intra-linguistic processes that drive language change, surveys the new media with their specific language varieties, and addresses sociolinguistic issues that will determine the fate of the language. The author calls for acceptance, not hindrance, of what is taking place in the Latvian language.

The paper also outlines the problems of linguistic purism and its manifestation in the context of the Latvian language. It is hard to assess the impact of purism on the Latvian language because the appeals and suggestions of purists do not have a major impact on language in general. In some cases, however, purism limits vocabulary choices and the way these choices are reflected in lexicographic sources. Dicta issued by purists often create confusion and uncertainty, complicate life and spoil one's mood.

In Latvian linguistics and in articles related to the Latvian language, an alarm is often sounded about the corruption, decadence, degradation, and even the imminent demise of our language (Kušķis, 2008). Such forecasts arouse strong emotions because language is the cornerstone of national identity. Language change is associated with decadence and destruction of the language; it is forgotten that everything in the world changes and that language is no exception. The inevitability of language change has been noted by ancient philosophers (Heraclitus), Humboldt, and Saussure: “For time changes everything. There is no reason why languages should be exempt from this universal law” (Saussure, 2006: 77). In the previous century, numerous Latvian linguists shared this opinion. Juris Plāķis (Plāķis, 1914: 102) wrote: “We know only that language with

its sounds and forms does not stand still; it constantly changes, turns, and develops; it is in perpetual motion, endless process". All living languages change; only dead languages remain the same. These changes differentiate living languages from dead ones.

Nevertheless, generally reasonable individuals, including linguists, often condemn changes, warn about changes, and threaten society with changes by attributing them to ignorance, lack of education, carelessness, negligence, or even conspiracy. New meanings of words, loanwords, various changes in pronunciation and orthography are condemned (the written Latvian language radically changed in the 20th century, but no one objects to that today). There are appeals to halt changes or at least to retard the harm they cause.

Such anxiety is characteristic not only of Latvians; it can be observed also in major and global languages. It has been present even in the past when the language was supposedly correct. For example, when half a millennium ago English language words lost their case endings, dire predictions were made about the deterioration of the English language and its imminent demise.

Are changes good or bad? There seems to be the view that good changes are those which have been suggested and are supported by someone (linguists, authorities); bad changes seem to be those which occur naturally. Yet in real life language change is usually unpredictable; it is often controversial and frequently inexplicable. It is almost impossible to view change as good or bad. Diversity of subjective opinions is most evident during frequent discussions by linguists regarding specific words about whose status it is very difficult to achieve consensus. If language in general progressed or moved towards a particular goal, all languages would have become similar a long time ago. Language change reflects the flow of time and other changes in the life of a people; to measure it in terms of progress or regress would be subjective and unwise (Aitchison, 1998), besides the "wise" past judgments viewed retrospectively are mostly ridiculous. We can talk about various conditions of the language in various periods; however, it cannot be unequivocally declared that the Latvian language in the 19th century was better than in the 20th or 21st century. If language effectively performs its communicative function, as well as other functions, it cannot be said to be in a poor condition. To objectively compare the state of the language in various stages of its development would be like comparing writers from various eras – each of them had his/her own time, place, style and taste. It is hard to compare

the linguistic skills of writers and speakers even from the same era, just as it is difficult to compare the language skills of ignoramuses or geniuses of different eras.

However, that does not prevent pessimists and linguists from seeking the moment when language development reached the height of perfection, invariably at some time in the past. Jacob Grimm (one of the luminaries of the German language of the 19th century), whose language is now often referred to as a standard, wrote that six hundred years ago every rustic knew, that is to say, practiced daily, the perfections and niceties in the German language of which the best grammarians nowadays do not even dream (Jespersen, 1922: 42). Where does this certainty come from? Neo-Latvians (intellectuals during the First Latvian National Awakening in the middle of the 19th century) also made a similar mythical statement: the Latvian language was pure as the driven snow before the German lords mutilated it. We do not have any information about the functions and the use of that language.

Samuel Johnson, the father of modern English lexicography, wrote in the Preface of his 18th-century dictionary: “Tongues, like governments, have a natural tendency to degeneration”. However, according to modern linguistic theory, language change proves the viability of a language (it adapts to ever-changing conditions) and revitalises language use. Furthermore, since society, language users, functions of language, and media change, it would be difficult – even foolish – to hope that language itself will not change, because “language develops to meet the needs of those who use it. It has no independent power to flourish or decay apart from those who speak and write it” (Howard, 1984: 10). Changes are usually noticed when they are sudden, rapid and visible; the reaction is negative because such changes are regarded as mistakes. It can be said that such dislike reflects the longing for a pure, simple, clear, and unchanging language. Standardisation and supervision of language use are often regarded favourably because these activities create the impression that someone is taking care of the language, refining and “purifying” it. That is basically a purist position.

The issue of language quality is nothing new – even the ancient Greeks noticed changes in the quality of language. That was the reason for creating etymology, which initially focused on the quest for the earliest, and thus supposedly the correct, meanings of words. Likewise, in the 18th century all changes in a language were regarded negatively (they were considered decadent). It was noticed that modern languages

were becoming simpler and losing the diversity of declinations and conjugations; the spoken language was also becoming more careless.

Purists typically tend to know when the language reached its peak of perfection and when degeneration began. Their solution is to return to the almost divinely ordained norms. It is forgotten that one learns his/her native language not from grammar paradigms but by semi-conscious listening to the living and changing spoken language, reading books, listening to the radio, watching television, etc.

It is often heard that Latvian language was the most correct at the beginning of the 20th century. Consider, for example, quotations from some linguistic authorities representing this so-called Golden Age. In the preface of the book *Latviešu gramatika* (1907, *Latvian Grammar*), its compilers Milēnbahs and Endzelīns state: “Currently, the spring of the Latvian language is flowing in its absolute purity only in the older generation, which has not surrendered to the impact of the book or newspaper publishers or foreign languages.” In the pamphlet *Dažādas valodas kļūdas* (*Various Language Errors*) published in 1928, Endzelīns writes: “... only teachers who teach their students to speak and write in Latvian correctly will eventually be able to restore a pure, unspoiled Latvian language”. It seems that at the beginning of the 20th century and during Latvia’s first period of independence, the Latvian language was already hopelessly “spoiled.”

Why is there such a dislike of language change?

Partially, it is due to dislike of changes in general. We live in time of great and increasingly rapid changes which create insecurity; alarm is felt mainly by the older generation, which cannot accept new styles in fashion, clothing, and culture. In the past, perhaps the critical attitude of researchers towards their epoch was influenced by idolizing of the Latin language, enthusiasm about a dead language which does not change, in which everything is clear, complete and organized. The Latin language, which was not used by ordinary (uneducated) people, was studied artificially from grammar books. For a long time, the majority of European languages were forced into the Procrustean bed of the Latin language until even non-existent declinations were found in them (merely to comply with the Latin standard). Since the Latin language was used mainly in writing, literary language was proclaimed as the only “true” language; it was forgotten that the colloquial language and communication among

people influence living languages and their development. Paradoxically, during its period of consolidation, the Latvian language partially managed to avoid this misfortune because the literary Latvian language was shaped by non-Latvians. Alunāns, Kronvalds, Brīvzemnieks and other Neo-Latvians emphasized the revitalizing nature of the colloquial language. Finally, many think that there is only one correct type of language and that other forms – namely, colloquial language, slang, technical jargon, chat language, etc. – are merely barbarized mutations. This view is accentuated by the spread of new media which use new types of language. Undoubtedly, the issue of spoken versus written language is real. In this dichotomy, there is a pendular movement. In the 18th and 19th centuries, many nations had a high-quality literary language because only educated people could write. They communicated mainly through letters, which they had ample time to polish. In the 20th century, one can observe a high quality of cultivated spoken language (which is required and made possible by the audio media), and that has led to a certain decline in the quality of the literary language. In the 21st century, the written language is becoming more like the spoken language (new media).

Why does language change?

First, language changes because people's needs change in a constantly changing world. Language adapts itself to these needs. Archaic words disappear from a language, or they are stored in dictionaries; neologisms constantly supplement the vocabulary stock. New forms of communication, such as SMS in mobile phones, have created new abbreviations and new symbols. The more rapid the changes in society, the more rapid the changes in language – changes in the Latvian language during the last 20 years are clear proof of that.

Second, language changes as a result of contacts; that is especially true of minor languages and languages (like Latvian) which are at geographical crossroads. The Latvian language has always been in contact with one or several major languages in the region – German, Polish, Swedish, Russian, and English. It has borrowed many words from these languages and assimilated them. In a way, it is good that there have been different contact languages because if there had been continuous contact with one major language, the impact on Latvian would have been very strong. While the contact language change has produced a variety of synonyms, e.g., the word *leduslācis* (literally, “ice bear” from German

Eisbaer) was replaced by *baltais lācis* (literally, “white bear” from Russian *belij medved*) and now is increasingly called *polārlācis* (from English *polar bear*). Loanwords are incorporated into the language and assimilated; for example, today Latvian has assimilated *rullēt* (from English *to rule*), *tīnis* (from English *teenager*), and *tusiņš* (from Russian *tusovka* meaning “party”) with its derivatives *tusēt*, *ietusēt*, *patusēt*, *aiztusēties*, *iztusēties*, etc. The conjunction *un* (“and”) – the most frequently used conjunction in the Latvian language – is actually a Germanism (from German *und*), a fact of which few Latvians are aware. Words such as *skola* (“school”), *slims* (“ill”), *tirgus* (“market”), *baznīca* (“church”), *žurka* (“rat”), *ģimene* (“family”), *ārstis* (“doctor”), *sēne* (“mushroom”), *puisis* (“guy”), *meita* (“daughter”), *bagāts* (“rich”), *nabags* (“poor”) are recognized as loanwords only by philologists. The concept of a loanword is relative; it depends on the knowledge of etymology. It is even more subjective and absurd to look for parallels in other languages and to prohibit the use of a word merely because a different language has the same form of the word or uses the word similarly (semantic calques). One hundred and fifty years ago, Juris Alunāns (Alunāns, 1956: 224) said: “It does not matter who gives words to Latvians; what matters is how they are given.” It is understandable why it is now easy to adopt numerous foreign words – no effort is required in creating their Latvian equivalents, and frequently loanwords which are consistent with the traditions of Latvian pronunciation and orthography are simpler and easier to use. Changes affect not only vocabulary. Numerous compounds and derivatives were acquired from German, and various word constructions were borrowed from Russian, which dominated in terminology models. Currently, English is slightly altering sentence structures and introducing various internationalisms. An increasing number of translations are augmenting the impact of relevant source languages because translations into the Latvian language constitute a large part of published texts (Veisbergs, 2008). Isolation from the outside world is more dangerous for the future of language than are various external influences.

Third, language is influenced by fashion, prestige, copying, imitation – people like to appropriate and imitate everything that is new, fashionable and seemingly attractive. However, it does not necessarily follow that changes dictated by fashion are comprehensive and deep, that there is unlimited freedom or that anything is possible. As with style in clothes, the basic elements – dresses, trousers, jackets – generally change only slightly. At the same time, jackets can be in various colors; they can have

two, three, four buttons or, in an extreme case, they might have a zipper instead of buttons. The situation with language is similar – at one time, it is in vogue to use the word *problēma* (*problem*), which ousts its past synonyms; then *izaicinājums* (*challenge*) supplant *problem*, and words such as *reāls* (*real*) or *dajebkas* (*whatsoever*), *pa lielam* (*broadely*), *pa smuko* (*nicely*), etc. become fashionable only to be replaced by something else. These causes of language change exist outside the language (Labov, 2001) – they are socio-linguistically and extra-linguistically determined.

There are also purely linguistic causes of change. The first is laziness, or, scientifically speaking, the economy of language. That is manifested in swallowed endings in spoken language, clipping and compounding. The economy of language also suggests that there is no need for two words that mean the same thing. Often subtle differences arise in the meaning of words; therefore, objections to neologisms which duplicate existing words are unfounded because one of the words will either acquire different meaning, or eventually disappear. What happens will be determined by the language users. There are other natural causes. For example, one change usually causes other changes. Formerly, in the Latvian language the abstract word *ekonomika* (“economy”) was used in the singular, but now that a different meaning has emerged, this word is also used in the plural. Economy of language is also manifested in the shortening of words, especially if there are some external parallels; currently this trend can be observed in words such as *minimizēt* (“minimize”), which is a shortened form of the former *minimalizēt*, and *optimizēt* (“optimize”), which is a shortened form of the former *optimalizēt*.

However, linguistic reasons are usually rather weak, and laws of language merely provide a rationale for changes caused by external factors. For example, in the Latvian language, nouns are either singular or plural in number; however, there are exceptions, namely, nouns which have no singular or no plural. Because of the impact of external factors (the English language), numerous exceptions are at present disappearing or becoming looser. For example, *debates* (“debate,” used in the plural) is increasingly being used in the singular form, *debate*, while nouns such as *prasme* (“skill”), *politika* (“policy”), *taktika* (“tactic”), *vara* (“power”) traditionally used in the singular, etc., are frequently used also in the plural. Although the impact is external, it occurs in accordance with the basic norms of the Latvian language.

Just as in nature, signs of evolution can be observed in language as well. Language has innovations and repetitions; their interaction ensures

development – language change occurs via replication of empirically real entities and evolution (Croft, 2000: 4). Both stable and occasional variations can occur in the spoken and written language, as well as in various subtypes of the language – registers, dialects, sociolects, age-group related varieties, written/spoken language, media-related varieties, etc. Suppression of variations and neologisms hinders development; on the other hand, rapid changes cause instability. Therefore, normal development entails slow changes in the grammatical system, but rapid and broad changes can occur in the lexical system if that is what society needs. In language evolution (which, to a certain extent, is contrary to the idea of universalism, reason, logic and perfection symbolized by the dead Latin language) emphasis is put on differences, diversity, varieties and changes as promoters of development. Evolution is continuous but not homogeneous; it is irregular and has no clear goal; rather, it is adaptation to circumstances. If we perceive language only as an abstract system, it is detached from its use where every utterance has a real context. Predictions about the course of evolution are almost impossible because we do not have all the facts about how society will develop in the future. Language develops differently in different periods, and different language sub-systems develop at a different pace – grammar, writing, the lexical core develop slowly (although reforms in writing and changes in the alphabet are possible) while the lexical periphery, terminology and slang develop rapidly. In general, language tends to become grammatically simpler and more streamlined, as well as lexically broader. However, there are always exceptions – sometimes an isolated norm can cause chaos in particular usage, or exceptions can be attributed to fashion or habit or laziness. Some language characteristics cannot be explained at all.

The new media

The spread of the new media refutes the currently widespread belief that people do not read or write anymore. Never before have there been so many people engaged in writing; however, it is a new type of writing which often does not comply with traditional norms and is unedited. New media blur the clear distinctions between spoken and written language; what emerges is a centaur language – a mixture of spoken and traditional written language which is used in chats, comments, short messages and e-mails. Alberto Moravia has wittily observed that the ratio of literacy to illiteracy is a constant, but nowadays the illiterates can read and write. I

think that currently the proportion of those who speak and write badly and those who speak and write well has remained the same; however, those who could not speak up before can do so now. Nevertheless, it is good that the Latvian language is used in these media. Everything has its own place, and one should not desperately look for refined, well-considered, and traditional Latvian language in these media. One can justifiably expect that kind of language from writers, trained speakers, as well as from high-quality newspapers, magazines, and serious TV and radio programs.

Purism

The subject of purism still attracts the attention of linguists throughout the world; however, during recent years the focus has shifted towards the aspects of explanation and denial (Purism ..., 2003, Purism, 2004). Purism is often defined as resistance to language change or attempts to eradicate some former changes or phenomena. Purists can oppose changes in general, specific changes, or, in the case of ultra-purists (regressive purists) even well-rooted phenomena in language. A current vogue term is “prescriptivism”, which can be regarded as a broader notion; it assesses language from the perspective of right and wrong. Trudgill goes even further and claims that “any set of beliefs about language which are based on the notion of correctness can be said to be prescriptive” (Trudgill, 2003: 107).

Purism is an active type of prescriptivism. Actually, purism could be regarded as language engineering; here it is appropriate to remember Stalin’s metaphoric description of writers as “engineers of human souls”. Purists regard themselves/linguists as engineers of human language.

It is believed that purism is a normal phenomenon as language undergoes standardization and codification of norms. For Latvians the issue of purism in relation to language has been topical since the First Awakening; it emerged together with nationalism, which, as in many other nations (not all), was shaped by philologists. However, once language standardization has been achieved, purism should end. Since there is reason to believe that standardization of the modern Latvian language was completed at the end of the 19th century, purism should not have had a significant impact on the language development thereafter. Indeed in real terms it has not been effective, yet many linguist and non-linguists have pursued these futile attempts.

Restrictedness of purism

Purism focuses mainly on the so-called literary, or standardized, language or official language (though the latter is more a political and sociolinguistic concept). Furthermore, purism tries to regulate mainly the written language and usually ignores the spoken language despite the fact that the latter dominates in communication, in formation of language norms and rules and thus also in the development of language, to say nothing of the fact that the history of any language has been mainly oral. But if the spoken language is heard in the “official” media, it can also receive a scolding, hypercorrect criticism or even be subject to self-censure by purists (Strelēvica, 2006: 57). Often language professionals (as well as non-professionals) use language naturally, and sometimes they apologize or indicate that they have used expressions which they themselves or somebody else might regard as incorrect. Such an approach often makes it difficult to perceive what has been said.

In any language, the written standard is slightly artificial because it differs from the common language, the idiolect. It is taught; people often resist it (for example, when norms of writing are changed). The standard also does not reflect the richness of language – sublanguages, layers, dialects, varieties of regional and professional languages, complexity of diverse registries, categories, age groups, classes, genders, education level groups, and combination of all possible varieties; nor does it reflect the diversity of media (written and spoken language, language of electronic means of communication, etc.).

Purism focuses mainly on the form of language, not on the meaning, where changes are the broadest and variability is the greatest. It is unclear whether this stems from a general difficulty in understanding and formulating the meaning or from a belief that it is impossible to influence the meaning.

The narrowness of purism can be also observed in rather subjective judgments regarding not only certain linguistic phenomena (they will be discussed later) but also linguistic categories; for example, “barbarisms are loanwords, which are felt in language as foreign bodies and which we could do without” (Laua, 1981: 121). In this definition, the explanation of barbarism is subjective because what is felt by one might not be felt by another, and what is needed by one might not be needed by another. Numerous loanwords are not even recognized as such by non-experts. 3–5% of Latvian vocabulary might suffice for simple communication

needs; yet if these words have survived and are still in use, evidently they are needed. The examples of barbarisms cited by Laua – *čau* (“hi”), *foršs* (“cool”), *bodīte* (“small shop”), *ģīmīs* (“phiz”), *reihš* (“Reich”), *kultūrtrēģeris* (“culture carrier”) – reflect a wide diversity of vocabulary which does not deserve to be grouped under the label of barbarism. A more correct definition of barbarisms is offered by Ojārs Bušs – “non-literary borrowings” (Bušs, 2005: 39).

Negative aspects of purism

Language is a living system which changes, and the totality of changes in spoken language sooner or later has to be accepted as the norm in a language. After all, language norms are not an expression of divine will carved in stone; language norms are assumptions by society as to what is correct. Therefore, the view that the majority of people are violating specific language norms is absurd – apparently the use of language has changed, and thus an outdated or invented norm also has to be changed. The permanent fixing of norms inhibits innovation, and that is contrary to the development of language.

Purism can seriously limit language diversity and hinder its development because language is a living and changing system, and changes in language usually begin with diversity. Thus the demise of Latin was partly due to the attempt of the Renaissance humanists to purify it from the pollution of the Middle Age period and return to the classical ideal (Ostler, 2007). If we limit the diversity and growth, the language is put in the Procrustean bed and impoverished. Purism can also divide society and encourage intolerance. In France, for example, dogmatic adherence to purism in grammar has resulted in the formation of a parallel standard in spoken language – thus a dichotomy of the theoretically correct and the real language has appeared. Also in the Czech Republic, there are two languages because prescriptivists recognise only the “correct” written, or literary, language. In reaction to this, a corpus-based grammar has been published showing the percentages of the various uses (“right” and “wrong”).

The theoretical standard is developed by individual people who have their own areas of limited competence and experience and who, to some extent, undemocratically impose their assumptions on users. If the reflection of language in dictionaries, for example, does not correspond to the real use of language but is based on the assumptions of contemporary

authorities or on a desire to preserve the past, language development is hindered; furthermore, an incorrect and unscientific assessment of the state of language is provided. Ignoring the spoken language and elevating the written language as the only language worth considering (juxtaposition of spoken and written language) compromises the integrity of language. For example, a focus on the written language often leads to complicated terminology, and difficulties in uttering long compounds and collocations are not taken into account (Veisbergs, 2007).

The opposition to loanwords stems from the assumption that our language is pure; however, all languages are mixed because they are not isolated from the surrounding world and other languages. Furthermore, no language has died because it incorporated too many foreign words. The death of a language has other non-linguistic causes, and changes in vocabulary do not portend its demise.

To describe language, purists often use emotionally charged and non-scientific words such as *crippled*, *spoiled*, *corrupted*, and *polluted*. They speak of language that has to be *saved*, *liberated*, *cleaned*, *restored pure and uncontaminated* and from which *unwelcome* and *intolerable* elements have to be *eradicated*, *prohibited*, *swept out*. Purism campaigns and battles by linguists consume time and energy that could be better used in compiling new dictionaries and text-books or in conducting research. It is also symptomatic that others are blamed for corrupting the language (Keller, 1994: 6).

Finally, a typical feature in Latvian purism is the trend to forge a link in the mind of an average Latvian between the idea of purism and the image of a linguist. Thus, if an individual is linguistically liberal, he/she regards linguists as bull-headed and old-fashioned enslavers of language (and spenders of public money); if an individual is a purist, he regards linguists as loafers because they are doing nothing to purge the language of incorrect words. This idea is supported by the mythologized image of Endzelīns as the only and true Latvian arch-linguist.

Types of purism

There can be diverse types, diverse expressions and diverse degrees of intensity in purism. Of the diverse types of purism, the so-called archaic, or ethnographic, purism is not characteristic of Latvians; that is, there is no desire to preserve the language in an absolutely ancient, idealized, folk form, free from foreign bodies, like Icelandic and partially

Arabic. That apparently can be attributed to the fact that since the early writings were not written by Latvians, they cannot be considered as a good point of reference. Folk songs are also not suitable because they do not provide enough material for carrying out the functions of a modern language. It is true that a certain kind of archaic purism can be observed in the reverential attitude of some linguists towards the guidelines set by former linguists and the language of some former writers. Usually that is characteristic of nations with a short history of literary language. Nations with a longer history would consider it strange if somebody criticized them because the modern language differs from that of Homer, Shakespeare or Cervantes; likewise, most people would consider objections of an 18th- or 19th- century linguist to certain forms of words or neologisms as odd. The history of Latvian literary language is much shorter; perhaps that is why the numerous guidelines set by Endzelīns for practical language use still seem relevant to some people (not to be confused with Endzelīns' linguistic theories, studies on etymology, etc.). Several of Endzelīns' ideas on practical language use can be easily disputed and were not accepted and supported by everyone even in his own time. That is evident in a book written by Endzelīns' contemporary, Kļāuka (Kļāuka, 1937). The following examples included in this book clearly show that although linguistic authorities have objected to them, some words, nearly a century later, are still being used "incorrectly": *izdot* (lit. "to hand out" :: *apgādāt grāmatu* ("to publish a book"); *izsmelt* (lit. "to empty") :: *izspriest, pilnīgi pārrunāt jautājumu* ("to discuss (a subject) in its entirety"); *ieņemt amatu* (lit. "to fill an office") :: *būt amatā* ("to hold an office"); *ķilda, strīds* ("quarrel") :: *rāte* ("angry dispute"); *mutiski, rakstiski* (incorrect form of "orally" and "in writing") :: *mutvārdos, rakstveidā* (correct form of "orally" and "in writing"); *slēdziens* ("opinion, finding") :: *secinājums* ("conclusion"); *spēlēt lomu* (lit. "to play a role") :: *ir nozīmīgs* ("to be significant"). It is strange that contemporary purists are continuing this absurd battle.

Latvian purism is also characterized by its opposition and covert protests during the Soviet era (Strelēvica-Ošiņa, 2007: 119), when it could be regarded as a fight for national identity against the fetters and obtusion of the Russian language. It is widely known that language is the first element to be ideologized and turned into a symbol by oppressed ethnic groups. During the 19th century, the same phenomenon could be observed in the attitude towards the impact of the German language.

The fight against the foreign element

In Latvian linguistics, purism has been manifested mainly as xenophobic purism – a fight against both new and assimilated loanwords. Furthermore, it has been believed that the most dangerous are Germanisms and Russianisms, that is, the contribution of the largest and the most significant contact languages. There are objective reasons for this attitude – these languages have exerted the greatest pressure and threats; there are also subjective reasons – these are languages which were well known by the purists themselves. Objections towards Finno-Ugric, Lithuanian, French or Italian loanwords, as well as diverse exoticisms, have not been so strong. The Neo-Latvians, who sought to purify the Latvian language from Germanisms, yet encouraged Latin and Greek internationalisms to enter the Latvian language.

Objections to foreign element by purists usually are rather non-systematic and arbitrary. Often editors/proofreaders of magazines and newspapers put foreign words in italics and quotation marks (Strelēvica, 2006: 48) in order to call attention to their foreign origin; that is done even if these foreign words are already well known and have been assimilated into the language. Sometimes purists insist that a foreign word should be replaced by a word of native origin. Frequently they suggest replacing new loanwords by older loanwords; for example, instead of *imidžs* one should use *reputācija* (“image,” “reputation”), instead of *ofiss*, one should use *kantoris*, *kanceleja*, *kabinets* or *birojs* (“office,” “room,” “bureau”). Sometimes loanwords, such as *bīčbols* (“beach ball”), *īmeils* (“e-mail”), *snovbords* (“snowboard”) have to be replaced by loan translations (calques), respectively, *pludmales volejbols* (lit. “beach volleyball”), *e-vēstule* (lit. “e-letter”), *sniega dēlis* (lit. “snow board”). Yet frequently purism goes even further and contends that calques spoil the language; for example, it is said that expressions such as *naudas atmazgāšana* (“money laundering”), *piegulošs* (“tight-fitting”), *viennozīmīgi* (“undoubtedly”) are not welcome in the language. In the fight against calques, the narrow-mindedness of purism is most vividly expressed – if there is a construction in Russian or German similar to a phrase, compound or derivative, that is sufficient cause for castigating and eradicating it. The fact that thousands of compounds or derivatives in the Latvian language have parallels in these two or other languages is not taken into account. Thus, in the beginning of the 20th century, compounds such as *sniegbalts* (“snow-white”), *debeszils* (“sky-blue”), *kristāltīrs* (“crystal-clear”), etc.,

were vigorously rejected as crude Germanisms. Purism fights against morphological calques as well – for example, *izgaismot* (“to light up”), *līdzcilvēks* (“peer”), *līdzpilsonis* (“fellow-citizen”), *savlaicīgs* (“timely”), *apmācība* (“training”). Inta Freimane lists the formations which should be purged from the language, and at the same time acknowledges the absence of rational reasons for doing so: “Unfortunately, there are no infallible, objective standards; signs of foreignness in relevant loanwords are sometimes rather hard to identify and define.” (Freimane, 1993: 371).

People say *iet ar kājām*, not *iet kājām* (“go on foot”). Silvija in a language-related programme on Latvijas Radio 1 declares that the former use is wrong because it is borrowed from the German *zu Fuß*. One could just as well argue that the latter form has been influenced by Russian *идти пешком*.

Purism also objects to semantic calques – words (usually of the Latvian origin) that have acquired an additional meaning from a foreign language: for example, *baudīt (cieņu)* (to enjoy respect, not simply “to enjoy,” e.g., food), *izsmelt* (lit. “to bail out water” synonym for “to discuss,” e.g., a subject in its entirety), *apmaksāt* (synonym for *samaksāt* [“to pay,” “to cover costs”]), *pieņemt* (lit. “to adopt”, synonym for *iedomāties* [“to assume,” “to imagine”]), *solis* (lit. “step” synonym for *rīcība* [“action”]), *atzīmēt* (“to mark” synonym for *pieminēt* [“to mention, to indicate”]) etc. Verbs such as *saturēt* (“to contain”), *sastāvēt* (“to constitute”), and *atrūnāt* (“to make a reservation/caveat”) are also under siege despite the fact that in the Latvian language there are nouns with a related meaning *saturs* (“content”), *sastāvs* (“composition”) and *atrūna* (“caveat”).

Different forms of the verb “to call,” such as *pazvanīt*, are prohibited because there already is the verb *piezvanīt*; however, it is permissible to use *piedauzīt* and *padauzīt* (“to knock”), *piedomāt* and *padomāt* (“to think over”), *piebikstīt* and *pabikstīt* (“to poke”), etc. Because of parallels with German, the adjectives *rakstisks* and *mutisks* (“written” and “spoken/oral”) are disparaged; it is suggested that the clumsy adverbs *mutvārds* and *rakstveidā* be used instead, but they cannot compete with the former in everyday use.

Fear of figurative meanings

Another characteristic of Latvian purism which frequently is associated with a suspicious attitude toward loanwords is the fight against both

lexical and phraseological metaphors, as well as a fear of using figurative meanings in general. That is very strange because extension of meaning constitutes a significant contribution to the development of a language – in this way, a multitude of abstract concepts can be created from a rather limited stock of native words. If in Latvian a thought (*doma*) can fly (*lidot*), and language (*valoda*) can flow (*plūst*), why can't speech (*runa*) **go** (*iet*)? A car (*mašīna*) and a clock (*pulkstenis*) cannot literally **go** (*iet*) either. In Latvian, *laiks iet* (lit. “time **goes**”, meaning “time passes”), and a person can *iet bojā* (lit. “to **go** dead” meaning “to die”); something can *iet labumā* or *iet mazumā* (lit. “to **go** better” or “to **go** smaller” meaning “to increase” or “to diminish”), *iet plašumā* (lit. “to **go** wider” meaning “to increase in scale”) and *iet zudumā* (lit. “to **go** wasted” meaning “to be lost”).

If in Latvian the face, trousers and vegetables can be washed and if it is acceptable figuratively to say *mazgāt galvu* (lit. “to **wash** one's head” meaning “to scold”), *mazgāt rokas nevainībā* (lit. “to **wash** hands in innocence” meaning “to wash away sins”), or *nomazgāt baltu* (lit. “to **wash** white” meaning “to wash clean”), then why isn't it acceptable to say *atmazgāt naudu* (lit. “to **wash** money” meaning “to launder money”) instead of using a grotesque four word combination (see later in the text)?

The same applies to the word *izsmelt*, which can mean “to bail out” if used in the context of water, or “to exhaust” or “to discuss/use in entirety” if used in connection with possibilities, problems, or patience. For nearly a century, there was resistance to using *izsmelt* with regard to a subject. If the adjective *izsmelošs* (“comprehensive”) is acceptable, then why is it that *izsmelt* can be used only in its literal meaning, namely, “to bail out”?

I think that a question/issue/matter (*jautājums*) can be raised (*pacelt*), not just asked (*uzdot*). A question can also be picked/lifted up (*cilāt*), moved forward (*izvirzīt*), set up (*uzstādīt*), placed (*nostādīt*), poured out (*nobērt*), spit out (*izspļaut*), etc.; of course, it is possible to use the simple verb *jautāt* (“to pose/to ask a question”), one of its derivatives (*pajautāt*, *apjautāties*, *iejautāties*, etc.) or synonyms, such as *aptaujāties*, *vaicāt*, *uzprasīt*. This diversity of choices makes the language beautiful and rich.

It is also foolish to oppose stylistic synonyms and euphemisms as in the case of the verb *zagt* (“to steal”) (Paegle and Kušķis, 2002:155-156). *Paņemt* (“to take”), *dabūt* (“to get”), *iznest* (“to carry out”), *aizceļot* (“to vanish”), *pievākt* (“to collect”), *aizdzīt*, *aizbraukt* (“to highjack”) and numerous other synonyms have emerged to enable the speaker to express various shades of meaning.

Silvija on Latvijas Radio 1 advises that in the Latvian language one should not say *atdot savu balsi par kādu* (lit. “to give away your vote to somebody”); instead, one should say *nobalsot* (“to vote”). The reasoning is that if something is given away (*atdot*), then it is gone. Logically, then, if a citizen has only one vote (*balsis*) and if that is given away, he/she does not have it anymore. But apparently behind this sophistry lies the fear of figurative meaning. According to that reasoning, one should not *atdot godu* (lit. “to give away honour” meaning “to pay respect, to salute”) because such a loss would be even more serious for the giver.

Why is the expression *iesēsties pelņē* (lit. “to sit down in a puddle,” meaning “to disgrace oneself”) considered a language-polluting phraseologism (Freimane, 1993: 410) that should be replaced by *galīgi izgāzties* (“to completely fail”), which metaphorically is much weaker? Because there is a parallel with the Russian language. If we purged from the Latvian language all idioms that have Russian or German parallels, we probably would reduce the number of Latvian idiom stock by one-third because many of them are early and late borrowings or independent formations based on universal metaphors, e.g. somatic idioms. The expression *krist acīs* (lit. “to fall into the eyes” meaning “to be distinctly visible”) has been under attack for a century; one should say *durties acīs* (lit. “to prick into the eyes”). Nevertheless, speakers apparently are not willing to listen to the dictum of purists and give up the former form.

Among “constructions which mislead Latvians” (Paegle and Kušķis, 2002: 47) are phrases such as *katrs otrais, trešais, ceturtais* (lit. “every second, third, fourth”). Instead of them, one should use *puse, trešdaļa, ceturtdaļa* (“half, one-third, one-fourth”). Should we similarly replace “every eleventh” with “one-eleventh,” etc.?

The majority of proscribed words and phrases can be subjected to such analyses, but the justifications offered by purists will be very unconvincing. Of course, one may use the forms suggested by purists, but the disparaged forms can be used as well.

The irrational fear of figurative meaning is reflected in the excessive use of italics and quotation marks by editors/proofreaders of magazines and newspapers; often this practice is applied to nearly all words which are used in a figurative sense, words which have an established secondary meaning, or even idioms (Strelēvica, 2006: 52).

Once more about uncontrolled borrowing from the English language

Currently, xenophobic purism is opposing the impact of English on the Latvian language. Although in Latvia, loanwords and the process of borrowing are generally allowed and approved, one still hears objections to uncontrolled borrowing. Borrowing is indeed uncontrolled (who could control it?), but not in the sense that it is universal and destructive of a language. Since the regaining of independence and political reorientation, the English language has dominated in contacts, and thus borrowing has been unavoidable. However, that is not the worst that could happen; it is merely a new phenomenon in the Latvian language after the dominance of the German and Russian languages. Borrowing is also stimulated by rapid global development and globalization, our comparative backwardness (50 years of partial isolation), as well as the global power of the English language. The influx of true English words into the Latvian language is small; it affects mainly buzzwords in colloquial language and in certain new spheres (computer science, sports): *tops* (“top”), *čats* (“chat”), *hosts* (“host”), *zūms* (“zoom”), *partija* (“party”), *kūls* (“cool”), *čiksa* (“chick”), *superīgs* (“superb”), *frisbijs* (“Frisbee”), *kaitot* (“to kite”), *snovot* (“to snowboard”). More significant is the number of neoclassical internationalisms that come into all European languages by way of English: *politkorektums* (“political correctness”), *loģistika* (“logistics”), *rafinērija* (“refinery”), *multiplekss* (“multiplex”), *prezentācija* (“presentation”), *antioksidants* (“antioxidant”), *kleptokrātija* (“kleptocracy”), *koronārs* (“coronary”), *naratīvs* (“narrative”), *koeksistēt* (“coexist”), *komitoloģija* (“comitology”).

With the shift in main contact languages, the system of the so-called false friends has also changed and can cause temporary confusion: *ambulance* (“ambulance” vs. former “outpatient clinic”), *aktivitāte* (“measure” vs. former “activity”), *kapacitāte* (“ability” vs. former “capacity/volume”), *konservācija* (“conservation” vs. former “preservation in a can”), *konspirācija* (“conspiracy” vs. former “secrecy”), *divīzija* (“division” vs. former “military division”), *prēmija* (“insurance payment” vs. former “bonus”), and *akadēmiķis* (“academician” vs. former “academic”). Predictably, the transformation of the system will end soon, and the meanings of words will adjust to the new dominant contact language, namely, English.

A language has self-regulatory mechanisms, and if a loanword is not suitable for the Latvian language or if it seems unpleasant or inconvenient for users, it is usually replaced or assimilated. The latter trend is clearly visible in colloquial expressions from English: *tīnis* from *teenager*, *fīča* from *feature*, *rullēt* from *to rule*, *cipot* from *to zip*. It is also evident in expressions borrowed from the Russian language *pričene* from *pricheska* (“hairstyle”), *tusiņš* from *tusovka* (“party”), and *bomzis* from *bomzh* (“homeless person”). These words have been successfully adapted to the Latvian language, and they show the power of internal normalization process of the language. Since *kompjūters* (“computer”) was not deemed phonetically suitable for regular use in the Latvian language, it was easily replaced by the colloquial word *kompis* and the officially approved word *dators*. In my opinion, the word *zīmols* (“brand”) was accepted mainly because it was hard for Latvians to agree on the broad or narrow vowel in the loanword *brends/brands* (“brand”).

Opposition to colloquial language

Another characteristic of Latvian purism, especially in the 20th century, is a negative attitude towards colloquial language – anti-colloquialism. In my opinion, it is a very undesirable trend because, first, it destroys the links between internal language variations and layers, thus ignoring the real state of the language, and, second, it does not objectively reflect this area in research and dictionaries. Thus, for example, a noteworthy dictionary of slang (Bušs and Erntšone, 2006) in the Latvian language was published only recently, and it contains numerous words which until now could not be found in any lexicographical source. The greeting *čau* (“hi”) first appeared in dictionaries only after 1995, although it had been widely used for more than half a century prior to that. Colloquial language is one of the sources of language development; shunning colloquial language limits its influx into literary language. Are we so rich that we can ignore language spoken on a daily basis?

There are several reasons for this trend. The language standard in the past was usually associated with the language of educated upper class and the written language. Currently, it is rather difficult to evaluate the real colloquial Latvian language of the past because it was seldom recorded in written form. The colloquial language of the past can be found in rare private letters and in documents which are stored in archives and which have not been edited, proofread or censored – in other words, in written

language. During the time when a wide-scale recording of the spoken language on tapes, in movies, and TV recordings began, the language was heavily censored and revised; one should also take into account the degree of natural self-censoring of public speech. Therefore it is hard to analyze the colloquial language of the past because it is available only indirectly, in a processed format, for example, in fiction.

Colloquial language contains numerous loanwords and buzzwords which violate officially approved standards. However, the issue of norms and standards is debatable. With regard to terminology, Valentīna Skujiņa states that “*standardized* means ‘officially approved’” (Skujiņa, 2005: 73). But what does “officially approved” mean? Can a word or a type of a word formation be approved by any institution? Does it mean that afterwards the word becomes acceptable and more valuable? Have colloquial clippings, such as *tīnis* (“teenager”), *sīcis* (“kid”), *fucis* (“football”), *kompis* (“computer”), *ēdūzis* (“canteen”) been officially approved for use, or have they not been approved and thus must not be used? Is clipping, which is a widely used process in word formation, characteristic of the Latvian language and thus “officially approved”? Or should words such as *e-pasts* (“e-mail”), *e-pārvalde* (“e-governance”), *e-iekļautība* (“e-inclusion”), *e-sabiedrība* (“e-society”), which have recently entered the Latvian language and for which there is no previously approved model in word formation be considered illegitimate, before some authority has proclaimed them as “official”? In my opinion, the models used in colloquial language are valuable because they reflect the natural orientation and fundamental essence of the Latvian language, in which brevity, conciseness, and metaphor have a significant role. Therefore, preference should be given to the verb *cipot* (“to zip”) in comparison to the official (?) expression *veikt tilpsaspiedi* (lit. “to perform volume compression”) found in terminological dictionaries.

New terms which are created “officially” should be user-friendly, that is, euphonious and as short as possible; the more the word or term is planned to be used, the shorter it should be. Therefore, the calque *naudas atmazgāšana* (“money laundering”) is a better term than *noziedzīgi iegūtu līdzekļu legalizēšana* (lit. “legitimization of illegally obtained gains”); *ambulance* (“ambulance”) has a tendency to replace the longer phrase *neatliekamās medicīniskās palīdzības automobīlis* (lit. “automobile of the emergency medical aid”); *harvesters* (“harvester”) supplants *koku gāšanas, atzarošanas un sazarumošanas mašīnu* (lit. “vehicle for tree logging, debranching and sawing”); and *ielogoties* (“to log in”) is more

popular than *ieiet sistēmā, izmantojot paroli* (lit. “to enter the system, using a password”). Written language that is replete with such terms unavoidably becomes longer and is simply not enjoyable.

Even in magazines and newspapers that use colloquial language, one can see the heavy hand of purism/prescriptivism in the excessive use of italics and quotation marks by editors/proofreaders (Strelēvica, 2006: 52).

Dictionaries

Finally, purism has caused significant harm to Latvian lexicography – entire layers of old vocabulary have been lost to researchers, and many other linguistic artifacts cannot be found. In the time of the Neo-Latvians, Germanisms were eradicated from dictionaries; the dictionary compiled by Milenbahs and Endzelīns does not contain recent loanwords or words which have borrowed letters, such as *f* or *h*. It is impossible to find colloquial language and other lower language layers in Soviet dictionaries. This incomplete reflection of language in dictionaries creates an incomplete and distorted picture of the language as a whole and hinders its natural development. In addition to its descriptive function, the dictionary also has a prescriptive function; that is, the presence of a word in the dictionary proves that the word exists in the given language and thus can be used. It also gives the meaning of the relevant word. Currently, some help is provided by Internet browsers, which enable the user to find a word if its form is known; however, it is not possible to see the entire list of words and their meanings. Perhaps purism in dictionaries is the cause of the recent misunderstanding and disbelief about why Germanisms/barbarisms which were seemingly eradicated long ago have once again appeared in the Latvian language. In reality, they never really disappeared from the language; they were merely forced underground and could not be found in reference sources. Their absence from dictionaries, as in the case of *čau* (“hi”), did not keep them from being preserved in language as such. Therefore, it is naive to think that “non-words, which are gathered, published and accepted into general usage are leading the Latvian language to its demise” (Grīse, 2005:120).

Modern descriptive linguistics and lexicography are based on the following tenets:

- language changes, and change is normal;
- spoken language is the basis of the language (development);
- correctness depends on usage, which is relative.

Common sense compels one to agree with Aija Priedīte, who says that “it is absurd to claim that a half of the nation is speaking incorrectly.”

Purism and language culture

Purism should not be confused with the so-called language culture. Polite suggestions (not shouting that “such a word does not exist”) which are meant to refine and enrich modern literary language would be beneficial for users. According to Melita Stengrevica, “To refine a language does not mean to be a language cop; on the contrary, to refine a language means to look more deeply into language processes and to understand them, to identify problems and to try to solve them in accordance with the essence of the language without fear of sometimes serious discussions and even of unpopular but well-grounded conclusions.” (Stengrevica, 2005: 6)

Indeed, linguists are not language cops; neither are they doctors or gardeners with “weed-whackers.” Linguists do not own the language; they are ordinary users who happen to have a better knowledge of the subject itself. Language culture, like any other culture, cannot be formed or regulated by decrees; it can be refined by individuals and shaped in discussions.

With regard to the current language culture, attention initially should be paid to the jumble of styles that exist in the media. Nearly all language styles now have elements of colloquial language. On the one hand, this influx invigorates these styles (possibly, a reaction to the strict prohibitions and purism of the past); on the other hand, the influx of colloquialisms levels styles and often destroys the integrity of each individual style (similar phenomena can be observed in other languages as well). Furthermore, it has always been a topical question whether the speaker is aware of why he/she is using a colloquial word or jargon in a “serious” style. If the breach of the norm is deliberate, there can be no objection; if it is not, then the situation is worse.

The mixture of styles is particularly visible after 50 years of censored, corrected, sterilized official language and fine literary language that was actually the only language that Latvians could see in a written form. Furthermore, the numerous published and Internet texts (their number has grown exponentially) are not edited – that saves money and increases the speed of transmission. The proofreader’s role is performed by spell-check, which does not (yet) correct one’s style. The spoken language, with its characteristic simplicity (crudeness), imprecision, unpolished

constructions, and buzzwords, is becoming increasingly dominant in the mass media. Furthermore, more and more media programs consist of discussions by non-professionals concerning daily issues. Nevertheless, there is good language and bad language as determined by the literature and texts which one chooses for reading or listening – there are complex texts, as well as light, entertaining texts; there are high-quality periodicals, as well as cheap magazines and newspapers; there is something for every language situation.

Language (as an abstract concept) is manifested in speech. The quality of the spoken language is characterized by the ability to use as many language elements as possible, the ability to change style as needed, and the ability to adapt to a given situation. Therefore, it is possible to use effectively not only literary language but also colloquial language, slang and jargon. Language can be considered to be used incorrectly when the conventions and norms of a given situation are violated. A conversation, replete with professional jargon, between two experts in the pharmaceutical industry cannot be regarded as an example of bad use of language; however, the use of jargon and non-grammatical forms on a serious TV program (unless there is a particular reason) is an example of bad use of language. Spoken and written texts allow both deliberate and unconscious deviation from language norms and standards. Although the quality of a spoken language is a purely individual matter, the totality of individual spoken language creates the real picture of the language (unlike the fixed theoretical norms in grammar books and dictionaries). Therefore, for example, in a situation in which we encounter a wide use of a limited number of words of substandard vocabulary, we can speak about a decline in the quality of lexical use in comparison to the lexicon accumulated in dictionaries.

It seems that in phonetics, orthography and grammar of the Latvian language, one cannot detect widespread deviations from language norms – they are not seriously challenged. Of course, there are changes in pronunciation if one compares today's pronunciation with available records from the 1930s; there are also slight changes in orthography about which there are often disputes; however, all of that is a result of gradual language evolution. The fact that the spelling of foreign proper nouns changes regularly might prompt interesting generalizations about language change and the "strictness of linguists, unchanging opinions, and research-based position," etc. The fact that during the last century, the Latvian spelling of the surname of the English writer Galsworthy has

been changed officially on numerous occasions attests to either rapid changes in the Latvian language or to constant changes in opinions, interpretations and “scientific” principles used by linguists and translators (because the English word itself has not changed).

It is neither possible nor necessary to control the development of language in a democratic and open state with the right to free speech. Language change is not indicative of the destruction of a language; neither though does it indicate progress. Language change is a natural characteristic of a living language. Attempts to limit changes will be mainly unsuccessful; attempts to reach the perfect purity that has never existed will also be in vain. According to Māra Zālīte, one should “give up the illusion that it is possible to do something once and for all in the sphere of language.” We can use language, rejoice in its variety, as well as shape and refine our own idiolect within the limits of our minds and abilities, and thus broaden the horizons of the common Latvian language.

Talk about the demise of the language, subjective hair-splitting about individual words, and arbitrary introduction of unnecessary new words (e.g., replacement of *Islande* [Iceland] with *Īslande*) divert attention from what is truly essential – the position of the Latvian language in heavy competition with other languages. That refers to language use in communication, particularly in the electronic media. In this regard, the new draft law on media which largely ignores the official state language is a time bomb with a short wick. Equally important is the need to use language which in our complicated ethnic situation should be safeguarded by laws, the quality of language instruction in schools, the development of computer linguistics, and the development of various language tools. Furthermore, one should not forget about demographics – if Latvians go extinct or leave for foreign countries and use different languages, their native language can die. However, reports of the death of our language have been greatly exaggerated. As long as the language is used, as long as it is open to innovation and change, it will live. No language has died because it has changed. Life exists in that which is being created and which changes, not in that which has been created and which is frozen.

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Some Features of the Latvian Language of Advertising

Gunta Ločmele

Prof. Dr.philol., Faculty of Humanities, University of Latvia

Abstract

The paper examines the formation of Latvian advertising today. The paper deals with phenomena such as compression of information in Latvian advertising, personalization, inclusion, elements of graphic design in written texts and expressive language means. Different types of advertising use language devices somewhat differently; however, the trend to develop the use of language in advertising is common to all types. The use of language in advertising is determined by various factors – time, space, and an understanding of culture and language in general by people who create advertisements. Badly written advertising texts that often are hidden translations from English do not foster the interest of consumers. However, a positive multicultural impact benefits the development of the Latvian advertising language.

Latvian advertising is influenced by social and economic, as well as by intercultural processes. As a result, it demonstrates the patterns of development of social communication in general, including interaction among different styles. Many advertisements are translations that have features of translationese.¹ However, the language of advertising has a specific pragmatic goal – to make a reader, a viewer or a listener act; in

¹ An extreme example of translationese is an advertisement for massage: “*Shiatsu pielietojuma laikā, pacients pilnībā ir ģērbts un guļ uz matiem uz grīdas.*” (http://www.rigamassage.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=67%3A2009-09-18-10-25-06&catid=34%3A2009-09-16-07-59-36&Itemid=56&lang=lv), (accessed on 2 January, 2010). Literally, “During a shiatsu treatment, the patient is fully dressed and is lying on his hair on the floor.” The English spelling of the Japanese word is retained (*shiatsu*), and the literal translation from Russian ignores the norms of Latvian grammar (*Во время применения шиатсу, пациент полностью одет и лежит на волосах на полу*). Moreover, the translator makes a mistake in meaning – the Latvian word *mati* (“hair”), in the Latvian advertisement, is a false friend of the Russian *маты* (“mattress”), which is used in the source text.

most cases, that means purchasing the advertised product. Traditionally, functional stylistics has considered advertising in terms of the publicist style (also called the style of mass communication) or has included it in the style of administration. However, the sociolinguistic approach to advertising, where it is considered as a part of the register of marketing, seems more appropriate. Registers are marked by choices of vocabulary and other aspects of style (Spolsky, 1998: 34; Davies, 2005: 112). Because of its pragmatic function, advertising is characterised by the choice of specific lexical and stylistic devices.

Advertising has the greatest impact when the advertised product is needed. However, advertising often tries to offer consumers an unfamiliar product of whose need they are not aware. Moreover, the impact of the economic crisis in Latvia has forced advertisers to overcome the challenge of diminished purchasing power. This makes creative business-to-consumer advertisements more competitive than those that do not use language devices to their full potential.

Different types of advertising – e.g., outdoor advertising on billboards, in promotion events, print advertisements in magazines, newspapers, broadcast advertising on TV, radio and the Internet, direct advertising via e-mail or mail, mobile phone messages and advertising over the telephone – use language devices somewhat differently; however, the trend to develop the use of language in advertising is common to all types.

Interaction between visual elements and text

As a rule, the text performs the main function in advertising. However, in some types of advertising, such as advertising on the Internet, the text can play a subordinate role to a good picture. Simultaneously, the function of text on the Internet is broader – it should provide answers to all possible questions that an addressee can ask. Even customers' comments about advertised goods on the same Webpage take on the function of an advertisement.

In e-mail advertising, however, the text with repetitions of the key message and an invitation to act – either by purchasing the product or by answering the e-mail – is the main element.

In print advertising, such as magazine advertisements, one can observe a dynamic interaction between visual elements and text: sometimes the main emphasis falls upon the text, sometimes upon a visual element, but a mutual relation between both elements is increasingly frequent.

Compression

Compression of information is present in all types of advertising. Maximum concentration of the means of expression is the way that advertising deals with time and space constraints. Compression will have an increasing role in the future. For instance, the trend to read e-mails on mobile phones – a development that will require even more compressed advertising texts – should be taken into account.

One does not usually seek deep thoughts about the meaning and purpose of life in advertising. However, many brand names in Latvia contain compressed meaning. Thus, the Mestako translation agency has created its brand by compressing the words that constitute its full name “Melnā stārķa kompānija” (“the black stork company”). The black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) is rare in Europe, and it is protected in Latvia; thus, in keeping with the current trend in Latvia, the company name acquires the connotation of being unique and providing exceptional, nature-friendly service. The fact that the name of the company is not explained lends an element of mystery, but the meaning can be inferred from a stylized picture of a stork in the company’s logo.



In general, however, a new trend has emerged in the usage of acronyms and abbreviations in Latvia: they are a reaction to the oversaturation of advertisements with borrowed abbreviations and other foreign elements observed earlier:

Baltcom piedāvā līdz šim Latvijā nebijušu jaunumu – internetu NGN (Next Generation Network – Nākamās paaudzes tīkls). (Kas Jauns, 2009, No. 27)

(Literally, “Baltcom offers a new product not previously available in Latvia: the NGN [Next Generation Network] Internet.”)

It is hard to imagine the modern world without the Internet. Informative Internet addresses in outdoor advertisements, such as the one for the radio station Kurzemes radio (www.kurzemesradio.lv) or another for a clinic that offers plastic and laser surgery (www.lazerplastikasklinika.lv),

can perform the compressed function of a headline, a caption or even a text if, because of space restriction or other reasons, an advertisement does not contain any other text.

Sometimes information can be presented very concisely because of the intertextual relation of an advertisement to other elements of the same campaign because all of the information has reached the target audience at an earlier stage of the campaign. The overall context of the advertisement also helps to add missing information. In the summer of 2009, the banner advertisement for Lexus displayed at the Riga Airport – *Lexus: “Limit. Debesis”* – was aimed at both Anglophone and Latvian addressees. Both audiences easily decoded the information because the Anglophone addressee was familiar with the idiom “*The sky’s the limit,*” and the Latvian addressee associated it with *augstāk ir tikai debesis* – a phrase used when a considerable height has been reached, and the next highest point is the sky. The picture of the advertised Lexus car was another key in decoding the message; the part of the target audience that was interested in the Lexus brand was familiar with its slogan “*The pursuit of perfection*” and could decipher the message on the banner as “*The sky is no limit. Augstāk ir tikai debesis.*” On the other hand, addressees who were seeing this advertisement for the first time were able to develop their own associations by associating it with the flight they had just experienced, the car, the noun *debesis* (“sky”) and the adjective *debešķīgs* (“heavenly”), which was not mentioned in the advertisement, but its meaning was implied by a broader context of the advertisement. The overall context prevented actualization of a different, quite negative, meaning of the word *limit* – the limit of perfection the producer might have reached.

Omission of letters in the billboard advertisement for discounts at the Spice shopping mall (2009) “*Zims kolecijas izprdana!*” (Literally, “Sles f wintr colectn”) was, for the Latvian cultural environment, an unacceptable case of phonetic compression. Many addressees perceived the text as an instance of a wrong and ugly use of the language, not as a deliberate analogy between the falling prices of products and words losing their letters.

Reiteration

Reiteration is one of the most typical features of advertising. It is a strategy opposite to compression, and it is used to help the addressee to

comprehend the information and to impress the main message in his or her mind.

Reiteration can be expressed differently in different types of advertising. In outdoor advertising, the same idea can be expressed graphically and repeated by figures and words to reinforce the message. The message “*Buy one, get one free*” is expressed by a picture showing products as elements of an equation (e.g., bottles of Ice Tea in the advertisement for Ice Tea, glasses of beer in the advertisement for Aldaris beer), by a mathematical formula containing numbers and by words.

In an advertising brochure for the Rīga Plaza shopping mall, the adjective *jauns* (“new”) is repeated 10 times – *jaunā filiāle* (“the new subsidiary”), *jauns modes un izklaides kokteilis* (“new cocktail of fashion and entertainment”), *jaunais veikals* (“the new store”), *jauns veikals* (“a new store”), *jaunais modes veikals* (“the new fashion store”), *jaunais centrs* (“the new centre”), *jaunā stila pasaule* (“the new world of style”), *jauns superveikals* (“a new superstore”), *jauni zīmoli* (“new brands”), *jaunākā mode* (“the latest fashion”). By semantic reiteration, the meaning “new” is repeated in the verb “*atklājiet*” (“discover”), which implies a promise to find out something new; the word combinations “*vēl neredzēti*” (“never seen before”), “*vēl nebijuši*” (“first-time”) convey the same message.

Personalization

Personalization is important in all types of advertising. To make a message personal, the imperative mood and both the singular and the plural form of the 2nd person pronoun are used. Although using the singular form of the 2nd person pronoun, particularly when addressing a stranger or an elderly person, is regarded as impolite behaviour and a violation of speech etiquette, copywriters still use it. Since that creates the impression that the main addressee of advertising is a young person, the older generation can feel offended. Moreover, copywriters, when using the singular or the plural form of the 2nd person pronoun, seem to be guided by whim because they use it inconsistently. The same lack of consistency can be observed in the spelling of the forms of the 2nd person pronoun with an upper-case letter (according to the Latvian convention for personal address in a personal letter) or a lower-case letter. Thus, in the beginning of the Itella company’s advertising brochure, the 2nd person pronoun is spelled with an upper-case letter, but later the same pronoun is spelled with a lower-case letter:

Neaizmirstiet sūtījumā norādīt klientam, kas darāms, ja viņu jūsu piedāvājums ir ieinteresējis.

(Literally, “Don’t forget to indicate what the customer should do if he or she is interested in your offer.”)

In a considerable number of texts, both forms are used: the singular form of the 2nd person pronoun is used in the headline and in the subhead, but the plural form of the 2nd person pronoun is used in the body of the text.

Some of the texts show editors’ errors in agreement between the form of the 2nd person pronoun and the form of the verb (in Latvian, a different ending of the verb matches each form of the pronoun). That points to the difficulty of this grammatical rule, as well as to internal discussions in the agency about which form of the 2nd person pronoun to use.

Ten years ago, there were cases when translators deliberately avoided using 2nd person pronouns in the target text in Latvian, whereas the source text in English contained more than 10 instances of their usage. Thus distance was created between the advertised product and the addressee, thus making the advertisement less personal in the Latvian culture. This could be attributed to undeveloped advertising skills in Latvian and indecisiveness about the correct form of the pronoun to be used. Another possible cause for the lack of personalization at the beginnings of advertising in Latvia during the period of renewed independence was the tradition of preserving a large power distance in the Latvian culture: part of the society still accepted hierarchical differences (see Hofstede, 2001 on cultural dimensions). Because of globalization, distancing in Latvian advertising has decreased and has resulted in more frequent use of the 2nd person pronouns. However, the problem in choosing the correct form of the 2nd person pronoun sometimes results in the avoidance of a direct address. Thus, while the Russian version of the text in a flyer for the brand outlet sale contains the singular form of the 2nd person pronoun: “Наконец-то ты сможешь нормально одеться” (Literally, “Finally you will be able to dress well”), the Latvian text opts for conversational, yet impersonal, wording: “Beidzot varēs kārtīgi apģērbties.” (Literally, “Finally, it will be possible to dress well”).

In the next example, an advertisement for the services of the Latvian Mobile Telephone company (LMT) features the headline “Līdzsavienojums + Konferences zvans. Nepalaid garām nevienu zvanu!” (“Call Hold + Conference Call. Don’t miss a single call!”) and a text

that avoids addressing a customer directly in a way that is unusual in the Latvian language of advertising:

Ja vēlas atteikties no šīs iespējas vai atkārtoti pieslēgt to, visērtāk to izdarīt LMT abonentu apkalpošanas centrā internetā – iCentrā [...]. (“If one wants to decline this offer or to renew it, the most convenient way to do so is in iCentre, the LMT customer service centre on the Internet.”)

The new service is called *Līdzsavienojums* (“Call Hold”) and *Konferences zvans* (“Conference Call”). Because of excessive compression in the headline, the capitalization in the second word combination (*Konferences zvans*) may seem unjustified because according to the Latvian language conventions, only the first word of the headline starts with an upper-case letter.

The singular form of the 2nd person pronoun plays a more significant role in personalization. However, one should take into account Latvia’s cultural conventions – excessive familiarity can have a negative effect. One should also note that personalization does not occur if the plural form of the 2nd person pronoun starts with a lower-case letter in Latvian; in such a case, everybody is addressed, but nobody is personally addressed.

Inclusion

Advertising should include, not exclude, a person from its spectrum of readers, listeners or viewers. Thus one needs to consider inclusion when translating advertisements. An advertising brochure for the ESPA Riga beauty salon is inconsistent in observing the principle of inclusion:

Rīgā, vienā no lielākajām Baltijas tirdzniecības ostām, atspoguļojas bagāts kultūrlānis, gadsimtu burvība atklājas gan viduslaiku un neoklasicisma, gan lielākoties jūgendstila ēkās, kas sarindojušās gar Rīgas bruģētajām ielām.

(“In Riga, one of the largest commercial ports of the Baltic, a rich culture layer is revealed. The charm of the centuries is reflected in both medieval- and neoclassical-style buildings but chiefly in the Art Nouveau buildings that line the cobblestone streets of Riga.”)

Residents of Riga are not included in the fragment of the text; information is provided only from the external point of view – for visitors of Riga. Besides, the information is misleading because it implies that all

of Riga has Art Nouveau buildings and cobblestone streets. Further on, the text attempts to resolve the problem of inclusion by using the pronoun *mūsu* (“our”):

Daudzslāņainā pilsētvidē ietver krievu, vācu un skandināvu dzīvesstila atblāzmu, kas sajūtama mūsu pilsētas kafējnīcās mūzikas un mākslas dzīves norisēs, ik uz soļa.

(“This multilayered city includes reflections of the Russian, the German and the Scandinavian lifestyles that are felt in the cafés of our city, in musical and artistic events at every step [you take].”)

However, the pronoun *mūsu* does not include all Rigans because only Russians, Germans and Scandinavians are mentioned among the citizens of Riga. Thus is lost that part of the audience which considers this a disparagement of the Latvian heritage.

Further in the text, a copywriter attempts to correct this mistake by mentioning the contribution of the Latvian architect Konstantīns Pēkšēns. However, because of the lack of clarity in presenting the information, the text excludes and loses all of its addressees:

Ievērojamā latviešu arhitekta Konstantīna Pēkšēna veidotā izsmalcinātā tīģeļa sirdī esošā fin de siècle ēka piedzīvojuši jaunu renesansi

(Literally, “The *fin de siècle* building which has been created by the prominent Latvian architect Konstantīns Pēkšēns and which is situated at the heart of the refined melting pot has experienced a new Renaissance....”)

The French phrase *fin de siècle* (“end of the century”) is used not to inform but to create an atmosphere; however, that makes the illogical text even more complicated. The fragment ends with an ellipsis indicating that the text will continue. However, a large part of the Latvian target audience has already been lost in the first paragraphs of the advertisement.

In the brochure, the Russian version of the text is provided next to the Latvian text. Although the Russian text contains the same mistakes of inclusion – the residents of Riga are included only in the second sentence – the Russian text does not contain the factual errors observed in the Latvian version. The Art Nouveau buildings are described as the most famous ones, the cultural heritage of the city includes the contribution by

Latvians, and the Russian text does not suffer from the excessive use of complicated, untranslated borrowings:

Рига, как один из ключевых портов Прибалтики, вобрала в себя много влияний, которые видны в средневековых домах, зданиях в стиле неоклассицизма и самых известных – югендстиля, которые выстроились на её мощёных улочках.

Космополитическая атмосфера города, которая включает в себя элементы латышской, российской, немецкой и скандинавской культуры начиная с её традиционных кафе и кухни и заканчивая музыкой и искусством, окружают Вас повсюду.

В самом сердце этого прекрасного города находится здание работы знаменитого латвийского архитектора Константина Пекшенса, которое пережило свой собственный Ренессанс ...

(“Riga, as one of the key ports of the Baltic, has absorbed many influences that can be observed in the medieval houses, the buildings in the neoclassical style and the most renowned ones – the Art Nouveau buildings – standing in a row along its cobblestone streets.

The cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city, which includes elements of the Latvian, Russian, German and Scandinavian cultures, from its traditional cafés and cuisine to its music and art, surrounds you everywhere.

A building by the famous Latvian architect Konstantīns Pēkšēns is situated in the very heart of this wonderful city. It has experienced its own Renaissance...”)

However, the Russian text contains politically charged usage of words *российский* (literally, “Russia’s”) and *латвийский* (“Latvia’s”). Slightly accenting political connotations, Riga is credited with Russian cultural elements, but Konstantīns Pēkšēns is described as a famous Latvian architect without a reference to his ethnicity; the Latvian text, on the other hand, emphasizes his Latvian origin.

Untranslated advertisements for products that use a similar advertising campaign all over the world have lately developed a way to include the audience – supplying in a footnote the Latvian translation of an advertisement:

*In an Absolut World opportunities always pop up.**

**Absolut pasaulē vienmēr pastāv iespējas. (Vodka Absolut advertisement, Kas Jauns 2009, No. 27)*

However, the translation may be misunderstood because *Absolut* has no case ending. That causes ambiguity in Latvian – it can mean both the intended “world of Absolut” and the opportunities that the brand can have in the world. Fortunately, both meanings are positive.

Untranslated advertisements are published considerably less often than before. However, one needs to be careful in using untranslated words that can be read in two languages: they may create either an additional positive boost or convey unintended negative associations in one of the languages. A recent example in Latvia is an ad for the Internet computer software store ATEA. The brand name, when pronounced, sounds like the Latvian word *ateja* – a WC. As a result, the advertisement *SONEX jauns nosaukums – ATEA* (Literally, “The SONEX new name – ATEA” [a WC]) has caused unintentional humour.



Advertising reflects the club culture of its producers who sometimes forget about political correctness and human rights and thus create advertisements such as the following:

Mans gribet remontet Tav's māja! (An advertisement in 2008 for a store that sells building materials). (“Me wants to remodel yourn house.”)

It is a parody of the ungrammatical speech of immigrant construction workers because it violates Latvian spelling rules and mimics the speech marked by errors specific to the immigrant community. The advertisement shows a picture of a dark-skinned construction worker. Because of its violation of human rights and the norms of speech etiquette, this advertisement is not inclusive or appealing but abusive.

Another reason why the audience feels excluded is usage of the lexis and grammar of written communication when forms used mainly in spoken communication should be preferred (e.g., in TV commercials):

Atmodini jaunās šūnas ik dienu ar jaunajiem Dermo Genesis ādu atjaunojošajiem līdzekļiem. (TV3, 15. 10. 2008., 19:04) (“Awaken new cells every day with new Dermo Genesis skin renewing products.”)

The Latvian text would have benefited from a simple and understandable spoken form without the affix *-ošajiem*, which complicates the text. As a side note, the word *jauns* (“new”), which is a typical element in advertising, is used excessively in this brief text.

Graphic design in advertising

For indicting a change in tone and attracting the consumer’s attention, words in advertising are sometimes written in all capitals. In the advertisement for *L’ORÉAL* hair colour, the key words are emphasized by using this technique:

*Nokrāso jau 10 MINŪTĒS,
padara tavus matus STIPRĀKUS,
manuprāt, tas ir kas JAUNS un REVOLUCIONĀRS! (Shape, 2009,
No. 4, 19)*

(“Colours in just 10 MINUTES,
STRENGTHENS your hair
I think it is something NEW and REVOLUTIONARY”)

For special emphasis in advertising, the first letter of a word is sometimes written in upper-case without sufficient justification and thus violates the orthographic norms of the Latvian language:

SIA INLEX AGENCY – tā ir Augsta Kvalitāte un Profesionalitāte.
(SIA INLEX AGENCY advertising leaflet)

(“SIA INLEX AGENCY – it stands for High Quality and Professionalism”)

Another violation of spelling norms is the use of upper-case letter in the middle of a word: *iCentrs* (in the above advertisement for LMT service). Spelling in advertising is sometimes called “fantasy orthography,” but it is less acceptable in Latvian because of the conventions and norms of Latvian spelling. Neologisms of this kind appear in the Latvian language as a result of the impact of foreign trademarks and brands.

Letter style is one of the tools for making advertisements expressive and personal. A handwritten address on a letter decreases the distance between the advertiser and the consumer, and it makes the letter more personal; that increases the chance that it will be opened and read. Advertising brochures also use handwritten text for personalizing the message. For instance, a handwritten text – a note on the margin – adds a lighter tone to the advertising brochure for the Mailmaster mail service company:

Ar vienu rulli plēves pietiek, lai iesaiņotu veselu ziloni un kasti ābolu ☺.

(“One roll of polythene is sufficient to pack a whole elephant and a box of apples☺”)

The smiley that has been borrowed from electronic communication adds to the impression of a handwritten message.

Natural quality and suitability for every woman’s lifestyle are underscored by stylized, seemingly handwritten, words in upper-case letters in the headline of an advertisement for *ECCO* shoes:

MANS ECCO. (*Shape*, 2009, No. 10, 3)

(“MY ECCO”)

The caption – *MANA PASAULE. MANS STILS.* (“MY WORLD. MY STYLE”) – and the signature at the end of the text – *NINA* – use the same letters that convey the impression of being handwritten.

Syntax and Punctuation

In advertising, punctuation marks convey their metaphoric meaning directly – they act as road signs. A full stop makes the reader stop to contemplate the polysemy of the message and decipher the meaning of the message immediately in the next sentence, which might even start as a continuation of the previous sentence – with a lower-case letter – as if one has never stopped reading it:

Ienirsti, prieka burbuļos! (Hotel Jūrmala SPA advertisement, *Una* 2009, No. 142)

(“Immerse yourself. in bubbles of joy!”)

Ellipsis points are a sign of something left unsaid, of a subtext that makes readers stop and think.

Cilvēkam pietiek siekalu un pacietības 25 aploksņu aizlīmēšanai. Mailmaster pakošanas iekārtas ar litru ūdens stundā aizlīmē 30 000 aploksņu... (Mailmaster handbook).

(“Humans have the patience and saliva for sealing up 25 envelopes. Mailmaster packaging equipment, with one litre of water, seals up 30,000 envelopes per hour....”)

In the advertisement for the “*Tāds es esmu*” concert (“This is the way I am”) by the Latvian singer Intars Busulis, ellipsis points evoke the image of a deep, multifaceted personality, they also include a hidden, subtle comparison with competitors:

Bez maskām, bez liekiem PR trikiem... Caur savām dziesmām patiess, vienkāršs, jautrs, brīžiem nerātns un arī skumjš... tāds, kāds viņš ir. (*Kas Jaun*, 2009, No. 27)

(“Without masks, without unnecessary PR tricks.... Using his songs as a medium – honest, simple, merry, sometimes naughty and also sad... just the way he is.)

Texts in advertising often contain question marks and exclamation points. The “question + answer” pattern is frequently used in headlines:

Jūti sevī nepārvaramu vēlmi uzlabot pasauli? Uz priekšu, šķirolucionār! (Public service advertisement for a waste sorting campaign.) Literally, “Do you feel an irresistible urge to improve the world? Go ahead, sortutionist!” (*šķirolucionārs* literally, “sortutionist” is an neologism formed by blending the verb *šķirot* (“sort”) with the adjective *revolucionārs* (“revolutionist”), thus injecting humour and enthusiasm into the message.

Another pattern that emerges is posing a question in the headline and answering it in the text. A Swedbank advertisement for the pension plan for seniors starts with the headline “*Es neatteiktos laimēt lieku latīņu. Un jūs?*” (“I wouldn’t mind winning a spare lat. Would you?”). The following text explains:

Tā es jautāju savējiem, jo laimēt mēs varam kopā. Es tāpēc, ka ieteicu saņemt pensiju Swedbank, bet viņi tāpēc, ka klausā labam padomam. (Literally, “This is what I asked my near and dear ones because we can win together. I will [win] because I have advised them to receive their pension at Swedbank, and they will [win] because they will have followed good advice.”)

Advertisements can make use of rhetorical questions that already imply an answer – they usually deny the negative because a positive evaluation is a standard feature in advertising:

Kurš teicis, ka sekss ir nekārts? (An advertisement for the magazine *Patiesā Dzīve*, *Kas Jauns*, 2009, No. 27) (“Who said sex is dirty?”)

Although it is still popular, the question mark has surrendered its leading position to the exclamation point. It seems that advertisers have no time to ask “Do you have a problem?” and to let the people themselves decide whether they really have a problem. The majority of Latvian advertisements make the choice on behalf of the people and offer a ready solution for the problem.

Sometimes an exclamation point implies an invitation although the text does not express it overtly. The invitation to purchase tickets is implied in the text and is brought to the fore by the exclamation point in the following example:

Biļetes sākot no 7 latiem “Biļešu paradīzes” kasēs! (An advertisement for the performance “Cabaret”, *Kas Jauns* 2009, No. 27) (“Tickets from 7 lats in the ticket offices of Biļešu paradīze!”)

However, the lack of punctuation might make a potentially good advertisement incomprehensible:

*Uz Stokholmu kopā ar Tallink – un tālāk dodieties ceļā ar savu
automašīnu!
no 87 LVL*

*C4 kajīte un transportlīdzeklis
automašīnas pakete. (Kas Jauns, 2009, No. 27)*

(“Together with Tallink to Stockholm – and continue on your way with
your own car!
from 87 LVL
C4 cabin and a vehicle
car package”)

Lexis of advertising

The language of advertising differs from that used, for instance, in mass communication. Professionals in advertising recommend the use of simple language in advertising – i.e., the language people use every day or the one in which addressees would address themselves when looking into the mirror. David Ogilvy advises copywriters to travel to the country and back to the city by public transport and then decide if they still want to use the complicated construction they planned to use before their trip (Ogilvy, 1983: 81). Now that the language of advertising is increasingly entering everyday speech, people need to like it, not ridicule it.

Some words in advertising are used particularly often. They are called strong words or clichés in advertising. In Latvian, the adjective *jauns* (“new”) is used most frequently (in about 25% of advertisements), it is followed by *labs* (“good”; in about 20%) and *īpašs* (“special”; in almost 15%), as well as by the ordinal number *pirmais* (“the first”; in 10%). The following are some examples of strong words:

- nouns – *jaunums* (“novelty”), *Latvija* (“Latvia”);
- adjectives – *ērts* (“comfortable”), *kvalitatīvs* (“qualitative”), *lielskiss* (“splendid”), *mūsdienīgs* (“modern”), *saulains* (“sunny”), *slavens* (“famous”), *stilīgs* (“stylish”), *tīrs* (“clean”), *veselīgs* (“healthy”); economic crisis has added new adjectives to the list – *pieejams* (“affordable”), *draudzīgs* [*piedāvājums*] (“attractive [offer]”);
- adverbs – *tagad* (“now”), *beidzot* (“finally”), *sevišķi* (“particularly”);
- verbals – participles – *neredzēts* (“unseen”), *nebijis* (“unprecedented”, a participle of the verb *būt* [“to be”] in Latvian), *īemīlots* (“favourite”, a participle of the verb *mīlēt* – “to love”);
- different strings of these words and verbals – *vēl neredzēts* (“yet unseen”), *Latvijā vēl neredzēts* (“hitherto unseen in Latvia”), *līdz šim Latvijā nebijis jaunums* (“a novelty hitherto unseen in Latvia”), *saulains piedāvājums* (“a pleasing offer”), *draudzīga cena* (“an affordable price”), *sevišķi draudzīga cena* (“a particularly attractive price”), *ekoloģiski tīrs* (“ecologically clean”).

Hyperbolization, a standard feature in advertising, consists of neologisms that exaggerate; they are compounds in which the first part highlights the core meaning of the word, and a verbal forms the

second part of the compound – for example, *ilgnoturīgs* (“long-lasting”), *ultramirdzošs* (“ultra-shiny”):

[..] *piesātināts, apjomu palielinošs ilgnoturīgs lūpu spīdums* [..]. (*Shape*, 2008, No. 12) (“Saturated, volume-boosting, long-lasting lip gloss”)

Lancôme Juicy Tubes mitrinošs, ultramirdzošs lūpu spīdums ar perlamutra daļiņām. (*Shape*, 2008, No. 12) (“Lancôme Juicy Tubes moisturizing, ultra-shiny lip gloss with nacre particles”)

Everyday speech elements, including colloquial neologisms, are acceptable in advertisements for young addressees:

[..] *droši pievienojies “Forum” ģimenei uz veco, labo, modīgo uzdzīvi – šīs sezonas “juntu noraujošākās” filmas prezentāciju*. (*Triecienspēks*, 2006, No. 3) (“... don’t hesitate to join the ‘Forum’ family for a good old-fashioned party – a screening of the most ‘roof-blowing’ movie of the season”)

In advertising that targets young people, expressions characteristic of adolescents’ speech are sometimes used, but in many cases the language does not differ from that which targets the general audience. Adolescents resent attempts by adults to address them in adolescents’ jargon because it often sounds unnatural when used by adults. Moreover, adolescents want to be treated like adults – they like to be addressed in the language of adults (see Ernstson and Tidriķe, 2006) on the language of adolescents).

Neologisms from literature also enter advertising:

Aivars Eipurs minimas jeb vienā istabā ar Antonu Vēberu. (*Diena*, 15. 12. 2008.) (“*Aivars Eipurs minima*, or in one room with Anthon Weber”).

Borrowed words and expressions continue to be abundantly used in Latvian advertising:

Internets telefonā! Čato, sērfo, bildē, GO Live! (Advertisement for the Tele2 product *Zelta zivtiņa*, *Triecienspēks*, 2006, No. 3) (“The Internet in the telephone! Chat, serf, take pictures, GO Live!”)

Borrowings from English prevail, but French expressions are also used, possibly because they add an atmosphere of romance, mystery and charm to the message:

Femme Fatale šokolādes pasaulē. (Shape, 2008, No. 12) (“Femme Fatale in the world of chocolate”)

.. *fin de siècle*. (Advertisement for the ESPA Rīga salon)

People seem to have become used to English words and expressions and often understand them; thus these borrowings do not always augment the expressiveness of the text. The relatively wide usage of unassimilated borrowings from English is possible because both languages have a common alphabet. The majority of unassimilated words in their original languages are brand names:

Izvēlies ECCO zābakus ar ūdensizturīgo Gore-Tex membrānu, kas nodrošina sausas un siltas kājas jebkuros apstākļos, un kombinē tos ar funkcionālajām ECCO somām. (Shape, 2008, No. 12) (“Chose ECCO boots with the waterproof Gore-Tex membrane, which keeps feet dry and warm in any circumstances, and combine the boots with functional ECCO handbags.”)

PROTECT TĒJA paaugstina organisma dabīgās aizsargspējas. (<http://www.anahata.lv/>) (“PROTECT TEA increases the body’s immune system”)

Sometimes borrowings from English are used because it is assumed, without much reason, that they lend authority to the message. Thus, the untranslated compound *anti-age* (not the grammatically correct but longer form *anti-aging*) is often used in advertisements for beauty products:

Aktīvi nogludinoša maska ar anti-age iedarbību, atjauno ādas mirzumu. (Shape 2008, No. 12) (“An actively smoothing mask with an anti-aging effect, it renews the radiance of [your] skin”)

[..] lūpu spīdums ar anti-age kompleksu. (Shape 2008, No. 12) (“[..] lip gloss with anti-aging complex”)

However, using the Latvian equivalent *pretnovecošanās* (“anti-aging”) would be more successful in pinpointing the problem and offering a solution – that is, fulfilling every woman’s desire to be protected from getting older and, consequently, enticing women to purchase the advertised product.

Advertising also contains instances where sector terminology and untranslated abbreviations are used:

Taisnotāja radīšanā ir izmantots jauns novatorisks plākšņu pārklājuma materiāls – nanodimantu keramiskās plāksnes ar optimāli gludu virsmu un izturību pret skrābām. (Shape, 2009, No. 1) (Literally, “A new innovative material for plate coating is used in creating the straightener – ceramic nano-diamond plates with an optimally smooth, scratch-resistant surface.”)

HP4666 ir ērts displejs, kas parāda, kad taisnotājs ir gatavs lietošanai [..] (Shape, 2009, No. 1) (“HP4666 has a handy display that indicates when the straightener is ready for use”)

Both foreign elements in the text, as well as abbreviations and acronyms, form a layer of professional jargon in advertising:

Ls 120 vērts bonuss ZVANIEM, SMS, MMS Bites tīklā un WAP. (Shape, 2009, No. 1) (“A LVL 120 bonus for CALLS, SMS, MMS in the Bite network and WAP.”)

In an attempt to attract an audience with different ages and tastes, the advertisement text offers a compromise solution – an untranslated English term along with its newly coined Latvian counterpart:

CITI ZIEMAS PRIEKI: Snow-tubing (kameršļūksana). (<http://www.slalom.lv/index.php?idp=37>) (“OTHER WINTERENTAINMENT: Snow-tubing (kameršļūksana)”)

Obviously, advertising draws the attention of its audience to foreign cultural realia and new technologies yet unknown in Latvia. Therefore, texts in advertising pose various problems in translating such words. Good solutions include *mikropērlītes* (“micro-pearls” used in the diminutive) and *mirdzuma serums* (“shine serum”):

Yves Saint Laurent Golden Gloss mirdzošs lūpu spīdums vīnsarkanā krāsā ar lakotu spīdumu, īstiem 24 karātu zelta puteklišiem un zelta mikropērlītēm. (Shape, 2008, No. 12) (“Yves Saint Laurent Golden Gloss shimmering lip gloss in burgundy with a lacquered effect, real 24-carat gold dust and gold micro-pearls.”)

Mirdzuma serums, kas nogludina matus un padara tos spožākus. (Shape, 2009, No. 1) (“Shine serum that smoothes [your] hair and makes it more radiant.”)

Latvian neologisms in advertising are often very metaphoric:

Modinātājgaisma sāk spīdēt pusstundu pirms izvēlētā pamošanās laika, pakāpeniski kļūstot arvien spilgtāka līdz izvēlētajai intensitātei – kā austošā saule. (*Shape*, 2009, No. 1) (Literally, “The light in the alarm clock starts shining half an hour before the time set for awakening and gradually becomes brighter until it reaches the desired intensity – just like the rising sun.”)

Less successful neologisms include the following: *gotu kola lapas* (for gotu kola leaves), *tulsi*, *frangipani*:

Sastāvā: Zaļā jasmīna ziedi, gotu kola lapa, lakricas sakne, kardamona sēklas, tulsi, rozmarīns. (<http://www.anahata.lv/>) (“Ingredients: green jasmine flowers, gotu kola leaves, liquorice root, cardamom seeds, tulsi, rosemary”)

L’Occitane ir izvēlējis piecus Āfrikas ziedu aromātus jaunajiem ķermeņa krēmiem ar Šī sviestu – frangipani, akācija, rozes pumpuri, vaniļa, ilang-ilang. (*Shape*, 2009, No. 1) (“L’Occitane has chosen five African flower fragrances for the new body creams with shea butter – frangipani, acacia, rose buds, vanilla, ylang-ylang”)

Linguistically interesting are advertisements with word play and neologisms that are based on an allusion – a direct or indirect reference to another place, event, literary or art work, etc.; for instance, by analogy with the American movie character Batman, a neologism is coined for the following advertisement:

Ieslēdz 99,5 Fit FM. Fitmeni steidz palīgā! (*Shape*, 2009, No. 1) (“Switch on the 99.5 Fit FM. Fitmen are rushing to help!”)

Adjectives and nouns constitute the largest part of neologisms in advertising; new verb coinages, such as *jogot* (“to practice yoga”) from the noun *joga* (“yoga”), are less frequent:

No 22. septembra ir iespēja “jogot” arī Pārdaugavā. (<http://www.anahata.lv/>) (“Starting on 22 September it will be possible to practice yoga in Pārdaugava as well.”)

Most neologisms in advertising are formed by borrowings from English. Borrowings from French are also rather popular; however, borrowings from other languages come into Latvian through English – for instance:

vatsu, šiatcu, jumeiho, anma – from Japanese,
lomilomi, lomi lomi nui, romi romi and ma-uri – from Hawaiian,
champi – from Hindi.

The slogan “*Tudiš-pīp*” was chosen for the sales promotion of the *Rimi* supermarket in 2008 and 2009. Although the originality of this advertisement attracted the attention of the audience and created an association with price cuts, the slogan caused discussion among language users. “*Tudiš-pīp*” is an onomatopoeic neologism. The authors of the advertising campaign explain that the word *tudiš* is associated with the sound produced by putting a big package of goods on the sliding belt in front of the cashier and that *pīp* is associated with the sound produced by the cash machine when the goods are scanned. This neologism can be used to replace a swearword in Latvian. Many people also associate it with the Russian phrase *tudi sjudi* – “to and fro”:

(Es, piem., pagājušogad, pa Austrāliju nodzīvojos turpat veselu mēnesi, lidoju no Rīgas uz Londonu (tudi, sjudi 124 Ls), tad no Londonas līdz Dubajai, no Dubajas līdz Singapūrai (tudi sjudi 580 Ls, lidoju ar Emirates), 2 dienas pa Singapūru, pēc tam ar Tiger airways no Singapūras līdz Darvinai (tudi, sjudi, ja nemaldos, kādi 40 Ls). (http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/comments. php?oid=567592&tab=news) (“Last year, for instance, I spent almost a month in Australia. I took a plane from Riga to London (to and fro, LVL 124), then from London to Dubai, from Dubai to Singapore (to and fro, LVL 580. I flew Emirates [Airlines], spent 2 days in Singapore, then flew by Tiger Airways from Singapore to Darwin (if I’m not mistaken, to and fro for about LVL 40).”)

In the example, the author of the comment on the Internet borrows the Russian term *tudi sjudi* instead of using terms such as *return ticket* or *roundtrip*.

Expressive language devices in advertising

The distinctive lexis, syntax, graphics and expressive devices contribute to the specific style of advertising; Latvian advertising is also often based on analogy. However, David Ogilvy (Ogilvy, 1983: 82) considers that analogies are not effective if people do not contemplate them in order to fully understand them. The Origo (2009) billboard featured pictures of models holding bunnies, along with the following text:

Pie mums izdevīgs pirkums ir kā zaķis. Ieraugi – ņer aiz ausīm! (“A good bargain [purchase] with us is like a bunny: as soon as you see it, grab it by the ears!”)

Unfortunately, when the text was inserted, the letters were too small for people to be able to read it and to understand the analogy. The bunnies caused associations with Easter, not with purchases that the authors of the advertisement encouraged addressees to make without hesitation. The text intended to imply, “Buy the product before someone else does or while it is still in stock”. Although the advertisement contained rhyme (*pie mums – pirkums*), as well as an attempt to address both the older and the younger generation (*zaķis* [“bunny,” which in young people’s slang denotes a girl], the text was not successful. The semantics of the noun *pirkums* (“purchase”), which implies a result, was not taken into account. If one has made a purchase, it cannot run away.

Although metaphors are a feature of the language of advertising in general, Latvian advertising texts are less metaphoric than those in English and Russian. Possibly in this regard, the Latvian language of advertising is influenced by the texts of Latvian publicists which use metaphors rather cautiously, or perhaps they fear that metaphors might create an effect of excessive visualization.

When we compare the same advertisement in Latvian and Russian, it is evident that the Latvian one is less expressive; whereas in the Russian version a pool is described by the epithet “*заражающий жизненной энергией*” (“pulsing with life energy”), the Latvian version does not contain the epithet:

Sestajā stāvā jūsu labsajūtai tiek piedāvātas Rondello saunas, tvaika istabas, karstie galdi, ledus strūklakas, atpūtas zonas un āra baseīns. (“On the sixth floor, Rondello saunas, steam baths, heated tables, ice fountains, relaxation areas and an outdoor pool are offered for your comfort.”)

На шестом этаже Вас ждут сауны Ронделло, паровые бани, шезлонги с подогревом, ледяные фонтаны, зоны отдыха и заражающий жизненной энергией бассейн под открытым небом. (“Rondello saunas, steam baths, heated tables, ice fountains, relaxation areas and an outdoor pool charged with life energy are waiting for you on the sixth floor.”) (ESPA Rīga booklet)

Latvians should think more about using their distinctive symbols in metaphoric names. Irēna Smetoniene, in considering metaphors in the Lithuanian language of advertising, concludes that too few Lithuanian symbols are used in Lithuanian advertising. For example, to Lithuanians, the bee is a symbol of activity and precision; therefore, a telecommunication company bearing its name is likely to be popular. (Smetoniene, 2006: 35). To Latvians, the bee is a symbol of diligence; however, silk is chosen for this company's advertisements in Latvia. The management of the company SIA "BITE – Latvija" has decided to associate in the minds of its addressees the qualities of silk with the quality of *Bite* coverage. "*Zīda auduma īpašības – kvalitāte un vieglums – perfekti raksturo mūsu pārklājuma kvalitāti, kas jau tagad skar mūsu klientus un skars arī turpmāk.*" ("The characteristics of silk – quality and lightness – perfectly describe the quality of our coverage that our customers experience today and will continue to experience in future") (http://zpark.lv/lat/jaunumi/mobilie_sakari/?doc=1114). However, since Latvians associate silk with lightness and softness, the expected associations are not created.

Rhyme is considered when creating advertisements. Even if the rhyme is not complete, advertisements that use it are easy to memorize:

*Abonē vienu,
otrs par puscenu!* (Una, 2009, No. 142)

("Subscribe for one, get another at half-price")

Humour

Sometimes advertising tries to make use of humorous stories –people in Latvia have developed a liking for the TV series of commercials for the prepaid cell phone card *Zelta zivtiņa*. It mainly makes use of situational humour, but sometimes the humour is based on language as well. One scene takes place in the kitchen, where small reminder notes are pinned to the wall. One of them reads: *Pabaro puķi, un aplej kaķi!* ("Feed the flower and water the cat!"). The joke is based on confusing the objects. Another note contains the slogan *Tikai viszaļāko zāli Gaujai!* ("Only the greenest grass for Gauja!") The humour is created by simultaneous invocation of several meanings of the noun *Gauja* in Latvian – it is the name of a cow in the series and the name of a river in Latvia. Since the notes are used in the Web page for *Zelta zivtiņa*, the note placed next to the list of different *Zelta zivtiņa* offers might be quite intriguing for a

person who has not viewed the TV commercial with an episode about the cow *Gauja*. Another instance of humour in *Zelta zivtiņa* commercials is based on different onomatopoeic words that different languages use to describe the sound of barking. In Latvian, the bark of a dog is represented by *Vau!* (pronounced like the English exclamation *Wow!*; the borrowing is often used by Latvians for expressing surprise). In Russian, a dog bark is described by a word *Гав!*. In the TV advertisement series, a Russian girl is teaching her dog the more stylish “Latvian” bark *Vau!* (“Wow!”). Magazine advertisements use humour with more caution because one individual’s sense of humour may differ substantially from that of another. An unsuccessful instance of humour occurs in an advertisement for the home package of *Lattelekom* products. The advertisement shows the picture of a well-dressed man with a bucket on his head who has been turned out of the flat. Documents are scattered on the stairs, an angry housewife is standing on the staircase above, and the situation is explained in the graffiti-style inscription on the wall:

Tā ir, ja nāk tukšām rokām. (“Such things happen if you come empty-handed.”)

A caption under the picture serves as a headline:

Lattelekom internets gan nāk ar bezmaksas sarunām. (*Kas Jauns*, 2009, No. 27) (“Lattelekom Internet is sure to come with free-of-charge calls.”)

This advertisement for *Lattelekom* does not observe the norms of Latvian culture according to which humour must not be humiliating.

The use of expressive devices in advertising is determined by various linguistic and extra-linguistic factors – time, space, and an understanding of culture and language in general by people who create advertisements. Unfortunately, one still encounters poor quality advertising that contains errors. Analysis of such cases is not provided in this article because they can be considered exceptions to the general modern trend of the language of advertising in Latvia.

Seth Godin states that we live in a post-advertising era. Old marketing methods no longer apply because consumers are too busy to pay attention to advertising. (Godins, 2007/2008, 19). Badly written advertising texts that often are hidden translations from English do not attract the interest of consumers.

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The Language of Poetry in Ancient Lexicographic Materials: Pindar and the Lexicon of Suda

Ilze Rūmniece

Prof. Dr.habil. philol., Faculty of Humanities University of Latvia,

Abstract

One of the distinctive features in the works by the researchers of verbal expression in antiquity is the use of excerpts from poetic language/poetry texts when treating the language and style of prose. It is well known that poetry as a form of verbal expression enjoyed a special role in ancient cultures and traditions of education. This is why it is important to evaluate the role of quotations from or references to the language of poetry in the ideas and arguments of ancient theoreticians of language or – in the case of this article – in lexicographic material as an arsenal of the facts of language.

The corpus of Greek texts yields considerable material whose research crystallises separate, generally typical, functions of quotations from poetry or references to them.

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest figures of ancient Greek poetry is Pindar (5th century B.C.), and the most important lexicographic source of ancient culture and the Greek language in the early Byzantine period is the 10th-century Suda Lexicon. Their interrelation is the object of interest in this article.

An essential feature of the ancient textual environment is the fact that the language and ideas of poetry texts were appreciated and used as a **valid** and comparatively **reliable** source of factual information. This was true even if the authors of a text had lived several centuries prior to the time when the relevant quotation was cited.

In the ancient philological texts, poetic sources serve a number of purposes: first, of course, they are useful for explaining realia, historical facts and persons. Less appreciated but not less important is the contribution of poetic texts to the field of linguistics: such texts help linguists to better understand the semantics of words, stylistic devices, grammar, etymology, and Greek dialects.

Authors of ancient Greek rhetoric and grammar texts, who can definitely be considered theoreticians of language, stress that the language of poetry is different from the language of prose in different aspects and different genres. Among them is the celebrated Aristotle, as well as Dionysius, Hermogenes, Stephan the Byzantine, and less quoted authors such as Harpocration, Triphon, Herodian, and Xenodor. It is noteworthy that facts from the language of poetry in texts by Erotian and Galen have been useful in explaining or forming professional medical terminology, as well as in explaining phenomena concerning the human body or state of health.

Ancient lexicographic sources are still valuable for modern linguists although their principles of composition and use of comparatively extensive excerpts from poetic texts can be regarded as a very special way to define the meanings of words. For example, in the Suda Lexicon¹ (10th –11th cent.), an entry consists of one or more synonyms followed by illustrative quotations from poetic texts. These quotations can be truly functional only if the user of the lexicon understands them both contextually and semantically.

This means that outstanding, textually immortalised and thus recognizable authors were valid sources of quotations. Over the course of time, their words could have become standardised as stable, even proverbial, collocations.

In the Suda Lexicon, one of the most frequently quoted Greek poets of the classical period (5th century B.C.) is the celebrated Pindar. Already in his lifetime, the Pindar was famous as a phenomenal lyricist.

Two factors were decisive: the genre of epinicia² and the unusually complex, associative expressions, replete with original figures of speech and innovative language. The first factor, an excellent mastery of the genre, bestowed the aura of a mythic poet-prophet on Pindar because an integral part of hymnic poetry was its gnomic nature, the poet's skill in

¹ Historically the very first alphabetically arranged and most comprehensive (at the time) lexicon of the language, facts of culture and realia of the antiquity is known under different titles: The Suda, Suda Lexicon, Sudas/Suidas. Its author-compiler is unknown and it has been compiled from works of earlier lexicographers.

² Greek *epi + nikē* – “on victory, in honour of victory”. Epinicia (Plural; Singular – epinicion) – songs of victory, triumphal odes – were created in honour of winners of sports contests who were highly respected in Ancient Greece and considered both by people and gods to be examples of excellence. This genre is also referred to, especially during Roman times, as odes of victory/hymns.

blending his own evaluation or suggestions about the fact of victory with a hint at the divine support for it.

The second factor – Pindar’s complex expression and specific linguistic means – obviously allowed Greeks to partake of the fascination of archaic and aristocratic poetic language; the ancient skill of *aoidos* (singer, minstrel, bard) must have accompanied his poetry.

As a backdrop to Pindar’s fame, there was also a third, comparatively subjective, factor: dedications of epinicia were addressed mainly to the members of noble families, even rulers. Thus important texts had a good chance to be preserved and remembered.

If one peruses the scholia on texts by various archaic and classical Greek authors, it is obvious that quotations from Pindar (as well as texts from tragedies) rank second to Homer as the most favoured sources for explanations and arguments, and they are approximately as frequent as the citations from texts by ancient Greek dramatists. This alone is proof enough of the so-called Pindar phenomenon, similar to the Homer phenomenon, with the wealth of their texts as a source for various references.

The practical value of Pindar’s language has been demonstrated by ancient lexicographical sources, such as the material in the Suda Lexicon. Any lexicon can be also viewed as a theoretical source which systematizes and explains the facts of language. To illustrate this point, let us consider some examples from the Suda Lexicon concerning the use of facts from the language of poetry.

First, I would like to emphasize excerpts from Pindar’s poetry are used: among the entries in the Suda Lexicon which cite a specific text by Pindar as an example or commentary of special interest there are those which explain the essence of a concept or the meaning of a lexeme by quoting a famous gnomic phrase by Pindar.

In this regard, the following cases are of particular interest.

The concept of *anyparkton*³ – “non-existent, that which does not exist in reality” – this basic explanation of the entry is followed by an extended commentary. The example for this entry is an excerpt from Pindar’s 8th Pythian epinicion, line 95:

“Who is who, who isn’t? The shadow’s dream is man.”

³ Here and hereinafter the Greek text is given in Latin transcription.

Further on, the commentary states that Pindar has expressed the impossible by means of a hyperbole; in other words [my comment – I.R.], a shadow as such cannot have dreams.

Thus the poet has clothed in words something that really is *anyparkton*, non-existent. For the author of the entry, it was an obvious choice to use a poetic context as an convincing explanation in which Pindar speaks about man as an ephemeral (*epāmeros*) creature: he is here; he is no more. Did he ever exist? Thus, instead of a descriptive or expository explanation, the lexicon offers a quotation which can be evaluated and understood only in the wider context of Pindar's poetic philosophy.

Some other explanations of entries contain citations from Pindar's works that reflect a similarly poetic spirit, but they are much more laconic than the one for *anyparkton*.

In the verbal arsenal of the lexicon there is also the compound adjective *damasiphron*, which belongs to Pindar's rare epithets (*hapax legomenon*). It is explained in a descriptive manner: "the one who can deceive, mislead" (*ho apatēsai dynamenos*). It also cites the relevant word combination from Pindar's 13th Olympic epinicion, in which the adjective denotes the words *gold, wealth* (*damasiphrona chryson*). In considering the individual meanings of the compound adjective, we can see that the first element comes from the verb *damazō* – "to oppress, to subjugate" – while the second element comes from the noun *phrēn* – "mind, thoughts". Consequently, the literal meaning of the compound epithet could be interpreted as "subjugating the mind or thoughts", and the whole compound in a literal translation could be rendered as "gold or wealth that subjugates [man's] mind".

The idea of deception (*apatēsai*) in the explanation of the entry arises from the knowledge of the specific and wider context of Pindar's poem rather than from the lexico-semantic treatment of the given adjective. The deceptive nature of value as potentially tempting/diverting man's mind is rooted in the poet's philosophy of values. The meaning of the lexeme has been treated solely on the basis of the context of Pindar's poetry, and as such it has been immortalised in the lexicon entry.

An example of a different type is the Greek adjectivised participle *ischyōn* – "strong, mighty". If the former adjective was an element of the poet's own language, then *ischyōn* is a wider popular lexeme for which the lexicon explanation offers a quote from Pindar's 2nd Pythian epinicion (49):

“*[he] who would overtake a winged eagle and pull ahead of a sea dolphin*”; in other words, such a person is also ‘strong, mighty’ (*ischyōn*). In this case, the entry makes use of only Pindar’s quotation – an incomplete one at that – representing only half of the idea. In reality, the poet in the given context speaks of a god (*theos*) whose might is expressed by the poet by means of three examples:

- he would overtake a winged eagle;
- he would pull ahead of a sea dolphin;
- he would crush some haughty mortals;
- while bestowing undying glory on others.

Thus we can see that the lexicon has used only the first two characteristics of the god’s might in the quotation from Pindar.

However, it is noteworthy that only a quotation from Pindar’s poetry has been used to explain the adjective although the original text does not contain the participle *ischyōn*. In general, any other stylistically less specific material from a Greek text could have been used.

The name of Pindar and a quotation from his gnome appear in the Suda Lexicon also in the extensive explanation of the concept of “envy, grudge” (*phthonos*).

The lexicon defines the term as follows:

“a disease of the human mind which eats away the soul once it has overtaken it like rust would eat iron. Such (of the same nature) is love: it turns this disease of a similar nature against its own creators.”

Further on, the entry cites three examples from ancient Greek poetry:

- 1) iambuses: *“having deleted the second letter in [the word] envy (phthonos),*

You will see the written [word] murder/death (fonos)”.

This iambic couplet should be regarded as a direct complement or example for the preceding explanatory text about envy as something morbid and destructive.

- 2) a quotation from Sophocles:

“envy steals up on the one who is doing well”

- 3) a quotation from Pindar’s 8th Nemean epinicion:

“Rumours [are] a savoury bite”.

The examples that illustrate the concept by quotations from both Sophocles and Pindar are gnomic in content and form. Pindar's fragment with its metaphoric parable is particularly poetic: for envious people (= envy) rumours are a savoury bite. Thus this gnome by Pindar accords well with the metaphor of eating cited at the beginning of the entry: envy is like a disease which eats away (*esthion*) the soul.

Moreover, the example from Pindar's text conveys a richer meaning and content because it actually demonstrates the dark side of glory, an idea which is characteristic of Pindar's epinicia: envy, slander, selfishness and swindling are among his frequently mentioned vices. There is also a purely formal aspect: the key lexeme in the fragment of the poem is not the noun *envy* but the adjective *envious* (*phthonerois*).

Thus it is not a particular word and its contextual meaning but the meaning of the whole concept for which Pindar's opinion had proved to be sufficiently expressive and convincing. The entry contains three essential aspects of envy, and all of them are illustrated by poetic texts.

In the Suda Lexicon, each entry is first given one or more synonyms. Often they are supplemented with quotations of poetry, which can be truly functional only if the user of the lexicon understands their meaning and context. Only works by outstanding authors whose texts have been cherished and preserved by generations of readers can serve as sources of quotations. Over the course of time, their sententious expressions have turned into a kind of "brand" (*sphragis*) – fixed word groups, even proverbs. In my opinion, this is the reason why such quotations are used to explain lexicon entries. The above-mentioned quotations from Pindar are not definitive and explanatory; instead, they challenge poetical, philosophical and metaphorical perception.

The concept that the language of poetry differs from the language of prose (or the language of daily use), which was so characteristic of the Greek language environment, has practically vanished from the landscape of modern languages. The principal factor, the power of tradition, which protected the language of poetry in ancient Greece and maintained a certain standard throughout the centuries, has definitely lost its role. The modern textual environment is characterised by a plethora of authors and texts, genres and functional styles of languages. The world is exposed to rapid changes and contradictions and, most important, it is materialistically oriented. In other words, the basic value of language functionality in modern times is seen in terms of precision and terseness rather than forms and semantic peculiarities of its means

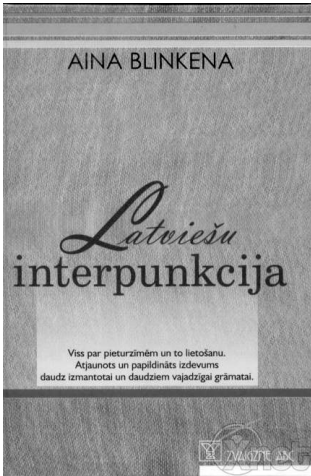
(which was characteristic of the language of Greek poetry, especially of its individual genres). All of the above-mentioned factors militate against the existence, formation and development of the language of poetry as a distinctive stratum, which, for instance, could serve as special and largely applicable material in lexicography. For the languages and cultures that have enjoyed the existence of such a concept, the general linguistic scene includes a rich source of poetic language, which, unfortunately, is now facing extinction.

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ACADEMIC LIFE

Important publication



Aina Blinkena
Latviešu interpunkcija.
Viss par pieturzīmēm un to lietošanu

*(Latvian Punctuation
 Everything about Punctuation Marks
 and Their Use)*

In Latvian.
 Publisher *Zvaigzne ABC*
 Riga, 2009, 440 pp.

822.174.801.1
 BI 680
 ISBN 978-9984-40-516-2

The first edition of Aina Blinkena's book *Latvian Punctuation* was published in 1969. Since then it has been a text book for teaching correct composition and punctuation in the Latvian language. As the language developed, there was a need to update the text with new findings uncovered in research and discussions.

In her new book *Latvian Punctuation: Everything about Punctuation Marks and Their Use*, the author has reviewed certain disputable issues, updated examples which illustrate specific principles, and deleted less relevant passages. Together with the editor Rūta Koluža, the author has improved the layout of the book so that it is clearer than the first edition, namely, the text is arranged in tabular form and contains highlighting in various colours.

The book shows the richness of the Latvian language and diverse means of expression. It is written on the cover that "This is a reissued and supplemented edition of a book which is widely used and needed", and there is a great deal of truth in this statement. Author proves the need for the book with an example taken from the newspaper *Diena*. This example shows a headline "Atdzesēt nedrīkst sildīt (Cool Not Warm)" and the

article which states that “Latvia’s economy has become controversial. Decision on where the comma should be placed can be decisive for the future of the country”. The author of the book concludes that “This example shows that punctuation is needed even in economics!”

The book will be useful for teachers and students, proofreaders and editors, as well as anyone who wants to improve his/her proficiency in speaking and writing in the Latvian language.



Pēteris Pildegovičs (compiler)
Lielā ķīniešu- latviešu vārdnīca
(Big Chinese-Latvian Dictionary)

The University of Latvia Press
 (UL Press)
 Riga, 2010, XXXpp.

UDK 811.174(081)
 Dr 956
 ISBN 978-9984-45-157-2

On September 29th the book opening to celebrate eight years of work on the *Big Chinese-Latvian Dictionary* took place at the Big Hall of the University of Latvia. Because the dictionary compilation project was supported by the Chinese Embassy in Latvia, Hu Yeshun, the Chinese ambassador to Latvia, attended the dictionary-launching celebration. He described the compiler of the dictionary, Pēteris Pildegovičs (sinologist and lecturer in the Department of Oriental Studies, Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia), as “a legendary pilot in the Sea of Knowledge”. The ambassador also expressed his amazement at the fact that it is possible to study the Chinese language at three universities, as well as at two secondary schools in Latvia, which is quite a lot for such a small country.

In opening the event, Leons Taivāns, Professor at the Department of Oriental Studies (Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia), recalled the 1980’s, when he was invited to participate in compiling a *Russian-Chinese Dictionary*. At that time, 33 authors worked on it for nearly 30 years to produce the three-volume dictionary. In contrast, Pēteris Pildegovičs worked alone on the *Big Chinese-Latvian Dictionary* and by unflagging effort successfully overcome the obstacles he faced.

Mārcis Auziņš, the Rector of the University of Latvia, also recalled his six-month visit to China several years ago. At that time, the Rector

wanted to learn at least the basics of the Chinese language for everyday communication; however, he was thwarted by the incredible complexity of the language.

M. Auziņš emphasized: “I highly value Pēteris Pildegovičs’ hard work because he prepared the dictionary’s content almost single-handedly. This dictionary is not only a serious and significant investment in improving the Chinese language study environment in Latvia, but, because language is the foundation of communication, it also makes a valuable contribution to the development of bilateral relations between Latvia and China.”

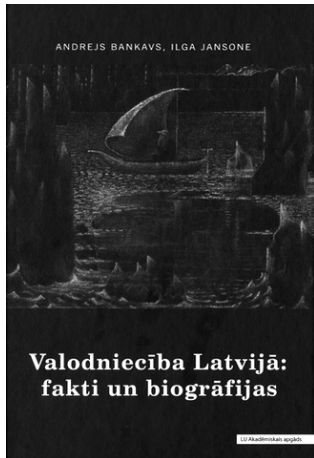
The extensive work on the dictionary was also supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. “Language is necessary in building mutual understanding. Diplomats know how important it is to speak the language of your partner, and this dictionary offers an opportunity to do so,” explained Andris Teikmanis, the State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, when expressing his gratitude for the accomplished work.

The Minister of Education and Science, Tatjana Koķe, congratulated the dictionary’s compiler with a bouquet of red roses and quoted the wise words of Confucius: “Confucius once said that what you know you should keep in mind, but what you don’t know you should discover for yourself. The *Big Chinese-Latvian Dictionary* is an excellent tool for discovering what we do not yet know,” said Tatjana Koķe. “It is not work but life that has been devoted to the creation of this true treasure, which in the future will also serve as a source of information for understanding past events.”

Professor Pēteris Pildegovičs, the compiler of the dictionary, is the former Ambassador of Latvia to the People’s Republic of China. He was born in a small village of Kalkumi, not far from Daugavpils, the largest city in eastern Latvia. He first learned about China in his childhood. On October 1, 1949, his father came home with a copy of the newspaper *Fight (Cīņa)* and explained that on that day a new country had appeared on the map of the world – the People’s Republic of China. At that time, little Pildegovičs could not imagine the role that this country would play in his career.

He graduated from the Eastern Language Institute of the Moscow University with a major in the Chinese language. After graduating, he spent ten years working and living in Vladivostok and did one year of field work in Singapore. In September 1998 Pēteris Pildegovičs, along with his wife, left Latvia to serve as ambassador to China.

Source: UL Press Centre
29.10.2010



Andrejs Bankavs and Ilga Jansone
(compilers of encyclopedia)

**Valodniecība Latvijā:
fakti un biogrāfijas**

*(Linguistics in Latvia: Facts and
Biographies)*

The University of Latvia Press
(UL Press)
Rīga, 2010, XXX pp
In Latvian

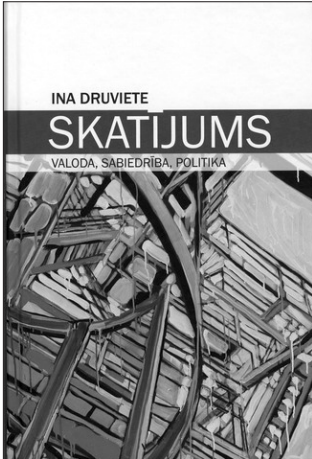
UDK 811.174(081)

Dr 956

ISBN 978-9984-45-157-2

The academic publishing house of the University of Latvia has published an encyclopedia on *Linguistics: Facts and Biographies* compiled by Andrejs Bankavs and Ilga Jansone. The encyclopedia consists of two parts. The first part traces the development of linguistics in Latvia from its origins until the end of 2009. The second part is devoted to philologists, theologians, pedagogues and writers whose works have contributed to the development of Latvian linguistics. This section includes 582 short biographies of linguists living in Latvia who are experts in Latvian, Slavic, Germanic and Romanic language studies. The encyclopedia also contains biographies of linguists who live abroad and who have contributed to research on Latvian linguistics.

Latest publications



Ina Druviete
Skatījums. Valoda, sabiedrība, politika

Viewpoints: Language, Society, Politics

In Latvian
 The University of Latvia Press
 (UL Press)
 Riga, 2010, 239 pp.

UDK 811.174(081)
 Dr 956
 ISBN 978-9984-45-157-2

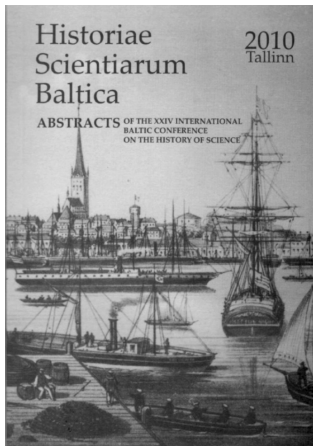
This collection of essays and interviews, intended for a broad spectrum of readers, includes 44 most important articles and publications of *Dr.habil.philol.* Ina Druviete, reflecting events and processes in the intellectual and political life in Latvia in the time period 1983 – 2009. The book vividly reveals the author's viewpoints on language, society and politics during the past 30 years.

In the Introduction of the book, the author declares: "... strengthening of the state language is a daily, never-ending task that requires support from both society and decision makers. It is my firm conviction that a researcher's mission is finished only after academic findings have been applied in real life; that is especially necessary in a field such as sociolinguistics, which is a discipline that concerns the mutual interaction of language and society. Those whose field of endeavor is the humanities should be involved in politics because there is no more important task in a nation than supporting its language and culture; carrying out this task requires not only conviction but also knowledge of our own and the world's experience".

The book contains articles from the 1980's, when the idea of a sustainable Latvian language was encoded in essays on the history of linguistics and language culture; writings from the period of the Awakening and the restoration of independence, when the Latvian language gained the status of the official state language; and contemporary articles which

stress that strengthening the position of the state language is a continuous process that requires the support of society and decision makers. This collection of articles serves as a reminder of how much has happened in our language area during the past few years.

Dr.habil.philol. Ina Druviete is a Professor at the University of Latvia and a member of the 10th Saeima (Latvian Parliament). She has published more than 300 scientific and popular articles on sociolinguistics, the history and teaching of linguistics, with special attention to issues of language policy.



Historiae Scientiarum Baltica 2010 Tallinn

Abstracts of the XXIV International Baltic Conference on the History of Science

The year 2010 marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Association of the History and Philosophy of Science of the Baltic countries. The Association was founded in October 1990 in Riga.

The 24th International Baltic Conference on the History of Science (started more than 50 years ago in Riga) was the first meeting of Baltic historians of science that took place in Tallinn, and it was the first hosted by Tallinn University of Technology. The conference was held in the new building of the Faculty of Social Sciences on the main campus of Tallinn University of Technology. Several leading historians of science from outside the Baltic region participated in the conference.

The work of the conference was organized in five sections – the history of medicine and museums; history of natural sciences and mathematics; history of technology and engineering; history of social sciences, humanities and education; and philosophy and methodology of science. Compared to previous conferences, more attention was devoted to the latter two areas. The two days of meetings revealed many interesting new insights into many similarities, differences and links in Baltic science. Increasing the knowledge and contacts among our three nations is extremely valuable for the sustainable growth of science in

the Baltic region, declared the Latvian academician Jānis Stradiņš, who had been present at the inception of these collaborative events. During the conference, participants from the Baltic States and Nordic countries discussed the possibility of having joint conferences on the history of science in the future.

Dr.habil.philol. Andrejs Veisbergs



Bārbala Simšone
Iztēles ģeogrāfija.
Mītiskā paradigma 20. gadsimta
fantāzijas prozā

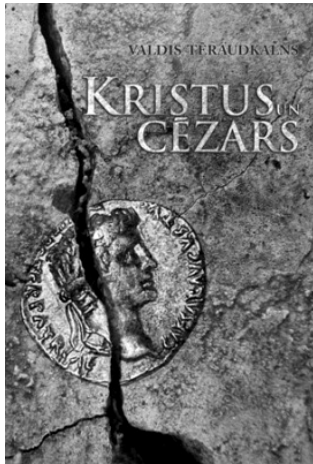
*(Imaginary Geography:
 Mythical Paradigms
 in 20th- Century Works of Fantasy Fiction)*

In Latvian.

The University of Latvia Press
 (UL Press)
 Riga, 2010, XXXpp.

UDK 811.174(081)
 Dr 956
 ISBN 978-9984-45-157-2

Do you know why Harry Potter's duels with the magician Voldemort always take place at the end of the school year? Do you have any idea where Frodo went at the end of the *Lord of the Rings*? Do you know the role of horses, rings and swords in fantasy fiction? And who actually is the lion Aslan? *Imaginary Geography: Mythical Paradigms in 20th-Century Works of Fantasy Fiction* by Bārbala Simšone, published by the academic publishing house of the University of Latvia, is devoted to the currently popular fantasy fiction genre. It decodes the mythical systems, signs and codes encrypted in the most famous works – e.g., *The Lord of the Rings*, the Harry Potter series, *The Chronicles of Narnia* – and thus reveals significant parallels to ancient myths, fairy tales and even biblical narratives. The work also surveys the history of fantasy fiction, includes literary criticism, discusses interesting contemporary trends in the genre, and contains a section on features of the fantasy genre in Latvian literature.



Valdis Tēraudkalns
KRISTUS un CĒZARS.
Kristietība un vara vēsturē

*(CHRIST and CEAESAR:
 Christianity and Power in History)*

Zinātne Publishers
 Riga, 2010, 352 pp

ISBN 978-9984-808-75-8

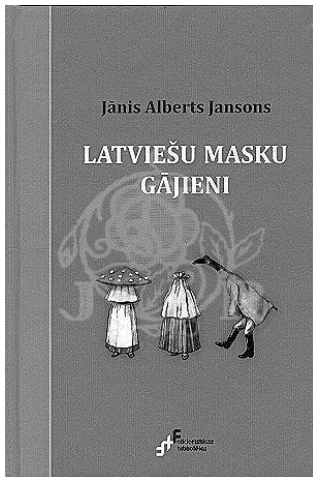
throughout the centuries as it formed symbiotic relationships with various political movements.

Jānis Alberts Jansons
Latviešu masku gājieni

(Latvian Masked Processions)

Zinātne Publishers
 Riga, 2010, 384 pp.

ISBN978-9984-808-81-9



of the second half of the 19 century. The work contains an abundance of commentaries, illustrative materials and music scores. Gatis Ozoliņš is the scientific editor and author of the Foreword.

Guest of the issue

AINA BLINKENA,

Academician, professor, *Dr. habil. philol.*



The name of Aina Blinkena has firmly found its place in the history of Latvia. She is known as an expert of linguistics, language history, language cultivation and terminology, and also as an active participant in the social processes and in educating the society. Her work, devoted to linguistic research, as well as to the preservation of the functions of the Latvian language and ensuring its legal status, spans over a half of a century. Its results can be seen in the numerous publications (both academic and popular) by A.Blinkena, and also traced in

the work of her students and the new linguists that she has “brought up”. Moreover, her work has earned an official recognition in the form of many prizes and awards, and also has been immortalized in the State Language Law which was created under her supervision.

A.Blinkena was born on September 5, 1929, in the town of Limbaži in the north-eastern part of Latvia. Her mother Lilija Andersone was a teacher, and father Jānis Andersons – a farmer. Aina’s schooling began in 1937 in the elementary school of Nabe, continued in the secondary school of Vidriži and, since 1944, in the gymnasium of Limbaži where, alongside the native Latvian language, she attended classes of English, German, Russian, and Latin. In 1948, she became a student of the University of Latvia, studying in the Department of Art Theory at the Faculty of Philology. When this department was closed and students had to choose another field, Aina Andersone ventured for the Department of Latvian Language and Literature, and, in her own words, never regretted the choice. She graduated in 1953, the title of her thesis being *Sentences with a single part of sentence in the historical tragedies by Andrejs Upīts*, and on October 15 of the same year started working in the Language and Literature institute at the Academy of Sciences, where she toiled for the rest of her working-life.

This road might have also taken another turn because, according to the practice of the Soviet period, there was a special commission deciding on the future work and life of the university graduates. This commission would have ordered A.Blinkena to take the post of a schoolteacher in Stopiņi, a rural community near Riga. (By that time she was already married to Pēteris Blinkens (1922-2008), who later was to become a doctor of engineering sciences and a professor at the Riga Technical University.) However, the Language and Literature institute expressed a wish to hire A.Blinkena, regardless of certain facts in her biography considered undesirable by the Soviet regime – her grandfather had been the head of the civil parish of Nabe before the Soviet occupation; her uncle's family had been deported to Siberia during the 1941 deportation, and her father – in 1949. (Other family members managed to escape the deportation by not being at home on the fatal night. The list of people that were planned to be deported from the Limbaži region shows the names of all members of the Andersons family.)

At the very beginning of her career, A.Blinkena was engaged in a very responsible and substantial project – the *Grammar of Modern Standard Latvian*. Her task was to write a chapter on the so far little-analyzed interjections, and also to take part in the analysis of verbs and adjectives. The young linguist coped with this work in a surprisingly short time – less than three months. It was not the only occasion in A.Blinkena's life when she had to take up a “mission impossible”, and managed it wonderfully.

A.Blinkena has always had an eye for such phenomena in the Latvian language that have been little researched until then; she could always detect problematic issues and find solutions for them. Quite logically, the young linguist soon proceeded to doctoral studies, and her supervisor was no other than the famous professor Jānis Endzelīns. A.Blinkena had by then turned to the topic of sentence modality. Her thesis, under the title *Interrogatory and Imperative Sentences in Modern Latvian*, was successfully defended in 1958.

Meanwhile, the work on the *Grammar of Modern Standard Latvian* was going on, and A.Blinkena participated in the description of various phenomena of word-formation and morphology. In 1965, four linguists received an official state award for this fundamental work – Rūdolfs Grabis, Aina Blinkena, Anna Bergmane, and Milda Lepika.

As linguists worked on the syntax-related chapters of the “Grammar”, they often realized there were inconsistencies in the system of rendering speech and thought in writing. The punctuation of the same syntactic positions also varied occasionally. Thus, A.Blinkena came upon the idea

to research the history and development of Latvian punctuation system thoroughly, and to compare it with that of other European languages. After a few years' work, the talented linguist published a book entitled *Latvian Punctuation*. This work earned her a *Dr.habil.philol.* degree in 1970.

Alongside with large theoretical projects, the people at the Language institute were always involved in analyzing smaller, but not less important issues. A.Blinkena's duties and commitments grew year by year. She was actively participating in conferences both at home and in Vilnius (Lithuania) and Moscow. The cooperation with the Linguistics institute in Moscow and with the Lithuanian Language institute later became regular. A.Blinkena became a member of the Scientific Council of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union, and travelled to conferences in many cities. This gave her a chance to stand on guard for the Latvian language – e.g., in the 1970s A.Blinkena, together with her Lithuanian and Estonian colleagues, managed to protect the Latin script used in these languages (there was an attempt by the Soviet government to impose the Cyrillic script on them). A.Blinkena had the possibility of presenting her papers outside the Soviet Union as well – at linguistic conferences devoted to Baltic studies, Baltic and Slavic language contacts, the history and development of languages, etc.

The active linguist often helped her colleagues at the institute doing other projects as well. For instance, she aided the people who prepared the complete works of the poet Rainis by reading all the volumes, analyzing problematic cases in the language and spelling used by the author, and consulting her colleagues on punctuation and other linguistic issues. During several summers, A.Blinkena joined dialectologists on their fieldwork trips, gathering data on sub-dialects and vernaculars. This practical experience, as well as theoretical knowledge gained at the university, helped her to successfully chair the editorial board of the *Atlas of Latvian Dialects*. In 1985, A.Blinkena was leading the first expedition of Latvian linguists, historians, and ethnographers to the Latvian settlements in Bashkortostan (a region in Russia) which date back to the 19th century when a number of Latvians emigrated there. During 1992–2002, A.Blinkena was the president of the Baltic languages department at the *Atlas Linguarum Europae*.

The wide and varied range of interests and academic activities of A.Blinkena includes pedagogy, terminology, and sociolinguistics as well.

As concerns her pedagogical interests (which, in a way, might be due to the fact that her mother was a teacher), A.Blinkena has written a

number of articles advising teachers on issues of language, grammar and punctuation, and, since the 1970s, she has also participated in creating school textbooks. Moreover, the outstanding linguist has also educated a number of young scholars; she has supervised 15 doctoral theses. Among her former doctoral students are professors Zaiga Ikere (Daugavpils University), Gunta Smiltnece (Liepāja University), Andrejs Veisbergs and Anna Vulāne (University of Latvia), Juris Baldunčiks (Ventspils University College), Regina Kvašyte (Šiauliai University (Lithuania)), etc. A.Blinkena has also been the opponent of a large number of theses. Besides that, she has also taught a course on the history of Standard Latvian to undergraduate students. Since 1985, she is a professor at the University of Latvia, but in 1992 was elected a full member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences. On February 6, 2009 A.Blinkena received an award for founding a school of thought. Terminology issues first captured the attention of A.Blinkena when she was working on the *Grammar of Modern Standard Latvian* and analyzing the punctuation problems, as well as reviewing the first Latvian dictionary of linguistic terminology, compiled by her colleagues. Since 1963, A.Blinkena attends the plenary sessions of the Terminology Commission and has prepared several materials together with experts of the respective fields. In 1976, the *Dictionary of Hydrometeorological Terms* was published with the help of A.Blinkena; she assisted in creating the terminology in economical geography, and was the editor of *Dictionary of Terms of Textile Industry* (published 1989). During 1976-1998, A.Blinkena was the chairperson of the Terminology Commission of the Academy of Sciences, and during the recent years has been taking part in the sessions as an honorary chairperson. She still is the language consultant of the Department of Textile Industry of the Terminology Commission.

In the 1970s the Latvian language department of the Language and Literature Institute began a new project supervised by A.Blinkena – the research of the history of Standard Latvian. The first book devoted to the changes of written Latvian and the beginnings of its standardisation, published in 1986, was the *Development of Latvian Writing* by Anna Bergmane and Aina Blinkena. (She wrote the introduction and the chapters on the use of capital letters and on punctuation.)

When a substantial morphological research was accomplished and submitted for publication at the publishers *Zinātne*, the political system changed, and A.Blinkena turned her attention and efforts to the more topical issues of sociolinguistics, as well as to ensuring the state language status for the Latvian language. The work on morphology, however,

was resumed in the 1990s – in an independent country, without Soviet censorship, and in a new financial situation. The previous research, which was worked out under the leadership of A.Blinkena, was now supplemented and improved, and was published in two volumes – *The Development of Latvian Morphological System: the Declinable parts of Speech* (2002), and *The Development of Latvian Morphological System: the Undeclinable parts of Speech* (2007). Both books contain chapters written by A.Blinkena about the changes that have affected the adjective and the conjunction during the four centuries of the existence of written Latvian. (Especially the chapter on the conjunction highlights many new aspects of the topic.)

After the plenary meeting of the Creative Unions in June of 1988, when the painful question of the status of the Latvian language was brought up, a work-group with A.Blinkena as its head and also a practical co-worker was organized under the aegis of the Presidium of the Supreme Council. She made a very important contribution to establishing the status of Latvian as official language, and later to elaborating the State Language Law. After the article “The Status of Latvian – as It Is and as It Should Be” published by A.Blinkena in the newspaper *Padomju Jaunatne*, there was an enormous flow of letters to the newspaper, as well as to the the Presidium of the Supreme Council of Latvian SSR, and to the Language and Literature institute. 354,280 persons confirmed with their signatures that they demand the status of state language for Latvian. “It was the largest sociological poll ever conducted in Latvia so far, and, taking into consideration the wish of the nation, the the Supreme Council proclaimed Latvian as the state language of the Latvian SSR on October 6, 1988”, A.Blinkena recalls. The Law on Languages was passed on May 5, 1989. Later it has undergone several amendments and also a change in title (now – State Language Law), but basically it has remained the same (even though occasionally there have been talks about the need for revision).

For these accomplishments, A.Blinkena was awarded the Three-Star Order on April 12, 2001.

In 1997, A.Blinkena received the status of scientist emeritus. Nevertheless, she is still taking part in both academic and social activities at the Latvian Academy of Sciences and at the Riga Latvian Society; still presenting papers at conferences both in Latvia and abroad; never refuses a consultation on linguistic questions; publishes articles, helps to prepare entries for encyclopaedias, and writes warm-hearted greetings to her colleagues on anniversaries and other events. She participates in

solving problems of language policy; attends the meetings of Latvian intellectuals; is a member of numerous editorial boards, and also the literary editor of various publications. A.Blinkena is a member of State Heraldry Commission and of the Riga War Memorial and Latvian Historical Heritage foundation, and one of the co-founders of the Union of Latvian Scientists. Despite all these duties, she manages to find the time for going to theatre, concerts, and exhibitions, for reading books, and for attending the meetings of the academic sorority “*Spīdola*” (the Riga group of this sorority was founded in 1991, and A.Blinkena was its first senior member).

Such an active and vibrant lifestyle has always been typical for the famous linguist. When A.Blinkena was young, she sang in a choir and participated in the amateur theatrical group at the institute; later she joined various associations, read public lectures, taught Latvian to foreign students in summer courses, edited legislative texts, reviewed a number of publications, organized conferences, kept up contacts with foreign linguists, etc. Her working capacities and the scope of her knowledge and interests is simply incredible, as well as her outstanding memory for songs and poetry.

Last but not least, A.Blinkena is a very warm, friendly, and outgoing person, with a house open for guests and a lovingly tended garden. Moreover, she is an affectionate mother of her equally talented daughter Ina Druviete, *Dr. habil. philol.* (a professor at the University of Latvia, a politician, and the Minister of Education during 2004-2006), and a caring grandmother and great-grandmother.

A.Blinkena is also a person who knows how to stand firmly by her views, even when her opponents engage in fiery disputes; especially on issues of Latvian orthography. Nevertheless, this is what she wrote, addressing her colleagues, in 1988: “May the sky above our heads, as we do our dusty work, be always calm; may it never be clouded by hatred and envy, but lit up by the sun of mutual respect and common cause.”

Kornēlija Pokrotniece, *Dr. philol.*,
senior researcher at the Latvian Language institute

Source: *LZ: Latvijas Zinātnieki.*
Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas akadēmiķe,
Profesore Aina Blinkena.

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