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**MULTILAYERED LANGUAGE POLICY  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA:  
CASE OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES**

**Doctoral dissertation**

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## ABSTRACT

The dissertation *Multilayered Language Policy in Higher Education in Estonia and Latvia: Case of National Universities* investigates the interplay of languages in higher education comparatively in Estonia and Latvia, focusing particularly on the national universities, i.e. the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia. Research is carried out from three interrelated, but separately analysable perspectives suggested by Spolsky (2004, 2009): (1) language management, (2) language practices, and (3) language ideologies and attitudes. Firstly, the analysis of language management is based on state-authored and institution-authored policy documents that discuss language in higher education. Secondly, the analysis of language practices in the institutions of higher education is based on data from interviews with students. Finally, language ideologies and attitudes, i.e. sets of beliefs about language, are identified both in management efforts and language practices.

The study of language practices shows that Estonian/Latvian and English are the most used languages in the national universities in Estonia and Latvia. Russian is used by the interviewed students to an extent in certain functions. Furthermore, the study of language management and underlying ideologies at the state and institutional level reveals that the main focus of the language policies carried out by the state and the national universities is on Estonian/Latvian. The relatively strong position of English as language of higher education in Estonia and Latvia becomes apparent in the research of state policies but particularly in the study of institutional policies and grassroots language practices and attitudes. What is more, the dissertation shows that Russian is an ideologically-laden language that is almost invisible in state-authored and institution-authored language management efforts but valued by the interviewed students as a language necessary for finding employment in the local labour market. The use of other languages is rather rare, although their use is theoretically supported in top-down language policies, particularly in state-authored policies. All in all, language is viewed as a discrete bordered entity at all policy levels, from legislation to language attitudes of the interviewed students.

**Keywords:** language policy, higher education, language ideologies, language attitudes, language practices, multilayered policy, internationalisation

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, language matters in higher education have gained ground in public and private, political and academic discussions in Europe and beyond. These discussions are triggered by the multifaceted nature of higher education: today it is both national and international. On the one hand, higher education is part of national education systems, in which local languages are often used. Linguists tend to consider using a language as medium of instruction in higher education to show that the language is well-developed. On the other hand, higher education is closely linked to international science and research. Furthermore, today's widespread academic mobility makes tertiary education even more international. In many places this has led to using English in academic situations, in which only recently other languages were used.

This dissertation contributes to the discussion on language issues in higher education by examining the interplay of languages in tertiary education comparatively in Estonia and Latvia, with particular focus on the national universities, i.e. the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia. The thesis is macrosociolinguistic in nature, namely, it studies language policy. More specifically, it focuses on language issues in higher education in Estonia and Latvia from three interrelated, but separately analysable perspectives by studying the three parts of language policy suggested by Spolsky (2004, 2009): (1) language management, (2) language practices, and (3) language ideologies and attitudes. Firstly, the analysis of language management is based on state-authored and institutional policy documents that discuss language in higher education. Secondly, the analysis of language practices is based on data from interviews with students. Finally, language ideologies and attitudes, i.e. sets of beliefs about language, are identified both in management efforts and language practices.

The research is set in Estonia and Latvia – relatively small countries with multilingual societies that actively participate in the global world where languages and their speakers are in close contact. Today, higher education in Estonia and Latvia functions mainly in the official languages<sup>1</sup> of the states, Estonian and Latvian. Yet, the international nature of tertiary education has brought these languages into contact with other languages, mostly English, today's most dominant language in higher education across the world. Among languages other than the official languages and English, Russian – the language of the eastern neighbour, the former occupational regime and the large-scale minorities living in both countries – stands out as a

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<sup>1</sup> The concept *official language* has been used in the dissertation as an English equivalent to *riigikeel* (in Estonian) and *valsts valoda* (in Latvian); such a translation has also been used in the official translations of legal acts in both countries that are publicly available on the website of *Riigiteataja*, [www.riigiteataja.ee](http://www.riigiteataja.ee), and on the website of *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, [www.likumi.lv](http://www.likumi.lv).

language used to some extent in higher education in Estonia and Latvia. Klaas-Lang (2016: 238) calls Russian and English “the major competitor languages” for Estonian and Latvian. Both countries are currently seeking a balance between the local and the global, the national and the international in higher education. The national universities provide an example of an academic setting in which these issues are continuously tackled.

Although the academic study of language policy has been carried out for decades, researchers have not developed an overarching theory for it. Language matters in societies are too complex for a theory that could suggest something useful for any context. According to Ricento (2006: 10–12), formulating theories and searching for data to confirm them is not by any means the principal task of language policy research, which should, first and foremost, examine particular language issues in context. Similarly, Cooper (1989: 11–14, 34–35) asserts that language matters are never issues in isolation, but become such in context. Moreover, he argues that the external contextual factors are what create the primary need for language policies:

Language policy is typically carried out in order to attain non-linguistic aims, such as consumer protection, scientific exchange, national integration, political control, economic development, the maintenance of old elites, or the creation of new ones; the pacification or co-option of minority groups, mass mobilisation of national or political movements (Cooper 1989: 34–35).

Thus, language policy research should be empirical rather than theoretical, and focus on language issues in political, economic, societal, historical and demographic context (Phillipson 2003, Spolsky 2009). Subsequently, the theoretical part of the thesis discusses shortly the development of language policy research (e.g. Haugen 1959, 1966; Kloss 1969; Cooper 1989; Tollefson 1991; Phillipson 1992, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas 2000; Schiffmann 1996; Spolsky 2004, 2009; Johnson 2013), its most important findings as well as terminology, including language management (e.g. Spolsky 2004, 2009; Ricento & Hornberger 1996; Hult 2010), language ideologies (e.g. Schieffelin et al. 1998), attitudes (e.g. Baker 1992; Garrett 2010) and practices (e.g. Hultgren et al. 2014). Its main focus, however, is on studying context surrounding language issues in higher education.

Firstly, the dissertation overviews language policy in higher education as carried out internationally, mostly by the European Union (EU). Although the EU has officially pledged its support to linguistic and cultural diversity in the union (e.g. the Treaty on the EU and the Charter of the Fundamental Rights in the EU), it has explicit goals that seem to compromise the principles of multilingualism and language equality. Internationalisation of European higher education is a good example, as the Bologna Agreement and the European Higher Education

Area give (covert) preference to using major language(s) in higher education and science (cf. Soler-Carbonell et al. 2017).

Secondly, the dissertation studies language policies in different European countries, mostly in the Nordic countries where the balance between using national and international languages in tertiary education has been heavily debated in recent years both by politicians and researchers. Thirdly, the political, economic, social, demographic and linguistic context of Estonia and Latvia is examined.

The main aim of the dissertation is to understand the interplay of languages in higher education comparatively in Estonia and Latvia, particularly in the national universities, i.e. the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia. The following research question and seven sub-questions have been formulated to reach the goal of the dissertation:

**What role do different languages play in higher education in Estonia and Latvia, particularly in the national universities, i.e. the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia?**

1. How is language use in higher education regulated at the state level in Estonia and Latvia?
2. How are language issues in higher education discussed in state-authored policy-planning documents in Estonia and Latvia?
3. How are language issues discussed in the documents of the national universities?
4. What ideologies are underlying the language policies carried out by the state and the national universities in Estonia and Latvia?
5. What languages and to what extent are used in the national universities?
6. For which purposes are different languages used in the national universities?
7. What are the attitudes of students towards the use of different languages in higher education in Estonia and Latvia?

In order to answer the research question, data are gathered from policy documents as well as interviews. The documents included in the analysis are retrieved from various levels of policy processes, i.e. state-authored laws, regulations and policy-planning documents as well as institutional strategies and regulations. The semi-structured interviews with students are conducted to collect first-hand qualitative data on linguistic practices and attitudes towards different languages used in higher education. Both document data and interview data are analysed with the method of qualitative content analysis. The following authors have been consulted on the choice of method: Hsieh & Shannon 2005; Saldana 2009; Mayring 2000.



The topicality of the research is determined by the considerable importance attached to higher education today. Firstly, one of the primary objectives of the EU and its member states is to build knowledge-based economies in order to be competitive in the global market. Higher education and science occupy a crucial role in such developments. In order to enhance the quality of higher education, the European Higher Education Area supports the free movement of students and academic staff. Secondly, higher education institutions internationalise their teaching in order to elevate their status globally: universities are now acting as enterprises that sell education in the global market. Yet, in addition to participating in the global market and competing for students and academic staff worldwide, higher education institutions have other essential functions in society, such as providing the state with necessary specialists. Finally, students and academic staff are more and more interested in international experience in order to improve their position in the labour market.

The interests of the EU, its member states, higher education institutions, students and staff listed above are tightly connected to language. During the last centuries, it has become common in Europe to use official/national languages in higher education, for example, as medium of instruction, language of communication and administration. However, internationalisation has brought more and more English into settings in which it has not been used so extensively before. As higher education does not stand alone but is closely linked with other spheres of life (e.g., general education and economy as well as all spheres of life where graduates work), language use in higher education affects language use also elsewhere. For instance, Druviete & Valdmanis (2010: 92) point out that education is a linear and hierarchical system. Language use at one level (e.g. higher education) inevitably affects language use at other levels of education (e.g. secondary education). Thus, sociolinguists, language policy makers and others who take a keen interest in language issues pay attention to higher education as a sphere of life that provides language with sources of new lexis and confers prestige upon language. As a result, they sometimes perceive the extensive use of English as a threat to local languages.

The above-discussed issues are current in Estonia and Latvia as well. As EU member states they aim to develop knowledge-based economies and participate in the European Higher Education Area. However, it should be noticed that among the EU countries, Estonian and Latvian are the smallest languages (by the number of speakers), in which higher education is offered at all levels<sup>2</sup>. Although internationalisation processes are current in both countries, they are less covered with research on the topic than, for example, the Nordic countries.

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<sup>2</sup> Today, Estonian is spoken roughly by 1 million people as mother tongue in the world, and Latvian is the mother tongue for approximately 1.55 million people worldwide (Lewis et al. 2016).

The novel merits of the thesis are as follows. Firstly, the research setting: today Estonia and Latvia are well-developed countries, EU and NATO member states, and they bring a wealth of experience to the research on language in higher education as post-Soviet countries that have effectively tackled the problem of maintaining Estonian and Latvian as languages of higher education at times of linguistic pressure from above. More specifically, Estonian and Latvian co-existed with Russian during the Soviet times as languages of higher education, and found a way out of the unfavourable situation, in which using Russian in higher education was officially more appreciated than using local languages. Both countries have undergone rapid political and economic changes during the past three decades, and higher education in Estonia and Latvia is now faced with similar issues than, for example, in the Nordic countries. Estonia and Latvia, in particular, are under-studied in respect to the issues of language in higher education, yet these settings are prone to give interesting insights into the topic due to their language situation (additionally, cf. Hogan-Brun et al. (2009: 5–7) for the list of critical issues arising from Baltic language policies that could have wider implications for other language policy contexts).

Secondly, the dissertation provides a sociolinguistic comparison of Estonia and Latvia. In respect to the political, economic, demographic and linguistic developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, Estonia and Latvia share a great deal of similar experiences, yet in-depth research on sociolinguistic similarities and differences is rather scarce. This could be due to different language families and linguistic contacts – the linguistic research of Estonian, a Finno-Ugric language, has been closely tied to the research of Finnish, and the linguistic study of Latvian, a Baltic language in the Indo-European language family, has been tightly connected to the study of Lithuanian. Thus linguists of Estonia and Finland, and Latvia and Lithuania have traditionally co-operated more than linguists of Estonia and Latvia. The author of this dissertation has personal linguistic and cultural knowledge on both Estonia and Latvia, and thus tries to offer an intrinsic insight into both settings.

Thirdly, the dissertation adopts a multilayered approach to language issues in higher education by studying policies in laws and regulations, ideologies and attitudes, and linguistic practices (Spolsky 2004, 2009). The tripartite approach is possible in the case of Estonia and Latvia as the societies are small enough to be viewed holistically. Hogan-Brun et al. (2009: 5–7) also list the smallness of the countries as one of the unique factors of the studies on the Baltic language policy – the states act as small language laboratories.

Structurally, the dissertation consists of introduction, six sections and conclusions. The first section discusses the theoretical background of the thesis, defining the basic concepts and outlining the approaches commonly applied to language policy research. The second section discusses the contextual background of the research topic, focusing on language policy in higher

education as exercised by the EU as well as specific countries, mostly the Nordic countries. The third section describes the research setting, studying the sociopolitical developments in Estonia and Latvia over the past centuries, and concentrating on recent political, economic, demographic, linguistic and educational developments. Data and methodology are outlined in the fourth section. The fifth section provides an in-depth analysis of the data. Finally, the research findings are discussed in context with results from other studies in the sixth section.

## **Approbation of the research**

### **Conferences and seminars**

1. Kibbermann Kerttu & Gunta Kļava. *Languages in Latvian Higher Education: Normative and Strategic Documents*. Baltic Sea Region in the Context of EU Integration, June 11–13, 2015, University of Latvia (Riga, Latvia).
2. Kibbermann, Kerttu. *Svešvalodu lietojums augstākajā izglītībā Igaunijā un Latvijā: normatīvo un stratēģisko dokumentu analīze*. Latvijas Universitātes doktorantu seminārs, May 16–17, 2014, University of Latvia (Riga, Latvia).
3. Kibbermann, Kerttu. *Foreign languages in higher education in Latvia: regulations and practices*. 2014 AABS Conference “Yale Conference on Baltic and Scandinavian Studies”, March 13–15, 2014, Yale University (New Haven, USA).
4. Kibbermann, Kerttu. *Foreign Languages in Higher Education in Estonia and Latvia*. “X Baltic studies conference in Europe Cultures, Crisis and Consolidations in the Baltic World”, June 16 – 19, 2013, Tallinn University (Estonia).
5. Kibbermann, Kerttu. *Foreign Languages in Higher Education in Estonia and Latvia: Regulations and Practices*. Conference of the Estonian Association of Applied Linguistics “Words, words, words”, Estonian Language Institute, April 18–19, 2013.
6. Kibbermann, Kerttu. *Valodas politikas loma Igaunijas un Latvijas augstākajā izglītībā*. 2<sup>nd</sup> International Young Linguist Conference “Via Scientiarum”, March 7–8, 2013, Liepaja University (Latvia).
7. Kibbermann, Kerttu. *Mācību valodas nozīme augstākajās izglītības iestādēs: ieskats teorijā (Igaunijas piemērs)*. XVII starptautiskā konferencē „Vārds un tā pētīšanas aspekti”, November 29–30, 2012, Liepaja University (Latvia).
8. Kibbermann, Kerttu. *English in the Education System of Estonia and Latvia: An Overview of the Language Attitudes of Students*. XII Zinātniskie lasījumi, January 26–27, 2012, Daugavpils University (Latvia).

9. Kibbermann, Kerttu. *Angļu valoda Igaunijā un Latvijā: studentu lingvistiskā attieksme*. XVI starptautiskā konferencē „Vārds un tā pētīšanas aspekti”, December 1–2, 2011, Liepāja University (Latvia).

### **Published research papers and book chapter**

1. Kibbermann, Kerttu. 2018. Languages in Higher Education in Estonia and Latvia: Language Practices and Attitudes. In Sanita Lazdiņa & Heiko F. Marten (eds.), *Multilingualism in the Baltic States: Societal Discourses and Contact Phenomena*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 407–422.
2. Kibbermann, Kerttu. 2017. Responses to the internationalisation of higher education in language policies of Estonia and Latvia. *Journal of Estonian and Finno-Ugric Linguistics* 8, 1: 97–113. Publisher: University of Tartu. JEFUL is abstracted/indexed in Scopus etc.
3. Soler-Carbonell, Josep, Taina Saarinen & Kerttu Kibbermann. 2017. Multilayered perspectives on language policy in higher education: Finland, Estonia, and Latvia in comparison. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 38: 4, 301–314. Publisher: Taylor & Francis. JMMD is abstracted/indexed in Scopus etc.
4. Kibbermann, Kerttu. 2014. Language Policy in Higher Education in Estonia and Latvia: Regulations and Practices. *VIA SCIENTIARUM*, 2: 111–125. Publishers: Liepāja University & Ventspils University of Applied Sciences.
5. Kibbermann, Kerttu. 2013. Medium of instruction in higher education institutions: language policy in Estonia. *Vārds un tā pētīšanas aspekti*, 17: 2, 83–93. Publisher: Liepāja University.
6. Kibbermann, Kerttu. 2013. Svešvalodu lietojums Igaunijas augstākajā izglītībā un zinātnē. *Valodas prakse: vērojumi un ieteikumi*, 8: 24–31. Publisher: Latvian Language Agency.
7. Kibbermann, Kerttu. 2013. English in the Education System of Estonia and Latvia: An Overview of the Language Attitudes of Students. *Valoda – 2012. Valoda dažādu kultūru kontekstā. Zinātnisko rakstu krājums XXII*, 272–278. Publisher: Daugavpils University.
8. Kibbermann, Kerttu. 2012. English in Estonia and Latvia: Language Attitudes of Students. *Vārds un tā pētīšanas aspekti*, 16: 2, 129–141. Publisher: Liepāja University.

## 1. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The dissertation studies languages in higher education in Estonia and Latvia within the paradigm of macro-sociolinguistics, i.e. language policy. Thus a discussion of the sociolinguistic and language policy concepts used in the study is in order. The central focus is laid on the concepts of language policy, language ideology, language attitude, and language practices. As a dominant theory of language policy has not been formulated in the academic study of language policy, this chapter discusses different approaches to the study of language policy, and positions this piece of research among numerous approaches.

### 1.1. Language policy

In a nutshell, language policy is an activity carried out by language policy practitioners to fix or modify language form, use and/or acquisition. In everyday use, language policy is often associated with politicians who pursue it as a subfield of domestic policy when regulating language use. Yet language policy is not only restricted to the regulations designed by government authorities, but is also established by other actors, for example, school administrators who develop guidelines for language use within the institution, or lecturers who choose to speak a language/variety in a class. To put it simply, language policy is found wherever language is used. Spolsky (2004: 39) stresses that language policy is present in every speech community and social group. He (ibid. 10) highlights that the essence of language policy lies in the choice between languages and varieties that we have in life.

The concept *language planning* was first used by Haugen (1959, 1966) in his writings about the standardisation of Norwegian. Since the early days of language policy research, its focus has been on the form of language (corpus planning by Kloss (1969)), the social position of language (status planning by Kloss (ibid.)), and language learning (acquisition planning by Cooper (1989)). The terminology created back then is still in use and applicable to language issues in higher education, for example, language policy in higher education deals with status planning as some languages/varieties are used in tertiary education while others are not; corpus planning as higher education and science enrich vocabulary; and acquisition planning as languages can be learnt in academia.

Language planning as a concept denoting the overall efforts to prescribe and modify language form and use fell into disarray in the late 1980s when it was substituted with similar concepts. It was then realised that some of the objectives of the top-down early language planning had failed. Since then the terms *language policy*, *language policy and planning*, and

*language policy and language planning* have been used more broadly than language planning to refer to the academic discipline.

At the time when research accumulated on the unsatisfactory outcomes of the early language planning, language policy scholars turned to critical theorists (e.g. Foucault (1972), Habermas (1985), Giddens (1987), Bourdieu (1991)), and argued that the early language planning had created stable diglossia, i.e. the allocation of languages to different functions, and had thus lowered the status of local languages and improved the status of the former colonial languages in the newly-established states in Asia, Africa and South America, thus helping to uphold the class-based structures of the colonial era (Ricento 2006: 13–15). Diglossia is a concept sometimes used also in the discussions of language policy in higher education: in recent decades, the extensive spread of English in higher education has caused fears of a possible diglossic situation, particularly in the Nordic countries (see Section 2.2). The critical approach is popular also today – now it is influenced by postmodern theory and combined with critical discourse analysis. Scholars, who adhere to this approach, aim to uncover the ideologies that reproduce inequalities in society (Ricento *ibid.*).

Today, some authors (e.g. Spolsky 2004, 2009; Tollefson 2011; Johnson 2013) have found it useful for the purposes of their argument to distinguish between language policy and language planning. When doing so, language policy is considered to be more general and language planning more specific. For example, Tollefson (2011: 357) defines language planning as deliberate efforts to modify language that entail precisely stated objectives and a plan to reach these goals. For him, language planning is a subfield of social planning. According to Tollefson (*ibid.*), language planning may produce language policy, i.e. general rules for using and learning languages that have been established in society. Tollefson (*ibid.*) argues that language planning is clearly expressed but language policy may be explicitly stated or implicitly understood from general practices.

This thesis follows the approach by Spolsky (2004, 2009) who also differentiates between language planning (what he calls language management) and language policy. Following Cooper (1989), Spolsky (*ibid.*) has developed an understanding of his own about the scope and nature of language policy. He stresses that language policy analysis can be conducted at three levels: 1) language management; 2) language practices; and 3) language ideologies.

At the first level, language policy is expressed by efforts by any social actor who is or believes to be in power to prescribe and modify language choice and use, be it in the form of governmental language acts or parental control over the language their children speak. This has traditionally been called language planning but Spolsky (2004, 2009) prefers language management due to the negative connotations of the word *plan*. Spolsky (2004: 8) argues that

we can talk about language management when we are able to identify the source of language intervention. He (ibid. 13) highlights that language management is often heterogeneous, and efforts at different levels, for example, language management by governments and local governmental authorities might contradict each other.

Establishing rules, however, does not always guarantee law-abiding practices in everyday life. Thus Spolsky (2004, 2009) argues that language policy is carried out in its most real sense in actual linguistic practices. Linguistic practices refer to the choice of language or variety that people make in different social situations. According to Spolsky (ibid.), linguistic practices are the most real part of language policy, it is what actually happens, as what has been written down in a law, might not be practiced in real life. For instance, the Soviet constitution proclaimed that all languages were equal, however, in reality Russian was “the *de facto* official language of the country and a necessary prerequisite of a true Soviet citizen” (Pavlenko 2008: 281). According to Spolsky (2004: 39), certain regularity in otherwise irregular linguistic practices appears in any social group because people are not free in making their choices, but they depend on social norms. Thus in language policy research it is important to distinguish between *de jure* policies – what the policies officially state, and *de facto* policies – how they actually work at the grassroots level.

The third aspect of language policy consists of beliefs and opinions held by members of societies about the status, prestige, use and form of languages, varieties and specific language features (Spolsky 2004, 2009). According to Spolsky (2004: 14), language users in a speech community share beliefs about appropriate language practices that affect the actual language use. At times, these beliefs may be organised into ideologies (Spolsky 2004, 2009). Spolsky (2004: 14) stresses that language ideology is language policy without a specific manager. Language ideologies are abundant in any society; they tend to be inconsistent and inconstant because they depend on other events that take place in society (ibid. 96).

Schiffman (1996) has spoken about *linguistic culture* when referring to “the set of behaviours, assumptions, cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes, ways of thinking about language, and religio-historical circumstances associated with a particular language”. The approaches by Spolsky (2004) and Schiffman (1996) are similar but whereas the first argues that ideology is policy, the latter stresses that policy arises from ideology. However, it is worthwhile to note that the cause-effect relationship between language ideologies and explicit language management efforts has not been proven.

Spolsky (2004: 217) stresses that language management, ideologies and practices are not necessarily congruent; the study of each may reveal a different language policy. According to Spolsky (ibid. 218), language practices are the real language policy and the potential of

language management to be as real depends on its congruity with the actual language use and ideologies. Furthermore, Spolsky (*ibid.*: 39–40) asserts that language policy analysis can focus on all of these three interrelated aspects or examine the language policy exercised at one of these levels, although he maintains that “to study one component of language policy while ignoring the other two will provide a very incomplete and biased view” (*ibid.*). Therefore, the dissertation applies the threefold approach to the study of languages in higher education.

Moreover, the past decades have seen a new interest in language policy, fuelled by the growing fear for the loss of world’s linguistic diversity (e.g. Crystal 2000), the deep interest in multilingualism, minority language protection and linguistic rights (e.g. Skutnabb-Kangas 2000), and the spread of English (e.g. Phillipson 1992, 2003). From the early 1990s to the present day, language policy research has experienced tremendous growth. Lo Bianco (2013: 1) calls language policy research “the most applied of the applied language sciences”. Recently, language policy research has accumulated also due to the adoption of English as medium of instruction in university settings where it has not been used so extensively before.

The fear for the loss of languages and the accompanying interest in preserving world’s multilingualism have given rise to the popularity of the language ecology approach in language policy research (e.g. Johnson 2013). The concept of language ecology can be traced back to the work carried out by Haugen (1972), however, the approach became prominent at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The ecology of languages draws a parallel between linguistic and biological diversity. Supporters of this approach argue that linguistic diversity is as important to human society as biological diversity is to world’s health (Mühlhäusler 1996).

Similarly, research on the spread of English, the “cuckoo in the nest” (Phillipson 2006) often aims to maintain world’s linguistic diversity. More specifically, reasons behind the spread of English are widely discussed. For example, Spolsky (2004: 76–91) holds that the spread of English has resulted in the use of English-medium technologies, the economic progress of English-speaking countries and internationalisation that makes people want to learn English. He maintains that language diffusion efforts of English-speaking countries have taken advantage of the opportunities created by economy and technology, not created them. By contrast, Phillipson, one of the chief opponents of the world-wide spread of English, argues in his seminal work on *linguicism and linguistic imperialism* (1992) that language policies supporting the spread of English can only be understood within the framework of imperialism, i.e. the dominance of some societies and their languages over others. He claims that powerful English-speaking countries promote English in order to benefit from its spread. Phillipson stresses that English linguistic imperialism is a type of linguicism, i.e. representation of the dominant language, to which desirable features are attributed.



Since the early days of language policy research, its scope has been greatly expanded. Whereas the early studies focused mostly on the top-down macro-level activities undertaken by state institutions, today's research is conducted at macro- as well as micro-levels. Already Cooper (1989) argued that in addition to states and public institutions (schools, private enterprises) also smaller units such as religious groups and families formulate language policies. He (ibid. 30) demonstrates that the restriction of language policy to activities undertaken by authoritative bodies is not enough because they ignore grass-level language policy activities that can also shape linguistic behaviour. Cooper (ibid.) brings the example of the campaign against non-sexist language that originally emerged in literature in the US in the 1960s and has ever since considerably affected the use and form of many languages. Today's language policy research focuses heavily on actual linguistic practices and considers identities of different ethnolinguistic groups, for example, to find out how top-down policies are interpreted and put into use at the micro level (e.g. Johnson 2013).

It is commonly accepted in scholarly literature that language policy is rooted in historical, cultural, education, political and religious conditions, and its research should adopt interdisciplinary focus (e.g. Cooper 1989, Schiffman 1996, Spolsky 2004). One widely recognised application of critical theory to language policy that takes into account the importance of context is the historical-structural approach by Tollefson (1991: 31–39). Whereas early language policy research emphasised the importance of state-authored decision-making, the historical-structural approach aims to reveal historical and socio-political factors that affect language use and the development of language policies (Tollefson 2015: 141). According to Tollefson (2011: 366–367), language policy research should include a detailed analysis of historical and socio-political circumstances that have shaped the current situation. This thesis discusses the historical context of today's language policies in the research setting in Chapter 3.

To conclude, this dissertation adopts a multilayered approach to researching language policy in higher education in Estonia and Latvia. Following Spolsky (2004, 2009), language policy is viewed in top-down language management efforts as well as language ideologies and practices. The problem with Spolsky's proposal is that it remains rather programmic and does not include precise means for conducting research (this has been suggested also by Bonacina 2011) that have to be found elsewhere. For this purpose, the following discussion on aspects of language management, ideologies, attitudes and practices helps to contextualise theoretically the research undertaken in this dissertation.

## 1.2. Language management

As argued above, language management includes efforts by any actor to manipulate language situation (Spolsky 2004: 8). Spolsky (2009) analyses language management in different spheres of life: from family to international organisations. This section comments on the efforts of language managers that are subject to this research, i.e. international organisations, states (governments, ministries, government organisations etc.) and schools (higher education institutions).

Firstly, higher education institutions in Europe are greatly affected by decisions made at the global and the European level. For example, Hultgren (2014<sup>a</sup>: 406–407) discusses the global university ranking systems that have turned universities into “competition-driven, corporation-like, performance-based institutions” (ibid.) as well as the policies adopted at the European level that aim at making the European higher education institutions more competitive with universities in the United States (ibid.).

Secondly, language use in tertiary education is influenced by decisions made by at the national level. The most visible state efforts to manage language situation have been written down in formal documents such as constitutions or language laws. Slightly more difficult to find can be policies that are put down in other government documents. According to Spolsky (2004: 13), it is the hardest to spot state’s language policies in countries that have no overarching explicit legislative documents, for example, England and the United States. Furthermore, Hultgren (2014<sup>a</sup>: 406–407) shows that states make political decisions that actually affect language use in higher education institutions: she brings the example of implementing bibliometrically based funding systems which encourage researchers to publish in high-ranking English-language journals in Denmark. However, it should be noted that the official language policy of a state tends to mirror its ideological stands rather than its linguistic reality as the existence of an official language policy does not guarantee that it is practiced in everyday social situations (Spolsky 2004: 8).

Thirdly, one of the most powerful language management instruments is the language policy implemented at education institutions (Spolsky 2009: 90). Most commonly, the language of education system is the language that has been given the status of the official/national language as this language tends to be tied to national identity (ibid. 90–91). According to Spolsky (2009: 94), language management at school can depend upon schools or external factors, such as governmental policies. Spolsky (ibid. 91) stresses that students’ language practices and beliefs are changed at school, and teachers are in charge of this process. However, students and teachers (as well as other language policy managers, such as school administrators and non-academic

staff) bring along their previous preferences for language policy, i.e. their language proficiency, practices and beliefs (ibid. 90–93). Spolsky (ibid. 91) emphasises that successful school language management should be built on these previous experiences.

Researchers have described differently how any policy becomes into existence. For example, Grin & Moring (2002) and Moring et al. (2013) describe a policy process in a linear way by arguing that policy planning process begins with inputs, i.e. converting supranational, governmental or non-governmental ideas into policy measures. After that come outputs, i.e. policy actions, in the form of laws, rules, regulations, policy documents and action plans. At the end, the outputs are practically implemented in institutions or communities by actors at the grassroots level. By contrast, Halonen et al. (2015: 3) assert that “politics and policies are essentially multi-sited by nature, taking place, being constructed, contested and reproduced on different horizontally and vertically linked levels simultaneously and in different times and places.”

Ricento & Hornberger (1996) propose the onion model of language policy – language policy is multilayered as an onion. Following the onion model, Söderlundh (2014: 121–122) explains the multilayered nature of higher education language policy: the first layer of language policy objectives is stipulated by legislation; the second layer is the institutional setting; and the third layer consists of the diverse language practices of individual people. To put it differently, broad language policy objectives are articulated at the state level; they are then transformed to universities, and finally, put into practice by people in the higher education settings. Since the proposition of the onion model of language policy by Ricento & Hornberger (ibid.), this has been the predominant view on language policy, however, Hult (2010) stresses that the layers are an abstraction and a simplification of the world, suggesting that language policy and practices should be studied from a holistic point of view.

University policies are affected by a number of decisions and regulations on international, national and institutional levels. For example, in a study conducted about the language policy of the University of Helsinki, Moring et al. (2013) show that the key language policy documents are affected by 24 EU documents, 14 national documents and 13 institutional documents.

Although top-down language policy analyses have recently been exchanged towards bottom-up approaches in language policy literature, Hultgren (2014<sup>b</sup>: 62) points out that “there is still merit in critically scrutinising top management discourses and in bringing to the fore what is enacted as a desirable or necessary linguistic situation /.../.”

### 1.3. Language ideologies and attitudes

The use of the concepts *language ideology* and *language attitude* tends to be complicated: while some find it important for their research argument to differentiate between the concepts (e.g. Mortensen & Fabricius 2014), others argue that making a subtle distinction between language attitudes, language ideologies, and other related concepts (e.g. Schiffmann's (1996) *linguistic culture*) is unnecessary (e.g. Oakes 2001). The source of the issue lies in different traditions: the concept of language attitudes comes from social psychology, whereas the concept of language ideologies was originally a research topic of linguistic anthropology. Now, both concepts are used in sociolinguistic and language policy research. In sociolinguistics, for example, Baker (1992) and Garrett (2010) have dealt with language attitudes, and Schieffelin et al. (1998) and Blommaert (1999) have looked at ideologies.

Principally, there is a great deal of overlap between the theoretical conceptualisation of language ideologies and attitudes. Research on both seeks to understand subjective socio-cultural beliefs, thoughts, preferences, and knowledge about languages, varieties, accents etc. held by individuals and groups. Moreover, as modern linguistics is based on the doctrine of arbitrariness, according to which no language is better than other, attitudes toward and ideologies about languages are commonly considered to reflect social perceptions of their speakers (Edwards 1999: 102). It is commonly accepted that although speakers of a language might have a higher socio-economic status than speakers of other languages, the evaluation of their language as superior lacks a direct basis (Myers-Scotton 2006: 120). Furthermore, language ideologies and attitudes are argued to be developed and employed by people to give structure and sense to their sociocultural experience.

The general practice in research tends to be the following: if it is important for the research to distinguish between the concepts, researchers first establish their ground rules. For example, Mortensen & Fabricius (2014: 195) use language ideology to refer broadly to sets of construct resources, i.e. "ideological postulates about language variation and social meaning that emerge historically and circulate in society" (ibid. 197), and language attitude to refer narrowly to the reaction part of language ideology (evaluation) (ibid.).

The above-given distinction between language attitudes and ideologies by Mortensen & Fabricius (2014) is rather widespread: attitudes are often attributed to individual speakers, and ideologies tend to be linked to wider social groups. Whereas attitudes are considered to be affective by nature, ideologies are often seen as more socially constructed over time. Sometimes, attitudes are seen as constructs that are more liable to change than ideologies that tend to be considered more deep-rooted. Furthermore, the research of language attitudes tends

to be closely related to its parent discipline, the socio-psychological study of attitudes (Baker 1992: 8–9), thus rather objective methodological means, such as experiments, quantitative studies and directed qualitative studies (e.g. matched-guise test, surveys, semi-structured interviews) are often being used by researchers. By contrast, ideologies are, in accord with their anthropological origin, drawn rather from live interactions and discourses that exist also without the presence of researcher. Often, a link is established between language ideologies and attitudes, claiming that shared attitudes form ideologies (e.g. Swann et al. 2004: 171).

In this thesis, both of the concepts *language ideologies* and *language attitudes* are used to understand the ways in which languages in higher education in Estonia and Latvia are explicitly or implicitly talked and written about. The concept of language ideologies is used in the analysis of state-authored and institutional regulations and policy-planning documents as legislation and official policy is widely considered to be the legitimate ideology (e.g. Woolard 1998: 20–21). By contrast, in the analysis of the data from interviews with students, preference is given to the concept of language attitudes. In other words, the concept of attitudes is applied to thoughts and beliefs expressed by individual language users, and the concept of ideologies is used to understand the underlying beliefs about language in legitimised documents. Possibly, ideologies could be drawn from shared attitudes expressed by students in interviews.

### **On the social aspects of language ideologies and attitudes**

In their frequently quoted work, Schieffelin et al. (1998: 3) define language ideologies as “representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world.” Researchers who study language ideologies are interested in how language ideologies shape social interactions (Woolard 1998). Language ideology can be viewed as “a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk” (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 55), and used as effective means to detect power relations and social inequality in the way people use and think about language.

Research has shown that the socio-political status of different groups plays a crucial role in evaluating them and their languages. Superior groups are often associated with intelligence and competence, and carry overt prestige. All in all, international and local political and socio-economic forces have a major impact on maintaining and changing communities’ attitudes and language learning motivations. Overtly, people tend to give preference to learning and speaking languages that are associated with high-status groups. It can be explained with the human quest for mobility as prestigious languages are thought to give their speakers access to socio-economic benefits (Myers-Scotton 2006: 121). In addition, favourable attitudes towards a language increase the motivation to learn it. Moreover, research has also found that people elicit

positive attitudes towards languages they are proficient in (Kristiansen 2010). Thus language attitudes and language competence are in a direct two-way relationship. Additionally, attitudes are also reflected by intelligibility – positive attitudes towards a language promote its intelligibility, whereas negative attitudes hinder it.

However, Baker (2006: 48–49) stresses that languages are not only for economic benefits, they also concern social aspects, such as identity and heritage. Besides social superiority, languages (and their speakers) are valued in terms of social attractiveness. For example, lower class and nonstandard varieties have often been found to be socially more attractive, friendlier and more trustworthy than higher class varieties (Garrett 2006: 117). Another reason why prestigious languages are not spreading at the expense of others is that social groups tend to defend their self-esteem by denigrating competing languages. Baker & Prys Jones (1998: 178) maintain that attitudes function as ego defence mechanisms. Fearing that other languages are more privileged than theirs, people may hold negative attitudes towards such languages and their speakers to enhance their own self-worth and attribute prestige to their own language.

In general, ideologies and attitudes are considered to be developed socially. Although some psychologists have acknowledged the effect of genetic heritability on attitudes (e.g. Tesser 1993), the importance of social environment has generally been recognised over genetic factors in attitude studies, partly because there is too little research into hereditary influence on attitudes. Suffice to say for the purposes of this study, attitudes are mostly learned during socialisation. Parents, friends, peer groups, education, work and the mass media have a profound effect on the formation and maintenance of attitudes, as people tend to adjust their attitudes to those of the groups they belong to (Vandermeeren 2005: 1319–1321).

Garrett (2010: 22) points out that attitudes are learned through observation learning, which involves observing the behaviour of others and drawing conclusions about the consequences of that behaviour, and instrumental learning, which concerns analysing the consequences of our own behaviour and whether it is praised or criticised by the social groups we belong to. Thus attitudes are always preceded by direct or indirect contact with the attitude object, whereas direct personal experiences are the most powerful sources for forming attitude (Lasagabaster 2004: 400). Morgan (1993: 71) sums up the three factors that influence attitudes the most: “the national culture, the social groups encountered by an individual, and the temperament of the individual in terms of flexibility and adaptability”.

The understanding that people acquire language attitudes during socialisation makes them interesting for researchers. It means that attitudes are shared by groups. This idea is commonly applied to explaining the differences in attitudes between different social and ethnolinguistic groups. Since all languages and language varieties are objectively comparable, the differences

in subjective evaluations are caused by the different social positions of groups who speak and identify with different languages (Appel & Muysken 2006: 19). Thus attitudes are based on social prejudice. People are driven by social norms about other ethnolinguistic and social groups to form attitudes towards their languages. Social norms are essential to language attitudes for two reasons. Firstly, individual attitudes reflect group norms, and secondly, attitudes lead to group behaviour that functions as their identity marker (Vandermeeren 2005: 1321).

Language attitudes are never static. As explained above, political and socio-economic transitions can affect attitudes and lead to attitude change at a macro level. Baker & Prys Jones (1998: 178) add that at a micro level attitudes towards acquiring or maintaining a language depend on the possibilities of reaping the rewards of using it. The possible rewards might include good grades at school or well-paid employment. Avoiding negative outcomes, for example feeling anxious and insecure, also plays a role in the maintenance of attitudes. For instance, the insecurity caused by being a peripheral member of a group may lead the individual to change his/her attitudes and behaviour in order to reach a better position in the group.

There is a difference between publicly expressed and privately held attitudes. To this end, Kristiansen (2010) divides attitudes into two groups – overt/conscious and covert/subconscious attitudes. He relates the distinction to the psychological notion of “paying attention to” (Kristiansen 2010: 60) and claims that respondents who are aware of the research topic and the presence of researcher are likely to produce overt attitudes. He clarifies that overt attitudes mirror the community’s public discourse and often discussed viewpoints on the attitude object. In contrast, covert attitudes are personal and therefore more difficult to research than overt attitudes. They are part of everyone’s private discourse that can clash with the language ideology of the community and are expressed only in authentic contexts.

The relationship between attitudes and behaviour has intrigued researchers for a while but is still unclear. The first prominent study on this relationship was conducted by La Piere (1934) who travelled around the USA with a Chinese student and his wife who La Piere describes as “personable, charming, and quick to win the admiration and respect of those they had the opportunity to become intimate with. But they were foreign-born Chinese, a fact that could not be disguised” (ibid. 231). They stayed in several hotels, visited plenty of restaurants and were refused service only once. Six months later, La Piere sent questionnaires to these establishments, asking them if they accepted Chinese in their hotels and restaurants. Over 90 % of those who chose to fill in the questionnaire answered ‘no’, most probably because of the prevailing hostile public attitudes towards Orientals. From the 1930s onwards, La Piere’s study has often been quoted to show the weak relationship between attitudes and behaviour.

More recent studies have confirmed that attitudes and behaviour, although conceptually somewhat close, cannot be confused. Attitudes are seen as preparations for behaviour. The more persistent the attitude, the more visibly and consistently it is expressed in behaviour. Lasagabaster (2004: 401) suggests that without confusing the two, attitudes can be inferred from behaviour using behavioural indexes of attitudes, such as interviews, questionnaires, matched guise tests or discourse analysis.

### **Integrative and instrumental motivation**

The early language attitude research in the 1960s considered attitudes to be one-dimensional, but from Gardner & Lambert (1972) onwards, scholars hold that language attitudes have several aspects. Opinions vary, but most scholars agree with Gardner & Lambert (*ibid.*) who propose that language attitudes can be instrumental and integrative. However, the relationship between instrumental and integrative attitudes is not straightforward, and it would be too simplistic to think that some hold instrumental and others integrative attitudes. More realistically, they are combined in minds and expressed together in behaviour (Baker & Prys Jones 1998: 176).

Gardner & Lambert (1972: 14) characterise instrumental motivation as desire “to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a foreign language”. Instrumental motivation reflects pragmatic motives, as they are self-orientated and expected to bring personal socio-economic benefits. According to Baker (1992: 32–33), they overlap with the human need for achievement and are expressed when foreign languages are learnt with the aim of gaining social prestige and enjoying personal success, for example furthering one’s career prospects or passing exams. Instrumental attitudes towards a foreign language not only influence the linguistic performance of learners, but also make the foreign language necessary to use.

In contrast, integrative motivation is reflected by “a desire to be like representative members of the other language community” (Gardner & Lambert 1972: 14). These attitudes result from a wish to identify with a certain group. Integrative attitudes represent social and interpersonal motives. Baker (1992: 32–33) explains that they are linked to the human need for affiliation. People who hold integrative attitudes towards a language learn it in order to meet people from the target language group and to earn the respect of others for speaking their language. Baker & Prys Jones (1998: 176) argue that instrumental attitudes might not be sustained when language learning aims are fulfilled, whereas integrative attitudes are more long-lasting and stimulate language learning more strongly. They also hold that it does not apply to English that has become vital in several spheres of life, for example in education, employment and business.



#### **1.4. Language practices**

Whereas language ideologies are the ways in which languages are explicitly or implicitly talked or written about, i.e. “value-laden discourse about what ought or ought not to happen“ (Hultgren et al. 2014: 2), language practices are what actually happens, in other words, the lived experiences of institutions and people (ibid.). Language practices and ideologies are, of course, intertwined and under mutual influence. In practice, they are often hard to distinguish, thus the difference is made, first and foremost, for analytical purposes, not to reflect the “real” situation. However, Hultgren et al. (ibid. 13) stress that neither ideologies, nor practices can be discounted in research: both take part in constructing the social world.

In university settings, language practices are the ways in which a certain language or variety is chosen in the situated interactions of academic staff, students and others who conduct their daily working lives there. Multilingualism tends to be a common practice at universities that are now increasingly international by nature. Lønsmann & Haberland (2013: xvii) point out that language alternation and codeswitching is rather a norm than an exception in such an international setting as universities are today. They stress that language competences play a huge role in language choice in such settings as speakers have diverse language competences, and the eventual language choice depends on the availability of common languages.

In addition, Grin (2003: 43-44) has developed a model to describe three factors that affect language use: capacity, practical opportunities and desire to use a language. Although his model was developed in the context of minority languages, the three factors are relevant also in general when discussing language choice. Furthermore, Haberland (2011) has added a fourth factor, i.e. need. In the context of education, the need to use a language is apparent – if lectures are held in a language, students need to use the language, they cannot change it directly.

Hultgren et al. (2014: 11) point out that language ideologies often seem to rely on unquestioned assumptions, such as language is a nameable, discrete entity with definite borders that is tied to a fixed territory. Woolard (1998: 20) notes that “the existence of a language as a discrete entity is always a discursive project, rather than an established fact.” At the grassroots level of practices, languages are not fixed and organised systems with clear borders that distinguish them from other languages; instead, language practices are often complex and quite messy. For example, ethnographic studies have found out that designating one language to function as medium of instruction in a class does not exclude other languages from being used during the course. Similarly, writing articles in one language only does not mean that other languages are not used in processes involved in conducting research (e.g. networking with

colleagues, doing research). The results of studies that focus on the multilingual nature of today's higher education are discussed in greater detail in Section 2.1.

It should be stressed that earlier studies on language policy and language practices tended to take a normative approach, assuming that language practices coincide with pre-proposed policy, for example, teaching was assumed to be conducted in the declared medium of instruction. More recently, studies have started to take a more dynamic approach, and now assume that language practices do not necessarily correspond to the proclaimed language policy, i.e. what is prescribed by top-down policy does not necessarily exist in that manner at the grassroots level of practices (e.g. Ljosland 2008; Söderlundh 2010; 2012, 2014).

Thus, top-down language policies can set goals but it is very difficult to turn the ideological goals into concrete practices. Linn (2014) brings the example of the Norwegian case with two written languages: during the 1950s and 1960s it seemed to policy-makers that it would make more sense to use a single common language in Norway; even though such a solution was forced upon language users, the policy failed to take control over the use of language because language practices are too complex and socially rooted to be changed overnight.

Similarly, Ljosland (2014<sup>b</sup>) observes grassroots language practices at a department in a Norwegian university that is officially implementing programmes in English and concludes that the position of the national language (Norwegian) as a full-fledged academic language cannot be maintained just by top-down regulations. "Active language planning 'from above' can only influence the conditions, while the ultimate outcome for the language is decided by each of its speakers in each of their daily acts of using one language or another and by how they perceive and interpret the language use of others" (Ljosland 2014<sup>b</sup>: 400). She argues that speakers' "sense of the present interactional demands" (ibid. 396) overrules the top-down language management prescribing language use. All in all, people are guided by their own attitudes and ideological understandings in choosing between languages. Generally, a successful language policy is congruent with the observable sociolinguistic reality (Schiffman 1996: 18, 54).

## **2. LANGUAGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

In this section, language management, ideologies, and practices in higher education are discussed. Research on language issues in higher education is mostly carried out as case studies, which focus, for example, on countries, universities, programmes or courses. When necessary, examples are brought from research literature that quite often refer to a specific context, however, in many cases it is possible to elaborate on the case-specific information to create an overall picture. The section 2.1 describes the domain of higher education and its accompanying language issues. Then, the section 2.2 gives an insight into settings in which language issues in higher education have deserved assiduous attention, most importantly, the Nordic countries.

### **2.1. Language policy in higher education**

Today, higher education is expected to cater for domestic needs and be globally competitive at the same time. This section pays attention to the relationship between national and international in higher education, including language issues that accompany mobility. It overviews manifestations of internationalisation at the EU level, and explores the concepts of domain, domain loss, parallel language use and parallelingualism in language management.

#### **2.1.1. National and international in higher education**

In essence, universities serve two main purposes: conducting research and educating future professionals, for example, doctors, civil servants and clergy (Haberland & Preisler 2015; Hultgren et al. 2014). As Saarinen (2014: 127) puts it, universities are “fundamentally international and essentially national.” Universities are international as their knowledge is based on international science and research. At the same time their administration and organisational structure has been mainly national for the past centuries.

Research has always been rather indifferent to national borders and has thus consistently leaned towards an international scientific language. Since the establishment of universities, different languages have served as international languages of science, for example, Latin, French, German and English (Hultgren et al. 2014). The latter took over the international scientific world after the end of the Second World War when science and research turned away from German that was used extensively at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Saarinen & Nikula 2013: 133). The turn to English happened not only in Europe but worldwide, for example, in Japan (Haberland 2009).

At the dawn of universities, international languages were used also for their other chief function, i.e. teaching. It was commonplace to use certain languages or varieties in families and everyday life, and other languages in spheres regarded as standing above daily necessities, such as religion, literature, education and science (Cooper 1989: 12). During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, European universities used Latin as medium of instruction; back then higher education was reserved for small elites (Coleman 2006: 3).

With the advent of the nation state in the 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries, universities abandoned Latin as medium of instruction and started educating students in national languages for the needs of local societies and administrations. Universities were then “construed as servants and support of the nation state” (Hultgren et al. 2014: 3–4), and national languages were developed to become academic languages; the linguistic shift served the purpose of nation-building. Due to the transition to national languages, higher education became available for the masses. The transition took place in a number of countries, mainly in Europe, central and eastern Asia, whereas universities in colonial and postcolonial settings mostly substituted Latin with the colonial language (Vila 2015: 1). Thus, for a few centuries (until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) language of teaching in universities all over the world was mainly the official/national language.

The advent of nation states inspired scientists to publish in national languages as well, however, research in national languages has always been accompanied by international scientific languages that are needed for the successful dissemination of research findings (Vila 2015: 2). Quite often, the critics of English-medium studies rely on the argument that many smaller languages might lose their status as a medium of scientific expression. In fact, the language of instruction and the language of research publications are two separate issues (although intertwined to an extent), and the language of research publications had switched to English already quite some time earlier (Maiworm & Wächter 2014: 27).

Today, higher education is still seen as part of national education systems, thus countries and universities tend to deem it important to use the national/official language as medium of instruction at universities. Sociolinguists often view higher education as one of the most prestigious domains of language use (Taavitsainen & Pahta 2003: 5) or as put by Vila (2015: 4) “one of the highest levels – if not *the* highest level – of linguistic elaboration that a language can reach”. As such, using a language in academia is seen as one of the most sensitive functions for languages (Coleman 2006: 2). Higher education is thought to confer prestige upon a language and provide it with new lexis. In addition, Druviete & Valdmanis (2010: 92) note that language use in higher education is important because education is a linear and hierarchical system. Language use at one level could affect language use at other levels of education.

However, today's higher education does not only serve national interests but has become international, also at the teaching level. Since the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, universities all over the world have been engaging in internationalisation<sup>3</sup>. Universities have adopted the role of international businesses (Hazelkorn 2011); they form a part of a common trade market in which competitive thinking dominates. To increase their competitiveness, universities compete for international students<sup>4</sup> and academic staff.

Language-wise, internationalisation is manifested in the increasing use of English in teaching, research and communication in settings where it has never been used so extensively before at the university level (Vila 2015: 2). Therefore, the recent developments in higher education that put extensive stress on internationalisation and English-medium teaching have challenged the traditional understanding of higher education as a national issue (Saarinen 2012: 157). Internationalisation signals a change in the value system of universities: whereas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century university was seen as a place for nation-building, it has by now taken on characteristics of international businesses, education has become a commodity and students have been turned into consumers (Hazelkorn 2011).

In Europe, particular stress within internationalisation processes is put on academic mobility. International mobility of students and academic staff is thought to increase the quality of university teaching, enhance institutional prestige, boost student numbers and attract funding. The logic underlying the emphasis laid on academic mobility is the following: the best students choose the best universities, i.e. the more international students, the better the university (Jensen & Thøgersen 2011: 19). In addition, internationalisation brings in new students that are needed in countries that are suffering from a demographic low point (Hazelkorn 2011). Thus, internationalisation is also a matter of economics. In addition, mobility is thought to bring about enhanced employability for internationally mobile students as well as domestic graduates (Coleman 2006: 5; Lam & Wächter 2014: 18). Almost automatically, internationalisation,

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<sup>3</sup>Internationalisation can be understood in multiple ways. A definition offered by the OECD (2008: 236) explains internationalisation as the integration of international, intercultural and global topics into higher education. Internationalisation is opposed to globalisation that is thought to blend different cultures into one when internationalisation stresses the importance of local cultures and identities in international communication. Teichler (2004) defines *internationalisation* as growing border-crossing activities between national systems of higher education, and *globalisation* as growing border-crossing activities of blurred national systems. Montgomery (2008: 19) adds that "internationalisation is a socio-political force that has developed alongside global changes in international relations, commerce and societies. Universities have been affected by global changes and have responded to these technological and global developments by expanding international recruitment and developing a more corporate approach to education."

<sup>4</sup> In research literature, both concepts *international students* and *foreign students* are used. According to the distinction by OECD (2017: 296–297), foreign students are those students who are not citizens of the country in which they study; they can be long-term residents. However, international students are those students who have left their country of origin in order to study in another country.

either abroad or at home, is considered to improve students' language and cultural skills and provide them with greater opportunities in the labour market (Saarinen & Nikula 2013: 139).

As market mechanisms, universities are now participating in internationalisation processes to stay competitive and attract funding. As Haberland (2014: 252) puts it, "the degree of internationalisation achieved is by now considered one of the most important benchmarks for measuring the success of a university." However, Montgomery (2008: 20) states that the results of internationalisation are difficult to measure as it is hard to determine what effective internationalisation means. Now, the quality of universities is measured with ranking lists that are interested mostly in quantity (publications in high-ranking journals, citations, external grant captures, number of incoming and outgoing international students, number of international academic staff, and employability of graduates). Research publications in English are often valued higher than publishing and teaching in the national language. Thus, universities interested in their rank position have to focus on internationalisation. Interestingly, Hultgren (2014<sup>a</sup>) concludes in her study about the relationship between Englishisation and world rank in eight Danish universities that there is no statistically significant correlation between the two. Some evidence supports the link, however notable exceptions appear in her study.

Internationalisation and mobility are praised in many parts of the world. Maiworm & Wächter (2014: 25) highlight that in the European policy discourse, mobility is almost exclusively positively connotated and viewed as resulting in an extensive range of benefits, e.g. increasing international understanding, building a European identity, securing an inflow of talented students who would later become young researchers in the host country, increasing labour market opportunities abroad and generating income from tuition fees. Saarinen & Nikula (2013: 138) agree that adjectives such as 'modern' and 'innovative' are often used in policy texts and higher education advertisements in Finland to describe internationalisation.

Internationalisation of higher education is mostly driven by the economic and political interests of universities, states as well as regions and supranational organisations. Within Europe, the international and market characteristics of tertiary education are furthered by shared policies on higher education. The Lisbon strategy projects higher education as a pathway to knowledge-based society and innovative economy. This idea has been further copied to many policy documents of the EU member states, including those in Estonia and Latvia. Higher education is treated as a commodity that can be traded on the global market. This approach was first adopted by the USA, Australia and the Great Britain, and the EU has followed their lead (Tamtik et al. 2011: 6–7). The Bologna Process (1999) aims to facilitate mobility in Europe, to be competitive with aforementioned countries, especially the USA (Hultgren et al. 2014: 4).

In many European countries, large-scale student mobility started with the introduction of ERASMUS Programme in 1987; Estonia and Latvia joined the programme in 1998. In addition to the short-term mobility offered by ERASMUS, degree student mobility was largely introduced through the Bologna process that proposed the similar structure of degree programmes all over Europe. One of the higher education policy aims in Europe has been the removal of obstacles that hinder mobility (Maiworm & Wächter 2014: 25–26). The Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area that it created aim at harmonising tertiary education in Europe. By 2015, 48 EU member states as well as surrounding countries have supported the borderless higher education in Europe proposed in the Bologna Agreement, so that the EU could “become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world” (Lisbon European Council 2000).

Although the EU overtly declares its support to its linguistic and cultural diversity (e.g. the Treaty on the EU and the Charter of the Fundamental Rights in the EU), stressing the importance of multilingualism and multiculturalism, it has been out of the EU’s reach to develop these beautiful declarations into binding regulations or practices in each and every sphere of life. At the moment, the EU juggles with 24 official languages that have all been declared equally authentic on paper but obviously cannot be treated as such in reality. Although international agreements and national strategies often speak about spreading multilingualism in higher education, it is mainly English that is spreading in European academia. Interestingly, some documents, such as *European Higher Education in the World*, adopted by the in 2013 and drafted as part of the EU 2020 strategy, openly acknowledge the relevance of English in tertiary education (Soler-Carbonell et al. 2017). In general, it is a rather infrequent approach in EU policy discourse to highlight the importance of one particular language (Nikula et al. 2012).

Finally, Hultgren et al. (2014) suggest that internationalisation is not the only change that is currently taking place at universities. In their analysis of language issues in the higher education of the Nordic countries, they argue that the Nordic universities are now simultaneously becoming more attached to local states and societies. According to them (ibid. 5), the integration of universities and the surrounding societies takes place through “strategic” research funding from the governments and commercial businesses and a shift from elite to mass universities. Hultgren et al. (2014: 5–7) point out that whereas in a (utopian) past universities were autonomous learning sites for the elite who pursued their quest for knowledge, universities now receive close attention and funding from governments. In return, the government places demands on universities, thus the autonomy of universities has been diminished.

### **2.1.2. Mobility and language**

Mobility connects internationalisation to teaching in English. As pointed out by Ammon & McConnell (2002), before the implementation of the Bologna Agreement, students of the European universities tended to spend their academic exchange year in the English-speaking countries. Although the Bologna Agreement never states that its goals should be reached by English-medium studies (it does not pay attention to language at all), it gives covert preference to using international language(s) in higher education. Attracting international students is a major reason why countries that are not English-speaking have introduced English-medium courses and programmes. The large-scale study by Wächter & Maiworm (2014) confirms that universities are interested in the English-medium teaching mainly in order to “remove language obstacles from the enrolment of foreign students” (p. 18). A common language, i.e. English, is construed as a vehicle that facilitates the recruitment of international students and academic staff. In addition to using English extensively in research and teaching, Haberland (2014: 252–254) mentions that English has become a language of internal communication at some universities and it is being considered as a language of administration.

Setting up English-medium degree programmes in higher education means that support for this language has to be strong not only worldwide but also in the local society (Saarinen & Nikula 2013: 134). All over the world, English is the most widely taught language in secondary education (Maiworm & Wächter 2014: 26). To teach English extensively at school is a top-down political decision. Yet Haberland & Preisler (2015: 24) stress that the top-down policies adopted by universities, states and the EU can only partially take credit for the successful spread of English in academia; the grassroots motivation of young people to learn English – a prestigious language – is at least equally as important.

Countries such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands that are at the forefront of creating English-medium courses and programmes are known for their inhabitants’ very good English skills, especially among younger generations. Taking this into account, Preisler (1999) and Haberland & Preisler (2015) argue that the spread of English in Danish higher education can only be understood in the frame of contemporary Danish society in which English is being spread both from above (i.e. the international orientation of universities described above) and from below (e.g. youth culture, the mass media). They clearly highlight the tremendous importance of English from below, i.e. the youth culture, and argue that the foundations of higher education language policy are laid already in secondary school and before. The spread of English in higher education is supported by the strong motivation to learn and use English, especially among youngsters, who relate their identity to the frequent use of



English. Preisler (ibid.) points out that Danish universities had no problems adopting English-medium instruction in higher education in the 1990s and the 2000s as university students are recruited from the youth and youngsters are motivated to learn and use English.

In addition, Haberland & Preisler (2015) argue that the mass media play an important role in the spread of English in Denmark. They note that the exposure of Danish media users to English is massive but it does not automatically mean that people are influenced by English (e.g. that they would include English in their everyday speech habits, code-switching etc.). They (ibid.) maintain that people are affected by a language only if the language is thought to be prestigious. They link the rapid spread of English among Danes, especially younger generations, to the prestige and value that English carries and symbolises. “Switching to English is a way of prestige-enhancing ‘doing being international’” (ibid. 20).

Thus, the essence of the 21<sup>st</sup> century universities is twofold: on the one hand, universities still need to cater for the domestic needs but, on the other hand, they have to be competitive in the global economy; their task is to maintain the national language, while adopting an international language. A great deal of universities are searching for a balance between national and international, local and global.

Now, sociolinguists quite often express their worries about language situation in higher education. For example, Vila (2015) holds that it is difficult to imagine that big languages or ‘supercentral languages’ as called by De Swaan (2001), such as Chinese, German, Spanish or Russian would be abandoned from the academia within the next decades. However, the spread of English can present threats to the position of smaller languages, named ‘central languages’ by De Swaan (ibid.), as their presence in higher education depends on their actual use in the few universities using that language for teaching and research (Vila ibid.) He brings the example of Dutch and Nordic languages (central languages) that established their presence in higher education already quite a while ago but this has not saved them from fears of English.

As for sociolinguists it is more than clear that internationalisation is tightly connected to language issues and it increases the use of English in higher education settings where English has not been used so extensively before. Thus, language issues should be worthy of attention in internationalisation discourse. However, for internationalisation policymakers language often does not seem to be an issue that would deserve special attention. For example, Saarinen (2012, 2014) and Saarinen & Nikula (2013) show that language is implicit, blurred or even invisible in recent Finnish higher education and internationalisation documents, in which policy is otherwise explicitly formulated. According to Saarinen & Nikula (2013: 133), languages used to be an intricate part of internationalisation discourse at the onset of such policies in the 1970s

and the 1980s in Finland, however, as Saarinen (2014: 129) notes, the position of language in higher education policy has since developed into being “unclear and unproblematised”.

Hultgren et al. (2014: 2) summarise the two opposing discourses about the visibility of language issues at the ideological level as the “internationalist” discourse and the “culturalist” discourse. According to them, proponents of the first tend to be politicians and university leaders interested in ensuring the competitiveness of nation and the rank of the university; language is often not an issue for them, “it is just a tool” (ibid.); they often show an instrumentalist view of language. Proponents of the latter discourse, however, tend to be linguists, members of cultural elite, national language councils and politicians whose task is to guarantee the maintenance of the national language, culture and heritage; for them language is a matter of the uttermost importance.

Jensen & Thøgersen (2011) show that at the grassroots level the visibility of two distinct ideologies towards the role of internationalisation and English-medium teaching get blurred. Their study on the attitudes of Danish university staff towards internationalisation and English-medium teaching concludes that the two ends of the ideological debate “appear to be linked” (ibid. 29). “It is possible to be “sceptical” towards English when it comes to certain aspects of the debate, for example a concern about Danish as a scientific language /.../, and still be “positive” towards English when it comes to internationalisation” (ibid. 29–30).

### **2.1.3. Language use in higher education**

Hamel (2006: 104–105) suggests three large areas to keep separate as far as language use and discursive practices at university are concerned, i.e. production of knowledge; circulation of knowledge (also distribution of knowledge, e.g. in Haberland 2014) and education for science. Production refers to the whole process of conducting research, either individually or collectively, including laboratory research, work with informants, producing, interpreting and writing up data, communicating via e-mail etc. Circulation includes reading other scientific texts, listening to others at conferences and seminars, distributing one’s own research results to others, either orally or in a written format. The audience for the distribution of research could be either other researchers or general public. Finally, education for science includes university teaching, for example, teaching students as well as in-service training for academic staff. Hamel (ibid.) stresses that boundaries between these categories are hard to establish in practice, the categories are interrelated and thus tend to overlap.

Haberland (2014: 253) agrees to the division put forth by Hamel (2006) and suggests that language management efforts, ideologies and practices differ considerably in these areas. He

also adds a fourth area, i.e. administration. He explains that Hamel did not imagine university administration to take place in another language than the country's language of administration but by now it is becoming a reality, e.g. in Denmark where some universities are considering the adoption of English as the language of administration.

The distinction between four categories of language practices is useful for understanding the multilingual nature of today's universities. For example, the language of producing knowledge can differ from the language of circulating knowledge. Whereas a significant part of academic publications has been written in English since the end of the Second World War, Haberland (2014: 254) notes that only recently have languages other than local languages (mostly English) come to be used in the process of conducting research. At the same time, there are plenty of evidence that demonstrate the active use of local languages when producing knowledge (e.g. Lønsmann 2011), even in Denmark that is on the forefront of the Englishisation processes of higher education. In case of Denmark, Madsen (2008, quoted in Haberland 2014: 258) shows that the following principle is at use while conducting research in an international environment: Danish is used whenever possible, English is used whenever necessary and other languages are used when it is convenient to use them.

Moreover, Kuteeva (2011: 6) notes that the widespread availability of textbooks and academic publications in English enhances the spread of English-medium instruction. Haberland (2014: 255) disagrees, arguing that until quite recently it did not have any effect on the language used in classroom, "not even when these textbooks were published more and more numerous in one and the same language, English". He argues that the change to English-medium instruction was not triggered by English-medium textbooks and publications, but internationalisation that became the decisive factor – the wish to attract more international students to become or stay competitive.

Finally, also in the field of university teaching large-scale multilingual practices have been detected. Interestingly, Söderlundh (2012, 2013, 2014) shows in a series of articles that courses that are nominally taught in English, rarely (if ever) make only use of English. She shows eloquently that university teaching consists of discursive practices in different languages. According to Söderlundh (2012: 90), internationalisation policies and universities often focus on the use of English instead of multilingual practices because many regard internationalisation to be a monolingual process rather than multilingual.

Söderlundh (2012, 2013, 2014) shows that teacher-led activities might take place in English, but students tend to use other languages in group works, especially the national/official language. She (2012: 89–90) notes that "syllabuses and descriptions stating that courses are taught in English may give the appearance of one reality, while actual implementation in the

lecture hall and seminar room reveals another.” Her data indicate that whenever English is the main language of instruction in classroom, it tends to be the language used when discussing study-related topics in the presence of international students, however, in group works, group discussions and other situations when all group members speak the national language of the country (Swedish), this language is most commonly used. Söderlundh (2012; 2014) concludes that the language of the majority of students and the surrounding society, i.e. Swedish in Sweden, has a special position at university, even in courses that are officially taught in English.

Similar findings about the pragmatic attitude of students and academic staff towards the use of languages have been put forth by Ljosland (2008; 2014<sup>b</sup>) about Norway. Ljosland (2014<sup>b</sup>) observes language practice in courses nominally taught in English at a Norwegian university and concludes that in reality language practices are multilingual. Similarly to Söderlundh’s findings about Sweden, Ljosland (ibid.) concludes that in practice conversations in small groups or one-to-one interactions that are part of the teaching and learning process often take place in a shared mother tongue of the participants. Ljosland (2014<sup>b</sup>: 397) claims that the decision to teach in English “is not felt to overrule the interactional demand which says that when all interlocutors share a native language, it can (and perhaps should) be used /.../.” However, when speaking in a large group or when lecturers address the whole class, English is used. Similar practices are reported to be taking place in workplace settings by Tange & Lauring (2009).

#### **2.1.4. English and other languages in higher education**

It is widely acknowledged that English is now all over the academia: English in academic publications and textbooks, English at conferences, English in classroom, and English even in administration. English is called *the lingua academica* or *the academic lingua franca* (Vila 2015: 1–2). The rapid changes in higher education are currently a common subject of debate which has fuelled research on language issues brought about by internationalisation and the increased use of English. Some of the recent editions on these issues include Hultgren et al. (2014) “English in the Nordic universities: Ideologies and practices”, and Vila & Bretxa (2015) “Language Policy in Higher Education: The Case of Medium-Sized Languages”. Nevertheless, we still know quite little about the actual consequences of these changes on other languages.

Saarinen (2012) points out a paradox that applies to the current linguistic situation in higher education. She calls it ‘the paradox of internationalization’: the more international students with their own unique linguistic background, the fewer languages are used at university and the more linguistically homogeneous the academic environment becomes. Haberland & Preisler (2015: 33) add that it has become increasingly difficult to teach in another foreign language

(except English) since the language competences of students have become extremely diverse. English is often the only common language that students and academic staff share.

Although English is widespread and Scandinavian politicians and sociolinguists talk about the possible *domain loss* in higher education for national languages (see Section 2.1.5), it remains unclear if internationalisation could actually lead to the total deletion of other languages from academia (Vila 2015: 2–3). In fact, during the recent years, not only English but also other languages have started to spread in academia, for example, the Saami language in Finnish and Norwegian higher education. Phillipson (2003: 81) refers to a survey commissioned by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2001 that looked for an answer to the question whether Nordic languages were suffering from the spread of English. Interestingly, the results show that languages such as Saami, Greenlandic and Faroese are recovering from their earlier exclusion from many spheres of life and thus they are extending their range.

Blommaert (2013) refers to this as the 21<sup>st</sup> century paradox: globalisation has led to escalating “superdiversity”. Ammon (2010) claims too that a national language can benefit from the side-effects of English-medium studies as the latter attract international students who, in addition to studying in English, come into contact and have the possibility to learn the local language, at least to a certain extent: “In this way the number of learners and the global reach of other languages may increase through English-language study programs” (p. 116).

On the one hand, the spread of English has received scrupulous attention in sociolinguistic literature. On the other hand, there is a growing number of sociolinguists who draw attention to the multilingual nature of higher education and stress that English is not used solely in today’s international academia but side-by-side with other languages. Haberland & Preisler (2015) raise the question about how many languages we need in academia for our communities of practice to work. They disagree with Aracil and Crystal who claim that two languages are enough: a common language for everyone that assures the effectiveness of communication, and one’s own language to express one’s identity. Haberland and Preisler (ibid.) argue that this is impossible to achieve as there is no one language that would be shared by everyone.

### **2.1.5. Domain and domain loss**

During the last decades, much of the public and academic discussion on language issues in academia have centred on the concept of domain. For example, Spolsky (2004: 42) suggests that language policy is best studied in sociolinguistic domains. The introduction of the concept is commonly attributed to Joshua Fishman (1972) who uses domains in his discussion on the interconnectedness of individual linguistic behaviour and socio-cultural norms. For him (ibid.)

domains are not inherent to language but emerge in everyday interactions that follow certain patterns, i.e. multilingual speakers choose between languages in particular situations. These choices may establish patterns that can be observed by researchers as domains. Spolsky (2009: 3) takes Fishman's domain as the basis for this language management theory. He stresses that domain is a social space that can and should be defined for the purposes of research, for example, home, church community, school, or nation state. Furthermore, he maintains that every social space has its own language policy that is influenced by internal and external forces.

Although the concept of domain has been successfully used by many sociolinguistics to discuss the language policy in various spheres of life, a great deal of researchers has recently rejected the concept because of its frequent use for ideological agenda. Ljosland (2014<sup>b</sup>) argues that current debates often depict domains as fixed areas of society although Fishman (1972) originally describes the dynamic nature of domains. In these ideological debates, domains are considered to be inherent to languages, thus they are construed as something that a language can possess, and therefore as something a language can lose. Domains are thought to be lost when a particular language is used less or not at all in a domain.

As a consequence, the concept of domain loss has been formulated; it shows that a language can lose its status and/or functionality (Hultgren et al. 2014: 9). Many sociolinguists now argue that such an understanding of domain and domain loss makes it impossible to determine in practice what a domain is, where it begins and ends as nothing is as clear-cut at the grassroots level as it tends to be at the ideological level; thus it is not clear what criteria need to be met for a domain to be maintained or lost (see e.g. Haberland 2005, Söderlundh 2014). The fears of domain loss are abundant in ideological debates on language use (especially the spread of English) in higher education.

Söderlundh (2014) highlights that the concept of domain suits well with the normative approach to studying language practices, i.e. when higher education is considered to be a domain and language practices are not examined not at the grassroots level but only from a statistical point of view. Such a view on language practices considers the pre-proposed medium of instruction to be the actual medium of instruction in classrooms, thus it is easy to conclude that national languages are losing ground to English in the domain of higher education and domain loss is not far away. However, ethnographic studies have found (e.g. Söderlundh 2012; 2013, 2014) that in practice officially monolingual classes are rarely conducted in one language, languages are mixed, code-switching is common, and as a result, there is no evidence that national languages would be losing ground to English.

Additionally, Haberland (2014: 254) stresses that the domain loss of national/official languages cannot be discussed in the context of the spread of English in academic publications,

a sphere in which the English influence is the most far-reaching. He argues that national languages have not been marginalised as a result of the massive use of English and that the spread of English in academic publications takes place at the share of other international languages (e.g. German, French), not the local languages. Hultgren et al. (2014: 10) maintain that publishing research almost exclusively in English in some academic disciplines has not actually lowered the status of national languages in the Nordic countries. Moreover, research that mostly deals with local subjects (e.g. law, national language, literature) has not been part of this development (Haberland *ibid.*). In addition, recent research shows that Swedish academics write primarily in Swedish when addressing a general audience (McGrath 2014).

Salö (2014) shows eloquently that the fears of domain loss are not based on empirical evidence but rather on ideologies. The concept of domain loss began to be used in relation to national languages and English in higher education and science in the Nordic countries at the end of the 1980s. Salö (2014: 93–94) and Josephson (2014: 113–114) track the beginnings of the concept in the Nordic discourse back to the prominent Danish linguist Jørn Lund and the Swedish linguist Ulf Teleman who first discussed the *domain loss* or *loss of functional domains* of the national language and the consequential rise of a diglossic society. Consequently, the concept of *domain loss* spread among sociolinguists as well as policy-makers.

Although domain loss forms a huge part of language ideological discussions, especially in the Nordic countries, now both empirical studies and theoretical contemplations attack the concept. Some, for instance Haberland & Preisler (2015), argue for rejecting the use of the term *domain loss* in language policy studies as it is “theoretically weak and empirically inadequate” (p. 18). Others, for example Ljosland (2014<sup>b</sup>), note that research could keep the concept, however, before applying it to analysis, its empirical basis should be established.

### **2.1.6. Parallel language use and parallelingualism**

The ideological debates that have identified domain loss as a threatening problem in the Nordic countries have established parallel language use or paralle(l)lingualism<sup>5</sup> as the solution to the problem (Ljosland 2014<sup>b</sup>). The terms were first used at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are mostly used interchangeably and meant to ensure that domain loss is avoided in respect to the national languages that are expected to be maintain their original functionality. Recently, many Nordic governments have set the goal to establish parallel language use at universities, it means that support and development opportunities are provided for both, the national language and English. The concept of parallel language use finds expression in language policies in all

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<sup>5</sup> Both orthographies are used in research literature.

the Nordic countries at national and supra-national levels (see in Section 2.2). Haberland & Preisler (2015) stress that in policy documents, parallel language use is seen as an ideal that prevents diglossic developments, i.e. an undesirable situation in which English develops into a more prestigious language than the local national language and the latter is left with a lower status. Although parallel language use as a guiding principle for the co-existence of the national language and English in higher education is largely rooted in the Nordic setting, similar practices might exist in other countries too.

The concept of parallel language use was first mentioned in the 1998 Swedish *Draft Action Plan*, designed by the Swedish Language Council for the government with the aim of strengthening the position of Swedish in higher education. The notion was later expanded, for example in the Swedish report *Mål i mun* (see Section 2.2.1) the concept of parallel language use implies to the co-existence of Swedish and English, not only to the need to protect the national language. In the 2006 *Declaration on a Nordic Language Policy*, published by Nordic governmental representatives, a whole section is dedicated to the parallel language use in education and research (Kuteeva 2011: 6).

Similarly to the concept of domain loss, parallel language use and parallelingualism are rather widely contested in sociolinguistics. The main piece of criticism focuses on their meaning, Hultgren et al. (2014: 10–11) and Linn (2014: 28–29) note that it remains unclear what the concepts mean – some use them to protect the national language, some promote English with them, yet others use them to describe the higher education setting in which the national language and English coexist. In order to understand the focus of parallelingualism, Hultgren (2014<sup>b</sup>) conducted a study to explore what it means in Danish language policy documents. Interestingly, she concludes that in the state-authored language policy documents parallelingualism is used to stress the need to protect Danish, while in institutional documents the same term is used to advocate the spread of English.

Other piece on criticism on the concepts of parallel language use and parallelingualism focuses on distinguishing between policy and practice. Ljosland (2014<sup>b</sup>) notes that it is not clear whether the terms refer to policy or practice or both. Even if policy-makers agree on the meaning of the terms, Airey (2009: 21) maintains that they do not have much effect on the actual language use, and their implementation in practice remains unclear. In order to bring some clarification to the issues, Linn (2014: 29) suggests to differentiate between the terms and to use parallelingualism when referring to language management efforts, and parallel language use when describing the language situation. Mostly, the terms are used interchangeably in research literature, however, such a distinction would be useful.



Lønsmann & Haberland (2013: xvii) point out that by using the concepts of domain loss and parallel language languages are constructed as discrete bounded entities that are in constant competition. They argue that this might not mirror real language practices in an adequate way. They stress that at the practice level, languages interact with each other and they are used in a hybrid way. Drawing a distinct line between languages in higher education gives rise to what Lønsmann & Haberland (p. xv–xvi) call separate multilingualism ideology that constructs language alternation as unwanted behaviour. According to this, people who can speak more than one language should use only one language at a time, codeswitching is not allowed.

Furthermore, Haberland & Preisler (2015: 30–31) point to the ongoing debate in Denmark on whether language policies should consider Danish and English to be parallel languages. The concept of parallel languages has been taken over from the Swedish language policy documents, however, the Danish sociolinguist Bent Preisler (2009) suggests using the term complementary languages instead. He considers parallel language use to be “unrealistic as well as undesirable as a consistent principle” (ibid.: 10). In order to describe the real language situation more adequately, he focuses on communicative situations in which Danish and/or English are used, and concludes that English is used when not all interlocutors speak Danish (well enough), and Danish is used when everyone is fluent in Danish. By speaking about complementary languages, Preisler highlights the fact that both English and the national language are used in higher education, depending on the communicative needs.

## **2.2. Experience from other countries**

The sub-section about country case studies aims to view language policies, practices and ideologies in national context where the issues of language in higher education have been heavily debated in recent years. In addition to discussing policies, practices and ideologies the sub-section takes a look at the discourse surrounding these issues. Even though the focus of this sub-section is on the Nordic countries, such issues are by no means limited to that geographical context and similar trends can be viewed elsewhere as well.

Since the 1990s English-medium teaching at European universities has grown fast, firstly at the level of doctoral and Master’s studies, and now also at Bachelor’s level. Although English-medium instruction at universities that are not situated in English-speaking countries is nothing new<sup>6</sup>, it started spreading fast only in the 1990s (Coleman 2006). Since then, universities in

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<sup>6</sup> Higher education institutions were teaching in English already in the 1950s in the Netherlands and Sweden but the number of those programmes was low (Coleman 2006: 7).

Western, Central and Eastern Europe have increasingly adopted English as medium of instruction (ibid.).

Wächter & Maiworm have monitored the English-taught programmes in Europe since 2001 (survey results published in 2002, 2008 and 2014). Their study shows that the number of English-taught programmes at European universities has increased tremendously in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly between 2007 and 2014. Since then, the growth has continued at a slower pace (Lam & Wächter 2014: 16). The leading European countries in the number of English-taught programmes are the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden, followed by France and Denmark (ibid.). The authors also mention that in some countries, such as Poland and Estonia, the growth has been extremely rapid recently, indicating that English-medium higher education is gaining strength in “Central East Europe and, in particular, the Baltic states” (ibid.) Coleman (2006: 5) argues that in these regions, a need to engage with internationalisation has additionally been fuelled by European integration and the EU membership.

The above-mentioned survey does not only take into account the number of English-taught programmes but also the share of universities in the country that offer programmes in English and the share of total student enrolment in them. In these statistics, the Nordic and the Baltic countries stand out – among the 12 leading countries to offer English-taught teaching are all Nordic and Baltic countries (Lam & Wächter 2014: 17). Germany and France do not make it to top here; universities from Germany, France and Spain more often than universities from other European countries consider it unnecessary to offer a wide range of courses in English as they can attract international students to study in their national language (ibid. 17–19).

In general, English-taught programmes are mostly offered at Master’s level in Europe – approximately 80% (Lam & Wächter 2014: 19). Interestingly, Lam & Wächter (ibid.) highlight that there are more English-medium programmes that lead to Bachelor’s degree available in the Baltic countries than in other European countries (34% of the English-taught programmes in the Baltic countries are offered to Bachelor students). All in all, the highest proportion of English-taught programmes is available in social sciences, business and law (35%), sciences (23%), engineering, manufacturing and construction (18%) (ibid. 20).

In Europe, more than half of the students enrolled in English-taught programmes are international students (54%, Lam & Wächter 2014: 20). The share of local students enrolled in English-medium programmes has grown slightly over the years (ibid.). Most of the English-taught programmes have both international and local students; there are few programmes where only local or international students are enrolled. Interestingly, universities in the Baltic countries tend to enrol more local students than the European average, whereas in the Nordic countries it is the other way around (ibid.)

The growing presence of English in higher education and science has become a source of concern for many; the concerns are especially voiced in the Nordic countries that are on the forefront of the internationalisation of higher education. In Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland English is used extensively both at universities and outside them. Whereas English has been used as the language for scholarly publications since the end of the Second World War in the Nordic countries, its increasing use as the language of teaching has brought on heated debates on language issues in higher education (Kuteeva 2011: 5).

According to Mortensen & Fabricius (2014: 194) universities in the Nordic countries “are at present in a transition from largely nationally-orientated institutions to consciously international ones”. In these countries English is the main language of research publications as well as the medium of instruction. The great majority of research articles are published in English; most of the doctoral theses are written in English, there are plenty of English-medium programmes both at graduate and undergraduate level, the proportion of international students is approximately 5–15% (Hultgren et al. 2014: 1). As elsewhere, there are differences in Englishisation between areas of study in the Nordic countries, with the technical, natural and medical sciences being more Englishised than the human and social sciences (ibid.).

The processes underway at Nordic universities are interesting to look at as these countries have relatively similar societies (for example high taxes and no tuition for students within the EU) but quite different language policy histories. Linguistically, the Nordic countries are rather homogeneous. English is widespread in the Nordic countries, McArthur (1998: 41) has even suggested Denmark, Norway and Sweden should be considered as countries where English is “a virtual second language /.../ which everyone learns and many use for personal and professional purposes at home and abroad.” Although English is widespread in all Nordic countries, studies have found considerable differences in terms of openness to English, with Iceland being the most purist and Denmark the most open (Hultgren et al. 2014).

The extensive use of English as a medium of instruction at higher education has triggered a great deal of research on the related issues in the Nordic countries. The focus in sociolinguistic research has shifted from worrying about the status of national/local languages and fighting the spread of English to accepting that the era of national-language based higher education is more or less over and national languages have to make room to English. The question under discussion is how to use the languages in parallel / in a complementary way. The Nordic discussion has focused on the questions of domain loss, parallel language use and the necessity of English as the language of international research (Airey 2011: 37). Empirical research has mostly taken a macro-approach by conducting large surveys on the use of English in higher education in relation to the use of national language and attitudes towards the changing

university setting. However, others have adopted a micro-approach and documented the specific language environments in courses nominally taught in English (e.g. Ljosland 2008, Söderlundh 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014).

As can be seen, the situation in the Baltic countries bears closest resemblance to the situation in the Nordic countries, thus the following sub-section explores how language issues in higher education unfold in the Nordic countries. More specifically, the following discussion focuses on the general sociolinguistic situation in the Nordic countries, languages used in higher education, steps taken by state and higher education institutions in managing language use in academia, and the ideological and attitudinal background. Later these processes will be compared to the situation in Estonia and Latvia.

### **2.2.1. Sweden**

The Swedish kingdom that was formed in the late Middle Ages, and as in many places elsewhere, the main language of the state administration, education and church was Latin until the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Halonen et al. 2015: 6). Swedish became the predominant language in Sweden during the time of the Reformation, and it has maintained such a position until today. Latin continued to be used in academic life until the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (ibid.), then Swedish took over. Consequently, Josephson (2014: 106) points out that Swedish has a long history of being a standardised national language as it filled the function already before the era of nationalism.

Today, Swedish has approximately 8.8 million mother-tongue speakers in Sweden (Lewis et al. 2016), and it is spoken natively by approximately 85% of the population (Josephson 2014). Josephson (ibid. 105–106) argues that despite being construed as a monolingual country, Sweden has two prominent languages that are visible in public life and education, and have a high status: Swedish and English. English started to spread rapidly in Sweden after the Second World War; nowadays proficiency in English is very high among the Swedish population as every Swede born after 1945 has learnt English at school at least for four years (ibid. 105–108). According to the data of the Special Eurobarometer Survey (European Commission 2012), 86% of Swedes speak English well enough to have a conversation.

Since the end of the Second World War immigration to Sweden has grown rapidly. Today, approximately 15–20% of the population speaks other languages than Swedish as their mother tongue, for example, Finnish, Arabic, Spanish, Persian, and Kurdish (Josephson 2014: 107). Sweden has ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1999), acknowledging five languages: Finnish, Sami, Meänkieli, Romani Chib, and Yiddish. Today,

Sweden is the only Nordic country where knowledge of the national language is not a prerequisite for citizenship for immigrants (Josephson: 2014: 107). In addition, Josephson (ibid. 117) highlights that the status of English is by no means comparable to that of minority and immigrant languages as it is so widely known and spoken.

According to Salö (2014: 87), there are three main institutions that deal with language issues in Sweden: the Swedish Academy (established in 1786), the Swedish Language Council (established in 1944), and the Swedish Centre for Technical Terminology. Originally, they all deal with cultivating the Swedish language, i.e. corpus planning. Language issues relating to immigration and minorities were debated in the context of education or integration policies (Josephson 2014: 110–112). Debates on the necessity of state-authored language policy (status planning) are quite recent in Sweden; according to Josephson (2014: 111) that is because of the long-time view that Sweden is a monolingual country.

The government asked the Language Council to come up with an action plan to promote Swedish in 1997. In the next year, the *Draft Action Plan* was introduced: it stated that Swedish should be established the principal language by law. Interestingly, by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, five minority languages had been given an official status in Sweden, and Swedish was an official language in Finland but it had no official status in Sweden. In 2002, the draft action programme for the Swedish language *Mål i mun* was adopted that established that Swedish should be made the principal language by law. Later it was exported to Denmark (*Sprog på spil*, 2003) and Norway (*Norsk i Hundre*, 2005). The follow-up bill *Bästa språket* (2005) had no such proposal. Finally, the government report *Värna språkfén* was adopted in 2008 and developed into the Swedish Language Act in 2009 (Salö 2014: 97–100). The Language Act stipulates that Swedish is the principal language of Sweden (Josephson 2014: 105).

As state intervention in status planning is so recent, Sweden had also not yet witnessed a national language policy for higher education (Linn 2014: 41). Nevertheless, language issues in higher education have attracted a particulated attention in recent years, taking into account that at least 1/5 of the courses and study programmes at Swedish universities are now officially taught in English (Salö 2010, cited in Söderlundh 2014: 111). Whereas Bachelor's studies are conducted predominantly in Swedish, more than half of the Master's programmes are taught in English, and approximately half of the Master's students at Swedish universities are from abroad (Salö ibid.). As elsewhere, most of the English-medium programmes are rather new, having come into being in conjunction with the European standardisation of university education following the Bologna Declaration (Söderlundh 2013: 87). In addition, the majority of PhD theses are written in English (Salö ibid.). Although the Swedish Language Council now

recommends that all doctoral theses written in English should have a summary in Swedish, this is not always the case (Kuteeva 2011: 10).

The state-level debates on language issues in higher education have mainly centred on the notions of ‘domain loss’ and ‘parallel language use’. One of the outlined objectives of the Swedish Language Council is to prevent such a domain loss in key sectors of language use, such as higher education (Josephson 2014: 105). Whereas their *Draft Action Plan* pays attention to the need to protect Swedish in higher education, the *Mål i mun* stresses the importance to use both Swedish and English in parallel. As English cannot and should not be avoided in higher education, the Swedish Language Council proposes parallel language use as the solution.

As already discussed in the Section 2.1.5 above, sociolinguists in Sweden and elsewhere are now sharply critical of the use of the concept *domain loss*, arguing that it is an ideological construct rather than a possible scenario at the level of language use. For example, Salö (2014) uses Bourdieu’s terms and approaches to discuss the interconnectedness of the discourse on the domain loss of the Swedish language with other socio-political discourses in order to indicate that struggles over language are always part of wider discussions on socio-political issues. He shows that from the 1960s to the 1980s language discourse in Swedish society focused on reprovving the increasing lexical influence of English. From the 1970s onwards migration into Sweden grew in numbers, fostering discourses on national identity and xenophobia as well as studies on bilingualism and debates on mother tongue education, and Swedish as a second language. Since the end of the 1980s, discussions on the increase of English in academia and fears that Swedish would become a kitchen language have frequented, motivating debates on domain loss as a threat English poses to Swedish. Salö shows eloquently how such discourses begin and develop with no other rationale than ideology.

As a consequence of the schism between political ideologies and scholarly understandings on domain loss, part of the sociolinguistic discussion on language issues in Swedish academia has focused on actual language use in real linguistic environments to find out whether internationalisation leads to excessive use of only English or it entails multilingualism. As mentioned in the Section 1.4, Söderlundh (2010, 2012, 2013, 2014) has conducted ethnographic studies on the issue. She concludes that English-medium courses at Swedish universities also make use of other language resources available to students and academic staff, and as a result, the use of English in higher education and science does not have such a detrimental effect on Swedish as expected by some. Despite the fact that many programmes are formally taught in English and syllabuses and policy documents present English as the only one, Söderlundh (2012) shows that Swedish as the national language holds a special position as the first language of the majority of students and lecturers.

Furthermore, not only nominally English-medium classes are multilingual but also classes that are held officially in Swedish. For example, Pecorari etc. (2011) shows that the parallel-language environment becomes obvious in two distinct ways at the Swedish university. Firstly, there are courses taught in English but secondly, also classes taught in Swedish incorporate elements of English, particularly when it comes to using English textbooks. Their large-scale survey results show that English-language textbooks are used extensively at Swedish universities, and they are additionally perceived to be useful for incidental language learning.

Good English skills and the spread of English in higher education system are supported by positive attitudes towards English that Swedes generally hold. According to Kristiansen (2010: 81–84), English is associated with modernity and dynamism in Sweden. Oakes (2001: 70) argues that the rapid spread of English in the post-war Sweden has to do with a new type of nationalism that Swedes adopted. Sweden was considered a modern and international country of social welfare; and a good knowledge of English was construed to support this ideological view. In addition, Josephson (2014: 109) holds that English could be considered a second language today as its knowledge is a prerequisite to take part in Swedish life.

### **2.2.2. Finland**

For centuries, Finland was part of the Swedish Realm (12<sup>th</sup> century – 1809); then of the Russian Empire (1809–1917), and as of 1917, Finland has been an independent republic. Due to the long historic connections to Sweden, Swedish has always played an important role in Finland. Since the proclamation of independence, the Republic of Finland has had two national languages, Finnish and Swedish (Constitution of 1919, and Language Act of 1922). Geographically, the country is mostly Finnish speaking. According to Ethnologue (Lewis et al. 2016), Finnish is spoken by 5.1 million people in Finland. The majority of the Swedish speaking population lives densely in restricted geographical areas in south-western Finland. Swedish-speakers constitute only 5.5% of the total population; their proportion has never been higher than 15% (Lindström 2012: 36). Despite the small proportion of Swedish-speakers, the Swedish language maintained the high status for a long time in Finland. Finnish started gaining ground in the 19<sup>th</sup> century first among the clerics in the parishes, judicial system, and then in the university. Finnish was finally attributed the status of the language of administration during the rule of the Russian empire, and it became the main language of instruction at universities after the proclamation of independence (Saarinen 2014).

Today, Finland's language policies are legislatively prescribed in the Constitution of 1999 and the Language Act of 2003. Legally, Finnish and Swedish are equal in status. In addition,

the Roma people and sign language speakers have particular rights; the three Sami languages spoken in Finland are given a status as indigenous languages by the Sami Language Act (2003); and since the ratification of the European Charter for Regional and Minority languages, the Karelian language has been given a minority language status. Today, many other languages are spoken in Finland too, since the 1990s the number of immigrants has risen rapidly.

According to Lindström (2012: 36), the language climate is stable in Finland, however, some issues appear as due to “the diminished proportional and societal status of Swedish, services in that language cannot always be ensured in the public sector, /.../ [and] the non-public sector fairly often neglects, or simply misses the provision of services in Swedish.” Although Swedish is legally equal to Finnish in Finland, in practice, Swedish is spoken less and less. Nevertheless, Saarinen (2014: 133) stresses that constitution is seen as something static and unchangeable in Finland; the roots of the current language regulations are inherited from the legislation of the Swedish era, and nothing is to be changed. Although the official role of Swedish and its mandatory teaching has been heavily debated in recent years, the legal position of Swedish has preserved, not least because of its regional importance in tying Finland to other Nordic countries (Lindström 2012: 37). However, Lindström (*ibid.*) adds that in many fields, English has begun to play a more important role than Swedish as the language of information in Finland, mostly due to the demands of internationalisation, and the increasing number of immigrants. According to the data of the Special Eurobarometer Surey (European Commission 2012), 70% of Finnish inhabitants speak English well enough to hold a conversation.

Today, higher education officially functions in the two national languages, Finnish and Swedish, however, English is also used extensively both in research and teaching. Officially, universities in Finland are either unilingual in Finnish or Swedish, or bilingual in both. Currently there are 14 universities in Finland, nine of which officially work in Finnish, two in Swedish, and three are bilingual; the division is similar in the polytechnic sector (Saarinen 2014: 135). The use of English has increased considerably since the 1990s in Finland’s tertiary education, especially for Master’s programmes. Today, approximately two out of three Master’s programmes teach in English, particularly in the field of business, biosciences and technology (*ibid.* 133). The use of English has grown fast after the 2004 amendments to the University Act that granted universities the right to use other languages than Finnish and Swedish for examination as well<sup>7</sup>. First a government decree was needed but since 2009 universities can decide upon the language of instruction as well as examination (*ibid.* 135).

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<sup>7</sup> Before the 2004 amendments, the language of instruction and examination was either Finnish or Swedish (or both) but universities had the right to use other languages for teaching. Thus, the first foreign-language programmes in the 1990s formally offered degrees in Finnish or Swedish, while the actual instruction took place in English (Saarinen 2014: 135).



In practice, English-medium programmes in Finland attract a great deal of international students. According to Saarinen (2012: 164), Finland has set the goal for a mix of Finnish and international students in English-medium programmes, however, in reality, the foreign language programmes in Finland attract more foreign than Finnish students. As elsewhere in the Nordic countries, tuition is free for students regardless of their nationality and citizenship (for now). Tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students will be introduced from 2017 onwards (Centre for International Mobility, 2016).

State-authored internationalisation strategies of higher education have been developed in Finland already since the 1980s (Saarinen & Nikula 2013). Altogether, three strategy statements for the internationalisation of higher education have been made (1987, 2001 and 2009)<sup>8</sup>. Saarinen & Nikula (ibid.) highlight that the 1987 internationalisation strategy couples internationalisation with the country's economic and educational success; the 2001 strategy assures that Finnish universities are protected by national legislation even in the era of internationalisation and foreign-language programmes; and the 2009 strategy focuses on Finnish higher education as an export service to be offered to the world.

Furthermore, Saarinen & Nikula (2013: 133–134) hold that the latter two strategies avoid explicit mentions of English, instead, an anonymous *foreign language* is used in the strategies when referring to international programmes at Finnish universities that now almost exclusively take place in English and not in any other foreign language. Saarinen (2014: 139) notes that “linking *English* and *foreign* in this way blurs the relationship of language to internationalisation”. Additionally, Saarinen (2012) counts different arguments that could lie at the heart of not naming languages in Finnish higher education: a) the choice of language is considered self-evident; b) language is considered to be only an instrument; and c) universities may feel that they have always been international, and thus they do not feel the need to problematise language use now. Interestingly, Saarinen (ibid.) also maintains that replacing *English* with *foreign languages* could show the willingness of policy-makers to promote languages other than English (at least theoretically), and their unwillingness to specifically acknowledge the strong position of English.

In addition to top-down language and internationalisation policies, the majority of Finnish universities has developed their own inner language policy (Ylönen 2015). The policy documents differ in content and length, however, according to Ylönen (ibid.) they all confirm

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<sup>8</sup> The first one was written as an unpublished memo, while the second and the third were published by the ministry of education (Saarinen 2014: 136–139).

the importance of Finnish and Swedish bilingualism as well as the spread of English. References to other languages are sparse.

In general, Swedish and English seem to get more attention in the ideological debates on language and internationalisation than Finnish. For example, Lindström & Sylvén (2014) show that the University of Helsinki, the oldest and largest university in Finland<sup>9</sup>, even though being officially bilingual in Finnish and Swedish, actually functions also in English, making it a *de facto* trilingual university (instruction, examinations, information publications, brochures, guides, signage, and webpages are available in three languages). Interestingly, however, its language policy document, the *University of Helsinki Language Policy* (2007), focuses explicitly on protecting Swedish and promoting English, while Finnish remains its “default or unmarked language”. Additionally, Soler-Carbonell et al. (2017) note that the use of Finnish in higher education is implicitly considered a norm also in state-level internationalisation documents as these do not pay close attention to Finnish. Both Lindström & Sylvén (2014) and Soler-Carbonell et al. (2017) also highlight that the focal point of state-level language discussions is on providing support to Swedish, which is construed as in need of protection.

Moreover, Lindström & Sylvén (2014: 150–151) show that the language policy of the University of Helsinki pays attention to protecting Swedish but university’s official language ideology differs considerably from the grassroots practices. The Finnish and Swedish bilingualism declared in policy documents has been replaced by Finnish and English at the micro-level. At the grassroots level, English has acquired the position of the second language, and Swedish has fallen to the position of the third language (Lindström & Sylvén, *ibid.*; Ylönen 2015: 76–79). Additionally, the study conducted by Lindström (2012) shows that international students at the University of Helsinki are able to manage in English, whereas local Swedish students express doubt whether they could manage in Swedish. The competence of students and academic staff in English is far better than their knowledge of Swedish, and Ylönen (2015: 65) shows that the spread of English in Finnish academia is considered to be a natural development.

Finnish studies show the schism between ideologies and practices when it comes to languages in higher education. Lindström & Sylvén (2014: 150) argue that the schism rises out of the general and non-committal nature of the university’s language policy: the language policy guidelines published by the University of Helsinki are a soft instrument, they rather aim to increase language awareness at the university than formulate concrete requirements, propose practices or instruments for following up its implementation. The researchers show that the language policy document of the University of Helsinki is explicitly an ideological document

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<sup>9</sup> Originally situated in Turku and named the Royal Academy of Turku, established in 1640.

that manifests the university's general language ideology and compiles "good practices identified as valuable to implement", rather than putting forward practical propositions.

As argued above, language policy effectiveness can be viewed from its congruency with the observable sociolinguistic reality (Schiffman 1996: 18, 54). Lindström (2012) claims that the language policy of the University of Helsinki is motivated by its local, national, regional and international language environment, including the legal conditions, however, the policy is far less congruent with observable language practices. The bilingual policy of the University of Helsinki is undermined by the lack of a command of Swedish, and the isolation of Swedish and its speakers. Thus, tensions between the overt *de jure* policy and the practical language use (*de facto* policy) can be observed especially in relation to Swedish. Policy towards the use of English, however, is much more congruent with practical language use, and will probably become even more stable in the future (ibid.)

Finally, the status of English in Finnish higher education is supported by positive attitudes held towards English. According to a large-scale national attitude survey conducted in 2009 (Leppänen et al. 2009), Finns' attitudes to English are very positive, the majority of respondents show favourable attitudes even towards the idea of Finnish children attending English-medium schools. Lindström (2012) shows too that both Finnish and Swedish as well as international students at the University of Helsinki are in favour of using English, showing both capacity and desire to use English in their studies. Thus, English is popular both with students and general public, supporting the claim put forth by Haberland & Preisler (2015) about Denmark: English would not be used so extensively in higher education, was it not so popular in society.

### **2.2.3. Denmark**

Today, Danish is spoken by 5.4 million people as a mother tongue in Denmark (Lewis et al. 2016). It is the *de facto* national language as there is no legal documents to give it an official status, although issue is being debated. In general, Danish language policy makes recommendations and puts forth suggestions about language use but these are not normative. Guidelines about language use are mainly given by the Danish Language Council (Dansk Sprognævn) that has been the main language authority since its founding in 1955. Denmark has ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages only for German.

The Danish kingdom was established in the Middle Ages, and its first university was the *Studium generale* in Lund (1425); the University of Copenhagen, the first university on the present-day territory of Denmark, was established in 1479. Latin as the language of instruction was gradually replaced by Danish by the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the university had been

turned into a national institution catering for the Danish nation state. Some other higher education institutions used Danish already before that, for example, the Royal Academy of Sciences used Danish in their proceedings and the Sorø Academy trained diplomats in Danish already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Haberland & Preisler 2015: 24–25).

Danish remained the default language of university teaching until the beginning of the 1990s and the 2000s, then a sudden shift to English occurred during a short period of five to ten years (Haberland & Preisler 2015: 25). According to the data by Maiworm & Wächter (2014: 39), 38% of degree programmes were taught in English at Danish universities in 2014. The current data by the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science (2016) shows that most of the programmes offered in English lead to Master's degree (433), whereas the number of Bachelor's programmes available in English is not quite that big (74). The importance of English-taught programmes continues to rise as of 2007 only ¼ of degree programmes were in English, and in 2012 there were only 143 Master's programmes and 60 Bachelor's programmes taught in English at Danish universities (Lueg & Lueg 2015: 12). Maiworm & Wächter (2014: 43) note as well that Denmark has experienced the major increase in the number of degree programmes offered in English only during the past years.

Haberland & Preisler (*ibid.* 26–27) note that the sudden transition to English-taught programmes was motivated by the changes in university funding systems by which universities became responsible for their own finances, and were expected to attract external funding on their own. Hultgren (2014<sup>a</sup>: 392) adds that since 2010 Danish universities have been allocated state funding in relation to 1) the number of publications (especially in prestigious journals and publishing houses); 2) the number of completed student years; 3) the value of external grants captured; and 4) the number of PhD degrees awarded. All of these indicators lead overtly or covertly to the spread and prestige of English.

Language issues in higher education are part of the public and political debates in Denmark. Jensen & Thøgersen (2011: 19–21) point out that the Danish pro-internationalisation debate traditionally points to the following advantages: university graduates need to be prepared to participate in an international labour market; internationalisation rises the quality of university education, and brings economic benefits to universities. Jensen & Thøgersen (*ibid.*) also highlight that the opponents of the ongoing large-scale internationalisation often refer to the obligation of publicly funded Danish universities to the society, the detrimental effect of the extensive use of English on the Danish language (often speaking about the possible domain loss), and the low quality of education when it takes place in a language that is neither the mother tongue of academic staff nor students. As elsewhere in the Nordic countries, to

overcome the fears of domain loss, parallel language use has been set to be an aim at Danish universities by the Danish Language Council and ministries (Jensen & Thøgersen 2011: 18).

In Denmark, there is no explicit state-authored policy on language issues in higher education, except for some general aims formulated by ministries. Haberland & Preisler (2015: 28–30) maintain that the Danish government mostly takes interest in the English-medium teaching, i.e. to what extent it exists and whether it is qualitative. The political debate on language in higher education has also focused on the question whether and to what extent the matters should be governed by the state or left to the universities (Jensen & Thøgersen 2011: 21).

In 2002 the Association of Danish Universities established a committee with the aim of inspiring universities to develop their language policies (Haberland & Preisler 2015: 27–28). As a result, the Danish Ministry of Science and Technology published a report in 2009 in which it suggested to form language competence centres at universities to cater for the needs of academic staff and students (e.g. to run language courses, translate research articles). Haberland & Preisler (ibid.) report that such centres have been established at Roskilde University and the University of Copenhagen. At some faculties of the University of Copenhagen, academic staff is even obliged to obtain a certificate of proficiency in English (ibid. 32).

All of Denmark's eight universities have either drafted their language policy as a self-standing document or included a section about language in other statements (Hultgren 2014<sup>a</sup>). For example, the language policy of the University of Copenhagen is stated in their mission statement called *The University of Copenhagen's Action Plan – Destination 2012* (2007). Although it is not valid anymore, it is the only document at the University of Copenhagen to have explicitly stated its language policy (Jürna 2014: 244). Hultgren (ibid.) reveals in her analysis of overt and covert ideologies in institution-authored documents that even though the language policies of Danish universities take the principle of parallel use as their starting point, their principal focus is on the spread of English.

Although English is very well-spread at Danish universities, Haberland & Preisler (2015) argue that fears of exclusive use of English and the consequent domain loss for Danish are exaggerated. Instead, Haberland & Preisler (ibid.) show that English is spreading in Danish academia but it is not happening so much at the expense of Danish but at the cost of other international languages, such as French and German that were used earlier in academic publications. In line with findings in Sweden (Söderlundh 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014) there is no evidence to suggest that language practices at Danish universities reflect the language choice expected and advertised by universities (English); recent studies show that Danish continues to play a prominent role in Danish higher education, including in programmes that are nominally taught only in English (Hazel & Mortensen 2013; Mortensen 2014).

In addition, Jürna (2014) reports, the working environment at different departments and centres at Danish universities varies from being almost only in English to being almost only in Danish. The international academic staff in Danish academia mostly consider English as a general working language while they find Danish helpful in administrative communication and in everyday life. The need for Danish becomes more evident when linked with a longer job perspective in Denmark and a higher position in the academic hierarchy.

Haberland & Preisler (2015) claim that the surrounding Danish society has to be taken into account in order to understand the extensive use of English in higher education in Denmark – English is well-spread and prestigious in Denmark. According to the Special Eurobarometer Survey (European Commission 2012), 86% of Danes are able to speak in English. Haberland & Preisler (ibid.) assert that the foundations of language policy in academia are laid already at school and supported by the strong motivation of youngsters to acquire English very well. They hold that the spread of English at Danish universities cannot be solely regarded as an issue of higher education but the language practices of the society have to be taken into account as well. Furthermore, Haberland & Preisler (ibid.) argue that “in Denmark, it has been rather easy to accept the idea that English is ‘the’ lingua franca of the world, simply because it puts Danes into the comfortable position that access to this lingua franca is widespread /.../” (ibid. 37).

#### **2.2.4. Norway**

Norway’s independence is taken from 1814 when the country proclaimed itself independent from Denmark. Since 1885, the two written varieties of Norwegian, Bokmål and Nynorsk, are officially recognised and afforded equal status. The Norwegian language is spoken by approximately 4.6 million people in Norway. Linn (2014) claims that Norway’s first-hand experience in juggling the two language varieties makes the current language debates about issues in higher education particularly interesting. He argues that due to its two written varieties, Norway has been seeking to achieve and maintain the balance between them at least for a century and a half. That experience is useful at the 21<sup>st</sup> century universities where two languages, the national language and the international language, are used extensively.

Language practices at university have been an important topic for public and political debate since the turn of the present century when policy focus turned from corpus planning to status planning (Linn 2014: 31). Ljosland (2011) divides the Norwegian political debate on the language matters in higher education into two parts: before and after 2005. She notes that before 2005 language issues were rarely debated in the context of internationalisation, which was heavily encouraged. In 2002, a paragraph in the Universities and Colleges Act stating that the

medium of instruction is usually Norwegian at universities was repealed. After 2005 language policy documents focusing on language issues in higher education, both at national and institutional level have been developed and public debate on the issue has sparked off. The general tendency has not changed: politicians and language policy makers still strongly encourage internationalisation and the use of English in higher education but they also urge lower-level decision-makers to work out the details in order to create an academic environment in which both Norwegian and English are used.

First steps to draw attention to the situation of Norwegian in higher education were taken by the Norwegian Language Council (Språkrådet) in 2005. Ljosland (2014<sup>a</sup>) describes their paper *Norsk I Hundre!* (Norwegian Language Council 2005) as a document that laid basis for the concentration of the Norway's language policy on higher education (one of its chapters is dedicated to language in higher education and research). According to Linn (2014: 41), the chapter focuses on striking a balance between Norwegian and English, i.e. it suggests parallel language use in order to limit the excessive use of English. To this end, the document proposes protecting the development and use of Norwegian technical language by law (since 2009 this has indeed been enshrined in law); to teach Bachelor's students in Norwegian; to strengthen the support for Norwegian-language textbooks; to make all students enrolled in a Norwegian-taught programme to write at least one substantial piece in Norwegian during their studies; to introduce the idea of writing a summary in Norwegian to PhD theses written in other languages; and finally, to introduce a language service at universities to ensure quality in written texts (ibid.).

As a result of this policy document by the Norwegian Language Council, the universities of Oslo and Bergen established internal committees to report on their language environment and to make their own suggestions. In addition, the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions came up with its own report and guidelines named *Proposal for a Language Policy for Universities and Colleges in Norway*. According to Linn (2014: 40–45), it includes a list of practical measures how parallelingualism could be realised in everyday practices. These guidelines have subsequently served as an example for by many higher education institutions. However, as reported by Linn (ibid.), after the adoption of these guidelines little has happened to implement their ideals, thus “parallel language use (practice) appears to be resisting a call for parallelingualist (ideological) intervention” (p. 45).

The 2008 Norwegian government report to the parliament on the language situation named *Mål og Menning* (by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs) is, according to Linn (2014: 37–38), a substantial, yet ideologically-driven survey of language policy in Norway. Its main attention is focused on protecting Norwegian from the threat of English that is depicted “as a sort of virus spreading through the language” (ibid.). The report does not focus

on language questions in higher education *per se* but passes the responsibility for developing policy in this area to the sector itself (ibid. 42). “Thus it appears that the government recommendation concerning language policy in higher education /.../ [is] free to develop autonomously” (ibid.). Ljosland (2011) agrees that Norwegian state policy documents explicitly leave the responsibility for specifying the language policy to lower level decision-makers, i.e. individual university departments and staff.

In general, Ljosland (2011: 993) points out that the Norwegian political and public discussion on the issues is rather problem-oriented and does not offer many practical solutions. Similarly to Söderlundh’s studies in Sweden, Ljosland (2008, 2014<sup>b</sup>) argues that the official English-only instruction does not lead to linguistic homogeneity at the level of practices, thus the political and public debaters on the issue should focus on the “possibilities for multilingual solutions, rather than the restricting binary debate on English versus Norwegian.”

### **2.2.5. Iceland**

There are seven higher education institutions in Iceland (universities and colleges), four of them are operated by the Icelandic state (Kristinsson 2014: 170–171). The University of Iceland is the oldest (established in 1911) and by far the largest university in the country. Since the very beginning of higher education in Iceland, Icelandic has been the main language used at universities. Iceland is a relatively small country, its official language is spoken by approximately 300,000 people (Lewis et al. 2016).

Iceland differs from the rest of the Nordic countries by their purist speech community. Kristinsson (2014) notes that its purist ideals appear in attitudes towards lexical, orthographic and grammatical practices. At the level of tertiary education too, the protectionist ideologies focuses on creating Icelandic terminology. Nevertheless, Kristinsson (ibid.) stresses that Icelanders are more open towards language choice. He highlights that the increasing use of English in Icelandic academia is consider natural: “an Icelandic academic may perceive of herself/himself as an ardent language purist while she/he spends most of her/his working hours using English /.../” (p. 167). Moreover, Óladóttir (2009, quoted in Kristinsson 2014) shows that while adhering to linguistic purism, Icelanders consider English proficiency essential as it promotes Iceland as a well-educated nation.

As elsewhere in the Nordic countries, the spread of English in Icelandic academia is supported by its skills in society. In Icelandic society English is well-known and permeates all levels of society, Arnbjörnsdóttir & Ingvarsdóttir (2014: 181–182) suggest that English is so well-spread in Iceland that it should not be considered a foreign language anymore.



Although people in general and at universities are quite pragmatic towards language choice, Kristinsson (2014) indicates that the country's official language policy is increasingly trying to show the presence of English as a problem that may lead to domain loss. The concern that English is increasingly used in Iceland and Icelandic might lose its status made Iceland to follow the lead of Sweden and introduce its official language policy in 2009. In 2011, the parliament passed a language law, the first of its kind in the country, which regulates the legal status of Icelandic and the Icelandic Sign Language: it stipulates that Icelandic is the national language, the official language and the language of education. Similarly to other Nordic countries, Icelandic sociolinguists note that the official language policy is likely to be ineffective in higher education as it does not take into account actual language practices (e.g. Kristinsson 2014).

Language is a predominant issue in Iceland's society, this is shown also by the number of language policy documents in Icelandic higher education institutions. Six out of seven higher education institutions in Iceland have issued explicit university language policies. According to Kristinsson (2014: 173), all these documents stress that Icelandic is the official language and the main language of instruction; other languages (English) might be used when necessary, especially at the graduate level; and Icelandic terminology has to be developed.

Although Icelandic is the main medium of instruction in higher education, Ingvarsdóttir & Arnbjörnsdóttir (2010) report that about 90% of course materials are in English and offering course materials in Icelandic would not be viable due to the small market (Arnbjörnsdóttir & Ingvarsdóttir 2014). Thus, the linguistic reality in Iceland requires a constant negotiation between the languages. The learning context in which students have to negotiate the linguistic situation where input is in two languages but output is mainly in one of them is called *simultaneous parallel code use* in Iceland (ibid. 180). In this aspect, Icelandic academia is an example of two languages used in parallel. As Arnbjörnsdóttir & Ingvarsdóttir (ibid. 182–187) note, using English in academia is often considered unproblematic in the Nordic society where English-skills are very high. However, studies show that problems appear both for students and academic staff, especially in the amount of workload necessary to be done on both sides. As borrowing and loanwords are considered a taboo in Icelandic society, academic staff pays a great deal of attention to translating or creating terminology for classroom activities.

### **Some concluding remarks**

To conclude, traditions of state intervention in planning the status of the national/official language(s) differ in the Nordic countries. In general, the fears of domain loss are particularly voiced in ideological policy documents, although local sociolinguists now argue that they are unfounded and the concept of domain loss is unuseful for analytical purposes. Top-down

policies propose parallel language use as means to prevent domain loss. Although sociolinguists agree with the idea of parallel language use, they often criticise both state-authored and institution-authored policies for not making real impact on the grassroots language practices. The top-down policies are ideologically-driven and tend not to be interested in bringing about changes in language use.

The Nordic countries in which language issues have been debated politically also before the wave of internationalisation of higher education (Finland, Norway) have put more legislative effort into regulating language issues in academia. Direct state intervention in language issues in higher education is rare, and it is common that state offers general guidelines but leaves the decision-making to universities, faculties and/or programmes. Borrowing of ideas, concepts and even ideologies is widespread.

At the grassroots level, English thrives at Nordic universities. More and more degree programmes are offered in English. English in higher education enjoys the strong support of Nordic societies that demonstrate remarkable English proficiency. Hultgren et al. (2014: 12) holds that internationalisation and Englishisation are the dominant ideologies in the Nordic societies. By contrast, non-Englishisation and parallelingualism may be considered a resistance ideology. In order for the opponents of internationalisation to be heard they have to speak out louder than its proponents, and according to Hultgren et al. (*ibid.*) it is indeed the case in the Nordic society. Although the voices that protect national languages are strong in Nordic societies, Hultgren et al. (2014: 12) argue that the attitudes of students and teachers are first and foremost positive towards English.

In general, the sociolinguistic studies seem to indicate that the truth is somewhere inbetween: on the one hand, using English in higher education (as well as elsewhere in society) is an inescapable reality; on the other hand, using English as medium of instruction in degree programmes has not actually diminished the use of and changed attitudes towards national languages in higher education. More and more, studies conclude that drawing a line between the national language and English is unnecessary, and top-down policies should rather focus their energy on coming up with multilingual solutions.

### 3. SOCIOLINGUISTIC SITUATION IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA

Language is part of a larger social and cultural context and knowledge about that context is necessary for understanding language policies. This section describes the sociolinguistic situation of Estonia and Latvia (Section 3.1) as well as gives an overview of the higher education in both countries, and presents latest statistics on the use of languages in academia their education systems (Section 3.2). Attention is paid to language practices, ideologies and attitudes, and language management.

#### 3.1. Sociolinguistic situation of Estonia and Latvia in a diachronic perspective

This section examines the language situation of Estonia and Latvia in four sociopolitical periods: (1) the pre-First World War period; (2) the interwar independence in Estonia and Latvia; (3) Soviet Estonia and Latvia; and (4) the re-independent Estonia and Latvia. The diachronic approach is adopted for two reasons: to understand the sociolinguistic history of the research setting, and to cast light on the ideologies and attitudes developed during the last centuries as they are precursors of present-day language ideologies and attitudes. Hogan-Brun et al. state that “[r]ecent language issues in the region /.../ represent a continuation of a much longer historical context of changing language regimes /.../” (2009: 4) and “[l]anguage policy in the Baltic States is indelibly linked to the history of this region” (ibid. 11). Different political actors and a great deal of minorities living in Estonia and Latvia have significantly affected the current linguistic and social environments of the countries.

##### 3.1.1. Pre-First World War period

Estonia and Latvia are neighbouring countries with somewhat similar tumultuous histories. Before the 13<sup>th</sup> century, peasants lived in loosely organised parishes in the present-day territories of Estonia and Latvia. Since then, the location has attracted a multitude of foreign political actors seeking to gain control over the region. In the past 800 years, Estonia and Latvia have been conquered by Germans, Danes, Swedes, Poles, Lithuanians and Russians<sup>10</sup>. The

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<sup>10</sup>In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, southern Estonia and large parts of Latvia were conquered by German crusaders who formed the Livonian Order to govern the territories. At the same time, northern Estonia was conquered by the Danish king who soon sold his lands to the Livonian Order. The Order ceased to exist at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the territories of Estonia and Latvia came under the Swedish and Polish rule. Estonia and northern Latvia, which were ruled by Sweden, were divided into the provinces of Estonia (northern Estonia) and Livonia (southern Estonia and northern Latvia) – the division that remained such until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Eastern and western parts of Latvia were governed by the Polish-Lithuanian Union. After the Great Northern War, the Russian Empire annexed the Swedish provinces of Estonia and Livonia (in 1710), and later other parts of Latvia (1772–1795), and ruled in the territories until 1918.

changing socio-political situation has resulted in multilayered language contacts and a great deal of minorities living in the countries today (Hogan-Brun 2005).

From the 13<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, German was the language of prestige in the present-day territories of Estonia and Latvia (Raag 2008: 62–63; Valsts valodas komisija 2007: 11). Even when the territories came under the Russian rule in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Baltic German landed aristocracy maintained its status and extensive privileges, as the Russian Tsarist economy relied on German merchants. Thus Germans continued to oversee the political, cultural and intellectual lives of the countries until the middle of the 1880s (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 14–16; Plakans 2008: 41–42; Talve 2004: 200–202, 523–526).

Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, German was almost uniquely the language of Baltic Germans. It was never really imposed on the local people. The latter, mostly peasants, spoke different dialects of Estonian and Latvian (Raag 2008: 27–28; Valsts valodas komisija 2007: 11). Even though these were considered to characterise lower social strata, Baltic Germans perceived themselves as the bearers and developers of culture (*Kulturträger*) for uneducated peasants, and thus many of them took genuine interest in the local languages (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 18–21; Kasik 2011). They wrote and published first books in Estonian and Latvian, and developed the written languages based on the patterns of German (Heinrich Stahl, 1637, *Anführung zu der Esthnischen Sprach*, Johann Georg Rehehusen, 1644, *Manuductio ad Linguam Lettonicam*).

After the abolishment of serfdom<sup>11</sup>, a voluntary language shift to German occurred among the local people (Ehala & Niglas 2006: 210; Metuzāle-Kangare & Ozolins 2005: 320). Many free and educated Estonians and Latvians adopted German even in their family circles for the benefits of upward social mobility and as a sign of their education (ibid.). This serves as an example of the prestige of German. Druviete (2008: 229) highlights that the emerging educated intelligentsia developed what could be called elite bilingualism, as uneducated people remained monolingual in their dialect.

First attempts to establish Estonian and Latvian as languages of culture were made during the national awakenings in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Blinkena 2007: 11; Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 23–26; Raag 2008: 52–57). Locals started to develop their vernaculars in literature, periodicals, popular science and folklore research (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 23–26; Raag 2008: 52–57). The national ideology enjoyed wide currency in the intellectual circles, however, it has been argued that even the most active nationalists doubted the long-term success of the national movement back then (Undusk 2004). Nevertheless, the national awakenings changed language situations

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<sup>11</sup> Serfdom was abolished in the Governorate of Estonia (present-day northern Estonia) in 1816, in the Governorate of Courland (present-day western Latvia) in 1817, in the Governorate of Livonia (present-day southern Estonia and northern Latvia) in 1819, in the Latgale region (present-day south-eastern Latvia) in 1861.

radically, and by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Estonians and Latvians had achieved high rates of literacy in their mother tongues (Ozolins 1999: 8; Raag 2008: 54–55).

With the emerging of local elites Estonians and Latvians took the conscious language development and research over from Baltic Germans (Kasik 2011; Plakans 2008: 18). Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Estonian and Latvian had been developed in line with German (Kasik 2011: 26–39; Plakans 2008: 17–18). After the realisation that Estonian is related to Finnish, first Estonian linguists started to model the Estonian language on it (Kasik 2011). In Latvia, the national awakening was driven by the 19<sup>th</sup> century European linguistics that took interest in the Baltic languages (Latvian, Lithuanian & Old-Prussian) in order to fill the missing links in the Indo-European language theory (Metuzāle-Kangare & Ozolins 2005: 319–320). This research raised the prestige of Latvian and the local people engaged eagerly in collecting and systematising linguistic material (*ibid.*).

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Tsarist administration introduced russification policies to its Baltic provinces (Pavlenko 2008: 278) in order to decrease the cultural power of Baltic Germans and quell the thirst of Estonians and Latvians for national autonomy (Plakans 2008: 230; Raag 2008: 83–84). It has been argued that russification was mainly directed at Baltic Germans and did not have a profound effect on the local people (Pavlenko 2008: 279). However, Metuzāle-Kangare & Ozolins (2005: 320) assert that the targeting of the russification measures at Baltic Germans was exactly what helped Estonians and Latvians in their national strivings. For example, replacing German with Russian in administration and education instigated a linguistic struggle between the suppressed German and the flourishing Russian, which helped the local people to continue the creation of their identities and nations.

Estonian and Latvian national ideas gained prestige in the following decades and turned into a political consciousness during the 1905 revolution and the World War I. The growing national consciousness was supported by the contemporary political developments in Europe – the collapse of the Russian empire and Germany's defeat in the World War I. By the second decade of the 1900s, Estonians and Latvians were culturally, economically and politically organised enough to establish independent states in 1918<sup>12</sup> and defend their newly founded republics against the Soviet army and the Baltic German Landeswehr in the wars of independence.

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<sup>12</sup> The Republic of Estonia was proclaimed on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1918, and the Republic of Latvia on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1918.

### 3.1.2. Inter-war independence in Estonia and Latvia

As a result of the previous events, Estonian and Latvian became the languages of the independent countries for the first time at the beginning of the 1920s<sup>13</sup>. Hogan-Brun et al. (2009: 29) argue that “/.../ in many ways, it is possible to see these countries as essentially lingua-centric in their self-identity and indeed in political and social priorities. At the same time, the newly emerging nations were acutely aware of being multi-national states, containing significant national and linguistic minorities.” In Estonia, minorities amounted to roughly 10% of the population in the 1920s and 1930s (Verschik 2005: 285), whereas Latvians made up 77% of the total population in 1934 in Latvia (Metuzāle-Kangare & Ozolins 2005: 323).

The governments implemented policies that protected minority languages and cultures, for example, minority schools were supported by the states. Although Baltic Germans maintained their high social status also during the 1920s and 1930s (Druviete 1997: 15), the former languages of prestige, German and Russian, became equal in status to other minority languages, such as Hebrew, Swedish, Polish and Romany (Plakans 2008: 175–176; Verschik 2005: 285). Most minority members were bilingual in the official language and their native tongue (Eesti Statistika n.a. 8).

During the ephemeral period of independence, Estonian and Latvian became to be used in all walks of life, including government, administration, military, education and science (Raag 2008: 163–177). In a relatively short period of time, Estonia and Latvia became full members of European life, education in the national languages thrived and the rate of participation in higher education was high both in Estonia and Latvia (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 28). The foundations of Estonian and Latvian scientific languages had been laid already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Raag 2008: 43–45), but the establishing of the national universities that functioned entirely in the state language contributed enormously to the development of the scientific language domain.

In 1919, the University of Tartu started work in Estonia, i.e. Estonian became its official language of instruction, research and administration (Lõbu 2014: 52). Previously, the University of Tartu, which was founded already in 1632, had delivered lectures in Latin (1632–1710), German (1802–1893, 1918), and Russian (1893–1917, 1918–1919) (Talve 2004: 148, 413–414). At the same time, the University of Latvia was founded in Riga. Its predecessor, the Riga Polytechnic (founded in 1862) and the Riga Polytechnic Institute (reorganised in 1896),

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<sup>13</sup> In Estonia, the status of official language was attributed to Estonian already in a preconstitutional act of 1919 (*Eesti Vabariigi valitsemise ajutine kord*, June 4, 1919) and in the constitution of 1920; the first language act was passed in 1934 (Tomusk 2015). In Latvia, official status was first attached to the Latvian language in 1918 (*Iskolata dekrēts par latviešu valodas lietošanu Latvijas iestādēs*, January 4, 1918); the first language law was passed in 1934 (Valsts valodas komisija 2007: 14–15).

had used German (until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) and Russian (in the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) was media of instruction (Plakans 2008: 223; Zigmunde 2006: 4). Establishing Estonian- and Latvian-medium higher education was preceded by delivering lower levels of education in Estonian and Latvian<sup>14</sup> and teaching the local language in lower levels of education as well as higher education – Estonian and Latvian were taught at the University of Tartu since 1802 (Baltiņš 2007: 107; Raag 2008: 39–40).

When the national universities of Estonia and Latvia, i.e. the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia, started teaching in Estonian and Latvian in 1919, they faced a shortage of academic staff, had to invite lecturers from abroad, and allow them to teach in foreign languages, mostly in Russian and German (Baltiņš 2007: 108, 110; Talve 2004: 558–559). In 1921, both the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia started to sign agreements with foreign academic staff, in which they promised to start teaching in Estonian/Latvian in the near future (Baltiņš 2007: 111; Lõbu 2014: 55–56). By 1938 Estonian had become the main medium of instruction at the University of Tartu (93% of studies took place in Estonian in 1938, although only 84.5% of the academic staff was originally Estonian) (Lõbu 2014: 53). Similarly, Latvian had become the main language of instruction at the University of Latvia by 1939 (Baltiņš 2007: 113).

The first period of independence came to an end in 1940 when Estonia and Latvia were incorporated into the Soviet Union. In a year, Nazi Germany annexed the territories of Estonia and Latvia. After Germany's defeat in the Second World War, the Soviet Union restored its rule in the Baltic states in 1944 for five decades. Moreover, the demographic composition of Estonia and Latvia was changed abruptly in the war. Baltic Germans left Estonia and Latvia in 1939, Estonian Swedes settled in Sweden in 1943, and Jews underwent holocaust during the Nazi German occupation.

### **3.1.3. Soviet Estonia and Latvia**

Immediately after the war, the Soviet Union undertook a major state-sponsored immigration project in Estonia and Latvia that Kasekamp (2011: 194) calls the most dramatic change introduced to Estonia and Latvia in the Soviet times. As a result, the ethnic composition of Estonia and Latvia became more heterogeneous. Before and during the WWII, the vast majority of inhabitants of Estonia were Estonians – 88% in 1934 (Eesti Statistika n.a. 8) and 97% in

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<sup>14</sup> The teaching of the Estonian/Latvian language started at least in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and spread widely in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Talve 2004: 100–102; 141–145). In 1906, the first gymnasium started delivering general education in Estonian (in Tartu) (Talve 2004: 552), and in 1916 in Latvian (in Riga) (Baltiņš 2007: 107).

1945 (ibid. 9). Quite similarly, the majority of Latvian inhabitants were ethnically Latvian – 75% in 1935 (Valsts statistiskā pārvalde 1936) and 80% in 1945 (Kasekamp ibid.). By the end of the Soviet occupation, the ethnic composition had changed dramatically – in 1989, 62% of Estonian inhabitants were Estonian and 35% were Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians (Statistical Office of Estonia 1995: 73). In the same year, Latvians comprised 52% of the total population of Latvia, whereas the percentage of Russians, Belorussians and Ukrainians was 45% (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia 2018<sup>c</sup>).

Throughout the Soviet occupation, the Baltic countries were considered the most western republics of the USSR. This made Estonia and Latvia suitable for new businesses and industries. Due to the oil and shale deposits in eastern Estonia, most Russian settlers were located in the industrial town of Narva and its surroundings (Ozolins 1999: 11–12). The capital Tallinn was also an attractive site for heavy industries. The Soviet economic, social, linguistic and immigration policies divided Estonia into three regions: the Russian-dominated North-East, mixed Tallinn<sup>15</sup>, and the rest of the country that was predominantly Estonian-speaking (Verschik 2005: 307). This division is still there 27 years after the restitution of independence (Statistics Estonia 2013<sup>b</sup>).

Latvia, having no natural resources, was also favoured as the destination of industrial expansion (Plakans 2008: 228). Together with raw materials and energy, workers were almost exclusively shipped in from other Soviet republics (ibid.). Since the Soviet industrial expansion focused mainly on cities, Russian-speakers formed a majority in seven biggest Latvian towns. By the end of the Soviet era, Riga was the only capital in Europe where the basic nation was actually a minority (36% in 1989) (Valsts valodas komisija 2007: 43).

According to Ozolins (1999: 10–11), the official aim of the large-scale immigration of Russian speakers<sup>16</sup> was to help the new Soviet republics to rebuild their economies according to the principles of planned economy. Another aim of relocating russified Soviet citizens to the newly occupied territories was to control the locals who still remembered their statehood (ibid.). Rannut (2008: 151) states that workers, military and official Soviet personnel moved from the other parts of the Soviet Union to Estonia and Latvia to make use of higher living standards and opportunities to work in spheres where locals were barred from.

The fast immigration was accompanied by the dissemination of Russian as newcomers were not encouraged to learn local languages. Consequently, spheres such as education and

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<sup>15</sup> 47.4% of the inhabitants of Tallinn were Estonians, 41.2% Russians, 4.8% Ukrainians and 2.6% Belorussians in 1989 (Statistical Office of Estonia 1995: 74).

<sup>16</sup> The term 'Russian speakers' includes ethnic Russians and russified members of other ethnic groups, both minorities (Ukrainians, Belarusians, Poles, Jews etc.) and locals, who speak Russian as (one of) their mother tongue(s).



administration were duplicated for Russian speakers. In order to disseminate Russian in Estonia and Latvia, two streams (Estonian/Latvian and Russian) of education were introduced and Russian was declared an obligatory second language (not merely a foreign language) in non-Russian schools (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 49–50). Each stream had its own curriculum, and Russian school children attended school for 10 years, whereas their Estonian and Latvian counterparts went to school for 11 years to acquire Russian properly (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 45; Priedīte 2005: 409; Rannut 2008: 425). Minority languages received no consideration and their speakers were forced to choose between Russian and the national language when picking a school for their children (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 45; Ozolins 1999: 10). Russian became “the *de facto* official language of the country and a necessary prerequisite of a true Soviet citizen” (Pavlenko 2008: 281).

The influx of Russian speakers caused what has been called asymmetrical bilingualism (Valsts valodas komisija 2007: 39) or unilateral bilingualism (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 50) – the monolingual Russian-speakers could successfully work and live in Estonia and Latvia without speaking the local languages, whereas the local people needed to speak Russian in order to secure employment and receive services from immigrants. In addition, the command of Russian became mandatory for locals aspiring to social advancement: the acquisition of various educational and professional qualifications depended on the knowledge of Russian (Ozolins 1999: 10). Gradually, Estonians and Latvians developed what Valdes & Figueroa (1994) call circumstantial bilingualism – the need to learn another language because your mother tongue is not enough to survive.

Furthermore, the dissemination of Russian was accompanied by restrictions on the use of Estonian and Latvian in several fields, for example, public administration, economy, military, transport, education and science (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 41; Rannut 2008: 426; Valsts valodas komisija 2007: 17–52; Verschik 2005: 286). Although the field of higher education was less affected by the reinforcement of Russian than some other fields, it was quite common that Russian-medium study groups were opened in parallel to Estonian/Latvian-medium groups, and local professors had to lecture in Russian (Raag 2008: 224; Valge 2009: 227–229; Valsts valodas komisija 2007: 22–23, 38–40). Additionally, all academic theses had to be written in Russian from 1978 onwards (Hennoste et al. 1999: 8; Raag 2008: 265), and Russian became the language of administration at universities (Valge 1994: 225–226). However, Valge (1994: 229–230) stresses the importance of writing research literature and compiling Estonian-language textbooks for higher education institutions during the Soviet times; without those writing textbooks for secondary schools would have been difficult.

All in all, the Soviet Union tried hard to russify its territories. However, to say that it was done pervasively does not mean that the republics were actually successfully russified. Although parallel linguistic environments were created in Estonia and Latvia, the attempts to russify the local people often lacked actual measures, such as effective Russian language instruction at schools. Pavlenko (2008: 281) adds that the Baltic nations preserved their nationalist consciousness throughout the Soviet period and often engaged in passive resistance to Russian, refusing to learn and use it. Despite the resistance, Latvians spoke Russian very well by the end of the Soviet occupation. Estonians also acquired Russian quite well, but due to the pattern of immigrant settlement and the linguistic distance between Estonian and Russian, Estonians never really became bilingual and no significant language shift occurred as a result of the Soviet occupation (Ehala & Niglas 2006: 210)<sup>17</sup>.

The Gorbachev period in the late 1980s saw far-reaching changes in Estonian and Latvian politics that turned towards independence. Estonia and Latvia passed language laws in 1989 that recognised the status and expanded the functions of their national languages and restricted the use of Russian. Independence was restored in the Baltic states in August 1991.

#### **3.1.4. Re-independent Estonia and Latvia**

The most extensive change that the Soviet occupation brought along was the change in the demographics of Estonia and Latvia (Kasekamp 2011: 231). The Soviet Union bequeathed Estonia approximately 500,000 and Latvia 700,000 largely monolingual immigrants who had arrived after the WWII (roughly one-third of each country's population) (Statistical Office of Estonia 1995: 56; Latvijas PSR Valsts statistikas komiteja 1990: 7). Since the restoration of independence, the states have devoted hard effort to re-establish the status and sociolinguistic functionality of Estonian and Latvian in the new delicate demographic situation. The vast number of stateless immigrants<sup>18</sup> and the disproportionate number of Estonian-/Latvian- and Russian-speakers<sup>19</sup> have made the task challenging. In 1994 Skutnabb-Kangas described the sociolinguistic space in re-independent Estonia and Latvia in the following manner:

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<sup>17</sup> According to the 1989 Soviet census, 67% of Latvians and 34% of Estonians had free command of Russian (Statistical Office of Estonia 1995: 132; Latvijas PSR Valsts statistikas komiteja 1990: 20).

<sup>18</sup> The restored republics of Estonia and Latvia granted citizenship only to those who had been citizens in 1940, and their descendants. For others, the process for naturalisation was worked out that required a basic knowledge of the official language (Kasekamp 2011: 231).

<sup>19</sup> In 1989, Estonian was the mother tongue of 62% of the total population of Estonia (Statistical Office of Estonia 1995: 107); 99% of Estonians spoke Estonian as mother tongue and 34% of Estonians spoke Russian as a second language (ibid. 132). Russian was spoken by 35% of the population as mother tongue (ibid. 107), however, only 14% of Russians spoke Estonian as a second language (ibid. 135). In Latvia, Latvian was the mother tongue of 52% of the total population in 1989 (Latvijas PSR Valsts statistikas komiteja 1990: 20); 97% of Latvians spoke Latvian as mother tongue and 66% of Latvians spoke Russian as a second language (ibid.). Russian was spoken

Russian is thus a majorized minority language (a minority language in terms of numbers, but with the power of a majority language), whereas the Baltic languages are minorized majority languages (majority languages, in need of protection usually necessary for the threatened minority languages) (Skutnabb-Kangas 1994: 178, quoted in Ozolins 1999: 23).

Pavlenko (2008: 301) agrees that in the post-Soviet countries Russian cannot be viewed as a minority language on equal terms with minority languages elsewhere. She argues that Estonian and Latvian language skills might be useful for the local Russian-speakers for the purposes of socioeconomic advantages within the country, but the proficiency in Russian facilitates mobility and contacts across the post-Soviet countries and even in the whole world. Likewise, Hogan-Brun et al. (2009: 5) assert that the sociolinguistic situation of Estonian and Latvian in the newly re-established states has been highly unusual in the worldwide context as it was not a minority language but the official language that was threatened.

Since the collapse of the communist bloc, Estonia and Latvia have positioned themselves as unitary states with multilingual societies, “/.../ in which the national language [is] the language in which all essential social functions [are] conducted /.../” (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 53). Both Estonia and Latvia adopted their first post-occupation language laws in 1989. The current Language Act has been adopted in Estonia in 2011; it was preceded by the 1995 Language Act. In Latvia, the Official Language Law was adopted in 1999. The governments have aimed their language management at the creation of Estonian- and Latvian-based sociolinguistic space and the integration of minorities into local societies through additive bilingualism (Rannut 2008)<sup>20</sup>. Not always have the language management measures of Estonia and Latvia been met with enthusiasm and support at the international level, mostly due to the uncommon language situation that has challenged the generally agreed interpretation of linguistic rights (cf Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 5–6, 59–74).

Both Estonia and Latvia have chosen to facilitate the integration of their Russian-speaking minorities through education (Hogan-Brun 2005: 277). The two streams of education, which had been introduced in the Soviet times, started to be replaced with bilingual education for the minorities in the middle of 1990s. The fundamental educational reforms were carried out at different paces in Estonia and Latvia: in 2004, an educational reform was introduced in Latvia,

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by 42% of the total population as mother tongue, however, only 21% of Russians spoke Latvian as second language (ibid.).

<sup>20</sup> Some authors, e.g. Laitin (1996) have suggested that other languages could be used for the integration of Estonians and minority-language speakers in Estonia. Soler-Carbonell (2014<sup>a</sup>) studies the possibility of English becoming a lingua franca among ethnic groups in Estonia but concludes that this has not become the case and inter-ethnic communication mostly makes use of the Estonian language. However, he notes that sporadically English is used to overcome communication problems in inter-ethnic contact.

according to which at least 60% of subjects in minority secondary schools were to be taught in Latvian (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009: 73–74). In Estonia, the same principle was established in 2011. Based on the Canadian experience, Estonia has also introduced immersion classes for Russian-speaking children.

In order to re-establish the functions and prestige of the official languages, state-authored language management in Estonia and Latvia has tried to diminish the use of Russian. Derussification has been carried out in spheres of life that had previously been russified. Consequently, Russian has been eliminated from administration, official communication, public signs and labels. Its impact on education, the state-sponsored media and the local languages has been reduced. In addition, a small-scale derussification occurred when approximately 10% of Russian speakers, especially military personnel, left Estonia and Latvia in the early 1990s (Pavlenko 2008: 282–287).

Today, a quick look at the demographics of Estonia and Latvia shows apparent similarities. In 2017, 69% of the total population in Estonia were Estonians, and 25% were Russians (Statistics Estonia 2017<sup>a</sup>). According to the 2011 census, approximately 69% of the population claimed to speak Estonian as mother tongue, whereas approximately 30% claimed to speak Russian as mother tongue (Statistics Estonia 2013<sup>a</sup>). By contrast, 62% of the total population in Latvia were Latvians, and 25% were Russians (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia 2018<sup>a</sup>). Altogether, approximately 63% of inhabitants claimed to speak Latvian and 35% of inhabitants spoke Russian as their mother tongue (Kibermane & Kļava 2016: 47).

The greatest difference between Estonia and Latvia in respect to the official language and Russian can be spotted in language skills and use. More precisely, Russian-language competence is more common among Latvians than Estonians. According to the data collected by the Latvian Language Agency (Kibermane & Kļava 2016: 52), 98% of Latvians are able to speak Russian at least at the beginner's level, and 72% of them claim to have very good or good knowledge of Russian. By contrast, the Estonian integration monitoring (Kivistik 2017: 54) shows that although 95% of Estonians have some Russian skills, only 48% claims to be able to use Russian actively. Moreover, the proficiency in Estonian/Latvian of those inhabitants who speak a minority language as first language is similar in both countries. According to the integration monitoring (ibid. 53), 90% of the minority population in Estonia have some command of Estonian, and 41% of minority respondents claim to be able to use Estonian actively (16% says that they are fluent in Estonian and 25% says that they have a good command of Estonian). The data by the Latvian Language Agency (Kibermane & Kļava 2016: 52) shows that 91% of the population whose mother tongue is not Latvian, have a command of Latvian,

16% says that their Latvian language skills are very good and 28% says that their language skills are good.

One of the factors that has contributed to the difference in language skills between the inhabitants of Estonia and Latvia is the pattern according to which immigrants were settled in the countries during the Soviet times (see Section 3.1.3). More specifically, a great deal of Russian-speakers were located in the northeast of Estonia during the Soviet times, and this part of Estonia still has a large Russian-speaking population (Statistics Estonia 2017<sup>c</sup>); these Russian speakers have very little informal contact with the Estonian language. Similarly, the vast number of Estonians lives in places where there are only few Russian-speakers (*ibid.*). By contrast, Latvian- and Russian-speakers live side-by-side almost all over the country (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia 2018<sup>b</sup>), and the majority of inhabitants speak both Latvian and Russian, i.e. language use is bilingual in both groups (Kibermane & Kļava 2016: 52–57).

According to Ehala (2014), the bilingual language use in Latvia is upheld by mutual relationships and integration: in Latvia, both Latvians and Russian speakers use Latvian as well as Russian to talk to their friends: 45% of Russian-speakers and 40% of Latvians speak two languages with their friends. The percentages are twice as what they are in Estonia. Similarly, both languages are used more often side-by-side in other walks of life in Latvia than in Estonia (*ibid.*). Ehala (*ibid.*) concludes that Estonia is more segregated linguistically than Latvia that is characterised by greater linguistic integration.

Furthermore, the afore-mentioned study by Ehala (2014) suggests that the main problem of interethnic communication in Latvia lies not in language skills but in distrust between the two linguistic groups. Such distrust is far greater in Latvia than in Estonia (*ibid.*). The deep-seated distrust between Latvians and Russian-speaking minorities has been explained with the danger that Latvians felt to their identity at the end of the Soviet occupation, which led the state to adopt quite strict language management measures after regaining independence. Ehala (*ibid.*) points out that Estonia's language legislation has been less strict (a view expressed also by other researchers, such as Saarts (1999)), thus there is more trust between Estonians and the Russian-speaking minorities.

In addition, English has become a major player in the sociolinguistic field of Estonia and Latvia. Since the restoration of independence, English has undergone a rapid transition, changing from a forbidden and ideologically suspect foreign language to an immensely popular language. According to the integration monitoring (Kivistik 2017: 56), 74% of Estonians and 56% of minorities in Estonia have at least some English skills. By contrast, the data collected by the Latvian Language Agency (Kibermane & Kļava 2016: 60) shows that 59% of Latvians and 47% of minorities in Latvia have at least some English skills. However, there are wide

generational differences in foreign language knowledge in Estonia and Latvia. Older generations who attended school in the Soviet times speak Russian and little English, whereas younger generations schooled in the independent republics have mostly learnt English as their first foreign language and speak it markedly better than Russian (Kibermane & Kļava 2016: 62–63; Kivistik 2017: 57).

There has been academic discussions about the factors that have contributed to the spread of English. For example, Fonzari (1999) argues that Estonia had several options for choosing the language of communication with other countries in the early 1990s; Russian and German could have been available options as the command of these languages was good. However, she holds that these languages were neglected because of the negative historical associations they carry. This leads Fonzari to conclude that Estonians [and Latvians] have *chosen* English as the language of communication with the rest of the world because it symbolically represents political, economic and cultural freedom as well as a window to the Western world.

Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas (1997) point to the other side of the coin and assert that it has not been the free choice of people and countries, but the British and American official rhetoric that has linked English to the values of democracy, free market economy and human rights. They claim that this rhetoric has made English indispensable for countries aspiring to democratic values and forced them to use English. Phillipson (1998: 102) cites the example of Malcolm Rifkind, former British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, who welcomed the fall of the Iron Curtin by announcing his support for the spread of English in Eastern and Central Europe so as to open these countries to the business, culture and social values of the United Kingdom.

However, this thesis agrees with Li (2003) in respect to his point that the contemporary worldwide predominance of English may be caused by (historical) factors, such as “the expansion of the Empire, greed, conquest, and colonization” (ibid. 45), but these do not affect the aim of today’s people to improve their chances in life through the advantages that English offers. This idea can be expanded from the individual to the societal level and applied to the Baltic countries that have been keen on fastening their integration into the Western world by accessing the linguistic and cultural capital of English.

All in all, English has been welcomed as a means of faster political and economic reintegration into Western structures, but its influence on the local cultures is partially thought to threaten their vitality. These threats have been particularly vocal in the field of language maintenance (cf. Liiv & Laasi 2006; Veisbergs 2007) and, lately, in higher education and science (cf. Lukk et al. 2017). The following section offers a detailed overview of the official

statistics kept by the ministries of education and statistical bureaus on the language use in higher education and related topics.

### **3.2. Languages in higher education: statistics and previous research**

This sub-section takes a detailed look at the statistics about higher education that have been gathered mostly by the appropriate ministries of education. Then, an overview of previous research conducted on language issues in higher education is offered.

#### **3.2.1. Estonia**

In Estonia, there were 20 higher education institutions in the academic year 2017/2018: six public universities (University of Tartu, Tallinn University, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonian University of Life Sciences, Estonian Academy of Arts, Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre); eight state institutions of professional higher education; one private university (Estonian Business School) as well as five private institutions of professional higher education (Ministry of Education and Research 2018<sup>a</sup>). Additionally, the number of higher education institutions has changed considerably over the last decades: in the academic year 1990/1991, there were only six public universities in Estonia but by 2002 the number had raised to 49 institutions, both public and privately owned (Statistics Estonia 2018<sup>a</sup>).

In the academic year 2017/2018, there were 46,154 students studying in Estonia's institutions of higher education (Ministry of Education and Research 2018<sup>b</sup>). The number of students is falling rapidly. In Estonia, the number of students peaked in 2010/2011, then 69,113 students were enrolled at higher education institutions (Statistics Estonia 2018<sup>b</sup>). Since then, the number of students has decreased by 33%. The changes in the number of students are depicted in Chart 1. The decrease in the number of students is caused mostly by the overall demographic trends in the countries but also by other factors, such as outward student mobility (Kreegipuu 2017: 2). For example, the data collected by the OECD (2017: 286) show that Estonia and Latvia (as well as Lithuania) are experiencing a greater outward student mobility than inward mobility – here, the number of outgoing local students exceeds the number of incoming international students.

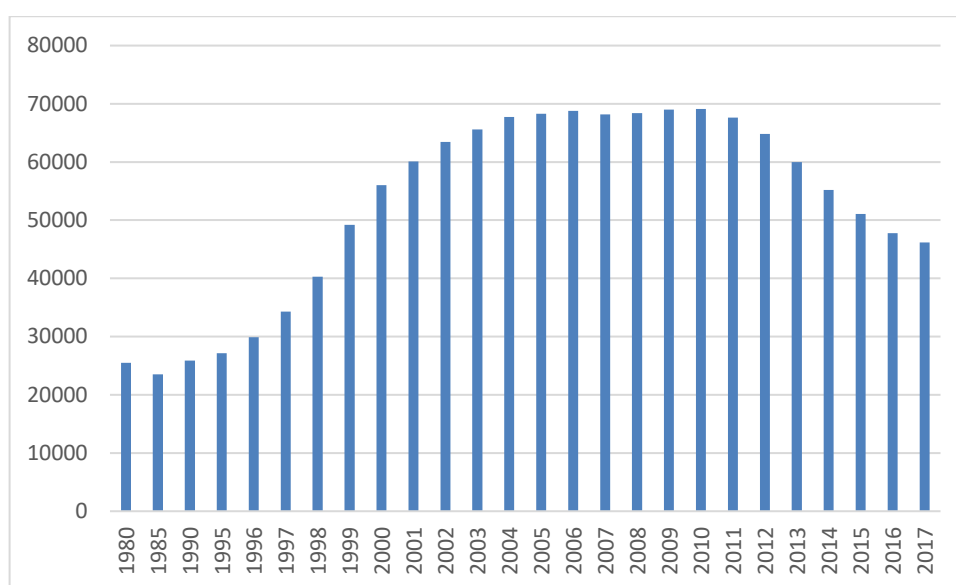
Recently, Estonian higher education has gone through profound changes – since the academic year 2013/2014 full-time students enrolled in Estonian-medium programmes<sup>21</sup> at

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<sup>21</sup> “Education is deemed to have been acquired in Estonian if at least 60% of the studies were carried out in Estonian” (Language Act § 26 lg 4).

state-financed higher education institutions do not pay any tuition for their studies. It means that higher education institutions can charge tuition fees from students who are enrolled in a programme officially carried out in a language other than Estonian. For the purposes of implementing this major reform, universities have had to define one language of instruction for every curriculum (exception is made for doctoral degree programmes and joint degree programmes) (see Section 5.1.1). As a result, higher education institutions are financially motivated to develop English-medium studies and attract students to these degree programmes (Klaas-Lang & Metslang 2018: 676).

**Chart 1.** Number of students enrolled at higher education institutions in Estonia (Data: Statistics Estonia 2018<sup>b</sup>)



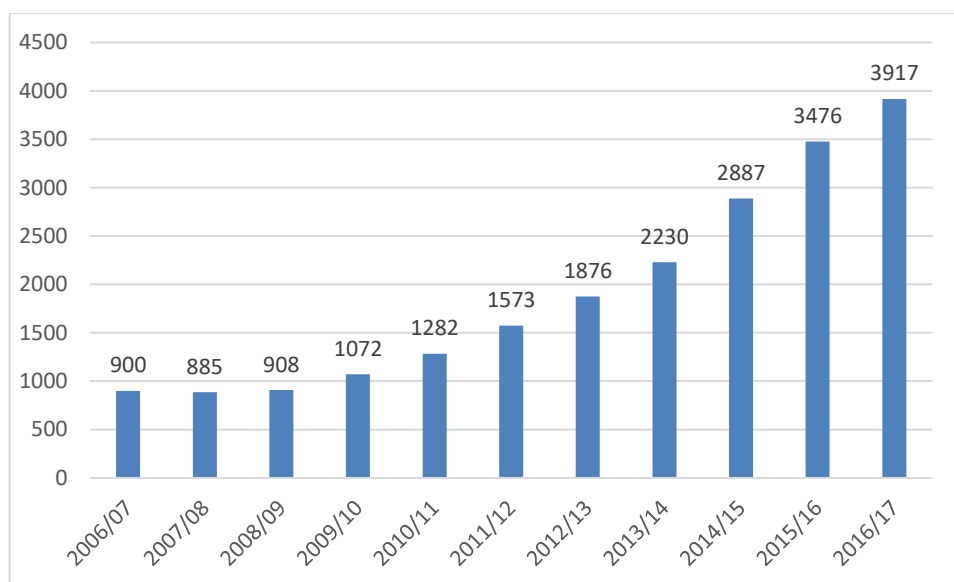
The number of international students is growing year by year (see Chart 2). In the academic year 2016/2017, 8% of students studying at institutions of higher education in Estonia were from abroad (Statistics Estonia 2017<sup>b</sup>). The share of international students in Estonia resembles that in many places elsewhere, for example, according to the statistics by the OECD, 5.2% of students were incoming international students in Estonia in 2015, 6.1% in Latvia, 6.4% in Sweden, 7.7% in Finland and Germany (OECD 2015)<sup>22</sup>. In Estonia, the number of international students has increased rapidly over the last years; this is depicted in the Chart 2 below. In 2016/2017 international students came to Estonia mostly from Finland (altogether 37% of international students were the residents of Finland before coming to study in Estonia); less from other countries: Russia (7%), Nigeria (6%), Ukraine (5%), Georgia (3%), India (3%) and

<sup>22</sup> The share of incoming international students enrolled as a percentage of all students is the greatest in Luxembourg (22%), Switzerland (20%), Australia and New Zealand (18%), Austria (18%), Belgium (12%) (OECD 2017: 286).



Latvia (3%) (Statistics Estonia 2017<sup>b</sup>). Today, international students come to Estonia from more diverse places than five years ago, when approximately half of the international students came from Finland (Kreegipuu 2017: 30).

**Chart 2.** The number of international students at institutions of higher education in Estonia (Data: Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia 2017)



As all higher education institutions (also public universities) can charge tuition fees from students enrolled in programmes implemented in languages other than Estonian, two thirds of international students pay tuition (Kreegipuu 2017: 30). International students are mostly enrolled in business, administration and law programmes (approximately 40% in 2016/2017), humanities, technical studies and social sciences (Kreegipuu 2017: 17). The OECD data (2017: 286) show that business, administration and law as well as science, technology, engineering and mathematics are one of the most favoured fields of studies in the OECD area. They explain it with the central role that these disciplines play in creating job opportunities and innovation (ibid.). In Estonia, international students are the most numerous at the Bachelor's level (40% of all international students are enrolled in Bachelor's programmes), however, the share of international students is the highest at the Master's and the PhD level (10% of all Master's and PhD students in Estonia come from abroad) (Kreegipuu 2017: 12). This agrees with an overall trend as well as the data of the OECD (2017: 286) shows that altogether international students account for approximately 6% of total enrolment in tertiary education programmes, however, over 25% of enrolments at the PhD level.

Estonian is the most common language of instruction at higher education institutions. Table 1 shows the percentage of students enrolled in programmes in which the principal language of

instruction is Estonian, Russian, and English<sup>23</sup>; both public and private institutions of higher education are included. Table 1 gives an overview of the media of instruction during the past 20 years (2015/2016 is the last academic year, for which such data is available on the webpage of the ministry); comprehensive data about the distribution of students across media of instruction can be found in the Appendix 1.

**Table 1.** Language of instruction in higher education institutions in Estonia: proportion of students (Data: Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia 2016)

Language / Year	1995/1996	2000/2001	2005/2006	2010/2011	2015/2016
Estonian	83.6%	86.3%	88.4%	90.2%	87.1%
English	2.1%	2.1%	1.5%	1.9%	9.0%
Russian	14.3%	11.6%	10.1%	7.9%	2.2%
Estonian and English (in PhD studies)					1.7%

Table 1 shows that Estonian-medium instruction has gained ground at the account of Russian-taught programmes during the past 20 years but the percentage of students enrolled in these programmes has not diminished due to the growth in the importance of English-medium programmes. In the past years, roughly 90% of students have been enrolled in Estonian-medium programmes. The number and percentage of students studying at English-taught programmes has grown rapidly only during the past years: until 2011 only approximately 2% of students were enrolled in English-medium programmes. In general, English-medium studies grew more popular than Russian-medium studies only in the academic year 2013/2014, until then there were more students enrolled in the Russian-taught programmes. However, English has been spreading gradually in Estonia's institutions of higher education since the early 1990s, whereas the use of Russian has been constantly decreasing since the regaining of independence.

Klaas-Lang & Metslang (2015: 174) indicate that the importance of Russian has diminished because Russian-medium higher education does not provide students with necessary Estonian skills that are crucial for participating in the Estonian labour market after graduation. Furthermore, Klaas-Lang (2016: 240) argues that Russian is used less and less in higher education in Estonia because private higher education institutions that used to provide Russian-medium programmes have been closed after failure to meet accreditation standards, and local

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<sup>23</sup> According to the accreditation documents, the principal language of instruction in foreign philology programmes (e.g. German language and literature) is Estonian; other languages may be defined as necessary for achieving learning outcomes but these are not reflected in the statistics on media of instruction offered by the Ministry of Education and Research.

youngsters who do not speak Estonian as their first language increasingly choose to study in Estonian since tuition fees have been cancelled.

According to the data of the Ministry of Education and Research (2016), foreign-medium instruction is more popular in private than in state-financed institutions of higher education. Russian is used as medium of instruction in both public and private institutions of higher education but Russian-medium instruction is more common in professional higher education than in universities, and in private schools than in public or state institutions of higher education. For example, in the academic year 2015/2016, 79% of students participating in Russian-medium programmes studied at private institutions of higher education, most of them were studying at the first level of higher education. By contrast, there are far more students enrolled in English-medium programmes in state-financed than private institutions of higher education. In the academic year 2015/2016, 86% of students studying in English-medium programmes were enrolled at state-financed institutions of higher education, most of them are pursuing their Master's and PhD degrees.

In Estonia, there are only few programmes that offer the entire curriculum in Russian – in 2017/2018 there were 18 accredited Bachelor's and Master's level programmes that were taught in Russian in Estonia's higher education institutions that constitutes 3% of the total number of programmes taught at Bachelor and Master levels (Selliov 2018). Russian-medium programmes are available at the Tallinn University of Technology (e.g. Automating Manufacturing and Fuel Technologies) but are more popular in private institutions of higher education, such as Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences *Mainor*, in which a quarter of Bachelor's and a third of Master's students study in Russian, and EuroAcademy, in which more than half of Bachelor's and a third of Master's students study in Russian (Selliov 2018).

In Estonia, degree programmes in English have been implemented since 1999. Today, there are more than 100 accredited English-medium programmes in Estonia; 70 programmes are implemented at the Master's level, i.e. one third of all Master's programmes in Estonia's higher education institutions is implemented in English (Kreegipuu 2017: 7). The number of English-medium programmes has increased enormously over the last decade (*ibid.*); in 2007 there were 18 English-medium programmes in higher education institutions in Estonia. English-medium programmes are the most popular in business studies, social studies and ICT studies (one fourth of programmes in each of these areas is implemented in English) (Kreegipuu 2017: 8).

In 2016/2017 approximately 10% of students were enrolled in English-medium programmes (Kreegipuu 2017: 8). Today, two thirds of students enrolled in English-medium programmes come from abroad (five years ago only one third of students enrolled in English-medium programmes were international students) (*ibid.*). The share of international students enrolled in

Russian-medium programmes has increased as well – in 2011/2012 there were 4% of international students enrolled in Russian-medium programmes but in 2016/2017 – 13% (ibid. 9). Approximately 5% of international students are enrolled in Estonian-medium programmes, particularly in humanities and agriculture (ibid). In order to support the Estonian-medium studies of minority school graduates and international students, since the early 2000s universities have offered them free Estonian language courses that they can attend up to a year (5–60 ECTS) (Klaas 2006). International students are offered to learn the official language but they are not expected to study in that language (Kibbermann 2017: 110).

The great majority of international students is enrolled at public universities, however, the share of international students enrolled at private universities has grown over the last years and reaches now 11% (Kreepuu 2017: 10). The most popular host universities for international students are Tallinn Technical University (35% of all international students), University of Tartu (22%) and the only private university in Estonia, Estonian Business School (11%) (ibid.).

In Estonia, PhD programmes use either Estonian or English as language of instruction (or both). For over a decade, the majority of PhD theses defended in Estonia have been written in English. According to Klaas-Lang & Metslang (2015: 172), approximately 90% of PhD theses written in Estonia were in foreign languages (mostly in English) in 2013 and 2014; Soler-Carbonell (2014<sup>b</sup>: 426) shows that 79% of the PhD theses defended at the University of Tartu in 2000–2012 were in English. Klaas-Lang (2016: 244–245) states that the popularity of writing dissertations in English is increasing and highlights the two factors that contribute to the popularity of writing PhD theses in English – 1) they are often based on articles published in English-medium journals; and 2) the university requires that opponents of theses come from abroad. Vihman (2017: 101) agrees that PhD candidates often justify writing in English with the quality of the thesis as they have more opportunities in selecting opponents for their theses.

Valge (2009: 230–232) argues that writing PhD theses in foreign languages affects Estonian as language of higher education and science the most, claiming that it has more impact on the sustainability of the Estonian language than the academic mobility of students and academic staff. In order to enhance the development of Specialised Estonian also in the context in which the majority of dissertations is written in English, the universities have agreed upon advocating among PhD students the requirement to write a summary in Estonian for every dissertation written in a foreign language.

### **Previous research**

Director of the Estonian Language Institute, Tõnu Tender (2017: 95) writes: “[t]he language policy of higher education has, indeed, major influence over language attitudes and language

use of younger generations” (my translation)<sup>24</sup>. In the past two decades, a great deal of discussions has been held in Estonia about medium of instruction in higher education as well as language of research and science. Public discussion was first initiated in the media at the end of the 1990s (cf. Lang 1998, Tulviste 1998.); at the same time the first academic conference on the topic was held at the University of Tartu (“Rahvuskeel globaliseerub maailmas” in 1999). In recent years, research on language in higher education and science has been carried out in the universities of Estonia and beyond; in addition, the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research has ordered several pieces of research that cover the medium of instruction in higher education. This section discusses some of the latest and most important research findings about language issues in higher education.

Firstly, Lukk et al. (2017) have undertaken a comprehensive study aimed to investigate the status, acquisition, research and development of Estonian and foreign languages in Estonia; the results of the study will be taken into account in the design of the forthcoming Estonian language strategy (for the years 2018–2027). The study demonstrates that the status of Estonian is rather weak in higher education (as well as ICT) in comparison to other fields of life due to the rapid spread of English in academia (Lukk 2017: 6). On the one hand, Lukk et al. (2017: 51) suggest that necessary measures have to be adopted in order to maintain Estonian as medium of instruction in all fields of study; for this fields of study should be divided between institutions of higher education, which shall be responsible for continuing studies in Estonian within that field of study as well as the development of terminology within the discipline. On the other hand, researchers (ibid.) also stress that developing Specialised Estonian in each and every subject field might not be reasonable and necessary. Moreover, the study suggests that more research should be carried out in order to understand how different languages are actually used in courses, programmes and fields of study (ibid.).

Secondly, Räsik et al. (2018) have conducted a large-scale study for the Ministry of Education and Research that aims to understand the situation of languages of instruction and their use in Estonian higher education. After conducting interviews with university administrations and heads of programmes, Räsik et al. (2018: 5) conclude that the following factors have influenced the spread of English in Estonian academia – a) demographic trends (less potential local students than earlier); b) switching to tuition-free higher education in the Estonian language that introduces the regulation that a degree programme may have only one medium of instruction, as well as created the opportunity to charge tuition only for studies in foreign languages; c) keen interests in internationalisation and hope that it will have positive effects on

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<sup>24</sup> “Kõrghariduse keelepoliitika on, tõepoolest, uute põlvkondade keelehoiakute ja -kasutuse kujundamisel üks olulisima mõjuga valdkondi” (Tender 2017: 95).

students studying in Estonian; d) English skills are necessary to read academic literature and to find employment in the labour market; and e) hope that international academic staff helps to raise the quality of education.

As a result of the interviews conducted for their research, Räs et al. (2018: 5) conclude that university administrations expect the scope of English-medium studies to increase in the following years, however, they acknowledge the importance of maintaining Estonian-medium studies at the first level of tertiary studies. The requirement set by the state to assign each Bachelor's and Master's degree programme one medium of instruction is considered to be restricting by university administrations as they would like to be able to integrate Estonian- and English-medium studies (Räs 2018: 16). The researchers add that the legal possibility to teach up to 40% of a curriculum in another language is, firstly, not well known among university officials and, secondly, it is unclear how to measure the proportions of language use in curricula as actual language use is much more diverse and complicated than visible in accreditation documents (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, Räs et al. (2018: 19–20) discuss the role of Russian medium of instruction in Estonian higher education. They (*ibid.*) establish that, in general, universities consider Russian-medium instruction to be insignificant, except for the colleges of the University of Tartu and Tallinn University of Technology in north-eastern Estonia. The researchers state that Russian-medium programmes contribute to internationalisation of higher education as these attract Russian-speaking students, mainly from Russia and Eastern Europe (*ibid.*). However, university administrations acknowledge that it is easier to organise studies in English than in Russian due to the language skills of younger academic staff (*ibid.*).

Soler-Carbonell (2014<sup>b</sup>) studies the tension between English as an academic language and Estonian as the national language in the context of language policy documents and statistical information about the language of PhD theses written in Estonian public universities. The author concludes that English enjoys a large presence at the doctoral level in Estonia, particularly in the natural and health sciences (*ibid.* 431). It appears from his data that there are clear language differences between different areas of knowledge: whereas dissertations in natural and health sciences are written in English, PhD theses in humanities are written in Estonian too (*ibid.* 432). Comparing the current situation to the Soviet times, he suggests that English replaced Russian as the international language of PhD dissertations (*ibid.* 432).

Soler-Carbonell (2015) analyses language matters in higher education policy documents in Estonia and finds that in the analysed documents tensions occur between preserving the vitality of Estonian as the language of higher education and internationalising higher education. The author shows in the study that Estonian policy documents avoid discussing the English language

overtly within the context of higher education. Soler-Carbonell (ibid. 264) maintains that the reason behind to could be enabling as much flexibility and variability as possible language-wise in academia, however, he also argues that by leaving the doors open for a multitude of foreign languages in Estonian higher education, the policy documents create rather an ideal concept than depict a practical reality.

Soler & Vihman (2017) explore the language-related tensions provoked by the search for balance between national and international in Estonian higher education. They analyse the orientation of different stakeholders (university officials, staff and students, members of society outside the university) at the University of Tartu towards the two prominent discourses – the nationalising discourse and the globalising discourse. The research suggests that the university officials are the most caught between the two discourses whereas academic staff and students take a more pragmatic view and generally do not identify language matters as priority. Moreover, the third group, members of society external to the University of Tartu, appear to have the most favourable orientation to the nationalising discourse as the general public is worried about the future of the Estonian language (ibid.).

Roosmaa et al. (2014) examine if and to what extent PhD students in Estonia consider it important to maintain Estonian as the language of science and research. This piece of research focuses on the Estonian language skills of PhD students, taking in account that the vast majority of them write their PhD theses in English. Their research indicates that Estonian PhD students consider writing in Estonian to be easier than writing in English; they are able to express their thoughts in a more logical and nuanced manner. However, the students who prefer writing in English mainly argue that it is easier due to terminology that is more familiar to them than the Estonian terminology that often do not even exist (ibid. 48–49). In order to preserve and develop Specialised Estonian, Roosmaa et al. (ibid. 49) emphasise the importance of writing summaries in Estonian for the PhD theses that have been written in English; these summaries should at least be at the length of a research article.

Klaas-Lang & Metslang (2015) study the sustainability of Estonian in higher education and science. Their paper reports that Estonian functions effectively as language of higher education and science – it is used as medium of instruction in tertiary education; higher education textbooks are regularly published in Estonian, some PhD theses are written in Estonian but all of them include summaries in Estonian etc. (Klaas-Lang & Metslang 2015: 173–174). Whereas English is growing more popular as language of higher education in Estonia, the importance of Russian is diminishing “due to the fact that Russian-language higher education does not guarantee the competence in the national language necessary on the Estonian job market” (ibid. 174).

Klaas-Lang (2016) takes a domain-based approach to the study of the vitality of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian in higher education, comparing national and institutional policies. According to her (ibid. 235–236), the extensive use of English in education (and other spheres of life) that characterises the current era might affect the sustainability of these languages as the Baltic higher education space is open towards global tendencies in tertiary education. Klaas-Lang (ibid. 238) points out that Russian and English as “the major competitor languages” for Estonian and Latvian but highlights that Russian carries greater economic value in Latvia than in Estonia. The paper reveals that the development of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian as languages of higher education has to be a top priority at the national level in order to guarantee the sustainability of the languages; and long-term sustainability cannot be achieved if internationalisation of higher education takes the leading role (ibid. 256–257).

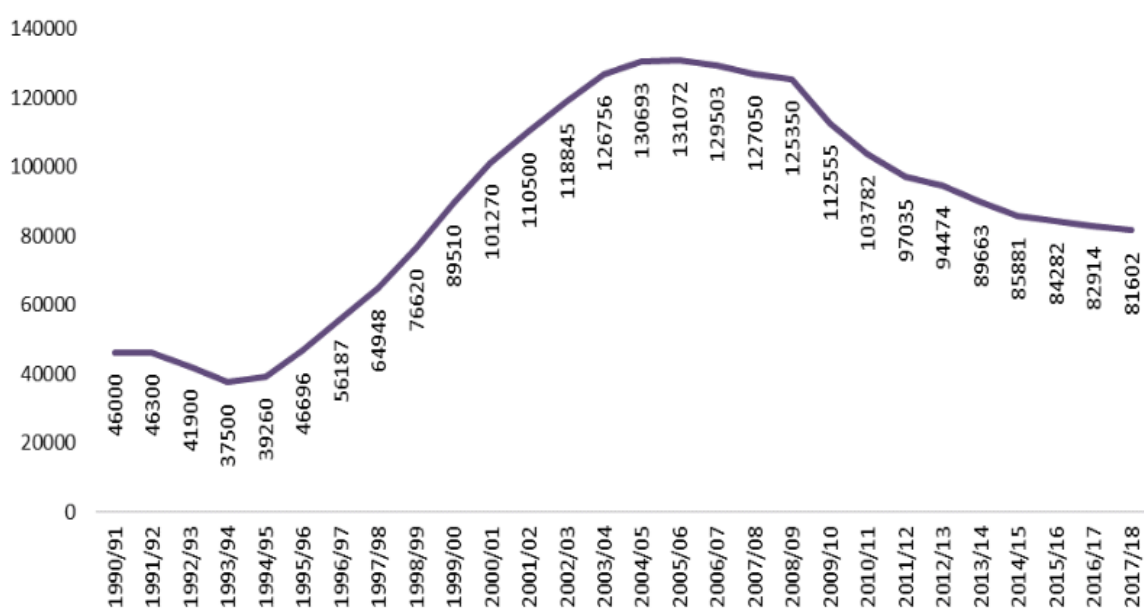
Similarly, Klaas-Lang & Metslang (2018) focus on the vitality of the Estonian language in the current situation in which English is used more and more as language of instruction in Estonian higher education. In this paper, Klaas-Lang & Metslang (ibid. 684) conclude that Estonian is widely used in higher education and science in today’s Estonia, however, it is crucially important for the vitality of Estonian that the state pays assiduous attention to language issues in higher education. According to them (ibid.), the interest of the state in the sustainability of Estonian in academia has waned in recent years.

### **3.2.2. Latvia**

In Latvia, there are 49 higher education institutions, in which 81,602 students were studying in the academic year 2017/2018 (Ministry of Education and Science 2018: 4; 33). There were 16 state-funded institutions of higher education, 12 state colleges, 19 private institutions of higher education and colleges as well as 2 branches of foreign universities (ibid. 5–6). The number of higher education institutions has decrease slightly in recent years as in 2015/2016 there were altogether 56 higher education institutions in Latvia (Ministry of Education and Science 2016). In 2017/2018, three forth of students are enrolled at state-funded institutions of higher education (Ministry of Education and Science 2018: 35). The number of students has been falling since 2005; since then, it has decreased almost by 38% (ibid. 33). According to Druviete (2014: 79), the decrease in the number of students results from the falling birth rates over the past two decades as well as the wave of emigration from Latvia that started around 2004. Changes in the number of students enrolled at higher education institutions are depicted in the Chart 3.



**Chart 3.** Number of students enrolled at higher education institutions in Latvia (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia 2018: 33)



Similarly to Estonia, the number of international students is growing year by year in Latvia – in 2017/2018, there were 8,806 international students<sup>25</sup> in Latvia, i.e. 11% of all students (Ministry of Education and Science 2018: 68). The changes in the number of incoming international students is depicted in the Chart 4. The vast majority of international students are degree students – 7563 students, i.e. 86% of international students were enrolled in degree programmes in 2017/2018 (ibid. 77). International degree students constitute 9% of the total number of students in Latvia (ibid.) The University of Latvia, the Riga Technical University and the Rīga Stradiņš University are the most popular universities among incoming students (ibid. 76–77). International students mostly come to Latvia from India (16% in 2017/2018), Uzbekistan (15%), Germany (14%), Russia (7%) and Sweden (5%) (ibid. 78–80).

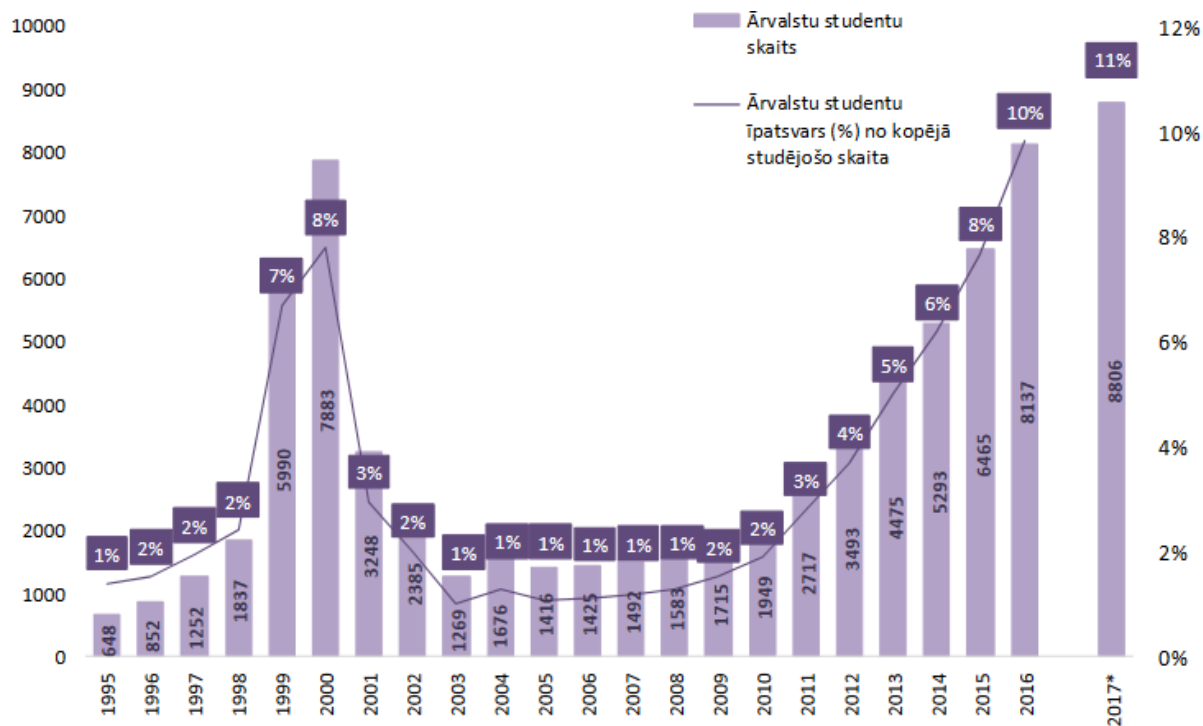
In Latvia, international degree students mostly study in the fields of business, administration and law (36%), health and welfare (26%), and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (9%) (OECD 2017).

Latvian is the most common language of instruction in Latvian higher education. At all levels of education (Bachelor’s, Master’s and doctoral studies as well as professional higher education) courses are taught in Latvian. In addition to Latvian, English and Russian are used as media of instruction in Latvian institutions of higher education. The proportion of students enrolled in study programmes in Latvian, English and Russian during the past 16 years are

<sup>25</sup> International degree students as well as students who have come to Latvia with Erasmus+ (Ministry of Education and Science 2018: 68).

presented in the Table 2. Comprehensive data about the distribution of students across media of instruction can be found in the Appendix 2.

**Chart 4.** The number of international students at institutions of higher education in Latvia (Ministry of Education and Science 2018: 68)<sup>26</sup>



**Table 2.** Language of instruction in higher education institutions in Latvia (Data: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia 2002–2018)

Language / Year	2001/2002	2005/2006	2010/2011	2015/2016	2017/2018
Latvian	88%	88.6%	85.2%	80.4%	80.5%
English	2.8%	1.3%	4.2%	9.5%	11.4%
Russian	9.2%	10.1%	7.7%	6.8%	5.8%

Russian-medium instruction is allowed only in private higher education and state-funded institutions of higher education can use Russian medium of instruction only in language and culture studies. Thus 97% on students who study in Russian are enrolled in private institutions of higher education and colleges (Ministry of Education and Science 2018: 69–71). English is used as medium of instruction both in public and private higher education; two thirds of the students who are studying in English, are enrolled at state-funded higher education institutions (ibid.). The importance of English has grown tremendously in the past year, in the academic year 2014/2015 English became more popular as the language of instruction in higher education

<sup>26</sup> The sudden growth in the share of international students in 1999 and 2000 is due to the University of Latvia that opened a branch in Isreal.

than Russian (see Appendix 2). 10% of students study in English in state higher education institutions, whereas in higher education 24% of students study in Russian and 17% in English (Ministry of Education and Science 2018: 69–71). As can be seen, the share of Russian- and English-medium studies is higher in private higher education than in public higher education.

In June 2018, the Latvian parliament adopted amendments to the Law on Higher Education that propose equality in requirements for public and private institutions of higher education (Saeima, June 21, 2018). The amendments, which come into force January 1, 2019, stipulate equal language requirements for public and private institutions of higher education, meaning that studies will be carried out in Latvian, the official language of the country, or any other official language of the EU (to the extent specified in the Law on Higher Education). Both public and private institutions of higher education can henceforth use Russian as medium of instruction only for Slavic language and culture studies.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science (June 29, 2018), “the amendments do not, by any means, impose restrictions on the use of foreign languages in institutions of higher education, as the state has already created necessary preconditions for the institutes of higher education to offer local as well as international students plenty of opportunities to study in any of the official languages of the EU<sup>27</sup>” (my translation). Although not mentioned explicitly, the amendments impose the major restriction on the use of Russian as medium of instruction in degree programmes that are not language and culture programmes. These amendments in the Law on Higher Education have been accepted after the adoption of amendments to the Law on Education in spring 2018 that stipulate the gradual transition to studies in Latvian in all secondary schools, including private schools (Ministry of Education and Science, June 29, 2018).

Doctoral students can choose in which language they write their PhD theses. In comparison to the Nordic countries (see Section 2.2) and Estonia it is interesting that most PhD theses written and submitted at Latvian universities are written mostly in the Latvian languages. In the years 2007–2013 only 16.5% of PhD theses defended at the University of Latvia were written in English, while almost 83% of theses were written in Latvian. Even dissertations on scientific and technical topics are often written in Latvian, as can be seen from the figures about Riga Technical University. From 2010 to 2013, 19% of PhD theses were in English, while 81% were in Latvian. The rather small percentage of PhD theses in English might be the result of the lack of English-skills as well as tradition to write in Latvian.

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<sup>27</sup> “Grozījumi nekādā mērā neierobežo svešvalodu lietošanu augstskolās, jo valsts jau līdz šim ir radījusi nepieciešamos priekšnoteikumus, lai Latvijas augstskolas gan vietējiem, gan ārvalstu studentiem piedāvātu plašas iespējas studēt kādā no Eiropas Savienības oficiālajām valodām” (Ministry of Education and Science, June 29, 2018).

**Table 3.** Language of the PhD theses defended at the University of Latvia 2007–2013, and the Riga Technical University 2010–2013 (Data: University of Latvia; Riga Technical University; my calculations)

University / Language	University of Latvia	Riga Technical University
Latvian	82.9%	80.8%
English	16.5%	19.2%
other	0.6%	

76% of theses written in English at the University of Latvia have been written in the domain of science, and 90% of theses written in English at Riga Technical University have been written either in the domain of science or engineering, manufacturing and construction. The natural, technical and medical sciences tend to be Englishized than the human and social sciences. In the former disciplines, English is more widespread and often “construed instrumentally”, not seen as “inextricably intertwined with the subject matter” (Hultgren et al. 2014: 7–8).

### Previous research

In Latvia, research has approached language issues in higher education from quite different perspectives. Druviete (2007) focuses on higher education as a sociolinguistic domain and a sociolinguistic function of language in order to define the hierarchy of languages in Latvian tertiary education. She points out (*ibid.* 139) that education is a sociolinguistic domain, in which languages are actively used side-by-side, particularly in higher education, which is relatively autonomous but closely linked with economic objectives of the EU (*ibid.* 140–141). Druviete (*ibi.* 141–142) highlights that the negative tendencies in higher education policies are connected with its internationalisation without paying attention to its linguistic aspects, as it has taken place in Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany. She (142–143) argues that Latvia should avoid repeating the mistakes made by other countries, and that the language regulations in Latvian higher education are good, and further liberalisation of language requirements in higher education should be avoided in order to preserve the motivation of minorities to acquire Latvian, and the motivation of researchers to use Latvian in science.

Kļava et al. (2010) have conducted a study on the effect of the 2004 reform on minority education on the Latvian language skills and use in higher education. They conclude that the Latvian language skills students who have graduated from minority schools are good enough to participate in higher education studies. However, they (*ibid.* 41) note that the Latvian language skills of students who are studying in private institutions of higher education are weaker and they have more problems with taking part in Latvian-medium studies.

Boge (2012) analyses in her PhD thesis the contents and implementation of language policy in higher education institutions with respect to language learning. The author (ibid. 122) concludes that language policy in the state-funded institutions of higher education is fragmentary and the activities undertaken to implement the language policy are incoherent. Boge's analysis (ibid. 123–124) shows that the University of Latvia is the only higher education institution that has formulated its language policy, whereas other state institutions of higher education either do not deem the development of language policy necessary or lack resources for it. She considers it important for the other institutions of higher education to follow the lead of the University of Latvia in this aspect (ibid. 124–125).

Stavicka (2014) explores in her PhD dissertation how internationalisation affects foreign language studies in higher education and the professional development of academic staff. She concludes that the majority of activities carried out for the implementation of internationalisation policies in Latvian academia are aimed at students, not the academic staff (ibid. 236). Stavicka (ibid.) argues that foreign language courses are often included in curricula in Latvia, however, certain language aspects have not earned the attention they would deserve, e.g. academic writing skills in foreign languages (ibid.). In addition, she (ibid.) argues that the foreign language skills of academic staff pose a challenge to internationalisation, and should be paid more attention.

Druviete (2014) offers a statistical description of the position of English in Latvian higher education and research, and argues that these domains are undergoing a partial loss of domain in Latvian. According to Druviete (2014: 80), the Latvian parliament adopted amendments to the Law on Higher Education (2006) in 2011 in order to counterbalance the possible domain loss, simultaneously protecting the Latvian language and enabling higher education institutions to use a great variety of languages. She claims that with the help of this law, Latvia is “not to repeat the approach of most European states which have nearly lost their official languages in the higher education and science and are trying to restore their functions” (ibid. 80). Thus, Druviete (2014) argues that Latvian authorities have taken appropriate legal measures to protect the functioning of Latvian all domains as domain loss would have a detrimental effect on the language in general. Moreover, she (ibid. 83) lists other domains that are undergoing a partial loss of domain, e.g. business and commerce, tourism, and popmusic. Additionally, Druviete (2014: 85) concludes that English carries symbolic functions in Latvia as it is related to European identity.

Auers & Gubins (2016) have carried out a survey on the economic benefits international students bring to Latvia. They conclude (ibid. 10) that tuition international students pay to higher education institutions in Latvia forms a significant part of the total finances available to

these institutions – in 2016, the Ministry of Education and Science had allocated 63 million euros to higher education, and international students paid 28 million euros as tuition. Considering the predictions made by the OECD, Auers & Gubins (2016) hold that the number of international students in Latvia will continue to grow in the forthcoming years. This piece of research does not focus by any means on language issues in higher education, nevertheless, some data can be retrieved also about language. For example, more than half of international students have chosen to study in Latvia because of medium of instruction (*ibid.* 9), and 11% of students have come to study in Latvia to learn Latvian or improve their Latvian language skills (*ibid.* 10).

Some discussions on the Latvian context have also been initiated when viewing the Baltic situation, e.g. Kaša & Mhamed (2013) and Klaas-Lang (2016, see Section 3.2.1). Kaša & Mhamed (2013) analyse how language policies and the use of foreign languages in academia influence and are influenced by student mobility. They find out that outgoing international students from the Baltic countries mostly decide to study in English-speaking countries (*ibid.*). In addition, the researchers argue that language policy law in Latvia and Lithuania is more protective of the use of the official language in state-funded higher education than in Estonia. The authors also note that after the restoration of independence, the Baltic states have paid a great deal of attention of language issues in general education but higher education has not gained so much attention (*ibid.*: 33). They argue that Estonia has developed explicit policy for „joining in the global competition for students by offering graduate-level study programmes in English“. By contrast, Latvian higher education policy mostly supports the use of the official language in higher education; the use of foreign languages is supported in case this use results from cooperation between local and foreign institutions of higher education (*ibid.* 46–47).

#### 4. METHOD AND DATA

As an area of research, language policy draws on a range of academic fields, thus the approaches and methods used in the academic studies of language policy processes are plenty as well. This section first outlines the methods that are used the most often in language policy research, and then gives an overview of the research design, data, and analytical methods employed in this thesis.

Research methods used in language policy studies have roots in diverse disciplines, such as anthropology, law, linguistics, political science, economics, social psychology, and sociology among others. Data are collected with survey questionnaires, interviews, participant observation and participatory action, from policy documents, linguistic corpora, census data and demographic data. Approached to data may be statistical, experimental, ethnographic, linguistic, and discourse-analytic among others (Hornberger 2015: 9–11).

In earlier studies analyses of large-scale national census data, demographic surveys and self-reported language use and attitudes were carried out (*ibid.*). These methods have not been abandoned along the way. For example, Wächter & Maiworm (2002, 2008, 2014) have conducted large-scale surveys to examine the spread of English-medium instruction across universities in Europe; Hultgren (2014<sup>a</sup>) performs a statistical analysis to explore whether there is a link between the implementation of English-medium programmes and the world rank of a university. Studying attitudes and ideologies with questionnaire surveys and interviews is rather common as well, for instance, Jensen & Thøgersen (2011) employ these methods to study the attitudes of the academic staff of the University of Copenhagen.

Recent studies give preference to analysing legal, political and economic documents with the methods of linguistic analysis, for example, critical discourse analysis (e.g., Lawton 2007). Recently, there has been a rapid increase in the number of scholars who use ethnographic approaches to examine language policy. For instance, Ljosland (2008) conducts an ethnographic study on language choice at a Norwegian university, and Söderlundh (2008) combines ethnography and sociolinguistics to study language practices and attitudes that affect language choice at a university in Sweden. Combining different approaches is common, for instance, Airey (2009) observes lectures and conducts interviews with students in order to investigate their learning patterns in a multilingual environment.

The main purpose of this empirical study is to cast light on the role different languages play in higher education in Estonia and Latvia, focusing particularly on the national universities. The following research question and seven sub-questions have been formulated to reach the goals of the thesis:

## **What role do different languages play in higher education in Estonia and Latvia, particularly in the national universities?**

1. How is language use in higher education regulated at the state level in Estonia and Latvia?
2. How are language issues in higher education discussed in state-authored policy-planning documents in Estonia and Latvia?
3. How are language issues discussed in the documents of the national universities?
4. What ideologies are underlying the language policies carried out by the state and the national universities in Estonia and Latvia?
5. What languages and to what extent are used in the national universities?
6. For which purposes are different languages used in the national universities?
7. What are the attitudes of students towards the use of different languages in higher education in Estonia and Latvia?

The data for the research of this thesis were collected from a variety of policy documents and through semi-structured interviews. Firstly, in order to analyse language policy at the state level, a considerable amount of current state-authored documents was scanned, and a corpus of documents was created so that it offered comprehensive coverage of the issue of language in higher education as discussed in legislation (laws, regulations) and policy-planning documents (strategies, guidelines, development plans, programmes etc.). Then, parts of the documents that dealt with language in higher education were extracted (sentence level). The total amount of data on state-authored language policies extracted includes 56 documents (16,520 words). All documents included in the analysis are publicly available.

Secondly, in order to analyse the language policy carried out by the national universities, a great deal of institutional documents was scanned, and the documents covering language were selected. The set of documents includes university strategies, statutes, regulations, rules, procedures, etc. Then, parts of the documents that are concerned with language were extracted (sentence level). The total amount of data on institutional language policies includes 35 documents (8,226 words). All of the documents are available on the websites of the universities. The multilayered approach to language policies taken in this dissertation aims to illuminate the complex and intertwined nature of governmental and institutional language policies in higher education (see, for example, Soler-Carbonell et al. 2017). The rationale for comparing governmental and institutional policies is that they are likely to be “influenced by the ideologies, goals and interests of their creators” (Lo Bianco 2005).

The drafting of state-authored policies and policy planning documents as well as institutional strategies that cover language issues in higher education has been prompted by the need and



desire to adapt to a rapidly changing higher education environment. Estonia and Latvia are far from being pacesetters in the development of these policies, they rather follow the overall tendencies in European higher education. This, however, does not diminish the importance of the documents. Instead, it gives Estonia and Latvia a chance to learn from the experience and mistakes of forerunners.

Parts of text have been chosen for the analysis that establish an overt connection between language and higher education. Reading of state and institutional documents suggests that an interesting study of covert language policy in academia could be carried out as there are plenty of policy texts that regulate or suggest something that is bound to have an effect on language use in higher education. For example, documents or their parts that cover higher education internationalisation and export, development of research and science and general development and preservation of language.

Thirdly, in order to offer insights into language practices and attitudes of students, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted in the spring and summer of 2016. Altogether, 16 interviews were conducted with students currently enrolled at universities either in Estonia or Latvia who are or have previously been enrolled at the University of Tartu or the University of Latvia. The interviews lasted on average about 41.01 minutes. The language of the interview was determined by the interviewees; if possible, the mother tongue of the interviewee was used. The interviews were conducted in Riga and Tartu, and the mean age of the respondents was 24.7. The dissertation has opted for small reference groups in this part of analysis in order to provide insights into language practices and attitudes of the interviewees, yet to be able to grasp the amount of material. The language issues in the Baltic states are complicated and have been subject to uncountable emotionally loaded private and public discussions in the past decades. Instead of trying to grasp and explain everything, the study focuses on discussing the data gathered from students who as young intellectuals are likely to be avant-garde in their use of and attitudes towards languages.

The interviewees were selected by the snowball sampling method, however, in the selection of interviewees variation in the range of disciplines and levels of study was kept in mind. The snowball technique is one of the most common methods for recruiting additional interviewees for methodological and pragmatic reasons alike as it enables the researcher to target those possible interviewees that satisfy the selection criteria of the study (Hoffmann 2014: 31). It is acknowledged in the present research that the nonprobability sampling technique as well as the number of interviewees does not enable to make representative conclusions about the entire student body but only about the students interviewed in the piece of research. This is considered enough to cast light on some linguistic practices and attitudes present among the students.

The interview schedule for the semi-structured interviews is in the Appendix 3; the form for gathering background information about the interviewees is in the Appendix 4; and the background information about the interviewees is summarised in the Appendix 5.

Questions for the semi-structured interviews were built according to a model put forth by Seidman (2006: 17–19). He offers a tripartiate model for phenomenological in-depth interviews in order to help interviewees to reconstruct their experiences with the research topic. He calls the first phase “focused life history” which aims to place the participants’ experience in context by asking them to describe their personal history in light of the topic. The second phase, called “details of experience”, concentrates on the details of the participants’ experience in the topic area, and the third phase “reflection on the meaning” asks participants to reflect on their experience and draw out deeper meanings.

The data gathered in the interviews were generated by self-report, thus the answers of the interviewees might project their beliefs about their language practices rather than “the true reality of their experiences” (Bolton & Kuteeva 2012: 434). Studies based on self-reported language practices tend to be ideology-based (Hultgren et al. 2014). Thus, this chapter maps the respondents’ beliefs about language practices rather than describing the actual language practices, for which an ethnographic study at grassroots level would be necessary. The interview material tackles the respondents’ perceived exposure to languages; here, languages are approached from the perspective of individuals’ perceived use and exposure to it.

Both extracted parts of policy documents and transcripts of interviews were analysed by means of qualitative content analysis. Qualitative data analysis is considered a valid method for the purposes of the thesis as is it a flexible (Hsieh & Shannon 2005), yet systematic and rule-guided (Mayring 2000) approach to text analysis that can be applied to a wide variety of texts, including policy documents, interview transcripts, fields notes, literature, photos etc. (Mayring *ibid.*; Saldana 2009) in order to infer both explicit and implicit meanings (Hsieh & Shannon *ibid.*). Qualitative content analysis is helpful to code copious amounts of textual data, as in the present case, and systematically classify them into an efficient number of meaningful categories that can be easily interpreted. Depending of the coding schemes and origins of codes, Hsieh & Shannon (2005) highlight three slightly different approaches to qualitative content analysis: conventional, directed and summative. In the application of qualitative content analysis conventional content analysis is used: coding categories are derived from scratch and directly from the analysable text.

Before the formation of codes, the extracted document data and transcripts of interviews were read repeatedly. The line-by-line reading of the data provided initial open codes that were developed into codes of topics identified as particularly important and reflective of more than

one key thought. Coding strategies were selected in alignment with research questions and goals. Codes were then clustered into categories based on their regularity and similarity. The emergent categories were used to group codes into meaningful clusters (Hsieh & Shannon 2005; McCarty 2015: 89). These categorical groupings were then systematically compared and contrasted to generate broader concepts or themes, i.e. higher levels of abstraction. Thematic constructs constitute the evidentiary foundation for interpretation (Saldana 2009). Definitions for each category, and code were developed. Examples for each code and category were identified from the data before reporting the findings. In the discussion section, the data are connected to other relevant studies and theories (Hsieh & Shannon 2005; McCarty 2015: 89).

## 5. EMPIRICAL DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, analysis of state-authored and institution-authored documents as well as analysis of data from interviews with students is presented. The state-authored documents are discussed in section 5.1, and the institutional documents are considered in section 5.2. The institutional policies are studied at the example of the national universities, i.e. the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia. The analysis traces the recurring themes that appear in the documents in order to cast light on the similarities and differences between the two countries, different policy levels and authors, and highlight ideologies underlying language management efforts. Section 5.3 focuses on the micro-level, i.e. language use and attitudes as reported in interviews by students. The interview data mainly address two issues: students' experiences with and attitudes towards language use in academia.

### 5.1. Macro-level data: state-authored documents

The analysis of state-authored policy documents concerning language in higher education is presented in this sub-section. Its first part is focused on legislation (laws, regulations), and its second part is concerned with policy-planning documents (strategies, development plans, guidelines, programmes etc.).

#### 5.1.1. Legislation

Firstly, government laws and regulations concerning language in higher education are discussed. The selected pieces of legislation are currently in force (in summer 2018) and mention language in the context of higher education. The pieces of legislation are originally in Estonian and Latvian, however, the states have provided an official English translation to the majority of the documents included in the analysis. For the ease of providing quotations from the material, English translations have been considered (when possible). Estonian legislation is available on the official webpage of *Riigiteataja* [www.riigiteataja.ee](http://www.riigiteataja.ee), and Latvian pieces of legislation can be reached on the official webpage of *Latvijas Vēstnesis* [www.likumi.lv](http://www.likumi.lv).

##### 5.1.1.1. Legislation in Estonia

Table 4 summarises the pieces of legislation that have been included in the analysis of the state-authored language management in Estonia. The length of the documents in the number of words shows the total amount of material, from which clauses on language in higher education

have been extracted. When the state has not provided an official English translation to a piece of legislation, an approximate translation of its title is included in square brackets.

**Table 4.** Legislation concerning language in higher education in Estonia

<b>Regulation</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>	<b>Length in number of words</b>
Constitution of the Republic of Estonia	1992	11,513
Language Act	2011	6,461
Education Act	1992	5,110
Universities Act	1995	24,589
Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act	1998	18,785
Private Schools Act	1998	17,599
Organisation of Research and Development Act	1997	11,757
Tartu University Act	1995	4,484
Aliens Act	2009	64,958
Kõrgharidusstandard [Standard of Higher Education]	2008	3,327
Välisriigi haridust tõendavate dokumentide hindamise ja akadeemilise tunnustamise ning välisriigi haridussüsteemis antud kvalifikatsiooni nimetuse kasutamise tingimused ja kord [Criteria and Procedures for Assessment and Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications and for Use of Title of Qualification Granted in Foreign Education System]	2006	1,992
Diplomi ja akadeemilise õiendi statuut ja vormid [Statute and Forms of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements]	2003	3,748
Arstiõppe, loomaarstiõppe, proviisoriõppe, hambaarstiõppe, ämmaemandaõppe, õeõppe, arhitektiõppe ja ehitusinseneriõppe raamnõuded [Framework Requirements for Medical Training, Veterinary Training, Pharmaceutical Training, Dentistry Training, Midwifery Training, Nursing Training, Architectural Studies and Civil Engineering Studies]	2004	4,007
Õpetajate koolituse raamnõuded [Framework Requirements for Teacher Training]	2000	1,757
Ametniku, töötaja ning füüsilisest isikust ettevõtja eesti keele oskuse ja kasutamise nõuded [Requirements for Proficiency in and Use of the Estonian Language for Officials, Employees and Sole Proprietors]	2011	1,216
Residentuuri lõpetamist tõendava tunnistuse statuut ja vorm [Statute and Form of Certificate of Completion of Residency Training]	2003	713
Kõrghariduse omandamisel süvendatult riigikeele õppimise tingimused ja kord [Criteria and Procedures for Intensive Studies in Official Language when Acquiring Higher Education]	2012	270

Altogether 17 documents were analysed, the material extracted for the analysis consists of 4,647 words. Languages and concepts denoting languages mentioned in documents have been counted; as a result, when language is discussed in the context of higher education Estonian has been mentioned for 79 times, English 44 times, official language 22 times, foreign language(s) 5 times, and Russian once. This gives an idea of the general focus of legislation language-wise and is useful for comparing the focus of documents drafted by different policy-makers.

The following recurring themes were formulated as a result of the analysis: 1) language preservation and development; 2) language of instruction; 3) language of administration and documents; 4) language acquisition and proficiency. The analysis of legislation shows that the Estonian state is mostly concerned with the language of documents and the language of instruction in higher education.

### **1. Language preservation and development**

The preservation and development of language, primarily the Estonian language, is the underlying basic idea of the state-authored language management efforts. A few paragraphs of the analysed legislative acts offer an overall ideological frame to the rest of the laws and regulations, emphasising the importance of language preservation, protection and development. In this aspect, the state of Estonia obviously attaches considerable significance to the maintenance of the Estonian language, claiming that Estonian has to be preserved, protected, researched and developed (e.g. Language Act, University of Tartu Act). In 2007, a sentence on the need to preserve the Estonian language was added to the preamble of the Constitution (1992):

[The state] must guarantee the preservation of the Estonian people, the Estonian language and the Estonian culture through the ages. (Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia 1992)

Furthermore, the Language Act states that foreign languages can be supported as well, however, Estonian has to be the first priority, and no measures taken to support foreign languages can damage Estonian.

In the more specific context of higher education, the state has placed particular emphasis on the University of Tartu, which is obliged by law to advance the preservation and development of the Estonian language:

The University advances the sciences investigating Estonia and its people for the purpose of preservation and development of the Estonian language and culture, and education in Estonian, preserves national cultural heritage and provides the related services to the public. (University of Tartu Act § 2.1)

### **2. Language of instruction**

In higher education, the state attaches Estonian the status of the main language of education (e.g. Universities Act, Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act). Language of instruction became one of the central foci of the state-authored language management in 2013 when the state tied language of instruction to tuition. Under current legislation, each curriculum

has to have one language of instruction, and only in specific cases can curricula have more than one language of instruction (this is possible in the case of doctoral degree programmes and joint degree programmes). In the majority of cases, the law stipulates that only one language is attributed the status of language of instruction. Other languages can be used in the study process, however, they cannot be defined as languages of instruction, even if they are used as media of instruction.

According to the legislative acts, language of instruction is Estonian or a language other than Estonian at universities, institutions of professional higher education and private schools. The state law defines Estonian as the preferred option and a right, whereas the use of other languages has to be decided by the council of a university or the minister of education (in case of institutions of professional higher education).

The language of instruction at universities is Estonian. The use of other languages shall be decided by the council of a university. (Universities Act 1995, § 22.8)

The language of instruction at institutions of professional higher education shall be Estonian. The use of other languages shall be decided by the minister who directs the ministry under whose area of government the particular institution of professional higher education belongs. (Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act 1998, § 17)

Thus, the state has not excluded any language from being a medium of instruction in higher education but Estonian is the only language specially mentioned. Interestingly, the Language Act states that education is acquired in Estonian when 60% of the studies are carried out in Estonian. As a result, other languages can be used as media of instruction in Estonian-medium degree programmes, however, they cannot be attached the status of language of instruction. Similarly, curricula in which language other than Estonian has been defined as language of instruction, no other language can be given the status.

Establishing one language of instruction for each curriculum has practical underpinnings as policy-makers have tied tuition fees to the language of instruction. In the majority of cases, students who are enrolled in Estonian-medium curricula and have completed everything necessary by the end of semester do not have to pay tuition. Higher education institutions can charge tuition for enrolment in degree programmes in which the language of instruction is other than Estonian. Thus, creating possibilities for studies in languages other than Estonian is an extra money-making opportunity for higher education institutions. Private schools are, of course, free to charge tuition fees from all students. In addition, policy-makers allow cases in legislation in which studies can be without tuition also in other languages than Estonian.

### **3. Language of administration and documents**

In its legislation, the state deals with the language of administration of higher education institutions and, in particular, with the languages in which certain documents are written. More specifically, the state is concerned with the language of administration in private schools, stating that it must be Estonian. The legislative acts say that foreign languages<sup>28</sup> might be used in some cases as languages of internal administration in private schools, and the language of administration has to be established in the statutes of the school. The state does not directly deal with the language of administration in public institutions of higher education, however, the §10 of the Language Act implies that it is Estonian.

Moreover, the vast majority of cases labelled as language of documents in the process of analysis deal with using language in documents that institutions of higher education issue to their graduates. The languages of diplomas and diploma supplements have been carefully regulated. Firstly, the law stipulates that institutions of higher education award diplomas in Estonian but in these diplomas English and other (unspecified) languages might be used as well (e.g. for naming the degree and the partner institution in the case of joint curricula).

Secondly, diploma supplements have to be or might be issued in English. This has deserved a great deal of the state's attention – English as the language of diploma supplements has been mentioned for 32 times. The analysis shows that the majority of the total mentions of English in Estonian legislation is in that context. In the paragraphs that concern the language of diploma supplements, Estonian mostly remains unmarked, it is the default language of diplomas and diploma supplements, not needing a special mention. Estonian is clearly marked as the language of diplomas once and as the language of diploma supplements for seven times. According to the law, institutions of higher education issue diploma supplements in Estonian or both in Estonian and English. In these documents, other languages might be used as well (e.g. name of institution of higher education).

In the majority of cases in which foreign language use is permitted by law in administration and documentation, this has to be done in parallel to Estonian. Exceptions to this are the documents submitted by students to the agency that assesses education gained abroad, and the documents submitted by researchers/institutions of higher education in order to receive funding for their projects. Firstly, documents submitted for assessment of education gained in another country can be in Estonian, English, Russian, or some other language (upon agreement). It is the only mention of Russian in respect to higher education in the analysed legislative acts.

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<sup>28</sup> According to the Language Act, foreign language is any language, except for Estonian and Estonian sign language.



Secondly, the Organisation of Research and Development Act stipulates that applications for research funding and can be required to be submitted in English only.

To conclude, the legislative acts state that the following languages are used as languages of administration and documents in Estonian higher education: Estonian (mentioned 14 times explicitly but mostly can be viewed as the unmarked and default language), English (mentioned for 39 times) and Russian (mentioned once). The notions ‘original language’ (for some information in documents drafted in other languages), ‘other languages’ and ‘foreign language’ has also been used in respect to administration and documents.

#### **4. Language acquisition and proficiency**

The legislative acts are concerned with some aspects of language acquisition and language proficiency in respect to higher education studies. For example, Estonian proficiency is required from top administrators of higher education institutions, and academic staff who engage in Estonian-medium studies. The law is not concerned with language acquisition of administrators and academic staff.

Mainly, the focus of legislation lies on the proficiency in the language of instruction. In the majority of cases, the law is concerned with the language skills of those students who are less likely to have sufficient proficiency in the language of instruction. Thus, the language command of local students is generally not dealt with, except for the graduates of the upper secondary schools in which studies have taken place in a language other than Estonian. The law stipulates that students of the upper secondary schools in which studies have been implemented in a language other than Estonian have to have acquired Estonian at the level that enables them to continue their studies in Estonian in tertiary education.

In addition, the state creates opportunities for those who are not proficient in Estonian but wish to enrol in an Estonian-medium programme. The state encourages students to participate in the in-depth studies of the official language<sup>29</sup> by making an exception in the length of their studies. Thus, learning the official language is an activity favoured by the state. This opportunity is available both to local and international students whose Estonian proficiency is not sufficient to study in it. The in-depth studies of the official language are organised by higher education institutions and financed by the state.

What is more, the law is concerned with the language skills of foreigners who need a residence permit for their studies in Estonia. According to the legislative acts, councils of universities and institutions of professional higher education have to establish and private

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<sup>29</sup> The Language Act stipulates the Estonian is the official language of the Republic of Estonia.

schools have to put down in their statutes minimum requirements for the proficiency in language of instruction. This is necessary for assessing the proficiency of foreigners who come to study with a temporary residence permit. Graduating from an Estonian-medium degree programme means that Estonian language testing is not necessary anymore.

### 5.1.1.2. Legislation in Latvia

Table 5 summarises the pieces of legislation drafted in Latvia that have been considered in the analysis. The number of words presented in the table shows the total amount of material, from which clauses on language in higher education have been extracted. When the piece of legislation is available only in Latvian, the approximate translation of its title to English is given in square brackets.

**Table 5.** Legislation concerning language in higher education in Latvia

	<b>Year of publication</b>	<b>Length in number of words</b>
Constitution of the Republic of Latvia	1922	5,309
Official Language Law	1999	3,218
Education Law	1998	16,713
Law on Institutions of Higher Education	1999	20,615
Law on Scientific Activity	2005	10,505
Ministru kabineta noteikumi Nr.1001 Doktora zinātniskā grāda piešķiršanas (promocijas) kārtība un kritēriji [Cabinet Regulation No. 1001 On the Procedure of and Criteria for Awarding of Doctoral Scientific Degree (Promotion)]	2005	2,036
Ministru kabineta noteikumi Nr. 407 Augstskolu, koledžu un studiju virzienu akreditācijas noteikumi [Cabinet Regulation No. 407 Regulations of Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, Colleges, and Fields of Studies]	2015	6,495
Ministru kabineta noteikumi Nr.202 Kārtība, kādā izsniedz valsts atzītus augstāko izglītību apliecinošus dokumentus [Cabinet Regulation No. 202 Procedure, according to which State Recognised Documents of Higher Education are Issued]	2013	6,113
Cabinet Regulation No. 408 Regulations Regarding Licensing of Study Programmes	2015	2,723
Cabinet Regulation No. 68 Procedures for Granting Scholarships to Foreigners	2012	2,639
Cabinet Regulations No. 733 Regulations Regarding the Amount of the Knowledge of the Official Language and the Procedures for Examination of the Knowledge of the Official Language for the Performance of Professional Duties and Duties of Office, Receipt of the Permanent Residence Permit and Obtaining of the Status of a Long-term Resident of the European Union and the State Fee for Examination of the Fluency in the Official Language	2009	6,066
Ministru kabineta noteikumi Nr.203 Studējošā personas lietas noformēšanas un aktualizēšanas kārtība [Cabinet Regulation No. 203 Procedure for Processing and Updating the Students' Personal File]	2007	1,081

Altogether 12 pieces of legislation were analysed, the material extracted from legislation for the purposes of analysis consists of 3,358 words. In the analysed legislative acts language has been mentioned in the following ways: official language (41 times), Latvian (30 times), official languages of the EU (17 times), foreign language(s) (11 times), and English (8 times). The following themes were developed after an in-depth analysis of the material: 1) language preservation and development; 2) languages used in studies; 2) language of documents; 3) language proficiency and acquisition; 4) language of knowledge production and dissemination.

### **1. Language maintenance and development**

Similarly to the Estonian legislation analysed above, a few paragraphs of the analysed Latvian legislative acts offer an overall ideological frame to the rest of the material, emphasising the importance of language preservation, protection and development. In this aspect, the state of Latvia attaches considerable significance to the maintenance of the Latvian language, asserting that Latvian has to be preserved, protected, researched and developed (e.g. Constitution, Official Language Law). As in the Estonian case, the Latvian state has also added a sentence on the importance of the preservation of the Latvian language to its constitution. The maintenance, protection, preservation and development of the official language are tied to education in the legislative acts.

### **2. Languages used in studies**

Firstly, the analysed legislative acts deal with language(s) used in higher education studies. Language policy makers have used a wide variety of ways to refer to languages used in studies, for example, ‘study programmes implemented in [a language or languages]’, ‘language of/for/in implementation of study programmes’, ‘language of acquisition of education’, ‘education acquired in [a language or languages]’. These notions have not been provided a definition. The more precise notions of ‘language of instruction’, ‘language of examinations’, ‘language of theses and defence’, ‘language of study materials’ and ‘language of course descriptions’ are used as well. This shows that the state is concerned with a rather great deal of aspects of language use in higher education studies.

Under the current legislation, study programmes are implemented in the official language in state-founded higher education institutions<sup>30</sup>. Language policy makers always refer to Latvian as the *official language* in the context of languages used in studies, emphasising its legal status

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<sup>30</sup> In the near future, the language requirements listed in the act of law will apply also to private higher education institutions (see Section 3.2.2).

as language of higher education. In addition, the law stipulates that *foreign languages* (Law on Institutions of Higher Education) or *other languages* (Law on Education) can be used in the implementation of study programmes in certain cases. The use of *foreign / other languages* is mostly restricted to *the official languages of the EU*. Under the Latvian legislation, these can be used in the implementation of study programmes 1) that are acquired by international students or implemented within international cooperation, and 2), in any study programme in the scope of 1/5 of credit points (except final and state examinations, writing of qualification, Bachelor's and Master's theses). According to the law, foreign languages can be used without any restrictions in the implementation of language and culture studies.

As a result, the notion *foreign languages* can be seen to serve several functions – firstly, it is an umbrella term that includes two separate categories of foreign languages: the official languages of the EU (except Latvian) and other foreign languages. Secondly, in some contexts, foreign languages are defined as the official languages of the EU (Latvian excluded, see example below), while in some other contexts, foreign languages are languages other than the official language (Latvian) and official languages of the EU (Latvian excluded).

/.../ The use of foreign languages in the implementation of study programmes shall be possible only in the following cases:

1) study programmes which are acquired by foreign students in Latvia, and study programmes, which are implemented within the scope of co-operation provided for in European Union programmes and international agreements may be implemented in the official languages of the European Union. /.../ (Law on Institutions of Higher Education 1999, § 56.3)

It appears from the legislative acts that study programmes may be implemented in more than one language – in the majority of cases, the official language and other official languages of the EU. Studies in Latvian or in another official language of the EU are preferred, for example, when granting scholarships for foreigners. Interestingly, the notion *the official language(s) of the EU* is used sometimes in a way that includes Latvian and sometimes in a way it is opposed to Latvian. For example in the following case:

A promotion thesis may be submitted in the official language or in any of the official languages of the European Union. (Law on Scientific Activity 2005, § 11.5)

The language policy makers do not name the official languages of the EU which they encourage to use, hinting that all the official languages of the EU are equal in that sense. In any case, Russian is excluded from becoming a potential medium of instruction at state-financed tertiary education.

Finally, the law stipulates that language of implementation of study programmes has to be accepted by accreditation committee. Academic staff involved in the implementation of studies has to have at least B2 level competence in the language of implementation. When a study programme or a part of it is implemented in a foreign language, academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme has to prove their language skills. Moreover, course descriptions and study materials have to be available in the language of implementation of studies.

### **3. Language of documents**

The state is concerned with the language of documents issued by higher education institutions to other state institutions (accreditation documents), documents issued by higher education institutions to students (diplomas, diploma supplements) as well as documents submitted by students to the state (scholarship applications). Languages that are mentioned as languages of documents: Latvian, the official language, English, the official languages of the EU, another language / other languages, original language (language used in diplomas in case of joint degree programmes).

Firstly, Latvian is mentioned as a language used in documents issued by higher education institutions to students (diplomas, diploma supplements) as well as language of scholarship applications submitted by students to the state. Secondly, the notion ‘official language’ is used in the institutional context only, i.e. in case of documents submitted by higher education institutions to the state for accreditation of their study programmes. In addition, the law stipulates that the name of higher education institution has to be in the official language. Thirdly, the official languages of the EU are mentioned in the context of foreign students (additional languages used in diplomas issued to foreigners) and international cooperation (language of diploma in case of joint degree programmes with higher education institutions abroad). Finally, the language of documents is the only context in which English has been particularly mentioned in the entire Latvian data (language of translation of accreditation documents, language of scholarship applications and language of diploma supplements).

### **4. Language proficiency and acquisition**

The Latvian legislators are mostly concerned with the language proficiency of academic staff and international students. The state does not regulate language proficiency of local students by any means. Firstly, the analysed legislative acts put great emphasis on the proficiency of academic staff in the official language. Academic staff has to have the highest level of proficiency in the official language (C1 for assistants, lecturers, assistant professors, professors,

heads of departments and university administrations). Exception is made for citizens of other states and stateless persons who participate in the implementation of study programmes within international cooperation. Secondly, the state also regulates proficiency of academic staff in foreign languages. More specifically, academic staff has to have at least B2 level competence in the foreign language in which studies are (entirely or partly) implemented.

Moreover, the state regulates the language proficiency of foreigners. Under Latvian legislation, foreigners have to have sufficient proficiency in the language of studies and if they stay in Latvia longer than six months or take subjects for the worth of more than 20 credit points, they have to take classes in the official language. Both of these requirements are simultaneously prescriptions to higher education institutions that can admit only students with sufficient proficiency in the language of studies and that have to create opportunities for them to learn the official language. Interestingly, the Procedures for Granting Scholarships for Foreigners stipulates that foreigners have to prove that they have necessary language skills to study in Latvia, and specifies that foreigners have to have either Latvian or English proficiency. Generally, such specifications are avoided in legislative acts that create theoretical opportunities for the use of all languages (or all official languages of the EU).

## **5. Language of knowledge production and dissemination**

What is more, the state regulates languages used for research production and dissemination. Languages that can be used for research dissemination are mentioned in the following manner: the official language, Latvian, foreign languages, and the official languages of the EU. First of all, higher education institutions are obliged to publish summaries of their research findings on the webpage in the official language. Additionally, this can be done also in other official languages of the EU. Secondly, the state is concerned with the language of theses and their public defence. According to the Language Law, theses can be written in the official language or foreign language (accompanied by an extensive summary in the official language). The law on Scientific Activity stipulates that PhD theses can be written and defended in the official language or other official languages of the EU. Summaries of the PhD theses have to be submitted in Latvian and in a foreign language that is decided by promotional committee. Other foreign languages can be used for the defence of the PhD theses only if thesis is dedicated to their research.

## 5.1.2. Policy-planning documents

In this section, policy-planning documents that discuss language in higher education are analysed. Only current documents (in summer 2018) are considered. When the states have provided official English translations to the documents, the text in English has been included in the analysis. When translations to English are not available, original documents in Estonian and Latvian have been analysed. All of the documents are publicly available on the official webpages of ministries or institutions subject to their supervision.

### 5.1.2.1. Estonia: policy-planning documents

Table 6 summarises the policy-planning documents drafted in Estonia that have been considered in the analysis. The tables include information on the name of the document, its author, year of publication and length in the number of words. The latter shows the total amount of material, from which sections about language in higher education have been extracted for the purposes of analysis.

**Table 6.** Policy-planning documents concerning language in higher education in Estonia

	<b>Author and year of publication</b>	<b>Length in number of words</b>
Estonian National Strategy on Sustainable Development <i>Sustainable Estonia 21</i>	Ministry of the Environment, 2005	n.a.
National Reform Programme <i>Estonia 2020</i>	Government of the Republic of Estonia, 2014	14,402
Development Plan of the Estonian Language for 2011–2017	Ministry of Education and Research, 2011	
Eesti võõrkeelte strateegia 2009–2015/2017 [Estonian Foreign Language Strategy 2009–2015/2017]	Ministry of Education and Research, 2009	4,692
Keeleprogramm 2018–2021 [Language Programme 2018–2021]	Ministry of Education and Research, 2018	5,785
Estonian Research and Development and Innovation Strategy <i>Knowledge-based Estonia</i> for 2014–2020	Ministry of Education and Research, 2014	9099
Teadus- ja arendustegevuse ning innovatsiooni programm 2018–2021 [Research and Development and Innovation Programme 2018–2021]	Ministry of Education and Research, 2018	4,878
The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020	Ministry of Education and Research, Estonian Cooperation Assembly & Estonian Education Forum, 2014	9861
Kõrgharidusprogramm 2018–2021 [Higher Education Programme 2018–2021]	Ministry of Education and Research, 2018	1,275
Tööturu ja õppe tihedama seostamise programm 2018–2021 [Programme for Connecting Labour Market and Studies 2018–2021]	Ministry of Education and Research, 2018	2,821
Eestikeelse terminoloogia programm 2013–2017 [Estonian-language Terminology Programme 2013–2017]	Ministry of Education and Research, 2013	3120

Eestikeelsete kõrgkooliõpikute loomise toetamise põhimõtted 2018–2027 [Principles of Creating and Supporting Estonian Language Textbooks for Higher Education 2018–2027]	Ministry of Education and Research, 2018	1,556
Eesti keele ja kultuuri akadeemilise välisõppe korraldamise põhimõtted 2018–2027 [Principles of Organising Academic Studies of Estonian Language and Culture Abroad 2018–2027]	Ministry of Education and Research, 2018	1,601
Eesti kõrghariduse rahvusvahelise tutvustamise strateegia 2015–2020 [Estonian Higher Education International Promotion Strategy 2015–2020]	Archimedes Foundation, 2015	1,806
Eesti teaduse rahvusvahelise tutvustamise strateegia 2016–2022 [Estonian Research International Promotion Strategy 2016–2022]	Estonian Research Council	1,730
Eesti kõrghariduse ja teaduse rahvusvahelistumise prioriteetsed tegevused aastatel 2013–2020 [Preferred Activities for Internationalisation of Estonian Higher Education and Research 2013–2020]	Council of Internationalisation of Estonian Higher Education and Research, 2012	1,013
Lõimumisvaldkonna arengukava “Lõimuv Eesti 2020” [Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia <i>Lõimuv Eesti 2020</i> ]	Ministry of Culture, 2014	3,706
Riiklik programm “Eesti keel ja kultuurimälu II (2014–2018) [National Programme <i>Estonian Language and Cultural Memory II</i> (2014–2018)]	Ministry of Education and Research, 2014	n.a.

Altogether, 18 documents have been included in the analysis. Some documents include lengthy discussions on the topic (e.g. Development Plan of the Estonian Language), other documents have just mentioned language in the context of higher education in a few sentences (e.g. Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion). Parts of the documents that deal with language in higher education have been extracted, the total amount of text included in the analysis includes 6,806 words. The following languages have been mentioned: Estonian (190 times), foreign language(s) (64 times), English (18 times), Russian (4 times). Language issues are discussed from a variety of viewpoints in the documents. After careful analysis four prevailing themes were formulated: 1) language competition; 2) language acquisition and proficiency; 2) language of studies; 4) language of knowledge creation and dissemination.

Quite often, the texts of strategies and programmes present references to normative regulations, other strategies and programmes. When doing so, the documents bring out what specifically is said elsewhere about their focus. Although the documents are linked, they do not necessarily form a whole. Different aims and possibly different authorships are visible.

## 1. Languages competition

Firstly, policy-makers discuss the overall language situation in higher education in the analysed documents. They take constitution as the basis for the suggested language management – the Estonian language has to be preserved. Using Estonian as language of higher



education and science is construed as an important aspect of the preservation of the Estonian language, which according to the constitution is one of the main objectives of the state.

On the one hand, policy-makers describe language environment in public higher education institutions as being ‘predominantly Estonian’ (Development Plan of the Estonian Language 2011: 54). On the other hand, the sociolinguistic situation in higher education is described in terms of competition between Estonian and English; Russian is mentioned once. According to the Development Plan of the Estonian Language (2011: 52), ‘[i]n higher education efforts are made to seek balance between the national and international components, that is, between the functions of Estonian and English; Russian is used, too.’ English is construed as the main competitor for Estonian in higher education and science. The terminology programme makes use of the notion ‘domain loss’ and claims that Estonian is losing the domains of higher education and science due to the rapid spread of English. The discussion is ideological and the threatened status of Estonian is not backed up with research findings.

Altogether, two concerns appear in the state documents. Firstly, continuation of the use of Estonian as language of higher education, and secondly, the preservation and development of Estonian as language of science. The analysed material is filled with statements such as ‘Estonian has to be the primary language of instruction and science’ and ‘Estonian as a language of higher education and science should have a strong position’ (Development Plan of the Estonian Language). However, the Development Plan also notes that the notion of ‘language of higher education’ is hazy and has not been defined (p. 54). According to the analysis of the material, the current status quo of Estonian as language of science is not enough and the use of Estonian as language of science should be ‘supported’, ‘preserved’, ‘developed’, ‘increased’, ‘popularised’ and ‘spread’. Complete transition to a foreign language should be avoided in any branch of science (Development Plan of the Estonian Language, p. 54) – but it remains unclear what ‘the complete transition’ means.

## **2. Language acquisition and proficiency**

The policy-makers discuss the acquisition of Estonian and foreign languages in the analysed documents. The acquisition of academic and professional Estonian and foreign languages as well as Estonian as a second language and Estonian as a foreign language (abroad) have been stressed. The latter is not precisely the topic of this thesis, however, it has been covered as the acquisition of Estonian in higher education institutions abroad has been argumentatively linked with Estonian higher education and its development. More specifically, students who acquire Estonian in a foreign university are construed as potential students of Estonian higher education institutions and potential participants in the Estonian labour market. Thus, academic Estonian

studies abroad are seen in the policy-planning documents as a mechanism for internationalising Estonian higher education.

Foreign languages are not named when language acquisition in higher education establishments is discussed, except for once in the *Foreign language strategy* that mentions that students mostly study English, Russian, Estonian as second language, German and French at Estonian higher education institutions; in addition, Italian, Spanish, Finnish, Swedish and Turkish are mentioned as language studied by the students in Estonia. Moreover, the strategy stresses that it is important to create opportunities to acquire the official languages of the EU in Estonian higher education institutions.

The policy-planning documents mention both locals and incoming foreigners as language acquirers. More specifically, the documents discuss language acquisition for the following groups of people: all students; students undergoing foreign language teacher training; students who have acquired general education abroad; international students; students enrolled in Estonian-medium curricula whose mother tongue is not Estonian; students, whose mother tongue is not Estonian; and incoming foreign academic staff and researchers. The main focus of the documents is on the language acquisition of students; foreign researchers and academic staff are mentioned twice in the entire material.

The reasons provided in the analysed documents for the importance of language acquisition in Estonian higher education institutions are threefold: 1) acquisition of the Estonian language by students whose mother tongue is not Estonian helps them to acquire Estonian-medium higher education; 2) acquisition of Estonian and foreign languages is important for graduates (both local and international students) in order to find employment in the Estonian labour market (and international labour market); 3) foreign language acquisition supports student mobility and internationalisation of higher education.

Mostly, language proficiency of students is discussed; language proficiency of academic staff mentioned rarely (unjustified language requirements should be avoided; also academic staff has to be proficiency in foreign languages). The state is concerned with improving language proficiency of students. Improvement is needed for Estonian and foreign language skills. Estonian proficiency – the main concern are the students whose mother tongue is not Estonian or more precisely, is Russian, or who have graduated from the non-Estonian-medium upper secondary schools.

### **3. Language of studies**

Policy-makers do not always refer to medium of instruction when discussing language of studies, although the main focus is on it. Mostly Estonian and foreign languages are discussed

as languages of studies in the analysed policy-planning documents. English is mentioned three times in this context, either when reference is made to the overall spread of English in European or world higher education or by a group of people who specifically stand for strengthening the position of English as medium of instruction in Estonian higher education. No other foreign language has been named. In the analysed material, three arguments appear in supporting the use of foreign languages as languages of instruction in Estonian higher education: 1) improvement of foreign language proficiency; 2) increased quality of higher education; 3) additional workforce in the Estonian labour market. Thus, foreign language instruction is seen as an instrument for improvements.

Furthermore, policy-makers focus on preserving Estonian as the primary language of instruction in higher education institutions. In the majority of cases, in which the preservation of Estonian-medium instruction is stressed, no arguments are given, it is something inevitable to the Estonian state. However, two arguments appear in the material that are connected with language proficiency and prestige: 1) Estonian-instruction ensures a high level of Estonian language proficiency among graduates; 2) not using Estonian as medium of instruction in the most specialities would diminish the role of the language in society.

Another issue discussed in the analysed material is the access of local students to Estonian-medium studies. Estonian-medium studies are intended for local students. The 2013 reform (Estonian-medium higher education without tuition fees), is argumentatively linked with better access to higher education. Here, the main concern are graduates of non-Estonian-medium upper secondary schools who are described as often not having sufficient proficiency in Estonian to study in it. As a result, the state supports language classes for these students in order for them to be able to study in Estonian (this has been discussed above in greater detail).

What differs in the documents is the scope of using Estonian as medium of instruction. This topic has deserved a great deal of attention of policy-makers in the analysed material. In a variety of documents, policy-makers argue for the preservation of Estonian as medium of instruction in higher education, however, their understanding on its scope differs – in terminology programme, it has been stated that Estonian should be used as medium of instruction for all specialities; in the Development Plan of the Estonian Language – for all study programme groups, and in some documents that are not valid anymore but that are being referred to in the analysed documents – at all levels of study, or BA and MA only; the pro-English document *Preferred Activities for Internationalisation of Estonian Higher Education and Research*: Estonian should be used for Bachelor's studies. In order to put an end to the discussion, language policy makers have put forth in the *Development Plan of the Estonian*

*Language* that the use of Estonian-instruction in all study programme groups should be legalised, and proportions of languages used for instruction should be defined.

#### **4. Language of knowledge creation and dissemination**

In this context, policy-planning documents describe different languages as having different roles, thus describing languages in hierarchies. At the top of the hierarchy is English, it is construed as a fact in the policy-planning documents that English is the main language of knowledge dissemination in Estonia. The use of English in this function is an undisputed fact, something that is not argued against. For example, English is the undisputed language of doctoral dissertations. The only cases, which prescribe using English for knowledge dissemination are for gaining benefits, i.e. marketing Estonian research. In some cases, the policy-planning documents refer to foreign languages as languages in which doctoral dissertations are written.

Estonian is construed in the analysed policy-planning documents as a language in need of state support as publishing in Estonian is considered not to be motivating for researchers without top-down state intervention. The state policy agrees on the need of supporting the use of Estonian as a language in which research is published; in addition to being important for the preservation of the Estonian as language of science, its role in the continuation of Estonian-medium higher education is acknowledged.

Suggestions: major research results should be published also in Estonian; all specialities should be covered with educational literature in Estonian. The mechanisms for supporting the use of Estonian as language of knowledge dissemination are mostly two: 1) support for creating and publishing higher education textbooks in Estonian; and 2) support for supplying doctoral dissertations with extensive summaries in Estonian. Both of these activities are motivated financially; the state pays for the writing and publishing of textbooks and provides grants for writing summaries for doctoral dissertations. In addition, the *Development Plan of the Estonian Language* (2011) states that a requirement should be established to write such summaries also for Bachelor's and Master's theses.

##### **5.1.2.2. Latvia: policy-planning documents**

The Latvian policy documents analysed below are summarised in Table 7. The table includes information on the name of the document, its author, year of publication and length in the number of words. The latter shows the total amount of material, from which sections about language in higher education have been extracted.

**Table 7.** Policy documents concerning language in higher education in Latvia

	<b>Year of publication</b>	<b>Length in number of words</b>
National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014–2020	Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre, 2012	23,432
Official Language Policy Guidelines for 2015–2020	Ministry of Education and Science, 2014	n.a.
Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy (2012–2018)	Ministry of Culture, 2012	17,361
Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnes 2014.–2020. gadam [Education Development Guidelines for 2014–2020]	Ministry of Education and Science, 2013	50,576
Zinātnes, tehnoloģijas attīstības un inovācijas pamatnostādnes 2014.–2020. gadam [Guidelines for Research, Technological Development and Innovation 2014–2020]	Ministry of Education and Science, 2013	24,239
Latvijas augstākās izglītības un augstskolu attīstības nacionālā koncepcija 2013.–2020. gadam [Concept of the Development of Higher Education and Higher Education Institutions for 2013–2020]	Council of Higher Education, 2013	30,267
Vienošanās par labu praksi ārvalstu studējošo piesaistē [Agreement on Good Practice in Attracting International Students]	Ministry of Education and Science, 2017	1,655
Jauna augstākās izglītības finansēšanas modeļa ieviešana Latvijā konceptuāls ziņojums [Information about Implementing New Model for Financing Higher Education in Latvia]	Ministry of Education and Science, 2015	15,032
Informatīvais ziņojums par pāreju uz mācībām valsts valodā vispārējās izglītības iestādēs [Information about Transition to Instruction in the Official Language in General Secondary Education]	Ministry of Education and Science, 2017	3,513

Altogether, nine policy documents have analysed. Each of them includes some information on the topic, however, none of them gives an in-depth view. The text extracted for analysis from Latvian policy-planning documents contains 1,719 words. Language has been mentioned in the following ways: Latvian (26 times), foreign language(s) (19 times), official languages of the EU (10 times), official language (5 times), English (2 times), Russian (once). The thematic coding of material suggests that the policy-planning documents in language and education discuss three main themes that relate to languages in higher education: 1) language acquisition and proficiency; 2) languages for studies; 3) congruency of state and EU policy.

### **1. Language acquisition and proficiency**

The main concern of the Latvian state, which appears in the analysed policy-planning documents in relation to language in higher education, is language acquisition and proficiency.

In the context of language acquisition and proficiency, the state is mainly concerned with the acquisition and proficiency of the Latvian language (20 mentions, including 10 mentions of Latvian as a foreign language). Foreign languages are mentioned in the context for 8 times; the official language and the languages of the member states of the EU are both mentioned once.

Firstly, the state is concerned with spreading the Latvian language, i.e. teaching Latvian for foreigners. The main focus of the policy-planning documents in the context of Latvian acquisition is on international students who are studying at higher education institutions abroad, and international students who have come to study in Latvia. The state plans to establish a support system for the Latvian language studies abroad in order to promote the spread of Latvian, and suggests that the interest of international students in Latvia towards learning the Latvian language should be facilitated by the higher education institutions. Secondly, a concern about the Latvian language proficiency of national minorities in Latvia is expressed both in relation to the language skills of students and academic staff. No measures are offered to improve their language skills in academia, the political instruments meant to improve their language skills are focused on general education, not higher education.

When it comes to foreign language acquisition and proficiency, it can be deduced from the material that foreign language learning is suggested both for locals and foreigners in Latvia. Firstly, foreign language proficiency is overtly required from international students who intend to study in a foreign language in Latvia; their language proficiency has to be sufficient for studies, and its sufficiency has to be tested by the higher education establishment or certified internationally. Secondly, foreign language proficiency is overtly required from academic staff and the rest of the staff in higher education institutions who are involved with incoming international students in Latvia. For the latter, the state suggests that higher education institutions offer foreign language courses for the members of academic staff whose proficiency in the foreign language, in which studies are implemented, is not sufficient.

The analysed policy-planning documents do not openly discuss the language skills of local Latvian-speaking students. Whereas it can be deduced from the material that the state suggests foreign language acquisition also for local students, the Latvian language skills of Latvian-speaking students are not mentioned even in passing.

## **2. Languages for studies**

Another point of interest that policy makers discuss to some extent in Latvian policy-planning documents is the issue of languages used for studies, including advertising and sharing information about study programme, creating and implementing studies and providing studying-related services to students. In this context, the focus is on languages other than

Latvian – the official languages of the EU have been mentioned for 8 times, foreign languages 7 times, Latvian 5 times, English 2 times, Russian and the official language once. Thus, the approach put forward in the policy-planning documents to languages used for the purposes of studies is a bit different than the approach discussed above in the context of Latvian normative regulations.

As can be seen, the main focus of the policy-planning documents in the context of languages used for studies lies on the use of foreign languages, particularly on the official languages of the EU. It has been stressed in the *National Development Plan* that higher education studies have to be implemented in accordance with the state's language policy, i.e. primarily in Latvian and other official languages of the EU, however, the main attention of policy-makers is on foreign languages. Using the official languages of the EU is mostly discussed in the context of promoting the creation and implementation of study programmes in these languages for the purposes of the country's higher education export.

“Ir pastiprināti jāattīsta ārvalstu studentiem un mācībspēkiem pievilcīga studiju vide, kas saistīta pamatā ar studiju satura pieejamību svešvalodās /.../.” (Guidelines for the Development of Education, p. 85)

The official languages of the EU are also mentioned in making references to the EU policies promoting multilingualism and language diversity in higher education.

The policy-planning documents reveal the state's concern with promoting higher education studies for international audience. The documents suggest that information about study programmes should be spread in Latvian and English (or languages of implementation of studies) alike. Here, the only mentionings of English appear in the entire documents, as language of information used in addition to Latvian.

### **3. Congruency of state and EU policy**

The third theme that arises from the analysis of Latvian policy-planning documents is the congruency of state language management with the policy proposed by the EU. Policy-makers make references to the policies adopted by the EU to show legitimate support for local policies. The Latvian policy planning documents include a great deal of references to the EU and world's linguistic diversity. It seems like a way to find extra reasoning for the Latvian language management that aims to preserve and develop Latvian – Latvian is not only important for the state, but also for the EU and the world. The language policy guidelines as well as several other policy-planning documents explicitly stress that Latvian is part of the world's linguistic diversity.

As a result, a tension appears in the analysed material – on the one hand, Latvian language policy makers aim to create conditions for the Latvian language to thrive in all spheres of life in Latvia that involves measures to curb the power of competing languages (e.g. Russian), and on the other hand, rather frequent references are made to the EU language policy that include support for multilingualism and language diversity. Despite all languages being equal in Latvia, the Latvian language has to be at the top of language hierarchy here.

### **5.1.3. Main results**

There are both similarities and differences between Estonia and Latvia in respect to state language management in higher education. Firstly, language policies on higher education are scattered across a great deal of legislative and policy-planning documents. Secondly, both states are concerned with some aspects of language proficiency and acquisition of students and academic staff as well as with the language of documents (issued by higher education institutions to state or students, or by students to higher education institutions or states). Finally, both states have paid a good deal of attention to languages used in studies, however, the state of Estonia mostly deals with language of instruction, whereas the state of Latvia has adopted a wider approach to language use in studies (including language of theses, language of examinations, language of study materials and language of course descriptions).

Both states deal with all three parts of language planning – status planning (language of instruction, language of education, language of administration in higher education institutions etc.), corpus planning (development of terminology, development of scientific language), and language acquisition (particularly for foreigners and local students who have graduated from a minority school, in case of Estonia also local students with Estonian as L1 – academic and professional Estonian).

Moreover, both Estonia and Latvia have taken on a task to guarantee the use of the official language in certain functions, including higher education. The main focus of state-authored language management in higher education is on the preservation and development of Estonian/Latvian. However, a difference lies in reference to the national language. In the Estonian normative regulations reference is made mostly to the Estonian language, whereas in Latvian legislative acts Latvian is mostly referred to as the official language, a notion that constantly maintains the special status of Latvian. In the legislative acts of Latvia, the concept *the official language* is mostly used in institutional context, i.e. when the state prescribes language use in higher education institutions (language used in studies, language of documents submitted by higher education institutions to the state). In addition, it appears in the context of



language acquisition and proficiency, and research dissemination. In the context of higher education, Estonian policy-makers have used the concept *the official language* is only in the paragraphs that address Estonian language acquisition by those who are not proficient in Estonian. The status of the language (the official language) could be interpreted to serve as an explanation why it should be acquired and used.

The Estonian language management in higher education pays quite heavy attention to the Estonian language skills (academic, professional, scientific language) of local students, including those whose L1 is Estonian. By contrast, the Latvian language management does not deal with the Latvian language skills of the local students (except for the graduates of minority schools). In Estonia, part of the focus of the preservation and development of the Estonian language lies on teaching the state language to Estonians, for example, by stressing the need to include Academic or Professional Estonian courses in university programmes. In Latvia, no such propositions are made in state-authored documents, the focus is on teaching Latvian to old and new immigrants, international students both in Latvia and abroad.

Furthermore, languages other than Estonian/Latvian are more visible in higher education language management in Estonian legislation than in Latvian legislation. English has been frequently mentioned in the legislative acts concerning higher education in Estonia, almost as frequently as Estonian. However, English is solely mentioned as the language used in documentation, mostly together with Estonian. The legislative acts allow the use of English without the accompanying Estonian only in few cases. In the Latvian legislative acts, English is also mentioned only in the context of documents but not so frequently than in Estonian legislation. Russian is largely invisible in state-authored policy documents. The use of Russian in higher education is mentioned once in policy-planning documents in every country: the *Development Plan of the Estonian Language* mentions that Russian is one of the languages used as medium of instruction at Estonian universities; and the Latvian *Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy* mention that the knowledge of state language is not good among students of private institutions of higher education that often use Russian as the main medium of instruction.

Quite often, the hazy notion of *foreign language(s)* is used in Estonian and Latvian state-authored documents in respect to higher education. In the Estonian set of documents, the notions *other languages* and *languages other than Estonian* are used rather frequently as well. In Latvia, policy-makers also use the ideologically-loaded concept *the official languages of the EU*, i.e. under Latvian legislation, the official languages of the EU may be used for implementing study programmes in higher education, except for language and culture studies. In the Latvian

legislative acts *foreign languages, the official languages of the EU and other languages* are always used side-by-side with the official language/Latvian and never alone.

Language issues in processes of internationalisation of higher education are discussed more thoroughly in the Estonian material than in the Latvian material. The Estonian discussion includes arguments not only for the benefits of internationalisation but also warnings about and even disapproval with the current internationalisation tendencies. By contrast, the Latvian documents do not cover language issues in processes of internationalisation thoroughly, and when discussing internationalisation, language issues are often not mentioned. What is discussed in several documents is the necessity to internationalise Latvian higher education (cf. Kibbermann 2017). In general, language and higher education do not seem to share deep connections in Latvian policy-planning documents, whereas in Estonia the topics are more intertwined.

It appears in the Estonian set of data that the state has left the right to decide upon the use of languages to higher education institutions, stating only that Estonian is the main language of instruction at Estonian higher education institutions, and the national university, i.e. the University of Tartu, bears responsibility for teaching in the Estonian language and researching it. By contrast, Latvian laws pay more attention to language issues in higher education, stipulating the circumstances under which languages can be used in university settings. Some ideas put forward in the Estonian policy-planning documents are legalised in Latvia (the proportions of languages of instruction; the scope of summaries of doctoral dissertations in Latvian and foreign languages).

## **5.2. Mezzo-level data: institutional documents**

In this section, the analysis of documents issued by the national universities, the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia, are analysed in order to highlight their language management efforts. Only current documents (in summer 2018) have been considered. All of the documents are available on the webpages of the universities, and deal with issues that are current for the entire university, not just some part of it (e.g. a faculty). The University of Tartu has translated the majority of its regulations and other documents into English, and the University of Latvia provides translation to some of its documents. If possible, the English version of documents has been included in the analysis. For the preciseness of the analysis, the translations have been compared to the originals in Estonian and Latvian. The authorship of language policy documents analysed in this section is less clear than in the previous section

about state policy documents, mostly they could be authored by an especially appointed working-group.

### 5.2.1 University of Tartu

Table 8 summarises the documents drafted at the University of Tartu that have been considered in the analysis. The length of the documents in the number of words shows the total amount of material, from which sections on language have been extracted.

**Table 8.** Documents of the University of Tartu concerning language

	<b>Year of publication</b>	<b>Length in number of words</b>
Strategic Plan of the University of Tartu for 2015–2020	2014	1,977
Tartu Ülikooli põhikiri [Statutes of the University of Tartu]	2014	4,799
Agreement on Good Practice in the Internationalisation of Estonia's Higher Education Institutions	2007	1,986
Study Regulations	2013	18,355
Conditions of reimbursement of study costs in degree study	2017	4,184
Form and procedure for issue of diplomas, residency certificates and diploma supplements	2013	3,223
Procedure for Awarding Doctorates	2013	5,297
Procedure for Publication of Graduation Theses and Dissertation	2012	1,263
Rules of Residency	2013	5,026
Procedure for Applying for Granting and Payment of Stipends and Study Allowances	2016	5,719
Admission Rules at the First and Second Level of Higher Education in the 2018/2019 Academic Year	2016	11,294
Admission Rules in Doctoral Studies	2016	3,411
Statutes of Curriculum	2015	4,712
Regulations for Processing Development Projects	2016	2,775
Conditions and Procedure of Electing the Representatives of Academic Staff to the Faculty Council	2015	1,740
Regulations for Recruitment of Teaching and Research Staff	2013	5,171
Documentary Procedure Rules	2015	2,498
Rules of Senate Elections	2016	1,143
Rahvusvahelistumise lähtealused ja eesmärgid Tartu Ülikoolis kuni 2020 [Principles and Objectives of Internationalisation at the University of Tartu until 2020]	2015	472
Language Principles of the University of Tartu 2009–2015	2009	898

Altogether 19 documents were analysed, the analysed material consists of 5,734 words. In the analysed material, the following languages have been mentioned: Estonian (148 times), English (77 times), foreign language(s) (21 times), non-Estonian (16 times), Russian (5 times), German (3 times), French (2 times). The following recurring themes were formulated after the analysis: 1) language preservation and development; 2) language acquisition and proficiency;

3) language of studies; 4) language of knowledge creation and dissemination; and 5) language of administration and documents.

### **1. Language preservation and development**

Main focus of the language policy of the University of Tartu lies on the importance to preserve and develop the Estonian language. The University of Tartu is the national university by law and by tradition, thus it feels responsible for the development of the national language in higher education and research (*Strategic Plan of the UT; Statutes of the UT*). The University of Tartu as the national university is responsible for the preservation and development of the Estonian language, thus it enhances education in Estonian. Using Estonian in higher education and research is considered to be important in order for the Estonian culture to survive (*Strategic Plan of the UT; Statutes of the UT*).

### **2. Language acquisition and proficiency**

The documents of the University of Tartu reveal that in order to promote Estonian, the University of Tartu teaches Estonian to international students and academic staff as well as local students (*Strategic Plan of the UT*). The focus of language acquisition and proficiency is on the following languages: Estonian (acquisition and proficiency); English (acquisition and proficiency); foreign languages (proficiency); French (proficiency), German (proficiency), Russian (proficiency) (German, French and Russian are mentioned only in the context of foreign language and culture studies and admission requirements). Language proficiency level for teaching and research staff is not defined; for students applying for studies at the university – B2.

The necessity to acquire Estonian is advocated for 1) all students enrolled in Bachelor's, professional higher education and integrated curricula; 2) foreign / international students; 3) foreign / international employees (teaching and research staff); 3) students without previous Estonian skills who wish to study in Estonian; 4) students who have graduated from secondary schools with language of instruction other than Estonian and students who have taken the state examination in Estonian as a second language and scored less than 80 points or whose language command is not at the B2 level. The Estonian proficiency is valued for employees as well as students.

The University offers the following reasons for the importance of advocating Estonian proficiency: 1) because the University of Tartu is the national university; 2) in order to study in Estonian; 3) in order to achieve the learning outcomes of Bachelor's, professional higher

education and integrated studies; 4) in order to enhance the integration of international students and staff into Estonian society.

The necessity to acquire English is advocated for 1) the teaching staff whose courses are taught in English; 2) members of support staff who advise international students, all researchers and teaching staff. The proficiency in English required from 1) international and visiting students who apply for studies in English or learn Estonian on the basis of English; 2) all students who apply for studies in English; 3) international students who apply for doctoral studies (except for Russian and Slavonic Philology); 4) students who apply for studies in English Philology. Proficiency in English is advocated by the University 1) in order to study in English; 2) in order to teach in English; 3) in order to advise international students and staff at the university.

In addition, Russian proficiency required from international students who apply for doctoral studies in Russian and Slavonic Philology, and French and German proficiency required from 1) students who apply for studies in French or German philology. Moreover, proficiency in *foreign languages* required from academic staff involved in the curricula and programme that is taught in a foreign language. Language proficiency required when applying for a teaching or research position at the university.

### **3. Language of studies**

Authors of documents issued by the University of Tartu that include some discussion on languages used for studies mention Estonian and foreign languages in the context, whereas the only explicitly named foreign language is English. It has been written down in the documents that Estonian and foreign languages / English are used together in studies in order to achieve learning outcomes – currently, Bachelor's studies and the studies of professional higher education, integrated studies and doctoral studies have to include courses or modules taught in foreign languages (English). In addition, each syllabus has to include a short description of the course in English.

Moreover, the university provides protection to the use of Estonian at the first level of higher education, stating that curricula in foreign languages can be open at the first level of higher education only if there already is an Estonian-taught curriculum in the same field of study.

The documents show that the university is interested in their students' and teaching staff's proficiency in the language of instruction. Students' proficiency in the language of instruction has to be certified or tested at the university. Students have to have at least B2 level in the language of instruction. Students without English skills at the B2 level cannot be enrolled in English-taught programmes at the university, however, students without Estonian skills can

apply for studies in Estonian and take an intensive language course in order to be able to study in Estonian.

Language of instruction is tied to tuition; details of paying the tuition and releasing the students from tuition are discussed thoroughly in the documents.

As a result, it appears that the University of Tartu has regulated language use only in respect to language of instruction and language of documents (curricula, syllabi) when it comes to languages used for studies.

#### **4. Language of knowledge creation and dissemination**

Language of doctoral dissertations. English is construed as the primary language of doctoral dissertations and Estonian as a secondary language used for writing the doctoral dissertations.

14. A dissertation must contain the following:

14.8. an exhaustive Estonian summary of various parts of the paper if the dissertation has been written in a foreign language or an exhaustive foreign-language summary of various parts of the paper if the dissertation has been written in Estonian; (Procedure for Awarding Doctorates)

27. The minutes of the meeting on allowing a dissertation to be defended must, in addition to the standard formal elements of the minutes, also contain /.../ the original and Estonian titles of the dissertation or, if the dissertation is in Estonian, the Estonian and English titles of the dissertation /.../ (Procedure for Awarding Doctorates)

In order to promote the use of Estonian in writing doctoral dissertations, the university regulations stipulate that in addition to English, the following has to be written in Estonian: topic of the dissertation; abstract of the dissertation to be published online; a brief popular science summary for the general audience, and an exhaustive summary of the dissertation written in a foreign language.

#### **5. Language of administration and documents**

The language of administration is Estonian; Estonian is the main and default language of documents (e.g. diplomas, residency certificates, applications for teaching and research positions); the university issues and receives certain documents in Estonian and English, or only in English. The university issues diploma supplements in Estonian and English. The university receives admission documents from students applying for studies at university either in Estonian or English; the university receives residency documents either in Estonian or English. Applications for teaching and research staff positions have to be in Estonian, except when applying for the position of professor, assistant professor, research professor or senior research fellow that have to be submitted both in Estonian and English (required language skills). If the candidate is not expected to know Estonian, the documents can be submitted only in English.

### 5.2.2. University of Latvia

Table 9 summarises the corpus of documents drafted at the University of Latvia that has been considered in the present analysis. The length of the documents in the number of words shows the total amount of material, from which sections on language have been extracted.

**Table 9.** Documents of the University of Latvia concerning language

	<b>Year of publication</b>	<b>Length in number of words</b>
Latvijas Universitātes Satversme	1996	6,747
Latvijas Universitātes valodu politika [Language Policy of the University of Latvia]	2010	570
Latvijas Universitātes Studentu padomes Satversme	2011	663
Latvijas Universitātes Stratēģiskais plāns 2010.–2020. gadam [Strategic Plan of the University of Latvia 2010–2020]	2010	7,525
Latvijas Universitātes pētniecības programma 2015.–2020.gadam	2015	14,611
Latvijas Universitātes studiju programmu un tālākizglītības programmu nolikums	2017	2,030
Latvijas Universitātes doktorantūras nolikums	2003	1,444
Noteikumi par promocijas padomēm un promociju Latvijas Universitātē	2006	3,484
Rīkojums par LU promocijas darbu kopsavilkumu izstrādāšanas un noformēšanas noteikumiem	2012	n.a.
Latvijas Universitātes studējošo prakses organizēšanas kārtība	2007	2,634
Noteikumi par informācijas ievietošanu LU portālā un pamatstruktūrvienību mājaslapu izstrādi	2010	1,183
Noteikumi par izdevuma "Latvijas Universitātes Raksti" izdošanu	2002	1,590
Prasības noslēguma darbu (bakalaura, maģistra darbu, diplomdarbu un kvalifikācijas darbu) izstrādāšanai un aizstāvēšanai Latvijas Universitātē	2012	2,098
Studiju kursu atzīšanas kārtība Latvijas Universitātē	2008	1,302
Uzņemšanas noteikumi Latvijas Universitātē	2016	2,008
Studiju uzsākšanas kārtība vēlākos studiju posmos Latvijas Universitātē	2009	1,273

Altogether 16 documents were analysed; the material consists of 2,492 words. In the analysed material, the following languages have been mentioned: Latvian (66 times), English (42 times), foreign language(s) (28 times), official languages of the EU (6 times), official language (3 times), German (once), French (once). The following themes were formulated: 1) language maintenance and development; 2) language acquisition and proficiency; 3) languages of studies; 4) language of knowledge creation and dissemination; and 5) language of administration and documents.

## **1. Language maintenance and development**

The University of Latvia sees it as its task as the national university to preserve, develop and research the Latvian language (*Language Policy of the University of Latvia*). In order to encourage the development of the Latvian language as the language of higher education and science, the university undertakes to use it in the implementation of study programmes in all fields of science, to teach Latvian to those who do not know the language (sufficiently) – international students and staff whose mother tongue is not Latvian; to develop its terminology and support the creation of study materials. The *Language Policy of the University of Latvia* stresses that it is important to maintain Latvian instruction in all fields of science but does not explain what it exactly means. It also highlights that study materials in Latvian should be created for Bachelor's students (but not for Master's and PhD students).

It appears from the analysis of the institutional documents that the Latvian language situation in higher education and science is satisfactory. The Latvian language is the language of instruction and as such it is used side-by-side with English (or other official languages of the EU, foreign languages (see below). English is construed as the international language of science that has to be acquired by the students and academic staff of the university (see below), the position of English as the language of higher education and science at the University of Latvia has to be improved. Latvian as language of higher education is fine, Latvian as language of science has to be developed.

## **2. Language acquisition and proficiency**

Whereas the language policy guidelines of the UL mostly speak about Latvian as a language which use has to be maintained and guaranteed, English is often put in the light in which its acquisition and use has to be enhanced, expanded and broadened. Altogether, language skills, especially in English, are depicted as a necessary prerequisite for professional development in today's world. The lack of foreign language skills in general, and English skills in particular is a recurring issue. It has been stressed that there is a problem with academic staff's foreign language skills at the UL, and it has been pointed out that the foreign language skills of students are not good enough, thus more emphasis should be put on foreign language teaching. Focus on students as well as staff, both academic and administrative staff. Specific mentions: doctoral students, international students, academic and administrative staff, staff whose mother tongue is not Latvian.

Languages – Latvian and foreign languages, first and foremost English, and then also other foreign languages (French and German are named in the analysed material in the context of doctoral studies as alternatives to English; reference to the common foreign language skills of



students of Latvia, learnt at school). The University of Latvia undertakes to facilitate the acquisition of English (both students and staff) and one additional foreign language. Although the documents agree that other languages (languages of neighbouring countries in particular) should be taught as well, these languages are seen languages learnt at language courses, while English should be more interwoven with regular studies.

Language proficiency important in order to 1) accomplish long-term objectives of the EU; 2) encourage the professional development in modern society. Latvian because of its status as the official language and because it is the task of the university to maintain, protect and develop the Latvian language; and English 1) because of its status as language of international scientific communication (*Language Policy of the UL*) and 2) in order for the students to be competitive in the international labour market. This shows the connection of the university both to the state as well as international science community. The acquisition and use of Latvian is a must, the obligation and honour of the university because of the location of the university (in the republic of Latvia); the acquisition and use of English is linked to international tendencies in research and labour market, not to lag behind, to be competitive.

Problems addressed: 1) insufficient foreign language proficiency of researchers in social and juridical studies that are hamper publishing in foreign languages; 2) language skills of academic and administrative staff have to be improved. Suggested solutions: 1) a system has to be created that enables students and staff to improve their Latvian and foreign language skills, particularly English.

### **3. Languages of studies**

The authors of the documents of the University of Latvia state clearly that the language of studies at the University of Latvia is Latvian and the use of other languages in the implementation of studies takes place according to the law. On the one hand, this shows adherence to the law. On the other hand, it shows that the university does not take responsibility for the use of foreign languages, the responsibility is placed on the state. This idea becomes more visible in the aim of the university set in its strategic plan. The *Strategic Plan of the University of Latvia 2010–2020* suggests that the university should make a suggestion to change the Law on the Institutions of Higher Education in order to be able to create more programmes in foreign languages. In the example below, the university distances itself from the law:

“Firstly, the Law on Higher Education has to be amended so that more programmes could be implemented in foreign languages. /.../

In bachelor's studies 15% of programmes of excellence should be implemented in foreign languages by 2016, and 50% of programmes of excellence should be taught in foreign languages by 2020." (University of Latvia Strategic Plan 2010–2020)

It appears from the document analysis that the following languages are used for studies at the University of Latvia: Latvian, foreign languages, mostly English (no other foreign languages is named in the context), and other official languages of the EU. Latvian is construed as the default language of studies:

4.1. paralēli latviešu valodai attīstīt studiju kursus un modulus angļu valodā. (Language Policy of the University of Latvia)

The authors of university documents do not mention specifically any need to preserve or develop of the status of Latvian as language used in studies, except for one mentioning that the University of Latvia undertakes to guarantee that studies take place in Latvian in all fields of science. The only function in which Latvian needs support is the creation of study aids and materials and educational literature (at least at the Bachelor's level).

By contrast, it appears from the documents that courses, modules and study programmes in English / foreign languages should be developed within Latvian-taught programmes and their importance should grow from Bachelor to PhD studies; their development has to be supported; more of courses, modules, study programmes in English / foreign languages have to be made available in all levels of study, particularly in the programmes of excellence; their proportion in studies has to grow from Bachelor's studies to doctoral studies.

English is the main foreign language used for implementing studies; other languages (the official languages of the EU or widely used languages) can also be used for implementing studies. The aim of using these languages seems to be attracting students. It has also been stated in the documents that languages other than English are mostly to be used in implementing studies in humanities and social sciences.

According the current regulations of the University of Latvia, Bachelor's students have to acquire at least 4 credit points (6 ECTS) and Master's students have to acquire at least 4 or 8 credit points (6 or 12 ECTS, depending on the scope of the programme) in a foreign language (English or other official languages of the EU). Students acquire professional terminology in English or other official languages of the EU. Final theses (not doctoral dissertations) are written in Latvian or other languages. The use of languages other than Latvian is possible in specific cases, i.e. if the author is a international student or a student of language and culture studies). Using English to an extent is compulsory in Bachelor's and Master's theses, as students have to supply the thesis with title and abstract in English. Disobedience to the law

appears also in the context of final theses – the University expresses its wish to stimulate the writing of Master’s theses in English (*Strategic Plan of the UL 2010–2020*).

#### **4. Language of knowledge creation and dissemination**

Focus on publishing research articles, research results, scientific literature, doctoral dissertations and their summaries, study aids, study materials and study literature for higher education. Languages mentioned: Latvian and foreign languages, particularly English (the only named foreign language in the context, in relation to doctoral dissertations and publications issued by the University of Latvia), and other unnamed foreign languages.

Latvian should be used in order to 1) make the research results available to the general public, and 2) maintain the Latvian language; foreign languages should be used because Latvian research is part of international research community. The University of Latvia undertakes to publish scientific literature, study literature (at least at the Bachelor’s level), doctoral theses and their summaries in Latvian. In order to motivate publishing in Latvian, the University undertakes to take Latvian publications into account when assessing the work of academic staff. Moreover, the University undertakes to provide language support should be provided for publishing research results in foreign languages.

The institutional regulations do not stipulate the language of the doctoral theses, this has been governed in the state law. However, the institutional regulations require doctoral students to write summaries for their dissertations in Latvian and foreign languages; the choice of foreign languages is determined by the council in which the dissertation will be defended. Although the university stipulates that the summaries of doctoral dissertations can be in any foreign language approved by the council, it appear from the material that the most common foreign language used for the purpose is English – numerous examples of formatting the dissertation and its summary is provided only in Latvian and English.

#### **5. Language of administration and documents**

The language of administration is Latvian at the University of Latvia; in specific cases, in which international partners, either universities or places of traineeship, are involved, documents can be in English.

##### **5.2.3. Main results**

Firstly, the language management efforts of the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia are scattered across a great deal of documents. Both universities have created their

overarching language policy documents, a soft policy-making instrument rather than documents that would prescribe specific measures for reaching its goals.

The main focus of the language policy implemented by the national universities is on the preservation and development of Estonian and Latvian. Both the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia consider it to be important to use the official language of the country in higher education and science; as national universities they bear responsibility for the maintenance and development of the official language. Additionally, both universities have regulated the use of languages in the following aspects: language of studies, language of documents and administration, language acquisition and proficiency, language of knowledge creation and dissemination. Thus, the documents of both universities cover similar issues.

The language policy of the University of Tartu is congruent with the state's language policy. The university documents discuss in greater detail what has been written down in law; the documents adhere to the law and repeat quite a great deal of what has been stated in the law. The language policy at the University of Latvia is slightly differently focused than the state's language policy in higher education, and sometimes even contradicts it. More specifically, the language policy of the University of Latvia construes Latvian as a default language that is already known, whereas part of its focus is on English, a language that needs to be acquired and used more frequently. The main stress of the policy is put on Latvian but English is much more visible as an academic language than in the state-authored documents.

It is worthwhile to note that English has much greater presence in the institutional documents than the state-authored documents. Whereas the documents of the University of Latvia pay attention to the lack of English skills among its academic staff and students, and aim at improving the situation (emphasising the need for more English), the language policy of the University of Tartu focuses on assuring the status of English in Estonian academic setting (construing English as part of Estonian academia). Other languages are mentioned rather rarely in the institutional documents.

The dual nature of higher education is clearly visible in the institutional documents. The universities seek a balance between local and international, including the official language and English. However, both the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia acknowledge that their staff and students should also learn other foreign languages. In a way, the universities try not only to prevent a full transition to English but also to avoid the bilingual situation in which only Estonian/Latvian and English would be used. For this purpose, they acknowledge the importance of linguistic diversity among university staff and students.

### **5.3. Micro-level data: language practices and attitudes of students**

This section analyses the data on the language practices and attitudes of the interviewed students. Tables 10 and 11 summarise information on the background of the interviewees. Every interviewee has been marked with a letter for the purpose of anonymity. Information concerning the higher education institutions as well as the foreign countries in which the interviewees have studied has been provided. The field of study of the interviewees has been identified according to the international ISCED classification. The first language(s) of the respondents as well as their self-reported knowledge of other languages has been included in the tables as well. More information about the interviewees can be found in the Appendix 5.

All interviewees are multilingual, they have learnt a variety of languages and take interest in different languages<sup>31</sup>. Nevertheless, the material reveals some tendencies that describe the language practices of the interviewed students at the university. It should, of course, be taken into account that the number of interviews conducted for the purposes of the following analysis is not enough to make generalisations about the entire student body in Estonia and Latvia, however, it is considered to be enough to show some tendencies in the respondents' experience of and attitudes towards language use in higher education (see more in Section 4).

The data from interviews with students currently enrolled at universities in Estonia and Latvia are analysed separately. Firstly, the recurring themes of the Estonian data are discussed, and secondly, the themes present in the Latvian data are examined. As the codes, categories and themes identified during the analysis differ to some extent in the two sets of material, the structure of argument presented below might differ as well. Before discussing the themes identified in each data set, relevant background information about the interviewees is provided. That includes summary on the interviewees' first languages, experience with and general attitudes towards foreign languages. Language use in higher education and attitudes to using different languages in higher education are discussed under relevant themes. The main similarities and differences found between the two sets of data during the analysis are summarised in the concluding part of this section.

After the in-depth analysis of the interview transcripts, the following recurring themes were identified: a) complementary use of Estonian and English; b) attitudes towards Estonian, English and their complementary use in higher education; and c) use of and attitudes towards other languages in higher education. Before discussing each of the themes in detail, some background information about the interviewees is provided.

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<sup>31</sup> During the interviews, all respondents express their wish or discuss their plans to learn another foreign language.

### 5.3.1. Estonian data

Table 10 summarises information relating to the background of the interviewees.

**Table 10.** Overview of the interviews with students enrolled at Estonian universities

Interviewee	Field of studies	University	L1	Knowledge of other languages
A(EE)	Science	UT	Estonian	English (very well) German (well) Russian (beginner) Finnish (beginner)
B(EE)	Health and welfare (medicine)	UT / Switzerland	Estonian	English (very well) Finnish (well) German (well) Russian (beginner)
C(EE)	Science	UT	Estonian	English (very well) German (very well) Russian (beginner)
D(EE)	Science	UT	Estonian	English (very well) German (well) Russian (beginner)
E(EE)	Humanities	UT / TU / UL	Estonian	English (very well) Latvian (well) Russian (beginner) Finnish (beginner)
F(EE)	Humanities	UT / TU / UL	Estonian	English (very well) Estonian (very well) Finnish (well) Russian (well)
G(EE)	Social sciences	UT / UL	Latvian	English (very well) Estonian (very well) Finnish (well) Russian (well)
H(EE)	Humanities	UT / Lithuania	Lithuanian	Estonian (very well) English (very well) Latvian (very well) Russian (well) Finnish (beginner)

### Background information

Six of the interviewees indicate Estonian as their mother tongue. In addition, one interviewee speaks Latvian as mother tongue, and one respondent speaks Lithuanian as their mother tongue. They have come to study in at the University of Tartu from Latvia and Lithuania, however, both of them are fluent in Estonian. All of the interviewees have learnt and claim to speak a variety of languages; the most frequently mentioned languages are English, German, Russian, and Finnish. Mostly, the interviewees have started acquiring English, German, and Russian already at school, some of them have taken extra German and/or Russian classes at university. By contrast, those who claim to know some Finnish, have mostly learnt it at university. Seven of

the respondents are enrolled in an Estonian-taught programme, and one interviewee is enrolled in an English-taught programme.

The foreign language that the respondents claim to have the best knowledge of is English; everyone claims to speak English very well. All of them have learnt English at school; they generally have not taken extra English classes at university but all of them highlight that they extensively use English in their studies (see below). German skills depend on the background of the interviewees. One of the respondents has spent her childhood and gone to school in Germany, she claims to speak the language very well. Three interviewees originally from Estonia claim to speak German well. Although all of them have learnt the language thoroughly at school, they now hesitate about their current language level as they do not need the language in their everyday lives and education.

Only the interviewees originally from Latvia and Lithuania point out that their Russian skills are good; the former highlights that she sometimes uses Russian as a language of communication with her course mates at university (see below). All of the respondents originally from Estonia note that they have learnt some Russian at school but they only have beginner's level of Russian. The latter group of students does not mention the need to use Russian at university, however, they stress the importance of the language at work and in the Estonian labour market (see below). Due to the importance of the language in the labour market, all interviewees highlight that they would like to speak Russian better.

For example, the respondent B has learnt Russian shortly at gymnasium, and then she has taken both elementary Russian and medical Russian at university. She claims that although she does not know Russian, she likes to speak the language when necessary. Similarly to other respondents originally from Estonia, she notes that studying Russian in the formal classroom setting has not been very useful for her, except for the classes of medical Russian that have given her some basis for conversing in Russian at work. But most of all, she has learnt from having had to speak the language at work.

B: ma olen õppinud natukene aega vene keelt vene keelt ma ei oska aga ma räägin suurima heameelega kõvasti ja valesti /.../ ma õppisin gümnaasiumis oli meil kaks kursust need ma tegin läbi siis ma õppisin ülikoolis olid meil üksikud kursused umbes mingi üks semester või kaks semestrit kus ma käisin kus tegelikult oli see et mul oli nagu olemas materjal aga me nagu seda rääkimise osa üldse ei kasutanud sest see grupp oli nii suur et sa lihtsalt ei jõudnud sinnani /.../ kui ma läksin tallinnasse tööle siis ma ei osanud üldse mitte no enda arvates üldse ei osanud /.../ aga sealt on tulnud päris palju nagu õppimist või nagu ma olen päris palju õppinud pluss ma olen õppinud sellest kuidas mu kolleegid ennast väljendavad

In addition, the respondent B also notes that she would like to be better at Russian as she needs the language quite often at her job in hospital. For now, she has acquired how to understand

patients' problems but she says that it would be great if she could have conversations with patients also about daily affairs.

In addition, five of the interviewees claim to know Finnish to some extent; three of them note that their Finnish is good, and the other two point out that they have beginner's level of Finnish. The students who claim to speak Finnish well say that they have previously needed the language either for studies or work in Estonia or in Finland. They highlight that they do not need to use the language anymore, and as a result, they have forgotten some of it.

All of the interviewees show positive attitudes towards foreign languages, saying that they are currently learning, plan to learn or wish to learn another foreign language. Reasons for acquiring new foreign languages vary but, in general, foreign languages are mostly learnt for the purposes of travelling and communication. Higher education and opportunities connected to it are mostly not stressed when speaking about the motivation underlying foreign language learning. Only the students whose main object of study is or has been foreign languages, note the link. In addition, one of the interviewees has lived in Germany in her childhood, and she says that she has taken an extra terminology course in German in order to be able to use the language not only for everyday communication but also for the purposes of higher education and science. However, she points out that so far she has had neither a necessity, nor an opportunity to use the language for such purposes.

### **Theme 1: Complementary use of Estonian and English**

The analysis reveals that the self-reported language practices of the interviewed students are bilingual. In theory, the interviewees are open towards using various languages at university. For example, the respondent D claims that it is important that everyone who has graduated from university is able to speak about his/her field of studies in multiple languages.

D: mida rohkem neid erinevaid keeli on kui mõelda sellele praktilisele väljundile ka et see inimene kes sealt ülikoolist läbi käib et ta oskaks arutleda selle teema üle võimalikult paljudes keeltes et et nagu selline eesmärk oleks minu meelest hea ülikoolile seda ei pea olema ülearu palju aga ikkagi mõnes keeles

However, the interest in and openness towards a variety of languages is narrowed down to using Estonian and English in practice. All of the interviewees note that the main (and often only) foreign language they have used in their studies is English. Using other foreign languages for the purposes of higher education is a rare exception rather than a rule for all students interviewed. Therefore, this sub-section has been organised in the following way: firstly, the use of Estonian is discussed; and secondly, the use of English is examined. The final part of the



sub-section views to what extent, in which situations, and why the interviewees use other languages in higher education.

To begin with, the data indicate clearly that Estonian is the most dominant language in Estonian higher education. It is the main language of instruction during Bachelor's and Master's studies, and one of the media of instruction during doctoral studies (together with English). Estonian is the main language of communication with course mates and university administration. Interestingly, even the interviewee who comes from Latvia and studies in English notes that she always communicates with university administration in Estonian. In addition, Estonian is the main language for writing Bachelor's and Master's theses, and one of the languages of study materials and literature during Bachelor's and Master's studies (together with English).

For the aforementioned activities, Estonian is the most common language in Estonian higher education but it is often used side by side with English. Whereas Estonian is used for all purposes at university, English is used in more specific situations. All in all, English is used as 1) the language of study materials and literature; 2) the additional language of instruction; 3) the language of communication with foreigners; and 4) the language of PhD theses as well as the summaries of Bachelor's and Master's theses in exact sciences. Each of the functions has been discussed in greater detail below.

Firstly, English is one of the languages of study materials and literature. All of the interviewees note that English has been the main or additional language of study materials and literature during their studies. The extent to which English is used as the language of study materials and literature seems to depend on the level of study as well as on the field of study. The lower the level of study, the more Estonian materials are used, and vice versa, the higher the level of study, the more the students have to read in English. In some disciplines, there are more materials available in Estonian (e.g. humanities), whereas other disciplines are more dependent on the newest research literature in English (e.g. exact sciences).

For example, the respondent A points out that all research literature in her discipline is available only in English but lecturers tend to distribute Estonian materials in classes. She notes that Estonian materials were more common during her Bachelor's studies, whereas as a PhD student she has to read more in English. Similarly, other interviewees highlight that even if all textbooks and research literature they have to read during their studies is in English, the lecture slides and materials distributed in lectures are mostly in Estonian. Interestingly, the respondent D mentions that even in an English-taught class in which she had to do her readings in English, Estonian-speaking students were distributed extra materials in Estonian for them to acquire the

subject matter more easily. The only interviewee to point out that all her study materials and literature are in English, is the student who is studying in English.

Secondly, English is the additional language of instruction for the interviewed students. In addition to being the main language of instruction during guest lectures, several interviewees note that they have taken English-taught courses during their studies at their home university. Although Estonian is the official and main language of instruction in their study programmes, English is used sometimes for regular courses. Courses are held in English when they are orientated not only to local students but offered to international students as well. The interviewees also note that English has been used as medium of instruction in courses held by lecturers who do not speak Estonian (fluently).

A: ma olen võtnud aineid kus kus ainekeeleks on ainult inglise keel niimoodi et õppejõud räägivadki ainult inglise keeles /.../ viimane aine mille ma näiteks võtsin oligi nii et eee... et seal olid noh mõni loeng toimus eesti keeles sellepärast et meil oli eestlasest õppejõud ja samal ajal ei olnud muukeelseid doktorante näiteks saalis et eesti keeles on lihtsam seletada mõningaid asju aga muidu oli inglise keeles sellepärast et kas meil olid doktorandid või olid ka õppejõud kes olid kaks õppejõudu oli minu arust inglismaalt üks oli vist rootsist

The interviews show that students mostly have to listen to English in guest lectures, however, in regular English-taught courses, they are also assigned writing and speaking assignments (essays, presentations etc.), thus they use the language in a more versatile manner.

Thirdly, the interview data show that English is the language of communication with foreigners, either with co-students, colleagues, and academic staff at home university or abroad. Interestingly, the data indicate that English is used for communicating with foreigners when other common languages (mostly Estonian) are not available. For example, the respondent B notes that she always speaks English abroad, either at a foreign university, at seminars, or at conferences. However, when describing her language practices at her home university, she says that she has never had the need to communicate in English with her foreign course mates as all foreign medical students have to take intensive Estonian classes at the University of Tartu because they have to take courses only in Estonian during the three last years of their studies.

B: meil ka kaks soomlast /.../ üks hispaanlane üks saksa poiss aga nendel oli ka see et nad pidid esimestel kursustel õppima eesti keelt ja nad tõesti õppisid selle nagu niimoodi ära

Similarly, the respondent G notes that she usually speaks English to her course mates because she is studying in an English-taught programme together with students from all over the world but she points out that she always speaks Estonian to Estonian students.

G: man ir studijas angļu valodā tātad ikdienā es tur sazinos angļu valodā tur ar saviem kursabiedriem izņemot tiem kas ir igauņi tiem es sazinos igauņu valodā /.../ ar mūsu programmes direktoru es reizēm runāju arī igauņiski viņš ir igauņis

The respondent D highlights as well that she communicates in English to foreigners but in Estonian with her Estonian-speaking course mates and lecturer even if the course is taught in English (in group works, during private conversations etc.). She also remembers that she has unintentionally spoken to her Estonian-speaking lecturers and course mates in English but switched languages as soon as she realised that it was *weird*. Also the respondent H notes that she speaks in English with other students if they have no other common language. She says that she never gives preference to English but if there is no other common language available, she uses it to communicate.

H: inglise keeles [ma suhtlen] enamasti noh siis kui inimene ei oska teisi keeli /.../ on mingi seltskond et kus peab inglise keeles rääkima noh kas mõni eestlane ei oska läti keelt või mõni lätlane ei oska eesti keelt mis iganes /.../ või siis kui oli näiteks talveülikool siis oligi niimoodi et mõni ungari keelt oskab mõni soome keelt mõni eesti keelt siis ikkagi lõppude lõpuks kõik räägivad inglise keelt

The last examples (B, G, D & H) show support to Preisler's (2009) claims that English functions as a complementary language in higher education. According to him, it tends to be used as a language of communication when there are no other common languages available. In the situation described by the respondent B English was not necessary as all interlocutors were able to speak Estonian, and in the situation described by the respondent H successful communication could not have taken place without English as no other common language was available. In addition, the last example shows support also to Saarinen's (2012) claims that the more linguistically diverse the higher education setting, the more important it becomes to use English as it is often the only language that everyone shares.

Finally, the interviewees describe English as the language in which PhD theses are written. At the University of Tartu, in some disciplines, students have to write summaries for their Bachelor's and Master's theses in English as well. The latter was mentioned by students who are studying exact sciences. The respondent D highlights that it is common to write PhD theses in English because they are mostly article-based, and all of the articles have been written and published in English.

While discussing their experience with foreign languages at university, all interviewees point to some difficulties with English that they have encountered during their studies. In general, the more the students has been in contact with English during their studies, the more they discuss linguistic difficulties that they have run into at university. Almost all interviewees mention that

they sometimes have difficulties in understanding some English accents, for example, English spoken by Indians, or even by Estonians. Furthermore, one of the interviewees highlights that even though she has always understood her lecturers' English, it is the plethora of accents that tends to bother her. The hardships experienced with English accents require the students to fully concentrate on what is being told, thus doing something else in parallel (for example taking notes) is complicated. For example, the interviewee E stresses that she sometimes doubts the usefulness of lectures if she does not understand its contents.

E: ma ei saa eestlaste inglise keelest aru see on see vahe see on nagu kui inglased räägivad siis ma kuidagi või noh inglased või ameeriklased või keegi et siis see hääldus on see millega ma rohkem harjunud olen meedia vahendusel ja siis on lihtsam aru saada sellest aga kui eestlased räägivad siis kõik need mõisted ja kõik asjad on niimoodi et ütleme et mul on vahepeal olnudki et mul on see tunne et mul ei ole sellest seminarist või loengust midagi kasu sest pooled sõnad lihtsalt lähevad kuskile ära et eesti keelest ikkagi midagi kuuled saad kirjutada samal ajal ja kuulata aga kui nad inglise keeles räägivad siis ma pingsalt vaatan suud ja jälgin mida ta parajasti räägib

In addition, some interviewees point out that it is sometimes difficult for them to understand written English due to unknown terminology, unfamiliar syntactic constructions or unusual writing styles. For example, the respondent H says that her difficulties in understanding written texts arise mostly due to the differences in syntax (compared to other languages she speaks), and the lack of morphology.

H: inglise keele süntaks on selline et pead väga kaugelt mõtlema mõnikord mis asi on et inglise keeles mul lugemine võtab tunduvalt rohkem aega süntaksi pärast ja grammatika.. noh morfoloogia puuduse pärast

Moreover, the interviewees point out communicative problems when having the need to study in English. For example, the respondent A notes that she has sometimes encountered difficulties in having had to explain something in English, and in understanding the essence of subject matter presented by others. As a result, she thinks that it could be more difficult to take courses about entirely new subjects in English.

A: oma valdkonnas /.../ inglise keeles on nagu lihtne selles mõttes et terminoloogia on kõik sama aga selle põhimõttest arusaamine on mõnikord keeruline et siis sa pead need sõnad tõlkima ja siis sellest tõlgitud asjast aru saama et kuidas see põhimõte nagu käib et mõnikord see on nagu see mis on natukene keeruline aga muidu muidu nagu vahet ei ole /.../ kui on mingi väga spetsiifiline asi või mingi uus ja raske siis on jah võõrkeeles lihtsalt natukene keerulisem õppida /.../ näiteks eelmine semester võtsin sellise aine nagu programmeerimine /.../ ma kujutan ette et ... et mingis mõttes ... oleks programmeerimine inglise keeles olnud minu jaoks keerulisem kuna kuna see oli asi millega ma olin täiesti mitte tuttav et täiesti võõras selle suhtes et kui mingi täiesti uus ja keeruline asi siis ma arvan et keerulisem on õppida seda inglise keeles

Sometimes, communicating in English is described as bizarre. For example, the respondent G describes that it is much more difficult for her to make presentations in English than in Estonian, although both are foreign languages for her. She explains that she always feels insecure about her English skills, and is afraid of what others think of her English as she is convinced that her course mates speak better English than she does. Similarly, the respondent H points out that although she has felt no difficulties in listening to a class in English, she feels *weird* when she has to present her paper in English to her course mates as she usually talks to them in Estonian.

## **Theme 2: Attitudes towards Estonian, English and their complementary use in higher education**

Whereas the previous sub-section discussed the interviewee's experience with language practices in higher education, this theme is centred on their attitudes towards Estonian, English and their complementary use. The analysis is sequenced similarly to the previous sub-section. The discussion on attitudes towards Estonian is followed by considering attitudes towards English. Part of the analysis focuses also on attitudes towards the complementary use of Estonian and English in higher education. Finally, attitudes towards using other languages in higher education are examined.

In conclusion, the interview data with students enrolled at Estonian universities show that they use mostly two languages in their studies, i.e. Estonian and English. Estonian is the most dominant language, however, it is used side-by-side with English. All in all, the further students proceed in their studies, the more important English becomes for them. Whereas Estonian is used constantly in almost all aspects of higher education (except for writing PhD theses), the data indicate that English is used for particular purposes. The data show that Estonian and English are used in a complementary way in higher education (cf. Preisler 2009). When choosing between languages, Estonian is preferred whenever possible, i.e. when everyone present in a classroom, working group, or conversation speak Estonian well enough, or when it is possible to distribute study materials in Estonian. English, however, is chosen when Estonian is not an option, i.e. there are international students or academic staff present in a classroom, working group, or conversation that are not fluent in Estonian, or when the most relevant literature is available only in English.

### **Attitudes towards Estonian**

To begin with, the interview data indicate that the use of Estonian in higher education is considered to be self-evident. Using Estonian at an Estonian university is considered normal

and obvious. Some respondents refer to it explicitly, whereas others show covert attitudes that express it. For example, the respondent H says that the language of instruction at her university has obviously been Estonian. When asked about the language of her Master's thesis she also says that it is logical to write the thesis in Estonian because she is studying in Estonia. She expresses her overt attitudes towards using Estonian at university.

By contrast, some interviewees do not mention using Estonian at all during their studies when asked about what languages they have used at university. However, when asked about the language of instruction of the courses that they have taken, they note that almost all courses have taken place in Estonian. This can be seen in the following example.

B:

**(interviewer):** mis keeli sa oled oma õpingute jaoks kasutanud

**(interviewee):** ma arvan et see on inglise keel ja tegelt=no inglise keel on kindlasti sest see on kõik teadusartiklid ja kõik õpikud on olnud valdavalt inglise keeles /.../

**(interviewer):** aga õppetöö mis keeles teil toimus

**(interviewee):** õppetöö oli eesti keeles

A similar situation is occurs when the respondent A is asked about the languages that have been the most useful for her during her studies. Her first response is English, however, when reminded of Estonian, she says that the importance of Estonian is so logical that she did not even think about it in the first place. Therefore, Estonian is the most dominant language in Estonia's higher education for the interviewed students, it is used daily, and its use is so self-evident for the interviewees that they sometimes do not even think about Estonian when asked to comment on their language practices and preferences at university.

The data also show that the interviewees consider Estonian to be necessary in Estonian higher education. Estonian is thought to be useful and valuable for students, universities, and the development of the Estonian language. Studying in Estonian is considered necessary for students because the interviewees stress that it is easier to study in their mother tongue than in a foreign language. Almost all of the interviewees highlight this as a factor why Estonian-medium instruction should be preserved in Estonia's higher education. For example, the respondent A describes Estonian as a language in which it is easier to explain the essence of subject matter at times. She continues by saying that it is not difficult for her to speak about her subject in English but sometimes she encounters some terminological problems which are not that easy to solve when speaking.

The interviewees specifically stress that studying in Estonian is particularly important at the beginning of studies, i.e. at the Bachelor's level. For example, the respondent F argues that it is easier to remember the subject in your mother tongue than in a foreign language, thus studies

should be preserved and textbooks written in Estonian. Even the respondent G who speaks both Estonian and English as a foreign language says that she would choose to study in Estonian, if the curriculum of her interest was available in Estonian. At the moment it is available only in English, thus she choose to study in English.

Thus, none of the respondents expresses their wish to study entirely in English (or any other foreign language) at the beginning of their studies. Reasons for choosing to study in Estonian rather than in English differ but the interviewees mostly refer to the difficulties they have encountered in taking courses or reading in English. In addition, the respondent A argues that the use of Estonian as the main language of instruction at universities is useful for local students as many of them would not be ready to study in English during their Bachelor's studies. That is because they have never had such an experience, as secondary education in Estonia takes mostly place in Estonian.

On the one hand, the respondent D points out that teaching in Estonian at university is important to preserve Scientific Estonian. That, on the other hand, is important for popularising science among Estonian inhabitants, mostly school children. Thus, she argues that using Estonian in higher education is necessary for the language as well as for university (science).

D:

**(interviewer):** kas see on eesti keelele vajalik et eesti keelt kasutatakse kõrghariduses

**(interviewee):** ma pigem arvan et jaa et ja mitte nende imelike uute terminoloogiliste sõnade pärast pigem (naerab) aga sellepärast et jääks selline kuidagi teksti=et oleks olemas tekstid ja inimeste selline harjumus asjadest mõelda ka eesti keeles /.../ kui see keel on olemas samas keeles milles lapsed räägivad koolis on olemas need keerulised tekstid ka siis on suurem tõenäosus et nad nende otsa satuvad /.../ see ei ole nüüd keele jaoks oluline aga see on teaduse jaoks oluline et siis suurem tõenäosus et nad niimoodi satuvad sinna teadusesse see eesti keele kasutamise jätkamine kõrgkoolis see aitab minu arust ka teadust edasi minu meelest

Also others see the importance in using Estonian at university for the development of the language. For example, the respondent E points out that Estonian as the main language of higher education gives purpose and prestige to the language and its use. She holds that without using Estonian in higher education it would affect the language in a negative way, firstly, in lexical aspects, and secondly, in the aspect of necessity. If the language is not used in higher education, it would soon become unnecessary also elsewhere.

Although all interviewees perceive Estonian as necessary in university settings, they all construct Estonian as a language that is necessary and useful for those students who already speak Estonian, i.e. Estonians and local minorities (mostly Russian-speakers). The interviewees do not consider Estonian to be obligatory or specially recommended for international students; Estonian is the business of locals, not foreigners. If international students are willing to learn

the language, they are welcome to broaden their horizons but it is not their task. For example, the respondent A holds that the incoming international students do not have to learn Estonian as they do not need it, and they usually come for a short period of time (a semester or two), so the time is too short for them to actually acquire the language. Moreover, the respondent considers Estonian to be one of the most difficult languages in the world to learn, so she does not think that international students should do it.

The importance of international students is not tied to the opportunities to broaden the scope of people able to speak the Estonian language but they are considered important to spread information about Estonia in the world, and to offer chances for local students to practice speaking English. For example, the respondent A maintains that her contacts with international students make the environment richer, and help her to uphold her language skills. When asked to specify, she notes that she mostly uses English when communicating with international students.

A:

**(interviewee):** tegelikult on sest see [välisüliõpilaste kohalolek] rikastab esiteks ja teiseks sa saad oma keelepraktikat arendada

**(interviewer):** mis keeli sa kasutad välisüliõpilastega suhtlemiseks

**(interviewee):** peamiselt inglise

### **Attitudes towards English**

As discussed above, English is used quite often in Estonian higher education, and the interview data show that the use of English is considered first and foremost to be a norm at university. English is not overtly praised by the interviewees, they rather take the use of English as a normal practice that belongs to the university setting. For example, two of the interviewees note that they can compile their own curricula and choose what courses in which languages they take. Although the language of instruction has been written down in the study information system through which students register to courses, the interviewees say that they have never paid attention to the course description to find out its medium of instruction as they have no problems studying either in Estonian or English.

Even the respondent H, who generally expresses rather negative attitudes towards English, for example by saying that she does not like English very much and whenever possible chooses to communicate in other languages, has chosen to take English-taught courses. She even comments that using English at university is not a problem for her. Thus, for her too English is a normal and common language of higher education.



H: mulle ei meeldi see inglise keel nii väga ma ... ma eelistan teisi kui on võimalik /.../ ma valisin selle ingliskeelse kursuse see kõlas hästi /.../ lihtsalt oma ümbruses ma tahaks kasutada teisi keeli kui läheb ülikoolis vaja see ei ole mingi probleem

Moreover, English is considered to be necessary in Estonian higher education. English is valued mostly because it is the language of study materials as well as the language of communication with foreigners. For example, the necessity of knowing English is expressed by the respondent B who maintains that it is not possible to study medicine in Estonia without knowing English as all research literature is in English. She highlights that she would not have reached valuable information without English; other languages do not help in this sense as all the valuable research information is available in English, and in order to find it you need to search for it in English.

B: see materjal mis on nagu noh okei raamatud aga teadusartiklid teadusajakirjades see on kõik inglise keeles ja ja palju on selliseid nagu tõsiselt võimsaid õppe .. nagu veebipõhiseid mingisuguseid materjale see on nagu see on nagu kõige alus /.../ ja ma ei leiaks neid asju kunagi üles kui ma kasutaks emakeelt või saksa keelt või mis muud keelt et see lihtsalt on inglise keel on nagu väga hea keel

Even the respondent H who is rather sceptical about the excessive use of English admits that it would be difficult to imagine a student who did not speak English as English is the main language of the newest research literature in all fields of study, including humanities.

The interview data indicate that studies conducted in English are linked to the presence of international students and academic staff. For example, the respondent A says that the language of instruction in her Bachelor's and Master's classes was almost always Estonian because there were no international students present, and even students who had come from Russian-medium schools were fluent enough to study entirely in Estonian. By contrast, her PhD classes have been held both in Estonian and in English, depending on the presence of foreign doctoral students in the auditorium.

Similarly, other interviewees say that the English-taught classes they have taken were held in English either because the lecturer was from abroad and was not fluent in Estonian, or the course was intended not only to local students but also to international students. Even though the respondent H is rather critical towards using English as a language of communication with her course mates and friends, she holds that the presence of a foreign lecturer or international students is a good enough reason for taking classes in English.

H: need ingliskeelsed ained noh välja arvatud klump ei ta on pigem ikka mõeldud eesti tudengitele /.../ aga jah teised ained on lihtsalt mõeldud välisõpilastele ka üldjuhul et siis võib ka kannatada seda et eestlane teeb inglise keeles

### **Attitudes towards the complementary use of Estonian and English**

As can be seen, using both Estonian and English is considered normal (self-evident) and necessary. All of the interviewees support the complementary use of Estonian and English. All of the interviewees enrolled in Estonian-taught programmes are satisfied with the proportions of language used during their studies: Estonian is the main language of higher education but they also need and have opportunities to use English in their studies. For example, the respondent A says that she would not be ready to study in English at the Bachelor's level. Her Bachelor's studies took place entirely in Estonian. English was then gradually added at the Master's level, and now at the PhD level she mostly uses English. She says that language-wise she would not choose to do anything differently.

Similarly, the respondent B holds that she is satisfied with the current situation, however, she interestingly notes that this understanding has come with experience. After having used the two languages during her studies, she knows the advantages of such language practices, however, she believes that before gaining such experience she would have preferred studying entirely in English. It seemed logical to study in English for the interviewee after gymnasium because English was the language of research literature, and English-taught courses would have eased the language use as it would not have been necessary to translate the material to her mother tongue. However, she now knows that without having had to acquire the material also in Estonian, she would not be able to use necessary Estonian terminology at work.

B: ma arvan et kui ma oleks keskkooli lõpetanud siis ma ütleks julmalt inglise keel praegu ma sellest enam nii kindel ei ole aga see on raske küsimus sest tegelikult kui ma olen õppinud ära ingliskeelse materjali ja ma pean selle eesti keelde ümber panema siis see on nagu siis see nagu natuke tundub mõttetult aga samas ma pean ju õppima seda väljendama oma tulevases töös neid samu nagu sõnu ja mul ei ole ju seda sõnavara välja kujunenud kui ma ei tõlgi ümber /.../ täpselt samamoodi jäävad need ukсед avatuks ka siis kui sa õpid oma emakeeles ja kasutad võõrkeelt see tegelikult ei muuda midagi

The interviewees who have had neither the need nor the possibility to take English-taught classes, point out that they would like to use English more during their studies. For example, respondent C who studies chemistry in Estonian at Bachelor's level and has been neither obliged nor offered to take courses in English says that there could be such an opportunity to take some English-taught courses in her programme. She stresses that it would be important to let students get used to the English-speaking environment that dominates the world of research and science. However, she maintains that Estonian students should not be forced to study entirely in English at the Bachelor's level as it would be too difficult for them, and it is very important to preserve Estonian-taught programmes.

C: võib-olla tegelt võiksid jah osad kursused olla ikkagi inglise keeles lihtsalt nii-öelda harjuda sellega et teadusmaailmas käib suhtlemine ikkagi inglise keeles

In addition, the respondent B says that she would like to be obliged to submit annual research summaries not only in Estonian (as it is now) but also in English in order to practice writing in Scientific English. She stresses that it should not be an obligation for everyone but an opportunity for those interested in research. Furthermore, she also maintains that it should not take place at the expense of Estonian but in addition to it, as according to her words, it is also nice to be able to write in your own mother tongue.

B: meil on siia maani kõik need teesid mis me peame kirjutama teatud nende residentuuriaastate lõppu meil on nagu siuke seminar siis me peame ka tegema need nagu eesti keeles aga ma tegelikult mõtlen et seda võiks peaks sundima tegema ka inglise keeles sest see väljund ongi see et me oskaks neid kirjutada aga need erinevates keeltes minu meelest erinevad nii palju /.../ seda ma ka ei tahaks et see oleks ainult inglise keeles /.../ tore on ju omas keeles ka osata kirjutada /.../ inglise keel on nagoonii on ta lugemise keel võib-olla võiks nagu rohkem olla kirjutamise keel /.../ ma arvan et see ei pea olema ka kõigi jaoks aga see võiks olla noh pigem siuke vabatahtlik

Similarly, the respondent D notes as well that she is satisfied with the situation in which she is studying both in Estonian and English. She says that studying only in Estonian (or English) would encapsulate her into one language space but now she has the opportunity to move between the two languages, and thus also materials, people, culture etc. that accompany the language. She appreciates the opportunity to study in her native tongue because it gives her the possibility to learn how to express herself in her field of study in Estonian.

The support for the parallel use of Estonian and English becomes also visible in the understanding of the interviewees, who are originally from Estonia, that there is no need to protect Estonian from the influences of foreign languages in general, and English in particular. For example, the respondent E maintains that Estonian is a small language, and Estonia is a small country, thus contacts with other languages are inevitable and normal. Being under the influence of foreign languages is considered normal for such a small language. As English is the language of science and higher education, it is inevitable that it affects Estonian.

### **Theme 3: Use of and attitudes towards other languages in higher education**

#### **Use of other languages**

When discussing their language practices at university, the respondents mostly speak about using Estonian and English. Sometimes using other languages is mentioned, however, the interviewees stress that the cases in which they use other languages are very rare, and they

ordinarily do not use languages other than Estonian and English for their studies. If other languages are used, they are mostly used for finding and/or reading extra materials and literature in the students' field of study. Five of the respondents mention that they have searched for and/or read materials in other languages. The respondent B has done it the most. She describes using Finnish and German for reading medical literature for her studies. Doing extra reading in Finnish was important for her before going to work in Finland, and she values German because of Germany's organised medical system and information available.

The respondent H mentions Russian as an additional language of study materials in a rare case. She needed to read Russian materials at the Khanty language (a Finno-Ugric language spoken on the territory of Russia) course because she is able to read in Russian. She explains that the knowledge of Russian was not obligatory for taking the class, and those who are not able to read in Russian could choose to do it in other languages. Interestingly, she mentions that the class took place in English.

Languages other than Estonian and English are rarely used also for communication with foreigners. The respondent B notes that before going to work in Finland, she used the opportunity to practice the language with her Finnish course mates. In addition, the respondent G mentions that Russian has become one of the languages of communication for her at university, as she has Russian-speaking course mates that tend to communicate in Russian, thus she sometimes tries to do that as well.

### **Attitudes towards other languages**

All in all, the interviewees are convinced that it is the task of the university to offer its students and academic staff a chance to learn different foreign languages. For example, the respondent H holds that language is a substantial part of education, and every university graduate should speak at least two foreign languages. First and foremost, the interviewees tie the importance of foreign languages to travelling and communication but they also maintain that foreign languages should be taught at university for the purposes of academic collaborations (for students and staff), and the needs of the local labour market (for students).

When asked about the importance of languages for people who either study or work at university in Estonia, all of the interviewees hold that English and Russian are the most important foreign languages in this aspect. Other languages are mentioned rarely. Depending on the interviewee, these languages are constructed as being important for communication with foreigners and/or local students. Whereas English is mostly stressed because of its role as a wide-spread language of communication and science, Russian is mostly seen as a language of local importance. For example, the respondent A explains that English should be known

because it is so widely used in the world, and Russian because there are Russian-speakers living in Estonia. She explains that despite the fact that the graduates of Russian-medium schools have all taken a state exam in Estonian, at times communication would be easier, if Russian was spoken at university. By contrast, the respondent G points out that Russian should be known first and foremost because of the international students who come to study in Estonia from countries where Russian is widely spoken (she mentions Russia, Ukraine and Armenia).

Estonian and English are also the languages that the interviewees consider to be most important for the Estonian labour market. In addition, almost all interviewees mention the need for Russian, and some mention that Finnish is useful in the labour market. Other languages are mentioned rarely. For example, the respondent B explains that she needs English and Russian at work in hospital. English is important for young doctors to read current research literature as university education guarantees only basic knowledge that is not enough in everyday work. In addition, she needs Russian at work. She describes her work as a doctor in a hospital in Tallinn where she has to communicate in Russian with Russian-speaking patients as there are patients who do not understand any Estonian. She adds that sometimes she has to read medical histories in Russian, mostly when patients come from the Russian-speaking north-east of Estonia.

The respondent B adds that although Russian is necessary for doctors in Estonia, her academic staff did not specifically promote the necessity and opportunities to learn foreign languages, including Russian. However, she holds that elementary medical Russian should be an obligatory part of curriculum for medical students in Estonia.

B: meie öeldi küll et vene keelt on teil vaja aga keegi ei öelnud et palun käige seal tunnis /.../ nemad nagu väga ei soosinud seda aga no vene keelt tegelikult ju oleks võinud soosida /.../ siuksed elementaarsed töös vajalikud asjad võiks olla tegelikult kohustusliku õppeprogrammina et mina arvan nii

Interestingly, the respondent B notes that her academic staff did not specifically support students' interest in foreign language, rather the other way around as they turned their students' attention to the fact that the faculty has to pay for the extra language courses and thus students' interest in foreign languages is not lucrative for them.

To conclude, Estonian and English are used side-by-side, and the interviewees express rather similar attitudes towards them as far as their use in higher education is under consideration. Both of the languages are considered to be normal/self-evident (obvious, logical) and necessary/useful in Estonian academia. The Estonian interviewees do not think about the need to protect Estonian from the influence of English in higher education and science because the role and use of both languages are seen in rather stable terms in Estonian higher education. In

addition, both languages carry prestige as languages of higher education. In addition, the interviewees express rather positive attitudes towards the use of Russian in university settings. Almost all interviewees highlight that Russian should have a place in Estonian higher education, mostly as the language of communication.

### 5.3.2. Latvian data

Table 11 summarises information relating to the background of the interviewees.

**Table 11.** Overview of the interviews with students enrolled at Latvian universities

Interviewee	Field of studies	University	L1	Knowledge of other languages
A(LV)	Social sciences	RISEBA / UL	Latvian	English (well) Russian (beginner)
B(LV)	Humanities	UL / TU	Latvian	English (very well) Estonian (very well) Finnish (very well) Russian (beginner) French (beginner) German (beginner)
C(LV)	Agriculture / IT	LLU / UL / Czech Rep.	Latvian	Russian (well) English (well) German (beginner) Hungarian (beginner) Latgallian (beginner)
D(LV)	Science	UL / Germany, Norway	Latvian	English (very well) German (well) Russian (well)
E(LV)	Health and welfare (medicine)	RSU / UL	Latvian	English (very well) Russian (well) French (beginner) German (beginner)
F(LV)	Social sciences / Pedagogy	RSU / UL / Malta	Latvian	English (very well) Russian (beginner)
G(LV)	Humanities	UL / Finland	Latvian, (Russian) <sup>32</sup>	English (very well) German (well) Estonian (well) Finnish (well)
H(LV)	Humanities	UL / Finland	Russian	Latvian (very well) English (very well) German (beginner) Finnish (well) Estonian (well)

<sup>32</sup> Although the respondent speaks both Latvian and Russian since his early childhood in his family, he calls Latvian his only mother tongue because he has gone to Latvian-medium school and his grammar knowledge and writing skills are better at Latvian than Russian.

After careful analysis of the interview transcripts, the following recurring themes were found in the material: a) multilingual practices at university; b) attitudes towards the use of different languages in higher education (Latvian, English, Russian etc.); c) necessity of English-based internationalisation. Before discussing the themes in detail, some background information is given on the interviewee's knowledge of languages.

### **Background information**

Six of the interviewees indicate that Latvian is their only mother tongue; one respondent indicates that both Latvian and Russian are his mother tongue (although he considers his Latvian to be better than his Russian), and one respondent indicates that Russian is her only mother tongue. All of the interviewees have learnt and claim to speak a variety of languages. The languages that the interviewees claim to speak the best are English, Russian, and German; the good knowledge of Estonian and Finnish of some students that is mirrored in Table 11 is due to the background of the author of this research, and the snowball method used for finding interviewees. All of the interviewees are currently enrolled in Latvian-medium curricula.

The foreign language of which the respondents claim to have the best knowledge is English. Six of the respondents claim to have very good English skills and two say that they speak English well. All of the students have learnt English at school but some of them indicate alternative means that have helped them to acquire English, i.e. the mass culture (television, internet, films, and books). For example, the respondent G explains that he did not consider the English classes at school to be useful for him, instead he has learnt the language by reading in and listening to it.

In addition, all of the interviewees have studied English at university. They mostly note that the language classes were specially designed for their programme, providing them with terminology used in their field of study. In general, the interviewees value highly the opportunity to learn English for Specific Purposes at their university, especially due to the close connection of the language classes with their curriculum. Two of the interviewees have had more negative experiences, and they notes that English classes would have been useful, were they more linked to their study interests. The high prestige that English carries among the interviewees is discussed below.

Three of the respondents indicate that they have good Russian skills and three say that their Russian is at the beginner's level. As already said, Russian is a mother tongue for the remaining two students. The interviewees for whom Russian is not a mother tongue mostly indicate that they have picked up their Russian just by living in Latvia. Although they mostly have had some Russian classes at school, they tend not to accredit their skills to language classes, claiming that

Russian classes were useless for picking up the language in comparison to speaking it outside classes. For example, the respondent D explains that she has picked up her Russian while doing sports and working in a Russian-speaking environment.

D: krievu valodu es iemācījos pati nu kaut kā tā es trenējos viegatlētikā un man tur visi bija krievi un kaut kā tā sanāca iemācīties /.../ es esmu strādājusi vidē kur galvēnā krievu valoda nu tā kā savā nozarē esmu strādājusi

Almost all of the interviewees for whom Russian is a foreign language say that they would like to know the language better. For instance, the respondent E, who is studying to become a doctor, highlights that she needs to speak Russian better if she wants to work in Latvia. Moreover, she explains that she sometimes feels insecure about her Russian, especially about her accent. She thinks that her accent might make her lose respect in the eyes of Russian-speaking patients.

E: es nedomāju ka man ir pietiekami laba krievu valoda man noteikti ka vajag labāku krievu valodu ja es gribu tā kā latvijā būt ārsts /.../ tas nav baigi vienkārši reizēm es tiešām ļoti ļoti apjūku ... kaut kā arī neliels kauns runāt ar savu akcentu man ir tā kā es nezīnu man ir ... es vienkārši dzirdu ka es runāju kaut kā ļoti ļoti nepareizi krieviski nu saprotu bet es izrunāju vārdus citādāk un man liekas ka tas uzreiz kaut kā to kaut kādu to respektu tā ... nu zina kā kamēr vēl students un nemāk runāt ...

Interestingly, although the interviewees are interested in improving their Russian skills, none of them considers taking language classes (either at school or at university) to be a useful and necessary method for that. The use of and attitudes towards Russian are discussed in greater detail below.

All of the students interviewed indicate that they have learnt German at school, however, none of them perceives their German to be very good. Two respondents say that their German is good and four respondents claim to have beginner's level in the language; the two remaining respondents do not list German as a language they would know at any level. Despite language classes at school, the interviewees say that they have not acquired German or that their German is not good enough due to too little opportunities to use it. For example, the respondent G who has learnt German intensively at school explains that he does not need to use the language anymore, thus he has forgotten a lot.

G: skolā es gāju vācu skolā tāpēc es zīnu vācu valodu ... sanāca diezgan ilgi mācīties bet tagad es to zīnu mazāk jo nav īsti pielietojuma mūsdienas

Although the respondents indicate that they have very little, if any, opportunities to use German, three of the respondents mention that they have taken or are going to take a German class at the university. All of them refer to personal gain in learning some more German:



learning it is seen as a great way to spend the summer (E), speaking it is considered to be useful knowledge when travelling in Europe (F), and learning it in language classes is seen as the main way to keep up the knowledge once acquired at school (G).

All of the interviewees are open towards foreign languages, saying that they are currently learning, plan to learn or wish to learn another foreign language. Reasons for acquiring new foreign languages vary but higher education and opportunities connected to it are not mentioned, except for interviewees whose main object of study has been foreign languages, and the respondent E who partly links her interest in learning foreign languages to higher education. She plans to participate in the German language summer courses, and says that the language knowledge might possibly become handy in future if she chose to continue her medical studies in Germany.

### **Theme 1: Multilingual practices at university**

The analysis of the interview data show that the self-reported language practices of the interviewees are multilingual at Latvian universities. The languages that the interviewees use the most in university settings are Latvian, English, and Russian. The sub-section is structured in the following way: firstly, using Latvian in higher education is discussed; secondly, the use of English is described; thirdly, the situations in which Russian is used are looked at; and finally, difficulties with languages mentioned by the interviewees are analysed.

In general, all of the interviewees are open towards linguistic diversity in higher education. For example, the respondents A holds that the knowledge of different languages is important as it offers students an opportunity to access original sources of knowledge, and acquire knowledge from a variety of sources.

However, when describing their experience with languages in higher education, it appears that linguistic diversity in university settings mostly means three languages for the students interviewed: Latvian, English, and Russian. These are the languages the interviewees claim to have used the most during their studies. The multilingual nature of higher education is very well illustrated in the following excerpt from an interview with the respondent E who is a medical student. In the excerpt she describes the use of three language when going to see patients: Latvian is used with Latvian-speaking patients, Russian is used with Russian-speaking patients, and English is used to translate everything important to international medical students who do not understand any of the former languages.

E:

**(interviewee):** mums ir bijušas kopā nodarbības [ar starptautiskiem studentiem] jo viņiem atkal ir grūti iet pie pacientiem un tad mums dot katram vienu ārzemnieku un tad mēs ejam pie pacienta

**(interviewer):** un kā tad notiek tad tev jārunā angļiski

**(interviewee):** jā nu angļiski un latviski vai krieviski ar pacientu latviski vai krieviski un ar to ārzemnieku angļiski

To begin with, the interview material indicates clearly that Latvian is by far the most dominant language in Latvian higher education. All of the respondents describe their experience with the Latvian language in higher education in quite a similar vein. They indicate that Latvian is the main language of instruction in their study programme. In addition, they all describe Latvian as the only language of communication with local university administration, and the main language of communication with coursemates. Moreover, most of them indicate that Latvian is the main language of study materials and literature as well as the language in which they have written or intend to write their Bachelor's and/or Master's theses.

Similarly as in the Estonian set of data, the official language of the country is the most used language for all kinds of purposes in higher education but English is used only for specific purposes. The interview data with the students enrolled at universities in Latvia indicate that English is used as a) the language of study materials and literature; b) the language of communication with foreigners; c) an additional medium of instruction; and d) the language in which PhD theses are written. It should be noted that the role of English in students' life is quite varied, depending on the respondents and their interests. The main factors that affect the extent to which English is being used in studies are the students' field of study and the participation in exchange programmes.

Firstly, all of the respondents indicate that English is the additional language of study materials and literature. The respondent D who is a PhD student indicates that by now all the literature she has to read is in English. Others indicate English as one of the languages of study literature that is often not compulsory but available for those who are interested in doing some extra reading.

E: visi materiāli pārsvarā nu 90% ko mums dod ir latviešu valodā bet es parasti tāpatas lasu angļu valodā /.../ nu vadlīnijas visas ir angļu valodā un viss tas tā kā principā mums jau arī saka lai mēs vienkārši lasam angļiski bet lai kārtotu eksāmenus tāpat jāizlasa lekcijas no turienes būs būs un tad tāpatas jāizlasa arī latviešu materiāli /.../ principā visu var jau arī izdarīt bez angļu valodas

Secondly, English functions as a language of communication with foreigners. The data show that the interviewees do not need English daily as a language of communication but in certain contexts – when taking courses at a foreign university or participating in guest lectures at home university, when communicating with foreign universities, and when contacting international students both abroad and at home. Contacts with international students and/or colleagues at home university are, however, rather rare (if mentioned at all), as exemplified in the following

excerpt from the interview with the respondent D. Similarly, none of the other interviewees mentions being in regular contact with international students at home university, for example, taking courses together.

D: tagad darbā arī man it kā nav vajadzības ikdienā pret svešvalodām nu tīri komunikācijas ziņā bet tas pats visu laiku ir jālasa angļiski jāraksta angļiski partneri ir ārzemnieki kaut kāda minimāla komunikācija tur sanāk arī bet nu tā it kā nē /.../ tēpat uz vietas es angļu valodu izmantoju tiešām reti es teiktu nu tā darbā ikdienā komunikācijā

Thirdly, the interviewees mention English as an additional language of instruction at university. Most of the interviewees have participated in some guest lectures held in English at their university, and those who have been abroad, have taken English-taught courses at foreign university. None of the interviewees claims to have had an opportunity or an obligation to take some classes in English, except for the English language classes. Only the respondent F notes that he has been warned by the university that some courses could be given in English, if there were international students interested in taking the class. He explains that there are only few local students enrolled in the programme, thus the university takes advantage of the interest of international students, and offers courses in English.

The respondent D who is a PhD student in biomedicine adds that her doctoral thesis will be in English as one of the opponents has to be from a foreign university. She also considers writing in English easier as all of the literature is available in English, and more valuable as than writing in Latvian as it gives the thesis an international touch, and as a result, it is understandable to more people.

Similarly to English, Russian seems to fulfil certain functions in Latvian university settings that are mostly limited to communication. Russian tends to function as the additional language of communication for the respondents who are able to speak the language. They indicate using Russian at university with people who do not speak other languages (well) or who prefer to communicate in Russian. Two of the respondents do not mention having used Russian during their studies as their self-reported Russian-skills are not sufficient to hold a conversation in that language. These interviewees who are able to speak Russian have used Russian as a language of communication both at home university and abroad (e.g. when communicating with Russian-speaking (foreign) students in Finland, in Germany etc.). For example, the respondent C notes that he had a course mate for whom it was easier to speak in Russian than in Latvian, thus he (as well as others) spoke Russian to him. In addition, two of the respondents mention that they sometimes like to speak Russian to their Russian-speaking course mates as it gives a good opportunity to practice the language.

In addition, the two respondents with Russian mother tongue indicated that they sometimes use Russian as an additional language to search for study materials and literature, however, both of them say that they first look for information either in Latvian or English, and then turn to Russian for extra sources, if possible. For example, the respondent H highlights that she has used Russian sources quite a lot during her studies because her field of interest has materials in Russian that are not available in Latvian and English. However, if possible, she always searches for sources in Latvian, especially when she has to submit papers in Latvian.

Interestingly, the interviewees refer to problems that they have encountered during their studies with languages quite rarely (if all). Most of them do not mention any problems, and when specifically asked about language-related problems, they stress that they have not had any problems with languages. In rare cases, some difficulties with understanding specific lexis while reading or listening to guest lectures in English is pointed out, however, the interviewees always stress that they do not consider it to be a problem. Furthermore, the student for whom Russian is the mother tongue highlights some issues that she has had with Latvian during their studies (e.g. difficulties to understand the subject matter, difficulties to get accustomed to studies in Latvian). A rare exception among the rest of the students is the respondent B who describes her difficulties with specific vocabulary and accent that she encountered in an English-taught class abroad.

B: angļu valodā mums bija tāds diezgan specifisks psiholoģijas kurss un tur dažkārt bija tā sajūta ka man likās ka es angļu valodu protu bet tik un tā dažkārt bija tādas lietas ko man vajadzēja meklēt vārdnīcās ātri vai terminus vai tādu specifiskāku terminoloģiju kas sagādāja grūtības /.../ vispār bija sākumā grūti pierast /.../ viņš nāca no konkrētā štata ar konkrēto izrunu tā kā mēs esam mācījušies universitātē to tā saukto british english tad bija grūti saprast tos american english gan izteicienus gan salīdzinājumus kā arī false friends tā saucamie kas arī britu un amerikāņu valodā atšķirās /.../ es tomēr domāju ka britu angļu valoda ir tāda ... man liekas .. ja tādi drīkst izteikties tad īstāka pareizāka ... labāk uztverama man ..

Languages other than Latvian, English, and Russian are rarely discussed (if all) by the interviewees as languages they use during their studies. The respondents B, G and H, who study foreign philology, discuss using Estonian and Finnish in their studies but mostly as an object of study, not as a language for materials, communication etc. The respondents D and E note that other foreign languages are not needed at all in their fields of study (exact sciences and medical science).

D: angļu valodas tas ir tāds nu tāds standards /.../ nu specifiskas valodas tālāk nu tas nav īsti varbūt vajadzības pēc ļoti specifisku valodu programmām tur /.../ tur dabas zinātnēs nav īsti vajadzības pēc tā es tā domāju līdz ar to nebūtu pieprasījuma

To conclude, the data indicate that Latvian and Russian are used for rather stable purposes in Latvian academia – Latvian is the dominant language used in all aspects of studying and communicating, and Russian is the language used additionally for communication when possible and necessary. By contrast, the interview data show that the role of English in students' life is more varied, the scope of using English during the studies depends on the student. Other foreign languages are used rarely, if all, for the purposes of higher education.

In general, the interviewees have not used English much at their home university. It mostly functions as an additional language of study materials and literature but there is often no obligation to read in English. The interviewees do not point out that they would have had to write or present something in English (outside English language classes). Neither have they had to communicate in English at their home university. Thus, English is used mostly for reading in their spare time. Using English is mostly associated with exchange studies abroad, during which the students have come into contact with foreigners and taken classes with international students.

## **Theme 2: Attitudes towards languages in higher education**

This theme has been developed around topics that are related to attitudes towards using different languages in higher education. The sub-section is sequenced similarly to the previous one: the analysis of attitudes towards Latvian is followed by the discussion on attitudes expressed towards English, Russian, and other languages.

### **Attitudes to Latvian**

Firstly, the knowledge of Latvian is considered to be obligatory and necessary for everyone connected to university (students, academic staff, and rest of the staff). Some (not all) stress that using Latvian as a language of instruction at university is also necessary to avoid communication problems between universities and society. For example, the respondent A explains that universities and the state should maintain at least at the Bachelor's level that all programmes were available in the state language as it guarantees wide access to higher education among local students. Similarly, some of the other respondents hold that everyone would not be ready to study in English thus it is important to maintain the possibility to study in Latvian at university.

In addition, some of the respondents note that it is useful to teach in the Latvian language at university as it gives local Russian-speaking students a great opportunity to improve their state language skills. For example, the importance of Bachelor's studies in Latvian is stressed by the respondent H who, as a Russian-speaker, has experienced how studies in Latvian have

improved her language skills. She speaks of her experience when she notes that if she had studied in English from scratch, her English would be better than her Latvian.

Secondly, the analysis of the material shows that Latvian higher education is considered to be inevitably in Latvian. The use of Latvian as the main language of higher education is considered a natural, unavoidable state of affairs, as there were no other languages that could possibly overtake its role as the principal language of higher education. The inevitable nature of Latvian shows both explicitly and implicitly. For example, the following example shows explicit attitudes of a respondent.

H: manuprāt tas ir loģiski kā mācības notiek valsts valodā un protams .... lai valoda nepazustu jāmācās to ne tikai skolā bet arī universitātē /.../ manā pasaulē tas vienmēr tā ir bijis un tas ir normāli

In several cases it appears that the use of Latvian in higher education is so self-evident that the interviewees do not even think about it when discussing their language practices at university. For example, when asked about their language practices at university, foreign languages tend to be first mentioned, for example, as in the next example. Latvian as the main language of higher education is so inevitable for the interviewee that it does not deserve an explicit mention. It shows that the respondents do not perceive Latvian in the same category with other languages.

C

**(interviewer):** kādas valodas kurās situācijās universitātē vai saistībā ar augstāko izglītību tu lieto

**(interviewee):** eee nu tieši ar universitāti mums ir angļu valoda universitātē kas tiek mācīta tā kā profesionālā tā kā tieši saistīta ar lauksaimniecības terminoloģiju un ... bet tā universitātē tā īsti nav sanācis neko lietot .. a nu ir bijis ka mēs braucam praksē kaut kur un tur krievu valodā kaut ko stāsta un tur krievu valodā var uzdot jautājumus

The inevitability of the role of Latvian in higher education is also visible in the next example, in which the respondent D considers it weird the Bachelor's and Master's theses are written mostly in Latvian in her faculty; nevertheless, she has not searched for an option to write in a different language. She explains that it is commonly accepted to write Bachelor's and Master's theses in Latvian, thus has acted in the same way as everyone else. She explains that she would have written her theses in English if the faculty requested her to do it.

D:

**(interviewer):** bet visi bakalaura un maģistra darbi tos tu visus rakstīji latviski

**(interviewee):** jā nu tā fakultātē bija pieņemts nu tas ir dīvani bet tā tur ir pieņemts un tā mēs arī rakstījām /.../ nebija tāda nosacījuma [rakstīt angļiski]

## Attitudes to English

All respondents express their positive attitudes towards English and its use in higher education. English is seen as a necessary and valuable language. The knowledge and use of English are considered important because of its dominant role in the world as the most common language for international (scientific) communication. All in all, English carries high prestige among all the interviewees. For example, when asked about what languages in which situations the respondent D has used during her studies, she first mentions English, and after realising that she has used quite a lot of Latvian during her studies, she claims that if she had to choose one language that was particularly important to her during her studies it would definitely be English.

One of the greatest values that the interviewees attribute to English is that great amounts of information are easily available in this language. The availability of research literature in English confers prestige upon the language among the interviewees. For example, the respondent E who is a medical student considers literature in English to be more trustworthy than materials in Latvian because newest research results are almost always first published in English. To her mind, study materials in Latvian have two disadvantages: firstly, they are often too old and thus include mistaken understandings, and secondly, they are translated, and thus not the original source of information. Therefore, she holds that the obligation to read Latvian materials for examinations is rather tiresome and, all in all, unnecessary.

E: [materiāli angļu valodā] kaut kā tas liekas uzticamāk nu grāmatas kas ir latviešu valodā ir bieži vien novecojušās nu bieži mums kaut kas stāsta kur ir kļūdas un tā bet man liekas ka labāk ir ņemt kaut kādu ārzemju literatūru /.../ tur uzreiz pa taisno tur nav neviens ņēmis un tulkojis tāpat ir daudz svaigākā informācija /.../ vienkārši liekas papildus darbs lasīt tos latviešu materiālus kuri īstenībā pārklājas bet īstenībā nav tik pilnīgi /.../ principā visu var jau arī izdarīt bez angļu valodas arī tas ka mēs viens otram palīdzam ja tiešām kaut ko nesaprot un tā

English carries such prestige among the interviews that they all express positive attitudes towards English-medium instruction, and seven of them express their (theoretical) willingness to study in an English-only programme in future. While these interviewees agree that not everyone should or could study in English in Latvia, they perceive themselves to be capable of and interested in English-medium studies. One of the most common reasons for (theoretically) choosing to study only in English mentioned by the interviewees is the accompanying opportunity to improve their English skills, this has been exemplified in the following excerpt from the interview with the respondent D.

D: būtu studiju programma [angļu valodā] pēc tiem trim gadiem nu visi jau nebūtu nevienam problēmas es domāju ar valodu

It is a widespread opinion that students who study in a foreign language get an extra, i.e. they do not only study about the subject but also improve their language skills. Almost all of the interviewees stress this. Other commonly mentioned advantages of English-medium studies include easiness as it would not demand students to act in several languages in parallel, and getting the international (=English-medium) experience needed to meet the demands of the global labour market.

The analysis above suggests that the interviewees personally perceive the medium of instruction at higher education as a pragmatic issue. Although they generally think that Latvian-medium studies should be preserved for a variety of reasons outlined above, their personal (theoretical) willingness to study in English shows that they see language skills as a by-product, something that comes along naturally when you study in the language. The pragmatic nature of the medium of instruction for the interviewees is expressed also in their claims that lecturers that give lectures in English do not have to be excellent at the language, more important is that they orientate well in their subject matter. Several interviewees even stress that they would prefer lectures given by non-native speakers of English as these would be easier to understand than classes held by native speakers.

A: nu ir bijuši gadījumi ja kur ir vieslektori bijuši ja kur tu saproti ka viņam pašam tā valoda ir slikta bet ja viņš ir tik spēcīgs cilvēks tad tāpat jau viņa ieguvums ir liels /.../ es neatteikšos nu pasniedzēja kura runā slikti angļiski un ja viņš nav labs tad viņš var runāt angļiski perfekti

However, it should be noted here that all of the respondents have chosen to study in Latvian as they are all currently enrolled in Latvian-taught programmes. The only interviewee (F) who does not express his readiness to study only in English, says that it would definitely be useful but he considers himself too lazy to accept the challenge. Also others tend to express their opinion that studying in Latvian is an easier way out whereas studies in English would pose greatly awaited challenges.

F:

**(interviewer):** vai tu labprāt studētu angļiski

**(interviewee):** es domāju ka jā jo īstenībā ir grūtāk ja tev ir jālasa angļiski un pēc tam jāraksta latviski esēja par to vieglāk ir lasīt angļiski un rakstīt pēc tam angļiski jo tev nav tā kā galvā jāpartulko

**(interviewer):** nu ja tev būtu viena un tā pati studiju programma paralēli latviski un angļiski kā tev šķiet kam kuram tu dotu priekšroku

**(interviewee):** es droši vien ka izvēlētos latviski jo .... jo es esmu slinks pēc dabas ja es būtu čaklāks es droši vien ka izvēlētos angļiski lai tā kā varētu paralēli vēl apgūt vēl labāk valodu un visu pārējo bet cik es esmu slinks tad es vienkārši izvēlētos latviski jo tas man mazāk laika paņemtu latviski tomēr vieglāk noklausīties to visu .. ar pasniedzēju komunicēt ir vieglāk un viss /.../ bet ja es teiksim būtu kaut kur ārzemēs mācīties tad noteikti man nebūtu nekādas pretenzijas angļiski mācīties nu ikdienā viss notiek angļiski vienkārši grūti ir tas ka tev ir jāpār=nu tā pārslēgšana priekš manis ir grūta starp valodām



The only interviewee who admits having had a choice between studying in Latvian and in English, is the respondent E. She explains that during the medical studies at her university it is possible to change groups and study in English together with international students. Although she says that it is a popular choice among local students, she refused to study entirely in English mainly due to great relationship that she has with her course mates. In addition she mentions that studying in English could at times be difficult as she has heard that not all academic staff are able to teach in fluent English.

All in all, the one interviewee (C) whose contact with the English language at university seems to be the weakest (neither has he had lectures (even guest lectures) in English, nor has he had to read anything in English for his studies) expresses the most positive attitudes towards studies in English.

C:

**(interviewer):** which languages are used as media of instruction in your study programme

**(interviewee):** studijas diemžēl notiek latviski /.../ es gribētu angļiski labāk /.../ es domāju ka studēšana latviski priekšrocības nedod īsti nekādas tāpēc ka ja kādas neskaidrības svešvalodā tad tu vienmēr vari pajautāt jautājumus un precizēt visu varbūt tas notiktu lēnāk un noteikti dārgāk jo tad būtu speciālisti vajadzīgi savadāki bet es domāju ka efekts būtu labāks /.../ ja skolā augstskolā tiktu mācīts tajā valodā tad būtu vairāk un plašāk iespējams iegūt informāciju /.../ nu latviski beigu beigās es jau varētu izteikties tāpat es domāju ka tā nebūtu liela problēma

The last example shows a bit broader understanding expressed by the interviewees: they generally do not feel the need to learn (in) Latvian and/or Russian (see below) as they consider their necessary Latvian and Russian skills to be there anyway. Thus, there is no need to improve these skills in formal classroom settings at university. However, English, particularly professional English is something that students in Latvia cannot pick up so simply, thus they stress that they would like to study in English.

A similar understanding is put forward by other interviewees too when they claim that there is no need for them to study in Latvian at university because they already speak Latvian. Two of the interviewees even maintain that Latvian does not get any advantage by being a medium of instruction at university because students should have learnt Latvian already at school. For example, the respondent D does not feel the need to teach in Latvian at university because those who have not already acquired Latvian well enough will never do that.

The above-given examples show that language is seen as an entity that can be acquired so that you do not have to learn it ever again. This mostly applies to mother tongue as it is the language in which the respondents feel that it is the easiest to express themselves.

## Attitudes to Russian

The data analysis shows that Russian is used to some extent in university settings, and its knowledge is considered necessary to meet the demands of the local labour market. Although all interviewees for whom Russian is a foreign language express their wish to improve their Russian skills, none of them values Russian as a language of importance in higher education. The interviewees either say that they do not need Russian in university settings or if they need the language they can acquire it by using it. Even the respondent H who speaks Russian as her mother tongue says that she could do without any Russian at university. At the same time she stresses the importance of Latvian and English during her studies.

Whereas all of the respondents hold that those connected to higher education in Latvia (students, academic staff, and administration) should know Latvian and English, only some mention that Russian should be known as well. For example, the respondent C holds that Latvian and English should be the default languages at Latvian higher education, whereas the knowledge of other languages could be considered a bonus. He then reformulates his thought and considers Latvian, English, and Russian are the three languages that everyone in Latvia should know.

By contrast, Russian is seen as a valuable (and almost obligatory) asset in the Latvian labour market. Almost all interviewees indicate that the Latvian labour market needs first and foremost three languages: Latvian, English, and Russian. According to the data, Latvian and Russian are needed locally, mostly for state-internal communication, and English is useful globally, for education, information, and communication with foreigners and abroad. This is exemplified in the excerpt from the interview with the respondent C.

C: darbā man ir krievu latviešu ... angļu ir tikai kaut kādos ... bet angļu ir vajadzīga tad kad tiek veiktas apmācības /.../ saskarsme ārpus robežām uzreiz angļu valoda ieslēdz pārsvarā /.../ Latvijā ir ļoti daudz krieviski runājošie ļoti ... vēl vairāk latviski runājošie un ir gana daudz situācijas arī tieši saistītas ar augstāko izglītību kaut kādi kursi vai kas kad angļu valodā var notikt kaut kas kaut kādas apmācības vai kas un informācija angļu valodā ļoti daudz ir kas ir jāapkopo /.../ reizēm gadās arī darbā ka nāks kāds darbinieks kurš tā kā latviski tā kā pilnīgi nesaprot tad ar viņu tu vēl centies latviski runāt bet ja atbrauc klients ja runā krieviski tad pienākums pret klientu man ir arī runāt krieviski

Although higher education is interchangeably connected to labour market and its needs, the interview material shows none of the interviewees is interested in taking Russian classes at university. Although many of them note that their Russian could be better for the labour market needs, they do not link Russian to their university education. For example, the respondent C has acquired Russian in his childhood while playing in the backyard with neighbours; he considers himself to be fluent in spoken Russian.

C: .... es nezinu ... jo es pamatskolā atteicos no krievu valodas paņēmu vācu valodu ar domu ka krievu valodu zināju un tagad man ir tā ka man nedaudz tā kā pietrūkst krievu valodas gramatika jo es iemācījos sarunvalodā visu bet lasīt rakstīt man neviens nemācīja to tikai tik cik pats iemācījies zinot vārdus un minot tos teikumus prasītos nedaudz mācīties bet vai es būtu gatavs maksāt naudu un iespringt tagad uz krievu valodu es domāju ka diez vai jo informāciju es krievu valodā nemeklēju un man vairāk sarunvaloda kas man jau ir tā man vairāk interesē un tāpēc es domāju ka nē

In addition, three of the students explicitly explain their disinterest in learning Russian in formal setting due to the political connotations of the language. For example, the respondent F maintains that it is much more difficult to understand the value of the information in Russian than in English as Russian is so tightly connected to political propaganda.

### **Attitudes to other languages**

Attitudes towards other languages are expressed rarely. Languages other than Latvian, English, and Russian are mentioned mainly by students who have learnt a great deal of foreign languages in their lives, including at university. For example, the respondents B, G, and H who speak a wide variety of languages well or very well and have experiences with different languages in the labour market, note that the Latvian labour market needs other languages as well, such as the languages spoken in the Baltic and Nordic countries. They maintain that the knowledge of Latvian, English, and sometimes also Russian is so common in Latvia that the knowledge of these languages does not give any advantages in the local labour market. In order to get a competitive edge you should know more languages.

H: skandināvu valodas un ... nu jā ... tagad es skatos uz darba tirgu un es saprotu ka es neizvēlējos tā kā sliktāko variantu ka tomēr somu un igauņu valodas ir diezgan aktuālas latvijā un es arī zinu ka zviedru norvēģu dāņu valodas arī ir aktuālas /.../ nu piemēram latviešu un angļu tas ir tādas ... nu protams ka ir jārunā tajās valodās un man tas pat neizraisa jautājumu un tā kā man krievu valoda ir dzimtā tad man ir tās trīs valodas kurās es runāju un tas ir tā kā obligāti un stabili es nevaru uzskatīt tās valodas par .. nezinu kaut ko īpašu ka es tur zinu trīs valodas jo man tas ir ... nu es skatos uz citiem cilvēkiem un tie arī runā divās un trīs valodās ļoti labi un jā .. nu nevar to uzskatīt=nu tas protams ir kā svešvalodas bet īsti tu nevari tās uzskatīt par kaut kādu vau svešvalodas jo tas ir tik .. nu latvijā ļoti daudz cilvēku runā divas trīs valodās

To conclude, the variety of languages mentioned depends to some extent on the respondents' linguistic background and field of study. Despite everything, there is a clear orientation towards considering Latvian and English the most important languages of the Latvian higher education. Using Latvian in higher education is considered to be inevitable, first and foremost, because it is used so extensively, and only then because the interviewees consider its use to be important for the Latvian language and/or higher education.

Although all interviewees say that they use English in their studies, it is not used much at the home universities of students. Using English is mostly associated with exchanges studies abroad. Even though the interviewees have not had very much experience in using English in higher education, the language carries high prestige among them. Language of instruction is seen as a pragmatic issue that does not affect the status, corpus and acquisition of the Latvian language, and thinking “Latvian is and will be used anyway” dominates. The interviewees express their desire to study in English only.

As shown in the previous sub-section, Russian is used to some extent as the language of communication in university settings; its skills (especially speaking skills) are considered essential to meet the demands of the local labour market, however, it does not carry any prestige as a possible language of higher education.

### **Theme 3: Necessity of English-based internationalisation**

The third theme is centred on the need to internationalise Latvian higher education. Such a necessity was expressed by all of the interviewed students. Internationalisation of higher education is mostly interpreted as the growth in opportunities to study in English for local students. For now it seems that courses and programmes offered in English at Latvian universities are mostly meant for international students. One interviewee is not even aware of the possibility to study in English at his university, and two respondents express heavy doubts about the availability of English-taught programmes at their university (although there are English-medium programmes available at their universities).

As shown above, all interviewees express positive attitudes towards broadening the scope of studies in English at Latvian universities, and almost all of them express their willingness to study only in English. According to the data, both the amount of guest lectures by foreign academic staff and lectures held in English by local academic staff has to be increased. According to some of the interviewees, the necessity to internationalise and Englishise Latvian higher education arises from the smallness of Latvia, and the Latvian language. For example, the respondent A holds that Latvia is a small country that does not have enough specialists, thus visiting lecturers are desperately needed here.

The creation of English-medium programmes at Latvian universities is considered useful both for the development of local students, and for attracting international students. Moreover, only the presence of and regular contact with international students is considered to be developing for the local students. For example, the respondent C argues that creating more programmes in English that would be available both for local and international students would be useful for the country as well as students.

C: [studijas angļu valodā] tikai dotu iespēju piesaistīt citu tautu studentus pie mums braukt un popularizēt latviju kā tādu un ļoti iespējams arī mūsu speciālistiem izmācīties šeit un pēc tam braukt kaut kur apmaiņas programmā uz ārzemēm un nestāvēt kā baltai lapai bet saprast par ko ir runa un spēt sazināties ar citiem speciālistiem no citām valstīm /.../ manuprāt tā ir valsts ekonomikas celšana nu jo ... katrs students kas brauc tas ved no ārvalstīm naudu iekšā latvijā un tikai tā tikai labumā nāk latvijai un viņa dzīvošana un uzturēšana viss tas piesaistītu ārvalstu naudu latvijai nauda nāktu mums un plus mums būtu kontakti solabiedri kuri viens ir no vācijas un otrs ir no latvijas viņi varbūt vēlāk biznesu var veidot kopā un tā kā viens otram palīdzēt kontaktēties

International is considered necessary by the interviewed students to rise the quality of the local higher education. For example, the respondent D overtly states that the amount of English-medium course offerings at a faculty and university speak about quality of the faculty and university. She considers English-taught programmes to be more qualitative and valuable for the development of students.

As already seen, the interviewees tie international to English. For example, all of the respondents who have studied abroad mention English as (one of) the main language(s) they used while studying at a foreign university. Moreover, in the example above (C) creating international contacts is defined as only being possible in English. Another interviewee interprets international as English-based, as seen in the example below.

A: vispār tā skola vispār ir ļoti starptautiska, tajā laikā tā bija ļoti starptautiskā .. jo tāpēc tās logo ir rakstīts ka tā ir RiSEBA jo latviski sanāk ReSEBA vai kaut kā .. nu angļiskais nosaukums ir oriģinālais tai skolai lai gan tā ir tikai Latvijā tā kā es domāju ka tā ir ļoti angļiska /.../ un oriģinālā mājaslapā viņiem arī atvēras angļu valodā

The interview data show that the interviewees consider education in English to be for everyone. Almost all of them note that they would like to study in English in order to improve their English language skills. At the same time, the interviewees perceive their English to be very good or good, and they all stress that their English skills are good enough in order to study only in that language. By contrast, several interviewees, who claim to have very good or good knowledge at other foreign languages, maintain that they could not study in that language because their language skills are good enough to study entirely in that language. For example, the respondent D who has studied German thoroughly at school and at language courses, and claims to speak German well, thinks that her knowledge of German would not be enough to study in that language.

D: vācu valodā es nevarētu studēt tik specifisku lietu jo nu ... tur tiešām .. nu tik specializētu nozari ja tu pirms tam neesi nepazīsti terminus ne vispār tika labā līmenī tur jau principā vajag augstāko līmeni lai studētu vāciski un man tur ar B kaut kādu tur līmeni es pat nevarētu es domāju

Moreover, the interview data show that English is perceived as an international language used by everyone all over the world, other foreign languages tend to be tightly connected to fixed territories, i.e. the main countries in which they are used as national and/or official language (Germany is tied to Germany and/or other German-speaking countries in Europe, Estonian is tied to Estonia, Finnish to Finland etc.).

Most of the interviewees see no negative effects in implementing more study programmes in English. The respondents D and F maintain that Latvian should be acquired in secondary education so well that universities should not teach in Latvian.

Interestingly, the interview data show that while the interviewees are interested in increasing the role of English as language of instruction in Latvian higher education, none of them considers it necessary or possible to transition to a higher education system in which all curricula would be taught in English. The respondent A notes that offering at least Bachelor programmes in the state language is important to give everyone an opportunity to acquire higher education. The respondent B maintains that language of instruction confers prestige upon a language, and thus it is of uttermost importance to preserve Latvian-medium higher education.

In addition, the respondents C and D notes that they do not think that all of their course mates would be ready to transition to English-medium studies as their English skills are not good enough to study in the language. The respondent E thinks that she would not have been able to study in English from scratch.

The Latvian language is considered dear for the respondents but there is nothing there could and should be done to protect the use of language in higher education. For example, the respondent D holds that Latvian should be protected as a spoken language in society but it cannot be protected in the sphere of education and science because these have no borders, therefore. The respondent E expresses similar views as shown in the example below. Interestingly, the respondent constructs the Latvian language as having borders, while higher education and science have none. The respondent maintains that in order to be successful in this world, you have to agree to the international nature of education and science. In this example, the separate multilingualism ideology prevails that Lønsmann & Haberland (2013) see as a hindrance to alternating between different languages.

E: latviešu valoda ir ļoti skaista un viņa ir kopjama un aizsargājama protams bet es domāju ka tas ir vairāk .. par to ir jādomā vairāk citās nozarēs ne tik ļoti medicīnā un kaut kādas .. nu viss .. nu mums vajag vairāk tos internacionālos materiālus /.../ ar to lai nodarbojas visi humanitārās zinātnes

### 5.3.3. Main results

The qualitative data presented in this sub-section offers a divergent view on the motivation behind using different languages in Estonian and Latvian academia. In addition to using languages as media of instruction in higher education, they are used for the purposes of communication, doing research and reading, writing papers and theses, etc. All of the students interviewed spend their academic lives in settings in which more than one language is being used. The data suggest that the use of languages differs to some extent in the respondent groups in Estonia and Latvia, especially in respect to English but to a lesser extent also in respect to Estonian/Latvian and Russian. Estonian and Latvian are indeed the most dominant languages in today's higher education in Estonia and Latvia. For the students interviewed, the official language of the country is the main language of instruction at Bachelor's and Master's levels (Estonia), the only language of instruction (Latvia), the main language of communication with course mates, academic staff and university administrations, and the language of Bachelor's and Master's theses.

English is the best-known foreign language both among the Estonian and Latvian respondents; it is also the most widely used foreign language in academic settings. The interview data with Estonian respondents show that, whereas the use of Estonian is widespread for various purposes, English is used in more specific settings in academia: as an additional medium of instruction for regular courses, a language of study materials and literature (together with Estonian), a language of communication with foreigners, and a language of PhD theses. Complementary language use appears: the students in Estonia tend to use Estonian whenever possible and switch to English only when there are no options to use Estonian. Interestingly, the students interviewed in Latvia come into contact with English more rarely at their home university: almost all of them relate English in university settings to the compulsory English language classes that are designed for acquiring specific terminology. In addition, they also report to have had one-time guest lectures in English but none of them claims to have had an opportunity to take regular courses in English; they all value English for the vast amount of materials available in it but claim that reading in English is not an obligation in their studies. As a result of the bilingual language practices at university, the students interviewed in Estonia can point to a wide variety of difficulties that accompany studying in a foreign language. By contrast, the Latvian respondents tend to idealize studies in English without noticing possible disadvantages that could be suffered from when studying in a foreign language.

Russian is known better and used slightly more among the Latvian respondents as a language of informal communication in academic settings than among the Estonian respondents who

rarely mention using Russian at university at all (mostly when discussing Russian language classes that they have taken). Russian has been learnt at school by all respondents in Estonia and Latvia and they all value the language as a necessary asset for the labour market (but not for higher education). In both settings, Russian carries overt prestige among the interviewees as they mostly express their wish to improve their Russian skills for the needs of the labour market. However, the means by which the students interviewed wish to improve their Russian skills differ in the two respondent groups. Whereas several students interviewed in Estonia have taken extra Russian classes at university in order to improve their knowledge (and express their positive attitudes towards them), the students interviewed in Latvia regard the idea of language classes as useless and prefer to practice Russian in everyday communicative situations that they consider to be sufficiently available around them for acquiring the language better.

Languages other than Estonian/Latvian, English and Russian are rarely (if at all) mentioned by the interviewees as languages used at university. Although all respondents express their interest in learning various languages, this is done mostly for other than academic purposes. For example, German, which is one of the most common languages taught at Estonian and Latvian schools, has indeed been learnt by many interviewees at school but it is not used in higher education, even if the self-perceived language skills of some interviewees would enable them to use German in academia.

The study shows that the two respondent groups also hold slightly different attitudes towards the use of language in academia. Higher education in Estonian and Latvian is considered to be obligatory and necessary in both groups of interviewees. The Estonian-medium and Latvian-medium instruction is valued particularly by the Bachelor's students. The fact that higher education mostly takes place in Estonian/Latvian is considered to be self-evident but the slight difference tends to be that, whereas the students interviewed in Estonia perceive such a situation as fully acceptable, the students interviewed in Latvia express their willingness to have more English in their academic lives. However, they do not believe that this would be possible, in their views there is no other language in which Latvian higher education could function.

English is highly valued as an academic language by all students interviewed in Estonia and Latvia and it carries high and overt prestige. It is the language linked to great amounts of knowledge that are easily available, international communication as well as socio-economic advantages believed to be granted to its speakers in the Estonian and Latvian labour market. It is no surprise that English carries high prestige among students in Estonia and Latvia as its status as the language of international higher education and science is highly praised not only at grassroots levels but also by top-down governmental and institutional policies, and generally considered to be useful in the Estonian and Latvian labour market.



Of course, the aforementioned differences apply first and foremost to the data sets of this study, but some generalization can be made. On the one hand, students (in this case at Estonian universities) who have had a possibility or an obligation to take courses in English at their home university are more aware of what it means to study in a foreign language. Thus, they have experienced that studying in a foreign language can be more difficult than studying in your mother tongue. They perceive using both Estonian and English in higher education to be natural and normal, but if they had to make a choice, they would opt for studying mainly in their mother tongue (with additional classes in English), especially at the Bachelor's level.

On the other hand, students (in this case at Latvian universities) who have not had a chance to take courses in English at their home university tend to feel that they are missing out on international tendencies; they are cut off from opportunities. As they have not had so much experience with studying in English, they cannot rely on their personal experience but only on their attitudes that are overtly positive towards English and studying in English. English is believed to be necessary, they feel that English should be taught and used considerably more in higher education. The spread of English in academia has almost only positive connotations for the Latvian interviewees. As a result, almost all of them claim that they would like to (continue to) study rather in English than in Latvian. Using both Latvian and English side-by-side as media of instruction is not discussed as they have not experienced this; they rather regard the idea of studying in two languages as too difficult.

In some cases it appears in the Latvian data that regular English-taught programmes are meant, first and foremost, for international students; sometimes local students have an opportunity to take such courses but sometimes they are even not aware of the opportunity to study in English at their university. By contrast, it seems that Estonian universities orient their English-medium courses more towards local students as well. In any case, what initiates English-medium instruction is a foreign person present in the classroom, either academic staff or students. Here, Saarinen's (2012) paradox of internationalization applies: the more international students with their own unique linguistic backgrounds there are, the more linguistically homogeneous the academic environment becomes. In other words, the more international students from different countries, the more English is used.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The dissertation set out to study the interplay of languages in higher education in Estonia and Latvia. This section answers the main research question – what role do different languages play in higher education comparatively in Estonia and Latvia, particularly in the national universities? The analysis of multilayered language policy presented in this dissertation enables to contrast management efforts at different levels and by different authors (state, higher education institutions) and compare those to the linguistic practices and attitudes of the students interviewed for the purposes of this thesis. According to Spolsky (2004: 218), “language management remains a dream until it is implemented, and its potential for implementation depends in large measures on its congruity with the practices and ideology of the community.” Thus, another question arises: how congruent is language policy in higher education in Estonia and Latvia at different levels of language policy? Firstly, the section discusses role of Estonian and Latvian in higher education language policy in Estonia and Latvia; then the role of English, Russian and other languages is viewed comparatively in the two research settings.

The research carried out within this dissertation reveals that Estonian and Latvian are prestigious languages of higher education in Estonia and Latvia – they are ideologically supported by the states as well as the national universities, and the interviewed students show favourable attitudes towards these languages. Secondly, Estonian and Latvian are at the centre of state-authored and institutional language policies. Thus, the ideology underlying state and institutional language management is predominantly national, and intended to protect the official languages. The protectionist measures taken by the states of Estonia and Latvia as well as their national universities for granting special privileges for Estonian and Latvian has been noticed also by Klaas-Lang (2016: 254). In addition, Estonian and Latvian are the most dominant languages used in higher education in Estonia and Latvia; this becomes apparent in the student interviews, which reveal widespread use of these languages in all academic functions, (Hamel 2006; Haberland 2014) as well as in the official statistics on the media of instruction in higher education institutions in Estonia and Latvia.

In general, a slightly different conceptualisation of language occurs in the state policies of Estonia and Latvia. Whereas Latvian policy-makers have outlined their vision of language use in higher education rather clearly in legislation and questions of language have deserved less attention in policy-planning documents, Estonian policy-makers have introduced rather few rules on language use in higher education in legislation, and mostly the discussion on the issues appears in policy-planning documents. In other words, language policy in higher education has

been made official and legally binding in Latvia, whereas in Estonia it is rather revealed in strategic measures that the state hopes to implement.

Interestingly, slightly different ideologies appear at the same policy levels in Latvia. The Latvian legislation concentrates on the strong position of Latvian as language of higher education but in policy-planning documents policy-makers additionally tend to advocate higher education export and creation of study programmes in foreign languages / the official languages of the EU. Moreover, the policy implemented by the University of Latvia puts increased emphasis on the spread of English among its students and academic staff. These policies are not necessarily contradictory but just focused differently.

Both in Estonia and Latvia (in particular) language policy makers tend to use the concept of *the official language* instead of naming the language in legislative acts in respect to language use in higher education. This is less common or does not exist at all in other sets of analysed material. The focus on *the official language* in legislation shows that the states construe themselves as forces whose task it is to preserve and develop the official language of the state, and not any other language. Using *the official language* instead of naming it could show that the state attributes the language a power position and establishes its level at the top of language hierarchies. Furthermore, referring to *the official language* instead of naming it offers an explanation to why the state has opted for imposing a rule or a regulation. Additionally, by naming a language an official language and implementing top-down policies, the state exercises its power to do so, positioning itself as a major power in defining language ideologies.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that in addition to Estonian and Latvian, English is ideologically valued as language of higher education at the state and institutional level as well as at the grassroots level. In the national universities, it is the second most used language. According to the official statistics, English is used as media of instruction in higher education institutions in both countries. In addition, the interviews conducted with students show that English is used for certain functions in higher education in Estonia and Latvia, such as a language of study materials and literature or a language of communication with foreigners. In the majority of functions, English is used in addition to Estonian and Latvian, i.e. in a complementary way (Preisler 2009).

English is the most mentioned foreign language in top-down policies both at the state and institutional level. In the majority of cases, policy-makers regulate the use of English in a way that it is used in addition to Estonian and Latvian. According to the state-authored and institution-authored policies, using English only is acceptable in rare cases that have to do with the international side of higher education. Although the policy-makers at the state level try to avoid giving special treatment to English and prefer referring to *foreign languages, other*

*languages, the official languages of the EU* (in Latvia), the mentioning of English and the unmentioning of other foreign languages shows its strong position as a language of higher education when compared to other foreign languages. Additionally, English enjoys immense prestige among the students interviewed for the research as they show very favourable attitudes to using English in higher education.

From top-level policies to grassroots practices, English becomes more visible towards bottom. The use and functions of English in higher education are rather invisible in legislation; English is mentioned for some times in state-authored legislative acts and policy-planning documents, however, it has deserved a great deal of attention in institutional documents and student interviews. Whereas the states focus on managing their official languages, higher education institutions and their participants (for example students) deal with everyday language issues in which the role of English in higher education becomes visible. At the institutional and grassroots level, English is more explicit and considered as a pragmatic need.

At the level of state policies in Estonia and Latvia, English is construed as a competing language and an opportunity (Estonia), or just an opportunity (Latvia). English is viewed as an opportunity and never framed as a threat at the institutional level, it offers the university a source of prospective students that are needed in the light of decreasing number of local students. Constructing English as an opportunity is closely linked with the universities' need for incoming international students as the number of perspective local students is constantly decreasing. The fear for the excessive spread of English that has been noticed in the Nordic political ideologies (e.g. Hultgren et al. 2014) is mostly not present in Estonian and Latvian state-authored and institution-authored policies.

What is more, the analysis shows that language management efforts and higher education policies tend not to overlap. For example, in the analysed policy-planning documents drafted by the Latvian state, a great deal of attention is paid to exporting higher education (cf. Kibbermann 2017) but in these documents, language is rarely mentioned. The separation of internationalisation and language policies has been noted also by others, for example, Druviete (2014: 141) states that the internationalisation policy of the EU is often blamed for not paying attention to language. Saarinen (2012, 2014) and Saarinen & Nikula (2013) note the schism between internationalisation policies and language policies in Finland, Hultgren et al. (2014) discuss the same issue also in the context of other Nordic countries. As a result, the two discourses – internationalist and culturalist – suggested by Hultgren et al. (2014) can be applied also to the Estonian and Latvian language policies in higher education.

The data on language practices shows that Russian is used to an extent in higher education. Its position is ideologically-laden at all policy levels. The official statistics show that Russian

is used as medium of instruction mostly in private higher education, i.e. it serves economic interests of private schools, in which education is a business and not so much a public service. Thus, teaching in Russian should be a good business decision when private higher education institutions are taking advantage of that opportunity. In a context in which public universities, including the University of Tartu and the University of Latvia, are actors in neo-liberal economic (Soler & Vihman 2017: 4) and (partly) responsible for their financial affairs, denying extra income from Russian-medium education is ideological. The analysis shows that in Latvia the choice has been made by the state but does not reveal the force behind the decision in Estonia.

The ideological stance on the Russian language adopted by policy-makers at the state level in both countries is apparent also in the invisibility of Russian in state-authored policy documents. It is not constructed as a threat, an opportunity or an everyday reality, it is simply ignored. It can be interpreted as ideological erasure. According to Irvine & Gal (2000: 38-39), ideological erasure is the process in which ideology makes the undesirable to disappear or simply explains it away. Soler-Carbonell (2015) suggests that Estonian language policy has a tendency to erase languages that apply too much pressure on Estonian. The invisibility of Russian in top-down policies can be explained with the sensibility of both states to their historical developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that language-wise differ considerably from the experience of many countries in Europe (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009).

The use and role of Russian in higher education in Estonia and Latvia becomes clearer in the interview data. The interviewed students repeatedly stress the significance of Russian as a language they will need to find employment in the local labour market. As a result, the students interviewed both in Estonia and Latvia often express the wish to improve their Russian language skills. Several other studies show that Russian plays a role as one of the languages valued in the labour market (cf. Kivistik 2017; Simmul 2017).

Authors of top-down state language management in Estonia and Latvia are rather unspecific when discussing the role of languages other than Estonian and Latvian in higher education. They prefer concepts such as *foreign languages*, *other languages* and *the official languages of the EU* (in Latvia), whereas they only infrequently mention specific languages. The only languages that policy-makers mention in legislation and other state policy documents are English and in rare cases also Russian. Opting for the above-mentioned concepts instead of naming specific languages in the majority of cases can be interpreted an ideological choice – the policy-makers choose to afford a (theoretical) opportunity to other languages as well, to show their ideological support to the acquisition and use of multiple foreign languages in higher education, instead of upholding the hegemony of certain languages. For example, Druviete

(2007: 142) stresses the importance of maintaining multilingual practices in higher education and not substituting these with monolingual studies in English.

The question is whether the unmentioning of the strong competing languages (calling the devil by its name) in state language management is helpful or harmful? Saarinen (2012, 2014) who has shown that the Finnish policies of internationalisation of higher education also avoid naming specific languages argues that it blurs the relationship of language and internationalisation. Saarinen & Nikula (2013) suggest that choosing a more general term mostly probably shows the genuine will of policy-makers to introduce other foreign languages to higher education, however, not speaking about specific languages (English in their case) “makes [them] discursively and ideologically stronger and more powerful” (ibid. 138).

Soler-Carbonell (2015) has found as well that English is often erased from the Estonian language policy documents. He suggests that it has been done because English exerts firm pressure on Estonian, and “the avoidance of English fosters flexibility, variability and adaptability but these concepts remain an ideal rather than form a practical reality” (ibid. 265). He further argues that such vagueness is unnecessary for students and academic staff but useful for policy-makers in order to save their face and avoid public criticism (ibid.).

Using the concept of *the official languages of the EU* by Latvian policy-makers at the state level is highly ideological. This concept effectively denies state-funded higher education institutions the chance to use Russian in certain academic functions that do not enjoy the state’s support. The regulation is imposed in an ideologically clever way, not by explicitly ruling out the use of Russian, a competing language that is felt to exert great pressure on Latvian, but by putting emphasis on the state’s membership in the EU and its acting in compliance with the EU policies.

Whereas state policy-makers tend to opt for the more general concepts, such as *foreign languages* and *the official languages of the EU*, the documents of the national universities are more specific. University language policies are more precise than state language policies, they have to set rules for everyday language issues that arise in university setting. In addition to Estonian and Latvian, the authors of institutional documents have frequently discussed English; other foreign languages have gained far less attention also at the institutional level. At the national level, policy-makers understandably focus on the formal and explicit ideologies of the state, whereas the institutional policies often refer to practical needs, thus showing a different kind of (a more implicit) ideological stand where internationalisation (represented by English language study programmes) is more prevalent.

All in all, language in academia is viewed in a rather traditional manner at all policy levels. The documents tend to depict languages as discrete entities with certain borders: at a time either

one or another language can be used for fulfilling a certain function. However, studies on language use in academia (e.g. Ljosland 2014; Söderlundh 2012, 2013, 2014) show that languages are rarely (if ever) used in such a manner and processes of internationalisation are multilingual at all levels: people make use of a great deal of linguistic resources they possess at all times. For example, language of instruction is not a solid concept at grassroots level: the fact that one language has been chosen as the nominal language of instruction does not mean that other languages are not used in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, medium of instruction is only part of the language use in academia. Languages fulfil a multitude of functions in university settings, for example, they are used for communicating with co-students, colleagues and university administrations, reading literature, carrying out research, writing papers, etc. The actual language use is much more diverse than depicted in policy documents.

Similarly, the ideology of separate multilingualism (Lønsmann & Haberland 2013) can be detected in the interview data with students: at the attitudinal / ideological level, people have a tendency to see that one sociolinguistic function can only be filled by one language. Instead of opting for multilingual solutions, the interviewees see English-only as rescue to their situation. Although the interviewees report multilingual language practices, they tend to see languages as separate and bordered entities whose simultaneous use is neither acceptable nor necessary (this has been noted also, for example, by Woolard (1998) and discussed by Li Wei (2011) as the ideology of One Language Only or One Language at a Time).

## CONCLUSIONS

The research conducted within this dissertation shows that language issues in higher education are rather topical at different levels of policy-making in Estonia and Latvia. The thesis concentrates on language management and ideologies at the state level as well as in the national universities, and gives insights into language practices and attitudes of students. The document analysis reveals the top-down management efforts of the states and the national universities as well as their underlying ideologies, whereas in the interviews students shared their experience with and attitudes to different languages in higher education.

The research on multilayered language policy yields that, first of all, at the state level, Estonian and Latvian enjoy ideological support of state policy-makers that have positioned these languages in the centre of language management. State policy-makers have discussed other languages in legislation and policy-planning documents to an extent, however, in the majority of cases, these languages remain unspecified and unnamed. The only *other* languages named in state policy documents in the context of higher education are English and Russian. Secondly, Estonian and Latvian have considerable support of the national universities both in Estonia and Latvia; however, at the institutional level the importance of English as language of higher education appears. Finally, the student interviews show that Estonian and Latvian are the most widespread and dominant languages in higher education for them, used in all relevant functions. English is used rather frequently, and it enjoys great prestige among the students. In addition, the students interviewed for the thesis value Russian as the language they need in order to find employment in the labour market. The students have reported a keen interest in learning other languages at universities, however, they mostly do not use these languages for academic purposes.

These research results imply that Estonian and Latvian are currently dominant and prestigious languages of higher education in the national universities in Estonia and Latvia. The position of Estonian and Latvian as languages of higher education is ideologically supported by the states, the national universities, and the interviewed students. English enjoys prestige as a language used in a complementary way in the national universities in Estonia and Latvia. Russian is ideologically erased at the state level; it is rarely mentioned in the language policies of the national universities. Nevertheless, it should be noticed that the institutional language policy focuses on some language issues only, and does not discuss, for example, the language skills needed in the labour market.

The interview data reveals that Estonian/Latvian and English fulfil all the criteria to be used in academia, as outlined by Grin (2003): the students interviewed are capable of speaking these



languages, they have opportunities and the desire to use these languages at university. In addition, the students interviewed in Latvia could be capable to use Russian in higher education, however, there are not enough opportunities and necessities to use the language in the national university as well as no desire to do it. The students interviewed in Estonia are more positively-minded towards Russian in higher education (they express their desire to learn and use the language in academia), however, they lack opportunities and the capacity to do it. As for other languages, for example, German, capacity alone does not create opportunities and desire to use the language in academic settings.

Today, higher education in Estonia and Latvia is faced with the same issues as, for example, in the Nordic countries. However, the sociolinguistic situation is unique in each and every setting, so is the tradition of language management. Compared to Sweden, Denmark and Iceland, Estonia and Latvia have a long history of top-down national language management. Moreover, English started to spread in the Nordic academic space already after the Second World War (at first as the language of science and then as the language of higher education), whereas its spread in Estonia and Latvia is relatively recent. However, Estonia and Latvia have experienced an extensive use of Russian in higher education during the Soviet occupations. In sociolinguistic studies and language management efforts alike, local experience should be taken into account, even if the problems are the same, ideologies and language practices depend on local conditions. Thus, further sociolinguistic studies on language in higher education in Estonia and Latvia could focus on the experience that these countries and their higher education institutions have with greater and more prestigious languages (such as Russian during the Soviet occupations) in order to understand how Estonian and Latvian were developed as languages of higher education during these times.

## **THESES FOR THE DEFENCE**

The following theses are presented for the defence of the dissertation:

1. Today, considerable importance is attached to higher education in Estonia and Latvia, and beyond – one of the objectives of the EU and its member states is to create knowledge-based society, and in these processes higher education plays an enormous role. Language use in academia is a much debated topic as well; discussions are stimulated by the multifaceted nature of higher education. On the one hand, it is closely linked to national education systems; on the other hand, it is tied to international scientific scene. Today's widespread academic mobility makes tertiary education even more international. Although internationalisation processes are current both in Estonia and Latvia, these countries (particularly Latvia) are less covered with research on language issues in higher education than, for example, the Nordic countries.

2. The dissertation reveals that Estonian and Latvian are prestigious languages of higher education in Estonia and Latvia – they are ideologically supported by the states as well as the national universities, and the interviewed students show favourable attitudes towards using these languages in academia. Secondly, Estonian and Latvian are at the centre of language policies implemented by the states and the national universities. Thus, the ideology underlying state and institutional language management is predominantly national, and intended to protect the official languages. Finally, the study of language practices shows that Estonian/Latvian are the most used languages at national universities in Estonia and Latvia.

3. English and Russian are used to an extent in certain functions by the interviewed students. Whereas English is ideologically valued as language of higher education at the state and institutional level as well as at the grassroots level, Russian is an ideologically-laden language that is almost invisible in state-authored and institution-authored language management efforts but valued by the interviewed students as a language necessary for finding employment in the local labour market. The use of other languages is rather rare, although their use is theoretically supported in top-down language policies, particularly in state-authored policies.

4. Further research on language issues in higher education in Estonia and Latvia could focus on the experience of Estonia and Latvia as post-Soviet countries that have effectively tackled the problem of maintaining Estonian/Latvian as language of higher education at times of linguistic pressure from above. Estonian/Latvian co-existed with Russian during the Soviet times as languages of higher education, and found a way out of the unfavourable situation, in which using Russian in academia was officially more appreciated than using local languages. The setting of Estonia and Latvia is prone to give interesting insights into the topic due to the language situation.

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**Appendix 1. Language of instruction in higher education institutions in Estonia: proportion of students 1993–2016**

<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>1993/1994</b>	<b>1994/1995</b>	<b>1995/1996</b>	<b>1996/1997</b>	<b>1997/1998</b>	<b>1998/1999</b>	<b>1999/2000</b>	<b>2000/2001</b>	<b>2001/2002</b>	<b>2002/2003</b>	<b>2003/2004</b>	<b>2004/2005</b>
Estonian	82.1%	81.7%	83.6%	83.8%	83.3%	86%	86.1%	86.3%	86.9%	87.4%	88.7%	88.8%
English	0.7%	1.4%	2.1%	2.9%	3.0%	2,9%	2.5%	2.1%	1.9%	2.0%	1.3%	1.4%
Russian	17.2%	16.8%	14.3%	13.3%	13.7%	11.2%	11.4%	11.6%	11.2%	10.6%	10.1%	9.8%
English and Russian (in PhD studies)												

<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>2005/2006</b>	<b>2006/2007</b>	<b>2007/2008</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>2011/2012</b>	<b>2012/2013</b>	<b>2013/2014</b>	<b>2014/2015</b>	<b>2015/2016</b>
Estonian	88.4%	88.2%	87.9%	88%	89.2%	90.2%	91%	90.6%	91.6%	90%	87.1%
English	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	1.9%	2.4%	3.4%	4.9%	6.7%	9.0%
Russian	10.1%	10.4%	10.5%	10.4%	9.3%	7.9%	6.6%	6.0%	3.2%	2.7%	2.2%
English and Russian (in PhD studies)									0.3%	0.6%	1.7%

Data: Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia 2016

**Appendix 2. Language of instruction in higher education institutions in Latvia: proportion of students 1999–2018**

<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>1999/2000</b>	<b>2000/2001</b>	<b>2001/2002</b>	<b>2002/2003</b>	<b>2003/2004</b>	<b>2004/2005</b>	<b>2005/2006</b>	<b>2006/2007</b>	<b>2007/2008</b>
Latvian	86.1%	84.5%	88%	88.1%	88.5%	88.6%	88.6%	88%	89%
English	6.4%	7.8%	2.8%	1.8%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1%	1.2%
Russian	7.5%	7.7%	9.2%	10.1%	10.3%	10.1%	10.1%	11%	9.8%

<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>2011/2012</b>	<b>2012/2013</b>	<b>2013/2014</b>	<b>2014/2015</b>	<b>2015/2016</b>	<b>2016/2017</b>	<b>2017/2018</b>
Latvian	88.9%	87.4%	87.3%	85.2%	85.4%	85.2%	82.2%	80.4%	82.1%	80.5%
English	1.3%	1.5%	1.9%	4.2%	4.9%	6.1%	7.8%	9.5%	9.9%	11.4%
Russian	9.8%	8.7%	8.3%	7.7%	6.8%	7.1%	7.2%	6.8%	5.4%	5.8%
Latvian and Russian		2.4%	2.5%	2.4%	2.4%	0.7%				
other				0.5%	0.5%	0.9%	0.6%	1.2%	0.6%	0.4%
Bilingual or multilingual studies							2.2%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%

Data: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia 1999–2018

### **Appendix 3. Semi-structured interview schedule**

#### **1. Language skills:**

- What languages do you speak? (first language, other languages)
- When and where have you acquired these languages?
- Why are you (not) interested in learning some more languages?

#### **2. Studies:**

- Where do you study? Where have you studied? Exchange studies?

#### **3. Language use at university**

- Please describe what languages do you use at your studies? To what extent? (When, how often, why do you use these languages)
  - Please describe what exactly do you do in these languages?
    - media of instruction,
    - study materials,
    - reading, writing,
    - networking at university (communication with friends, colleagues, acquaintances etc.),
    - communicating with faculty,
    - communicating with the university administration,
    - language of theses,
    - mail correspondence,
    - supervision;
    - presenting research results orally;
    - exchange studies in a foreign country ?
  - Have you encountered any difficulties/problems/misunderstandings in relation to foreign languages?
  - In what languages is it possible to study at your university?
- 4. Does your institute/department/faculty/university have a language policy you are aware of? What kind of policy are you aware of?**
- 5. The most relevant/useful language(s) for your studies/work**
- What language(s) should be known at university? (by staff, students, administration)
  - What language(s) are the most useful for your studies?
  - Why should/shouldn't international students learn Estonian/Latvian?
  - What kind of advantages Estonian/Latvian gains through being a language of instruction in Estonia/Latvia?

- If you had a choice between a study programme in Estonian/Latvian and English which you would choose?
- Would you be ready to study in a programme which is taught in a foreign language only?
- What language skills have given you the greatest advantage in the academia or outside the university?
- What languages are important for the labour market?
- What language(s) have been important for your job?

#### **6. The spread of foreign languages in academia**

- According to your mind, are foreign languages well-spread in Estonian/Latvian academia? (What foreign language skills should be further spread in Estonian/Latvian academia? Are the current foreign language skills of students, staff and administration enough?)
- Does university provide some language support to you? (Language courses, language advice, both about foreign languages and Estonian/Latvian)
- Should university invest in some way in the foreign language skills of students and staff?
- What kind of a role do different language skills of students and lecturers play for you? (Do you feel that there is some kind of English that is better than other varieties? Easier to understand? Easier to communicate in?)
- Should Latvian be protected against the influence of foreign languages in academia?

**Appendix 4. Form for gathering background information about the interviewees**

<b>Interview No.</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Place</b>	
<b>Length</b>	

**Background information**

1. **Age:** .....
2. **Gender:**  male       female
3. **Current university:** .....
4. **Previous universities:** .....
5. **Other countries in which the respondent has studied:** .....
6. **Field(s) of studies:** .....
7. **Current level of studies:** .....
8. **Mother tongue(s):** .....
9. **Knowledge of other languages, self-reported level of knowledge:**
  - a. ....  very well       well       beginner
  - b. ....  very well       well       beginner
  - c. ....  very well       well       beginner
  - d. ....  very well       well       beginner
  - e. ....  very well       well       beginner

## Appendix 5. Summary of the background information about the interviewees

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Field of studies	University/ Universities/ Countries for exchange studies	Level of studies	L1	Knowledge of other languages	Interview language	Interview duration (in minutes)
A(EE)	26	F	Science	UT	PhD	Estonian	English (very well) German (well) Russian (beginner) Finnish (beginner)	Estonian	53:45
B(EE)	29	F	Health and welfare (medicine)	UT / Switzerlan d	MA	Estonian	English (very well) Finnish (well) German (well) Russian (beginner)	Estonian	42:43
C(EE)	21	F	Science	UT	BA	Estonian	English (very well) German (very well) Russian (beginner)	Estonian	38:31
D(EE)	24	F	Science	UT	BA	Estonian	English (very well) German (well) Russian (beginner)	Estonian	43:21
E(EE)	30	F	Humanities	UT / TU / Latvia / Finland	BA/ MA	Estonian	English (very well) Finnish (well) Latvian (well) Russian (beginner)	Estonian	41:45
F(EE)	28	F	Humanities	UT / TU / Latvia	MA	Estonian	English (very well) Latvian (well) Russian (beginner) Finnish (beginner)	Estonian	46:32
G(EE)	24	F	Social sciences	UT / UL	MA	Latvian	English (very well) Estonian (very well) Finnish (well) Russian (well)	Latvian	38:17
H(EE)	26	F	Humanities	UT / Lithuania	MA	Lithuanian	Estonian (very well) English (very well) Latvian (very well) Russian (well) Finnish (beginner)	Estonian	43:39
A(LV)	28	M	Social sciences	RISEBA / UL	BA	Latvian	English (well) Russian (beginner)	Latvian	39:34
B(LV)	23	F	Humanities	UL / TU	BA	Latvian	English (very well) Estonian (very well) Finnish (very well) Russian (beginner) French (beginner) German (beginner)	Latvian	33:02
C(LV)	26	M	Agriculture / IT	LLU / UL / Czech Rep.	BA	Latvian	Russian (well) English (well) German (beginner) Hungarian (beginner) Latgallian (beginner)	Latvian	35:44



D(LV)	25	F	Science	UL / Germany / Norway	PhD	Latvian	English (very well) German (well) Russian (well)	Latvian	35:20
E(LV)	23	F	Health and welfare (medicine)	RSU / UL	MA	Latvian	English (very well) Russian (well) French (beginner) German (beginner)	Latvian	38:10
F(LV)	27	M	Social sciences / Pedagogy	RSU / UL / Malta	BA	Latvian	English (very well) Russian (beginner)	Latvian	38:11
G(LV)	21	M	Humanities	UL / Finland	BA	Latvian, (Russian)	English (very well) German (well) Estonian (well) Finnish (well)	Latvian	57:24
H(LV)	23	F	Humanities	UL / Finland	BA	Russian	Latvian (very well) English (very well) German (beginner) Finnish (well) Estonian (well)	Latvian	36:35