BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN LATVIA:
INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE

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Bilingual Education: The case of Latvia from a comparative perspective

Pieter Batelaan

Introduction

In many former Soviet republics, now independent, language policy and bilingual education are heavily discussed. The change from a Soviet Republic into an independent state with a parliamentary democracy had repercussions for the many Russians who had immigrated into these countries during the last 5 decades, particularly with respect to their language. Russian, which had achieved the role of “official state language”, was now suddenly degraded into a minority language. Local languages had taken over functions, which were exclusively fulfilled by Russian. Russian had lost its privileged status and the Russians were now forced to learn the local language in order to become equal citizens (Haarmann, 1995).

After a period of rigid language policies in the former Soviet Republics, including Latvia, these republics are becoming more aware of the need for multicultural policies also under the influence of their own policy to build relations with or even become members of Western organisations such as NATO, OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Union. A result of this awareness is that the government of Latvia has implemented new policies with regard to bilingual education.

The Soros Foundation of Latvia invited an international group of experts to determine whether and to what extent each of the models for the organisation of bilingual education, produced by the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia, supports the integration of ethnic minorities in the society of Latvia, and at the same time allows them to maintain their own culture and language. The experts were provided with background materials, including descriptions of the various models, models developed by schools based on these models, the alternative model of the Association of Russian speaking schools in Latvia (LASOR), and official documents of the Ministry of Education and Science in Latvia.

Co-ordinators of the project are Indra Dedze of the SFL and Pieter Batelaan, editor of Intercultural Education. It was decided to use the documents for two purposes: (1) a publication in Latvia aimed at schools, educational authorities, and politicians, and (2) a special issue of Intercultural Education because the issues raised in the various papers seemed of importance for an international audience for which bilingual education is an important issue. The case of Latvia proffers insights in the issues of bilingual education of which the importance goes far beyond this small and young republic.

Both publications are not identical. The different target groups have different interests and different knowledge. Details of the various programs and comments are important for the Latvian readership and they are left out in the international publication. On the other hand, information about Latvia that is necessary to understand the context of Latvian educational policies is highlighted in the international publication.

It is our intention that our Latvian readers find inspiration in the reactions of this international group of experts and that the readers of this special issue of Intercultural Education gain more understanding by looking at bilingual education from another perspective than their own.
1. Context

1.1. The country: history

The policies with respect to education, and particularly to minority and bilingual education in Latvia cannot be understood without some awareness of the historical events that have taken place in the 20th century: independence from 1918-1940, Soviet, Nazi, and again Soviet occupation until 1991, “restoration” after 1991. Historically the Latvian nation has developed from native Baltic and Finno-Ugric (Livs) tribes. The region at the East side of the Baltic Sea to which Latvia belongs has for a long time been visited by traders and invaded by other nations and peoples (mainly from Germany and Russia, including groups escaping from prosecution elsewhere such as “old-believers” from Russia after religious reforms in the 17th century, and Jews from Ukraine and Byelorussia). In the 13th century German rule was established in the present territory of Latvia. At the end of the 16th century Latvian territory became under Polish-Lithuanian, in 1621 under Swedish, and by the end of the 18th century all of this territory was under Russian rule. In the second part of the 1800s there was as elsewhere in Europe a strong nationalist movement. At the end of WW1 on 18 November 1918 Latvia declared independence.

Latvia was an independent country until 1940, democratic until 1934, a period in which minorities could develop a certain cultural autonomy, including receiving education in state-funded minority schools. After 1934 when a coup d’état took place by Karlis Ulmanis, the ethnic policy changed: minority rights were decreased and Ulmanis aimed at the development of a “Latvia for the Latvians”.

As a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrob pact Latvia came under the Soviet sphere of influence on 23 August 1939. In June 1940 Soviet troops marched into Latvia, and Latvia was made a part of the Soviet Union. Economy, agriculture, society and culture were sovietised. In June 1941, on the eve of the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, thousands of Latvian citizens were deported to Siberia. At the end of that month the Baltic republics were occupied by Nazi-Germany. During this occupation 90% of the Latvian Jewish community and many Roma were killed. The German minority had left because of Hitler’s call to return to the “Heimat”.

In 1944 the Soviets returned. Both Nazi-collaborators and supporters of independence were deported. According to Misiunas & Taagepera (1993) about 60,000 people may have been deported from Latvia in 1945-46. Deportations took also place in the framework of the collectivisation of agriculture (in March 1949 about 50,000).

In the framework of Soviet industrialisation policy thousands of Russians and other non-Latvians immigrated into Latvia. Between 1945 and 1959 400,000 Russians and 100,000 people of other nationalities settled in Latvia. The keyword for cultural policies between 1945 and 1953 is “Russification”.

The de-stalinisation process under Khrushchev (1956) made a re-emergence of the national cultures possible. It was a short period of “Thaw”. Local Communists (including ethnic Latvians) felt encouraged to act against forced immigration and industrialisation. In 1959 this period was over and there came an end to these policies. The years 1959-1960 are years of the Latvian Purge. Latvian officials were replaced again by Russians and even harsher policies were introduced, but in the field of culture the anti-nationalism campaign could, according to Misiunas & Taagepera not reverse the cultural revival that had begun with the Thaw. The areas of economics, urbanisation and immigration, were characterised by the old policies of centralisation.
Education policies were aimed at bilingualism for Latvians. In 1965, after the fall of Khrushchev a new curriculum was approved for Latvian schools in which the language of instruction was Latvian, but the teaching of Russian remained a very important part of the curriculum. The establishment of bilingual schools in 1967, even in areas where there was almost no Russian population, came to be seen as blatant instruments of Russification (Misiunas & Taagepera, 1993, p. 197).

During the years 1968-1980 centralisation of the economy and politics under Moscow’s control and immigration continued while a Baltic culture and life style stayed relatively Western oriented. The early 1980s can be characterised as years of stagnation. The year 1987 can be considered as a watershed in the history of the Baltic republics. The policy of glasnost allowed considerable expansion of public activity, particularly with respect to environmental issues, which became a catalyst in crystallising opposition.

In 1991, as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Baltic states regained their independence. The heritage of the occupations is that Latvia is now an ethnically segregated country. The two parts of the society are “ethnic Latvians” and “Russian speaking communities”, which include also many other minority groups from other former Soviet Union republics. Ethnic Latvians took political power and denied the greater part of Russian speaking population to obtain Latvian citizenship.

The Soviet past and the earlier history had created insecurity in Latvians about their identity endurance and negative attitudes toward the Russian speaking people and other minorities as well, which was fertile ground for (radical) nationalists at both sides. The approval of the Citizenship Law in 1994 provided some clarity for minorities. From that time onwards policies were – at least verbally – more directed towards “integration”: a process of limited possibilities for naturalisation started with that Law, although there remained a distinction between citizens and non-citizens. This process was in 1997 accelerated under influence of the OSCE’s High Commissioner for Minorities Max van der Stoel and the European Commission (Agenda 2000), and lead to amendments to the Citizenship Law (1998) and the Integration Programme of 2001.

The main goal of the Latvian authorities during the last decade was the restoration of the Latvian culture. One may say that Latvianisation had replaced Russification (see Silova, 1996 and her contribution in this issue). Under the influence of the Council of Europe, the European Union, UNESCO, and agencies such as the Soros Foundation in Latvia, the country becomes more aware of its multi-ethnic character.

1.2. Population

Latvia has always been a multicultural, multi-ethnic country in terms of population. Before 1940 about 9% of the population was of Russian origin. The composition of the Latvian population has changed dramatically in the years of the Soviet occupation. Many Russians and people from other Soviet republics (Byelorussia, Ukraine) immigrated into Latvia as a result of the Soviet economic policies (industrialisation instead of agriculture). According to the Latvian institute in 1935 77% of all residents were Latvians. In 1989 this was only 52%. Latvians had almost become a minority.

According to the statistics of the Latvian Institute (www.latinst.lv) the population in the year 2000 was: 2,375,000. The ethnic composition is

Ethnic composition:

1 Other sources such as IBE (2000) give rather different figures over 1999, for instance Latvian 55.7%, Russian 32.3%, Belorussians 3.9 %, Ukrainians 2.9%, Poles 2.2%, Lithuanians 1.3%, others 1.7% (IBE, 2001, p. 17).
57.6% Latvian,  
29.6% Russian,  
4.1% Byelorussian, 
2.7% Ukrainian, 
2.5% Polish,  
1.4% Lithuanian, 
0.4% Jewish,  
1.7% other nationalities.

Protassova describes in her contribution the various sources of Russian presence in Latvia from the 13th century onwards. Immigrants (and their descendants) who came to Latvia before 1940 are mainly Latvian citizens. Russians who immigrated during the occupation years do not have the Latvian nationality. They are non-citizens, because they had lost their previous Soviet citizenship. Non-citizens’ children born after 21 August 1991 have the right to be recognised as citizens of Latvia. Since 1994 everybody is allowed to apply for citizenship. To acquire citizenship they have to take an examination on the proficiency of the Latvian language and knowledge of the constitution, the text of the national anthem and the history of Latvia. According to the Latvian institute, no more than 5.6% of the Russian non-citizens have applied for naturalisation. 42% of the Russians living in Latvia are Latvian citizens.

1.3. The linguistic situation

The Latvian and Russian languages both belong to the Indo-European languages. Within the Indo-European language family, Latvian belongs to the Baltic language branch, while Russian belongs to the Slavic branch. Under Soviet rule Latvia was officially bilingual, but in fact Russian was the main language in the public domain.

Since the independence of Latvia, Latvian is the state language. The largest minority language is Russian.

Protassova describes the development of Russian in Latvia. Her conclusion is that the discrepancy between Russian spoken in Russia and Russian spoken in Latvia, especially in the domains of terminology and literature, is growing, which has its implications for the status of Russian in Latvia. Supporting the minority culture and language is not included in the Latvian cultural policies. These policies are still based on the assumption that the status of Latvian is threatened by Russian. With respect to, for instance, Polish, Lithuanian and Jewish schools, there are agreements with the governments of Poland, Lithuania and Israel. Such an agreement does not exist with Russia.

In 1989 only 21% of representatives of other nationalities declared to have Latvian language skills while most of Latvians knew Russian (Latvian Institute). There are still many Russian-speaking people in Latvia who do not speak Latvian. The Baltic Times (2002) reports about a survey, conducted by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences that 12% of Russian speakers don’t know a word of Latvian, and that 48% have only elementary knowledge of the state language. 27% said their Latvian was at medium level and only 13% have complete proficiency in Latvian.

1.4. The education system

As most governments do, also the Latvian government aims at reforms in education to promote:

The formation of a knowledgeable, skilled, well-bred, virtuously and aesthetically developed active personality
Education of an independent, skilled and responsible person in a democratic society
Formation of a creative person, who can contribute to enrichment of national and world culture
Formation of a competent and professional personality, who can compete in the labour market
Provision of the necessary conditions for creating life long education (IBE, 2001).

The National Standards for Compulsory Education (1998) also lists didactic principles. These principles can be characterised as modern and as such they open opportunities for schools to implement modern and interactive methods. The national standards are certainly not an excuse for teachers for teaching in a traditional way.

Latvia is not an exception when it comes to problems with implementation. The reality is – as almost everywhere – different from the political rhetoric. And, as in many other countries, particularly in Eastern and Central Europe, “the low pay to teachers and insufficient improvement of teachers’ education are the main causes for the fact that it is impossible to achieve a crucial change in raising the education quality”. (IBE, 2001, p. 11). On the other hand, my own experience with consulting Latvian teachers in various projects was very positive: teachers participating in these projects have implemented various modern teaching strategies such as co-operative learning in their classrooms.

During the years of independence before the Second World War, particularly before 1934, “cultural autonomy was one of the characteristics of ethnic policy. The various ethnic–cultural groups could establish their own state-funded schools with their own language of instruction: Russian, Polish, Jewish, Lithuanian, etc.

During the Soviet period there were only two kind of schools: Russian and Latvian, which, according to the Ministry’s report to the IBE, was, in fact, “one of the sharpest expressions and facilitators of social splitting as the systems have differed not only in their language of instruction, but also in the attitude of pupils and teachers against history and changes taking place in Latvia”. (IBE, 2001, p. 17). The education law of 1998 is aimed at the development of a system, which is “united, continuous and diversified”.

The issue is of course: to what extent? To what extent should the system be united, continuous and diversified?

Different people and different groups will give different answers to this question. It is an issue that plays an important role in the political discourse. The education law of 1998 provides that the language for obtaining education in Latvia is Latvian, but simultaneously with the Latvian language other languages may be used in minority education curricula. The idea is to unite the systems, but to maintain separate ethnic minority schools.

At the present day 31% of all pupils attend (now bilingual) schools with instruction in Russian. Other ethnic minorities also attend these schools. The number of pupils in these schools is decreasing in favour of the Latvian schools.

Currently there are also 5 state financed ethnic minority secondary schools (1 Jewish, 2 Polish, 1 Ukrainian, and 1 Lithuanian school), as well as 7 minority primary schools. These schools are supported by the various “home lands” (through agreements with the governments of Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, Israel).

However, most students from minority groups, with the exception of Lithuanian and Roma students, attend schools where Russian is one of the languages of instruction. All these schools have implemented the minority education programme that aims at the transformation of all minority schools into bilingual schools. This programme started in 1999 with the first grade pupils. They will complete their nine-year basic education in 2008. By that year bilingual education will be officially implemented in all school years.
Four different advisory models were prepared. These are the models that are studied by the various authors of this issue (see par. 5).

2. Identity and Integration

Latvia is an ethnically segregated country (Gundare, 2002). Both communities have in fact their own cultural infrastructure, including schools and media. It is notable that the government refers to Latvia as a multi-national in stead of a multicultural society. Pedersen rightly emphasises the problems with this terminology in a country, which claims to develop integration within a democratic context. Using the term non-Latvians for children born in Latvia in families with another first language than Latvian is confusing. One of the goals of “integration” is that people can identify themselves – at least partly – with the Latvian state. This raises the question: how can people with a different “nationality” identify with the Latvian “nation”?

Latvia is a young country that has been independent between 1919 and 1940, and since 1991. It is, therefore, not surprising that a Latvian identity is not as self-evident as it is in Western democracies, and that policies of Russification were replaced by policies of Latvianisation. However, minorities can only identify with the nation in which they are living if that nation is inclusive towards minorities, if they are not separated, if they have the opportunity to participate into the public discourse on an equal basis.

According to Silova “Latvian long-term education policy throughout the 1990s had simultaneously emphasised two trends – a gradual Latvianisation of the education system in its “content” and a preservation of its linguistically separate, also referred to as multicultural, “form”. This form could be interpreted in two ways: the official interpretation that the maintaining of minority language schools is a consequence of multiculturalism, or that an education policy that keeps separate structures intact, has to do with the fear of negative aspects of ethnic mixing on Latvian language students.

According to Gundare (2002), before the 1990s the concept “integration” in Latvia only existed in the area of mathematics. Now it is in many documents referring to the ethnic diversity in Latvia a key-word, which does not mean that now everybody understands this concept in the same way. In fact, everybody uses the term differently for his or her own purposes (Silova).

A democracy is characterised by regard for the minority (Pedersen). Therefore dialogue is pivotal. Integration is creation of connection between the different elements and actors in society. It is either based on ordinary acknowledged values or based on the social group’s interdependence. It is impossible to go through an integration process in a democracy without dialogue (Pedersen).

There exists a lot of literature about the meaning of “integration”. In most literature “integration” is something more or less opposed to “assimilation”. Assimilation is aimed at a complete adaptation to the majority culture. Those who argue for assimilation consider their country as a monoculture. Integration is aimed at participation of different groups and individuals with their own characteristics into a society, which is considered as “multicultural”. Integration is a process that has its impact on the development of each of the participants. This impact is very difficult to predict. It depends on a practical infinite number of developments and circumstances. It is like the weather in a see climate. Predictions can only be made for a very short term. Assimilation, on the contrary, is a policy aimed at steering the participants to become more and more similar to the dominant group of participants. Assimilation is related to nationalistic policies, excluding those people who do not belong or adhere to the majority’s values, culture, religion or ethnic origin. Integration takes place in an
Open Society, where also the various participants are open and not in any sense defensive. In order to integrate, all participants have to accept the basic democratic values of the society, which are in accordance with the principles of human rights, which include linguistic and cultural rights. That is the (democratic) climate.

An important condition for integration is communication. In that respect knowledge of the official language(s) of a country can be seen as instrumental for the integration process. Within an integration model, there is always to a certain extent a role for the languages, cultures and religions of the “minority” groups. Integration is a two way process. “Immigrants” and their descendants need to learn to communicate with the “autochthonous” population by learning their language and by respecting the basic values of the society. The “autochthonous” population needs to realise that the “immigrants” are part of their society, and to accept that the different cultures of minority groups take part into the development of the “national culture”. Therefore, integration is not only a problem for minorities on which the majority takes the decisions. School reform, for instance, aimed at “integration”, should be discussed with the representatives of the schools involved, particularly in the case of Latvia, where such a large percentage of the schools are “minority schools”. Silova claims that the participation of the minorities was, in fact, symbolic. The implementation of the bilingual education models in minority schools has been strongly opposed by NGOs representing Russian-speaking and other minorities.

Whereas minorities consider the introduction of an education reform as a threat of assimilation, and as long as there is a feeling to be excluded from the public discourse, it will be very difficult to achieve the goals of integration (see also the reactions of representatives of minorities and teachers in minority schools quoted in Silova’s contribution).

Integration is a possible goal of language education policy (Grin & Schwob, this issue). However, not any kind of language learning leads to integration. On the other hand, learning the local language is a condition for integration, but does not lead automatically to integration. The goal of integration through learning the language can only be achieved when other conditions are fulfilled, for instance, when it takes place in a frame work of intercultural education.

3. Multi- and Bilingualism

Before we discuss the various “bilingual education models” produced by the Latvian Ministry of Education, we need to clarify the terms “bilingual education” and “bilingualism”. One of the problems that are notified by various contributors (see for instance Protassova) is that these terms are not defined in the official texts.

3.1. Countries are bilingual /multilingual

3.1.1. As a result of the history of the nation

There are countries in Europe which are from its beginning multilingual. Examples are Luxembourg, which is trilingual (see Housen’s contribution), or Belgium, where the languages Flemish (Dutch), French, and German have their own territories, and language boundaries. Also in Switzerland language boundaries are completely clear and not discussed. Each region has its official language (see for more details Grin & Schwob in this issue). These languages are also spoken in countries at one of the boarders (France, Germany, Italy, and The Netherlands).
Other examples can be found in countries such as Spain, where Basque is spoken in the Basque country, Catalan in Catalonia, etc. During the Franco period these languages had no official status, since the democratisation of Spain, these languages have official status, within a framework where Spanish (Castillian) is the official language at the federal level. People in these regions have to be bilingual in order to function in the Spanish society. Policies and practice with respect to the different languages spoken in these countries are not comparable to situations that exist in countries such as Latvia, where the languages are not territorially defined. In other countries we find other situations, there are minority languages spoken in specific regions, for instance Frisian in Holland, Britons in Brittany (Western part of France) or Sorb in Germany. The difference is that, although for instance Frisian is recognised in Friesland as an official language, it is not necessary to be bilingual as long as a person speaks the official language of the respective country. The same applies to Ireland, where Gaelic is dominated by English, and where the minority language is taught in schools for cultural reasons. Grin & Schwob refer to these languages as unique languages which are protected and supported through the Council of Europe’s Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

3.1.2. As a result of demographic changes
In many countries the language situation has become more complicated as a result of migration movements and, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America, as a result of colonialism. In most post-colonial countries where the colonisers spoke a “world language” i.e. English, French, Spanish or Portuguese, these languages are the official languages (often together with other, indigenous languages). In most of these countries, particularly in Africa and Asia bi- or multilingualism is the rule. In Latin America the status of the languages of indigenous people very low. Their position is similar to the lesser-used languages in Europe, although the history of the people who speak these languages is far more violent, often characterised by genocide. Now programmes for bilingual education of indigenous people exist for instance in Latin America. Maintenance and development of the various cultures is one of the main aims of these programmes. As a result of recent immigration many languages are heard in most European and North-American countries. Does that make these countries bilingual or multi-lingual? It would be very unrealistic to consider states such as California or Florida with such a huge and growing percentage of Spanish speaking people as “monolingual”. On the other hand, these states are officially not mentioned as being bilingual. The same applies for Latvia: there is a large – although not growing – minority speaking other languages, but officially Latvian is the standard language. But whether Florida, California or Latvia are bilingual countries or not, they have in common that they see themselves as multicultural, and that they have responsibilities with respect to cultural and linguistic rights.

3.2. People are bilingual/multilingual
The language bilingual people use depends on the situation in which they communicate: in general, at home and with friends, they will speak their first language (or dialect), they will also use this language to express their emotions, for instance in poetry. Where nuances and subtleties are important, people will tend to use their first language, particularly if this language has a rich culture and history, which is the case with Russian. The first language is, in general, the language of the private domain, which does not mean that learning that language also should be left to the private domain.
Particularly where one of the main aims of education is also the development of the whole personality, including ethic and aesthetic aspects, it is important to develop the first language. In professional situations, they will use the standard language, or – in international communications - a world language, which could be their first language if this language is an international language (for instance Russian). The second language is, generally spoken, mainly used in the public domain.

In some cultures a distinct language is used in religious contexts. Bilingualism is not exceptional. There are more people in the world who are – as the consequence of cultural-historical development bi- or multilingual than people who are monolingual.

4. Bilingual Education

4.1 The debate

The term bilingual education is not defined in the various models presented by the Latvian government (Protassova). The purpose of bilingual education is to enable children to learn to read and to develop knowledge and skills in the other academic subjects in the mother tongue (L1) while they are learning the new second language (L2) (Crawford). A second language can also be a language that is not spoken in the locality where the language is taught (for instance English in Latvia), the second language is then referred to as foreign language (FL). Bilingual education is one of the most politically discussed topics, particularly in the Western Hemisphere, because language issues are so much related to identity issues. Therefore, the arguments are more political than educational. “While the purpose of bilingual education is to allow children to learn their new second language quickly and to keep up in their academic learning while they do that, nationalistic tendencies (…) lead many in an uninformed general population to conclude that teaching the official language is the most desirable strategy to achieve their educational goals” (Crawford).

Another reason why bilingual education is one of the most discussed topics in education, is, that it is related to issues such as human and cultural rights. That is why international organisations such as OSCE, the EU and others are so keen to reporting about these rights in countries such as Latvia with a large non-Latvian speaking communities (see also Silova in this publication). Hacsi (2002) characterises the debate as a Tower of Babel (p. 63). In the USA, for instance, bilingual education is the central issue of Latino civil rights. Opponents see bilingual education as an attempt to resist assimilation and to maintain a separate culture at the nation’s expense. Similar discourses can be heard in Latvia. Protassova refers to “the insufficient and unfounded discussions about bilingualism in society, more political than scientific and consequently misunderstood”.

Krashen (www) reports about a study by McQuillan & Tse (in press) that 87% of academic publications (between 1984 and 1994) supported bilingual education, but newspapers and magazine opinion articles tended to be anti bilingual education, with only 45 % supporting bilingual education”. These are interesting figures because they show the difference between educational and political motivations.

The fear for disintegration as a consequence of the multilingual character of a country is based on the myth that there is a correspondence between national identity and one language. Pedersen warns in her contribution to this publication that “conflicts arise, when nationalistic governments or authoritarian regimes believe in the unity as a stabilising factor and fight for the unity with all means, also by linguistic means”. These nationalistic policies can be very
openly promoted (for instance the oppression of languages like Catalan during the fascist regime of Franco in Spain or the English only movement in California), but they can also be hidden behind multicultural rhetoric, see for instance the contribution of Silova who describes the Latvianisation tendencies in educational policies.

4.2. Political Motivations for bilingual education

Bi- or multilingualism is in the general public opinion often seen as a threat of the state’s unity. All authors in this publication agree that this is not the case. Choumak, for instance, sees bilingualism and multilingualism as the most optimal variant for solving ethnic language conflicts. A good example is the Gymnasium “Maxima” in Riga. This Russian-speaking school aims at multilingualism, while the teachers are obliged to raise “patriots for Latvia”. Multilingualism is an asset, particularly when the minority language is a world language as is the case with Russian in Latvia.

For the Latvian government learning Latvian (as a second language) is a condition for integration. This is also an opinion to which each of the authors subscribes. But in acquiring a second language one does not need to neglect the first language. From the educational point of view it is generally accepted that children learn their new language more rapidly with a firm base in the mother tongue (Crawford).

On the other hand, in many cases, also minorities are for other than educational reasons in favour of bilingual education. Minority communities want to (and have the right to) maintain their languages for cultural, religious and political reasons. They fear assimilation, losing their identity, and, particularly where they are not fully accepted as citizens, they will emphasise the need of maintaining their “heritage” language.

Minority languages and cultures, particularly the indigenous (unique) ones, are in many countries supported by governments because they realise that these languages are considered as valuable for the country’s “national” culture. Examples of these policies can be find in The Netherlands with respect to Frisian in Friesland, in Switzerland with respect to Romansch (see Grin and Schwob). Preservation of a language in general as a political goal is different from preservation of the knowledge of a language. Diachkov, for instance, mentions that the preservation of the Russian language can never be the goal of bilingual education in Latvia, the Russian language can only be preserved and developed in Russia. On the other hand, to preserve the knowledge of Russian, it is important to have a good relationship with the country where the language is spoken (see also Protassova).

In countries such as Canada and Australia multicultural policies support the teaching of the so-called heritage languages of 2nd, 3rd and 4th generations of immigrants. In the EU learning of foreign languages is strongly recommended for economic reasons, and it is generally accepted that knowledge of languages is part of the “human capital”.

It is hardly to believe that knowledge of the Russian language would not be important for the Latvian economy, which has so many ties to Russia. As a matter of fact, the same survey of the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, referred to in The Baltic Times of 25 April 2002, 56% of Latvians (and 83% of Russian speakers) believe that Latvian residents should also be able to speak Russian. It would therefore not be a surprise when the Latvian government would decide to promote the learning of Russian as a foreign language and – in that framework – would support bilingual education for the Russian-speaking students.

Pedersen recommends strongly the development of plurilingualism in Latvia, which will make it easy for the country to communicate with neighbouring countries (through the knowledge of Polish, Lithuanian, and Russian) and with the world through the knowledge of English.
4.3. Educational Motivations for Bilingual Education

In all contributions it is argued, based on extensive research, that using the mother tongue of children in their education is of paramount importance. On the basis of generally accepted theoretical principles (see for the literature the contributions of Crawford, Housen, Pedersen, and Protassova in this issue) for minority children the most stringent requirement appears to be that the mother tongue must function as the medium of education in all subjects initially. Development of literacy should be first developed in L1. I would like here to refer to the contributions of Pedersen, Housen and Crawford, all referring to Cummins, and others who conclude that there is a threshold of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in the mother tongue that must be reached in order for the student to attain academic proficiency in the mother tongue and later in a second language. This requirement provides us with the criteria to decide on the quantity of using mother tongue instruction in education.

The various bilingual education programmes can be characterised as follows:

1. Transitional programmes: the main aim is to learn the second language. The mother tongue of students is used to facilitate this process. The target group consists of students who speak another language than the state language.
2. Maintenance programmes and enrichment programmes, aimed at learning both the second language and further development of the mother tongue. Target group here consists also of students who speak another language than the official language. The major outcome of a maintenance programme is a bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural child who is able to function easily in two languages and two cultures.
3. Two Way bilingual education, aimed at the learning and development in both languages by members of both communities. It has the same assets as the maintenance programmes, but now for both minority and majority students.

The main issue from an educational point of view is: does bilingual education work? For an answer we have first to realise what “work” means? Hacsi (2002, p. 88) stresses the importance of long term results: how are children, going through bilingual or second language education programmes, doing “down the road”, when they are in highschool. Hacsi summarises various large research projects and concludes that Two-way bilingual programmes had the strongest long-term impact, followed by other enrichment programmes. But he also emphasises that the choice and the success of the model depend on the educational and demographic context: what languages are we talking about? What is the status of these languages? How many people in the school are speaking these languages? And, finally, we need to be aware of the object of research: what kind of bilingual education has been evaluated; how were teachers prepared and qualified? However, there are many similarities in this respect between Latino’s in the USA and Russian speaking minorities in Latvia: both groups are considered as large minorities, both groups speak a “world language”, both groups refer to cultural rights and are motivated to maintain their original language.

5. Options

5.1. The 4 models offered by the Ministry of Education and Science

The Latvian government has offered 4 “models” for organising “bilingual education” in minority schools.

In all 4 models there is a fixed number of hours to be spent on language and literature in both languages.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>LV language &amp; literature</th>
<th>L1 language &amp; literature</th>
<th>Subjects in L1</th>
<th>Subjects taught bilingually</th>
<th>Subjects in LV (L2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Grade 1 2hrs – Gr 2-3 3-4 hrs Gr 4-9 4hrs</td>
<td>Grade 1-3 7-9hrs Grade 5-9 4-6 hrs</td>
<td>Gr 1-4 mathematics Gr 5 health</td>
<td>Gr 1-3 sports Gr 1-3 natural sciences Gr 2-3 arts 3 Gr 5-9 mathematics Gr 6 biology</td>
<td>Gr 3-9 English. Gr 4-9 sports Gr 4-9 arts Gr 5-9 home economics Gr 5-9 history Gr 7 computer science Gr 7-9 biology Gr 7-9 geography Gr 7-9 social sciences Gr 8 health Gr 8-9 physics Gr 8-9 chemistry Gr 1-9 extra curricular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Grade 1 2hrs – Gr 2-3 3-4 hrs Gr 4-9 4hrs</td>
<td>Grade 1-3 7-9hrs Grade 5-9 4-6 hrs</td>
<td>Gr 7 computer science Gr 8-9 physics Gr 8-9 chemistry</td>
<td>Gr 1-9 mathematics Gr 1-9 arts Gr 1-4 natural sciences Gr 5 health Gr 5-9 history Gr 5-9 home economics Gr 6-9 geography Gr 6-9 biology Gr 7-9 social sciences</td>
<td>Gr 3-9 English Gr 7 computer science Gr 8 health Gr 1-9 extra curricular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td>Grade 1 2hrs Gr 2-3 3-4 hrs Gr 4-9 4hrs</td>
<td>Grade 1-3 7-9hrs Grade 5-9 4-6 hrs</td>
<td>Gr 1-8 mathematics Gr 1-3 arts Gr 7 computer science Gr 5-8 history Gr 7 social sciences Gr 8-9 physics Gr 8-9 chemistry</td>
<td>Gr 1-4 natural sciences Gr 6 geography Gr 7-9 social sciences</td>
<td>Gr 1-9 sports Gr 2-9 arts Gr 3-9 English Gr 5 and 9 health Gr 5-9 home economics Gr 6-9 biology Gr 7-9 geography Gr 8-9 social sciences Gr 9 history Gr 9 mathematics Gr 1-9 extra curricular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 4</td>
<td>Grade 1 2hrs Gr 2-3 3-4 hrs Gr 4-9 4hrs</td>
<td>Grade 1-3 7-9hrs Grade 5-9 4-6 hrs</td>
<td>Gr 1-3 mathematics Gr 1-3 natural sciences Gr 1-3 arts</td>
<td>Gr 7 computer science Gr 7-9 biology Gr 8-9 physics</td>
<td>Gr 3-9 English Gr 4-6 mathematics Gr 4 natural sciences Gr 4-9 sports Gr 4-6 arts Gr 6 biology Gr 5 and 8 health Gr 5-9 home economics Gr 5-9 history Gr 6-9 geography Gr 7-9 social science Gr 8-9 chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAŠOR</td>
<td>Grade 1 2hrs – gr 9 4hours</td>
<td>Grade 1-7 7-8 hrs Grade 5-9 3 hrs</td>
<td>All subjects with exceptions in next columns</td>
<td>Gr 1-9 sports, arts Gr 8-9 mathematics Gr 7 computer sciences Grade 9 biology, physics, chemistry, geography, social sciences Gr 5-9 home economics</td>
<td>Gr 9 social studies (civics)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Including literature
3 Includes music, visual art, handicrafts
4 Including literature
5 Including literature
6 Including literature
Subjects are taught in Latvian, the minority language, or bilingually. It is hard to determine how teachers interpret “bilingually”. The difference between the models is mainly quantitative: how many subjects are taught in the various languages during which periods?

If we take a closer look at the time allocated to the minority language, L1, we see in all models minority language and literature with a fixed number of hours, the same applies for Latvian language and literature.

In model 1 the subjects taught in L1 are only mathematics in grade 1-4 (and in grade 5 health).

In model 2 the subjects taught in L1 are only computer science (1 hour in grade 7, and physics/chemistry (5-4 hours in grade 8-9). In this model many subjects are taught bilingually.

In model 3 more subjects are taught in L1 until grade 9. In grade 9 almost all subjects are taught in Latvian.

In model 4 mathematics, natural sciences, sports and arts are taught in L1 until grade 3.

In fact, these options only differ from each other in terms of quantity. In terms of quality they are empty (see also Protassova). In the programmes we hardly find any reference to build bilingualism in real life situations, how to teach interculturally, facing the integration not only into Latvian but also into the European society.

All four models have in common that they are aimed at the command of Latvian. In Choumak’s terms: model 1 and 2 are “hard transitional”, model 3 and 4 “soft transitional”.

Possibility of maintenance will be crucially impeded during the process of integration. However, much depends on other factors such as the attitudes of teachers, didactics, and pedagogical climate.

The transition in model 1 is too early according to Pedersen, it gives better chances for assimilation than integration.

The quality of model 2, which is characterised by “subjects taught bilingually, depend on the quality of implementation of this programme (Pedersen). Theoretically there is a possibility for integration. (Pedersen), but it completely depends on how the teacher interprets “bilingually”.

The advantages of model 3 lie in the maintenance of the minority language. One of the disadvantages is that the linguistic competence might be tied to subjects. This can be prevented by interdisciplinary work across the curriculum that includes both languages (Pedersen). Model 3 offers most possibilities for maintenance and transition at a time that CALP is developed in the mother tongue.

In model 4 the development of bilingualism is not a continuing process (Pedersen).

Most authors (Diachkov, Silova, Pedersen, Protassova) mention the fact that there is a gap between policies formulated in legislation and providing the means for implementation. Diachkov emphasises the lack of time allocated to language lessons. He and others also refer to the lack of textbooks for bilingual education. Protassova mentions the learning environment in which communication with speakers of Latvian is not possible. If learners of Latvian do not have access to a language adapted to their level of comprehension while communicating, or when they only have to speak with other learners of Latvian, or when they have to listen to a language far above their abilities, they will not have proper input and will be disappointed. (Protassova). Language proficiency of teachers working in Russian schools is often not

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7 Including “myself and my country” in grades 3-5: 1 hour, and history of Latvia in gr 9: 1 hour extra
8 Including 1 hr extra history and culture of the ‘ethnic motherland’.
sufficient to teach in both languages. Passing the language proficiency exam does not mean that teachers are able to teach in that language (Diachkov, Protassova). In none of the models there are any didactical proposals of how to develop bilingualism based on real life situations and of how to teach interculturally, facing the integration into the Latvian but also into the European society (Protassova).

5.2. Alternative model LAŠOR
The Association of Russian Language Schools in Latvia (LAŠOR) developed an alternative model. In this alternative subjects are taught in L1 until grade 8, in grade 9 subjects are taught bilingually with the exception of 1 hour civics in Latvian. Diachkov considers this model more political than educational. The aim of LAŠOR is to preserve the Russian language, which – from Diachkov’s point of view – can only happen in Russia. In this model there is not enough attention for Latvian language learning (Diachkov). Choumak, on the other hand, concludes that this model allows to secondary education in Latvian.

Pedersen defines this programme as a maintenance programme with transitional elements. “If both languages and cultures are connected to positive values and regarded as equal, it can be an excellent basis for intercultural understanding and integration”.

5.3. Two way bilingual education
The problem with all 5 models mentioned before is that they only apply to minority children and can only be realised in minority classes (at least in the lessons which are taught in the first language or “bilingually”).

A model, which is not presented by the Latvian authorities, but which is mentioned in some of the contributions is the model of Two Way Bilingualism (Crawford). It is a model that perfectly fits in classes in so-called mixed schools Ideally there is a nearly 50/50 balance between language minority and language majority students. Students serve as native-speaker role models for their peers (Rennie, 1993). The model is only useful where the minority language is a “world language”, as is the case in California with English-Spanish classes and in Latvia with Latvian-Russian classes. Besides, such classes are an ideal environment for “learning to live together”.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. With respect to the content of bilingual education
Officially bilingual education in Latvia aims at maintenance of the mother tongue and associated ethnic identity. However, the official policy is vague up to what level the ethnic home language and identity are to be preserved, and whether outcome expectations involve either full and balanced or only partial an imbalanced forms of bilingualism, biliteracy and biculturalism (Housen). Proficiency in Latvian is the main concern. The nature of the transitional component in bilingual education in Latvia is such that it may well defeat the maintenance and enrichment objectives, particularly in programmes based on the models 1, 2 and 4.

The models offered by the Ministry of Education and Science are transitional. Only model 3, and the LAŠOR model are by more than 1 author characterised as having possibilities for maintenance purposes while they provide full possibilities for achieving the goals of proficiency in Latvian.
Diachkov and Crawford emphasise the need to increase the number of hours teaching Latvian. This problem can be solved when the teaching of the language is not anymore the responsibility of the language teacher, but when each teacher in any subject becomes a language teacher (see below under process).

The category “bilingually” in all models should be defined with greater precision (Crawford, Housen and others), and to be related to teaching strategies to be used in the various subjects, based on the various theories as described by Crawford and others in this publication. Housen advises “against the regular mixing of languages for teaching purposes in general and particularly against the frequent use of the “dominant” language during lessons designated to the “weaker” language. Teachers should be trained to implement strategies for teaching bilingually according to this definition.

Long term accompanied research programmes are needed in order to evaluate to what extent the various programmes achieve both the goals of the command of Latvian and of the various minority languages, taking into account the various conditions in which these models are used (see also under process).

All contributors agree with Cummins that bilingual children perform better in school when the school effectively teaches the mother tongue and, where appropriate, develops literacy in that language.

Integration of Russian speaking students through the learning of Latvian is only possible when the education takes place in the frame work of intercultural education, including co-operative learning in (linguistically) heterogeneous groups. Within this frame work the model of Two Way Bilingual education as described in Crawford’s contribution should be developed in mixed schools.

All students in Latvia should have the opportunity to learn at least 3 languages: Latvian (as the main means of communication – L1 for Latvian speaking students, L2 for Russian speaking students), Russian (both as L1 for students with a Russian speaking background), FL and L2 for Latvian speaking students), and another FL for all, for instance English and/or German. Grin & Schwob note that the “limited international importance of Latvian, just like the plurilingual situation in Switzerland, should be a strong incentive to foster second and third language learning”. The results of the survey of the Baltic Institute for Social Sciences (56% of Latvians believing that Latvian residents should be able to speak Russian) should encourage Latvian authorities and schools to emphasise the importance of learning Russian and other foreign languages by Latvians.

A model to be explored in the Latvian situation should be “Two Way Bilingual Education” in schools and classes with both Russian speaking and Latvian speaking students with an addition of a third (foreign) language. As Crawford mentions, these classes could also be organised on a temporary basis, for instance one or two days per week.

Explore the possibility of pairing Latvian speaking and Russian speaking (or other minority) schools in order to share expertise, organise activities where minority students and majority students have the opportunity to learn and work together. In the Open School Project is already experience with co-operation between schools. Two Way Bilingual Education with the addition of another foreign language could be explored in such a co-operation.

Teachers, particularly teachers from Russian speaking origin fear changes in job qualifications. It is therefore of utmost importance that teachers from both Latvian speaking communities and Russian speaking communities receive training (together) in order to equip them for their task with respect to bilingual education in a changing context (see also Batelaan & Gundare, 2000). These tasks include the design and implementation of language policies within the schools and the consultation of the various subject teachers in the schools. See for
the need of training of teachers of Russian as first language particularly the contribution Protassova with respect to the state and status of the Russian language in Latvia.

6.2. With respect to the process developing and implementing bilingual education

The didactic principles listed in the National Standards provide the schools with many opportunities to implement teaching strategies that are appropriate for an education that can meet international standards for quality. In this respect, a lot of work has already been done within the framework of educational activities of the Soros Foundation of Latvia. Teachers are aware of these opportunities, but they also experience bureaucracy and mistrust, discrepancy between the standards and examinations.

With respect to the various models, schools should develop their own curriculum based, of course, on the “National Standards” but also on the context in which the school operates. (see also Pedersen). It will make the schools more “entrepreneurial” and less bureaucratic. It gives schools more opportunities to relate the curriculum to the context in which the school operates, including the expertise of the teachers working in the school and the knowledge, experiences, and abilities the children already possess. Curriculum development should take place within the frame work of whole school development. (for instance as it is described in the frame work of the EU project “Preparing Schools for a Multicultural learning Society”, in which also the Open School Project participates (Batelaan, 2000).

The effectiveness of a model for bilingual education depends on a myriad of variables. No model should be transplanted in its entirety to other contexts (Housen). It is therefore important to look closely at the specific Latvian context: politically, demographically, linguistically, culturally, and in the local school contexts for schools developing their own curriculum. For a good understanding of what has to be done it is important to distinguish context and conditions. The context is given, conditions have to be created, for instance teacher education, production of textbooks, etc.

The Latvian language can be considered as a “unique” language (Grin & Schwob), which is only spoken in Latvia, and which has hardly an international status. The consequence of this is that it is more difficult to motivate people who speak an international (high status) language, to learn this “unique” language.

Educators and policy makers should take into account that there is a tension, felt by both language groups between speakers of a minority language, which is as such a world language, and speakers of the official language, which in fact a unique language. Both language groups may feel themselves threatened by the other. This makes the Latvian situation rather unique (although there are similarities in other former Soviet republics) compared to situations elsewhere in Europe. It also requires specific attention for attitudinal and motivational problems (see also Housen).

Crawford refers to Vygotsky whose concept of proximal development emphasises the social dimension of learning, the importance of relevant input and contextual learning. Language is learned when the use of students’ language is monitored and corrected. This implies that language learning not only takes place in language lessons, but in all contexts where children use language. That makes teachers of other subjects also language teachers. Teacher education and training should include activities where teachers learn to contribute to the language development of their students (see for instance Hajer & Lemmens, 1998).

One of the biggest challenges of teaching a second or a foreign language is to create as many situations as possible where pupils can express themselves in the target language (see also Grin & Schwob). Housen refers to communicative rich contexts. In classrooms such situations can be created where children of different language backgrounds communicate with each
other in small groups, where they have opportunities to present acquired content and understanding in the target language, for instance in the framework of Complex Instruction. Learning a language is learning a skill. Skills are learned by doing and reflection on doing. The role of the teacher is to create the situations where students use language in a meaningful way, not to correct their errors immediately (unless they interfere with communication), but to organise also an opportunity for reflection on the language used, in order, also, to “focus on form” (Housen).

For academic success it is very important that children learn to use the language in academic situations. This could be both the mother tongue and the second language. Students who have learned to write for academic purposes in their own language can easily transfer this knowledge into the second language. However, it is important that they opportunities are created in which they can use this language in a functional way. Housen emphasises the importance of comprehensible output, which “refers to opportunities for pupils to produce their own meaningful, coherent and linguistically precise discourse in the target language”.

Offering opportunities for co-operation in order to conceptualise the subject matter and for the production of “comprehensive output” have consequences for the role of the teacher. Traditional teacher centred strategies create insufficient opportunity for individual pupils to produce comprehensive output, hindering language development (Housen). Language learning is not over by the end of compulsory school (Grin & Schwob). Therefore, bilingual education should also be offered at the secondary level.

6.3 With respect to the political context

The use of the term multi-national in stead of multi-cultural is an obstacle for a democratic integration process.

Silova describes the culture of regulations and control of the Latvian government. Her findings, including lack of motivation from the side of the teachers, are confirmed by personal communications I had with teachers and teacher trainers. Also the OECD (2001) notes “a near obsession with formulating laws and regulations”. Training and guidance in stead of control should accompany implementation of reform in order to make it a success. The Inspection should be used to guide a process of quality improvement, helping schools to evaluate their own activities. A process of self- and peer-evaluation is much more productive in a process of reform. In order to establish a culture as the goals and the didactical principles of the National Standards imply, the culture within the Ministry should change into a culture of service instead of a “bureaucratic” culture of setting rules and control. It can be concluded that - from the perspective of schools and teachers, the implementation activities of the Ministry of Education limit the creativity of teachers in schools (as was the case during the Soviet period). It is understandable that – as a result of the Soviet occupation between 1940 and 1990 – claims of the Russian speaking community are received with suspicion. However, in a situation where young generations are prepared to participate into the Latvian (multicultural) society, it is necessary for all groups to learn to live together, based on mutual understanding, reconciliation with respect to the past (cf. the reconciliation process in South Africa), and mutual acceptance. This is only possible when students from both communities have opportunities to meet and to work together.

The result of integration should be a feeling of “belongingness” to the Latvian culture. This is only possible if the Latvian speaking community is open to Latvian residents with a “minority”. As Grin and Schwob note: “national minorities may have privileged links to a neighbouring nation-state”, but this does not necessarily diminish their belonging to Latvia, as
long as they are fully accepted. The examples of Switzerland and Luxembourg show that “contacts with neighbouring countries speaking the same language poses no threat to national unity”.

Cultural agreements with countries from where minorities originate are important for the development of minority cultures within a multicultural context. Agreements exist with countries such as Poland, Byelorussia, and Israel. Not with the country where most minority people come from: Russia. According to Protassova, there is hardly any support for the minority language and culture of the Russian speaking community. She refers to the example of the Finnish government with respect to Finland’s Swedes and Russians.

It could be useful for the Latvian and Russian authorities to establish co-operation as exist between Finland and Sweden.

Finally, the most important condition for achieving the goals as set out in the National Standards is a motivated and professional team of teachers. Control and mistrust impede the implementation of educational reform. One of the main instruments for quality improvement is the training of teachers. Particularly with respect to the planning and implementation of language policies in the school and in the classroom aimed at integration and academic proficiency, continuous further professional development is needed with respect to understanding theories of bilingual education and providing opportunities for students to actively communicate in context-rich environments. I had the opportunity to work with teachers in Latvia in the framework of various projects organised or supported by the Soros Foundation. I was impressed by their openness, creativity, and motivation. They should play a keyrole in the activities to be organised to make the education reform a success.

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**BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN LATVIA**

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1. PERSPECTIVES ON BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingual education is a highly complex issue that involves second language acquisition, academic instruction in the mother tongue, culture, teacher training, materials preparation, assessment of student knowledge and skills, and politics. Bilingual education addresses the need that emerges when children speak a mother tongue that is not the official language and when they must learn that official language as a second language. It is a process that typically takes from two to five years (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Because children cannot learn to read, solve mathematics problems, learn social studies and science concepts in the language that they do not understand or speak during much of that interval, they can fall behind several years in their academic learning.

The purpose of bilingual education is to enable children to learn to read and to develop knowledge and skills in the other academic subjects in the mother tongue WHILE they are learning the new second language. This is based on the major, underlying premise of bilingual education: positive transfer of skills. What a child learns in the mother tongue is positively transferred to the new second language when the child learns that language (Cummins, 1986, 1989). The processes of reading, mathematics, critical thinking, and all of the knowledge and skills learned in science and the social sciences do not have to be learned a second time, just as we adults can learn a second language without learning how to read again or without needing to learn history again in the second language.

Politics plays a crucial role in the issue of bilingual education. While the purpose of bilingual education is to allow children to learn their new second language quickly and to permit them to keep up in their academic learning while they do that, nationalistic tendencies in the United States, in most other countries, and probably in Latvia, lead many in an uninformed general population to conclude that teaching in the official language is the most desirable strategy to achieve their educational goals. That children will learn their new second language more rapidly with a firm base in the mother tongue is counter-intuitive, and, for that reason, many reject bilingual education, even though research evidence from around the world demonstrates its efficacy (UNESCO, 1953; Saville and Troike, 1971; Modiano, 1968; Cummins, 1986, 1989; Krashen and Biber, 1988; J. Crawford, 2000).

2. SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS: SOME AMERICAN EXPERIENCES

During the past thirty years, there have been two categories of instructional programmes for teaching second language learners in the United States—immersion second language approaches and programmes of bilingual education. Because educational policy in the United States is controlled by individual states and by independent public school districts within states, there is no single approach to meeting the needs of the second language learner. An overview of these two basic approaches, along with subcategories of practices within each, is presented in Figure 1.
Figure 1 Model Program Structures For Meeting the Needs of Second Language Learners

Second language approaches, with academic instruction in the second language

Bilingual education with mother tongue instruction and second language/structured immersion

Immersion/structured immersion

Sheltered instruction

Maintenance model

Transitional model

Structures for implementing bilingual education

Concurrent method

Team teaching approach

Preview-review approach

Dual language approach

Two-way bilingual program

Eastman model

Submersion

Self-contained classroom

Pullout
2.1. Teach Them the Second Language (and in the Second Language)

Second language options for teaching second language learners exist in several forms and for many reasons. In some cases, the numbers of children who share a mother tongue at a grade level are small, and it has not been feasible to offer a programme of mother tongue instruction. A lack of trained teachers and mother tongue instructional materials may exacerbate this situation. Public sensibilities constitute another reason for providing only second-language instruction, where political considerations have largely discouraged or made difficult the use of mother tongue instruction and have instead required the use of what may be characterized as structured immersion in the second language. In the states of California and Arizona, for example, bilingual education has been effectively prohibited by state law.

2.1.1. Immersion Instruction

One approach to second language acquisition is immersion, sometimes called structured immersion (see FIGURE 1), which are focused on intensive second language instruction. California law now limits second language instruction (ESL) to one year, even though it is well documented that children need two to five years to learn the second language well enough to learn academic subjects and reading (Thomas and Collier, 1997). English language instruction (ESL) is the most important element in an immersion approach to teaching second language learners in the United States. Their academic instruction in reading, mathematics, science, and social science is also conducted in English, although second language learners gain little from this instruction. They do not understand or speak the second language, nor can they read at a level of comprehension.

The submersion approach is a variation on structured immersion that is still observed in the United States, and it is truly a sink-or-swim approach. While no one advocates its use, it is often observed as the default approach to working with second language learners. Second language learners are simply thrown to the mercies of a teacher, classmates, and instructional materials in the second language, with no concessions to their language or cultural needs. This sometimes occurs very cynically, where the needs could be met, but they are not because of political reasons. It is sometimes simply a reflection of the inability of the school to respond to the needs of a small number of children who do not speak the language of instruction.

2.1.2. Sheltered Second Language Instruction

Sheltered second language instruction is a very powerful approach for working with English language learners that fits within this category in FIGURE 1, but it is an INTERMEDIATE approach. It is designed to follow an initial English-as-a-second language acquisition programme that takes students from non-English speaker status to that of intermediate speaker of the second language. It is therefore an important second language component of all education programmes for second language learners, whether they have been in bilingual education or in a second language immersion approach. It is, however, a submersion approach when used, or misused, with beginning speakers of the second language.

The purpose of a sheltered instruction approach to the academic curriculum in English is to provide a focus on context-embedded activities, ensuring that comprehensible input is
provided while treating increasingly cognitively demanding aspects of the core curriculum (Krashen, 1985; Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992). The Los Angeles Unified School District (1985) prepared a set of English-language teaching strategies that provide the necessary scaffolding in content areas for intermediate English language learners. Among recommended strategies are that teachers:

- Simplify input by speaking slowly and enunciating clearly
- Use a controlled vocabulary within simple language structures
- Where possible, use cognates and avoid the extensive use of idiomatic expressions
- Make frequent use of nonverbal language, including gestures, facial expressions, and dramatization
- Use manipulatives and concrete materials, such as props, graphs, visuals, overhead transparencies, bulletin boards, maps, and realia
- Maintained comprehension through extensive use of gestures, dramatization, illustrations, and manipulatives
- Check frequently for understanding by asking for confirmation of comprehension, by asking students to clarify, repeat, and expand, and by using a variety of questioning formats

2.1.3. BICS and CALP

Cummins (1986, 1989) provides a major principle that has guided American educators’ understanding of providing the best context for learning and for learning in a second language. He posits two levels of language that emphasize the need for high level proficiency in the second language before academic instruction is provided in the second language, such as that provided to intermediate second language learners in a sheltered mode. He describes basic interpersonal communications skills (BICS) as those that permit second language learners to carry on a simple conversation in the new second language. They appear to be proficient, but they are not. A higher level of language proficiency, cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP), is required for the student to learn to read in the second language or, for example, to learn a concept, such as the commutative principle of addition in mathematics \((2 + 3 = 3 + 2)\).

Cummins (1981) and Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukomaa (1976) conclude that there is a threshold of language proficiency in the mother tongue that must be reached in order for the student to attain academic proficiency in the mother tongue and later in a second language. This threshold is seldom met in programmes of immersion in the second language because the children are not provided with mother tongue academic instruction.

2.2. Patterns for the Teaching the Second Language

A very common pattern for providing second language instruction in the United States is that in which the teacher in the self-contained classroom provides all instruction, including instruction in the second language. Unfortunately, not every teacher is well prepared, or prepared at all, to teach a second language.

Another common pattern is the pullout programme, usually employed in primary schools. These ESL teachers have their own classrooms, and, for periods of 40-60 minutes, they pull children out of their self-contained classrooms for second language instruction and then send them back. In departmentalized secondary schools, usually at the fifth or sixth grade levels and above, one or more teachers may have responsibility for teaching English-as-a-second language. An
advantage of a pullout programme is that a specialist can be very effective in providing this important instruction and will usually have high quality materials for this purpose. There are several disadvantages to this approach, as well, including missed instruction in the regular classroom, singling out second language learners as “special,” and homogeneous grouping.

3. Teach Them in the Language They Already Speak While They Learn to Understand and Speak The Second Language:

3.1. Bilingual Education Approaches

In most programmes of bilingual education in the United States, children learn to read and write and also study the other subjects of the academic curriculum, mathematics, social science, and science, in the mother tongue, usually Spanish, but also in Korean, Mandarin, Arabic, Tagalog, Russian, Armenian, and other languages. Where children do not have the opportunity to learn academic subjects in the mother tongue, they obviously fall behind in those subjects during the period of time they are learning the second language.

The underlying principles of programmes of bilingual education in the United States are:

- Teach second language learners to understand and speak the second language.
- Teach the academic subjects, including reading and writing, in the mother tongue while the children are in the process of learning to understand and speak the second language.
- Transition the children from mother tongue academic instruction to second language instruction in a sheltered mode when they have an intermediate level of the second language, usually in the second or third grade.

3.2. Culture and Teaching the Second Language Learner

Culture is an important aspect of all programmes of instruction for children who must learn a new second language. In the United States, American educators speak of bilingual/bicultural education in the same breath. This merger of linguistic and cultural issues is also very common to bilingual education in Latin America, where it is called bilingual/intercultural education. Lambert (1975) has contrasted additive and subtractive education programmes for second language learners. In the former, children add a new language and culture to the mother tongue and culture and its accompanying culture, along with a positive self-image. In a subtractive programme, the second language and its accompanying culture are substituted for the mother tongue and culture, often leading to low self-esteem, leaving school, low academic achievement, and other negative consequences.

Programmes of bilingual education are additive. Children maintain the mother tongue and culture while adding a new language and culture. The result is a bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural individual with high self-esteem. And the acquisition of the new language is more rapid because of the strong base of language and background knowledge in the mother tongue. Immersion second language programmes are of the subtractive type.

3.3. Transitional vs. Maintenance Models of Bilingual Education

There are two underlying philosophies about how to conduct programmes of bilingual education—transitional and maintenance (Lessow-Hurley, 1996) (see FIGURE 1). In the more transitional model most common in the United States, children learn the second language, learn their academic subjects in the mother tongue, including reading and writing, and transition to
second language academic instruction in a sheltered mode when they have reached an intermediate level of proficiency, usually between the late second and early fourth grades. The major goal of the transitional programme is to produce a monolingual, monoliterate, and monocultural child who temporarily uses the mother tongue and culture as a vehicle for learning. Children in transitional bilingual programmes usually continue their academic studies only in the second language after the onset of transition to the second language, although they sometimes receive continuing support in the mother tongue from a paraprofessional or parent volunteer, as needed.

In the maintenance model, the process is the same up to the point of transition. After the children begin academic instruction in the second language, they continue to receive periodic lessons in the mother tongue in all subject areas. The major outcome of the maintenance programme is a bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural child who is able to function easily and comfortably in two languages and cultures. It is a very powerful additive approach that is rarely encountered in the United States.

3.4. Structures for Organizing Programmes of Bilingual Education

Within the transitional and maintenance models, there are several structures for grouping children and for assigning teachers and paraprofessionals that have been used in both models (see FIGURE 1). One approach that is often used intuitively is called concurrent method. The teacher says everything twice, once in the children’s mother tongue and once in the second language, assuming that there is only one other language in the classroom and that the teacher is bilingual. When the teacher is not bilingual, a bilingual paraprofessional may fill that second role, basically serving as an interpreter. Although it is an efficient approach with an uncomplicated structure, it is also very ineffective.

The team-teaching approach is quite different (see FIGURE 1). Two teachers, one bilingual, the other usually not, work together in the same classroom. They work independently; but when they teach, each teaches the entire class. The primary advantages of this approach are to provide outstanding language and cultural models to the children and to reduce the number of proficient bilingual teachers needed.

The dual language model resembles the team teaching model in that there are two teachers, one bilingual, the other usually not, but in separate classrooms (see FIGURE 1). The monolingual second language teacher teaches the second language and academic instruction in the second language for those in the two classrooms that are ready for it. The bilingual teacher teaches the academic subjects to the second language learners in the mother tongue and can also teach that mother tongue to the other students as a second language. The major disadvantage is that the second language learners and native speaking children are rarely working together because their needs are diametrically opposed. It is important for second language learners to associate with native speakers because they learn the second language from those children, as well as from their teacher. They can avoid the fossilization or stopping-in-place that can occur when children are separated from native and capable native speaking peers (Selinker, 1992). It also important for groups of children from different languages and cultures to associate with each other in order to avoid linguistic, cultural, and ethnic isolation.

The preview-review model (see FIGURE 1) is very complex, but it resolves some of the shortcomings of the other models. Two teachers work together as in the team teaching and dual language models, one bilingual, the other usually not. One teacher provides a preview of the lesson to the entire group in one language, and the other teacher then teaches the main body of
the lesson to the entire group in the other language. Each then reviews the main lesson with his or her language group after the main body of the lesson. The order of use of the languages is reversed in that subject area the next day. The children in whose language the main body of the lesson is not to be presented listen to a preview in their mother tongue. They also review the lesson in their mother tongue after the lesson is presented in their second language. The children always have the best possible model of both languages, and they are mixed for part of the lesson. The model also reduces the number of scarce bilingual teachers needed.

The Eastman model (Krashen & Biber, 1988) also effectively alleviates the problem of isolating students from each other at the primary level (see FIGURE 1). Second language learners, usually Spanish speakers, are organized for mother tongue instruction in reading, the language arts, and academic areas of the curriculum during the morning, along with a programme of English language instruction. English speaking students are organized for reading and academic instruction in English in the morning. In the afternoon, mother tongue students are mainstreamed with English speaking students in art, music, and physical education, which are conducted in the second language of English. As second language learners gain English language proficiency after two or three years, they begin to receive sheltered academic instruction in English in the more concrete areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics and science. Because it is more abstract, English language instruction in social studies is introduced later.

The two-way bilingual education programme (Lessow-Hurley, 1996) (see FIGURE 1) has a different goal from mainstream bilingual education. It is employed where two language groups of parents want their children to learn, and learn in, another language. Usually, one group of children will will learn the second language and also learn the academic subjects in their native language. But another group of native speaking students is in the classroom because their parents want them to learn the other language, and in the other language. The programme goal is additive in that each group learns the language and culture of the other group. The Eastman model is an effective organizational structure for conducting a two-way bilingual education programme.

3.5. What Is the Place of Second Language Instruction in the Bilingual Education Programme?

Teaching English as a second language is the underlying base of all programmes to meet the academic needs of second language learners in the United States. It is the major element of those full bilingual education programmes where the mother tongue is used for academic instruction while children develop sufficient proficiency in the second language to benefit from academic instruction in that language. Whether or not children learn to read and write in their mother tongue, they clearly must learn to speak and understand the English language.

Before we examine how English-as-a-second-language has been taught, we should examine the contrast between constructivist and behaviorist models of instruction. A constructivist view of instruction focuses on the construction of meaning, using what the child already knows and combining it with new knowledge, concepts, and skills to be integrated (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000). It is learner-centered and highly contextualized. Within the constructivist view, language acquisition is embedded in function. Skills are taught in a meaningful context, not in a rigid, artificial, isolated, and fragmented way.
Reductionist, behaviorist, and skills-based models conversely focus on the disassembly or fragmentation of curricular elements so that isolated skills and concepts can be mastered within a linear paradigm (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000). Traditionally, most students have studied a second language using such grammar-based approaches as the grammar-translation and audiolingual methods that move learners from part to whole. Both approaches are found in the United States, with educators preferring the constructivist view and politicians, the reductionist view. Most of us have personal experience with this type of approach. We may recall the grammar-translation approach from foreign language courses we took in secondary school and university. According to Chastain (1975), our mother tongue was always the window through which we viewed, and contrasted, the vocabulary and grammar our new second language. Instead of becoming functional in speaking and understanding our new second language, we succeeded, at best, in written tests of grammar, we translated with difficulty, and we read with halting comprehension (Crawford, 1994).

The audiolingual approach has its roots in structural linguistics and behavioral psychology, resulting in a methodology based on a grammatical sequence, with mimicry and the memorization of sequenced pattern drills, but without the heavy grammatical analysis of the grammar-translation approach (Chastain, 1975).

3.5.1. Communicative Approaches

During the past twenty years, the results of research have changed our conceptions of how a second language is acquired and how this acquisition is best promoted in the primary and secondary classroom. There has been a major paradigm shift away from grammar-based approaches to language learning and toward those we call communicative, and they are also consistent with constructivist approaches to literacy that focus on comprehension, not pronunciation (Crawford, 1994). The foundation for communicative approaches to second language acquisition is based on concepts, theories, and hypotheses that have converged around the interaction of constructivist notions about making meaning. Vygotsky (1978) defined the zone of proximal development as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance in collaboration with more capable peers.” This key concept emphasizes the social dimension of learning that results from the support of mothers, teachers, older siblings, and other caregivers. The collective wisdom of the cooperative learning group has an obvious role here, as well. The convergence between communicative approaches to second language acquisition and literacy is particularly prominent in the constructivist paradigm.

3.5.2. Underlying Hypotheses and Principles

There are several important hypotheses and principles that underlie current practice in most communicative approaches to second language acquisition in the United States. In his classic input hypothesis, Krashen (1982) concludes that growth in language occurs when learners receive comprehensible input, or input that contains vocabulary and structure at a slightly higher level than what they already understand, reflecting Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development. Krashen (1981) relates the input hypothesis to the silent period, the interval before speech in either the mother tongue or second language in which the child listens to and develops an understanding of the language before beginning to produce language.
In his acquisition-learning hypothesis, Krashen highlights the difference between the infant's subconscious acquisition of the mother tongue and the conscious learning of a second language of the secondary student of French. We acquire language subconsciously, with a feel for correctness. Learning a language, on the other hand, is a conscious process that involves knowing grammatical rules. The infant, of course, is almost always successful in acquiring communicative competence, while the secondary school foreign language learner is usually not (Crawford, 1994).

According to Krashen's (1982) natural order hypothesis, grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable sequence, with certain elements usually acquired before others. He concludes that the orders for first and second language acquisition are similar, but he does not conclude that sequencing the teaching of language according to this natural order or any grammatical sequence is either necessary or desirable.

Krashen's (1982) related monitor hypothesis describes how the child's conscious monitor or editor serves to make corrections as language is produced in speaking or writing, but only with time to apply it, a situation not present in most ordinary classroom oral discourse, a focus on the form or correctness of what is said, rather than on the content of the message; and knowledge of the grammatical rule to be applied. These conditions serve to illustrate why so few children or adults learn to understand and speak a foreign language in a grammar-translation or audiolingual secondary school or university foreign language course.

In his affective filter hypothesis, Krashen (1982) concludes that several affective variables are associated with success in second language acquisition, including high motivation, self-confidence and a positive self-image, and, most important, low anxiety in the learning environment. It is therefore important that teachers avoid high-pressure instruction and, especially, the humiliation of students acquiring the second language.

Results from recent research have led to other major changes in educators' conceptions of how a second language is acquired and how this acquisition is best facilitated in the classroom, one of which is the obvious similarity between primary and second language acquisition.

- The formation of an incomplete and incorrect interlanguage (Selinker, Swain, and Dumas, 1975), with most children moving through similar stages of development in this incomplete language
- A similar role for correction in both primary and second language acquisition
- Approximation, a developmental process in which children imitate more proficient native speakers in all of dimensions of language, oral and written, and test hypotheses about it

In his view of successive approximation, Holdaway (1979) describes the process as one in which Vygotsky's adults and more capable peers, i.e., teachers and proficient native-speaking students, use information in the output from children's responses to construct, adjust, and finally eliminate the scaffolding that facilitates progress in learning.

Terrell (1982) and Krashen and Terrell (1983) conclude, therefore, that we should view correction as a negative reinforcer that will raise the affective filter and the level of anxiety among second language learners. When errors do not interfere with comprehension, their correction has no more place in the second language programme than it does when infants acquire their mother tongue. Caregivers may expand incorrect or incomplete forms, such as me go or Kitty gots four feets, and say Yes, you go or Yes, Kitty has four feet. There is little evidence, however, that this expansion has any positive effect. Errors are signs of immaturity,
not incorrectness; they will disappear naturally as a part of approximation in the developmental process of language acquisition (Crawford, 1994). These similarities between primary and second language acquisition are not consistent with either the grammar-translation or audiolingual approaches. Children learning their first language do not rely on grammatical rules or on systematic acquisition of vocabulary. With its emphasis on early production instead of a silent period, on correct production instead of an acceptable, though immature and incomplete, interlanguage, and on grammatical sequence instead of function and communicative competence, the audiolingual approach bears little resemblance to the way primary or second languages are successfully acquired.

4. Basic Instructional Strategies For Second Language Acquisition: The Natural Approach

The implications of Krashen's hypotheses and of related similarities between first and second language acquisition are that approaches to second language acquisition should provide comprehensible input, focus on relevant and interesting topics instead of grammatical sequences, and provide for a silent period without forcing early production. The approaches to second language acquisition that meet these criteria are categorized as communicative approaches. The most appropriate for elementary and secondary classrooms is the natural approach, and it is widely used in the United States.

Terrell's (1977) original concept of the natural approach provided for three major characteristics:

- Classroom activities were focused on acquisition, that is, communication with a content focus leading to an unconscious absorption of language with a feel for correctness, but not an explicit knowledge of grammar.
- Oral errors were not directly corrected.
- Learners could respond in the target language, their mother tongue, or a mixture of the two.
- Krashen and Terrell (1983) later added four principles that underlie the natural approach to language acquisition:
  - Comprehension precedes production, which leads the teacher to always use the target language, focus on a topic of interest to the children, and help the children maintain comprehension.
  - Production emerges in stages ranging from non-verbal responses to complex discourse. Children can begin to speak when they are ready, and speech errors are not corrected unless they interfere with communication.
  - The curriculum consists of communicative goals. Topics of interest comprise the syllabus, not a grammatical sequence.
  - Activities must lead to low anxiety, a lowering of children's affective filter, which the teacher accomplishes by establishing and maintaining a good rapport.

Terrell's (1981) natural approach is based on three stages of language development: 1) preproduction (comprehension); 2) early production; and 3) emergence of speech, which are followed by the intermediate level.

The preproduction stage

The teacher provides topical, interesting, and relevant comprehensible input in the first stage, speaking slowly and using gestures to maintain comprehension. Children may respond with physical behaviors, shaking or nodding their heads, pointing at pictures or objects, and saying yes or no. It is important that input is dynamic, lively, fun, and comprehensible. This basic input
The early production stage

In the stage of early production, the children begin to produce one-word utterances, lists, and finally two-word answers, such as little dog and in house. Some of the latter, such as me like and no want, are grammatically incorrect or incomplete. According to Crawford (1986), we should view these errors as immature, not incorrect. In the presence of good models, these errors will disappear in time, just as they do among infants developing their mother tongue.

The emergence of speech stage

During the emergence of speech stage, children begin to produce structures that are longer, more complex, richer in vocabulary, and more correct. This production proceeds from three-word phrases to sentences, dialogue, extended discourse, and narrative. At this stage, Terrell recommends such activities as preference ranking, games, group discussions, skits, art and music, radio, TV, filmstrips, pictures, readings, and filling out forms.

The intermediate level

When children enter the intermediate stage, they are ready for sheltered academic instruction in the second language, that is, instruction in English, but with strong support and scaffolding so that second language learners can maintain comprehension.

5. The Curriculum of a Communicative Programme

According to Crawford (1994), teachers who would advocate teaching the first person present indicative tense to a 7-year-old second language learner in a primary school classroom would be incredulous at the suggestion that a parent teach the same concept to a three-year-old at home. Of course, both children can use the tense correctly, and neither as the result of instruction. This leads us to conclude, as do Krashen, Terrell, and others, that the content of second language acquisition programmes should be based primarily on content, not on grammatical sequence. Under the assumption that needed language structures will emerge and be acquired naturally within the context of topical lessons, a communicative second language curriculum is usually organized around a set of topics in order to ensure the introduction of new vocabulary and concepts of interest and utility to the children (Terrell, 1981).

6. Other Aspects of Educational Programmes For Second Language Learners in the United States

6.1. Instructional Materials

Programmes of bilingual education for Spanish-speaking students have access to rich sources of textbooks in Spanish. Textbooks are available in Spanish for instruction in reading, mathematics, science, and social sciences through and beyond the sixth grade. They are parallel in scope and quality to those in English. In the case of reading materials, the texts are similar, but the literature content and reading instructional content is linguistically and culturally appropriate for Spanish-speaking children learning in Spanish. In the other curriculum areas, texts are generally high-quality translations of English language materials. Materials for reading instruction are sometimes available in other languages, but supplies are limited because the
numbers of children are small and they are widely scattered, making the provision of bilingual education programmes difficult. The most effective materials for teaching English-as-a-second-language are large-format posters and big books (large-format versions of trade books of children’s literature). Teachers supplement with concrete objects in their classrooms. The content of curriculum for children enrolled in programmes of bilingual education is the same as for English-speaking children, the only difference being in the language in which it is delivered and the provision of English-as-a-second-language instruction.

6.2. Teacher Training

Some states have formal programmes for the preparation of bilingual teachers. In California, for example, all teachers learn how to teach English-as-a-second-language and how to teach content areas of the curriculum in a sheltered mode. They also learn about the cultures of children they will encounter in their classrooms. Bilingual teachers meet additional requirements. They are tested in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing in both English and the other language in which they will teach, usually Spanish. Their skills must be at a rating of four on a scale that ranges from one (no proficiency) to five (native speaker). They are also tested in their knowledge of the culture of children from the language group with which they will work. Finally, they take the curriculum and methods courses required for all teachers, but in a bilingual mode, that is, in both English and the other language. They learn how to teach each subject in which they are licensed to teach in both languages, and they also learn how to transition children from their mother tongue to English later. Their university instructors are fluent in both English and the other language and conduct the courses in both languages, with students completing course assignments and, eventually, student teaching in both languages. In many areas, certified bilingual teachers are paid at a high level, and they always are the first hired.

6.3. Best Practice in the United States

- Although there is much variation in programmes for language minority children in the United States, we can identify a number of well-accepted best practices:
- Transitional and maintenance programmes of bilingual education that provide English-as-a-second-language instruction and mother tongue instruction until children make the transition to English-language academic instruction
- Use of the Eastman structure to maximize use of scarce bilingual teachers, provide outstanding models of English and Spanish (or other mother tongue), and also integrate English-speakers and English language learners during a part of the school day to minimize fossilization
- Communicative approaches, such as the natural approach, in teaching English-as-a-second-language
- Sheltered academic instruction in English, even after the children make the transition from mother tongue instruction
- Textbooks and ancillary instructional materials for reading instruction (including literature), mathematics, science, and social science provided in the non-English mother tongue that are parallel in scope and sequence and in quality to those in English
Teacher training programmes that address issues of language, culture, second language instruction, and bilingual education methodologies

7. THE LATVIAN CONTEXT

There are at least four unique factors in the Latvian context that are common to the experiences of many parts of the former Soviet Union, but unique with respect to other parts of the world: 1) Latvian language and culture recently and suddenly became dominant in Latvia, with the language and culture of the previous power structure now in a subordinate position; 2) most Russian-speaking Latvians, as well as those whose mother tongues are Lithuanian, Polish, Estonian, German, and Roma, are long-term residents of Latvia; 3) a rich legacy of native Latvian speakers have an excellent command of Russian; and 4) the Latvian and Russian languages use different alphabets. This latter difference is not an insurmountable problem—there are tens of thousands of children from Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Arabic countries, and, indeed, Russia, who are enrolled in programmes of bilingual education in the United States and who transition from one alphabet to another.

In a process funded by the United National Development Programme (UNDP) and the Delegation of the European Commission in Latvia, The Naturalisation Board of The Republic of Latvia (1999) prepared *The integration of society in Latvia: A framework document*, edited by E. Vebers. Chapter 3, entitled Education, Language, and Culture, was dedicated to a careful examination of the interplay among these three issues in Latvia. Several aims from the document that impact on the issue of bilingual education are summarized below:

- To focus education on the learning of Latvian language at a level that permits young people to “use it freely as a means of communication,” while promoting the “preservation of identity among minorities and their integration into Latvian society”
- To establish a stable society that shares a common official language, Latvian, while supporting the cultivation of minority languages
- To ensure the development of Latvian cultural values, even while the values of other cultures are developed and protected

Several problems and difficulties in implementing educational reform processes were also identified in the document, including insufficient remuneration for teachers, a conservative orientation in schools that focuses on the reproduction of knowledge instead of creative and critical thinking, financial difficulties related to maintaining schools, especially with regard to heating, shortages of nationally-produced textbooks and instructional materials in both Latvian and minority languages, and continuing problems in moving away from the old system toward an orientation befitting a rapidly developing democracy.

Section 9 of the Education Law of Latvia (1999, 2000, 2000) addresses ethnic minority children and allows for instruction in “another language.” Section 41 of the same law provides for ethnic minority children to acquire “relevant ethnic culture and for integration of ethnic minorities in Latvia.” An amendment to an earlier code requires that at least two subjects at the primary school level and three at the secondary level will be taught in the state language (Circular of the Ministry of Education No. 1-14-2, 1996). These provisions reflect the commitment of the Ministry of Education and Science to allowing children to maintain the mother tongue and the culture that accompanies it, even as children add or strengthen Latvian language or culture. The methodology for teaching Latvian-as-a-second language is not described, but, based on other references to difficulties in moving away from traditional methods in other subject areas, it may be assumed that the approach is traditional and heavily focused on the teaching of grammar in
most cases. The approach to teaching Latvian is described as communicative in the programme descriptions of the Partial Primary Education Program of Agenskalns (German language) and of the ABECE school in Riga. In Order No. 286 (1999), the Ministry of Education adopted a model programme of bilingual education with four sub-programmes. The four models provide for children to learn Latvian language and culture and also “to learn the native language and culture.” All of the models include instruction “bilingually,” although the methodology for accomplishing this bilingual instruction is not described. In the programme descriptions of Riga Technical Lyceum No. 1 and of the primary education program of the Liepa primary school, it is implied that bilingual instruction is conducted in two languages, Latvian and Russian.

Instruction in Latvian language and culture is provided for in two to four lessons each week in grades one to three, and four in grades four through nine, a number of lessons that seems quite minimal if the children are to learn Latvian. Mother tongue academic instruction is provided for in the ethnic minority language and in mathematics and natural sciences in some models, but not all. Mother tongue instruction is provided for in music, visual art, handicrafts, and sport at some levels, although these are areas in which instruction in Latvian could probably be provided much earlier. Parent choice is implied in the descriptions of the four models, but it is not clear how this might be accomplished if individual parents in schools did not agree as to the model to be used in the school of their children’s attendance. Finally, the Association in Support to the Russian Language Schools (LASOR) has proposed a policy that would extend the four primary models into the secondary level, where the law provides for education of all students in Latvian language.

In the subsequent Instruction No. 8 (2001), the Ministry of Education provided for education programmes to prepare teachers for work in bilingual education programs, but the content of such programs is not described. The programme description of Riga Secondary School No. 17 identifies the need to improve the Latvian language skills of teachers.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following generic recommendations for consideration reflect the Latvian context for bilingual education, experiences of educators in other countries, and theory and research supported by investigations. They are organized into the categories of educational policy, curriculum and methods, and teacher training.

**Educational Policy**

Recommendation: Consider defining with greater precision instruction presented “bilingually,” as the term is used with respect to the four models.

Rationale: There are many approaches to bilingual instruction, ranging from concurrent method to dual language, and many others; some are very effective, and some not; bilingual instruction does not consist of teaching in the mother tongue and the second language, but rather instruction in the mother tongue while they children learn Latvian-as-a-second language.

Recommendation: Consider the integration of fluent Latvian speakers and minority language speakers for at least a part of the school day, even in the bilingual education program.

Rationale: Minority language children, even at the first grade level when they are learning academic subjects in the minority language, will learn Latvian
much more rapidly if they are in lessons with native Latvian speakers in such areas as sport, music, arts, visual art, and handicraft; this can be accomplished in the Eastman design described above.

**Curriculum and Instruction**

Recommendation: Consider emphasizing communication through the natural approach in programmes of Latvian as a second language, rather than grammar.
Rationale: Learning the second language is similar to learning the mother tongue; formal knowledge of grammar is not a significant factor until students reach at least an intermediate level of proficiency in oral language. Traditional grammar-translation and audiolingual approaches are not effective in teaching children to understand and speak another language.

Recommendation: Consider teaching in Latvian, according to provisions of Section ???, the very concrete areas of art, music, physical education; proceeding to the semi-concrete areas of mathematics and science; finally transitioning to the more abstract social sciences.
Rationale: These concrete and less academic areas of the curriculum can be taught very effectively in Latvian using sheltered strategies beginning during the first grade.

**Teacher Training**

Recommendation: Consider adding strategies for teaching second language to the teacher training curriculum for all teachers at all levels and in all disciplines, including sheltered instruction in academic curriculum areas; similar staff development for inservice teachers would also be needed.
Rationale: Even non-bilingual teachers have an important role in supporting the development of Latvian language proficiency as they teach minority language children who have transitioned into Latvian language instruction.

Recommendation: Consider augmenting the salaries of teachers who demonstrate proficiency in Latvian language and culture and a second language and culture.
Rationale: This recognizes the value of being bilingual and bicultural, and it encourages teachers to develop second language and cultural skills.

Recommendation: Consider the creation of a career ladder to bilingual teacher by establishing the position of bilingual paraprofessional, who would provide mother tongue instruction or support in the mother tongue in the classrooms of monolingual Latvian teachers under their supervision.
Rationale: Paraprofessionals can provide mother tongue instructional support where a bilingual teacher is not available; they are also encouraged to complete training and become bilingual teachers themselves.

In addition, recommendations for consideration of changes in the four models proposed by the Ministry of Education are offered:

Recommendation: Consider increasing the number of Latvian as-a-second-language lessons to five each week at all grade levels in all four models.
Rationale: Even as children receive mother tongue instruction in the academic areas, they need daily instruction in Latvian language with a communicative approach.

Recommendation: Consider teaching mathematics and the natural sciences in the mother tongue in grade levels one and two in all four models.

Rationale: Mathematics and the natural sciences are academic subjects that will be difficult for children to understand in Latvian while they are still early in the process of learning Latvian-as-a-second language.

Recommendation: Consider having teachers use sheltered strategies to maintain understanding as they teach children transitioned from mother tongue to Latvian language, a language that is still developing.

Rationale: Even after students are ready for Latvian language instruction in the academic areas, their language is not as strong as native speakers; they need support.

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A Search to Merge

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Foreword
The title might be interpreted in many ways. In this connection it refers to integration and assimilation processes resulting from language policies and the curricula of the schools. Under this heading the essay describes and discusses bilingual education and the educational policies within compulsory primary education in Latvia, with special regard to education of ethnic minorities. The aim is to determine whether educational opportunities resulting from four models support the integration of the minorities in the society of Latvia. Furthermore, the essay includes recommendations to minority education in future and experiences within minority education and transboundary majority education in the Danish-German border region. The idea is to inspire to prospects for the schools in Latvia.

1. First class language and first language
In democracies, linguistic freedom has always been emphasised as an individual human right, but the right for public education in a mother tongue different from the official state language(s) has had straitened circumstances. In nation states, it is a general conception that linguistic diversity in education threatens a national unity based on a common identity. But it is only the national ideology that argues for a nature given correspondence between national identity and one language. In the world, there are several examples that contradict this argument. Furthermore, the existence of different languages in a country is rarely the cause of civil conflict that might threaten the unity of the state. The conflicts arise, when nationalistic governments or authoritarian regimes believe in unity as a stabilizing factor and fight for the unity with all means, also by linguistic means. In these cases, only one language is allowed in education. Or policies in education encourage the children to give up their mother tongue in order to be accepted in a society that has only one language as a first class language. It is not always the first language of the population.

The democratic countries that accept linguistic diversity among the children in public education aim at bilingualism or multilingualism. However, bilingualism is usually the prerogative only, of children having another first language than the official language. Most often the bilingual combination includes the official language(s) because it is regarded as a unifier in the diversity. Home languages different from the official language are branded as minority languages. They are minor because of the number of speakers, but the word minority also associates to inferiority.

Minority languages are neither minor nor inferior to the native speakers. The first language is of major importance for the speaker’s personal and educational development (Baker (2000), Cummins (2000) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000)). When the children’s first language is promoted at home and in the school, not only this language but also the second language develops. The languages are interdependent. Add to this that several studies show that the children become more flexible in their thinking because they have to handle information through different languages. The processes are described clearly by Cummins, “Bilingual children perform better in school when the school effectively teaches the mother tongue and, where appropriate, develops literacy in that language. By contrast, when the mother tongue is encouraged to atrophy and its development stagnates, children’s personal and conceptual foundation for learning is undermined.” (Cummins 2001:18).
2. **Mother tongues in the education of Latvia**

Bilingualism and bilingual education are not mentioned in the “Education Law” of Latvia. In the general provisions, the language of acquisition of education (chap. I, sek. 9) is defined as the official language of the state. That is Latvian. However, education may be acquired in another language in private institutions and in state and local government institutions with programmes for ethnic minorities. These programmes (chap. V, sek. 41) have to fulfil the “National Standards”, but minority education has a dual aim. Its content shall give possibilities for acquisition of the ethnic culture and for integration in Latvia. The models for the four programmes are made by the Ministry of Education and Science and it lays down the subjects which must be acquired in Latvian.

In 2001, models for programmes were developed for compulsory education that includes primary school, class one to nine. Here another language than Latvian is permitted on condition of acquisition of Latvian and tests that prove a satisfactory competence in Latvian according to demands laid down in the law. There are four programmes with a differentiated distribution of the minority and the official language in the curricula, and the schools have to choose one of these programmes.

Secondary educational programmes for ethnic minorities were not published in 2001 but education curricula for minorities are mentioned in the governmental paper “Development of Education. National report of Latvia 29.3.2001”. In connection with the “National Standards” for the educational subjects in secondary education it says, “ Latvian language and literature (525 lessons in three years, in education curricula for minorities - 420 lessons)” and “ minority language and literature, if a minority education curriculum is implemented (210 lessons in the three years)”. In higher education, the choice of language is not prescribed, but final professional qualification examinations take place in Latvian only.

Tests in Latvian and final examinations in higher education in Latvian stress the position of the Latvian language from a governmental point of view. The language policy is to give Latvian a high status in the society through education, and each pupil in compulsory primary education has to have a proficiency in the official language of the state.

Both majority and minority education have to be seen in relationship with the political system and the sociolinguistic and cultural realities of the society. In the “Education Law” it is mentioned that the educatee shall become members of the democratic state and society of Latvia (chap I, sek. 2) through education. In this way democracy and integration into the society are set up as important values, and in the following they will be defined in order to demonstrate the basis for the evaluation and the recommendations regarding primary education for ethnic minorities.

3. **Democracy and integration**

Democracy is not only a type of government which everybody is entitled to exert influence on. It is also an attitude to life where the majority cannot have its own way but has to take the view of the minority into consideration. You have to see the reasonableness in other people’s point of view and try to understand them. The real democracy is characterized by regard for the minority. Therefore, dialogue is the pivotal point. Right from the beginning, the children have to learn in practice to talk and listen to each other and reach a mutual understanding.

Integration is creation of connection between the different elements and actors in society. It is either based on ordinary acknowledged values or based on the social groups’ interdependence. It is impossible to go through an integration process in a democracy without dialogue. Consensus about the social order are created through linguistic communication. You agree on the interpretations of the situation, moral, values, self-knowledge and goals
underlying the social order, but in a democracy you also discuss and criticise the interpretations in a dialogue between the different actors in society. Integration might also be enforced. Thus the social order is based on compulsion and obstacles. Somebody are dominating and others are being dominated. This is a form of integration that lies outside democracy.

4. Intercultural dialogue

The Latvian governmental document “The Integration of Society in Latvia. A Framework Document Chap. 3 Education, Language and Culture” regards education as an important source to integration because it gives the possibility for an acquisition of the Latvian language. It is regarded as a determinant in the integration and “for creation and understanding of a common system of values” (p. 3) and as a stabilizing factor in a multinational society. Furthermore, it is stressed that “Integration of society in education is a process with two aspects, the Latvian and the non-Latvian, and both sides should be prepared to engage in intercultural dialogue and show the other side understanding, tolerance and cooperation.” (p. 4).

The attitude to integration expressed in these quotations stresses the importance of the intercultural dialogue and indicates a democratic way of integration. However, it has to be considered in which language this dialogue is going to take place. If it is only taking place in Latvian, it will favour those having it as their first language. Another aspect is that the document operates with the dichotomy Latvian and non-Latvian where the negation underlines that someone is different from the Latvian. Therefore, it has to be analysed whether the Latvians constitute a dominating group and the non-Latvians are being dominated.

5. A multinational society

In the “Framework Document“ (p. 3), the country is characterized as a multinational society. The government recognizes that there is more than one national identity. National identities are the Latvian and the non-Latvian. It will not deny the non-Latvians having their national identity, but does the government want to share the Latvians’ privileges with the non-Latvians? The answer can be found by analysing many elements in society, among them the educational system and the language distribution in education. It raises more questions, among them whether the educational system does favour Latvians and non-Latvians in both primary and secondary education, and whether several combinations of languages (bilingualism) are regarded as problems or resources in the educational system, e.g. Latvian - English, Latvian - Russian, Latvian - Polish, Latvian - German or other combinations?

It should be noticed that the government does not refer to a multicultural or a multiethnic society. It is the way, many West European nation states characterize their countries to day. Latvia is defined as a multinational society. According to the national ideology, a nation state cannot be multinational. By using the concept multinational, the government gives the impression of a state confronted with obstacles in developing a nation state. The unsaid argument is that groups having another national identity than Latvian threaten the nation-building. They do it by being “non-Latvians”. The assertion that one common national identity is seen as the decisive condition of a successful democracy in many European nation states may cause the “non-Latvians” to be regarded as a threat to the development of democracy. As the Latvian goal is democracy, the state does only want one national identity. The definition “non-Latvians” to children born in Latvia is based on their first language as they nowadays can receive a Latvian citizenship. So they are Latvian citizens, but they are
regarded as non-Latvians because their first language is not Latvian. Using the Latvian language is considered to be a prerequisite for being Latvian. The language equals national identity and national identity equals the language - the slogan of nationalism. But is this ideology the only valid? Does the first language say everything about the national identity? Not always! Does monolingualism correspond to one national identity? Not always!

6. The first language does not equal the national identity
In Ireland, English as first language does not prevent the majority population from having an Irish national identity although Irish (Gaelic) would be the corresponding first language. Another example is the national minorities in the Danish-German border region. They have the majority language as their first language and the minority language as their second language acquired in minority kindergartens and schools. In spite of this, they have a national identity that defines them as belonging to a minority. A national identity that corresponds with the national identity in the kin state, i.e. the neighbouring country, has been recognized by Denmark and Germany since the Copenhagen-Bonn Declarations of 1955. Those who say that they belong to one of the minorities and affiliate with Danish or German culture are recognized as such by the authorities. It is a principle of national sentiment.

7. Children in Latvia
Is it possible that children born after Latvian regained independence in 1991 have a Latvian national identity without possessing the official Latvian language? In principle yes. Maybe adults born in Latvia have the feeling of being Latvian without competence in the official Latvian language. It depends on how Latvianness is defined. An analysis of the demands set up for applicants of the citizenship of Latvia could give an answer. An analysis of the whole educational system could give another answer. In this context, only primary education and especially primary education for ethnic minorities will be considered.

8. Latvian and non-Latvian
The educational policy of Latvia reveals that the government is attempting to restore a nation state with the national corner stones, i.e. Latvian language, history and culture. If the national identity does not correspond to that of the nation state, respect for the national values is expected. It is said directly, e.g. in the learning outcomes for pupils completing class three. As evaluative skills one of the expected results is that the pupil “knows the national symbols and holidays of Latvia, its capital and holds them in respect” (National Standards of Compulsory Education p. 20).

The uniformity with the national corner stones has a national ideology as its basis and it is directed against others, usually other nations, but also groups residing inside the nation but having another national identity. The often repeated dichotomy Latvian and non-Latvian might be seen as an expression of the relation “we” and the “others”. The dividing line between “we” and “others” is a common feature throughout the “National Standards”. In connection with “Cultural Identity” in class three it is expected that the pupil “acknowledges the importance of language and culture in coming to understand himself/herself and others, the culture of his/her own and other nations” (p.18). Furthermore, the words “language” and “culture” in the singular number, might indicate that language is thought of as a single language and culture as a nation cultural category. The same view is repeated for class six in the goal “can write and speak about his/her own culture and that of other nations”.

Bilingualism and multiculturalism are not seen as a basis of understanding themselves. And the view on a nation is that it has one culture.
Within “Social Systems and Processes” culture is also focussed, and the dichotomy is present. In class three it is expected that the pupil “has some conception about his/her own national culture and that of neighbouring cultural groups” (p.19). Here, national culture is set up against other cultural groups. In class six it is extended to “knows his nation’s traditional cultural values and is aware of the positive investment of other ethnic groups in the development of Latvian culture”. By talking about “other ethnic groups” it is indicated that there are several ethnic groups beside the dominant ethnic group. That makes it look as if the nation’s traditional cultural values are created by one ethnic group, whereas the Latvian culture today contrasts to the traditional by being developed by other ethnic groups as well. Obviously, the “one” ethnic group is not mentioned or defined, but it must be the Latvian. It is not defined as an ethnic group because the national and the ethnic identity merge in majority national identity according to the national ideology. Only “the others” are ethnic groups.

In class nine one of the expectations is that the pupil “has some conception about different cultural traditions and values, recognises the diversity of cultures and has respect for the diversity inherent in world culture” (p.19). These goals from class three to nine indicate a centrifugal development from the individual pupil’s culture to world culture. But there is no doubt that a Latvian national culture has to be known and respected by everyone. The question is how this dichotomy is going to be handled in primary education. Is it through didactics where polarization (I/we and the other/others) is the leading principle or is it integrative didactics?

9. Integrative didactics?

In the “General didactic principles of compulsory education” in the “National Standards” (p. 8-9) it is stressed that the teacher has to take the pupils’ prior experiences in account in an integrated approach because “only an open-minded attitude allows for a humanistic value’s education and secondly, effective learning can occur only when it is linked to the daily life and prior experiences of the student.” The daily life is regarded as a complex whole “Therefore an integrated approach is the most appropriate choice in that it promotes the acquisition of authentic knowledge, skills and values. The integrated approach can be implemented through the use of themes, individual research projects and team-teaching.” (p. 9).

As exemplified an integrated approach is defined as cross-curricular teaching. However, an integrated approach might also be defined as “get together”, i.e. cooperative teaching where there is no division in majority and minority education or a tight cooperation between majority and minority schools. That is teaching where focus is on the intercultural dialogue. That is not exactly the way the cooperative aspect is perceived in the “National Standards”. It is not defined as cooperative learning, but social skills are mentioned as cooperative skills. You might say that the goals are in common. They focus the ability to live in harmony and equality, “respecting themselves and others” and “the principles of equity regarding gender, ethnic, class, religious affiliation and lifestyle orientation.” (p. 11). But the way to reach the common goals seems to differ. In the “National Standards”, openness is the keyword, “Keeping channels of communication open and maintaining an open-minded attitude will allow individuals to avoid adopting any prejudices or forms of discrimination.” (p. 11). The question is whether openness is enough if there is no invitation or taken no initiative to communication. Neither are open arms a guarantee for a hug. You will only get that if you meet a friend. In the same way an intercultural dialogue within education is a necessity or a prerequisite for transforming the principles about equity into praxises.
10. The Latvian language

In public primary majority education, Latvian is the language of instruction. In primary minority education the minority language and the Latvian language are languages of instruction. In 2001, there was only one type of public secondary education. It had Latvian as the language of instruction. Higher education has final examinations in Latvian and probably Latvian as the medium of instruction to a great extent, at any rate in the higher education financed by the state.

The focus on the Latvian language in education can be seen as a mean to change the status of the language that did not have a high status at state level during the Soviet regime. The “National Program” of the Latvian government contains an integration programme called “The Integration of Society in Latvia. A framework Document”. In Chapter Three “Education, Language, and Culture” it is stated that “the status of the Latvian language is still not secured” (p. 3). As it is the only official language, there is no doubt about its status as such. But it is not the only language having a high status in the population, as the Russian language has a high status among those having it as first language. Just like Polish and German have a high status among those having it as their first language.

When Latvian is regarded as threatened (“not secured”) it must be due to the idea that only one language with a high status guarantees the nation-building. It is underlined by the wording “An official language is both the symbol of the state and an instrument for integration of society.” (p. 3). But European experience shows that it is possible with more than one language with a high status in countries having one official language, e.g. Finland where Swedish has a high status in some areas. Latvia seems to stick to nationalism or national ideology with the well-known one nation, one language, one culture, and one identity as the corner stones and the idea of the slogan the language equals national identity and the national identity equals the language.

11. Primary minority education

In Latvia, primary education of ethnic minorities has to obtain the same main goals as majority primary education according to model programmes approved by the Ministry of Education and Science (16.5.2001). Furthermore, minority education has two special aims. It is obliged to offer the minority pupils scope for integration in the Latvian society and for keeping their national identity (I. 3.).

These additional aims make it clear that a minority is a group of people which has another national identity than Latvian. And they indicate that it is not taken for granted that minority pupils are integrated in the Latvian society when they start school. Obviously, this must follow from their parents not being integrated. The aims illustrate the state of affairs. The Latvian society is composed by groups having different national identities, and the Latvian government strives for an integration of all minorities. Competence in the Latvian language is seen as a determinant for the integration.

In the objectives for implementation of the minority programme, language is mentioned but it is not defined as minority or majority language. It is language as a general skill, “skills of the language and mathematics”(II, 4.1.). In the following paragraph the special objectives for minority education stress the two languages, the Latvian and the native. Priority is given to Latvian and the minority language is added. This attitude signalizes 1+1 language, an additional view upon the command of two languages. Neither bilingualism nor Latvian as a second language is mentioned. That gives the impression of another aim than bilingualism. The focus is on Latvian, the language of the education that follows compulsory primary education,
“5.1. to facilitate the integration of the learner into the society of Latvia and to ensure the command of the Latvian language on such a level that would enable the learner to continue to pursue the education in the Latvian language;
5.2. to learn the native language and culture.”

In the paragraphs about the content of minority education (chap.V) it is remarkable that only the Latvian language is mentioned explicitly, minority languages are not:

“14.5. communication aspect: command of the Latvian language; practical experience in the use of the language; ability to communicate (speak, write, read) in several languages;”

(chap.V, 14.5).

The minority languages might be included in the expression “several languages” but it might also mean foreign languages. That is at any rate the content of the words “number of languages” that is mentioned under Communicative Skills in the “National Standards” (1998:11).

An analysis of the recommendations regarding choice of model programmes (Chap.V, 18) reaches the same result. In programme 1, 2, and 3, minority languages are not mentioned, although bilingual preschool is referred to in 1. On the other hand, Latvian turns up two to three times in each recommendation, and it looks as if the choice of model has something to do with Latvian. Only in programme 4 the mother tongue is included because it is an explicit model for parents who want primary education in the children’s mother tongue. Consequently it indicates that the parents who choose the other programmes do not care so much about the mother tongue as the Latvian language. Or rather, they are thought to think so by those who have developed the recommendations.

The suggested criteria for the choice of programme are the children’s competence in Latvian combined with the parents’ wish for integration. Obviously integration is measured on the competence in Latvian and the possibilities for usage in everyday life.

There is no reference to integration in programme 1. It is recommended to children with some competence in Latvian and an environment where Latvian is used. Hence they are supposed to be integrated already at the beginning of the first class. The children qualifying for programme 2 do also possess some competence in Latvian but have no environment to practice the language. They are not integrated beforehand as the “families want the children to be integrated into the society of Latvia;”. So, it is not only the Latvian language but also the environment or the sociolinguistic realities of the community that matters. If they are not Latvian, the integration cannot be expected in spite of some linguistic competence in the official language. Programme 3 is supposed to suit pupils with no competence in Latvian, no Latvian environment, but parents who want integration,

“18.3. Sub-program 3 is recommended for students who have no preliminary knowledge of the Latvian language nor the environment where they could practise the Latvian language, but whose families want the children to be integrated into the society of Latvia;”

A comparison between programme 3 and 4 reveals the attitude to the mother tongue of ethnic minorities. In 3 there is a wish for integration, in 4 there is not. At any rate it is not mentioned in the recommendation. It looks as if mother tongue education is thought to prohibit integration,

“18.4. Sub-program 4 is recommended for students who have no preliminary knowledge of the Latvian language and whose parents want them to receive the primary education in their mother tongue.”

A complete interpretation of this recommendation and its criteria must be related to the language distribution of the programme. That is also due to the other programmes.
Programme 1

When comparing the criteria in the recommendation for programme 1 with the distribution of languages in its curriculum, the result is contradictory in relation to the development of the minority language. If the children have some competence in Latvian when starting out in school, they are recommended to choose this programme which has bilingual subjects from class one. The attitude seems to be that the children are capable of bilingual education right from the beginning. In itself that would not be contradictory to the development of the minority language. The contradiction lies in the fact that the transition to Latvian as the medium of instruction is beginning after the three first years and is fulfilled from class seven. The first three years only mathematics and the minority language as subject are taught in the minority language. In class four to six, it is reduced to be minority language and minority literature and one year with health studies but this subject has to be integrated in other subjects. In class seven to nine the minority language is represented in the subjects minority language and literature. Apart from that mathematics is taught bilingually and the rest of the subjects are in Latvian.

The linguistic attitude behind this programme with early transition to Latvian monolingual education is that the minority language is of no worth. It is stressed by being only a subject. The children might feel the majority language imposed on them as the only thing of value. That might result in refusal, conscious or unconsciously. The transition ignores the diversity in the society and the children’s bilingualism. The message communicated to the children is that the minority language does not belong to the school. It is a private matter. They have no chances of developing all the concepts from the educational world in their first language. To a high degree they are reserved for the second language, the Latvian language.

It is a mystery, why pupils who have a minority mother tongue and qualifications in Latvian right from class one and an environment with usage of Latvian, are recommended to choose an early transitional programme. A bilingual programme would give them literacy and subject matter knowledge in the mother tongue without damaging the development of the second language Latvian. It would have permitted a transfer between the two languages. Educational research proves this in connection with well-implemented bilingual programmes all over the world. Add to that several additional advantages as described above.

The recommendation and the language distribution of the programme give better chances for assimilation than integration. Assimilation understood as giving up the minority language and culture and taking on the majority language and way of life.

Programme 2

This programme is characterized by bilingual instruction. Only the subjects Latvian and the minority language and literature are separate in language throughout all classes. In the last three years computer science, chemistry and geography are taught in the minority language. The reason why these subjects are not taught bilingually is not described. Therefore, it is impossible to comprehend.

The programme considers bilingual development and maintenance of the mother tongue, and the curriculum does justice to both minority and majority cultural and social competence. It implies that he pupils learn to use the two languages as languages of experience and language of knowledge. When you use the language for referring to “things” which you have a first hand knowledge of, personal experiences, feelings between an “I” and a “you” and that which happens here and now, it is language of experience. The language of knowledge, on the other hand, is the language usage in connection with phenomenons and relations detached from every concrete and personal context, but brought to your knowledge on second or third
When both types of usage are considered in both languages, there is a transfer across the two languages. The children will get a possibility for differentiation and generalization of their own experiences in the two languages and for concept learning and academic skills. If the bilingual programme is well-implemented, it gives a good chance for integration.

Programme 3
The distribution of languages in programme 3 considers both the minority language and Latvian, but there is one subject that is taught bilingually only. That is natural science in class one to four. Furthermore, one year out of four in geography has bilingual instruction. Compared to educational programmes for minorities in many places, it is striking that the creative subjects as sports, home economics, arts, music, etc. are taught in Latvian apart from the first years. They are not maintenance elements of minority language and culture. These subjects include a language usage that is close to the language of experience. In fact that is what the children need in their second language acquisition as they have acquired that type of usage in their first language in everyday life at home.

The distribution of languages for the other subjects does not stand to reason. It looks as if it is a half-and-half distribution, but with a predominance of Latvian in the last year of compulsory education. Although a change does only take place in mathematics, history, and social sciences, the complete picture is that of transition. There are only three or four subjects left in the minority language in the last year, i.e. minority language and literature and physics and chemistry.

When the subjects have not been taught bilingually, the transition from one to another language after eight and four years of learning and for one year only, is a great task. It would be more reasonable to change to bilingual teaching instead. If it is in order to acquire new labels for the skills learnt in one language, the bilingual way will be the most appropriate under all circumstances.

The organization of this curriculum gives possibilities for the development of both the minority and the majority language. The advantages lie in the maintenance of the minority language and in its usage as both language of experience and knowledge. The disadvantages lie in dominance of the majority language and the fact that the linguistic competence might be tied to the subjects. It can be prevented by interdisciplinary work across the curriculum that includes both languages.

Though some impediments in connection with the development of the two languages have been mentioned, there is no doubt that the pupils’ bilingualism will be a sufficient tool in an integration process.

Programme 4
In the recommendations for choice of programme the fourth was presented as a minority maintenance programme. It was intended to be a programme for parents who wished primary education in the mother tongue. Following, the instruction in the mother tongue needs to be retained throughout primary education. That is not the case in programme 4. There is an early transition from the minority language to Latvian after class three. Actually the instruction in class four to six does only take place in Latvian, even the ethnic minority language and literature. It is to hope that it is a misprint! In class seven to nine it is given in the minority language, and that is the only subject where it is solely the minority language. The rest of the subject plan is a mixture of bilingual and monolingual Latvian instruction that is held throughout the three years.
As the minority’s mother tongue is left out for three years, the programme can hardly be characterized as a minority educational programme. Although the three first years in the mother tongue might strengthen the native language and give it a status in school, there is a heavy risk for a loss of the ability to use the mother tongue in the learning process during the transition phase. Children lose their communicative skills quickly if they are not used and if they are regarded of no value for a period. And that is what happens in this programme. Though the minority language appears again in class six, the transition to Latvian might be fulfilled already.

The opportunities for the pupils to develop bilingualism and maintain their national identity is not a continuing process in this programme. There are ups and downs for the minority status. On the face of it the advantages are not to be seen. In relation to integration it looks as if it is on expense of the minority status.

12. English as a foreign language

In all four programmes there is one foreign language that is defined as English. It is introduced in class three, and according to the model subject plan Latvian is the language of instruction, i.e. the foreign language learning is based on the pupils’ second language. If that is what actually happens, it is not the most adequate way of doing it. The expediency of choosing the first language as basis is well-documented in research. The instruction might take place in English only, and there will be no more discussion.

13. An alternative model programme

The Association in Support to the Russian Language Schools in Latvia (LASOR) has worked out some general comments to the model programmes for primary education of ethnic minorities and it has elaborated an alternative programme. From the association’s their point of view the four programmes are of the transition type as it has been pointed out in this analysis. It finds that the programmes “cannot ensure the preservation and development of the minority language and do not contribute to reproduction of the national and cultural identity of the minorities represented in Latvia” (Comments 2.5.).

In an alternative programme, the association wants to ensure the status of the minority. At the same time it guarantees that it will be possible for the pupils to continue secondary education in Latvian if that is going to be the only opportunity. The association suggests minority secondary education. On the background of the success of bilingual secondary programmes in Europe that seems to be a sensible demand in order to develop minority language and culture. Regarding the integration in society, the aims of the programme do also take that into consideration. They should create optimum conditions for integration in a multinational and multi-cultural society. By using these words the association stresses its perception of the character of the society. The possibilities for integration are utilized in some of the principles that the programme is based on. Most obvious that is in “6.2. Interaction between the Latvian culture and the minority culture in the educational process” and “6.3.2. Interrelation between the languages of instruction within the framework of individual subjects.” These paragraphs also open up for intercultural understanding.

In the “Model programs for primary education of ethnic minorities” offered by LASOR, the objectives special to minority education are different from those of the governmental paper. Instead of an additional view it puts languages and cultures on equal footing and underlines the opportunities for education in both languages.

“5: The special objectives for implementation of the model program for primary education of ethnic minorities are to master the mother tongue and the Latvian language, as well as the
culture and history of Latvia and the ethnic motherland on such a level that would enable the learner to continue to pursue the education in the mother tongue or the Latvian language and to become integrated into the society of Latvia.”

The means to implement these principles and objectives are found in “The model subject plan and curriculum”. It is divided in four blocks. The first block “National culture and languages” is subdivided in “Letonika” and “Etnika” which refer to majority and minority. The languages of instruction are Latvian and the minority language respectively. The block “Introduction to technologies and sciences” contains the traditional subjects. They are taught in the minority language but transition to bilingual teaching takes place the last year of compulsory education, exceptions are mathematics that is bilingual in the two last years and computer science that is bilingual only. The block “Civics” is mainly bilingual and so is “Arts” apart from music and visual arts being in the minority language the first four years.

14. A comparison between the governmental and the alternative programme

The minority language has a stronger position in this alternative programme than in any of the four governmental programmes. A comparison shows that it has most features in common with programme 3. However, the LASOR programme has a transition to bilingual instruction the last years of compulsory education instead of a transition to Latvian monolingualism in programme 3. The bilingual way is evaluated as the most suitable solution in a transition and to bilingual children. Furthermore, civics and arts are to a high degree bilingual whereas they are predominantly Latvian in the governmental model. The conclusion is that bilingual education is an advantage to bilingual children and it maintains the minority language. Another advantage is that foreign language learning is based on the pupils’ mother tongue. The alternative programme focusses language awareness and cultural awareness in combination with the development of the minority and majority language. If both languages and cultures are connected to positive values and regarded as equal, it can be an excellent basis for intercultural understanding and integration. Furthermore there is no doubt that this programme guarantees the development of the minority language to a higher extent than the four programmes. It might be defined as a maintenance programme with transitional elements.

15. The choice of some selected schools

None of the school programmes presented for the evaluation are identical with the model programmes, neither the governmental nor the alternative. Most of the programmes are close to programme 3 or the alternative programme. That is the programmes that prove the strongest maintenance of the minority language. It is clear indication of the wish for preserving and developing the minority language through education. There is no strong wish for early transition programmes (1), bilingual programmes (2), and language changing programmes (4). The schools represented belong to different types. There are public schools, private schools, a Polish school, and a German language school.

Public schools

The exception in relation to choice of programme is Riga Secondary School no. 17 which has a partial primary programme for class five to nine following programme 4. It deviates from the guideline in having some of the subjects in the Russian language instead of bilingual, e.g. mathematics, or in having them in Latvian. On the other hand some are bilingual where programme 4 prescribes Latvian, e.g. history, biology, and home economics, and others are in Latvian in the years where bilingual instruction is foreseen, e.g. music. On the whole
bilingualism is the principle, and there should be no hindrance to integration.
The reasons for the exemplified deviations are a recognition of a lack of proficiency in Latvian by the teachers. They head for teacher training that will make it possible to make up the deficiencies in three years. In the long run the parents, the pupils, and the teachers want to develop a bilingual teaching model according to programme 4.
Three other public schools go in for model 3. That is Liepa primary school in Cesis district, Riga Secondary School No. 22, and Riga Technical Lyceum No.1. However, the language distribution of the subject plan of the Liepa school differs in being more bilingual than programme 3. In a way it corresponds to programme 2, but it is obvious that the school wants a stronger representation of the minority language. Transition to Latvian takes place in history, sports and the art subjects. The advantage of the school programme is the implementation of an integrated teaching based on cooperation among the teachers. That should ensure a bilingual development and give basis for integration in society.
The Riga school No. 22 lays emphasis on bilingualism in the teaching process and an awareness of the need for both languages and the feeling of pleasure in using them. This attitude is not followed up in bilingual teaching as in programme 2, but it is stressed in paragraph 3.4. that the children will learn bilingually in special sessions. The distribution of languages in the curriculum indicates bilingual instruction with deviating and joint features with programme 3. The feature in common is transition to Latvian in four subjects in the last year(s). Add to this the sports and arts subjects in Latvian most of the time. The bilingual goals ensure integration in society.
The programme of the Technical Lyceum is close to programme 3, and the school points out in the Introduction that it has teachers who can and do teach in Latvian or bilingually but the school aim at all the teachers being able to do so. Then, the programme could be most effectively implemented. As described in programme 3, there is a dominance of Latvian in the last years of school that might reduce the development of the minority language, but that does not prevent integration.

**Private schools**
The private school “Evrika” in Riga launches a programme that is not modelled on any of the existing model programmes. According to the description of the content, it will contribute to the preservation of the national identity of the pupils and facilitate their integration into the society of Latvia. There is nothing that speaks against that. The curriculum reminds of the alternative programme in having no transition to Latvian. It is an either- or throughout the classes. Eight subjects are taught bilingually, seven in Russian and five in Latvian.
Another private school does not follow the model programmes. The private school ABECG in Riga foresees that its pupils will not have obstacles to integrate in a multiethnic society as they study Russian, Latvian, English, and computer science in depth. Obviously some of the pupils have other obstacles to cope with in their life, e.g. problems with health or behaviour. The Russian language is predominant as language of instruction, and transition to Latvian takes place in history and geography in class nine. Latvian is preferred in natural sciences, sports, home economics, visual arts and handicraft. There is no bilingual instruction in relation to individual subjects. The possibilities of integration are depending on the development of bilingualism. The opportunities are present, and it cannot be refused that the pupils might succeed.
The third private school is the Gymnasium “Maksima” in Riga. It has developed its own primary education model and clearly demonstrates its position or view upon the nation-building in Latvia and the borders between nations. The Russians in Latvia remain part of a
large nation. That indicates a community across state borders, but it is not the goal of the school to refer to or to cultivate a definite national culture. The school is aiming at social and cultural awareness and an easy integration process into the society. And the teachers are obliged to raise patriots of Latvia. Furthermore multilingualism is an aim. It consists of three languages acquired with a productive competence and two with a receptive competence only. An analysis of the curriculum reveals that these two languages, German and French, are introduced in interest groups that lie beside the compulsory subjects. The plan of these subjects and the curriculum are close to the alternative programme. They are characterized by having Latvian language and literature and the one-year subject civil studies as the only subjects in Latvian. The “Maksima” programme does also have one year of history in Latvian where the content is the history of Latvia. The other subjects are either taught bilingually or in Russian. Furthermore it is stressed that English is taught in the foreign language. All in all they are prospects that indicate an integration in the Latvian society.

A Polish school
The Polish school in Kraslava aims at fulfilling the “National Standards” along with the goal of respecting the Latvian state and feeling a community with the Polish nation. It is defined as an affiliation to the ethnic motherland. As the pupils do not have to master Polish at the entrance of the school, this community is first of all based on a national sentiment. Apparently a language shift has taken place in some families, a well-known phenomenon in other ethnic minorities in the world. The feeling of community with the Polish nation is underlined in the acquisition and development of the Polish language in the school. The curriculum prescribes Polish as the medium of instruction in the language as a subject. In history and ethics it is used as well. Apart from this, bilingual instruction is characteristic of the first years followed by a transition to Latvian. The subjects biology, physics, chemistry, sports and home economics are in Latvian throughout primary education. So all in all, Latvian has a strong position in the curriculum, and from a linguistic point of view integration will be possible.

A German language school
The pupils in Agenskalns Primary School are transmitted to Agenskalns Gymnasium after four years of primary education, a system that is typical of the school structure in many lands in the Federal Republic of Germany, e.g. Schleswig-Holstein. In primary education, German is taught as the first foreign language followed by English, and Latvian-German bilingual education is offered in music and handicraft. As German is a foreign language, the programme of the school does not belong to the educational programmes of ethnic minorities. The pupils do not belong to an ethnic minority. It is a plurilingual programme for a language school.

16. Bilingualism and integration
The diversity of curricula and patterns for language distribution in public and private schools should be a guarantee for the development of a minority education that fits different needs and points of views. The question is whether the choice among several programmes is a necessity. Another solution could be freedom to create and develop an individual curriculum without ties. They might be felt as restrictions rather than inspiring possibilities. Naturally the curricula should be under the responsibility of fulfilling the “National Standards” and development of bilingualism which includes the Latvian language. Such a freedom would also make it possible for the schools to structure a curriculum which starts from and makes use of the experiences, the knowledge, and the abilities the children already possess.
The diversity of curricula, which are presented for the evaluation, is more or less adapted to the model programmes. This adaption shows the wish for freedom of creating an individual curriculum. It is also an indication that the schools have already realized the individual solutions. This development must be supported, and it will be of benefit to democracy and voluntary integration.

The comments on the language distribution in the programmes have included some remarks about the possibilities for integration. This is estimated on behalf of theory only and points at that which the minority community might offer. However, integration is a two-sided process and the attitude of the majority community is crucial. If the minority feels oppressed, their bilingualism will be of no use. Without mutual acceptance, equal opportunities and a dialogue about social conditions there will be no integration characteristic of a democracy.

Assimilation

Though the model programmes for primary education of ethnic minorities are existing and put into practice in different ways, it is still a question whether the parents and the pupils belonging to an ethnic minority or said to do so, feel that they have a real choice within public education. As long as there is no public secondary education in their minority language nor a bilingual secondary education that includes their minority language, they may doubt whether bilingualism is the correct choice. Especially, when generally bilingualism is only promoted in the Latvian-English combination. The parents might think that the children do only obtain a proficiency in the state language at the same level as monolingual majority children with Latvian as their first language if they forget about their mother tongue in education. Such a belief contradicts research results within bilingualism but might be a consequence of a negative attitude to a bilingualism that include a language that does not have a high status in the society.

A change in the parents’ choice of school for their children indicates an insecurity in minority education or rather an insecurity in the reaction of the society to this type of education. It might be influenced by the fact that at present public secondary and higher education are in Latvian. In “The Integration of Society in Latvia. A Framework Document” it is mentioned that “Parents of non-Latvian and mixed families are choosing Latvian language schools because they are thinking about educational opportunities for their children and their competitiveness in the future.” (Chapter Three, Education, Language, and Culture” p. 5). That is a clear indication that the parents think that the majority Latvian primary school is giving the optimal basis for secondary and further education, and the ethnic minority education as giving a poor chance. Not necessarily because of the standard of the minority education but they might feel a rejection of their minority status. Such a development is a sign of an assimilationistic policy in education or an assimilationistic attitude in society. That is not a sign of integration in society.

Plurilingualism - A vision

The process of shaping a national identity in Latvia is parallel to the processes which have taken place in many European nation states during the last two centuries. But diversity due to autochthanomous minorities and minority groups as a result of migration have changed this picture. In EU the goal is unity in diversity. And the Council of Europe is not only concerned with the protection of language rights of minority groups. It also promotes plurilingualism so that a more effective international communication can lead to mutual understanding and respect for diversity within identities and culture.

Instead of taking a step backwards in education in order to establish a nation state like the
traditional West-European (EUropean) type, why not take a step ahead and create a multilingual curriculum where plurilingualism is the goal? This was the goal of the European Language year 2001. It focussed on the opportunities that might be reached by having more than one foreign language, but did not suggest models that included a language with minority status and a foreign language, i.e. a plurilingualism consisting of the official language, a minority language and a foreign language for majority as well as minority pupils. It would not break down the nation state as the common communicative mean is the official language. It is just the unity language-culture-identity that are changed into diversity instead. It might be characterized as diversity in unity.

In such a plurilingual model, Latvian could be combined with English as a foreign language and Russian, Polish or German that are acknowledged as minority languages but at the same time are the official languages of neighbouring or almost neighbouring states. In the design of the curriculum pupils having one of the three big minority languages as their mother tongue are going to have Latvian and English as their second languages during primary and secondary education. Those having Latvian as their mother tongue are going to have English and one of the minority languages as their second languages during primary and secondary education. By this policy the country will gain a population that is able to communicate with the neighbouring states and the rest of the world.

The country would be characterized by a complex communicative competence. And Latvia will make use of the pupils’ resources, i.e. the knowledge, the skills and the experience they have got at home and in their environment. It will also make use of the resources among the teachers speaking the different languages as their native languages. However, they are not going to teach it only as a native language but also as a second language. What is needed is teacher training in second language teaching and learning in general and following it has to be specified in Latvian as a second language, Russian as a second language, Polish as a second language, German as a second language, and English as a second language.

In other words, didactics for the development of plurilingualism have to be developed. It should be the educational programmes for all children with no regard to national or cultural identity and they would have to go together in a district school. A plurilingual curriculum that is open for maintenance of the diversity in national and cultural identities would be a good guarantee for integration in society. Furthermore it must be in the self-interest of the state to make the most of the human and linguistic resources of society. According to the needs in a globalized world, plurilingualism might not only contribute to intercultural understanding but it would also be a resource in international politics and trade. In the long run it might be an economic strength.

**Free schools**

If nation-building according to a national ideology is preventing the development of plurilingualism as a common aim across national identities for majority and minority, the ethnic minorities might take the matter in their own hand. They have a potential for bilingualism and could be given a free hand to develop plurilingualism. The model programmes do not give it. As the analysis of the four programmes shows, the ethnic minorities have restrictions - more or less - in developing bilingualism and cultural diversity. The schools could develop their own curricula like the “free” schools in Denmark. They are obliged to teach the national language and reach adequate standards comparable with those of the public schools, but they are free to do it in the way they want. This freedom of choice has been a leading principle in Danish education for 150 years. Today, various kinds of “free” or independent schools exist, all of them receiving government subsidies by up to 85% of their
operational expenditure. Subject to certain conditions, loans on favourable terms can be obtained for the establishment of new schools.

The principle behind these large subsidies is that, although Denmark has an efficient education system providing educational opportunities for all, it should be possible for people to choose an alternative kind of education for their children should they wish so, whether their reasons for this are ideological, political, educational, or religious. The schools of the national German minority in Denmark are run according to these principles. They are “free” schools and are described after the following introduction to the Danish-German border region where they are situated.

17. The Danish-German border region

The Danish-German border region has several models within majority and minority education that might be relevant to the Latvian situation, too. To that comes a history with many common elements among them the existence of national minorities.

The present Danish part of the Danish-German border region was under German rule 1864-1920. At that time the language of the administration, school and church was turned into German, but most of the inhabitants had a Danish dialect as their mother tongue and home language. After a referendum in 1920 the area became part of the Kingdom of Denmark. The Germanization and oppression felt by the Danish inhabitants during German rule resulted in a negative attitude by many Danes to everything that was German. Maybe hatred would be a more exact word. A national conflict was dominating.

On the other hand, those who felt German and affiliated with Schleswig-Holstein established a German minority, and it got a German branch at public schools where Danish was a compulsory subject. Later German minority schools were established under the Danish law on free schools. In class 1-13 they have German as the medium of instruction in all subjects apart from the subject Danish. But it has to be stressed that most pupils have the Danish dialect as their first language. They acquire German as their second language in the German minority kindergarten and school. Therefore a proficiency in a dialect of the official language of the country is ensured at home, the question is whether the dialect and the standard are given sufficient opportunities for development in minority education. This sociolinguistic situation indicates another important thing. There is seldom correspondence between first language and national identity in the German minority.

Those who felt Danish south of the 1920- border organized a Danish national minority in the land Schleswig-Holstein. Today the minority has its own school system and cultural and political associations. Most children have German as their first language and acquire the minority language Danish as their second language in minority kindergartens and schools. They cover class 1-13, and Danish is the medium of instruction in all subjects apart from the subject German. In this subject most children’s first language is used, and it corresponds to the official language of the country. In the Danish minority schools it is also a question whether this language has optimal opportunities for development within education. However, the final examinations after class nine, 10, and 13 in the German and the Danish minority school are recognized by the society where the minority lives and by the neighbouring kin state. This duality opens the door for the pupils to choose further education in Denmark or Germany.

Though the minority schools have the minority language as medium of instruction, new integrative didactics, co-ordinated teaching, that involves both the minority and majority languages are being developed. The two languages are seen as tools in minority education and for understanding each other, of gaining mutual acceptance and for exchanging ideas.
Bilingualism plus one or two foreign languages are the ideal. And it is not seen as a threat to the national affiliation. Even some majority members choose minority education for their children because of the bilingual ideal. To them national identity is not a “we” constructed in opposition to “others”. It includes everybody within the frames of a nation state. They prefer minority education to majority education that has only monolingualism in the national language plus one ore two foreign languages as ideal and the national values of one nation-state is being transmitted. In these national minorities, the national identity does not have the national language as first language as a prerequisite. Germanness and Danishness are matters of national sentiment and that is recognized by the authorities since the Copenhagen-Bonn declarations of 1955. There are, however, people in the minority and the majority who still support the nationalistic conception that the first language equals one’s national identity. To day several minority members are developing a new form of affiliation. It is not the uniformity with the history, monolingualism and monoculture that underlies the national ideology of the neighbouring kin state, and which is directed against others. The minority members do not define themselves in contrast to the majority. They live and are integrated in the majority society but are feeling a community with the people of the neighbouring kin state.

The minority - majority model: Yggdrasil
There has been no tradition for cooperation between German minority schools and Danish majority schools in the Danish part of the border region called Sjælland. And it is still an exception. So it is in the German part of the region. However, a comprehensive programme now takes place in three small towns in Schleswig-Holstein, close to the state border and it includes three public schools and three Danish minority schools. The aim of the cooperation is a common wish among parents, teachers and pupils to develop a society friendly to children. The decision-making process includes adults and children, and the cooperation started in 1999 with the project work “Stones and Stars” i.e. obstacles and wishes for the schools and the local society. The project groups visited each other at the schools. The mutual understanding was good although most majority children were monolingual in German and had little competence in Danish. The minority children compensated for this by being bilingual in German and Danish, but their use of Danish furthered the majority children’s interest for acquiring it. Another project was a joint booklet in Danish and German about the project. It was elaborated by the adults and got the title of the project “Yggdrasil”, the name of the world tree in the Nordic Mythology. It grows in the middle of Asgård, the Ases’ world, and holds the sky in place.

The cooperation has continued most closely between the two schools in each of the three towns, the German public school and the Danish minority school. The German and Danish classes have had lunch together, have invited each other to children’s musical performed by the pupils and have visited the old age home and presented Danish and German songs at Christmas and birthdays. To this must be added joint sports activities as triathlon, fitness programmes and football matches. Furthermore, outings together for an island and a common summer party with booths and spectacles should be mentioned. The schools have also cooperated on administrative arrangements as school bus routes, and they have exchanged informations about events and incidents, things that never happened before. Earlier on, the schools had their own isolated world separated by an invisible wall. Now Yggdrasil is growing in the middle in stead.
A transboundary majority model: Tønder-Niebüll

Cooperation in the border region is not only a majority-minority phenomenon, it does also take place between Danish and German majority schools across the border. There has been contacts between majority schools in Denmark and Germany for years in order to acquire proficiency in German as a foreign language and international understanding. However, continuous transboundary school cooperation in the border region is a new phenomenon. May be because of former national conflicts of interests, may be because it is more interesting for the teachers and pupils to visit areas of Germany or Denmark that is further away. That which signifies a foreign country.

The transboundary cooperation in the Danish-German border region between Danish and German majority schools may give inspiration to a cooperative model between minority schools and majority schools in Latvia. In a way there are many preconditions which are alike both politically and in regard of attitude between the two states in the border region and between the Latvian and Russian group in Latvia.

Now things are beginning to change in the border region. The national conflict due to German rule that was renewed during the Second World War seems to be overcome by the post-war generation. They are now the decision makers in education, and it was the teacher of a Danish majority school that took the first initiative to a Danish-German cooperation. For three years a Danish and a German secondary school (class 10-13) at a distance of 25 kilometers have now cooperated closely within nine different subjects. To that comes private arrangements in form of parties arranged by the pupils and weekends at families in the neighbouring country.

One of the aims has been to get rid of prejudices and stereotypes of the neighbouring country and its inhabitants, also mentioned as “the others”. A personal acquaintance with the pupils and teachers in the neighbouring state during joint projects or lessons should give a basis for this. The pupils would have to be open for other traditions, methods, point of views etc. in order to cooperate. Another important goal has been to give possibilities for developing the pupils’ and the teachers’ proficiency in Danish and German as foreign languages or rather neighbouring languages.

As Danish and German as foreign languages are optional subjects in primary and secondary education not all pupils have chosen it. However, most Danish pupils choose German as second foreign language in primary education, i.e. class seven to nine, but it is not the case in secondary education. The German pupils at the cooperation school have the possibility to choose Danish as their second foreign language. However, the cooperation has included all pupils with no regard to their communicative competence in the neighbouring language. Also teachers having no or little competence in the language of the neighbouring school took part in the cooperation. The Danish teachers had at least some receptive competence in German, but some of the German teachers had no competence at all in Danish. English could be a lingua franca, but was seldom used by the teachers as one of the aims was to develop the competence of the neighbouring language. Therefore the cooperation began with a 14 day intensive language course for the teachers. It took place in school hours and was a tandem course where Danes and Germans were together.

The cooperation was planned by the teachers, and it was connected with practical difficulties because there are great differences in relation to duration of lessons, holidays and examinations between the two countries. It had to be restricted to certain periods.

In the subjects Danish, German and English as foreign languages there has been two types of cooperation. The teachers have crossed the border and taught in the other secondary school. The advantage has been that the pupils got a native speaking teacher who had also a cultural awareness related to a life in the neighbouring country. But it has always been teachers who
had a proficiency in teaching foreign languages, so they were not solely mother tongue teachers. In some of the subjects the pupils had projects in common e. g. solar energy in physics. Here the aim was to develop solar collectors which should be put up on the roof of the schools. The pupils have discussed the process and the choice of products via e-mail and video-conference and have met personally. In voluntary music two modern compositions were instructed for a Danish-German choir and orchestra and several joint rehearsals were made. Finally two twice two concerts were given, one at each secondary school. The two foreign languages as subjects were most successful. Here the pupils themselves had chosen the foreign language. So most pupils were positive towards the cooperation. Projects within the subjects art, music and sport also succeeded, though some of the pupils were opposed to cooperation. But on the whole, pupils with no or little knowledge in Danish or German as foreign languages managed to interact in these subjects. In other subjects, such as physics and biology the linguistic barrier was greater because language was a necessity for solving the tasks. The pupils stayed with their own language group and the interaction was almost zero.

The teachers report that they have gained a fruitful knowledge of another school system, and the acquaintance with the new colleagues had been inspiring. It had even led to personal friendships. The feeling of community was widespread among the teachers. The pupils were divided in two groups, a pro and a contra. The positive evaluation was due to the development of communicative competence and international understanding. The negative pupils mentioned the language barrier and disinterest in partners they had not chosen voluntary. In spite of this, the cooperation has been an eyeopener to intercultural understanding for many pupils. The transboundary cooperation is going to start again in the year 2003 in a reorganized form. A Danish-German line will be established, and the pupils can choose it voluntarily as they can choose between an additional European line, an industrial line, and an IT-line in the Danish school and an additional bilingual German-English line in the German school. In Latvia, the prejudices and stereotypes towards other national groups and the barrier between the Latvian and the Russian schools could be broken down by using the same model as this majority model in the Danish-German border region. Though it was put into practice in secondary education it will also be possible in primary education. Furthermore Latvian and Russian could be taught as second languages by native speaking teachers and the pupils could acquire the second language through tandem work between first and second language speakers.

18. Coordinated teaching in national minority schools

If there is no political, social or educational wishes for cooperation between the majority and the minority schools, the sources of opportunities internally within minority education have to be examined. A coordinated teaching within minority and majority language and literature as subjects and sometimes music and arts might be one of the fruitful examples to follow. For the last ten years it has been one of the most marked improvements within national minority education in the Danish-German border region. It aims at strengthening the pupils’ bilingualism by profiting from the resources the pupils have in their first language. Two bilingual teachers cooperate within one class but as they stick to the language of the subject to a very high degree. The teachers develop a thematically based instruction with themes related to the pupils life-world on the basis of the children’s cultural and social competences. It includes a communicative competence in a first language and a second language acquired for three years in a minority kindergarten. The content of the themes ought to be co-ordinated between the teachers so that they do not work contrastively covering all aspects in each
language - however, overlapping each other both thematically and linguistically. The reading-process is integrated in the themes and takes place in the two languages. First one step in the mother tongue then followed by the minority language which is most children’s second language. This learning process is also an advantage for metalinguistic awareness. The attitude being produced is that the pupils are lucky that they have two languages. Although the two languages on the whole are separated, the instruction breaks down the limits between the different subjects and the majority language and most children’s first language is no longer just a subject, it is an integrated and important part of instruction. The cooperation between two or more teachers within thematically based instruction also breaks down the isolation of the teachers, differences in professional traditions are clarified and the pedagogical dialogue between the teachers is a necessity. The attitude to the political, social and educational context is being discussed.

**Perspectives**

Models and programmes, initiatives and future developments are dependent of the teachers’ commitment. It is determined by their opportunities for development and selfrealization. The basis for that is confidence by the government and the school in the teachers’ experiments. Furthermore reduction in lessons for time used for curriculum development and cooperation is a necessity. And in-service teacher training is a must. The teachers have to be qualified for cooperation within subjects and for opening the door of the classroom. They also have to learn to break down the walls between minority and majority schools. Another important thing is knowledge about bilingualism, identity and multiculture. That is the conditions of developing an intercultural education. Its aim is an intercultural society where the individuals, and not ethnic or national communities as groups, meet each other and have a common interest. They become involved and influenced by the cultural and linguistic diversity.

Intercultural learning is not only a question about minority - majority relations in a society. In an economic globalized world a lot of people spend periods of time in more than one cultural context. Intercultural learning is a general necessity that might be acquired by the introduction of an intercultural dimension across a curriculum. A dimension which is not static, but open to changes in a changing world with Internet, satellite media and new technologies. The key word in intercultural learning is solidarity or to say it in other words: respect, a sense of community and responsibility for your neighbour and learning to act according to that attitude both at a local as well as at a global level. Solidarity and responsibility are attitudes that exclude ethnocentrism and prejudices, but they include respect for diverse life-styles and belief systems, for linguistic and cultural diversity, all in all for an identity different to one's own.

Ten years ago an in-service teacher training course in intercultural education for majority and minority teachers came into existence in the Danish-German border region. The intention was to let them jointly develop ideas for an intercultural dimension across the curriculum. After one year we had to realize that only the minority teachers were interested in exploring the opportunities for teaching methods for cultural and language awareness leading to an understanding and a wish to maintain cultural and linguistic diversity. May be time was not ripe for such an idea among the majority but it has a future.

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Contextual, output and operational variables in bilingual education in Latvia

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Abstract

This article evaluates the implementation and implications of the recent Education Act in Latvia for the education of language minority children in Latvia. By analysing the output, contextual and operational variables which determine language education policy, comparisons are made with two established Western-European models of multilingual education, the European School model and the system of trilingual education in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, revealing that, as elsewhere, it is the output variables, modified by contextual variables, which determine the operational strategies that need to be addressed.

1. Introduction

In recent years the combined forces of globalisation, automatisation, increased mobility and migration and, in some parts of the world, the redrawing of state boundaries, have engendered an unprecedented upsurge of linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity. In an attempt to come to terms with these phenomena, policy makers in many nations have been forced to reassess the traditional roles of language and education in society, often leading to major constitutional and educational reforms.

This article discusses aspects of the bilingual education policy currently conducted in Latvia, with particular emphasis on the language component. A comparative approach is taken: when relevant, bilingual education in Latvia is compared to other well-established models of bilingual education. The principal points of comparison are the European Schools and the system of trilingual education in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, two West-European models of multilingual education in which my colleagues and I at the University of Brussels have been directly involved as researchers and consultants. Both models are internationally acknowledged as instances of good practice in bilingual education and could serve as a source of inspiration of what can be done to integrate linguistically and culturally heterogeneous populations in a coherent educational program which produces academic success while respecting linguistic and cultural diversity (cf. EEC 1990, Skutnabb-Kangas 1995, Baker 1996, Lebrun &
Baetens Beardsmore 1993). This justifies their use as a reference point against which the bilingual educational programs in Latvia will be checked.

Before we turn to the analysis proper we will present some necessary background information about the European School model and Luxembourg model in order to allow the reader to make comparisons with bilingual educational provision in Latvia.

2. Two West-European models of multilingual education.

2.1. The Luxembourg system

Like Latvia, Luxembourg is a small country (approx. 1000 square kilometres) with a linguistically diverse population (approx. 410,000) which since its independence in 1839 has undergone considerable influence from its powerful neighbours (Germany, France). The Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg is the only European country which has mandatory multilingual education for the entire population (since 1848). It operates a three-language policy in education, consisting of the local vernacular, Luxemburger, a partially standardized Germanic language which is the state language, and two other official languages, German and French. Primary education starts in Luxemburger, gradually changes over to the almost exclusive usage of German by the end of primary school and introduces French as a medium of instruction in secondary school. Luxembourg stands as a compelling counter example to traditional uniformist assumptions relating multilingualism to inadequate educational achievement, economic under-development, and political instability because of problematic relationships between minority and majority groups. In Luxembourg, a higher than European average proportion of secondary school pupils pursue university and other forms of tertiary education, often in neighbouring countries. The country also has had higher than European average GNP increase per annum, while inflation and unemployment are at a European record low.

Key features of the trilingual education program:

- Nursery school and the 1st year of primary school are in the home language, Luxemburger.
- German, a genetically related L2, is taught as a subject from the 1st year of primary school onwards and replaces Luxemburger as the exclusive medium of instruction by the end of primary school.
- Literacy skills are first taught and acquired in German (given the non-codified nature of Luxemburger)
- A typologically more distant L3, French, is introduced as a subject in grade 2 of primary school. French gradually replaces German as the dominant medium of content-matter instruction in the course of secondary education.
- All teachers are nationals and speak all three languages.
- All three languages are used in school and the wider community (to different degrees and for different purposes). The L2 and L3 prevail in the neighbouring countries (Germany, France, Belgium).
Outcomes:

- All university education and much other tertiary education is followed in either the L2 or the L3 in neighbouring countries (France, Germany, Belgium), implying that levels of L2 and L3 proficiency and scholastic attainment at the end of secondary education meet foreign tertiary education standards.

For more details, see Lebrun & Baetens Beardsmore (1993).

2.2. The European School model

European Schools (ESs) are intended primarily for children of European Union officials working abroad though other children, including host nationals and immigrants also attend. There are currently 14 European Schools located in seven member states of the European Union. Each European School consists of several first language sections, collectively covering eleven of the European Union's official languages (i.e. Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish). The European School population contains both language majority and language minority children but the former are always in the numerical minority in any given school. For instance, in the European Schools near Culham (U.K.), pupils from the English L1 section are the majority language pupils but within the school they are outnumbered by the other L1 sections. All European Schools and all L1 sections follow the same curriculum, which leads to the European Baccalaureate, a special diploma which provides access to universities world-wide.

European Schools are distinctly multilingual and multicultural, not only in terms of their pupil population, but also in their organisation, ethos and goals. These goals include the promotion of (a) high levels of scholastic and intellectual development, (b) intercultural understanding and a pluralistic identity, and (c) high levels of functional proficiency in at least two languages. These two languages are the child's home language (L1) plus a second language of wider currency to be chosen from French, English or German, the three working languages of the European Schools system.

Key features of the European Schools model:

- Basic education in nursery school (2 years), primary school (grades 1-5) and secondary school (grades 6-12) is provided in one of the eleven different L1 sections.
- The L1 is the dominant medium of education until grade 7 (age 13). Only in the final years of secondary school the total amount of instruction through the medium of the L1 may drop below 50%, the rest being taken up by other languages.
- all pupils must learn a second language -- either English, French or German-- from the first year of primary school onwards.
• The L2 is first taught as a subject. From grade 3 onwards it is increasingly used as a medium of communication and instruction in other, non-language classes. In the last two grades of schooling, a little over 50% of the time-table can be taught in the L2.

• A third language (L3) is compulsory taught as a subject in grades 7 to 10. In grades 11 and 12 it can be taken as an elective course. The L3 can be any EU language not previously studied as L1 or L2. If the L3 is English, French or German, it may also be used as a medium of instruction for certain elective courses in grades 11 and 12.

• All L2 and L3 courses are taught to mixed classes of pupils from different L1 sections (but not pupils for whom the language of instruction is the L1).

• All teachers are native speakers of the language they use in class and know in addition at least one other working language of the European Schools system (i.e. English, French, German).

• Subjects such as History, Geography, and Economics are taught in the L2 to mixed groups of pupils from a supranational, European perspective to promote multicultural awareness and a European identity.

• Social engineering, the deliberate mixing of pupils from different L1 backgrounds inside and outside the classrooms (in the playground, during extra-curricular activities and special communal integration lessons) creates opportunities for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural contacts, fostering socio-cultural integration and reinforcing the formal L2/L3 learning process.

• L2/L3 learning can (but need not) be further promoted by the availability of the language in the wider, out-of-school environment (e.g. German in the European School in Munich, French in the European Schools of Brussels, English in the European School of Culham).

Outcomes:

• European School pupils attain comparable levels of academic achievement as monolingual L1 pupils, even for content matter taught and examined in the L2 and L3;

• L1 proficiency is comparable to monolingual peer norms;

• Global levels of L2 proficiency approximate monolingual native speaker norms by the end of secondary schooling (but not necessarily earlier) if the L2 is available in the wider, out-of-school context (e.g. French-L2 in the European School in Brussels). If not, slightly lower levels of L2 proficiency may be attained (e.g. German-L2 in the European School in Brussels).

• L3 proficiency, although generally lower than L2 proficiency, may still be fairly high if the L3 is available as a vehicular language inside or outside the school.

• Pupils develop a non-ethnocentric identity, reflected in nuanced and positive attitudes towards their own L1 and other languages, cultures and nationalities. Nationalistic antagonism and ethno-linguistic tensions are rare.
For a comprehensive description of the European School system, see Baetens Beardsmore (1995), Housen (2002a).

3. Descriptive framework

Choice of the European Schools system and Luxembourg system of education as reference points in this article does not imply that these two models should be exported to Latvia (or elsewhere). Indeed, research undertaken in varied setting throughout the world has clearly indicated that the effectiveness of a bilingual model depends on a myriad of variables (several of which are beyond the control of policy makers, program designers and educators) and that no model, no matter how well tried in its original context, should be transplanted in its entirety to other contexts (Baetens Beardsmore 1995).

Three general sets of factors need to be considered in analysing bilingual education/language education policy (Spolsky et al. 1974; Baker 1996; Baetens Beardsmore 1993): contextual, output and operational variables. 

*Contextual variables* refer to the macro-level context in which a given language educational policy is implemented. Of particular consideration here are the nature of the languages and the populations targeted by the policy. Contextual variables include such factors as the legal status of the languages and their respective communities involved, their social, sociolinguistic and numerical status (minorities vs. majorities), their socio-geographical status (i.e. whether the target languages are used in the out-of-school environment), their typological relationship (including whether the languages use the same script or not), and so forth. All these factors shape pupils’ *attitudinal and motivational disposition* towards the target languages and their respective communities. Also included are the *resources available* for implementation (teachers, teaching materials, infrastructure).

*Output variables* in bilingual education involve both the desired *goals* --external or self-determined, stated or hidden- as well as actual *outcomes*. Goals and outcomes can be envisaged as short, medium or long-term and can be stated at different, overlapping levels: linguistic (levels of language proficiency attained), scholastic (levels of academic proficiency attained), socio-psychological (attitudes and motivations developed), sociocultural (levels of bi-culturalism and degrees of acculturation to different ethno-cultural groups).
It is the output variables, modified by contextual variables, which determine the operational strategies that need to be addressed. Operational variables refer to the concrete educational provisions in terms of the linguistic, pedagogical and didactic procedures deployed in the implementation of a bilingual education policy. The following parameters (among others) need to be integrated in some coherent fashion: the nature of the curriculum (esp. the allocation of time, functions, resources and commitment to each language in the curriculum), the assessment procedures used, and actual language teaching strategies and classroom practices.

Although a full appreciation of the effects and effectiveness of the Latvian language education policy requires an analysis of context, input, output, and operational variables, some of the variables can only be given cursory attention here, because of space constraints.

4. Analysis and comparisons

4.1. Contextual variables

Demographic patterns and status of the languages involved: The out-of-school environment in which a child evolves is as significant as the in-school situation for determining language usage and learning, or any other scholastic activity for that matter (Baetens Beardsmore 1995, Diaz, Moll & Mehan 1986). Of primary concern for reflection here are the demographic patterns and the relative statuses of the languages in the wider context, with consequences for extra-scholastic language contact and pupils' attitudinal and motivational dispositions for language learning. Is the region in which a bilingual program operates relatively homogeneous or is it linguistically and culturally heterogeneous, and how does bilingual education complement the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the community? Answering these questions with regard to the Republic of Latvia is complicated by the country's complex, multilingual and multi-ethnic population structure, which derives from pre-Soviet and even pre-Empirial times (Melvin 1995). The linguistic and ethnic complexity of Latvia, however, is in no way exceptional or necessarily an impediment for successful bilingual education. This is compellingly illustrated by, for instance, the experience in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the
European Schools, which cater for equally or even more linguistically and ethno-culturally diverse populations.

**Status of the languages:** The status of the various languages in Latvia is a moot point. As a result of its legal status as state language, the number of its speakers and its use in official and prestigious domains (administration, law, parliament), the Latvian language can be considered the majority language in Latvia. In principle at least, this provides favourable attitudinal dispositions towards its use in the bilingual programs and a powerful motivational factor. All other languages spoken in Latvia are referred to as '(ethnic) minority languages'. Clearly, the labels *minority* and *majority* have little to do with absolute numbers or demography. As Haberland (1991, pp. 182-3) pointed out, the primary issue is relative power – the minority languages ultimately derive their status in relation to what is considered to be the national language. Terminological issues aside, it is clear that Russian occupies a special position in Latvia. Russian is more firmly established in Latvian society than the other minority languages and it even forms the numerical majority language in several parts of the country. This state of affairs has consequences for the outcomes of bilingual education. The situation of Russian-speaking children in bilingual schools in predominantly Russian-speaking areas is reminiscent of that of, for example, French-speaking children learning L2-English in the European Schools in the predominantly French-speaking city of Brussels. From what is known about the role of contextual variables in determining outcomes in the European Schools system (Housen 2002a) we speculate that the Russian-speaking pupils may perceive the learning of Latvian as less pertinent to their communicative, professional or social needs than the other ethnic minority children and therefore the Russian-speaking pupils may be less strongly motivated to learn and use Latvian. This is the more likely in schools where Latvian is not prevalent in the wider community for regular, spontaneous interaction.

**Population targeted:** Bilingual education in Latvia is a case of *one-way bilingual education* because it is provided to one group in society only. Only ethnic minority children are required to learn Latvian and study through Latvian whereas mainstream Latvian children are exempted from making similar stringent language-acquisition efforts.
This stands in contrast to other countries of a similar size with bi- or multilingual education, such as the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Brunei or Singapore, where the entire population is targeted for bilingual education, where there is no selection and where all children, regardless of linguistic background, are put through the same constraints where language and academic learning are concerned. Linguistic equality is also striven for in the European Schools and in the Two-Way Immersion programs in the United States (Montone & Loeb 2000), where both the language minority and majority children in the school have to learn a second language and have to learn and communicate through their weaker second language.

An educational system where only minority children are expected to make the effort towards bilingualism (often meaning transition to the majority language) while the mainstream population is not required to make any stringent language-acquisition efforts amounts to "in-built linguistic discrimination" (Baetens Beardsmore 1995: 11) which, unintentional though it may be, cannot fail to be perceived by all children involved, with possible detrimental consequences for their linguistic and personal development.

**Composition of the school population.** The pupil population of bilingual schools in Latvia tends to be fairly homogeneous, with most pupils sharing the same home language and ethnic background. However, some bilingual schools (especially in the urban areas) are confronted with a more heterogeneous population. Russian-Latvian schools (i.e. the former Russian-medium schools) are not only attended by Russian-speakers but also by most of the Ukrainian and Belarussian children, a large proportion of Poles, Jews and other non-Latvian children, children from linguistically mixed backgrounds and even some children from Latvian-speaking backgrounds (UNDP 1997, p. 62). It is inevitable therefore, that the pupil population in at least some bilingual Russian-Latvian schools shows a wide range of different home language backgrounds as well as a range of L1 and L2 skills, with some children from ethnically mixed or non-Russian families being educated in a third language. The extent of the variation in language proficiency in the classrooms is still unclear, as are its educational implications. But again, this is not a unique Latvian phenomenon. L2 classrooms in the European Schools, for example, also display considerable differences in L2 proficiency in the early years of schooling but these are gradually levelled out as the children proceed through the system. This indicates
that differences in language proficiency upon entry need not pose a major pedagogical problem, given appropriate teaching strategies and time.

Linguistic distance between the L1 and L2 may also contribute to variation in the rate of L2 learning and final L2 achievement in mixed populations. Pupils from a Germanic language background learning English or German as their L2 in the European Schools have been found to have a considerable initial diminishing L2 learning advantage over their non-Germanic peers (Housen 2002a,b). The Luxembourg experience in trilingual education suggests that typological proximity between the L1 and L2 in bilingual education can facilitate the introduction of an L2 in bilingual education. The experience with Greek pupils in the European School system has shown that allowances may have to be made for the presence of two different spelling systems rather than one in bilingual education. These experiences are also relevant for the Latvian context. Several of the ethnic minority languages in Latvian bilingual education (e.g. Russian, Lithuanian, Polish, Belarussian) are genetically related to the designated second language Latvian though some use a different spelling system (e.g. Russian). Other ethnic minority language are typologically more remote (e.g. Estonian) and may in addition use an entirely different alphabet (e.g. Yiddish). Children belonging to these language groups may need more time and pedagogical attention to acquire criterion levels of literacy in their respective L1 and L2.

**Teachers**: Ideally, teachers in bilingual programs should be native speakers, since they provide the pupils with genuine linguistic role models and rich, varied, accurate and appropriate input for language learning. Native speaker teachers also serve an important function as role models in the development of the pupil's cultural identity. In addition, L2 teachers should also be bilingual, or have at least sufficient knowledge of their pupils' L1 to accommodate to their communicative needs in the early stages of L2 development. While there should be no shortage of eligible native speaker teacher candidates in Latvia in theory, recruitment is made difficult because of extremely low pay (UNDP 1998, p. 68).

Shortage of qualified teachers, particularly teachers trained in teaching Latvian as a second language (LAT2) can impede the successful implementation of the bilingual education policy. Again, this situation is not very different from what goes on many other
parts of the world where bilingual situation is being introduced, as witnessed by the Council of Europe workshops devoted to this problem (Council of Europe 1997). It seems inevitable that pedagogical insecurity may prevail among Latvian teachers who are trying to apply bilingual policy and program guidelines without much preparatory training and without having themselves gone through the program they are passing on. Although these constraints are currently being addressed by the Latvian authorities (cf. the National Program for Latvian Language Training; UNDP 1996, pp. 73-5), and should be eliminated with time, it is difficult to envisage how this can be achieved in the short time span allowed by the Latvian Education Act (i.e. by 2004).

4.2. Output variables

The overall goal of bilingual education can be either one of language maintenance, enrichment or transition (Fishman 1976): if maintenance the goal is to preserve a threatened minority language; if enrichment the goal is to add an additional language to the curriculum and to the pupils’ linguistic repertoire at no cost to their first language; if transition the goal is to lead pupils as quickly as possible to the exclusive use of a second language. Transition policies are the most prevalent forms for minorities and can be for assimilation of the minority groups, for integration of different groups or for cultural pluralism (Watson 1984, Baetens Beardsmore 1992). Maintenance and enrichment policies typically lead to balanced forms of bilingualism and additive outcomes because they involve the addition of cognitive, psychological and social abilities which do not negatively influence those acquired in the first language. In contrast, the outcomes of a transition policy can be subtractive when the second language takes over to the detriment from the first language so that bilingualism and the cognitive, psychological and social benefits it can confer, are withheld. Still at the outcomes level, the goal of a particular policy may be to achieve different degrees -minimal, partial, full- of bilingualism, biliteracy and of biculturalism.

If we attempt to classify the bilingual education system in Latvia along the frame of reference developed by Fishman, we must pay attention both to the explicit goals in
official policy statements as well as to the implicit goals and actual outcomes that are likely to be achieved through the implementation procedures deployed.

The stated linguistic and educational goal of the bilingual education system in Latvia is to develop high levels of Latvian proficiency among non-Latvian speakers to give them comparable chances of scholastic success as Latvians-speakers in mainstream higher education, which is monolingual Latvian, while at the same time preserving the children's home language. The associated socio-cultural goal is the integration of ethnic minorities in mainstream Latvian society, which is envisaged as a "homogeneous society" (Ministry of Education and Science, 2001), and give them equal chances of participation in public life as ethnic Latvians, again while at the same time preserving the children's distinct ethno-cultural identity.

Thus, officially, bilingual education in Latvia aims at maintenance (of the L1 and associated ethnic identity) and enrichment (addition of a second language and fostering scholastic development). It also includes transitional features because another stated aim is to effect a transition from education in two languages to education in one language only, Latvian. Arguments about equality of opportunity and maximizing pupil performance are used to justify the transitional component: children need to function in the majority language in higher education and society and if competency in the majority language is not quickly and fully established, minority children may fall behind majority peers at school and be excluded from full participation in society. The extent to which such justifications are valid is considered later.

Official policy is vague up to what level the ethnic home language and identity are to be preserved, and whether outcome expectations involve either full and balanced or partial and imbalanced forms of bilingualism, biliteracy and biculturalism. Significant in this respect is that knowledge of the minority language and literature is not part of the state assessment procedure, whereas knowledge of the Latvian language and literature is (as is knowledge of the foreign language from the moment when it is taught). This suggests that proficiency and literacy in Latvian are the prime concern of the bilingual education policy but the promotion of high levels of L1 attainment are not. This impression is confirmed by a closer analysis of the structural components and implementation procedures of the bilingual education system conducted in the next section. This will reveal that the nature
of the transitional component in bilingual education in Latvia is such that it may well defeat the maintenance and enrichment objectives and lead to partial rather than full bilingualism, to assimilation rather than integration, and eventually to a potential language shift at the detriment of the ethnic minority languages.

4.3. Operational variables

A detailed analysis of the bilingual education system in Latvia will reveal how the stated maintenance, enrichment and transitional components operate and to what extent envisaged goals can be achieved. Emphasis will be on the role of languages in the bilingual curriculum and the language teaching strategies deployed.

4.3.1. Nature of the curriculum

4.3.1.1. Distribution of languages in the curriculum

Of primary concern for reflection is the time devoted to the L1 and L2 in the curriculum. If the desired outcome goal includes maintenance and enrichment, there should be as much curricular support for the L1 (through L1-subject and L1-content teaching) as is necessary to avoid L1 impairment and as much support for the L2 (and further languages) as is possible. Concretely this means that unless the L1 is dominant in the wider community, it is probably advisable to devote no more than 50% of the time-table to the L2 in the first five to eight years of schooling (Baker 1996, Skutnabb-Kangas 1995).

Latvian program models 1, 2, and 4\(^1\) emerge as examples of what Ramirez & Merino (1990) have called Late Exit Transitional Bilingual Educational programs. Such programs typically allow between 25-40% of classroom teaching in the L1 until the end of primary school. Program model 3, and particularly the LASOR model provide 50% or more of L1 teaching. This is a design feature of language maintenance programs as illustrated by the high proportion of L1 instruction in the European School program. This

\(^1\) See for a brief description of the models the introduction by Pieter Batelaan (ed)
is felt to be necessary for the many European School pupils who are in a minority situation (e.g. the Swedish, Greek, Danish, Portuguese, Finnish, Dutch) and who lack the rich linguistic out-of-school environment considered necessary for their normal L1 development. Also note that the inevitably smaller amount of time devoted to the L2 in the European Schools curriculum does not negatively affect L2 development, which is generally high and often even native-like by the end of secondary education.

Children in Latvian belonging to the smaller ethnic language groups (e.g. Polish, Yiddish, Estonians) are probably in a situation not unlike that of Danish, Greek, Finnish, or Portuguese pupils in the European Schools. Their L1 development, too, could be argued to benefit from intensive L1 instruction in primary school, probably more intensive than that provided by program models 1, 2 and 4. This would be particularly beneficial if the L1 is typologically unrelated to Latvian (like Estonian) and/or uses another spelling system (like Yiddish). The situation for Russian-speaking children is probably different. Many (though not necessarily all) of the Russian-speaking children live in a richer L1 environment, providing substantial extra-curricular exposure and attitudinal and motivational stimulus for L1 development. Their L1 development therefore, seems currently less at risk, even if the total amount of time in the curriculum devoted to Russian instruction were to fall below the 50% criterion mark of a maintenance program. Here it is the L2, Latvian, rather than the L1, that might benefit from additional curricular support, particularly in the light of the high levels of both oral proficiency and literacy in Latvian that are demanded from these children for academic success in monolingual Latvian secondary and higher education.

4.3.1.2. Extent of bilingual provision

If the desired outcome goals of a bilingual education policy include full bilingualism and particularly full biliteracy, then bilingual education should not only be allowed to start early (to take advantage of young learners’ natural language learning abilities) but also to span the entire education cycle, that is, primary and secondary education. This recommendation follows from what is known about the development of full proficiency and literacy in L1 and L2, which are complex, gradual and lengthy processes. Allowing bilingual education to extend into secondary schooling has the additional advantage of providing the element of continuity in the curriculum felt necessary for harmonious academic and socio-cultural development (Baker 1996).
Bilingual provision in Latvia is currently restricted to primary education only. There is no long-term continuity in the education system for minority children but an in-built switch from bilingual instruction to monolingual instruction in the L2. It may be queried whether this procedure is sensible if full and stable forms of bilingualism and biliteracy are indeed aimed for. Closer examination reveals that in many of the different program models this switch already occurs before the end of primary schooling. In program models 1 and 4 L1-medium instruction has virtually disappeared from the curriculum by grade 4. After that, the L1 is only offered as a subject, thus assuming a status in the curriculum similar to that of the foreign L3. Surprisingly, L1-medium content teaching is lacking altogether from program model 2 until the last three grades of primary school. The rationale for this is unclear. Only program model 3 and the LASOR model provide significant L1-medium instruction throughout the primary cycle and thus offer the best possible chances for L1 maintenance.

4.3.1.3. Progression of L1 and L2 teaching and choice of content-matter subjects

Bilingual education means that both languages have to be used as media of instruction at some stage of the child's education, but the progression of how much of each is used and for which type of content matter seems to vary for minority and majority children. The theoretical rationale for the relevant choices is provided by Cummins (1984) who has identified three principles that capture the relationships between progression of L1 and L2 teaching, choice of content-matter subjects and successful linguistic and scholastic development in bilingual education. According to the Threshold Hypothesis, normal intellectual and scholastic progress in school requires that pupils attain minimal threshold levels of proficiency in the language of classroom instruction in order to successfully process content matter. According to the Interdependence Hypothesis, language tasks differ in terms of the degree of cognitive processing required and the degree of contextualization involved. Processing academic content-matter in a classroom involves decontextualized and cognitively demanding language use, requiring what Cummins (1984) has coined CALP (cognitive-academic language proficiency). This contrasts with BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills), the type of language proficiency necessary for performing context-embedded and cognitively-undemanding language activities, such as carrying on a general conversation. BICS, which reflects a minimal threshold, is developmentally the most basic and provides the basis for the later development of CALP. Finally, the Common Underlying Proficiency Hypothesis assumes a common, language-independent basis for the development of decontextualized aspects of language proficiency, including literacy skills. Once firmly established in one language, such decontextualised language skills can easily be transferred to any other language being learned (provided there is sufficient contact with the target language and adequate motivation to learn it).

On the basis of these theoretical principles, several requirements can be proposed as necessary for bilingual curricula that aim at full bilingualism and biliteracy (Tucker 1998; Skutnabb-Kangas 1995; Krashen & Biber 1988). For minority children the most stringent requirement appears to be that "the mother tongue must function as the medium of education in all subjects initially. At least some subjects must be taught
through L1 all the way, up to grade 12, but the choice of subjects may vary” (Skutnabb-Kangas 1995:14; original emphasis).

The European Schools are often singled out as a program that is "close to ideal for minority children” in the way it has incorporated these requirements (Skutnabb-Kangas 1995:14). A comparison between the choices made in the bilingual programs in Latvia and those in the European School program may therefore provide an indication of the likelihood of success of the Latvian programs.

Progression and content-matter choices in relation to the minority L1 (i.e. the language least likely to develop to a high native speaker-like level) is as follows:

- In the European Schools all subjects are taught exclusively through the medium of the L1 during at least the first two years of schooling. The curriculum of the LASOR also follows this practice but the program models developed by the MoES do not (though, admittedly, the number of content-matter subject not exclusively taught through the L1 in the initial grades is small).
- In the European Schools, literacy is first developed in the L1. The situation in the Latvian programs is unclear. One would need to know more about what goes on in the “Latvian Language and Literature” courses in grades 1 and 2. It would seem, however, that development of literacy is started in the L1 and L2 simultaneously.
- In the European Schools all cognitively demanding decontextualised content courses (mathematics, social and natural sciences) are taught first through the L1, again for a period of at least 2 years. The LASOR program also offers nearly all academic content matter first through the L1. The program models of the MoES vary in the extent to which they approximate this practice, depending on the type of course content involved.
- In European Schools the L1 is taught as a subject throughout schooling, from grade 1-12. This principle is also observed in all the Latvian programs.

For the majority L2, the progression and subject choices are as follows:

- In European Schools the L2 is taught as a subject throughout schooling, from grade 1-12. The same practice is also found in all the Latvian programs.
- In the European Schools the L2 is first introduced as a subject and is taught as subject for at least three years before being used as a medium of instruction for non-language content. This principle is only strictly observed in MoES program model 4. In all other Latvian programs, the L2 is used as medium of instruction, whether solely or in combination with the L1, either from the start or within the first three years of primary school.
- In the European Schools the L2 is first used as a medium of education for cognitively less demanding, contextualized subjects (Physical Education, Plastic Arts, Projects and Activity classes). The Latvian programs also adhere to this principle, with the exception of program model 4 where the first use of the L2 as the exclusive medium of education involves cognitively demanding and decontextualized content
matter (viz. Mathematics). In the other programs, exclusive use of the L2 is first reserved for less academic subjects like Sports and Home Economics.

- In the European Schools use of the L2 as a medium for teaching cognitively demanding and decontextualized subjects is delayed until grade 8, when the pupils have been taught the L2 as a subject for seven years (grades 1-7) and when they have been taught through the medium of the L2 in less academic subjects for five years (grades 3-7). In the Latvian programs, exclusive use of the L2 as a medium of instruction (i.e. excluding its use in 'bilingual teaching') for academic subjects is usually also delayed but not always as long as in the European Schools. The earliest use of the L2 for academic content matter is attested in MoES program model 4, where the L2 is used as sole medium of instruction for Mathematics from grade 4 onwards.

- In the European Schools, development of literacy in the L2 and of other decontextualized aspects of L2 is delayed until grade 5. By that time pupils have not only acquired the necessary basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) in their L2 but also CALP-related skills have been established in the L1, allowing for transfer to the L2. As was said earlier, it is unclear whether literacy in the L2 is also delayed in the Latvian programs.

In sum, curriculum structure and content of the Latvian bilingual programs seem adequate for the outcome goals desired from the policy. MoES program model 3, from which the LASOR model and many of programs currently implemented in Latvia's bilingual schools are derived, provides the most adequate curricular conditions for minority L1 maintenance and therefore seems particularly appropriate for implementation in areas where sufficient extra-scholastic contact with the L1 and motivational conditions cannot be guaranteed. In situations where L1 development is less at risk but where contextual support for L2 development cannot be guaranteed, bilingual education might be more profitably modelled after program model 4.

Finally, it may be queried whether restricting bilingual provision to primary education only is judicious if the aim is indeed to push both oral and literacy skills in both languages to their maximum capacity so as to become complete vehicles for full usage in all aspects of professional, public and personal life.

### 4.3.2. Language strategies

To enhance language learning in bilingual education, there should be a clearly articulated plan for language development that is linked to academic development. Research on bilingual education in varied settings around the world and general research on second language acquisition show that language learning is more effective when it is integrated in meaningful and significant content matter instruction but there is also a clear role for the formal study of language.

Both types of instruction are provided in Latvia, which is the correct choice, given the desired outcome goals. Unfortunately, information on actual practice in language subject and language content teaching is
unavailable, which precludes a detailed appraisal of this aspect of bilingual education in Latvia. The following sections are therefore offered as personal reflections on general aspects of language teaching methods, strategies and practices that could potentially be applicable to the Latvian context.

### 4.3.2.1. Strategies for language content teaching

Content-matter instruction in both school languages is an essential component of bilingual education which enhances language learning in two ways. First, it renders the target language more pertinent to the pupils' immediate communicative and academic needs, thus creating a more favourable motivational disposition to learn it. Secondly, content matter instruction in the target language provides crucial input and output reinforcement for language acquisition processes. Second language acquisition research particularly emphasizes the importance of *comprehensible output* in this respect (Swain 1995). Comprehensive output refers to opportunities for pupils to produce their own meaningful, coherent and linguistically precise discourse in the target language. Such output is necessary for the development of high levels of productive oral and written proficiency in the target language as it moves the pupils from a purely semantic-pragmatic processing of the language to a structural analysis. Content matter classrooms must therefore ensure that they provide not only adequate *comprehensible input* but also opportunities for pupils to produce sufficient comprehensive output. Research on teaching practice in bilingual education shows clearly that traditional teacher-centred activities, which are inevitable at certain points of a lesson, when they become the dominant or exclusive mode, create insufficient opportunity for individual pupils to produce comprehensive output, hindering language development (Swain 1996). Such teacher-centred strategies are typically resorted to by teachers who, due to insufficient preparatory training, fail to understand the process of integrated content and language-learning syllabus in bilingual education (Baetens Beardsmore 1999). This situation leads to a pedagogic strategy which produces reactive rather than active language usage on part of the pupils, thereby defeating the major objective of a bilingual program using content-matter to reinforce the formal language learning process.

For this reason, the use of a language as a medium for teaching content matter needs to be complemented by creating communicative-rich contexts in the classroom that promote the production of spontaneous continuous output to enable the development of productive language proficiency. Such contexts can be created through, for instance, interactive teaching and the extensive use of monitored group- or pair-work rather than individual work. The European Schools experience in L2 teaching show that this practice is greatly facilitated if the pupil population is linguistically heterogeneous, because this creates a natural context for the necessary use of a common L2. Such natural occasions for informal social interaction in the L2 rarely emerge in homogenous immersion classrooms, where there is little reason for pupils to use the L2 amongst themselves as they typically share a common L1. This is one of the reasons for the lower than expected levels of productive proficiency attained in immersion education (Swain 1995). One way, therefore, in which bilingual education in Latvia could offer more interactional input and output in the L2 is
by creating ethno-linguistically mixed classrooms and promote the L2 as the common lingua franca. Obviously, this option will be available in some but not all areas of the country.

4.3.2.2. Strategies for language subject teaching

Research on L2 achievement in immersion contexts and the European Schools suggests that there is a clear need in bilingual education for 'structured exposure' to the L1 and L2 in the form of language-subject teaching to supplement the 'language in use' component of language-medium content instruction (Ellis 1990, Harley 1993, Housen 2002a,b). In minority language contexts, it may even be expedient to delay L2-medium content instruction and first provide L2-subject teaching to help pupils get started in learning the language. This is the practice in the European Schools and in program model 4 in Latvia.

Methods and approaches to L2-subject teaching vary widely (see Stern 1992 for an overview) and there is no conclusive research showing the superiority of one over the other. The methodology currently being developed in Latvia for the teaching of LAT2 appears to favour an experiential approach, emphasizing the development of communicative skills rather than formal knowledge about the language. This is probably a sound option, given the wide range of functions of the L2 in education and the wider society. However, there is increasing research evidence that L2-subject teaching (and, indeed, L1-subject teaching) also needs to be analytic and focus on linguistic form at some stage of schooling to help pupils acquire the less accessible aspects of the target language and to promote their metalinguistic awareness, linguistic accuracy, precision and appropriateness (Hammerly 1991). Lack of form-focused L2 teaching can engender premature fossilisation, particularly in situations where critical levels of L2 exposure and motivation cannot be guaranteed, which might be the case in bilingual schools catering for Russian-speakers in Latvia.

'Focus on form' in language teaching need not necessarily be explicit, or the sole responsibility of the L1/L2 subject teacher. In the European Schools, all teachers in both L2 and L1 classes, whatever their nature, tend to include linguistic features in their teaching, paying particular attention to lexical precision and grammatical accuracy (esp. in written production) and spontaneously correcting minor errors by repeating the correct form before moving on. It is this general but often implicit concern with linguistic accuracy, precision and appropriateness that pervades all lessons in the European School which helps to account for the high levels of productive oral and written proficiency in both the L1 and the L2 in this program (Baetens Beardsmore 1995).

4.3.2.3. Bilingual teaching strategies

A striking feature of bilingual education in Latvia is the prominent role in many of the programs and program models accorded to 'bilingual teaching'. As was stated earlier, it is not clear exactly what this means in terms of actual teaching and classroom practice. The
term 'bilingual teaching' can refer to a wide variety of pedagogical practices. It can refer to *strong* forms of bilingual instruction, such as the concurrent use of two languages in the same classroom ('translanguaging'), either by the same teacher or by team teachers, or the alternate use of the L1 and L2 in consecutive lessons or days ('Alternate Day Bilingual Teaching). *Weak* forms of bilingual teaching are typically characterized by the occasional and limited use of one language (usually the L1) during a designated 'other language' lesson. Weak forms of bilingual teaching may also include the use of bilingual glossaries of specific subject-matter terminology to ensure that the pupil has the requisite vocabulary in both the L1 and the L2, or the occasional and *ad hoc* use of code-switching and translation to clarify issues and solve communication problems. Such (weak) bilingual teaching strategies are common practice in many bilingual education programs, including the European School and Luxembourg programs.

The literature is not precise on how any of these different bilingual teaching strategies works in detail, nor what their outcomes are in terms of language and educational achievement. It is therefore not possible to make valid statements about this aspect of bilingual education in Latvia. However, on the basis of our research in L2 teaching in the European Schools (Housen 2002b), we would advise against the regular mixing of languages for teaching purposes in general and particularly against the frequent use of the 'dominant' language during lessons designated to the 'weaker' language. (In Latvia, the dominant language will normally be Latvian though in some schools it may be the ethnic minority language, in case Russian). Regular use of the dominant language in 'weak language'-medium classrooms not only deprives pupils of vital input for language learning but it may also lead them to 'switch off’ whenever the weaker language is used, making that language less pertinent to their immediate communicative needs and thus diminish their motivation to learn it.

5. Concluding remarks

The type of bilingual education currently proposed and implemented in Latvia represents a "weak form of education for bilingualism" (Baker 1996:153) because the prime longterm goals and likely outcomes of the bilingual education policy appear to be the promotion of and ultimate transition to Latvian rather than balanced, full bilingualism and biliteracy, official statements about maintenance of the minority L1 and identity notwithstanding. This conclusion is based not so much on the structure and content of the educational programs developed and the pedagogical choices made, which seem consistent with the desired outcome goals, nor on the resources available for implementation, which may (temporarily) prove inadequate, but rather on the limited and unequal distribution of bilingual provision in the Latvian education system as a whole.
This is essentially a political decision and illustrates that bilingual education in Latvia, as everywhere, derives its raison d’être not only from a concern with the linguistic and educational needs of a particular group in society, but also from political and ideological reasons. As pointed out by Baetens Beardsmore (1992), nations that operate on a monolithic ideology are often particularly reluctant with regard to bilingual education, and when provided there is often a powerful hidden agenda. The USA and former Soviet Union are two examples in case. The USA parsimoniously provides bilingual education for its mainly Hispanic minority population under the guise of equality of educational opportunity but does not hide the ultimate goal of rapid elimination of the need for bilingualism, which negatively affects the outcome of what sparse provision there is. Similarly, the former Soviet Union had widespread bilingual provision for its ethnically mixed republics but it consistently encouraged the promotion of Russian, so that Russian speakers were far less likely to opt for bilingual education while speakers of other languages were covertly encouraged to follow bilingual education in the process of Russification (Lewis 1981, MacLaughlin 1986). A very similar scenario seems to unfold itself at the moment in the Republic of Latvia. Latvia, like many other Eastern European countries, largely adheres to the modernist model of the state, heavily influenced by ethnic nationalism and ideals of homogeneity and unitary identities. This is in contrast to Western Europe, which, in the wider context of the European Union, has experienced a shift from the modernist ideology of uniformism and assimilation to an increasingly post-modern focus on diversity, heterogeneity, pluralism and hybrid identities (O'Reilly 2001). It is this ideology that underlies Western European models of multilingual and multicultural education such as that of the European Schools. This is also the ideological perspective from which the system of bilingual education in Latvia has been analysed in this paper. This perspective is characterised by several ideals, namely, that multilingualism is both a desirable and viable educational goal for everyone in society and, therefore, that the entire population be put under the same constraints with respect to language learning and academic development, and that attempts be made to respect language and culture of origin while also forging a new, non-ethnocentric identity.

These ideals find empirical support in the success of the European Schools system and the experiences of small nations such as Luxembourg, which stand as compelling reminders that bilingual education, when carefully planned and provided to the whole population, can help foster a country’s economic vitality, reduce the dividing influences of nationalism and ethnicity in society and give the country a distinctive national identity. Whether these Western European experiences have some relevance for the Latvian context depends primarily on policy objectives, tempered by perceptions of public expectations with regard to assimilation, integration, language maintenance, language shift and the need for high levels of bi- and multilingual proficiency.

References


Figure 2. Language distribution in Model 1
Figure 3. Language distribution in Model 2

Grade level

L3-subject
Bilingual (L1+L2)
Latvian-medium
Latvian-subject
L1-medium
L1-subject
Figure 4. Language distribution in Model 3
Figure 5. Language distribution in Model 4
Figure 6. Language distribution in the LASOR Model
Figure 7. Language distribution in the Gymnasium 'Maksima' program
BILINGUAL EDUCATION MODELS IN LATVIA: A VIEW FROM BELARUS

L.N.Choumak (Belarus)

DEMOCRATIC BUILDING OF MULTIETHNIC STATES.

The issue of language and society can become hotly contested during periods of rapid social change, and this holds especially true for Latvia. At the present juncture in Latvia’s history, a great deal of discussion has been taken place regarding the transition from Russian to Latvian as the official language of the country.

Modern-day Latvia, as a society, is oriented towards democracy, a market economy, an open society and integration into the European Community. Since independence there has been a major change in values and this has had consequences for the language orientation of various linguistic communities, their mother tongue and linguistic competence. The transition from Russian to Latvian as the common official language can be historically justified (see Blinkena, 1996; Druviete, 2001). However, such changes are not always automatic and permanent. For example, Belarus experienced a return to Russian as the official language in 1995, giving it the same status as Belarussian (see later in this paper). This has led to a growing amount of dissatisfaction among the Belarus population.

To ensure that the status of a (new) official language is elevated to the fullest extent possible, it is necessary to boost its legislative and social status in the domains of science, business, mass media, culture and especially in education. The introduction of a state test in Latvian (the Law “On Education”, section 9) can facilitate this process. I would agree with the document The Integration of Society in Latvia. A Framework Document. Chapter Three. Education, Language and Culture. (pp.3-4), that it is critical to promote national values, patriotism, confidence, and solidarity, as well as ethnic, linguistic and religious tolerance if we are to arrive at harmonious relations between the various groups in society.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION: THE CASE OF BELARUS

Before turning to the situation in Latvia, let me focus on my own nation of Belarus. This can be instructive for comparison purposes. The situation regarding bilingual education in Belarus is quite ‘fuzzy’ and inconsistent (Mechkovskaya, 1994; Syametska, 1998; Lukashanets, 2000; Tipologiya, 1999). Belarussian and Russian have traded places several times as the country’s main language. Many in the country now speak ‘trasyanka’, a Russian ethnic dialect. Belarussian, as a language, has in the meantime become a minority language. The fuzziness in the language corresponds with an unclear ethnic identity.

Until 1990, in the Soviet education system, Russian was to be learned as a second native language. Consequently, the number of Belarussian-speaking schools declined drastically (Belarussian and Belarussian Literature were mostly taught as subjects, but were not the language of instruction). During the period 1991–1993, after the Law “On Languages” was passed, secondary schools underwent a process of ‘Belarusization’. Textbooks in the Belarussian language were published and classroom language became Belorussian. This reality changed after a referendum on language took place in 1995. The referendum led to Russian becoming the official language again. The status of the Belarussian language and the essence of Belarussian (ethnic) identity have become problematic, as was the case before independence. A redrafted version of Belarusian education law entitled: Education in the Republic of Belarus (Draft, 2001.) emphasizes the ethnocultural basis of
education, as one of the main principles of national educational policy. According to this document, both Belarussian and Russian are the main teaching and socialization languages in the nation’s schools. All pupils in state secondary schools must now learn Belarussian, Russian and one other foreign language (with a few exceptions). Citizens have the right to choose the language of instruction within the options provided by the educational institutions.

Local authorities can give permission (after approval by the Ministry of Education) in certain instances to language communities to organize their own schooling in the mother tongue. This is possible at both the primary and secondary school level. The main approach to bilingual education in Belarus has been developed by the linguist Souproun (Souproun, 1987). According to this approach, the material studied in the native language is slightly more advanced than the material studies in the second language material (p.77).

One model applies for both schools with Russian and Belarussian as the primary language of instruction. From the first grade (second year of school - there is also a preparatory year) onwards, Belarussian/Russian is taught twice a week. One of these lessons is devoted to language study and the other is devoted to developing second language communication skills. There is also a basic course in Belarussian/Russian Literature and History that takes place in the second language. In an attempt to restore ethnic self-consciousness and a sense of Belarussian culture among pupils in Russian-language schools, subjects such as Music, Painting, Technology and Vocational Studies are now taught in Belarussian. As a consequence of recent laws in the field of education, a total of 6 subjects in Russian-speaking secondary schools are taught in Belarussian. To my knowledge, however, there are no schools in Belarus that make use of two teachers in a single classroom (speaking different languages).

LATVIA’S PRESENT LINGUISTIC SITUATION

The linguistic situation in Latvia is different that what we find in Belarus, though like in Belarus some of the main problems in contemporary Latvian society relate to issues of language and education. Finding a solution to these problems in both countries is vitally important for the further development of society in terms of interethnic relations, integration, assimilation, dialogue, confrontation, consolidation, etc.

Conflict can be expected when a government imposes laws that effect the status of certain languages being used in society. This is also what is happening in Latvia today. Both representatives of the Russian minority in Latvia and several sociologists (mainly from Russia) have criticized developments in the Baltic States as ‘an intention to exorcise the Russian spirit from the culture of these states’, and to “discriminate against Russian culture and Russian language”. Various authors have observed that in the Baltic States many people, against the wishes of the State, continue to use Russian in all spheres of life. (see e.g. Belousov, 2001; Chelyshev, 1998; Isayev, 1996). It has also been argued by such authors that promoting a language inevitably leads to imposition of its culture, mentality, and ideology on all the residents of the State. This necessarily results in the decline of the other languages. In this process, native speakers of minority languages are destined to lose their national consciousness and national culture.

In my opinion, we can observe the realization of a holistic, appropriate, and gradual process of language building in Latvia today. This process takes present reality into consideration and is also in tune with developments around the world. Some of the main aspects associated with these developments include:

- During a period of ten years following the passage of the law On Language (in 1998), representatives of ethnic minorities have the right to receive secondary education in their native language.
- A system of bilingual education, based on the democratic principles of free choice, will operate from 1999 to 2004. Parents can choose from a variety of learning models that take social and cultural factors into account. Such an approach presents the most effective dialogue between
different ethnic communities. The European Community has set a positive example in the past by giving linguistic communities a good deal of power in making such decisions.

- From 2004 onwards, Latvian will be the dominant language in Latvian education. It will also be the only language of instruction in secondary school (10th–12th grades). In Estonia this transition will take place in 2007.

The processes described above all support the gradual integration of minorities into Latvian society. Article 13 of the European Council’s Defending Ethnic Minorities Framework Convention (February 1, 1995) states that governments are not required to financially support education in ethnic minority languages (also see the document adopted by Latvian Sejm entitled The Strategy of Integration into the European Council, dated February 9, 2000). However, if one of the aims is to improve interethnic communication, then sensitivity to foreign languages that are accepted, widespread and well-established in a certain region becomes a factor. The Russian language fits this description in Latvia.

The status of Latvian and Russian in Latvia has changed in recent years. Russian remains a prestigious and international language, with a long literary, scientific, communicative, etc. tradition. Yet it has now sacrificed its dominance in Latvia to a language with less international status. This is an important part of the overall equation. Throughout the world, languages spoken by minority communities are often related to world languages, such as English, French, and Spanish. In Latvia, approximately 30% speak Russian, the dominant language in the region, as its first language. For purposes of consolidation, Latvia is attempting to solve its language problems within the framework of current legislation. Certain compromises might be necessary in the future. It is important that Latvian culture and society remain open systems. The promotion of interethnic understanding and the rejection of stereotypical thinking will help to alleviate some of the social and psycholinguistic discomfort experienced by linguistic minority communities (Sorokin, 1994; Akimova, 2001).

It is quite obvious that each nation must develop its own unique language policy, based on that nation’s distinct situation, ethnic composition, culture and history. Cultural concerns have a great impact in my opinion. Cultural and language diversity represents an extraordinary resource for Europe’s future, and Latvia should play an important role in this future.

**PRESERVING MINORITY LANGUAGES AND CULTURE IN LATVIA**

To avoid interethnic conflict and to promote the full participation of linguistic and cultural minorities in Latvia society, it is necessary to promote universal values, such as human rights, which includes cultural and linguistic rights. Language is one of the main cultural indicators of ethnicity, and it has a powerful consolidating influence on ethnic communities. Language issues have also motivated communities to put forward a range of social and political demands, and given rise to various social movements. According to Nelde (2001): “The values and intentions of various language groups are so different and multifaceted that it is impossible to implement a uniform language policy that meets the ambitions of all language communities ”(Nelde, 2001, p.20).

The main components of language policies aimed at the preservation of minority communities’ language and culture are as follows:

1. Ensuring that the language in question is used optimally in various realms (education, mass media, theatres, etc.);
2. Ensuring that language transmission from generation to generation takes place;
3. Encouraging writing in the minority language (publication of novels, textbooks and scientific manuscripts);
4. Promoting bilingualism/multilingualism (also to resolve) ethnic language conflicts;
5. Creating opportunities for interaction and communication (e.g., internet if face-to-face communication is not possible).
CHARACTERIZING BILINGUALISM IN LATVIA

Bilingualism is the ability that allows people to use with proficiency two different languages in oral or written form. The languages can be used alternately, and switching takes place depending on the situation. What types of bilingualism do we find in Latvia today? We can describe them as follows:

1. Contact bilingualism: Situations where significant religious, social and economic interaction takes place (e.g. between Russian–Latvian, and/or Polish–Latvian, individuals);
2. Non-familial bilingualism: Latvian, Russian, Polish, etc. belong to different language families;
3. Subordinate bilingualism: one of the languages is the prime language, the other has less status;
4. Passive bilingualism: implies general reading and listening skill development in a second language;
5. Professional bilingualism: teachers of Latvian, mass media employees, etc.
6. Mixed bicultural bilingualism: understanding both the native and Latvian culture.

If we look at the kind of bilingual competence envisaged by Latvian authorities in the 21st century, we can identify the following:

1. Functional bilingualism: this implies a type of purposeful bilingualism that does not interfere with one’s command of the second language. It helps individuals to feel psychologically comfortable in situations that demand frequent switching from one language to another.
2. Professional bilingualism: this is aimed at: a) receiving specialized secondary education or higher education in Latvian and/or b) being able to communicate professionally.
3. Active bilingualism: this implies not only being able to read and listen in a second language, but also being able to speak and write with proficiency.
4. Intercultural bilingualism: the aim here is to develop cultural pluralism.

In Latvia, some kind of bilingualism will be officially supported in secondary education through 2004. After this date, bilingualism will no longer be supported officially. The reason for this is that the objective of secondary education is not the development of full bilingualism. The objective of education is integration into Latvian society, with the Latvian language fulfilling a dominant role.

LINGUA-DIDACTIC PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES WITH BILINGUALISM

The last few decades have seen increased globalization and cultural pluralism around the globe. These developments have also challenged the educational systems of many countries, and multicultural and intercultural education principles have become more commonplace as response to such trends. The issue of language is closely connected to these principles.

Language should be seen as both an activity (L.V. Tsherba) and a cognitive entity. Mental operations such as analysis, synthesis, generalization, abstraction, and comparison are processes that characterize all linguistic thinking. For bilinguals these operations are more complex. When a person starts to study a second language he/she first acquires those aspects of the language that are accessible, universal, and logical. It is more difficult to understand emotional and expressive aspects of the language that are connected to ethno-cultural idiosyncrasies (Karazhyev, 1990). Therefore, a bilingual person’s speech production in a second language tends to be poor and stylistically neutral. There is also interference between the two languages (Poznyakova, 1996).

Bilingual individuals differ from others with respect to the way they view the world and their attitudes. It is clear that being bilingual, like any other phenomenon, has its advantages and
disadvantages. On the one hand, being proficient in two (or more) languages has positive consequences for one’s intellectual development. Such individuals tend to be more socially adaptable (under certain circumstances), can make more rapid professional and material progress, and have easier access to other cultures. On the other hand, various problems associated with bilingualism have been identified. Psycholinguist Ovsyaniko-Kulikovsky (1992) claims that “children have no ethno-psychological features before acquiring language. They are ‘international’. Step by step they learn their native language, together with the ethnic features of their environment… the specific aspects of their ethno-psychological type begin to appear in their mentality” (p. 173). This author continues: “being able to fluently speak one’s ethnic (“first”, “native”) language and develop one’s ethnic mentality are of primary importance…” (p. 187). Viewed in these terms, we can say that language and ethnicity function automatically, and that the development of one’s ethnicity is largely an unconscious process. Acquiring a second language will take place through one’s native language, and this process will be mediated by one’s ethnic language system. The development of bilingualism will be conditioned by the dominant mode of thinking associated with one’s native language.

There are some persistent problems associated with bilingualism. Simultaneous bilingualism (both languages learned at exactly the same time) can result in the unconscious production of the kind of mixed speech that is characteristic of many bilingual speakers (creolization), thereby creating a kind of pseudo-ethnic self-consciousness. Previous sociolinguistic studies of bilingual children have shown that such children lagged behind monolingual children in a variety of domains. Various 20th century American research projects showed this, for instance (see also N.T.Darsey, G.T.Altus, G.B.Johnson, S.Arsenyan, L.M.Korovkin). What these studies demonstrated was that the early development of bilingualism can lead to a “dual personality”, psychological conflicts, a lack of balance, and a marginal status. Bilingualism among young children does not take away the problem of self-identification, but postpones this problem.

We can expect a more positive prognosis, however, if society and (secondary) education emphasize the intercultural/multicultural character of communication and encourage the formation of an open personality, in which one’s ethnic identity is retained and viewed in a positive way. Studying the relationship between bilingualism and how children develop knowledge, some scholars have concluded that gradual bilingualism is the most effective strategy (Shakhnaroich, 1996; Vygotsky, 1983; Donaldson, 1985). Learning one’s native language and a second language should happen simultaneously. One’s native language provides the foundations upon which bilingualism can be constructed.

Given that one’s native language is an important tool in developing second language skills, we can ask how the native language is best used. Kostomarov and Mitrofanova (1988) have criticised the practice of constant translation. Constant comparison between native and second languages prevents the creation of automatic speech habits, according to these authors, though Maslo (2001) argues the opposite. Modern methods of language learning focus less on the acquisition of words, word combinations and sentences (and their native language equivalents), and more on typical linguistic contexts and current usage of the language. Understanding the ‘cultural aspect’ in second language learning is vitally important.

In sum, we might say that the main problems associated with bilingual education are:
1) children's age when learning a new language;
2) the role that the native language plays in the education system;
3) teaching methods;
4) culturally sensitive textbooks; and
5) linguistic environment in the school.

EVALUATING THE VARIOUS MODELS
I have used the following criteria to evaluate the 5 Latvian models, developed by the Latvian government and LAŠOR, and outlined by Pieter Batelaan in his editorial contribution to this special issue:

- Extent to which the Latvian laws regarding education can support the model’s implementation
- Extent to which each model encourages integration into Latvian society
- Extent to which the learners’ native culture is preserved
- Extent to which the program is intercultural
- Teaching methodology
- Implementation mechanisms
- Financial constraints and advantages
- Possible limitations
- Opportunities for parent participation

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE MODELS

The main objective of educational and language policies in Latvia, as presented in the National Standards of Compulsory Education, Education Law, Model programs for primary education of ethnic minorities is to help members of linguistic minorities become proficient in Latvian. In the future, the mother tongue of these minorities will be relegated to the private domain.

With respect to the various models (there are four in total), I consider model 4 (see editorial for a description) to be the most appropriate when taking the above-listed criteria into account. The degree of immersion increases as a step-by step process in this model. Mastery of the second language (Latvian) is based on native language skills and this is crucial, as I pointed out earlier. By the 10th grade, learners are ready to complete their secondary education with Latvian as the sole language of instruction (10th–12th grades).

Native language learning plays an important role in both the emergence of a multiethnic society (regional, ethnic and cultural traditions also need to be considered), and an individual’s intellectual, creative and emotional development. These are the main reasons that the LAŠOR model emphasizes the learners’ native language as the main instrument needed to “preserve and develop one’s native language and culture” (sections 1.3 and 5.18). In this model, individuals are encouraged to maintain their ethnic identity and accept other cultural values through gradual immersion into Latvian language and culture (e.g. 13 subjects are taught either in Latvian or bilingually in the 9th grade). In my opinion, the LAŠOR model could be a very effective model, which could operate alongside the four models proposed by the government.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS (GIVEN THE LATVIAN CONTEXT).

Based on the previous discussion, I would like to make the following recommendations:

1. There should be a gradual transformation to a common model of bilingual education (model 4 is preferable) for ethnic minorities. This presents the most equitable and financially feasible mechanism for language policy realization.

2. Teaching bilingualism through continual translation is not very effective. This method places high demands on the education system if an assistant interpreter is needed.

3. In today’s multicultural world, intercultural education is becoming more critical as a tool that can be used to meet the various needs of students from different backgrounds. Subjects like ‘Language and Culture’, ‘Social Studies’, ‘Arts’, ‘Anthropological Studies’, ‘Second languages’ lend themselves well to such an educational approach. The primary aim of such interdisciplinary subjects is not to expand knowledge (though always an aim), but to cultivate certain qualities that
characterize a multicultural individual. Outside the common curriculum this can also be promoted through school clubs and organizations, well-stocked libraries with books in the native languages of the pupils, and access to the internet and multicultural summer recreation camps.

4. It is necessary to develop new textbooks that are more sensitive to the ethnic backgrounds and mother tongues of the pupils. As much as possible, such textbooks should take the unique features of each language community into account. Their cultures and history are important contexts in education. However, these native languages are best addressed indirectly. Direct translations are not useful. These criteria follow the approach embraced in the educational materials entitled *Simply in Russian* (Arkhangelskaya & Gushchina, 2001), intended for teaching Russian as a second language in Latvia. These materials are designed to promote intercultural communication through a focus on Russian cultural values within a larger cultural context.

5. Latvian textbooks should include appendices that contain the main terms and concepts used in the book in the learners’ native languages (and additionally in English). The Department of Applied Linguistics at Belarussian State University uses this method when teaching foreign students.

6. The idea of mixed language education is also worth mentioning. In such a scheme, the Arts are taught in the native language, for instance, while science is taught in an international language (English or Russian). This helps learners to continue working in their native language and culture, while, at the same time, it helps them become competitive in the labor market (Solntsev & Mikhlanenko, 1996).

7. Teachers who have a good command of both languages need to be stimulated financially. This is better than hiring language assistants to support teachers who have insufficient language skills.

**POSSIBILITIES FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN LATVIAN-SPEAKING SCHOOLS**

Since the 1980s, multilingual education has become a much more common educational tool throughout the world (Nelde, 2001). Multilingual education in schools helps to promote more harmonious intercultural relations, and combats monolingual ethnocentrism. Multilingual education is especially effective where language conflicts occur. In the case of Latvia, given its specific history and social context, it would be advisable to introduce Russian (a major international language that is widely used in the country) both as a specific subject and as a second language (voluntarily).

The Russian Federation a rich experience in solving language conflicts that have arisen due to ethnicity, economics, politics, language and educational ideology. The official language is used to provide educational and cultural unity in a multiethnic and multilingual state. Use of the official language is also related to the constitutional guarantee to receive education. Though the principle of multilingualism is widely applied in secondary education, each Federation Republic has developed its own system of teaching languages. For example, according to the basic curriculum of ethnic schools in the Russian Federation, the native language is taught 3 hours per week, and the second language (Russian) is taught 2 hours per week. This takes place from 1st through 12th grade, i.e. native and second languages are on an almost equal footing. We see slightly different approaches elsewhere in the region. In the Ukraine, a foreign language is taught from the 1st grade onwards, while Russian is taught from the 5th grade onwards.

**TEACHER TRAINING AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Due to recent developments in Europe and elsewhere, there is no longer just a need for teachers, interpreters and translators. There is a new demand for specialists in international and
intercultural communication. In 1996, the Russian Ministry of Education, for instance, substituted the phrase “foreign languages” with “linguistics and intercultural communication”. The teacher’s task is no longer limited to teaching the standard fare. It is becoming important for them to also cultivate the understanding of other cultures, as well as appropriate intercultural behaviors and communication in multicultural society. This type of teaching can lead to increased “sociocultural competence” during second language learning. One important way forward could be the establishment of teacher training based on comparative pedagogy. (see also Andreyeu, 2000, pp.36–41). This is relevant for the contexts of Belarus and Latvia, but also for all countries interested in creating harmonious multicultural societies.

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Bilingual Education Theater: 
Behind the Scenes of Latvian Minority Education Reform

Iveta Silova

Focusing on the political nature of education policy-making in the post-Soviet context, this article questions whether, how, and to what extent the bilingual education reform underway in Latvia contributes to social integration among different ethnolinguistic groups. The article begins by tracing the emergence and institutionalization of bilingual education reform in light of long-term education development trends prevalent during the 1990s. Based on press analysis, document review, and in-depth interviews with major education stakeholders in Latvia, it reveals that there exists a growing disjunction between "policy-talk," "policy action," and "policy implementation," resulting in legitimization of education spaces that once were and continue to be functional, hierarchical, and divisive.

During the periods of rapid political, economic, and social change, education reform is intertwined with political decision-making. The distinction between policy and politics often becomes blurred and sometimes completely disappears. Contest over policy is used to "build constituencies, to break up old alliances and forge new ones, and to galvanize people into action, or alternatively, to maintain old power structures and lull people into complacency. It seeks to evoke values and emotions by presenting something as good or evil, innocent or guilty, responsible or not, possible or impossible, strong or weak, right or wrong" (Stone, 1997, p. 379). In this context, it is important to recognize that analytical concepts, problem statements, and policy instruments do not necessarily represent "universal truths," but may in fact be "political claims" themselves (Stone, 1997, p. xi). The politics of policymaking becomes particularly apparent in the post-Soviet context, where "old" institutional legacies continue to have a great impact on "new" reforms. However noble these "new" reforms may be in their intentions, they are often driven by politicians and their political agendas, rather than based on participatory, informed decision-making processes. One of the main obstacles for effective education change in the former Soviet Union has been the inherited centralized, top-down approach to education planning and development, resulting in exclusion of major stakeholders from participation in education policy deliberation.

Given its political nature, it is not surprising that policymaking is often described as a "messy" affair that sometimes gets out of order, and frequently deviates from expected outcomes. Policymakers may blame educators for "coopting the reforms, distorting them, or turning them to their own benefit," while education practitioners may argue that "elite policymakers rarely know what schools really need and propose reforms that could never work" in practice (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 60-61). Challenging the assumption that policy is a "sphere of rational analysis, objectivity, allegiance to truth, and pursuit of the well-being of society as a whole" (Stone, 1997, p. 373), this article focuses on the politics of policymaking and emphasizes the resilience of schools as institutions. As Tyack and Cuban (1995) argue, "the institutional structure probably has more influence on the implementation of policy than policy has on institutional practice" (p. 134). Similarly, Darling-Hammond (1997) emphasizes that actual school and classroom practice "is less related to the intentions of policymakers than it is to the knowledge, beliefs, resources, leadership, and motivations that operate in local context"
Richard Elmore (quoted in darling-Hammond, 1997) has rightly called this phenomenon "the power of the bottom over the top" (p. 214).

It is within this context that Latvian bilingual education reform efforts will be discussed. Instead of analyzing the proposed policy solutions to the "integration problem" and comparing it to different international models, this article will focus on the process of policymaking in the post-Soviet context and discuss its consequent effects on policy quality and implementation. Emphasizing the distinction between "policy talk," "policy action," and "policy implementation," this article will trace how the concept of "integration" was modified as it moved through different stages of policymaking. First, it identifies which aspects of the integration concept were institutionalized in Latvian education legislation. Second, it examines what happened to the newly institutionalized "policy talk" when it ultimately reached the school. Finally, the article concludes with the examination of how legislative and practical implementation of the new policy concept interacted with the constraints imposed by Soviet legacies, including the “old” Soviet education structures as well as cultural and psychological behaviors.

From Policy Talk to Policy Action:
Latvian in Content, Multicultural in Form

It is important to examine the emergence of the integration concept in Latvian public discourse and its institutionalization in education legislation in the context of long-term education reform trends. As Tyack and Cuban (1995) explain, “long-term trends follow their own different timetables, which do not necessarily correspond with what people are talking about” (p. 47). In other words, previous education reform efforts may have a delayed impact on current education change, thus shifting education goals expressed in policy talk and affecting projected outcomes of policy action.

From the beginning of the 1990s, one of the main goals of state education reform was to restore the status of the Latvian language in state educational institutions. In the context of the new education reform, the Latvian language was presented as the main mechanism that would ensure the effective integration of Russian and other minority students into Latvian society. To achieve this goal, Latvian education policy throughout the 1990s was aimed at a gradual Latvianization of the education system, including introducing common education standards for all schools, regulating the use of textbooks and teaching materials, and increasing Latvian language instruction in minority schools. Importantly, political elites have never seriously challenged the necessity of keeping a “multicultural” form of the education system, which was inherited from the Soviet Union and was reflected in separate schooling structures for Latvian and Russian speaking students. Although some right-wing, nationalist parties advocated eliminating Russian language schools as such, their efforts never reached the level of education legislation. In other words, Latvian long-term education policy throughout the 1990s had simultaneously emphasized two trends – a gradual Latvianization of the education system in its “content,” and a preservation of its linguistically separate, also referred to as multicultural, “form.”

While ensuring the right to education in minority languages, the 1991 Education Law required the mastery of the Latvian language in all education institutions regardless of the instructional language or school administration. One of the main education tasks became a gradual Latvianization of education institutions. In the 1990s, reform
initiatives included introducing Latvian as the only language of instruction in state-financed higher education institutions (Language Law, 1992), increasing the number of Latvian language classes in non-Latvian schools (MOES regulation #1-14-2, 1995), requiring all teachers to pass the highest level of the state language test (MoES regulation # 175, 1996), as well as prohibiting the use of textbooks published outside of Latvia (MOES regulation # 1-14.2, 1996; MOES regulation # 501, 1997).

At the end of the 1998, the Latvianization trend became more apparent as the new Education Law of 1998 stated that “at state and municipal education institutions instruction shall be in the state language.” At the same time, the Law stated “instruction may be provided in other languages” at (1) private education institutions, (2) state or municipal education institutions which implement minority education programs, and (3) other education institutions as prescribed by other laws. Moreover, the new Education Law announced that state financed secondary education would only be available in the Latvian language starting from 2004, while primary education would be reformed through the introduction of transitional bilingual education programs in the state and minority languages. Meanwhile, several political party programs continued to promote the further increase of Latvian language teaching in minority schools, with some parties (e.g., People's Party) advocating a complete transition to Latvian language instruction at all levels of education.

Importantly, Latvianization of the education system did not involve elimination of minority schools. Instead, separation of education along linguistic lines was often used by Latvian politicians as an illustration of the multicultural nature of Latvian society in an attempt to refute discrimination claims advanced by some Russian speaking groups. For example, while claiming that separate schools were an illustration of the multicultural character of a Latvian society, the Ministry of Education made an attempt to clarify internally that "multicultural" schools meant "separate," not necessarily ethnolinguistically "mixed" schools. As some Russian parents began to send their children to Latvian schools, it was officially stated that the creation of ethnically and linguistically "mixed" schools and classes was “not recommended” as it could "negative effects" on Latvian-speaking students (MOES regulation # 4-37, 1995). For example, the MOES recommended that Latvian kindergartens should accept non-Latvian children only if “a child understands conversational Latvian language.” In general education, the MOES advised that Latvian language schools should accept only those Russian-speaking children who “speak fluent Latvian.”

To summarize, an overview of policy developments in the 1990s suggests that the long-term education policy trends throughout the 1990s were geared towards Latvianizing education system through regulating the amount of Latvian language teaching, the level of Latvian language skills by minority school teachers, and the use of Latvian-published textbooks in schools. In fact, all of the state regulations dealt with Latvian language issues and none of them addressed other minority school concerns such as teacher in-service and pre-service education for minority schools, or the development of teaching materials in minority languages. At the same time, education policy makers assumed that "integration" could be achieved through Latvianizing minority schools and without involving Latvian language schools.
From Policy Talk to Policy Action: Legitimizing Long-Term Policy Trends

The emergence of discourse on ethnic integration in the end of the 1990s triggered changes in Latvian education policy talk, particularly regarding minority education reform. Previously dominant discussions of Latvianizing the education system—either through strengthening Latvian as a second language of instruction in Russian language schools, or increasing the number of subjects taught in Latvian in minority schools, or even turning minority schools into Latvian language schools—was replaced by the idea of bilingual education. While confirming the continuing existence of separate schooling structures for different ethnolinguistic groups, the new reform initiative was based on the assumption that minority schools needed to be reformed by introducing transitional bilingual education programs. In contrast to previous education policies, which were directly aimed at Latvianizing minority education, the national program Integration of Society in Latvia (1999) described bilingual education as a “step towards integration” given that it would provide “the opportunity for non-Latvians to study Latvian language and culture without losing awareness of their ethnic origin.”

Although bilingual education reform was introduced in the context of promoting the idea of ethnic integration, it strongly emphasized the need for increased Latvian language instruction in primary minority schools and a gradual transition to Latvian language instruction in secondary schools. In fact, the national framework program Integration of Society in Latvia (1999) stated that the first goal of the education reform was “to ensure that the Latvian language is learned sufficiently by all residents of Latvia, but especially so that the younger generation is able to use it freely as a means of communication.” Interestingly, Baiba Petersone, a government official who served as the head of the Strategic Department in the MOES and initiated bilingual education reform, openly admitted that the idea of bilingual education was, in fact, born as a continuation of previous Latvianization policy trends:

We had to think strategically what could be sold at the time politically. The requirement for education in the state language remained and you could not tell TB/LNNK\textsuperscript{2} otherwise. Nobody would accept it. Nothing would be passed in Saeima. Then, we began the development [of the draft Education Law]. At this point, the minority education program idea was born, not because it was necessary to ensure that minorities had the right to education in their native language, as it was always so eloquently presented to [Max van der] Stoel.\textsuperscript{3} Still at this point, this idea was born because it was necessary to ensure that all Latvian residents [potential citizens] know the state language. (personal communication, May 11, 2001)

While the national program mentioned the importance of other integration components such as “the values of tolerance and civic society,” “the political culture of the younger generation,” and “preservation of identity among minorities,” none of these components had been institutionalized in education legislation. Furthermore, some
integration concept components, particularly “the right of non-Latvians to preserve their native language and culture,” had been undermined in the process of Latvianizing higher education institutions, resulting in very limited possibilities to become educated as a minority school teacher in state pre-service and in-service teacher education institutions.4 Finally, bilingual education was introduced as a reform specifically developed for minority schools, thus contradicting one of the most important principles of the “official” meaning of integration, which describes it as “two-way process.” As a result of institutionalizing only one component of the integration concept and completely dropping other constituent parts, its “official” meaning was strongly modified, leading some Russian speaking minorities to believe that bilingual education reform presented a "threat of assimilation" (see Declaration of Public Organizations, 1999; Arshavskaya, Gushin, Pimenov, 2000).

To summarize, bilingual education reform introduced in the context of integration underscored two important issues, which were not clearly expressed before. First, it confirmed that separate education structures would remain intact, thus using the “old” institutional legacies to signal the culturally and linguistically diverse nature of Latvia’s education system. Second, it re-formulated the essence of minority education reform in the context of ethnic integration by replacing the rhetoric of Latvianization with that of bilingual education. As the analysis of education legislation illustrated, however, bilingual education reform continued the previously formulated long-term policy of Latvianization, thus building on one component of the integration concept only – the Latvian language.

From Policy Action to Policy Implementation

Having illustrated how the “official” meaning of the integration concept changed as the idea moved from policy talk to policy action, it is important to examine what happened as the discourse on ethnic integration and multiculturalism reached the school. Based on in-depth interviews with school directors, teachers, and representatives of education NGOs, this article reveals that the institutionalization of bilingual education reform in education legislation did not necessarily ensure its successful implementation in practice. Without the necessary financing, implementation mechanisms, support structures, and the motivation and active involvement of educators, a seemingly progressive education reform may remain a symbolic construct, existing on paper but not in practice.

Implementing Integration

Overall, data gained from Latvian and Russian language press analysis, expert interviews, and policy documents suggest that there was a lack of governmental support and political commitment for implementing bilingual education reform in schools. In particular, there was a lack of financial resources and support mechanisms necessary for ensuring that reform reaches the school. In addition, schools often received fragmented information or contradictory messages about the goals of reform and their roles in implementing bilingual education in schools. More importantly, there was a lack of motivation among teachers in minority schools to fully embrace the new reform.
Financial constraints. Conceived in the context of ethnic integration, bilingual education reform was introduced without any secured governmental funding in its first years of implementation and has become heavily dependent on international financial support. In the end of 1998, Baiba Kintslera and Baiba Petersone, two representatives of the MOES (interviewed by Nagle, 1998, October 31) explained that “minority teachers have enough possibilities to learn the state language” and that “schools will be provided with the necessary teaching materials” (p. 1). In 1999, the MOES allocated LVL 75,000 (approximately USD 125,000) for purchasing textbooks for minority schools, which amounted to approximately LVL 0.42 (approximately USD 0.7) per minority student. In addition to the fact that there were no textbooks specifically developed for bilingual education at that time, the amount of money allocated per student was not enough for purchasing even a single book. After a wave of panic and criticism from minority school teachers in 1999, the MOES made an allocation of LVL 600,000 (USD 1,000,000) towards salary increases for teachers of Latvian language and other subjects taught in the Latvian language or bilingually in minority schools. Amounting to a monthly increase of about LVL 1 (approximately USD 1.3) per teacher, this allocation was a nice symbolic gesture, but it did not improve the working conditions of teachers.

In other words, the MOES began the implementation of bilingual education reform based on the assumption that additional financial resources would not be necessary for reform implementation. The only finances allocated for these purposes in the first three years of reform came from international sources through the National Program for Latvian Language Training (NPLLTT) and the Soros Foundation-Latvia (SFL). First, the NPLLTT, which was initially developed as a program advancing the teaching of Latvian as a second language (LAT2), had to re-orient itself in 1999 to address the goals of bilingual education, including preparing bilingual education teacher trainers and developing teaching materials. Second, the SFL began a new project in 1999 aimed at providing practical support in the form of training, materials, and consultations to teachers involved in implementing bilingual education. It was only in 2001 that the Latvian government contributed USD 690,000 to support the work of the NPLLTT, which remained more heavily funded by international donors from the EU, UN, Britain, Canada, Sweden, and the United States.

Lack of implementation mechanisms. In addition to a lack of financial resources, bilingual education reform was passed without assessing the reality of school life and developing any implementation mechanisms. First, many teachers who were supposed to begin teaching bilingually did not know the Latvian language well enough. According to the MOES estimates announced in October of 1998, there were 677 teachers who did not know the state language at the highest level (Nagle, October 31, 1998, p. 1). Although the majority of them received the necessary language certificate by the end the year, many teachers admitted that their language skills were not good enough to actually teach their subject matter bilingually (Silova & Catlaks, 2001).

Second, school representatives pointed out that they received either no or insufficient methodological training for teaching their subjects bilingually. Since there was no in-service training organized locally, some internationally funded organizations took on the task of providing teacher training in bilingual education methodology. In 1999, the only possibility to receive on-going support in the process of implementing bilingual education models and multicultural education was provided by the “Open
School” project of the SFL. This project, however, was limited in scope and was able to provide support to 16 schools in 1999, and 36 schools in 2000. After re-orienting itself from preparing LAT2 teachers to bilingual education teachers, the NPLLTT trained 40 bilingual education teacher trainers in 2000, planning for these trainers to engage in training other teachers in the following years. In 2000, some bilingual education courses began to be offered through in-service training centers, regional and city school boards, education NGOs, and teacher associations. Although there was a gradual increase in professional development opportunities for teachers, there was not a coordinated effort on the state level to organize systematic in-service teacher training for the implementation of bilingual education reform.

Lack of information. Importantly, schools lacked information about the essence of bilingual education to ensure its implementation in schools. According to the results of the evaluation of the implementation of bilingual education models (Odina, Belousa, Nadirova, Stallman, 2000), 41% of the evaluation participants stated that they did not have enough information to make an informed decision regarding which bilingual education model to choose for their school. Similarly, 42.2% of the respondents disagreed, strongly disagreed, or were not sure that they knew the strengths and weaknesses of a selected model. In other words, not only were schools not methodologically and professionally prepared for implementing bilingual education in schools, but they did not have enough information about the goals of the reforms and their role in their implementation.

Limited participation of minority schools. Finally, development of bilingual education reform was largely monopolized by government officials, which resulted in leaving the majority of minority school representatives out of a policy dialogue. Commenting on the possibility to get involved in the process of formulating bilingual education reform, Igor Pimenov (personal communication, May 5, 2001), a Russian-speaking representative of the NGO Latvian Association for the Support of Schools with Russian Language Instruction (LASSRLI) commented that “everything was already decided” by the time when he first heard about the reform. Furthermore, schools found out about the new reform last, having "no chance to protest or to suggest an alternative" (Russian language school director, personal communication, May 22, 2001).

Although ethnic minorities had some opportunities to comment on the bilingual education reform during public discussions, which were organized in the context of debating the state integration program draft in the spring of 1999, their suggestions were minimally taken into consideration and did not change the overall tone of the reform. Furthermore, these public discussions took place at a time when the idea of bilingual education as a transition mechanism to Latvian language instruction in secondary schools was already institutionalized in the Education Law (Ministry of Education, 1998). Given limited opportunities for minority school teacher to get involvement in bilingual education reform process, it is not surprising that many educators did not readily embrace the new reform. Questioning the democratic nature of the process, Abrams Kleckins compared the formulation of minority education reform in Latvia to Soviet practices:

Democracy begins with a very simple mechanism – no decisions are made without participation of those to whom these decisions apply. When I participate in decision-making, it becomes my
decision. But, if something is forced on me, then it is not in any way different from Soviet power. Just as people did not feel that they could influence something during the Soviet times, the same is relevant today. (personal communication, June 8, 2001)

To summarize, there were major constraints in implementing bilingual education in schools, resulting in a disjunction between policy action and policy implementation. Particularly, there were no financial resources planned for reform implementation, there were no systemic implementation mechanisms and support structures, and there was not sufficient information about the reform goals and processes on the school level. More importantly, minority teachers were largely left out from the process of policy formulation, which resulted in their alienation from reform.

Enforcing Integration

Given the unfunded mandate of implementing bilingual education and a lack of support from schools, the MOES and other governmental agencies attempted to enforce ethnic integration though numerous orders, regulations, and control measures for schools. After the restoration of Latvian independence, education laws and regulations became an inseparable part of education reform, often being the only indicators of change in the education system. Commenting on the Latvian education reform progress in the 1990s, OECD (2001) experts noted “a near obsession with formulating laws and regulations” (p. 56). Although a growing wave of new laws and regulations may have had some noble intentions, many educators began to perceive it as a negative phenomenon, which limited the creativity of teachers in schools. Comparing current education reform process to that of the Soviet period, one Russian school director noted that “today, there are more inspectors and bureaucrats than during Soviet times...” (personal communication, May 15, 2001).

Interestingly, one government official explained that a strong emphasis on laws and regulations was purposefully used by the MOES officials to exploit professional weaknesses of school administrators inherited from the Soviet times, thus ensuring the obedient implementation of some reform projects that could have been otherwise contested by minority school representatives:

We need to take into consideration that the system was characterized by its inertia, and the inherited Soviet mentality of following instructions, for example, implementing all administrative decisions, which was positive in this case. No matter what the Russian newspapers write about, the schools implement what the MOES says, even if the Ministry did not have the right to issue some kind of requirement... (Baiba Petersone, personal communication, May 11, 2001)

In addition to a strong emphasis on enforcing numerous laws and regulations, the Latvian government organized a comprehensive system for controlling schools in the realm of language and education policy implementation. This system was most effectively realized through two state institutions, including the State Education Inspection and the State Language Inspection Board. Created in the beginning of the
1990s, these two government agencies began their “inspection crusades” in schools by counting how many teachers knew the Latvian language, how well they knew the Latvian language, how many subjects were taught in the Latvian language or bilingually, what percentage of time was devoted to Latvian and minority languages during the lesson, and what kind of textbooks were used in schools. Primary based on a coercive approach, these “inspection crusades” were used by government officials as a “wake-up call” to Russian-speakers, sending a “a very strong signal to people that the rules of the game had changed…” (Nils Muiznieks, personal communication, May 14, 2001).

**Staging Integration**

Implemented through laws and regulations, enforced through control and inspection mechanisms, and unaccompanied by support structures, minority education reform brought a lot of ambiguity, fear, and anxiety to Russian language and minority schools. This apprehensive atmosphere was present throughout the 1990s, intensifying by the end of the decade. As Tatjana Liguta, a Russian-speaking representative of an NGO, explained, “if earlier we were concerned about the future of some individual Russian schools, we are now concerned about the fate of the Russian school as such” (personal communication, May 11, 2001). In addition to a feeling of anxiety about the future, many school principals and teachers had not yet freed themselves from the legacies of the Soviet past, including their dutiful obedience to authorities and tacit consent to implementing all orders and requirements. Fearful of losing their jobs, some school principals and teachers began to use previously well-learned techniques to save their schools from any potential trouble. These survival techniques included silent obedience, careful manipulation of the “official” reform content through its interpretation, and hidden resistance in the form of direct deceit of education authorities.

**Silenced fear and anxiety.** The themes of fear and anxiety emerged in all interviews with Russian and minority schools principals and teachers as well as in interviews with NGOs closely working with schools. As one former Russian language school teacher (personal communication, May 16, 2001) described the situation, “teachers are afraid of everyone… they are afraid of language inspectors, Ministry officials, district school board, city school board, even their own school principal.” Fearing the attraction of additional attention to their schools, the majority of principals and teachers kept quiet about their concerns. According to one Russian language school director (personal communication, June 7, 2001), “everybody was silent… Russians were silent, because they were scared. School principals were silent, because they did not know the language… teachers were silent, because language inspection could come and they could lose their jobs.” Furthermore, a minority school director (personal communication, May 15, 2001) explained that their silence meant that there was simply “no opportunity to say ‘no.’” In other words, all of the concern, anxiety, and fear, which prevailed within the school, was carefully masked by a cover of silence on the surface.

**Obeying authorities.** Reflecting on their teaching experience before and after independence, several interviewees suggested that the current atmosphere of fear and anxiety in schools forced teachers to employ the “old” mechanisms of survival, ranging from obedient implementation of all orders, to cunning manipulation of information, to hidden resistance of the new reform. Commenting on “the inherited ‘respect’ of higher authorities,” Jakov Pliner explained that “many directors implemented everything that
was demanded by the communist party [during the Soviet times]... If the Party says ‘necessary,’ the Komsomol says ‘ready’ [to implement it]... And, today we do the same” (personal communication, May 15, 2001). Similarly, Gusev (1998) described the continuing reliance on the “syndrome of obedience” in schools:

Many Russian schools are running ahead, trying to outstrip one or the other newly emerging innovation, which has not yet become “a regulation for immediate implementation.” It is enough for some gentlemen from “above” only to mention that “it would be nice if...”, when the next thing you see is that it has already been implemented. Without waiting for “special regulations,” teachers began to write in Latvian in their journals and students’ mark books, as well as keep school documentation. Wallpapers, posters, stands and other “visuals” have been transformed into the state language under the vigilance of the school administration. They would do anything to protect the school... there began an understandable and already familiar process, probably irrevocable... Eternal fear of a dutiful person – what if the authorities will show up, inspect, and ... whip...

In many cases, however, these obedient efforts to implement reform did not result in any positive outcomes. Data gained from expert interviews, for example, highlighted that many teachers did not really know what bilingual education was, some teachers had insufficient Latvian language skills, and there were no textbooks available to be able to successfully implement reform. Commenting on a lack of in-service teacher training and teaching materials, a Russian language school teacher (interviewed by Borisoglebskaya, 1999) explained that teachers implement bilingual education with “a heavy heart... they understand that it is necessary to do, but they are unable to do it professionally and efficiently in the current circumstances” (p. 6). As one interviewee stated, reform implementation void of support structures for schools in many cases resulted in a “parody of bilingual education” (personal communication, June 7, 2001).

**Manipulating the system.** While some schools made an attempt to implement everything coming from ‘above,’ other schools attempted to manipulate the system through finding their own meanings and interpretations of the new reform. As Tyack and Cuban (1995) observed, when “the aims of reform seem vague, contradictory, or unattainable, educators often respond by turning reforms into something they have already learned how to do” (p. 64). In Latvia, the majority of Russian language and minority school teachers admitted that they interpreted bilingual education in ways that seemed more convenient to them at a particular time, which resulted in a wide range of practices. The strongest and most resourceful schools were able to turn into the nationally recognized “centers of educational excellence,” while the majority of schools struggled to survive by implementing reform that was only remotely resembling bilingual education. For example, a Russian school teacher (interviewed by Borisoglebskaya, 1999) described the implementation of bilingual education as “self-deception,” because “everybody understood the word ‘bilingual education’ as they wanted” (p. 6).
Deceiving the system. Whereas some schools attempted to survive the reform through careful modification of its meaning, other schools engaged in a more direct deceit of authorities, whereby they began to report one thing to the education authorities and implement the opposite in school. As in-depth interviews with Russian language and minority schools principals and teachers indicated, the skills of duplicity, which were well learned during the Soviet period, became particularly useful after Latvia’s independence. As one Russian language school teacher put it, “the same Soviet methods are used now… the orders and regulations come from above and we are preparing shining, positive reports” (personal communication, May 25, 2001).

Interviews with Russian and minority school directors and teachers revealed that schools used different ways to manipulate the system. For example, when the MOES prohibited the use of textbooks published outside Latvia in minority schools (MOES regulation #501), some schools principals obtained two types of textbooks – “one on the desk to be used regularly in class [usually a textbook published in Russia] and the other under the desk to be used when the inspection comes to school [usually a textbook published in Latvia]” (Russian language school teacher, personal communication, May 21, 2001). Furthermore, some schools developed a double curriculum – “one for regular use in school and one for inspection” (Russian language school director, May 22, 2001). In addition, some schools began to replace teachers speaking poor Latvian with teachers speaking fluent Latvian on a day when education or language inspection was expected to come. As one interviewee explained, “teachers speaking poor Latvian would always get sick when education inspection was expected” (personal communication, May 16, 2001). Finally, several school representatives referred to bilingual education reform as “bilingual education theater,” explaining that they had to “stage classroom performances” in order to impress education and language inspection, hoping that they would be able to work undisturbed afterwards. As one Russian language school director summarized, "School is a special place, where something can always be hidden, not shown..." (personal communication, May 22, 2001).

Emerging Disjunctions: Policy Talk, Policy Action, and Policy Implementation

Based an analysis of the process of bilingual education reform, this article reveals that there exists a growing disjunction between rhetorical and practical developments in Latvian minority education. This disjunction emerges on two levels of education reform – the legislation/government level and the implementation/school level. On the level of education legislation, the disjunction is reflected in adopting laws and regulations primarily based on one component of the integration concept, which emphasizes the importance of the Latvian language. As a result, the meaning of integration becomes modified as a one-way process involving minority schools only, where non-Latvians integrate into Latvian society through learning the state language, history, culture, and traditions. While emphasizing the Latvian language as the main means of ethnic integration, bilingual education reform disregarded other constituent parts of the concept, thus modifying the “official” meaning of integration and, in some extreme cases, equating it with assimilation.
Furthermore, this article suggests that minority education reform has been primarily used as a “declarative” or symbolic construct to signal internationally that “the ethnic integration problem” is finally being addressed. In practice, however, neither the necessary financial resources nor arranged systemic support structures have been secured for successful reform implementation. Although internationally funded institutions provide some support for implementing bilingual education in schools, their assistance is usually fragmented and limited in scope. As the OECD (2001) experts note, “reform cannot come from projects or educational innovations alone. Unless it is rooted in the realities of life in Latvia now, and reaches toward a shared vision for Latvia’s future, reform will remain at best a legal abstraction, and at worst an unwanted irritation to schools struggling to survive” (p. 56).

Indeed, the institutionalization of bilingual education reform in legislation did not necessarily ensure its implementation in schools. Lacking systematic implementation mechanisms and support structures, the success of reform has been primarily measured by the number of regulations passed, the number of teachers certified, and the amount of fines collected. As this article illustrated, minority school representatives used different techniques to survive "the unwanted" reform. Fearing to lose their jobs and fighting to preserve the continuity of their school culture in a rapidly changing environment, some schools began to use “old,” well learned techniques of saving their schools from any potential trouble. These survival techniques included silent obedience, careful manipulation of the “official” reform content through its interpretation, hidden resistance, and silent rebellion.

Given the emerging disjunctions between "policy talk," "policy action," and "policy implementation” in Latvian bilingual education reform, this article confirmed once again that "policy is not so much implemented as it is reinvented at each level of the system" (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 214). As Tyack & Cuban (1997) underscore, "as street-level bureaucrats, teachers typically have sufficient discretion, once the classroom doors close, to make decisions about pupils that add up over time to de facto policies about instruction, whatever the official regulations” (p. 135). No matter what kinds of bilingual education models may exist on paper, schools decide what actually would occur in practice. Therefore, it is important that school representatives are not left out of the policy loop in designing and adopting new reforms as happened in the case of bilingual education in Latvia. Instead, it is important to ensure a common space for policy deliberation, as well asample opportunities for schools to participate in learning, experimenting, and adapting new ideas to their local contexts. After all, can Latvia afford the "bilingual education theater"?

1 In Tinkering Towards Utopia, Tyack & Cuban (1995) explain that “policy talk” refers to the current rhetoric in media, “policy action” means that programs and innovations are adopted in legislation, and “policy implementation” relates to what actually happens in the classroom. Often, new innovations may be approved through education legislation, but these policies may not be necessarily implemented due to resilience in schools.

2 For Fatherland and Freedom/ Latvian National Independence Movement – a right wing, nationalist political party, which won 17 seats in Saeima in the 1998 election.

3 Max van der Stoel served as the OSCE High Commissioner on national minorities until June 2000.
Since the adoption of the Language Law (1992), all higher education institutions switched to Latvian language instruction. Although it is still possible to receive education as a Russian language and literature teacher in the University of Latvia, minority teachers of other subjects are no longer being prepared in state higher education institutions. Although this legislation has not yet negatively influenced Russian language schools, which continue to draw from the pool of teachers prepared during the Soviet times, some small minority schools have already faced difficulties. Unable to find teachers locally, they are forced to employ teachers from their “ethnic homelands” as in the case of Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews. This, however, creates further obstacles - first, these teachers usually cost more; and, second, these teachers usually do not possess the necessary Latvian language proficiency to be able to teach in a state Latvian school (for example, the state requires all teachers to have the highest level of Latvian language skills).

There are several Russian language schools which are well known for their excellence in implementing bilingual education. These schools, however, are very few in number. First, these schools are usually located in the capital city of Riga, where in-service training possibilities are widely accessible. Second, they are usually run by young, energetic principals of the post-Soviet generation, who have strong international connections and are able to secure outside funding for their schools in order to secure teaching materials and organize in-service training for teachers.
BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND LINGUISTIC GOVERNANCE: THE SWISS EXPERIENCE

FRANÇOIS GRIN AND IRENE SCHWOB

In the course of just a few pages, it is not possible to offer more than a succinct overview of the Swiss context and the experience of Switzerland with bilingual education. Consequently, this text emphasises those features of the Swiss experience that are determining in assessing the extent and limitations of its relevance to the selection and design of language education policies in other contexts—in particular the context of modern Latvia.

This chapter is organised as follows: in Section 1, we briefly characterise the issue at a general level, providing some definitions necessary for the ensuing discussion. In Section 2, we review the main features of “linguistic governance” in Switzerland, with reference to its demolinguistic, geolinguistic and historical context. Section 3 presents the main traits of language education in Switzerland, while Section 4 is devoted to a descriptive overview of the (very few) cases of bilingual education in this country; in Section 5, we attempt to assess these experiments. In a concluding Section 6, we discuss the parallels and differences between the respective language education challenges of Switzerland and Latvia.

1. Language policy, language education policy, and integration

As a starting point, it is important to note that several terms take on a completely different meaning depending on historical, social, political and cultural context. In this paper, language policy is defined as:

a systematic, rational, theory-based effort at the societal level to modify the linguistic environment with a view to increasing aggregate welfare. It is typically conducted by official bodies or their surrogates and aimed at part or all of the population living under their jurisdiction (Grin, 1999a: 18).

In the expression “linguistic governance” also used in this paper, “governance” means “the methods of coordinating action within a given society” (Cardinal & Hudon, 2001: 7). Governance therefore implies the involvement of many different stakeholders. Nonetheless, language policy remains the core of linguistic governance. In general, language education policy is located at the intersection of language policy and education policy; as such, it may be considered part of either—or both. Language education policy, as part of language policy, is concerned with (1) what languages are taught to whom, (2) under what conditions, (3) with what resources, (4) aiming at what goals, and (5) using what methods. Independently of the way in which these five questions are answered, language education policy must be understood as a form of public policy. The function of the latter, as in the case of language policy defined above, is to steer society’s linguistic environment towards a more desirable state (Grin 2002a, 2002b). This policy goal can be characterised, depending on the

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situation, in many different ways. For some countries, this may mean ensuring that a large proportion of the school-going public acquires an adequate command of one (or perhaps more than one) foreign language; this is a priority in countries like Sweden, Germany or France. In other countries, targets in terms of residents’ language proficiency may be particularly demanding; this is certainly the case for Andorra (whose education system encourages the acquisition of fluent Spanish and French, in addition to the locally dominant Catalan) or for Luxembourg (for French, German, and Lëtzebuergesch). In other countries still (such as Ireland), one chief goal of language education policy is to ensure the survival of a threatened minority language (e.g., Irish Gaelic). For some countries like Germany, one issue with particular importance is the acquisition by migrant workers and their descendants of the country’s main language (German)\(^2\). In most cases, the term integration refers to incorporation, into autochthonous majority society, of relatively recent immigrants; it is also the sense in which it will be used in this paper, it being understood that such “incorporation” may take very different forms. We shall define multilingualism as the presence, in a given polity, of “many” languages; plurilingualism further implies that the languages in question are specifically identified. Bilingualism is therefore a special case of plurilingualism, where the number of languages concerned is two. A classical distinction (Appel & Muysken, 1987) must be made between societal bilingualism, which means that two languages are used in society (but not necessarily by each or even any member of society), and individual bilingualism, which refers to competence in two languages by one given individual\(^3\). A person’s first language (usually, though not systematically, his or her mother tongue) will be denoted by IL1 (for “individual first language”), as distinct from LL1 (for “local first language”), which will denote the locally (or regionally) dominant language—that is, the language declared as IL1 by a majority of persons residing in the area considered). The same convention applies to IL2, IL3, LL2 and LL3.

Let us briefly return to the notion of integration. The above makes it clear that “incorporation” in one form or another is a possible goal of language education policy. Integration itself may imply different objectives. Consider the case where members of an immigrant community speak language B and most of them do define B as their IL1. Let A stand for the local, regional or national LL1. According to a typology proposed by Grin and Vaillancourt (2001), an assimilationist approach to integration means that immigrants are encouraged to drop B from their repertoire and adopt A as their IL1 (this characterises, by and large, the American [US] and French approach). A multiculturalist approach to integration means that immigrants are encouraged to maintain B as IL1, without any major insistence on them learning language A (let alone making A their IL1). Finally, an integrationist approach would encourage bilingualism among immigrants, where either A or B would be defined as IL1, but where the other language would be known with a comparable degree of fluency.

\(^2\) Out of a total resident population of more than 82m in 1999, Germany counted 7.3m foreigners, including a little over 2m Turks. The adoption of a new immigration legislation by the Bundestag on 21 March 2002 bears witness to the importance of the issue of integration.

\(^3\) We shall, however, eschew the question of the level of proficiency required for a person to qualify as a bilingual.
2. The historical roots of Swiss plurilingualism and territoriality

Switzerland is a plurilingual federal state whose Constitution (Art. 4) recognises four national languages: German, French, Italian, and Romansch. Art. 70 of the Constitution declares the first three as official languages of the Confederation, while the fourth is official in a more restricted way—that is, its official character is restricted to contact between the federal authorities and residents whose IL1 is Romansch.

Through officially “quadrilingual”, Switzerland is actually “multilingual”, owing to the presence of a large proportion of foreigners (20% of the resident population). Some of these foreigners come from neighbouring countries, and are liable to have one of Switzerland’s LL1s as their IL1 (e.g., if their country of origin is Germany, Austria or Liechtenstein, their IL1 is likely to be German; if their country of origin is France, their IL1 is likely to be French; if their country of origin is Italy, their IL1 is likely to be Italian). Yet half of the total foreign population residing in Switzerland claims another IL1. Table 1 provides an overview, using 1990 Census figures (2000 Census figures, at the time of writing, have not been published yet).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German a,b</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French a</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian a</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages of former Yugoslavia c</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romansch a</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a: national language  
b: German and Alemannic dialects  
c: Not including speakers of Albanian from Kosovo

In 1990, almost 9% of the population claims a non-national language as an IL1 (this percentage had risen to 9.6% in the 2000 census).

The possibly defining feature of Swiss linguistic governance is the application of the territoriality principle, which means that in each part of the country, only one language is official. Roughly speaking, the west of the country is French-speaking, the centre, north and east is German-speaking, and the south is Italian-speaking. The language regions are therefore separated by fairly clear-cut “language borders” that

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4 There are plentiful accounts of the various aspects of Swiss plurilingualism and linguistic governance. For an overview, see e.g. Grin, 2000, in which a number of more specific references are quoted.

5 Different spellings are used for “Romansch”—even in English—reflecting the fact that this language, spoken as an IL1 by some 40,000 people, has five different written standards corresponding to local varieties, in addition to one unified standard developed in the 1980s. “Romansch” is one of the two spellings used by the Collins Dictionary of the English Language. The situation of Romansch as a particularly threatened language has been analysed by several authors, e.g. Furrer (1994).
have remained essentially stable for approximately 600 to 700 years. A few scattered valleys in the east are Romansch-speaking. This means that the core linguistic environment of each language region is unilingual; in terms of the definitions above, each region has only one “local language”, implying that the concept of “LL1” is clear, but that there is no such thing as an “LL2” or an “LL3”. Even if the linguistic repertoires of a high proportion of individuals are varied (and often plurilingual) throughout the country, there is no local official bilingualism anywhere in Switzerland, with the exception of a limited number of municipalities or groups of municipalities (“districts”) designated as bilingual. They are all located along the French-German language border, mostly in the canton of Fribourg/Freiburg.

Another crucially important feature of linguistic governance in Switzerland is the fact that it is a federal country made of 26 states, called “cantons”—or in six cases, “half-cantons”. These cantons are, constitutionally, the locus of sovereignty, and cantons delegate some areas of competence to the federal state (in a sense, this arrangement can be seen as the reverse of “devolution”). Cantons retain their competencies for matters of language and education, and the federal government only has limited competencies in these areas. This implies, at a general level, that language policy, education policy, and hence language education policy are primarily a responsibility of cantons (see following section).

Of the 26 cantons or half-cantons, three are bilingual and include French- and German-speaking areas: Valais/Wallis; Fribourg/Freiburg; and Bern/Berne. In each of these cantons, both French and German are official, but the language border runs right through the cantons concerned, and local administration functions either in French or in German. Official bilingualism exists only in the central offices of the cantonal administration (with French having a dominant position in Valais and Fribourg, and German having a dominant position in Berne). In addition, as mentioned above, a limited number of municipalities along the language border are bilingual (e.g. the city of Biel/Bienne, located in the canton of Berne). The canton of Grisons is trilingual (German-Romansch-Italian) 6. In this case, the responsibility for setting the language border between the language areas has been devolved by the cantonal government to the municipal authorities. In practice, this means that small municipalities, in this mountainous canton, decide themselves which is their official language for all the official business under their jurisdiction.

The Swiss approach to linguistic governance is undoubtedly quite unique, and apparent parallels with Belgium or Canada should not be overestimated. The uniqueness of the Swiss model is rooted in a long history that reaches back to the 13th century, whereby Switzerland emerged through progressive aggregation, as small cantons joined the Confederation—largely as a way to ward off the imperialism of Austrian emperors and French kings. Even though this progressive accretion process has not been as harmonious and consensual as the Swiss “national myth” would have it, the Swiss largely adhere to the notion that Switzerland is a Willensnation (a nation which exists as the result of the free will of its citizens) 7. Most importantly, if there is such a thing as a “Swiss nation”, it is not associated with a specific, single

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6 Hence, the official names of this Canton are respectively Graubünden, Grischun, and Grigioni.
7 From the abundant literature on Swiss nation-building, see e.g. Raffestin (1990), Altermatt (1996), Büchi (2000), etc.
language. Rather, the Swiss nation is perceived as stemming from its very diversity. According to the Swiss self-representation, or “national myth”, which took root more particularly during the 19th century, national identity is therefore defined as existing not despite, but because of its linguistic diversity.

Of course, some specific features have been particularly helpful in bringing about this outcome. One such feature is the fact that, contrary to what is often assumed in Eastern and Central Europe, there is no automatic correspondence between “nation” and “people” and between “people” and “language”—at least not in Switzerland. As noted above, the vision of a Swiss nation has emerged as one based precisely on its plurilingualism. It follows that the language groups that make up Switzerland are emphatically not “nations”, and do not perceive themselves as such (Stojanović, 2000; Grin, 2002c).

Swiss language regions, in contrast to what can be observed in Belgium, have no institutional or legal existence as such, and the linguistic borders do not coincide with the political boundaries between cantons. Moreover, there is no correspondence between a language region’s LL1 and that region’s historically dominant religion. More specifically, both the French- and the German-speaking regions include cantons that are, historically, mainly protestant, or mainly roman catholic. The same is true of the small Romansch-speaking regions. Only in the case of the Italian-speaking regions is there some degree of coincidence between the LL1 and roman catholicism—but even there, this is not an absolute rule.

This situation of cross-cutting cleavages, along with the historical irrelevance, in Switzerland, of language-based nationalism, has undoubtedly helped to prevent the creation of homogeneous and possibly antagonistic language-defined blocs. The extreme decentralisation of the country (reflected, in particular, in the fact that many key competencies remain vested with the Cantons and have never left them), probably goes a long way towards accounting for the relative success and stability of the Swiss model of linguistic governance.

3. Language education policy in Switzerland

In line with the features described in the preceding section, it should come as no surprise that in Switzerland, language policy, education policy and, therefore, language education policy remain a cantonal, not a federal area of competence. Hence, there are 26 education ministries, and the role of the Confederation is restricted to some supporting measures, particularly for financing university-level research.

As a result of the principle of territoriality, the basic rule is that there is one and only one language of instruction in each school, according to the LL1 of the canton (or, in the case of bi- or trilingual cantons, of the municipality). Therefore, children are schooled in French in French-speaking Switzerland, and their curriculum include “foreign languages” as subjects—in principle, German and English. More or less symmetrically, children in the German-speaking part of the country are schooled in German, and have French and English as subjects. The range of L2 teaching is generally broader in Italian- and Romansch-speaking areas. Hence, for a large majority of children (except, of course, children of recent immigrants from non-neighbouring countries), IL1 and LL1 coincide.
At the time of writing, the longstanding tradition, in all language regions, of prioritising a national language as the “first foreign language” taught as a subject is eroding. The current popularity of English means that this language is receiving a increasing share of student’s weekly schedules—and correspondingly rising budget allocations. However, there is still official consensus to the effect that pupils with a given national language as an IL1 must acquire some competence in at least one other national language8.

The logic underpinning the teaching of national languages is one of national cohesion. Some degree of familiarity with at least one other national language is considered a relevant factor of national unity and understanding between language groups. However, this rationale operates within the framework of the principle of territoriality. For example, French-speaking parents moving to the German-speaking canton of Zürich do not have a right to send their children to a French-medium school. The canton may grant them this right, but is free to restrict it, 

even if a child is to be sent to a private school at his or her parents’ expense. Reciprocally, German-speaking parents moving to the French-speaking canton of Geneva do not have a right to German-medium education for their children. The Geneva authorities being relatively relaxed on these matters, schooling in the private “German school” of Geneva would, in practice, be allowed for parents who wish to enrol their children there. However, the general pattern is for such parents to send their children to normal public establishments (which, in Geneva, function in French).

In addition to national cohesion, another goal pursued by the teaching of national languages (and, of course, English) is that of human capital investment. Switzerland is one of the few European countries for which representative survey data have made it possible to estimate rates of return to second-language skills, distinguishing between levels of proficiency in these languages (Grin, 1999b). They indicate that these rates of return are considerable—typically, at 8% to 12%, they amount to about two or three times the rate of return on the average additional year of schooling. Given the amount invested by the cantonal governments for the teaching of these languages, the investment can be said to be highly profitable, also at the societal level.

Nonetheless, the occurrence of individual bi- or trilingualism, though significant by comparison with other European countries, is generally less than many foreigners often suppose. This is largely due to the fact that, owing to the principle of territoriality, most residents of Switzerland can live in one language only—that is, the respective LL1. This is very much like a person who lives in Madrid can make do with Spanish most of the time, or a person living in Helsinki may not need anything else than Finnish, despite Finland’s active bilingualism policy.

Against this backdrop, it is perhaps not surprising that experiments with bilingual education remain few and far between. Nonetheless, there is growing interest for various types of bilingual education at various tiers of the education system. The following sections are devoted to an account and assessment of these experiments.

8 Estimates of total and per-capita investment for IL2 and IL3 teaching have been made for all the cantons in 1997, using data for the 1993-94 school year (Grin and Sfreddo, 1997). They indicate a certain degree of asymmetry between the language regions, where Italian-speaking Switzerland made the biggest effort to teach other national languages, followed by French-speaking Switzerland. In the German-speaking parts of the country, spending on the teaching of English was already higher than spending on the teaching of French.
4. Bilingual education projects: a descriptive overview

According to the Canadian and North American terminology, bilingual education is defined as a learning situation which implies instruction in a second language (be it an official, a national or an extra-territorial language, in general a language other than the LL1). This second language is taught as a subject, but it is also the communicative means or vehicle for subjects other than language instruction, such as history, geography or mathematics (Brohy & Bregy, 1998; Brohy, 1998). The term “immersion” is often employed (as we do here) synonymously with “bilingual education”. The expression “content and language integrated learning”, usually abbreviated as CLIL, has been coined to encompass different methodological approaches relevant to bilingual education (Nikula & Marsh, 1998).

The second language used in the school can generally not be defined, given the Swiss context of territoriality, as an LL2 (see Sections 1 and 2). It is destined to become most pupils’ IL2, but this is not always the case. Consequently, we shall talk of a “target language” or simply of an “L2”.

A complex issue in bilingual education is that of the link between the LL1 (which may be the IL1 of most pupils) and the second (“target”) language also taught and used in the school. The nature of this link is often an implicit one since—as in the case of Swiss experiments with bilingual education—the LL1 is present in the everyday surroundings of the children. In principle, teaching through the medium of a target language requires the teacher to speak in the target language only. Reference to LL1 is possible if absolutely necessary or demanded by a pupil. In primary school, teachers use devices such as puppets or some other distinctive sign (for example, a finger ring worn by the teacher at rare moments) to allow translation of target language key words into the LL1. Many techniques may further comprehension of the L2, such as working with different materials, talking about what is being done (for example, cooking), presenting equivalent examples of tasks first, or allowing work in pairs, for less advanced pupils to benefit from the skills of more advanced classmates. Teachers have to find an equilibrium between the need to ensure the learner’s comprehension and the obligation not to yield to a tendency to simplify their language. One of the biggest challenges of bilingual teaching is to create as many situations as possible where the pupils express themselves in the target language.

In view of the methodological challenges of bilingual teaching, it appears evident that teachers should be appropriately trained. Over the last ten years, occasional in-service training has been arranged for teachers involved in pilot bilingual education projects. However, much more still needs to be done in this area. The current overhaul of Swiss teacher training institutions includes, in most bilingual regions, exposure to some form of bilingual education, or study in an L2 region (Berthoud & Gajo, 1998). Universities are starting to organise new courses combining linguistic subjects with non-linguistic ones. Bilingual education methodology in Switzerland is still in its early stages, but the teacher trainers are honing their skills, and use such opportunities to compare pedagogical concepts—for example, between “foreign” language teaching and mathematics didactics (Plazaola Gyger & Leutenegger, 2000).

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9 Teacher training is currently being transferred from non-academic post-secondary institutions to universities.
In the Swiss context, most experimental projects of bilingual education typically posit “language enrichment” as a long-term goal. Bilingual education projects may take place at different levels of the school system, from pre-school or kindergarten to university. Brohy (1998) distinguishes six main parameters of bilingual education:
• starting age;
• duration;
• continuity over different ages and school levels;
• intensity of the use of the second language (reaching from partial, e.g. 10% of the curriculum, to total immersion);
• regularity of the bilingual offer in the school (e.g. bilingual education depending or not on the number of pupils enrolled);
• linguistic composition of the class (if IL1 and IL2 pupils are present in the same class, we speak of dual immersion).

Although most educational matters, being in the purview of cantons, are not centrally regulated, some are subject to federal by-laws, and this may affect bilingual education. Consider for example what is known in Switzerland as the “maturité” or “Matura”, which by and large corresponds to a German “Abitur” or to English “A levels”. This leaving certificate, which gives access to universities, may be awarded by the cantons, but will then have only cantonal validity. In order to enjoy country-wide recognition, it must meet requirements spelled out in a federal-level by-law, the “Swiss federal maturity ordinance”\(^\text{10}\). The body of regulations includes provisions pertaining to the bilingual “maturité”. In order for a certificate to qualify federally as a bilingual one, it must in particular respect a certain equilibrium between the types of subjects (humanities v. others) that are taught in the target language. In addition to the target language course proper—usually 4 lessons a week—a minimum of 600 lessons must be taught in the target language in at least two subjects (one of them belonging to the humanities) during the four years of secondary II schooling (Conseil fédéral, 1995).

Given the Swiss context, notably the territorial principle, it is unsurprising that bilingual education is at the same time an ancient and a recent phenomenon. Along the French-German linguistic border and in the canton of Grisons, bilingual education and submersion (education in IL2 without reference to IL1) have taken place since the 19th century. They were often offered by private schools\(^\text{11}\). However, public debate and research on bilingual education in Switzerland have only started in earnest in the late 1980s. Bilingual education has not yet been generalised in any cantonal school system (with the exception of some communities in the canton of Grisons). However, many pilot projects have been initiated in the last twenty years. Brohy (1998) lists no fewer than 157 projects using different language combinations comprising French, German, Italian, English, Romansch and a few others. The number of projects has further increased since then.

Bilingual education starting at kindergarten or in primary school is known to take place in 58 schools, many of them private. Such early immersion projects, where at

\(^{10}\) In the context of this precise function, the action of the standing competence of Cantons’ education Ministers is, in turn, supervised by the federal government which edicts by-laws.

\(^{11}\) However, the role of private schools remains marginal in Switzerland, and accounts only for about 4% of total school enrolment up to age 15 (end of compulsory education).
least 50% of the subjects are taught through the medium of a language other than the LL1, are therefore comparatively rare in Switzerland. Most of the schemes operate with partial immersion, where the share of the target language amounts to about 20% to 30% of the curriculum. Generally, bilingual education starts at secondary I or II level, and tends to be profiled for high achievers. A few public school projects offer a considerable amount of teaching in L2, present a continuity over many years, start early, and embrace several school levels. Of these, we have chosen to focus on the outcomes of three cases that have been scientifically evaluated. These cases are presented in the next section.

5. Assessing the effects of bilingual education projects

This summary assessment of the effects of language teaching and bilingual pilot projects in Switzerland requires us to review several experiments, none of which, however, offers a continuous bilingual education running through all school levels. The main point highlighted by most cases is that acquisition of the IL2 is not completed by the end of compulsory school (at the age of 15-16), even if the schedule shares for L1 and L2 are 50/50.

It is useful however, to begin by mentioning a basis for comparison. A recent qualitative study in Geneva (Diehl et al., 2000) on the acquisition of German as a second language showed that most students (with French as their IL1) are, at the end of their thirteenth school year, only at stage 3 in German, out of six possible, as far as grammar acquisition (verb flexion, syntax, case system) is concerned. This result was obtained through traditional language teaching with an endowment of two to five lessons a week over ten years of schooling (the equivalent of about 1300 lessons).

(1) One of the most comprehensive experiments with bilingual education in Switzerland is currently taking place in the bilingual canton of Valais/Wallis, where both French (60% of the population, living in the western part of the canton) and German (30% of the population, living in the eastern part) are spoken. An early immersion programme starting in the first or second year of kindergarten is compared to a later immersion scheme starting at the third grade of primary school. Both models operate on a schedule where 50% of the instruction takes place in the LL1 (French) and 50% in the target language (German). Mathematics, geography and crafts are taught in this second language. In either language, lessons are taught by a native speaker or by a bilingual13. Teachers teaching through the medium of the target language, however, are required to be able to converse with colleagues and with parents in the LL1. Participation in this pilot project is optional. Various selection criteria are applied if families’ demand exceeds supply. This experiment is now being evaluated, as the children have reached the fourth year in primary school. The children (with French as their IL1) who have followed the early bilingual education stream have, at this stage, an oral and written comprehension capacity (receptive skills) about 10 to 20 percentage points below that of a class of native German pupils taught through the medium of German only (Bregy & Revaz, 2001;

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12 8 samples of free writing of 200 pupils in grade 4 to 12 were analysed.

13 “Bilingual” means that the teacher has experiential knowledge of the target language through his or her family background, through schooling in the target language, or through a personal living experience in the target language area.
Schwob, 2002). Yet unpublished results of research on these “bilingual” 6th-graders indicate a relatively wider gap in language performance by comparison with German-speaking pupils in productive competencies. By comparison with their counterparts enrolled in the “standard”, fully French-speaking streams, the children suffer no deficiency from being in a bilingual programme; in particular, their competence in French, their IL1, is not lower than that of children in the regular stream. Their results for mathematics (taught through the medium of German) at the end of grade 4 are not in yet; at grade 2, however, no difference in achievement with control classes was found.

At all ages when tests have been administered (7, 10 and 12), the children’s attitude towards language learning is very positive and they express satisfaction about their progress in language acquisition. At the end of grade four (after five or six years of bilingual education, which therefore includes one or two years of non compulsory pre-school), their attitudes are much more positive (up to 20 percentage points) than those of pupils who start to study German as an IL2 as a compulsory subject in fourth grade.

Pupils who choose bilingual education from the beginning of third grade (among them many high achievers) also show very positive attitudes by the end of grade 4, after two years of enrolment in the programme (Bregy & Revaz, 2001). Bilingual education also means that pupils have more time to acquire a language, that teaching is more varied, and that content and language are integrated in learning. Moments of drill represent a low percentage of teaching time; much of the learning is accomplished by understanding and doing. However, without additional language input from the family or through residential stays in target language areas, this 50/50 bilingual education scheme will not produce native-like competencies in speaking and writing by the end of grade 6. This result converges with Canadian observations (Lyster, 1993).

(2) Experiments in bilingual education at the secondary II level (in pre-university education for the more able pupils, ISCED 3A) have been evaluated for students in the second year of this education tier. Results indicate that partial bilingual education after several years of L2 or L3 learning may lead to upper medium competencies in the target language (Wokusch & Gervaix, 2001). These competencies correspond to the B2 level of the Common European frame of reference of the Council of Europe (level 4 out of 6, according to Council of Europe/Europarat, 2001, or the European Language Portfolio, Schneider et al., 2001). The bilingual secondary II exams on the subjects taught in a target language require students to develop subject matter knowledge in the target language in the same way as native speakers do. The only substantial difference is that the extent of the subject matter examined is slightly reduced.

Besides the university degree for the subject taught at the secondary II level (for example, history), teachers in bilingual education programmes either have a university degree in the target language, or — more frequently — they have equivalent

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14 Bilingual education programmes at secondary II level, of course, bank on previous language learning as a subject. In the case of German as a target language, students would typically have had two lessons a week of German as a subject during three or four years of primary school, followed by about four lessons a week at secondary I level. In the case of English as a target language, previous language learning would generally be around to two to four lessons a week during the three years of secondary I schooling. However, the amount of early exposure to English is currently expanding as part of primary school reform in several cantons.
linguistic abilities arising from other aspects of their personal experience, as mentioned above. 

In the trilingual canton of Grisons, a community project was launched in 1995 by the municipality of Samedan. The population of Samedan includes 22.6% of Romansch (IL1) speakers alongside a majority of German speakers. The project aims at fostering bilingual skills by integrating German lessons from the beginning of kindergarten and by teaching more lessons in Romansch at lower secondary level (age 13-16). Before this experiment, kindergarten and primary school were in Romansch only, whereas secondary school was in German only. An external evaluation revealed good results for German and French (the IL3 starting at grade 7), but varying results in Romansch. In mathematics and science (taught in Romansch), pupils did well on standardised tests administered in German. This proves that skills are satisfactorily transferred. The Romansch and immigrant pupils displayed better meta-linguistic abilities than the German speakers (Brohy, 2001a; Brohy, 2001b).

Let us try to synthesise the above results. It is not possible to assess the effects of continuing bilingual schooling up to the secondary I level and subsequent total immersion at the secondary II level, since there is no educational offer of this kind in Switzerland—whereas this is proposed in Latvia. However, we can safely point out that:

- a bilingual education structure obviously allows a better language education than traditional language instruction, while still ensuring equal achievement in the subjects taught in L2;
- bilingual education (50% in LL1 French and 50% in German) in primary school only lays the groundwork for later native-like competency;
- in the case of a minority language (whether in Switzerland or in other countries), small, threatened languages require additional support. This is the case for Romansch. The aim of fostering competencies in a threatened language cannot be reached through the sole reinforcement of teaching of and in this language at secondary I level;
- bilingual education can be very successful at secondary II level even with a small previous basis acquired through traditional language instruction, and with subsequent bilingual education accounting for only about 25% of the weekly schedule. This result, however, is observed among the upper half of achievers in Swiss schools. Lower achievers would certainly need more immersion time in the target language.

Bilingual education, however, cannot be assessed on pedagogical grounds alone, because it takes place in social context. A few words therefore need to be said about the link between bilingual education and the issue of individual and group identities; this issue has often come to the fore in Switzerland.

Existential fears linked to bilingual education may arise in bilingual cantons when a language group—a local minority or even a local majority—feels threatened. A few observations of a phenomenon of this kind have been made in parts of French-speaking Switzerland located next to the language border with German-speaking areas.

The canton of Fribourg/Freiburg (roughly two-thirds French-speaking, one-third German-speaking) is one traversed by the language border. A partial bilingual
education project, which would have included two to four hours a week of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in the respective other language, was submitted to a referendum in September 2000\(^\text{15}\). It was defeated by a narrow majority of voters, apparently swayed by arguments like the lack of teacher training and the rising costs of education; in addition, fears were expressed that bilingual education might tip the language balance in French-speaking municipalities located near or at the language border in favour of German (Fuchs, 1999; Brohy, 2001b). This vote reflects the different sensitivities of population groups located nearer to and farther from the language border.

The city of Biel/Bienne is officially bilingual, with 38% of the population registered as French-speaking and 62% as German-speaking (December 2000). However, immigrants make up more than 25% of the resident population, and more than 16% of the population speak languages other than French and German. In terms of IL1, the population breakdown is the following: 53% German, 30.7% French, 7.6% Italian, and 8.7% other languages. Biel/Bienne is located in the canton of Berne, where 84% of the population is German-speaking. The municipal authorities of the city of Biel/Bienne have adopted a decidedly proactive stance, and set up an Office for the promotion of bilingualism (Racine, 2002). The activities of this Forum for Bilingualism focus on inter-community relations and on the promotion of bilingualism in business. A prize is regularly awarded to bilingual businesses. The Forum also publishes research on language attitudes\(^\text{16}\) and issues recommendations.

Bilingual education projects have lately been initiated at all school levels in Biel/Bienne. One of them is a compulsory and therefore only partial immersion experience, taking place at one of city’s primary schools. The school includes German-speaking and French-speaking classes. Partial bilingual education concerns only subjects that are not crucial for promotion to the next school year. Thus, during the four weekly lessons when instruction takes place in the target language, children do crafts, gymnastics, writing, singing and natural science. In addition, the legal conditions for this bilingual programme to be implemented had to be prepared with utmost care\(^\text{17}\). School regulations have been adapted with respect to selection criteria, language use with parents, and frequency of information to parents by the teachers (Merkelbach, 2001: 41). According to personal observation, one of the first positive results of this experience is, besides the mutual acceptance of pupils from the two language groups, that the French-speaking and German-speaking teachers of the same school actually meet with each other and become acquainted with the curriculum employed for the other language group.

6. The Swiss experience: what relevance for Latvia?

The relevance of the Swiss experience for Latvia ought to be assessed at two levels: the first is the macro, external level, in which we would ask, in language education

\(^{15}\) The Swiss system of “direct democracy”, in which a wide range of decisions are subjected to referendum, operates not only at the level of federal but also of cantonal government; it may therefore also affect decisions in areas that are in the purview of cantons, such as language education policy.

\(^{16}\) See [http://www.bilinguisme.ch/lescahiers.html](http://www.bilinguisme.ch/lescahiers.html).

\(^{17}\) Parents retain the right to demand that their child be exempted from the programme and enrolled in another (unilingual) school. However, this request must be justified by explicit reasons, and parents would then have to shoulder the cost of transport to another school.
policy perspective, whether the conditions and goals are sufficiently similar for some parts of the former to be transferable to the latter. The second is the internal level, which is concerned with the same question, but with regard to language teaching proper.

As to the former level, we have already noted that the Swiss case (in its demolinguistic, geolinguistic, historical and institutional dimensions) is quite unique. It is therefore difficult to see how it could carry over to the Latvian case. In particular, we should observe that the crucial notions of “minority” and of “integration”, as used in Latvia, have nothing to do with their meaning in Switzerland. Let us consider them in turn.

First, the minorities in Switzerland are linguistic minorities, emphatically not “national minorities”. It bears repeating once again that in the Swiss context, the concept of “national minority” does not make sense, for a number of historical reasons briefly mentioned in Section 2. It follows that the notion of kin state is irrelevant in Switzerland—contrary to what often happens in Eastern and Central Europe, where (national) minorities may have privileged links to a neighbouring nation-state. In Switzerland, the feeling of “belongingness” to the country, even among linguistic minorities, is not diminished by the fact that their language is fully official, and the fact that such recognition facilitates contacts with neighbouring countries speaking the same language poses no threat to national unity.

Second, Switzerland’s (linguistic) minorities are indisputably longstanding, indigenous minorities; the current linguistic structure of the country reflects the distribution of various groups since the 5th century AD. By contrast, the presence of a considerable Russian-speaking minority in Latvia is the result of recent migration flows that have taken place since the forcible incorporation of Latvia in the Soviet Union in 1940. It is therefore unsurprising that the legitimacy of claims, by the Russian-speaking community of Latvia, to be considered as a minority in a similar sense should be a politically contested one.

Third, an ambiguity concerning the term “minority” needs to be addressed; this requires us to look beyond the Swiss case discussed so far. Many of the minority languages that benefit, in various European countries, from protection and promotion through education policy, are said to be “unique” languages—that is, languages spoken nowhere else, and which are, in particular, not the majority language of any nation-state, neighbouring or not. This definition applies to languages such as Welsh, Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Basque, Catalan, Ladin, Friulian, Sardinian, Frisian, Sorbian, Sámi, etc. In the Swiss case, it applies only to Romansch. With the exception of relatively large languages (such as Catalan, which numbers over 6m speakers), the “unique” languages are threatened, sometimes severely so, and the need for support for them is usually not contested, and reflected in the philosophy of international instruments such as the Council of Europe’s Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. In the case of Switzerland, concerns over the continuing demolinguistic decline of Romansch has spurred on constitutional initiatives that will eventually result in the adoption of fresh legislation, whose main point is increased federal support for Romansch\(^{18}\). This line of argument is not

\(^{18}\) The preliminary version of the bill was circulated for consultation on 26 October 2001. The revised version is currently in preparation before submission to Parliament. See [http://www.kultur-](http://www.kultur-).
convincing in the case of Russian in Latvia, given the massive demolinguistic difference between the Russian and Latvian language\textsuperscript{19}.

It follows from the above that key elements of Switzerland’s linguistic governance, at least as regards those articulated with respect to the concept of “minority”, only have, in our opinion, limited applicability to Latvia.

Let us now turn to the issue of “integration”. As pointed out in Section 1, the term “integration”, particularly in western Europe, is generally used to refer to the progressive incorporation, into majority society, of immigrants. Typically, immigrants have come from relatively less prosperous countries to seek work in the affluent economies of Western Europe. The decision to allow entry to foreign workers (or “guest” workers, with reference to the well-known German concept of \textit{Gastarbeiter}) was also one made by the democratically elected authorities of the countries concerned. However, the case of Russian-speakers living in Latvia does not quite match this description.

In any case, there has not been, until now, very much in the way of a coherent approach to the linguistic dimensions of the integration of migrants in Swiss society. The general rule (again, in application of the territoriality principle), has been to expect immigrants (if they stay in Switzerland for good, which has tended to become the dominant pattern) to learn the LL1 (that is, French in Lausanne, German in St. Gallen, Italian in Locarno, etc.). Immigrant children are schooled in a normal LL1 (French, German or Italian) classroom as quickly as possible\textsuperscript{20}. At the same time, total submersion of children with another IL1 into the an LL1 stream may not be harmless for their self-image, and later cognitive acquisitions in other subjects—not to mention, of course, their own IL1 (Perregaux & Hottelier, 1995)\textsuperscript{21}. Moreover, in a submersion system operating in LL1 alone (without planned consideration of IL1), a wave of immigrants generally needs a time span of 20 to 30 years before it is fully assimilated schoolwise, and is linguistically not distinguishable from native children (or children from families who have settled in the country several generations earlier) (Doudin 1998; Reis, 1998). For obvious geopolitical reasons, in addition to the already-mentioned fact that Russian-speakers in Latvia are not an immigrant community in the standard western European sense, a total submersion approach, even restricted to secondary II level, is hardly suitable to their situation.

For all the above reasons, whether it be articulated with respect to a notion of “minority” or of “integration”, the Swiss experience may have little to contribute, in terms of language education policy, to the Latvian problems of linguistic governance. Nonetheless, some aspects of the still modest Swiss experience regarding the “internal” effectiveness of various modes of bilingual or immersion schooling may be relevant when tailoring some of the pedagogical aspects of Latvia’s language education policy to the needs of the country.

\textsuperscript{19} In fact, one might consider Latvian to be, relative to Russian, in the position of the “unique” minority language.

\textsuperscript{20} Cantons’ practice, however, may vary, particularly as regards the children of \textit{refugees} or of \textit{illegal aliens}. Some cantons deny them access to the education system, on the grounds that their presence in the country may only be temporary and must be regarded as such until their status has legally changed. Other cantons, such as Geneva, systematically school them, on the basis of human rights considerations.

\textsuperscript{21} For an interesting debate on this issue in the US context, see the January/February 2002 issue of the Harvard Education Letter on \url{http://edletter.org/forum/}.
Some relevant contrasts and parallels may be pointed out between the respective language education contexts of both countries. Parallels may be more manifest between the learning of German by francophones along the German-French language border in Switzerland, and the learning of Latvian by speakers of Russian in Latvia.

- In both countries, L2 learning requires a considerable effort, also because the two languages are very different—a difficulty probably linked to the fact they do not belong to the same language branch.
- In both countries, the language learning relationship takes place in a context where feelings of resentment may emerge against the perceived dominance of the community speaking the target language.
- However, contrary to German, Latvian is not a language shared by different nations. Like Romansch, it is a “unique” language. The associated vulnerability is not necessarily fully compensated by its position as the official language of a sovereign nation.
- The limited international importance of Latvian, just like the plurilingual situation of Switzerland, should be a strong incentive for fostering second and third language learning in the population in general.

Some conclusions that can be drawn from the Swiss case may also apply to the Latvian case:

- As noted in Section 5, second language learning is not over by the end of compulsory school; for most people, language learning needs to extend beyond this stage. This observation should encourage Latvia to offer bilingual education at the secondary II level. The share of the languages concerned need not be 50/50; actually, a broader range of formulas may be considered (what is known as “partial” bilingual education, where the share of the target language can be in the region of 25% of a weekly schedule). The offer may concern not just Latvian as a target language, but also Russian, or further languages—among which German, Swedish and English appear to have particular relevance.
- The more a language is lacking in prestige and international visibility, the more non-native learners need to be motivated and need time for acquisition. The consequence for Latvia is to ensure that the education system effectively fosters the learning of Latvian and that the acquisition of the Latvian language is accessible to all. Language policy can legitimately address other, non-educational spheres to secure the long-term prospects of the Latvian language.
- Sociological observation indicates that existential fears among speakers of a minority language (or who perceive themselves as such), may be intertwined with language education issues. In a population where such fears are present, acceptance of bilingual education will be less. Hence, it is important for language education planners in Latvia to introduce reforms without rush. Social actors must be given time to get acquainted with the reforms, and be satisfied that these reforms pose no threat to their language and culture. Members of the Russian-speaking community ought to be progressively won over to the notion that competence in Latvian constitutes a valuable human capital investment, but this case will be more made more convincing if bilingual education is offered throughout the tiers of the education system.
• The more a school system is fragmented in different, even hermetic sectors (for example, public and private establishments as in Latvia; distinct French and German schools or streams as in the city of Biel/Bienne), the less pupils of different population groups meet in school, and the more difficult it is to develop bilingual education programmes. Such programmes, on the contrary, thrive on contact and mutual knowledge.

• Teachers’ fears of changes in the job qualifications required may lead to powerful teacher union backlash against pedagogical reform. Therefore, it is important for teachers to receive the high-quality initial and in-service training necessary to equip them for new tasks. In both Switzerland and in Latvia, they need to be prepared to face plurilingual and multilingual challenges brought on by increasing mobility and globalization.

• Generally, the argument of the cost of bilingual education can be dismissed. Estimates (for cases other than Switzerland; see Grin, 2002a) indicate that moving from a unilingual to a bilingual education system typically entails an extra cost of less than 5%.

Ultimately, there is no doubt that language choices in general, and the choice of language(s) of instruction in particular, are deeply political issues. Fears that one’s IL1 may be downgraded, whether at the individual or group level, have to be taken into account by decision-makers. Such fears are usually linked to social change and competition over symbolic or material status. Hence, the issues at hand are not confined to the level of isolated individuals or specific groups. Bilingual education is an especially sensitive issue, which may cause opposition from minority population groups. An integrated, multi-level approach at the local level, including information, research and promotion, as the city of Biel/Bienne has initiated, should help not only to increase language skills, but also to foster positive attitudes towards language learning. Bilingual education is certainly part of genuinely promising reforms in education systems, but intervention at the school level alone constitutes but a part of an overall language policy. These issues must be explicitly taken into account in the debate over the kind of society to which people aspire.

References

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22 A brief look at the experience of the Autonomous Basque Community (CAV) in Spain shows that an important investment in teacher training has been made in order to increase teachers’ competence in Basque. Teachers can get paid leave to study the Basque language for up to three years (Gardner, 2000: 48). This is one of the reasons why the "Basqueness" of the teaching staff has risen from 5% to 60% within the last 25 years (information from Itziar Idiazabal Gorrotxategi, 23.4.2001).


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Ekaterina Protassova

LATVIAN BILINGUAL EDUCATION: TOWARDS A NEW APPROACH

ABSTRACT During the transitional period from being part of the Soviet Union, with Russian as the official state language, to an independent state within the European Union, with special language policies supporting minority languages, Latvia has developed reasonable principles of bilingual education. Nevertheless, a lot of work still needs to be done to improve teaching methods, to develop effective programmes, and to assess the multifaceted process of language use at school, including sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic analysis of educational discourse and spontaneous bilingual communication. The quality of bilingual education depends upon different factors, which are subject to various influences. Some of these aren’t mentioned in the models being proposed by the government, such as the pedagogical relevance of a child-centred approach, the progression in language and cultural competence of participants, mixing / overlapping / avoidance strategies of language use, attitudes of families, children and teachers, etc. The challenge for teachers of both Latvian as a second and Russian as a first language is enormous. In the future, other bilingual situations will present themselves in Latvia as well. Because of this, Latvian society must consider their entire policy towards bilingualism in the educational system.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION: SOME THEORETICAL STATEMENTS

Through my research on bilingual children, families and institutions in the Soviet Union, Russia, Germany and Finland, I have arrived at several conclusions with respect to education:

1. the development of one’s first language promotes the development of one’s second language;
2. the use of one’s native language at home is crucial to one’s school success in the second language;
3. children who do not receive enough support in their home language, fail to grasp the very principles the teacher intends to convey because they lose time trying to apply abstract concepts to the things they are accustomed to;
4. the quality of bilingual competence must be accurately assessed at each level of development; and
5. teachers dealing with bilingual students know too little about first and second language acquisition.

With respect to the linguistic situation I have learned that:
6. just because people speak the same language, does not mean they feel like they belong to the same culture;
7. the mother tongue is not always the language of instruction;
8. the mother tongue is not always the language that the speaker commands the best, sometimes s/he can operate better in other languages.

No matter how motivated people are, it can be very difficult to become fluent in a second language. It is important to keep this in mind when we communicate with people for whom the dominant language is not the mother tongue. In most cases, it takes two or three generations of a single family to make a major transition in one’s way of life and to shift to a new primary language. Citizens of a particular country do not necessarily share the same nationality, as can be seen in past multicultural and multilingual empires like the Soviet Union. In these empires, people were pressured to speak one dominant (Russian for all) language, while in some cases an additional national language was also allowed (if your nationality was not Russian).

Philosophically, my views on bilingualism correspond with those of the Polish-Russian linguist Jan (Ivan) Baudouin de Courtenay, who wrote in 1916 that a person must be given the right to decide independently which nationality or nationalities s/he belongs to, or whether to belong to any at all. Furthermore, I agree with some of the theoretical principles put forth by Krashen & Biber (1988) and Cummins (1996) regarding bilingual education. These authors have declared that:

- children must be allowed to keep up in the subject matter while acquiring a second language;
- literacy in the first language provides a foundation for long-term growth in second language academic skills;
- learning subject matter in the first language helps to make it more comprehensible in the second language;
• practical advantages of bilingualism become more clear in societies where different languages are needed (instead of sole dependence on the dominant one); and
• bilingual education can develop into biculturalism.

The results of my research also support L. Wong Fillmore's ideas (1991, 1992, 1996) that the proportion of the number of native speakers and second language learners in a classroom is an important variable. The way in which educational environments are organised also shapes a person’s linguistic experiences. I would like to suggest that it is possible to evaluate educational programs by considering the following:
• how various languages are used;
• the linguistic and social purposes of education;
• the context of the curriculum;
• the adequacy of materials and methods used to attain teaching goals;
• the accessibility of the declared principles to educators;
• the amount of time spent teaching in a language, and the educational content being taught; and
• ability of one’s approach to address individual differences and meet individual needs.

EXPERIENCING LATVIAN BILINGUALISM

My own personal historical experiences with multicultural Latvia are quite common for a Russian. Let me explain. My grandmother lived in Riga before the World War One and spoke both German and Russian, while the ancestors of my grandfather were Russian Germans from the Baltic. Some of their acquaintances belonged to mixed Latvian-German-Russian families. When our family visited Latvia in the late 1950s, Latvian people over the age of 20 could hardly speak Russian, but many elder people did speak German. I visited first as a small child, so I had to play with children in their own language, learning it while we played and interacted. Schoolchildren at that time had also started to acquire Russian as a second language. By the early 1970s, I could already communicate freely in Russian with Latvian young people. Nowadays, young people from the Baltics and Russia use English as their means of communication.
In 2001, I visited Latvia and met teachers - representatives of different minority schools, day care centres and universities - involved in the bilingual education project organised by the Soros Foundation. During my studies, focusing on child language and bilingualism, I met scientists from Latvia who had a different ethnic origin, and I asked them about the situation pertaining to the use of the Russian language in Latvia. I listened to their life stories and experience-based reasoning and tried to understand their problems and needs. I also examined several schoolbooks and educational contexts. It was overly clear that knowledge of the Latvian language is critical in this society, but that many non-Latvian speakers thought they were too old to learn it sufficiently in order to achieve all of their aspirations. They regretted the decline in the professional aptitude of Russian language teachers, the low socio-economic status of Russian, the lack of new materials, and the decline of the educated segment of Russian-speaking society. All of my informants thought that their functional multilingualism and multiculturalism were of a great practical use, and they regarded the period in question as transitional in the history of Latvia. It is understandable that during a time of political and economic change, discontinuities can occur between the priorities of the educational system and the availability of professional resources to address these priorities effectively.

In the educational realm, certain steps can be taken to move forward. Schools can examine the language use and language needs of the parents. They can also ask what priority these parents attach to their children's learning of Latvian and minority languages in a given linguistic environment, which includes relationships, audio-visual media, outside activities, etc. In my experience, parents usually accord both languages equal status, but promote one more than the other in everyday reality. Research on teaching Latvian as second language, including metalinguistic information, will help to improve instructional practices and diversify effective classroom activities (like those presented in e.g. Bratt Paulston, 1994; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Extra & Verhoeven, 1994; Heller, 1999; Myers-Scotton, 1997; Protassova, 1992; Ramirez, Yuen & Ramey, 1991; Schachter, 1998; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1997). Through the analysis of classroom interactions among adults and children attending bilingual programs, it can be shown that the types of the discourse that take place either support or inhibit the participants’ progression in the area of language and cultural competence. The pedagogical advantages found to be associated with a child-centred approach point to the fact that such an approach can be useful in bilingual education.
RUSSIAN AS A MINORITY LANGUAGE IN LATVIA

According to V. M. Alpatov, the contemporary linguistic situation in Latvia needs to be viewed in the context of Latvia’s goal to integrate completely into Western European society, economically, militarily and culturally. Latvia and the other Baltic States are situated close to the European Union and they receive notable support from Western European countries and the USA.

The Latvian language has a long written tradition. General literacy was accomplished long ago and at the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union it was a fully developed language. This is one of the reasons that the role of Russian will diminish (in contrast to the situation in several other independent former Soviet republics) in the future. However, the manner in which Latvian is now replacing Russian as a language of discourse has led to considerable criticism, and in my view some of this is justified. As P. Kolstø (1999) has commented, the Russian diaspora in Latvia (as an ethnic group which lacks a territorial base within Latvia) has to be viewed not only in terms of objective factors such as geography, demography, and history, but also by perceptions and ideas. One needs to consider that people attach themselves to the place where they are born and raised. A majority population can view members of minority groups as foreign, or outsiders, while minority group members can feel very 'rooted' in a place. Only about one-third of Russians residing in Latvia in 1996-1998 were willing to consider themselves a minority. Forty-one percent mentioned that Latvia was their place of birth, and no more than 11% perceived Russia as their homeland. Despite their feelings of belongingness, they will most likely, for some time to come, be viewed as a unique cultural and linguistic minority by the majority population. Kuznecov (Kuznecov, 2000) has commented that the future of the Russian language in Latvia will be determined by a variety of factors. These include:

- the weakening of contacts with metropolitan Russia;
- the use of (historically developed) dialects;
- the absence of centres that “safeguard” the quality of written and spoken Russian;
- attrition of Russian among older Russian residents of Latvia who have not previously had enough access to modern standardised Russian;
- words from the Latvian language that have seeped into Russian language usage;
- everyday contacts with Latvians, Poles and others who speak non-native Russian.
Kuznetsov claims that the local authors of programs and schoolbooks in Russian are not sufficiently qualified to compose standard texts. The growing “distance” from Russia’s cultural capitals is creating differences between the Russian spoken in Russia (which is changing extremely rapidly) and the Russian spoken in Latvia, especially in the realm of terminology and literature. Though various traditions and classics will remain a constant in Latvian-Russian culture, new norms, values, and cultural expressions are constantly being negotiated. This will lead to a new and distinct reality.

The Russian-speaking community has had to work hard to retain its own cultural identity and traditions (e.g. the example of Finland’s Swedes and Russians also demonstrates this necessity - see Kuure, 1997; Pentikäinen & Hiltunen, 1995), and this fact is somehow ignored in the Latvian models evaluated in this special issue. All of the proposals require native Russian speakers to integrate completely into Latvian society, to become bilingual, to enjoy full civil rights, to be responsible residents, to have unhindered access to all spheres of social life and to become part of the dominant society. According to Vaira Vike-Freiberga (2002), President of Latvia, nearly half (45%) of Latvia’s ethnic Russian inhabitants have already acquired Latvian citizenship. However, about 23% of the Latvian population still remain non-citizens.

Recent research shows that proficiency in Latvian and English has increased due to the rising prestige of these languages in different spheres of life. These changes are most prominent among young people, in regions where Latvian speakers dominate, and among those residents who deal with the public. Some of these facts go unreported. Society has been partly politicised by the mass media and the general public is consequently less optimistic than current developments would justify (Baltaiskalna, 2001).

At the societal level, we still see that due to historical inequities the Russian speaking population disproportionately hold higher status jobs. Druviete (2000) argues that such historical realities have had their impact on the psychological make-up of various groups in society.

ASSESSING THE LATVIAN SITUATION
The Latvian policy of multilingualism has been framed within the context of securing the status of the Latvian language, while promoting the recognition of other languages (languages which, historically, have and have not been spoken in Latvia).

In my opinion, it is unfortunate that some phrases in the Latvian government documents remind one of past rhetoric and ideological posturing in the Soviet system. The phrases I am referring to include: “to facilitate the harmonious development of learners”, “to become involved in public life, while preserving one’s national identity”, “to provide every person with the opportunity to grow physically and mentally, and to develop a free and responsible, creative and cultured personality”, “to develop the ability to appreciate and understand the beautiful things in life”, “to create a thirst for education and self-education”, “to become aware of the need to take an active position against cynicism and other types of moral evil”, “to create honest and decent persons, Latvian patriots”. References to the individual also fit into this list: “From child to the world; from the world to the child”. As such, the intentions here are positive. However, there is no reference to content and the concepts are outdated. Also, statements like these are not connected to real life, the needs of (all) children, or the possibilities of schools.

The bilingual school models that have been chosen by the Latvian government allow for multiple variants. In fact, they represent different versions of one model. Once a school accepts one of these variants, they will have to decide in detail how everything will be organised. This has to be done before actual implementation. The different variants are all based on a child’s proficiency in the second language, while ignoring that person’s mother tongue. No attention is devoted to type of instruction or the methods to be used. Another problem is that, as far as I can judge, none of the variants take the composition of the classroom into consideration, or the materials and opportunities that are available to teachers and students.

Teachers are usually responsible for the assessment of language learning and this occurs by and large within the context of specific courses, so that such assessment may or may not be connected to subject learning. Though standardized school-leaving examinations, developed nationally by a testing institute, and insight into the future careers of students can supply us with a certain amount of feedback regarding how successful language teaching approaches have been, they still tell us little about the hundreds of thousands of real interactions that take place every day in bilingual classrooms. With respect to the general public, it has been repeatedly reported that Latvian native speakers usually communicate with those learning
Latvian in the Russian language because it is easier for both. It is critical that learning situations are created that help children improve their proficiency in Latvian. Children who undergo language immersion, where all of the pupils speak Latvian and where they must communicate in this language, develop competence after several years.

A close look at the various models proposed by the Latvian government leaves me wondering if there are any basic differences. The view of bilingual education expressed in each model is essentially the same. The only difference can be found in the number of lessons given in each language. Most experts would agree that number of lessons does not have as much impact as the age of the children, the linguistic composition and size of the class, teaching style, the quality of the materials used and the effectiveness of the methods employed. It is essential that the subject matter is understood completely, and that time is not wasted boring the children with education that does not challenge them.

If a class consists primarily of minority children, there are two ways to address the language issue. A first option is to utilise the dominant language. The expectation is then that the pupils’ families will assist them in making their homework and in developing their native language. A second option is to start teaching using the pupils’ mother tongue, and only later shifting to the majority language, so that content and language basics are learned separately. If children who are already bilingual form a class, their parents have to decide at the start which language will be used for instruction. If the choice falls on the dominant language, then the minority language is only used for language instruction and for short courses in the humanities. If the minority language is chosen, a good deal of attention is devoted to the minority language, though half of the teaching takes place in the majority language. If classes are not formed according to pupils’ bilingual abilities, confusion can take place and academic progress is hindered.

We hardly find any reference in the proposals to how bilingual skills can be developed in real life situations, and how they can be taught within an intercultural context, preparing pupils not only for integration into Latvian, but also European society. The models also emphasise the role of privatisation, new technology and the importance of lifelong learning. But they ignore the influence of local newspapers, magazines, television and other electronic means of communication, which represent a major educational resource.

Two-way immersion (half the children are dominant language speakers, while the other half are non-dominant language speakers, the children converse in both languages, dividing the time more or less equally between the languages) programs are not proposed at all in the
models. I did notice that some schools in Latvia use this model in their everyday work. Some activities that took place in both languages, as well as in English, were student initiatives (these were surprisingly innovative - teenagers devised new types of collaborative language for themselves).

Russian needs to be seen as both an historical language and a foreign language (of the Russian Federation) in Latvia. It is also a “language of international communication”, as was emphasised in the former Soviet Union. However, Russian speakers have to come to terms with the fact that they are no longer the dominant community in Latvia. Other minority languages in Latvia can also be considered both an historical and foreign language. German could claim this status, but has not (perhaps because so few native speakers live in Latvia). Such historical language diversity can be an important resource, yet the authorities fail to take full advantage of such opportunities. The government proposals make little reference to these languages as positive cultural elements.

Even if the global situation has changed, we cannot expect teachers and students to develop new norms and values overnight. Also, the misconceptions and half-truths that have been part of the political discourse have undoubtedly left their mark. What is needed at this point is a well-informed discussion about the merits of multiculturalism and multilingualism. For example, the quantity of hours spent in the classroom using this language says little about the development of language proficiency. On the other hand, the development of clear goals, a teacher’s competencies, teaching methods and materials, group composition, etc. give a better indication. The reality of ineffective bilingual teaching can often create more harm than good when it comes to language learning. When a teacher instructs in a language (s)he does not master, this person will produce unfortunate mistakes. This, in turn, detracts from the image the teacher has tried to convey to the students. Bilingual teachers have reported to me that they sometimes learn their presentations in Latvian by heart in order to be able to reproduce it in class. They are, however, aware that all of their students understand Russian to a certain degree and that more than half are native Russian speakers. The accumulation of dissatisfaction leads to decreased motivation for both teaching and learning. It is widely known that poor academic skills and hence low school achievement on the part of minority children and working class children are primarily due to discontinuities between the home and school environments. The more compatible the home and school environments are, the more likely it is that cultural end social enrichment will take place. This has consequences for the pedagogical style of the teacher.
The foregoing implies that improvement is needed. First, it becomes important to gain more insight into the home environment. It also implies that teachers need to develop a high degree of competence in interculturalism, metalinguistics and communicational theory. They have to be able to combine mainstream intervention with a pluralist approach. This implies a focus on Latvian independence, but also on what it means to be part of the Western world. It also implies combating oppression and isolation. The worldview contained in the government’s models connects Russian culture and Russian language to what is happening in Russia, but not to the past or present of Latvian society. This approach may fare well during the transitional period, but it could lead to high levels of ghettoisation and marginalisation in the long run.

The profound changes that have taken place in Latvian society have challenged not only teachers of Latvian as a second language, but also teachers of Russian as a first language. Schoolchildren often speak vernacular variants of Russian. Though some Russian-speaking parents were dissatisfied with the contents of Latvian and Russian textbooks being used in Latvian schools, and with the teaching methods, it seems to me that both are superior to what I have seen in Russia. Major progress has been made in writing textbooks that incorporate the general foundations of language teaching, while those produced in Russia regularly fail to qualify as truly modern. The negative parental attitudes might be related to a sense of nostalgia. It seems that they idealise their youth, a time when they studied in the Soviet schools during the “golden 60s and 70s of Soviet science”. This opinion is old-fashioned, to say the least.

The framework proposed by the government does not leave much room for addressing the true needs of children. Obliging children to cope with a problem in a second language without language assistance, even when it becomes clear that instruction in one’s first language would help, interferes with a pupil’s full participation in the curriculum. Creative skills can develop in both languages and they can be (positively) transferred from one language to the other. Arts, crafts and sports are more likely to be taught in a second language because they demand very concrete vocabulary. Linguistic utterances in the subjects are understood without the need of the full command of grammar. One solution to the problems identified above is for a bilingual teacher to collaborate with majority and minority language teachers. Such co-operation can assure the complete understanding of the educational task at hand.
Development of a Latvian identity can occur in various languages. One’s cultural identity, however, is the result of various interacting factors. These include family life, school and work experiences, the role of the mass media and public opinion, and successful (or not) self-realisation. The self-esteem of the Latvian population has been constantly growing in recent years. On the other hand, the Russian-speaking non-citizens of Latvia seem to have little optimism about their future. In my opinion this makes this particular community vulnerable, especially for people born in Latvia with a strong Latvian-Russian minority identity. For their children the experience of not truly belonging can also be alienating. I believe that after these individuals become citizens of Latvia, their attitudes towards multilingualism, multiculturalism and their identity will change. If the approach will be to force these people to find security in their own community, away from the majority, while clinging to mythological perceptions of the past, integration will become much more difficult. It struck me that, in general, the residents of Latvia were much more focused on the past and on emphasising differences than on universal humanitarian values, international literature, or global culture. Access to these realms can be gained in any language.

During the present transitional period I have noticed that the schools in Latvia are working towards the goals of developing the basic principles of an ethnically diverse and interculturally open society. I felt a clearly pronounced wish to integrate into European society. On the other hand, I observed some of the traditional (Soviet) pedagogical rhetoric, which has not (yet?) been properly translated into educational practice. I also observed a strong relationship between communities and schools. In many instances we find a situation where parents have lost their jobs, and are experiencing difficulties adjusting to a new (non-Soviet) way of life. They also expect a lot from the schools. They are hopeful that schools will equip their children to live in the new Latvian reality. In the education reform process, I can identify tensions between child-centred and society-centred tendencies. Under the new democratic circumstances, it is important that the individual needs of children are taken more into account, that children are considered to be individuals with their unique bilingual life stories and their specific (also linguistic) competencies and preferences. In a traditional Latvian school (as in many places), too much emphasis is placed on the three R’s (reading, writing and arithmetic). These are taught in traditional ways, with little emphasis on meaningful learning. The Latvian educational policy, at this point in time, seems more
Concerned with educational unification, common values and responsibilities than on modernisation, individualisation, and internationalisation.

Given the present state of affairs in Latvia, important research would include investigations into bilingual socialisation patterns in families and in educational institutions. This should occur first and foremost with respect to the real use, quantitatively and qualitatively, of various languages. It is known that “incorrect” methods of acquiring a second language perpetuate certain types of errors, entail simplification of meaning and hinder the listeners in their cognitive and linguistic development. Language switching may serve as a marker of a new ethnic identity, but in educational contexts it tames the distinction of language specificity and enhances the deformation of intact language structures.

On the whole we can conclude that bilingualism will not only continue in Latvia, but that it will develop further. This also applies to the future of bilingual education. Other immigrant groups will migrate to Latvia and all of them will need the Latvian language to function in this society. I predict that the demand to learn foreign languages other than English, German or Russian will grow in society. I also predict that more bilingual schools in different languages will be established and will become commonplace, while the Latvian language will strengthen its position as the official state language and the preferred language of discourse.

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