

**BILINGUAL LESSONS IN SCHOOLS OF LATVIAN
REPUBLIC *DE FACTO* AND *DE JURE***

Tatjana Russita

ABSTRACT

Some of the Russian-speaking teachers in minority schools in Latvia have to teach bilingually. That is, they are required to use both Latvian and Russian within the scope of one lesson. However, due to insufficient knowledge of Latvian they often cannot do that properly. In this study I describe the strategies they use to solve this problem. Problem-oriented interviews with teachers, participant observation and personal experience were used to collect information. I have discovered five strategies for the teaching. Each strategy involves different ratio of Russian and Latvian within a lesson. Three of them also imply a significant amount of cheating and pretence. Four strategies used for document handling in Latvian were discovered as well.

KEY WORDS: behavioural strategies, bilingual education, cheating, Latvia, teachers, case-study

ANOTACIJA

Kai kurios pamokos rusakalbēse Latvijas tautiņu mažumų mokyklose turi būti vedamos dvikalbiu būdu, t. y. dalyko turinį išdėstant iš karto ir rusų, ir latvių kalbomis tuo pat metu. Tokie reikalavimai dažnai tampa sunkiai įgyvendinama problema, nes ne visi rusakalbiai mokytojai pakankamai gerai moka kalbėti latviškai. Straipsnyje pateikiamos ir aptariamos konkrečios tokių mokytojų elgesio strategijos, padedančios formaliai spręsti minėtas problemas. Tyrimo metu buvo daromi probleminio turinio interviu su minėtų mokyklų rusakalbiais mokytojais, taikomi dalyvių stebėjimo ir asmeninės patirties metodai. Kiekviena šių strategijų įvairiais lygmenimis rodo tiek rusų, tiek ir latvių kalbos vartosenos pamokos metu dalį. Daugelis jų atskleidžia savęs apgaudinėjimo ir sąmoningo tariamų dalykų įsivaizdavimo realiais atvejais. Tas pat pastebima ir mokytojams rengiant aktualią pamokų vedimo dokumentaciją latvių kalba. **PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI:** elgsenos strategijos, dvikalbė pedagogika, apgaudinėjimas, Latvija, mokytojai, atvejo analizė.

Dr. Tatjana Russita

*Department of Social Psychology, Moscow City University of Psychology and Pedagogics
Sretenka 29, 127051 Moscow, Russia*

The Latvian Portage Association, Čiekurkalna 4-24d Riga, LV-1026, Latvia

E-mail: tanja.ru@gmail.com

The main goal of this research is to describe different behavioural strategies for bilingual teaching chosen by teachers in Russian minority schools in Latvia. While the problem of bilingual education is widely discussed in Latvia¹, the unbiased scholarly research is actually lacking. Among the performed studies one might mention a rather wide analysis of implementation of bilingual education by the Baltic institute of social sciences², reports of State institutions³ reports by minor-

¹ See: ЧУЯНОВА, Элина. *Успех реформы – государственная ложь*. Час, 12.10.2006; ЭЛКСНЕ, Полина. *Оценки выставляют... через пять лет*. Телеграф, 31.01.2005; ПОКСБОРО, Ангус. *Уроки на латышском раздражают русских школьников*. ВВС–Рига, 2005.

² See: ZĒPA, Brigita (ed.). *Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education*. Riga: the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2002.

³ See: VĒBERS, Elmārs (ed.). *Gadagrāmata 2005*. Rīga: RD IJSD, 2006.

ity initiative groups⁴. Most of these works were obviously influenced by political views of their authors.

In this study I try to dissociate myself from my personal views and provide an objective description of the situation in minority schools. I do not try to evaluate the success of bilingual education in Latvia; what I do is analyze the behavioural strategies of teachers who try to fill the gap between what is required and what is possible.

A behavioural strategy is a way teacher chooses to behave in different circumstances when he or she must teach bilingually, or prepare documents in Latvian. I found five different strategy patterns for conducting a lesson and four patterns for preparing documents.

I had worked at two Russian minority schools in Latvia myself from 2000 to 2004, and had observed the process from inside in the years when it was at its most acute and vivid.

Background

History. The number of Russian-speaking inhabitants of Latvia grew up increasingly in the middle of 20th Century, when Latvia was integrated into the USSR⁵.

According to the Latvian Central bureau of statistics 37,52% of population quote Russian as their native language⁶. In Riga, the capital city, the percentage of native speakers of Russian is estimated to be even higher.

All Russian-speaking children have an opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue, since the percentage of so-called minority schools is adequate. The great majority of minority schools provide education in Russian, being staffed with Russian-speaking teachers.

Since 1995 the State started to realize step-by-step transfer to bilingual education in minority school at the level of 10–12th grades. State organizations and NGOs worked on this transfer, being well financially supported⁷, but the minority schools are still not actually ready to provide bilingual education.

The Law on Education⁸ requires that 60% of education in minority secondary schools (in grades 10–12) from 1 September 2004 be in Latvian, the rest in the mother tongue. The choice of subjects to be taught in Latvian is left to the school. The education in primary and middle school was also affected: each school must provide some subjects in Latvian and some – bilingually, i.e. in both languages during the same lesson.

School reform sparked waves of protests among Russian speakers in Latvia, which included a number of manifestations, mass meetings and a hunger strike.

The current research covers mainly primary (7–10-year-old children) and middle (11–15-year-old children) school. One example from the bilingual lesson in the eleventh grade was taken to illustrate the strategy possible in other grades as well.

⁴ See: МАЛАШОНОК, Александра; ХАЛЯВИН, Никита. *Русская школа в Латвии и «Реформа–2004»*. Оценка взаимодействия «реформы» через анализ результатов централизованных экзаменов. Рига: Ассоциация Русской Культуры Образования и Науки «АРКОНА», 2007; ПЛИНЕР, Яков; БУХВАЛОВ, Валерий. *Качество образования в условиях реформы русских школ Латвии. Экспертная оценка*. Рига, 2006. [retrieved from: www.russkie.lv 31.10. 2009]

⁵ СИМОНЯН, Ренальд. *Россия и страны Балтии*. Москва: Academia, 2003, с. 99.

⁶ *Latvijas demogrāfijas gadagrāmata 2003*. 2004. Rīga: LR Centrālā statistikas pārvalde [retrieved from: www.csb.lv 20.08.2008].

⁷ See: OSE, Liesma. *Bilingual education in Latvia: The decisions and timeline of implementation of the bilingual education*. 2006. [retrieved from: www.nordvux.net 15.10.2009]

⁸ *Latvijas Republikas Izglītības likums*, 41. panta 3. daļa.

Opinions. The Government suggest, that bilingual education will help young people to enter the universities in Latvia and study there in Latvian, that bilingual education will ensure equal opportunity for Russian- and Latvian-speaking entrants⁹.

The opinions about the reform among the respondents differ, but most of them tend towards the negative end of the spectre.

It is common to perceive it as revenge for the USSR times, when Latvians had to learn Russian:

I think it is pure revenge. It is just (...) we've had bad times, now it is your turn! [L., primary school]

or as a staged show, a completely senseless process:

It is felt that for those who implemented all that it was important to raise some dust, but they did not care about the result. The main thing for one part of the population was to show to the other part of the population that something happens; some 'impetus for Latvification' takes place. (...) it is clear that the system does not work, the circumstances are unnatural... Everything is formal, in reality nobody has done anything (...). It is just a symbol – we are in Latvia and that is our policy. [V., Math]

Most respondents often say, that, for example, Music or Drawing lesson might be taught bilingually, but Maths or Science lessons should be taught in mother tongue. It is common among teachers to think that school headmasters are trying to press schools into bilingualism faster and deeper than the Ministry is asking, because of their wish to be in the Ministry's good books.

School system in Latvia

Below is a brief description of school system in Latvia provided to help to understand the described realities and situations:

- Primary school: grades 1–4 (mainly 7–10 year-old children);
- Middle school: grades 5–9 (mainly 11–15 year-old children);
- High school: grades 10–12 (mainly 16–18 year-old children).

In primary school there is one teacher for Mathematics, Russian (native tongue), Reading, Handicraft, Social science, Ethics. There are other teachers providing instruction in Music, Drawing, Sports, English and Latvian languages.

In the middle and high schools each subject is taught by a different teacher.

A lesson lasts 40 minutes; breaks between them vary in different schools. It is hard for primary school children to maintain attention for 40 minutes, therefore P.T. (physical training) breaks should be provided for them – all children stand up and move a bit while the teacher is reciting short rhythmical poems.

The structure of the lesson varies a lot from subject to subject and from one teacher to another in high school, but the smaller the children the less the structure differs. In primary school the lesson often consists of the following parts: children greet the teacher; homework is checked; the teacher writes the date and subject of the lesson on the blackboard; children copy it out; P.T. break;

⁹ See: *Mazākumtautību izglītība Latvijā, 2008* [retrieved from the homepage of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia (www.am.gov.lv) 31.10.2009]

the teacher explains new material; children do exercises individually or in groups; some are called out and answer questions in front of the class.

Teacher puts all the records in the class register – topic of the lesson, homework, presence and absence, in middle and high school also the marks.

Each class has about 25–30 children and has its own tutor – a teacher who is in charge for this class. Twice a year the tutor delivers report cards to the children parents. These contain their results in every subject: marks in middle and high schools and summary of their work in primary school.

The optional lessons are provided as well – mainly once in a week a teacher meets those children who are especially interested in his or her subject and they are working in a small group on a deeper level.

Materials and methods

The object of research was Russian-speaking teachers working in minority schools in Latvia. Most of these teachers do not speak Latvian on a level sufficient to teach bilingually – some of them cannot even use Latvian in everyday situations.

This paper is based mainly on the materials of the research that took place in four minority schools in Riga in August–September 2007. The main language of education in all those schools was Russian. Strategies used by teachers involved in the program of bilingual teaching were studied.

Twelve cases of teachers who are supposed to teach bilingually were studied in some detail. I took the interviews and visited some of their lessons. The classification of strategies was developed based on the material of these cases, but for the concretisation and specification examples from other teachers' work were used.

In autumn 2007 all respondents were women, age 30–61, with varying degree of proficiency in Latvian, from different schools and, therefore, in different circumstances and relations with school administration. The mother tongue of all respondents was Russian (except one case where it was neither Russian nor Latvian, but the respondent was fluent in Russian and has been using it for many years in her everyday and professional life, also admitting that it was easier for her to teach in Russian than in her mother tongue). In autumn 2009 two more interviews were taken to form an estimate about the current situation. One of these teachers was the woman from the first sample; the other was a previously un interviewed man.

The main research methods were problem-oriented interviews with teachers and participant observation of the lessons in the course of two months. I also relied on my personal previous experience: I worked at different minority schools from 2000 to 2004, working within the framework of the bilingual transfer program in 2002/2003.

The described situation took place before the global economic downturn, now it is slightly different and not so acute.

Results

1. Behavioural strategies during lessons

Five behavioural strategies were found:

1. 'I do not care'
2. 'Set piece'

3. 'Few words in Latvian on every lesson'
4. 'Let's try to teach bilingually'
5. 'Better Latvian than the mix of languages'

Teachers may switch between chosen strategies depending on situation and different circumstances (the long-term factors like the attitude of school administration to the teacher or short-term, like the expectation of inspection on the lesson¹⁰). The possible reasons underlying strategy choices are reviewed in the next section.

1.1. 'I do not care'

This strategy requires the least cheating and lying. A teacher who chooses it totally ignores any orders about the bilingual component of a lesson.

L., primary school teacher, did not know she had to teach bilingually. She was very surprised to hear from me that even her first grade, according to the documents of the school administration, was included into the transfer program and she had to teach Handicraft bilingually. Her reaction to the news was indifferent – she said she could not teach in Latvian and whatever administration had planned – she will not.

They can threaten me with the dismissal, I will teach in Russian anyway. [L., primary school]

It is also possible to use this strategy in the presence of inspectors:

I had such an experience. It was registered that Math in my school should partly be taught bilingually. Certainly I worked in Russian; I did not even greet my children in Latvian. And just then was the accreditation. Suddenly the inspector comes to my lesson. And he...or she... I do not remember... says, that everything is fine, all great... And what about Latvian? — Do you teach in Latvian sometimes? I answered: certainly! But today it was Geometry, it is a very difficult subject and it is much better to teach it in Russian. She was completely satisfied with this answer. [V., Math]

I suppose there are two reasons to choose this strategy: first, poor knowledge of Latvian and second, lack of fear of dismissal. The teacher, assured of his or her necessity to the school no matter what, will probably choose this strategy. There are even cases when fluent speakers of Latvian choose 'I do not care' strategy.

As might the first example show, school administration sometimes provokes teachers to ignore the requirement about the bilingual component, when it does not tell the teachers that they should teach bilingually, marking their subjects in the official documents as already taught in two languages.

That seems very logical – in their reports headmasters should present the situation in school as being better than it actually is in order to avoid trouble. It is thus much easier to report that this school is ready for the transfer, there are many bilingual lessons and everything is prepared, than to

¹⁰ It is hard for the teachers to explain what kind of inspectors they are waiting for. In the most cases they take in mind school administration (sometimes it is even more unpleasant than any external checkups). The real inspection from the outside may come only in the period of school's accreditation – e very few years.

go against the stream, reporting the actual state of things, especially knowing that it would change nothing. As the result almost all schools report that they are ready.

1.2. 'Set piece'

When choosing this strategy, a teacher uses Russian during the ordinary lesson, but in case of inspection 'plays' his or her 'set piece' – bilingual lesson prepared at home with as much Latvian component as it is possible.

Sometimes teachers can have a 'set piece' lesson that has no connection to the current topic discussed on ordinary lessons. See the example:

Literally... on the short break the headmaster informs me, that she will be on the lesson... And I have just ten minutes to... pull myself together. The only thing I say to children – there will come people, they want to see how you are working, how do you behave and how you can speak Latvian. It was Social Science lesson (...). The topic was 'Advertising'. I had collected in advance advertisements in Latvian (...). I gave to each child one advertisement, we read them... I announced the topic, read one advertisement out loud. Said in Latvian on which page the children should open the exercise books. And that's actually it. (...) Then I just gave them a nudge to write their advertisements in Latvian and they came out front and read their advertisements loudly. And... When the children's speech is heard... It makes the impression that the lesson is in Latvian. She (headmaster – T.R.) was delighted! But I almost didn't say a single word in Latvian. [E., primary school]

The Social Science subject in primary school allows speaking on different themes besides the 'general line' studied during the ordinary lessons – a teacher may say something like "OK, children – last time we discussed economics, but today let's speak about love ...".

But some subjects are not so tolerant to such switches. It is hard to prepare in advance, say, the Math lesson. But for that case teachers also have some devices. Here are some of them:

a) To call out to the front those children who speak Latvian – e.g. from the bilingual families or those who went to Latvian kindergartens.

Variation of this method is to ask different children to read the text of the task, but only those who speak Latvian fluently – to translate:

Let's assume that I need to translate something... I ask them. They translate. (...) It is possible in the fourth form, when they are rather grown-up. When they can help, understand everything. (...) Let's assume I give them the text in Latvian... (...) And not everybody can translate. I also can't (smiles sadly). I ask to translate, pretending that everything goes on as it should go, pupil maybe even doesn't suspect that something goes wrong, I do not know. Translates with a pleasure. That's it. [M., primary school]

b) To use the same exercise-books for the lesson, but in Latvian. Teachers mention that it is also important to use sometimes Latvian versions of the books during the ordinary lessons¹¹ – just to get children used to them and to avoid children questions about the new books at the inspected lesson.

¹¹ *Ordinary* here means 'without inspection'.

In general, this strategy is mainly preferred by those teachers whose knowledge of Latvian is very poor:

I never had any scruples about this issue. I just know the limitations of my Latvian. I know, that my struggle with it on the ordinary lesson will not do children any good; I will give them less knowledge. So what for? [M., primary school]

Teachers have an impression that the most important thing for all inspections is the show – nobody is interested in final results, the main thing is how it looks like.

1.3. ‘Few words in Latvian on every lesson’

Both third and fourth strategy users speak Latvian on every lesson. Actually it is hard to say where this border lies, and it is possible that the difference between these strategies is purely quantitative, depending on the amount of Latvian used during the lesson.

When speaking about the third strategy, I mean using Russian during the whole lesson, but saying a few words for the children in Latvian.

The third strategy may be realized in two ways:

a) mentioning the key words of the subject or some difficult words found in the texts, analyzed on the lesson, to make children learn the terminology in Latvian, e.g. how to say in Latvian ‘nave’ and ‘the relief’ (in the History of Culture lesson in eleventh grade, the topic being the similarities and differences in the literature of the early Middle Ages in the West Europe and Russia). In some cases teacher first asks if there are people in the classroom, who know how to say this or that in Latvian.

This version of the third strategy is chosen by teachers who speak Latvian fluently. They believe this is the best possible way to realize bilingual education.

S., who is teaching the History of Culture, answered the question why she does not speak Latvian with the eleventh grade:

There will be no work, no work, we’ll just lose time (...) First of all, it is the psychological aspect. This is the first and the most important thing. Their knowledge of Latvian is perfect. But here we are speaking about psychology. While I’m speaking Russian, it is a lesson ... If I switch to Latvian, it is over. Maybe something may be on the Latvian language lessons, but such things (like the History of Culture – T.R.)... Moreover, they are working on really difficult texts. These texts are difficult for comprehension in Russian, but in Latvian it is impossible. But speaking Latvian when analyzing text written in Russian... it is murder! Therefore – certainly not! [S., History of Culture]

Sometimes a teacher uses literally few words:

Well, for my subject we need to act, not to speak. We do not really speak much ... If only there are any terms — for example ‘klusā daba’¹². [N., Drawing]

¹² ‘The still life’ (Latv.).

b) another version of the third strategy is to say in Latvian not the new terms or key words, but just any words a teacher knows in Latvian. One of the examples is the phrase in Russian said on the Geography lesson:

Povesim *attelu* na stenku¹³ [O., Geography]

Such examples are well-known due to their utter absurdity, although it seems that this strategy (3b) is not very popular,

Both users of second and third strategies use Latvian in the written parts of the lesson – write the date and some auxiliary things like ‘Classwork’, using Latvian in the most formal parts of a lesson.

1.4. ‘Let’s try to teach bilingually’

The followers of the fourth strategy also may be divided in two groups:

a) those whose knowledge of Latvian is rather poor, but who try to follow the rules and use as much Latvian as demanded. They try to include bilingual component to every lesson, but do it very formally:

They said – 20% of the lesson should be taught in Latvian. What, where, does not matter, but must be said (in Latvian – T.R.). Of the lesson. And the teacher decides himself... let’s say, ‘classwork’, the date, theme of the lesson. In Latvian. Then he may teach in Russian (...) He may walk around, ask (in Latvian – T.R.). Or ‘stand-up – sit down’, or the P.T. break in Latvian, whatever he wants. Now I see everything is not so horrible. I can do exercises with a kid in my mother tongue, give examples in mother tongue (...) I just don’t see any point. [M., primary school]

This is an actual strategy for those teachers who almost do not speak Latvian, but work in schools, where the administration is very keen on issues of bilingual education.

b) those, which speak Latvian fluently, but feel that it is important to use also Russian during the lesson. Teachers try to teach bilingually, provide terminology in Latvian, ask children to answer in Latvian, but give explanations in Russian if children do not understand.

I saw a lesson in the sixth grade which can serve as a good example: children answer in both Russian and Latvian, the new material is mostly explained in Russian, exercise books are in Latvian and therefore all the tasks for the individual work are in Latvian.

However, here is the comment from a teacher who does not use this strategy, explaining why it is unacceptable:

Many of our teachers take these... Mencis’¹⁴ ‘fill-in-the gap’ tasks. They are both in Russian and in Latvian. Many teachers use exercise-books in Latvian (...) it is horrible. The child who grew up in a Russian family and whose parents work all day long or do not know Latvian at all — they just cannot help him. Then children just do not understand what the exercise is, what do they (the authors of the exercise-book – T.R.) want. (...) Everything is in Latvian. He is not up to it. He

¹³ ‘Let’s hang the *image* on the wall’ (everything is said in Russian apart from the word *image*, which is said in distorted Latvian).

¹⁴ J. Mencis – the author of exercise-books in Maths for the 1st – the 6th grades.

is waiting, let's say, for the parents. Parents come tired after work, they cannot even ask about the homework, and he feels fine. He comes to the lesson 'I did not understand the task!' And what can you say? (...) Yes, it is a very common case.(...) There are children who really did not understand, but in most cases they start to cheat (...) and it is a habit already. (...) And the small kid... He is reading in Russian – and even then he often does not understand, but if it's in another language... [L., primary school]

While this explanation might seem plausible, it is important to remember that L.'s Latvian is poor and the actual reason for her choice of a different strategy is unknown to us.

1.5. 'Better Latvian than the mix of languages'

The whole lesson is taught in Latvian.

Actually, this choice is the prerogative of native speakers of Latvian or those who are very fluent in it.

The problem with such lessons is that subject-oriented knowledge suffers – e.g., children learn proper names and specific terms only in Latvian which is the cause of the mistakes they do in their everyday speech.

A., a Geography teacher, is shocked by the result of using Latvian textbooks on her lessons:

It is very often that they see a proper name in Latvian and start to say it in Russian incorrectly. I cannot remember the example right now... In 'Ateny'! Yes, in 'Ateny'! I think – my God, what is it, this 'Ateny', where are they?! Right here, it's written, they answer. [A., Geography]

This example needs an explanation. The names of the Greek capital is Афины (*Afiny*) in Russian and *Atēnas* (*Atenas*) in Latvian. In Russian it sounds close to 'uh-fee-ny' and that is what the teacher was expecting, but children had learned it in Latvian — 'uh-tae-nas' and use the Latvian name with a Russian ending when speaking Russian.

Some of the teachers criticize bilingual education not only for its absurdity and mendacity, but also for its uselessness:

Seems strange to think that one can learn Latvian if one has the P.T. breaks in it! [L., primary school]

However, my experience shows that the situation with the knowledge of Latvian among children slowly changes, each new 'generation' of children knows it better than the previous. I cannot claim that it is the effect of the bilingual lessons, but it seems that the increasing quantity of Latvian in Russian-speaking children's everyday life changes their attitude to the language and pushes them on to learn it.

2. Document handling

Teachers mention that it is even more important to handle the documents in Latvian, than to teach bilingually, because chances that someone would inspect the documentation are higher than that an inspector's visit at a lesson.

First of all, all the documents must be filled in Latvian since it is the state language of the Republic of Latvia. The requirements for the written language are higher than to spoken language, therefore even a rather high level of conversational Latvian (which is also quite rare among teachers) does not solve the problems with document filing.

Observations have shown that several strategies in the teacher's work with the documentation (often combined) exist, often in combination.

Sometimes funny situations occur. Since all the records in the class register must be put in Latvian, teachers have to cheat if it is impossible. E.g. the themes of an English lesson in primary school are written in a way: 'Tēma¹⁵: 'Wild and domestic animals'', being divided into the actual theme and metatext in Latvian.

2.1. Filling in Russian

If the teacher is very self-confident or does not care about the job, he or she may keep the documents in Russian (cf. Strategy 1 in conducting the lessons) – in that case school administration is forced to translate them.

2.2. Copying

In some cases teachers just copy all the reports and records from their colleagues. Or just use their own last year documents, adapting them slightly for current needs. Sometimes they do not understand a word from what they are writing about. However, this strategy is rather popular.

Once I helped to change one document (it was the application for the facultative lessons), which was sent back to the teacher from the higher authorities with the comment that the text does not correspond to the title of the document.

It turned out that teacher just rewrote the full text from her colleague's application (the colleague was preparing completely another lessons for children of different age) and mixed the paragraphs in the text to make it slightly different (actually to make it completely incomprehensible). She did not understand a word from the document she had prepared.

The second example also describes the situation I was involved in personally. L., a primary school teacher, asked me to translate already filled-in report cards, as she said 'just for me, to understand what I have written there'. I translated the children's characteristics she had written (she actually had copied them from another colleagues' report cards). The characteristics said: 'Has knowledge about the structure of the world and about the processes that take place in it'. L. was rather surprised and said that she would have never written anything like this in Russian, since nobody in her first grade had such knowledge. But since it had already been written, that did not matter.

The complexity of the process of information transfer from teachers to parents is very interesting as well. Imagine the situation, where non-Latvian-speaking teacher tries to bring the information about the pupil to his or her non-Latvian-speaking parents. In the best-case scenario Latvian-speaking relatives and neighbours (both teacher's and parents') are involved in the process, but it is common for parents just to sign the document without reading it.

This is how the whole idea of report cards is corrupted, losing its sense.

¹⁵ 'The theme' (Latv.)

2.3. Ask for help

The most common practice is to ask Latvian-speaking colleagues or relatives to help with translation. My observations show that this strategy is used from time to time by most teachers. Often the translators are their grown-up children – most of those who are about 15–25 can now speak Latvian on an acceptable level and can translate the texts written by their parents in Russian.

A., a Science teacher and the leader of Science section in her school, had to deal with a huge amount of the documents because of her high position. She said that she had to ask her husband, whose Latvian was better, for help every time she needed to translate something she wrote. She felt very sorry that he was forced to spend his time on, but she could not do it herself, even though her Latvian was otherwise adequate.

In this example she is speaking about self-reflection. This is a written self-evaluation every teacher should submit at least once a year:

Generally it is not senseless, but the requirement to do it in Latvian is very bad and makes it completely senseless. The nuances get lost, people write just to do the formality. For me myself it could be even useful... I wrote, wrote... But broke down – S. (husband – T.R.) finished it for me.
[A., Science]

Latvian language teachers also say that their Russian-speaking colleagues, filling school registers, often ask them for help (for example, to translate a name of the musical composition ‘Russian: *sel komarik na dubochek*’ — ‘a small mosquito sat down on a small oak-tree’).

2.4. Filling in Latvian

If the language level allows, teachers are making all the records in Latvian and do not care about the mistakes. School administration corrects the mistakes before sending the documents to the higher level’s inspections. At least in some schools there is a special position for a person who is fluent in Latvian and is translating and editing teachers’ documentation during the working hours.

Whichever strategy you scrutinize, it is obvious that the attitude to all the documents is formal. The knowledge of language does not allow for more. Most of the documents planned to help the educational process along are useless since they should be written or filled in the language teachers do not know perfectly.

Conclusions

Twelve cases of Russian-speaking teachers working in the minority schools in Latvia show how people cope with the impossibility to fulfil the formal requirements, making pretence that the requirements are fulfilled.

Five strategies of conducting a lesson and four strategies of document handling were found.

These strategies differ from each other in the ratio of Latvian and Russian languages within one lesson, in the degree of formality of the use of the bilingual component and in how much difference there is between the ordinary lessons and the ‘set piece’ lessons prepared for inspectors. Cases of the largest discrepancies between what is required by the spirit of the law (i.e. the law of the com-

pulsory bilingual education in the minority schools) and what happens on the lessons in reality are most interesting for this study (see lesson strategies 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4).

The collected data show that factors which underlie the choice of the strategy are a teacher's level of Latvian, his or her relationships with school administration, and some personal features. Strategy choice can also depend on the specific class which will attend the bilingual lesson.

It is also very interesting how teachers with insufficient knowledge of Latvian cope with document handling in this language, asking their colleagues, school administration, friends and relatives for help. Sometimes document handling becomes utterly formal, the teachers do not even try to understand what they write.

Literature

- МАЛАШОНОК, Александра; ХАЛЯВИН, Никита. *Русская школа в Латвии и «Реформа-2004». Оценка взаимодействия «реформы» через анализ результатов централизованных экзаменов*. Рига: Ассоциация Русской Культуры Образования и Науки «АРКОНА», 2007.
- ПЛИНЕР, Яков; БУХВАЛОВ, Валерий. *Качество образования в условиях реформы русских школ Латвии. Экспертная оценка*. Рига, 2006. [retrieved from: www.russkie.lv 31.10.2009]
- РОКСБОРО, Ангус. *Уроки на латышском раздражают русских школьников*. ВВС-Рига, 2005.
- СИМОНЯН, Ренальд. *Россия и страны Балтии*. Москва: Academia, 2003.
- ЧУЯНОВА, Элина. *Успех реформы – государственная ложь*. Час, 12.10.2006.
- ЭЛКСНЕ, Полина. *Оценки выставляют... через пять лет*. Телеграф, 31.01.2005.
- Latvijas demogrāfijas gadagrāmata 2003*. 2004. Rīga: LR Centrālā statistikas pārvalde [retrieved from: www.csb.lv 20.08.2008].
- Mazākumtautību izglītība Latvijā, 2008* [retrieved from the homepage of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia (www.am.gov.lv) 31.10.2009]
- OSE, Liesma. *Bilingual education in Latvia: The decisions and timeline of implementation of the bilingual education*. 2006. [retrieved from: www.nordvux.net 15.10.2009]
- VĒBERS, Elmārs (ed.). *Gadagrāmata 2005*. Rīga: RD IJSD, 2006.
- ZEPA, Brigita (ed.). *Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education*. Riga: the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2002.

DVIKALBĒS PAMOKOS LATVIJOS RESPUBLIKOS MOKYKLOSE DE FACTO IR DE JURE

Tatjana Russita

Maskvos m. Psihologijos ir pedagogikos universitetas, Rusija
Latvijos Portidžo asociacija, Ryga, Latvija

Santrauka

Dvylika tyrimų, atliktų Latvijos tautinių mažumų mokyklose vedamose rusakalbių mokytojų pamokose, rodo, kaip yra bandoma spręsti privalomų dvikalbių pamokų vedimo problemas, t. y. kaip tose mokyklose tvarkomasi su gebėjimų atitikti formalius tokių pamokų vedimo reikalavimus stoka ir apsimetama, kad tokie formalieji reikalavimai yra vykdomi. Mokytojai tautinių mažumų mokyklose privalo kai kurias pamokas vesti iš karto dviem kalbomis (rusų ir latvių) toje pačioje pamokoje. Nepakankamai gerai mokėdami kalbėti latviškai, tokie rusakalbiai mokytojai šių reikalavimų realiai įvykdyti negali.

Straipsnyje yra pateikiami ir klasifikuojami įvairūs mokytojų elgsenos pavyzdžiai, aprašomos tokio elgsenos strategijos. Jos yra naudojamos spręsti konfliktinėms situacijoms, kylančioms tarp formalių reikalavimų tokiose pamokose kalbėti paraleliai dviem kalbomis ir realių galimybių tai padaryti stokos (pamokos turiniui išdėstyti net ir geriausiu atveju reikia dvigubai daugiau laiko). Formaliosiose ataskaitose stengiamasi parodyti, kad tokie reikalavimai vykdomi, nors jie ir nėra realūs. Minėtos elgsenos strategijos formaliai liudija dvikalbių pamokų egzistavimą, nors tai nėra realiai įgyvendinami dalykai.

Tyrimai buvo atlikti keturiuose Rygos tautinių mažumų mokyklose 2007 m. rugpjūčio–rugsėjo mėn. Visose šiose mokyklose pagrindinė mokymo kalba yra rusų.

Aprašomos penkios mokytojų elgsenos strategijos dvikalbių pamokų vedimo metu. 1. „...man tai nerūpi...“; 2. „...parodomoji dvikalbė pamoka, specialiai parengta atvykusiam inspektoriui...“; 3. „...keli latviški žodžiai kiekvienos pamokos metu...“; 4. „...bandau mokyti abiem kalbomis...“; 5. „...verčiau kalbėsiu latviškai, negu painiosiu abi kalbas...“. Trys iš šių strategijų liudija įvairaus lygio savęs paties apgaudinėjimo ir apsimitimo matyti tariamą objektą kaip realų atvejus.

Visos čia minimos elgsenos strategijos skiriasi tarpusavyje latvių ir rusų kalbos vartojimo pamokų metu kiekio ir tarpusavio santykio aspektu. Lygiai taip pat čia įvairuoja ir formalusis dvikalbio komponento vartosenos lygis įprastos ir „parodomosios“ pamokos (inspektoriui) metu. Surinkti duomenys liudija, kad vienos ar kitos strategijos pasirinkimas priklauso nuo paties rusakalbio mokytojo latvių kalbos mokėjimo lygio, jo santykių su mokyklos vadovais ir kitų asmens elgsenos ypatybių. Strategijos pasirinkimą taip pat lemia ir mokinių sudėtis dvikalbės pamokos metu.

Verta aptarti, kaip rusakalbiai mokytojai rengia privalomą pamokų vedimo dokumentaciją latvių kalba. Daugelis jų to daryti patys net nesistengia – prašo tai padaryti geriau gebančių savo kolegų, mokyklos administracijos, draugų ar giminių pagalbos. Kartais tokių ataskaitų rašymas tampa visiškai formaliu dalyku, nes patys mokytojai net nesivargina perskaityti ir įsigilinti, ką vietoje jų kažkas ten yra prirašęs.

Išskiriamos keturios dokumentacijos tvarkymo privalomąja latvių kalba strategijos: 1. „...rašau ataskaitas rusiškai...“; 2. „...kopijuojau...“; 3. „...prašau pagalbos...“; 4. „...rašau latviškai...“. Viena jų yra aiški savęs apgaudinėjimo strategija, o visos keturios neišvengiamai reikalauja papildomo laiko ir darbo išteklių mokyklos administracijai galutinai parengiant aktualius dokumentus latvių kalba, t.y. jų tekstus verčiant iš rusų kalbos, taisant gramatines latvių kalbos klaidas ir pavieniais atvejais jas sukuriant naujai vien tam, kad jos įgautų tvarkingų ir turinčių tam tikrą prasmę dokumentų pavidalą.

Atskirų elgsenos strategijų klasifikacija yra parengta remiantis dvylikos tyrimų rezultatais, o jų pagrindimas iliustruojamas konkrečiais paskirų mokytojų darbo atvejų pavyzdžiais. Buvo daromi probleminio turinio interviu su minėtų mokyklų rusakalbiais mokytojais, taikomi dalyvių stebėjimo metodai, atskleidžiama ir asmeninė straipsnio autorės ketverių metų darbo Latvijos tautinių mažumų mokykloje patirtis.

Tyrimo metu užfiksuoti prieštaringi formalios ir realios dvikalbystės vartosenos minėtose mokyklose atvejai, nulemti ne visada įmanomų realizuoti Latvijos Respublikos įstatymuose numatytų šio pobūdžio reikalavimų, sudaro esminę šiame straipsnyje pateikiamos medžiagos dalį.