

LANGUAGE CONFLICT AND CLAIMS FOR THE EXPANSION OF
LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN LITHUANIA:
CONTRASTING CASES OF POLISH AND RUSSIAN MINORITIES

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF EURASIAN STUDIES

JULY 2015

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ABSTRACT

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July 2015, 180 pages

This thesis studies the reasons for the differences in the attitudes of Polish and Russian minorities in regards to language policy in Lithuania within the context of the multitude of relations between language and ethnic identity. The Polish minority makes claims for the expansion of language rights, whereas the Russian minority does not demonstrate support for such claims. In this thesis, the Lithuanian national language rights framework, the attitudes of the majority community (the Lithuanians) towards minority languages, the characteristics of the two minorities (the Poles and the Russians) and their approaches towards their languages are examined with a comparative perspective. The research is based on qualitative data obtained during the fieldwork carried out in Lithuania. Research findings demonstrate that the current language conflict in Lithuania is essentially a Polish-Lithuanian conflict over the recognition of the Polish ethnolinguistic identity within the Lithuanian nation-state. Respectively, it is reflected in status-related claims regarding the transformation of the existing national language rights framework.

Key words: Lithuania, ethnic identity, language, ethnic minorities, language rights

ÖZ

LİTVANYA'DA DİL ÇATIŞMASI VE DİL HAKLARININ GENİŞLETİLMESİ İÇİN TALEPLER: POLONYALI (LEH) VE RUS AZINLIKLARIN ÇELİŞEN ÖRNEKLERİ

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Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Ayşegül Aydıngün

Temmuz 2015, 180 sayfa

Bu tez, dil ve etnik kimlik arasındaki ilişkilerin çeşitliliği bağlamında, Litvanya'daki Polonyalı (Leh) ve Rus azınlıkların devletin dil politikasına karşı tutumlarındaki farklılıkların nedenlerini incelemektedir. Leh azınlık dil haklarının genişletilmesi için taleplerini ortaya koyarken Rus azınlık bu tür taleplere destek vermemektedir. Bu tezde, Litvanya'daki ulusal dil hakları çerçevesi, çoğunlukta olan topluluğun (Litvanlar) azınlık dillerine ilişkin tutumu, iki azınlık grubunun (Lehler ve Ruslar) özellikleri ve dillerinine ilişkin yaklaşımları karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenmiştir. Bu tez Litvanya'da gerçekleştirilmiş olan saha araştırmasında elde edilmiş olan nitel verilere dayanmaktadır. Araştırmanın sonuçları günümüzde Litvanya'da dil çatışmasının esasen Lehler ve Litvanlar arasında olduğunu ve bunun, Lehlerin, Litvanya ulus-devletinin kendi etnolingistik kimliklerini tanımasını talep etmesinden kaynaklandığını göstermektedir. Dolayısıyla, söz konusu çatışma, dil kullanımından daha çok dil grubunun ve onun dilinin sembolik statüsü ile ilgili talepler bağlamında söz konusu olmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Litvanya, etnik kimlik, dil, etnik azınlıklar, dil hakları

To My Grandfather

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. *Ayşegül Aydıngün* for her overall guidance, valuable comments and suggestions in the course of the research, as well as for her optimism, moral support and encouragement. Also, I would like to thank my examining committee members – Prof. Dr. *Süer Eker* and Assist. Prof. Dr. *Işık Kuşçu Bonnenfant*.

I am thankful to my friends – *Viktoriiia Demydova*, *Yuliia Biletska*, *Merve Hazer Yiğit*, *Siavil Alieyeva* and others – for their support and valuable pieces of advice. My special thanks go to my friends and former colleagues – *Zeynep Gayran*, who was an enormous help when preparing the Turkish summary of the thesis, and *Sarah Mills*, who helped me with editing. I am grateful to the family of *Mickevičiai* for hosting me during the field research.

Finally, I want to thank my parents and my beloved sister for constantly encouraging and supporting me since the beginning of my graduate studies.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introducing the Field

The Republic of Lithuania – between 1940 and 1991 the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (the LitSSR) – is located in the northeast of Europe. Together with Latvia and Estonia, Lithuania is part of the Baltic region, named after the Baltic Sea, to which each of the three states has access. The country's territory is 65,300 square kilometers.¹ Lithuania borders Belarus in the east, Latvia in the north, Poland in the south and the Kaliningrad region of Russia in the southwest. The population of Lithuania is approximately 3 million inhabitants. The capital is the city of Vilnius.

According to the 2011 census² data, Lithuanians comprise 84.1%, while Poles, Russians and Belarusians make up respectively 6.6%, 5.9% and 1.2% of the country's population.³ Looking at the statistics of the country's ethnic composition, one may assume that Lithuania, unlike other Baltic states, is an ethnically homogeneous society. Nevertheless, the two largest ethnic minorities – Poles and Russians – are not evenly dispersed throughout the country's territory.⁴

¹ Lithuania, *World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lh.html>, last visited on November 2014.

² 2011 m. Lietuvos gyventojų surašymas, *Oficialiosios Statistikos Portalas*, <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/2011-m.-surasymas>, last visited on May 2015.

³ The shares of population by 'native' languages were reported as follows: Lithuanian – 82%, Russian - 8%, Polish – 5.6% (some people mentioned more than one 'native' language).

⁴ See appendices A and B.

Instead, they are concentrated in a number of regions and urban areas, where they make up a sizeable share, plurality or even the absolute majority of the population.

This thesis aims to find out the similarities and dissimilarities in the attitudes and responses of Polish and Russian minorities regarding the state language policy in Lithuania after 1991. While comparing the two minorities, primary attention is given to the origin of the communities, their attachment to the geographical territory of Lithuania, the linguistic component of ethnic identities, language status, the perception of threat to linguistic identity, involvement in struggle for the protection and expansion of language rights and alike. The general sociolinguistic situation in Lithuania and the relationships between the two ethnic minorities and the titular nation are also taken into account.

1.1.1 Lithuanian Majority

Lithuanians are a small nation with the total population of around three million, including migrants, who reside in other countries, and autochthonous Lithuanian communities in Poland and Belarus. The only state (official)⁵ language of the country is Lithuanian.⁶ It belongs to a separate group of Baltic languages within the family of Indo-European languages.⁷ It is closely related to the Latvian language, although they are not mutually intelligible. Lithuanian uses a variation of the Latin alphabet, which consists of 32 letters. The Lithuanian alphabet employs a number of diacritics and digraphs to reflect the phonetics of the language. Loanwords from other languages that use the Latin script are adopted in their phonetic form and spelled according to the rules of the Lithuanian language. Personal names and surnames of foreign origin, held by

⁵ Lit. *valstibine kalba*, literally meaning *state language*, is the original term used in Lithuanian.

⁶ Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija, <http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Konstitucija.htm>, last visited on April 2015.

⁷ Subačius, G. 'Apie lietuvių kalbą', *Lietuvių kalbos institutas*, http://www.lki.lt/LKI_LT/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=34&Itemid=34, last visited on November 2014.

Lithuanian citizens, are also written in their phonetic form according to the rules of the Lithuanian language. Therefore, letters which are not found in the Lithuanian alphabet cannot be used in official documents.⁸

Lithuanians have always comprised the absolute majority of population in the LitSSR. The republic did not experience such a massive migration wave between 1940 and 1991 as for example Estonia, Latvia or Kazakhstan. The Soviet language policies of Russification, as a rule, led only to the spread of unassimilated bilingualism, whereas the position of the titular language in Lithuania remained relatively firm as compared to the positions of titular languages in other Soviet republics.⁹

In the Soviet period Lithuanians stood out for their strong sense of national identity and cultural and political resistance to Soviet policies. Such a strong national unity and opposition to the central Soviet government can be illustrated by the fact that Lithuania was the first republic to proclaim its independence from the Soviet Union in 1990, which, however, was internationally recognized only in 1991.¹⁰

In general, it can be said that after the proclamation of independence there has been little argument among local elites about the character of the nation-building process, which is to be based around the central role of the Lithuanian language, glorification of medieval history and statehood, orientation towards the European integration and critical evaluation of the Soviet period, referred to as the period of occupation.

⁸ Ramonienė, M. 'Language Planning and Personal Naming in Lithuania' *Current Issues in Language Planning*, vol. 8, no 3, 2007, p. 430.

⁹ Tamošlūnas, A. 'The Linguistic Russification of Titular Baltic Nationalities', *LITUANUS - Lithuanian Quarterly Journal Of Arts and Sciences*, vol. 26, no 1, 1980.

¹⁰ Ashbourne, A. *Lithuania: The Rebirth of a Nation, 1991-1994*, Lanham, Md.; Oxford: Lexington Books, 1999, p. 14.

1.1.2 Polish Minority

The size of the Polish community is approximately 200,000 people.¹¹ This ethnic group is concentrated in the following administrative districts of Lithuania: *Šalčininkų rajonas* – 77.8 % of the region's population; *Vilniaus rajonas* – 52.1% of the region's population; *Trakų rajonas* – 30.1% of the region's population; and *Švenčionių rajonas* – 26% of the region's population. The districts are located in the eastern part of the country on the border with Belarus and around the country's capital. In the city of Vilnius Poles make up 16% of the population.

The above-mentioned areas, controlled by Poland in the interwar period, are often informally referred to as *Wileński Kraj*.¹² Approximately 40% of Lithuanian Poles live in the countryside, being one of the least urbanized ethnic groups.¹³ The number of people that stated their ethnicity as Polish has decreased by 15% between 2001 and 2011. However, the speed of the decrease remains the lowest among minority groups in the republic. Also, the age composition reflects the highest number of children and teenagers and the lowest share of elder people among all the country's minorities.

In religious terms the absolute majority (88.6%) of local Poles define themselves as the followers of the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁴ There is a strong connection between the Polish identity and Catholicism, which has been the state faith since the 10th century. Since the 13th century Catholic Church started using the Polish language for religious purposes,¹⁵ thus, creating a triangular link

¹¹ 2011 m. Lietuvos gyventojų surašymas, *Oficialiosios Statistikos Portalas*, <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/2011-m.-surasymas>, last visited on May 2015.

¹² Zubek, V. 'New Poland's Old Dilemma: the Polish minority of Lithuania', *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, vol. 16, no 4, 1993, p. 664.

¹³ 2011 m. Lietuvos gyventojų surašymas, *Oficialiosios Statistikos Portalas*, <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/2011-m.-surasymas>, last visited on May 2015.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Catholic Encyclopedia, Poland, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12181a.htm>, last visited on December 2014.

between religion, language and national identity. Poland also played the role of a religious center from which Catholicism was spread eastwards, throughout the Lithuanian territory.

The Polish community is historically rooted within the territory of Lithuania. After the formation of the common Polish-Lithuanian state in the 16th century the Polish nobility and clergy dominated the political and religious matters of the country and facilitated the process of cultural and linguistic Polonization.¹⁶ Hence, the Polish community on the territory of modern Lithuania did not emerge as a result of migration. Rather it was formed by the local population of both Slavic and Baltic origins. Consequently, the Polish community is considered autochthonous to the regions where they reside in Lithuania. This fact is also well-realized by community members, for whom it was Lithuania and Lithuanians which ‘came’ to their home region after 1939, when the Vilnius region, previously controlled by Poland, was transferred to the Republic of Lithuania by the Soviet government.¹⁷

1.1.3 Russian Minority

Russians comprise the second largest ethnic minority in Lithuania. Their share in the country's population dropped from 9.4% in 1989 to 5.9% in 2011.¹⁸ According to the data from the latest census, approximately 177,000 ethnic Russians reside on the territory of Lithuania. Lithuania's Russian community is predominantly urban, middle- and senior-aged. They make up the majority of population in the city of *Visaginas* – 51.9%, where the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant, currently inactive, was constructed during the Soviet period. Russians comprise 19.6% of the population in *Klaipėda*, the major Lithuanian seaport. In

¹⁶ Zubek, V. ‘New Poland's Old Dilemma: the Polish minority of Lithuania’, *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, vol. 16, no 4, 1993, p. 664.

¹⁷ Ashbourne, A. *Lithuania: The Rebirth of a Nation, 1991-1994*, Lanham, Md.; Oxford: Lexington Books, 1999, p. 46-47.

¹⁸ 2011 m. Lietuvos gyventojų surašymas, *Oficialiosios Statistikos Portalas*, <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/2011-m.-surasymas>, last visited on May 2015.

Zarasų and *Švenčionių* districts Russians make up 18.7% and 13.3% of the population. In *Vilnius* the share of ethnic Russians is 12%. The majority of local Russians at least nominally belong to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Today's Russian community of Lithuania began to form before the 20th century.¹⁹ Russians started settling down in Vilnius when it became the center of governorship of the Russian Empire in the 19th century. Besides, a number of 'old-believers' had been settling on the Lithuanian territory since the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. However, the absolute majority of Lithuania's Russians are relative 'late-comers' – the ones who settled on the territory of the republic after World War II, thanks to the economic and migration policies of the Soviet authorities.²⁰ Thus, they are mostly first-, second- and rarely third-generation migrants. A number of Soviet-time migrants from other Slavic republics have blended in with the Russian community as well.

The number of ethnic Russians in Lithuania decreased after the country proclaimed its independence mostly owing to migration in the 1990s, including the relocation of the Soviet military and their families, combined with the gradual naturalization process.

1.2. Introducing the Study

In the Soviet period ethnic processes were subjected to the overall logic of the Soviet nationality policies, which in a dialectical manner combined the view on the primordial essence of ethnicity and the constructivist desire for the creation and imposition of a new supra-ethnic 'Soviet' identity.²¹ The latter was closely associated with the promotion of a distinct Soviet culture and linguistic Russification.

¹⁹ Biveinis, P. and Kasperavičius, A. 'Lietuvos tautinės mažumos, valstybė ir visuomenė XX-XXI amžių sandūroje', *Lietuvos Istorijos Studijos*, vol. 30, 2012, p. 152.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Grenoble, L.A. *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*, New York; Boston; Dordrecht; London; Moscow: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003, p. 42.

The bankruptcy of the Soviet ideology in the late 1980s had been accompanied by the tide of ethnic and cultural revival, which served as the basis for nation-building projects in post-Soviet republics. After 1991 various nations and nationalities of the former Soviet Union were involved in the process of reconsidering their ethnic identity, demarcating group boundaries and renegotiating their relationships *vis-a-vis* other ethnic groups in contact.

In Estonia and Latvia, an important factor which defines the hostile nature of interethnic relations in these countries lies in the overall perception by the two titular nations of their cultures and most notably, titular languages, as being under threat from the side of Soviet-time migrants?²² The legal expression of such a threatened position is the restrictive citizenship law, which, at the time did not automatically allow Soviet immigrants to become citizens of newly independent republics.

In this regard Lithuania is different. In the absence of major cultural, linguistic and demographic threats to the titular nation, all the country's inhabitants were automatically granted citizenship according to a 'zero-citizenship' model. Owing to this fact the overall character of inter-ethnic relations in the republic is much less troublesome and hostile than in other Baltic states.²³ Nevertheless, since 1991 the country's two major ethnic minorities have had to reestablish themselves under the new social and political conditions of the independent Lithuanian nation-state.

Language and religion, as highlighted by William Safran (Safran, 2008, p. 171), usually serve as the primary core around which ethnic identity is arranged. With religion retreating from the public sphere of modern societies, language remains the most suitable instrument for the public manifestation of ethnic identity. In a way, the politicization of language and language-related issues is the unavoidable consequence of inter-ethnic interaction and boundary-drawing.

The 'Polish issue', which exists in the Lithuanian public discourse, is in its essence the issue of the use of the Polish language or a struggle for its symbolic presence in the public sphere. This struggle is realized in the form of claims for

²² Muiznieks, N., Rozenvalds, J. and Birka, I 'Ethnicity and Social Cohesion in the Post-Soviet Baltic States', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 47, no 3, 2013, p. 289.

²³Ibid.

the use of bilingual street signs, the use of the Polish language in official communication in the areas populated by the Polish minority, the preservation of the original Polish spelling of names and surnames in official documents, the reconsideration of amendments to the education system and others.

The local Russian community, although having found themselves in the identical social and political context with their Polish counterparts, did not create a similar ‘Russian issue’ and in general express greater readiness for social and cultural integration.²⁴

*Table 1.1 Polish and Russian Minorities in Lithuania*²⁵

	<i>Polish community</i>	<i>Russian community</i>
Status	Ethnic minority	Ethnic minority
Change of status	From minority in a Soviet Socialist Republic to minority in independent Lithuania	From a privileged minority in the LitSSR and majority in the USSR to a minority in Lithuania
Origin	Autochthonous	Immigrant
Political homeland	Poland	Russia
Distribution	Rural/urban	Predominantly urban
Religion	Roman Catholicism	Russian Orthodox Church
Attitude towards titular nation	Feeling of Cultural Superiority, mild	Feeling of Cultural Superiority, strong

The two communities share important similarities. First of all, they have 'homelands' outside of Lithuania – Russia and Poland. However, for the local Polish community Poland has long been an external political homeland whereas there has been also a strong attachment to the land on which they live in Lithuania. On the other hand, for the local Russian community a full-fledged minority status is a relatively new experience due to the following reason. In the Soviet period, Moscow was the cultural and political center not only for the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic but also for all the rest of the Soviet Union, including the LitSSR. Hence Russians, while being a minority in Lithuania, were at the same time a majority in the Soviet Union as a whole. Besides, the Russian language was the second official language in all the Soviet

²⁴ Potashenko, G. ‘Russians of Lithuania (1990-2010): Integration in Civil Society’, *Ethnicity*, vol. 3, 2010, p. 106.

²⁵ Prepared by the author.

republics and served as the means of interethnic communication in the USSR.

For the two communities an associated faith is an important marker of national identity – Russian Orthodox Church and Polish Roman Catholic Church. The majority of Lithuanians are also Roman Catholics, but there is still religious segregation due to the language of religious services. Both Poles and Russians share feelings of certain cultural superiority towards the titular Lithuanians, emanating from the history of the region, which was the subject of Polish and Russian political and cultural domination until the establishment of the independent Lithuanian state.

At the same time, there are a number of important differences between the two communities. First, there is the degree of attachment to land. While the Polish community is autochthonous, the Russian community is predominantly immigrant, having formed out of relative ‘late-comers’. Second, there is the continuation of the minority status for the Polish community before and after 1991; whereas the Russian community became a minority group in its proper sense only after 1991. In other words, one may suggest that Lithuanian Poles have experienced the status of an ethnic minority for a longer period than Russians. There are also differences in the degree of religiousness, which is higher for the Poles; and in the share of urban population.

The Russian language has become a minority language in Lithuania after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Despite the fact that it experienced a downgrade in its official position, especially in relationship to Lithuanian, it still remains the most widespread foreign language in Lithuania by the total number of speakers. 63% of Lithuanian inhabitants reported knowledge of the Russian language in 2011.²⁶ Russian also remained the most widespread second foreign language studied by 80% of school students in 2012.²⁷

²⁶ ‘Lietuvoje labiausiai paplitusi užsienio kalba – rusų, daugėja mokančiųjų angliškai’, *Kauno Diena*, <http://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/salies-pulsas/lietuvoje-labiausiai-paplitusi-uzsienio-kalba-rusu-daugeja-mokanciu-angliskai-415411#.VEKIUFx2Myc>, last visited on December 2014.

²⁷ Zverko, N. ‘Profesorė: nors lietuviai mokiniai nenori mokytis rusų kalbos, dažnai neturi pasirinkimo’, *DELFI.LT*, <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/education/profesore-nors-lietuviai-mokiniai-nenori-mokytis-rusu-kalbos-daznai-neturi-pasirinkimo.d?id=58357940>, last visited on December 2014.

The use of the Russian language for business purposes remains widespread, especially in the capital, and a good command of the language is an important advantage for competing at the domestic labor market.²⁸ In a way, such a situation provides local younger Russian speakers with an advantage against their Lithuanian peers, as they have good command of both the titular language and Russian. Needless to say, Russian still remains an important regional language in former USSR republics and provides access to a broad variety of media sources, Russian-language literature and mass culture.

The Polish language has remained a minority regional language in Lithuania for more than 70 years. It did not experience a change of status in 1991. However, it may be assumed that the overall sociolinguistic environment has transformed. In the Soviet Union, Polish was one of the recognized minority languages of an ethnically heterogeneous state in which Russian was the language of inter-ethnic communication and policies of Russification were applied. In independent Lithuania it became a minority language in a small nation-state with a monolingual language policy and a strong emphasis on an ethnolinguistic component in the nation-building process.

The Polish language does not have a special regional role as it is not spoken outside of Poland and it is not preferred as a foreign language or the language of inter-ethnic communication. Due to the specifics of their continuous minority status first in the Soviet Union and LitSSR and then in independent Lithuania, the members of the Polish community usually possess the knowledge of all the three most widespread languages of Lithuania – Lithuanian, Russian and Polish.

The number of schools using Polish as the main language of instruction increased from 44 in the 1990/1991 academic year²⁹ to 54 (80, including mixed schools where there are groups for which Polish is the main language of instruction) in the 2013/2014 academic year³⁰, which may indicate the persistent

²⁸ 'Užaugo rusiškai nekalbanti karta', *Veidas.lt* <http://www.veidas.lt/uzaugo-rusiskai-nekalbanti-karta>, last visited on December 2014.

²⁹ Biveinis, P. and Kasperavičius, A. 'Lietuvos tautinės mažumos, valstybė ir visuomenė XX-XXI amžių sandūroje', *Lietuvos Istorijos Studijos*, vol. 30, 2012, p. 156.

³⁰ Kligienė, M. 'Tautinių mažumų švietimas Lietuvoje', *Švietimo problemos analizė*, no. 19 (105), 2013, p. 2.

desire of the majority of the Polish community to educate their children in the Polish language rather than in the Lithuanian language.³¹ In addition, Polish maintains its importance in spiritual life either as the exclusive language of religious services in the areas where Poles comprise the majority of population or together with the Lithuanian language in the areas with mixed population.

*Table 1.2 Polish and Russian Languages in Lithuania*³²

	<i>Polish language</i>	<i>Russian language</i>
Current status	Minority language	Minority language, regional language
Change in status after 1991	No	Yes; from an official language to a minority language
Claim/struggle for language rights	Yes	No

A set of language-related claims and concerns regarding the alteration of the existing language rights framework, publicly expressed by the members of the Polish community, is commonly and informally referred to in Lithuania as the ‘Polish issue’. It includes claims for the original spelling of Polish names and surnames in identity or state-issued documents, introduction of bilingual street signs and the use of the Polish language in official communication in areas populated by Poles, and resistance against the introduction of teaching of some subjects in the Lithuanian language in schools with Polish as the main language of instruction.

Consequently, the research question of the study is the influence of such factors as the characteristics of a minority community and the position of a minority language in a society on the development of the perception of threat to a linguistic identity and hence on resorting to the struggle for the alteration of existing language rights framework among the members of Polish and Russian communities in Lithuania.

In this thesis it is argued that, in the case of the Polish minority, the community’s characteristics, such as demography, origin and institutions,

³¹ Ramonienė, M. and Extra, G. *Multilingualism in Lithuanian Cities: Languages at Home and School in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda*, Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla, 2011, pp. 14-15.

³² Prepared by the author.

enhance its potential to engage in a language conflict with the national majority. The unfavorable position of the Polish language in Lithuania creates a perception of threat to an ethno-linguistic identity and generates greater awareness of, and motivation for language-related claims.

In case of the Russian minority, the community's characteristics limit its potential to engage in a conflict with the national majority. The status of the minority language is a relatively recent experience for the members of the community, mediated by the fact that Russian preserves its important position at the domestic linguistic market as the language of business, regional communication and mass culture. The negative change of the status of the language, which occurred in the recent past, did not lead to the perception of threat to a linguistic identity and motivation to engage in a struggle for the alteration of the existing language rights framework.

1.3. Methodology

Documentary research and fieldwork are used in the thesis. The documentary research includes the study of official statistics, official documents and legislation. The field research was conducted between the 2nd and the 26th of February 2015 in Lithuania. It includes semi-structured elite and expert interviews with Lithuanians, Poles and Russians, as well as in-depth interviews with ordinary people from local Polish and Russian ethnic minorities. Respondents for interviews were chosen through the help of convenient and purposive sampling with the mediating role of gatekeepers. Interviewees are a Polish expert from *the House of Polish Culture*; a Polish expert from *the Union of Teachers of Polish Schools of Lithuania*; a Russian expert from *the Union of Teachers of Russian Schools of Lithuania*; a Lithuanian expert from *the House of Ethnic Communities*; a Lithuanian expert in sociolinguistics from *the Vilnius University*; the member of *the Department of Lithuanian Studies* at the Vilnius University; the employee of the *Russian Cultural Center* in Vilnius.

Interview questions covered the following topics: evaluation of general tendencies in the process of integration of ethnic minorities in Lithuania; the attitude of the titular ethnic group towards minorities; the role of 'homelands' in

the life of the minority communities; attitudes towards the Lithuanian language and culture among the minorities and issues in their linguistic integration; the position of minority languages in the Lithuanian society; the position of minority languages as mother tongues within the members of minority communities; the claims of the Polish minority for the expansion of language rights and related tensions; the situation of the Russian community as in contrast to the Polish case.

For the three groups of interviewees there were three separate variations of questions. The version of the questions, which focuses on the comparison of situations and tendencies among major ethnic minorities in Lithuania, was used for the Lithuanian experts. For experts from minority groups the versions of questions focused on the situations of their respective communities were used. The languages of interviews are Lithuanian and Russian.

A set of semi-structured in-depth interviews with the ordinary people from the Russian and Polish minority groups, residing in the city of Vilnius (in total 14 people, aged 20 to 55) constitutes the second part of the fieldwork. The questions of the interviews covered the following topics: personal background; language proficiency and language acquisition patterns; attitudes towards the majority community, its culture and language; attitudes towards respective 'homelands'; instances of discrimination; minority language use and language choices for schooling, media and work; attitudes towards the claims of the Polish community; and opinions on differences between the Polish and Russian communities in this regard. The language of interviews is Russian.

Finally, the data collected through the help of interviews was supplemented with the data from field observations at regions, predominantly populated by ethnic minorities. The latter includes the visual representation of minority languages in public places, language choices and language switches in the course of public conversations, and the availability of printed media and books in minority languages.

The research field for both minorities is the city of *Vilnius*, Lithuania's capital, in which the sizeable shares of both Russian and Polish ethnic groups reside. In addition, the town of *Šalčininkai*, in which the Polish ethnic group comprises the absolute majority of population, is also a site for the collection of field observations.

1.4. Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is composed of seven chapters. In the first chapter an introduction to the study, its methodology and structure are presented. The second chapter sets the theoretical framework of the research. It starts from a general discussion on the relationships between language and the formation and maintenance of ethnic identity and continues with the analysis of the concept of language rights and its applicability for the situation of language conflict. The third chapter analyzes the existing national language rights framework in Lithuania, as well as the areas of contestation from the side of the Polish community. The fourth chapter focuses on the role of language for the majority community and prevailing attitudes towards state language policy and claims for the expansion of language rights. The fifth chapter compares the characteristics of the two ethnic minorities, such as demography, social and economic status, origin, attitude to the majority community, affiliated organizations and institutions, evaluating their relative capacity for putting forward right-related claims. The sixth chapter presents the comparative analysis of the positions of the minority languages in various domains of the Lithuanian linguistic market, the importance of language-related issues for community members, and motivation to engage in language conflict. Finally, the seventh chapter summarizes and concludes the research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter examines the theoretical framework of the research. In order to approach the issue of ethnic minorities and language conflict in Lithuania the complex role of language as a marker of ethnicity shall first be defined. Hence, the first part of the chapter will briefly examine the main theoretical approaches to ethnicity (primordialism, constructivism, instrumentalism) and discuss the role of language in ethnic identity formation and maintenance. The second part will review the relationships between nation-state, nationalism and language. Finally, the third part will refer to the notion of minority language rights and conflicts which involve a linguistic dimension.

2.1 Linguistic Component of Ethnicity

2.1.1 Approaches to Ethnicity

The discussion on the role of language in ethnic identity formation and maintenance shall be first introduced by a general discussion on the phenomenon of ethnicity. This part of the chapter will summarize three major views of ethnicity in social disciplines - primordialism, constructivism and instrumentalism.

The first theoretical approach to ethnicity – primordialism - takes roots in the extreme linguistic nationalism of the 19th century, represented by ‘German Romantics’ - Herder, Humbolt and Fichte (cited in May, 2012: 30). According to their view, ethnicity is perceived as a natural and immutable quality of a particular individual. Human beings are seen as belonging to fixed ethnic communities. The constitutive elements of ethnicity are common language, blood

ties, and soil, which are historically objective and cannot be altered. Another branch of primordialism - socio-biology - presented by the works of Pierre van den Berghe, argues that ethnic groups are 'natural' because they are the extensions of historically blood-related kin groups, selected on the grounds of genetic evolution (cited in May, 2012: 30). The contemporary scholars of primordialism, such as Geertz, Isaacs and Shils, argue that ethnic ties are primordial attachments, which are rooted in human's earliest socialization and kinship (cited in May, 2012: 31-32). Other ties are built on and around this ethnic kinship. Respectively these attachments precede and predefine the patterns of in-group and intergroup interaction. In other words, the patterns of interaction arise out of prior categorical distinctions, not the other way around, as suggested by Gil-White (Gil-White, 1999: 814-815).

In this last view, ethnic relations are not primordial in their real sense, but are assumed to be so by the members of ethnic groups. People perceive these ties as primordial, given that they are linked to certain objective historical and cultural characteristics – blood relatedness, customs, and language, and thus treat them as pre-eminent over other ties.

In summary, the primordial approach tends to explain the persistence and sustainability of ethnic bonds over other forms of group identity. Ethnicity is either directly inherited, or perceived to be, on the grounds of objectively shared commonalities, such as common origin, culture, language and history. In response to this view the constructivist critics of primordialism suggest that cultural attributes such as origin, culture and language, do not constitute a sufficient explanation for the phenomenon of ethnicity for it is more than just a sum of the abovementioned markers (May, 2012: 32). The same combination of attributes in one case may result in the emergence of an ethnic community, while under different circumstances it doesn't occur. The primordial approach lacks the historical examination of constituents which are taken for granted, whereas, in fact, such ethnicity markers as culture, origin and language are prone to transformation and alteration in a longer historical perspective. Finally, primordialism has little to say about such phenomena as the multiplicity of identities, hybridization and the role of an individual choice in identity change and switches (May, 2012: 40-41).

The constructivist approach to the issue of ethnicity detaches the most commonly attributed markers of ethnicity from the essence of the phenomenon and can be traced back to the works of Max Weber on ethnic groups. Weber defines ethnic groups as “human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent, belief in common origin and in general commonness” (Weber, 1979: 389). Hence ethnicity is a presumed identity, for which belief outweighs the objective relatedness, and, consequently, it is of secondary importance whether blood ties are real or fictional. In Weber’s view, alongside the belief in common origin, a common language is fundamental, but not always a necessary presupposition of group formation.

Within the discipline of social anthropology the development of the constructivist approach to ethnicity is associated with the work of Fredrik Barth, who draws a distinction between the ‘cultural stuff’ of a particular ethnic identity and ethnic boundaries (Barth, 1969: 9-38). The latter are, in fact, the core of ethnic identity, whereas the pool of cultural markers, such as religion, beliefs, language and customs, is not immutable, but can change and transform over time when it is used in the boundary-construction process. In other words, these are tools, which are used in order to create and maintain ethnic boundaries, and which can be constructed, reconstructed or discarded, depending on given circumstances. Hence, ethnicity originates in the process of in-group self-ascription and distinction of those who belong to a particular community from the outsiders on the basis of the most appropriate cultural criteria.

The role of cultural markers in the process of ethnic identity construction is also stressed by Paul Brass (Brass, 1991), according to whom, ethnic groups use markers as symbols both for internal cohesion and for differentiation from others. The duality of the process of ethnic formation is discussed by Joane Nagel (Nagel, 1994: 167-168), according to whom, ethnic identity formation is a dialectical process of group-individual and intergroup interaction, and is a complex outcome of external and internal definitions and ascriptions.

In this regard Anthony D. Smith suggests a distinction between ethnic categories and ethnic communities, or *ethnies* (Smith, 1992: 437-440). The former are identified by outsiders on the basis of certain cultural and historical criteria, such as language and religion. By contrast, ethnic communities are the

result of internal self-ascription, self-awareness and demarcation of identity boundaries.

In short, the constructivist perspective on ethnicity advocates the separation of cultural identity markers from the essence of the phenomenon of ethnicity. Ethnic groups are ascribed and self-ascribed through the process of boundary making and maintenance, and in the course of interaction with outsiders.

The instrumentalist (situative, or circumstantial) approach to ethnicity is focused on the ways in which ethnicity becomes salient and can be utilized by groups and individuals under various circumstances (May, 2012: 37-40). Ethnicity can be viewed as a social and political resource, which can be used to mobilize people in order to achieve particular benefits or obtain other resources. According to Peter Worsley (Worsley, 1984: 249), ethnicity legitimizes claims to rights and provides weapons in competition over social goods. The weight of ethnicity can dramatically alter depending on the social and political structure of society. In the case of North America ethnicity and ethnic identity might be a purely symbolic expression of nostalgia and a cultural phenomenon of a secondary importance (Gans, 1994: 578-580), whereas in other cases ethnicity is the dominant modality according to which the society is shaped and powers are distributed, as in Nazi Germany, the former Yugoslavia, etc. (Fenton, 2003: 51-72). Identity switches and the changes of one's ethnic identity can be the examples of its situational and instrumental character (May, 2012: 38).

The instrumentalist perspective highlights the importance of ethnicity as a tool for achieving social, political and economic gains and, thus, the adaptability and adoptability of ethnic identities. Therefore, this approach seems to be focusing on the process of ethnic mobilization rather than on ethnic groups as such. However, the reality of ethnicity is elastic, but not totally arbitrary, for ethnicity is not always freely chosen, but is often merely one out of a limited range of choices, provided by broader social and political structures (May, 2012: 41-46). This is especially valid in the case of minority groups which are defined and treated accordingly by the dominant group. The instrumentalist perspective is also challenged by instances when ethnic identity persists in the face of political oppression and persecution, notwithstanding assimilationist policies.

These three major theoretical perspectives on ethnicity contribute to the

studying of ethnicity in general and its linguistic dimension in particular in the following manner. Primordial accounts of ethnicity emphasize the persistence of ethnic bonds over other group identities, for they are defined by the constituents, or markers, which have primordial importance for their bearers. Consequently, language is one of the most prominent markers of relatedness and common descent. From the constructivist perspective language is a marker, commonly used in the process of group-making and boundary creation. It is both a symbol of ethnic identity and a practical tool for distinguishing insiders from outsiders. The instrumentalist perspective, in turn, links the difference in the salience of ethnicity and languages in their association to ethnicity to changes in social and political circumstances and to struggle for resources.

2.1.2 Language and Ethnic Identity

According to a typical definition a language is “a communicative system composed of arbitrary elements which possess an agreed-upon significance within a community” (Edwards, 2009: 53). This definition automatically links the phenomenon of language to the process of interaction and attributes it to the group level. A speech act or an utterance is produced at the personal level, but language as a whole is a collective non-material phenomenon shared by all of its speakers.

Consequently, all major studies on ethnicity at some point encompass the question of language and linguistic groups. However, the works on ethnic identity, especially those which follow a more constructivist perspective on the nature of the phenomenon, often disregard the special place of language, treating it as just one in the range of markers of ethnicity (May, 2012: 134-135).

Indeed, while a specific language can play the role of a valuable cultural marker for a particular ethnic group, the correspondence between a language and ethnicity is not unconditional. The Irish case is extensively used for exemplifying the detachability of language from ethnicity in this regard. However, this principal detachability of the two shall not be mistakenly perceived as lessening the value of language as an identity shaping factor. Whereas language is not equal to ethnicity, it nevertheless plays a very significant role in the creation and

maintenance of ethnic identity, which is much more prominent than that of surface identity characteristics (May, 2012: 135-136). The significance of language can be illustrated by the repartition of language to ethnicity in three major dimensions – marking one’s ethnic identity and boundary-making, culture, and politics.

Firstly, while language itself is the product of social and historical forces, as well as the outcome of the deliberate efforts of standardization and codification, so it is not primordial in any real sense, it possesses strong associations with ethnic identity and produces emotional attachments. Benedict Anderson notes that language is the component which provides its speakers one of the strongest primordial feelings as it is usually transferred from a mother to a child in a natural way (Anderson, 2006: 67-81). The notion of ‘mother tongue’ which is employed on various occasions, including scientific works, public censuses and surveys, can be illustrative for primordial affiliations, which language can create in the eyes of its speakers. As suggested by Smolicz (Smolicz, 1981: 76), it represents a “core cultural value” so that the sharing of a language may engender particular solidarities among its speakers. The particular value of language can vary among different ethnic groups (Smolicz, 1991: 38).

Instances, when associated ethnic language is learned as the second language do not cancel out the fact that under ideal circumstances it is transferred between generations in a ‘natural’ way. Arguably, this peculiarity is embodied in language itself and can be revitalized relatively easily. In cases when a new language is learned by a particular generation which undergoes a language shift, it will then be passed on to following generations as though such a shift never occurred. The revival of Hebrew in Israel can be illustrative in this regard (Zuckermann and Walsh, 2011: 112-115).

There is often a continuing psychological attachment to ‘the lost’ language, which demonstrates continuing power of what is intangible and symbolic (Edwards: 54-55). Many immigrant communities, which underwent linguistic shifts, still express their special feelings and emotional attachments towards an ‘associated’ language (Eastman, 1983: 48). Consequently, language use or language proficiency should not be confused or directly equated with linguistic identity. This implication can be applicable for the Irish case in which, despite a

language shift to English, Irish is recognized as ‘the first’ state language and there are attempts to encourage its acquisition and use (May, 2012: 143-147).

Another important functional role of language, suggested by Tabouret-Keller, Bucholtz and Hall, Fought and others, which is relevant for ethnic identity formation and maintenance, is its capacity for boundary-making (cited in May, 2012: 137). Ability or inability to speak a particular language (language variety, vernacular, dialect or accent) can facilitate interaction or conversely place immediate restrictions on communication and therefore on identification with a particular community. Unlike other identity markers, such as religion or origin, language is visible immediately in the course of interaction. Thus, it becomes the first ground for defining one’s identity. In many instances language acquisition is also central to the process of integration and it is stated as a precondition for obtaining citizenship. Besides, linguistic boundaries are regularly employed for the demarcation of ethnic boundaries, for instance, when determining ethnic autonomies (May, 2012: 137). In those cases when linguistic boundaries are employed as demarcating features of group identity, their blurring would be regarded as the major threat to a group’s existence.

The role of language in identification and ethnic boundary maintenance is visible at both the group and the individual level. Scholar of the psychology of language, Howard Giles, in 1973, elaborated communication accommodation theory (cited in Edwards, 2009: 31). According to this theory, language and speech variations are important in interaction because they are the markers both of group membership and of individual identity. Approximation strategies, used in the course of interaction, can reflect convergence strategies – intention to become more similar – and divergence strategies, which accentuate differences. In 1981 Giles and Johnson suggested ethnolinguistic identity theory, according to which language can demarcate ethnic boundaries and express one's self-realized ethnic identity. Myers-Scotton, in the course of study on bilingualism and inter-ethnic communication, proposed a 'markedness model' when marked or unmarked language choices in code-switching are defined by the process of identity negotiation (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 158-164).

Two other symbolic roles of language in the manifestation of ethnicity and ethnic boundary maintenance, less frequently referred to, are personal naming

and the use of toponyms. As Jernudd suggests, names mark the identity both of a unique person and of a person as the member of a group, for they bear a reference to one's ethnicity or religion (Jernudd, 1995: 121). John Edwards stresses the importance of personal and group naming for identity, because naming can be seen as an ability to manifest one's identity as the member of a group (Edwards, 2009: 19-21). Therefore, once state policies on standardization in the domain of language are able to effect regulations and restrictions on naming, they may also create conflict about the manifestation and maintenance of group and personal identity.

The issue of geographical naming, or toponyms, constitutes another area of the confluence of language and ethnic identity. The use of specific toponyms can be a manifestation of a link between a particular ethnolinguistic group and its 'home' landscape. In other words, as suggested by Shama, Robinson and Monmonier, place names can be viewed as the interlock of landscapes and language (cited in Mac Giolla Christ, 2003: 114). Consequently, the practices of naming places reflect the ethnic encoding of landscapes and may also represent a site for identity-related contestations (Mac Giolla Christ, 2003: 127-128).

Language is also closely intertwined with ethnicity in the domain of culture. A community's language may be deeply connected to associated ethnic culture in a number of important ways. Fishman argues that language and culture are linked in three key ways: indexically, symbolically and in a part-whole fashion (Fishman, 1994: 84-88). The first interconnection is stated by the fact that at a particular time a particular language is most historically and intimately associated with a particular culture. The school of linguistic relativity, developed by Sapir and Whorf is most prominent in this sense (cited in May, 2012: 139). They argue that one's social and cultural experiences are determined and organized by language and each language represents a particular worldview. In other words, different languages produce different pictures of the social world and linguistic differences predetermine differences in identity and culture, hence they are, in principle, inseparable from one another.

Although more recent linguistic and sociolinguistic studies seriously question the assumptions of this approach, a weak version of linguistic relativism is widely accepted by contemporary scholars in sociolinguistics, including

Fishman, Edwards, Reines and Prinz (cited in May, 2012: 139-140). This means that while language, as a system, is detachable from culture, it definitely has a big impact on it. It also affects the perception that people have about the role of language in producing and reproducing culture. A particular community may undergo a language shift so that another language will serve its cultural needs. However, at every point in history there is a language which is best suited, or perceived as such, for serving a particular culture. Fishman illustrates this idea by lexical differences which exist between languages and include terms and notions which are relevant for serving particular cultural needs of their speakers (Fishman, 1994: 86).

Secondly, there is a symbolic interconnection between language and the culture of its speakers. The common point of agreement among all the contemporary scholars of linguistics and sociolinguistics is that all languages are equal in their capacities to serve various cultural, social and economic domains and there are no intermittently superior or inferior languages. Symbolic and communicative statuses, attached to a particular language, originate with the status of the speaking community, its cultural richness and accumulated cultural heritage (Fishman, 1994: 87). Indeed, when language is judged as primitive or poor, this judgment is attributed to the status of an ethnic community.

The third way in which the two phenomena – language and culture – are interconnected is through the role of language as cultural material. As suggested by Fishman, “language (is part of) culture because much of culture is inherently and inescapably linguistic” (Fishman, 1994: 86). In other words, there are parts of everyday culture which are expressed, implemented and realized via language. This last implication is also mentioned by Nancy C. Dorian, who speaks of two kinds of links between an ethnic group and its language (Dorian, 1999, 26-41). Firstly, language serves its speakers as an identity marker which can be under certain circumstances substituted with other markers. On the other hand, language preserves a strong link to the cultural context, association with non-material culture of a particular group. The cultural loadedness of a particular language is especially relevant for small communities with rich oral cultures. These oral cultures disappear with the disappearance of their languages.

In addition to its relevance for the process of boundary-making and

identity-shaping and for the representation, expression and transmission of a community's culture, language is also prominent in the political realm. Due to the fact that the acts of speech are not produced in a social vacuum they are also acts of symbolic exchange and cannot be reduced to communication alone (Bourdieu, 1991). People, engaged in conversations, utilize their linguistic capital, defined by conditions at the linguistic market, the relations of power and symbolic domination. One's linguistic dispositions, or *linguistic habitus*, obtained in the course of early socialization, represent an integral part of their social self and reflect one's particular position within a given society – class, gender, age, education, race, ethnicity and alike (Bourdieu, 1991: 95). The struggle of language is both a symbolic struggle over the picture of the social world and the distribution of powers. The questions of linguistic control and recognition, owing to the importance of language for ethnic and national identity, can be attributed then to the matters of social and cultural control.

The political aspect of the language becomes particularly salient in the process of nation-state building. It is the medium of public communication and education. At the same time it is a symbol of national unification. Through the attribution of an official status a particular language is attached to the position of its speakers. “The choice of the common language, tied to substantial benefits, is crucial for the further distribution of powers within a state.” (Rannut, 1999: 112) The inequality of languages, ergo ethnolinguistic communities in a nation-state, which may become a matter of political contestation, exclusion or oppression, is especially visible in the case of majority-minority opposition. The political aspect of language in relation to ethnic and national identities in a nation-state and its potential to generate conflicts and struggle will be further discussed in details in the second part of this chapter.

Finally, in order to complete the discussion on the relationship between language and ethnic identity it seems necessary to refer to religion as another area where language may become indirectly involved in the process of identity-shaping and maintenance. Language and religion are traditionally viewed as two of the most prominent markers of ethnicity which share important similarities and also have significant differences in the ways in which they affect identity formation and maintenance (Brubaker, 2013: 1-20; Safran, 2008: 171–190). The

two aspects can be perceived as contesting, complementing or substituting each other in the process of the construction of ethnic identity.

Besides this complementary role, there is also a deeper interconnection between the two phenomena. Firstly, language serves an instrumental role in religious matters as the language of religious ceremonies and texts. There might also be a symbolic connection which arises between a particular language and faith. In such cases language obtains an additional importance, for it becomes the marker of both linguistic and religious identity. Instances of a language carrying a strong association with a particular religion are the role of the Arabic language in Islam, the importance of Hebrew as the language of the Torah, and the presumed 'sacredness' of the Armenian alphabet (Safran, 2008: 173–182).

2.1.3 Functions of Language

The complexity of the roles language plays in the course of the formation and maintenance of ethnicity demonstrates that it may be presumed as one of its most valid and powerful components. In other words, in cases when language is present on the scene of ethnicity it is likely that it becomes not only one of its markers but also an axis around which other aspects of ethnicity can be arranged.

Before summarizing the patterns of interrelation between language and ethnic identity in different domains it is worth mentioning the two aspects, or dimensions, in which language functions, and which, in turn, make it so penetrative and omnipresent. According to John Edwards, language possesses a dualistic relation to identity, for there are instrumental (communicative) and non-instrumental (symbolic) functions of language (Edwards, 2009:54-56). The two functions are interconnected, but in principle they are separable. Codified language originates in vernacular, initially spoken by people, but when it is realized as a symbol of group identity it can retain its importance even in the absence of its actual use in everyday life. Hence, language may retain its importance for identity in those cases and in those instances when it is not used as a tool for communication.

Consequently, these two functional dimensions can be helpful in providing a more encompassing view of the areas in which language can become sensitive

for a particular ethnic community and generate the feeling of identity threat, language-related claims and/or tensions given the areas in which language is interrelated with ethnicity, such as identification and boundary-making; culture; politics and the public sphere; and religion. A table below summarizes the aspects of interconnectedness between language and ethnic identity.

*Table 2.1 Functions of Language as Component of Ethnic Identity*³³

Functions of language	<i>Non-Instrumental (Symbolic)</i>	<i>Instrumental (Communicative)</i>
<i>Maintaining identity boundaries</i>	Symbol of ethnicity, emotional attachment to the language and primordial feelings	Daily communication in the language; distinguishing outsiders and insiders by the language spoken
<i>Culture</i>	Link between language and culture; cultural loadedness of language	Instrument to produce and consume cultural products; linguistic/verbal part of culture
<i>Politics and public sphere</i>	Construction of administrative borders; official status; access to resources; banner to unite	Education; official communication
<i>Religion</i>	'Holy' language; 'sacred' script	Medium of religious services

The instrumental functions of language in maintaining identity boundaries and in-group ties are based upon a particular common language used by a particular ethnic group for communication. The inability to speak a particular language is an obstacle for identification with a group which uses this language. The symbolic functions of language in the maintenance of identity boundaries can be considered more diverse and include its role as identity marker, the generation of emotional attachments to a particular language associated with a particular ethnicity, preferences for the particular linguistic form of personal names and toponyms, and the use of such concepts as 'mother tongue' and 'titular language' in defining one's ethnicity.

In relation to a community's culture, language can serve as an instrument to produce, reproduce and consume cultural products. Moreover, certain parts of cultural heritage, such as story-telling and epic poems, proverbs and tongue twisters, are essentially linguistic. Therefore, they cannot be adequately reproduced in another language. Language is also symbolically related to ethnic identity through its associated culture, for in the eyes of speakers there is often a special connection between the language and non-material culture, namely the literature, of a particular ethnic group. Language reflects the cultural peculiarities

³³ Prepared by the author.

and needs of a particular ethnic group in terms of vocabulary, structures and expressions so that it can be perceived by its speakers as inseparable from their cultural identity.

The political domain opens up a link to the phenomena of nationhood and nation-state. Instrumentally, language is used for the provision of public education. It serves the function of medium for transmitting and acquiring knowledge. A common language is also required for securing official communication. The symbolic functions of language in the political sphere can be attributed to the recognition of the official status of a language, which in turn can be linked to the recognition of the status of an ethnic group associated with this language. Linguistic maps can be employed in the course of the determination of frontiers and other administrative borders. Finally, language and language-related issues can be utilized by political parties and organizations as banners to attract and unite their supporters in the contestation of the existing distribution of powers among communities.

In some cases language is also connected to ethnicity as long as it serves important religious functions. Instrumentally, language can be seen as a medium for conducting religious services. It can also obtain a specific symbolic importance as the 'holy' language of a particular faith.

These functional aspects are mutually dependent and in a way stimulate each other, because the symbolic importance of a language would normally be expected to be supported by its communicative functions (Edwards, 2009: 55). It is also true that symbolic importance, attached to language, tends to stimulate moves for restoring or expanding its communicative functions. Therefore, there are various policies and programs of language maintenance and language revival among those communities, which undergo a language shift and the communicative functions of their associated languages are either lost or damaged.

Considering the importance of language in different aspects of ethnic identity formation and maintenance it is possible to predict that threats to language, and hence to linguistic identity, found in various domains, can be perceived as threats to this group's ethnic identity.

2.2. Nation-State and Language

2.2.1 *Nation, Nationalism and Nation-State*

Discussion on the relevance of the linguistic component for ethnic groups and ethnic identity shall also be linked to the context of nationalism and the nation-state, in which the political dimension of language and its affect on majority-minority relations become salient. According to Stephan May, academic studies on the two phenomena – ethnicity and nationalism – have been developing mostly parallel to each other (May, 2012: 55). This fact undermines important similarities between ethnic and national identities and the degree of interconnectedness between the two of them.

A definition, elaborated by Guibernau, suggests that a nation refers to a group of people who are conscious of forming a distinct community and who share a historic territory, or ‘homeland’, common historical memories, common culture, common political destiny and a desire for at least some degree of social and/or political self-determination (Guibernau, 2001: 243). This definition echoes the notion of *ethnie*, or an ethnic group, coined by Anthony D. Smith. Indeed, according to Smith, nationhood and ethnicity are closely related phenomena (Smith, 1984: 453).

Consequently, the last part of Guibernau’s definition – common political destiny and political self-determination - is what constitutes a primary distinction between the two notions. It can also be attributed to the emergence of the ideology of nationalism, a crucial ideological force, which has provided an impetus for the formation of modern nations and nation-states.

The classical modernist perspective on nation and the nation-state focused on the relative modernity of the phenomena and their constructed natures (May, 2012: 59). In the views of Weber and Renan, the phenomenon of nation can be better understood by looking at the sphere of values and ideas rather than at objective criteria. Nations are the products of historical forces and their appearance corresponds to a particular historical period. They are the outcome of specific social, economic and political circumstances, such as structural changes

brought about by modernization and social transformation. The nation, then, is the new form of the organization of society, which addresses these structural changes.

Some contemporary modernists, such as Hobsbawm, view the two phenomena as principally unrelated (cited in May, 2012: 67). In this perspective nations are the result of social, political and economic modernization – and not the result of pre-existing ethnicity. Others, such as Gellner and Anderson, assume a connection between ethnicity and nationhood (cited in May, 2012: 67-71). The link between the two phenomena is acknowledged through the importance of common artifacts, such as language, history and culture for the process of nation formation. Those artifacts, which can be borrowed from ethnicity, provide a feeling of community, belonging and continuity, and grounds for a shared national identity. As suggested by Gellner, a nation shall seek for cultural and linguistic continuity and, if possible, cultural and linguistic homogeneity, in order to function effectively (Gellner, 2006). In Anderson's view, nations and nationality, as 'imagined' communities, can be considered cultural artifacts, which are produced by the ideology of nationalism and shall be reinforced by some common cultural guidance, which in a creative manner can incorporate certain pre-existing ethnic traits and markers (Anderson, 1991: 4-5).

Consequently, there are two dimensions, in which a modern nation can be addressed. On the one hand, it represents a historical community of culture and on the other hand it is a legal-political one, which is institutionally embodied in the form of the nation-state (May, 2012: 67-71). In this regard it shall be noted, however, that both national history and national culture are the selective outcomes of nation-building, which may contain fictional or even artificially constructed elements, which serve the purpose of providing the image of the cultural relatedness and historical rootedness of a national community.

The scholars of ethno-symbolic analyses of nationalism, such as Hutchinson, go further in developing a link between ethnicity and nationalism and the persistence of the two phenomena, which cannot be fully addressed within the framework of a classical modernist approach. In this view, the rise of nationalism and nation-states are not unrelated to pre-existing ethnic identities. Quite contrary, ethnic bonds and the markers of ethnicity to a very large extent

predetermine and shape nationalist ideology and national identity (Hutchinson, 2001: 75-83). Thus, nations are not merely political, and not only cultural, but also ethno-cultural communities. Pre-existing attributes and symbols, provided by ethnic identities, are appropriated by nationalist ideology and reflected in national identity with the aim of establishing national consciousness, feeling of commonality, unity and historical continuity.

As it can be deduced from the definition of nation provided before, the ideology of nationalism brings ethnicity to the political level, appropriating it to the needs of nation-state and national identity. According to Gellner, nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit shall be congruent. In other words, a nation-state shall represent the confluence of nation and state, which is the ultimate goal of a nationalist ideology. A nation-state shall possess a homogeneous national culture and identity, with which its members can identify and to which they can be committed. This is also true not only in the process of creation of a nation-state, but also for the recreation and maintenance of a particular conception of nationhood and national identity, once a nation-state is established.

This ideology can be reinterpreted in the following way - every nation deserves a state and hence, as it can be inferred from the first part, each state shall ideally represent one nation. This formulation of nation-state congruence, however, imposes principle restrictions on its ability to accommodate and/or recognize the legitimate claims of nations without states, or national minorities (May, 2012: 79).

Connor suggests that the examples of 'true' nation-states, which comply with the ideology of nationalism and, thus, are ethnically, culturally and linguistically homogeneous, are extremely rare (Connor, 1993: 374-377). Quite contrary, in the modern world most of the existing states are not actually nation-states at all – they are multinational (comprising a number of national minorities), polyethnic (comprising a range of immigrant groups), or both (May, 2012: 80). In other words, the ideology of nationalism and traditional models of citizenship, based on the assumptions that nation and state are congruent, might be inadequately addressing the reality of modern pluralist societies.

The fact that the idea of nation-and-state congruence remains so powerful is

the expression of the effect of hegemony of one collectivity and its access to the ideological apparatus of both state and civil society (May, 2012: 80). The dominant group perceives the state as the political expression of their particular ethnic group and respectively, their culture, traditions, and language. For this group, their ethnic culture seems to correspond with the national culture, which, as it was previously discussed, is the aggregation and appropriation of ethnicity. Consequently, their ethnic ties become civic ties and those groups who do not share them are reconstituted as sociological minorities (May, 2012: 84-85). Moreover, as theories and ideologies of nationalism suggest, those minorities become subjected to the desired goal of the unification of national culture and identity. The last provision implies that they have to accept the culture/identity of the dominant ethnic group in the nation-state.

2.2.2 Language in a Nation-State

Based on definitions and assumptions that nationhood derives from pre-existing ethnicity and that it needs uniformity in culture to function efficiently it can be assumed that language occupies one of the central roles in the process of nation-building. Linguistic German nationalism of the 19th century, mentioned in the previous part of the chapter in the course of discussion on ethnicity, has the most radical essentialist view on the role of language in nationhood. According to Fichte, culture and, in particular, language is the 'soul' of a nation, being its most important distinguishing characteristic (cited in May, 2012: 61). In other words, linguistic and cultural bonds, which are primordial and objective, are also the defining aspects of a nation.

Whereas the essentialist view on the nature of nationhood is rejected by the contemporary scholars of nations, nation-states and nationalism, they also refer to the role of language for these phenomena. A shared standard language, spoken by all the members of a national unit, serves the primary communicative function, through which the desired degree of centralization, unification and efficient administration can be achieved (Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 39). Besides, in a nation-state, the promotion of a common language is a necessity both for social and cultural congruency and for the unification of people into a single political

community. “A successful nation-building project can help to ensure that language no longer serves to separate citizens into distinct and mutually antagonistic groups, but would become one of the defining bonds of a common identity” (Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 39). Finally, if the political aspect of the nation-state is taken into account, there is also a need for a common language of public political dialogue that is crucial for exercising modern democracy (Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 39-40). In result, a particular language becomes affiliated with a nation-state and undergoes institutionalization – the process, by which the language comes to be accepted or taken for granted in a wide range of social, cultural and linguistic domains or contexts, both formal and informal (May, 2012:6).

The goal of language standardization and institutionalization is reflected in a particular language policy of a nation-state. According to Spolski, language policy is an omnipresent phenomenon, attributable to various social domains, which can be divided into language practices, language beliefs and ideology and into resulting explicit policies of language management and language planning activities (Spolski, 2004: 5-15). There might be cases when no explicit language policy is defined, but even in such cases there are shared views on what can be considered appropriate language use or behavior and what is perceived as deviant. Language policy is concerned with language in its totality, thus, dealing with language as a system, including grammar, vocabulary, script and pronunciation, as well as with language acquisition and use. Consequently, language itself and its speakers both become the objects of language policy.

There are numerous language policies, exercised in different social domains, or speech communities. A wide range of complex linguistic and non-linguistic elements, variables and factors shape an exact language policy, which is employed in each particular context. Different language policies, either implicit or explicit, can be found at the family level, in schools, offices and religious organizations. There are also language policies, exercised at the supranational level, such as the level of the European Union.

However, the most encompassing and the most influential is language policy at the national level – state language policy. It is the most complex level, which is frequently institutionalized and expressed in the form of language-

related legislation and hence can be relatively easily traced and evaluated. Additionally, a particular state language policy may interfere with private language policies and implicitly or explicitly regulate language use in different social domains, penetrating even to the family level.

Nancy Hornberger suggests an integrative framework for analyzing state language policies (language-planning policies), which approaches different domains and targets that are encompassed (Hornberger, 2006: 29). According to this framework, policy targets and areas can be subdivided into three major categories. The first category is status planning. It encompasses regulations and provisions regarding language use in different domains. The second category is acquisition planning. Policies attributed to this category target language acquisition and maintenance. The last category is corpus planning. This set of policies and regulations targets language as a communicative system, regulating vocabulary, standard grammar and pronunciation. While the last category is sorely concerned with the national language, the first and the second category constitute the areas in which a national language policy can also affect the position of ethnolinguistic minorities.

Weinstock suggests another dimension for evaluating a language policy (Weinstock, 2003: 250). The differentiation in policy-making areas can be related to the variety of functions which language serves. Therefore, language policies engage with the communicative functions, cultural functions and identity-shaping functions of language. Thus, such matters as the regulation of personal naming and geographic toponyms can also be considered part of national language policy, taking into account their symbolic meaning for personal and group identification.

As it was previously discussed, national language policies assume an implicit or an openly pronounced goal of linguistic unification and homogenization according to national standards. Consequently, they may possess a threat to ethnolinguistic minorities and can be a receipt for an interethnic conflict (May, 2012:7). A particular language policy can be regarded by the national minority as an attempt by the majority to dominate the state. Moreover, as long as language, as it was discussed in the previous part of the chapter, in its various dimensions and manifestations may constitute the integral part of ethnic identity, the policy of language homogenization can be perceived as a threat to

identity and stimulate the defensive responses of minorities.

In this regard, it shall be noted that the situation of linguistic minorities which have to face such challenges is substantially different from the situation of those ethnic/national groups who undergo partial language shift or do not have a distinct linguistic identity at all, but enjoy their separate statehood (for example the case of Ireland, the case of Austria, and the Latin American states). In the latter cases, other mechanisms provided by the ideology of the nation-state, such as national history, myths and culture, can guarantee national unity so that the loss or absence of a distinct language might not be perceived as a direct threat to identity.

2.2.3 Education

A point acknowledged by a wide variety of sociological and educational commentators is that education can be recognized as the key institution in the apparatus of the modern nation-state (May, 2012: 175). Hence, it is usually perceived as the primary locus of state language policies as well as the primary field of contestation in the course of language conflicts. Joseph formulates this centrality of education for state and language in the following manner: “If language and politics were a country, education would be its capital, the great centralised and centralising metropolis that everyone passes through, from which the country is run and where its future course is determined” (Joseph, 2006: 46). Whereas linguistic uniformity can also be fostered by other state policies and institutions, such as literacy campaigns and compulsory military service, the education system still remains a key element in this process.

If one of the necessary goals of a nation-state is to adopt a standardized form of language for achieving the required degree of uniformity and congruence, then the education system can be considered the primary institute for its achievement. Mass education provides the literacy and competence necessary for producing full or effective citizens in modern industrial societies (Levy, 2003: 231-236). At the same time mass uniform education itself requires a medium of instruction for achieving this goal. Thus, a common language serves an instrumental role for achieving the required degree of uniformity in education,

while the mass education system serves for the acquisition, the spreading and maintenance of a common language within a particular national unit. From the previous discussion on the selection of the components of national identity it is evident that the associated language of a dominant ethnic group is likely to be chosen as the common 'national' language as opposed to the languages of minority groups.

In those cases where national education policy has to address minority groups, a variety of policy modes and strategies can be invoked. Four major types of state responses to the education and language needs of minority groups can be singled out (Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 21-22). The first type of response is characterized by minimal tolerance for minority languages. In such a case state policies advocate a rapid transition to the majority language, which shall be achieved through 'language immersion' - schooling exclusively in the majority language. Schooling, thus, is aimed at adjusting minorities to the cultural and linguistic mores of the dominant group.

Another type of response serves a similar goal of transition to the majority language, but it involves a greater degree of tolerance for minority languages. In this case education strategies for minorities can be summarized as the provision of transitional bilingual education. Whereas at the beginning of schooling a non-national language is used, by the end of one's education it is supplemented and eventually replaced by the majority language. Arguably, the two types of state responses both follow the ultimate goal of establishing a linguistically homogeneous uniform civic culture and can be perceived as imposing threats to the linguistic identities of minority groups.

The third type of state response can be characterized by a significant degree of state accommodation to linguistic minorities. The state follows a maintenance approach towards minority languages through the provision of bilingual education, which is conducted largely in the minority language. Finally, mutual accommodation represents the fourth type of response, in which, besides schooling exclusively in the minority language, this language is also recognized in all domains of public life. Complete mutual accommodation may involve the recognition of the official status of the minority language. In such cases the knowledge of the minority language can be mandatory for certain public servants

(the case, for example, for Canada's federal government) or become a compulsory part of the curriculum in majority schools (like the Swedish language in Finland or the French language in some Canadian provinces).

In addition to the teaching of minority languages a policy on second language instruction has also become a major issue in some cases, where the learning of a foreign language is mandatory (Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 22). For instance, in many countries of the former Soviet Union, there has been a widespread shift from Russian to English as the preferred foreign language.

2.3. Language Rights and Conflicts, Involving a Linguistic Dimension

2.3.1 Notion of Language Rights

The discrepancy between the position of the national language and the other languages, spoken by ethnic minorities in a nation-state, creates favorable conditions for the spread of bilingualism, language shift, and the eventual loss of an associated language by minority communities (May, 2012:1-2).

The followers of the liberal approach in sociolinguistics, such as Edwards, Coulmas, Brutt-Griffler and others, advocate that if a language shift occurs it is the natural result of competition at the linguistic market, and thus, merely the outcome of the rational calculations and choices of speakers who switch to a more prestigious language which provides greater economic and social opportunities (cited in May, 2012:148-152). Consequently, a language shift and the situation causing it shall not be reversed or considered worth special concern.

The critics of this approach, such as Fishman, Dorian, Hornberger and others, appeal to the historical, social, and political constructedness of languages, and their positions *vis-a-vis* one another (cited in May, 2012:156-157). Whereas in a given period a particular language may be more competitive and prestigious, this fact is not related to the inner nature of the language. Language and its status are the products of wider historical, social and political forces. There is nothing natural about the status and prestige attributed to particular majority languages. The previous discussion on the relationship between the modern nation-state and the national language can be illustrative in this regard. Moreover, under varying

historical or geographic conditions the same language can be considered either a prestigious majority or elite language, proficiency in which brings major advantages, or a non-prestigious, disadvantaged minority language (May, 2012: 5). Among numerous examples which illustrate this situation are the differences in the status of Russian in the Soviet Union, contemporary Russia and some former Soviet republics.

Thus, the competition of languages is 'unfair' in the sense that the broader conditions under which a language enters such a competition are the outcome of various non-linguistic historical, economical, political and social processes. A language shift rarely if never occurs among a community of power and wealth. Rather it is the language of the poor and unprivileged that disappears (Crawford, 1994: 4-8). Hence, even if initially speakers seem to willingly abandon their language, their choice is not purely independent, but prescribed by wider social, political and economic conditions (May, 2012: 155). Needless to say, the cases when people resist a language shift, even though such a choice may look irrational and may bring various expenses and disadvantages, demonstrate that language-related issues reach beyond the 'fittest and strongest survives in the competition' logic.

A contrasting view on language change and maintenance is provided by the concept of language ecology, found in the works of Pinkers, Crawford, Maffi, Muhlhauser and others (cited in May, 2012: 3-4). Within this paradigm the conditions of languages and language shifts are affected by a broad set of non-linguistic variables and it is analogous to processes of biological/ecological endangerment and extinction. Language and linguistic diversity shall be seen as a value in itself, which shall be protected just like biological species are protected.

Stephen May notes, however, that the language ecology paradigm actually reinforces, albeit unwillingly, the inevitability of the evolutionary change that it is protesting (May, 2012:4). One possible conclusion which may be inferred from this view on language is that a language loss is an inevitable part of the cycle of social and linguistic evolution – a form of linguistic social Darwinism.

Finally, the nature of state policies and goals pursued by a nation-state in the sphere of language, which affect minority languages and ethnolinguistic communities, foster the development of a particular scholarly paradigm which

advocates the protection of language rights. According to Stephan May, “the key concern of the language right paradigm is how to ensure that minority language speakers are able to continue to speak their language(s) for the foreseeable future” (May, 2012: 2).

The language rights paradigm, developed by May, Rowls, Dworkin, Kymlicka and others, is linked to the notion of social justice and a broader human rights framework. The situation of a language loss must be evaluated not only through the position of the language, but also by paying attention to the conditions of its speakers (May, 2012: 156-157). The vast majority of today’s threatened languages are spoken by socially and politically marginalized and/or subordinated groups. In this relation Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson discuss the notion of linguicism – ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate and reproduce the unequal distribution of power and resources between groups on the basis of associated languages (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1995: 103-106). There are three major strategies of linguicism: the glorification of the dominant language, the stigmatization of minorities and their languages, and the rationalization of relationships between minority and majority languages in such a way that a desired outcome of such a relationship would be a shift to the majority language.

The framework of language rights shall guarantee then that people are not subjected to discrimination, denied the opportunities of social and economic mobility on the ground of language or face a demand to give up their linguistic identity, in exchange for opportunities and the improvement of their status (May, 2012: 8-11, 177). As it was previously discussed, language may constitute the central feature of an ethnic minority’s group identity and its maintenance might be related to the satisfaction of its identity needs.

In summary, the paradigm of language rights represents a normative approach to language-related issues in minority-majority relations. In a broad sense, it is a right of the people to maintain their ethnolinguistic identity, which is different from the dominant society. It suggests that the matters of language survival and loss are related to the uneven distribution of power in a society, which favors the majority language speakers and disadvantages those who speak minority languages. The issue of linguistic equality/inequality shall be

approached in the same manner as other individual and group rights, and safeguarded by appropriate provisions and mechanisms.

2.3.2 Approaches to Language Rights Regimes

There are various typology principles suggested for addressing the subject of language rights and language rights regimes. Patten and Kymlicka single out four distinct options, or oppositions, according to which different language rights and language rights regimes can be classified (Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 26-31). Those are *tolerance-oriented vs promotion-oriented rights; norm-and-accommodation vs official-languages rights regimes; personality vs territoriality rights regimes; and individual vs collective rights*. Arguably, it is impossible to apply a universal set of linguistic human rights, for the needs and claims differ sufficiently among groups (Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 34). Therefore, only a minimalist language rights regime can be achieved at the international level. Thus, the analysis of language rights is mostly concerned with the level of the nation-state.

Heinz Kloss (1971, 1977) suggests the division of language rights into two categories - tolerance-oriented and promotion-oriented rights (cited in Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 26-27). This dichotomy is also one of the most influential ways of approaching language rights. Tolerance-oriented rights are linked to the overall logic of personal freedoms and non-discrimination in the sense that they allow one to preserve their language in the private domain. This includes the freedom to use one's native language at home and in public; freedom of assembly and organization; a right to establish private cultural, economic and social institutions; and fostering one's language in private schools. Basically, the state does not interfere with the desire of minorities to use their native languages. Therefore, tolerance-oriented rights provide minimal protection for linguistic minorities. Nevertheless, violations of this minimal set of rights are not uncommon and can be observed in a number of countries with strongly prescriptive language policies.

Promotion-oriented rights go beyond the logic of non-discrimination and non-interference. They oblige the state to actively support and promote language maintenance and the use of minority languages in all relevant domains. The

provision of this set of rights usually requires the recognition of minority languages within the public domain, or civic realm of the nation-state. Accordingly, promotion-oriented rights, among others, may include the use of minority languages in administration, such as publishing official documents in minority languages, state-sponsored financial support for media in minority languages and for minority organizations. This framework also encompasses the provision of state-funded minority language education.

In Kloss's view, newly arriving immigrants should be granted tolerance rights, whereas national groups (ones that have been present within a state for at least several generations and have maintained their language) shall be granted both tolerance and promotion-oriented rights. Since it is technically and financially impossible to grant the full range of promotion rights to each and every linguistic minority, the principle of eligibility may involve a range of factors, such as the size of the community, and territorial concentration.

Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson suggest another related categorization of state responses to minority languages (1995: 79). National legislation can be classified according to the degree of overtness in terms of regulating language use, as concerning linguistic minorities. Consequently, the use of minority languages can be explicitly prohibited by prescriptive national language policies, tolerated or actively promoted and supported.

Another approach to language rights classification involves a distinction between norm-and-accommodation and official-language rights regimes (Rubio-Marin, 2003: 59-68). The logic of norm-and-accommodation provides that accommodations are made by the state for those who lack proficiency in a particular language. It may include hiring bilingual staff at certain public offices, the provision of interpreters at court hearings and transitional bilingual education for children. The key aim is to establish communication between public institutions and citizens with limited proficiency in a national language in order to ensure their full access to rights and benefits, guaranteed by the state. This set of rights can also be classified as instrumental in the sense that their allocation instrumentally supports the provision of other goods and rights.

Unlike accommodational, or instrumental language rights, there is also a series of non-instrumental status-oriented rights, which is typically accorded to a

language through the recognition of its official status. The allocation of this set of rights is related to the recognition of the degree of equality between languages. In this case the provision of rights is not related to the lack of proficiency in one language. On the contrary, language rights shall be secured despite the fact that a particular member of a linguistic minority may be fluent in the national language.

The ultimate goal of this set of rights is not the establishment of instrumental communication, but the recognition of the speakers of a particular language as constituting a distinct community within a nation-state. Non-instrumental rights allow a linguistic minority to avoid a trade-off between state citizenship and cultural identity by ensuring that its speakers can live in their language in every relevant sphere, including the public sphere. For these rights are granted and practiced at the group level, community membership is principle.

This set of rights would include the provision of state-sponsored minority language education, support for cultural organizations and programs, media in minority language, administrative services in this language. Additionally, a particular group shall have certain political authority to self-govern the life of its linguistic community. Arguably, this set of rights can be completely realized in those cases when a minority language is granted full official status, equal to the one of the majority language so that the state functions according to the principle of official bilingualism or multilingualism.

Apparently, granting equal official status to every single language spoken in a particular state cannot be a feasible option (Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 29). Consequently, differences between national policies and the principles of allocation of language rights depend upon whether a state relies exclusively on the norm-and-accommodation approach or combines it with the official status recognition approach regarding some languages and linguistic communities.

In terms of spacial allocation of language rights two organizational principles – territorial and individual – can be applicable (Patten, 2003: 297-299; Reaume, 2003: 270-294). Whereas those are also the general principles of human rights distribution, they are extensively discussed in the context of language rights. The territorial principle guarantees the provision of language rights, which are limited to a particular territory. Thus, the territorial principle of the allocation of language rights tends to convert a multilingual population into unilingual

constituencies. In turn, the individual principle attributes linguistic rights to individuals, irrespective of their geographic position.

According to the individual principle, language rights follow persons wherever in the state they may choose to live. According to the territorial principle, however, they are dependent on what area of the state people find themselves in. (Patten, 2003: 297). Nevertheless, many language rights are group-based rights, so even when the individual perspective is applied, their provision is still dependent on the presence of the sufficient number of speakers for whom respective facilities, such as schools, can be established.

Another broad principle of differentiation and allocation of language rights also originates from a general distinction between individual and collective language rights (Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 30-31). It can be interpreted in the two following ways. From one perspective, language rights that everyone in the relevant jurisdiction has, irrespective of the particular language group to which they belong, can be classified as universal. Group-differentiated rights, by contrast, are rights that can be exercised only by the members of designated language groups. Therefore, eligibility for the access and practicing of these rights is defined on the grounds of community membership.

Another dimension in which group-individual differentiation can be treated is the presence or absence of some minimum cumulative demand for a service to be claimed and classified as a right. An individual language right is one that an individual can claim irrespective of the number of co-linguist residents in the state or jurisdiction that is relevant to the exercise of the right. Collective language rights are triggered only when some threshold level of cumulative demand has been exceeded.

Therefore, differentiation in language right frameworks can be reflected in multiple national language rights regimes, which address ethnolinguistic minorities. In this respect the language rights paradigm also provides a mechanism for evaluating the position of minority languages, as well as indicating the areas and ways in which it can be enhanced and how therefore language-related rights claims can be raised.

2.3.3 *Language Conflicts*

In general, conflicts over language policy are concerned with the rules that public institutions adopt with respect to language use in a variety of different domains – use in the state apparatus, communication with citizens and provision of public services, courts and education – as well as its use in the private domain (Patten and Kymlicka, 2003: 16). In other words, they are related to the contestation of the existing national language rights framework.

Relatively few scholars directly approach the situation of language in ethnic conflicts (Mac Giolla Christ, 2003: 150). According to Williams, a language conflict originates in situations where minorities become vulnerable to assimilation in the process of nation-state building (Williams, 1984: 183-188). Therefore, minority communities may perceive this process as a threat to the continuity of their identity and resist the state policy. Williams also suggests a number of certain preconditions, which favor the emergence of a conflict (Williams, 1984: 187-188).

First, a minority shall have a core territory, defined as its intrastate ‘homeland,’ rather than be evenly dispersed throughout the country. Second, the linguistic identity shall be supported by a strong cultural basis of the community. Finally, there shall be opposition groups, such as pro-assimilationist political parties, which are associated with identity threats. In this case language can be used as a resource for the political mobilization of the minority and contestation of the distribution of powers in the national unit in order to protect the minority’s position. In other words, the politicization of language is related to the contestation of state policy and the distribution of power and resources, whereas the abovementioned preconditions favor such politicization (Williams, 1984: 215).

However, more recent studies on ethnic conflicts by Burton, Last and Carment, Woodhouse and Ramsbotham, Zartman and Rasmussen and others, suggest additional explanatory variables, besides power contestation, which account for the development of a conflict situation (cited in Mac Giolla Christ, 2003: 161). Mostly they are concerned with the notion of basic human needs and

interests, which become the subject of a conflict.

As Burton suggests, apart from basic biological and economic needs there are also particular identity needs, expressed by an individual or a group (Burton, 1987: 23). Identity needs, as they play an important role in human life, cannot be an object of trading or negotiation. Consequently, conflict arises when those needs are ignored, suppressed or fail to be provided. In the view that a particular ethnic identity in numerous ways depends on the linguistic one, needs, which are related to the practice and maintenance of one's associated language, can be addressed from this perspective.

Azar provides four casual categories which stipulate the emergence of a social conflict (Azar, 1990: 7-11). The first factor is communal content, meaning that the composition of society is heterogeneous and multicomunal. The second factor is the uneven distribution of resources which are to meet human needs, including those regarding identity and security. The third factor is the role of the state. Significant flaws in the state's capacity to address the needs of various groups favor the emergence of a conflict situation. This factor is also applicable to situations where, upon the collapse of the previous regime, a new system is still in the process of consolidation, such as the case of the new independent republics of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Finally, the presence of an international linkage to other states or international organizations can affect the course and the character of the conflict.

The constructivist critics of this approach, such as Vayrynen and Avruch, argue that needs are not given, but produced in the course of specific social practices (cited in Mac Giolla Christ, 2003: 162-163). Situations of conflict are constituted not only by the competition for resources, addressing the pre-existing needs of a group, but also by the management of meaning under the conditions of collapse of a shared reality. This provision is valuable in the sense that the needs of a group are context- and case-dependent rather than completely universal. Besides, the understanding of ethnic identity and associated meanings may undergo serious transformations in the course of a particular conflict.

In summary, it might be argued that within the context of general conflict theories language is understood as a need or interest, which is related to various issues, such as identity, ideology, resources and governance. Consequently, a

language in an ethnic conflict plays a dualistic role. It is “both a socio-political resource and an interest which itself requires resourcing” (Mac Giolla Christ, 2003: 163). In other words, language is, on the one hand, a resource for group mobilization in the contestation of power and resource distribution; on the other hand, becomes the contested subject of a conflict as long as it is considered relevant for a particular group identity.

A distinct approach to language shift and language competition, which may involve the situation of a language conflict, was developed within the discipline of language ecology, and involves the notion of linguistic vitality. The original model of linguistic vitality was suggested by Giles in 1977 (cited in Mac Giolla Christ, 2003: 44-46). The vitality of an ethnolinguistic group is what makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in inter-group situations. Just like the vitality of a species the vitality of a language group depends on the group’s qualities and the characteristics of the environment in which it finds itself.

The model suggests structural variables, which affect the ethnolinguistic vitality of a particular community. They can be classified into three broad categories: status-related variables, demography-related variables and institutional variables. General assumptions include the following: the more prestigious the group is in a given society, the more it is vital; the more favorable demographic trends it demonstrates, the better perspectives it has for language maintenance; the more widely represented the language is in various institutions, the more vital the group is which uses it. However, the authors also notice the importance of subjective self-belief in linguistic vitality of a group. Perceived threats and dangers may be an important factor affecting the actual persistence of an ethnolinguistic community on par with objective factors (Mac Giolla Christ, 2003: 46).

The critique of this approach is suggested by Haarmann (cited in Mac Giolla Christ, 2003: 47-53). In his view, this model is effective for analyzing language-related factors at the macro level, but it does not encompass specific language relations. Haarmann argues that “language ecology should cover the whole network of social relations which control the variability of languages and their modal speakers’ behaviour” (Haarmann, 1986: 3, cited in Mac Giolla

Christ, 2003: 46). It includes the relationships between an individual, group, society and state in all areas, which may be relevant for language. However, as long as the case of the individual is too complicated and multifarious for an encompassing analysis, groups of speakers shall be the primary locus of a study.

Haarmann proposes an inventory of ecological variables, relating to language in ethnicity (cited in Mac Giolla Christ, 2003: 48-50). Those are *ethnodemographic variables*, which include the total number of group members and their distribution, demographic tendencies and trends; *ethnosociological variables*, relating to the social conditions of groups; *ethnopolitical variables*, referring to group-state relations; *ethnocultural variables*, or cultural traditions and norms, distinctive for the group; *ethnopsychological variables*, which refer to attitudes and perceptions of the group, regarding its identity; *interactional variables* are attributed to the patterns and modes of interaction with other referent groups; and *ethnolinguistic variables*, related to the linguistic characteristics of a group, such as distance between languages, and language proficiency. Although all types of variables shall be equally evaluated in the course of analysis, it is suggested that ethnopolitical variables, attributed to the involvement of the state, play a distinctive embracing role, which defines the mode and the character of intergroup interaction and interethnic relations (Mac Giolla Christ, 2003:50).

Mac Giolla Christ suggests that in order to apply this model to the situation of a language conflict the notion of competition should be added to the analysis (Mac Giolla Christ, 2003:54). Ethnolinguistic groups, just like biological species, compete with each other for resources available in a particular environment, and for the eventual niche, which is to be occupied by the group. If resources are scarce or access to them is restricted, the competition may evolve into an open conflict. Thus, ecological variables can be seen as resources, which are allocated by an ethnolinguistic group, and utilized in the course of the contestation of the distribution of powers in a given socio-political environment. Taking into account the dualistic role of language as both a resource and a desired goal of contestation, which itself requires resources, the alteration of ecological variables, primarily the ethnopolitical ones, may become the area of contestation and conflict.

Therefore, language may be both a resource and the goal of the struggle in an interethnic conflict. The necessity to become involved in a language-related conflict may be attributed to the contestation of status and resource distribution, the satisfaction of identity needs and the maintenance of ethnolinguistic identity. Whereas different variables and factors stimulate the emergence of a conflict and affect its character, a language-related conflict can be located within the domain of state-society relations as it connects and influences all other domains and variables.

2.4. Conclusion: Framework for Case Study

The paradigm of language rights provides an important normative framework for addressing the situation of the inequality of language groups in a particular nation-state. Besides, it provides an insight into potential areas and ways in which current conditions can be changed. Thus, it can be used as a valuable tool for measuring the position of a linguistic minority in a nation-state and providing directions in which this position can be altered and improved. In fact, the notion of language rights can serve as a ground on which language-related claims are aggregated and articulated. However, owing to its normative and prescriptive nature, this paradigm does not directly address the issue of language conflicts. Rather it concerns the degree of inequality between communities, potential threats imposed on their maintenance, and means for minimizing such threats.

Approaches to conflicts that involve language introduce a number of important variables relevant for the characteristics of a conflict. Language can be treated as a valuable resource for group mobilization when contesting the distribution of power and other resources. On the other hand, language may be seen as an element relevant to the realization of identity needs. Thus, capacities and mechanisms, important for language maintenance, become the goal of contestation in the course of a conflict and require other resources to be allocated by a particular group in order to succeed in the struggle.

The framework of language ecology, attributed to the state of languages in conflict, provides an important insight into the diversity of factors, such as

linguistic peculiarities, patterns of communication, cultural, demographic, social and psychological characteristic of a community, which are relevant to the issue. Additionally, subjective self-belief in the vitality of a language community can be considered important in this regard.

However, there seem to be a number of points in the existing discussion, which render it insufficient for a comprehensive evaluation of the conflict situation, addressed in this study because it focuses on two ethnolinguistic communities – one, expressing claims for language rights and the other, remaining inactive. In particular, there may be several problematic areas.

Firstly, inequality in the status and position of language groups in a particular nation-state and differences in the accessibility, allocation and distribution of resources among them indicate that there is a potential for conflict. However, reasons and motives, owing to which the given situation becomes contested by a minority group in the form of a conflict, remain obscure. In other words, the question of why in certain cases some groups become involved in a conflict while others do not, providing that they share important similarities, is relevant in this regard.

Secondly, conflicts involving a language dimension in which a common language is primarily used as the tool for group mobilization, where different ultimate goals such as secession are pursued, shall be distinguished from conflicts which primarily focus around language-related issues. Apparently, it is difficult to provide a clear-cut difference between the two types of conflicts, for the nature of an ethnic conflict is heterogeneous, multifaceted and prone to transformation and evolution. Nevertheless, a relative centrality of language issues, such as language maintenance, use and status, articulated in the form of rights expansion claims, shall be taken into consideration.

Thirdly, in the view of the discussion on the relevance of language to ethnic identity, the identity dimension of a language conflict shall be within the primary focus of conflict evaluation. Language is relevant for a particular group as long as it is relevant for the shaping of its identity. Respectively, a particular situation or state policy may be presumed as threatening the maintenance of group identity. Taking into account the multiplicity of functions which language plays in ethnic identity formation and maintenance, the range of issues of concern

involves matters of actual language use in different domains as well as various symbolic manifestations of ethnolinguistic identity and status-related issues.

Finally, the fact that a language conflict involves at least two participating sides, one of them being the ethnic majority in a nation-state, requires closer attention to the dominant group’s attitudes towards the issue. As suggested by Joseph, provided that language rights are allocated to minority groups, the majority community may perceive itself as being under a threat (Joseph, 2006: 46). In the course of the contestation of the existing language rights framework, majority language rights, which are taken for granted, may be limited in order to create space for minority languages. As a result the majority community may perceive claims for the expansion of minority language rights as damaging the position of its national language. Consequently, the characteristics of national identity, the sensitivity of the majority to language-related issues, readiness to meet the demands of minorities, or oppose them, are all valid factors in understanding the situation of a language conflict.

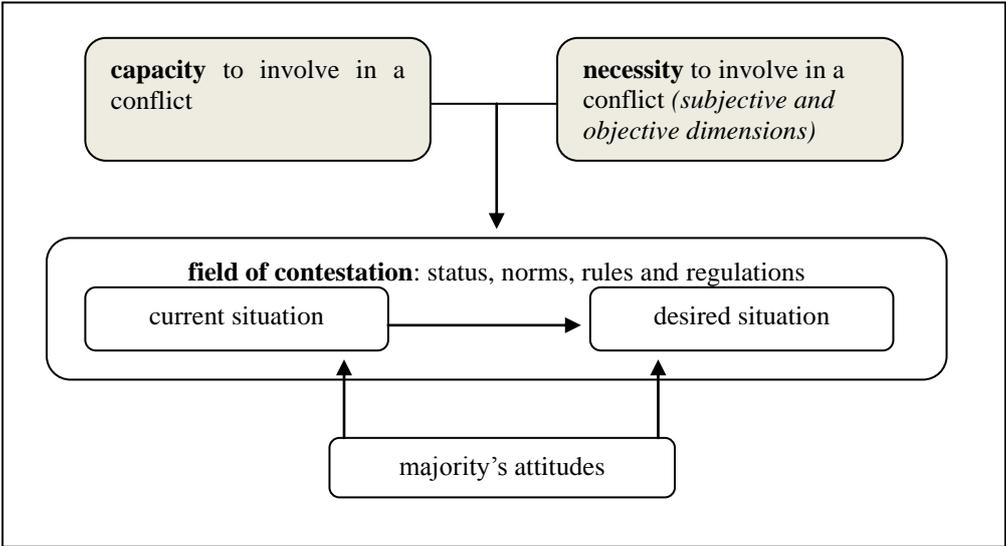


Figure 2.1 Language Conflict³⁴

Therefore, taking into consideration the reservations discussed above, an integrated framework for approaching the case study of the thesis is suggested. The framework includes a minority group’s capacities for engaging in a language conflict, the group’s necessity, or need, to engage in the conflict, the majority group’s predisposition for involvement in a conflict situation, and the field of

³⁴ Prepared by the author.

contestation, or language rights claims, relating to status norms, rules and regulations. The latter can be approached in the form of the alteration of the existing language rights framework.

A minority group's capacities to get involved in the conflict can be related to various types of resources – social, economic, political and cultural– on which it can rely when initiating a language conflict and articulating its claims for language rights. Factors, which determine the group capacities, can be partially paralleled to ecological variables, relating to the environment of an ethnolinguistic group. They include demographic factors, socio-economic factors, cultural factors, organizational factors and external factors.

Demographic factors may include the absolute size of the group, its composition by age, territorial distribution (concentrated, dispersed) and population dynamics (growth, decline, migration). Socio-economic factors encompass the group's education level, its social and economical status and intergroup stratifications. Cultural factors include the origins of the community (historically rooted, migrant), accumulated cultural capital (which may be self-realized as the feeling of cultural superiority/inferiority to the dominant group) and overall cultural coherence and distinctiveness. The existence of ethnic organizations (formal and informal, political, cultural, paramilitary), which may articulate, aggregate or support language-related claims, can be attributed to organizational factors. External factors refer to the availability of a political 'homeland' to back up the minority in a conflict.

A minority group's necessity to trigger a language conflict and engage in claims for the expansion of language rights can be approached from two perspectives – objective and subjective. Firstly, the objective perspective refers to the actual conditions of the minority language in a particular state and the extent to which they are favorable or unfavorable in the matter of maintenance of a distinct linguistic identity. In the view of the discussion on the duality of language's functions in ethnic identity both communicative and symbolic aspects shall be of equal consideration in this regard. Thus, the dominating patterns of everyday interethnic communication, the use of language in such domains as education, work, media, administration, religion, personal names and toponyms, and the recognition of its status may be evaluated. Secondly, it is the subjective

dimension which refers to in-group awareness of the issue, a degree in which community values the associated language for its identity and perceives the current situation as threatening and requiring engagement in conflict.

Finally, the position of the dominant group regarding language-related issues contributes to the evolvement of a conflict situation. The national majority's attitudes are related to the degree in which language is important for national identity and ideology, and therefore ways in which the majority evaluates potential changes and claims for the expansion of minority language rights and expresses tolerance or rigidity to such claims.

The field of contestation is the locus of a conflict over language rights, which can be attributed to existing and desired language-related norms and rules – the national language rights regime. In short, it is the alteration of the existing language rights framework that becomes the object of the conflict. In this respect, claims for the expansion of language rights, expressed by a particular minority, can be located between the current language rights regime of the state and the theoretically most favorable language rights regime (the equation of language statuses and an official bilingualism).

CHAPTER 3

NATIONAL LANGUAGE RIGHTS REGIME IN LITHUANIA

The national language rights regime is the formal reflection of the national language policy, as it concerns the conditions of ethnolinguistic minorities and minority languages. Arguably, it is also the locus of a language conflict or language related-tensions between communities, which are realized in the form of claims for the provision of language rights.

The national language rights regime is formed by the combination of international and national normative acts, directly and indirectly regulating the positions of ethnic minorities in the sphere of language. Therefore, this chapter of the thesis reviews international and domestic normative frameworks, which are relevant for minority rights protection in Lithuania. Considering the fact that Lithuania is a member of the UN, EU, Council of Europe and OSCE,³⁵ corresponding documents from these organizations are included in the chapter. In addition, Lithuania signed a bilateral agreement with Poland, which includes provisions on the protection of the rights of the Polish ethnic minority in Lithuania and the Lithuanian ethnic minority in Poland.

3.1. International Legislation

3.1.1 *United Nations Organization*

The documents of the United Nations Organization, such as declarations and conventions concerning human rights, provide the broadest normative framework in the area of ethnic minority rights. *The Universal Declaration of*

³⁵ Lithuania, *World Factbook*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/lh.html>, last visited on November 2014.

*Human Rights*³⁶ (1948) declares the principle of non-discrimination in the provision of rights and freedoms, including race, language, religion and nationality, as stated in Article 2.1: “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” However, it doesn’t have a specific reference to ethnic minorities. In this regard **the Resolution of the General Assembly. Fate of Minorities**³⁷ (1948) is illustrative. The resolution concerns the issue of ethnic minorities, stating that it “is difficult to adopt a uniform solution of this complex and delicate question, which has special aspects in each State in which it arises.” This reference indicates that ethnic minority rights constitute a separate and complex issue of concern, sensitive for member states.

At the level of the United Nations the discourse of minority rights protection was further elaborated within the general framework of the protection of individual human rights and the principle of non-discrimination in **the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**³⁸ (1965). Article 1.4 of the convention is important, for it states that the elimination of racial discrimination can be achieved by special measures, targeting discriminated groups in order to help them achieve equality. In other words, affirmative action policies and similar instruments can be employed by the government in order to combat discrimination. It treats discrimination at the group level and proclaims that individual rights protection can be insufficient in those cases where particular social groups were previously subjected to certain forms of discrimination.

The understanding of minority rights as group rights, which shall not be treated only at the individual level can be deduced from **the International**

³⁶ Universal Declaration of Human Rights., <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/lh.html>
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>, last visited on March 2015.

³⁷ Resolution of the General Assembly. Fate of Minorities, <http://www.un-documents.net/a3r217c.htm>, last visited on March 2015.

³⁸ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>, last visited on March 2015.

*Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*³⁹ (1966). It links ethnicity and culture and explicitly mentions linguistic, religious and cultural rights as constituents of minority rights discourse. Article 27 of the document states the following:

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.

This approach was further elaborated in *the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*⁴⁰ (1992). Although this declaration has no legally binding power, it provides the most comprehensive approach to minority rights. Articles 2.1-2.5 of the declaration state that national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities have the following rights:

The right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public ... to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life; to participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live; to establish and maintain their own associations; to establish and maintain ... contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

Consequently, in addition to cultural, linguistic and religious rights the document declares the right of minorities to participate in political life on national and regional levels and the right to establish organizations and maintain relations with their 'homelands'.

In general, at the UN level, minority language rights are approached implicitly, relating to the overall principle of non-discrimination and personal freedoms. It provides an overall tolerance-oriented view on the provision of language rights to ethnic minorities.

³⁹ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>, last visited on March 2015.

⁴⁰ Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r135.htm>, last visited on March 2015.

3.1.2 *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)*

Documents regarding the discussion on the rights of ethnic minorities, which were adopted by the OSCE, such as *Helsinki Final Act* (1975), *the Concluding Document of the Madrid Meeting* (1983), *the Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting* (1989) and the *Concluding Document of the Copenhagen Meeting* (1990),⁴¹ have no legally binding power, but refer to minority issues and the protection of minority rights, adding a dimension of security to the subject. The relationship between minority issues and the potential for the emergence of local and regional conflicts are recognized by *the Helsinki Summit Declarations*⁴² (1992). The declarations include a decision to establish the position of a High Commissioner on National Minorities, whose mission is formulated as follows:

Provide "early warning" and, as appropriate, "early action" at the earliest possible stage in regard to tensions involving national minority issues which have not yet developed beyond an early warning stage, but, in the judgment of the High Commissioner, have the potential to develop into a conflict within the CSCE area, affecting peace, stability or relations between participating States, requiring the attention of and action by the Council or the CSO.

3.1.3 *Council of Europe*

Normative documents, adopted by the Council of Europe, constitute the foundation for international legislative framework in the area of minority rights protection. The documents have binding powers for those member states that signed and ratified them.

The first document, which can be considered relevant for the issue of minority rights protection, is *the European Convention on Human Rights*⁴³ (1950). Article 14 of the convention prohibits all forms of discrimination on any grounds, including race, religion, national origin, or association with a national

⁴¹ Račkauskaitė-Burneikienė, A. 'Tautinių mažumų apsauga tarptautinėje teisėje', *Etniškumo Studijos*, vol. 2 (2013), 2013, p. 92.

⁴² Helsinki Summit Declarations, <http://www.osce.org/mc/39530?download=true> , last visited on March 2015.

⁴³ European Convention on Human Rights, http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf, last visited on March 2015.

minority. Thus, it is similar in this regard to the documents adopted by the UN in the same period in the way that it treats minority rights as individual rights and links their protection to the principle of non-discrimination.

Another important normative document, adopted by the Council of Europe, is *the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*⁴⁴ (1992). This document is unique in the way that it concerns the linguistic rights of minorities and provides a comprehensive roadmap for ensuring their protection. At the same time, the definitions, which are used in the document, are loose and open to interpretation at the level of national governments.

Article 1 of the charter defines regional or minority languages as “traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population”. An important implication, which comes from this definition, is that the status of a minority language is defined on the national level. Consequently, an official language, spoken by the numerically largest group of population in a particular state, cannot be considered a minority language in its region where a different language is more widely spoken. The charter gives further clarifications regarding the definition of a region and language for which the document is applicable:

Territory in which the regional or minority language is used means the geographical area in which the said language is the mode of expression of a number of people justifying the adoption of the various protective and promotional measures provided for in this Charter; it does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the State or the languages of migrants.

This provision doesn't contain the precise definitions of conditions for a language to be eligible for the measures stated in the charter. However, it excludes the dialects and the languages of migrants, both being arbitrary concepts, from this definition.

Article 8 encourages states to provide education from pre-school to the university level in minority languages. In the case that that is not realizable, the minority language shall be taught in schools in the region as an integral part of the curriculum and be available at the university level. Article 10 provides that regional administrative authorities shall use the minority language in oral and written communication with citizens. Article 11 encourages states to have at least

⁴⁴ European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/148.htm>, last visited on March 2015.

one channel and one radio station in a minority language and not to oppose the retransmission of radio and television broadcasts from neighboring countries in those languages.

In general, this document introduces an explicitly promotion-oriented approach towards the rights of ethnolinguistic communities. There is also a distinction between the applicability of different language rights regimes to minorities, depending on their origin and territorial concentration.

Lithuania refused to sign the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. An official reason for this decision provided by the government is that signing this charter could damage the position of the state language.⁴⁵ Moreover, it is argued that conditions for minority languages, created in Lithuania, are sufficient enough to ensure minority language rights without signing the document. The fact that Lithuania refused to sign and ratify the charter was also highlighted and criticized by Polish and Russian experts during interviews in the course of the field research.

The second document, produced by the Council of Europe, which regulates the conditions of ethnic (national) minorities, is *the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*⁴⁶ (1995). This convention can be considered important in the sense that it is fully dedicated to the protection of minority rights. The document provides that the status of a minority representative is an individual choice and cannot be defined by the national government. “Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.”

In many aspects, regarding the protection of linguistic rights, the convention repeats the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Article 10, part 1 of the document states that “every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without

⁴⁵ Popovaitė, I. ‘Ar lietuviai – baltos varnos?’ *DELFI.LT*, <http://myep.delfi.lt/news/ar-lietuviai-baltos-varnos.d?id=63087646>, last visited on April 2015.

⁴⁶ Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/157.htm>, last visited on March 2015.

interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing.” Article 14 provides the following:

Every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.

Additionally, Article 11, part 1, suggests that “every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language.” Article 11, part 3 contains a provision regarding the use of minority languages for public signs and toponyms:

In areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the Parties shall endeavour ... to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public also in the minority language when there is a sufficient demand for such indications.

In other words, these provisions recognize the use of personal names and toponyms in a minority language as minority rights. In addition to linguistic rights, Article 15 states the right of national minorities to participate in cultural social economic life and political affairs.

In general, the convention is formulated in the manner of compromise, which leaves space for interpretation by signing states, and therefore has mostly a declarative character. Indeed, neither the precise definition of a territory eligible for the convention’s implementation nor the proportions of a minority group in the share of population are provided in the document. However, judging by the work of the Advisory Committee, it is suggested that the rules of the Convention shall be applicable in territories where ethnic minorities make up 20% of the population. (Advisory Committee, Opinion ACFC/OP/II(2009)002 2009: 144, 145 paragraphs; Advisory Committee, Opinion ACFR/OP/II(2005)007 2005: 133, 134 paragraphs; Advisory Committee, Opinion ACFC/OP/II/(2008)004 2008: 161 paragraph).⁴⁷

Thus, the legislation of the Council of Europe regarding minority language rights protection has a distinctive promotion-oriented character. Both communicative and symbolic functions of language are included in the scope of

⁴⁷ Račkauskaitė-Burņeikienė, A. ‘Tautinių mažumų apsauga tarptautinėje teisėje’, *Etmiškumo Studijos*, vol. 2 (2013), 2013, p. 97.

the language rights framework. There is also a reference to the territorial principle in the distribution of language rights.

3.1.4 European Union

The legislation of the European Union does not directly cover the issue of ethnic minority rights. In general, in the context of the European Union, the CoE's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities serves as the key legal document in the matter of minority rights protection.⁴⁸

In addition, *the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*⁴⁹ (2000, has legal binding powers since 2010)⁵⁰ includes provisions, which can be applicable for minority rights protection. Article 21 of the charter prohibits any form of discrimination on grounds, such as ethnic or social origin, language, religion or belief. Additionally, article 22 states that “the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.” Hence, the denial of minority rights can be under certain circumstances qualified as the violation of the provisions of the charter.

Nevertheless, the EU provides certain institutional opportunities for the articulation of language-related claims and concerns, such as those provided by the European Parliament. After the representative of the Polish minority party was elected as EP member, this institution has been also used for articulating minority rights issues in Lithuania.

⁴⁸ Panayote, E. D. ‘Recognition of Minorities in Europe: Protecting Rights and Dignity’, *Minority Rights Group International*, 2004.

⁴⁹ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0389:0403:en:PDF>, last visited on March 2015.

⁵⁰ EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/charter/index_en.htm, last visited on March 2015.

3.1.5 *Bilateral Agreement with Poland*

The issue of minority rights protection is also mentioned in a Polish-Lithuanian bilateral agreement - *the Agreement between the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Poland on Friendly Relations and Good-Neighbor Cooperation* (Lithuanian: *Lietuvos Respublikos ir Lenkijos Respublikos draugiškų santykių ir gero kaimyninio bendradarbiavimo sutartis*)⁵¹(1994).

Article 13 of the document obliges the sides to adhere to the international principles of ethnic minority rights protection. In its second paragraph, it also provides the definition of the Polish ethnic minority in Lithuania as the following: “persons who have Lithuanian citizenship and who are of the Polish origin or ascribe themselves to the Polish identity, culture and traditions and consider the Polish language their mother tongue.”⁵² That is, language is considered one of the key markers of ethnic identity in this definition. The same article states that those persons, either individually or together with other representatives of their community, have the right to freely declare, protect and develop their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity.

Article 14 of the agreement specifies the rights of the minority community. Among others, the representatives of the Polish minority in Lithuania shall have the right to freely use their mother tongue in private and public life; to obtain and exchange information in their mother tongue and have mass media in their language; learn their mother tongue and study in their mother tongue; establish minority organizations; use the minority language in religious services; use personal names and surnames in the phonetic form of their mother tongue. Article 15 of the agreement also provides a right to use the minority language in regional administrations.

⁵¹ Lietuvos Respublikos ir Lenkijos Respublikos draugiškų santykių ir gero kaimyninio bendradarbiavimo sutartis, <http://www.kpd.lt/lietuvos-respublikos-ir-lenkijos-respublikos-draugisku-santykiu-ir-gero-kaimyninio-bendradarbiavimo-sutartis/>, last visited April 2015.

⁵² Ibid.

3.2. National Legislation

Three major national normative acts regulate ethnic minority rights in general and their linguistic rights in particular. Those are *the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania* (*Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija*), *the Law on State Language* (*Valstybinės kalbos įstatymas*) and *the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania* (*Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas*). While some provisions of the normative acts directly regulate the conditions of ethnic minorities, others do it implicitly, by regulating the use of the Lithuanian language. The sphere of language use is also regulated by the clarifications and instructions of *the State Language Commission*, provisions of *the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania*, clarifications of *the Institutional Court*, and decrees of *the Lithuanian Government*.

In addition to the documents listed above, *the Law on Ethnic Minorities* (*Tautinių mažumų įstatymas*) is included in the chapter although it has no judicial power. The original version of the law was introduced in 1989, amended in 1991 and became obsolete in 2010. For the last five years work on a new version of the law has been going on in the Lithuanian parliament. There are several drafts and proposals regarding the new version of the law, which have been prepared by parliamentary groups. The process of elaboration of a new law on ethnic minorities has been causing intensive political discussions and awareness among the representatives of ethnic minorities. Arguably, the adoption of the new law will indicate the future dimension for minority policies in Lithuania and perspectives for the resolution or continuation of interethnic tensions.

3.2.1 Constitutional Provisions and Law on State Language

The major document of the national legislation is *the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania*⁵³ (1992). Article 29 of the constitution provides that a person's rights must not be restricted and also that no one shall be provided with privileges on the grounds of his or her race, nationality, language, origin and

⁵³ Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija, <http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Konstitucija.htm>, last visited on April 2015.

religion. Thus, it ensures the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

Article 14 of the constitution provides that “the state language is the Lithuanian language”. In addition to the constitutional provision the status of the Lithuanian language as state language is regulated by a separate normative act – *the Law on State Language*⁵⁴ (1995). Article 1 of the law provides that this document regulates language use in Lithuania in official circumstances and does not regulate language use in unofficial communication, religious matters or organizations which belong to ethnic minority communities.

As stated in article 4 of the law, all Lithuanian institutions, organizations and enterprises are obliged to use state language in the course of their operation, in administrative documentation and correspondence. Article 6 provides that public servants, employees of governmental institutions, police and security officers, employees in communication area, transport, health care, social security and relations with customers must know the state language in accordance with officially defined criteria, reflected in the stages of the state language exam.

In the sphere of education, article 12 of the law states that all secondary schools in the country must teach their students the Lithuanian language according to a unified standard. According to article 13, publicly broadcast audiovisual products, such as films and TV programs, must be either translated into the state language or supplemented with the Lithuanian subtitles. Materials which are used in educational purposes, foreign TV channels, retranslated on the Lithuanian territory, and music are exceptions from this ruling.

Article 17 of the law provides that the state language is the only language of public signs. The names of ethnic community organizations and related written information can be provided both in the state language and in the respective minority languages. However, the size of the sign in a minority language must not be bigger than the one of the Lithuanian sign.

Article 25 of the document rules that the implementation of the Law on State Language is controlled by *State Language Inspection*. State Language

⁵⁴ Valstybinės kalbos įstatymas, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_bin?p_id=170492, last visited on April 2015.

Inspection⁵⁵ is a state financed organization, responsible to the State Language Commission and the Ministry of Culture. The work of the commission is regulated by a separate *Law on State Language Inspection*⁵⁶ (2001). Article 4 of the document defines the inspection's functions. The inspection must ensure that governmental and municipal institutions, enterprises and organizations, operating in Lithuania, adhere to the requirements of the Law on State Language. It scrutinizes the cases of violation of the law, investigates requests and complaints, consults governmental institutions, municipalities and other organizations on the subject of compliance with the law, and takes measures to prevent the violation of the law.

Within the scope of its authority, the organization has the right to prepare reports on the violation of the legislation and impose administrative penalties. Penalties are listed in the article 97 (parts 1-7) of *the Administrative Violations Code of the Republic of Lithuania*⁵⁷. They include financial punishments for not using the state language in enterprises and organizations; for not complying with the orders of the inspection; for not using the state language while official duties are fulfilled; for not using the state language in official correspondence; for submission of official documents in languages other than the state language; for not translating broadcast radio and television programs, films and other video materials into the state language; for not using the official Lithuanian names of geographical places and streets in official documents, publications, correspondence, teaching materials and on public signs.

⁵⁵ Valstybinė kalbos inspekcija, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/www_tv.show?id=6905,1,30, last visited on April 2015.

⁵⁶ Valstybinės kalbos inspekcijos įstatymas, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=157329&p_query=&p_tr2=, last visited on April 2015.

⁵⁷ Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių teisės pažeidimų kodeksas; <http://www3.lrs.lt/docs2/BPAGVDKS.PDF>, last visited on April 2015.

3.2.2 *Spelling of Personal Names*

Article 3.282 of the *Civic Code*⁵⁸ of the Republic of Lithuania states that on official documents, such as identity documents, birth and marriage certificates, names and surnames of Lithuanian citizens, as well as geographic names, must be written “according to the rules of the Lithuanian language”.

*The State Language Commission*⁵⁹ is the institution which, according to the Law on the State Language Commission, is responsible for providing clarifications and consultations regarding the implementation of the language law, and in other situations, which are related to the use of the state language. Within the scope of its activities the commission clarifies the regulation of the spelling of personal names of foreign origin in the Lithuanian language. Guidance for the spelling of foreign- originating names and surnames of Lithuanian citizens is provided on its official webpage. It may be suggested that the general rule is to approximate the pronunciation of respective names in the languages of origin by means of the Lithuanian variation of the Latin script.

3.2.3 *Legislation on Education*

The main normative document, which regulates the sphere of public education in Lithuania, is *the Law on Education*⁶⁰ (the version of 2011). Article 30 of the law states that Lithuanian citizens have the right to receive secondary education either in state or minority languages. Schools, which provide education in minority languages, can be financed publicly by the Lithuanian state or privately. In minority schools the subject of the Lithuanian language shall be an obligatory part of the curriculum. The total amount of hours dedicated to the

⁵⁸ Lietuvos Respublikos civilinio kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo įstatymas, <http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/oldsearch.preps2?Condition1=107687&Condition2=>, last visited on April 2015.

⁵⁹ Valstybinė lietuvių kalbos inspekcija, <http://www.vlkk.lt>, last visited on April 2015.

⁶⁰ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas, http://www.sac.smm.lt/images/file/e_biblioteka/Lietuvos%20Respublikos%20svietimo%20istatymas.pdf, last visited on April 2015.

teaching of the Lithuanian language shall not be lower than the one dedicated to the teaching of a minority language. The provision also suggests that particular subjects, chosen by students, can be taught in minority schools in the Lithuanian language, thus in principle giving way to a potential shift from bilingual education predominantly in a minority's language to other forms of bilingual educations, such as transitional bilingualism.

Paragraph 8 of the article provides a separate regulation for the regions and districts, where national minorities 'traditionally' make up a sizeable share of the population. In such regions and districts there should be at least one school which provides education in the state language. In the case of there being a single school in a district there should be at least one group in each grade which provides education in the state language. In other words, this provision safeguards the availability of Lithuanian language education in the areas where Lithuanian speakers are in the minority. It might be argued that this principle contradicts the idea that linguistic minorities are defined at the national level because it protects the status of the Lithuanian language as a 'minority language' in areas populated by ethnic minorities.

This provision can affect the position of minority languages in the following way. In the case of an area where there are two schools – one school's curriculum is in a minority language and the other is in the state language – and the number of students is insufficient for maintaining both of them, it is likely that the minority school will be shut down and students will be transferred to the state-language school.

A separate *Law on Science and Studies*⁶¹ (2009) regulates issues, related to university-level education. Article 49 provides that the language of instruction in the institutions of higher education in Lithuania shall be Lithuanian. The exceptions are made for programs related to the studying of foreign languages, courses taught by foreign lecturers and for those cases when teaching in a foreign language is necessary for participation in international student exchange programs. The latter concerns sections for incoming exchange students, in which

⁶¹ Mokslo ir studijų įstatymas, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=474734, last visited on April 2015.

courses are taught in English.

Another important document, which concerns the condition of ethnic minorities in the sphere of education, is *the Program on the Lithuanian Language and Literature Final Exam*⁶² (2013), adopted by the Ministry of Education. The latest edition of this program does not include a provision that an obligatory language exam shall be conducted differently for the graduates of Lithuanian and minority schools.⁶³ Hence it obliges the graduates of minority schools to take the exam in the same form as their Lithuanian peers and implies that the exam will be graded according to uniform criteria.

3.2.4 *Law on Ethnic Minorities*

*The Law on Ethnic Minorities*⁶⁴ (1991-2009) was one of the first normative acts, adopted by the Lithuanian parliament. Its first version was published in 1989, before the restoration of independence. Hence, the original version of the document contains such terms as *the Lithuanian SSR, Supreme Soviet, and Local Soviets of People's Deputies*. Moreover, it can be suggested that the law is guided by the Soviet understanding of ethnicity, considering that article 4 suggests the following: “Every citizen of the Lithuanian SSR upon obtaining a passport shall be free to identify his ethnicity on the basis of the nationality of his parents or of one of his parents.”

Article 1 provides that “The Lithuanian SSR ... shall guarantee to all ethnic minorities residing in Lithuania the right to freely develop; and shall respect every ethnic minority and language.” Article 2 of the document lists the rights of ethnic minorities in Lithuania, such as the right to obtain state aid for developing

⁶² Lietuvių kalbos ir literatūros brandos egzamino programa, http://www.nec.lt/failai/3879_2014m_Liet_k_BE_programa-pakoreguota-3autorai.pdf, last visited on April 2015.

⁶³ ‘Visų Lietuvos mokyklų abiturientai laikys vienodą lietuvių kalbos ir literatūros brandos egzaminą’, *Švietimo ir mokslo ministrija*, http://www.smm.lt/lt/pranesimai_spaudai//visu-lietuvos-mokyklu-abiturientai-laikys-vienodalietuviu-kalbos-ir-literaturos-brandos-egzamina, last visited on April 2015.

⁶⁴ Tautinių mažumų įstatymas, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_1?p_id=22150, last visited on April 2015.

culture and education, to have schooling in minority languages, to have printed media in minority languages, to perform religious rites in minority languages, to establish ethnic cultural organizations, to be represented in governmental bodies.

Articles 4 and 5 of the law provide that in areas, “serving substantial numbers of a minority with a different language,” a minority language in addition to the state language shall be used in offices and organizations and on public signs.

In principle, it can be suggested that the law provides the minorities with the full scope of language-related rights, except for the recognition of official status. According to the opinion of a local Polish expert⁶⁵ the original law in its form and spirit was ahead its time at its adoption and satisfied the needs of Lithuania’s ethnic minorities. He also mentioned that the Polish community hopes that the new version of the law would be at least equal to the text of the previous version in the scope of provided rights.

There are five versions of proposals available: 2010-01-15, submitted by J. Narkevič (*Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles*)⁶⁶; 2013-11-13, submitted by R. Tamašunienė (*Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles*)⁶⁷; 2013-12-18, submitted by L. Talmont (*Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles*)⁶⁸; 2013-12-20, submitted by L. Talmont (*Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles*)⁶⁹; 2014-09-11, submitted by J. Narkevič, R. Tamašunienė, V. Kravčionok, L. Talmont, M. Mackevič, Z.

⁶⁵ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

⁶⁶ Tautinių mažumų įstatymo projektas, 2010-01-15, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_1?p_id=363451&p_tr2=2, last visited on April 2015.

⁶⁷ Tautinių mažumų įstatymo projektas, 2013-11-13, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_1?p_id=459593&p_tr2=2, last visited on April 2015.

⁶⁸ Tautinių mažumų įstatymo projektas, 2013-12-18, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_1?p_id=462578&p_tr2=2, last visited on April 2015.

⁶⁹ Tautinių mažumų įstatymo projektas, 2013-12-20, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_1?p_id=462578&p_tr2=2, last visited on April 2015.

Jedinskij, J. Kvetkovskij (*Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles*), Irina Rozova (*Russian Alliance*)⁷⁰.

The text of the draft of 2010-01-15 generally repeats the conditions of the previous law on ethnic minorities. The text of the draft 2013-11-13 does not include the provision about the right to indicate one's ethnic identity in passport, according to his or her parents' ethnicity. The drafts of 2013-12-18 and 2013-12-20 differ from each other in some of its wording. They both contain provisions on the freedom of associations, speech and thought for ethnic minorities. However, the most notable difference from the previous versions is article 1, paragraph 3. It contains the following provision: "Ethnic minorities, while using their freedoms and rights must adhere to the Lithuanian constitution, laws, and other normative acts, protect and respect national sovereignty and territorial integrity, state language, culture, traditions and rites."

The version of 2014-09-11 is the most comprehensive and elaborated draft of the law on ethnic minorities. It is substantially different from the original law of 1991 and from previous drafts. Firstly, its preamble includes a reference to the importance of the protection of ethnic minority rights for the maintenance and stability of democracy. Article 2.1 of the draft provides the definition of an ethnic minority as "a group of Lithuanian citizens or persons, permanently residing in Lithuania, which is peculiar for its culture, religion and language or one of these markers, which (markers) are different from those of the ethnic majority; and such a group is united by the desire to protect its ethnic identity."

Article 3 guarantees freedom to choose identity and freedom to either be treated as a minority or not according to one's will, thus, resembling the similar provision of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Article 4 directly prohibits policies, aimed at the assimilation of ethnic minorities. In addition to the general provision, in the second paragraph it is stated that "it is prohibited to apply measures which aim at artificially changing the percentage composition of the population in areas, which are inhabited by ethnic minorities."

Article 5 provides that the representatives of ethnic minorities shall enjoy their respective rights both individually and at the group level, thus stating the

⁷⁰ Tautinių mažumų įstatymo projektas, 2014-09-11, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=481434&p_tr2=2, last visited on April 2015.

dual – individual and collective - nature of minority rights. Article 12 contains a provision regarding the right to celebrate ethnic holidays and commemorate historical dates and publicly use ethnic symbols. In fact, this provision can be understood as the one which allows using such national symbols as the Polish or Russian flag.

Article 15 suggests that administrative units in which ethnic minorities comprise no less than 10% the minority has the right to use the respective minority language for communication with local administration, thus attempting to define precise criteria for the territorial-based provision of language rights. According to article 17 of the draft in the same administrative units, their names, street names, names of public organizations, geographic signs, can be also written in the minority language next to the state language. This article is in direct conflict with the Law on State Language.⁷¹

3.3. Language Rights Framework and the Areas of Language Conflict

In the Lithuanian case the normative framework, which regulates the conditions of ethnic minorities, consists of a number of international normative acts, as well as domestic legislation. As of 2015, Lithuania has no separate law which regulates the rights of ethnic minorities for the Law on Ethnic Minorities lost its judicial power. Currently the new version of the law has been prepared in the national parliament. Consequently, the rights of ethnic minorities are safeguarded by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which Lithuania signed in 1995 and ratified in 2000.⁷²

A number of national normative acts, which regulate the use of the state language, most notably the Law on State Language, are relevant for the language rights of ethnic minorities. In this regard it should also be noted that Lithuania did not sign and ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

⁷¹ Europos teisės departamento išvada tautinių mažumų įstatymo projektui, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=483422, last visited on April 2015.

⁷² ‘Trečiasis pranešimas apie Europos Tarybos tautinių mažumų apsaugos pagrindų konvencijos įgyvendinimą Lietuvos Respublikoje pagal konvencijos 25 straipsnį’, *Lietuvos Respublikos kultūros ministeria*, 2011, p 6.

In general, it can be argued that a relatively advanced national framework for the protection of minority language rights is provided in Lithuania. In particular, in the area of education, Lithuanian legislation guarantees the provision of state-funded schooling in minority languages. This norm can be considered advanced in terms of minority rights in this regard. Therefore, the national language rights framework can be characterized by the overall promotion-oriented approach towards the protection of the rights of ethnolinguistic communities. However, there are notable reservations deriving from the definition of the status of the state language (use of public signs, spelling of personal names, use of other languages in official communication) as well as from recent changes which can alter the situation with minority languages in the area of schooling.

Claims for language rights, expressed by the Polish community in Lithuania, are primarily concerned with areas restricted by the law on state language, such as the use of minority languages for public signs and personal names, and affected by the latest amendments in legislation on education, as well as by the lacunas, which emerged after the national Law on Ethnic Minorities became obsolete. The claims of the Polish minority regarding the change of the national language rights framework can be listed as following, according to the position of the Electoral Action of Poles of Lithuania⁷³ and the reports of local Polish experts.⁷⁴

Use of minority languages:

- the use of the minority language in local administrations *on par* with the state language in those administrative units where ethnic minorities comprise a sizeable share of the population;
- the use of both minority and majority languages on public boards, street signs and private commercial signs in the areas populated by ethnic minorities;

⁷³ Kravčionok, V. 'Apie tautinių mažumų situaciją Lietuvoje', *AWPL.LT*, <http://www.awpl.lt/?p=504&lang=lt>, last visited on April 2015.

⁷⁴ Interviews with Polish experts from the House of Polish Culture and the Union of Teachers of Polish Schools of Lithuania, Vilnius, February 2015.

- the use of the original spelling of personal names and surnames of in those minority languages, which use the Latin alphabet, in official documents.

Area of education:

- the outlawing of the principle according to which in those areas, where ethnic minorities comprise the majority of population, state-language schools are preserved at the expense of minority-language schools;
- the cancellation of the teaching of particular subjects, such as history, geography, the principles of citizens' upbringing, in the state language in minority schools as damaging the minority school education system;
- the cancellation of the provision of the unified language exam for the graduates of titular and minority schools, which violates the principle of equal opportunities and does not provide an adequate interim period for minority schools to adapt to the change.

Areas, which are not directly concerned with the matters of language:

- the restoration of political rights of minorities, which have been violated since 1996 when the preferences for minority parties were abolished and the universal 5% threshold for entering the parliament was introduced;
- the alteration of the principle of the distribution of electoral districts, according to which areas of the Polish majority are united with ethnically Lithuanian areas;
- the complete restitution of property and lands, expropriated by the state in the Soviet period to their former owners, namely ethnic Poles in the Vilnius region;
- the restriction on the mechanism of land transfers, which has allowed some Lithuanians to obtain property in traditionally Polish areas, thus changing the ethnic composition of some districts.

The last set of claims is not directly related to minority language rights. Nevertheless, it can be relevant for the articulation of language-related claims at

the political level, as well as for the preservation of existing demographic composition in areas, populated by the representatives of ethnolinguistic minorities.

Summarizing the discussion in this chapter it can be said that Lithuania has an explicitly defined monolingual language policy with a marked degree of tolerance to linguistic minorities, reflected in corresponding international and national legislation. However, there are important limitations regarding potential for the expansion of minority language rights, originating from the status of Lithuanian as the only state language. Recent amendments on legislation in the area of secondary education and discussions on the new version of the law on ethnic minorities can also be perceived as negative developments regarding the position of local ethnolinguistic communities.

CHAPTER 4

ATTITUDES OF THE MAJORITY COMMUNITY

This chapter of the thesis focuses on the role of language in the Lithuanian national identity, the effect which it imposes on interethnic relationships in language-related domains, and the attitudes of the majority community regarding the alteration of the existing language rights framework. The chapter will discuss the historical aspect of language in Lithuania, the current situation of the relevance of language for the Lithuanian identity, attitudes to language minorities in the Lithuanian society and the nature of the public discourse regarding language conflict.

The Lithuanian language belongs to a separate group of Baltic languages within the Indo-European language family. Baltic languages share some notable commonalities with Slavic languages, and, according to some opinions, developed from a common Balto-Slavic root. “While displaying some typological characteristics related to Slavic, and some shared lexical items, they are thought to have separated from a common stem in the seventh century.”⁷⁵ However, Lithuanian and Latvian are not mutually intelligible. Needless to say, there is no mutual ineligibility between the Baltic and Slavic language.

Unlike Latvian, which has experienced a series of innovations, Lithuanian is considered the most archaic Indo-European language, sharing important similarities in grammar and vocabulary with proto Indo-European and Sanskrit, making it valuable for the scholars of Indo-European languages. The peculiarity of their language is well realized by the Lithuanians. “Lithuanians have taken a particular pride in their native language as the oldest living Indo-European

⁷⁵ Hogan-Brun, G., Ozolins, U., Ramonienė, M. and Rannut, M. ‘Language Politics and Practice in the Baltic States’ in Kaplan, R. B. and Baldauf Jr., R. B. (eds.) *Language Planning and Policy in Europe Vol. 3: The Baltic States, Ireland and Italy*, Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2008, p. 46.

language”.⁷⁶

The Lithuanian language has occupied a key role in the nation-building process in Lithuania. In fact, much of the struggle for nationhood and independent statehood, have revolved around language and language-related issues, such as resisting Polish cultural and linguistic domination, the repressive language policies of the Tsarist Russia, and the Soviet policies of Russification. “Language has been central to the National Awakening movements in all three Baltic States; in many ways, it is possible to see these countries as essentially lingua-centric in their self-identity and indeed in political and social priorities.”⁷⁷

Even if compared to other Baltic states, Lithuania might be considered the most illustrative case of a strong connection between language and national identity. Language as a component of national identity and as a matter of concern might possess a higher value for Lithuanians than for instance, for neighboring Latvians, as a Lithuanian expert mentions: “Yes, Latvians are our brothers... but younger. I think they don’t care about language as much as we do.”⁷⁸

The member of the department of Lithuanian Studies at Vilnius University also noticed that Lithuania has been in a more advanced position regarding language-related issues than other Baltic states:

I can say that we have been ahead of the rest of the Baltic. It was so even in the Soviet times, and during the first years of independence. Latvians and Estonians would look up to our developments in language policies. They would come to us to learn, for instance, how to teach language to national minorities, how to design language proficiency tests...⁷⁹

This special place of the Lithuanian language in the construction of national identity and the strong attachment of Lithuanians to their language has been on mentioned numerous occasions by the representatives of ethnic minorities during

⁷⁶ Hogan-Brun, G., Ozolins, U., Ramonienė, M. and Rannut, M. ‘Language Politics and Practice in the Baltic States’ in Kaplan, R. B. and Baldauf Jr., R. B. (eds.) *Language Planning and Policy in Europe Vol. 3: The Baltic States, Ireland and Italy*, Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2008, p. 47.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 57.

⁷⁸ Interview with a Lithuanian expert from the House of Ethnic Communities, Vilnius, February 2015.

⁷⁹ Interview with a Lithuanian expert from the Department of Lithuanian Studies at Vilnius University, Vilnius, February 2015.

the interviews.

4.1. Historical Background

Although national historiography attributes the establishment of Lithuanian statehood to the early 14th century, the medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania was neither ethnically Lithuanian nor dominated by ethnic Lithuanians. It was a multiethnic and multireligious state where the Latin and Slavonic languages were used as the language of the church and administration. After the establishment of the Common Polish-Lithuanian State it was Polish, which gained the dominant position. The first books in the Lithuanian language were published abroad – in the 16th century in Prussia.⁸⁰

Russia annexed Lithuania in 1795. A series of uprisings which followed the annexation led to the introduction of censorship policies. Printing in the Lithuanian language, such as books and newspapers, was outlawed for the period of 1864-1904.⁸¹ Arguably, this policy had a severe negative impact on the further development of the language. Nevertheless, some printed books in Lithuanian were still published abroad and smuggled to the Lithuanian territory by so called ‘book-carriers’.

The period of the late 19th century was the period of the Lithuanian national awakening, a trend common to the region in general.⁸² The ideas of Lithuanian nationalism were of an ethnolinguistic nature and drew inspiration from linguistics and folklore studies.

When Lithuania achieved its independences in 1918, the Lithuanian language for the first time obtained official status. Hence it enjoyed the support of all the necessary language-related public institutions, such as schools, universities, philology departments and printing. Those institutions had already been in place for more than two decades by the time the Baltic States were

⁸⁰ Grenoble, L.A. *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*, New York; Boston; Dordrecht; London; Moscow: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003, p. 104.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940.

It is argued that late incorporation and the experience of independent nationhood were the causes that accounted for the difference of the Baltic republics from the rest of the USSR in language-related issues.⁸³ First of all, by the time of incorporation their languages had been official languages in independent nation-states for more than two decades, supported by all the necessary institutions and an extensive corpus of printed literature. Owing to this fact, their languages had already had standardized grammars and developed vocabularies. Secondly, unlike in other parts of the USSR, high literacy in the titular languages had already been achieved by the time Soviet rule was established in the region.⁸⁴

The incorporation of the Baltic States coincided with the turmoil of World War II and the challenges of the first years of post-war reconstruction. The Soviet government was relatively less concerned with the transformation of schooling and language teaching in the region at that period. In Lithuania the schooling system was composed of three types of schools: Lithuanian-language schools, Russian-language schools and Polish-language schools. Russian became a compulsory subject in all schools, whereas Lithuanian was taught as a subject in non-titular schools.

In the Soviet period, Lithuanian was just one of the subjects taught in minority schools. In Russian schools there were one or two hours of the language a week and students had an option not to study the Lithuanian language at all, which many preferred. In Polish schools the situation was even worse, considering the fact that schoolchildren studied Polish as the mother tongue, Russian as the common language of the Soviet Union, and Lithuanian as only the third language on the priority list. As a 42-year-old male Polish interviewee, who studied in a Polish school, suggests, “I learned Russian in school. Comparing to Lithuanian, they taught it at a much higher level. The requirements were much

⁸³ Grenoble, L.A. *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*, New York; Boston; Dordrecht; London; Moscow: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003, p. 105.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

higher.”⁸⁵ Moreover, as it was reported by the respondents, both teachers and students usually considered the Lithuanian language as secondary and unnecessary for future education and a career. Thus, they paid little attention to its being taught and made little effort to study it. A 41-year-old female Russian respondent, who completed her secondary education during the Soviet period, said the following:

We had Lithuanian language classes starting, probably, in second grade. But it is hard to call them proper classes. They didn't give me anything in terms of language. And it wasn't necessary at that time. I finished school in 1986. It was the first year when they cancelled the compulsory exam on the Lithuanian language. That's why teachers didn't even bother.⁸⁶

According to the opinion of the member of the department of Lithuanian Studies, school programs were not designed in such a way that the students would be able to communicate in the Lithuanian language. Classes usually provided students at most with some limited knowledge on grammar and with basic translation skills. According to her words:

This was our primary task at the time of the restoration of independence. How to teach Lithuanian to national minorities so that they could actually use it in real life? In the Soviet Era what they learned was how to decline a noun or a verb, or how to translate a sentence. But if it comes to such a simple thing as to ask to open a window, they couldn't do it. So we had to prepare new programs, books, methods, train teachers...⁸⁷

As long as Russian was considered the all-Union language of interethnic communication, all public services and needs could have been met, knowing only Russian. The growing number of migrants from other Soviet republics, who did not know the titular language, had few incentives to learn it. This was also true for minority communities which received poor teaching of the language at their schools and felt little need to master their knowledge of Lithuanian. A 42-year old male Polish respondent, who studied in a Polish school during the Soviet period, said the following:

Now, of course it seems like there were not enough classes of Lithuanian. But who knew then. Then it seemed like it was enough. There was no need. Maybe if you

⁸⁵ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

⁸⁶ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

⁸⁷ Interview with a Lithuanian expert from the Department of Lithuanian Studies at Vilnius University, Vilnius, February 2015.

lived in a small Lithuanian town or had many Lithuanian friends... But they all learned Russian in school and could speak Russian. You could use Russian in all institutions and offices. As far as I know, at some factories working for all-Union purposes, it was only Russian and no Lithuanian.⁸⁸

Russian, which gained official status, also became a compulsory subject in all titular schools in the Baltic republic. The period of secondary education there was one year longer than in other Soviet republics in order to give extended time to catch up with the learning of the Russian language. Ironically, owing to this extra year, schools also had more time to teach their titular language to students.⁸⁹ Initially, Russian was taught, beginning from the second grade. In the following years, in line with the policy of Russification, the central government pressed the republican authorities to start introducing the Russian language in the first grade and in kindergartens. However, Lithuania and Estonia were the two strongholds where the teaching of Russian in the first grade was introduced last, in the 1980-81 academic year.⁹⁰

In the LitSSR, the cases of language shifts to Russian among Lithuanians were extremely rare. A Lithuanian expert in sociolinguistics said during the interview that:

Apart from extraordinary situations, maybe if a child's parents were extremely pro-communist, or because of lack of availability of Lithuanian schools in the neighborhood, the absolute majority of children from Lithuanian families would receive secondary education in their mother tongue. I myself have never heard of such cases.⁹¹

On the contrary, it was not the case in other parts of the Soviet Union, namely Central Asia or Caucasus, where people preferred to send their children to Russian-language schools, considering them more prestigious and providing better career perspectives in the future.

Higher education, as well, was predominantly Lithuanian in terms of

⁸⁸ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

⁸⁹ Ivanauskas, V. 'Rusų kalbos plėtra ir Lietuvos TSR švietimo politika devintajame dešimtmetyje', *The Year-Book of Lithuanian History*, vol. 2008 /1, 2009, p. 111.

⁹⁰ Grenoble, L.A. *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*, New York; Boston; Dordrecht; London; Moscow: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003, p. 97.

⁹¹ Interview with a Lithuanian expert in sociolinguistics from Vilnius University, Vilnius, February 2015.

language of instruction. Even in such departments as calculus and engineering the Lithuanian-language groups usually outnumbered Russian-language groups. The latter were filled with non-titular students, the graduates of non-Lithuanian schools. In this regard one of the female Russian interviewees, 45 years old, recalls her university years:

I studied one year in mathematics department here in Vilnius. Even there we had one Russian group and maybe two or three Lithuanian groups. It was logical. All those students who came from all those little towns and villages... They couldn't study mathematics at the university in Russian. They simply didn't know the language that well.⁹²

Unlike in Latvia and Estonia, the composition of the local communist party and the administrative apparatus was mostly ethnically Lithuanian and Lithuanian-speaking.⁹³ It is suggested that it was the local party leadership that opposed rapid industrialization and thus the influx of labor migrants, both of which were at much lower rates than in other Baltic States. These moves account for the fact that Lithuanians remained the absolute majority in their titular republic between 1940 and 1991.

Party composition and the attitudes of elites favored the continuous use of the titular language at administrative and political levels and local officials were reluctant to implement an extensive Russification policy in the republic. According to Grenoble, Russian was used as the working language in the party and the government.⁹⁴ However, in many cases it was only official resolutions which were written in Russian though the actual discussions were still in Lithuanian. Such ministries as the ministry of culture and education were almost exclusively Lithuanian and Lithuanian-speaking.⁹⁵

Despite the fact that the Lithuanian language was still in relatively better

⁹² Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

⁹³ Hogan-Brun, G., Ozolins, U., Ramonienė, M. and Rannut, M. 'Language Politics and Practice in the Baltic States' in Kaplan, R. B. and Baldauf Jr., R. B. (eds.) *Language Planning and Policy in Europe Vol. 3: The Baltic States, Ireland and Italy*, Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2008, p. 70.

⁹⁴ Grenoble, L.A. *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*, New York; Boston; Dordrecht; London; Moscow: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003, p. 106.

⁹⁵ Ivanauskas, V. 'Rusų kalbos plėtra ir Lietuvos TSR švietimo politika devintajame dešimtmetyje', *The Year-Book of Lithuanian History*, vol. 2008 /1, 2009, p. 124.

condition than many other languages of the Soviet republics, there was an ongoing decrease in its status, the spread of bilingualism among the titular population, and favorable conditions for Russian-speaking minorities to remain monolingual.⁹⁶ All this accounted for a widely shared dissatisfaction and awareness about the future of the language among the titular population.⁹⁷

The beginning of the 1980s was the time when the decreasing status of Lithuanian against Russian had become especially apparent. Lithuanian was a titular language, but Russian has been gaining more and more ground in various domains. This was also a period in which a significant number of Russian-speaking migrants came to Lithuania to work at Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant, making up an absolute majority of the population in the newly founded town of Visaginas. A Lithuanian expert in sociolinguistics from Vilnius University characterized this period as follows:

There was more and more Russian everywhere. Yet, at that time the situation was still not too dangerous but I guess that if there hadn't been perestroika and independence who knows what would be the situation now. Thank God, we have what we have now.⁹⁸

A similar opinion was also shared by Antanas Smetona, the Dean of the Philology Department of Vilnius University:

Well, there were the real conditions of official bilingualism, and not just any kind of bilingualism. It was bilingualism with a clear prestige preference for the elder brother's language and with clear perspectives for the future of the Lithuanian language that it will be sooner or later replaced by the Russian language.⁹⁹

The end of the 1980s was marked as the period of national awakening throughout the Soviet Union. In Lithuania, as well as in the rest of the Baltic, language issues and concerns about the ongoing Russification took an important

⁹⁶Hogan-Brun, G., Ozolins, U., Ramonienė, M. and Rannut, M. 'Language Politics and Practice in the Baltic States' in Kaplan, R. B. and Baldauf Jr., R. B. (eds.) *Language Planning and Policy in Europe Vol. 3: The Baltic States, Ireland and Italy*, Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2008, pp. 70-71.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

⁹⁸ Interview with a Lithuanian expert in sociolinguistics from Vilnius University, Vilnius, February 2015.

⁹⁹ 'Filologijos daktaras A.Smetona: Lietuvių kalba tikrai neišnyks', *Baltai.lt*, <http://www.baltai.lt/?p=514>, last visited on May 2015.

place in public discourse and served as grounds for independence claims. The public protests and movements of the late 1980s in the Baltic States are commonly referred to as ‘singing’ revolutions, for they included various cultural and folklore activities, also involving linguistic dimensions.¹⁰⁰

According to the member of the Department of Lithuanian Studies, during the period of late perestroika, associated with political activities of *Sajudis*, there emerged a demand from the side of non-titular residents of the republic for Lithuanian language courses, which were established at working places, offices and factories.¹⁰¹ Several respondents recall this period as the time when they or their acquaintances engaged in some sort of improving of their knowledge of the titular language, as supported by the following quotations from Russian respondents:

There was that feeling that nothing will be like it was before. And we will have to adjust to it. I mean to know the language also. We knew that those who wanted to stay had to learn it. If you know the language it is different. You are like a bit more “ours.”¹⁰²

(Russian, female, 42)¹⁰³

No, not in school. I learned Lithuanian on my own. It was the perestroika time already. There was that rise in national self-consciousness everywhere. I also took part in all those political actions, they were not ethnic. Russians and Poles also took part. It was a push, stimulus to learn the language properly. I remember many of my university friends also became more interested in Lithuanian at that time.¹⁰⁴

(Russian, female, 45)

It may be concluded that language played an important role in the formation of the modern Lithuanian nation, which can also be classified as essentially ethnolinguistic. The matters of language maintenance and resistance to

¹⁰⁰ Hogan-Brun, G., Ozolins, U., Ramonienė, M. and Rannut, M. ‘Language Politics and Practice in the Baltic States’ in Kaplan, R. B. and Baldauf Jr., R. B. (eds.) *Language Planning and Policy in Europe Vol. 3: The Baltic States, Ireland and Italy*, Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2008, p. 77.

¹⁰¹ Interview with a Lithuanian expert from the Department of Lithuanian Studies at Vilnius University, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁰² Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁰³ Information about interviewees, such as ethnicity, gender and age, will be provided after a quotation in the following format - (*ethnicity, gender, age*) - in those cases when it is not provided in the text preceding the quotation.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

language oppression have occupied an important place in national history. Probably, ethnic minority groups have also been aware of the exceptional importance of the language for the titular nation even in the Soviet Era. This is how a 51-year-old male Polish interviewee describes Lithuanians:

You have to respect your roots. This is why Lithuanians didn't break down in the Soviet time and didn't lose their authenticity [*autentichnost* – the original word used by the respondent, Y.K.]. They are stubborn and they hold on to their language.¹⁰⁵

The conditions of the Lithuanian language in the Soviet period remained comparatively better than in the majority of the Soviet republics, and probably, even better than in other Baltic republics. The following reasons may account for this fact: late incorporation, hence legacy of the official status for the language during the years of first independence; titular ethnic composition of the local communist party and administration, hence continuous use of the language in administration and reluctance to implement radical policies of Russification; relatively low level of migration from other parts of the Union; and reluctance of the titular population to abandon Lithuanian in favor of Russian.

Nevertheless, the increasing presence of Russian in various public domains and ongoing attempts of the central government to facilitate Russification have become the matters of public concern and awareness. Consequently, language-related issues played an important role in public mobilization in support for independence claims in the years of perestroika.

4.2. Lithuanian Language in Independent Lithuania

The exceptional symbolic meaning of the language for the Lithuanian nation-building project predetermines its unquestionable superior status in the country. As the chapter on the national language rights framework suggests, the supremacy of the Lithuanian language is enshrined in the constitution. Various normative acts and institutions are directly or indirectly concerned with the matters of language use and maintenance.

The idea that language is an important marker for belonging to the national community is shared by the population. A quantitative study on ethnic and civic

¹⁰⁵ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

markers of group belongingness, conducted in 2011 among university students, addressed the issue by asking the question “What characteristics make someone Lithuanian?”¹⁰⁶

*Table 4.1 Markers of Lithuanian Identity*¹⁰⁷

Which of the following characteristics make someone Lithuanian?	<i>Strongly agree (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat agree (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat disagree (%)</i>	<i>Strongly disagree (%)</i>
<i>Ethnic markers</i>				
Born in Lithuania	36	43	16	5
Able to speak Lithuanian	75	18	4	3
Have parents that are Lithuanian	27	38	28	7
Catholic	9	24	26	40
<i>Civic markers</i>				
Lithuanian citizenship	59	34	6	2
Respect country's institutions	66	27	6	2
Feel Lithuanian	69	24	4	2
Live in Lithuania most of one's life	35	42	20	3
Believe in independence of Lithuania	80	15	3	2

The set of choices was divided into two categories: ethnic markers and civic markers. The results of the survey are presented in the table 4.1. From the results it can be deduced that markers, labeled as civic in the study, are valued by the respondents more highly than ‘ethnic’ markers (arguably, the ones which are related to such ethnic ‘primordial’ markers as origin, ancestry and religion) with the one exception – ability to speak Lithuanian.

According to the results of another quantitative sociological research regarding the constituents of the Lithuanian identity, conducted in 2007, 64.5% of the respondents named the loss of the language as the main sign of assimilation.¹⁰⁸ A qualitative study on the transformation of the Lithuanian identity in the epoch of globalization demonstrates that specific cultural features have been losing their importance in defining one's belonging to the national community. Only two major common elements of national identity can be singled

¹⁰⁶ Buhr, R, Fabrykant, M. S and Hoffman, S. M. ‘The Measure of a Nation: Lithuanian Identity in the New Century’, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 45, no 2, pp. 143-168.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹⁰⁸ Kuznecovienė, J. ‘Lietuvių tautinė tapatybė: uždaramo ir atviro demenys’, *Filosofija. Sociologija*, vol. 18, no 2, 2007, p. 7.

out - language and territory.¹⁰⁹

The sensitivity of Lithuanians to language-related matters and the special status of the national language are generally accepted by the local minorities. None of the respondents questioned the position of Lithuanian as the only state language in the country or the fact that it is an obligation for all the minorities, living there, to have a good command of the language. Here are quotations from the views of respondents concerning this topic:

Yes, Poles have always lived here. And Vilnius once was a Polish city. But yeah, Lithuania came, let it be the Lithuanian language as well.¹¹⁰

(Polish, male, 55)

I think that if it is the Lithuanian state, then it all should be in the state language, and people should know this language.¹¹¹

(Russian, female, 42)

It's my duty to know Lithuanian. I understand very well that it is the state language of the country, where I live. It's normal.¹¹²

(Polish, female, 29)

Both Polish and Lithuanian experts stressed that there is no contest over the status of Lithuanian as the only state language. As, for example, an expert from the Union of Teachers of Russian Schools of Lithuania puts it: "We are Lithuanian citizens. We must know Lithuanian. No one questions this. No one claims that Russian would become the state language here."¹¹³

As it was discussed in the theoretical chapter, the effect of the expansion of language rights for ethnic minorities could be presumed as threatening by the national majority. Thus, considering the importance paid to the national language in Lithuania, not only a direct assault on the titular language, but also changes such as any sort of elevation in status for minority languages which indirectly

¹⁰⁹ Štutinienė, I. 'Lietuvių tautinė tapatybė globalizacijos kontekstuose: raiška ir kaitos tendencijos', *Filosofija. Sociologija*, vol. 2, 2006, pp. 18–26.

¹¹⁰ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹¹¹ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹¹² Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹¹³ Interview with a Russian expert from the Union of Teachers of Russian Schools of Lithuania, Vilnius, February 2015.

affect the balance of languages in the symbolic sphere, can be potentially treated as threats to the Lithuanian language and cause a negative reaction within the part of the titular community. According to this logic, the expansion of the language rights of minorities can be presumed as an ‘insult’ to the symbolic status of Lithuanian as the only state language. Probably, due to this reason many respondents were either pessimistic regarding the perspective of the expansion of language rights for the minorities or even saw such a struggle as undesired and potentially harmful to the minorities, for it might escalate negative relationships between the communities. Here is the view of a 20-year-old Polish university student on the issue:

Those claims for language rights, I mean those streets signs and blah-blah-blah. I think it should not be done so impudently. No. It’s not because I’m against all this. I support them. But for now it is better not to provoke Lithuanians, especially those nationalists.¹¹⁴

A 45-year old female Russian interviewee also mentioned the exceptional sensitivity of language matters for the Lithuanians:

If you live in this country you have to accept that there is a state language, especially, in such a small country as Lithuania, so concerned with its ‘precious’ language. There are just three million Lithuanians. There is no need to hurt them by all this.¹¹⁵

Another factor, which originates from the sensitivity of language issues for the titular community and affects interethnic relations in Lithuania, is that discourse on the protection of the Lithuanian nation and language and adoption of restrictive politics in ethnic matters are used in the political struggle for the votes of more conservative and nationalist part of the electorate. An expert from the House of Polish Culture refers to it in the following way: “It is also a matter of principle. There are some quite ardent nationalist cadres in the Lithuanian society, as well as politicians who represent them.”¹¹⁶

The fact that nationalist rhetoric can be appealing to a certain part of the electorate can be illustrated by the use of nationalist and anti-Polish slogans

¹¹⁴ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹¹⁵ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹¹⁶ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

during an outdoor public manifestation organized in the city center by nationalist political groups on the 16th of February, Lithuania's Independence Day (officially *Day of Restoration of the Lithuanian State*).¹¹⁷ In this relation, according to the opinion of the Polish expert,¹¹⁸ there is little chance that the new law on ethnic minorities will pass through the Lithuanian parliament before the upcoming national parliamentary election. No matter which version of the new law is eventually adopted, either favoring or further restricting the rights of ethnic minorities, the party in power cannot make such a risky and sensitive decision, which can potentially affect the distribution of votes and the results of the approaching election.

Summing up, it can be argued that the Lithuanian language is the major component of the Lithuanian national identity. The matters of language maintenance, discourse on the threat to the national language has occupied a significant place in the construction of the national identity. In such a case it is likely that attempts to change the current situation in language matters, including such symbolic issues as the norms of spelling and multilingual signs, might be met with a marked degree of suspicion or hostility from the side of the titular community.

4.3. Discrimination and Stereotypes

As discussed in chapter three, it is apparent that in Lithuania there is no direct legal discrimination on the basis of a person's origin, ethnicity, mother tongue or religion. "Despite repeated accusations of extreme nationalism among the titular populations; there is a marked degree of linguistic tolerance on their part"¹¹⁹ However, as the matters of language are considered a salient and sensitive issue in the country, it is also important to look at the everyday

¹¹⁷ Author's observations in the course of the field research, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹¹⁸ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹¹⁹ Hogan-Brun, G., Ozolins, U., Ramonienė, M. and Rannut, M. 'Language Politics and Practice in the Baltic States' in Kaplan, R. B. and Baldauf Jr., R. B. (eds.) *Language Planning and Policy in Europe Vol. 3: The Baltic States, Ireland and Italy*, Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2008, p. 34.

experiences of the members of ethnic minorities in this regard.

In the course of field research, respondents were asked about their experiences of discrimination or biased attitude on the grounds that they are not Lithuanian, don't speak flawless Lithuanian, or have a non-native accent in Lithuanian. In general, respondents would agree that instances of biased attitude, depending on ethnic origin or native language, are possible, but not they are not systematic. A 41-year-old female Russian interviewee summarized the attitude of Lithuanians towards ethnic minorities in the following way:

Small 'actions' and ugly things have always happened, in the Soviet Era also. Like if you ask for something in Russian they pretend that they don't understand you. Not in Vilnius, but in Kaunas. You know, it's the 'most Lithuanian city on earth'. But real systematic chauvinism... No, I cannot say this, it would be a lie. People are different of course. But systematic, no.¹²⁰

A 32-year-old male Russian respondent, who completed his secondary education in a Lithuanian school and whose colleagues at work are ethnic Lithuanians, shared an opinion that whereas there is no legal discrimination or openly expressed negative attitude towards the representatives of ethnic minorities, there are some areas to which access is informally restricted. Here is the quotation of his view:

It [*negative attitude – Y.K.*] is present, not especially strong but it's in the air. You can feel it, but you can't touch it, as they say. No one's rights are restricted. We can vote, speak Russian and all that. But you understand that someone whose surname is Ivanov or Petrov [*generic Russian surnames used – Y.K.*] will never become a president. Even if he is Ivanovas or Petrovas [*Lithuanized forms of those surnames – Y.K.*].¹²¹

The instances of biased attitude towards minorities may occur sporadically, at the level of everyday communication. It is usually expressed towards those who are unfamiliar. Interestingly enough, all the respondents would initially state that they had no experience of mistreatment on the grounds of their non-Lithuanian ethnic background or their non-native accent in Lithuanian. However, after a set of follow-up questions they would recall such instances, which happened to them or to their friends. For example, a 42-year old male Polish interviewee said:

I heard from some acquaintances. Like some comments in a trolleybus - "Why do

¹²⁰ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹²¹ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

you speak Russian or Polish? It is Lithuania here.” But it seems to me that it was more possible in the 1990s. It was kind of a nationalist peak. I myself have never come across such cases. My environment is composed of well-mannered and educated people.¹²²

Some respondents said that Lithuanians usually avoid negative actions or gestures in presence of ethnic minorities, although nationalist rhetoric might be found in an exclusively Lithuanian environment. This is how a 51-year-old male Polish respondent puts it:

We don't hear it. Lithuanians try not to touch this in the presence of minorities. But what they may discuss among themselves – it's a disaster. Sometimes they think that I'm Lithuanian and then I hear... Russians are like that, Poles are like that and so on and so forth. But if they know that you aren't Lithuanian they won't tell. But I think it's more talking for the sake of talking. I mean no one told me that I must not speak my language here or something like that. We don't take into account those imbeciles who go to all that nationalist manifestations. They are in the minority. A loud minority, though.¹²³

From some responses it may also be deduced that Lithuanians who grew up in the capital are more welcoming and less biased towards non-Lithuanian speakers than those who migrated to the city from other parts of the country. A 20-year old female Polish university student, whose group mates are almost exclusively ethnic Lithuanians, said:

I guess it is mostly those who come to Vilnius from the provinces. Those who were born and grew up in Vilnius have no problems. They usually know Russian and, maybe, even can understand some Polish, and don't make a problem out of it. But those who come they are in shock. I remember how my group mates were complaining: it's Russian everywhere in shops and transport; it doesn't feel like Lithuania here.¹²⁴

Some interviewees mentioned that during their university studies there were lecturers with a bias against non-titular students, which reflected in comments on language mistakes in student papers and in correlation between grade distribution and students' ethnic background. The same 20-year-old Polish respondent recalled such a case, which had happened to her and some of her university friends:

Our instructor in economics, she understood that I'm not titular, although my name is Lithuanian and surname is Lithuanian. She understood it from mistakes in my paper which someone for whom Lithuanian is their mother tongue wouldn't make.

¹²² Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹²³ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹²⁴ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

She made a comment on that. Like, it's a shame that people cannot learn proper Lithuanian. Then when it was exam time, she asked all students to bring their passports. And guess who was forced to retake the exam – me, and those students who had non-Lithuanian names and surnames. I know people, Lithuanians, who didn't study for the exam, didn't know anything. And they passed. Really, I don't know why she behaved like that.¹²⁵

A 27-year-old female Russian university graduate mentioned a similar experience during the interview. She said:

Now, because I'm married I have a Lithuanian surname. But there were situations at the university... I cannot be sure, of course. But some grades of some teachers differed depending on the student's surname.¹²⁶

Another important point, mentioned by some respondents, is that they have received flattering comments on their Lithuanian language, made by the Lithuanians. These are the examples of answers, provided by interviewees:

No I don't think that it's a problem for Lithuanians now. It's not like in the Soviet Era. I mean they already got used to hearing all those Slavic accents everywhere. I think it may even please them. I mean - all those Poles and Russians speak our language...¹²⁷

(Russian, female, 45)

Yes, of course if you speak Lithuanian they like it. If you speak good Lithuanian then the attitude is good. It matters for them. They will find an excuse to complement you for your good language.¹²⁸

(Polish, female, 28)

It can be argued that while the issues of language and ethnicity are quite salient in the society, they usually don't take the form of an open conflict or systematic discrimination. A Lithuanian expert puts forward the following opinion: "I'm convinced that there is no language conflict on the personal level. All surveys and studies also show this. People live together without problems."¹²⁹

However, according to the answers of the respondents, instances of negative attitudes are possible. From the previous discussion it is also apparent

¹²⁵ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹²⁶ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹²⁷ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹²⁸ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹²⁹ Interview with a Lithuanian expert in sociolinguistics from Vilnius University, Vilnius, February 2015.

that even at the level of everyday communication language is not merely a matter of convenience in the Lithuanian society. A language one speaks may affect the attitudes of listeners and the degree of inclusion or exclusion for the interlocutor. Ability to speak the titular language, especially fluently, is highly and openly praised by the titular community.

In brief, one may conclude that Lithuanians can be considered an example of an ethnolinguistic nation. The Lithuanian language is one of the main markers of Lithuanian identity. To a certain extent it can be named as its most important marker. The formation of the modern Lithuanian nation in the 19th century was centered on language-related issues. Language maintenance and threat to language identity in the face of the Soviet-Era loss in status and the expansion of Russian were issues of public concern, which played an important role during the struggle for independence.

Language-related issues are also sensitive and salient in independent Lithuania. The matters of language support and maintenance are important identity-shaping factors and they occupy a notable place in the public discourse. Regarding the Lithuanian case it might be said that the idea of claims for minority language rights can also be perceived as a threat by the majority community. Ethnic minorities are aware of the sensitivity of language issues for the titular community and thus, of constraints which it puts on the discussion of the expansion of minority language rights. The prominence of language-related issues, as well as the importance of language for the titular nation, is also visible at the level of everyday interaction, where, in the absence of systematic discrimination, language choices and language proficiency may positively or negatively alter the attitudes of interlocutors.

CHAPTER 5

MINORITIES' CAPACITIES TO PUT FORWARD LANGUAGE-RELATED CLAIMS

A minority group's capacities to involve in a struggle on rights expansion can be related to various types of resources – social, economic, political, cultural and alike – on which it can rely when engaging in a language conflict and articulating claims for language rights. Factors, which determine the group capacities, can be partially paralleled to ecological variables, relating to the environment of an ethnolinguistic group. They include demographic factors, socio-economic factors, cultural factors, organizational factors and external factors. Consequently, this chapter will focus on the relative capacities of Lithuania's Polish and Russian minorities to put forward language-related claims.

5.1. Demography

Demographic indicators, such as the absolute number, share in total population and territorial distribution are relevant factors for understanding the relative weight and visibility of a particular ethnolinguistic community in a society. In addition, major tendencies in the change of those variables may also be indicative of a community's vitality.

As data from table 5.1 suggests, Lithuanians have always comprised the absolute majority in their titular republic. The percentage of the titular group never dropped below 79% of the total population. In fact, the Lithuanian SSR was the second most ethnically homogeneous republic of the Soviet Union after the Armenian SSR.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Vsesoyuznaya perepis' naseleniya 1989 goda, *Demoskop Weekly*, http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_89.php, last visited on May 2015.

The two biggest minorities in the republic – Russians and Poles – never comprised more than 17%. The relatively slow pace and scope of industrialization, with an emphasis on industries that rely on domestic labor, explain the lower total number of migrants from other parts of the USSR. The influx of migrants in the first post-war years was also hampered by ongoing armed resistance and guerrilla war against the Soviet government. In some parts of the republic armed resistance lasted until 1957.¹³¹ Later, it was the local communist government, which tried to avoid a rapid increase in the number of migrant laborers.

Table 5.1 Ethnic Composition of Lithuania¹³²

	1959		1970		1979		1989		2001		2011	
	thousand people / % of population											
Total	2711	100	3128	100	3391	100	3675	100	3484	100	3044	100
Lithuanians	2151	79.3	2507	80.1	2712	80	2924	79.6	2907	83.4	2561	84.2
Poles	230	8.5	240	7.7	247	7.3	258	7	235	6.7	200	6.6
Russians	231	8.5	268	8.6	303	8.9	344	9.4	220	6.3	177	5.8

The total number of Lithuanian Poles was the highest in 1989. The growth was defined mostly by natural reasons, rather than by migration. However, as suggested by an expert from the House of Ethnic Communities,¹³³ there was some migration of Belarusian and Ukrainian Poles to Lithuania in the post-war years. The accounts of this post-war migration are supported by the answers of the Polish respondents, some of whom have ancestors coming from Belarus. On the other hand, in the same period there was a significant outflow of Lithuanian Poles, caused by the post-war ‘exchange of population’ between Poland and the Soviet Union.

Arguably, during the years of independence the decline in total numbers was mostly the result of natural demographic reasons and it is within the general

¹³¹ Ashbourne, A. *Lithuania: The Rebirth of a Nation, 1991-1994*, Lanham, Md.; Oxford: Lexington Books, 1999, p. 114.

¹³² Prepared from data on censuses in the LitSSR and the Republic of Lithuania (Demoskop Weekly, <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/pril.php>, last visited on May 2015, and Oficialiosios Statistikos Portalas, <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/>, last visited on May 2015)

¹³³ Interview with a Lithuanian expert from the House of Ethnic Communities, Vilnius, February 2015.

demographic trends in Lithuania. The latter can be supported by the fact that the percentage of Poles dropped by 0.3% in the first ten years of independence and in the following ten years remained approximately the same, dropping only by 0.1%

The Russian community represents a contrasting case in this regard. During the Soviet period it steadily grew both in absolute figures and in the percentage of the total population. Such reasons as labor migration and assimilation of other non-titular ethnic groups can be considered as contributors to such an increase. The latter probably includes part of the local Polish population.

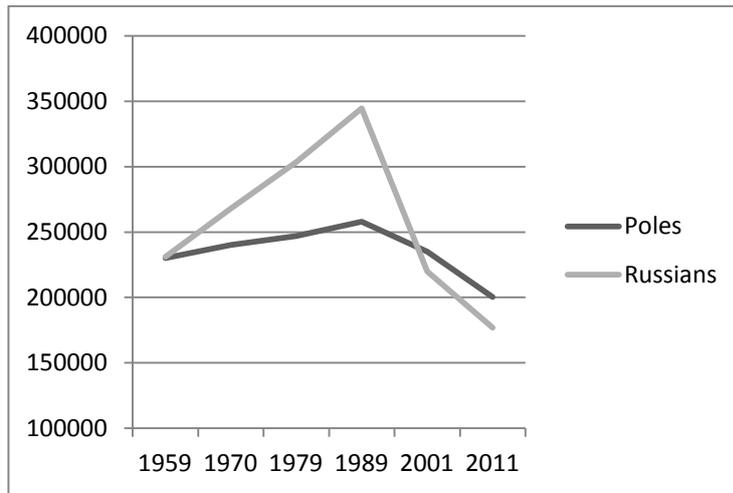


Figure 5.1 Poles and Russians in Lithuania¹³⁴

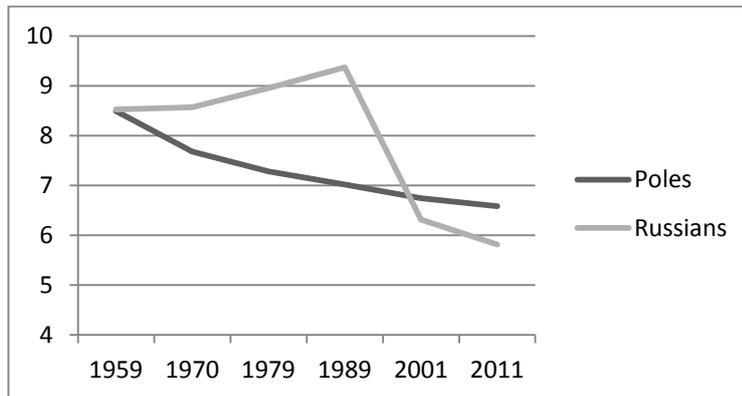


Figure 5.2 Shares of Poles and Russians in Lithuania's Population¹³⁵

However, in the post-1991 period, the size of the Russian community

¹³⁴ Prepared from data on censuses in the LitSSR and the Republic of Lithuania (Demoskop Weekly, <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/pril.php>, last visited on May 2015, and Oficialiosios Statistikos Portalas, <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/>, last visited on May 2015).

¹³⁵ Ibid.

dropped significantly both in absolute figures and as a percentage of the population, and by 2001 it lost the status of Lithuania's largest ethnic minority to the local Poles. Such reasons as out-migration in the first years of independence, especially of the military and those who worked for the party apparatus and administration, negative birth/mortality balance and assimilation to the titular nation can account for this change. Besides, some Russified Poles who had previously defined themselves as Russians might have 'rediscovered' their Polish identity in those years. This decline, however, slowed down in the next ten years, for by that time the factor of out-migration had already lost its relative importance.

Another indicator, which illustrates the difference between the two communities, is the age composition, or the share of the elderly, youth and children in the total population.

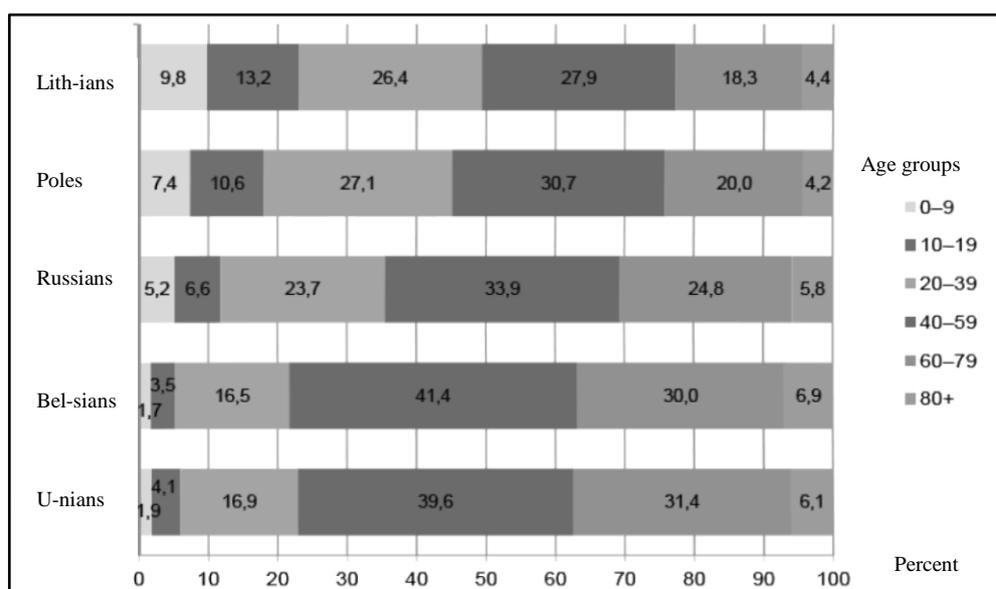


Figure 5.3 Ethnic Groups by Age¹³⁶

The Polish community is 'younger' than the Russian community. It has a smaller share of the elderly and significantly higher share of people under 40 (45.1% against 35.8%), including children under 20 (18% against 11.8%). In general, age distribution in the Polish community is the closest to the one of the titular nation.

¹³⁶ 'Gyventojai Pagal Tautybę, Gimtąją Kalbą ir Tikybę. Lietuvos Respublikos 2011 metų visuotinio gyventojų ir būstų surašymo rezultatai', *Lietuvos Statistikos Departamentas*, 2013, p. 3.

Finally, territorial distribution and thus, the degree of geographic compactness of a community can be considered. The Polish ethnic group is quite compact.¹³⁷ In two administrative districts Poles comprise the absolute majority – the 77.8 % of population in *Šalčininkų rajonas* and 52.1% of population in *Vilniaus rajonas*. In two other districts Poles comprise a sizeable minority - 30.1% in *Trakų rajonas* and 26% in *Švenčionių rajonas*. In the city of Vilnius Poles make up 16% of the population. Additionally, approximately 40% of the Polish people of Lithuania live in rural areas, remaining the least urbanized among the country's major ethnic groups.¹³⁸

The Russian ethnic group is relatively dispersed.¹³⁹ They make up the absolute majority of the population (51.9%) in the city of Visaginas (constituting a separate administrative unit). Russians also comprise 19.6% of the population in the city of Klaipėda. In *Zarasų rajonas* and *Švenčionių rajonas* Russians make up 18.7 and 13.3% of population. In Vilnius the percentage of ethnic Russians is 12%.

Summing up, regarding major demographic factors it can be said that the Polish community, which also became the largest ethnic minority in Lithuania, is in a relatively more favorable condition than the Russian community. Unlike the latter it experienced neither big inflows nor outflows of population between 1959 and 2011. After 1991 its percentage remained relatively stable. On the other hand, the Russian community experienced a serious decrease in size in the first post-1991 decade. However, the speed of the decrease slowed down, for the major ethnicity-based emigration outflow had already been exhausted. In the view of a member of the Russian Cultural Center: “The worst years for the Russian community [*in terms of emigration – Y.K.*] already left in the past.”¹⁴⁰

The Polish community is relatively ‘younger’ than the Russian community,

¹³⁷ 2011 m. Lietuvos gyventojų surašymas, *Oficialiosios Statistikos Portalas*, <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/2011-m.-surasymas>, last visited on May 2015.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with a Russian expert from the Russian Cultural Center, Vilnius, February 2015.

which accounts for the better perspective of community maintenance in the future. It is also territorially concentrated, making up the absolute majority in two administrative units and a sizable minority in two other neighboring districts. Arguably, geographic concentration both reduces the degree of assimilation and provides grounds for the claim of territorially-based minority rights.

On the contrary, the Russian community is relatively dispersed, concentrating in urban centers, which are surrounded by ethnically Lithuanian and/or Polish rural areas. Russians comprise the absolute majority only in one municipality.

5.2. Socio-Economic Conditions

The socio-economic conditions of a particular minority group can be considered as factors, influencing its overall status in society. In the case of Lithuania there is a significant disparity in the percentage of persons with higher education among the major ethnic groups. The percentage of highly-educated Russians is higher than the country's average and the one of the titular Lithuanians. In turn, the percentage of ethnic Poles with higher education is much lower than both that of Russians and of Lithuanians.

In the views of local Lithuanian and Polish experts,¹⁴¹ the fact that the Polish intelligentsia had been 'voluntarily' repatriated to Poland during the post-war population exchange is an important factor, accounting for such a disparity.

Table 5.2 Education by Major Ethnic Groups¹⁴²

	<i>population elder than 10</i>	<i>higher education</i>	<i>%</i>
Total	2758069	585841	21.2%
Lithuanians	2310862	499306	21.6%
Poles	185495	25544	13.8%
Russians	167657	41284	24.6%

Lower education level and hence lower social and economic status can be considered as discouraging factors for claims in status recognition. This disparity

¹⁴¹ Interviews with Lithuanian and Polish experts, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁴² 2011 m. Lietuvos gyventojų surašymas, *Oficialiosios Statistikos Portalas*, <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/2011-m.-surasymas>, last visited on May 2015.

is also a well-known fact in society. One Russian respondent summarizes this stereotypical image in the following way:

About those bilingual signs... I'm deeply convinced that in those areas where they want those signs 80% of population is in fact so uneducated in their mass... Those are rural people. Yes, they are Polish, but they don't speak proper Polish... I doubt that a peasant or worker from there cares much about those signs. He cares how to earn some money and then to spend it on food and alcohol.¹⁴³

(Russian, female, 45)

However, the lower amount of people with higher education might also to a certain extent slow down the speed of assimilation. No higher education in the Polish language was available during the Soviet Era. Consequently, those Poles who would receive higher education most likely went to Russian-language groups.

It is more difficult to trace the disparities in economic conditions owing to the fact that the statistics on GDP per capita is available only for larger administrative units. In general the districts of Vilnius and Klaipėda, where the biggest percentages of both minorities live, are more prosperous than the country's average. However, this disparity is mostly generated by respective administrative centers. Nevertheless, some estimation can be made, relying on the differences in average salaries, although they do not provide direct information on intergroup disparities in this area.

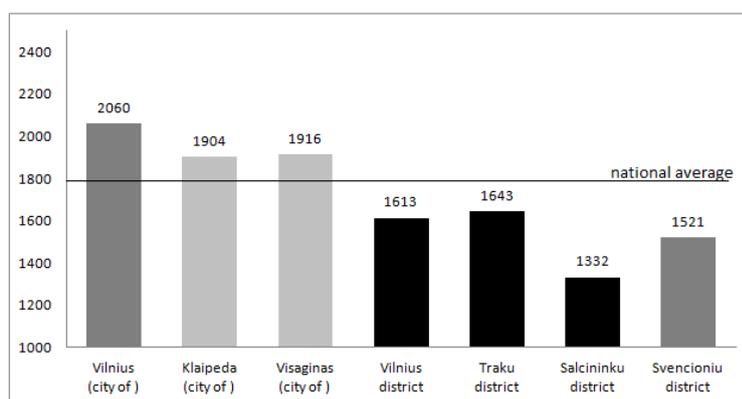


Figure 5.4 Average Salaries in Selected Districts¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁴⁴ Gyventojai ir socialinė statistika, Lietuvos Statistikos Departamentas, <http://db1.stat.gov.lt/statbank/SelectTable/Omrade0.asp>, last visited on May 2015.

Except for the capital, average salaries in all administrative units, where the majority of the Polish community resides, are significantly lower than the country's average. All the areas with significant Russian population, excluding *Švenčionių rajonas* (which also has a sizeable Polish minority), are above the national average in this regard. It can be deduced from this data that the members of the Polish community are more likely to be in a disadvantaged economic position as compared to the country's average and to the position of the Russian community.

This assumption is also supported by the opinion of a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture¹⁴⁵ who mentioned that ethnically Polish areas are also among the least economically developed ones in Lithuania and the level of poverty is higher among the Polish community than the country's average. Thus, the socio-economic profile of the Polish community may be considered as a disadvantaging factor.

5.3. Historical Rootedness

Another important factor which favors or hampers a community's capacity for putting forwards status and rights-related claims is its historical origin. The distinction between an immigrant community and a national minority (which formed as the result of the reconfiguration of national borders) is present both in theoretical and legislative discussions, related to language rights and policies towards minorities. In this regard, autochthonous status is usually seen as a ground for claims for the community's greater recognition within the nation-state.

The Polish community is historically rooted on the territory of Lithuania. After the formation of the common Polish-Lithuanian state in the 16th century the Polish nobility and clergy dominated the political and religious matters of the country and facilitated the process of cultural and linguistic Polonization. It should be noted that 'Polishness' was perceived as a social and religious marker of one's belonging to the higher strata of the society and to the Roman Catholic

¹⁴⁵ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

Church.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, the language borders among the regional Slavic vernaculars were blurred. Often the switch to the Polish language in actual linguistic terms accounted merely for the use of the Latin script instead of the Old Cyrillic. Hence most likely the Polish community on the territory of modern Lithuania did not emerge as the result of a historical migration. Rather it was formed by the local population of both Slavic and Baltic origins, having gradually embraced first the pre-modern religious and social Polish identity, which then solidified in the 19th - 20th centuries - the period when the ideas of modern nationhood were introduced to the region. A Lithuanian expert also expresses a view that the Polish community was formed out of the local Slavic population:

If you go to those villages they will tell you that they are Poles. But linguistic studies, in the Soviet Era and recently, have indicated that many of them don't speak Polish. They speak Belarusian dialects. <...> there are not that many real Poles in that 'Polish' region.¹⁴⁷

The minor part of today's Russian community of Lithuania began to form before the 20th century. Russians comprised a sizable portion of Vilnius inhabitants when it became the center of governorship of the Russian Empire in the 19th. Besides, a number of 'old-believers' had settled on the Lithuanian territory during the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.¹⁴⁸ However, the absolute majority of Lithuania's Russians are relative 'late comers' - the ones who settled on the territory of the republic after World War II, thanks to the economic and migration policies of the Soviet authorities.¹⁴⁹ A number of Soviet-Era migrants from other Slavic republics have blended in with the Russian community as well. Thus, the majority of the Russian community in Lithuania is comprised of first, second and rarely third-generation migrants.

The family stories of the interviewees are also illustrative in this example.

¹⁴⁶ Zubeck, V. 'New Poland's Old Dilemma: the Polish minority of Lithuania', *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, vol. 16, no 4, 1993, p. 664.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with a Lithuanian expert from the House of Ethnic Communities, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁴⁸ Matulionis A. V., Frėjūtė-Rakauskienė, M. 'Identičnost russkoy etničeskoj grupy i ee vyraženiye v Litve i Latvii. Sravnitelnyy aspekt', *Mir Rossii*, no 1, 2014, p. 93.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 94

All of the Russian respondents have parents or grandparents who arrived to Lithuania after World War II, except for one respondent whose family are old-believers on both maternal and paternal sides.

The difference in the communities' origins has been frequently mentioned during the interviews, when the respondents were asked to compare the differences between local Russians and Poles regarding the claims for the expansion of language rights. Here are some examples:

First, there are many Poles here. These are their native lands. Russians came and settled down. But they came later. It is not a Russian land. It's a Lithuanian land. A Lithuanian-Polish land, probably. There were Russian old-believers before, but nevertheless...¹⁵⁰

(Russian, female, 41)

Well, it's [*regarding the use of bilingual street signs – Y.K.*] important for someone to feel at home. And he is at home here. Since the 14th, the 16th century, they have lived here all this time.¹⁵¹

(Polish, male, 42)

I support local Poles. Lithuania was part of Poland. Poles have always lived here. Then Lithuanians came and started to give orders what language must be spoken and written. On what grounds do they have such a right – tell those people that they should speak Lithuanian and forget Polish.¹⁵²

(Polish, female, 29)

Let's put it this way. What kinds of Russians are there and from where they did come? Mostly, those are working people or locals, who already assimilated and do not consider themselves pure Russians. So we're speaking about newcomers. What claims can they have – they have no roots? Poles consider Lithuania, the Vilnius region, historically Polish. That's why they can claim something.¹⁵³

(Russian, female, 42)

It's a historical factor. People were born here. These have been Polish lands. But for me, those are people who are trapped in the past. Those who don't want to accept changes. It's Lithuania now.¹⁵⁴

(Polish, female, 28)

We, Poles are here since I don't know when. My mom checked in all those archives and religious metrics. My family is all from here, from Vilnius district. There are documents to prove it.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁵¹ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁵² Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁵³ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

(Polish, male, 21)

Poles have been here for a very long time. They are autochthonous. Our roots here, grandfathers and grandmothers...¹⁵⁶

(Polish, male, 55)

A Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture also shares an opinion that the differences between the origins of the communities play a significant role in interethnic relations in Lithuania:

There is such a nuance. We, Polish people, are the native people of Lithuania, that's why we could 'shout' louder. And the majority of the Russian population arrived after 1945. But I must say that by looking at us they also have become more active in recent years.¹⁵⁷

In summary, the Polish community can be considered autochthonous in Lithuania (although with some reservations), whereas the Russian community is predominantly immigrant (again with some reservations). Seemingly, this difference is well realized by the members of national minorities as an important ground for justifying status- and rights-related claims.

5.4. Attitudes towards Own and Majority Culture; the Feeling of Cultural Superiority

The identity-shaping and configuration processes rely on intergroup interaction and the drawing of boundaries between 'us' and 'them.' The attitudes of the representatives of ethnic minorities towards the majority community, its language and its culture can be considered factors affecting the character of interethnic relations. If a community is aware of its cultural difference and there is a shared feeling of cultural superiority towards the majority culture, it might hamper the desire to assimilate and bring additional motivation for status-related claims.

The feeling of cultural superiority is probably less noticeable among local Poles, who tend to avoid direct comparisons between Polish and Lithuanian cultures. In this regard a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture suggests

¹⁵⁶ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

the following: “I doubt that there is open disregard towards the Lithuanian culture. I mean like we are better because we started printing books 300 years earlier than Lithuanians.”¹⁵⁸ There is also a shared view that the local Polish culture is an integral part of the Lithuanian cultural heritage. An expert from the Union of Teacher of Polish Schools of Lithuania expresses the following opinion: “Regarding cultural matters it must be acknowledged that the Polish-language culture of Vilnius and Lithuania is an inseparable part of the Lithuanian cultural heritage in general.”¹⁵⁹

Nevertheless, Polish respondents also tend to highlight the importance of Polish literature, music, history and the richness of Polish cultural heritage, which they would also like to make their children familiar with. Here are quotations from the views of Polish respondents on the cultural heritage of the community:

I think the more cultures you know the richer you are. My children will grow here. They should know the culture of their neighbors. But of course, first I want them to know their own, Polish culture. Our great writers, composers... This is one reason why I want to send them to a Polish school.¹⁶⁰

(Polish, male, 42)

Our cultures are close, of course. We have lived together. But there are differences. For example, holidays. It seems like they are the same. We are both Catholics. But the precise form, presentation... I don't know. Decorations, speeches, songs... You just feel that it is yours. I want to pass it to my children.¹⁶¹

(Polish, female, 29)

As opposed to Poles, some Russians quite openly defined Lithuanian culture as small, closed, provincial, strange, which cannot be adequately compared with the Russian language and culture for the fact that they possess a global value. Some have said during the interviews:

I think that Russian culture is much richer, the language is much richer. All Russian, it is much richer.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with a Polish expert from the Union of Teachers of Polish Schools of Lithuania, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁶¹ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁶² Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

(Russian, male, 32)

Obviously, Lithuanians are a small nation. They have few things to be proud of, except for basketball, maybe.¹⁶³

(Russian, female, 45)

To me, nothing has changed in years, no progress. The level is like in a village, provincial. Maybe, except for film-making... They started doing something, like decent comedies... There is no way to compare. Russian culture is world class. Lithuanian culture is plagiarism and low level.¹⁶⁴

(Russian, female, 38)

We don't worry about our culture with all its great authors. It will never die. Despite everything, we are great. No matter what anyone says or does.¹⁶⁵

(Russian, female, 27)

Both ethnic communities have their perceptions of certain issues in Lithuanian history, contrasting to the ones of the titular community. For the Russians those might be characterized by the outcome of World War II and the nature of Soviet rule in Lithuania. In the dominating Lithuanian view, the period of World War II is considered a civil war in a country torn apart by two aggressors – Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Lithuania's incorporation into the USSR is conventionally defined as the period of occupation. This position conflicts with the official Soviet and post-Soviet Russian historiography. Regarding the contrast of views on the historical past an expert from the Russian Cultural Center refers to the following: "We want our children not to forget the truth. What is being done with history here it's simply a catastrophe."¹⁶⁶

For the Poles the discussion about the annexation of the Vilnius region by Poland in 1920-39 can be considered a sensitive historical issue. In official Lithuanian historiography this period is considered the occupation of its 'historical' capital. The city of Kaunas, which was the Lithuanian capital in the interwar period, was officially referred to as a 'temporary' capital.¹⁶⁷ In the Polish

¹⁶³ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with a Russian expert from the Russian Cultural Center, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁶⁷ Ashbourne, A. *Lithuania: The Rebirth of a Nation, 1991-1994*, Lanham, Md.; Oxford: Lexington Books, 1999, p. 54.

view it might be perceived, however, as the reunification of the culturally and ethnically Polish region with the rest of the Polish state, supported by the results of a local referendum. In the words of a Polish expert “there are some historical misunderstandings, like the status of Vilnius, left from the previous century, which, no doubt, affect the relationships between the communities.”¹⁶⁸

According to a Lithuanian expert from the House of Ethnic Communities, Russians and Poles are the two ethnic minorities in Lithuania with whom it is the most difficult to discuss such debatable topics as, for example, Lithuanian history, because they are “always ready to tell, but not always ready to listen to the Lithuanian point of view.”¹⁶⁹

In general it can be suggested that factors, discussed above, can be of an ambiguous effect on the minorities’ desire and readiness to put forwards status-related claims. On the one hand, Russians seem to be more explicit in expressing their superior cultural status, which might discourage the intention to assimilate and give justification for claims for greater status recognition. However, this view on the majority culture can also discourage the community from such claims, because the Russian language and culture will prevail for the sake of their greatness and there is no need to engage in some sort of status-related struggle.

On the other hand, the Polish community’s attitudes are more implicit and less pronounced. However, there is also an awareness of cultural difference and attention to the fact that the Polish culture is an integral part of the Lithuanian cultural heritage. Hence, there are additional grounds for claims for measures to be taken to preserve it.

5.5. Organizations and Institutions

The presence of institutions, which are important in cultural and linguistic matters and can articulate the language-related claims of ethnic minorities, shall be considered as another factor, favoring the emergence of a public tension on language-related issues. Therefore, institutions such as cultural organizations,

¹⁶⁸ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with a Lithuanian expert from the House of Ethnic Communities, Vilnius, February 2015.

political parties and the church will be reviewed.

5.5.1 Public Organizations

There are a variety of Russian public organizations and cultural associations in Lithuania: *the Union of Teachers of Russian Schools of Lithuania* (Vilnius), *Russian Cultural Center* (Vilnius), *the Russian Community of Klaipėda* (Klaipėda), *Cultural-Educative Centre 'Harmony'* (Klaipėda), public organization *Russian House* (Vilnius), public organization *Association of Russian Compatriots* (Visaginas), *the Center of Russian Culture* (Kaunas), *the Assembly of Lithuanian Russians* (Vilnius), *the Russian Commonwealth of the City of Visaginas*, and others (in total 65 organizations in 2010)¹⁷⁰.

In general, the primary scope of their activities is related to cultural and historical matters, to which can be added the promotion of the Russian language both as mother tongue and as a foreign language. An expert from the Russian Cultural Center describes the organization's activities in the following way:

We are a cultural, not a political organization. There are exhibitions, events related to the promotion of literature, round tables... But the Russian language is our big concern, as well. There are courses for the Russian language in our center. I should say that there is a big demand... Yes, Lithuanians come. Those who need Russian for work and either didn't study it in school or forgot it.¹⁷¹

Polish organizations include *the Union of Poles in Lithuania* (15 regional offices), *the Institute of Poland in Vilnius*, *the Union of Teachers of Polish Schools of Lithuania*, and *the House of Polish Culture* (in total 44 organizations in 2010)¹⁷². It can be said that Polish organizations in Lithuania, although less numerous, are more centralized and coordinated.

The scope of the organizations' concerns includes cultural, historical, social

¹⁷⁰ 'Trečiasis pranešimas apie Europos Tarybos taurinių mažumų apsaugos pagrindų konvencijos įgyvendinimą Lietuvos Respublikoje pagal konvencijos 25 straipsnį', *Lietuvos Respublikos kultūros ministeria*, 2011, p 68.

¹⁷¹ Interview with a Russian expert from the Russian Cultural Center, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁷² Trečiasis pranešimas apie Europos Tarybos taurinių mažumų apsaugos pagrindų konvencijos įgyvendinimą Lietuvos Respublikoje pagal konvencijos 25 straipsnį, *Lietuvos Respublikos kultūros ministeria*, 2011, p 68.

and economic issues. Article 2.2 of the Charter¹⁷³ of the Union of Poles in Lithuania states that the aim of the organization is “to contribute to the good of the public, economic, educational and cultural development of the Lithuanian citizens of Polish identity.” Article 2.3 adds to the goals “the ethnic revival of the Lithuanian Poles, who are the ethnic group of native origin with centuries-old traditions; the formation of national self-consciousness; the upbringing of children and youth; and the cherishing of Christian traditions.” Hence there is an explicit emphasis on the idea of the community’s revival.

In summary, Russian organizations are more numerous and dispersed. They are engaged with cultural and historical issues, mainly serving the cultural needs of local Russian and Russian-speaking communities. Polish organizations are more centralized and have a more explicit orientation towards revival and maintenance of the local Polish community.

5.5.2 Political Parties

Lithuanian Poles are politically united and represented by a single ethnic party - ***Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles*** (*Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija /Akcja Wyborcza Polaków na Litwie*), which was established in 1994 as the political wing of the Union of Poles in Lithuania.¹⁷⁴ Its leader ***Valdemar Tomaševski*** is also a member of the European parliament.¹⁷⁵ Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles can be considered the major ethnic party in Lithuania, which is active in Lithuanian political life and enjoys considerable support from the electorate in national and municipal elections in regions with sizeable Polish population. It is also one of the oldest political parties in post-1991 Lithuania and the oldest minority party.

¹⁷³ Lietuvos Lenkų Sąjungos Įstatai, <http://zpl.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/IMG.pdf>, last visited on May 2015.

¹⁷⁴ Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija, <http://www.awpl.lt>, last visited on May 2015.

¹⁷⁵ Valdemar Tomaševski, Biografija, <http://vtomasevski.lt/biografija/>, last visited on May 2015.

Prior to the 2012 parliamentary elections¹⁷⁶ the EALP did not manage to surpass the 5% threshold for entering the parliament by proportional representation. However, its representatives were elected through majoritarian districts. The elections of 2012¹⁷⁷ can be considered a major political success for the EALP, for the party for the first time managed to obtain 5.81% of the votes, resulting in five chairs in the parliament. Two more party representatives were elected in majoritarian districts. In the end, the EALP entered into a broad ruling coalition, headed by the Social Democratic Party of Lithuania.

The EALP has also enjoyed relative success in local elections.¹⁷⁸ Since 1995 it has been winning the absolute majority of votes in *Šalčininkų rajonas* and *Vilniaus rajonas*, thus controlling local administrations. Besides, it has been the second most influential party in the capital city of Vilnius. In the 2015 local elections the EALP earned 17.19% of votes there, finishing second.

Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles is associated with the promotion of minority issues on the political level and the struggle for the protection and expansion of minority rights.¹⁷⁹ It also claims the role of an umbrella political organization for all major Lithuanian ethnic minorities, including Lithuanian Russians. Since the 2004 elections to the European parliament, it has presented a joint list of candidates with the Klaipėda-based ethnic Russian party *Russian Alliance (Rusų aljansas)*.

Russian parties, on the other hand, are less consolidated and much less successful in parliamentary and local elections. The Russian Alliance managed to elect only three deputies in Klaipėda in the local elections of 2002.¹⁸⁰ Since then its members have been elected through joint party lists with ‘bigger’ political

¹⁷⁶ Rinkimai, *Vyriausioji rinkimų komisija*, <http://www.vrk.lt/rinkimai>, last visited on May 2015.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Programa, *Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija*, http://www.awpl.lt/?page_id=60&lang=lt, last visited on May 2015.

¹⁸⁰ Rinkimai, *Vyriausioji rinkimų komisija*, <http://www.vrk.lt/rinkimai>, last visited on May 2015.

partners.

*Table 5.3 Results of 2015 Local Elections in Selected Districts*¹⁸¹

	<i>Vilnius</i>	<i>Klaipeda</i>	<i>Visaginas</i>	<i>Vilnius district</i>	<i>Traku district</i>	<i>Salcininku district</i>	<i>Svencioniu district</i>
EALP/RA	17.2%	11.9%	9.3%	60.8%	17.6%	76.2%	16.7%
ULR	2%	4.1%	8.7%	x	x	x	x
“Visaginas is us”	x	x	33.3%	x	x	x	x

Another Russian party, *the Russian Union of Lithuania (Lietuvos rusų sąjunga)*, has a clearly pronounced pro-minority position.¹⁸² In different parliamentary elections it has joined the lists of the EALP and the Lithuanian Labor Party. In the local elections of 2015 it did not manage to win a single chair in the capital, and won only one chair (out of 30) in Klaipeda and two (out of 24) in Visaginas.¹⁸³ In the city of Visaginas the local elections of 2015 were won by *the Public Electoral Committee “Visaginas is us” (Visuomeninis rinkimų komitetas „Visaginas – tai mes“)* – the local electoral coalition with the deputy list, composed of local ethnic Russians.¹⁸⁴

As compared to the Polish political organizations, Russian political organizations are more fragmented, less visible on the political scene and have lower support from voters and attract less public attention. Regarding this an expert from the House of Polish Culture said the following: “For the last 10 years we have reached a political consolidation. We have a single party. And the Russian community is still divided.”¹⁸⁵

Interestingly enough, during the interviews, when the respondents were

¹⁸¹ 2015 m. kovo 1 d. Lietuvos Respublikos savivaldybių tarybų rinkimai, <http://www.vrk.lt/2015-savivaldybiu-tarybu>, last visited on May 2015.

¹⁸² Ustav, *Soyuz Russkih Litvy*, <http://sojuzrus.lt/ustav.html>, last visited on May 2015.

¹⁸³ Rinkimai, *Vyriausioji rinkimų komisija*, <http://www.vrk.lt/rinkimai>, last visited on May 2015.

¹⁸⁴ ‘Visaginas – tai mes!’ <http://visaginieciai.lt/>, last visited on May 2015.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

asked about the reasons for the differences between the two communities in the public discourse on language-related issues, some of them explicitly named the differences in political representation. Here are quotations from the opinions of some Russian and Polish interviewees:

You know, it's hard to answer. But Poles have more resources. They have a single united party.¹⁸⁶

(Russian, female, 42)

I don't know why Russians are so disorganized politically. Tomaszewski tries to unite them, as well. Maybe it's because they didn't have good leaders. There was no one to organize them.¹⁸⁷

(Polish, male, 55)

I think that's Polish politicians... And people support them. Looking at the votes for Tomaszewski [*meaning the results of the presidential election of 2014 – Y.K.*] - people approve them. It's not artificial, not at all.¹⁸⁸

(Polish, male, 21)

It's mostly politics. There are very bright politicians in the Polish party, brighter and more persistent. It's thanks to them that this issue is being promoted.¹⁸⁹

(Russian, female, 38)

Russian parties don't have that many resources and money. It's all about resources, I think.¹⁹⁰

(Russian, male, 32)

Therefore, there is a crucial difference between the two minorities regarding the factor of political representation which favors the Polish community in the matters of status-related claims. There is a single ethnic political party, which has the stable support of the electorate and represents the Polish community at the political level. The administrations of the two administrative units, in which there is the Polish majority, have been controlled by the EALP. It has been represented in the national parliament. Russian political organizations are less united and visible even at the level of local elections.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

5.5.3 Church

Affiliated religious institutions, although they do not directly aggregate or channel the communities' concerns and opinions, may still play an important role in their coherence. Based on the discussion of the relationship between language, religion and ethnic identity, it can be argued that religious institutions contribute to the maintenance of a respective linguistic community both in symbolic and instrumental ways.

The Catholic Church has played a crucial role in the formation and maintenance of the modern Polish nation. As Porter suggests "it virtually goes without saying that any discussion of identity in Poland must include a consideration of Catholicism."¹⁹¹ There is a clear link between Polish identity and the Polish Catholic Church which has been using the Polish language in its services since the 14th century.

The Polish community in Lithuania is considered one of the most religious ethnic groups. In terms of religion the absolute majority (88.6%)¹⁹² of the Polish community define themselves as followers of the Roman Catholic Church. This percentage is higher than that of the titular Lithuanians (82.9%).¹⁹³

Poles also tend to visit churches more regularly and in bigger numbers than titular Lithuanians or local Russians. This is exemplified by the following. Despite the fact that Poles comprise only 16% of the population in Vilnius, 20 out of 29 of the main capital's catholic churches have services in the Polish language (18 have services in Polish and Lithuanian, one church uses only Polish and one church – Polish and Belarusian).¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Porter, B. 'The Catholic Nation: Religion, Identity, and the Narratives of Polish History', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2001, p. 289.

¹⁹² Gyventojai Pagal Tautybę, Gimtąją Kalbą ir Tikybę. Lietuvos Respublikos 2011 metų visuotinio gyventojų ir būstų surašymo rezultatai, *Lietuvos Statistikos Departamentas*, 2013, p. 4.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Mišių laikas *Vilniaus Arkivyskupija* <http://www.vilnensis.lt/paieskos-rezultatai/?baz=&sav=57&lan=4>, last visited on November 2014.

According to subjective observations and the reports of the respondents, the proportion of Poles among regular visitors of churches is much higher than their proportion in the population of the capital. An interviewee from the House of Polish Culture suggests the following in this regard: “I don’t have figures to prove it, but I won’t make a mistake if I say it. Polish people go to churches and they go more often than Lithuanians. I can guess that it might be as high as almost 50% of the parishioners in churches in Vilnius are Poles.”¹⁹⁵ It is also worth noting that, according to subjective observations of the author, youth compose a sizeable percentage of visitors at Polish-language services.

The Russian Orthodox Church, which historically has played an important role in the formation of the Russian identity, cannot be considered such a crucial institution in the life of the local Russian community. Only 51.4% of Lithuanian Russians indicated that they belong to Russian Orthodox Church.¹⁹⁶ Another 11.8% identified themselves as ‘old believers’.¹⁹⁷ 23.7% of local Russians stated that they are atheists (11.7%) or did not indicate any religious affiliation.¹⁹⁸ Respective figures for Poles are 10.2% (only 1.5% of atheists), and for Lithuanians – 15.1% (6% are atheists).¹⁹⁹ Nevertheless, there are ten Russian Orthodox churches in the Lithuanian capital.²⁰⁰ However, those churches were constructed during the period of the Tsarist rule. It is questionable to what extent their number corresponds to the actual number of parishioners in today’s Vilnius.

It can be concluded that religious institutions play a more significant role in

¹⁹⁵ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

¹⁹⁶ Gyventojai Pagal Tautybę, Gimtąją Kalbą ir Tikybę. Lietuvos Respublikos 2011 metų visuotinio gyventojų ir būstų surašymo rezultatai, *Lietuvos Statistikos Departamentas*, 2013, p. 4

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Prihody Vilenskogo blagochiniya, *Vilensko-Litovskaya yeparhiya*, <http://www.orthodoxy.lt/blagochiniya/prikhody-vilenskogo-blagochiniya/>, last visited on May 2015.

the life of the community and in the maintenance of ethnolinguistic identity for the Lithuanian Poles than for the Lithuanian Russians. The uniting role of religion can be considered then as another contributor to the capacity of the Polish minority for engaging in the contestation of status, including language-related matters.

5.6. Foreign Factors

National minorities which rely on the political support of their political home states can be considered as being in a better position regarding the promotion and maintenance of their status in the host society than those communities that do not have such a 'homeland'. Additionally, home countries may also serve as valuable points of cultural, linguistic and symbolic reference.

Both Russian and Polish communities in Lithuania have their respective political 'homelands' – Russia and Poland. They are Lithuania's immediate neighbors: Lithuania borders Poland to the south and the Kaliningrad region of Russia – to the southwest. All respondents reported that they visited their respective political 'homelands' on numerous occasions. Nevertheless, the role of Poland and Russia for the local minorities may differ in several important aspects.

Poland, as well as Lithuania, is a member of the European Union and NATO. In the initial post-independence period, the relationships between the two countries remained considerably good. In the international arena Poland gave open support to Lithuania's struggle for independence. 'Unresolved' issues regarding the status of the Polish minority in Lithuania (the restitution of nationalized property to former owners, the use of bilingual signs and the spelling of personal names) were dormant, and started to be articulated by the Polish politicians after 2007 when there was a major turn in Polish foreign policy.²⁰¹ The reform of the Lithuanian educational system, introduced in 2011, also became the object of Poland's criticism of Lithuania for damaging the position of the Polish minority and promoting assimilation.

²⁰¹ Sirijos Gira, V. 'Lietuvos - Lenkijos dvišalių santykių vertinimai: probleminiai klausimai', *Rytų Pulsas*, vol. 36, no 2, 2011, p. 11.

As regarding the support of the Polish state to the local Polish community, during the interview a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture praised the financial support of the Polish government for cultural activities, education and renovation of Polish schools.²⁰² Poland also provides scholarships in Polish universities for local students. Nevertheless, for Poland, the Polish community in Lithuania is just one among several Polish diasporas abroad and it has to compete for the attention of the Polish state and financial resources with large and growing Polish diasporas in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Interestingly enough, some Russian respondents tend to emphasize the role of the Polish state in the language conflict in Lithuania. According to some opinions, Poland uses its minority as leverage with the Lithuanian government. It can openly do so, for it is a strong Central European power, which is also a member of the EU and NATO, unlike Russia, which cannot act so openly in these matters, restricted by its unfavorable international situation. Here is how a 32-year-old male Russian interviewee describes differences that exist between the involvement of Poland and Russia in the matters of local ethnic communities:

If Russians make a claim for something, they will be told immediately – go to Russia and live there. But Lithuanians cannot tell it to Poles. Because Poland – here it is, right next to Lithuania. And if compared to Lithuanians, it's a much more militant nation... Both are in NATO and in the EU. What can Lithuanians say against Poland? In the end, you will see, there will be all those Polish signs and surnames here. I don't support this, but it will happen. I'm 100% sure. If they keep claiming they will get it. Poland supports it at the international level. If Poland supports it, Lithuanians have no other choice. For Russians it's different. Russia is stronger than Poland, of course, but Poland feels at home here, in Lithuania. Russia cannot interfere so openly. The political situation doesn't allow it.²⁰³

The biggest issue of Russia's concern in the relationship with Lithuania has been the transit route to the Kaliningrad region – an exclave, surrounded by Poland and Lithuania. The issue of the Russian minority, which is numerically small and, unlike in the other Baltic states, has a full citizenship status in Lithuania, has remained less significant. In general, the bilateral relations can hardly be defined as good. Lithuania has been one of the most radical opponents of Russia's foreign policies in the region, namely its military involvement in

²⁰² Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁰³ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014.

In the view of Russian respondents the negative image of Russia and of current Russian policies negatively affects the conditions of the local Russians in Lithuania and creates an obstacle for Russia to be more involved in the life of its diaspora. This assumption is supported by the following quotations from the views of some Russian respondents:

Russophobia is an official ideology here. You can see it in schools, on the TV channels, everywhere. When I cook I hear children play war games in the yard. I hear “Shoot! Russians are coming!” Yes, there is a negative attitude which is transferred to local Russians because of this.²⁰⁴

(Russian, female, 41)

When there was a war in Georgia it was such hysteria here. People were really waiting for Russian tanks and planes to come and occupy Lithuania. I’m not kidding.²⁰⁵

(Russian, male, 24)

I don’t support Russian politics. Unfortunately, not all the Lithuanians understand that Russians here are not all the same. All things, related to Russia, are perceived in a biased way.²⁰⁶

(Russian, female, 45)

Local Russian experts have confirmed during the interviews that Russia provides financial and organizational support for various cultural activities and exchange programs and that it allocates university scholarships for students from Lithuania, but its support is much more modest as compared to that which the Polish community receives from Poland and there are political issues, which can create additional problems.²⁰⁷ According to an expert from the Union of Teachers of Russian Schools of Lithuania, there is the following difference between the involvements of the two countries in the lives of local communities:

It is wrong to say that Russia doesn’t help us. But it cannot be compared to Poland. I mean if you compare the Russian diaspora abroad, what is the place of Lithuanian Russians there and what about the importance of local Poles to Poland? But there are trips and excursions, courses for teachers, scholarships for students... Political

²⁰⁴ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁰⁵ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁰⁶ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁰⁷ Interviews with Russian experts from the Russian Cultural Center and the Union of Teachers of Russian Schools of Lithuania, Vilnius, February 2015.

relationships also play their role. There was an international competition for schoolchildren on the subject of the Russian language in Moscow. The Lithuanian ministry of education forbade our students to participate there. The organizers had something like “for student from the Baltic States, CIS, Abkhazia and South Ossetia” in the name, because of this reason. Lithuania doesn’t recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia.²⁰⁸

There is another external factor relevant for the Russian minority, which may discourage it from raising status-related claims. The Russian community in Lithuania is aware of the situation of Russian minorities in other Baltic states and views it as a clear example of the much poorer conditions of Russian communities there than in Lithuania. Thus, the respondents tend to evaluate their current status in a more positive way. Here are some opinions of the interviewees:

It’s not like Latvia or Estonia. We have all rights, citizenship. But I remember that before 1991 there were also debates here “Who should be given citizenship” I don’t think it’s because Lithuanians are so kind that they gave it to everyone. Simply there are too few Russians here. Otherwise they would have problems with those who lived here before 1940. They would have to give citizenship to all those Poles who repatriated to Poland after the war.²⁰⁹

(Russian, female, 45)

Here we don’t have such nonsense like in Latvia, where they even forbid people to speak with each other in languages other than Latvian. There are problems, but I can speak Russian and I don’t feel ashamed of it.²¹⁰

(Russian, female, 38)

I would compare us with Russians in Latvia. First, there are more Russians there. And also we didn’t have as strong pressure as they did at the political level. There was no question of citizenship, and no one tried to shut down Russian schools here, like it was in Latvia in 2004, if I’m not mistaken. Maybe, people here are kind of thankful for this and more open to integration.²¹¹

(Russian, female, 42)

Regarding external factors, it can be suggested that the direct and indirect involvements of the two political homelands affect the positions of ethnic communities in Lithuania. Both Russia and Poland provide financial support for the educational and cultural activities of their communities. Poland’s role is

²⁰⁸ Interview with a Russian expert from the Union of Teachers of Russian Schools of Lithuania, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁰⁹ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²¹⁰ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²¹¹ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

especially visible in the financial support of Polish schools.

Since 2007 Poland has also been showing open criticism of Lithuania's policies regarding the Polish minority. Poland can use both bilateral and supranational instruments of leverage in this debate. However, Poland's direct involvement in the issue and the worsening of bilateral relations can also have a negative effect on the image of the Polish community in Lithuania.

Russia, in turn, is less involved with the problems of the Russian minority in Lithuania, which is not within the scope of Russia's primary concern, as compared to other Russian communities. Arguably, hostile bilateral relations and the negative image of Russia in Lithuania further constrain Russia's involvement. Additionally, the examples of neighboring Baltic states, in which the conditions of Russian minorities seem to be worse, influence the perceptions of the local Russians about their status.

It is possible to conclude that there is a variety of factors and characteristics attributed to an ethnolinguistic community and its position in a nation-state which are not directly linked to the issues of language use and maintenance. Nevertheless, they can be considered important community features, or resources, which strengthen or weaken its capacity for engaging in a conflict with the majority community, including a conflict over language-related issues.

In demographic terms, the two communities are of an approximately similar size. However, the Polish community is relatively 'younger' and much more territorially concentrated than the Russian community, which accounts for the better perspective of community maintenance in the future, reduces the degree of assimilation and provides better grounds for the claims of territorially-based minority rights.

Judging by indirect indicators, the socio-economic profile of the Polish community cannot be considered one of its strong characteristics. Seemingly, it is poorer and definitely less educated than the Russian community.

In terms of historical origin, the Polish community has a clear advantage, for it can be considered the autochthonous national minority of Lithuania, whereas the Russian community is of heterogeneous origin with a greater share of late migrants. This difference is also well acknowledged by national minorities.

Probably, a situation where an ethnic minority is ‘overwhelmed’ by the majority culture would arguably play a discouraging role in a minority’s motivation to resist assimilation and engage in language-related claims. The cases of Lithuanian Poles and Russians show substantial differences both from the abovementioned situation and between one other. The feeling of cultural superiority towards the titular national among the Polish community, if present, is more obscure and implicit. But there is also a view of the Polish-language culture as an integral part of the Lithuanian cultural heritage. In turn, Russians tend to express this feeling more openly and consistently.

Regarding institutional support, it can be concluded that Polish organizations are more centralized and have more explicit orientation towards the revival and maintenance of the local Polish community than Russian organizations. The same is true for institutionalized political representation. A single ethnic party represents the Polish community at the political level in local administrations, national parliament and the European Parliament. Russian political organizations are less united and successful even at the level of local elections. Furthermore, the Catholic Church as an institution can play an additional role in the maintenance of the Polish identity and the community’s overall connectedness and coherence.

The role of political ‘homelands’ as it is seen from the previous discussion can be multidimensional and ambiguous. Both Poland and Russia provide their respective communities with financial and organizational support. However, Russia’s concern for the Russian community in Lithuania seems to be smaller than that of Poland for the Polish community. Russia’s involvement in Lithuania is also constrained by political factors. The position of the Polish minority in Lithuania has become an important factor, shaping Polish-Lithuanian bilateral relations.

Therefore, if the combination of the factors, discussed in this chapter is taken into account, it can be assumed that the Polish minority in Lithuania has a more suitable foundation and greater capacity for putting forward claims for minority rights, including language-related claims, than the Russian minority.

CHAPTER 6

MOTVATION TO ENGAGE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE EXPANSION OF LANGUAGE RIGHTS

The members of an ethnolinguistic community may express a desire to put forward language-related claims if the present status of the community is not satisfactory in terms of the provision and distribution of resources, necessary for its sustainability. In particular, if there is a potential for a language loss and hence a threat to ethnolinguistic identity and the community's continuity.

Motives for such a desire to emerge and be aggregated in the form of status-related claims may be classified as objective necessities of the community relating to the current state of the linguistic market, and subjective necessities relating to the ethnolinguistic group's awareness about the role of language-related issues in the maintenance of the communal identity and the psychological importance of the areas of contest for community members.

The objective necessities of a particular community can be subcategorized by instrumental, functional and symbolic dimensions. The instrumental dimension is attributed to proficiency or the lack of proficiency in the majority language. If the members of a minority community lack the proficiency in the majority language there may be an objective need for a change in the national language rights regime, so that its members can have access to state-provided benefits and so that restrictions on the basis of the language of communication would not be a problem.

The functional and symbolic dimensions can be attributed to the variety of the roles, which language plays in different domains. If the presence of the community language is limited, or it is absent from certain functional and symbolic domains, it might provide grounds for the community to make claims for the enhancement of its position and to alter the current situation of language-

related matters through the contestation of the existing national language policy and language rights framework. On the contrary, if the language is widespread and well-established in relevant functional and symbolic domains there might be little objective need and motivation to engage in such a struggle.

Subjective necessity to put forward language-related claims can be attributed to the community's attachment to its own language as a marker of ethnic identity, the perception of threat to the status of the language, and the awareness and perceived importance of contested issues, such as in matters of education, use of language in public places and naming.

Therefore, in this chapter the necessity and motivation of the Russian and Polish communities in Lithuania to put forward language-related claims will be discussed.

6.1. Objective Dimensions: Language Use and Linguistic Vitality

6.1.1 Proficiency in Titular Language and Linguistic Integration

In the Soviet Era there were conditions for the maintenance of full-fledged monolingualism among the Russian minority throughout the Soviet Union. Moreover, conditions also favored the linguistic Russification of other ethnic minorities in Soviet republics. The table below shows the percentage of those who stated that they were fluent in Lithuanian and/or Russian, according to data from the 1989 all-Union census.

Table 6.1 Self-Reported Fluency Level in Lithuanian and Russian in 1989²¹²

<i>Community/Language</i>	Lithuanian	Russian
<i>Lithuanians</i>	x	37.4%
<i>Russians</i>	33.4%	x
<i>Poles</i>	15.5%	57.9%

In 1989 only one third of Lithuania's Russians were fluent in the titular language. Fluency in Russian reported by Lithuanians might be distorted by the fact that the census was conducted at the time of the national awakening and struggle for independence. This assumption can be supported by data from the

²¹² Vsesojuznaya perepis' naseleniya 1989. Litovskaya SSR, *Demoskop Weekly*, http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_lan_89_li.php, last visited on May 2015.

2011 national census²¹³, in which 67.1% of Lithuanians (for the age groups 30-59 - as high as 80%) reported that they knew the Russian language. Figures for the Polish community coincide with the overall trend of minorities' better proficiency in Russian than in the titular language.

*Table 6.2 Self-Reported Fluency Level in Lithuanian and Russian in 2011*²¹⁴

Community/Language	Lithuanian	Russian
<i>Lithuanians</i>	x	67.1%
<i>Russians</i>	66.3%	X
<i>Poles</i>	65.5%	76.4%

Data from the 2011 national census shows a significant improvement in minorities' knowledge of the titular language. The percentage of Poles who reported their knowledge of Lithuanian quadrupled and became approximately the same as among ethnic Russians. The knowledge of the titular language has also significantly improved among Russians. In addition, a quantitative study on the knowledge and use of languages in Lithuanian cities and towns also shows that 92% of Russians in big cities, 100% in middle-sized cities, and 86 % in towns have some proficiency in the Lithuanian language.²¹⁵

Lithuania adopted a 'zero option' citizenship model, giving its citizenship to all residents of the LitSSR, disregarding their ethnic origin and knowledge of the state language. However, there was also a three-grade state language testing system for the graduates of non-Lithuanian schools (before 1992) introduced in order to measure their linguistic qualification for obtaining certain job positions.²¹⁶

The requirements and the difficulty of the test correspond to A2, B1 and

²¹³ 2011 m. Surašymas, *Oficialiosios Statistikos Portalas* <http://osp.stat.gov.lt/2011-m.-surasymas>, last visited on May 2015.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Nevinskaitė, L. 'Kalbų mokėjimas ir vartojimas didžiuosiuose ir mažesniuose miestuose' in Ranomienė, M. (ed.) *Miestai ir kalbos II. Sociolingvistinis Lietuvos Žemėlapis*, Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2013, p. 63.

²¹⁶ Interview with a Lithuanian expert from the Department of Lithuanian Studies at Vilnius University, Vilnius, February 2015.

B2 levels of foreign language proficiency.²¹⁷ The first category is required for employees in the service industry, industrial labor, trade and transport whose duties involve verbal communication and the filling out of basic forms. The second category is required for employees in the areas of education, culture, health care, social security and for public servants in cases where their duties include regular communication and working with documents. The third category is required for high-level managers in state and municipal institutions, organizations, enterprises, high-level public servants, and teachers of the Lithuanian language.

None of the respondents mentioned that they had serious trouble with passing this exam and usually found it rather easy, requiring less knowledge of the language than they actually need at work. Here are the views of some interviewees:

Yes I had to take the exam. I don't think it shows much about your real knowledge. I don't remember if there was any interim period. Probably there must have been something. I signed up for a course before the exam. I hoped to improve my Lithuanian. We went and the teacher told us that we didn't need anything because our level was already high enough to pass. I passed it. It was easy. I don't know anyone who failed. I have the second category. I can work almost everywhere now. Ironically I never used this certificate. I changed my job at that time and I never needed it.²¹⁸

(Russian, female, 41)

I don't remember what year it was. It turned out to be quite simple. I mean I didn't need a high level then. The real problem was not to pass the exam. In real life you need to know it better than the exam requires, especially if you have to read and write in Lithuanian, not just speak it.²¹⁹

(Polish, male, 51)

I was at the university when independence came. At the time they immediately asked us to take an exam in the state language. We had only one semester to prepare. I had some problems of course; my Lithuanian was really poor back then. But in the end no one failed. I was lucky also because there were very few boys in our department. So the teachers were easier on us than on them during the exams.²²⁰

(Polish, male, 42)

²¹⁷ Valstybinės kalbos mokėjimo kategorijos, *Ugdymo plėtotės centras*, <http://www.upc.smm.lt/svietimas/vkm/kategorijos.php>, last visited on May 2015.

²¹⁸ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²¹⁹ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²²⁰ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

According to the opinion of an interviewee from the Department of Lithuanian Studies, if there is a problem of linguistic integration it is a minor one and it exists only among the elderly.²²¹ The graduates of non-titular schools might have limited knowledge of the language in comparison to their mother tongues and to the proficiency of a native speaker. At the same time, the graduates of minority schools have sufficient language skills for everyday communication, work and, if they choose to pursue it, for further education. Those who choose to continue their education in a Lithuanian university do not have serious obstacles. During the first years of independence, at the department of the Lithuanian philology there was a separate group, designed for graduates from non-Lithuanian schools. However, it was abolished due to the lack of demand, because non-titular students who chose Lithuanian philology had no problems with studying in the same group with titular students.

The expert also suggested that not only the zero citizenship law, which did not create additional tensions between ethnic groups in the republic, and the lower proportion of ethnic minorities in Lithuania's population, but also the quick adoption of new titular language teaching methods and programs for non-titular citizens accounted for a relatively smooth linguistic integration of minorities into the country. Unlike in the Soviet Era, new programs and teaching materials were designed in such a way that they would ensure the primary focus on the communicative and other practical aspects of language learning. In this regard Lithuania has been ahead of other Baltic states.

A common opinion shared by the experts and respondents is that only the members of ethnic minorities who are older than 60 might have insufficient knowledge of Lithuanian. Even those people, however, usually obtained some limited knowledge of the state language owing to the overwhelmingly Lithuanian linguistic environment in public places and the proliferation of Lithuanian media. A Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture provides the following example:

There was a big problem with the language immediately after the independence. People didn't know the state language well. They didn't hear it often in Polish regions. Older people still have problems, but because now you can hear and see

²²¹ Interview with a Lithuanian expert from the Department of Lithuanian Studies at Vilnius University, Vilnius, February 2015.

Lithuanian everywhere, not like in the Soviet times, they also can understand something in a shop or watch some TV programs. My mother is a good example. She didn't speak Lithuanian at all back then. Now she can manage to ask for something or read simple things.²²²

As suggested by an interviewee from the House of Ethnic Communities, this problem will be completely solved by itself in 20 or 30 years when this elder generation passes away, so there is no need to take any urgent measures regarding it.²²³

The respondents, who were interviewed during the field research, when asked about their level of Lithuanian, rated their knowledge from 'fair' to 'perfect', None of the interviewees defined their level of Lithuanian as insufficient or expressed a desire to improve it as the following quotations show:

At the conversational level it's ok. I write without problems, maybe, with mistakes sometimes. Literary language can be complicated, I may have trouble with understanding something, but regarding a conversation or work, I have no problems.²²⁴

(Polish, male, 42)

At the conversational level I have no problems, when communicating. A technical article might be difficult. I don't need this, though. I don't have problems with speaking.²²⁵

(Polish, male, 51)

I would give myself seven out of ten for my Lithuanian. I don't like it as language. I had no interest in learning it. I studied it only to be able to manage a conversation.²²⁶

(Russian, male, 24)

Excellent... [*The respondent completed part of his secondary education in a Lithuania school – Y.K.*] But it depends on the situation. Sometimes it happens that Lithuanians cannot understand that I'm not a native speaker. But sometimes, when I'm nervous, the accent appears.²²⁷

(Russian, male, 32)

Quite high. I used to do translations from Russian into Lithuanian in the past. I also

²²² Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

²²³ Interview with a Lithuanian expert from the House of Ethnic Communities, Vilnius, February 2015.

²²⁴ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²²⁵ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²²⁶ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²²⁷ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

- maintained official correspondence with state organizations.²²⁸
(Russian, female, 45)
- I'm fluent in speaking, reading and writing, but I think in Russian, of course.²²⁹
(Russian, female, 27)
- No problems. I passed the graduation exam in high school and passed it with a very high grade.²³⁰
(Polish, female, 28)
- Average, but enough for communication, reading and writing. My grammar is weak, though...²³¹
(Polish, male, 55)

On the whole, currently the problem of the lack of proficiency in the titular language among the representatives of ethnic minorities in Lithuania may be considered less urgent than it was 25 years ago. Probably, the majority of the members of ethnic communities have already reached at least some limited proficiency in the Lithuanian language. Nevertheless, the limited knowledge of the state language might still be an obstacle in some situations for the sizeable percentages of both Russians and Poles, especially among the elderly.

6.1.2 Patterns of Communication; Languages in the Urban Environment in the Lithuanian Capital

The patterns and strategies of communication, dominant language choices and the variants of linguistic accommodation can be considered indicative of the relative vitality of different languages. In other words, if a particular language is frequently chosen as the means of public and private communication, its conditions and the conditions of the associated ethnolinguistic community are good. Correspondingly, even if such a language does not have an official status there might be little urgency to initiate struggle to achieve it.

In general, Lithuania can be considered an essentially monolingual country,

²²⁸ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²²⁹ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²³⁰ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²³¹ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

for the titular Lithuanians comprise the absolute majority of the population and it did not experience a linguistic shift apart from the spread of limited or functional bilingualism in Russian during the Soviet Era. However, local linguistic minorities concentrate in a small number of administrative districts, where the situation is substantially different. The city of Visaginas is Russian-speaking whereas the areas of 'South East Lithuania' are Polish-speaking. In this regard, the capital city of Vilnius represents an interesting case of interethnic communication, for both minorities make up sizeable percentages of the population there, but there is also the Lithuanian-speaking majority.

Relying on the observations from the field study it can be argued that the Lithuanian language absolutely dominates visually in the urban environment of the capital, secured by the corresponding article of the Law on State Language. Public signs, announcements and advertisements (with minor exceptions in areas, related to serving tourists) are written in the Lithuanian language. Moreover, even handwritten private announcements, such as accommodation for rent, located on announcement boards in neighborhoods where the majority of inhabitants are non-titular are almost exclusively in Lithuanian.

However, spoken languages on the streets present quite a heterogeneous picture. Lithuanian still occupies the central role and it is commonly chosen as the language of communication in the situation of addressing an unfamiliar person. The Russian language is omnipresent and can be heard regularly and frequently throughout the day, including conversations between passengers on public transport, between the employees of the railway station or a supermarket, between customers and employees in a bank, post office or hairdressing salon. Relying on the observations made in the course of the field research it can also be argued that Russian is more noticeable on the streets of the city than it might be expected, judging by the proportion of Russians indicated in the latest official census. Moreover, Russian is far more prevalent than Polish, which was, at most, heard several times within almost a one month stay.

It should be noted, however, that there are significant disparities among city districts and neighborhoods in terms of the ethnic and linguistic composition of their dwellers. Russian is more dominant in central and older neighborhoods constructed in the Soviet Era, such as *Lazdynai*, *Karoliniškės*, *Antakalnis*. Polish

is more visible in some older post-war districts, such as *Naujininkai*, and remote neighborhoods, such as *Naujoji Vilnia*. The latter had been a separate municipality until 1957 when it was united with the city of Vilnius. New districts on the outskirts of the city, which were built after 1991, are predominantly Lithuanian in ethnic and linguistic terms. There are also a large number of monolingual Lithuanian students from other parts of the country, who live and study at universities in Vilnius.

In general, the Russian language is still quite vital in the Lithuanian capital. According to the answers of respondents, they frequently use Russian in various situations – at home, work, shops, hospitals and public places, as mentioned in the following quotations:

At home it is Russian [*the respondent's wife is an ethnic Russian – Y.K.*]. At work it is both Lithuanian and Russian. There are Lithuanians, with whom we communicate in Russian, and they are not few. Those are, as a rule, my peers with whom we grew up in the Soviet Era. They all speak Russian really well. They themselves start speaking Russian with me, they want to practice it.²³²

(Polish, male, 51)

At home it is Russian. At work in is 90% Lithuanian. In public places it is also Lithuanian, but it depends. When I go to a hospital I try to find a Russian-speaking doctor. Sometimes you need to explain or understand something very accurately.²³³

(Russian, female, 41)

Within our family we speak Russian. At work it is usually Russian. Lithuanian is only in the city, in public offices, but it is also not all the time.²³⁴

(Russian, male, 24)

At home it is both Russian and Lithuanian. With my husband and children it is mostly Lithuanian. At work it is Russian 90% of the time.²³⁵

(Russian, female, 42)

At work it is Lithuanian and Russian. More Russian, I think. With my husband it is Russian, although he is an ethnic Lithuanian. But he speaks perfect Russian. In my presence his relatives usually speak Russian.²³⁶

(Russian, female, 27)

Referring to the example of her own mother, a 45-year-old female Russian respondent said that it is still possible to live in Vilnius knowing only the Russian

²³² Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²³³ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²³⁴ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²³⁵ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²³⁶ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

language:

Of course now times have changed. It is difficult to live a full life without knowing Lithuanian. But wait, what am I saying? My own mom doesn't know Lithuanian. She can understand only very basic things, that's all. She is a retiree. And she is quite an active lady. She goes to hospitals, supermarkets, theatres... She doesn't stay locked in her apartment and she manages without the Lithuanian language.²³⁷

Polish, on the other hand, remains mostly a language spoken at home. Polish respondents indicated that, in addition to Polish and Lithuanian, they also use Russian on various occasions:

Within our family it is Polish. At work, I think, all three languages. I try to speak with people in their mother tongues. In my opinion you show them your respect in this way. With friends it is Polish and Russian.²³⁸

(Polish, male, 42)

Within our family it is mixed. Part of my relatives, older ones, from my father's side, they speak only Polish. With them I use Polish. And also when I go to church services are in Polish.²³⁹

(Polish, female, 20)

With my parents and siblings I speak Polish. My husband is Lithuanian so we speak Lithuanian. At work it is Russian and English.²⁴⁰

(Polish, female, 28)

At home sometimes it is Polish, sometimes Russian. Sometimes both at the same time... You know how we speak here in Vilnius – a word in Russian, two words in Polish, *po-prostu* [*a dialect word, meaning "in a simple way" – Y.K.*] At work Lithuanian, but it depends on the customer.²⁴¹

(Polish, female, 29)

An expert from the House of Polish Culture describes the position of the Polish language in the following way:

This is the peculiarity of our community. Usually we know all three languages. The Polish language in Lithuania is mostly a family language, spoken at home. Also in the church its position is good. But I think that the situation is better now than in the Soviet Era. There is more Polish now than then. That's for sure.²⁴²

²³⁷ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²³⁸ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²³⁹ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁴⁰ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁴¹ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁴² Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

The mixture and mutual influence of languages, mentioned by some respondents, is also visible on the streets. Code-switching, when a sentence is started in one language and finished in another, lexical and grammatical borrowings, and distinct nuances in pronunciation can be frequently observed in the speech of ethnic minorities. The Polish language in this regard is affected both by Russian and Lithuanian. But the opposite is true for Russian and even for Lithuanian, especially in terms of lexical borrowing and slang. These features were also observed during interviews with respondents and even during conversations with local Lithuanian experts.

There is a tendency that Lithuanian becomes the language of interethnic communication among the local minorities, particularly among youth. A 20-year old female Polish respondent spoke about the family of her father, in which there were three children – he and his two sisters.²⁴³ The respondent's father sent her to a Russian school and Russian is the main language in the home. Consequently, she has limited knowledge of Polish. The family of her father's elder sister switched to speaking Polish at home in the 1990s and sent their children to Polish schools. As a result the respondent's cousins speak Polish and very limited Russian. The other sister married a Lithuanian and their children went to a Lithuanian school and don't speak Polish or Russian. So Lithuanian, as the only compulsory language at all schools, becomes a common language for the cousins when they meet each other.

In general, the following pattern of language choices can be suggested. In an official situation, or addressing someone unfamiliar, the Lithuanian language will be chosen. For two ethnic Russians it will be the Russian language. In situations when Lithuanians, especially those among the older generation, notice that someone struggles with speaking and understanding Lithuanian, they might switch to Russian or suggest doing so. Therefore there is a high probability that Russian would be chosen as the second option, after Lithuanian, in communicating with non-titular interlocutors regardless of their actual ethnic origin.

During a conversation between an ethnic Russian and a Pole, depending on their language proficiency, either Russian or Lithuanian is chosen. Finally, Polish

²⁴³ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

(or Russian in some cases) is chosen for communication between two ethnic Poles, which leaves Polish in the role of the language of in-group communication.

6.1.3 *Media and Print*

The domain of media and print can be considered another important indicator of the position of a particular language in society. The availability of media is an importance resource for language maintenance. Consequently, the absence of media (or its limited presence and low quality) in a community's language may negatively affect its conditions and facilitate linguistic assimilation.

The situation with the availability of television in minority languages is quite different for the Polish and Russian languages. A broad variety of Russian news channels, entertaining TV channels and the Russian-language versions of several international channels is provided by all major cable TV operators in the capital. For example, the capital's largest cable TV operator *Init* provides ten Russian channels in a standard 48-channel package (monthly price 7.80 €).²⁴⁴ In addition a variety of sports and documentary channels, included in the package, is offered either in English or Russian with Lithuanian subtitles. Another operator *Cgates* offers a standard 50-channel package for 8€, which includes eight Russian TV channels (two movie channels and one channel for children).²⁴⁵ Besides, Russian movies and TV series, which are occasionally broadcast on Lithuanian TV channels, are usually shown in their original audio with Lithuanian subtitles.

Therefore it is not surprising that local Russians watch television mostly in the Russian language. According to the responses of the interviewees it is mostly the local news that they might watch in Lithuanian. Here are the reports from some respondents:

I only watch local news in Lithuanian, because there is nothing else interesting there. All the rest is in Russian.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Kabelinė televizija, *INIT.LT*, http://init.lt/lt/paslaugos/?sgroup_id=34&city_id=1#, last visited on May 2015.

²⁴⁵ Retransliuojamos programos Vilniuje, *Cgates*, <http://www.cgates.lt/lt/televizija/kabeline-televizija/vilnius/programos>, last visited on May 2015.

²⁴⁶ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

(Russian, female, 38)

I watch television and news in Russian. I can watch Lithuanian news sometimes. But if there is a Russian and a Lithuanian channel I will naturally choose the Russian one. It is the question of comfort. Russian TV is just a matter of money. There will be Russian channels in a cable TV package. Of course, not every retiree can afford cable TV.²⁴⁷

(Russian, female, 41)

TV is in Russian, of course. I don't watch Lithuanian TV at all. The level of Lithuanian TV programs is very low; there is nothing to watch there.²⁴⁸

(Russian, male, 24)

Both Russian and Lithuanian, but mostly Russian. In Lithuanian it is local news, maybe also some talk shows. Other programs and movies are in Russian. My husband [*ethnic Lithuanian – Y.K*] also prefers Russian channels. The choice and the quality are incomparably better.²⁴⁹

(Russian, female, 27)

Some respondents shared their complaints about the cases when some Russian channels were temporary banned from broadcasting in Lithuania due to the violation of the Law on Mass Media. This ban is usually perceived by local Russians as some sort of anti-Russian propaganda in Lithuania and the violation of their rights. A 41-year old Russian female interviewee described the situation as follows:

They banned RenTV, I guess, for a couple of months for some political programs. They introduce censorship and then say that we live in a democratic country with the freedom of speech. After all, I pay money for these channels and want to have service for it.²⁵⁰

Only one channel (*TV Polonia*) is generally available in cable network TV packages provided for the viewers. According to the words of an expert from the House of Polish Culture, the choice and the quality of the channel's content cannot satisfy viewers.²⁵¹ This accounts for the fact that many Poles prefer either watching Russian TV channels or Polish television via satellite receivers. A 42-year-old male Polish interviewee, who has two little children, describes the

²⁴⁷ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁴⁸ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁴⁹ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁵⁰ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁵¹ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

situation with Polish television as follows:

Polish TV channels are a big problem. We have a satellite receiver and watch Polish channels. Cable TV, as far as I know, is only *TV Polonia*. My wife checked all the cable operators and there were no Polish channels in their packages. But we wanted Polish TV at home. We have little children so we wanted them to watch TV, cartoons in the mother tongue.²⁵²

During an interview with a 29-year old female Polish respondent, she mentioned that one needs to buy a satellite receiver in order to watch Polish television:

When I watch something, I watch it in Russian or Lithuanian. Honestly, I don't have too much time to watch TV at all. My parents live in the countryside, they are retired. I bought them a satellite receiver so that they can watch Polish channels.²⁵³

Obtaining a satellite receiver can be financially unaffordable, especially for elderly people and the population in rural areas; they mostly watch Russian channels. According to the words of an interviewee from the House of Polish Culture,²⁵⁴ this situation creates a particular split in public opinion among the members of the community on various issues as, for instance, in the situation with the armed conflict in Ukraine. Whereas urban Poles who watch Polish and Lithuanian television would tend to favor the Ukrainian side, rural Poles who watch mainly Russian television would tend to take a pro-Russian position in the conflict.

It is worth mentioning, though, that younger respondents stated that they rarely watch television in general and rely mostly on the Internet as their source of news and entertainment.

The situation regarding printed media in minority languages is also different for the two communities. In the city of Vilnius a variety of Russian-language press is available at all newspaper kiosks and bookshops in the city. As a rule, it includes two or three local weekly periodicals and a range of Russian newspapers and entertainment magazines. At the same time, only one or two local Polish-language newspapers and no press from Poland are available. According to an expert from the House of Polish Culture, "newspapers from Poland are rare.

²⁵² Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁵³ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁵⁴ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

Normally only local Polish-language newspapers are available. If you happen to find something from Poland, it will be at least one week old.’’²⁵⁵ However, the only minority-language newspaper which has a periodicity of more than once a week is *Kurier Wileński* in the Polish language.

Table 6.3 Printed Media in Minority Languages²⁵⁶

Name	Language	Periodicity	City
<i>Ekspress nedelia</i>	Russian	weekly	Vilnius
<i>Klaipėda</i>	Lithuanian, Russian	weekly	Klaipėda
<i>Litovskij kurjer</i>	Russian	weekly	Vilnius
<i>Obzor</i>	Russian	weekly	Vilnius
<i>Sugardas</i>	Lithuanian, Russian	weekly	Visaginas
<i>V každyj dom</i>	Russian	weekly	Visaginas
<i>Russkij mir Kaunasa</i>	Russian	monthly	Kaunas
<i>Kurier Wileński</i>	Polish	5 days a week	Vilnius
<i>Magazyn Wileński</i>	Polish	monthly	Vilnius
<i>Spotkania</i>	Polish	monthly	Vilnius
<i>Tygodnik Wilenszczyzny</i>	Lithuanian, Polish	weekly	Vilnius

Table 6.4 Internet Media in Minority Languages²⁵⁷

Major Internet-media in the Russian language	
<i>Ru.delfi.lt</i>	the Lithuanian branch of the most popular news portal in the Baltic States, the Russian-language version
<i>Litovskiy kuryer</i>	the web-page of a local newspaper
<i>Gazeta Obzor</i>	the web-page of a local newspaper
<i>Express-nedelya</i>	the web-page of a local newspaper
<i>Penki.lt</i>	the Russian-language version of a Lithuanian portal
<i>L24.lt</i>	the Russian-language version of a Lithuanian portal
Major Internet-media in the Polish language	
<i>Pl.delfi.lt</i>	the Lithuanian branch of the most popular news portal in the Baltic States, the Russian-language version
<i>Wilnoteka</i>	A local news portal in the Polish language
<i>Kurier Wileński</i>	the web-page of a local newspaper
<i>Radio "Znad Wilii"</i>	the web-page of a local radio station
<i>L24.lt</i>	the Polish-language version of a Lithuanian portal

The proliferation of Internet-media, which has developed in the recent decade, creates another language domain. In addition to online sources from Russia and Poland proper, there is also a variety of Lithuania-based Internet-portals, which provide local news content in minority languages. Internet-media includes independent news portals, the web pages of newspapers and of a Polish-

²⁵⁵ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁵⁶ ‘Trečiasis pranešimas apie Europos Tarybos taurinių mažumų apsaugos pagrindų konvencijos įgyvendinimą Lietuvos Respublikoje pagal konvencijos 25 straipsnį’, *Lietuvos Respublikos kultūros ministeria*, 2011, p. 79.

²⁵⁷ Prepared by the author.

language radio station.

Russian-language news portals are the corresponding versions of Lithuanian-language news portals. In addition to the Polish versions of Lithuanian pages there is one exclusively Polish-language internet portal. The Polish version of the most popular Baltic informational internet-portal, which previously operated in Lithuanian and Russian, was launched in 2012.



Figure 6.1 Books in Polish - left, Russian – center and right²⁵⁸

Some comparisons can also be made concerning the availability of printed materials and books in bookshops. In the city of Vilnius publications in the Russian language significantly outnumber those in the Polish language on the shelves. Books in Russian are available in smaller bookshops and the book sections of supermarkets, whereas, books in Polish, are only available in larger bookshops. Their choice is limited to approximately one fifth of the range of books available in the Russian language.

In short, we can say that the Russian-language media market in Lithuania is more diverse and accessible than the Polish-language media market. The Russian-language media market is formed by Russian channels, retranslated by local cable TV networks, several local newspapers and magazines and imported press. The Polish-language media market is formed by several local printed media outlets, a radio station and Polish satellite television. Naturally, for younger respondents Internet-media play a more important role as a source of information than traditional media, which they watch and read only intermittently.

²⁵⁸ Taken by the author during the field research.

6.1.4 *Tendencies and Patterns in Education*

Education can be considered a crucial domain, responsible for language acquisition and maintenance. It is also an area in which nation-building policies regarding language are the most strongly pronounced. The availability of state-financed education in a minority language can be considered an important constituent of an advanced language rights framework and, together with in-family use, a keystone in the preservation of ethnolinguistic identity.

Lithuania inherited the system of schooling in minority languages from the Soviet Era. In general, it can be described as bilingual education, which is conducted largely or exclusively in the minority language with the majority language as a compulsory part of the curriculum. Unlike in other Baltic states, where reforms towards the introduction of transitional bilingualism have been conducted, until recently there was no intent from the side of the government to significantly alter this principle in Lithuania.²⁵⁹ The latest reform in education, which suggests the introduction of a greater variety of subjects taught in Lithuanian in minority schools, became an area of contestation in the ongoing language-related conflict.

As elsewhere in the USSR, in the Soviet Era in Lithuania there was a network of Russian schools, as well as Russian groups at all the departments of universities in the republic. After 1991, except for the domain of higher education, the Russian-language education system has been mostly preserved. In independent Lithuania, pre-school and secondary education in the Russian language is provided by a network of kindergartens and secondary schools.

Additionally, in the Soviet Era, Lithuania was the only republic of the Soviet Union which had a network of schools with Polish as the language of instruction.²⁶⁰ Currently in Lithuania, Polish-language education is available at all stages. There are publicly financed Polish kindergartens, public Polish schools

²⁵⁹ Hogan-Brun, G., Ozolins, U., Ramonienė, M. and Rannut, M. 'Language Politics and Practice in the Baltic States' in Kaplan, R. B. and Baldauf Jr., R. B. (eds.) *Language Planning and Policy in Europe Vol. 3: The Baltic States, Ireland and Italy*, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2008, p. 92.

²⁶⁰ Kwiatkowski, J. 'Szolnictwo polskie na Litwie w latach powojennych. Krotki zarys' in Sienkiewicz, J. (ed.) *Szkoły polskie w Republice Litewskiej*, Vln: Scripta manent, 2009, p. 14.

and a branch of a Polish university.²⁶¹

*Table 6.5 Number of Schools by Language of Instruction*²⁶²

Schools, language	1990/1991	2000/2001	2009/2010	2013/2014
<i>Lithuanian</i>	1801	2031	1195	1075
<i>Polish</i>	44	74	62	54
<i>Russian</i>	85	68	36	33
<i>Lithuanian, Polish</i>	7	11	16	11
<i>Lithuanian, Russian</i>	31	23	21	14
<i>Russian, Polish</i>	47	26	11	9
<i>Lithuanian, Russian, Polish</i>	25	10	6	6

All experts referred to the fact that the number of Polish schools in Lithuania grew rapidly in the first half of the 1990s and exceeded the number of Russian schools. At that time, many Russian-speaking but ethnically Polish families chose Polish schools for their children. Those families whose children previously went to the Russian schools also started transferring them to the Polish schools. Since then the number of Polish schools has been always higher than the number of Russian schools.

*Table 6.6 Number of Students by Language of Instruction*²⁶³

Students, language	1990/1991	2000/2001	2009/2010	2013/2014
<i>Lithuanian</i>	409295	522569	440378	330603
<i>Polish</i>	11407	22303	14170	11888
<i>Russian</i>	76038	41162	17634	14354

In the 2013/2014 academic year there were 62 schools offering Russian-language education, 33 of which were exclusively Russian. The number of schools and school students experienced a major decline in the 1990s, owing to the out-migration of Russian-speakers in the first years of independence as well as the fact that ethnic Poles started sending their children to Polish schools and some Russian families or families with other ethnic backgrounds started sending their children to Lithuanian schools. However, in recent years this negative tendency is not observed and the number of students in Russian schools has become relatively stable.

²⁶¹ Roduner, M. 'Polish; the Polish language in Education in Lithuania', *Regional Dossiers Series*, Mercator-Education, 2006, pp. 22-35.

²⁶² Trečiasis pranešimas apie Europos Tarybos taurinių mažumų apsaugos pagrindų konvencijos įgyvendinimą Lietuvos Respublikoje pagal konvencijos 25 straipsnį, *Lietuvos Respublikos kultūros ministeria*, 2011, p 104.

²⁶³ Ibid.

The number of students has been decreasing in both minority and majority schools. There was a 24.9% decrease in Lithuanian schools, a 16.1% decrease in Polish schools and 18.6% decrease in Russian schools between the 2009/2010 and 2013/2014 academic years. Surprisingly, there is a bigger drop observed in titular language schools than in minority schools. The high figures of out-migration reported since 2008 and the fact that it affected the titular community more than the minority communities can contribute to this outcome.

In the 1990/1991 academic year students who were receiving their secondary education in the Polish language comprised 2.3% whereas the students of Russian schools made up 15.3%. The former figure was substantially lower than the percentage of ethnic Poles in the country's population. The latter figure was substantially higher than the share of ethnic Russians. In the 2013/2014 academic year 3.3% of students were studying in the Polish language and 4% – in the Russian language. Thus, the percentage of students in Polish schools increased but did not outnumber the students in Russian schools.

In the Soviet Era many ethnic Poles chose Russian-language education for their children. Currently, in rural areas parents almost exclusively choose Polish schools for their children, but in the capital, the situation is more diverse. During the interview, a Polish expert summarized the tendencies for schooling within the Polish community in the following way:

In the Soviet Era many parents sent their children to Russian schools. Maybe they thought that it was more prestigious. Also it was better if they wanted their children to receive higher education, which was in Russian or in Lithuanian. Nowadays, in the countryside, I think, 90% of Polish children go to the Polish schools. In Vilnius it is different. I guess it is at most 50%. But there are many mixed families – Russian-Polish, Lithuanian-Polish. Then they, most probably, send their children to Lithuanian or Russian schools.²⁶⁴

A Lithuanian expert in sociolinguistics believes²⁶⁵ that local administration in the municipalities of the Vilnius region, controlled by the Polish party, often creates pressure on ethnically Polish parents to send their children to Polish schools. Those parents who want to send their children to a Lithuanian school prefer driving them to the capital so that the local administration will not know

²⁶⁴ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁶⁵ Interview with a Lithuanian expert in sociolinguistics from Vilnius University, Vilnius, February 2015.

about it. In the city of Vilnius the situation is more diverse, but as a rule, in families where both parents are ethnic Poles, they send their children to Polish schools.

In the course of the research it was also figured out that some Russian families follow a similar pattern in choosing an education strategy for their children. First they send them to Lithuanian kindergartens so that they learn the state language at an early age. And then they send their children to Russian schools so they will learn literary Russian and receive education in the mother tongue. Here are examples of such a strategy, provided by some Russian respondents:

I wanted my child to learn the language as soon as possible. I deliberately sent her to a Lithuanian kindergarten. But school must be Russian so that the child will grow up the Russian culture. I don't regret my decision. I think it was absolutely right.²⁶⁶

(Russian, female, 41)

My children went to a Lithuanian kindergarten but now they are studying in a Russian school. It was a principle decision in our family. We understood that it would be difficult for them in the future without knowing the state language. So kindergarten was like creating a life-long foundation in the Lithuanian language. And Russian school is for knowing both the Russian language and culture.²⁶⁷

(Russian, female, 45)

I finished a Russian school, but I went to a Lithuanian kindergarten. My mom was convinced that if I went to a Lithuanian kindergarten I would have some basic level of Lithuanian before school. I don't know. I don't think that it helped me that much.²⁶⁸

(Russian, male, 24)

Both experts from the local minority school teachers' unions agree that local minority schools provide a high standard of education and can adequately compete with Lithuanian schools in preparing their students for university entrance exams. The Polish expert shared the following opinion regarding schooling:

I think it's a big mistake to send children to school in a language other than your mother tongue. It is hard for them to adapt then. Think of those children who have to study such subjects as math or physics in a foreign language. They might be hard in your mother tongue even. Also, they will have problems with learning good Polish. Polish schools have good teaching and a material basis. The teaching of Lithuanian is at a very high level. Anyone who wants to study at a university can do

²⁶⁶ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁶⁷ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁶⁸ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

it after a Polish school.²⁶⁹

The interviewee from the Union of Teachers of Russian Schools of Lithuania is convinced that Russian schools are competitive in the sphere of secondary education. According to her:

Russian schools in Lithuania provide high-quality knowledge. I think, on average our students have stronger knowledge in many subjects than in Lithuanian schools. I'm happy to see that our parents have begun to understand this. Sending a child to a Lithuanian school can create big problems, even misunderstanding in a family. They will learn Lithuanian really well in Russian schools, but if they go to a Lithuanian school their knowledge of the native language and culture will remain primitive, only at the family level.²⁷⁰

Except for a branch of one Polish university, higher education in Lithuania is in the state language. Thus, those students from minority schools who intend to continue their education at the university level are obliged to pass the state language exam. Since 2013 this exam became unified for Lithuanian and non-Lithuanian students. In other words, whereas previously minority students had to take an exam which was designed for non-native speakers (checking comprehension, grammar and writing skills), after the amendment they are required to take it in the form designed for native speakers (interpretation of a selected work of literature in the form of an essay).

However, recently in Lithuania receiving higher education abroad has become an increasingly preferred option both by minority and by titular students, especially since the country became a member of the European Union. In this case the proficiency in English, not in Lithuanian, as well as the overall level of knowledge plays a primary role.

Therefore, regarding the sphere of education it can be concluded that, although the Polish language has improved its position in Lithuania, it still remains below the potential maximum. Nevertheless, the area of education can be considered one where the conditions of the Russian and Polish languages are similar, and thus constitutes a relatively strong domain for the latter.

²⁶⁹ Interview with a Polish expert from the Union of Teachers of Polish Schools of Lithuania, Vilnius February 2015.

²⁷⁰ Interview with a Russian expert from the Union of Teachers of Russian Schools of Lithuania, Vilnius February 2015.

6.1.5 Prestige and Informal Status

Finally, the prestige and informal status of a particular language in a given society can either facilitate or mediate language-related concerns. The high prestige of a particular language and demand for language proficiency positively affect the position of an associated ethnolinguistic minority, which favors the maintenance of that language in society, and can arguably discourage its members from involvement in the language-related struggle. The opposite situation would suggest that an ethnolinguistic minority might feel a need to make a claim for the redistribution of language-related statuses, seeking to secure or enhance the overall position of its language in a given society.

Table 6.7 Most Necessary Languages in Lithuania²⁷¹

The most necessary languages	Ethnic identity			
	<i>Lithuanian</i>	<i>Russian</i>	<i>Polish</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>Lithuanian</i>	68%	57%	61%	58%
<i>Russian</i>	16%	46%	35%	47%
<i>Polish</i>	1%	1%	11%	3%
<i>English</i>	55%	47%	44%	48%
<i>Other</i>	5%	5%	8%	7%

The study on language use in Lithuanian cities and towns regarding the languages which the respondents found the most necessary (useful) in Lithuania shows the following results.²⁷² 65.74% of the respondents stated Lithuanian among the most necessary languages. English is chosen as the most necessary non-titular language (65.74% of respondents) after Lithuanian. Russian was chosen by 21.42% of respondents and the Polish language by 1.64%. Only one percent of ethnic Lithuanians and Russians stated Polish among the most necessary languages in Lithuania whereas 16% of Lithuanians and 35% of Poles mentioned Russian in this regard.

Regarding the most prestigious languages,²⁷³ English is the top choice with

²⁷¹ Krupickaitė, D. and Baranauskienė, V. 'Regioniniai kalbų vartojimo Lietuvos miestuose ypatumai' in Ranomienė, M. (ed.) Miestai ir kalbos II. Sociolingvistinis Lietuvos Žemėlapis, Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2013, p. 33.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Krupickaitė, D. and Baranauskienė, V. 'Regioniniai kalbų vartojimo Lietuvos miestuose ypatumai' in Ranomienė, M. (ed.) Miestai ir kalbos II. Sociolingvistinis Lietuvos Žemėlapis,

50.52%. Lithuanian is the second with 39.94%. Russian lags far behind with 7.11% while Polish was mentioned by only 0.92% of respondents (by none of the Russian and Lithuanian respondents and only by 8% of the Polish respondents).

*Table 6.8 Most Prestigious Languages in Lithuania*²⁷⁴

The most prestigious languages	Ethnic identity			
	<i>Lithuanian</i>	<i>Russian</i>	<i>Polish</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>Lithuanian</i>	47%	18%	26%	20%
<i>Russian</i>	3%	26%	17%	25%
<i>Polish</i>	0%	0%	8%	2%
<i>English</i>	50%	65%	62%	66%
<i>Other</i>	13%	20%	19%	17%

Although the results of the study demonstrate significant differences in answers according to the ethnic identity, the common point of agreement is that Lithuanian and English are the two most necessary languages in Lithuania and that English is the most prestigious language in the country. Although Russian is not considered a language of high prestige it is mentioned as the second most necessary language in Lithuania by all the ethnic communities. On the contrary, the Polish language is viewed neither among the most necessary nor among the most prestigious ones in Lithuania by all the ethnic groups, including the majority of the Polish respondents.

For employment in the private sector, the Russian language is still considered a significant advantage. It is in demand in services oriented towards tourists and also towards elderly Russian-speaking customers, whose knowledge of the state language is insufficient. Additionally, Russian is required for trading and doing business with other former Soviet republics, as mentioned in the following quotations:

The Russian language in Vilnius has always been and will always be in demand. You cannot cut economic relations with Russia. It's unavoidable. I'm sure that political relations will improve in the future. Retail needs employees who can speak Russian, especially those who work with tourists. The younger generation doesn't know Russian, but in order to live a comfortable life and be successful in Vilnius, I think, you should know Russian, especially in terms of job opportunities. Of course, you should also now Lithuanian. Well, you still can find a job without knowing Lithuanian, but you need two languages and also English to be really successful.²⁷⁵

Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2013, p. 35.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

(Polish, male, 51)

I think Russian is in demand for work and business, especially in trade. There was a period in the 1990s when Lithuanians didn't want to learn Russian. But it's business, whether you like it or not.²⁷⁶

(Russian, female, 45)

At work Russian is in demand, in trade and logistics. There is a huge market in the former USSR. Even at my former university our professor would always tell students that knowing Russian is a big advantage. Look at job announcements here in Vilnius. Knowing Russian is always an advantage.²⁷⁷

(Russian, female, 38)

I can give my own example. In my office no one speaks Lithuanian. Even Lithuanians who work there, they also speak Russian. Our director is Russian. All top managers are ethnic Russians. You cannot get employed if you don't speak Russian. Seven out of eight departments work with foreign countries, mostly with the former USSR.²⁷⁸

(Russian, male, 32)

From what I see Russian is mostly required in the service industry; it's not like during the Soviet Era. But on every job-related webpage, there are plenty of announcements in which knowing Russian is either a requirement or an advantage. Perhaps, this is why Lithuanian youth now sign up for Russian-language courses.²⁷⁹

(Russian, female, 42)

The interviewee from the Russian Cultural Center also mentioned a stable demand in learning the Russian language, related to its importance for many professional areas:

There is a demand, for sure. People from different professional areas – managers, economists, doctors, lawyers... There are companies, which work with Russia and Russian-speaking countries, but there are also those who work with the local Russian-speaking population. There are still many people here who don't know Lithuanian well enough to deal, for example, with judicial documents.²⁸⁰

Russian is also chosen as the second foreign language learned in Lithuanian schools (81% of students were studying Russian in the 2011/2012 academic year).²⁸¹ However, such a high percentage is partly explained by the

²⁷⁶ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁷⁷ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁷⁸ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁷⁹ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁸⁰ Interview with a Russian expert from the Russian Cultural Center, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁸¹ Zverko, N. 'Profesorė: nors lietuviai mokiniai nenori mokytis rusų kalbos, dažnai neturi

fact that in many schools there are no other options except for the Russian language, for they lack language instructors and teaching materials.²⁸² As for Russian case there is a solid base, formed during the Soviet Era.

The demand for Polish is quite limited. Regarding the demand for the Polish language and its economic value in Lithuania a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture expresses the following opinion:

No, I cannot say that Polish is in big demand here. Some people come to us for the language courses, but as far as I know, I might be mistaken, there are no schools in Lithuania in which students can learn Polish as a foreign language. There are some Polish companies which might require those who can speak Polish, but that's all.²⁸³

It is possible to argue that the situation has improved, compared to the Soviet times, when owing to the closed border between the USSR and Poland and, hence, the lack of economic activities, knowledge of the Polish language brought virtually no advantage in career perspectives or employment.

Thus, Russian is still in relative demand in Lithuania, especially in the areas of trade, commerce and the service industry, oriented towards tourists and local Russian-speaking customers. It is not the language of high prestige as it was in the Soviet Era, but knowing Russian is still viewed as a considerable advantage in employment. Polish, on the other hand, is neither a prestigious language nor a language in demand in Lithuania.

6.2. Subjective Dimension: In-Group Awareness and Support for Language-Related Claims

The objective necessity of engaging in the contestation of language-related status distribution and the alteration of the existing national language rights framework originates in the conditions of a language and ethnolinguistic group on the linguistic market. However, there is also a subjective dimension attributed

pasirinkimo', *DELFI.LT*, <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/education/profesore-nors-lietuviai-mokiniai-nenori-mokytis-rusu-kalbos-daznai-neturi-pasirinkimo.d?id=58357940>, last visited on December 2014.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius February 2015.

to the psychological features of the community: self-awareness about language-related issues and the subjective importance of the areas of contestation for the community members. In other words, the members of an ethnolinguistic community may also be either aware or unaware of language-related matters and feel higher or lower need for getting involved in a struggle for the better positioning of their language.

First, it must be highlighted that the revival of the Polish ethnicity in Lithuania at the end of the 1980s – the beginning of the 1990s went along with the overall resurgence of ethnicity in the Soviet Union and hence the awareness about cultural, historical and linguistic matters. The rapid growth in the number of Polish-language schools in this period can be an illustrative example of people's deliberate 'return' to their ethnicity. The findings of the field research also suggest that there was a deliberate switch to the native language among some members of the Polish community during perestroika and post-perestroika years. At that time, as mentioned by an interviewee from the House of Polish Culture,²⁸⁴ the opening of borders and the proliferation of contact with Poland also affected the degree of awareness regarding the situation of the Polish language in Lithuania. Linguistically Russified local Polish elites and intelligentsia had limited proficiency in the Polish language. Besides, local people spoke very peculiar 'Eastern Polish' vernaculars, highly influenced by the Russian language, and thus, difficult to understand for the speakers of literary Polish. As a result, upon the restoration of independence and the opening of the borders between the two countries there was a problem even at the level of basic communication.

The Russian community was in a substantially different position at that period. It was a majority community which spoke the all-Union state language and represented the culture, which, to a very large extent, was promoted as the culture of the Soviet Union. Therefore, ethnicity-related matters, including language, did not have such high relevance for the Russian community during that period.

Another important feature of the community's identity can probably originate from its immigrant character and formation during the Soviet period.

²⁸⁴ Interview with a Polish expert from the House of Polish Culture, Vilnius February 2015.

Part of the local Russian community is more ‘Soviet’ or ‘Post-Soviet’ than ethnically Russian in terms of identity. A Lithuanian expert refers to it in the following way:

I cannot even call some of them proper Russians. They are ‘Soviets’ (*Sovietikai*). There is that mentality that the state should give them all that they need and want. They are like little spoiled children; they don’t care about other things. They don’t want to learn the language, because they are lazy and think that the state owns them something.²⁸⁵

This can be potentially accountable for the lack of concern about non-material issues, lack of civic and political activism, and nostalgia about the past. It may be both hampering integration into the host society on the individual level and discouraging the emergence of stronger in-group ties and group activism.

As regarding the language conflict, most of the Russian respondents did not share much support for the idea of language rights expansion, finding the matters discussed of secondary importance to economic and social problems, as mentioned in the following quotations:

I don’t accept those claims. I think those are just political games. Lithuanians do not support this and I’m on their side.²⁸⁶

(Russian, female, 42)

I don’t support what Poles do. It’s like they cannot learn Lithuanian to read those names and signs and speak in administrations. It’s not right. If a person lives here why can’t he or she learn the Lithuanian language?²⁸⁷

(Russian, male, 32)

If they want it, then let us wish them good luck. If you write your name with W instead of V you will not protect your Polish identity in this way. In order to protect it you should be active and bring something to the society.²⁸⁸

(Russian female, 27)

I think it is nonsense. There is Lithuania and there is Poland. They don’t even have those letters in the alphabet to write Polish names. I don’t care. I sincerely don’t understand why you should write something in Polish if you live in Lithuania.²⁸⁹

(Russian, female, 38)

²⁸⁵ Interview with a Lithuanian expert from the House of Ethnic Communities, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁸⁶ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁸⁷ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁸⁸ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁸⁹ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

As regarding names and surnames, to be honest, I got used to it already. First it was a bit weird when they added “s” to my surname in the office, issuing passports. I can change it. The possibility exists. But it doesn’t disturb me. It is not the surname which defines a person.²⁹⁰

(Russian, male, 24)

There was just one Russian respondent, a 41-year-old woman, who found that the claims of the Polish community are in principle logical and legitimate.

She said:

It’s absolutely normal what they want. If Poles have always lived here they should have the Polish language. What is the problem with those street signs? Who cares about those tables, especially if it is on a private house? I mean they were there in the Soviet Era. Polish people live there and they never call those streets by their Lithuanian names. Let it be two signs next to each other, like ulica Wilenska and Vilnius gatvė [*Polish and Lithuanian versions of the most common street name – Vilnius street – Y.K.*].²⁹¹

There is much greater concern about historical and political problems, and the current character of bilateral relations between Russia and Lithuania, shared by part of respondents, which can be summarized as the issues of ‘political Russophobia’ and ‘the rewriting of history.’ Here are examples of such views from some Russian interviewees:

One of the reasons why I don’t want to send my children to Lithuanian schools is that they will grow up just like a ‘pure Lithuanian’ [*grynas lietuvis – the respondent said it in Lithuanian – Y. K.*], hating Russia and everything related to Russia. I see such examples from my acquaintances. Don’t misunderstand me, in general I like this country, it’s my motherland. But the biggest problem here is state-supported Russophobia. If they were to finally get rid of these complexes, things will get much better.²⁹²

(Russian, female, 38)

What they do with history here is awful. My grandfather was in the Red Army and he fought for our freedom against the Germans. And now it’s an offense against me, and for many people, to hear that Soviets and Nazis are all the same.²⁹³

(Russian, female, 41)

They just repeat occupation, occupation. There is no Soviet Union for 25 years and Lithuania is in deep.... [*meaning problems in the country’s economy – Y.K.*] But they can’t stop complaining that it’s because Russians occupied us. If it hadn’t happened we would have been like Finland now. Yes, for sure. The occupants came and built schools, hospitals, roads and factories. I think politicians zombify people by all this so that they won’t wake up and see who is really guilty for what is going

²⁹⁰ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁹¹ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁹² Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁹³ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

on here now.²⁹⁴

(Russian, male, 32)

The opinions of the Polish respondents on language-related matters are quite different and more clearly pronounced. There are references to the relevance of the matters of spelling and writing, and especially, those, regarding the situation about the recent changes in the school system. Interestingly enough, the concept of language rights and principles of democracy, once introduced into the public discourse, seems to shape the opinions and attitudes of common people about the ongoing language conflict. Polish respondents said the following during the interviews:

Names can be a painful question. My grandmother's name was Anna, it's a Catholic name, and it's not exotic. When they were changing her passport they wrote Ana [*the Lithuanian adaptation of spelling – Y.K*] with one n. She was really disappointed. For her it was like someone made a mistake in her name. It's an important question. If a name is given to someone at birth why do they have to change it?²⁹⁵

(Polish, female, 20)

You have to know the Lithuanian language, for sure. But a language is not just a set of symbols. It is more. It is culture, traditions. That's why, I think, children should study in their mother tongue in order to save those things which pass from generation to generation. And honestly, we, Poles, have a lot to save and pass. We have nothing to be ashamed of from the historical point of view. We have great literature, music, theatres, movies... <...> I myself took part in demonstrations about the changes in the law on education. My children will soon be school students. I'm worried about their future.²⁹⁶

(Polish, male, 42)

I'm worried about what they want to do with schools. I have little children. They are not fluent in Lithuanian yet. It is too early for them to study history and geography in the Lithuanian language. They haven't mastered even their mother tongue yet. It should be only the mother tongue during the first years of school.²⁹⁷

(Polish, female, 29)

This is a 20-year old problem. I really don't understand why it cannot be solved. Considering that Lithuania is a member of the European Union. We aren't somewhere in Africa, where they have different standards. What the local Polish community wants are very minimal necessities. I what to write my surname the way it should be written. If there is 80-90% of Polish population in the town, why can't they have signs written in their mother tongue where their home is? In Europe it is

²⁹⁴ Interview with a Russian, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁹⁵ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁹⁶ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁹⁷ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

all normal.²⁹⁸

(Polish, male, 55)

There is assimilation. Mixed marriages and the state language have their influence. It can be felt. Precisely to limit assimilation there must be protests and rights demanded.²⁹⁹

(Polish, male, 21)

Consequently it is probably both the instrumental concerns, such as matters of education and status-related concerns, involving the manifestation of the community's history and its local character and maintenance of ethnolinguistic identity, which are shared by some of the representatives of the Polish community. There was one 28-year-old Polish respondent, though, who is married to a Lithuanian and who stated that she doesn't support the language-related claims. She said:

I don't support these claims. People who support it, they have their reasons. Yes, there has always been a Polish community here and so on. But, in my opinion, those are the people who live in the past. Times have changed now. We live in Lithuania and we have to accept this.³⁰⁰

In general, it might be argued that, regardless of whether the initial introduction of the language issues to the public discourse was 'artificial' and made by the local Polish politicians (as suggested by some Russian respondents and by Lithuanian experts) or it was the channeling of the actual desires and needs of the community. At the current stage language-related concerns are present among at least some part of the local Polish minority. The Russian community is likely to be less concerned about language-related issues.

Although the Russian language in Lithuania did experience a major drop both in official and in informal status as compared to the Soviet period, it still occupies a visible place at the local linguistic market and has not reached the state at which the matters of language maintenance acquire particular importance.

Russian is no longer a highly prestigious language required for an administrative or political career, as well as for advanced options in education. Nevertheless, it is in demand in many professional areas, such as trade,

²⁹⁸ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

²⁹⁹ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

³⁰⁰ Interview with a Pole, Vilnius, February 2015.

commerce and the service industry. *De facto*, Russian still remains the language of interethnic communication in the ethnically heterogeneous regions of the country. It is also the most widespread foreign language in Lithuania. In addition, there is a developed media market in this language, available in Lithuania. In principle, in such multiethnic cities as the Lithuanian capital, it's possible to manage with only limited proficiency in the state language.

The Polish language is neither a prestigious nor a demanded language in Lithuania. It has a limited media market to rely on and fewer professional areas in which it might be required. It remains predominantly a family language of in-group communication. The only relatively strong domain of the Polish language is education. At the same time, it is the domain in which state language policies are the most visible. Probably, being the only relatively strong side, the maintenance of Polish-language education causes greater concerns among the representatives of the Polish community and dissatisfaction with the attempts of the government to alter the situation.

Consequently, language-related claims can be less appealing to the representatives of the Russian community as compared to the Polish minority. On the subjective level the Russians might be also less concerned with language-related issues than the Poles. The ideas of language maintenance and language status as related to identity issues are more openly articulated within the Polish community, whereas, for the Russian community, these issues seem to be of secondary importance.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The multiplicity and omnipresence of symbolic and instrumental functions of language, attributed to various aspects of ethnicity, place it among the most powerful identity-shaping factors and tools for in-group and intergroup differentiation. In certain situations language might not be the most crucial aspect of ethnicity, or it may be complemented or replaced by other identity markers. However, in most cases, it remains relatively central to the issues of ethnic identity.

Language possesses a strong link to national identity and the ideologies of nationalism. Therefore, language-related issues also play a visible role in nation-building policies, addressing both instrumental and symbolic needs of a nation-state in this regard. The elevation of a particular language or vernacular to the status of a national language creates a situation of inequality between ethnolinguistic communities at the national level and produces linguistic minorities. This inequality is also attributed to the distribution of power, symbolic and economic resources, and the issues of the recognition of group status. Under certain conditions such a situation may impose a threat to the maintenance of a minority language and hence the persistence of a distinct ethnolinguistic identity.

The role of language in the formation and maintenance of group identities, namely ethnic and national ones, predetermines the salience of language-related issues in the process of intergroup interaction and may become a ground for tensions and conflict situations. A minority's potential to initiate language-related claims can be linked to the contestation of existing resources, power and status distribution patterns, and a need for the protection and maintenance of group identity. The case of Lithuania, addressed in the thesis, represents one such instance where there are disagreements between the majority community –

Lithuanians - and minority communities – Poles and Russians - regarding national language policy and the provision of language-related minority rights.

The case study chosen for the thesis is important as an example of the following aspects. Firstly, it is a relatively recent conflict, which emerged from the post-1991 social, political and economic developments in the region in general, and in the Republic of Lithuania in particular. Therefore it is less extensively addressed in academic discourse. Secondly, it is peculiar for its centeredness on language-related issues, which are symbolic and status-related, rather than of functional value for the communities, such as the use of bilingual signs, original spelling of personal names, use of minority languages in local administrations, etc. The notions of language rights and language-related claims are openly articulated in the public discourse. Finally, Lithuania's two largest national minorities – Poles and Russians - which also comprise approximately equal percentages of the country's population, tend to demonstrate different responses to the situation at the national linguistic market and to developments in state language policy. In essence it is a Polish-Lithuanian conflict whereas the Russian community remains relatively inactive and silent in this regard. Consequently, this thesis has focused on dissimilarities of the two minorities, which may be accountable for such a situation. Methods, used in the thesis, included theoretical analysis, analysis of secondary sources, documents, statistics, qualitative in-depth interviews and field observations.

The research question, stated at the beginning of the study, concerned the influence of factors such as the characteristics of a minority community and the position of a minority language in society on perceptions of threat to linguistic identity. It then concerns a resulting resort to struggle for the alteration of the existing language rights. Therefore, in order to address the comparative nature of the Lithuanian case, an integrated theoretical framework was used. The two communities have been evaluated in terms of their capacities, or resources at disposition, for involvement in a conflict. Those included demographic, socio-economic, historical, cultural, organizational variables, as well as the role of respective homelands.

The objective positions of minority languages in Lithuania, accounting for groups' ethnolinguistic vitality, have also been evaluated. Language-related

factors included the proficiency of major ethnic groups in respective languages, informal status and prestige of minority languages, prevailing language choices in intergroup communication, availability of media and press in minority languages, tendencies and patterns in education. The evaluation of the conditions of the two languages at the national linguistic market was supplemented by the analysis of the community members' awareness of the issue.

In addition, the attitudes of the national majority towards language-related matters and claims for the expansion of minority language rights were included in the study, for they define the overall mode of a language conflict and shape minorities' expectations and possible ways of conflict resolution.

The current national language rights framework was chosen as the legal and institutional reflection of the language conflict domain. In this regard it should be highlighted that in the course of the field research it was found that the concept of language rights is familiar to the members of the communities and to a certain extent it also shapes the character of public discourse regarding the conflict situation.

Relying on the findings of the research we can conclude that Lithuania has an explicitly defined monolingual language policy with a marked degree of tolerance to linguistic minorities. However, there are important limitations regarding the potential for the expansion of minority language rights, originating from the status of Lithuanian as the only state language. Recent amendments on legislation in the area of secondary education and discussions on the new version of the law on ethnic minorities can also be negatively perceived by local minority groups. Besides, the relative centrality of language for national identity makes language-related claims and the alteration of the existing language rights regime a sensitive issue in national public and political discourses. This last factor can probably account for the fact that the status of the Lithuanian language as the only state language is not challenged by the minority communities.

Regarding the relative capacities of the minorities to put forward language-related claims it can be concluded that the Polish community is in a relatively more advantageous situation than the Russian community. Lithuanian Poles are more geographically concentrated. Polish public and political organizations are more consolidated, competitive and congruent. The Catholic Church may also

play an additional role in unifying and strengthening the group identity of the Polish community in Lithuania.

Despite the fact that both Polish and Russian communities are of heterogeneous origins, the former ethnic group is considered autochthonous to the region by its members, as well as by the representatives of other minorities and by the Lithuanians. The Russian community is perceived as immigrant and having little ground for rights-related claims.

Both minorities have some degree of perceived cultural superiority towards the titular community. However, it seems to be more explicit and more openly pronounced among the members of the Russian community. Such an attitude may arguably hamper desire to integrate and assimilate into the titular ethnic group and potentially trigger some claims for the provision of instrumental language rights. At the same time it might generate lesser concern about the vitality of the linguistic community and necessity to resist assimilation threats. For the Polish community, while the feeling of cultural superiority is not openly articulated, local Polish-language heritage is viewed as an integral part of Lithuanian historical cultural heritage. This can potentially serve as grounds for the claims of greater status recognition on par with the titular culture and language.

Russia is less openly and extensively involved in the matters of the Russian community than Poland is in the matters of the Polish community. The negative perception of Russia and Russian policies can be said to create a discouraging effect on the position of the local Russian community and limit the scope of Russia's involvement in the community's matters. However, the negative reaction to the active position of Poland regarding its minority community raises the question as to what extent it will be a positive or negative factor for interethnic relations in the future. In the Russian case the negative examples of the conditions of Russian-speaking minorities in other Baltic states can have an additional discouraging effect on the minority's motivation for rights-related claims.

Since 1991, Polish and Russian have had equal status. However, the positions of the Polish and Russian languages in contemporary Lithuania substantially differ in a number of important aspects. The Russian language in Lithuania did experience a major drop both in official and in informal status as

compared to the Soviet Era – from the highly prestigious all-Union language of interethnic communication, administration, work and science to the mother tongue of a relatively small national minority. Nevertheless it still occupies an important place at the local linguistic market. Russian is not a highly prestigious language, but it is in demand in many professional areas, such as trade, commerce and the service industry. Russian *de facto* remains the language of interethnic communication in the ethnically heterogeneous regions of the country. It is also the most widespread foreign language in Lithuania. In addition, there is a well developed media market available in this language. Principally, in such multiethnic cities as the Lithuanian capital, it is possible to manage with only limited proficiency of the state language, relying on the knowledge of the Russian language.

The Polish language is neither a prestigious nor a demanded language. It has a limited media market to rely on and fewer professional areas in which it might be required. It remains predominantly the family language of in-group communication. The only relatively strong domain of the Polish language is secondary education. At the same time, it is the domain in which state language policy is the most visible. Probably, as the only relatively strong side, the maintenance of Polish-language education causes greater concerns among the representatives of the Polish community and dissatisfaction with the attempts of the government to alter the situation.

The differences between the minority languages indicate that for the Polish community there might be a greater rationale for language maintenance and protection of ethnolinguistic identity, whereas language-related claims can be less appealing to the members of the Russian community. In this regard it should also be noted that the conflict is predominantly located within the domain of status, touching issues of symbolic value, rather than the communicative domain, for the matters of linguistic integration and lack of the minorities' proficiency in the titular language have already lost their urgency.

On the level of in-group awareness, the Russians might also be less concerned with language-related issues than the Poles. The ideas of language maintenance as related to identity issues are more openly articulated within the Polish community, whereas, for the Russian community, these issues seem to be

of secondary importance.

Based on the field research data, it can be argued that the current language conflict in Lithuania is essentially a Polish-Lithuanian conflict over the symbolic recognition of the ethnolinguistic community in the nation-state. Correspondingly, it is reflected in status-related claims regarding the transformation of the existing national language rights framework. It is unlikely to expect a major turn in the position of the Russian community on the ongoing situation of conflict, for it has lower capacities and necessities for being more actively involved in the issue. In the best case scenario it may enjoy the benefits of being a relative 'free-rider' if the conflict situation resolves in a way which favors the position of minority communities.

Consequently, the potential areas and directions of further research on the case-study may focus on internal dynamics within the Polish community, concerning the conflict situation. In particular, it may target differences in personal motivation and the degrees of support for language-related claims according to in-group stratifications determined by age, gender, income, education, and rural/urban origin. Focusing on these dynamics would allow for arriving at more general conclusions about the degree of communal support for articulated claims as well as making predictions about the persistence, intensification or moderation of the conflict in the future.

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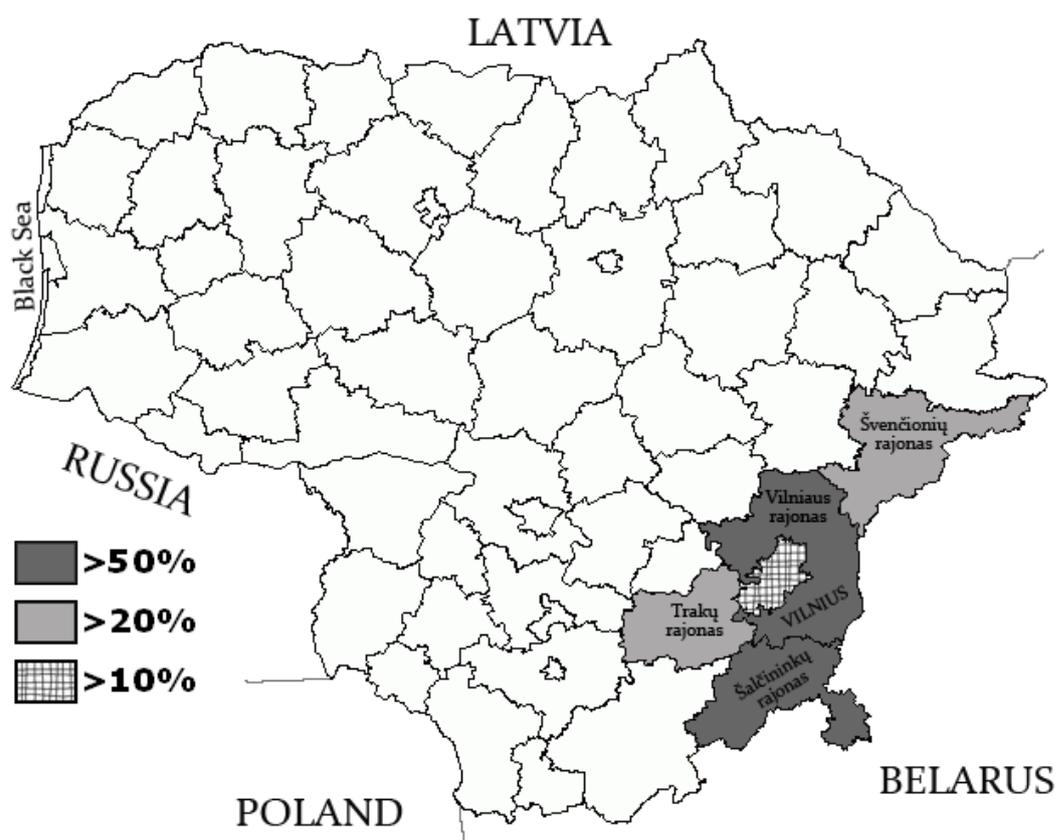
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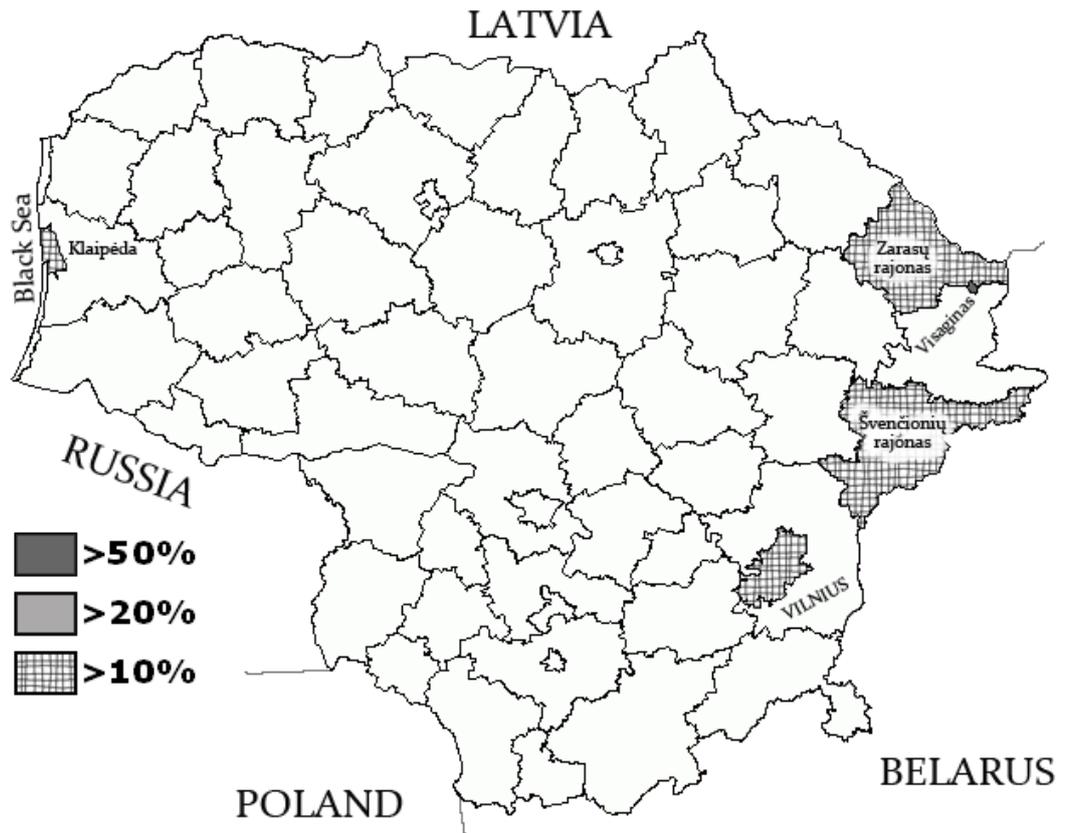
APPENDICES

A: MAP OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE POLISH MINORITY BY ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS³⁰¹



³⁰¹ prepared by the author using an administrative map from http://dic.academic.ru/pictures/wiki/files/83/Savivaldybiu_konturai.png

B: MAP OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RUSSIAN MINORITY BY ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS³⁰²



³⁰² prepared by the author using an administrative map from http://dic.academic.ru/pictures/wiki/files/83/Savivaldybiu_konturai.png

C: TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu tez, Rus ve Leh azınlıkların, Litvanya'daki dil politikalarına yaklaşımlarındaki farklılıkların nedenlerini, dil ve etnik kimlik ilişkisinin çeşitliliği bağlamında incelemektedir. Çalışmanın sorusu, azınlık toplulukların karakteristik özellikleri, dilsel kimliğe karşı tehdit algısının gelişimindeki azınlık dilinin konumu ve bununla bağlantılı olarak, Litvanya'daki Leh ve Rus azınlıklarının mevcut dil haklarının değiştirilmesi için mücadeleleri gibi faktörlerin etkisini ele almaktır.

Arka plan

Litvanlar; göçmen ve Polonya ve Belarus'ta yaşayan yerli Litvan grupları dahil, nüfusu 3 milyon dolaylarında küçük bir ulustur. Ülkenin tek devlet (resmi) dili Litvancadır. Hint-Avrupa dil ailesinde Baltık dillerinin ayrı bir grubuna aittir. Letonca diliyle yakın bir ilişkisi olmasına rağmen karşılıklı olarak anlaşılabilir değildir. Litvanca, Latin alfabesinin 32 harfli bir türünü kullanmaktadır. Dilin fonetiğini göstermek amacıyla Litvanca birkaç fonetik işaret ve diyagraf kullanmaktadır. Latin alfabesini kullanan ve diğer dillerden alınan yabancı kelimeler kendi fonetik formları içerisinde benimsenmekte ve Litvanca kurallarına göre yazılmaktadır. Litvanyalı vatandaşlar tarafından kullanılan yabancı kökenli özel isim ve soy isimler de Litvancanın fonetik kurallarına göre yazılmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, Litvancada bulunmayan harfler resmi belgelerde kullanılmamaktadır.

Litvanlar, LitSSC'de nüfusun her zaman mutlak çoğunluğunu oluşturmuştur. Litvanya Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti; 1940'tan 1991'e kadar, Estonya, Letonya veya Kazakistan örneğinde olduğu gibi geniş çaplı bir göç dalgası yaşamamıştır. Sovyetlerin bir kural olarak dilde *Ruslaştırma* politikası sadece asimile edilemeyen bir çift dilliliğe sebep olmuş; buna karşın diğer Sovyet cumhuriyetlerine kıyasla egemen dilin konumu açısından Litvanya oldukça katı durmuştur.

Sovyet döneminde Litvanlar Sovyet, politikalarına karşı güçlü ulusal kimlikleri, kültürel ve politik direnişleriyle ön plana çıkmışlardır. Böylesi güçlü ulusal bir birlik ve Sovyet egemenliğine karşı başkaldırıya, Litvanya'nın Sovyet yönetiminden 1990'da bağımsız ilk cumhuriyet olması örnek verilebilir ancak bu durum 1991'e kadar uluslararası alanda tanınmamıştır.

Genel itibariyle bağımsızlık ilanından sonra yerel seçkinler arasında; karakteri Litvanca dilinin merkezi rolüne dayanan, ortaçağ tarihinin ve devlet olmanın yüceltilmesi, Avrupa'nın içerisinde içselleştirilmeye karşı yönelim, işgal dönemi olarak bilinen Sovyet dönemine karşı eleştirel değerlendirme olan ulus inşa sürecinde çok az ihtilaf yaşanmıştır.

Litvanya'da Leh halkının yaklaşık olarak sayısı 200,000'dir. Bu etnik grup aşağıdaki idari bölgelerde yoğunlaşmıştır: **Šalčininkų rajonas** - bölge nüfusunun % 77.8'i; **Vilniaus rajonas** bölge nüfusunun % 52.1'i; **Trakų rajonas** - bölge nüfusunun % 30.1' i ve **Švenčionių rajonas** - bölge nüfusunun % 26'sı. Bu bölgeler ülkenin doğu kısmında, Belarus sınırında, başkent etrafında bulunmaktadır. Vilnius kentinde Lehler nüfusun % 16'sını oluşturmaktadır.

Yukarıda bahsedilen ve savaş döneminde Polonya tarafından kontrol edilen bölgeler için sıklıkla resmi olmayan *Wileński Kraj* ismi kullanılmaktadır. Ülkenin en az şehirleşmiş etnik grubu olan Lehlerin yaklaşık olarak % 40'ı kırsal bölgelerde yaşar. 2001 ve 2011 yılları arasında etnik kökenlerinin Leh olduğunu söyleyen insanların sayısı % 15 azalmıştır. Ancak, düşüşün hızı, ülkedeki azınlık grupları arasında en düşük hızdır. Aynı zamanda, yaş kompozisyonu ülkedeki bütün azınlıklarda çocuklar ve gençlerin oranı en çok, yaşlı kesiminin oranı en az olarak göstermektedir.

Din açısından yerli Lehlerin büyük çoğunluğu (% 88.6), kendilerini Roma Katolik Kilisesinin mensubu olarak tanımlamaktadır. Leh kimliği ile 10. yüzyıldan itibaren devletin dini inancı olan Katolik inancı arasında güçlü bir bağ bulunmaktadır. 13. yüzyıldan itibaren Katolik Kilisesi Leh dilini dini amaçlar için kullanmaya başlamıştır. Böylelikle, din dil ve ulusal kimlik arasında üçlü bir bağ oluşturmuştur. Polonya, aynı zamanda Katolik dininin tüm Litvanya bölgesinden doğuya yayıldığı bir dini merkez olmuştur.

Leh topluluğu, tarihsel olarak köklerini Litvanya topraklarından almaktadır. 16. yüzyıldaki ortak Polonya-Litvanya devletinin kurulmasından

sonra Polonyalı soylular ve din adamları, ülkenin politik ve dini meselelerini etkileyip kültürel ve dilbilimsel *Lehleşmeyi* kolaylaştırmıştır. Bundan dolayı günümüzde Litvanya'daki Lehler bir göç sonrası buraya gelmemişlerdir. Aksine, hem slav hem de Baltık kökenli halklardan oluşmaktadır. Bu yüzden Lehler, Litvanya'da yaşadıkları bölgelerin yerlisi olarak düşünülmektedirler. Bu gerçek, Vilnius bölgesi Sovyet hükümeti tarafından Litvanya Cumhuriyeti'ne verildiğinde geri gelenin Litvanya ve Litvanyalı olduğu halk tarafından anlaşılmıştı.

Ruslar Litvanya'daki ikinci büyük azınlığı oluşturmaktadırlar. Ülke nüfusunda oranları 1989'da % 9.4'iken 2011'de % 5.9'a inmiştir. En son sayıma göre yaklaşık olarak 177,000 Rus kökenli Litvanya bölgesinde yaşamaktadır. Litvanya'daki Rus topluluğunun büyük çoğunluğu şehirlerde yaşamakta; orta yaş veya yaşlı nüfusa sahiptir. Ruslar şu an aktif olmayan, ancak Sovyet Döneminde işletilen İgnalina Nükleer Enerji Santralinin kurulduğu yer olan *Visaginas* şehrinin nüfusunun büyük çoğunluğunu (% 51.9) oluşturmaktadırlar. Ruslar Litvanya'nın deniz limanı olan *Klaipeda*'da nüfusun % 19.6'sını, *Zarasu* ve *Švenčionių* bölgelerinde nüfusun % 18.7'sini ve % 13.3'ünü oluşturmaktadırlar. Vilnius'ta etnik kökeni Rus olanların oranı ise % 12'dir. Yerli Rusların çoğu ismen de olsa Rus Ortodoks Kilisesine mensuptur.

Litvanya'daki Rus azınlığı 20. yüzyıldan önce oluşmaya başladı. Ruslar, Vilnius kenti Rus İmparatorluğu valiliğinin merkezi olduğunda Vilnius'a yerleşmeye başladılar. Bunun yanı sıra eski zamanlardaki Büyük Litvanya Düklüğünden beri etnik Rus olan 'eski inananlar' bu bölgede yaşamaktaydılar. Ancak, Litvanya'daki Rusların büyük çoğunluğunu, ülkeye Sovyet yetkililerin politikaları nedeniyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra gelenler oluşturmaktadır. Böylelikle Ruslar, çoğunlukla birinci, ikinci hatta nadiren üçüncü dereceden göçmen nesilleridir. Diğer slav halklarından Rus halkına karışmış olan Sovyet dönemi göçmenleri de mevcuttur.

Daha çok 1990'lardaki göçler ve yerleşirme süreçleri ile birlikte, Sovyetlerin askerleri ve ailelerinin yeniden yerleştirilmelerinden dolayı Litvanya'daki Rus kökenlilerin sayısı, Litvanya bağımsızlığını ilan ettikten sonra azalmıştır.

Tez Konusu

Tez için seçilen konu ařağıdaki alanların bir örneđi olması açısından önemlidir. Birinci, bu konu, 1991 sonrasında o bölgede ve Litvanya Cumhuriyeti'ndeki sosyal, siyasi ve ekonomik gelişmeler sonrasında ortaya çıkan, ve nispeten güncel olan bir çatışmadır. Bu nedenle de akademik çalışmalarda çok az ele alınmıştır.

İkinci olarak, tezin konusu, kişi isimlerinin ana dilde yazılması, iki dilli tabelaların bulunması ve yerel idari birimlerde azınlık dilinin kullanılması gibi toplum için işlevsel olmasından daha çok statü ile ilgili olan simgesel dil sorunlarının odağında bulunması açısından özgündür.

Dil haklarına yönelik beyan ve talepler kamusal alanda açıkça ifade edilmektedir. Nüfus oranları neredeyse birbirine eşit, Litvanya'nın iki büyük ulusal azınlığı olan Lehler ve Ruslar, hem dil haklarına yönelik taleplerinde hem de devletin dil politikasındaki gelişmelere gösterdikleri tepkilerde farklılık gösterme eğilimindedirler. Temelde bu farklılık, Rus halkı bu meselelerde sessiz ve eylemsiz kalırken, Leh ve Litvanlar çatışmaktadırlar. Sonuç olarak, bu tez böyle bir durumun hangi sebeplerle ortaya çıktığına yani iki azınlığın farklılıklarına odaklanmıştır.

Metodoloji

Tezde kullanılan yöntemler; teorik analizleri, ikincil kaynakları, belgeler, istatistikler ve saha çalışmalarını içermektedir. Saha araştırması, 2-26 Şubat 2015 tarihleri arasında Litvanya'da gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu araştırma, yerel Leh ve Rus etnik azınlıklardan sıradan insanlarla yapılan derinlemesine mülakatların yanı sıra Litvan, Leh ve Ruslarla yapılan yarı- elit ve uzman mülakatlarını içermektedir. Mülakatlar için muhataplar uygun ve amaca yönelik örneklemeler ve denetçilerin arabulucu rolüyle seçilmiştir. Uzman mülakatları; *Leh Kültür Evi* ve *Litvanya'daki Leh Okulları Öğretmenleri Birliği*'nden Leh elit ve uzmanları, *Litvanya'daki Rus Okulları Öğretmenleri Birliği* ve *Vilnius'taki Rus Kültür Merkezi*'nden Rus elit ve uzmanları, *Etnik Gruplar Evi*, sosyolinguistik alanda çalışan *Vilnius Üniversitesi*'nden, *Vilnius Üniversitesi'ndeki Litvan Çalışmaları*

*Bölümü'*nden Litvan uzmanları ile gerçekleştirilmiştir (toplam 7 kişi).

Mülakat soruları aşağıdaki konuları kapsamaktadır: Litvanya'da etnik azınlıkların entegrasyonunda genel eğilimlerin değerlendirilmesi; egemen grubun azınlıklara karşı tavrı; azınlık halklarının hayatlarında 'vatan'ın rolü; azınlıklar arasında Litvanca diline ve kültürüne karşı tutumlar ve kendi linguistik entegrasyonlarındaki sorunlar; Litvanya toplumunda azınlık dillerinin konumu; azınlık halklarının içerisinde ana dil olarak azınlık dillerinin kullanılma konumu; Lehlerin dil haklarının genişletilmesi iddiaları ve diğer gerilimler; Leh meselesine kıyasla Rus azınlığının durumu.

Mülakata alınan 3 grup için 3 ayrı soru türleri bulunmaktadır. Litvanya'daki temel azınlık grupları arasındaki durum kıyaslamaları, eğilimlere odaklanan soru türü Litvan uzmanlar için kullanılmıştır. Azınlık gruplarından gelen uzmanlar için soru türleri bu azınlık gruplarının durumlarına odaklanmıştır. Mülakat dilleri Litvanca ve Rusçadır.

Vilnius şehrinde ikamet eden Rus ve Leh azınlıklardan sıradan insanlarla (yaşları 20 ila 55 arasında değişen toplam 14 kişi) yapılan bir dizi yarı-yapılı derinlemesine mülakatlar alan çalışmasının ikinci bölümünü oluşturmaktadır. Mülakatlardaki sorular aşağıdaki konuları kapsamaktadır: Kişisel arka plan; dil yeterliliği ve dil edinim şekilleri; çoğunluk olan halka, kültürüne ve diline karşı olan tutumlar ve ana vatanın anlamı; ayrımcılık örneklerine, azınlık dili kullanımına, eğitim için dil seçimine, medya, iş, vb.'ne karşı tutum; Leh topluluğunun iddialarına karşı tutum; bu bağlamda Rus ve Leh grup arasındaki farklar üzerindeki düşünceler. Mülakatların dili Rusçadır.

Son olarak, mülakatlar yardımıyla toplanan veriye; çoğunlukla etnik azınlıkların yaşadığı bölgelerde yapılan alan gözlemleri veriler; halka açık yerlerde azınlık dillerinin görsel sunumları, dil seçimleri, halka açık yerlerde konuşurken konuşma esnasında dil değiştirmeleri, azınlık dillerinde basılı medya ve kitapların varlığı ve benzeri ektenmiştir.

İki azınlık için yapılan araştırmanın alanı ölçülebilir oranların ikamet ettiği şehir olan Vilnius-Litvanya'nın başkentidir.

Tez Yapısı

Tez, yedi bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölümde, çalışmanın bir girişi yapılmış, yöntemi ve yapısı sunulmuştur. İkinci bölüm ise çalışmanın kuramsal çerçevesini belirlemiştir.

Dilin, etnik kimliğin oluşturulması ve korunmasıyla olan ilişkisi sorunsalından başlayıp, dil hakları kavramının ve onun dil çatışması durumunda uygulanabilirliğinin analizi ile devam etmiştir. Üçüncü bölüm, Litvanya'daki mevcut ulusal dil hakları kapsamının yanı sıra Leh halkının mücadelesinin (tartışmalarının) alanlarını analiz etmektedir. Dördüncü bölüm, dilin çoğunluk olan halk için rolü, devletin dil politikasına karşı tutumları ve dil haklarının genişletilmesi için yapılan talepleri ele almaktadır. Beşinci bölüm, iki etnik azınlığın, demografik, sosyal ve ekonomik durumunu, kökenlerini, çoğunluk olan halka karşı tutumlarını, bağlı buldukları kurum ve kuruluşları, bir etnik çatışmaya girme eğilimlerini değerlendirmektedir.

Altıncı bölüm, Litvanya'daki azınlık dillerinin konumunu, dil ile alakalı meselelerin o topluluğun üyeleri için önemini ve bir dil çatışmasına girme potansiyellerini analiz etmektedir. Yedinci bölüm ise araştırmayı özetlemektedir.

Bölümler

Teorik bölüm, etnisitenin birçok yönüyle ilişkilendirilen dilin çeşitliliği, dilin simgesel rolü ve etkin işlevini ele almaktadır. Belli durumlarda dil, etnisitenin en önemli parçası olmayabilir veya farklı bir kimlik unsuru ile tamamlanabilir ya da değiştirilebilir, ancak çoğu durumda nispeten etnik kimliğin ana meselesidir. Ayrıca, dil, ulusal kimlik ve milliyetçilik düşüncesi ile sıkı bir ilişkisi içindedir. Böylelikle, dil ile alakalı olan meseleler, ulus-devletin ihtiyaçlarına simgesel ve işlevsel olarak cevap vererek, ulusal kimlik inşa politikalarında belirgin bir rol oynar. Belirli bir dilin ya da ana dilin ulusal dil statüsüne yükseltilmesi etno-linguistik azınlıklar arasında ulusal düzeyde bir eşitsizlik ve dilsel azınlıklar yaratır.

Bu eşitsizlik, gücün, simgesel ve ekonomik imkanların dağılımı ve grubun statüsünün tanınması gibi durumlara da yansır. Belli şartlar altında böyle bir

durum, azınlık dilinin korunmasına dolayısıyla etno-linguistik kimliğin varlığını sürdürmesine karşı bir tehdit oluşturacaktır.

Dilin, etnik ve ulusal grupların kimliğinin inşaa ve korunmasındaki rolü, gruplar arası etkileşim sürecinde dil sorunlarına önem atfetmesinde belirleyici olur ve yaşanabilecek gerginlik ve çatışmalar için zemin hazırlayabilir. Bir azınlığın dil taleplerinde bulunma potansiyeli, mevcut kaynakların, gücün ve statünün dağılımı mücadelesiyle ve grubun kimliğinin muhafazası ve mevcudiyeti ihtiyacı ile ilişkili olabilir. Litvanya meselesi, tezde, çoğunluk olan halk (Litvanlar) ile azınlık halklar (Lehler ve Ruslar) arasında ulusal dil politikası ve azınlıkların dil hakları ile ilgili taleplerinin karşılanması bağlamında yaşanan anlaşmazlıkların bir örneği olarak sunulmuştur.

Tezin teorik çerçevesi; bir azınlık grubunun haklar ile ilgili iddialarda bulunabilme kapasitesi, grubun çatışmalara katılmasına duyulan gereklilik, çoğunlukta olan grubun kendi dillerine ve dilsel azınlıklara olan tavırları ve hukuki norm, kural, ve düzenlemeler ile ilgili mücadele alanını içermektedir. İkincisi bir azınlık grup tarafından istenen mevcut ulusal dil hakları çerçevesinin değiştirilmesi olarak yaklaşılabilir.

Bir azınlık grubunun hak iddia edebilme kapasitesi bir dil çatışmasına katıldığında veya dilsel hakları dile getirirken kullanacağı birçok kaynakla (sosyal, ekonomik, politik, kültürel, vb.) ilgili olabilir: Grubun kapasitesini belirleyen faktörler; nüfusla ilgili faktörler, sosyo-ekonomik faktörler, kültürel faktörler, yönetsel faktörler ve harici faktörlerdir.

Nüfusla ilgili faktörler; grubun mutlak boyutunu, yaş bileşimini, bölgesel dağılımını (yoğun veya dağınık) ve nüfus dinamiklerini (büyüme, azalma, göç) içerebilir. Sosyo-ekonomik faktörler; grubun eğitim seviyesini, sosyal ve ekonomik statüsünü ve grup içi tabakalaşmayı kapsar. Kültürel faktörler; toplumun köklerini (tarihsel olarak yerlisi veya göçmen), kültürel sermayesi (egemen gruba karşı kültürel üstünlük veya aşağılık duygusuna sebep olabilen) ve bütün kültürel uyum ve farklılığı kapsamaktadır. Dil ile ilgili iddiaları dillendirmek toplayıp bir araya getiren ve destekleyen etnik organizasyonların (resmi veya gayri-resmi, politik, kültürel, yarı askeri) var olma sebebi yönetsel faktörlere atfedilebilir. Harici etkenler, bir çatışmada azınlığı desteklemek için politik bir vatanın olup olmadığına işaret etmektedir.

Bir azınlık grubun dil çatışmasını tetikleyip dil haklarının genişlemesi için hak iddia etme girişimlerinde bulunması gerekliliğine iki perspektiften yaklaşılabılır: Objektif ve sübjektif. İlk olarak, bariz dilsel bir kimliğin devamı için herhangi bir devlette bir azınlığın dilinin gerçek şartları ve bu şartların ne düzeyde olumlu veya olumsuz olduğu bilinmelidir. Dilin fonksiyonlarının etnik kimlikteki ikilik görüşünde, hem iletişimsel hem de sembolik yönler bu bağlamda eşit değerlendirmeye tabi tutulacaktır. Böylelikle, günlük hayattaki etnik gruplar arası iletişimin baskın şekilleri, dilin eğitim, iş, medya, yönetim, din, kişisel isimler, yer isimleri gibi alanlarda kullanımı ve statüsünün tanınması değerlendirmeye alınabilir. İkinci boyut sübjektif (öznel) boyuttur ki bu meselenin bilincidir - grup içi dile kimliğinden ötürü toplumun atfettiği değerler ve hali hazırdaki durumu gözlemleyip tehlike olduğuna kanaat getirip bir mücadeleye girilmesini gerektirir.

Son olarak çoğunlukta olan grubun dil ile ilgili meselelere karşı tutumu bir çatışma ortamının oluşmasına katkıda bulunur. Ulusal çoğunluğun tavırları dilin ulusal kimlik ve ideoloji için ne derece önemli olduğu ile ilgilidir ki dolayısıyla da çoğunluğun azınlık dil haklarının genişletilmesiyle olabilecek potansiyel değişiklikleri ve iddialara açılacak yol ile ilgilidir ve bu tür iddialara sertlik veya hoşgörü gösterilebilir.

Ulusal dil hakları rejimi;.mücadele alanı var olan veya var olması istenilen dil ile ilgili normlara ve kurallara atfedilebilen, dil hakları üzerinde bir çatışma alanıdır. Kısacası, çatışmanın objesi haline gelen mevcut dil hakları esaslarının değişmesidir. Bu bağlamda, herhangi bir azınlık tarafından dillendirilen dil haklarının genişletilmesi iddiaları, devletin var olan dil hakları rejimi ve teorik olarak en olumlu dil hakları rejimi arasında konumlandırılabilir ki bu dil statülerinin ve resmi iki dilliğin eşitlenmesidir.

Dolayısıyla, üçüncü bölüm, çatışma alanının bir yansıması olarak yasal ve kurumsal olarak belirlenen mevcut ulusal dil hakları kapsamını değerlendirilmektedir. Araştırmanın bulgularına dayanarak, Litvanya'nın dilsel azınlıklara belirgin bir şekilde hoşgörü gösteren bir tek dillilik politikası olduğu sonucuna varabiliriz. Ancak, devletin tek devlet dilinin Litvanca olmasından kaynaklanan, azınlık haklarının geliştirilmesi ile ilgili önemli kısıtlamalar bulunmaktadır. Üstelik, ortaöğretim alanındaki son mevzuat değişiklikleri ve

etnik azınlık kanunlarının yeni versiyonuna dair tartışmalar yerel azınlık gruplar tarafından olumsuz olarak algılanmaktadır.

Bunun yanı sıra, dördüncü bölümde de ele alındığı üzere, Litvanya'nın ulusal kimliğinde dilin nispeten daha merkezde bulunması durumu, dil taleplerini ve mevcut dil hakları rejiminin değiştirilmesini halk arasında ve politik söylemlerde hassas bir konu haline getirmektedir. Bu son etken, azınlıkların Litvancanın tek resmi devlet dili olmasına karşı çıkmamalarının sebebi olabilir.

Azınlıkların, dil taleplerini gerçekleştirme oranları beşinci bölümde karşılaştırılmıştır. Lehler, Ruslara nispeten daha avantajlı konumdadırlar. Litvanyalı Lehler coğrafi olarak belli yerlerde toplanmışlardır. Leh azınlık politik teşkilatları daha güçlü, rekabetçi ve birbirleriyle uyumludur. Katolik kilisesi de Litvanya'daki Leh azınlık için birleştirici ve grup olarak kimliğin güçlenmesinde bir rol oynar. Hem Leh hem de Rus grupların heterojen kökenli oldukları gerçeğine rağmen Lehler, çoğunluk grubu olan Litvanlar ve diğer azınlıklar tarafından bölgenin yerlisi olarak kabul edilirler. Ruslar ise göçmen ve hak talep etmeye daha az hakkı olan topluluk olarak algılanır.

Her iki azınlık da egemen olan etnik gruba karşı kültürel üstünlük algısına sahiptir. Ancak, bu algı Ruslar arasında daha net ve açık bir şekilde ifade edilmektedir. Muhtemelen böyle bir tutum, asimilasyona ve çoğunlukta olan etnik gruba entegrasyona karşı engelleyici bir davranış ve dil haklarının karşılanmasına yönelik talepler için potansiyel bir etkidir. Bu durum aynı zamanda etno-linguistik topluluğun varlığının devamı ve asimilasyon tehdidine karşı koyma düşüncesine dair daha az bir endişe de yaratabilir. Lehler açısından bakıldığında, kültürel üstünlük duygusu açıkça ifade edilmemesine rağmen yerel Lehçe mirası, Litvanya tarihi kültürel mirasının bir parçası olarak gözükmektedir. Bu durum, Lehler için çoğunluğun dili ve kültürüyle eşit oranda hak talep etmesi için zemin sağlayabilir.

Rusya, Litvanya'daki Ruslar ile alakalı konularda Polonya'nın Lehler için gösterdiğinden daha az ve üstü kapalı bir hassasiyet göstermektedir. Litvanya'da Rusya ve Rus politikalarının olumsuz algısını, yerli Rusların konumu ve onlarla ilgili konularda Rusya'nın söz sahibi olmasında caydırıcı bir etken olduğu söylenebilir. Ancak, Polonya'nın Litvanya'daki Lehler için aktif pozisyonuna karşı gösterilen olumsuz tepki, etnik topluluklar arasındaki ilişkide ne derecede

olumlu ya da olumsuz bir etken olacağı sorusunu gündeme getirmektedir. Rus azınlık meselesinde ise diğer Baltık devletlerindeki ana dilleri Rusça olan azınlıkların durumları örnek alındığında, hak talep etmeleri için ayrıca caydırıcı bir etki yaratabilir.

Altıncı bölümde Litvanya'daki azınlık dillerinin, grupların etno-linguistik varlığının devamındaki pozisyonları ele alınmıştır. Bu pozisyonlara; çoğunlukta olan etnik grubun ilgili dillerdeki yetkinliği, azınlık dillerin resmi olmayan konumları ve sahip oldukları prestij, gruplar arası iletişimde geçerli olan dil tercihleri, azınlık dillerinde yayın yapan medya olanağı, eğitimde eğilim ve mevcut seçenekler dahildir. Ulusal dil alanında bu iki dilin içinde bulunduğu koşullar, azınlık üyelerinin bu konudaki farkındalıkları analiz edilerek ayrıca eklenmiştir.

1991'den beri, Lehler ve Ruslar eşit statülere sahiptir. Ancak, günümüzde Lehçe ve Rusçanın konumu günümüz Litvanyası'nda birçok açıdan farklıdır. Rusça, Sovyet döneminde etnik gruplar arası iletişimden, idari yönetim, iş ve bilim dünyasına kadar birçok alanda sahip olduğu hem resmi hem de gayri resmi konumuyla karşılaştırıldığında Litvanya'da bir düşünüş yaşamaktadır. Yine de Rusça önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Rusça yüksek prestij sahibi bir dil olmamasına rağmen ticaret, iş, hizmet sektörü gibi birçok profesyonel alanda Rusçaya ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Rusça *de faktosu*, ülkenin heterojen bölgelerinde etnik gruplar arası iletişim dili olarak kalmıştır. Ayrıca, Litvanya'da en yaygın yabancı dildir. Buna ek olarak, Rusça yayın yapan gelişmiş medya sektörü vardır. Çoğu zaman, Litvanya'nın başkenti gibi farklı etnik grupların bulunduğu şehirlerde, devlet dilini çok az bilip sadece Rusça ile idare edilebilir.

Lehçe ise ne prestij sahibi ne de ihtiyaç duyulan bir dildir. Sınırlı sayıdaki profesyonel alanda ve kısıtlı olarak medya sektöründe ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Lehçe, daha çok aile dili olarak kalmıştır. Lehçe'nin nispeten güçlü olduğu alan ortaöğretimdir. Aynı zamanda, bu alan, devletin dil politikasında en görünür olduğu alandır. Görece tek güçlü alan olmasından dolayı Lehçe eğitimin iyileştirilmesine yönelik getirilen kısıtlamalar Leh halkının arasında kaygıya yol açmaktadır ve hükümetin bu girişimlerinden dolayı büyük bir memnuniyetsizliğe neden olmaktadır.

Azınlık dillerindeki bu farklılıklar, Rus halkı için dil haklarına yönelik daha

az talepte bulunulmasına, Lehler için ise dilin muhafazası ve etno-linguistik kimliğin varlığının korunması için daha büyük bir gerekçe olabileceğine işaret eder. Bu bağlamda, simgesel değerin kabul edilmesi bakımından çatışmanın iletişim alanından ziyade statü alanında yaşandığını belirtmek gerekir. Dilsel entegrasyon ve azınlıkların Litvanca bilgisi ise önceliği zaten kaybetmiştir.

Grup içindeki dil ile alakalı meselelerde farkındalık seviyesi Ruslarda Lehlerdekenden daha azdır. Kimlik meselesiyle ilişkili olan dilin muhafaza edilmesi düşüncesi, Lehler tarafında daha açık bir şekilde ifade edilirken, Ruslar için ikinci planda kalmış gibi görülmektedir.

Sonuç

Saha araştırması verilerine dayanılarak ve çalışmayı özetleyerek Litvanya'da yaşanmakta olan dil çatışmasının, temelde etno-linguistik topluluğun ulus-devlette tanınması üzerinden yaşanan Leh-Litvan çatışması olduğu söylenebilir. Bu, mevcut ulusal dil hakları kapsamının değiştirilmesine yönelik statüsel taleplere yansımıştır. Devam eden çatışmada Rus halkının pozisyonunda büyük bir değişiklik beklemek pek mümkün değildir. Zaten Rus halkı, bu konuya daha aktif bir şekilde müdahil olmak için daha az bir istek ve ihtiyaç duymaktadır. En iyi durumda, bu çatışma bir şekilde azınlıklara yarar sağlarsa, Ruslar 'free-rider' olarak bunun avantajlarından faydalanabilirler.

Bu konuda daha sonra yapılacak çalışmaların potansiyel alanı ve yönelimleri, Leh azınlığın iç dinamiklerine odaklanabilir. Özellikle, bir gruptaki insanların yaş, cinsiyet, gelirleri, kentli ya da kırsal kökenleri vb. özelliklerine göre sınıflandırılarak, onların kişisel olarak dil haklarına yönelik taleplerin destekleme seviyesi ve ilgisine odaklanabilir. Böylelikle, talep edilen haklar için toplumsal desteğin seviyesi, devamlılığı ile ilgili öngörüler, çatışmanın gelecekte şiddetlenmesi ya da azalması hakkında daha fazla genel sonuçlar elde edilmesini sağlayacaktır.

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FOR THE EXPANSION OF LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN LITHUANIA:
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