



LANGUAGE PLANNING AND PRACTICE: LITHUANIAN MODEL

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I. INTRODUCTION: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. To understand the Lithuanian situation, it is necessary to give some demographic data.

According to the national population census (1989), the total Lithuanian population amounts to 3.674,8 mln., split up as follows:

Lithuanians	81,6 %
Russians	8,2 %
Polish	7,0 %
Ukrainians	1,7 %
Byelorussians	1,5 %
Jews	0,1 %
Others	0,7 % ¹

The last general census was in 2001 but have no official data yet.

II. A BRIEF HISTORIAL OUTLINE OF LINGUISTIC LAWS

The main stages of the formation of a legal basis for the functioning of Lithuanian as the official language are:

- The Constitution of the Lithuanian State, adopted on August 1, 1922 by the Founding Seimas.
- The additional Law of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic № 77 for Constitution, adopted on November 18, 1988.
- The Law on the Official Language, adopted on January 31, 1995.
- The Law on the Enforcement of the Law on the Official Language, adopted on February 7, 1995, established de jure the current status of Lithuanian.
- The Programme for the Uses and Promotion of the Official Language, adopted by the Government on December 4, 1995, which marked the beginning of the de facto stage of the status of the language.

¹ Statistical yearbook of Lithuania. Vilnius, 2000, p. 49

The next important “step” in the process of language planning and practice was the Law on the Status of State Commission of the Lithuanian Language of the Republic of Lithuania (March 25, 1993). The main fields of activity of this Commission are:

Legal and administrative protection of the official language (OL)

Drafting legislation guaranteeing the correct use of the OL; harmonizing legislation regulating the status of the OL and other language rules with corresponding documents of the European Union; formulating and financing programmes for teaching non-Lithuanian speakers the OL or improving their skills; etc.

Language standardisation: collection, investigating and generalization of non-standard language facts; approval of Lithuanian, bilingual dictionaries of technical terms, and approval of standard technical terms; standardisation of place names;

Language teaching and improving language skills: financing and coordinating language-teaching programmes at schools of higher education and vocational schools; supporting language courses for non-Lithuanian speakers; language consultations for institutions and individual; language education through the mass media;

Control of language usage: control of the implementation of the Law on the OL of the Republic of Lithuania and other legislation regulating the use of the OL.

III. PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

A very important decision was made in 1989 the so called “ Zero Version “ which wasn't as harsh as in the other Baltic republics. It is stated that everyone living in Lithuania, until the enactment of the Citizenship Law, has the right to become a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania. This Law gave all inhabitants of Lithuania the possibility to gain citizenship without qualification even though international rights don't include such an obligation. On December 5, 1991 the new Citizenship Law of the Republic of Lithuania was accepted and it meet international standards. This Law amendments were made to the first article which stated that the citizen of the Republic of Lithuania is an individual who previous to June, 1940 had Lithuanian citizenship and his children, who have gained the citizenship of another nation had the right to preserve or regain Lithuanian citizenship. The rights of Lithuania's minorities (109)² are enshrined in the Preamble and Chapters II, III, IV, XIII of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on National Minorities, the Law on the Official Language of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Education, the Law on Citizenship, the Law on Non-Governmental Organisations, the Law on Public Information, the Law on Religious Communities, the Law on Political Parties and Political Organizations. The Republic of Lithuania has signed or ratified various international covenants and conventions: the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, UN International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Right, the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The latter Convention was ratified by Seimas in 1995. On February 1 of the same year the republic of Lithuania signed the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. It was scheduled for ratification in 1999. On 23 December 1997, Seimas adopted the Law on Petitions under Articles 25 and 46 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. By this law the Republic of Lithuania recognized the competence of the European Commission on Human Rights to accept petitions from individuals, non-governmental organizations and groups of persons claiming that their rights under the

² Lietuvos tautinės mažumos. Vilnius, 1998, p. 34

Convention have been violated; Lithuania also recognized the jurisdiction of the Court of Human Rights in all cases related to the interpretation and application of the Convention.

Lithuania has signed and ratified bilateral political agreements on friendly and good neighbourly relations with Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine and Poland. New and effective forms of co-operation have been established by the following joint institutions of two states: the Parliamentary Assembly of Lithuania and Poland, the Council of Cooperation of the Governments of Lithuania and Poland, the Committee of National Minorities of the Council, and the Advisory Committee of the Presidents of Lithuania and Poland.

IV. EDUCATION

The main language of instruction in different stages of Lithuania's education is Lithuanian. There are other languages (mostly national minorities'), which are used as languages of instruction (%)³:

Language of teaching	General daily schools	Vocational schools	Vocational colleges	Higher schools
Russian	7,7	6,3	0,2	0,9
Polish	3,8	0,8	1,0	0,2
Byelarussian	0,0	-	-	0,1
English	0,0	-	-	0,9
French	-	-	-	0,1
German	-	-	-	0,1

There are different types of the schools according to the language of instruction: Lithuanian, Russian, Polish, Byelorussian, Lithuanian and Russian, Lithuanian and Polish, Russian and Polish, Lithuanian, Russian and Polish. There is Jewish religious school, Menachem Home in Vilnius.

V. LANGUAGES AND MASS MEDIA

Lithuanian state media has not only one-language (OL) programs. Lithuanian Radio daily broadcasts 1.5 hour programs in Russian, 30 minutes in Polish, a bimonthly 30-minute show in Ukrainian, and a weekly 30-minute show in Byelorussian. Lithuanian National TV broadcasts daily 10-minute informational program and several weekly programs in Russian and Polish, but has short programs for a smaller national minorities as Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Jews. Lithuania re-broadcasts TV Polonia, a TV programme from the Republic of Poland and some parts of the Russian TV programmes and TV stations of other countries. The average broadcasting time a day of Lithuanian State radio and TV (in hours) by languages of broadcasting is:

Languages	Radio (%)	TV (%)
Lithuanian	49,0	11,9
Russian	0,9	0,2
Polish	0,5	0,1

³ Statistical yearbook. Vilnius, 2000, p.50

Others	0,3	0,1
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At present some private radio stations and TV companies also have programmes in the minority languages of Lithuania.

In 1999 Lithuania had 754 periodic publications: newspapers, magazines and bulletins. Most of them are published in Lithuanian – 88,1%. Other languages are using too:

Languages	Newspapers (%)	Magazines, bulletins (%)
Russian	8,8	0,7
Polish	1,6	0,2
English	0,8	9,8
Other (Jidish, German, Byelorussian...)	1,3	0,5

VI. PUBLICATION OF BOOKS

In the year of 2000 besides Lithuanian which is the main language in this sphere (90,7%) we can name others: (%)

English	Russian	Polish	Germany	Others
3,7	2,3	1,3	0,8	0,83

CONCLUSIONS

The earlier mentioned demographical indices have determined language functioning peculiarities in the country. The official language is Lithuanian Other languages are used too. First of all the state supports the languages of the largest national minorities: Russian and Polish functionates as: the languages of instruction in general education, vocational and higher schools; the languages of mass media; culture, theatre, national self-expression language; the means of communication. Doubless, the mentioned languages aren't equal, they differ in spreading and the difference of functions. Some of them (Polish) are mostly used in Eastern Lithuania. It was conditioned by compact distribution of population (Poles) in this region.

The situation of Western European and Russian languages is different. They are taught at schools, colleges and universities as non-native languages (first foreign or second foreign). The European languages (traditionally English, German and French) are used wider now: besides traditional functions in education and science spheres they are applied in: a) means of mass media (radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, bulletins), b) to keep various relations with Western countries, c) personal communication.

It should be mentioned that Russian which earlier was themain means of communication outside Lithuania, now lost some of its functions: it is functioning as a mother-tongue for Russians and for Russian speaking people (Byelorussians, Ukrainians and others) and for communication with the countries, formers of the Russian Federation.



CONGRÉS MUNDIAL SOBRE POLÍTQUES LINGÜÍSTIQUES
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WORLD CONGRESS ON LANGUAGE POLICIES Barcelona, 16-20 d'abril de 2002

Lithuanian society is in the process of two kinds of integration: 1) internal – to integrate all nationalities for common state building and development. The integrational function of the Lithuanian language is undoubted and it has to be fulfilled in the context of valuing cultural awareness and multilingualism. The integrative aim of language policy is a well-organized language acquisition planning; 2) international – integration into Europe and the international communication as a whole it would be necessary to know not only English, but also other languages, which taught traditionally.