

## Foreign Language Learning in Latvia in Non-formal Education

### 1. Foreign language skills of adults in Latvia

Analysing the 2012 Eurobarometer data on languages in Europe, it can be seen that the two languages most commonly used by Latvian population are Latvian and Russian (refer fig.1).<sup>1</sup>

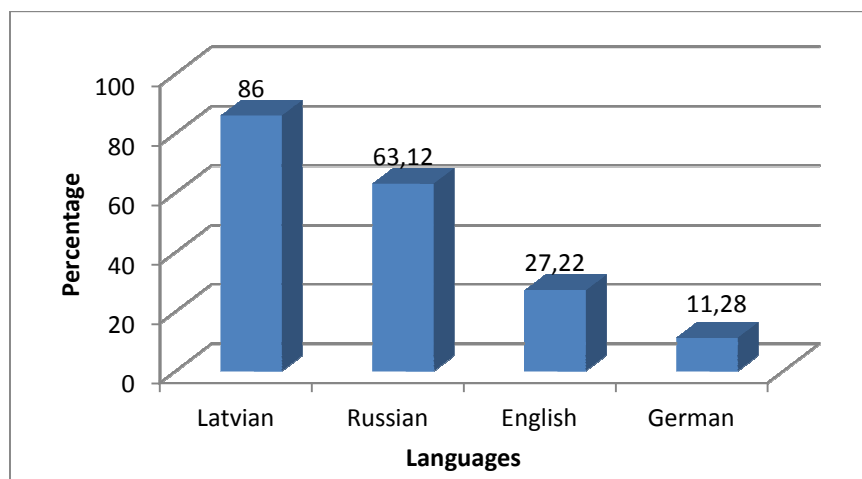


Figure 1. Most commonly used languages in Latvia<sup>2</sup>

Latvian is used by 86% of the respondents and Russian by 63.12%. Apart from these languages English is used by 27.22% and German by 11.28% of respondents. Latvian is the native language for 71.25% (out of 86%) respondents using Latvian language and 14.75% have learnt it (refer fig.2.).

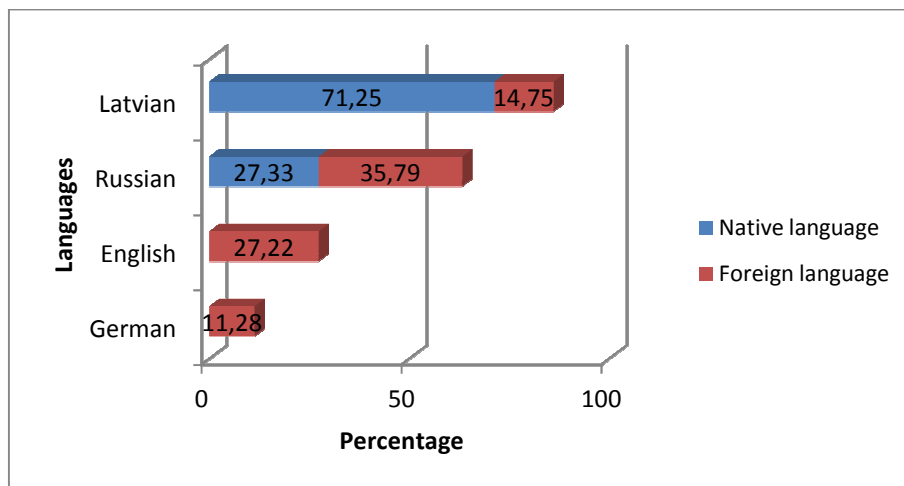


Figure 2. Most commonly used languages in Latvia – native languages and foreign languages<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://languageknowledge.eu/about>

<sup>2</sup> <http://languageknowledge.eu/countries/latvia>

<sup>3</sup> <http://languageknowledge.eu/countries/latvia>

Russian is the native language for 27.33% (out of 63.12%) respondents using Russian language and 35.79% have learnt it as a foreign language (refer fig.2.). Both German and English are foreign languages.

Analysing the foreign language by age groups it can be seen that the most learnt foreign language in Latvia is Russian language (refer fig. 3).

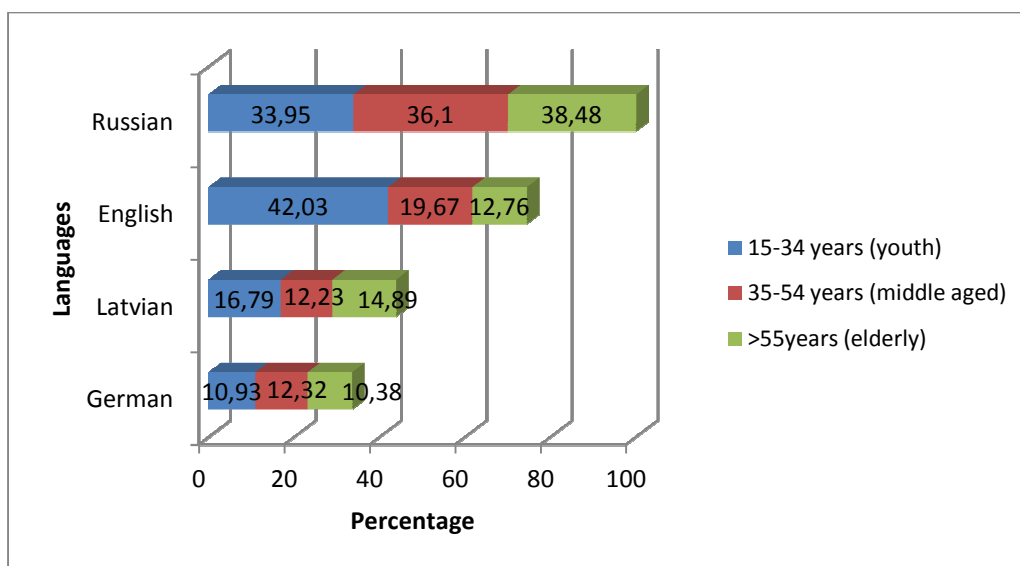


Figure 3. Distribution of most commonly used foreign languages by age groups<sup>4</sup>

Russian was learnt most often by respondents in the age group above 55 years – 38.48%. The second most learnt foreign language is English which is popular among the youth (15 - 34 years). Latvian language is also one of the most frequently learnt languages in this age group – 16.79%. The popularity of German is rather similar among all age groups and is most popular among respondents in the middle aged group (35-54 years) – 12.32%.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Foreign language learning opportunities for adults in Latvia

### Free

**The State Employment Agency** offers *non-formal education through voucher system*. This is an opportunity to participate in free non-formal education programmes for the unemployed and job seekers whose skills do not match the changing labour market requirements or whose skills are not sufficient enough to find a suitable job. Unemployed persons and job seekers have the opportunity to get these training vouchers and learn in non-formal education courses and after the successful completion of examination get a document certifying the new set of knowledge and skills gained. The length of the courses is up to 2 months.

<sup>4</sup> <http://languageknowledge.eu/countries/latvia>

<sup>5</sup> <http://languageknowledge.eu/countries/latvia>

One of the education programmes offered is the “state language” which is offered in three levels – elementary, intermediate and advanced. At least primary education is necessary to study in the elementary level Latvian courses. In order to start learning in the intermediate level one has to have skills of at least elementary level and similarly for the advanced level preliminary knowledge at the intermediate level is necessary.

Foreign languages can also be learned using the voucher – English, German, Russian, French, Swedish and Norwegian. English language courses are the most widespread offer of courses – *Elementary*, *Intermediate* and *Upper intermediate* level courses as well as business English courses. It is possible to determine one's English language level by completing an online test on the Agency webpage before registration. The other foreign languages can be learnt in courses with or without preliminary knowledge.

Education for the unemployed and jobseekers are partly financed by the European Social Fund project "Training for unemployed and job seekers in Latvia - 2" for 2009-2013.<sup>6</sup>

The State Employment Agency also offers *lifelong education measures for employed people*. The aim of the project is to provide employed persons the opportunity to extend and enhance the knowledge and skills required for their jobs by participating in professional enhancement programmes (from 160 hours) and non-formal education programmes (24 -159 hours).

It is possible to learn English, French, Italian, Russian, Latvian, Norwegian, Spanish, German and Swedish languages at various levels under the non-formal education programmes.

It is possible to study English, Latvian, French, Russian and German languages in their relevant professions e.g. English for service sector employees, German for people working in the public sector etc. under professional enhancement courses.

The full list of formal and non-formal education programmes is accessible at: <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=433&mid=435&txt=2913&from=0>.

Programmes for employed persons are actively carried out under the ESF project No.1 DP/1.2.2.1.2/09/IPIA/NVA/001 [„Lifelong education measures for employed persons”](#).<sup>7</sup>

**State Education and Development Agency (VIAA)** is an administrative institution directly under the supervision of the Ministry for Education and Science. The policies and activities under the responsibility of VIAA are broad and diverse. Since 2010 VIAA has become a one stop agency for European Union (EU) structural funds, foreign scholarship and cooperation programmes, for the implementation of European Economic Area financial mechanisms and grant schemes in education, science, research, lifelong education and career support

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=433&mid=311&txt=2903&from=0>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nva.lv/index.php?cid=433&mid=435&txt=2913&from=0>

Šis projekts tiek finansēts ar Eiropas Komisijas atbalstu. Šī publikācija [paziņojums] atspoguļo vienīgi autora uzskatus, un Komisijai nevar uzlikt atbildību par tajā ietvertās informācijas jebkuru iespējamo izlietojumu.

policies offering detailed information and consultations on education development prospects in Latvia and Europe.<sup>8</sup>

VIAA participates in the implementation of various European Union and European Social Fund projects under the lifelong learning programme. Language projects are implemented under all such sub programmes. Information regarding the projects can be found on the VIAA homepage under the lifelong learning programme and international cooperation section:

- „Leonardo da Vinci” vocational educational programmes:  
[http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/muzizglitibas\\_programma/leonardo\\_da\\_vinci/leo\\_jaunami/](http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/muzizglitibas_programma/leonardo_da_vinci/leo_jaunami/)
- „Grundtvig” adult education programmes:  
[http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/muzizglitibas\\_programma/grundtvig/grundtvig\\_jaunami/](http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/muzizglitibas_programma/grundtvig/grundtvig_jaunami/)
- International cooperation programmes „Nord Plus”:  
[http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/starptvalstu\\_sadarbiiba/nordplus/par\\_nordplus/](http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/starptvalstu_sadarbiiba/nordplus/par_nordplus/).

„Nord Plus” was set up in 1988/1989 by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The aim of the programme is to improve and introduce innovations in the Nordic and Baltic education systems. The programme activities are based on agreements between education institutions and organisations of member states participating in the programme. The programme supports projects that promote the acquisition of knowledge and the creation of exchange and cooperation networks.<sup>9</sup>

One of the 5 sub activities under the „Nord Plus” programme is „Nordplus Nordic languages programme”. The programme supports activities aimed at strengthening the Nordic neighbouring languages (primarily Danish, Norwegian and Swedish) learning among children and the youth and the development of Nordic language learning materials, methods and strategies for all levels of education and training systems. The programme participants include the Nordic countries: Denmark (Greenland and Faroe islands also), Finland (Åland islands, too), Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The three Baltic States - Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have also started participation since 2012.<sup>10</sup>

## **Paid**

**The Professional Development Centre of Turība University** is open to all those interested in gaining further knowledge to increase one’s competitiveness. Professional training, further qualification, requalification and courses commissioned by enterprises are all being offered. More than 200 programmes for professional training, 20 programmes for adult non-formal education and tens of commercial courses and seminars have been developed and implemented during the period of its existence. At present the centre offers more than 40 different licensed education programmes.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/viaa/darbiba/>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/starptvalstu\\_sadarbiiba/nordplus/par\\_nordplus/](http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/starptvalstu_sadarbiiba/nordplus/par_nordplus/)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/starptvalstu\\_sadarbiiba/nordplus/nordplus\\_valodu\\_programma/](http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/starptvalstu_sadarbiiba/nordplus/nordplus_valodu_programma/)

<sup>11</sup> <http://kursi.turiba.lv/par-mums>

Šis projekts tiek finansēts ar Eiropas Komisijas atbalstu. Šī publikācija [paziņojums] atspoguļo vienīgi autora uzskatus, un Komisijai nevar uzlikt atbildību par tajā ietvertās informācijas jebkuru iespējamo izlietojumu.

The centre also offers various language learning programmes for adults (refer table 1.).

Table 1

*Language learning programmes*

Title	Learning outcomes:	Topics
English (with preliminary knowledge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicate with people;</li> <li>- Making plans and arrangements;</li> <li>- Communicate over the phone in English;</li> <li>- Work with foreign clients.</li> </ul>	Socialising, entertaining guests; Occupations, interests and lifestyle; City; Transport; Describing people; Describing companies and responsibilities; Travelling; Communication culture in public places; Telephoning; Addressing customer complaints.
English (for beginners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating at work and on everyday topics;</li> <li>- Basic skills and abilities of listening, reading speaking and writing;</li> <li>- Use the knowledge gained in socialising with people, business meetings and telephoning.</li> </ul>	Socialising, entertaining guests; Family; Routines; Home; Shopping; Meals; Transport and the city; Travelling; Jobs; Office.
German (with preliminary knowledge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating at work and on everyday topics;</li> <li>- Develop skills and abilities of listening, reading speaking and writing;</li> <li>- Use the knowledge gained in socialising with people, business meetings and telephoning, business communication and organising and arranging meeting.</li> </ul>	Socialising, entertaining guests; Occupations, interests and home; Public institutions; Business trips; Describing people; Describing companies and responsibilities; Communication culture in public places; Business conversations over the telephone; Customer complaints.
German (for beginners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating at work and on everyday topics;</li> <li>- Basic skills and abilities of listening, reading speaking and writing;</li> <li>- Use the knowledge gained in socialising with people, business meetings and telephoning,</li> </ul>	Socialising, entertaining guests; Describing people; Routines; Home; Describing products ; Business lunches; Transport and city; Business trips;

	business communication and organising and arranging meeting.	Work; Office.
Russian (with preliminary knowledge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating at work and on everyday topics;</li> <li>- Develop skills and abilities of listening, reading speaking and writing;</li> <li>- Use the knowledge gained in socialising with people, business meetings and telephoning, business communication and organising and arranging meeting.</li> </ul>	Socialising, entertaining guests; Occupations, interests and home; Public institutions; Business trips; Describing people; Describing companies and responsibilities; Communication culture in public places; Business conversations over the telephone; Customer complaints.
Russian (for beginners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating at work and on everyday topics;</li> <li>- Basic skills and abilities of listening, reading speaking and writing;</li> <li>- Use the knowledge gained in socialising with people, business meetings and telephoning, business communication and organising and arranging meeting.</li> </ul>	Socialising, entertaining guests; Describing people; Routines; Home; Describing products ; Business lunches; Transport and city; Business trips; Work; Office.
Latvian (with preliminary knowledge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating at work and on everyday topics;</li> <li>- Develop skills and abilities of listening, reading speaking and writing;</li> <li>- Use the knowledge gained in socialising with people, business meetings and telephoning, business communication and organising and arranging meeting.</li> </ul>	Socialising, entertaining guests; Occupations, interests and home; Public institutions; Business trips; Describing people; Describing companies and responsibilities; Communication culture in public places; Business conversations over the telephone; Customer complaints.
Latvian (for beginners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating at work and on everyday topics;</li> <li>- Basic skills and abilities of listening, reading speaking and writing;</li> <li>- Use the knowledge gained in socialising with people, business meetings and telephoning, business communication and organising and arranging</li> </ul>	Socialising, entertaining guests; Describing people; Routines; Home; Describing products ; Business lunches; Transport and city; Business trips; Work; Office.

	meeting.	
Spanish (for beginners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating at work and on everyday topics;</li> <li>- Basic skills and abilities of listening, reading speaking and writing;</li> <li>- Use the knowledge gained in socialising with people, business meetings and telephoning, business communication and organising and arranging meeting.</li> </ul>	Socialising, entertaining guests; Describing people; Routines; Home; Describing products ; Business lunches; Transport and city; Business trips; Work; Office.
French (for beginners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating at work and on everyday topics;</li> <li>- Basic skills and abilities of listening, reading speaking and writing;</li> <li>- Use the knowledge gained in socialising with people, business meetings and telephoning, business communication and organising and arranging meeting.</li> </ul>	Formal and informal greetings, introductions; Orders, requests; Home, flat ; Hotel; Giving directions in the city; Private and business meetings; Travelling; Fashion; Meals.
English for Police work (for beginners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand specific terms and terminology connected to one's job;</li> <li>- Freely converse on everyday topics;</li> <li>- Understand the essence of problems and find solutions;</li> <li>- Carry out phone conversations in English;</li> <li>- Work with foreigners;</li> <li>- Address and resolve customer complaints.</li> </ul>	Socialising, entertaining guests; Occupations, interests and home; Describing people; Describing companies and responsibilities; Travelling; Communication culture in public places; Telephoning; Office; Labour law; Civil law; Criminal law; Law enforcement institutions and their functions; Human rights and international law; Constitutional law; Computer systems and database terminology.
English for Police work (with preliminary knowledge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand specific terms and terminology connected to one's job;</li> <li>- Freely converse on everyday topics;</li> <li>- Understand problems faced and</li> </ul>	Socialising, entertaining guests; Occupations, interests and home Describing people; Describing companies and responsibilities; Travelling;



	find solutions; - Carry out telephone conversations in English; - Work with foreigners; - Address and resolve customer complaints.	Communication culture in public places; Telephoning; Office; Labour law; Civil law; Criminal law; Law enforcement institutions and their functions; Human rights and international law; Constitutional law; Computer systems and database terminology.
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(<http://kursi.turiba.lv/valodas>)

The duration of the language learning programme „English Language for Police Work” for beginners as well as those with preliminary knowledge is 200 hours, the rest – 160h. The price for all programmes is 300 LVL.

#### **Other enterprises:**

Information regarding other enterprises that offer a variety of language learning courses in Latvia is summarised in the Table 2 below and these were found using the Google search engine listing the top 10 search results.

*Table 2*

#### *Language learning offer*

Name	Languages	Level	Length of the course Price	Homepage
Baltic Media Language Learning Centre	Spanish, Italian, P.Roger's Business English, English, German, Swedish, Norwegian, Latvian, Russian	Beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate	24 hours; approx. 150 LVL	<a href="http://www.valodukursi.lv/lat/valodu-kursi">http://www.valodukursi.lv/lat/valodu-kursi</a>
Training centre „New Horizons”	Group lessons – English, Russian, German, French, Italian, Norwegian, Swedish, Spanish. Online language learning in 24 different languages	All language levels	Average 48 hours	<a href="http://www.nh.lv/kursi">http://www.nh.lv/kursi</a>
Language learning centre (Public Service Language)	English, Spanish, Italian, German, Latvian, Russian, Portuguese,	Various language levels	3- 5 months; 115-312 LVL (1 lesson – from 3.50	<a href="http://www.vmc.lv/index.html">http://www.vmc.lv/index.html</a>

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Centre)	French		LVL)	
Language centre „Pygmalion”	English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Swedish	All language levels	50-120 academic hours, 1 academic hour (45 min) prices starting from 2.75 – 3.85 LVL	<a href="http://www.pygmalion.lv/lv/">http://www.pygmalion.lv/lv/</a>
Language centre „Baltic Languages”	English, Danish, French, Estonian, Italian, Russian, Lithuanian, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Finnish, Spanish, German, Swedish	With/without preliminary knowledge, intermediate, upper intermediate, advanced	No information	<a href="http://balticlanguages.lv/">http://balticlanguages.lv/</a>
„Skrivanek Baltic”	Corporate customers, English, German, Czech, Danish, French, Italian, Chinese, Russian, Latvian, Norwegian, Finnish, Spanish, Swedish	All language levels	105-240 LVL	<a href="http://www.skrivanek.lv/lv/">http://www.skrivanek.lv/lv/</a>
Education and language centre „Mirte”	English, French, Russian, Italian, Hebrew, Chinese, Latvian, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, German	With/without preliminary knowledge	30-64 academic hours; 165-228 LVL	<a href="http://www.mirte.lv/public/index.html">http://www.mirte.lv/public/index.html</a>
Language centre „Berlitz”	English, French, German, Italian, Spanish	Various levels	Starting from 69 LVL/month	<a href="http://www.berlitz.lv/?lng=lv">http://www.berlitz.lv/?lng=lv</a>
Goethe Institute	German	All language levels	Average 56 academic hours; 160 LVL	<a href="http://www.goethe.de/ins/lv/rig/lrn/lvindex.htm">http://www.goethe.de/ins/lv/rig/lrn/lvindex.htm</a>
Foreign language learning centre „Klass”	English, French, German, Russian	With/without preliminary knowledge	60 academic hours; 55 LVL	<a href="http://www.klass.lv/">http://www.klass.lv/</a>

### Sources

1. State Employment Agency homepage [www.nva.gov.lv](http://www.nva.gov.lv) [retrieved 14.03.2013]
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