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MEASURING ETHNOLINGUISTIC VITALITY OF THE LARGEST ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE BALTIC STATES (I)

This article presents the results of a large-scale quantitative study of the ethnolinguistic vitality of major ethnic groups in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and interprets the results for possible ethnic identity processes in the Baltic countries. Ethnolinguistic vitality is understood here as an ethnic group's potential for collective action. Vitality processes are considered short-term (one to five years) and intragenerational. Ethnic identity is understood here broadly as a collective identity that is shared by a group that is functioning or able to function as a society. Ethnic identity processes (segregation, assimilation and consolidation) are long-term (minimum 20 years) processes. The analysis revealed significant differences in the vitality of ethnic groups in the three countries. The vitalities of Estonians and Lithuanians are highest, while the Latvians' vitality is slightly lower. As for the Russian minorities, the vitality is highest in Latvia and lowest in Lithuania. In Estonia, the vitality of the Russian-speaking population is slightly lower than in Latvia, particularly in north-east Estonia, and it is quite low in rural areas and small settlements. The Poles in Lithuania and Latgalians in Latvia have the lowest vitalities. The results suggest a continuation of segregation of Russians in Estonia and Poles in Lithuania. Due to low intergroup discordance between Lithuanians and Russians, the Russian community in Lithuania is likely to assimilate, as are the Latgalians in Latvia. The Latvian-Russian situation resembles an unstable equilibrium: the vitality profiles of Latvians and Russians could lead either towards consolidation or separation.

Key words: identity, vitality, majority, minority, Baltic countries

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Introduction

Ethnolinguistic vitality "is that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations" (Giles, Bourhis, Taylor 1977, p. 308). It has been suggested that groups that have low vitality are likely to cease to exist as distinctive collectives, while those that have high vitality are likely to survive. Traditionally, ethnolinguistic vitality is divided into objective and subjective vitality (Bourhis et al. 1981). Objective vitality is determined by three structural variables: Demography, Institutional Support and Status (Giles et al. 1977) while subjective vitality is understood as "group members' subjective assessment of in-group/out-group vitality", which "may be as important in determining sociolinguistic and inter-ethnic behaviour as the group's objective vitality" (Harwood, Giles and Bourhis, 1994, p. 175). In this article, ethnolinguistic vitality is understood as a perception of groupness (see Ehala 2008, 2010a), together with emotional attachment to this group and readiness to act collectively as a group. Thus the approach is social-psychological in nature and close to traditional subjective vitality studies, although the framework is considerably extended.

As a social-psychological phenomenon, vitality is tightly connected with ethnic/linguistic identity. According to Omoniyi and White, "the sociolinguistics of identity focuses on the ways in which people position or construct themselves and are positioned or constructed by others in socio-cultural situations through the instrumentality of language and with reference to all the variables that comprise identity markers for each community." (Omoniyi and White, 2006, p. 1). In this article, we concur with Bendle (2002) that identity construction is an ongoing, lifelong project in which individuals constantly attempt to maintain a "sense of balance", which depends on the context in which they live. In the Baltic setting, micro-sociolinguistic factors (language aptitude, attitudes towards an official language and experience in studying it, an exposure to language policy matters, and knowledge of history) and macro-sociolinguistic factors (the prestige of the first and second languages, the language planning climate, attitudes between majority and minority language groups etc.) clearly influence identity processes and acculturation orientations.

The purpose of the present study is to analyse ethnic and linguistic af-

filiations and identity construction by the main ethnic groups in the Baltic States by analysing the results of a quantitative study of ethnolinguistic vitality, during which group members reflected on their ethnic and linguistic identities and inter-group relations in their countries of residence. The results disclosed different degrees of ethnolinguistic vitality amongst the communities in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, characterised by their variable perceptions of the groups and the respondents' own attachment to these groups.

The article is organized as follows. First, the theoretical background for ethnolinguistic vitality is formulated, along with a refined vitality model (see Ehala 2008, 2010a), which was used as the main theoretical framework. The article continues with an explanation of the sociolinguistic situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, presenting some general characteristics of ethnic groups in the Baltics. Then the methodology of the study is addressed. Subsequently in section 3.3, we present the vitality questionnaire and how the key elements are reflected in the questions. Moreover, we provide a detailed description on the approach for gathering the data. After that, the article presents the results of three quantitative surveys of the ethnolinguistic vitality of the main ethnic groups in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The results are described in a comparative way, in an effort to further our understanding of ethnolinguistic processes among Baltics' titular groups and minorities. As the empirical goal of the study is to provide a detailed account of the ethnolinguistic vitality of Russians as the largest ethnic minority group in Estonia in comparative perspective with other Baltic countries; and to reveal the relationships between the identity construction and vitality, the current article ends with the presentation of the clusters of the different groups of the Russian-speakers living in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that provided more substantial information of their acculturation orientations and identity construction.

The position of the Russian-speakers in post-Soviet Baltic countries falls into the conflicting and contested narratives. In Estonia, the share of Russians is about 25.5% while in Lithuania it is only 4.9%. Latvia has a significant share of Russian-speaking population: slightly fewer than 27.6%. Russian is spoken as the first language by ethnic Russians, as well as by many Ukrainians, Byelorussians and members of other ethnicities. According to the contemporary nationalizing discourses, a first language is the main boundary feature between titular groups, whose ethnic identity relies heavily on native fluency in Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian, and the rest.

The clusters revealed that the three Baltic Russian-speaking communities are not homogeneous in terms of ethnolinguistic vitality. Altogether,

five clusters with different vitality profiles emerged in Estonia and four were found among Latvian as well as Lithuanian Russian-speakers. The socio-demographic profiles of different clusters showed that age, educational and occupational profile, citizenship and place of residence have impacts on vitality and identity construction strategies.

This study is important for better understanding and more effective control of the inter-ethnic processes in Estonia and other Baltic countries: its results deepen understanding of how different public discourses influence vitality and to which extent these discourses find resonance in different social subgroups.

1. Measuring ethnolinguistic vitality: introduction the V-model

Ethnolinguistic vitality is a property "which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive collective within an intergroup setting". (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor 1977, p. 307) Although the concept of vitality is intuitively clear and has remained attractive for researchers, it is very hard to operationalise. Relying on the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979) and previous models of ethnolinguistic vitality (Giles, Bourhis & Taylor 1977; Sachdev & Bourhis 1993; Allard & Landry 1994; Landry, Allard & Henry 1996; Bourhis 2001), Ehala (2005, 2008, 2010a, 2010b) has developed a formal model of ethnolinguistic vitality that can be used to obtain directly comparable data from distinctive inter-ethnic contact situations – the V-model. This model specifies the structural relationships between its four key variables that affect the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups: (1) **p**erceived **s**trength **d**ifferential (**PSD**) between the in-group ("us") and the most prominent out-group ("them"); (2) the level of intergroup **d**iscordance (**D**); (3) perceived intergroup distance (**R**); and (4) the level of **u**tilitarianism (**U**) in the value system of the group studied.

All these factors are socio-psychological, and they reflect group members' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about their own group and the inter-ethnic relations in the setting they are living. The mathematical V-model is operationalised in a way that makes it possible to assess these factors on a scale, so that each respondent is characterised by a vitality score. By calculating the average score for the sample and/or finding subgroups with different vitality scores, it becomes possible to assess the vitality of a given group, i.e. its readiness to act as a collective entity in intergroup relations. Below we will characterise each of the subcomponents of the V-model in more detail.

1.1. Perceived strength differential (PSD)

The driving force behind language shift is the power difference between dominant and minority groups. Language and identity maintenance depends on the opportunities and rewards, real or symbolic (including positive social identity), that the competing groups can provide for their members. The sum of these factors can be called the perceived strength of the group.

However, for group vitality, the crucial factor is not perceived strength itself, but the perceived strength differential between the in-group and the most prominent out-group. The reason is that groups exist in their socio-historical settings and the perception of the strength of the "us" group depends on the relative strengths of the "them" group (see Figure 1).

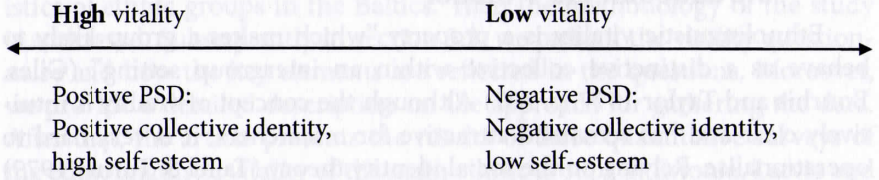

Figure 1. Interdependence between group vitality and the perceived strength of the groups

In general, if the **PSD** is small, the benefits from shifting one's group membership do not outweigh the emotional and social costs. The more the **PSD** is in favour of the out-group, the more beneficial it would seem to shift identity. Thus, provided that the influence of all other factors is zero, the **V** of the group would be equal to the differential of the perceived strengths ($\mathbf{S}_{we}$ and $\mathbf{S}_{they}$) of the minority (in our case, Russian-speaking) and majority (Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian) groups. Mathematically, this can be formulated as follows: $\mathbf{V} = \mathbf{PSD} = \mathbf{S}_{we} - \mathbf{S}_{they}$. If $V < 0$, then the group has low vitality; in other words, it has a low potential to act as a group, a condition that may lead to identity and language shift. If $V \geq 0$, then the group is vital, i.e. it is able to function as a group and to maintain its identity over time.

1.2. Intergroup discordance (D-factor)

Although **PSD** is the driving force behind identity and language shift, it is certainly affected by other factors that either hinder or enhance this tendency. One such factor is intergroup discordance (**D**). This is a complex factor that expresses the perceived illegitimacy of intergroup power relations, as well as distrust towards the dominant majority. Although legitimacy and distrust are clearly distinct concepts, they are interrelated. It is well known that some low-status groups tend to show out-group favouritism, i.e. a minority group members' tendency to see the dominant majority in a more positive light than his/her own group (Sachdev & Bourhis 1991), and that the perception of a more powerful group is dependent on the degree of the perceived legitimacy of their power (Zelditch 2001). This would imply that the more the intergroup power relations are perceived as legitimate by the low-status group, the more positive their perception of the high-status out-group is. Batalha, Akrami & Ekehammar (2007) offer empirical support for this hypothesis, showing how the dominant group with legitimate power is perceived as being more intelligent and responsible. There is also some empirical indication that the larger the perceived illegitimacy of the situation, the higher the level of distrust towards the dominant out-group: for Russian-speakers in Estonia, the correlation between perceptions of illegitimacy of the power position of Estonian-speakers and the extent of distrust towards them have a fairly solid correlation: $r = 0.368$ ($p < 0.01$) (Ehala & Zabrodskaja 2011, p. 236). Thus, provided that there is typically a positive correlation between perceptions of illegitimacy and distrust, it would be reasonable to calculate the D-factor as the mean value of these two factors.

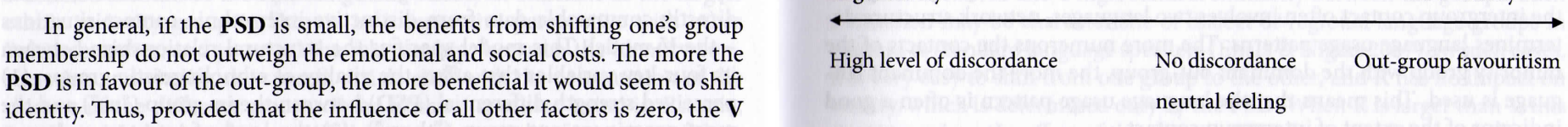

Figure 2. Interdependence between group vitality and intergroup discordance

The relationship between the D-factor and the other components of V needs to be specified, too. It would be reasonable to assume that the larger the negative **PSD** and the lower the value of **D** (i.e. the more legitimate the situation is considered, and the more trustful the attitudes towards the out-group are), the lower the vitality (see Figure 2). In such a situation, the low-status group is unlikely to challenge the existing power relations, as it feels too weak and perceives its low status as legitimate. The smaller the negative **PSD** and/or the higher **D**, the higher the vitality, as the low-status group has both the motivation (to establish justice) and the perceived strength

to change the power relations. When the **D-factor** is incorporated, the **V** formula takes the following form: $\mathbf{V} = ((S_{we} - S_{they}) + \mathbf{D}$.

It is reasonable to assume that in a case where there is neither perceived discordance towards the out-group nor perceived out-group favouritism, the value of **D** would be equal to zero, i.e. it would not affect the value of **V**. The higher the positive value of **D**, the more it will reduce the negative value of **PSD**, leading to higher values of **V**. If **D** has a negative value (indicating out-group favouritism), it will increase the negative value of **PSD**, leading to lower values of **V**.

1.3. Intergroup distance (R)

Intergroup distance (R) relates to the extent of the intergroup contact and the distinctiveness of features characterizing the group. The resistance to intergroup contact expresses a group's disposition to maintain its in-group networks, while the environment offers opportunities for the development of a different network that unavoidably weakens the heritage network (Landry, Allard & Henry 1996). Sanders (2002) discusses several cases where ethnic entrepreneurship was able to provide resources for the community, thus reducing the need for contacts with outside communities. Thus, a disposition to maintain segregative minority networks would enhance the **V** of the group, despite a large negative **PSD**.

The network structure, in turn, is heavily related to language usage: as the intergroup contact often involves two languages, network structure determines language usage patterns. The more numerous the contacts of the minority group with the dominant out-group, the more the dominant language is used. This means that the language usage pattern is often a good indicator of the extent of intergroup contact.

Besides language, intergroup distance can also be marked by other features, such as religion and other cultural practices (Myhill 2003), as well as racial features. Sanders (2002, p. 342) refers to a number of studies indicating the inhibitory effect that individuals' distinctive racial features have on their choice of possible ethnic identities. For example, dark-skinned West Indian children living in New York City have severely limited options with regard to ethnic identity, as they are persistently identified as African Americans (Waters 1994). Also, second-generation Asian Indians with dark skin are not able to avoid racial marginality in the United States (Rajagopal 2000), whereas lighter-skinned groups, particularly biracial children who have one Asian parent, have more choices (Xie & Goyette 1997).

Ultimately, the intergroup distance is dependent on the symbolic and

discursive factors that establish the norms concerning the acceptability, extent and nature of intergroup contacts; this is also related to ethnic distinctiveness (see Figure 3).

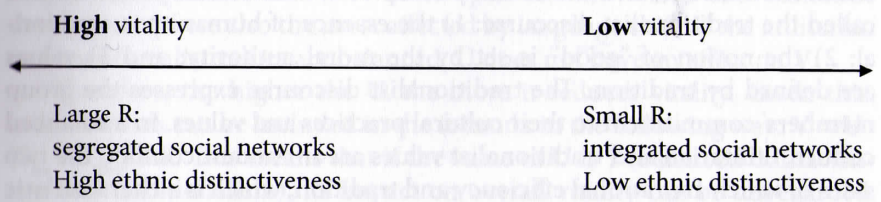

Figure 3. Interdependence between group vitality and intergroup distance

Thus, all factors being equal, the less intergroup contact takes place and the more distinct the groups appear, i.e. the larger the intergroup distance, the higher the **V** of the group. Mathematically, the relationship of intergroup distance to the other factors can be expressed as: $\mathbf{V} = ((S_{we} - S_{they}) + \mathbf{D}) / \mathbf{R}$.

Let us assume that the minimal value for **R** is 1. This would correspond to the minimal intergroup distance, both in terms of social network and cultural distinctiveness. It would mean a very strong interconnectedness of social networks and a high cultural similarity between the groups. Such a situation may be characteristic of dialect or regional language groups in relation to standard language speakers (Ehala & Niglas 2007). In such cases, it is very easy to shift from one group to the other, and **R** has no impact on vitality, which is determined only by the **PSD**. When **R** is larger than 1, this starts to reduce the effect of the negative **PSD**, because of the costs that are associated with the shift from one group to another. Thus, the larger **R** gets, the closer **V** gets to zero, i.e. the point where the benefits of identity shift are cancelled out by the costs. At this point, there would be no motivation for identity shift by the minority group members, and thus the minority group would remain sustainable.

1.4. Unilitarianism (U)

U is a value system that justifies pragmatic and economically beneficial courses of action. Scollon & Scollon (1995, p. 116) describe the basic principles of utilitarian discourse as follows: 1) humans are defined as rational economic entities, 2) "good" is defined as that which will provide the

greatest happiness to the greatest number, and 3) values are established by statistical (i.e. quantitative) means.

Each culture, though, functions as an interplay of rational and emotional motivations, and utilitarian principles are balanced by what can be called the traditionalist discourse: 1) the essence of humanity is emotional; 2) the notion of "good" is set by the moral authority; and 3) values are defined by tradition. The traditionalist discourse expresses the group members' commitment to their cultural practices and values. In a balanced culture, utilitarian and traditionalist values are in modest conflict, the two sides of which are rational efficiency and tradition, which is a characteristic of many well-functioning societies. This opposition is well recognized by the major theories of human values, such as Schwartz (1992, 2006) and Inglehart & Welzel (2005), although all authors use their own terminology.

As the utilitarian principles are discursive, different groups may vary in respect to the salience of the utilitarian and traditionalist values in their culture. Although the level of utilitarianism and traditionalism can form different combinations (see Ehala 2012), two of them are directly relevant to language and identity maintenance. Groups which are very low in utilitarianism while holding strongly traditionalist values tend to be highly committed to their social identity (see Figure 4). For example, some religious groups (such as the Amish or the Russian Old Believers in Latvia and Estonia[a]) are so traditionalist that they hardly assimilate at all, despite their supposedly large negative **PSD** with the mainstream society. This value configuration would support language and identity maintenance.

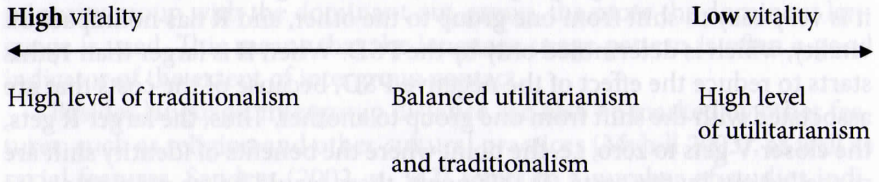

Figure 4. Interdependence between group vitality and group value system

If the group tends towards utilitarian values while traditional values are disfavoured, the group members are more predisposed to abandon heritage traditions, as maintaining them seems costly, meaningless and/or backward. Such a value configuration would reduce **V**. For example, Russell (2000) reports the case of the New Guinean Gapun, whose speakers adhere

to a value system oriented towards inter-individual competition, which promotes a shift towards Tok Pisin as a tool to raise one's status in Gapun society. Lewis's (Lewis 2000, p. 95) analysis shows that those Guatemalan Mayan communities that were more open to innovations and economic development were also the most affected by language shift. If the utilitarian and traditionalist values are balanced, U does not have an effect on **V**.

Therefore, the higher the U, the more it reduces vitality. Given this, utilitarianism can be included in the formula in the following way: $\mathbf{V} = \mathbf{U} \cdot (\mathbf{S}_{we} - \mathbf{S}_{they}) / \mathbf{R}$. This means that if the value of **U** is 1 (balanced utilitarianism and traditionalism), its impact on overall vitality can be disregarded. If the value of **U** falls below 1, it starts to reduce the negative value of **PSD**. When **U** reaches 0, the whole equation becomes equal to 0, meaning that the group is so traditional that it has no inclination for identity shift towards the majority. If the value of **U** is greater than 1, the effects of **PSD** start to increase, causing the **V** value to drop.

It must be noted, however, that language shift is not always connected to a high level of utilitarianism. As Zoumpalidis (2013) shows, the Pontic Greek community is undergoing a shift to Russian, yet the community is quite traditional in other aspects of their culture and maintains its identity well. This is often the case with communities whose heritage language is not one of its core values (see Smolicz 1981). Thus it is more appropriate to say that high traditionalism favours identity maintenance in general and if language is one of the core values it is also maintained.

In some circumstances, utilitarianism can also be beneficial for ethnic minority maintenance, but only in cases where the language is spoken by a majority in another prominent country. For example, Pöyhönen (2013) reports that the Finnish language has become very popular in north-western Russia, which helps the Ingerian community to retain their lost language competency. The same appears to be the case with Russian minorities in the Baltic countries, where Russian can be maintained even on utilitarian grounds as it is certainly a useful language in the region.

In sum, there are four vitality factors: perceived strength differential (PSD), intergroup discordance (D), intergroup distance (R), and traditionalism/utilitarianism (U). By measuring these factors, we can draw a vitality profile of a group. This profile might help to predict the group's inter-ethnic behaviour and acculturation orientations.

2. Sociolinguistic situation in the Baltic states

The societies of the Baltic countries provide an excellent opportunity for a comparative study because they share a number of important similarities. All these countries have Russian-speaking communities that acquired their minority status after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The shared historical experience makes also the majority ethnic groups well comparable.

It should be noted that even during the first period of independence Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were relatively multicultural and multilingual (see Table 1).

Table 1. The composition of the population (according to the censuses)

Estonia in 1934		Latvia in 1935		Lithuania in 1923	
Estonians (992 520)	88.1%	Latvians (1 905 900)	77.0%	Lithuanians (1 701 900)	84.2%
Russians	8.2%	Russians	8.8%	Russians	2.5%
Germans	1.5%	Germans	3.3%	Poles	3.3%
Jews	0.4%	Jews	4.9%	Jews	7.6%

In Estonia, at the beginning of the 20th century, there existed a concept of "kolm kohalikku keelt" ["three local languages"] (Estonian, German and Russian). Proficiency in the three local languages was an advantage for a person whose profession required communication with clients. This did not imply a full command of the languages but rather a functional bilingualism, i.e. an ability to understand and communicate in rather narrow domains. The phenomenon continued in the Republic of Estonia up to the first Soviet occupation (1940-1941). This is illustrated by job announcements: "Needed: a girl knowing the three local languages and able to type"; "Polite, healthy young man, who knows the three local languages, needs any job"; "Woman looking for any kind of work, knows the three local languages" (Ariste 1981, p. 33-34).

During the Soviet times, Russian-speaking residents of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania mostly remained monolingual and did not integrate with the titular nations. The independence of Lithuania was restored *de facto* in 1990 and in Estonia and Latvia in 1991. The languages of the titular nations became the only official languages in these countries. As a result, the official language knowledge level among Russian-speakers has increased from 37.5% in 1989 to 66% in 2001 in Lithuania, from 14% in 1989 to 44.5% in 2000 in Estonia, and from 22.2% in 1989 to 50% in 2000 in Latvia (Population and Housing Census Data). Although census data reflect the rather subjective point of view of the informant about his or her knowledge of the official language, they do suggest a very-close-to-reality representation of the language situation.

2.1. General characteristics of ethnic groups in the Baltics

Vitality is a complex combination of attitudes, which although they reflect the sustainability of the ethnic group do not always reflect it objectively. The sustainability of ethnic groups was assessed by objective parameters. With regard to demographics, absolute values, the actual *proportions* of each *group in the population* and its dispersion in the territory, are given. Cultural indicators include the presence of education and its scale, mass media in the native language and their diversity, as well as the diversity of local cultural life and its overall level. The economic context is described through the evaluation of the welfare of group members, and the stability of the group's ethnic economy and of the political organization. Next, we present an overview of these characteristics of the ethnicities in the Baltic countries to contextualize the results of the vitality study.

In regard to ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and members of a number of other ethnicities in the territory of the Soviet Union who settled in the Baltic countries during the Soviet period, their dominant language is Russian, and they may have constructed some sense of a common-language-based identity in which the Soviet element has a substantial role. In this sense, these communities show similar identity processes, which are characterised in detail by Nikiporets-Takigawa (2013): Victory Day has become a strong uniting symbol, with its Soviet nostalgia for several other Soviet time phenomena. As this common identity is constructed mainly by means of the Russian language, we call these groups Russian-speaking communities without distinguishing the share of different ethnic backgrounds in them.

2.1.1. Estonia

According to the 2011 census, there are 1.29 million people in Estonia. In our study, Estonians and Russian-speakers participated. Although the latter included, along with Russians, representatives of many other nationalities, from the perspective of our goals it is better not to divide them into nationalities (whose share in the country's population is extremely small: Russians constitute 26%, then Ukrainians 2%, and Belarusians 1%). For greater clarity, the comparison is presented in Table 2, followed by a short summary.

Table 2. General characteristics of the two major ethnic groups in Estonia

	Estonians	Russians (Russian-speakers)
Population size	889,000 people	384,000 people
Percentage	69%	29%
Geographical distribution	2% live in Ida-Virumaa, 215 000 (23%) in Tallinn, and 75% in other areas of Estonia with high ethnic density	130 000 (33%) in Ida-Virumaa with high ethnic density, 185 000 (47%) in Tallinn, and 20% in other areas
Education	Education in the native language at all levels and in all areas at a high level	In the native language, basic and partly secondary education, higher education exists only in a few specialities
Mass media	A wide choice of print, electronic and audiovisual media in the native language	The choice of local print, electronic and audiovisual media in the native language is scanty; however, many Russian Federation sources are accessible
Cultural life	Broad and rich cultural life	Local cultural life in the mother tongue is very limited
Material prosperity	Higher incomes than the average in the country	Lower incomes compared to the average in the country
Economic role	In the Estonian economy, decisive	In the Estonian economy, modest, with the exception of Ida-Viru where substantial
Political activity	Politically well-organized	Politically poorly organized

Summarizing, we can say that the share of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia is high, and they live very compactly: only 20% are scattered in Estonian-speaking areas. At the same time, in Ida-Viru County, where the density of the Russian-speaking population is extremely high, only a third of the Russians live, but this region is economically weaker than the national average. Although education to the end of secondary

school is in Russian, we should note that now Russian-language schools are being actively transitioned to partial Estonian-language instruction in the upper secondary level. As for the local cultural life, it is fairly poor in comparison with Russia. Thus, despite the fact that the demographics of the Russian community are quite good, economic weakness does not allow the community to be culturally and politically active.

2.1.2. Latvia

According to the 2011 census, the population of Latvia was 2 067 000 people. Drawing a comparison between the major ethnic groups in Latvia (see Table 3, data from the census and Joma & Meržs 2008; Marten et al. 2009), we consider the Latgalian Latvians and Latvians as a single nation. This is done for a more adequate comparison as Latgalian Latvians themselves consider themselves to be primarily Latvians. However, the share of Latgalian Latvians is calculated as a proportion of the rest of the population, so the percentages added together do not equal 100%. Thus, the identity of Latgalian Latvians is a sub-identity of Latvian identity, i.e. a Latvian regional identity, so it is logical to consider these two groups together when calculating the share of Russian-speakers relative to Latvians. At the same time, Latgalian Latvians themselves still want to be seen separately from the rest of the Latvians. Therefore, in evaluating vitality of Latgalian Latvians, we consider the two groups separately.

Table 3. General characteristics of the major ethnic groups in Latvia

	Latvians (together with Latgalian Latvians)	Russians (Russian-speakers)	Latgalian Latvians
Population size	1.284 million	676,000 people	140,000 people
Percentage	62.1%	33%	7%
Geographical distribution	In Riga, in the minority (42%), also in Daugavpils (15%) and Rēzekne (45%); dominate in small towns and rural areas	Russian-speaking community is dominant in the two largest cities of Latvia: 387 000 (47%) live in Riga (55% of city population), 88 000 (11 %) live in Daugavpils (85% of city population)	About 60 000 live in the Latgale region (40% of its population). The rest are scattered in other parts of Latvia.

Education	Education in the native language at all levels and in all areas at a high level	In the native language basic and partly secondary education, higher education in many specialities	Mother tongue education is practically absent; Latgalian is taught as a separate subject in seven schools in Latgale.
Mass media	A wide choice of print, electronic and audiovisual media in the native language	Good selection of printed, electronic and audiovisual information in the native language. Media channels from Russia	Just one newspaper and a half-hour radio program once a week
Cultural life	Broad and rich cultural life	Local cultural life in the mother tongue is significant	Activities and religious services are organised
Material prosperity	Average	Above average	Below average
Economic role	Average	Significant	Below average
Political maturity	Politically well-organized	Politically well-organized	Narrow circle of activists

The Latvian Russian-speaking community is large in absolute numbers, constitutes more than one-third of the Latvian population and dominates in the capital and major cities. In addition, the Russian-speakers in Latvia are quite active economically and their standard of living is above average. All of this supports a strong cultural and political organization. Given these figures, it can be argued that, in terms of the Russian-speaking community, we are dealing with a strong group, which by its size and power is only slightly weaker than Latvians. Latvians dominate numerically but most of them live in rural areas and they are weaker economically than the leading urban lifestyle Russian community. This balance of power has allowed the Russian minority to strengthen its presence in public policy.

Latgalian Latvians are a relatively small community. In addition, they are scattered throughout the country, being in the minority even in their historical homeland. The cultural and economic role of Latgalian Latvians is very modest. Objective indicators show that their language is under considerable threat. The cultural identity of Latgalian Latvians is better maintained because it is associated with the Catholic Church.

2.1.3. Lithuania

According to the 2011 census, there are 3.05 million people in Lithuania (see Table 4; data for Lithuania are taken from Wikipedia and overview publications by Hogan-Brun et al. 2009).

Table 4. General characteristics of the major ethnic groups in Lithuania

	Lithuanians	**Russians (Russian-speakers)**	**Poles**
Population size	2,583,000 people	201,000 people	183,000 people
Percentage	85%	7%	6%
Geographical distribution	Lithuanians prevail in most of the country, except in the south-east and south (where they constitute 40%). In Vilnius, Lithuanians constitute 59%	About 108,000 Russian-speaking people live in Vilnius, where they constitute 20% of the urban population. In Visaginas there are 23,000 Russians (75% of urban population)	More than half of Poles live in rural areas. In the vicinity of Vilnius 61%, and in Šalčininkų region 78%. Vilnius is home to around 100,000 Poles, who constitute 19% of its population.
Education	Education in the native language at all levels and in all areas at a high level	While basic education in their native language is available, parents prefer schools with Lithuanian as the language of instruction.	Basic education in the mother tongue is guaranteed. Limited access to higher education in the native language
Mass media	A wide choice of print, electronic and audiovisual media in the native language	Print media and radio programmes in the native language; Russian Federation TV channels are widely available	Print media and radio stations in the native language; Polish TV channels are available
Cultural life	Broad and rich cultural life	Limited choice of local cultural life in the native language	Limited choice of local cultural life in the native language
Material prosperity	Average	Below average	Below average
Economic role	Significant	Below average	Below average
Political maturity	Politically well organised	Politically non-organised	Politically organised

In terms of ethnic composition, Lithuania is the most homogeneous of the Baltic countries: the share of the titular nation is the largest, and no minority exceeds 10 percent of the population. However, south-east and southern Lithuania, including the capital, are fairly multi-ethnic. Rural areas in the vicinity of Vilnius are populated by Polish-speakers, a group which is considerable in size and lives quite compactly, promoting the stability of this group. The Russian-speaking community, on the contrary, is widely scattered; the biggest part lives in Vilnius, making up one-fifth of the inhabitants. Though Russian-speaking mass media is easily accessible in Lithuania and schools with Russian as a language of instruction do exist, the majority of the Russian-speakers prefer Lithuanian schools and cultural life. The political organization of Russians is very weak, in contrast to the Poles, with their high political and cultural unity.

To summarize, the titular ethnic groups of the Baltic States are sustainable ethnolinguistically, although some difficulties with cultural and political domination are encountered by Latvians. Among the Russian-speaking communities, the largest lives in Latvia and has considerable cultural, economic and linguistic influence in the country. The second largest Russian-speaking community lives in Estonia, but both economically and politically it is much weaker than in Latvia. At the same time, it is quite compactly settled, ensuring its sustainability. The number of Russian-speakers in Lithuania is lower, they are more dispersed across the country and they are considerably weaker than the Estonian Russians. Considering the historical roots and compact residence of Poles in Vilnius and its vicinity, it is possible to consider the Polish community of Lithuania stronger than the local Russian one, though it is smaller. The small size is compensated for by the high level of political and cultural self-organisation. Among the Baltic minorities under consideration, the weakest are, undoubtedly, the Latgalian Latvians, because the community is small, scattered around the country and completely bilingual.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Measuring vitality

Although the concept of vitality is understood quite well at an intuitive level, research in the field has still not led to the creation of widely accepted uniform measurements of vitality. There are various reasons for this.

The primary problems arise, certainly, because the social phenomena are extremely varied and difficult to measure. Undoubtedly, the vitality of

groups is influenced by various economic, demographic, historico-cultural and political factors. At the same time, there is no reliable method for measuring the economic, cultural, political and demographic power of these groups. These circumstances can be described in detail, but it is still very difficult to express comparative results of research. It is difficult to check the validity of models in different language environments.

The second methodological problem is connected with the fact that objective factors influence the vitality of a group and its assimilation is only indirect, and this influence does not always lend itself to unequivocal interpretation. The reason is that, strictly speaking, the phenomenon of language and identity shift occurs not at the group level, but at the level of the individual. What language is used in speaking with children, and what language is used in their education depend primarily on individual beliefs and the decisions made on the basis of those beliefs, instead of on the economic, cultural and other forces working on the group as a whole. Considering the fact that language shift is a result of the language behaviour of certain people, the objective sustainability of a group is not as important as the individual opinions of the group members regarding the group's sustainability. These opinions are formed as a result of communication and are expressed by individuals.

Therefore, it is expedient to measure the vitality of a group first of all through the measurement of the attitudes and beliefs of its members. Such a technique is based on the assumption that if the group members consider their group unpromising or unattractive as a collective identity, they seek to abandon it, i.e. by a shift in language or a distancing of themselves from the group by other means. Therefore, what determines language shift is the individual subjective perception of the situation, not how the situation objectively appears to a neutral observer.

Measurement of subjective assessment and attitudes makes it possible to create a tool by means of which it is possible to collect easily comparable data in very different social environments. Its main assumption is that while the objective reality undeniably influences group behaviour, its influence is mediated by its symbolic representations in public and private discourses. These socially shared representations can be formalised on universal scales of human cognition such as weak – strong, similar – dissimilar, high – low. These scales can be transformed to quantitatively measurable mathematical scales that enable uniform quantitative comparison over different inter-ethnic situations.

One of the best research methods that meet these conditions is the Likert scale questionnaire, which offers a range of responses (Carrett et al.

2003). This approach has also been used in classic studies on subjective vitality (Bourhis et al. 1981; Abrams et al. 2009). To reduce possible errors caused by formulations of single questions, it was decided to measure each model component by using thematic groups of questions, comprised of ten questions each. The reliability of such a thematic group can be checked by means of statistical methods that strengthen the reliability of the theoretical propositions that underlie the formulation of the questions. Basically, if the questions whose content reflects the concepts they are based on show high correlation among themselves, it is possible to argue with confidence that all these questions express the attitudes of the respondents to more general phenomena underlying the questions themselves. For a more detailed overview of the choice of questions see Ehala (2008).

3.2. Sampling

To conduct an anonymous written survey, the sample was assembled according to where the possible informants lived. The samples of the surveys were composed so as to reflect the sociolinguistic diversity of regions.

In Estonia, the sample consisted of 460 Russian-speakers and 538 Estonians, **compiled** by a professional survey company in five regions with different concentrations of sociolinguistic communities (see Table 5). The informants had different socio-demographic backgrounds (e.g. age, education, social status and knowledge of the state language).

Table 5. The sample in Estonia

Regional concentration of sociolinguistic communities	Proportion of Russian-speakers in the area (%)	No. of Russian-speaking respondents	No. of Estonian respondents
Rural settlements	1-10	50	147
Towns and settlements	10-20	70	132
Western Tallinn	30–50	70	126
Eastern Tallinn	50–80	120	82
Towns in eastern Estonia	80–100	150	51
Total		460	538

In Latvia, the sample consisted of 406 Russian-speakers, 419 Latvians and 200 Latgalian Latvians, compiled by a professional survey company in five regions with different concentrations of sociolinguistic communities (see Table 6). The informants had different socio-demographic backgrounds (e.g. age, education, social status and knowledge of the state language).

Table 6. The sample in Latvia

Regional concentration of sociolinguistic communities	Proportion of ethnic groups in the area (%)	No. of Russian-speaking respondents	No. of Latvian respondents	No. of Latgalian Latvian respondents
Daugavpils	85 Russian-speakers	98	53	
Riga	50 Russian-speakers	152	150	
Rēzekne	45 Latvians + Latgalian Latvians 55 Russian-speakers	50	50	100
Balvi	78 Latvians + Latgalian Latvians	3	48	100
Cesis and rural regions (Valmieras rajons, Madonas rajons, Cēsu rajons)	90 Latvians 90 Latvians	51 52	50 68	
Total		406	419	200

In Lithuania, the sample consisted of 230 Russian-speakers, 270 Poles and 400 Lithuanians, **compiled** by a professional survey company in five regions with different concentrations of sociolinguistic communities (see Table 7). The informants had different socio-demographic backgrounds (e.g. age, education, social status and knowledge of the state language).

Table 7. The sample in Lithuania

Regional concentration of sociolinguistic communities	Proportion of ethnic groups in the area (%)	No. of Russian-speaking respondents	No. of Lithuanian respondents	No. of Polish respondents
Vilnius	19 Poles 14 Russians	60	110	130
Vilnius region	61 Poles 8 Russians		50	140
Visaginas	56 Russians 9 Poles	50	50	
Klaipėda	28 Russians 5 Poles	60	80	
Kaunas	4 Russians 0.4 Poles	60	110	
Total		230	400	270

The sociodemographic backgrounds of the informants (e.g. gender, age, education, family income) are presented in Table 8:

Table 8. Sociodemographic descriptors of the samples (%)

		Estonia		Latvia			Lithuania		
		Esto-nians	Russ-ians	Lat-vians	Russ-ians	Latgalian Latvians	Lithuanians	Russians	Polish
Gender	Male	45	41	34	40	40	49	46	50
	Female	55	59	66	60	60	51	54	50
Age	<25	19	17	23	21	20	25	20	17
	25–34	18	18	24	21	21	23	9	15
	35–49	27	29	23	29	26	26	23	23
	50–64	26	27	21	22	19	20	33	27
	>65	10	9	8	7	14	16	15	18
Education	< Basic	3	4	2	1	1	1	2	2
	Basic	13	11	8	8	12	13	8	15
	Secondary	25	23	19	23	23	32	33	39
	Vocational Secondary	30	41	28	21	44	25	33	29
	Vocational Higher	8	6	16	15	17	N/A	N/A	N/A
	University	21	15	28	32	3	30	24	14
Income	much below average	10	14	16	24	9	11	19	18
	slightly below average	20	23	21	21	16	24	22	29
	average	54	55	53	41	59	53	51	45
	slightly above average	13	8	10	12	15	10	8	6
	much above average	2	0	0	2	1	2	0	2

The questionnaires were presented in the state language (Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian) and Russian for the participants to choose the preferred one. There were no Polish or Latgalian Latvian versions. Next, we introduce the principles of composing a questionnaire and the general structure of its subsections.

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 14.0.

3.3. General commentary to the vitality questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into six conceptual groups of questions: R1, R2, G1, G2, U and D, each section containing 10 items. All groups of questions are tuned in pilot studies so that to achieve acceptable Cronbach alpha levels (all above 0.7 in the Estonian setting). This allows the summary indexes to be calculated for each conceptual group as the mean value for all individual items. However the individual items can, of course, be used for descriptive purposes.

The questionnaire also contains 14 questions pertaining to the sociodemographic background information about the respondents. A short outline of the conceptual groups is provided below, for a more detailed account see Ehala (2010). In Appendix, guidelines for questionnaire construction are provided for each conceptual group.

3.3.1. Section R – intergroup distance

Intergroup distance is the sum of language usage, racial, religious and cultural differences between the two groups, as perceived by the group members. The larger the intergroup distance, the more difficult it would be to shift one's group membership. Thus, other factors being equal, the vital-

ity of the group is the higher the larger is the perceived distance between the groups, i.e. the more distinct they appear.

Intergroup distance is measured on two dimensions: linguistically (items R1–R10) and culturally (R11–R20). For measuring linguistic distance the individual network of linguistic contacts questionnaire is adapted from Landry et al. (1994). The cultural distance items are original.

3.3.2. Sections G1 and G2 – perceived strength differential

In intergroup settings people compare their in-group (G_1) with the prominent out-group (G_2) with respect to their cultural, political, economic and demographic strength. Arguably, a large difference between the strengths of the minority and majority groups boosts language shift.

There are 20 questions in this section, adapted from the Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality Questionnaire (Bourhis et al. 1981) which is still often used in vitality research. The G1 questions measure the strength of the majority (Y) and G2 questions the strength of the minority (X).

In our research we calculate the summary index for both G1 and G2, but the individual items can also be used for descriptive purposes.

3.3.3. Section U – Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is a broad understanding that people act as it is economically most useful for them (Scollon and Scollon 1995). The utilitarian principles are balanced by the traditionalism discourse that relies on emotional attachment of a person to his important others and traditions. The higher is utilitarianism in a low status group, the more likely it is to assimilate as the members opt easily for other more rewarding social identities. Very traditional groups (like Amish), however, remain vital despite large cultural mass differences with prominent out-groups.

Utilitarianism is measured by 10 original items, five of which address utilitarianism and five of which express traditionalism. In our research we use Utilitarianism index which is the differential between utilitarianism items mean and traditionalism items mean.

3.3.4. Section D – Discordance

Tajfel and Turner (1979) argue that if the low status of the in-group is perceived to be legitimate, the members of such group are more likely to abandon their membership. If the situation is perceived illegitimate, the members could be more prone to fight collectively for improvement. Perceived illegitimacy is the main factor that contributes to the discordance (D) between groups. There are other contributing factors too, such as stigmatization, discrimination, historical injustices, competition over resources, and inter-group violence. The higher is the level of perceived discordance the less likely is assimilation between groups. The discordance is measured by 10 items, of which four measures the legitimacy of the intergroup power relations and six the level of intergroup aversion. In our research we use the summary index for D.

With the methodological discussions in mind, we now turn to the presentation of the results for the current research as well as methodological issues regarding the questionnaires for the largest ethnic groups in the Baltic countries.

(To be Continued in the Next Issue)

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Endnotes

1 The Old Believers (*starovery* or *staroobriadtsy*) abandoned the Russian Orthodox Church after 1666-1667 in protest against the church reforms introduced by Patriarch Nikon; in order to escape from religious persecution in Russia, they settled on the western coast of Lake Peipus in Estonia.

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NATIONAL IDENTITY: SOME CUES FROM ISAIAH BERLIN

The article deals with the problems of nationalism as reflected in the works of the celebrated Riga-born liberal thinker Isaiah Berlin. Berlin`s subtle analysis of the national consciousness is discussed by way of evaluating of his assessment of the legacy of J.G. Herder and J.G. Hamann ( both associated with Riga), as well as by way of accentuating of Berlin`s distinction between „nationalism as a state of mind" and „nationalism as a mere demonstration of national sentiment". It is upheld that nationalism is not a monolithic phenomenon, and is to be viewed as being susceptible to the same type of perversion, that Berlin attributes to the notion of liberty in his celebrated positive/negative liberty distinction

Key words: Isaiah Berlin, nationalism, national sentiment, full-blown aggressive nationalism, Latvian national consciousness

When discussing the issues of national identity in a democratic, multi-ethnic set-up, one is bound to become confronted with the liberalism *versus* nationalism dilemma. Liberalism, according, to common definition, is concerned with the basic rights of an individual, whereas nationalism presupposes collectively or tribally orientated attitudes.

This dilemma has manifested itself since the beginning of the Modern

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