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of the Republic of Lithuania,
Vilnius**

Language Education Policy Profile

2003/2004

PART I: Strategy of teaching Lithuanian language at general education school (2004–2009)

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PART I: Strategy of teaching Lithuanian language at general education school (2004–2009)

1. Introduction

Under the Official Language Law of the Republic of Lithuania, the Education Law, the Laws of National Minorities and their supporting documents there have been created the basics of language legal protection and development. However, the society needs, the official use of the language, the circumstances brought about by globalization and integration into EU influence the use of the Lithuanian language in the country and its cultivation at schools of general education.

The necessity to adopt the strategy of Lithuanian language teaching at schools of general education is conditioned by the changes in the situation of the Lithuanian language observed since Lithuania regained independence and in the attitude towards the Lithuanian language both within the society and at schools of general education. In the situation when Lithuania starts integrating into the European structures, it is necessary to emphasize the country's efforts of retaining and developing the use of the official Lithuanian language in all domains of public life and today's need for people to know as many foreign languages as possible, at least one of them being the language of neighbouring countries. In the process of creating the competitive and know-how based economy in Lithuania, as well as in the entire European Union, the foreign languages could contribute to the achievement of this goal through the enhancement of cognitive native language and foreign languages skills.

The prevailing attitude in Europe is that it is necessary to retain the diversity of languages and that protection and enshrinement of national languages should be decided upon by each state. The use of languages has a significant influence upon the economic and social factors, which are more favourable for the so-called international communication languages; therefore, there should be put enough focus on the consolidation of native language status as well as on the use and teaching of the Lithuanian language.

The development trends of the official Lithuanian language are defined in 'The guidelines of official language policy in 2003–2008', approved under LRS Decision No. IX-1595 of June 3, 2003, while the strategy of teaching the Lithuanian language at schools of general education elaborates the official policy in each respective area.

The changes and new factors currently influencing the situation of the Lithuanian language at school and outside its boundaries make part of more general changes and factors, having effect on the overall humanistic education and the existing situation of common and national culture. Therefore, in preparing the strategy of teaching the Lithuanian language at general education schools there was taken into account the integral nature and mission of this study subject, the new trends and situation of literary as well as general cultural and humanistic education in Lithuania and at schools of Europe.

2. Strategy objectives and goals

The objectives of strategy for teaching the Lithuanian language at schools of general education are to evaluate the current situation of the Lithuanian language as a study subject at general

education schools and to foresee the trends of Lithuanian language teaching in the society undergoing changes.

Strategy goals:

- to define the most critical problems in the area of Lithuanian language teaching and to foresee the ways how to solve them;
- to present proposals on how to specify the status of the Lithuanian language in documents regulating the area of education;
- to provide for directions, stages and principles for harmonizing teaching of the Lithuanian language.

3. Position and evaluation of the Lithuanian language as a study subject

The use of the Lithuanian language at school of general education is legalized by the Laws of the Official Lithuanian Language, Education and National Minorities. The content of Lithuanian language teaching is defined in the following documents:

General Curriculum Framework of General Education Schools and Education Standards (General Curriculum Framework of General Education Schools and Education Standards. XI–XII forms). Order No. 1465 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, dated August 21, 2002; General Curriculum Framework and Education Standards of preschool, primary and basic education. Order No. 1147 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, dated June 24, 2002 and Order No. ISAK-1015 of July 9, 2003).

1. General education plans (General Education Plans, 2003–2005, Order No. 408 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, dated March 31, 2003).

The Lithuanian language is the language of the school community, while at schools of national minorities it is presented as the official language representing a tool necessary for the facilitation of social integration. It is conditioned by the fact that all study subjects are taught in the Lithuanian language (except foreign languages); therefore, the Lithuanian language at school of general education plays a double role: it both represents a study subject and an instrument for learning other subjects. At schools of national minorities it can be used for teaching other subjects.

The Lithuanian language is a compulsory discipline and its course is included into all study programmes: primary, basic and secondary. The Lithuanian language at schools of general education is taught according to dual syllabus: the native Lithuanian and the official Lithuanian. For the Lithuanian language as a study subject in the curriculum of general education schools there is allocated the following number of hours in percentage:

	At Lithuanian school	At school of national minorities
Primary school	34%	11%
Basic school	18%	10%
Secondary school:		
general course	11%	10%
expanded course	16%	12%

3.1. Favourable factors

1. Preservation of national culture under the conditions of globalization has been announced to be the priority of Lithuanian policy of science (LRG Decision No. 1182 of July 19, 2002) and is in conformity with EU policy.
2. The approved General Curriculum Framework and Education standards quite democratically define the content of Lithuanian language teaching and allow the teacher to select the content in accordance with the actual needs of learners.
3. The Lithuanian language is a compulsory study subject, and the maturity examination of the Lithuanian language is obligatory.
4. For the graduates of basic school there is arranged the centralized assessment of the Lithuanian language achievements.
5. The scores of the Lithuanian language maturity exam are accepted as the scores of entrance to all high education schools.
6. The Lithuanian language is understood as a study discipline integrating several subjects (language, literature and partially culture).
7. The Lithuanian language, taking into account the schools of national minorities operating in Lithuania, is taught according to different syllabuses.
8. For the Lithuanian language as a native language at general education schools there is allocated relatively a lot of time.
9. The most of study syllabuses at public schools of secondary education in Lithuania are conveyed in the Lithuanian language.

3.2. Unfavourable factors

1. The absence of clear strategy for Lithuanian language teaching.
2. The social circumstances are not favourable to the Lithuanian language – proper knowledge of the Lithuanian language almost in the majority of job tenders is not required (the focus, instead, is put on the skills of foreign languages).
3. The system of symbols used in the electronic environment does not encourage improvement of the Lithuanian language and adds to an offhanded attitude towards illiteracy.
4. Rapidly growing threat on the part of the English language and pressure on the Lithuanian language.
5. The impact of mass (in particular visual) culture changes the attitude towards the native language, literature and culture.
6. Distortion of the Lithuanian language teaching content, because of the double role of the Lithuanian language (the study subject and the instrument for learning other subjects) is ignored.
7. The assignment of the subject to the group of study subjects ‘Languages’ does not comply with the subject targets. Such assignment within the syllabuses is not conceptualized, therefore, it gives rise to certain misunderstanding on the level of education content planning policy and distorts the specifics of the Lithuanian language as a native language.
8. The Lithuanian language, just as other study subjects, in 11-12 forms represents a profiled subject.
9. There is some gap between the functional and critical literacy within the content of Lithuanian language teaching, the literary and cultural competences and the needs of the society preoccupied with globalization processes. This lowers the school and the subject prestige, has a negative effect on the culture and impedes cultivation of creativity.
10. Low professional qualifications of teachers:

11. Teachers' insufficient ability to specify the content of General Curriculum Framework and extended studies, taking into account the goals of education, the capacities, needs and vocation learners and the environment;
 - distorted proportions between the parts of the Lithuanian language teaching content;
 - the Lithuanian language at schools of national minorities in the primary forms is often taught by the same teachers of primary forms, who have been attested as having the II and III official language knowledge qualification category, i.e. non-specialists;
 - there have not been adopted any methodologies or recommendations on how to teach the children at Lithuanian schools who have been transferred from the unfavourable (not Lithuanian) linguistic environment and have a bad command of the Lithuanian language;
 - not enough involvement of the experience gained by other countries in the cultivation of literacy through the use of modern teaching aid, in particular electronic means (computers, the Internet, etc.).
12. Two different Lithuanian language maturity exams (the test of the native language and the test of the official language) are organized in such a way that they do not ensure equal possibilities to study at the Lithuanian institutions of high education.
13. While for the subject of the Lithuanian language there is allocated relatively a lot of time (in particular at the initial school), there is not enough attention being paid to the fact that in higher forms this time ratio is gradually decreasing.
14. At schools of national minorities for the subject of Lithuanian language there is allocated relatively much less time than for the native language at Lithuanian schools. The possibilities to learn the official language at schools of national minorities are also much lower due to the fact that other study subjects in most frequent cases are taught in languages other than Lithuanian.
15. Notwithstanding the Law of Education, at Lithuanian schools there might be observed the tendencies of teaching some disciplines in languages other than Lithuanian.
16. Lack of reliable information on the situation of the Lithuanian language (scientific, methodological, social research, etc.).

4. Improvement trends of Lithuanian language teaching at school of general education

4.1. The use and importance of know-how society provided possibilities

The society in which different area activities are based on the knowledge is called the know-how society. Thus, the same term 'know-how society' covers not only the information but also the information management and information activities in general. Information as such only represents structured data which are absolutely passive unless they are being used by someone knowing how to process and interpret them. Nowadays the use of information almost does not cost anything, while dissemination of know-how and development of knowledge acquisition capabilities stills remains to be quite a complicated and costly process. Furthermore, the know-how society has a need for wisdom – the knowledge and the skills based on moral code and common human values. Therefore, one of the most important measures for the creation of know-how society is a priority investment into the development of human skills. Talking about the know-how society, there shall be emphasized a dual ratio between the language and know-how society:

1. Influence of language teaching and cultivation on the development of the society, because the language is one of the key instruments of know-how society – the language and the consciousness are inseparable.
2. The influence of know-how society and possibilities to improve language teaching and cultivation.

The Lithuanian language at school provides more universal possibilities than other subjects to cultivate versatile skills, especially those associated with spoken communication and linguistic way of thinking. Moreover, in this situation the Lithuanian language, just as any other humanitarian study subject, may play a special role, i.e. may be used as a tool for personal development and orientation in the world. This cannot be replaced by any information technologies. This role of the Lithuanian language is also important due to the fact, that at school for this subject in comparison with other humanitarian sciences there is devoted the most time and its content covers the widest areas. Thus, the school lessons of the Lithuanian language may become the lessons of cultivating general competences, because without the philosophy, logics, creative thinking and artistic imagination it would not be possible to integrate knowledge from different areas of human activities into a single uniform system.

While emphasizing this role of Lithuanian language teaching at general education schools, there should also be taken into account the problems associated with the creation of know-how society. One of them is the overestimation of the importance of the exact sciences and ignoring of general humanitarian education.

Conclusions:

- It is necessary to encourage adoption of various teaching forms and methods as well as teaching aid helping to cultivate the person's basic skills required in the know-how society and their employment during the Lithuanian language lessons.
- It is necessary to create a special Internet website intended for school learners which would contain both information and activated remote study courses of Lithuanian language, the Lithuanian language library for learners and the learners' creative works, etc.

4.2. Topic of forming national identity under conditions of globalization

Lithuania's integration into the European structures and the increasing mobility of the society brings about the natural problem of national identity. Not only Europe, but also Lithuania become the coexistence place of different cultures; therefore, while educating schoolchildren there should always be underlined tolerance to other people and their beliefs, understanding of people next to you, nurturing of own culture and language as well as enshrining and retaining of national identity.

Under conditions of globalization much importance should be laid on harmonizing different education systems so that the citizens could take advantage of any education service available in any country. It is also a burning issue to Lithuania in strengthening the cohesion with other European states, in preventing discrimination, social disjuncture, in cultivating tolerance and respect to human rights. The above mentioned ideas were raised in 'Detailed program on further work of implementing the objectives of the European education and training systems', adopted by the European Union Summit Meeting held in Brussels on February 20, 2002. In the aforementioned program there is stated that the objectives of education get considerably expanded 'when we talk about personal preparedness for a better life and more active civil self-expression in the democratic society accepting and respecting cultural and linguistic diversity'.

Thus, preservation and enshrining of the Lithuanian culture and language should become not only the measure of the nation's value but also the value of multicultural Europe.

Teaching of the native language and culture is one of the key criteria in evaluating the education system in each state. On the list of basic competences necessary for the purpose of ensuring lifelong learning possibilities, first of all, there should be distinguished literacy (in its wide sense) and cultural education represented by different areas. Thus, in the European documents there are underlined competences directly pertaining to the subject of the Lithuanian language as a study discipline.

One of education priorities and the basic competences in all European states is considered to be the faculty of communication in several foreign languages, among those are very often being mentioned the languages of the neighbouring countries. However, at the same time, the top priority in all states remains to be enhancement of competences with respect to the native language, literature and culture, i.e. the competence of literacy in its wide sense and the competence of official language. In the draft document of 'Language teaching policy directions in the European states' there is also emphasized equal value of all languages, critically evaluated overestimation of the English language as *lingua franca* and mentioned the importance of harmful effect of putting too much focus on teaching foreign languages.

During the process of integration into the European structures for each citizen of Lithuania it becomes burning to have a command of at least one or several foreign languages. This is a very important factor in ensuring the citizens' free movement within the European and the world labour market; however, again it should not be overestimated. Teaching of foreign languages should be related to Lithuanian language teaching and culture as well as to the formation of national identity. It is necessary to realize that the knowledge of foreign languages in comparison with the native or official language skills has somewhat different and narrower goal.

Upon Lithuania becoming the member of EU, the migration of various nationality people within the labour market is supposed to increase. It is already now that the schools where all subjects are taught in the Lithuanian language are being entered by more and more representatives of national minorities, children from mixed nationality families and by kids of parents who have come to Lithuania to work. The existing laws guarantee to all citizens of Lithuania equal rights to study in the official language as well as to learn the official and the native language; there have also been prepared legal documents regulating and ensuring teaching to children from abroad in Lithuania. Unfortunately, the experience and the methodologies of teaching foreign children in Lithuania, especially taking into account their poor command of the Lithuanian language or absolute inability to speak it, are still very scarce in Lithuania. However, there have been prepared recommendations on how to organize teaching of the official language to foreign children, there have been adopted a concept and program of methodology course for teaching the official language as a non-native language: V. Salienė, R. Žemaitis 'Education of migrating employees' children'; there has also been issued a handbook of the Lithuanian language and a teacher's book: H. Prośniakova, V. Stumbrienė 'My and your country Lithuania' (Vilnius, Kronta, 2003).

Conclusions:

- In forming the Lithuanian language (native and official) teaching content it is necessary to consider the specific requirements set by society to the level of language knowledge and to match those requirements with the individual capabilities and needs of a person.

- Different status of languages (native, official or foreign) within the country conditions the selection of education objectives and scope of its content.
- Teaching of the Lithuanian and foreign languages shall be linked on a systematic level and involve the use of common communication skills.
- It is necessary to involve more actively the experience of EU in teaching foreign kids the official language and to encourage the teachers of Lithuanian to put more interest in such teaching.

4.3. Harmonizing of Lithuanian language teaching content

Harmonization of language teaching content shall be understood as synchronizing of the whole and its parts, of the content and the form, of the school requirements and the individual requirements of a person as well as society expectations.

The content of teaching is realized on several levels: the level of state, the level of school and the level of teacher. All levels of teaching content realization are important, however, their problems differ.

4.3.1. General documents

On the state level, the content of teaching is realized through the following documents: General Curriculum Framework and Education Standards, education plan and examination syllabuses. The provisions contained therein are in one or another way reflected in textbooks (to be approved by commissions of experts) and in other teaching materials (not to be approved).

On the level of school, general documents are concretized, the provisions reflecting specifics of a particular school are brought up-to-date, the entire teaching process is coordinated among different teachers (the school strategic plans, vision, mission, etc.). Then the teacher concretizes the teaching content: taking into account the situation in the class, the character and the capabilities of learners and plans the content of teaching as well as organizes the actual activities of teaching.

The general documents regulating the teaching content and the documents providing for the general trends of teaching had been under preparation for a couple of years and were issued at different time; therefore, there might be observed certain discrepancies, concretizing differences and possibility of different interpretation. Especially problematic is the fact that not all teachers are prepared to work according to the requirements of documents democratically setting the guidelines of teaching.

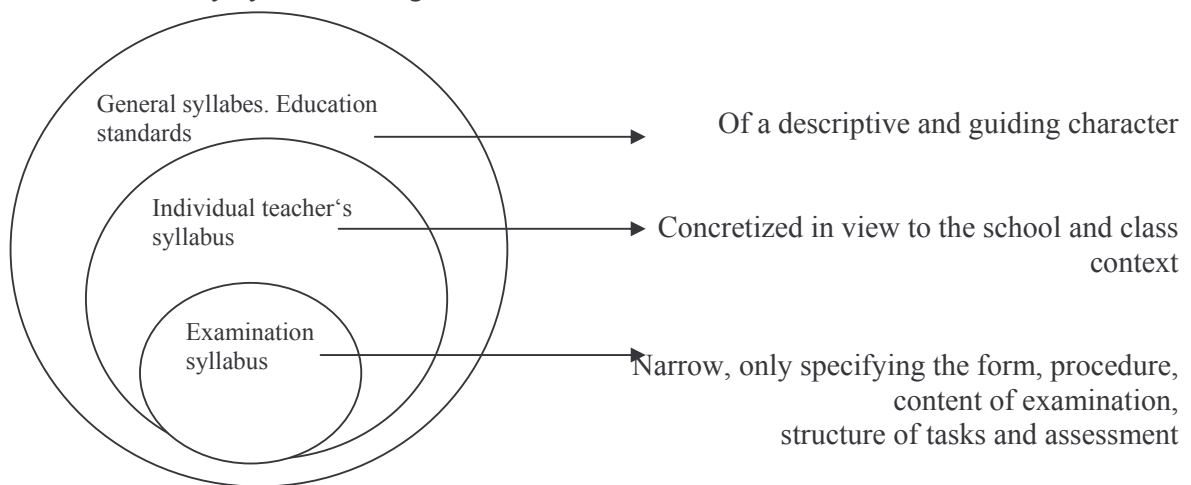
The documents defining the teaching content of general education school disciplines have been adopted on the basis of pedagogical and psychological data collected both within the country and worldwide. The cyclic conveyance of subject content complying with the evolution of kids, teen-agers and the youth should help the learners develop basic skills, achieve the required competence relevant to their age.

The entire teaching content is presented through 3 general education school stages: primary, basic and secondary. The type and the number of observed differences as well as any problems become apparent in the stages of primary and basic teaching, however, there is not enough reliable information, because it was only in 2002 and 2003 that there was conducted the first more or less comprehensive survey of learners' language skills. The results of the ongoing

survey are supposed to be finalized in 2-3 years, then there will be worked out specific recommendations on how to improve the teaching content on the level of primary and basic education school.

The differences of teaching content and results appearing in the last, i.e. the secondary stage (learning for the purpose of examination only or learning by ignoring the general syllabes and education standards, teaching according to certain clichés or patterns, negligence of the necessity to develop skills) are more obvious due to the regularity of maturity examination process; however, these problems should not be interpreted in a simplex way, because the majority of preconditions may be the consequence of basic and initial teaching.

The general education syllabes, the education standards and the examination syllabes make up the cycle of programs regulating the content of teaching. Harmonizing of teaching content can be achieved only by harmonizing the above mentioned documents.



In all these documents there are distinguished two areas of teaching: language teaching (practical language skills and theoretical knowledge) and literature teaching. The Lithuanian language as a study subject at general education schools covers cultivation of linguistic, literary and cultural competence. These competences are understood as part of communication competence. However, their conception is not defined in the general documents; therefore, their understanding both in the native Lithuanian language and the official language curricula differs to some extent, first of all, due to the fact that these curricula have somewhat different goals.

Language competence is understood as literacy, based on the knowledge of language system and basics of linguistics. Therefore, the linguistic literacy (a little bit narrower concept than the language competence) includes such skills as ability to read, understand, write and convey texts orally; there should be differentiated three interrelated levels of literacy, namely: basic, functional and critical. The basic literacy covers the ability to read and understand the text, to write and speak correctly. Under the functional literacy there may be assigned the ability of right use of oral speech and written language, taking into consideration the particular situation (the addressee, the purpose, the intentions, etc.). The critical literacy is understood as the ability to analyze, evaluate and create various written and oral texts.

Literary competence covers the ability of understanding and interpreting literary texts in different aspects (aesthetic, social, value-related and from the point of view of world outlook) based on the knowledge of literature history and theory and the ability to apply these skills.

This competence is closely associated with the cultural competence – the ability to understand and refer to the Lithuanian and European systems of cultural values and universal attitudes, to recognize and interpret common signs of culture based on the knowledge and skills acquired at school of general education. The cultural competence is the background of social and individual maturity of a person and its cultivation is the task linking all study subjects of general education school.

Language teaching

The provision underlined in the general documents under which there should be paid more attention to the language as an instrument, to its use and, in general, to its practical aspect is a motivated requirement meeting the needs and expectations of society. Therefore, efforts are made to ensure that the graduate of the secondary school should

- be able to realize that the knowledge of language system is necessary for the successful integration and active participation in social and cultural processes;
- in creating various texts (written and oral) be able to use effectively the knowledge of language system and knowingly seek improvement of his/her speech skills and individual style.

The documents regulating the content of teaching contain certain differences. In general education curricula the priority is given to the understanding of text linguistics and language functioning, official spoken language and written matter-of-fact language, and the education standards orient towards the understanding and creation of various types of texts through the application of the most appropriate strategies, whereas the examination syllabus formulate one of the requirements (by narrowing the previous documents), i.e. the requirement to create texts of determined scope and genre, to understand the stages of writing process and to refer to this knowledge when writing.

During the language lessons the possibilities of IT are not fully utilized and too little focus is put on IT language. The stylistic enrichment of the Lithuanian language is a burning problem of common language; therefore, it is important that cultivation of style should be started already at school. The principle of language style cultivation at school would be the creation of texts reflecting today's realities and the use of such texts already created. Due attention to IT influencing the language, its vocabulary, syntax and even morphology would reduce the negative impact on language teaching, and IT language should be legalized as a specific style, so that schoolchildren could be able to learn it as a special language strain having its own regularity and area of use.

Teaching of literature

The goals and tasks of general curricula raise the requirements to have thorough and comprehensive knowledge of literature, skills of perceiving and evaluating literature self-dependently, based on the knowledge of literature theory and history, skills of reading and discussing non-fiction texts and evaluating the most significant events of literary and cultural life. Implementation of such wide requirements and cultivation of the necessary skills is, however, time consuming. The scope of content of the existing curricula is extremely broad. To be able to cover it, there has been undertaken the direction of going deep into it instead of embracing the whole range of its scope; therefore, there is some confrontation between the requirements and the actual scope of content. Such situation brings about the need to revise the content of teaching. Narrowing of the curriculum content would be favourable for the

cultivation and improvement of the ability to analyze and interpret fiction and non-fiction texts and would create precondition for the cultivation of learners' creative vocation and spoken communication skills. This is expected to strengthen motivation and change the attitude towards the Lithuanian language as a study subject.

Conclusions:

- Synchronizing of teaching content should commence upon the critical revision of general curriculum and education standards and it would be based on the clear content selection criteria. The most important of them should be the actual needs of the person associated with his/her personal, social and vocational activities.
- At the same time there should be critically evaluated the number of lessons (academic hours) in the General education Plans.
- In presenting the content of subject on all levels there should be put enough attention to the formation of learners' positive attitude towards the subject being studied and to the enhancement of their, as language users', self-confidence.
- To provide in the general documents at least reference proportions of teaching content, so that there should be avoided any overestimation of one or another content area in concretizing the content on the level of school and teacher.
- Apart from the general documents, to prepare for teachers methodological explanations containing concrete examples.
- The examination syllabus and tasks should be in compliance with the goals of general curriculum and the requirements of education standards.

4.3.2. Teaching materials

Teaching materials are represented by visual, technical, demonstration, laboratory and computer means and devices employed in the process of teaching. Supply of these materials to schools is organised in accordance with 'The procedure of supplying schools with textbooks on general education subjects, parts of their sets, other teaching materials and literature' (Official gazette, 2002, No. 120-5437).

Textbooks represent a reusable printed (or its electronic audio or visual equivalent) source of general education subject teaching (learning) intended for learners of particular forms (particular form, age group, training stage), which conforms to the general curricula and education standards approved by the Minister of Education and Science and which provides information and the system of tasks required for the cultivation of learners' value-related attitudes, capabilities, skills and competence.

Textbooks are the only means of teaching that may be regulated by the state. Textbooks are evaluated by the experts' commission and approved by assigning a special marking which means compliance with the requirements set to textbooks. For other teaching materials (exercise books, sets of exercises and tasks, teacher's books, etc.) markings are not assigned, therefore, responsibility for the quality of their content, methodological relevance, compliance with the general documents and suitability to schools (compliance with respect to the learners' age) are assumed by the authors, the publishing houses and the teachers who offer this material for use. Previously not only textbooks had to be approved, but all supplementary teaching materials. Now the evaluation of such materials has been refused.

During the recent years there have been prepared textbooks of the Lithuanian language for teaching both the native and the official language. The majority of them provide finalized

methodologies, quite attractive tasks and diversity of activities taking into account today's topicality. However, with respect to textbooks, even with the approved ones, there might be noticed several negative trends:

- By non-motivated expansion or narrowing of textbook content the general documents are being ignored (general curricula and education standards).
- Too little respect to the age of children and their mental capabilities.
- Poor and flat textbook methodological organization.
- Jug-handled presentation of content, lack of variety of teaching and learning strategies.
- The textbook material does not reflect the existing changed situation.

The procedure on the approval of textbooks adopted in 2002 creates preconditions for a more stringent evaluation by the experts' commission, because there have been established specific textbook evaluation criteria. However, the teachers lack the teacher's books: beside some textbooks of the official Lithuanian language there have been issued teacher's books, whereas the teachers of the native Lithuanian language do not have any. Apart from textbooks it would be very valuable to prepare a systematic and comprehensive digest of Lithuanian language rules that would be very beneficial not only for schools. There is a critical lack of oral speech teaching materials: it would be reasonable to have audio versions of literature pieces and their excerpts and audio recordings of folklore and dialect samples, teaching materials for different speech styles, in particular if these could be provided together with computer handbooks.

Conclusions:

- The clear system of textbooks is not yet in place.
- Textbooks should be supplied in sets: the learner's book, the teacher's book, the book of exercises, etc.).
- Sets of textbooks should be compiled in such a way that they would help purposeful efforts in achieving the requirements formulated in the curricula and would combine theoretically formulated tasks with practical activities.
- The content of language and literature knowledge as well as of language use in textbooks should be presented in a consistent, systematic and methodical way.
- It is necessary to revise the handbooks already approved for their compliance with the handbook evaluation criteria.
- It would be valuable to have the electronic versions of handbooks and the accompanying teaching aid. The emergence of up-to-date digital teaching aid should be also encouraged.
- It is necessary to establish the database of teaching materials, so that teachers would be provided access to reliable information.

4.3.3. Teaching methods and assessment

Transfer of knowledge without the cultivation of skills does not comply with the requirements to be met by the modern school. Moreover, very often it conditions the insufficient educational level of learners, increased homework load, neither it encourages cultivation of skills and motivation to study, the joy of cognition, communication and cooperation, and very often the learners (especially of younger age) are frightened away from studying the subject.

The priority of developing skills and competencies should become the method of encouraging cooperation, creativity and helping the teacher differentiate and individualize the teaching process. In order that the teachers would be able to apply these methods successfully, it is necessary to make proper selection of basic teaching content, to compile the teaching materials,

which would stimulate such activities and to initiate new assessment forms of learners' progress and achievements.

A lot of confusion and pressure has been elicited by the problem of today's assessment of teaching content – the assessment model oriented towards the evaluation of learners' achievements and not towards their failures is yet not in place. Assessment and self-evaluation as part of learning process has not yet reached the majority of schools.

The method of distance teaching should be further improved. There has not been prepared any Lithuanian language programme for distance teaching intended for learners with different training and motivation level, i.e. for different target groups (for Lithuanians residing abroad, for foreigners and their children, for those who wish to improve their knowledge and command of languages, etc.).

With the increased significance and strength of regions the conditions for the use of traditional dialects of the Lithuanian language have also been improved. In the process of teaching correct common Lithuanian language, dialects could be referred to as its origin. There has not been created a single teaching methodology on how to cultivate the language skills of those learners who enter the school speaking the urban language or the regional sociolect, of kids from mixed nationality families or of children from bilingual or multilingual regions. Creative application of learners' dialects and urban language variants and treatment of them as today's reality could contribute a lot to the process of Lithuanian language teaching by restoring confidence in own language, in its powers and ability to reflect today's reality.

In general all languages come under the same block titled 'Languages', however, synchronizing of native language and foreign languages teaching seems to be rather fragmentary; in the process of teaching foreign languages not enough attention is paid to the knowledge of the Lithuanian language. Especially there should be emphasized the link of translation teaching to the teaching of the native language.

Conclusions:

- To adopt an up-to-date assessment model complying with the content of teaching and oriented towards different faculties of learners.
- To initiate dissemination of effective language teaching methodologies and sharing of good practice experience among teachers.
- To initiate preparation of syllabus for distance Lithuanian language teaching.
- To relate the linguistic teaching with the formation of national identity through the application of methodologies encouraging learners to take interest in the linguistic environment, dialects and sociolects.

4.3.4. Examination and learners' achievements

Upon reforming the education system and making it more transparent and accessible to all children, already in 1998 there was commenced the reform of examination system. Its reorganization allowed the implementation of a single-channel entrance examination to higher educational institutions system, encouraged to adopt a more careful and serious attitude towards the school teaching content and highlighted some problems: the level of schools (teachers and learners) and training is very different, in some cases the curriculum requirements in the process of teaching are neglected and the level of learners' literacy requires improvement.

Deeper and wider look at the results of centralized maturity exams and the analysis of data forced to pay more attention to the process of teaching and its results not only in the stage of secondary teaching, but also on the level of initial and basic teaching, because quite a number of problems get transferred to higher education institutions from the lower level of education. There was initiated search of methods to define the reasons of quite poor results.

In 2001 there was launched the Schools Improvement Program, part of which is represented by the national survey of learners' achievement on the initial and basic level of education. There was prepared and approved a program of sustainable survey and organized the first tests (in 2002 for the 6th forms and in 2003 for the 4th and 8th forms). The results of survey were finalized and followed by technical and objective analysis, which had highlighted quite a number of problems and defined the ways on how some of them could be solved. The objective report would be beneficial to all teachers, and the recommendations presented in the report should be referred to already now.

The examination and other testing methods representing the form of assessing learners' achievements is not just the continuation of the training process, which especially pertains to the maturity exams. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the specific principles of forming the content of testing and assessment. The exam of the Lithuanian language should be arranged in accordance with the general principles of examination by means of combining the validity, reliability and objectivity of assessment.

Conclusions:

- It is necessary each year to prepare in a centralized way the material for the assessment of achievements for learners of IV, VI, VIII, X forms, so that the school authorities, teachers and schoolchildren could evaluate the effectiveness of their work.
- In harmonizing the teaching content, testing of learners' skills should be organized in such a way that there would be covered all types of linguistic activities: reading, listening, writing and speaking.
- In testing and assessment of learners' linguistic achievements, due attention should be paid to speaking skills.
- The tasks of testing skills and achievements shall be modelled to match the activities associated with the most natural contexts of life (written communication tasks, for e.g. creation of intellectualized text).
- The tasks of testing skills and achievements should cover different areas of teaching content.
- A newly prepared examination program and samples of tasks prior to approval shall be subjected to wide public for consideration.

4.3.5. Nearing of dual general curricula of the Lithuanian language

Knowledge of the native language, literature and culture and the national minorities' knowledge of the official language and the country culture is associated with the cultivation of public spirit, with ensuring of social welfare and reduction of social disjuncture. Therefore, it is vitally important to ensure cultivation of the respective competencies already in the system of education without any infringement upon the right of national minorities to retain their national identity. Teaching of the native language and the official language pursues different goals that with respect to the native language are much wider, because the official language for a representative of national minorities is already the second language.

The main goal of the official Lithuanian language General Curriculum Framework – the learners' ability to use the Lithuanian language in all areas and situations of life, their readiness to pursue further studies and work – is no less significant for the representatives of national minorities than for the native speakers of Lithuanian. This preconditions the necessity to adopt equal standards of the Lithuanian language; i.e. to test and assess the same general skills of literacy.

Developing all types of linguistic activities could near the curricula of the native and official Lithuanian language. Equal standards of the Lithuanian language should be approached both by the Lithuanian schools and the schools of national minorities: it is necessary to teach how to create and understand discourse of different character, both oral and written, to produce, i.e. speak and write various texts in correct language (not only interpretations of works of fiction), to get prepared for further studies and activities involving the use of the Lithuanian language in all areas of life. In such case, preparing equal tasks for checking writing, reading, speaking and linguistic competences could facilitate testing of the Lithuanian language skills.

Conclusions:

- To near the general curricula of the native and the official language and to uniform the standards.
- To adjust in principle the number of official Lithuanian language lessons.
- For 2007 - 2008 academic year to adopt a uniform program of the Lithuanian language maturity exam and speaking course credit requirements (topics, assessment) for all graduates of Lithuanian general education schools as well as write and pretest all the new examination papers.
- To get prepared for teaching the Lithuanian language in all schools and to children of any age having very different command of the Lithuanian language.

4.4. Modernizing the Lithuanian language and language teaching

The Lithuanian language at school includes linguistic and literary teaching, and each of these areas has specific features to be taken into account when speaking about updating the content of the subject.

Language teaching

Though the basic rules of the common language are codified in grammar textbooks and dictionaries, i.e. are presented in the form of written arbitrary standards, the colloquial language is in the process of constant change, because its users adapt themselves to new living conditions. This should be kept in mind with respect to the process of modernizing the language and its teaching.

Modernization of language is associated with the following:

- adjusting the language itself to the current situation and self-adjustment through standardization and codification, i.e. through updating the framework of language (primarily, terminology) by new topics, taking into account the changed circumstances of language use not only upon the restoration of country's independence but also under the conditions of globalization and internationalization;
- formation of new attitude towards the language, in particular codified, so that it should be in harmony with the general attitude towards values prevailing in the society – to educate active and self-confident language creators putting trust in their nation;

- creation and dissemination of new language forms; operation with modern texts; adoption of new linguistic expression forms, primarily those used in the electronic environment – from the Internet, structural accumulation of data, their processing and use to e-mail and SMS messages; mass media and advertising language not only from the point of view of its content but also from the point of view of relations between the communicating parties (conversation with the partner who is not seen, communication with lots of people at the same time, both oral and written, etc.); employment of new technologies;
- altered communication stylistics of people undergoing changes (new pace, new fashions and new environment realities bring about new language requirements).

Modernization of language teaching is indispensable from the presentation and analysis of real language in real life (also of hypertext and visual communication, etc.) and teaching to use the language in accordance with its functional designation. The situation of using the language in public and the poor ability to use the Lithuanian language correctly and properly shows that in the process of teaching the Lithuanian language there are encountered obvious discrepancies between the needs of modern life, the teaching methodology and the learners' style of studying and that there is not enough motivation to study the Lithuanian language.

Modernization of language teaching could be based on easily accessible and understandable language system and standards. In order to enable the people to evaluate the correctness of language themselves and could become its active users and creators, they should be confident not only in the correctness of their own language but also in their knowledge of language system itself. The forms of presenting the rules of modern language and the examples of its use should meet three requirements; i.e. the subjects being presented should be:

- accessible, reachable and understandable to the majority;
- in compliance with the existing needs of users;
- of novelty forms encouraging people to take interest and active participation in the process of language modernization.

Literature teaching

It should be noted that teaching of literature at school, first of all, should be oriented towards educating the reader, which means that it should cover not only specific knowledge of subject theory and its application in the analysis of literature works, but also some functions of cultural cultivation and integration of subjects. Therefore, modernizing of literature teaching at school should be associated with the selection of pieces of literature (fixed in general curricula) putting more focus on today's topicality, learners' psychological characteristics, application of different learning strategies and the possibility to develop basic skills.

Literary teaching at school is significant with regard to psychological, sociological, ethical and philosophical aspects. In this respect, of all the subjects being taught, the integrating role is being performed by the subject of literature. In today's general education curricula there is formulated the attitude that presentation of literature is meaningful to the extent to which it motivates the personal spiritual self-help (cognition, reflection), however, a strictly fixed list of literature works made following the prevailing historical principle of selection prevents implementation of this attitude during the process of teaching. The current situation under which the requirements of general curricula do not comply with the requirements of educational standards should be changed as soon as possible.

The history of literature should remain as an example illustrating the historical and cultural processes helping to understand the world of culture signs. Narrow specific subjects of literature science (for instance, the requirement to discuss the importance of literature theory for the purpose of perceiving the piece of literature) should be excluded. The greatest attention should be paid to the development of reading and general skills (for example, critical thinking). Also there should be implemented the curricula provision that during the process of literature teaching there should be revealed various topics: existential, artistic, psychological, philosophical, historical and those pertaining to the modern society – the latter to be especially underlined; unfortunately, in reality these topics receive very little attention in the existing general education curricula.

Teaching of literature should be oriented not only towards fiction literature but also towards the discourse of various types; either in general curricula for XI–XII forms or in textbooks (and in many cases, during teaching process) there have not yet been realized the provisions of educational standards that learners should be able to discuss and evaluate the texts, where the meaning is expressed not only by means of verbal symbols, or that they should be able to compare fiction and non-fiction works sharing the same topicality, etc.

Modernisation of literature teaching should be associated with the need to cognize the modern miscellaneous cultural life, to evaluate critically its manifestation and to take an active part in it. Thus, the teaching of literature shall not be limited to the cultivation of specific capabilities but be broad enough to cover other modern areas of cultural and public communication.

Conclusions:

- There should be encouraged launch of projects investigating the needs of language modernizing and initiating new methods and means of dissemination. Learners, their parents and teachers both from Lithuanian and national minority schools could join such projects.
- Implementation and dissemination of language modernizing ideas should be also associated with the possibilities offered by information technologies.
- It is necessary to put the Lithuanian language and literature teaching methodologies being applied at school under critical revision and to search for possibilities to encourage creation of new methodologies reflecting the current needs and capabilities of learners.
- It is necessary to revise spelling and punctuation standards and adjust them, taking into account any problems that might become apparent.
- To renew the general curricula and education standards in accordance with today's requirements and to synchronize the requirements of general curricula and education standards.
- It is necessary not only to implement IT at schools, but also to put effort that there should be used Lithuanian versions of software; therefore, creation and ensured implementation of such software programs should be encouraged.
- The priority of literature teaching in general curriculum should be given not to the historical principle but to the issues of modern society.
- When approving literature textbooks, to make sure that these are not just a new copy of old subjects but are textbooks meeting the requirements of up-to-date content and complying with the modern principles of material selection.

4.5. Teaching of Lithuanian language during lessons of other subjects

The general school teaching objectives and goals in general curricula and education standards define necessary directions of classroom activities: to cultivate certain general competences, value-related attitudes and general skills of learner. In pursue of achieving general objectives, the school should create conditions for learners 'to develop their communication skills, which are so important in today's life, and cultivate information culture (knowledge of native and foreign languages and computer literacy)'. There shall be highlighted formation of value-related attitudes and development of general skills (personal, social, communication, work and activity).

Revision of general curriculum of different subjects and education standards has revealed the difference in how implementation of general objectives is perceived and defined. That could be taken for granted; because most frequently there are being emphasized those general skills, which are more clearly associated with the respective subject being taught. However, there is an obvious lack of teaching attitudes with respect to certain communication skills: accurate use of concepts, ability to read special texts and convey matter-of-fact texts orally and in writing, etc.

The above-mentioned problems are also reflected in the process of teaching, when teachers of other subjects than the Lithuanian language give to children assignment to write, for instance, papers, but do not explain the purpose of doing this or the specific stylistic requirements of the paper, or do not evaluate the accuracy, etc. Another extremity which has turned into a problem is associated with the insufficient use of oral speech: learners' oral production is becoming more and more rare, discussions during subject lessons are also quite rare, which negatively influences formation of oral speech skills and use of subject terminology as well as specific terminology, etc.

It is very important that learners should be familiarized with IT and the use of the Lithuanian language. This pertains to the Internet language, its possibilities, the Internet and electronic dictionaries, electronic databases, digital language resources, automatic translation databases, etc. Computer versions of dictionaries and directories, including collections of various templates, and the ability to use all this should be considered to be the manifestation of both verbal communication and information skills. Development of these skills should be the task for teachers of all disciplines.

Conclusions:

- During lessons of all subjects there should be dedicated some time for learners to speak and discuss so that they would be able to learn to make reasoned speeches, narrate and use the respective specific terminology.
- In the case of written tasks, language-related aspects should also be assessed.
- Teachers of all subjects should speak correctly.
- Into the concept of teachers' vocational training there should be included the requirements on the necessity to learn the Lithuanian language and the specific language of the subject.
- Teachers of all subjects should be able to give reference as to where the learners could find Lithuanian terminology of their respective subject. It is encouraged that learners, if necessary, themselves could be the creators of Lithuanian terminology.
- The rules on attesting teachers should include the requirement that teachers during each attestation should take a credit in the specific language of the subject.
- To initiate drafting of program 'Language during lessons of all subjects'.

4.6. Training of teachers and their qualifications

The concept of teacher training which is under consideration defines the directions of teachers' vocational training. Training of teachers of the Lithuanian language as well as of other subjects is based on two models - the consistent and the parallel. The Lithuanian language teachers are supposed to have the university education and get professional training exceptionally at universities of pedagogical or humanitarian profile.

In the draft concept of teachers' vocational training there are quoted empirical surveys revealing the weakest points in vocational training of teachers: 'lack of practical skills and psychological, didactic and pedagogic knowledge', 'too much load with respect to theoretical disciplines, too low number of practical courses, too short pedagogical practice and lack of methodological knowledge'. Practicing teachers often point out the lack of practical skills and the inability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice as the weakest point of professional training of future teachers. Thus, practical training for work at school at the present time represents one of the most delicate problems in professional training of teachers.

It is understandable that the teacher's professional competence is based on his/her knowledge of subject and didactics. Within the content of Lithuanian language teacher training, the important place together with the academic subject-related training should be taken by methodological training, which presupposes implementation of subject content innovations and methods stimulating the effectiveness of training or learning. Another important area of teacher training is the analysis of school curriculum, education standards, learning materials and teaching on how they should be critically evaluated and properly used.

Usually there are several categories of knowledge distinguished having importance for teachers that could be grouped into four main areas: knowledge of discipline, knowledge of discipline didactics, pedagogical and psychological knowledge, perception of the world outlook, cultural and social issues.

In-service training of teachers should be planned and performed by the Ministry of Education and Science, Education Development Centre, Teacher Professional Development Centre, regional teachers' education centres and pedagogical universities. Only having synchronized the content of in-service training program and agreed upon the priorities, taking into account the teachers' needs, will it become possible to organize consistent, regular and scheduled in-service training of teachers.

Conclusions:

- To initiate that teacher training institutions of higher education should put more focus on the methodology and practical training of future teachers; that after the basic course of studies there should be given a period of at least one year for pedagogical practice followed by the state exams – only then there could be acquired the required qualification of teacher and obtained the teacher diploma.
- To conduct continuous survey of Lithuanian language teachers' in-service training needs, to synchronize those needs with priorities and only then proceed with drafting of training projects.
- In preparing the curricula for in-service training of teachers, to pay more attention to the analysis of ongoing surveys and the results of learners' skills testing as well as recommendations.

5. General Conclusions

Based on the common need to have a clear strategy of Lithuanian language teaching at schools of general education, 'Guidelines of official language policy in 2003–2008' approved by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania Decision No. IX-1595 of June 3, 2003 and Decision No. IX-1938 'On the policy and perspectives of the Lithuanian language upon Lithuania becoming the member of the European Union', dated December 18, 2003, it is recommended, while improving the Lithuanian language teaching at schools of general education, to put special focus not only on the documents regulating the content of teaching, professional training of teachers and their qualifications, but also on the formation of more favourable attitude of the society towards the Lithuanian language teaching and facilitation of more friendly environment for the cultivation of Lithuanian language. Therefore, there should be pointed out the following directions of activity:

1. In forming the Lithuanian language (both native and official) teaching content, it is necessary to take into consideration the specific public requirements with respect to the level of language command and to match them to the individual capabilities and needs of a person with a special focus on the basic skills required in the information and know-how society.
2. The status of the official Lithuanian language should not be only formalized by documents but also realized in educational institutions and in teaching process.
3. It is necessary not only to implement IT at schools, but also to seek that there should be used Lithuanian versions of software; therefore, creation of such software programs should be encouraged.
4. Harmonization of teaching content should commence upon the critical revision of general curriculum and education standards and be based on clear criteria of content selection:
 - the actual needs of a person associated with his/her personal life, social and professional activities,
 - proportioned cultivation of language, literary and cultural literacy,
 - coverage of all types of linguistic activities: reading, writing, listening and speaking,
 - the material should pertain to the topics of modern society as closely as possible.
5. To near the general curricula of the Lithuanian native and Lithuanian official language, to unify the standards and to prepare a new examination of the Lithuanian language.
6. To adopt a new assessment model, which would comply with the content of teaching and be oriented towards different skills of learners.
7. To pay more attention to the methodological qualification of teachers, to initiate issue of methodological publications and recommendations, dissemination of effective teaching methodologies and sharing of good experience among the learners.
8. To encourage emergence and use of various modern, attractive, quality, purposeful and methodological forms and methods of teaching, teaching aid associated with the basic human skills and to create a widely accessible information base.

9. It is necessary to be more active in employing EU experience for the purpose of providing official language teaching to children from abroad with different level of training, having different skills and of different age groups.
10. To prepare a distance Lithuanian language teaching program intended for persons with different needs, of different training level and age and a special Internet website for people studying the Lithuanian language.
11. In presenting the subject content on all teaching levels, a lot of attention should be paid to the formation of learners' positive attitude towards the subject being taught, to enhance their, as language users', confidence, to link language teaching with the formation of national identity.
12. To prepare the program 'Language during lessons of all subjects' aimed at the improvement of linguistic communication skills.
13. To conduct continuous surveys of Lithuanian language teachers' in-service training needs, to synchronize the needs with priorities and only then proceed with drafting of training projects.
14. To initiate that institutions of high education training teachers should put more focus on the methodical and practical training of future teachers; that after the basic course of studies there should be given a period of at least one year for pedagogical practice to be followed by the state exams – only then there could be acquired the required qualification of teacher and obtained the teaching diploma.

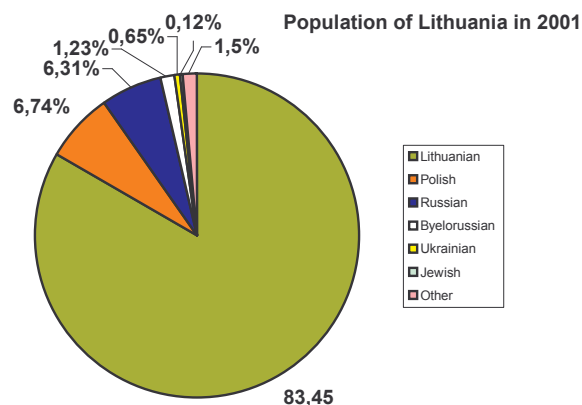
PART II: Education of national minorities and immigrant children

1. Education of national minorities

Education of national minorities residing in the Republic of Lithuania constitutes an important and integral part of the education system in Lithuania. The principles of education of national minorities in Lithuania as a democratic state which attitude towards national minorities was enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, General Concept of Education in Lithuania, Law on Education and Law on National Minorities. According to this Law Lithuania guarantees national minorities a series of rights, including: the right to obtain aid from the state to develop their culture and education; the right to have schooling in their native languages.

Lithuania is the most monoethnic country from the three Baltic countries –by the Census 2001 data – Lithuania’s population were of 115 different ethnicities: Lithuanians made up 83,45%, Poles 6,74 %, Russians 6,31%, other – 3,5%. Since the restoration of independence of Lithuania in 1990, more than 90% of persons of non-Lithuanian ethnic origin obtained Lithuanian citizenship in the first year.

According to the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania the main minorities in Lithuania (Russians, Poles and Byelorussians) are able to teach their children in general schools where the language of instruction is Russian, or Polish, or Byelorussian, or let them to the schools where language of instruction is Lithuanian (it depends on parents). Schools with



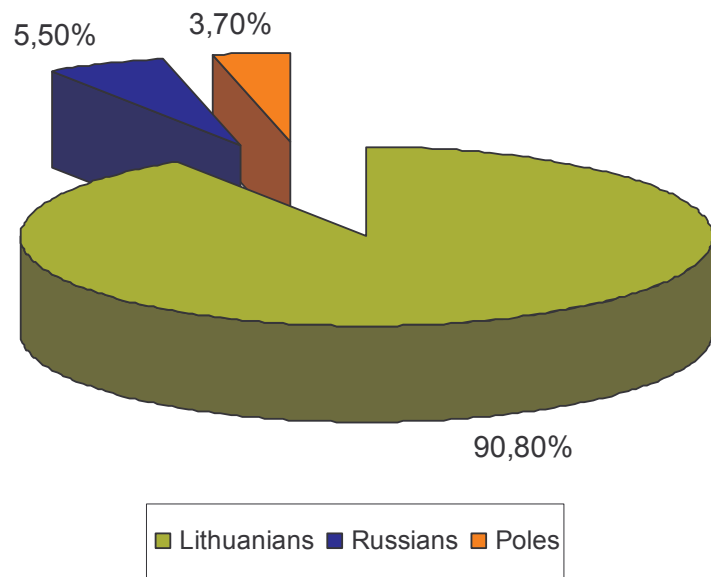
linguistic minorities follow the general curricula for general education approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, which includes such subjects as mother tongue (in the same proportion as Lithuanian in main schools) and Lithuanian as a state language; the other subjects may supplement with ethno-cultural elements. Recently (according to the new Law on Education 2003) the learning facilities provide good possibilities for minority persons to learn minority language in a school curriculum. It means that persons belonging to national minorities have the opportunities for being taught the minority language not only in school in which educational process is traditionally conducted in the Polish or Russian language with such language of instruction, but as well as in every school of Lithuania. This is especially

important for the small minority groups which have another opportunity to learn their language in non-formal educational institutions where teaching on Saturdays/Sundays is the most appropriate form.

In the beginning of 2003/2004, the number of students in general education schools was 556 325. The official language of instruction in vast majority of schools is Lithuanian.

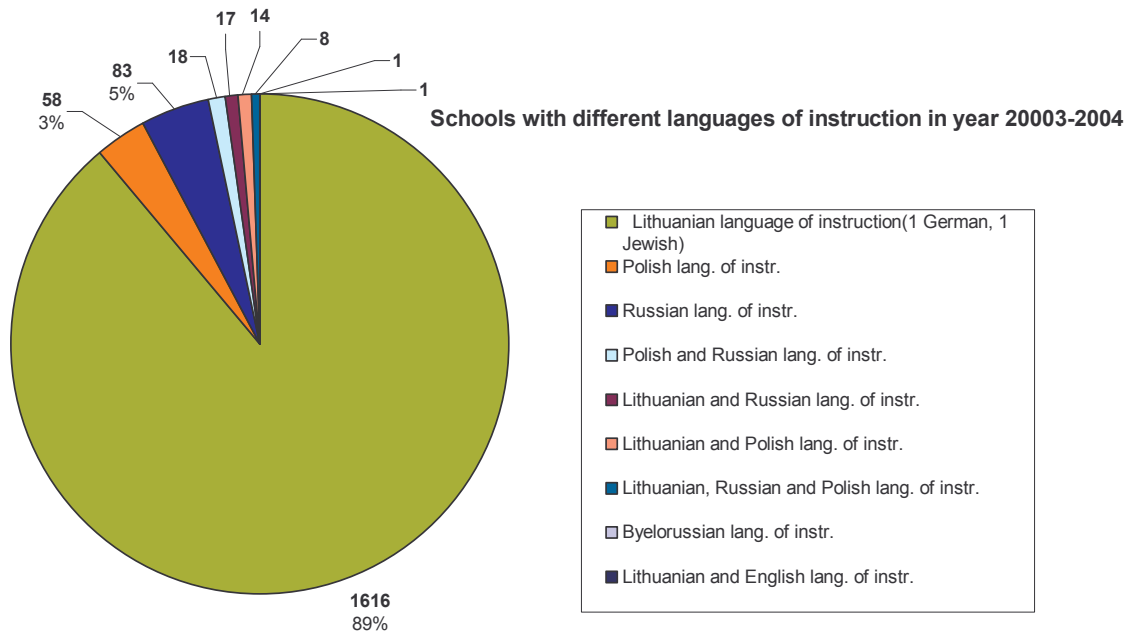
The number of students in the beginning of 2003/2004 with the Russian language of instruction was 30 465 (5,5 % of all pupils) and the number of students with Polish language of instruction was 20 549 (3,7 % of all pupils). The number of students with Lithuanian language of instruction was 505 086.

Distribution of students



The number of general education schools where the language of instruction is Lithuanian in year 2003/2004 was 1616, the number of schools where language of instruction is Russian – 58, the number of schools where language of instruction is Polish – 83, 1 school where language of instruction is Byelorussian and in 58 schools with different languages of instruction. *(The data on private schools and adult education centres is not included).*

Social, economic and political development which took place in the life of Lithuania over the last decade, new challenges facing Lithuania due to the processes of integration and globalization which are gaining momentum so that education better corresponds to the changing needs of the national minorities, modern conditions for ensuring satisfaction thereof and further trends for the development of Lithuania's education.



Dynamics of schools in year 1990/91-2003/04

	1990/91	1993/94	1996/97	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Lithuanian	1801	1978	2037	2038	2031	1960	1857	1616
Russian	85	84	85	69	68	61	56	58
Polish	44	54	58	73	74	80	81	83
Byelorussian	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lithuanian-russian	31	27	25	29	23	20	19	17
Lithuanian-polish	7	6	8	11	11	12	13	14
Russian-polish	47	53	42	28	26	21	21	18
Russian-byelorussian	-	2	1	1	1	1	-	-
Lithuanian-russian-polish	25	14	16	10	10	17	9	8
Lithuanian-english	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1
Total:	2040	2218	2273	2261	2246	2174	2058	1816

Dynamics of students in year 1990-2003 m.

	1990/91	1993/94	1996/97	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Lithuanian	409 295	422 216	459 799	508 373	522 569	520 291	512213	505086
Russian	76 038	58 743	52 315	44 058	41 162	37 481	33698	30465
Polish	11 407	15 312	19 212	21 826	22 303	21710	21314	20549
Total*	501 740	496 387	531 480	574 486	586 294	579741	567453	556325

- Lithuanian , Russian, Polish + Byelorussian students

2. Language teaching for the children of immigrants

Eurydice, Lithuanian contribution to the Survey on "School-based Measures for Immigrant Children"

2.1. National definitions and demographic context of immigration

Under the EU Council Directive 77/486/EEC, Member States are required to take the necessary measures to provide education to the children of migrant workers from the European Union in the official language of the receiving country and encourage the teaching of their mother tongue and culture of origin. In Lithuania, the present number of migrant workers or refugees is not yet significant. The chances are, however, that new arrivals may start coming to the country after its accession to the European Union. The existence of a possibility like that is supported by an analysis of the current international economic situation.

Although Lithuania is a small country, the ethnic composition of its population is quite diverse. Side by side with native Lithuanians that make the absolute majority in the country, representatives of other nations, including Russians, Poles, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Jews, Germans, Karaites, Tartars, the Romany, etc., have been living here for centuries. According to the population census of 2001, Lithuanians accounted for 83.45% and people of other nationalities for 16.5% of the total population. All native-born people of other nationalities are considered to be representatives of ethnic minorities in Lithuania. After Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, there was an influx of foreign nationals to Lithuania. Some of them came with the intention of taking employments whereas others poured over the border as refugees. In Lithuania, those particular people are classified as migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers. Article 2 'Major definitions' of the new draft Law on the Legal Status of Foreign Nationals in the Republic of Lithuania states that:

- A foreign national is a person other than a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania irrespective of whether or not he/she has a citizenship of some foreign country or is a stateless person;
- An asylum seeker is a foreign national who has applied for asylum according to the procedures of the above mentioned draft law but in whose respect no final decision has been taken yet;
- A refugee is a person who, because of his/her well-grounded fears to be subjected to persecution on the grounds of his/her political beliefs or adherence to a particular race, religion, nation or social group, has been forced to leave the country whose national he/she is and who is unable or afraid to get protection of that state, or is a stateless person who has been forced to leave the country in which his/her place of residence was and to which he/she is unable or afraid to return because of the above mentioned reasons.

Persons who have left their homeland for economic reasons in search of better living standards are not classified as refugees: they are regarded as migrants for economic reasons or simply economic migrants.

In documents prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science on the organization of schooling in Lithuania, the children of the above mentioned categories of people are referred to as ‘children of foreign nationals to have arrived to work or get settled in Lithuania’. That is a general term to refer to the children of migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers as well as other people who may have arrived in Lithuania because of other reasons.

2.2. Organization of education of immigrant children in schools of general education

According to regulations approved by Lithuania’s Government, all immigrant children, irrespective of any reasons behind their arrival in Lithuania, have a possibility to attend schools of general education, vocational schools or colleges whereas immigrant children of pre-school age can attend day nurseries and kindergartens or, on request from their parents or foster parents, pre-primary preparatory groups.

The revised Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania adopted in June 2003 devotes considerable attention to the education of immigrant children. Under the law, primary and basic secondary education is compulsory to all children up to the age of 16 and is guaranteed by the state to all Lithuanian citizens and nationals of other countries who have been granted a right to reside or temporarily settle in the country. Children start attending primary schools in the calendar year during which they reach the age of seven. That provision is also applicable to immigrant children who, similarly to children of Lithuanian citizens, may choose various educational programmes, their variants, modules and course programmes in different subjects according to their abilities and aptitudes. Pupils are also free to choose between a school implementing the chosen educational programme and another provider of education, and also learn individually in compliance with the procedure defined by the Minister of Education and Science. In addition to compulsory subjects and their different programmes or courses, pupils may select certain optional subjects offered by the school. There is a free choice of non-formal education or self-development programmes. In schools maintained from the public purse on the general government or municipal level, schooling according to the study programmes of pre-school, primary, basic (lower secondary), upper secondary and vocational education is provided free of charge to all pupils, including immigrant children; pupils of primary and basic (lower secondary) schools are provided with textbooks in full, and pupils of general secondary or vocational schools are partially provided with textbooks from the school stock following a prior assessment of the social status of the pupils’ parents or foster parents.

Most of immigrant children attend government- or municipal-dependent schools free of charge. No separate classes are established for children of migrant workers in Lithuania. They learn in the same class with all others. However, in the refugee reception centre in Rukla, the children of asylum seekers are taught separately for a certain period of time before they learn enough Lithuanian to be able to take up schooling in the official language of instruction.

As set out in Article 30 ‘Right to learn in the official or mother tongue’ of the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania, any Lithuanian citizen or immigrant having a right to reside or temporarily settle in Lithuania is provided with schooling in the official Lithuanian language or granted a possibility to learn that language.

Article 5 ‘Principles of the education system’ of the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania states that one of the main principles underlying the Lithuanian education system is ensuring of equal opportunities as the education system is socially sound and guarantees equality to all individuals irrespective of any differences in gender, race, nationality, origin, social status, religion, convictions or views. It ensures access to schooling, provision of general education and acquisition of the first professional qualification and creates conditions for the improvement of the qualifications obtained and retraining.

Over the period from 1 July 1997 to 1 April 2003, some 1,338 people applied for the status of refugees in Lithuania. The status was granted to 60 people. Refugee seekers included people from such countries as Afghanistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Iran, Russia, Chechnya, etc. The number of refugees to choose Lithuania as the country of their final destination is steadily increasing. Most of them are from the Commonwealth of Independent States as they have more information about Lithuania. Currently, Lithuania is frequently chosen as the country of final destination by refugees from Chechnya who are provided temporary refuge in Lithuania out of humanitarian considerations.

The data show that the average number of immigrant children attending Lithuanian schools of general education has been fluctuating between 100 and 150 per school year. In September 2003, information on immigrant children attending schools of general education in municipal geographical administrative areas was received by the Ministry from 15 municipalities out of 60. According to the data, 46 schools of general education are currently attended by 197 immigrant children. The greater part of the immigrant children have no communication-related problems as the most of them know Russian and therefore have chosen schools with Russian as the language of instruction.

2.3. Measures in support of possibilities for immigrant children to learn their mother tongue

As specified in the educational plans for schools of general education, ‘on request from pupils whose mother tongue is other than the language of instruction, they can be given lessons devoted to the mother tongue provided a teacher of that language is available and a group of at least five pupils is formed’. In Lithuania, that measure can be easily provided in support of children of Russian and Polish origin as there is a wide network of schools with Russian and Polish as the languages of instruction. Similarly, learning the mother tongue is no problem to those pupils whose language of origin is English, German or French as the country has a large number of well trained teachers of those languages. In Lithuania, there are about 40 Sunday schools attended by Armenian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Tartar, Romanian, German, Greek, Jewish and other children wishing to study their mother tongue and get to know the culture and traditions of origin.

In close cooperation with specialists from the Education Development Centre and experts from the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education and Science has prepared and published recommendations for measures in support of immigrant children’s languages of origin. Most of experience in teaching the mother tongue to immigrant children has been accumulated by the refugee reception centre in Rukla. The Centre has a specially equipped classroom for learning mother tongues. The teachers from the Centre act as consultants to people teaching the mother tongues, assist them in preparing for the lessons and drawing up of individual teaching programmes. The Centre, however, experiences a shortage of textbooks for the study of those languages. It is not easy to find people who could teach the mother tongues. Rather often

immigrant pupils and their families do not show sufficient interest in learning the language of origin. The general teaching plans for schools of general education provide for a possibility to organise schooling to immigrant children in two languages: the language of origin and the official Lithuanian language. They also provide for a possibility to teach certain subjects by two teachers one of whom is a teacher of the subject and the other a teacher of the children's mother tongue acting as a consulting assistant. In addition, the general teaching plans provide for a possibility to learn the mother tongue (on request from the pupils' parents or the pupils themselves) by way of selecting a certain module or using the hours allocated to additional education.

As specified in the Order for the Social Integration of Immigrants that have been Granted Refuge approved by Resolution No 572 of 17 May 2001, the costs of giving lessons of the mother tongue can be covered, based upon a contractual agreement, from the funds allocated to the Programme for the Social Integration of Immigrants that have been Granted Refuge.

2.4. Organisation of the official language teaching to immigrant children

A detailed analysis of issues related to the official language teaching to immigrant children is presented in the the 2003/05 General Education Plans for Schools of General Education. The document, approved by the Minister of Education and Science, specifies that:

- On request from pupils' parents and seeking to create equal opportunities for all children to achieve a certain level of maturity to guarantee them a successful start of their schooling, schools of general education, including primary-school-type kindergartens, primary, basic and secondary schools, and gymnasiums implementing programmes of primary education, establish pre-primary preparatory groups to be attended by children from the age of five;
- Separate groups are established for children wishing to attend Lithuanian schools but having either no or very poor command of Lithuanian. Groups like that may be incorporated into pre-primary preparatory groups allocating the hours scheduled in the plan of additional activities for developing the language learning skills of those children who do not know Lithuanian;
- The group attended by children with either no or very poor command of Lithuanian may not comprise more than 15 children. (The latter provision of the general education plan enables immigrant children to learn some Lithuanian before they start attending school);
- Additional pedagogical support is provided to fill in the educational gaps of those immigrant children or pupils who got transferred to a school with a different language of instruction. Remedial classes are given at a mutually agreed time outside the normal school timetable. They are included in the syllabus for additional development of pupils and accounted for in the daybook for their additional development;
- Intensive courses for learning the official Lithuanian language are offered to pupils who started attending Lithuanian primary schools without any command of the language of instruction;
- The hours included in the line 'Mobile groups' of the basic education curriculum in the education plan may be used to compensate for possible gaps in the knowledge and of those immigrant children or pupils who got transferred to a school with a different language of instruction.

As specified in the Order for the Social Integration of Immigrants that have been Granted Refuge, the costs of additional teaching of Lithuanian to school-age children of refugees, if necessary, may be covered from the funds allocated to the Programme for the Social

Integration of Immigrants that have been Granted Refuge provided an agreement is made with the respective school or teacher.

2.5. Programmes, learning materials and teacher training for immigrant children

Immigrant children study Lithuanian from sets of learning materials developed for teaching Lithuanian to pupils of ethnic minority schools. After enrolment in Lithuania's schools of general education, immigrant children learn all other subjects from the same textbooks as the other children in the mainstream. It is, therefore, very important that pupils of foreign origin should acquire a certain command of Lithuanian as soon as possible. The General Curriculum Framework for schools of general education contains a recommendation that pupils should be simultaneously taught by two teachers if that is necessary for the immigrant children who have no command of the official language of instruction or are intensively learning it. In the course of the project carried out jointly by the Ministry of Education and the Dutch agency SARDES, a set of three books entitled *Mano ir tavo šalis Lietuva [Lithuania, the Land of Mine and Yours]* was prepared and published at the expense of the Dutch Ministry for Foreign Relations. The set included the textbook for teaching Lithuanian to immigrant children, another textbook for socio-cultural and civic education and the teachers' book. Immigrant children learning Lithuanian from the first textbook of that set should acquire the "threshold" level of language skills, as defined in the respective documents of the European Union. The textbook may be used both for long-term and short-term courses upon completion of which immigrant children are expected to be able to attend Lithuanian mainstream schools of general education.

Specialists of the Basic and Secondary Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Education Development Centre, who are engaged in developing the policies for language teaching and preparing the general programmes and standards for teaching Lithuanian as the official language, designed recommendations on teaching the official language to immigrant children. In compliance with those recommendations, the teacher of Lithuanian in the receiving school is responsible for preparing an individual programme for teaching the official language to immigrant children. The programme that should comply with the general programme and educational standards for teaching Lithuanian as the official language is worked out after taking into consideration the pupil's age and his/her command of the language.

Prior to 2003, the teacher training higher schools and colleges of Lithuania had no special programme for a recognised course of initial or in-service training of teachers working with immigrant children. Students could follow courses on teaching Lithuanian as a foreign language at the Department of Lithuanian Studies of Vilnius University, Vilnius Pedagogical University and the Pedagogical Department of Vilnius Teacher Training College. There was, however, no specialised course on the education of immigrant children. While carrying out the joint project of the Ministry of Education and the Dutch agency SARDES, the teaching staff from Vilnius Pedagogical University and Vilnius Teacher Training College prepared a special course for initial and in-service training of teachers working with immigrant children. The programme of that course was published in the teachers' book of the teaching set, *Mano ir tavo šalis Lietuva [Lithuania, the Land of Mine and Yours]*.

The course may be taught at institutions for both initial and in-service teacher training. The implementation of the project triggered off a constructive dialogue between the Ministry of Education and Science and representatives of various institutions working with immigrant

children. A number of seminars on work with immigrant children were held to teachers and representatives of municipal education departments and public organizations.

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PART III: Foreign Language Education Strategy Paper

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Purpose of the document

The society in Lithuania is fostering the most universal heritage of the European nations, i.e. the preservation and development of linguistic diversity. Numerous public, cultural and social changes in Europe and worldwide had a dramatic impact on language policy in Lithuania, as the country moves towards the age of rapid changes and new challenges. The widening gates to the unifying Europe, communication and collaboration with the world forced the education stakeholders in Lithuania to contemplate the processes of changes in foreign language education knowing that the importance of proficiency in foreign languages will continue to grow in the future. People started to perceive language learning differently, they became more aware of the advantages that foreign language skills give in the diverse European Union and beyond its boundaries, especially better prospects to communicate, study and work. The importance of foreign language education was highlighted in the preparation of new Lithuanian school curriculum. Stringent requirements were set for foreign language education as an integral part of personality development.

The Foreign Language Education Strategy Paper is one of the components of the Language Policy Description of the Republic of Lithuania, aiming to determine the role of foreign languages in the overall Language Education Strategy in the Lithuanian educational system and to introduce the public and the Council of Europe to foreign language education policy in Lithuania through the presentation of changes in language education, approaches to language education in Lithuania, application of the European experience, giving the overview of current situation, identifying the problems and looking for solutions which meet the needs and interests of every citizen of Lithuania according to the requirements of modern life.

1. Overview of foreign language education:

1.1. Foreign language teaching policy formation.

After the restoration of Independence in Lithuania and the launch of the educational reform, the strategy and curriculum of foreign language teaching had to be substantially modified and the methodology of foreign language teaching had to be dramatically changed. It was a complex work requiring pro-active creative efforts. The school associated the key objective of its activities with specific goals in subject teaching, including those of foreign languages. The educational reform had a strong conceptual foundation, i.e. the Concept of National School (1988) where education was perceived as the component of national culture. The principles of national education were defined as far back as 1992 in the General Concept of Education in Lithuania, under which the reform in education was directly linked with the development of modern nation, open society and democratic state. The Draft General Curriculum for General Education Schools in Lithuania, published in 1994, and the Draft General Curriculum Framework and Standards for General Education Schools, Grades 1-10, Publishing Centre, Vilnius, amended and developed in 1997, identified the underlying reasons of changes in foreign language education in the socio-cultural context and in terms of didactics of subject. They identified concrete changes, explained the content of some newer terms of didactics, the concept and purpose of standards and curriculum, reviewed the main aims and objectives of

education. This document initiated the implementation of new school curriculum which was outlined in the standards of achievements and in general curriculum. All these source documents enabled the democratisation and humanisation of education aimed at the development of an independent personality able to create his/her own life with responsibility. The public was involved in the educational changes as the player able to influence the curriculum, teaching methods and materials. It became apparent that the evaluation of new circumstances of foreign language learning was important in order to become an active member of the society. There were two types of reasons for changes in foreign language education: 1) social and 2) didactics of subject. The internal social reasons were the alteration of political situation in our country which brought around the possibilities to choose the ways and conditions of living and professional activity, unlimited opportunities to meet the people from other countries. The external social reasons were the cultural, political and economic integration of nations and countries and the necessity to protect the socio-cultural identity. All these changes imposed the requirement to study and learn foreign languages. It was the necessity of the times developing alongside the global events such as rapid technological progress, development of information society, creation and development of communications such as electronic mail, the Internet, etc. All these circumstances further promoted foreign language learning and the restructuring of school curriculum. In these new social conditions, foreign languages became an important factor in socio-cultural cooperation. Learning of foreign languages should have come closer to natural exchange of information. New social conditions prompted the education stakeholders to change the choice of foreign languages giving the priority to Western European languages and withdrawing from compulsory teaching/learning of Russian and providing possibilities to study two or three foreign languages. The teaching methods were also changing. The grammar-translation method was replaced by the communicative approach. The education process was differentiated with the introduction of learning levels which enabled pupils to select the curriculum according to their abilities, to develop their knowledge and proficiency. The country saw the emergence of schools with special emphasis on foreign language education offering the possibility to learn foreign languages since grade 2. The curriculum was also changing. Different social conditions imposed the need for special focus on socio-cultural content of language learning. Rather than being the object of education, the language materials had to become the tool of development of communicative skills. There was a need to develop such teaching materials which could provide training for various activities and would be in line with modern language teaching methods. British, German, French, etc. sets of textbooks were used together with newly developed national textbooks for foreign language education.

The modernisation of curriculum continued and the drafts of General Curriculum Framework and Standards for general education schools (grades 11–12) were developed and published in 1999. They were used as the basis for drafting the last important document, i.e. the General Curriculum Framework and Education Standards for Grades 11–12, which was published in 2002. This document establishes the general framework of school curriculum for pupils of grades 11–12 to be used by the schools to prepare their specific curriculum, including that for foreign languages, which meets the needs and interests of schoolchildren, the needs of local community and the possibilities of the school. Other documents are also used to make the curriculum more specific. These are the national education standards, specifications of maturity examinations, teaching materials, national plan for education and, finally, decisions of school's council regarding the profile of the school, modules of subjects, etc. The purpose and structure of foreign language education as well as its links with other subjects, methodological references and the description of achievements of foreign language in all types of language activities are presented as some of the key objectives of modern school under the language education policy.

The school reform pinpointed the importance of foreign language learning and proficiency for the maturity of personality, communication with the world, learning of other cultures and their comparison with native culture, sharing of information and socio-cultural values with other people thus enabling the development of communicative competence and cultural self-awareness, nurturing of individuals' relation with themselves, other nations and their cultures.

1.2. Aims of foreign language education

As any other school subject, foreign languages develop our general skills which are universal. These are the skills which enable any individual to be successful at school and in various professional activities. They include personal, social, communicative, critical thinking and problem solution, etc. skills. Some specific skills are also important in foreign language education and they are presented in general curriculum as the components of communicative competence, i.e. subcompetences. In foreign languages, the communicative competence acquires a specific meaning which is unique to foreign languages. Foreign language learning gives the ability to understand the language as a social and cultural phenomenon and the expression of thought and helps develop overall linguistic culture. It is extremely important to teach to perceive the language as the expression of thought, the condition of behaviour and activity determining self-expression and lifestyle of every speaker, listener, reader or writer. The proficiency in mother tongue and foreign language skills also help reveal the uniqueness of native language and to develop a general cultural competence in languages. Various meaningful language activities are aimed at the improvement of personal communicative as well as linguistic and cultural competence, promotion of language-driven thinking and personal relations with multicultural community, understanding of language as an ever-changing phenomenon, perception of ties with cultural traditions of one's nation. All this promotes better understanding of problems of existence and strengthens our personal value systems and general skills, develops cultural and language communication skills which are necessary for everyone and inseparable from each other when learning foreign languages. One of the main objectives is to teach foreign language in the form of practical activity allowing to discover the content and meaning of information, to compare new and old information, to absorb various cultural experiences, to process, store and convey them. Therefore, the idea is to show that language is a tool to receive and transmit information. The practical aims of foreign language education require the entire teaching process to be of communicative nature. Schoolchildren must develop the skills of autonomous learning, be able to apply their skills and knowledge in new situations, be able to use dictionaries, reference books and latest information technologies. The developmental aims of foreign language education require the expansion of both philological and general outlook of pupils. Foreign language teaching must be based on the experience of native language learning and other cross-curricular relations. It is necessary to nurture the ability to communicate, identify the main linguistic content of native language and evaluate cultural values and experience of other countries. The educational aims of foreign language education are very important. When schoolchildren learn foreign languages, they develop their personality and strengthen such values as openness to language and culture of a given country, prepare themselves for living in a multinational, multicultural and multilingual world, develop the qualities and values necessary for successful communication such as tolerance and ability to cooperate, develop the desire to learn languages and continue lifelong learning, develop their moral and aesthetic views as well as the desire to conceive the world as the system of interlinked processes and phenomena, nurture positive traits of character as well as the ability to think, the will, memory, attention, feelings, skills of systematic and diligent work,

independent thinking skills and ability to select the appropriate cognitive activity. Foreign language education helps develop the social and cognitive activity and creativity in pupils.

1.3. General trends of foreign language teaching in the European Union and the Council of Europe documents and their application in the Lithuanian foreign language education policy

Lithuania is about to become open to the world and the expanding European Union. In the 21st century, the Europeans live in a multilingual environment. The restructuring of curriculum, including foreign language education, in the framework of the school system in Lithuania, which undergoes the reforms based on democratic principles, dates back to the very first years of the restoration of Independence. It was necessary to take account of global tendencies affecting the development of the country and to think of possibilities within the process of learning which could enable young people to acquire personal and socio-cultural competence necessary in the light of rapidly changing reality, which would ensure successful solution of personal, social and professional problems in the emerging multinational and multilingual society of different cultural traditions.

With the new possibility to communicate with educational institutions from other countries, Lithuanian authorities began to investigate the approaches towards foreign language education in the European Union and to examine the language policy of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe, which was founded in 1949, currently unites 45 countries. The Republic of Lithuania is one of its member states. The homepage of the Council of Europe is at www.coe.int. The Council of Europe seeks to help its member states create the necessary conditions for its citizens to learn several languages. The ability to communicate in two or more languages ensures the mobility, better employment opportunities and personal reception of information. The Council of Europe emphasizes that language learning helps promote tolerance and understanding of other cultures. Therefore, it must be available to everybody.

The Council of Europe assisted Lithuania with the development of new curriculum for the reformed school and helped implement new language education programmes, promoted innovative language teaching and training of teachers. All these activities are coordinated by two bodies: the Language Policy Division in Strasbourg and the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz (Austria). We were and continue to be active members of cooperation. Specialists from 47 European states, which are signatories to the European Cultural Convention, are taking part in the projects coordinated by the Language Policy Division in Strasbourg. One of the major goals of the Council of Europe for the last decades is to develop and implement more practical approach to language education based on daily communication needs of learners. The outcome of this innovative work is the developed method of communicative language learning which is now widely applied both in Europe and Lithuania. The Council of Europe published the description of reference levels of communicative skills in its “Learning, Teaching, Assessment. A Common European Framework of Reference. Council of Europe, 2001”. It is an integral system applied in the European and, obviously, Lithuanian language education. This reference is widely used as the basis to plan education and assessment both by the educational policy-makers who develop educational programmes and by the teachers and developers of examinations. The website of the Language Policy Division is: www.coe.int/lang/.

Acknowledging the importance of the role of teachers in the process of learning and development of innovative teaching methodologies, the Council of Europe increased its

operational dimension and set up the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz (Austria) in 1994. The Centre has 33 member states. Lithuania joined the Centre in 1999. The main purposes of the Centre is to promote innovative language teaching, to support the cooperation between teachers and their research activities in all member states of the Council of Europe. It is a forum for language teaching experts, trainers of teachers, authors of textbooks and other specialists. The topics discussed at the Centre were dealing with the language education policy in Lithuania aimed at the application of communication and information technologies in language teaching and teacher training. Through our participation in the project of the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz on early language learning, we prepared and implemented the policy for early language learning in the educational framework of our country. Through the conferences and seminars organised by the Centre, our developers of textbooks and foreign language programmes gained more experience and got acquainted with innovative approaches. The experience was further applied to the programmes of professional improvement of teachers in Lithuania and was used by our educational policy-makers.

The address of the European Centre for Modern Languages is: <http://www.coe.int/ecml> or www.ecml.at.

Lithuania became the member of the Council of Europe in 1993. The Council of Europe supported language education initiatives in its new member states. In 1995–1997, seminars were organised in Soest, Germany, to discuss the issues of development of educational programmes, while regional seminars to discuss all current issues in language education were held in Riga, Vilnius and Tallinn. The thirst ideas of bilingual education in Lithuania were also born during the seminar organised by the experts of the Council of Europe in Vilnius. Teachers were given the opportunity to take part in the R&D seminars of the Council of Europe organised in a number of countries.

Both the European Union and the Council of Europe encourage people to show interest in languages. English is the most popular first foreign language in the EU Member States. Usually, French is the second foreign language. 91% of schoolchildren are learning English, 34%– French, 15% – German, and 10% – Spanish. (http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion). The European Union highly values the proficiency in foreign languages. It is a usual practice in many Member States to speak, study, work and pursue other goals in at least three languages. The proficiency in languages is also favoured by the employers. They can use the advantages of the European citizenship in the common market, especially the right to live and work in any EU Member State. The European Commission wishes to make this advantage available to all people living in Europe. In 1995, the European Union published the White Paper “Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society” and decided to encourage all its nationals to learn at least three languages: their mother tongue and two more languages. It is not a coincidence that the attitudes of Lithuanians, as members of the European Union, towards foreign language learning are changing as they can see the possibilities to live, study or work in the European Union and beyond its borders.

Now we will review the involvement of Lithuania in the European educational programmes and will name the opportunities they provide, their importance for the Lithuanian foreign language education policy as well as the possibilities which are being used.

The European educational programme SOCRATES, which was set up by the EU, had and still has a major impact on education and language teaching and learning in Lithuania. One of the purposes of the programme is to improve learning of European languages. On 1 November

1998, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved Lithuania's participation in the SOCRATES programme.

The European Union educational programme Socrates has been successfully operating in thirty European countries for the period of eight years. Lithuania has been involved in the programme for five years. In 2000, the second phase of the programme, which should continue for seven years, was launched. It is the follow-up of the first phase which lasted five years and yielded valuable results.

The figures speak for themselves: 500,000 students from various European countries were given the possibility to study in universities abroad under the exchange programmes, 10,000 schools participated in the European cooperation projects, thousands of projects were implemented to promote European languages. Socrates programme comprises eight actions:

Comenius – school education

Erasmus – higher education

Grundtvig – adult education and other education pathways

Lingua – teaching and learning of European languages

Minerva – use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education

Observation and innovation of education systems

Joint actions with other European programmes

Socrates takes account of all types of learning – formal and informal – and all levels, from nursery school to university and adult education, which is becoming increasingly important. Socrates is relevant to all those involved in education: teachers, education staff, administrative and management staff, along with the pupils and students, all playing an increasingly active part in European cooperation projects. With Socrates, school can no longer remain confined within four walls. It is opening up to the various components of civil society which are eager to take up the challenges of education: civil servants and decision-makers, local and regional authorities, social partners, associations, the business sector, etc.

All of these actions together have common priorities. The emphasis is on countering social exclusion and under-achievement at school by providing specific support for disadvantaged groups, and promoting equal opportunities for women and men. Special attention is paid to possibilities to learn and teach European languages, particularly the languages which are less widely used and taught. There is also emphasis on the importance of studying in a multicultural environment as one of the cornerstones of European citizenship. The new information and communication technologies (ICT) permeate the whole programme, as they have much to offer active teaching methods and contribute to innovation. Lastly, Socrates encourages broad dissemination of information, ideas and good practice. The systems and practices in education vary enormously from one country to another. Europe is very diverse itself. In this context, European cooperation, whether through mobility, pilot projects, European networks or comparative studies, offers huge advantages. It provides a fertile ground for innovation, the quest for quality, and the implementation of new ideas. Surely we will be more creative if we all pull together.

There is a close affinity between the goals of Socrates programme and the national goals of education in Lithuania. The need to coordinate efforts under the educational reform and the accession of Lithuania to the European Union was emphasised as one of the priority areas of Lithuanian education as far back as in 1998. Currently, all goals of Socrates programme are

relevant to national needs. The period of accession to the EU makes the overall goals of the programme more relevant in the context of Lithuania and, as a programme of cooperation between European educational institutions and individuals, this programme is also in line with the political aims of Lithuania on its way to the EU integration. Virtually all actions of the programme meet the objectives of the EU integration through the dissemination of experience, language learning, communication and exchange of experience, and the “European” dimension of projects. One of the main goals of education in Lithuania is to increase the quality of education by implementing the standards of the European reference levels. Socrates helps solving problems in education which are too difficult to tackle for the country on its own. For instance, due to financial difficulties, the problem of access to education is very important in Lithuania, and Socrates emphasises the necessity to solve it. There are no doubt that international mobility is very relevant to national goals. For instance, in case of Erasmus, international mobility plays a vital role helping keep pace with progress in higher education and, at the same time, enabling international recognition of studies (Erasmus promotes more flexible recognition of credits, changes in study programmes, etc.). It is very important that the programme helps increase professional options for students who will be more successful in a common market. The professional diversity of outgoing students is an important factor, especially when there is a shortage of academic studies in a particular field in Lithuania. For instance, in Soviet times, some social sciences were seriously downgraded and distorted, so the possibility to gain relevant knowledge in the EU Member States is very important for the development of this particular science. Comenius and Grundtvig are related to several programmes at national level, for instance, the Programme for Implementation of ITC in Education or the Action Plan to Ensure Lifelong Learning.

Those five years that the programme was active in Lithuania are best characterised by constantly increasing number of participants. More than 2,000 students from Lithuania, who received Erasmus grants, and nine hundred teachers were able to study and give lectures at European universities. Currently, 30 institutions are involved in Erasmus programme. During the last three years, the mobility of students and teaching staff was constantly increasing. For instance, in academic year 2000–2001, the mobility of students and teaching staff increased by 97% and 57%, respectively, as compared to 1999–2000. In 2002–2003, students will receive 1,000 grants and 380 grants will be provided to teachers. During the last three years, higher education institutions have been represented better in terms of their geographical location, especially as, in addition to universities, newly set up colleges (non-university higher education institutions) recently became involved in the programme. The majority of outgoing university teaching staff and students are from the two largest cities (Vilnius and Kaunas), where there is a strong concentration of higher education institutions. Strengthening position of colleges in the provinces should encourage their representatives to be more active in the future. One of current priorities is to involve as many colleges as possible into Erasmus programme.

During the second phase of Socrates programme, Grundtvig replaced the previous adult education programme and provided new opportunities in small cooperation projects for adult education and Grundtvig networks. Bearing in mind that modern adult education is a relatively new phenomenon in Lithuania, various organisations take part in Grundtvig actions, among them the adult education centres, non-governmental organisations, labour exchange training centres, associations of schools, colleges, etc. Since 2001, there has been a clear growth in interest in this programme. For example, in 2001, the national agency received 16 projects and 9 of them received financial assistance. In the same year, the European Commission received 38 letters of intent to participate in centralised actions where Lithuanian institutions could act as partners and coordinators. 14 Grundtvig grants were provided for the professional

improvement. In 2003, Lithuanian institutions took part in 20 decentralised projects for adult cooperation and 25 centralised projects. Uneven regional representation of institutions remains one of the major problems. Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda counties are well represented, but there are too little institutions from Panevėžys and Šiauliai areas.

In 2001, Lithuania took a rather active role in the centralised Lingua programme. Together with partners from France, Sweden, Germany, Belgium and other countries, Lithuania launched 4 Lingua-1 projects (promotion of language learning and teaching) and 1 Lingua-2 project (promotion of development of new language teaching methods). One of Lingua-1 projects is coordinated by the Lithuanian institution. In 2003, 9 applications for Lingua projects were received, of which 4 were approved.

In 2000, Lithuanian institutions took part in 2 Minerva projects, and 4 projects were carried out in 2001, 2002 and 2003. One project is coordinated by the Lithuanian institution – Kaunas University of Technology. In addition, one Lithuanian institution started to coordinate another project (ADIS, aimed at integration of the disabled into the labour market; completed by now) before the start of phase two. From the geographical perspective it is clear that Lithuania is represented by institutions from Vilnius and Kaunas in all projects except one.

School education programme Comenius is very important for the education system of Lithuania, a country which has been in isolation for a number of years. It is a large, intensive and long-term programme aimed at international cooperation between schools and pre-school education establishments. This is evidenced by its intensive development in 2000–2002. The second phase of the programme, which was launched at the end of the first phase, has really accelerated and, in recent years, a lot of effort has been devoted to improving the quality of projects and better dissemination of the programme.

In 1998–2003, 25 Comenius 2.1 European cooperation projects for the professional improvement of teachers were implemented. Lithuanian institutions are involved in 4 Comenius networks. 233 individual training grants were provided for teachers and 44 student teachers of foreign languages received practical training in European schools.

Although the number of eligible applications is limited because of financial difficulties, the increase in the popularity of the programme is shown by the growing number of applications (for instance, the number of applications for Comenius 1 programme increased from 87 in 2000 to 148 in 2002 and 182 in 2003). During the period of five years, 283 institutions took part in 448 Comenius 1 projects. Institutions from major Lithuanian cities and regions are the most active in Comenius activities: 53 from Vilnius, 51 from Kaunas, 33 from Šiauliai, 21 from Panevėžys, 21 from Klaipėda. Until now, no institutions from Birštonas town, Jonava, Jurbarkas, Rokiškis, Šilalė and Švenčionys regions took part in the programme. The majority of projects is carried out by secondary schools (199) and gymnasiums (106) but the vocational training institutions and basic schools are active as well (46 and 25, respectively). 18 special education institutions, 18 extra education institutions, 14 primary schools, 10 schools-nurseries, 4 youth schools, 6 adult education institutions and 2 pre-school education institutions took part in the programme.

According to project coordinators, one of the most important motives for involvement in the programme is the need for innovations, i.e. the desire to improve, enrich professional knowledge and skills, learn new teaching methods and experiences and apply them in practice. Another popular motive is the desire to get to know and to introduce students to culture and

heritage of other European countries and learn languages. Some educators note that Socrates programme is the only possibility to learn more about the experience of colleagues in other countries and cultures in this difficult financial situation for education. Strengthening of contacts with existing partners is rarely a motive for involvement in the programme. Until recently, teachers in Lithuania had little contact with educators from the European countries and they are increasingly looking for partners in organised forms.

The impact of involvement in the programme is very diverse and difficult to measure. It can be measured on the basis on subjective assessment of participants and the opinion of experts. All Comenius participants and experts assess the participation in the programme as very valuable in terms of acquisition of new methods and experience, raising awareness of educational systems in other countries, improvement of language competence and management methods, gathering of skills, learning other cultures, and finding professional contacts in other countries. A number of educators emphasise that an important outcome of this programme resulting from the acquired experience and methods of education in other European countries is the change in thinking and a new approach to students and their profession, the shift of values towards democracy and tolerance. They also emphasise a positive impact of projects on students (especially in small settlements and rural areas), which helps fostering new skills and competences as well as changing their thinking and promoting independence. According to the coordinators of school partnership projects, the main results were: better awareness of the European cultures among students and teachers, cultural communication between students as well as the dissemination of new initiatives, acquisition of skills and knowledge about education and integration of students with special needs among the educators. The dissemination of project implementation experience among the educators is very important as well. Partnership projects in the form of correspondence are viewed to be less efficient. It was suggested to reduce their number and offer more school improvement and linguistic projects as well as the mobility projects. The problem of proficiency in European languages is still important in Lithuania and all educators, who took part in a number of different projects, give a favourable assessment for the impact of this programme on improvement of this competence. This impact was multidimensional: from a selection of the field of studies according to the language learned during the project, to the implementation of new language teaching methods and development of methodological materials. The contribution of the programme to the development of new teaching methods is perceived as being very significant. The work with projects is also an active cross-curricular learning method.

More information about Socrates programme and possibilities of involvement in its actions can be found at www.socrates.lt or the National Coordinator of the EU Socrates Programme in Vilnius, Geležinio Vilko g. 12.



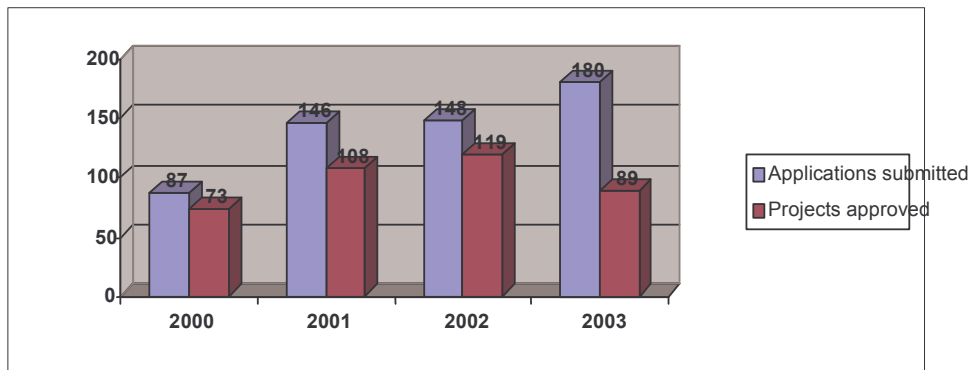
Education and Culture

Socrates



National Coordinator of the EU Socrates Programme

Growth of Comenius 1 Projects



Education and Culture

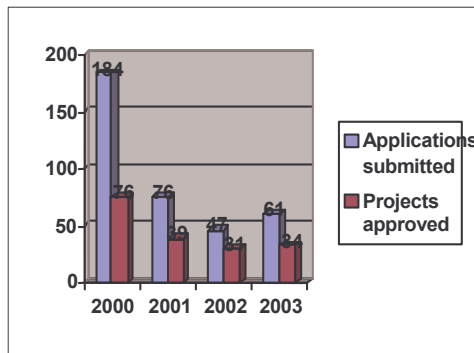
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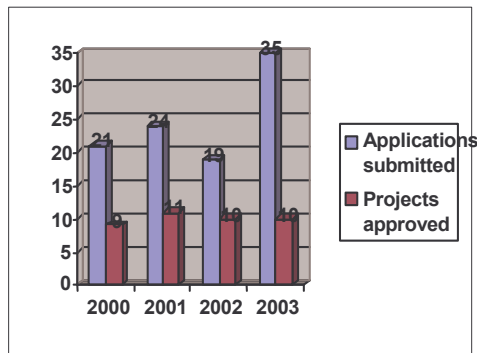
National Coordinator of the EU Socrates Programme

Comenius 2.2 Grants

In-Service Training



Language Assistants





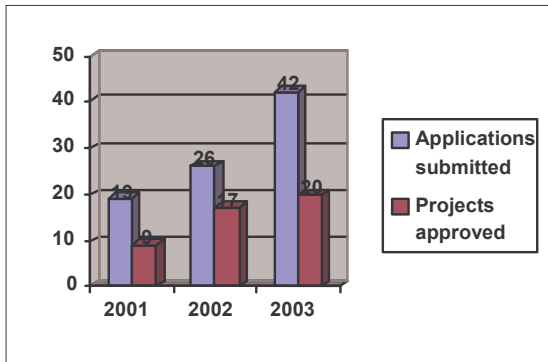
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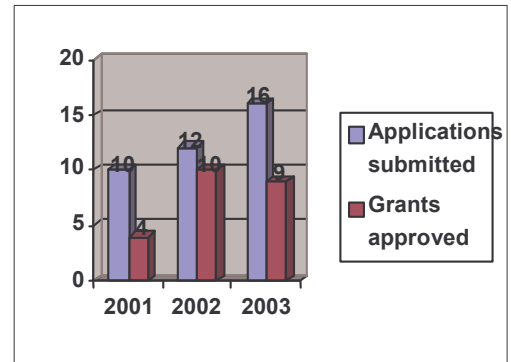
National Coordinator
of the EU Socrates
Programme

Grundtvig Decentralised Actions

Grundtvig 2 Projects



Grundtvig 3 Grants

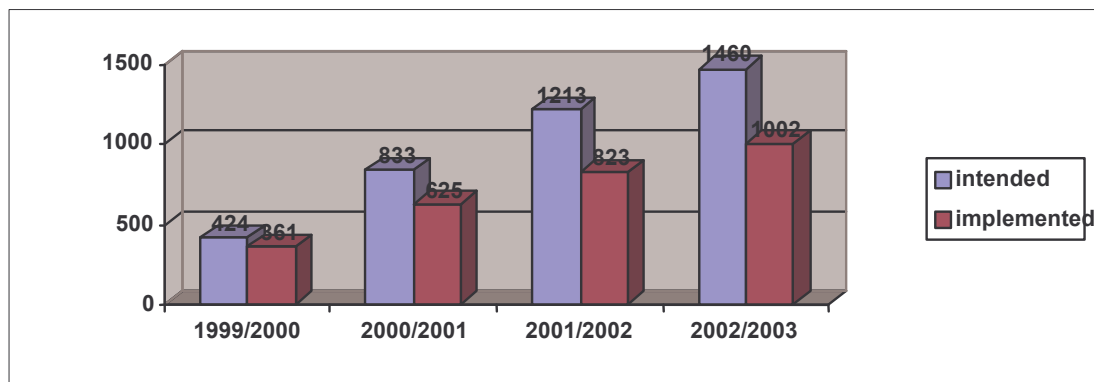


Socrates



National Coordinator
of the EU Socrates
Programme

Mobility of Erasmus Students



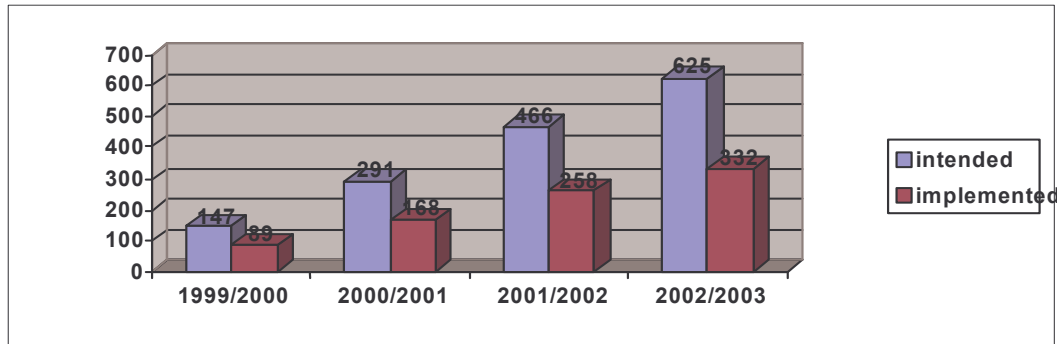


Socrates



National Coordinator of the EU Socrates Programme

Mobility of Erasmus Lecturers

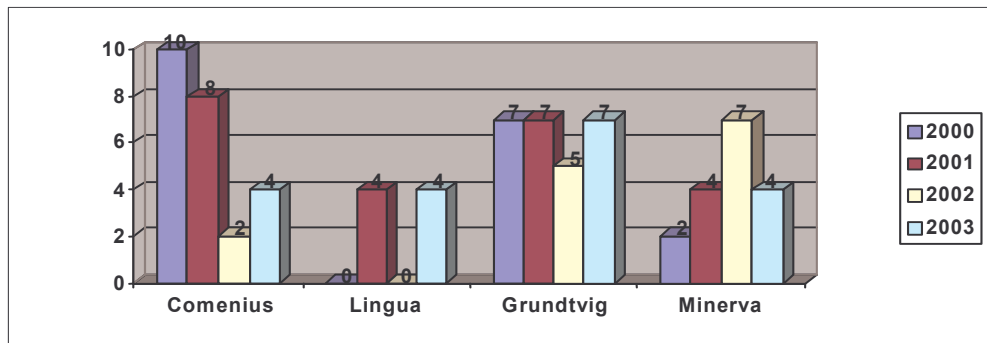


Socrates

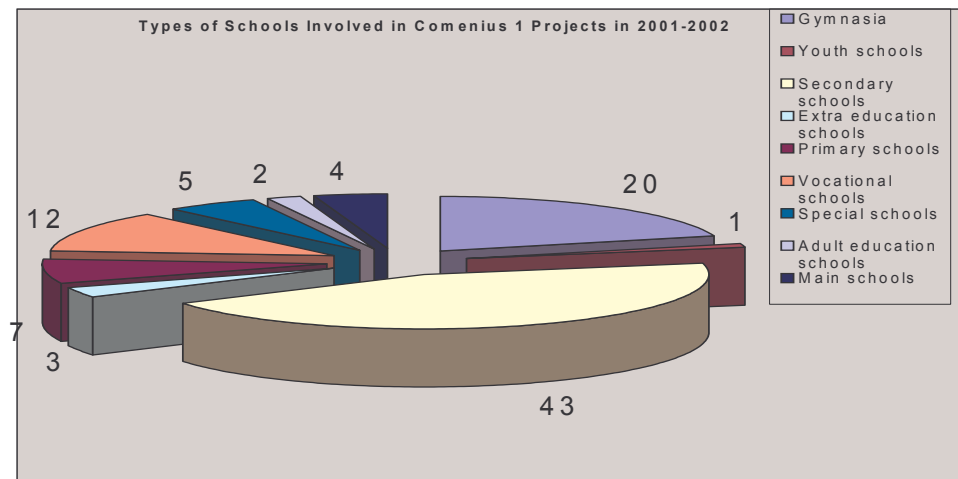


National Coordinator of the EU Socrates Programme

Centralised Projects



Involvement of Lithuanian institutions in Socrates decentralised activity projects



LEONARDO DA VINCI is the vocational training programme. Since foreign language skills ensure better career and business opportunities, learning of languages at vocational schools is one of the key priorities. This programme supports language education projects aimed at: exchange visits of language teachers, collection and analysis of best language teaching practices, development of educational materials for language teaching. Our vocational schools have also been involved in foreign language education programmes. This involvement is not limited to partnership. Our vocational schools intended to be more active pursuing the possibilities for foreign language learning provided by the EU. More information about this Programme is available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/leonardo_en.html.

The Council of Europe and the European Union announced the year of 2001 as the European Year of Languages. It was a real festival of languages in Europe and Lithuania. The principles of this initiative were: the Europe of today and the Europe of future will be plurilingual. Plurilingualism is the main strength of Europe. Every European must have access to lifelong language learning. Everyone deserves to be able to use the advantages of language skills in the fields of culture and economy. Language studies promote tolerance and understanding among people of different linguistic and cultural background. These principles were followed by the Lithuanian National Committee for Languages when implementing the programme of the Year of Languages. The programme will be continued through the celebration of the Day of Languages as the annual national event in Lithuania.

Every year, the jury of experts of each EU Member State awards the European Label for innovative projects in language learning which meet the European criteria. In 2002, the European Union allowed Lithuania to take part in the European Label initiative. The Socrates Foundation and the Ministry of Education and Science invited language teachers from Lithuanian schools to submit their projects. Ten initiatives were awarded the European Label by the Lithuanian jury.

For more information see: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/language/label.html>;
<http://www.smm.lt/old/km/km.index.htm>

During the 20th Conference of Ministers of the Council of Europe (15–17 May 2000), the ministers of education of all European states signed the Resolution on the European Language

Portfolio (ELP). The Resolution recommends all states to pursue harmonised introduction of ELP into their national educational systems and to ensure favourable conditions for its application in various stages of education. The ELP will be used to reflect the proficiency in all languages and to identify the achievements in learning. The ELP will be based on the reference levels described in the Common European Framework. It will be recognised and acceptable everywhere in Europe and will give benefits to lifelong language learners. The ELP will enable learners to acknowledge their proficiency in foreign languages, identify their international experience and set specific learning objectives. By recording their language competences, including partial and specific competences, and by setting their learning objectives, the learners should become more aware, independent and more motivated to learn. In order to ensure the continuity and coherence of this project, the Council of Europe developed the Principles and Guidelines for ELP describing the overall core and scientific basis of the project. Moreover, the ELP Validation Committee was set up. All models of ELP which comply with the validation procedures will be assigned the validity number, the right to use the logo of the Council of Europe and be called the European Language Portfolio. The presentation of the ELP to the pedagogical community and politicians was chosen by Lithuania as the main focus for the launch conference of the Year of Languages in the Baltic States. The experience in the ELP development in the Czech Republic, Ireland, Finland and other countries was presented. In 2002, a task force was set up by the Ministry of Education and Science to develop the Lithuanian version of ELP and the action plan for its implementation for school students of upper secondary level (grades 9–12). Its presentation is expected before 2004. The Lithuanian Language Portfolio will consist of the language passport, language biography and dossier. A special ELP website was launched at www.coe.int/portfolio - www.smm.lt/old/km/km_index.htm. It has links to other national Language Portfolios.

The introduction of the Portfolio should become a part of the process of changes in the assessment system in Lithuanian schools and should be continuously applied in other age groups. It should play a pivotal role creating and developing the tradition and culture of self-assessment.

2. Foreign language learning possibilities

Comparative statistics

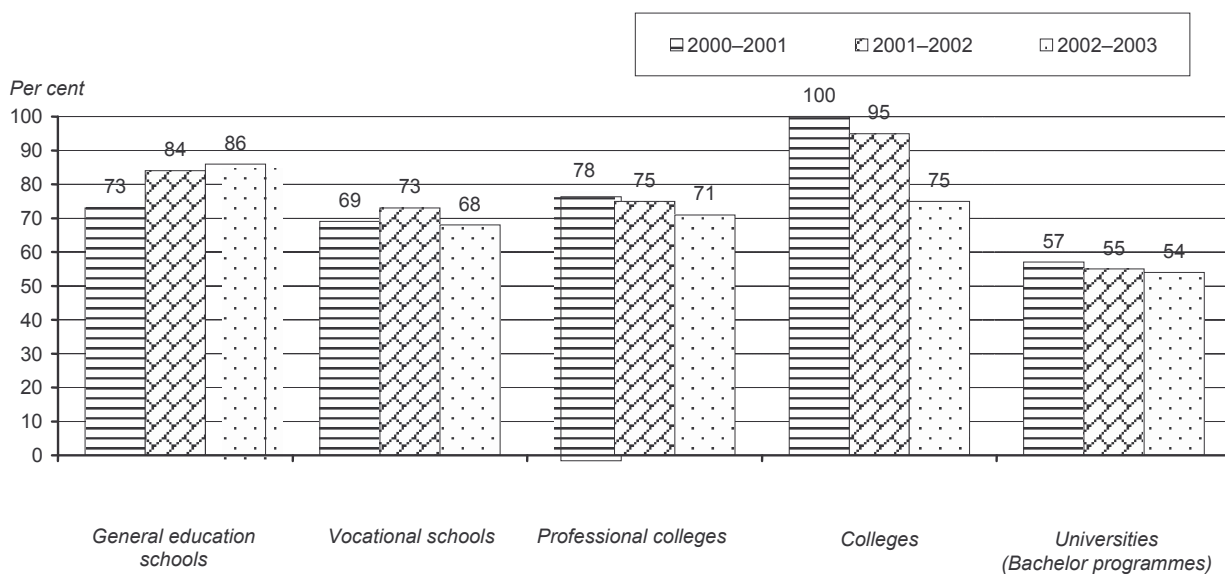
Number of schools, students and pedagogues

Beginning of the academic year

	2000–2001	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004
Number of educational establishments	2521	2428	2324	2078
General education schools	2354	2270	2172	1932
Vocational schools	84	81	82	83
Professional colleges	57	42	27	15
Colleges	7	16	24	27
Universities	19	19	19	21
Number of students, thousands	787.3	796.7	806.9	810.5
General education schools	603.8	602.4	594.3	583.1
Vocational schools	47.0	45.0	44.4	44.4

	2000–2001	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004
Professional colleges	37.4	32.0	22.4	12.3
Colleges	3.5	10.4	26.2	40.5
Universities	95.6	106.9	119.6	130.2
Educators, thousands	70.4	68.9	69.1	69.5
General education schools	51.9	50.9	50.2	50.3
Vocational schools	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.7
Professional colleges	4.2	3.6	3.3	1.7
Colleges	0.4	1.1	2.0	3.5
Universities	9.0	8.6	8.9	9.3

Students of foreign languages in educational establishments as compared to the total number of students and pupils, %
Beginning of the academic year



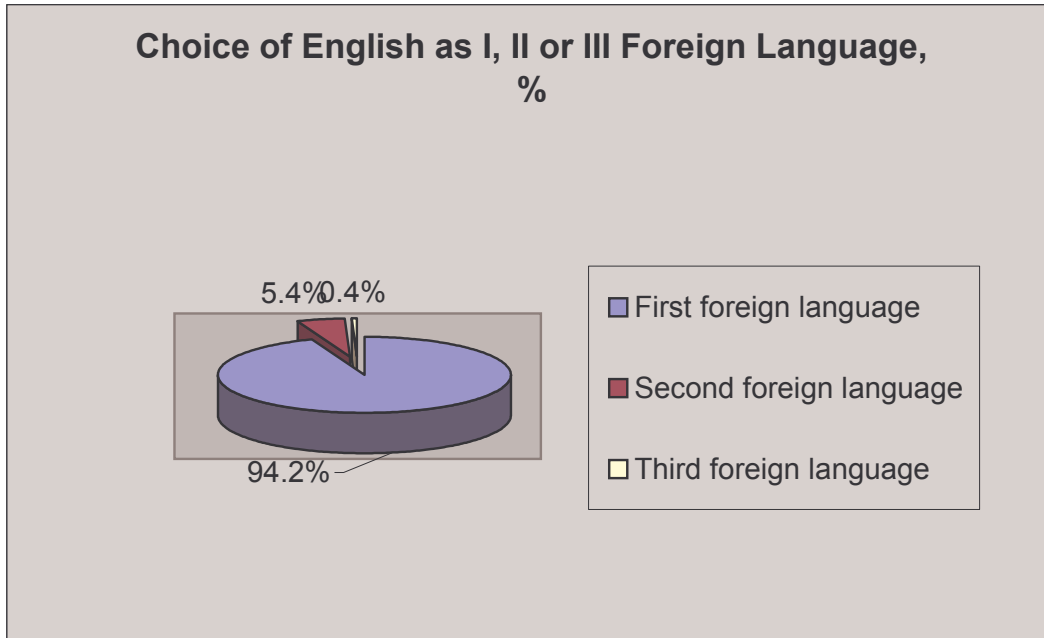
2.1. Foreign language education in general education schools in Lithuania

2.1.1. Formal and non-formal foreign language education

In academic year 2003–2004, there are 485,876 pupils in 1,781 schools in Lithuania studying their first foreign language; 279,108 pupils are studying their second foreign language in 1,172 schools; 4,496 students are studying their third foreign language in 165 schools; 1,850 pupils are studying the Latin language in 73 schools.

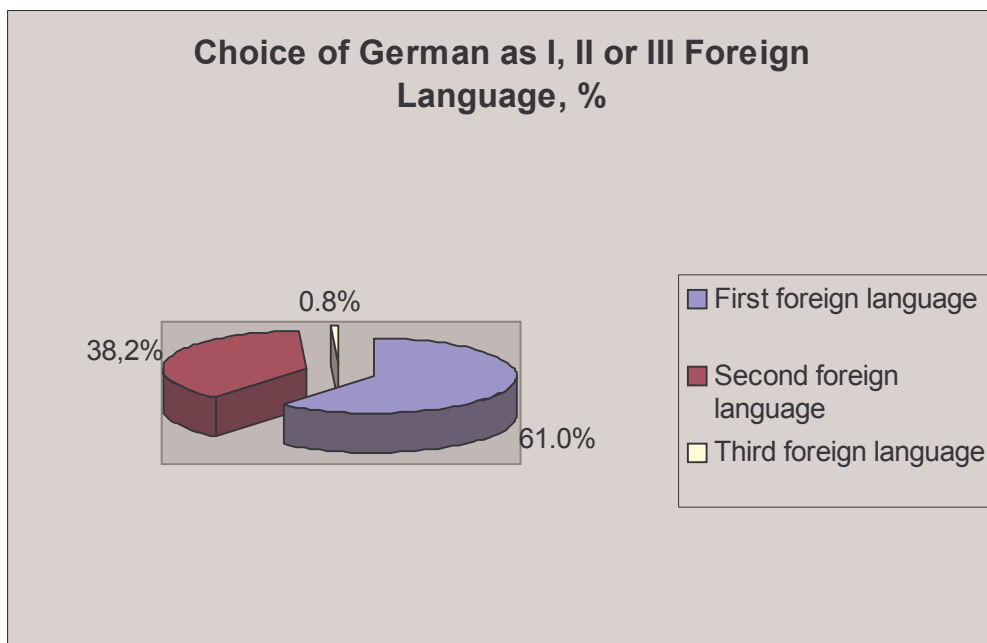
The English language

as the first foreign language is studied by 402,748 pupils in 1,601 schools
as the second foreign language is studied by 23,001 pupils in 475 schools
as the third foreign language is studied by 1,852 pupils in 88 schools



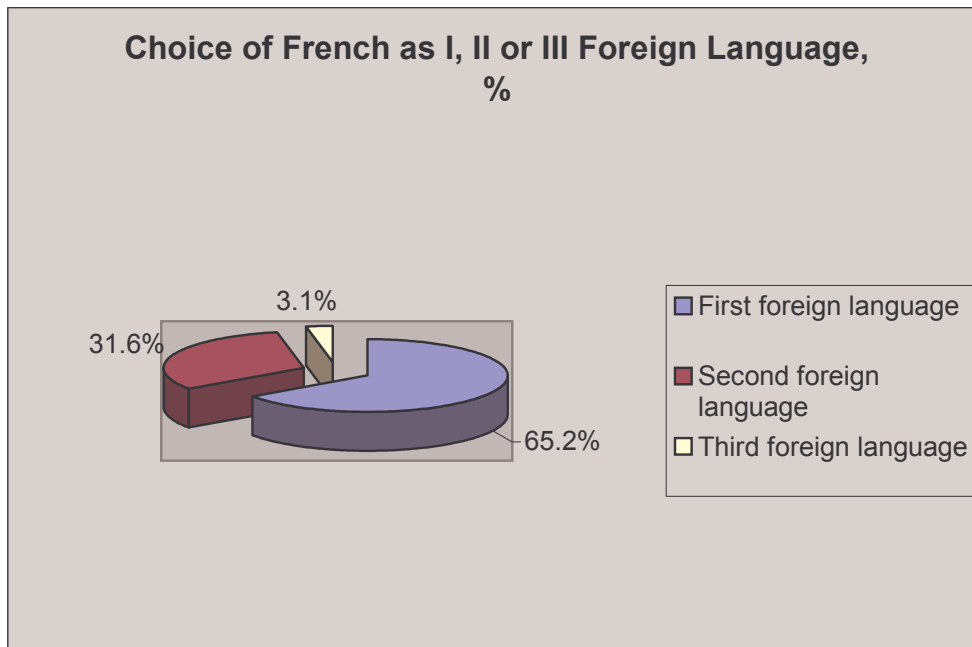
The German language

as the first foreign language is studied by 68,084 pupils in 851 schools
as the second foreign language is studied by 42,734 pupils in 506 schools
as the third foreign language is studied by 881 pupils in 67 schools



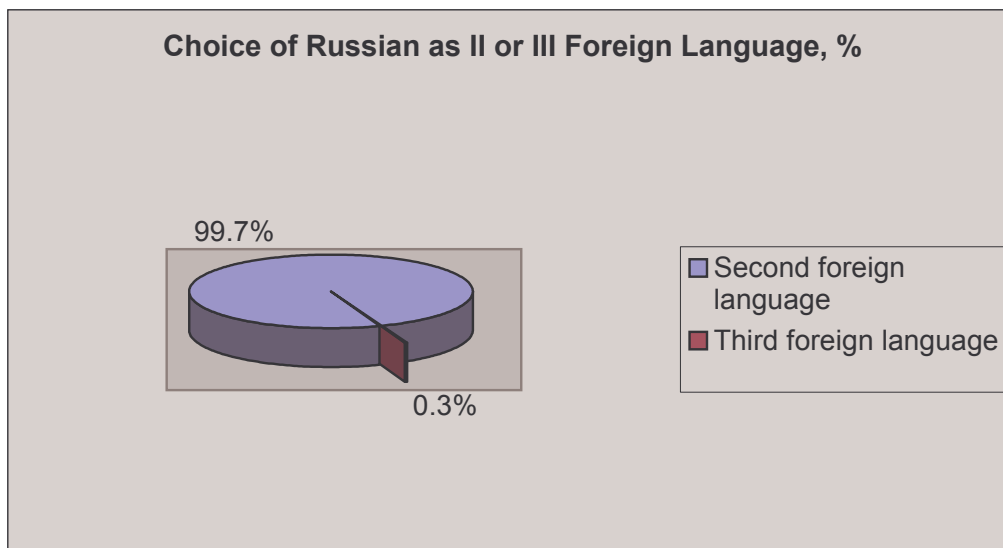
The French language

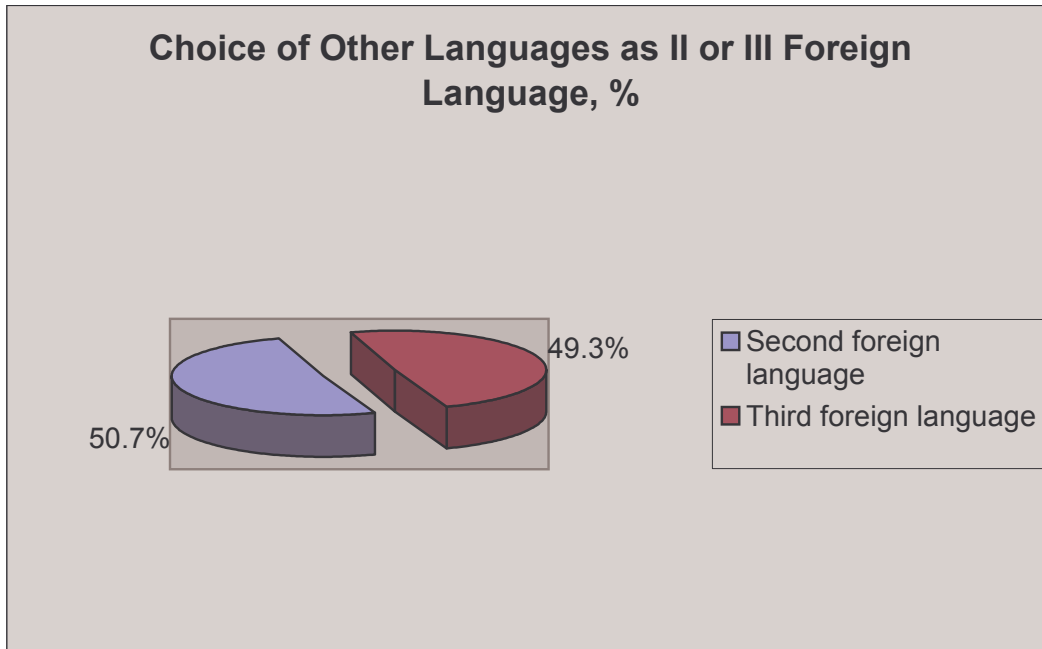
as the first foreign language is studied by 13,066 pupils in 240 schools
as the second foreign language is studied by 6,334 pupils in 204 schools
as the third foreign language is studied by 628 pupils in 44 schools



The Russian language

as the second foreign language is studied by 206,488 pupils in 1,121 schools
as the third foreign language is studied by 600 pupils in 43 schools





The Italian language

as the second foreign language is studied by 72 pupils in 2 schools
 as the third foreign language is studied by 107 pupils in 7 schools

The Spanish language

as the second foreign language is studied by 162 pupils in 7 schools
 as the third foreign language is studied by 160 pupils in 8 schools

The Danish language

as the second foreign language is studied by 16 pupils in 1 school

The Hebrew language

as the second foreign language is studied by 148 pupils in 1 school

The Norwegian language

as the second foreign language is studied by 15 pupils in 2 schools

The Swedish language

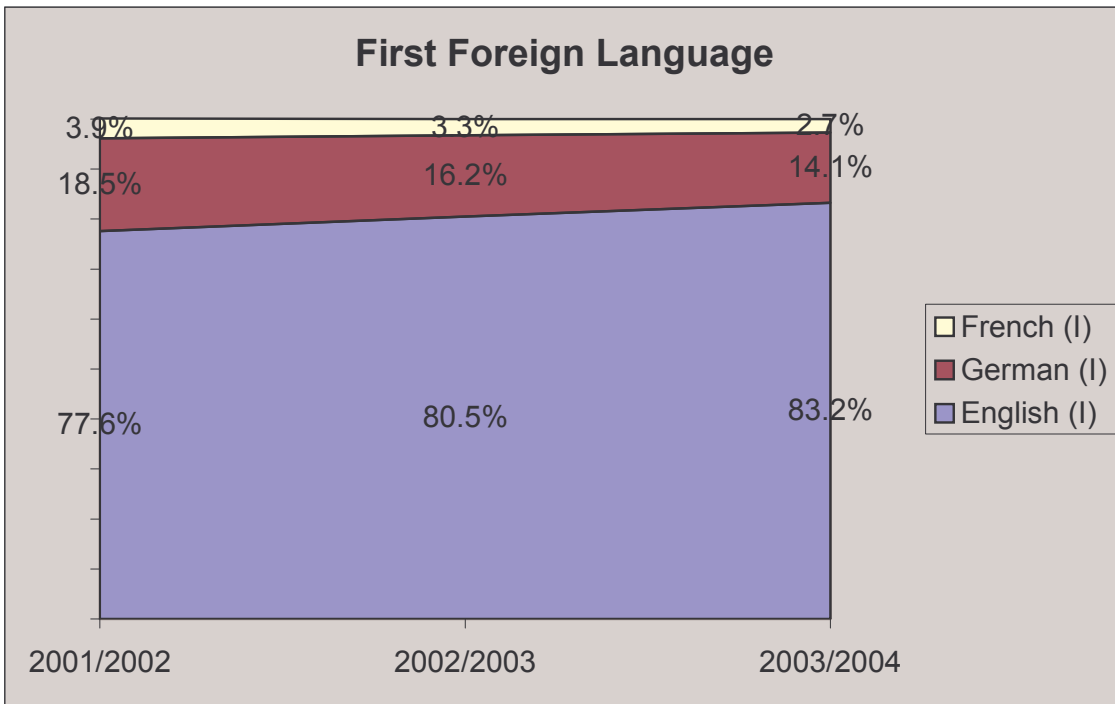
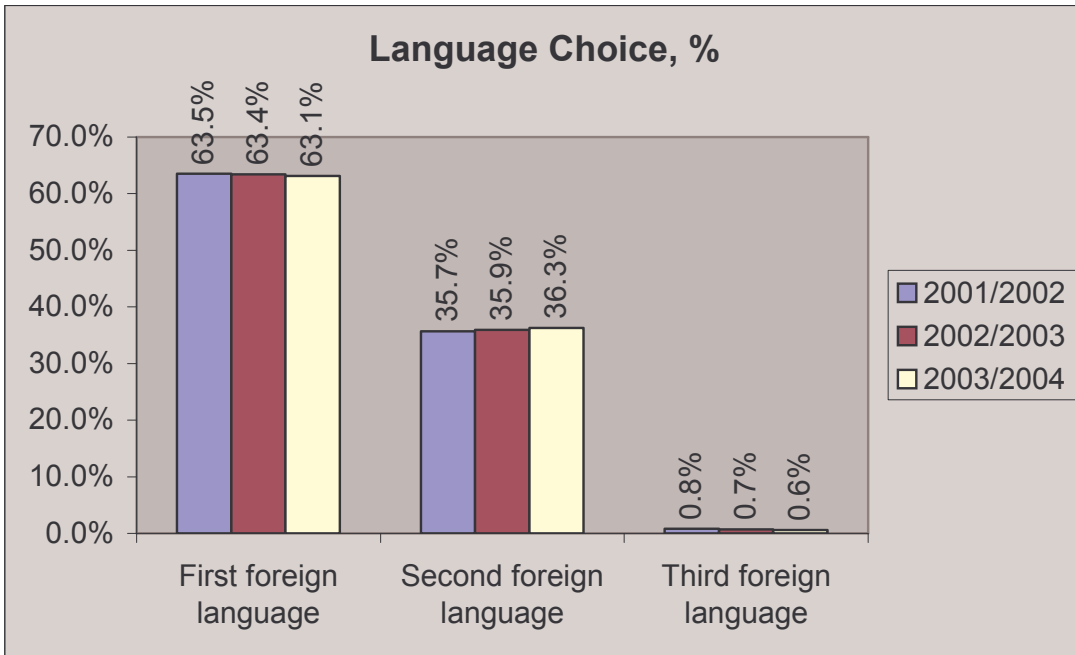
as the third foreign language is studied 47 pupils in 3 schools

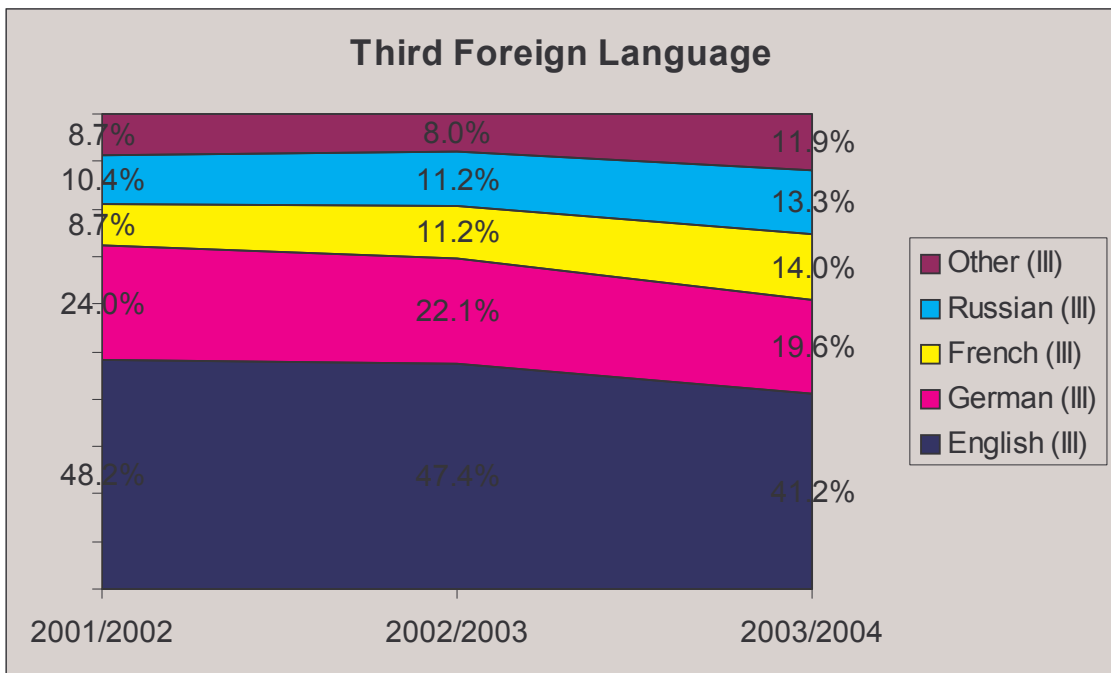
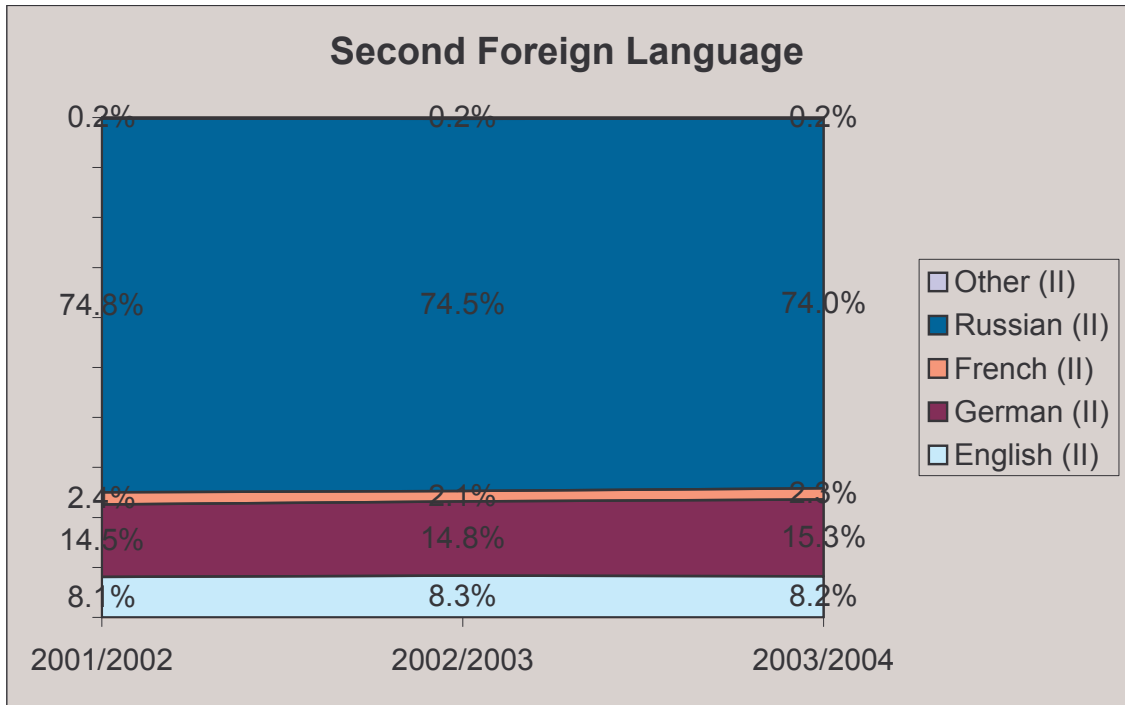
The Japanese language

as the third foreign language is studied by 58 pupils in 2 schools

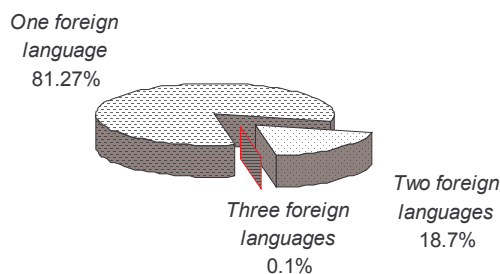
The Polish language

as the second foreign language is studied by 142 pupils in 5 schools





Students studying one, two and more foreign languages in general education schools as compared to the total number of students (2003–2004)



2.1.2. Formal and non-formal foreign language education

In Lithuania, schoolchildren can learn two/three foreign languages. The learning of foreign language is divided into four relative stages: introductory, elementary, intermediate and advanced. Bearing in mind the wishes and needs of students, the first foreign language is one of the Western European languages, i.e. English, French or German. The second language is one of the Western European languages (English, French, German), the language of neighbouring countries (Polish, Latvian, Russian) or other language of any country, depending on the wishes and needs of pupils as well as the possibilities of the school. The third foreign language is usually chosen by pupils studying the humanities. The most popular are the Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian, Italian, Spanish, Japanese and other languages. The school curriculum allows to start teaching of first foreign language at primary school. In Lithuania, there is a possibility to start foreign language learning at grade 2 according to the early language learning model. However, the compulsory teaching of the first foreign language starts at grade 4. The basic school continues with the compulsory teaching of first foreign language by developing communicative competence on the basis of primary school experience. At grade 6 of the basic school, the compulsory learning of the second foreign language is introduced. The aim is to develop partial competence on the basis of the first language learning experience. Secondary schools/gymnasia practice the compulsory teaching of first foreign language, while the development of the communicative competences in the second foreign language is compulsory only for students of humanities. Students of other profiles can stop learning their second foreign language. At secondary school/gymnasium of humanitarian profile, the third foreign language is a common choice. It is differentiated according to the professional needs of students and the autonomous learning is promoted.

At the intermediary and advanced stage, students may choose an extended language learning course and modules because there is a possibility to allot more hours and extend the content of language learning.

In order to develop communicative competence, the council of the school may decide to divide a class into groups. A diverse foreign language learning is being integrated with other subjects. A close relationship between education and native language is very important. To avoid any

interference, various phenomena in languages are compared, and the communication between teachers and integration of teaching materials is promoted. Communication skills developed in the mother tongue, which are further improved through foreign language learning, play a positive role satisfying the needs of native language learning and learning of other subjects. They also allow pupils to prepare for their everyday life and professional activities.

Schools promote the interaction between formal and non-formal education. The Ministry of Education and Science is implementing the support programme for extremely gifted children which is available to children who are good at languages. Formal and non-formal educational programmes are specifically adapted to the needs of such children. The schools continuously promote the extracurricular activities in foreign languages such as olympiads at regional/intercity/national level, amateur arts activities, contests, weeks of languages, additional courses of literary translation or foreign languages for business, language courses, etc. Schoolchildren take part in international language olympiads abroad. In 2001, 2002 and 2003, our pupils took part in the World Debate Championships. Schoolchildren learning Russian won gold medals at the international olympiad for the Russian language in 1998 and 2001. In 2002, our students represented Lithuania at the international olympiad for the German language. The number of various non-formal education services is constantly increasing. The availability of song and drama festivals in foreign languages as well as other events is also improving. Formal and non-formal education are well complementing each other.

2.2. Foreign language education in vocational schools

Vocational school students by language of instruction

Beginning of the academic year

	Total number of students			%		
	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004
Number of students	45057	44441	44403	100.0	100.0	100.0
of which language of instruction						
Lithuanian	42898	42929	43417	95.2	96.6	97.8
Russian	1754	1143	805	3.9	2.6	1.8
Polish	405	369	181	0.9	0.8	0.4

Foreign language students in vocational schools

Beginning of the academic year

	2002–2003		2003–2004	
	Total	%	Total	%
Number of students studying foreign languages	30180	100.0	31965	100.0
of which				
one instruction language	24366	80.7	25943	81.2

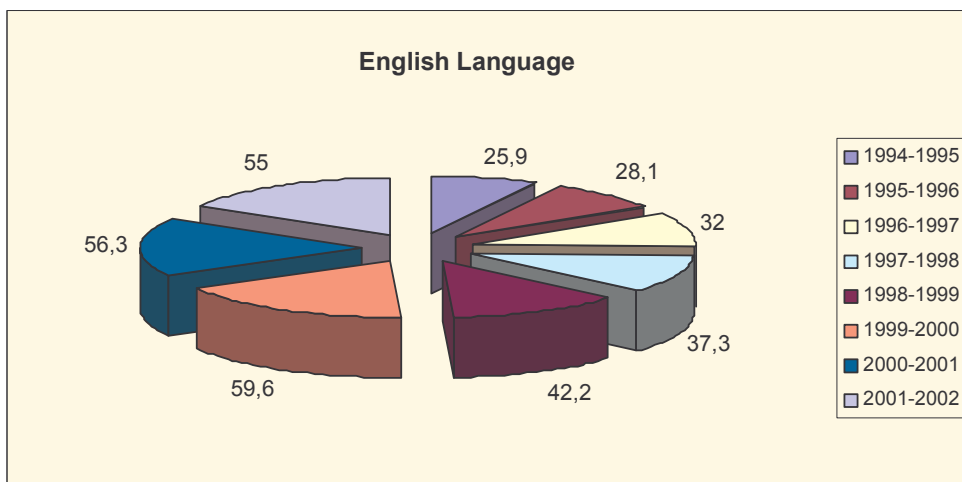
two instruction languages	5757	19.1	5971	18.7
three instruction languages	57	0.2	51	0.1
Foreign languages				
English	16924	56.1	17981	56.3
German	7823	25.3	8059	25.2
French	1086	3.6	1185	3.7
Russian	10054	33.3	9696	30.3
Other languages	164	0.5	138	0.4

The following socio-economic factors have an impact on vocational education:

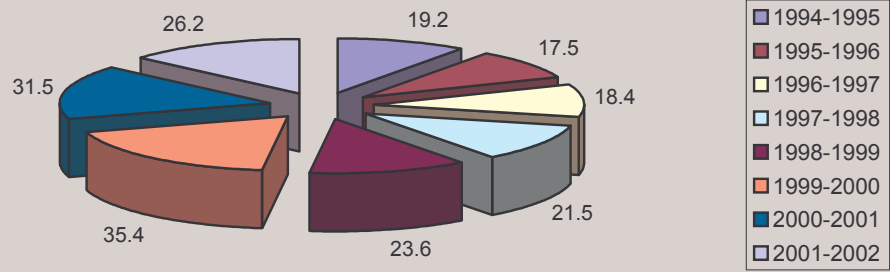
- increasing need for skilled workers
- growing service sector in a number of countries
- technological changes
- knowing what new skills are required in the society
- decline of the idea of the “only occupation in life” and strengthening of the notion of continuous education.

These factors prompted the need for change in curriculum, including the list of subjects taught, their content and organisation. For the development of general skills, the curriculum for the main vocational education was supplemented with occupational foreign language. The hours for language education are taken from vocational training hours according to the level and special features of the programme. Students seeking secondary education at vocational schools study according to the curriculum of technological profile. The students who select the said profile must study one foreign language and, if they wish so, can choose another foreign language from their optional courses. The school applies the profiled teaching and is prepared to offer courses for least three languages, thus providing its students with a choice. Russian, English and German are the most popular languages.

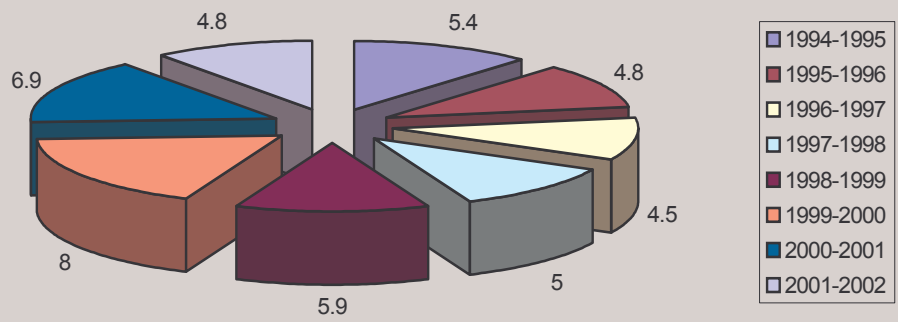
The charts below show the share of foreign language students in the total number of students (percentage) in 1994–2002 in vocational schools in Lithuania.



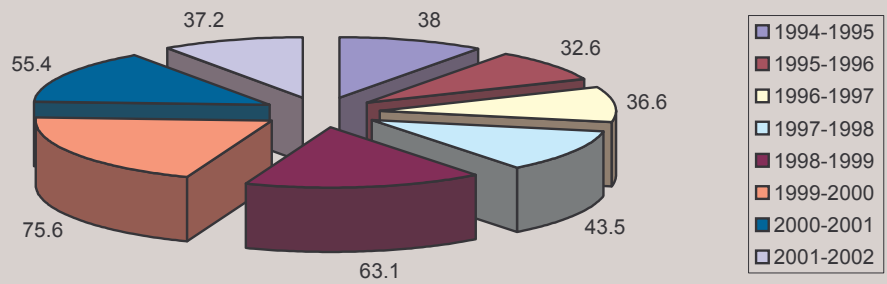
German Language



French Language

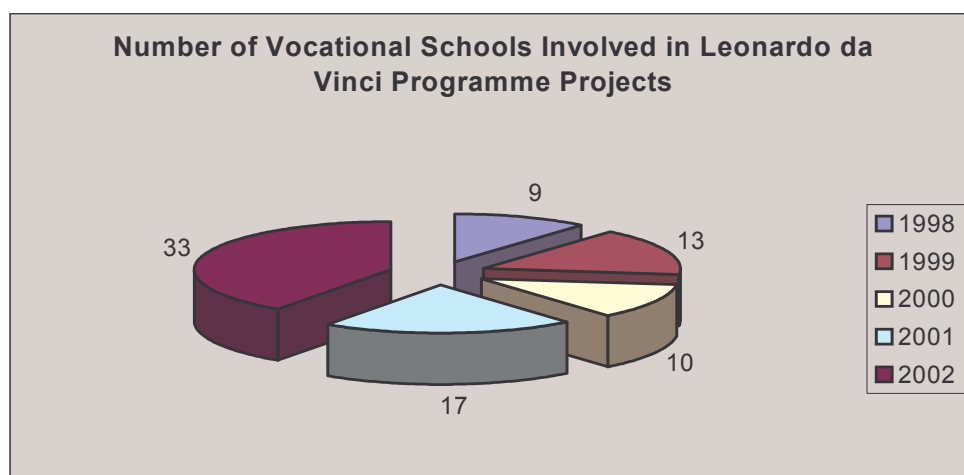
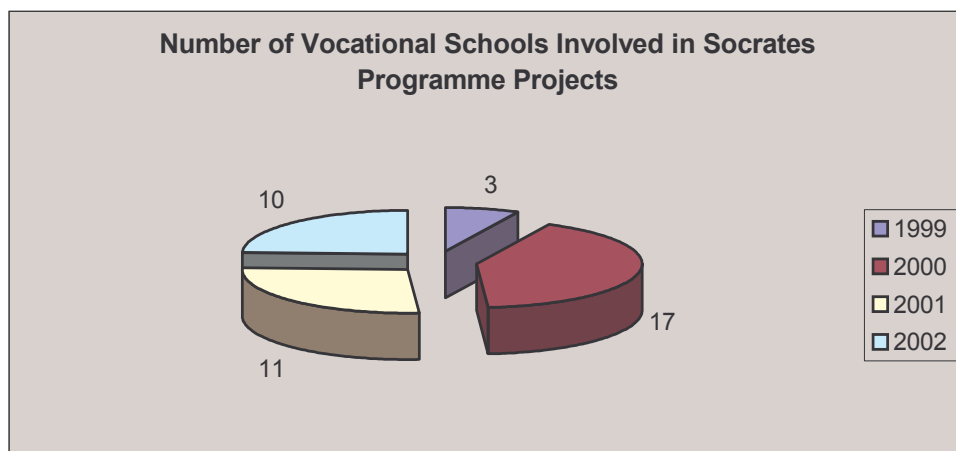


Russian Language



Vocational schools are involved in the projects carried out under the EU programmes. Such involvement helps improve foreign language skills for students.

The charts below show the number of vocational schools involved in the EU projects.



2.3. Foreign language education in professional colleges

Students, by language of instruction

Beginning of the academic year

	Total number of students			%		
	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004
Number of students	31964	22367	12262	100.0	100.0	100.0
of which language of instruction						
Lithuanian	31837	22131	12013	99.6	98.9	98.0
Russian	13	–	–	0.0	–	–
Polish	114	236	249	0.4	1.1	2.0

Foreign language students in professional colleges
Beginning of the academic year

	2002–2003		2003–2004	
	<i>Total</i>	%	<i>Total</i>	%
Number of students studying foreign languages	15915	100.0	6735	100.0
of which				
one instruction language	12720	79.9	4822	71.6
two instruction languages	3015	18.9	1732	25.7
three instruction languages	180	1.2	181	2.7
Foreign languages				
English	10849	68.2	4627	68.7
German	5250	33.0	2166	32.2
French	1579	9.9	691	10.3
Russian	1507	9.5	1187	17.6
Other languages	105	0.7	64	0.9

2.4. Foreign language education in colleges

College students, by language of instruction
Beginning of the academic year

	<i>Total number of students</i>			<i>%</i>		
	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004
Number of students	10377	26236	40472	100.0	100.0	100.0
one language of instruction	10332	26181	40414	99.6	99.8	99.9
two languages of instruction	45	55	58	0.4	0.2	0.1
Language of instruction						
Lithuanian	10377	26236	40472	100.0	100.0	100.0
English	45	42	48	0.4	0.2	0.1
German	–	13	10	–	0.05	0.02

Foreign language students in colleges

Beginning of the academic year

	<i>Total</i>			<i>%</i>		
	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004
Number of students studying foreign languages	9866	19569	29247	100.0	100.0	100.0
of which						
one instruction language	7508	15000	22771	76.1	76.7	77.9
two instruction languages	2095	4015	6415	21.2	20.5	21.9
three instruction languages	263	554	61	2.7	2.8	0.2
Foreign languages						
English	7493	14847	21204	75.9	75.9	72.5
German	3400	6631	9096	34.5	33.9	31.1
French	738	1540	2476	7.5	7.9	8.5
Russian	677	1341	2765	6.9	6.9	9.5
Other languages	179	333	243	1.8	1.7	0.8

2.5. Foreign language education in universities

University students, by language of instruction

Beginning of the academic year, all stages of studies

	<i>Total number of students</i>			<i>%</i>		
	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004
Number of students	106913	119548	130245	100.0	100.0	100.0
one language of instruction	104251	116039	127146	97.5	97.1	97.6
two languages of instruction	2662	3509	3099	2.5	2.9	2.4
Language of instruction						
Lithuanian	105943	118458	128799	99.1	99.1	98.9
Russian	639	728	821	0.6	0.6	0.6
Polish	254	237	178	0.2	0.2	0.1
English	2122	2826	2821	2.0	2.4	2.2
German	340	487	417	0.3	0.4	0.3
French	195	234	211	0.2	0.2	0.2
Belarusian	82	87	97	0.1	0.1	0.1

Foreign language students in universities
 Beginning of the academic year, all stages of studies

	<i>Total</i>			<i>%</i>		
	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004
Number of students studying foreign languages	48777	54006	54949	100.0	100.0	100.0
of which						
one language of instruction	40479	45132	46068	83.0	83.6	83.8
two languages of instruction	7643	8428	8399	15.7	15.6	15.3
three languages of instruction	586	352	370	1.2	0.6	0.7
four and more languages of instruction	69	94	112	0.1	0.2	0.2
Foreign languages						
English	35932	40658	42688	73.7	75.3	77.7
German	12589	12823	12008	25.8	23.7	21.9
French	3874	4069	3977	7.9	7.5	7.2
Russian	828	1117	1489	1.7	2.1	2.7
Other languages	4576	4753	4262	9.4	8.8	7.8

2.6. Foreign language education for schoolchildren with special needs

Schoolchildren with special needs are taught foreign languages the same way as their peer students.

Various educational possibilities enable the pupils to seek general standards and learn according to general curriculum. The Ministry of Education and Science together with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour look for solutions regulating social care/welfare and educational functions. The general curriculum can be modified and adapted for children with special needs who attend general education schools. It is also possible to offer other teaching methods and materials.

The sign language is the native language of the deaf. Lithuanian is their second language. According to general school curriculum, they learn the Lithuanian (official) language and one foreign language.

The deaf are only taught writing. They are not taught pronunciation and listening because of the lack of communicative skills. All materials are presented visually and in a more concentrated form.

Foreign language teaching has always played an important role in the history of education of the blind and visually impaired people. Blind people can learn and study a number of foreign

languages, and teaching materials are specifically adapted for them: the materials are prepared in Braille and in the form of special computerised audio applications, audio books, etc. A special attention to foreign languages was paid at Kaunas Institute for the Blind where students were learning music and had extensive foreign language courses. Today, all the students of the Secondary School of Antanas Jonynas, the Lithuanian centre of education for the blind and visually impaired, can learn two foreign languages and take school and state examinations in foreign languages. At grade 4 in the primary school, the students have to select English or German and at grade 6 they start learning one more foreign language of their choice (English, German or Russian). English is gaining more popularity among schoolchildren and it is the preferred choice for the first foreign language. A large share of pupils study German as their first foreign language. Russian is the most popular second foreign language. A number of graduates take the foreign language examination. So far, there was a tendency that stronger pupils would take the German or English language examinations and the weaker ones would try to pass the Russian language examination. Every year, schools try to order new publications and textbooks for foreign language education. Blind students use the textbooks in Braille which are printed by the Lithuanian Centre of Education for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Publishing of every textbook of this type requires a lot of time. Naturally, the choice of textbooks in Braille is not as good as that of conventional textbooks. However, every teacher has a possibility to prepare teaching materials and tests in Braille. The centre of computer technologies has a special Braille printer. Information technologies are often used during foreign language classes. There is a large collection of educational applications for English, German and Russian languages. Both teachers and their students can use the Internet and email.

2.7. Foreign language education possibilities for national minorities

Foreign language education in national minority schools is organised according to the same principles as in all schools in Lithuania: according to the same General Curriculum Framework and Educational Standards. However, the curriculum for these schools lays down the compulsory teaching of one foreign language only (students at schools for national minorities must study their native language, the official language and one foreign language; total maximum number of hours in schools for national minorities is always higher than that in Lithuanian schools). Pupils can learn their second foreign language as an optional course or use the possibilities of additional education. At the request of parents, these schools also offer the possibilities for early foreign language learning (e.g. in academic year 2002–2003, all 48 pupils of grade 2 started learning English at Ateities Secondary School, Vilnius).

Children of migrating employees and children of migrants, refugees or other persons who found shelter in the Republic of Lithuania learn the foreign language which is included into the curriculum of the school they attend. They usually study those foreign languages which are available at the school they attend. A student from abroad can choose the foreign language he/she studied at school of the country of origin if the specialist teacher of that language is available.

2.8. Foreign language education for adults. Possibility of lifelong learning of foreign languages

“The adult education system faces a serious challenge to enable a person to develop the resolve to shape his/her life and not to wait for public decisions.” (Conceptual Framework of Lithuanian Adult Education System. Vilnius, 1993). The concepts of lifelong learning and of learning society are gaining more importance both in Europe and in Lithuania. One of the

major areas in the programme of the Lithuanian Association of Adult Education (LAAE), which was established in 1992, deals with the development of possibilities for adults in the field of lifelong learning of foreign languages. At school, a student develops the skills of autonomous learning of foreign languages. A person, autonomously improving his/her language skills, learning new languages and finding new ways to exchange information, can have a deeper understanding and better appreciation of such important phenomena as political events, changes in the economy and culture, conservation of nature, etc.

In academic year 2000–2001, there were 15,272 people learning their first foreign language (of them: 7,299 were learning English, 4,117 – German, 516 – French, and 3,340 – Russian); 10,575 were learning their second foreign language (of them: 1,699 – English, 1,088 – German, 388 – French, and 7,400 – Russian) in secondary schools for adults and adult training centres in Lithuania (grades 6–12). There are no data available on adults learning one or more foreign languages in non-formal adult education institutions. However, one can be sure that foreign language learning is popular there as well.

Surveys, which were conducted during the discussion of the Memorandum and summarised in the follow-up report for the European Commission, show how Lithuanian educators assess the situation of foreign language education.

Foreign language as one of the new major skills
Foreign language teachers. Situation.

Possibilities of foreign language learning (in terms of social groups): the survey of foreign language teachers showed that the best possibilities to acquire foreign language skills were available to individuals studying at school (7 points out of 10), the possibilities of working people were assessed at 4 points, and the worst possibilities (2 points) were available to people before and in retirement.

Possibilities of foreign language learning (in terms of offer and methods): on a scale 1–10, adults have the best possibilities to study English (8), German (6.5) and French (5), while Russian scored 3.4 and the Scandinavian languages – only 2. 18 % of the respondents have no opinion about the possibilities to learn Scandinavian languages and 25 % evaluate the possibilities at 0.

Foreign language skills. According to the respondents, currently the people in Lithuania are most proficient in Russian (8 points out of 10), English (6) and German (4). The proficiency in other languages (French, Scandinavian languages) scored 1–2 points. 18 % of the respondents have no opinion about the possibilities to learn Scandinavian languages and 25 % evaluate the possibilities at 0.

Problems faced by people in Lithuania when learning foreign languages:

- 1) lack of financial resources – 87 % of the respondents
- 2) low self-confidence – 44 %
- 3) lack of motivation – 41 %
- 4) other (lack of educational institutions, unfavourable employer attitudes towards learning, lack of technical means, outdated textbooks, lack of textbooks at schools, unavailable specialised textbooks for age groups, lack of time) – 10 %

What measures could be efficiently used to improve foreign language education?

For youth:

- 1) allocation of more hours for foreign languages in school curriculum – 62 % of the respondents
- 2) application of active teaching methods – 41 %
- 3) application of the CLIL method for some subjects – 21 %

Only 18 % of the respondents think that Lithuanian foreign language teachers/lecturers have the experience they could share with other countries. The prevailing opinion is that it could be the teaching plans and teaching methodologies.

Professional college teachers assessed the achievements of Lithuanian educational system in the field of foreign language teaching/learning at 6 points (out of 10) and the postgraduates at VMU (Vytautas Magnus University) who worked as teachers assessed the achievements at 7. The proficiency in two general areas – IT skills and foreign language skills – is the necessity of modern living. There is a constant demand for such courses and the market offers a number of possibilities to meet this need. Since these skills are directly related to the employment possibilities, people tend to invest their own funds into the acquisition of these skills. On the other hand, there is still a lot of room for improvement of foreign language education in terms of curriculum, content, methods, forms and measures to stimulate the motivation of learners, improvement of teacher competence, conditions for the improvement of competence, etc.

“In modern society, every person must develop the attitude and the ability for lifelong learning, the ability of autonomous learning using the possibilities offered by various forms of education and new information and telecommunication technologies. The renewed curriculum must provide a modern individual with social, cultural and communicative competence. It must develop the important metacognitive and communicative skills and information culture (proficiency in native and foreign languages, computer literacy). The programmes for computer and economic literacy, development of entrepreneurship and foreign languages are becoming an important part of continuous adult education.

3. Organisation of the foreign language curriculum through the implementation of Curriculum and Standards for Foreign Language Education

3.1. General principles of communicative skills development

The course of foreign language education has been changing according to new priorities of didactical principles. Previous orientation towards the conveyance of language knowledge has been replaced by the development of language skills, their practical application, strengthening of educational motivation in the light of new environment and public life. Foreign language teachers had to adopt such teaching methods which stimulated the independence of students, perception of communication process, critical thinking, ability to acquire and convey the necessary information and develop the system of values. The teacher had to understand the importance of new methods and be able to apply them creatively in the development of language activity together with innovations in modern pedagogical science. The communicative foreign language teaching integrates the best features of other methods which help avoid any interference, understand and learn the material, develop the skills of productive discourse. The process of teaching should be dominated by inductive methods which stimulate active involvement of students and develop their thinking. A learner with his/her individual

personal and age characteristics is at the centre of the entire language process development. Psychological comfort during a lesson should stimulate the motivation to learn, ensure the security of learners, prevent from the fearing of making mistakes in order to achieve the main goal, i.e. the development of language activities. The methodology of foreign language education emphasises a close relationship between the education and the native language through the application of comparative method of language teaching. Communicative skills acquired in the native language are further improved through foreign language learning and have a positive impact on the learning of other subjects. Foreign language lectures must reinforce the appreciation of the native language and resistance to its pollution. This is ensured by the communication between the native language and foreign language teachers and in-depth knowledge of teaching materials. It is important that pupils, especially at the later stages, were able to express themselves according to the rules of foreign language. It is necessary to teach them to translate into correct native language according to the structural systems of languages and to convey information presented in the foreign language using proper and correct native language.

All types of language activity are developed in an integrated manner. However, the comparative weight of each type of activity may change according to learning conditions. The priority may be given to reception, production or interaction, oral or written discourse. The basis of foreign language methodology and didactics in Lithuania is the communicative language teaching approach, i.e. such organisation of language activities when virtually entire learning is devoted to individual or group activities of every learner. The nature of exercises depends on the stage of learning, the level of achievements and the purpose of learning. Language materials are presented in situations which stimulate informal communication. The communicative competence comprises several subcompetences such as the linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic, socio-cultural, and social subcompetence. By developing the linguistic subcompetence in an particular language, students are able to learn its linguistic patterns, structure, original features, outspread, norms, functions, stylistic and expression means. They are also able to learn and master the lexis, to pronounce and stress correctly and to acquire a general understanding of language behaviour. The development of sociolinguistic subcompetence helps learn the correct use and interpretation of language forms according to the situation. The development of discourse subcompetence allows to learn how to understand and produce coherent and clear oral and written texts, while the development of strategic subcompetence allows to use different strategies in order to understand a particular oral or written text, to produce oral or written discourse or to communicate with an interlocutor. The development of socio-cultural subcompetence is aimed at better understanding of socio-cultural context in which the language is used. The socio-cultural subcompetence is developed through all language education methods and sources when learners are introduced to the most distinctive features and facts of target culture by showing them the relationship between the target language and culture and the native language and culture. Students are taught to rely on their native language learning experience and other interdisciplinary links. The development of social subcompetence increases self-confidence and the desire to communicate with others, the ability to act appropriately in different social situations. Communicative competence is the ability to understand others and to convey their thoughts in either oral or written form (reception and production), to communicate with others orally and in writing (interaction), to be able to mediate the communication between people who use different languages (interpretation).

In order to develop listening skills and understanding of spoken language, teachers should promote listening to authentic discourse and provide different texts and situations, set specific

targets. In order to develop writing skills and understanding of written texts, teachers should promote various reading methods and reading strategies. Students should be exposed to contemporary, real and meaningful language according to their experience, interests and tuition goals. A teacher should closely monitor and assess the progress of students, give them advice, teach how to learn, be confident in themselves and seek personal goals.

3.2. Description of foreign language teaching tendencies and materials:

- early foreign language learning
- prospects for CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)
- textbooks and teaching materials and use of new technologies.

Foreign language education is divided into four relative stages: introductory, elementary, intermediate, and advanced. Language teaching at the elementary stage is based on the early foreign language teaching method. By using the European experience in language education and bearing in mind language teaching scenarios proposed by the Council of Europe as well as the objectives of the EU laid down in the Barcelona Conference of February 2002, which include teaching of at least two languages from very early age and increasing of the awareness of the importance of foreign language learning in all age groups, Lithuania has developed and is implementing its own Conceptual Framework of Early Foreign Language Learning. This programme emphasises the purpose and understanding of foreign language, discusses social and psychological assumptions for education, didactical principles, development of basic communicative skills, and its relation with other subjects. Students are taught to understand cultural differences, the relation between the native language and the foreign language. Foreign language education can be started at grade 2. The compulsory learning of first foreign language starts at grade 4. Language teaching should be linked to the socio-cultural context of Lithuania. The focus is on individual activities of every student, work in pairs and groups. The methodology tries to avoid routine and mechanical communication. The requirements for the implementation of principles of in-depth teaching were developed as the extension of current foreign language teaching, which gives students a possibility for in-depth foreign language learning from grade 5 or grade 9. Since 2000, the intensive teaching of subjects at grade 11 was restructured into the course programmes according to the model of profiled teaching. Students are able to choose the courses or modules which match their needs and abilities.

In 2002, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania started the implementation of the Content and Language Integrated Learning Project. This project received a lot of attention from the Embassy of France, the French Cultural Centre and the British Council, which organised courses for French teachers and methodical seminars with participating experts from foreign countries.

By changing and improving teaching methodology, schools implement new teaching methods based on the use of new technologies. Through the implementation of the School Improvement Programme, which was approved by the Government, and the supply of new technologies to schools, this method will gain more popularity in foreign language education as well. Currently, one computer is shared by 20 students at grades 1–12 and by 10 students at grades 9–12.

Textbooks and other teaching materials play an important role in the process of curriculum change. In 1998, the supply of textbooks was decentralised. In 2002, some funds for purchase of textbooks were allotted in the pupil's basket, and the remaining funds were distributed in the form of limits for schools or their founders. In 2003, the funds for purchase of textbooks were

allotted in the pupil's basket. Schools have discretion in deciding on the number and types of textbooks to be purchased. Schools select textbooks from the List of Obtainable Textbooks approved by the Minister of Education and Science. Information about textbooks which can be used for education is given in the List of Certified Textbooks. Publishers search for authors, advertise their textbooks and deliver them to schools. Schoolmasters approve the lists of textbooks to be purchased and decide on the ways and funds for acquisition of workbooks. The Ministry of Education and Science evaluates the content of textbooks, compiles the List of Certified Textbooks and the List of Obtainable Textbooks, allocates additional funds from the budget, gathers and consolidates information provided by municipalities and schools on the use of funds and textbooks purchased.

Both national and foreign textbooks (sets of textbooks), which are based on latest methodologies, are used in the process of foreign language education. Sets of textbooks consist of a textbook, workbook, selected readings, audio tapes, CDs, computer applications and other supplies. New national textbooks for foreign languages are developed according to the General Curriculum Framework and Standards and language proficiency levels of the Council of Europe. The panel of experts approves national textbooks and recommends textbooks of foreign publishers if the latter meet the requirements of the curriculum and standards. National textbooks for English are published for grades 2–10 (two alternative series) and textbooks for grades 11–12 are under development. Textbooks of such British publishers as Oxford, Cambridge, Longman, Macmillan-Heinemann are also very popular. National textbooks for German language teaching in grades 2–11 were published. New textbooks of German publishers (Hueber, Klett, Langenscheidt, etc.) are also used. New textbooks for French were developed for the introductory stage. Currently, the most popular textbooks are those published by French publishers Didier and Cle. National textbooks for Russian language teaching, which meet the requirements of the General Curriculum Framework and Standards, have been published for the first and second year of learning. There are also adapted textbooks of foreign countries for subsequent years of language learning (up to grade 11). In addition to the abovementioned sets of textbooks, extensive training materials, designed for students preparing for their maturity examinations, were developed for individual education stages. Native speakers of Polish can use textbooks for the basic school which were developed in Lithuania. Students of grades 11–12 use translated Polish textbooks. In 2003, a textbook for Roma language was compiled and a new textbook for Spanish was published. Less popular languages are taught using the textbooks published in countries of origin of these languages.

4. Achievements in foreign language education

4.1. Assessment of foreign language achievements in the context of changes in the educational process

- 4.1.1. The existing student progress, achievement, skill and knowledge assessment system should be adapted to new conditions of lifelong learning and must promote such learning in every possible way.
- 4.1.2. Despite recent changes in educational goals and content, there were no major changes in student assessment. The traditional culture of student achievement assessment does not fit modern goals and objectives of education. Such assessment is very narrow and more encouraging to remember information rather than think critically, solve problems or use various sources of information. The existing traditional assessment culture does not stimulate the creativity in students, does not increase the motivation to learn or stimulate

the desire to learn. Therefore, the assessment of student progress and achievements needs to be changed. The assessment culture has to be replaced by newly created student assessment tradition and new assessment methods should be introduced.

- 4.1.3. Quality assessment should become an integral part of educational and learning process. It should become an important method of learning. The assessment should ensure the efficient feedback between teaching and learning.
- 4.1.4. The assessment is based on standards. The priority is more often given to the criterion-referenced assessment (based on specific assessment criteria) rather than the norm-referenced one.
- 4.1.5. The assessment criteria at state level are defined by the Educational Standards. These Standards outline the general and subject-specific skills, knowledge, understanding, system of values, i.e. the things to be achieved by students after completion of a certain learning phase (foreign language learning stage). The Educational Standards must ensure that students acquire specified knowledge and skills when there is a wide choice of programmes, methods and teaching materials.
- 4.1.6. The Educational Standards are interpreted and made more specific by creating assessment criteria adapted to concrete schoolchildren according to individual level of a student and general level of the class, the goals of the school. The tasks for the assessment, which are used in the process of learning, during examinations or research of student achievements, are developed according to the Educational Standards.
- 4.1.7. In foreign language learning, the objects of assessment are the skills and knowledge of schoolchildren which comprise foreign language communicative competence in four areas of communicative activity: reception (understanding of spoken and written texts), oral and written interaction, oral and written production, and mediation (interpreting).
- 4.1.8. Foreign language education is divided into four relative stages: introductory, elementary, intermediate, and advanced. At the introductory and elementary stages, the basic communicative competence is formed; at the intermediate stage, the minimum communication competence is developed, and the advanced stage is aimed at training students to take part in discourse activities. At this stage, the emphasis is on the development of autonomous learning, better understanding of foreign culture and improvement of basic skills of professional language and culture of the selected profile. The introductory stage of the first foreign language overlaps with the first language teaching year (grade 4), the elementary stage continues during the second and the third year (grades 5 and 6), the intermediate stage covers the fourth and the fifth year (grades 7 and 8), while the advanced stage lasts during the remaining years (grades 9 to 12). The introductory stage of the second foreign language may last only a few months during the first year of language learning (grade 6); the elementary stage may last two or three years (grades 6 and 7 or, after the introductory stage at grade 6, up to grade 8); the intermediate stage would end together with the basic school (grade 8 or 9 to grade 10), while the advanced stage would overlap with the secondary school (grades 11 and 12).
- 4.1.9. The results of every foreign language learning stage are described in the Educational Standards developed and applied for the first and second foreign language. The achievements of students are linked to the achievements (levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1,

C2) outlined in the descriptions of standards (learning levels) developed by the Council of Europe (Common Framework). When the educational standards of foreign language were being prepared for the main and secondary school, the descriptions of the said language proficiency levels were analysed and the achievement descriptions were matched against foreign language education stages. This is illustrated in the table below:

FOREIGN LANGUAGE STAGES AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE REFERENCE LEVELS OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

First foreign language

Grade	Year of learning	Language teaching stage	Council of Europe reference level of language proficiency
4	1.	introductory	
5	2.		
6	3.	elementary	A ₁ Breakthrough
7	4.		
8	5.	intermediate	A ₂ Waystage
9	6.		
10	7.		B ₁ Threshold
11	8.		
12	9.	advanced	B ₂ Vantage

Second foreign language

Grade	Year of learning	Language teaching stage	Council of Europe reference level of language proficiency
6	1.	introductory	

7	2.		A ₁ Breakthrough
8	3.	elementary	
9	4.		A ₂ Waystage
10	5.	intermediate	
11	6.		B ₁ Threshold
12	7.	advanced	

It is very important to purposefully develop the ability in students to self-assess their progress and achievements. It is related with the assessment principle that the main goal should not be the detection of errors and gaps in student knowledge. The assessment should allow students to see their knowledge and skills, encourage them to aim at as much as they can achieve.

The ability to self-assess the progress and achievements is the essential part of lifelong learning ability necessary for every member of the learning society. Currently, various student self-assessment and learning motivation improvement methods are being developed and will be introduced in the future. Special tools helping students self-assess their progress and achievements are being used. One of such tools for foreign language learning is the European Language Portfolio of the Council of Europe (currently under the development) intended for students aged 15–18.

4.2. Assessment of achievements in learning and maturity examinations

In foreign language achievement assessment system, the maturity examination is the overall final assessment of student achievements. The results of the examination provide information about the first (9 academic years) or the second (7 academic years) foreign language learning at general education secondary school. In Lithuania, foreign language examinations are developed only for the graduates of general education secondary schools. There are no foreign language examination(s) in the basic school.

The graduates of general secondary education school may choose the examination of one of the following foreign languages: English, French, Russian, and German. Foreign language examination is not compulsory. Students may choose and take maturity examinations for several foreign languages.

There are two types of foreign language maturity examinations: state and school examinations. They differ in their purpose, assessment principles and level of tested skills.

The maturity examination at state level is developed according to the extended course of General Curriculum for grades 11–12 and meets the requirements of the Educational Standards laid down for the extended course achievement level. This level is oriented towards the Threshold level (B1) for speaking and writing (production and interaction) and towards the Vantage level (B2) for reading and listening (reception). However, both the comparison given in the table above and the level of maturity examinations is not substantiated.

The assessment for the state examination is norm-referenced. The work of a student is assessed in points according to the assessment scale given in the assessment instruction for maturity examination at state level. These points are translated into the score on a scale of 1–100 with a minimum passing limit set in point score. The maturity examination at school level is developed according to the general course of General Curriculum and meets the requirements of Educational Standards laid down for the standard course achievement level. This level is oriented towards the Threshold level (B1) of the Council of Europe.

The maturity examination at school level is designed to test and assess student achievements according to the educational standard for the standard course. The work of a student is assessed in points according to the assessment scale given in the assessment instruction for maturity examination at school level. The final score on a scale of 1–10 is awarded using the correlation table for points and scores given in the same assessment instruction. The maturity examination syllabus for foreign languages is the main document defining the purposes and content of foreign language maturity examination. The examination syllabus is developed according to the general curriculum and educational standards of foreign languages for general education school, grades 11–12. The maturity examination syllabus is common for all foreign languages. The foreign language examination syllabus may be modified and supplemented annually according to the results of foreign language examinations and/or changes in curriculum after the issue of new or modified General Curriculum Framework and Educational Standards of foreign languages or other documents regulating the goals and content of education.

The examination syllabus discusses the aims and objectives of foreign language education, the purpose, subject-matter and assessment principles of maturity examination at state and school levels. It also details the skills to be tested, outlines the structure of examination and the requirements for maturity examination at state and school level. Every foreign language in the syllabus has its own list of lexical topics and the assessment criteria for the written text. The syllabus also contains the matrix of maturity examination at state and school level showing the comparative weight (percentage) of individual papers of the examination and the skills tested.

Foreign language maturity examinations at both state and school level are taken in writing. Examinations at both levels consist of four papers: understanding of spoken text (listening), understanding of written text (reading), use of language forms and structures, and the creation of written text (writing). The importance of every paper of the examination differs for the state and school examination.

Speaking skills (oral interaction and production) are tested during the spoken language credit test. The credit test for spoken foreign languages was introduced in 2002 together with the elimination of testing of speaking skills during foreign language examination.

The purpose of foreign language examination is to test and assess the knowledge and skills of schoolchildren referred to as the communicative competence in foreign language. The components of the communicative competence (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic, socio-cultural and social) link a number of skills and knowledge which are being tested during the foreign language examination: knowledge of means of expressing communicative intentions; ability to produce language units such as phrases and sentences according to the communicative situation and intention; skills of creative use of language structures; application of spoken and written text understanding, text production and compensation strategies; understanding and formulation of coherent and clear verbal deliveries; awareness of the socio-cultural context in which the language is used.

The skills of students become evident in four areas of language activity: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These language skills, except for the speaking skills which are tested during the spoken language credit test, are tested during the state and school examination.

The tasks for all examination papers are prepared according to the main factor in foreign language teaching, i.e. the communicative approach. Language expression and understanding skills which have to be tested are presented and detailed in the specifications for the state and school examination.

The main skills to be tested during the maturity examination at state and school level are the following:

- to understand and analyse spoken and written texts;
- to create text(s) appropriate to the communicative goal and situation;
- to use the main grammatical forms and structures.

During the foreign language examination and spoken language credit, the following general skills of pupils are also tested in an integrated way: communicative and information skills (listening, reading, writing, finding the necessary information, understanding, analysing, interpreting and assessing oral and written information, conveying of information in various ways); thinking (intellectual) skills (synthesizing, creating, evaluating and applying knowledge in new unconventional circumstances, using of knowledge in various situations, selection of problem-solution strategy and searching for specific solutions); social skills (communication and cooperation, understanding of opinions and reasoning of others, substantiation and explanation of personal position, persuasion to achieve the desired goal).

The content of foreign language examination is defined by the specifications and lexical topics (subtopics) of the examination. The object of assessment is the reception (listening and reading), written interaction and production skills as well as the use of correct language. The main tested reception skills are: understanding of the essential information and the main idea; understanding of major details; detailed text understanding; analysis, selection and division of information; understanding of implications, the author's position and view; use of appropriate text understanding and compensation strategies. The texts of various types, styles and genres according to the topics in the syllabus and the specifications of educational standards are selected to test spoken and written text understanding skills.

The examination tests the written interaction and production skills to create various types of texts (descriptive, narrative, informative, cogitative) according to the requirements of specified genres in a particular communicative situation by selecting a relevant form of text, presenting

the content (ideas) in a logical and coherent manner, and choosing appropriate means of expression.

The test for the use of language forms and structures is used to test the skills of using lexical and grammatical forms and structures and linking the meaning and the form.

The procedures and actions as well as the content and language material contained in the examination tasks for the final assessment of schoolchildren are oriented towards the use of foreign language in real life situations.

4.3. Levels/standards achieved and their link with the Council of Europe Common European Framework

Foreign language achievement standards for secondary school graduates are oriented towards the achievement levels B1 and B2 described in the Common European Framework of the Council of Europe. The level of foreign language achievements of graduates of general secondary education school depends on the selected foreign language course at grades 11–12 as well as on the duration of foreign language learning and the number of weekly hours allocated for language learning.

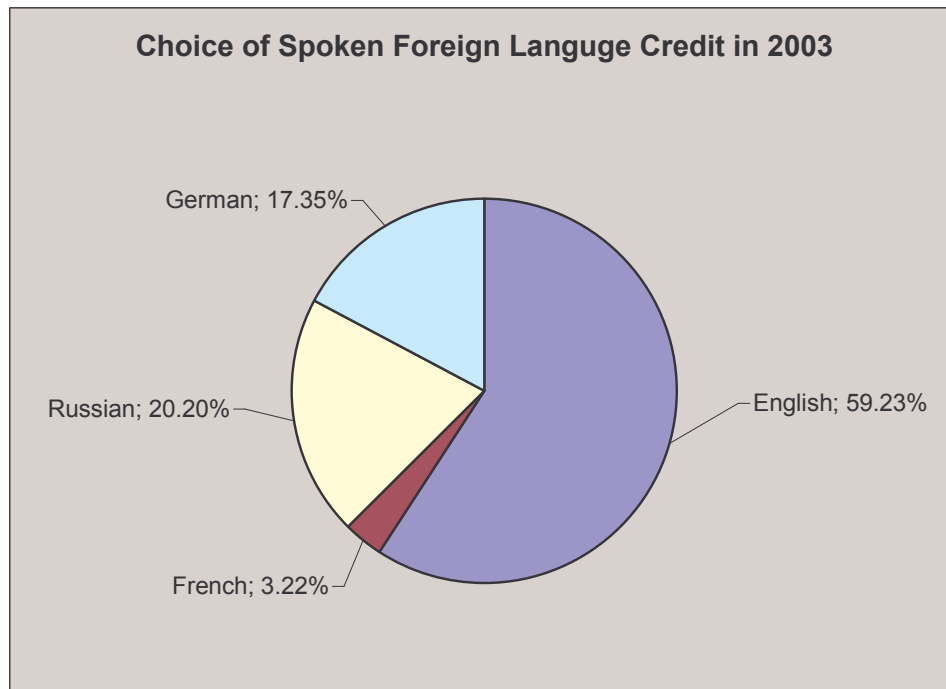
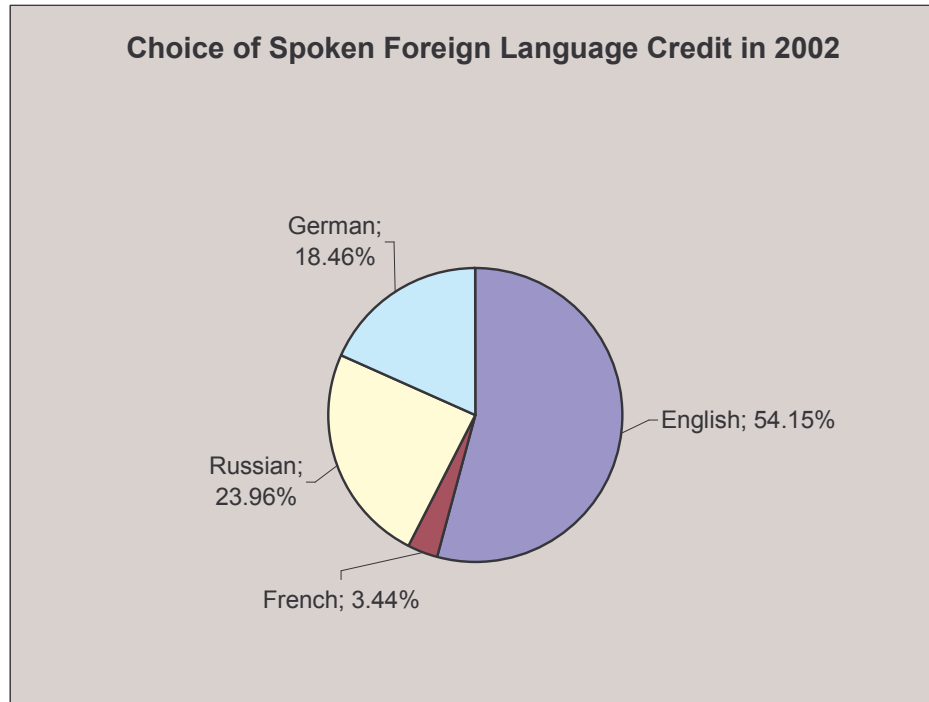
The standard of achievements orients the schoolchildren learning their first foreign language towards the reference levels of language proficiency of the Council of Europe which are listed below. This standard is described in General Curriculum Framework and Educational Standards of foreign languages for grades 11–12 in the following way:

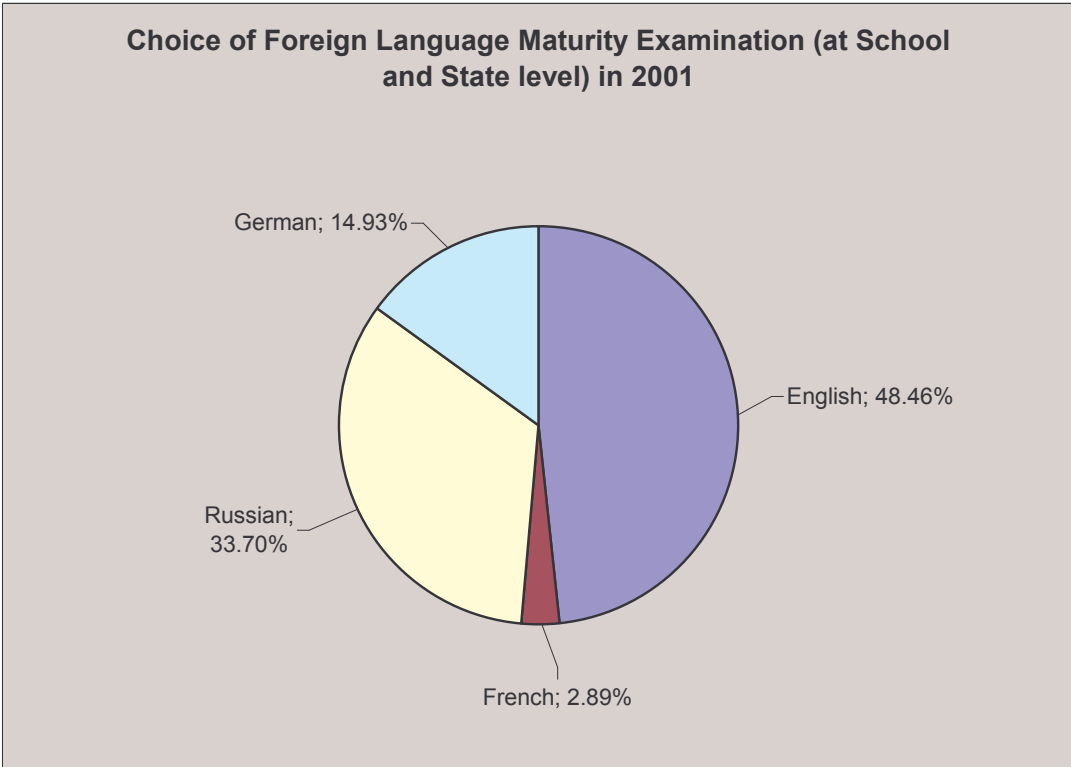
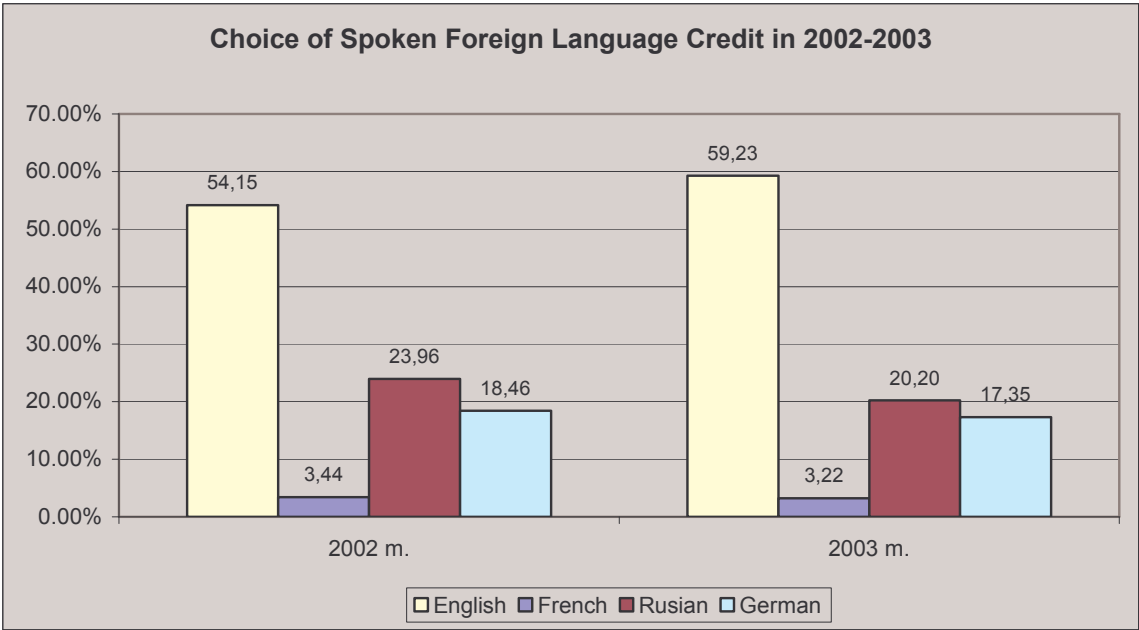
The standard course gives the possibilities for rather narrow but relatively independent communication in foreign language: in all areas of communicative activities the achievements of schoolchildren are oriented towards the Threshold level (B1) of language proficiency.

The extended course provides the possibilities for rather independent language use: in the fields of interaction and production, the achievements of students are oriented towards the Threshold level (B1), whereas achievements in the field of reception (listening and reading) are aimed at the Vantage level (B2). However, these levels are not justified by any research.

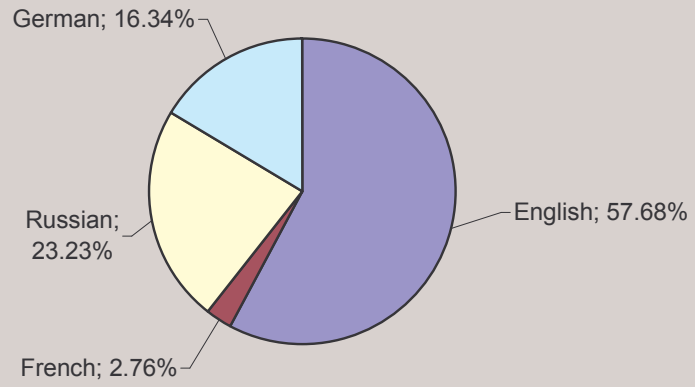
Students, who learn their second foreign language, may seek to reach the level of proficiency in their first language depending on the conditions, motives and personal goals of foreign language learning.

4.4. Statistics of spoken foreign language credit and maturity examinations

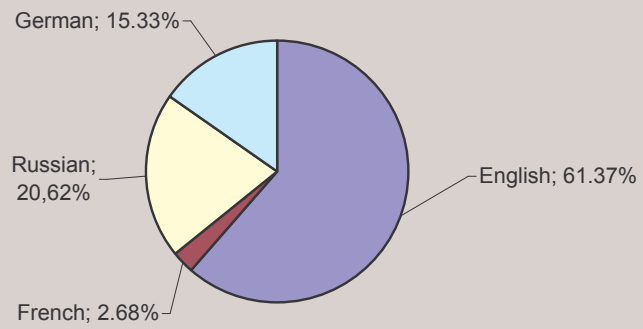




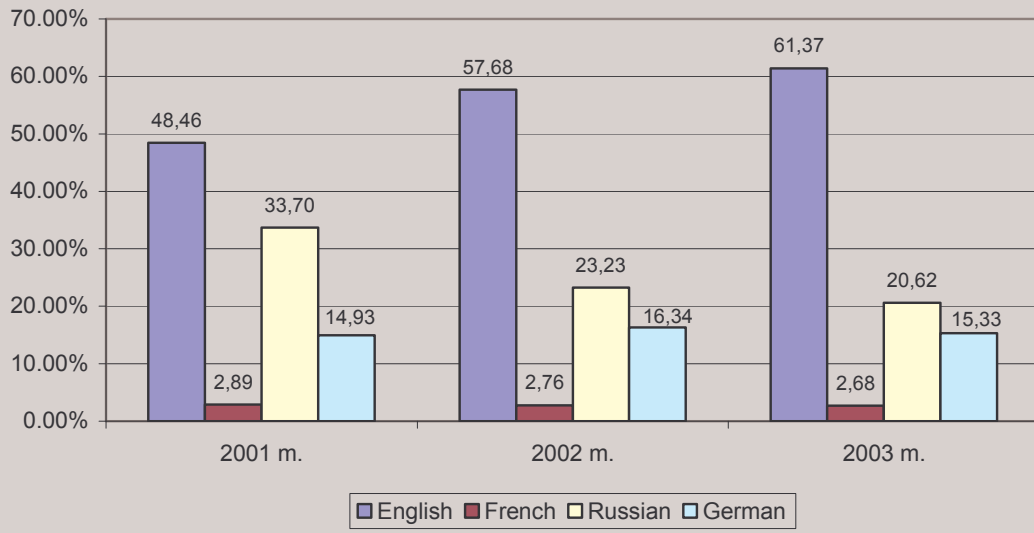
Choice of Foreign Language Maturity Examination (at School and State Level) in 2002

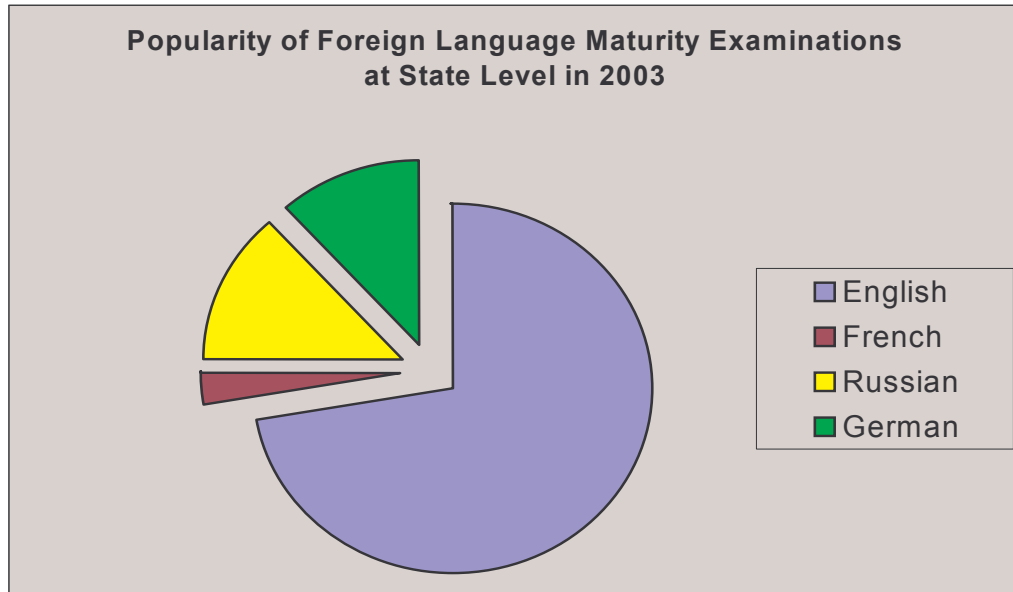


Choice of Foreign Language Examination (at School and State Level) in 2003



Choice of Foreign Language Maturity Examination (as School and State Level) 2001-2003





5. Foreign language teachers:

Statistical data.

Number of educators

Beginning of the academic year

	2000–2001	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004
Educators, thousands	70.4	68.9	69.1	69.5
General education schools	51.9	50.9	50.2	50.3
Vocational schools	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.7
Professional colleges	4.2	3.6	3.3	1.7
Colleges	0.4	1.1	2.0	3.5
Universities	9.0	8.6	8.9	9.3

5.1. Training of foreign language teachers.

5.1.1. Statistical data of training of foreign language specialists.

Training of foreign language specialists at universities				
	Total number of students		Acquired qualification	
	2002–2003	2003–2004	2002	2003
Undergraduate studies at university level				
<i>Degree and/or professional qualification: Bachelor of Philology:</i>				
English and Russian Languages	59	197	-	22
English Philology	908	888	114	118
English Language and Literature	61	51	15	9
Classical (Latin and Ancient Greek) Philology	45	48	12	6
Polish Philology	107	104	16	21
Lithuanian Philology and Finnish Language	30	-	14	-
Lithuanian Philology and Swedish Language	21	-	10	-
Lithuanian Philology and Foreign Language	141	115	1	13
French Philology	204	190	49	40
Russian Philology	246	241	43	43
Scandinavian Philology	49	48	15	14
Slavic Philology	24	25	11	11
German Philology	494	494	89	93
German and Russian Languages	32	15	14	20
German Language and Lithuanian Language	24	23	-	-
Romance Philology	14	28	-	-
Lithuanian Philology and Latvian Language	-	34	-	8
<i>Acquired degree and/or professional qualification: Bachelor of Philology, teacher</i>				
English Language and English Language Teaching	120	166	-	-
German Language and German Language Teaching	33	43	-	-
English Philology	565	625	199	232
English Language and Russian Language	30	22	-	-
Byelorussian Philology	87	97	8	20

Polish Philology	125	119	24	24
Polish Philology and Primary Education Teaching	59	41	10	28
French Philology	74	72	27	16
French Philology and Lithuanian Language	15	29	-	-
Russian Philology	297	312	60	62
Russian Philology and Primary Education Teaching	60	42	12	18
Russian Language	43	22	14	9
German Philology	205	197	75	83
Graduate studies at university level				
<i>Acquired degree and/or professional qualification:</i>				
<i>Master of Philology</i>				
Applied English Linguistics	17	33	9	6
English Linguistics	24	31	6	11
English Culture and Literature	13	6	8	5
Classical (Latin and Ancient Greek) Philology	14	13	4	5
French Linguistics	15	15	6	9
Scandinavian Philology	4	9	-	-
Slavic Linguistics	20	22	4	7
Slavic Literature	17	21	5	7
German Linguistics	34	35	10	11
Applied German Philology and Lithuanian Philology	7	15	-	-
<i>Acquired degree and/or professional qualification:</i>				
<i>Master of Philology, teacher</i>				
English Philology	36	34	12	13
Polish Philology	28	18	11	9
French Philology	10	8	5	5
Russian Philology	32	30	10	6
German Philology	24	19	7	10

Training of foreign language specialists at colleges				
	Total number of students		Acquired qualification	
	2002–2003	2003–2004	2002	2003
<i>Acquired professional qualification: translator/interpreter</i>				
English Language	142	207	-	32
German Language	13	10	-	8
<i>Acquired professional qualification: teacher</i>				
German Language Pedagogy	33	57	-	-
English-French Language Pedagogy	60	83	-	-
English and Second Foreign Language (German or Russian) Pedagogy	16	32	-	-
German and Second Foreign Language (English or Russian) Pedagogy	12	25	-	-
English-German Language Pedagogy	38	142	-	-
German-English Language Pedagogy	-	21	-	-
Training of foreign language specialists at professional colleges				
	Total number of students		Acquired qualification	
	2002–2003	2003–2004	2002	2003
Teacher Training and Pedagogy				
English Language Pedagogy	355	246	88	26
French Language Pedagogy	20	18	10	-
German Language Pedagogy	171	117	45	27
Humanities. Foreign Languages				
English language	86	53	25	15
German language	9	-	-	-

5.1.2. Training of educators at universities and colleges.

Rapid changes in social and cultural life, the development of information society and the integration into the Euroatlantic structures raise new objectives for education in Lithuania. A new environment for education is developing and the culture of education is changing. Further progress of education and the quality of teaching are inseparable from the readiness of teachers to work in this new environment. The role of teachers is changing. The teacher should not only be the holder of knowledge but also the organiser of learning, moderator, helper, advisor, partner, intermediary between a student and different modern sources of information. The teacher of today has to be competent in both professional education and non-formal, additional education. Teachers of foreign languages must have good communicative skills, information skills and good social competence. They have to be witnesses of the facts of life who transfer the traditions of their country and are able to appreciate cultural and historic values of other countries. They must be able to understand global changes, be creative, be good at communication, have active civic position.

Foreign language teachers are trained at 6 (out of 15) universities as well as at 6 colleges. Most universities (Vilnius Pedagogical University, Šiauliai University, Klaipėda University, Vilnius University, etc.) confer academic degrees and teacher qualification (parallel model). Other universities, such as Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University, Institute of Foreign Languages of Vilnius University confer both bachelor's and master's degrees, but do not grant teacher qualification categories (consecutive model). Currently, foreign language specialists, who have an academic degree but not necessarily a formal teacher qualification, can work at school. The qualification of a teacher is granted after completion of undergraduate studies at university level and/or pedagogical professional studies of one year. Graduates with a bachelor's degree and teacher's qualification can work at all stages of school system. There are some specialised programmes which are aimed at training specialists for a particular stage of foreign language education. For instance, if a programme is exclusively aimed at training early language learning specialists, they can only work at the introductory stage.

Undergraduate programmes designed for foreign language teacher training can be used to train a specialist of only one or two foreign languages.

Teachers of the same languages are trained under very similar or even equivalent programmes. For instance, there are 11 programmes available for teachers of English at 6 universities and 5 programmes for teachers of French at 4 universities. Teachers of Russian are trained at 3 universities under 8 programmes that are virtually identical. Most training programmes for foreign language teachers are available to full-time students. However, there are some evening and even part-time courses. Some training programmes for teachers of Lithuanian enable students to acquire ancillary specialisation in Latvian, Swedish, Finnish and other foreign languages. The duration of undergraduate studies at university level is 4 years. The studies comprise 160 credits (4 years x 1,600 hrs). One semester has 20 credits. A study programme includes compulsory, optional and free courses. The ratio of classroom and autonomous work is gradually changing from year to year: students at more advanced stage have to devote more time for autonomous studies and optional courses, and the latter can be taken at a different university. The drafts of study programmes are developed by faculty boards and approved by the Senate. The content of studies is defined by three interrelated professional and subject-matter competences of an educator: general (humanitarian and social) education; pedagogic and psychological education; specialty education.

A summary of programmes for foreign language teaching available at Lithuanian schools

Professional qualification	Number of programmes for teaching of English	Number of programmes for teaching of German	Number of programmes for teaching of French	Number of programmes for teaching of other languages	Number of programmes for teaching of two languages
Translator (with a university degree)	1	1	1	-	-
Teacher of basic school (with further education)	1	1	1	-	-
Translator (with a non-university degree)	6 (6F, 3E, 1P)	1 (1F)	-	-	-
Teacher (with a non-university degree)	7 (7F, 3P)	7(7F, 2P)	2 (2F, 1P)	-	8
Bachelor of Philology	6 (6F, 1E)	5(5F, 1E, 1P)	3 (3F, 1P)	15	6
Bachelor of Philology, teacher	4 (4F, 3E, 2P)	3(3F, 1P)	2 (2F,1E, 1P)	7	4
Teacher (Bachelor's degree under other programme)	1 (1F, 1E)	-	-	-	-
Master of Philology	3 (3F)	2 (F)	1(F)	8	1
Master of Philology, teacher	1(F, E, P)	1(F, E, P)	1 (F, E, P)	2	-

F: full-time, E: evening courses, P: part-time. Number of different programmes is given in brackets.

The graduate study programme comprises 80 credits. At least 25 credits are used for theoretical studies. Autonomous work by students at graduate level must account for at least 30 percent of all subjects studied. Each graduate study programme completes with an assessment of graduate's education, i.e. the defence of thesis. The thesis must give a clear account of the research object and present a scientific formulation of research problem reflecting both theoretical and practical importance of the selected topic. The master's diploma issued by universities is recognised in all European states which ratified the Lisbon Joint Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region in 1997. The Republic of Lithuania ratified the Convention on 15 October 1998.

Some colleges also grant the qualification of a teacher. Although the programmes available at colleges are virtually identical to the university programmes, college graduates may only teach at basic school level. So far, there have been no studies measuring the level of training of teachers graduating from universities and colleges.

Training of foreign language teachers at higher education institutions faces the same problems as training of other educators. Teacher's competence is one of the factors underlying the quality of teaching. OECD experts assessed the Lithuanian educational system and noted that the reforms in teacher training were too slow (Reviews of National Policies for Education. Lithuania. OECD, 2002). The foreign language teacher training system also fails to meet the new requirements of schools. OECD experts recommended to develop vocational training standards for educators, to increase the duration of practical training at school and set a better balance between the academic studies and practical training. Universities are not ready to train teachers for work in new knowledge society and to modernise the profession of teachers.

Lithuanian universities provide training for educators in languages of ethnic minorities such as the Byelorussian, Polish or Russian languages. Teachers of Byelorussian language are trained at Vilnius Pedagogical University. Lithuania is keen to foster the linguistic diversity and to protect the linguistic and cultural diversity of ethnic minorities.

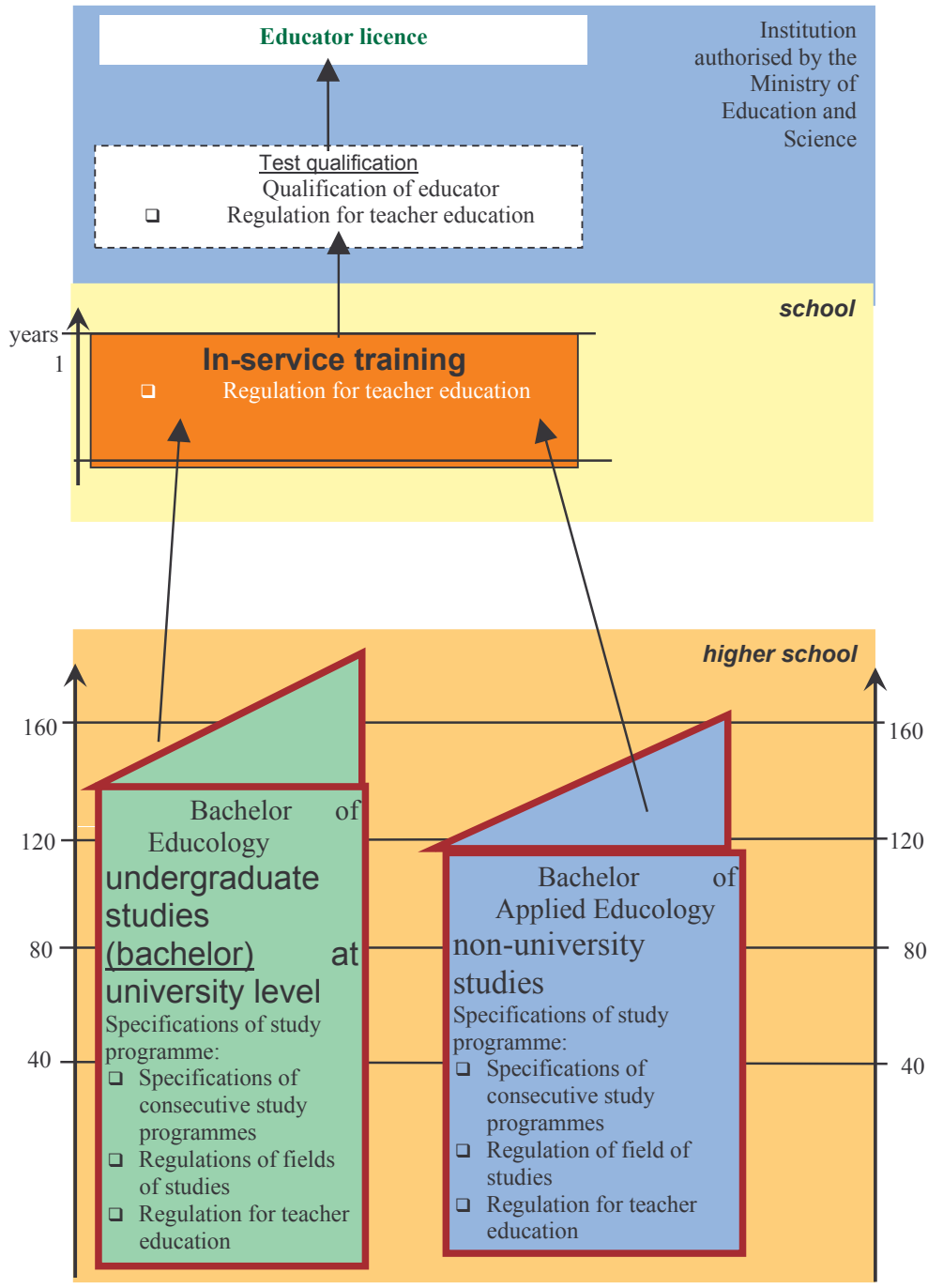
The Ministry of Education and Culture took notice of the need of changes in teacher training and developed a new Conceptual Framework for Training of Educators.

5.1.3. Reforms in training of educators at Lithuanian schools

In 2004, the Board of the Ministry of Education and Culture 2004 approved new Conceptual Framework for Training of Educators. The Conceptual Framework defines the goals, objectives and main principles of teacher training for the education system in Lithuania. It also outlines the professional competence of an educator, organisation of teacher training and measures to ensure the quality of training. The renewed training of educators is based on the Principles of National Education Action Plan for 2003–2012 approved by the Resolution No. IX-1700 adopted by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on 4 July 2003, the Law on Education, the Law on Higher Education and other laws, the National Development Plan approved by the Resolution No. 1196 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 4 October 2001, the Memorandum of Lifelong Learning, rules and principles of the Bologna Process, documents defining the main reforms in general education, vocational training and higher education in Lithuania as well as this Conceptual Framework. The Conceptual Framework is designed for training of pre-school, primary, basic, secondary education and occupational teachers as well as social educators and special educators at universities in Lithuania. This Conceptual Framework outlines the principles of training of educators, defines the competence and qualification of an educator and the ways to acquire it, presents new approach to teacher training process according to stages (non-university and university study programmes), details the licensing rules and assurance of quality of teacher training. This Conceptual Framework will be used as a basis for the National Reform Programme for Teacher Training and Professional Improvement which is included into the National Development Plan of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2001–2004. The Programme will be funded by the structural funds of European Union and supported by cooperation and exchange programmes.

The Ministry of Education and Science intends to improve and develop pedagogical training standards and to define the implementation strategies. There are plans for international accreditation of programmes. Teachers for basic and secondary schools as well as gymnasiums must acquire a bachelor's or master's degree.

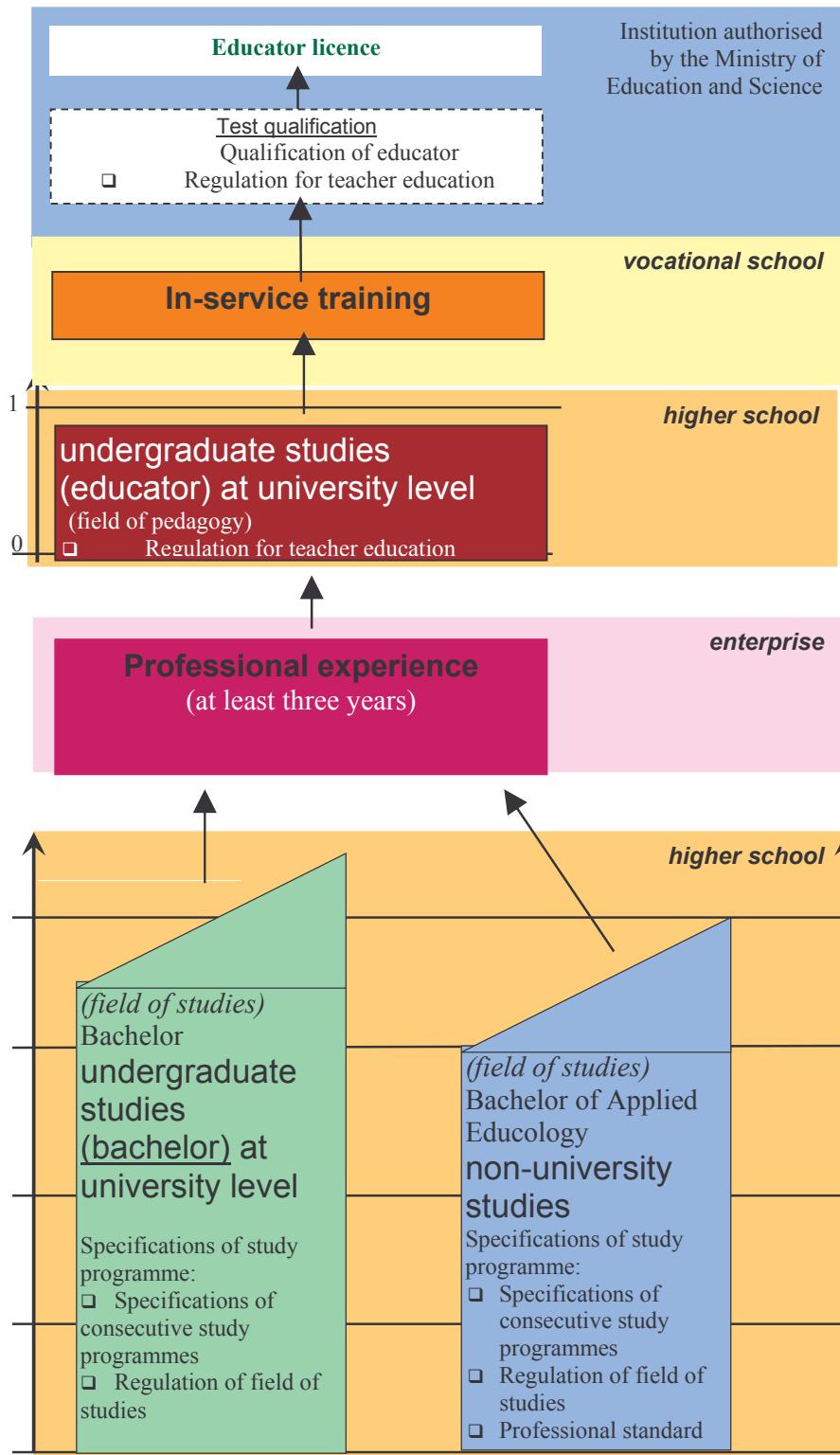
Below you can see the general guidelines for changes in teacher training.



parallel model, educology

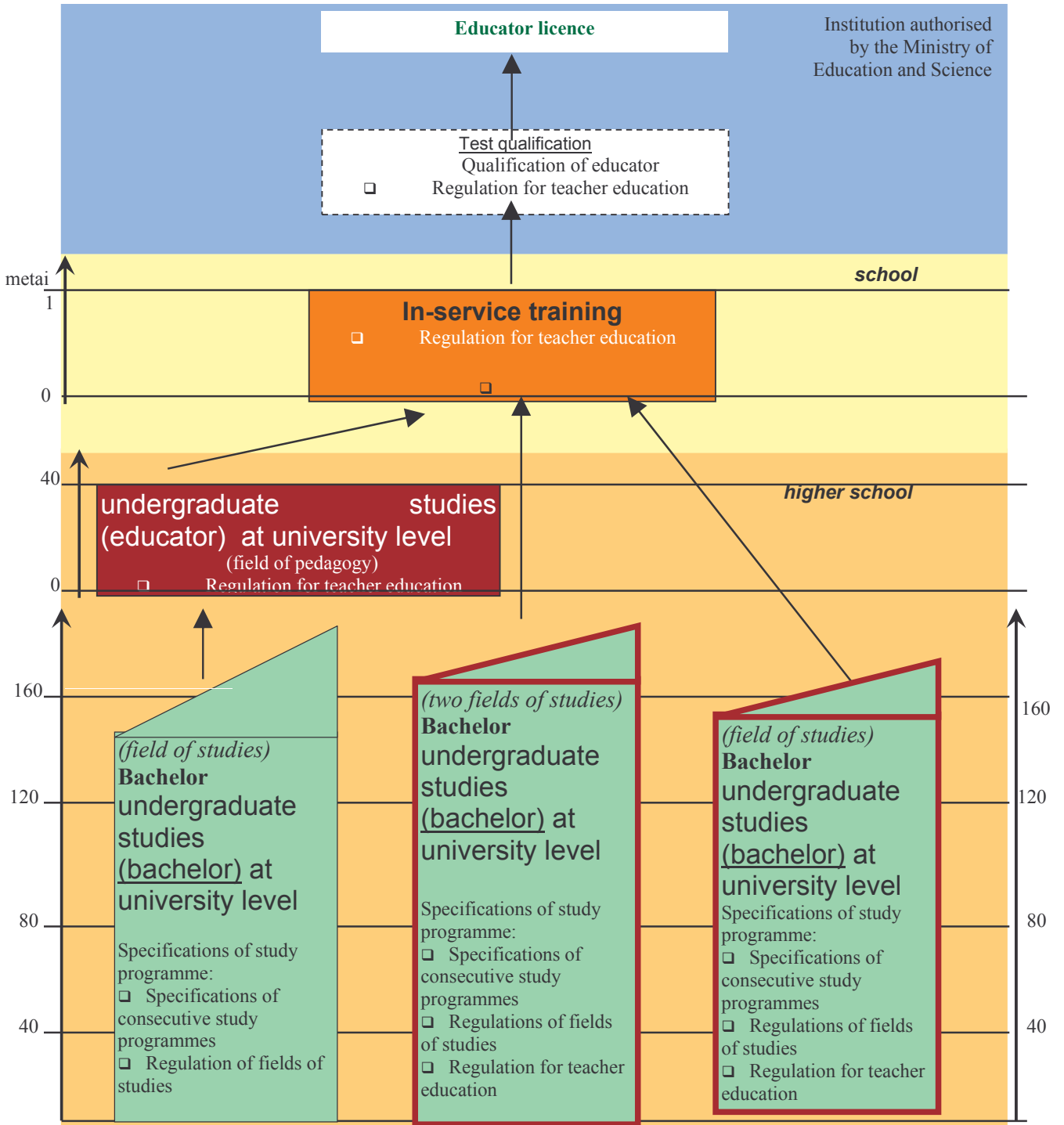
Training of *social and special educator*

Training of *pre-school, primary school educator*



consecutive model, certain fields of study

Training of professional educators



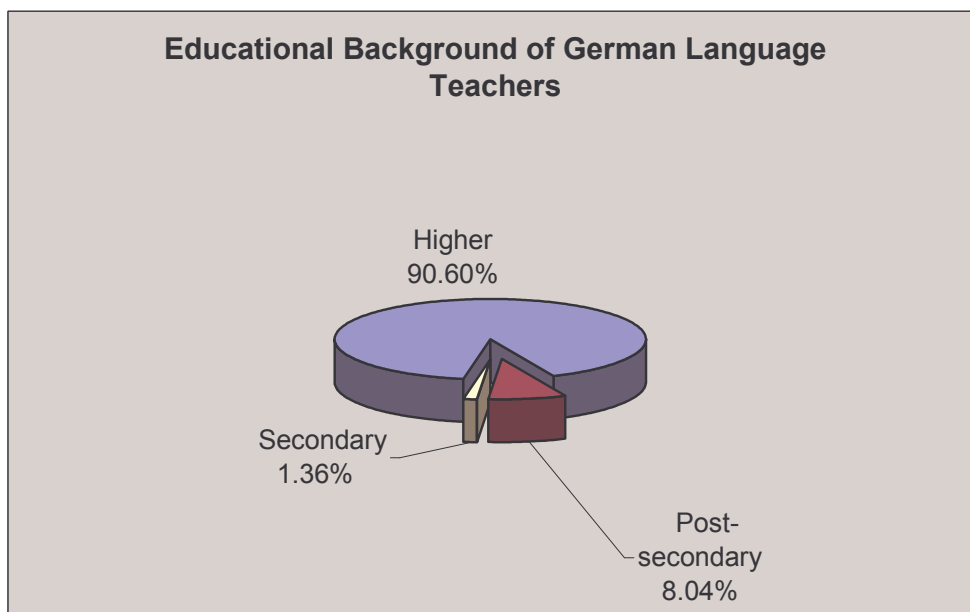
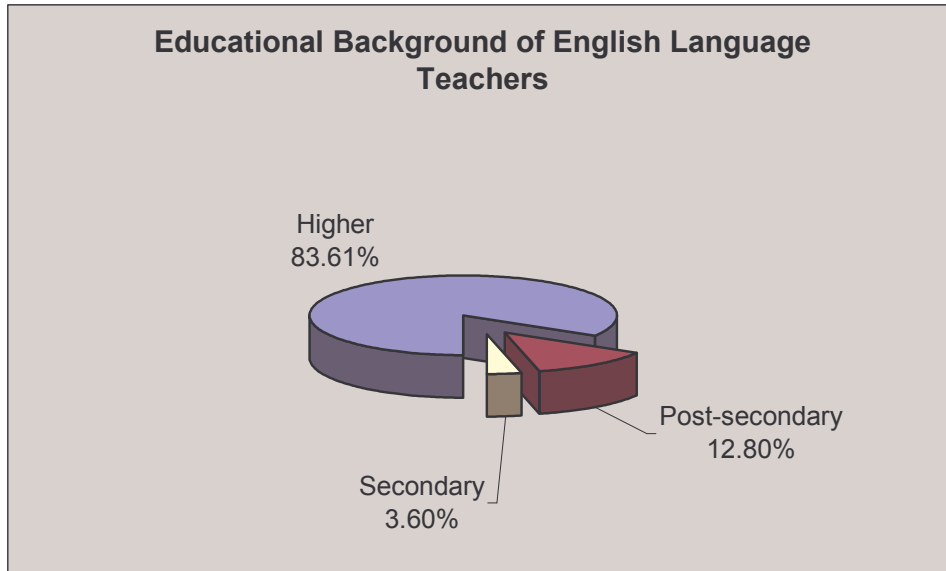
consecutive model,
certain fields of study

parallel model, educology

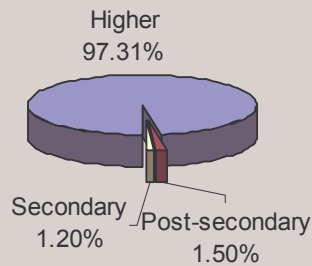
Training of educators for *secondary and basic school* education

5.2. Improvement of qualification of foreign language teachers

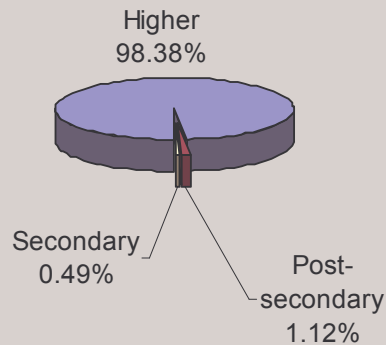
Below you can see the charts of educational background of foreign language teachers in Lithuania:



Educational Background of French Language Teachers



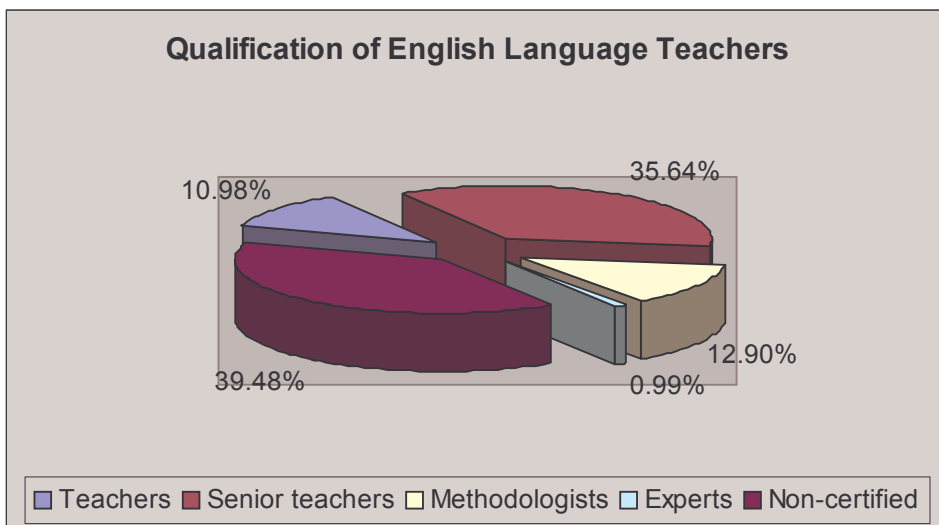
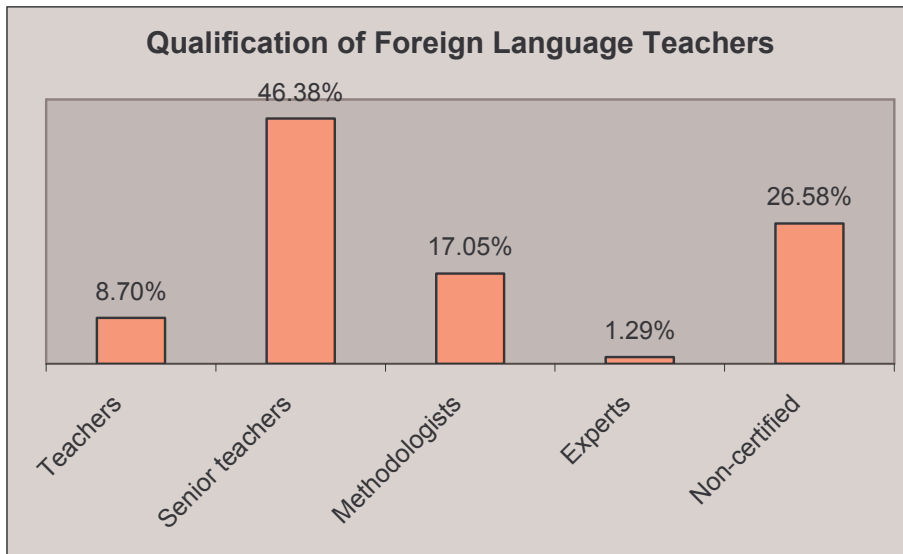
Educational Background of Russian Language Teachers

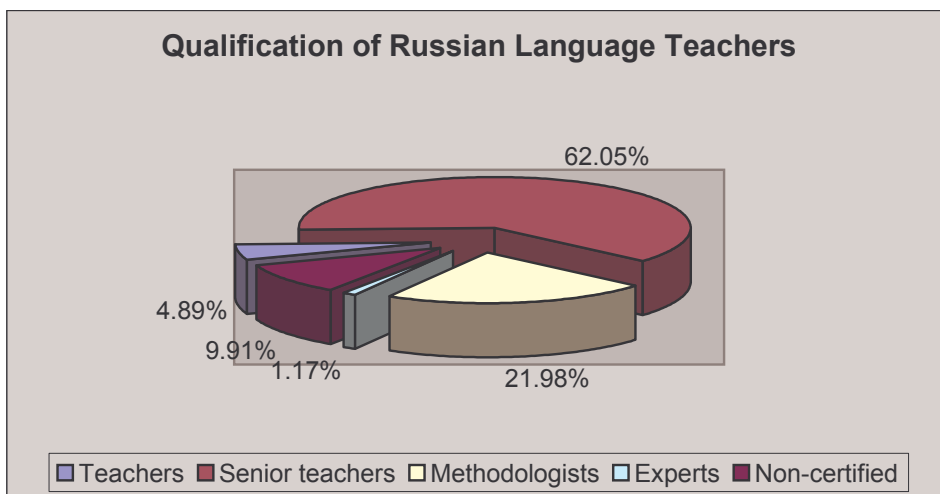
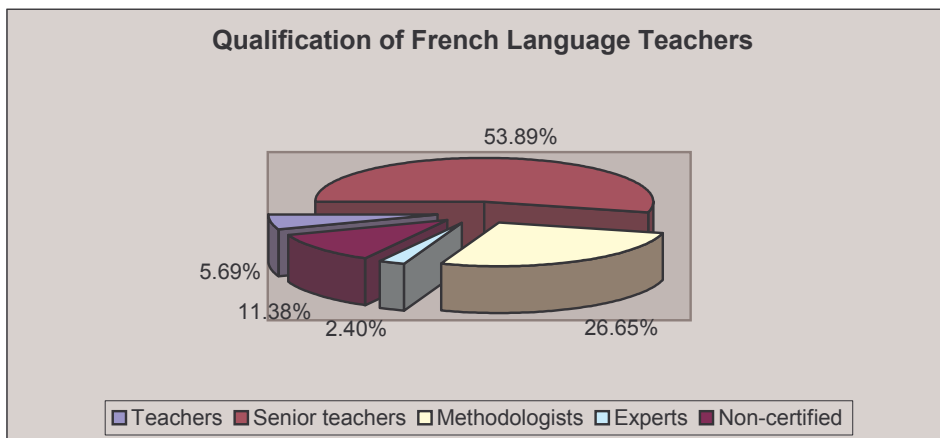
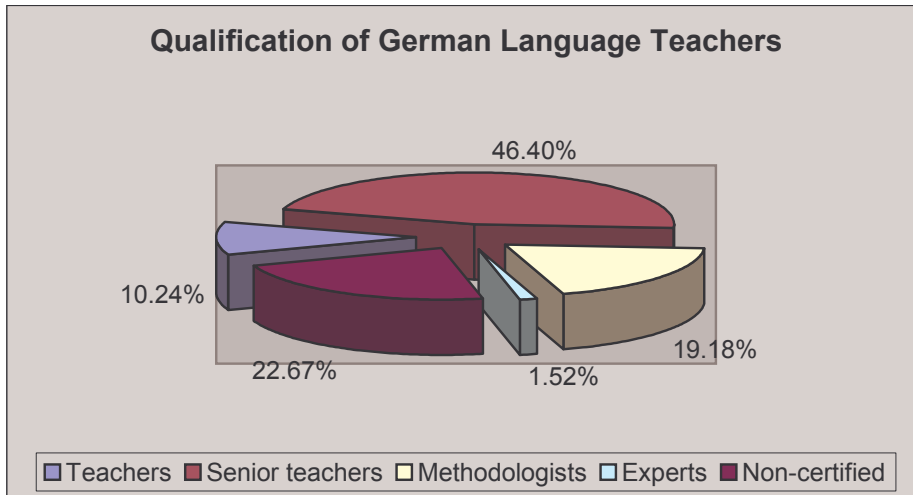


A programme for the improvement of work of foreign language teachers was carried out to give teachers the opportunity for continuous upgrade of knowledge and improvement of their performance. The goal of the programme was to help every teacher continue the improvement of their abilities, skills and knowledge so that teachers be able to channel them into higher-quality education for students. Article 49 of the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania states: “1. A teacher shall be entitled to: 1) propose his/her individual programmes; 2) attend professional improvement courses for at least 5 days every year; 3) be certified and acquire a qualification category according to the procedure established by the Minister of Education and Science. 2. A teacher must: ... 4) improve his/her qualification”.

The performance of working teachers is assessed according to the qualification requirements for certification of educators. In Lithuania, the system of qualification categories is divided into 4 steps: teacher, senior teacher, teacher methodologist, and teacher expert. The system of qualification categories is used to differentiate the salaries of educators. This encourages to seek professional career and increase the motivation for long-term involvement in education and for professional improvement. All educators have equal opportunities to acquire qualification categories.

Foreign language teachers according to qualification categories:





Due to the reforms in curriculum and changes in educational needs of the society, educational background of teachers is no longer sufficient and the work record is losing its importance. In recent years, a number of structural changes in the professional improvement system took place as a result of reforms in educational system. In 2001, the professional improvement system for

educators was decentralised. A number of institutions emerged on the educator professional improvement market such as university and municipal centres for teacher education and non-government organisations. The availability of professional improvement opportunities is better, which helps save national funds and time of educators. However, regional centres sometimes fail to submit updated information, ensure the quality of lectors or better communication between local teachers and other educators.

Foreign language teachers have a wide variety of opportunities to satisfy their qualification needs in Lithuania. During the last five years, 295 programmes were available for 5,898 foreign language teachers, or one programme for every 20 teachers. Foreign language teachers are most active members of professional improvement activities (Lithuanian language teachers: 4932 – 216 – 23 respectively). The content of many qualification programmes sometimes overlaps with the programmes offered at higher education institutions. However, this is not a problem as a number of educators graduated from universities in Soviet times.

The Teacher Professional Development Centre is the largest institution for professional development of educators in Lithuania. It offers professional development programmes under the strategic guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Science for 2004–2012. The projects of the Centre present the strategic papers of the Ministry of Education and Science regulating the national educational policy and changes in curriculum. They also promote discussions of the contents of General Curriculum Framework and Standards as well as their application in the process of teaching, other projects, etc. In 2000–2003, the Teacher Professional Development Centre carried out the following projects for foreign language specialist and schoolmasters: “Profiled teaching and Reform of Maturity Examinations at State Level”, “Improvement of Quality of Education in Reformed Basic School”, “Changes in Curriculum and Assessment System”, “European Language Portfolio”, “Innovations in Foreign Language Teaching and Methodology”, “Modernisation of Curriculum”, etc. The Teacher Professional Development Centre trained 40 English and German language consultants for secondary education, 61 consultants for Russian and 26 consultants for French language teaching. Annually, nearly 1,200 teachers of English, French, Russian and German language improve their qualification at the Centre.

Both the Teacher Professional Development Centre and regional educational centres organise regular seminars under various programmes such as “Early Foreign Language Learning”, “Foreign Language Teaching and Information Technologies”, “Working with New Textbooks”. The improvement of qualifications of foreign language teachers through local programmes was widely assisted by various foreign organisations such as the British Council, the USA A.P.P.L.E Programme, Goethe Institute, French Cultural Centre, American Centre, R. Bosch Foundation. They supported the preparation and implementation of new teaching methods and teaching materials as well as the development of new foreign language maturity examinations. Every year, teachers were going abroad for internship. The support was provided for the programme of re-qualification of teachers. Volunteers from the Peace Corps worked in Lithuania, and some teachers from Germany and France continue to work in the country. The system of training of foreign language teachers as specialist-multipliers is being developed. The funding of the teacher improvement programme should get better in the future because the funds were allocated in the pupil’s basket. Schools and teachers are able to choose various programmes and modules offered by the Teacher Professional Development Centre and educational centres in regions and towns. The work of foreign language teacher as inseparable from the ability to use computer technologies. It is expected that before 2005, the compulsory test qualification of computer literacy will be introduced for all teachers. In the field of

methodology, the project work and methods stimulating the cooperation and independence should be developed. The sphere of teacher activities is expanding: in addition to traditional lectures, foreign language teachers manage joint projects, after-school activities, organise cultural programmes in foreign languages, etc. Therefore, education must be oriented towards a creative, responsible, independent teacher and an independent and responsible school community.

6. Key developments, priorities and problems for the implementation of foreign language strategy

6.1. Implementation of General Curriculum Framework and Foreign Language Standards.

6.2. Principles of school activities implementing the foreign language education strategy.

6.3. Problems and solutions concerning foreign language teaching.

General Curriculum Framework and Educational Standards for grades 11–12 summarise the aims and objectives of education, the competences which are important and necessary for any member of knowledge society and his/her professional activity. A wide dissemination programme will be used for the implementation of the General Curriculum Framework and Foreign Language Standards. At the moment, it is necessary to harmonise the existing general curriculum and the overall aims and goals of education. The content of education should be renewed in such a way as to enable the person to face modern challenges, use newly emerging opportunities, foster personal independence and sociality in the environment of open society, globalization, rapid changes and outburst of information. This can only be ensured by proper cultural maturity and modern competences. Proficiency in foreign languages is and will be very important for everyone in the future. A member of information society must be armed with the latest information and communicative skills. A special focus must be put on the development of *general* foreign language skills as the ability to learn and use information independently, etc. A student must be able to communicate in writing and orally as well as to perceive foreign language as the means of communication and expression of ideas, use different strategies and develop the autonomous language learning and self-control skills. Therefore, the General Curriculum Framework and Educational Standards in the dissemination programme pinpoint the necessary cultural and language communication skills which are inseparable in foreign language education. The implementation of general curriculum framework and educational standards should include regular renewal of programmes (including examination syllabus) according to the needs of the society and the results of new research. In the nearest future, the curriculum will be revised in order to make relevant screening according to new competences and workload of students. Foreign language textbooks and other sources of learning should be gradually upgraded if they fail to meet modern requirements.

Problems. There were no studies carried out in Lithuania to investigate if foreign language education meets the needs and interests of the society. The second foreign language is gradually losing its position because the curriculum allows to abandon it after grade 10 (the table below shows the number of students studying according to the science profile who stopped learning the second foreign language):

English	German	French	Russian
1050	2200	115	21302
34%	38%	15%	61%

Was the abandoning of the second foreign language the only way to reduce the workload of pupils? We are different from other Baltic States as well as a number of European countries in this respect. Another major problem impeding the achievement of foreign language education aims and objectives is the lack of foreign language teachers (especially teachers of English) and teacher training. So far, we have not yet applied the practice of European countries to train teachers specialising in at least two languages. Hopefully, the intended reforms in teacher training will solve this problem. The lack of teachers and poor qualification of many re-qualified teachers is the major obstacle to the implementation of early foreign language learning. It is necessary to analyse the performance of retrained foreign language teachers and develop the programmes for further improvement of their linguistic competence and methodologies. There are other problems such as the insufficient use of new technologies in the process of education. Nevertheless, this problem should be solved in the future.

Conclusions

*Following the General Curriculum Framework and Educational Standards as well as the European Union and the Council of Europe documents on language education policies, **the Language Education Strategy of Lithuania:***

1) promotes the awareness of the importance of language learning in a modern society:

- the number of language students is increasing as more and more people in Lithuania realise that the ability to communicate in two or more languages improves their mobility, career opportunities, possibilities to receive information personally;
- the increasing number of schools, teachers, pupils, professors and students participate in various international projects (Comenius, Lingua, etc.) allowing them to improve their skills not only in English but also in French and German as well as to know some less popular languages (Italian, Spanish, Danish, Swedish, Finnish, etc.);
- promotes using every opportunity to reveal, cherish and promote European linguistic and cultural diversity;
- promotes learning of at least two foreign languages;
- encourages teachers to improve their professional and methodological competence;
- shows a necessity to make drastic changes in the entire teacher training system;

2) promotes the following foreign language education initiatives:

- to prepare textbooks for less popular foreign languages (Italian, Spanish, Danish, Swedish, etc.);
- to develop early foreign language learning;
- to improve the choice of foreign languages in general education schools (Italian, Spanish, Danish, Swedish, etc.);
- to implement the Content and Language Integrated Learning Programme;
- to use new technologies in foreign language education;
- to set up a new system for language skills assessment through the implementation of the European Language Portfolio in the educational system of Lithuania;
- to learn the languages of neighbouring countries;
- to introduce innovative language teaching in the vocational training system;
- to develop the possibility of foreign language learning for schoolchildren with special needs;

3) promotes the cooperation between local and foreign formal and non-formal education institutions in the field of language education:

- to develop non-formal and distance foreign language learning;
- encourages continuous methodological assistance to adults seeking autonomous language learning;
- ensure the possibility of lifelong foreign language learning through learning of the professional language;
- development of activities of associations of foreign language teachers.

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