

ABOUT THE LINGUISTIC CONSTITUTION OF SOCIAL SPACE: THE CASE OF ESTONIA

Anu Masso, Tõnu Tender

University of Tartu

Abstract. The article uses a theory of social space by Henri Lefebvre and is based on the assumption that analysing motivations for foreign language learning could help to understand the changes in social space. Using Estonia as an empirical example we are arguing that the country is moving from a transitional phase of social space to a post-transitional phase, i.e. the fast changes in language learning motivations and curricula, as well as the increasing number of personal or mediated contacts with different countries are replaced by a relative ‘calming down’ of social space, where the individual relationships with the geo-cultural world are developing. Using qualitative in-depth interviews as the empirical basis, the analysis found four different individual linguistic-spatial strategies – spatial production based on unchanging morphologies; spatial production based on historical and power connotations; spatial production based on connotations of consumerism and spatial production based on cultural meanings. In our opinion, the last strategy supports social change most positively. Taking into account the importance of the consumerist and spatial meanings of language, we believe that these aspects should be taken into account in developing language policies.

DOI: 10.3176/tr.2008.2.03

Keywords: language learning motivations, social space, spatial triad of Henri Lefebvre, spatial transition

1. Introduction

We begin from a suggestion made by Henri Lefebvre that language plays a crucial role in the constitution of social space (Lefebvre 1991). In this the emphasis of our article differs to some extent from previous studies that have mostly analysed languages in terms of power relations (Méndez and Cañado 2005, Guilherme 2007) or in terms of minority-majority relations (Wawra 2006, O’Rourke 2005). Few researches have focused on the relations of language learning with social space (Blommaert, Collins, Slembrouck 2005, Collins, Slembrouck

2005). The present article aims at developing further this line of research by analysing the roles that foreign languages and language learning motivations in particular play in creating spatial perceptions and practices.

There are many examples of how (foreign) language skills create opportunities for acting in a specific social space and different contexts for interpreting the activities in different spatial units. A good example is the so-called Bronze Soldier crisis in post-communist Estonia that reached the international media threshold (see e.g. Tanner 2007) – at the end of April 2007 the Estonian authorities removed the Bronze Soldier statue from its previous location in the centre of the capital and exhumed the nearby war grave. While the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia regard the statue as a shrine many ethnic Estonians consider it a painful reminder of the Soviet occupation.

Another example comes from the time Estonia joined the European Union when population groups who lived in the same country but in different information spaces exhibited different behaviour. Namely, different language groups expressed different fears – while Russian families bought up kilograms of salt, Estonian families bought up kilograms of sugar, in anticipation of a post-accession price rise – at least according to the media channels they followed (Russian families live mainly in the Russian language media environment and Estonian families in the Estonian and Finnish language media environment).

Therefore, it is important to examine how social reproduction through languages could develop into a social change. In the present analysis Estonia is used as an example of a post-transition society. This article aims to answer the following general research question: how are the motivations for learning foreign languages and the perception of social space related to each other? We will try to include all possible interactions between language and social space, as analysed by Henri Lefebvre, and will analyse below these interactions in more detail.

2. Language in theories of social space

Although there are many theories and empirical analyses concentrating on social representations of language (see e.g. Heinz, Cheng, Ako 2007), there are almost no studies concerning the construction of social space. This article focuses on the latter aspect and uses mainly the ideas of Henri Lefebvre¹ formulated in his book *The Production of Space* (1991).

¹ Similar fields are often analysed using different linguistic theories (e.g. van Lier 1996, Gardner 1985). However, systematic research of language as a system has been criticised because it has excluded the subject from the analysis (Lefebvre 1991, Ahearn 2001). For example Henri Lefebvre has criticised the earlier linguistic theories by Noam Chomsky, since these ‘*completely ignore the yawning gap that separates the linguistic mental space from that social space wherein language becomes practice*’ (Lefebvre 1991:5). In an alternative sociological approach more attention is paid to the activities and understandings of an individual. Therefore combining linguistic theoretical approach with sociological approach is the only way to analyse the role of foreign languages in the creation of social space.

The most important part of Lefebvre's theory is the idea that space is fundamental to our lived experience and that the spatial lived experience is always produced socially². Social space in a narrower sense comprises architecture and landscapes and social space in a wider sense comprises the relations between the representatives of different cultures. Although the notion of production in Lefebvre's works has been interpreted as the economic production of things (Elden 2004), the authors of this article believe that the philosophical meaning of production, i.e. the creation of knowledge or institutions, is more important. For example, in modern European societies it is expressed by the orientation of individuals to recreational activities and by active promotion of specific tourist attractions by relevant institutions.

According to Lefebvre's theory, to understand production of a specific space we should analyse the three different aspects of spatial experience: representations of space (conceived space), spatial practices (perceived space), and representational space³ (lived space). In the context of this article spatial practices include, for example, contacts with various cultures, motivation for travelling, etc. Representation of space is a space created by politicians, planners, etc., e.g. the opportunities of geo-cultural mobility offered or missing in Estonia under different regimes and ideologies. Representational space marks individual meanings given to specific cultures or geographical regions.

Despite the fact that all three parts of space are closely linked, in a specific spatial experience one may dominate the others. The most problematic situation occurs where representations of space and spatial practices dominate the spatial event. An excellent example is the Soviet era during which the limited opportunities to travel to the Western countries created in Estonians a certain feeling of deprivation. While spatial practices and representations of space must have an inner consistency, such rules of integrity and coherence do not apply to representational spaces. Therefore, the meanings given to representational spaces may arise from various sources, e.g. from personal experiences related to specific countries, from the media and also in the process of learning a foreign language (see also Figure 1).

Although the role of language in the construction of social reality has been analysed by several other authors (see e.g. Fairclough 1995), Henri Lefebvre is distinguished by his idea that language is one of the most important means of production of social space. Despite the fact that he fails to answer unequivocally the question whether language comes before or after social space or exists in

² Although Lefebvre uses in his theory of space many terms used by Marx (production, relations of production, class struggle, etc.), he is influenced by a wider range of philosophers, such as Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger (see e.g. Elden 2004).

³ The term *espace vécu* (lived space) used by Lefebvre has also been translated into English as 'spaces of representation' (see e.g. Watkins 2005, Shields, Soja). In this article we use the term 'representative spaces' used in 'The Production of Space' translated by Nicholson-Smith in 1991. In our opinion, this term is more accurate as it refers to the construction of space by an individual.

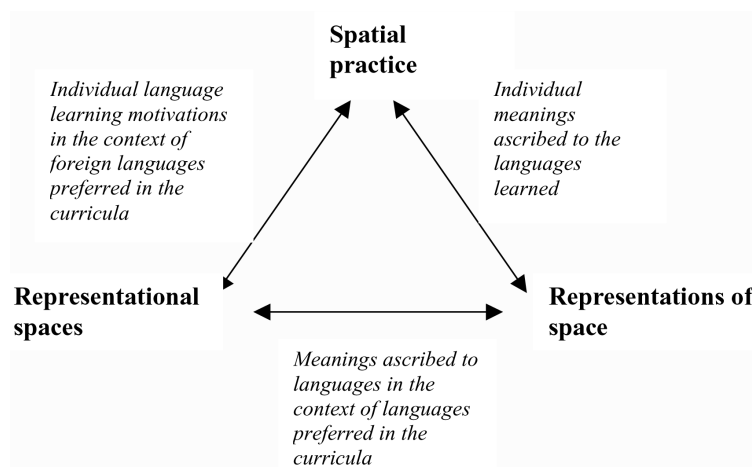


Figure 1. Analytical scheme for analysing connections between language and space (based on Henri Lefebvre)

parallel with it, Lefebvre is convinced that each spatial experience is characterised by specific linguistic codes (e.g. words, music, buildings). According to this approach language is not just the means of distributing information, a channel reflecting the existing social reality, but it also helps to construct the reality, i.e. language is the means of living in a specific space and understanding it. Lefebvre's notion is supported by Laura Ahearn (2001) according to whom in order to analyse spatial textures⁴ and the personal conception of a person's cultural position, one should analyse the (foreign) language usage patterns. This is what we are doing in this article.

Meaningful production of space, which for an individual means the creation of important cultural relations, can happen only when knowledge (including motivation for language learning based on personal choices) replaces the ideology (including strictly defined state policies on foreign language learning). According to Lefebvre, such creative capacity is possible only in the course of general social transformation. A system of linguistic codes formed during the transformation consists of knowledge that tends to attribute a privileged status to a specific time and space in which the language is used. In today's multicultural societies it means, however, that preferring one space should not be in contradiction to other spaces.

According to linguistic theories, an important factor in the formation of preferences is the motivation for foreign language learning. Most authors distinguish between integrative and instrumental motivations (see e.g. Spolsky 1969, Crookes and Schmidt 1991 etc). Neither of these motivations excludes the active role of an individual in the formation of representational spaces – in the first case the learner

⁴ This means that certain textures, i.e. the meaning of linguistic and spatial forms for the actors in the space, are important, not the forms of language and space (e.g. geographical center-periphery, languages spoken to some extent).

identifies himself with speakers of the target language, in the second case certain pragmatic goals dominate within a specific space (e.g. finding a job, sitting a language exam, etc.). This division of language learning motivations has been often criticised (see e.g. van Lier 1996) because it does not enable us to explain how is knowledge related to specific spatial units, also called individual innate curiosity, created. Instead, Leo van Lier has pointed out that in the case of a specific individual the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors should be balanced. We presume that these different motivations are more characteristic of people who are over 25 years old and learn foreign languages outside the formal educational system. Therefore, this article is focused on that group of population.

Empirical studies have shown that foreign languages play an important role in forming social space mainly in transition societies. In Estonia, for example, fluency in foreign languages has obtained, in addition to the connotation of establishing power relations between different groups, the connotation of social success. Language has become capital in its broader meaning and it affects people's mobility, perception of social space, collective self-determination and the way people position themselves within social hierarchy, etc. (T.Vihalemm, Masso, P.Vihalemm 2004, Lauristin 2004). More recent analysis has indicated that as the transition progresses the instrumental meaning of language may diminish and the symbolic meaning may increase (Masso, Tender 2007).

In conclusion, although Lefebvre's spatial theory may have its drawbacks⁵, using his scheme in this article enables us theoretically to join the analyses of social space and languages. Including the three spatial elements – spatial practices, representations of space, and representational spaces – in the empirical analysis enables us to compare individual experience with other spatial (see e.g. Schütz 2003) or language theories. Estonia as a post-communist society allows us to analyse how social space is created. However, it has to be borne in mind that in a certain development stage of a society 'production' may be the production of things rather than the production of space as the relationships creating space might not develop so fast. Next, we will give an overview of the Estonian population's spatial relationships and language learning policies during the last decades.

3. Language and space in a post-transition country

The role of foreign languages in constituting social space is in the present article analysed using Estonia as an example of a post-transition country. Research has so far not provided an answer to the question why Estonia's transition has

⁵ Lefebvre's theory makes it difficult to apply Marx's concepts in spatial analysis because Marx never focused on spatial analysis in his works. Also, space-forming progressive and regressive forces are intertwined in space reproduction theories, which makes it difficult to explain how a specific social space is formed. His argument that class struggle is inherent in space is also questionable, mainly in the light of the plurality of life styles characteristic of post-modern societies, which has replaced the earlier strict class boundaries (see e.g. Lash and Friedman 1992).

been so successful. Although it has been argued that the main reason for success has been liberal economy (see e.g. Anderson, Romani 2005), we argue that spatial element is also important in interpreting social changes. The Estonian example enables us to analyse how social (spatial) reproduction through languages could develop into a social change.

Over time, Estonia has been influenced by many different languages and geo-cultural spaces, mainly as a result of wars of conquest⁶. The present language learning motivations and spatial visions have been affected by three main periods: (1) Soviet occupation that entailed the domination of the Russian language in official communication channels and spatial separation from the West; (2) people's recollections of the pre-occupation time when there were no restrictions on travelling and fluency in several foreign languages was promoted, led by example by the cultural elite, as well as people's recollections of Estonia as a country belonging to the Nordic cultural space⁷; (3) the time after the restoration of independence of Estonia after the collapse of the Soviet Union – gradual geo-cultural opening up together with more frequent personal and economic contacts with Western countries, new economic opportunities and reduction of insecurity caused by the Soviet time closed borders (Masso 2007).

In his analysis of social space Henri Lefebvre called a space based on socialist principles (in this case the Soviet space) a failed transition (Lefebvre 1991) because (e.g. in the case of Estonia) it changed only ideological superstructures without being demonstrated in real life, i.e. in language and space. Lefebvre's argument can be accepted with certain reservations. Under the Soviet rule, Estonia was physically cut off from the Western world and social space was shaped mainly by direct contacts with other Soviet republics. However, watching/listening to Western media channels (e.g. Finnish TV, etc.) compensated for physical spatial isolation. Although the cultural value of Soviet architecture is to a large extent questionable (see e.g. Tarand 2007), the Soviet urban and rural space was still characterised by public buildings (Sakala Centre, Tallinn City Hall) and dwelling houses (concrete blocks of flats) built in a certain style.

The example of the Soviet Union is unique because the aim of the power structures was to use the Russian language (taught to the Estonians at school as the first foreign language) to create Soviet territorial nationalism – 'proletarian internationalism' or a union of members of the working class comprised of different nations (see e.g. Ussubalijev 1984). Although in theory such internationalist policy "took into account the characteristic features of different nations" (*ibid* 5), in effect it often resulted in cultural and linguistic assimilation of ethnic groups. Neither did such ideology support the identity creation in ethnic Russians. Therefore, the

⁶ Over centuries, Estonia was under the rule of the Danish king (North Estonia in the 13th century), Germany (14th and 20th centuries), Poland (South Estonia in the 16th century), Swedish king (17th century) and Russia (18th and 20th century).

⁷ The Nordic identity that is these days so important to the Estonians is confirmed by various empirical studies (see e.g. Vihalemm, Masso 2007) and it is among other things based on the recollections of the Swedish rule that was culturally productive for Estonia.

authors of different studies agree that during the Soviet era the Russians did not identify themselves through their ethnic origin (Castells 1997, Brubaker 1997)⁸.

Because in Soviet Estonia it was compulsory to learn at least two foreign languages (the second, after Russian, being either English, German or French), people often used it as a form of resistance to the ideological socialist internationalism. The so-called 'elite' schools that were established in the 1960ies and provided in-depth language learning became one of the few possibilities for cultural or other elite to secure cultural capital for their children at the time when access to economic capital and consumption was limited.

The period after the restoration of independence was characterised by fast and profound changes in social space and its linguistic reproduction. The primary spatial ideal was 'return to Europe' (see e.g. Feldman 2000), which was mainly expressed by the entering of Finland and Sweden into the Estonian public space. Besides the Scandinavian countries, one of the main (travel) destinations was also Germany (see e.g. Vihalemm 2007, Masso 2008) – a country carrying a positive connotation in historical memory where the Estonians could enjoy western consumer culture. The importance of Nordic countries as a strong spatial alternative can be explained by both cultural closeness and historical memory. It is no less important that already in early 1990s the Nordic countries were accessible to the Estonians, i.e. through travelling it was possible to experience personally the Nordic welfare model. In the early 2000s the institutional dimension was added, i.e. the desire to join the spaces of the EU and NATO. Intensive spatial changes were supported by the foreign language policy that had changed after the restoration of independence in 1991 (learning Russian at school changed from compulsory to voluntary) as well as by new language learning choices (the number of learners of the Russian language dropped dramatically on account of those learning Scandinavian languages, English, German and other languages). The number of foreign languages taught at school increased – a third foreign language (C-language) was added to the curriculum of upper secondary schools (see e.g. Tender 2007). Such changes in preferences reflected a protest against the toppled regime and a desire to find a new basis for self-determination.

The period of intensive changes should create prerequisites for a new space to be formed in Estonia during the 'calming down' or post-transition period. By now, the majority of students (80%) clearly prefer English, which is similar to the trends in Western Europe (see Key data...2005). After the decline, the interest in learning Russian has slightly increased, the number of learners being twice as much (40%) as the number of learners of German. It is possible that for the younger generations the Russian language carries weaker connotations of power and they wish to learn the language of a neighbouring country for practical reasons. The number of those who wish to learn a smaller or more 'exotic' language (Finnish, Swedish, Latin, Spanish, Japanese, Hebrew, etc.) is much smaller.

⁸ Only Neil Melvin (1995) has presented a counter-argument, noting that ethnic self-consciousness of the Russians strengthened in the 1970s in peripheral Soviet republics.

Although language learning preferences have reached certain stability, the spatial reproduction relations characteristic of a post-transitional period are only forming. This article aims to find an answer to the question – which individual linguistic strategies for constituting social space could characterize a post-transitional society? In order to answer this question we will first establish how social space and the changes in space are perceived by individuals, and which are the motivations for learning a foreign language? In order to answer these questions we will provide an overview of the methods used to collect data for the analysis.

4. Sample strategy and methods of data analysis

To collect answers to the above-mentioned questions, we used the non-standardised in-depth interviewing technique. The interviews included three main topics – foreign languages (languages learned, usage of languages, learning motivations, etc.), experiences and contacts with different countries and media consumption. To make the interviews comparable, the interviewers used various basic and probing questions. However, according to the method of semistructured interviewing (for different methods see e.g. Trost 2004) the sequence and wording of the questions were not pre-determined.

Interviewees were selected by strategic sampling (see e.g. Trost 2004). First, the age variable was selected on the basis of the subject of the study, i.e. the interviews were conducted with people aged 25 and older learning a foreign language at a language school. This enabled us to focus on people who were learning a foreign language ‘actively’ outside formal educational system; learning a foreign language while working full-time means that a conscious choice is made about a specific language. We presume that these people are implementing spatial strategies more actively because they have already put into practice the knowledge acquired within the formal education. Excluding younger people allows us to keep the sample homogeneous in terms of institutional changes (curricula, etc.).

According to the requirements of strategic sampling, the variety of opinions was ensured by differentiating the languages. Interviews were conducted with the learners of the following languages: languages that are spoken in countries that are geographically close to Estonia (Finnish, Swedish); languages that carry the connotation of power (German, Russian, Swedish); languages spoken widely in the world (English) and more ‘exotic’ languages, i.e. languages that have a smaller number of learners (French, Spanish, Italian, Japanese). A total of 18 interviews were conducted. Six interviews were conducted with the Russian-speakers in Estonia, the rest with those speaking Estonia as mother tongue. Dividing the sample into groups whose native language is different enables us to analyse more thoroughly the meaning of the foreign language in interpreting social space.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. First, the texts were summarised and analysed in the form of structural analysis (for different methods see e.g. Mayring 2003). The material was divided into 126 categories that were grouped

into seven 'code families': socio-demographic data, foreign languages learned, spatial contacts, meanings ascribed to foreign languages and geographical regions, cultural adaptation in case of migration, media consumption habits. The first two parts – language learning motivations and spatial meanings – were analysed by using structural analysis. Although this technique of analysis is primarily inductive, previous theoretical/empirical approaches were used to derive substantial categories from the texts.

In addition to traditional qualitative analysis done 'by hand' we also used software Atlas.ti. Mike Fischer has appositely described the advantages of using software in the process of coding – we have the choice to go through the discovery process by foot (i.e. traditional analysis 'by hand') or by air (i.e. computerised analysis) (Fischer 1997:39). In this study the advantage of using computer analysis was most obvious in the third part that focuses on the complex hidden phenomena that can be found in data – individual linguistic-spatial strategies. The software enabled us to increase the validity of the analysis, i.e. after linking conceptual categories with each other it is always possible to go back to the initial data (see e.g. Dey 2003). Instead of using this function for concept mapping or cognitive mapping as described by Ann Lewins and Christina Silver (2007) the links between categories are analysed in the form of cognitive mapping, which model a theoretical approach.

Next, we will present the results of the analysis in three parts: first, an overview of the meanings attached to space; second, an overview of language learning motivations, and third, the relations between foreign languages and space.

5. Perceptions of space

In this chapter, we will analyse how people perceive social space and the changes occurring within that space. To that end, we will look at the meanings ascribed to different geographical regions; how open/closed social space is and which are the arguments for such labelling. The analysis is based on the opinions expressed by the interviewees in the course of interviews and on the countries/regions marked by the interviewees on an outline map of the world.

Although our aim was to analyse spatial perceptions expressed in the texts, we also used the spatial dimensions described by Henri Lefevre (1991) to identify conceptual categories. Therefore, we focused on spatial practices (foreign or domestic contacts; immediate or mediated contacts) and the perceived spatial representations (diverse, narrow or focussed spatial perceptions).

Some arguments were based on **immediate contacts abroad and narrow spatial perceptions**. These interviewees have acquired their knowledge about foreign countries through few and unvaried personal contacts. Even if they could name countries and cultures in different parts of the world, the descriptions and perceptions of these regions were relatively formal/abstract. For example, Merilei has lived abroad and thanks to her language skills uses regularly foreign media

channels; however, when she speaks about different countries, she mentions only geographical distance, stereotypes and how appealing/unappealing a country emotionally is to her. No specific reasons for perceiving those countries/regions in a certain way are provided. Even when speaking about the Soviet era, the interviewee recalls mainly (the lack of) mobility and mentions superficial consumerist associations.

.../ So, I place Finland here ... and Turkey, etc. I do not like those countries, that region. .../ I do not like Germany, I do not like the people there...It reminds me that the Germans are so selfish .../ It was the Russian time and nothing was available here [in Estonia]. So we went to Leningrad or Kaliningrad or what's it called. We didn't have anything; they had all kinds of goods .../ (Merilei, 27, learning German).

In such construction of space the interviewees used also specific institutional (e.g. EU member states and other countries) or other spatial dimensions (super-powers, such as the USA and Russia) (see also Graph 2). Arguments are based mainly on immediate contacts and therefore, the risks of possible natural disasters (constructed by the media) are not taken seriously. On the other hand, this category is characterised by the important role of language in constructing the social space of the Soviet era. An excellent example is an extract from the following interview in which Nele, who is learning French, had felt the presence of France already in the social space of the Soviet era.

.../ Well, I don't know, [they are] our neighbours... Russia is important because we live close by Russia. It is important to have good relations with your neighbours. I have many contacts with these countries. Actually, with many more than on this list. As regards the USA, I wanted to move to America. I have many contacts there, because it is important to me. And also with UK. .../ I think that [during the Soviet time] these neighbours would have been the same. And Russia, of course. Finland, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania; also France, because I studied French .../ (Nele, 25, learning Russian).

Nele (25, learning Russian)

Valentina (42, learning German)



Figure 2. Perceptions of space: Immediate contacts abroad and narrow spatial perceptions

In some interviews conducted with Russians the production of personal space was based on contacts with friends or relatives living in a particular country. They expressed the importance of a strong local communication network and in this way stressing the links with local Estonian society. However, these arguments were based on the logic of confrontation, i.e. the interviewee raised the question whether Russia can be considered a foreign country at all, as illustrated by the following extract.

.../ First of all the USA, because my sister lives there. Northern Europe is unimportant; I have no interest in it. My family lives here, I work here. .../ I have been there [in Northern Europe] only briefly, on a business trip. To Russia, yes. I often have to travel to Moscow but it is not a foreign country to me. .../ I do not like travelling much. .../ Although it [Estonia] is a quiet place, nobody bothers you, the Estonians have the psychology of farmers – they do not meddle too much with your life. You couldn't have it in Ukraine or Russia – everybody will poke their nose into your business there .../ (Valentina, 42, learning German).

Such results indicate that the notion of a common language of the Soviet people promoted during the Soviet era (see Mõistlik 2007) may still occur in the perception of space by some people. However, the interviews show that this does not necessarily exclude the possibility that the person also identifies himself or herself with the local Estonian society.

Other arguments expressed mainly **mediated contacts abroad and focussed spatial perceptions**. In the case of such perception people are interested in very different cultures (e.g. European, Tibetan, Chinese and Australian cultures) and have many personal contacts in different countries. Some countries/cultures are still preferred to others or people focus on certain spatial perceptions. For example, different countries were divided into categories based on their political impact or political/cultural conflicts highlighted by the media. The latter dimension was often mentioned in interviews with those Russian-speakers whose personal space was limited to superpowers (Russia and USA). Another group of arguments was based mainly on consumerist symbols related to specific countries. This perception of space is characterised by the fact that opinions are based mainly on mediated contacts or what people have heard/read in the media. An example of such perception of space is the following extract from the interview with Nikolai who is learning Finnish.

.../ I grew up surrounded by Russian culture, my native language is Russian and therefore, to me, Russia is the most important country. My homeland is probably Russia – Moscow, St Petersburg .../ I think America. Because it is the most advanced and powerful country in the world. Although I do not always agree with their politics, it is a very influential country and has to be taken into account. Many things in the world depend on the USA whether we like it or not. .../ Italy immediately brings to mind spaghetti, Venice, Colosseum, Ferrari .../ Germany – Hitler, Mercedes-Benz, German beer .../ (Nikolai, 35, learning Finnish).

Another perception of space with a similar line of arguments is expressed by **immediade contacts in Estonia and focussed spatial perceptions**. In this group the interviewees are characterised not so much by mobility outside Estonia as by work-related or personal contacts with representatives of various cultures in Estonia. Similarly to the previous type of spatial perception people belonging to this group consciously prefer some regions to others (Europe vs. Asia, Europe vs. Russia) and use certain linguistic or abstract cultural notions to describe different countries/regions. Connections with Estonia are strong and therefore, despite relatively wide cultural knowledge, the respondents said that they would be afraid to emigrate; they were wary of risks associated with different cultures or regions.

./.../Japan has a feeling of a small cosy country ./.../ European cultures, to my mind, are rather weak... I mean specifically Scandinavia. ./.../ I don't actually like that life style... People travelling all the time... all that spending and polluting. Because of all those planes and... ./.../ (Jüri, 39, learning Japanese);

./.../ We did not talk about Japan at all... That this is also a place that you would like to visit. America is interesting because I haven't been to America. Across the Atlantic, I mean. Well, I am not especially keen on going to Russia. At the same time, it is our neighbour country and we should know the language. There are so many Russian-speaking people in Estonia. If you work somewhere where you have to communicate with people a lot... in a shop or a pharmacy... you just can't manage without the [Russian] language ./.../ (Terje, 42, learning English).

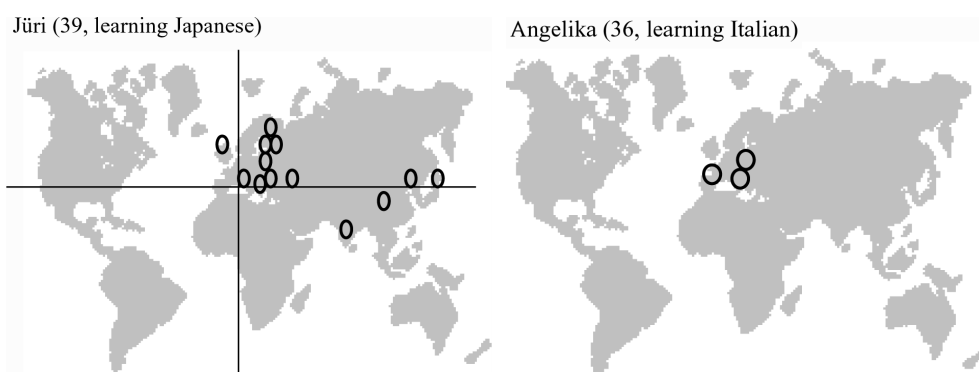


Figure 3. Perceptions of space: Immediade contacts in Estonia and focused spatial perceptions (left) and immediate contacts abroad and focused spatial perceptions (right)

Quite similar is a perception of space expressed by **immediate contacts abroad and focussed spatial perceptions**. However, immediate foreign contacts dominate in this group, which is especially evident in the interview conducted with Angelika (see the extract below). This group also prefers specific spatial

regions (the Mediterranean, Europe) or ascribes specific political, economic or cultural (linguistic, quotidian, national) meanings to certain regions. In several interviews the dimension of power was used to describe space, mainly based on information obtained from the media (e.g. the interview with Arkadi).

.../ First is the USA – I am an americanophile; I think that it is the only country determining the world politics now and this is a great responsibility; it is a country of great opportunities and freedom. To me it is a very important country, the leader of civilisation. .../ Israel. This is my historical homeland; what happens in Israel, the situation there, is very important to me .../ (Arkadi, 46, learning English);

.../ Well, my sister has been living in Switzerland for ten years and has described everything in detail, the country's nature and... .../ I just don't like America. I've been to Canada and I lived there for several months but I don't feel connected. I don't know... everything is so big and fake there. Maybe from other people's experiences and descriptions. These come first to my mind... where people have been and what they have told and seen. .../ (Angelika, 36, learning Italian).

Referring to Lerebvre (1991), such focussed perception of space supports social change because ascribing a privileged status to a specific space ensures that spacial practices are in accordance with representations, i.e. spatial events do not dominate like they did during the Soviet era.

The last form of spatial perception is characterised by **a wide spatial perception based on immediate or mediated contacts abroad or immediate contacts in Estonia**. In the first case contacts with different cultures are mainly local (e.g. contacts at work with Russians, Koreans, Britons); in the second case opinions are based mainly on the information obtained from the media or books (see e.g. the interview with Tiiu) and in the third case they are based on personal contacts (see the interview with Astrid). A common characteristic is a relatively wide perception of space, i.e. no region is clearly preferred to others.

.../ I would like to visit South-Africa, I liked Eilenthal's books about travelling; and then there are those Pacific islands somewhere here, Easter Island and others. For example Madagascar. .../ In Australia, I would like to learn more about the indigenous people, about their culture, about the way they think... .../ The Estonians are also the indigenous people. The culture and customs, folk culture. .../ (Tiiu, 42, learning Swedish);

.../ My first experience with a foreign country... well, then there were Soviet Republics; technically, it wasn't a foreign country then but it was outside Estonia and the first place I visited was actually Ukraine .../ Differences were big... although Russian was widely spoken in Estonia too... The only air operator was Aeroflot. You couldn't use any other language [than Russian] and the whole culture, how people communicated in general .../ Actually, it was terrible. The crowd, the scramble... I do not exactly like big crowds and scramble. The first time in a foreign country was after Estonia became

independent again and I had my Estonian passport. I went to Denmark. Everything was clean, immaculate. (Astrid, 54, learning Finnish and English).

Arvo (50, learning English)

Astrid (54, learning English)

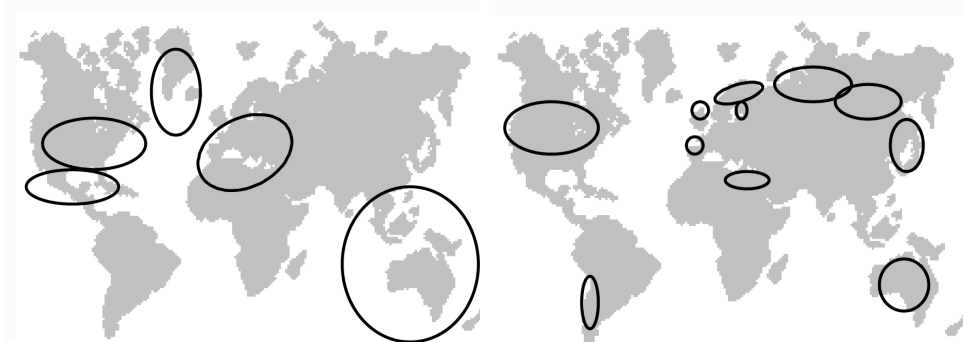


Figure 4. Perceptions of space: Immediate contacts in Estonia and wide spatial perceptions (left) and Immediate contacts abroad and wide spatial perceptions (right)

Based on different forms of perception of space we can assess the state of spatial transformation in Estonia. Successful spatial transformation (see Lefebvre 1991) is supported by the fact that ideological perceptions and connotations of power are rather unimportant. Instead, more important are interpretations based on individual practices (and foreign languages learned). The only sign of danger is the spatial risk dimension, which is acquired from the media, related to possible natural, political and cultural risks. Based on the analysis, we believe that mediated contacts without any immediate cultural contacts may hinder social change, at least in the case of narrow perception of space. Because foreign languages are a contributory factor to immediate contacts, we will next focus on learning motivations.

6. Motivations for language learning

The aim of this section is to establish which are the motivations for learning a foreign language outside the formal educational system. We will focus on establishing and describing the variety of motivations expressed in the course of interviews. Different types of motivation are based on two theoretical approaches: a classic dichotomical differentiation – integrative and instrumental (see e.g. Crookes and Schmidt 1991, etc.) – on the one hand and a somewhat less known differentiation – intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (see e.g. Lier 1996) – on the other hand (see also subchapter 2.2. Language in theories of social space).

Some interviews indicated that **motivations for learning foreign languages are intrinsic and integrative**. These interviewees valued the language they learned and the relevant culture; they also valued the aesthetic qualities of the language. Unlike other learners, they enjoyed the process of learning and were less result-orientated. Therefore, the results of learning were not outstanding, at least in the learners' own opinion. Although these learners may not necessarily have immediate contacts with the speakers of the target language, most of them have learned several other foreign languages. A good example is the following interviewee who is learning Swedish and feels certain connection with the Swedish language and culture. Thus, the integrative language learning motivation is directly used to construct a certain space (in the given case – Scandinavian).

.../ I don't know why I am doing this... in the past when we could not travel and were kept behind the Iron Curtain... even then I thought...that in addition to English I would like to learn Swedish. Because Nordic countries are close, both physically and emotionally and I imagine that I can use Swedish even in Finland, and definitely in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland .../ (Tiu, 42, learning Swedish).

Another example illustrates vividly the intrinsic integrative motivation that is characterised by the appreciation of the aesthetic values of the language learned. In the case of one interviewee (Jüri), the liking for the sound of Japanese was supplemented by the construction of space through protest – one reason for learning Japanese was disappointment in Western culture.

.../ I just like Swedish .../ a very short and snug language; the self-confidence of the Swedes, the fact that they have enjoyed peace for a couple of hundreds of years or more .../ (Merle, 45, learning Swedish);

.../ I have always been interested in cultures that differ from ours. ... Why Japan? Because I have been into martial arts from an early age .../ Oriental culture is full of meaning .../ and it is enriching. I am somewhat disappointed in Western culture or I have not found myself in it and am running away .../ Japanese characters... I like the calligraphy of Japanese characters; art is related to calligraphy .../ And it is a unique language because it has three different systems of characters .../ (Jüri, 39, learning Japanese).

These results are similar to previous studies (van Lier 1996), according to which intrinsic learning motivation is not necessarily supporting achievement. This analysis shows that for successful language learning the combination of intrinsic and instrumental motivations should be supported by a third factor – a positive spatial perception of a specific language.

Other interviews indicated **intrinsic and instrumental language learning motivation**. Although there was no external pressure to learn a foreign language, the interviewees appreciated greatly the value of the language in communication, the language as the means of learning about a foreign culture. In this group the

practical aspect of learning was important, i.e. people wished to use the language (e.g. on a trip, in work). The interviewees have learned or intend to learn several languages. A good example is Riho, who is learning Spanish and has set himself a goal of speaking five languages; to him, learning languages is like a competition with the (abstract) average Estonian.

.../ I would like to speak five languages. This is a good achievement for an average Estonian .../ I haven't been to Spain yet .../ I would like to travel to Cuba. One reason why I started to learn Spanish is that Latin America, half of South America speaks Spanish .../ (Riho, 29, learning Spanish).

Another interviewee – Astrid who is learning Finnish and English – is an example of a situation where intrinsic motivation for language learning arises from the desire to maintain the existing communication network.

.../ I visit Finland quite often, my cousin lives there. I also like to go to the opera in Finland in summer. This has had a strong impact on me; it seemed strange not to know Finnish. You go there and cannot speak the language .../ (Astrid, 54, learning Finnish and English).

Angelika who is learning Italian, has similar cultural motivations plus a pragmatic aim to use the language in business. Terje's job (she is learning English) involves business trips abroad and reading professional literature in English. Proficiency in English offers also career opportunities and therefore, the employer is interested in the employees' progress in language learning.

.../ I am just interested in Italy and their language and culture .../ well, I am learning the language because in the future when I will start my own business it will be useful. This is one of the reasons .../ (Angelika, 36, learning Italian);

.../ For work... I was thinking about it for years... that I should learn the language. Because I have to go on business trips. And all materials are actually in English. ... And if you wish to... if you have an opportunity to make a career in the company you definitely have to speak English. You cannot do anything if you don't speak the language .../ The employer is asking how I am doing and well... .../ no, he is not putting pressure on me, no... But it is good because he encourages me .../ (Terje, 42, learning English).

Unlike previous studies (see e.g. van Lier 1996) that focussed mainly on individual motivations for language learning this study showed the importance of collective motivation – a collective positive spatial experience may support individual motivations (friends' example, pressure from colleagues, a wish to maintain a communication network).

The third group is characterised by external and instrumental language learning motivations. Foreign languages are learned mainly because this is necessitated by the external environment (a job requirement, desire to live and work in a foreign country). Differently from other groups these learners have an opportunity or even an obligation to implement their knowledge and skills acquired at a language school.

.../ I need the language at work. Because time goes on, new equipment is used. Manuals are all in English. I need to know the language. Another thing is that children are growing up, I have more time for myself and I would like to travel, to see the world. If you know English, you can manage everywhere ... Also in everyday life. And if you want to read professional literature... technical literature... most of it is in English .../ (Arvo, 50, learning English);

.../ Because my knowledge [of the language] is inadequate. We receive letters at work in English and I have to reply in English. Some meetings are also held in English .../ (Jelena, 32, learning English);

.../ I like Finland and the Finnish language because I am going to move there. I have great expectations; they say that it is a very nice country... .../ (Merilei, 27, learning German);

.../ I need it... at work and otherwise too... I use English every day, and Russian too. ... I have to know Russian, at least a little .../ (Nele, 25, learning Russian).

A slightly different motivation is expressed by Irina who is learning English for practical reasons. To her, English is a lingua franca connecting different spaces, a language that is used in both travelling and business. Although the interviewee admits that other languages are also necessary, she is learning English for practical reasons, which is also expressed by the ‘division’ of languages in her family.

.../ I would like to travel more. English is used everywhere. It’s an official language... I decided to pick up English because I do not know it sufficiently. For example, my husband and I went to Spain. He speaks German but German is of no use in Spain. We also went to Egypt and I did not understand anything .../ (Irina, 39, learning English).

The analysis shows that the instrumental scope of a language may vary significantly depending on external factors – how much the language can be used at the local, regional or international level. This means that spatial interrelations are expressed mainly when the learner communicates with native speakers of the target language (see e.g. Krashen 1982).

The fourth group of interviewees is characterised by external and integrative language learning motivations. These motivations are integrative mainly because the learners believe that in order to manage in a foreign language environment and in a foreign culture, it is instrumental to understand the culture and the language. It is typical of the external motivation that the interviewees stress that language skills are an indicator of competitiveness.

.../ This is easy to explain. Because Estonia will soon join the Schengen area, we will be able to travel to EU without a visa... I would like to work in Finland .../ Aspirations, I think. I want to know the culture, to know the language at elementary level at least and I not to be afraid of difficulties. Because when you live in a foreign country, you are an inferior, a second-rate person. You can find only a difficult and low-paid job .../ (Nikolai, 35, learning Finnish).

Although the integrative motivation of language learning is often described as identification of a learner with native speakers of the target language (Crookes and Schmidt 1991 etc), this analysis indicates that language learning may be a means of addressing the issue of identity.

In conclusion, the analysis showed that foreign languages are important in the formation of personal space. This means that foreign languages are learned not only because there is an external instrumental obligation or a practical necessity. Therefore, we will next analyse how the motivations of language learning and spatial meanings are related at an individual level.

7. Individual strategies of space and language

The above analysis showed that language takes part in the formation of social space and vice versa. Therefore, a foreign language itself may form a part of spatial strategy. In order to analyse various linguistic and spatial strategies we will first look at how similar were the qualities ascribed to foreign languages and countries.

The analysis showed that different foreign languages and countries are perceived quite similarly by the interviewees. Characteristics ascribed to a specific language and culture, i.e. political, economic, national and historical features as well as features related to nature and climate, specific cities/places, cultural and geographical closeness/distance and consumption habits, were rather similar. However, there were some differences. For example, when speaking about languages, the interviewees referred to the aesthetic qualities of different languages or compared the languages based on their similarity/difference. It was surprising that in the case of languages people mentioned more often features related to popular culture or consumerism. This may indicate that foreign languages are not merely the means of exchanging abstract information but play an important role also in forming behavioural practices.

On the other hand, in the case of space people expressed more often feelings that we called 'emotional interest' (e.g. *I just like that country*), which is logical – it takes effort to learn a language but travelling is seen mainly as a leisure activity. However, space is not perceived as an object of consumption – this is confirmed by the fact that space was referred to as a specific cultural object.

Four key categories may be distinguished in meanings attributed to languages and space – unchanging morphologies, cultural meanings, consumerist connotations, historical and power connotations. These conceptual categories allowed us to summarise the motivations for language learning, representations of space and spatial practices. Next, we will present the relations between the categories in the form of conceptual diagrams supplemented by extracts from interviews and interpretations by the authors. The interrelations are summarised by using the following four linguistic-spatial strategies.

We named the first linguistic-spatial strategy as follows: **production of space based on unchanging morphologies**. By unchanging morphologies we mean general or abstract meanings attributed to space, e.g. peculiarities of the natural world, geographical distance, etc. These meanings are used mainly for countries and languages with which the interviewees have had no personal contacts. We may say that if the person does not know the language that would help to understand a specific culture the space is perceived as relatively distant. On the other hand, speaking a specific language may bring the relevant space closer. In our interviews this phenomenon was expressed mainly in the definition of 'neighbourhood'. For example, although the respondents referred to the importance of the Russian language in the past, they also pointed out that now Russian may be useful for supporting Baltic cohesion (i.e. for communicating with Latvians and Lithuanians). Such dimension of neighbourhood defined on the basis of language varies from immediate neighbours (Finland, Latvia) to neighbouring regions (Baltic countries, Nordic countries, Europe). It was a little surprising that Poland was also defined as linguistic neighbour (see Graph 5).

Based on Lefebvre's theory of space (1991) there are no personal preferences in a space created by abstract symbols; therefore, the creation of space is based too much on preferences of power and ideology. In the case of production of space based on unchanging morphologies, knowledge about different regions is obtained either through personal contacts (in Estonia or abroad), media or formal educational system. On the one hand, such strategy is indicating that educational policy has an important role in the production of space. On the other hand, it involves certain risks, i.e. language learning without intrinsic motivations or real cultural experience may create a formal and abstract space. According to Henri Lefebvre "A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential" and therefore the creation of an abstract space does not necessarily support further economic, political, etc., transformation of society.

The second linguistic-spatial strategy is based on **historical and power conceptions**. This means that foreign languages are an important factor in inclusion in/exclusion from a specific space (e.g. *Austria belongs to the German language space; France and the French language belong together because the French are proud of their language*). In the case of this strategy the motivations for language learning are different. The construction of spatial meanings is mainly based on personal contacts with foreign countries (see Graph 6).

The interviews showed that such spatial production strategy involves only certain foreign languages. One of such languages carrying the connotation of power is Russian, although in some interviews it was treated differently. Although it was admitted that Russia is an economic and political power in the modern world, the Russian language was mentioned mainly in the context of the past and therefore, negative aspects prevailed (see Graph 6). Neutral meanings were expressed when speaking about the local Estonian-Russian communication network; however, it was done mainly in the normative form.

Another language carrying the connotation of power was German. Although there have been changes in the meanings ascribed to German (it has become more important, mainly due to the work done by Chancellor Angela Merkel), for historical reasons, the meanings were rather negative. Connotations of power were ascribed to German mainly by Russian-speaking interviewees. This was somewhat unexpected, taking into account the results of previous empirical studies according to which the Estonian Russians visit Germany more often and are more interested in German culture than the Estonians (Vihalemm 2004). Other languages that carried the connotation of power were large hegemonic languages (Spanish, English).

Such power dimension requires contacts with a specific language or space. If there were no contacts, the interviewees ascribed more neutral political, economic and institutional meanings to languages and spaces or referred to specific official symbols (e.g. the Danish flag, the Union Jack, etc.). One of the techniques used was contrasting a large country/language with a small country/language – the interviewees identified with small post-soviet countries similar to Estonia (Poland) and distanced themselves from large countries (USA, Russia). The Russia-USA dimension was used mainly in Russian-language interviews and by some active learners/users of Russian.

The production of space that is based on ‘obsolete’ history may cause, according to Lefebvre (1991), difficulties in further realization of social changes. Difficulties can be overcome if history is interpreted so that the linguistic meaning does not contradict the territorial meaning (e.g. presently, people express emotional interest in both Russian and Swedish languages but, unlike in the case of Sweden, their associations with Russia and Russian culture are negative). When interpreting history through language learning the motivation for learning becomes more important, i.e. integrative motivation without clear identity solution may not necessarily enable such interpretation of history and production of positive space.

The third linguistic-spatial strategy is based on **consumerist connotations**. The strategy is expressed mainly by associating specific countries or languages with certain products or tourism. Associating languages/countries with consumption often carries connotations of freedom, i.e. the present availability of goods and consumption possibilities are compared with those of the Soviet time. Only the Latvian and Lithuanian languages are not associated with freedom, probably because Latvia and Lithuania had the same starting position as Estonia and differences in consumption possibilities are smaller. The interviews showed that consumption brings closer a specific culture rather than the language spoken in that country (e.g. people become interested in Chilean culture after having tried a Chilean wine).

The linguistic-spatial strategy based on consumption is most often characterised by instrumental language learning motivations and immediate cultural contacts. People who have no contacts with the specific language/culture tend to use tourism clichés, symbols of popular culture (e.g. Malta is often associated with Eurovision) and the so-called signal symbols. They talk about languages (e.g. the

French language) or official symbols (e.g. the Danish flag, the British Royal Family) as about certain trademarks that are used for marketing the country to tourists.

The strategy based on consumerist connotations is similar to the first strategy, which is based on unchanging morphologies, because the meanings ascribed to space are relatively abstract. However, it can be argued that the consumerist strategy supports social change more because for some people the knowledge of trade marks created in a specific space may act as a unique fixed point to be used for orientating in the space. Such knowledge may support cultural adaptation when having contacts with the relevant country. At the same time the lack of overall cultural openness and interest (e.g. stereotyping by Merilei) may inhibit adaptation. As the consumerist strategy was slightly more often used by the Russian-speaking interviewees, it may mean that the need for cultural-economic adaptation is greater among that group.

The fourth strategy is based on **cultural meanings**. This strategy is characterised by the fact that when discussing different languages and countries people use 'cultural' categories: nationality/ethnicity, daily life, cultural impact and closeness, aesthetic (and other) qualities of the language and 'the arts' (e.g. theatre, classical music, fine arts, etc).

As regards the aesthetic qualities of languages it appeared from the interviews that a language itself may participate in creating art and culture (e.g. *Finnish as a language of films, etc.*). Aesthetic and cultural qualities were ascribed also to hegemonic languages (e.g. *I like English very much, especially British English*. See the appendix). Associations with different nationalities were both positive and negative. Negative or simplified stereotypes were used when there were no immediate contacts (e.g. *Helen associates England with rowdy British stag nights in Tallinn*). Positive associations were mentioned by those who are already learning or are interested in learning a language (e.g. *Krista who is learning German described Germans positively*).

The strategies described above indicated that people feel abstract fear of Russia. Descriptions of daily life (e.g. transport, general lifestyle) were also subsumed under the category of cultural meanings. The analysis indicated that negative stereotypes about Russians and other Slavic nations based on immediate contacts are becoming a thing of the past. Thus, the results indicate that contacts at the level of daily life open possibilities for mutual understanding between the Estonians and Russians and for creating a common positive space.

It is not unexpected that foreign languages are important in order to understand a specific cultural space (e.g. *you have to speak Chinese to understand how the Chinese think*). However, it appeared from the interviews that only certain languages, which we call 'transition languages', take part in such cultural construction of space. This means that specific languages are used outside their country of cultural origin and this alleviates the feeling of cultural threat (e.g. *you can manage perfectly with Russian in Latvia; the only foreign language that the Polish speak is Russian and therefore it is difficult to make contacts*). These are

the cases where spatial and socio-economic closeness may weaken power connotations or other connotations carried by language.

The strategies that are based on cultural meanings are characterised by foreign contacts and intrinsic language learning motivations. Various language learning experiences are decisive in these strategies, i.e. the learners are individuals who are learning the languages that are more 'exotic' in Estonia or learned by a smaller number of people.

The linguistic-spatial strategy based on cultural meanings increases the awareness of and openness to various cultural spaces and supports social change. However, diverse language learning experiences with integral motivations but without international communication experience may make cultural experience rather abstract and therefore, the individual lacks the 'tools' of interpreting cultural meanings and reducing geo-cultural insecurity.

8. Conclusions

While earlier studies focused on links between foreign languages and economy (Tender, Vihalemm *forthcoming*), this analysis focused on links between space and foreign languages.

The analysis showed that language may participate in the production of social space and thereby either support or hinder social change. The analysis of spatial representations and practices indicated that the discourse of a common Russian language of the Soviet people created by the media during the Soviet era may still be present in individual perceptions of space. However, the (negative) meanings and power connotations associated with the (Russian) language are disappearing. The formation of open perception of space may be hindered only by one-sided linguistic and cultural contacts (e.g. information obtained from the media without immediate contacts) and therefore, space may become a source of (political, cultural, natural, etc.) threat.

The analysis of links between foreign languages and space showed that results in language learning depend, besides the type of motivation, on the spatial meaning of a specific language. Therefore, learning a language without getting to know (and interpret) the relevant culture may not produce the desired results. These findings are somewhat different from the results of previous studies (see Lehmann 2006), according to which the cultural value of language is manifested mainly at collective level. However, the collective and individual levels are closely related, i.e. collective positive spatial experience can support individual language learning.

Connection between language and space was evident also in identity creation. The analysis showed that learning a foreign language provides a cultural reference point for identity creation and helps to solve the issue of identity.

The analysis identified four linguistic-spatial strategies: unchanging morphologies, cultural meanings, consumerist connotations, historical and power connotations. The most 'successful' in supporting social change is the strategy based on

cultural meanings, i.e. learners are culturally open and ascribe either neutral or positive cultural meanings to different geographical regions. The strategies based on unchanging morphologies and consumerist connotations show also great potential. If the strategy is based on language learning without immediate contacts, the result may be rather formal – a social space based on abstract symbols. Such space does not support economic and political transformation of society. The fourth strategy that is based on historical and power connotations, stresses the need for interpreting historical spatial relations. Language learning without such historical and cultural dimension may result in xenophobic spatial attitudes even if the learner is interested in language learning.

Up to now, the language policies have not paid much attention to the spatial and consumerist meanings of language. Therefore, spatial strategies that are based on history and power may result in different behaviour and vice versa. This analysis showed that certain harmonisation trends within EU may not be successful because people who have obtained cultural knowledge through foreign languages would prefer that the diversity of goods at regional level is maintained. Such 'commercial' approach may be necessary first of all in the case of languages carrying imperial connotations. Thus, various regional programmes and educational policies should be taken into account in the development of language policies and vice versa⁹.

Acknowledgements

The research was supported by the Estonian Science Foundation within the grant project 'Changing collective identities in Estonia in the context of moving into the global world' grant number 5845).

Address:

Anu Masso
Institute of Journalism and Communication
University of Tartu
Ülikooli 18
51014 Tartu, Estonia

Tel: +372 5566 4578

Fax: +372 7376 355

E-mail: anu.massos@ut.ee

⁹ Please note that the interviews were carried out before the so-called Bronze Soldier crisis in April 2007 that may have changed the opinions of Russians and Estonians about languages and space.

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Appendix

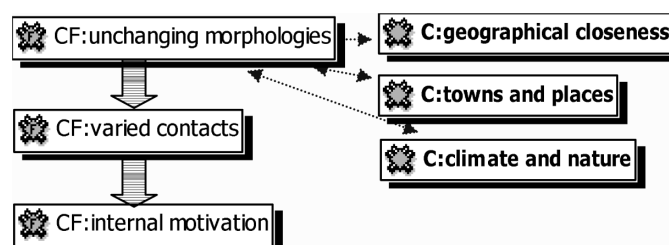


Figure 5. Exemplification of the strategy 1: production of space based on unchanging morphologies (CF = code family, C = code)

Sample of extracts by categories:

GEOGRAPHICAL CLOSENESS

- *.../ Because it is a neighbouring country and one should know the language. Young people also need Russian nowadays .../ (Terje, 42, learning English, internal, instrumental, focussed space, contacts in Estonia);*
- *.../ And beside those I would place the closest neighbours. European languages are our closest neighbours. Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Finnish are close. ... Yes, the closest neighbours. Not in cultural terms but geographically close .../ (Arvo,50, learning English, external, instrumental, wide space, contacts in Estonia);*
- *.../ These (Latvian, Lithuanian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Slovenian, Slovakian, Czech) are together: I put those together probably because of their geographical location .../ (Astrid, 54, learning Finnish, internal, instrumental, wide space, contacts abroad);*

NATURE AND CLIMATE

- *.../ Many people, the Estonians, have told that if they had a choice and could live somewhere else they would choose New Zealand. Because of its nature and because there is something very similar. I don't know.. could be. .../ (Tiiu, 42, learning Swedish, internal, integral, wide space, mediated contacts);*
- *.../ Greece. The mountains, beautiful nature, I have seen many photos .../ Dutch is also a cool language. And of course... I was there first time this autumn and was amazed by how they live surrounded by water. This is incomprehensible! Gosh, it was amazing .../ (Merle, 45, learning Swedish, internal, integral, wide space, mediated contacts);*
- *.../ Well, above all the nature of America. What amazed me was, using the words of Zinovi Gerdt, "what can be created by human hands if they are free". He said that and it is true because everybody who knows history knows that people enjoyed real freedom namely in America .../ (Arkadi, 46, learning English, internal, integral, narrow space, foreign contacts);*

TOWNS AND PLACES

- *.../ Czech Republic is the centre of Europe. Prague. .../ Maybe Germany, Bavaria, Munich, the Alps .../ the English language – Big Ben .../ the Latvian language – Jurmala, Lido, what else...the Gauja River .../ (Arkadi, 46, learning English, internal, integral, narrow space, foreign contacts).*

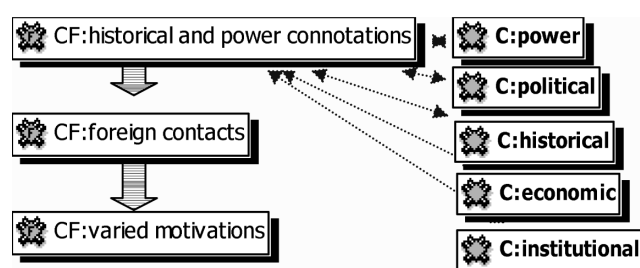


Figure 6. Exemplification of the strategy 2: production of space based on historical and power connotations (CF = code family, C = code)

Sample of extracts by categories:

HISTORICAL

- /.../ No, I do not feel any closeness to the Russian language. I don't know, maybe the Estonians' recollections of the "old good Soviet time" ...these mainly /.../ (Tiiu, 42, learning Swedish, internal, integral, wide space, mediated contacts);
- /.../ Russian... well, at school we hated the language. It was the language of the invaders. We were defiant against the language because we were forced to learn it from an early age. We had no choice. Russian was compulsory, you had to learn it /.../ (Laura, 26, learning German, external, instrumental, focussed space, foreign contacts);

ECONOMIC

- /.../ China has an important role in our economy, all those gadgets made by their nimble fingers /.../ (Riho, 29, learning Spanish, internal, instrumental, foreign contacts);

POLITICAL

- /.../ Well, Belarus... all those political scandals last year .../.../ Germany – Angela Merkel is a well-known political figure. If I remember correctly, Germany will be the next presidency of the European Union /.../ (Jelena, 32, learning English, external, instrumental, foreign contacts);
- I don't know... there are places in Russia where I would not go. No rules are observed there /.../ I am sure that somewhere in Africa there are countries similar to Russia where power politics is the only politics...or something like that. I don't know, it's a difficult question /.../ (Nele, 25, learning Russian, external, instrumental, narrow space, foreign contacts);

INSTITUTIONAL

- /.../ In general, our civil servants can use French because of the European Union /.../ Yes, I think that because Estonia is a member state, we are orientated to the West. I don't know, maybe I am wrong about the decline of the importance of Russian but my personal experience is that the Russian language is of no use to me /.../ (Laura, 26, learning German, external, instrumental, focussed space, foreign contacts);

POWER

- /.../ Polish is the language of a large country. To be honest, I don't like it much /.../ It is probably the arrogance and insolence of a large nation that has influenced my

attitude towards their language /.../ (Helen, 28, learning French, internal instrumental, wide space mediated contacts);

- */.../ The German language is not so important any more. Maybe it was, probably before my time. Germany was a powerful country but now it is like these three – Finland, Denmark and Sweden. /.../ (Astrid, 54, learning Finnish, internal, instrumental, wide space, contacts abroad);*
- */.../ I would say that the United States. The map would probably not be so different. Because there were and still are two dominating powers in the world /.../ I think that the Soviet Union was as influential as Russia is now. It is true, that China did not have the same influence but the situation has not changed actually and the dissolution of the Soviet Union did not change the position of Russia in the world, I think /.../ (Nikolai, 35, learning Finnish, external integrated, focussed space, foreign contacts).*

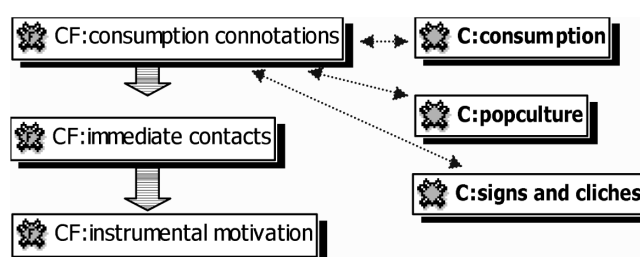


Figure 7. Exemplification of the strategy 3: production of space based on consumerist connotations (CF = code family, C = code)

Sample of extracts by categories:

CONSUMPTION

- /.../ Spanish – well, if you want to have a holiday in the south... to go to the sea... then you should know the language. It won't hurt you to know it /.../ (Arvo,50, learning English, external, instrumental, wide space, contacts in Estonia);
- /.../ I associate Moscow with Christmas decorations I bought there many years ago. They've lasted for some 20 years. They used to have those special shops selling the goods of European countries /.../ (Terje, 42, learning English, internal, instrumental, focussed space, contacts in Estonia);
- /.../ Czech Republic – Czech footwear was very popular during the Soviet time. Czech rubber boots... they had warm lining and high heels and they looked like real boots. These were goods in short supply /.../ (Krista, 38, learning German, internal, instrumental, wide space, foreign contacts);
- /.../ the Finnish language... Helsinki... rocks, the sea, the Finns, the Stockmann department store /.../ the Czech language – Prague, Czech beer... Although I have never to Czech Republic. Czech glassware. I have never been there. I don't even know why I have those associations /.../ (Jelena, 32, learning English, external, instrumental, foreign contacts);

SIGNS AND CLICHES

- /.../ Ski resorts in Finland, the Yvaskiula rally for example, Finnish TV, the home of Santa Clause... I don't know if he speaks Finnish /.../ (Krista, 38, learning German, internal, instrumental, wide space, foreign contacts);
- /.../ the French language – French is a romantic language and... it has a beautiful sound, I like it and I think that I am not the only one /.../ (Nele, 25, learning Russian, external, instrumental, narrow space, foreign contacts);
- /.../ the Danish language – I associate the Danish language with the Danish flag, the red one with a cross. I have never heard it spoken and I don't know how it sounds /.../ (Nele, 25, learning Russian, external, instrumental, narrow space, foreign contacts);
- /.../ Dutch – Amsterdam, the red-light district (laughs)... I don't know, there are no more associations /.../ (Jelena, 32, learning English, external, instrumental, foreign contacts);

POPCULTURE

- /.../ Irish. Irish dancing; Irish is associated with Celtic culture... I have met some Irish people. I have not been to Ireland but I associate it with stone fences and old

pubs and Irish music, things like that /.../ (Merle, 45, learning Swedish, internal, integral, wide space, mediated contacts);

- */.../ French – fashion, style, atmosphere /.../ (Irina, 39, learning English, external instrumental, narrow space, foreign contacts).*

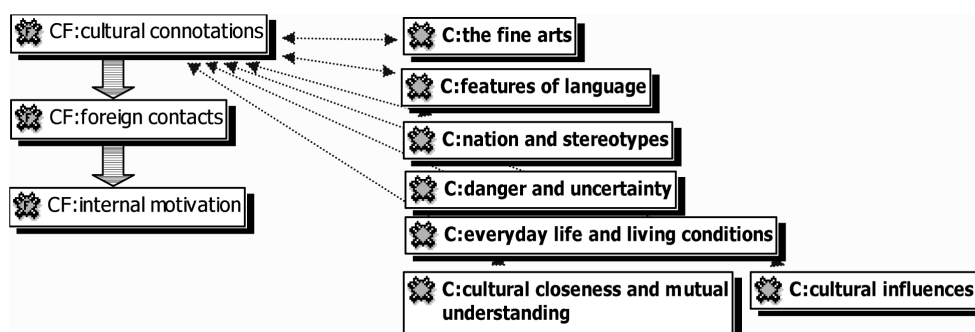


Figure 8. Exemplification of the strategy 4: production of space based on cultural meanings (CF = code family, C = code)

Sample of extracts by categories:

THE FINE ARTS

- /.../ French – *Tartuffe, Versailles, Dumas* /.../ Polish – *Chopin, mazurka, Mickiewicz, Auschwitz* /.../ Italian – *the Renaissance; Leonardo da Vinci, spaghetti* /.../ (Arkadi, learning English, internal, integral, narrow space, foreign contacts);

CULTURAL CLOSENESS

- /.../ *As regards Israel, it is connected with my national identity... but these are passing thoughts because in order to adapt to living in another country you have to know the language and to have a profession that you can practice everywhere; I think that I have achieved in Estonia what I can not achieve anywhere else* /.../ (Arkadi, 46, learning English, internal, integral, narrow space, foreign contacts);

NATION AND STEREOTYPES

- /.../ *This is a very lively and active language, like the Italians are: lively and active and talkative and friendly and for some people they even seem too intrusive* /.../ (Angelika, 36, learning Italian, internal integral, focussed space, foreign contacts);

EVERYDAY LIFE AND LIVING CONDITIONS

- /.../ *Canada left a good impression. Everybody is very friendly and smiling and helpful... and of course the great difference, we were still within the Soviet Union then and the contrast was enormous. It left a very positive impression on me although I would not like to live there* (Angelika, 36, learning Italian, internal integral, focussed space, foreign contacts);

DANGER

- /.../ *Turkish – to me the sound of this language is funny. They have the resorts and bird flu ... Trips were cancelled this spring because bombs were exploding. In Islamic countries they like to blow up something from time to time and then others, non-Muslims, should stay away* /.../ (Krista, 38, learning German, internal, instrumental, wide space, foreign contacts);

FEATURES OF LANGUAGE

- /.../ *Because nobody speaks like the Chinese. Maybe only the Japanese. Like oriental*

music, it uses only quarter notes, not half notes like our music, so their language and speech is much more nuanced. I believe that a slight change in tone already means a completely different thing /.../ (Krista, 38, learning German, internal, instrumental, wide space, foreign contacts);

- */.../ English – the first thing that comes to mind is a very interesting and conservative culture. From the Old World, interesting, independent. At the same time it is actually very strong. I like English very much. Especially the British English /.../ (Angelika, 36, learning Italian, internal integral, focussed space, foreign contacts);*
- */.../ Latvian – the same is valid for Latvia. As I said, you can manage perfectly with Russian in Latvia /.../ (Riho, 39, Spanish, internal, intrinsic, wide space, foreign contacts).*