



6 Estonia

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6.1 Linguistic Situation and Language Policy

Estonia's population is 1.35 million.²¹ Ethnic Estonians comprise 68% of the populace, ethnic Russians comprise 26% and Ukrainians 3%. Over 120 ethnic groups are represented in the country. Sixty-seven per cent of the population claims Estonian as its mother tongue and 30% Russian.²² During a census two years prior to the restitution of independence in 1991, *circa* 15% of Russians and 8% of Ukrainians reported fluency in Estonian. In 2000, these census figures were 33% and 38% respectively.

Estonian is the official state language. A language law adopted in 1995 regulates the use of language in the public and private spheres. In particular, this law requires that people working with the public have a prescribed degree of proficiency in the state language. Since the reestablishment of independence, English has replaced Russian as the dominant lingua franca for international communications. Management and service sector jobs often require fluency in Estonian, Russian, English and Finnish.

There are both Estonian and Russian-language schools, two international schools where instruction is delivered through English and two Finnish-language schools where instruction is based on the Finnish national curriculum. Approximately 77% of students attend Estonian-medium schools and 23% Russian-language schools. Various ethnic communities provide mother tongue instruction through evening or weekend classes. Publicly funded universities offer the vast majority of programming in Estonian. Several private post-secondary institutions offer instruction through Russian or English.

6.2 CLIL in Estonia: an Historical Overview

As of 1920, shortly after the birth of the Republic of Estonia, the provision of elementary education (grades 1–4) in a child's mother tongue became compulsory. In addition to Estonian-language schools, the Russian, German, Swedish and Jewish communities had their own state-supported schools. Generally speaking, CLIL was not used as a teaching strategy. Some exceptions were to be found, such as the teaching of mathematics in French at the French Lycée in Tallinn. At the end of World War II, under Soviet occupation, only Estonian and Russian-language schools remained.

However, in the 1960's, several schools (both Estonian and Russian-language schools) with intensive language programmes began offering a few elective subjects in grades 6–12 through the L2. As a rule of thumb, the subjects taught through the L2 were literature and culture, as well as the history and/or geography pertaining to a country or countries where the L2 is an official language.

The wider application of CLIL strategies began in the early 1990's. Russian-speaking parents started to insist on the introduction of dual language instruction in order to improve their children's knowledge of Estonian and to increase their children's options for further education. Concomitantly, a Tartu University research team developed an 'Estica' curriculum with complementary teaching materials, which were used to teach home and cultural studies, as well as history, through the medium of Estonian.

As of 2000, CLIL programming has expanded considerably. The greatest driving force behind the expansion is parental demand for improved language learning opportunities motivated by the increasingly clear link between economic success and Estonian, as well as foreign language fluency. Other driving forces include a National Action Plan for Integration, increased foreign and national funding for language training, other integration-related projects, and the establishment of the Estonian Language Immersion Centre. The Centre, which was established by the Ministry of Education and Research, manages the voluntary national Estonian language immersion programme. It supports curriculum and teaching materials development, as well as the training of teachers and educational administrators. Finally, declining enrolment is forcing schools to compete for students and work harder to improve the delivery of quality programming. CLIL programmes are often perceived as providing extra value.

6.3 Current Legislative Framework

In accordance with the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, any language of instruction may be used in local government schools contingent on a decision by the school's council and local government approval, and in state schools based on a decision by the school's council and approval of the Ministry of Education and Research. There are no restrictions on the introduction of CLIL programming prior to upper secondary education and no CLIL-specific standards. Estonian language is a compulsory subject in Russian-language schools and kindergartens. National curriculum guidelines apply equally, regardless of the language of instruction. At the upper secondary level (grades 10–12), the language of instruction is Estonian. 'Language of instruction' is defined as a language that is used for the delivery of a minimum of 60% of the curriculum during any given week.

The Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act states that by 2007, schools must begin a process that will lead to the delivery of at least 60% of the curriculum in Estonian in grades 10–12. No completion date has been set for this process. Currently,

²¹ January, 2005, Statistical Office of Estonia

²² National Census 2000

many Russian-language schools are not fully prepared to meet this future requirement. Local governments have the right to apply to the National Government for permission to use a language other than Estonian as a medium of instruction (60% of curriculum delivery) at the upper secondary level. This right has not been exercised.

6.4 Types of CLIL Programming and Enrolment Figures

- Enriched Language Programming in Estonian-language and Russian-language Schools – General Education

English, German, French and Russian

In 2004, 23 schools (20 public and 3 private) out of 604 general education day schools (both public and private) offered more hours of instruction in English, German, French or Russian than prescribed by the national curriculum.²³ Eighteen schools offered CLIL classes in English, five schools in German, two schools in Russian and one school in French. Subjects taught include literature, social science, tour guiding, economics, American, British or German history, and other electives. It is exceptional for these schools to offer compulsory subjects such as mathematics, physics or chemistry through the L2. Most CLIL courses are offered in grades 10–12. Some are offered in grades five to nine. Entry into these schools is usually gained through a competitive process. Most are widely considered to be prestigious institutions catering to above-average students.

Estonian

In September 2004, 101 out of the country's 604 general education day schools used Russian as a primary language of instruction for all or part of their student bodies. Eighty-three per cent of those schools delivered instruction of some non-language subjects through Estonian. Subjects taught varied greatly, however, and physical education, handicraft, politics, music and art were among those most often taught in Estonian.²⁴

- *Estonian-Language Immersion in Russian-language Schools – General Education*²⁵
Three types of immersion programmes are offered: early total, early partial and late.

Early Total Immersion

Programming is offered in 10 schools and involves 1,269 students.²⁶ Two additional schools are preparing to offer the programme as of September 2006. Entry to the early immersion programme can be gained in kindergarten or in grade one. On mutual

23 Content and Language Integrated Learning at School in Europe, Estonia, National Description – 2004/05, Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 2005. It should be noted that these figures do not include the two aforementioned English-language and the two Finnish-language schools.

24 These and all further listed statistics have been obtained from the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

25 NB: These figures include three Estonian-language schools.

26 In September 2004, there were 42,530 students studying through the medium of Russian in general education day schools.

agreement among participating schools, student selection is based primarily on a first come, first served basis.

The number of hours and subjects taught in a given language are based on an agreement among schools offering early immersion. The availability and strengths of existing teachers have led to some exceptions. In kindergarten and grade one, all subjects are taught in Estonian. In grade two, Russian language arts is introduced. In grade three, in addition to Russian language arts, English language arts is introduced. In grade four, science is taught in Russian (L1). In the upper grades, physics, chemistry and mathematics are also taught in Russian.

EARLY IMMERSION	Language of Instruction as a Percentage of Total Instructional Time		
	In Estonian	In Russian	In English
Kindergarten	100	-	-
Grade 1	100	-	-
Grade 2	90	10	-
Grade 3	72	16	12
Grade 4	64	24	12
Grade 5	49	39	12
Grade 6–9	44	44	12

Most early immersion schools offer a preparatory class for potential immersion students. Two 35-minute classes are provided per week for two semesters. Also, 17 kindergartens offer a two-year total Estonian-language immersion programme to 479 students.

Early Partial Immersion

Programming is offered in approximately 20 public schools. No statistics are available on enrolment. Grade one is the usual entry point. In general, entry is gained on the basis of a written request by one of the child's parents.

EARLY PARTIAL IMMERSION	Language of Instruction as a Percentage of Total Instructional Time		
	In Estonian	In Russian	In English
Grades 1–2	50	50	-
Grades 3–9	40	48	12

Subjects taught in Estonian (L2) in grades one to four include science, politics, mathematics (partially), music, art, handicrafts and physical education. In grades five to nine, history, biology and chemistry are often taught in Estonian. Subjects taught in the L2 vary from school to school, and depend on the availability of teachers and parental demand.

Late Immersion

Programming is offered in 17 public schools and involves 803 students. Three additional public schools are preparing to offer the programme as of September 2006. Based on mutual agreement among participating schools, student selection is decided primarily on a first come, first served basis and a minimum C+ grade point average in grade five Estonian language arts.

LATE IMMERSION	Language of Instruction as a Percentage of Total Instructional Time		
	In Estonian	In Russian	In English
Grade 6	33	57	10
Grades 7-8	76	14	10
Grade 9	60	30	10

Most Russian-language schools deliver some non-language classes through Estonian in grades one to five.²⁷ Grade six is a preparatory year for the late immersion programme that begins in grade seven. In grade six, science, people in society, handicrafts and art are taught through Estonian. In grades seven and eight all subjects, with the exception of Russian language arts and the L3, are taught in Estonian.

- *Modular CLIL in Russian-language Schools – Vocational Education*

In addition to the 604 aforementioned general education schools, in February 2005, there were 67 vocational schools in Estonia. Sixty-five percent of students were studying in Estonian-language programmes and 35% in Russian-language programmes. Few statistics are available on CLIL programming in vocational education. A recent study found that 10% of teachers from 14 Russian-language schools surveyed were teaching non-language subjects through Estonian. Also, several Estonian-language vocational schools have received groups of Russian-speaking students for one to two months and have provided these students with instruction through the medium of Estonian. These students have returned to their home school. The Vocational Education Section of the Ministry of Education and Research is unaware of any CLIL programming in the L3.

6.5 Aims of CLIL Programmes

CLIL programmes for the learning of languages other than the official language aim to develop in students:

- age-appropriate levels of target-language competence;
- an understanding and appreciation of the target culture.

CLIL programmes for the learning of the national language aim to develop in students:

- advanced levels of functional Estonian-language proficiency;
- age-appropriate levels of Russian-language competence;
- grade-appropriate levels of academic achievement in non-language subjects, such as mathematics;
- an understanding and appreciation of the students' own culture and the culture of the national majority;
- and functional proficiency in a third language.

6.6 Curriculum, EU Dimension and CLIL Certificates

Curriculum

CLIL programmes must be delivered within the framework of national curriculum guidelines. Based on these guidelines, schools are required to develop a school curriculum and course outlines. The Immersion Centre has developed sample curriculum guidelines that help guide schools in the development of their own documentation.

The EU Dimension

The European dimension is included in learning materials, in particular, in schools with enriched language programmes in French, German and English. However, much remains to be done. Trips abroad and numerous twinning projects are undertaken. Materials produced under the guidance of the Immersion Centre reflect the European dimension only to the extent that it is reflected in the national curriculum. Participation in the EU Comenius programme by schools offering CLIL programming is limited.

Certificates

Students do not receive any CLIL-specific certificates. Some schools support students in obtaining international certification (e.g., Zeugnis der allgemeinen Hochschulreife). Subjects in which state examinations are administered are usually written in the language of instruction (Estonian or Russian), but the student may choose either language.

6.7 Methodology

Based on anecdotal evidence, teachers use a wide variety of methodologies in the delivery of enriched language programming. Concomitantly, translation is often used as a learning tool, as is lecturing, as well as the memorisation of texts and vocabulary lists.

In the immersion programme, it has been agreed among schools that attention will be given to ensuring that all classes are taught on the basis of language and content goals. Subject integration, student-centred learning, a focus on student interests, group and pair work, the development of critical and creative thinking, the development of a rich language learning environment, contact with native speakers, the development of a secure environment where

²⁷ See above section entitled Enriched Programming in Estonian-language and Russian-language Schools.

students feel free to experiment with language and the use of a variety of assessment procedures are all key elements of what is considered good pedagogy.²⁸

6.8 Teaching and Learning Materials

CLIL educators who teach in English, German, French or Russian use materials created or adapted by teachers, books intended for native speakers and materials found in the media, including on the Internet.

Many teaching and learning materials have been produced centrally. Under the leadership of the Non-Estonian Integration Foundation, teachers' guides, worksheets for kindergartens, a series of Estonian-as-a-second-language textbooks and workbooks for grades five to nine, grammar tables and a web-based language tool intended for independent learning have been produced. Schools offering late immersion have received considerable Estonian-language learning resources for their libraries.

Under the leadership of the Estonian Language Immersion Centre the following teaching and learning tools have been produced:

- 95 large print readers translated into Estonian from French and English;
- 12 large print readers developed for kindergartens;
- 6 textbooks and 6 student workbooks for grades 1–3 with a teachers' guide for grade one;
- 3,250 worksheets created for kindergarten to grade nine;
- a 225-page handbook-compendium for teachers and administrators.

These Immersion Centre materials support the integration of several subjects such as maths and science, and the learning of both language and content, goal-setting, self and peer evaluation, and take into account equity issues.

6.9 Teachers and Teacher Training

Teachers delivering CLIL classes through the medium of English, German, French and Russian are usually trained as second language teachers. With the exception of those educators teaching in Russian, teachers are usually not native speakers. About ten foreign-trained native speakers of English, German or French deliver CLIL programming. In addition to the in-service training facilitated by the British Council, the Goethe Institute and the French Cultural Centre, the English Teachers' Association has organised professional development in second language teaching. CLIL methodology is only now beginning to receive some attention.

In the Estonian-language immersion kindergarten programme about 50% of teachers are native speakers of Estonian. In early immersion in grades one to six, almost all teachers

are native speakers, while in late immersion the vast majority are not.

The vast majority of educators teaching in Estonian immersion programmes have been trained as either teachers of:

- Estonian as a second language or as a first language;
- a non-language subject such as mathematics; or,
- as elementary school educators qualified to teach all subjects.

A small number of teachers have obtained certification in more than one of the above areas. Tartu University's Narva College offers pre-service training at bachelor's and master's levels, leading to qualifications to teach in grades one to four in the Estonian-language immersion programme. Narva College also offers in-service courses that allow language teachers or elementary school teachers to obtain subject area certification in subjects such as history and geography. Tallinn University offers an immersion methodology course as an elective at bachelor's and master's levels.

During the past five years, under the Estonian Immersion Centre's leadership, over 900 people have received a total of 55,000 hours of in-service training. Initial early and late immersion teachers received over 300 hours of in-service training including coaching and feedback based on observation of their teaching. To ensure that teachers do not carry the full burden of programme implementation, vice-principals, principals, school inspectors, as well as local and national government officials have also received training specific to their job function as it relates to the delivery of immersion programming.

Trainers have included Canadian and Finnish partners, Estonian immersion teachers, Immersion Centre and university staff, as well as private sector trainers who have worked to integrate immersion materials and practices into their training programmes.

6.10 Financing

The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research funds the Estonian Language Immersion Centre (EEK 5 million per annum). Significant funds have been invested into the Estonian immersion programme by Canada (CAD 2.2 million), the European Union (EUR 1.2 million), the Netherlands (EUR 20,000), the United States of America (USD 35,000) and by the Council of Europe (EUR 20,000).

School principals have the authority to pay a bonus to Estonian-language teachers or teachers teaching through the medium of Estonian to classes of non-Estonian-speaking students. Many of these teachers receive bonuses of up to 20% of their base salary. Normally, funding for bonuses must come from the school's salary pool, but in the one region of the country suffering from an acute teacher shortage, the Ministry of Education and Research has provided additional funding. Also, during immersion programme start-up

²⁸ Lesson Observation Checklist, Estonian Language Immersion Centre

years, the Ministry of Education and Research funded assistant teachers based on a formula of 0.25 assistant teachers to one full-time immersion teacher.

The Adult Education Act states that at least three per cent of the salary pool for educators must be used for professional development. Schools can use these funds at their own discretion. Schools working with the Immersion Centre have used some of these funds for CLIL-related training, but no accurate statistics are available.

EU structural funds are currently being used to help teachers teaching in Russian-language vocational schools to improve their Estonian-language skills so that they could teach in Estonian.

6.11 Quality Assurance and Research

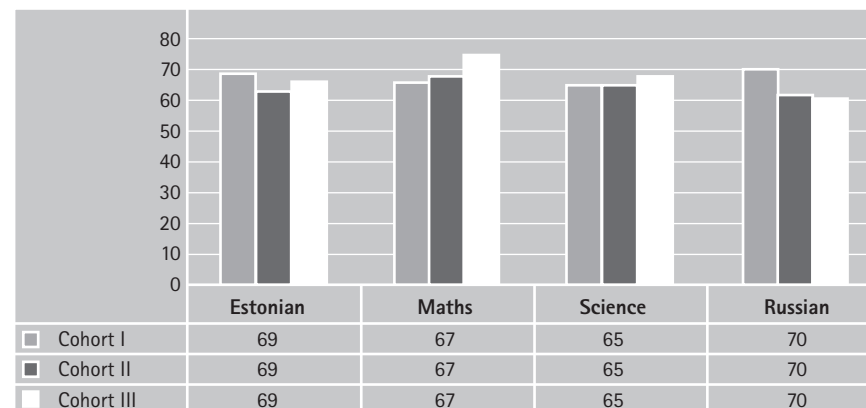
The early Estonian immersion programme has been under study as of 2000 and the late immersion programme as of 2003. Both programmes are being researched by one and the same Tartu University team that was selected based on an open tender and by an independent committee of experts. Early immersion programme sustainability has also been studied by the authors of this chapter.

Research Results

Studies of both early and late language immersion students have sought to determine whether students are achieving national curriculum expectations. They have also included assessment of parental attitudes vis-à-vis the programme. The results of the early immersion study follow. The late immersion study is in too early a phase to draw any far-reaching conclusions.

In early immersion, the first three cohorts (5 classes, 9 classes and 10 classes respectively) have been studied in grades one to three. This makes a total of 538 students and 24 classes. A control group consisting of three classes in an Estonian-language school and three in a Russian-language school were included in the study. Students were tested in Estonian language arts, Russian language arts, science and maths.

The primary conclusions of the study are that learning through the medium of a second language is manageable for the students. The average results of all cohorts in grades one to three fell into the range of 60–76%. As expected, Estonian and Russian-language skills developed well. Results were even throughout the country, including areas where there are limited opportunities to speak Estonian outside of the classroom. The decline in grade three Russian language arts scores was also noted in the Russian-control group. Notably, Cohort II immersion students achieved better results than the Russian controls.



The intelligence quotient (IQ) of students was determined using the Raven test. Comparisons between the differential in test results when compared with the differential in IQ results do not indicate a clear correlation. Moreover, subject-testing shows that the differential in test results per school varies greatly. This seems to indicate that there is a significant difference in how schools support students and deliver the curriculum.

Parental assessment of student achievement in the early language immersion programme has remained high from year to year: the development of Estonian language skills is in accordance with, or has exceeded, the expectations of 80–90% of parents. As regards the learning of subjects, the expectations of 60–80% of parents have been met or surpassed.

Programme sustainability was studied in the first four schools adopting the nationally managed early immersion programme. The study included parental and teacher surveys, lesson observations, analysis of school planning instruments and interviews with school managers. Clearly the initial pilot schools have been successful in launching the programme. Respondents identified the fact that major stakeholders understood and supported the programme, this being a key programme success factor. Centrally produced teaching materials and programme coordination by the Immersion Centre were also widely indicated as programme success factors. The study also revealed the fact that schools could benefit from a greater focus on supporting students in developing critical thinking skills, taking better into account topics of interest to students and being more effective in implementation of best practises in evaluation.

6.12 Future Challenges

Increased Demand

As the success of various CLIL programmes is further documented through research and is propagated by parents of CLIL students and the students themselves, demand will increase. A recent public statement by one of Estonia's best known entrepreneurs, calling for the expansion of immersion programming, including into Estonian language schools, is also a strong indicator of growing interest. Multilingualism is quickly becoming the norm. Moreover, the start of the shift as of 2007 to the delivery of at least 60% of the curriculum in grades 10–12 through the medium of Estonian for native speakers of Russian will also fuel the expansion of programming.

Preparing, Engaging and Keeping Teachers

This is already the single greatest challenge in the delivery of current CLIL programming. The shortage of qualified teachers willing to work in CLIL programmes is likely to grow exponentially as the programme expands and students move into senior grades. It will take a coordinated national and local effort to address the issue.

Programme Management

As CLIL programming expands, so will the need for school administrators who understand how to support CLIL teachers and manage programming. Further, coordinating programmes nationally will become increasingly complex. Programme accreditation is currently being explored as one possible management tool.

Maintaining Equal Access to Programming

As considerable research attests to the fact that immersion is suitable for students with different abilities, Estonian partners in immersion education have agreed to provide equal access to programming. Nonetheless, as the programme gains popularity, schools may be tempted at the point of programme entry to select academically stronger students. Partners in education will need to return to the issue regularly in order not to lose sight of this fundamental fact.