

LATVIAN TRANSLATION AND BILINGUAL LEXICOGRAPHY SCENE

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Abstract. Translation needs tools; the most widespread and the early tools for all nations have been (bilingual) dictionaries. In absence of the necessary language pair dictionary translators seek advice in other language dictionaries. Translators have also often been the authors of dictionaries. Development of Latvian writing, translation and lexicography shows numerous parallel and amazingly similar processes to the neighbours' testifying to the common space of knowledge (Wissensraum). Latvian lexicography starts with bilingual dictionaries connected with translation and religious needs. National awakening/awareness movement in the 19th century led to a greater variety of translations and dictionaries. Notably, monolingual Latvian dictionaries appeared only in the second half of the 20th century, testifying to the importance of bilingual lexicography that facilitates language contacts. Bilingual dictionaries have dominated the lexicography scene of Latvia from its start until today. The 20th century with its expanding translation needs produced an even greater variety of translations and bilingual dictionaries.

Key words: lexicography, bilingual translation, dictionaries, Latvian, German

1. TRANSLATION AND LEXICOGRAPHY

Language is the most distinctive feature of culture (Nida, 2001:13). Language, apart from daily use (which in Saussurian terms is speech, in fact) can be seen in its pure form in dictionaries, grammars and corpora. Dictionaries are linguistic tools, but also 'cultural objects, integrated as such into a culture: they bear witness to a civilization' (Dubois, 1971: 8). They reflect the language and culture, but they also form the current framework for language norms, use and possibilities. In multilingual environment (Latvian environment has been such) translators are to a large extent the main developers of the language, translation is the medium through which new notions and words enter the language expanding its potential and ensuring development. As can be seen further, in the early stages translators/writers were often also the lexicographers, e.g. Stender, Muehlenbach a.o. Thus, translation and lexicography have two aspects in common (apart from bilingual language material).

Translation is the process by which lexical equivalents are codified in bilingual dictionaries. Translation reference needs (factual and linguistic) arise in this process, which the translator attempts to meet *inter alia* by consulting dictionaries (Hartmann, 1998: 146). Besides, as Baltic translation started with religious

texts, the appropriate method was a close, literal, formal transposition of God's Word. This meant that equivalents (which dictionaries offer) were sought and maintained. The tradition of faithful rendition (Nida's (1964) formal equivalence, Newmark's (1981) semantic translation), however, survived for centuries and was the main strategy in "serious translations" as distinct from localizations.

2. LATVIAN DICTIONARIES AND TRANSLATION SCENE

2.1. EARLY TRANSLATIONS AND DICTIONARIES

It is usual to date Latvian lexicography from 1638 when the first dictionary was published. At that time Latvians were a peasant nation and the official cultural sphere was fully in the hands of non-Latvian governors, the German clergy and landowners. This had lasted for about 400 years since the territory came under the German crusaders and bishops in the 12th century. The dominant powers had changed (and would continue to change) from time to time – Danes, Poles, Swedes, Russians came and went hardly affecting the Latvian language scene, as their sole interest was the territory and the possessions and the power of the nobility. The German nobility retained its position until the end of the 19th century.

The dictionary was preceded by the first books: *Catholic Catechism* published in Vilnius in 1585 and Luther's *Small Catechism* published in Koenigsberg in 1587. The 16th century translation and writing in Latvian is the result of Reformation, that, like in other parts of Europe, was an "engine" of translation (Albrecht, 1998: 127). In the Baltic region Reformation was a major driving force as it was competing with Counter-Reformation/Catholic religion. These translations were followed a century later by the *New Testament* in 1685 and the *Old Testament* in 1689. The first translations into Latvian were very literal word-for-word translations retaining German, Latin or Polish constructions. This seems partly because of the amateur character of the translations, partly because of the genre (God's Words are to be transferred literally), partly because of poor lexicographical resources.

The translation of the Bible (1689) done by Glueck (with one assistant) is viewed today as remarkable, taking into account the shortage of notions and words, scarcity of previous translation samples and the fact that Glueck's knowledge of non-standardized Latvian (as a foreign language) could be far from perfect. Yet, if one can say that Luther's translation of the Bible gave rise to the German language (Brisset, 2003: 344), the Latvian Bible translation to some extent "created" Latvian, and certainly created written Latvian. One can also see the importance of individual figures of translators (Pym, 1998) as agents of change (see further). The quality of Latvian used by the German clergy at the beginning was not high – Mancelius tells a story that after a sermon a Latvian had commented "Who knows what that German cat is saying" (a wordplay on *kaķis*

(cat) and *katķisms* (catechism)). It was to improve the link between the church and the peasant nation, between the German-speaking clergy and the Latvian-speaking people that the first dictionaries were created. They were used by the clergy to acquire more or less decent Latvian that the peasants could understand, as well as to improve the quality of religious translation. One can see elements of missionary language field work in the early linguistic work and translations, its agents incorporating the features of Christian missionaries and “gentlemen-scholars” (Chelliah, 2011: 33).

The first dictionary (Mancelius, 1638) had three parts: a German-Latvian book, containing about 6,000-7,000 words, often providing several Latvian synonyms to the German word. The second part is a thematic lexicon containing about 4,000 somewhat random items on 51 topics (German-Latvian). Though this part seems to be hastily put together, many of these words and expressions are not in the first part. The third part, *Phraseologica Lettica*, consists of 10 parallel conversation pattern chapters (Mancelius, 1638). This division of the macrostructure is to be noted as it tended to be repeated in some later dictionaries. It is also notable that the dictionary preceded grammars.

The other two dictionaries of the 17th century were multilingual, Polish-Latin-Latvian (Elger, 1683) and German-Latin-Polish-Latvian (supposedly Dressel, 1688). Elger’s dictionary is worth noting mainly because it creates an early link between Latvian and Lithuanian lexicography – in fact, it is based on the third edition of Sirvydas (1642) – supplemented by the Latvian part, with 14,000 entries, much larger than Mancelius’ work. This does not seem to be a case of early plagiarism or copying (Cormier, 2010:133), or piracy, so frequent until the 20th century (Landau, 2001:43), but most likely a concerted attempt of the Catholic Church or Polish rulers to spread their influence. Published in Vilnius and representative of the Eastern (Polish dominated) variety of Latvia, it introduced the Latin script for Latvian. Parallel to this there were several Latvian grammars written in Latin.

The 18th and 19th centuries saw the same – dictionaries (including several unpublished manuscripts) were compiled by non-Latvians, they gradually improved in scope and depth. Lange’s (1777) dictionary had 15,000 entries in its German-Latvian part and 10,000 entries in the reverse part, also providing information on regional use, borrowings, biblicisms and toponyms.

Meanwhile the translations gradually changed, while constituting about 90% in the first half of the 18th century, the percentage of religious books fell below 50% already in the 1780s (Apinis, 1977: 92). Once other type of texts appeared, a different approach was exercised by translators – the texts were freely adapted to suit the level of education and understanding of the peasants. These were translations of moralizing stories and plays, secular information on agriculture, gardening, medicine, cooking and, more important – semi-encycopedic information. Most of these were translations-adaptations, localizations, domestications, compilations, rewrites. Adaptation is, perhaps,

the most suitable term for these works, as they combine not only localization, domestication, but also elements of foreignization. Thus, they do not conform to the simplified dichotomy of Venuti's (1995) domestication versus foreignization. Moreover, there is no "ethnocentric reduction" taking place. Domestication in the early case of Latvian was a logical approach in a situation when the target audience was semi-illiterate and had little idea of many abstract and novel phenomena beyond its limited vision.

Among the translators and lexicographers G.F.Stender stands out as a paramount representative of the new trends. Stender's (1789) dictionary, though smaller in size, uses the Latin script for Latvian words for the first time in the Germanic tradition. It also pursues the tradition of appendices containing toponyms, personal names, names of birds, fishes, insects, plants, trees, fungi (which Latvians traditionally like and are knowledgeable about). Both dictionaries often retained the mistaken stock of the previous ones: there are still many German elements in their Latvian grammar, collocation patterns and phrases that are not characteristic of Latvian – and that apart from the undeniable German influence that must have already existed in the language (Zemzare, 1961).

Stender was a rationalist, enlightener and educator, as well as the greatest authority of the time on the Latvian language issues. Apart from the dictionary Stender was the author of numerous translations, localizations and original writings. Thus, he translated German poetry (1753), religious stories (1756) from Huebner (1714), wrote Latvian grammars in the 1760s, translated fairytales and stories (1766/1789) later retranslated into Estonian, songs (1774; 1785), wrote ABCs, localized Aesop's, Phaedrus' and La Fontaine's fables, the German enlightener C.F.Gellert's writings, many of which actually entered Latvian folklore. Stender wrote/localized a huge and impressive popular "peasants' encyclopedia": *Augsta gudribas grāmata (High Knowledge Book)* (Stender, 1774; second edition 1796, the last edition 1988), which was perhaps a creative localization of J.K.Gottsched's *Erste Gruende der gesammten Weltsweisheit* (1734). The year 1774 saw another localization of Stender's *Svētās gudribas grāmatīņa* done on the basis of the Swiss theologian J. K. Lavater *Aussichten in der Ewigkeit* (1768). Thus, his activities can be viewed as symbiotic: translating and didactic enlightening information according to the principles of rationalist ideology, and in parallel expanding the Latvian lexis. The variety of Stender's work can be viewed as an early example of the cline between the "translation language" and the "real", authentic language (Veisbergs, 2009). A similar cline can be seen also as regards the text/contents: it is almost impossible to state whether many of these works are translations, localizations or original texts (see Chesterman (1996) on the boundaries of the notion of translation), moreover the author/translator is to some extent the creator not only of the concrete translation text, but also of the Latvian language as such.

The early dictionaries attracted also some interest outside Latvia. K.F.Temler (1772) in Denmark produced the first comparative multilingual dictionary

(Latvian–Lithuanian–German–English–Latin–Greek–Slavic) testifying to the early interest in Baltic roots.

The end of the 18th century saw various localized translations of moralizing stories and plays (e.g. A.Stender's (son of G.F.Stender) translation/localization in 1790 of the Danish-Norwegian writer Ludwig Holberg's *Jeppe pa bjerget*, which under the title *Žūpu Bērtulis* became a hit for many decades), as well as short tales or stories. There was a spread of secular information on agriculture, gardening, medicine, cooking. Most of these were translations, adaptations and compilations. Translators often had to face the absence of a word in the target language (Latvian) for a notion expressed in the source language – the linguistic lacunae (Schroeder, 1995:10) had to be filled in with either a borrowed or new native lexis. While in religious texts this mainly concerned specific religious items or occasional unknown cultural items (*lion, olive, camel*), when translation scope and depth increased, so did the amount of lexis created or borrowed.

The Latvian translation scene until the mid-19th century is dominated by religious texts, calendars (since 1757), practical advice on economic aspects of peasants' life, occasional medical (periodical *Latviešu ārste* in 1768-69) and enlightening texts on geography, history, etc. Fiction includes mostly localized sentimental stories, songs and easy poetry that might be interesting to the common people. Practically all texts have German sources, even when the original is in a different language. Thus, 1824 saw the publication of *Robinsons Krūziņš*, a translation by Girgensohn of the extremely popular German adaptation of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) by Joachim Campe *Robinson der Juengere* (1779). The translation had actually been done earlier, as Girgensohn died in 1814. Girgensohn's translation is a landmark – this is the first novel to be translated in Latvian and the translation is meticulously faithful (the translator was advised to localize the heroes and the venues, but refused). Instead foreignizing tendencies can be observed, e.g. Girgensohn meticulously explains unknown words and proper names to the Latvian reader, introduces loans and coins neologisms. This continues the increasing tradition of using translations to develop the language. Later – in 1871, 1885, 1886, 1894, 1886 – the translation was republished in a modified form (getting shorter and shorter) and consumed by several generations, serving as a perfect case of *rewriting* (Lefevere's term) and construction of the image of Robinson. The genuine Defoe's hero appeared in Latvian only in the 20th century. Incidentally Campe's Robinson, translated at the same time in neighbouring Lithuanian, obtained Lithuanian ethnicity and proclaimed nationalistic anti-Russian sentiments, as the Russian government had banned the use of Lithuanian. This is a similar story in many European languages (Monteiro, 2006; Dimitriu, 2006). Robinsons tended to acquire whatever traits were welcome at the moment.

Abolition of serfdom in the Baltic provinces in the first decades of the 19th century (earlier than in the other parts of the Russian empire (1861)) provided an impetus for fast economic and social development, which, however,

did not affect Lithuania and the Eastern part of Latvia – Latgale. The year 1830s saw the first regular newspapers and magazines, in 1822 the first Latvian newspaper *Latviešu avīzes* (*Latvian Newspapers*) was started. In the 19th century Latvian newspapers and magazines played an important role in the development of native literature, there were frequent discussions of linguistic issues and practical advice on the translation or composition of texts (Scholz, 1990). More sophisticated literature, mostly poetry, appeared: Schiller's *Ode to Joy* (1804), *The Robbers* (1818). They were followed by translations of Heine, Goethe, Lessing, Sudermann, Krilov's fables (1847). Newspapers carried many translations of Estonian and Lithuanian literature (*Latvie i*, 2008:103). Many song texts were adapted from German as chorus singing spread.

Early translations from Latvian mainly focused on *dainas* (folksongs): J.G.Herder's *Volkslieder* (1779), *Stimmen den Voelker in Liedern* (1807), *The Foreign Quarterly* carried *dainas'* translations and a review in 1807/08. Herder, who resided in Riga in 1764-1769, is to be noted not only for the translations, but also for his deep impact on Neo-Latvians, who adhered to his idea of recovery of national individuality and political identity through rediscovery of folklore. Another German enlightener to be mentioned is Merkel whose *Latvians* (1797) described in detail the position of the semi-serf Latvian population, their character traits and elements of culture. Another of his contributions, *Wannem Ymanta* (Merkel, 1802), a semi-reworked Latvian tale of the glorious past, was also published for the German audience.

Thus, the historical pattern of Latvian lexicography is explicitly bilingual/multilingual (Veisbergs, 2000). As such it lasted for more than 300 years. Moreover, for the first 200 years the dictionaries were compiled by German speakers and aimed mainly at German speakers. Numerous notions, relevant for the clergy but unknown to Latvians, were introduced. Some of these translation loans seem strange today, yet many were assimilated and have become part and parcel of Modern Latvian, although they keep the traditional German structures (e.g. compounds can hardly be found in traditional folk Latvian texts, most are German loans). Nevertheless, gradually this led to two variants of Latvian. The peasant people were speaking one language at home and another while communicating with the non-Latvian governors in the official spheres: the court, the church, the administration, the manor. Only the second variant of the language appeared in written form. Thus, two parallel languages or two variants of one language coexisted – the so-called Old Written Latvian and the spoken folk language. The dictionaries reflected predominantly the first. So did the translations; they were also central in the Latvian literary polysystem (Even-Zohar, 1990), the written medium of which had virtually nothing else.

2.2. NATIONAL AWAKENING AND NEO-LATVIANS

The situation began to change in the middle of the 19th century when the so-called Latvian national awakening started, led by Neo-Latvians (nationally aware

Latvians who refused being Germanized, as well-to-do and educated people had tended to do formerly). Parallel to the standard menu of sentimental popular German stories, Neo-Latvians glorified the national past embodied in folklore. It sparked an interest also in other nation's folklore; therefore, Russian, German, Estonian folktales were translated. Thus, inspired by Macpherson's *Ossian's songs* (a forged ancient Scottish epic) and simultaneously by the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg*, Pumpurs compiled/wrote the Latvian epic *Lāčplēsis* on the basis of Latvian folksongs and myths. The other trend focused on the future of the nation and the language that should service it – much scientific and educative literature had to be created. This meant turning the vernacular language into the referential language (to use Gobard's terminology (1976: 34)) in an act of reclaiming identity. Thus, language became both the aim and the means of national emancipation, similar to Finnish, Estonian, Czech, Slovak and other "new" languages and nations (Paloposki, 1998: 376); it assumed a new representative function (Prunč, 2007: 46). A huge growth in translation started – the new writers-cum-translators turned to serious literature in order to prove that anything could be expressed in Latvian. As national literature proliferated the share of translations dropped from 93% in the early 1860s to about 80% in the 80s (Apīnis, 1977: 313), yet it was still predominant. A broader spectrum of source languages reduced the share of German as a source language to about 70%, with Russian and English scoring about 7% each. Yet, German often functioned as an intermediate language. Neo-Latvians also borrowed ideas of Romanticism and put them into their own original practice (Pumpurs' national epic *Lāčplēsis*), as well as translated Romantic and classical works, e.g. fragments of *Nibelungenlied* (1888), *Odissey* in the 90s. Romanticism was followed by Realism (mainly German influence), with much of original literature describing the Latvian country life, e.g. the greatest realist novel Kaudzītes' *Mērnieku laiki*.

Gradually the scope of translations widened and their quality improved, so that in the last two decades of the 19th century satisfactory translations of long prose texts were widespread. One could say that around the turn of the 20th century Latvian literary scene had reached the level of contemporary European literature; it followed and was part of the Western trends. Although no organized groups of symbolist, expressionist or modernist writers were established, individual authors aligned with various trends. Translations were naturally the source of these ideas and leanings. The greatest Latvian poet and playwright Rainis translated several great and important works of Goethe: *Faustus* (1897/8) (done in prison!), *Prometheus and Iphigenia*, Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, *Wilhelm Tell*, *The Robbers*, Byron's *Cain*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*. His literary career actually started in the late 1880s with translations of Pushkin, Ibsen, Ovid, Burns, etc. He wrote various surveys of foreign writers, published these, as well as translations of Maupassant, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Sudermann in the progressive newspaper *Dienas lapa* whose editor he was in 1891-95. The paper informed the readers on various trends in Western literature as well. *Faustus* was hailed as a remarkable sample of Modern Latvian. The beginning of

the 20th century saw translations from French and its influence on the original literature. This affected also the general translation pattern – it liberated itself from the Germanic faithfulness. Thus, when Rainis translated Alexandre Duma's *The Count of Monte Cristo*, he Latvianized it in a very liberal way, cutting out the less interesting passages according to the French tradition. This could be viewed as a watershed from fidelity and literalness to “target orientation” with a freer and more dynamic use of language (unless one views early localizations as such).

Meanwhile the Germanic element (mainly direct loans) in the language was viewed as alien and fought against. Most dictionaries of the 2nd half of the 19th century were produced by Latvian speakers, e.g. Valdemārs' Russian-Latvian-German dictionary published in 1872 (50,000 entries), and accordingly tended to reflect more of the spoken folk language. These dictionaries were aimed at Latvians. The national, social and professional strife between the German (Ulmann, 1872) and Latvian editors (Valdemārs using the Latin script) and their dictionaries generally was beneficial, bringing together Old Latvian and New Latvian and improving the end products.

The last serious work of the Old Latvian tradition, Ulmann's *Lettsches Woerterbuch* (1872), Latvian-German, comprising 20,000 words, was aimed at the German reader and had the most exhaustive number of entries. It used the Latin script for Latvian, included many dialect words, some etymological elements, phrasal examples, avoided some Germanisms (letters f, h), and all in all was a rather descriptive and traditional dictionary (though it had also some Latvians among compilers, e.g. Neikens). Valdemārs was innovative in many ways – in fact, the dictionary had a team of compilers, they coined and introduced many neologisms, not only for new notions but also substituting many German loans. German was used mainly to explain these Latvian neologisms. In the 2nd edition (1890) the German part was dropped as many neologisms had taken root. The dictionary had two appendices dedicated to proper names. In 1879 a reversed dictionary, Latvian-Russian-German, was produced, with 13,000 Latvian entries.

Other types of dictionaries started to appear, practically all stimulated by language contacts. The development of the national language, the spread of newspapers and international contacts created a need for books of foreign words: Mekons (1878), with 2000 entries, Dravnieks (1886), with 5000 entries. The opening of the wider world, the wish to demonstrate the national intellectual and linguistic potential of Latvia as well as the Russification of schools, spelled a need for encyclopedias. Encyclopedias (according to the German pattern called “Konversation” dictionaries) became popular at the end of the 19th century, e.g. *Dravnieka Konversācijas vārdnīca* (1891-1898, unfinished), and another in 1906-1921, both in the Gothic script. This culminated in a monumental *Latviešu Konversācijas vārdnīca* (17 vols., 1927-1938, in the Latin script) still unsurpassed, though the last 2-3 volumes were not published due to the Soviet occupation in 1940. In all of these, despite the political anti-German drive, one can see the

influence and pattern of German lexicographic ideas of the time, namely the *Brockhaus* dictionaries with their strong emphasis on personalities (differing from *Encyclopedia Britannica* with its more subject-oriented approach).

The beginning of the 20th century saw extensive activities of Dravnieks – the most prolific Latvian lexicographer, who created modern German-Latvian, Russian-Latvian, English-Latvian and Latvian-Russian bilingual desktop dictionaries used by learners and translators, the Latvian public being the target audience.

Translations of the new Latvian literature into other languages started, mainly into German and Russian (Blaumanis, Kaudzītes), Estonian (Blaumanis, 1890, 1892).

Towards the end of the 19th century the two language variants merged and one could speak of Standard Modern Latvian. However, the struggle against German and later Russian dominance and its influence on the language also transferred language purism activities to the making of dictionaries (excluding existing words and including as yet non-existent ones). The historical emphasis on bilingual dictionaries, characteristic of the Latvian lexicographic tradition, has led to the situation that the term *dictionary* for an average Latvian is associated mostly with a bilingual dictionary. This is typical of small nations where the main purpose of a dictionary is seen as helping to sustain contacts with other cultures. Functional reasons determined that dictionaries with the main contact languages were the first to be compiled and their number was the largest. For example, a decent Latvian-Estonian dictionary had to wait until 1967, despite the geographical and historical proximity; similarly, a Latvian-Swedish dictionary in Latvia appeared only in the 1990s.

The other tradition was more of an intralinguistic character – that of purifying, improving and standardizing which starts really only in the mid-19th century. Paradoxically, German-compiled dictionaries were in some way more descriptive (registering and recording) than prescriptive (inventing new terms for non-existent notions). This tradition affected mostly monolingual explanatory dictionaries, spelling dictionaries (though spelling is so close to pronunciation that there seems to be little sense in them) and of course dictionaries of foreign words where Latvian with its transcription principle (foreign words are respelled in Latvian according to their supposed pronunciation in the original) offers a great playfield for regular linguistic change, innovation and restructuring.

2.3. THE ICONIC DICTIONARY

The bilingual emphasis finds its expression even in the iconic Latvian Dictionary. The Latvian project was started by Muehlenbach (1853-1916), a notable and well-known linguist of the time in the early 1880s. Incidentally, Muehlenbach had tried his hand in translation – Homer's *Odyssey* – and had attacked Rainis' translation of *Faustus* as being too free in the use of language material: deviating

from the standard norms for the sake of euphony. At the beginning he focused on supplementing Ulmann's 1872 Latvian-German Dictionary (20,000 words, with some etymological elements). As a result the dictionary is designed as a bilingual translation book with explanations in German and examples in Latvian. The First World War broke out, and Muehlenbach died in 1916. After the war, on return to Latvia, Endzelīns, by now an undisputed number one of Latvian linguistics, was entrusted with finishing the dictionary and received the manuscripts. The public was involved – a rather novel phenomenon, never to be repeated in Latvian lexicography. Both Muehlenbach and even more so Endzelīns were negative about borrowings (rife in Latvian). The older ones were included, but the more modern ones (as well as most neologisms) were purged. Already in 1911 in a letter to Muehlenbach Endzelīns had advised that the dictionary should have only real Latvian “goods” (*īsta latviešu manta*). As a result the language of Latvian *dainas* (folk songs), fairy tales, proverbs, etc., forms the backbone of the dictionary. Early written texts are represented, too; there is a multitude of local and dialect words. However, there are also many citations from literature, rare local words and neologisms coined by writers. Translations were avoided in the corpus. Doubtful neologisms, considered worthy of including, were supplied with an asterisk.

The dictionary *Muehlenbacha Latviešu valodas vārdnīca* was published between 1923 and 1932 (Muehlenbach, 1923-1932) in folios, then in four big volumes (77,175 entries). Yet the corpus was extended by the addition of new items and texts. Assisted by E. Hauzenberga, Endzelīns compiled two extra volumes of supplements and corrections, published from 1934 to 1946 (55,543 entries) (Endzelīns, 1934-1946). Thus, the dictionary contains 132,718 entries and covers 5,480 pages in total (the figure was certified only after it had been digitalized (A.V.). Sixty years were spent on this dictionary and it luckily escaped the Soviet ideological influence contrary to the iconic Lithuanian dictionary. Begun as a one-man work it turned into a three-people work with some public support. The dictionary was published in the new spelling (as Latvia underwent an extended orthography reform from the Gothic script to Latin (1908-1937). Translations, though, mostly kept the Gothic script until the 1920s; the last newspapers changed the script at the very end of the deadline.

The purpose of the dictionary can partly be seen in its double title: in Latvian it says *Dictionary of the Latvian language*, in German *Lettsisch-Deutsches Woerterbuch*. It seems that the authors were actually killing three birds with one dictionary. They compiled the most comprehensive stock of Latvian for the time, they used German for explanations – so one could use it as a bilingual dictionary (mostly aimed in this function at non-Latvians), – and they put Latvian in the framework of comparative linguistics internationally. As such it was reviewed and acclaimed by A. Meillet, M. Niedermann, R. Trautmann, K. Būga and other celebrities of Indo-European comparative studies and lexicographers. It had certainly achieved its external goal. At home it became and remains a monument of ‘correct/good’ (normative) Latvian. Of course, one can see some irony in the

fact that this iconic Latvian work is mostly composed in German, including Germanized place-names in citations.

The dictionary reflected mostly the spoken language of the end of the 19th century, carefully weeded of undesirable elements, internationalisms, later borrowings. It has a wealth of dialect variants and does not shun rude words, yet on the issue of borrowings it is clearly prescriptive in the sense that loans are mostly omitted (not a single word containing *f* or *h*), despite such frequently used and irreplaceable everyday words as *ha, fui, fakts, filma, forma, hallo, Hanza*. Older and essential loans (e. g. *un* from German *und*, *jā* from German *Ja*) are included. The purpose of this defensive stand is clear, it reflects the traditional *Weltanschauung* of the Latvians – even in independent Latvia the linguistic pressure from the two major contact languages (both with considerable minorities) was felt as dangerous and polluting. In a way it worked against the dominating trend of the time: innovations in language brought via translations.

The normative and purifying aims of dictionary compilation outlived Endzelīns. Even as late as in the 1970s when the first fully monolingual Latvian dictionaries were compiled: the *Latviešu literārās valodas vārdnīca* (1972–1997) in 8 volumes (80,000 entries) and a desktop *Latviešu valodas vārdnīca* (1987) (25,000 entries), their necessity was explained by laying emphasis on the normative and prescriptive function of such dictionaries. Both had large editorial boards, and similar to the general trend (Bejoint, 2010: 221), carry no associations with a particular lexicographer or linguist.

The 1920s saw an enormous growth in translations, a great interest in Lithuanian (belated, because of the Lithuanian language ban by the tsarist regime), Estonian and Scandinavian literatures. The Baltic cooperation, partly supported by governments, created a large turnover of these translations. The 20ies also saw translations from the Eastern languages – Chinese, Arabic, Persian, Japanese, Indian, extending the scope of strategies. Though there were no dictionaries of these language pairs, translations were done by experts in the languages, e.g. P.Šmits translated Chinese tales.

As the scope of translation grew, many translations were still done not by translators, but by distinguished Latvian writers, e.g. Rainis translated Byron's *Cain*, Calderone. Virza translated French and Russian symbolist poetry, as well as Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Andrejs Upīts translated Gogol, Krilov and Tolstoy from Russian, as well as Flaubert, France, Heine, Wilde, H. Mann, etc. It seems they used translation for honing their literary skills, borrowing ideas and, of course, to earn extra money.

During the interwar period Latvian literature was frequently translated: folktales were published in Kaunas, Prague, Paris, Chicago, Germany and Russia. Rainis' works in the 20s were translated into many languages: Russian, German, English, Czech, etc.

The Soviet period, especially after Stalin's death, saw many quality translations of various classics, as well as extensive translations from many hitherto less known

languages; however, Russian was frequently used as an intermediary language (Silis, 2009: 185). Latvian literature was extensively translated into Russian, many translations were done into the other languages of the USSR. The translation scene was Moscow controlled, and mostly Soviet literature and classics were translated. Modern western literature was considered suspicious and ideologically dangerous. Fidelity approach was paramount, accuracy was a hallmark of proper translation; standard use of Latvian was demanded (Blumberga, 2008: 48). Sometimes omissions were practiced for ideological/manipulative reasons, sometimes footnotes explained ambiguous places. Though the policy determined what could be translated and how it should be done, sometimes the end result undermined the communist party goals despite the censorship. A fine-tuned system of ambiguous subtexts and undercurrents developed behind the official monolith façade. A considerable number of retranslations were done, mostly of classics, making them more accurate and using a more modern language. Literary translation steadily became a profession, while Latvian writers gradually moved out of translation jobs.

Meanwhile bilingual dictionaries spread in volume and variety. Thus, the period 1900-1966 witnessed the publication of 106 bilingual dictionaries (20 Latvian-German, 18 Latvian-Russian, 17 Latvian-English, 28 spelling and 19 dictionaries of foreign words). It was bilingual dictionaries that broke the prescriptive tradition in the 1990s, e.g. the most frequent Latvian greeting form since the mid-20th century *čau* appeared in a dictionary (*Latvian-English dictionary*) first in 1997. Postmodern mobility with its mix of styles, freedom of internet chats, impact of English (Veisbergs 2007), tearing of the barriers has in many ways sharpened the feeling that language is out of hand. Even the Latvian corpus compilation (there is an initial corpus of a few million words) has been delayed to some extent by the unwillingness of many linguists to see the real reflection of the language that, in fact, is functioning extremely well. The second half of the 20th century saw the production of bilingual dictionaries that gradually reached beyond the standard Latvian combinations – German, Russian and English.

Regaining of independence in 1991, establishing of Latvian as the sole official language of the state lead to an enormous growth in the translated information volume and a major proportional shift from expressive (fiction) texts to appellative and informative texts. Most of translations are not in book form or those of fiction. The tradition of adaptation has found a new creative outlet in advertizing translations as well as in software localization. The collapse of the Soviet Union lead to a fast linguistic reorientation as most of the information for Latvian speakers now comes from the West and from English. Within 10 years the source language pattern had changed radically – if in 1985 the proportion of translated books from Russian and English was 15 : 1, in 1994 the proportion had changed to 1 : 6 (Nitiņa, 2008: 268). Finally a change of the cultural paradigm (from traditional to postmodern) has occurred. Translation has become a huge industry and profession in its own, though of a varying status. Translation

criticism has gradually overcome its traditional linguistic limitations. Translation has again (like in the early stage of Latvian) become the main vehicle of language development. This is reflected in lexicography where since the collapse of the Soviet system bilingual dictionaries have retained their dominant position with rarer languages, like Danish, Norwegian, Japanese, Chinese, etc., added.

CONCLUSIONS

In Latvian lexicography there is a clear dominance of bilingual dictionaries. Bilingual dictionaries were first compiled to serve the needs of the clergy in the main contact language pairs and triples. In Latvia this was predominantly the German-Latvian combination. Later, with incorporation into Russia, Russian is added as a dominant language.

Since the 19th century the Latvian translation scene (predominantly German-oriented) has a great variety of texts and is broad and massive in scope. It affected the composition of Latvian considerably by adding to it a substantial foreign element. When the translation scene underwent a huge explosion at the beginning of the 20th century, so did the dictionaries. Since independence the Latvian lexicography has been versatile, but somewhat chaotic.

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