

## THE ETHNIC AND LINGUISTIC IDENTITY OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING YOUNG PEOPLE IN ESTONIA

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**Abstract.** This article investigates the development of the identity of young non-Estonians, depending on their language environment and linguistic origin. The study focuses on the changing ethnic and linguistic identity of people in areas with a large concentration of non-Estonians – Tallinn and Ida-Virumaa. A comparison is made between young people from monolingual and bilingual families who have graduated from schools with Russian language of instruction. The purpose is to find out how linguistic origin, language environment, frequency of communication with speakers of Estonian and the level of skills in the official language relate to the ethnic and linguistic identity of young non-Estonians; and how the linguistic self-identification of non-Estonians and their identity change due to factors influencing the society. Written questionnaires were used as the method for conducting the research.

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### 1. Introduction

The study was brought about by several problems related to ethnic and linguistic identity which have arisen in the integration of non-Estonians into the society.

Upon the contact of cultures and languages, ethnic and linguistic identity becomes significant. Since ethnic and linguistic identity have an important role in people's self-concept, it also affects the evaluation given of oneself and of others and one's psychological well-being. In addition to the role of the identity of their group of origin, the relationship between the minority groups and the majority group also bears great significance in the integration of the minority.

Social support and good relationships with friends and family not only foster the development of a positive self-concept but also help in getting to know one's

ethnic background. Identity is going through constant changes, since in a multi-cultural society, common concepts, mentality, attitudes and customs tend to be dispersed through a joint language space (Kirch 2002:87). Therefore, linguistic identity constitutes an important basis for the formation of one's identity.

The population density of non-Estonians significantly influences their ethnic and linguistic self-perception. There tends to be a problem with the subsistence of the Russian-language population in areas with a large concentration of non-Estonians which, of course, bears a direct effect on both their attitudes and language skills (Rannut 2005:10).

The majority of non-Estonians are concentrated into the larger cities and the border area. They constitute 46% of the population in Tallinn and 80% in Ida-Virumaa; these two areas being home to 84% of the non-Estonians of the country (Estonian National Census 2000). Areas with a large concentration of non-Estonians are, however, often the sites for the development of oppositional attitudes which are expressed by opposing oneself in the society (us vs. them) to the group speaking the target language as a mother tongue (Rannut 2005:11). Therefore, the object of interest was the study of the ethnic and linguistic identity of the young non-Estonians of those two areas since the influence of the Estonian language is smaller there than in the areas with dispersed non-Estonian population.

Little research has been conducted in Estonia regarding the relationship between the language and identity of non-Estonians. There are research papers and articles about identity and ethnic identity; the significance of language and the effect of language environment in the integration of children and their adaptation to Estonian-language schools has also been researched; however, the language identity problems of young non-Estonians who have already graduated from school are an unexplored area and the topic has hitherto not really been reflected upon. This study is an attempt to fill this gap by analyzing the ethnic and linguistic self-perception of young non-Estonians and the factors influencing this, with a comparison based on young people from monolingual and bilingual families of Tallinn and Ida-Virumaa.

## 2. Identity

*Identity* is a person's knowledge about who they are; who other people are; what it is that differentiates them and how one should behave in certain situations considering the social group where one belongs. This feeling of identity has developed historically, on the basis of continuity; i.e. it comprises knowledge about who we were in *the* past, who we will be in the future, who our mothers and fathers, our grandmothers and grandfathers were (Kidd 2002:7). Identity is a conception of oneself and therefore constitutes the basis of an individual's relationship with the world and its interpretation, as well as their evaluation of the behaviour of both themselves and others (McAdams 1997:106). Identity is related to the specific values of an individual which have been shaped within the limits of their development and environment and are partially cultural formations by referring to

common values and their outputs (Liebkind 1995). The individual identity is unique for a person. This, for example, also includes a person's biographical details, their experiences, hobbies and preferences (Thoits, Virshup 1997:106).

If the individual identity is comprised of answers to the questions of who I am and where I belong to, then collective identities are answers to the questions of who we are and where we belong to. The size of the group or its function is not important in the case of affiliation, what is important is the co-existence of this group for as long as the members of the group define themselves as the members of the group (Tajfel 1981).

Warren Kidd (2002:190) points out that social groups are related to each other through cultural identity and language. A native cultural environment and a well-defined habitat are the guarantees of national continuity. According to W. Kidd (2002), the passing on of cultural knowledge to children constitutes a certain kind of national reproduction comprising everyday habits, beliefs, traditions, customs, creation and culture in the most general sense. The identity of ethnic groups is often based on the national group of the mother (Turner 1987).

Another possibility is to characterize the society through its sub-identities. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) primarily stresses the following (collective) sub-identities in language policy:

- **Territorial identity** which comprises territorial location (e.g. the existence of a residence permit or registration);
- **Political identity** which expresses loyalty towards the state (e.g. the possession of citizenship);
- **Ethnic identity** which encompasses origin and culture, as well as the traditions and value judgements related to these;
- **Linguistic identity** which shows functional competence, pragmatic skills, different communicative strategies in a specific language.

### 3. Ethnic identity

Ethnic identity is an ethnic group's sense of belonging to a specific group (Liebkind 1995). Ethnic identity is composed of many factors, the combination of which has developed historically and is unique for each nation. The decisive factors are language and the culture based on it. Other factors which form a part of this are a common religion, traditions, collective self-consciousness, collective opposition to other nations (Rannut et al. 2003). Ernest Gellner is the author of a theory of nationalism (1983) where the basis for national affiliation – in addition to common culture – also consists of accepting each other as belonging to the same group. According to E. Gellner, national identity is not purely about belonging to a group with objectively defined characteristics but it is more of a collective conception.

Ethnic identity is also based on language. Culture cannot be preserved without language. Therefore, linguistic identity or linguonym plays a significant part in the formation of ethnic identity (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000).

In a multicultural society of the developed industrial era, there are few possibilities to preserve ethnic identity because of the following reasons (Kallas 2001):

- Society is composed of different ethnic groups;
- Larger national groups are formed of many smaller ethnic groups;
- Certain ethnic groups mix with the others, there is assimilation.

Ethnic identity is open to changes. People from different races and nationalities can have the same ethnic identity (e.g. a black Brit, an Italian American). Ethnic identity is not determined by biological or cultural differences but by the knowledge of who we are, what we believe and what makes us different from the others (Valk, Karu 1999).

Estonian society is not ethnically homogeneous, therefore it is very important to develop the identity of ethnic minorities. Russian identity is complemented by Estonian cultural background and in the European Union, also European attitudes towards values (Kirch 2002).

The central dimension of identity – the linguistic-ethnic self-determination – may withdraw within a few generations and European identity may assume first position. It is likely that the bearer of a completely new identity – the subethnos of *Euro-Russians* – will develop in Estonia (Kirch 2004:20).

Young people living in Estonia whose mother tongue is Russian are becoming multicultural (Kirch 2004:18). They will remain Russians as to their language, culture and ethnic self-concept, but they are no longer identical to the Russians living in Russia (idem:18). An entity is created which unites the ethnic group and ethnoculture – Estonian Russians (in this article it means at least the second generation of immigrants from the former Soviet socialist republics – E. K.), who are not similar to the Russians in Russia or, for example, the Russians in America (Kirch 2004:19).

The case with Estonian Russians and Estonian Russian culture is no longer the case of typical Russians or the type of Russian people who live in Russia. Estonia rather provides a reason to talk about a new concept to be pointed out – *Estonian Russians* (Fiškina 2000:179).

#### **4. Language and identity**

One part of social identity is formed by linguistic identity or linguonym (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). When groups communicate among themselves they develop similar value judgements which influence the ethnic identity of these groups (Iskanius 2005). The ethnic and also linguistic self-concept of young non-Estonians depends on their skills of the official language and the frequency of communication with the speakers of the majority language (Rannut 2005).

Linguistic identity means associating yourself with a specific language. An ethnic group can be inserted into a larger social unit by way of immigration or due to historical events (e.g. wars, conquests, disintegration or formation of states). The ethnic and linguistic groups of the groups do not usually coincide. There may

be several varieties of language within the boundaries of a single ethnic group and vice versa, different ethnic groups may speak the same language (Vahtin 2004).

Language helps preserve culture, therefore linguistic identity also plays an important part in the development of ethnic identity (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). Common concepts are dispersed through a joint language space and this also approximates identities (Kirch 2002:87). Some of the collectives, however, are bilingual where the speaker chooses their language depending on the situation (*diglossia*); in some collectives, it is more common to switch from one language to another (Vahtin 2004:37–38). Every normal society contains more than one variety of language. According to Dan P. McAdams (1997:116), it is more and more difficult to preserve one's linguistic identity in the industrial era, the main reason for this being the mixture of ethnic groups which characterizes the era.

Language nevertheless plays one of the most important parts in the development of identity and personality. Language is an instrument through which one tries to understand and interpret one's environment (Iskanius 2005). When children learn to speak, they become members of the society. Linguistic communication is one of the most important means and external characteristics of becoming the member of a group. People understand each other through communication, the facts, ideas and thoughts that they express record the common knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about the world of that group of people. The members of the group identify themselves and others through language, accent and vocabulary (Rannut et al. 2003).

The main issue in a multicultural environment is the choice of language. Usually, certain preferences have developed which depend on the speakers, the activity and the topic. The languages of different spheres of language may differ, for example there may be a home language and a language of state institutions. This type of language use may be influenced by the language shift defined by the educational opportunities of the following generation (Rannut et al. 2003).

Language environment is an important factor in the case of linguistic identity, because everything which influences the language environment, also influences the individual and the language use at large (Rannut 2005).

## **5. Purposes and method of research**

The purpose of the research which formed the basis of this article was to find out how linguistic origin, language environment, frequency of communication with speakers of Estonian and the level of skills in the official language relate to the ethnic and linguistic identity of young non-Estonians; how non-Estonians identify themselves linguistically and how the identity changes due to factors influencing the society.

The hypotheses of the research were the following:

1. The types of linguistic identity among the young non-Estonians of Estonia are:  
monolingual – Russian (i.e. speakers of Russian);  
bilingual – speakers of Estonian and Russian.

2. The ethnic identity of young non-Estonians is changing or has changed, the new type of ethnic identity is Estonian Russian.

The method of research was a questionnaire. Young non-Estonians provided written responses to the questions – electronically. A further interview was conducted with some of the respondents but the purpose of this was to ascertain the level of spoken Estonian of the informants. The questionnaire provided multiple choice answers for each question of which the respondents chose a suitable response. There were a total of 39 questions. The questionnaire was structured according to the principle of the Likert scale which enabled the multiple choice answers to express the level of existence of the specific value. The questionnaire was also encoded, i.e. the multiple choice answers were numbered so that an electronic statistical analysis of the results of the questionnaires could be performed pursuant to the purpose of the research. Some of the questions were open questions which gave the opportunity to provide longer answers as well as comments. The questionnaire was structured by spheres of topics which allowed associations between topics. The most important modules of topics were: 1) ethnic and linguistic background as well as language use in different environments; 2) questions of attitudes related to language and identity; 3) questions of ethnic identity.

In order to characterize the associations between numerical indicators or variables, the correlation coefficient was used which shows how strongly the indicators are related to each other. The Student t-test allowed us to determine whether the difference between the average values of two samples was substantial enough for us to draw the conclusion that these samples are drawn from general sets with different average values. This was used to verify the statistical hypotheses concerning the average values. The  $\chi^2$ -test was used for comparing the distribution of the sample.

The ANOVA-test was used to investigate the connections between two groups. This also provided an answer to the question whether the differences within the groups of the sample are due to the effect of the factor investigated or due to the randomness of the sample. Reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) was used to determine the similarities between variables.

Cluster analysis was used to divide the questionnaire data into groups via the structural classification method. The statistical data processing package SPSS 13.0 was used for analyzing the research.

## 6. Material of the research

The informants were young non-Estonians aged 20–27, a total of 100 young people: 50 people from Tallinn (25 young women and 25 young men) and another 50 people from Ida-Virumaa (25 young women and 25 young men). In Ida-Virumaa, non-Estonians from Aseri, Kiviõli, Püssi and Narva were questioned.

The young people participating in the research had graduated from schools with Russian language of instruction and were born in Estonia, therefore they were

at least the second generation of immigrants. The informants were found conditionally on the basis of random sampling – the only criteria were age, place of birth (Estonia) and the fact that they had graduated from a schools with Russian language of instruction.

The informants came from monolingual families (70% Russian) and from bilingual families (30% Estonian and Russian). 21 of the young people from Tallinn came from bilingual families (12 young women, 9 young men). In these families, one of the parents was Estonian (on 12 occasions, the mother, on 9 occasions, the father), the other was Russian. The home languages were both Estonian and Russian. 29 young people (13 young women, 16 young men) came from monolingual families. Their parents were on three occasions Ukrainian mothers (young women), on one occasion the mother was Latvian (young man), two of them had Georgian fathers (young women), three had Lithuanian fathers (young women), on two occasions, the father was Ukrainian (young men), while the other parent was Russian. The mother tongue was deemed to be Russian on 32 occasions (10 young women, 22 young men), Estonian on 14 occasions (12 young women, 2 young men), Ukrainian on three occasions (young women), and the mother tongue of one young man was Latvian.

9 of the young people of Ida-Virumaa (7 young women, 2 young men) came from bilingual families. Those families also had one Estonian parent (the mother on 4 occasions, the father on 5 occasions) while the other parent was Russian and they spoke both Estonian and Russian at home. 41 young people came from a monolingual family. Their parents were Belorussian mothers on two occasions, Ukrainian mothers on two occasions (young women), Armenian mother on one occasion (a young man), on three occasions, the father was Armenian (young women), on two occasions, the father was a Tatar (young men), while the other parent was Russian. The mother tongue was deemed to be Estonian on three occasions (by 2 young women and 1 young man), their mother was Estonian. All of the other young people considered their mother tongue to be Russian although one of their parents was not Russian.

The other nationalities were:

- Mothers – in Tallinn: Ukrainian (3), Latvian (1);  
in Ida-Virumaa: Belorussian (2), Ukrainian (2), Armenian (1).
- Fathers – in Tallinn: Georgian (2), Lithuanian (3), Ukrainian (2);  
in Ida-Virumaa: Armenian (3), Tatar (2).

In a bilingual family, the home languages were both Estonian and Russian. In this case, one of the parents in these families was Estonian, the other was Russian. The young people mostly deemed as their mother tongue the language which was the native language of their mother – in this case, either Estonian or Russian.

In a monolingual family, either both parents were Russian or one of them belonged to another nationality. The home language was Russian in all of these families, regardless of the fact that the other parent belonged to another nationality. The young people dominantly felt that their mother tongue was Russian. On only

four occasions, it was not Russian which was considered to be the mother tongue but the language of the mother who was from another nationality.

4% of the young people from Tallinn considered another language to be their mother tongue although the home language was Russian. The remaining 30% of the young people came from bilingual families and their home languages were both Estonian and Russian.

All of the young people who were questioned had acquired their secondary education at schools with Russian language of instruction, 30% had also graduated from an institution of higher education after secondary school (18 informants from Tallinn, 12 from Ida-Virumaa). In Tallinn, there were more young people with higher education; in Ida-Virumaa, there were more young people with vocational education. Therefore, it can be said that young people from Tallinn generally have a higher level of education. Income-wise, all young people questioned more or less belonged to one and the same group which is close to the average of Estonia.

## 7. Outcome of the research

Most of the young people (46%) assessed their Estonian skills to be good. 28% of the people questioned considered their official language skills to be very good and 26% considered their skills to be satisfactory. In the researched group, young women had better skills of the official language than young men and the skills of young people from Tallinn were, in turn, better than those of Ida-Virumaa. The Estonian skills of respondents from mixed Estonian-Russian families were also better. The young people questioned worked as service personnel, teachers, civil servants, experts (in information technology, technology etc.) and manual workers.

Almost half of the young non-Estonians questioned (45%) communicated with Estonians every day ( $r = 0.998$ ). Some of them came from mixed families where one of the parents was Estonian. In these families, some of the relatives are also Estonian, many have good acquaintances and friends among Estonians. The remaining people had Estonian neighbours and some Estonian friends. 35% of the young respondents communicated with Estonians outside of their working hours a few times a week ( $r = 0.998$ ). These young people spent free time together (for example, while working out), they also had Estonian friends and pen friends whom they did not meet every day. 15 young people met Estonian outside of their working hours incidentally about once a week ( $r = 0.925$ ).

5 young people from Ida-Virumaa practically never communicated with Estonians outside of their working hours ( $r = 0.925$ ). They had no Estonian neighbours or friends; but in Ida-Virumaa, it is possible to survive without Estonian, for example even when taking care of everyday affairs.

The majority of the respondents nevertheless communicated with Estonians at least a few times a week. Young people from Tallinn communicated with Estonians more often ( $\chi^2 = 52.381$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). On the basis of the correlation, we can conclude that linguistic origin bears a strong influence on people.



In order to determine linguistic identity, the language of communication with members of the family, of communication outside the home and the language one preferred to read were surveyed. Young people from monolingual families mainly communicated with their family in Russian ( $r = 0.92$ ), young people from bilingual families usually used both Estonian and Russian ( $r = 0.87$ ). On four occasions, they also communicated to the mother in Estonian ( $r = 0.82$ ); in that case, the mothers were Estonian (average correlation coefficient  $r = 0.87$ ). In the case of a bilingual family, the home language was usually the native language of the mother. If the mother was Russian, the family whose other parent was Estonian also preferred to speak Russian ( $\chi^2 = 9.145$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). Figure 1 illustrates the choice of language of the research subjects when communicating with the members of their families.

Table 1 shows the influence of the nationality of the mother in the choice of a home language; there is a strong connection between the nationality of the mother and the home language. Figure 1, however, points out which language the research subjects use in communicating with different family members.

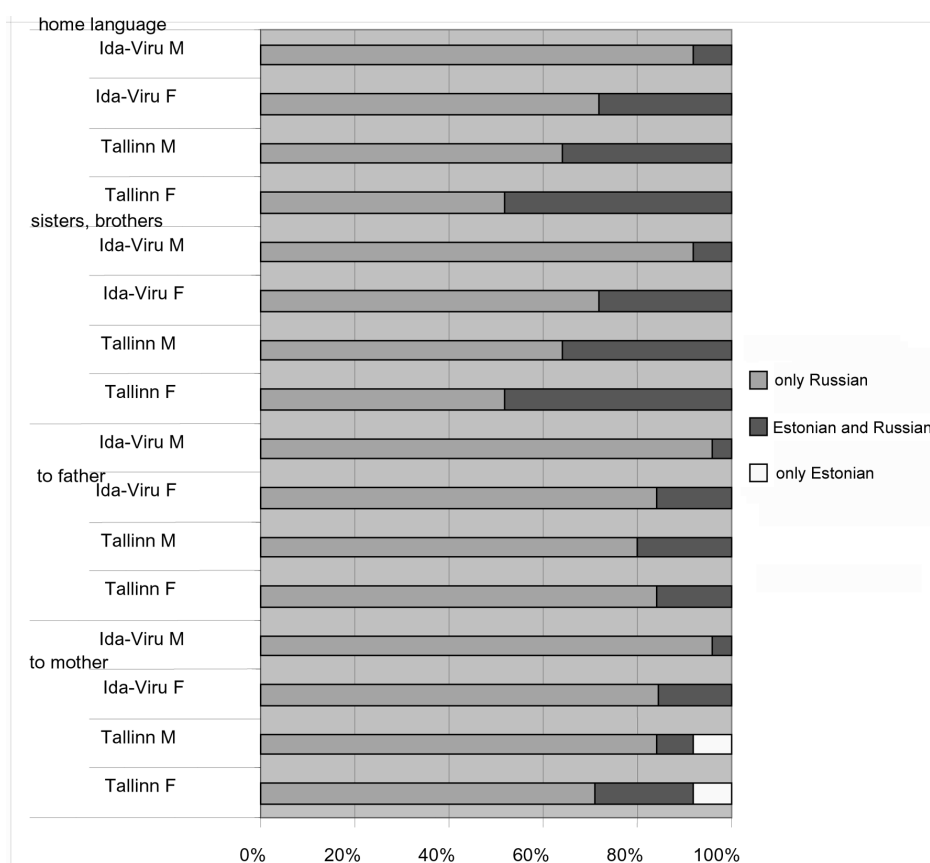


Figure 1. The research subjects' language of communication with their family.  
F – female, M – male

**Table 1. The influence of the nationality of the mother on the choice of home language**

			Home language		Total
			Est	Rus	
nat. of mother	Est	Amount	16	1	17
		Expected amount	4,1	12,9	17,0
		% of home language	66,7%	1,3%	17,0%
		% of total	16,0%	1,0%	17,0%
	other	Amount	0	9	9
		Expected amount	2,2	6,8	9,0
		% of home language	0%	11,8%	9,0%
		% of total	0%	9,0%	9,0%
	Rus	Amount	8	66	74
		Expected amount	17,8	56,2	74,0
		% of home language	33,3%	86,8%	74,0%
		% of total	8,0%	66,0%	74,0%
Total	Amount	24	76	100	
	Oodatav hulk	24,0	76,0	100,0	
	% of home language	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	% of total	24,0%	76,0%	100,0%	

Est – Estonian, Rus – Russian

Outside the home, both Estonian and Russian were used, depending on which language the communicative partner preferred. The relationship with linguistic origin was very weak in communication with friends, therefore this cannot be taken into consideration ( $r < 0.7$ ), ( $\chi^2 = 15.659$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ); at work, 55% of the young people only spoke Russian ( $\chi^2 = 28.193$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), 45% spoke both Estonian and Russian. At public offices, mostly Estonian and Russian were spoken (62%) and also in Estonian (33%), only 5% of the young people only spoke Russian outside the home, language use in the shop for the group was as follows: only Russian – 17%, Estonian and Russian – 53%, only Estonian – 30%.

The correlation largely depended on whom the young people were communicating with and which language was used. The communication pattern most used outside the home was both Estonian and Russian (bilingualism). This language choice is illustrated by Figure 2.

Young non-Estonians mainly used only Russian to read the press (70%) or Estonian and Russian (30%). With the support of correlation, it is confirmed that there is a very strong connection to whether the family is monolingual or bilingual ( $r = 1$ ). Fiction was read 100% in Russian because the young people find that it is more comfortable to read in Russian. Although communication took place both in Estonian and in Russian, the young people nevertheless admitted that it is easier to read fiction in Russian, even more so since all of them had graduated from schools

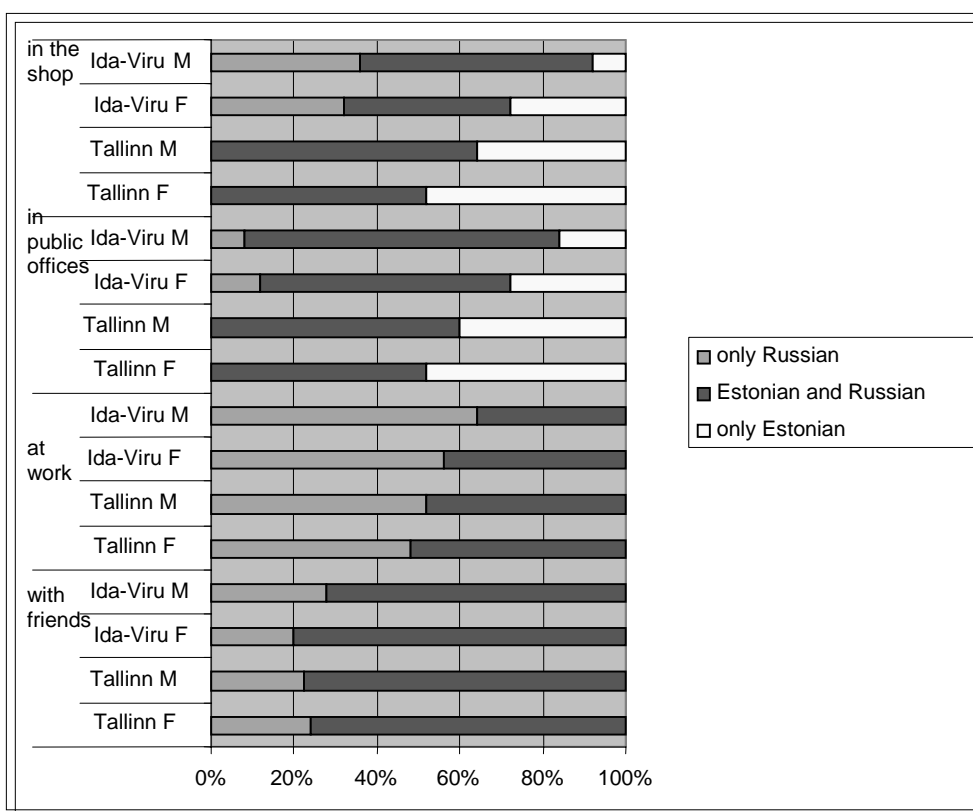


Figure 2. Young non-Estonians' choice of language of communication outside the home

with Russian language of instruction. Technical and professional literature, however, was read only in Russian by a mere 17%, both in Estonian and Russian by 47% and in Estonian by 5%, but 30% of the respondents also used another language in reading professional literature. These young people had graduated from an institution of higher education. Relationship with the linguistic origin was weak here ( $r < 0.7$ ).

Young people who only read Russian-language newspapers and magazines came from monolingual families ( $\chi^2 = 52.381$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ); non-Estonians from bilingual families, however, read both Estonian-language and Russian-language press. The reason given was that this is due to habit, since monolingual families had only subscribed to Russian-language newspapers while bilingual families subscribed both to Estonian-language and Russian-language newspapers and magazines (the principle of continuity).

Technical and professional literature was read in Estonian and Russian or even English depending on necessity. The reason for this is that there exists less scientific literature in Estonian and Russian than in English and the necessity for using English-language literature is more substantial.

In order to facilitate the use of the method for calculation of the average values for cluster analysis, three new variables were found by using the average values: firstly, the language used between the mother, the father and brothers and sisters, regarding which the value of the Cronbach alpha achieved through reliability analysis was 0.81 (the home language). The second variable was the language used with friends, at work, in public offices and the shop for which the value of alpha was 0.85 (everyday language); the third variable was the language for reading the press and fiction, technical literature and watching television, for which the value of alpha was 0.44 (language of reading). The relationship of these variables has been presented in Figure 3.

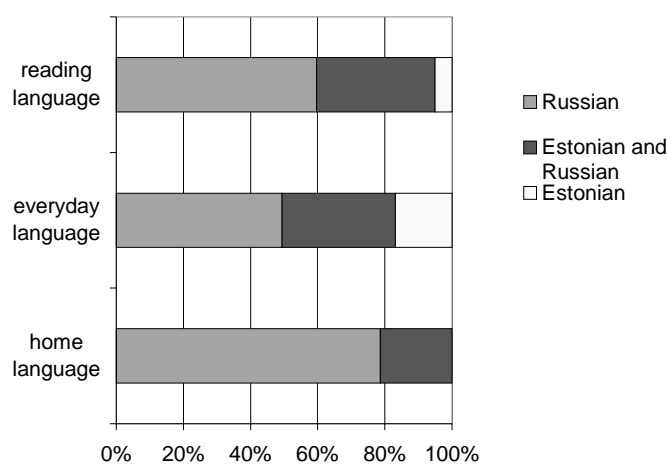


Figure 3. The home language, everyday language and reading language of young non-Estonians

## 8. Linguistic groups

In order to verify that the emergence of specific linguistic groups has taken place in the group of informants questioned, a cluster analysis was performed. The basis for the cluster analysis was formed by data related to language: nationality of the parents, mother tongue, language of communication at home and outside the home, use of language in reading and in watching television. As a result of this analysis, two linguistic groups were distinguished. By analyzing the above data, it can be claimed that these groups are the Russian group and the Estonian/Russian group. Results gained by calculation were, however, somewhat different. Here, an Estonian-language group could also be distinguished. The analysis yielded the following results: there were 55.3% of young Russian speakers, 40.4% of young Estonian and Russian speakers and 4.3% of Estonian speakers. These results were calculated via average value. Since the last group was small (4.3%), two language groups can be distinguished:

- young Russian-speaking non-Estonians;
- young Estonian/Russian speaking non-Estonians.

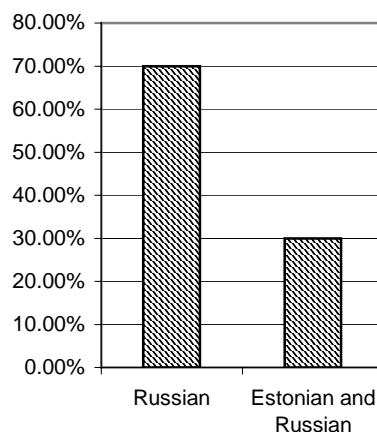


Figure 4. Linguistic groups of young non-Estonians on the basis of cluster analysis

## 6. Ethnic identity groups

In order to determine ethnic identity, the problem of exclusion of young non-Estonians was examined and factors influencing the future plans of the young people were analysed; the analysis of answers to an attitudinal module provided by the research subjects also formed a part of the research. It was also examined which ethnic traditions and customs are closer to the non-Estonians of Estonia. The purpose of cluster analysis was to conduct a survey of developing ethnic groups.

In order to perform cluster analysis, questions related to issues of language, self-assessment as well as attitude (all questions of the questionnaire). There were two types of attitudinal questions – a perception of exclusion and a sense of security concerning the future.

18% of young non-Estonians (12% – rather ‘no’ and 6% – ‘no’) considered there were no advantages in belonging to an ethnic group; what matters is the capabilities and skills of the person. 25% of those questioned thought that everything depends on the situation, sometimes it is important to belong to a specific nationality (for example, in politics) and at other times it is not.

Most of the respondents, i.e. 61% (35% – rather ‘yes’, 26% – ‘yes’) were certain that ethnicity gives Estonians an advantage in achieving success in business, political career, better paid jobs and more choices in which specialty to choose at institutes of higher education. The reasons given for this were the possession of citizenship, better command of the official language, connections and acquaintances. There was a strong relationship between the preferential nationality and linguistic origin ( $r = 0.998$ ,  $r = -0.998$ ).

Most young people questioned did not have any misunderstandings based on ethnicity (80%). 5 young men from Tallinn and 15 from Ida-Virumaa had nevertheless experienced hostile attitude because of their nationality in public places (for example, at sports competitions, cafés, clubs, the streets). Conflicts were mostly limited to arguments, but in ten cases (in Ida-Virumaa) there was also physical conflict involved. No ethnic discrimination was mentioned inside the work collective. In the description of the above conflicts these were not connected to language skills either.

Certain differences can nevertheless be pointed out concerning monolingualism and bilingualism. Monolingual people have the experience of being discriminated against, the connection was strongly positive; bilinguals had not perceived any discrimination ( $r = 0.85$ ).

With regards to the future, 64% of respondents felt security. These young people were certain in associating their future with Estonia. 24% of non-Estonians felt uncertainty, some of them wished to live abroad in the future, a small segment of people were not satisfied with their current job. It was also mentioned that if their Estonian skills were better, they would also have less uncertainty regarding the future. There were respondents who expressed uncertainty about the future regardless of other criteria – for example, they simply mentioned a sporadic fear regarding the future (unexpected accidents, death of parent(s), impoverishment, unemployment etc.). The young people thought that successful people can have certainty regarding the future. The bases for success were considered to be capability, good education, a well-paid job, acquaintances and connections, good financial situation of both one's parents and oneself, good knowledge of Estonian and foreign languages. Good Estonian skills were strongly connected to the sense of security of non-Estonians ( $r = 0.81$ ) (average very good + good).

Young people from monolingual families had a rather negative attitude towards learning Estonian ( $r = 0,66$ ), young people from bilingual families, however, had a favourable attitude towards this ( $r = 0.51$ ). Most of the young non-Estonians (77%) were certain that Estonian skills are necessary. They think it is necessary for enabling one to acquire a good job and have a career, to get a better education, to participate in the politics of the state, to get to know Estonian culture better and to find more Estonian friends. 23% of the young people from Ida-Virumaa were of the opinion that Estonian skills are not essential and it is also possible to get by without speaking the language. Such young people had no Estonian friends, their home language was Russian, their working team was bilingual and they could communicate in Russian at work. The representatives of these young people came from monolingual families. They assessed their Estonian skills as satisfactory.

When comparing young people from monolingual and bilingual families, then the readiness of young people from bilingual families to work in a mixed team was greater:  $r = 0.81$  in the case of young people from bilingual families and  $r = 0.95$  in the case of young people from monolingual families. Half of the young people questioned enjoyed working in a mixed team. They think it is possible to improve

their Estonian skills there and maybe to use it in the future to find a better job; they can also communicate in their mother tongue there.

More than half of the young people questioned had a favourable or rather favourable attitude towards mixed marriages (55%). These were mainly young people from bilingual families and also the people whose Estonian skills were better and who communicated with Estonians more frequently ( $r = 0.77$ ).

20% of the young respondents had a negative or rather negative attitude towards mixed marriages. They had mixed families in their circle of acquaintances whose members had divorced their marriage, discontinued their cohabitation or the members of which did not get along with each other very well and during whose arguments, the issue of nationality was also raised as one aspect ( $r = 0.70$ ). The main reason was considered to be different cultural background. The remaining 25% of respondents did not have an opinion in this matter ( $r = 0.98$ ).

21% of the respondents had not given any thought to the issue of compulsory service of non-Estonians in the Defence Forces of Estonia ( $r = 0.75$ ). One fourth of them (25%) found that non-Estonians should not or should rather not serve in the Defence Forces of Estonia. They think young men should decide for themselves whether they would like to go through army service or not ( $r = 0.84$ ).

More than half of the respondents (54%) favoured the fact that all young men should serve in the Defence Forces of Estonia since they live in Estonia, after all, and this would also be an expression of loyalty towards the Estonian state ( $r = 0.71$ ).

Based on this group of questions, it is possible to reach the conclusion that very few of the respondents to these questions have felt exclusion and that they are loyal to the Estonian state. They are therefore willing to integrate with the society. Young people from monolingual families had experienced exclusion more. On the basis of cluster analysis, three ethnic identity groups were established.

In order to determine identity groups, an analysis was conducted of answers to questions which are directly related to the opinion of the young people regarding who they think they bear resemblance to.

20% of the respondents did not have an opinion regarding the question *are you similar to Estonians?* 11% thought that they are not similar to Estonians. 31% were certain that they are in many ways similar to Estonians. These were mostly young people from bilingual families, most of whom (38%) thought that they were similar to both Estonians and Russians.

**Table 2. Table regarding the distribution of cluster groups**

Groups	N	% of the amount	% total
Cluster 1	35	35.0%	35.0%
Cluster 2	39	39.0%	39.0%
Cluster 3	26	26.0%	26.0%
Total	100	100.0%	100.0%

27% of the young respondents considered Russian traditions and customs to be closer or rather closer to them. These young people rarely communicated with Estonians and they had rather limited Estonian skills. Estonian traditions and customs were considered to be closer or rather closer by 10% of the young people. The respondents came from bilingual families and very frequently communicated with Estonians.

Most of the young people (63%) followed both Russian and Estonian traditions. Calendar holidays were celebrated twice, according to both the Estonian and the Russian calendar and time (Christmas, New Year, Shrovetide), they also celebrated St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day. These young people had the best language skills, they also included all of the young people from bilingual families (but nevertheless also a considerable amount of respondents from monolingual families) ( $r = 0.714$ ).

29% of the young respondents considered their behaviour to be similar to both Estonians and Russians, 5% considered to be more similar to Estonians ( $r = 0.993$ ). The latter were young people from bilingual families. Most respondents (66%) think that their behaviour is more similar to Russians than to Estonians. The reason here could be the national temperament, which is somewhat different for the Estonian and Russian population regardless of the fact that they live alongside each other, this could also be the reason for the behavioural differences ( $r = 0.984$ ). In analysing the answers to this question, it became apparent that language skills had not had a strong influence here.

The largest number of young people (65%) associated their future plans with Estonia, this could be seen both in the case of Tallinn and Ida-Virumaa and with both young women and men ( $r = 0.554$ ). The reasons given for this were that they were born and raised in Estonia, Estonia is their homeland and their parents and friends live here. The fact that they have a satisfactory job here was also pointed out. Those who wanted to study at an institute of higher education believed that they could also receive good education in Estonia and they also have better career opportunities here.

10 young people from Ida-Virumaa, however, decided in favour of Russia. They all had relatives in Russia and they thought that connections allow them to achieve greater success there than in Estonia. Those young people, however, only displayed satisfactory skills in our official language ( $r = 0.925$ ).

25% of the respondents associated their future with another country ( $r = 0.906$ ). Some of them pointed out that they were not quite sure whether they would actually take this decisive step someday, but they admitted that they have had such a dream already for a long time and they would like to live even only temporarily in a foreign country in order to earn money, to study at the university, to acquaint oneself with a new culture, to improve one's language and communication skills and to gain experiences. Other countries mentioned were Germany (4 young men from Tallinn and 5 young women from Ida-Virumaa). The young women decided to first work as a babysitter or a salesperson and, when possible, also to try to enter



university, two young women, however, wished to marry a German in the near future and settle in Germany.

Six non-Estonians (4 young women from Tallinn and 2 young women from Ida-Virumaa) wished to pursue employment in Finland. Since they knew that salaries are higher in Finland than they are in Estonia, they wished to earn money in that particular country. Generally, they could not give specific answers regarding which job they would like to have there but one young woman said that she had already received an offer to work in Finland as a painter and she has decided to accept the offer.

Two young women from Tallinn and two young men from Ida-Virumaa had decided to go to England to study, two young women wished to travel to the USA – their acquaintances had promised to provide them with work there. The reasons they gave for this were that there is more competition in the labour market of Estonia since Estonia is a small country. Their acquaintances had also told them that the general standard of living is higher in the United States than it is here.

In making their future plans, they had taken into consideration both their Estonian skills and their foreign language skills (some of the young people mentioned that they possess good German or English skills, but Finnish was at best spoken only on communicative level). There were also some young people who were not satisfied with their current job.

There were but a few young people who watched only Estonian or only Russian television channels (10% and 14%, respectively) ( $r = 0.549$ ). Most of the respondents followed both Estonian and Russian channels (43%) as well as other television channels (33%), which they were able to see via cable television (satellite channels). The programmes watched the most turned out to be news and sports programmes, television series and films, youth programmes and quiz shows.

Respondents with better Estonian skills who came from bilingual families watched both Estonian-language and Russian-language television programmes. At the same time, these data do not provide sufficient grounds for ascertaining that there is a connection between the television channel watched and linguistic origin.

Figure 5 shows that three types of ethnic identity formed within the researched group. The largest group was formed by Russians/Estonians (43%), 22% of the research subjects can be considered Estonians and 35% Russians. The results were achieved by calculating the average value. Ethnic identity was related to the mother tongue. If the mother tongue was Russian, the ethnic identity type was Russian ( $t = 3.208$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.042$ ,  $r = 0.90$ ), if the mother tongue was Estonian, the identity type was mostly Estonian/Russian (Estonian Russian) ( $t = -2.762$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.055$ ,  $r = 0.5$ ). The ANOVA-test was used in order to ascertain the connection between the groups. The result was  $F = 12.009$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $F_{crit} = 3.304$ . Since  $F$  is greater than  $F_{crit}$ , the hypothesis concerning the developed identity types (Russian, Russian/Estonian, Estonian) has been proven.

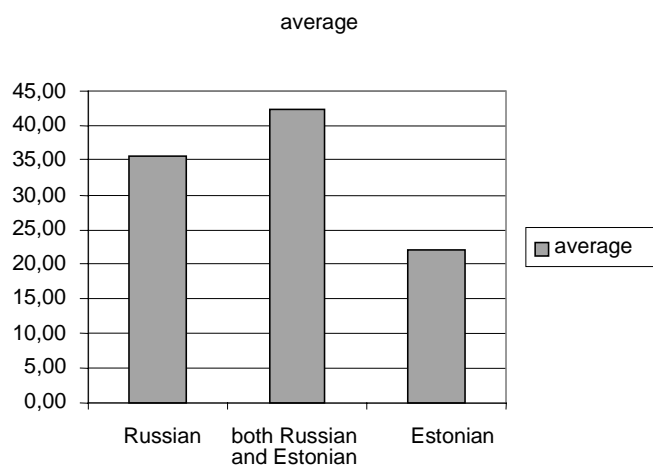


Figure 5. Identity types of young non-Estonians

## 9. Implications

The analysis of the answers of young non-Estonians from Tallinn and Ida-Virumaa yielded that the differences were minimal (also in the case of young women and men), therefore, the comparing agent was the different linguistic origin (monolingual and bilingual family). Linguistic origin to a large degree determined in which language, with which nationality and how often the young people liked to communicate; this also influenced their identity. The results of the study make it possible to conclude that the Estonian skills of young people from bilingual families is better, that they speak in both Estonian and Russian depending upon necessity, they have experienced much less exclusion than young people from monolingual families and they also have a favourable attitude towards learning Estonian and they find that Estonian skills are a necessity. Young people from bilingual families communicate with Estonians more often, they are more similar to Estonians with regards to following traditions, behaviour and character than young people from monolingual families. Therefore, an identity change has taken place. The correlation coefficient has been used for statistical comparison.

In the researched group, young people from bilingual families mostly considered the native language of their mother to be their mother tongue – in this case, either Estonian or Russian. In monolingual families, the home language was Russian, regardless of the fact that in certain cases, the other parent was from another nationality. This shows that in the case of the monolingual family, ethnic minorities have preferred to blend into the Russian language environment and their linguistic identity has changed. Outside the home, Estonian was used more and usually, the language better suitable for the conversational partner was used. In reading, mostly Russian was used. Cluster analysis helped distinguish two

linguistic groups, one of which was the Russian-language group and the other the Estonian-language/Russian-language group.

In order to determine identity groups, answers to questions directly related to whom the young people thought they bore most similarity to, were analysed.

Over one fourth of the respondents were certain that they are similar to Estonians in many aspects. These were largely young people from bilingual families; most of the respondents thought they were similar to both Estonians and Russians.

Most of the young people followed both Russian and Estonian traditions. Calendar holidays, for example, were celebrated twice, according to both the Estonian and the Russian calendar and time; St. Martin's Day and St. Catherine's Day were also celebrated. These young people possessed the best language skills, they also included all young people from bilingual families (but also a substantial amount of respondents from monolingual families) ( $r = 0.714$ ). Regarding similarities with Estonians, most people thought that there are quite many similarities.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that a new type of non-Estonians – the so-called Estonian Russian – is developing who is different from the Russians in Russia and most likely, also different from Russians elsewhere in the world. Acceptance of the customs and habits of another ethnic group changes the identity of non-Estonians so that they become more similar to Estonians. Cluster analysis yielded three types of ethnic identity: Russian, Russian/Estonian and Estonian.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the types of linguistic identities of younger generation non-Estonians are:

- 1) monolingual – Russian (this group prefers to use Russian in most situations and their level on Estonian skills is also not very good);
- 2) bilingual – speakers of Russian and Estonian (this group is proficient in two languages and easily switches from one language to another and speaking the language better suitable for the conversational partner).

It can also be concluded that a new ethnic non-Estonian identity has developed or is developing among young non-Estonians – the Estonian Russian. At the same time, it cannot be said that the process is taking place at the same rate, the same level or the same time among all non-Estonians.

## **10. Conclusion**

The applied research results confirm that a new non-Estonian identity – the Estonian Russian is developing. Their Estonian language skills and knowledge as well as acceptance of Estonian culture brings non-Estonians closer to Estonians and they therefore also experience the feeling of being a more loyal Estonian citizen.

Non-Russian aliens, however, generally assimilate with Russian-speaking environment and culture in areas of dense immigrant population, as could be seen in the case of the researched group of young non-Estonians.

The results of this research are however only valid for this particular group of research subjects. The result could be different in a group of different composition; the determining factors can, for example, be age, the fact that one had graduated from an Estonian-language school as well as the number of research subjects. Therefore, it would be interesting to research the linguistic and ethnic identity of different age groups in the future by including people who have graduated from Estonian-language schools and by increasing the number of informants.

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