



Perspectives of Higher Education Language Policy Development in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and Policy- Driven Research

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Methodology

The information is gathered through the desk research as well as face to face communication with Erasmus + higher education reform experts of these countries. The study embraces reports of governmental and non-governmental institutions, websites of universities, data of university rankings, other analytical data and research articles of individuals.



The Eastern Partnership Region



Country	University	Webometrics Rank
Armenia	Yerevan State University	2643
	American University of Armenia	3709
	Russian-Armenian State University	4959
Belarus	Belarusian State University	684
	Belarusian National Technical University	2715
	Yanko Kupala State University of Grodno	3382
Georgia	Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University	1423
	Ilia State University	1773
	Georgian Technical University	2088
Moldova	State University of Moldova	3151
	Technical University of Moldova	3202
	Nikolae Testemitanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Moldova	7091
Ukraine	Sumy State University	1977
	National Taras Shevchenko University of Kiev	1995
	Kharkiv National University VN Karazin	2245

BEFORE 1991
Different linguistic
situation and higher
education priorities

AFTER 1991
Change of the “rules
of game” for language
education policies

**AFTER JOINING THE BOLOGNA
PROCESS**
English is a lingua franca
Developing new approaches and
methodologies to
internationalize curricula

The situation of language and foreign language learning in Soviet Union (before 1991)

- All kinds of policies were centralized and governed by the Moscow authorities
- Linguistic issues were to some extent politicized as well as the professional and the social relevance of languages was either underdeveloped or undermined by centralized strict
- Russian was the only lingua franca
- Internationalization was not a priority for higher education system
- Foreign language was not used as a tool for mobility of students and staff
- Higher education language policy development was not in place
- Profession-oriented language teaching was not practiced
- Higher education institutions did not have foreign language courses and programmes for non-linguists
- Number of international publications was limited.

Developments after 1991



**Decentralization
of governance
of universities**

**Development of
specific national
landscapes of
higher
education**

**Responsiveness to
international trends**

After 1991

The national languages have acquired more importance for academic purposes and at the same time study programmes with foreign languages as a medium of instruction have started to spread across the systems

- Significance of Russian language decreased
- English has become a new lingua franca
- The knowledge production and the national interests are reflected in higher education reforms and governmental programmes which changed the role of foreign languages for education.
- The complexity of foreign language policies for internationalization of higher education were connected first of all with non-linguistic factors such as appropriate skills to ensure foreign language planning, link the language policies to economic, political and social issues and show the paramount role of languages in them.

Foreign Language Policies after the Accession to the Bologna process

Goals

- The governments of the ENP countries started to regard the internationalization of higher education as one of the key elements to improve, develop, modernize and strengthen their higher education systems and allocate a specific role to the languages for developing the mobility of staff and students and cultivating multilingualism and linguistic diversity among the staff and students of the universities
- Bridging internationalization and multilingualism has become a priority on the national level which led to the development of new approaches and methodologies to internationalize curricula and increase the number of foreign language programmes and courses, profession oriented language teaching, learning and research

Obstacles

hinder the efficient development of language policies at higher education institutions and are related to

- **funding** (insufficient funding from the state and university budgets),
- **mindset** (challenging the monolingual or bilingual mindset (with national language and Russian or another foreign language to multilingualism)
- **legislation** (making these changes explicit in the national higher education legislation and institutional normative acts, strategies and policy papers ,
- **attitudes** (e.g., the policy-makers have political concerns to strengthen the role of the national languages within the national higher education systems as in their opinion the provision of the domestic students with the foreign language programmes will undermine the role of the national languages)
- **pedagogical approaches** (the teaching staff are lack of foreign language competences, new pedagogical approaches such as CLIL and they are not able to carry out profession-oriented subject-teaching in foreign languages)

Georgia

- School reforms in 2010 made a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning of English as it has coined a new generation of Georgian bilinguals which are fluent in Georgian and English (Fahey M. 2018).
- All the three universities – Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Ilia State University and Georgian Technical University, have very well-developed internationalization strategies for 2018-2024.

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

- ✓ 240 study programmes with 22 foreign-languages and 7 dual degree programmes”.
- ✓ Internationalization is one of 6 core priorities specified in the Strategic Development Plan of the university (2018-2024), and language policy implementation is the most successful of all the universities enrolled in the study
- ✓ Until 2024 the university planned “to further develop foreign-language and bilingual, joint and dual degree programs”, accredited foreign-language and bilingual programmes”. There is a specific task targeted to boost the quality of foreign languages taught and learnt at the university, which enrolls the following indicators:
- ✓ The syllabi for undergraduate students are linked to the CEFR, the students are supposed to reach B2 level by the end of the 8th semester and they earn 40 credits in total for learning foreign languages throughout the study programme, which allows the bachelor students acquire profound skills and competences in foreign languages.
- ✓ All the students in humanities “apart from one western language, should select and study one of the Classical (old Greek, Latin) or Eastern (Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Chinese, and Japanese) languages (10 – ECTS)” (Tvaltvadze D., Kurdadze R. 2011).

Ukraine

“Languages are not a secondary responsibility left to the individual initiative of the student or to the private language market, but an educational and social responsibility”. (Country Report of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

- **Ukrainian is the language of instruction at the universities but foreign languages are introduced across curricula of all the study programmes and the number of hours assigned for foreign languages are from 240 to 432.**
- **English is the foreign language taught in the most of the programmes, but French, German and Italian are also introduced in the core curricula in many of the non-linguistic programmes and are built on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.**
- **The entrants take an admission test in a foreign language and foreign language proficiency at B2 level is required to be admitted to the Ukrainian universities.**

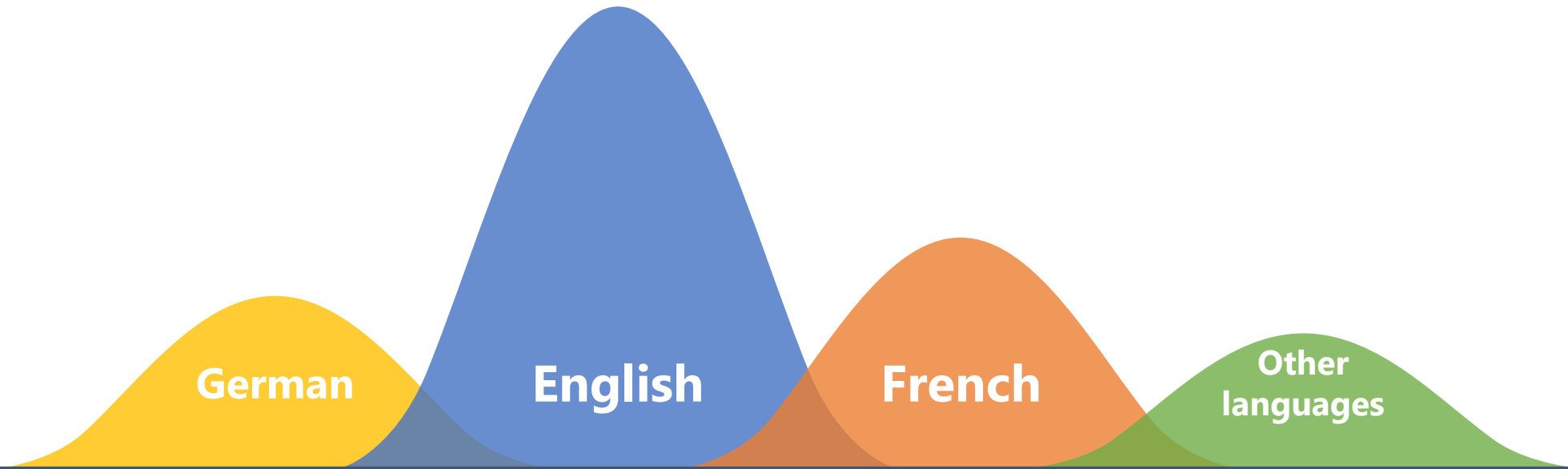
Kharkiv National University

- **Kharkiv National University VN Karazin is performing a policy of integration into the European knowledge society and is making an attempt to remove all the barriers that can hinder the international mobility of their students. It has contracts and cooperation agreements with 209 foreign organizations from 51 countries.**
- **Karazin University not only benefits from the European funding but also allocates money from the university budget on academic mobility, and 1/5 of mobility opportunities are covered from the university budget.**

Armenia, Belarus and Moldova

- ✓ *Internationalization is a priority on the national and institutional level but foreign language policies are not linked to internationalization.*
- ✓ *Foreign language policy development is not a priority for the most of the universities*
- ✓ *Lack of language proficiency is an obstacle for mobility for the students and the staff.*
- ✓ *The study programmes at the universities are not linked to the CEFR.*
- ✓ *International dimension in education, teaching, learning and research is developed mainly through different TEMPUS and Erasmus+ projects.*

Popularity of Languages in Academic Programmes in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine



Conclusions and Recommendations

- The education systems and universities in the post-soviet countries are still in the process of transitions and transformations,
- Internationalization is very fragmented and not systematized
- The Bologna reforms on internationalization are sluggish, which is explained by the lack of sufficient human resources capable of promoting internationalization, the lack of a systemic approach to solving problems, lack of sufficient government support, inefficient use of tools, lack of financial sustainability at the universities to fund foreign language policy development initiatives and promote multilingualism.
- It should also be noted that in many cases it was not the process of signing the Bologna Agreement that accelerated the process of integration of universities into the process of internationalization, but the investments of the European Union in the form of individual, institutional and inter-institutional grants.

Recommendations

- Set up goals and tasks on the country level to develop national policies on the foreign languages linked to internationalization
- Identify the economic, political, social and academic benefits of developing a foreign language policy for internationalization of higher education and make it a country priority in higher education.
- Foreign language policies do not occur in a vacuum. They occur at the intersection of interests of governments, universities and individuals and it is possible to develop due to cooperation with foreign partners and building new international bridges and the intensive cooperation between all these stakeholders is required to push the language policy reforms linked to the internationalization of higher education,

**Thank you
Mulțumesc
Merci
Danke
Gracias**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!
Questions for discussion????????
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