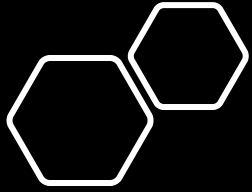


University branding and the internationalization of higher education in the Baltic states: the role of language

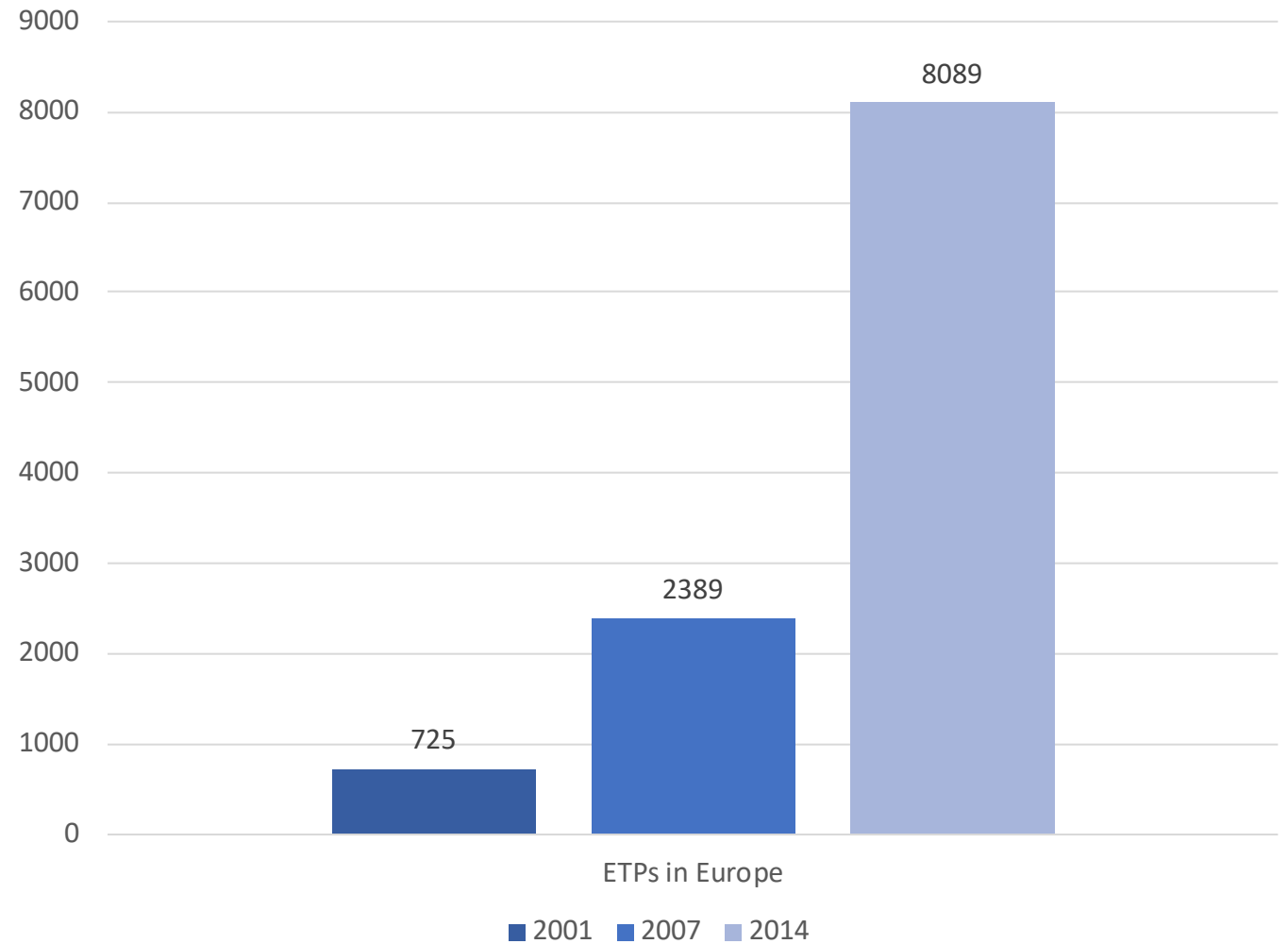
Josep Soler

Department of English, Stockholm University



General
background:
growth of the
presence of
English in
European HE

English-taught MA programmes in European HE



Wächter and Maiworm (2014: 16)

Particularly in the Nordic countries and the Baltic states

Wächter and Maiworm (2014: 49)

ETPs identified in 2007 and 2014 – by region (%)


	Region					
	Nordic	Baltic	Central West Europe	Central East Europe	South West Europe	South East Europe
Proportion of higher education institutions offering ETPs						
2007	31.5	25.0	22.6	19.9	7.6	20.7
2014	60.6	38.7	44.5	19.9	17.2	18.3
Proportion of study programmes provided in English						
2007	5.9	1.7	4.0	1.6	0.5	1.1
2014	19.9	10.3	9.9	5.0	2.8	2.1
Proportion of students enrolled in ETPs						
2007	1.7	0.8	1.2	0.4	0.1	0.8
2014	5.3	1.7	2.2	1.0	0.5	0.8

Sources: Institutional Survey, Programme Survey, StudyPortals, EUROSTAT

More parallel, please!

**Best practice of
parallel language use
at Nordic Universities:
11 recommendations**

Language policy
reactions in the
Nordic countries



Similar kinds of dilemmas in the Baltic states

- “As an EU member state, Lithuania has had to **reconcile itself with Eurocentric and global tendencies** and share common policy rationales **supporting multilingualism** and multiculturalism, whilst as a **young independent state** it is also intent on **promoting and strengthening the national culture and language**”. (Bulajeva and Hogan-Brun 2014, p. 328).

Eiki Berg: ingliskeelset õpet ei pea kartma

ARVAMUS

Eiki Berg, Tartu ülikooli rahvusvaheliste suhete teooria professor
22.02.2019 07:00



Eiki Berg. Autor/allikas: Erakogu



“No need to fear English-taught programmes”

Ingliskeelsed õppekavad tuleb muuta kakskeelseks

 **Martin Ehala**
Tartu Ülikooli professor, Meie Eesti toimetaja

- Ilma seaduse toeta ei suuda eestikeelsed õppekavad ingliskeelsetega võistelda.
- Eestikeelse kõrghariduse püsimine vajab ühiskonna tahet ja poliitilist otsust.
- Eesti- ja ingliskeelse kõrghariduse tasakaalumeetmed tuleb esitada arengukavas.



“English-taught programmes should become bilingual”

Controversial changes prohibiting education in Russian language approved in Latvia

LETA

July 4, 2018

 (No Ratings Yet)



Latvian President Raimonds Vējonis has declared amendments to the Law on Institutions of Higher Education that prohibit private higher education institutions from offering education programmes in Russian language, as detailed in the publication in Latvian Herald.

A fertile ground for language ideological tension



Language Perceptions and Practices in Multilingual Universities

Edited by
Maria Kuteeva
Kathrin Kaufhold
Niina Hynninen

palgrave
macmillan

University branding and the internationalization of higher education in the Baltic states: the role of language

- Aim of the chapter: to explore the multimodal resources (linguistic and visual) employed in the promotion of HE by three agencies in the Baltic states.
 - Selected videos from *Study in Estonia*, *Study in Latvia*, *Study in Lithuania*.
- To see how these resources are organised and what themes emerge out of the narratives in them.
- To investigate the metapragmatic meanings associated with the messages presented in the material.
 - About HE in the Baltic states and about student mobility today.

Higher education agencies in the Baltic states and the promotion of Baltic universities

- Study in Estonia / Study in Latvia / Study in Lithuania
- State-sponsored consortium of HE institutions in each country
- Different levels of intensity in the production of promotional material.
- Videos on YouTube:
 - N=78 by Study in Estonia (earliest in 2010)
 - N=27 by Study in Latvia (earliest in 2015)
 - N=29 by Study in Lithuania (earliest in 2014)



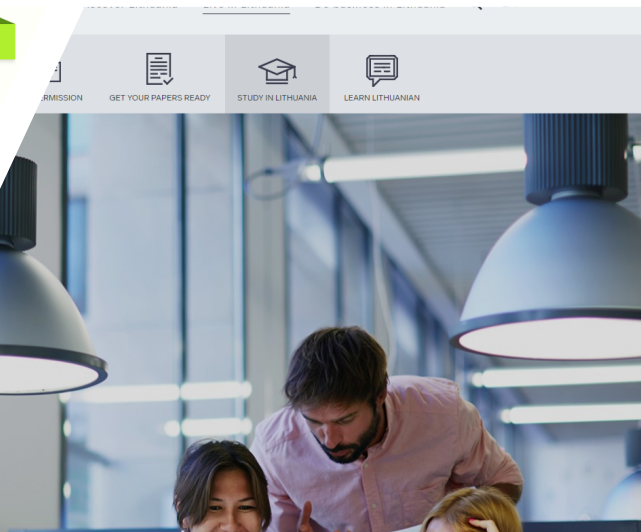
degree recognised in all countries

Students from more than 80 countries

Bachelor and Master programmes

I'M LOOKING FOR ...

Studies Apply Cos
of living Fr
Accommodation
Universities Me
Admission L
Bachelor
Doctoral s
Culture Dipl



Questions

What multimodal resources (linguistic and visual) are employed in the promotional materials developed by the three organisations at hand, and how are such resources organised? **Content analysis**

What key themes emerge out of the narratives presented in such promotional materials? **Thematic analysis**

What does the use of these resources and themes index in connection to the language ideological tensions in the higher education systems of these three countries? **Critical analysis**

Material

		Length	Date of publication	Number of views (as of January 2019)
	Study in Estonia			
1	Study in Estonia - Quality of education	5:11	26 May 2010	26,506
2	Study in Estonia - International experience	3:09	26 May 2010	10,034
3	Study in Estonia - Internet republic	2:39	26 May 2010	4,072
4	Study in Estonia - Safe and healthy life	4:02	26 May 2010	5,246
5	Study in Estonia - Good career opportunities	2:34	26 May 2010	6,314
	Study in Latvia			
6	Higher Education and Science in Latvia	3:04	03 Oct 2017	967
7	Study in Latvia, Study in University of Latvia	3:25	20 Aug 2015	5,099
8	Study in Latvia, Study in Stockholm School of Economics in Riga	2:25	24 Nov 2015	3,580
9	Study in Latvia, Study in Ventspils	3:42	10 Dec 2015	9,022
10	Study in Latvia, Study in Liepaja University	2:32	24 Nov 2015	3,119
11	Study in Latvia, Study in Rēzekne	3:19	18 Jun 2014	1,436
	Study in Lithuania			
12	Study in Lithuania	3:06	03 Sept 2014	94,319
13	Marina from Russia talks about studies in Lithuania	2:26	28 Apr 2014	3,401
14	Victoria from Ukraine talks about studies in Lithuania	1:50	28 Apr 2014	4,472
15	Abdullahi from Nigeria talks about studies in Lithuania	1:50	28 Apr 2014	5,168
16	Olawale from Nigeria talks about studies in Lithuania	2:35	28 Apr 2014	5,449
17	Manuel from Italy talks about studies in Lithuania	1:27	28 Apr 2014	2,720
18	Ella from Israel talks about studies in Lithuania	2:25	28 Apr 2014	4,436
19	Melissa from Congo talks about studies in Lithuania	1:50	28 Apr 2014	3,492
20	Vladimir from Estonia talks about studies in Lithuania	1:54	28 Apr 2014	1,394

Content analysis of the material: An inventory of multimodal resources



Study in Estonia (video n.1)



Study in Latvia (video n.8)



Study in Lithuania (video n.19)



Study in Estonia (video n.4)

	Nationalities (in order of appearance)	Languages (audio)	Languages (subtitles)
Study in Estonia	Canada, France, China, Spain, USA, Mexico, Italy, Georgia, Moldova, Colombia, Lithuania, Turkey, Ukraine, Germany, Cameroon	English	Not available
Study in Latvia	Germany, USA, Belarus, Lithuania, Moldova, Estonia, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, India, Poland, Bulgaria, France	English	Not available
Study in Lithuania	Russia, Ukraine, Nigeria, Italy, Israel, Congo, Estonia	English, Russian	English, Russian

Thematic analysis: key recurring themes in the promotional videos

Quality of
education

Quality of life

Ease of
communication

Theme 1: Quality of education

- Highly personalised teaching and learning: reduced study groups, accessibility of professors
- A gateway to Europe: degrees in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, recognised immediately throughout the rest of the EU
- Affordable tuition fees together with low living costs (high return for what you pay)
- The international nature of the experience: studying side-by-side with other international students as an additional benefit

Abdullahi Haruna

(Nigeria)

Studies E-business
at Mykolas Romeris University,
2nd year master degree student.

Они рассказывали, что им понравилось в Литве,
потому что они познакомились

▶ ⏪ 🔊 0:09 / 1:50 CC ⚙️ 📺 📱 🗑️

“the cost of living is cheap, talking about accommodation, transportation, feeding, that is cheap compared to other parts of Europe, and with little money you can get good quality education here in Lithuania”.

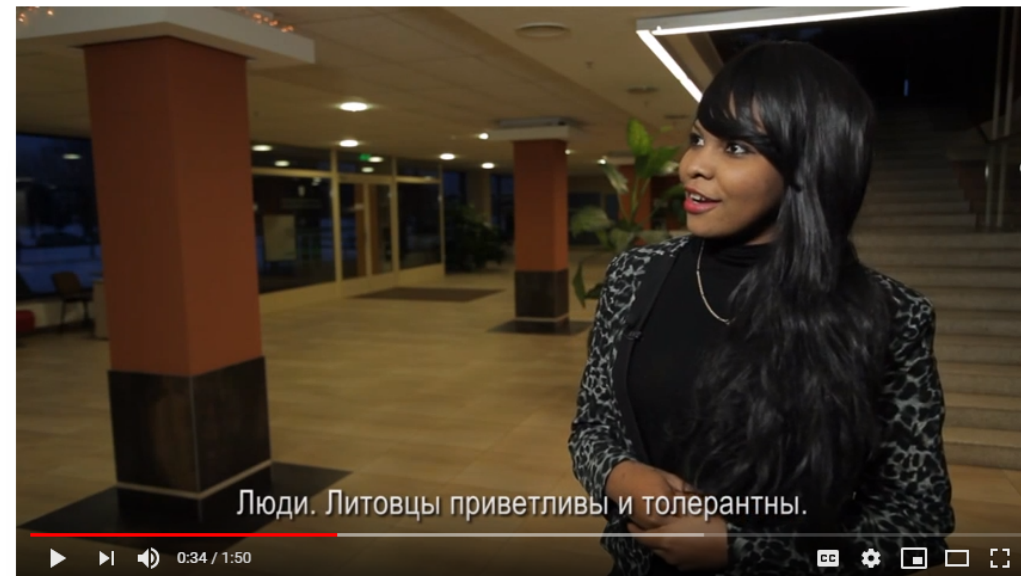
Theme 2: Quality of life

- People are friendly and very helpful
- Beautiful landscapes, good food, quiet towns, relaxed atmosphere



Study in Estonia - Safe and healthy life (4)

“Estonia at the moment is very accepting of foreigners, they, they have so many people that want to help you if you have a question or if you have a difficulty from living, the migration, to the university, there are always people that are willing to help you see you through”

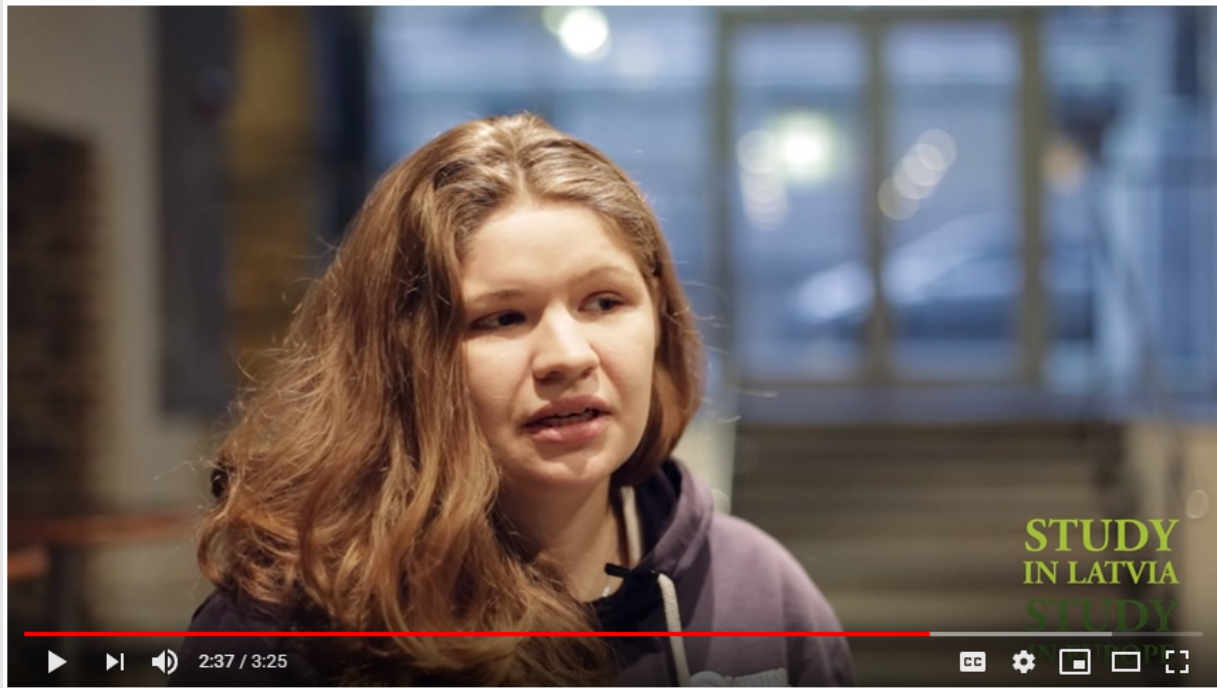


Melissa from Kongo talks about studies in Lithuania

people in Lithuania are “very nice and not so racist. Since I am here, I feel like home and not that I felt offended in Lithuania”.

Theme 3: Ease of communication

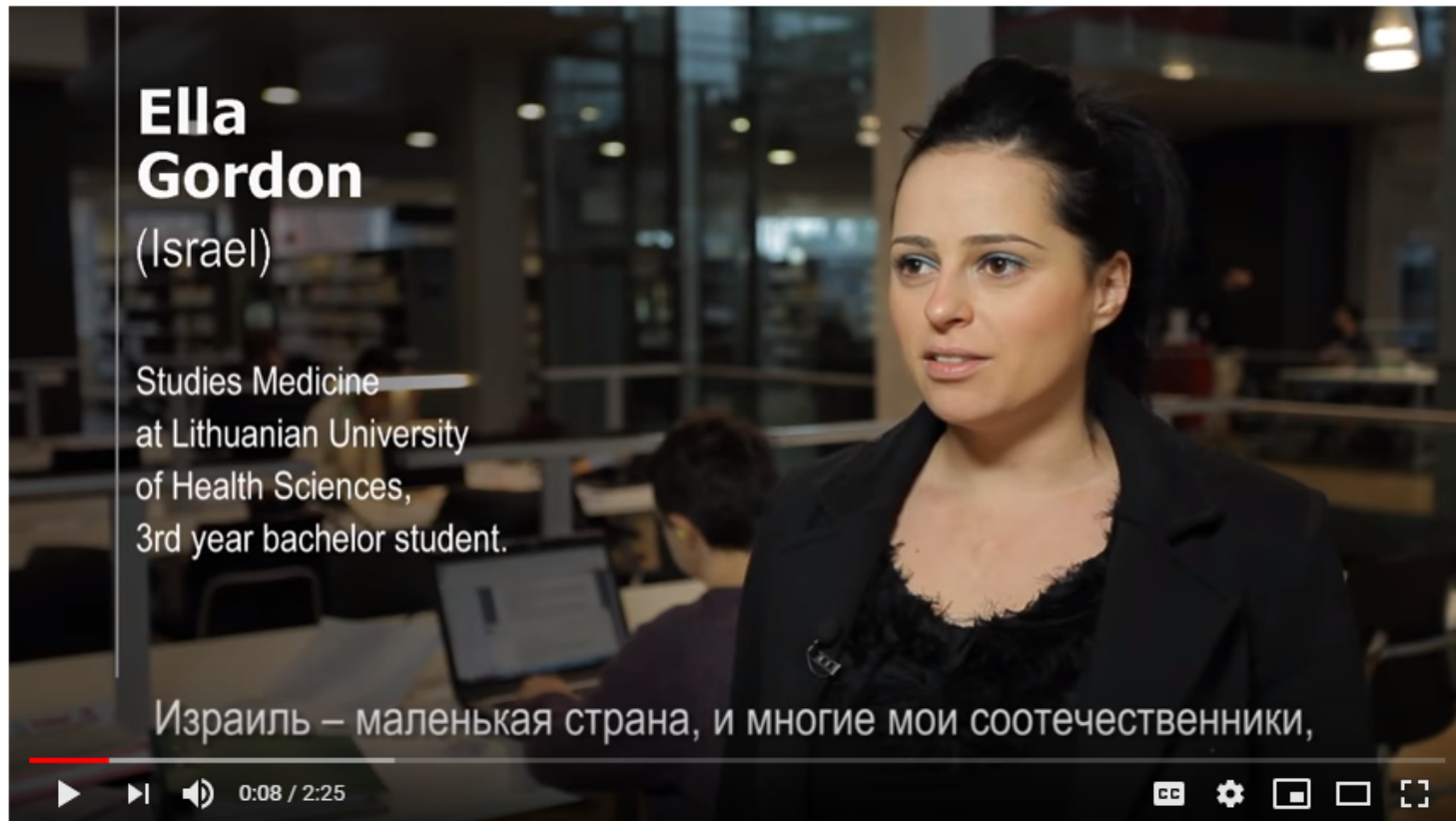
- There are no communication problems, everyone understands English
- You can actually improve your English during your stay
- It is possible to learn a bit of the local languages and even use them if necessary



Study in Latvia, Study in University of Latvia

“Riga is such an international city that anybody can get by with knowing some English or knowing Russian, or even picking up some very few Latvian phrases (*some phrases in Latvian*) it’s a very easy language to actually pick up, so it’s very very welcoming city to come to”

with one caveat: "it needs to come from you"



Ella Gordon
(Israel)

Studies Medicine
at Lithuanian University
of Health Sciences,
3rd year bachelor student.

Израиль – маленькая страна, и многие мои соотечественники,

0:08 / 2:25

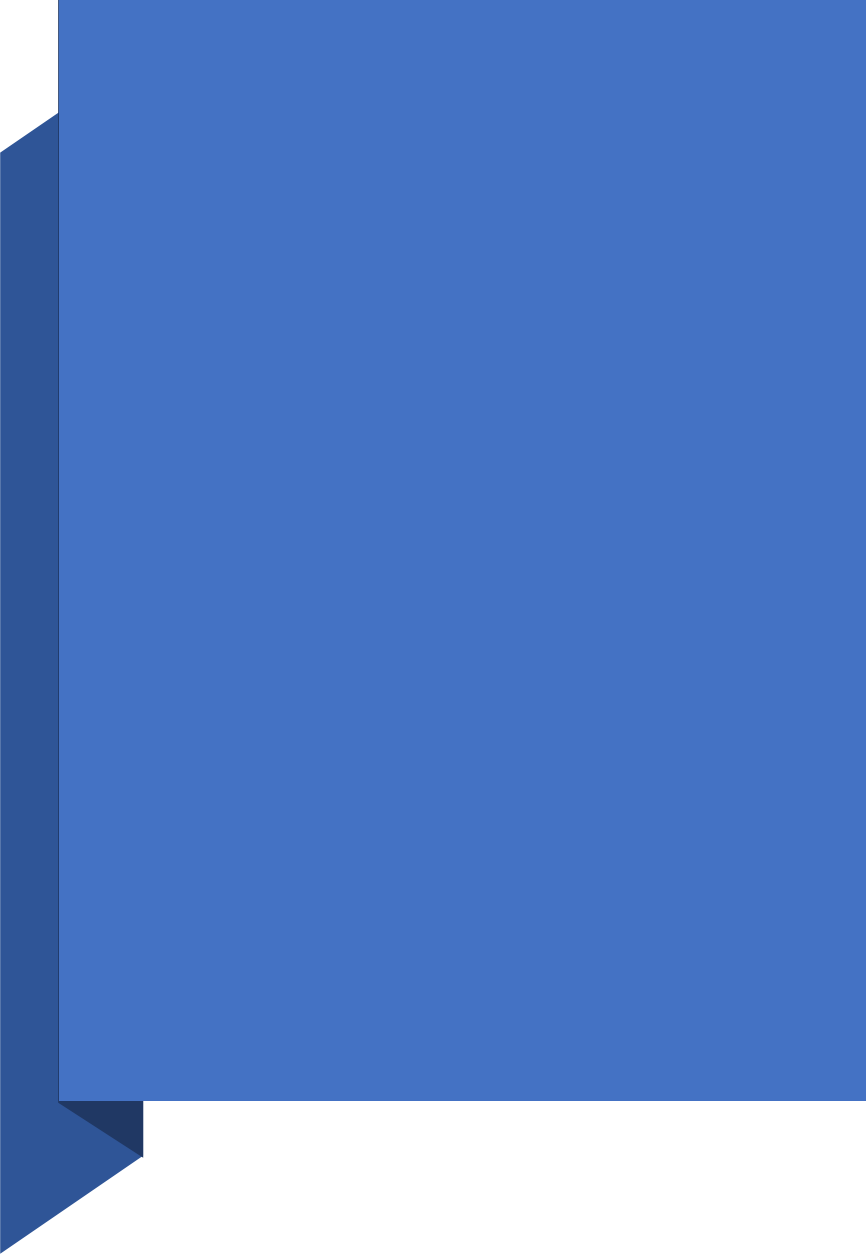
CC Settings Full Screen

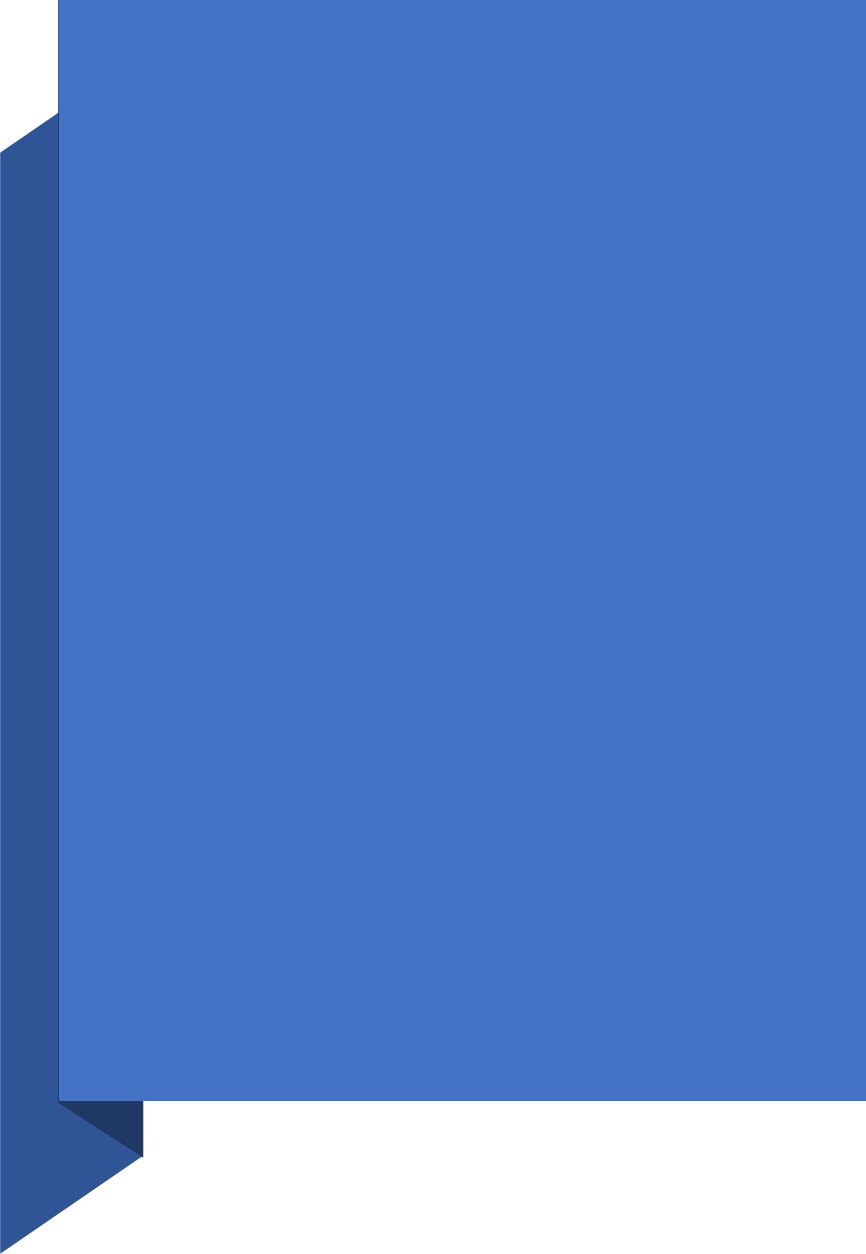
The video player shows a woman, Ella Gordon, in a library or study area. She is wearing a black blazer over a black top. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and bookshelves. The video player interface includes a progress bar, play/pause button, volume icon, and control icons for closed captions, settings, full screen, and a small window.

"it is not that, okay, you will pass if you will not do anything. It is not like this. You need to take yourself to study ... because the study is really hard, like, you need to sit and to read, and it is not that you can, 'Okay now I don't want, I'm going to party', no, it's not like this ... So, like, to be serious, like, to take it really seriously".

Critical analysis: the metapragmatics of the promotional videos

- Why these resources and why these themes?
- Forward-looking youth, who appreciate the landscape and the relaxed nature of the places where they study, and who are happy to use English almost exclusively to get by during their daily life as foreign students.
- Goal: to present the idea of studying in EST, LV, LT in a very positive light, associated with freedom, openness, and good quality of studies and of life in general.

- 
- Second-order metapragmatic meaning: the counter-narrative of these positive discourse, a more negative one.
 - Quality of education - perceived opinion that such a quality may not be that high
 - Highlighting the fact that people are nice and friendly, very welcoming and “not that racist”, as Melissa put it, - people in these countries not being that nice, in fact being rather unwelcoming of foreigners, even racist.
 - One can easily get by only in English - language might be a problem and communication might not be all that easy on a daily basis.

- 
- Third metapragmatic level: a certain idea of what it means to be an international student today in the context of globalized HE.
 - Presented with a range of options and choices, it is up to you as an individual and as a student to make the right kind of decisions, if you wish to become part of this international community.
 - Image of the mobile, entrepreneurial self, underpinned by a global capitalist ideology – the individual is the ultimate responsible for their path and for constructing their future.

Final remarks

- The local/global dilemmas (cf. Bulajeva and Hogan-Brun 2014; Kibbermann 2017; Soler and Vihman 2018).
 - Not exclusive to HE alone (Heller et al. 2014) nor of the Baltic states only (Cots et al. 2014).
- Striking (but unsurprising): that national elements are so strongly erased from the promotional material.
- In terms of languages: linguistic hierarchy – ENG and then the rest, with RUS as more ambivalent.
- Consequences: an emptying of any defining trait of what makes studying in EST, LV, LT truly original and a standardising effect of what studying abroad may actually mean.
- A lost opportunity to attempt at breaking away from a standardising discourse of international mobility and to highlight multilingualism as a feature of a truly added value.

University branding and the internationalization of higher education in the Baltic states: the role of language

Josep Soler

Department of English, Stockholm University