

## LIVONIAN IN RECENT YEARS

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**Abstract.** This article discusses developments affecting Livonian during the last decade. It describes actions to promote Livonian during this period, for example, the International Year of Livonian Language and Culture and also discusses the status of Livonian in Latvia, the social setting for its use, and the ways in which it is used in everyday life. This article offers insight into the difficulties associated with Livonian language acquisition and language development as well as a description of Livonian language pedagogical materials and other resources, which have been recently developed or are in the process of being developed. Likewise, methods and opportunities for further developing Livonian and improving its current situation are examined in the context of potential solutions as well as already existing initiatives.

**Keywords:** Livonian, language policy, language planning, sociolinguistics, language resources, teaching, grammar, corpora

**DOI:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.12697/jeful.2016.7.1.12>

### 1. Introduction

With the International Year of Livonian Language and Culture in 2011 came a new period, which has shown itself to be one of the most intensive and fruitful spans of time in the modern history of the Livonian language and certainly since the restoration of Latvia's independence. It has been rich with activities, events, and publications and many important studies were initiated and advanced. During this same period, the Salaca Livonian dialect appeared again in use, while, at the same time, the name of the Livonian people and the words of their language have sounded across Latvia and the world, with interest in the Livonians continuing to grow both within the territory historically inhabited by the Livonians as well as in Latvia as a whole.

However, this period will also enter history as the first time since almost the very beginning of Latvia's restored independence when there do not exist any government action plans or support mechanisms in the

law for safeguarding the status of the Livonian language. Despite this, the development of Livonian has not stopped and it is possible to speak of the future of Livonian with optimism.

## 2. Promoting Livonian

The International Year of Livonian Language and Culture consisted of a collection of events devoted to Livonian language and culture. This year was announced and organized by the Livonian community organization *Līvõ kultūr sidām* (Livonian Culture Center) in cooperation with the Livonian Friends' Association (Latvian *Lībiešu draugu biedrība*, Estonian *Liivi Sõprade Selts*), which put together exhibitions, concerts, readings, and other events throughout 2011 in Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Lithuania, France, Russia, and elsewhere, in order to acquaint the general public with the Livonian people, their language, and also their traditional and modern culture. In addition to these events, a number of publications appeared describing the Livonians and their language, a number of books were published in Livonian, and a number of conferences devoted to topics relating to Livonian were organized in Latvia and Estonia, which included the participation of the presidents of both of these countries. These conferences actually created the concept of a new scientific field – Livonian Studies (*livonica*, in Latin or *livonika*, in Latvian) – or a research field devoted to the study of the Livonians, their history, culture, and language. This has resulted in a conference series devoted to this new field.

The International Year of Livonian Language and Culture noticeably invigorated discussion of Livonian-related questions both within Latvia and abroad. The visits of the presidents of Latvia and Estonia to the Livonian Coast can be counted among the indirect results of this, with the Estonian president's state visit already coming the following year in 2012. Other noteworthy achievements to mention include the fact that the incorporation of Livonian language elements into the Song and Dance Festival in Latvia has practically become a tradition and also the occurrence of many other events which are meaningful from the perspective of the popularization of the Livonians and the Livonian language.

As part of the International Year of Livonian Language and Culture, foundations were also laid for another tradition, namely, the Livonian Culture Days, which are organized by the Livonian community organ-

ization *Rānda* in Ventspils. Traditionally occurring in the middle of September, the Livonian Culture Days have taken place each year (with the exception of 2015) and have acquainted the residents of the region near the Livonians' ancestral homeland in northwestern Courland (*Kurzeme*, in Latvian) with the Livonians, their language, and their culture. The Culture Days' program has included various concerts, events highlighting modern Livonian culture (poetry readings, exhibitions, and so on), presentations discussing new publications, and so on. Since 2012, the annual Livonian Studies conference has also occurred as part of the Livonian Culture Days (the 2015 conference took place in Riga marking the fifth successive year that this conference had been organized). During the last two years, the Livonian Culture Days in Ventspils have been complemented by Kindred People's Day, which is a celebration of unity among nations speaking Finno-Ugrian languages occurring in early October, with events organized by the Livonian community organization *Līvōd Īt* in Riga.

Likewise, since the end of 2014, a Livonian day is organized in Riga twice monthly. Its participants are acquainted with traditional culture, food, and other elements of Livonian life. In 2015, the Livonian day events were included within the program of the Riga City Festival. This offered participants a chance to attend a Livonian music concert and introduced them to Livonian culture, traditions, and language.

Along with Livonian community organizations, the Latvian Language Agency (*Latviešu valodas aģentūra*) has also made a contribution to the popularization of the Livonian language. The Agency has regularly included several events devoted to Livonian in its program for the European Day of Language and has actively involved itself in the organizing and support of various proceedings connected with the Livonian language. In addition, the Agency actively participated in the events of the International Year of Livonian Language and Culture.

A relatively new trend can also be observed in that websites and social networks are being used ever more actively for the purpose of popularizing the Livonians and the Livonian language as well as sharing information related to these topics. The web portal *Livones* has existed already since 2006. In 2012, it changed its web address and can now be found at *www.livones.net*. Along with this change, the portal also updated its design and its newer posts appear in not only Latvian, English, and Livonian, but also in Estonian and Finnish. Additionally, the contents of the portal have been supplemented with a section called

“The Livonians in 44 answers”, which is the electronic version of a publication (discussed further on in this article) produced as part of the International Year of Livonian Language and Culture and gives answers to the most common questions concerning the Livonians and their language.

Groups or pages devoted to the Livonians and the Livonian language continue to be organized on social networks, for example, on the Latvian social network *Draugiem.lv* (*Līvõmõ*<sup>1</sup>), on *Twitter* (*Līvu fonds*<sup>2</sup>), *Facebook* (the choir *Līvlist*<sup>3</sup>, the Livonian center *Kūolka*<sup>4</sup>, page *Līvi . Līvs . Līvlist*<sup>5</sup>, *Līvu diena. Līvõd pāva*.<sup>6</sup>), and others.

From the standpoint of popularizing the Livonian language, the most important such group is *Līvõ Kēļ* on *Facebook*, which began its work in 2015. This group, which has more than 700 followers, regularly posts a word of the day, which is supplemented by a relevant photo and a reference to related information in the online version of the Livonian-Estonian-Latvian Dictionary (Viitso and Ernštreits 2012). The most recent content has also been complemented with Livonian phrases useful in everyday life posted along with illustrations and accompanying explanations describing their use. Additional audio materials are published separately on the group’s *Youtube* channel *Lindloul*<sup>8</sup>.

*Līvõ Kēļ* is the first direct exposure for many *Facebook* users to the Livonian language, at the same time, regularly published information helps maintain contact with the Livonian language for the community and functions as a jumping off point for further Livonian language learning. This group also helps to attract new people interested in Livonian, as the posts on the group are regularly shared by group members on their own profiles, in this way reaching a new audience, which has often had no contact with the Livonians in the past.

1 Available online at <<https://www.draugiem.lv/group/16003239/livom/>>. Accessed on 24.02.2016.

2 Available online at <<https://twitter.com/Livufonds>>. Accessed on 24.02.2016.

3 Available online at <<https://www.facebook.com/liivlist/>>. Accessed on 24.02.2016.

4 Available online at <<https://www.facebook.com/K%C5%ABolka-L%C4%ABvu-centrs-690081924460215/>>. Accessed on 24.02.2016.

5 Available online at <<https://www.facebook.com/libiesi/>>. Accessed on 24.02.2016.

6 Available online at <<https://www.facebook.com/livudiena/>>. Accessed on 24.02.2016.

7 Available online at <<https://www.facebook.com/livuval/>>. Accessed on 24.02.2016.

8 Available online at <<https://www.youtube.com/user/lindloul>>. Accessed on 29.03.2016.

### 3. The Livonian language and the Latvian state

Despite the fact that in recent years there have been wide-ranging and diverse events devoted to popularizing the Livonians and the Livonian language, their combined effect, while clearly noticeable in Latvia's society, has ultimately not been effective enough. This is evidenced by the fact that within the Latvian government there is still insufficient understanding regarding the role of the Livonian language and culture in Latvia's cultural space.

Within the Latvian government, Livonian culture and language are still generally viewed as something disconnected and removed from the rest of Latvia's cultural space. Therefore, it is no surprise that after the end of the government-supported long-term special purpose program "The Livonians in Latvia" (*Lībieši Latvijā*) in 2012, there have been no further political or other support programs from the Latvian government. Instead the areas supported by this project have now been cast adrift and responsibility for them has been fully rolled onto Livonian community organizations, which are very active, though also quite limited in terms of their available resources.

In spite of this, one important positive exception can be observed, namely, during the last five years, the Latvian Language Agency (LLA) has very actively connected itself with questions relating to the maintenance and development of the Livonian language. This is not, however, among the Agency's responsibilities. Thanks to the understanding of LLA officials regarding the body of questions relating to the Livonian language and the guarantees given to the Livonian language by the Latvian State Language Law (VVL), the LLA has found ways to support projects relating to the maintenance, development, and even, within the realm of possibility, the popularization Livonian within the parameters outlined by the State Language Law. With the assistance of the Latvian Language Agency, Livonian also has been included in the guidelines for Latvian national language policy for 2015–2020. However, it is paradoxical that the LLA, which, currently, is the sole government institution systematically working with questions relating to Livonian, does this work utilizing its existing budget funds and does not receive any additional funds from the national budget designated for working with these questions.

#### 4. Language use in its social setting

One of the areas where coordination and government support would be very important is the social setting in which Livonian language use occurs. Thanks to the overall increase in understanding concerning the Livonians, the Livonian language, and its potential role in the national economy, especially in tourism, the situation has markedly improved in recent years.

So, for example, in Kolka Parish, signs have been put up in many places indicating directions to objects of local interest (“sea”, “parking lot”, etc.) with the information appearing in Livonian alongside Latvian. Therefore, individuals who arrive in the villages on the northwestern coast of Courland, which have been historically inhabited by the Livonians, can not only become acquainted with the nature, history, and points of interest in the area, but also come into contact (often for the first time) with the Livonian language. The use of Livonian in this way also helps distinguish this region in terms of its cultural historical uniqueness, thereby also increasing its economic competitiveness. Some elements of Livonian are also used on the Kolka Parish homepage and in other informative materials.

However, the level of Livonian language use in northern Courland should be quite a bit broader. The State Language Law (VVL), which came into force in 1999, states that “The place names [along with] the names of government institutions, community organizations, businesses (companies) on the Livonian Coast as well as the names of events taking place in this region are also to be established and used in the Livonian language.” In this way, the law defines a singular exception<sup>9</sup> in the entire territory of Latvia, i.e., that another language can be used alongside Latvian in the names given for places and government institutions. Unfortunately, this unique exception for Livonian has, in fact, not been sufficiently utilized and this is due primarily to an insufficient degree of awareness of this law and a lack of coordination.

As an example one can mention the Ventspils-Kolka highway, which was modernized and paved in 2011. In the course of the reconstruction work, road signs were placed along the highway and also at the turns towards each Livonian village giving, for the first time ever, the names of the villages as well as other information. Sadly though, Livonian is

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9 More detailed rules were established by the Cabinet of Ministers. See online at <<http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=243610>>, accessed on 16.03.2016.

not used on any of these. As in 2016 new laws pertaining to roadways came into effect and these laws specify new parameters for signs near populated areas, at least the signs near the villages will end up being changed over time. One hopes that the new road signs will for the first time in Latvia's history also include the Livonian text required by the State Language Law. Similarly, it would be a positive development to utilize Livonian in the names and informational materials of the government agencies in Dundaga, Tārgale, and Roja Parishes, at least within the territory of these located on the Livonian Coast.

The use of Livonian in the work of community organizations and local businesspeople could be quite a bit broader. Livonian community organizations traditionally have tried to use elements of Livonian in at least the names of events they have organized and in informative materials (for example, the annual Livonian Festival, the program of the Ventspils Livonian Culture Days, etc.). However, in everyday work and information available online, Livonian has been used rather infrequently.

A similar situation exists for private business. For example, many tourism-related businesses offering trips in the region historically inhabited by the Livonians, mention the Livonians in their informational materials, but they do this fairly passively with elements in Livonian itself appearing almost not at all. SIA Kolkasrags is the only business, which uses Livonian fairly actively in its communications, visual information, and also online. This also is the only business, which, since 2009, has offered a Livonian language version of its website<sup>10</sup>. It is fairly sparse; however, all the same, this kind of action has real value.

It is peculiar that Livonian is not used in any of the informational materials available at the tourist information centers within the territory historically inhabited by the Livonians. The closest thing to Livonian language use in this context is that the Kolka Parish Council places a regularly updated Livonian “word of the day” on its website and the Dundaga Municipality Tourist Information Center offers visitors the opportunity to view its website in the Dundaga dialect<sup>11</sup> of Latvian,

10 See examples online at <<http://www.kolka.info/lv>>, <<http://www.piza.lv>>, <<http://pitagi.lv>>, <<http://www.kolkasrags.lv/li>>. Accessed on 17.03.2016.

11 See examples online at <<http://www.visitsalacgriva.lv/lv>>, <<http://www.aloja.lv/turisms>>, <<http://www.turaida-muzejs.lv>>, <<http://www.kolka.lv>>, <<<http://visit.dundaga.lv/dun/destinations/libiesu-krasts>>. Accessed on 17.03.2016.

which, of course, it would not be technically correct to call an example of Livonian language use.

It can be concluded that the use of Livonian in a social setting is being halted by several contributing factors. Primarily, it is due to a lack of information concerning the possibilities for utilizing Livonian and also difficulty in finding elements of Livonian to use. Another factor is the lack of sufficient initiative in using Livonian elements, which is caused by the functional approach to Livonian, i.e., the need for using the language is seen only in terms of the number of potential users of such materials, and does not consider more broadly the accompanying value of these language elements, their effect on encouraging cultural tourism, and the perspectives for increasing the number of potential language users in the future. An additional problem also exists in finding financial support for the preparation of materials in Livonian and even if such support is found, then the difficulty of hiring individuals able to prepare such materials.

Therefore, it is clear that Livonian would be used much more if institutional and advisory support for utilizing Livonian would be available to national and local government institutions, community organizations, and businesses, for example, in preparing texts and translating these into Livonian, which would surely be a powerful motivation for a considerably more active use of Livonian in a social setting.

## **5. Language acquisition and dynamics**

The most complex situation still exists in the realm of Livonian language acquisition. Livonian is in an unusual situation. The geographical area of people interested in it is limited and yet also scattered, not only within Latvia, but also beyond its borders. This means that it is difficult to form language learning groups of adequate size, whose participants also possess knowledge of Livonian at a similar level. For this reason, the level of Livonian language classes, even if it is possible to organize them despite the difficulties involved with logistics and financial support, will always settle at the lowest proficiency level within the group, which typically means studying language basics. As individuals who already possess knowledge of Livonian usually become involved in such groups, this type of language activity can offer them nothing aside from repeating language basics and socializing with other class participants. Therefore, the result of such language acquisition activities is largely symbolic.



The second biggest problem is access to Livonian language teachers. The number of Livonian language teachers is very small, especially when it comes to organizing classes focusing on more advanced language study. In addition, not infrequently teachers and potential language course participants are located in different places, which means that it is necessary to transport teachers for such courses from other locations. An example of such a situation can be found in the Livonian language courses financed by the Ventspils City Council in 2013/2014 where a teacher would travel twice a month from Riga. In this way, the design of Livonian language courses along with other factors connected with organization and content have to be taken into account, as do the fairly complicated logistics and associated expenses, which often unnecessarily add to the cost of such activities.

In order to resolve the problems associated with Livonian language instruction there are two main solutions possible in this type of situation: (1) improve the possibilities for Livonian language acquisition through self-study or through distance learning and (2) intensify Livonian language acquisition by bringing together in intensive language courses Livonian language teachers with those interested in studying Livonian, but who are often spread out geographically.

Opportunities for self-study and distance learning have markedly improved in recent years with the publication of the Livonian language dictionary in 2012 and the appearance of its online version (see further on in this article). As the dictionary also includes information on grammar and the fundamental principles of the Livonian language, it too can be used for learning Livonian language basics. In addition, the Livonian primer prepared by Livonian intellectual Kārlis Stalte in the late 1930s was published in 2011. With the translation of its contents into Latvian and Estonian, it can be used as a practical learning tool for studying Livonian. Taking into account the complex grammar of Livonian, it is very important to develop special, preferably interactive, Livonian language learning materials suitable for different proficiency levels, which would ensure the possibility for more complete independent language acquisition, as well as to utilize the opportunities provided to us by modern technology in developing online distance learning programs, which would allow teachers to work with students regardless of their location. At the moment, solutions like these do not exist for Livonian, though work has been done on developing such programs within different scientific projects at both the University of Tartu and the University of Helsinki (see further on in this article).

With respect to intensive Livonian language study, two successful examples can be mentioned. Already since 1992, the Livonian children's summer camp *Mierlinkizt*<sup>12</sup> has taken place every summer. Children from all around Latvia learn the basics of the Livonian language at the camp during its several week long duration. Even if it is not possible to learn a great deal of Livonian during such a short time and even if a majority of the camp participants do not come into contact with Livonian in the interim, this camp is the first exposure for a large number of the camp participants to Livonian (which for many of them is their family's heritage language) and potentially can prompt them to further efforts in studying Livonian.

Another example is the Livonian Summer University, which took place in Košrags, on the Livonian Coast, in 2013. At the Summer University, researchers and students of Finno-Ugrian linguistics from six different countries spent one week learning the fundamentals of Livonian language, history, and culture, while also familiarizing themselves with the region in northern Courland historically inhabited by the Livonians. The Summer University was part of a study program at the University of Tartu and the students participating in it received ECTS credits.

Even though it is possible to study Livonian at several institutions of higher learning (the University of Tartu, University of Helsinki, and University of Latvia), this type of summer university format allows individuals from other educational institutions, where Livonian language study is not available, to learn about the Livonians and the Livonian language as well as to study Livonian at a deeper level and expand upon the knowledge they have gained at their own educational institutions. Likewise, it allows one to become acquainted with Livonian culture and life ways "on site" in the Livonian fishing villages of northern Courland.

Of course, these types of intensive language learning activities have their downsides. In the case of the Livonians, these types of intensive courses are expensive due to the logistical and accommodation costs involved. Additionally, these types of intensive study programs are not well-suited for individuals with busy schedules who require more intensive planning to ensure that their available free time matches the schedule of these courses.

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12 Example see online at <<http://www.livones.net/norises/2015/?raksts=8891>>. Accessed 05.03.2016.

An additional problem for learning Livonian is the lack of appropriate learning materials. As mentioned earlier, several new tools to help with language learning have appeared: a dictionary and a primer. K. Boiko's Livonian language course book (Boiko 2000) published in 1999 continues to be used for language learning. However, it only ensures Livonian language acquisition at a basic level and it is also not well-suited for those without a preexisting knowledge of linguistics. The target audience of this course book were the undergraduate students of the Finno-Ugrian Studies program at the University of Latvia. As a result, language learning materials are largely prepared by Livonian language teachers themselves.

Special pedagogical resources are actually also necessary for Livonian language teachers, as information concerning Livonian grammar is often difficult to find or is published in other languages. As a result, teachers are often unclear on a number of points concerning Livonian, which makes the language learning process considerably more difficult. However, currently a Livonian text corpus intended for pedagogical use is being prepared and work is also being done on preparing a handbook of Livonian grammar (see further on in this article), which, once completed, should noticeably simplify the work of both teachers and students.

Therefore, with respect to the dynamics of language use in the last five years, it can be said that the total number of Livonian speakers has not noticeably changed. A small increase in number is only visible in the group composed of those who have learned some Livonian language basics. The reason for this is the annual Livonian children's summer camp, the Livonian Summer University, the continuing teaching of Livonian at institutions of higher learning, a selection of Livonian language courses<sup>13</sup> as well as the ever increasing amount of Livonian language materials online, which have promoted the acquisition of basic knowledge of Livonian and increased interest in Livonian in general.

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13 See examples online at <<http://www.livones.net/norises/2014/?raksts=8863>> and <<http://www.livones.net/norises/2014/?raksts=8839>>. Accessed on 05.03.2016.

## 6. Language research, publications, and the development of language resources

In recent times, there has been much active work in the field of Livonian language research. This work has had noticeable results and during this time the foundations have been laid for future studies of far more depth.

The largest and most meaningful work created during this period is the Livonian-Estonian-Latvian Dictionary (Viitso and Ernštreits 2012), which is the result of a nearly 40-year-long process of documenting Livonian lexical items. This publication is especially noteworthy in that it is reflective of contemporary Livonian and that this lexical data is written in the modern Livonian orthography. The dictionary also includes various kinds of other information, such as notes on pronunciation, a short introduction into Livonian grammar, conjugation and declension types. All of these qualities make it a suitable tool not only for further research into Livonian, but also as a means for language acquisition. This work is available not only on paper, but also online<sup>14</sup>, which makes it accessible to an even wider circle of researchers and other individuals interested in Livonian.

This project is currently being expanded upon at the University of Tartu where on the basis of this dictionary, a new, expanded version of the dictionary is being prepared. This new version will include the complete Livonian conjugation and declension paradigms and will also be connected with the Livonian written language corpus. The emerging corpus will be useable for not only more detailed studies into Livonian, but also in everyday life for studying Livonian. At the same time, on the basis of the dictionary, the corpus, and earlier Livonian language studies, there is a plan to prepare a grammar of Modern Livonian and a handbook of Livonian by 2018, which will be a major asset for Livonian language teachers and students alike.

New tools intended to assist with the acquisition and use of Livonian are also being designed in Finland where through a cooperation between the University of Helsinki and the University of Tromsø, utilizing the materials used for the Livonian-Estonian-Latvian Dictionary, new spell check, automatic translation, and morphological analysis tools are

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14 See online at <<http://www.murre.ut.ee/liivi>>. Accessed 17.03.2016.

being developed<sup>15</sup>. Currently, the already functioning versions of these programs are available for use with the open access program *Open Office* as well as for web browsers. Recently, work has also begun on developing a Livonian keyboard for mobile devices as well as Livonian language tools for other such devices necessary for modern life.

“The Livonians: History, Language, and Culture” (*Lībieši: Vēsture, valoda un kultūra*) is a very important study about the Livonians in general and has been published in both Estonian (Blumberga et al 2011) and Latvian (Blumberga et al 2013) versions. A section of this book is devoted specifically to the Livonian language, its contacts, borrowings, and grammar. Especially important in this collection is the description of the basic characteristics of Livonian. Along with this collection of articles, the first all-encompassing published monograph concerning the Livonian written language has appeared, which, just like the aforementioned collection, was published in both Latvian (Ernštreits 2011) and Estonian (Ernštreits 2013).

The aforementioned publications were published in connection with the International Year of Livonian Culture and Language; however, other studies of Livonian have continued to appear in addition to these. So, for example, the Journal of Estonian and Finno-Ugric Linguistics published a special issue on the Livonian language (ESUKA), which also became the first collection of articles devoted to Livonian published in English. This collection contains various materials concerning the history of the Livonian language, its grammar, and current directions in research into Livonian. It should be noted that already this year the next issue devoted to the Livonians will be published in this series.

Along with these publications, work has continued on many other studies of Livonian. The most significant current areas of research include Livonian and Latvian language contacts, the Salaca dialect of Livonian, the modern-day morphology of Livonian, along with other areas. Here it should also be mentioned that at the end of 2015, two new doctoral dissertations on Livonian phonetics (Tuisk 2105) and syntax (Norvik 2015) were defended. Syntax is especially important as it is one of the least studied areas of Livonian.

The last five years have also been significant in that many researchers have been recognized for their contribution to science. Karl Pajusalu was elected an academic of the Estonian Academy of Sciences

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15 Examples see online at <<https://victorio.uit.no/langtech/trunk/langs/liv/src>>. Accessed 17.03.2016.

and also a foreign member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences (LAS) and honorary doctor at the University of Latvia, Eberhard Winkler was elected an academic of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences, a foreign member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences and honorary doctor at the University of Tartu, Renāte Blumberga was elected a foreign external member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences and also received the Baltic Assembly's Science Prize, Tiit-Rein Viitso received Estonia's highest prize in the field of language research – the Wiedemann Prize, and Valts Ernštreits received Estonia's Kindred Peoples' Programme Prize in the field of science.

## 7. Other Publications

Along with scientific studies, a rich collection of many other works have been added to the bibliography of publications appearing on topics related to the Livonians.

Ignoring its relatively limited scope, one of the most important and popular publications to appear in recent times is “The Livonians in 44 answers” (*Lībieši 44 atbildēs*, in Latvian; LI44a). This thin, little book contains basic information about the Livonians along with answers to the 44 most common questions asked about the Livonians. The initial intent in writing this book was to offer basic information about the Livonians and the Livonian language to teachers, so that they could include this information in their lessons. This publication turned out to be so successful that its first run had almost entirely been purchased before the book's official unveiling. This book is now in its second edition and has been translated into English (LI44b). The text of the booklet is also available online<sup>16</sup>.

A similar publication, which was also very popular, appeared in Estonia. This was the special issue of the periodical “Eesti Loodus” (Nature of Estonia) devoted exclusively to the Livonians. In this issue, readers were acquainted with the Livonian language, the Livonians themselves as well as the territories they have historically inhabited.

Speaking of publications related to the Livonian language, we should also mention a somewhat unique issue marking the 20th anniversary of the Livonian community organization *Līvõ kultūr sidām* – “Let's limit ourselves to the maximum” (*Aprobežosimies ar maksimumu*; MKS).

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16 See <<http://www.livones.net/44atbildes>>. Accessed on 17.03.2016.

This book is formed based on excerpts from various earlier published works devoted to modern Livonian history, including the work *Līvõ kultūr sidām* has done in the fields of language maintenance, preservation, and popularization. In this way this book documents the newest processes in the field of Livonian.

During the period discussed above, several works have been published devoted to the Livonian language with the most important of which doubtlessly being Kõrli Stalte's Livonian primer (Stalte 2011) written in the late 1930s. This book is a collection of Kõrli Stalte's original poems and stories, which can surely be called one of the most excellent examples of Livonian literature. Its high quality language and translations into Estonian and Latvian, which were published as a separate booklet, make this publication a good tool to help with Livonian language acquisition. Especially noteworthy is that this book is the first book published exclusively in Livonian since World War II.

Two bilingual poetry anthologies were also published during the International Year of Livonian Language and Culture. The first of these was the poetry anthology "How the Livonians emerge" (KSL), which contains the work of poets from various nations devoted to the Livonians and also the work of four Livonian poets written in Livonian and Latvian. This book was nominated for the Culture Award of the Latvian daily newspaper "Diena". The second book is a Livonian poetry anthology in Livonian and Estonian (LLK).

Possibly the most surprising event during the last year is the return of the Salaca dialect of Livonian into use. This occurred thanks to poet, Ҕempi Kārl, who writes in Salaca Livonian and whose book "The Three Coasts of Salaca" (*Salats joug kolm aḡa*; Ҕempi 2013a) became the first book in Salaca Livonian in the entire history of the existence of the Livonian people. Along with the original poems in Salaca Livonian, this book contains translations into Estonian and Latvian. The first book by Ҕempi Kārl has already been followed by a second volume (Ҕempi 2013b) and the poet continues to write actively. The newest poems by Ҕempi Kārl have been published on the web portal *Livones.net* (Ҕempi 2015). It should be noted that not only has Ҕempi Kārl returned Salaca Livonian to active use, the last known speakers of which lived in the middle of the 19th Century, but that he has also created a Salaca Livonian written language based on the orthography of literary Livonian.

## 8. Problems and future opportunities

Looking back in total at the development of Livonian during the last few years, it can be concluded that it has proceeded successfully. It could even be said – very well. Of course, it is true that the deciding factor in this process has been precisely the active work of community organizations in cooperation with institutions outside of Latvia along with financial support from various sources outside of Latvia.

Government agencies and organizations, especially the Latvian Language Agency, have taken an active involvement in supporting events connected with the Livonian language; however, the lack of coordination, government planning, and budgetary support is glaring, as is the lack of cooperation between institutions and the chaos in terms of dividing responsibilities and including the Livonians in documents relating to national planning in the period since the end of the government program “The Livonians in Latvia” (*Lībieši Latvijā*) in 2012. At the same time, Livonian community organizations, which have been entrusted with government responsibilities relating to Livonian language preservation and maintenance, are limited in their abilities mainly due to a lack of resources.

However, the situation of the Livonians on the whole and in the coming years, thanks to the LLA, and the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia, the Estonian Kindred Peoples’ Programme, the Finnish *Kone* Foundation, and other financial sources, can be considered good. New studies, which can be used for practical purposes, are being produced and their first results will be evident already this year.

As mentioned above, the worst situation currently is in the teaching of Livonian, especially with respect to the quality of available language learning materials. Solutions will need to be found for this problem in the near future. Modern-day and future technologies could certainly be helpful here – online tools for language learning and use, automatic translation programs, and so on. As already mentioned, work is currently underway to develop these types of tools for Livonian.

At the same time it is important to involve the Livonians and those interested in Livonian into this work. In the 21st Century, with the appearance of the internet and social networks, with the appearance of Skype and the ability to record sound with our computers, to record videos and publish them online, everyone has the ability to give their contribution to the preservation and development of Livonian. One



good example already exists – the *Facebook* group “Līvõ kēļ”. It only remains for others to follow this example.

Precisely these new technologies and the possibilities they offer, used wisely, can solve many of the problems that the Livonian language faces. Therefore every Livonian, every individual interested in Livonian, must do everything they can in order to fully take advantage of this technology as much as possible, and to help the Livonian language be a step ahead of the others.

### Acknowledgements

The study has been carried out within the framework of Estonian Research Council project IUT2-37 and with support of Latvian Language Agency.

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- LLK = Līvõ lūolkub. Ma akub sīnda vizzõ, tūrska! Liivi luulevalimik. Ma vōtan su õnge, tursk! Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Paul Ariste soome-ugri põlisrahvaste keskus, 2011.
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**Kokkuvõte. Valts Ernštreits: Liivi keel uusimal ajal.** Artiklis on vaadel-dud liivi keele arengut viimase aastakümne jooksul. Sellesse on koondatud andmeid sel ajal aset leidnud liivi keele populariseerimisega seotud ürituste, näiteks rahvusvahelise liivi keele ja kultuuri aasta kohta, samuti teavet liivi keele staatusest Lätis, keelekeskkonnast ja argipäevasesest kasutusest. Artikkel heidab pilgu liivi keele omandamise ja keelekorraldusega seotud probleemi-dele ning viimasel ajal valminud või praegu loodavatele õppevahenditele ja liivi keele ressurssidele. Samuti on artiklis nii potentsiaalsete lahenduste kui ka olemasolevate algatuste kontekstis vaadeldud viise ja võimalusi edasiseks liivi keele arendamiseks ja keele olukorra parandamiseks.

**Märksõnad:** liivi keel, keelepoliitika, keelekorraldus, keelekorpus, sotsioling-vistika, keeleressursid, grammatika, keele õpetamine

**Kubbõvõttõks. Valts Ernštreits: Līvõ kēļ amāūzimōļ āigal.** Kēra vaņṭlõb līvõ kīel kazāndimizt periz āigastkim āigal. Sīezõ ātõ kubbõ vōttõd tietõd līvõ kīel tundtõbõks tiemizõks sidtõd jeddõvõtāmiztõst, nāgṭõbõks iļ rovd-vailiz līvõ kīel ja kultūr āigast, nei tīz tietõ iļ līvõ kīel statūs Leṭmōļ, kīel immõrkouṭšt ja jegāpāuvizõst kōlbatimizõst. Kēra ētab pilk līvõ kīel ummis-tōmiz ja kīel kōrdõlpanmiz problēmõd pāl, periz āigal vaļmõks sōdõd agā paldn lūodõbõd optõbvaindõkst ja līvõ kīel resursõd pāl.

Neiṭz ātõ vōibizt arāndõkst ja paldnīzizt tikkimizt kontekstõs vaņṭõltõd līvõ kīel kazāntimiz ja vōlmiz parāntimiz vītõd ja vōimizt.