

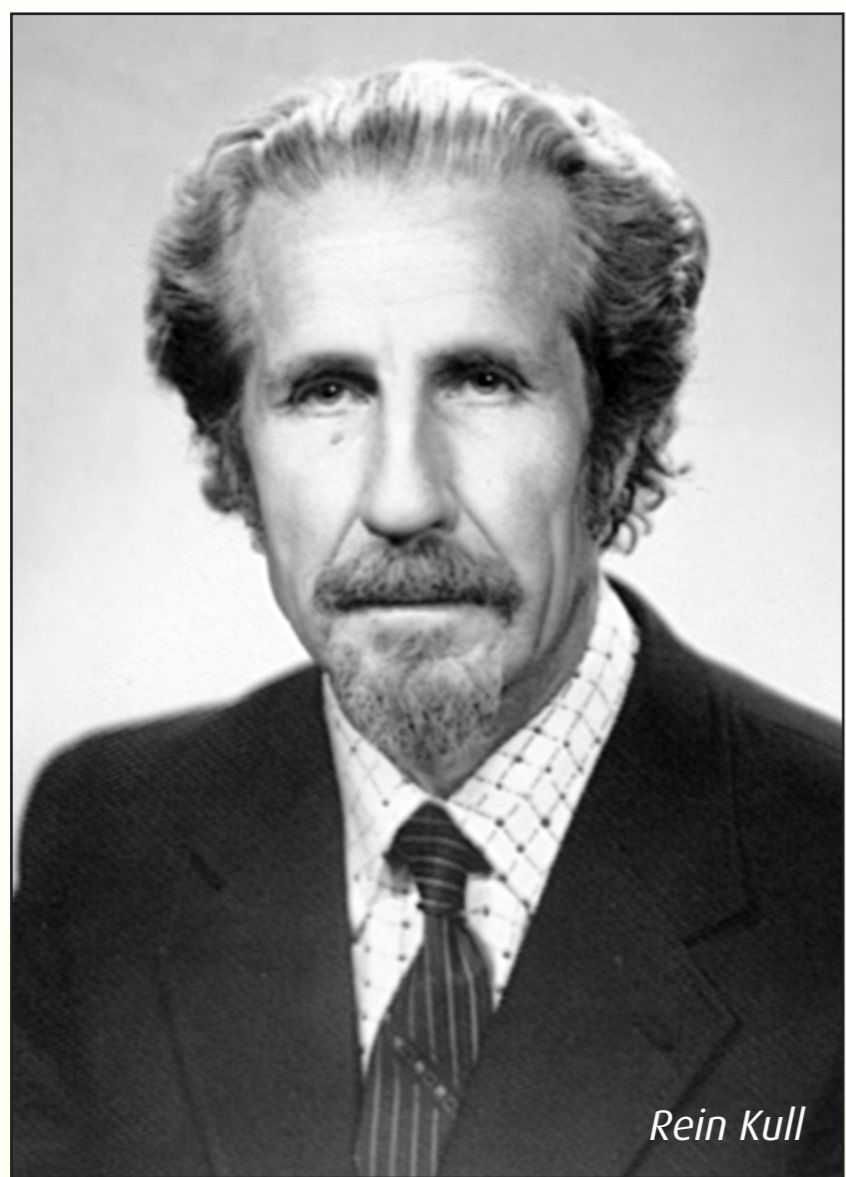
Language planning



Lauri Kettunen



Elmar Muuk



Rein Kull



Henn Saari

Language planning in Estonia began in 1872 when the Society of Estonian Literati at the proposal of its president Jakob Hurt decided to adopt the new spelling in the publications of the society and at the same time adopted a number of proposals to unify the standard language. However, from the perspective of language standardization, the first Estonian-language grammar by Karl August Hermann (1884) was even more important because it shaped Estonian-language grammar terminology.

The language reform movement developed in 1905 from the Young Estonia movement and its aim was to make the Estonian language in a short time equal to the well-established European civilized language. The leaders of the movement were Johannes Aavik and Villem Grünthal-Ridala; both of them made important contributions also to Estonian linguistics and the teaching of Estonian.

The language planning movement was another trend that developed the Estonian language that peaked in 1920–1935. This trend was led by Johannes Voldemar Veski. In the early 1920s the decisions were often influenced by the opinion of Lauri Kettunen and later by Elmar Muuk (1901–1941). The trend aimed at a uniformly standardized language; for this purpose the vocabulary of all fields of life was developed. Andrus Saareste (1892–1964) balanced the activities of this trend in the 1930s. After the Second World War general language planning in Estonia was characterized by a trend that was strictly normative and avoided variation; the leaders of this trend were Arnold Kask (1902–1994) and Ernst Nurm (1896–1983). This trend emphasized avoidance of sloppy language use, and blocked the adoption of Russianisms. Starting with the 1970s on the initiative of Rein Kull (1925–2001), Tiit Erelt (1942), and Henn Saari (1924–1999) Estonian language planning has offered increasingly more advice on good usage rather than commands.

Traditionally the highest form of general language planning has been the compilation of dictionaries of correct usage. In the course of time the norm of Standard Estonian has been established by the language committee of the Estonian Literary Society and the republican committee on correct usage. At present it is established by the language committee of the Mother Tongue Society. Terminological work is carried out by terminological committees, academic societies, ministries, etc. The Estonian Association for Terminology (ETER) was set up in 2001. The Institute of the Estonian Language, the Institute of Estonian and General Linguistics at the University of Tartu, and the Institute of the Estonian Language and Culture at Tallinn University have an important role in language planning and research.

The Mother Tongue Society has functioned since 1920 as a voluntary philological association which has been led by the most distinguished linguists of their time. The Mother Tongue Society has organized vocabulary collection competitions, scientific conferences, language days at schools both in Estonia and abroad on a regular basis. The yearbook of the Mother Tongue Society, which is one of the most prestigious linguistic publications, has been published since 1955. Since 2000, Oma Keel, the journal for all people interested in linguistics has been published.

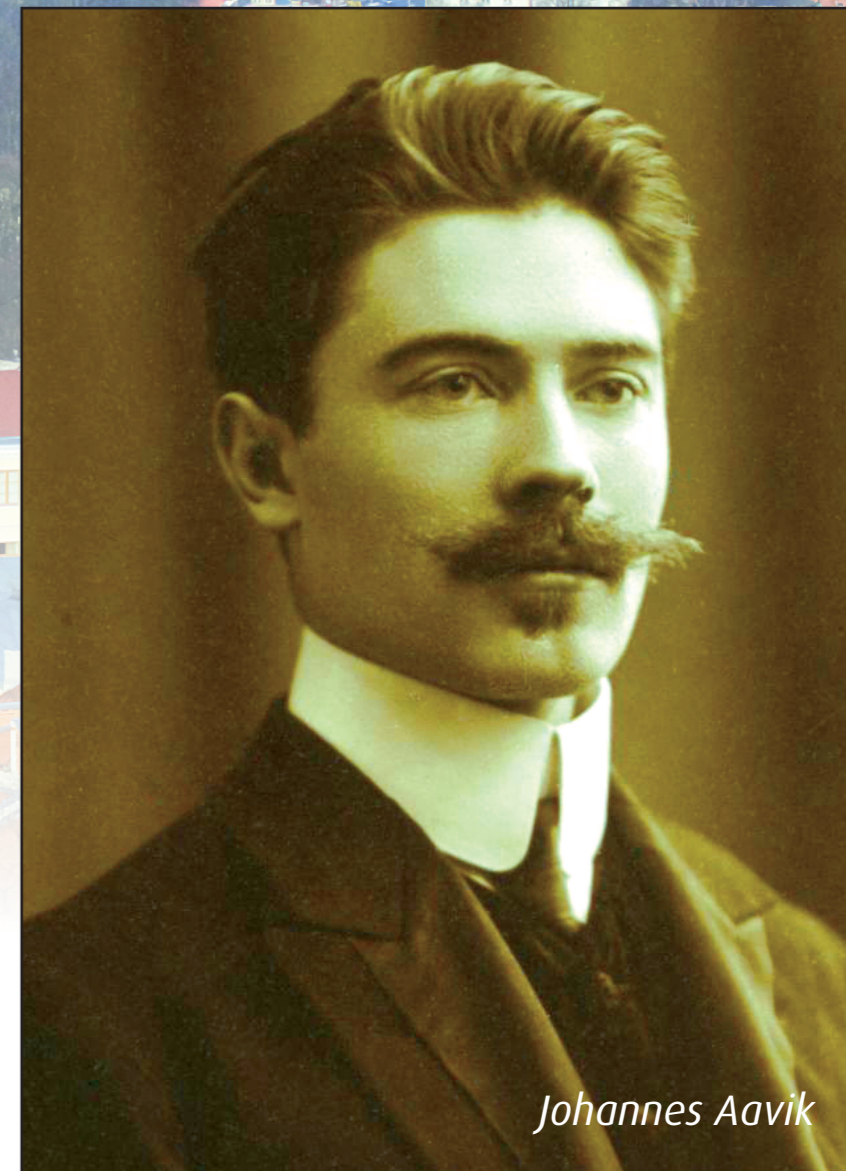
The Institute of the Estonian Language (established in 1947) has acted for many years as a theoretical research centre and has also provided language advice and carried out language planning activities. The terminological centre was set up at the institute in 2006. The web environment of place names, which was created on the initiative of Peeter Päll (1961), offers assistance to scholars in a number of fields and other interested people.

Johannes Aavik (1880 Põide – 1973 Stockholm) made an impact that is unique worldwide. In the heyday of the language reform movement in 1912–1926 J. Aavik made his major proposals for the renewal of the structure of the Estonian language and for the enrichment of vocabulary with dialect and loan words. He invented a large number of new words and improved grammar (*i*-plural, *i*-superlative, etc.) and spelling. One can find hundreds of words in the contemporary languages that he invented (*malbe* 'quiet, meek', *mõrv* 'murder', *naasma* 'return', *relv* 'weapon', *roim* 'murder', *uje* 'shy', *taunima* 'denounce', *siiras* 'sincere', and others) or adopted as loan words from Finnish and Estonian dialects (*algupärane* 'original', *avardama* 'expand', *edu* 'success', *hetk* 'moment', *huvi* 'interest', *kiinduma* 'become attached', *soodus* 'favourable', etc.). He used his innovations in translating fiction. The **Johannes Aavik Society** was established in Tallinn in 1992.

Johannes Voldemar Veski (1873 Vaidavere – 1968 Tartu) was the founder and the most important promoter of the language planning trend in the development of Standard Estonian, an author of many language norms, and the greatest creator of terminology in cooperation with subject specialists. His principles of language planning included expedience, systemicity, traditionalism, and acceptability in popular speech. He initiated *Eesti keele õigekirjutuse-sõnaraamat* 'Estonian Spelling Dictionary' (1918) and the three-volume *Eesti õigekeelsuse-sõnaraamat* 'Dictionary of Correct Usage of Estonian' (1925–1937). J. V. Veski participated in the preparation of secondary school textbooks and over thirty dictionaries that fixed over 100,000 terms. Each year the Mother Tongue Society holds a conference in Tartu in his honour called the Veski Day.

Valter Tauli (1907 Tallinn – 1986 Uppsala) – creator of a complete system of language planning principles.

Tiit Erelt (1942 Tallinn) – chief language planner of the Institute of the Estonian language, researcher of terminology and lexicology; editor and author of dictionaries of correct usage as well as many terminological dictionaries.



Johannes Aavik



Johannes Voldemar Veski



Valter Tauli



Tiit Erelt

Web addresses

Eesti õigekeelsussõnaraamat ÕS 2006 'Dictionary of Correct Usage of Estonian ÕS 2006', <http://www.eki.ee/dict/qs2006/>
Language advice of the Institute of the Estonian Language, <http://www.eki.ee/keeleabi/>
Geographic names, <http://www.eki.ee/knab/>
Keeleveeb 'Language Web', free site with access to several dictionaries, <http://www.keeleveeb.ee/>
Keelevara. 'Language Ware', pay site with access to several dictionaries, access to some dictionaries is free, <http://www.keelevara.ee/>
Periodicals: *Keel ja Kirjandus* 'Language and Literature', *Oma Keel* 'Our Own Language', *Emakeele Seltsi aastaraamat* 'Yearbook of the Mother Tongue Society'.

The poster was prepared by the Estonian Literary Museum, the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, and the Mother Tongue Society. Text by Tiit Erelt.
Layout by Margus Nõmm, Multimedia Centre of the University of Tartu 2008.

Books

Johannes Voldemar Veski keelelisi töid 'Some linguistic essays by Johannes Voldemar Veski' (1958).
Johannes Aavik: *Keele kaunima kõlavuse poole* 'Towards better euphony in language' (1912); *Uute sõnade ja vähem tuntud sõnade sõnastik* 'A dictionary of new and less-known words' (1921); *Keeleuuenduse äärmised võimalused* 'Extreme possibilities of the language reform' (1924); *Õigekeelsuse ja keeleuuenduse põhimõtted* 'Principles of correct usage and the language reform' (1924); *Eesti õigekeelsuse õpik ja grammatika* 'A textbook and grammar of the correct usage of Estonian' (1936).
Valter Tauli *Keelekorralduse alused* 'Introduction to a theory of language planning' (1968).
Rein Kull *Kirjakeel, oskuskeel ja üldkeel* 'Standard language, special language, and general language' (2000).
Henn Saari *Keelehääling* 'Broadcasting language' (2004).
Tiit Erelt: *Eesti ortograafia* 'Estonian spelling' (1995, 4th edition 2005); *Eesti keelekorraldus* 'Estonian language planning' (2002); *Eesti oskuskeel* 'Estonian special language' (1982); *Terminiõpetus* 'Terminology' (2007).

At present the norm of Standard Estonian is based on *Eesti õigekeelsussõnaraamat ÕS 2006* 'Dictionary of Estonian Correct Usage ÕS 2006' (edited by Tiit Erelt, compiled by Tiit Erelt, Tiina Leemets, Sirje Mäearu, Maire Raadik).