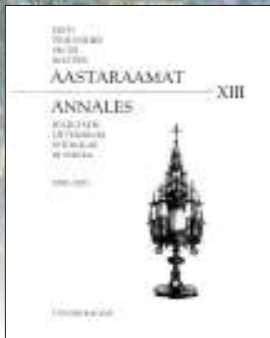


# Estonians Outside Estonia and their Language



## Varieties of Estonian outside Estonia – their emergence in the East and West

There is some data from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries about Estonians who fled to the neighbouring areas, beyond Lake Peipsi to Russia or to Finland; the first Estonian settlements in these areas were established in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. More extensive emigration occurred starting with the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the main destinations of Estonian emigrants were North America (the USA and Canada), but also Finland, South America, and Australia. The Second World War brought about the largest wave of political emigration. In 1939–1944 at least 70,000 Estonians fled from Soviet power to Germany and Sweden. Larger communities of Estonians outside Estonia emerged in Great Britain, Australia, Canada, and the USA. People who have left since Estonia joined the EU constitute the most recent group.

To this day Estonian communities and language enclaves have survived in Russia, Sweden, Great Britain, Canada, the USA, and elsewhere. The largest Estonian community lives in Russia, where Estonian villages can be found from Lake Peipsi to the Sea of Japan. In the oldest villages the Estonian language has been used for 5–6 generations; it has led to the emergence of the Siberian Estonian common language, which has no precise equivalent in Estonia. In more recent villages the original source dialect is spoken also by the second and the third generation.



## Number of Estonians living abroad

• Russia	46,390 (1989)	28,113 (2002)	• Finland	10,340 (1998)	17,599 (2006)
• USA	26,762 (1990)		• Ukraine	4,208 (1989)	2,868 (2001)
• Sweden	26,438 (1997)		• Latvia		2,677 (2000)
• Canada	20,530 (1986)		etc		
			TOTAL		125,000 (2000)

## Study of the language spoken by Estonians outside Estonia

The study and collection of the Estonian language used outside Estonia began in the 1950s and 1960s. The first surveys appeared in the 1970s and 1980s when Aarand Roos wrote an overview of Estonians in Turkey (1975), Raimo Raag completed a thesis on the vocabulary of Swedish Estonians (1982), and Jüri Viikberg completed a thesis on language enclaves in Siberia (1989).

After the restoration of Estonian statehood there has been a renewed interest in Estonians living both in the East and West. The language of Swedish Estonian has been recorded and studied by Raimo and Virve Raag, Birute Klaas, Aino Laagus, and Mari Allik; the language of Danish Estonians has been studied by Maarika Teral, and that of Finnish Estonians by Kristiina Praakli and Sirje Hassinen. In the 1990s extensive material was collected from the Russian Estonians (Anu Korb and others).

So far there have been more studies on the language of Swedish, Siberian, and Caucasian Estonians with a focus on classical branches of linguistics (lexical loans, grammatical and lexical interference). Another topic is the status of old territorial dialects and the standard language in a new environment. Other trends have focused on bilingualism and related topics (the bilingual child, code switching, language death, etc.). The studies have dealt with both spoken and written material. A major recent project is "Estonian Language in Sweden" (2003–2007, D. Krull, L. Keevallik, R. and V. Raag), which describes phonetic, lexical, morphological, and pragmatic developments in the language spoken in Sweden (<http://www.finugr.uu.se/estisveng.html>).

The Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies (VEUK), which was set up in 1996, has held three conferences focusing on Estonians living abroad (1997, 2006, 2008).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the diachronic method has been supplemented by the synchronic method; the study of settlements has been replaced by dispersed communities, and the study of generations has been replaced by shorter periods of time. There has been a shift from studies of interference on the basis of language descriptions to corpus-based studies of code switching.

## Collections of the Estonian language as used outside Estonia

Since 1956 the language of Estonians living outside Estonia has been recorded in the surviving Estonian settlements in Russia (incl. Siberia and the Far East) and the Caucasus, the USA, Canada, Sweden, Great Britain, Germany, and Finland. There is an increased emphasis on the digitization of language material. In 2008 the large-scale projects included 'Collection of the heritage of Estonians in Russia and making it publicly accessible' at the Archive of Estonian Folk Poetry and 'Digitization and transcription of the language material of Estonians living abroad and making the language examples accessible on the Internet' at the Institute of the Estonian Language.

## Audio recordings of the language of Estonians living abroad (as of 1 January 2008)

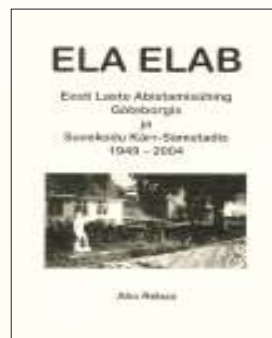
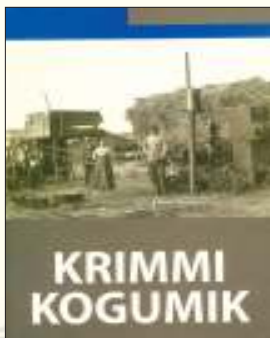
• Archive of Estonian Folk Poetry	(1971– ) 500 hrs	• Institute of the Estonian Language	(1956– ) 300 hrs
• Estonian National Museum	(1999– ) 270 hrs	• University of Tartu	(1996– ) 70 hrs
		TOTAL	1,140 hrs

## Origin of language material

Archive of Estonian Folk Poetry (500 hrs):	Siberia + elsewhere in Russia
Estonian National Museum (270 hrs):	Sweden, USA, UK, Germany
Institute of the Estonian Language (300 hrs):	Abkhazia, Siberia, USA, Canada
University of Tartu (70 hrs):	Sweden, Denmark, Finland

## Teaching of Estonian outside Estonia

Outside Estonia the Estonian language is taught to children in 11 countries and 23 locations – at school, in Sunday schools, at language courses. In 16 countries the Estonian language is taught at 34 establishments of higher education. In-depth Estonian language study is offered at Secondary School No. 2 in Pechory (Russian Federation); secondary schools with a large number of Estonian-language classes include the Riga Estonian School, Stockholm Estonian School, Helsinki Roihuvuori School, Salme and Sulev Schools in Abkhazia, Aleksandrovka Secondary School in the Crimea, and the Upper-Suetuki basic school in eastern Siberia. Estonian supplementary and Sunday schools can be found in Denmark, the USA, Canada, and Australia. The state supports the private study of Estonian in Finland and Sweden if there are over four such children in the respective district. The Estonian Societies teach Estonian in Lithuania and Russia (Moscow, St Petersburg, Krasnoyarsk, and Cherepovets).



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