

Values behind Metaphors: Figurative Speech in the Discourse of a “Language Crisis”

Ene Vainik

Institute of the Estonian Language, Estonia
ene.vainik@eki.ee

Geda Paulsen

University of Uppsala, Sweden
Institute of the Estonian Language, Estonia
geda.paulsen@moderna.uu.se
geda.paulsen@eki.ee

Abstract

This study is a values-driven approach to figures of speech, depicting language and its standardisation. We explore a discourse about the modernisation of linguistic norms that took place in Estonian public media in 2020–2022 and reached the point of being labelled a crisis. The debate took place mostly in the form of opinion-writing texts, expressing the writers’ subjective perspectives. During the discussions, two parties with different outlooks on language and language planning issues emerged, representing the dichotomy of liberal and conservative value models. The focus of the study is on the interplay between values and patterns of figurative thought, as metaphors were extensively used to strengthen the arguments of both sides. The analysis, based on the theoretical-methodological means of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Figurative Framing, Metaphor Scenario Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, revealed that the opposing parties favoured certain metaphors when depicting language. As a side issue, we also address the dynamics of power relations through the language crisis discourse.

Keywords: figurative language, metaphors, values, standardisation, Estonian

Streszczenie

Wartości ukryte w metaforach. Mowa przenośna w dyskursie dotyczącym „kryzysu języka”

Niniejszy artykuł prezentuje oparte na wartościach badanie figur stylistycznych określających język i jego standaryzację. Materiał zaczerpnęliśmy z debaty dotyczącej modernizacji norm językowych, która miała miejsce w estońskich mediach publicznych w latach 2020-2022 i osiągnęła punkt, który można nazwać kryzysowym. Debata odbywała się głównie w formie tekstów opiniotwórczych, wyrażających subiektywną perspektywę autorów. W jej trakcie uwidoczniły się dwa przeciwstawne poglądy na kwestie języka i planowania językowego, reprezentujące liberalny i konserwatywny model wartości. Niniejsze badanie koncentruje się na wzajemnym oddziaływaniu wartości i wzorców myślenia figuratywnego,

ponieważ metafory były szeroko stosowane w celu wzmocnienia argumentów obu stron. Oparte na założeniach teoretyczno-metodologicznych teorii metafory konceptualnej, ram figuratywnych, analizy scenariuszy metaforycznych, systemowej lingwistyki funkcjonalnej i krytycznej analizy dyskursu badanie ujawniło, że przeciwne strony sporu faworyzowały określone metafory podczas dyskusji o języku. Jako kwestię poboczną poruszamy również dynamikę stosunków politycznych, która uwidacznia się poprzez dyskurs dotyczący kryzysu językowego.

Słowa kluczowe: język przenośny, metafory, wartości, standaryzacja, estoński.

1. Introduction

There are many serious crises running in parallel during the time of permacrisis, which has exacerbated the polarisation of opinions and raised the level of expressivity in the contemporary media landscape, involving more channels and voices than ever. Expressing public opinion has become easy and quick, regardless of whether the writer is an expert or a layperson. Anyone can publish an opinion on social media and spread it to a remarkably large public; the social media opinion may be picked up by traditional media platforms and receive an even wider resonance. This has led to the situation where the line between “well-researched” journalistic opinions and ordinary opinions has become difficult to define (Halpern 2018: 4), and this is particularly true in times of crisis because of emotionally engaged actors. We use an example of a local crisis – the “language crisis” – in Estonia to better understand the fluctuating undercurrents of communication styles during times of crisis in general.

By the term “language crisis” we mean a rather intense discussion about language standardisation, freedom of linguistic choices, the development of prescriptive vs. descriptive dictionaries, etc. Such a discussion of up to 60 opinion articles took place in the Estonian public media between 2020 and 2022. At one point in the debate, the discussion was overtly labelled a crisis: “Our society is also threatened by the language crisis” (an article by B. Klaas-Lang, 19.10.22).

Crises implicate change and adaptation to a new reality. While change is inherent to a natural language, the readjustment of a standard language is easily perceived as decay or corruption. Spelling changes and even minor relaxations of linguistic norms provoke lively disputes. As a catalyst for the language crisis served the process of the modernisation of the heart of standard Estonian, the traditional prescriptive Dictionary of Standard Estonian *Eesti õigekeelsussõnaraamat* (ÕS). The modernisation has involved the fusion of descriptive and

prescriptive lexicographic databases¹ into one central “super-dictionary”, the EKI Combined Dictionary (EKI ühendsõnastik, CombiDic) (Tavast *et al.* 2020, Langemets and Päll 2021). This occurred in the context of a growing lexicographic trend toward applying automated, corpus-based processes as replacements for introspective lexicography (Gantar, Kosem and Krek 2016; Kallas *et al.* 2019). The discussions were hence directed to the form (all-digitalisation vs. paper dictionary) and substance (bringing the norms closer to actual language use vs. the strictly normative stance) of the ÕS.

The primary focus of this study is on imagery revealing the conceptualisations of language as the object in the process of standardisation. Language is a multifaceted phenomenon and rather abstract as a concept: it is hardly thinkable or discussable without using conceptual metaphors even in a neutral discussion (e.g. the CONDUIT metaphor introduced by Lakoff and Johnson 1980). The debates in the Estonian language crisis reveal that language users have strong ideas about language: for some disputants the fate of the Estonian language seems to be at stake. Often arguments in the language crisis are couched in expressive figurative language, a feature that has been found to characterise any discourse in times of crisis (Huang 2020: 7). An aspect that has not received explicit attention in the context of crisis discourse, to our knowledge, is the interplay in selecting certain imagery that corresponds to the participant’s underlying value model. We assume that because of the time restrictions and “alarming” effects of any crisis (see Section 2 below), the expression of (potentially threatened) values becomes essential in a crisis discourse.

The aim of this study is to discover and describe the interplay between values and patterns of figurative thought and metaphoric expression in public opinion. To approach this interplay, we qualitatively analysed a corpus of about 60 journalistic texts in (persuasive) opinion writing in respect to figurative talk and in respect to the underlying societal values related to the target domain of LANGUAGE. Conceptualisations of language coloured by values seemed to exist in all aspects of the heated discussion: the preferred strategies of language planning, standardisation, and dictionary making.

According to Kivle and Espedal (2022), a bottom-up text analysis is one of the suitable means for determining values in a discourse; the novelty of our approach is to combine it with a bottom-up analysis of conceptual metaphors and other elements revealing figurative thought and the construction of reality. In the following sections, we introduce the theoretical

¹ The normative recommendations and explanations of ÕS will not completely conflate in CombiDic, as a filtered view of ÕS will be available for the dictionary user in future (Tavast *et al.* 2020: 217).

background ideas, refine our research questions, and describe the data and methods of our study. The fourth section presents our results, along with quotes from the discourse, and in the last section we draw conclusions and discuss them in relation to the theoretical assumptions.

2. Theoretical background

As our purpose is to combine the analysis of linguistic imagery with its usage in the discourse of a specific crisis where different values are expressed, the theoretical background is inspired by several schools of thought. In this section, we provide the definitions of some key concepts and introduce the main background ideas.

The term *crisis* originates from the Greek word *κρίσις*, denoting a “decisive point in the progress of a disease”, or more generally a “vitaly important or decisive state of things, the point at which a change must come, for better or worse”.² In social sciences, the notion of a crisis is defined by three key elements: 1) the core values of a group are threatened, 2) the time for decision-making and action is limited, and 3) the situation is characterised by elements of surprise, uncertainty, and ambiguity (see Hermann 1963; Sundelius, Stern and Bynander 1997, or Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger 2015). In more general terms, a crisis can be characterised as a period of intense instability that causes severe pressure and stress, requiring urgent action to prevent a threatening situation from turning into a disaster (Hancı-Azizoglu 2022).

The question of true values often becomes vital in crises. This is also true in the language crisis discourse. Following Kluckhohn (1951: 395) and Selznick (1992: 60), we consider the notion of *value* an implicit or explicit conception of the desirable that influences the choice of means and actions characteristic of an individual or a group. For instance, a value associated in particular with attitudes towards language planning and standardisation is purism, a controversial notion within linguistics, suggesting that a language may become harmed because of neglect by certain speakers and/or external influences, such as language contact (Langer and Nesse 2012).

Opinion journalism is considered to fall within the realms of both literature and journalism (Khorob 2019); its higher degree of figurativeness makes it more similar to fiction.³ Opinion writing as a genre has undergone massive changes from traditional journalism to online

² The definitions are taken from the *Online Etymology Dictionary* (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/crisis>) and the *Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins* by Julia Cresswell.

³ Fictional texts tend to offer alternatives to ordinary metaphors: for instance, writers make complex metaphorical connections by combining existing conceptual metaphors in unusual ways (Lakoff and Turner 1989).

registers, altering the very norms for journalism and reflecting cultural changes (Halpern 2018: 57–58). The set of goals characteristic of opinion writing involves, according to Biri (2018: 155), the following three aspirations: (1) to express an opinion, (2) to argue for a cause, and (3) to persuade the reader. This genre involves a large variation in texts, from formal to informal: editorials, political speeches, advertisements, personal persuasive texts, and personal commentary⁴. Opinion writing subtypes may also differ in textual strategies: they may be either writer-oriented (typical to personal texts as blogs) or reader-oriented (news sites) (Biri 2018).

The interactional goals can be achieved by using figurative language, but for the opinion statement to be successful, the author should present his or her stance in such a way that the reader is convinced and feels involved. Since Aristotle, metaphors have been considered effective means of persuasion. The persuasive force of metaphors is strengthened when the audience is familiar with the metaphor target, the metaphor is novel, is used at the beginning of a message, is unitary, and is not extended (Sopory and Dillard 2002). Metaphoric language is also found to be more emotionally engaging than literal language (Citron and Goldberg 2014).

The basic idea behind the Theory of Conceptual Metaphors is that the human conceptual system is based on understanding one concept, called the Target domain (typically an abstract and barely delineated one), through another concept, called the Source domain (typically more concrete, familiar from experience, and well-delineated; see Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Kövecses 2016). Conceptual metaphors are ubiquitous, conventional, and often not noticed when used and/or processed. Conceptual (and linguistic) metaphors are used on purpose as well, as has been discussed by G. Steen (2008: 223), who argues that their function, when used deliberately, is to change the addressee's perspective on the referent or topic. The deliberateness of metaphors is revealed by the metalinguistic comments in the discourse, where it becomes evident that the sender is paying extra attention to the Source domain as different from the Target (Steen 2017: 3–5).

Metaphors and other figurative devices can have even wider impacts on discourse than conveying semantic and conceptual content. Goffman (1974) examined how people construct meaning and used the term *frame* to depict the organisation of social experience. Frame analysis is hence concerned with communication and the effect of the message, suggesting that the frame – how the information is presented to an audience – influences the way people

⁴ See e.g. Språkporten and Cappelen Damm utdanning <https://access-socialstudies2018.cappelendamm.no/ento/tekst.html?tid=2324193&sek=2261800>.

process that information, important in shaping public discourse, because these figures contain important linguistic and conceptual content about the issue under discussion.

Figurative language has been found to play an important role in shaping public discourse as it can be used to propose a problem definition, to evaluate an issue and/or to present a particular solution (Burgers *et al.* 2016: 417). In this way, figures of speech not only operate on the level of language as framing devices but also at the conceptual level, as reasoning devices (Lakoff 2004). In combination, figurative frames based on, for instance, metaphors, hyperbole, or irony, can even be combined, with increased communicative effects as results (Burgers *et al.* 2016: 419).

Another account that encompasses figurative thought and expression in a complex way is that of A. Musolff's notion of *scenarios*, i.e. applying everyday conventional knowledge about mundane mini-dramas – family affairs, etc. – to issues that are of much wider scope and importance (mostly in political discourse). He defines a scenario as a set of assumptions made by competent members of a discourse community about the prototypical elements of a concept, i.e. participants, “dramatic” storylines, and default outcomes, as well as ethical evaluations of these elements, which are connected to the social attitudes and emotional stances that are prevalent in the respective discourse community (Musolff 2016: 30).

Finally, we consider the discourse of opinions as a kind of interaction where individuals and representatives of some institutions interact with each other and – as a specific feature of a public discourse – strive for the solidarity of potentially shared attitudes among individuals and groups. Therefore, we also adopt the ideas of Systemic Functional Linguistics and Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (e.g. 2010). Above all, the goal is to look at the use of language in terms of how it reflects the power relationships between the individuals and institutions involved in the discourse (who, when, what, and where) and to further interpret these practices in relation to wider social processes (e.g. as the imposition of a particular world-view by formally superior institutions: an aspect that has made discourse analysis “critical” (see, e.g., van Dijk 2018).

By doing so, we keep in mind the three layers of meaning (the metafunctions) of language as formulated by Halliday (2003): i) ideational (meanings about the world), ii) interpersonal (meanings about roles and relationships), and iii) textual (meanings about the message). We believe that figurative language can easily be used to convey both ideational and interpersonal meanings.

The general assumption that imagery used in opinion writing during times of crisis reveals the author's underlying value model – in the context of the pervasiveness of figurative thought

and the deliberate and persuasive use of figures, frames, and scenarios for the interpersonal and/or power-related work – leads us to the main hypothesis about our particular case of “linguaging⁵ about language” during the Estonian language crisis: the figurative conceptualisation of language during a time of crisis arises from the author’s core values and his/her engagement with language, professionally and/or emotionally. We will show that this is the case by searching for answers to the following research questions: What were the core values of the disputants regarding language and its maintenance? What kind of imagery was used in the discussions to conceptualise the target domain of LANGUAGE? Was there a correlation between language-related value systems and preferred imagery?

Our approach to the study is qualitative, sharing methodological similarities with discourse analysis, except that, in addition to content-related keywords, we code for the figurative conceptualisation of language as one of the main foci of the study.

3. Material and methods

The data was set up as a small corpus (62 texts, approx. 250 pages) of articles published online between 01.09.2020–31.12.2022: there were interviews, editorials, analytical papers by experts, opinions, and recycled blog posts. Mostly, the texts were reader-oriented and intended as opinion writing (see previous section). The venues were publicly funded media platforms in most cases: the weekly cultural magazine *Sirp* (30%), the *Estonian Public Broadcaster* (ERR; 45%), and the linguistic journal *Keel ja Kirjandus* (its non-peer reviewed subsection “Topical issues”; 5%). One private media representative involved in the discussions was the daily magazine *Postimees*⁶ (20%), notorious for its conservative values and keen to publish opinion pieces on language. The most liberal media platforms (the news website *Delfi*⁷ and the daily newspaper *Päevaleht* (*Estonia Daily*), etc.) did not participate in the debate.

The texts were downloaded and stripped of visual elements and quotes. The texts were imported in chronological order to the software Quirkos,⁸ where all texts were provided with metadata: the date of publication, publisher, and author (see the appendix). The authorial positions were generalised according to the professional background of the participants: the

⁵ On the concept of linguaging, see Love (2017).

⁶ The absence of the daily magazine *Päevaleht* and the weekly magazine *Eesti Ekspress* from the language crisis discourse is striking.

⁷ <https://www.egrupp.ee/en/operating-areas/media/estonia/ekspress-meedia-as/>.

⁸ <https://www.quirkos.com/>.

voice of (institutionally engaged) linguists (32%; N = 20), language editors (19%; N = 12), and journalists (19%, N = 12); the remaining 30% (N = 18) consisted of teachers, state officials, outsiders (experts in other fields), and a group of “combined voices” for interviews, where multiple opinions were mediated. On the basis of occupation with language, a further division can be made into scientists and practitioners.

Content-wise, the texts were tagged with an open scheme, with four substantial categories: 1) figurative use of language (both conventional and novel, both subconscious and deliberate, both metaphors and other tropes: similes, hyperboles, the absurd, irony, etc.), 2) the target domain of figurative thought, i.e. the particular topic addressed (the nature of language, dictionaries, language norms, the process of language planning, etc.), 3) the values expressed (the elements in the text that revealed the author’s positive programme or its violation were tentatively coded as values), and 4) the emotions expressed.

For the current research, an export from the software was performed, where we focused on the cases where figurative elements were used to describe the nature of the target domain LANGUAGE. The qualitative analysis consisted of looking at the instances of figurative thought and talk in their discursive context. This entailed considerations of who used particular imagery where and when, whether it was an unplanned or deliberate act, and what the responses of the other disputants were like: were the images co-constructed in agreement or by denial and resistance?

4. Results: The imagery of language through the lens of values

The analysis starts with a general overview of the value systems emerging from language crisis discourse in Section 4.1. In Sections 4.2–4.5 we explain and illustrate the figurative language that the disputants used to strengthen their arguments, according to underlying value models. The dynamics of the discourse is reported in a separate publication (Vainik and Paulsen 2023).

4.1. General overview

The general overview of how the expressed values correlated with the figurative use of language is presented in Table 1. The open-scheme tagging of the examined texts resulted in 29 bottom level value categories related to language and its standardisation. The most frequent of these were the labels “freedom”, “clarity and correctness”, “development”, “actual usage of language”, and “eternity, endurance”. Fundamentally, the values revealed opposing tendencies: the qualities desirable from the point of view of some discussants were viewed by others as

anti-values, i.e. as phenomena society should avoid. Critical to the divergence of values were attitudes towards a) language change, b) regulatory policy, c) the existence of ideals (such as instrumentality or aesthetics), and d) emotional engagement.

The attitudes of discussants can be generalised as two different value models operating in the background, which we labelled as “conservative” and “liberal” mindsets (see Table 1)⁹. The polarising subcategories were also divided into more inclusive value categories on the far left side of Table 1 as: 1) eternity, endurance, 2) (in)tolerance of diversity, 3) ideals to strive for, and 4) emotional engagement.

The open scheme tagging for imagery of the target domain of LANGUAGE resulted in 36 different types, of which the most frequent and recurring ones were: BUILDING, SUPPORTEE¹⁰, PERSON, LIVING BEING, CONTRACT, TOOL, etc. Table 1 presents the system of values, together with the imagery stemming from the subcategories of values that the two mindsets prioritised. Bold is used for the value (sub)categories and small caps for the source domains of conceptual metaphors. The cells with imagery missing or occurring as anti-values are shown in light grey.

⁹ Note that in the analysis in Sections 4.2–4.5, we refer to the realisations of these mindsets also as “liberal voices” vs. “conservative voices”, with the only purpose of describing the figurative expressions reflecting the two value models.

¹⁰ The label SUPPORTEE is a proxy for the Estonian *abivajaja* ‘lit. something or someone in need of help or care’. The original Estonian term is neutral in respect of animacy or gender.

Table 1. The system of values regarding language and standardisation, as well as the preferred imagery

General values	Subcategories & Imagery	Liberal	Conservative
Eternity, endurance	Changeability vs. steadiness	Natural development	Changes are a potential threat
	LIVING BEING	A natural phenomenon, adaptation to a new situation	Questioned
	SUPPORTEE, PROTEGEE, VICTIM	Not questioned, hardly used	Language in need of urgent help; protection from wrongdoers
	PLANTS & GARDENING	Not questioned, not used	The image of plants and a garden in need of maintenance
	BUILDING	Too much stability → need for reconstruction and renovation	Stability is desired but threatened → the demolition aspect
(In)tolerance of diversity	Advocated regulatory policy	Freedom of one's linguistic choices	Need for norms and restrictions
	SOCIAL SUBJECT	Attribution of freedom, democracy	Anti-value ridiculed by means of irony
	LIVING BEING	Welcoming of (bio)diversity	Anti-value ridiculed by means of irony
	PLANTS; GARDENING	Not used	Plants and a garden in need of protection from intruders
	CONTRACT	Voluntary and responsibility	Compulsory, precise, and forever
Ideals to strive for	Instrumental	Actual usage	Uniformity and precision
	TOOL	Perfect as it is, flexibility and efficiency	Precision and efficiency
	TOY	Simplicity, accessibility, playfulness and creativity	Anti-value ridiculed by means of irony
	Aesthetic	Creativity	Beauty
	GARDEN	Not used	Image of a beautiful garden in need of maintenance
	Purity	Welcoming whatever occurs in natural usage	Avoiding foreign influences
	GOOD IS CLEAN/BAD IS DIRTY	Used ironically, attributing it to opponents	Genuine=good=pure; foreign=bad=dirty
Emotional engagement	Psychological	Sympathy	Empathy
	HUMAN BEING	Love, sympathy with language's health and well-being	Love, compassion; pity for suffering

4.2. Eternity, endurance

There is one central value, the *continuation of the Estonian language through time*, that did not turn into an anti-value: there is no conflict of values on this question from either a conservative or liberal standpoint. However, argumentation and the use of figurative language show that the opinions about the way to achieve continuance differed radically. Firstly, conflicting values occurred with respect to what kind of development path would support this value: changeability or stability. From the perspective of liberals, the endurance of language was assured through its natural evolution, while the conservative view considered linguistic changes potential threats. The dichotomy of sub-values is also recognisable in the ways certain source domains were mapped onto the target domain of language.

The disputants speaking in favour of the natural development of language preferred the metaphor of LANGUAGE-AS-LIVING BEING¹¹. Expressions such as *living language vs. dead language, vitality, health, extinction of the language* and *organism of the language* revealed the underlying conceptual metaphor. In the context of the goal of endurance, the emphasis was rather on the adaptability of language, thus borrowing insights or scenarios from evolutionary biology. The image of the living being was used notably by liberal linguists: *Language is not a static list prescribed by dictionaries, but a living phenomenon* (21.10/Ling/LR); and *That language changes over time, however, is a feature of every living language* (22.04/Ling/LL). *The vitality of a language* was also seen as a benefit of the ongoing debate (22.10/Ling/BK), as was linguistic diversity: *alongside the standardised written language, it is the varieties of a language used in different regions or situations that keep a language alive* (22.10/Ling/KP).

The figure of LANGUAGE-AS-LIVING BEING as embedded in the scenario of the STRUGGLE FOR LIFE was questioned by conservative voices: *The claim that the Estonian language will go extinct if researchers do not start developing it in a new way is worth examining* (21.06/Jour/KT); *When it is said that language is changing [...] this refers to the notion of language as untouched nature – like a primeval forest – that changes independently of man, by itself* (21.12/Ling/PN).

A recurrent metaphor associated above all with the conservative mindset was conceptualising language as a SUPPORTEE. The concept stemmed originally from the Estonian

¹¹ There are two kinds of notations for conceptual metaphors. One is the formula as a proposition, e.g. ARGUMENT IS WAR, as originally proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), and the other is the practice of referring in a more general manner, in which case the target domain and source domain are captured in one expression connected by hyphens, e.g. the UNDERSTANDING-AS-SEEING metaphor, as used by E. Sweetser (1990). We prefer to use the more general way of referring where appropriate.

term *keelehoole* ‘language maintenance,’ lit. “care-giving to language.” The figure of the SUPPORTEE was hardly used by liberals, nor did they question it overtly. The figure was heavily exploited by language practitioners who saw language change as the main danger to the endurance of the Estonian language.

The Estonian language was portrayed as under threat from English (21.02/Edit/VK) and from the reformation plans regarding the standardisation of Estonian (21.04/Mult/MH). The image of the SUPPORTEE was one that was amplified during debates: from a SUPPORTEE to a PROTEGEE and further into the role of VICTIM: *So what or who is weak and in need of protection in today's Estonian language life? It is not students who need protection from teachers, authors from editors, south Estonians from north Estonians, women from men, or people from the repressive linguists of the past, but it is the Estonian language that needs protection* (22.03/Edit/MK). The figure of the VICTIM was even more amplified when the ongoing debate became framed as a WAR or defensive BATTLE against the higher order institutions who were suspected of favouring language corruption: *The Estonian written language is attacked by institutions in higher positions* (22.04/Jour/AK), and *The Jacobins of the Language Institute cancel the Estonian written language* (22.10/Jour/ME).

Another conservative image related to aid was the metaphor of language forms as PLANTS to be protected in a well-tended GARDEN. Like plants in a garden, language was seen to be in need of constant and meticulous maintenance. Plant images appeared in such expressions as *take root*, ‘entrench’, *proliferate*, *the natural lushness of language*, *pruning*, *nerfing*, *uprooting*, etc. The conservative voices compare linguistic variation to weeds and a negative scenario was described in order to threaten the proponents of natural development: [...] *if the norm of written language is deliberately abolished, over time variation will increase, just as weeds grow if a garden is not tended* (21.06/Jour/ME).

A source domain of metaphorical mapping that both the conservative and liberal voices share was that of BUILDING. In literature, the metaphor has been described as conceptualising stability and persistence (Kövecses 2018: 47). In the case of the current discussion the LANGUAGE-AS-BUILDING metaphor captured, however, different aspects of the source domain (see Table 1). Conservative voices saw stability as desirable, and every hint of losing stability was seen as a threat; thus, in their utterances, instances of BUILDING represented threats to permanency, in particular through the scenario of demolition: *language teaching based on rules is fading away* (21.06/Jour/KT); [...] *they want to pull down the house again and start over [...] So that they can erect the Tower of Babel in the wasteland?* (21.06/Jour/MK). Linguists stressed an alternative – a constructive scenario – when using the image of LANGUAGE-AS-BUILDING: *the*

foundations of the written language are laid at school, on which the (literary) language experience of future life is built (22.12/Ling/MA). For the most liberal participants, the image of BUILDING related to stagnation and a need for renovation, which involved a witty and deliberate comparison: *to keep the language fixed would be the equivalent of not rebuilding khrushchevkas*¹² (22.09/Ling/LR). Hence, the image of BUILDING was stretched to explain the need for the renewal of language.

4.3. Attitudes towards diversity

The general (either favourable or intolerant) attitude towards (linguistic) diversity occurred in the preferred language regulation policies. Fundamentally, the conservative viewpoint involved the idea that clear norms and restrictions were required, while liberals emphasised democracy and freedom of linguistic choices, which also meant more personal responsibility.

Liberal values were highlighted in the personification of language as a SOCIAL SUBJECT that encompassed attributes typical to social sciences: *free* and *democratic* (as opposed to *authoritarian* or *totalitarian*). This type of personification was, in fact, one of the driving forces behind the heated emotions and reactions in the language crisis, starting with the article that launched the debate (“Linguists: The Estonian language is free, but it could be even freer” (20.10/Ling/MM)). The viewpoint that valued individual linguistic choices was interpreted by the advocates of the conservative value model as a call for linguistic “complete tolerance”, a rule-free, flabby behavioural standard (21.06/Mult/GR).

Questioning the conceptualisation of LANGUAGE-AS-SOCIAL SUBJECT led to its use ironically, as a deliberate metaphor, by conservative voices. The editorial “Freeing language from shackles” amplified the personification, with shackles referring to slavery, implying a ridiculing scenario or framing. Linguists were ironically called *the liberators of the written language* (21.06/Jour/KT). The same scenario was used by another author in ridiculing the scientific endeavour as *linguistic steam spent on “liberating”* certain words from an enforced differentiation of meanings (22.02/Edit/HS). Interestingly, not everyone in the discourse understood the metaphorical nature of the image LANGUAGE-AS-SOCIAL SUBJECT and started to ask questions, e.g. *Would language be liberated too much?* (21.06/Mult/GR) and saying: *Language doesn’t have to be caged* (22.03/Outs/EL), which was meta-represented in ironic turns by the liberal scientists: *The dictionary reform has nothing to do with freedom of language or*

¹² Standard (Soviet-era) buildings containing small flats, mainly common in the 1960s (definition from the EKI Combined Dictionary, available at <https://sõnaveeb.ee/search/unif/dlall/dsall/hruštšovka/1>).

with its possible imprisonment (21.06/Mult/GR); *There is no such thing as freeing meanings because meanings have never been imprisoned, especially not by the Institute of the Estonian language* (22.09/Ling/AT). Anyhow, the conservative voices tended to see freedom as negative, even repressive and imposed by rulers: *Freedom imposed from above has been the main weapon of all autocrats* (22.10/Trans/HS).

Another metaphor characteristic of liberal voices was LANGUAGE-AS-LIVING BEING, which fits into the scenario of welcoming diversity and conceptualising language as an ecosystem. While in connection with the value of endurance this metaphor was questioned by the conservative voices (see previous section), and in the case of addressing language policies, it was ridiculed: *In the case of non-literary language, it should not be anyone's business to suggest anything, nor should anyone have any reason to object to any use of language: every bird sings in terms of how its beak is shaped – a question of biodiversity!* (22.04/Jour/AK).

Instead of social-psychological personification, the conservative voices used the metaphor of PLANT and the scenario of GARDENING. One of the opinions published was a perfect allegory instantiating this scenario, titled “On the situation in the language garden”, where the relationship of language and its caregiver was described as a relationship between a garden/plants and a good gardener. There the issue of linguistic diversity and the speaker's free choice of linguistic forms was depicted with concern: *You can see, right here in the right-hand corner, the owner has tried to preserve wildlife [...] It has been hinted that the plan is to fill the entire garden with nothing but biodiversity.* (21.09/Edit/HM). Other conservative voices used a negative scenario of the Estonian language, *a garden or a park that is about to be neglected [...] where alien species (-loans) will begin to proliferate*, and doubts were expressed as to *whether the linguistic coppice that is growing up in the world's winds will ever grow into proper Estonian* (22.10/Outs/TK).

The liberal voices did not respond to the framing of language planning as taking care of a garden, apparently, because this did not fit their values regarding preferred regulatory policy (= fewer regulations, more choice, and more individual responsibility). They did not take it seriously, neither opposing it nor being ironic about it. They just ignored the scenario.

A metaphor used often by the representatives of both value models was LANGUAGE-AS-CONTRACT, highlighting the social/societal character of language. However, the two sides focused on different interpretations of this notion, which eventually led to misunderstandings. In the early stages of the debate, portraying language in terms of (voluntary and responsible) agreement was more characteristic of the proponents of the liberal value model: [...] *language is an agreement that people voluntarily follow; [...] how we write in Estonian is a social*

agreement (20.10/Ling/MM); *It is the norm, or social agreement on which communication and the functioning of society in general are based* (21.06/Ling/AT). Later in the discussion, the proposed scenario became somewhat uncomfortable for the liberals, as the conservative discussants took the agreed nature of language literally and failed to understand why, for example, linguists argued that words could not have firmly agreed upon meanings. The liberal scientists started to argue that *even words whose meanings are not agreed upon are intelligible* [...] *Not to mention the fact that the meanings of words must somehow be agreed upon in order for language to be understood or to survive* (22.05/Ling/AT). The conservative voices insisted on the metaphor LANGUAGE-AS-CONTRACT, which depicts language rules as compulsory, precise and, valid forever. At the most heated point of the debate, the Estonian Chancellor of Justice phrased the conservative opinion as: [...] *words must have agreed upon meanings, and sentences must have agreed upon orders of words* [...] (22.10/State/ÜM).

4.4. Ideals to strive for

Both liberal and conservative value models had their visions of language, its nature, and its capabilities. In the case of the liberal mindset, the voicing was somewhat modest as they preferred to talk about the actual usage of language as a reality that established norms, while in the conservative mindset, the vision was overtly called an ideal of three kinds: instrumental, aesthetic, or striving for purity.

In regard to the instrumental ideal (or function for the liberals), language was conceptualised as a TOOL by both sides, revealed by such attributes as *rigid* vs. *flexible*, and *blunt* vs. *sharp*. The conservative attitude, which reinforced correctness and accuracy, was characteristically summed up as: *Language – both oral and written – is a means of communication – A tool, if you like; [...] And every tool must be as practical, efficient and handy as possible* (21.12/Outs/LV). The high expectations of language as a refined tool were expressed in the following simile: *Written language is a tool, like a scalpel in the hands of a vascular surgeon* [...] (22.10/Edit/HS).

The liberal value model agrees with the LANGUAGE-AS-TOOL metaphor, highlighting such qualities as flexibility, efficiency, and convenience, and seeing no need to further fine-tune that tool: *Through evolution, we have built ourselves an efficient tool, fine-tuned to our needs, which works just as it is* (21.06/Ling/AT). The accuracy and precision of LANGUAGE-AS-TOOL were overtly denied: *Precise expression is basically impossible in language* (22.09/Ling/AT). The Chancellor of Justice clearly supported the value of language as a tool, *inter alia* as a means of

maintaining links between generations: *Language is a tool for thinking and carries with it the experience of generations* (22.10/State/ÜM). In that statement, the instrumental ideal is intertwined with the general value of eternal endurance.

A metaphor competing with the TOOL was that of LANGUAGE-AS-TOY, which reinforced such qualities as accessibility, playfulness, and creativity. The scenario of linguistic fun and playfulness was adopted by those who followed the liberal value model: *You can play with everything, and it is particularly desirable to play with the language you speak* (22.03/Outs/EL); *Language is a source of joy and playfulness* (22.05/Ling/AT); *Play instead of angst* (22.09/Ling/LR). This carefree and light-hearted attitude towards language was challenged by opponents: *first, the Estonian language is not a toy lying on the street but represents one of the highest values of all – identity* (22.09/Outs/AV). The image of LANGUAGE-AS-TOY was rejected, and the light-hearted attitude was disapproved of in ironic utterances by the conservatives, who foresaw a negative scenario: [...] *freedom from norms and rules, the denial of the need for a standard, is bad news for the consumers of written language, as well as for all those who love to play* (22.10/Edit/HS); *If you set out to smash norms in the name of joy and playfulness, joy and playfulness will be the first to go* (22.10/Trans/HS).

It appears that the image of the GARDEN, exploited by the conservative voices was also used to promote the aesthetic appreciation of the “ideal” language, as the allegory “On the situation in the garden of language” very expressively described the beauty of the well-maintained garden (i.e. standardised language): *I mow regularly, at the right height, so that the eye has a good view of a smooth and even landscape. [...] I prune the ornamental shrubs to make them look nice. [...] The whole place looks simple but nice and tidy. [...] The lawns are lined with pretty benches; [...] All of the flowers are arranged according to colour and growth.* The gardener also expressed her pity and sadness because of the owner’s decision to leave the garden untidy because biodiversity had been declared to be a value above aesthetics and purity (21.09/Edit/HM).

The ideal of linguistic purity drove the conservatives to oppose foreign influences: *Foreign influences lead to the impoverishment and monotony of the language because the rich possibilities of the mother tongue are pushed out by actively invading forms [...]* (21.02/Edit/VK). A dismissive attitude was expressed by using the conventional conceptual metaphor GOOD IS CLEAN/BAD IS DIRTY (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). Expressions such as *gutting* and *decontaminating* were used to describe the process of escaping foreign influences, whereas the attitude of tolerating variance in language was called *dirtying*: *At the same time, the dictionary soils the language particularly boldly* (22.10/Outs/LV). The ideal of purity was also

present in the allegory of the Language Garden: *to root out superfluous weeds. [...] You have to be especially attentive to foreign species, e.g. the Portuguese slug, which simply needs to be eliminated so that it does not harm the garden* (21.09/Edit/HM).

4.5. Emotional engagement

The general value category of emotional engagement in language was expressed via personification in psychological terms by the metaphor LANGUAGE-AS-HUMAN BEING. This was revealed by assigning language psychological states (e.g. *(not) satisfying* language, language's *well-being* and *suffering*) and human-like activities (e.g. *meeting one's mother tongue, being cared for* and *language's appeal*).

The psychologising approach led to expressing an emotional attachment to language, evident in both the conservative and the liberal value models. The difference was that liberals showed affection and sympathy, while conservatives showed compassion and empathy. Controversial words were humorously referred to as “the unfortunate paronyms” by the conservative voices (22.02/Edit/HS); the practitioners also empathised with the language's fate in the dictionary: *if you put these two language variants with different functions together in one dictionary, one of them will inevitably suffer* (22.03/Edit/HM). The liberal mindset led to sympathetic “caring for the well-being of the Estonian language” (22.10/Ling/BK) and a full-blown presentation of the concept of “language welfare” (22.10/Ling/KP).

5. Summary and discussion

The emotional debate called the “language crisis” in Estonia (2020–2022) revealed aspects typical of a crisis: threatened values, the urgency to take action, ambiguity, and uncertainty. The intensity of communication took the form of expressive messages and figurative speech reflecting the values of the participants.

The objective of this study, to examine the relation between values and the patterns of figurative thought as expressed in public opinions, is based on the figurative conceptualisation of LANGUAGE, the central notion in the language crisis discourse. We approached this issue by examining the conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) that contributed to the framing of the language in a critical situation (Burgers *et al.* 2016) from the perspective of threatened values as one of the defining concepts of a crisis. The complexity of the language crisis discourse

was also examined in terms of (positive and negative) scenarios (Musolff 2016) that dominated the discussions, emerging around the main metaphors conceptualising LANGUAGE.

The examination of the research question targeting the nature of the core values of the disputants regarding language and its maintenance (cf. Section 2) revealed a hierarchic and bipolar value model. The two opposing parties with different positions on language and language planning issues represented the dichotomy of liberal and conservative value models. The linguists generally represented the liberal value model, and the language practitioners reflected conservative values (with the exception of a few conservative-minded linguists).

One of the peculiarities of the hierarchical value system was that, on a higher level, the disputants agreed on the higher value of “endurance of the Estonian language”. However, the subcategories of that value reflected the opposed notions regarding the ways to achieve this goal: while the liberal voices emphasised the adaptive aspects of language, welcoming natural development, the conservative voices saw changes as potential threats to the stability of language.

The contrast between the two general value models was clearly noticeable in the rest of the higher-order value categories: tolerance vs. intolerance of diversity, the ideals to strive for (creativity and variability in actual language usage vs. the beauty of a uniform and precise standardised language), and the types of emotional engagement (sympathy vs. empathy) as the psychological conceptualisation of language. For an overview of the hierarchical bipolar value system, see Table 1 (Section 4.1), where the two poles are illustrated with the main figures of thought and speech that reveal either adherence, ignorance, or aversion to particular values.

As to the question of the type of figurative expressions used in the language crisis discourse in the conceptualisation of the target domain of LANGUAGE, the imagery was quite rich (36 different types: BUILDING, SUPPORTEE, LIVING BEING, CONTRACT, TOOL, etc.; see Section 4.1, and in more detail Vainik and Paulsen 2023). In the current analysis, we did not strive to demonstrate the full ontological tree of the source domains (e.g. we did not connect HUMAN BEING and SUPPORTEE under the general category of LIVING BEING, nor did we unite PLANTS and GARDENING under that broader category) but rather how the phenomena known from common knowledge were used to depict different aspects of the target domain for the sake of persuasion and insisting on certain scenarios for acting. Here we paid attention to the choice of imagery – either unconscious or deliberate – that corresponded to the value models of the disputants, i.e. the answer to the third research question.

The qualitative analysis thus showed clear correspondences between the figurative conceptualisation of language and the author’s professional and value-based engagement with

language, as we had hypothesised. The results also show that the conservative and liberal attitudes were clearly reflected in a variety of figurative means: both conventional and deliberate metaphors were used, as well as figurative framing (Burgers *et al.* 2016) and metaphorical scenarios (Musolff 2016).

The conservative-minded discussants, who were mostly language practitioners, such as editors, translators, and teachers, highly valued the quality of written language. They used the LANGUAGE-AS-TOOL metaphor in which the efficiency and sharpness of the tool were emphasised. They felt that endurance was guaranteed only if language norms were compulsory, precise and lasted forever in line with an explicit CONTRACT. The metaphorical quality of the notion of a contract as proposed by the liberal-minded linguists was ignored. The conservative voices perceived the stability of language as desirable and threatened, and therefore the demolition aspect of the BUILDING metaphor was easily activated and promoted in their argumentation. The resulting scenario was that the Estonian language was conceptualised as in need of urgent help and protection from wrongdoers and therefore the metaphor of the SUPPORTEE was gradually amplified into the PROTEGEE and even further into the VICTIM in the broader frame of the language BATTLE (see Vainik and Paulsen 2023). A parallel scenario was the LANGUAGE-AS-GARDEN in need of maintenance and protection from intruders, in which the metaphoric equations were made that GENUINE = GOOD = PURE; FOREIGN = BAD = DIRTY. Overall, it made sense to personify language emphatically and figuratively express feelings of love, compassion, and pity for its sufferings.

The liberally-minded discussants (mostly institutionally engaged linguists) had a more relaxed conception of language, as their profession involved observing, describing, and explaining language as constantly changing. Their favourite metaphor was LANGUAGE-AS-LIVING-BEING, framed in the course of evolution (as if a natural phenomenon). They expressed no fear of changes and variability and advocated (bio)diversity. Their preferred scenario was “endurance thorough development”. If anything, they felt that too much stability could be seen as a threat to language’s survival, so the BUILDING metaphor was exploited creatively by calling for “language renovation”. The liberals valued the LANGUAGE-AS-TOOL for its flexibility and efficiency in its current state, expressing no need to subject it to excessive refinement. They even proposed a LANGUAGE-AS-TOY metaphor, advocating for simplicity, accessibility, playfulness and creativity, an approach strictly rejected by the conservatives. The liberals personified language in two different ways. They attributed qualities of the SOCIAL SUBJECT (such as freedom) and they used a more psychological account and sympathised with language by appreciating its well-being and wishing it good health.

The figuratively amplified values sometimes shifted into anti-values during the debates. What was of value to one side might be of no value or even be seen negatively by the other side. For instance, regarding the shared value of the endurance of Estonian, the participants emphasised different solutions and accordingly different figurative expressions in ways of achieving the goal. The opponents' scenarios were also creatively used for "meta-representational effects", i.e. by reinterpretation in a humorous and hyperbolic manner and making allusions to previous uses in the discourse (see Musolff 2016: 33 and his reference to Sperber 2000).

As Table 1 reveals, the two value models showed preferences for metaphoric conceptualisation. The values of the disputants not only conditioned the use of figurative language but also the perspectives on the imagery used in the discourse: with shared conceptual metaphors (e.g. TOOL, BUILDING, or CONTRACT), different aspects were highlighted that fit the underlying values. For instance, both PLANTS & GARDENING and LIVING BEING can be considered connected with nature, although in the language debate they served opposing values. The two sides used separate metaphors (the image of the LIVING BEING was even ridiculed by the conservative voices) and both of these framings had historical traditions.

The biological metaphor of LANGUAGE-AS-LIVING BEING originating in evolutionary biology and promoted by the liberal-minded linguists is not new in language sciences: it was popular as early as the 19th century. It was the school of historical-comparative linguistics that first introduced the notion of language as a living organism, with reproductive capability and ending in death (Haugen 1972: 326). The parallel between the diversity of nature and the diversity of the world's languages has also been tackled from a transdisciplinary viewpoint (see Koreinik 2023, and her references to Maffi 2005).

The metaphors of PLANTS and GARDENING, favoured by the conservative voices, related to the imagery of linguistic purism, identified with the efforts to preserve a language from corruption and foreign influence. Pajunen (2023) has noted that a purist approach is not so much focused on the creation of a pure language as reflecting the opinions of language users about, for example, the deterioration of language skills or language decay. This tendency also emerged in our data. Purists aimed to keep the language pure by eliminating unwanted influences from the language, both foreign and indigenous. The scenario of PLANTS and GARDENING was clearly connected with the self-image of the purist as defined by George Thomas (1991). He found *the gardener* to be one of the most prominent images for depicting purists' mentality and activities, and the image of a *garden* in need of careful cultivation as not only one of the most popular themes in the apologetics of purism but also a metaphor incorporated into linguistic theories as

the Prague School theory of standard languages and modern language planning (Thomas 1991: 20–21).¹³

An advantage and disadvantage of figurative thought and expression is its partiality: by highlighting some aspects of the reality being constructed it also hides other aspects (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Kövecses 2018). By doing so, the ideational metafunction (Halliday 2003) can only be partially realised. The main function of figurative expression in interpersonal terms – and in the case of inter-institutional terms – is to accomplish solidarity within the group and to affirm dominance over others. In the analysed discourse, values were turned into anti-values via questioning or ridiculing the central values and images of the opposite view by means of figurative framing: denial, selective amplification, ridiculing, and irony. This tendency was almost entirely one-directional – the conservatives questioned and ridiculed the images of liberals (LIVING BEING, SOCIAL SUBJECT, or TOY), while the liberal voices generally avoided re-framing figurative expressions used in the conservative value model.

During the language crisis discourse, the nature and function of metaphors' source domains in relation to the targets was actively assessed. The analysis showed quite a high degree of awareness of metaphor usage in language crisis writings: the main metaphors depicting language were evaluated, criticised, and resisted. These are the moments when language users took voluntary control over the ways they used metaphors to highlight and hide in expressions, conceptualisations, and communication (Steen 2017: 3). The way the metaphors originated in conventional knowledge can be interpreted as exploiting or imposing certain “metaphor scenarios” in Musolff's terms (2016: 135): “At the level of ‘acceptance’, metaphors are integrated as scenarios, complete with seemingly self-evident default conclusions, into the hearer's world-view”. Our study indicates that “non-acceptance” questions the opponent's ideology. Thereby, the distinctions in the ways the main participants, scientists and practitioners, related to language reflected two contrasting value systems, liberal vs. conservative.

Public linguistics is a democratising movement, breaking down the divisions between the academic world and the wider community (Price and McIntyre 2023). Public engagement was present in building the combined dictionary of Estonian, the CombiDic: the openness to changes

¹³ The value of purism for linguists is succinctly formulated by Thomas (1991: XX): “For most linguists, however, purity is a notion which is alien to the very nature of language, and recent attempts to tackle the social factors and attitudes which shape language use have failed to give due consideration to the effect of purism on the development of language.”

and critique was emphasised, and the feedback of users was welcomed¹⁴. Why did this pursuit turn into reluctance and even protests?

The language crisis discourse showed that the roles of dominance did not follow the expected order between institutions and practitioners: there were even signs of “disorder” in the institutional party. The power relations occurred in an almost schizoid way: power structures did not want to exercise power, but subordinate structures insisted on it. The non-linguists favouring prescriptivism wanted clear recommendations on what the written Estonian should look like and claimed authority to stipulate linguistic choices. These strong insights tended to take precedence over linguistic arguments.

Another aspect characteristic of power relations is that the institutional view, although permissive, is still perceived as a top-down ideology and hence compulsory. While the expected hierarchy of dominance failed because the institutions in charge promoted liberal values, new relations of dominance were strived for in the discussion by the sharers of conservative values. This was done, mostly, by selectively amplifying and ironically ridiculing the imagery used to promote liberal values. The striving for true hierarchy was satisfied by the presence of higher order state officials (the Chancellor of Justice and the Minister of Science and Education) in the discourse and by reaffirming that standardised Estonian would be protected, and that the practitioners would be provided with dictionaries that met their expectations (22.10/State/TL; 22.10/State/ÜM; 22.11/Mult/JV).

Opinion writing builds on the writer’s values, as well as on evaluative positions. The language crisis discourse indicated that values or their violation tended to be accompanied by expressions of emotions, which can be seen as building blocks of attitudinal positioning.¹⁵ The evaluation directly influenced the interpersonal level of meanings, and indirectly the ideational meanings by affecting the choice of particular imagery and thus contributing to the figurative construction of reality.

The differences in the emotional attitude towards language by the representatives of the two value models are explainable by their immediate emotions in the situation perceived as a threat to their values and uncertainty: the conservative authors (mostly the language practitioners) were concerned and expressed fear, doubt, frustration, and other negative emotions in their passages

¹⁴ Margit Langemets and Peeter Päll in *Kirjakeele norm ja EKI sõnastikud* [The written language standard and the dictionaries of the Institute of the Estonian Language] (2021-01-04), on the website of the Institute of the Estonian Language, <https://keeleabi.eki.ee/?leht=8&id=451>

¹⁵ White (2008), examining evaluative disposition, defines the attitudinal modes of the positive/negative stance on three axes: feelings (emotional reactions), tastes (assessments of human behavior), and values.

quite openly, while the liberally-minded authors (mostly linguists) experienced no uncertainty or urgency about the situation and expressed their confidence that the Estonian language “is doing well” generally, and that the discussion was good for the language (“The Estonian language excites, the Estonian language is cared for – after all, all of these discussions are actually good for the Estonian language” (22.12/Ling/BK)).

The discourse of the language crisis revealed perceived threats to some of the core values of interested subjects and institutions, as well as emotional upheaval that translated into highly expressive usage of language, while providing arguments for the preferred scenarios of action or warnings against scenarios that should be avoided. As is typical to a crisis, the heated discussions of language and its norms forced the engaged participants to assess reflectively. Did the discussions lead to a new track regarding the pressing concern of language standardisation? The future will show if this is the case.

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Appendix. List of the sources

Abbreviations of the authorial positions: Ling – linguist; Jour – journalist; Edit – language editor; Mult – multiple voices; Trans – translator; Outs – outsider; State – state representative.

Time/authorial position/initials	Publisher	Author's names	Title	Translation of the title
20.10/Ling/MM	ERR	Merit Maarits	Keeleteadlased: eesti keel on vaba, aga võiks olla veel vabam	Linguists: the Estonian language is free, but could be freer still.
20.12/Jour/IT	ERR	Indrek Treufltd	Keel võib olla kindlus	Language can be a castle.
21.01/Ling/ML	SIRP	Margit Langemets, Peeter Päll	Muutuv ÕS	Changing ÕS (ÕS=prescriptive dictionary)
21.02/Edit/VK	SIRP	Väino Klaus	Inglispärase grammatika pealetung	The onslaught of English-style grammar
21.03/Edit/RR	SIRP	Riina Reinsalu, Helika Mäekivi	Keeletoimetaja muutuste ristteel	The language editor at the crossroads of change
21.04/Mult/MH	SIRP	kollektiivne	Pöördumine seoses EKI algatatud sõnastikureformiga	An address in relation to the dictionary reform launched by the Institute of the Estonian Language
21.05/Ling/AT	SIRP	Arvi Tavast	Vastus pöördumisele seoses EKI algatatud sõnastikureformiga	Response to the appeal concerning the dictionary reform launched by the Institute of the Estonian Language
21.05/Ling/LL	KK	Liina Lindström	Keelekorraldus meie elu kujundamas	Language planning is shaping our lives.
21.06/Mult/GR	ERR	Greeta-Liisa Roosve	EKI sõnastikureform tekitab keeleinimestes tusk	Dictionary reform causes anguish among language practitioners.
21.06/Jour/AK	SIRP	Aili Künstler	Mis on „neutraalse“ keelearenduse tegelik eesmärk?	What is the real purpose of 'neutral' language development?
21.06/Jour/KT	SIRP	Kaarel Tarand	Keel vabaneb ahelaist	Freeing language from shackles
21.06/Mult/IO	PM	Indrek Ojamets	Sõnastikureform tekitab segadust ja palju küsimusi	Dictionary reform causes confusion and raises many questions.
21.06/ÕP/HR	ERR	Hanneli Rudi	Eesti keele õpetaja: jääb mulje, et käib vaikne ÕS-i kaotamine	Estonian language teacher: the impression is that there is a silent abolition of the ÕS (ÕS=prescriptive dictionary).
21.06/Jour/ME	PM	Martin Ehala	Kirjakeel kui rõhumise tööriist	Written language as a tool of oppression
21.06/Jour/MK	PM	Mari Klein	Metaraie või mestaraie	Meta-clearance of the clearance of <i>mesto</i> 'place' (Rus)
21.06/Ling/AT	PM	Arvi Tavast	Kirjakeel kui kokkulepe	Written language as an agreement
21.06/Jour/AK	SIRP	Aili Künstler, Helika Mäekivi	Pealelend – Helika Mäekivi, Eesti Keeletoimetajate Liidu juhatuse esimees	Dessant – Helika Mäekivi, Chair of the Board of the Estonian Association of Language Editors
21.06/Trans/ML	SIRP	Mall Laur	Liiasuse printsiip ja sõnastikureform	The principle of redundancy and dictionary reform
21.07/Ling/TH	SIRP	Tiit Hennoste	Kirjakeel hõlmab täitunud kirjakeel	Written language includes a full-fledged written language.
21.07/Ling/RA	KK	Reili Argus, Annika Hussar,	Ikka sõnastikest, keelekorraldusest ja -	Still on dictionaries, language planning and editing

		Airi Männik	toimetamisest	
21.09/Edit/HM	ERR	Helika Mäekivi	Olukorrast keeleaias	On the situation in the language garden
21.10/Jour/AK	SIRP	Aili Künstler, Helika Mäekivi	Pealelend – Helika Mäekivi, Eesti Keeletoimetajate Liidu esimees	Dessant – Helika Mäekivi, Chair of the Estonian Editors' Association
21.10/Jour/AK	SIRP	Aili Künstler	Kas keeletoimetaja ameti koht on ajaloo prügikastis?	Is the language editor's place in history's dustbin?
21.10/Ling/LR	PM	Lydia Risberg, Küllli Habicht	Loendipõhisusest kasutuspõhisuseni	From list-basedness to usage-basedness
21.11/Edit/HM	ERR	Helika Mäekivi	Keeletoimetaja sõnaloendid	Linguistic editor's word lists
21.12/Outs/LV	ERR	Lauri Vahtre	Kui keel on segi, siis on kõik segi	When language is messy, everything is messy
21.12/Ling/PN	SIRP	Peep Nemvalts	Eesti keelekorralduse sasipuntrad	The entanglements of Estonian language planning
22.02/Edit/HS	SIRP	Hille Saluäär	Sõnadest ei saa isu täis ehk Elukestva emakeeleõppe kaitseks	Words don't satisfy the appetite, or in defence of lifelong mother tongue learning
22.02/Edit/HM	ERR	Helika Mäekivi	Sõnatähendusest keelekorralduseni	From the meaning of words to language planning
22.03/Edit/HM	ERR	Helika Mäekivi	Keelekorraldusest kirjakeeleni	From language to written language
22.03/Outs/EL	ERR	Eliis Lelov	Keelt ei pea puuris hoidma	Language does not have to be caged.
22.03/Edit/MK	ERR	Mari Koik	Keele-elu ja nõrgemate kaitse	Language-life and the protection of the weakest
22.04/Jour/AK	SIRP	Aili Künstler	Kutsun üles keelerindel sõda lõpetama	Calling for an end to the war on language
22.04/Ling/LL	ERR	Liina Lindström	Eesti keel olgu mugav töövahend, mitte vesikivikaelas	Let the Estonian language be a handy tool, not a millstone around the neck.
22.05/Ling/AT	ERR	Arvi Tavast	Milleks meile eesti keel?	What do we need Estonian for?
22.06/Outs/KV	SIRP	Kadri Vider	Sõna vabadusest, andmepõhiselt	On the freedom of the word, data-driven
22.07/Jour/MH	ERR	Marju Himma	ÕS asendub sõnaveebiga – kas keeletööriist ikka säilib?	The ÕS [ÕS = prescriptive dictionary] replaced by an e-dictionary: will the language tool survive?
22.07/Ling/KK	ERR	Krista Kerge	Targutaja tahab sõna	The know-it-all wants a say.
22.09/Outs/AV	SIRP	Anto Veldre	Kust on pärit zuumeri eesti keel?	Where does the Zoomer's Estonian come from?
22.09/Ling/LR	ERR	Lydia Risberg	Mida on ühist eesti keelel ja hruštšovkal?	What do Estonian and Khrushchev-style houses have in common?
22.09/Jour/MV	ERR	Maarja Vaino	Kultuuristuudio Arutelu küsib, kas eesti kirjakeele normi aeg on ümber?	The Culture Studio Debate asks whether the time of Estonian writing standards is over.
22.09/Ling/AT	ERR	Arvi Tavast ja Krista Kerge	Täpne väljendus on keeles põhimõtteliselt võimatu	Precise expression in language is impossible in principle.

22.10/Edit/HS	ERR	Hille Saluäär	Keelearendus kui elevant värvipoes	Language development as an elephant in a paint shop
22.10/Jour/ME	PM	Martin Ehala	Keeleinstituudi jakobiinid tühistavad eesti kirjakeelt	The Jacobins of the Language Institute cancel the Estonian written language.
22.10/State/TL	ERR	Tõnis Lukas	Õigekeelsussõnaraamatut ja reegleid on vaja	A spelling dictionary and rules are needed.
22.10/Jour/ME	PM	Martin Ehala	Keeleinstituut susserdab emakeele kallal, aga keegi ei saa aru mida täpselt	The Language Institute is messing around with the mother tongue, but no one understands exactly what this is about.
22.10/Trans/HS	ERR	Heigo Sooman	Selle maa keelekorraldus	The language planning of this country
22.10/Ling/BK	ERR	Birute Klaas-Lang	Meie ühiskonda lõhestada ka keelekriis	Our society is also threatened by language crisis.
22.10/Outs/LV	PM	Lauri Vahtre	EKI sõnaveeb õpetab eesti keelt valesti kasutama	EKI's dictionary website teaches the wrong use of the Estonian language.
22.10/State/ÜM	ERR	Ülle Madise	Eesti keel on põhiseaduse kaitse all	The Estonian language is protected by the Constitution.
22.10/Outs/TK	PM	Toomas Kiho	Kui keel on kaitseta, tuleb umbrohi peale	When a language is not protected, weeds grow on it.
22.10/Ling/KP	PM	Karl Pajusalu	Keele heaolu esmaseks aluseks on keele mitmekesine kasutus	The diverse use of language is the primary basis for language well-being.
22.11/Jour/ME	PM	Martin Ehala	Kaalul on rohkem kui	More than ÕS at stake
22.11/Outs/EL	Edasi	Erkki Luuk	Kiri, keel ja selle korraldus	The letter, language and its planning
22.11/Mult/JV	ERR	Johannes Voltri	Eesti Keele Instituut ei plaani keelekorralduses reforme	The Estonian Language Institute has no plans to reform language planning.
22.11/Ling/ML	ERR	Margit Langemets, Ene Vainik	Tõde ja õigus keeles	Truth and justice in language
22.11/Ling/RK	PM	Reet Kasik	ÕS on eesti kultuuritraditsioon	The ÕS is an Estonian cultural tradition.
22.12/Ling/ML	ERR	Margit Langemets et al.	Keele muutumisega kaasneb alati ka selle üle muretsemine	When language changes, it is always a matter of concern.
22.12/Ling/BK	ERR	Birute Klaas-Lang	Kirjakeel peab olema üheselt arusaadav	Written language must be unambiguous.
22.12/Edit/LR	ERR	Lisbeth Rats	Keeletoimetajad tunnevad muret tulevase ÕS-i pärast	Language editors are concerned about the future ÕS.
22.12/Ling/MA	SIRP	Merilin Aruvee	Emakeeleõpetus, keeleteadlikkus ja keeleallikad	Mother tongue teaching, language awareness and language sources
22.12/Ling/BK	SIRP	Birute Klaas-Lang	Eesti keelevaldkonna tulised teemad	Hot topics in the Estonian language field