

# Studying major transitions in literary communities through the Estonian National Bibliography (1800-1940)

Peeter Tinitis<sup>1,2</sup>, Krister Kruusmaa<sup>1</sup>, Laura Nemvalts<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup> National Library of Estonia, <sup>2</sup> University of Tartu

National bibliographies are collections of data that gather information on printed publications, broadly connected to a particular country (e.g. published within country's modern borders or by its diaspora abroad). Composed mostly for cataloguing, these collections have come recently to be used as datasets for cultural historical studies, as an aspect of bibliographic data science (e.g. Lahti et al. 2019). The use of this data for analysis entails data harmonization and linking to connect different spellings of publishers and authors and tie them with other relevant datasets. National bibliographies aim for comprehensiveness in their coverage and can prove a substantial source for cultural data analytics.

Here, we adopt the Estonian National bibliography to study the emergence and transformations of the Estonian language literary community in 1800-1940. The period is marked by several transformations - the use of Estonian moved from the use by German elite to native Estonians (ca. 1860-1880), the use of other languages were suppressed during russification (ca. 1885-1914), and Estonian became the official language of Republic of Estonia (1918-1940). We study these processes through the changes that took place in the community of authors, editors, and translators noted in the bibliography.

Particularly, we look at:

- the patterns of change in the languages used in reference to major historical events
- the influx of new Estonian literati during the late 19th century, compared to other nationalities, and their role in the publishing market
- the co-authorship networks of Estonian writers during and after the National Awakening

We aim to show that national bibliographies can be a formidable dataset for cultural historical studies, allowing both old questions to be addressed in new systematic ways (e.g. the influence of the period of Russification on Estonian publications) or new topics addressed in a methods rooted in data (e.g. the changing demographics of the writers during the spread of literacy and the nationalist ideas).

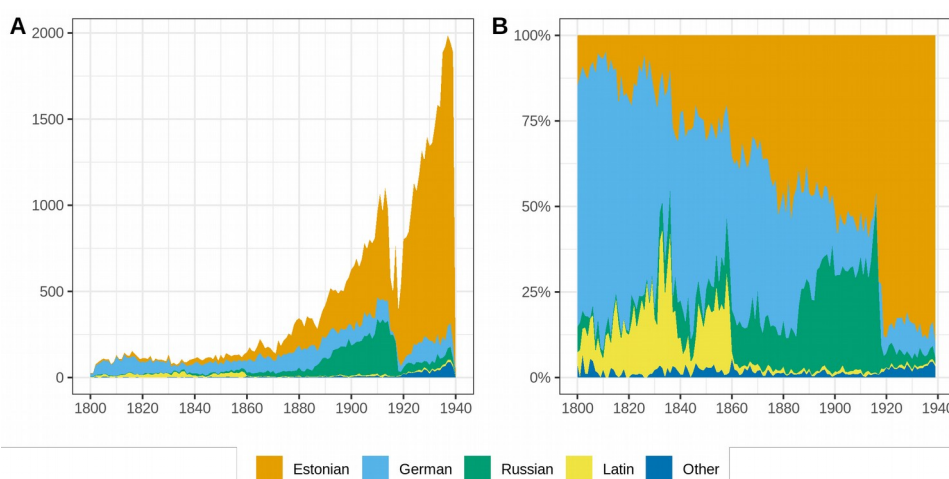


Figure 1: The distribution of languages in Estonian National Bibliography 1800-1940 (n = 62,118)

## References

Lahti, L., Marjanen, J., Roivainen, H., & Tolonen, M. (2019). Bibliographic Data Science and the History of the Book (c. 1500–1800). *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 57(1), 5-23.