

## Language Attrition

REMODUS e-learning course **2022 May 18 – June 29**

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*REMODUS – The (Re-)Making of a Discipline: Digital Transformation and Internationalization in and beyond Uralic Studies 2021–2024*

<https://remodus.univie.ac.at/>



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Numerous Uralic languages that are documented to a varying extent must today be considered extinct: there are no longer any speakers of these languages and no meaningful revitalization efforts are ongoing. For many of these languages, available evidence shows how the languages changed in the process of going extinct: there is documentation of “pre-shift” and “post-shift” variants, i.e., of the language as it was still widely spoken and comparatively vibrant and of the language as it was spoken by its terminal speakers. Contrastive surveys have shown systematic differences between these variants in phonology, morphology, and syntax. Observations on how languages can change as they go extinct are not just of value for the study of these individual languages, they are also of synchronous value for scholars studying languages with low vitality existing in precarious situations, regardless of their genealogical classification. They give them a framework within which they can contextualize their observations on systematic differences between their observations and documentation of earlier forms of the same language. Furthermore, when not brought about by genocide, language death is by default brought about by intense language contact: a speaker community over a few generations abandons its heritage language and starts using a more prestigious language instead. Uralic languages that are known to have gone extinct did so under intense contact from other Uralic languages, Indo-European languages, and Turkic languages. Thus the cases of these language extinctions are highly interesting to scholars and students working on language contacts of languages of these genealogical groupings.

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### **Schedule: Wednesdays, 16–18 Estonian time in Zoom**

#### **[1] 18.05.22**

Petar Kehayov: *Language obsolescence and language attrition: an introduction*

Notions and definitions: collective vs. individual level phenomena & sociological vs. linguistic perspective; Types of language death; Related but different phenomena; Characteristics of language attrition

#### **[2] 25.05.22**

Petar Kehayov: *Morphosyntactic change in the vanishing Finnic communities of Russia*

Vitality of the Finnic varieties spoken in Russia; What does differentiate language extinction and dialect levelling?; Structural context; Excessive variation in the language of the last speakers; What causes languages going hog wild before they vanish?

[3] **1.06.22**

Joshua Wilbur: *The case of Pite Saami*

[4] **8.06.22**

Miina Norvik: *The case of Livonian*

[5] **22.06.22**

Virve Vihman: *Language attrition in the mind of a speaker*

[6] **29.06.22**

Gerson Klumpp: *Language change vs. language attrition in late Kamas*

The course consists of 6 Zoom lectures organized by the University of Tartu. Experts on the history and documentation of individual Uralic languages lecture on structural changes the languages underwent as their usage declined. In addition, psycholinguistic methods of researching language attrition will be introduced. For full participation and submission of a learning diary participants will receive **2 ECTS points**. Participants are asked to **register by mail to** Gerson Klumpp, **klumpp@ut.ee**. The Zoom link will be send to you after registration.