

AET KUUSIK

Naming, normativity and negotiation:
LGBT-related labels in Estonian media
discourse and community evaluation,
1995–2023



AET KUUSIK

Naming, normativity and negotiation:
LGBT-related labels in Estonian media
discourse and community evaluation,
1995–2023



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Press

University of Tartu, Institute of Estonian and General Linguistics

Dissertation accepted for the defence of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on 9 June 2026 by the Committee of the Institute of Estonian and General Linguistics, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Tartu.

Supervisors: Professor Liina Lindström (University of Tartu)
Professor Raili Marling (University of Tartu)

Opponent: Dr Joanna Chojnicka (University of Groningen)

Public defence: 31 August 2026 at 14.15 at Ülikooli 18-204, Tartu

This study has been supported by the Graduate School of Linguistics, Philosophy and Semiotics; funded by the European Regional Development Fund (University of Tartu ASTRA Project PER ASPERA).



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Investing
in your future

ISSN 1406-1325 (print)
ISBN 978-9908-57-315-1 (print)
ISSN 2806-2450 (pdf)
ISBN 978-9908-57-316-8 (pdf)

Copyright: Aet Kuusik, 2026

University of Tartu Press
www.tyk.ee

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before starting my doctoral studies, I did not know that one could cry over a research text. I do not mean one's own article that refuses to develop as elegantly or as quickly as one would like, or the messy questions of data, not knowing what to do, exhaustion, and lack of sleep – all this I anticipated. What I did not anticipate was crying while reading a chapter that was at once so personal, so sharply critical, so beautifully written, and so attentive to the ethical stakes of statistics, representation, and labelling in queer life. It moved me because it made visible something I had often felt only in fragments: that methods are never just methods, and categories are never just categories; they are ways of noticing, erasing, protecting, or failing people. Moments like this changed what I thought doctoral work could be: not only knowing more, but reading more carefully, doubting more responsibly, and remaining affected by the lives behind the data.

This dissertation has therefore been shaped by books, articles, corpora, surveys, and seminars, but also by the people and communities who made it possible to think with care and without unnecessary narrowing.

First, I am deeply grateful to my supervisors, Liina Lindström and Raili Marling, both of whom gave me the freedom to let the project take shape without forcing it into a smaller or safer form.

When I first met Liina, she seemed to be at the centre of everything in our institute. I have since come to admire not only her work as a linguist and academic leader, but also her courage and judgement in taking part in difficult public discussions about language and society. Her example has mattered to me because it shows how linguistic expertise can be brought into public debate with both clarity and responsibility. As a supervisor, she gave me considerable latitude and treated me as someone capable of using it. That trust allowed me to explore, change direction, and take ownership of the project. I also thank Liina for encouraging me to turn the course *Language, gender and sexuality* from an idea developed in a course on teaching in higher education into an actual course.

I knew Raili before my doctoral studies as a feminist scholar and public intellectual whose work had already shaped how I thought about gender, power, and culture. Her scholarship has been important to me because it has never reduced equality to simple oppositions between women and men or treated structural inequality as a one-dimensional problem. Her background in literary studies, cultural analysis, and socially grounded language work helped me think across disciplinary boundaries without losing sight of political and ethical stakes. I have also valued how she combines scholarly discipline with warmth and humour; she has shown me that one can be intellectually demanding without mistaking seriousness for distance. I thank Raili for including me in her project on affect and politics, which I look forward to joining after the defence.

Together, Liina and Raili supported my wish to experiment with methods and research questions, to change direction when needed, and to move between

linguistics and broader cultural and political analysis. Their intellectual trust has shaped not only the dissertation, but also the kind of researcher I want to become.

I am grateful to the preliminary reviewers of this dissertation, Jarmo Jantunen and Joanna Chojnicka, for their generous, honest, critical, and encouraging feedback. I especially value that their comments helped me see both what the dissertation was already doing and what still needed to be strengthened. I have also learned a great deal from the anonymous reviewers of my articles, even when the process was difficult. Their criticism has forced me to clarify my contribution, sharpen the argument, and make more explicit why this work matters.

I thank Meri Lindeman for the wit, boldness, and intellectual generosity that turned my first international conference into a collaboration. I am grateful that they contacted me and suggested that we write together; our comparative work on *kväär* and *kvääri* helped me think about my research in a broader Finnic and translocal context.

I am especially grateful to Elisabeth Kaukonen and Ave Palm, with whom I have been able to build parts of this work in practice. Together, we developed and taught *Language, gender and sexuality*, a collaboration that helped me think more clearly across linguistics, gender studies, and related fields in Estonia. I thank Elisabeth also for writing, presenting, and organising research events with me. Ave has been an equally important companion from a neighbouring academic context; I thank her for her sharp mind, queer humour, and rare ability to make serious work lighter without making it less serious. I hope these collaborations will continue.

At the University of Tartu, I have benefited from many conversations, comments, and forms of support. I thank Virve Vihman for supporting my research visit to Nijmegen and for her valuable feedback as the internal reviewer of this dissertation. I also thank Ann Veismann for her work as a reviewer in my progress evaluations and for inviting me to teach in her course when I wanted more experience with larger groups. I thank Pärtel Lippus and Kaidi Lõo for conversations when I needed to think things through, and Karl Pajusalu and Petar Kehayov for their warmth and collegiality. I am also grateful to Riina Reinsalu for reading a draft of my fourth article and for conversation on CDA, register, and genre.

I thank Mari-Liis Korkus, one of my office roommates in Jakobi 2-431, for inviting me to contribute to the Young Linguists' Language Club and to several other seminar contexts. I also thank her for showing how one can keep a clear eye and a steady voice during difficult public moments, including those in which prominent figures use their visibility to bully and others cheer along. I thank Kristel Algvere, Bridge Moran-Nae, and the others who have shared Jakobi 2-431 for the conversations and laughter that made the office a good place to return to.

Several colleagues at the Institute of the Estonian Language have helped me sharpen my thinking about language, lexicography, corpora, and public communication. I thank Arvi Tavast for conversations and willingness to think along, Margit Langemets for giving me the opportunity to contribute to lexicographic

consultation work, Kristina Koppel for help with corpus-related questions, and Lydia Risberg for inviting me to contribute to Language Tweets.

I also thank Tarmo Jüristo from SALK for quick, incisive, and useful feedback when I needed an outside perspective. I thank Christian Veske and the Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner for giving me opportunities to use my knowledge in public-facing equality work.

I have also been fortunate to find a wider community of researchers working on language, gender, sexuality, queer lives, and queer pasts. Conferences, workshops, symposiums, summer schools, winter schools, and online seminars have given me spaces where unfinished thoughts could be tested and where I could learn from others. I especially thank Lucy Jones, Bill Leap, Frazer Heritage, and the organisers and participants of Lavender Languages & Linguistics, and the Lavender Languages Institute summer school. These spaces have been intellectually and personally sustaining. I am particularly grateful to Lucy Jones and Frazer Heritage for their encouragement, generosity, and for coming to Tartu; that visit meant a great deal to me.

My research visit to Nijmegen was important in helping me think about experimental work and the future directions of this project. I thank Charlie Loopuijt and Enny Das at Radboud University, and Antje Meyer at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, for welcoming me, discussing my plans at a stage when they were still developing.

I am grateful for the grants and institutional support that made conference travel, training, and research visits possible. Financial support from MEDAL, the Kristjan Jaak national scholarship program, the Estonian Doctoral School, and the Rõuk Family Foundation allowed me to present my work, meet other researchers, and develop the dissertation in ways that would not otherwise have been possible.

I also want to thank the people who helped with the practical and bureaucratic side of doctoral work or organizing research events or teaching. Tiia Margus, Ülle Niin, Andrea Nagy, and Lii Lang have answered questions, solved problems, and made institutional procedures easier to navigate. This kind of work is often invisible, but doctoral studies would be much harder without it.

Before entering doctoral studies, I had spent many years in feminist advocacy, writing, editing, and organising. I have come to understand how much this background shaped the dissertation. Being part of founding and working in a feminist organisation taught me things that cannot be learned only from academic literature: how public debates are built, how categories travel, how communities disagree, how archives and memory are made, and how language can harm, protect, or make space. Rigorous feminist advocacy work is not the same as research, but it requires a similar discipline: reading carefully, checking assumptions, listening to those affected, and forming a position only after doing the work. Questions of positionality and ethics are central to any work that seriously wants to call itself feminist. I thank my colleagues and comrades from Feministeerium – especially Kadi Viik, Nele Laos, Kaimai Kuldkepp and Elise Rohtmetts and the wider feminist and queer communities for shaping the ground

from which this dissertation grew. I also thank Kadri Nikopensus and the team of *Lillade õuduste öö / Night of Purple Horrors*, made with the Estonian National Museum and Film Resort, for a collaboration that made space for queer storytelling in another medium.

My work starts from queer and LGBT studies, but it has always been in dialogue with other struggles against injustice, including anti-authoritarian and animal rights work. I am grateful for the collaborations and conversations that have helped me see these connections without flattening their differences.

I thank Sara Barbo and Laura Barbo for friendship and for sharing, in parallel ways, similar commitments to writing and making difficult things happen. Sara, your work as a writer has mattered to me; Laura, your ability to bring seemingly impossible things into existence remains an example. I am glad we have been able to talk, even if we do it too rarely.

I thank Rainer Kattel and Kadi Soosalu for their hospitality in London and Pärnu, for wide-ranging conversations, and for making my stays there both possible and intellectually alive.

I am also grateful to my trainers at MyFitness, especially Inge Nelk, Karina Alt, and Mari-Liis Ilves. Your classes made sitting down at my desk to write feel possible, even welcome.

I thank Andreas Kalkun, a great friend and brilliant researcher, for making this process lighter in the most practical and necessary ways: for offering me a roof when I needed one, for conversations that were often as silly as they were sharp, and for making me laugh so hard that my stomach hurt for days. I also thank Andrei Danilo and Vassili for their kindness and company during those visits. My warm thanks also go to Helve Kalkun, whose home in Värskas has offered rest, food, and a sense of care I've been grateful for.

Lastly, but most dearly, I thank those closest to me. I thank Marika Kuusik, Anu Kuusik, and Sander Kuusik for their love and support. I thank Rebeka Põldsam for being close to this dissertation: for friendship, partnership, intellectual companionship, care, humour, curiosity, resilience, anger, and joy. Your work and presence have shaped this dissertation more than I can adequately say. I also thank my beloved furry companions Murjel and Krõpo for keeping me grounded in ordinary life, with all its routines, interruptions, care, and softness.

Tartu, July 5, 2026.

CONTENTS

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS.....	11
1. INTRODUCTION.....	12
1.1 Overarching research question.....	14
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: NAMING, NORMATIVITY AND NEGOTIATION.....	16
2.1 Naming as categorisation and ideological positioning	19
2.1.1 Slurs, reappropriation, and the politics of naming	20
2.2 Normativity as linguistic and discursive patterning.....	22
2.3 Negotiation, localisation and community metalinguistic meaning-making	24
2.4 From theory to analysis	26
3. SOCIOHISTORICAL AND RESEARCH CONTEXT	27
3.1 Central and Eastern European sexual politics and discourse.....	27
3.2 Estonian research context	29
3.3 Estonian LGBT discourse: existing research and gaps.....	32
3.3.1 Existing research on LGBT topics in Estonia	32
3.3.2 Gaps addressed by this dissertation.....	35
4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY	37
4.1 Research design and logic of the dissertation	37
4.2 Data overview.....	39
4.2.1 Public discourse data (corpus-based)	40
4.2.2 Community-facing data (survey-based)	42
4.3 Queer Corpus Stylistics: from corpus evidence to ideological positioning	44
4.3.1 Corpus-assisted discourse studies	44
4.3.2 Critical Stylistics as interpretive framework	45
4.3.2.1 Textual-conceptual functions used in this dissertation..	46
4.4 Corpus analytical procedures.....	51
4.4.1 Query construction, cleaning, and context units	51
4.4.2 Frequency and collocation procedures	53
4.4.3 Concordance selection and qualitative reading	54
4.4.4 Critical Stylistics workflow.....	55
4.4.5 Slur-focused corpus-informed workflow	56
4.5 Survey analytical procedures	56
4.6 Researcher positionality, reflexivity, and ethics.....	57
5. MAIN RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	59
5.1 Frequency trajectories and lexical stratification	59
5.1.1 Frequency patterns: stem-based and single-lemma evidence....	59

5.2 Discursive strategies and ideological positioning in Estonian media discourse	67
5.2.1 Institutional framing and term-specific differentiation	68
5.2.2 Categorisation and antagonistic positioning in polarised discourse: list structures, grievance clustering, and <i>pede</i> as an ideological tool	71
5.2.3 Visibility and integration: conditional normalisation and the markedness of disclosure	74
5.3 Localisation and community negotiation.....	75
5.3.1 <i>Kväär</i> in Estonian: recognition, uptake, and polarisation	75
5.3.2 Estonian-Finnish comparison: same global concept, different local anchors.....	76
5.3.3 Metalinguistic logics: why people embrace or reject <i>kväär/kvääri</i>	78
5.4 Synthesis: naming, normativity, and negotiation.....	81
6. CONCLUSION	84
SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN	88
PUBLICATIONS	97
REFERENCES	224
APPENDIX 1. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE	237
CURRICULUM VITAE	240
ELULOOKIRJELDUS.....	242

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- Article 1.** Kuusik, Aet. 2024. Kuidas suhtub Eesti LGBT kogukond sõnasse *kväär*? *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 67 (4). 315–339. <https://doi.org/10.54013/kk796a1>.
- Article 2.** Kuusik, Aet, Meri Lindeman. *Forthcoming*. Is it like a warm coat or should it be buried 1,000 kilometres deep? A comparative analysis of *queer*, *kväär* and *kvääri* in the Estonian and Finnish languages. In *Challenging the Binary: Perspectives on Non-Binary, Genderqueer, and Gender Neutral Language* (eds. Lily Kahn, Riitta Valijärvi). Berlin: De Gruyter Brill.
- Article 3.** Kuusik, Aet. *Under review*. Naming, Framing, Regulating: *gei*, *homo*, *homoseksuaal* in Estonian media (1995–2023). *Journal of Baltic Studies*.
- Article 4.** Kuusik, Aet. 2025. Vaenusõna *pede* muutuv roll. *Ariadne Lõng: soo-uuringute ajakiri*, 21 (1/2). 32–64. https://ariadnelong.ee/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Ariadne-Long-2025_2_Kuusik.pdf.

The author's contribution:

Article 2. The study was designed in equal collaboration and built on the author's earlier Estonian survey and analysis (Article 1). The author prepared the Estonian data, conducted the statistical modelling for the cross-linguistic comparison, and situated the results within international research on *queer* label localisation in other languages. Lindeman planned the joint study design, gathered and thematically analysed the Finnish data, and offered the folk linguistic perspective that shapes the study's approach to community metalinguistic knowledge. Lindeman had primary responsibility for integrating the thematic analyses across datasets. The comparative interpretation and manuscript were developed together.

1. INTRODUCTION

In January 2024, Estonia became the first post-Soviet state to legalise same-sex marriage – a legal transformation that would have been unthinkable in the early 1990s, when male homosexuality was still a criminal offence inherited from the Soviet penal code. Yet words, it turns out, do not follow the same trajectory as laws. The Estonian slur *pede* (a homophobic slur for gay men; roughly akin to English *fag*) continues to circulate in online commentary as a tool of ideological differentiation; *kväär* (‘queer’) – adopted as a norm-critical label of resistance – remains contested within LGBT communities, partly because it echoes *väär* (‘wrong’); and *homoseksuaal* (‘homosexual’) – a label with roots in Soviet-era medical and legal registers – persists alongside the more casual *gei* (‘gay’) and the colloquial *homo*, each carrying distinct ideological weight. This dissertation begins from the premise that these linguistic afterlives are a productive site of analysis: it is precisely in the friction between rapid legal change and slower, more uneven discursive transformation that the ideological work of naming – drawing boundaries, allocating legitimacy, and distributing stigma – becomes visible.

Language is one of the central sites through which social norms, hierarchies, and identities are produced, negotiated, and contested (Fairclough 1995; Wodak 2012). This dissertation addresses the tensions between legal change and discursive persistence in Estonia – a linguistic space with strong language-planning traditions (Lindström et al. 2023) and a complex trajectory of nation-building and Europeanisation where, as in other Central and Eastern European contexts (Kulpa et al. 2012; Witalisz 2021), global Anglo-American queer¹ lexicon and framings intersect with local cultural traditions. Through a mixed-methods approach that integrates corpus-based diachronic analysis of Estonian media with survey-based data from Estonian and Finnish LGBT communities, it demonstrates how lexical, grammatical, and evaluative choices reproduce or challenge ideological structures over time and across contexts. At its core is the argument that LGBT-related labels do not merely describe groups but position them within moral, political, and institutional hierarchies (Motschenbacher 2010; Baker 2005).

Although scholarship on language, sexuality, and LGBT representation has increased internationally (Baker 2018; Motschenbacher 2022), the linguistic construction of sexual and gender minorities in small and Central and Eastern European languages has remained under-examined (Bogetić 2022; Bogetić 2025; Kulpa & Mizielińska 2011). This gap is conceptual as well as empirical: where the post-socialist region has drawn scholarly attention, the work has been largely sociological, legal, and policy-oriented, leaving unexamined how public language itself produces and contests sexual normativity – and only rarely combining

¹ The dissertation does not fix *queer* to a single sense: it is used in the norm-critical sense of queer theory when analysing how discourse constructs normativity, and in the broader umbrella sense when examining how community members use and evaluate labels such as *kväär*. Chapter 2 unpacks the term’s layered history accordingly.

analysis of media patterning with evidence of how communities evaluate the labels in circulation. The present study provides the first systematic corpus-based analysis of LGBT-related labels in Estonian media across three decades and, to my knowledge, the first sustained application of Critical Stylistics to any Finno-Ugric language.

These firsts carry a twofold contribution. Methodologically, the dissertation shows that Critical Stylistics offers an explicit, replicable route into ideological text analysis, and integrates it with community survey data and cross-linguistic comparison. More centrally, the dissertation shows how LGBT-related labels do three things at once: they name people, place them in relation to an unmarked norm, and become objects of debate within communities. In this sense, naming is not just a matter of vocabulary, but a way to trace how normativity is produced, challenged, and negotiated in a small state-language of a country with a post-socialist history. The dissertation employs a two-layer analytical approach. The first layer examines media discourse through corpus-assisted diachronic analysis, tracing how Estonian media constructs representations of LGBT people and non-normative sexuality through patterns of naming, collocation, and ideological framing (Jeffries 2010; Partington et al. 2013). The second layer investigates community perspectives through surveys of Estonian and Finnish LGBT respondents, capturing how community members evaluate, negotiate, and contest the labels used to describe them (Niedzielski & Preston 2003; Preston 2004). These layers work in dialogue: media discourse makes salient available label-based categories and their ideological loadings, while community attitudes expose tensions, gaps, and transformative possibilities within these categories.

The Estonian context makes these questions particularly productive. Estonia's small and densely networked public sphere can allow lexical and discursive patterns to circulate rapidly (Praagli & Koreinik 2020) and help establish boundaries of what identities are intelligible, legitimate, or deviant. Moreover, contemporary Estonian public discourse about LGBT topics is shaped by Soviet-era criminalisation, psychiatric framing, and enduring scepticism toward activism – legacies that continue to shape how certain lexical choices are marked as acceptable or ideologically suspect (Põldsam 2023; Healey 2001). At the same time, global queer labels and framings do not enter a language intact but undergo cultural negotiation: *kväär* illustrates how linguistic borrowing is shaped by local histories and norms (Baer 2020; Kulpa et al. 2012). Finally, labels that appear equivalent are not: each of the focal terms carries a distinct ideological load, which the following section sets out.

This dissertation examines a specific set of LGBT-related labels in Estonian: *gei* 'gay', *homo*, *homoseksuaal* 'homosexual', *kväär* 'queer', and *pede* (slur). The comparative analysis of *kväär* also includes the English source form *queer* and the Finnish adaptation *kvääri*.

These terms were selected for three reasons. First, they represent distinct registers and usage contexts: *homoseksuaal* is categorising and institutional; *homo* is colloquial; *gei* is a relatively recent English-origin borrowing; *kväär* is even more recent, circulating primarily in activist and academic contexts; and

pede is a slur. Second, together they span the range from formal to informal, institutional to community-based, borrowed to locally formed, and relatively routinised to highly charged. Third, *gei*, *homo*, and *homoseksuaal* are the most recurrent generalising labels for same-sex sexuality in the journalistic corpus analysed in Article 3, making them tractable for diachronic corpus analysis; *kväär* and *pede*, while less frequent, warrant inclusion because of their contested and ideologically salient position in public discourse.

The terms receive different kinds of analytical attention because they enter the dissertation through different discourse sites. *Kväär* enters through explicit community debate about appropriateness, political implications, and local usability, and this metalinguistic visibility itself becomes part of the analysis. *Gei*, *homo*, and *homoseksuaal* enter as established journalistic labels, examined through their recurrent collocational and textual environments. *Pede* is treated separately, as a slur whose pragmatic functions are traced across time and genre rather than as one more synonym in the set.

These issues are both relevant and timely. Even with the 2024 marriage milestone, public debate around LGBT issues remains divided. Conservative actors continue to use language to oppose “gender ideology” and to portray sexual and gender minorities as threats to national and family values (Bogetić 2025). The relevance of these questions extends beyond Estonia. Across Europe, conflicts over sexual citizenship and equality frameworks often involve naming, categorisation, and the acceptance or rejection of international terminology (Zamfir 2023). In a public sphere shaped by strategic communication, the meaning and scope of identity categories are actively contested, including in populist rhetoric that mobilises them against sexual and gender minorities. This makes it important to examine how labels and framing devices organise social meaning. The dissertation does not decide which uses of a category should count as legitimate. Instead, it traces the discursive mechanisms through which category meanings are claimed, reworked, and contested across actors and contexts. This dissertation is not only descriptive. By making the ideological work of LGBT-related naming open to analysis rather than taken for granted, it contributes to critical language awareness, understood as the capacity to recognise and question how seemingly neutral linguistic choices can encode power relations, naturalise social hierarchies, and shape what becomes publicly intelligible (Fairclough 1992; Darics et al. 2025).

1.1 Overarching research question

The four articles address a single overarching problem: how do lexical and discursive practices around LGBT-related labels in Estonian construct and negotiate meanings and positions in a context shaped by rapid societal transition and a highly mediated public sphere?

This question is operationalised through three dimensions:

1. How have key LGBT-related labels (*gei*, *homo*, *homoseksuaal*, *kväär*, *pede*) evolved in Estonian-language public discourse (1995–2023) in terms of frequency, usage patterns, and ideological-institutional positioning? (Articles 1, 3, 4)
2. Through which linguistic mechanisms are LGBT-related labels used to shape representations of identities and negotiate ideological positions in Estonian-language public discourse? (Articles 3, 4)
3. How has the global label *queer* been localised into Estonian (*kväär*) and Finnish (*kvääri*), and how are these forms evaluated within LGBT communities? (Articles 1, 2)

These questions are addressed through four interconnected studies: Articles 1 and 2 examine community evaluations of *kväär*/*kvääri*/*queer* in Estonian and Finnish contexts; Article 3 analyses the collocational and ideological positioning of *gei*, *homo*, and *homoseksuaal* in journalistic discourse; and Article 4 traces the pragmatic transformation of *pede*. Together, the articles show that the uptake and contestation of labels cannot be understood from media patterns or community attitudes alone but requires attention to both.

The rest of this dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 develops the theoretical framework around three organising concepts: naming, normativity, and negotiation. Chapter 3 provides the sociohistorical and research context. Chapter 4 describes the data and methodology. Chapter 5 summarizes the main results and discussion. Chapter 6 concludes by summarizing the dissertation's overall contributions, limitations, and directions for future research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: NAMING, NORMATIVITY AND NEGOTIATION

This chapter develops the dissertation's theoretical framework around three organising concepts: naming, normativity, and negotiation. Together, these concepts describe how LGBT-related labels categorise people, place those categories in relation to an unmarked norm, and become sites of public and community contestation. Before turning to these three concepts in detail, the chapter defines two shared working terms, *discourse* and *LGBT*, which recur across the dissertation. The sociohistorical context and existing research are addressed in Chapter 3, and the corpus-based and text-analytical procedures in Chapter 4.

LGBT is used in this dissertation as the default umbrella initialism referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, reflecting its established use in Estonian media, advocacy, and policy contexts. Variants such as LGBT+, LGBTI, LGBTQ, and LGBTIQ+ appear where source material uses them: the + signals the inclusion of further identity categories beyond the four named letters, while I refers to intersex and Q to queer. Because these formulations vary across sources, the initialism used in any given instance reflects the terminology of the original context rather than a theoretical stance on which formulation is most inclusive. The analytical focus is on language use rather than on assigning identities to language users or to the people represented in texts: I examine which labels are used, how they are used, and what kinds of positioning they make possible. This context-dependence of initialisms is not unique to Estonian: Jones (2026: 237) notes that LGBTQ+ is the most frequently used form by UK charities and organisations at the time of writing, while LGBT was more common at the time of her data collection, illustrating how even umbrella labels shift across time and institutional context. Similarly, Verhoef's (2026) corpus-assisted analysis of a Dutch LGBT advocacy organisation's annual reports shows a shift from GLBT/LGBT to LGBTI and LGBTI+, while also demonstrating that initialism expansion can function as a marker of inclusion without giving equal textual visibility to all groups named or implied by the initialism.

Discourse in this dissertation refers to thematically organised, patterned language use in texts (Fairclough 1992; Fairclough 1995; Wodak 2012) – recurrent ways of naming, framing, and evaluating a topic within a given domain (here primarily Estonian-language public texts, and, where relevant, metalinguistic commentary in LGBT communities). The term is used in a text-anchored sense compatible with corpus-assisted analysis and Critical Stylistics (Jeffries 2010; Partington et al. 2013): accordingly, **discursive resources** are the linguistic means through which meanings are shaped (e.g., label choice, categorisation, agency allocation, presupposition, modality), and **discursive strategies** are recurrent configurations of these resources that yield relatively stable representational and positioning patterns across texts. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) informs the broader orientation, while corpus-assisted analysis and Critical Stylistics provide the analytical toolkit.

The study of language and sexuality has developed from early work – especially in the 1980s–1990s – often framed as research on “gay and lesbian language” towards a more complex view of how linguistic practices construct, maintain, and contest sexual and gender identities (Cameron & Kulick 2008). In the now-classic reframing by Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick (2008), sexuality is not a stable social fact merely reflected in language; rather, it is constituted through discourse, interaction, and ideology. This shift marks a broader disciplinary reorientation. Where earlier ‘lavender linguistics’ and what is now sometimes termed LGBT linguistics focused primarily on describing the language use of LGBT speakers and communities, **queer linguistics** foregrounds the critique of heteronormativity as a linguistic and discursive structure, asking not only how LGBT people use language, but how language produces and maintains sexual and gender normativity more broadly (Barrett 2002; Hall 2003; Motschenbacher 2010; Motschenbacher 2022). These orientations are not mutually exclusive and are often combined in current work that links queer-linguistic critique of normativity with attention to situated community practices and label negotiation (Jones 2026: 53–54). Both orientations inform this dissertation, but the primary analytical commitment is queer-linguistic: the focus is not on describing an LGBT community variety, but on how public discourse constructs normativity and how community members evaluate and negotiate the labels through which they are named. At the same time, queer linguistics has internal tensions: Lo Vecchio (2024) cautions against monolingual and prescriptivist “inclusive language” epistemologies, arguing for more context-sensitive and lexicologically grounded approaches to sexual normativity and categorisation.

The word *queer* itself needs some explanation here, because its history is part of what this dissertation analyses. In English, *queer* was already used in the sixteenth century in meanings such as ‘odd’, ‘suspicious’, or ‘perverse’. It later became attached to same-sex sexuality, especially male same-sex sexuality, as a pejorative term; one often-cited moment is the 1894 “queer snob” insult in the Queensberry affair (Foldy 1997). By the early twentieth century, and especially by the 1940s, its association with sexual deviance had hardened into a slur (Nossem 2019; Brontsema 2004). From the late 1980s onwards, *queer* was taken up as a defiant political label, most visibly by the activist group Queer Nation, partly to challenge the narrower reference of *gay*, which often excluded lesbians, trans people, and others outside the prevailing norm. In the early 1990s, it also entered academic use through *queer theory* (De Lauretis 1991). In this context, *queer* does not simply mean LGBT, nor is it the sum of the categories in the LGBTIQ+ initialism. It names a critical orientation towards normative sexuality and gender, and towards the categories through which sexuality and gender are made intelligible (Barrett 2002). These meanings have not replaced one another in a neat sequence. Oddness, insult, reclaimed political stance, academic critique, and everyday umbrella use continue to coexist and sometimes conflict (Somerville 2014; Jagose 1996). This instability matters for the present study because the Estonian adaptation *kväär* is not a neutral translation of *queer*. It is a local form shaped by the competing meanings and histories attached to *queer* itself.

This instability reflects a more general point: discourse-analytic traditions foreground identity as an outcome of categorisation, social positioning, and the discursive construction of sameness and difference. Identities are not simply expressed but continuously (re)made in discourse – produced, reproduced, transformed, and sometimes dismantled through recurring practices of naming, categorising, and evaluating social actors (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 478; Eckert 2002: 101). This is precisely why labels and their patterned environments are analytically central in language-and-sexuality research: they offer an empirical window onto how legitimacy and “normality” are discursively distributed.

Queer linguistics is also closely connected to queer theory’s account of performativity. Judith Butler’s argument that gender is produced through the reiteration of norms – ‘the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names’ (Butler 1993: 2), rather than expressing a stable inner core, provides a useful way to conceptualise how sexual and gender categories solidify through iterated discourse. At the same time, performativity foregrounds that repetition is never perfectly identical: labels and categories can be re-used in ways that contest their inherited meanings. Because this dissertation addresses contested labels (including a slur), the question of re-use and semantic layering becomes relevant (the detailed theoretical tools for that discussion are developed in Section 2.1.1).

The dissertation’s orientation is queer in a sense that extends beyond its focus on LGBT-related labels. Following Ahmed’s (2006) conception of queer phenomenology, a queer orientation involves attending to what has been straightened, naturalised, or made to seem inevitable – and asking how it came to be that way. The dissertation therefore reads Estonian media discourse ‘queerly’ by foregrounding what is typically unmarked: the assumptions embedded in list structures, the presuppositions carried by verbs of disclosure, or the nominalisations that background agency. This orientation translates into three core commitments that guide the analyses across the articles:

1. **Heteronormativity as linguistic practice.** While ideology is the broader mechanism, heteronormativity is the specific ideological formation this dissertation foregrounds. It is not reduced to “hostile content”; it is also enacted through systematic linguistic asymmetries – especially in naming practices, category formation, and the grammatical positioning of social actors. This makes it possible to analyse normativity even in texts that are not explicitly evaluative.
2. **Ideology as patterned meaning in language use.** Queer linguistics aligns with discourse-ideology research in treating linguistic choices as socially consequential: ideologies become durable partly because they are repeatedly built into routine and recognisable ways of wording the world.
3. **Categories as contested and historically layered.** They are social instruments that can legitimise, minoritise, medicalise, politicise, or stigmatise, often simultaneously. Crucially, these meanings are not fixed: labels accumulate,

shed, and transform their social-discursive weight through the very processes of contestation and reuse that this dissertation traces, meaning that what a label *does* in discourse at any given moment is inseparable from what it has done before.

Taken together, queer linguistics provides the dissertation's overarching orientation: it motivates treating LGBT-related labels not as neutral descriptors but as entry points into the linguistic production of normativity and ideological boundaries, across both public discourse and community metalinguistic evaluation.

2.1 Naming as categorisation and ideological positioning

Naming is the dissertation's primary analytical object, because labels do not merely refer to social groups; they bring categories into being and load them with evaluation (Fairclough 1995; Jeffries 2010). To call someone *homoseksual* rather than *gei* is not a neutral choice between synonyms but an act of categorisation carrying register, history, and implied legitimacy. **Categorisation** is the discursive practice of producing discrete social types (groups, identities, "kinds of people", "issues") out of complex social realities. Naming is one of the most powerful categorisation devices: labels create boundaries, make entities publicly intelligible, and often carry implicit evaluation and legitimacy cues. Categorisation – realised primarily through naming and labelling practices – is used as an umbrella concept across strands: it covers (a) media naming practices and (b) community self- and other-labelling, including debates over what a term "counts", who it includes/excludes, and who has the authority to use it (Berger & Luckmann 2018; Jeffries 2015).

If categorisation produces discrete social types, representation concerns how those types are made to appear in texts. **Representation** is treated as the discursive construction of social reality: how texts make actors, practices, and relations visible and meaningful through recurring linguistic choices (including what is foregrounded/backgrounded, how agency and responsibility are distributed, what is framed as a problem vs. an ordinary fact). Representation connects the text-analytic work (where form–meaning links are traced) with corpus analysis (where repeated co-textual environments show what becomes typical) and with survey data (where participants articulate how labels represent them, misrepresent them, or feel imposed) (van Dijk 1998; Fairclough 1995; Hall 1997; Jeffries 2015).

One recurrent effect of these representational choices is **stigma**. In its foundational formulation, stigma is relational rather than inherent: it resides not in a person but in the relationship between a marked attribute and the stereotypes it activates in a given social setting (Goffman 1963). Later stigma theory makes the power dimension more explicit: stigma is a socially produced process through which a labelled difference becomes linked to negative stereotypes, separated from a normative "us", and associated with status loss and discrimination under

conditions of power (Link & Phelan 2001). In this dissertation, stigma is understood as a relational and historically durable effect reproduced through discourse, institutions, and unequal power relations. This is particularly relevant for LGBT-related terminology, because labels do not merely describe social categories: they may also reactivate pathologising or criminalising associations, position subjects as deviant or lesser, and shape whether a term is experienced as distancing, harmful, or inclusive in context (Matsick et al. 2022; Motschenbacher 2026).

Because stigma depends on context and uptake, the same label can do different discursive work depending on whether it is used by community members or by social outsiders: it may function as in-group self-reference or solidarity, but also as out-group categorisation, distancing, institutional framing, or stigmatisation. Motschenbacher's (2026) overview of labelling theory in language and sexuality studies shows that labels are not interchangeable: previous studies have found, for instance, that *homosexual* triggers more negative evaluations than alternatives such as *gay* and *lesbian*, reflecting its historical medicalised and pathologising associations, while labels such as *dyke* may function as derogatory in mainstream contexts but as in-group solidarity labels in specific lesbian communities. Comparable evidence from the Dutch context shows that label choice can be used to manage normality: same-sex-attracted young people may avoid labels such as *gay* or *lesbian* and instead describe attraction or relationships more generally, not because sexuality has become irrelevant, but because particular labels can evoke gendered stereotypes and mark them as visibly different from the heterosexual norm (van Lisdonk et al. 2018). This dissertation therefore treats label choice as inseparable from speaker positioning and uptake, bringing media uses into dialogue with community members' metalinguistic evaluations.

2.1.1 Slurs, reappropriation, and the politics of naming

The limit case of naming-as-act is the slur. Analysing a slur like *pede* requires additional theoretical tools. The analysis of *pede* draws on philosophical and pragmatic work on slurs, treating slurs as lexical items whose social force is realised in use. Slurs are not only labels but also acts: they can categorise, degrade, and position people within social hierarchies, thereby participating in the production and policing of gendered and sexual norms. A key premise in this strand of scholarship is that slurs cannot be understood by dictionary meaning alone. First, slurs are historically and contextually dynamic: the same form can develop new pragmatic functions across time, genres, and discourse situations. Second, even the "mention" of a slur (e.g., quotation, reported speech, metalinguistic discussion) is not automatically neutral, because it can still activate shared stereotypes and norm expectations.

In philosophical literature, accounts of slurs are often grouped into three broad families. Semantic/content-based approaches treat derogation as part of lexical meaning, typically by building pejorative evaluation into the semantic contribution of the slur (Bianchi 2014: 36; Jeshion 2017: 112). Pragmatic approaches treat slurs primarily as conventionalised speech acts and social practices (Cepollaro

2015: 3–6). Non-content approaches, by contrast, treat slurs as prohibited words whose offensiveness is explained by social prohibitions rather than by encoded derogatory content (Anderson & Lepore 2013: 350–352).

The dissertation aligns most closely with functional-pragmatic perspectives: what matters analytically is how the slur is deployed to do social work (categorising, evaluating and positioning), and how this work changes across contexts and periods. A key pressure on purely semantic accounts is the need to explain non-derogatory in-group uses: Croom notes that any adequate theory must account for how slurs can sometimes communicate non-derogatory meaning between close in-group interlocutors (Croom 2011: 349). Complementing this pragmatic orientation, Hom and May emphasise that pejoratives are sustained by – and help reproduce – discriminatory cultural norms that organise social groups as targets of contempt (Hom & May 2018: 6).

This orientation also fits Rappaport’s view that slurs are multi-dimensional and best approached through a many-factored account that integrates semantic, pragmatic, and evaluative properties rather than reducing derogatory force to meaning or intention alone (Rappaport 2020: 201). In such accounts, it is not sufficient to ask what a language user “meant”; one must also examine conventional history, discourse context, and uptake, including the fact that offence can persist even in a quotation or mention (Rappaport 2020: 191–193; Anderson & Lepore 2013: 353–354).

Reclamation and reappropriation add another layer for understanding contested uses. Brontsema defines reclamation as when a group takes back a negative term directed at them. She points out that this does not remove the term’s harmful history; instead, it can reactivate or strategically reuse the historically sedimented stigma attached to the word (Brontsema 2004: 15). Popa-Wyatt’s account of roles and power is important here. It shows that reappropriation depends on social position. Just because a group uses a slur does not mean it loses its offensive nature, and not everyone can claim the right to use it. Whether a use counts as reappropriation depends on the relationships and power dynamics involved (Popa-Wyatt 2020: 9, 10). These theoretical commitments inform the analysis of *pede* in Article 4. In the Estonian data, in-group or identity-asserting uses are limited and serve varied pragmatic purposes rather than amounting to a single reclaiming strategy. The analysis therefore treats ‘reappropriation’ descriptively, as a disputed and partial practical option rather than a completed reclamation.

The contestability of naming is particularly visible in slurs, where meaning is inseparable from social struggle: resignification, the contested remaking of a sign’s meaning through re-use, is not a purely linguistic shift but a political contestation over who can use a sign, in what contexts, and with what effects (see Section 2.3). Diachronic scholarship on slurs further shows that derogatory force and target can shift across time and genres – slurs may broaden into more generalised insults or change their pragmatic functions (Čupković 2015). Thus, tracing a slur like *pede* requires historical and pragmatic attention rather than treating it as a stable hate term (Article 4). This also helps explain why sexuality-related slurs so often function simultaneously as a form of gender policing: a slur like

pede stigmatises non-heterosexuality and disciplines non-conforming masculinity in the same move, because the ideological distinctions around gender and sexuality are mutually reinforcing (e.g., masculinity is policed through sexual stigma). In media-hostility research, homophobia and transphobia are explicitly described as tightly interwoven with misogyny, suggesting that analytic separation of ‘sexism’ and ‘anti-LGBT hostility’ can miss how the same discursive practices target multiple groups (Kibbey 2024).

2.2 Normativity as linguistic and discursive patterning

Normativity refers to the condition in which certain identities, practices, and forms of expression function as unmarked defaults, while others are marked as noticeable, debatable, or problematic. It is therefore not simply what people consider “normal”, but a relatively settled order of assumptions through which some social arrangements appear ordinary, legitimate, or self-evident. In this dissertation, normativity functions as a bridge concept between queer linguistics and discourse-ideology research: it explains why labels and their discursive environments matter, because labels do not only refer to people and practices but also position them in relation to what counts as ordinary, legitimate, or in need of explanation (Cameron 1995; Motschenbacher 2010; Motschenbacher 2022; Warner 1993).

Normalisation, by contrast, refers to the discursive process through which particular representations, categories, or evaluative positions become acceptable, repeatable, and difficult to contest. It may involve the gradual acceptance of previously marked identities or practices, but it may also involve the legitimisation of exclusionary or regulatory framings. Following Krzyżanowski, I treat normalisation as a process produced through repetition, recontextualisation, institutional framing, and language choice, through which new or previously contested norms become part of public common sense (Krzyżanowski 2020a; Krzyżanowski 2020b; Krzyżanowski et al. 2023).

Naturalisation is a related but more specific ideological process: it presents historically contingent arrangements, such as family models, sexual hierarchies, institutional categories, or political framings, as self-evident, timeless, or simply given. Whereas normalisation describes how a representation or norm becomes acceptable over time, naturalisation describes how its ideological character becomes obscured. In textual terms, naturalisation may be realised through presupposition, generic statements, institutional register, routinised phrasing, or categorisation patterns that embed assumptions rather than openly argue for them (Fairclough 1995; van Dijk 1998; Jeffries 2010; Verschueren 2011).

Gender is understood here not as a fixed biological essence, but as a socially organised and historically variable category through which bodies, identities, roles, relations, and forms of expression are made intelligible. It is produced and recognised through repeated social and semiotic practices, including language, and regulated by normative expectations about masculinity, femininity,

embodiment, and belonging (West & Zimmerman 1987; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992). Where gender is used as a respondent variable in the survey-based articles, it is treated as self-identified social position rather than as a fixed attribute. This dissertation does not analyse gender as an independent object, but treats it as inseparable from the naming and normative positioning of sexuality, especially where LGBT-related labels rely on assumptions about masculinity, femininity, gender nonconformity, or sexual deviance.

Heteronormativity is the specific ideological organisation of social life around heterosexuality, and the relationship and family forms associated with it, as the assumed baseline. In linguistic terms, heteronormativity often operates through asymmetries: what is left unnamed vs. named, what is treated as the default vs. special case, and which social relations appear as grammatically and discursively “normal”. Heteronormativity is treated here as something that becomes visible not only in overt evaluation but in structural patterning, such as categorisation routines, agency allocation, institutional framing, and presupposed family models (Cameron & Kulick 2008; Warner 1993).

Linguistic sexual normativity refers to the specifically linguistic/discursive means through which heterosexuality (and often binary gender) is encoded as unmarked, while non-heterosexual and non-cis possibilities are encoded as marked (through grammar, collocation, semantic networks, institutional registers, etc.). This concept makes it possible to state precisely that the dissertation is not only about ‘attitudes’ but about how normativity is built into language patterns, including patterns that look descriptive or technical. Within queer linguistics, Motschenbacher’s work has been particularly influential, conceptualising ‘linguistic sexual normativity’ and showing how ostensibly neutral linguistic resources contribute to sustaining heterosexuality as the unmarked default (Motschenbacher 2011; Motschenbacher 2018; Motschenbacher 2022; Motschenbacher 2026). His corpus-based studies demonstrate that grammatical patterns, collocations, and lexical asymmetries systematically encode heteronormative ideologies, thereby making visible the mechanisms through which language participates in social regulation. Motschenbacher’s (2022) corpus-based analysis also documents term-specific patterns: *same-sex* collocates predominantly with relationship and legal-political vocabulary (*marriage, couple, legislation*) and functions as a label through which the state regulates non-heterosexual relationships, while *homosexual* retains clinical-pathologising associations and *gay* shows broader collocational flexibility. These patterns provide a comparative baseline for analysing their Estonian counterparts.

Register refers to a type of language use tied to specific domains, such as medical, legal, or human rights. This can be recognised by recurring word choices and ways of presenting a topic (Biber & Conrad 2019; Halliday & Hasan 1985). Register is therefore not treated here as equivalent to formality, although particular registers may occur together with more formal or informal language (Biber & Conrad 2019; Trudgill 1992). In the media corpus analysis, register is treated as a set of resources that a text draws on. When non-normative sexuality is

discussed with clinical terms and in a diagnostic or regulatory context, the text is viewed as using a medical register, regardless of the genre or outlet.

Ideology is treated as a socially shared and relatively durable system of assumptions, values, and categories that shapes what becomes “common sense” in a community and is reproduced (or contested) through discourse. Ideology is therefore not limited to explicit opinions; it is also observable in patterned linguistic choices that repeatedly make some social arrangements seem natural, legitimate, and non-controversial (van Dijk 1998; Fairclough 1995; Verschueren 2011).

Evaluation refers to how discourse encodes judgments, stances, and value positions – sometimes explicitly (adjectives, insults), but often indirectly (category choice, framing, co-text, contrast structures, “neutral” institutional labels). Evaluation is crucial because key terms often operate as “labels that look descriptive” but acquire evaluative force through distribution, collocation, and discursive packaging (Hunston 2007; Jeffries 2010).

Because normativity is realised in textual patterning, the dissertation analyses it through Critical Stylistics. A text-anchored framework is particularly well-suited to Estonian-language data because ideological positioning is not necessarily carried by overt evaluative vocabulary alone. It can be realised through structural resources such as categorisation, modification patterns, compounding, and list constructions that package social reality into apparently straightforward descriptions. Applying Critical Stylistics to Estonian is analytically productive precisely because these resources are grammatically visible in distinctive ways, for instance, productive compounding (e.g., *homoabielu* ‘homo-marriage’) packages identity categories and social institutions into single lexical units that circulate as established labels, offering a testing ground that extends the framework beyond its predominantly Anglophone base. The framework and its operational functions are set out in the methodology section (Section 4.3.2.1).

2.3 Negotiation, localisation and community metalinguistic meaning-making

Naming and normativity describe how labels work in public discourse; negotiation concerns what happens when communities answer back. Labels are not simply received but evaluated, claimed, refused, and locally reworked, as when the global concept queer is localised as *kväär* and *kvääri*. Community members’ metalinguistic commentary is therefore evidence in its own right: a site where the legitimacy and meaning of labels are actively contested rather than fixed.

Metalinguistic commentary is language about language: explicit definitions, usage rules, judgments of appropriateness, etymological or phonological associations, and reflections on who can or should use a term. In this dissertation, such commentary is treated as theoretically meaningful data, especially in small-state language contexts where naming debates are salient and circulate rapidly (Niedzielski & Preston 2003). Lindeman (2025) demonstrates this approach for

a closely related context, treating LGBT community members' talk about labels as evidence of how normativity is maintained and contested through everyday metalinguistic practice. Recent sociolexicological research similarly shows that naming practices around gender and sexuality form a vocabulary domain marked by heightened **metalinguistic awareness**, where debates over terminology are part of the phenomenon itself rather than external commentary on it (Lo Vecchio 2024). In this sense, metalinguistic commentary is not peripheral but constitutive: it reveals how language users position themselves in relation to the categories they use or reject (Lo Vecchio 2025).

Language attitudes are evaluative orientations toward words, varieties, or registers, including explicit judgments and patterned preferences in use (Garrett 2010). **Language ideologies** are broader beliefs, feelings, and assumptions about language and its social meanings, for example what counts as proper, foreign, authentic, or socially legitimate language (Kroskrity 2010). Together, these concepts help explain how labels gain or lose legitimacy, how people manage risk and belonging through terminology, and how acceptability is negotiated rather than given (Niedzielski & Preston 2003).

This perspective is also informed by folk linguistics and lavender languages inquiry, which treat language users' own articulations as situated knowledge rather than as secondary evidence. Marzullo and Leap (2024) argue for approaches that centre language users' own perspectives and treat community knowledge as analytically meaningful. This is especially relevant to Articles 1–2, where survey responses are analysed not only as opinions about *kväär/kvääri*, but as metalinguistic evidence of how LGBT community members conceptualise, evaluate, and negotiate contested labels. This strand treats naming as part of how sexual and gender categories become socially usable, acceptable, or rejectable within specific language contexts. The folk linguistic framing is more central to Lindeman's contribution in Article 2; here it is incorporated as one component of a broader approach to community-facing language data.

A key implication is that labels can have different social force depending on speaker position, context, and perceived entitlement. Community attitudes therefore provide access to the practical politics of naming: how terms are accepted, resisted, restricted to in-group use, or treated as imposed from outside. This perspective also informs the interpretation of the slur-focused article (Article 4), where questions of acceptability, reclamation, and reappropriation are understood as socially situated judgements shaped by community histories and perceived risks, not only textual properties.

2.4 From theory to analysis

These three concepts – naming, normativity, and negotiation – do not map neatly onto separate articles. Instead, they appear in different combinations across the dissertation. Article 3 analyses naming and normativity together in media discourse, using Critical Stylistics to trace how the labels *gei*, *homo*, and *homo-seksuaal* categorise and position their referents. Article 4 extends this to the contested edge of naming, adding slur pragmatics to show how *pede* is mobilised ideologically.

Articles 1 and 2 turn to negotiation, examining how Estonian and Finnish community members evaluate and localise *kväär* and *kvääri*. Article 1 also reaches back to the naming axis by supplying broader diachronic frequency evidence for the main LGBT-related word families in Estonian public discourse. Read together, the four articles trace a single process across public and community discourse: how LGBT-related labels name and categorise, how they sustain or unsettle normativity, and how their meanings are negotiated within communities.

3. SOCIOHISTORICAL AND RESEARCH CONTEXT

Whereas Chapter 2 developed the dissertation's theoretical framework, this chapter supplies context rather than concepts: the post-socialist and Estonian conditions in which LGBT-related labels circulate, and the prior research the analyses build on. Section 3.1 looks at the post-socialist environment in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Section 3.2 focuses on Estonia. Section 3.3 reviews current research and highlights the gaps this dissertation tackles.

3.1 Central and Eastern European sexual politics and discourse

The state-socialist past – and in the former Soviet states, the specifically Soviet legal and institutional legacy – provides a distinct set of historical and ideological conditions for understanding LGBT discourse. Under state socialism, sexuality was generally treated as a taboo topic, and male homosexuality in particular was criminalised and heavily stigmatised across the region (Healey 2001; Stella 2015). Estonia, as the empirical focus of this dissertation, shares this legacy but also has distinctive features addressed in Section 3.2.

Recent scholarship challenges the binary framing of state-socialist repression versus Western liberation. Dobrowolska argues against a one-size-fits-all narrative of “sexual modernity” modelled on the West, often imagined through the 1960s US sexual revolution, insisting instead on multiple trajectories and agencies and on questioning the category of “sexual revolution” itself (Dobrowolska 2025). Kulpa and Mizielińska make a related point at the level of knowledge production: Western theorising often assumes a “Western time of sequence” against which the region appears belated, yet such catching-up narratives obscure local histories and agency (Kulpa & Mizielińska 2011; also see e.g. Koobak & Marling 2014: 23) and can reproduce what Uguron (2025) calls “imperatives of amnesia”. For this dissertation, the consequence is that post-socialist LGBT discourse is best read not as delayed adoption of a Western path but as an ongoing negotiation of sexual meanings under specific historical, linguistic, and political conditions, including the production of heterosexuality as a norm to be analysed rather than assumed (Dobrowolska 2025). These transformations also unfolded within a compressed time frame in Estonia (see Section 3.2).

This stance has a methodological implication for how Western theory is used. CEE queer scholarship characteristically works both with and against Anglophone frameworks, adopting their tools while resisting their universalising assumptions (Kulpa & Mizielińska 2011: 15–18). This dissertation follows that stance, using queer linguistics and Critical Stylistics as adaptable toolkits while letting Estonian linguistic form and Soviet-era institutional history set the analytic agenda. The relationship is therefore ambivalent rather than simply one-directional: Anglophone concepts and activist models may carry geopolitical authority, but they can also become resources that local actors translate, adapt,

and use strategically; their ideological effect depends on uptake rather than origin alone (Kulpa & Mizielińska 2011). Bassi (2018) adds that Anglophone dominance is not only empirical but epistemic, since queer studies have often treated translation as peripheral, reproducing a de facto monolingual outlook even though many concepts circulate primarily through translation.

These dynamics become especially visible in how queer terminology travels across languages. As set out in Chapter 2, *queer* carries layered, contested histories, and global scholarship documents how languages adopt and adapt it, producing diverse local equivalents and debates. Nossem's analyses of Italian queer lexicons show how locally available and borrowed terms carry historically layered meanings that do not map neatly onto Anglophone categories (Nossem 2016; Nossem 2019); Chinese-language debates around *tongzhi* ('comrade') show lexical choice to be inseparable from political history, register, and competing projects of legitimacy (Engebretsen et al. 2015; Wong 2008). Across these cases, translation is never neutral substitution but an ideological act that can both lose and create meanings – which is why *queer* is often treated in CEE scholarship as (partly) 'untranslatable' (Baer 2020; Kulpa et al. 2012; Article 2). It travels through asymmetric infrastructures, where Anglophone categories function both as resources for recognition and as symbols of geopolitical hierarchy – an ambiguity especially salient in a small-state setting with a contested relationship to both Western and Eastern frameworks (Cottet & Picq 2019).

Research on LGBT politics and discourse in the region has begun to document these specificities in concrete, language-centred ways. Szulc (2012) shows how Polish activists negotiate between the English *queer* and locally available categories, revealing tensions between imported concepts and entrenched Catholic-nationalist understandings of sexuality (Szulc 2012). Suyarkulova (2019) analyses how *queer* is adapted as *квир* ('kvir') in Kyrgyzstani Russian, where it acquires new political uses in debates about national values, "Western influence", and legitimate belonging (Suyarkulova 2019). Baer's discussion of post-Soviet Russia (e.g., the site *gay.ru* and the journal *Kvir*) illustrates similar dynamic: imported categories become usable through local media infrastructures and locally specific discursive constraints, rather than through one-to-one equivalence with Anglophone *queer* (Baer 2018).

Other work in the region (e.g., on Hungary and neighbouring contexts) similarly shows that the circulation of *queer* and related vocabularies becomes entangled with domestic identity categories and EU-level equality discourses, producing locally specific ideological economies of naming (Kulpa & Mizielińska 2011; Takács 2007). Joanna Chojnicka's (2015) preliminary comparative study of homophobic discourse in Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish media/political contexts identifies a recurrent post-socialist repertoire in which sexual minorities are framed as threats to nation, family, and the Church, excluded from 'normal' society, and positioned through privacy/invisibility logics, reversed victimhood, and bundling with other stigmatised outgroups. Although methodologically exploratory rather than corpus-based, this provides a useful regional macro-frame

for the present dissertation's more systematic, label-sensitive analysis of Estonian media discourse.

This body of work highlights why post-socialist sexual politics cannot be analysed without attention to language. Choices in translation, naming practices, and new words are part of the larger struggle over legitimacy, authenticity, and the perceived “foreignness” of non-heteronormative lives. Although this dissertation does not focus on translation theory, treating translation and localisation as part of how labels circulate helps reveal how borrowing, calquing, and dictionary-making can become ideological (Bassi 2018; Cottet & Picq 2019). This connects directly to my studies of *queer/kväär* in Estonian media and of the locally adapted forms *kväär/kvääri* within Estonian and Finnish LGBT communities (Articles 1–2). Small-language communities face this tension in a sharpened form: English-origin terms can tie local activism to global movements, but they can also appear foreign or elitist (Taavetti 2024).

CEE discourse-historical work on trans topics makes a related point about layered regimes of recognition: Chojnicka shows how gender transition discourses are repeatedly framed as unfinished and continually reinterpreted in post-socialist Poland, shaping what can be said and institutionalised about trans lives (Chojnicka 2023). As established in Section 2.1, naming practices provide a strategic entry point for analysing ideological struggle – and this is especially crucial for understanding Estonian LGBT discourse, where Soviet-era legal and medical vocabularies, activist terminology, and later rights-based framings did not simply replace one another but continued to coexist and reshape independence-era discourse.

3.2 Estonian research context

This section specifies the Estonian context that shapes the dissertation's empirical focus. Estonia shares the post-socialist legacies discussed in Section 3.1, but its trajectory is also shaped by a small-state language ecology with strong institutional language planning, rapid media transformation, and a compressed timeline of LGBT political mobilisation.

One concrete linguistic consequence of Soviet social policy was asymmetrical visibility and criminalisation: in Soviet Estonia, male-male sex was criminalised, while women's same-sex relations were rendered legally and discursively invisible (Põldsam & Arumetsa 2023). Soviet legal and medical discourses framed same-sex desire as deviance or pathology, and these framings left durable traces in public language and institutional norms. More broadly, Soviet-era popular medical and health-education literature functioned as a didactic authority that taught gendered bodily taboos and normalised specific “proper” behaviours, often through pathologising and moralising narrative exempla (Kalkun 2006: 135, 138, 140). This legal-discursive environment shaped the lexical field available in public discourse: in late Soviet and early post-Soviet Estonian media, same-sex sexuality was often framed via terms like *homoseksualism* (‘homosexualism’) and *pederastia* (‘pederasty’), with the latter also functioning as a legal category; these

terms carried strong associations of deviance, pathology, and criminality (Kulpa et al. 2012).

A specifically Estonian turning point is the late 1980s: during glasnost and perestroika same-sex sexuality became discussable in the media and was framed partly through HIV/AIDS prevention discourse and “enlightenment” articles (Kurvinen 2007: 288, 290). Koppel shows that this new media openness was channelled very specifically through HIV/AIDS prevention: the first HIV case in 1988 brought “men who have sex with men” into public discussion as a risk group, and by 1989–1990 the Estonian-language press – including the dailies *Noorte Hää* and *Edasi* and the youth magazine *Noorus* – already hosted the first public debates, personal ads, and early attempts to organise lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people (Koppel 2022: 125; Kurvinen 2007: 289–290). This public-health framing helped bring terms such as *lesbi* and *gei* into broader public circulation and created a pragmatic ‘need to name’ sexual minorities in public health and educational registers, while also making “homosexuality” speakable in the press and opening space (however constrained) for early self-organising and self-naming practices to become visible (Kurvinen 2007).

Estonia’s re-establishment of national sovereignty, EU integration, rapid media transformation, and the public emergence of LGBT politics occurred within a compressed time frame, illustrating what Kulpa and Mizielińska (2011) describe as a “time of coincidence” (see Section 3.1). These dynamics of selective uptake and local re-framing of imported concepts, well documented in Estonian gender/media research and related scholarship on post-socialist knowledge transfer (Marling 2010; Koobak & Marling 2014), also shape how global queer vocabulary becomes locally legible and contestable.

To locate Estonia within its closest regional comparison frame, the Baltic states show substantial internal divergence: ILGA-Europe’s 2026 Rainbow Map – an overall score indicating the extent of legal and policy protections for LGBTI people – ranks Estonia at 46%, while Latvia and Lithuania score 30% and 24% (ILGA-Europe 2026). Estonia presents a particularly instructive case: rapid legal change – marked most visibly by marriage equality in 2024 – coexists with persistent cultural ambivalence and generational divides in public attitudes. Public opinion monitoring shows a long-term increase in acceptance since 2012, but also uneven consolidation across questions and social groups: after the high point recorded in 2023, the 2026 survey indicates a slight decline in personal acceptance of homosexuality, weaker support for several rights-related items, and a more pronounced deterioration in attitudes toward trans people (Turu-uuringute AS 2023; 2026; Hämmäl et al. 2022). This disjuncture between legal progress and uneven social acceptance forms the backdrop to my analysis of Estonian media discourse and community attitudes. Recent interview-based research on 18–20-year-olds in Estonia suggests that anti-LGBTIQ+ hostility is perceived by youth as highly salient and partly normalised within wider risks of political violence, indicating that sexual- and gender-minority hostility should also be considered in relation to youth radicalisation and prevention contexts (Belova-Dalton 2026).

A further layer concerns the wider European circulation of ‘culture war’ framings and anti-gender rhetoric. In Estonia, this repertoire is present but uneven: it tends to become most visible in particular outlets, actors, and controversy cycles, rather than functioning as a pervasive and stable organising frame across the entire media sphere (Sepper 2025). Kováts notes that “culture war” is a morally loaded concept that has travelled from the US to Europe and is often used as a metaphor to delegitimise opponents rather than simply describe disagreement (Kováts 2023). Russia’s 2013 ‘gay propaganda’ legislation provided a concrete model for framing LGBT visibility as a foreign-imposed threat, and its influence is traceable in Estonian conservative rhetoric that similarly frames LGBT rights as external imposition. Velvet (2019) shows how the Foundation for the Protection of Family and Tradition (SAPTK) and the rise of the Conservative People’s Party of Estonia (EKRE) drew on transnational conservative-populist repertoires that braid anti-LGBT and anti-gender positions with narratives of sovereignty, elite overreach, and contested democratic legitimacy. In the 2014 Cohabitation Act debate, for instance, SAPTK’s mass letter campaign and calls for a referendum framed the bill as both a crisis of democracy and an EU-driven imposition. For my purposes, this context clarifies why LGBT-related terminology in media discourse often functions as a strategic political tool as much as a description: labels can be mobilised to index foreignness, elitism, moral threat, or national decay, and they participate in struggles over who can credibly “speak for Estonia”. Policy-oriented equality research suggests that similar institutional struggles arise around how hate speech and discrimination are defined, especially where debates hinge on competing understandings of legitimate restriction versus “freedom of speech” (Padar & Sepper 2022; Kala 2024).

Small-state language dynamics add an institutional dimension to this context. In Estonia, debates over new sexuality- and gender-related vocabulary become visible not only in mainstream media but also through language-planning and lexicographic institutions, which function as public reference points for acceptable usage (Algvere 2025; Langemets et al. 2024; Lindström et al. 2023; Praakli & Koreinik 2020). Widely read Estonian-language news outlets therefore provide a pragmatic vantage point for tracing how sexuality- and gender-related labels are introduced, repeated, and contested in publicly accessible discourse, even as the media ecology has become more fragmented and ideologically segmented in recent years (Opermann & Kõuts-Klemm 2024). More broadly, Central and Eastern European scholarship shows that terminology debates around gender and sexuality can become focal points of ideological conflict: key labels are often framed as imports and are resignified within anti-gender registers, making linguistic innovation publicly contestable (Bogetić 2022; Bogetić 2025; Kováts & Põim 2015). Estonian is highly permeable to English loanwords (Leemets 2004) and lexical change is accelerated through dense media and activist networks. For example, the word *queer* entered Estonian public texts mainly via commercial media, contemporary art, and activist communities – channels where global vocabulary often arrives first (Article 1).

3.3 Estonian LGBT discourse: existing research and gaps

This section surveys existing research (3.3.1) and identifies the gaps this dissertation addresses (3.3.2).

3.3.1 Existing research on LGBT topics in Estonia

Research on Estonian LGBT discourse is still relatively sparse; adjacent political-historical work on the mobilisation of gender and LGBT themes is discussed in Section 3.1 (Velmet 2019). The existing work falls into three areas: historical and sociological accounts, gender and media scholarship that provides a methodological backdrop, and the small body of linguistic work on LGBT representation.

Historical and sociological accounts

Põldsam's dissertation offers the most comprehensive historical account so far, tracing discourses on non-normative sex–gender subjects from the interwar period to today's Estonia. She shows how the period of national awakening that enabled LGBT community organising and rights claims simultaneously framed sexual minorities as threats to national continuity and demographic survival (Põldsam 2023). Together with Arumetsa, Põldsam reconstructs the emergence of gay, lesbian and trans community organising in 1989–1994 and shows how early activism unfolded at the intersection of post-Soviet democratisation and nation-building debates, while also being shaped by transnational activist networks and forms of support (Põldsam & Arumetsa 2023: 9–12). This work provides crucial sociohistorical context for my analysis of how media and public discourses construct LGBT identities in 1995–2023.

Complementing these movement- and history-oriented accounts, sociological research has also examined everyday queer lives and close relationships in Estonia, highlighting how belonging, recognition, and “normality” are negotiated beyond formal politics, for instance, how same-sex couples navigate visibility in everyday spaces (Uibo 2021). Related work on Pride in Estonia shows how public LGBT visibility is negotiated between nationalist framings and transnational Pride repertoires, and how Pride itself can be treated as an “imported phenomenon” in competing political narratives. Uibo shows how visibility is negotiated through explicit naming work: organisers sought to avoid the derogatory framing of a “Gay/Homo parade” by rebranding the event as a “Pride procession”, drawing on the culturally positive connotations of the national Song Festival procession to make public LGBT visibility more acceptable (Uibo 2019).

Tiidenberg and Allaste (2020) offer one of the most detailed empirical accounts of LGBT activism and public visibility in 2010s Estonia, based on activist interviews and participant observation. They show how civic activism is shaped by a persistent discourse of social passivity and by the Soviet-era semantic baggage of ‘activism’ (linked to state-mandated propagandist practices), which can give the activist label a residual negative valence and helps explain why

public-facing repertoires are often carefully negotiated rather than openly confrontational (Tiidenberg & Allaste 2020). While not a study of language use as such, this organisational and interactional context is crucial for interpreting how media discourse about LGBT issues was produced, circulated, and contested – especially around the partnership-law period – and for understanding how a small number of highly visible actors can become discursively over-represented as “the LGBT voice” (Tiidenberg & Allaste 2020).

An important sign of consolidation is the edited collection “Kalevi alt välja: LGBT+ inimeste lugusid 19. ja 20. sajandi Eestist” (2022) (‘Brought Back to Light: Stories of LGBT+ People in 19th- and 20th-century Estonia’). This collection comes from a community-driven scholarly initiative. It brings together research from different fields and the history of the community regarding Estonian LGBT lives and activism. It also includes studies on public visibility and naming practices that are important for later media and discursive struggles (Põldsam et al. 2022).

Gender and media scholarship as methodological backdrop

Although not focused on LGBT topics, Estonian scholarship on gender and media representation provides an important conceptual and methodological backdrop for my analysis of sexual normativity. Marling’s feminist CDA of post-socialist print media shows how media discourse constructed a “spectre of feminism” as an intimidating, foreign-coded “other” and used it as a gatekeeping device in negotiating “proper” national progress (Marling 2010). Importantly, she conceptualises this not as simple rejection, but as ideological filtering and “creolisation” – imported frames are reshaped into locally legible forms and aligned with dominant political ideologies (Marling 2010). Scholarship on ideological filtering and conceptual authority in post-socialist settings (Marling 2010; Kulpa & Mizielińska 2011; Bogetić 2022) supports the interpretation that Estonian debates over *kväär* involve contested conceptual authority, not only moral disagreement. This framing helps explain patterns in my data: the persistence of *homoseksuaal* alongside *gei*, or the complex functions of *pede* reflect active negotiation between competing frameworks for understanding sexuality and social order.

Corpus-based research on gendered lexical patterning, alongside perception-focused work, shows how language can naturalise men as the unmarked default and describe women and men through stereotypical traits, reflecting occupational gender segregation and interpretive bias (Kaukonen 2025; Kaukonen et al. 2025). A comparable Estonian precedent is Piits’ collocation-based work on frequent person-denoting nouns, which shows that recurrent co-textual patterns can be interpreted as evidence of culturally salient gender- and age- related stereotypes in media discourse (Piits 2015). In my dissertation, I build on this insight by using collocational patterning as one empirical route for tracing normativity in public discourse. Complementing these linguistic approaches, a recent mapping of misogyny and sexism in Estonia’s media environment emphasises how identity-based forms of hatred are intertwined, with misogynistic discourses extending

beyond hostility toward women to other targets, including sexual and gender minorities (Kaukonen et al. 2024). Estonian media scholarship documents systematic gendered patterns in representation: women are more often framed through private/family life, while men are foregrounded via work and public achievements (Piltre 2011; Sepper et al. 2020; Malmberg 2018). This provides a broader context for examining how sexual minorities are positioned within existing gender norms.

Linguistic analyses of LGBT discourse

Linguistic analyses of non-normative sexuality and LGBT representation in Estonian media are rare. Kurvinen's (2007) historical discourse analysis of print media around the late Soviet and early independence period identified a shift from medical framing to sexualised representation but did not analyse terminology or linguistic patterning systematically. Because Estonian queer-linguistic research is sparse, Finnish provides the closest linguistic reference point: it is a related Finnic language, has a more established language-and-sexuality research tradition, and functions as the comparison case for Article 2. The Virittäjä special issue "Kieli ja queer – sukupuolen, seksuaalisuuden ja kielen tutkimuksen risteymiä" ('Language and queer: Intersections in the study of gender, sexuality, and language', Virittäjä 126(2), 2022) maps the field from early "homoslang" traditions to contemporary queer linguistic approaches, illustrating how language and sexuality debates develop in a closely related language setting (Jantunen & Surkka 2022). Comparative corpus research on Finnish platformed discussion, such as Suomi24, shows how homo/hetero categorisations and evaluative stances crystallise through recurring lexical patterning, supporting the value of corpus evidence for tracking normativity across genres and participation structures (Jantunen 2018), while Lindeman's folk-linguistic approach treats language users as active contributors to linguistic expertise rather than only objects of analysis (Lindeman 2025).

Small number of recent BA and MA theses indicate emerging interest at the level of community and activist discourse. Toots (2023) analyses the lexicon of LGBT activist podcasts, documenting how speakers navigate between local and English-language terms and how they construct inclusive or exclusive in-group categories. Raud (2022), from the perspective of communication studies, shows that the Estonian "movable middle" often associates LGBT with "dashing, distant, and deviant" meanings and reports uncertainty and avoidance around LGBT-related terminology, while also perceiving LGBT media coverage as excessive, exploitative, or irrelevant. This is useful for this dissertation because it highlights metalinguistic difficulty and the disproportionate role of repeated media labels for audiences who otherwise do not engage with LGBT topics. Other theses have explored more specific subtopics: Toots' MA thesis (2025) focuses on representations of trans people in Estonian mainstream outlets and politically conservative-populist alternative media, showing how topic selection and evaluative framing can vary across outlet types.

3.3.2 Gaps addressed by this dissertation

Building on international research in queer linguistics and discourse studies, this dissertation offers a focused Estonian-language account of how labels related to sexuality and gender gain social meaning in public discussions and community metalinguistic reflections. At the policy level, Estonia has adopted *LGBTIQ equality principles and action plan for 2025 to 2030* (Majandus- ja Kommunikatsiooniministeerium 2025; Kala 2024). However, human-rights monitoring still reveals ongoing issues, such as debates over hate speech regulation, anti-discrimination protections, and trans-related healthcare and legal recognition (Kala 2025). In this context, the dissertation makes three contributions:

Diachronic public-discourse evidence. While prior work has mapped key debates and moments in Estonian sexual politics, we still know comparatively little about how a small set of high-frequency labels (e.g., *gei*, *homo*, *homo-seksuaal*) pattern in everyday news discourse across time through their recurring collocations, grammatical positioning, and evaluative co-texts. Article 3 addresses this by providing a corpus-assisted, diachronic analysis that links linguistic patterning to ideological positioning in media discourse.

Localisation and community meaning making around *kväär*. Recent book-level work on lavender languages inquiry argues that the emancipatory potential of such research depends on integrating critiques of normativity with methodologies that centre locality, everyday practice, and language users' lived experience (Marzullo & Leap 2024). Yet much language-and-sexuality research remains skewed toward media discourse and rarely captures how communities themselves evaluate and contest the labels that circulate publicly. Articles 1–2 address this by analysing how *queer* is localised as *kväär* (and comparatively Finnish *kvääri*), documenting how community members conceptualise and evaluate the term, showing what it can do as an identity label and as a norm-critical resource, but also why it can remain ambiguous or contentious.

Slur functions and antagonistic positioning. Article 4 addresses the lack of diachronic and pragmatic research on sexuality-related slurs in Estonian by tracing how *pede* functions across periods and genres: not only as a personal insult, but also as a resource for political antagonism, gender policing, and metalinguistic commentary. This extends the dissertation's broader argument that labels are not merely descriptive but function as an empirical window onto the discursive production and contestation of normativity in a small-state language context.

These contributions address gaps at both local and international levels. Empirically, the dissertation provides the first systematic corpus-based study of LGBT-related labels in Estonian media from 1995 to 2023, bringing evidence from a region that remains largely absent from international queer linguistics. It also contributes to Estonian language research and public debate by documenting how specific labels function ideologically over time and by providing an evidence base for discussions of media representation, language planning, and equality policy. While Poland and Hungary have attracted international scholarly attention for illiberal anti-gender and anti-LGBT mobilisation and policy backlash, and

Russia for the legal and social effects of its “gay propaganda” regime (Kuhar & Paternotte 2018; Grzebalska & Pető 2018; Kondakov & Shtorn 2021; Edenborg 2021), this research has been primarily sociological, legal, and policy-oriented. The same is true of much existing work on Baltic LGBT issues (Vērdiņš & Ozoliņš 2020; Glenn 2022) and regional LGBT history (Lipša & Vērdiņš 2024; Navickaitė 2024). Corpus-based and discourse-linguistic approaches remain rare, leaving largely unexamined how public language itself participates in producing and contesting sexual normativity in these contexts. Theoretically and methodologically, the dissertation extends Critical Stylistics beyond its predominantly Anglophone base and examines its applicability to Estonian, a language without grammatical gender but with a rich case system and productive compounding and derivation. The framework’s explicit form–function mappings also offer a tractable way to connect ideological text analysis with corpus evidence and community survey data.

These gaps matter because in Estonia’s small state-language media ecology, labels and recurrent framings can rapidly stabilise into public ‘common sense’ about LGBT people. Without both a diachronic account of media patterns and evidence on community evaluations, it is difficult to assess which naming practices are normalising, stigmatising, or contested in practice.

4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, the dissertation uses a complementary multi-method design: corpus-assisted analysis supports accountable generalisation about recurring public-discourse patterns, while text-anchored analysis and survey-based community data provide interpretive depth and access to locally articulated meanings. The interpretive frameworks are introduced in Chapter 2 (queer linguistics, slur pragmatics, metalinguistic perspectives) and in this chapter: corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS), Critical Stylistics, and textual-conceptual functions (TCFs).

4.1 Research design and logic of the dissertation

Here and throughout, I use *LGBT-related* as an umbrella descriptor for labels that occur in Estonian public discourse in connection with non-heteronormative sexuality and gender; in the journalistic strand, *gei*, *homo* and *homoseksuaal* are therefore treated as context-dependent discourse labels rather than as precise demographic descriptors (Article 3). Lexicographically, *homo*, *homoseksuaal*, and *pede* are classified as nouns, while *gei* and *kväär* are classified as both noun and adjective in the Institute of the Estonian Language's combined dictionary (Eesti Keele Instituut 2026).

The dissertation adopts an integrative design in which methods are matched to distinct discourse sites and analytical tasks. Each article targets a different dimension of contested naming. This design is particularly apt in a context where sexual meanings are negotiated across layered institutional histories and competing moral-political frameworks; a corpus-only approach would miss local uptake and resistance, while survey-only evidence would miss the wider discursive structures within which those negotiations occur. The two data types also capture different speaker positions: the media corpus tracks predominantly out-group labelling of *gei*, *homo*, and *homoseksuaal* (how public texts categorise same-sex sexuality), while the surveys access in-group evaluation of *kväär* (how community members negotiate an emergent label). Article 4 (*pede*) addresses a related boundary case: it analyses predominantly out-group derogatory uses while also attending to limited identity-asserting or in-group uses, but its empirical evidence remains corpus-based. Against this background, the four articles contribute as follows:

Article 1 (*kväär*, Estonian survey + corpus context): combines (a) corpus-based contextualisation of LGBT-related labels in Estonian public texts with (b) an Estonia-focused online survey to examine community evaluations and meanings of *kväär*, using both closed-response items and open-ended metalinguistic commentary.

Article 2 (*kväär/kväär*, Estonian-Finnish comparison): uses parallel surveys in Estonian and Finnish language contexts to examine cross-linguistic and cross-cultural adaptation and evaluation of *queer*, *kväär*, and *kvääri* across post-Soviet Estonian and Nordic Finnish context, combining qualitative analysis of metalinguistic commentary with comparative statistical exploration of associations between background variables and evaluations.

Article 3 (*gei, homo, homoseksuaal, media-corpus strand*): analyses diachronic media discourse using corpus-assisted pattern identification (frequency and collocation) and systematic close reading supported by a Critical Stylistics workflow, allowing recurrent textual strategies to be described in a transparent and comparable way across periods and outlets.

Article 4 (*pede, slur-focused strand*): conducts a diachronic, corpus-informed analysis of a derogatory label, treating the corpus primarily as a **retrieval archive** for contextualised instances and then analysing pragmatic function and usage patterns qualitatively (rather than modelling large-scale quantitative tendencies as the primary output).

Across these four articles, three research dimensions emerge: diachronic development of labels is examined through diachronic corpus evidence (Articles 1, 3–4) with Article 1 providing broader contextualisation across multiple sub-corpora and Articles 3–4 conducting focused two-period comparisons. Discursive strategies are analysed via corpus-assisted patterning and a Critical Stylistic close-reading workflow applied to media texts (Article 3) and via corpus-informed pragmatic analysis of slur usage (Article 4). Cultural translation is investigated through community survey data in Estonia and Finland, combining statistical exploration of evaluative patterning with inductive thematic analysis of metalinguistic commentary (Articles 1–2). Table 4.1 summarises how each article’s data, methods, and analytical focus contribute to the dissertation’s overall research design.

Table 4.1. Overview of articles, methods and analytical foci

Article	Title	Methods	Analytical focus
1	“Kuidas suhtub Eesti LGBT kogukond sõnasse <i>kväär</i> ?” EN “Perceptions of the word <i>kväär</i> (‘queer’) among the Estonian LGBT community”	Corpus analysis (thesaurus, frequency, concordance). Community survey. Thematic analysis. Statistical methods (Conditional Inference Tree modelling)	Frequencies of main LGBT labels and diachronic change; community attitudes toward <i>kväär</i>
2	“Is it like a warm coat or should it be buried 1,000 kilometres deep? A comparative analysis of <i>queer</i> , <i>kväär</i> and <i>kvääri</i> in the Estonian and Finnish languages”	Parallel community surveys. Thematic analysis. Statistical methods (Chi-square tests; Conditional Inference Tree modelling)	Cross-linguistic adaptation and comparison
3	“Naming, Framing, Regulating: <i>gei, homo, homoseksuaal</i> in Estonian media (1995–2023)”	CADS (frequency, collocation, concordances). Critical Stylistics	Diachronic ideological discursive patterns
4	“Vaenusõna <i>pede</i> muutuv roll” EN “Changing role of the slur <i>pede</i> ”	Corpus-informed qualitative analysis	Diachronic pragmatic functions of slur <i>pede</i>

Sections 4.2–4.6 describe the data, corpus procedures, survey design, and analytic steps in turn.

4.2 Data overview

Across the dissertation, the empirical data come from (a) public written discourse in the Estonian National Corpus (ENC) (used in Articles 1, 3, and 4 with different analytic emphases) and (b) LGBT community surveys (Articles 1–2). Table 4.2 provides an overview of corpus and survey data across articles.

Table 4.2. Data sources and coverage²

Article	Corpus data	Survey data	Time span
1	ENC 2021: Balanced Corpus (1990–2007; ~12M) ENC 2021: Reference Corpus (1995–2008; ~224M) ENC 2021: Timestamped (2014–2021; ~230M) Estonian Trends (2020–2023; ~142M)	Estonia (n=353)	Corpus: 1990–2008; 2014–2023 Survey: October 2022
2	–	Estonia (n=353) Finland (n=353)	October 2022 (Estonia) October 2023 (Finland)
3	ENC 2023: Reference Corpus (1995–2008; ~224M) ENC 2023: Timestamped (2014–2023; ~344M) Periodicals only	–	1995–2008; 2014–2023
4	ENC 2023: Reference Corpus (1995–2008; ~224M) ENC 2023: Timestamped (2014–2023; ~344M) Multiple text types (incl. comments/forums where available)	–	1995–2008; 2014–2023

The data selection also entails several exclusions. Transgender-related labels such as *transsooline* and *transseksuaal* occur in the material but are not analysed systematically, because they require a dedicated trans-linguistic framework attentive to gender, embodiment, transition, medical gatekeeping, legal recognition, and self-naming. Bisexual, pansexual, and asexual labels are not treated as focal terms, since the dissertation concentrates on the most frequent generalising labels for same-sex sexuality in Estonian media (*homo*, *gei*, *homoseksuaal*) and on two contested labels with distinct discursive roles (*kväär*, *pede*); *bi*- forms also create substantial unrelated query noise. The analysis is further limited to Estonian-language discourse: Russian-language media in Estonia constitute an important parallel discourse field, with their own terminological repertoires (e.g., *голубой* [goluboi] ‘light blue; gay [slang]’, *нудоп* [pidor] ‘slur for gay men’) and ties to both local and broader Russian-language media and discourse contexts. However, including Russian-language material would require a separate sampling strategy,

² Token counts are reported as displayed in Sketch Engine at the time of querying. The Reference Corpus count (~224 million) differs from the figure in Koppel & Kallas (2022; ~212 million), likely due to differences in tokenisation.

different corpora, and engagement with the specificities of Russian state discourse on “non-traditional sexual relations”. Spoken interaction is excluded because available Estonian spoken corpora contain too few LGBT-related tokens and would require different methods. Social media platforms are not analysed as a separate data source because they require platform-specific collection strategies and ethical protocols; online comments and forums are used only where they are part of the Estonian National Corpus and explicitly included in the article-specific design. These exclusions are matters of data design and analytical focus, not claims about the lesser relevance of the excluded identities, languages, or discourse sites.

4.2.1 Public discourse data (corpus-based)

Public texts were accessed through the Estonian National Corpus / eesti keele ühendkorpus, queried via Sketch Engine (Kilgariff et al. 2014). The corpus data are drawn from a general-purpose national corpus, not from a purpose-built corpus of LGBT-related texts. The target labels were retrieved through lexical queries across the corpus, regardless of text topic, which makes it possible to capture both topical and incidental uses of these labels, including uses that occur outside explicitly LGBT-related discussions. Article 1 uses the 2021 version (Kallas & Koppel 2022), Articles 3 and 4 use the 2023 version (Kallas & Koppel 2023). These data are used in three different ways across the dissertation:

- In Article 1, corpus evidence is used to contextualise label use in public discourse and to motivate the focus on *kväär* in community evaluation. The study draws on several subcorpora – the Balanced Corpus (1990–2007), Reference Corpus (1995–2008), and Timestamped Corpus (2014–2021) as well as Estonian Trends (2020–; ~142M as queried in 2023), an external monitor corpus drawing on the same sources as the Timestamped corpus and updated approximately monthly in Sketch Engine (Kallas & Koppel 2022). As a continuously expanding monitor corpus rather than a fixed reference corpus, Estonian Trends is used here to track very recent lexical salience and uptake, not as a directly comparable period corpus. Since Article 1 draws on subcorpora with different compilation histories and genre profiles, and since their coverage periods partly overlap, they are analysed as separate samples rather than pooled into a single dataset (Koppel & Kallas 2022: 209, 218). In Article 1, the frequency counts are based on the selected subcorpora as available in Sketch Engine and were not filtered by comment-section metadata. The corpus evidence is used for broad frequency-based contextualisation of public textual uptake; participatory genres such as comment sections and forums, where present in the underlying corpus, are not analysed separately, and community meanings and evaluations of *kväär* are examined through the LGBT survey.
- In Article 3, quantitative corpus analysis (collocation, concordances) identifies salient patterns, and qualitative Critical Stylistics analysis interprets their ideological functions (the analytical toolkit is outlined in Section 4.3.2.1).

Article 3 restricts analysis to texts classified as ‘periodicals’ in Sketch Engine genre metadata. Because genre labels are automatic metadata, ‘periodicals’ is treated as a practical filter rather than a perfect genre typology. Outlets are categorised by ideological positioning (mainstream, cultural, conservative-populist) rather than by genre, as the latter distinction is increasingly blurred in digital media environments. The categorisation draws on Estonian media research documenting the emergence of ideologically segmented alternative media alongside established outlets (Opermann & Kõuts-Klemm 2024; see Section 3.2).

- In Article 4, the same corpus infrastructure was used to retrieve diachronic instances of a slur across text types (including participatory genres such as forums and comment sections) for pragmatic/function analysis rather than large-scale quantitative modelling. Because the two periods differ in platform ecology and the availability/visibility of participatory genres in the corpus, Article 4 analyses *pede* cross-genre.

For the diachronic corpus-based articles (Articles 3–4, and for the diachronic contextualisation in Article 1 where comparable), the core comparisons are organised around two time periods drawn from subcorpora of the Estonian National Corpus, with article-specific filtering as described above:

- **Earlier period (P1)** (Reference Corpus/Koondkorpus, 1995–2008; ~224 million tokens): contains journalism, fiction, parliamentary transcripts, Estonian and European legal texts, academic texts, and web texts including news, blog and forum posts. Article 1 additionally draws on the Balanced Corpus (1990–2007; ~12 million tokens), which contains equal proportions of newspapers, fiction, and academic writing. Although the Balanced Corpus starts in 1990, token frequencies before 1995 are too low and corpus composition too varied for reliable diachronic claims.
- **Later period (P2)** (Timestamped/Uudiswood, 2014–2023; ~344 million tokens; see Table 4.2): consists primarily of online media portal texts (Koppel & Kallas 2022: 217–218), including established outlets (e.g., Delfi, ERR, Postimees), conservative-populist alternative media (Uued Uudised, Objektiiv), and cultural publications (e.g., Sirp, Mõõrileht).

Throughout this dissertation, journalistic texts refer to content from professional outlets (newspapers, online news portals, and cultural publications), including news, opinion, features, interviews, and reviews; social media posts and user-generated commentary are not included unless explicitly stated. In Sketch Engine, these correspond to texts classified as ‘periodicals’ in the genre metadata. This means that the corpus-based analyses describe public textual representations of LGBT-related labels; they do not directly capture private discourse, community-internal communication, embodied practice, or interactional use.

The two main subcorpora were selected because their temporal metadata enables diachronic tracking of language change, and because the periods they cover correspond to analytically meaningful phases: an early independence phase, when same-sex relationships first became discussable in mainstream media, and a later phase characterised by intensified political contestation around partnership recognition and marriage equality. The absence of data for 2009–2013 reflects corpus availability rather than a theoretical assumption; the gap falls between the compilation periods of the available subcorpora (Kallas & Koppel 2022). Notably, both *kväär* and the LGBT initialism entered the corpus during this gap period (Article 1).

4.2.2 Community-facing data (survey-based)

Community perspectives are captured through online surveys targeting LGBT respondents. Article 1 analyses an Estonia-focused survey conducted in October 2022 (N = 353), administered via Google Forms. The survey was conducted at a point when *kväär* had begun circulating beyond activist and academic contexts into cultural journalism and broader public discourse, while community attitudes toward the term remained divided. This timing makes it possible to relate documented media usage patterns to community members' self-reported evaluations and interpretations of the same emerging label. Article 2 extends this design into a parallel Estonian-Finnish comparison, co-authored with Meri Lindeman. The Finnish survey was conducted in October 2023 via Webropol, reaching the same number of responses as the Estonian survey (N = 353) and yielding a combined dataset of N = 706. Both surveys were open for seven days. Response uptake was strongly front-loaded – the large majority of responses arrived within the first two days of dissemination, after which the rate of new responses fell to a trickle. The seven-day window therefore captured the bulk of community uptake, and keeping the survey open longer was unlikely to have added many further responses. As is typical for online community surveys disseminated via social media, the samples skewed toward younger respondents; age was therefore treated as an analytically relevant background variable in subsequent analyses.

In the Estonian survey, the questionnaire was distributed through three main channels: the largest Estonian LGBT+ Facebook group (approximately 1,800 members); the Estonian LGBT Association (Eesti LGBT Ühing), which included it in its newsletter and closed information channels; and the Gay Christians' Fellowship (Geikristlaste Kogu), which was invited by email to forward it to members and followers. From there, the questionnaire circulated further person-to-person and through reposting by other LGBT groups and online spaces, including Discord. Respondents to the Finnish survey were recruited through comparable community organisations and online networks. "LGBT community" was thus operationalised pragmatically, as those reachable through LGBT activist organisations and their associated channels – people who recognise LGBT labels or community spaces as relevant to themselves. Targeting these networks rather than adjacent ones (e.g., feminist circles) was deliberate: the aim was to capture

how people who relate to the labels evaluate *kväär*, not the views of a general public with an interest in the topic.

Both surveys followed a similar overall structure. The first section collected background information (sociodemographic and identity-related variables), with identity questions allowing custom responses and non-response options. The second section asked about familiarity with and use of *kväär/kvääri/queer* and included a five-point evaluation item measuring respondents' orientation toward the localised label. The third section consisted of open-ended questions inviting respondents to justify their rating and describe what they understood *kväär/kvääri* to mean.

These surveys are not intended to be statistically representative of all LGBT people in Estonia or Finland. In the Estonian survey, the sample was concentrated in major urban centres, with approximately 71% of respondents living in Tallinn or Tartu, and was also nationally/ethnically homogeneous, with approximately 92% reporting Estonian national/ethnic self-identification. The surveys are therefore best understood as community-facing, self-selected samples recruited through LGBT organisations and online networks, rather than as population-level attitude surveys. The Estonian survey is also likely to under-represent Russian-speaking LGBT people in Estonia, since recruitment moved mainly through Estonian-language LGBT organisations and networks. Earlier work notes parallel Estonian- and Russian-speaking queer networks in Estonia (Aavik et al. 2016), and Uibo's survey found Russian-speaking respondents to be under-represented relative to their share of the general population (Uibo 2021). Recent ethnographic work on grassroots queer organising in Estonia also points to the growing importance of multilingual community spaces and Russian-speaking queer participants and activists (Lukinmaa & Milyakina 2025). Several such initiatives were only emerging or being reorganised around the time of the Estonian survey and were therefore not available as established recruitment channels. A consequence of this recruitment route is that the surveys may also under-reach people who engage with *queer* as a political or practice-based label without affiliating with organised LGBT communities, for example, those in artistic or activist circles who support queer politics without adopting the label for themselves, or people whose relationship to *queer* runs through non-normative relationship or sexual practices, which were more visible in the Finnish data (Article 2). Some meaning potentials of *kväär* circulating outside organised LGBT community networks may therefore be under-represented.

Ethical procedures followed web-survey guidelines (Buchanan & Hvizdak 2009). In the Estonian survey, I obtained informed consent; no personal identifiers (names, contact details, IP addresses) were collected; and participants indicated age in ranges to reduce identification risk. After data collection, the Estonian Google Forms survey was deleted from the platform, and the exported data were stored and processed on secure university servers.

The full Estonian survey instrument is provided in Appendix 1.

4.3 Queer Corpus Stylistics: from corpus evidence to ideological positioning

This section introduces the corpus-based and text-analytical approaches used in the dissertation. Section 4.3.1 outlines Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) as the methodological framework for pattern identification; Section 4.3.2 presents Critical Stylistics as the interpretive framework for linking textual form to ideological meaning; and Section 4.3.2.1 specifies the textual-conceptual functions applied in the analysis.

In the media-corpus strand of the dissertation, I use “Queer Corpus Stylistics” as a working label for the specific combination of approaches applied here: the normativity critique of queer linguistics, corpus-based patterning, and the text-anchored interpretive toolkit of Critical Stylistics. The point is not to propose a new paradigm, but to name an integrated workflow that moves between macro-level repetition (how norms become “common sense”) and micro-level textual choices (how categories, agency, and assumptions are grammatically built) (Kłaniecki 2023)

4.3.1 Corpus-assisted discourse studies

Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) refers to approaches that combine corpus linguistic techniques with discourse-analytic interpretation to identify recurrent (and often non-obvious) patterning in large text collections and relate these patterns to social meaning and ideology. A key motivation is methodological: corpus analysis supports accountable generalisation beyond isolated examples, while discourse-analytic close reading keeps interpretation anchored in co-text, genre, and context (Baker 2008, 2018, 2023; Baker et al. 2008; Partington et al. 2013).

In this dissertation, corpus-assisted analysis makes visible how LGBT-related labels become embedded in wider discursive fields through repeated co-textual association and distribution across genres and time periods. CADS foregrounds, for example:

Collocation and co-textual patterning: how labels cluster with recurring semantic fields and institutional frames (Brezina et al. 2015; Gablasova et al. 2017).

Evaluative environments (often discussed via semantic prosody): how repeated co-occurrence can build persistent positive/negative orientations around otherwise “descriptive” category terms, while still requiring concordance-based interpretation rather than purely automatic labelling (Hunston 2007).

Diachronic comparison: how distributional tendencies and dominant co-textual environments shift or persist across periods (Baker 2013; Partington et al. 2013).

CADS is complementary to the dissertation’s other frameworks rather than competing with them: corpus evidence provides a structured view of repetition and salience in public discourse, while queer linguistics and (where used) Critical Stylistics support interpretation of these patterns as mechanisms of normativity and ideological positioning.

In language-and-sexuality research specifically, corpus-assisted approaches have produced substantial diachronic evidence. Paul Baker's corpus-based work on British public discourse shows that framings and label choices shift over time – often toward more rights- and identity-oriented language – while older framings and “diachronic layers” of terminology remain in circulation (Baker 2008; Baker 2013; Baker 2023; Love & Baker 2015). Wilkinson's diachronic corpus-based CDA of *The Times* – interpreted through a poststructuralist discourse-theoretical lens – traces how salient labels and framings shift across periods, from earlier legal-criminal framings (e.g., *homosexual offence*) toward later collectivising and institutionalised labels (e.g., *LGBT community*), while showing that change unfolds alongside recurring, sedimented patterns visible in keyword profiles and collocation analysis (Wilkinson 2019; Wilkinson 2022; Wilkinson 2023). Other scholars have combined CADS approaches with critical discourse traditions to trace how media texts normalise certain sexual and gender identities while marginalising others (Tarat et al. 2023; Zottola 2018). Corpus-assisted critical stylistics work outside sexuality studies (e.g., Hassan's analysis of media portrayals of religious groups) is also relevant here methodologically, because it demonstrates how corpus patterns can be interpreted through Jeffries' textual-conceptual functions to reveal ideological positioning (Hassan 2019).

4.3.2 Critical Stylistics as interpretive framework

The corpus-based media analysis requires a framework that links textual form to ideological meaning in a systematic and transparent way. For this purpose, the dissertation draws on Critical Stylistics (CS), developed by Jeffries, which offers a text-anchored toolkit for identifying how ideologically consequential meanings are constructed through recurrent linguistic patterning (Jeffries 2010; Jeffries & Walker 2019).

CS builds on Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL; Halliday & Matthiessen 2004) but reworks its functional grounding into an explicitly critical descriptive apparatus: a consistent set of form-function mappings that trace how texts cue particular worldviews and “common-sense” assumptions (Jeffries 2010). The choice also resonates with established Estonian traditions of functional and critical text analysis that foreground how linguistic form participates in constructing social reality and power relations (e.g., Kasik 2002; Kasik 2003; Kasik 2004); CS adds to this tradition one explicit and replicable cross-linguistic toolkit.

CS aligns with the broad aims of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in treating discourse as ideologically consequential but differs in emphasis. Where CDA often moves between textual analysis and wider socio-historical explanation, CS forces the analyst to specify which textual choices cue which ideological readings, tracing how categorisation, agency patterns, list/contrast structures, and presuppositions build a particular version of social reality in the text, rather than moving quickly from topics to stances (Jeffries 2010; Jeffries & Walker 2019). This is especially useful in corpus-assisted work, where the interpretive risk is to build claims from striking individual concordance lines rather than from recurrent textual patterns.

Finally, CS is central primarily in Article 3, where the media-corpus analysis requires systematic form-ideology mapping at a textual level. The other articles foreground different but complementary perspectives (community evaluation and metalinguistic sense-making; pragmatic approaches to derogation and contested labels). The theoretical framework therefore presents CS as one component within an integrated design.

4.3.2.1 Textual-conceptual functions used in this dissertation

Jeffries operationalises Critical Stylistics through textual-conceptual functions: recurring ways in which texts organise experience, evaluation, agency, relations, assumptions, and viewpoint through identifiable linguistic cues (Jeffries 2010: 15–16).

Jeffries' framework comprises ten textual-conceptual functions (Jeffries 2010):

1. Naming and describing: constructing categories and attributes through labels, noun phrases, modification, and nominalisation.
2. Representing actions, events and states (transitivity): construing processes and participant roles, distributing agency, responsibility, and affectedness.
3. Equating and contrasting: building relations of sameness and difference between categories, actors, or positions.
4. Exemplifying and enumerating: grouping entities into sets and taxonomies, as complete lists or illustrative instances.
5. Prioritising: assigning salience by foregrounding some meanings and backgrounding others through information structure and syntactic packaging.
6. Implying and assuming: presenting meanings as shared or taken for granted (presupposition and implicature).
7. Negating: evoking a scenario to deny or dismiss it.
8. Hypothesising: using modality and conditionals to present situations as possible, probable, necessary, or obligatory.
9. Presenting others' speech and thoughts: reporting, framing, and evaluating the speech and thought of others.
10. Representing time, space and society (deixis): positioning events and participants in time, space, and social relations relative to a viewpoint.

Of Jeffries' ten functions, Article 3 develops in detail those that most consistently organised the comparison between *gei*, *homo*, and *homoseksuaal*: naming and describing, representing actions/events/states, equating and contrasting, exemplifying and enumerating, implying and assuming, and prioritising. The other functions in Jeffries' framework were not treated as absent. Negating, hypothesising, reported speech/thought, and time-space-society positioning occur in the material, but in this analysis they mainly functioned as cues within the focal functions or as contextual features of journalistic discourse, rather than generating separate comparative findings. The selection of focal functions was therefore guided by analytical productivity: functions were developed as separate categories when

they helped explain recurrent differences in the ideological positioning of the three terms.

Following Jeffries, the functions are treated here as overlapping conceptual tools rather than as discrete categories with one-to-one correspondences between form and meaning. The textual cues listed for each function are therefore used as recurrent operational indicators, not as exclusive or exhaustive formal markers.

The core TCFs used are:

Naming and describing captures how texts construct social categories and attributes through labels, noun phrases, modification, and nominalisation, thereby delimiting “kinds of people” and their evaluative profiles (Jeffries 2010: 19–21, 33–35). Typical realisations include label choice, noun-phrase structure, modification (premodifiers/postmodifiers), nominalisation, and categorising compounds. Naming is treated here as ideologically consequential because it establishes category boundaries and can embed evaluation implicitly. A further operational distinction within naming and describing concerns grammatical realisation: labels can appear as nouns (constructing a bounded social type) or as adjectives (attributing a property). Nominal labelling can strengthen categorisation by presenting sexuality as a discrete identity category rather than an attribute. In the media corpus analysed in Article 3, the target terms *gei*, *homo*, and *homoseksuaal* occur predominantly in nominal patterns (e.g., as head nouns or predicate complements such as *olla* X ‘to be X’); adjectival uses are comparatively rare and are treated as part of the same categorisation work (Article 3).

In the tables below, the first column gives the Estonian example with gloss and translation, the second identifies the key textual cue(s), and the third provides the TCF interpretation, i.e. the analytical point the example illustrates in relation to the function.

Example (ET + gloss + EN)	Textual cue	TCF interpretation
Geide ja lesbide õiguste eest võitlejate rühmitust gay.PL.GEN and lesbian.PL.GEN rights.PL.GEN for fighter.PL.GEN organisation.PART <i>‘an organisation of fighters for the rights of gays and lesbians’</i>	geide ja lesbide + võitlejate rühmitust	Constructs a rights-bearing collective and institutional legitimacy through category naming.
Homoseksuaalide abielu tähendab aga omasuguste ühendust homosexual.PL.GEN marriage mean.3SG but same.kind.PL.GEN union.PART <i>‘The marriage of homosexuals means a union of those of the same kind’</i>	tähendab + omasuguste ühendust	Defines the category via sameness; frames “marriage of homosexuals” as a distinct type with an internal logic.

Representing actions, events and states captures how texts construe processes and participant roles – who acts, who is acted upon, and what is presented as an action, event, or state – thereby distributing agency, responsibility, and affectedness (Jeffries 2010: 38–40). Typical realisations include verb/process type, voice and impersonal constructions, argument structure, and clause patterns that foreground or background actors and institutions.

Example (ET + gloss + EN)	Textual cue	TCF interpretation
Doonoriks ei või olla [...] narkomaanid, prostituudid ja homoseksuaalid. donor.TRANS NEG can be.INF [...] drug.addict.PL prostitute.PL and homosexual.PL <i>'A donor cannot be [...] drug addicts, prostitutes, and homosexuals.'</i>	doonoriks + ei või olla; institutional source implicit	Represents the listed groups as regulated rather than acting participants; the institutional source of the prohibition is syntactically absent.

Equating and contrasting captures how texts build relations of sameness/difference between categories, actors, or positions, often compressing evaluation into oppositions and alignments (Jeffries 2010: 51–52). Typical realisations include coordination and parallelism, comparison structures, apposition/renaming, and contrastive frames (e.g., binaries, “X vs. Y” formulations). It is included because equivalences and oppositions often act as compressed ideological evaluations and devices for constructing oppositions and alignments.

Example (ET + gloss + EN)	Textual cue	TCF interpretation
Pole tähtis kas inimene on gei või hetero. NEG.be important whether person be.3SG gay or straight <i>'It doesn't matter whether a person is gay or straight.'</i>	kas + või + pole tähtis	Builds a binary contrast while explicitly neutralising its value; still presupposes the salience of the category split.

Exemplifying and enumerating captures how texts group entities into sets and taxonomies, either presenting items as constituting a (seemingly) complete list or as illustrative instances of a broader category (Jeffries 2010: 66–67, 69–71). Typical realisations include list structures and case-parallelism, explicit exemplifying markers (e.g., ‘for example’ equivalents), and coordination patterns that create category scope and membership. This function is analytically distinct from equating/contrasting because it organises who or what belongs together, rather than how items are positioned relative to one another. In practice, the boundary between exemplifying and enumerating is not always formally clear-cut; some cases rely on pragmatic inferencing, and the same list structure may function as either an illustrative or a more comprehensive set depending on context.

Example (ET + gloss + EN)	Textual cue	TCF interpretation
Kõik targad lapsed teavad, et inimesed jagunevad tarkadeks ja lollideks, lesbideks ja geideks. all smart.PL child.PL know.3PL that people divide.PASS smart.PL.TRANS and stupid.PL.TRANS lesbian.PL.TRANS and gay.PL.TRANS <i>'All smart children know that people are divided into smart and stupid, lesbians and gays.'</i>	kõik targad lapsed teavad + tarkadeks ja lollideks, lesbideks ja geideks	Naturalises a taxonomy via list/parallelism and treats categorisation as “known truth”.
Näiteks geide ja lesbide ühendused on juba loodud. for.example gay.PL.GEN and lesbian.PL.GEN association.PL be.3PL already establish.PTCP.PASS <i>'For example, gay and lesbian associations have already been established.'</i>	näiteks + on juba loodud	Provides a concrete instance supporting a broader category claim; presents institutionalisation as already underway.

Implying and assuming captures how texts present meanings as already shared, taken for granted, or not up for debate, thereby naturalising contestable premises as the default interpretive frame (Jeffries 2010: 94–103). Typical realisations include presupposition triggers (definite descriptions, factives, change-of-state formulations), temporal/iterative markers (e.g., ‘already’), conditionals and limiters (e.g., ‘as long as’), and other constructions that embed assumptions rather than asserting them. Although presupposition and implicature can be analytically distinguished, they are not always sharply separable in practice; the category is used here to capture both textually encoded assumptions and closely related implied meanings that contribute to naturalisation.

Example (ET + gloss + EN)	Textual cue	TCF interpretation
Kümme noort leidis, et neid ei häiri homoseksuaalid seni, kuni need avalikult üles ei astu ning paraade ei pea . ten young.person.PART find.PST.3SG that them.PART NEG bother homosexual.PL as.long.as these publicly up NEG step and parade.PL.PART NEG hold <i>'Ten young people found that they are not bothered by homosexuals as long as they do not appear publicly and do not hold parades.'</i>	seni, kuni + avalikult + ei astu + ei pea	Presupposes acceptability is conditional on invisibility; normalises a threshold model of tolerance.

Example (ET + gloss + EN)	Textual cue	TCF interpretation
Rootsi homoseksuaalidel juba lubatud oma kooselu seadustada, mis annab neile samasugused õigused nagu heteroseksuaalsetel abielupaaridel. Sweden.GEN homosexual.PL.ADE already allow.PTCP.PASS own cohabitation legalise.INF which give.3SG them.ALL same.kind.PL.NOM rights.PL.NOM as heterosexual.PL.ADE married.couple.PL.ADE <i>'In Sweden homosexuals have already been allowed to legalise their cohabitation, which gives them the same rights as heterosexual married couples.'</i>	juba lubatud + samasugused õigused nagu	Presupposes that permission is/was required; constructs rights as granted within an authorisation frame while asserting equivalence to heterosexual marriage.

Prioritising captures how texts assign salience by foregrounding some meanings and backgrounding others through information structure, transformations, and subordination: for example, what is placed in thematic or initial position, what appears in the main clause rather than an embedded clause, and what is expressed through transformations that reduce prominence, especially passive constructions and comparable impersonal forms (Jeffries 2010: 77–88). In Article 3, this is particularly relevant for institutional discourse, where regulatory outcomes are foregrounded while authorising institutions or agents (state, medical institutions, legal bodies) are left implicit or syntactically downgraded. Typical realisations include word order and thematic fronting, passive and impersonal constructions, agent omission or optional agent marking (e.g., English *by*-phrases, Estonian *poolt*-constructions), and subordination or relative-clause packaging of consequential information. Some of the following examples also appear under earlier functions.

Example (ET + gloss + EN)	Textual cue	TCF interpretation
Doonoriks ei või olla [...] narkomaanid, prostituudid ja homoseksuaalid. donor.TRANS NEG can be.INF [...] drug.addict.PL prostitute.PL and homosexual.PL <i>'A donor cannot be [...] drug addicts, prostitutes, and homosexuals.'</i>	doonoriks + ei või olla; institutional authority implicit	Foregrounds eligibility as the primary proposition while backgrounding who imposes the restriction; prioritises regulatory logic over institutional accountability.

Example (ET + gloss + EN)	Textual cue	TCF interpretation
Rootsi homoseksuaalidel juba lubatud oma kooselu seadustada, mis annab neile samasugused õigused nagu heteroseksuaalsetel abielupaaridel. Sweden.GEN homosexual.PL.ADE already allow.PTCP.PASS own cohabitation legalise.INF which give.3SG them.ALL same.kind.PL.NOM rights.PL.NOM as heterosexual.PL.ADE married.couple.PL.ADE <i>'In Sweden homosexuals have already been allowed to legalise their cohabitation, which gives them the same rights as heterosexual married couples.'</i>	lubatud + mis annab	Prioritises authorisation ("allowed") as the headline meaning, while the rights outcome is syntactically secondary; keeps the granting institution backgrounded, even in a pro-equality framing.

Several of these examples recur in Chapter 5, where they are analysed as evidence rather than only as illustrations of the functions. The functions themselves are overlapping conceptual lenses rather than discrete categories (Jeffries 2010: 88): a single stretch of text may, for instance, both enumerate category members and presuppose their boundaries as given (Jeffries 2010: 66–71; 94–103).

4.4 Corpus analytical procedures

All corpus analyses were carried out in Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014) using the corpora described in Section 4.2. This section specifies (a) how search queries were constructed and cleaned, (b) how quantitative patterning (frequency and collocation) was operationalised where relevant, and (c) how concordance material was selected and analysed in the close-reading stages.

As outlined in Section 4.2.1, the three corpus-based articles use the corpus differently: Article 1 for frequency contextualisation, Article 3 for collocation-based patterning and qualitative interpretation, and Article 4 as a retrieval archive for pragmatic analysis. The corpus analyses are therefore text-first and pattern-oriented: they examine how labels are used in public written discourse, rather than analysing interactional turn-taking, ethnographic practice, or speaker-level sociolinguistic variation.

4.4.1 Query construction, cleaning, and context units

Exploratory frequency mapping

To contextualise term salience and to determine which labels would be carried forward into the corpus-based analyses, I first compiled a broader set of candidate LGBT-related labels for an exploratory frequency overview. The initial list was

based on prior research and researcher judgement and was then checked using Sketch Engine’s distributional thesaurus in ENC 2021 to check corpus-near neighbours and confirm that selected items belonged to the same meaning domain. Seed terms for the thesaurus were *gei*, *lesbi*, *homo*, *homoseksuaal*, *LGBT*, *transsooline*, and *transseksuaal*; for *kväär* and *pede*, corpus frequency was too low for the thesaurus function to return results. Items that appeared as thesaurus neighbours but fell outside the dissertation’s focus (e.g., broader “social justice” labels) were excluded to keep the frequency comparison aligned with the research object. Figure 5.1 presents this exploratory frequency mapping; the subsequent article-level analyses focus on the narrower set of key labels specified in Section 4.1.

Query design

Search queries were constructed to retrieve relevant morphological variants of the target labels (e.g., case- and number-marked forms) and, where needed, derived and compound forms, while excluding string-matches that are orthographically similar but conceptually unrelated. Depending on the term and the article, this was achieved via (a) lemma-based searches (when available and appropriate), and/or (b) regular-expression patterns (to capture derivatives and compounds sharing a stem). For example, Article 1 uses regular-expression queries in the lemma search field (e.g., *homo.** retrieves all words whose lemma begins with *homo-*, including *homo*, *homoseksuaal*, *homoabielu* (‘same-sex marriage’), *homotsema* (‘to act/be homo’ [pejorative]); *trans.** retrieves *transsooline* (‘transgender’), *transseksuaal* (‘transsexual’), etc.).

The distinction between regular-expression queries (e.g., *homo.**) and single-lemma queries (e.g., *homo*) is analytically significant: regular-expression queries capture morphological variation (compounds, derivatives), while single-lemma queries track individual labels as standalone forms. This difference is interpreted in Section 5.1.

Cleaning and exclusions

Retrieved results were checked against concordance lines to confirm that hits belonged to the intended meaning domain; false positives were removed through manual concordance screening and, when searches returned substantial unrelated material, through query-level exclusions or stopword lists in Sketch Engine. For *homo*, non-target uses (*Homo sapiens*, *Homo ludens*) and technical formations (*homogeenne* ‘homogeneous’, *homogeniseerima* ‘to homogenise’) were excluded. For prefix-like strings (*trans-*), unrelated items (e.g., *transport*, *transatlantiline*) were filtered out.

Context units

The basic qualitative unit of analysis is the concordance line (KWIC), with surrounding co-text used to establish how the label functions in context. In Article 4, concordance lines were extracted with ± 50 words of co-text; when required, larger units (paragraph or full text) were consulted for functional interpretation.

4.4.2 Frequency and collocation procedures

Where the research task required diachronic patterning (Articles 1 and 3), frequency was calculated as both absolute counts and normalised frequency (per million tokens) to support comparison across subcorpora of different sizes. To test whether observed frequency differences between periods are statistically significant, log-likelihood (LL) tests were applied to the three focal terms in Article 3 (*gei*, *homo*, *homoseksuaal*). Log-likelihood is appropriate for comparing frequencies across corpora of different sizes and does not assume normal distribution (Rayson & Garside 2000). Statistical significance is treated as a warrant that differences are unlikely to be due to corpus size alone, while interpretive claims are based on convergence with normalised frequencies, collocation evidence, concordance reading, and qualitative analysis. Results are reported in Section 5.1.

In Article 3, collocation analysis was used to locate recurrent discursive environments for *gei*, *homo*, and *homoseksuaal* before moving into text-anchored interpretation. Collocates were extracted using Sketch Engine's Collocations function within a symmetrical ± 5 -word window, wide enough to capture discourse-level patterning while limiting noise from distant co-text (Stefanowitsch 2020), with results ranked by LogDice score. The Collocations function was preferred over Word Sketch because the latter requires higher token frequencies to generate reliable grammatical profiles (Kilgariff et al. 2014: 10–12), and the target terms had relatively low frequencies in the filtered subcorpora. The window-based approach also aligned better with the research aim of identifying general discursive environments rather than specific grammatical relations.

LogDice was selected as the association measure because it is well suited for large, diverse general corpora with relatively low target-term frequencies. Unlike Mutual Information (MI), which favours rare word pairs and can overweight low-frequency collocates, or T-score, which emphasises high-frequency combinations, LogDice balances both extremes and produces more stable results across varying corpus sizes and term frequencies (Rychlý 2008). A LogDice score of ≥ 5 was used as the minimum threshold for significance, with scores ≥ 10 treated as especially strong associations. A minimum collocate frequency of 7 occurrences was applied to avoid interpreting accidental co-occurrence.

Collocation results were then treated as **attention-directing evidence**: they identify where patterning is likely to be meaningful, but interpretive claims are grounded in concordance reading rather than in collocation scores alone. The

quantitative collocational results informed the subsequent qualitative Critical Stylistics analysis (Section 4.4.4).

4.4.3 Concordance selection and qualitative reading

Across the corpus-based analyses, qualitative interpretation proceeds through concordance reading with metadata. In Article 3, KWIC concordance lines were exported from Sketch Engine and manually analysed as the main qualitative evidence base for describing recurring discursive strategies.

To keep close reading manageable while still anchored in the quantitative outputs, Article 3 applies a structured sampling rule: for each strong collocate, 7–15 concordance lines per period were analysed. The lower bound corresponds to the minimum-frequency threshold, while the upper bound was set to maintain analytical tractability; where a collocate occurred more than 15 times, all lines were read and a subset selected to represent recurring patterns, with highly exceptional one-off cases excluded. KWIC lines were stratified by outlet and year within each period to ensure coverage across sources and timepoints and to avoid clustering from single sources. The resulting qualitative dataset consists of 1,078 concordance lines across both periods and all three node terms. Consistency was supported through two-pass coding, with each TCF assignment documented with an explicit note of the textual cue(s) motivating the decision. Concordance lines were treated as evidence of recurrent patterning rather than as “best examples”: quantitative results (frequency/collocation) were used to identify salient contextual environments, and qualitative coding was then conducted by the author on this systematically extracted dataset. Examples quoted in the analysis are therefore illustrative of patterns attested across multiple concordance lines; single instances are not treated as sufficient evidence on their own.

In Article 4, the procedure differs because the research aim is not collocational profiling but a diachronic account of pragmatic functions. The corpus is therefore used as a retrieval archive, and the analysis proceeds through reading and coding concordance evidence (± 50 words; expanded when necessary) across the two periods. Because several relevant meanings depend on irony, sarcasm, quotation, or context-dependent subversion, concordance lines were not interpreted mechanically: where the local KWIC context was insufficient, wider co-text was consulted before assigning a function or ideological interpretation.

All Estonian corpus examples cited in the dissertation were translated into English by the author. Translations aim to preserve the lexical and stylistic markedness of the original, rendering examples as literally as possible while maintaining readability. Where pragmatic effects or connotations are difficult to render in translation, the original Estonian is retained in parentheses or discussed in the analysis.

4.4.4 Critical Stylistics workflow

In Article 3, corpus outputs are integrated with a Critical Stylistics workflow within the Queer Corpus Stylistics design outlined in Section 4.3. Quantitative patterning (frequency and collocation) is used to identify salient co-textual environments for *gei*, *homo*, and *homoseksual*, and these environments are then interpreted through close qualitative analysis of concordance material using Jeffries' textual-conceptual functions (TCFs).

Coding was conducted manually on exported KWIC lines, with attention to how grammatical and lexical patterning constructs category boundaries, allocates agency and responsibility, builds equivalences and oppositions, and embeds taken-for-granted assumptions. The Critical Stylistics workflow operationalises the queer-linguistic commitments set out at the beginning of Chapter 2 by tracing how naming, agency, categorisation, presupposition, and evaluation construct normativity in recurrent textual patterns.

Each label analysis in Article 3 follows a consistent presentation structure: (a) frequency and distribution overview, (b) collocational profile with key collocates identified, (c) qualitative analysis of concordance patterns organised by textual-conceptual function, and (d) summary of ideological positioning. This structure ensures that interpretive claims remain anchored in the quantitative evidence.

Each concordance line was coded for the textual-conceptual function most directly relevant to ideological positioning in that local context. Where multiple functions were applicable, the overlap was noted, but a single primary function was assigned according to which function most strongly shaped how the label positioned the referent group in that specific co-text. This was an interpretive decision guided by the research questions rather than a mechanical rule. Coding proceeded across multiple analytical passes, with earlier decisions periodically revisited to ensure consistency as patterns and categories became clearer. Register differences were not pre-assigned but emerged through iterative analysis of concordance evidence.

As this is a solo-authored study, intercoder reliability measures were not calculated. Instead, consistency was supported through systematic documentation of coding decisions, repeated analytical passes, and explicit coding cues. These cues included how agency and responsibility were distributed in the clause; whether institutional authorisation or restriction was invoked; whether equivalences or oppositions were constructed; whether list or enumeration structures were used to build categories; and what assumptions were treated as given, for example through presupposed norms.

4.4.5 Slur-focused corpus-informed workflow

Article 4 uses the same corpus infrastructure and diachronic division as the media strand but operationalises corpus evidence differently: the objective is to document how *pede* functions pragmatically across contexts and time, rather than to model collocational tendencies as the primary output.

The coding scheme takes Croom’s (2013) three-part classification of slur uses as its starting point (see Section 2.1.1) but extends it to accommodate two dimensions that existing frameworks do not systematically address: diachronic functional change and ideological instrumentalisation. The five-function scheme – (1) insult, (2) social control, (3) political labelling, (4) provocation, and (5) (limited) identity-asserting/in-group use – was developed inductively from the corpus material; the empirical motivation is presented in Article 4. A minority of instances resisted clean assignment, most often where norm-enforcing and ideological-boundary uses co-occurred or where the slur was reported rather than deployed. These cases were assigned to their primary function to keep the categories analytically legible; a few marginal uses that did not form a recurring pattern were noted but not treated as separate functions.

The discussion is descriptive rather than evaluative: it does not provide a legal or normative classification of hate speech but analyses discursive functions and contextual uses.

4.5 Survey analytical procedures

This section outlines how the two survey datasets (Section 4.2.2) were analysed. Both surveys combine (a) closed-response items analysed quantitatively and (b) open-ended comments analysed qualitatively as metalinguistic commentary. The two strands are treated as complementary: statistical analyses map patterned associations in the sample, while thematic analysis specifies how respondents themselves justify and conceptualise *kväär/kvääri*.

Quantitative strand (Articles 1–2). All quantitative analyses were conducted in RStudio (Posit Team 2024). Attitude towards *kväär/kvääri* was measured with a 5-point Likert item and analysed in relation to background variables (e.g., age group, gender and sexual identity, trans status; operationalisation reported in Articles 1–2). For statistical analysis conditional inference trees (Hothorn et al. 2020) were used as an exploratory method to identify which background variables show the strongest association with attitude ratings. Cross-language comparisons (Article 2) were tested using chi-square tests of independence.

Qualitative strand: open-ended responses (Articles 1–2). As established in Section 2.3, open-ended responses are treated as metalinguistic commentary – language users’ explicit reflections on labels, their meanings, and their social consequences rather than as opinion data. Open-ended responses were analysed inductively following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis procedure. The qualitative material comprises the open-ended justifications and definitions

(approximately 13,000 words in the Estonian survey and 14,000 words in the Finnish survey). Themes are treated as interpretive patterns produced through coding rather than as entities that “emerge” from the data. Initial coding was conducted without predetermined hypotheses; a single response could be coded under multiple themes when it mobilised several evaluative logics (e.g., conditional or ambivalent stances). QCAmap (Mayring 2014) was used as a practical environment for coding and organising themes; the analytic logic followed thematic analysis rather than qualitative content analysis. For Article 2, the Estonian thematic framework developed in Article 1 served as the baseline: Lindeman coded the Finnish dataset using this framework, and we developed the cross-dataset synthesis jointly. Because the open-ended material constitutes a fixed dataset (all survey responses) rather than an incrementally sampled one, saturation is not applicable as a stopping criterion; instead, thematic coverage was ensured through iterative coding and review of the full dataset.

Integration of strands. In Articles 1–2, the quantitative and qualitative analyses address different aspects of the same object: community negotiation of a contested label. Quantitative modelling indicates which background variables pattern with evaluative orientation in the sample; qualitative analysis shows how respondents make sense of and argue for those evaluations (e.g., via linguistic associations, perceived risks, aesthetic judgements, political meanings, or inclusion/exclusion concerns). Integration of the two strands is reported in the Results/Discussion sections of Articles 1 and 2.

4.6 Researcher positionality, reflexivity, and ethics

As a queer researcher involved in Estonian feminist and LGBT networks, I am not an external observer of the discourses analysed. This community affiliation shaped both my access to data – particularly for survey distribution – and my interpretive orientation. It brings advantages (familiarity with local naming debates and sensitivity to contextual nuance, as well as credibility within the community and increased trust that likely supported survey participation), but it also means I am implicated in the discourses I examine.

My research is guided by two commitments: producing a linguistic analysis of identity labelling in Estonian and avoiding analytic practices that reproduce stigma when discussing marginalised groups. These aims are not always aligned, and navigating their tension has required ongoing reflexive attention. I maintained a research diary and an audit trail of analytical decisions (e.g., coding choices, query parameters, and borderline cases) to make my interpretations more transparent and accountable.

Importantly, I do not adopt a “view-from-nowhere” stance toward the social content of the discourse under study. When analysing queerphobic or dehumanising language, the analysis is text-anchored and empirically grounded, but it is not politically neutral: the purpose is to show how such discourse works

linguistically and ideologically, not to legitimise it as simply one “side” of a debate (Lo Vecchio 2025; van Dijk 2001; Motschenbacher 2011).

The clearest test came with the *kväär* survey data: responses were often ambivalent, ranging from distaste and avoidance (including explicit call for dictionary removal) to celebration and pride. I present these positions and their reasoning without advocating a “correct” outcome, treating the object of analysis as community negotiation rather than terminological “resolution”.

Ethical considerations were particularly acute in analysing *pede* (Article 4). The term has documented harmful uses and can carry impact even in quoted or ironic contexts, yet it also appears in community self-positioning and limited attempts at reclamation. I approach this material with the understanding that questions of reclamation and harm are matters for community negotiation, not academic adjudication. My analysis documents the range of pragmatic functions – including tensions and ambivalences – without deciding which uses are legitimate.

5. MAIN RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter synthesises the dissertation’s empirical findings on how LGBT-related labels have been used, evaluated, and ideologically positioned in Estonian media discourse and LGBT community language practices across roughly three decades, foregrounding cross-article patterns and answering the three research questions.

5.1 Frequency trajectories and lexical stratification

This section triangulates two frequency measures (see Section 4.4.1): a stem-based view of broader word families, produced through regular-expression queries in the lemma search field (Article 1), and a single-lemma view of standalone labels in journalistic texts (Article 3). Together they show the same overall trajectory, while any divergence indicates whether change is driven primarily by standalone label choice or by broader lexical productivity (cf. van Dijk 2001: 275).

5.1.1 Frequency patterns: stem-based and single-lemma evidence

Across the LGBT-related word families captured by the stem-based queries, the main pattern is field expansion with layering. Older labels, compounds, and derivatives remain in circulation even as newer items enter the field and become specialised. This pattern is comparable to Szulc’s analysis of Polish LGBT naming, where Polish terms, English borrowings, euphemisms, activist labels, and locally adapted forms such as *gej* and *klir* coexist rather than forming a simple sequence of replacement (Szulc 2012: 72–73). The Estonian data show a comparable but language-specific layering in a smaller-language context, where the arc from Soviet-era medicalised vocabulary to rights-based institutional language and activist neologisms unfolds within approximately thirty years. Figure 5.1 shows these patterns across four corpus periods (see Table 4.2 for corpus details).³

Two complementary measures are used here. Figure 5.1 maps the broad word-family trends (stem-based queries) across four periods; Figure 5.2 narrows to standalone single lemmas in journalistic texts across two periods, making the ‘change without replacement’ claim visible at the lemma level. The two are read together throughout this section: the stem-based view shows overall expansion across word families, while the single-lemma view shows which individual labels drive it.

³ Note that the four subcorpora have different compositions. The Balanced Corpus contains formal genres like newspapers, fiction, and academic texts. The Reference Corpus includes web and forum texts. The later corpora, Timestamped and Estonian Trends, are based on RSS news feeds. The Balanced Corpus offers the earliest baseline from 1990 to 2007 and shows the first uses of terms. However, the most reliable comparison over time is between the Reference Corpus and the later RSS-based corpora. See Section 4.2 for details about the corpora.

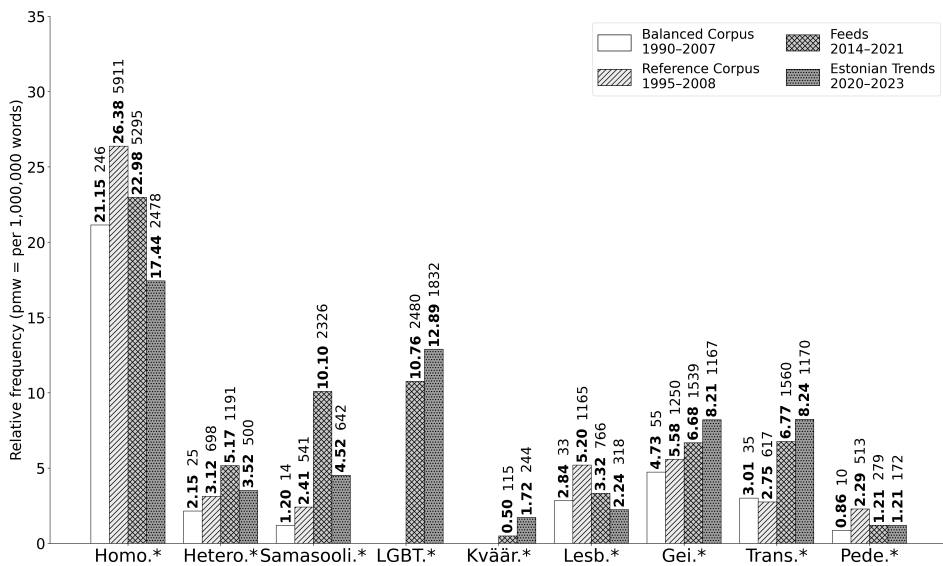


Figure 5.1. Relative frequencies of LGBT-related word families captured by stem-based regular expression queries across four corpus periods (per million tokens). Asterisk notation (e.g., homo.*) indicates regular-expression queries in the lemma search field, capturing all words whose lemma begins with the search string.

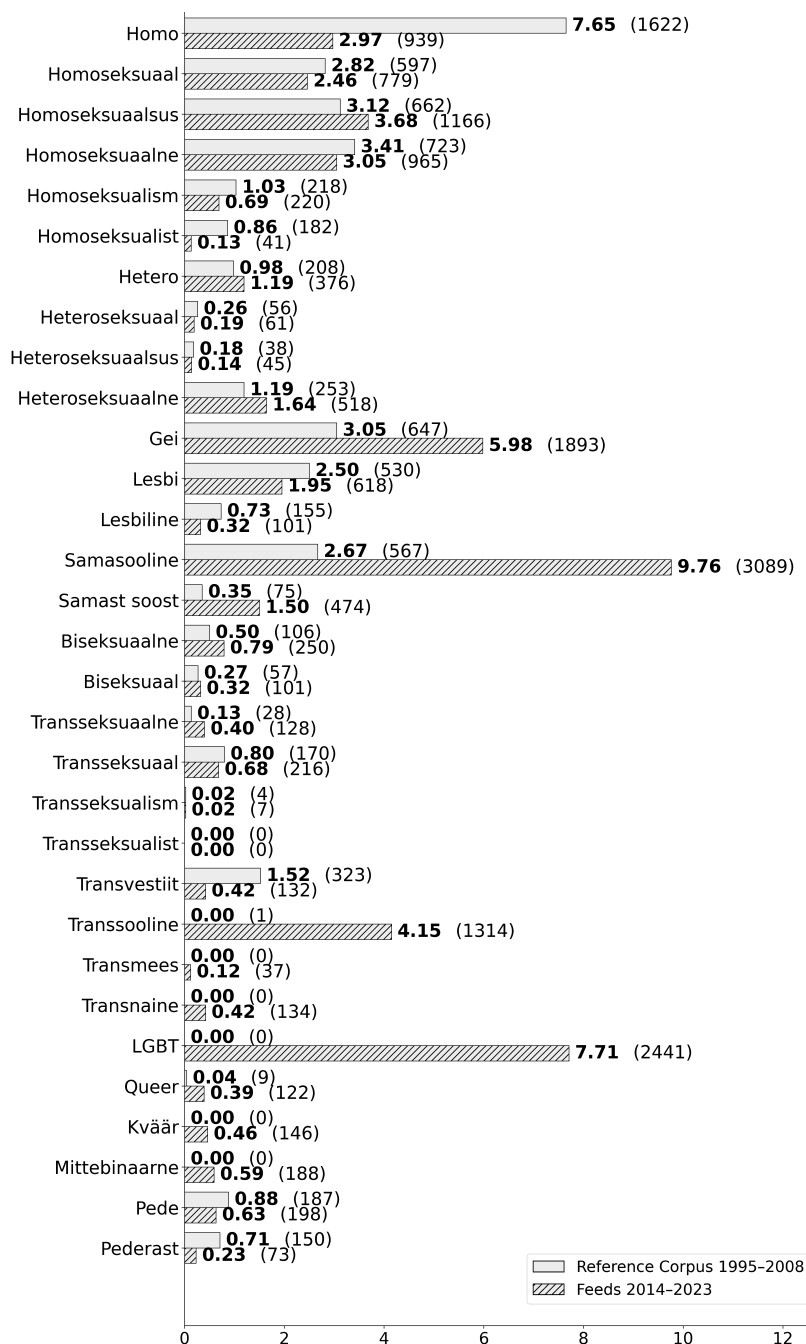


Figure 5.2. Relative frequencies of LGBT-related lemmas in journalistic texts across two periods (per million tokens). Data from ENC Reference subcorpus (1995–2008) and ENC Timestamped subcorpus (2014–2023), filtered by source metadata.

First, use of *homo.** remains consistently more frequent than use of *hetero.**, though both the frequency of *homo.** and the asymmetry between the two change over time: in 1990–2008, *homo.** occurs around 8–10 times more often than *hetero.**; by the 2020s, *homo.** has declined somewhat while *hetero.** has increased slightly, narrowing the gap to around fivefold. (The apparent peak in the 1995–2008 Reference Corpus is likely to reflect corpus composition, as this subcorpus includes web texts and forum posts; see Section 5.2.) The increase in *hetero.** may reflect debates around partnership and marriage equality, where both labels – *homo-* and *hetero-* – are explicitly named in comparison. The single-lemma data (Figure 5.2) specifies the source of this decline: within the *homo*-family, the standalone label *homo* declines strongly, as does the noun *homoseksuaal*, while the adjective *homoseksuaalne* ‘homosexual [adj.]’ and abstract noun *homoseksuaalsus* ‘homosexuality’ remain relatively stable. This indicates that the regular-expression level decline is driven by shifts in identity-label preference – from *homo* and *homoseksuaal* toward *gei* – rather than by a decline in descriptive or adjectival vocabulary. A similar change has been noted in English-language media. Love and Baker (2015: 71–72) highlight a gradual decline in the use of “homosexual”, while the term “gay” remains stable. They see this as a significant shift in norms, where “homosexual” relates to behaviour, but “gay” refers to identity. Motschenbacher (2021: 26–27) clarifies this trend: many people now avoid “homosexual” as a self-identifying label because of negative connections. The Estonian data show a similar pattern. There is a decline in formal and clinical labels along with the rise of an identity-affirming alternative. However, the local dynamics are different. English also has *homo* as a colloquial and often derogatory form (Boswell 1993; Merriam-Webster n.d.) but in the English-language comparison literature cited here the contrast is more often drawn between gay and homosexual, whereas in the Estonian case *homo* appears more visibly as a routine public-discourse label.

At the same time, the use of *gei* increases substantially, confirming the redistribution away from *homo* – an older, pragmatically flexible and polemically available label – toward *gei* as the preferred standalone label in journalistic discourse. Log-likelihood tests indicate that the period differences are unlikely to be due to corpus size alone, with a sharp decline for *homo* (7.65 → 2.97; LL = 562.28, $p < .001$) and a strong rise for *gei* (3.05 → 5.98; LL = 241.64, $p < .001$), while *homoseksuaal* shows only a small decrease (2.82 → 2.46; LL = 7.08, $p < .01$). The overall asymmetry between *homo.** and *hetero.** remains consistent with regard to markedness/heteronormativity: heterosexuality is lexically less marked, while homosexuality is more often explicitly named. This imbalance shows a wider pattern in discussions. Baker (2005: 100–101) points out that in media talks, heterosexuality is often ignored or taken for granted because it is not seen as newsworthy. Meanwhile, Paterson and Coffey-Glover (2018: 21) illustrate that unmarked *marriage* usually means heterosexual marriage. Terms like *heterosexual marriage* and *traditional marriage* appear as specific alternatives, indicating that heterosexuality acts as the unmentioned standard. Motschenbacher and Stegu (2013: 524) expand on this: concentrating only on non-heterosexuality

can reinforce heterosexuality as the hidden norm. The Estonian frequency data reveal that this markedness logic continues, even as the language becomes more varied. The gap between *homo* and *hetero* shrinks but does not disappear.

The distribution of concordance lines across outlet types in the journalistic dataset confirms that label preference correlates with ideological positioning (Figure 5.3). Conservative-populist outlets – present only in Period 2 – show a distinct pattern: while *gei* remains the most frequent term (48%), it is less dominant than in mainstream sources (72%). The difference is not in *homo*, which remains stable (19–20% in both outlet types), but in *homoseksuaal*, which accounts for 32% of conservative-populist concordance lines, compared to 9% in mainstream media. This suggests that conservative-populist sources show markedly higher use of formal-clinical terminology (*homoseksuaal*) while mainstream outlets prefer identity-affirming language (*gei*). Cultural outlets only have 35 concordance lines in total (2% of the dataset), which is too few for a reliable comparison. This register-ideology split has parallels across languages. Soggiarelli (2019: 46–47 and 54–55) notes a similar distinction in Italian media. In this context, the term *omosessuale* varies based on the discourse and ideological positions. Conservative and Catholic groups prefer the formal term, while the borrowed *gay* serves as a label that affirms identity. Motschenbacher (2021: 26–27) offers a framework for understanding this: terms with negative associations become available as distancing labels in ideologically charged discourse. The Estonian data reflects the same trend. The term *homoseksuaal* is not just “formal”; its formality serves a specific ideological purpose in conservative-populist sources.

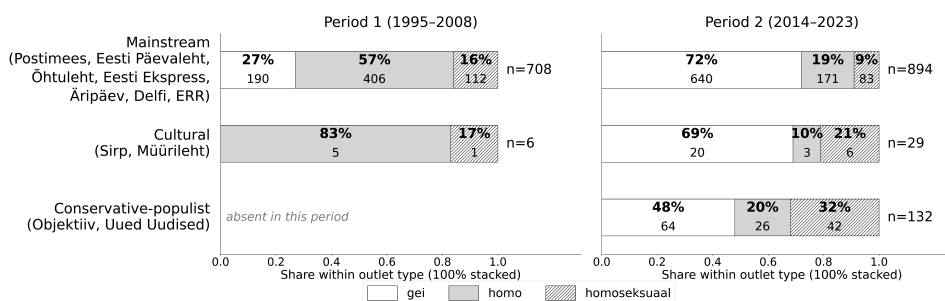


Figure 5.3. Proportional distribution of *gei*, *homo*, and *homoseksuaal* by outlet type and period. Conservative-populist outlets are absent from Period 1. Of the full dataset ($n = 1,816$ concordance lines), 47 lines from miscellaneous sources not classifiable into the three main outlet categories are excluded from this figure.

Second, while the use of *gei** rises, *lesb** decreases slightly. Multiple explanations are possible: (a) *gei* may increasingly be used in a gender-inclusive way following English *gay*, though collocational evidence suggests *gay* remains strongly associated with male referents (Motschenbacher 2022: 72); (b) subcorpus composition and topic distribution may affect observed frequencies; and/or (c) lesbian visibility may have been particularly salient in the 1990s and

then redistributed as the vocabulary diversified. The decrease of *lesb.** may also relate to movement history: the merging and professionalisation of lesbian and gay activism in Estonia led to broader umbrella terminology (Koppel 2022: 141). These patterns require separate qualitative follow-up. The imbalance between *gay/gei* and *lesbian/lesbi* frequencies is a common pattern across different languages. Baker (2013: 191) points out that *gay* is more closely linked to male identity, which contributes to the invisibility of lesbians. Szulc (2012: 78–79) explains that in Polish discussions, *gay* serves as a general term but often ends up being exclusive to males, raising similar concerns. Ng et al. (2024: 1–2) offer recent statistical proof: in their extensive analysis of news coverage, the label *gay* significantly surpasses lesbian and other identity labels.

Third, later corpora show a clear rise in rights-based and institutional vocabulary. The query results for *samasooli.** (‘same-sex’) (capturing all inflected forms) and the single lemmas *samasooline* and *samast soost* (‘of the same sex’) increase sharply, with *samasooline* rising up to tenfold compared to the 1990s. These terms primarily appear in debates about registered partnership and marriage equality. Motschenbacher (2018: 161–162; 2022) reports that English *same-sex* typically pairs with relationship and legal-political vocabulary. It is least likely to connect with identity categories. This term acts as the label the state uses to regulate non-heterosexual relationships. The Estonian *samasooline* serves the same purpose: it functions as a regulatory tool rather than a label that communities choose for self-description.

Fourth, use of *trans.** increases substantially from the 2010s onward, roughly doubling in comparison to the earlier periods. The single-lemma data shows a change within this family. *Transsooline* (‘transgender’) increases notably while *transseksuaal* (‘transsexual’) declines, reflecting wider international trends. Zottola (2018: 247–248; 2021: 71) documents a similar pattern in British press corpora. Popular press favours *transsexual* and *sex change*, while quality press increasingly uses *trans*. Advocacy groups see *transsexual* as problematic because it emphasises physical and sexual aspects instead of identity. Baker (2013: 193) interprets this same trend in English-language academic discourse as a shift from a sex/sexuality framework to a gender framework. Two additional terms appear in Figure 5.2: *biseksuaal* (‘bisexual’) and *mittebinaarne* (‘non-binary’), which remain low-frequency in the corpus. These terms are not analysed in detail here: *bisexual* identity vocabulary poses particular methodological challenges, as the stem *bi-* generates substantial noise in regular expression queries (e.g., *binaarne* ‘binary’, *bioloogia* ‘biology’), requiring manual filtering that falls outside the current scope. Non-binary labels emerge only in the later period, consistent with the broader expansion of non-binary as an identity category beyond binary frameworks (Coats & Laippala 2024: 21–22; Kolek 2019: 304, 312–313) and warrant separate investigation as gender-identity vocabulary expands. The low frequency of these terms should not suggest low relevance. Wilkinson (2019: 249, 250) shows that bisexuality is often overlooked in media representation. Coverage is not equally shared across identity categories. Ng et al. (2024: 1, 7) confirm that in news discourse, *gay* keywords far outnumber *bisexual* ones. Fifth,

use of institutional umbrella terminology shows the strongest growth. *LGBT.** is absent from the earlier corpora but its frequency increases sharply from the 2010s, becoming one of the most frequent terms in the later periods (Figure 5.1). This increase aligns with the initialism's institutional consolidation during the corpus gap (2009–2013; see Section 3.2): EU-supported *Erinevus Rikastab* ('Diversity Enriches') initiatives (running 2009–2012) produced LGBT-branded mainstream outputs (including a supplement of the daily newspaper *Postimees*) and an LGBT public-opinion survey; MTÜ Eesti Gei Noored (NGO Estonian Gay Youth) was renamed Eesti LGBT Ühing (Estonian LGBT Association); and the Ministry of Justice's 2012 cohabitation-law concept triggered sustained public debate (Talalaev 2013; Tiidenberg & Allaste 2020). The single-lemma data confirms that the frequency of use of *LGBT* increased substantially in journalistic texts (Figure 5.2), reflecting the professionalisation of advocacy and the stabilisation of *LGBT* as a default label in policy, media, and organisational discourse. Cross-linguistically, a comparable shift is visible in UK press discourse: in a diachronic corpus of *The Times* (1957–2017), Wilkinson shows that *LGBT* becomes a key term in the 2003–2017 subcorpus and is closely tied to institutional/workplace contexts, consistent with a move toward collectivising umbrella terminology (Wilkinson 2023: 176, 179, 207). Baker (2013: 188) documents a comparable trend in English-language academic discourse, where frequency of use of *LGBT* increases, while use of *homosexual* decreases, linking this to the limitations of earlier formulations like *gay men and lesbians*.

Sixth, *kväär* enters later as a new addition, though with a low frequency: it is absent from the P1 data but present by 2014 (Figure 5.1), appearing after the 2009–2013 timestamp gap in the corpus. Despite its low frequency, *kväär* becomes salient enough to trigger explicit metalinguistic negotiation within the LGBT community (see Section 5.3). Notably, the use of *LGBT* is at least seven times more frequent than *kväär* in the later corpus periods, underscoring that institutional terminology dominates while activist/cultural innovations like *kväär* occupy a niche position. In the 2020s Estonian Trends corpus, *kväär* becomes almost three times more frequent than the English *queer*, suggesting that the localised form has gained ground over the English label. The single-lemma data (Figure 5.2) confirms that the use frequency of both *kväär* and *queer* remains low compared to established labels, though *kväär* shows slight growth (Article 1). In other non-English contexts, the relationship between local forms and English forms varies. Jakobsson (2020: 151–152) shows how the Swedish word *skev* takes on a broader meaning beyond sexuality, though it also moves away from its original critical meaning.

Seventh, the *pede.** query remains relatively infrequent in the broader corpus comparison: *pede.** occurs at 2.29 occurrences per million words in the 1995–2008 Reference Corpus and at 1.21 per million in both Feeds and Estonian Trends. Here, the regular-expression query does not isolate the slur *pede* alone, but also includes *pederast*-type forms. The higher rate in the Reference Corpus likely reflects the inclusion of web texts and forum material, where such vocabulary is more common. The single-lemma data (Figure 5.2), restricted to

journalistic texts, separates *pede* and *pederast* and likewise confirms that both remain low-frequency. However, low or only moderately changing frequency does not imply functional stability: Article 4 draws on forum and blog data alongside media texts to document substantial pragmatic refunctionalisation of *pede*, including its extension into political and polarised public discourse and its increased morphological productivity in compounds (see Section 5.2.2). This disconnect between frequency and function illustrates why quantitative frequency data must be supplemented with qualitative pragmatic analysis. As Motschenbacher (2018: 166–167) argues, corpus findings require qualitative concordance-based interpretation. Love and Baker’s (2015: 57) account of a mismatch between “words and acts” makes a related point: the frequency or explicitness of particular words cannot by itself reveal whether the exclusionary social work of discourse has diminished, persisted, or changed form. The *pede* data illustrate this concretely: pragmatic functions multiply (Article 4) while raw frequency remains low and changes only moderately.

Taken together, the frequency data obtained from queries using regular expressions and single lemmas converge on the same conclusion: lexical change in Estonian LGBT-related vocabulary is characterised by expansion and stratification rather than simple replacement. Older, colloquial, institutional, and activist vocabulary coexists, with different forms becoming specialised across time, register, and ideological positioning. Cross-linguistically, this pattern aligns with diachronic studies showing that LGBT lexicons layer rather than simplify: Shi and Lei (2020), tracking English LGBT labels across 150 years, show that earlier terms persisted even as newer labels entered, with each becoming associated with different usage contexts.

Several additional lemmas shown in Figure 5.2 are not discussed in detail but warrant a brief mention. In the *homo* family, *homoseksualism* (‘homosexualism’) and *homoseksualist* (‘homosexualist’) decline and stay very low-frequency; these forms carry some lingering negative or ideological meanings. In the *hetero* family, use of *heteroseksuaalne* (‘heterosexual [adj.]’) increases slightly over time, while use frequency of *heteroseksuaalsus* (‘heterosexuality’) remains low. The use frequency of the single lemma *lesbi* (‘lesbian’) declines slightly, which is in line with the *lesb.** pattern mentioned earlier. *Pederast* (‘pederast’) stays low-frequency and declines. In the *trans* family, *transseksuaalne* (‘transsexual [adj.]’) and *transseksualism* (‘transsexualism’) both decline, while *transmees* (‘trans man’) and *transnaine* (‘trans woman’) appear in the later period. *Biseksuaalne* (‘bisexual [adj.]’) stays very low frequency across both periods.

5.2 Discursive strategies and ideological positioning in Estonian media discourse

Building on the frequency patterns documented in Section 5.1, this section synthesises the dissertation’s findings on how ideological positions are constructed through linguistic choices in Estonian media discourse. The main evidence comes from the Critical Stylistics analysis of three labels (*homo*, *gei*, *homoseksuaal*) (Article 3) and the pragmatic analysis of the slur *pede* (Article 4).

Primary coding using textual-conceptual functions (see Sections 4.3.2.1 and 4.4.4) gives a descriptive overview of the dominant textual mechanisms by term and period (Figure 5.4). Because each concordance line was coded for a single primary function, functions that typically work in combination with others – particularly Implying/Assuming – are under-represented in this distributional summary and are instead traced through the qualitative concordance analysis below.

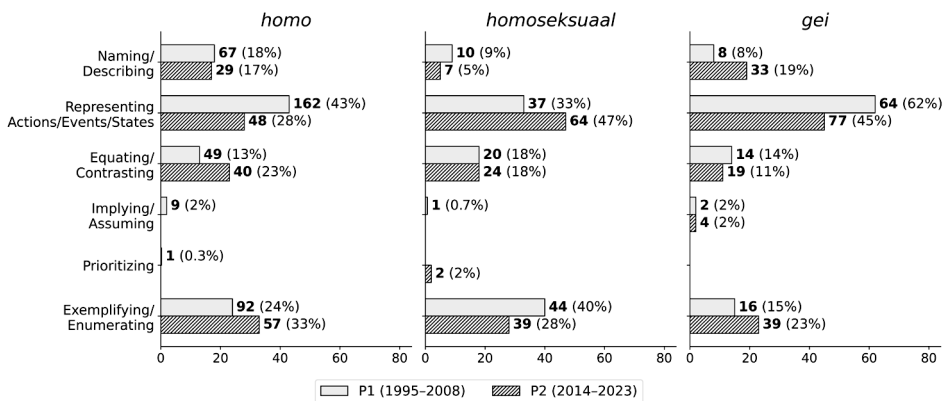


Figure 5.4. Primary textual-conceptual function distributions across *homo*, *homoseksuaal*, and *gei* by period (P1 = 1995–2008; P2 = 2014–2023; *n* = 1,078 concordance lines). Percentages are calculated within each term-period subset.

Together, these analyses show that the way LGBT-related labels work and position their referents changes over time. However, some structural patterns stay the same. There is still pressure to categorise, connections to institutions, and organisation based on contrast. Within a single period, institutional-regulatory, rights-based, and populist-antagonistic normativities coexist and produce conflicting framings of the same labels. This confirms that normativities are multiple and competing rather than monolithic (Hall et al. 2019) and that identity categories not only describe but also regulate and exclude (Motschenbacher & Stegu 2013: 523–524). Heterosexuality functions as the unmarked default – a pattern visible at the frequency level (Section 5.1) and, here, in textual structure: ‘marriage’ requires explicit marking when it refers to same-sex unions, while heterosexual marriage needs none (cf. Paterson & Coffey-Glover 2018: 192). The Estonian data show that this pressure continues even as vocabulary expands. What changes

is not the persistence of these structural patterns, but where evaluation is located. In Period 1, evaluation often comes from obvious textual choices, such as stigmatising pairs, scare quotes, and clear labels of deviance. In Period 2, it increasingly moves toward structural and subtle forms: assumptions, degree of certainty, selective attribution, and category membership based on lists. This diachronic shift aligns with Love and Baker's (2015: 83–84) finding that opposition in British press discourse increasingly uses indirect strategies. However, the Estonian situation is complicated by the rise of openly hostile discourse in conservative-populist outlets.

In Critical Stylistics terms, the most consequential patterns are realised through a small set of recurring mechanisms: Naming/Describing, Representing Actions/Events/States, Equating/Contrasting, Exemplifying/Enumerating, and especially Implying/Assuming (e.g., via modality, hypotheticals, definitional structures). This synthesis chapter shows what these mechanisms do in the data: they repeatedly frame LGBT-related labels and their referents as (a) institutionally governable, (b) politically mobilisable, and (c) conditionally “integrable” in ways that keep heterosexuality as the unmarked norm (see Section 5.2.3).

5.2.1 Institutional framing and term-specific differentiation

A central finding is that institutional framing is not a neutral background: it is one of the main ways in which public discourse encodes power asymmetries. Paterson and Coffey-Glover (2018: 192) made a similar observation about British marriage debate discourse. They noted that public discussions tend to focus on institutions, not the individuals impacted by them, and that binary categories are often accepted as “natural”. Ng et al. (2024: 8–10) supported this on a larger scale, finding that mainstream news coverage of LGBT issues mainly revolves around legal and rights themes.

Across the journalistic corpus analysed in Article 3, categories indexed by *gei*, *homo* and *homoseksuaal* are frequently constructed as objects of external regulation – permitted, prohibited, defined, or protected – through textual patterns that foreground institutions and background lived agency. All three labels appear in institutional contexts, but with distinct positioning.

The comparison of *gei*, *homo*, and *homoseksuaal* shows that the three labels should not be treated as simple stylistic variants. Although they may occasionally alternate within journalistic prose as apparent synonyms, especially where writers avoid lexical repetition, the corpus evidence shows that this synonymy operates only at the level of local textual substitution. At the discourse level, the three labels are differentiated by their recurrent collocational environments, textual functions, and institutional or ideological positioning. *Gei* is increasingly associated with rights-based and human-rights discourse, *homoseksuaal* with institutional and classificatory registers, and *homo* with politically flexible, often antagonistic or rhetorically condensed uses, especially in compounds and oppositional framings.

Homoseksuaal recurrently appears in constructions that frame same-sex identity as a formal category to be evaluated, administered, or controlled. One robust pattern is its embedding into prohibitive or exclusionary statements. For example, *Doonoriks ei või olla narkomaanid, prostituudid ja homoseksuaalid* ('Donors cannot be drug addicts, prostitutes, and homosexuals') positions *homoseksuaal* as the final element of a negatively marked list and uses deontic modality ("cannot") to construct same-sex identity as a disqualifying category. Even where discourse appears tolerant, institutional asymmetry remains visible in impersonal permission constructions, e.g., *Rootsi homoseksuaalidel on juba lubatud oma kooselu seadustada* ('Swedish homosexuals have already been allowed to legalise their cohabitation'). Here, acceptance is represented not as inherent belonging but as authorisation granted. The same logic is reinforced through definitional constructions that reduce relationships to a categorical taxonomy, e.g., *homoseksuaalide abielu tähendab aga omasuguste ühendust* ('the marriage of homosexuals means a union of those of the same kind'). This "X means Y" framing foregrounds sameness and category while backgrounding relational or experiential dimensions. In short: *homoseksuaal* often functions as the register-appropriate label that lends weight to institutional regulation, and this weight can serve as a tool of exclusion just as easily as classification. Baker (2005: 21) points out a similar situation for English *homosexual*. Its medical meanings allow for clinical and institutional interpretations that create distance instead of providing a clear description.

Diachronically, *homoseksuaal* undergoes the most visible register shift of the three terms. In Period 1, it is predominantly embedded in institutional management and biomedical framing: law and administration (marriage legalisation, partnership registration), church-state authorisation (*lubanud õnnistada* 'allowed to bless'), and epidemiological risk classification (AIDS/HIV risk groups, blood donation exclusion). In Period 2, *homoseksuaal* moves toward visibility politics and public narration: coming-out milestones in sports and politics (*tunnistas avalikult* 'admitted publicly', *kapist välja* 'out of the closet', *määratles end* 'defined oneself'), human-rights and repression reporting (Chechnya/Russia: *vahistatakse* 'are arrested', *piinatakse* 'are tortured', *tapetakse* 'are killed'), and polarised legislative framing (marriage "distortion", adoption rights, hate-speech criminalisation). The TCF (textual-conceptual function) distribution reflects this shift: list-based positioning (Exemplifying/Enumerating) drops from 39.6% in P1 to 28.5% in P2 of coded concordance lines, while action and event framing (Representing Actions/Events/States) rises from 33.3% to 46.7% (Figure 5.4).

Gei is most distinctively aligned with rights-based and advocacy registers. Collocational evidence (Article 3) shows *gei* developing strong associations with international human rights vocabulary ('Chechnya', 'persecution', 'torture') and appearing in evidence-based claims such as *52% geidest ja lesbidest on kogenud vaenulikkust* ('52% of gays and lesbians have experienced hostility'). This positions *gei* within institutional legitimation and transnational advocacy discourse. Both terms appear in visibility contexts, but with contrasting evaluative orientations: *gei* is framed as linked to personal well-being and empowerment

(*paranes ta vaimse tervise probleemidest koheselt, kui geiks olemise avalikustas* – ‘his mental health problems improved immediately after he disclosed being gay’), while the visibility of *homoseksuaal* is framed as structurally constrained or newsworthy precisely because it is exceptional (*tänapäeva tippjalgpallis pole võimalik avalikult homoseksuaal olla* – ‘in today’s top-level football, it is not possible to be openly a homosexual’). The register difference thus positions *homoseksuaal* within institutional-regulatory and medical framings, while *gei* aligns with rights-based advocacy and **personal well-being narratives**. *Gei* also shows diachronic development, though less dramatic than the other two terms. In Period 1, *gei* is already established as a stable identity category, frequently paired with *lesbi* and embedded in taxonomic lists (*geid, lesbid, biseksuaalid, transseksuaalid* ‘gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals’) that treat sexuality as a classificatory system. Alongside rights-based framing, Period 1 *gei* also appears in institutional-regulatory constructions with deontic modality (*politsei lubas geide paraadi* ‘police allowed the parade of gays’) and in assimilationist framings where inclusion depends on integration into mainstream society (*noorte geide ja lesbide sulandumine tavaühiskonda* ‘young gays’ and lesbians’ integration into mainstream society’). Period 2 strengthens the rights and visibility register while the institutional-regulatory and assimilationist framings recede but do not disappear. The shift is thus one of relative prominence rather than replacement, consistent with the layering pattern observed in Section 5.1. Quantitatively, *gei* shows the strongest action/event profile of all three terms (Figure 5.4), while a rise in Naming/Describing reflects the increased taxonomic diversity of Period 2.

Homo is the most versatile and changeable of the three terms. It appears less often in formal institutional settings and more frequently in competing contexts, such as rights/legal progress, moral panic, spectacle, and debate about language. Here, it acts as a rhetorical tool, and its ideological strength largely relies on its surroundings. In Period 1, *homo* is closely linked to stigmatising and medical terms, like AIDS and related slurs. In this period, action framing is the main way of presenting the term. In Period 2, action framing decreases while contrastive and list-based positioning becomes stronger (Figure 5.4). This change aligns with a move toward political grouping and polarised views and is also seen in contexts of normalisation and self-identification (see Section 5.2.2). This does not mean *gei* is always used positively or *homo* negatively; rather, the three terms show patterned differentiation that aligns them with different ideological projects and interactional stances. Across both periods, LGBT subjects are frequently positioned within regulatory and institutional templates – but a counter-pattern of agency appears especially in protest, rights-claiming, and community-event contexts. The stronger generalisation is therefore dual-track: institutional regulation and community agency coexist as competing representational logics, with their relative prominence shifting across periods and outlet types.

Agency patterns – the tendency for LGBT subjects to appear as objects of institutional action rather than as agentic actors – were identified through qualitative analysis of concordance lines, not through systematic grammatical analysis. This finding reflects recurrent textual tendencies observed across the

dataset (Article 3), and is compatible with Peterson's (2016) analysis of how transitivity and phoricity can position queer subjects as passive or backgrounded participants in English homophobic discourse. However, verifying this pattern at the grammatical level in Estonian would require a focused corpus-syntactic analysis of subject/object distribution, process types, and referential chains, and could therefore be pursued in future research.

5.2.2 Categorisation and antagonistic positioning in polarised discourse: list structures, grievance clustering, and *pede* as an ideological tool

The second major result concerns how media discourse repeatedly constructs same-sex sexuality relationally, through contrasts and list-based association with other categories. Across both periods, Exemplifying/Enumerating and Equating/Contrasting are among the most consequential mechanisms, though their functions shift substantially. Grammatical number supports this interpretation: in the concordance lines, plural forms of *homo*, *gei*, and *homoseksuaal* clearly outnumber singular forms (806 vs. 240 countable cases). I treat this not as a direct measure of agency, but as evidence of a recurrent grammatical pattern in which LGBT subjects are more often construed as countable social groups than as individual experiential subject positions.

In Period 1, enumeration primarily operates through two competing logics: coalition/inclusion lists that position homosexuality as one minority among others within a rights/tolerance frame, and stigmatising “deviance bundles” that place it alongside criminality, pathology, or disgust categories. Both logics use the same syntactic device (coordinated lists, case-marked parallelism) but produce contrasting ideological effects. For *gei* specifically, enumeration in Period 1 is one of the most frequent textual mechanisms: identity inventories (*geid*, *lesbid*, *biseksuaalid*, *transseksuaalid* ‘gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals’) construct sexuality as a classificatory system, while institutional examples and quantification (52%, *kogu maailmas* ‘all over the world’) present categories as countable and stable. Equating/Contrasting in Period 1 centres on identity-category opposition – *homo* vs. *hetero*, “traditional family” vs. *homode abielu* ‘homo marriage’ – sometimes reinforced through scare quotes and analogies that police the limits of acceptable identity and family forms.

In both periods, enumeration is one of the most frequent textual mechanisms for positioning homo (P1: 24.2%; P2: 32.8%). What shifts is not its prevalence but its function. Three distinct list-types emerge: “menu of targets” lists that bundle minorities with ideological labels (*pagulased*, *moslemid*, *immigrandid*, *liberaalid*, *feministid*, *homod* ‘refugees, Muslims, immigrants, liberals, feminists, homos’), “issue-bundle” lists that cluster contested policy topics, and taxonomy-expansion lists that legitimise a wider classificatory system (bisexual, trans, queer, non-binary). The ideological point is that the list itself does the positioning work: once *homod* appears in a list with other politicised categories, the text no longer

needs explicit evaluation to cue “outgroup” readings. Coffey-Glover (2015: 4–5) explains this from a Critical Stylistics viewpoint. Implying and assuming carry ideological power because they make claims seem like common sense. List structures work in a similar way. They present category membership as accepted rather than debated.

Equating and contrasting breaks down into two opposing patterns in Period 2. Polarisation templates create divides, using us vs. them frames and either X or Y binaries that place *homo* alongside other politicised categories. Normalisation templates argue that the divide does not matter, shown by phrases like *pole vahet, kas hetero või homo* (‘it doesn’t matter whether hetero or homo’) and *elavad sõbralikult kõrvuti* (‘live side by side in a friendly manner’); these also include de-pathologisation claims. Thus, Period 2 constructs and unsettles the same categorical distinctions at the same time, constructing and dissolving the very same categorical divisions. The key idea is that even normalisation templates depend on naming categories: tolerance often stems from identifying these categories and then rejecting discrimination, which can ironically reinforce the boundaries it tries to eliminate.

A clear illustration can be seen in the example *vanamehed pruunides ülikondades, kes kütavad õhku kahe teemaga: pagulased ja homod* (‘old men in brown suits heating up the air with two topics: refugees and homos’), where *homod* appears as one of two “heated-up” topics (paired with refugees). Even if the sentence is critical of populist agitation, the structure still reproduces a list logic that positions same-sex sexuality as a politicised wedge issue rather than an ordinary social fact. In this sense, ideological polarisation can be enacted even in texts that oppose polarisation because the same enumerative and contrastive architecture keeps the category available as a rhetorical tool. A comparable pattern emerges in Jantunen’s (2018) analysis of Finnish forum discussions and reveals that *homo* often appears with terms related to religion, aggression, hate speech, and political vocabulary. In contrast, *hetero* is characterised by themes of cognition, emotion, and self-reflective identity. This difference highlights the wider imbalance between how society discusses non-normative sexuality publicly and how it treats heterosexuality privately and without emphasis.

A further Period 2 development is that marriage discourse becomes a site where competing framings of *homo* converge: institutional-rights reportage, moral panic and religious-apocalyptic frames, slippery-slope arguments, and satirical depoliticisation all cluster around the same legal change (cf. Love & Baker 2015: 70 and Paterson & Coffey-Glover 2018: 21–23 for comparable dynamics in British press discourse). *Homoseksuaal* participates in the same legislative arena but in different textual environments: adoption rights, hate-speech criminalisation, and disputes over representational authority (*LGBTIQ+ ei esinda kõiki homoseksuaale* ‘LGBTIQ+ does not represent all homosexuals’), where the formal label lends institutional weight to competing claims about who speaks for whom.

Article 4 extends this focus on categorisation and antagonistic positioning by showing how the slur *pede* has shifted from mostly localised insult functions toward systemic ideological instrumentalisation in the later period. The dia-

chronic comparison (1995–2008 vs. 2014–2023) documents a move from a predominantly mediated/quoted and culturally ironised usage toward more direct political labelling, with a notable rise from around 2018. The shift is explicitly connected to changes in the media environment (digital expansion and comment-space affordances) and to broader polarisation dynamics (including conflicts around the cohabitation act and refugee policy). Institutional and civil-society monitoring also indicates that online spaces linked to Estonian news outlets are important sites of anti-LGBT hostility: European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) (2015: 16) identifies news-portal comment sections as sites of racist and homophobic expression, and in Grossthal and Vähi's (2022: 5–6) monitoring sample *pede* was the most frequent Estonian slur in comments targeting groups on the basis of sexual orientation.

In later discourse, *pede* often becomes a **worldview label** rather than a reference to a person – for example, *Pedeseadus*, *pedesotsid ja rahva pedestamine* ‘fag law, fag social democrats, and fagging the people’ illustrates how the slur is mobilised to delegitimise policies, institutions, and ideological opponents. This is strengthened by morphological productivity: ***pede-* as a first component** (e.g., *pedepropaganda*, *pedesotsid*) functions as an efficient mechanism of ideological bundling, allowing diverse “undesirable” phenomena to be collapsed into one stigmatising construct. At the same time, ***-pede* as a second component** can function as an ironic intensifier (e.g., enthusiasm compounds), but Article 4 stresses that this does not automatically imply neutrality: the underlying stereotype of “deviation/excess” remains available and socially consequential. This pattern of stable low frequency, along with functional intensification, is different from the French Google Books data analysed by Agovino et al. (2022: 157, 165–166). In that data, *pédé* rises sharply after the 1960s. This increase is seen as a resemantisation process driven by LGBT mobilisation. In contrast, the Italian term *pederasta* remains rare and relatively stable. This is consistent with Italy's historically documented “strategy of silence” (Agovino et al. 2022: 153, 166). The Estonian term *pede* is more similar to the Italian pattern. The lack of a comparable community-led resemantisation means its hostile functions operate without the competing practical aspects that appropriation, even if partial, can introduce (see Section 2.3). This also shows that strategies associated with Anglophone queer politics, such as slur reclamation, do not transfer automatically: a form may be theoretically available for reappropriation while remaining locally dominated by hostile, antagonistic, or norm-policing uses.

This section's synthesis shows that processes of categorisation and antagonistic positioning operate on a continuum from subtle classificatory lists and contrasts in mainstream journalism to explicit ideological labelling in polarised and alternative media but also that these mechanisms shift diachronically. In Period 1, evaluation is more often carried by overt lexical markers (stigmatising collocations, scare quotes, blunt deviance-bundling). In Period 2, evaluation increasingly migrates to structural carriers: list membership, presupposition, modality, and selective attribution do the ideological work while surface language may appear more measured, making ideological positioning potentially

harder to identify and contest than in Period 1's more overt formulations. Across that continuum, lexical choice (*homo* vs. *gei* vs. *homoseksuaal* vs. *pede*) is inseparable from textual patterning, which determines whether sexuality is framed as governable, tolerable, threatening, laughable, or politically symbolic.

5.2.3 Visibility and integration: conditional normalisation and the markedness of disclosure

The third key result concerns how inclusion and social belonging are discursively made conditional in visibility contexts. Article 3 shows that equality is frequently articulated through conditional clauses, modality, and comparative framings so that “normality” is asserted but not presupposed as the default. A representative example is: *Kui gei läheb arsti juurde, siis on ta tavaline patsient* (‘If/when a gay person goes to the doctor, then they are a regular patient’). The *kui* (‘if/when’)... *siis* (‘then’) construction carries conditional force; the statement performs inclusion, yet it also reveals how strongly the discourse relies on categorical abstraction (a generic “*gei*” as a type) when imagining equality. Motschenbacher (2020: 3, 4) argues that coming-out discussions support the hetero/homo divide by leaving heterosexuality unmarked, while non-heterosexual identities need a clear declaration. Baker (2005: 90) shows how media talks about coming out using ideas of confession and announcement, treating disclosure as an important event. The Estonian conditional constructions illustrate the same imbalance in grammar; belonging must be clearly stated rather than simply assumed. This pattern is already visible in Period 1, where formulations such as *ei tohi teha vahet, kas oled gei, lesbi või nõndanimetatud tavaline inimene* (‘must not make a distinction whether you are gay, lesbian, or a so-called normal person’) name heterosexuality only through the category ‘normal’ – marking it as the baseline against which *gei* and *lesbi* appear as identity categories, even within a sentence arguing against discrimination. The hedge *nõndanimetatud* (‘so-called’) signals awareness of this asymmetry.

In the later material, visibility is repeatedly treated as something socially negotiated and managed. Article 3 notes that *kapist välja tulema* (‘to come out of the closet’) functions as an established metaphorical resource, and that **coming out** is framed not simply as personal disclosure but as a negotiation of belonging – and, often implicitly, of permission to be publicly visible as LGBT. Within these visibility contexts, the three labels also show tendential differentiation: *gei* is closely tied to disclosure/well-being narratives; *homo* is often used in politicised framings where visibility is debated and contrasted with “ordinary” social membership; and *homoseksuaal* appears in milestone-style reporting and constraint framings where disclosure is newsworthy or structurally difficult, particularly in Period 2, where it clusters around sports and political coming-out events, often with verbs of public declaration (*tunnistas avalikult* ‘admitted publicly’, *määratles end* ‘defined oneself’) that frame disclosure as an event requiring institutional narration rather than personal narrative.

Taken together, the integration/visibility findings show that discursive change is not simply a matter of “more acceptance” or “softer words”. Rights-based and wellbeing registers do expand, but they often coexist with older institutional framings and with newer polarisation dynamics. Crucially, even supportive discourse can keep heterosexuality as the unmarked baseline by treating same-sex sexuality as something that must be explicitly named, disclosed, managed, or conditionally normalised. The broader diachronic shift is synthesised in Section 5.4. The following section turns from high-frequency public labels to the localisation and contestation of *kväär* and the community’s metalinguistic negotiation of its meanings and risks.

5.3 Localisation and community negotiation

While Sections 5.1–5.2 showed how LGBT-related vocabulary is used and ideologically positioned in Estonian media discourse, this section shifts the analytical lens to community-facing meaning-making: how LGBT community members evaluate, legitimise, reject, and redefine emergent labels. The focus is on *kväär/kvääri* as localised equivalents of *queer*, because their uptake is uneven and accompanied by explicit metalinguistic debate. Rather than assuming a single ‘community’ stance, I treat these debates as evidence of partial institutionalisation alongside heterogeneous adoption and contested meanings. (Articles 1–2)

5.3.1 *Kväär* in Estonian: recognition, uptake, and polarisation

Article 1 shows a “known but contested” profile for *kväär* in the Estonian LGBT community sample. **Recognition is high** (93% report knowing the word), yet **self-reported use is substantially lower** (35% say they use it). This gap is important for the dissertation’s broader argument: *kväär* is not a niche term simply because people have not encountered it; rather, it is a term whose social meaning creates reasons to hinder adoption even when the label is recognisable.

Attitudes in the same sample are distributed across the full five-point scale, tilting modestly toward the negative end: 34% evaluate the term as acceptable (“very like” + “somewhat like”), 21% are neutral, and 45% evaluate it as unacceptable (“somewhat dislike” + “strongly dislike”). The specific attitude distributions are compared with the Finnish results in Section 5.3.2. The key analytical point is therefore not “rejection” but polarisation: *kväär* is simultaneously available as (a) an inclusive, empowering umbrella for some, and (b) an awkward or risky label for others. Szulc (2012: 87–91) documents similar discussions within communities in Poland. Here, English *queer* serves both as an inclusive term and a place for defining boundaries, with different ideological stakes involved.

The demographic patterning reported in Article 1 provides a concrete localisation mechanism: gender identity is the strongest predictor of attitude rating. In the decision-tree model, men and women show a lower predicted average

evaluation (2.685) than nonbinary participants (3.304), with no further splits in the model after this primary division. The qualitative analysis in Article 2 helps explain this split. Respondents define *kväär* not only through non-normativity but also through active anti-normativity, questioning norms that include homo-normativity. Nonbinary identity positions exist outside the binary gender system. This may make *kväär*'s norm-critical meaning more resonant for them than for respondents whose gender identities fit within established categories. When gender identity is removed, age emerges as the next predictor: younger groups show higher predicted averages than older groups, and under-30 participants are overall more positively oriented toward *kväär*. *Kväär* is therefore locally associated as a term that aligns especially with nonbinary identity positions and younger age cohorts, rather than functioning as a stable cross-community umbrella. This aligns with sociolinguistic work that treats age not only as a matter of openness to innovation but as an intersection of life stage and history: different cohorts encounter linguistic forms under different social conditions and attach different meanings to them (Labov 2010; Eckert 1997; Eckert 2003). Age may matter here for an additional reason as well: different generations encountered different label repertoires at the point when sexual and gender identity categories first became personally salient, often during youth or early adulthood, and those earlier labels can retain particular affective weight and familiarity. For older respondents, *kväär* is a later addition to a repertoire already anchored around other terms; for younger respondents, it may form part of the vocabulary through which their identity is first articulated.

Article 1 further connects this contested uptake to broader language-ideological tensions: respondents explicitly orient to the English-Estonian relationship in LGBT vocabulary and to competing strategies of localising queer either by reworking familiar Estonian terms with negative histories, such as *lilla* 'purple', which is used informally as a derogatory term for gay people, or *pede*, or by valuing *kväär* as a new "exact" translation that creates new local linkages. Importantly for the dissertation's argument about "change without replacement", *kväär* does not function as a single "safe alternative" that resolves naming politics; rather, it becomes one more layer in the stratified repertoire.

5.3.2 Estonian-Finnish comparison: same global concept, different local anchors

Article 2 shows that Estonian and Finnish language users display similar average attitudes toward the localised terms (mean 2.8 in both; median 3; mode 2), but different patterns of adoption and different demographic predictors of evaluation. In both language contexts, the responses span the full Likert range, supporting the interpretation that the issue is ambivalence rather than categorical opposition.

At the level of self-reported familiarity and usage, however, the two contexts diverge (see Figure 5.5). Estonian respondents report higher familiarity with *kväär* (92.6%) than Finnish respondents do with *kvääri* (85.0%), higher general usage (35.1% vs. 21.8%), and higher self-referential use (32.1% vs. 18.4%).

Finnish respondents, by contrast, report much higher usage of the term *queer*, with 87.0% in Finnish compared to 65.4% in Estonian. This pattern supports a key localisation argument: Finnish respondents' lexical choices suggest greater openness to using the global English term as a main resource. In contrast, Estonian respondents show a stronger preference for the localised form (*kväär*), even though it remains a topic of debate. Article 2 also points out that Finnish has significantly more alternative translations for *queer* than Estonian, though most of these are specific to certain contexts, such as *vinokino* for a film festival, rather than general-use terms.

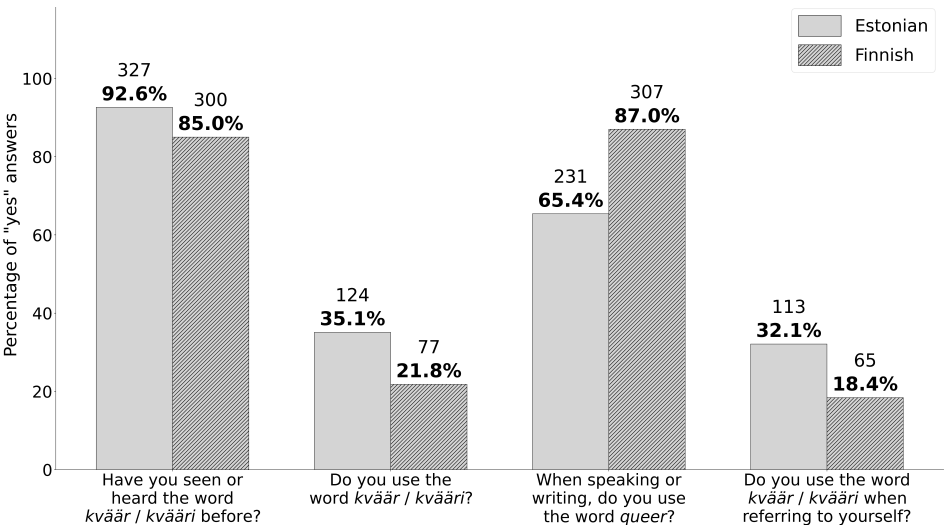


Figure 5.5. Familiarity and usage of *kväär*, *kvääri*, and *queer*. Responses $n = 706$.

Attitudes also show stronger polarisation in Estonia (Figure 5.6). While overall dislike is similar (45.3% among Estonian respondents; 42.5% among Finnish respondents), Estonian sample has higher proportions at both extremes: 21.8% “strongly dislike” and 17.9% “strongly like”, compared to Finnish 13.9% and 9.9%, respectively. This cross-language difference in polarisation complements Article 1’s within-Estonian finding that no single “correct meaning” stabilises and that *kväär* remains ideologically loaded.

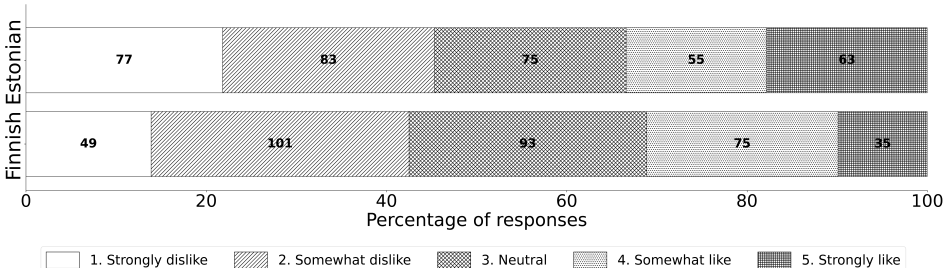


Figure 5.6. Distribution of responses to the five-point evaluation item for *kväär*/*kvääri*.

The demographic predictors of evaluation also differ by language context. In the decision tree reported in Article 2, the statistically most significant predictor of evaluation among Estonian respondents is gender identity (men and women evaluate *kväär* lower; nonbinary and genderqueer participants higher), whereas among Finnish respondents evaluation patterns primarily by sexuality: asexual and bisexual respondents evaluate *kvääri* more favourably than gay, lesbian, pansexual, and other respondents do. This matters for interpretation: the “same” translocal concept does not land on the same social fault lines. Among Estonian respondents, *kväär* aligns strongly with gendered positioning; among Finnish respondents, *kvääri* aligns more with sexuality-based subgrouping. At the same time, both contexts show a broader similarity: *kväär/kvääri* is more positively received especially by respondents for whom conventional binary or fixed identity labels may be less adequate or less comfortable.

Finally, the relationship between the localised labels (*kväär* in Estonian, *kvääri* in Finnish) and the English label *queer* is structured differently in the two countries. Evaluation of the localised form does not predict whether respondents report using the English *queer* in either language, but the reasons differ. In Finnish, reported *queer* use is not strongly predicted by any single variable; the English form functions as a parallel choice largely independent of attitudes toward *kvääri*. In Estonian, by contrast, reported *queer* use is structured mainly by age: respondents over 35 are much less likely to report using it. This suggests that English *queer* use is tied to generational repertoires, rather than being directly predictable from respondents’ evaluation of *kväär* alone.

5.3.3 Metalinguistic logics: why people embrace or reject *kväär/kvääri*

Across Articles 1–2, the most important qualitative result is that the debate about *kväär/kvääri* is rarely “just about a word”. Respondents treat *kväär/kvääri* as a site where multiple ideological concerns meet: language purity vs. multilingualism, translation legitimacy, in-group authority, identity inclusion, usability, and social consequences. This means that the ambivalence surrounding *kväär/kvääri* is not only a reaction to an unfamiliar word, but also a response to the double status of queer as both an empowering transnational resource and a marker of Anglophone conceptual authority. Respondents who value the term tend to foreground solidarity and inclusiveness; those who reject it orient to its perceived importedness – and, as the themes below show, these positions are often argued through the same language-ideological resources. Article 2 organises these justifications into five main themes: linguistic attitudes, connections and associations, identity and authority, practicalities, and impact.

1. Linguistic attitudes: emotion, purism, and “good/bad localisation”

A central feature of this theme is the intensity of affect in respondents’ evaluations. Some evaluations are mild (“clumsy”, “nice”, “weird”), but others are strongly emphatic; one Finnish respondent writes: “I HATE the word

kvääri and hope that it will be buried a thousand kilometres deep and will NEVER be dug up” (as an extreme negative stance). Respondents also argue both for and against the localised forms through language-ideological positions: some oppose English loan influence, while others value borrowings as resources that enrich the language; importantly, purist arguments can appear on both sides depending on whether “localisation” is seen as resistance to English or as awkward “Finnish-/Estonian-ised English”.

2. Connections and associations: wrongness, rifles, and social scenes

This theme shows how localisation activates new associations. Estonian respondents often link *kväär* with *väär* (‘wrong/false’). They interpret this either as playful defiance, like “a middle finger to homophobes”, or as undesirable self-stigmatization, asking, “why label yourself ‘wrong’?” Finnish respondents also connect *kvääri* with ‘wrong’ through inflectional rhyme, for example, the genitive *kvääri-n* rhyming with *väärin* ‘wrongly’. They notably associate it with *kivääri* ‘rifle’, which has a negative connotation. These phonological links show how a global concept is reinterpreted based on the existing words in the local language. Respondents also place *kväär/kvääri* socially. Finnish participants connect *kvääri* to specific locations and cultural references, including the queer bar *Kvääristö*. Estonian participants describe *kväär* as a modern term related to academic and activist groups.

3. Identity and authority: self-identification, community boundaries, outsider-use norms

Both datasets highlight identity ownership. *Kväär/kvääri* is often framed as a tool for self-identification. Respondents often state, either explicitly or implicitly, that outsiders should not use this term. Article 2 points out a common belief that the word should “definitely” be used by the person or community themselves, not by outsiders. Respondents also construct a social type of the “*kväär/kvääri* user” in both positive and negative ways. For example, they describe users as educated or privileged versus annoying hipster queer. This shows that the term has already taken on a social profile rather than just a semantic description. A key cross-language difference concerns scope. Finnish respondents widen the definition of *kvääri* to include non-monogamous and kinky subcategories, indicating a broader range of meanings. In contrast, Estonian *kväär* is more closely linked to LGBT identity specifically, as noted in Article 2. Estonian respondents also express stronger evaluations on both sides of the rating scale. The Estonian data emphasises community belonging and inclusiveness more than the Finnish data, which reflects a greater internal debate about the exact boundaries of *kvääri* identities, as noted in Article 2.

4. Practicalities: recognisability, spelling/pronunciation, and communicative efficiency

Respondents often judge *kväär/kvääri* based on practical factors such as memorability, spelling, pronunciation, audibility, and whether the word is

widely recognised enough to be useful in conversation. The Finnish *kvääri* has not yet made it into the national dictionary (Article 2) and remains unsettled among competing synonyms; this lexicographic instability is reflected in the reported lower self-referential usage. In Estonia, respondents have similar practical concerns. They describe *kväär* as hard to pronounce and visually unappealing; some believe the English word *queer* is clearer and more established. However, some respondents mention *kväär*'s morphological flexibility for example, *kväärikas* 'queerish' and *kväärtuslik* 'queer-valuable', a play on *väärtuslik* 'valuable', as evidence that it can be used productively in Estonian. Others see the rise of new terms as unhelpful for gaining wider recognition (Article 1).

5. Impact: empowerment, risk, and social consequences

Finally, respondents assess *kväär/kvääri* in terms of what it might do: empower, enable strategic vagueness and inclusion, divide the community, or invite hostility. Article 1's synthesis explicitly highlights the importance of inclusive language use (*kväär* as an umbrella that can cover multiple identities) while also stressing that *kväär* does not function as an unambiguous "safe alternative" in Estonian.

A second qualitative layer concerns what *kväär/kvääri* is understood to mean, and both datasets show notable differences. Based on the qualitative findings in Article 2, definitions can be grouped into themes such as synonymy (especially with *queer*), norm-nonconformity, polysemy or epistemic looseness, concept hierarchy (umbrella versus subcategory), and drawing exclusionary boundaries (what counts as *kväär/kvääri* and what does not). This variability suggests a cautious discussion-level implication for the dissertation: *kväär/kvääri* cannot currently be assumed to represent everyone the way institutional umbrella terms like LGBT+ aim to, even if some users choose it for inclusive reasons. As one Estonian respondent noted, "It seems to mean everything and yet nothing at the same time. On the one hand, it feels liberating, but on the other, I often have no idea what is meant by it" (Article 2). Conversely, some Finnish respondents specifically excluded "basic gays and lesbians" from the category, viewing *kväär/kvääri* as a more specific identity marker rather than an umbrella term (Article 2).

Together, Articles 1–2 show that *kväär/kvääri* is a case of translocalisation in a very concrete sense: the global concept 'queer' enters local languages not simply as a borrowed form, but as a locally reworked label whose meaning is reshaped by (a) phonological/semantic associations in the receiving language, (b) language-ideological expectations about "proper" localisation, and (c) intra-community negotiations of belonging, authority, and safety. The result is a sign that many people recognise but use unevenly. Its inclusive potential is therefore inseparable from the social risks and competing ideological interpretations attached to it in specific contexts.

5.4 Synthesis: naming, normativity, and negotiation

The preceding sections approached the data from three angles: frequency and stratification (Section 5.1), discursive positioning in media (Section 5.2), and community evaluation (Section 5.3). Read together, they converge on an argument that no individual strand could establish on its own: the ideological work of Estonian LGBT-related labels is carried out simultaneously through three operations – naming, positioning labelled referents in relation to an unmarked norm, and the negotiation of those labels within the communities they describe.

Naming. The clearest cross-article finding is that the Estonian LGBT-related lexicon develops through expansion and stratification rather than replacement (Section 5.1). Soviet-era medicalised vocabulary, rights-based institutional terms, English-origin borrowings, locally adapted activist terminology, and slurs coexist across roughly three decades, but they become specialised across time, register, and ideological positioning. Crucially, naming cannot be read off raw frequency alone: *homo* declines as a standalone label while remaining productive as a compound stem, *gei* rises as the rights-compatible mainstream label, and *homo-seksuaal* recedes overall yet concentrates in conservative-populist outlets where its clinical register can perform distancing work. *Pede* makes the point most sharply: its frequency remains relatively stable, but its pragmatic functions multiply (Section 5.2). Naming is therefore not simply a matter of which words exist, but of how labels distribute across registers and come to perform different ideological work.

Normativity. The second axis is that labels position their referents in relation to an unmarked heterosexual norm, and that this positioning persists even as public discourse becomes more liberalised (Section 5.2). The *homo/hetero* asymmetry narrows but does not disappear; “marriage” requires explicit marking primarily when it is same-sex; and inclusion is repeatedly framed as conditional rather than assumed. What changes over time is not the disappearance of normativity, but the linguistic means through which it is carried. In Period 1, evaluation is often visible through overt markers such as stigmatising collocations and scare quotes. In Period 2, it more often moves into structural mechanisms – presupposition, selective attribution, list-based association, and authorisation frames – that can make the surface language appear more measured while still positioning LGBT subjects as marked, debated, or institutionally mediated. This supports Motschenbacher’s (2020) broader point that discursive change around same-sex sexuality need not mean a move from normativity to non-normativity, but may involve a qualitative shift in the mechanisms through which normativity is reproduced. This is the dissertation’s central claim about ideology: it operates not only through explicit attitudes, but also through recurrent textual structures that organise what appears ordinary, legitimate, or in need of explanation.

Negotiation. The third axis is that labels meant for a community become objects of negotiation within it, following a logic that does not simply mirror media uptake (Section 5.3). *Kväär* is widely recognised but unevenly adopted; its evaluation is polarised and patterned by locally salient identity divisions – gender identity in the Estonian data, sexuality in the Finnish data. The same global

concept therefore lands on different social fault lines even in two closely related Finnic languages. Respondents debate phonological associations (*kväär ~ väär*), questions of “proper” localisation, and in-group authority over who may use the term. These debates show how the same label can be experienced simultaneously as a resource for transnational queer belonging and as a sign of linguistic or conceptual importedness. This is where the gap between public availability and community acceptance becomes central: a label that appears neutral, progressive, or analytically useful in public discourse cannot be assumed to be experienced as inclusive by those it names.

Taken together, the three axes are not independent findings but interlocking aspects of one process. A label is introduced, retained, or redistributed; in use, it positions its referents relative to an unmarked norm; and the communities it describes adopt, contest, rework, or refuse it. The ideological work of LGBT-related naming in Estonian becomes legible through this interplay – and this interplay is visible only because media discourse and community evaluation are analysed together.

Each axis corresponds to one of the dissertation’s research questions – naming to RQ1, normativity to RQ2, and negotiation to RQ3 – whose specific findings are summarised below.

RQ1. Lexical change in Estonian LGBT-related vocabulary is characterised by:

1. Expansion and stratification rather than replacement: older, institutional, rights-based, activist, and derogatory terms coexist rather than simply displacing one another;
2. Redistribution among standalone labels: *homo* declines while *gei* rises in journalistic discourse;
3. Persistent homo-/hetero- asymmetry: *homo*-forms remain more frequent than *hetero*-forms, consistent with heteronormativity as markedness;
4. Functional change without major frequency change: *pede* shows relatively stable frequency but substantial pragmatic refunctionalisation;
5. Ideological differentiation across outlet types: conservative-populist sources use *homoseksuaal* proportionally more often, while mainstream media increasingly uses *gei*.

RQ2. Ideological positioning in media discourse emerges through three recurring mechanisms:

1. Institutional regulation and recognition frames, including agency positioning and permission structures;
2. Antagonistic positioning, including exemplifying/enumerating structures and the polemical mobilisation of *homo*;
3. Slur-based ideological compression, especially through *pede* as a flexible label in compounds and political labelling.

RQ3. The localisation of global queer terminology (*queer* → *kväär/kvääri*) is characterised by:

1. Public-text stabilisation at low frequency: the localised form becomes visible but remains far less frequent than institutional umbrella terms such as *LGBT*;
2. A recognition-uptake gap with polarised evaluation, structured by different demographic predictors in the Estonian and Finnish data;
3. Metalinguistic anchoring in local form: evaluation is shaped not by “meaning” alone, but by phonological and semantic associations, language ideologies, and perceived social risks and benefits of the label.

6. CONCLUSION

This dissertation begins from the premise that language is not merely a reflection of existing social attitudes toward LGBT people but one of the sites through which those attitudes are produced, reproduced, and contested. Despite this, the linguistic dimension of Estonian LGBT **discourse** has received little systematic attention, leaving the mechanisms through which harmful patterns are built into routine language use largely unexamined. This dissertation addresses that gap. While vocabulary changes are a significant part of this process, the dissertation shows that they do not tell the full story. Estonia legalised same-sex marriage in 2024, and its LGBT vocabulary has grown from a limited set of Soviet-era medical and legal terms to a diverse range that includes rights-based institutional language (*samasooline*, *LGBT*), an English-derived label (*gei*), a locally adapted critical term (*kväär*), and older established forms (*homo*, *homoseksuaal*, *pede*). Each of these labels carries different meanings, associations, and ideological implications. This dissertation demonstrates that even in rights-friendly discussions, the way media texts are written still frames LGBT individuals as subjects of regulation rather than as active participants. Permission structures, conditional integration frames, and grouping with other marginalised categories remain prevalent over time.

This dissertation provides the first systematic study of how a small set of focal LGBT-related labels are used in Estonian media over three decades. It examines their frequencies, collocations, grammatical environments, and evaluative contexts. This work also offers the first organised documentation of how Estonian LGBT communities, and Finnish communities for comparison, evaluate a contested localised form of *queer*. Together, the media and community strands address the same problem from two complementary angles. Labels that circulate in public discussion gain ideological weight through repetition and textual patterning; communities then navigate this weight by accepting, resisting, reinterpreting, or rejecting labels that are used for them or offered as resources for self-description. The synthesis across articles reveals what no individual study could show: the gap between media discourse patterns and community evaluations is important for analysis. *Kväär* is widely recognised but adopted unevenly. *Gei* is common in mainstream journalistic discourse, yet those it is meant to describe debate whether any of the available labels truly represents their experience. *Pede* shows a steady low frequency in journalistic data while diversifying pragmatically in participatory genres, where it can function as insult, gender policing, political labelling, provocation, and, more marginally, tentative self-reference. These differences between frequency and function, and between public circulation and community evaluation, are key signs of contested naming in a small, closely connected public sphere.

The dissertation also offers a methodological contribution by showing how corpus-assisted discourse analysis, Critical Stylistics, and community survey methods can work together around a common focus: contested naming practices.

Applying Jeffries' textual-conceptual functions to Estonian-language media texts demonstrates that the framework can be used beyond its Anglophone origins (Jeffries 2010), while the Estonian material also shows where operational adjustment is needed. Because Estonian lacks grammatical gender but has productive compounding and a rich case system, categorisation and ideological positioning are carried partly through compound formation and case-marked list structures that the original framework does not foreground. Combining corpus evidence with community survey data addresses a known gap in corpus-based queer linguistics (Baker 2018), where media representation has typically overshadowed the views of the communities represented. These findings matter not only for queer linguistics and corpus studies, but also for media studies, language planning, and equality-oriented communication, where terminological recommendations benefit from evidence of how labels function in use.

The dissertation reexamines what it means to study "LGBT terminology". In public and policy discussions, terminology is often treated as if labels can be easily ranked from more progressive to less progressive, more accurate to less accurate, or from slur to neutral to empowering. The evidence here presents a different view. Following Lo Vecchio (2025), the dissertation views LGBT-related naming as a pragmatically and socially marked lexical field. This is an area where word choices carry social significance and show patterned variation. It can be analysed using the same methods as any other disputed vocabulary. While it is established that labels carry ideological weight through context in corpus-assisted discourse studies, this work shows how this principle operates within a layered small-language context that includes both media and community data. Labels are tools whose ideological effects depend on how they are used, including the words they appear with, the grammatical structures they are in, their positions in a list, and the assumptions they carry. The findings also show that linguistic categorisation is not only constraining: the same processes that regulate social intelligibility can also create possibilities for recognition, solidarity, and self-definition.

In the media data, the label *homoseksuaal* is more strongly associated with institutional and regulatory contexts than *gei*, making non-normative sexual identity seem like a formal category that can be defined, managed, or controlled. This association with regulatory registers can lead to the term being used for distancing, objectifying, or exclusionary purposes in public discussions. *Homo*, meanwhile, occupies a different position: it declines as a standalone label in journalistic texts but remains highly productive as a compound stem in politicised and metalinguistic debates, serving as a versatile resource for both ironic and antagonistic discourse. Similarly, *pede* is not just a slur with a fixed negative meaning. It is a versatile term whose effect changes depending on the context and time. It can shift from a direct insult to a way to police masculinity, to a political label, or to a provocative cultural statement. The masculinity-policing function in particular shows how homophobia and misogyny operate through shared linguistic mechanisms, extending stigma beyond sexuality to gender nonconformity more broadly (cf. Kaukonen et al. 2024). Additionally, its ability to form

compounds with *pede-* as a first element extends stigma to laws, policies, and ideological opponents. The key takeaway is that studying terminology related to marginalised groups needs to focus not only on which labels are chosen, but also on how they work in use: through collocation, grammatical patterning, textual organisation, compounding, and pragmatic function.

For Central and Eastern European queer linguistics more broadly, the dissertation provides a clear example that the relationship between “Western” queer concepts and local discursive realities is not just a matter of simple importing or rejection. The *kväär/kvääri* comparison shows that the same global concept interacts with different social issues in Estonian and Finnish-language contexts. In Estonian, its uptake is shaped by gender identity, while in Finnish it is influenced by sexual identity. Localisation is affected not only by meaning but also by phonological connotations (*kväär* ~ *väär* ‘wrong’), language-ideological expectations, and internal community debates about authority and risk. The ambivalence around *kväär/kvääri* should therefore be read as an effect of the term’s double status: it can function as a resource for transnational queer belonging and critique, while also being experienced as a sign of linguistic or conceptual importedness. This supports the broader argument in CEE scholarship that local sexual politics cannot be understood through a simple catch-up narrative (Kulpa & Mizielińska 2011). Instead, local sexual politics functions through its own logic of layering, simultaneity, and negotiation (Szulc 2012), which becomes clear when one focuses on how language works rather than only on what laws allow.

Several limitations shape the scope of these claims. These conclusions are derived from public written corpora – journalistic texts throughout, and participatory genres (forums and comments) in the analysis of *pede* as well as community survey data. They reflect publicly used language rather than private conversation. The dissertation shows how naming and framing patterns change over time, genre, and discourse site. It does not test causal relationships between media discourse and public attitudes or policy outcomes. The analyses focus on what appears in public texts and do not address spoken interactions, private conversations, or the fast-changing dynamics of social media. The community surveys mostly reached respondents through Estonian-language LGBT organisations. As a result, Russian-speaking, rural, and less organisationally connected individuals, and people who relate to queer without community affiliation are likely to be underrepresented. Including these groups would require different strategies for reaching participants. The convergence of findings across different methods strengthens the overall argument, but it also means that the conclusions reflect trends across various strands rather than a single model applied to all data. The focus on a limited set of labels, chosen for their frequency and ideological importance, necessarily overlooks other terms, like *biseksuaal* (‘bisexual’) and *mittebinaarne* (‘non-binary’), as well as the complete range of trans-related vocabulary. Their discursive paths deserve specific analysis.

Four directions for future research emerge from these results. First, the finding that ideological positioning works through routine textual patterns, not just

through overt evaluation, calls for research focused on how different audiences read and interpret the institutional framings, list structures, and conditional integration patterns documented here. Combining the corpus-stylistic approach with reader-response or focus-group methods would help determine whether the ideological effects identified through text analysis match the meanings that audiences create. Second, the *pede* analysis suggests a broader methodological hypothesis: functional diversification can happen without frequency change. This should be tested by applying the same corpus-informed functional approach to other contested and derogatory labels, including gendered and ethnic slurs, across different genres. Third, the dissertation's claims about small languages and peripheral contexts should be strengthened by expanding multilingual and regional comparisons. This is especially important in relation to Russian-language media in Estonia and bilingual community networks. Such an approach would test how far the patterns identified here are specific to language versus shared across Estonia's parallel publics. It would also extend queer-localisation comparisons beyond Estonian and Finnish to other Baltic and Central/Eastern European language contexts. Fourth, experimental or survey-based designs that systematically vary label choices in otherwise similar contexts, such as *gei*, *homo*, or *homo-seksuaal* would test whether the register-specific ideological associations documented through corpus analysis lead to measurable differences in readers' evaluations and perceived appropriateness. This would decouple the effect of label choice from the textual environments in which labels typically appear.

What this dissertation shows is that in a small language facing rapid legal and social change, the words available for non-heteronormative identities are never just words. They serve as places where institutional authority, community belonging, political strategy, and drawing of ideological distinctions meet. Across the articles, these labels were shown to do three things at once – to name, to position what they name in relation to an unmarked norm, and to become objects of negotiation within the communities they describe. It is in this interplay of naming, normativity, and negotiation that their ideological work becomes legible. Here, the routine and often invisible work of forming texts shapes which kinds of lives become publicly understood. For queer linguistics, the dissertation shows that Anglophone-derived frameworks need to be adjusted for different languages. It also highlights how “translation” and word formation reveal sites of ideological negotiation in small-language settings. For Estonian language planning and for those working on LGBT issues, such as NGOs, educators, and journalists, as well as the LGBT communities themselves, this research provides evidence for thoughtful discussions about naming practices, media representation, and communication strategies within the community. Without community evaluation, it is impossible to determine whether a term that seems neutral or progressive in media is actually seen as inclusive or as being taken over. Examining how labels become routine through text formation, rather than just focusing on which labels are selected, is essential for understanding Estonian LGBT discourse. This approach also helps to clarify the relationship between language, social norms, and transformation in contested areas.

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Nimetused, normatiivsus ja neis navigeerimine: LGBT-teemadega seotud sildid Eesti meediadiskursuses ja kogukonna hinnangutes, 1995–2023

Väitekirjas uurin, kuidas LGBT-teemadega seotud nimetuste kaudu eesti keeles tähendusi luuakse, norme taastoodetakse ja piire tõmmatakse. Analüüsi keskmes on viis eestikeelset sõna – *gei*, *homo*, *homoseksuaal*, *kväär* ja *pede* –, mis erinevad üksteisest ajaloo, kasutuskonteksti, hinnangulisuse ja kogukondliku vastuvõtu poolest. Esitähthühendit LGBT kasutan väitekirjas üldise katusmõistena: see tähistab lesbisid, geisid, biseksuaalseid ja transsoolisi inimesi. Variante (nt LGBT+, LGBTI, LGBTQ) kasutan vastavalt allikmaterjalile; plussmärk osutab teistele seksuaal- ja soovähemustele ning identiteetidele, mida lühendi neli tähte eraldi ei nimeta. Inglisekeelset sõna *queer*, eestikeelset vastet *kväär* ja soomekeelset vastet *kvääri* käsitlen eraldi vaidlusaluste nimetustena, mille kasutuse, sobivuse ja sotsiaalsete tähenduste üle kogukondades aktiivselt arutletakse.

Ühelt poolt on Eesti ühiskondlik ja õiguslik raamistik viimase kolme aastakümne jooksul märgatavalt muutunud: nõukogude ajast pärinev kriminaliseeriv ja patologiseeriv käsitlus on asendunud järjest enam võrdsetele õigustele ja inimõigustele toetuva poliitikaga, näiteks hakkas 2024. aastal Eestis kehtima abieluvõrdsus. Teiselt poolt ei muutu LGBT inimestest rääkimise viisid automaatselt seadusemuudatuste ega uuringutes väljendatud hoiakutega samas tempos. Avalikus meediaruumis püsivad edasi nii häbimärgistavad kui ka institutsionaalselt reguleerivad kirjeldused ning heteronormatiivsed eeldused võivad säilida ka näiliselt neutraalses või isegi toetavas sõnastuses.

Uuritav periood 1995–2023 on seega olnud kiire ühiskondliku muutumise aeg. Õiguskeskkond on liberaliseerunud, LGBT-teemadest rääkimiseks kasutatav sõnavara on laienenud ning meediaruum on muutunud. Õiguste, nähtavuse ja perekonna teemalised vaidlused on toonud LGBT-teemad avalikku arutellu varasemast nähtavamalt, kuid samal ajal on need vaidlused muutunud poliitiliselt polariseeritumaks ja instrumentaalsemaks. Väitekirjas näitan, et nimetuste valik on ideoloogiliselt ja institutsionaalselt tähenduslik: sõnavalik asetab keelekasutaja eri ootuste ristumispunkti ning nimetuste kaudu saavad mõned subjektid normipäraseks, teised markeerituks, probleemseks või võivad mõjuda isegi ähvardavalt (Fairclough 1995; Wodak 2012; Motschenbacher 2010, 2022; van Dijk 1998).

Uurimisküsimused ja teoreetiline raamistik

Väitekirja eesmärk on vastata küsimusele, kuidas meediadiskursuses ja kogukondlikes keelepraktikates kujundatakse ja kinnistatakse LGBT-siltide tähendusi ja positsioone ning kuidas neis navigeeritakse kontekstis, mida iseloomustab kiire ühiskondlik muutus ja tugevalt meediastunud avalik ruum (Fairclough 1992, 1995; Wodak 2012). Eesmärgi täitmiseks olen püstitanud kolm uurimisküsimust:

1. Kuidas on LGBT-teemadega seotud peamiste eestikeelsete siltide (*gei, homo, homoseksuaal, kväär, pede*) kasutussagedus, -mustrid ja ideoloogilis-institutsionaalne positsioon Eesti avalikus diskursuses muutunud (1995–2023)?
2. Milliste keeleliste mehhanismide abil kasutatakse LGBT-teemadega seotud silte identiteetide kujundamiseks ja ideoloogiliseks positsioneerimiseks Eesti avalikus diskursuses?
3. Kuidas on globaalne silt *queer* eesti keelde (*kväär*) ja soome keelde (*kvääri*) kohandunud ning milliseid hinnanguid annavad neile LGBT kogukondade liikmed?

Analüüsi keskmes on viis eesti keeles laialt kasutatavat või ühiskondlikult laetud silti: *gei, homo, homoseksuaal, kväär* ja *pede*; võrdlusesse on kaasatud ka ingliskeelne sõna *queer* ning soomekeelne *kvääri*. Need sildid on seotud eri registrite (nt meditsiini, seaduste ja poliitikakujundamise, inimõiguste, aktivismi), institutsionaalse ajaloo ning tekstiliikide ja pragmaatiliste funktsioonidega. Varasemad uurimused on näidanud, et korduvad tekstilised mustrid võivad hoida heteroseksuaalsust vaikumisi normina ning käsitleda mittenormatiivset seksuaalsust erandina, probleemina või reguleeritava objektina, ka siis, kui sõnavara ise on kaasajastunud (Warner 1993; Cameron ja Kulick 2008; Motschenbacher 2022). Siinses väitekirjas uurin, kas ja kuidas need mustrid avalduvad Eesti materjalis – nende siltide jälgimine korpustes ja kogukonna metalingvistilistes hinnangutes võimaldab tuua nähtavale, kuidas sellistest mustritest tulenev normatiivsus püsib ka siis, kui ühiskondlikud hoiakud ja seadused liberaliseeruvad.

Metodoloogiliselt toetub töö kväärilingvistika (*queer linguistics*) uurimisuunale, mille kohaselt hetero- ja *cis*-normatiivsust käsitatakse diskursiivselt toodetava vaikumisi režiimina, mis muutub nähtavaks nimetamise, markeerituse ja kategoriseerimise kaudu (Warner 1993; Cameron 1995; Cameron ja Kulick 2008; Motschenbacher 2010, 2022). Laiemalt toetub väitekirja kriitilise diskursuseuurimuse traditsioonile, mille kohaselt keel ei kirjelda maailma üksnes neutraalselt, vaid osaleb normide, hierarhiate ja identiteetide loomises (Fairclough 1992, 1995; Wodak 2012).

Uurimistöö ühendab korpuse abil tehtava diskursusanalüüsi (Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies, CADS) ja kriitilise stilistika (CS) tööriistu: kvantitatiivsed korpusmustrid (sagedused, kollokatsioonid, konkordantsid) suunavad tähelepanu korduvatele kooslustele, mille põhjal kirjeldatakse kvalitatiivselt, kuidas tekstides konstrueeritakse normi, kõrvalekallet, autoriteeti ja loomulikustatust (Baker 2008, 2018, 2023; Partington et al. 2013; Jeffries 2010). Vaenusõna (*pede*) uurimus lisab pragmaatilise vaatepunkti: vaenusõna tähendus ei ole üksnes leksikaalne, vaid kujuneb kasutusaktides, osaluspraktikates ja žanrites; seetõttu ei saa selle kohta järeldusi teha ainult sageduse alusel (Croom 2013; Rappaport 2020; Anderson ja Lepore 2013). Kogukonnaandmete käsitlemisel on lähtutud rahvalingvistika ja metalingvistilise teadlikkuse perspektiivist, mille kohaselt on keelekasutajad ise tähendusloome eksperdid, kes põhjendavad ja vaidlustavad keelelisi

valikuid oma kogemuse ja keeleideoloogiatega kaudu (Niedzielski ja Preston 2003; Preston 2004; Garrett 2010).

Sotsiokultuuriliselt asetub uurimus Kesk- ja Ida-Euroopa postsotsialistlikku konteksti, kus seksuaalsuse poliitika ja mõistestik ei moderniseeru lineaarselt ühe lääne mudeli järgi, vaid kujuneb ajaloo, institutsioonide ja geopolitiiliste muutuste ristumiskohas (Kulpa ja Mizielińska 2011; Kulpa et al. 2012; Dobrowolska 2025). Eesti puhul on oluline nõukogudeaegne õiguslik-meditiiniline pärand ja varajane HIV/AIDSi ennetustöö (Healey 2001; Kurvinen 2007; Koppel 2022), samuti taasiseseisvumisjärgne kiire meediaruumi muutumine ning tugevad keeleideoloogiad ja keelekorralduslik traditsioon (Lindström et al. 2023). 2010.–2020. aastate avalikes vaidlustes on lisaks nähtav ka laiem *antigender*-retoorika, kus LGBT-silte kasutatakse poliitilise polariseerimise vahendiks (Kováts ja Põim 2015; Velmet 2019; Bogetić 2025; Sepper 2025). Joanna Chojnicka (2015) on näidanud, et Läti, Leedu ja Poola meedia- ja poliitilises diskursuses positsioneeritakse seksuaalvähemusi sageli ohuna rahvusele, perekonnale ja kirikule ning välistatakse seeläbi nn normaalsest ühiskonnast. Väitekirja näitab, et Eesti materjalil ilmnevad võrreldavad normatiivsed mustrid, kuigi need realiseeruvad keeleliselt teistsuguste mehhanismide kaudu.

Andmestik ja meetodid

Väitekirja empiiriline materjal pärineb kahest allikast.

1. **Avalik kirjalik diskursus:** eesti keele ühendkorpus, milles tegin päringuid veebipõhise korpuspäringute keskkonnas Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014; Kallas ja Koppel 2022; Kallas ja Koppel 2023). Tegemist on üldkorpusega, mitte LGBT-teemade põhjal koostatud erikorpusega: analüüsitavad esinemisjuhud on leitud sõnapäringutega kogu korpusest, sõltumata teksti teemast.

Diakroonne analüüs tugineb kahele perioodile, mida võimaldavad korpuste ajamärgistatud andmed: 1995–2008 (Koondkorpus) ja 2014–2023 (Uudisvoogude korpus). Artiklite lõikes kasutan korpusematerjali eri eesmärkidel: (a) laiem kasutussageduste kaardistus ja sõnavara muutuste jälgimine, (b) ajakirjanduslike tekstide kollokatsioonid ehk sõnad, mis esinevad otsitava nimetuse lähikontekstis tavalisest sagedamini, ning kriitilise stilistika lähilugemine, (c) sõna *pede* käsitlevas artiklis eri žanrite kontekstitundlik kvalitatiivne analüüs. Perioodidevahelisi sageduserinevusi kontrollisin log-likelihood-testiga ning kollokatsioonide tugevust hindasin LogDice'i assotsiatsioonimõõdikuga (Rayson ja Garside 2000; Gablasova et al. 2017).

2. **Kogukonnaandmed:** veebiküsitlused LGBT vastajatele Eestis (oktoober 2022, N=353) ja Soomes (oktoober 2023, N=353), kokku N=706. Küsitlused sisaldasid küsimusi sõnadega tutvav olemise ja nende kasutamise kohta, 5-punktilist hinnanguküsimust sõna *kväär/kväär*i kohta ning avatud vastustega küsimusi, kus vastajad põhjendasid oma hinnanguid ja kirjeldasid sõnaga

seotud tähendusi, definitsioone ja assotsiatsioone. Kvantitatiivses analüüsis kasutasin tingimusliku otsustuspuu mudeleid (Conditional Inference Trees; Hothorn et al. 2020), et tuvastada, millised taustatunnused seostuvad sõnale antud hinnangutega kõige tugevamalt; Eesti ja Soome vastuste võrdluses kasutasime ka sõltumatusteste, sealhulgas hii-ruut-teste. Avatud vastuseid analüüsisin temaatilise analüüsi meetodiga (Braun ja Clarke 2006).

Meetodite kombinatsioon on integratiivne: korpusanalüüs annab pildi kasutusmuustritest ja avaliku diskursuse korduvatest mallidest, kogukonnaandmed toovad välja selle, kuidas nimetusi tajutakse ja millised tähendused seostuvad nendega uuritava grupi sees. Just nende kahe vaate dialoog võimaldab selgitada, miks mõni avalikus ruumis levinud silt ei kinnistu kogukonnas või miks mõne nime-tuse funktsioon muutub (nt vaenusõnade puhul) ilma märgatava sagedusnihketa.

Väitekirja koosneb katuspeatükist ja neljast publikatsioonist. Esimene artikkel uurib sõna *kväär* Eesti LGBT kogukonnas: kui tuntud see on, kes seda kasutab, kuidas seda hinnatakse ja milliste põhjendustega seda omaks võetakse või selle kasutamisest hoidutakse. Artikkel ühendab kogukonnaküsitluse korpuspõhise taustaga, sest *kvääri* ei saa mõista üksiksõnana eraldi laiemast sõnavara muutumisest. Selle tähendus ja vastuvõtt kujunevad olukorras, kus eesti keeles on kõrvuti vanemad nimetused (*homo*, *homoseksuaal*, vaenusõna *pede*), peavoolustunud õiguste ja poliitika keel (*LGBT*, *samasooline*) ning uuemad kogukondlikud ja aktivistlikud sõnad.

Teises artiklis, mille kirjutasin koos Meri Lindemaniga Turu Ülikoolist, võrdlen sõnade *queer*, *kväär* ja *kvääri* kasutust ning hinnanguid eesti ja soome keeles. Artikli keskse küsimusena uurisime, kas sama globaalne sõna kohandub kahes lähisugulaskeeles sarnastel viisidel. Tulemused näitavad, et ei kohandu. Eesti keele keskkonnas seostuvad hinnangud sõnale *kväär* eelkõige sooidentiteediga, seksuaalse identiteediga. Samas ei ole need taustatunnused põhjused iseeneses, vaid näitavad, milliste kogukonnasiseste arutelude, kasutajaprofiilide ja keeleliste ootuste külge sõna kummaski keeleruumis kinnitub. Samuti on ingliskeelse *queer*'i kasutus soome vastajate seas märksa levinum, mis näitab, et lokaliseeritud vormi vajalikkus ja prestiiž ei ole eesti ja soome keeles samasugused.

Kolmandas artiklis analüüsin sõnade *gei*, *homo* ja *homoseksuaal* kasutust Eesti ajakirjanduslikes tekstides aastatel 1995–2023. Korpusanalüüsi ja kriitilise stilistika abil – st ühendades korduvate keelemustrite tuvastamise tekstide lähilugemisega – näitan, et need nimetused ei ole lihtsalt stiilivariandid ega sünonüümid. *Gei* seostub üha enam õiguste ja inimõiguste raamistikuga, *homoseksuaal* institutsionaalse ja klassifitseeriva registriga ning *homo* poliitiliselt ja retooriliselt paindliku kasutusega, eriti liitsõnades ja vastandustes.

Neljas artikkel keskendub vaenusõnale *pede*. Selle artikli eesmärk on peale kasutuskontekstide uurimise ka näidata, kuidas selle funktsioonid ajas muutuvad. Analüüsist selgub, et *pede* võib toimida otsese solvanguna, maskuliinsuse ja normide kontrollimise vahendina, poliitilise sildistamise tööriistana, provokatsioonina ning piiratud juhtudel võib seda esineda ka enesekohases või kogukonnasiseses kasutuses. Oluline mehhanism on liitsõnamoodustus ehk morfoloogiline

produktiivsus: *pede*- liitsõna esikomponendina võimaldab kanda seksuaalsusega seotud stigmat üle ka seadustele, poliitikutele, ideoloogiatele ja avalikele vaidlustele. Nii ei toimi sõna ainult otsese solvanguna inimese kohta, vaid ka poliitilise ja ideoloogilise märgistamise vahendina.

Nelja artikli ühine eesmärk on näidata, kuidas nimetused toimivad eri tasanditel: avalikus meedias korduvate sõnavalikute ja tekstimustritena, vaenusõnade puhul pragmaatiliste kasutusfunktsioonidena ning kogukonnas hinnangute, kasutusotsuste ja metalingvistiliste põhjenduste objektina. Nii moodustub tervikargument sellest, kuidas LGBT-teemadega seotud sõnad eesti keeles inimesi ja nähtusi nimetavad, normidega suhestavad ning kogukondades navigeerimise ja vaidluse objektiks muutuvad. Sellepärast on väitekirjas kõrvuti korpusanalüüs, tekstide lähilugemine, vaenusõnade pragmaatiline analüüs ja kogukonnaküsitlused: iga andmestik näitab nimetuste ideoloogilisest tööst eri külge.

Peamised tulemused

1. Leksikaalne areng: laienemine ja kihistumine

Korpusandmed näitavad, et Eesti LGBT-sildid ei asendu lineaarselt, vaid laienevad ja kihistuvad: uued nimetused ja institutsionaalsed sildid (nt *LGBT*, *samasooline*) lisanduvad, kuid vanemad sõnad ei kao, vaid spetsialiseeruvad eri registritesse ja ideoloogilistesse positsioonidesse (vrd Szulc 2012; Baker 2013; Shi ja Lei 2020). Korpusandmed annavad sarnase üldpildi kahest vaatenurgast, mis võimaldab eristada, kas muutus tuleneb teema taandumisest või sildivaliku ja vastuvõetavuse muutumisest. Ajakirjanduslikes tekstides nihkub eelistus selgelt: *homo* kui iseseisva sildi kasutus on vähenenud, samal ajal kui sildi *gei* kasutus on suurenenud; sildi *homoseksuaal* kasutus on muutunud vähem, kuid see püsib eriti institutsionaalsetes ja ideoloogiliselt laetud kasutuskontekstides (artikkel 3).

2. Markeeritus: heteroseksuaalsus kui vaikumisi norm

Homo-/hetero-asümmeetria püsib kogu vaadeldud ajavahemiku vältel: *homo*- on korpuses järjekindlalt ligikaudu viis korda sagedam kui *hetero*-, mis tähendab, et mittenormatiivne seksuaalsus on avalikus ruumis sagedamini eksplitsiitselt nimetatud kui heteroseksuaalsus (Baker 2005; Motschenbacher ja Stegu 2013; Motschenbacher 2022). Ajas lõhe väheneb, kuid ei kao: ka õigustepõhise avaliku arutelu laienedes jääb heteroseksuaalsus taustanormiks, mille ümber “teised” seksuaalse identiteedi kategooriad eraldi sõnastatakse.

3. Nimetuste kasutuse ideoloogiline diferentseerumine meedias

Kuigi *gei*, *homo* ja *homoseksuaal* võivad üksiktekstides vahelduda näiliste sünonüümidenä, eriti sõnakorduse vältimiseks, ei toimi nad meediadiskursuses samaväärsete nimetustena. Eesti meedias on nende kasutus ideoloogiliselt diferentseerunud: *gei* seostub tugevalt õiguste ja inimõiguste raamistikuga, *homo* poliitilise vastandamise ja liitsõnalise kasutusega ning *homoseksuaal* institutsionaalse, klassifitseeriva ja distantseeriva registriga. *Gei* seostub tugevalt õiguste, heaolu

ja rahvusvahelise inimõiguskeele registriga ning esineb korduva muustrina institutsionaalset autoriteeti kandvas raamistikus: statistika esitamise, organisatsioonide ja rahvusvaheliste inimõigusraportite meediavahenduse kaudu (artikkel 3; vrd Wilkinson 2023; Ng et al. 2024). Nimetus *homoseksuaal* koondub klassifitseerivasse institutsionaalsesse raamistikku (õigus-, meditsiini-, haldusküsimused); selle kliiniline taust võimaldab diskursiivset distantseerimist, kus identiteeti esitatakse kategooriana, mida hinnatakse, hallatakse või kontrollitakse (Baker 2005; Motschenbacher 2021; artikkel 3). Konservatiiv-populistlikes allikates on *homoseksuaal* proportsionaalselt sagedam kui peavooluallikates, mis toetab tõlgendust, et formaalsus toimib siin ideoloogilise ressursina (Opermann ja Kõuts-Klemm 2024; artikkel 3; vrd Socciarelli 2019). *Homo* on pragmaatiliselt kõige paindlikum: see sobitub kergesti liitsõnadesse (*homoabieliu*, *homopropaganda*), loosunglikesse vastandustesse ning seda kasutatakse ideoloogiliste piiride seadmisel, kus mittenormatiivset seksuaalsust rakendatakse retooriliselt rahulolematuse koondamise vahendina.

4. Tekstilised mehhanismid ja diakrooniline nihe

Ideoloogiline positsioneerimine ei teostu ainult otsese väärtusotsuste kaudu, vaid sageli tekstide ülesehituse korduvates muustrites: keda esitatakse tegutsejana ja keda tegevuse objektina, mida kirjeldatakse lubamise või keelamise loogikas, millised kategooriad pannakse samasse loendisse ning millised eeldused kinnistatakse tingimuslausetega (Jeffries 2010; Partington et al. 2013; Motschenbacher 2022). Selle muustriga haakub ka mitmuse kasutus: lähilugemisel esinevad nimetused korduva muustrina rühmakategooriatena (*geid*, *homod*, *homoseksuaalid*), mitte üksikisiku kogemusliku positsioonina. Seda ei saa käsitada agentsuse otsese mõõtmisena, kuid see toetab üldisemat järeldust, et LGBT-subjektid ilmuvad meediatekstides rühmadena, kelle õigusi, nähtavust või tunnustamist lubatakse, keelatakse, reguleeritakse või kaitstakse.

Kriitilise stilistika analüüsis tuli esile kaks peamist tekstilist mehhanismi, mille kaudu LGBT-silte ideoloogiliselt positsioneeritakse: loendid ja koordineerivad struktuurid ning eeldused ja modaalsus. Esiteks loendid ja koordineerivad struktuurid (Exemplifying/Enumerating), mis võivad normaliseerida, asetades LGBT-kategooriad ühe vähemusena teiste sekka (nt *juudid*, *mustlased*, *homoseksuaalid*), või stigmatiseerida, sidudes need nn probleemiklastritesse (nt *narkomaanid*, *prostituudid ja homoseksuaalid*) (Jeffries 2010; Coffey-Glover 2015; artikkel 3). Teiseks eeldused ja modaalsus (Implying/Assuming): tolerantsus kujuneb nendes tekstimuustrites sageli tingimuslikuks (nt *kuni nad avalikult üles ei astu; kui see sättumus kõrvale jätta*), mistõttu kuuluvus ei ole eeldatud, vaid justkui väljateenitav (Baker 2005; Motschenbacher 2020; artikkel 3).

Oluline on ka see, et sama grammatiline mehhanism võib luua vastandlikke ideoloogilisi efekte: koordineeritud loend võib olla kaasav või stigmatiseeriv. Ka homofoobse populismi vastane kriitika võib taastoota loendiloogikat, mis teeb LGBT-teemast poliitilise vastandamise vahendi (*wedge issue*) (artikkel 3; vrd Chojnicka 2023).

Diakrooniline nihe avaldub selles, kuhu hinnanguline positsioneerimine paigutub. Varasemates tekstides (1990. aastad ja 2000. aastate algus) avaldub häbi-märgistamine otsesemalt: negatiivsed kollokatsioonid (nt *aids*, *pede*, *narkar*), jutumärkidega distantseerimine ja LGBT-siltide kaudu selge kategoriseerimine hälbena. Hilisemas perioodis (2014–2023) muutub osa hinnangulisusest struktuursemaks: ideoloogiline positsioneerimine liigub sagedamini loenditesse, eeldustesse, modaalsusesse ja agentsuse varjamiseks, kuigi paralleelselt kasvab ka avalikult vaenulik repertuaar konservatiiv-populistlikes kanalites (Love ja Baker 2015; Velmet 2019; artikkel 3; Sepper 2025).

5. Vaenusõna *pede*: stabiilne sagedus, tugev muutus pragmaatilistes funktsioonides

Vaenusõna *pede* analüüs näitab, et sagedus ei ole piisav mõõdik: isegi kui esinemissagedus ajakirjanduslikes korpustes on madal ja suhteliselt stabiilne, võib sõna pragmaatiline funktsioon tekstis oluliselt muutuda (Croom 2013; Motschenbacher 2018; artikkel 4). Varasemas perioodis domineerivad otsese solvanguga seotud kasutused, mis on enamasti ajakirjanduses vahendatud või tsiteeritud kujul: tekst ei pruugi sõna ise solvanguna kasutada, vaid annab edasi olukorda, kus kedagi on nii nimetatud. Sellistes kasutustes on sihtmärgiks peamiselt mehed, kellele omistatakse mittenormatiivset seksuaalsust. Hilisemas perioodis lisandub tugevam ideoloogiline instrumentaliseerimine: *pede* laieneb poliitilise sildistamise vahendiks, maskuliinsuse ja normide sotsiaalseks kontrolliks ning provokatsioonivõtteks. Oluline mehhanism on liitsõnamoodustus: *pede*- kui esimene komponent võimaldab kanda stigmat üle abstraktsetele objektidele (*pedeseadus*, *pedesotsid*, *pedepropaganda*), muutes vaenusõna paindlikuks poliitiliste piiride tõmbamise vahendiks (artikkel 4). Pragmaatiliste funktsioonide nihkesse panustavad eelkõige kaks tegurit: veebimeedia levik ja ühiskonna poliitiline polariseerumine, mis selgitavad sõna muutumist argisest solvangust poliitilise diskursuse vahendiks (artikkel 4). Laiemalt haakub see dünaamika Eesti vaenu- ja platvormiseire materjaliga, kus uudisteportaalide kommentaarirume on kirjeldatud homfoobse väljenduse levikukohana ning sõna *pede* esineb seksuaalse sättumuse põhistes eestikeelsetes vaenukõnejuhtumites keskse vaenusõnana (ECRI 2015; Grossthal ja Vähi 2022).

Uurimusest tuleb selgelt esile ka see, et irooniline, metafoorne või naljana mõeldud kasutus ei neutraliseeri automaatselt vaenusõna sotsiaalset kahjulikku toimet: sõna ajalooline ja normeeriv koormus jääb kasutusse reservina ning võib aktiveeruda ka siis, kui sihtmärgiks ei ole otseselt seksuaalsus, vaid laiem normi rikkumine (Anderson ja Lepore 2013; Rappaport 2020; artikkel 4).

6. Kväär/kvääri: suur tuntus, selektiivne omaksvõtt, polariseerunud hinnangud

2022. aastal läbi viidud küsitluse analüüs näitab, et sõna *kväär* on Eesti LGBT kogukonnas tuntud, samuti seda, et see pakub palju arutamist: valdav enamik vastajatest tunneb sõna (93%), kuid märksa väiksem osa raporteeris end seda kasutavat (35%); hinnangud jaotuvad tugevalt kogu skaalal ja kalduvad tagasihoidlikult negatiivse poole (artikkel 1; artikkel 2).

Eesti-Soome võrdlus kinnitab, et sama globaalne silt ei mahu kahes lähisugulaskeeles samasse kasutusloogikasse. Eestis on lokaliseeritud vorm (*kväär*) tuttavam ja sagedamini kasutatav kui Soomes (*kvääri*), samas soome keeles raporteeritakse oluliselt rohkem ingliskeelse *queer*'i kasutamist (artikkel 2). Keskmised hinnangud lokaliseeritud variantide suhtes on sarnased, kuid Eestis on eri arvamused tugevamad, st rohkem on äärmuslikke hinnanguid mõlemas suunas, mis viitab kohalike assotsiatsioonide tugevamale mõjule.

Oluline on ka see, milliste taustatunnustega hinnangud seostuvad: eesti keele kontekstis on keskseim sooidentiteet (mittebinaarsed vastajad hindavad sõna keskmiselt positiivsemalt), soome keele kontekstis eristusid asekuaalsed ja bisekuaalsed vastajad, kes hindasid sõna keskmiselt positiivsemalt (artikkel 1; artikkel 2). See toetab väitekirja lokaliseerimiskäsitust: lokaliseerimine on ühtaegu fonoloogiline ja semantiline (*kväär* ↔ *väär*), ideoloogiline (laenu vs. oma) ning kogukonnasisene autoriteedivõitlus – kelle sõna see on ja kellel on õigus seda kasutada (Kulpa et al. 2012; Baer 2020; Niedzielski ja Preston 2003).

Avatud vastuseid analüüsi teemaatilise analüüsi abil (Braun ja Clarke 2006). Analüüs koondas põhjendused viieks: (1) keelelised hoiakud ja kohaliku variandi sobivus eesti keelde (vrd Garrett 2010), (2) assotsiatsioonid ja seosed (nt *väär*-seos kui julge ümberpööramine või enesestigmatiseerimise risk), (3) identiteet ja autoriteet (kogukonnasisesed ja -välised kasutusnormid), (4) praktilisus (hääldus, kirjpilt, äratuntavus, kommunikatiivne tõhusus) ning (5) mõju (võimestamine vs. turvariskid) (artiklid 1 ja 2).

Vastustest ilmneb, et nimetused toimivad kogukonna jaoks ühtaegu tähendusloome, strateegia ja riskijuhtimise vahendina: inimene võib sõna toetada, kuid seda mitte kasutada, kui see tundub ohtlik; või pidada sõna ebasobivaks, kuid tunnistada selle poliitilist potentsiaali.

Järeldused ja panus

Väitekirja kõige üldisem järeldus on see, et leksikaalne moderniseerumine – uute nimetuste lisandumine ja peavoolu keeleliste valikute muutumine – ei too automaatselt kaasa täielikku diskursiivset nihet. Isegi LGBT inimesi toetavates või solidaarsust väljendavates tekstides räägitakse mittenormatiivsest seksuaalsusest sageli kui millestki, mida tuleb lubada, keelata või tingimuslikult normaliseerida; samuti esitatakse selle avalikuks tegemist eraldi sündmusena, samas kui heteroseksuaalsus sellist selgitamist ei vaja. Siit ilmneb väitekirja keskne pinge: ühiskondlikud hoiakud ja seadused võivad muutuda kiiremini kui tekstides kinnistunud kategoriseerimise, raamistamise ja agentsuse jaotamise mustrid. Keel ei ole muutunud reaalsuse passiivne järelkaja, vaid ka institutsionaalne mälu ja korduvate tekstimustrite kogum, mis kannab ideoloogilist järjepidevust edasi isegi siis, kui sõnavara pinnal paistab olevat uuenenud (Fairclough 1995; Motschenbacher 2022; Baker 2018).

Väitekirja panus on kolmetasandiline. Esiteks pakub see esimese süstemaatilise, mitut kümnendit hõlmava korpuspõhise ülevaate valitud LGBT-nimetuste kasutusest Eesti meedias aastatel 1995–2023. Seda avaliku diskursuse analüüsi

täiendab kogukonna vaade: Eesti küsitlus näitab, kuidas LGBT kogukonna liikmed hindavad sõna *kväär*, ning Eesti-Soome võrdlus avab, kuidas ingliskeelne *queer* kohandub kahes lähisugulaskeeles erinevalt. Teiseks näitab töö, kuidas kväärilingvistika, korpuse abil tehtava diskursuseuurimuse (CADS), kriitilise stilistika ja vaenusõnapragmaatika lähenemisi saab kasutada väikse keele ja postsotsialistliku konteksti analüüsimiseks, kus angloameerika mõistestikku ei saa otse üle võtta. Kolmandaks pakun väitekirjaga metodoloogilise mudeli, kus korpusanalüüs, lähilugemine ja kogukonnaküsitlused täiendavad üksteist: iga meetod teeb nähtavaks midagi, mis jääks ainult ühe meetodi või andmekogu korral varju. Rakenduslikult on tulemused kasutatavad kriitilise keele- ja meedia- kirjaoskuse arendamisel, ajakirjanduspraktikate reflekteerimisel, keelekorralduslikes aruteludes ning vabaühenduste kommunikatsioonistrateegiates, kus sõnavalikul on sageli suur kaal.

Kokkuvõttes näitab väitekirj, et eestikeelsete LGBT-teemadega seotud nimetuste ja tekstimustrite muutumine ei ole ühesuunaline ega stabiilne protsess. Keeleline maastik laieneb ja kihistub, uued sildid lisanduvad vanade kõrvale ning ideoloogiline töö kandub osaliselt sõnade pinnalt tekstilistesse struktuuridesse: loenditesse, eeldustesse, modaalsusesse ja institutsionaalsesse raamistamisse. Just see kihistumine seletab, miks ühiskondlik liberaliseerumine ja keeleline normatiivsus saavad samal ajal eksisteerida: muutus toimub mitte asendamise, vaid kihtide lisandumise ja funktsioonide ümberkujunemise kaudu.

PUBLICATIONS

REFERENCES

- Aavik, Kadri, Triin Roosalu, Margarita Kazjulja, Laura Mere, Kerli Kaal & Maaris Raudsepp. 2016. *LGBTQ inimeste igapäevane toimetulek ja strateegilised valikud Eesti ühiskonnas*. Uuring. Tallinn: Soolise võrdõiguslikkuse ja võrdse kohtlemise voliniku kantselei. https://www.volinik.ee/volinik-live-web-prd/s3fs-public/2023-07/LGBT_uuringuraport_LOPLIK_veeb.pdf. (26 February, 2026).
- Agovino, Massimiliano, Michele Bevilacqua & Massimiliano Cerciello. 2022. Language as a proxy for cultural change. A contrastive analysis for French and Italian lexicon on male homosexuality. *Quality & Quantity* 56(1). 149–172. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01121-x>.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2006. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822388074>.
- Algvere, Kristel. 2025. Adult L1 users' attitudes towards their proficiency in written Estonian as evidence of deep-rooted language ideologies. *Eesti ja soome-ugri keeleteaduse ajakiri. Journal of Estonian and Finno-Ugric Linguistics* 16(2). 5–50. <https://doi.org/10.12697/jeful.2025.16.2.01>.
- Anderson, Luvell & Ernie Lepore. 2013. What Did You Call Me? Slurs as Prohibited Words. *Analytic Philosophy* 54(3). 350–363. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phib.12023>.
- Baer, Brian James. 2018. Beyond Either/Or: Confronting the Fact of Translation in Global Sexuality Studies. In Brian James Baer & Klaus Kaindl (eds.), *Queering Translation, Translating the Queer: Theory, Practice, Activism*, 38–57. 1st edn. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315505978>.
- Baer, Brian James. 2020. *Queer Theory and Translation Studies: Language, Politics, Desire* (New Perspectives in Translation and Interpreting Studies). 1st edn. London; New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315514734>.
- Baker, Paul. 2005. *Public Discourses of Gay Men*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203643532>.
- Baker, Paul. 2008. *Sexed texts: language, gender and sexuality*. London; Oakville, CT: Equinox Pub.
- Baker, Paul. 2013. From *gay language* to *normative discourse*: A diachronic corpus analysis of Lavender Linguistics conference abstracts 1994–2012. *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 2(2). 179–205. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.2.2.01bak>.
- Baker, Paul. 2018. Language, sexuality and corpus linguistics: Concerns and future directions. *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 7(2). 263–279. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.17018.bak>.
- Baker, Paul. 2023. *Using corpora in discourse analysis* (Bloomsbury Discourse). 2nd edn. London: Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350083783>.
- Baker, Paul, Costas Gabrielatos, Majid KhosraviNik, Michał Krzyżanowski, Tony McEnery & Ruth Wodak. 2008. A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Discourse & Society* 19(3). 273–306. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926508088962>.
- Barrett, Rusty. 2002. Is Queer Theory Important for Sociolinguistic Theory? In Kathryn Campbell-Kibler, Robert J. Podesva, Sarah J. Roberts & Andrew Wong (eds.), *Language and Sexuality: Contesting Meaning in Theory and Practice* (Stanford Linguistics), 25–43. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.

- Bassi, Serena. 2018. The Future Is a Foreign Country: Translation and Temporal Critique in the Italian It Gets Better Project. In Brian James Baer & Klaus Kaindl (eds.), *Queering Translation, Translating the Queer: Theory, Practice, Activism*, 57–71. 1st edn. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315505978>.
- Belova-Dalton, Oksana. 2026. Perspectives of Estonian youth on the risk of political violence and its prevention in Estonia. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2026.2629899>.
- Berger, Peter L. & Thomas Luckmann. 2018. *Tegelikuse sotsiaalne ülesehitus: teadmus-sotsioloogiline uurimus*. (Trans.) Katre Pärn, Mirjam Parve & Ragne Schults. Tartu: Ilmamaa.
- Bianchi, Claudia. 2014. Slurs and appropriation: An echoic account. *Journal of Pragmatics* 66. 35–44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2014.02.009>.
- Biber, Douglas & Susan Conrad. 2019. *Register, Genre, and Style*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108686136>.
- Bogetić, Ksenija. 2022. Politics of resignification. *Gender and Language* 16(3). 195–215. <https://doi.org/10.1558/genl.23885>.
- Bogetić, Ksenija (ed.). 2025. *Language, Gender and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe* (Palgrave Studies in Language, Gender and Sexuality). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-84528-4>.
- Boswell, John. 1993. On the Use of the Term “Homo” as a Derogatory Epithet. In Marc Wolinsky & Kenneth Sherrill (eds.), *Joseph Steffan versus the United States*, 49–55. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400821044.49>.
- Braun, Virginia & Victoria Clarke. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3(2). 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.
- Brezina, Vaclav, Tony McEnery & Stephen Wattam. 2015. Collocations in context: A new perspective on collocation networks. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 20(2). 139–173. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ijcl.20.2.01bre>.
- Brontsema, Robin. 2004. A Queer Revolution: Reconceptualizing the Debate Over Linguistic Reclamation. *Colorado Research in Linguistics* 17. 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.25810/DKY3-ZQ57>.
- Buchanan, Elizabeth A. & Erin E. Hvizdak. 2009. Online Survey Tools: Ethical and Methodological Concerns of Human Research Ethics Committees. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics* 4(2). 37–48. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jer.2009.4.2.37>.
- Bucholtz, Mary & Kira Hall. 2004. Theorizing Identity in Language and Sexuality Research. *Language in Society* 33(4). 469–515. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404504334020>.
- Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of “sex”*. New York: Routledge.
- Cameron, Deborah. 1995. *Verbal Hygiene: The Politics of Language*. London: Routledge.
- Cameron, Deborah & Don Kulick. 2008. *Language and sexuality*. 6th printing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cepollaro, Bianca. 2015. In defence of a presuppositional account of slurs. *Language Sciences* 52. 36–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2014.11.004>.
- Chojnicka, Joanna. 2015. Homophobic speech in post-socialist media: A preliminary typology of homophobic manipulative discourse. *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 4(1). 138–173. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.4.1.05cho>.

- Chojnicka, Joanna. 2023. Transition in Poland, Poland in Transition: tracing the history of gender transition discourses in Polish social media. *Zeszyty Łużyckie* 59(1). 79–103. <https://doi.org/10.32798/zl.1119>.
- Coats, Steven & Veronika Laippala. 2024. *Linguistics across Disciplinary Borders: The March of Data*. 1st edn. London: Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350362291>.
- Coffey-Glover, Laura. 2015. Ideologies of masculinity in women's magazines. *Gender and Language* 9(3). 337–363. <https://doi.org/10.1558/genl.v9i3.17360>.
- Cottet, Caroline & Manuela Lavinás Picq (eds.). 2019. *Sexuality and translation in world politics*. Bristol, England: E-International Relations.
- Croom, Adam M. 2011. Slurs. *Language Sciences* 33(3). 343–358. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2010.11.005>.
- Croom, Adam M. 2013. How to do things with slurs: Studies in the way of derogatory words. *Language & Communication* 33(3). 177–204. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2013.03.008>.
- Čupković, Gordana. 2015. Diachronic variations of slurs and levels of derogation: on some regional, ethnic and racial slurs in Croatian. *Language Sciences* 52. 215–230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2014.09.002>.
- Darics, Erika, Orrie Staschen, Matt Drury, Joanna Chojnicka, Maria Mazzoli, Jelte Olthof, Dimitris Serafis & Janina Wildfeuer. 2025. Critical language awareness as a future imperative: seeing the 'water.' *Frontiers in Communication* 10. 1623193. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2025.1623193>.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. 1991. *Queer theory: lesbian and gay sexualities*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Dobrowolska, Anna. 2025. *Polish Sexual Revolutions: Negotiating Sexuality and Modernity behind the Iron Curtain*. 1st edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/9780198962878.001.0001>.
- Eckert, Penelope. 1997. Age as a Sociolinguistic Variable. In Florian Coulmas (ed.), *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, 151–167. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Eckert, Penelope. 2002. Demystifying Sexuality and Desire. In Kathryn Campbell-Kibler, Robert J. Podesva, Sarah J. Roberts & Andrew Wong (eds.), *Language and Sexuality: Contesting Meaning in Theory and Practice* (Stanford Linguistics), 99–110. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.
- Eckert, Penelope. 2003. Language and Gender in Adolescence. In Janet Holmes & Miriam Meyerhoff (eds.), *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, 381–400. Oxford: Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470756942.ch16>.
- Eckert, Penelope & Sally McConnell-Ginet. 1992. Think Practically and Look Locally: Language and Gender as Community-Based Practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21(1). 461–488. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.21.100192.002333>.
- Edenborg, Emil. 2021. *Politics of visibility and belonging: from Russia's "homosexual propaganda" laws to the Ukraine war*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Eesti Keele Instituut. 2026. *Eesti Keele Instituudi ühendsõnastik 2026*. Eesti Keele Instituut. <https://sonaveeb.ee>. (26 February, 2026).
- Engelbrechtsen, Elisabeth L., William F. Schroeder & Hongwei Bao (eds.). 2015. *Queer/Tongzhi China: new perspectives on research, activism and media cultures* (Gendering Asia 11). Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press.

- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). 2015. *ECRI aruanne Eesti kohta (viies seiretsükk)*. Country Report. Strasbourg Cedex: Council of Europe. <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-estonia-estonian-translation-/16808b56f2>. (18 February, 2026).
- Fairclough, Norman. 1992. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge, UK and Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1995. *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London and New York: Longman.
- Foldy, Michael S. 1997. *The trials of Oscar Wilde: deviance, morality, and late-Victorian society*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gablasova, Dana, Vaclav Brezina & Tony McEnery. 2017. Collocations in Corpus-Based Language Learning Research: Identifying, Comparing, and Interpreting the Evidence. *Language Learning* 67(S1). 155–179. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12225>.
- Garrett, Peter. 2010. *Attitudes to Language*. 1st edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511844713>.
- Glenn, Clinton. 2022. “Let Them Flee to Sweden: There, Everyone Looks at Them More Politely”: Gay Propaganda and LGBT Rights in the Baltic States. In Janis Chakars & Indra Ekmanis (eds.), *Information Wars in the Baltic States* (The Palgrave Macmillan Series in International Political Communication), 227–261. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99987-2_12.
- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Spectrum Book 73). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Grossthal, Kelly & Mari-Liis Vähi. 2022. *Uuring vaenu leviku kohta Eesti sotsiaalmeedias*. Uuring. Eesti Inimõiguste Keskus. <https://humanrights.ee/app/uploads/2022/11/Uuring-vaenu-leviku-kohta-Eesti-sotsiaalmeedias.pdf>. (23 February, 2026).
- Grzebalska, Weronika & Andrea Pető. 2018. The gendered modus operandi of the illiberal transformation in Hungary and Poland. *Women's Studies International Forum* 68. 164–172. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2017.12.001>.
- Hall, Kira. 2003. Exceptional Speakers: Contested and Problematic Gender Identities. In Janet Holmes & Miriam Meyerhoff (eds.), *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, 353–380. 1st edn. Hoboken: Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470756942.ch15>.
- Hall, Kira, Erez Levon & Tommaso M. Milani. 2019. Navigating normativities: Gender and sexuality in text and talk. *Language in Society* 48(4). 481–489. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404519000447>.
- Hall, Stuart (ed.). 1997. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London; Thousand Oaks, CA; New Delhi: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Halliday, Michael A. K. & Ruqaiya Hasan. 1985. The structure of a text. In *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*, 52–69. Victoria: Deakin University.
- Halliday, Michael A. K. & Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen. 2004. An introduction to functional grammar, 3rd edn. London: Arnold.
- Hämmäl, Jaanika, Marianne Meior & Anu Varblane. 2022. *Soolise võrdõiguslikkuse monitooring 2021: Lõpparuanne*. Tallinn, Estonia: Kantar Emor. https://vordsuskeskus.ee/sites/default/files/2023-10/soolise_vordõiguslikkuse_monitooring_2021_lopparuanne.pdf.
- Hassan, Sawsan Hazim. 2019. *Media Portrayals of Abrahamic Religions in Broadsheet Newspapers: A Corpus-Based Critical Stylistic Analysis*. Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield PhD dissertation.

- Healey, Dan. 2001. *Homosexual desire in revolutionary Russia: the regulation of sexual and gender dissent*. Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press.
- Hom, Christopher & Robert May. 2018. Pejoratives as Fiction. In David Sosa (ed.), *Bad Words: Philosophical Perspectives on Slurs*, 108–131. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hothorn, Torsten, Kurt Hornik & Achim Zeileis. 2020. *ctree: Conditional Inference Trees*. R package version 1.2-8. <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=partykit>.
- Hunston, Susan. 2007. Semantic prosody revisited. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 12(2). 249–268. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ijcl.12.2.09hun>.
- ILGA-Europe. 2026. *Rainbow Map 2026: Reflecting the Legal and Policy Situation for the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex (LGBTI) People in Europe*. Brussels: ILGA-Europe. <https://www.ilga-europe.org/report/rainbow-map-2026/>. (3 July, 2026).
- Jagose, Annamarie. 1996. *Queer theory: an introduction*. New York: New York University Press.
- Jakobsson, Hilda. 2020. Skev. *lambda nordica* 25(1). 150–154. <https://doi.org/10.34041/ln.v25.629>.
- Jantunen, Jarmo Harri. 2018. Homot ja heterot Suomi24:ssä: analyysi digitaalisista diskursseista. *Puhe ja Kieli* 38(1). 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.23997/pk.65488>.
- Jantunen, Jarmo Harri & Sanni Surkka. 2022. Homoslangista queer-fennistiikkaan: Queer-lingvistisen tutkimuksen historia, nykyisyys ja tulevaisuus. *Virittäjä* 126(2). 161–177. <https://doi.org/10.23982/vir.116140>.
- Jeffries, Lesley. 2010. *Critical Stylistics: The Power of English* (Perspectives on the English Language). 1st edn. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Jeffries, Lesley. 2015. Language and ideology. In Natalie Braber, Louise Cummings & Liz Morrish (eds.), *Exploring Language and Linguistics*, 379–405. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Jeffries, Lesley & Brian Walker. 2019. *Keywords in the press: the new labour years* (Research in Corpus and Discourse). Paperback edition. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Jeshion, Robin. 2017. Loaded Words and Expressive Words: Assessing Two Semantic Frameworks for Slurs. *Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 17(50). 111–130. <https://doi.org/10.5840/croatphil201717210>.
- Jones, Lucy. 2026. *Language and LGBTQ+ youth: analysing marginalised identities through an intersectional lens* (Bloomsbury Studies in Queer Linguistics). London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Kala, Aili. 2024. *Eesti LGBT+ inimeste võrdsuse tegevuskava poliitikasoovitused*. Tallinn: Eesti LGBT Ühing. <https://www.lgbt.ee/uuringud>. (3 July, 2026).
- Kala, Aili. 2025. LGBT+ inimeste olukord. In *Inimõigused Eestis 2026*. Tallinn: Eesti Inimõiguste Keskus. <https://humanrights.ee/materjalid/inimoigused-estis-2026/lgbt-inimeste-olukord/>. (26 February, 2026).
- Kalkun, Andreas. 2006. Tütarlastest sirgub naine. Hoiatusjutud tütarlastele populaarses meditsiinikirjanduses. *Mäetagused* 34. 133–148. <https://doi.org/10.7592/MT2006.34.kalkun>.
- Kallas, Jelena & Kristina Koppel. 2022. *Estonian National Corpus 2021 / Eesti keele ühendkorpus 2021*. Center of Estonian Language Resources. <https://doi.org/10.15155/3-00-0000-0000-0000-08D17L>.

- Kallas, Jelena & Kristina Koppel. 2023. *Eesti keele ühendkorpus 2023 (annoteerimata)*. Center of Estonian Language Resources. <https://doi.org/10.15155/3-00-0000-0000-08C04M>.
- Kasik, Reet. 2002. Tekstil on mitu palet. In Reet Kasik (ed.), *Tekstid ja taustad. Artikleid tekstianalüüsist* (Tartu Ülikooli Eesti keele õppetooli toimetised), vol. 23, 7–12. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastuse trükikoda.
- Kasik, Reet. 2003. Funktsionaalse tekstianalüüsi eri suunad. In Reet Kasik (ed.), *Tekstid ja taustad II. Artikleid tekstianalüüsist*, vol. 26, 7–9. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus.
- Kasik, Reet (ed.). 2004. *Tekstid ja taustad III. Lingvistiline tekstianalüüs*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus.
- Kaukonen, Elisabeth. 2025. *Revealing the Gender in the Genderless: Estonian Gender-Marked Vocabulary and Its Perceptions*. Tartu: Tartu University Press PhD dissertation.
- Kaukonen, Elisabeth, Kaarel Lott, Raili Marling, Maria Murumaa-Mengel, Mari-Liis Sepper & Maarja Tinn. 2024. *Alfamehed ja lillekesed: misogüünia ja seksismi normaliseerumine Eesti meediapildis*. Tallinn: Mõttekoda Praxis. <https://www.praxis.ee/uploads/2024/12/Raport-lillekesed.pdf>.
- Kaukonen, Elisabeth, Polina Oskolskaia, Liina Lindström & Raili Marling. 2025. Gender, language and labour: gender perception of Estonian and Russian occupational titles. *Frontiers in Communication* 9. 1454022. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2024.1454022>.
- Kibbey, Tyler Everett (ed.). 2024. *Linguistics out of the closet: the interdisciplinarity of gender and sexuality in language science* (Interdisciplinary Linguistics volume 3). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110742510>.
- Kilgariff, Adam, Vít Baisa, Jan Bušta, Miloš Jakubíček, Vojtěch Kovář, Jan Michelfeit, Pavel Rychlý & Vít Suchomel. 2014. The Sketch Engine: ten years on. *Lexicography* 1(1). 7–36. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40607-014-0009-9>.
- Kłaniecki, Beniamin. 2023. Queer stylistics, unqueer politics: revisiting Bruce Chatwin. *Studies in Travel Writing* 26(3). 208–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645145.2023.2292218>.
- Kolek, Vít. 2019. Research of the Czech language from the perspective of Queer Linguistics. *Slovenščina 2.0: empirical, applied and interdisciplinary research* 7(1). 113–125. <https://doi.org/10.4312/slo2.0.2019.1.113-125>.
- Kondakov, Alexander Sasha & Evgeny Shtorn. 2021. Sex, Alcohol, and Soul: Violent Reactions to Coming Out after the “Gay Propaganda” Law in Russia. *The Russian Review* 80(1). 37–55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/russ.12297>.
- Koobak, Redi & Raili Marling. 2014. The decolonial challenge: Framing post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe within transnational feminist studies. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 21(4). 330–343. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506814542882>.
- Koppel, Kristina & Jelena Kallas. 2022. Eesti keele ühendkorpuste sari 2013–2021: mahukaim eestikeelsete digitekstide kogu. *Eesti Rakenduslingvistika Ühingu aasta-raamat. Estonian Papers in Applied Linguistics* 18. 207–228. <https://doi.org/10.5128/ERYa18.12>.
- Koppel, Taavi. 2022. Eesti LGBT+ liikumise algus 1990–1994. In Rebeka Põldsam, Vahur Aabrams & Andreas Kalkun (eds.), *Kalevi alt välja*, 125–141. Tallinn: Eesti LGBT Ühing.
- Kováts, Eszter (ed.). 2023. *Culture Wars in Europe*. Illiberalism Studies Program. <https://doi.org/10.53483/MOLD8941>.

- Kováts, Eszter & Maari Põim (eds.). 2015. *Gender as symbolic glue: the position and role of conservative and far right parties in the anti-gender mobilizations in Europe: France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia*. Brussels: Foundation for European Progressive Studies. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/budapest/11382.pdf>.
- Kroskrity, Paul V. 2010. Language ideologies – Evolving perspectives. In Jürgen Jaspers, Jan-Ola Östman & Jef Verschueren (eds.), *Handbook of Pragmatics Highlights*, vol. 7, 192–211. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/hoph.7.13kro>.
- Krzyżanowski, Michał. 2020a. Discursive shifts and the normalisation of racism: imaginaries of immigration, moral panics and the discourse of contemporary right-wing populism. *Social Semiotics* 30(4). 503–527. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2020.1766199>.
- Krzyżanowski, Michał. 2020b. Normalization and the discursive construction of “new” norms and “new” normality: discourse in the paradoxes of populism and neo-liberalism. *Social Semiotics* 30(4). 431–448. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2020.1766193>.
- Krzyżanowski, Michał, Ruth Wodak, Hannah Bradby, Mattias Gardell, Aristotle Kallis, Natalia Krzyżanowska, Cas Mudde & Jens Rydgren. 2023. Discourses and practices of the ‘New Normal’: Towards an interdisciplinary research agenda on crisis and the normalization of anti- and post-democratic action. *Journal of Language and Politics* 22(4). 415–437. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.23024.krz>.
- Kuhar, Roman & David Paternotte (eds.). 2018. *Anti-gender campaigns in Europe: mobilizing against equality*. First paperback edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Kulpa, Robert & Joanna Mizielińska. 2011. *De-centring Western sexualities: Central and Eastern european perspectives*. London: Ashgate.
- Kulpa, Robert, Joanna Mizielińska & Agata Stasińska. 2012. (Un)translatable Queer?, or What Is Lost and Can Be Found in Translation. In Sushila Mesquita, Maria Katharina Wiedlack & Katrin Lasthofer (eds.), *Import – Export – Transport. Queer Theory, Queer Critique and Activism in Motion*, 115–145. Wien: Zaglossus.
- Kurvinen, Heidi. 2007. Homosexual Representations in Estonian Printed Media During the Late 1980s and Early 1990s. In Judit Takács & Roman Kuhar (eds.), *Beyond the pink curtain: Everyday life of LGBT people in Eastern Europe*, 287–301. Ljubljana: Peace Institute.
- Labov, William. 2010. *Principles of Linguistic Change: Cognitive and Cultural Factors*. 1st edn. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444327496>.
- Langemets, Margit, Lydia Risberg & Kristel Algvere. 2024. To Dream or Not to Dream About ‘Correct’ Meanings? – Insights into the User Experience Survey. In Kristina Š. Despot, Ana Ostroški Anić & Ivana Brač (eds.), *Lexicography and Semantics. Proceedings of the XXI EURALEX International Congress*, 741–760. Cavtat, Croatia: Institut za hrvatski jezik. https://euralex.org/wp-content/themes/euralex/proceedings/Euralex/%202024/EURALEX2024_Pr_p741-761_Langemets-Risberg-Algvere.pdf.pdf.
- Leemets, Tiina. 2004. Mullivann, peenema nimega jaccusi. In Maire Raadik (ed.), *Keelenõuanne soovitab* 3, 55–61. Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus. <https://keeleabi.eki.ee/artiklid3/jaccuzi.html>. (3 January, 2026).
- Lindeman, Meri. 2025. *Sateenkaari-ihmistien kielenkäyttö: Kansanlingvistinen aineisto ikkunana identiteettiin, performatiivisuuteen ja normatiivisuuteen*. Turku: Turun yliopisto PhD dissertation.

- Lindström, Liina, Lydia Risberg & Helen Plado. 2023. Language ideologies and beliefs about language in Estonia and Estonian language planning. *Eesti ja soome-ugri keeleteaduse ajakiri. Journal of Estonian and Finno-Ugric Linguistics* 14(1). 7–48. <https://doi.org/10.12697/jeful.2023.14.1.01>.
- Link, Bruce G. & Jo C. Phelan. 2001. Conceptualizing Stigma. *Annual Review of Sociology* 27. 363–385. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.363>.
- Lipša, Ineta & Kārlis Vērdiņš. 2024. Researching the Baltic Queer History. *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls* 120(1). 5–9. <https://doi.org/10.22364/lviz.120.01>.
- Lo Vecchio, Nicholas. 2024. A lexicological response to Motschenbacher’s Linguistic Dimensions of Sexual Normativity (2022). *Lexique* (34). <https://doi.org/10.54563/lexique.1781>.
- Lo Vecchio, Nicholas. 2025. For a sociolexicology of queer naming: On problematizing the LGBTQ lexicon in historical linguistics. In Scott Burnett & Francesca Vigo (eds.), *Battlefield Linguistics*, 157–178. De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111351568-008>.
- Love, Robbie & Paul Baker. 2015. The hate that dare not speak its name? *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* 3(1). 57–86. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlac.3.1.03lov>.
- Lukinmaa, Pauliina & Alexandra Milyakina. 2025. “It is a Representation of What We All Need as a Queer Community”: The Transformative Power of Communal Queer Quilting at the Behemoth’s Centre, Estonia. *SQS: Journal of Queer Studies* 19(1–2). 54–74. <https://doi.org/10.23980/sqs.178001>.
- Majandus- ja Kommunikatsiooniministeerium. 2025. *LGBTIQ-inimeste võrdsete võimaluste edendamise aluspõhimõtted ja tegevuskava 2025–2030*. Tegevuskava. Tallinn: Majandus- ja Kommunikatsiooniministeerium. <https://mkm.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2025-12/LGBTIQ-inimeste%20v%C3%B5rdsete%20v%C3%B5imaluste%20edendamise%20alusp%C3%B5him%C3%B5tted%20ja%20tegevuskava%202025-2030.pdf>. (26 February, 2026).
- Malmberg, Kristi. 2018. Meesterindel muutusteta: Kaksikümmend aastat portreelugusid Eesti päevalehtedes. *Ariadne Lõng: nais- ja meesuuringute ajakiri* 17(1–2). 76–90.
- Marling, Raili. 2010. The Intimidating Other: Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of the Representation of Feminism in Estonian Print Media. *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 18(1). 7–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08038741003626767>.
- Marzullo, Michelle A. & William Leap (eds.). 2024. *Critical Sexuality Studies, Lavender Languages, and Everyday Life* (Advances in Sociolinguistics). London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Matsick, Jes L., Mary Kruk, Lindsay Palmer, Eric K. Layland & Anna C. Salomaa. 2022. Extending the social category label effect to stigmatized groups: Lesbian and gay people’s reactions to “homosexual” as a label. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 10(1). 369–390. <https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.6823>.
- Mayring, Philipp. 2014. *Qualitative content analysis: theoretical foundation, basic procedures and software solution*. Klagenfurt: Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssor-395173>.
- Merriam-Webster. n.d. Homo. Merriam-Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/homo>. (3 July, 2026).
- Motschenbacher, Heiko. 2010. *Language, gender and sexual identity: poststructuralist perspectives*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Pub. Co.

- Motschenbacher, Heiko. 2011. Taking Queer Linguistics further: sociolinguistics and critical heteronormativity research. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2011(212). 149–179. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2011.050>.
- Motschenbacher, Heiko. 2018. Corpus linguistics in language and sexuality studies: Taking stock and looking ahead. *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 7(2). 145–174. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.17019.mot>.
- Motschenbacher, Heiko. 2020. Coming out and normative shifts: Investigating usage patterns of gay and homosexual in a corpus of news reports on Ricky Martin. *Sociolinguistic Studies* 14(1–2). 61–84. <https://doi.org/10.1558/sols.37005>.
- Motschenbacher, Heiko. 2021. Language and sexuality studies today: Why “homosexual” is a bad word and why “queer linguist” is not an identity. *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 10(1). 25–36. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.00011.mot>.
- Motschenbacher, Heiko. 2022. *Linguistic Dimensions of Sexual Normativity: Corpus-Based Evidence*. 1st edn. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003190257>.
- Motschenbacher, Heiko. 2026. Labeling theory in language and sexuality studies. *Journal of Language and Sexuality*. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.24029.mot>.
- Motschenbacher, Heiko & Martin Stegu. 2013. Queer Linguistic approaches to discourse. *Discourse & Society* 24(5). 519–535. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926513486069>.
- Navickaitė, Rasa. 2024. Political Homophobia in Soviet Lithuania Revisited: The Case of the Dissident Viktoras Petkus. *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls* (120). 32–58. <https://doi.org/10.22364/lviz.120.03>.
- Ng, Reuben, Ting Yu Joanne Chow & Wenshu Yang. 2024. News media coverage of LGBT identities over 10 years in a 400-million-word corpus. *PLOS ONE* 19(4). e0300385. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0300385>.
- Niedzielski, Nancy A. & Dennis R. Preston. 2003. *Folk Linguistics*. 2nd edn. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Nossem, Eva. 2016. Hetties, Queens, and Fag Hags. Ironie Name Giving in LGBTIQ+ Discourse. *de genere. Rivista di studi letterari, postcoloniali e di genere. Journal of Literary, Postcolonial and Gender Studies* (2). 27–45. <https://www.degenere-journal.it/index.php/degenere/article/view/30>.
- Nossem, Eva. 2019. Queer, Frocia, Femminiellə, Ricchione et al. – Localizing “Queer” in the Italian Context. *gender/sexuality/italy*. <https://doi.org/10.15781/31YC-YS20>.
- Opermann, Signe & Ragne Kõuts-Klemm. 2024. Eesti elanikkonna meediakasutuse muutumine 2005–2024. In Ragne Kõuts-Klemm (ed.), *Eesti meediamaaastik 2005–2024. Kogumik Peeter Vihalemma 80. sünnipäevaks*, 230–266. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus.
- Padar, Eveliis & Mari-Liis Sepper. 2022. *LGBTQI võrdsus Eestis – barjäärid ja võimalused*. Mõttekoda Praxis. <https://www.lgbt.ee/uuringud>. (3 January, 2026).
- Partington, Alan, Alison Duguid & Charlotte Taylor. 2013. *Patterns and Meanings in Discourse: Theory and practice in corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS)* (Studies in Corpus Linguistics). Vol. 55. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/scl.55>.
- Paterson, Laura L. & Laura Coffey-Glover. 2018. Discourses of marriage in same-sex marriage debates in the UK press 2011–2014. *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 7(2). 175–204. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.17022.pat>.
- Peterson, David. 2016. Homophobic Grammar: The Role of Transitivity and Phoricity in Homophobic Formation. *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 5(1). 61–93. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.5.1.03pet>.

- Piits, Liisi. 2015. *Sagedamate inimest tähistavate sõnade kollokatsioonid eesti keeles*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus PhD dissertation. <http://hdl.handle.net/10062/45723>.
- Pilvre, Barbi. 2011. *Naiste meediarepresentatsioon Eesti ajakirjanduskultuuri ja ühiskonna kontekstis*. Tartu, Estonia: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus PhD dissertation (Journalism).
- Põldsam, Rebeka. 2023. “*Why are we still abnormal?!: History of discourses on non-normative sex-gender subjects in Estonia*”. Tartu, Estonia: University of Tartu Press PhD dissertation. <https://dspace.ut.ee/handle/10062/91637>.
- Põldsam, Rebeka, Vahur Aabrams & Andreas Kalkun (eds.). 2022. *Kalevi alt välja: LGBT+ inimeste lugusid 19. ja 20. sajandi Eestist*. Tallinn: Eesti LGBT Ühing.
- Põldsam, Rebeka & Sara Arumetsa. 2023. Emergence of LGBT Movements in Late Soviet and Post-Soviet Estonia. *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 32(2). 99–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740.2023.2195207>.
- Popa-Wyatt, Mihaela. 2020. Slurs, Pejoratives, and Hate Speech. In Duncan Pritchard (ed.), *Oxford Bibliographies in Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780195396577-0403>.
- Posit Team. 2024. *RStudio: Integrated Development Environment for R*. Posit Software, PBC. <http://www.posit.co/>.
- Praakli, Kristiina & Kadri Koreinik. 2020. Keelemuutus vs. sotsiolingvistiline muutus: Eesti keele sotsioperioodid re-revisited. *Keel ja Kirjandus* 63(11). 915–934. <https://doi.org/10.54013/kk756a1>.
- Preston, Dennis R. 2004. Folk metalanguage. In Adam Jaworski, Nikolas Coupland & Dariusz Galasinski (eds.), *Metalanguage*, 75–102. De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110907377.75>.
- Rappaport, Jesse. 2020. Slurs and Toxicity: It’s Not about Meaning. *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 97(1). 177–202. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18756735-09701010>.
- Raud, Kristiina. 2022. *Dashing, distant, and deviant: Meanings attributed to LGBT people by the movable middle in Estonia*. Tallinn: Tallinn University, Baltic Film, Media and Arts School Master’s thesis. https://www.ester.ee/record=b5736653~S1*est. (3 March, 2025).
- Rayson, Paul & Roger Garside. 2000. Comparing corpora using frequency profiling. In *Proceedings of the workshop on Comparing corpora*, vol. 9, 1–6. Hong Kong: Association for Computational Linguistics. <https://doi.org/10.3115/1117729.1117730>.
- Rychlý, Pavel. 2008. A Lexicographer-Friendly Association Score. In Petr Sojka & Aleš Horák (eds.), *Proceedings of the Second Workshop on Recent Advances in Slavonic Natural Language Processing (RASLAN 2008)*, 6–9. Karlova Studánka, Czech Republic: Masaryk University. <https://nlp.fi.muni.cz/raslan/2008/papers/13.pdf>.
- Sepper, Mari-Liis. 2025. *Soovastane retoorika Eesti meedias 2015–2025*. Rakendus-uuringu raport. Soouuringute Keskus Dike. <https://transinimesed.ee/projektide-kirjeldused/>. (3 January, 2026).
- Sepper, Mari-Liis, Jane Ester & Sandra Haugas. 2020. *Naised poliitikas. Teel soolise tasakaalu poole*. Tallinn: Poliitikauuringute Keskus Praxis.
- Shi, Yaqian & Lei Lei. 2020. The evolution of LGBT labelling words: Tracking 150 years of the interaction of semantics with social and cultural changes. *English Today* 36(4). 33–39. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078419000270>.
- Socciarelli, Matteo. 2019. The “synonymy” of gay and omosessuale in Italian: a corpus linguistic analysis of two news websites. In Hanh Thi Nguyen (ed.), *TESOL Working Paper Series* 17, 46–68. Honolulu, HI: Hawaii Pacific University TESOL.

- Somerville, Siobhan B. 2014. Queer. In Bruce Burgett & Glenn Hendler (eds.), *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, 203–207. 2nd edn. New York: New York University Press.
- Stefanowitsch, Anatol. 2020. *Corpus linguistics: A guide to the methodology*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.3735822>.
- Stella, Francesca. 2015. *Lesbian Lives in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137321244>.
- Suyarkulova, Mohira. 2019. Translating “Queer” Into (Kyrgyzstani) Russian. In Caroline Cottet & Manuela Lavinás Picq (eds.), *Sexuality and translation in world politics*, 42–56. Bristol, England: E-International Relations.
- Szulc, Łukasz. 2012. From queer to gay to Queer.pl: the names we dare to speak in Poland. *Lambda Nordica* 17(4). 65–98.
- Taavetti, Riikka. 2024. Queer Theory and the History of Sexuality. In Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks & Mathew Kuefler (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Sexualities*, vol. 1: General Overviews, 137–158. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108895996>.
- Takács, Judit. 2007. Social Visibility and Acceptance of LGBT People in Hungary. In *How to Put Equality into Practice? Anti-discrimination and Equal Treatment Policy-making and LGBT People*, 11–32. Budapest: Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó. <https://mek.oszk.hu/06600/06653/06653.pdf>.
- Talalaev, Helen. 2013. LGBT inimeste olukord. In Kari Käsper & Marianne Meiorg (eds.), *Inimõigused Eestis 2012: Eesti Inimõiguste Keskuse aastaaruanne*, 69–84. Tallinn: SA Eesti Inimõiguste Keskus.
- Tarat, Sarunya, Nawarat Siritararatn & Woravut Jaroongkhongdach. 2023. A Diachronic Corpus-Based Analysis of LGBTQ-Related Research Articles. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network* 16(2). 241–258.
- Tiidenberg, Katrin & Airi-Alina Allaste. 2020. LGBT activism in Estonia: Identities, enactment and perceptions of LGBT people. *Sexualities* 23(3). 307–324. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460718797262>.
- Toots, Leena Karin. 2023. *LGBT+ kogukonnaga seotud sõnavara Eesti LGBT+ aktivistide taskuhäälingutes*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikool Bachelor's thesis. <https://hdl.handle.net/10062/90626>.
- Toots, Len. 2025. *Transsooliste inimeste kujutamine Eesti peavoolu- ja poliitilise alternatiivmeedia väljaannetes*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikool Master's thesis. <https://hdl.handle.net/10062/111510>.
- Trudgill, Peter. 1992. *Introducing Language and Society* (Penguin English Linguistics). London: Penguin Books.
- Turu-uuringute AS. 2023. *LGBT. Avaliku arvamuse uuring 2023. Eesti Inimõiguste Keskus & Sotsiaalministeerium*. https://humanrights.ee/app/uploads/2023/05/2023-04-LGBT-aruanne_avaldamine.pdf.
- Turu-uuringute AS. 2026. *Avaliku arvamuse uuring LGBT teemadel (2026)*. Uuringuaruanne. Eesti Inimõiguste Keskus. <https://humanrights.ee/materjalid/avaliku-arvamuse-uuring-lgbt-teemadel-2026/>. (5 June, 2026).
- Ugron, Nóra. 2025. Writing Queer Eastern European Worlds: Queer-feminist Literary and Activist Practices in Romania. *Transilvania* (3). 11–27. <https://doi.org/10.51391/trva.2025.3.02>.

- Uibo, Raili. 2019. Prides in Estonia: Struggling in the Centrifugal Pulls of Nationalism and Transnational Leveraged Pedagogy. In Katharina Wiedlack, Saltanat Shoshanova & Masha Godovannaya (eds.), *Queer-Feminist Solidarity and the East/West Divide*, 175–199. Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing Group.
- Uibo, Raili. 2021. “*And I don’t know who we really are to each other*”. *Queers doing close relationships in Estonia*. Huddinge: Södertörns högskola PhD dissertation.
- van Dijk, Teun A. 1998. *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. London: Sage.
- van Dijk, Teun A. 2001. Critical Discourse Analysis. In Deborah Tannen, Deborah Schiffrin & Heidi E. Hamilton (eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, 352–371. Oxford: Blackwell.
- van Lisdonk, Jantine, Lorraine Nencel & Saskia Keuzenkamp. 2018. Labeling same-sex sexuality in a tolerant society that values normality: The Dutch case. *Journal of Homosexuality* 65(13). 1892–1915.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2017.1391537>.
- Velmet, Aro. 2019. Sovereignty after Gender Trouble: Language, Reproduction, and Supranationalism in Estonia, 1980–2017. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 80(3). 455–478. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jhi.2019.0027>.
- Vērduņš, Kārlis & Jānis Ozoliņš. 2020. The Latvian LGBT Movement and Narratives of Normalization. In Radzhana Buyantueva & Maryna Shevtsova (eds.), *LGBTQ+ Activism in Central and Eastern Europe*, 239–264. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-20401-3_10.
- Verhoef, Jesper. 2026. From gay to LGBTI+ advocacy group: A diachronic corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis of COC Netherlands’ annual reports, 2008–2023. *Journal of Language and Sexuality*. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.25039.ver>.
- Verschueren, Jef. 2011. *Ideology in Language Use: Pragmatic Guidelines for Empirical Research*. 1st edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139026277>.
- Warner, Michael. 1993. *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- West, Candace & Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. Doing Gender. *Gender & Society* 1(2). 125–151. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243287001002002>.
- Wilkinson, Mark. 2019. ‘Bisexual oysters’: A diachronic corpus-based critical discourse analysis of bisexual representation in *The Times* between 1957 and 2017. *Discourse & Communication* 13(2). 249–267. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481318817624>.
- Wilkinson, Mark. 2022. Radical contingency, radical historicity and the spread of ‘homosexuality’: A diachronic corpus-based critical discourse analysis of queer representation in *The Times* between 1957–1967 and 1979–1990. *Discourse, Context & Media* 48. 100623. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2022.100623>.
- Wilkinson, Mark Joseph. 2023. *From “homosexual offence” to “LGBT community”: A diachronic corpus-based critical discourse analysis of queer representation in The Times between 1957–2017*. Lancaster, UK: Lancaster University PhD dissertation.
- Witalisz, Alicja. 2021. Polish LGBTQ+-Related Anglicisms in a Language Contact Perspective. *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 56(s1). 631–653.
<https://doi.org/10.2478/stap-2021-0013>.
- Wodak, Ruth. 2012. Language, power and identity. *Language Teaching* 45(2). 215–233. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444811000048>.
- Wong, Andrew D. 2008. The trouble with tongzhi. The politics of labeling among gay and lesbian Hongkongers. *Pragmatics* 18(2). 277–301.

- Zamfir, Ioana. 2023. Gender Politics in Central and Eastern Europe: Reassessing EU Policymaking in Light of Russian Sharp Power and the Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine. *Potentia: Journal of International and Public Affairs* 14(1). 8–46.
- Zottola, Angela. 2018. Transgender identity labels in the British press: A corpus-based discourse analysis. *Journal of Language and Sexuality* 7(2). 237–262.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.17017.zot>.
- Zottola, Angela. 2021. *Transgender identities in the press: a corpus-based discourse analysis*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

APPENDIX 1. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The Estonian-language online survey on the word *kväär*, whose data are analysed in Articles 1 and 2. The questionnaire was authored in Estonian by the present author; the right-hand column gives an English translation for reference. The parallel Finnish-language instrument used for the comparison in Article 2 was designed and administered separately by Meri Lindeman and is reproduced in their dissertation (Lindeman 2025).

Survey item (Estonian, as administered)	English translation
Olen Tartu Ülikooli keeleteaduse doktorant ja nooremteadur Aet Kuusik ning uurin LGBT+ teemadega seotud sõnu ja nende kasutust eesti keeles. Praegu huvitab mind sõna “kväär” ja LGBT+ kogukonna suhtumine sellesse. Kutsun huvilisi osalema küsitluses, millega uurin suhtumist sellesse sõnasse.	I am Aet Kuusik, a PhD student and junior research fellow in linguistics at the University of Tartu, and I study words related to LGBT+ topics and their use in Estonian. I am currently interested in the word kväär and the LGBT+ community’s attitude towards it. I invite those interested to take part in a survey on attitudes towards this word.
Küsitlusele ootan vastama LGBT+ inimesi.	LGBT+ people are invited to respond to the survey.
Küsitlus on anonüümne, konkreetse isikuga kokku viidavaid andmeid ei koguta ja metaandmeid ei salvestata.	The survey is anonymous; no data that could be linked to a specific person is collected, and no metadata is stored.
Küsitluse tulemusi kasutan teadusartikli kirjutamisel. Küsitlusele vastates annad nõusoleku oma vastuseid kasutada, sh vabavormilisi vastuseid teadusartiklis anonüümselt tsiteerida.	I will use the survey results to write a research article. By responding, you consent to your answers being used, including the anonymous quotation of free-form answers in a research article.
Vastamine võtab aega 5–10 minutit.	Responding takes 5–10 minutes.
Kui soovid lisainfot, siis palun võta ühendust meiliaadressil aet.kuusik@ut.ee.	If you would like more information, please get in touch at aet.kuusik@ut.ee.
Suur tänu kõigile vastajatele!	Many thanks to all respondents!
<i>* Viitab kohustuslikule küsimusele</i>	<i>* Indicates a required question</i>
Sinu sooline enesemääratlus. Vali see, mis on sulle siit valikust kõige omasem.* Naine Mees Mittebinaarne Ei soovi vastata Muu: ____	Your gender self-identification. Choose the option that fits you best.* Woman Man Non-binary Prefer not to answer Other: ____
Kas sa oled transsooline?* Jah Ei Ei soovi vastata	Are you transgender?* Yes No Prefer not to answer

Survey item (Estonian, as administered)	English translation
Sinu seksuaalne enesemääratlus. Vali see, mis on sulle siit valikust kõige omasem.* Aseksuaalne Biseksuaalne Gei Lesbi Panseksuaalne Ei soovi vastata Muu: ____	Your sexual self-identification. Choose the option that fits you best.* Asexual Bisexual Gay Lesbian Pansexual Prefer not to answer Other: ____
Sinu rahvuslik enesemääratlus. Vali see, mis on sulle siit valikust kõige omasem.* Eestlane Venelane Ei soovi vastata Muu: ____	Your national/ethnic self-identification. Choose the option that fits you best.* Estonian Russian Prefer not to answer Other: ____
Sinu vanus* 10–14, 15–19, 20–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, 40–44, 45–49, 50–54, 55–59, 60–64, 65–69, 70–74, 75–79, 80–84, 85–89	Your age* 10–14, 15–19, 20–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, 40–44, 45–49, 50–54, 55–59, 60–64, 65–69, 70–74, 75–79, 80–84, 85–89
Sinu kõrgeim lõpetatud haridustase.* Põhiharidus Keskkool Kõrgharidus Muu: ____	Your highest completed level of education.* Basic education Secondary education Higher education Other: ____
Kust sa oled pärit?* Tallinna linn, Tartu linn, Pärnu linn, Ma ei ole pärit Eestist, Harju maakond, Hiiu maakond, Ida-Viru maakond, Järva maakond, Jõgeva maakond, Lääne maakond, Lääne-Viru maakond, Pärnu maakond, Põlva maakond, Rapla maakond, Saare maakond, Tartu maakond, Valga maakond, Viljandi maakond, Võru maakond	Where are you from?* Tallinn (city), Tartu (city), Pärnu (city), I am not from Estonia, Harju County, Hiiu County, Ida-Viru County, Järva County, Jõgeva County, Lääne County, Lääne-Viru County, Pärnu County, Põlva County, Rapla County, Saare County, Tartu County, Valga County, Viljandi County, Võru County
Kus sa praegu elad?* Tallinna linn, Tartu linn, Pärnu linn, Ma ei ela Eestis, Harju maakond, Hiiu maakond, Ida-Viru maakond, Järva maakond, Jõgeva maakond, Lääne maakond, Lääne-Viru maakond, Pärnu maakond, Põlva maakond, Rapla maakond, Saare maakond, Tartu maakond, Valga maakond, Viljandi maakond, Võru maakond	Where do you currently live?* Tallinn (city), Tartu (city), Pärnu (city), I do not live in Estonia, Harju County, Hiiu County, Ida-Viru County, Järva County, Jõgeva County, Lääne County, Lääne-Viru County, Pärnu County, Põlva County, Rapla County, Saare County, Tartu County, Valga County, Viljandi County, Võru County
Kas tead sõna “kväär”?* Jah Ei	Do you know the word kväär?* Yes No
Kas kasutad sõna “kväär”?* Jah Ei	Do you use the word <i>kväär</i>?* Yes No

Survey item (Estonian, as administered)	English translation
Kas kasutad eestikeelses kirjas/kõnes sõna “queer”?* Jah Ei	Do you use the word <i>queer</i> when writing/speaking Estonian?* Yes No
Kuidas sulle meeldib sõna “kväär”?* 1. Üldse ei meeldi 2. Pigem ei meeldi 3. Neutraalne 4. Pigem meeldib 5. Väga meeldib	How much do you like the word <i>kväär</i>?* 1. Do not like it at all 2. Somewhat dislike it 3. Neutral 4. Somewhat like it 5. Like it very much
Palun selgita või kommenteeri oma vastust.* [open-ended]	Please explain or comment on your answer.* [open-ended]
Kas sa kasutad sõna “kväär” iseendast rääkides, iseendale viidates?* Jah Ei	Do you use the word <i>kväär</i> when talking about / referring to yourself?* Yes No
Mida sõna “kväär” sinu jaoks tähendab? [open-ended]	What do you understand the word <i>kväär</i> to mean? [open-ended]

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Aet Kuusik
E-mail: aetmail@gmail.com

Education

2022–2026 Doctoral studies in Linguistics, University of Tartu
2010–2014 MA in Linguistics and Language Editing, Tallinn University
2000–2003 BA in Public Administration, Tallinn School of Economics

Employment

2022–2026 Junior Research Fellow in Linguistics, University of Tartu
2011–2024 MTÜ Oma Tuba / Feministeerium.ee, co-founder, board member and editor
2011–present Freelance editor, writer, and gender equality expert

Main Research Areas

Sociolinguistics and critical discourse studies; language, gender and sexuality; LGBT-related labels, language ideologies and normativity in Estonian media discourse and community language practices; corpus-based discourse analysis and Critical Stylistics.

Selected Research Publications

Kuusik, Aet (2025). Vaenusõna *pede* muutuv roll [The changing role of the slur *pede*]. *Ariadne Lõng*, 21, 32–64.
Kuusik, Aet; Lindeman, Meri (2025). Is it like a warm coat or should it be buried 1,000 kilometres deep? A comparative analysis of *queer*, *kväär* and *kvääri* in the Estonian and Finnish languages. In *Challenging the Binary* (forthcoming).
Kuusik, Aet (2024). Kuidas suhtub Eesti LGBT kogukond sõnasse *kväär*? [How does the Estonian LGBT community perceive the term *kväär*?]. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 4, 315–339. <https://doi.org/10.54013/kk796a1>
Kuusik, Aet; Põldsam, Rebeka (2023). Kuhu võiks viia entusiastlik jah? Seaduste mõjust soolisusele ja seksuaalsusele [Where might an enthusiastic “yes” lead? The influence of laws on gender and sexuality]. In A. Kannike & K. Rattus (Eds.), *Õige keha, vale keha? Näitus keha tähendustest Eestis* (pp. 35–47). Eesti Rahva Muuseum.

Teaching

2025 Course designer and responsible lecturer, “Language, Gender and Sexuality”, University of Tartu
2024 Seminar instructor, “Estonian Orthography and Composition”, University of Tartu

2022–2024 Co-teacher, seminars on language, gender and sexuality, University of Tartu

Grants and Mobility

Jan–Feb 2025 MEDAL (Methodological Excellence in Data-Driven Approaches to Linguistics) Mobility Scheme grant. Host institutions: Radboud University and Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics.

Projects

- 2026–2030 Researcher, “Representation of Affective Politics and Political Affects” (PRG3262), principal investigator: Raili Marling, Estonian Research Council
- 2024 Principal investigator and terminologist, “LGBT Terminology” (FHVEE24319), Institute of the Estonian Language

Selected Creative Work

- 2025 Curator, exhibition on female sexual agency and intimacy, with Pire Sova and Perdita S., Planet Amor, Tallinn
- 2024–2025 Co-author of the exhibit “Sex Work or Prostitution” with Rebeka Põldsam and Katrin Tiidenberg, exhibition “Who Claims the Night?”, Estonian National Museum
- 2024 Co-screenwriter of the short film “Night of Purple Horrors”, Estonian National Museum / Film Resort
- 2019–2020 Playwright for the documentary play “How to Say Yes?”
- 2015–2016 Playwright for the documentary play “Real Women Real Men Real Others”, Vaba Lava curatorial programme

Selected Editing Work

- 2024 Language editor for the Estonian translation of Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Translator: Epp Aareleid; editors: Margus Ott and Neeme Lopp; afterword: Raili Marling. EKA, Tallinn.
- 2022 Language editor of the Estonian translation of Florence Given, *Women Don’t Owe You Pretty (Naiste asi pole kena olla)*. Translator: Sandra Müür. Rahva Raamat, Tallinn.
- 2021 Editor of the Estonian translation of Emily Nagoski, *Come As You Are: The Surprising New Science That Will Transform Your Sex Life (Leia oma kirg. Teaduslik tee parema seksini)*. Translator: Helen Kalpus. Postimees, Tallinn.

Membership in Professional Organisations

- 2024–present Estonian Association for Applied Linguistics
- 2022–present International Gender and Language Association

ELULOOKIRJELDUS

Nimi: Aet Kuusik
E-post: aetmail@gmail.com

Haridus

2022–2026 Doktoriõpingud keeleteaduses, Tartu Ülikool
2010–2014 MA, keeleteadus ja keeleteoimetamine, Tallinna Ülikool
2000–2003 BA, avalik haldus, Tallinna Majanduskool

Töökogemus

2022–2026 Keeleteaduse nooremteadur, Tartu Ülikool
2011–2024 MTÜ Oma Tuba / Feministeerium.ee, kaasasutaja, juhatuse liige ja toimetaja
2011–... Vabakutseline toimetaja, kirjutaja ja soolise võrdõiguslikkuse ekspert

Peamised uurimisvaldkonnad

Sotsiolingvistika ja kriitiline diskursuseuurimus; keel, sugu ja seksuaalsus: LGBT-teemadega seotud nimetused, keeleideoloogiad ja normatiivsus eesti meediadiskursuses ja kogukondlikes keelepraktikates; korpuspõhine diskursus-analüüs ja kriitiline stilistika.

Valik teaduspublikatsioone

Kuusik, Aet (2025). Vaenusõna *pede* muutuv roll. *Ariadne Lõng*, 21, 32–64.
Kuusik, Aet; Lindeman, Meri (2025). Is it like a warm coat or should it be buried 1,000 kilometres deep? A comparative analysis of *queer*, *kväär* and *kvääri* in the Estonian and Finnish languages. – *Challenging the Binary* [ilmumas].
Kuusik, Aet (2024). Kuidas suhtub Eesti LGBT kogukond sõnasse *kväär*? *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 4, 315–339. <https://doi.org/10.54013/kk796a1>
Kuusik, Aet; Põldsam, Rebeka (2023). Kuhu võiks viia entusiastlik jah? Seaduste mõjust soolisusele ja seksuaalsusele. – Anu Kannike, Kristel Rattus (toim.), *Õige keha, vale keha? Näitus keha tähendustest Eestis* (lk 35–47). Eesti Rahva Muuseum.

Õpetamine

2025 Kursuse “Keel, sugu ja seksuaalsus” looja ja vastutav õppejõud, Tartu Ülikool
2024 Seminarijuhendaja kursusel “Eesti õigekeelsus ja väljendusõpetus”, Tartu Ülikool
2022–2024 Kaasõppejõud keele, soo ja seksuaalsuse teemalistes seminarides, Tartu Ülikool

Grandid ja mobiilsus

jaan–veebr 2025 MEDAL (Methodological Excellence in Data-Driven Approaches to Linguistics) Mobility Scheme'i grant. Vastuvõtavad institutsioonid: Radboud University ja Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics.

Projektid

- 2026–2030 Teadur projektis “Afektiivse poliitika ja poliitiliste afektide kujutamine” (PRG3262), vastutav täitja: Raili Marling, Eesti Teadus-agentuur
- 2024 Projekti “LGBT terminoloogia” (FHVEE24319) vastutav täitja ja terminoloog, Eesti Keele Instituut

Valik loometöid

- 2025 Näituse naise seksuaalsest agentsusest ja intiimsusest kuraator koos Pire Sova ja Perdita S-iga, Planet Amor, Tallinn
- 2024–2025 Eksponaadi “Seksitöö või prostitutsioon” kaasautor koos Rebeka Põldsami ja Katrin Tiidenbergiga, näitus “Kellele kuulub öö?”, Eesti Rahva Muuseum
- 2024 Lühifilmi “Lillade õuduste öö” kaasstsenarist, Eesti Rahva Muuseum / Film Resort
- 2019–2020 Dokumentaallavastuse “Kuidas öelda jah?” dramaturg
- 2015–2016 Dokumentaallavastuse “Tõelised naised, tõelised mehed, tõelised teised” dramaturg, Vaba Lava kuraatoriprogramm

Valik toimetamistöid

- 2024 Keeletoimetaja Donna J. Haraway raamatu eestikeelsele tõlkele *Raskustes püsimine: hõimuloome ktulutseenis*. Tõlkija: Epp Aareleid; toimetajad: Margus Ott ja Neeme Lopp; järelsõna: Raili Marling. EKA, Tallinn.
- 2022 Keeletoimetaja Florence Giveni raamatu eestikeelsele tõlkele *Naiste asi pole kena olla*. Tõlkija: Sandra Määr. Rahva Raamat, Tallinn.
- 2021 Toimetaja Emily Nagoski raamatu eestikeelsele tõlkele *Leia oma kirk. Teaduslik tee parema seksini*. Tõlkija: Helen Kalpus. Postimees, Tallinn.

Kuulumine erialaorganisatsioonidesse

- 2024–... Eesti Rakenduslingvistika Ühing
- 2022–... International Gender and Language Association

DISSERTATIONES PHILOLOGIAE ESTONICAE UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

1. **Ülle Viks.** Eesti keele klassifikatoorne morfoloogia. Tartu, 1994.
2. **Helmi Neetar.** Deverbaalne nominaaltuletus eesti murretes. Tartu, 1994.
3. **Ülo Valk.** Eesti rahvausu kuradi-kujutelm. Tartu, 1994.
4. **Arvo Eek.** Studies on quantity and stress in Estonian. Tartu, 1994.
5. **Reet Kasik.** Verbid ja verbaalsubstantiivid tänapäeva eesti keeles. Tartu, 1994.
6. **Silvi Vare.** Nimi- ja omadussõnatuletus tänapäeva eesti kirjakeeles. Tartu, 1994.
7. **Heiki-Jaan Kaalep.** Eesti keele ressursside loomine ja kasutamine keele- tehnoloogilises arendustöös. Tartu, 1998.
8. **Renate Pajusalu.** Deiktikud eesti keeles. Tartu, 1999.
9. **Vilja Oja.** Linguistic studies of Estonian colour terminology. Tartu, 2001.
10. **Külli Habicht.** Eesti vanema kirjakeele leksikaalsest ja morfosüntaktilisest arengust ning Heinrich Stahli keele eripärast selle taustal. Tartu, 2001.
11. **Pire Teras.** Lõunaeesti vokaalisüsteem: Võru pikkade vokaalide kvaliteedi muutumine. Tartu, 2003.
12. **Merike Parve.** Välited lõunaeesti murretes. Tartu, 2003.
13. **Toomas Help.** Sõnakeskne keelemudel: Eesti regulaarne ja irregulaarne verb. Tartu, 2004.
14. **Heli Laanekask.** Eesti kirjakeele kujunemine ja kujundamine 16.–19. sajandil. Tartu, 2004.
15. **Peeter Päll.** Võõrnimed eestikeelses tekstis. Tartu, 2005.
16. **Liina Lindström.** Finiitverbi asend lauses. Sõnajärg ja seda mõjutavad tegurid suulises eesti keeles. Tartu, 2005.
17. **Kadri Muischnek.** Verbi ja noomeni püsiühendid eesti keeles. Tartu, 2006.
18. **Kanni Labi.** Eesti regilaulude verbisemantika. Tartu, 2006.
19. **Raili Pool.** Eesti keele teise keelena omandamise seaduspärasusi täis- ja osasihitise näitel. Tartu, 2007.
20. **Sulev Iva.** Võru kirjakeele sõnamuutmissüsteem. Tartu, 2007.
21. **Arvi Tavast.** The translator is human too: a case for instrumentalism in multilingual specialised communication. Tartu, 2008.
22. **Evar Saar.** Võrumaa kohanime analüüs enamlevinud nimeosade põhjal ja traditsioonilise kogukonna nimesüsteem. Tartu, 2008.
23. **Pille Penjam.** Eesti kirjakeele *da-* ja *ma-*infinitiiviga konstruktsioonid. Tartu, 2008.
24. **Kristiina Praakli.** Esimese põlvkonna Soome eestlaste kakskeelne keelekasutus ja koodikopeerimine. Tartu, 2009.
25. **Mari Mets.** Suhtlusvõrgustikud reaalajas: võru kõnekeele varieerumine kahes Võrumaa külas. Tartu, 2010.
26. **Karen Kuldnokk.** Militaarne retoorika. Argumentatsioon ja keeleline mõjutamine Eesti kaitsepoliitilises diskursuses. Tartu, 2011.

27. **Kai Tafenau.** Uue Testamendi tõlkimisest Rootsi ajal: käsikirjad, tõlkijad ja eesti kirjakeel. Tartu, 2011.
28. **Külli Prillop.** Optimaalsusteoreetiline käsitus eesti keele fonoloogilisest kujunemisest. Tartu, 2011, 261 lk.
29. **Pärtel Lippus.** The acoustic features and perception of the Estonian quantity system. Tartu, 2011, 146 p.
30. **Lya Meister.** Eesti vokaali- ja kestuskategooriad vene emakeelega keelejuhtide tajus ja häälduses. Eksperimentaalfoneetiline uurimus. Tartu, 2011, 145 lk.
31. **Kersti Lepajõe.** Kirjand kui tekstiliik. Riigieksamikirjandite tekstuaalsed, retoorilised ja diskursiivsed omadused. Tartu, 2011, 141 lk.
32. **Tiit Hennoste.** Grammatiliste vormide seoseid suhtlustegevustega eesti-keelses suulises vestluses. Tartu, 2013, 236 lk.
33. **Helena Metslang.** Grammatical relations in Estonian: subject, object and beyond. Tartu, 2013, 443 p.
34. **Kristel Uihoaed.** Verbiühendid eesti murretes. Tartu, 2013, 227 lk.
35. **Helen Plado.** Kausaalsuhete adverbiaallused eesti keeles. Tartu, 2013, 244 lk.
36. **Annika Kungas.** Pragmatiliste markerite kujunemine ja funktsioonid eesti keeles *lt*-sõnade näitel. Tartu, 2014, 200 lk.
37. **Maarika Teral.** Arvutipõhine eesti keele õpe: vahendid ja hinnangud nende efektiivsusele Tartu ülikooli keelekursuste näitel. Tartu, 2015, 175 lk.
38. **Anni Jürine.** The development of complex postpositions in Estonian: a case of grammaticalization via lexicalization. Tartu, 2016, 315 p.
39. **Kairi Tamuri.** Basic emotions in read Estonian speech: acoustic analysis and modelling. Tartu, 2017, 238 p.
40. **Sven-Erik Soosaar.** Eesti keele kultuursõnavara arenguhooni – eesti keel kui piirikeel. Tartu, 2017, 157 lk.
41. **David Ogren.** Object case variation in Estonian *da*-infinitive constructions. Tartu, 2018, 212 p.
42. **Reet Hendrikson.** Kas sõjasõna sünnib sõtta? Erialakeele tõhusus sõjandusterminoloogia näitel. Tartu, 2018, 252 lk.
43. **Eva Velsker.** Ajaväljendid eesti murretes. Tartu, 2018, 216 lk.
44. **Riina Reinsalu.** Juhendavad haldustekstid žanriteoreetilises raamistikus. Tartu, 2019, 168 lk.
45. **Ann Siiman.** Vormikasutuse varieerumine ning selle põhjused osastava ja sisseütleva käände näitel. Tartu, 2019, 209 lk.
46. **Tiina Laansalu.** Kesk-Harjumaa kohanimede kujunemine ja nimesiire. Tartu, 2020, 216 lk.
47. **Mariko Faster.** Hargla kihelkonna vetenimed Eesti-Läti piirialal. Tartu, 2020, 218 lk.
48. **Maarja-Liisa Pilvik.** Action nouns in a constructional network: A corpus-based investigation of the productivity and functions of the deverbal suffix *-mine* in five different registers of Estonian. Tartu, 2021, 252 p.

49. **Hanna Pook.** Pronoun use and variation in Estonian dialects: *kes* ‘who’, *mis* ‘what’ and *keegi* ‘someone’. Tartu, 2023, 225 p.
50. **Andra Annuka-Loik.** Naer ja naerev hääl eesti suulises suhtluses. Tartu, 2023, 202 lk.
51. **Tiina Paet.** Võõraainese kinnistumine eesti keeles: keelekorralduslik ja leksikograafiline vaade. Tartu, 2023, 260 lk.
52. **Lydia Risberg.** Sõnatähtendused ja sõnaraamat. Kasutuspõhine sisend eesti keelekorraldusele. Tartu, 2024, 286 lk.
53. **Liis Ermus.** The phonetic variation of plosives in Estonian. Tartu, 2024, 151 p.
54. **Piret Upser.** Eesti hädaabikõned: tüübid, teemad ja suhtlusprobleemid. Tartu, 2025, 214 lk.
55. **Elisabeth Kaukonen.** Revealing the gender in the genderless. Estonian gender-marked vocabulary and its perceptions. Tartu, 2025, 204 p.
56. **Carl Eric Simmul.** Eesti konverbitarindi semantika, infostruktuur ja sõnajärg. *des-*, *mata-* ja *maks-*tarind. Tartu, 2025, 346 lk.
57. **Kairit Tomson.** Põhjustamisseoste väljendamine ning analüütiliste põhjustamiskonstruktsioonide kujunemine ja kasutus eesti keeles. Tartu, 2025, 197 lk.